

When I was a child, I was hypnotised by my dentist. The hypnosis went like this:

Dentist George W. Fairfull Smith attached 4 balls of cotton wool onto the length of rotary dental drill. These, he said, were three little rabbits, being chased by a hungry fox. Needing a place to hide, the rabbits wondered if I would allow him to drill a hole in my tooth, into which they could run. Fairfull Smith would then plug that dental burrow quickly, before the fox had a chance to catch up. I agreed straight away. I watched the cotton wool rabbits go round and around, while Fairfull Smith gave me a filling, without anesthetic. The whole thing was filmed by a BBC camera crew and broadcast on TV in 1982.

www.rabbitcotton-toothcottonrabbit.com is named after the narrative of this hypnosis, during which a rabbit is transformed into cotton wool, is caught in a loop before darting into a hole in my tooth. Video footage of this event, of my hypnotised and broadcast image, can be seen in Peter (2014) and in nou (2018). It is a fragment of a larger documentary in which I am a medical subject; a laboratory mouse. In my work it is a cut up that cuts through time and space, through screen and format. Using it, I can slice open 'truthful' narratives and make up new stories, ones in which my image appears in Ridley Scott's Blade Runner or my body is hybridised, invaded by an alien being.

Set in Orfella Regular and Vennema Grotesk Book & Regular

• elongated domestic gallery space • The men and women are referred to in the text as.

Image title, date, format

DSC_1151.psd, Sept 16, 11:38am

Jane Topping Newspaper, or (Memoirs of a Spacewoman), 8-December 2018

Saturday 8 December 2018, by invitation, 12pm-6.00pm
Sunday 9 until Tuesday 11 December 2018,
by appointment only, 12pm-6.00pm

<http://www.rabbitcottontoothcottonrabbit.com>
<http://alexanderhetherington.com>

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(Pewter hands, 19th C. from the Neish Collection of Smith Museum & Art Gallery, Stirling)

Image title,
date, format

57-8-1.jpg, Today,
2:29pm

References from
'Memoirs of a
Spacewoman' by
Naomi Mitchison,
first published by
Victor Gollancz,
London, 1962,
references to this
edition published
by Kennedy &
Boyd, Glasgow,
2011

1. NAOMI
MITCHISON
her
first
science fiction
novel,
intro page vii
2. I think about
my friends and
the fathers of my
children, page 5
3. and the very
different times
of other people...
page 5
4. One reads
and watches, one
steeps oneself
in 3D and 4D,
page 7
5. one practices
taking bizarre
points of view,
page 7
6. this apparently
immovable stabil-
ity, page 10
7. Nobody enjoys
their first per-
sonality change,
page 10
8. itself devel-
oping out of a
spiral, page 11
9. I seemed to
feel them with my
teeth and tongue,
page 12
10. I had only to
stretch out my
fingers and there
it was, page 13
11. in the pe-
ripheral ring of
brain-plus-eye
material page 14
12. Gradually I
found myself
getting into the
same state of
mind, page 19
13. I found an
equal slipping in
my imaginations,
page 20
14. and he had
warned us against
hallucinations,
page 26
15. from Glitter-
boy, page 32
16. and as so
often is the case
in hallucinations
the whole thing
appeared to take
in a vast stretch
of time, page 39
17. But was this
memory, again,

b19fur006.jpg,
Today, 2:25pm

Peter
Transition mid.tiff,
Today, 8:31pm

Jane Topping, Newspaper, or Memoirs of a Spacewoman/02, She Was A Visitor



I think about my friends and the fathers of my children

She Was A Visitor

tor from 1967³.

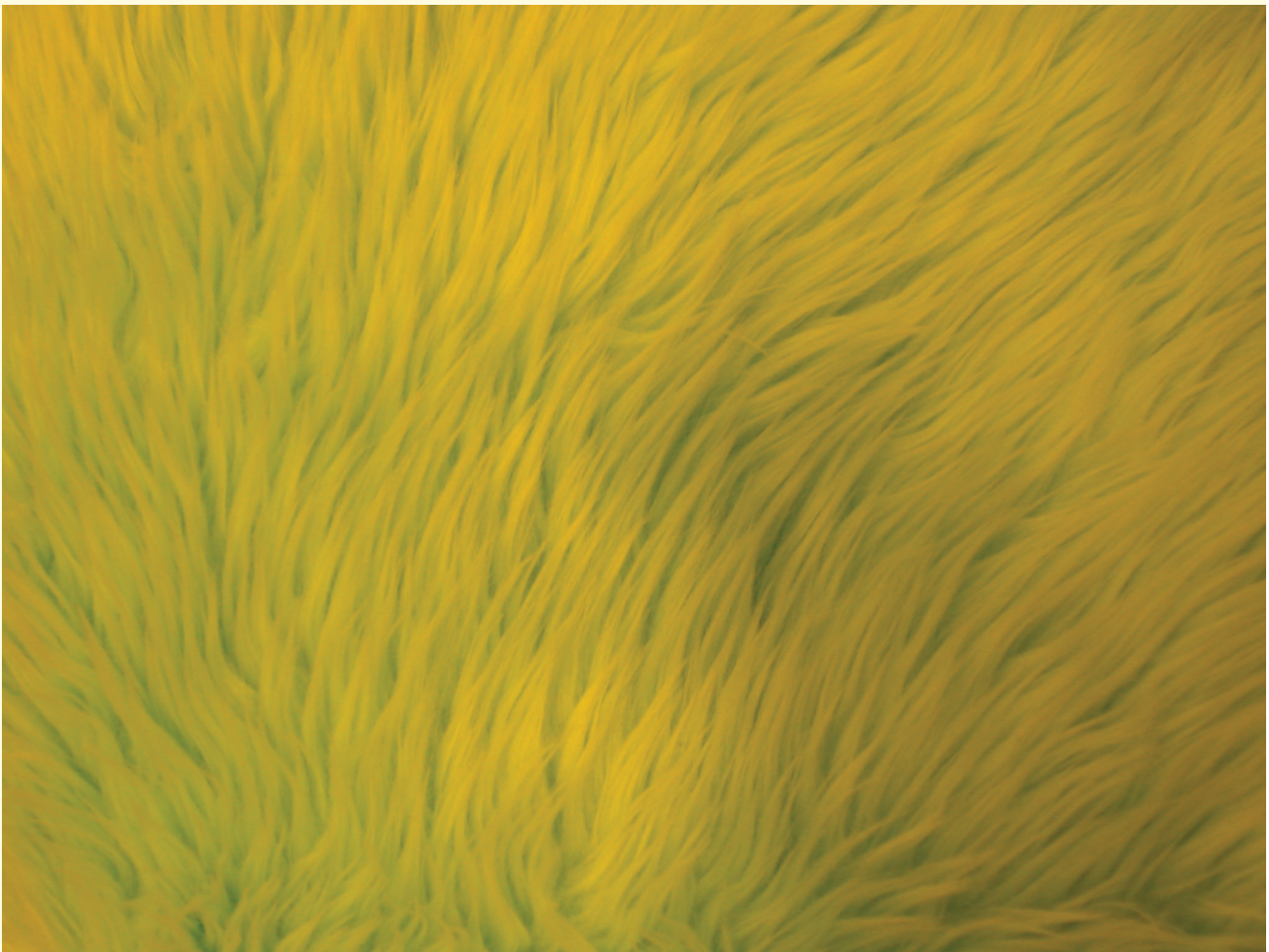
It started off by remembering that London-based artist Gail Pickering named her red light cyclorma-screen¹ installation at BALTIC, Gateshead as part of her solo exhibition Near Real Time², an experimental treatise based on found tapes of the Vidéogazette community television project which took place in Villeteneuve, France in the 1970s with the same title as American Robert Ashley's experimental repetitive spoken-word piece She Was A Visi-

about a solid colour-image, in this case luminous bright-red, and its visual after affects, people hallucinate blue or see in black-and-white for a while afterwards, or 'see' or 'imagine' objects nearby or at the edge, of the blind spot, at the peripheral vision, like Ludimar Hermann's grid illusion, grey circles between vertical and horizontal lines or E. Lingelbach's 'scintillating grid illusion' – white flickers to black and vice versa... with a repetition of the sentence, and the between sounds of the sentence,

One reads and watches, one steeps oneself in 3D and 4D

'she. was. a. visitor.' sung by a chorus, generating a dis-integration. Georgina Starr used this technique too, in her work, Mum Sings Hello, from 2009. (That's Lionel Richie's Hello, 1984. The video with the blind actor/sculptor. While 'mum' is singing down the telephone and has been recorded on an answer machine.) Ella Finer, a London-based artist who works with performance, the spoken word and sound, writes about Starr's project in her essay Starr's Sonorous Shadows for the Cooper Gallery publishing series &labels⁴; in the essay Finer suggests the voice manifested on the tape, and eventually recorded to 12" vinyl, is

a sonorous material, it manifests as form, from silhouettes and the intangible.





What I think I am describing is something like the video infinity affect on 70s and 80s television, maybe used on disco tracks on Top of the Pops, for example Boogie Nights by Heatwave”⁵. And then interrupts again, at this point, mentioning hysterical blindness, I tell them, abruptly, that that’s not relevant here, though they continue to mention that Hitler’s hysterical blindness was cured by hypnosis. And that



Beatnik-girl.jpg,
Today, 2:30pm

DSC_0020_6-
e1525765268743.
jpg, Today, 2:27pm

an unlocated effect, page 45
18. I could not think of it without a name, and I named it to myself with splendid inappropriateness, Ariel, page 49
19. and for a time the conference buffeted me about on a sea of discussion, excitement, disappointment, uncertainties and plans... page 54
20. after thought, to go into meditation and out of time... page 70
21. so an artificial situation arose, page 72
22. the colours and shapes convulsed, page 82
23. of several dark and shining colours, page 92
24. gave great aesthetic pleasure to those who, page 92
25. the successful artist with touch and... page 93
26. as doubtless, from its flashing and faceted jewel eyes, now diamond, now sapphire, now emerald... page 96
27. the beginning of jewel colour in in the yet unbright eye, page 97
28. there is a butterfly and there is a reflected butterfly, page 114
29. the colours in its wing became blurred, static, page 121
30. as well as some deliberate committing to memory, page 132
31. in a counter-interference, page 134
32. and delinquent deception, page 161

I seemed to feel them with my teeth and tongue

this mythologized hypnotic intervention may also have changed his personality – that the hypnotists’s suggestions trapped him in a state of violence, anger, racism and narcissism. And ideas of the affects of hypnosis are relevant here.

I am thinking also about Alvin Lucier’s sound piece I Am Sitting in a Room, from 1969. Hypnotic voice leads to form.⁶ Incidentally in 2011 artist and writer Martin Conrads remade Lucier’s work using a synthetic, software-generated voice. Conrads’ piece is called I ain’t sitting in a room and can be heard, at random, among a group of 150 sound pieces, referred to as ‘skits’, including works by musicians and theatre makers like John Zorn and Heiner Goebels, as part of German artist Mischa Kuball’s red-light, stroboscopic and rotating-mirror elements installation ‘res-o-nant’⁷ from 2017, on view, currently, at the Jewish Museum in Berlin until 2019. Kuball talks about a “resonance between architecture and skin” and the “signification of voids”, which reminded me of what Cynthia Cruz said about Marguerite Duras’ writing, that it was ‘threadbare... full of holes’.⁸ In reality Kuball’s work, mirroring Gail Pickering’s luminous red-light-room, is more likely to be about a resonance between sight, light and skin. And in turn resonances between surfaces, screens and skin. The holes or gaps or voids I think though are spaces for the inclusion of other voices, biographies and reflections, the mirroring and multiple

glass screens she referred to as a ‘seeping of identity’.

I was interested in producing a project about Jane Topping on paper, on newsprint.

evidence of material, material surfaces externalizing them from the screen, returning film to works on paper. Escaping. I also considered scripting the essay like a news report. ‘Glasgow artist revealed to be time traveling space agent’. Like the story of Charlotte Anne Moberly and Eleanor Jourdain, and John Titor or a planetary visitor like Valiant Thor⁹, the ‘extraterrestrial that walks among us’. Instead its about interruptions, incompleteness and a slip between fact and fiction, and a fascination around doubt, optical illusions and an unreliable narrator. Like the Czech philosopher Vilém Flusser¹⁰ discussing the impossibility of any final

truth, underlining the necessity of doubt, of am



dirt-featherweb.
jpg, Today, 2:29pm

I found an equal slipping in my imaginations

biguity, at the very least, and of the fictional structure[s], or to my mind, the fictional circumferences, of perception. I think it’s also about the unfinished or unfinishable, like the numerous edits of BladeRunner, from the 1982 Worktype prototype version though to the Final Cut in 2007.

(The narration at the beginning should amount to a kind of, or be about sonic, visual or narrative ‘artifacting’. Jane do you think Harrison Ford should be thought of as an untrustworthy or unreliable narrator in the original theatrical cut of Ridley Scott’s Blade Runner from 1982, the one with Deckard’s strained, flat and impassive voice-over; like its puncturing, or penetrating, the film from an ‘external’ space of the production’s notorious difficulties and exasperations? Is his voice-over an artifact? A form of lossy compression. “The voice is an irregular eye-witness,” comes the reply. I agree. Robert Ashley reminds us that, “...the fault is in our moni-

tors”).))¹¹

Stop. Start again. (In looking out for evidence of an unreliable narrator...) I start by thinking about the late American operatic composer Robert Ashley whose work often dealt with the intersection of electronics, human speech, and musical notation. It is worth noting that Ashley exhibited a mild form of Tourette’s Syndrome, a neurological condition characterized by repetitive, stereotyped, involuntary movements and vocalizations called tics. The disorder is named for Dr. Georges Gilles de la Tourette, the pioneering French neurologist who in 1885 first described the condition in an 86-year-old French noblewoman. The Syndrome’s vocal tics and echolalia, repeating the words of another, might explain some of the broken patterns, deviances or randomness, and repetitions in Ashley’s narrations. While it is not a coincidence, to this text, that Ashley’s voice has been described as ‘hypnotic’.¹²

DSC_0470.jpg,
Today, 2:29pm



F5.jpg, Today,
2:30pm



3 Hypnosis stories

On September 17, 1894, a man identified only as “Mr. Neukomm” was visiting 23-year-old clairvoyant Ella Salamon in her uncle’s home in Tuzer, Upper Hungary. Neukomm wanted some medical advice. His brother was spitting up blood, but the doctors weren’t sure if the blood was coming from his stomach or his lungs. So Salamon agreed to be hypnotized by Neukomm in front of her parents and uncle. Once hypnotized, she started to describe the lungs in great detail. When Neukomm asked if his brother would die, she said, “Be prepared for the worst.” Then Salamon collapsed and mysteriously died minutes later. At the time, it was believed that her death was caused by a bungled hypnosis performed by a layman, and Salamon’s brain simply couldn’t take the excitement. According to The Journal of the American Medical Association, Salamon was the first person to die while under hypnosis.

Before you decide to experiment with hypnotism on a large group of people, it is important to realize that not everyone is able to fall under hypnotic suggestion. One Berlin schoolteacher learned this lesson the hard way back in 1912.The teacher, Boennecker,

had the daunting task of educating the children of the “lower working classes.” He considered them loud, rude, and unruly and was apparently at wits’ end with his class. Having an interest in hypnotism, the teacher decided to use it on his students. When he believed that they were all under his influence, he told his students not to mention the hypnotism to anyone. Then he told them that they must always tell him the truth and be polite. After he woke his class from the trance, the hypnosis appeared to have worked on a number of students. But there were others who did not go into the hypnotic state. These very aware children went home and immediately told their parents what the teacher had done. An investigation was launched, and the teacher was arrested. In court, it was determined that the hypnosis was unhealthy for the students and Boennecker was sent to prison for 10 days for his poor judgment

If you worked in medical research and happened to have a very slow day, what would you do? Have a chat with the bacteria inside a petri dish? Well, Mr. Richard De Silva from the Ceylon Medical Research Institute decided to “hypnotize” bacteria back in 1953.According to his findings, which were presented in the sixth International Micro-Biological Congress, he was able to affect the death rates of bac-

From Glitterboy,

(Insert a glitch¹³, a missing scene.¹⁴)

His voice, at it travels through time and location, vocal road movies if you like, puts you into a place where numerous possibilities can occur, in the past, present or future, or could occur at the same time, across time. His voice, in a flow, building environments, build-ings, spaces and dimensions, generating characters, their grain and grade, their senses and then letting them all disappear again. In Jane Topping’s film Peter, this is phenomenon is referred to as ‘texture’.

It closes on a hesitation, a stutter, to conclusion, about thoughts still in the frame but not full evolved about, hidden characters, who is speaking and whose words are being spoken, about blind spots and optical illusions, about scenes missing...

Titles and alternative titles

“She Was A Visitor”
On Escape and Escapism
Fictionalising and Hypnotising the Document
(Scripting) the Collage
Scene missing and random acts, intermissions
(infinity) Cyclorma wall, the unreliable narrator
Science-fiction film set at home, “a double-surplus of commonplaceness and strangeness”*
Plus
Unwanted Telepathy, A Footnote, 3 eerie stories of hypnotic encounters, & Synopsis of Memoirs of a Spacewoman



intense-lipstick-ap-
plication.jpg, Today,
2:24pm

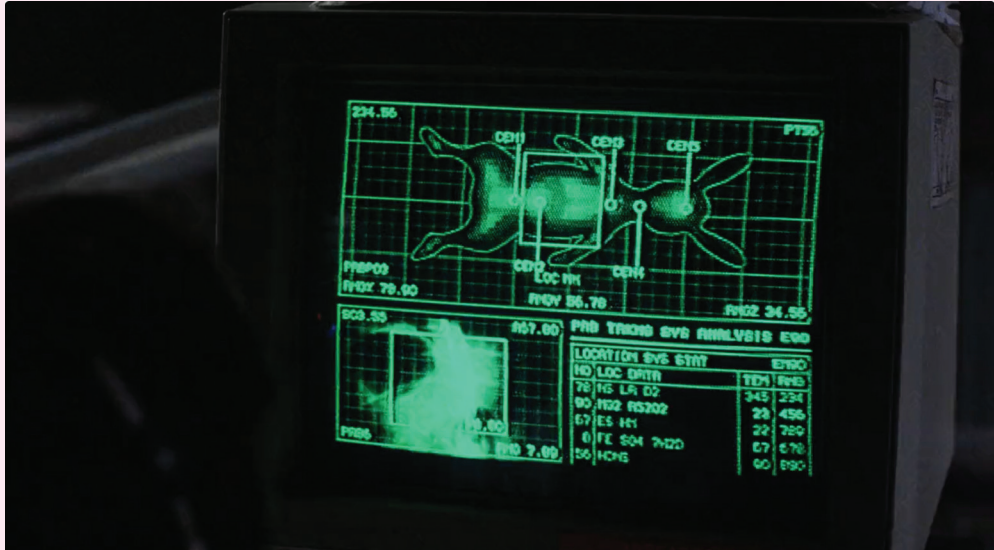
teria by the powers of verbal suggestion. Placing bacteria on two plates, he would say over one of the dishes, “No growth, no growth! You are sterile, you are sterile, you are sterile! You are dead, you are dead, you are dead!” Both dishes were then placed into the incubator. At the end of 24 hours, the dish to which he had been unkind had fewer living bacteria than the dish he had ignored. While science is still investigating how the thoughts of an observer affect behaviors and outcomes in research, speaking to things that could in no way understand the human language was call hypnotism back in the 1950s.

Synopsis, Naomi Mltchison, Memoirs of a Spacewoman

1962. The Spacewoman in question is a scientist and explorer. The book is set many centuries in the future, though no dates are given. Humans have explored many worlds in a number of different galaxies. Their quest is for knowledge and to be helpful: there is a strict rule against ‘interference’. The narrator, Mary, is a specialist in ‘communication’ - a kind of telepathy. She operates in a society where women are just as likely as men to be leaders, though she herself prefers not to lead. They also do pretty much as they please as regards sex and reproduction: I think of my friends and the fathers of my children. I think about my children, but I think less about my four dear normals than I think about Viola. And I think about Ariel. Viola is a haploid human, conceived as a result of sexual interaction with a Martian - Martians being hermaphrodite. Ariel is an alien creature that could be seen either as a parasite or a kind of child. There are no space-opera thrills and

figths: rather there are a number of different worlds with interesting biologies. In one case there is an ethical problem concerning some caterpillars and butterflies, both intelligent. Attitudes about sex and about alien cultures are similar to those of the New Wave, though it is not normally classed as part of it.

rabbitscreeninner-
space-1.jpg, Today,
2:24pm



A black and white 16mm silent film, The Written Object, in-part informed by a conversation with Jane Topping, can be seen at alexanderhetherington.com/project/the-written-object-sweet-as-fuck/

After thought, to go into
meditation and out of
time

References

1. An infinity cyclorama (found particularly in television and in film studios) is a cyc which curves smoothly at the bottom to meet the studio floor, so that with careful lighting and the corner-less joint, the illusion that the studio floor continues to infinity can be achieved. Cycloramas are often used to create the illusion of a sky onstage, or are white to create no background, or green screen to create a masking backdrop.

2. Gail Pickering, Near Real Time interview, <https://www.studiointernational.com/index.php/gail-pickering-interview-mirror-speech-baltic-gallery> (retrieved 11/11/18), Gail Pickering, including the installation ‘She was a visitor’, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art Gateshead | 31 Oct 2014 – 11 Jan 2015

3. Robert Ashley, She was a visitor, 1967, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/music/tracks/n49mvc/>

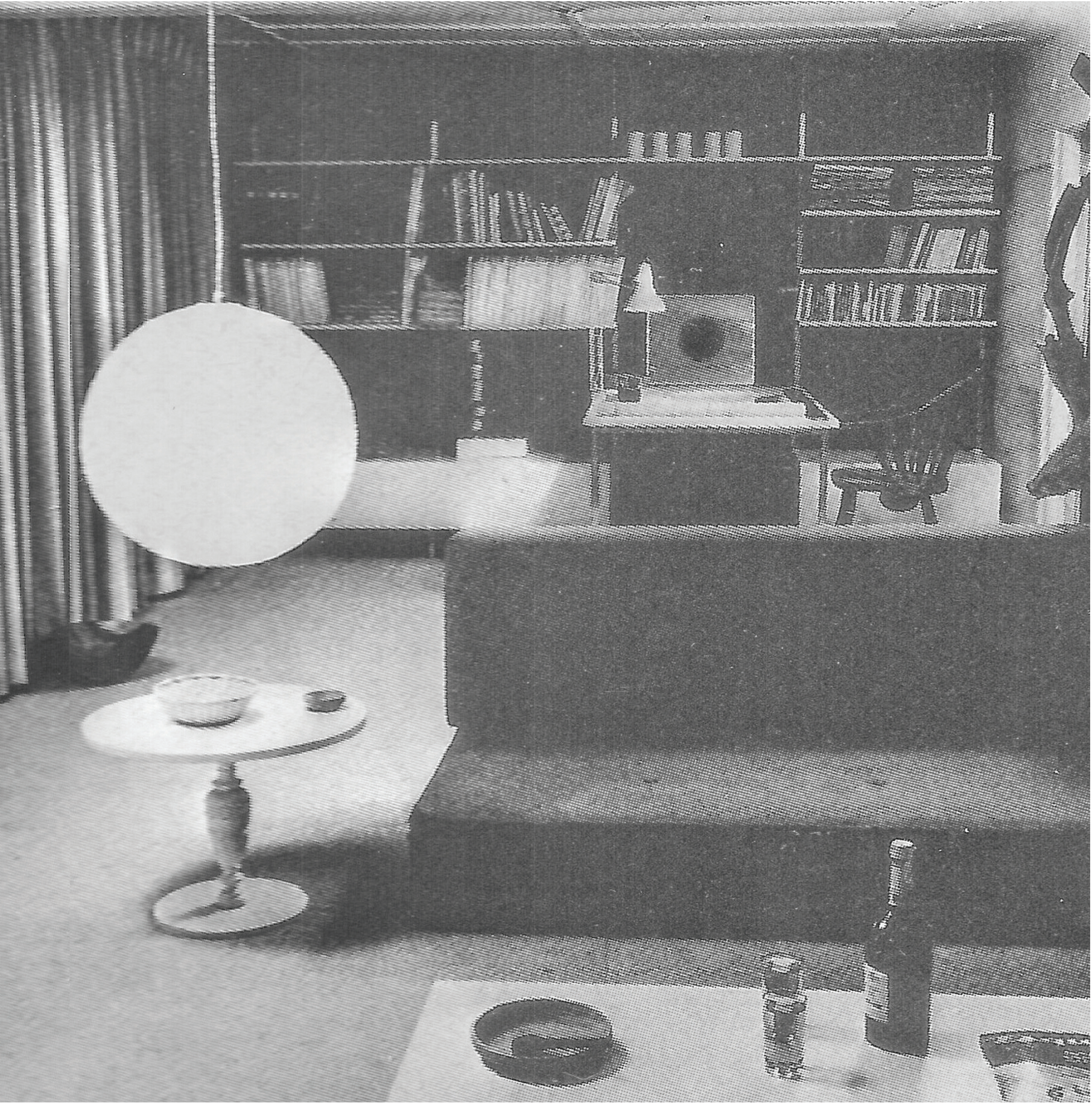
Comments from YouTube.
Heard this hot off the press in 1967. Highly (pun intended) instructive. The continuous looped statement morphs into pure sound, like a foreign language. Twenty years later I encountered the story of Wittgenstein & a student looking at a tree & taking turns saying “I know that’s a tree” over & over.

Il est heureux que vous ayez précisé le titre du morceau sans quoi je l’aurais facilement confondu avec le “obladi oblada” des Beatles... les refrains des deux morceaux étant quasiment identiques, la confusion aurait été compréhensible.

4. & labels, Cooper Gallery’s gallery periodical: <https://www.dundee.ac.uk/cooper-gallery/labels/>

5. Heatwave, Boogie Nights, 1977, lyrics Rod Temperton, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r8tW1cQtsw0> (retrieved 11/11/2018)

6. Alvin Lucier’s I Am Sitting in A Room, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fAxHILK3Oyk>, (retrieved 11/11/2018) “I am sitting in a room different from the one you are in now. I am recording the sound of my speaking voice and I am going to play it back into the room again and again until the resonant frequencies of the room reinforce themselves so that any semblance of my speech, with perhaps the exception of rhythm, is destroyed. What you will hear, then, are the natural resonant frequencies of the room articulated by speech. I regard this activity not so much as a demonstration of a physical fact, but more as a way to smooth out any irregularities my speech might



have.”

7. res-o-nant, A Light and Sound Installation by Mischa Kuball at the Jewish Museum, Berlin <https://www.jmberlin.de/en/exhibition-resonant> (retrieved 12/11/2018)

8. Notes Toward a New Language: Holes: On Marguerite Duras, Cynthia Cruz, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet/2015/04/notes-toward-a-new-language-holes-on-marguerite-duras>

9. The Extraterrestrial That Walked Among Us! (True Story!), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e-7kE8JPwtk> (retrieved 12/11/2018)

10. Vilém Flusser (2014). “On Doubt”, Minnesota Books

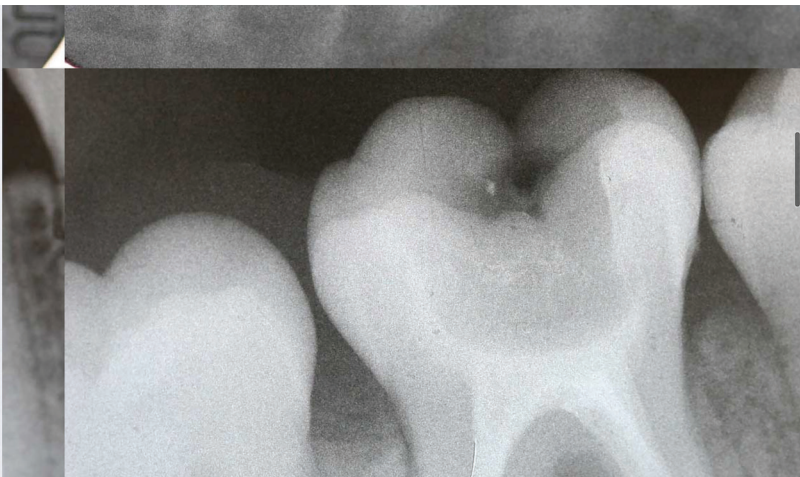
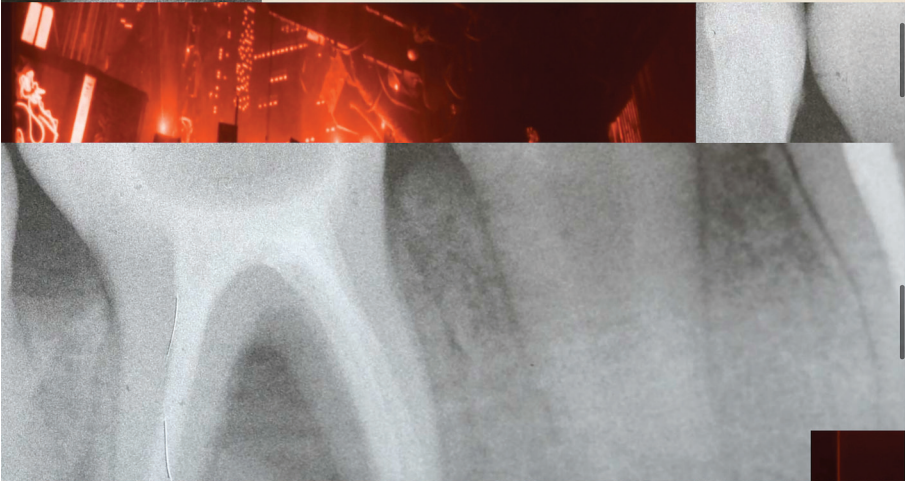
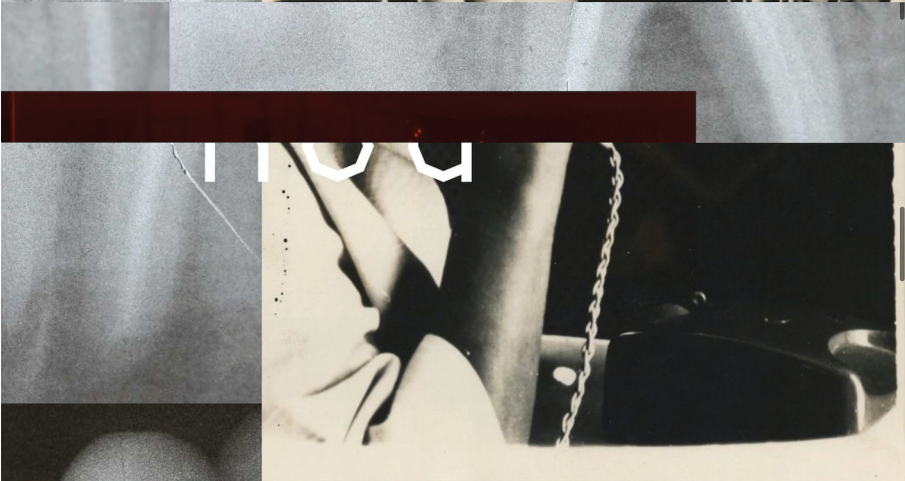
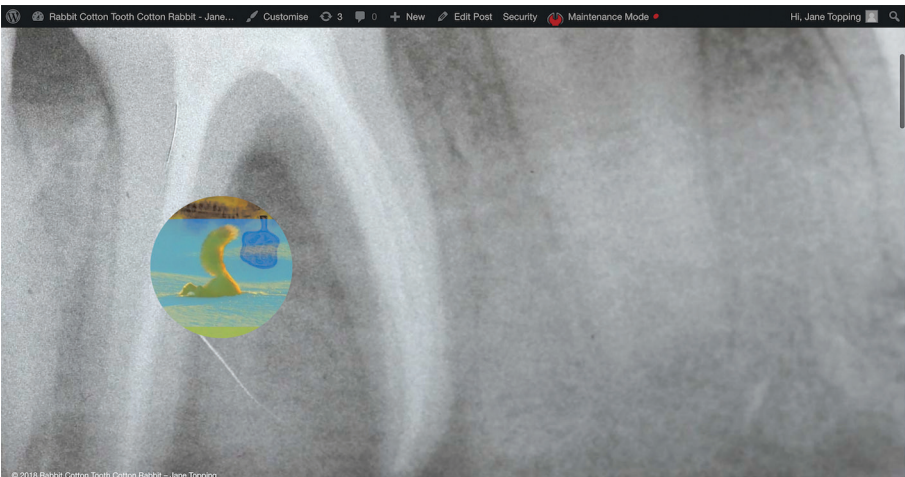
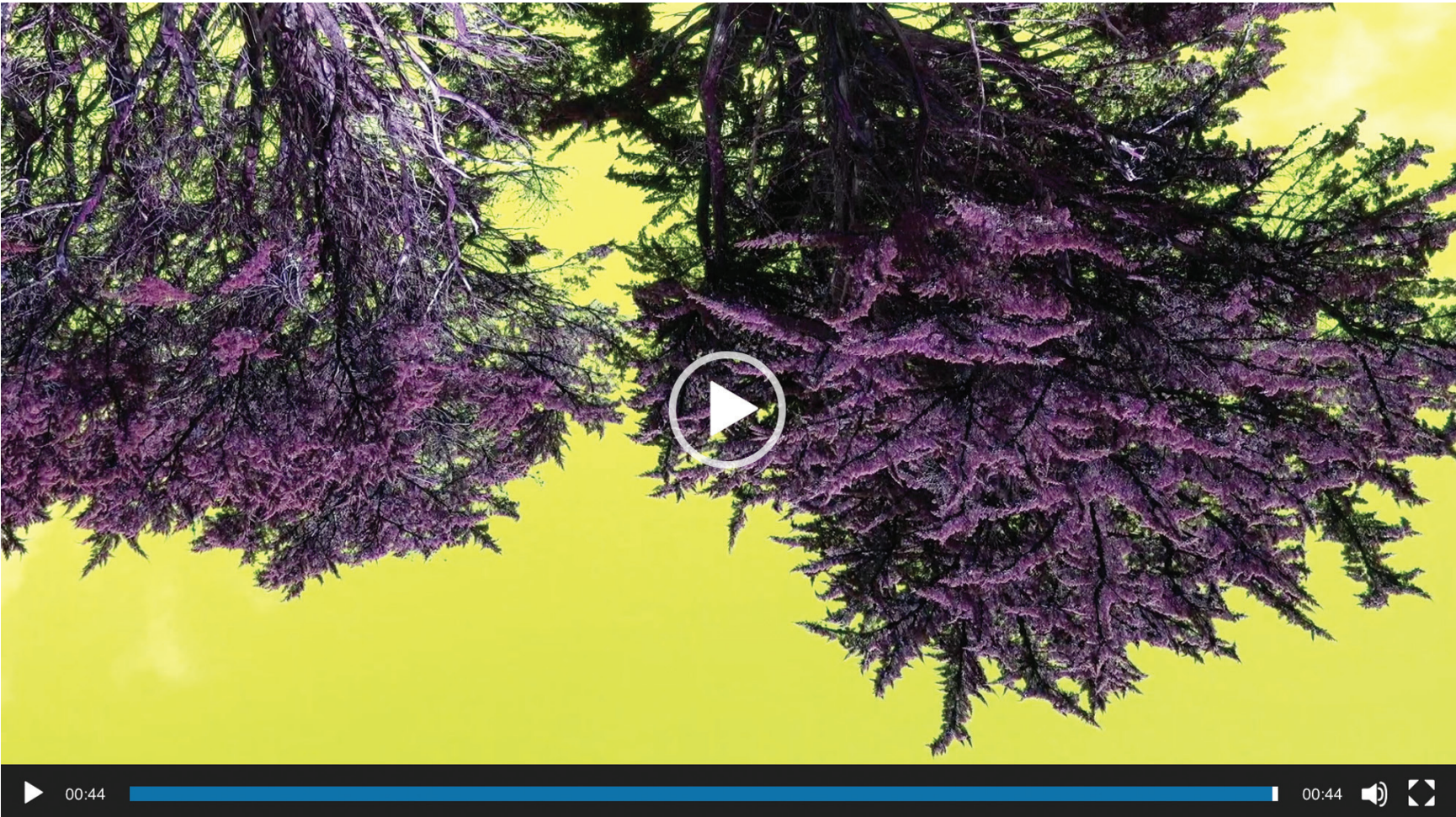
The colours in its wing
became blurred, static

11. Robert Ashley, Flying Saucer Dialogue, 1985, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EygYUYIx_sM

“Flying Saucer has come to Earth for important indicator event concerning humans: The Marriage of Atlanta. Problem: Apples. (‘Apples, even golden ones, for one of the greatest living humans?’) Log: ‘Pick up the apples, in whatever form, and take them to Earth-base for analysis. You will know them. This has been arranged. After analysis they are to be returned to where you got them. No evidence that they were gone. What we need to know is what they are and what is their attraction for this great human.’ Flying Saucer briefed on ‘current’ human concerns, specifically, architecture: shelters, power generators; monuments (functional, creative, symbolic space; i.e., images of vision, narrative and sound). Simple Flying Saucer Mission. What could be easier? Flying Saucer misses the mark by thousands of years. Arrives mid-twentieth century. Picks up three, charming men. Earth base now a small-town bank in Illinois. Put them in the bank for a moment, where they will be seen, take them back to where they came from. All this in zero-time. Situation getting worse. Morale is ‘falling.’ Flying Saucer personnel in advanced stages of enchantment, picking up bad habits, two hours in the bathroom in the morning, all-night parties, drinking, drugs, always humming songs (‘working on the changes, sir’), god knows what next. Personnel is not immune to imagination. Affects them like a virus. Next thing you know, some will want to stay (‘you know, sir, I’m really getting to like it here’). Some apples.” Additionally: Robert Ashley, Act 1, Change, from Now Eleanor’s Idea, 1987/1993, focusing on Eleanor and her journey from Midwestern-small-town bank teller to television news reporter to prophet for the Southwestern Hispanic low rider car culture”. As a result of a mysterious incident at The Bank, where she is employed as a teller, Now Eleanor has a kind of religious experience and decides to change her job. She is hired by a local television broadcaster to anchor the daily news, and she becomes a celebrity overnight. To fulfill the responsibilities of her experiences she conceives of a documentary program to study the exotic “Low Rider” community; she believes that the answer to her “experience” will be found among the facts of the documentary.

¶“Low Rider Magazine,” the fan-cult magazine of the “Low Rider” movement in the Southwestern United States.

12. “Perfect Lives has been called “the most influential music/theater/literary work of the 1980s.” At its center is the hypnotic voice of Robert Ashley. His continuous song narrates the events of the story and describes



a 1980’s update of the mythology of small town America.” <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet/2014/03/imperfect-news-but-art-in-all-directions-robert-ashley-1930-2014> retrieved (11/11/2018) and Perfect Lives (extracts), Robert Ashley, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-1LWC39Ehm4> (retrieved 11/11/2018)

13. Blaise Pascal’s Pensées, 1670. ‘This is where our innate knowledge leads us’. <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/18269/18269-h/18269-h.htm> ‘This is where unaided knowledge leads us’ as seen in João Maria Gusmão and Pedro Paiva: On the Movement of the Fried Egg and Other Astronomical Bodies, page 41, Ikon, Birmingham, 3 February — 21 March 2010. The Pensées (“Thoughts”) is a collection of fragments on theology and philosophy written by 17th-century philosopher and mathematician Blaise Pascal.

14. Jane Topping’s ‘Scene Missing’ card in her video Peter, 2014–2018 brings me back to an interest in missing or lost films and missing scenes in films that I mentioned in Jonathan Owen’s text for Double-X, a trio of three of his eraser drawings that showed at the flat in July 2018. For example in 1964 Andy Warhol Films Jack Smith Filming Normal Love, a home movie, which may have been Warhol’s first film, was seized by the New York City police and has since disappeared. Missing too is Ken Russell’s Cranks at Work, a short 35mm film documentary on the late South African choreographer John Cranko who left the UK for Stuttgart, Germany in 1961 following a prosecution for ‘homosexual activity’.

* Brandon Bussolini, on Robert Ashley’s Now Eleanor’s Idea, Dusted Magazine, <http://www.dustedmagazine.com/reviews/3959>, (retrieved 11/11/2018)

Some notes on hypnotism <https://www.hgi.org.uk/resources/delve-our-extensive-library/ethics/uses-and-abuses-hypnosis> (retrieved 11/11/18)

Hypnotized by Radio, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/96485788?searchTerm=hypnotised&searchLimits> (retrieved 11/11/18)

teeth_videoph_ BRweb.jpg, Today, 2:24pm

Alex Heherington would like to thank Jane Topping, Oliver Mezger, Sara Monaghan and Wendy Kirkup and extending thanks to all the artists and visitors of the No.35 project.

Overleaf, reverso, Haeckel_ Discomedusae_ 98-1-e152 56749 58964, Today, 2:24pm

