



It is part XXXV of an ensemble, and these latent commons are no longer necessarily ceremonial

Collective Making at Artez Arnhem, BEAR and Creative Writing

Networked Collective

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Collective Making

With the 6-week Collective Making program we invite you to become part of our collective and experience what it means to work as a collective body. Important for us is the idea of 'becoming' and 'not-knowing'. In her book *The Mushroom at the End of the World*, Anna L. Tsing coins the term latent commons, which she describes as hidden, fugitive moments of entanglement between living beings in a complex world. These commons may not be directly visible, as they develop themselves in interaction, cooperation, competition and desires between different beings and environments. When we move, create, feel, talk and eat together, we try to become aware and experience what these commons could be.

Our collective practice and form is one of being a multitude, with different opinions, disciplines, forms of engagements, roles, positions, searching for ways of relating to and communicating with each other. To work our way through differences, similarities and encounters, to frame a space and time as we work. How to understand work as a process of making and receiving, and to understand receiving as a productive act in itself that can again activate new processes of making and understanding, and through which new notions of collectivity may arise.

Program

During the six weeks we will work together collectively. We'll make strolls in the park, discuss texts, make theatrical performances, film, write poetry, cook and eat, jam, print, draw, paint and make zines. During the first four weeks we invite you to participate in different workshops. This starts with collectively working with the theatrical technique Viewpoints. A method to research being (together) in space; resulting in a collective performative moment. The second week is about furnishing our collective space and working in it with drawing, printing and also visiting an ecological farm to collect vegetables and cook your own fermented food. The following week consists of fieldwork, we will go as well into nature as explore a city landscape and curate this into temporal outside presentations. Week four is about writing poetry that translates into improvised music-jams. The workshops will culminate in a 'library of possibilities'; out of which you will also create a zine. The final weeks can be used to collect your thoughts and ideas of what you've experienced and make this, the last day of the program, into a self-organized presentation. The program is two days a week (Tuesdays and Wednesdays) but during the other days of the week the studio is free to explore. It is a full on program, but it also contains moments of meditation, reflection and dialogue, and more ambiguous moments of not-knowing.

Networked Collective

For a few years we have been working as a Networked Collective. As the word implies, this collective stems from a network, there is not a core, or center, but at most a temporary focal point. The notion was coined by Okwui Enwezor in his text *The Artist as Producer in Times of Crisis*, and defined as: 'a flexible, non-permanent course of affiliation, privileging collaboration on project basis than on a permanent alliance.'

core: a tension between on the one hand the social process of working together and living together, and on the other hand formal, autonomous qualities of works that are the outcomes of that process. These two aspects, the social and the autonomous, might seem independent from each other, but they interfere constantly and create an added value in their coalescence. Our collective projects are always proposals about this exchange. We would like to state a politics of

Collectively we work within residencies, projects, exhibitions, plays, informal gatherings and on publications. From these assemblies a fundamental research-area came to the core: a tension between on the one hand the social process of working together and living together, and on the other hand formal, autonomous qualities of works that are the outcomes of that process. These two aspects, the social and the autonomous, might seem independent from each other, but they interfere constantly and create an added value in their coalescence. Our collective projects are always proposals about this exchange. We would like to state a politics of collectivity. As an ensemble, but also an assembly, education can be a field in which this multi-voiced dimension resonates. In this way a Networked Collective within an educational situation does not only act as the fulfilling of a function, but as an internalization of a discourse, in which the structure becomes the embodiment of questions regarding diversity, vulnerability, multidisciplinary and polyphony.





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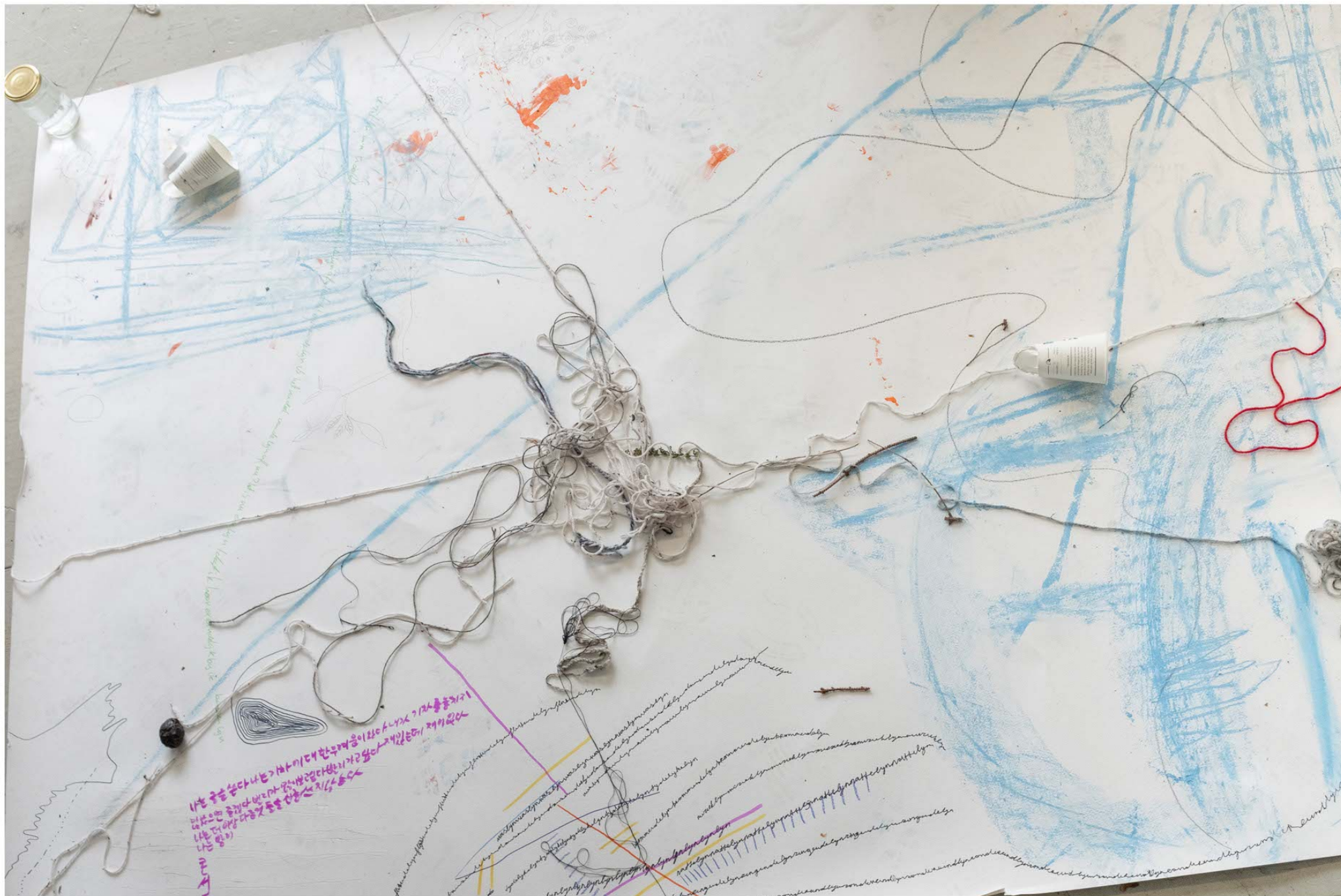
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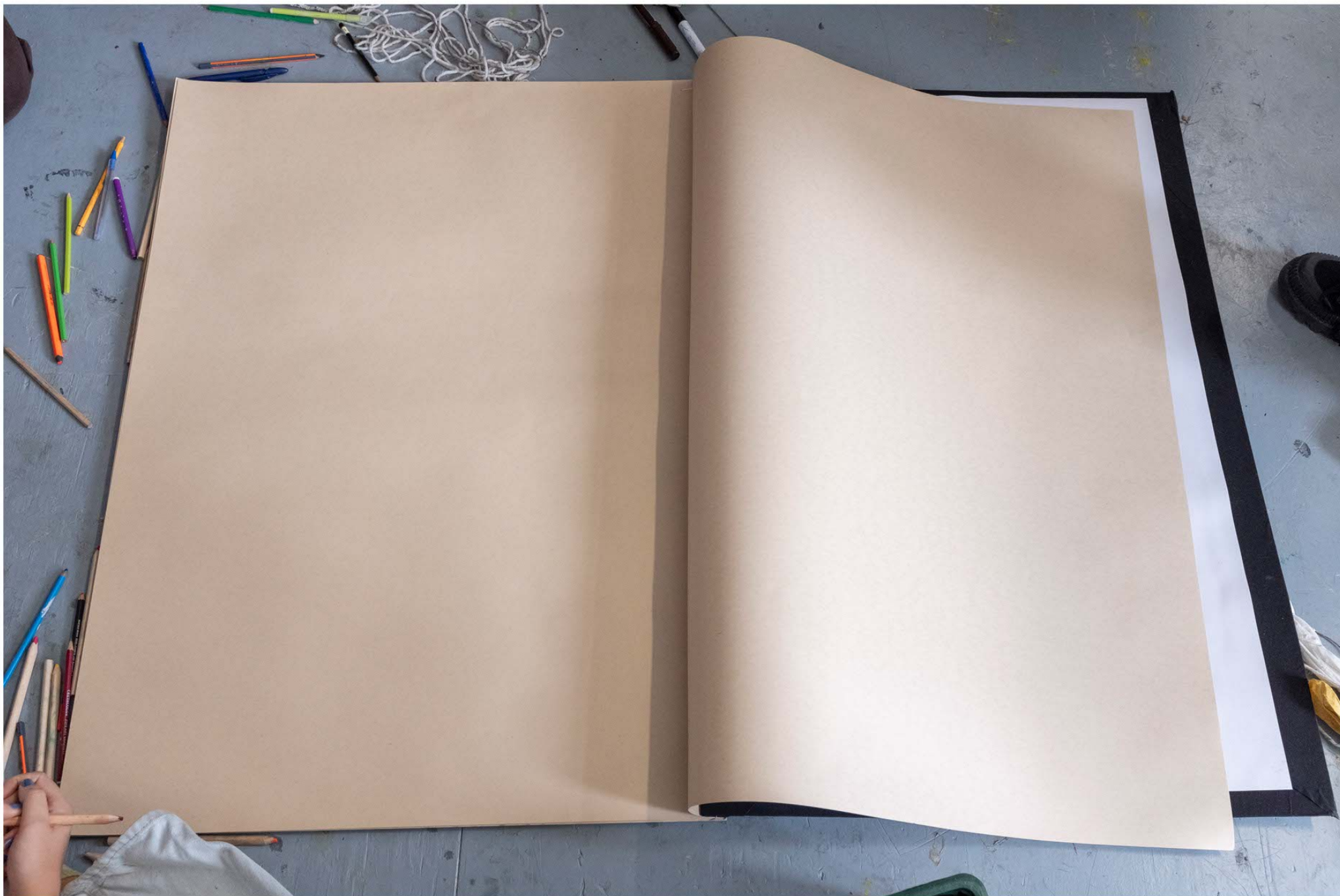
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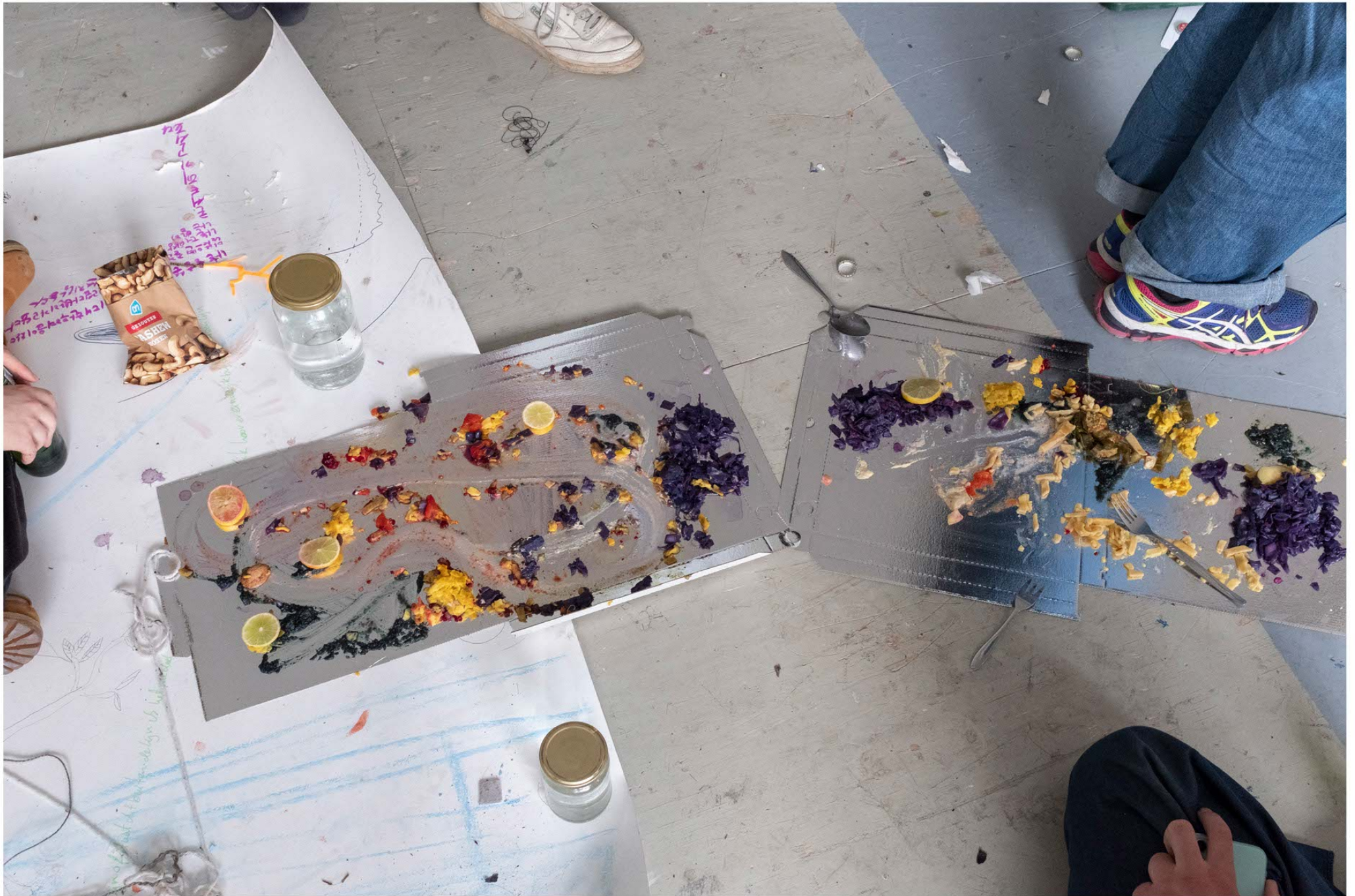
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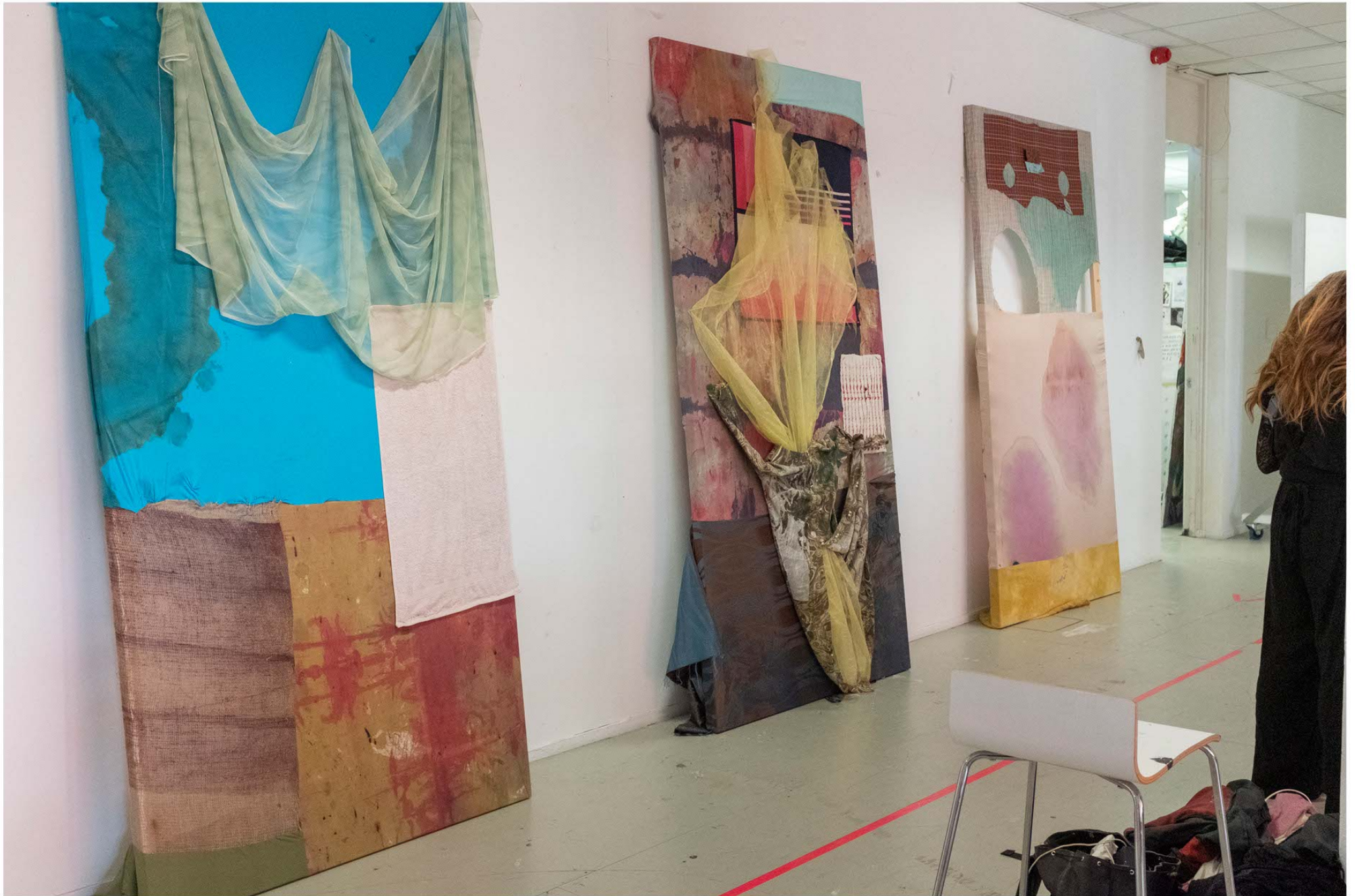
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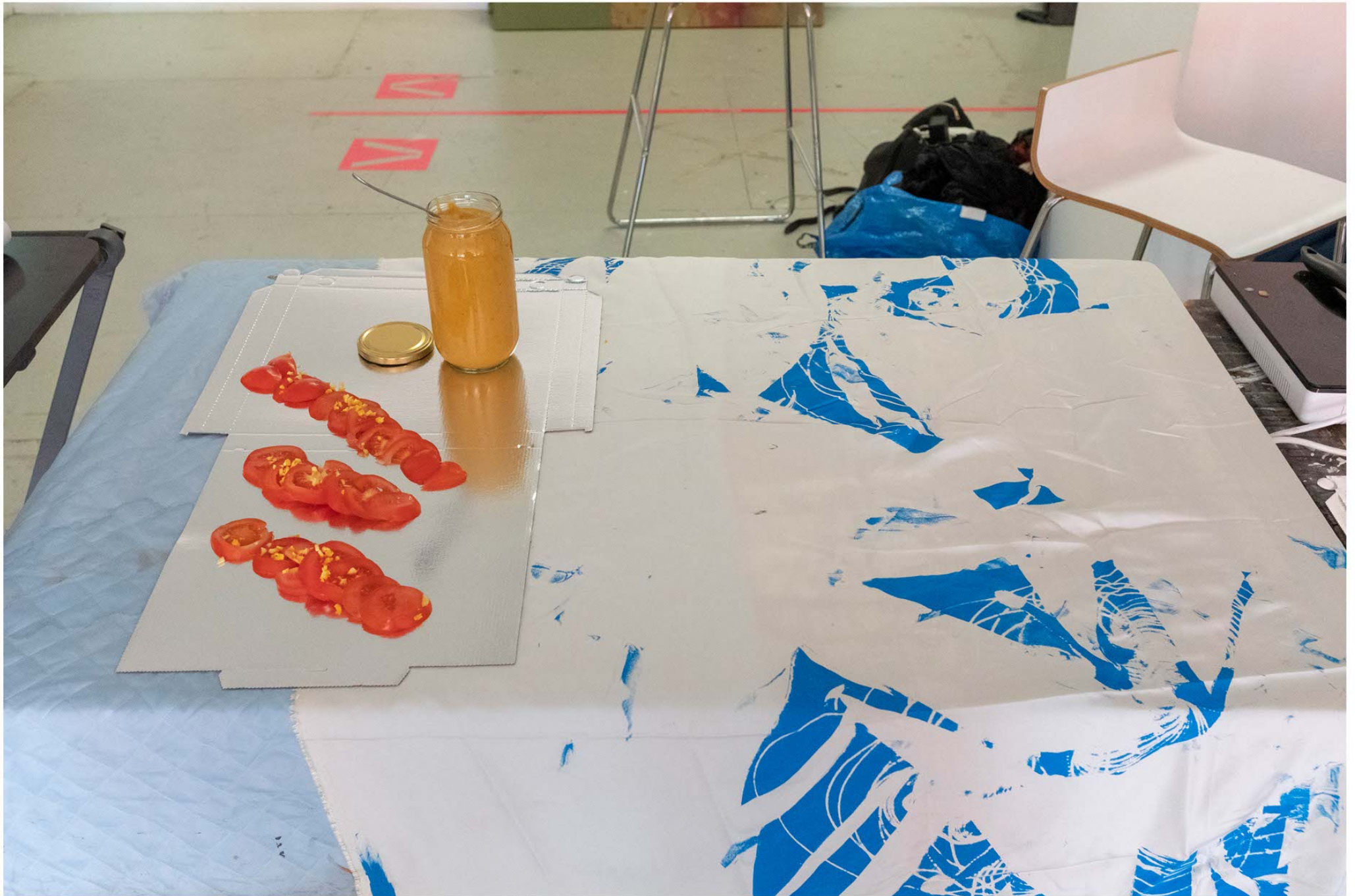
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my discomfort, I understand that we are learning to listen—even if we don't yet know how to have a discussion.

Meetings among pickers and with the Forest Service take place because of the legacy of Beverly Brown, a tireless organizer who decided to listen to the precarious workers of the northwest forest, including mushroom pickers.¹ Brown brought pickers together through a practice of translation that, rather than resolving difference, allowed difference to disturb too-easy resolution, encouraging creative listening. Listening was Brown's starting point for political work. She had begun not with languages but with gaps across city and countryside. As she explains in a memoir recorded before her death, Brown grew up knowing that urban elites never listened to rural folks—and that she was determined to do something about this.² She began by listening to disenfranchised loggers and other rural whites.³ But thus she was introduced to the commercial foragers who collect mushrooms, berries, and floral greens. These folks were more diverse than the loggers. Her work grew ever more ambitious as she set up scenes for listening across greater gulfs.

Brown's advocacy for political listening inspires me to think past a disturbance in our aspirations. Without progress, what is struggle? The disenfranchised had a common program to the extent that we could all share in progress. It was the determinacy of political categories such as class—their relentless forward motion—that brought us the confidence that struggle would move us somewhere better. Now what? Brown's political listening addresses this. It suggests that any gathering contains many inchoate political futures and that political work consists of helping some of those come into being. Indeterminacy is not the end of history but rather that node in which many beginnings lie in wait. To listen politically is to detect the traces of not-yet-articulated common agendas.

When we take this form of awareness out of formal meetings into everyday life, yet more challenges appear. How, for example, shall we make common cause with other living beings? Listening is no longer enough; other forms of awareness will have to kick in. And what great differences yawn! Like Brown, I would acknowledge difference, refusing to paper it over with good intentions. Yet we cannot rely on expert spokesmen, as we have learned in human politics. We need many kinds of alertness to spot potential allies. Worse yet, the hints of common

agendas we detect are undeveloped, thin, spotty, and unstable. At best we are looking for a most ephemeral glimmer. But, living with indeterminacy, such glimmers are the political.

In this last mushroom flush, a final upsurge in the face of varied coming droughts and winters, I search for fugitive moments of entanglement in the midst of institutionalized alienation. These are sites in which to seek allies. One might think of them as latent commons. They are latent in two senses: first, while ubiquitous, we rarely notice them, and, second, they are undeveloped. They bubble with unrealized possibilities; they are elusive. They are what we hear in Brown's political listening and related arts of noticing. They require stretching concepts of the commons. Thus, I characterize them in the negative:

Latent commons are not exclusive human enclaves. Opening the commons to other beings shifts everything. Once we include pests and diseases, we can't hope for harmony; the lion will not lie down with the lamb. And organisms don't just eat each other; they also make divergent ecologies. Latent commons are those mutualist and nonantagonistic entanglements found within the play of this confusion.

Latent commons are not good for everyone. Every instance of collaboration makes room for some and leaves out others. Whole species lose out in some collaborations. The best we can do is to aim for "good-enough" worlds, where "good-enough" is always imperfect and under revision.

Latent commons don't institutionalize well. Attempts to turn the commons into policy are commendably brave, but they do not capture the effervescence of the latent commons. The latent commons moves in law's interstices; it is catalyzed by infraction, infection, inattention—and poaching.

Latent commons cannot redeem us. Some radical thinkers hope that progress will lead us to a redemptive and utopian commons. In contrast, the latent commons is here and now, amidst the trouble. And humans are never fully in control.

Given this negative character, it makes no sense to crystallize first principles or seek natural laws that generate best cases. Instead, I practice arts of noticing. I comb through the mess of existing worlds-in-the-making, looking for treasures—each distinctive and unlikely to be found again, at least in that form.

Latent commons



CHAPTER 2

VIEWPOINTS AND COMPOSITION: WHAT ARE THEY?

Viewpoints, Composition: What do these terms mean? The following definitions reflect *our* understanding and use of them. Even in the context of the work of such pioneers as Mary Overlie and Aileen Passloff, it is impossible to say where these ideas actually originated, because they are timeless and belong to the natural principles of movement, time and space. Over the years, we have simply articulated a set of names for things that already exist, things that we do naturally and have always done, with greater or lesser degrees of consciousness and emphasis.

VIEWPOINTS

- Viewpoints is a philosophy translated into a technique for (1) training performers; (2) building ensemble; and (3) creating movement for the stage.

- Viewpoints is a set of names given to certain principles of movement through time and space; these names constitute a language for talking about what happens onstage.
- Viewpoints is points of awareness that a performer or creator makes use of while working.

We work with nine Physical Viewpoints, within Viewpoints of Time and Viewpoints of Space. The bulk of this book focuses on the Physical Viewpoints, though Vocal Viewpoints, which we developed later, are addressed in Chapter 9. The Vocal Viewpoints are specifically related to sound as opposed to movement. Physical and Vocal Viewpoints overlap each other and constantly change in relative value, depending on the artist or teacher and/or the style of the production. The Physical Viewpoints are:

Viewpoints of Time

TEMPO

The rate of speed at which a movement occurs; how fast or slow something happens onstage.

DURATION

How long a movement or sequence of movements continues. Duration, in terms of Viewpoints work, specifically relates to how long a group of people working together stay inside a certain section of movement before it changes.

KINESTHETIC RESPONSE

A spontaneous reaction to motion which occurs outside you; the timing in which you respond to the external events of movement or sound; the impulsive movement that occurs from a stimulation of the senses. An example: someone claps in front of your eyes and you blink in response; or someone slams a door and you impulsively stand up from your chair.

REPETITION

The repeating of something onstage. Repetition includes (1) *Internal Repetition* (repeating a movement within your own body); (2) *External Repetition* (repeating the shape, tempo, gesture, etc., of something outside your own body).

Viewpoints of Space

SHAPE

The contour or outline the body (or bodies) makes in space. All Shape can be broken down into either (1) *lines*; (2) *curves* (3) a *combination* of lines and curves.

Therefore, in Viewpoints training we create shapes that are round, shapes that are angular, shapes that are a mixture of these two.

In addition, Shape can either be (1) *stationary*; (2) *moving* through space.

Lastly, Shape can be made in one of three forms: (1) the body in space; (2) the body in relationship to architecture making a shape; (3) the body in relationship to other bodies making a shape.

GESTURE

A movement involving a part or parts of the body; Gesture is Shape with a beginning, middle and end. Gestures can be made with the hands, the arms, the legs, the head, the mouth, the eyes, the feet, the stomach, or any other part or combination of parts that can be isolated. Gesture is broken down into:

1. BEHAVIORAL- GESTURE. Belongs to the concrete, physical world of human behavior as we observe it in our everyday reality. It is the kind of gesture you see in the supermarket or on the subway: scratching, pointing, waving, sniffing, bowing, saluting. A Behavioral Gesture can give informa-

tion about character, time period, physical health, circumstance, weather, clothes, etc. It is usually defined by a person's character or the time and place in which they live. It can also have a thought or intention behind it. A Behavioral Gesture can be further broken down and worked on in terms of *Private Gesture* and *Public Gesture*, distinguishing between actions performed in solitude and those performed with awareness of or proximity to others.

2. **EXPRESSIVE GESTURE.** Expresses an inner state, an emotion, a desire, an idea or a value. It is abstract and symbolic rather than representational. It is universal and timeless and is not something you would normally see someone do in the supermarket or subway. For instance, an Expressive Gesture might be expressive of, or stand for, such emotions as "joy" "grief" or "anger." Or it might express the inner essence of Hamlet as a given actor feels him. Or, in a production of Chekhov, you might create and work with Expressive Gestures of or *for* "time," "memory" or "Moscow." *i*

ARCHITECTURE

The physical environment in which you are working and how awareness of it affects movement. How many times have we seen productions where there is a lavish, intricate set covering the stage and yet the actors remain down center, hardly exploring or using the surrounding architecture? In working on Architecture as a Viewpoint, we learn to dance with the space, to be in dialogue with a room, to let movement (especially Shape and Gesture) evolve out of our surroundings. Architecture is broken down into:

1. **SOLID MASS.** Walls, floors, ceilings, furniture, windows, doors, etc.
2. **TEXTURE.** Whether the solid mass is wood or metal or fabric will change the kind of movement we create in relationship to it.
3. **LIGHT.** The sources of light in the room, the shadows we make in relationship to these sources, etc.

4. **COLOR.** Creating movement off of colors in the space, e.g., how one red chair among many black ones would affect our choreography in relation to that chair.
5. **SOUND.** Sound created by and from the architecture, e.g., the sound of feet on the floor, the creak of a door, etc.

Additionally, in working with Architecture, we create *spatial metaphors*, giving form to such feelings as I'm "up against the wall," "caught between the cracks," "trapped," "lost in space," "on the threshold," "high as a kite," etc.

/SPATIAL RELATIONSHIP

The distance between things onstage, especially (1) one body to another; (2) one body (or bodies) to a group of bodies; (3) the body to the architecture.

What is the full range of possible distances between things onstage? What kinds of groupings allow us to see a stage picture more clearly? Which groupings suggest an event or emotion, express a dynamic? In both real life and onstage, we tend to position ourselves at a polite two- or three-foot distance from someone we are talking to. When we become aware of the expressive possibilities of Spatial Relationship onstage, we begin working with less polite but more dynamic distances of extreme proximity or extreme separation. **TOPOGRAPHY**

The *landscape*, the floor *pattern*, the *design* we create in movement through space. In defining a landscape, for instance, we might decide that the downstage area has great density, is difficult to move through, while the upstage area has less density and therefore involves more fluidity and faster tempos. To understand floor pattern, imagine that the bottoms of your feet are painted red; as you move through the space, the picture that evolves on the floor is the floor pattern that emerges over time. In addition, staging or designing for performance always involves choices

about the *size and shape* of the space we work in. For example, we might choose to work in a narrow three-foot strip all the way downstage or in a giant triangular shape that covers the whole floor, etc.

COMPOSITION

- Composition is a method for creating new work.
- Composition is the practice of selecting and arranging the separate components of theatrical language into a cohesive work of art for the stage. It is the same technique that any choreographer, painter, writer, composer or filmmaker uses in their corresponding disciplines. In theater, it is *writing on your feet*, with others, in space and time, using the language of theater.
- Composition is a method for generating, defining and developing the theater vocabulary that will be used for any given piece. In Composition, we make pieces so that we can point to them and say: "That worked," and ask: "Why?" so that we can then articulate which ideas, moments, images, etc., we will include in our production.
- Composition is a method for revealing to ourselves our hidden thoughts and feelings about the material. Because we usually make Compositions in rehearsal in a compressed period of time, we have no time to think. Composition provides a structure for working from our impulses and intuition. As Pablo Picasso once said, making art is "another way of keeping a diary."
- Composition is an assignment given to an ensemble so that it can create short, specific theater pieces addressing a particular aspect of the work. We use Composition during rehearsal to engage the collaborators in the process of generating their own work around a source. The assignment will usually include an overall intention or structure as well as a substantial list of ingredients which must be included in the piece. This list is the raw material of the theater lan-

guage we'll speak in the piece, either principles that are use-full for staging (symmetry versus asymmetry, use of scale and perspective, juxtaposition, etc.) or the ingredients that belong specifically to the Play-World we are working on (objects, textures, colors, sounds, actions, etc.) These ingredients are to a Composition what single words are to a para-graph or essay. The creator makes meaning through their arrangement.

- Composition is a method for being in dialogue with other art forms, as it borrows from and reflects the other arts. In Composition work, we study and use principles from other disciplines translated for the stage. For example, borrowing from music, we might ask what the rhythm of a moment is, or how to interact based on a fugue structure, or how a coda functions and whether or not we should add one. Or we'll think about film: "How do we stage a close-up? An establishing shot? A montage?" And we'll ask: "What is the equivalent in the theater?" In applying Compositional principles from other disciplines to the theater, we push the envelope of theatrical possibility and challenge ourselves to create new forms.
- Composition is to the creator (whether director, writer, performer, designer, etc.) what Viewpoints is to the actor: a method for practicing the art.

Colophon

It is part XXXV of an ensemble, and these latent commons are no longer necessarily ceremonial

Collective Making at Artez Arnhem, BEAR and Creative Writing

During six weeks we worked collectively and did a lot of workshops, talking, filmed, ate and made a presentation with onion soup and an improvised theatreplay/performance.

Networked Collective

Samieh Shahcheraghi
Bas van den Hurk
Lotte Driessen
Liza Wolters
Marijn van Kreijl
Fateme Heidari
Gijsje Heemskerk
Loran van de Wier
Feline Pouwels
Maxim Ventulé
Jochem van Laarhoven
Sofie Hollander
Chrys Amaya Michailidis
Matea Bakula
Benjamin Schoones
Raoul Janssen
Alma van Woudenberg
Stella Schleussinger
Lois Ebben
Levon Zoomers
Sihyeon Park
Iza Christoffels
Anna Hoogsteder
Niki Koti
Yubin Lee
Olin 't Hart
Sigrid van Essen
Dieuwke Oosterbosch
Valerie Ludwig
Ina Darakchieva
Julie Jilissen
Djalil Sultani
Liefke Gelissen
Mel Kikkert
Terra van Dorst

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