Re-thinking Concepts through Making
An Androgynous Approach in Design

A document submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Design
Angela Edwiges Salcedo Miranda
Spring 2017
Re-thinking Concepts through Making
An Androgynous Approach in Design

A document submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Design
Angela Edwiges Salcedo Miranda
Kt.:020583-5929
Analysis Advisor: Hildigunnur Sverrisdóttir and Guðbjörg R. Jóhannesdóttir
MA project Mentor: Hildigunnur Sverrisdóttir
Spring 2017
This analysis is 4 ECTS credit hours of a total 30 credit hours final project towards the degree of Master of Design. The written content of this publication as well as images are the responsibility of the author. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any for or by any means without a written permission of the publisher: Iceland Academy of the Arts, Þverholti 11, 105 Reykjavik, Iceland.

References to this publication should be as follows: Salcedo, Angela, “Rethinking Concepts through Making, an Androgynous Approach in Design” Reykjavik: Iceland Academy of the Arts, 2017.
[This publication is a digital version of the original one. Although the written content is presented in both, only the material edition (to be available in the degree exhibition), communicates the sensorial design discourse as a whole].
If Life dies, Death dies $\Rightarrow$ Chaos is Finite Life is Eternal Existence $\Rightarrow$ Order Death
Re-thinking Concepts through making
An androgynous approach in architecture and design

Abstract. An androgynous approach in architecture and design was conceived as a menstruum to dissolve fixed identities, to move on towards a liquid way of living. It was enacted for the first time at the Íslenski bærinn (The Icelandic Farmstead, Turf-House) as an open, transformative platform for socio-material constructions. There, design students from different fields gathered around the bær, listening to the voices of the winds. Once immersed in the language of the land, they moved inside the house. In the mist and the shadows of the collective baðstofa (bathing room), instrumental thought, vital matter and poetical time, converged.

Keywords: Time Decolonization, Autopoiesis, Applied Indigenous Thinking, Ecocentrism, Self Exploration, Metaphors, Crafts, Vernacular Aesthetics, Feminist Theory, Icelandic Turf-house, Androgynous Design, Post-humanism

“[W]ithin a prevailing architecture discourse construction is often not seen as a social and cultural construction at all but appears to be a strangely essentialist term. The construction is driven by so-called rational arguments about function and economy far from superficiality, ornamentation or other “effeminate” characteristics.”

In contrast to modern paradigms of design and architecture, vernacular aesthetics of the world have, throughout history, carried the invisible but constant threads holding the balance of an ever-changing life. Traditional architectures, such as the Turf-House, are no less than collective forms of poetry (from the greek, poiesis meaning creation). Rooted in universal indigenous thinking, they evolved responding to the spiralling motion of natural systems along generations, permeated by ethics of respect and reciprocity towards nature and life.

All of a sudden, in the historical blink of an eye, such an indigenous wisdom was somehow reduced to the second class category of mythical thinking. During industrialization, the collective learning<>living processes of intergenerational tradition and evolution were disrupted all over the world. Either in the search for a better life or because of the illusion of fast capitalistic “progress”, vernacular aesthetics became part of an undesirable past.

Nowadays, metropolitan intellectual violence has left almost no clear water; nor space for ingenuity, experience and collective poiesis. Values that are not only essential for cultivating the Earth within our bodies, but the most precious legacy for further generations.

This project is therefore, a first call for joining a collaborative poetic space. Addressed to designers willing to defeat the rules of linear space-time by bringing together memory and imagination. Six young volunteers will be transforming into ants for undertaking a reflective 4 weeks hands-on journey. Following the bodily-smart potential of vernacular aesthetics, their main goal will be finding out how the Turf-House as a site-specific design method can inspire materializations towards an androgynous approach in design?

Free of the social mutilations of heteronormativity and detached from anger, humans of the future have learned to transform from ice to steam, oscillating between their female and masculine nature. After capitalism, they recreate the universal codes of multi-species life more than ever before. This design-journey is meant for them.

1 Androgynous refers to the whole set of biological features of a fern. For indigenous-Mesoamerican eyes the complex geometry of this prehistorical organism might illustrate a Theory of Everything. The God, in the Spinozist, Einstein’s conception.

Content

Introduction <> Life is born out of death ············· 9

Spring 2016, I
Design starts between body and thought <> Reflection on systemic skin problems ············· 11

Spring 2016, II
Re-thinking architecture through the skin of a fern <> Reflection on love, meeting a broader concept ············· 13

Summer 2016, I
Experimenting with aloe vera <> Reflection on reciprocity, refugees, and cultivation of refuges ············· 14

Summer 2016, II
Collecting ferns around the island <> Reflection on self-power to reweave destiny ············· 15

Summer 2016, III
Linking architecture, ferns and consciousness <> Reflection on being lost within design practice ············· 17

Autumn 2016, I
In the preparations for the winter: dying yarn, knitting <> Reflection on the importance of traditional arts ············· 19 for the health and evolution of the human species

Autumn 2016, II
Drawing strokes between past and future <> Reflection on the uncomfortable facts about technology ············· 21

Autumn 2016, III
Crafting paper <> Reflection on the difficulties of communicating complexity in academic environments ············· 23

Winter 2016, I
Transforming paper <> Reflection on authored versus collective art ············· 24

Winter 2016, II
Becoming ant, immersed in the language of the lands <> Reflection on the Turf-House as a poetical object ············· 26

Winter 2016, III
Future dwelling <> Reflection on the androgynous nature of living systems ············· 28

Spring 2017, I
The androgynous design workshop <> Reflection on the creative process and method ············· 30

Spring 2017, II
Feeling emotional <> Reflection on the closing cycle ············· 33

Annex 1. Androgynous project territory ············· 35

Bibliography ············· 36
Introduction <> Life is born out of death

Dwelling in Reykjavik, while trying to learn both Icelandic and the wordless language of nature, I got pregnant. Along this bitter-sweet process, the borders between life and death, science and myth, handiworks and art, male and female, inner and outer, dissolved.

At the switching rhythm between innangarðs (“within the enclosure”) and utangarðs (“beyond the enclosure”), a new being came to life. The most meaningful moments I experienced during this process of “becoming new life”, occurred in the proximity of other bodies in the public hot-pools of Iceland. Laying down in the water, after a forty to sixty minutes run, surrounded by the ice and heat of Iceland’s volcanic dynamics.

Immersed in the steamy 35º tub I usually found myself looking at the changing skies, following the singing lines drawn by birds when flying randomly to go sleeping together with the sun. At the 42º I used to catch myself going inwards, perceiving nothing from the outside but unravelling inner thoughts, dwelling in timeless worlds. Then, going outwards again. My solidified Mexican backbone melted to give birth to a Mesoamerican-Nordic, androgynous baby.

This art-book telling the underlying story of my MA project conception, is constructed through a series of reflections that unfolded progressively during the iterative rhythms of high and low-impact corporeal activities. My need and discipline of devoting un-rushed time to hand and body practices in silence (meaning without outer talks, television or other communication devices), is the constant thread conducting the evolution of an MA project that mirrors my own transformation.

Through the materiality of this reflective book, I want to communicate how the ever-changing fabric of life can be experienced and expressed beyond languages, through symbols and bodily-crafted objects. In this case, in the form of a bespoken calendar that represents an overlapping time-space between the solar and lunar (ritual) Mesoamerican calendars.

In the next pages I will thus describe the gestation of my design. Beginning from the blossoming spring days in Iceland, passing by all the gradients of darkness during winter time, till the starting of spring again. I divided the process into 13 stages in allusion to the 260 days lunar calendar (of 13 months, 20 days each), that corresponds to both agricultural practices and a woman gestation period. The series of stories I am about to tell here can be read both independently and as a whole.

I want to emphasize that my design project began and continued as a linguistic exploration. That is to say as a response to the attempts of colonial structures to conquer my language, my time and thus, my consciousness. I experienced this conflict in its highest level before moving to Iceland. It was awaking me in different scales of the self: myself as particles, myself as fragments, myself as individual, myself as collective, myself as Earth, myself as Cosmos.

Eventually, I realized I was unable to grasp the links between death and life, between my Mesoamerican ancestors and myself, between them and the future. Gut feelings and childhood memories were the only forces driving me to rebel, pushing me to move out of my Mexican-colonial remains. Once settled down in Iceland, the task would be to seek for a different language to confront those elemental questions. This language would be nothing else but corporeal magnetic fields affecting and being affected while transforming matter. I see the record of such a living re-creation as the essence of art. Through this book I want to communicate the story beyond words, in the language of senses.

I also take this design journey as a way to defend that reincorporating human scale creative practices is essential for moving out of the current capital-based environmental crisis. Claiming that iterative corporeal arts-crafts allow all scales of human consciousness to heal and learn in the path towards collective evolution.
The audience I would like to reach is everyone wanting to puddle into the language of contemporary vernacular architecture<>arts<>crafts as a way of empowerment and confidence; as a way of freedom. I speak as a woman that, as time goes along, feels more like a child and more like an elder. From this liquid voice she releases questions and critical perspectives about her professional-personal creative career that she crafts while running, and dissolving. I hope the opening of my human fears and questions inspire others to construct more alternative paths, stepping stones and bridges out of a capital-based socioeconomic system that has never made sense to life on Earth.

How can poetical objects become a vital, liquid backbone of collective transformative-processes? How can we reincorporate corporeal practices and their evolutionary essence towards the future?
Never before had I lied to a professor. This was the first time, in the art school, in my 30’s. During a meeting the teacher started asking me questions about a teamwork I had to organize. Eventually becoming non-stop, inquisitive and unbearable. His neurotic face gestures together with his increasingly lauder voice and bodily exaltation made me feel powerless and exposed in front of my fellow students and other professors. At the same time, I was very angry. The situation was not fair and lying seemed to be the only escape.

Actually, it was quite liberating to do so. After his last demand, when he asked me to show to the group an email I presumed to have sent; my confused cheating mind had to admit I had not sent it. The whole discussion and fact seemed non-sense to me but, anyways. In that moment I realized it was not that he hated me. Instead, he might just be very insecure and fearful in his position as an academic, in his dwellings within our world’s competitive system.

Some time before, I had gone through skin problems also related to systemic stress, during the transition when leaving off my position as a well-known architect in Oaxaca, to become an unknown student again in Reykjavík. It was a rash around the eyes that lasted for weeks, with relapses appearing during months. There were days when I woke up without being able to open the eyes because they were swollen, itchy, dry and very red.

I got my first skin disease when I was 4. At that time, both of my legs transformed. They were all covered by a rare reptile-like rash. My doctor parents took me to many of their friends’ offices. It was very nice to get all that attention. One of the doctors wanted to get an electroencephalogram of my brain; so she plugged those fresh, jelly, gummy ends with wires on my head while I was laying down in her super comfortable seat. I felt like in a spa. Plus, I got my brain signals printed before we left. This was the best visit we made so far.

In the final visit to the dermatologist, he said the nervous-skin problem wouldn’t disappear but after a decade. My parents concluded the reason was that I was under much pressure. The problem was that I thought I always had to be the best in gymnastics class. My dad, — by then my hero—, asked me to do it, so I took it very seriously. But after the skin problem process, he talked to me in a loving way. I remember he held me up in his arms saying that what he meant by “being the best”, was that I should always do my best. That I should do as much effort as I could. Even beyond my own limits. That winning was not important and was not the point. He said competitions existed for us to have fun and enjoy them as games. Against diagnoses and predictions, the rash disappeared in less than a week.

Health problems related to studies, competitive environments, uncertainty about the future, work, and money, power and, money again; have become part of people’s everyday lives. Do you think that is natural? In the case of us, designers, do you think creativity can happen in the FFF (freeze, fight or flight) mode? Do you think it is normal that we adapt to compete and overthink when that is something our bodies reject? I don’t think what is wrong is me or us; but the way this socio-economic system is designed.

The first stone of my MA project had therefore to be settled out of the current institutionalized socioeconomic territory. Even rejecting the prostituted concept of “sustainability”, a hallmark that makes sense within a capital-based system as it is associated with the production of commodities to be sold. Whereas exchanging (reciprocity) or giving (generosity) are economical actions that are more in accordance to ethics of life, as I’ve discussed in my MA thesis.

The first challenge was thus, finding a way to move my mind and body out of metropolitan intellectual violence. Landing into a different world (context). The most sensitive and democratic resource I could come up with to do this was imagination. I would start by illustrating a different possible reality inspired in my ancient-indigenous worldview and using imagination.

I hope our human nature never adapts to any system that implies life’s (both environmental and multi-species) aggressiveness and violence.
Re-thinking architecture through the skin of a fern <> Reflection on love, meeting a broader concept

For long time I have been attracted by patterns in nature and by the passing of time over materials. My work as an architect has many times been inspired by these observations. Yet, a more profound connection with the meanings of time, came in a dream I had when moving to Iceland.3

After this event, the symbol of the young frond of a fern that in Mesoamerican history is recorded as “The glyph of the Speech” became my living key, my Theory of Everything; as the experience of divinity or God. Using this key, I was able to deconstruct and recreate the meanings of time, love and every other concept from my own lived knowledge.

In this way, I got to grasp (emotionally-theorizing) why Mesoamerican ancient peoples like the Zapotec, or the Maya considered time and all that is made out of time divine or sacred. Coming to the conclusion that our speech/breath, the main feature of humans as living creatures, is made out of time. Time thus, expresses the collective mind observing, conducting and recreating life. The speech/breath of universe is not something we can measure in unities, but the realm of existence where all living and dying scales interact.

From this understanding, time is divinity. Having almost nothing to do with the concept spread by institutionalized religions. I believe the sacred not only exists in the heavens or after death, but it exists physically. Constantly feeding life within our-selves, manifested through the feedback between the individual<>collective consciousness<>language. A corporeal<>material construction that is made out of time. After this realization more questions sparked: If divinity lives within ourselves, as ourselves, how do we use it? How do we take care of it? How do we feed it?

Again, looking at the living cycle of the androgynous fern, the rhizomatic heart-shape that the plant adopts before self-fertilization, taught me a lesson of love. Some years back, I used to assume one must find love in someone else. Eventually, such a statement didn't make sense anymore. It didn’t seem fair nor real that nature would have brought me to life as half a human in the search for completion. Attentive to the flow of different codes of love, the rhizomatic network that connects fern-species all around the globe, came to me as an intuitive picture of love. This infinite force cannot be exclusive to someone or in someone. It is rather the potential relation that exists in the space within and between all beings. The latent blaze that fills and enfolds all-selves, everywhere, in all times. Maybe the miracle of life happened because we, the participatory universe, asked for a chance to love.

I’m feeling a whole and I want to learn more about how to love. A Rumi poem says that one has to be a seeker, but before becoming a seeker, one has to become a lover.

---

3 The story of this dream can be read in my MA Thesis “Evolution by Choice, Bodies and Minds On”
Summer 2016, I  
Experimenting with *aloe vera* <=> Reflection on reciprocity, refugees, and cultivation of refuges

Obsessed with the behaviour and shape of ferns,
I started to look for some of them around the country. The first photos and physical samples I collected are from Holtagerði, the street where I rent a room, in Kópavogur. At the same time, the majestic *aloe vera* plant that lives in the hall of my home, at the bottom of the window, stirred my curiosity and experimental senses since the moment I met her. There are at least two species of aloe vera in Iceland. They have become popular as they survive easily through the long winters. They are as well among the few plants remaining green during the whole year. Present in many Icelandic homes, the gel is often used to help cicatrizing injuries and to relieve irritated skin.

Eventually, I started making experiments with the *aloe vera* pulp. Coloring paper and yarn. Interestingly, when I showed the tests to friends and people around (lastly also to professors), they often said things like “Wow, nice! Well, but *aloe vera* isn’t really Icelandic.” If you use it you should be able to explain why did you choose to work with something that is not from Iceland. Inside me, I wondered if that mattered. In many ways I empathized and felt identified with such a reptilian-succulent beings. I am not Icelandic either but, again, does that actually matter? If we both are adapting to and cultivating this land, isn’t it what makes someone become part of a place?

In the strict sense, most cultures and species around the world are immigrants looking for and taking care of their refuges along history. What eventually makes species belong to a place is their capacity to learn, adapt, maintain, transform while transforming, unite and evolve along with time. Why shouldn’t aloe vera, myself or any other refugee be given the chance to cultivate and be cultivated in this or any other land?

---

4 For more details about the fern obsession see my MA Thesis “Evolution by Choice, Bodies and Minds On”
"Freya is the divine archetype of the völva, a professional or semi-professional practitioner of the Germanic magical tradition known as seidr. Seidr (Old Norse seíðr) was a form of magic concerned with discerning and altering the course of destiny by re-weaving part of destiny's web."\(^5\)

My renewed conception about the nature and meaning of love can't fully be explained in words, but by the goose pumps I get when sharing other's emotional states or by bringing pictures of this broader concept to my mind. Memory and imagination transcend the physical space to come to life in the present again. My body chills.

One of the images I can easily recall to not forget what love is about, is the meeting between my tiny dog and I after we haven't seen each other for a while. The way she cries out when I'm about to put the keys in the door's lock before entering home. Her dissolving and vibrating minuscule body running desperately forward, jumping and escalating through my legs till she is lifted by my arms; to immediately start fast-speed licking my face (8 to 10 licks per second). This is love. She does not care about whom I was with, how well I did at work, how beautiful or ugly I am, whether I took a shower or not. She is just blissfully energized by my presence and warmth, and so am I by hers.

These invisible unconditional threads uniting all beings, exist potentially in all times and spaces; nourished within the vibratory fields of all things. Different from romantic love, this broader realm doesn't need to be searched for and found like a needle in a haystack. It is rather free, infinite, filling and caressing one's skin in the inside and the outside. Maybe if two persons embrace this conception, universe would bring them together. So they can cultivate their lives with no hierarchies nor conditions. They would then become 3. They would then become a thousand-warriors flock of love.

I had never seen flowers blossoming so crazy-fast as in the Icelandic summer. These were times of enjoying mental and corporeal freedom, feeling a dweller of the universe. I was already not just a freer woman but a women army of love. Out of plans, I met the most blissful loving relationship I've ever had with a human. He showed up together with the bright colours of summer. A beautiful, humble and elegant boy that awoke my last reflections about love and the power, we humans have, to change the scripts of destiny. By re-weaving the web of life. Improving the pattern for further generations.

Although still having in the memory complicated relationships I had in the past, carrying some threads of the male based familial tradition that is predominant in Mexico; the 2 meters of love young man approached to me as the manifestation of a different, more balanced kind of relationship. Eventually, I was helpless before his presence. Proud of being able to fall in love with someone that, out of perfection, brought nothing else but confidence, admiration and joy.

After this time, I decided to assume my responsibility and power to cut vicious generational chains. I wouldn't carry on a tradition of women underestimation. The short time he, the beloved, and I spent together was so full of present that became timeless.

---

The journey of my thesis work began with the question of How can architecture not just sustain itself but reinforce its natural supporting systems? Soon I concluded that for architecture to be able to nourish nature, was not a technological neither a conventional architectural problem. The question should be asked as an interdisciplinary problem. Where cognition linked to the natural sciences played a main role. I needed to state first that the life of architecture (seen as an autopoietic or self-creating organism), was a cognitive process. Where the consciousness of the architectural system was not in the object itself but rather in the community that constructs and inhabits it. Architecture should be observed as an autopoietic (ever changing-relational) organism that is a unity together with its social networks and the environment. Therefore, the so-called sustainable architecture or, as I was proposing, a nourishing architecture, had to be constructed at the level of society’s consciousness. A long lasting collective project of consciousness might be the only platform where architecture’s paradigm can be radically re-thought. The question I should then ask rather than How can architecture become sustainable? was How can architecture become and keep becoming nourishing together with humans and nature? The fern would be my tridimensional prototype or metaphor, mirroring a living architecture. It would allow me to study the behaviour of architecture as a living system that evolves through time. This felt like the right path but it wasn’t quite clear. How would I take this idea to a design level with the limited technical, economical and temporal resources I had? I could start biting my nails in this moment. Everyone in the class has been feeling lost at some point or most of the time within our design program. We, thinking creatures, have the pressure of being able to come up with a brilliant solution to face a social problem. This solution must also be meaningful for us personally. Then, we have to be able to make this happen within a capital-based economy. MA as well as BA design, art and architecture students worldwide (as well as students of every other field) are trying to succeed in a system that doesn't have space for everyone. Professional fulfillment has become an endangered concept. Job markets “out there” are limited and scarce. Designers are trained to produce beautiful or innovative stuff, in the best case labeled by the hallmark “sustainable” or “responsible”. Almost no-one in western countries and world capital cities cares about the human-wellbeing expenses that are attached to technological production in non-western societies. Many times we have to avoid thinking about the slavery chains behind the goods and devices used in our everyday professional practice and life in order to continue. It is not about finding the guilty, but about speaking clearly and out loud about systemic social problems to be able to confront them. Our cities are too noisy but we are not allowed to shout. Does it make sense to keep thinking within the current institutionalized education structures when they are taking part in the problems while trying to solve them with the same production force? How can these paradoxes be disrupted to jump out, entering into different paradigms? The first reaction I had when feeling lost in the design process was an inside yell saying “stop!!!!!” Stop this fast global tide. Stop trying to make more, travel more, eat more, shoot the camera more, impress more, build higher, go faster. Do not be afraid of having nothing to say. What would happen if you don't succeed? What is success? Do not be afraid of time. I refuse to be in a rush once more. I thought about death and celebrated it as my ancestors did. I surrendered. To learn to die before dying. From there, I saw a light. My way to move forward was thus born in the realm of death. In the metaphysical or mythical spaces very well know by indigenous peoples of the world and by shamans. I might fail in the eyes of capitalism, but as long as fear doesn’t paralyze me, not even the fear of death, I have already succeeded. My challenge is to joyfully win the battle of everyday fear. I don’t care about anyone pushing away my passions. What I wanted to know and explore the most were those forgotten and underestimated ancient and contemporary indigenous worlds.
In the preparations for the winter: dying yarn, knitting

=> Reflection on the importance of traditional arts for the health and evolution of the human species

“When the gods had become as wroth with him as was to be looked for, he [Loki] ran off and hid himself in a certain mountain; there he made a house with four doors, so that he could see out of the house in all directions. Often throughout the day he turned himself into the likeness of a salmon and hid himself in the place called Frånangr-Falls; then he would ponder what manner of wile the gods would devise to take him in the water fall. But when he sat in the house, he took twine of linen and knitted meshes as a net is made since […]”

The Beguiling of Gylfi, Prose Edda

In Norse mythology, Loki is a god that represents chaos. Although after Christianity’s influence he was associated with evil, one can’t really say he is “bad”. He is just chaotic. Whereas the one-eyed Odin, who is considered the main god for the Nordic tradition, is associated with wisdom and order. Early this year I went to listen to Emily Hennessey, a story teller of Norse mythologies that performed in the Norræna Húsið. She started telling the story of Loki, by saying that once Odin, bored of a too ordered and static world, crossed the river dividing the worlds to explore the realm of dreams and chaos. There, he became blood brother with Loki and life was never fixed or boring again.

I wondered why Loki, the god, the giant, the misbehaving blood-brother of the wise and benevolent Odin, would be constantly knitting meshes in the late evenings and nights?

Alike other practices among indigenous societies, the story of Loki might be a metaphor expressing the importance of hand-iterative crafting processes as a way of individual-collective meditation. As a way of ethical construction, intervention and transformation of the collective fabric of life. Loki’s knitting can therefore be regarded as a symbol of his shamanic practice. Once the sun was set, he entered the realm of dreams using the door of his own consciousness. In such a space where all times converge, he played with the threads of destiny at the pace of his own transformation.

In a fractal, participatory universe like ours, crafting one’s individual consciousness is crafting that of the whole universe. In indigenous cultures, everyday bodily practices allowed communities to enter the rhythm of silence at the convergence of body and time. These methods of individual-common health, eventually became traditions that traversed millennia in the way of handiworks, vernacular arts-architecture, music, oral poetry, martial arts and other physical disciplines. All evolved as forms of “open poetry”, materializing our collective transformative path towards evolution.

When looking at the often sedentary contemporary city lifestyles, they seem as absurd as catastrophic. The overestimation of rational thinking linked to the assumption that rational thinking is in a brain that can be disconnected from the body, is fragmenting us individually, collectively and geographically.

Lack of bodily silence may be our global disease diagnostic. I wonder what kind of collective evolutionary narratives exist or are missing in our current modern architecture? What kind of stories of social transformation can be read, for example, in the Turf House and other folk’s poetical objects?

---

6 By fractal I am referring to a non-hierarchical organization where all breathing beings, no matter the scale, are divine. For details see my MA Thesis “Evolution by Choice, Bodies and Minds On”
There are several theories about the time when our world is going to be over. What became clearer for the western-scientific tradition not long time ago, is that such an event will not occur soon.

By their part, indigenous cultures around the world constructed pyramids, temples, milestones and other “mysterious” structures that evidently were made to last forever. One of the virtues of the interaction between communities and these socio-material legacies from the past, is that they transmit a sense of security and hope towards the future. If we get to recognize any sort of time-keepers in our everyday lives, we would be sure that as we have been dwelling in our settlements for many generations, we will remain living there for at least some thousands of years more. In this way, we would know we can take a pause to breathe before taking any decision<action. Either individually or collectively. We would then know that our time reference frame is not that of our single human life, but that of the fabric-enterprise where past and future generations are involved.

Interestingly, ancient sites were neither meant to remain fixed nor to be preserved as static heritage. Instead, they were an open design in constant transformation that mirrored those socio-cultural learning processes of living<learning<evolving. Always leaving space for upcoming generations to participate.

In Oaxaca, my home town, together with the mountains that are considered sacred, we inherited some millenary-architectural-sites. The most known is called Monte Albán. Among other teachings, Monte Albán exists always in my mind in the shape of a tight-rope. With a mobile bead or knot in-between. Each of the rope’s ends represents the past and the future, while the knot is my own-self. Imagination keeps me sliding back and forth along this time-rope, consciously or subconsciously, as I am dwelling in the present. Let’s say that it allows me to be empathic and correspond not just with my community in the present, but with those who came before and will come after. In the case of Iceland it is clear that language<poetry, the Turf-house and also music, are collective tight-ropes like Monte Albán.

When these longer time-frames are made conscious, communities are able to foresee the future. In my case, raising the awareness that evolution and natural selection are still going on. This is the main reason why I can’t agree with the current overestimation of technology. I’ll explain. If we want to make a better world for those coming after (“world”, meaning the human-body<creations<environment unity), our central role as dwellers of the present is to learn a bit more than what was learned in the past. This would be the way to evolve in a reciprocal nourishment together with Earth. Living is nothing else but a never ending learning process.

The topic of learning is broad. For now, I am particularly interested in How intergenerational learning happens? If I try describing such process in simple terms, I’d say it is about repeatedly questioning and crossing the limits of what has already been achieved before. For instance, when I run a bit more than my body feels comfortable with, when I share with others more than I would like to, if I have discipline of practicing new things, —like a different language or playing an instrument—; that iterative practice, will eventually make new bodily-learning, that is to say new memory<history, in the long intergenerational path.

In this respect, modern technologies, particularly the popularized automotive-transport and telecommunications industries, bring two main problems. The first is that by making our life easier, for instance when we use the computer to make everyday calculations or the car to transport us in distances we can walk or run ourselves with more effort; it is technology that is evolving while we are loosing capacities. As well as our chances to find meaning. Why is there always someone in the olympics who breaks the previous world record if not by evolution? If we trained for many generations, some day we would all be able to run as fast as a car.

If modern and hi-technology was truly democratic and sustainable in the longer (evolutionary) term, I would have less arguments. But global technologies, a product of Western science popularized by industrialization and capitalism, isn’t born under democratic nor sustainable means. It is not likely that it will become so at the rates we consume it following the laws of capitals. Unless we use them to transform the whole paradigm.
We are reaching the moment when the natural resources we currently rely on to produce our fast-speed technological clutter are extinguishing. If we don’t stop this production tide, we would have to learn to survive without it again. From the beginning on. As we (meaning “we” in the next generations) might have lost most of our long-term memory capacity, bodily-abilities and hand-skills. In other words, life is a relational system where the health of Earth and the health of all species are interdependent.

And here I enter a second problem. Knowing that natural selection is a collective matter, affecting populations rather than individuals; What if evolution, in our human species, requires a balance between the rational and emotional-spiritual realms of life? Does it make sense to consume technologies without solid ethical-spiritual foundations? Do we really pretend to live isolated with our money inside of a bubble? What about our children and our grandchildren? Although we know nature will find her way to the next evolutionary step, we still underestimate her.

Our professors say there is nothing new that the younger generations can do. Because all has already been done. If we believe them, of course we may feel unsatisfied or empty. I agree, there is nothing new to do within this system; there is all yet to be done to transform it radically. I think those who say there is nothing new to create, haven’t looked at themselves in a mirror. In a spiraling world, innovation possibilities are infinite. Otherwise we wouldn’t exist.

I like having in mind that the best climbers are not those in their 30’s, when they are at the peak of their physical-rational power; but the ones in their 50’s and even after, as such an art requires a stronger soul-spirit. It seems that our anthropocentric-world is mostly behaving as a 30 years old narcissist climber. I am looking and training forward towards the moment of our 50’s or 60’s.

How could we turn technology into something that supports nature and human rights more than it destroys them (in their production-market chains)? Where are the limits of technology before it starts stealing our conflicts in our way towards evolution? How can the collective reflection of time and speed participate in the technological<>consciousness<>human equilibrium?
Crafting paper <> Reflection on the difficulties for communicating complexity in academic environments

More than one of my friends in the academy have shared their frustrations about being asked to reduce or simplify a topic that, in their eyes, can't be split from other parts. I have experienced the same feeling from the beginning of my process. After many months of trial and error of the ways to present the stage of my work to the faculty, I guess I have learned a useful criterium: in order to be able to communicate within an institutional framework and mindset that is still reductionist, it is practical to take one part of the system/complex-map at a time. Not to forget about the whole, just keeping it in the back-up memory. Bringing it forth when reflecting and analysing on my own, and back when it comes to speak about it. Well, there are exceptional academics that can be shown the whole picture and still get it. Dóra Ísleifsdóttir, the program director, defended my baroque presentations more than once. But many other professors can feel overwhelmed, turning their lack of ability to understand and construct into inaccurate and many times destructive critiques.

In this sense, I find it important to be stubborn at times, not letting external inputs to stop one’s intuitions and complex maps. It is even okay if one can’t completely comprehend mentally one’s own territory. Specially in the starting period, it might be naturally chaotic.

To start from chaos might be actually a positive sign. Since new paths might be more difficult to grasp and follow. But if one stays put in this chaos<>order, exploring the territory attentively listening with all senses, guts and love; then both, the whole panorama and the ways of approaching it will get clearer and clearer. Of course it is also crucial to accept when there is real junk or components that are irrelevant, taking them out. So one doesn’t loose the whole and the focus, maintaining the project-system in good shape. Transparent and open for evolution.

Eventually, the complexity of my territory became so familiar, that I could start speaking about it in simple terms. Although words are also abstractions of cultural ways of thinking (having their limits), they can be important anchors or keys for others to connect with the project. Sometimes in layers that are superficial, sometimes in more profound ways. Even beyond cultures and geographies. Some people see the English tongue as the language of the mind. So when one uses this language aiming to transcend the rational understanding, it becomes an art to treat words with the pulse of the heart. I am still raw in such an art though.
Although in the last years I have assumed a very critical position towards the global architecture paradigm and profession, I still see myself as a human whose strongest passion has to do with the poetics of space. From this perspective, together with some meaningful years of architectural career in Oaxaca and few more of design-teaching practice, I have been naturally reflecting about the Icelandic built environment.

For the last two years, since I arrived in the island, the feeling of a disconnected architecture has remained present. Apart from the Turf-House and the later Norwegian, Danish and Swedish style houses, newer architecture feels alien because it doesn't correspond to the beauty and richness of the human and natural aspects. This imported-functional architecture, is not establishing a dialogue with the entities it is supposed to embrace and correspond. That is to say with humans and the landscape. As in almost every other city of the world, international disposable-like architecture is not listening to the wonders, only to the lack of self-knowledge and confidence of our post-modern societies.

On one hand, the socio-environmental potential of architecture seems to be idle. Yet, on the other, I appreciate the fact that almost everyone has access to a built refuge with good minimums of habitability. It is great that the difference between the wealthiest and poorest is not even comparable to the gap present in, for instance, Latin American cities. This more cohesive state of commonwealth, also has to do with the scale of the social-networks and proximity. A smart societal system, were the virtual social-networks activate in physical encounters. This is unquestionably a quality to be regarded as a lesson of social cohesion <> organization.

Besides these pros and cons, I regard the current architectural situation as a process rather than as a pathology. Where promoting equal access to a new typology of shelter than the Turf-House, was a logical desire before the need of erasing the colonial structure remains as fast as possible, considering the pressure of the harsh weather conditions. Such a rapid development apparently didn't leave time to reflect about aesthetic-environmental matters.

Nevertheless, as my professor Guðbjörg Jóhannesdóttir has defended in her doctoral and related work, beauty is not just a matter for the sake of the eyes, but for the sake of the body-mind-Earth cultural system. I'm thinking in How, through the architecture of the future, can beauty be reclaimed as a way of social <> environmental reciprocal nourishment? Yet, sooner than that, it might be timely to ask what is beauty? what is beauty beyond classic aesthetic measurements?

My body itched since I moved to Iceland because I was hoping to use my MA design work to contribute to the Icelandic architecture sphere in some way. I have been thinking that it would be awesome to be able to give something back to this land, from which I have received the world. At the same time, I don't believe in external architects coming to contexts they haven't truly experienced. With their “objective eyes” and “truths”, to make a 3 or 4 weeks research and then say what is best and what should be done. This is why I appreciate architectures made by people, because beyond rationale they correspond in the best possible way to spatiotemporal specific circumstances. They take roots progressively, leaving space for future adaptation and evolution.

So here I was again, facing the international practitioner dilemma. Eventually, I decided I would focus on speaking about the lessons design practice can learn from vernacular aesthetics <> arts, using the Turf-House as a tridimensional metaphor for inquiry. Applying what I call the Turf-House language or code (containing intangible ethic <> aesthetic principles) to craft an artistic piece as the final expression of

---


the project. In this way, I could learn more about the Turf-House and about Iceland without feeling I was invading a space that I still needed to get to know better.

To my surprise, during a meeting with Hildigunnur Sverrisdóttir, my mentor, when telling her about my design plans, I could see a conflict between her feedback and gestures. I had the impression that she didn’t want to push me to take a different direction but, she actually did! This was not the first time I ended up being very grateful after she said something like “well, you can of course do this and you’ll get your grade. But it would be sad that you stay in the comfort zone, I think you have the capacity to be more ambitious, you have such a strong base.”

At first, I didn’t like to hear this, I already felt the pressure of having to take this problem into mental circles again. Until hopefully finding another way to go. Plus, I didn’t see something horrible in sticking to the safe zone, it would be just not as exciting as taking a more meaningful path.

Nonetheless, while Hildigunnur was saying this, after a longer pause before finishing, she mentioned some artwork of a guy that made a group of people make objects with flour dough in tiny scale, turning them into the real-functional scale afterwards. The thing wasn’t meaningful because the shape and result, but because the organization. Something clicked into myself making me almost interrupt her to say “Yes, okay, I get it, you’re right”. If I want people to question the current architecture-design paradigm by looking at the mythical-vernacular, that is inherently androgynous⁸ and collective, I can’t remain within an individual-artistic-authored practice. It wouldn’t make any sense. In a way, I was looking forward to get this last impulse to dare jumping seriously into the Icelandic architectural matter.

It could be risky and more difficult, but the need of being coherent with myself was stronger. I needed to figure it out how to find a group of Icelandic people willing to work with me. I could provide the method and they would teach me more about Iceland. Then, it wouldn’t be about me coming up with a brilliant solution, but about us, inter-culturally reflecting about Iceland’s threads towards the future.

---

⁸ The way I am applying the concept of androgynous is explained in the section Winter 2016, III, p.27
Becoming ant, immersing in the language of the lands

Reflection on the Turf-House as a poetical object

Naró is a poetic organism, her language is that of the lands
Through her skin, she listens to the winds and lights transforming
She is inhabited by humans, their thoughts are hers
She digs into the soil, dwellers are safe and warm in her womb
For Naró to remain alive, dwellers must organize and transform

Once I heard ants,—insects in general,—might be more perfect than us, humans. So this is why their bodies have remained the same since long, long time ago. It seems that it is true, at least partly. Imagine we could lift and move fifty times our weight, pollinate, transport nutriments, turn everything into soil again and have such an astonishing communal organization.

I mention these facts, because it seems that design experts giving me feedback about the materiality of my handiworks and design project want to hear a rational explanation to justify why I am mixing different materials. They say that using something like newspapers would communicate a different discourse than if I use aloe vera or instead something more Icelandic.

I am confused and wondering if this has more to do with aesthetics or with sustainability. In the case of Iceland, where local construction or crafting materials are not abundant, it is desirable to recycle or reuse those that have become waste. On the other hand, using local resources makes sense only if it is done in a scale that doesn’t put in risk their conservation.

An ant-like collection of materials is precisely one of the smart values of the Turf-House. Classic aesthetics would be offended by the lack of purism, but the kind of assemblage of the Turf-House, denotes an intuitive harmony by incorporating different available materials. Its beauty is that of being sensitive enough to combine elements in such a way that made sense for the people and the landscape-environment. For the macro and micro-universes. Allowing the object to experience the passing of time with dignity. Embracing weathering to maintain its life.

During this stage of my process, the image of the Turf-House both as a living organism and as a form of poetry became stronger. This fact was interesting to observe as this naive refuge was not just the place where the Icelandic literary tradition came to life, but also material poetry itself.

Both, the Turf-House and the poetic tradition were a coherent response to the limited material resources available. One played with language, materializing in written words. The other played with building materials and the breath of universe. Embracing time/weathering as main condition. Both creations were means for survival. The Turf-House, a parallel of a mother’s womb made out of Earth. The second, a new born baby gestated at the silent rhythms of candle lights. Why aren’t both getting the same care?

Anyways, my intention is to awaken a reflection re-evaluation of the lessons, values, potentials, stories as well as disadvantages that the Turf-House embodies. A step that might be timely to take before deciding to store it as a treasure of the past.

Clocks interrupt Earth’s smooth fractal dreamings
Owls are trapped into unsubtle meanings
Are we condemned to material existence?
Crafters hands may unfold new beginnings
Naró is a poetic organism

Through her skin, she listens to the winds and lights transforming

Her language is that of the lands

She is inhabited by humans, their thoughts are hers

She digs into the soil, dwellers are safe and warm in her womb

For Naró to remain alive, dwellers must organize and transform
One of the most significant reflections I had when studying Nordic Mythologies sparked when I learned about Ymir, the giant and first creature coming to life. As told in the Norse legend of creation. My heart started beating faster as I read he was described as an hermaphrodite being. This fact, together with the rest of the story led me to the realization that the figure of Ymir in the Nordic tradition, was a parallel of the Mesoamerican Glyph of the Speech (the fern). A blast of fresh, clearing water fell over my head. For real, all humans are bounded in the core sharing universal living codes, no matter how distant in the shape and geography we are. In the inside we are one, in the outside we are endless diversity.

It was magical how the theory about knowing one-self as a way to get to know the “otherness” (as I began my path by knowing more about my own self and culture), became spontaneously a practical experience. I would then realize that Ymir, the vital holder of balance between the male and female poles of existence, most probably wasn’t a corpulent man, as depicted in most of the classic representations. I would also start seeing the androgynous character in many other old and present realms of the Icelandic system-culture. For instance Loki, “he”, was the mother, “she”, of an eight legged horse. In the Icelandic language, differently from English and Spanish, there is more complexity to specify the feminine, masculine and neutral genders. In the present, expressions like the feminist, queer, race and refugees struggles are as well androgynous. Not in the essentialist, but in the complex understanding I am defending. Matching with one of the main claims of the indigenous Maya movement of the Zapatistas (settled in the south of Mexico), in their struggle for “a world where all worlds fit in.”

I could experience how the mythical androgynous was still alive in Iceland; either in the contrasting nature or in my Icelandic friends, with whom I smoothly identify. So I held on to the word androgynous instinctively. Like a new born baby grapples to her mom’s breast. This would be my way to speak about the alternative reference frame<>territory I was re-creating. A future world characterized by ethics of life, synchronized with the fractal-spiralling nature of living systems; leaded by communities<>tribes, rather than individuals. I would capture the complexity of the whole system at once, through the word androgynous that could touch people in the scale of the body.

Something I can’t accurately explain, makes me know that humans of the future will be more androgynous. So will be their creations. When we become more androgynous, the Earth will recover harmony, reconnecting with all scales of the universe. This event will be the manifesto of the ancient threads enacted in a future that is better than the past and the present.

By naming my proposed new approach of design androgynous, I am sending a reminder that as our planet, we are metaphorically and literally a liquid world. An embodiment of love and freedom. At the same time, I want to empower those who like me, can’t identify with the rules of the system heteronormativity-capitalism. Whispering them that our responsibility is greater. That we need to follow and spread more widely the ethics of life and connectedness. Since we, the liquid, including all minorities, already have a part of ourselves in the future, it is us who have to make sure nobody is left behind.
Spring 2017, I
The androgynous design workshop <> Reflection on the creative process

My final design consists in the first physical event of the androgynous new born learning<>living poetic-platform. In the way of a hands-on workshop. A first collective experiment organized in collaboration with the department of Design and Architecture of Listaháskóla Íslands. Where the main purpose is to invite a group of young designers to join me for asking the question of How the Turf-House, as a site-specific design method, can inspire materializations to reconnect with ethics of life?

Through the exploration of Norse and Mesoamerican mythologies and looking at the Turf-House as an androgynous object that embodies ethics and aesthetics of life. The poetic-group will first develop an experimental design code/language, different than the classic one that spread through colonial structures. We will apply this code or set of features to different poetic undertakings. From now, I will refer to this code as vernacular (for the broader context) and, as androgynous, when applied to my MA project. This is to highlight that at this stage, it becomes an event that aims to lead us towards a different systemic paradigm that is taking place in the future. Such decolonizing aesthetics, are as well the threads holding the construction of the Androgynous approach in Design (mindset) and what I call the Turf-House Design Method. They give shape to this analysis/art-book too. Below, there is an open list of those androgynous (vernacular) ethics-aesthetic values of the Turf-House, extracted as a starting personal approximation:

1. Diffused borders [Between villages, between houses]
2. Lack of symmetry [as pattern of all undertakings]
3. Rhizomatic, multi-scalar dwelling
4. Sense of wholeness exists in diversity
5. Connections become tridimensional
6. Absence of classic focal-perspective and proportions
7. Intrinsically progressive [Its open plan allows for continuous learning, adaptation, evolution, death and rebirth]
8. Driven by fractal time and by darkness-light flux
9. The patchwork crafting-method speaks the language of the body (senses)
10. The measures are those of the human body
11. Ontologically relational
12. It surrenders to the beauty and strength of the context, establishing a dialogue, speaking the same language
13. Changing skin [metamorphic garments depend on each season], safe womb
14. Hearted in the baðstófa [originally the collective bathing room became the main living room], at the convergence of water, warmth and proximity
15. Embraces weathering (humidity, darkness and death) to exist
16. Integrates a rhizomatic network of workshops<>human-skills<>tools
17. Built on a close-to-zero foot-print
18. Transparent in its multi-skinned structure
19. Darkness drives light, mass drives voids, quietude drives sound
20. Warmth [atmosphere] is created at the convergence of multi-species magnetic fields
Brief of the project

Re-thinking concepts through making
An androgynous approach in design

The proposed design workshop emerges in the context of capitalism exhaustion, where patriarchal-colonial structures embedded in the birth of international modern paradigms of architecture and design need to be re-evaluated. During 4 weeks, an interdisciplinary design team will undertake this critical-creative task, at the intersection between thought [under the lights of Norse and Mesoamerican indigenous Myth], matter [looking at the Icelandic Turf-house as a metaphor for design] and time.

This is therefore, a call for joining a co-working hermaphrodite* hands-on design space, addressed to young designers willing to defeat the rules of linear space-time by bringing together memory and imagination.

1st. Phase. Thought

We depart from the assumption that the living (all living organisms as well as humans in the personal-professional realms) are, in all cases, at the same time acts of poetry and poetic actors (from poiesis<>autopoiesis, meaning creation). Where the happenings of life depend not only on the components or knots in a given system, but on the relations between such knots.

In other words, at the core of existence lays the relation between matter (body-Earth) and thought (mind-cosmos), coming together across time. In this ever-creating (autopoietic) system of life, we embody the need of making sense of ourselves within this world by recreating it, at the peace of our own transformation<>evolution.

Over such thoughts, I'm throwing right away an open question directed to the design collective: How do we, individually and as a team, want to participate in the process of sustaining the poetics of life? How can we feed the relational system self<>materializations<>nature in its different temporalities or terms from both, a personal-professional and collective standpoint? How can we undertake this task within the Icelandic context?

For the purpose of reflecting about these matters to take tangible actions within our design journey, the ancient ethic/scientific codes contained in Norse and Mesoamerican mythologies will be brought to the table.

Keywords: Ethics of Life, Time Decolonization, Autopoiesis, Indigenous Thinking, Self Exploration, Metaphors, Crafts
2nd. Phase. Thought and Matter

In contrast to the international modern paradigm of design, the diversity of vernacular aesthetics of the world carried along time the invisible but constant threads holding the organization and balance of an ever-changing life. In their “imperfect”, androgynous character, vernacular architectures and traditional handiworks evolved responding to the spiralling motion of natural systems and thus, they were in accordance to codes of ethics closer to life. These material lessons, holding nature<>self living principles, are in accordance to the diverse stories and symbols originated in what we know as indigenous or mythical thinking.

Nevertheless, such a collective learning<>living process of poetical-architectural adaptation and evolution has been worldwide interrupted. Either by the understandable desires of a better life or by the illusion of fast capitalistic “progress”. Fueled by the overestimation of rationality and the underestimation of creative-ingenuity and experience.

Following the experimental-sensorial potential of vernacular aesthetics, we, members of the design collective, will transform into ants to undertake a reflective hands-on journey intended to find out How the turf-house, as a site-specific method, is inspiring materializations towards an Androgynous Approach in Design?

Keywords: Vernacular Aesthetics, Androgynous Design, Feminist Theory, Applied Indigenous Ethics, Icelandic Turf-house

3rd. Phase. Matter

The final phase of the workshop will consist in designing the plan and set up for an art-exhibition, opening on the 6th of May in Gerðarsafn Museum, in Kópavogur. Where the set of processes and materializations resulting from the collective journey will be presented. Although the original purpose of such exhibition was to present the individual work of the graduating MA students in Fine Arts and Design of Listaháskóla Íslands, I will switch the “I”, of my individual participation, to the “we” of the design collective as part of the ethical-political statement of the project.

Participants Role

From a critical, reflective and creative perspective, invited BA design students from all fields will be asked to use both, their preferred as well as unvisited skills to perform as researchers, co-creators, co-crafters, landscape sensors, experimenters, thinkers, translators.

We will address questions of time, crafts, language, collective and independent work, colonization-decolonization, poetry, bodies, genetics, technology, sound and others. Dwelling between science, art, crafts, physics and metaphysics.

As the constant thread of the project, students will be asked to reflect on How the Turf-house method is informing their living along the course? How it might influence their present and future practice? and How it is being translated into androgynous materializations? The ways and languages to answer this questions are open, preferably beyond words. I will provide the guidance yet, still will perform as one more member of the collective.

Expected (Open) Outcomes

1. Turf-House code (invisible and visible / ethic-aesthetic principles)
2. Personal diary preferably using a non-wording language
3. Main designs for the exhibition, either as prototypes or in their final stage
4. Co-design and final set up for the final exhibition

*As mentioned, the language or crafting mode, as well as the specific main outcomes will be discussed and determined at the beginning of the workshop and adjusted along the way depending on the profiles, interests and preferences of the participants.
I have been sharing the Androgynous nomadic space with five students in the second year of their BA: Auður Ákadóttir, Dógg Gunnarsdóttir, Ríkardur Már Ellertsson, Sigrún Lárusdóttir and Sturla Hrafn Sólveigarson. Two of them from architecture, two from fashion design and one from product design. All joined the project voluntarily after an open invitation pulled by the critical and innovative approach they perceived when I introduced it. Although Auður is taking part in the workshop, she has decided to quit the university, as she feels she doesn't fit in this schooling system. By their part, the architects expected to see architecture from a new perspective. The fashion designers are critical towards the fashion industry, they are not interested in getting involved in the fashion market once they finish their studies. Sometimes they doubt if they are in the right field.

Although we are just getting to know each other, they are enthusiastic and cooperative persons. Receptive and responsive of the tasks and methods we are following. Going sea-swimming together, discussing our matters in the warm-pool afterwards, was one of our most important moments. This is not the first time I can't understand why all this young potential doesn't find a place in a world in need.

I am learning that the Turf-House method can be applied within or without academic structures in different contexts (following site-specific vernacular artefacts and correspondent mythologies). Yet, it cannot be standardized nor repeated without the action of human beings that previously absorbed this experience in a personal, corporeal way. Because the language and interaction, in the way of animal gestures and care coming from the guidance are essential. At the same time, the dissemination of this first experiment might be a detonator of spontaneous similar gatherings organized under different, unpredictable concepts. This would be desirable and fantastic.

Tomorrow is the first day of summer in Iceland. I have been giving the whole and a bit more of myself to the project. Since from my oldest memories, I cannot help making my best. Often crossing my own limits. I feel very exhausted and fulfilled<>alive at the same time. Writing this series of reflections has been a fragile task. It demands care and sensitivity; specially when speaking about Iceland. Not to invade or communicate something wrongly, as I am still in the process of getting to know this world. Once in a while, I write a line full of doubts about the Icelandic context, expecting my mentor and advisor to react, clarifying the idea. When I do this, sometimes it takes me longer time before I can fall asleep. Although I have learned to see most of my apprehensive sides as natural flows that precede order, I am still quite sensitive and emotional.

During my time within the MA Design programme, a restless part of my heart<>mind has been always connected to my loved ones living in Oaxaca, my home town. I haven't been there since I started the MA 2 years ago. Even though I don't miss my relatives, lately I miss making sure, physically, that they are sound and safe. In this closing stage of the cycle, things appear more difficult than usually. I am wondering How being emotional could be turned into an advantage within a design leading-teaching practice?

Many times women give up their professional careers labelled by adjectives like hysterical (from the Latin hystericus “of the womb”), burned-out or weak. Instead of allowing collaborators and working environments to embrace this sensitivity or sense of humanity as a value. I guess I am already experimenting and finding out How states of vulnerability can act as divers to enter layers of nonhierarchical cooperation?
Annex 1. Androgynous project territory
Bibliography


