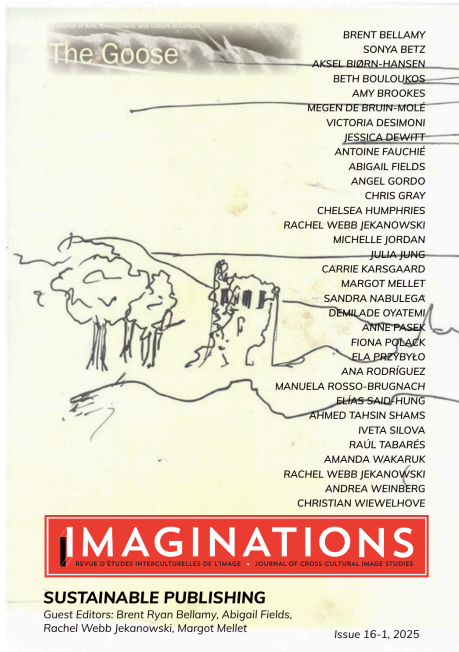


IMAGINATIONS

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IMAGINATIONS:

JOURNAL OF CROSS-CULTURAL IMAGE STUDIES |
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NOTES ON A RESEARCH PROPOSAL

MEGEN DE BRUIN-MOLÉ

AMY BROOKES

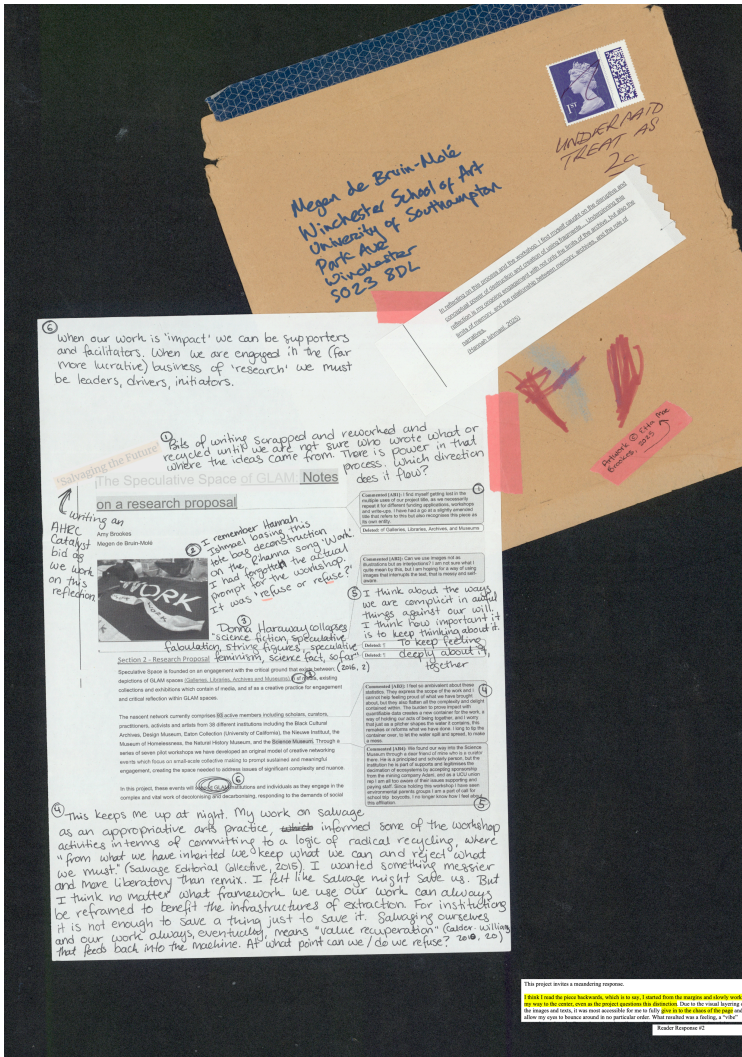
“We discussed which texts had lingered and shaped us while we sat in a café in the park, each feeling like we had stolen ourselves from work, freed from our desks and devices, despite the fact that we sat discussing a research project. I remember mentioning the work of Jane Rendell, Jack Halberstam, Donna Haraway, and Katherine McKittrick whose work I encountered thanks to you... These works do not include an introduction that details their originality and impact. To engage with them has been to follow a trail of breadcrumbs through the woods. They have taken me somewhere entirely elsewhere, but I have had to work to follow them. I picture their disdain for the slides I am shown in a REF Impact workshop, these strategies to make work appealing to assessors. I imagine them laughing and slipping away between the trees, or at least that is what I want for them, to remain untethered and elusive, free to revel in wild strangeness.”

How do we sustain creative work in the face of burnout, institutional crisis, the end of funding, the mess of life? Like the workshops that it addresses, this article is a deliberate attempt to resist closure. It draws on the ongoing work of our “Speculative Space” project, which uses “SF as a creative practice for engagement and critical reflection within GLAM space”—galleries, libraries, archives, and museums. This project has comprised a series of workshops oriented around site-specific small acts of collective making. Over the last three years we have gathered in the back rooms of the Winchester

Gallery, the Women's Art Library, the Whitechapel Gallery, Science Museum London, the Museum of English Rural Life, the Natural History Museum, and in the digital institutional spaces of Teams meetings. Each workshop was fragile and fleeting, and the record of the work which lingers in photographs, quotes, and ephemera is only an echo of the true outcome which was in the act of gathering, the trust engendered, and the space created for concerns to be voiced. How then to document this work, and to answer the institutional demands to validate its worth using the metrics of academic research and funding frameworks?

In answer, this article consists of a series of images of scanned and annotated pages which revel in relational complexity. They are layered and non-linear, and while this reflects our ambitions for this work we do not want this form of representation to be an act of exclusion. Embedded within this work is metadata including the original bid and tracked changes as alt text, and image descriptions for each page and the photographs within, in a further digital layering of code and content.

Scroll down to view the images, or click [this link](#) to access the accessible version as a Word document.



When our work is 'impact' we can be supporters and facilitators. When we are engaged in the (far more lucrative) business of 'research' we must be leaders, drivers, initiators.

1) Lots of writing scrapped and reworked and recycled until we are not sure who wrote what or where the ideas came from. There is power in that process. Which direction does it flow?

Reshaping the Future on a research proposal

Writing an AHEC Catalyst bid is we write on this reflection

2) I remember having this idea was described on the planning some work. I had forgotten the official prompt for the workshop. It was 'refuse or refuse?'



3) Donna Haraway collapses fabrication, striving, figures, speculative feminism, science fact, reform

Section 2: Research Proposal. The research proposal comprises 80 active members including lecturers, curators, practitioners, students and artists from 38 different institutions including the Black Cultural Archives, Design Museum, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, the Museum of Modernism, the Natural History Museum, and the British Library. Through a series of seven 90-minute workshops we have developed an original mode of creative relationship-making which focus on speculative collaboration to prompt individual and meaningful engagement, creating the space needed to explore issues of agricultural complexity and nuance in the project. These events will be held at the University of Southampton, Hampshire, in the summer of 2024.

4) This keeps me up at night. My work on salvage as an appropriative art practice, *salvage* informed some of the workshop activities in terms of committing to a logic of radical recycling, where "from what we have inherited we keep what we can and reject what we must." (Salvage Editorial (Gleiche, 2016)). I wanted something messier and more liberatory than repair. I felt like salvage might save us. But I think no matter what framework we use our work can always be reformed to benefit the infrastructures of extraction. For institutions to be reformed to save a thing just to save it. Salvaging ourselves it is not enough to save a thing just to save it. Salvaging ourselves and our work always, eventually, means "value recuperation" (Lester, Williams, 2008, 20). That feeds back into the machine. At what point can we / do we refuse?

5) I think about the issues we are complex in and things against our will. I think how important it is to keep thinking about it. (Notes: - depict about together)

6) I have no interest about these matters. They involve the scope of the work and I am not sure how much I can do. I am not sure how much I can do. I am not sure how much I can do.

This project invites a meaningful response. I think I read the piece here and was 'what is it for?'. I started from the salvage and the idea of the image and text. I was most interested for me to help give it the shape of the page and allow the eyes to be drawn to the specific color. We worked on a 'salvage' and 'refuse'.

NOTES ON A RESEARCH PROPOSAL

The essay in which other texts have been offered has answered the query, "if we practice this, extending that knowledge as well as coloring it, maybe we can reshape the container within the complexity, find ways to reflect." The paper is concerned with **the way we acquire knowledge, as well as the way we use it, and the way we use it to reflect on it.**

What does it mean to produce [work-leading] research? Can this be research that also feels important and meaningful to the people who do it? This is a question that has been considered as we had down to reflect on our work as part of the 'Speculative Space' project, with the UK's 2022 Research Excellence Framework (REF) assessment looming, and a push in Arts and Humanities work to intensify grant-writing activity in the face of sector-wide budget cuts. The 'Speculative Space' project was in many ways a direct response to this moment, as the situation conditions we find ourselves within, but it was also an attempt to subject or resist these conditions.

The paragraph above is taken from our 2022 British Academy/Leverhulme Small Research Grants application. It summarizes our previous funding request and makes claims that must be at once bold and achievable, but justify your request for more funding.

This phrase is taken from the REF assessment criteria. The REF assesses and ranks research contributions based on their 'originality, significance, and impact.' The more stars, the larger the impact reviewers imagine for the work. work-leading (four stars), internationally excellent (three stars), recognized internationally (two stars) and unassessed (one star), with a separate category reserved for those submissions the panel decides don't qualify as 'research.' The higher ranked an institution's research, the larger the portion of a £2 billion pot the institution will receive for the coming cycle.

I think a lot about what "we" elides, the work it does to create cohesion but also the people who end up between the cracks. The "we's" in this sentence are not the same as the "our." We include some of the words and images of the "our" in this article, these notes. Our collaborators for each workshop, but also our project co-lead Dr Nonko Suzuki-Bosco, who does not work in academia and who chose to take a step back from academic work and writing. We could not write this without them. Yet our names are the ones at the top of the document.

Commented [A18]: I long to strike out the words 'work-leading' but settle for placing them in quotation marks to recognize that these are the words of REF panels and other bodies that I am obligated to reference, which research is deemed noteworthy. The comment that 'impact' is more valuable than the 'originality' and 'significance' of the work. This is not our but hope for the work.
 Deleted: Dr Amy Brooks and 1
 Deleted: 1

Commented [A18]: I read the words of Aston and Murray in The University and the Underperformance. David Thorneil did better this. These letters, like the "official academic" they work describes whose questions in "a qualification" get to, when they come that in the work of these individuals and their ideas into the university and about what one can. To abuse its flexibility to make for reasons to be in whose university's glory, to be in but not of—this is the goal of the achievement in the modern university" (p 11). We attempt to subject and resist, to intervene in previous accounts to finding and resist it in the article, which, however and just the words, who create something out. But we also legitimize this work in a certain context, we like to credit, we partly our doing so in order to access more funding, and so we are clear further into the system.
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Deleted: the activity
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 Commented [7]: The work of putting together both the UK's research and application and the REF (UK) that has led to a more meaningful way of seeing and meaning-making, from the ideas of yet another grant application in the university, as time, funding and over-ambition, of assembling the various bits of financial and contextual information that particular set received. From the excitement when we submitted our request and received that the money would be received through all of the obstacles the creative workshops had proposed (REF) through and moments are part of the project of the project.
 Deleted: and so we don't do it
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These images are of others' work but we mobilise them here to make meaning in ways that make sense to us

Impact always makes me think of meteors. Deep Impact. It is a violent metaphor. And yet impact can also be a small violence if we zoom out enough.

Is there change without violence? Can we turn small impacts into big ones by shifting scale?

The problem is not in any of these things by themselves. The problem is that our work has become the work of showing how we are doing all of these things rather than the actual work of doing them. We have to come speculative storytellers of the experience of the radical imaginary we have filled the space with imagined presents and futures until there is no room for speculation. Speculation has become an exercise in risk management.

I count all of what I charge the this

I think I don't want to do these things not done since

This one!
The joy in taking the time to actually stop and talk and dig through the things that we have generated - not just so we can quantify it for another grant application but so it can become an act of re-remembering (learned?) in the process of one friend ship! I have been working with many of Gordon's wings and ideas I have been working with many of Gordon's work with The Hawthorn Archive (she has stepped down as its keeper). It is a book and an archive that drives to be impossible to summarize. Not to stop off the curator's clearest, but as a practice for people's attention (Lamin 2012). Preson (-.)

Here I find the story I was looking for: the excitement at a visit, the sensory observations of a walk, the time taken from such a walk. This finds like the rest of the project (if it ever here ends).
For this reason, the title is unending. This doesn't appear to be a project about CLAM. It's a collage of academic, writing and teaching applications and large and small iterations to show how and what comes with different modes both present and imagined.


Handwritten notes on the collage.

NOTES ON A RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Research proposal, invitation to a workshop, and funding application which are an effective way of getting the critique of institutional demands and funding frameworks. We value the institutional language of funding requests, in order to be prepared to open our proposals. The resulting document is a direct reflection of the terms of savings, qualitative methodology, interpretation, and collection that the original research proposal covers. We are left with the impression of a living document and an ongoing concept of creativity that transcends and concludes the academic constraints from which it was drafted.

Reader Response #1

5) This letter is effuse and enthusiastic and perhaps even naive. It tries to anticipate and assuage concerns before they arise. Is this also a kind of risk management? To assure participants that this will be a safe place to take risks (is that an oxymoron)? Or are we proposing to all take a risk together? Could we/should we proceed without this kind of supportive language? What is the difference between support and infrastructure?



The premise of our grant documents is to be different from the premises we made in our grant applications to the academic 6)

We are writing because we would like to invite you to be part of The Speculative Space of Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums' project...

We will be running a series of creative workshops between October and December to gather and discuss these threads through several acts of making. We hope that the creative aspect of these workshops will support imaginative and unexpected dialogues.

Participants would not need to prepare anything in advance, or have any previous experience in making or creative practices. We are inviting you to participate to gain as one of the 10 person workshops which will last two hours, and/or participation in workshops remote sessions.

Workshops
 The times and dates of the in-person workshops will be based on participant availability, so if you are particularly interested we would appreciate if you could let us know if a weekly afternoon/ evening/ morning/ weekend would be preferable to you. Please also let us know if you have any other limits on your availability, would be available remotely but not in person, or if you have any specific access needs.

Workshops
 If you are self-employed, unemployed, freelance, or on an academic contract which does not cover research time we do have some funding to cover travel costs and provide a small grant/bursary for your time. Please do let us know if this would be of interest. While this...

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Workshop 1
 The Speculative Space project comprises a series of three workshops and events for the duration of the project. The first workshop will be held on the 10th of October and will focus on the theme of 'Speculative Space' and will involve a series of creative exercises and discussions. The second workshop will be held on the 24th of October and will focus on the theme of 'Speculative Space' and will involve a series of creative exercises and discussions. The third workshop will be held on the 7th of November and will focus on the theme of 'Speculative Space' and will involve a series of creative exercises and discussions. The final event will be held on the 21st of November and will be a public exhibition of the work produced during the project.

Writing workshops
 Hawthorn Archive

Archives houses, although it is not a proper library, an incomplete and disorganized intellectual history of a somewhat but not entirely random selection of radicals, fugitives, runaway, deserters, abolitionists, heretics, dreamers and in-differents, many tied to the Black Atlantic radical tradition, who at some point stopped doing what they were told they had to do, stopped thinking what they were told they had to think, and stopped being available for things they had no design in making or controlling.

The Hawthorn Archive is real and it is an imaginary infrastructure for a writing project that started off initially – some time ago now – with the purpose of finding some shared language for the utopian elements found in a variety of defiant activity in the past and in the present. The focus of the Archive and the book that gathers some of its contents is a particular kind of political consciousness. I call being in...

⑩ After this conversation with Ellis, which took place before one of the last workshops (it was the last in-person one) I have often wondered what other w/rinking language may have put off the people we did contact who did not respond. Critical reflection, especially on others' work, is a gift, but also a risk. What if we had not appreciated Ellis' generosity? What if we were not still thinking about it?

It is our hope that these workshops will be a joyful opportunity to meet other scholars and practitioners to foster sustained connections and collaborations. We are keen to ensure that the workshops prioritize and support the involvement of emerging scholars and practitioners, and those from historically marginalized groups. We would very warmly welcome any further suggestions you might have for individuals or groups who would be interested in this project.

All the best,
Amy, Megan and Noelle

(Brooke De Bruin-Mole and Susuki Rogers 2023)

Nowhere do we appear to have an outcome or indicate impact. Instead, this small promises, reflection space, support, making, funding, by and connection. It seems to ask for nothing but time, but implicit within this is a request for engagement and trust.



The Hawthorn Archive was one of the prompts of texts for this workshop which didn't take place where it was meant to and which questioned the methods and motives of archiving.

But we asked more of some people. They began to co-lead, working with us to develop a workshop that responded to the specific concerns of this particular gathering of people and place.

⑪ I remember thinking about this term, and how we struggled to find a language to enable the kind of work we wanted to do. The workshop "co-leads" were our innovators and researchers, and we, the "project coordinators" were researching how to create a space where leadership ≠ ownership or dominance or sole responsibility of care.

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Deleted: [1] If you are interested, we would also be delighted if you would consider co-leading one of the shared workshop sessions. This would involve working with one or two other invited session leads – identifying one online meeting of around 2 hours in the weeks prior to the workshop to agree on a theme which you think of as a concern or interest within CLAS, identify any of our staff that you would like to support, identify any of our staff that you would like to address the theme, and discuss a concrete meeting address and dates on our calendar during the workshop with our support. All project organizers, Amy, Noelle and I will also be on hand to facilitate this discussion and particularly to help organizers who are Amy, Noelle and I would be there to ensure you are fully supported in organizing and delivery. We would be able to pay you £200 for your time preparing and delivering the workshop, plus air based travel costs.

Deleted: [APR] The phrase "historically marginalized" was questioned by Ellis Walker, one of our workshop co-leads, when she received the email. We had originally drawn it from the policy documents of our institutions. At the time, we were eager to be inclusive. Despite being (probably) over long and quite remote places with information, several people who reviewed this email read and replied to us.

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Deleted: It requires time, participation, no preparation or very small and clearly defined preparatory work, a response. Most participants turned up to the workshops having no idea what they would be doing or the task list – so they felt they could not measure the area. Having they would need to be there and what kind of things they would expect to be doing.

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alternative to extractive and unsustainable academic publishing. Like other pieces in the preface, this text is not a message but a space for reflection. The things do not have to be in the shop have been, and that scholarship guided by goals of collectivity and humane approaches to labor are open respectful openness to sustainable modes of knowledge production one with limited institutional structures. The authors model that process for us, providing a path for those who wish to follow in their footsteps.

Reader Response #1

Speculative fiction with its sights set on the future has traditionally represented the new and has had less to say about the maintenance of what already exists. At the same time though, as the philosopher of science Ernst Bloch says, the good here is never that completely new. But, as you say in ideas and communities that are attempting to build a more sustainable future together... The contradiction between the new and of maintenance was out through by what we might call Speculative Maintenance: the care for the new that will bring about a better future. (Tom Dillon, 2022)

The project creatively and critically engages with the labor of collective research and reflection, using the forms of bookshelves, annotations, maps, and track changes to produce a polyvalent, **open-ended archive of knowledge production**. The underlying documents include a

Reader Response VI

INTRODUCTION

Archival Imagination of/for the Future

To turn the archive into something living is to fundamentally connect to a moment of political becoming. | BASAL ABBAS AND RUANNE ABOU-RAHEN, "The Archival Multitude"

13 In this document but also in the planning and execution of the workshops, editing work is treated as a creative act. The edit is an act of power that act can erase. It can extract. It can be additive or transformative. The decision not to edit is also an editorial act.

If you are interested, we would also be delighted if you would consider contributing to the creative workshop sessions. This would involve working with one or two other invited session leads - offering one session, roughly of 45-60 mins in the weeks prior to the workshop to focus on a theme which you think is of interest to our audience. All topics, specific ones of interest could be useful to address the theme, and discuss a creative response and the workshop can continue during the workshop with the support of our creative facilitators. We are happy to facilitate this discussion and provide you with the support and advice. **Workshop activities.** The workshop will include a range of activities, including a creative writing workshop and a discussion on the workshop. We would be able to pay you £200 for your time preparing and delivering the workshop. We would be able to pay you £200 for your time preparing and delivering the workshop. We would be able to pay you £200 for your time preparing and delivering the workshop. We would be able to pay you £200 for your time preparing and delivering the workshop.

Commented [A1]: I really enjoyed this paragraph. It seemed like something that would be useful for us to have in our archive. I would like to see more of this kind of writing. The paragraph was well written and easy to read. I would like to see more of this kind of writing. The paragraph was well written and easy to read. I would like to see more of this kind of writing. The paragraph was well written and easy to read.

Most apartments turned up to the workshops with no idea what they would be doing, and we used our cardboard and boxes to hand on to a similar experience of surprise. We attempted to remove the pressure of production, to attempt that the workshop itself as an act of gathering and making was the point, that there was no threshold of access beyond us being together. We held on to the idea that each workshop was a different act of association for us all.

From the not-a-bin in workshop #1 to the carrier bag in workshop #7 these small acts of making have felt like unexpected containers for treasures that need to be unpacked and sorted and then thrown back into chaos. After being scanned, most of the workshop outputs now live in various bags and boxes under my desk.

Commented [A2]: I like the idea of the workshop. The idea of the workshop is to have a space where people can come and share their ideas and experiences. The idea of the workshop is to have a space where people can come and share their ideas and experiences. The idea of the workshop is to have a space where people can come and share their ideas and experiences.

A significant amount of time has passed since we left the workshop, but it's an essential part of the process. I was surprised at how much time it took to do the workshop. I was surprised at how much time it took to do the workshop. I was surprised at how much time it took to do the workshop. I was surprised at how much time it took to do the workshop.

And if there was no past? And if the past was the invention of the imperial archive? And if the keepers at its gate are guarding something else? | ANIELLA AZOULAY, Potential History

Subari and Tomer Gardi edited and published a (nd Hebrew) book of twelve short stories, written and Israeli writers, under the title *Awlad* ("and the subtitle "Imagined Testimonies from Each story weaves an imagined future set after alestinian refugees and the replacement of the a new sociopolitical arrangement. Each story it future, with some portraying a democratic y; some depicting a Palestinian revolt without Zionists; some describing a Palestinian Arab integrated Jewish minority; and still others set time where "return as a dream" freely flows return," unfettered by state bureaucracy. No outlined or advanced in the book as a whole; al testimonies come together as opening the visioning different futures in a current reality

9 We apply for more funding, we assess ourselves and fit work into the existing constraint of academic research structures because we believe it is important work, because it has been useful work, because we have put alongside brilliant people who have entrusted us with their fears for the future and their delight in possibility, because we have shared the vulnerability of making something together. We know what this has meant to us, and what we hope it could mean.



Space you had and are cut back to a small form this act would be you, in fact, with you and smooch. We all do that and a with us.

do we need a conclusion that is more radical and decisive? Do we need a conclusion at all?

I wonder if I like having this text here as framing. I think I prefer to hide the labour and the order and the organisation of these

excerpts from contributors + hosts + co-leads and to just let them live as "utopian moments" (Gordon, 2017: x)

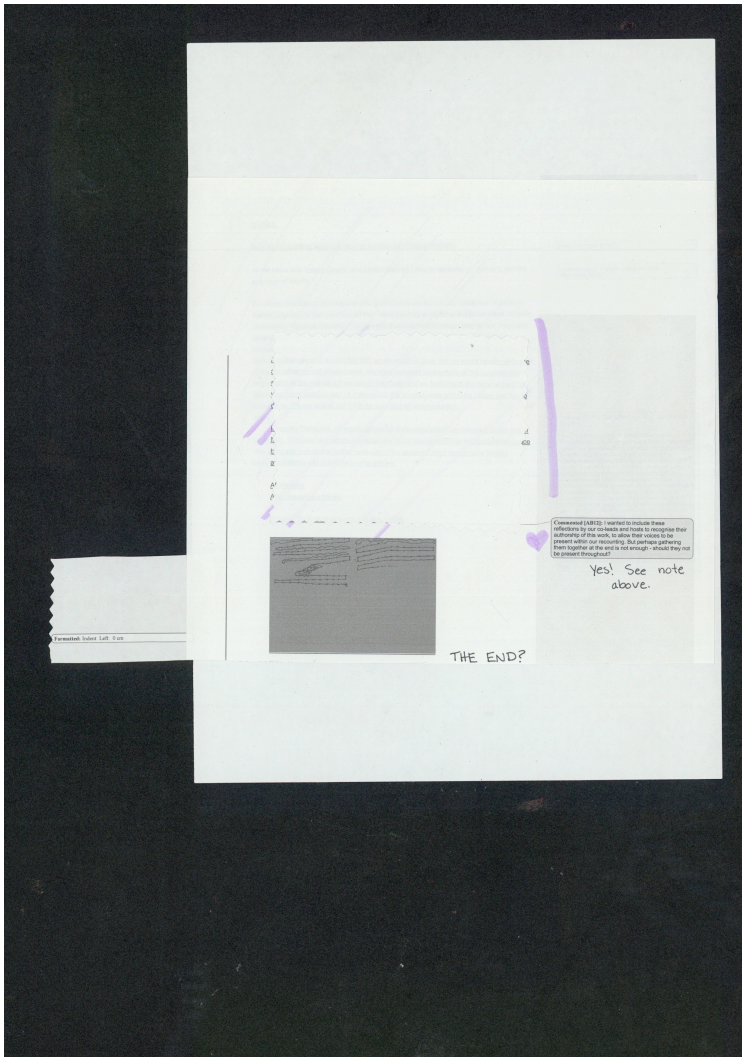
Or "utopian marginalia?"



Ultimately, our collective assemblages of mini-dramas and discussion formed a way for us to co-shape landscapes to hold our uncertainties and hopes, through historical understanding, positionality and speculative fiction. We merged with, against and future into layered, and assemblage, messy, situations of what storytelling the long lengths of literature and social theory could reveal. (Gordon, VT, Chain, 2022)

The text on purpose of the submission, as I understood it, to represent a comment on the bottom of page right of the associated document (here "Author"). I wonder if the having this not been a finding. I think I prefer to hide the labour and the order and the organization of these excerpts from contributors + hosts + co-leads and to just let them live as "utopian moments" (Gordon, 2017: x). Or "utopian marginalia?" (Gordon, 2017: x). I wonder if the having this not been a finding. I think I prefer to hide the labour and the order and the organization of these excerpts from contributors + hosts + co-leads and to just let them live as "utopian moments" (Gordon, 2017: x). Or "utopian marginalia?" (Gordon, 2017: x).

Reader Response 2



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The original Speculative Space project website can be accessed here: speculativespace.wordpress.com. It includes images and materials from, as well as further reflections on, the workshops.

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