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20 Days of 2020: Moving through the institutional body language of  
Melbourne museums in lockdown

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## abstract

This visual digital a/r/tographic inquiry uses trace and the in-between as method to speculate upon posthuman visual languages and future museum education pedagogies in a combined visual and written exegesis. This research harnesses the remote disruptions of pandemic conditions for responsive research creation while critically analysing the digital traces of five Melbourne museum Instagram archives from 2020.

The study seeks to unfold and reimagine with the visual languages, codes, architectures and frames that contribute to a museum's institutional body language in a time of forced physical closure, it asks; *What can we learn about the changing nature of museum education from exploring Melbourne museums through Instagram posts in 2020?*

Underpinned by a/r/tography and connectivist concepts this exegesis applies feminist new materialist methods in data-led, iterative, generative visual cycles to speculate with social networks, virtual encounters and the influence of new technologies upon visual digital a/r/tographic praxis.

Emergent visual questions arising from the archived data, were fed through an embedded Instagram feedback loop to the museum industry. These dialogic visual questions between digital collaborators, museum industry and a/r/tographic 'selves' formed provocations about what feeds and shapes our ways of visually knowing the world. A triggering event led to rethinking trained research methods and the development of an alternative museum narrative set, instigating new lines of inquiry.

Readers move between text and image to experience the entangled meaning making processes of this inquiry and are invited into the virtual visual exegesis as avatar for a disembodied encounter with/in the metaverse research 'world'. Working as architect, curator, artist, participant and builder in the metaverse of Spoke Mozilla, opened pedagogic imaginings and sensorial wonderment for the possible multiple narratives that future museum's might welcome.

A recorded walk through and still screen shots are also provided. All (d)a/r/ta work is stored in figshare depository and is accessible from chapter links within the text. A durable record of all creative work and process works, via QR code can be accessed via <https://doi.org/10.26188/24311980> .

## declaration

I, Yvette Walker, declare that the submission of the exegesis comprises only my original work toward the Master of Education (Research) except where indicated in the preface. Due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used and the thesis is fewer than 30,000 words, including figures and references. The research was conducted with the approval of the University of Melbourne Higher Degrees by Research Committee.

Yvette Walker

Date: 30/6/23

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This thesis has been professionally copy-edited by Dr Kerrie Le Lievre.

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QR codes for Chapter four: Figshare depository

## How to read the creative and written exegesis

*Dear Reader,*

*You are invited to access the process works, creative exegesis and written exegesis concurrently. The Instagram feedback loop Mythinkspot shows process works over the course of the candidature; summaries of the process have been made as GIFs and can be accessed via the QR codes embedded throughout the written exegesis using a smart phone. The archived portfolio in its entirety can be accessed via the QR code below or individual chapters via DOI links at the start of every chapter.*



Figure 1: Researcher Instagram account

*To access the visual exegesis, it is advisable to open an additional window on your desktop computer, preferably in Firefox or Chrome, and follow the prompts to choose an avatar and experience moving through the virtual visual chapters in Mozilla Hubs. Yvette's visual exegesis in Hubs is available at: <https://hubs.mozilla.com/mLTRBn6/20-days-of-2020-yvette-walker-exegesis> All visual chapters, (d)a/r/ta works, visual recording and screen shots can be accessed via the Figshare depository links on the following page.*

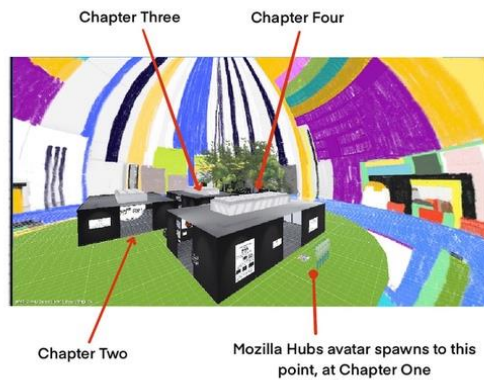
*Moving with/in the interstitial spaces between the creative and written works intentionally seeks to unfold the relationships between text and image as a silent in/between for reflective response, while mirroring pandemic remote movements. This reflects the computational nature of the candidature and invites readers to engage between the two ways of mattering while troubling discomfort.*

**The images speak in silence. And there is silence between image and word. Listen to them both.**

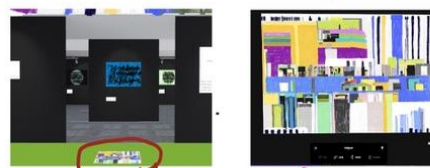
*– Sylvia Kind, 2006, p. 2*

# Navigating the visual exegesis in Mozilla Hubs

Visual Exegesis: <https://hubs.mozilla.com/mLTRBn6/20-days-of-2020-yvette-walker-exegesis>



*If  
glitches  
arise,  
further*



To zoom on the (d)arta work,  
click the right mouse button on the 'object'

*information about how to troubleshoot and controls is available via, [hubs help](#). If trouble persists, an alternative to experiencing the site as an avatar is viewing the 11 min screen recording of a walk through. This is accessible via, [screen recording walk through of visual exegesis](#). Please note that this allows for glancing at the visual (d)a/r/ta, it does not show the wall texts. For a closer look at the (d)a/r/ta you can click on the chapter titles below and this will take you to the Figshare repository with each chapter's visual work and titles:*

*Chapter One: this living inquiry: [visual work](#)*

*Chapter Two: ways of being, knowing, doing: [visual work](#)*

*Chapter Three: responsive metho-pedagogy: [visual work](#)*

*Chapter Four: findings and what lies beyond: [visual work](#)*

*Access to screen shots of the visual exegesis via, [screen shots of visual exegesis](#).*

*Yvette*



## **Chapter One: *This living inquiry***

Chapter One unfolds the context for study: the theoretical influence and questions framing the research work.

## Introduction

This speculative a/r/tographic inquiry (MacDonald, Coleman, Healy et al., 2022) immerses us with/in the *in/between* of five Melbourne museums' *institutional body language* (Jennings, 2013; Bryant et al., 2016). It slows down the usually rapid social media scroll to sit with/in the discomfort of research with/in a period of unknowns to spend time *with* visual languages – the seen and unseen, the felt and the observed – and wonder *with* the aesthetic encounter as teaching methodology (Roldán, 2015, p. 193).

*Institutional body language* (Jennings, 2013) is a key term for this research. It refers to the museums' visual pedagogy, the “powerful messages museums convey through unspoken and unwritten manifestations of their being” (The Empathetic Museum, n.d.). If we think about museum Instagram<sup>1</sup> accounts as an extension of museum education, these portfolios “teach human beings to have visual conversations with other humans through the visual content of the images” (Marin-Viadel et al., 2019, abstract). As cultural leaders in aesthetic education and practice, the choices museums make about their visual *being* offer insight into visual languages and values: how is *inclusivity for diverse ways of knowing* (UNESCO, 2021, p. 154) *manifested*? In what ways are the *tangible and intangible* (ICOM, 2022) of the museum nurtured and reflected in images?

The inference of body language informs working with visual images. Thinking *with* gesture, pause and movement, and Instagram as communication of pedagogy in motion, the term presents permission to be *with* the tacit, the form and the silent gestures that are overlooked and unseen contributions to meaning-making while museums “think about thinking publicly” (Boyd, 2014, p. 39). The conditions of remote research and their dependency upon the digital for access to collective cultural ways of knowing amplified the need to interrogate Jennings's (2013) *linguaging* of institutional body language, to disable museums' visual languages and investigate their pedagogical design in a time of organisational and global precarity. *What “being” is manifested by museums when their usual way of being is so challenged?* The creative and written work trace the rhizomatic lines of flight<sup>2</sup> ‘thrown out’ by the institutional body language of five Melbourne museums during government-enforced lockdowns, and speculates the aesthetic experiences of their visual choices for pedagogical

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<sup>1</sup> Instagram is a visual social media platform, enabling museums to share visual content with their audiences by creating or uploading photographs or videos. Instagram uses machine learning to choose content and share with users.

<sup>2</sup>A rhizome, is a botany term, referring to the underground root system and new shoots of a plant. Deleuze and Guattari use the term in their book *A Thousand Plateaus* (p.21) to describe the non-hierarchical growing network of theory, research, ideas and thought. Deleuze and Guattari's *line of flight* conceptualises the multiplicities (or assemblages) that form from the root system. I have used the term to describe the lines of inquiry opened by the data that I have followed.

insights and possible “transformational multiplicities” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 11) to consider the central question of this research:

*What can we learn about the changing nature of museum education from exploring Melbourne museums through Instagram posts in 2020?*

Using visual, digital a/r/tography and autoethnographic mapping of selves, this computational research starts in the middle of art museums’ ways of knowing to unravel the *nature* of museum education during this time of flux. While exploring visual languages in research, the exegesis seeks to contribute to innovative social knowledge on museum education, using new visual images (Marin-Viadel & Roldán, 2012, p. 14) as research creation for multiple, alternative museum narratives.

## Theoretical, personal, global context

The work has been guided by the many artists, educators and collectives before me in museum and art education, who have agitated for alternative pedagogies and new ways of seeing or doing research and teaching differently. These influences have laid fundamental paths for my living inquiry.

Entering the museum sector as an educator in 2010, I was fortunate to work within a team that valued theorising emergent ‘pedagogy as praxis’ (Clelland Gray, 2017, p.2) and I became re-invigorated about radically inclusive pedagogic possibilities following Nina Simon’s participatory museum (2010), the knowledge communities of *Museum 2.0* blog (2007), Nancy Proctor’s (2010) “multiplatform” & *Untour*, as well as Gail Anderson’s (2012) *Reinventing the Museum Tool*. Decolonising work such as the *Not Museum* (Kletchka et al., 2020), reinforced my interest to find a way to disrupt and inform my pedagogies while working within institutions. I began to ask: *How does the museum negotiate the paradox of being an authority while divesting power? What museum education pedagogies support this shift?*

Plunging us into darkness and enforced ‘rest’, the COVID-19 pandemic shifted our gaze away from the museum object and its physical architecture, towards other bodies of knowledge existing in the world around us. The spotlight upon the flexible, enabling capabilities of non-human digital collaborators opened a wondering about educational possibilities awaiting us – the bodies of knowledge that go beyond the long-standing dominant voices, those in the shadow of anthropocentric, hegemonic monuments.

Re/searching museums computationally reiterated the fact that “interpretative communities are no longer solely human” (Cameron, [2021](#), p. 8) and that the relational aesthetics (Bourriaud, [2002](#), [2020](#)) informing my work in museum education would need recalibration with ideas further afield to develop a visual digital language to involve “the creative impulses from other-than-human-actors” (Cameron, [2021](#), p. 5).

The rhizome as an “image of thought” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1987](#), p. 5) was the beginning of my re-engaging praxis with ‘asignifying ruptures’, through visualising as ‘metaphor *in process*’ (Boulton et al., [2016](#)). Network learning theories coupled with Feminist New Materialisms and posthuman ontologies are theoretical frames and concepts ‘put to work’ (Coleman et al, [2019](#)) using process-oriented visual methods with computational collaborators. These theories have aided being *with* digital collaborators and *staying with the trouble* (Haraway, [2016](#)) within data-led, digital research-creation discomforts. Experimenting with digital pedagogies as a dynamism of forces, towards pedagogies of intra-action (Barad, [2007](#); Lenz Taguchi, [2009](#)), has scaffolded thinking digitally with Instagram visual formats as extensions of museum ‘scripts’ and led to consideration of alternative heuristic pedagogies of the future museum; I became acutely aware of the museum structure/architecture/format/space/time limitations supporting pedagogies that focus on knowledge transfer rather than “ontological pedagogies that deal with the process of becoming” (Cochrane et al., [2014](#), p. 13). This reflection of museum education praxis presents levels of complexities within the pedagogies of museum education. A further question arose: *How do our pedagogies form the conditions for what mattering is open for discourse (Barad, [2006](#), p. 1), and what informs digital pedagogies?*

Instagram portfolio’s are always in the past tense, and although its visual images can be encountered, revisited and commented upon, they are fixed in place and despite multiple formats (stories, posts, reels, IGTV), the inability to co-curate restricts intra-active phenomenon for museum communities. The constraints of Web 2.0 technology orient the audience as spectators, limiting opportunities for discourse mattering.

Connectivism aided thinking about *knowledge* as a set of connections between entities in a network (Downes, [2005](#), [2007](#)) and the concept that digital sites never rest (Downes, [2012](#); Siemens, [2004](#)). This knowledge, formed with/in the “rapidly altering foundations” (Siemens, [2004](#), para 25) of the digital landscape, guided my exegetical thinking about a way

of learning and doing for future museum education, that is in constant collective becoming, emancipatory, without institutionally imposed interpretative mediation.

*What happens when we teach, learn and make with/as community, without the 'script' of 2.0 Instagram borders and formats and move towards content/research/museum creation, that resists normalising views of development and knowledge production (Lenz Taguchi, 2009)? Could museums of the future nurture learning that is a negotiation between and in relation with all things – that is never fixed and always under construction (Siemens, 2004)?*

These questions instigated the re-framing of research 'posts' as "educational questions" (Marin-Viadel & Roldán, 2012, p. 14 and experimenting with Feminist New Materialisms as a methodological approach (Coleman et al, 2019).

The temporal states of art making processes are the result of re-visiting, re-negotiating and re-working ideas and marks responsively to intuitive, sensory and other felt phenomena when working creatively. This 'terrain' transfers with ease to the shifting digital rhizomic landscape of network learning, however, working as remote researcher, my computational dependence brought attention upon my neglected digital instincts/senses/ intuition. Effort in attuning to these digital senses became a focus.

The processes of *becoming* digital visual a/r/tographer in relation *with* algorithmic behaviours *and unseen* communities, has sought to flatten and mute the authoritarian voice of museum/educator/artist and move towards collaborative possibilities. Experimenting within Spoke's (Mozilla Hubs) Web 3.0<sup>3</sup> technology enabled me to test a way of being 'with knowledge' in co-production with digital collaborators – an alternative way to think, *with* museum education towards pedagogies of intra-action (Lenz Taguchi, 2009). This led to further troubling: *How do these platforms aid thinking with the collaborative possibilities between human and non-humans? Could digital disabling of visual situations help us move towards de-familiarisation (Braidotti, 2018, para. 52) and think with intra-active forces with/in museum education (Barad, 2007, p. 141)?*

Spoke enabled a re-negotiation of 'selves' without format constraints, designing for learning that is with community while together *in relation*. *So, what mediates learning within a space with few to no parameters?*

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<sup>3</sup> 3.0 technology is a decentralised iteration of the world wide web that gives greater autonomy and privacy to users. Artificial intelligence and blockchain technology process data.

Cormier (2008) describes ‘triggering events’ as events/situations/experiences that disrupt existing worldviews or understanding, forcing a re-examination of assumptions and beliefs that leads towards new insights and learning. Experiencing a ‘triggering event’ as researcher within this candidature (see chapter three) caused thinking with pedagogies of disruption and wondering about ways of embedding friction within digital encounters. It has proved a constructive way of thinking with the re-negotiation of praxis/worldview/understanding *thrown* by pandemic destabilisation of self/others/world.

The “digital image explosion” (Cameron, 2021, p. 3) presents museums with important choices about what they choose to value as digital cultural heritage, and how they develop their narratives (Sandell & Nightingale, 2012). Museums’ social media accounts present influence upon their valuing of visual/aesthetic education experience; they ‘structure our choices and what we might remember’ (Cameron, 2021, p. 3), presenting questions for this inquiry within pandemic contexts: *what and who informs these choices when museum staff are disparate and objects inaccessible?*

This research responds to the emergent, data-led art processes to aid unfolding new knowledge residing within the borderlands of a/r/t (Irwin, 2017). Immersing within the interstitial spaces between image and text (Springgay et al., 2005), I build new digital languages and relationships with digital collaborators as visual, digital a/r/tographer (Coleman, 2021) to inform activist research that provokes disruption through art research creation (Loveless, 2019) and explores ‘mattering’ with Feminist New materialist methods (Coleman, Page & Palmer, 2019) for museum education. Grounded in Feminist data principles (D’Iganio & Klein, 2020) and Posthuman theory (Braidotti, 2013) has energised my thinking with current museum archives and digital heritage (Cameron, 2021), to un/learn about art through art creation (Roldán & Marin-Viadel, 2014; Roldán et al., 2019) and *interrupting* with art education (Biesta, 2019) has provided rich sources of contemplation, feeding a reflective unfolding of personal experiences and emotions using autoethnographic methods (Adams et al., 2017).

This context and its theoretical collaborators are outlined here to share why the pursuit of this candidature has been important for my personal pedagogy in museum education, and to contribute to the body of work within museum education that explores what art education makes possible (Biesta, 2019). Armed with an Apple pencil and iPad, working as a remote researcher, I started developing a methodology informed by (but not limited to) these influences to develop a *metho-pedagogy* (MacDonald, Coleman, & Wise, 2022), because they are not only coupled, but inform and are informed by one another.

## The study

The study is born of deep personal concern for the sustainability and feasibility of the arts sector in Melbourne and asks questions of/for/about the industry, through a re-calibration of method, practice and pedagogy, *what do we want to become?* (Braidotti, 2002, Prologue) while also concurrently asking *what do I want to become?* The research design has experimented with/out objects, with/out touch, with/out verbal discussion, reaching towards innovative museum activism, disruption and progressive practices to interrogate the nature of museum education during the pandemic. The intertwined creative and written exegesis stories five Melbourne museums during lockdown in 2020. The study traces the digital archives of the museums' Instagram accounts, during a period of 20 days in which the Victorian government enforced museum closures within lockdowns one and two.

If “every time a visitor views an image, he or she is redrawing the image” (Mayer, 2005, p. 174), museum digital pedagogy is important, as it has the potential to shape the ‘conversation’ for learning and for imaginaries – particularly when it is one of the few points of access during lockdown periods. But *what is informing the image being redrawn? And, in what ways are we ensuring that the image redrawn is reflective of all the agents informing the museum’s visual literacy?*

Visual digital data tracings of the Instagram data sets led to emergent, rhizomatic provocations that informed visual iterations, autoethnographic writings, wonderings, and questions, that in turn fed a/r/t methods. These iterative, generative cycles formed the primary data sets as new visual museum narrative (d)a/r/ta. In homage of Coleman’s (2021, p.193) influential guidance in my work, as visual digital a/r/tographer, I bracket the (d) to re-frame its position for the reader. It is kept silent to give attention to a/r/t selves in relation to and informing new data in this inquiry.

Mirroring museum processes by creating digital visual work in response to emergent themes aided me in answering the research questions, as lenses upon and between artist, researcher, teacher, audience and information architect.<sup>4</sup> Undertaking research with/in a period of uncertainty, while “unpredictable encounters transform us” (Tsing, 2015, p. 20), I embraced a speculative, slippery, metho-pedagogy, knowing that questions might not be answerable and may prompt new discussion.

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<sup>4</sup> *Information architect (IA)* here, refers to the position at the nexus of users, context and content on social media platforms, from deciding and organising ‘content’ to aspects beyond functionality to include “how people *feel* and the *way* the platform does things” (see guardian [article](#))

## Research questions

The primary research question of this study was:

*What can we learn about the changing nature of museum education from exploring Melbourne museums through Instagram posts in 2020?*

The data informs two further questions:

*What does the digital mapping and storying of data (of this phenomenon) through lockdown indicate about the changing nature of the audience?*

*What implications does this period of experimentation have for the future of museum education and relational digital pedagogies?*

## 50/50 creative and written exegesis

The exegesis is a conversation between the creative and written components of the study that contributes to answering the central question of the candidature, with the intent of bridging the theory/practice divide (Lenz Taguchi, [2009](#)). Answering the questions in these two ways, sought to resist the constraints of existing methodologies and the normative dominance given to *language mattering* (Barad, [2006](#), p. 132).

Attending to the relations between text and image, this study sought to observe “those forms of activity that are not caught by functionality” (Weigel, [2019](#)), to address the *nature* of museum education through written, visual mattering while also giving attention to the movement between them. The creative and written texts are weighted equally in their contribution to the 30,000 words needed to meet the candidature requirements of this Master of Education (Research), and therefore one medium should not be regarded as superior to the other for assessment purposes; they are entangled in the meaning-making process.

The choice to undertake a 50/50 exegetical responds to the global museum sector’s discussions of re-imagining and re-calibrating museum praxis. The creative exegesis re-imagines *with* the emergent themes from the data that give insight into the nature of museum education during lockdown. The creative work explores these concepts, and, while experimenting with their implications, challenges what transformational pedagogical encounters are, and can occur *in what exists* and *what can be built* (UNESCO, [2021](#), p. 148).

## Computational research

Working within a research methodology that could explore museum education pedagogies while physically remote during lockdown, required navigating unfamiliar materials, skills and theories. Early in the candidature, the purchase of a new iPad and Apple pencil, as a compact all-in-one remote workstation, became my desk, research space, drawing studio and connector to the outside world. I became acutely aware of my human self, dependent upon my collaboration with the non-human iPad and *its* work that enabled all the interconnections in-between different matter for learning and knowledge to take place (Barad, [2007](#)). Drawing and writing on one single device developed a co-dependency that acknowledged “the impossibility of an absolute separation between an apparatus, a person using an apparatus, and the procedure performed” (Hickey-Moody, [2019](#), p. 2).

Over the course of the Melbourne lockdowns I became aware of the missing incidental interactions and chats within daily interstitial spaces which contributed to contemplating relationality (de Freitas, [2017](#)) as isolated human. *Was I sensing things differently? Without my body engaged, my mind imaginaries with felt memories changed?*

Turning away from the social constructivist learning theories that previously shaped my a/r/t practice, I looked towards multi-theoretical, transdisciplinary approaches from diverse fields to build research connections through research creation for an-other relationality. A threading began, and connections emerged between connectivism, (Downes, [2005](#), Siemens, [2005](#)) New Materialism (Barad, [2007](#), Hickey-Moody, [2019](#)) and posthuman thinking (Braidotti, [2018](#)). Together, these theoretical frames, working as visual digital a/r/tographer challenged my own possibilities and potentialities beyond what I already thought I knew (Lenz Taguchi, [2009](#), p. 9). My iPad became co-designer, and I learned its languages and watched it navigate the usual physical in-betweens. I realised I had become one of the many mutual entangled agents with/in the study and was urged to ask: *Where are our in/betweens for thought with our digital collaborators? Where can our minds retreat for processing, synthesising, for judgement?*

## Instagram data

If we are to consider that all aspects of the museum are part of the network of learning, and each of these entities works together with the others to form knowledge, what pedagogy is

informing the museum Instagram profile? Who is developing the content, and who controls the Instagram account? And, what visual literacy do we want to nurture?

Much like Zeller's study asked of museum educators in 1985, I now ask museums to consider the professional behind the controls of their feed. "Who are these people? How are they professionally involved? Are they art educators?" (Zeller, 1985, p. 154, as cited in Kletchka, [2021](#)). I wondered about the museums' leadership, when considering their Instagram profiles, and their influence on perceptive formations. This motivated me "to pay attention to subtleties" while being "sensitive to slight differences" (Cervený, [2001](#), para 11) within each data set, to work with artist mark-making and create originals. I began a process of 'relational re-configuration' (Cameron, [2021](#), p. 352) with the institutional body language data. These pandemic portfolios, weighted with the same value for meaning making as cultural objects, were re-conceptualised as *situations*<sup>5</sup> to reflect their replacement of objects during the pandemic, and their *power* as learning devices that contribute to the learning networks of museums.

The concept of *situation* has helped to guide my thinking *with* digital rather than *about* digital. It refers to the entities at play within the visual context. The term has also resolved the inability to label cause and effect when working with public digital data, as it is in constant negotiation and re-negotiation with the actors encountering it. Re-visiting the original data set for a second iteration (post *triggering event* described in chapter three) presented the multiple possibilities for interchangeable narratives that this method gives rise to. *Situations* also offer a way to consider the moving, tinkering and lifting of visual data to learn with between platforms/site/sights that "never rest but are reconfigured within and are dispersed across and threaded through one another" (Barad, [2010](#), p. 244).

## Instagram feed

Thinking computationally, with compute languages, pace and data relationships are utilised within digital researcher practice as method and are always in development. Algorithmic behaviours and formats inform, impact and influence our choices as artists, researchers,

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<sup>5</sup> Guided by a/r/tographic terminology, visual data were experienced as "relational situations" that could "provoke meaning through contemplation, complication, and as alternative models of space and time" (Springgay et al., [2008](#), p. xx).

teachers. If, as Cameron (2023, p.9) argues, “the essence of human history is now cultural memory in a digital form, and that digital data is the dominant fabric of contemporary life”, consideration for what content drives algorithms and how it informs audience visual perception is necessary. The inbuilt disrupted format of the Instagram feed presents questions for museums about the intent and function of their social networking platforms and the relations between museum, audience and machine as co-creators of cultural ways of learning and valuing visual images. *How do we chew and digest, or do we bite and move on? How are museums designing-in friction* (ACCA, 2021)? *What stops audiences scrolling past the museum?* These questions informed the pushing of data sets back into the Instagram feed, using researcher-filmed screen recordings in an attempt to disrupt control. Constructing a recording that swipes the carousel for the audience, not only attempts to slow down the encounter, but removes the control from the audience, repositioning them as passive spectators, to provoke contemplation; *can I disrupt the disrupted format?*



Fig 2: *Who controls the carousel?*

Consumed by the pace of museum Instagram images moving rapidly through audience feeds, and the “implication of the abundance of heritage” (Harrison, 2012, Chapter 8), I formed concerns about the long-term effect of ‘creeping heritage’ upon value. *What is stored, what is discarded? How do we ensure these ‘rules’ for cultural storage are not informed by the “Cartesian dualisms that hold nature and culture, matter and mind to be separate”* (Harrison, 2012, chapter 9)? These considerations informed my encounters with data, to be *with* the visual entities as I would be *with* the physical museum object.

## Visual digital data

The responsibility felt when working with museums’ digital visual images presented me with dilemmas throughout the study, particularly that of how judgements about rightness are made “given the absence of a formula or an algorithm” (Eisner, 2001, p.9). My discomfort with the lack of structure informing the process was exemplified by my resorting to my training,

initially deconstructing the visual images using elements and principals (colour tone, texture, form, number of figures, and so on).



Fig 3: Working with visual data

It wasn't until I saw these 'crunched numbers' and observations in table format that I realised I was conforming to an idea of 'rightness': not Nelson Goodman's "rightness of fit" that Eisner (2002 p. 9) speaks about, but a Western, colonially art-educated, ontological response. From this point, re-looking, re-thinking and re-encountering became my usual process towards working as artist, free of association, frames of references and self-imposed boundaries. The 'Re's' became roots to the pre-assumptions residing with my childhood 'habit detective' ways of encountering the world that led to deidentifying the data twice and working as a/r/tist to begin new dialogic contributions that aimed to contribute one of many future museum narratives, free of dispositif controls. *Is this possible? But how?*

## Discovering new digital visual languages

As artist, I forged a new relationship with the iPad Pro digital interface and reconfigured the way I perceive, make and engage in an embodied discourse between artist, materiality, and *situation* during this study. The immediacy and responsive sensitivity of the medium quickly generated a playful experimentation at each encounter. Navigating the process of working with new visual textures mediated by a screen also required me to adapt to digital senses. The relationship/s between the new materials opened unknown sensory *conversations*, pushing boundaries of isolated form and texture, and the interaction within *situations* formed a dialogue between platforms, sites/sights and materialities. The ease of manipulation and ability to render, delete and start again prompted a consideration of what choices I was making about visual language as visual a/r/t/ographer, and how the digital aids these alternative choices offered. I was reminded to consider how I was *engaging* and 'reading' the visual language and what visual language I was using to create with. *Can all audiences access this language? What am I expecting of my audience? Who is that audience?*



Fig 4: *Exploring visual languages*

## Procreate shaping methods and languages

The simplicity of lifting the secondary data into Procreate and experimenting with how the data sets could be deidentified, formed the foundation of my metho-pedagogy. Procreate enabled me to keep my archived secondary data set as a transparent ‘layer one’ that could be ‘disabled’ in multiple additional layers and re-visited throughout the study as new lines of flight emerged. I quickly realised that it allowed me to see the data differently (Coleman, [2021](#)), and thus this site enabled me to work as an *a/r/tist*, to trace and to redraw, to remove subjects/objects/entities within images and to follow what I discovered.

Initially, I used quick descriptive language to document what was in a picture alongside the literal traces of the visual forms and colour palettes (as seen in Fig 3). The traces soon became textural explorations of the visual situations, using a variety of mark-making strategies to emphasis and block-in the negative and positive spaces, examining the composition, the framing within the uniform Instagram square and how the visual information moves the eye within the space. The near-flouro Procreate colour tones offered clear distinctions between museums, while the colours paradoxically ‘unmuted’ the museum, amplifying them in pandemic silence and creating a conflict between the visual representation and the experiences created for audiences.

The large range of drawing tools and functions that supported my experiments allowed me to tinker as a lab technician might, removing aspects of the image, highlighting areas, enhancing particular forms, and zooming in and out. Each additional ‘layer’ added to the ‘gallery’ presenting documented evidence of testing/processes. These could be overlaid with chosen layers to see different entities at play. This allowed me to encounter new discoveries with/in the images. These ‘conversations’ opened new narratives for knowledge building, a concept explored by Stewart ([2007](#)).



Fig 5: *New data conversations*

I dedicated many hours to tracing lines, space, shapes, colours and tones, re-searching *with* trace to see entities at play not seen upon first glance. I was attempting to lean away from the ‘semiotic trap’ that we are all implicated in, which is both signifying and representative (Lazarato, 2006), and remembering that *nuance matters* (Cervený, 2001).

## Codes

The process of deidentifying the museums within Procreate shaped the coded written and visual language for this study. Each museum was given a letter and a Procreate colour as codified reference (as seen in Fig 7); they became museums ‘v’(pink), ‘w’ (green), ‘x’ (blue), ‘y’ (yellow) and ‘z’ (purple). Research colour codes and symbols were generated to de-identify the museums (see codes). Instagram formats were given a code also: a green arrow (the electronic symbol for ‘play’) was code for IGTV format; blue dots (in contiguity) re-presented the Instagram carousel format and one red circle symbolised the single, still image.



Fig 6.2: *Codes, symbols and visual language*



Fig 7: *Codes with traces in Procreate*

The themes for tracing were developed responsively through research process. With each image, new themes were unfolding, requiring me to go back through each museum multiple times for new trace lines and new codes. Initial trace lines included the themes of humans, broadcast, interiors, exteriors, nature, object, staff, female artists, marketing, figure paintings, education team and performance. Overlaying the deidentified data sets (in chronology timelines) in Procreate, patterns began to emerge, the themes of interior, exterior and humans; these ‘sticky’ themes formed a series of iterative generative works to form new narratives in Instagram’s Layout app<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Layout App is a platform that offers a *photobooth* for generating iterative photo sets and curating options for uploaded photographs. The photos are formed into a collage by Layout and users can manipulate frame proportions or flip or rotate images to play with curations offered.



Fig 8: *Inside, Outside and empty*



Fig 9: *Where are all the people?*

## Layout App

Layout and its algorithmic frames shifted the human ‘identified themes’ to be traced; they became something new, an *alternative space* born of the digital, de-centralising human concepts and forms.



Fig 10: *Narratives with Layout app*

Using iterative drawing processes within Procreate and moving them into Layout App contributed to my uncovering the capabilities of Instagram’s format and parameters for (re)telling the museums’ pandemic narratives. Layout App ignited new collaborative responses when working with the data, enabling me to immerse myself in possibilities through playful experimentation with its frames. These spaces, initially used for experimentation, became co-creators and curators of data-led drawing and ways of researching, informing ways of seeing, experimenting and knowing the data through the platform’s capabilities. This process led the development of multiple series of work including, *where are all the people?* In this series, derived from the museums’ ‘human’ layer timelines, the humans were no longer present in Layout’s frames (see Fig 9), and instead, Layout had offered the spaces in/between the human forms for consideration.



Fig 11: *Humans to machines and in/betweens*



Fig 13: *New ways of seeing*



Fig 12: *Digital collaborators*

The collaboration between my iterative drawings and Layout App’s generative works throughout the candidature contributed re-presentations of forgotten spaces (Aoki et. al, 2004, p. xx), offering new ways of seeing my drawings that proposed new considerations and new lines of flight to follow. This prompted a wondering about *how many ways one series could be experienced? What entities are at play in the images that perhaps remain ‘muted’, that could inform a new way of thinking and working with the data?*

## Miro Board a site for fieldwork

The Miro Board is a space where I analysed data and made connections between the knowing, the doing and the making processes. The practice of *miro-gogy*, allowed me “to see through, thinking with/in/out method in new encounters” (Healy et al, 2019, p.82), and document the “theoretical acts that are practice and artful ways of creating meaning through recursive, reflective, responses, yet resistant forms of engagements” (Springgay et al., 2008, p. xxix). It provided a space to connect the mind, the art-making and the fields of inquiry in one space, together. Storying the data around one another and sitting them alongside each other created endless conversations and tensions between concepts, instigating new iterative cycles of stories.



Fig 14: *Methods and mattering with Miro*



Fig 15: *My Living inquiry*

Mapping the Miro Board, following colours, shapes and data on the board, formed an artefact of the research 'matter', a visual portrait of the research as a living inquiry. Miro board platform aided in creating new methods and languages. *Following* the curated place makers for my new knowledge, I thought of this as a form of digital a/r/tographic mapping. The Miro Board documented emergent processes in which I could re-visit the lines of inquiry and follow new ones. It enabled the linking, connecting and intersecting visualisation of lines. These grew,

threaded and wove together ideas manifesting elsewhere on the board. The act of using my hand, via Apple pencil, to move, re-size, duplicate, draw and write around or on top of secondary data sets, uploaded images and data-led iterations became an embedded daily integration as visual digital a/r/tographic practice. I mapped the data in a timeline across the board, uploading images, text and associations related to it, building a tangled network. Looking across the timeline, I can see at what point I followed a new idea and what data instigated that thread to follow. As Kontturi (2018) noted, “following is not about the reproduction of what already is, from a fixed point of view, but about opening to what is in itself still in the making” (. X).

*Miro-gogy* as method has shaped the research ‘world’ (Healy et al, 2019 para 22) of this living inquiry, it has been instrumental in thinking with the ‘mattering’ and immersing within the entanglement of theory, practice, method relations (Barad, 2007, p224). Uploaded into Spoke Mozilla, the living inquiry was transformed into the world housing the visual exegesis (see [matter world](#)).



Fig 16: *Walking through the matter*



Fig 17: *Methods, stories, worlds*

## Testing emergent themes *with* audience

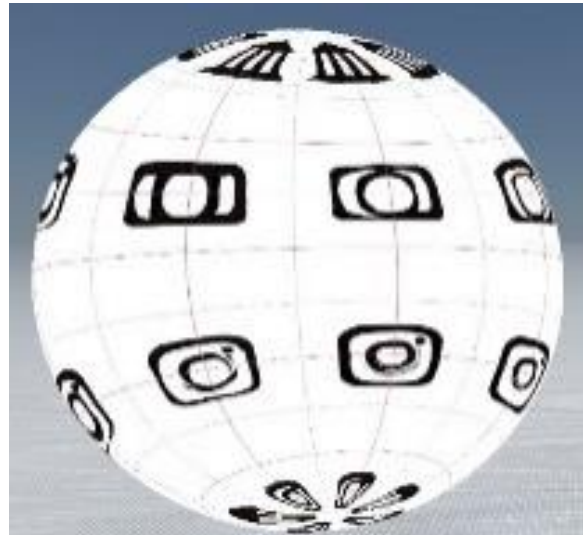
The incorporation of research learning platform site/sights, *Mythinkspot* and Spoke (Mozilla Hubs) was born from the research questions to explore what relational digital pedagogies are or could *be* while thinking with digital audiences/authors/museum educators through a/r/tographic visual and digital methods.

The feedback loop within this research study, refers to iterative, responsive cycles of research data that fed this exegetical. Original archived data sets from 2020, led the iterative visual questions and informed subsequent (d)a/r/ta sets. The visual questions contributed to a digital conversation, that is relational, responsive and ongoing. The actors involved in the conversation are broad and blurred, artist/research/teacher are at the same time audience/spectator and museum. The endless *feeding* for new knowing, from all sources, underpins the value placed upon digital relational iterative processes and the development of research Instagram profile *Mythinkspot*. Aligning with Feminist data principles, this positions

the research as active, open and transparent while indicates it is not fixed and always in development. The feedback loop presented an opportunity to test ideas *with* audience and explore algorithmic behaviour, while *show my work* (D'Ignazio & Klein, 2020).

Sharing my processes – theorising and learning visibly to unknown audiences – was intentionally transparent, creating an opening for others to enter, question, consider and collaborate (Kind, 2006). Designing within Spoke, with iterative research creations, formed collaborative, generative architectural spaces for virtual audiences to intra-act with/in. It aided thinking digitally, *seeing* data differently and opened an-other way of be/ing *with* audience. Both these spaces are entangled in thinking and meaning-making for new knowledge, and thus reflect the importance of showing/sharing the processes of meaning-making in creative and written candidatures. They are reflective of thinking as process, art as process and art as knowledge. They are regarded not as exhibition, but as virtual experimental, learning spaces.

These collaborative platforms embedded *slipperiness* within the study for generative meaning-making, to explore the 'selves' while with/between the data sites (MacDonald et al., 2022) in response to the five Melbourne museums' lockdown relationships with audience, *while* being audience as researcher within the lockdown period. The *slipperiness* kept the research between knowns, in an active state, responsive to new encounters and thoughtful contradictions. Both *Mythinkspot* and Spoke Mozilla, place “the researchers discourse and practices within another space, between artists and producers, producer and audience, theory and practice so that it becomes the space for reflection, contemplating and revealing action” (Stewart, 2007, p. 128). Being *with* transparency, as vulnerable a/r/tographer, and sharing “tentative content” (Grocott, 2012, p. 10) was an invitation to become entangled as a mutual collaborator, to engage in ‘conversation’, between image, text, technology and other, to negotiate ideas while under construction (Siemens, 2004) with intent for these exchanges to “co-exist and reverberate together” (Springgay et al., 2008, p. xxx). Playing with data within these platforms tested the interdisciplinarity and multiplicity of the digital audience as something porous and unseen that bleeds (ACCA, 2021) into our ways of knowing.



## **Chapter Two: *Ways of seeing, being, doing***

Chapter Two explores of ways of knowing that inform this research. From pre-assumptive ethnographic beginnings in childhood, to art school, teaching college, and into the colonial art classroom and museum education Western-trained ontological framing. The a/r/tographic renderings provided an invitation to step into the creative thinking processes that lead to new knowing, towards answering the research questions through the making of meaning-making.

*“I am the youngest of three kids; I would often spend many hours a day in the car with my sisters’ friends, dance buddies, and grown-ups at my mums work and being dragged to my sister’s school, play dates and events. My mum recalls two aspects of my behaviour at this this age. The first, is that in true Montessori-education approach, I would spend a lot of my time silently tracing the letters that I found in the world around me, on street posters, on the packaging in supermarkets and books around the house – tracing with my finger was a silent, visual and textural experience of the shapes that made up the world around me. ... The second aspect of my behaviour of this time, was my personal belief that I had a special ability to discover people’s habits. Mum tells stories of me turning to her with great conviction when leaving someone’s house to reveal to her that I have uncovered their habit, like a detective, I would then proceed to describe and report how often they would show their habit and what it looked like. Discovering the habits of our friends was a way for me to understand my world at the time, something I could observe, unspoken forms of communication and something I could contribute to our family’s way of knowing”.*

## Frames, borders and boundaries

**“We are accustomed to looking at objects. We need to become accustomed to seeing spaces between and around objects as if they, too, were solid. See, spaces can free us from deadly assumptions”**

–Kent & Stewart, 2008, p. 84.

My self-titled ‘habit detective’ role was a position I took seriously. Reading and observing people around me through the ways they moved their bodies through the spaces we shared and how they used those bodies to tell a story was my primary way of building a knowing about the world around me from a young age. These *in/betweens* of verbal communication and activity have been the space, and now the method, where meaning-making occurs for me. The in/between as method has informed a way for me to see, describe and capture the world around me, a way of being in relation. This ethnographic observation was a way I could contribute to my family’s way of knowing, and led me to a path of all things visual, as art student, as art teacher and museum educator and now to this study, where I have sought to re-attune to the untrained ways of knowing of my habit detective roots.

Re-visiting the influences, both conscious and unconscious, that have shaped my praxis as art educator has been led by associations between emergent themes in the data and associations with personal memories felt and experienced, as child, artist, researcher and teacher, using autoethnographic methods. Corita Kent’s (Kent & Stewart, 2008) *pedagogy of care* that underpinned her work as art educator was introduced to me at art school, and has contributed to shaping the foundations of my art and teaching practice – ways of listening, looking, seeing, making and observing while attending to the in/between, the unseen, the spaces that inform the objects that we see. Rather than using Kent’s physical cardboard “finder” digital interfaces were my “finder/s”. They served as research collaborators and allow me to look with ‘fresh’ eyes. Multiple lenses for multiple ways of seeing the data have opened an-other way to experience, and other ways to “look at things until their imports identity, name, use, and description have dissolved” (Klein, 2021, para. 15). Seeing the image ‘dissolve’ has not been a linear process; it has emerged rhizomically, after time spent sitting with and tinkering with the data, zooming in and out of the archive.

Embedding a visual autoethnographic praxis, intentionally shares process, thinking and labour, to put ‘new materialist concepts to work’ (Coleman, Page & Palmer, 2019 para 1). It has been way to attend to my *deadly assumptions* learned through the Western

education system, turning toward something different. Recording ideas and thinking with/in my own handwriting is a long-held habit, sometimes done on the backs of envelopes or in the margins of books and has been a way to embody the idea at hand, a form of paradata. Reconfiguring this as a method, informed by my supervisor, brought some relief to working digitally, because this is something I have always done. This habit of marginalia was transferred to the digital *margins* throughout the candidature, and was found in mobile phone ‘notes’ and on the Miro Board. Gradually I employed Procreate’s ‘layers’ to record and document words and visuals in ‘layers’, with each ‘layer’ labelled within (what Procreate calls) the ‘galleries’ of ideas. Creating new habits with Procreate helped to “locate what my practice is, how it is shaping and what it is shaped by” (Coleman, 2021), while also informing new ways of seeing, as exemplified by the Museum portrait series. These portraits are visual reminders to respect the complementary semantic spacing between text and image (Mena & Roldán, 2017, p. 250) as equals in the entangled meaning-making of visual research.



Fig 18: *Embodying ideas using marginalia*



Fig 19: *Museum portraits (detail)*

## Visual, Sensory, Digital, process-oriented methods

Artists are synthesisers of the human experience (Coleman, 2021, personal communication). We attune our attention to the tacit, more-than-human ways of seeing, being and knowing, necessitating a creative research methodology that engages with possibility and imaginings. Our practices are experienced with action, often without verbal dialogue or linearity. The process can be impulsive and intuitive, and is always experimental. Therefore, this *way* of knowing, as artist, as maker, is at the heart of the method, as it is a process used when the artist is within the in/between of knowings – a space of discomfort, intuition and process. Informed by these ways of being with/in the world, the central question of the research enables consideration of emergent unknowns and reflexive and rhizomatic working methods. *What can we learn about the changing nature of museum education by exploring Melbourne museums through Instagram posts in 2020?*



Fig 20: *How do we understand the nature of something?*

So how do we understand the ‘nature’ of something? The term ‘nature’ intentionally embeds a multiplicity of possibilities and requires an examination of the frames of reference used to explore such a layered and complex word. Understanding the nature of museum education during a period of flux has placed my work between the knowns – the binary definitions or absolutes (Barad, 2007, p. ix). Using visual, sensory and digital processes, this exegesis seeks to understand the nature of museum education through testing and experimenting with a/r/tographic selves, and to challenge the existing self-imposed parameters and framing that accompany my work. *What exists, visually, that may disrupt my conceptual boundaries towards transformative education possibilities* (Mena & Roldán, 2017, p. 258)?

The rhizomatic, data-led research design harnesses the art-making process, starting from the middles of art museums baked-in ways of knowing and unfolding with iterative art methods, towards a rupture rather than a *tinker*, a *dismantling* rather than a *replicating* of “*existing power structures*” (Braidotti, 2018) for new museum narratives. Iterative visual languages, a transparent feedback loop, reflexive writing, and making processes are “attempts to understand the creative artefact themselves, rather than respond to a gap” (Sullivan, 2009, p. 50) and “to consider images as questions which are answered with new images” (Marin-Viadel & Roldán, 2012)

### **a/r/tographic renderings**

The renderings of a/r/tography opened ways to think *with* emergent concepts from the data, *with* metaphors, *with* associations as auto ethnographic reflexive encounters. They meet at the intersection of the *selves*; they inform and are informed by the historical, present and future thinking of this inquiry. As Stewart (2009) would suggest, because, “stories shaped through autobiography as a portrait of self that mirrors and situates experience” (p. 126). These

“theoretical spaces” (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 899) have aided thinking with relationships between languages, material and matter, the material-discursivities at play in the inquiry. They are thinking processes negotiated to *make teaching and learning visible and invite others to enter* (Kind, 2006, p. 1) while informing the perpetual motion of my rhizomatic living inquiry – the becoming *with*, and development of, an-other way of knowing.

The renderings have been formed through the process of unfolding in/sights (Irwin, 2003, p. 65) while in deep exploratory spaces, when theory, practice and creative activity (Springgay et al., 2008, p. xxi) seep through their boundary walls and form a ‘sticky’ (Healy, 2019) *some things*, that I return to. This sticky-ness is something that engages my conceptualisation of this work and forms new lines of flight. Sitting with/in these spaces and rendering these thoughts into creative manifestations offers “possibilities of engagement ... research that breathes. Research that listens” (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 899).



Fig 21: *The sticky some things*

The three ‘selves’ of artist, researcher and teacher have been unravelling for understanding personal praxis, while concurrently re-framing and re-braiding for new embodied understanding of teaching as social practice (Di Rezze, 2000; Surrey, 1991). This deepening understanding of the contiguous relationships of the selves (Springgay et al., 2008, p. 900) and the subtle *movements* between identities has been particularly meaningful in recalibrating what relational digital pedagogies are possible.

The following description of renderings within this inquiry seeks to guide the reader through the processes and thinking of the candidature, using creativity for developing an a/r/t identity and leading towards answering the research questions.

## Negotiating hybridity

The a/r/tographic collaborative exhibition reflected the hybrid tensions working creatively as artist/researcher/teacher.

The shift to physical exhibition (available due to government restrictions easing), forced a consideration of digitally born and conceptualised work into a physical learning environment/exhibition space. The physical (re)presentation and curation of creative works for physical encounters, instigated thinking with hybridity, and formed investigations for the framing of digital pedagogies within social media Web 2.0 technologies. *Tracing the digital traces* series Institutional body language (zoetrope as museum) and Digital co-lab, started pedagogista wondering about the development of Web 3.0 parameters. *What are the possibilities for intra-active, immersive, digital first experiences? How could audiences experience participatory works? How could intra-activity be fostered in museum education work?*

## Contiguity

Central to the unfolding of the research questions is the concept and a/r/tographic rendering of contiguity. It informed the conceptual, physical and a/r/tographic in/betweens because:

**Contiguity is a rendering that helps us understand those ideas with a/r/tography that lie adjacent to one another, touch one another, or exist in the presence of one another**

- Springgay et al., 2008, p. xxviii.

Re-configuring relational pedagogies for museum education praxis while experiencing the forced shift into computational research due to the ‘Anthropause’ has reinforced the lack of the usual incidental pauses, and embedded silence experienced in the distances moving between activities has opened new ways of working without *physically* moving through the world. Over the course of Melbourne’s lockdown periods, the embedding of the in-between spaces of pre-pandemic life and their incidental influence on my practice became increasingly important. Heightened awareness of my physically fixed geographical position and the usual distance travelled between places of work/schools/studio/, being without the walk, the tram ride or the stair climb, fostered thinking about the *silence* encountered in these, usual, in-between spaces in human activity. This led towards thinking how the digital interfaces present these opportunities, and the subconscious curatorial need to design-in the usually embedded interstitial spaces of pre-pandemic daily routines. The lack of social

engagement and incidental conversation drew attention to the spaces/places where we contemplate and digest what we know as educators.

## The ellipsis or the artist - researcher- teacher

Throughout this computational re-search, the ellipsis provided comfort. A constant presence on each digital interface, the three dots have become an expected, silent call to challenge, asking me to consider *more and* imagine *with*. They form a trail to and from something; positioning themselves as always in the middle, they “mark a silence of some kind” (Flood, 2015). Silence within the ongoing dialogue between all things is part of “a bridging” (Aoki et al., 2005) and presents time and silent communication as contributing concepts with/in this research: time for thinking, for pausing, re-calibrating, re-imagining, while gazing to/with/in the rhizome middles of this living inquiry.



Fig 22: *Marking a silence of somekind*

Ellipses have been recorded in a/r/tographic conversations online and on the phone; they are reminders of being in the middle of thinking, of anticipation, pause and thought. They move in relation with one another; they negotiate meanings (Springgay et al., 2008), imply thinking is in motion, collaborative process-as-art-as-knowledge shifting with those *things* in relation, while sharing the process. Experimentation with these ideas was explored with works such as *In conversation* and *Feedback looping*.



Fig 23: *In conversation with feedback loop*



Fig 24: *In conversation with feedback loop, screen two*

While in-process of continual *becoming* within the digital, written and visual forms of remote research, the three dots of the ellipsis informed my praxis, situating my-selves within the digital interface as always-relational collaborator in conversation, in motion, *with*,

material-discursivities emergent. This identification with the ellipsis became evidence of my shift towards listening to and hearing digital languages as intra-active, as “generative conversations” (Kind, 2006, p. 4). This contributed to the development of a new form of pedagogical silence, open to *other* conversations that punctuated an invitation for new digital possibilities while the selves started to blur (Coleman, 2017, para. 1). With this, a new responsibility to the in/between arose. The remote silence of the ‘anthropause’ brought attention to what *matter* (Barad, 2006) informs and is informed by museum education pedagogies and practice. New Materialism aided attuning to the in/between silences, discomforts and pauses. Placing the digital ellipsis dots silently beneath the a/r/tographic slants framed this candidature with/in the digital, the global: pause, hesitation and conversation. It aided a *becoming* within digital conditions, where meanings reside in the in/between spaces of language, image, material, time and space beyond the known pedagogies, and a trusting in another way of thinking, *another world* (Raychman, 2001, p. 139): the digital rhizome.



Fig 25: Visual digital a/r/tographer

## Ellipses in/form metaphor and metonymy

Instagram’s carousel format is visually indicated by ellipsis-like marks that invite audiences to swipe or click their screens to the right for more images. The carousel forms a visual, institutional narrative, a set of curated images in contiguity with one another, allowing for audience movement back and forth and between. The action of swiping the screen for *more* offers a pause in the fast-paced scrolling of social media. Interrogating this concept further led to experimentation with visual storytelling that designs-in liminal spaces.

Associated with theme parks, entertainment and imagination, the up-and-down of the animals and the circular form of the carousel base imply motion and entertainment, and yet as a static structure, the carousel invites participation, through its beauty, large-scale carved animals, decorated objects, lights, colours and mirrors, which propose a magical transportation into the imaginative world. These structures represent a safe known for the audience and the spectator, and for participation – something to gaze into/from/ upon.

However, it struck me that when in motion, the ornate carving, colours and beauty can only be enjoyed by those gazing from within, and cannot be deciphered by the audiences gazing from with/out. The objects become hard to see, and it is the swift movements of colour and light in/between the object that remain – an in/between state of ‘known’ familiars. Much like the institutional body language, these flickers of light and colour are condensed moments of information, of entities at play that are wedged between something else much like the museum Instagram posts wedged between somethings unknown in the scroll, raising the question: *If the objects are not in view and cannot be accessed by the audience gazing upon the structure, what is seen?*

The clunky-ness in/between two states of being (static and in motion) alerts me to the button that is between them. *Who controls the post?* With a push of this button the carousel shifts from the fixed, static, physical structure into something else, in motion, where the objects become removed from vision, blurred, and instead it is the structural form that remains visible. This thinking informed a metaphoric inquiry and metonymic relations, exploring the notions of museum, control, hybridity, function and audience participation from outside the museum.

*What can we as audience experience of the museum when the object has become ‘removed’? What is the museum communicating when there is no audience to attract into the (physical) museum? Who is behind the Instagram feed?*



Fig 26: *What happens when the objects are removed?*



Fig 27: *Carousels and the ellipses*

Instagram’s carousel format opened investigations into circular, visual, narrative technologies and early motion-viewing devices. The format invites audiences to move images to their right to reveal more in a curated photo sequence. Unlike on the carousel, the audience can move back and forth when encountering Instagram’s carousel; they can change the pace of their encounter. The carousel invites spectator, audience and participant, and despite the many members of the public who participate in these roles, it remains the same as it did prior to

their encounter. With or without the public, the carousel rotates, unresponsive to the humans on board.

## Metaphor and metonymy

Seeking insight into the multiplicity of pedagogical encounters that brings awareness to the silence of *beingness* (Aoki et al., 2005, p. 369) has led my thinking about the role of participation by audiences in museum narratives during lockdown. This rendered new questions and wondering that included: *How are audiences participating within the museums digital architecture and format design? What shifts occur in our relation to this architecture? What has been designed-out? What has been designed-in? How does this influence the pedagogy occurring?*

Exploring hybridity and testing *the borders* between the digital and physical museum led me to thinking about digital parameters and formed a series of Insta Layout App algorithmic iterations, influencing thinking about the digital museums as always in motion, with new, daily curated narratives and interactions taking place between audience and museum. The museum narrative was always in-process of being shaped.

The Zoetrope (1834) offered a metaphorical structure responsive to participatory encounter, that was in-keeping with the closed, inaccessible objects of museums in lockdown. With technological advancement, the contemporary computational version of still-image-to-animation format – of Graphic Interchange Formats (GIF) – has designed-out the liminal spaces as experienced in analogue versions like the Zoetrope. GIFs, as silent synthesisers of individual images, have now become a prevalent visual language tool in social media, yet sit in-between video and still images as a relational story/association/summary/punctuation device. The gradual evolutionary removal of the in/between spaces from Zoetrope to GIF heightened my interest in experimentation with formatting, algorithmic behaviour, pace, control and curation. How do these functions, frames and parameters shape a way of seeing, feeling and being, with visual images? In what ways does it “structure our choice and what we might remember?” (Cameron, 2021, p. 3). *In what ways is this informing our visual literacy and our pedagogies?* This led to testing the boundaries of format, hybridity and control, in making and creating for audience encounters. *How are these formats informing our pedagogies? Can I dictate pace and how ‘content’ is encountered?*

The Zoetrope as ‘museum’ sits raised on a white plinth and forms the museum’s body, a tall, white, clean, continuous wall. These small slits of light, cut evenly into the surface, represent a moment of communication, its Institutional body language; a snippet, gesture, intonation, opening, to the museum. *Institutional body language* invites the audience to spin and activate the hybrid participation. It is based on Drew Tetz’s phenakistoscope, but the marks have been replaced by the format symbols devised and used throughout this research. Here, the animation/illusion is controlled by the audience, if they choose to partake; otherwise, the work remains a static object. Once it is in motion, the audience is invited to view the analogue animation; they can choose to activate the museum as hybrid form, through their mobile phone screens, to experience a digital animation in motion on the internal floor of the ‘museum’. The movement activated by this hybrid relationship, between screen, movement and audience moves the audience up and down (much like the carousel pony), facilitating them to be *with* the physical and digital museums at the same time. Hybrid *possibilities* and tensions have been designed-in to the work through the incorporation of the mirror above, which forces the museum’s gaze upon the audience inter/intra-action. This work explores metaphor and metonymy an a/r/tographic rendering that “permeate[s] the systems of containment and classification of language” (Springgay et al., 2008, p. 905). *What will remain of museum re-imagining when museums re-open?*



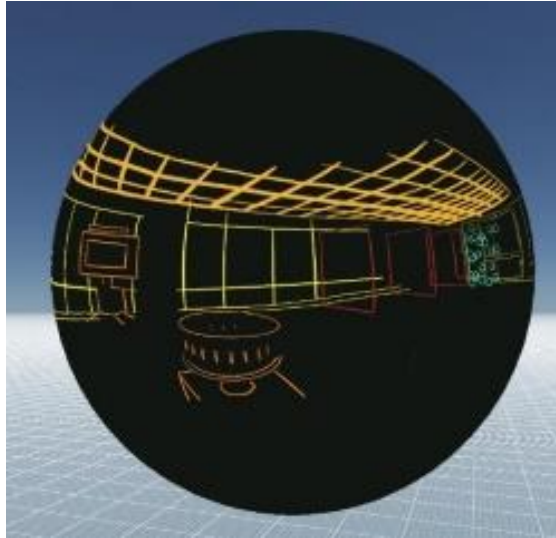
Fig 28: Zoetrope as monument



Fig 29: Institutional body language



Fig 30: The in/between discomfort



### **Chapter Three: *Responsive metho-pedagogy***

Chapter Three is the story of Trace as method. This chapter shares the metho-pedagogy undertaken, and the ‘triggering event’ that turned the research away from representational visual language.

*“Subconsciously ‘muting’ the affective experience from the data threw me,  
I realised that another iteration of the data set was necessary ...  
Have I preferenced a code above affect? Have I chosen to re-present rather  
than feel or percept?”*

## Deidentifying the data (twice)

The process of visual deidentification developed hyper-awareness of personal visual bias, assumptions, and habits. *What research stories resides within the data set? What research stories can be identified?* This led the study towards thinking with the concept of deidentification and possible ways to deidentify. Initially, I codified the primary data set and experimented with Procreate possibilities. Stewart's (2007) work aided a process of thinking about research creation and the language used within visual arts research, *'how can we decode and recode what we do?'* Stewart's (2007) neo-narrative approach, by 'tracing new stories', generated a way of thinking with the archived museum narratives and informing new discoveries, and her neo-narrative methodology phases provided initial structure and instigated the production of a research timeline in which a Miro Board was used to document the research journey and observe the visual language and visual codes within the study, to *reflect on the research design while researching*. It required me to find a way of *doing* visual data that could unfold insights for the questions, while exploring possibilities. *What parts of the image are important to 'mask'? How will the de-identification impact the study? How many ways are there to de-identify something?*

## Tracing the in/between as method

Thinking with iterative drawing, and while making the Zoetrope, it became apparent that these ways of being in the world, as artist, teacher and researcher, work together in equal coexistence, rhizomatically. The rhizome was expanding, more assemblages were sprouting, and I was deep in the middles (Springgay & Truman, 2008), between binaries: inside /outside/ digital/ physical/ cutting/ measuring while typing/ drawing, isolating/ collaborating, knowing/ not knowing.

Irwin (2003) argues that the in-between space is essential to the a/r/tographic process because it allows for the exploration of new possibilities and the creation of something new. It is a space of uncertainty and risk-taking that can lead to transformative learning experiences. It highlights the liminal spaces and connections between different entities and perspectives. It is a site for learning, where new forms of knowing and understanding emerge from grappling, testing and 'troubling' the uncertainty about it all. To "stay with the trouble" (Haraway, 2016) requires resilience, persistence, while embracing the messy middles and resisting the temptation *to walk away*.

I was physically, theoretically and artistically deep within the entangled middles, negotiating discomfort as it unsettled my praxis and realising that the in/between and its discomfort would never stop if I was willing to stay with/in the middle-ground (Biesta, 2019). The rhizome never ends; it's always there and there's always more work to be done. *What transformative work could take place if we stay in dialogue with what we encounter outside of ourselves* (Biesta, 2019)?

Thinking and looking *with* trace became a way to immerse myself within the in/betweens of the visual data. By way of tracing the in/between, the *felt* discomfort was steering the research. Keeping the *felt* central was indicative of transformation.



Fig 31: *This is the story of trace*



Fig 32: *Thinking and looking with trace*

## Transparency and tracing the digital traces

Tracing the digital traces has informed iterative cycles of visual artefacts – *stories in perpetual motion* (LeBlanc et al., 2015). Building transparent layers to trace the data sets in Procreate allowed me to see the data sets individually, or altogether, or interchangeably, by ‘activating’ new (d)a/r/ta ‘conversations’ between the museum ‘layers’ (as seen in Fig 7). This experimentation was forming the metho-pedagogy for the study, enabling me to see the in/betweens of each layer in contiguity with each museum. Transferring the (d)a/r/ta work from digital transparency to physical transparent acrylic, opened new encounters between it (the (d)a/r/ta) and the environment.



Fig 33: New ways to experience (d)a/r/ta

While social media within pandemic conditions has enabled responsive and timely crisis communication, it has also bred “an alternative normative order” (Volkmer, [2021](#), p. 5), filtering and reinforcing personal algorithms that contribute to knowledge construction and the embedding of non-human actors. The influence of automated robots and machine-curated applications associated with Instagram became a source of interest and playful experimentation through the feedback loop, heightening my awareness of the things unseen and forces at play. *What machine learning will inform our memory of pandemic museum narratives? What choices have the museums made about preserving digital data and the non-human contributions to culture?*

### Primary (d)a/r/ta set 1: *Tracing the data*

Working in transparent ‘layers’ within Procreate allowed for multiple tracings of the four weeks of research, gazing from one week to another and from museum to museum. It enabled me to overlay, to test and remove entities at play. The traced *situations* were categorised based on arising themes including objects, humans, broadcast, interiors, exteriors and outdoor nature, and attributed a colour in initial iterations. When transferred to physical printed works on A1 acetate sheets for exhibition, the digital informed the physical; the *situations* were suspended in even rows to enable the audience to ‘walk’ through and see ‘with’ the weeks and days of research to emulate Procreate’s capabilities.

The grided ceiling of *studioFive* aligned the tracings in an orderly format, to imply five museum structures, together as sector, in-process of *reterritorialising* and of re-imagined, re-situated hybrid narratives. The physicality of the transparent ‘structures’ was present, just enough to cause audiences to move around and in between them; they became physical *objects*. Audiences could gaze between museums or beyond to other artefacts in the exhibition, in/sight and in relation to one another.



Fig 34: *Physical (d)a/r/ta*

It became evident that the traces traced in *Tracing the digital traces* were not *situations* anymore. I had deidentified the original visual images to the point of uniformity between entities while also removing the entities from what lies in/betweens them. *Have I preferenced a code above the original forces? Had I removed the affect?*

Lazzarato (2006) suggests that affect “give[s] rise to relations that are difficult to assign”; that the affective forces “go beyond the subjective individualising limits (of people, their identities, roles and social functions) within which language seeks to confine and to which it tries to reduce them” (para. 3). I came to realise, while reading Lazzarato’s (2006) ‘Homage to Deleuze and Guattari’, that the disabling of the original visual images presents the traces as uniform, reducing their original differences and removing the affective forces. I had prioritised the “representative functions” (Lazzarato, 2006, para. 9) of the images and I realised that it was my *head* I was accessing, not my *body*. I had constructed a coded language, a visual literacy. *Have I chosen to re-present rather than feel or percept (para)?*

Perhaps a distancing had taken place between myself, from my own perception, in order to explore the archives superficially as ‘*an interesting object, a curiosity*’, a leaning-into my desire for the transparency of entities at play, deconstructing rather than engaging with the *forces* of movement they *hold* and embracing the deviation ‘*in the living, twisting, tingling vibration of senses*’ (Aaltola, 2021, para 3.).

Reading Aaltola’s (2021) question “*is there a risk we have forgotten to engage and use our senses?*” initiated a realisation that I had reverted back to my known, the eye; that the creativity accessed was a trained *articulation* to research conditions. Tracing with semiotics had reinforced the position of ‘knowledge bearer’ rather than the creation of alternative (d)a/r/ta sets that enable a *felt*, aesthetic experience of the period of lockdown. Experiencing the tracings in physical form was the catalyst for a re-consideration of *who is educational research for?* Have I subscribed to the dominant mattering – creative research as dispositif? What if I traced to be *with* the entities? I re-visited Harris and Holman Jones’s (2022) manifesto: “*creative agency is alive in its unknowability, if only we can stand the discomfort*” (para, 22).

## Primary (d)a/r/ta set 2: more than articulation

Motivated to challenge the first narrative set, the second iteration was necessary re-assess the dominant *mattering* and embrace posthuman creativities (Harris & Holman Jones, [2022](#)), to develop greater resilience for discomfort encountered, towards “a more-than-articulation” (Harris & Holman Jones, 2022) expression of data. *How could I shake the subconscious pull of known visual ways and sit with an undiscovered creative agency? How could I move ‘beyond expression’*(para 10)?

Re-evaluating with this in mind required a re-thinking about the word ‘trace’. The obligation to stay ‘true’ to the archived image for de-identification purposes was present in the first iteration of this (d)a/r/ta set. I felt bound to take a literal approach, to staying within the invisible parameter of research boundaries, but I began to wonder ‘*who am I creating the visual language for? For what use?*’

If we think of visual images as questions and these questions as emergent in an ongoing conversation, their arrangement through curatorial placement opens new conversations and perspectives for the audience to encounter and learn with. The re-consideration of museum Instagram portfolios as experimental pedagogies at work reinforced that “what we are teaching is not solely content, but rather a way of relating to the visual arts” (Roldán, [2015](#), p. 194). I started again, into the discomfort, to explore what me and my creativity might unleash.

## Removing the traced timeline from the archive

I moved from deconstructing the images (as formal compositions and cultural readings/meanings) towards a method of disabling the image, beyond (re)presentations (Massumi, 2022). I removed the trace line (indicating timeline) from between *situations* within the archive – a form of dissection – and gave the entities at play their own space. Disabling and removing the archived *situations* from their original context/ history formed a new relationship: new forces and new narratives to think with; what entities I was seeing, what I was experiencing in the new (d)a/r/ta sets without recognisable forms. This friction forced my perceptual sensing to pause while adapting to a new kind of structure-less percept: a structure unconstrained by the familiar.

Tracing marks initially unseen or disregarded, I made separate Procreate ‘canvases’ for the *sticky* (Healy, 2019) emergent themes. Through iterative tracings, this way of conceptualising and being with the *situations* through disabling made me wonder with and for all the narratives previously neglected from this attention. This concern soon fuelled a sense of urgency for contradictions, instability and iterative museum praxis, to tease at the structures and language mattering that box visual perception.

As I re-traced, tinkered, and re-traced again, I added more ‘layers’ of the entities to attend to the *felt* through “an unfolding, opening, evolving, expanding, manifesting, laying open my sensory awareness, understandings of beauty and perceptual sensibility” (Irwin, 2003, p. 64) and formed a new series of iterations titled *Tracing digital traces 2: Beyond articulation series, 2022*.



Fig 35: *Beyond articulation series*

The shift in relationship between the two iterations, from visual data analysis of deconstructed form towards an impulsive disabling of the work, has informed implications emerging from the research study. The new *Beyond articulation* series presented visual narratives with multiple openings and movement. The forms, with/out their usual structure, are alleviated from an imposed coded language and are in ‘naked’ contiguity, bringing attention to the forms “beyond use-value” (Harris & Holman Jones, 2022, para, 25).



Fig 36: One data set, two alternative narratives



Fig 37: *Traces, together*



Fig 38: *Transparent (d)a/r/ta encounters*



## Data informing (d)a/r/ta

Tracing five museum Instagram accounts over a period of 20 days of museum closure, revealed flipped narratives, plants as objects and the flattening of institutional hierarchies. Could this suggest that the pandemic was a catalyst for conceptualising a future museum that exists *beyond* normative parameters? The data informed multiple (d)a/r/ta sets, and has fed future thinking *with* digital collaborators, and asks, *what's possible?*

### Openings

The 20 Days of 2020 data, traced a unique period for Melbourne museums. Museums and audiences were in a state of 'being' *with/out* – *with/out* usual activity, *with/out* physical access, *with/out* the gaze to activate the physical objects and place. Being *with/out* has underscored this candidature – without the usual conditions for pedagogical structures, yet *with* pause for new possibilities for the sector.

This space unfolded an 'active participation' with the world (Irwin 2005 p.898-899) where the in/betweens of concepts, image and texts provoked imaginaries for new 'pedagogies of place' (Irwin et al, 2015 p.72) and re-negotiation with human existence (Biesta, 2019). Throughout my inquiry art making processes have put thought to sight, initially for interpretation and then as an act of invention (Irwin et al, 2015 p,72) for and with the future of museum digital archives, audience and relational digital pedagogies. The tongue-tied nature of being with thinking for future being, has challenged me in this work, but has driven a new urgency to be *with* the world (Biesta, 2019) "a critical exchange...that is reflective, responsive and relational" (Springgay, 2008, p.160).

Working within 'non-traditional research output', was an initial prod, an opening to engage with things other than the traditional and engage with other possibilities for this candidature an area I hope this contributes toward. But, I wonder, who will read it? *Who is educational research for?*

Biesta's (2019) world centered approach for education centres on 'what it means to live one's life, and to live it well – at the very heart of art education.'" Being with my/selves and

contemplating what mattering matters in (my/our) museum education pedagogy, I realise that it is the fostering of this thinking that informs the mattering for the next.

## Excess

Methods and pedagogies of discomfort have kept me actively vulnerable, transparent and experimental. They challenged and nurtured my intuition, impulsivities and multiple ways of sense making. The re-fascination *with* creativity, its processes, that at times felt had a force unto itself, propelled me, while also overwhelmed me with the sense of weight and responsibility of the re-engagement that it brings. This rupturing considers the alternatives to the alternatives and has become swept up in deep philosophical musing about onto-epistemological foundations for our work and the many ways, we each know, be and do that get muted by the architectures we walk within. After deleting a lot of this formational thinking from the paper, I realise this has been the *excess* breeding future inquiries.

It reveals the rhizome at work, the assemblages propagating and starting to form.

It has also reminded me, that what we choose to trace/to matter in our work informs the stories we tell. Teaching for multiple tracings, for multiple stories, commit us to ‘never rest’ and to keep our pedagogies in motion.

So, from this point I wonder *with* posthuman museums of the future. Can they be imagined for *wilding* (Harris & Holman Jones, 2022, para, 26). *What might a posthuman museum look like?*

This question has led me toward experimenting with Spoke by Mozilla, a virtual 3D space free from contextual frames of references, algorithms, digital habits and behaviours. The site forced an acclimatisation, immersion and disembodiment from anthropocentric ways, toward engagement with an *other* way of being, doing and seeing. It allowed me to build-in interstitial spaces, contemplative immersive reflexive *worlds* and curate with an endless rhizome to tell the story of this candidature while *experiencing* the central questions and thinking with future otherness.

Working as architect, curator, artist, participant and builder in Spoke, opened pedagogista imaginings and sensorial wonderment. The experiential dis/embodyment from my human self, as walking, building avatar, opened conceptual makings of new relational encounters. *What is the place of the metaverse in this new ecology?*

When we look across the GLAM sector at the increased incorporation of digital technologies for offering alternative visual and immersive encounters,<sup>7</sup> or, digital preservation methods and 3D modelling<sup>8</sup> and live, immersive entertainment,<sup>9</sup> the public's appetite for whole body, sensory engagement may open opportunities for art education, curriculum and pedagogies. How might the wonderment of these experiences challenge human sensory perception and engage senses previously dormant? How might curriculums account for the more-than-human forces that may contribute to renewed understanding of the world (Kaplan, 2017)?



Fig 39: Initial experimentations in Spoke



Fig 40: Multiplatform digitally born worlds

Free of museum interpretative frames, mediation or architecture, future thinking with Web 4.0 metaverse, offers consideration for the next iteration for museum education 'pedagogies of place' (Irwin et al, 2015 p.72) shaping curricula and responsive pedagogies.

## (In)sight/sites for future research

Speculating with post human and Feminist New Materialist theories offers a way to think with the creative, entangled ecologies of this exegetical for the next version of museum education within Web 4.0, and ask the question:

*How might experimental museum pedagogies and visual languaging be informed by imaginaries within the metaverse?*

What data might benefit the exploration of this question? I propose a collaborative computational research project mapping and storying museum pedagogical experimentation with museum educators. Incorporating Instagram as research/education creation feedback loop as daily calls to practice, and Mozilla Hubs for collective pedagogical imaginings by museum education staff, this future inquiry as PhD may offer interrogation into the potentialities of space to place imaginings for praxis.

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<sup>7</sup> Examples such as VR storytelling (V&A museum, 2021) and re-discovering masterpieces (Louvre, 2019). Or gaming builds (Franklin Museum, 2022) and commissioning artists (Anadol).

<sup>8</sup> Google arts and culture database seeks to preserve cultural heritage, sacred sites and war-threatened heritage for audiences using 3D modelling and digital preservation methods for remote access.

<sup>9</sup> See example, Fever labs, a global entertainment event company collaborating to create immersive experiences with Van Gough, Dali and Monet artworks.

## Mozilla Hubs - a collective build for pedagogical imaginaries

Separated from the museum's historical *weight*, a virtual interstitial space may offer a space for museum educators to challenge pedagogical comforts and attune to rhizomic, responsive pedagogies that feed and are fed by the creative conditions of being with/out. The metaverses architecture would form from/with their ideas, reflections, curiosities and imaginings, that together become their, collective alternative museum space, and contribute to the rich pedagogical research work already in metaverse as research site/sight (Healy, Coleman et, al, [2023](#)).

## Museum Instagram - research creation for small disruptions

Informed by the pandemic condition of vulnerability, discomfort and isolation, the visual digital a/r/tographic work would map the exploration of relational digital pedagogies through documentation of collective 'architecture', participant and research creation. All data would be housed on collective Miro board for a transparency and visible process. Discussions about experimental pedagogies, visual languages and site/sight developmental architecture would inform iterative researcher and educator creations shared for transparency and invitation via the museum's Instagram site, as a responsive feedback loop to the museum sector. Digital pedagogical experiments, reflections upon engaging with multiple hybridities of physical, 2.0, 3.0 and 4.0 in collaboration with digital collaborators would provide provocations for consideration throughout.

## Conclusion

The archived institutional body language, of Melbourne museums in 2020 lockdown, opened fertile explorative spaces for new visual digital a/r/tographic methods. Tracing the digital traces ruptured thinking and informed a triggering event that led a new narrative set, opening contemplation for re-visiting and re-looking with imaginaries in re-search. This visual and written exegesis has woven a braiding of 'selves' *with* the world and has formed thicker entanglements with research creation for future pedagogical thinking. Tracing as method and reflexive praxis, may conceivably offer pedagogies that are ready for the nature of posthuman museums of the future.

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