

amanda
teixeira

how to

peel

an orange

california institute of the arts

11/27 - 12/01
D300

reception 11/29 5-8 PM

If people arrive, tell them I'm living my inverse

...

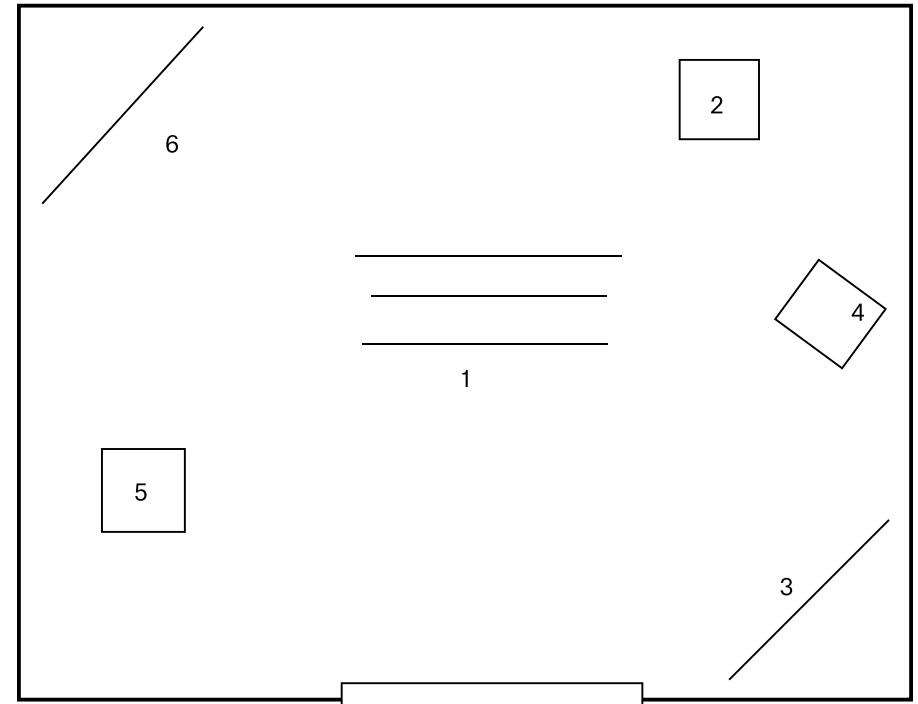
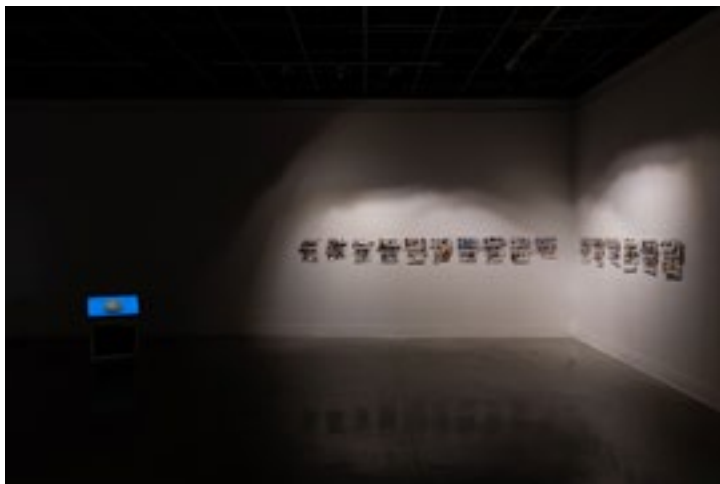
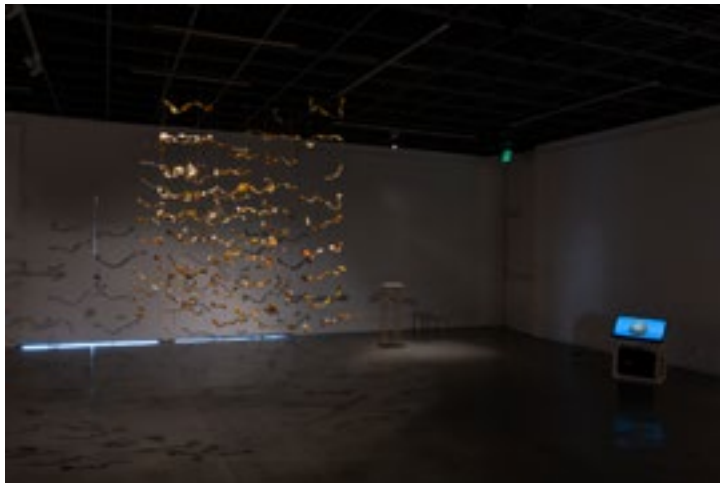
That there's a fulgent hollow fully opened

And a dark spot drawn on the chalk walls

Where the woman-inverse put herself.

[hilda hilst - the man on high]





1
how to peel an orange or
invisible acts of care
98 orange peels
golden thread
wood

2
a worm that ate the catalog back cover
to escape the european painting tradition
found object

3
anti-index or
leave of absence or
lack of recognition; a strategy of control
48 pages of FPG stock photography catalog
1993 (children, family, groups, couples, men,
women, nudes)
metal holders

4
orange peel conversations;
spoken silences
video
5 minute loop

5
failed monument
wood
rock
glitch

6
soft floor plan of
my living room –
santa clarita 91381
red rosin builders paper



1

My father used to cut oranges and gave me the wedges unpeeled, ready to eat. During that time, I was looking after him, and his care for me was limited to these oranges. Both of us sitting on the flowered sofa, the TV sound in the background, his worn-out slippers, we talked about something other than how long he would be around. Have you ever considered going to Japan? he asked me once. I learned to peel oranges by watching him, in a gesture of care and attention. This carcass peel doesn't always represent conversation, but sometimes it's instead silence and everything that this silence means. Language is more than the written and spoken word: it is a gesture, an accent, gaze, pace, and the lack of language. It is also silence, the loss of, lack of words, speechlessness, skin, texture, smell.

This show uses different tactics to explore the spaces in-between. Looking at everyday gestures and banal materials, this show thinks of a language that when spoken everyone understands—by the loss of language, the language of loss. Beyond what could be described as presence and absence, “how to peel an orange” is an open and eerie process of what could happen in the space where it is not—where it misses. With an invisible thread, this works look provisional, but claims some kind of land in the instability, as if a boat was an island.

I wasn't researching any particular subject, /
but just accepted what came along,
even if it took the form of a newspaper
cutting: books have formed out of
this natural enough acceptance.
To give a meaning to things that they don't have.

[joan brossa - the mirror on the road]

A Little Too Much

There's something we haven't talked about yet, something about decay, about the collapse that anticipates absence. It's in the lack of support in which a paper house is flat and sculptural at the same time but just for a while before it falls, creases, crumples, rips. During the seconds in which it dries without molding, suspends without artifice, hangs at the limit of its own weight. The temporary — and admitting the need for it to be temporary, for it to be quick, for it to exist in any form, however briefly, for it to exist and resist for a week and then you don't know, whatever. It doesn't really matter. Pouco importa. Little matters. Over the past few years, looking closely at what Little is and why it matters - Little is banal, it's invisible, it's discarded, it's sometimes ignored. But it is necessary. Half a teaspoon of yeast is little, but it's essential for the cake to rise.

On the other side of the little there is the Much. And they dance back and forth, changing positions depending on the context. Too much takes time, it takes will, it takes collectivity, it takes patience. Too Much is sometimes too much. Too much can be obsessive and obsession is sometimes essential. Too Little, a little more happens as an accident, while too Much is imposed as a necessity. When too little is too much, it feels like an absence, the structure collapses and becomes a shadow of itself. When too much is too much, there is no difference. When they dance, some necessary and magical accident happens.

Those ways we have to settle. Moving house. I hate packing: collecting myself up, pulling myself apart. Stripping the body of the house: the walls, the floors, the shelves. Then I arrive, an empty house. It looks like a shell. How I love unpacking. Taking things out, putting things around, arranging myself all over the walls. I move around, trying to distribute myself evenly between rooms. I concentrate on the kitchen. The familiar smell of spices fills the air. I allow the cumin to spill, and then gather it up again. I feel flung back somewhere else. I am never sure where the smell of spices takes me, as it has followed me everywhere. Each smell that gathers returns me somewhere; I am not always sure where that somewhere is. Sometimes the return is welcome, sometimes not. Sometimes it is tears or laughter that makes me realize that I have been pulled to another place and another time. Such memories can involve a recognition of how one's body already feels, coming after the event. The surprise when we find ourselves moved in this way or that. So we ask the question, later, and it often seems too late: what is it that has led me away from the present, to another place and another time? How is that I have arrived here or there?

[sara ahmed - queer phenomenology]





There is a _ that is as much something as it is nothing.

It is a gap, a _ of loss and grief, a _ of magic and new possible life practices, is out of time and a place for memory, is a _ for failure and learning. In a house, it would be the _ of the hallway, but also the hinges and the _ under the door where you would put a doorstep, the hole in a door-knob where your key fits almost perfectly. It is _ button. It is the _ between the bodies on the couch and the _ inside an empty stomach. It's the mold of a body in a pillow that recovers its shape during the day after waking up. It is the breathing, the inhaling and the exhaling and the moment of empty lungs in between. The mm, hums, ohs, and other sounds you do before saying something. It is the texture of the inside of a skull. It's the smell of food in cooking hands and the shape of the water when they are washed. It is snakeskin and the distance inhabited by migratory birds. The endsheets and the gutter in a book. The _, enough, to move toes inside a shoe. It's the thin layer of dust in every object and in the carpet. It is everything once eaten, and the memory of not being there but also never leaving.

Behind a stone, inside a book, in seeing through, seeing the inside, slowing down time.

An important claim I make in this chapter, and an important foundation for the arguments to be developed in this book, is that the most productive way to overcome this dualism is not to do away with representation (and by extension telos, intentionality, "aboutness," and selfhood), or simply project human kinds of representation elsewhere, but to radically rethink what it is that we take representation to be. To do this, we need first to provincialize language. We need, in Viveiros de Castro's words, to "decolonize thought," in order to see that thinking is not necessarily circumscribed by language, the symbolic, or the human.

[eduardo kohn - how forests think]





The Ministry of Mothliness

“The Moth might not understand Measurements or Instructions. The Bookworm lives in a book that is bigger than itself, but doesn’t know it. Fortunately the lack of awareness of its surroundings doesn’t stop the Worm from eating it; it ignores the meaning of what it’s eating because it’s nothing more than food. The Moth doesn’t know if it’s an Art Book, encyclopedia britannica, the first edition of The Metamorphosis from Kafka, or the Bible. The Taste of a book is not defined by the words printed on its surface. It doesn’t matter: the Moths, the Worms, the Termites, the Bookworms only think about eating out of Necessity rather than Pleasure. [...]”

I compost my soul in this hot pile. The worms are not human; their undulating bodies ingest and reach, and their feces fertilize worlds. Their tentacles make string figures.

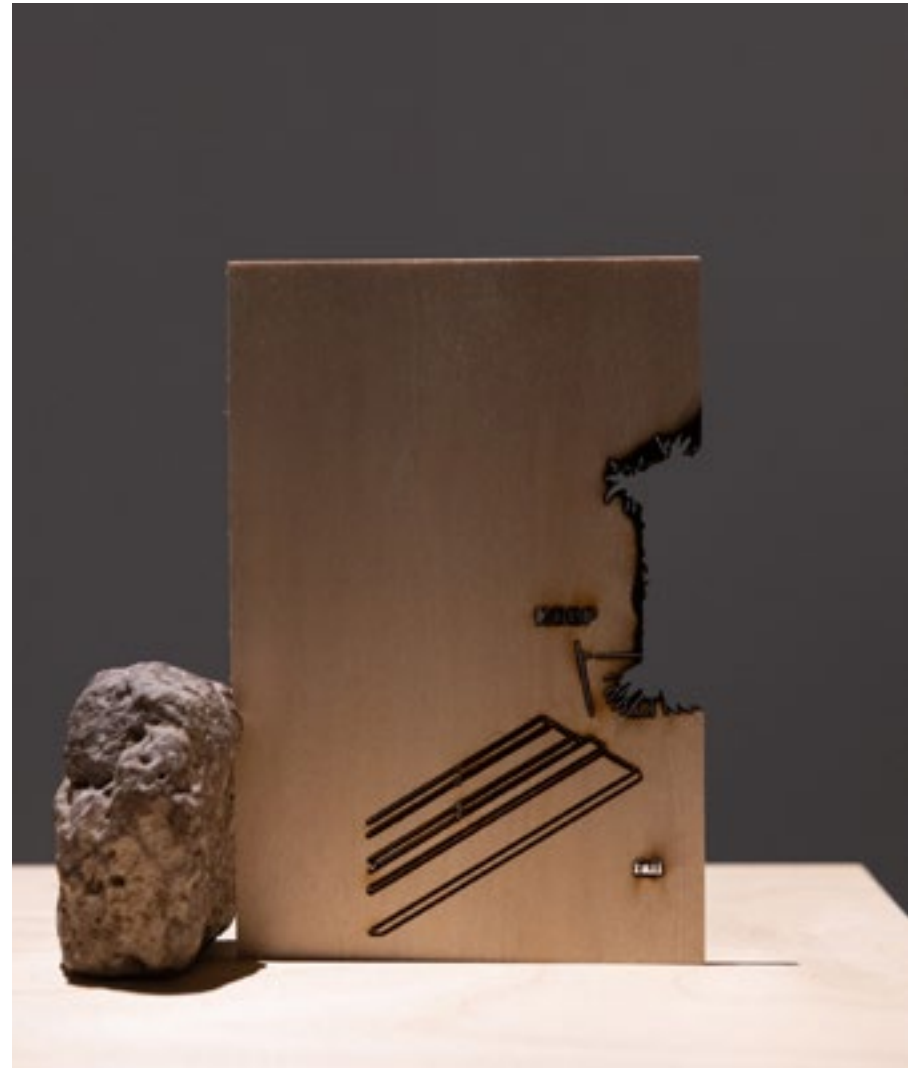
[donna haraway - staying with the trouble]



monuments

The monument's nature is monumental, mo-nu-men-tal, its monumental scale being larger than the body of the beholder, being firm on the ground, having a base, being heavy, having weight, physical weight, hard to carry, impossible to move, to be stable, being massive, sometimes-hollow-but-not-giving-the impression-of, giving the impression of being heavy of having integrity of being true of representing, monumentally representing a truth. It is made to be outside, to be seen as you walk on the street, to be a reference for a street, to be larger than a sidewalk, in the open-air, where there's no roof, where there's no railing, the moment is monumental in itself, it doesn't need, it doesn't have anything above it, it is in and of itself and that's enough. The monument must not be suspended, it must not have a hollow base, it must not have an unstable base, it must not fall, it must be firm, it must be intact. The monument cannot shake with the slightest touch or fall with the slightest breath, if it breathes heavily, blows out, the monument must not fall, in the event of an earthquake it must not fall, without all this the monument is not a monument it is something else it is an illusion of a monument it is a souvenir of the Eiffel tower with the tip chipped off after the cat knocked it to the ground and played with it, it is not a monument if the cat can knock it over. It doesn't matter if it represents everything and everyone that should be represented, all

families, women whether young or old, men whether married or not, monuments, the nuclear family is a monument and there is no monument that proves otherwise. Monuments are for people, for men on horses, for people, but not just anyone, not just any monument, for men with hats, mustaches and swords, like Don Quijote, for men and horses, but also for men without horses, and for horses without men, never. It needs to be legible, it needs to have a representation, an image, a peel, a bust, a face, it needs to try to represent the unrepresentable that's what the monument is. These are anti-monuments, they can fall down if there's an earthquake, they can slip if someone shouts in front of them, if someone sighs, they can fall down, and it's good that they should fall down, monuments to the failure, monuments to falling.



5

“to refuse to call others to order, to refuse interpellation and the reinstantiation of the law. When we refuse, Moten and Harney suggest, we create dissonance and more importantly, we allow dissonance to continue – when we enter a classroom and we refuse to call it to order, we are allowing study to continue, dissonant study perhaps, disorganized study, but study that precedes our call and will continue after we have left the room. Or, when we listen to music, we must refuse the idea that music happens only when the musician enters and picks up an instrument; music is also the anticipation of the performance and the noises of appreciation it generates and the speaking that happens through and around it, making it and loving it, being in it while listening. And so, when we refuse the call to order – the teacher picking up the book, the conductor raising his baton, the speaker asking for silence, the torturer tightening the noose – we refuse order as the distinction between noise and music, chatter and knowledge, pain and truth.”

[fred moten and stefano harney - undercommons]



4

Listening to planes fly by, sometimes more than three at the same time, and fortunately there are more birds than planes. They draw maps in smoke in the sky, long straight clouds that last hours and disappear. Punish the eyes looking at that which passes in the sky and cunningly accept that its name is cloud, its answer cataloged in the mind.*

In a Green Folder you can fit an airplane, a bird, a monument, the whole field of biology and the art history that came before us. It might fit those that continued to make art despite the wars and the bombs and the rain and the fruit and the visas and the birds and the passports and the men and their horses. If in a moment they fall, if we make them fall and we rewrite them and we cut them up and choose what remains, sometimes the slices sometimes the peels sometimes the skins and sometimes the gesture and the smell of the orange that I wish I could put in an folder and keep and send to those who are far away to the people in the rain. In these folders they live side by side like a bilingual edition, the maps that represent a continent and the space of borders and walls and the perfect map that takes up too much space, and doesn't fit the Green Folder anymore. Perhaps rolled up, perhaps folded, perhaps shredded. [...]

*[julio cortázar]



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amanda teixeira, MFA thesis show

california institute of the arts

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D300 gallery