

Material acts and embodied learning encounters

‘ the mode of existence has to do with the emergent quality of the experience, not with the factually cross-checked identity of the objects featuring in it’

(Massumi, 2013, p11)

Context

Tate (Modern and Britain)

Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts (University of East Anglia).

Goldsmiths (Centre of Arts and Learning)

Through interdisciplinary art practice I am establishing new material methodologies to re – position the learning encounter as a practice, and as a form.

I am forming functioning art objects that operate as agents for learning. These pedagogical art objects inhabit a territory between learning theory, object making and gallery interpretation

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Questions

What does learning look like?

How do we understand learning as a material event?

How can the art object achieve a more potent pedagogical status?

How can the subjective associations of those who use the objects and the context in which these associations occur, constitute the parameters of the work?

How can the act and material of art pedagogy transform approaches to teaching and learning practices?



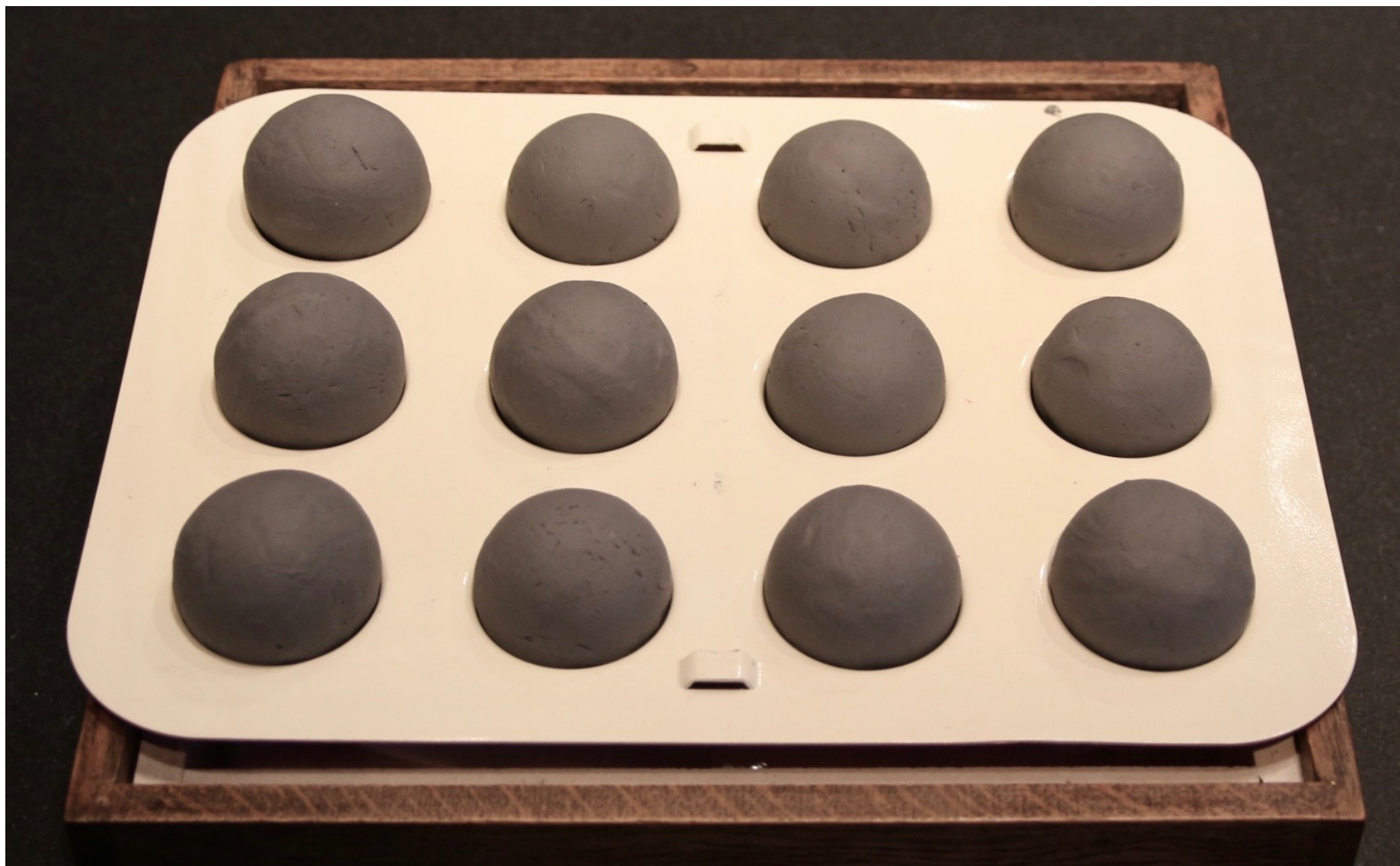


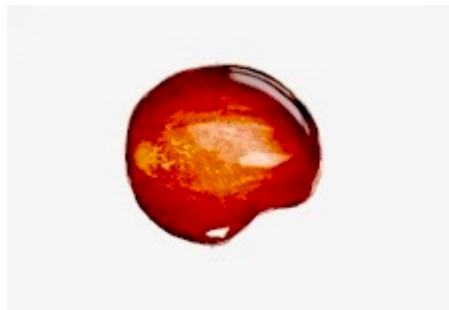




Whilst referencing previous experience this new research critically pushes and extends the practice towards new material outcomes to explore what learning looks like. The learning experience becomes the catalyst for the making and application of this new category of objects.

My method is my practice, it interrogates the status of materiality within the context of art pedagogy. In this increasingly dematerialised context where interpersonal process is prioritised and physical outcomes are overwhelmed, I am pushing towards a 'vital materiality' (Bennet, 2010, p.137) where subject and object merge.





Tortoise and the Hare



I am arguing for a heightened experience of 'being present in the object encounter – a direct haptical and material response.

This physical engagement with matter is seen by Garoian (2013, p.124) as a 'prosthetic embodiment' where the materiality of the body and materiality of the art object extend from each other prosthetically.

Can this extension from participant to object and back again enable the subject to become integrated as part of the object and more materially present?



What does learning look like what does it feel like?

Drowning occasionally

A new jigsaw

A shift from cerebral to a state of play

(MA Arts Practice students 2016)

Drowning occasionally

- a bath of water, floral foam, sponges, water, something in balance, scales, pulley, elastic, weighted, polystyrene, yo-yo, discarded packaging, custard, laptop
- cool, reflective, wet, weightless, muted, saturated, sleep, moving against a crowd, movement, slow, transformative, with weight, luke warm, black, slippery and smothering, fear/deep, sense of frustration

- For art to open our eyes to the world it has to do something other than remain sensible. It has, to borrow a hermeneutic metaphor, to speak, and it can only do so if it successfully enables us to understand that there is something more to be seen in it than what is immediately before the eye.
- P8 rethinking the visual in contemporary thinking. The hermeneutics of seeing.

New Materialism

Barad (2003,) clearly identifies the cultural need to understand the importance of materiality in epistemology - that *matter matters*.

The recognition of *matter* as material language extends our understanding of knowledge, how we know it, and how it is encountered.

Handlings





I see (hear, feel, smell, touch) these objects as openings – sometimes you can't see beyond that but you know somehow there's a gap that you want to squeeze through because what's on the other side is unknown and exciting. You can turn certain parts of your brain off – and start with a feeling not a concept – the connections bubble inside, popping on the surface of an internal dialogue – is it pain? Is it pleasure? Is it play? Then a thought or idea emerges which you almost dismiss because it was unexpected and is perhaps unwelcome.

Now, where will we go with that idea? Now the door is open.....now we have used these objects as 'pokey sticks' messing up the 'normal' order of things – we will hold it until, like a pair of magnets we are pulled towards something with a 'clang' of clarity, as if it was meant to be.

