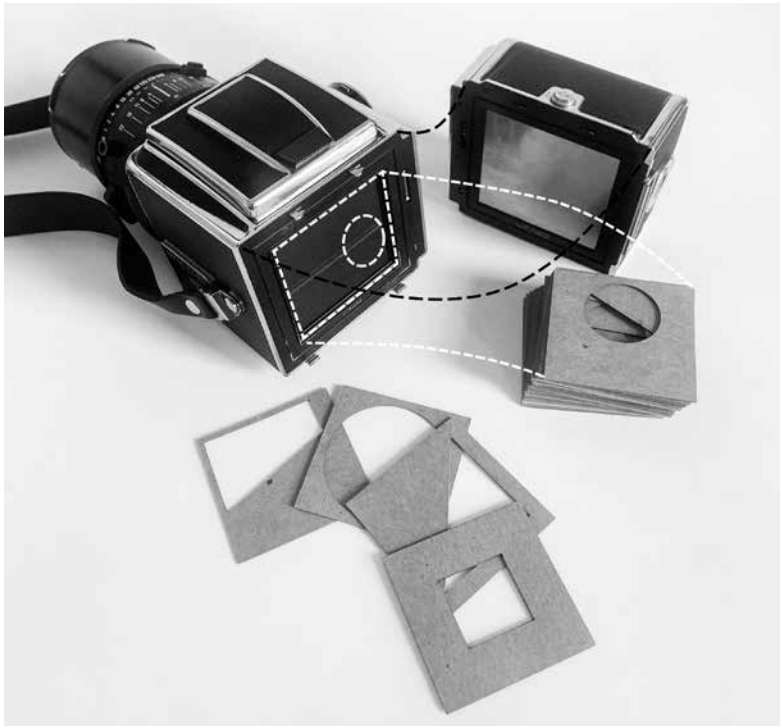
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Erin Manning and Troels Steenholdt Heiredal discuss autistic perception as a kind of slowness, a quality of perception edging in, not to be categorised but experienced.

Erin Manning
interviewed by Troels
Steenholdt Heiredal

Exploring autistic perception in architecture



1. Photo showing a Hasselblad camera with the film case removed from the camera-body. A stack of cardboard squares and four squares fanned out at the front. Dashed lines show how the cardboard squares are fitted in between the camera-body and film case, masking out the film when shooting. This is the process Troels Steenholdt Heiredal used to create multiple exposure photos representing his autistic perception.

Troels Steenholdt Heiredal writes: I had the privilege of diving into conversation with Erin Manning, a renowned Canadian philosopher, artist, dancer, and mover of the world. Last summer she showed her work in the exhibition *100 Acres* at the Richard Saltoun Gallery in London, which was composed of two 25-yard cuts of monk's cloth that are sewn, embroidered, knotted, and tufted *[4]*. Our discussion centred on how and where we create, informed by exploring neurodivergence and neurotypicality through an architectural lens.

Troels Steenholdt Heiredal (TSH): Please could you start by speaking about how you came to, and how you understand, autistic perception, because I think some people might hear it here for the first time.

Erin Manning (EM): I didn't set out to theorise autism or become a theorist of neurodiversity. It happened much more organically. I had been trying to write about movement. Most of my work in that period focused on semiotics of dance – through dance history, analysis of scores, or the sociology of dance. But there was very little work on movement, *per se*. Dancers have this incredible intelligence around movement, but it's not an intelligence that requires words for the most part. If you're in a studio, you are going to move into a movement, not talk about movement. I wanted to find ways of articulating movement's own mode of thought, to see whether there was a way to grow a philosophy from the movement itself.

In that context, I saw Mel Baggs's video 'In My Language',[1] and that changed the whole conversation. What I see in that eight-minute film is a brilliant thinker giving us a way of thinking about movement. When I wrote about the video in my book *Relationscapes*,[2] I actually didn't write about autism. Rather, I had this strong intuition that we were making a mistake when we said that thought and language are completely imbricated. I wanted to think about thought *in* and *as* movement. I had no sense at the time that what I was writing

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had a connection to autism. But a bunch of young autistics got in touch with me – DJ Savarese,[3] Tito Mukhopadhyay,[4] Mel Baggs[5] – and so I started reading all the blogs I could find. These included the work of Anne Corwin,[6] Ido Kedar, [7] Jim Sinclair,[8] and so many others whose voices were becoming more present in that period, like Estee Klar and her important *Joy of Autism* blog around her son, Adam Wolfond.[9] The autistics I was reading were for the most part early teenagers and I was so honoured to be in conversation with them. I asked them what I could do, or how I could learn from them. They suggested I teach them philosophy. That became the book *Always More Than One*,[10] in which I began to flesh out the concept of autistic perception: a modality of perception amongst autistics that slowed the configuration of the world into categories. There seemed to be a way that autistics perceived, that backgrounded category, or what Anne Corwin calls chunking.

Very blatantly put: when autistics engage with the world, they don't see objects first and foremost. Of course, they see objects too, but there's this kind of slowness, this quality of perception edging in. I recognised this tendency from my reading in neuroscience, and from the work of Brian Massumi in *Parables for the Virtual*.[11] As I developed the concept of autistic perception, it became important to underscore that *all* perception works in this way, but that autistics enjoy the glimmer of that edging in more emphatically. None of us perceive objects. An object grows from perceptual fielding into a segregated form-like structure. We know this neurologically, but what autistics teach us is *how*. I think there's no question that autistics directly perceive in a more complex way. This direct perception is often taught in artistic environments, and sought through drugs or other mind-altering practices. But, for many, as we grow up in a world that prizes selecting out and categorising, the experience of it is mostly lost.

When I was getting ready to publish *Always More Than One*, I said to the autistics I was in conversation with that I would be accused of romanticising autism. And they said to me, Erin, the world has been romanticising neurotypicality for so long.

TSH: It most certainly has! And this is the other concept I think it's important to address. Could you talk about your definition of neurotypicality?

EM: So this is probably where I puzzle people the most. Like everybody, in the beginning, I thought neurodiversity was a person, and neurotypicality was a person. That shifted over time, especially when I began to think through systemic racism and whiteness.

In my book *The Minor Gesture* I was beginning to think of neurotypicality as a kind of first-identity politics, out of which all the other identity politics emerged from disability through race and gender. Fred Moten was one of my manuscript reviewers, and he said to me: Erin, I think all black life is neurodiverse life.[12] So there's a footnote in the book that says this. At the time I couldn't engage it directly. It became my next book, *For a Pragmatics of the Useless*.[13] This was a turning point where I realised, OK, I'm coming to a new vocabulary here. Neurotypicality is whiteness: a basic organising principle that orchestrates a kind of normativity around body and knowledge. Very early, as we are moved through developmental stages, we are taught what a normative body should be able to do. This happens from the very first medical appointment our parents go to where the baby is weighed. There's a developmental chart, and we're told that at this point the baby needs to be able to sit and talk and so on.

Here the question of racism becomes very important. Not every child is born developmentally equal in society. Fred [Moten] doesn't mean all black people are autistic. He means that neurotypicality is not accessible across the board. So, when I say neurotypical is whiteness, what I'm trying to say is, folks, skin colour is not the basis of whiteness. Yes, white skin has privilege, but that's the easiest way to talk about whiteness. The harder way is to say that it comes with the predisposition toward a certain idea of development. That's how I've come to think about it. I've turned very, very, very slowly in my writing toward the idea of normopathy to underscore that what I am trying to get at here is not a neurological category (as though you could cleanly distinguish brain and body), but rather a normative standpoint that is wielded and so thoroughly entwined into what counts as valuable, worthy existence, that we have very little sense of it unless we are excluded from it. I've always known that the vocabulary of the neuro is problematic. It's just too limited and orients too stridently toward pathology. The interesting question is not whether you're neurodiverse or not, but whether there are conditions through which neurodiversity can thrive? And, if there are, then it doesn't matter if you're autistic or not, because life is possible.

TSH: Yes, it's about creating spaces for us all to thrive. Learning that I'm autistic is the best thing that happened to me because it produced a new language with which I could write myself back into my life. But I'm still often caught in … writing myself into neurodiversity, editing myself into neurotypicality. A framing that came from me asking about the difference between explaining and exploring. I've spent a lot of time explaining my autistic self to others, and in the beginning to myself too. But I would rather explore it. At the moment I'm exploring what I currently call an *Autistic Architectural Approach*. I think we so often reduce architecture to building. It becomes sculptural. It's about what does the building look like. And not how does the building function? What does the building build? And I was wondering if you see any opening for autistic perception within architecture?

EM: Yes. There are so many ways to enter into this conversation. I'll start with Arakawa and Gins.[14] They argued for a way of architecting life through the refusal of category. They dreamed of an architecture where you had to reinvent your ways of moving and living every single day. They built two of these speculative architectures, one of them in Long Island, and one in Tokyo, called the Bioscleave Houses. I visited both of them. They looked like play schools, very colourful,

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and had no predisposed environments. Well, you could tell it was a bathroom because there was a toilet in there and a kitchen because of the stove. But they tried to not impose a kind of idea of what a living room would be or a bedroom. They also didn't privilege flat surfaces. In the house in Long Island, the floor had all these bumps, and was very difficult to move in.

I met Madeline Gins when she called the house to ask my partner Brian to write a blurb for their new book *We Are Not Allowed To Die*.[15] Madeline was extremely curious. When Brian wasn't home, she asked me to do it instead. Over the next years, we started to talk about autistic perception. It was obvious that all the work that they had done was committed to this question. She wanted me to take autistics to the Bioscleave House, but I didn't think it was a good idea because the autistics I knew would've found the ground too hard to walk on. I said to her, I don't think autistics need the ground to be so hard to walk on, they're already perceiving such complexity. And so we had these great conversations about how, in a way, she designed the house for neurotypicality – trying to introduce neurodiversity to neurotypical tendencies.

So we segue here into the classroom. What had been happening in that period for me was that SenseLab, the laboratory for thought in motion I had created, was growing a kind of neurodiverse architecture completely organically. I write about this in *For a Pragmatics of the Useless*, in the chapter called 'Practicing the Schizz'. I was teaching in the SenseLab space and was engaged in what people were calling composing. Over years, people came in everyday to shift the architecture of the environment in minimal ways. It was an extraordinary practice that involved feeling into the space and, through an attunement to material, bringing new angles of perception into view through tiny shifts. We worked with what we thought of as a composting of materials. Nothing fancy. The aim was to shift through subtraction as much as addition in order to create more opportunities for complexity – of sound, of visual field, of experience more broadly. This grew not for a public, but as a practice of making a world for study, in the sense Stefano Harney and Fred Moten give the term.[16] The world is so violent for neurodiversity. This became a site of refuge, importantly not as a finished environment but as a space for recomposition.

I taught in this space for several years. At a certain point, tunnels began to appear, and one day somebody brought a tent. I started noticing that students would arrive up to an hour early to get the tent or to be in the tunnel. And I realised, wow, this is how neurodiverse environments architect. These students were not people who would walk in and say I'm autistic or I'm neurodiverse. There was just a sense that being in that tent made it possible to learn. Over four or five years, as I was teaching in these constantly shifting spaces, I began to understand something architectural – that, given the right conditions, peoples' other ways of learning are foregrounded.

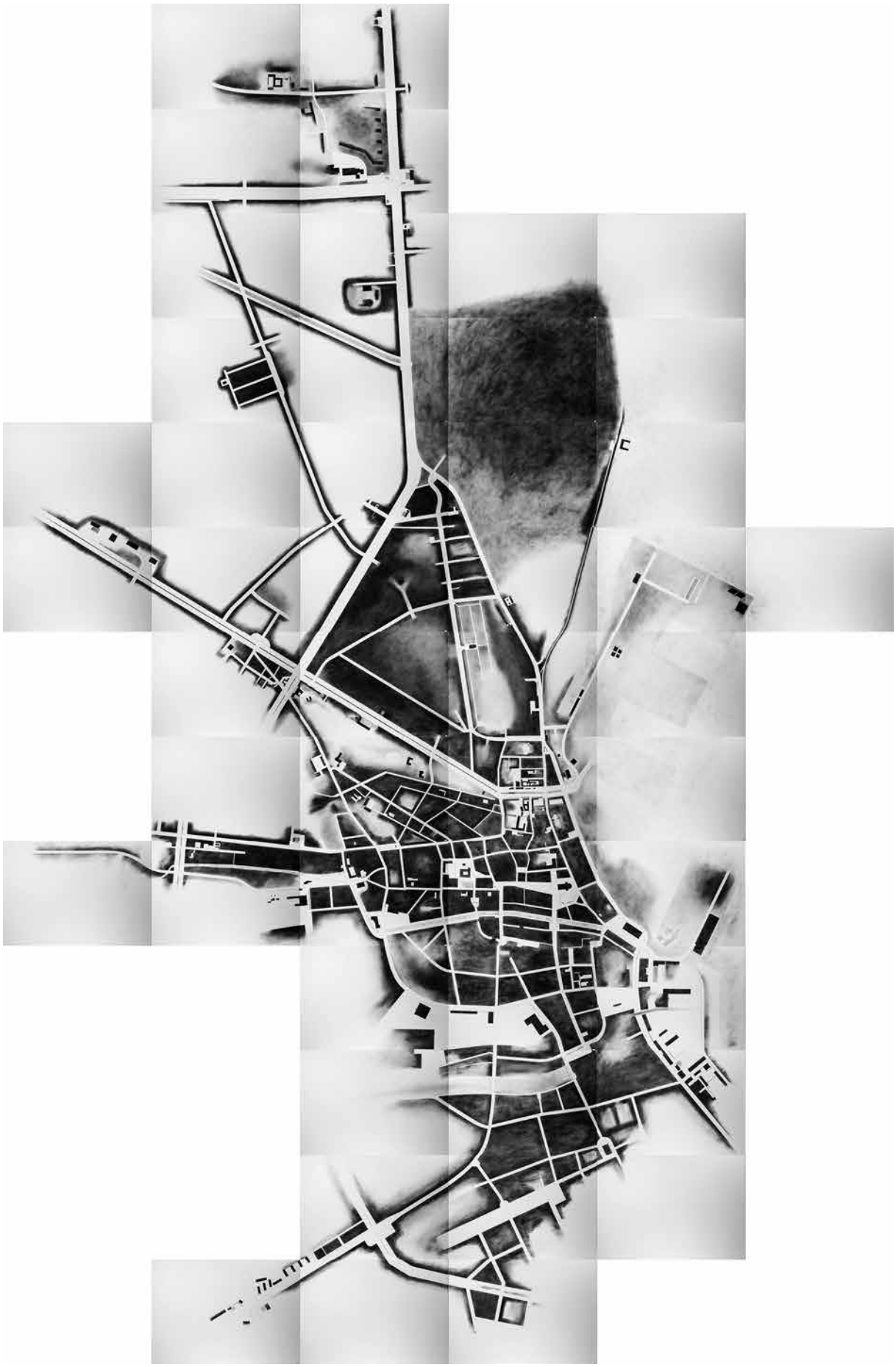
The students taught me this. Very slowly, they also tuned my body toward different teaching tendencies. Where, for instance, I might once have thought it was important that people face me when I teach, I began to feel that for many that was an impediment to learning so I stopped worrying about it. Once it became clear that the face-to-face was no longer required, many students stopped forcing themselves into that posture. It was common in the classroom to lie down, or even hide. And then this was amplified. I openly suggested people feel free to walk in and out, to take the class for a walk through a Skype connection. Eventually, I booked a separate room for people to go to if they needed an adjacent space. I had always had an online component for those who are excluded from university. My classes have always been open to anyone who wanted to participate. And I emphasise to all students that, if you can't leave the house, it might make the day liveable to just turn on the class and have it in the background.

One thing that really stood out is that, given the opportunity, people move a lot more than we might think. I know I need to move. To sit still is something we've been taught to do, but when enough people in the room start to move, other people begin to move too. And then as a teacher, you have to learn to not think that movement means people aren't paying attention. Even more important, you have to learn to not be interested in paying attention. It isn't urgent. And attention isn't paying, attention is moving.

I think that architecture and autistic perception become interesting when we stop doing that really superficial work that relegates the sensory to surface. For example, a sensing architecture as a wall that can be touched or that engages perception through some kind of visual screen. No, no, no, no, no. Every architecture is already shifting with autistic perception. What's interesting is to create the conditions for autistic perception to shape environments. Perceptually, not necessarily physically. I don't mean you have to take down walls. But sometimes even that can be necessary. I remember a day when people were doing badly, and they cut the legs off their kitchen table. Then suddenly the table was close to the ground and everything else could change with it. So that's how I think. But I'd be interested to hear how you think about *Autistic Architectural Perception*.

TSH: Let me illustrate it through an example first. I'm still early in my journey. I came aut in late 2019 at thirty-five,[17] and therefore I'm now able to revisit my earlier works and see how autistic perception has shown up without me being aware of it at the time. About thirteen years ago, I started shooting 35mm film, making multiple exposures. Through this, I realised that photographing the same city on top of itself again and again and again built invisible cities directly onto the film. [18] And those cities felt closer to my experience of them than typical photographs. Then, later on, I got a medium format camera.[19] Without knowing how to use it, it just felt right. I noticed that there is a tiny sliver of space inside the camera, between the back of the camera body and the detachable film case. So I started to make little cardboard squares that had different shapes cut out from them, a circle, a square, a trapezoid, and so on. I could put these cardboard cutouts into that space and mask parts of the film

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2. **The Aarhus Drawing, 5.6 x 3.6m, 2012. A large hand drawn plan map of the city of Aarhus, Denmark, drawn entirely from memory on 48 individual sheets of A2 paper, by Troels Steenholdt Heiredal. The areas of the city that were unknown to Heiredal, were simply not rendered in the drawing.**

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[1]. This allowed me to focus on specific parts of the city. Again, doing multiple exposures combining different cutouts allowed me to build new city constellations. But I can't see the cutout through the viewfinder, so I have to figure out what ends up on the film, by 'going into the camera' and imagining what the image looks like. The whole process becomes this deep conversation between the city, the camera, and me (see pp. 104–116).

Then, cut to last year, reading David Gissen's book *The Architecture of Disability* (see pp. 92–94), I was introduced to the blind art theorist Georgina Kleege[20] and her work adding disabled perceptions to the art canon. And I realised I was trying to express my actual autistic perception of the city. To this day, I still don't know where those cardboard cutouts came from. Initially I tried to figure that out. But more and more I'm now thinking, why do I need to figure that out? Making those photo-works is me writing myself into neurodiversity, trying to explain to people why is me editing myself into neurotypicality, which I don't believe is needed.

This is unfolded from my current thoughts around an *Autistic Architectural Approach*, based in wondering/wandering. Wondering is asking open-ended questions without the need to get a determined answer. There might be an answer. But it's not asked for that sake, it's asked to point out a direction to move toward. And wandering, which is deeply connected to the concept of autistic wandering[21], to walk and let yourself be led by the circumstances and not have a fixed route or destination in mind, here applies to a search for awareness in alternative places to the traditional capitals of knowledge, and allow what we find to direct the next step, not be so focused on the end goal that we miss what's right here. And, yes, we might hit a dead end, but that's okay. We can just backtrack a little, though we might not backtrack the exact same way, and so we still end up in a new place. So this is also about the spatial nature of the mind. And I reflect this in what you were saying too: that it's not about a built 'sense' architecture outside of us. I think that appears because many don't understand the deep implications of what it means to be neurodivergent. Similar many, myself included, do not understand what it really means to be in a wheelchair, but we can understand a ramp. And it's easy to produce a ramp. That's where it gets shorthanded into building. Not into architecting. I would love it if you would talk about the difference between architecting worlds rather than buildings.

EM: I think neurodiversity is in the perceptual field. Not only in the photograph that is born of those cardboard cutouts, but in the recognition that there's a sliver of space just big enough for that cardboard. That's a very autistic moment in itself. Neurodiversity is something to be surprised by. It's not something that you *are*, as though being were some kind of static state. What I mean is that, if we want to move beyond pathology, we have to see that neurodiversity is something labile: a quality of life-living that takes us with it, shifting the conditions of perception, and of existence more broadly.

I'm not saying there are not differences that can be pathologically defined – like autism, tourette's, schizophrenia, bipolar, or depression. But I am saying that neurodiversity cannot be reduced to a state, to a hardened neurology defined as states that can be measured and enumerated. Neurodiversity is a mode of worlding that takes us with it. For some of us, it brings real challenges. And it's important that we also recognise the ways that neurodiversity makes living difficult. Because it does. Living in neurodiverse ways means being hit a million times every day by 'doing it wrong'. Or simply 'being' wrong. But to dwell is to create a neurotypical baseline as a given, measuring difference according to lack. Neurodiversity is complexity, and this complexity is celebratory. The question is how to craft conditions for it in a world that is emphatically composed toward deintensification.

We must begin in the tunnel and go through the middle. So, if I speak personally, I had the most extraordinarily negative review of a book I'm working on a couple of days ago. Oh my God, you cannot imagine how negative it was! This is coming back to this question of making worlds. The book is perhaps one of the first close engagements with the work of Fernand Deligny in English. Deligny was part of La Borde with Felix Guattari in the mid-1960s. He became very interested in autistics, and ended up spending thirty years in the south of France creating conditions through which neurodiversity could thrive. In the first years, he developed a vocabulary of what he calls 'tracings', which I've translated as 'errant lines' (and others have translated as wander lines – both translations are fine). Deligny was interested in mapping autistic movements to better understand the rhythms and refrains of their everyday lives. The tracings were not, for the most part, drawn by autistics. They took the place of the reports that might in another context have been written by those taking care of the autistics. These tracings – maps – were placed in palimpsest. They are extraordinary documents that make felt the degree to which autistics have particular rhythms in their movements, places they return to.

Deligny and his co-workers go on to develop a whole vocabulary around these intensities. The book I am talking about is mostly a very close reading and translation of his work, a challenging job because Deligny invents language.

So I got this review from someone who hates the book. The review should be published as an example of the way neurotypicality is taken as a standpoint in the regime of legibility. Of course, any reviewer is welcome to despise a book. But this review went the next step. It wanted a kind of 'clarity' through 'critique' that would position, sequester, orient, develop, discern, describe. When I got this review, I wrote to the press and said there was simply no way for me to respond. In order for me to respond, I would have to fit myself into the neurotypical frame the reader was seeking. And that's so violent that I'm just not willing to do it. That's the world of your explanations, within the explaining/exploring diagram. There is such a push for this stance. The more neurodiverse space you take in the world, the more people fight you.

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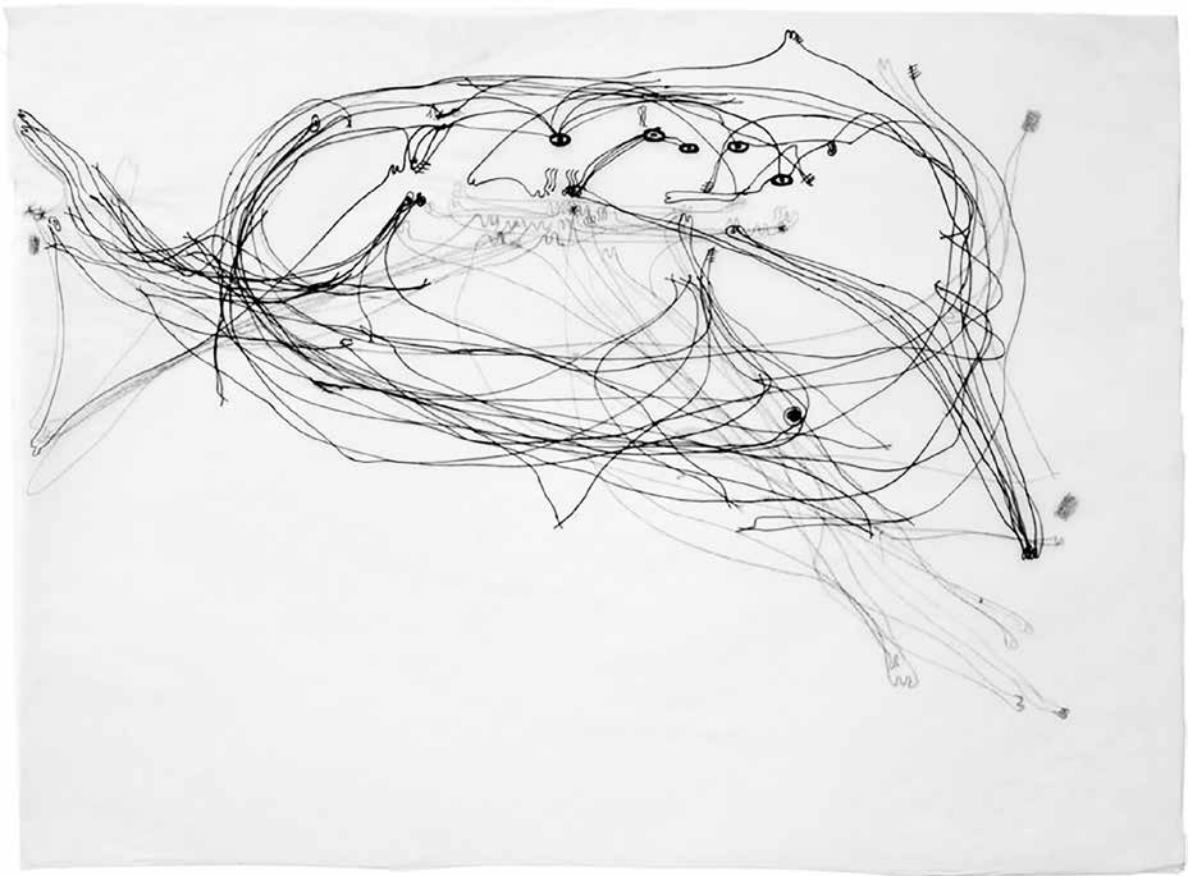
Sure, I could mitigate this by beginning with a personal narrative, positioning 'my-self', but that's neurotypical. I won't play that game. My life depends on it. I know that sounds extreme, but it actually does depend on it. It just feels like, that's not the world I want to live in. The world I want to live in is a world where neurodiverse ways are lived. And that's why no response is possible. Which is of course not to say that the book is 'right' or 'good'. It's to say that there is a dominant neurotypical logic that is taken as the standpoint for knowledge that I refuse. This is also what I was trying to say about architecture when I said we could not reduce neurodiverse architecting to buildings. Neurodiverse living means attuning to where autistic perception takes us, to the kinds of worlds it makes.

TSH: I love the connection between drawing, movement, living. I want to share two different drawings of this. The first is called The Aarhus Drawing. It's a plan drawing of the city of Aarhus, where I had lived for three years, done entirely from memory *[2]*. Upon returning to Copenhagen, I sat down at my desk to draw. I visualised leaving the architecture school. The street is wide, then slightly curves. I pass the alleyway and so on, and then suddenly it gets fuzzy. There are parts not drawn in at all, because I had never been there. It was an attempt to explore my inner geography.

The second drawing came out of me trying to draw out movement through space. In 2011, I was in Paris and taking the metro and I started to draw the rides, which is something I still do (just last November I was in São Paulo and drew a few rides). The idea of the drawings was to duplicate a horizontal line from the edge of the paper, like a robot. But the movement of the train interferes with that, and so the drawings are full of clues as to what's happened. I think a lot of people think of the subway as going in, coming up, and that whole space in between doesn't really exist for them. It's part of questioning the spaces we move through. I've been wondering if growing up in a grid city or a European medieval city is detectable in your mind, given the environment you are accustomed to navigating?

EM: It's a great question. I suspect the answer would have a lot to do with autistic perception. I go back to Deligny, and the errant line tracings *[3]*. In your drawing, I noticed the line of flight at the top, a kind of break there, and the intensifications. Because when you look at a drawing, you'll probably be drawn to where it differs from itself; where it opens. In the tracings, there are these kinds of differences, where the line becomes thicker or thinner or where it returns to itself. Deligny called these intensities '*chevêteres*'. Directly translated, *chevêtre* is truss. But Deligny doesn't mean truss in any kind of normal way. I think he means the quality of holding up, a kind of metastability. You can't separate out house and truss. The truss is a kind of intensification in the architecting of house.

If you think of spiralling tendencies – in a non-gridded space – I guess you would have to begin with a certain shape of *chevêtre*. This shape would return as a refrain. The refrain of a gridded city would be qualitatively different. But since we don't ever live in overview, our



3. **Monoblet, November 1976. Map of movements of three autistic children in the kitchen of "Y House" while making bread. Drawing by Fernand Deligny and his team. Image provided by Erin Manning.**

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4. **Digital photo of artwork included in Erin Manning's exhibition 100 Acres. The photos show monks cloths that are sewn, embroidered, knotted and tufted.**

movements themselves are perpetually reoriented by our perceptual tendencies. So I also think that if you tend more toward autistic perception, your *chevêtres* will be more spiralling no matter the space, because your ways are not going to be organised, in the first instance, by category.

Autistic perception is both more detailed and more abstract. It feels into complexity that defy genre. Not 'a' house, but house-field. Not 'a' park, but a greening. Or a feeling of a different rhythm in the walk. Or in an opening with fewer skyscrapers of a different quality of air or sky. Now, everyone feels this to a certain extent. There may be a street you're drawn to and you don't know why. It just feels like a street that could be walked down, or this street creates a kind of momentum toward another street, which lures you toward it. It could be half-conscious – like a desire to get away from the noise of a main street. Or the ease of walking on a wider pavement. Generally speaking, most of us don't think it through. But we have these tendencies and the tendencies bear new tendencies. What stands out with autistic perception or neurodiversity, which may otherwise be backgrounded, is the issue of activation. A body that is pulled into many sensory directions can freeze. So that pavement might be more than the site of an easeful walk. It may be the only way that walking is possible. I often hear this from people. I also know it myself – this quality of experience is what made the walking possible (or impossible). So, actually, those roads and tendencies allowed you to get to class or to the supermarket or the cafe, which in turn fostered the activation contour for study. The class pulled those movements into itself, produced those geographies. What I'm trying to say is that autistics or neurodiverse folks queer their cities. No matter if the city has grids or not.

TSH: Almost a folding into the environments. The city inside the classroom. Which makes me think of your 3E project. I appreciate that, not only do you do deep thinking and writing, but you also put it into physical matter in the world through your art practice, or SenseLab, or in the 3Ecologies Project. On the website, it says '3E places special emphasis on creating a welcoming environment for neurodiversity, not only supportive of but positively learning from the normally undervalued experiential and perceptual worlds of pathologised and racialised communities.'[22] Can you expand on that?

EM: I would say that 3E involves two interlocking experiments. First of all, the three ecologies are: the social; the environmental; and the conceptual.[23] Guattari's exploration of the three ecologies as a concept has been very important: the idea that it is in the transversality of the three ecologies that new ecological worlds become possible. We take that to mean that all practices must necessarily involve some imbrication of the social, the environmental, and the conceptual.

At SenseLab, we tended to be mostly focused on the social and the conceptual. With 3E, the environmental ecology moves to the forefront. But it is emphatically not a back-to-the-

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land project. My recent book *Out of the Clear* goes into much more detail in this regard.[24] What the land does is to push us to engage more directly in the direction of the environmental. Such that the transduction can occur – we hope – in our urban movements so we train ourselves out of the nature-culture dichotomy, still so powerful despite all the literature denying this! It's just too easy to forget that we are nature, that nature is us.

3E is 100% off-grid. We heat with wood and use solar, which is a very difficult technology in the north because the sun is so low for the winter months. It's not very far from Montreal, about three hours north. But it's at the end of the paved road, and so really in another world. After our land, you get into crown land; government, and indigenous land. Of course, all Canadian land is indigenous land. But speaking of propertied land available to the real estate market, we are on the cusp. So, on one hand, the project is committed to rethinking property. We've purchased a hundred acres and have set up a foundation called *The Understory Foundation* that connects to the 3Ecologies non-profit to become a steward of the land. The stewardship will be in perpetuity and will hopefully include more land as we're able to purchase more tracts, and as people in the area bequeath their land to the project (which has begun to happen).

The aim is to give the land back to itself, refusing the possibility that you can own it. Which is to say it will always be public, always free according to a mandate that it never be developed. It will be a site for the kind of composing described above that is in attunement with its tendencies. We won't be able to abolish private property, of course. But we may be able to generate conversations around it and move toward other ways of living and learning. This is a central aspect of the project: to teach each other to be in a different logic of investment. We are very aware that this is not something that everybody can do. It isn't about making any kind of judgement about whether you have extra money to throw in. But, if you did, we would be excited if you throw it toward the forest to open up land for other ways of engaging in the question of living. That's one side.

The other side is this question of pedagogies, or what I call parapedagogies of resistance. How do you create conditions that foster neurodiverse ways of living and learning? The hardest thing is the sociality. We work on a concept we call 'minor sociality'. This is about being tuned toward the three ecologies in living and learning, rather than prioritising the human 'chunked' presence. There's a large rental house that we open up for residencies, and a cabin that anyone can always stay in for free. But this does mean that, if you are up north, you are often living with others, and this can be very hard for neurodiverse folks because of our habits of interpersonality. So we practice a kind of vectoring sociality, which we've explored for twenty years, first through SenseLab and now through 3E.

We think of this as impersonal sociality: sociality turned toward the event. What this means in practice is that the project, not the people, is foregrounded. We don't foster an engagement of 'all together now'. Nor do we have consensus-building practices. We rarely discuss what we are going to do. Instead, we move with the lures and learn to feel into what aspects are potentialising for us.

A recent example is a sauna we built. A few people decided a sauna would be interesting and began to do the work of gathering materials. Then people gathered to build. Some people were directly engaged in the building; others cooked. Some were there all the time, others more sporadically. We've learned not to be concerned about 'participation'. How we engage, and what that engagement does, is open. Who knows what the walk can do in the context of building a sauna! This can, of course, create tensions. There is no collective work without tensions. But we work hard not to begin in presupposition. When the day is over, we make no demands on each other to gather. It is often very difficult for me to be social, so a collective dinner is rarely a lure. When I do show up, you know I really want to be there. We learn not to expect normative sociality. And in the array of difference we learn from each other what makes the learning possible. For one of us, that dinner is really important as a way of connecting. For another, that kind of sociality might make the next day of sauna-building impossible.

When working to develop minor sociality I learn a lot from Harney and Moten's writing on black sociality as a mode of existence. Interpersonality is an enforced presupposition that can feel extremely violent. It is white in its predisposition. I am much more interested in the field of relation. The field of relation cannot be parsed into self and other. It is an environmentality that includes all that has been edited out in the chunking.

What we learned over the years is that to do collective work. You have to become interested in what the collectivity does, in what relation does. Not just in what you want the collectivity to do. We neurodiverse folks often talk about ourselves as creatures. We're all creatures. There's an animality to it. It's beautiful. You should come!

TSH: Yeah! I'd love to. Let's leave that as an open invitation to all. Thank you.[25]

Notes

1. Mel Baggs, 'In My Language', online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JnylM1hI2jc> [accessed 21 May 2024].
2. Erin Manning, *Relationscapes: Movement, Art, Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012).
3. DJ Savarese is a poet, activist, Optimist and protagonist in the documentary DEEJ. Online at <vimeo.com/ondemand/deej> [accessed 21 May 2024].
4. Tito Mukhopadhyay is a writer, author of amongst other books *Teaching Myself to See* (Goleta, CA: Punctum Books, 2023).
5. Mel Baggs was a non-binary blogger and activist. Baggs, 'In My Language'.
6. Anne Corwin is an engineer, blogger, and activist. She can be followed on Twitter (X) @ felisroboticus.
7. Ido Kedar is a non-speaking autistic author and autism advocate. His written works include the essay collection Ido in Autismland (Sharon Kedar, 2012)
8. Jim Sinclair is an American autistic activist and writer who

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helped pioneer the neurodiversity movement. Sinclair, along with Xenia Grant and Donna Williams, formed Autism Network International.

9. Adam Wolfond is a nonspeaking Autistic artist, poet, and university lecturer, author of *The Wanting Way: Poems* (Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions, 2022).
10. Erin Manning, *Always More than One: Individuation's Dance* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).
11. Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Visual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002).
12. Fred Moten is an American cultural theorist, poet, and scholar. Most important to this conversation is the book *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Society* with Stefano Harney (London: Minor Compositions, 2013).
13. Erin Manning, *For a Pragmatics of the Useless: Thought in the Act* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2020).
14. Shusaku Arakawa and Madeline Gins are artists, architects, and poets.
15. Madeline Gins and Arakawa, *Niemals Sterben! Architektur gegen den Tod* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008).
16. See Moten and Harney, *The Undercommons*.
17. This is the Autistic term for identifying as Autistic.
18. See the photo series here: https://www.troelsheiredal.com/invisible-cities
19. Specifically, a Hasselblad 500 c/m.
20. Georgina Kleege is an art theorist and writer. Amongst her books are *More Than Meets the Eye* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).
21. For more see Dr. Steve Garby's article "Wandering Minds: autism, psychogeography, public space and the ICD (2011)" Last accessed Feb. 9, 2025 https://www.academia.edu/8586966/Wandering_Minds_autism_psychogeography_public_space_and_the_ICD_2011_
22. Online at <3ecologies.org/about/> [accessed 21 May 2024].
23. From Felix Guattari's book *The Three Ecologies* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013). Erin Manning argues that, already in the 1980s, Guattari said that we wouldn't be able to deal with the environmental question if we didn't recognise the transversality of the three ecologies.
24. Erin Manning, *Out of the Clear* (London: Minor Compositions, 2023).
25. Throughout this interview, I have capitalised 'Autistic'. Devon Price suggests in his book *Unmasking Autism* that the word should be capitalised for the same reason that members of the Deaf community capitalise 'Deaf': 'to indicate it is part of my identity I am proud of.' Devon Price, *Unmasking Autism* (New York, NY: Harmony Books, 2022).

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Erin Manning, 3–4
Troels Steenholdt Heiredal, 1–2

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