

THE FIVE OBSTRUCTIONS
someonehastodosomethingbeforeanyonecandoanything

Dear artists,
I am writing to ask if you would like to be part of an exhibition.

The five hindrances/five easy steps (working title) is about the obstructions to making and viewing art, and the freedoms, constraints and refusals implicit in the exhibition process.

There is no curatorial brief.

An assumed set of conditions and ideas generally governs curatorial practice and creates the ground for creative work. I would like to interrogate the conditions that shape or drive each artist's practice and use this material to somehow construct a specific set of parameters from which to make new work. In this instance, stipulations, guidelines or obstructions, often thought of as burdensome and something to be circumvented are considered as impetus for creativity and movement.

Note: In Buddhism, the Five Hindrances are negative mental states that impede success with meditation and lead away from enlightenment. The Seven Factors of Enlightenment juxtapose or balance these disturbances. The Five Obstructions (2003) is a film by Lars von Trier, in which he asks Jørgen Leth to remake his film The Perfect Human (1967) five times, each time with a different obstacle given by von Trier. It is a collaborative restaging that explores the idea of perfection and human failure. The Five Easy Steps because it is essentially a kind of simplification of processes and relationships... paint perfect clouds in five easy steps, how to become a tattoo artist in five easy steps, make a music video in five easy steps, five easy steps to sell your art... someonehastodosomethingbeforeanybodycandoanything

As the curator, I realise that you expect me to put into place some guidelines to influence the making of new work. It is now my turn to send you something, describe something, put something in place.

I am asking you to reflect on your practice and document it as a list. Write what characterises your practice—what you would consider as fundamental, or what you would never do or put into your art. Inclusive or exclusive, your list only needs to be about five items, but send more if you want.

From your lists I will create one or more obstructions or freedoms that may be interesting for you to work with. You can choose to accept, modify or refuse my suggestion. Using this material, in dialogue, we will construct the curatorial scaffold as a framework for making. This is probably not so ‘collaborative’ as it is a propositional architecture; a kind of improvised scaffolding that allows things to be seen.

The exhibition will involve five artists. Each artist will work one obstruction.

Each of you will work with different conditions. (The project is not about standardising the conditions of production underlying the exhibition process.) By imposing or lifting an obstruction (or a freedom), I am seeking to create a more nuanced dialogue out of bare bones so that a curious sort of current begins to flow.

At this stage I propose to let the works just exist in the space without comment. I will however document our communications. Perhaps, in the viewing of this exhibition, we will move from a limited interest in five artists to a general interest in art and its processes. I am playing at trying

something new—working in a very visible way that entails some risk.

In offering each of you a choice of stipulations I have been careful not to proscribe the form and just keep to ideas. I have tried to frame each condition in dialogue with your lists. Perhaps, I might just as well have let the obstructions be randomly generated...

I think the stipulation will read as the title of each work.

The exhibition will be in June.
And the form your work will take is completely open.
M.

LOUISA BUFARDECI

[do not count]

Here is a list of a few things I would never do in my practice: incorporate material from my personal life create a work that purposefully intends to injure or defame another person create a work that requires me to interact with a large number of people create work out of plastic abstract expressionism I'm sure I could think of many more if none of these inspire you. Louisa

There's the time-space continuum. It's an infinite grid in neon blue on a darkest blue ground. There's a voice explaining the concept. It's a man's voice — measured and angular. He picks up two points of the grid and brings them together to explain how time and space might come together. I take the two points from him, put snaps on them and click them together. Then more points and more snaps. I twist the time-space continuum, wring it, intertwine it and snap it together here, there, now and then. Now I don't think I counted. I may have measured, so if I did count it was then involuntary. Is measuring counting? Here I think it isn't but perhaps there it is. The voice ignores my question and moves on to explain the next dimension. Louisa Bufardecì 2011

Louisa Bufardecì is a Melbourne artist who lives and works in the United States. A conceptual artist, Bufardecì works across a range of media, from sculpture and installation to wall drawings and digital prints. The artist frequently works with statistical information from the public domain, including the CIA Factbook, the national census and opinion polls. She translates this information into colour charts, maps and architectural diagrams; and in doing so, reveals underlying patterns, gaps and inequalities.

Louisa Bufardecì completed a Master of Fine Arts (Art and Technology), School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2006 and a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Drawing), Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne in 1998.

Recent solo exhibitions include: *Louisa Bufardecì + Zon Ito*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 2009; *Some Material Flags*, Museum of Contemporary Art (MOT), Tokyo, 2008; *Every second is like, forever, and every year is like 11.3 centimetres*, Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne & Design Commission, Seattle, WA, 2007. Recent group exhibitions include *In/Formation*, BRIC Rotunda Gallery, Brooklyn, New York, 2008; *A Time Like This*, VCA Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne, 2008; *A Red World*, Wangaratta Gallery, Victoria, 2008; *Zoom +/-*, ARENA 1 Gallery, Santa Monica, CA; Limn Gallery, San Francisco, CA, 2007 and *The Unquiet World*, Australian Centre of Contemporary Art, Melbourne, 2006.

In 2008, Louisa Bufardecì was awarded an Australia Council, Visual Arts and Craft Strategy New Work Grant. She was the recipient of the Manhattan Graphics Center Scholarship, 2007; VAP Fellowship, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 2006; Second Year International Scholarship, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 2005 and the Gordon and Anne Samstag International Visual Arts Scholarship, 2004. Her work is

Starlie Geikie and Lauren Berkowitz, curated by Rebecca Coates, Neon Parc, Melbourne, 2008; *The Horror of Tradition*, curated by John Souza, Andrew Shire Gallery, Los Angeles, 2008; and *This is the thing I thought would never come*, curated by Tony Garifalakis, Bus Gallery, Melbourne, 2006. Geikie has received grants from both Australia Council and Arts Victoria, including a three month Australia Council Studio Residency in Los Angeles in 2006. She lives and works in London, UK.

NATHAN GRAY

[make being here enough]

no irony
no no-respect
no text
no about the body
no sentiment
5 things I'd never do in my work (I think)
... So the stipulation I want to work with is 'make being here enough'. My works will be responses to the stipulation in that, raw experience, largely devoid of content will be the focus. Being here, in the now, will be all that will be required. They will also be explorations of my current series of works with the moire effect...
... attached some recent writing around the moire effect, the singularity and data corruption. It's a bit of a basis for the works I have been making lately...
My idea is that the works respond to the theme 'make being here enough' by being hermetically appreciable i.e. no prior knowledge is required as they will act purely between the viewer and the object. (though I'm sure this is an impossible goal).
N

In my recent work I explore the Moire effect (an optical effect created by the over-layering of two sets of grids at differing angles) as a strategy for foregrounding perception and it's limitations, limitations set to be overcome in future decades. When the viewer moves around the work, the moire effect causes it to strobe and ripple—giving the disorientating impression that the work is shimmering fiction, not truly present in the space.

Part of the larger context of my investigations into history, perception and the ways in which events and phenomena combine and recombine in ways impossible to predict, the new work is inspired by the writings and predictions of futurist/entrepreneur Ray Kurzweil and social critic/terrorist Theodore Kaczynski (the Una Bomber). Both predict that we are inexorably approaching a period of technological growth so rapid that it will radically alter humanity, making humans hyper-intelligent, effectively immortal and indistinguishable from their technology. Both have vastly different interpretations of this event. Kurzweil actively promotes technological change and life extension techniques, whilst Kaczynski is serving life in prison for his campaign of bombings against intellectual scientists like Kurzweil in an attempt to stop these changes.

This end-of-history event is commonly referred to as The Technological Singularity. The term was coined by science fiction author Verner Vinge and presages a time when human perception and the debate over its function and dysfunction will become centralized as the human mind is mapped and comes under our increasing control.

Nathan Gray, 2011

Nathan Gray is an artist and experimental musician whose work is often characterised by its utopian or optimistic tones, and its dynamic physical structure. His exhibitions are almost always interactive, utilising viewer participation to help shape the work. Gray creates multi-coloured assemblages that integrate improvised sculptural experiments with his two-dimensional practice. His work incorporates a multitude of process-based elements, often using a method that parallels brainstorming or mind mapping, in an attempt to explore links between craft, sound, culture and ecology.

Nathan Gray completed a Bachelor of Arts (Fine Art) at Curtin University, Perth in 1994 and a Postgraduate Diploma in Electronic Design and

Interactive Media at RMIT, Melbourne in 2002. Selected solo exhibitions include *Spectral Light and Pressure Changes*; MR KITLY 2011, *In The Year 2525*, Utopian Slumps 2011; *What they Brought Back*, Ryan Renshaw 2010; Gertrude Contemporary Project Space, Melbourne Art Fair, 2010; *Art#1* (ACCA regional tour No. 1), Shepparton Art Gallery 2010, *Attack Decay Sustain Release*, Craft Victoria, Melbourne 2009; *An Infinity of Traces*, Studio 12, Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne, 2009; *Secretion Erosion Conjunction* (with Alex Vivian), Rear View, Melbourne, 2009; *Tudo Que Acho | Everything I Think*, The Narrows, Melbourne, 2008; *Quem Ao Viu O Vento*, Escola Dos Belos Artes, Salvador, Brazil; 2008; *The Fruiting Body*, Black and Blue, Sydney, 2008; Untitled Installation, Mirka@Tolarno for ACCA, Melbourne, 2007; *Love, Purity, Accuracy*, Utopian Slumps, Melbourne, 2007; *The Fold*, Joint Hassles, Melbourne, 2007 and *Terrarium*, Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne 2006. Selected group exhibitions include *Territorial Pissings*, Utopian Slumps, 2010; *Drawing Folio*, Block Projects, Melbourne, 2009; *Grow Wild*, curated by Sleep Club, Utopian Slumps, Melbourne, 2008; *Thank God We Died Together...*, TCB art inc., Melbourne, 2008; *Fire Fire*, The Narrows, Melbourne, 2007; *Otherworld*, Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne 2005; and *Slave*, VCA Gallery, Melbourne, 2005. Gray completed a residency at the Sacatar Foundation in Bahia, Brazil in 2008. He is also a musician and member of the improvised electro acoustic group Snawklor and experimental synth rock trio The French.

ALASDAIR MCLUCKIE

[create a piece walking in two directions]

I very much applied this stipulation to my practice, and therefore life, in a way I didn't first realise or even think possible. I began to experience my process in a very physical way, to experience the push and pull of one object desiring to move in two directions at the same time. A task that was at odds in me. I worked away for months in order to understand and arrive at the truth that my head was walking in one direction, and my heart in another.

The stipulation had me making to understanding my own process rather than to produce anything physical. I realised that in order to make any work at all for this project, in order for me to be able to move in both directions at once, it was entirely necessary and appropriate, to take my head off of my body. The truth being that my head is a home to my brain, who deals in the consumption and processing of information. The rest of my body is a home to my heart that trusts in its instincts and acts accordingly and, partly due to a lack of eyes, feels rather than sees.

And so, in this newly productive, blissfully decapitated state I could move freely. Freely enough to produce the self portrait exhibited, a self portrait exploring and documenting the understanding of these separate states, the nature of this stipulation and myself. A self portrait that is two parts of the whole individually, so they can calmly walk in two different directions.

Alasdair McLuckie, 2011

...Around the past year and a half or so I've been practicing a sort of meditation process that involves deconstructing unhelpful and untrue belief structures that I'd placed on myself and my practice... this has very much changed the way I look at all the work I have made... I've spent about the last month or so really looking into and further deconstructing my practice to figure out how to move forward from here, again, all really positive stuff but also a little confusing... A lot of what I've been thinking about moving forward is how to switch the feeling that goes into an artwork. So this is all great having the opportunity to engage with this process —something that was happening naturally for me—in a more structured way with an exhibition outcome. My list then is what I feel have been inherent elements in my work that have aided this way of working...
Talk soon,
Al

Alasdair McLuckie's practice adopts meticulous process to explore mythology, mysticism, and ritual. Through drawing, craft, and sculpture, his work aims to re-invent folklore with a strong formalist aesthetic sensibility that incorporates mythical creatures, references to psychedelic imagery and 1970's design. The works obsessive attention to detail translates into a dense visually symbolic language that expresses the imagined energies of the cosmos as well as infinite visual possibilities.

McLuckie has been included in contemporary art projects both here and abroad. Most recently his work was included in the inaugural exhibition *Monanism* at the Museum of Old and New Art in Hobart, as well as major exhibitions including *Primavera* at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney; *Freehand: Recent Australian Drawing* at Heide Museum in Melbourne and his first commercial solo exhibition, *Fields of Ecstasy* at Murray White Room in Melbourne, all in 2010. McLuckie completed a B.A. in Fine Art at the Victorian College of the Arts in 2007.

FRANCESCA RENDLE-SHORT

[steal an idea]

Here is what I can say — I've never had my own catalogue never said never never ever not turned up never said I never say no never ever never never (then) How's this? never say no never not turn up never not cry never say never never ever say everything Let me know if it needs further revising. Best Francesca

Francesca Rendle-Short loves to work with words, across art forms and media. She is very interested in the way an arts practice and the process of making imaginative work can inform the direction writing and research can take. She is also interested in writing from the body, how a writer's body operates and survives as the language of the process. In this work she wants to step into the work, become the work with her writing body—muscle, ink, rain. She has never actually writtenonwalls quite like this before.

Francesca Rendle-Short, 2011

Francesca Rendle-Short is a writer who has worked variously as a radio producer, teacher, editor, freelance writer and arts journalist. Her writing practice is diverse and eclectic. She is the author of the novel *Imago* (Spinifex Press); the novella *Big Sister* (Redress Novellas); and the artist book *A little book of breathing*; co-author of the play *Us*. In addition she has published numerous short fictions, photo-essays, exhibition text, poetry for the page and for the wall, and text and sculptural works in literary journals and magazines, online and in exhibitions. Her second novel, *Bite Your Tongue*, will be published later this year by Spinifex Press. She has a Doctor of Creative Arts from the University of Wollongong and is currently the Program Director of Creative Writing at RMIT University.

CURATOR'S THANKS

I would like to extend my thanks to each of the artists: Louisa Bufardecì, Starlie Geikie, Nathan Gray, Alasdair McLuckie, and Francesca Rendle-Short for their courageous and enthusiastic embrace of the premise, and for contributing their distinctive ideas and imaginative work to this project. Special thank yous to Margaret Lawrence Gallery Director, Vikki McInnes, also to Scott Miles and Claire Ulenberg for their generous support and assistance with this project. Thanks also to Brad Haylock for creative design in the spirit of the project.

LIST OF WORKS

LOUISA BUFARDECI

Flag for the Fourth Dimension
[do not count]
2011
seersucker fabric, snaps
variable dimensions

Courtesy the artist & Anna Schwartz Gallery
www.louisabufardecì.net

STARLIE GEIKIE

working with architect
HELEN WALTER

'You are the only other control I trust —Starlie made them and Helen put them together'
[do not make the work with your own hands]
2011
88 rope lengths, 48 steel rings, wax
dimensions variable

Courtesy the artist & Utopian Slumps, Melbourne
www.starliegeikie.com

NATHAN GRAY

Moire Study 10-13
[make being here enough]
2011
various materials; clear and mirror Perspex, flywire, aluminium insulation, glass, silk screen and wooden frames. 60 x 60cm each

Courtesy the artist & Utopian Slumps, Melbourne
www.undodesign.com

ALASDAIR MCLUCKIE

Untitled
[create a piece walking in two directions]
2011
Biro pen on pink paper
3 distinct drawings, framed. 106.5 x 39.5cm (overall)

Untitled
[create a piece walking in two directions]
2011
Biro pen and Posca pen on wood 250 x 95 x 70cm (including base)

Courtesy the artist & Murray White Room, Melbourne
www.alasdairmcluckie.com

FRANCESCA RENDLE-SHORT

Just Glad Wrap
[steal an idea]
2011
installation, various materials;

Holy Bible: Scofield References 1917
Inscribed: "To Mrs Rendle Short with Love and Appreciation from the Members of the Shaftesbury Bible Study Class, February 1924";
Daily Light on the Daily Path: A Devotional Textbook for Everyday of the Year; in the very words of Scripture, London: Samuel Bagster & Sons
Inscribed: "August 31, 1870"
variable dimensions

Courtesy the artist

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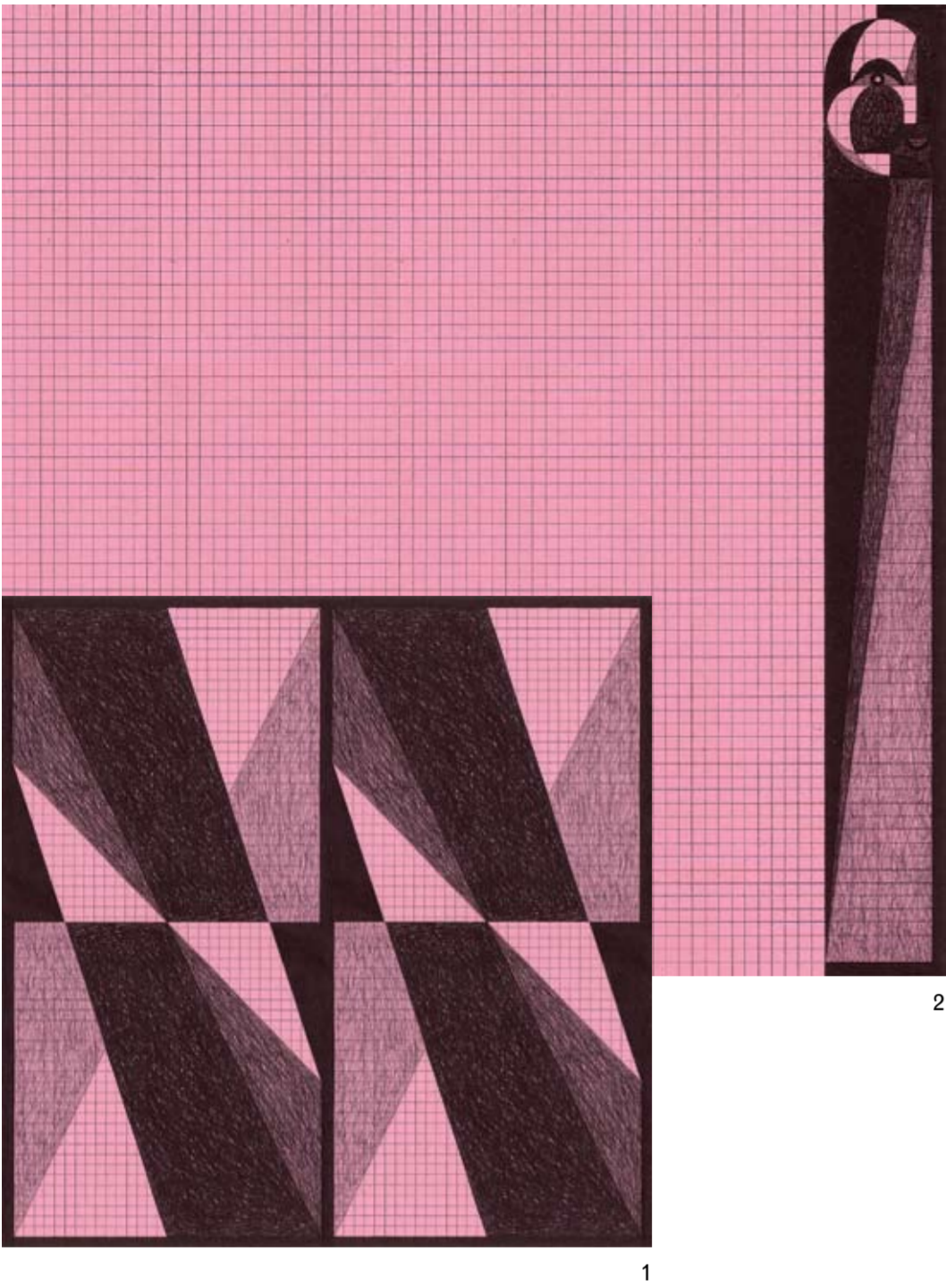


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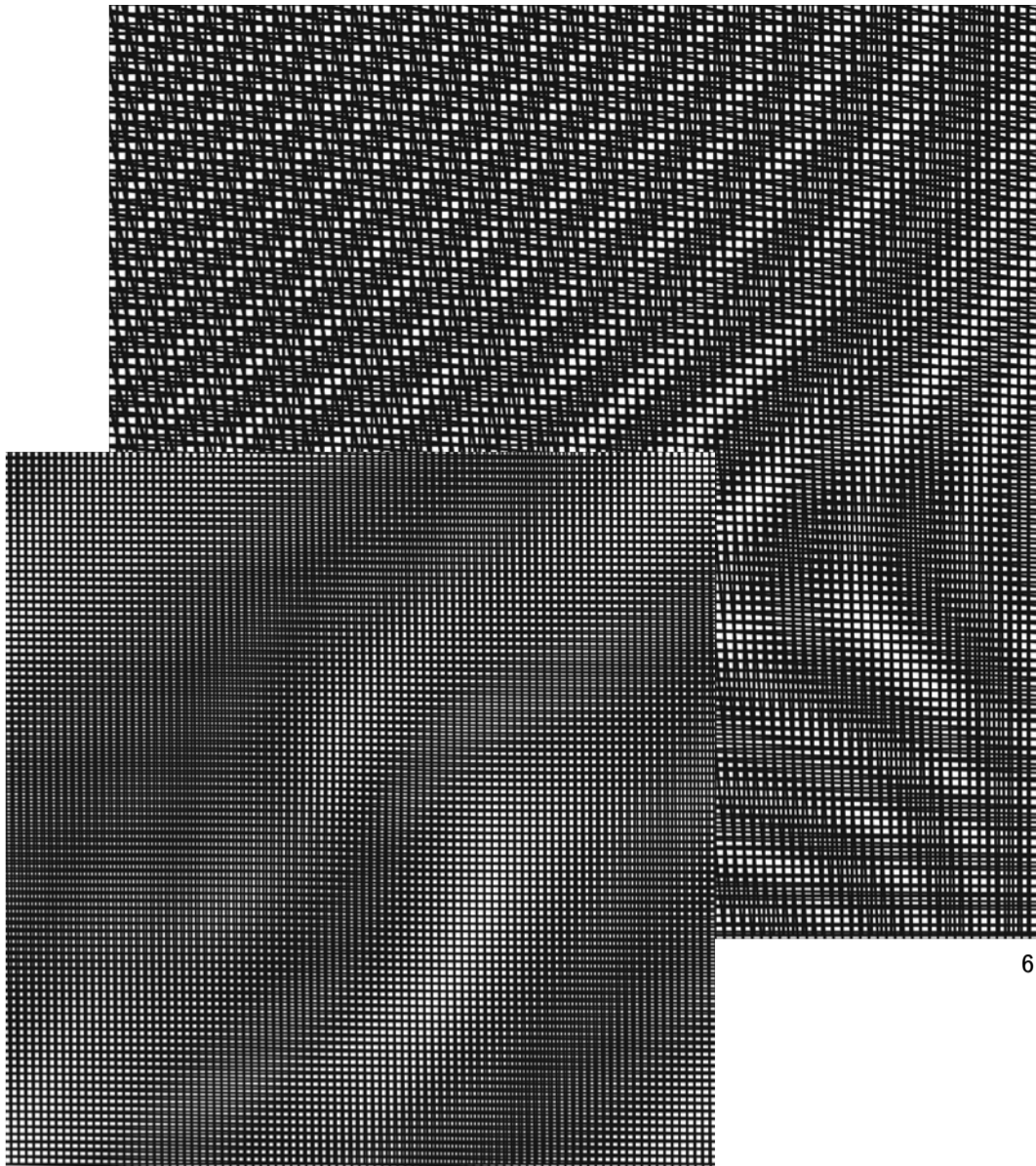
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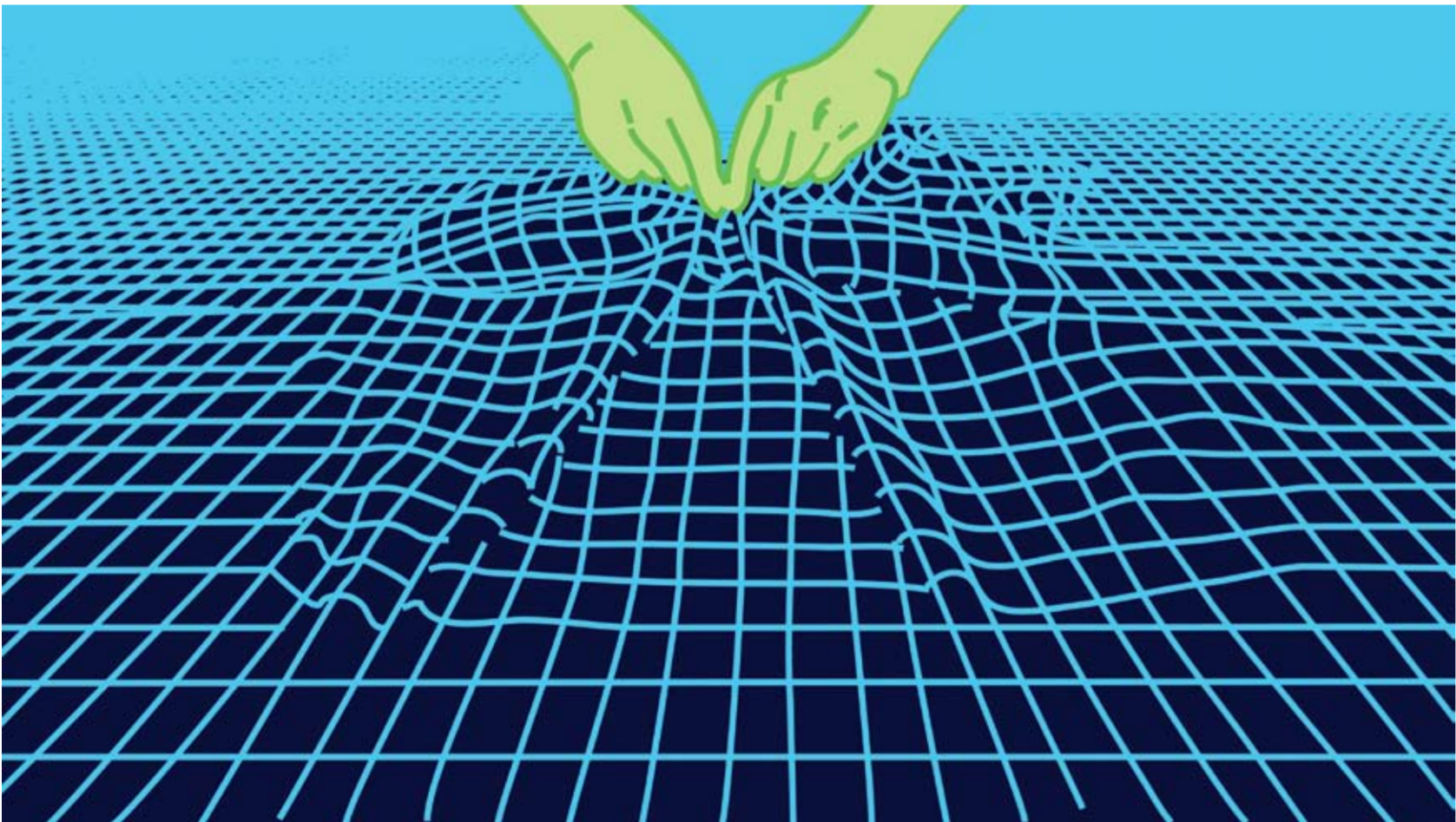


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THE FIVE OBSTRUCTIONS
someone has to do something before anyone can do anything

Louisa Bufardeci
Starlie Geikie
Nathan Gray
Alasdair McLuckie
Francesca Rendle-Short

Martina Copley, curator

17 June – 9 July 2011
Margaret Lawrence Gallery
40 Dodds Street
Southbank VIC 3006
Tues–Sat, 12–5pm
+61 3 9685 9400
www.vcam.unimelb.edu.au/gallery

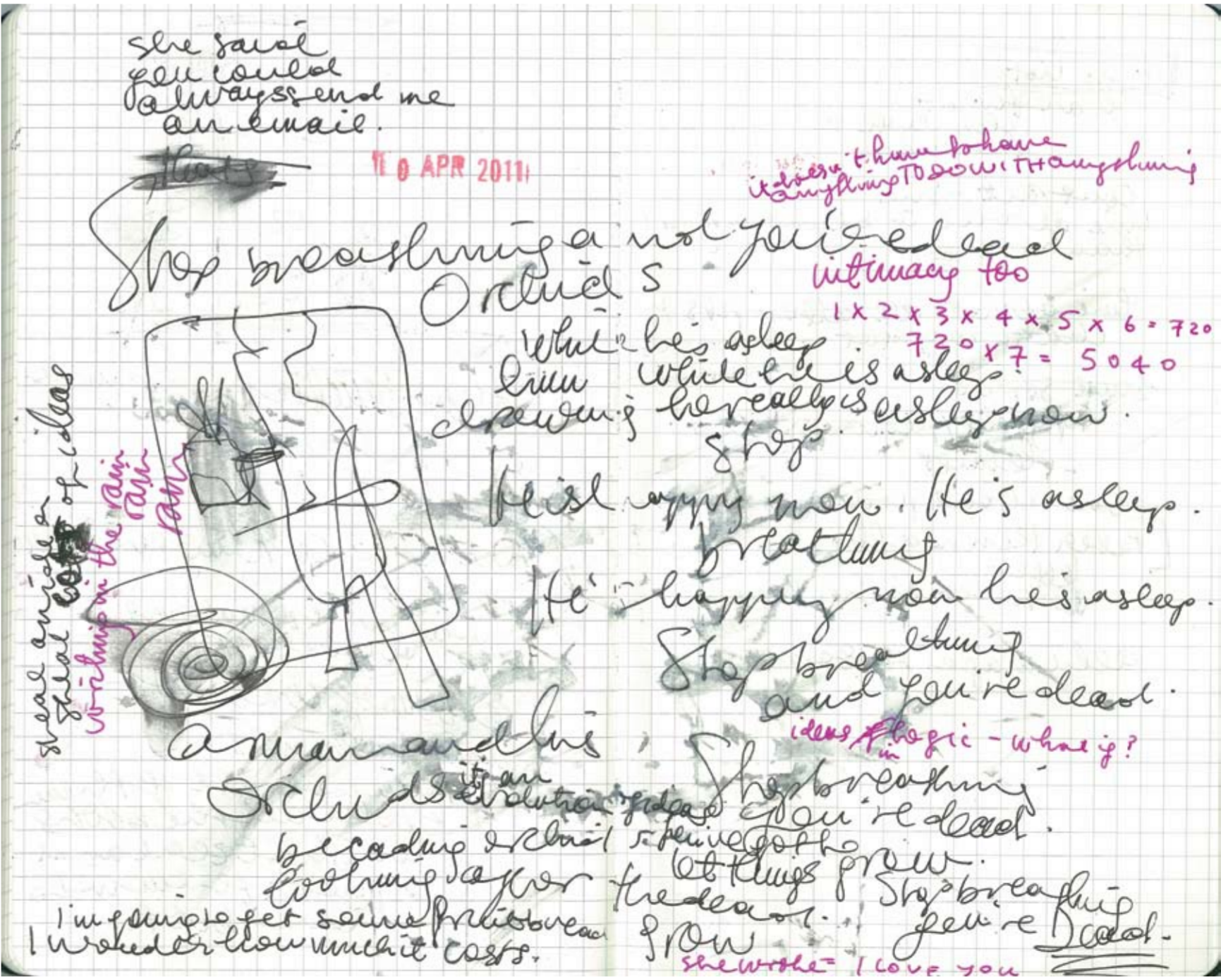
1, 2
Alasdair McLuckie, *Untitled* 2011 (detail)
biro pen on pink paper
images courtesy the artist

3, 4
Starlie Geikie, untitled photographs
courtesy the artist

5, 6
Nathan Gray, *Studies for Moire Studies*
photographs courtesy the artist

7
Louisa Bufardeci, untitled image
courtesy the artist

8
Francesca Rendle-Short, *Writing in the rain*, 2011 (detail)
ink on paper, notebook
photograph courtesy the artist



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