Weaving an Artistic Research Methodology

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The production of knowledge is always a collective effort, a series of back-and-forth conversations that produce multiple results.
>—Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*

[The] promiscuous traffic between different ways of knowing carries the most radical promise of performance studies research. Performance studies struggles to open the space between analysis and action, and to pull the pin on the binary opposition between theory and practice.
>—Dwight Conquergood, "Performance Studies: Interventions and Radical Research"

There is the obsessive, addictive quality to spinning yarn and the weaving of cloth; a temptation to get fixated and locked into processes, which run away with themselves and those drawn into them.
>—Sadie Plant, *Zeros + Ones: Digital Women + the New Technoculture*

Practice as research in the performing arts pursues hybrid enquiries combining creative doing with reflexive being, thus fashioning freshly critical interactions between current epistemologies and ontologies.
>—Baz Kershaw, "Practice as Research: Transdisciplinary Innovation in Action"

In June 2016, I exhibited *(tfw) spin measure cut* at Seventh Gallery in Melbourne. The exhibition included several components: central to it was a multichannel video installation in the gallery, made up of two video triptychs looping on three screens. The exhibition also included a triptych of performative video works, created in the gallery and projected into the front window of the gallery as well as presented in an online installation. In *(tfw) spin measure cut*, weaving is a crucial feature structurally as well as aesthetically: the "textile triptych" literally weaves together found video footage to create a new visual language for exploring the interrelation of digital technologies, bodies, and women's labour.

Still from "cut," part of *(tfw) spin measure cut* (2016). Jane Frances Dunlop.

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These videos then "weave" through the performance triptych, appearing in the online installation and gallery projection as the work moves in and out of online and real-life spaces, marking their entanglement. The title references contemporary Internet shorthand ("tfw" stands for "that feel when" or "that feeling when," an Internet acronym) and the gestures of the Greek Fates (who spin, measure, and cut the thread of a person's life). The textile "weaving" of video turns the metaphorical weaving of ideas, spaces, art, and academic forms into an aesthetic model. My most recent project, *select important things*, uses similar techniques to different purposes as it interweaves stock footage with personal anecdotes to explore the construction of knowledge systems.

In 2022, the first iteration of my newest series of artworks was exhibited as part of *Personal Structures*, the European Cultural Centre's Venice Biennale exhibition. *select important things* makes use of many of the same techniques as *(tfw) spin measure cut*: it is a work that intertwines found footage with my own creative writing to create a series of videos that can be reordered into different configurations to become different installations. At the end of a hallway in the Palazzo Bembo, there are two dark rooms illuminated by the light of looping videos. Walking down the hallway, the low buzz of voices coming through the screens can be heard. In the first room—a vestibule more than a room—two screens face each other with headphones hung beside them. On these screens, the "knowledge system videos" play in alphabetical order. These micro videos—each less than thirty seconds long—are the content of the work, made to be organized and reorganized. Here, they are presented as a dataset that has yet to be activated: a deceptively simple list of things and actions and feelings illustrated by stock footage and narrated by definitions that careen through the memories and ideas that lend significance to the most minute details of the world. This set of "knowledge system videos" takes inspiration from theories of Knowledge Representation (Davis, Shrobe, and Szolovits 1993), from the ways that humans try to capture the "richness" of the world for machines. In this work, the weaving is conceptual not aesthetic: the threads of the personal and the generic run side by side in the "knowledge system videos," ready to fold into new patterns within the fabric of each installation.

"patterns, rocks, gold, planets," collage created for *select important things* (2022). Jane Frances Dunlop.

In the second room, three large screens mounted at eye level loop through different arrangements of the "knowledge system videos." These arrangements capture experiments in categorization: the division of the knowledge system into related groups (things, feelings, actions, attributes) and then again into smaller subsections (things that are places, feelings that scratch, actions with thinking. . .). In *Metaphors We Live By*, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson write, "In order to understand the world and function in it, we have to categorize, in ways that make sense to us, the things and experiences we encounter" (1980, 162). Lakoff and Johnson are talking about the world-making power of metaphor: how ideas of likeness shape culture and thinking. Metaphor, in Lakoff and Johnson's book, is a powerful performance that not only describes but also defines what is possible (and impossible) through these categorizations.

In *select important things*, the knowledge system metaphor weaves between a subjective and—for lack of a better phrase—deeply human activity through to a machinic process of categorization and then back toward the human. The installation (mis)takes the process of categorization by shaping its data and datasets via instinct and whim. The making of knowledge systems, the categorization of datasets: these epistemological tools are mis-deployed one on top of another to build and organize a version of the world that is so specific, so personal as to be possibly useless. The installation practices categorization at a personal level, as a way of making sense; it is a practice of shaping a world, for knowing what the world is and how it operates. And so, the work performs one system of knowing. I capture one version of the world and its possible categorizations. As the arrangements play out in parallel, they are cast together in different ways. These arrangements become a score for false randomness: the videos interweave in a pattern that is too big to see, too unintended to explain. This is the aim, with *(tfw) spin measure cut* as well as *select important things:* to see what patterns might emerge unintended from scores that—like certain algorithms—function in ways that can exceed intention or control. These works do not end in answers but rather take and remake the systems that shape the world and lay them back out again as aesthetic propositions, as art systems that echo real systems, moving between one another in curious ways.

Weaving, as I will try to conceptualize it here, is a performative approach; it is a performance score as mode of discovery that tries to send certain threads flying together to see what patterns might emerge. The warp threads—held stationary by the loom—are bound together by the weft, which moves back and forth to produce the final textile. Weaving, as metaphor and score for artistic research, enables us to think through what is bound together in a work and why. It suggests both constraints as well as possibilities, a unified whole that is simultaneously made up with discrete threads. Weaving is a score that lets me operate with intention and precision before I let a work unfold (unravel) into its own disorder. Central to research, and therefore to thinking practice as research, is the fact one does not necessarily know where the exploration will lead. My artist statement ends with the claim that "my work begins with the concrete structures and abstract ideas that make the world, shaping how we are together. It ends in aesthetic propositions that provide no answers" (Dunlop 2023). This statement is one attempt to articulate the uncertainty of research and the centrality of exploration, as well as to highlight a particular epistemological position that views knowledge (or, research outcomes) as something other than answers. In what follows, my aim is to present this methodology for artistic research. It is informed by performance studies and visual art approaches, and it binds a feminist epistemology to the different forms artistic practices take.

I work through the metaphor of weaving because it enables me to highlight how information and ideas move from one context to another as well as how information and ideas bind together and fray apart. While textile metaphors appear across a range of theories (such as Collins 2016; Ingold 2010; Paavolainen 2017), weaving, as I will outline it here, is intended to capture the

practical aims and methods of artistic research into performance and contemporary digital technologies. In the theorists I situate myself through (Haraway, Plant, Kember and Zylinska), weaving is a practice that reflects feminist perspectives on technology and places them within a broader landscape of technological history that includes the critical perspectives of cyberfeminism (Braidotti 1996; Fernandez, Wilding, and Wright 2002; Kember and Zylinska 2012; Goh and Thompson 2021) as well as other recent interventions (Laboria Cubeoniks 2014; Russell 2020). Building on these theorists and the artistic legacies of feminist approaches to digital art, I present weaving as a methodological approach that unites these theories in artistic research. In working with weaving, the different threads of the artistic research provide a means for situating my work theoretically and artistically within broader cultural studies and digital humanities settings, as well as in relation to the progression of my own line of inquiry. Central to this practice of situating is relation: the warp and weft threads of my practice operate through their relation to one another.

My use of weaving as a model for my processes of inquiry is indebted to intersectional feminist theories from cultural and performance studies, as well as media theory, which I bring together here. It is this work of entangling ideas and practice through artistic research that I refer to as a process of "weaving." As others before me have identified (Boddington 2006; Haraway 2016; Paavolainen 2017; Plant 1998; Bal 2002), weaving necessitates multiple threads and thus implies the strength and frictions of things—different contexts, people, or concepts—as they come together. Through my work as an artist and as a researcher, I investigate the structures of digital technologies as they interface with material and cultural infrastructures to consider how our concrete systems shape and are shaped by abstract ideas. This broad project finds specificity in the interrogation of technological and social systems: *(tfw) spin measure cut* focused on the impacts of Internet communication technologies and the politics of emotion, while *select important things* explores the paralleled impacts of machine learning and Internet culture on the knowledge systems and subjecthood within digital ubiquity. In all instances, weaving as metaphor and model attends to the movement of relation within those overlapping concerns. It is a generative process, a process in which pieces come together in new totalities, where threads can be traced through an array of work. By thinking through weaving as artistic research, it is possible to point to the threads of art making, the influences of outside resources and the written considerations that together form a critical practice. These threads are bound together by this practice: they remain distinct while also becoming part of the fabric of a process or a project. Weaving is a process that moves back and forth between the various components of a project and pulls them into tight relation. It captures the different elements of research, the useful frictions they produce as they are bound together.

Relation is essential to this project because it signals the ongoing social interactions through which the politics of emotion—wherein the affects generated by interaction gain meaning from their broader cultural and social context—overlap with the systems of digital technologies. Relation is performative, it is generative and ongoing; it is both constituted by its context as well as capable of (re)creating and (re)interpreting the paradigms that produce it. My artistic and theoretical investigations proceed for the conceptual as well as concrete ways the relation of ideas, objects, and systems generate meaning and consequence. Working with weaving is a way of thinking with the generative collisions research renders. It also emphasizes the parallel between personal or social interactions and technological exchanges. By weaving digital technologies and system analysis with more familiar tools and tropes of self-expression, my work demonstrates the ways in which the personal has become technological—to rephrase the famous second-wave feminist maxim. It is through the repeated practices of our relations with one another through digital systems that the social and technological become imbricated. This is an overriding preoccupation within my work: how relationships are formed or enacted through

negotiations of the technological and emotional infrastructures that support them. It is through the efforts of these practices that togetherness is experienced, often as a temporary condition within the context of digital networks, but an important aspect of how mediating technologies have become part of our daily lives.

Elsewhere, I have argued that generosity and dissonance are two concepts that, taken together, enable an understanding of how affective, emotional and technological frictions are imbricated in artworks (Dunlop 2017). When weaving is used as a way of thinking and making, generosity and dissonance become the productive consequences of that work. Generosity describes the practice of care and reciprocity within the exchanges that constitute relations. It is an openness to the difficulty of difference as it aligns with the will toward putting things, people, and ideas together. Dissonance names these difficulties, the frictions produced in those actions, the imperfection and inequality as well as in the lags, latencies and glitches produced by relation. These are not separable concepts: generosity moves the threads of an artistic process forward and wills them together and it is only within that unity that dissonance—the insights found in the frictions and noises of being together—can fully be encountered. Generosity weaves the fabric; dissonance works in the tension of the threads one against another: both are vital to process and finished product. In the Sadie Plant quote at the opening of this article, weaving is described as a process that stabilizes as well as unravels: it is a bringing together and a fraying apart. Taken from *Zeros + Ones*, it comes from the cyberfeminist's compelling theorization of the influence that textiles and womens' collective labours had on the invention of computers (1998). Plant demonstrates how weaving as model and metaphor enacts this approach practically, situating the process in the intersecting histories of digital technologies and the "women's work" of textile weaving or embroidery. Generosity and dissonance, as modes of knowledge making as well as relation, enact the temptation of being "fixated and locked"—the will toward the together of generosity—but instead "runs away—" the resounding frictions named by dissonance (Plant 1998, 62).

Throughout, I will return to *(tfw) spin measure cut* (2016) and *select important things* (2022) as a way of demonstrating weaving as an artistic research methodology. My work is invested, artistically and epistemically, in the slippage between the material and conceptual that characterizes many key ideas in both digital philosophies and performance studies. The Derek Conquergood and Baz Kershaw quotes that begin this article explicitly address this proximity of different modes of knowing and making as a central quality of performance studies. Taking inspiration from feminist approaches to knowledge making from theorists such as Sadie Plant and Diana Taylor—who provide the other epigraphs—I approach this hybridity through a model of weaving. Weaving as an approach to artistic research provides a way to intertwine academic and artistic research processes, it is a way to navigate the relationship between the concrete structures and abstract ideas that shape the world. It is both the framework and impetus for my artistic research methodology. Weaving is a central motif in my work, a score that operates as a model and a metaphor for exploring ideas, generating material and situating these practices in the world.

Weaving: Artistic Research

Weaving provides a tactic for negotiating the simultaneity of online/offline that characterizes the contemporary digital ubiquity that I work across, as well as the slippage between the abstract and the concrete of the terms associated with it. It functions to enact the generative and relational qualities of feminist epistemologies. The possibilities and importance of practices of relation as a site that generates knowledge and meaning is present throughout the work of the feminist scholars that ground my methodology. Sara Ahmed's work addresses how emotions are generated through the interactions of people and culture (2004, 2017); Rosalyn Diprose's

definition of generosity foregrounds the potential of an ethical interpersonal encounter (2002); in the work of Sarah Kember and Joanna Zylinska, the interaction of new media and creative practice is vital as a means for producing things (ideas, artworks) that can intervene in the normalizing forces of culture (2009, 2012). It is through these thinkers that I weave my own work, topically, as a study of emotion and technology, as well as methodologically and politically as invested in feminist approaches to cultural objects and to the knowledge processes that render them meaningful. Thinking with these theorists provides new insights into how artistic research can intervene in and enact new politics of knowing, while acknowledging how these insights are located within a genealogy of feminist thinking-doing.

This playing with the ways in which conceptual and concrete objects operate in close proximity is central to my work: terms such as *network*, *interface*, or *performance* refer to concrete actions or physical systems as well as to the more effusive theories or conditions. This is symptomatic of the "promiscuous traffic" of performance studies referenced by Conquergood: "[The] promiscuous traffic between different ways of knowing carries the most radical promise of performance studies research. Performance studies struggles to open the space between analysis and action, and to pull the pin on the binary opposition between theory and practice" (2002, 145). Here, Conquergood highlights the methodological promise and potential of performance studies: the epistemological terms and possibilities of movement within the apparent opposition of theory and practice. The generative value of this movement is tied to its potential for performing feminist modes of knowledge through generosity and dissonance. This counter or parallel generation of knowledge seeks to interrogate how that knowledge is generated by extending what constitutes its making. For Kember and Zylinska, the epistemic implications and applications of the insights provided by practice is central to their work. Writing about their collaboration research process in *Interfaces of Performance* (Chatzichristodoulou, Jefferies, and Zerihan 2009), they demonstrate how their "creative media" are a "creative/critical practice" that intervenes in media practices (Kember and Zylinska 2009, 13). With "creative media," they entangle artistic methods with media and theory to extend the impact as well as insights of their work. The importance and possibilities of a different performance of knowledge resonances with my own methods: Kember and Zylinska capture how artistic research is an investigation into the specific concerns of a project, as well as a means for producing new knowledge through its enactment.

This is key to both my work and theirs: the performative potential of artistic research enables them to generate epistemic interventions in new forms. This is how they "produce things," create insights whose scope exceeds the written analysis that captures it. Addressing imbalances of institutionally inscribed power, such as those that surround knowledge, is central to an inclusive intersectional feminism that aims to empower historically suppressed ways of knowing, thinking, and generating ideas.

The terms for how artistic practice is used in research inquiries are numerous and their definitions shift with usage. The effort to define and distinguish these terms, as well as their regional and practical differences, is present throughout the literature on methodologies related to artistic practice, research-creation, or practice as research (Biggs and Karlsson 2011; Nelson 2013; Kershaw 2011; Smith and Dean 2009; Riley and Hunter 2016). I choose to frame my methodology as artistic research while acknowledging that it runs parallel to (or is perhaps synonymous with) these other terms. All these terms signal the centrality of practice as both mode and output of a research inquiry. They refer to the ability of research to modify art making, and art making's ability to change the terms of research, to expand the terms upon which new ideas are encountered. The artistic research processes that govern my work, and the conceptual justification for them, are indebted to—and built upon—feminist approaches to epistemology.

This work is, ultimately, deeply invested in how, as Taylor writes in *The Archive and the Repertoire*, "the production of knowledge is always a collective effort, a series of back-and-forth conversations that produce multiple results" (2003, xx).

As a discipline, performance studies is skilled at interpreting the movement between artistic and social practices because its central object of study does exactly that. The "multiple results" of the "back-and-forth" relations, through conversation as well as exchange and performance, provide the strategies for negotiating this relation. Weaving, theoretically and in my artistic practice, foregrounds frictions produced in the intersubjectivity of relation, a necessary concern of a project focused on interpersonal relation and one that concentrates on the intersection of emotion and performativity in exchanges situated on Internet communications. An intersectional feminism provides—structurally and conceptually—both framework and justification for this focus on relation and, as a result, on relationality. My emphasis here is on relation, on the processes and consequences of proximity and connection. However, these connections and proximities are inseparable from relationality, which is to say from the ways relation unspools into socially, culturally, and politically situated networks and structures. I aim to amplify the claims of relation—as well as its emotional or affectual consequences—as modes of knowing, and to use those modes of knowing to engage with contemporary technology. Generosity, distance, weaving: all of these terms work to think through how relation occurs, what it produces, what problems it makes, and what problems it solves.

Hazel Smith and Roger T. Dean capture the dynamic nature of practice as research process in their introduction to *Practice-Led Research, Research-Led Practice in the Creative Arts* (2009). Smith and Dean prefer the term "practice-led," which they complement with "research-led practice" (7–9, 20). Their multidirectional "iterative cyclic model" demonstrates the multiplicity of paths within the possibilities of artistic research. The diagram of research processes they provide maps how ideas move into artworks, returning to ideas and cycling through theoretical outputs (20); their model foregrounds the dynamic and mobile nature of practice as research (19–25). Within Smith and Dean's modelling, my work could be classified as practice-based—which is generally used to emphasize studies in which the artwork is a form or output of the research and set in opposition to a practice-led approach in which the artwork leads to insights presented in a more traditional written style. I use artistic research in order to acknowledge both the multidirectional relationship between these different approaches within my work and that my practice is central to the research output.

In weaving, there are two kinds of threads: the warp and the weft. The warp are stationary threads that form the frame of a cloth; the weft moves between the various warp threads—its path is held in place by the warp, and it binds the warp threads together. Thinking through, and with, weaving demonstrates how the progression of an artistic research process operates as a weft that binds together the warp of artistic outputs (experimentation and exploration; analysis and synthesis), influences (inspirational theories; artworks) and writing (analysis and synthesis; experimentation and exploration). These strands form the warp of my work: they are the parallel threads that run concurrently and give shape to the inquiry that moves between.
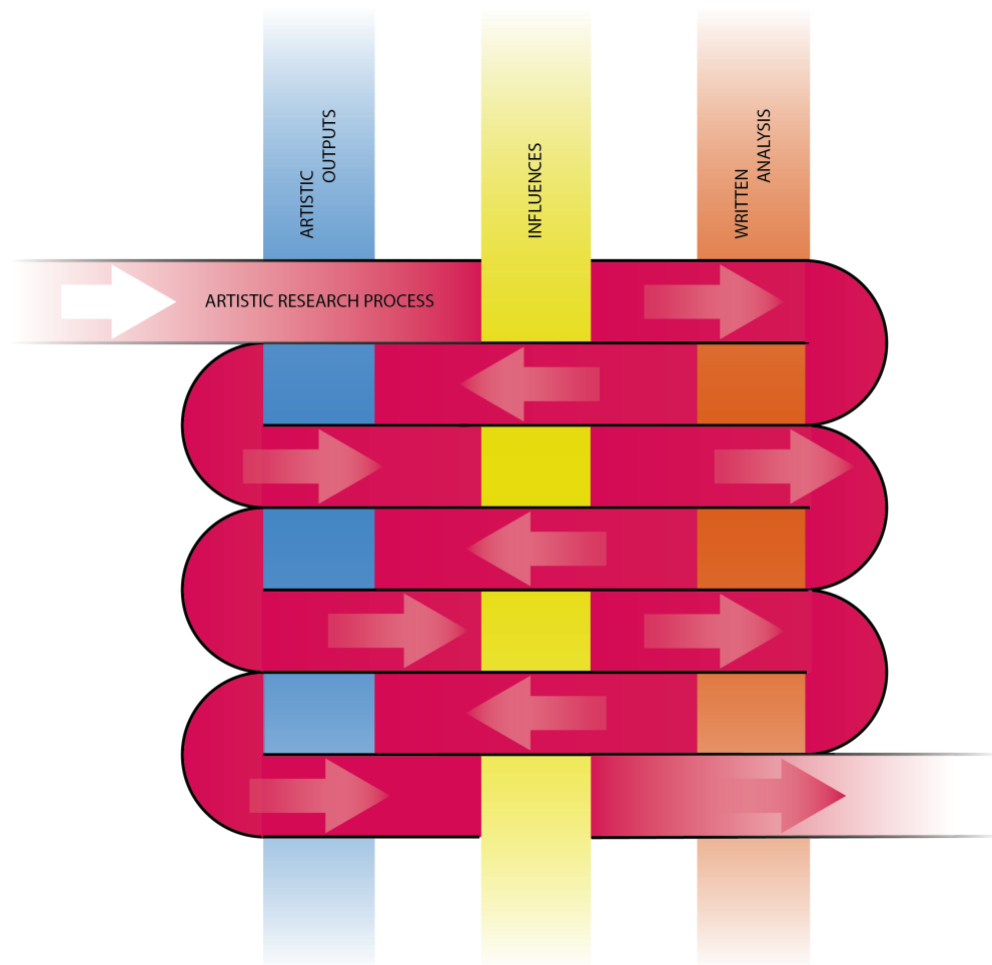
Weaving as Artistic Research Process. The artistic research process is represented by the weft thread: it weaves between the warp threads, binding their insights together into a single coherent contribution. The warp threads represent key methods that run parallel to one another and are bound together by the artistic research process: Artistic outputs include practical, aesthetic and intuitively motivated explorations into the research topic. Influences include investigations into the work of others that provide context and inspiration. Written analysis includes critical interrogation that articulates line of inquiry.

In "The Production of Knowledge in Artistic Research," Henk Borgdorff writes: "Artistic research . . . unites the artistic and academic in an enterprise that impacts both domains. Art thereby transcends its former limits, aiming through the research to contribute to thinking and understanding; academia, for its part, opens up its boundaries to forms of thinking and understanding that are interwoven with artistic practices" (2011, 45). My use of weaving actively emphasizes the "forms of thinking and understanding that are interwoven with artistic practices," clarifying their value and application by bringing them together with feminist approaches that are likewise invested in opening up the boundaries that define knowing.

The warp and the weft are different approaches, different paths through the same project of binding ideas together. As weft moves through the warp, it creates a fabric that includes the nuances of different threads as well as the outcome their entirety produces. The artistic outputs account for the practical, aesthetic, and intuitive explorations of research through the creation of artworks. The artworks produced provide insights into the inquiry through their processes of making as well as in the reflection upon finished works. The artistic research process interweaves the insights gleaned from the process of making these artworks, as well as the critical impacts of their final form, with the situating support of the artistic and theoretical influences. It binds the influences, the artworks, and the written analysis that constitute the artistic research process

together in a single contribution. The influences and contexts thread accounts for investigations into the work of others. Weaving captures how the artistic research brings together engagements with other artists, theorists, and writers as they attend to related areas and themes. This puts the artistic outputs as well as any written analysis that might accompany them in relation to broader historical and conceptual legacies. This thread represents the written processes that articulate the outcomes of the artistic research process by analyzing the relationship between the artistic outputs and the influences. Within this process, what I have termed "written analysis" can take a variety of forms, including academic articles (such as this one), essays in exhibition catalogues, project statements, and more experimental forms of creative nonfiction. All these different modes provide a means for critical reflections that explore and capture the synthesis of artistic outputs and influences. The frictions, the points of crossover during the weaving process, are vital to the evolution of a project. These are the points that generate new perspectives and possibilities. This approach to artistic research proves to be productive in multiple ways: it evokes the experience of friction between the different strands of a broader work as well as in the strength of the new "textile" that the process generates.

The weft thread of the artistic research process moves through these warp threads; it moves over and under each in turn. It brings their insights into relation with each other: following the weft is following the line of inquiry that is shaped and supported by the processes represented by the warp. In *(tfw) spin measure cut*, themes are captured in the videos that interweave within the gallery: the cut of a knife through a body, the mechanization of a factory floor, the rhythm of a loom. The work takes its structure from the Fates, the Greek muses who spin and measure and cut the thread of a life's fate. The title combines their actions with the Internet acronym "that feel when" to reference the inevitable feelings of living and making a life in digital ubiquity. The work is made of a series of videos, one for each action. The videos have two parts: the first is a video poem in which lines of writing are read aloud as they appear on screen, the second is a video textile that weaves together stock footage. In "cut," the textile interweaves video of open-heart surgery with a person cutting colourful plants; "measure" makes threads of men in suits measure a model of a future city and birds on the shore of a lake; in "spin," it is dancers and a large moving machine. Throughout all three, a factory loom moves in black and white. In the gallery, the videos loop on three screens so that all three always play simultaneously. The sound plays simultaneously, making a whispering chorus while the poems appear between the cacophony of sounds that accompany the textiles.

Weaving layers and layers again in the piece: ideas are captured in the found footage and then intertwined in the videos, echoing through the poems before being woven once again in the gallery space. These gestures—related labours that perform and define living—frame an approach to the intersections of the functional, material, and emotional terms of contemporary networked life. Between the warp threads, the weft of process crosses back past itself. These cross-backs mark the instances of refinement, revision, return, and focusing during the artistic research process and inform the weft as it moves onward. *(tfw) spin measure cut* uses the weft to bind lines of thought into an examination of intimacy—embodied and emotional—as it unravels in contexts of digital ubiquity. It was part of a series of works I made between 2015 and 2018 that interrogated the cultural functions of Internet communication tools through their misuse. The use of video chorus, and glitching caused by the looping of videos through unstable Internet networks, continued in other works such as *hurl outward at a certain pace* (2016), while the concept's grounding theories were captured in talks and essays. The specific textile woven within *(tfw) spin measure cut* contains threads that continue into future ideas. The process of weaving occurs over time, but the result is not fully understood until the weaving has been completed. Each section is a story, but the fabric continues. The aim is to enact, concurrently, an aesthetic

and epistemological weaving that generates new objects through the relation of the strands pulled together.

Weaving: A Feminist Epistemic Paradigm

Weaving, as a way of understanding the interconnected movement of ideas, owes its conceptual lineage to contemporary feminist theories. It finds origin in feminist epistemological approaches that foreground movement and the entanglement of different perspectives (Bal 2002; Haraway 2016; Plant 1998; Tsing 2011, 2015). Weaving aims to make actual this entangled knowledge making and understanding, seeking not only to analyze but also to enact new ways of knowing and being in relation. In her vital work "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspectives," Haraway writes, "The alternative to relativism is partial, locatable, critical knowledges sustaining the possibility of webs of connections called solidarity in politics and shared conversations in epistemology" (1988, 584). Weaving is one way of making methodology through attention to "the possibility of webs of connections": the fabric of process is both solidarity and conversation made through "partial, locatable, critical knowledges."

Donna Haraway's writings articulate the feminist necessity of situating ideas, of working with ways of knowing that acknowledge the processes and structures that produce these ideas as knowledge. The changing knowledges that Haraway gives voice to echo the model for interdisciplinary cultural studies proposed by Mieke Bal in *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities: A Rough Guide* (2002). Bal advances a methodology for "travelling concepts" that focuses on how the movement of a specific concept enables a scholar to "grope" through the shifting definitions of key concepts as they move across disciplinary lines (Bal 2002, 11). Bal's methodology reinforces the power of this situating by forming an interdisciplinary methodology that tracks the shifting meaning of an idea as it moves across different disciplines (that is, different structures for producing knowledge). Importantly, "groping is a collective endeavour": it is the negotiation of contingent meanings, the acknowledgement that things do not "mean the same thing for everyone," that makes interdisciplinary work important (2002, 11). For Bal, attention to how a concept "travels," how its meaning shifts within different contexts, provides a strategy for undertaking interdisciplinary work that acknowledges and makes use of the impact that context has on meaning. For both theorists, there is a feminist emphasis on the relational nature of knowledge production. The emphasis on tangles (Haraway) and collective groping (Bal) casts this relational knowledge as something that is gestural, in process and in tension. It foregrounds a sense of embodiment, as it emphasizes a materiality to both knowledge as information and as thought.

This relational and tactile sense of knowledge and knowledge making is key to my use of weaving. In *select important things* (2022), weaving as an epistemological tactic is the foundation for the work's structure. *select important things* begins with Knowledge Representation, with the theories that consider processes and procedures for representing the world as data for machines (Davis, Shrobe, and Szolovits 1993). At the centre of the project is a knowledge system: the micro videos that capture the world through a combination of stock footage and personal anecdote. The first of the collection (which is ordered alphabetically), "abrasive," opens with close-up footage of hands sanding down the edges of a piece of wood as the voiceover says "soft hands so is abrasion a conceptual not a physical thing for me." As the twenty-one-second video unfolds, the narrator talks about schoolyard pebbles and scraped knees and the video cuts to images of children in a playground, then to a sneaker stepping on pebbles. What this video captures is an idea of "abrasive" that is specific and associative. The narration does not offer a

definition but instead situates "abrasive" in experience, illustrating the threads that move off the idea to give shape to the concept itself.
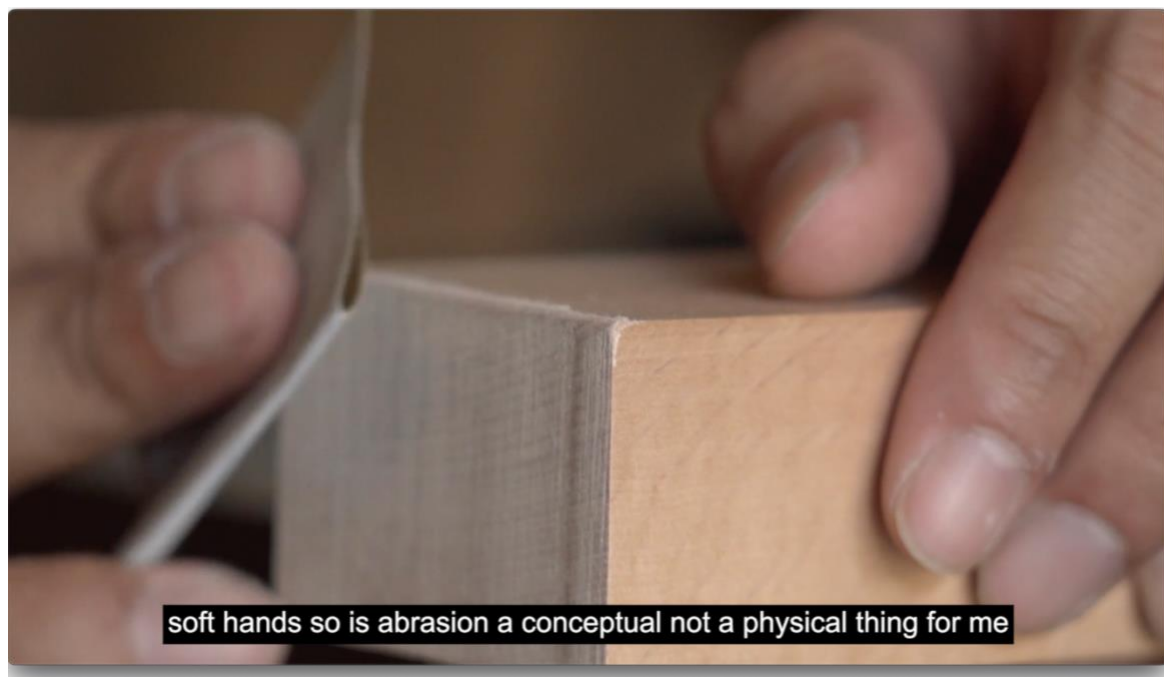
Still from *"abrasive,"* part of *select important things* (2022). Jane Frances Dunlop.

The footage of the video begins with something that is abrasive—the productive abrasion of sandpaper on wood—but then departs from the explicitly abrasive to illustrate the images of the narration. The "abrasive" captured is a conceptual not a physical thing, even if it is illustrated through a story about a physical experience. It is a contradictory piece of knowledge: experience, action, and consequence tangled up together. Each of the videos in the knowledge system unfolds in a similar way: footage is chosen to reflect the anecdotes that form the entry as often as the thing itself. The stock footage is high quality, clear, and cleanly shot. It was made to be used for anything or everything: commercials and corporate videos, personal or professional projects. In the depositories of stock footage that I used, single ideas or things are distilled and then endlessly repeated. For each entry in the knowledge system, I would begin with the entry as keyword (abrasive; alive; Antarctica; artist; boredom; bricks; butterflies; charisma). Sometimes the results were endless: hundreds of videos of butterflies are available, free to use, from the stock footage site Pexels. Others necessitated more careful authoring: there are few videos labelled charisma, yet so many videos of performers and speakers and dancers. With each video, I set what I know about an idea against what others know as I tried to align the two through these generic images. Each piece weaves a composite from ways of world knowing, combining the collected understanding of a database with stories and images from a single life.

select important things is a project in its early stages. Its amalgamation of different modes of knowing collected and repurposed to reflect a single, deeply subjective mode of knowing is intended to reflect the increasingly fraught landscape of twenty-first-century epistemologies (McIntyre 2018). The work of artistic research brings together concepts and concerns from multiple disciplines. Weaving is a way of conceptualizing a relational and discursive approach to the problems of knowing that arise within the fracturing of contemporary politics and news cycles. It is language for thinking through how the various threads of this project are brought together: the "intellectual-creative practices that also produce things" that Kember and Zylinska identify as the centre of their work across artistic and theoretical modes (2009, 10). There,

Kember and Zylinska are describing artistic research: the process of making that, as it becomes entangled with thinking, can "produce things." These "things" are the artefacts (objects, performances, videos, essays, poems. . .) that an artistic inquiry produces, but also the ideas that those artefacts are catalysts for. There are many "things" in artistic research. Framing my own approach as weaving foregrounds the contact between those things; how these objects interact with each other and the world concerns me, and is central to any "thing" they produce.

This attention to interaction, to frictions and syncopations, is a situating in Donna Haraway's sense: understanding how context informs meaning, and imposes assumptions, to comprehend the situation of meaning. In *Staying with the Trouble* (2016), Haraway expands upon her earlier work on "situated knowledges" (1988) with the model-metaphor of "tangles": "I try to follow the threads where they lead in order to track them and find their tangles and patterns crucial for staying with the trouble in real and particular places and times" (2016, 3). Thinking through situated knowledges is, in *Staying with the Trouble* and in critical responses to Haraway's work (Haraway 1988, 2016; Goh 2017; Lewis 2017), informed by a feminist politic concerned with the dismantling of historical hierarchies of knowledge by accounting for a broader set of perspectives and possibilities. For Haraway, this is a way of understanding the "tentacular thinking"—that is, thinking that is operating with a multiplicity of orientations—necessary for situating knowledge through difference (2016, 31). Here, the "real and particular" that focuses my work in both *(tfw) spin measure cut* and *select important things* are the concrete consequences that unfold with the modes of thinking/knowing instantiated by new and emerging digital technologies.

The theorists I draw on provide a methodological precedent for feminist epistemologies that emphasise the mobility of knowledge, particularly as it is constituted through processes of relation. The embedded nature of the insights produced through artistic research is the way in which it is able to action these feminist epistemic models as practical approach. The siting of my work within contemporary technological discourse and practice, and more specifically in the digital tools that mediate contemporary relation, is an example of the practical manifestations of this. The tools and the aesthetics of digital ubiquity are the material of my work: I pull footage from stock libraries and livestream performances and frame my practice through screen capture and search engines. The individual approaches of each artwork reflect the shifts in my line of inquiry, as I investigate particular aspects of digitally entangled relation and presence. However, this reoccurring technical and aesthetic choice locates my practice, and my research, firmly within the context that it seeks to understand.

This embeddedness reflects the situated and responsive nature of a feminist epistemic that functions through mutual influence: I respond to the context that I work in at the same time as I acknowledge how my work is shaped by that context. As Borgdorff states: "Works of art and artistic practices are not self-contained; they are situated and embedded. The meaning of art is generated in interactions with relevant surroundings" (2011, 47). By deploying the techniques and technologies of relationships, I am able to investigate how we are embedded, surrounded by, and interacting with these conditions. The corruption of objective data through this artistic meddling is important to the process, or irrelevant, depending on perspective: I am a product of my times, already entangled with the practices of relation that each project engages. It is for this reason (and with this in mind) that artistic research provides a crucial insight into contemporary practices of relation mediated by new and emerging technologies.

Relation weaves knowledge together, and forms from the friction produced by these encounters. Throughout the work I have produced as an artist and as a theorist over the last decade, I have engaged with various theoretical and artistic practices that make this manifest. I have used

weaving to work practically with different threads of an artistic research process: to bind the different modes of inquiry together and to draw attention to the importance of the frictions found in that process. This approach has enabled me to directly engage with the digital technologies that mediate relation, social practice, and knowledge production, and that in doing so define this cultural moment and its constituent webs of context. By playful intervention into the digital systems that frame daily exchanges, my artistic research is able to document as well as intervene in contemporary postdigital contexts. Documenting these technologies makes their functions available for future critical engagement, contributing to historical understandings of technologies. The reproduction of digitally mediated practices of relation, reframed as performance, also serves to intervene in contemporary understandings of that mediation.

These artworks complicate how we understand our relationships, provoking viewers to reconsider how technologies and practices are obscured and invisiblized by ubiquity and habit. The threads of my approach enable me to bind together the insights that weave through my research, bringing together the ongoing fabric of my practice. It is the ability to negotiate ways of knowing that artistic practice entangled with contemporary systems captures and re-creates, a weaving that reaches edges before doubling back on itself: the work makes propositions but often resists conclusions. Instead of seeking unity or completion, these works make use of the friction of relation as it is paralleled by the tensions of digital mediations. Friction is present in all modes of mediation, in all the ways that our current practices of relation are always already performing the social into its future iterations.

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