

Correspondence

Issue 2.2

Marie Shannon

Lucy Meyle

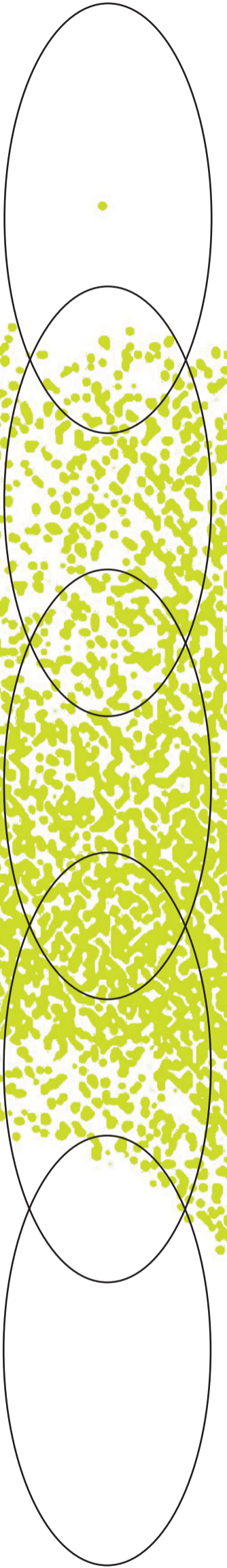
Ziggy Lever

Albert L. Refiti

Millie Godfery

Balamohan Shingade

Nkosi Nkululeko



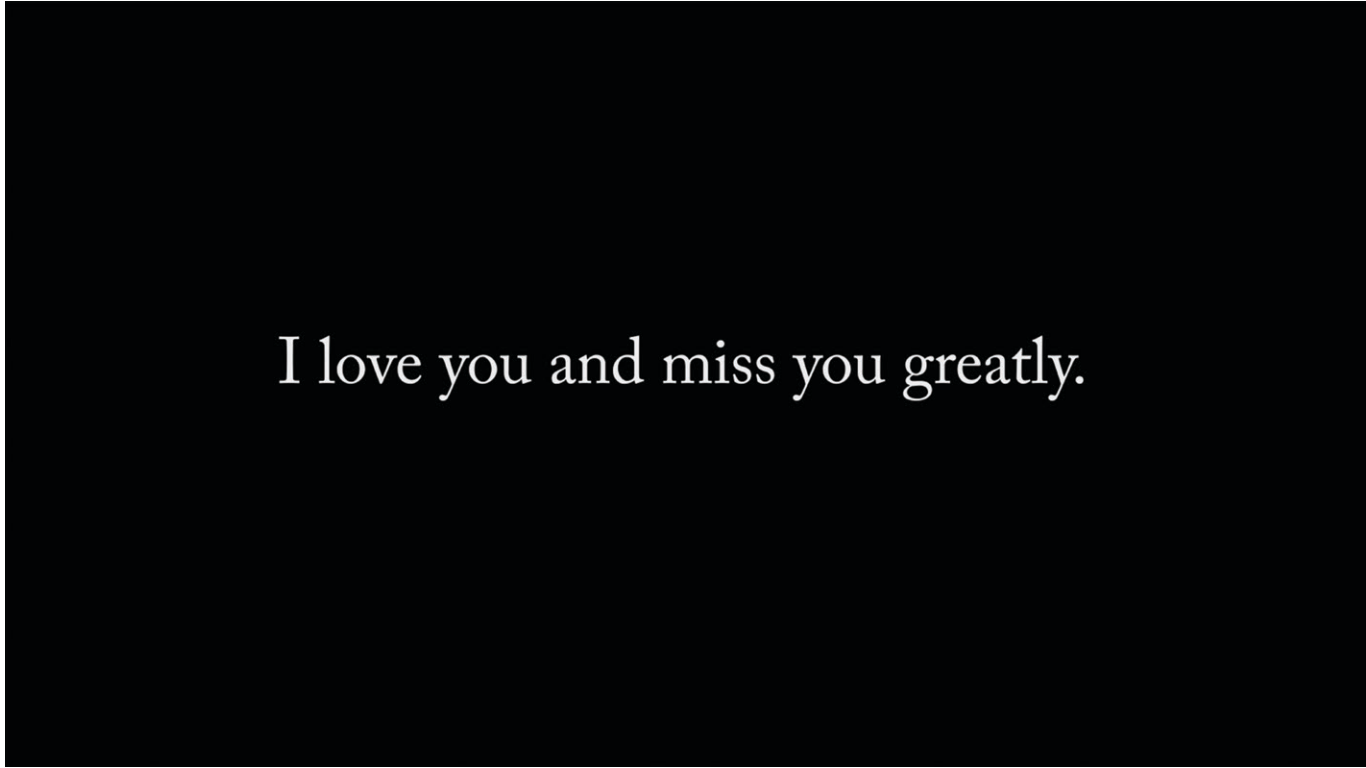


A series of stills from *The Aachen Faxes*, 2012.
15 min 30 sec Single channel / Digital Video / Colour / Sound
Marie Shannon

ISSUE 2.2

[02:04]

CORRESPONDENCE



I love you and miss you greatly.

PG 2



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Editorial: Leaving the Warmth of the Spacious Atrium

Orissa Keane



A series of stills from *The Aachen Faxes*, 2012.

Marie Shannon

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Correspondence is a biannual publication exploring the possibilities of art writing in Aotearoa. This volume, containing issues 2.1 and 2.2, have been informed by the idea of a 'spacious atrium'. For me, the spacious atrium came to represent a kind of breathing room between other spaces, in which to explore ideas within my writing practice. For the invited writers, the metaphor was interpreted differently—it could be said that a collective structure was formed between these interpretations. Find yourself a back copy of *Correspondence* 2.1 to read more about corridors, sun-traps and geospatial dashboards.

Correspondence 2.2 returns once more to the spacious atrium, stretching its boundary towards the sky and to Aachen. Both the distance and connection can be felt within many of the contributions within this issue: connection between correspondents, between subjects in the diaspora, between dislocated image fragments, and between the artists and their kites.

Interspersed throughout this issue you'll find stills from Marie Shannon's moving image work *The Aachen Faxes*, 2012. The work takes its content from the correspondence Julian Dashper sent, mostly by fax, to his partner Marie Shannon during a residency in Aachen, Germany, in 1995. Within the text-based artwork, recurring references to weather and time emphasise the distance between Dashper and Shannon, between Germany and New Zealand. Despite the relative speed of fax machines in the 1990s, taking only minutes, rather than the weeks of waiting for a letter to arrive in the post, *The Aachen Faxes* captures the presence of longing across distances, something which the faster correspondence of today still fails to erase. The selection of stills in this issue were chosen with these things in mind: time, geographical distance, and the weather. I encourage you to experience the original moving image work which can be found on the CIRCUIT Artist Moving Image website, with the slow drawn tones of a cello which comprise the soundtrack. Thank you, Marie Shannon, for permission to publish these stills.

I've never spent so long considering the possible expanses travelled by images in both their printed and unprinted-lost-toner forms. I've also never come across such a poetic and interesting description of the movements of toner and paper

within a copy-printer than in Lucy Meyle's contribution, *Part(icle) Images*. Meyle explores image and particle distribution, referencing and expanding on Ziggy Lever's *Image After Imago* from *Correspondence* 2.1. She describes how some of the fine toner evades thermal adhesion to paper and becomes "like pollen or dust in their ability to wander on the air or hitch a ride on a trouser-hem."

On an utterly windless sunny day in April, I went with Millie Godfery to fly a kite at Waimairi Beach for the *Aerodynamicas* project organised by Milli Jannides and Nicola Farquhar, joined by many other friends and artists. Those who couldn't be there on the day sent kites in their stead, including our contributors Lucy Meyle and Ziggy Lever. Godfery's lyrical account of the day captures the lightness of letting go, running shoes-off along the beach with a falling kite trailing behind—precisely, I think, what the project set out to achieve.

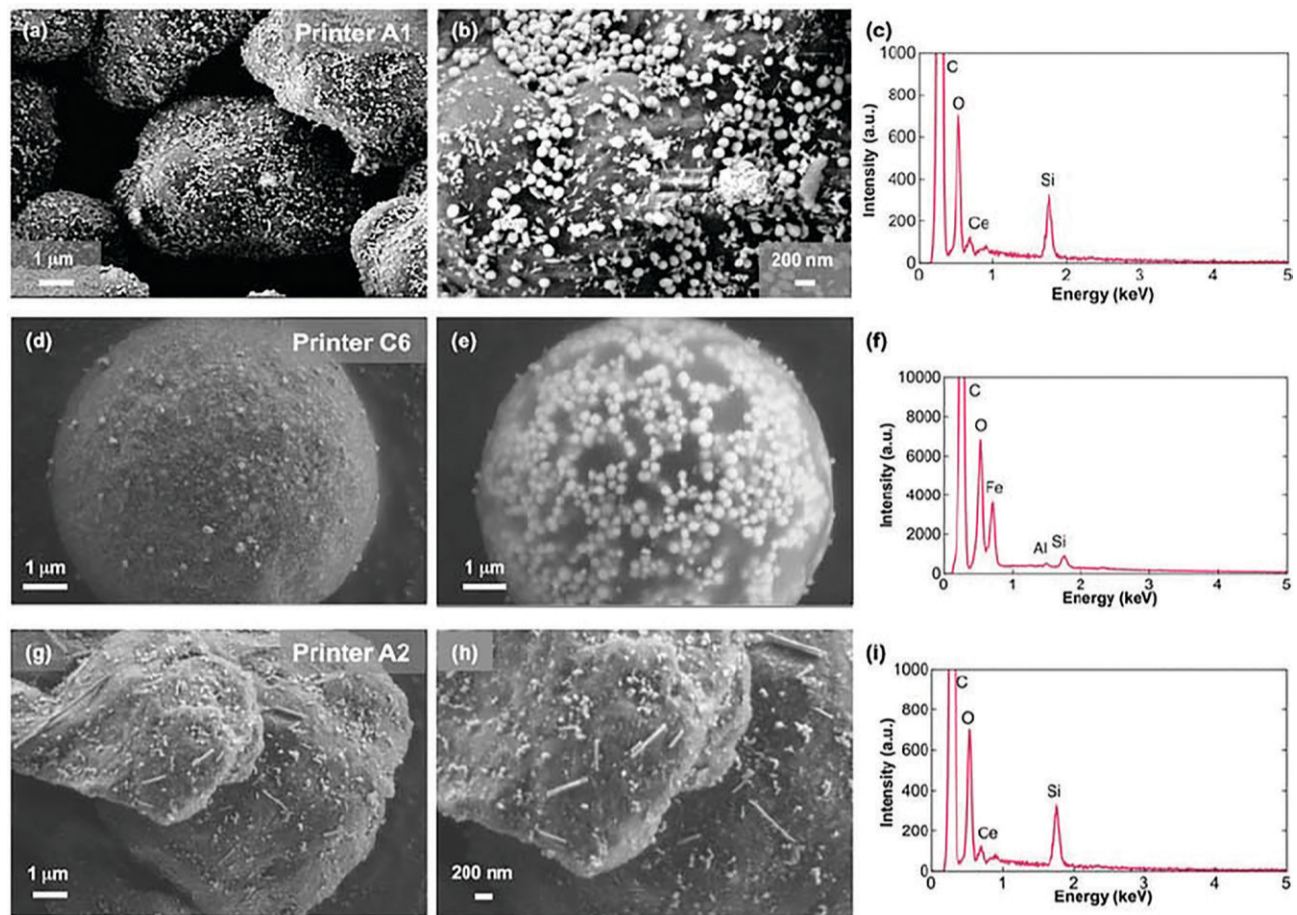
Being-Social: The Context in Which the Vā Has to Embed Itself is an extract from Albert Refiti's doctoral thesis which considers the concept of vā in the context of the Samoan diaspora. As you'll read, "[i]n its traditional Samoan setting, vā is the organising principle in which things are given their place and relations are forged between people, as well as between people and objects, and space and territory." And so I return again to thinking about distance and the persistent connections between people and places.

Adjournments in chess are no longer so common as they were before shorter time controls were introduced around the 1990s. Previously, a game might go on for five or six hours, at which point a player would call an adjournment so as to continue the game another time. While Balamohan Shingade and Nkosi Nkululeko's game of correspondence chess has spanned a period of eight months, an end has not been reached and an adjournment has been called for. *Correspondence Game 2022-23, Part 2: Adjournment* continues the epistolary email exchanges of two friends, sharing chess gossip, music recommendations and stories.

Enjoy,
Orissa Keane
Editor

Part(icle) Images

Lucy Meyle, with images sourced by Ziggy Lever



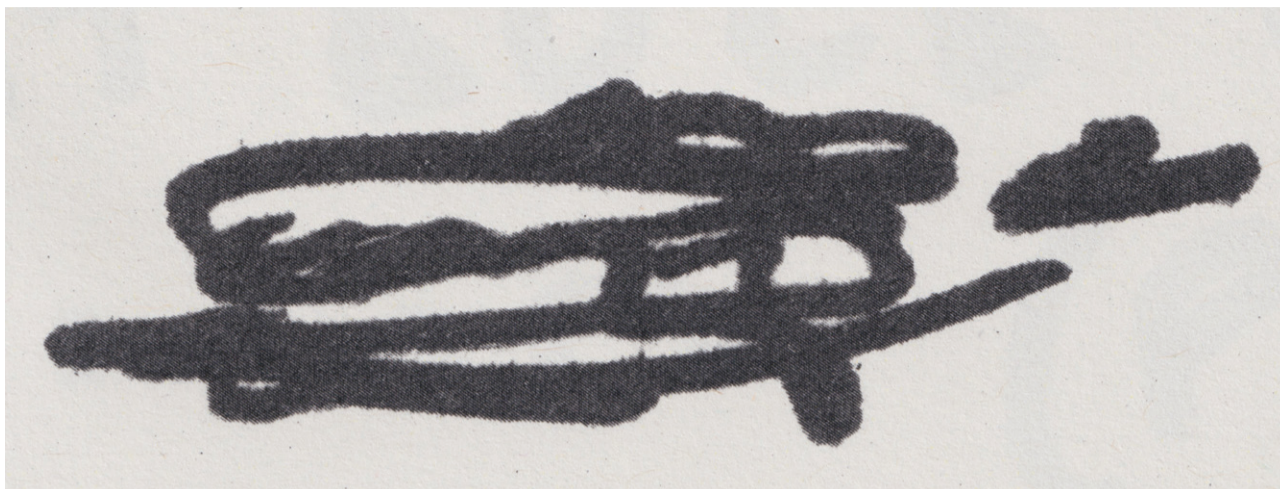
Representative scanning electron microscopy images of three toner powders from Printer A1 (a,b), Printer C6 (d,e), Printer A2 (g,h) and their respective EDX spectrum (c,f,i). Nanoparticles on the toner surface are commonly amorphous silica, illustrated by the EDX spectra.

Figure 1 in Pirela, Sandra & Sotiriou, Georgios & Bello, Dhimiter & Shafer, Martin & Bunker, Kristin & Castranova, Vincent & Thomas, Treye & Demokritou, Philip. (2014). Consumer exposures to laser printer-emitted engineered nanoparticles: A case study of life-cycle implications from nano-enabled products. *Nanotoxicology*. 11. 10.3109/17435390.2014.976602.

Some weeks ago I was trying to explain the studio photocopier to a group of students. This was intended to demystify a basic printing process and help them to explore new types of paper and surface, but also to encourage them to clear their own paper jams rather than letting the communal machine flail for hours with its little red error light blinking hopefully. Saving the electrostatic and photoconductivity details for another time, I started by describing the path that a piece of paper takes through the machine. From the flat stack in the slide-out tray, the paper moves through a series of rollers, bending and curving around them. Fine dry toner is applied—in sequence if the intended transfer is in colour—and then warmed and pressed to melt and fuse the particles onto the surface. If the paper is to be printed double-sided, it goes through this process twice, briefly popping out from the

machine only to be sucked back in and reappear somewhere else. When finished the paper is warm and always slightly curled from the heat, and any delicate fuzzy nap it had before printing has now been flattened. The paper is also now fused to the image it has picked up along the way. I ended the explanation by showing how to change the cartridges, replenish the trays, and pull out mangled pieces of paper from inside the machine.

Often during the clearing of a photocopier jam I have come away with fingertips dusted grey-black. This is because the image hasn't yet been fused by heat and so toner is lying softly on the surface of the paper like chalk pastel. Occasionally the transfer is only half-there as the paper didn't make a full turn around the drum and an incomplete rainbow marks the ragged image-edge. In these halted or jammed print jobs, the images are on



2400dpi Scanned detail of a scribble that was hand drawn and scanned, then printed on an A0 laser printer, in *SNAIL TIME II*, a publication made for the installation of the same name at RM Gallery and Project Office in 2022. ISBN: 978-0-473-61351-8

the page and on my fingers, but also suspended in the air. There are little particles of toner which drift from the open machine onto the ground, or the open flap of Door A, or the extended external paper tray. Motes get carried off on my foot or smudge themselves on the hem of my shirtsleeve. Tiny pieces of images get ferried around the office via an open door or the breeze created by a fast-walking colleague.

In addition to these chance part(icle)-images in the air, there are a whole lot more inside the printer itself. Part of the photocopier process involves chance adherence of some, but not all, toner to the paper. Whatever doesn't cling successfully is swept into an internal storage container. Called the 'waste toner cartridge' this fills up as the other toner cartridges empty themselves out. If you open up the waste toner cartridge (which is not recommended by the manufacturer) it is filled with a dust that seems to hover anxiously. The large amount of dry ink collected and stored inside appears as a mid-toned grey-brown-black. It looks this way because it is a mixture of all the colours in the printer, but it is surprising how make-up-like it seems—vague and neutral-ish like the colour of an eyebrow pencil making pretend shadows for real hairs. The toner is dense and yet somehow fluffed, so soft as to be almost imperceptible when you push your finger down into it.

My collaborator Ziggy Lever has written previously about the potential for installations to change over time, and that a certain 'image' of an installation takes hold as the authoritative or 'final'

one despite that finality being a kind of fiction. He mentions the making and planning processes, alterations of light or temperature within a space, material transformations of objects, and the individual responses of visitors as examples of what gets lost in the photographic documentation of an exhibition, despite being essential parts of an installation's life-cycle. When Lever asks "what traces those materials back to the installation after it disappears?", I don't think this is a call for a more exhaustive documentation as evidence of those subtle qualities mentioned above. Rather I understand the question as an acknowledgement of the flimsiness of the 'final' documentation of an installation, and that despite its authoritative stance, an image's representations have a capacity to be circumvented or interfered with.

I use printed matter in installation and sculpture, primarily making multiple publications/ephemera for dispersal but also as a substrate underneath other parts of a sculpture. This printed matter can be made up from images and texts sourced from historical documents, gathered from online archives, authored by myself, commissioned contemporaneously, or be a combination of those things. Publications in multiple that are free to be taken away by audiences can sometimes be presumed supplementary to an installation, and their looseness and mobility often evades the 'final' photographically documented *when* and *where* of the



2400dpi Scanned detail of an image of oyster mushrooms pinning in *SNAIL TIME II*.

work. Publications like this operate outside of the type of photographic documentation that fixes an installation's archived image, because they are free to meander, scrunched up in pockets or smoothed flat between the pages of a notebook. If they lack a tether (such as a date, title, or artist's name) these publications can also become untraceable, finding themselves amongst other objects and documents, ageing at different rates because of exposure to sunlight, used as ad-hoc shopping list surfaces. However, thinking about the waste toner cartridge inside the photocopier, I wonder about an even more dissipated *when* and *where* for these publications—in particular the images and texts within them—one more on a molecular level than at a scale tangible to the human eye.

When does an image solidify? In the photocopier the answer can

be straightforward: the image only adheres to the paper once it passes over and under the heated zone of the roller. It is this particular amalgam of toner which we can call the *image*, and everything else is just 'waste' to be scraped away. But the waste toner cartridge creates this condition only through its naming, not because it accurately categorises the material held within it. To me these recalcitrant toner particles can be thought of as an extension of the paper-bound image, or maybe like a shadow image. Not solid in any way and certainly not 'readable' to the human eye, they are instead like pollen or dust in their ability to wander on the air or hitch a ride on a trouser-hem.

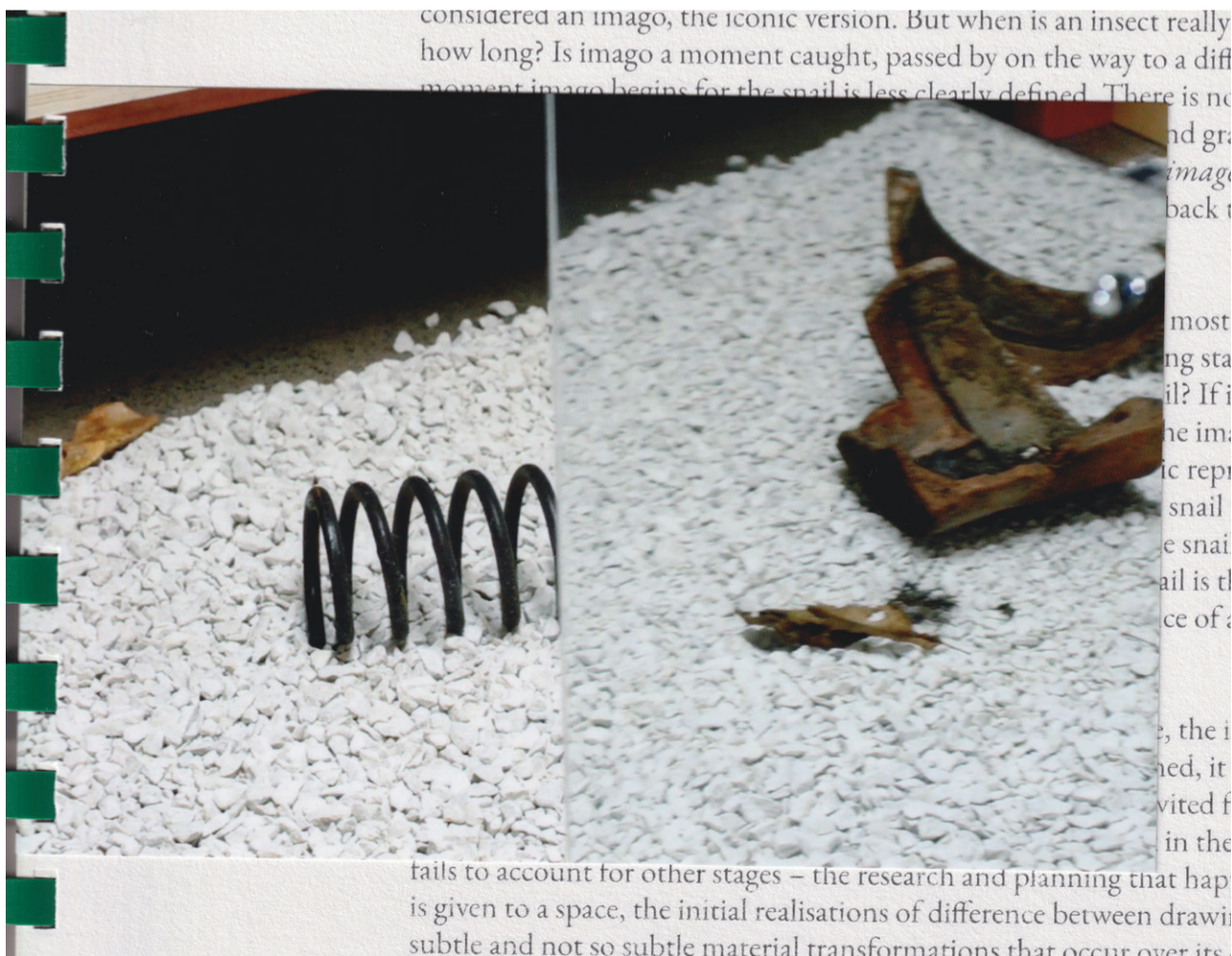
All the particles in the waste toner cartridge had the potential to be a part of an image or a piece of text, and it is only chance which determined their fate at the last





minute. These particles came into contact with images and texts, yet for whatever reason did not fuse to the paper. Inside the waste toner cartridge there must be thousands of ghost images and trace texts. They are all bunched up together, intermingled, out-of-order. There may be more of one ghost image or trace text than another, depending on the amount of copies originally requested or the surface area of toner applied to the drum. So infrequently does the cartridge get replaced, that potential pieces of one image from yesterday must be rubbed up next to some particulate from text printed last month, or last year. How printed matter is disseminated from within an installation or sculpture is similarly not a one-way street. This dispersal follows a multi-pronged pathway which can be traversed back and forth and which ultimately changes the publications (and what is held within them) over time. Ephemera from

an installation changes hands and locations, becomes archived alongside past exhibition materials, or 'loses' its initial artistic context entirely. That the constituent materials of printed matter in my practice may also meander off the page *before* they assemble into a publication draws these multi-pronged pathways back further, charting more *whens* and *wheres* that cannot be known. But I can also loop back around even now. In my everyday, I share the photocopier with an identifiable group of co-workers and students, and so it is really the excess toner of *their* images that *my* images are coming into contact with. Particles we each have instrumentalised to communicate our interrelated thought-processes, drawings, and texts are jostled together within the machine like a temporary cosmos, waiting for an errant sleeve to move them into new arrangements or a breeze to disperse them into the air.



2400dpi Scanned detail of the first version of the text *Image After Imago* with image overlay in *SNAIL TIME II*.



2400dpi Scanned detail of the letters "A" and "N", part of a list of materials hand written and scanned, then printed on an A0 laser printer, in *SNAIL TIME II*.



[02:15]

ISSUE 2.2

Dear Marie, How are you? I am sitting in my little flat on Sunday night, thinking that this must be the slowest week I can remember in quite some time.

[02:30]

CORRESPONDENCE

Not that I am having a bad time, it is just that time is going really slowly.



[02:43]

At home the months seem like days, but here it is exactly the opposite. I cannot believe it is only one week that I have been here.



Being-Social: The Context in Which the Vā Has to Embed Itself

Albert L. Refiti, 2014

In its traditional Samoan setting, *vā* is the organising principle in which things are given their place and relations are forged between people, as well as between people and objects, and space and territory. As a political agent, it works as a principle of interdependence—a unidirectional relationship between *matai* and dependants, in which one is meaningless without the other. Serge Tcherkézoff points out that, in hierarchical societies, “[p]eaceful relations of equality are located within the hierarchy, understood as a space organized by belonging to the same whole: within that space, there is room for equality at each level.” Thus, the movement of power in this context “is hierarchical because one of the terms is everything to the other—and the converse is never the case”.¹ Samoan society is structured along similar hierarchies that contain different interdependent levels, where each level is meaningless without the other.² Persons (and objects), for instance, are ‘graded’ and ranked and given different stations or spheres of relations. Thus, people inherit or are bestowed roles (*tofi*), which allow them to *nofo* (sit) at the centre of the circle of *matai* (made up of *ali’i* [paramount chiefs] and *tulafale* [orator chiefs]). Outside the circle are adjunct spheres, made up of *tausī* (wives of *matai*, mirroring the circle of *fa’amatai*), the *aualuma* (unmarried women) and the *aumaga* (untitled men). *Vā* is the glue that folds relationships and interaction into a relational field of action; as Bradd Shore says, it “order[s] social relations”.³

¹ (Tcherkézoff, 2009, p. 305).

² (Tcherkézoff, 2009, p. 305).

³ (Shore, 1977, p. 367).

⁴ This will be discussed in later chapters.

What is integral to the notion of a person within this sphere of relations is that the person is a distributed entity, made up of many parts (and connecting lines of relations), and each part can flow from the person to other persons, connecting many in turn.⁴ The term *tautuanaga* (remember) comes into play here as the call for responsibility and responsiveness to one’s relationships and for honouring one’s ancestors and family—one has to maintain many lines of relationships.

For subjects in the diaspora, these lines of relations to a Samoan context can become very ‘slack’. This is because customary understanding of *vā* no longer applies to subjects in the diaspora; Samoans in the diaspora are subjected to laws based on democratic principles of equality, in which all subjects have equal access to rights and resources. By contrast, the *vā* in the Samoan context keeps people within separate and unequal spheres, which are, however, connected and orbit each other. In the diaspora, these spheres are no longer maintained, and the *vā* as a traditional way to manage and order relationships has gone through successive transformations. As I observed above, the Fale Pasifika is one of examples in which the *vā* is reinterpreted and maintained.

To understand the structure of space in Samoan thinking more generally, comparative studies of Samoan concepts and their Western counterparts are useful. For example, in his analysis of the Samoan context of social relations, Bradd Shore notes the absence in Samoan of a verb



An extract from “*Lau tofiga lea. Vā and the contemporary understanding of space as identity*”, *Mavae and Tofiga: Spatial Exposition of the Samoan Cosmogony and Architecture*. A thesis submitted to Auckland University of Technology in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, School of Art & Design, Faculty of Design & Creative Technologies, 2014. 18 – 23. Thank you to Albert L. Refiti for permission to publish this extract.

⁵ (Shore, 1977, p. 184).

⁶ (Shore, 1977, p. 185).

⁷ (Shore, 1977, p. 187).

⁸ This position foregrounds aspects of Continental philosophy concerned with the opposition between being and becoming.

⁹ (Shore, 1977, p. 186).

¹⁰ See also (Massey, 2005); (Thrift, 1996); 2003); (Thrift, 2006).

¹¹ (Low & Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga, 2003, p.1).

¹² (Massey, 2005, p. 64).

¹³ Massey echoes here Homi Bhabha’s take on the nation-space and -time: “The problematic boundaries of modernity are enacted in these ambivalent temporalities of the nation-space. The language of culture and community is poised on the fissures of the present becoming the rhetorical figures of a national past. Historians transfixed on the event and origins of the nation never ask, and political theorists possessed of the ‘modern’ totalities of the nation ... never pose the essential question of the representation of the nation as a temporal process.” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 142).

¹⁴ (Massey, 2005, p. 65).

¹⁵ (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992, p. 8).

equivalent to the English verb “to be”.⁵ He points out that an important part of Western thought, by comparison with Samoan thought, is the dichotomy between the real and the apparent: “the phenomenal world is interpreted as an array of appearances or seemings and shadows, a veil behind which truth lies as an absolute state beyond both time and space”.⁶ Western thought is distinct from Polynesian thought in its stress on the internal consistency structuring human experience, which reduces the intuition of those (non-Western peoples) it seeks to comprehend by turning the possibility of a cross-cultural interpretation into a science.⁷

A Samoan understanding of space, as Shore indicates, takes into account a “theory of action” rather than one of “being”,⁸ which recognises the world in its dual aspects: both a transient, mutable and dynamic aspect and a stable, immutable and formal dimension. Both are firmly linked to the phenomenal world. Shore believes that, for Samoans, “both aspects of experience are equally ‘true’ for each is appropriated to a different context, and all contexts are linked as complements in actual experience”.⁹

Bradd Shore wrote in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and by the 1990s, a greater understanding of space and cultural difference was in full swing. Setha Low and Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga, for instance, observed that a renewed interest in issues of space and place in the 1990s foregrounded spatial dimensions of culture,¹⁰ rather than treating them as background: “human behaviour was now seen as being located in and constructive of space”.¹¹ This renewed interest in space perpetuated assumptions about globalised space and promoted a ‘divided’ view of the nature of space itself, and of the relation between space and society:

Space and society mapped on to each other and together they were from the beginning divided up, ‘cultures’, ‘societies’ and ‘nations’ were all imagined as having an integral relation to bounded spaces, internally coherent and differentiated from each other by separation.¹²

Places as locations of cultural identity came to be seen as bounded, with their own internally generated authenticities, and defined by their difference from other places beyond their borders. Doreen Massey proposes that this ‘imagined space’ is a way to organise global space as “divided/regionalised”, so that the nation-state as a project¹³ could be legitimated as progress, as ‘natural’ across the globe.¹⁴ Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson called this the “isomorphism of space, place and culture”. Using the example of how ‘the Bushmen’ came to be Bushmen, they argue that, instead of assuming the autonomy of the primeval community, “we need to examine how it was formed as a community out of the interconnected space that always already existed”.¹⁵ They propose that a shared historical process differentiates and connects



the world.¹⁶ Debates in the Pacific and elsewhere suggest that received categories and ‘authenticities’ need to be questioned, and that the current ascriptions of remoteness and isolation have been produced both discursively and materially through colonialism.¹⁷ Anthropologists (and social scientists in general) may have adopted a “lens of local studies”: “Imagining themselves to have found ‘primitive isolates’, they defined them as place-defined societies and assumed that they were pre-capitalist ‘originals.’”¹⁸ Massey regards space as a product of dynamic interrelations: connections and disconnections, and their combined effects; an emergent product of relations. This would include relations which establish boundaries, where ‘place’ is necessarily “meeting place”. In such cases, “difference of a place” must be conceptualised predominantly as the constant emergence of “uniqueness out of (and within) the specific constellations of interrelations” within which a place is set, but also “what is made of that constellation”.¹⁹

In the rationalised project of modernity,²⁰ spaces and cultures are differentiated into temporal sequences, in which “Western Europe is ‘advanced’, other parts of the world ‘some way behind’, yet others are ‘backwards.’”²¹ The transformation of the world’s geography into world history renders spatial heterogeneity as a single temporal series, and thereby reduces cultural difference to that between places within a historical queue. ‘Scientific study’ of ‘other cultures’ turns out to be a process of distancing, in which the subject of study is separated from the object by history, and the object of study becomes distanced from the subject’s scientific gaze. This distancing has the effect of “decreasing the actuality of difference” because “difference/heterogeneity is neatly packed into its bounded spaces and dismissed to the (‘our’) past”.²² Massey proposes that a more useful way to identify the world of the ‘others’ is to treat history as a simultaneous event. She uses the notion of ‘coevalness’, an “imaginative space of engagement” that mutually implicates identity, space and time in the construction of a space of complexity and multiplicity.²³ The end of modernity not only heralds the arrival of the ‘margins at the centre’ but also the arrival of people from the past; distance is suddenly eradicated both spatially and temporally, and migration is an assertion of coevalness:

... the repression of the spatial was bound up with the establishment of foundational universals (and vice versa), the repression of the possibilities of multiple trajectories, and the denial of the real difference of others ... what was at issue was the establishment of a geography of power/knowledge.²⁴

It was in this context in the mid-1990s that Albert Wendt’s reimagining of the *vā* took place. The subject of such times, a “body-becoming”, created a *vā* by “clearing a space for itself among and alongside other bodies”.²⁵ The crux of the reinvention of the *vā* at this moment is that it must provide a space of ‘equality’, where a proper engagement between Samoans (and by extension the

¹⁶ (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992, p. 16).

¹⁷ (Thomas, 1991, p. 36).

¹⁸ (Massey, 2005, p. 67).

¹⁹ (Massey, 2005, p. 68).

²⁰ Modernity is a shorthand term for modern society, or industrial civilisation; the world as open to transformation, by human intervention, economic institutions, industrial production and a market economy with certain range of political institutions, including the nation-state and mass democracy, see (Giddens & Pierson, 1998, p. 94).

²¹ (Massey, 2005, p. 68).

²² (Massey, 2005, p. 69).

²³ To Johannes Fabian conceived ‘coevalness’ to mean ‘existing at the same time’, in order to show how the ethnographic encounter with the native Other locates the Other in a hierarchical distance, while suppressing the simultaneity and contemporaneity of the encounter. According to Fabian, the denial of coevalness is a “persistent and systematic tendency to place the referents of anthropology in a Time other than the present of the producer of anthropological discourse” (Fabian 2002: 31).

²⁴ (Massey, 2005, p. 70).

²⁵ (Wendt, 1996).

Pasifika community) and people of the new land could take place—an engagement based on respect (*teu*). In this sense, *teu le vā* becomes the possibility of existing and engaging with others, on the same level, by bringing things into relation and, by doing so, exist as ‘equals’. This would be the ideal of coevalness Fabian and Massey conceptualised, which allows the native other to exist spatially and temporally on the same plane with modern subjects.

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[03:11]

It is just that I cannot
remember a time when I
marked the days off on the
calendar one by one each night.

ISSUE 2.2

[03:27]

Anyway, I have achieved a bit
so far. I can now type quite fast
with both hands. It took quite
a lot of doing to get this far.

CORRESPONDENCE

PG 16



Photo by Orissa Keane



Breathing Room

Millie Godfery

Aerodynamicas was an initiative led by artists Milli Jannides and Nicola Farquhar at Waimairi Beach in Ōtautahi on the 22nd of April 2023. There were more than thirty artists from around the motu involved in making and flying for this event.

Coordinates: 43°29'15.0"S 172°43'29.0"E

*43 degrees, 29 minutes, 15 seconds south;
172 degrees, 43 minutes, 29 seconds east*

Structure

From the warm sand looking up, a kite is a flitting, tremulous thing. Yet it requires a sure sense of structural integrity to get up there, the lift of the wind encountering the weight of material, the tail drag balancing the thrust of movement. Dart against swoop, swoop after rise, rise becoming fall.

This from NASA's webpage: "aerodynamics is the way air moves around things." So a kite is not just the physical object, the strings and crosses and wings. A kite is how it converses with the wind (or an absence thereof), the tension created by the motion of the kite flyer's hands, how fast they run to get it airborne, and how they slow, breathless and attentive, to stand like a puppeteer in dialogue with an extra limb.

You could say that the work of artists involves a lot of the stuff of aerodynamics. How do the changeable things—distance, perspective, weather (literally the effects of the elements on an artwork over time, or how it bears the cultural, social, economic and political environments which circulate it)—interact with the physical structure of the work itself? The premise of *Aerodynamicas* seemed to call this into focus, elevating these unpredictable factors as an essential part of both the making and sharing of the kites.

Like a good poem, which is made not just from the words but the shape of the space around them, what emerged from *Aerodynamicas* was how the kites became more than the structures themselves. Amongst all the space afforded by Waimairi Beach, where on a clear day you can stand on the shoreline and see the crest of the coastline morph into the jagged Kaikōura Ranges, freedom and playfulness emerged. We had our shoes off. The sun burst through unexpectedly, announcing itself to the afternoon. Formalities were shed. There was no structured beginning or end to the event, but rather a trickling and bursting and wavering of participation, as natural and inconsistent as the wind itself.



Photo by Toni Cuthill

Bridle

A lot of a kite's functionality rests on how successfully the maker has located the fulcrum. The line needs to be placed at the right axis point on the bridle so that the kite can manoeuvre itself against the wind, and so equal strain can be distributed to the right points of the kite. Calculating the length of the bridle is therefore a technical thing, but I imagine the maker's hands are also alive with the memory of the tug and dive of a kite in the air. In a sense, an aerodynamic structure is born out of more than just accurate physics. The kite flyer's construction comes together out of a combination of precision, muscle memory, and hope.

But the definition of fulcrum is not just the point on which a lever turns or is supported; it is also "the most important part of an activity or a situation," and so it is fitting that the event itself created an exercise out of pinpointing the right coordinates. The webpage for the event had been suitably vague, as had the accompanying Instagram account, which showed a collage of kite "inspo" but gave no more insight into the nature of the event. This had caused me to wonder how this would inhibit the very sense of participation that I understood the event to be inviting. And, at first, it seemed it may, with Google Maps taking Orissa and I to outside the Waimari Surf Club, where a few artists with kites peeking out of bags and cardboard boxes had clustered, unsure if it was the right place to be. We waited tentatively.

Further down the beach a larger group had gathered and eventually someone came to gather us together. Despite the accuracy required in effectively attaching a bridle to a kite in order to get it airborne, many within the artist-cum-kite flyer group had poured their aroha into the sails and structure of their kites, and so string and scissors were being passed around for those who had not yet attached a bridle and tether. The momentum was building, reluctance giving way to curiosity, as one, then two artists took their kites for test runs. And suddenly there was no shame. Kites were ascending, drooping, crashing, the artists breathless and rather unbridled.

Tether

A kite is tethered to a body by a length of string. Sometimes the string appears invisible, so that the kite appears to hang from the sky.

Imagine an artwork tethered to the sky rather than the crisp gallery wall. All that breathing room. Object, maker, observer, all flapping in the wind.

Object, maker, observer each surrendering to the high chance of elemental damage, giving over to a manner of abandon.

Fraught, we'd have to accept that flight might not always be possible.

But sometimes, with the right airs, perhaps just enough momentum off the sea or from the friction of the flyer's legs—

there'd be a lift.



Photo by Toni Cuthill





[05:30]

The weather is really variable here - one day it's warm and the next day it's freezing.

ISSUE 2.2

[05:41]

The temperature doesn't bother me physically, as I'm inside nearly all of the time, but I do find it affects me emotionally.

CORRESPONDENCE

PG 20



[05:55]

When it is fine and warm I feel quite good, but when it is overcast and grey I feel like every day is a month. At home the weather does not bother me at all.



Correspondence Game, 2022-23

Part 2: Adjournment

Balamohan Shingade – Nkosi Nkululeko

from: bshi034
to: JohnBuryman
date: 18 Mar 2023, 21:03
subject: Shingade-Nkululeko, Correspondence 2022-23

ISSUE 2.2



Nkosi! Hey,

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 Bf5 4. Nf3

So much has happened in the past four months. You and I put up an exhibition together in Tāmaki Makaurau only for the studio to be burgled the night before the opening!

I'm excited to be resuming our correspondence game with a knight move. You observed that beginners are drawn to certain chess pieces even as they have so many others at their disposal. Recently, it's been the knights for me. I'm finding nothing more satisfying than the knight's characteristic indirection and evasiveness. The knight is a satirist. I admire her voice in the messiest and most threatening of instances.

In answer to your question about how we assess our growth as musicians is something I remember my teacher once said: It's gradual until it's sudden. I wonder whether it rings true for you?

I look forward to hearing about the journeys in poetry and music and chess! Before I sign off, I want to share with you my most listened to track of any music. It's the late Ustad Sultan Khan's improvisation in raga Yaman Kalyan. (The Lydian mode might function as an appropriate door to this raga.)

<https://youtu.be/7wYXEY4htDA>

Your friend,
Balamohan

from: JohnBuryman
to: bshi034
date: 25 Mar 2023, 06:22
subject: Re: Shingade-Nkululeko, Correspondence 2022-23

CORRESPONDENCE

PG 22



1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 Bf5 4.Nf3 e6

Hey Balamohan!

I'm glad to revisit our game! Had quite a busy week that just wouldn't let up haha. It was terrible to hear about the break-in! I checked in with the tattoo shop you linked me with (via instagram) and was glad to hear everyone was alright but so sad to see the photos of the place.

Knights are pretty majestic. Recently, in a few chess tournaments, I've been drawn to those pieces almost exclusively. Maybe I'm going back to my roots as a beginner lol. I just bought a book about the former world champion Viswanathan Anand. I enjoy his games and studied a few but never had a whole game collection before. I'm very much looking forward to it.

I listened to the youtube video you sent with Ustad Sultan Khan. I'm always amazed at how much can be explored in just 1 mode. It truly sounds like it shifts and evolves. What a master of music. I've been changing my approach to chess for the last few weeks. Listening to music, stretching, tea, short walks, and more, are all part of the process. Before a recent tournament game, I got to hear his music fill my room as I laid on my mat (feeling the stiffness in my bones lol. I need more of this).

I made a playlist and I'll share the link to [Herbie Hancock's "Watermelon Man."](#) The opening (about 1:40 min.) is quite supreme. I really love the genre-bending he does in his work, even in the 70s! I'm sure hip hop producers could sample the intro to make a slammin beat! I play it every time I get ready for a chess match. Great vibes.

How are you doing as spring approaches? I remember you discussing storms in your area, big enough to have people stay inside for safety. How are things progressing?

best,
nkosi

from: bshi034
to: JohnBuryman
date: 28 Mar 2023, 11:49
subject: Shingade-Nkululeko, Correspondence 2022-23





1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 Bf5 4.Nf3 e6 5. Be2

The first part of Herbie Hancock's Watermelon Man makes for a terrific warm-up soundtrack! The whimsical music would seem to encourage wayward chess moves, like opening with The Wall or the Bong Cloud variation. But maybe that's too wild, because the soundtrack is not weird, but is wonderfully waggish. I wonder, what would it mean to be a Watermelon Woman in chess?

If youngsters in your area are anything like here, they'll have read the opening books cover to cover, making the mainlines a no-go. The last FIDE tournament I entered was a Christmas special in 2020. All of my opponents were teenagers or children; sharp, well-prepared, just incredible. I regretted every mainline I entered. Won 4, lost 3. I think the Watermelon Woman would've said to the mainline players, "I prefer not to." Without disrespect or any cunning, she would've invited them to play something obscure, some sort of play that'd require attention to tempo and that'd simultaneously erupt across both the King's side and the Queen's side of the board.

For all the talk of adventurous openings, my move today is exactly the opposite. It's conservative, and cautiously aims for only a small improvement. It follows Nigel Short's line popularised in the 1990s, a line by the Englishman that's come to be called "less ambitious."

Until soon,
Balamohan

from: JohnBuryman
to: bshi034
date: 2 Apr 2023, 02:54
subject: Shingade-Nkululeko, Correspondence 2022-23



Hey Balamohan!

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 Bf5 4.Nf3 e6 5.Be2 c5

i don't even know how popular chess books are anymore! they look at youtube videos and online chessable courses now (and they're still good)! quite a few folks seem to talk about books not having as much relevance to people's development these days. but the books coming out are soo good!

there's too many to keep count. personally, after getting into tournaments recently, it seems like folks might put in energy to study openings but i'm getting the feeling that folks are just as clueless as i am ... but waiting just for the moment that someone falls in a *specific* variation they've studied for hours lol.

that would be funny to create a playlist based on chess openings! i'm glad you went for the "less ambitious" opening. i have a tough time dealing with structures that involve chasing my Bishop with the King-side pawns.

i think i find "ambition" plays a part in other aspects of my life. i tend to feel too content with what i have. i work hard in the service of teaching or giving, but when it comes to myself, the days slip. i think i'm trying to learn to exercise that ambition more often now. what about you?

with(out) ambition,
nkosi

from: bshi034
to: JohnBuryman
date: 11 Apr 2023, 16:15
subject: Shingade-Nkululeko, Correspondence 2022-23



Nkosi! Kia ora,

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 Bf5 4.Nf3 e6 5.Be2 c5 6. Be3

Oof, yes... I'm not experienced or risk-taking enough to try the lines e.g. with 4. h4. (It'd make me feel nervous, like I've under-packed for a hike in stormy weather!) I wonder, if the line we're playing is called "less ambitious", then what makes the 4. h4 ambitious? What can we say about ambition itself from that pawn move in the Caro Kann?

I think the pawn's ambition in 4. h4 is made of discontent and hope. At first glance, it looks magnanimous for a pawn from the corner-most side of the board to throw itself into the attack with wild abandon. The pawn seems impatient with small improvements in the position, and it breaks rank and routine to voice itself. (In your last email, you seemed to say that contentment was incompatible with ambition.) But I don't think we'd call the pawn ambitious if it only dreamt of x, but if it didn't act to bring x about. That is, if it harboured a desire to chase down your light-squared bishop, but if it never took any steps forward. Ambition disposes us to action. But does the move have to be daring for it to be called ambitious? Or must the context be volatile in which the move is made for it to be called ambitious? The pawn move looks risky, because it's exposing, and it makes the structure a little more fragile. So ambition might be being disposed to action with the hope for something beyond the ordinary.

I think it'd also be interesting to distinguish ambition from mere desire with the help of 4. h4, and also to avoid talk of ambition being reduced simply to a debate about whether it is a vice or a virtue. But to answer your question: As with my "less ambitious" choice of moves, my daily efforts have also been focused around minor adjustments, with the question of rhythms and routines in my day-to-day. Using a metaphor from music, I'd love to ask you what I sometimes ask myself: What does a day or a week with a strong backbeat look like for you?

Your friend,
Balamohan





from: JohnBuryman
to: bshi034
date: 24 Apr 2023, 12:24
subject: Shingade-Nkululeko, Correspondence 2022-23



Balamohan!

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 Bf5 4.Nf3 e6 5.Be2 c5 6. Be3 Nc6

I love this reading of ambition from you. Both in the context of the Caro and your interpretation it feels like certain moves can present as ambitious when they're simply setting a boundary for the safety and harmonious movement between pieces. "Ambition disposes us to action." More and more, language or certain terminology appears to be part of a larger spectrum as opposed to clearly defining what is or should be in the (in)definite future.

Recently, I've been checking out a chess book "Under the Surface" by Jan Markos and pairing it with Gaston Bachelard's "Water and Dreams." I think what they clearly explore in their beginning chapters revolve around the common missteps in solving the problem of evaluating the function of a chess piece or evaluating the function of an image of water. Both require the author/player to not force the function you wish a piece could have, but rather, discover your "beyond the ordinary" because it is forced. There was a passage by Dvoretsky where he recalled an old teacher highlighting to him that fancy moves should only be played when they are called for. Sometimes I wonder if it's my inner nature or my "artistic" nature that drives me toward those aesthetically pleasing moves more often. I tend to discover fancy, defending moves when it is absolutely necessary but the stress that leads to that discovery is very much exhausting haha.

A day with a strong backbeat definitely involves music haha. Mostly for the sake of turning the mind to a language-less thinking that I feel is pretty good for me. The days change but the consistency is in the gesture toward sensitivity. Through puzzle-solving, book-reading, music-playing, poetry-writing, etc, I find myself reacting to very small moments, which can be its own vice in itself. Finding the balance is such a struggling skill. The week always poses problems for me to work through in the act of balance. I am prone to obsession, so if overworking is not mistaken for ambition, then that is a good day. I know "scheduling" helps folks a lot, but sadly I cannot schedule my thoughts. Despite using it often, I usually feel like I miss something when I engage my intuitive side in order to solve a problem quickly. Sometimes I think "I can do better than just my intuition." Obviously a lot of complications in that regard haha.

If your daily rhythms or routines are disturbed, what guides you through that?

intuitively,
 Nkosi

from: bshi034
to: JohnBuryman
date: 3 May 2023, 13:22
subject: Shingade-Nkululeko, Correspondence 2022-23



Nkosi! Hey,

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 Bf5 4.Nf3 e6 5.Be2 c5 6. Be3 Nc6 7. dxc5

"Turning the mind to language-less thinking"—yes! This is a beautiful way of putting it. (Actually, I've skipped a few too many beats in my weekly rhythm cycle, which also consists of riyaz (practice of Hindustani music) in the evenings. But like when I'm out of tempo in music, I hope to catch my place in the next cycle.)

By the way, when did we reach our "tabiya"? I love this chess concept—a position that's reached after a conventional sequence of opening moves, and at which point the game starts as if for a second time. I think of tabiya as a parting of ways from others' games. Ours might've been moves 5. Be2 or 6. Be3. (But if the coming sequence is still part of a Caro-Kann player's repertoire, then I'm now playing along by ear!) I wonder whether the concept of tabiya can offer an index to the positions and points of departures in our own lives? Like re-starting after my family's move from Hyderabad to Tāmaki Makaurau. The Migrant's Gambit.

I have a bad habit of running out of time, even in classical games where we begin with 90 minutes on the clock each. I think we're forced to adjourn our correspondence, at least for now. But unlike adjournment mechanisms in formal tournaments, I don't have my move secretly sealed in an envelope... It's dxc5. The first capture in our game.

To be continued,
Balamohan

— ADJOURNED —





[08:15]

Thank you for your fax that was in the fax machine this morning when I went to check it.

About the contributors

Marie Shannon is an artist who works with photography, video and drawing, and has been working with text for a number of years. She has made a series of videos using on-screen text, and sometimes voiceover, to tell short, autobiographical stories, or to reflect upon specific times and events in her life.

Lucy Meyle uses sculpture and publication as sites for re-imagining and re-imagining our relations to what is human and more-than-human in the time of climate emergency. The idea of 'bagginess' is a central concern, where extra room within representations or interpretations can be understood as freeing and/or hazardous. Recent exhibitions include *Memories of a Naturalist*, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Ōtepoti, 2022; *wiggling together, falling apart*, Michael Lett, Tāmaki Makaurau, 2022; *At Thresholds*, City Gallery Wellington, Te Whanganui-a-Tara, 2022; *Mews Room*, play_station gallery, Te Whanganui-a-Tara, 2022; *Snail Time II* (with Ziggy Lever), RM Gallery, Tāmaki Makaurau, 2022; and *Snail Time I* (with Ziggy Lever), Window Gallery, Tāmaki Makaurau, 2021.

Ziggy Lever's work draws on scientific, cosmological, poetic, and institutional material, through an active researching of sites and (paradigmatic) structures. Unfolding investigations into sites and archives, and in varying cooperative modes of practice, his works relate improvisational making to archival contexts and readings. Recent exhibitions/projects include *The Observatory Project* (with Eamon Edmundson-Wells) residency at CERN, 2023; *Document Scales*, Enjoy, Te Whanganui-a-Tara, 2022; *Snail Time II* (with Lucy Meyle), RM Gallery, Tāmaki Makaurau, 2022; and, *Snail Time I* (with Lucy Meyle), Window Gallery, Tāmaki Makaurau, 2021. <https://www.ziggylever.com>

Albert L. Refiti is an associate professor of art and design at Auckland University of Technology and the holder of the

matai ancestral title Leali'ifano from his grandfather's home of Vaovai, Falealili, in Samoa. He is the co-author, with Tina Engels-Schwarzpaul and Lana Lopesi, of *Pacific Spaces: transformations and transmutations* (Berghahn Books, 2022) and *The Handbook of Contemporary Indigenous Architecture* (Springer, 2018) with Elizabeth Grant, Kelly Greenop and Daniel Glenn. Albert is the convenor of the Vā Moana Research Cluster and recipient of two Marsden Fund Research Grants: *Vā Moana: space and relationality in Pacific thought and identity* (2019-2022) with Tina Engels-Schwarzpaul and *Artefacts of Relations: Building in the Pacific* (2022-2025) with Rau Hoskins. He was the 2019-2020 Andrew W Mellon Senior Fellow at The Metropolitan Museum of the Arts and was awarded the 2021 Fellow of the Auckland War Memorial Museum Medal.

Millie Godfery has a Masters in English Literature from Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington and has published work in *Takahē* and *six cents*. She enjoys tending to words as one tends to a garden, carefully and with patience.

Balamohan Shingade is a candidate for the PhD in Philosophy at The University of Auckland. Most recently, he's been a researcher with the Center for Culture-Centred Approach to Research and Evaluation (CARE), Massey University, and curator at St Paul St Gallery, Auckland University of Technology. He is also a singer of Hindustani music. <https://balamohanshingade.com>

Nkosi Nkululeko's work is published in *ANMLY*, *Chess Life Online*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, *Oxford Poetry*, *The Nation*, *Poetry Northwest*. He is anthologised in *The Best American Poetry* (2018), *Bettering American Poetry* Vol. 3 (2019), and *Furious Flower: Seeding the Future of African American Poetry* (2019). Nkululeko is a poetry, music, and chess instructor from Harlem, New York.

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ARTS COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND TOI AOTEAROA



[10:03]

It has turned to summer here now, but people say it could all be over in a few weeks.

[11:44]

It now feels like I have been
away for both a long time, and
a very short time as well.