

01

An apparatus for storying the world

We can ask the reader to question distinctions between text and place.

[1] What is more tangible for you in the happening of this moment? The text you are reading or listening to, or the furthest point in the distance that you can see?

(Was Orpheus the first known documentarist?)

A documentary (derived from *Document* - to construct or produce with a high proportion of details closely reproducing authentic situations or events) is an attempt to recapture someone something somewhere looking back.

This is one of 22 manifesto cards produced by the Ambient Literature project. Each offers an argument; a provocation; an expressive gesture. They are markers in moving sand.



02

Concerned with temporal being

Spaces offer reasons to linger. To remain and contemplate⁰⁸, and step away from the world. To allow the word to happen in the ||interstices||.

*“Concerning a voice through air
it takes space to fold time in feeling”*

Susan Howe (2004)

[1] Identify the sound that stands out for you, this is position one; [2] Identify another sound, one that has come after, this is position two; [3] Imagine that you are now occupying the mid point in this duration; [4] Identify all the places that you concurrently occupy.

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03

A lesson in ambient hermeneutics

Picture a child at an airport,
watching planes rise ^{into} the sky*

His back is turned to the camera, his head raised.

What is foregrounded and what is mise-en-scene? Are you present, and if so, where are you stood?

Are you leaning against the railings, your feet perched, like the boy's, on the lower spar?

Where the camera tells you, or elsewhere on the concrete jetty?

Ambient Literature is a liberation
from the tyranny of the lens.

**after Chris Marker (1962)*

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note



Experiential

Do we have anything other than our
experience?

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[1] Imagine that you can't experience anything. Describe.



Situated

Situation is not simply co-ordinates, a sited work, responsive to only time and space emerges.

A situated work is a *happening*

— within which the reader's perception is all that there is, all that they can trust.

We are not privileged an account of why something is happening; it simply does. Story emerges from our presence in the moment, in the situation.

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note

Equipment, broadly conceived

You have encountered ambient works in many forms. Talented artists, writers and performers have sown the field in which we now stand.

Standing between past and future, we are always articulating *Now*. Now is catalogue and map, taxonomy and grammar.

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This manifesto recognizes that those works, taken collectively, describe and demonstrate the connection between experience and story in a distinct manner.

07

A manipulation of the potential of acoustic space

Our eyes skim across printed pages, reading from
left to right

When we hear words, do we imagine them
running across our mind, beginning in
one lobe and continuing to another?

Sound allows you to identify distances between you and objects, constructing the world. Reflections from surfaces characterise the size and nature of the space.

[1] Imagine that you are stood next to the source of a nearby sound, perhaps a bird, the horn of a car or voice on the other side of the room; [2] How does the world seem from this vantage point?

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Engaged with the reader

The act of writing is deliberate but its form shifts
when we know where you sit, how you are holding
this card,

whether your next breath will come...

Tools in this form of storytelling are for
creating the flip side of what appears.

[1] Look down at the manifesto definition and
select the last word from any of seven sentences;
[2] re-configure the words until you understand
the message that is meant for you.

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A present ghosting

Before you opened this box, you had no inkling what these words were, but you trust* that they **existed** just the same. What if we told you these words were different before you lifted the lid? What if these words were different each time you opened the box?

**and why do you trust that assertion?*

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[1] Let's do some counterfactual imagining*
- what if you had done X instead, how would your life be different now?

**after Ruth Byrne (2005)*

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Concerned with errance

Errance (fr), usually translated as ‘wandering’.

Our destinations are less important than our journeys. We encourage drifting within a narrative, moving from place to place and experiencing⁰⁴ serendipity; encountering the unexpected.

Destinations are formed from un-

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-expected stops along the way.



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The material under erasure, present and absent, purposive and hidden

Despite what bookbinders and publishers will tell you,
literature is not is a fixed thing.

An ambient work fixes itself only in so far as its
reader knows that they experienced *something*.
That *something* happened and they were present
during it. No other material trace is left.

(Uⁿe_veⁿ distribution is encouraged)

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[1] Find a scrap of paper, write a note for a
stranger, give them your best advice or a funny
quip; [2] Leave it in a place where its discovery
will cause delight.



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A remediation of sensory perception

What do we take for granted? What is natural and what is artifice? Our perception isn't to be trusted, our world is being manipulated.

note

Consciousness is infused with technologies of inscription.

N. Katherine Hayles (2002)

If we do not hold with foundational knowledge, what is not mediated? If one does believe that there is some essential foundation to experience, what is it predicated upon?

[1] Try to step outside of your experience.

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Eliciting perceptual ambiguity

The experience of doubt was a problem and a source of inspiration for Descartes - how can we trust our senses when things have different 'modes' of appearing? Held in the hand, a piece of wax has definite qualities, however, when it is placed next to the fire its shape and fragrance are altered.

note

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- [1] Look as far into the distance as you can;
 - [2] Now squint;
 - [3] Notice a black dot;
 - [4] Notice that it has now moved;
 - [5] Feel the presence of the black dot located somewhere at the back of your head, it's buzzing...

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Eternal return of the present

This story has no beginning and no end. It exists in the now, in the act of reading these words, and plays out for as long as you want it to.

You can never return to the start; ¹⁴
that instant is gone;
but the moment is replayed as many
times as you wish.

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A reframing of the world as lived

note



moving and
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an expressive gesture.
argument; a provocation;
project. Each offers an
by the Ampère Institute
manifesto cards produced
This is one of 22

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A necessarily incomplete text

note

The writer has a larger existence than can be contained within their text. They are not [contained] by a pronoun, they can only be «represented» by their words and actions.

“Pull back now from the screen, the text, the cursor and its mesmerising trancebeat pulse. Become aware of sore eyes, overflowing desk. The hollow ashtray fashioned like a yawning frog, a gross cascade of cigarette and sour pumice spilling from its china throat. The index finger of the right hand, poised above the keys.

The author of this piece types the words ‘the author types the words’.”

Alan Moore (1996)

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The exterior made interior; a fracturing of space

Interpretation as an act of configuring relations.

[1] Feel a point where your skin makes contact with a surface, for example the soles of your feet against fabric; [2] Feel as many different points in this area as you can; [3] Zoom in find more detail - a tingling, warmth coldness, or, if you detect nothing, imagine that you are feeling these things; [4] Imagine that sight emanates, not from your eyes, but from this place of feeling. You see contours; [5] Now transform these contours into rolling hills and take a walk...

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Confronting reading

Literature was/is/has never been
only words, has never just manifested
as verbal constructions.

Literary texts, like
us, have bodies.²¹

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Confronting Writing

note

“We don’t know what [Ambient Literature], a real [example of the form], ought to be; all we know is that the [forms we are using] today will be what we make them, today, and that our job is not to cultivate their resemblance to what existed yesterday, but to move further on.”*

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**after Alain Robbe-Grillet (1965)*



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Inherently paratextual

The page upon which our manifesto for Ambient Literature is printed bears cues by which you have read the manifesto itself [paper, design, the deckled edge. What did you think when you saw it? Did you run your finger along the rough edge?].

The city outside affords an equivalent set of material cues²¹ that influence how we read space.

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Materially specific

note

What does it mean to read in a | liminal | space?
What do we mean by reading if the words are not visible? Are they still read in anything akin to a conventional sense?

Is the body of the text now
the body of the reader?¹⁸

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Social and personal

A look can be an «embrace» or a **wound**. Even the gaze of statues carry barbs, bear weight and consequence.

note

[A glance around you right now will reveal a spectrum of emotional regard.]

Were you to hold one of those faces for longer than a moment, what would be revealed? What does your face say about you today?

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