indexing

X-dexing is a mode of navigation with an open number of trajectories. It attends to transversal aspects in--between multiple materials, making common grounds or tensions emerge. In a play on the way "indexing" produces, registers and categorises relations from the assumed possibility of having an overview, "x-dexing" is first of all an invitation to an engaged reading from the sides-and-through. Reading here is considered as a practice of handling and mishandling; it includes attention, invention, affection, and projection. X-dexing is transformative and in a two-way manner intimately connected to the material it is applied to: the x-dex is influenced by the material itself, but provokes an effect on it as well.

If "indexing" would be about gaining *access* through the illusion of completeness, the x-dex is about situated unfoldings, about letting go of fixitude and about handing over for a little longer; a form of generative relationality that is not providing with control nor indication, but a sort of playfulness and imaginative re-entanglement. Perspectives, feelings, aesthetics or uneasiness are not only brought to the table by the agents that share materials, but by

the emergent x-dexer as well. Together they contribute to an explicit toolset for handling difference patterns, operate with worldly absences, and score open questions.

X-dexing emerged as a relational device to structure relations between objects, questions and events in a way that is not closed or fixed. Included in this x-dex are handles, forms, scores and traces that do not represent nor try to give an overview of the material, even if they speak about it in many ways. They act as departure points, a proposition to traverse the materials as a new making, an invitation to return to, relearn from, operate otherwise and iterate elsewhere.

HANDLES

The format of the *handle* refers (amongst others) to computer programming where a handle is used as an abstract reference to a resource which is taken care of elsewhere, therefore allowing to connect to previous locations and temporalities. At the same time, the handles are departure points or anchors from where a contributor could evoke ideas that specifically attend to questions about working together, tensions of collectivities, or materialities of creative work.

Each handle catalyzes a cluster of questions:

Handle 1
Time
Which are the temporalities involved in your subject area? What time formations do you encounter, such as the durings, the afters, the befores, the alreadies?

Handle 2
We
How is a sense of "we" emerging, being delimited, problematized and/or re-claimed? What are the limits, the modes and the genealogies of those we's?

Handle 3
How
What material and semiotic possibilities or tools do you encounter? How are they articulated, how do they function and which interdependencies are made evident?

Handle 4
Transitions
What happens in moments for/of transition, mutation, rearrangement, handing over or taking on?

FORMS

Forms are used to attend to visual and textual appearance in the materials.

Curves: Tracing the curves that are significant for a contribution. Curves can be visually present but can also appear in other forms, for example textual or temporal curves. From the curves of a typographic word to those that connect images or metaphors, there is a rich intertwining of curved lines in there.

Colors: Engaging with colors that are telling, develop a specific meaning, or play a specific role in the contribution. Actions can include finding colors, injecting color, combining colors, etc. Or: use chosen colors to highlight, cross over, link or annotate.

Text: Engaging with the contributions textually through one of the following text-based formats: anecdotes, questions, tags or glossary entries. Text can be used to write under, aside or on top. It can also be rearranged differently, to combine textualities of different parts; or deepened in the form of questions, explanations, counterpoints etc.

Absences: Checking what is missing, and noting or signaling it. Absences can also be reclaimed.

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Traces are rich-media marks left by the operator of the x-dex, a pile of sketches, scripts or ideas from a moment of x-dexing. They have functioned as temporary utilities for the x-dexer, as processing tools to support the writing of a score.

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As specific instructions written by a group of x-dexers, *scores* attend to all materials with the tools and handles at hand.

X-dexing can happen in a concentrated manner, engaging with materials, given scores or invented ones, using these forms or others. But it can also be operated slowly, along time, in an ongoing manner. The following steps can be followed:

Step 1: *select* a first element that you will fix for this round (a handle / a form / one of the materials)

Step 2: *select* a second element that you will fix for this round (a handle / a form / one of the materials)

Step 3: *select* a third element that you will fix for this round (a handle / a form / one of the materials)

Step 4: write a *score*

Step 5: operate and start *x-dexing*: make a trace

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This *x-dexing* document is a
next iteration of the *x-dex* booklet
that was produced in the context of
the publication *Iterations* (https://
iterations.space). Only small changes
are made in this version, with the
intention to make it a standalone
navigational device.

Jara Rocha & Manetta Berends,
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