I HAD TO DO IT
new work by ella barclay

Minimum requirements for a feeling of schizophrenia
by Kailana Sommer

"Coherence is a mark of the corporate" - S. Cubitt 1998

[then]

In 1971 Lynn Margulis teamed up with James Lovelock to flesh out what was later to become known as the 'Gaia[1] Hypothesis[2]', arguing that we[3] are part of a complex, synergistic self-regulating web that propagates and continues the conditions of life on earth. An inter-dependent and corruptible whole that is the pure emersion of sentience, action, reaction and symbiosis. A world where we need it and it needs us.

[17 yrs later]

In 1988 Shoshana Zuboff commented that technology "represents intelligence systematically applied to the problem of the body... [compensating] for [its] fragility and vulnerability"[4] - where information technology sublimates physical limitations and transformes them into mental abilities.

The social organisation of etiquette and class standards were remodelled into the Age of the Smart Machine. Lifting human consciousness from its immersion in the sentient discomforts of labour, extreme temperatures, substances[5], efforts and fatigue, and reordering it, as knowledge was unshackled from the arena of the *dirty body* and the animal conditions of labor distantiated through the extension of the machine[6] -

- And rather than feel trivialised by this [re]construction we embraced[7] our clean new liberation, efficiently moving from codes to coded and substituting work-*force* for work-*life*.

[10 yrs later]

Sean Cubitt wrote of a "distracted and disassembled body"[8]. A techno-body that conforms to the hierarchies of

multimedia design, which prioritises certain features over others[9], serving a coherence of personhood that exists in an external fabrication[10] -*And having fed so voraciously on the system we have ourselves been fed into it, becoming each other's appendages - my likes, their metadata / their metadata, my new shoes. Our lives are the aggregation of a multiplicity of microspheres.*

- A pure communication, between the mind and the object of fascination[11].

But, like the marketisation of any practice, 'communication' was downgraded - relegated to the minimised capacity of the technological domain[12], remaining bathed in the redemptive rhetoric of universal determination and autonomy.

Where the body was once a problem it is now a hindrance, a failed object to overcome.

[18 yrs later]

In 2016 Keller Easterling asked that "we look at the world with half closed eyes"[13] and see not just the buildings as they speckle and define our landscape, but the infrastructural matrix in which these forms are fixed. The future city, she said, will be the regurgitated formulas, 3D printouts and spatial products of architectonic operating systems - replicable forms interweaving across the urban environment. A Solid State Drive through the shiny cartoon cityscape of airports and greenhouses and theme parks and data centres and hotels and hospitals and cemeteries and sewers -

And so here we are, a desk strewn with knock-off vibrators, an arm that falls limply from the shoulder thanks to Hot Keys, an inability to sustain attention beyond the standard 2.37s, a sensation of sadness that has no recognisable avenue of escape, a dusty workspace, and feeling of lost connections.

And while we might idolise the Rem Koolhaus and Frank Gehrys of the world, theorising on architectural space and the socio-material fabric of urban life, the real definers of space and our inter-connected lives are the big data companies buying up large swathes of square meterage and encasing multilevel refrigerators[14] in

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1 Gaia, mother earth, sex, transformation, the explosion of limitless possibility, the explosion of our beginning, actuality fucking actuality - sweating, heaving, grunting, messy and cluttered. Consider this.... A world where we all just got high

2 It was the 70's.

3 Everything, not just the ego driven bipeladists of the planet.

4 [Zuboff 1951: 22]

5 (harmful) – still a lot of substances involved.

6 The tragic weakness of flesh defeated.

7 With teetering ambivalence.

8 [Cubitt 1998:25]

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9 Your eyes, ears and dominant hand

10 But, then again, it always has been. It's just far more efficient now.

11 I'm sorry, I'll brb, I've just received a Second Life group notice: DJ Dani at Seven's Cafe in Bomber Beach.
☺/ .: ★ⓖⓗ◎: .: □□ Dani Kynx
／▌ .: ★ⓖⓗΔT: ⟨Spinning all your favs and taking Requests⟩ ♪
／｜ .: ★ⓖⓗ∈R∈: http://maps.secondlife.com/secondlife/Jaqueline%20Beaumont%20Island/189/28/31
     .: ★ⓖⓗ∈N ☑ □ їṼ□ ➔ 6-8 slt
     .: ★SExy H◎S ⊤ ESS Tisephone
Come on down to the best place in SL. Bring your friends, lovers, family and anyone you want to come and party with us and shake those sexy pixels.

12 And how could that be all we mean when we talk of communicating, or simply when we talk?

13 i. I'd imagine she means squinting, like when you blur your vision and new forms and outlines become recognisable.
   ii. [Easterling 2016: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1QZtOprwvGQ]

14 Data Centers - a large group of networked computers used to house every moment of digital life, including back ups. http://www.datacentermap.com/australia/sydney/

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mirrored glass[15]. The heavy solids of urban space that constitute our information. These invisible buildings reflecting everything but themselves and describing all that they aren't[16].

[now-ish]

I have to ask, are we more or less important than the photosynthesizers, Mr Lovelock? When the entropy of a plant's harvest is oxygen, what is ours but the tension of memory and forgetting?

While it may be difficult to recognise, in a period of technological ubiquity, but the processing of land to store our memory, physical and otherwise, has become a rare consistent -

And I have to wonder then... is that *our* entropy?

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15 The anxiety of surveillance.

16 i. The tension between privacy and convenience.

ii. "Here, put this on", he says.

"OK, sure", you say, taking the navy work suit into your hands.

"It gets pretty cold in there so you'll want to leave your jumper on underneath", he tells you as you begin pulling the coarse wool sweater over your head.

You put your arms down and start taking off your shoes instead, slipping into the jumpsuit as he runs through the basic procedures.

"All doors to the Data Center must remain locked at all times, never leave a door ajar, unless the air-conditioner has overloaded and it is necessary to supply secondary ventilation to the room, of course."

"Of course", you reply, zipping up the front of your suit.

"Take this", he says, passing you a small magnetic key and stepping into an airlock room.

"It'll give you access to the internal room, ain't gonna be anyone else in there but you, Jensen here and myself, so if you see anyone, they're unauthorised and you'll need to come find me immediately, got it?"

"Got it", you reply and follow him in.

"Good on ya", he says, cracking a slightly honeyed smile then swinging the last door open behind himself and leaning back into the blackened cavity.

It's cold, much colder than you could have expected, something more akin to a meat storage room. Dark too. Only the gentle glow of blue and red diodes flickering on and off, outlining row after row after row of self-similar columns. A gridded phosphorescent amoeba. You can't help but imagine that future city, where such columns are described along with the Doric, Ionic and Corinthian.

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