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Mayer, Katrin

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# gender<ed> thoughts

New Perspectives in  
Gender Research

Working Paper Series  
2020, Volume 1

Katrin Mayer

Time to Sync or Swim -  
some gendered thoughts



GÖTTINGER CENTRUM FÜR  
GESCHLECHTERFORSCHUNG  
GOETTINGEN CENTRE FOR  
GENDER STUDIES

# gender<ed> thoughts

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## **2020, Volume 1**

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## **Göttingen Centre for Gender Studies**

Project Office

Georg-August-Universität Göttingen

Centrum für Geschlechterforschung

Platz der Göttinger Sieben 7 • D - 37073 Göttingen

Germany

[genderedthoughts@uni-goettingen.de](mailto:genderedthoughts@uni-goettingen.de) | [www.gendered-thoughts.uni-goettingen.de](http://www.gendered-thoughts.uni-goettingen.de)





## **Time to Sync or Swim – some gendered thoughts**

Katrin Mayer

Hochschule für bildende Künste (HfbK) Hamburg, kamensiehin@yahoo.de

### **Zusammenfassung**

*Time to Sync or Swim* ist der Titel einer kollaborativen, installativen Arbeit von Katrin Mayer und Eske Schlüters aus dem Jahr 2016, die in der Kunsthalle Lingen, im Heidelberger Kunstverein und in der M.1 Arthur-Boskamp Stiftung in Hohenlockstedt in unterschiedlichen Versionen gezeigt wurde. Sie besteht aus einer akustisch-binauralen *Spur* – einem Hörspiel das über Kopfhörer empfangen wird, sowie einer materiell-räumlichen *Spur* – einem installativen Gefüge, durch das sich die Besucher\_innen während dem Hören frei bewegen. Dies ermöglicht, dass es die Rezipient\_innen sind, die eigene Beziehungen und Überlagerungen des Akustischen, Visuellen und Haptischen produzieren. Ausgehend von Virginia Woolfs Roman *Orlando* (1928) beschäftigt sich die Arbeit inhaltlich mit Fragen von Wahrnehmung, sowie digitaler Identitäts- und Geschlechterkonstruktion, deren denkbar komplexeste Vervielfältigungen aktuell in der sogenannten *Otherkin*-Bewegung auf der Internetplattform *Tumblr* anzufinden sind. Neben dem Identifizieren mit anderen Wesen, Tieren aber auch Pflanzen oder Dingen gibt es eine große Ausdifferenzierung was die sexuelle Orientierung angeht. Im Beitrag für die *gender[ed] thoughts* entstand, das gegebene Style Sheet appropriierend, eine neue und erweiterte Textcollage, die auf die bestehende Audio-Spur von *Time to Sync or Swim* aufbaut. Die Bildmontagen im zweiten Teil setzen sich aus Ausstellungsansichten und Recherchematerial zusammen und wurden für den Band *Visualität und Abstraktion / Eine Aktualisierung des Figur-Grund-Verhältnisses* (Hg. von Hanne Loreck in Zusammenarbeit mit Jana Seehusen, Hamburg 2017) entworfen.

### **Schlagworte**

Otherkin; Kinship; Orlando; Virginia Woolf; Tausend Plateaus; Die Wellen; Wahrnehmung; Topologie; ASMR; Synästhesie; Kino; Trigger; Materialität; Haptik; Gesichthaftigkeit; Eske Schlüters; Martin Beck; Pronomen; Posthumanismus

### **Abstract**

*Time to Sync or Swim* is the title of a collaborative, installative work by Katrin Mayer and Eske Schlüters from 2016 that was presented in different versions at Kunsthalle Lingen, Heidelberger Kunstverein and M.1 Arthur-Boskamp Stiftung in Hohenlockstedt. It consists of an acoustic-binaural *track* – an audio play that is aired via headphones - and a spatial-material *track* – an installative assemblage through which visitors can navigate freely while listening. This enables recipients to create relations

and overlaps of the acoustic, the visual, and the haptic layers on their own. Based on Virginia Woolf's 1928 novel *Orlando*, the work deals with the subject of digital identity- and gender-constructions, whose most complex possible proliferation can presently be witnessed in the so-called *Otherkin*-movement, mainly on the media-platform *Tumblr*. Apart from the self-identification with other beings including animals and plants or objects there is a vast differentiation of sexual orientation. For *gender[ed] thoughts* Mayer appropriated the existing Style Sheet and developed a new textual collage based on the audio-track of *Time to Sync or Swim*. The pictorial montages in the second part are mounted from exhibition views and research materials and were developed for *Visualität und Abstraktion / Eine Aktualisierung des Figur-Grund-Verhältnisses* (Hg. von Hanne Loreck in Zusammenarbeit mit Jana Seehusen, Hamburg 2017).

## Keywords

Otherkin; Kinship; Orlando; Virginia Woolf; A Thousand Plateaus; The Waves; Perception; Topology; ASMR; Synesthesia; Cinema; Trigger; Materiality; Haptics; Faciality; Eske Schlüters; Martin Beck; Pronouns; Posthumanism

### 001.o01. Trigger Layered Soundscape

1 I'm staying here right now – with you – in  
this artificial cinematographic space,  
2 watching people pass by, you can see how  
they walk, you can probably see if they  
are lost somewhere in their mind.  
3 Follow this voice, let's listen to this Trig-  
ger Layered Soundscape.  
4 And when we sit or stay together, close,  
we melt into each other with these  
phrases.  
5 As  
6 I talk  
7 I feel  
8 I am you  
9 as I talk I feel  
10 I am...such-and-such...XYZ. I am other  
kind, kin to the other,  
11 physically somewhere or other or else-  
where.  
12  
13  
14 And right now – since the moment we  
met – I go by *she*. I identify as ambiphilic  
female and for practical

purposes I express myself in a feminine  
way.

15  
16 The *I*, the self, is to be seen  
17 as a complex of sensations  
18 out of variable compositions.  
19  
20 I am imagining myself as a self-aware  
21 two-dimensional  
  
22 geometrically-derived  
23 something-or-other  
24 with who – knows – how – many – an-  
gles.  
25  
26 Let me be your *headmate* for the next 5,  
10, 15, 20 minutes.  
27  
28 We are now synchronized with the ob-  
served trails and traces, with the spatial  
system which now seems slower than real  
time.  
29  
30 It actually brings your body into the same  
spaces other bodies are –  
31  
32  
32  
33

34  
35  
36

**001.o02. Let yourself be triggered by the Materials!**

- 1 So, walk around, feel the soles of your shoes, feel the floor.
- 2 Concrete, rubber, forest floor?
- 3 Let yourself be triggered by the materials!
- 4 Smell the sound, hear the light, see the world, see the words curling like rings of smoke.
- 5 Listen to your body!
- 6 I – as one of your *headmates* – miss the forest, miss the smell of wild life and fresh air.
- 7
- 8 We can inhabit this cinematographic space.
- 9 Cinema, technology that perforates consciousness.
- 10 Can you feel the stroboscopic effect, when you squint against the light?
- 11 These exposures to stroboscopic light pierce a hole in reason.
- 12 Who am I? What am I? What is the I?
- 13
- 14 I am the howl echoing through the mountains.
- 15 I am the ripples on the river,
- 16 I am the air you breath.
- 17 If I speak of these emotions they are not spatially in my head but my head shares with them the same spatial field.
- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21
- 22

**001.o03. Nature plays so many queer tricks upon us**

- 1 Nature complicates her task and adds to our confusion
- 2 by providing not only a perfect ragbag of odds and ends within us.
- 3 Nature, who plays so many queer tricks upon us,
- 4 making us so unequally of clay and diamonds,
- 5 of rainbow and granite,
- 6 and stuffs them into a case,
- 7 often of the most incongruous;
- 8 for the poet has a butcher's face
- 9 and the butcher a poet's.
- 10 Nature, who delights in muddle and mystery,
- 11 so that even now we know not
- 12 why we go upstairs,
- 13 or why we come down again.
- 14
- 15 Only intensities pass and circulate.
- 16 Still, the Body without Organs is not a scene, a place,
- 17 or even a support upon,
- 18 in which something comes to pass.
- 19 It has nothing to do with phantasy,
- 20 there is nothing to interpret.
- 21 But be aware of its limits and don't be ashamed of them.
- 22
- 23 The body without matter
- 24 causes intensities to pass.
- 25 Be obnoxious about your identity!
- 26 Be obnoxious about your intensities!
- 27 Change your gender every week!
- 28 Use *made-up pronouns*,
- 29 like uske, usko, uskoself, uskoselves
- 30 lit, lits, litself
- 31
- 32
- 33
- 34
- 35
- 36
- 37

### **001.o04. *Faciality is always a Multiplicity***

1 We can now propose the following distinction:  
2 The face is part of a surface-hole, holey surface system.  
3 The face is a surface: facial traits, lines, wrinkles;  
4 long face, square face, triangular face;  
5 the face is a map.  
6 There is even something absolutely inhuman about the face;  
7 the inhuman in human beings.  
8  
9 The face, at least a concrete face, vaguely begins to take shape on the white wall.  
10 It vaguely begins to appear in the black hole.  
11 One hole,  
12 one hole no tail,  
13 one hole one tail,  
14 the black hole is on the white wall;  
15 one hole two tails,  
16 two holes no tail,  
17 it is not a unit since the black hole is in constant movement on the wall.  
18  
19 Two black holes, four black holes, n black holes distributing themselves like eyes.  
20  
21  
22 fae, faer, faerself  
23 ve, vaer, vaers, vaerself  
24  
25 Faciality is always a multiplicity.  
26  
27  
28

### **001.o05. *Try to imagine another Topology!***

1 Everything is partly something else, as if the mind has become a forest with  
2 glades branching here and there.

3 Everything seems to have shrunk.  
4 Things come nearer, and further,  
5 and mingle and separate and make the strangest alliances  
6 and combinations in an incessant chequer of light and shade.  
7 Our journeys take us back into the heart of matter itself,  
8 down to the depth of matter.  
9 It's eyes. It is a face. And the eyes are always inside the hole.  
10 And we have to wait, perhaps half a minute!  
11 Looking at the new picture which lies on top of the old,  
12 as one slide is half seen through the next,  
13 before we can say:  
14 This is the face, a multiplication of eyes.  
15  
16 Try to imagine another topology!  
17  
18 Can you see me now?  
19 Your eyes, globed and clouded  
20 like some grey stone of curious texture,  
21 but how speak to a person who does not see (you)?  
22  
23 I am the green-eyed person, part tree, part mountain, part river, part sun.  
24 Wanting to sleep outside in dense forests  
25 without having to worry about what might happen to your small, fragile, and weak human body.  
26 Running your hands over your skin and wishing you could feel tough, smooth scales instead of soft flesh.  
27 Do you have kin experiences?  
28  
29 Our journeys take us back into the heart of matter itself;  
30 when we long to have wings, a carapace, a rind, to breathe out smoke,  
31 wave our trunks, twist our body, divide ourselves, to be inside everything,  
32 to drift away with odors!  
33 Develop as plants do, flow like water, vibrate like sound,

- 34 gleam like light.
- 35 To curl ourselves up into every shape, to penetrate each atom,
- 36 be matter –
- 37 to get down to the depth of matter.
- 38 Try to shapeshift mentally!

### 001.o06. Create your own Pronouns!

- 1 Anyway one can be kin to something else without being the things themselves.
- 2 Orlando for example:
- 3 I observed my composure;
- 4 I remarked with what magnificent vitality
- 5 the atoms of my attention dispersed,
- 6 swarmed round the interruption,
- 7 assimilated the message.
- 8
- 9 Hm, but I'm wondering if I am kin to Orlando.
- 10 O-rland-o.
- 11 I feel really connected with this fictional character,
- 12 it feels like a version of myself at times.
- 13 Orlando. Capital O, rland, capital O.
- 14 O-rland-O. Orlando, if that is one's name.
- 15 And in terms of identity, Otherkin are their kintype.
- 16 We do not identify *with* but *as*.
- 17 This is an important distinction to make
- 18 and it is much harder if English is not your first language.
- 19 And, what are the most common traits of a birdkin?
- 20 Right now my phantom wings ache for no reason and there's nothing I can do about it,
- 21 because painkillers don't do shit for the ache.
- 22

- 23
- 24 Is it normal to be kin to a bunch of characters?
- 25 I'm worried, I'm almost faking.
- 26 Oh my dear. You seem in the act of rolling some thoughts up and down, to and fro
- 27 in your mind till it gathers shape or momentum to your liking.
- 28
- 29 Have I used the right pronouns?
- 30 When you feel that uncomfortable feeling inside when called human or when reading a text that refers to all readers as humans then create your own pronouns.
- 31 cloy, cloud, clouds, cloudself
- 32 hu, hume, humeself
- 33 How do you pronounce your pronouns?
- 34 xe, xyr, xyrsel
- 35 lit, lits, litsel
- 36 Lit is going to take time off to care for litsel.
- 37 The surface of his / her / your / lits / cloys / my mind slips along like a pale-grey stream, reflecting what passes.
- 38 So lit can experience litsel as many things according to the variable relations of becoming with the person(s) or things lit approaches.
- 39
- 40 Have I used the right pronouns?
- 41
- 42

### 001.o07. Who is writing the Script?

- 1 Well, chronologically I am 35 years old but my mental age is lower.
- 2 I've come to realize that some beings are born older than they physically are, and some beings younger.
- 3 But here either my invention is failing me or,

4	what is more likely,	34	We can shape our words till they are
5	is providing me with so many possible		the thinnest integuments for our
	instances		thoughts.
6	that I shrink back from the cardinal	35	
	labor of composition.	36	
7	Are you polyglamorous, crafty, glit-	37	
	terific, neurodivergent, gray asexual,	38	
	crazy or shy?	39	Polysexual, omnisexual,
8	Go a long way to figure out who or	40	
	what you are.	41	
9	Cloud gender – a gender which can't	42	
	be fully realized or seen clearly.	43	
10	Fog gender – a gender which is close	44	
	to a certain gender, but cannot be di-	45	Try to imagine that you auto-complete
	rectly pinpointed.		me.
11	Corugender – a gender affected by	46	
	flashbacks.	47	
12	I am	48	
13	trigender,	49	
14	non-binary,	50	
15	galaxygender.	51	
16	It's a gender I made up. It's hard to	52	
	describe I think,	53	
17	I guess I could describe it as my gen-	54	
	der being vast like the galaxy?	55	
18		56	
19	It's good to speak out words,	57	
20	that finally take shape in our minds.	58	
21	But who is writing the script?	59	
22	The whole assortment shall be lightly	60	
	stitched together	61	
23	by a single thread.	62	
24	Because	63	
25	memory runs her needle in and out,	64	
26	up and down,	65	
27	hither and thither.	66	
28		67	
29		68	
30	Memory is the seamstress, and a capri-	69	
	cious one at that.	70	
31		71	
32		72	
33		73	
		74	
		75	
		76	

# Pronouns I have encountered in no particular order

vemeunlovely:

eidolan:

lovemeunlovely:

rocketrissa:

lovemeunlovely:

rocketrissa:

askanonbinary:

lovemeunlovely:

- she/her/hers/herself
- he/him/his/himself
- it/it/its/itself (this one to be used ONLY IF YOU'RE EXPLICITLY TOLD THAT IT IS OKAY)
- ze/zir/zirs/hirself
- ce/cir/cirs/hirself
- hir/hir/hirs/hirself
- xe/hir/hirs/hirself
- ey/em/eir/eirself
- ve/vir/virs/virself
- xe/xir/xirs/oirself
- hu/hu/hume/homeself
- ve/vaer/vaers/vaerself
- fae/faer/faers/faerself
- they/their/theirs/themself
- this one/they one
- use of name in place of pronouns, absence of pronouns
- alternation between any subset of the pronouns listed above, i.e. between xe and he and she, or they and she, etc.
- use of combination of pronouns listed above, selecting different decisions from different pronoun sets, i.e. xe/faer/faers /themself

Use the pronouns people ask you to use, always  
Please feel free to add your own or any ones that I missed  
I haven't heard of some of these! I'd love to



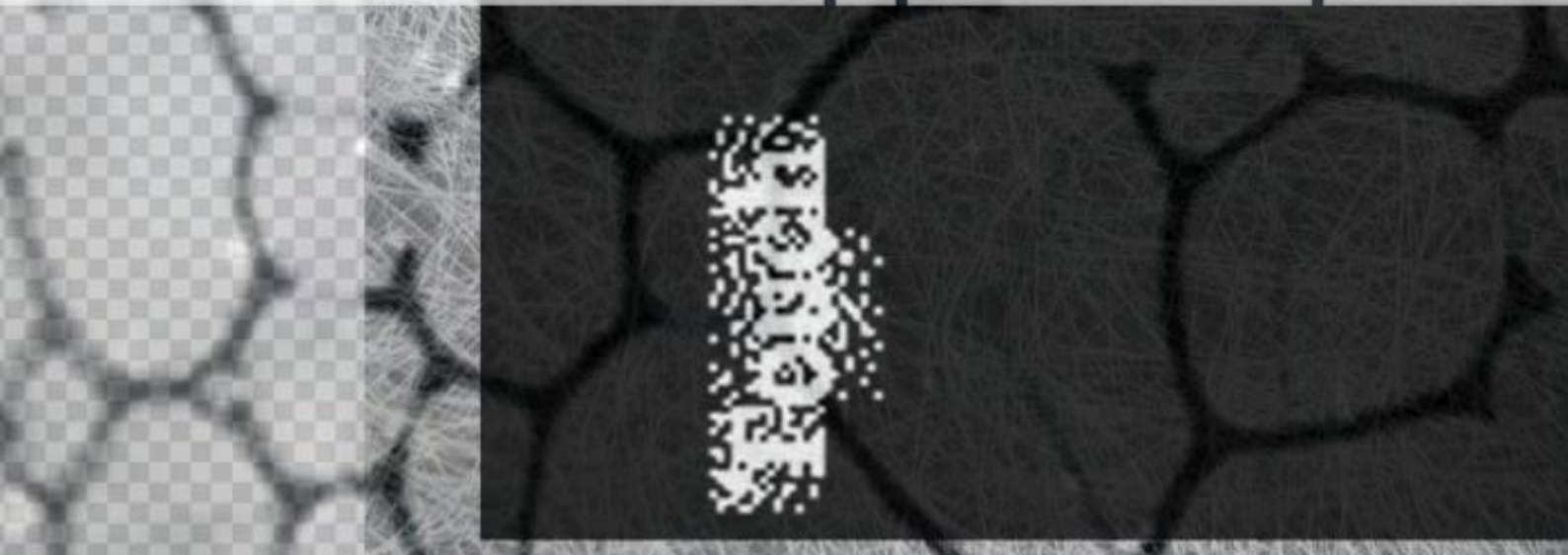
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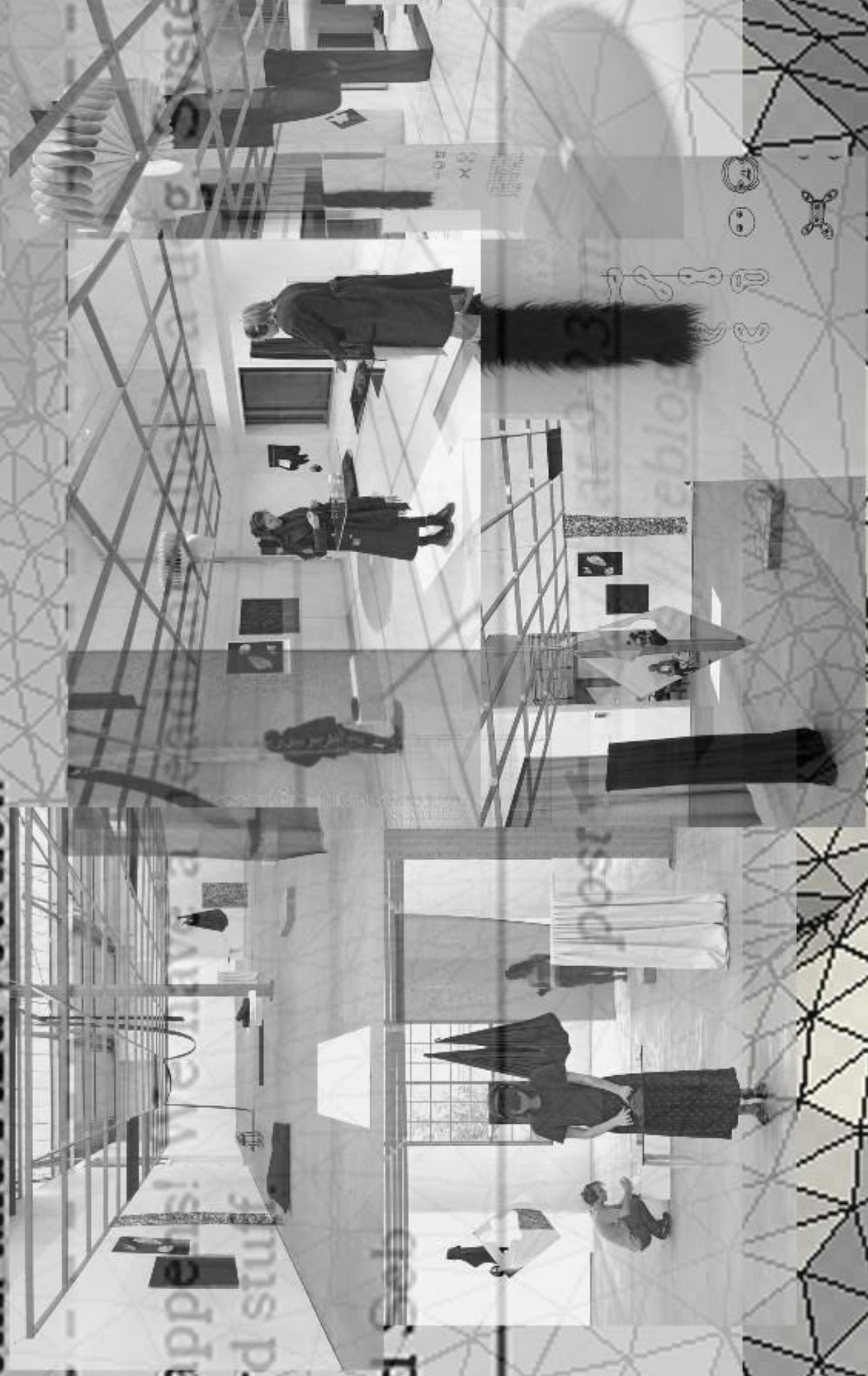


♂ y y y y





myscuit said: I have a headmate that is a room.  
room. and I kid you not.



It happens! We have a  
weird stuff  
-Mod Seb

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