



POSITIONS THROUGH CONTEXTUALISING
WRITTEN RESPONSE

PROMPT 1

Annotated Bibliography

Reference One

MAGCD Reading List

Plain Text: The Poetics of Computation

Dennis Tenen

“SPIRITUAL TELEGRAPH

In Bergson’s view of the universe, the brain and the central nervous system act as a “central telephonic exchange”, which communicates between the extrinsic continuous world and the intrinsic “memory-shot[s]” of our perception.²⁷ The mind receives images of the world that it compares with existing stored images to produce a new composite image that is once again stored in memory. ... Human perception — cognition, consciousness, existence—involves a complex synthesis of analog and digital processes.”

(D. Tenen, 2017)

KEYWORDS:

- ◆ *Consciousness*
- ◆ *Mind*
- ◆ *Perception*

One of the reasons my starting point of enquiry was about how to visually represent light, was because I am interested about visually representing my own perception of consciousness and intangible things such spirits, energy and third eye visions. The things we can’t actually really see around us but they exist, like light itself.

I found this specific reading quite interesting and related to my selected theme of enquiry because I would agree to Bergson’s philosophy and thoughts about our mind being similar to a cinematographic framing device. However, I would argue or add, that perhaps not all minds work the same way and neurodiversity needs to be considered. After all we all perceive light, colours, and everything else around us differently.

As my position with my practice is primordially about self-development, I could say I am in a journey of self-enquiry and development of my practice, trying to find my own way to visually communicate life and consciousness as I perceive them.



Reference Two

MAGCD Reading List

Against Interpretation

Susan Sontag

“There are no style-less works of art, only works of art belonging to different, more or less complex traditions and conventions. ... Styles belong to a time and a place; our perception of the style of a given work of art is always charged with an awareness of the work’s historicity, its place in a chronology. Further: the visibility of styles is itself a product of historical consciousness. ... All the contents of consciousness are ineffable. Even the simplest sensation is, in its totality, indescribable. Every work of art, therefore, needs to be understood not only as something rendered, but also as a certain handling of the ineffable.”

(S. Sontag, 2009)

KEYWORDS:

- ◆ Art
- ◆ Ineffable
- ◆ Style

For a while, I have been personally wondering what my artwork “style” is, why it is the way it is and how would like it to be or develop over the future. (This is one of the reasons I enrolled to this MA).

Susan’s Sontag essays are intellectual gems and the highlighted text relates directly to my self-enquiry artistic journey and current project enquiry through two points:

1. I found the statement that style directly relates to time and place conventions comforting. It makes me understand that style, like ourselves and our character, it is a product of our own perception, life experience, influences, and consciousness in this time in life. I would say this thought is also directly related to trends (which I am very interested), but I will not pull this thread for now.
2. I found the highlighted text to be also directly linked to my position of enquiry and found reassuring the consideration of art as a representation of the ineffable, as I am in a journey to find a way to communicate the ineffable myself.

Sidenote: Perhaps I should mention that by ineffable in this context I also mean deeply personal, traumatic, and silenced stories, which, I wish to give a voice with my work moving forward and has had a direct impact in my creative work and its style.



Reference Three

Personal Research

12,000 Different Colours

Design as Art. Bruno Munari

“Colour is nothing but a sensation and has no existence at all independent of the nervous systems of living beings. (O.N. Rood)

...

Every colour changes according to the material in which it is fixed, ... A smooth surface reflects the light and the colour is more intense, while on a rough surface the colour is matt and more subdued.”

(B. Munari, 1966)

KEYWORDS:

- ◆ *Colour*
- ◆ *Self-Enquiry*
- ◆ *Sensation*

At the start of the brief a tutor asked me “what do you like about colour?” This question has been stuck to my head since, as I couldn’t answer it on the spot. I’ve been thinking about it through the entire brief.

What do I like? + What is there to like about colour?

Technically, I know that colour is product of refracted light. - Think of Rainbows or Pink Floyd’s The Dark Side of the Moon cover album. I thought about different temperature light to perceive different colours, studies about colour psychology, etc. but it has been the quote from O.N. Rood included in to Munari’s essay 12,000 colours that helped me push this enquiry.

If colour is a sensation, I asked myself, what makes me feel? What is my qualia about colour?

I can’t never pick a single colour as my favourite, so my enquiry is about colour in general, as in all colours.

Colour in general makes me feel “good”. *Why?* A childhood memory of me and my father talking about colour appears in mind. He used to be a wall painter and I grew up admiring his books on colour, colour theory and a sea of colour swatches.

So, it could be that I like colour because it takes me back to a sensation of love and safety felt around my dad.

However, while I reflect on how I find colour to make life beautiful, and so more pleasurable, I also realise how I love the use of colour as a tool and method of communication. Colour is versatile, besides of decorating, it can story tell, inform, highlight, accentuate, catalogue, alert, etc.



Reference Four

Personal Research

Interactions of Colour

Josef Albers

“Colour intensity — brightness

Everyone has preference for certain colours and prejudices against others. This applies to colour combinations as well. We change, correct, or reverse our opinions about colours and this change of opinion may shift forth and back. Therefore, we try to recognise our preferences and our aversions — what colours dominate in our work; what colours on the other hand, are rejected, disliked, or of no appeal. Usually a special effort in using disliked colour ends with our falling in love with them.”

(J. Albers, 1963)

KEYWORDS:

- ◆ *Colour*
- ◆ *Prejudices*
- ◆ *Self-enquiry*

This highlighted from Josef Albers' *Interactions of Colour* is another reference directly linked to my self-enquiry about what do I like about colour.

When I read it, I was able to instantly start naming all my colour preferences and prejudices. For example, I have a tendency to like cool tones over warmer ones, certain colour combinations, etc. I am sure everyone can do the same.

So, while working on iterations of this brief, every time I found myself trying to adjust the colour combination or colour result during the iterations, I fought it. I tried to also question my dislike for some colours. Do I truly dislike them? And started thinking about projects or images that contained colours or colour combinations I would usually dislike, but nonetheless, I would like and appreciate.

Reference Five

Practice or Project

Projections with Polarized Light

Bruno Munari



[Fig.1 Left & Fig. 2 Right]

“We learn from the folded piece of Cellophane that it is the thickness of the colourless material that determines what colour we see: one thickness gives no colour, two produce red (and its complementary green), three blue (and its complementary orange), etc. ... These experiments gave me a whole mass of possibilities... with one of these colourless compositions I can produce about fifty variations, simply by rotating the polaroid during the projection.”

(B. Munari, 1966)

KEYWORDS:

- ◆ *Colour*
- ◆ *Experiments*
- ◆ *Iterations*

Bruno Munari's statement on his experiments with projection slides directly mirrors the process of my work during this brief. As I used illustrator to visually represent light, illustrator's tools allowed me to produce a large number of variations from the same elements as the cellophane allowed Bruno Munari create variations of projections with simple manipulation.

I found myself enjoying the experiments, having fun, and being surprised by what new combination would appear on screen depending on buttons I would clicking to change blending modes, positions, rotations, effects, etc. The result has been a collection of kaleidoscopically floral compositions which colours would differ depending on the order and position of elements.

Reference Six

Practice or Project

Close your eyes, SPBH Editions, 2014

Gareth McConnell



[Fig.3]

“An onslaught of kaleidoscopic imagery fuses portraits he took of rave-goers in Ibiza with hyper real, vivid scenes of the sun rising as the night bleeds into the morning. . . . Close Your Eyes is a personal political piece – a frustrated meditation on the nature of human movement and occurrence, an embodiment of the power of mass communion in its many forms, and the delirious but bittersweet pleasure of losing oneself to hedonism from the view of someone who saw it from within.”

(J. Cresswell, 2014)

KEYWORDS:

- ◆ *Kaleidoscopic*
- ◆ *Meditation*
- ◆ *Quale*

I selected this specific project image as one of the references for this brief because I found this image to be an exceptionally beautiful representation of colours, light and human consciousness. To be more specific the left page of the spread.

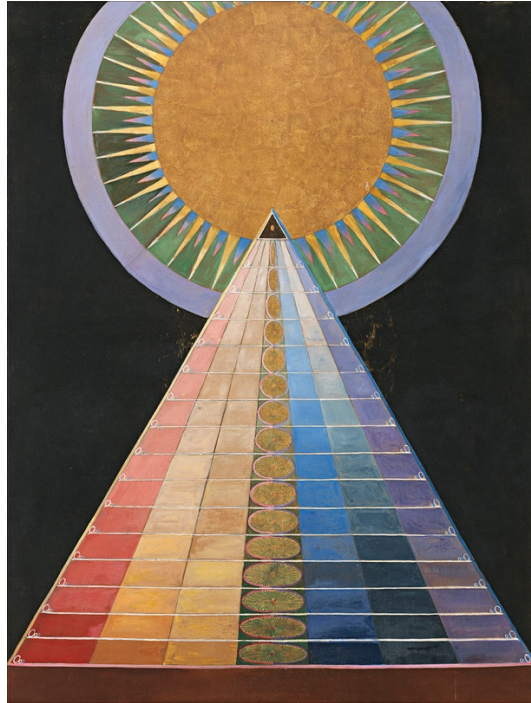
At this point with this research done I questioned if the tool used for this brief (illustrator – 2D image rendering) and my skills to visually represent light were adequate. Although certainly fun and the process of these iterations was quite meditative, I think the work resulted is a bit limited and perhaps using other tools that involve 3D or 4D image rendering could help me visually represent light more accurately to my quale (personal life consciousness experience) as the result of these iterations were not quite right.

Reference Seven

Practice or Project

No. 1 Altarpiece, 1915

Hilma af Klint



[Fig.4]

“During a séance in the year 1906, a spirit called Amaliel allegedly commissioned Hilma af Klint to make paintings for the temple. ... The general idea of The Paintings for the Temple was to depict the [monistic](#) nature of the world. The works should represent that everything in the world is one. ... “The pictures were painted directly through me, without any preliminary drawings, and with great force. I had no idea what the paintings were supposed to depict; nevertheless I worked swiftly and surely, without changing a single brush stroke.”— Hilma af Klint.”

[\(S. Graf, 2021\)](#)

KEYWORDS:

- ◆ *Instructions*
- ◆ *Occult*
- ◆ *Spiritual*

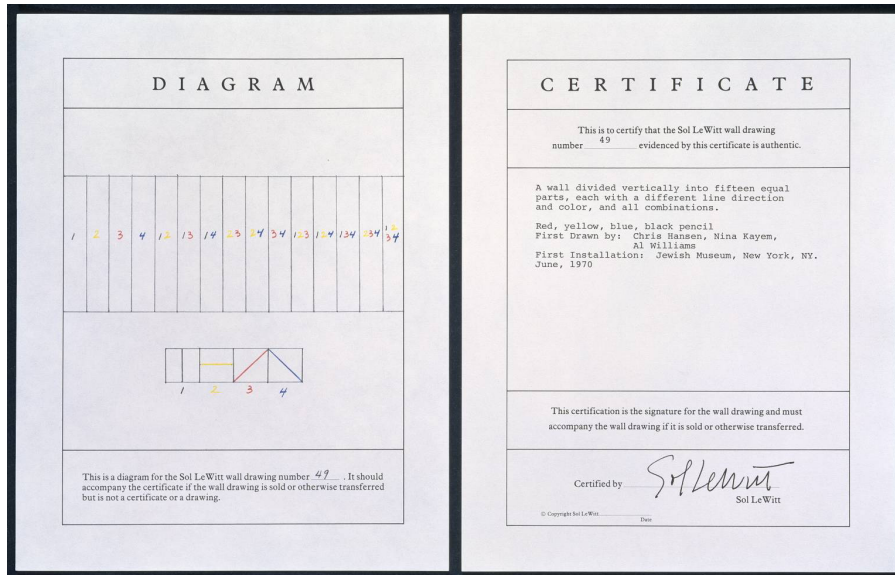
Hilma af Klint’s practice is relevant to my position of enquiry due to her spiritual artistic practice. It was through connecting with spirit guides that she was able to illustrate the ineffable and the unseen or occult. In response to this work of hers, I developed a chart design system to use with a crystal pendulum, this exercise imitated her practice as it attempted to connect with spirits through the pendulum, asking a series of questions / prompts and creating visuals following the pendulum answers / instructions. The outcome of this experiment directed my research towards instructions, design systems and programmes.

Reference Eight

Practice or Project

A Wall Divided Vertically into Fifteen Equal Parts, Each with a Different Line Direction and Colour, and All Combinations, 1970

Sol LeWitt



[Fig.5]

“LeWitt's wall drawings are executed by assistants from the artist's instructions. In this work, the lines are all equally spaced and drawn in coloured pencil. Each colour corresponds to a different type of line: yellow for horizontal, black for vertical, red for diagonal from left to right, and blue for diagonal from right to left. The lines are drawn in all possible combinations in fifteen rectangles, becoming denser from left to right. Through this layering, new colours and complex patterns emerge from LeWitt's simple set of rules.”

(Gallery label, August 2004)

KEYWORDS:

- ◆ *Combinations*
- ◆ *Instructions*
- ◆ *Rules*

Sol LeWitt's name and work was mentioned to me 3 times in 3 days by 3 different sources, so I felt compelled to look into his work and add it to my research. This work is relevant to both, the new direction of research and previous pendulum experiment, as it explores the creation of artwork following a set of rules and instructions. As LeWitt defined the set of rules and instructions, members of the public or assistants would follow them create visual outcome. If we compare this project to my previous experiment, there are similitudes as I created the set of prompts to allow the pendulum to instruct me how to create the artwork. Furthermore, I find this creative practice interesting and relevant to my professional practice of lecturer, as it makes me reflect on how I give instructions.



Reference Nine

Personal Research

Designing Programmes, 1964

Karl Gerstner

“Not to make creative decisions as prompted by feeling but by intellect criteria. ... The creative process is to be reduced to an act of selection. Designing means: to pick out determining elements and combine them. Seen in this term, designing calls for method.”

(K. Gerstner, 1964)

KEYWORDS:

- ◆ *Criteria*
- ◆ *Logic*
- ◆ *Method*

Karl Gerstner designed what he calls “A morphological box of the typogram”. Criteria and parameters on the left, relative components on the right. This method can be used in any project or situation, it can be helpful method for experimentation, iterations and unstuck a project.

This reference inspired me to try creating my own morphological box as another experiment for this brief. This was a bit challenging at first but quickly embraced the concept and thought of ways I could apply this method in my practice moving forward. During the course of this first year of MAGCD there has been a recurrent feedback about my work, “*It is rigid*” so I am trying to embrace different methods to challenge my practice.



Reference Ten

Personal Research

The Creative Art: Point of View, Experimentation and The Prism of Self

Rick Rubin

“Point of View

Pgs. 144 to 149

The artist’s perception reminds us of who we are and who we can be. We are attracted to the shared experience held within the work. Carl Rogers said ‘The personal is the universal’. The personal is what makes art matter. Our point of view. A point of view is the perspective – conscious and unconscious – through which the work emerges.

Experimentation

Pgs. 120 to 127

If you begin with a question and use it to guide an adventure of discovery, that’s the work of the artist. The surprises along the way can expand your work, and even the art from itself. Failure is the information you need to get where you’re going.

The Prism of Self

Pgs. 282 to 285

Like a kaleidoscope, we can adjust the aperture on our vision and change the result. We may aim to work from one particular aspect, like taking on a character, and create something from our darkest self or our most spiritual self. Those two works won’t be the same, but they both come from us and they would both be true colors. Any framework, method or label you impose on yourself is just as likely to be a limitation as an opening.”

(R. Rubin, 2023)

KEYWORDS:

- ◆ *Expression*
- ◆ *Perspective*
- ◆ *Limitation*

The chapters selected from *The Creative Act* by Rick Rubin, 2023 relate back to the references explored during *Positions through Iterating*. It’s a motivational, inspiring read that empowers the concept of perspective and creative expression to find one’s identity.

The words in this book are not only cheerleading the creative process to find one’s voice or style but also supports and enhances other references from the reading list such as “*Against Interpretation*” by S. Sontag, 2009; *The Poetics of Computation* by D. Tenen, 2017; or *Exercises in style* by R. Queneau, 1958.

As per how it enhances to my position of enquiry, it supports and encourages the exploration of consciousness and qualia through one’s self creative practice.



Reference Eleven

MAGCD Reading List

Conditional Design Workbook, 2013

Blauvelt, Maurer, Paulus, Puckey, & Wouters

“One might say that graphic design moves from product to process, or from object to tool – an instrument for making many things. If the idea is the machine that makes the art, then we might rightly ask: who makes the idea? In conceptual art the subjective dimension, of course, enters from where it is initiated, tis point of origin is in the artist. In conditional design the authors make a similar claim: ‘Even though a process has the appearance of objectivity, we realise the fact that it stems from subjective intentions.’”

“Traditionally, the subjective has been located with the artist and designer. What is different about process-oriented approaches today and in the case of conditional design in particular is that the subjective has been distributed throughout the process. Its instructions can only guide and offer constrains, ... it is in this way an open system.”

“Maurer states: ‘Before I give control away, I must develop a system that will take over the decisions of design.’ ...”

(Blauvelt, Maurer, Paulus, Puckey, & Wouters, 2013)

KEYWORDS:

- ◆ *Instructions*
- ◆ *Process*
- ◆ *Subjective*

One of the most relevant references from MAGCD reading list for Positions through Contextualising must be the Conditional Design Workbook as it contains two other references relevant to the research and experimentation of this brief.

On one side it has a manifesto, which I attempted to draft my own as an experiment. On another side it explores the practices of LeWitt and Gerstner, which I also researched during this brief and attempted to experiment creating my own version of both, created my own version of programme and set of instructions to use the programmes and systems developed during this brief. Furthermore, this reading also shares sets of rules and instructions to experiment and challenge design processes.



Reference Twelve

MAGCD Reading List

Exercises in Style, 1958

Raymond Queneau

“The book is an exercise in communication patterns, whatever their linguistic sounds. And it seems to me that Queneau’s attitude of enquiry and examination can, and perhaps should? – be applied to every language.”

(B. Wright, 1958)

KEYWORDS:

- ◆ *Expression*
- ◆ *Iteration*
- ◆ *Perspective*

To my point of view, this book is an excellent example of an exercise in iterations not only in linguistic communication but in any other kind of communication, including visual, aural, gestural and spatial communications. It inspires me to look at a project, subject or story not only from multiple perspectives but also to represent or communicate it in different styles.

This reference relates back to the concepts of personal consciousness and qualia, and it relates and enhances other references from the reading list such as “Against Interpretation” by S. Sontag, 2009; *The Poetics of Computation* by D. Tenen, 2017; and “The creative Act” by R. Rubin, 2023.



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List of Figures

[Fig. 1]

Munari, B. (1952) "Untitled", 1952, slide for multi-focal projection, mixed media on slide, 2 x 2 x 1 inches – Courtesy Fondazione JVBD Milano. Available at: <https://microscopegallery.com/slide-slide-slide/> [Accessed: 22 Apr. 2023]

[Fig. 2]

Munari, B. (1953) Slide for Projection with Polarized Light, 1953. Available at: <http://www.resettheapparatus.net/corpus-work/projections.html> [Accessed: 22 Apr. 2023]

[Fig. 3]

McConnell, G. (2014). Close Your Eyes, SPBH Editions, 2014 | Gareth McConnell. [online] garethmcconnell.com. Available at: <https://garethmcconnell.com/close-your-eyes-spbh-editions-2014/#16> [Accessed 22 Apr. 2023].

[Fig. 4]

Af Klint, H. (1915). Group X, No. 1, Altarpiece. [Oil and metal leaf on canvas, 93 1/2 x 70 11/16 inches (237.5 x 179.5 cm)] Available at: <https://www.guggenheim.org/audio/track/group-x-altarpieces-nos-1-3-1915-by-hilma-af-klint> [Accessed 18 May 2023].

[Fig. 5]

LeWitt, S. (1970). A Wall Divided Vertically into Fifteen Equal Parts, Each with a Different Line Direction and Colour, and All Combinations. [Graphite on wall] Tate Modern. Available at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/le Witt-a-wall-divided-vertically-into-fifteen-equal-parts-each-with-a-different-line-t01766> [Accessed 18 May 2023].



PROMPT 2

Critical Analysis 1

Hilma af Klint Spiritual Artwork

Hilma af Klint was a Swedish artist and a pioneer of abstract art. She was a member of the spiritualist movement and believed in the existence of a higher spiritual realm. She created a large body of work which was commissioned by spirit, to represent and visual communicate the metaphysical world and explore spiritual themes.

At the beginning of her career, however she painted landscapes and was interested in botanical drawings. After completing the commissioned large body of spiritual work, she returned to drawing flowers in a very abstract form. Her notebooks and abstract botanical representations are minimal and beautiful like technical scientific drawings.

What sets Hilma af Klint's work apart is her exploration of abstraction before it became a widely accepted artistic practice. Her practice offer a unique and ground-breaking exploration of abstract art and spirituality.

For the completion of her Spiritual Artwork, she developed a unique visual language using vibrant colours, intricate geometric shapes, and symbolic imagery. Overall, the work is enigmatic but looked closely one can understand there is a system and meaning behind each brush. Most of the compositions feature circular or spiral forms, suggesting a connection to cosmic and cyclical themes.

Hilma af Klint began creating abstract works as early as 1906, several years before pioneers like Kandinsky and Mondrian. Her paintings for the temple, created between 1906 and 1915, which predate many notable abstracts works of the time. This challenges the traditional narrative of abstract art history and emphasizes af Klint's pioneering role. Which I personally find outraging as it demonstrates the patriarchal power in history.

From a critical standpoint, the "Paintings for the Temple" can be seen as a fusion of art, spirituality, and theosophy. They reflect af Klint's deep interest in esoteric knowledge and her attempt to visually convey complex metaphysical ideas. The intricate symbolism and esoteric references present a challenge to viewers who may not be familiar with the artist's spiritual beliefs. Understanding the context and symbolism behind the paintings is crucial to fully appreciate their intended meaning.

Her work however was not fully appreciated back then as she was ahead of her time. I also believe that because she was a woman, most likely the art world and society did not take her seriously. The collection contains extremely large painting about the journey of life and what's beyond death, but also some other abstract representation of religions in smaller size and watercolour papers. For example, one of my favourites is the abstract representation of Buddha's standpoint in Earthly life No.3, which is represented with a black and white circle, currently exhibited at the Tate Modern in London.

Since she followed instructions from Spirit to create this work, was she the machine following instructions? This takes me the next reference and it is directly linked to my first set of experiments at the start of this brief. Hilma's af Klint spiritual work inspired me to experiment developing my first chart design system to use with a pendulum. The components of the parameters of the chart took inspiration from Hilma's spiritual artwork. To imitate the work, I chose vibrant colours and sacred geometry shapes. The first set of outcomes were strange, something I would not have designed but I believe further iterations of the system/chart would have been very interesting.



Critical Analysis 2

Conditional Design Workbook

The conditional design workbook is, as the name gives away, a workbook. It is for designers, written and designed by designers. It critically enquires design practice through systematic methods and programmes, exploring the concept of design process as the outcome itself. Using logic and sets of rules and instructions to remove the subjectivity and intuition from the design process.

It explores the methods and research created by artists and designers who explored the concept before them, around the 1960's such as Sol LeWitt and Karl Gerstner and takes it further by developing their own set of rules and instructions for the reader to play in a group of four members in a workshop.

On Sol LeWitt's artwork made of instructions, the executer of the instructions is not the owner of the artwork itself, Sol LeWitt's is. Just like my laptop is not the owner of my artwork, I am, the laptop is the tool/machine. When using a system of rules and instructions designed by an artist or designer, the reader or executer becomes the tool/the machine. They must follow the steps to create the work but never become the owner of the outcome. The subjectivity of the design process is removed.

However, in relation to the work I am exploring through enquiry, I see systems, instructions, set of rules and programmes as methods to challenge my own practice and as a tool to create work with others. The system or programme leaves room for interpretation.

Design programmes are an interesting method to explore social interactive design outcomes, unblock a project and perhaps be surprised on the process. It removes the pressure from subjective and intuitive design. It becomes autonomous and iterative; both enhancing and challenging production and creative processes. To my point of view, it gives the designer steps to take their practice further, rather than only viewing the designer as only a "manipulator of tools" the designer can be both, including "a creator of tools".

The book itself is designed with the limited colour palletted given to executers of the rules set up as activities. Overall playful and experimental like the concept itself. Creating sort of reflection or loop. It does as it says, there is no contradiction there. Furthermore, I personally like that it includes a manifesto and a glossary too. These make the book perfectly accessible to beginners and more adept designers as it can meet anyone at whichever level they are.

Notes of contextualisation regarding my own experiment during this brief:

As mentioned earlier Hilma's af Klint inspired me to experiment developing my first chart design system to use with a pendulum. I developed a chart design system with parameters, prompts and instructions for the forces that move the pendulum to choose the components for the composition of the outcomes by moving the pendulum at each prompt and indicating its choices. In this instance, I became the machine executing the instructions but also the designer of them. Although I gave the power of subjectivity to the pendulum as it dictated, given the options on the chart, how the outcome would be. There was no subjectivity from my part but there was logic applied to the entire process.

As per the spiritual work created Hilma's af Klint, since she followed instructions from Spirit to create this artwork, was she the machine following instructions? To finalise, I find that both references directly relate to my position of enquiry about how to visually represent the intangible, ineffable or ethereal while in a journey of self-enquiring own career and practice.