

Desktop Conversations Vol. I – Erin Honeycutt & Katharina Wendler

Emails via Amsterdam / Brussels / Berlin / Reykjavik / Vienna / Weimar, October 2018 – May 2019

2018-10-20, 13:24

Siegfried,

Here is an update. Down to 17 images with accompanying text. Been cutting like a knife but I think I could cut some more.

In this moment, I am imagining the images in small frames next to texts in small frames like A5 and A6?
And 1 or 2 posters.

<<<333

2018-10-22, 12:38

Roy,

just got off the phone with Jonathan.

The good news is that he really likes the project.

I was very happy to hear that and think this might be the best option: we'll postpone to next spring/summer, so we have time and energy (and 4 legs to stand on) to make this really good.

What do you say?

Still so excited and absolutely love your work on the cactus chronicles!

<3

Siegfried

ps. Can we please send each other email love-letters? This can be our conversation piece.

pps. Can you shoot me your CV and portfolio? thx

2018-10-22, 14:45

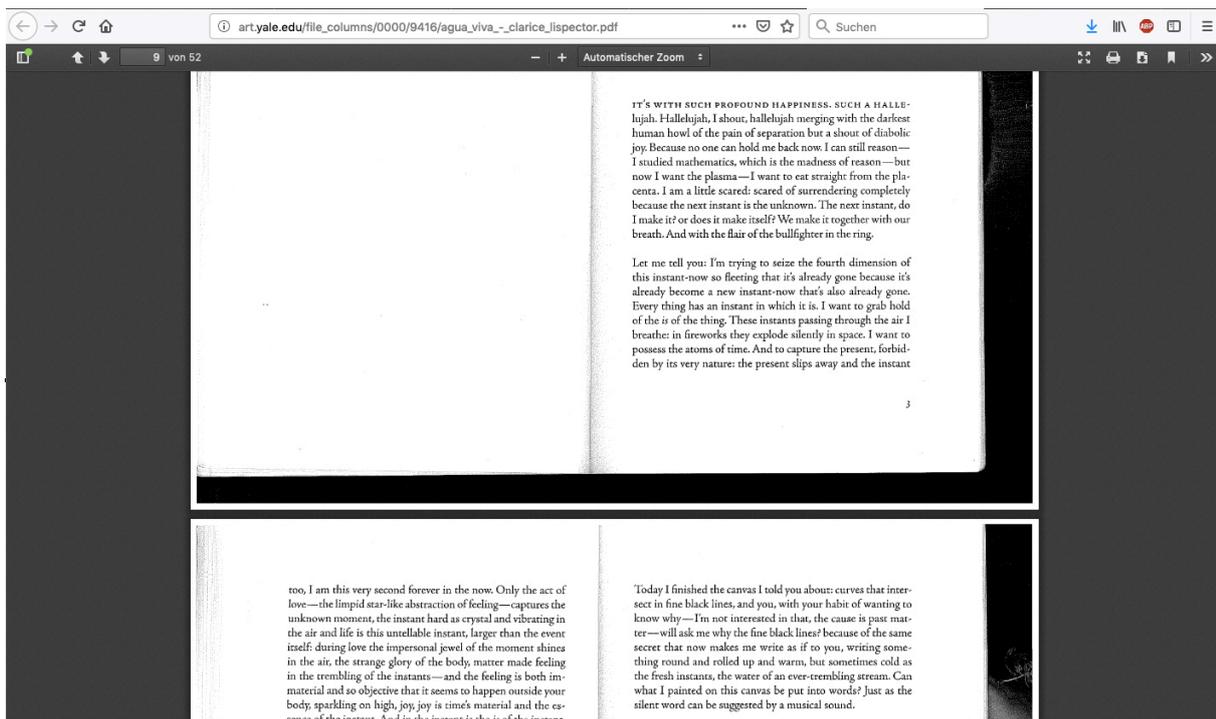
Siegfried,

First, should I buy this summerhouse in Iceland? In Snæfellsness? I mean, I am going to be connected to this place for the rest of my life I think, I should at least own a summerhouse by these beautiful cliffs, right? In view of the glacier where *Journey to the Center of the Earth* happened, right? It's only 88,000 Euros. For writing purposes! For big sleepovers!

http://fasteignir.visir.is/property/234097?search_id=38139199&index=15

That is great news from Jonathan! I've also noticed how the longer I work with the images and text the more they work on me in turn and serve this purpose of making more meaning from these memories and the significance of these photographs... and what is grief and what is a cactus and what are they telling me! So exciting. I think the nature of our collaboration deserves more exposure and also we can have so much fun building it up until the spring... droppin' little cactus clues.

I picked up this book in Brussels called 'Aqua Viva' by Clarice Lispector (here is part of it in pdf form: http://art.yale.edu/file_columns/0000/9416/agua_viva_-_clarice_lispector.pdf).



It is writing like I've never read before.

Also, Brussels was such a trip, I loved it all – the conference, the concert, and then this Sunday afternoon in a park eating a communal meal of pumpkin squash with refugees telling stories with a microphone and then these drunk bums took the microphone and started singing, omg.

Email love letters have begun. I'm listening to Bert Jansch in a sunny window patch. (Sunny window patch healing sunshine on your broke foot.)

Viva!

Yours,
Roy

2018-10-23, 14:50

Hi dear,

What a time warp of ideas when you go looking through your desktop. I really have to stay organized, eek. The only kind of portfolio I could come up with is just evidence from these performances that include the main text I wrote for them. Hope you can use them!

I inquired about the house and apparently, the kronur is not so good right now. So I will wait on that one.

<3

2018-10-23, 16:04

Hi!

Thanks!

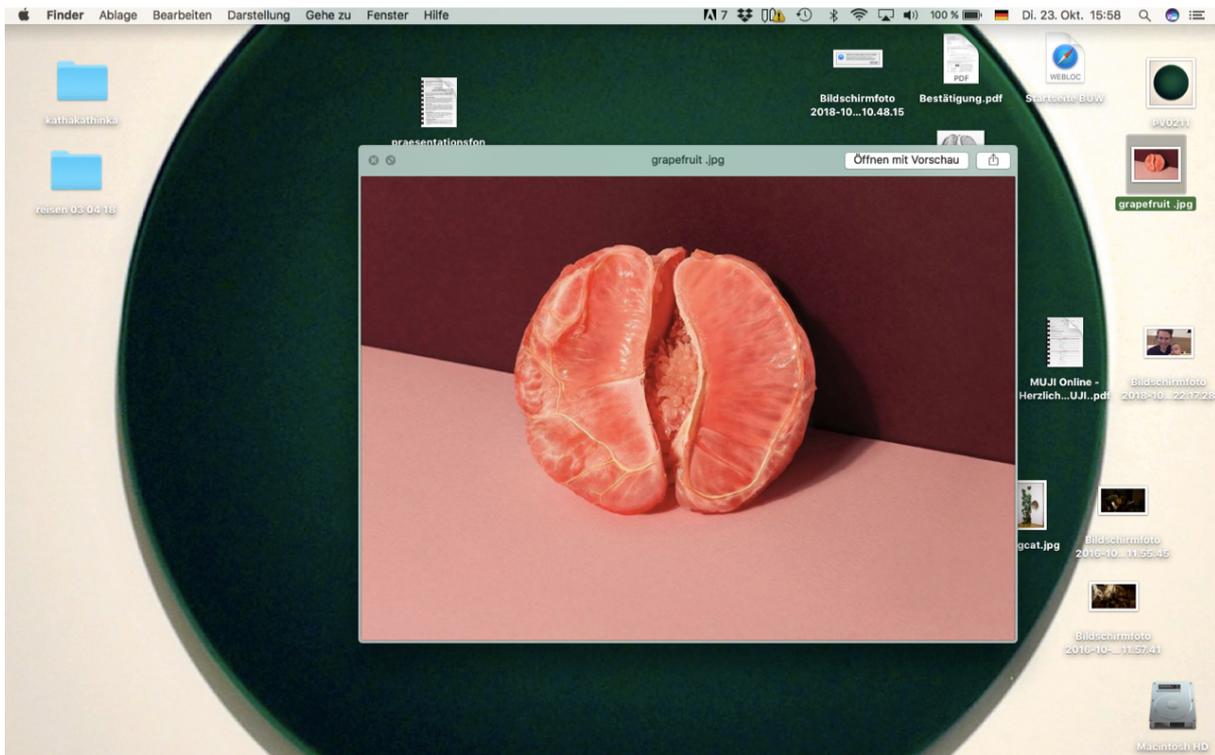
Hugs,
Siegfried

ps. Here's a screenshot of my desktop:

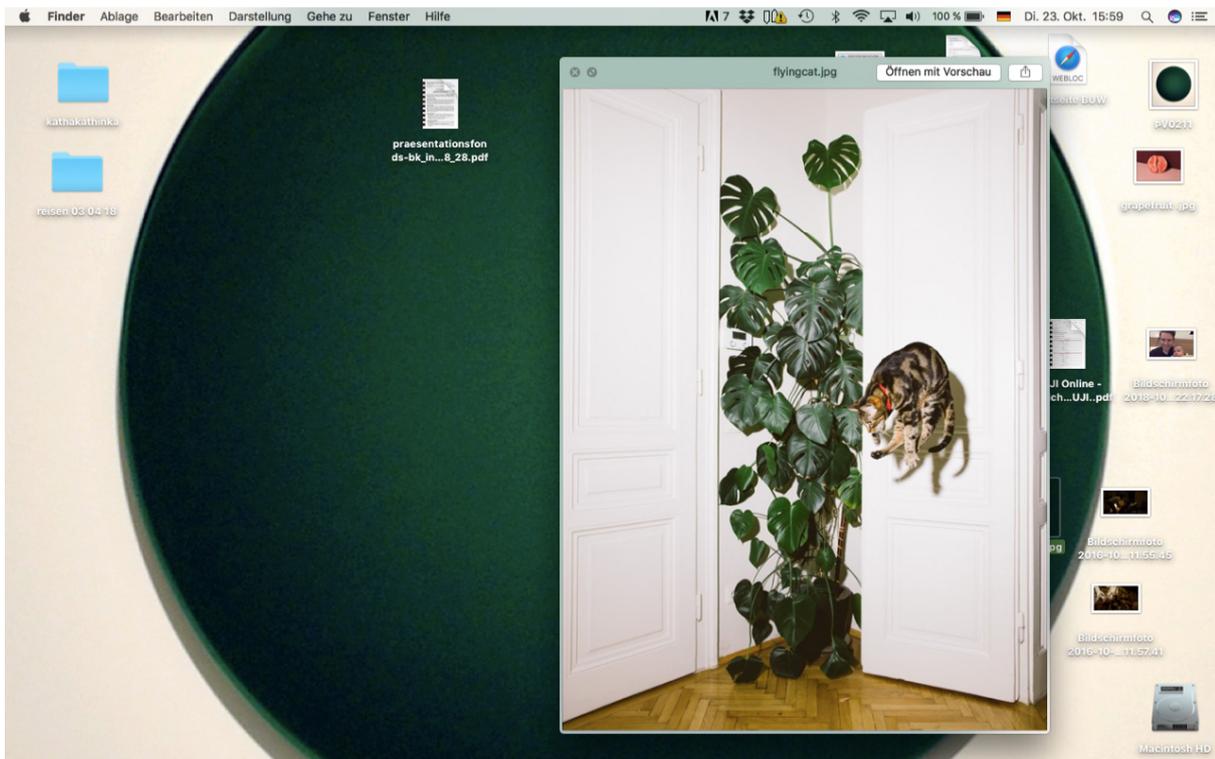


There are 3 images I am so intrigued by that I can't let them go:

1. A grapefruit. On the screen since March 26, 2018:



2. A flying cat. On the screen since October 12, 2016:



3. Pablo Escobar burning dollars to keep his family warm. On the screen since October 10, 2016:



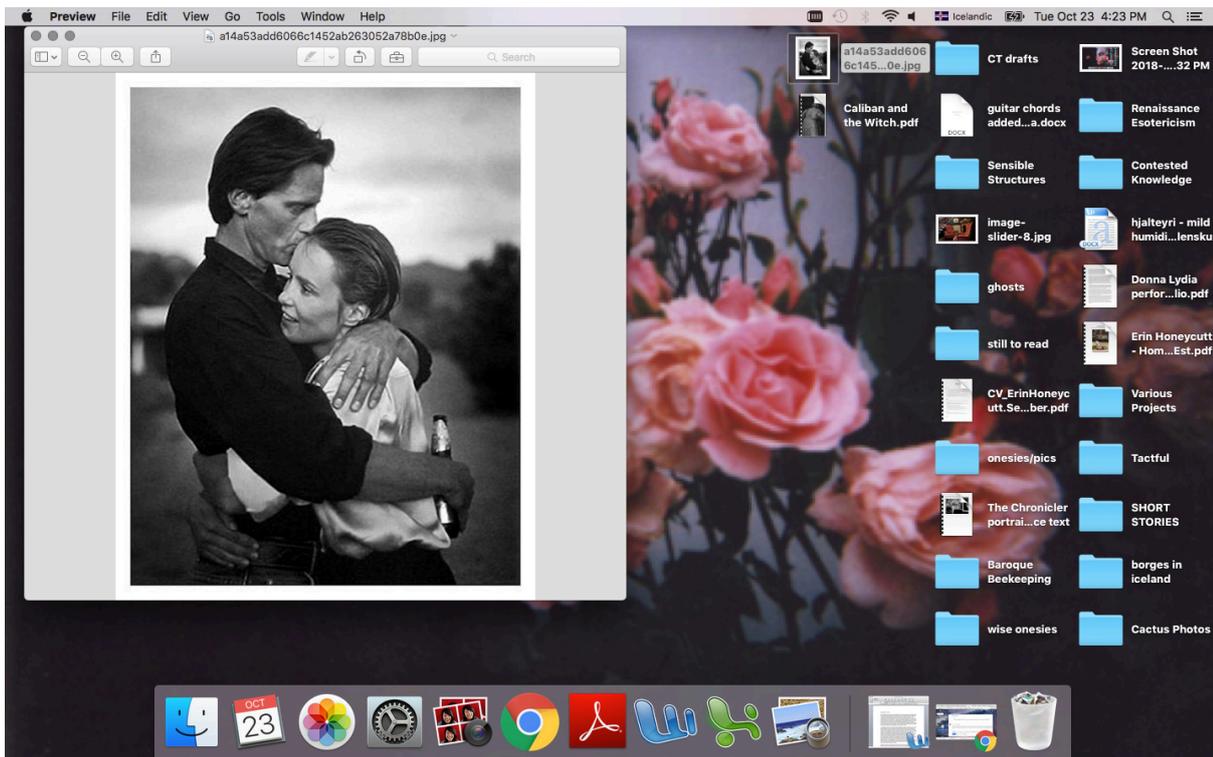
2018-10-23, 18:57

These three images mean everything – like everything you need to know about anything, the basics of life: grapefruit, flying cat, pablo escobar. It could be a short story about the significance of desktop images.

1. My desktop



2. Zoom in on the adorable photo of Sam Shepard and Jessica Lange



2018-10-23, 19:38

Desktops are everything, the space in which we operate daily, both content-wise but also visually, a window. In this sense I think they are exhibitions, unintentional exhibitions, private exhibitions. There is a reason why some things – images, folders – remain there longer than others.

Your desktop reads like a poem, I want to open every single folder that's on there. Sensible Structures! Baroque Beekeeping! Ghosts! How do you find these titles? Do they just come to you?

*With love,
Siegfried*

2018-10-23, 21:17

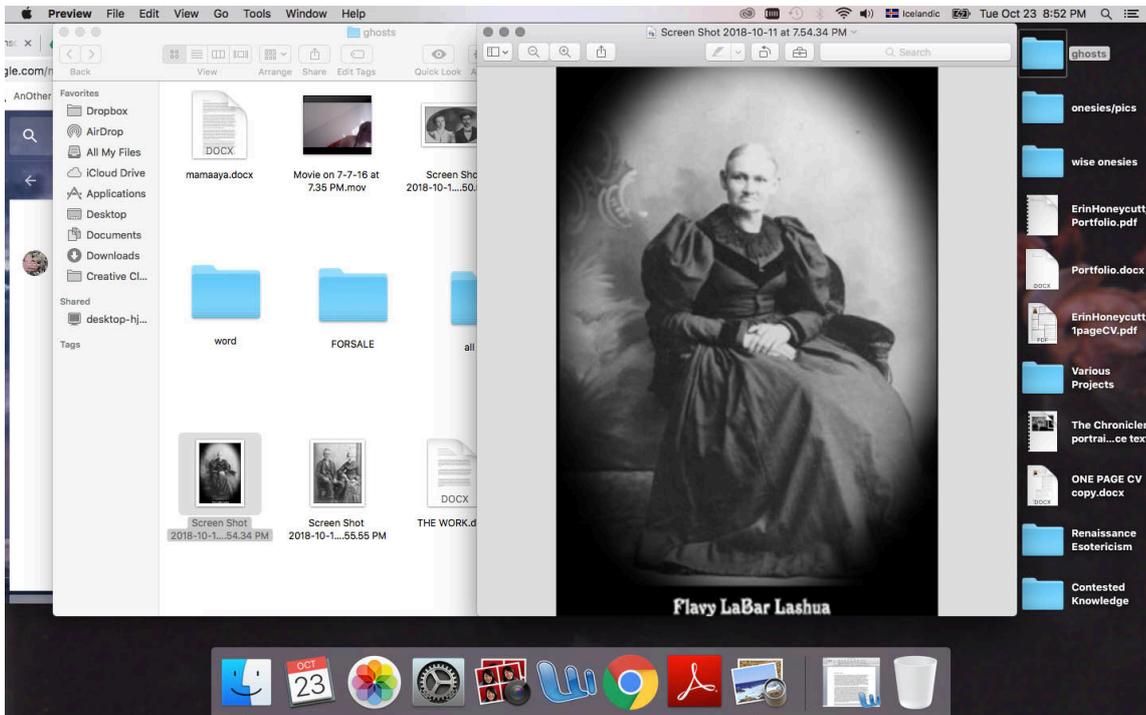
It is so profound what meaning can be traced right under our noses in the spaces we use everyday... the furniture we use to prop up our everyday tasks, which takes place in this desktop window dimension so incredibly often. I sometimes feel like my brain is a little offshored onto this desktop, or like it is my third elbow.

The names come to me when I try to think of a way to remember what the contents of the folders feel like. That is, if it is not something already with a name as in the case of 'Baroque Beekeeping' and 'Sensible Structures', two exhibitions/projects already underway. The 'Ghosts' folder is full of ghosts as in poems I

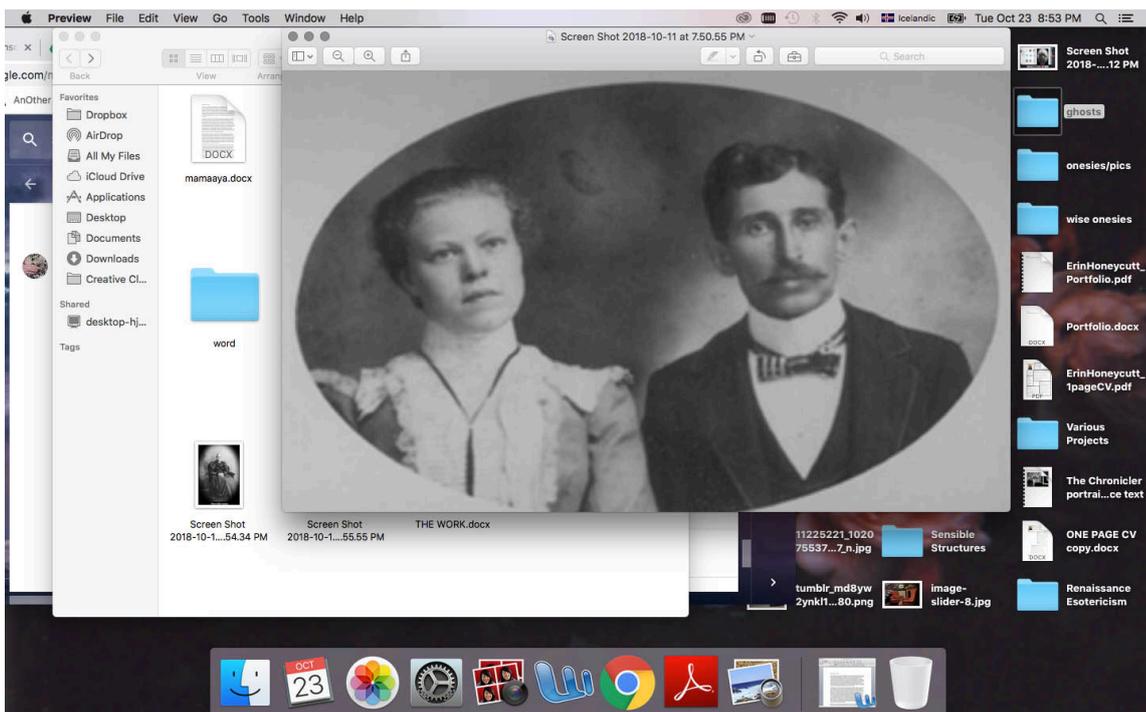
wrote that feel like ghosts already as I feel like such a different person now than the person I was when I wrote them, but, alas, I keep them – as ghosts.

But also literally as in very old family photos like these:

1. My great, great, great grandmother, Flavia Labar Lashua, taken in Montreal sometime in the early 19th century. We know that her husband immigrated from Reims, France, but nothing about her birthplace.



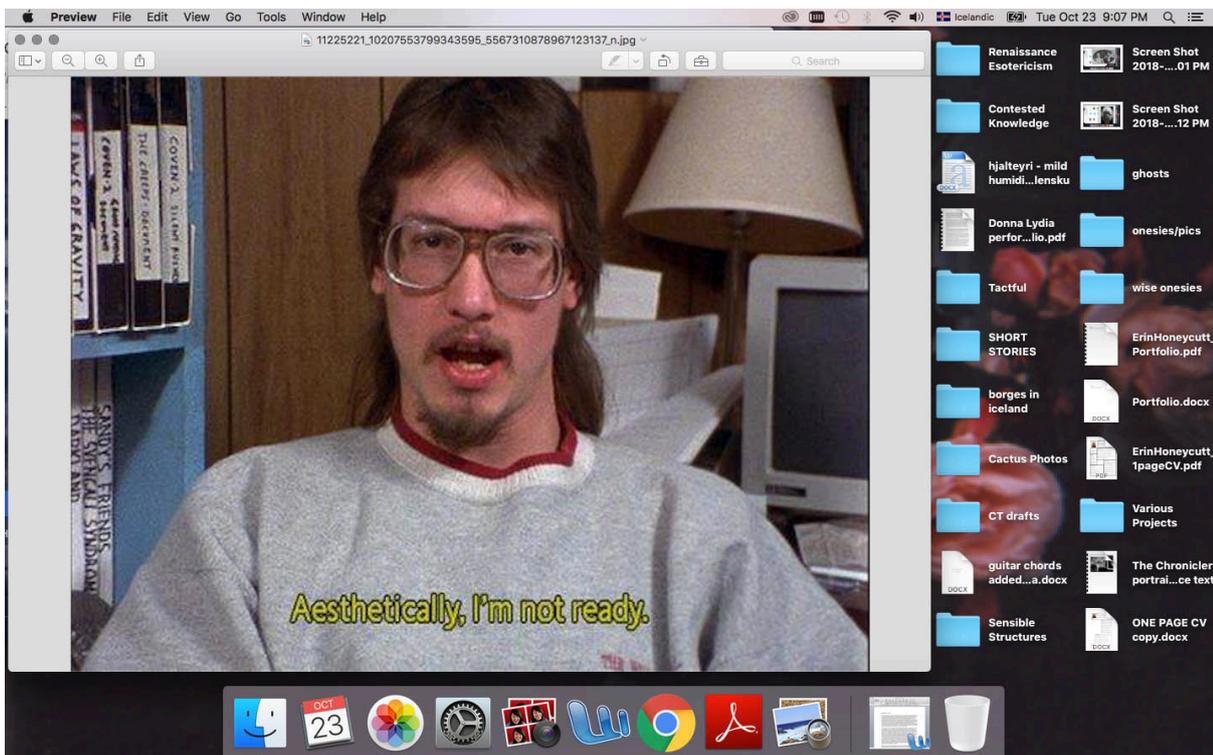
2. My great grandparents, Egbert Lashua and Maude Cleaves, taken in Wisconsin around 1910, I think.



I never realized that I organized this way until you asked actually... ghosts are from the past, whether they be poems or ancestors! It's all the same in the desktop world!

I also think it is incredible how deep and shallow the desktop world can be. I also have some great memes saved in a folder called onesies/pics, like this one:

3. This movie is hilarious and I can't remember the name of it.



How do you maneuver your desktop world? It is so minimal! This green orb is so peaceful!

Yours,
Roy

2018-12-15, 16:18

Hallooo,

Attached, a crown of sonnets - so addictive, and so nice to have parameters for language like this! Maybe there is some point to be made about how the usual art writing language is in an unnamed and unspoken of parameter while this one is simply named and originates from 14th century Italy... heh / all in all very fun, a revolution!

xx

2018-12-17, 14:09

Roy,

it's been a while and I want to get back to the desktop conversation.

Absolutely stunning to see these old (indeed ghostly) pictures of your ancestors. I look at their faces and look for traces of your face in them (no success).

To answer your question of how I navigate in my desktop world, it seems to be a place for lost files (I don't know where to put them in my system), or any file that is temporary (a virtual to-do list, things that expire, like concert tickets), or files that I want to see every day and that I can't let go (that's where the beauty lies).

A good example of the first kind are these ridiculous screenshots that I took of my Facebook profile picture, or rather, of the options that Facebook (SO out-of-date btw) offered me:



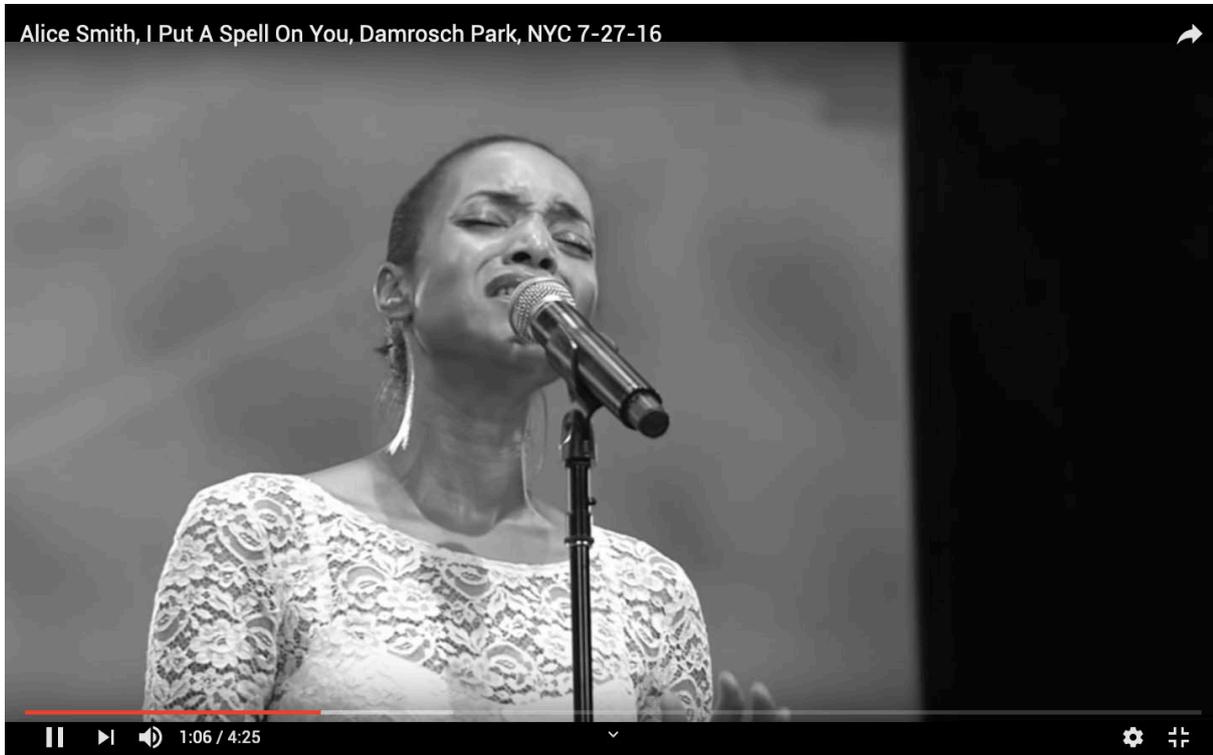
I especially like the one saying “I am a knitter“. Like anyone would put that on their photo. Or maybe they would. I don't judge!

Also, let me tell you how extremely touched I was to read your sonnet on Metahaven's 'EURASIA'. Without having seen this work at Stedelijk, I developed an intuitive understanding of what it must be like. I'm especially fond of the paragraph

*As it rotates in space, a crowd of sleep
in a howling first-person shooter game,
the names of eyes and ears are just skin-deep
names of new species of an app filename.*

So beautiful.

*Also, I have to share this video of Alice Smith singing “I put a spell on you“ with you:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ShZv9aqXf7w>*



*I'm watching it on repeat and it gives me shivers every single time.
I went to see the Arthur Jafa show at Julia Stoschek Collection yesterday and it was mind-blowing. An archive of videos, films, snippets from the internet, archival footage – around the topic of African-Americans in the US (roughly spoken), though about anyone's identity really. I have never seen any topic so well-represented, so well-told, so diverse and beautiful and funny and I have learned more from this exhibition than I have from any history book or documentary.*

*Love,
Siegfried*

ps. Who is that guy in your last screenshot?? “Aesthetically, I’m not ready“. I have a crush.

2018-12-19, 00:19

Dear Siegfried,

I watched Alice Smith in awe and wonder and a few tears I do believe. I have never heard of her; why?! It made me a little nostalgic for my homeland in the south. I imagined you coming with me there on an epic road trip in a pick-up truck in which we visit Memphis. This is where my dad is from and where his mother, Mary Patricia, worked for the Center for Southern Folklore and helped to get old blues musicians out of prison so they could keep recording. I have odd memories of her funeral celebration party where so many old

blues musicians paid tribute to her on stage and it was a drunken mess and I sat shy in the corner most of the night – I was 12 and really into Lord of the Rings. I've always wanted to go back there and try to find some of these musicians or anyone she knew and document the journey somehow – want to come with? (I also think this journey would say a lot about this complicated history of race in the south.)

I watched Alice and then I had to avert thoughts back to this essay I am writing about a still life painting from 1690 of seashells, so now my desktop is quite full of old seashell paintings. Believe me, they do not compare to the fervor of Alice. Of course, the topic is 'textures of time' because the Dutch guy who invented the pendulum clock did so around the same time many of these paintings of seashells were made. Seashells are so in now, amiright?

I think in this case, I will leave the images hanging around my desktop until I make a folder for them. Some of them might be significant and I will choose to keep, but like you said, that's where the beauty is... and I don't know quite yet if they have grabbed me.

Here is one painting by Adriaan Coorte:

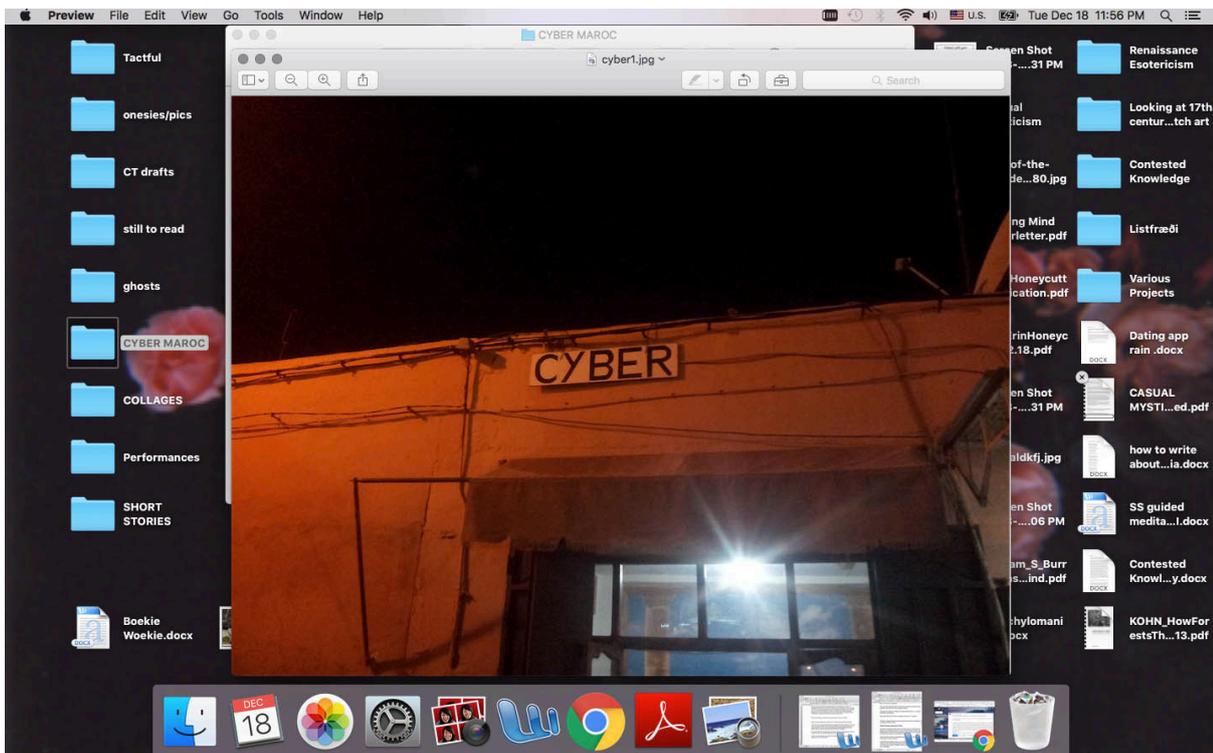


Although, in terms of visual culture, I think your portfolio of possible Facebook profile frames says just as much, if not more, about the times we are living in as these seashell perspectives said about Holland in the 17th century. I especially like #nichtmeinelager...

I recently did a little organization on my desktop and created a chasm down the middle with more established folders to the far left of the desktop (folders that are longstanding on my desktop that I don't think I can organize in any other way now because I have some kind of emotional connection to what belongs in them and what doesn't – like the 'Ghosts' folder I mentioned before. Although I also have a

‘onesies/pics’ folder with a variety of images and subfolders in it, the decision of placing an image in one folder or the other follows no reason. I also have old family photos in the ‘onesies/pics’ folder, so there is no reason... just rhyme. I also have a ‘Tactful’ folder with my CV and passport scan and some receipts and transcripts).

Oh wow, the established folder side of my desktop also includes a folder called ‘CYBER MAROC’. These are photos I took in Marrakesh when I first visited in 2016 and was fascinated by the cyber cafés.



I think it is an established folder because I know there is something juicy in there but I’m just waiting to know in what form it will be extricated from my desktop world.

Maybe I just write about them – the simple, beautiful task of writing about photos and that will tell you all you need to know about your relationship with the image. Ahhhhh....

Is there something about the images we choose to keep on the desktop that remind us of something we don’t want to forget? Not necessarily in a practical way, like something with a deadline due next week, but an image that spoke to us and every time we see it hanging out on the desktop, we are reminded?

Oh, and a picture of my parents from the mid-80’s looking christmasy that I just added to my desktop for completely sentimental reasons and for the fact I pick up this lady at the airport tomorrow:



P.s. The ‘Aesthetically, I’m not ready‘ dude is from *American Movie* (1999), a documentary about that dude, Mark Borchardt, a very, very independent filmmaker making films in Wisconsin with his friends and family and no budget. Totally your humor kind of movie! Here is a beautiful scene:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TSzHvRVE5uM>



2019-04-16, 11:16

ROY.

We just got off the phone and you said that everything feels really cactus-sy in your life right now. I am getting nervously excited (in the most positive sense of the word) about our show that is coming up in June. I am envisioning a summery poster show (with heavy reading) and the possibility to take something home (postcards!? posters for sale!?).

Think about your performance piece.. You can invite other people if you want - they'll get 250 Euros (and our company).

What's the name of the guy again, the one that you're currently writing your thesis about?

What's his take on cacti?

I have one very strong memory concerning cacti that I can't quite get rid of and that — OMG WHY AM I REALIZING THIS JUST NOW!?! — is a road trip with my dad from Vegas to Arizona. [Seriously, I am sitting in my Bauhaus office in Weimar and just had to stare out of the window for 2 minutes because I cannot believe that I didn't bring this up sooner.]

I was 17 (the same age you shaved your head for the first time) and flew from Tampa/Florida to Las Vegas where we rented a van and drove around for three weeks. It was mainly canyons and national parks but the trip ended in Tucson/Arizona where we just saw lots and lots of cacti and beautiful stone gardens. I need to dig up my old CD-ROM drive and have a look at the photos from that time.

The story is of course different from yours; a different narrative with a possibly very similar aesthetic. Roadtrippin' with my dad was an intense experience (like traveling with my dad in general) but I remember it to be quite relaxed and that we became very close on that trip. Driving through the US in a camping van, listening to Mark Knopfler and Jim Croce, really made me feel very small (not used to these long distances, not used to these weird looking motels by the road, not used to 4-gallon-milk containers and not used to this insane amount of space around me and the beauty of nature in the mid-west). Will dig up the photos and get back to you.

That said, I am SO READY to come to the south with you. Memphis you say? Early October you say?

Your studying of seashells naturally falls on fruitful soil with me. I collected some shells in Alor/Indonesia two years ago which led me to believe that there is a lot more going on in this world than humans can possibly grasp or sense. Would love to send you a photo but again: don't have my hard drive with me. The shells have drawings of mountains on them, I kid you not (did I show them to you when you were in Berlin?). Cynics might say that this is a coincidence and that I only imagine the pattern to look like mountains and that patterns in nature repeat and that's just that. But when you've traveled in an area for a month where so-called black magic is performed and people are able to direct bee swarms by pure thought – you don't believe in coincidences anymore.

Shells and time are obviously closely connected and that brings me to my most pressing project which is the monograph on Hreinn Fridfinnsson which is about to be published. He worked a lot with ammonite fossils and seashells and is currently hanging out on my desktop cause I took some screenshots during our last Skype meeting:



I think you are right when you say that we keep certain images around because they remind us of something which we don't want to forget (yet). Practical stuff on the one hand (boarding passes), aesthetic stuff on the

other (why can't I let go of Pablo Escobar burning dollars? – It's been sitting on my laptop for two and a half years now).

I do have the tendency to put images in folders and never look at them again. What a sad cycle of life: Putting stuff into folders means not having to deal with them anymore, in a way to get rid of them. Weirdly, our whole life is organized that way; don't we constantly put stuff away (in boxes, in folders, in drawers, in closets) because it's of no immediate use? Is this the culture of humans – to accumulate stuff and store it away?

Another image which I might get rid of sooner than later is this drawing of a futuristic gas station which was built by the Italian architect Giuseppe Pettazzi in Asmara/Eritrea in 1938 as part of a modernist colony outside of Mussolini's Italy. I wrote an essay about it which was published last week in an exhibition catalogue with the title "The Uncanny Valley".



With love,
Siegfried.

2019-04-17, 20:19

Lady Siegfried,

I kid you not, ever since paying the deposit on this apartment in Berlin I am dancing more. In the kitchen, while cooking and listening to music, I am somehow transported more easily by music like some vista of life is opening and I feel like I'm in a beautiful sentimental film from the 70s but it is so completely now.

Henri Michaux is who I am writing my thesis on. Here is a great review written on him by Octavio Paz

(<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2002/aug/10/featuresreviews.guardianreview18>) and another one in Hyperallergic (<https://hyperallergic.com/130265/further-adventures-in-mescaline/>). I would say what Michaux has to say about cacti has to do with needing a new language to express something you have experienced because it cannot be expressed in linear language (not just tripping on mescaline, which is derived from Peyote cacti, but aesthetic experiences with painting and poetry too).

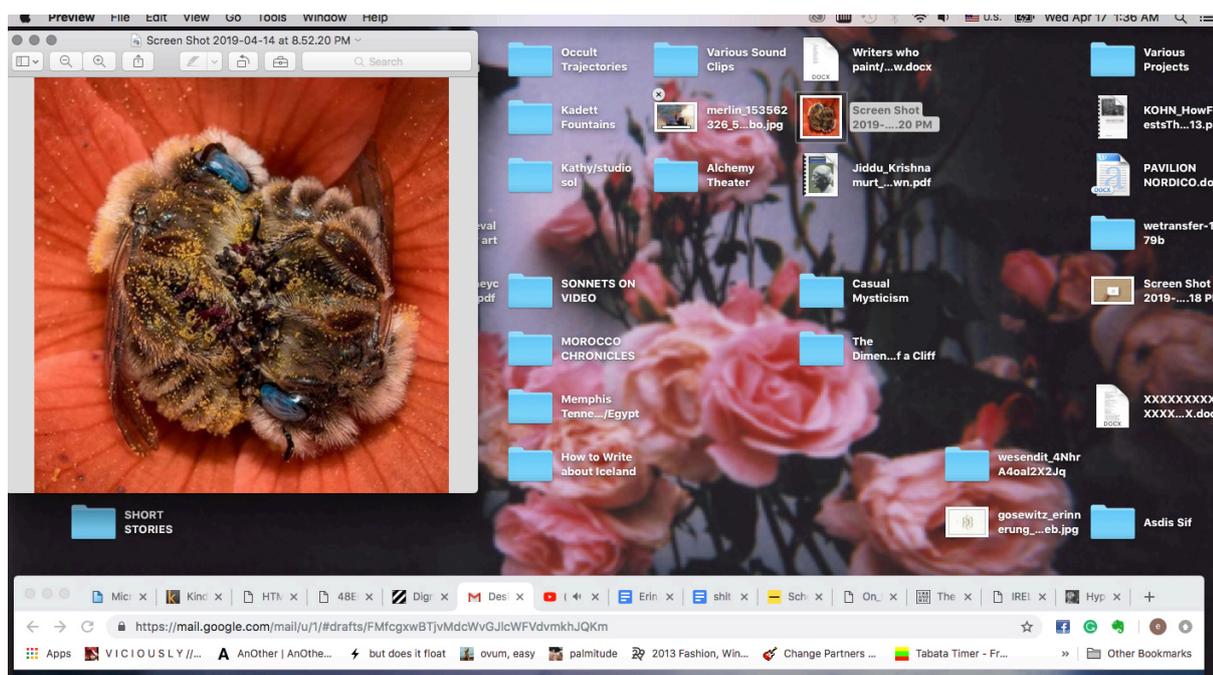
Something about discovering him and it occurring the same time as this opening really makes me tingle. I think it may be a similar thing that the cacti and the ammonite shells have to say for Hreinn – something about magic in nature and our ability to communicate with it and our ancestors' ability to communicate with it... I just find it so interesting that there has been human-peyote communication with the Huichol in Mexico since 300 BC and it told them about spiritual realms and Gods they began worshipping.

A summery poster show sounds about right. Maybe both postcards and posters? I will send you another email with the larger image files of the 17 cacti photos.

In thinking about the performance, I always see my effort in a performance as an effort to feel words more – to hear them in an elevated sense, or through a different medium than expected, to spatialize them somehow – just how the practice of writing about the images transformed the images and my whole connection to my past and to time in general.

I just had a hilarious vision of me walking around to each poster and treating each one like I am a news anchor and pointing to the poster behind me like it is the latest news headline but talk about tiny details like a shadow or a flower and read some parts of the text. Or simply read the texts very slowly like a poem to a small cactus plant in real life – this simple practice of reading slowly can be totally transporting. I could have an interview with a cactus plant. I will keep thinking about it – and about collaborators. Would you want to collaborate on a performance somehow?!!

My steady desktop image these days is this pair of bees cuddling in a flower in a pool of pollinated ecstasy.



Lots of love,
Roy

P.S. Memphis, yes. Possibly October, yes. Maybe we could turn it into a Siegfried and Roy image/text project? Involve her old workplace's archive?! Here is a photo of my grandma in Memphis with her dog, Freddie Mercury.



Erin Honeycutt (born in 1989 in Atlanta, lives and works in Berlin and Reykjavik) studied Environmental Humanities (BA) and Art History (MA) as well as Western Esotericism (MA). She writes in a variety of collaborations with artists as well as reviews and poetry. She has recently performed her text-based work at Beyond Human Impulses, Athens (2018), the Reykjavik Arts Festival (2018), and Kadett, Amsterdam (2019). Her essay, *Sensible Structures*, was published by In the End, Books?, Antwerp, as part of the exhibition by the same name which opened at Kling og Bang, Reykjavik in early 2019.

<https://erinhoneycutt.persona.co/>

<https://baroquebeekeeping.com/>

Katharina Wendler (born 1988 in Hamburg, lives and works in Berlin and Weimar) is an art historian and exhibition maker. She studied Cultural Sciences, Art Management and Psychology at Leuphana Universität Lüneburg as well as Art History at Humboldt Universität zu Berlin and the University of Iceland. From 2013 to 2017 she directed the project space Safn Berlin/Reykjavik and since 2014 has realised and coordinated numerous exhibitions, publications and other projects with German and international artists. She currently works as Curator of the Bauhaus University Gallery and Artistic Associate at the Faculty of Art and Design at Bauhaus-Universität Weimar as well as a freelance curator and writer in Berlin.

In early 2018 she initiated the exhibition format *__in conversation with__*, that takes as its goal to bring people into conversation and thus into collaboration. Artists are invited to enter into dialogue and to develop an exhibition from it. The conversations are formulated into texts and serve to accompany the exhibitions as text material. They enable the visitors to develop a deeper understanding of the working methods of the artist and their artworks.

__in conversation with__ is based on the assumption that artists themselves are best able to provide information about their works, their working methods, their ideas and inspirations. One simply needs to ask.

<https://www.katharinawendler.com/>

Exhibition

Erin Honeycutt

Cactus Chronicles

June 9–30, 2019

Opening: Sunday, June 9, 1–6 pm (performance at 2:30 pm)

Dzialdov, Maybachufer 43, 12047 Berlin

as part of Project Space Festival Berlin 2019