



Kohn, Eduardo. (2013). *How forests think. Towards and anthropology beyond the human*. University of California press. Presentation Theory 1: Ana Maria Bermudez Morou.

Last time Ana spoke about semiosis. The word “semiosis” comes from Ancient Greek: more specifically, the word *semeion* which means sign (or, actually symptom). Like when you have a fever it is a sign that you are ill. Its broader application comes from the fact that when we meet reality—like a rain-forest—we come with a baggage of images and with knowledge of what we see, based on our experience with cause and effect. The question raised by Eduardo Kohn: are we stuck in our knowledge? Do we see and sense the *forest* with all that baggage: our *culture*?

One question Zofia brought on with her presentation, is that we may not be very good at being attentive to our own culture either: which is particularly relevant in design. Some people may think that if the design retreats quietly into our everyday environment, then that is when it really work. Like we have accepted it into our world. However, what Zofia’s presentation of Marcin Wicha’s design essay shows two issues that might be related: 1) a comprehensive history of design is difficult to come by; 2) teasing it a bit, using a playful approach, can make us learn something.

Which is what we also can do by moving from one design scene to another: from Norway to Poland, for instance. This is when we will see clearer elements that are different from our own scene: because we pick up on details such as when we find posters that are hand-painted, for instance, and also how design is part of the local culture than where we come from. These are also signs, and semiosis can be defined as the process of discovering them. Perhaps also we may learn that design is closer to geography than to history: when we move it changes, how it bundles with other things, and the importance of context where design is done and lived.

Oddly, the book that Helena came with aims at sinking into a *place*, using George Perec’s *descriptive* protocol. like we also could have done with Ana’s shape shifting story (Runa Puma) in the South American rain-forest. But here the critical moment is not the failure at decolonising our senses—which was one of Ana’s points—but rather how we can move and work with our senses. Thus, Helena’s scenographic take on creating a situation for her reading the book as what Perec is doing in the plan and procedure of the book, so that she expands her reading by finding a way of working with Perec/the book.



Wicha, Marcin. (2015). *Jak przestalem kochać design. Karakter*. Presentation Theory 1: Zofia Joanna Biedzka.

Our round with [OULIPO](#) (workshop for potential literature)—with Saralinn from the audience—is of direct interest to us, in the sense that it came in the wake of e.g. Situationism: the use of constraints to make a harvest of contingencies from random (i.e. so called, chance-methods). The “math” used in OULIPO as such a harvester arguably stands on the shoulders of Guy

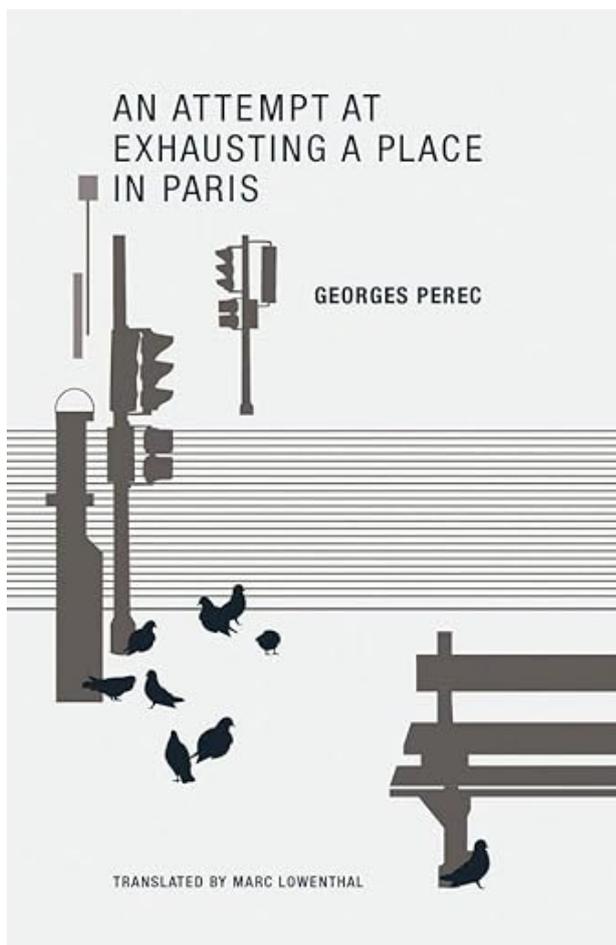
Debord's [Dérive](#): like, walking in the city, taking a right turn at the next street-corner, whenever you see someone wearing red. Or, looking up at the windows: take a snapshot and move on...

You make up a set of rules and you follow them. In Santiago, the Chilean artist [Alejandro Jodorowsky](#), with some friends, drew a line across the city, and they proceeded to walk that stretch. Which means that they had to knock on doors, explain that they were doing an art-project, and were let in to walk through. In France, [Laurent Tixador and Abraham Poincheval](#) drew a line from Metz to Paris, and decided they would solve whatever technical problem that came their way by making the tools, boats, tunnels and high-rise climbs they needed to get on with their plan.

Why do people do things like that? Well, the point argued by Debord—in the theory of the derive—is that the city we live in, where we have our daily habits and ways, eventually becomes a mirror reflection of ourselves: we move head-on into what Ana talked about the rain-forest. So, the methods invented by the situationists and OULIPO is in this way, are to decolonise our senses. Because the way we see the city that we call “our own” is often plugged in with advertisement, propaganda and other means calculated by people, to make us live, think and sense in this way.

If we are designers we will ask whether we are amongst these calculating people, or we are amongst those creating alternative practices to open our minds and senses to what there is. Removing the clutter, decolonising. Starting with the awareness of our senses, and beginning to make decisions relative to that (instead of following the mainstream of commercial culture). Maybe this is what people who want to educate themselves by embarking on an MA at KHIO are with themselves and society. And why it can make sense to work with design at an art-school.

[Sophie Calle](#) is an artist that has been inspired by the OULIPO in the 1960s, and one of her works involves stalking unknowing people, following them all the way into their homes, and taking pictures of their apartments. She exhibited the pictures with the method and story (as Tixador and Poincheval) like two different examples of art-by-journey as they were coined by curator and theorist Nicolas Bourriaud in [The radican](#). In this play, the exhibit is a site for people who cross paths and create their own stories by passing through, and this becomes part of the work.



A question is what we do with this in design? Going out for mushrooms, coming home with blue-berries a way of lining this up (like an exhibition space or a logbook/BlackBook)... Well, the protocol we use in class to find our way to the QUAD groups, is a case of what Debord (above) called *rendezvous possible* (possible meeting): sending people off to a spot in the city, with the assignment to relate to people who may/not have been sent to the same place from other cells. In our class this is something we have prepared and coded. It works in a certain way.

It is not tied to the white-cube—nor a particular format—it is something transportable and that can be used somewhere else. In this sense it is, and has become, a *design tool*. Having rotated through the QUAD-groups in this course, some of you might be able to read the chart in this direction: relating to the chart through the operations that you have learned. Then it has been transformed into a sign (and the process is semiosis).

On the other hand, you may have reasons for not wanting to reach that point: you want to remain in the forest. It is better to follow surprise as a companion than falling into a system. But this is not the end of the story: in the forest there are ordeals, and you must make it to come back and tell the story. [Lydia Hann](#)—our presenter 22.09—has not come back to tell the story. She wants to remain in performance on her materials exploration.

Georges Perec. (2010/1974). *An attempt at exhausting a place in Paris*. Wakefield. Presentation Theory 1: Helena Blessing.