

give me some space

basics on using negative space and the rule of thirds to compose a photo

Fig. 1—in composing a photograph we will attend the space around the motif in order to give it space. Where it is placed on a grid will also remove some noise. If we notice that it flattens to the point of removing the gaze, the photographer can leave a footprint, so that it is apparent that someone has left, and there is now a space available for a new look.

In the *learning theatre*, the practitioners start with set of *instructions* and with a viewing-*protocol*, on which they are expected to develop their *own* take (because we are at art-school). After the presentation, the practitioners enter a conversation with the host and are asked to exhibit the items on a table—adjacent to the seating area in the *learning theatre*—to be photographed. To this point, the practitioners have trouble making notes from the conversation, and also asking someone else to do it for them, though they are used to taking notes in class when in the attendance. Also the *exhibit*.

So, *note-taking* and *exhibiting* are likely defined after the “finishing-line” of a presentation; which they have worked on, and been nervous about. The reception of the work, which happens during the conversation—where the whole attendance is encouraged to participate—the nervousness is transformed into *relief*, and becomes in effect a time-out. From the host point of view, insufficient attention may have been devoted to this *transition*, and has been considered as matter of simple logistics to make everything work: whereas it may be part of a “grammar” of stops-and-shifts.

Which is has been surreptitiously, but at the same time denied of importance, because considered to be kind of obvious. So it may be. Also for the practitioners. But yet it is overlooked/readily “forgotten”. In the Lacanian jargon developed, so far, for the *learning theatre* tweaking this *tricky* transition could be initiated by articulating a *language* for it: to make the situation respond, in rebound. Because it is not a situation where the practitioners in the *learning theatre* feature as “bad students”. Instead, the host opts for considering one of the “sleepy topics” of the *learning theatre*.

It is a point at which the practitioner is challenged to move from a mode in which they are steering after the object-causing-desire **a**—pursuing it as they present—into a different mode where they are asked to take *one step back*: to consider their own delivery from the vantage point of the **other**. They also are asked to *deconstruct* something that was conjoint during the presentation: by separating the item which previous held the desire to exhibit it. This is not something self-evident, but still a regular demand in an art-school, or art-community. Knowing when to stop-and-shift.



Fig. 2—*Threing*: a performance-based interior architecture developed by Paul Ryan (tapestries by Luis Berrios-Negron) for a pavilion in the Karlsauae at dOCUMENTA13 in 2012. Relations can be hatched as *space-givers*.

In other words, it is a transition at which the stop-and-shift requires separate attention—yet to be determined—since the *next step*, after presentations, is that the practitioners would both *need* notes from the class-conversation and the sense of the item in the twilight zone between the presentation and exhibit modes. That is, when they start working in groups of 4 (the QUADS) which is a situation where the practitioners would want to come up with an idea for a logbook entry, based on the experience with the stop/shift included. In linguistic terms, a *sentence* (Lacan). In performed terms a *series* (Deleuze). Or, in the terms of the *learning theatre* a *non-repetitive series* (i.e., a model in Julia Robinson’s sense) made up from a *sequence* of events and turns, and a *con/sequence* of things said in response. The QUAD is *instruction-based*, the logbook is *protocol-based*: active constraints in the *learning theatre*.

Again, the *essays* that they are asked to make—on the backdrop of their *logbooks*—are developed through a series of practical *instructions* (workshop tasks in the Fluxus spirit), while they present their logbooks to an audience of practitioner bas on a *viewing-protocol*, based on three registration points: **(1)** a visual overview/summary of the logbook [a map], **(2)** a curated selection of sample views from the logbook, and **(3)** an embodied view of the kind of feedback *needed* at this point. The writing exercises are included into the logbook, the logbook is submitted to DASart feedback.

The *instructions* for the QUAD are a set of rotating tasks in a group, for a duration of 1 hour: (i) *prompt* an idea [fed on learning in theory class or from studio learning]; (ii) *support* that idea with this seen, heard and researched; (iii) *critique/discuss* that support; (iv) *pitch* an activity that will kick off working with the idea in the logbook. The QUAD instruction, when operated, is in itself a feedback method. The DASart feedback is plugged into the course in class, as the QUADs take turns, at each session, to do a QUAD session in class. So, the entire class gives feedback to the QUADs.

The DASart feedback takes place in the form of **a)** *post-its* attached to a panel under each of the QUAD-members' names, and while their works is discussed—with the QUAD drill above as a reference—they also can intervene and say **b)** *what works for me...* **c)** *as a professional with this background/perspective I need more clarity on...* **d)** the QUADs who have been listening/viewing take on the task of *writing a collective letter* (about 200 words) to each of the members of the presenting QUADs, and build up to an *open question* (not a yes/no question) to finish off.

This stop-and-shift has been working remarkably well. It is a page/phase-turner. So, what can we learn from that? One possibility is that the QUADs have been *pitching in*: as the QUADs work *on their own* with the letters, and the QUADs present in class. Which means that they are no longer islands: while one QUAD is presenting *in class*, the attendance is also formed by QUADs. So, there is a situation with a group *and* a group of groups. The latter groups write letters building up to an open question to the members of the first: small collectives address individuals from afar.

The letter-writing QUADs get to be collectives inside the class. The individual receiving the question gets to be a class-member in a *different* sense of being assigned to the place by the school institution. Which means that we pass *from* a logic of extrapolation (the QUADs continue class-work after classes) *to* a logic of interpolation: the QUAD *in class* is surrounded by an ensemble of other QUADs, the individual contained by the ensemble of the class, *outside* class-hours. So, what we can detect is that a *stop* is a shift *from* content *to* container. The *signifiante*.

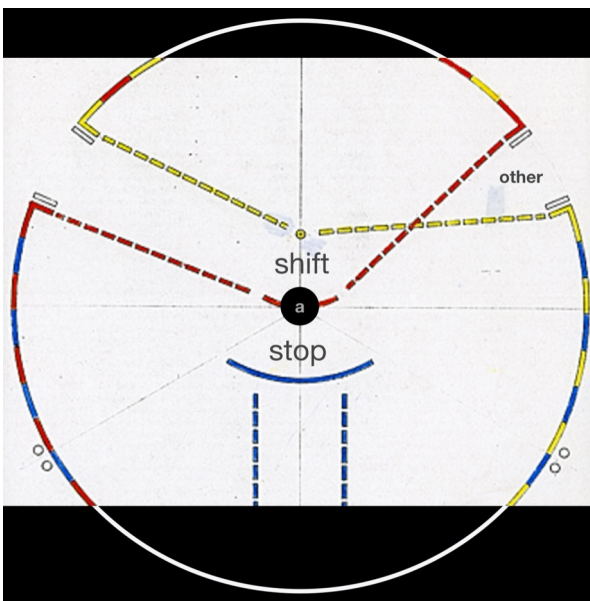


Fig. 3—the logic of interpolation of the *other* from its relation to the *object a* (or *objet petit a*) in the turn from stop to shift—a Janus moment—the idea of displacement serves the purpose of giving the practitioner some space: which happens as content is turned to container. Here language is content, the container signifier.

If we return to the “sleepy topics” of the course, there are *two* of them: **I)** the note-taking and exhibition tasks in the wake of presentation in class; **II)** the references in APA7th that the students are asked to hand in, after book- and media-presentations. Two provisional measures: to instruct note-taking arrangements/support the exhibition protocol; and to create a LMS assignment for the references. However, the point is for the practitioners to adopt these practices as part of their standard repertoire. So, the mere course-requirements will *not* do.

The logic of interpolation applies to the essay, as the references are incorporated. It also works the final presentation of the logbooks, where the feedback received during the term comes out through the practitioner's clarification on the needed feedback. The sleepy topics must be solved accordingly. To model the *learning theatre* as a non-repetitive series, as attempted here, we need to define an equivalent of a *stop* in written syntax: a *shift* (**Fig.3**).