



video

**MARY HAD**  
*a little alembic*  
**IHI zine 02.0**



feb 2019

anti-copyright  
anti-copyright

## reflections on co-creation :: mons-disaster and GashGirl

**m-d:**

creating open systems of production, using the framework of sympoiesis as articulated by mary beth dempster+ is endlessly challenging and rewarding. It is aspirational and often speculative, and asks that as a maker, you remain always open, perhaps perpetually in crisis, it asks of you to perhaps think as a swamp thinks++ in tidal motion, sometimes drowning, sometimes deep in mud, air roots breathing through lenticels, walking through the world with your mouth wide open, every particle of the swamp adjusting to the ever-changing conditions. to be truly co-creative and open source selves and work, offering it to others with no attachment to outcome, is pretty difficult, but ultimately rewarding in that you receive the gift of unmaking yourself over and over again. the gift that keeps on giving but is hard to take.

+ sympoietic systems are homeorhetic, evolutionary, distributively controlled, unpredictable and adaptive

++ acknowledging here my swamp writing companions, ashley haywood and nick taylor, we have drowned each other in our tides, swallowed all the words and spewed them out again, briny and bloated, time and again, as the waters rise and fall, and the lenticels open and close.

**GashGirl:**

You have to sense when to relentlessly fight for your progeny, and when to yield, offering them up to the lion's hot breathy maw. You need to eat, to cook, to leave the house to fetch water from the well, to gather wild greens, and field mushrooms from fairy rings after the rain. Remember to sleep. But sometimes you need to stay awake all night to finish that thing, to break its back. But but I can't, and you know this about me. It's good to take a walk after lunch and observe the ants. If they are swarming you know that rain is on its way. Unless they are swarming because it's that one night of the year that they've all grown wings and they're off to that anty bacchanalia. Sometimes you need to find a rock, hold it in your palm, then return it to the same spot. Or maybe you must lie on the grass and spot which creatures the clouds are becoming. In the making frenzy it's important to remember to water the garden, to feed the compost, to reply to incoming texts within at least 72 hours. To set aside the rest of life, at least for 1 week, or 1 month, or 1 year, to do this thing, this DIWO thing. DIWO-do it with others. To know that despite the fiercest of arguments you and your accomplices will be friends at the end of the making. That's probably the most important thing, that and the work, you want it to be good, to know that it was the best that you could do, under and within all circumstances.

**m-d**

i think i fight less than you for my progeny, because i am anti-natalist, and i don't want to care for any babies. i want to lose all the precious things, throw them to the lions so that they can feed and breed the unthinkable. suddenly the hard place i began blooms like a carpet of ruby saltbush in the spring. the desert was always, beautiful, though, even with the ants and the 3-corner jacks tearing up what's left of your feet. and here we are, so far from home, with our krill and our terra and our spore, wondering how they got here in the first place. but you know, i couldn't have done it on my own. i find working alone so desperate sometimes. the system is so fucked. precarity rules, and when somebody sits by me, or adjacent, or proximal or trans-me, then i find myself in their flow, when i was in the valley of shit, and it might be less like shit then and more like muddy water that becomes a stream of life. co-creation is inherently anticapitalist. i said that at a workshop one day without explanation. people had questions about that. i leave it here without explanation.

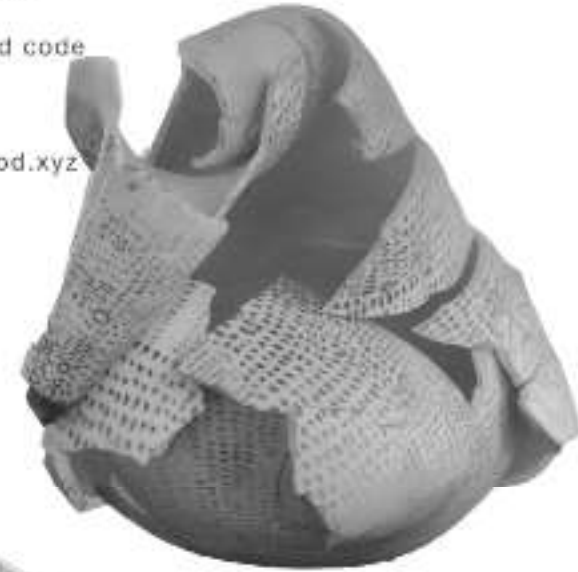
the precious shards of the alembic found its own magic

asemic marks describe the process

digital distillation through fire and code

ceramicist: ashley haywood

read her and weep: [ashleyhaywood.xyz](http://ashleyhaywood.xyz)

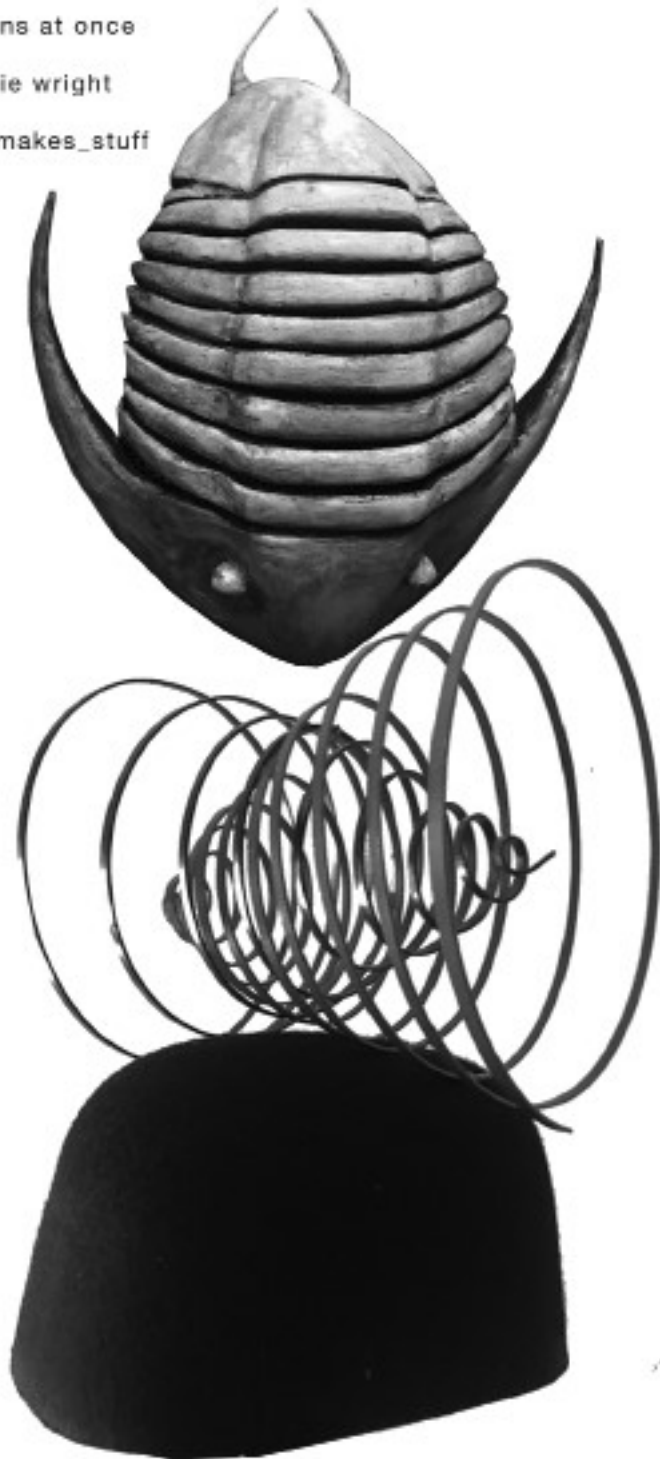


head sculptures for speaking to fossils across spacetime

in all directions at once

sculptor: annie wright

insta: annie\_makes\_stuff



### GashGirl:

It's beyond any monetary value that can be neatly quantified, what accomplices bring to the feast. Paolo Virno talks about virtuosity essential to late capitalism, defining this as humans' inherent cognitive and communicative capacities, that can be turned to create commodities and profit for the masters. But it is this infinitely generative virtuosity, especially when performed in the company of others—be they strangers, xenokin, biofam or familiars—that can be deployed to hexecute new ways (or to recuperate the most useful of old ways) to care better for one another than for the machine.

+++++

*A 1000 thanks to fearless accomplices, co-creators and facilitators of the Tender Alembicians Suite as presented for Refresh: Refiguring the Future. Baci e abbracci.*

*We acknowledge that our work was made on Indigenous land, primarily Tarntanya on Kurna land, and also the land of Lenape people, their elders and ancestors. We pay our respects to them all. We enjoyed the privilege of free passage across first nations' lands to create our works, and all benefits that have accrued from the production of our art are as a result of that privilege.*

### Alembic ceramicist

Ashley Haywood ashleyhaywood.xyz

### Sculptural hats maker

Annie Wright instagram.com/annie\_makes\_stuff/

### Soundtrack vocalists

Harriet Fraser-Barbour, Agnese Trocchi, Natasha Tyshkevich, Lika Kareva

### Sound artist/performer (for 'This Platform Life' performance on 15 Feb 2019)

Petra soundcloud.com/petraxyzzz

### Voices (Her eyes were as black as coal ...)

Emma Black, Jessie Boylan, Alice Farmer, Harriet Fraser-Barbour, Yasmin Gurreeboo, Amy Ireland, Grace Marlow, Gala Moody, Holly Annabel, Jana Norman, Sally Olds, Melinda Rackham, Neha Spellfish, Tom Squires, Joel Valentine

### Additional stills photography for video

Teri Hoskin, Rosslyn Prosser

### Botanical illustrations

Maria Sibylla Merian

### Mxtrx Class participants (Adelaide iteration)

Ben Brooker, Alison Coppe, Alice Farmer, Grace Marlowe, Melinda Rackham, Amelia Walker

### Curators of Refresh: Refiguring the Future

Heather Dewey-Hagborg

Dorothy R. Santos

### The Hunter College Art Galleries

Curatorial support: Jenn Bratovich, Exhibitions Manager; Marie Coneys, Curatorial Assistant; and Sarah Watson, Chief Curator

AV tech support & performance documentation: Carlos Rigau

Carpentry: Phi Nguyen, Head Preparator

Installation: Jeremy Becker, Joe Gannon, and David Gimbert

### Eyebeam team

Lola Martinez, Eyebeam/REFRESH Curatorial and Engagement Fellow

Sarah O'Connell, Program Manager, Eyebeam

Sally Szwed, Director of Programs, Eyebeam

Yidan Zeng, Production and Administrative Assistant, Eyebeam

### Studio space support for creative development

MakeSpace, ActNow Theatre, Adelaide

### Funding for IHI to participate in Refresh: Refiguring the Future

This project has been assisted by the Australia Council for the Arts, the Australian Government's arts funding and advisory body.

## #!/baroque/computing

IHI chatted with Neha Spellfish about baroque computing, box sets, wizards, sysadmins and the intimacy and fragility of machines. Let's just say, we love the command line, and renegade servers, and temperamental systems. The chat began in response to an article by Paul Vixie.

Here: <https://czep.net/17/legion-of-lobotomized-unices.html>

This chat is the seed for a podcast series of conversations with coders, hackers, artists who have some feels about pre-www comms, the early days of browsers, those who fancy ansi and work with emacs and green on black.

Here's Neha on Baroque Computing

Vixie laments the growing impotence of the crafts-"man", the system's wizened elder mascul, the presumptive consort of all methods embedded in the functional, slight structured richness of the minima. Did the craft system cease to be? Were the elder engineers slain, their body of work only rediscovered in the forensic sense making of the Bourne shell? Are they otherwise lost in the (void) of the ancients, banished to legendary tombs of past code?

Did Daddy lose his job? Furloughed. Laid off... the tools and work spaces ceded to the automaton?

There is an evolutionary grace lost in the scuffle of our cold warring info age - the conflict between what is precious, destined to age, and ultimately obsolete vs that of what is demanding of all means of temporal (un)boundedness. Paul is both the victim and pater familias of this auto-monolith, the computing thing that things-and-things. A creation as infosexual as much as it is inert, unnerved, unfeeling, inhumane, in demand, in waiting, at attention, attended to. The text-to-speech-video-word destruct. The oncoming headlights from which we are unable to avert a gaze.

But then, there is Grace still. In Hopper's Naval wisdom she declares:  
*We must state relationships... not procedures.*

.. and out unfolds the truth of Baroque Computing's pre-history - that it had sprung from the well of combined trans-sisters and circuits, proximity, circumference, and care - the painstaking hands of the femin-x, the artisanal cautious regard, the breathless observations of the scrying mambo asogwe, the witchery of the expert seamstresses.

Did we cry when we were relegated to the pews of the Cathedral? Or insulted and set aflame in the midst of the dizzying Bazaar?

The craftsman had not even been and yet the craftwork materialized without him. And so it must continue. It always was, and always will be.

<3  
Sfish



# Synchronous writing #1

## Ingredients:

Google Doc containing 1 mother script  
1 timing device  
Internet-enabled writing device  
Personal texts and a hard copy book  
People to write with

## Method:

Step 1. Access a "mother script" which will seed the writing-to-come here: <https://tinyurl.com/y6oaruuw>

Step 2. Set an alarm for 23 minutes.

Step 3. Read the following instructions/prompts then begin.

Some ways to begin working with each other and with the text:  
Write \*within\* the existing text by adding or subtracting words  
Write \*with\* another writer, cursors dancing around one another  
Devise a rule for yourself and apply it to the text (ie: delete every 3rd word of every 3rd line)  
Insert single words or entire slabs from the texts you have bought with you. You may apply a rule for selecting the section you use, eg, pick the book up and use the 9th line of the page the book falls open at.  
Delete everything  
Bring it all back

Throughout the entire exercise write with no regard for the preciousness or ownership of words, that is, you are free to hack anything, excise or transform anything that anyone has written. Be prepared to kill all darlings and generate new creatures!

Step 4. When the alarm sounds, finish the line you are on, and read the text aloud, in company or alone.



image: neha spellfish  
[soundcloud.com/spellfish](https://soundcloud.com/spellfish)



## HOMAGE: Polycephalic Slime Invocation

written before and after by swarming multitudes

31 years after Donna Haraway's *Cyborg Manifesto* led an exodus from the divine to hardware

183 years after Ada Lovelace, Enchantress of Numbers, summoned analysis where before there was only difference

67 years after Christine Jorgensen split atoms and became gender ground zero

15 years after VNS Matrix's *Cyberfeminist manifesto* declared each mainframe a clitoris

5 years after Maria Alyokhina showcased the feminine rage and resilience that will not be snuffed out and will be heard.

15 years after the CCRU escaped institutional lockdown to turn their asylum inside out

32 years after Rose Kolodny, *Steppin' Razor*, was ectogenetically birthed into the sprawl, hanging garden of Chiba-Babylon

21 years since Sandy Stone donated a body part to Linda Dement's *Cyberflesh Girlmonster* and made the machines restless

11 centuries since Hildegard von Bingen, the Sibyl of the Rhine, sang the songs of the blood in theological code, prophesy, activism, and cosmology

10 years after VNS Matrix's *Bitch Mutant manifesto* became a tender hex at 25 Gregorians.

12 years after Silvia Federici's *Caliban and the Witch* celebrated the resistant classes of vagabonds, paupers and the rest of those with enough magic to burn

14 years after Lisa Nakamura jammed the ideology-machine with race-as-bug, articulating critical recombinant mattering as a disruption to cybersocial hygiene identity tourism

45 years after Ursula Le Guin exploded communist utopias in *The Dispossessed*

62 milliseconds after the ghost of Poly Styrene pushed hair from your ear and screamed silence into your plastic bag mind

19 years after Sadie Plant's *Zeros and Ones* traced the almost literal thread from computation as we know it, woven into our world as it is, back to its gathering across a Jacquard loom

32 years after Octavia Butler broke the dawn on xenogenesis

8 centuries after Jeanne de Purcelle heard the Voices

35 years after Theresa Hak Kyung Cha dictated both contradiction and positive construction. 3 years before pirate vagabonds *soda\_jerk* tore a streak of terror through the colonial fiction that is *terra nullius*

4 years after Shulamith Firestone died alone

27 centuries since Sappho scribed her mysterious agendered hexecutables on Lesbos

22 years after Critical Art Ensemble released *The Electronic Disturbance* into the noosphere

37 years after Laurie Anderson held us in her petrochemical arms, her military arms, her electronic arms

45 years after Wendy Carlos showed with a single procedure that moving Bach into the world of synthesis was also to move gender into the world of synthesis

199 years after Mary Shelley symbiotically birthed the modern Prometheus

122 hours after Amy Ireland drank wine in Berlin and revealed the hard poetic intricacies of fuck knows everything relevant

Time unknown before and since Laboria Cuboniks, speaking as no one in particular, broke nature's nature with xenocoded alienation, making monsters that speak in tongues of code and plastic

1 lifetime after your mother bit through your umbilical and said into your red face

REDEEM ME

Inestimable time before and beyond finitude, climate change hurtling us all towards a singularity the extropians didn't imagine...