

LAS PALMAS

Thinking-Feeling, Feeling-Thinking

Rowena Harris

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* This blank is a void, is a gap, is a space that does not permit me to write in the usual sense - I am only able to write (and think) on either side of it, and never directly down the centre. I have tried too long to do that, now I have given up. How do you write about something under your skin? About sharing your cognition with code? And your sense with code? How do you write about something that falls outside of language? Outside of semantic systems? Outside of higher consciousness altogether? You can't. You can only leave footnotes at the edges.

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* In artificial intelligence (AI), high-level reasoning requires very little computation (calculate this or that), but low-level sensorimotor skills require enormous computational resources (feel this or that). In the same respect, the deliberate process we call higher consciousness is the thinnest veneer of human thought, effective only because it is supported by this much older, much more powerful - the much higher processing capacity of unconscious sensorimotor knowledge. AI has a lack of common-sense problem. Humans have a common-sense fullness, but a fullness that turns into a blankness when you come to write it.

† In training himself to communicate through computer assistance, a paraplegic patient explained that he had to actively not think with the BCI (a cap with wires and nodules and algorithms), in order to spell out language on a screen with his mind.

‡ The computer on the other hand, used learnable algorithms and adapted to the patient's 'unthinking' brain signals. Between patient unthinking and algorithmic adaption the shape of communication was co-formed, and as a result of their intra-action a new process of unthinking-thinking emerged into being.

§ Simulation, in psychology, is a process of perception using sensorimotor memory. For example, without moving a muscle, sensorimotor responses simulate memories of what it might be like to sit in a chair - you know this whilst you are still standing, and 'you know' outside of symbolic, semantic, or linguistic systems entirely. A true thinking-feeling.

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* A gap

† A breath

‡ A something that happened too fast to have actually happened at all

§ A known but not consciously known

** A cognitive ecology

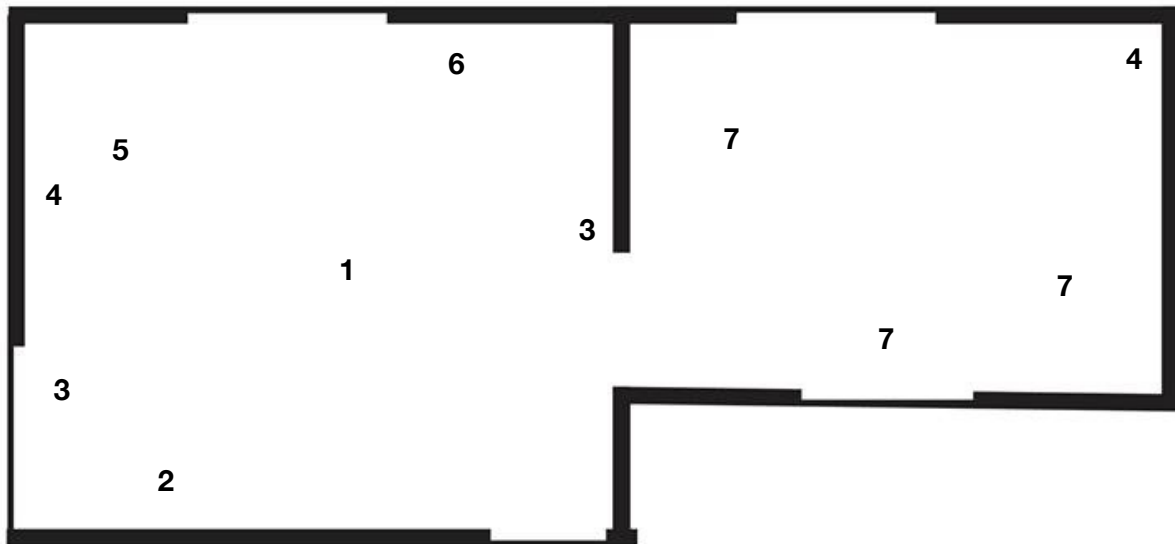
†† An interface with somatic responses

‡‡ A dialogue with touch

§§ A touch is part of our sensibility

*** A sensibility is the excess, the surplus of vibrational life beyond that which can be known

††† Algorithm, in etymology, has its roots in Algebra, given by Arabic mathematicians. Translated this means 'union of broken parts', yet in English until the 15th century, this was understood specifically as a surgical term 'the union of broken bones'. Algorithm, in the English language, has bodily underpinnings - and a will, perhaps, to re-join the body.



1. **Thinking-Feeling #1**

Tubular steel

2. **Thinking-Feeling #2**

Tubular steel

3. **Becomings of Touch**

Unfired clay, bisque-fired clay,
glazed ceramic

4. **Conductive Fluid**

Electrode Gel (conduit between medical
technology and skin, such as ultrasounds
and brain-computer interfaces)

5. **Unthinking-Feeling**

Glass, nylon cap, glazed ceramic,
polystyrene

6. **Missing Embrace**

Custom T-shirt, washed once and then
worn last night for sleeping; packet-fresh
custom T-shirt

7. **Waves and Waves. (Between patient
unthinking and algorithmic adaption a
new process of unthinking-thinking
emerged into being).**

Ink-jet on silk, tubular steel, fixings,
adapted domestic fans, air

Rowena Harris is a London based artist. Her work takes place at the nexus between materiality, technology and the body, and investigates changes in sensory and bodily informatics in an increasing digitised environment. Through sculptural and material exploration, as well as film and publications, she questions whether there is an essential merger between materiality and digitality - one which is embodied and embedded. She graduated from the MFA Fine Art at Goldsmith's College in 2010, and has since exhibited widely. Forthcoming exhibitions include *British Summer Time (BST)*, Copperfield, London, UK; *On Reflections*, Agnes Varis Art Centre, New York, US; *Dreamworks*, curated by IKO, Limbo, Margate, UK; and her writing will be published in *On Field Review* (all 2018). Recent exhibitions include *Soft Boundaries* (solo), The Gallery Apart, Rome; *Super Human Corporation*, Space In Between, as well as Tenderpixel, The Bluecoat, Fondazione Memmo, Bloc Projects, Flat Time House, Artissima. She was awarded the Sainsbury's scholarship from the British School at Rome 2014-15, was the founding editor of Misery Connoisseur Magazine. She is currently an AHRC funded PhD candidate at Goldsmith's College.
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