STAKES AT THE EDGE OF PARTICIPATION: WHERE WORDS AND THINGS ARE THE ENTIRELY SERIOUS TITLE OF A PROBLEM

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines how the material performativity of experimental prototypes can provide us with new insights into what it means to "have a stake" when engaged in co-design. For participants like birds and frail elderly people, a participatory interest cannot necessarily be articulated through language and discourse. Drawing on examples from the recent research project Urban Animals and Us (UA&Us), we suggest that experimental prototypes hold the promise of material enactments of relations that enable a re-articulation of what it means to have a stake in a socio-material event. In the specific context of this project, a stake might be the enchantment of a reality otherwise bound to conformity and limited by deteriorated mental and physical faculties. We further argue that the experimental prototypes hold a capacity to structure and enable an essentially de-anthropocentric relationality that affords cross species relations and installs a sense of wonderment by extending the life-worlds of elderly people beyond the windowpane and towards the birds in the park. In conclusion we suggest that a stake, under these conditions, could be related to the methodological inventiveness by which prototypes and practices are associated with the speculative attempt at producing novel realities such as new interspecies relations.

INTRODUCTION

By drawing on post-human theory and performative ontology such as Actor–Network Theory (ANT) and later writings in Science and Technology Studies (STS), this paper is positioned within an emerging field that combines STS and design in new modes of research (Andersen, 2013; Lindström and Ståhl, 2014; Kimbell, 2008; Wilkie, 2010; Disalvo, 2012; Michael, 2012; Lenskjold, 2015; Jönsson 2014). This is what we have elsewhere come to refer to as *speculative co-design* (Lenskjold and Jönsson, 2014). As an example of what this might be in practice, this paper describes "Urban Animals and Us", a recent design project conducted at the retirement home Grønnehaven in the Danish city of Elsinore between September 2012 and May 2013. The project's three principal components – *Birds-view perspective, Talk-in-to* and *InterFed* – were designed to experimentally investigate the potential in speculative design prototypes devised to produce interspecies relations between wild urban animals (birds, for example) and frail elderly people. In this paper, our research agenda – the extension of the landscape of co-design into the post-human domain of encounters with objects and animals – is continued through an analysis of two performative artefacts, *BirdFlute* and *PhotoTwin*, that form parts of the last two experiments.

In retrospect, especially considering later discussions of the project with peers in the co-design community, one important and reoccurring question has been "To what extent, or in what sense, has the project succeeded in defining and attributing a stake on the part of the elderly participants?"

The great innovation in the tradition of participatory design (PD) and co-design has been the number of methods and tools enabling designers and users to "design together" and to "harness the collective and infinitely expanding set of ideas and opportunities that emerge when *all the people who have a stake* in the process are invited to 'play the game'." (Sanders, 2002, emphasis added). Stakeholders in this context, then, are those who accept the invitation to play the game both because they initially have something at stake but also because their engagement offers them the prospect that they might "contribute directly" (Sanders, 2002) in order to enunciate their stake(s) and thus express a "vested interest" (Carno, 1995)[1].

While this unquestionably provides ample opportunities to the vast majority of participants, it directs our curiosity to the remainder – those who are inhibited from participating because they lack the communication skills of the majority. In extension, our first realisation has been that, throughout the project, we have increasingly come to see the elderly participants in much the same way as we do the gulls and doves: as removed, that is, from the logics of dominant linguistic channels of communication.[2] Ultimately, this raises the question of what it actually means to have a stake, or what is itself at stake, in the context of collaborative design. Hence, as the title of this paper might imply,[3] there is an entirely serious problem when things are treated as simple servants of the human language and of the issues that entangle us. If we are to have a stake around issues and matters of concern (Latour, 2005)

such as co-habitation, how do we invest interest without the error of believing that the human world constitutes a shared stage for all living creatures (Uexküll in Sloterdijk, 2009) And how do we do this without formulating a stake using language and discourse?

Consequently, this paper considers material agency as an alternative venue for the exploration of what can be formulated as a "stake". Or, to be more concise, this paper seeks to address the following interconnected questions: What does it means to have a stake when considered from a post-human position in co-design? To get to grips with this, we make use of the more recent relationship between ANT and participatory design-things (Atelier, 2011) with attention to some specific points articulated by Callon in regards to hybrid communities. In the final part of the paper, we extend the theoretical framings to consider the methodological implications of a re-articulation of stake, in relation to the notion of *carpentry* (Bogost, 2011) and in the context of *inventive methods* (Wakeford, 2012).

BACKGROUND

In the tradition of participatory design, artefacts and objects emerge out of close collaborations between designers and users. As Brandt explains:

> "The dogma of Participatory Design is the direct involvement of people in the shaping of future artefacts. Thus central for designers within this field are the staging of a design process involving participation of people" (Brandt, 2006, 1).

More recently, ANT has become a major influence for PD activities. ANT raises new questions about participation and democracy that resonate well with some of the contemporary concerns of PD. By extension, it also suggests ways of re-thinking theories and methods within the field such as the shifting of attention from *objects* to *things* in order to consider design projects as sociomaterial collectives of humans and non-humans (Callon, 2004).A "thing", as Latour proposes, then, should recall its original meaning: a place and time where one gathers in order to resolve affairs ("ðing").

With a closer interest in design, Pelle Ehn reflects on the concept of things and the idea of *design things* in relation to participatory design processes (Koskinen, Zimmerman, Binder, Redström, and Wensveen, 2011). Design things are argued to resemble "a town-hall meeting" (Koskinen et al., 125), a *some-thing* that people gather around to make collective decisions and to debate the future of their community. To achieve a collective gathering, Ehn suggest that instead of using sophisticated systematic methods, designers get better results by using rough materials such as cardboard, foam and clay, since it brings people to the same table and creates a language everyone can share.

An example of the use of such rough materials can be found in co-design methods such as *doll-scenarios*.

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[1] Stake, in this regard, is hinged upon the ability to perceive the consequences concerning an issue of personal importance and express a *vested interest* (Crano, 1995). This definition fits the prerequisites for individual engagement in most co-design activities. It is also important to stress that there in the area of participatory design research, and related disciplines such as HCI already exists a rich body of research concerning people unable to express a stake in and of the selves. See, for example, Larsen et al, 2012. While these studies are testament to the fact that it is indeed possible to utilize participatory methods and technologies in this regard, the aim of this paper diverges in one crucial aspect: It is not the primary goal of the project UA&Us to develop methods, tools or artefacts that can alleviate suffering or improve life conditions *for* the seniors. Rather, it has been the aim to explore the possible relations *between* fragile seniors and urban animals. And it is in this regard that the question of stake is raised and will be examined.

[2] It is important to stress that the main research objective with Urban Animals and Us has been to inquire into the possibility of establishing interspecies relations, partly by means of a co-design and partly inspired by the tradition of speculative interaction design.

[3] The title both paraphrases Michel Foucault's "'Words and things' is the entirely serious title of a problem" (Foucault, 1970) and, more importantly, references that quote's recent use by the American feminist theorist Karen Barad (2003).

Here, a selection of rough materials such as "dolls, and materials for customizing these, a stage consisting of three sets, some pictures to glue to the three … sets" (Malmborg, Binder and Brandt, 2010, 3) is utilized to encourage dialogues about what social interaction might be facilitated by future technologies.

While the doll-scenarios can serve as an excellent example of "design things as town hall meetings", we would also like to further relate it to Callon's suggestion in his discussion of PD (Callon, 2004) that we must avoid constantly disentangling humans and non-humans as we construct new types of collective life and conceive new technologies. When Callon prompts us not to diminish the collective to the individual it is because participatory processes characteristically consider *only* the participation of human actors and the information available to them. This might at first seem to be the opposite of such participatory processes, since the dogma of PD is, as described above by Brandt, to involve people. In its place, Callon suggests that we place the hybrid collective at the centre – which by extension means that artefacts cannot be "considered as pure associations of human beings who communicate one to each other" (Callon, 2004, 9). He argues that we cannot consider technologies and artefacts simply as servants; instead, rather, we should consider them as partners and revise our conception of human beings themselves.

Another important leitmotif from ANT undergirding the project deliberated in this paper - but otherwise has found less traction with PD and co-design until recently – is a shift towards investigations into reality itself. When considering reality, or more precisely realities, as that which is "enacted into being" (Mol, 2010) we also recognize that what is at stake is intertwined with the ontological practices of co-constructing these realities through the "messy objects" (Law and Singleton, 2005) involved.

We will return to Callon and the performative inquiry into reality, but first we will describe both the UA & Us experiments, and the methodological principles behind them.

EXPERIMENTAL AND PERFORMATIVE PROTOTYPES
We have previously positioned the project as being carried out in an *open events format*, defined by first involving many participants in different tasks over a certain period of time and later developing the project into three specific experiments (Lenskjold and Jönsson, 2015). Further, we have described the first experiment (Birds View Perspective) in more detail as a method applying a participatory design approach through the use of rough materials in a workshop setting (Eriksen, 2009). In this paper, therefore, we examine the methods of the two later experiments, since they do not seem to straightforwardly fit the frame of PD methods as such.

In the second experiment, *Talk-in-to*, sound produced by people was translated into non-human sound through the BirdFlute. When the flute-like instrument is blown into, it produces a sound that mimics bird calls such as those of a crow. By switching a knob on the instrument one can change the soundscape between three different bird calls. The sound created by the flute is then transmitted via a digital network to a small speaker placed outside the retirement home Grønnehaven. Pressing one of the three different keys causes a change of animal call. The sounds are a selection of different bird calls that have been recorded and interpreted by ornithologists.

Figure 1. (Top) The image to the left shows how Jørn is testing the BirdFlute and the different birdcalls at department B1 at Grønnehaven. (Bottom) The outdoor speaker is placed on the balcony.

The third experiment, *InterFed*, explores human and non-human relationships through the device PhotoTwin. It consists of two customized digital cameras, one located outdoors and one inside the retirement home. The camera devices are triggered when birds peck on the replaceable shutter releaser made out of bird-food. Two different photos are taken simultaneously, one outside, the other inside; the two images are then displayed side by side on a portable screen in the retirement home.

The two experiments address the concern that nonhuman worlds should be taken seriously. As we have previously argued, the design experiments are neither designed *for* animals nor *for* the elderly

participants. Instead, an attempt is made to weave human and non-human practices together to engage and enact multiple perspectives.

Figure 2: (Top) The image show the two out and indoor customized cameras. (Bottom) The images depict the portable screen that gathers and displays the photographs generated by the birds.

PERFORMATIVE ARTEFACTS

Enacting scenarios by interacting with props and prototypes is a method commonly used in collaborative design traditions. As argued by Brandt et al (2013), enacting scenarios is very powerful for imagining and exploring new possible futures. Enactments can be staged in manners such as the doll scenarios described above or in Buchenau and Fulton's "Experience Prototyping" (2000), where design experiments are carried out as enacted improvisations in real-use contexts – such as on a train when developing a new travel service. The activity of enacting is described as a means of exploring and trying out. Thus, both bodily and tacit knowledge is set in motion to generate and evoke new knowledge for possible futures.

Similarly, the tangible artefacts BirdFlute and PhotoTwin function as a means to explore and try out new possible relations between the elderly people and birds – with the difference, however, that there is no clear stage for enacting a scenario, and the tangible artefacts are not made out of rough materials such as customizable cardboard, as often seen in many co-design projects. Instead their different components are made out of fully functional bits of plastic, code, metal and wood etc. Following the argument that tangible artefacts play a very important role in staging enactments (Buchenau and Fulton, 168) our carpentry skills (many hours of tinkering in a wood workshop) came to play a major and earnest part in producing the experimental prototypes.

Materially, the prototypes do not support or model dialogical engagements. Neither do they exist as instantiations of possible futures. Rather, they support and allow for a more bodily and tacit experience as *performative artefacts* (Danholt, 2005) in the sense that they animate the present by co-constructing possible relations into being (Wilkie, 2012). In short, to state that the artefacts are performative means that the prototypes affect in concrete, material and bodily ways. While this might likewise be argued for when engaging with more rough co-design materials, BirdFlute and PhotoTwin are enacted in an open-ended process that needs a figuring and trying out – to see what they might do in practice in real use contexts. As such they do not merely re-present a potential (of performing new interspecies relations); rather, the artefacts as material assemblages in and of themselves perform relations and enable the participants (elderly people and birds) to bring relations into being, in the present. If we are to remove them, the potential for new relations is also distanced; we are left to discuss and imagine such possible relations with the staff and residents at Grønnehaven. While elderly people or birds might not respond to a demand or a well-articulated agenda they do diversify agency. To further articulate some of these points we will now move on to describe some of Callon's suggestions for exploring collective agency.

HYBRID COMMUNITIES AND MATERIAL PERFORMANCE

In Callon's paper "The Role of Hybrid Communities and Socio-Technical Arrangements in the Participatory Design" he gives many examples to show that action is collective. He does this by describing how telephone text messages contribute to the emergence of new identities and social group - to how ploughshares distribute an invisible co-presence by binding together the ploughman with all those who designed, distributed and maintained it. In other words, Callon describes how human agency is shaped by the socio-technical arrangement around us. If you change this arrangement or collective, you also change agency. Accordingly, Callon hopes for a future of innovation where information technologies and artefacts "start off from human diversity to customize agencies" (Callon, 2004). To do this, he encourages the participatory design community to explore *collective agency* by, firstly, not assuming that modes of action are peculiar to human beings; secondly, by moving beyond responses to

demands and the satisfaction of human needs; and, finally, by treating artefacts as more than servants.

As we have said, participatory design activities such as workshops one can use rough materials such as cardboard, foam and clay as a "Ticket-to-Talk" (Teisen, 2011) for opening up conversation with acquaintances and stakeholders or as support in formulating a stake. To further Callon's encouraging points on *how* to actually develop and diversify collective agency, one route might be to consider alternative ways and mediums that provide means for us to gather around matters that concern us.

ENCHANTMENT OF THINGS

In Karen Barad's paper "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter" (2003) she questions how language has come to be more trustworthy than matter in the shaping of our understanding of the world:

> "Language has been granted too much power. The linguistic turn, the semiotic turn, the interpretative turn, the cultural turn: it seems that at every turn lately every 'thing'—even materiality—is turned into a matter of language" (Barad, 2003, 801).

She continues to ask why language is granted its own "agency and historicity while matter is figured as passive and immutable, or at best inherits a potential for change derivatively from language". Barad's proposal to challenge the belief in power of words is to pursue a performative understanding: "Performativity, properly construed, is not an invitation to turn everything (including material bodies) into words; on the contrary, performativity is precisely a contestation of the excessive power granted to language to determine what is real" (Barad, 2003, 802).

Following Barad, agency is "a matter of intra-acting; it is an enactment, not something that someone or some thing has" (Kleinman, 2012). In a similar manner Jane Bennett (2013, 2010) suggests that agency is distributed as an emerging effect from ad hoc configurations of human and nonhuman forces. Bennett's philosophical project attempts "to think slowly an idea that runs fast through modern heads; the idea of matter as passive stuff" (Bennett, 2010, xii) as well as to promote greener forms of human culture and more attentive encounters between "people-materialities" and "thing-materialities" by theorizing a "vital materiality". This is a theory designed to open democracy to the voices of excluded humans, since this (she believes) might spur the cultivation of a more responsible, ecologically sound politics.

To explain the agential powers of objects, Bennett refers to how many hoarders repeatedly say "the things took over". [4] From a psychotherapeutical perspective those

people are described as ill; to her, they are people who might have a certain (better?) susceptibility to the enchantment of things. The hoarders, with all their stuff, show that humans are *not* the mastery of agency. When things take over, the non-human slips through with a startling power, provoking a gestalt shift in perception. Normally, perception is biased towards instrumentality rather than vibrancy. Such instrumentality is to Bennett an example of a narrative of disenchantment. Her idea is that the characterization of the world as disenchanted may "discourage affective attachment to the world" (2001, 3). Hence, her counter-story is to call attention to the way the world is, or can be experienced as enchanted, and suggests that experiencing such 'enchantment' might make one more open to the appreciation and concern for others (including non-human others). Enchantment is a sense of openness towards the unusual, the captivating and, sometimes, the disturbing part of life. She is trying to show how it is still possible to experience a sense of wonder.

'WILD THINGS' IN THE RETIREMENT HOME

As we have now described the two later experiments and their methodological and theoretical background we would like to continue by accounting for that which come into being at Grønnehaven while exploring and trying out the above described experimental prototypes.

BIRDFLUTE AS INTERSPECIES CROSSINGS

The day we handed the BirdFlute over to the staff and residents, they collectively decided to place it by the comfortable sofa; the outdoor speaker they placed on the shared balcony. After having set it all up and made sure that the sound conducted by the BirdFlute was properly transmitted to the outside speaker, we all took a short break. During this break something surprising happened – a dove landed on the balcony. This generated an excitement in the room. Someone seized the BirdFlute and blew into it. Random digital birdcalls were generated: a 'crow' called out a warning signal; a 'magpie' called for food; a 'blackbird' sang. As we tried to make sense of the BirdFlute in situ, we saw that the dove on the balcony was moving nervously. It seemed to us like it is was trying to define where the sound was coming from and whether it should take it seriously. Indoors, everyone slowly started to realise that the BirdFlute did not have any dove calls. After a short while the dove decided to fly away; one of the elderly participants reflected: "Perhaps the dove is not very good at listening to and understanding the sounds of other species."

The elderly and the staff continued to have relations with the dove over the following weeks. When arriving for our next visit we noticed a small plate with water and some crumbs left on the balcony. Some of the residents had added new material possibilities for creating and extending interspecies relations. In the end, the dove became so at ease with some of the residents that it actually started to come inside and walk around in

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[4] Hoarders are people that are described as suffering a compulsive need to gather, buy and collect things.

the living room. The last story we were told by a member of staff when enquiring about the friendly dove is that it had to be removed, in her words, "back into the wild."

Figure 3: A selection of photos taken with a disposable camera by members of the staff and residents at Grønnehaven (and later scanned in by the authors) depict the dove that took such a liking to Grønnehaven B1 ward.

No matter whether the dove came on its own accord or not, the BirdFlute initiated an actionable series of events by which the elderly participants got to channel their affective interests into actions (saving/ bringing food out to the balcony), which was ultimately cut off by the regulatory regime of the institution (the dove was explained by one of the staff to have been removed to "a nice place in the countryside"). This account of events perhaps first calls into question the network of relations between elderly people, birds and institutional regulations relating to things such as time consumption and hygiene. Further, and more interestingly, it also points to a 'hybrid community' composed of the dove and a number of the elderly people, enacted through the design prototype. Finally, if we look more closely at the elderly people, it becomes clear that material interactions with the prototype, nurture a capacity for co-presence (Callon, 2004) that can be seen as an attribution of agency in the form of enchantment towards the presence of the dove and other such co-habitational creatures. Or, even, a vested interest based on an enchantment of life beyond the bounds of the nursing home, and thus the possibility of what Bennett (2001) calls interspecies "crossings". Following Bennett we may then argue, "that crossings have the power to enchant" (ibid, p. 17), and that enchantment in this respect resides in the capacity to co-construct a sense of mobility and transformation.

INTERFED AND THE CO-CONSTRUCTION OF AN ALIEN PERSPECTIVE

In the final experiment, InterFed, a screen in the living room displaying images changing randomly when triggered by birds foraging in front of an outdoor sensor attracted some of the elderly people in the ward. One man in particular (see plate 4) became momentarily captivated by the changing sequence of images during the period that the experiment was running. Like the

dove in the BirdFlute experiment, it is tempting to conceive of these moments as instances of interspecies crossings. The truth of the matter, however, is, that we simply do not really know what exactly awoke Ove's interest. Ove was at the time of the trial one of the most observant and interested elderly people of ward B1, where the experiment was set up. On more than one occasion, he reminisced about his life – encounters with a school of gulls in the middle of the Atlantic, for example, when he was sailing as a young man – as we discussed the experiment. But despite his intact social skills, Ove was also suffering from dementia to an extent that made it difficult for us, or the staff, to assess his understanding of the project.
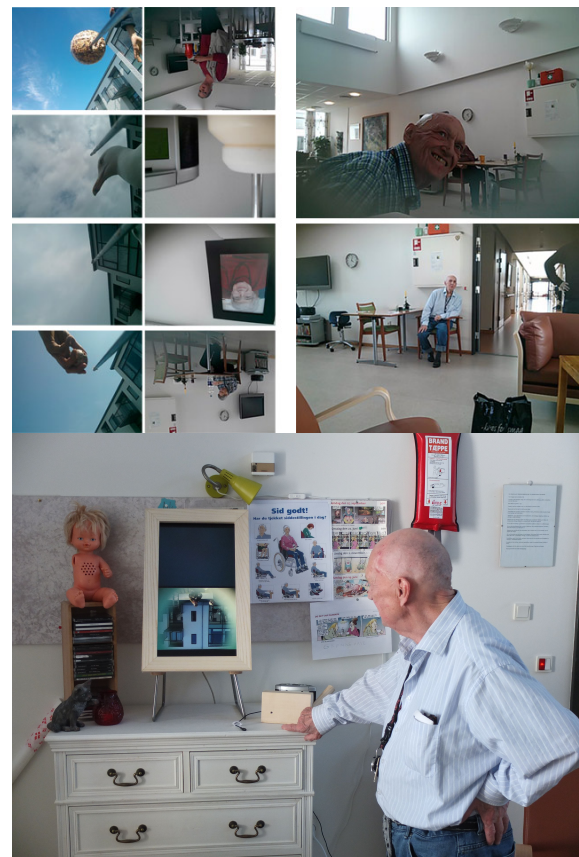

Figure 4: (Top) sample of simultaneously captured images from inside and outside Grønnehaven, generated by the InterFed prototype and triggered by the activities of birds. (Bottom) Ove is looking at the PhotoTwin screen, in anticipation of bird activities.

If we turn to the selection[5] of image-pairs generated by the InterFed prototype, it is evident that Ove frequently appears in the frame. But crucially, his appearance, and thus our understanding of the life he lives inside the ward, must be understood in juxtaposition with the appearance the birds in the other frame – outside. And

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[5] The image-pairs in figure plate 4 only displays a fraction of the total number of images generated in the course of the trial, and have been selected with respect to the activities in the pictures. Thus, it is not an accurate representation of the activities over time, but rather a condensed series of the more interesting events that occurred during the trial.

so we find our perspective altered. It is from the estranged vantage point of the prototype (what the American media scholar Ian Bogost has termed an *alien phenomenology)* (Bogost, 2012) that we can begin to gaze into the respective lifeworlds or "umwelts" (Uxküll, 2010) from an outside. The images from inside the ward tell us micro-stories of everyday events. Consider, for instance that, that some of the images are upside-down or facing the wall, resulting in fragmented still-lives of paraphernalia and objects residing in the living room, the corner of a clock radio, a portrait of a woman wearing a red blouse, and so on. These were the outcome of interactions with the prototype that we would subsequently inquire into upon our next visit to the ward. From the staff we learned that someone among the staff (no names were disclosed) would repeatedly turn the camera towards the wall, most likely because she felt uncomfortable with the prospect of having her picture taken. Similarly, the birds are photographed showing us the tip of a wing, a blurry bird in the distance, a beak. If we contend that the prototype constitutes an alien perspective from which to see the living room as an assemblage of objects and events, it is also precisely from this vantage point that we can begin to explore ways to "slow down" reasoning (Stengers, 2005) and perhaps as Despret (2006) suggests, expand the collective by inventing "polite ways of entering into relationships with nonhumans". Hence, the artefacts help us to arrive at outcomes that would not otherwise be possible and to cause unexpected effects. We are offered a means to ensure that it is not only possible to respond to constraint, but to choice.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this final section, we will return to the questions set out in the beginning of this paper and discuss how we might reassess what it means to have a stake in light of the experiments. Furthermore, how does the turn to new materialism (Barad, 2003, Bennett, 2001, 2010, 2013) and hybrid collectives (Callon, 2004) help us rearticulate a position between the reliance on language discourse and forms of material performativity that nevertheless still maintains a relevance as design research – rather than innate and pure metaphysical exploration?

What we have seen in the two experiments is that the prototypes propagate different kinds of events and relations to animals. In the case of the dove on the balcony, the BirdFlute prompted elderly people to engage in an (albeit speculative) attempt at interspecies communication resulting in an affective enchantment with the animal that led them, staff and the dove to explore new relations; in the case of the InterFed prototype, the opportunistic actions of foraging birds affected micro-social events and material configurations of the living room, in effect turning it into a 'great indoors' viewed trough the alien perspective of the InterFeds camera.

In collaborative design projects, a stake denotes something performed together – assuming a prior ability to participate and to enunciate a stake. We have thus far addressed the difficulty of claiming a stake in a design process as something subjective and inextricably related to language. In our attempts to find a stake in light of the two experiments we have described, we suggest that it might be useful to consider the etymological origin of the modern noun "stake": the Old English *staca*, a piece of wood or other material used as a support; a pole. The material support, then, does not retreat to language. It performs, rather, an intricate dance with "people-materialities" and "thing-materialities" (Bennett, 2010) that stakes out a path rather than voicing a claim.

On a disciplinary note, to embrace a new materialism in relation to collaborative design means an attempt to stake out paths for a speculative orientation in co-design that creates questions and inquires into new realities. This may recall Ian Bogost's notion of *carpentry* as means of inquiring into the ontological reality of a given world (2011). Hence we suggest carpentry as a method performed through the prototypes, and as a specific inventive method (Wakeford & Lury, 2012) that removes the fixed position of turning matter into language and holds a capacity to enchant. It allows us to cautiously sketch out different modes of being in a shared world. It does not provide answers to a problem, instead it enacts a vital materialism as a means of exploring and trying out collective agency. In short, it prototypes hybrid collectives.

However, and as pointed out by Lury and Wakeford, inventiveness can never be known in advance of its material, performative, realization. What is inventive emerges in the combination of a method (inquiring prototypes) and a problem (the possibility of establishing interspecies relations). By posing the inventive method of carpentry in relation to the specific problem of language, what emerges in the re-articulation of a stake in a prolonged suspension of the prevalent anthropocentricity in design research. But as the title of this paper suggests (paraphrasing Barad) language and discourse inevitably returns as an important factor in opening up questions of how to further evaluate, represent and analyse the epistemological objects (in)formed by this project. Even though we have conscribed non-human entities in the form of birds and artefacts, we have to accept that we will always fall back into language (as represented by the textual accounts in this very paper). Nonetheless, this is our attempt to stake out paths for a more intricate and vital collective dance that move us closer to the idiom 'to pull up stakes', in order to move away from a fixed position firmly grounded in language and discourse.

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