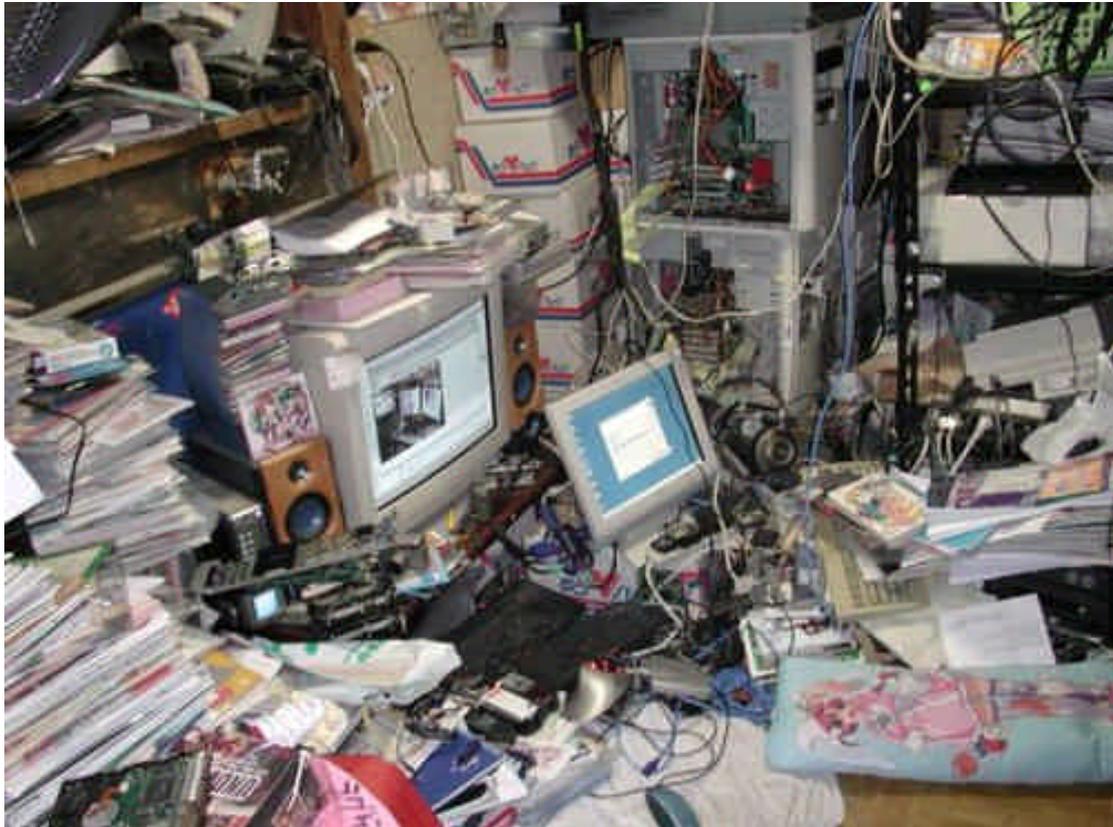


## Dumpster Diving for Small Dataspaces of Anarchy

[very first ideas on Monday afternoon 3 June 2013 ]  
Oda Hiroto and Chris Berthelsen



([source](#))

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Yuk Hui urges us to be archivists instead of users<sup>1</sup>, and reminds us that care, preserving and giving, need to be key aspects of our archive culture. We agree, and further promote **Dumpster Diving** in our everincreasing flotsam archives and hardware trash in the pursuit of **small dataspaces of anarchy** that offer real human(e) agency in the age of omnipotent big data where “control is enthusiastically rebranded as participation”<sup>2</sup>. We hold hope because we know that our sense urges trump logic circuits. And this means that humans have the unpredictable potential to “establish new situations despite the constraints on everyday life imposed through [the] electronic objects”<sup>3</sup> that are increasingly involved in our physical, emotional and mental environs.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.metamute.org/editorial/lab/archivist-manifesto>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/02/opinion/sunday/the-banality-of-googles-dont-be-evil.html>

<sup>3</sup> Kera (2012), quoting Dunne and Raby (2001:7) when discussing Hackerspace projects in Japan Kera, D. 2012. Hackerspaces and DIYbio in Asia: connecting science and community with open data, kits and protocols. *Journal of Peer Production*, Issue 2 [online]. Available at < <http://peerproduction.net/issues/issue-2/peer-reviewed-papers/diybio-in-asia/> > [Accessed 1 Aug 2012]

While big-tech undulate to the promises of the Always-On Smart City of our closenoughtotouch futures, remember that

“always on means no time to reflect critically on the bigger picture”<sup>4</sup> and that our data streams are in danger of losing history, violently crammed into an Always Now of “never succession.... [a] lonely cloud of discrete and discontinuous points”<sup>5</sup>. Even now, we are awash in open+flotsam abandoned database Archives<sup>6</sup>. Billions of replicas, in clouds and in drones. much more deeply embedded in person to person transactions.

Hui RIGHTLY warns us that “we are no longer able to organize these traces, but leave them on the cloud to be taken care by others.”



# Wise words

([source](#))

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<sup>4</sup> (Thakara, 2005:37-8) Thakara, J. 2005. *In the Bubble: Designing in a Complex World*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

<sup>5</sup> (Philosopher Henri Bergson quoted in Thakara, 2005:38).

<sup>6</sup> Fields of information left fallow no more. <http://gizmodo.com/5910223/how-yahoo-killed-flickr-and-lost-the-internet> - see also <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/17/technology/acxiom-the-quiet-giant-of-consumer-database-marketing.html>



*Computers will always let you down in the end ([source](#))*

Similar to the deathrun of blackhole datascares, the aging, creaking, but still ultraerotic and hyperagitated Tokyo mega-region presents a myth of power, impersonality, high-tech and impending destruction.

On our real Tokyo streets and alleyways however, we notice how the frugal DIY of residents illustrates the fine-grained agency that they possess in the shaping of their personal environments. We experience that everyday Tokyo takes shape as an accumulation of the activities of individuals or groups making the most of the individuality of distinct place but with a horizontal solidarity that (unlike the all encompassing city visions of Europe) forms Tokyo's non-intentional landscape of not only flowers, green and edibles but memories and meanings, traditions and social norms, relationships and support. The living urban fabric is maintained by an enormous number of daily small-scale interventions that are an essential part of the process of organic repair<sup>7</sup>.

What we really mean to say is that our lives on the streets of a megaregion are surprisingly sleepy, dusty and cosy.

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<sup>7</sup> see <http://thisbigcity.net/the-non-intentional-landscape-of-tokyo/>



Taking ownership of suburban Tokyo walkway ([source](#))



BBQ in suburban Tokyo with beer crate, rocks, sand and leaves ([source](#))



the environment, practical use, and reflection of society, culture, and traditions<sup>8</sup>. We try to understand git repositories and API endpoints in the same way as twine and clothes pegs, duct tape and breeze blocks. Our infrastructure takes as its starting points (1) n-th order derivative creation<sup>9</sup> fostering architecture of Japanese video sharing site Nico Nico Douga<sup>10</sup> and (2) otaku and doujin (fan creation) cultures founded on database consumption and simulacrum layers<sup>11</sup>. From this viewpoint, the key to creation is not author originality but **generativity-focused architectures and the design of systems of elevated “betweenness centrality”**.

YES,

sifting through the trash of legions past we realize that in making connections desires are allowed to flow and create new possibilities, enabling a becoming-other through new forms of desires, bodies and pleasures. Importantly, we come to understand that assemblages are not only tangible but more often than not virtual<sup>12</sup>. Like our Tokyo neighbours Dumpster Divers use and reuse and hoard and mould the resources at hand. And at the extreme Shea envisions a heartquicken environment of “live code, live spam. Dumped amidst e-trash, where DIY open hardware builders and die-hard free networkers co-exist, data-deprived replicants trade sex for codes, code sexing code”<sup>13</sup>.

If we can just give up on walled gardens, appliances<sup>14</sup> smooth surfaces<sup>15</sup>, new hardware<sup>16</sup> and omnisocial tracking and censorship<sup>17</sup> our next generation will put

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<sup>8</sup> Jonas, 2007 in <http://thisbigcity.net/small-places-of-anarchy-in-the-city-three-investigations-in-tokyo/>

<sup>9</sup> Secondary derivative creation involves “multiple derivative contents sprout[ing] from the same work, but the derivative relationship between the works [...] does not go beyond a single hop”. In n-th order derivative creation “the primary work becomes a module of the secondary work, [and] that secondary work becomes a module of a tertiary work, and so on.” (Hamano, 2012:2). Hamano, S. 2012. The generativity of Nico Nico Douga. *Genron: Portal for Critical Discourse in Japan* [online] Trans. Naoki Matsuyama. Available at < <http://global.genron.co.jp/2012/05/14/the-generativity-of-nico-nico-douga/> > [Accessed 20 May 2012] (First appeared in *Shisouchizu vol.2: Generations*, NHK Publishing, Dec 2008.)

<sup>10</sup> [Nico Nico Douga](#) is a popular video sharing website in Japan. Its nickname is "Niconico" or "Nico-dō", where "nikoniko" is the Japanese ideophone for smiling. As of April 18, 2012, Nico Nico Douga is the fourteenth most visited website in Japan (Wikipedia5).

<sup>11</sup> A major characteristic of otaku culture in the late 20th Century is the deep database of cultural elements (characters, configurations etc) combined with an intermediary ‘simulacrum’ (secondary derivative creation) layer formed by the combination of such elements (Hamano, 2012:2 discussing Hiroki Azuma’s ‘Otaku: the Database Animals’).

<sup>12</sup> Holmes, O’Byrne and Murray (2010:254). Holmes, D., O’Byrne, P., and Murray, S.J. 2010. Faceless sex: glory holes and sexual assemblages. *Nursing Philosophy*, 22, pp:250-259.

<sup>13</sup> Shu Lea Cheang quoted in Mute (2012). Mute. 2012. Compost your orgasm trash. *Mute* [online magazine]. Available at < <http://www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/compost-your-orgasm-trash> > [Accessed 22 August 2012].

<sup>14</sup> See Doctorow (2012). Doctorow, C. 2012. Lockdown: the coming war on general purpose computing. *Boing-Boing.net* [blog] January 10. Available at < <http://boingboing.net/2012/01/10/lockdown.html> > [Accessed 8 May 2012].

**filters back in the heads of humans, and rip them from the pipes controlled by corpo-governments**<sup>18</sup>.



*Real computing, as We experience it in distinct locales infused with rich memories conjoining with private pleasures in a combination of appropriated objects, convivial means of mobility, and malleable devices that are still galapagos but succulently generative.* ([source](#))

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<sup>15</sup> Despite what Berardi (2009:85) claims, **our video game generation doesn't just tolerate pubic hair in all its forms, we revel in it!** Berardi, F. 2009. *Precarious Rhapsody: Semiocapitalism and the Pathologies of the Post-Alpha Generation*. London, Minor Compositions. Edited by Erik Empson & Stephen Shukaitis. Translated by Arianna Bove, Erik Empson, Michael Goddard, Giuseppina Mecchia, Antonella Schintu, and Steve Wright. Available at < <http://www.scribd.com/doc/50101270/Berardi-Precarious-Rhapsody-2009> > [Accessed 8 May 2012].

<sup>16</sup> To manufacture new hardware is too heavy an enterprise - 1.7 kg to make 32mb ram; to manufacture a laptop creates 4000 times its weight on your lap. Heavy shitz. (See Thakara, 2005:10-11; and Hawken, Lovins and Lovins, 1999). Hawken, P., Lovins, A., and Lovins, H. 1999. *Natural Capitalism*. London: Earthscan.

<sup>17</sup> See terrorist profiling and corporate censorship in Robb (2012a) - e.g. "There's [...] a whole host of laws and regulations that are aimed at restricting our freedoms in favor of the Intellectual Property mafia. They want the ability to censor everything we see and shut down web sites if there is even a whiff of IP infringement. Massive, automated censorship is going on now. Google blocks 300,000 URLs a week from its search results due to corporate pressure. Are all of these requests to block infringing content reviewed? No. It's automated. It's non-judicial. It's simply corporate censorship." Robb, J. 2012a. The atomation of government coercion. *Global Guerillas* [blog] Available at < <http://globalguerillas.typepad.com/globalguerillas/2012/05/the-automation-of-totalitarianism.html> > [Accessed June 3 2012].

<sup>18</sup> See Thakara (2005:26). These shall be Turing complete and end-to-end. Granted, many of our servers will still reside in the cloud, but at least we will be able to get root on them (turn of phrase from Bowen, 2011) Bowen, R. 2011. Open source and the cloud. *Notes in the Margin* [blog] December 19. Available at < <http://drbacchus.com/open-source-and-the-cloud> > [Accessed 8 May, 2012].



Young love in the Dumpsters 1 ([source](#))

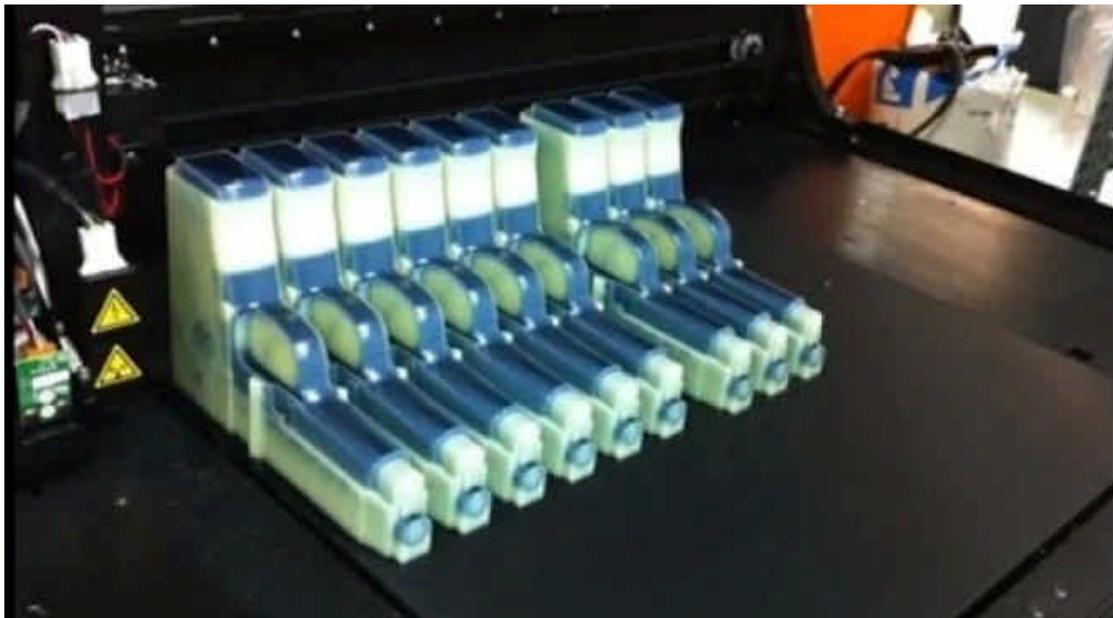


Young love in the Dumpsters 2 ([source](#))



*Hacking Tamagotchi – “I’d really like to develop an iPod (or Podzilla) virtual pet that lives and dies based on how much I feed it music, clear out the old music and rate the music I have. **I think I’d use my music players more if I had to care for them like pets.**”*  
([source](#))

**From loose parts to disassembly.**



*Weapons from a 3D printer* ([source](#))



*Violent gamer titillation 1 – integrating sexy sprites into military action software ([source](#))*



*Violent gamer titillation 2 – combining sexual software and aggressive hardware ([source](#))*

Development and general use of  
datadisassemblers

(also known in the physical realm as Santa Claus machines<sup>19</sup>) can allow us to easily recycle our archives, services and digital goods in the same way that we can recycle household and industrial waste into materials to be reused in 3D printers.

As we become as at ease with our data as we are with wire, PET bottles, screws, plastic twine and breeze blocks through codeliteracy we will naturally go on to develop the same ability to disassemble, reconstitute and play with our archives and digital goods that we are gaining with our physical goods in the current homebrew industrial revolution<sup>20</sup>.

Under these conditions small dataspaces of anarchy will become as common among the general public as potplant gardens are along the Tokyo streets. These spaces are zones of human-scale action, attachment and care in digital-related arenas.

They can:

- 1) Replace state control with regards to an aspect of life.
- 2) Take away that aspect from the requirement of majority rule.
- 3) Promote unimposed order as the style working.

They are located within the existing system, tacitly accepted or actively protected, and may take many forms. They are not the whole of society but occupy space within the existing order and can be entirely individual in nature. They are not consciously based in anarchist ideology **because “anarchy is a normal tendency in voluntary organized social life, where spontaneous order comes out without an imposition.”** The virtue of unimposed order thus develops through learning of the practice of rational freedom – that the complexity of the social world can be an asset rather than a source of perpetual war<sup>21</sup>.

The general public code as we now patch and mend and sew.

The Dumpster Diver logic in working in small dataspaces of anarchy is that of the unselfconscious process of continuous adaptation and piecemeal building by bricoleur gardeners who make do with their heterogeneous repertoire of resources to explore connections and new uses through action<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> Santa Claus Machines can “recycle household and industrial waste into materials to be reused in a 3D printer. Households could simply disassemble old unwanted objects, and use the materials to print new objects. Combined with a cheap source of renewable energy like solar panels, many households and communities could become very self-sufficient.”

<http://theweek.com/article/index/244445/how-3d-printing-could-take-over-the-manufacturing-industry>

<sup>20</sup> <http://homebrewindustrialrevolution.wordpress.com/>

<sup>21</sup> Section based on a collage of Bamyeh (2009), with snippets of Di Francia (1982:225) and Feireiss (2000:5) (Originally posted in <http://thisbigcity.net/small-places-of-anarchy-in-the-city-three-investigations-in-tokyo/>)

<sup>22</sup> see <http://thisbigcity.net/the-non-intentional-landscape-of-tokyo/>

## **to Tend**

Hui talks of care and humanism. On a more tangible level we suggest the 'tending' of archives (in as Hui notes, a self-archived, decentralized fashion). By 'tend'<sup>23</sup> we mean to act with treasured spaces, objects and data with an imperative to **widen the potential number of interactions a thing can enter into, and to widen the margin of play**<sup>24</sup>.

## **Partially invisible encounters and interactions**

are thus

**articulated and invigorated**<sup>25</sup>.

And the regeneration and sharing of memories helps us to maintain dignity and a sense of self<sup>26</sup>.

**so,**

"When future economists look back on the dawn of the internet era, they will marvel that an age of such technological marvel was attended by a widespread, infantile mania for preventing positive externalities.<sup>27</sup>" – \ Dumpster Divers will foster a landscape-with-digital-aspects where urges and ingenuities dominate facts. This is another part of the story of the journey towards autonomy: People working with resources-on-hand to create what they desire, and to satisfy desires without relying on others to provide it for them, nor deferring to those claiming positions of authority<sup>28</sup>. The constant (re)generation of cultural wealth that this entails helps

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<sup>23</sup> For an indication of what 'to tend' entails, see this example from an East London 'cottage' (public toilet) where men regularly cruised each other for sex - "It occurred on a quiet night, when there was no cruising taking place, and in a period when the local council had neglected to clean the toilet for many weeks. In the absence of the flow of cruising men needed to keep the sexual energy of the cottage going, a small group of regulars, all of them by then friends, were huddled inside the toilet gossiping. After chatting for a while, they broke into the (abandoned) attendant's office, brought out two large jugs of detergent, mops and buckets, and started thoroughly cleaning the place.....By taking it upon themselves to clean the site, this band of friends were performing an act of care for the site and ensuring its functional sustainability as a 'cottage' (as opposed to a semi-derelict public toilet)." (Brown, 2011:152). Brown, G. 2011. Amateurism and anarchism in the creation of autonomous queer spaces. In Jamie Heckert and Richard Cleminson eds., *Anarchism & Sexuality: Ethics, Relationships and Power*, New York: Routledge, p143-157.

<sup>24</sup> Thrift (2004b:70) quoted in Brown (2011:152).

<sup>25</sup> Thrift (2004a:84) quoted in Brown (2011:152).

<sup>26</sup> Tweaked from Baecker, Moffat and Massimi (2012). Baecker, R.M., Moffat, K and Massimi, M. 2012. Technologies for aging gracefully. *interactions* 19, 3 (May 2012), 32-36. Available from < <http://beta.interactions.acm.org/archive/view/may-june-2012/technologies-for-aging-gracefully> > [Accessed 6 June 2012].

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2013/jan/08/why-charge-everything-kill-creativity?CMP=twtd>

<sup>28</sup> Brown (2011:144).

prevent all of our algorithmic recommendation systems from descending into entropic noise<sup>29</sup>.

Becoming not just archivists but also Dumpster Divers who build small dataspaces of anarchy helps us to begin to form creative communities with diverse lifestyles rooted in familiar technologies<sup>30</sup>, and further, the preservation of the common environment through the confirmation of feelings, lifestyles and pleasures in the everyday humanly scaled and personally comprehensible environment<sup>31</sup>. Here, we transform mega-data into human(e) scale resources-at-hand that people feel encouraged, able, and intrinsically rewarded for assuming control over in the continual creation of their environments<sup>32</sup>.

END



These guys obviously don't know shit! ([source](#))

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<sup>29</sup> Austin (2013). Austin, D. 2013. Civilization and the war on entropy. *Ribbonfarm*, [blog] Available at < <http://www.ribbonfarm.com/2013/05/23/civilization-and-the-war-on-entropy/> > [Accessed 30 May 2013].

<sup>30</sup> See Kera (2012) - "While innovation is typically seen as a disruptive and foreign force in a given society that we have to study as an issue of "adoption", **in the holistic, pragmatic and integrative view of knowledge production and sharing embodied by Hackerspaces around the world it is simply defined as community building.**"

<sup>31</sup> <http://thisbigcity.net/the-non-intentional-landscape-of-tokyo/>

<sup>32</sup> <http://thisbigcity.net/small-places-of-anarchy-in-the-city-three-investigations-in-tokyo/>

This text comes out of discussions about

(1) an ongoing study of the sensual aspects of Tokyo as an aging and shrinking mega-region.

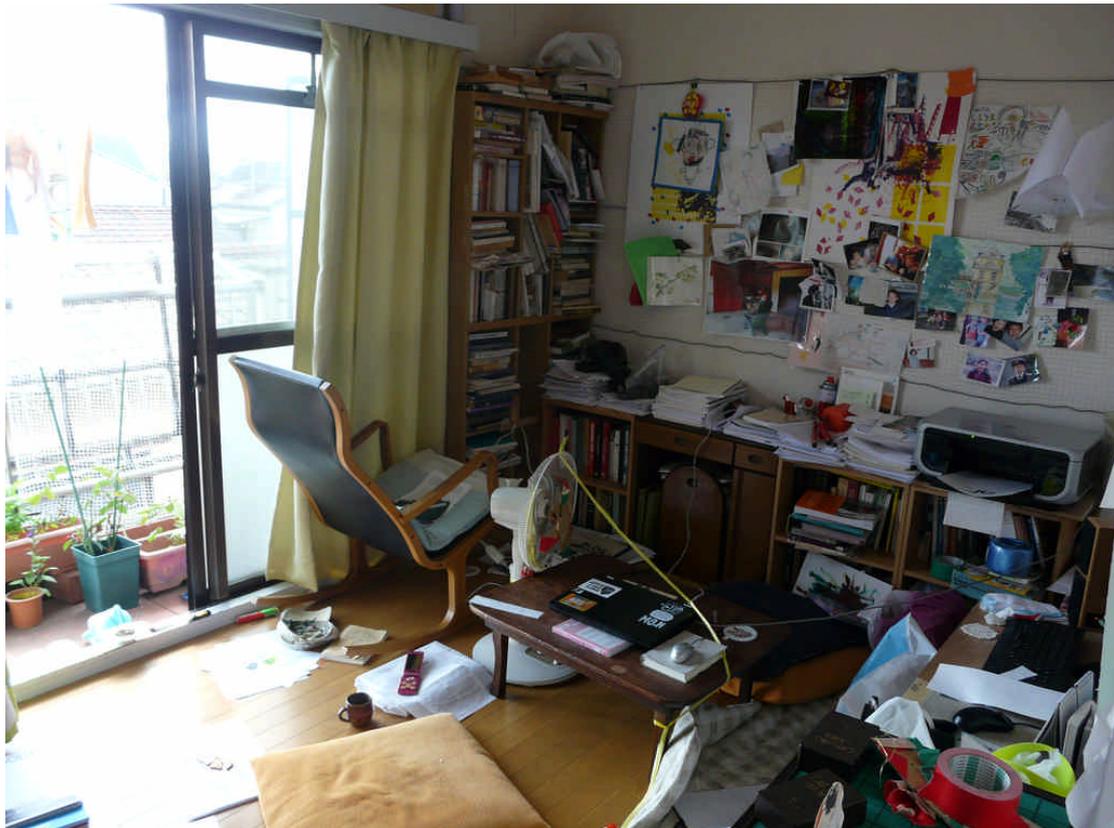
<https://gumroad.com/l/sexuailing-tokyo>

(2) and illustrated text on Tokyo's non-intentional landscape

<https://gumroad.com/l/non-intentional-landscape>

and other stuff at

<http://a-small-lab.com>



*Workshop of Oda Hiroto*