

## Improvising a Delicious Landscape with Resources at Hand

Experiments with Fruit, Weeds, Clay, and Junk  
in Tokyo and Auckland

Presentation for Building a new food economy in Japan through sharing, collaboration, and commoning, a session organised by FEAST Project, Research Institute for Humanity and Nature (RIHN) at World Social Science Forum 2018.

Presentation prepared by chris berthelsen (<http://small-workshop.info> – <http://a-small-lab.com>), activities by so many people, with especially powerful influence of people and cats on street, Xin Cheng, Shota Matsumura, Tracey Sunderland, Phillipa Nielsen, Zon Sakai, Midori Aoyagi, Masami Terada, Jack Tilson. At least!





Activities at and around Mairangi Arts Centre (Tamaki Makaurau, Aotearoa a.k.a Auckland, New Zealand)

Auckland Council



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Attendance at World Social Science Forum 2018 supported by FEAST Project (Research Institute for Humanity and Nature) – thank you Christoph Rupprecht and friends!

## Abstract

Various delicious experiences that Chris Berthelsen, Xin Cheng, and companions enjoyed during the course of improvised public projects in Tokyo and Auckland will be presented.

A view of improvisation as a “gentle” (McCann, 2013), “infinite” (Carse, 1986) and “silent” (Habraken et al., 1987) game is discussed to give coherence to this backdrop. The idea of the Delicious Landscape, which (as we tentatively perceive) addresses the food economy through pleasures of the senses, frugality, and non-food elements is then scratched out upon this framework.

Four aspects are drawn from the experiences, and noted as being of particular interest when “doing” food economies for delicious everyday landscapes which support sharing, collaboration and commoning: Making friends, Porosity and ambiguity, Scattered pantry, and Working in public.

# Introduction



















A Method of Gentle, Infinite, and Silent Improvisation

evolves large scale through ~~fragmental~~ and insignificant work.

"accumulations of interactions"

Small places of crachy



Gentle

Quality becomes quality-

**gentle**  
 > is the way i want to remember to hold >> it's an always celebration  
 > a viscous fluid

**infinite**  
 > is the terrain >> a type of "game" which helps us stay gentle

**silent**  
 > is one way of moving/ doing/ being together >> punctuations, flows, localised swellings >> wayfinding rather than explicit strategy >> "accumulations of interactions"

Silent, infinite and gentle improvisation.



## gentle

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“to pronounce a word incorrectly according to the dictionary”

do not have to have consensus to be gentle, in fact it is probably better not to

Key Reference: McCann, A. (2013). A Politics Of Gentleness: Towards A Critical Vernacular Ecology. Talk at Peace House, Oxford.



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"...about following and riding upon the forces of examples and projects, using their immanent energy and intensity, rather than building impregnable walls around the proposed practice." (Otto von Busch, 2008:29)

Key Reference: Carse, J. (1987) Finite and Infinite Games. New York: Ballantine Books.

## **SURPRISE**

A way to END the finite game – necessitates deception – to laugh “at” - requires training

The reason for infinite play to continue – to be amused and transformed by it – to laugh with – we prepare each other for surprise – what we thought was coming to an end continues! - education

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“even though we are different our diachrony tends to synchronize” (Berardi)

Try to understand and respect others, and develop “rules” (= common ground)

### **Silent:**

- > Played without explanation, agreement or predetermined pieces or moves
- > Only move is to “do stuff”

you can only play if you can conceive of your own malleable goals

## gentle

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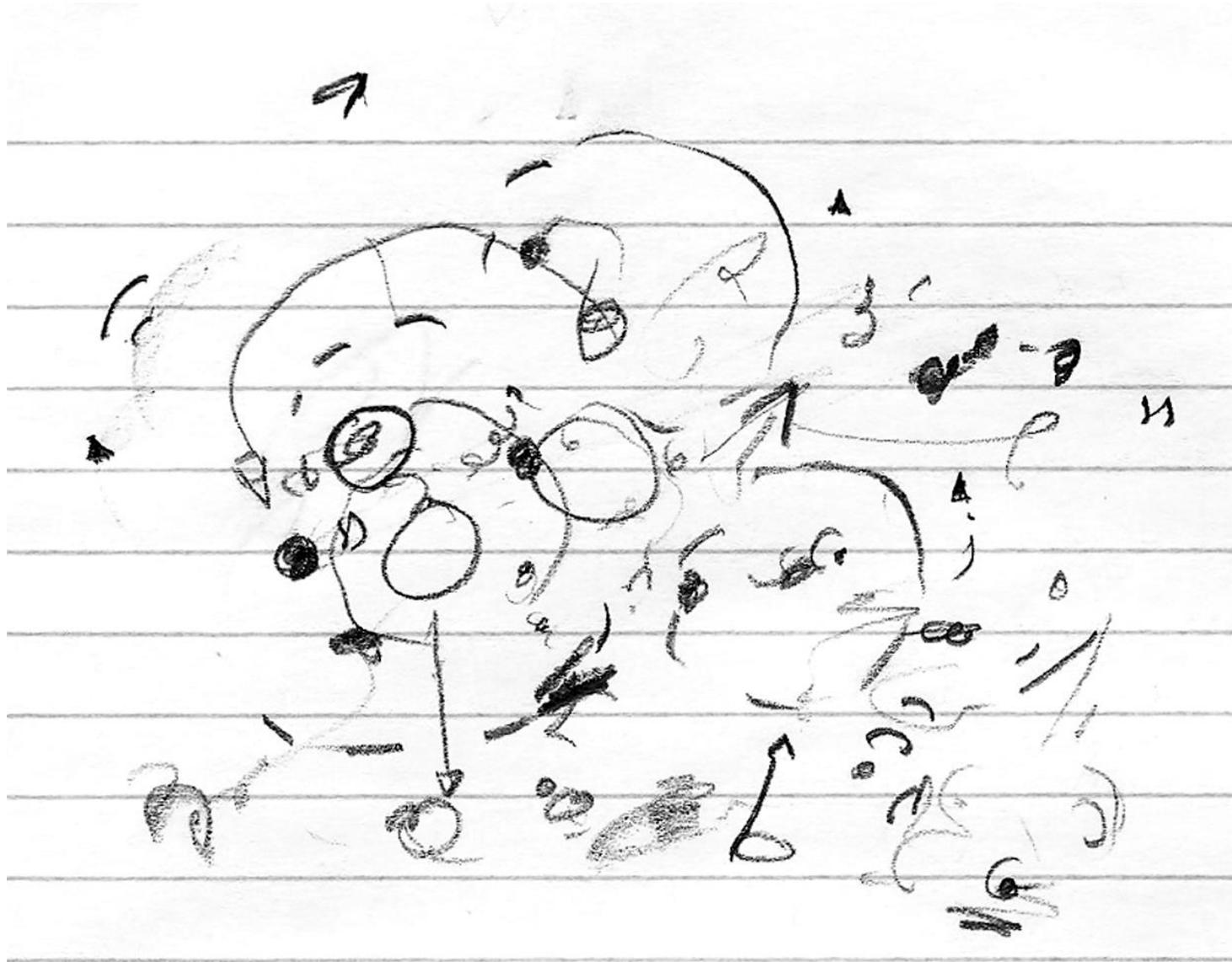
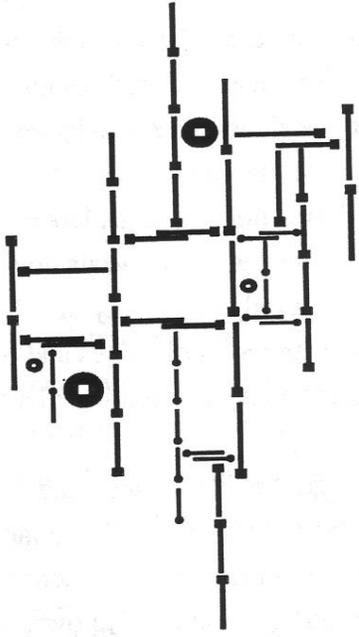
## silent

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Who “reads”? Who “makes”?

Key References: Habraken, N.J., and Gross, M . (1988). Concept Design Games, in Design Studies. Vol. 9, 1988.

Habraken, N.J., et al. (1987). Concept Design Games, A report submitted to the National Science Foundation. Book One: Developing. Book Two: Playing.



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- Making friends
- Porosity and ambiguity
- Scattered pantry
- Working in public

- **Making friends**

Generative, agile, and pleasurable collaborations come from the (s)low-key process of “making friends” with people, all of whom have particular “flavours” and special skills and abilities that will bubble up, be nurtured, and mixed together during the friendship (where friendship is a dynamic spectrum not a particular state). They do not have to come from “calls for proposals” or provisions of service but can emerge from the uncertainty of everyday life if we are open and maintain a stance of “noticing” and “accompanying”.

- **Porosity and ambiguity**

The porous aspect refers to how the activity seeps through multiple layers (physical and non-physical) of our community. Asynchronous activity stretches itself through space and time. Start and end points are fluid and the location of activity is scattered throughout the community. Uncertainty gently turns the activity from a “transaction” or “pay for play” service into a story, in-direct negotiation, and an opening for participation or foothold for further development.

- **Scattered pantry**

All materials are sourced from our local environment at no cost (waste materials, renewable resources, etc). Many of them will be re-used in future iterations of the project. We do not have to develop central community gardens or resources centres, we can dance about our neighbourhoods collecting delicious treats and Making Friends.

Tasty and useful things appear, and sometimes we don't know what to do with them, yet.

In addition to the cost and waste-minimization benefits procuring materials in this way cracks open our neighbours/neighbourhoods for convivial interaction, development of casual relationships, and the collection and creation of stories about the people, things and places around us.

- **Working in public**

Working in public transforms no-spaces of transition (jogging, going to the bus stop, walking to school, etc) into landmarks, signposts and interfaces. These signs of life on our streets invite conversation, chance encounters, and open up everyday life for creative activity.

## Experiments for Improvising a Delicious Landscape



malleable, mendable,  
always breaking,  
unfinished, foothold  
finding, uncertain



folding in projects,  
open to chance  
encounters, iterative  
prototyping, pleasure of  
failures, collaborative  
fixing





mixtures, skinship, skill-sharing, improvised and always breaking public furniture





unplanned constructions,  
off-the-cuff space  
selection, latent  
infrastructures

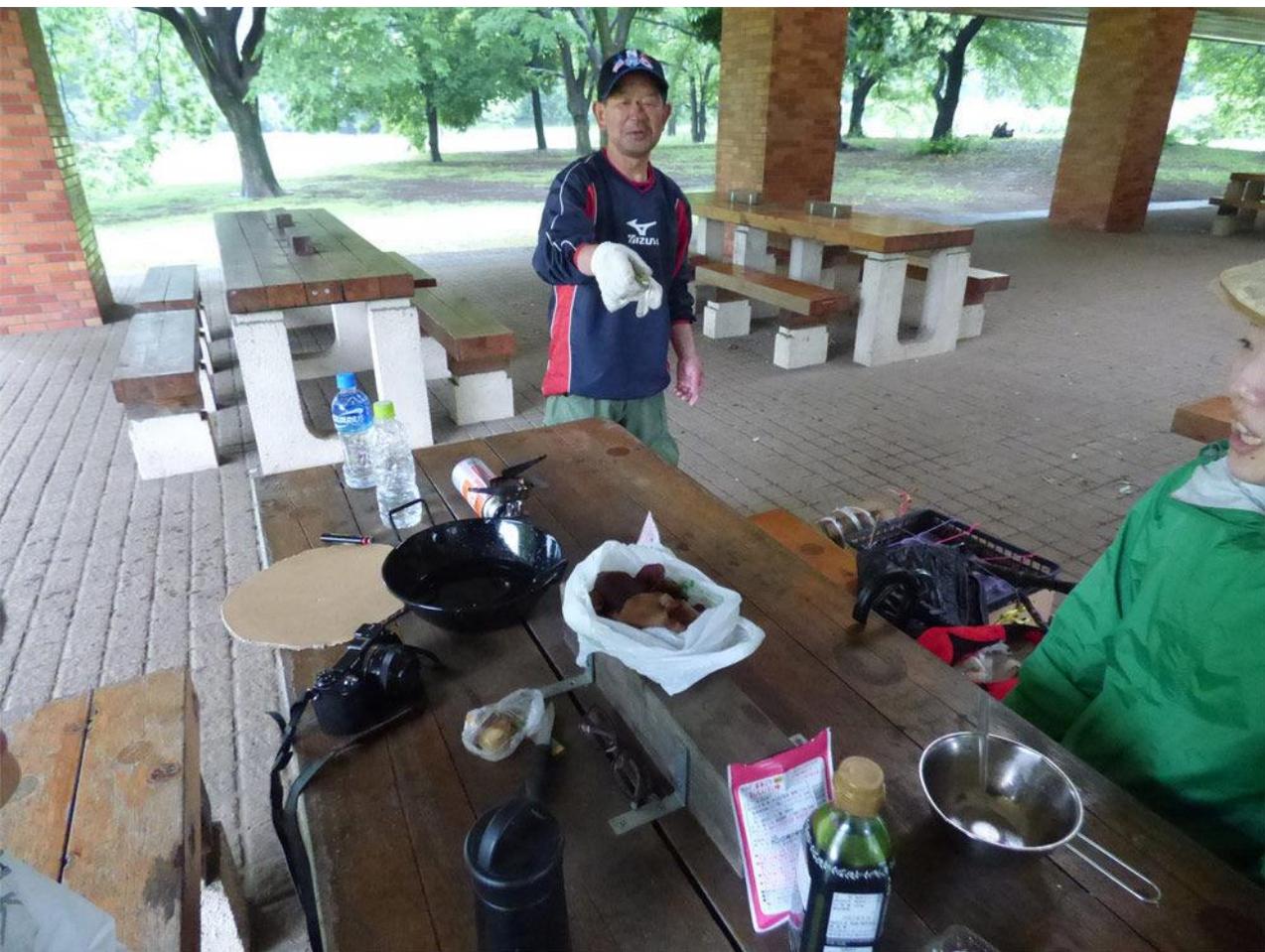


prototyping in-use for Making Friends and learning about materials, constructions, places, people, and our own 'goals'



public preparation, found ingredients, improvised utensils, Making Friends with elegant dogs





trust, public preparation





public preparation,  
improvised utensils,  
uncertainty and  
anticipation, public  
bacteria, trust





trust

always uncertain  
exchange, improbable  
and wonky equipment,  
offers of pleasure





improvised equipment





improvised equipment,  
prototyping in-use



multipurpose lash-ups,  
multiple failures





improvised equipment,  
finding footholds in  
failures, trust





common weeds,  
improbable equipment,  
unexpected treats





out of control situations,  
improvised equipment,  
cracking open  
institutions, freely  
available resources





out of control situations,  
improvised equipment,  
cracking open  
institutions, freely  
available resources,  
uncertain pleasures



unruly,  
improvised  
equipment



improbable  
and  
efficient  
equipment



mystical  
treats,  
composite  
and weird  
equipment,  
new  
pleasures  
of the  
senses



improvised  
equipment





improvised equipment,  
interfering with normal  
consumption techniques

improvised  
equipment,  
Making  
Friends,  
various  
hospitalities





improvised equipment,  
interfering with normal  
production techniques,  
transformation of frugal  
ingredients to luxury  
items





unlikely and wonky  
vessels, interfering with  
normal consumption  
techniques, leaks, stains,  
cracks, and new  
pleasures





useless equipment,  
interfering with normal  
production and  
consumption techniques,  
re-learning everyday  
routines, new pleasures



open to 'anyone', folding-in friends and abilities,  
mixtures, unlikely equipment, cracking open private and  
luxurious spaces



unlikely and uncertain structures, always-growing menu, softly breaking the rules





Making  
Friends at  
site of  
production,  
improbable  
exchanges





'lonely' times



'lonely' times, industrial ingredient foraging, role-reversal, Making Friends





Making Friends, making together, new pleasures, new abilities, off-key methods and inconvenient activity





Making Friends, making together, new pleasures, new abilities, off-key methods and inconvenient activity





Making Friends, making together, new pleasures, new abilities, off-key methods and inconvenient activity



