

# **A State of Becoming:**

Exploring Selfhood and its Ontogenetic Nexus  
with Memory, Mapping, and Material  
Engagement in Autobiographical Visual Art  
Practice

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## *Context:*

❖ Selfhood

❖ Memory

❖ Mapping

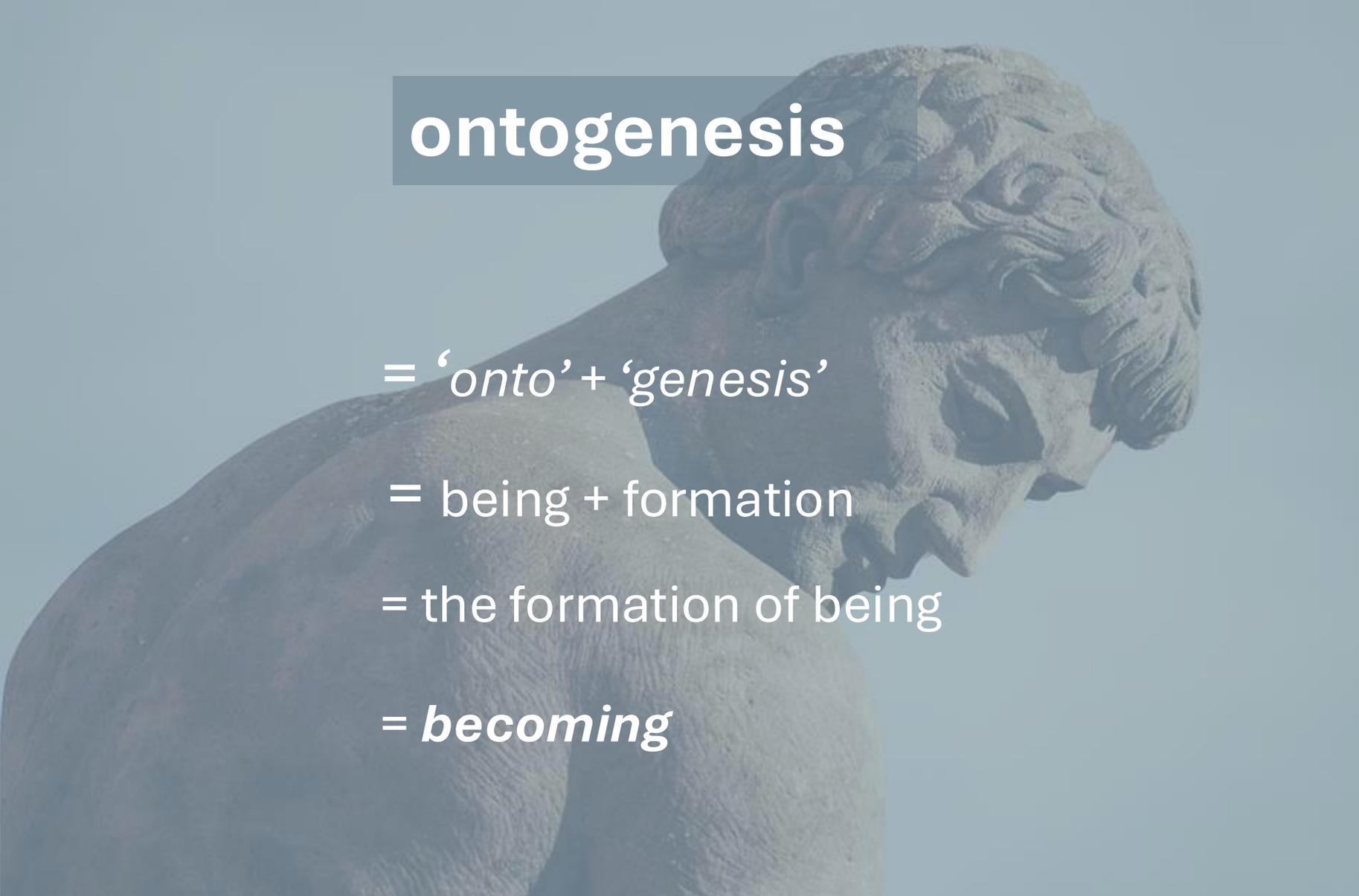
❖ Experiments with Materials

❖ Is there a Connection?



*An artist has got to be careful never really to arrive at a place where he thinks he's at somewhere. You always have to realise that you're constantly in a state of becoming, you know, and as long as you can stay in that realm, you'll sort of be alright.*

*(Bob Dylan, No Direction Home, 2005, 02.11.47 )*



# ontogenesis

= 'onto' + 'genesis'

= being + formation

= the formation of being

= ***becoming***

# Selfhood:

❖ **Buddhism** – no self

❖ **Taoism** – the self is an emergent and changing process in constant flow harmonising with the Tao as an ongoing transformation

❖ **Hume** - the self is simply a bundle of ever changing perceptions and experiences that rapidly succeed each other in perpetual flux

❖ **Simondon** – a continual open-ended process of becoming  
- ‘individuation’

# Memory:

❖ Pure Memory does not exist

❖ **Bartlett** – a dynamic and creative process of maintaining, updating and actively reconstructing events in the context of our attitude towards a mass of organized past reactions and experiences

❖ **Ricoeur** - it has always been known and often repeated that life has something to do with narrative; we speak of a life story to characterise the interval between birth and death

❖ **A R Hopwood** – ‘The False Memory Archive’; ‘WithTV’.

# Mapping:

❖ Why do we map?

❖ Post-Representational/ Processual Theory:

- *Maps are ontogenetic in nature. Maps have no ontological security, they are of-the-moment; transitory, fleeting, contingent, relational, and context dependent.*

- *Maps are practices – they are always mappings; spatial practices enacted to solve relational problems*

(Kitchin, Dodge & Perkins)

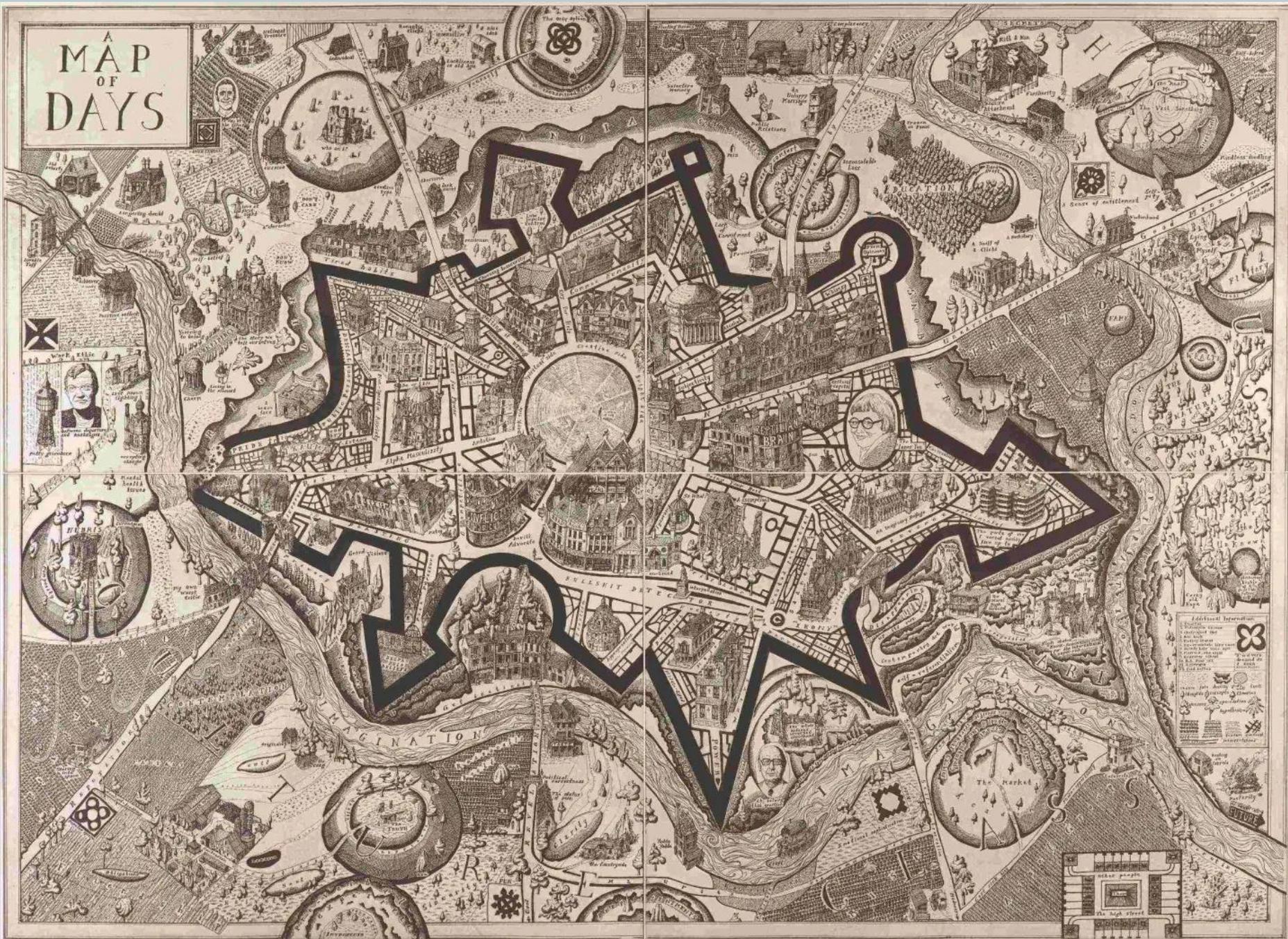


Image source: [www.npg.co.uk](http://www.npg.co.uk)



Everyone I Have Ever Slept With, 1963-1995

Image Source: [www.artsper.com](http://www.artsper.com)

Hotel International, 1993

Image Source: [www.whitecube.com](http://www.whitecube.com)



# ***Material Engagement:***

## ***Material Engagement Theory (MET)*** – Lambros Malafouris

- ❖ an ongoing human becoming which remains unfolding – one that can be seen as an incomplete process rather than an end product called homo sapiens.
- ❖ homo faber – humans make things and are made by them
- ❖ ***thinging*** – thinking and feeling with, through, rather than simply about things
- ❖ a collaboration between hand and material each responding to the other, participating in each other's existence, taking responsibility for and feeling the effects of each other's acts and ultimately feeding back to the brain.

# *What Does This Mean In Practice?*

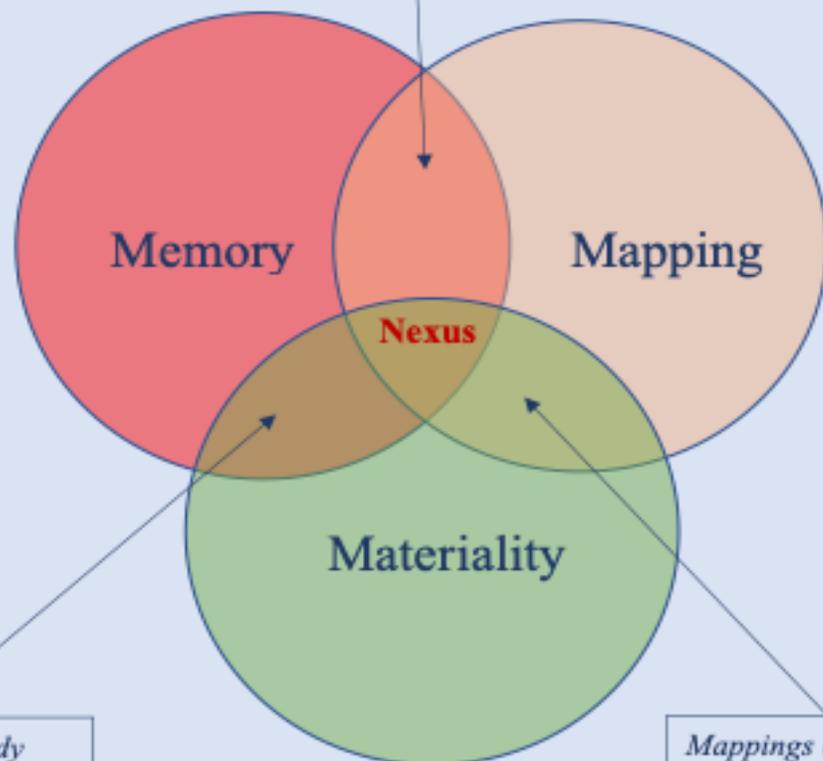
Is it possible to make a visual representation of the self that is in a state of becoming?

- The Observer Effect
- Form of Representation?

*Bergson – no image can represent duration because an image is immobile while duration is pure mobility*

# SELFHOOD

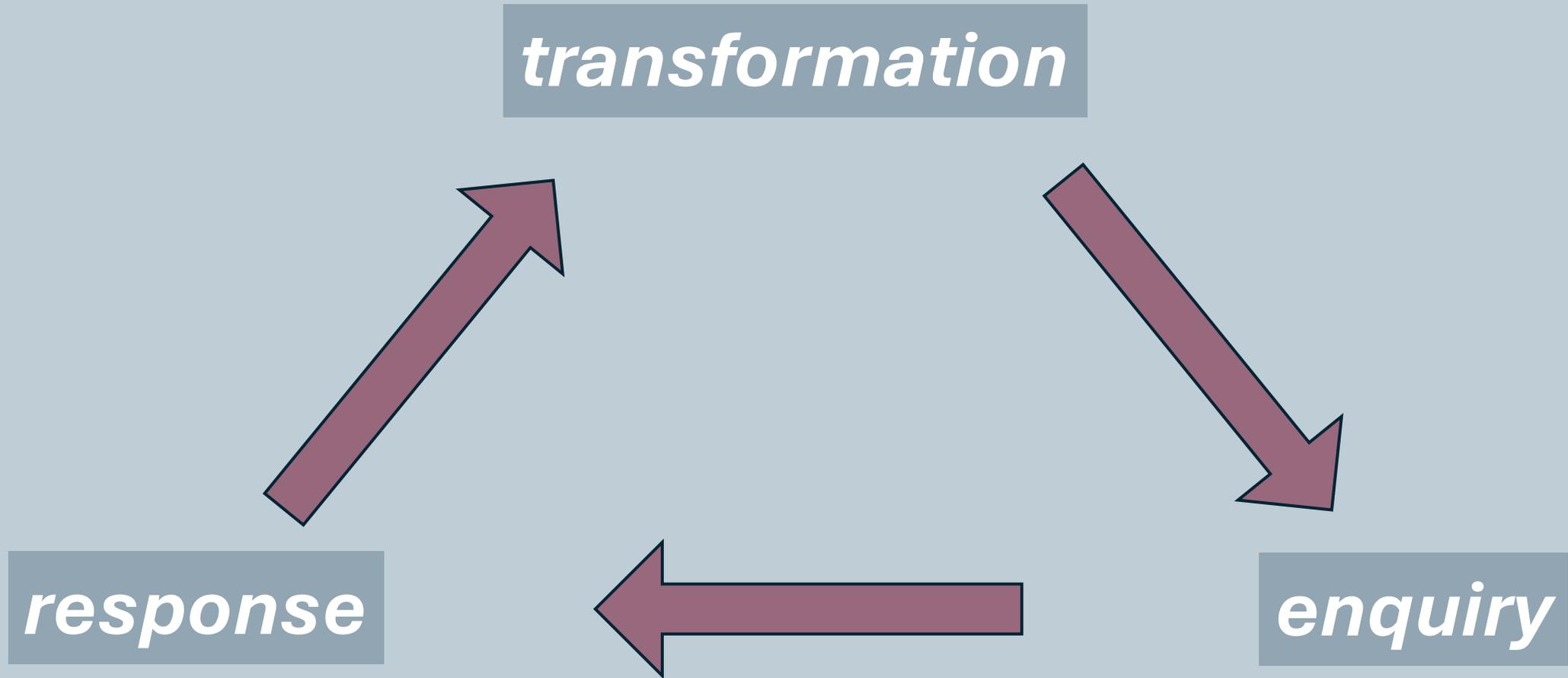
*Memory is created in the form of cognitive mappings. The mapping process is reliant on memory and can act as a cue to memory retrieval and a catalyst for reflection.*



*Materials embody memories as well as acting as cues for memory retrieval*

*Mappings can be formed through material engagement. Materials can contain the traces of past*

# *Embracing the Transformational Loop:*



## *Questions For Discussion:*

- ❖ By privileging process over product, does product become irrelevant?
- ❖ Is the process the product?
- ❖ Does the process have to be evident within the product? If yes, to whom – the artist or the viewer?
- ❖ What happens when the product necessarily becomes the end goal eg submission to open calls in which there is a deadline and possibly a theme?