

Development Plan Phase 2

Themes of research

In the Summer of 2018, during my Master's graduation from [REDACTED], I was asked by [REDACTED]* to present my project [REDACTED], a book full of short stories and poetry based on personal recollections treading the line between fiction and non-fiction. Whilst writing these texts I found that music, certain smells, foods, places, particular images and sounds triggered my memories. I started thinking about how these texts would be encountered by the listeners, and if I could texture their experience with some of the things that triggered me in the process of writing.

*Listen to my radio segment here:

For this reason, I decided to play music in-between my readings to create certain moods and emotions. This multi-sensory experience revealed what has in my professional career increasingly interested me—indeed obsesses me; the interaction of literature, memory and media, and of texts and paratexts.

Modes of exploration

I intend to explore this subject from two main positions; the first is the visual designer concerned with the paratextual elements that form the frame of any given publication, influencing the literary value and public reception of the text; they are the colophon, typographic treatment, table of contents, pagination, end papers and any other framing devices not necessarily defined by the author.

French literary theorist [REDACTED] argued that “*although we do not always know whether these productions are to be regarded as belonging to the text, in any case, they surround it and extend it, precisely in order to present it, in the usual sense of this verb but also in the strongest sense: to make present, to ensure the text's presence in the world, its reception and consumption in the form of a book.*”

Similarly, the paratextual elements can also act as emotional devices to enhance the experience of the reader, triggering memories and/or behaviours. When it comes to digital media, what belongs to these emotional and functional devices is arguably not as clear anymore.

Following the rise of digital media, how do we map what happens to a memory once it becomes public? — Are interactions in comments sections part of the paratext? — What do digital paratextual elements such as estimated reading times, hashtags and pay-walls exemplified by [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] tell us about accessibility in literature? — How do online forms of media impact the way that writers might approach topics that require the intimacy of a book?

These questions relate to both my designing methods, personal ideas of memory and the consumption of literature. Researching these themes and finding where the friction lies will merge two subsections of my professional interests that I've always been convinced belong together but could never really quite tie.

The second is the writer concerned with content, be it editing, reading, reviewing and/or evaluating the texts of others. In a 2003 profile, [REDACTED] ison told [REDACTED]; "I read books. I teach books. I write books. I think about books. It's one job." I, in the same vein, do not believe the two aforementioned positions to be divorced from one another, rather the synergy of these activities is what I'm most interested in. I one day would like to host a collaborative publishing platform where I can confidently address the borders of genre, design, media and text, operating from a place of rich understanding based on research and networking. My storytelling abilities, unlike my design capabilities—which are effects of years of professional training, are largely self-taught. Therefore, I plan to use this fund to further develop my own fictional writing style, learning how to implement literary patterns such as Narration, Description, Classification and Evaluation, and learning deeply from established practitioners.

Personal objectives

I plan to achieve this by attending writing workshops, speaking to, and interviewing writers and theorists whose work I find interesting and exist at the intersection of literature and other forms of media. One such person who immediately comes to mind is [REDACTED], who often compares his artistic approach to the chapters of a book. [REDACTED] whose work on post-colonial memory and media in Dutch-Caribbean literature also greatly intersects with the questions I seek to answer, would be a valuable source of knowledge. Finally, I also plan to look to [REDACTED] whose photographic approach to writing makes me ask,

Where do other authors start from? — What different things do they reference that they do not share, and how does this affect their writing?

I want to document the outcomes of these questions in a series of accounts, which I then plan to exhibit at the end of the 14 months in a book and an open-free online archive, accompanied by public readings. By talking to different literary professionals, I hope to learn from their writing processes, linguistic styles and thereby strengthen my own authorial voice.

Language and accessibility

Though born and raised Rotterdam and The Hague, I spent large parts of my upbringing in Kumasi, Liverpool, Reading and London. So my gateway into literature was largely through the books of English speaking writers such as [REDACTED]. This has meant that even though I read and express myself verbally in Dutch, my written lingual tendencies are in English. Therefore engaging in Dutch-speaking literature; that is writing, editing and proof-reading is something that I would like to strengthen.

In 2019, I wrote my first published text in Dutch [REDACTED] for

██████████ The experience of writing in Dutch revived memories that were locked in the language native to that experience. It made me want to write more extensively in my native language and discover more hidden stories and new ways of expressing parts of my identity, and thereby engage a different type of audience. For this reason, I plan to attend writing courses on prose, fiction and storytelling at ██████████ where large parts of its teaching is set in Dutch.

Audience, exchange and engagement

"I look very hard for black fiction because I want to participate in developing a canon of black work...We've had the first rush of black entertainment, where blacks were writing for whites, and whites were encouraging this kind of self-flagellation. Now we can get down to the craft of writing, where black people are talking to black people."

- ██████████

Having been a stranger in more places than I can count, including where I was born, the fictional words of ██████████ through the lens of race, culture and belonging, gave meaning and hope to my experience of being a 'dark-skinned-other' in the Netherlands. Through the power of imagining, I could merge who I wanted to be in my dreams with who I was in real life. It helped me to not rely on memories of trauma as the compass of my identity, but rather the resilience and boldness of my dream-self.

I believe that many people will find value in finding themselves in worlds otherwise untold. My broader ambition is to contribute to bringing diverse fictional stories to the forefront. This project, therefore should also serve to lay the groundwork for collaborations with writers in the Netherlands who don't follow the traditional route of Academia. These collaborations could result in public dialogues in the form of readings, performances and workshops, of which I would want the process materials to be made accessible online.

By bridging the way people enter into writing and literature, I want to create a plurality of fictional matter that expands on the parameters of design. I believe this effort could diversify and enrich a largely white literary culture and engage a larger audience in the long term.

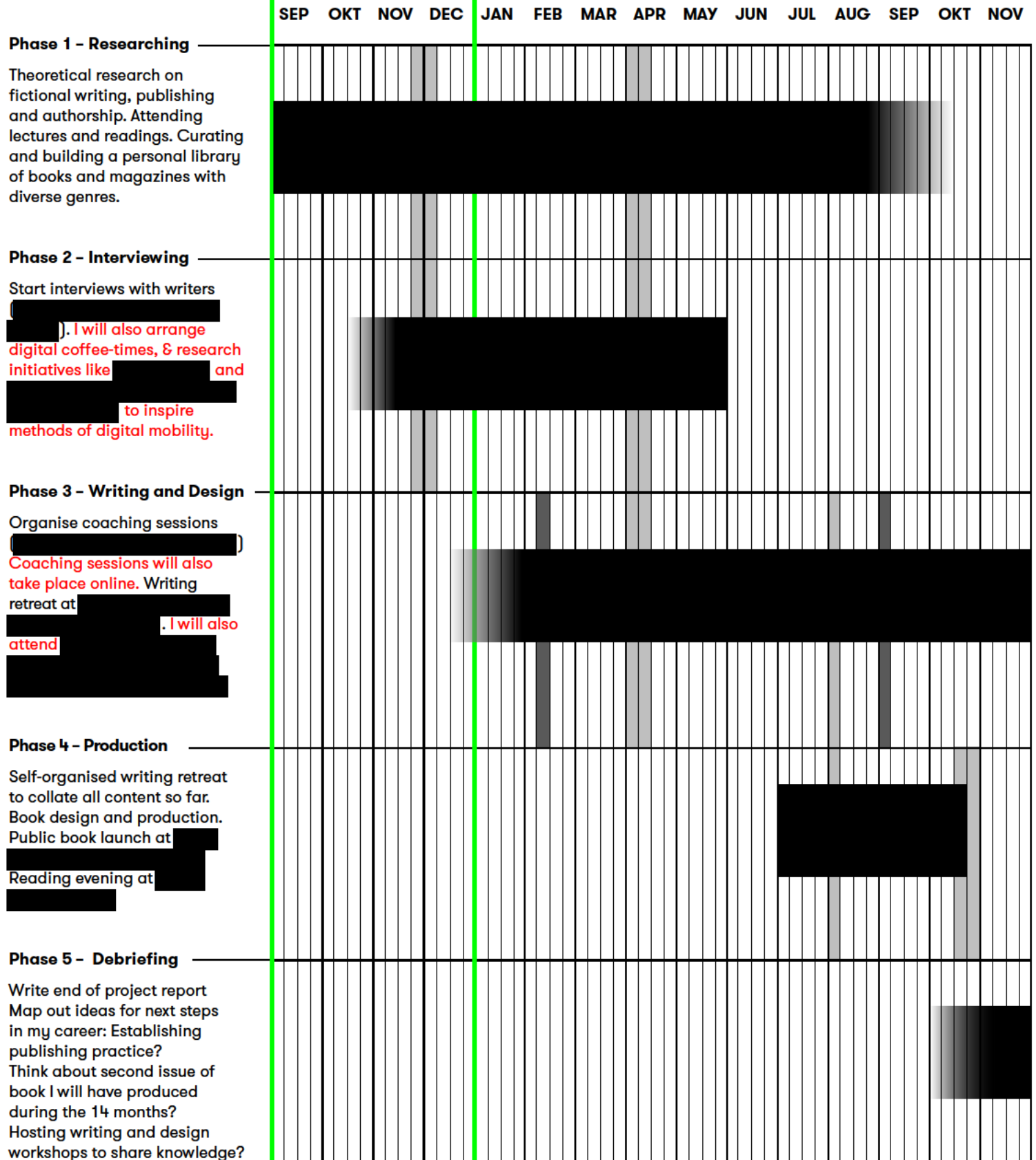
Timereporting and year plan

*In response to COVID-19, plans that require travelling will be marked **RED** with alternative ideas.

■ = Travelling to the Netherlands
■ = Residencies in Switzerland

2020

2021



Budget

*In response to COVID-19, plans that require travelling will be marked **RED** with alternative ideas.

Free budget

€11.000

(with €1.500 moved to presentation budget & €1.500 moved to Professionalisation)

Monthly Stipend: 10 x €1000 (Oct. 2020—Nov. 2021)

€10.000

- To compensate taking off some months' worth of work spread over the course of 14 months.

Festivals and fairs

- [REDACTED], [REDACTED] €1.000

Professionalisation

€6.500

(with €1.500 taken from free budget)

Coaching sessions

- [REDACTED] — 4 Sessions €750
- [REDACTED] — 4 Sessions €750

Retreats and workshops

- [REDACTED]: Cursus schrijven €650
incl. travel costs, accomodation with friends and family
- [REDACTED]: Writing retreat €725
incl. travel costs, accomodation supplied by [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] workshops **€725**
incl. travel costs, accomodation at [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] Interactivity Masterclasses €750
incl. travel costs, accomodation at nearest hotel

Books and magazines

€500

Travelling budget for research and interviews

€1.650

Presentation

€6.500

(with €1.500 taken from free budget)

Book printing

- [REDACTED] €1.800

Book launch & readings

- [REDACTED] €300
Fee for external collaborators,
- [REDACTED] €400
Fee for external collaborators, Material for exhibition furniture

Website development

- Digital archival platform for found material i.e editors' manuscripts €3.500
- Website development for [REDACTED]

Travelling budget for presentation

€500

Thanks to the support of

able to realise my first publication;

I was

It is a book about the reconciliation of memory through the use of narrative non-fiction and prose. The book is made up of 20 narrational non-fiction stories and interludes of photographic media. With an unflinching intensity, these stories are an indirect analysis of micro-moments that fit into wider political realities.

mother. So I was hit over my face like a kick and
my eye on the balcony via the catwalk. There
was a window with blinds when you made it to see that.
I think we were the second floor, or maybe the
first. The window with the blinds was mine and my
sister's room, the blinds were slightly open and I
could see a lady lying in the bed. I was shocked by the sudden
realisation, it began to rain. But finally
unhooked an array of high pitched cries. My father kept
knocking, increasing the motion over to banging,
clunking and then finally stopping until the door
flow open.

From this point on, everything fell silent. I don't
remember anything between the adults, but I re-
member that there must have been. I don't see who the
figure was that occupied the room with my mother. It
may have been my father, but it also could not have
been. I don't remember him hitting her. I don't know if
he threw her over the balcony or if she jumped in.
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Freedom between Yolanda's thighs

The cat curled itself around Yolanda's ankles, at first
apprehensive of the door that possessed freedom, then
leaped on to the terrace where the little girl named
Yolanda was in the doorway of the apartment with her
shoulders slightly rounded, broad eyes and short
dark blonde hair that hung a thick fringe in the back.

Since the time of finding her mother on the concrete
parking lot, she had a cloud similar face
that resembled her mother's face. She had her
conversation with her father but she wasn't
Yolanda, out of all the new faces presented a warm
amount of time. A small girl of four but she kept up
behind Yolanda, peering between the relief of her
thighs. The new girl moved her head to take in her thin
legs, as they were Yolanda's thighs, then
she moved to the other leg to peer. There at her
looked exactly the same as her, but with blond
shoulder length hair and light eyes. Both girls wide-eyed
and cautious around another in looking up the
other. The new girl looked up at the new adult standing
on either side of the doorway connecting to small
talk to loud tones, supposedly about her future.

Every now and then, as if we not have her out of her
own destiny, they'd assume her that everything was
going to be alright. When her attention returned to
Yolanda's thighs to look out her own conversation,
the girl had gone inside. Yolanda took her hand from
the other adult and let her into her life with
the other girl and the cat with the freedom.

The ginger this time

Tell that he knows will look into an almost break-
ing point when they insert the ginger into her arms.
The ginger itself will not be any bigger than an adult
thumb, so the pain should not be much longer than
thirty minutes or so.

00:00:00 In this case maybe you should all get that
some more, remember to feel the reason
to fear years. Nevertheless, it would pass
it will pass.

Manifesting love

My you be the love you were waiting for
that you find friendship within you
May you not yield when strongholds come
and demand your silence.
May your lips never stop smiling, when
months in your pants become due, it
May the only force that be against you,
be God Himself.
My your members run to meet themselves
that you may be victorious.
My you be the head and not the tail,
the top and not the bottom.
My your descendants spread to the east
and to the west.
My you claim the space that your story
never holding back or holding in.
My your words occupy even the most de-
fect of hearts, that they bring healing, so
May you find joy, peace, hunger, love,
blessing, comfort and softness.
My your pain serve you and not
the other way around.
My your will of triumph never run dry
for as long as you roam the earth.
May blessings rise you of its goodness,
that even your bitterness cries
out for your company.



My first poem in Dutch was published by [redacted], a poetry magazine based in [redacted]. It was important for me to communicate in the language of my childhood because I was attempting to capture the feelings of an emotional time that I associate with where I grew up in The Hague. One can never quite put into words what that the loss of a loved one feels like, so every element of the language was important.

“Voor vandaag wisten wij dat je allang naar de goede plek was overgestapt, want je ogen, normaal gesproken de kleur van luie zondagmiddagen, begonnen iets duisters te openbaren. Die ochtend rook het huis naar zwavel en lood. Scherp en puur aroma.

Je nam met je mee, het huis waar onze liefde leefde en een kind die jouw vlammeende ogen droeg.

Dat was de leer van herinnering die mij nu in de steek zou laten bij het maken van het ontbijt van een stervende man. Een Earl Grey thee voor een vroeg graf, die ik voor vijf tot ongeveer twintig seconden liet weken, gezoet met een halve theelepel suiker en een druppel halfvolle melk, zodat de kleur van de thee op jou huid leek deze laatste dagen.

Donker...dof, maar nog steeds onbeslist bleek. Je handen waren zo koud als steen,

misschien iets zachter, maar precies zo grijs als deze dag.

In de stille momenten waren je ogen verlegen, je stem zachtmoedig en je bewegingen traag. Onze radio waar je aura vroeger leefde was nu een statische schaduw van zichzelf...

[...]

Toen je ging waren er geen vuurwerken. Geen tranen op het tapijt. Geen groot gedoe of lawaai. Geen wimpelen in muizentoon. Geen onduidelijke spraak of duidelijke sprakeloosheid. Geen begrafenis of verdriet waar wij onszelf in storten. Onze levens gingen verder alsof jij nooit op de radio te horen was.

Na die dag hebben wij het huis in een lauwe blauwtint geverfd om jouw ongecompliceerde tocht te verbergen.”

and roll into other thoughts

When Trauma lives in the body, how do you make it pliable? What does it mean to stretch the tension away and kneed the furrows flat? Sometimes various forms of sadness live inside the body. They cleave, hug and ultimately suffocate the body, rendering it void of necessary comfort. In a world fuelled by the pursuit of capital, the body loses its value when it can no longer produce, thus it remains, not for the sake of value, but obligation to the body—important to always unfold and eject that trauma that so desperately clings.

Role: Performer, Director, Producer

Watch full video



I was the designer and illustrator for an activity book to help Black women get ahead in everything from relationships to starting a successful side hustle. I created a memorable and fun illustration style that was easy to fill in customise and print.

Role: Designer, Illustrator

