

ABOUT THE KINK IN THE ARC

The Kink in the Arc is a collective, dream novel. Invited writers, artists and curators contribute a description of an artwork in any form, these descriptions are then ‘sited’ within the context of the novel: an overheard conversation between two residents in a ‘sanatorium for the weary of image’. This *mise en abyme* or ‘Russian doll’ effect is repeated in the resident’s conversations, which often contain stories within stories, descriptions within descriptions, works within works; mirroring the structure of the novel itself. This is also a formal device used as a way of *untethering* the reader from narrative, disconnecting, distancing and allowing her to experience the artworks in a state of not knowing: an attempt to break the circuit of reading, the narrative arc we know (and love) but which also needs to be distressed, reassessed: *kinked*.

The Kink in the Arc is fundamentally concerned with a version of *Ekphrasis*: descriptions of artworks contained within artworks.

The idea of a rest home or sanatorium is very close to the idea of the artist’s or writer’s retreat or residency, in that it allows ‘time and space’ away from (or even deeper within) the travails of contemporary existence. It is of course a fictional trope beloved of modernist writers and of filmmakers. It can serve both as a metaphor for a moribund or doomed society (*The Magic Mountain*) and for the inevitability of mortality (*The Wind Has Risen*). It is also a useful container for circularity, for endlessness (*Last Year at Marienbad*) and for worlds within worlds (*Sanatorium Under the Sign of the Hourglass*)

Readers should note that though the novel will make reference to characters suffering from mental exhaustion it is not in any way attempting to make light of mental illness or to stigmatise further those who suffer from any such condition.

The idea of a collective novel is important on a variety of levels. By collecting descriptions of artworks from so many different sources, we are interested in the potential for a kind of database of daydreams, ideas, reveries, imagined works: a labyrinth but also a layering and counter layering of artistic sensibilities and possibilities. Outcomes can change; participants can re-edit, reconstitute, re-site their individual contributions or offer changes to all/any. Ideally the structure and the contributor’s parts within it, move as freely as abstract thoughts, desultory conversation or speculation. By weaving those different artworks (and by extension, real and imaginary, past, present and future) together, the novel looks to contain or begin to represent a shared imaginary. Its collective, mutable nature means the work refuses to be static. It can drift into further possibilities taking the artworks along in its train. The novel has manifested as written texts, as a website, as readings, exhibitions and performances. The project exists without funding and texts are free to download. All rights belong to its contributors.

The Kink in the Arc is an attempt at a re-framing of the novel via collected, imagined descriptions. On a simpler level, it is a unique and variable form of ekphrastic, eternal, oneiric, collective group exhibition. We hope it can exist freely and without boundaries. We hope that you read on...

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