

space of the
nameless

SPACE OF THE NAMELESS

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Author's Declaration

I declare that this thesis presents work carried out by myself and does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge, it does not contain any materials previously published or written by another person except where that text or work has been referenced. All substantive contributions by others to the work presented are clearly acknowledged.

The written thesis was designed as seven printed booklets, accessed through a game device that invites a randomized order of reading. This PDF is not the intended form.

DOMINIQUE SAVITRI BONARJEE

Department of Art. Goldsmiths University of London, 2023

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ABSTRACT

A sudden loss of self: time morphs, I forget my name, who am I? Rather than pathologizing these personal experiences of dissociation and disturbance of the stable 'I', they become the focus of this practice-based thesis, offering a path towards engaging with the unknown in art research. How can 'detaching the I' mean forgetting my humanness, allowing me to attune to diverse nonhuman presences invoked by my creative process? By improvising with multiple agencies, can I extend the notion of dance, and make the matter of my body an interface for listening to more-than-human tempos, vibrations, and rhythms?

The purpose of my methodology is to devise, test out, and repeat practices of detaching the I that gradually finetune a 'transmodal' sensory disposition of curiosity and reverence towards the unknown. The 'detached eye', a koan (in Chan/Zen Buddhism a linguistic device for propagating embodied knowledge) encountered in my Butoh dance research, mutates into the 'detached I'. This mutation is guided by wisdom traditions that nurture self-porosity: Sufi whirling, Daoist martial arts, yoga, Buddhist meditation. From this ecology of practices, I invent dances of collapsing, wobbling, and liquefying, extending these dances into an (expanded) studio practice that supports material innovation and open-ended processes. I co-create a copper sound suit, concoct fragile skin-like membranes, collect straight sticks, cultivate slime moulds. In the writing, I weave together microphenomenology with *écriture féminine*, to re-energize

the sensory charge of these opaque journeys. My citational practice prioritizes orality, lesser-known voices, and polydisciplinarity. The unusual presentation of the thesis is isomorphic with the curvilinearity of the research trajectory.

The original contribution combines practices for 'detaching the I', communicated in the written thesis, and their activation within the viva installation conceived as an instrument that amplifies a more-than-human rhythmic field. The research roadmap is transmitted and vivified through four pedagogical koans. They aim to disorient the 'I' from time efficiencies perpetuated by dominant epistemes, seeking to safeguard a Space of the Nameless, a way to generate art and knowing within unknown cosmologies.

Acknowledgements

My deepest gratitude to my original supervisory team, Kristen Kreider and Michael Archer, who embarked on the journey of Space of the Nameless with curiosity and aplomb. Many thanks to the close attention of my second supervisory team, Nina Wakeford and Andrew Renton, who guided me towards being able to communicate the vast scope of this project.

I wish to thank so many friends who are also my collaborative conspirators, or collaborators who have become my friends, and all the people who have contributed ideas and energy to this research, namely Mika Satomi, Hannah Perner-Wilson, Mariam Arid, Joel Cahen, Chaong-Wen Ting, Kyoko Fujiwara, Mei-Fang Liao, Amy Sharrocks, Petrine Vinje, Jamie Forth, Sasha Drozd. Also the nameless, including a woman who I met on a train platform who gifted me her own clothes to wear for a performance. Other key individuals provided the belief and encouragement I so dearly needed to keep afloat. I thank Atau Tanaka for his interest, challenges and on-going support for my work; Helen Oates for initiating me to Sufi turning practice; Stuart Verity for guiding me through Wudang Tai Ch'i Chuan; Paul Sacher for persuading me to do a PhD; and especially my father, Hector Bonarjee, for planting the seeds of spiritual philosophy-by-practice in me from a young age. My ad hoc art studio at Colet House has been a place of spiritual solace and I am utterly awed by the Study Society's generosity, and so grateful for all the help I received here from Thomas Phillips and many more.

My research is indebted to 'women's work' and its ways of knowing, especially to my mother, Lucette, who taught me to find joy in manual practices. This work is also a tribute to the life of Mariam Arid who passed away in 2022. Mariam was largely responsible for the fabrication of the The Crochet Resistance Suit and this artefact remains a testament to her personal creativity and her gift for crochet.

I dedicate this work to both these women and to all those who, like them, without formal education, hold unknown knowing within their bodies.

With special heartfelt thanks to Ivo Juriaan Mensch who has accompanied me along this meandering path.

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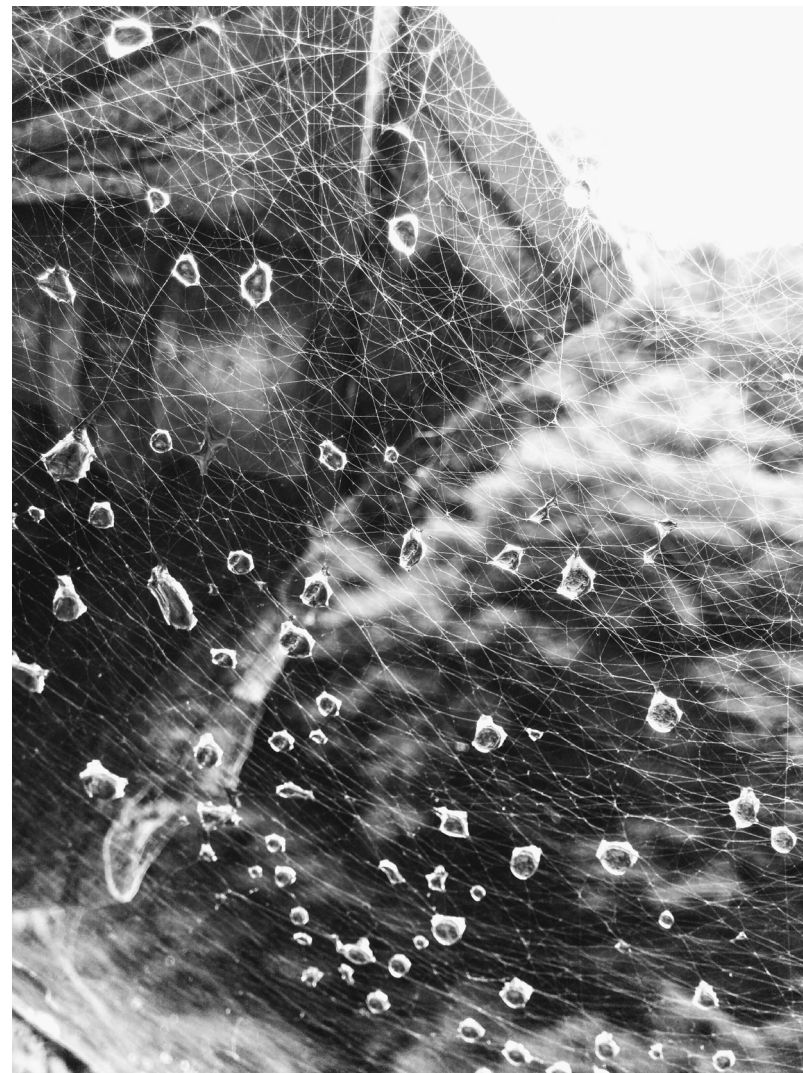
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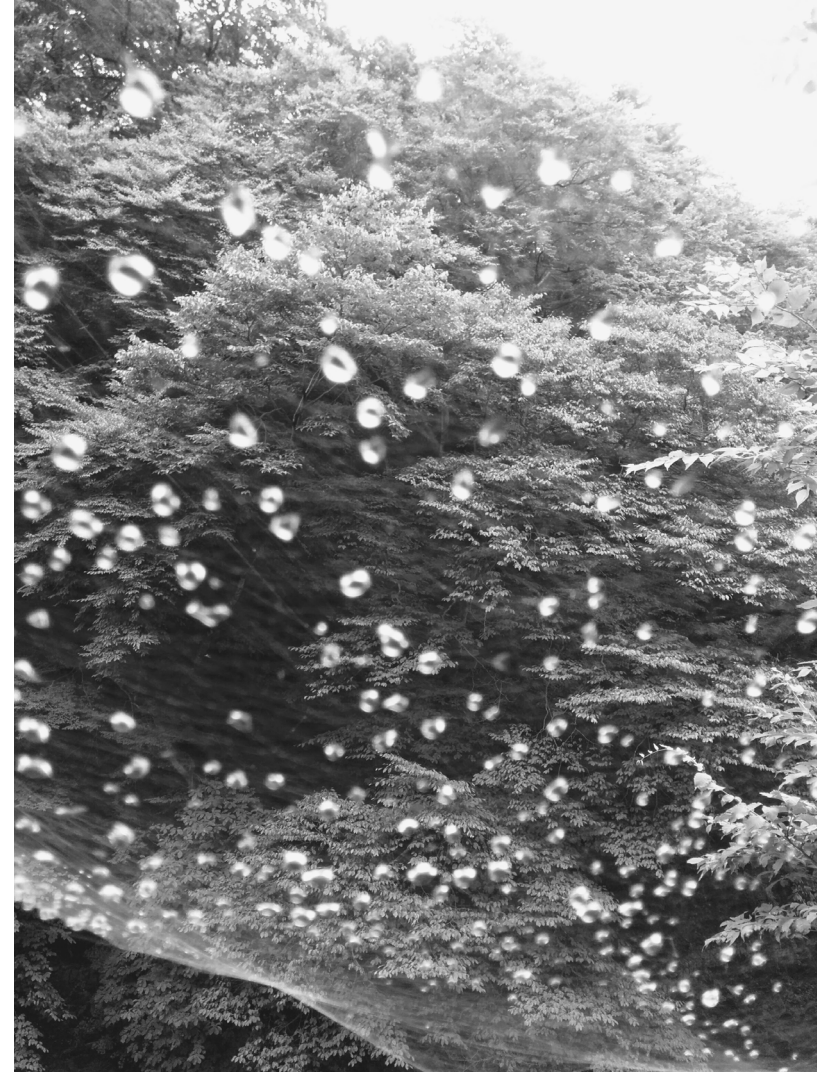
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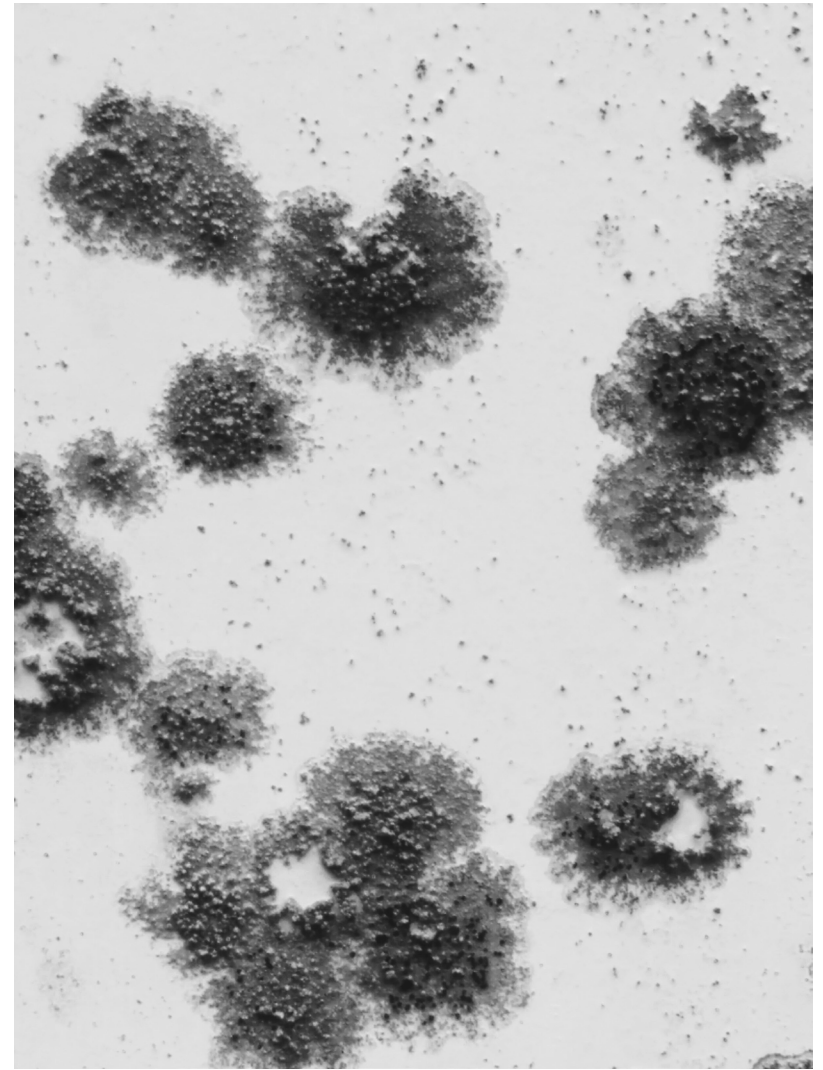
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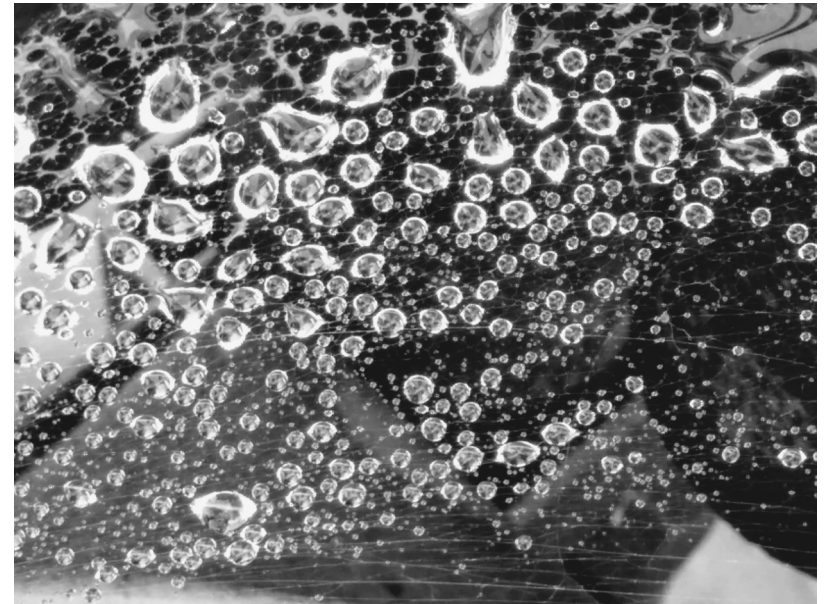
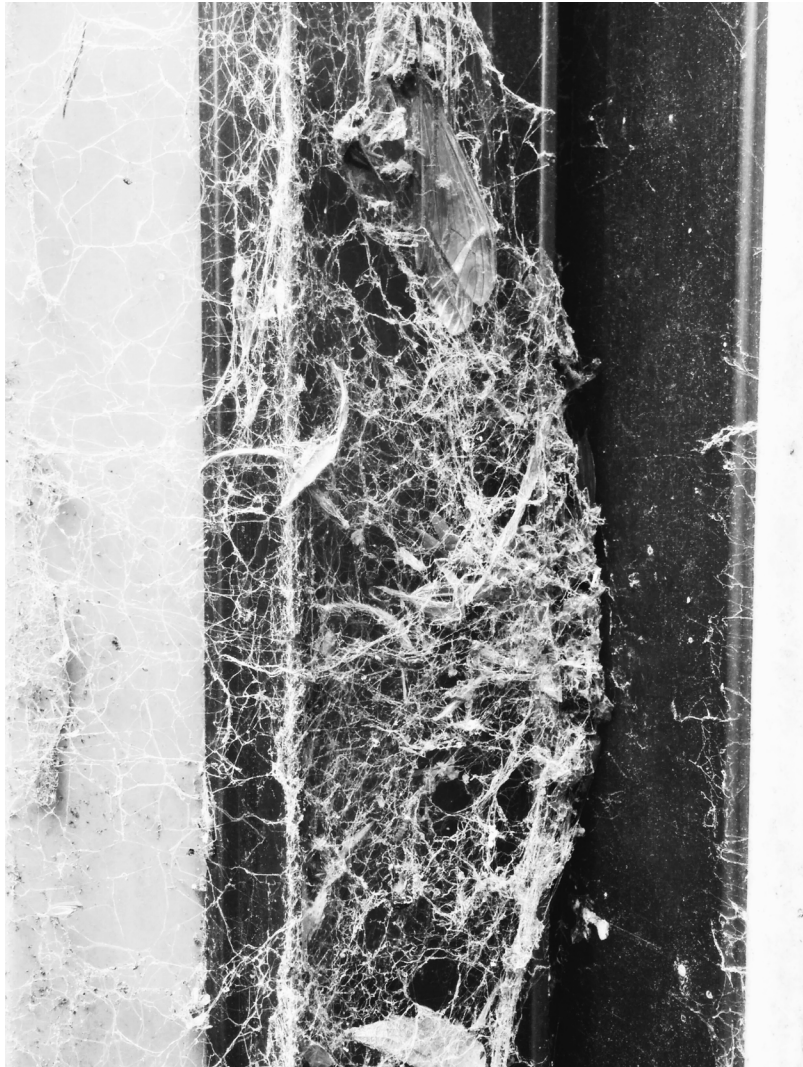
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wandering

“What is the intended outcome of your spiritual practice?”

My friend asked me this one day, and immediately, and instinctively, I replied: “I want to get out of the way.” This same intention sustains my art practice. They are not dissimilar. Both perpetuate my curiosity about reality. Both sustain an ongoing living inquiry. A *living* inquiry is a way of propagating thought. A plant, for example, is a living inquiry: the way a soft green entity grows from water and sunlight and soil is *the most mystifying thing in the universe*. Art and spiritual practice – and they are very much intertwined for me – are plants I nurture and through which I learn the art of getting out of the way.

Getting out of the way is how I become *nameless*: it is, to forget my (human) identity – even only momentarily. Getting out of the way makes the world seductively mysterious; when my usual assumptions dissipate, a sense of wonder can once more arise. Wondering is not knowing, a way to hear another knowing, the kind of knowing I hear in my tissues, my bones. My intuition is that art’s knowing emanates from this unknown. And I am deeply enamoured by *unknown*

knowing. Which is why I tend to it with the *terra incognita* that is my body, the perpetual 'unknown that I am'.

Being curious about this unknown that 'I' is sent me seeking. It led me to Japanese Butoh dance. Eventually, I moved to Japan for three years (2012 – 2015).¹ During this time I met the artist Masaki Iwana who introduced me to the dance of the "human as material entity".² This would become my path.

While in Japan I experienced ever-present dis-sociation; I became invisible within the prevailing social order. Forever the *gaijin* – the 'alien' – I was now the *unknown* entity. I lived a strange existence, supporting myself through undocumented work, teaching English to businesspeople. Without a permanent employment contract, I was unable to even rent an apartment. I depended on the goodwill of strangers. Becoming attuned to chance and synchronicity was a survival tactic: auspicious connections sustained me.³ My first home in Tokyo was offered to me as 'a plant caretaker'.

This itinerant state meant my art studio had to be portable; what could be more portable than my body? Attuning my creative experimentation to the unknown entities moving (through) me incited an intense period of embodied research.⁴ My impulse clearly chimed with Butoh founder, Tatsumi Hijikata's, provocation to his fellow artists to explore their own darkness over contemporary trends:

Why don't they try drinking from the wells within their own bodies? They should instead drop a ladder deep into their own bodies and climb down it. Let them pluck the darkness from within their own bodies and eat it. But they always seek resolution from outside themselves.⁵



Fig. 1. Tadanori Yokoo, *Tatsumi Hijikata and the Japanese - Rebellion of the Body*, Butoh Performance by Hijikata Tatsumi, Tokyo, 1968.

In Japan I met many seminal Butoh artists whom I invited to a series of conversations, which I later gathered into the book *Butoh, as Heard by a Dancer*.⁶ What I heard from these exchanges was this: Butoh is not about self-expression, by *not* expressing, by getting out of the way, the body material – the *nikutai*, ‘flesh/meat body’ – comes to reflect time’s passage. The dancer seeking an encounter with the unknown, enters a state of visceral materiality that allows time to appear in the living matter of her body.

~

Through my wanderings I met the artist Kaoru Murakami. She invited me to respond to her installation, *Bulb Cities*, in an abandoned school in Gunma prefecture for the Nakanojo Biennale of Contemporary Art (2015). During our stay, Kaoru and I were invited by a group of other participating artists, to join an informal tour, to visit artworks, and give short artists’ talks. In these talks each artist emphasized the work (of their art): the time taken, the processes involved, the sensitive relations to context and environment. They highlighted the physical labour, while the conceptual frameworks seemed less important. The work of artist Jaime Humphreys, *Lie of the Land* (2015), made a real impression on me, not only in its scale and delicacy, but as a practice of living time. *Lie of the Land* is a topographical map of the area of Shima Onsen in Gunma. The artist had painstakingly recreated this map on the floor of a former gymnasium. It had taken him more than two months of constant work, sweeping minute amounts of sand on the floor. The ephemeral sand sculpture, the artist’s talks, the art work, all of this stayed with me.

~

On September 30th, the eve of my departure from Japan in 2015, I went to Shimbashi, Tokyo’s financial district and danced (my first public) *Collapse*. Dressed as a ‘salary man,’ I let gravity pull me down.⁷ It took approximately 27 minutes to crumple me to the pavement. This action is the juncture at which I began to wander beyond Butoh.

I returned to Nakanojo Biennale in 2017. My residency studio was a disused bath house in Shima Onsen, located next to a river. The derelict space was covered in mould and spiders. And after a series of extreme typhoons during the four weeks of my residency, the river turned into a dangerous torrent. Here, immersed in constant damp and white noise, I listened to the lessons of Butoh – about *time as living matter* that comes from not expressing. I applied them to engaging with the generative constraints of this environment, as an invocation to the (unknown) nonhuman entities to guide my body.⁸

I returned to Tokyo in early September that same year for one last interview for my book. I was meeting Kuniichi Uno, ‘the philosopher of the body’.⁹ Uno found a lifelong inspiration in his close associations with three important Butoh dancers – Tatsumi Hijikata, Ko Murobushi, Min Tanaka.¹⁰ That day, our conversation began chaotically. We had met to speak of Butoh, but I no longer wanted to talk about Butoh’s past, I wanted to address its apparent prescience about the *con-tempo*-rary concern with the other than human. And then Uno guessed it: he steered us towards the topic of time, the “war on time” he called it.¹¹ He spoke of bodies exhausted by control and surveillance, and how there is an exhaustion that communes with the unknown through the body of the child, and that this exhaustion is what it takes to become “another than the other” – *to become nonhuman*. He was explaining all this to me through a



Photo: BOZZO

Fig. 2 Jaime Humphreys, *Lie of the Land*, 2015.

cryptic, notoriously untranslatable text entitled *Yameru Mahime* ('*La Danseuse Malade*' – *The Ailing Dancer*, 1983) written in Japanese by Butoh founder, Tatsumi Hijikata. Uno explained:

...it's as if the child knew everything in his own way, it's a somewhat reversed situation, where the child makes the adult Hijikata dance: as soon as he is born, the child wants to dance and think how to dance, he wants to discover dance everywhere ... it's something like that. This subject / object situation is not fixed, and the child is very voyeuristic, very contemplative, without looking. Hijikata often says that the child has eyes, but he can also detach that eye freely, he has this power.¹²

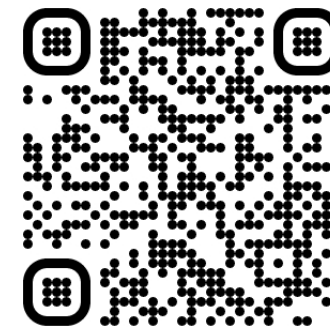
That description seeded something: a detached eye that moves, unobstructed by dualistic perceptions of reality, contemplating by dancing with "the humidity, the smells, the insects."¹³ But what I really heard was, the detached *I* is a practice for getting out of the way, and listening to the flow of unknown knowing.

∞

Fig. 3 *Spanda Ergo Sum*, 2-channel video & sound, 25:16, 2022.

In the Tantric tradition of Saiva Yoga, Spanda is a principle of vibration: the creative pulsation of the cosmos. Spanda is composed of two alternating aspects *unmesa* and *nimesa* – appearance and disappearance, manifestation and absorption, arising and subsiding – their succession is time itself. The images in this two-channel work are a record of the entire timeline of my doctoral research process across numerous locations. These spaces where I hear vibrations in materials and entities, become an ‘expanded studio’. The sound composition builds a polyphony of voices from recordings of my process and materials, hovering over a binaural drone frequency of air-conditioning systems.

Please wear headphones.



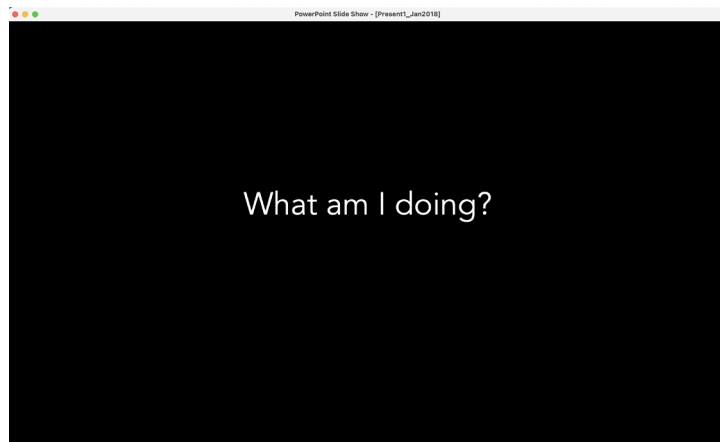


Fig. 4 "What am I doing? I don't know",
slides from my first doctoral presentation, 2018.

(dis)Orientation

... intelligence highly awakened is intuition, which is the only true guide in life.¹
~ J. Krishnamurti

I wonder, what kind of disposition would allow me to engage with the unknown, while safeguarding its opacity,² without seeking to explicate, represent, name it? I imagine a psychosomatic/somatopsychic³ way of tuning my body as cognitive instrument for listening to knowing as it oozes through matter, leaks into the material of my body. How could such a practice allow me to 'dance with the unknown' – the unknown that I am, the unknown other, including nonhuman others? How can this dance be a way of 'doing the work', the art work in this case?⁴ How can an art practice, informed by non-western wisdom philosophies, imagine an embodied ecological stance, open to collaboration with unknown entities?

I wonder.

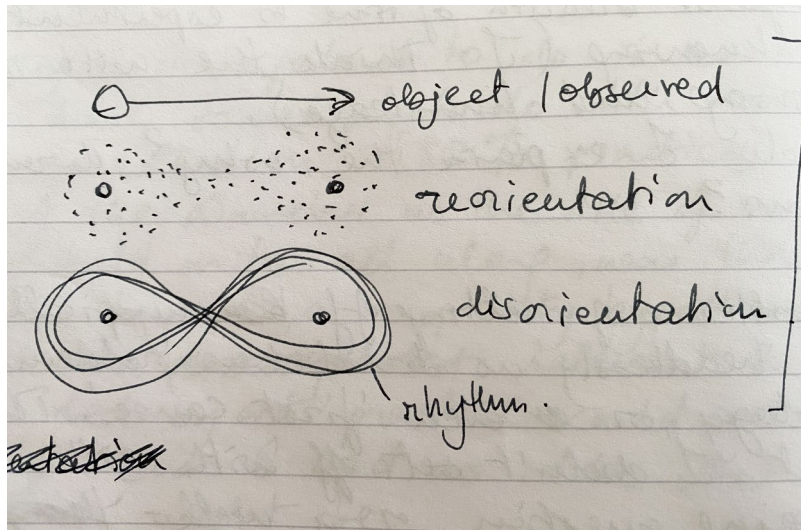


Fig. 5 *Reorientation, Disorientation, Rhythm: a dance of nonduality*, diagram on ruled paper, 120 x 70 mm, 2022.

The ‘detached eye’, the koan I heard through Butoh, has oriented me along this path. It led me to the detached ‘I’,⁵ a state of awareness that is nonpersonal, distributed, by being, paradoxically it would seem, embedded, and profoundly steeped in granular materiality. The detached ‘I’ is the capacity to listen, through the body to a more-than-human field. Time is being listened to, in material forms and agential forces. Detaching the I as practice means making time to engage with ‘temporosity’ – the oozing quality – and ‘templuralities’ – the diversity of tempos that become audible. The core question of this practice is ‘who am I?’ – who is the ‘I’? It unfolds into two further questions: Who leads and who follows? What do ‘we’ – I, you, we – want? Together they form a tripartite inquiry for detaching the ‘I’ as proposed in this thesis.

I shaped this path for detaching the I from inventive embodied practices. At heart, detaching the I, stems from a desire to expand the notion of dance beyond the human. This led me towards unrestricted improvisations, melding artistic media, spiritual traditions, theoretical, philosophical, and oral sources. The sheer multiplicity of ‘dance partners’ makes me wonder if practices of detaching the I, could not only perforate boundaries of selfhood (I) and species (human/nonhuman), but if such a doctoral project, might imagine practices for “polydisciplinamory”?⁶

~

An ‘artefact’ emerged from this eclectic art practice; an installation as instrument, composed of exuviae gathered from my research, combining materiality and sound.⁷ The instrument is distributed: it doesn’t have a fixed body, rather its modular components are

perpetually reconfigured and can accrete relatively infinitely. I play this instrument while wearing a handcrafted sound synthesizer suit made of conductive copper yarn. Inside the instrument, I become a ‘sonic-gardener’, tending to elements, connecting, amplifying, or modulating the space’s rhythmic field. The system affords freeform real-time collaborations with other human players, and nonhuman ones – wind, electricity, etc.⁸ The materials used to create this instrument are diaphanous, fragile, and sensitive to temperature, oxidation, and acidity. The quality of the materials sets the dynamics of choreographies of care needed to interact with the instrument. The expanded electronic interface works with visual programming languages, Max and Pure Data, to create two levels of data sonification. What is heard is the sonification of haptic and latent interactions, (analogue) feedback occurring intermittently between the two circuits (the capacitive sensor and the wearable copper suit) and the ‘polyvocalities’ – the noise of ambient electrical charge – being continuously affected by diverse human and nonhuman entities.

Knowing at large

I consider a ‘rhythmic field’ a vibration emanating from a subtle dimension that seeps through materiality: I call it knowing at large.

~

Art research troubles notions of rigour in academia, and certain research prerogatives even reveal a ‘masculine’ academic culture that may well be culturally-specific.⁹ Once, at an annual review panel,

I was asked why I chose academia and not a monastery, a cave, or some other ascetic retreat for my seeking. Yes, my path is one of liquid knowing over hard facts,¹⁰ and my research emerges from a methodology steeped in ‘oceanic feeling’.¹¹ The reason I choose to solve a cryptic Butoh riddle through the tortuous academic path of a doctorate in art is because I have experienced another kind of knowing, and I don’t want it to be lost.

In Japan I was immersed in direct transmission, a quasi-osmotic relation of learning between master and student that is central to many crafts, martial arts, and wisdom traditions in India, China, and Japan.¹² When one of my teachers, Ko Murobushi, passed away unexpectedly, I remember thinking “let this not be lost.” These oral, proximal, somatic modes of knowing might disappear because, globalisation tends to extend the Western (Anglo-American) cultural body (and its language); the internet and global computational technologies, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic, engender remote, self-sufficient, and accelerated paths to knowledge;¹³ and obviously there is the pervasive smartphone-grab, to ‘frack our attention’.¹⁴ A friend was telling me that when his daughter entered the ‘why’ stage, around age four, if he ever admitted, ‘I don’t know’, she’d press him to “look it up then!”

Knowing (at large) is intended as a distinction from the dominant episteme. A friend, the author Minna Salami, calls this dominant body, what I’m simply calling knowledge, Europatriarchal Knowledge. Minna links it to a ‘devaluation’ of “the erotic, the feminine, and the poetic because they are connected to the natural world”.¹⁵ I reiterate her marvellous choice of adjective: knowing at large leaks with this

sensuous (more-than-human) feminine charge.¹⁶ I aim to revalue sensuousness by orienting my research around knowing’s unknown.

Sara Ahmed offers a language of orientation. Being oriented around alludes to the dominant centre, which when it sets its sights on policies of ‘inclusion’ of (‘oriental’) others, orients towards these novel perspectives. But orientation towards only tends to extend the dominant centre’s orbit.¹⁷ My leap into the unknown happens at escape velocity, breaching the perimeter around knowledge’s dominant core. To nurture knowing’s body, I orient my research around it. Could this orientation create an ‘energetic duality’ that allows for a renewed movement of thought and ideas? Because a duality is not a binary. A binary is an irresolvable opposition, either zero or one, while a duality allows for two different states, the wave/particle duality for example. This energetic movement comes from the generative opposition created by powerful forces orbiting both centres.¹⁸ In this thesis, my tendency towards unruliness is a politics, a resistance to certain academic research paradigms. Nurturing the generative tension of duality in my approach is a minoritarian way of recalibrating research, towards imagining as-yet-unknown nondual dances of knowing-knowledge that art practice affords in the academic institution (Fig. 5). While these ideas clearly chime with John Dewey’s century-old insights that body-mind is the source of “nondualistic” immediacy of experience in art, contemporary education is still more cerebral than somatic.¹⁹

‘Knowing at large’ doesn’t originate in art theory, rather it emanates from the practices of my heritage. The principle of nonduality (called Advaita in Hinduism) conveys the non-separation of creator and

creation as an experience of unity, and is first mentioned in the late Vedic record of the Upanishads.²⁰ This principle called ‘nonduality’ underpins my personal syncretic path across Sufi, Daoist, and Buddhist wisdom traditions. From these threads I weave an ecology of practices for embodied listening, which means attuning to knowing by “dissolving the subject into a position that is neither being nor nothing”, and is enabled by *techne* of “rapture”,²¹ that might invoke “new cognitive dispositions”.²²

My citational practice prioritizes orality as the intimate field of knowing that can be heard all around, all the time.²³ I choose to listen to lesser-known voices and ways of knowing. The ‘labour of listening’ informs my collaborations with humans and nonhuman organisms, entities, spaces, atmospheres.²⁴ Those I listen with are the contextual field of my work; Space of the Nameless designates a space to practice attuned knowing, with cognitive assemblages that include unknown knowers.²⁵

Finally, knowing does not avail itself to logical (human) argument: while not rational, it is not *irrational*. It is what philosopher, Yuk Hui calls ‘non-rational’, a term inspired by Daoism, that goes “beyond phenomenal truth”. And fittingly, Hui (rather curiously) adds that the non-rational emits a rhythmic vibration.²⁶

Disorienting the ‘I’ as methodology

I went seeking for the detached I beyond the phenomenal. Intuition guided me. In practice this meant that I didn’t start with a well-worded research question, follow a pre-existing methodology to investigate it, nor did I arrive at conclusions in a timely way.²⁷ My research’s



Fig. 6 *Thirty minutes of silence*, Goldsmiths University, 2020.

awkward turn meant timelines (and timeliness) were frayed.

I was accepted into the doctoral cohort at Goldsmiths University the year the 80% practice-led pathway opened. Did I understand it too literally, but I felt excited by the prospect that my art practice could generate its own knowledge. If the ‘original contribution to knowledge’ should bloom directly from the field of my art practice, it felt paramount that I put myself in service to knowing, by getting out of the way. I just dived in, scattered seeds, let wildflowers grow. Still, the unknowability of this process made me anxious and hyperactive; I kept trying to second-guess my motives and intentions, even at times researching performatively to give credence to my activities.²⁸ As I set things off in all directions, I cross-pollinated media unrestrictedly. Soon my supervisors got anxious; I should stop making, it was time to harvest. But was it? I work with diverse cognizers – biological, technological, human – who don’t tend to obey human notions of timeliness.²⁹ Time really preoccupied me: not too fast, not too slow. Clearly my main task was to attune to rhythms and tempos animating my research. Such delicate work and academic demands to explicate my methods created a growing tension.

Researchers before me have grappled with this tension.³⁰ What this existing field of art research establishes is that the thesis’ contribution to knowledge can be inextricably derived, even completely inseparable from the research artefact. And that the ‘artefact as original contribution’ need not have a physical form, neither as object nor as writing; it might be as ephemeral as an utterance, or an atmosphere, as ungraspable as the temporal duration of a process. These existing research paths emboldened me to stick to my intuitions and build a methodology following the desire line of knowing as vibration.³¹

~

My methodology for detaching the I begins with the koan of the detached eye, the practice-riddle I encountered through Butoh dance.³² The dancer Akira Kasai had spoken of it, as had Yoshito Ohno, while Ko Murobushi described a sense of distance from the ‘self’. But Masaki Iwana’s evocations really awoke my imagination.³³ And then, in September 2017 at the cusp of beginning my doctoral research, Kuniichi Uno reminded me of this ‘child’s eye-view’ that “wants to discover dance everywhere.”³⁴ It must have been this exchange that turned me into a ‘kata-breaker’.³⁵ Kata in Japanese means the spirit of a form. In *Wandering*, I write that I wanted to go beyond Butoh. I wanted to unfold a new dimension of Butoh – what philosopher Jean Gebser calls a ‘mutation’–³⁶ to expand dance, through the riddle of the detached eye, and imagine embodied epistemologies for engaging with the unknown. Dance in this sense would no longer be just a performance limited to human enaction or enjoyment, but what Erin Manning calls an expanded ‘dance of attention’, that traverses membranes, creates porosity between bodies, and necessitates tempos of care.³⁷ Its moves arise through interstitial ‘intra-actions’, “affectively charged multisensory dance, technological intimacies, remembering, figuring, embodied mathematics.”³⁸

~

Certain misconceptions about Butoh abound,³⁹ perpetuated by an aesthetic, often exoticized outside (also inside) Japan, that portrays Butoh as a loose, ‘anything goes’ dance form through which to express personal pathos or narrative, while covered in white body paint. Perhaps initially my attraction to Butoh was a search for ‘self-expression’, but it soon shifted to the socio-political landscape out of

which Butoh emerged. In Japan's post-war era Butoh germinated in a hotbed of avant-garde artists, engendered by two principal founders, Tatsumi Hijikata and Kazuo Ohno. Butoh's original openness of authorship and the vibrant collaborations it enabled across artistic fields was both very unusual and deeply compelling.⁴⁰ Through this movement (only later named Butoh), a diverse group of artists questioned the body's identifications with nation, gender, and other cultural taboos which came to the fore after Japan's defeat by America. Butoh's recurring tendency towards a 'rebellion of the flesh', meant resisting aspects of Westernization. Hijikata's observation was that "to a production-oriented society, the aimless use of the body, which I call dance, is a deadly enemy which must be taboo."⁴¹ These early artists focused on the flesh body (called *nikutai*), wishing to develop their resistance to dominant cultural forces inside their own matter. I consider Butoh a psychosomatic technique for intensifying the state of body as material, from which surges the "inner movement of politics" as dance.⁴²

~

My research revealed to me that Butoh is not a dance of self-expression.⁴³ Hijikata intimated that what wants to be expressed emerges by not expressing it.⁴⁴ Who then, or what, is creating the dance? This became my dance challenge. And I found the vivifying koan for guiding my practice in 'the detached eye'.⁴⁵ Butoh requires a disposition of getting (the I that wants to express) out of the way. The spaciousness this creates would allow for an unknown movement, because "Butoh dancers have got to position their bodies so that no one is able to guess their next movement"⁴⁶... not even the dancer themselves.

Here is where my path with Butoh converges with my spiritual path, a convergence made explicit in this thesis, by transmuting the riddle of the detached eye, into the detached I. This mutation extends Butoh's visceral charge beyond performance, distributing liveness into *aliveness*.

To clarify, detached does not indicate a Cartesian, remote 'god's eye view' or the observer's 'view from nowhere'.⁴⁷ This perception is at once impersonal, and intensely tethered to matter; the state Masaki Iwana calls "human as material entity" reveals this paradox.⁴⁸ The 'detached eye' originates in the detached perspective of *riken no ken* described by Zeami in the Japanese art of Noh theatre.⁴⁹ *Riken no ken* is still considered a mysterious teaching in Noh, and the kanji characters link it to another expression, *mokuzen shingo*, which implies 'heart vision'. Noh actor, Noboru Sano explains *riken no ken* as "seeing through your back, with heart".⁵⁰

~

To reorient knowledge around knowing, I've harnessed Butoh's 'intellectuality of the body' through this transmutation of 'eye' to 'I'.⁵¹ Detaching the 'I' is a way to (dis)orient 'I'-ness to a permeable namelessness. By disturbing notions of singular control, it invites indeterminacy, and chance, into artmaking, and fosters the 'heart vision' that perceives multitudes of collaborators, thus expanding knowing's body. The principle of the detached I implies 'thinking like a planet' from the locus of one's own body matter.⁵² In academia, the detached I might enable the disciplinary porosity Gayatri Spivak calls 'planet-thought', which is "to embrace an inexhaustible taxonomy of ... names".⁵³

~

‘Who am I?’ is the main question. It emerges from the transmutation of eye to I and guides my methodology. It may sound like an odd research question to pose in (Western) academia.⁵⁴ My source of inspiration is *neti neti* – not this not this – an apophatic practice from the Hindu Advaita Vedanta tradition. A renowned guru of nonduality, Nisargadatta Maharaj, describes it as follows: “*Neti-neti*: Not this, not this; the analytic process of progressively negating all names and forms, (*nama-rupa*) of which the world is made, in order to arrive at the eternal, Ultimate Truth.”⁵⁵ *Neti-neti* is the *practice* of recursively questioning the ‘I’ to experience the absence of I-ness. It is not intended to elicit any conclusive answers.

‘Who am I?’ – who is this ‘I’ that I embody? – is the implicit query (or *query*) throughout this research journey. By destabilizing a priori knowledge of the self as knower, it propagates a radical curiosity that sustains my intention to get the ‘I’ out of the way and allow the unknown to express itself through my art practice.

Disorienting the ‘I’ exposed me to a dizzying diversity of sources.⁵⁶ What conjoins Butoh dance, posthuman feminist phenomenology, water science, cognitive research, and the “unification of the moral order and cosmic order through technical activities”, what Hui calls ‘cosmotechnics’,⁵⁷ is the principle of nonduality: what I’m looking for within (apparently) incommensurate fields is how contemporary thought can inform detaching the I as a spiritually-attuned and embodied politics.

Detaching the ‘I’

CHOICE OF METHODS, PRACTICES, MATERIALS

In ballet training, I learned to spot. This means fixing your gaze on a point in the room and when you turn, you whip your head around, to keep your eyes on that spot: maintaining this orientation prevents dizziness. In the Sufi dance of the dervishes, you do the opposite, you allow your eyes to go out of focus so that the world spinning around you loses its clear contours. This dance requires a shift of sensory attention, from the narrowly focused eye, towards a landscape-in-motion, the totality as field. In the Sufi tradition, disorientation is considered a non-rational way of knowing, that comes from ‘listening with the heart’⁵⁸ Listening in this sense guides my choice of methods, practices, and materials, as I mutate (Butoh’s) detached eye to the detached I.

~

Detaching the I is to summon the elusive ‘muse’, much like early spiritualist channelling – often by women, excluded from the professional artistic sphere.⁵⁹ As the Surrealists did before me, with their use of early myographic sensor technologies, I too have used current technologies – EEGs, breath and fitness monitors – to enable states of automatism. This brought me closer to the sonic experiments of the 1960s and 70s, to Fluxus, Alvin Lucier’s realtime compositions with EEGs, and John Cage’s use of the I Ching to create indeterminacy.⁶⁰ Other influential currents come from the Judson Church’s negation of the spectacle of dance by performing pedestrian gestures, or using uncontrollable cues for example traffic light signals, to diffuse their artistic agency.⁶¹

Unsurprisingly, my own novel methods of ‘getting out of the way’ (entering ‘automatism’) resonate with two post-war Japanese art groups. Gutai preceded, and Mono-Ha developed contemporaneously with Butoh. The 1950s Gutai manifesto expounded the ‘meeting of spirit and matter’ in the artist’s body, which resulted in experimental and often ephemeral artworks that centred live bodies: Kazuo Shiraga’s “Challenging the Mud” (1955), and Atsuko Tanaka’s “Electric Dress” (1956) are relevant here.⁶² The second is the Mono-Ha group. Their choice of materials was intended to provoke a ‘dislocation’ allowing materiality to be encountered ‘as it is’, without name. Or as Kishio Suga proposed, ‘leaving things alone’, to grasp their nameless state.⁶³ Like the Mono-Ha artists, my methods also invoke materiality, not as resource, but as interface, a mirror through which to reflect on the (nonconscious, imperceptible) cultural introjections and conditioning that might be steering my will’s intentions.⁶⁴ Ultimately, my methods chime with Iwano’s mantra to “do nothing is best”:⁶⁵ to not express, and so, detach the I.

~

Detaching the ‘I’ is largely a training in ‘temporal nimbleness’,⁶⁶ for “loosening of entrenched and typically unmoveable operations that constitute the ‘I.’”⁶⁷ The undoing of the stable ‘I’ of the knower, enables temporal polyphonies of unknown knowers to be heard.⁶⁸ So while, at first glance ‘getting out of the way’, ‘doing nothing’, seem to be dispositions towards a more minimalist practice, it’s my commitment to recursive forms of practicing – as ‘time-work’⁶⁹ – that have elicited the diversity and even the noisiness, of my art practice over the research timeline, including the intricate design of the submission.

~

From her research into yogic practice and Zen Buddhist meditation, Antonia Pont derives four criteria for practicing: structural form, repetition, relaxation, and repeating repetition.⁷⁰ They help to explain the underlying ‘logic’ and range of my ecology of practices.

Structural forms include serialized dance actions (*Collapse*), long-term improvisational experiments (*Liquidity*) and their notation as scores, a work contract for the fabrication of an unknown object (Somatic Revolutions), material experimentation in making bio-art membranes and collecting sticks. Each provides a support structure⁷¹ – a framework – for repetition, relaxation, and the commitment to repeating until “the repetition eclipses the doer and even the content of the practice”.⁷²

Dances and scores

Dance remains my core practice of embodied inquiry. All four sections of the writing refer to my dance research. Collapse is an invitation to dance with gravity through a protracted fall: I’ve been dancing it in numerous locations since 2015. Liquidity began with a contract to myself through which I vowed to practice daily until I grasped what liquidity might be as a dance. Wobbling is an invitation to be out of balance and thereby encounter meta-stable states of (dis)individuation.⁷³ Dances of 0 – 1 expand the spectrum of dance’s becoming by recursively lingering at the froth between movement and the coalescence of form.

These support structures afford repetition; ‘oceanic feeling’ is known to emerge from repetition. Under another guise, I seek the flow state, at the threshold of boredom and anxiety, between the known task and

the unknown challenge.⁷⁴ The 700-year old Sufi whirling tradition is a kind of (repetitive) ‘flow framework’. In the Daoist martial art of Tai Chi Chuan, also called ‘dryland swimming’, forms and gestures are repeated to move in harmony with the ocean of chi.⁷⁵ These two established embodied ways of knowing, which I practice, guide my invention of fluid dance forms throughout this project.

Psychologist Csikszentmihalyi revealed the flow state as an experience of effortlessness and timelessness which only arises through a shift in egoic consciousness brought about by the task at hand.⁷⁶ When I dance Liquidity for example, I know that shift. To transmit it, I create (automatic) drawn scores directly after the practice, while embodied knowing animates and is transduced by my still trembling hand: in this notation, line is rhythm. These graphic scores are not intended to be scrutinized with eyes, rather their reverberation induces a somatopsychic reaction to the line’s vibrational discharge.⁷⁷

Handcrafted electronics

It’s quite randomly – or perhaps auspiciously⁷⁸ – that I got involved with handcrafted electronic technology. It was one result of ‘detaching the I’, of getting out of the way and rather myopically following a process, that I found myself in this field. Learning to sonify data from electronic artworks, I researched early Minimalist music.⁷⁹ And so, I unwittingly strayed into an area I’d never heard of and found an appropriate place: ‘new interfaces for musical expression’ (NIME) also seeks perspectives beyond the “unitary corporeal body.”⁸⁰

Handcrafted computational interfaces of this kind have little to

nothing in common with cause-effect systems of control. You can’t push a button and get a predictable outcome because these systems include uncontrollable elements – latent electricity, micromovements (shaking, trembling) in the case of the Crochet Resistance Suit – they invite randomness. The suit is not built around (human-centered) efficiency; the suit dances me.⁸¹ It hinders ‘my’ freedom to move how ‘I’ want. It enables not expressing. ‘I’ don’t control this technology and working with ‘what doesn’t work’, according to human assumptions, makes these technologies surprisingly attuned to my research inquiry.⁸²

Sticks and membranes

The text *Choice (Wobbling)* introduces my ‘method’ of collecting sticks and *Skinship (Liquidity)* opens with some close-up images of bio-art membranes. Collecting straight sticks and cooking up membranes both frame timework. Looking for ‘straight sticks’ is an absurd task that gets me outside and makes me spend long hours with my head lowered towards the ground. The sticks may appear straight, but when dried, they curve. Making membranes was inspired by a conversation with a fellow maker about the environmental cost of casting materials. I opted to make bio plastics out of ingredients that are proximal to my body: vegetable glycerine that I use on my skin, and agar seaweed, part of my vegetarian diet. Membranes are organic films, ‘bodies of water’, like me: in a dry space they desiccate, in a humid space they become soft and pliant.⁸³ Each membrane is different; no matter how much I try to repeat a formula, it’s impossible to recreate the same texture. The game becomes how to achieve the

(unachievable) ‘perfect membrane.’⁸⁴ The reactive nature of both these organic collaborators is a testament to their aliveness. Their unstable form is influenced by atmospheric conditions, a factor I, without access to the temperature control of a museum infrastructure, have little influence over. They teach me about wilting: a vital technique for ‘a corpse desperately struggling to stand upright.’⁸⁵

Becoming headless, a polycephalic writing

The decreation of my habitual self through the repetition of these practices, allowed my initial anxieties about research outcomes to relax into a patience towards what wants to emerge. This equanimity nurtures wonder and “wonder makes you call yourself and your world into question.”⁸⁶ These subtle (inner) wonderings required an original form of writing.

The poetic register of my noetic reflections doesn’t disseminate facts. I deploy writing from an embodied place, hanging in the zone, at the threshold, where the voice of a singular ‘I’ takes form. Recursively wondering who speaks ‘queers’ the research question, by incessantly calling into question the stable ‘I’ identity. The intended thrust line imposed by an ‘I’ is thus consistently warped through inquisitive interruptions, a form of apophatic practice (neti-neti). Frequent shifts between deictic positions, pronouns, and tenses, veering into suggestive guided meditations and visualizations, all perpetuate this ‘polycephalic’ (many headed) voice, inviting the reader to also join the inquiry through probing questions.⁸⁷

My desire to discover a language suited to the embodied intellect was also initiated by my conversation with Uno about Hijikata’s last

text, *Yameru Mahime* (The Ailing Dancer). As I could not access Hijikata’s ‘untranslatable text’ I opted to discover its molecular dance within myself by combining diverse sources and practices.

My writing feels for the sensuous charge of *écriture féminine*.⁸⁸ I discover a model in Clarice Lispector’s works, *The Passion According to G.H.* (1964), and *Água Viva* (1973). Here I find a non-individuated, fluidly shifting register, that never fully loses the experiencing ‘I’. I am inspired by Lispector’s linguistic improvisations immersed in vibration.⁸⁹ To achieve this in my own style, I create syncopation by interrupting my personal reflections with endless questions. Like perforations of memory this re-membling darns new relations, intermeshing self and other, author and reader, in each moment, as if each instant were a first encounter, a return to zero.⁹⁰

To arrive at the granularity of experience of *Yameru Mahime*, I have additionally repurposed the cognitive research method of the Microphenomenological (MP) Interview, developed by Claire Petitmengin.⁹¹ I found the MP interview, partly inspired by Petitmengin’s Vipassana meditation practice, ideally suited to my aims.⁹² The core technique in Vipassana, an ancient form of meditation (which I also practice), attributed to Siddharta Gautama the Buddha himself, is the development of a witnessing eye on one’s own body: to see one’s own flesh with a detachment that leads to equanimity.⁹³

Making discoveries

THE ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION

Detaching the 'I' is primarily a sensory disposition, another way of seeing. I already learned this through the detached eye, when Masaki Iwana demanded dancers keep an open-eyed gaze, to allow the total exposure of our 'inner landscape'.⁹⁴ The eyes are connected to the heart through the vagus nerve, and adopting a soft focus activates the parasympathetic nervous system, linked to feelings of safety, sociability, and love.⁹⁵ In this research journey going from the detached eye to detaching the I, to attune to my numerous known and unknown collaborators, required deepening this practice into a 'transmodal' attention, where all sensory modalities become undifferentiated:⁹⁶ eyes are skin, pores are ears, the mouth opens to see, the churning body listens, 'as if to incense'.⁹⁷ This state of openness, at the 'fringe of consciousness', welcomes the nameless, embraces the unknown. Lingering in not knowing, resisting the urge to leap into 'what I know',⁹⁸ and surrendering to the vulnerability this necessitates is communicated in the writing, which in turn prepares the reader for an encounter with the 'artefact', where transmodal immersion is transmitted through a polyvocal art form.

Installation as instrument

The installation as instrument is an immersive artwork. Conductivity guides the choice of components: copper, bio-sculptures, gels and liquids, electronic processors, cables, wiring and sensor technology. Drawn scores, ceramic and glass vessels, plaster casts, textiles,

wood, stones, mirrors also constitute its expanded body – the list is not exhaustive. The instrument's morphing modular nature allows for freeform collaborations through its activation.⁹⁹ Witnesses are engulfed in the installation's sound field, which makes audible the activity of ambient agencies. A dissonant note is a 'readymade' concealed somewhere in the instrument's body on each install.¹⁰⁰ It acts as a teetering point following the principle of Yin and Yang, where the presence of the opposite polarity perpetuates movement.¹⁰¹

Is it an exhibition, an installation, a performance, a concert, a dance, a ritual?

The Indian term for music, sangita is song, play, intonation, instrumentation, and dance "combined in every action."¹⁰² This instrument plays such music. Like the raag form of Indian music, it 'entertains' not just humans but the "already entertaining environment".¹⁰³ The components, purposefully left in flux, become support structures for knowing at large, which is amplified through an activation of the installation, in the presence of witnesses.¹⁰⁴ This time-based moment establishes a *Space of the Nameless*, an elastic spacetime where I's (and eye's) wonder, and bodies listen, and knowing diffuses as an acoustic perfume.

(Though there are other artists who also make artwork that defies disciplinary boundaries, I won't explain this piece through comparison, not because I think it unique, rather, to safeguard the unknown this instrument holds in latency.)

~

This artefact arose from practicing detaching the I. It truly shifted my attitude to the live presence of my body in my artworks: from performance to activation. An activation is no longer about 'me', the named individual, 'performing'. Instead, as I listen, I dispose myself to this sonic environment. I have used many other media in my research, video, photography, sound recordings, all technologies designed for explorations of close-ups, metamorphosis, or time-travel even (in "AO", "Spanda Ergo Sum" and "Three Seductions of Consciousness"). But my *work* was to create this molecular dimension in my sense of 'I', to make my body the *techne* for this temporal and scalar agility, not just as artwork but as life-skill. Did I achieve this? I don't know. But practicing detaching the I in the context of 'playing' this instrument, with and for others, is a lesson in how to attune to the music and the noise of the world, and responding moment by moment, to compose in new and unknown ways, as the process unfolds in real-time.

~

Space of the Nameless is not a repeatable ('falsifiable') experiment. If you, the reader, were to follow my methodology, I can almost guarantee you would not arrive at the same result. The instrument as installation, while obviously original, is not the 'original contribution' by itself. Rather, this thesis' knowing vibrates throughout the body of work. All the nested parts, the writing, the installation as instrument, and its activation, function *as a whole*. The thesis' contribution cannot be grasped from any isolated part, just as a piano couldn't be played on one single key.

The practice of detaching the I is the original contribution to knowing. It is a method for engaging the unknown in the vicinity

of art.¹⁰⁵ It requires committing to practicing without knowing the outcome, dancing with the fragile, the ephemeral, the nameless, and listening as a protest, of patience, with heart: detaching the I dilates 'I'-ness into a much vaster expanse of time than one's lifetime. Though initially derived from my personal spiritual practice, detaching the I has led me, via my art practice, to imagine an embodied ecological politics, attentive and intuitive to the 'activism' called forth by a more-than-human field, that can be heard through my body. In academia, detaching the I, as embodied practice imagines ways to wade into the unknown opacities that *conjoin* (apparently) incommensurate disciplines by lingering in the awkward (generative) silences of discourse. Learning to listen to this unknown begins in the terra incognita of your body, as an act of communion and companionship to the planet and the vast ecology of others whose political voices may be difficult to hear, let alone discern.

Four koans for detaching the I

The leading question, 'who am 'I'? branches into two more questions; 'who leads and who follows?' – a question you'd ask in a dance duet, addressed to an assemblage of knowers; 'what do I/you/*we* want?' – a way to intuit pivotal stages of in-formation, that require an agential shift.¹⁰⁶ These three questions are the heart (and arteries) of the roadmap for detaching the I. They are nurtured by four practice koans, which also serve as portals to the eight texts that follow:

0 - 1:

Is time becoming thin or is it becoming thick?

Collapse:

Transition happens through the left hand.

Liquidity:

I too want to be a saunterer, I don't want to walk in straight lines.

Wobbling:

Stand on one foot and dance to the rhythm of a blade of grass.

What do they mean? Nothing. They don't have a rational meaning. They came to me quite unexpectedly, mostly during movement research moments. I just wrote them down, with my left hand – I am normally right-handed – so that I wouldn't analyse or correct them. Each one seemed to convey a poetic distillation of the methods and practices of one of the four sections of writing, transmitted in the form of a pedagogical koan. They are provocations, aids to practice, intended to *vivify* this thesis' knowing.

Form of the thesis and *mode d'emploi*

The written presentation of the thesis perpetuates poly-disciplinarity in its unusual form. The texts and artworks are presented as seven printed and handbound chapbooks contained in an archival box. An abstract print is rolled into the top level of the box. It unfurls when the box is unpacked. The print is a Drishti Device, intended to establish an initial pause, a moment to soften the eyes and open inner vision.¹⁰⁷

The book (that you are reading) contains the required front matter, details of contents and artworks, and the texts Wandering and (dis)Orientation. After the present book, read the introductory text, Somatic Revolutions, which charts the development of *The Crochet Resistance Suit*. There are then eight texts contained in four sections:

0-1: Grammar | Hypertime

Collapse: Who am I? | Boredom Bardo

Liquidity: Skinship | Desire Line

Wobbling: Choice | Free Time

These should be accessed using the origami game of chance as interface. This is included in its folded form inside the box. The game needs to be pushed into its three-dimensional functional form for use (Fig. 7). If you are reading the digital PDF version, you can print out the game (see Fig. 8 p 73).

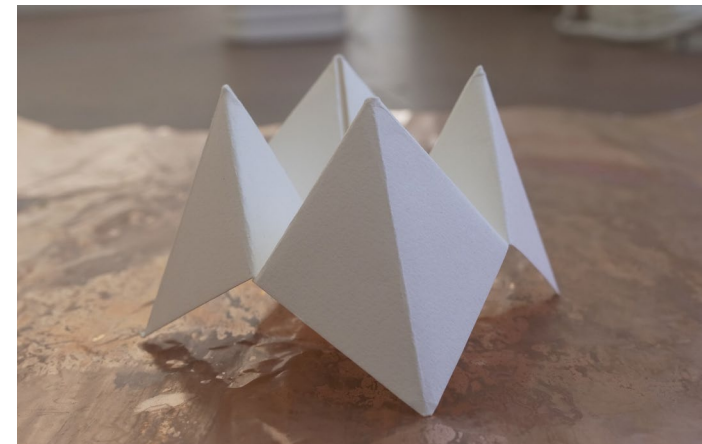


Fig. 7 *And so it begins*, origami game, installation detail, 2019.

Use the game to plot your own randomized path through the texts. On the top level of the game, you will find the four koans. Read each one in turn: I recommend reading them out loud, then closing your eyes, listening with your mind's eye. Pause, be patient. Choose the phrase that compels your curiosity. Count the number of words in the chosen koan, open and close the game that number of times. Now look at the numbers on the second level of the game. Choose one of the four numbers, unfold it to discover the title of the text underneath the number. This is your entry point. Before you start, remember which riddle got you there. Practice it: write it down, recall it intermittently as you read, and activate it physically, with your body. Keep a written record of your chosen numbers/texts. Repeat this process, finding your way through, until you have exhausted all choices. As choices reduce, the trajectory becomes clearer. Each text offers a secondary navigation option as hypertext veins connecting themes across different sections and indicated in footnotes.

Using the game to access the texts is disorienting. It requires a constant recalibration, each time from a different entry point, instead of a prescribed direction specified in a regular table of contents. Two texts in any one section won't necessarily be read consecutively. Holding material in latency is also a practice in the reading.

The texts contain numerous images and links. Images organised serially concentrate information about the process; they are intended as further immersive devices (pp 10 -18 of this book) and aren't captioned. All other figures, representing key moments, evidence, or details of artwork are fully captioned and referenced. QR codes lead

to audio-visual artworks and documentation: 'desire lines' – to be followed as desired.

The final booklet contains appendices and a full bibliography. Appendix I is my conversation with philosopher Kuniichi Uno. Appendix II is an MP interview about my Sufi dance practice with artist Petrine Vinje interviewing. Appendix III is Astrida Neimanis' response to my artwork for an art research presentation at Goldsmiths University in November 2019. Appendix IV contains documentation of the printed submission and of the viva voce exhibition.

~

The viva exhibition is entitled *O vive~ a Rhythmic Field*. I activate it through embodied composition, using the Crochet Resistance Suit as interface (the instrument also functions without intentional activation).¹⁰⁸ Each examiner is provided with a customized 'listening plinth', a low seating platform with a speaker inside of it that invite listening through the body as a 'non-linear' mode of witnessing.¹⁰⁹ The situation may feel unconventional, but the terms of examination rely on being immersed in unfamiliar territory. The design and form of the submission is a complete set of techne in service to this proviso, with indeterminacy and chance being woven into the encounter. The materials should therefore be accessed in this way and not by reverting to the assumption of any preordained order of reading.

Thesis submission and Library Deposit

O vive~ a Rhythmic Field is documented with professional video, sound recording, and stills photography. A selection of images is included in Appendix IV. A PDF digital version of the thesis as required by the Graduate School is prepared for library deposit. The PDF is not the intended form of the submission, and this document includes a statement to this effect. Additionally, the photographs and video of the viva installation are not the format presented for the examination and are not the way in which the artwork makes an original contribution.

The following documents will be posted in an appropriately sized box to each examiner's home address by the Art Department: the lot of seven handbound A5 booklets held by a latex band, a folded print of the game, and a blank A5 notebook.

I am aware that demands on (human) time risk getting in the way. I am also aware that the tempos of knowing at large, of the order of fermentation rather than instant gratification, may well leak beyond the temporal limits of this doctoral project and its examination. But time is a vital material in my research project, and so, it is intentionally woven into every part of the submission, and therefore integral to its examination. A heartfelt thank you for granting my research your precious time.

∞

Fig. 8 *Origami game of chance*, 284 x 284mm print on 90gsm paper, 2022.



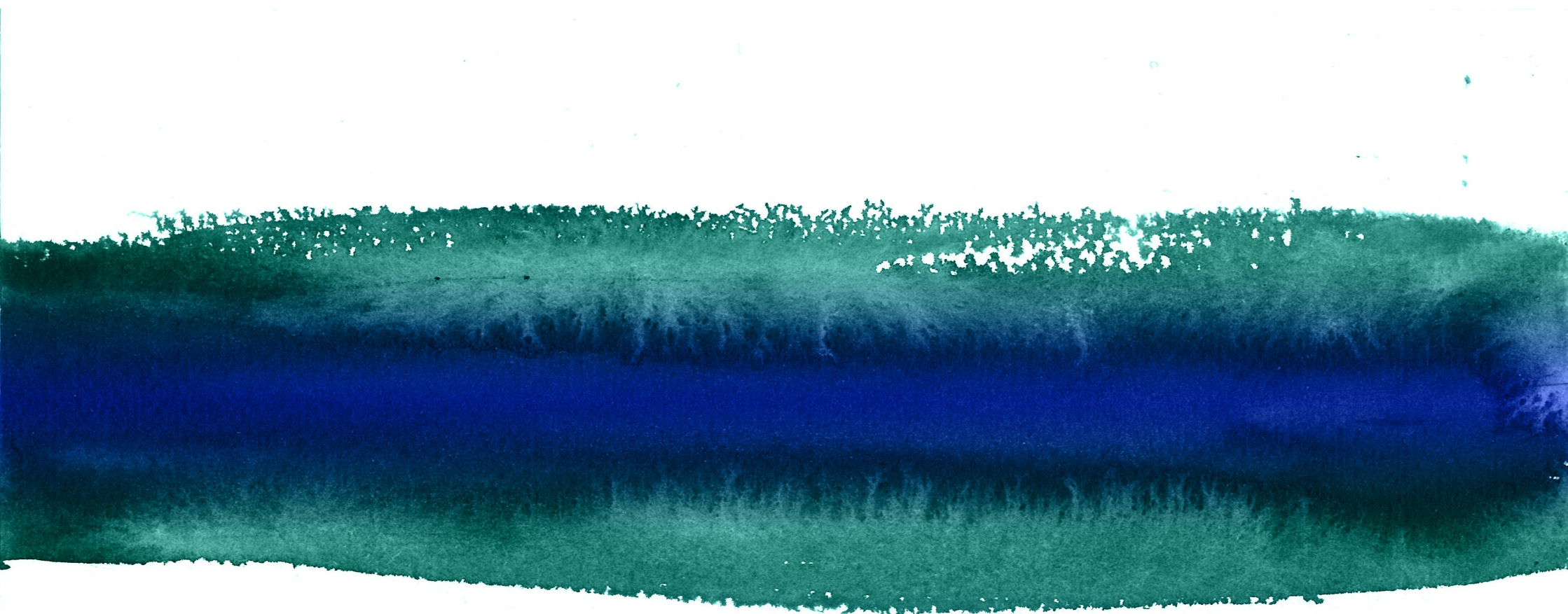


Fig. 9 *Drishti Device*, digital print on Fabriano Pergamon ice white paper, 700 x 330mm, 2022.

NOTES for **WANDERING**

1 In 2012, I was awarded the Lisa Ullmann Travelling Scholarship to go to Japan for three months. It was the dance artist, Yoshito Ohno (son of Kazuo Ohno, co-founder of Butoh dance) who helped me to obtain a cultural visa to stay in Japan.

2 Masaki Iwana, *The Intensity of Nothingness*. (Réveillon, South Normandy: La Maison du Butoh Blanc, 2011).

3 In India ritual events, such as weddings are planned on 'auspicious days', selected in consultation with astrological charts. In the Daoist tradition, the 'divinations' of the I Ching allow (human) insight into the three realms of earthly, social and cosmic order. See Richard Wilhelm and Cary F. Baynes, *The I Ching, or Book of Changes*, Bollingen Series, XIX (Princeton University Press, 1980).

4 When I arrived in Japan in 2012, my aim was to do embodied research. But as I'd never heard the term before, my intention ignited my experimentation across dance improvisation, durational urban walks, reflections on practice through visual art and experimental writing, etc. In 2017 I discovered Ben Spatz's methodology which he also called

‘embodied research’ and which he was proposing as a practice structure. For an application of my methodology of embodied research see Dominique Savitri Bonarjee, *Butoh, as Heard by a Dancer*, Routledge Advances in Theatre & Performance Studies (Oxon & New York: Routledge, 2024).

For Spatz’s see Ben Spatz, “Embodied Research: A Methodology,” *Liminalities: A Journal of Performance Studies* 13, no. 2 (2017): 31.

5 Tatsuhiko Shibusawa, “Hijikata Tatsumi: Plucking off the Darkness of the Flesh,” *TDR/The Drama Review* 44, no. 1 (March 2000): 51–52, <https://doi.org/10.1162/10542040051058852>.

6 Bonarjee, *Butoh, as Heard by a Dancer*.

7 Many of my English students in Tokyo were ‘salarymen’. In Japan this term is used to describe male white-collar workers. The following reference gives an account of the salaryman culture of exhausting work hours. See Atsuko Kanai, “‘Karoshi (Work to Death)’ in Japan,” *Journal of Business Ethics* 84, no. S2 (January 2009): 209–16, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-008-9701-8>. The Japanese economy has only recovered slightly. This has direct implications for employment. Both the seniority wage system and the lifetime employment system, which were popular during the period of economic growth in Japan, unavoidably changed to an outcome-wage system. Now there is greater mobility in employment, increased use of nonregular employees, and diversified working patterns. The

problem of karoshi – a potentially fatal syndrome resulting from long work hours – has been known since the early 1980s. This problem has become more serious in recent years. The purpose of this article is to provide an overview of the economic and employment conditions in Japan, as well as to examine the working lifestyle of Japanese men and its connection to “karoshi.” It is argued that (1

8 A generative constraint means an intentional limit that I might impose on my embodied research improvisations. Suggested by my supervisor Kristen Kreider, “Supervisory Meeting,” January 10, 2018.

I use both ‘more-than-human’ and ‘nonhuman’: they are not interchangeable but follow the distinction Masaki Iwana makes between ‘the human as material entity’ and ‘human identity as personhood’. More-than-human acknowledges the existence of a ‘human/social’ dimension on a theme. The term ‘nonhuman’ includes animate and inanimate materialities and entities, *and* (human) body material. See Masaki Iwana, *The Intensity of Nothingness*. (Réveillon, South Normandy: La Maison du Butoh Blanc, 2011).

9 Kuniichi Uno is the author of numerous books in Japanese, *A gênese de um corpo desconhecido / The genesis of an unknown body* (in Portuguese, 2012) and *Penser un Corps Épuisé / Thinking an Exhausted Body* (in French, 2018). Uno was also the only doctoral student of Gilles Deleuze.

10 Tatsumi Hijikata (1928 – 1986) is considered the founder of (Ankoku) Butoh, the ‘dance of utter darkness’. Ko

Murobushi (1947 - 2015) was a dance artist who developed his own approach to Butoh after briefly training with Hijikata in the early 1970s. Min Tanaka (b. 1946) is a dancer and actor who came into contact with Butoh in the 80s and also created his own method which he no longer calls Butoh.

11 The full transcript of my conversation with Uno is in Appendix 1.

12 Kuniichi Uno, interview by Dominique Bonarjee, September 2, 2017. See Appendix I (*italics mine*).

13 Uno.

NOTES for (dis)ORIENTATION

1 Jiddu Krishnamurti, *Education and the Significance of Life* (Chennai: Krishnamurti Foundation India, 2009), 11.

2 Édouard Glissant, *Poétique de La Relation*, Poétique III (Mesnil-sur-l'Estrée: Gallimard, 1990).

3 Here I mean the oscillating resonances between somatic and psychic states of experience. While the word 'psychosomatic' is often pathologized, 'somatopsychic' is frequently mentioned in Simondon's philosophy of individuation. Gilbert Simondon, *Individuation in Light of Notions of Form and Information*, trans. Taylor Adkins (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2020).

4 Spiritual practice is referred to as 'doing the work' in many wisdom schools. See Antonia Pont, *A Philosophy of Practising with Deleuze's Difference and Repetition* (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2021).

5 Others before me have played with the homonym ‘eye’ and ‘I’ including Kathy Acker, *Portrait of an Eye : Three Novels* (New York: Grove Press, 1998).

Synott’s text is particularly relevant. He writes about the primacy of the visual in Western culture, coming from ancient Greek and Christian traditions, and links it to the sense of self: “The eye therefore is the I to others, and in many ways: self, disposition, mood, deception, and soul. The eye also creates the I.” Anthony Synnott, ‘The Eye and I: A Sociology of Sight’, *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 5, no. 4 (1992): 632.

6 Loveless’ neologism ‘polydisciplinamory’ describes “a “multiple” approach to research-creation (multiple in terms of discipline, method, and form).” Natalie Loveless, *How to Make Art at the End of the World: A Manifesto for Research-Creation* (Duke University Press, 2019), 15, <https://doi.org/10.1215/9781478004646>.

7 I use the word ‘*exuviae*’ to convey the agential charge of these research fragments which I collect and often *reanimate* as new artworks. Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

8 During its development I played the instrument with different electronic sound collaborators including Mika Satomi, Joel Cahen, Pietro Bardini, also sarod player, Drupad Mistry and tabla player Neeraj Mistry.

9 Loveless, *How to Make Art at the End of the World*.

Price links academic values of “rigour, strategy, interrogation” to a ‘masculine idealisation’, and speaks of the “colonial arrogance” of generic forms of academic research. Elizabeth Price, ‘A Report to an Academy’, 2–3, https://learn.gold.ac.uk/pluginfile.php/1713869/mod_folder/content/0/Price%20-%20Keynote.pdf?forcedownload=1.

10 Marina Abramovic speaks of ‘liquid knowledge’ as experiential and embodied. See Robin Nelson, *Practice as Research in the Arts: Principles, Protocols, Pedagogies, Resistances* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

11 Romain Rolland called ‘spontaneous religious experience’ oceanic feeling in his exchanges with Sigmund Freud. See Catherine Clément, *Syncope: The Philosophy of Rapture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

12 These transmissions are transcribed in Dominique Savitri Bonarjee, *Butoh, as Heard by a Dancer*, Routledge Advances in Theatre & Performance Studies (Oxon & New York: Routledge, 2024).

This form of proximal pedagogy has its origins in the teaching of spiritual philosophies in India, called *parampara*, or guru-shishya relation. See Mona Behl and Charitha Pattiaratchi, ‘Relevance of the Guru-Shishya Parampara to Modern-Day Mentorship’, *Oceanography* (Washington, D.C.) 36, no. 1 (2023): 74–75.

During the PhD timeline I received ‘direct transmission’ from Helen Oates in the Mevlevi lineage of Sufi Dervishes, at The Study Society, Colet House, London (2019-2020), a centre for the syncretic study of nondual spiritual traditions. Also Wudang Tai Ch’i Chuan training in the lineage of Cheng Tin-hung and Dan Docherty with Stuart Verity of Integral Tai Chi, London, see Stuart Verity, ‘Integral Tai Chi’, accessed 13 November 2022, <https://integral-taichi.com/>.

This teacher-student model was also adopted by Butoh founder Tatsumi Hijikata, see Takashi Morishita, *Hijikata Tatsumi’s Notational Butoh. An Innovative Method for Butoh Creation* (Tokyo: Keio University Art Center, 2015).

13 Natalie Loveless also makes this observation: “This is a university landscape governed by the desire for clear and immediate individualized impact metrics, by greater online, informational (rather than critical interpretive) content in classes...” Loveless, *How to Make Art at the End of the World*, 9.

14 D. Graham Burnett, Alyssa Loh, and Peter Schmidt, ‘Opinion | Powerful Forces Are Fracking Our Attention. We Can Fight Back.’, *The New York Times*, 24 November 2023, sec. Opinion, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/24/opinion/attention-economy-education.html>.

15 Minna Salami, *Sensuous Knowledge. A Black*

Feminist Approach for Everyone. (London, UK: Zed Books, 2020), 21.

Here and elsewhere my use of first name indicates a degree of closeness.

16 The *feminine* (in this case) is an energetic principle of charge which overflows and includes the term ‘feminist’ (of human discourse). Not to be confused with gender essentialism. ‘Knowing’ as feminine generates a (nondual) polarity to ‘masculine idealisation’ Price, “Art of Research: Research Narratives,” 2.

17 Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2006).

18 Nondual logic is a principle of ‘generative opposition’, visualized in Daoist philosophy through the Yin and Yang symbol. See Yuk Hui, *Art and Cosmotechnics* (Minneapolis: e-flux, University of Minnesota, 2021).

19 See Richard Shusterman. “Dewey’s Somatic Philosophy.” *Revue Internationale De Philosophie* 62, no. 245 (3) (2008): 293-311.

Loveless, *How to Make Art at the End of the World*.

For a critique of educational ‘efficiency’ see Krishnamurti, *Education and the Significance of Life*.

20 Eknath Easwaran, *The Upanishads* (Middlesex, England: Arkana, Penguin Books, 1988).

21 The Greek word *techne* includes skill, artwork, (computer and mechanical) technology, craft. See Hui's use of the term, Hui, *Art and Cosmotechnics*, 125.

22 Neidich describes art's capacity to alter perception and 'destabilize' the brain's neural tendency to consume and reflect "modernist repetitive spaces and regulated organized time?" Warren Neidich, 'Neuropower: Art in the Age of Cognitive Capitalism', in *The Psychopathologies of Cognitive Capitalism: Part One* (Berlin: Archive Books, 2013), 221–22.

23 The Indian Vedas are considered 'knowing that can be heard', in Sanskrit *shruti*. The Vedas were *heard* by numerous (unnamed) 'authors' who channelled knowing through yogic practice. See Sri Aurobindo Ghose, *The Secret of the Veda*, vol. 15, The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo (Pondicherry, India: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1998).

24 Mentioned at "The Listening Academy" (Iklectik Art Lab, London, September 29, 2022).

25 N. Katherine Hayles, *Unthought: The Power of the Cognitive Nonconscious* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2017).

26 Hui introduces the non-rational in relation to art's 'truth', which he says harbours an unknown that evades demonstration. Hui, *Art and Cosmotechnics*, 123–25.

27 This exemplary structure, considered "effective

management", is one of the learning outcomes of the thesis-by-practice research pathway in Goldsmiths University's official programme details. See 'Programme Details', Goldsmiths University of London: MPhil/PhD Art, accessed 13 November 2022, <https://www.gold.ac.uk/media/docs/programme-specifications/mphilphd-art-thesis-by-practice.pdf>.

Also Loveless' point that "research-creation as a mode of resistance to individualist, careerist, and bibliometric university cultures" is also highly relevant to the 'resistance' that underpins my own research stance. Loveless, *How to Make Art at the End of the World*, 8–9.

For a critique of 'efficiency' in education see Krishnamurti, *Education and the Significance of Life*.

28 For example self-consciously playing the role of quantitative researcher with the somewhat absurd endeavour of collecting data from 'free time'. See Free Time (*Wobbling*).

29 What Hayles calls a 'cognitive assemblage'. See Hayles, *Unthought*.

30 I follow in the footsteps of four researchers. Nina Wakeford and Nicola Singh both argue for the orality of knowledge that inheres liveness, a core issue in my thesis.

Wakeford focuses on the temporalities involved in the live communication of knowledge: I draw on these "feelings,

energies and atmospheres” in my own work, see Nina Wakeford, ‘NOW, SPEAK THIS, NOW: The Re-Amplification of Political Energy’ (PhD Fine Art (unpublished), Ruskin School of Art, University of Oxford, 2017), 21. Singh’s focus is on acts of *listening* to knowledge. Nicola Singh, ‘On the “Thesis by Performance”: A Feminist Research Method for the Practice-Based PhD.’ (PhD Art, Northumbria University, 2016).

Katrina Palmer’s thesis *Reality Flickers* does away with the object of sculpture altogether to ‘relocate’ it in narrative writing. See Katrina Palmer, ‘Reality Flickers: Writing with Found Objects and Imagined Sculpture’ (PhD Fine Art, Royal College of Art, 2011). The practice component of Elizabeth Price’s thesis is the repetitive process of making an expanding ball out of packing tape as a way of knowing. The written part annotates the material processes of the labour involved. Elizabeth Price, ‘A Demonstration of a Relation between Thinking and Doing: Sidekick; and Other Unfinished Work, Undead’ (PhD Fine Art, University of Leeds, 1999).

31 “In landscape architecture... ‘desire lines’... are where people deviate from the paths they are supposed to follow.” Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology Orientations, Objects, Others*, 19–20.

32 This research includes conversations with nine seminal Butoh dancers and the philosopher Kuniichi Uno. See Bonarjee, *Butoh, as Heard by a Dancer*.

33 Akira Kasai (b. 1943) was one of the first generation of dancers who joined Butoh’s development in the 1960s. He went on to create his own method, influenced in part by Rudolf Steiner’s ‘eurhythmy’.

Yoshito Ohno (1938 – 2020) is the son of Butoh co-founder Kazuo Ohno. He danced in *Kinjiki* (1959), considered to be the first Butoh work.

Ko Murobushi (1947 – 2015) became involved with Butoh in the early 1970s and achieved great acclaim outside of Japan for his form of Butoh creation.

Masaki Iwana (1945 – 2020) first encountered Butoh in the 1970s through Tatsumi Hijikata. He developed his own method and taught at his home in rural South Normandy, France until 2018.

See conversations with these artists in Bonarjee.

34 Kuniichi Uno, interview by Dominique Bonarjee, 2 September 2017.

35 Noh actor, Noboru Sano, introduced me to this expression during the ‘Japanese Noh Lab’ (The Place, London, 21 September 2023).

36 A ‘mutation’ is growth without the implication of linear progression or advancement, a development over time that unfolds a previously unknown dimension. Jean Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1985).

37 These dances belong to the more-than-human repertoire proposed by Manning. Erin Manning, *Always More than One Individuation's Dance* (Durham, N.C. : Chesham: Duke University Press ; Combined Academic [distributor], 2013).

38 Karen Michelle Barad, 'On Touching--The Inhuman That Therefore I Am', *Differences*, Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies, 23, no. 3 (1 January 2012): 207.

39 See for example Bonarjee, *Butoh, as Heard by a Dancer*. Also Sylviane Pagès, *Le Butô En France: Malentendus et Fascination*, Recherches (Pantin, France: Centre National de la Danse, 2015).

40 In the 1960s Butoh was a truly open and experimental cross-disciplinary form, a time of artistic collaborations across dance, literature and visual art. This openness changed when Butoh founder, Tatsumi Hijikata's began a more theatrical choreographic phase in 1972. Bonarjee, *Butoh, as Heard by a Dancer*.

41 Tatsumi Hijikata, 'To Prison', *TDR/The Drama Review* 44, no. 1 (March 2000): 43–44.

Hijikata's only solo piece was entitled 'Rebellion of the Body' or 'Revolt of the Flesh' (1968).

42 Randy Martin, *Knowledge LTD: Toward a Social*

Logic of the Derivative (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2015).

43 Bonarjee, *Butoh, as Heard by a Dancer*.

44 Bonarjee, 4.

Butoh researcher Takashi Morishita also concurs see Morishita, *Hijikata Tatsumi's Notational Butoh. An Innovational Method for Butoh Creation*.

45 The *koan* is a pedagogical method of 'vivification' in Zen Buddhism, a cryptic language device that fosters an unknown, thus keeping knowledge alive. Thomas Cleary and J.C. Cleary, *The Blue Cliff Record* (Boston & London: Shambhala, 1992).

46 Tatsuhiko Shibusawa, 'Hijikata Tatsumi: Plucking off the Darkness of the Flesh', *TDR/The Drama Review* 44, no. 1 (March 2000): 50, <https://doi.org/10.1162/10542040051058852>.

47 The 'god's eye view' describes a religious idea of God being omniscient, which in cinematography is a perspective from above. The 'view from nowhere' alludes to the problems of the 'objective' perspective in science and philosophy. See Thomas Nagel, *The View from Nowhere* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1986).

48 Masaki Iwana, *The Intensity of Nothingness*. (Réveillon, South Normandy: La Maison du Butoh Blanc, 2011).

49 Michiko Yusa, 'Riken No Ken. Zeami's Theory of Acting and Theatrical Appreciation', *Monumenta Nipponica* 42, no. 3 (1987): 331–45.

50 Sano, 'Japanese Noh Lab'.

See also Katsunori Miyahara and Miguel Segundo-Ortin, 'Situating Self-Awareness in Expert Performance: A Situated Normativity Account of Riken No Ken', *Synthese (Dordrecht)* 200, no. 3 (2022).

51 Natsu Nakajima in Bonarjee, *Butoh, as Heard by a Dancer*, 32.

52 James Bridle, *Ways of Being : Beyond Human Intelligence* (London]: Allen Lane an imprint of Penguin Books, 2022).

53 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Death of a Discipline* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 73.

54 Though sound art theorist, Voegelin recently posed a similar question in Salomé Voegelin, *Uncurating Sound : Knowledge with Voice and Hands* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2023).

55 See Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj, *I Am That* (Mumbai, India: Chetana, 2009), 524.

For a short introduction see Nithya Shanti, "NETI NETI | Not This, Not This," video, 2:03, 2020, <https://youtu.be/FrAHB-u-Hpg>.

Artist LuYang's exhibition of that name explores nonbinary identities through Buddhist philosophies of reincarnation using digital avatars, *NetiNeti*, Zabludowicz Collection, London, September 22, 2022 - February 12, 2023, Exhibition.

56 For an account of dizziness as art research method, see Ruth Anderwald, Karoline Feyertag, and Leonhard Grond, *Dizziness*, Publication Serie of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2019).

57 Hui's definition of 'cosmotechnics'. Hui, *Art and Cosmotechnics*, 41.

58 Fellow Sufi turner, Kim Richardson, suggested this Sufi expression to me. Kim Richardson, Turners Facebook Group Discussion, July 6, 2022.

For a brilliant account of dizziness as artistic research method, see Anderwald, Feyertag, and Grond, *Dizziness*.

59 David Maclagan, *Line Let Loose: Scribbling, Doodling and Automatic Drawing* (London, UK: Reaktion Books, 2013).

60 I explore automatism in art through tendencies to automate tasks in AI research in Dominique Bonarjee, 'Automatism and Automation: Paradoxical Trajectories', in *Theorem: Doctoral Research in the Visual Arts & Design*, ed. Jane Boyer (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge School of Art, 2018), 83–100.

61 Carrie Lambert, 'Moving Still: Mediating Yvonne Rainer's "Trio A"' 89, no. Summer, 1999 (October 1999): 87–112.

62 Jiro Yoshihara, 'Gutai Art Manifesto', Guggenheim.org, December 1956, <http://web.guggenheim.org/exhibitions/gutai/data/manifesto.html>.

63 Akira Tatehata, 'Mono-Ha and Japan's Crisis of the Modern', *Third Text* 16, no. 3 (2002): 223–36.

64 Mono-Ha's critique of the post-war modernization of Japan was also a critique of modernity's extractive global forces. Tatehata.

65 Bonarjee, *Butoh, as Heard by a Dancer*.

66 Pont, *A Philosophy of Practising with Deleuze's Difference and Repetition*, 12.

67 'Time-workers' in Pont echoes the wording of the seminal text of yoga, the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. Pont, 18.

68 Hayles also makes this point. See Hayles, *Unthought*.

69 Pont, *A Philosophy of Practising with Deleuze's Difference and Repetition*.

70 Pont's 'philosophy of practising' is based on her Zen *shikantaza* meditation and yoga practice. See Pont.

71 Céline Condorelli, 'In Support: A Theoretical

and Practical Investigation into Forms of Display' (PhD, Goldsmiths University of London, 2014).

72 Pont, *A Philosophy of Practising with Deleuze's Difference and Repetition*, 19.

73 See Simondon, *Individuation in Light of Notions of Form and Information*.

74 See Csikszentmihalyi's diagram for his theory of flow. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Classic Work on How to Achieve Happiness*, Rev. ed. (London: Rider, 2002).

75 It is difficult to date the origins of Tai Chi Chuan. It is suggested that existing Daoist practices were influenced by the Yogacara practices from India, which the monk Bodhidharma, founder of Chan/Zen Buddhism brought to China around the 5-6th century CE. Cleary and Cleary, *The Blue Cliff Record*.

76 Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Classic Work on How to Achieve Happiness*.

77 This notation is another mutation of Butoh, specifically, Butoh-fu a method of choreographic method of sensorial utterance for generating nonconscious physical reaction. See Bonarjee, *Butoh, as Heard by a Dancer*.

Also, Morishita, *Hijikata Tatsumi's Notational Butoh. An Innovative Method for Butoh Creation*. Rosa Van Hensbergen, 'Moving with Words, 1950s–1980s Language, Notation, Choreography' (Cambridge, 2019).

78 Bridle says the biggest challenge for mainstream computational technology is to achieve true randomness. ‘Auspiciousness’ is a kind of ‘randomness’: the nuance is that auspiciousness admits to unknown agencies behind the seemingly random. See Bridle, *Ways of Being : Beyond Human Intelligence*.

79 Especially Alvin Lucier’s composition with electroencephalograms (EEGs), “Music for Solo Performer” (1965), see Atau Tanaka and Marco Donnarumma, ‘The Body as Musical Instrument’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Music and the Body*, Oxford Handbooks. (Oxford University Press, 2019). Also Minimalist composer LaMonte Young’s spatialization of sound based on harmonics and imperceptible microtones. See Jeremy Grimshaw, *Draw a Straight Line and Follow It: The Music and Mysticism of La Monte Young* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011).

80 “By proposing an expanded body that encompasses technology and space ... the possibility of the posthuman body, [proposes] hybridized bodies as instruments beyond the extent of the unitary corporeal body.” Tanaka and Donnarumma, ‘The Body as Musical Instrument’, 18.

81 Here is another resonance with LaMonte Young’s “Well-tuned Piano” (1964). The piano instead of being ‘tempered’ to the human ear, is *tuned* to a fundamental note derived from a nonhuman (cosmic) logic.

See Grimshaw’s explanation of Young’s tuning method in Grimshaw, *Draw a Straight Line and Follow It: The Music and Mysticism of La Monte Young*.

82 Dominique Savitri Bonarjee, “‘It’s Not Working’: Lessons from Glitches’ (Guest Lecture [online], Weissensee Art Academy, 29 November 2021).

83 Astrida Neimanis, *Bodies of Water. Posthuman Feminist Phenomenology.*, Environmental Cultures Series (London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017).

84 Gell identifies such creative hubris in the competitive nature of decorative carving of Maori meeting houses. See Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*.

85 A description of Butoh attributed to Tatsumi Hijikata. See Bonarjee, *Butoh, as Heard by a Dancer*.

In Noh theatre, the art of wilting or withering (*shiore*) is an advanced performance technique which I explore in the text Boredom Bardo (*Collapse*). For *shiore* see Tatsuro Ishii, ‘Zeami’s Mature Thoughts on Acting’, *Theatre Research International* 12, no. 2 (1987): 110–23.

86 John Vervaeke, “In conversation” (talk at Rebel Wisdom’s Last Campfire, The Tramperry, London, November 5, 2022).

87 These tactics are inspired by my training in the Microphenomenological Interview with Claire

Petitmengin in Normandy, October 2019. See also Claire Petitmengin, 'Describing One's Subjective Experience in the Second Person: An Interview Method for the Science of Consciousness', *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 5, no. 3–4 (7 December 2006): 229–69, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-006-9022-2>.

'Polycephalus' is a reference to slime moulds – *physarum polycephalum* – meaning many-headed.

88 Hélène Cixous, *Le Rire de La Méduse et Autres Ironies* (Paris: Galilée, 2010). Hélène Cixous, *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

89 Michael Boon, *The Politics of Vibration: Music as a Cosmopolitical Practice* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2022).

90 An interpretation of l'Amour Autre, the concluding passage of Hélène Cixous, *Le Rire de La Méduse et Autres Ironies* (Paris: Galilée, 2010), 68.

91 I trained with Petitmengin in person, in October 2019. Claire Petitmengin, Anne Remillieux, and Camila Valenzuela-Moguillansky, 'Discovering the Structures of Lived Experience: Towards a Micro-Phenomenological Analysis Method', *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 18, no. 4 (September 2019): 691–730, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-018-9597-4>.

92 Claire Petitmengin, 'Describing One's Subjective Experience in the Second Person: An Interview Method for the Science of Consciousness', *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 5, no. 3–4 (7 December 2006): 229–69, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-006-9022-2>.

93 'Vipassana Meditation', accessed 1 December 2023, <https://www.dhamma.org/en/about/vipassana>.

For Ansuman Biswas' use of Vipassana in contemporary art, see Silvia Battista, *Posthuman Spiritualities in Contemporary Performance: Politics, Ecologies and Perceptions*, 1st ed. (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018).

94 See "Masaki Iwana as Heard by his Students" in Dominique Savitri Bonarjee, *Butoh, as Heard by a Dancer*, Routledge Advances in Theatre & Performance Studies (Oxon & New York: Routledge, 2024), 120–36.

Also Masaki Iwana, *The Intensity of Nothingness*. (Réveillon, South Normandy: La Maison du Butoh Blanc, 2011).

95 Stephen W. Porges, *The Polyvagal Theory: Neurophysiological Foundations of Emotions, Attachment, Communication, and Self-Regulation*, Norton Series on Interpersonal Neurobiology. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011).

96 'The transmodal dimension', a state of synaesthetic sensitivity that moves freely between sensory modalities, is marked by a rhythmic intensity. See Claire

Petitmengin, 'Towards the Source of Thoughts The Gestural and Transmodal Dimension of Lived Experience', *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 14, no. 3 (2007): 54–82.

97 A beautiful expression borrowed from artist Trinh T. Minh-Ha who suggests this as a disposition for 'watching' her work. Minh-ha T. Trinh, 'What about China?' (BFI Festival, Curzon Soho, London, 15 October 2022).

98 What Petitmengin calls satellite dimension' – goals, judgements, theoretical and contextual knowledge – which tend to interfere with the (nonconscious) knowing of lived experience. See Petitmengin, Remillieux, and Valenzuela-Moguillansky, 'Discovering the Structures of Lived Experience'.

99 I borrow the word 'activation' from Kishio Suga. Kishio Suga, "Activations," Artist's Website, accessed July 6, 2022, <https://www.kishiosuga.com/biography-activations>.

100 The 'Gel Prop' for example, which was originally an ergonomic wrist-rest for computer work which I was offered when I suffered from intense RSI. See Fig. 8 / *Wobbling*

101 The Yin and Yang symbol is explained in Richard Wilhelm and Cary F. Baynes, *The I Ching, or Book of Changes*, Bollingen Series, XIX (Princeton University Press, 1980).

102 Hazrat Inayat Khan, *The Mysticism of Sound*

and Music, Dragon Editions (Boulder Colorado: Shambhala, 1996), 9.

103 The improvisational form of the raag in Indian music is based on a scale that describes a mood, in response to the context and ambience of the performance. See Santosh Kumar Pudaruth, 'A Reflection on the Aesthetics of Indian Music, With Special Reference to Hindustani Raga-Sangita', *SAGE Open*, no. 6(4) (2016), <https://doi-org.gold.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/2158244016674512>.

The installation I created can also be approached as a ritual object, activated through minor gestures, that entertain the weather. Cited from Erin Manning, 'Weather Patterns: Or How Minor Gestures Entertain the Environment', in *The Minor Gesture* (New York, USA: Duke University Press, 2020), 68; Manning, 76.

104 For the importance of the witness/public to improvisational dance see conversations with Masaki Iwana and Ko Murobushi in Bonarjee, *Butoh, as Heard by a Dancer*.

105 Gell uses this expression to describe 'art-like' situations that allow for the activity of unknown agencies across an extended spacetime. See Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

106 'In-formation' is a stage in the process of

(metastable) form. See Gilbert Simondon, *Individuation in Light of Notions of Form and Information*, trans. Taylor Adkins (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2020).

For agential shifts in art situations see Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*.

107 Drishti is a yogic practice of gazing on a part of the body, the sky, waves, or a flame, and is used to deepen meditative awareness.

108 *O vive~* is different from previous stagings of the work due to the examination situation and I activate it alone without other sound collaborators.

109 Nicola Singh's closing provocation is "to think about how bodies physically respond to, or are attended to, in our research." Nicola Singh, 'On the "Thesis by Performance": A Feminist Research Method for the Practice-Based PhD.' (PhD Art, Northumbria University, 2016), 9.

space of the
nameless

somatic
revolutions

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DOMINIQUE SAVITRI BONARJEE

Department of Art. Goldsmiths University of London, 2023

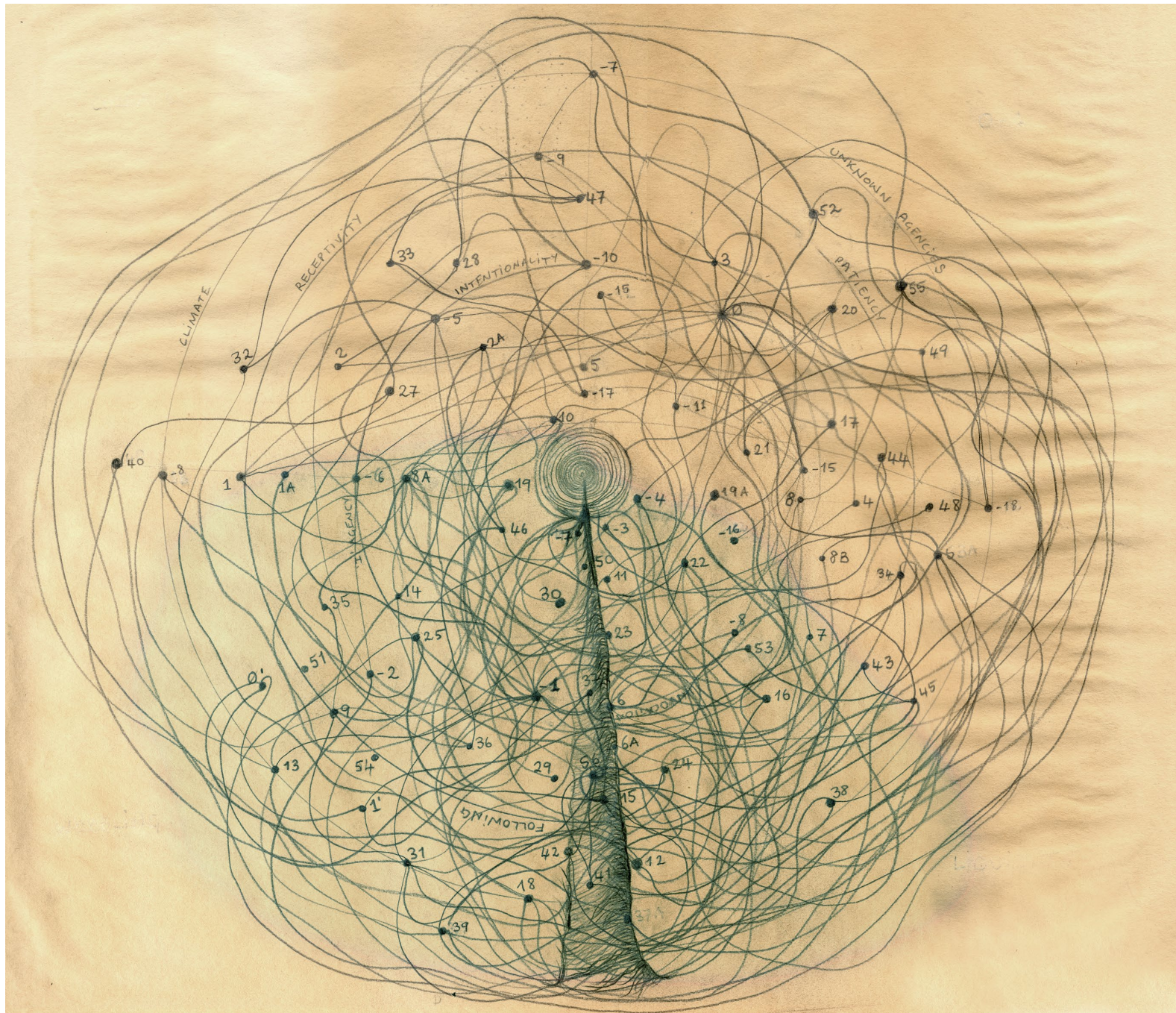


Fig. 1 *The Expanded Body*, pencil on found paper, 2022.

Chronological Legend of Art Situations

- # -19 The Tohoku Earthquake strikes Japan followed by a 10-metre high tsunami (03/2011).
- # -18 Departure for Japan on a travel scholarship delayed due to the Tohoku Earthquake (02/2012).
- # -17 First transmission conversation with Masaki Iwana at Kid-Ailack Hall, Meidaimae, Tokyo (06/2012).
- # -16 Transmission conversation with Yoshito Ohno in Kami-Hoshikawa, Yokohama (07/2012).
- # -15 Transmission conversation with Natsu Nakajima in Yotsuya, Tokyo (12/2012).
- # -14 Transmission conversation with Yukio Waguri at Keio University Art Centre, Mita (08/2014).
- # -13 Transmission conversations with Ko Murobushi, Takadanobaba, Tokyo(12/2013).
- # - 12 Kumano Kodo pilgrimage and trip to Ise Shrine, Kii Peninsula, Japan (07/2014)
- # - 11 Field trip to Yamagata and transmission conversation with Ko Murobushi, Yamagata (10/2014).
- # - 10 Arrival in Berlin to teach a butoh workshop while I am hosted by Marina Epp (11/2014).
- # - 9 Move to Berlin and share a studio with Marina Epp and others at the Funkhaus (02/2015)
- # - 8 Ko Murobushi dies while in transit in Mexico (06/2015).
- # - 7 Nameless joint exhibition with Ryo Shimizu at Hagiso Gallery, Tokyo (08 – 09/2015).

- # - 6 First trip to Nakanojo Biennale and Shima Onsen with Kaoru Murakami (09/2015).
- # - 5 COLLAPSE #1 dance in Shimbashi, Tokyo on the eve of my departure from Japan. (30/09/2015).
- # - 4 Preparation of a crochet contract for Marina Epp, Berlin (02/2017).
- # - 3 Week-long dance residency with my mother at Theaterhaus Mitte Berlin, (04/2017).
- # -2 Second visit to Nakanojo Biennale as a participant artist with a four-week residency in Shima Onsen, (08/2017).
- # -1 Final interview for my butoh book with philosopher Kuniichi Uno, Tokyo (09/2017).
- # 0 PhD registration and first flashpoint, Goldsmiths University, London (09-10/2017).
- # 1 Dream of 'the grid and the white space'. Ivo and I start collecting straight sticks, Berlin (29/10/2017).
- # 2 Found a piece of wall reinforcement mesh in a skip, Berlin (11/2017).
- # 3 First free time research sessions, Berlin (10-11/2017).
- # 4 I leave a dish of agar in my studio during the end of year break, using time-lapse photography to see what happens 'when no one is watching', London (12/2017 – 01/2018).
- # 5 'What am I doing? I don't know', first PhD lunchtime presentation, MARS Research Hub, Goldsmiths University (01/2018).
- # 6 Contract myself to begin practicing Liquidity and creating automatic scores, (01/2018 – 06/2019).

- # 7 Visit to the Natural History Museum to research the Ediacara biota fossil record, London, (01/2018).
- # 8 Trip to Japan to work with sculptor, Kyoko Fujiwara, on the installation performance Arcadia, the Invisible Realm, Japan (02/2018)
- # 8* Interview with Sasha Drozd and colleagues at Tokyo Institute of Technology.
- # 9 First experiments growing slime mould cultures in my kitchen, London (03/2018).
- # 10 Awarded an ICE Fund Grant (Goldsmiths University) to work with Jamie Forth on the use of commercial wearable tech in movement and dance (03/2018).
- # 11 Second week-long dance residency and public performance with my mother, Lucette, at Theaterhaus Mitte Berlin, (04/2018).
- # 12 Begin using the Muse EEG headband for my Liquidity practice; and documenting my brainwave states during the practice (03/2018 – 06/2019).
- # 13 Ivo and I go straight-stick collection during anti-cyclone Hartmut known as 'the Beast from the East', London (18/03/2018).
- # 14 From here to there is not known, installation 19. My first research exhibition (coinciding with UCU strikes), MARS Research Hub, (03/2018).
- # 15 First meeting with Hannah Perner-Wilson at Spectrum, Berlin (04/2018).
- # 16 Meet Mika Satomi at the Koba shop. Kobakant Collective take over the crochet suit commission, (04/2018).

- # 17 Full-day free time research workshop using wearable technologies acquired with the ICE funding, Theaterhaus Berlin Mitte (05/2018).
- # 18 Mariam Arid begins a placement at KOBA, Berlin (06/2018).
- # 19 I use a Muse EEG headband to track my embroidery work for outl ndish, an exhibition curated by Teena Lange, Gr ntaler Galerie, Berlin, (08/ 2018).
- # 20 I attend Masaki Iwana's final workshop at La Maison du Butoh Blanc, South Normandy, (08/2018).
- # 21 Start of my Tai Chi Chuan instructor training with Stuart Verity of Integral Tai-Ch'i Chuan London (09/2018).
- # 22 Video work, Lexicon of Free Time, using Google dictation software, (10/2018).
- # 23 Research presentation at Intelligent Futures: Automation, AI and Cognitive Ecologies, University of Sussex (10/2018).
- # 24 Astrida Neimanis is my respondent for an Art Research Presentation, Goldsmiths University (11/2018).
- # 25 Interview with Mariam Arid at the KOBA shop, Berlin (11/2018).
- # 26 Completion of The Crochet Resistance Suit and finissage performance at KOBA shop, Berlin (01/2019).
- # 27 COLLAPSE Brexit, London, (29/03/2019).
- # 28 Second research exhibition, Let the Music Make Them Dance, installation 32, MARS Research Hub, London (05/2019).
- # 29 Tales of Fabrication, research presentation at Tai Kwun Art Centre, Hong Kong (06/2019).

- # 30 Research presentation for Futures of the Real at Goldsmiths University, (06/2019).
- # 31 Studio experiments with mould cultures, bioplastics and cymatics, London (Summer, 2019).
- # 32 COLLAPSE is part of a collaboration, So Tired the Sea, with Astrida Neimanis and Siouxzi O'Connor for Lofoten Art Festival, (09/2019).
- # 33 COLLAPSE Quintet, a commission for Chisenhale Dance Space, London, (09/2019).
- # 34 One-week Microphenomenological Interview Training with Claire Petitmengin, Normandy, where I meet Petrine Vinje (10/2019).
- # 35 Presentation of my automatic drawings and research, Automatism and Automation, Drawing Room, London, (11/2019).
- # 36 ILINX, research upgrade installation, London, (12/2019). Meet Atua Tanaka.
- # 37 Begin Sufi Whirling training at The Study Society, Colet House, London (10/2019) and graduate as a Dervish on Valentine's Day, 14 February 2020.
- # 38 Bio-art membrane experiments in my living room, (02/2020).
- # 39 The Covid Pandemic officially begins in the UK. My studio is closed from March 2020. I start meditating with The Crochet Resistance Suit, (03 – 08/2020)
- # 40 The Society of Art Research Bergen Conference is cancelled due to COVID-19, (04/2020).

- # 41 I explore practices for becoming ambidextrous by writing on post-it notes with my left hand (04/2020)
- # 42 I attend online Kirtan singing gatherings throughout the pandemic (2020-2021)
- # 43 AO is the colour of the blue-green screen is commissioned for Beyond Measure, (University of Leeds), and Landscape and Goodness, Landscape Research Group, Summer 2020.
- # 44 Film Hypnomotor, a performance to camera, responding to Trisha Brown's Watermotor, at Chisenhale Dance Studios, London, Summer 2020.
- # 45 Transition Happens through the Left Hand, video work with live composition for Unfix Fest, (06/2021).
- # 46 Completion of the video triptych, The Three Seductions of Consciousness, (06/2021).
- # 47 Dance COLLAPSE # 9, for Proxy Bodies Exhibition, curated by PhD cohort Elly Clarke, on Felixstowe beach, (09/2021).
- # 48 One-week Crochet Resistance Suit residency and open studio with Mika Satomi, Hannah Perner-Wilson, and sound artist Mei-fang Liau, Theaterhaus Mitte, Berlin, (10/2021).
- # 49 Art research presentation and performance, Sounding the Membranes, for a computational art research event organised by Atau Tanaka at Iklectik Art Lab, (11/2021).
- # 50 I visit the Spirit Collection and begin a series of conversations with curators and conservators at the Natural History Museum, London, (11/2021).

- # 51 And so it Begins, a live installation of my research (coinciding with UCU strikes), at MARS Research Hub, (11/2021).
- # 52 Lose my studio in Deptford and am immediately offered a studio at Colet House, London (01/2022).
- # 53 For the Mixed Bag, Art PhD group exhibition, I install $E=H_2O$ and activate and activate the first Mind Rave, Goldsmiths University, (02/2022).
- # 54 First Embodiment Hackathon presented in collaboration with artist Sissel Marie Tonn, University of Sussex (05/2022).
- # 55 Second Mind Rave activation for Sex Re-Boot, an evening of performance art, curated by Dyana Gravina, at Iklectik Art Lab, (05/2022).
- # 56 Complete the work Spanda ergo sum, a two-screen HD video and binaural sound composition, (12/2022).
- # 57 Submission of my PhD (12/2022).
- # 0 * Completion of the Nondual Turning Sculpture
- # 1 * Casting the Turning Gesture of the Heart in copper.

∞

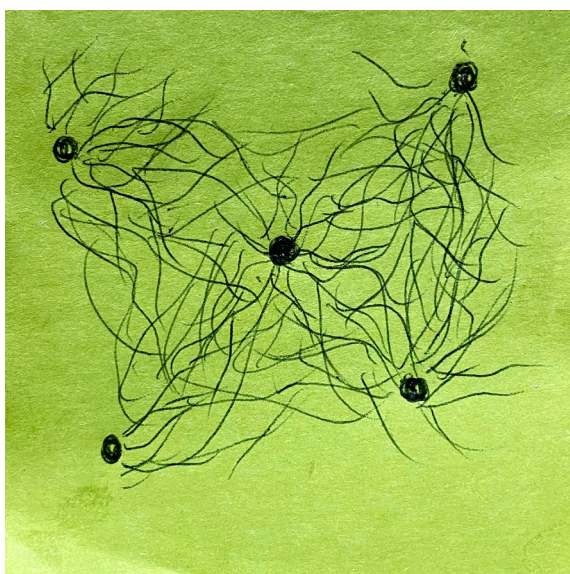
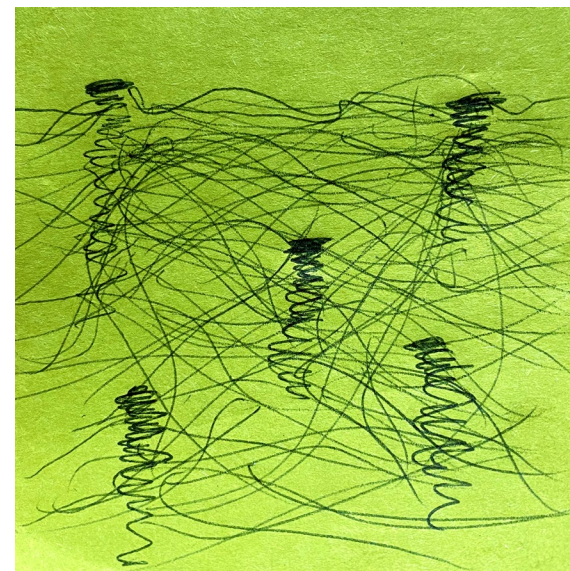
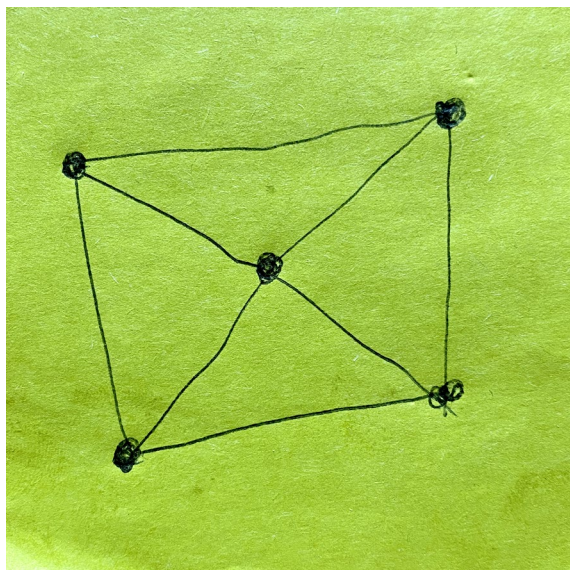


Fig. 2 *From cause and effect to an immersive worldview:
scoring Space of the Nameless in three movements of thought,
drawings on post-it notes / 75 x 75 mm Berlin, October 2021.*



Fig. 3 Tantrika painting, Sanskrit MS 511. Wellcome Collection.

somatic revolutions

Expanding the Body I: origins

Sitting in the candlelit belly of a boat, I was the invited ‘stranger’ according to the Jewish Passover tradition. Our masteress of ceremony, Maayan, began to sing the Chad Gadya, a song about ‘one little goat’ that gets eaten by a cat, that gets bitten by a dog, and then... and then... and then... Listening to the cumulative winding verses in search of a cause, I heard a search for origin: always messy, no straight lines, full of crisscrossing paths of intentions and desires. In this case it ends with ‘the Holy One’ being responsible for the entire chain of events that led up to the kid goat’s misfortune.

I do not know the point of origin of the *Space of the Nameless*, try as I might. It isn’t the date of my interview for the programme, or when I enrolled, or the first meeting with my supervisor. It’s not the day I moved into my on-campus studio, or when I initially presented my work to the cohort. Something had already begun. I don’t know what

it was, but I know it was in motion. And whenever I search for the ‘prime mover’, I become more *disorientated* by what I have unpicked, it all just keeps spewing out as, given time, new relations unravel.

I simply do not know how I found myself creating ‘a distributed instrument’ that holds a field of knowing in latency; whose body is in a perpetual state of transformation and which seems to possess the mythical powers of a medusa: like ‘living water’ (*agua viva* is a ‘jellyfish’ in Spanish) it keeps ingesting the many bodies, entities, materialities, of my art practice into its loose and shifting contours.

Within the framework of my research-by-practice doctoral project, the question of origin has preoccupied me. Gleaning this information seemed a necessary exercise to fulfil the (institutional) expectation of having a clear research timeline that would enable a timely conclusion. Not knowing made me turn to list-making. I tried to remember any ‘agential’ “art-like situations”¹ that had occurred during my PhD. I included events that precede and succeed the beginning and end points (in time) because the edges were just too porous to identify any clear boundary. The events, encounters, artworks, listed in the *Chronological Timeline of Art Situations*, (any references to these situations use the format # n) allowed me to notate a compositional image of *The Expanded Body*.²

In its obsession, perhaps even its absurdity, my ambition is not dissimilar to the artist Tehching Hsieh’s *Time Clock Piece* (1980 - 81).³ Hsieh’s commitment to the temporality of a process has consistently inspired me in this journey. In *Time Clock Piece*, Hsieh alludes to the materiality of (work) time through the progressive growth of his hair (from baldness to shoulder length) over a one-year duration of punching a timeclock every hour on the hour. Whereas he ‘captures

time’ with the accelerated speed of a photographic animation, I use the medium of drawing to divulge synchronicities in my art ‘work’ over the five-year stretch of research time. These instants become the ‘pores’ of *The Expanded Body*.

The activity of scoring *The Expanded Body* put me in a meditative ‘flow’ state.⁴ I found pleasure in joining the dots and witnessing a mesh appear, tracing a brain-like circuitry of coiling neural pathways that seemed strangely isomorphic to the ‘wireframe’ function of (Blender and Unity) 3-D design software, used to give structure to void spaces. As I drew each connecting line, this mesh progressively flooded the ‘empty space’ of my knowing with a ‘tidalectic’ cosmogony.⁵

In the score that appeared I couldn’t help but notice a resonance with the principle known as Indra’s Net.⁶ In Hindu myth Indra is the Vedic deity of weather – thunder, rain, clouds, storms, lightning, and rainbows (in the realm of human affairs, Indra’s cataclysmic powers are transmuted to conflict and violence, making Indra the god of war). In Buddhism, Indra’s Net is applied to understanding the total interpenetration of events over time. The net’s function is not to connect or capture but to convey a holographic logic, where any small part can reveal the whole; every single ‘eye’ of the net gleams like a finely cut diamond, and “each jewel reflects all the other jewels”.⁷ The shifting relations between nodes are revealed through the reflections, diffractions, and refractions, of ‘the light of consciousness’ continually illuminating further interactions (and ‘intra-actions’).⁸ Indra’s Net is an imaginal principle for grasping the fabric of time.

The sheer volume of relations contained in *The Expanded Body* make it hard to read, possibly illegible. But it isn’t meant to be looked at but communed *with* (as are all my research scores). Because there

are no identifiable forms, it should be consulted with dilated eyes so that 'seeing' becomes a sensorial listening (or *bristling*) capable of transmitting patterns hidden within the noise. It was by doing this that I noticed an agglomeration of lines around the making of *The Crochet Resistance Suit*.⁹

~

The 'suit' is a wearable electronic artwork crafted from crochet. It began as a conceptual work, but it repeatedly eluded my (teleological) impositions, proving itself again and again to be *not this not that*. To describe its aesthetic, I'd say it resembles the fasciae webbings of the body in a way reminiscent of a much earlier example of wearable art, *Electric Dress* (1952) by Gutai artist Atsuko Tanaka. But this 'suit' is a fully handcrafted computer, woven from conductive copper yarn, with sensors placed at the head, hands, and under the soles of the feet – "the parts where 'will' is embedded most" I write in my project diary. Later, a tilt sensor stone will be connected to the heart. The suit's function is to 'listen' to the (mostly imperceptible) micro-vibrations of the wearer's body in relation to the environment: it senses pressure changes, the pull and drag of gravity, and the perpetual trembling of living matter. All this data, these numbers, synthesize a live composition: the sound of a body 'desperately struggling to stand upright'.¹⁰

The Crochet Resistance Suit is a yarn that has already taken over four years to decipher: its origin moment precedes this research, and its point of resolution will seep beyond the submission. Many people have been involved, most of them women. The process resembles

an endless game of catch, always in motion, propelled onwards and onwards in time. 'The first throw' remains an enigma. Was it a brief comment, exchanged over tea, which led me to ask my friend Marina to make me a suit of chainmail armour from crochet? Not because I wanted one, but because she hated her job and loved doing crochet, and I wanted to help her, and I thought I could turn this into a conceptual art project about the effect neo-liberalism has on work and time and joy...and...and...and... And then I found myself with a large swathe of crocheted electronics attached to a microprocessor, and I was expected – at least I felt obliged after all the work that went into it – to make a 'performance' with it.

I wasn't fully aware I was even playing this game until that turning point in Berlin in October 2021. I had spent the week in a studio, continuing to unravel the process, with my (subsequent) collaborators Mika Satomi, Hannah Perner-Wilson (Kobakant Collective), and this time sound artist Mei-Fang Liao joined us. I'd brought some sculptural elements I was working on. Mika proposed that we introduce a capacitive sensor to the mix that would 'sense' the electrical charge in my sculptures. Suddenly the suit's conductive capacities had expanded, beyond the suit's perimeter, to include the objects, entities, atmospheres, of the space. This meant that the circuit's components could be accreted and nested quasi-infinitely. It dawned on me that this might be an 'infinite game' whose purpose is not to be completed, but instead, its structure enables the continuity of play.¹¹

Each roll of the ball (of yarn) – each iridescent flash of light in Indra's Net – also served to ultimately illuminate my own path of spiritual inquiry. What I discovered through my art research-by-

practice, is a manifestation of the Zen philosophy of *uji*, (being-time), that “beings, things and events do not exist in time: beings, things and events *are* time.”¹² Said another way, the seed is not be found in (conscious) prior intention, but through the flowering of (nonconscious) creation; practice reveals theory.¹³ If for the purposes of ‘effectively managing’ my research, I were to retrace the ‘myopic’ process of making the suit, I might well discover ‘the seed’ of the *Space of the Nameless*. This is what I have done. Taking a retrospective approach, after the fact, has revealed not so much a research timeline but a ‘time-web’ as the ‘line’ slipped out of *my* control and distended into wide apertures allowing other tempos in. This line-let-loose has woven unpredictable formations that I, alone, could never have authored; this web worlded a ‘novel musical interface’.¹⁴

What I learned from letting go of this yarn is that crafting can be a critically curious approach to artmaking. That ‘women’s work’ can harness feminine *techné* made by the work of many hands.¹⁵ And this lively game of improvisation across electronics, materials and bodies, has led to my encounter with an artform, that *I didn’t know*, that transgresses the ‘liveness’ of human performance and the (assumed) lifelessness of an art object, and is immersive without relying on computational gadgetry.¹⁶ The flavour of the form follows the nature of the process: “vibration, tonality, pleasure, jouissance, color”¹⁷... *aliveness*.

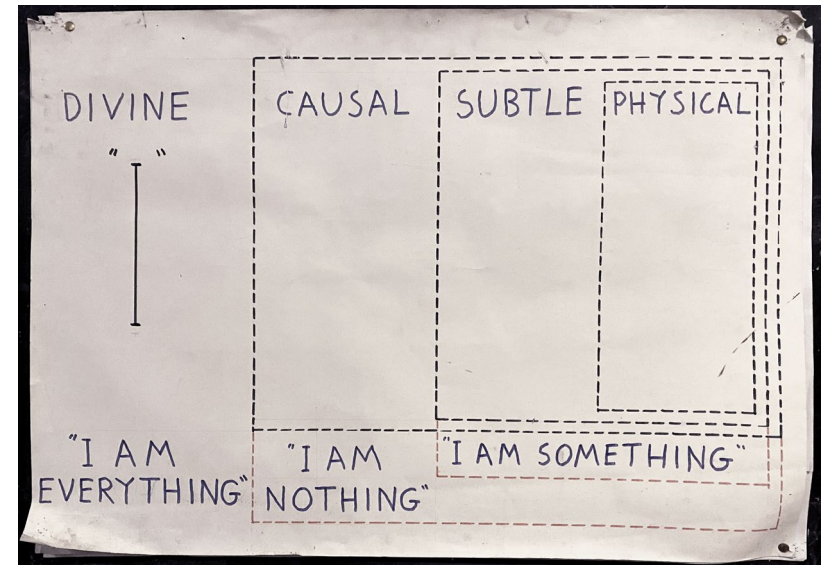


Fig. 4 The Four Elements chart, Colet House, London.¹⁸

Expanding the Body II: porosity

The feeling somewhere in your body that your arm is not really your arm conceals an important secret.¹⁹

~Tatsumi Hijikata

The anatomy of an expanded body doesn’t end at the skin. To grasp the body (of work) through the models I propose takes an act of *palpation*. And this requires knowing about ‘psycho-technologies for becoming porous.’

In the Vedic tradition of Advaita Vedanta, the Four Bodies also called Four Levels is a model of distributed self-hood: the physical flesh is the ‘meat body’; the subtle body is the dimension of the psyche, thoughts, and desires; the causal body holds a being’s entire temporal existence in *potentia*; the fourth body is the totality, the ground and container for all being. These four bodies are a model for understanding nonduality (which is the meaning of *advaita*), a principle of unity, based on the interplay of duality called *leela*. According to Advaita, life’s mysteries can only be grasped by expanding the limits of the physical ‘I’ ego-body (called *ahamkara* in Sanskrit) beyond the edge of the skin, and into the subtle and causal dimensions, towards encountering the totality of the infinite ‘I’ self (called *Param Atman*).²⁰

My score of *The Expanded Body* loosely follows the onion-skin logic of Advaita’s Four Bodies helps me acknowledge how, throughout this research, ‘I’ am (often unknowingly) ‘breathing with’ an expanded body of con-spirators.

At the centre (of my score) is ‘my’ physical body. The nodes in this vicinity are those ‘I’ initiated or ‘was the cause of’. Their relative distance from the centre indicates lingering doubts I have about how directly responsible I am for their coming into being. The second ring, linked to the subtle body, is populated with situations that came about in a way that felt less determined by my direct input, but that I may have somehow set off inadvertently. Around the third ring, linked to the causal body, I place events that I appear to have had no (conscious) control over, synergies that surprised me, seemed auspicious, or that I had not even considered. On the outer level, I place vaster events such as storms, earthquakes, strikes, the COVID-19 pandemic, not directly linked to my research but which impacted it, nonetheless.²¹

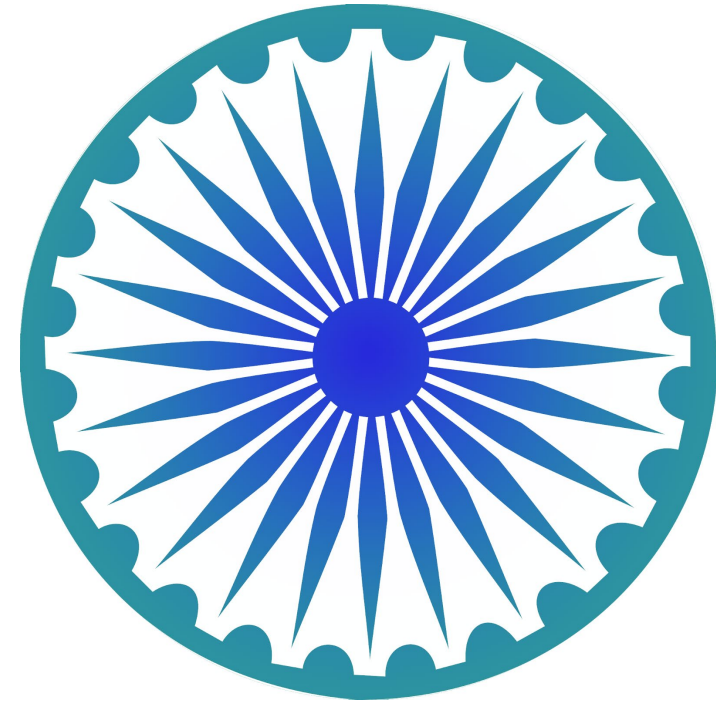


Fig. 5 Image based on Ashok or Dharma Chakra.

Expanding the Body III: aliveness

The swarm of relations surrounding *The Crochet Resistance Suit* suggest this temporally dispersed event might well be the spinal tap root of *Space of the Nameless*. To build its vertebral composition I follow the *chakra* system, another Tantric principle of subtle anatomy that originates in the Vedas. Through the *chakra* system's energetic logic, I zoom into certain 'art situations' that seem to be agglutinations of 'intensity' that subsequently inflected new desire lines in the suit's fabrication.²² These 'building blocks' helped me to understand the process and will hopefully help you to grasp the research journey that follows.²³

~

At the centre of the Indian flag is the Ashoka chakra, representing Dharma chakra, the wheel of time, and change. The symbol was chosen by Gandhi to mark the shift to post-Independence India after the end of British colonial rule in 1947. *Chakra* means wheel in Sanskrit.

In the human body, chakras line the spine and are located at the seven points of intersection of the two main *nadis* – the feminine *ida* lunar channel on the left and the masculine *pingala* solar channel on the right which intertwine at the seven chakra centres. In chakra anatomy, the life force, called *prana*, follows a watery logic. It irrigates the body via channels called *nadis*, the Sanskrit word for 'river' (and *nada* meaning sound). The chakra centres, like watermills, or spinning wheels, pump the (*prana*) life force, which lubricates the wheels' smooth revolutions.²⁴

Each chakra is connected to a *bija* (seed) mantra; a mantra is a sacred sound or poetic form. The tonal ascent of sounds, from the coccyx base to the crown follows the seven notes of the musical scale (*saptaka*) with corresponding (Hindustani Classical Music) solfege syllables.²⁵ The reverberation, in the body, of the *bija* sounds and phonemes, is linked to the (embodied) origins of language. Traditionally, the spiritual effect of *prana* energy ascending through the chakras, has been visualized as the gradual opening of a lotus flower (see Fig. 3). At each stage, more of the petals uncurl until, at the seventh chakra, the thousand-petaled lotus appears – wisdom's blooming.²⁶

To discover the energetic principle underlying *The Expanded Body*, the connecting lines of the score become the *nadi* meridians conducting energetic forces around the research project. Now switch your imaginal perspective to take an immersive view of the body, something like an MRI scan in which all the microscopic slices would have been stacked one on top of the other. The central circle (of the score) would represent the cross-section of the spinal column. From this overhead perspective, you would now be looking inside the column from which the chakras emanate. And the ripples that spin off from the revolutions of the chakra wheels from central column (the score's lines) trace the course of the spinal fluid's tributaries as it flows into the eight texts that ensue.

And so it begins.

~

muladhara chakra

Physical location: coccyx, legs, bones

Provides root support, grounding

Element – earth / Metal – lead

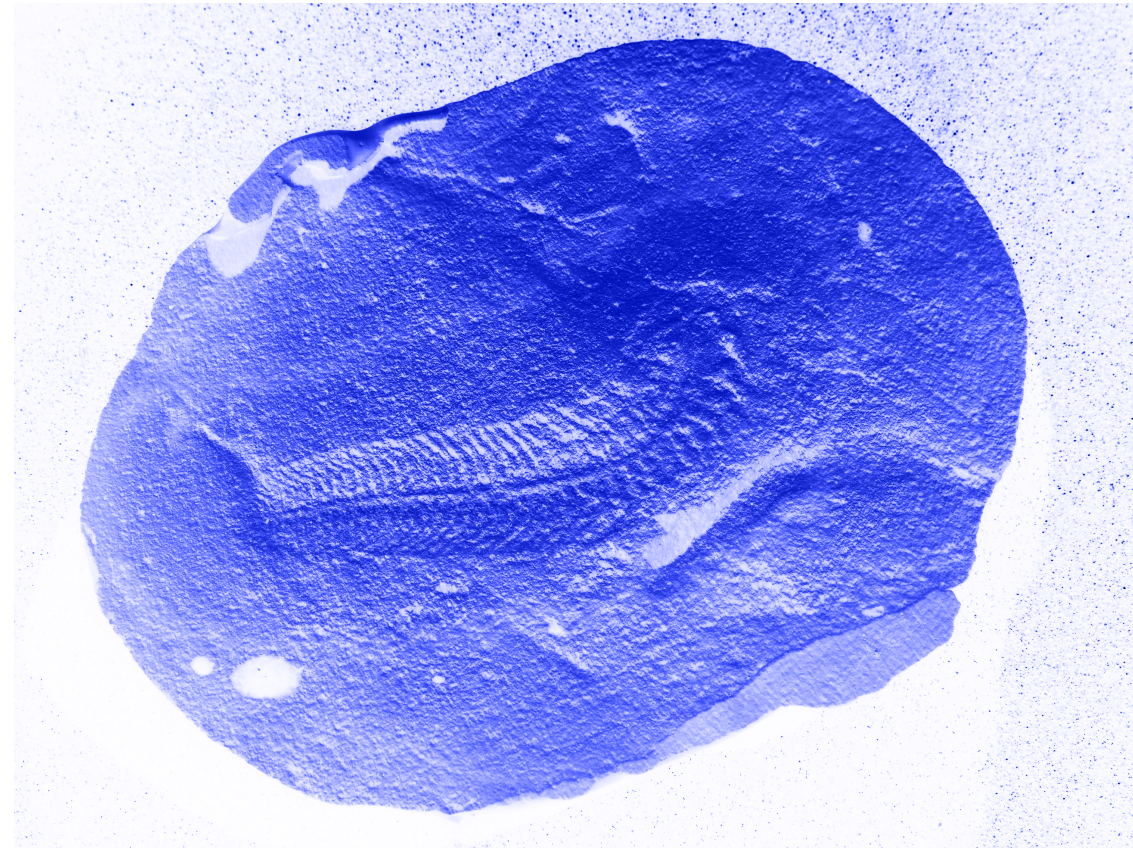
Mineral – ruby / Sense – smell

Seed mantra: LAM / Musical syllable: sa

What do I want? What do you want?

You make a slipknot, nice and loose, so that it glides smoothly along the yarn. And then, you keep pulling through the knot, making sure you have just the right tension between the yarn and your index finger – a flexible tension – then it will flow. And if you take out the hook, and pull the yarn, everything will unravel back to the first knot.

She was sharing the secrets of crochet with nimble gestures as we talked about art and life. I kept dropping stitches. She wasn't looking at my hands, she was staring at the air between us, musing about work she loved, instead of all the freelance jobs – admin, cleaning, events, waitressing, media – that sustained her art practice. She was



wishing she could live from her crochet. Hearing her longing made me drop stitches again, my attention wandering: how could we resist the 'gig economy'?

The commission is to create a warrior's outfit. Its design is inspired by medieval chainmail, because of the simple repetitive motif: I designate it *The Crochet Resistance Suit*.²⁷ The suit embodies 'women's work' as a soft resistance (in part to gendered issues in the historical 'art versus craft' debate, informed through an activity that 'valorizes' labour often not recognised as 'work').²⁸ The suit's fabrication would free time.

The contract stipulates that Marina can take as long as she wants to make the suit. All the work must be properly remunerated. Its fabrication must be paced in a piece-meal fashion, so that I can afford to pay for it according to my own or other resources if they become available (I hoped to secure some cultural funding for this 'conceptual artwork'). Because the commission might take a lifetime to complete, the contract can also be transferred to others at any point.

I wondered, could this contract introduce 'love' into labour's equation of rate per hour, just by enabling one person to do the work they really *love*?

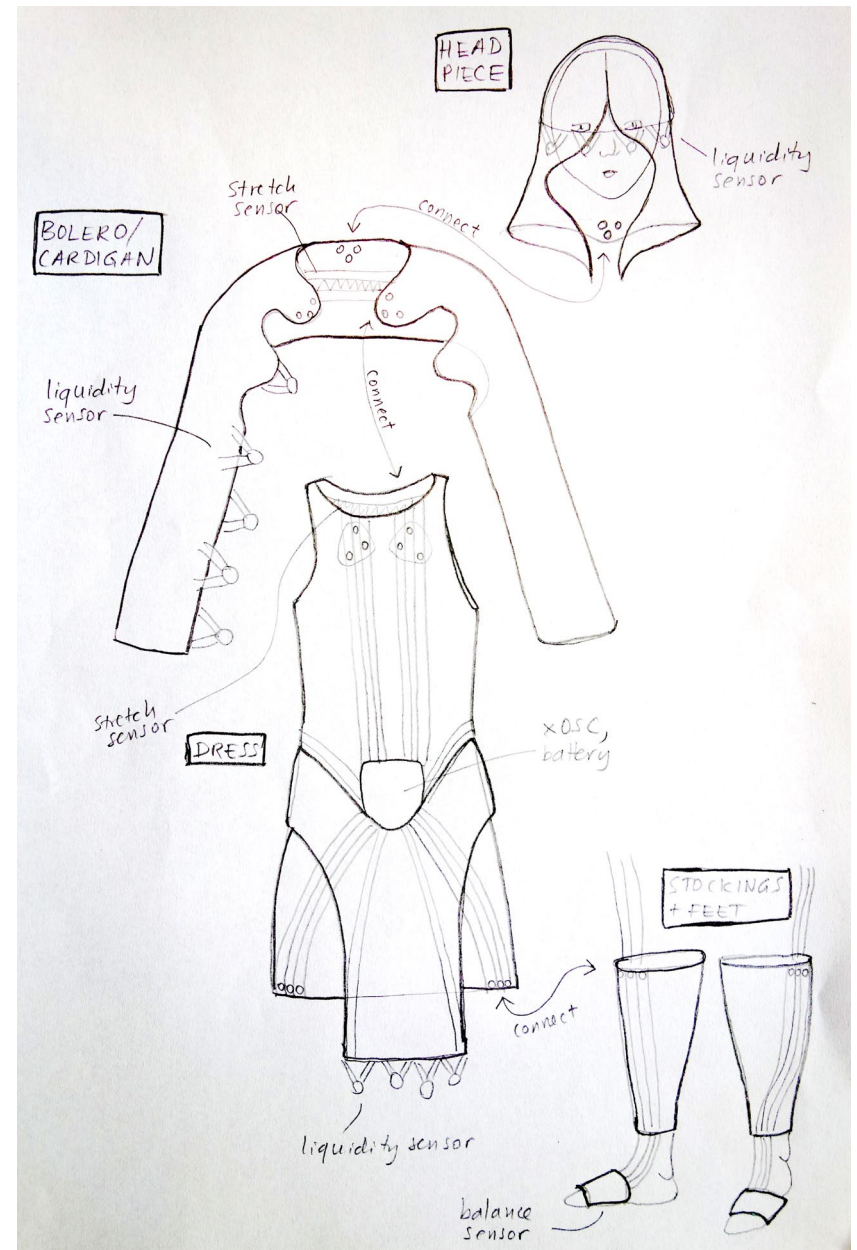


Fig. 6 *The Crochet Resistance Suit*, Drawing by Hannah Perner-Wilson, 2018.

swaddisthana chakra

Physical location: bladder and reproductive organs

Linked to feelings, desires / Element – water

Metal – tin / Mineral – moonstone / Sense - taste

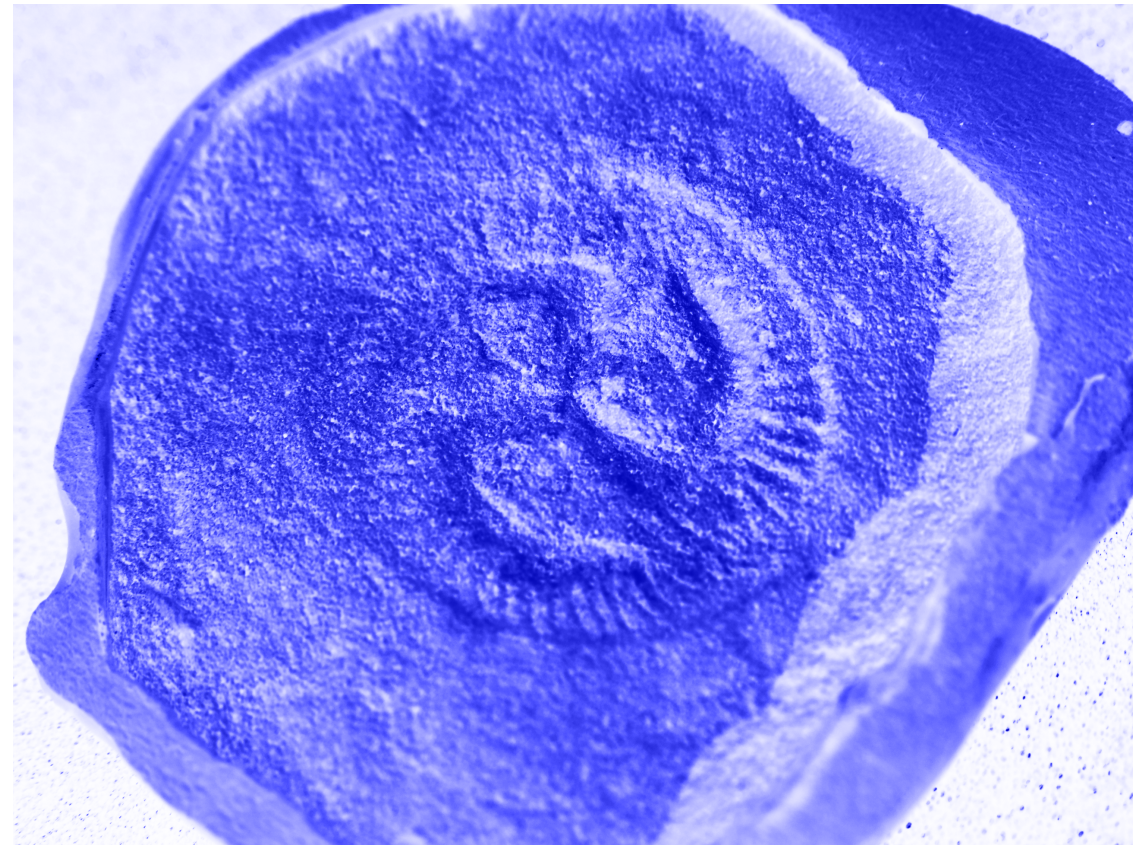
Seed mantra: VAM / Musical syllable: re

Häckeln = Hacking²⁹

A year passed. A little square of crochet took form. Around that time, I heard about the *Ohm Hook*. I was at Spectrum, a former hackerspace in Berlin, listening to Hannah Perner-Wilson, give a presentation about her invention: a crochet hook with a built-in sensor that measures the resistance of the yarn.

(Was I dreaming?)

Hannah and her collaborator, Mika Satomi, are Kobakant Collective. Together they “explore the use of textile crafts and electronics as a



medium for commenting on technological aspects of today's 'high-tech' society".³⁰ In 2018 they received a European Union grant to finance their electronic tailoring shop, KOBA. KOBA's lure was also its ethos: to 'get what you want, you make it... Nothing was for sale; everything could be made.'³¹

KOBA was located at the edge of Görlitzer Park in Berlin. I was living around the corner on Lübbener Strasse. Marina, now pregnant, was ready to pass the yarn. Hannah and Mika caught it. With their resources, things picked up speed. What I didn't know was that Mika and Hannah were using conductive yarn to construct the sleeve. In their hands, resistance became more than just a concept, it would become a function. And when they presented me with a finished sleeve, I really did wonder, 'is this what I wanted?' I had no idea what to do with it. I had to learn. The following year Hannah invited me to attend my first hackathon, the *Unuseless Musical Instruments Hackathon*, organized by Giacomo Lepri at Queen Mary University's Augmented Instruments Lab.³² Over two days of frenetic activity, crafting, coding, and soldering, I burnt my hand, and made a pile of jelly wobble by practicing Tai Ch'i Short Form with my wrists attached to a stretch sensor. It was a steep learning curve: I enjoyed it.

My friend Mitch (Altman) says that 'hackerspaces are about love'. They challenge corporate monopolies on technology, and the impact of deskilling linked to the 'post-labour condition'.³³ In these hackerspaces, I'm convinced I felt the 'material or medium of work directing me'³⁴ by being immersed in a "collective inter-individual reality".³⁵ It made me wonder if hacking, as communal curiosity and inventive improvisation, could *free* time?³⁶



Fig. 7 Copper yarn sample: *The Crochet Resistance Suit*, 2018 - 2019.

manipura chakra

Physical location: solar plexus

Linked to will, power, agency / Element – fire

Metal – iron / Mineral - amber / Sense - sight

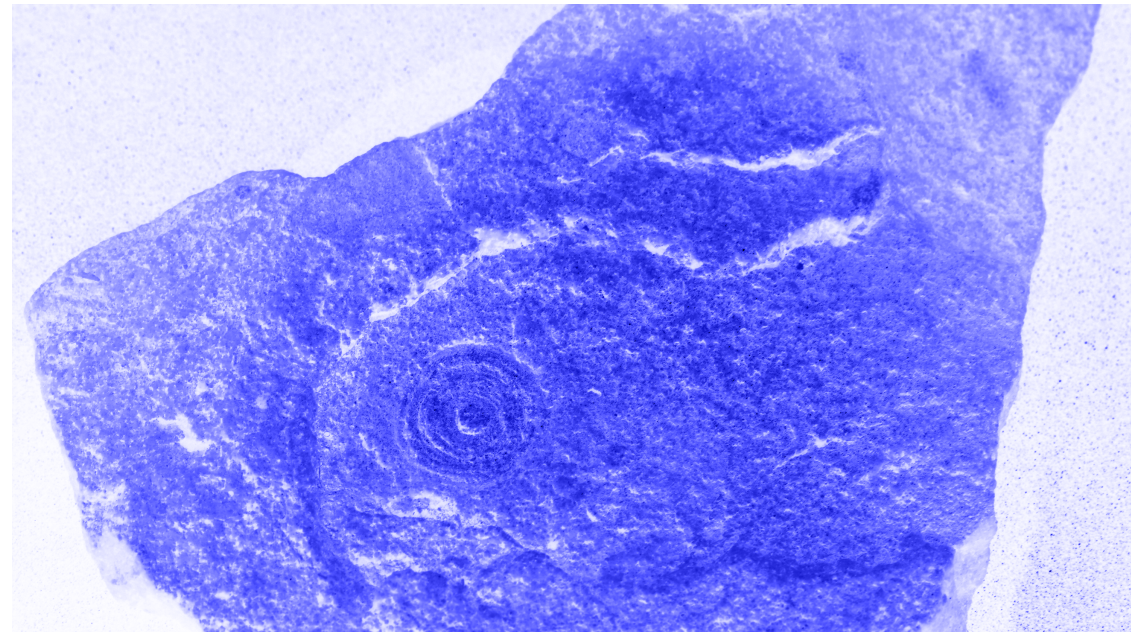
Seed mantra: RAM / Musical syllable: ga

This is not a performance

Her theory of ‘somatic revolt’, the idea that even when you are consciously aware of the importance of an office job, for example, in which you feel repressed or which feels deeply unnatural to you – as it does for me, no matter how much you try to convince yourself otherwise, like psychosomatic illness, your body will eventually revolt; against itself, against society, which is why there are so many auto-immune disorders and so much mental illness worldwide: this ruthless system, in truth, just doesn’t work for people...³⁷

~ Neil Chapman

‘Somatic revolt’ is my theory. In my former life as a freelancer in the design industry, my body’s revolt took the form of debilitating repetitive strain injury (RSI). It’s what made me quit. (The RSI



returned with a vengeance at the start of my doctoral research.) Somatic revolt is a silent scission, something far murkier than can be resolved with a new chair, a gel pad, or an ergonomic mouse – though of course the comfort these interfaces provide will allow me to *sink* back into ‘productive mode.’³⁸ When I chose to listen to another system – my nervous system – I heard something about time, about my body-material’s attempts to *embody* a particular temporality that for some reason I still find myself unable to impersonate.

The tempo of pleasing

You know the score. Straight after an event, questionnaires are fluttering. Each question wanting to know how you *feel* about a performance, an exhibition, or other event or cultural offering. There is a scale of 1 to 5 at your disposal to rate it: Did it *perform* well? Was it a good use of your time? Will it have a positive impact on your life? Etc.³⁹ Then you get to the final box on the form. You are being asked to identify with a category. Your tick is the self-assured flourish confirming you *know* who you are and where you fit. From there, the data will be parsed by an algorithm, a data visualization graph might be plotted, a curve will give shape to a ‘we’ space – ‘our user experiences’. But which entity will determine the successful or unsuccessful use of time (and money)? Who judges whether the work has performed well or poorly and is either useful or useless?⁴⁰

~

For three days I’d been in the inspirational presence of dancer, Rosalind Crisp.⁴¹ In a poetic shorthand, I’d written, ‘a syrupy space’ ‘a membrane’, ‘thick sand’, ‘the string of an instrument, taut through constraint’. And questions: ‘How quickly do you respond to a partner’s touch? Do you feel the need to respond straight away? Is it about ‘being good’? What does the *tempo of pleasing* feel like?’ The source of these thoughts were the inner tempos generated by the sensuous inner work of dancing.

My body still floppy with wonder, I was handed the user-experience form and the familiar tick-boxes of identity. Was I to *know* these things so soon and respond immediately? I was convinced that the entity that draws inferences from this process, couldn’t possibly be on the same wavelength, in the same timeframe, as this ‘we’ the form purports to include. I felt my body contracting; longing for *temporosity*.

~

When I attended Masaki Iwana’s final summer workshop at La Maison du Butoh Blanc in August 2018, I didn’t know that this would also be our final meeting. But I *knew*, when I heard him say, with his distinctive blend of gentle timidity and sincere gravitas, “do not treat your body like an employee!”⁴² I just knew that it had never been about making a *costume* for a *performance*.

anahata chakra

Physical location: Heart, lungs, arms, hands

Enables compassion and love

Element – air / Metal – copper

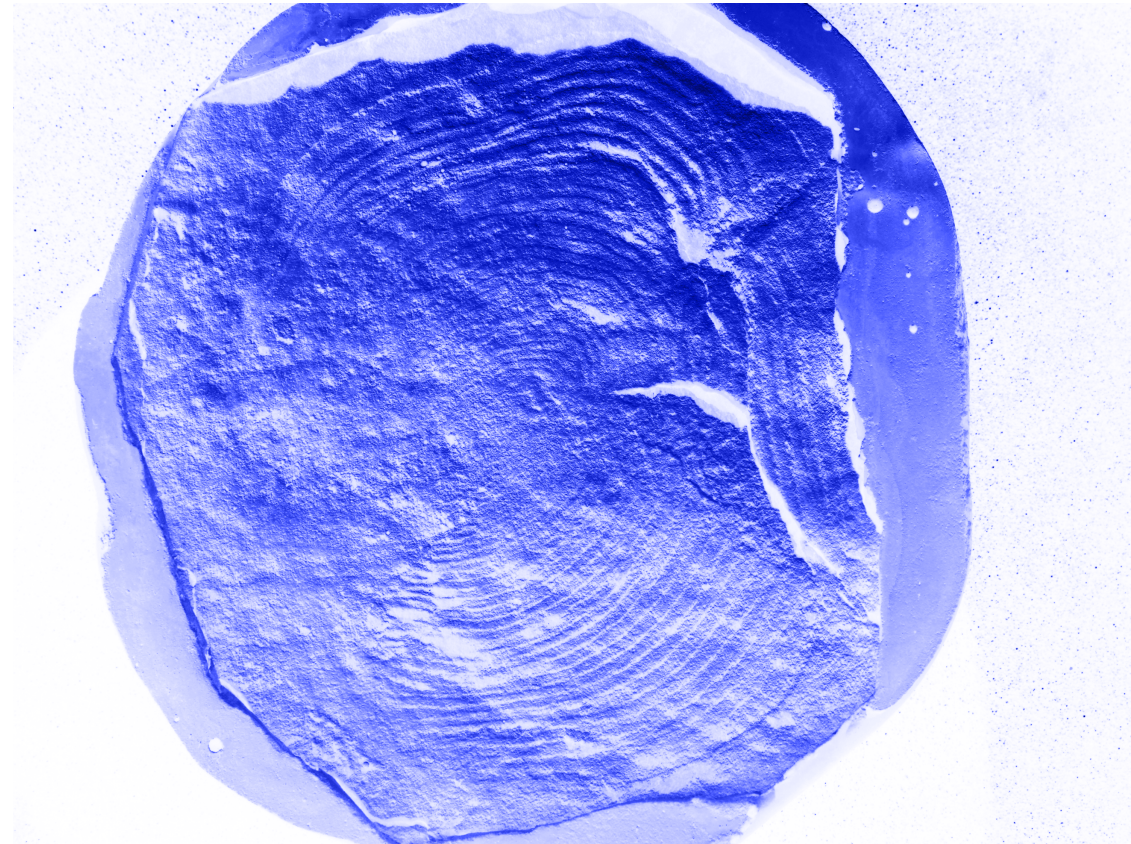
Mineral – emerald / Sense - touch

Seed mantra: IAM /YAM / Musical syllable: ma

Who leads, who follows?

Scribbled next to a sketch, I have written: “‘costume’ needs to have the possibility to transform from clothing to membrane.” But what is the function of a membrane, how does it mediate relations between a body, bodies? Definitions include ‘a ‘thin pliable sheet or film’, a ‘semipermeable layer’, a ‘selective barrier’ letting some things through and not others, also serving to ‘connect or separate parts, regions, or organs’.

Inspired by my time in a mouldy bath house the previous year, I began to grow slime mould cultures. Their nightly meanderings resulted in



lacy yellow networks of tendrils filling, and often overflowing, the petri dish containers. I showed Hannah some photos. She caught the ball. She imagined possibilities for integrating them into the suit's circuitry. The pattern on the table at KOBA was changing, the shape of human armour was giving way to a circle, with 1.74m diameter – my height. But instead of Vitruvian symmetries, it displayed the irregular pattern of a blown-up petri dish of slime mould activity, the outer perimeter holding many smaller random-shaped cells within its contours. What we didn't realise was that these asymmetries 'glitched' the repetitive rhythm characteristic of crochet, and crafting such a pattern would require constant shifts of perspective: from the wood to the trees; from the trees to the wood...

~

On 7 June 2018 I received an email from Mika announcing that a "super knitter/crochet *prakticantin*" named Mariam has begun a placement at KOBA.⁴³ Hannah and Mika met Mariam Arid at a knitting group in a refugee camp in Lichtenberg. She came from Aleppo in Syria. Now that she had been allocated her own home, the Job Centre offered her a six-week training program. Mariam asked to do the training with Kobakant. It was the opportune moment; the crochet suit was on the table.

Working at KOBA was Mariam's first 'job'. Her work was paid for in part through a research grant.⁴⁴ Perhaps the initial concept of allowing love into work's equation, was somehow fulfilled ...

~

"I'm going to write a bit about myself.
My name Mariam Arid I was born in Syria Aleppo in 2.2.1966
I was a housewife in Syria I have 6 children 5 girls and a son
I was in Germany 4 years ago
I escaped from the war I live here with my son and try to bring my
husband and young daughters here
I always felt lonely and sad because of my family
But when I met you, you were my new family. Yours sincerely,
Mariam."⁴⁵

~

Mariam would work on the suit for long hours, always with her electronic 'god counter' in one hand, counting her prayers as she counted the knots.

One day I interviewed her at KOBA. She told us:

"We went across the borders of all these countries, we went to Turkey, then we went to Hungary, Serbia, Slovenia, Macedonia."⁴⁶ Mariam and her son walked more than 2,500 kilometres to escape the war in Syria. That afternoon she told us many things, stories of her childhood, joys and sadness. She would smile, and then break down a moment later as she spoke of her daughters and her husband, still in Syria.⁴⁷ But she loved to work with crochet, it made her forget time she said, and the trauma of forced exile. "I mostly escape from the present situation ... I'm counting while I'm crocheting, I'm counting so there's no place for other thoughts, that's why I feel good." I wondered if the irregularity of the 'slime mould pattern' was interfering with her crochet flow?⁴⁸



Fig. 8 Electronic crochet sensors and samples, *The Crochet Resistance Suit*, 2018 - 2019.



Fig. 9 Crochet samples, *The Crochet Resistance Suit*, 2018 - 2019.

Her reply:

The whole time I didn't know what I was doing, I really didn't know. I didn't know what Dominique was doing, what ideas she had. I didn't really understand what we're doing... So, I just thought, we have to follow this. And I started working on the sleeve without really knowing what we are doing.⁴⁹

Through 'not knowing' Mariam looked for her own meanings in the work, ones we hadn't considered. "We didn't choose the war; the war chose us!" She said the war had "carried [them] away", it was not their choice, but she realised that conflict grows in unpredictable ways, in fractious trails "like the [slime mould] it begins at one point, and it spreads all over the area and doesn't stop."⁵⁰

~

The research grant I received was for the purpose of investigating free time using commercial biofeedback technologies (with Jamie Forth, a researcher in computing). *The Crochet Resistance Suit* was the final 'wearable' we acquired for this purpose: it was the only handcrafted one. 'Freeing time' is not a *performance* though, so the suit couldn't be a 'costume'. And the suit was based on my body measurements, and 'I don't know, nor might I ever know, how to 'free time'. We decided that the suit's technology had to be tuned to the *uncontrollable*: to the more-than-just-human encounters of entities like gravity, air, wind, with living, breathing bodies. Perhaps attuning to this interplay could *free time*.



Fig. 10 *The Crochet Resistance Suit*, 2018 – 2019.

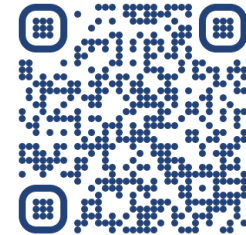


Fig. 10.1 *Tales of Fabrication: interview with Mariam Arid*, HD video & sound, 4:13, 2018.

vissudha chakra

Physical location: throat

Enables communication and creativity

Element – sound / Metal – mercury /

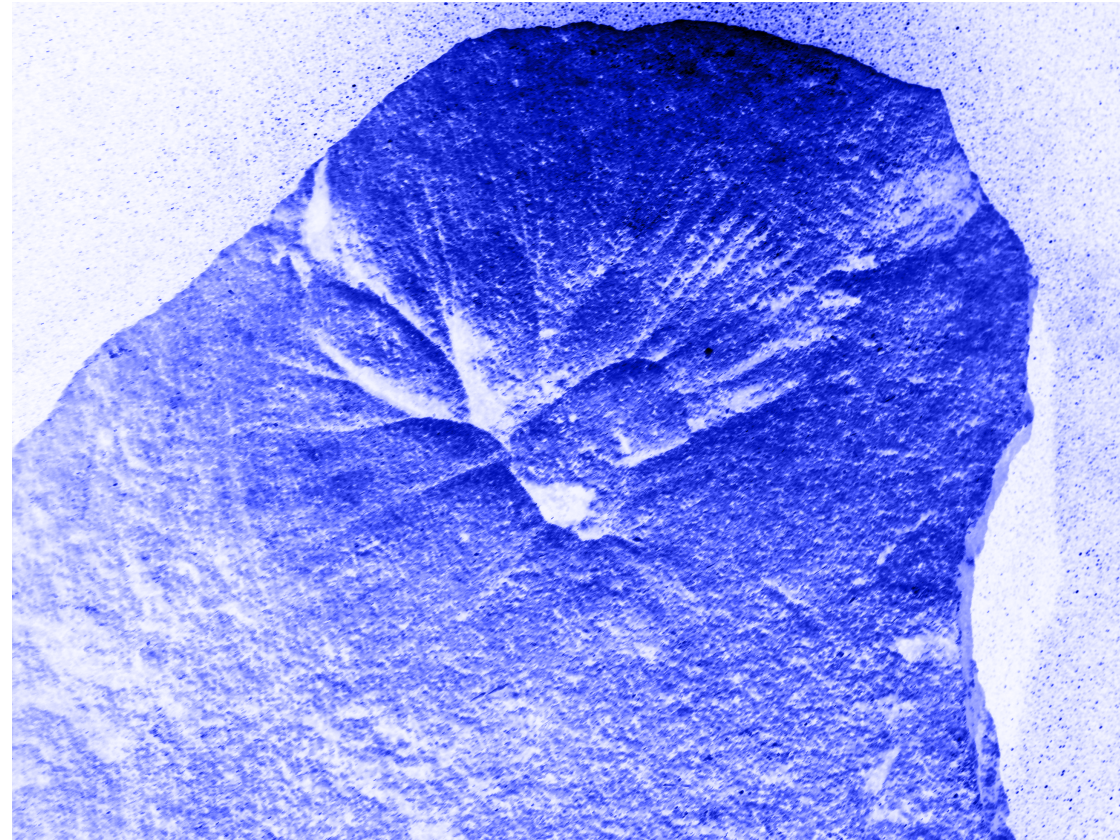
Sense - hearing

Seed mantra: HAM / Musical syllable: pa

The appearance of an unknown thing

The suit was at a stage of completion. The first time I wore it publicly – for the finissage exhibition at KOBA in January 2019 – Hannah, Mika and Mariam helped me put it on. The polyphony of sounds that came from the micromovement data was mesmerising; the minutest weight shifts between (my) body and the ground, the quivering of (my) head in time with (my) heartbeat, the trembling of (my) hands. We listened, entranced by the composition of electrical resistors.

An issue remained. The suit drips with materiality. Its thin filaments twist and catch on everything to the point of being stifling.



The construction is so delicate and fragile that, without assistance, it would take me almost an hour to find my way in. It was so prone to entanglements that 'moving freely' was hopeless hubris. So ornate as to be exhausting, oppressive, inhuman. All this made the suit virtually unwearable. Glancing at myself in the mirror, I wondered: What is it? Who is this?

~

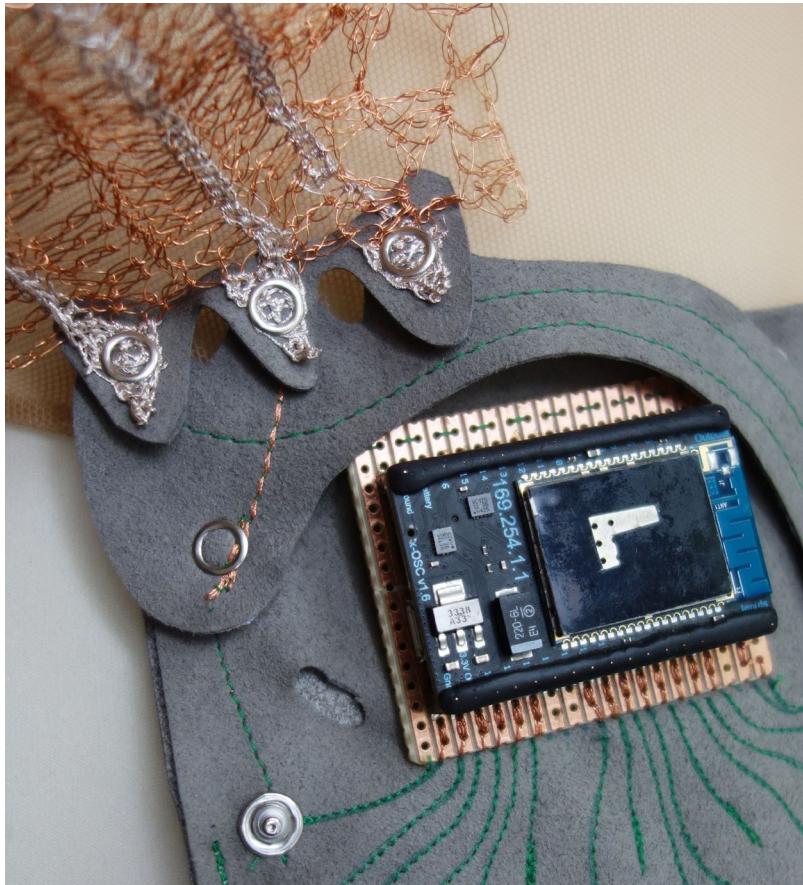


Fig. 11 Electronic microprocessor sewn into textile casing, *The Crochet Resistance Suit*, 2018 – 2019.



Fig. 12 'Slime mould' pattern crochet pieces, *The Crochet Resistance Suit*, 2018 – 2019.

While certain things do not appear to be useful, neither are they useless; they linger in the folds of the unknown.

In the ancient Daoist text of Zhuangzi (written by Master Zhuang 370 - 287 BCE) there is a story of a king who gives a man some seeds to grow gourds. The gourds that grow are too big and too heavy to be used for their regular purpose as water carriers or pitchers. Because he doesn't know what to do with these gourds, the man destroys them believing them to be *unusable*. When the king sees this, he asks the man, "why did you not think to make a boat out of these enormous gourds, you could have used it to journey along the rivers?" The gourds, unsuitable for their *known* uses, were *non-usable*.⁵¹

Non-usable isn't the opposite of useful or to be confused with 'unusable'.⁵² The non-usable might appear useless or unusable, but the non-usable is what is not yet known, has no historicity, and by contemporary reality's known standards, is *nameless*.⁵³



Fig. 14 Copper swing sensor embedded in chin piece,
The Crochet Resistance Suit, 2018 - 2019.

Fig. 13 (opp) Glove made with conductive copper yarn circuitry,
The Crochet Resistance Suit, 2018 - 2019.

ajna chakra

Physical location: pineal gland, brow centre

Linked to psychic seeing and intuition

Element – light / Metal – silver

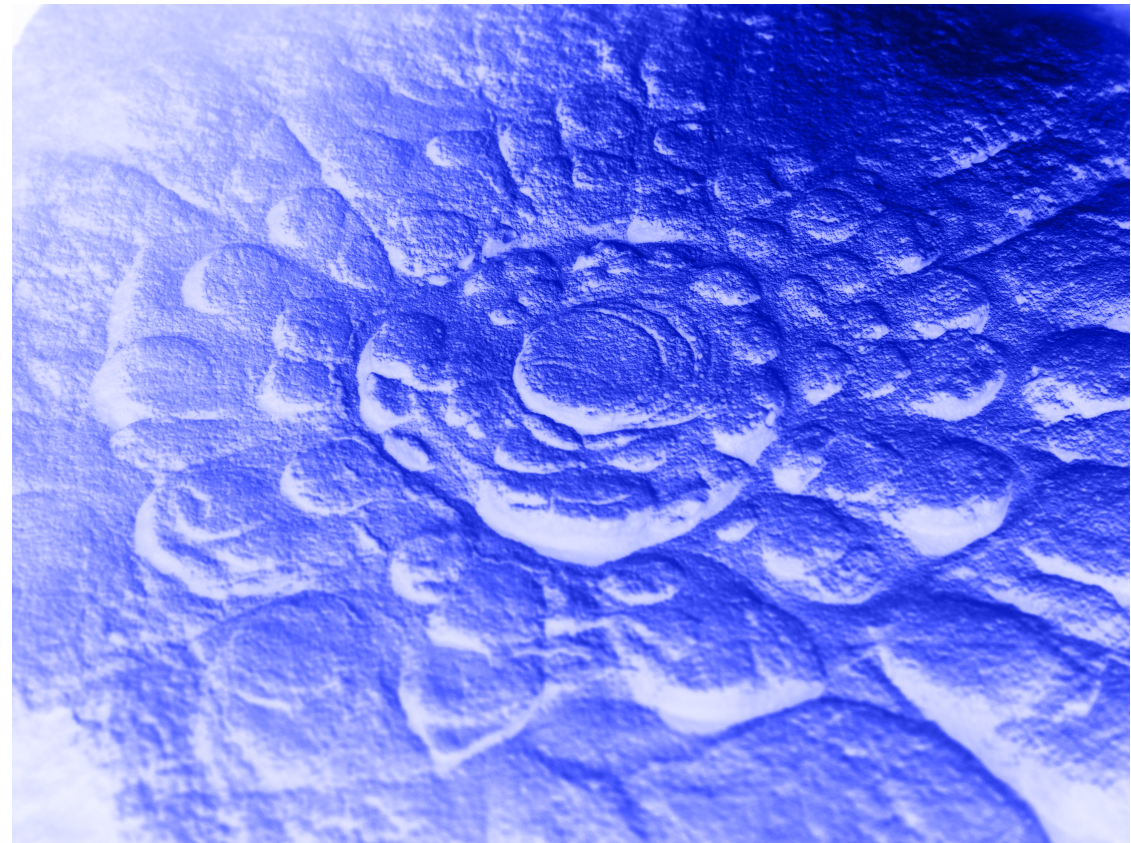
Mineral – sapphire / Sense - sight

Seed mantra: AUM / Note: dha

A rhythmic field

A year went by, then two. *The Crochet Resistance Suit*, too obscure in its unknowability, was receding into obsolescence. I received a text message from Mika one day: “How is the performance with the suit going?” I was ashamed, I had not given the suit its time: because it *takes time* to discover ways of navigating such a body of work.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, time lost its habitual tempo. It expanded or it contracted, I’m not sure which, but the question of freeing time came back to me with renewed urgency. I salvaged the suit from the depths of my forgetting. I laid out all the parts on my living room floor. I wanted to know what it was, what it might be. Could I learn something from its intricate patterns were I to *give* it time?



For hours, days at a time, I 'looked' without looking with eyes closed, seeing with my hands, gazing at the yarn with careful palms and fingers. The task of donning the suit became a meditation. It was teaching me to touch it. My fingertips easily followed the connections between pieces, locating the edges where clasps and press studs join individual parts. Without the prickling heat – my nervous system's reactivity to being 'time-poor' – my body now welcomed contact with this entity. I let it envelop me, the intimacy of its electrical charge slithering along my skin. In our union, I heard the world (and 'I' in it) in the (sine) waves of a 'rhythmic field'.

Listening, I knew, that 'I' don't control my movements; I am not *free* to do what 'I' want, move how 'I' want; the unknown that *moves me* can be heard in my heartbeat, in the wind, through electrical resistance. But what I know doesn't have a name – *neti neti*, not this, not this – only to be worn, activated, danced, alive!



sahasrara chakra

Physical location: crown of head, cerebral cortex,

central nervous system

Linked to understanding, wisdom / Element – thought

Metal – gold / Mineral – diamond

Thousand petaled, realisation

SILENCE / Note: ni

Imagine you are in a large white gallery space, and you notice a ten-centimetre-long cockroach scuttling past your feet. Your pupils will dilate instantly. The cockroach is alive. I want to be that cockroach.

∞



Fig. 15 *Transition Happens Through the Left Hand*,
HD video and Livestream sound, 2021.



Photo: Matt Favero

Fig. 16 *"Mind Rave", Sex Re-boot, activation, Iklectik Art Lab, 2022.*



Photo: Matt Favero

Fig. 17 *"Mind Rave", Sex Re-boot, installation detail, 2022.*

Photo: Chaong-wen Ting



Fig. 18 "Love is in the Wireframe", installation & activation, Berlin, 2021.



Photo: Chaong-wen Ting

Fig. 19 "Love is in the Wireframe", detail, 2021.



Fig. 20 "Love is in the Wireframe", detail, 2021.



Fig. 21 *And so it begins*, installation detail, mixed media, 2021.

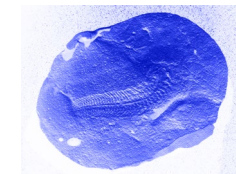
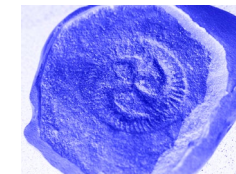
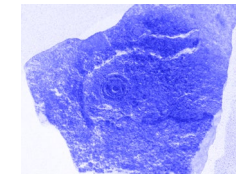
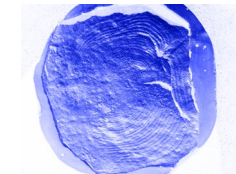
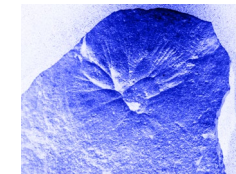
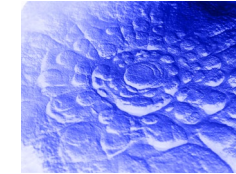
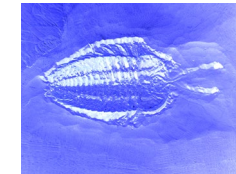


Fig. 22 "Love is in the Wireframe", activation view, 2021.

The Ediacara Fossil Record

The images on the previous pages are based on photographs I took of fossils held at the Natural History Museum in London.⁵⁴ They are the imprints of the Ediacara Biota, an epoch that dates back over 600 million years ago, believed to be the earliest experiment of life on planet Earth. The Ediacara is marked by the first appearance of multicellular organisms, beings that were soft-bodied and gelatinous with sizes ranging from a few centimetres up to over a meter in diameter. Few fossils can be found from that era because the soft matter of the organisms didn't easily register imprints in rock. Of those that exist, many display fascinating geometric symmetries.

'The Garden of Ediacara' was unique in many ways. Ediacarans, like plants, had the ability to absorb nutrients from the rich ocean waters through their outer membranes. This mode of osmotic sustenance meant that despite their diversity of shapes and sizes, there were no predators: 'nobody needed to eat anyone else'.⁵⁵ With the Cambrian explosion, more complex organisms started to appear in the fossil record. Strangely, the Cambrian phylogenetic tree of life doesn't seem to be connected to the Ediacaran one: the Cambrian era appears to have been a completely novel (secondary) experiment in life. The crucial difference with the Cambrian explosion is the appearance of predators. This is marked by eyes and mouths forming inside a head appendage, and the result is calcification: shells and exoskeletons formed around organisms for protection: "life gets hard".⁵⁶ One of the earliest Cambrian predators was an arthropod called *Anomalocaris*, which had eyes and a disc-like mouth: an "odd shrimp" that may have acted in its own self-interest.



NOTES TO SOMATIC REVOLUTIONS

1 Gell calls 'art-like situations' "those in which the material 'index' (the visible, physical, 'thing') permits a particular cognitive operation ... *the abduction of agency*." Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 13.

2 The research score was inspired by Gell's diagram (following Husserl's model of 'time-consciousness') of the artist's oeuvre as "...one indivisible work, consisting of many physical indexes (works) but amounting to a single temporal unity, like a persistent thunderstorm which is made up of many, quasi-instantaneous flashes of lightning." Gell, 235–36.

3 Adrian Heathfield and Tehching Hsieh, *Out of Now: The Lifeworks of Tehching Hsieh* (London, UK: The Live Art Development Agency & MIT Press, 2015).

4 Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Classic Work on How to Achieve Happiness*, Rev. ed. (London: Rider, 2002).

5 A play on words by historian Kamau Braithwaite, 'tidalectic' is a conjunction of tidal and dialectic that describes an 'oceanic worldview'. See Stefanie Hessler, *Tidalectics : Imagining an Oceanic Worldview through Art and Science*, Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary Academy, Host Institution. (London : Cambridge, Massachusetts: TBA21-Academy ; The MIT Press, 2018).

6 For the Buddhist imaginal of Indra's Net see Shinshu Roberts, *Being-Time. A Practitioner's Guide to Dogen's Shobogenzo*

Uji (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2018).

7 Roberts, 75.

8 Barad's term describes a similar principle. Karen Michelle Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway : Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

9 The soft eye focus is a form of 'vagal brake' that engages the parasympathetic nervous system. See Stephen W. Porges, *The Polyvagal Theory : Neurophysiological Foundations of Emotions, Attachment, Communication, and Self-Regulation.*, Norton Series on Interpersonal Neurobiology. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011).

10 Tatsumi Hijikata's described butoh in this way, as heard from many butoh artists.

11 See James P. Carse, *Finite and Infinite Games: A Vision of Life as Play and Possibility* (New York, NY: Free Press, 2012).

12 Roberts, *Being-Time. A Practitioner's Guide to Dogen's Shobogenzo Uji*, 65. Italics mine.

13 Gebser suggests origin appears through creation. I understand it to mean that practice reveals theory. Jean Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1985).

14 With reference to experimental musical interfaces, Tanaka and Donnaruma also speak of "an expanded definition of the body [that] parallels the extended notion of the instrument" and extends into shared space. See Atau Tanaka and Marco Donnarumma, 'The Body as Musical Instrument', in *The Oxford Handbook of Music and the Body*, Oxford Handbooks. (Oxford University Press, 2019), 7.

15 Hertz initiated the critical making project to "blend and extend the fields of design, contemporary art, DIY/craft and

technological development" by critically engaging with the social impact of technology, through hands-on practice. See Garnet Hertz, *Critical Making*, Online edition (Vancouver, Canada: Garnet Hertz, Concept Lab, 2012), <http://www.conceptlab.com/criticalmaking/>.

The Crochet Coral Reef project relocates 'women's work' in art practice, see Christine Wertheim, 'Craft-Work and Other Gendered Myths of the Capitalocene', in *Crochet Coral Reef* (Los Angeles: Institute for Figuring, 2015), 104–11.

16 Royona Mitra responds to the current trend of virtual reality (VR) or augmented reality (AR) 'immersion' from a decolonial perspective, Royona Mitra, "Decolonizing Immersion: Translation, Spectatorship, *Rasa* Theory and Contemporary British Dance," *Performance Research* 21, no. 5 (September 2, 2016): 89–100.

Hui too is critical of the widespread uncritical use of VR and AR in art. See Yuk Hui, *Art and Cosmotechnics* (Minneapolis: e-flux, University of Minnesota, 2021).

My experience of VR 'immersion' is always linked to nausea. Is it because of the 'cephalo-centricism' of the apparatus which privileges the ocular (scopic) function and causes proprioceptive rupture?

17 Clément describes *rasa*, the Indian aesthetic theory of nondual (immersive) witnessing that Mitra refers to (above). Catherine Clément, *Syncope: The Philosophy of Rapture* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minneapolis Press, 1994), 215. Aliveness in my work encompasses a relation to witnessing in art that much aligned with *rasa* theory.

18 Philip Jacobs (current Sheikh at Colet House, 2022) prepared this image in the mid 1980s. He explains it with David Böhm's, terms: "Causal = implicate order, Divine = super implicate order, subtle/physical = explicate order." Philip Jacobs, 'The Four Elements Chat', Facebook Messenger, 27 November 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/messages/t/1430204118>.

19 Tatsumi, Hijikata. "Wind Daruma." TDR : Drama Review 44, no. 1 (2000): 71-79. (Italics mine).

20 I know of the Four Levels/Bodies model from yoga philosophy. Also as taught at The Study Society, Colet House, see Philip Jacobs, *Being: The Teaching of Advaita. A Basic Introduction*. (London: The Study Society, 2007). Also Pavan Kanwar, *A Vedic Life* (Delhi: New Age Books, 2011).

21 The Four Levels (or Four Bodies) proves a fascinating schema for grasping Simondon's theory of individuation. 'Pre-individual reality' is a dimension that continues to influence the becomings of the 'individuated entity', much like the 'causal level'. What Simondon calls 'a theater of individuations', reminds me of the Four Levels' 'drama of existence' resulting from the influence of all the levels on the individual/physical realm. See Gilbert Simondon, *Individuation in Light of Notions of Form and Information*, trans. Taylor Adkins (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2020).

22 For many readers, 'intensity' immediately evokes Deleuze and Guattari: *The Expanded Body* undoubtedly displays a rhizomatic structure, whose intensities are the 'artistic agglutinations' I've chosen to recount. See Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

23 For full photographic and technical documentation of *The Crochet Resistance Suit* see:

Hannah Perner-Wilson, Mika Satomi, and Kobakant, 'Crochet Resistance', KOBA, accessed 24 November 2022, <https://www.kobakant.at/KOBA/crochet-resistance/>.

Hannah 'Plusea' Perner-Wilson, 'Commission - Crochet Resistance', Photo album, Flickr, accessed 27 November 2022, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/plusea/albums/72157695263141991>.

Mika 'mikst' Satomi, 'Crochet Resistance', photo album, Flickr, accessed 27 November 2022, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/14412219@N04/albums/72157697808408905>.

24 The *chakras* are associated with the main nerve plexuses along the spine. See Huai-Chin Nan, *Tao & Longevity: Mind-Body Transformation*, trans. Wen Kuan Chu (York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser Inc., 1996).

For more on Nada Brahma see Hazrat Inayat Khan, *The Mysticism of Sound and Music*, Dragon Editions (Boulder Colorado: Shambhala, 1996).

25 Ashok Da. Ranade, *Keywords and Concepts: Hindustani Classical Music* (New Delhi: Promilla & Co., 1990).

26 For the Vedic origins of the *chakras* see Kanwar, *A Vedic Life*.

For a (Western) introduction to the *chakras* see Anodea Judith, *Eastern Body Western Mind: Psychology and the Chakra System as a Path to the Self* (New York: Celestial Arts, Random House, 2004).

27 “A ‘name’ is that which defines an object. A ‘designation’ is an inferred style. The name is born from the object. The designation comes from the subject.” Wang Bi on Laozi’s designation of the *dao*. See Hui, *Art and Cosmotechnics*, 161.

28 Taking into account the gendered issues of ‘art versus craft’ while imagining communal activities that ‘valorize’ labour that hasn’t been recognised as work. Christine Wertheim, *Craft-Work and Other Gendered Myths of the Capitalocene* in Margaret Wertheim. *Crochet Coral Reef*. (Los Angeles: Institute for Figuring, 2015): 109.

29 The German word for ‘crochet’ shares the same proto-Indo-European root as the word ‘hacking’. In this thesis ‘hacking’ refers to makerspaces, operating as what Chandler calls a ‘sympoietic’ mode of governance. See David Chandler, *Ontopolitics of the Anthropocene: An Introduction to Mapping, Sensing and Hacking* (UK: Routledge, 2018).

30 Hannah Perner-Wilson and Mika Satomi, ‘About’, Kobakant, accessed 15 November 2022, https://www.kobakant.at/?page_id=475.

31 Kobakant received funding from the EU Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme to set up their shop for a year. Hannah Perner-Wilson and Mika Satomi, ‘How to Get What You Want’, accessed 15 November 2022, <https://www.kobakant.at/DIY/>.

For a feminist perspective on hackerspaces see Annika Richterich, ‘Hackerspaces as Technofeminist Sites for Experiential Learning’, *Learning, Media and Technology*, no. 47 (1) (2 January 2022): 11–25.

32 Giacomo Lepri, Andrew McPherson, and John Bowers, “Useless, Not Worthless: Absurd Making as Critical Practice,” in *Proceedings of the 2020 ACM Designing Interactive Systems Conference*

(New York, NY, USA: Association for Computing Machinery, 2020), 1887–99. Andrew McPherson, and John Bowers, “Useless, Not Worthless: Absurd Making as Critical Practice,” in *Proceedings of the 2020 ACM Designing Interactive Systems Conference* (New York, NY, USA: Association for Computing Machinery, 2020).

33 Altman is one of the early founders of the hackerspace movement and a friend. Mitch Altman, ‘Conversations about Hackerspaces’.

I first encountered the term ‘post-labour’ condition Hui’s essay “On Automation and Free Time,” *e-flux - Architecture - Superhumanity*, March 2018, <https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/superhumanity/179224/on-automation-and-free-time/>.

34 David Chandler, *Ontopolitics of the Anthropocene: An Introduction to Mapping, Sensing and Hacking* (UK: Routledge, 2018), 145.

35 Simondon cited in Hui, ‘On Automation and Free Time’.

36 Yuk Hui considers ‘free time’ under AI labour conditions, which he says undo the (Marxist) worker/user binary as they “integrate the individual into technological systems”. Hui.

37 My friend Neil quoting me on his blog. Neil Chapman, “Travelling Inside... Spanish Moss by Hové Parfumeur,” *The Black Narcississus* (blog), 2020, <https://theblacknarcissus.com/2020/03/28/travelling-inside-spanish-moss-by-hove-parfumeur/>.

38 Ahmed uses the word ‘sinking’ to describe the feeling of belonging or being at home, experienced by those who fit into a particular system and its normative orientation. Sara Ahmed, *Queer*

Phenomenology Orientations, Objects, Others (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2006).

39 Elly Clarke, looks at the issue of data-gathering in her current doctoral project: <https://www.gold.ac.uk/art/research/current-mphil-phd-research/clarke-elly/>

40 Mark Fisher helped me to articulate some of these ideas. Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism* (Hampshire, UK: Zero Books, 2009).

41 Workshop with Rosalind Crisp at Independent dance, Siobhan Davies Studio, London, February 2019

42 Masaki Iwana cited in Dominique Bonarjee, 'Workshop Notes', 15 August 2018.

43 Mika Satomi to Dominique Bonarjee, 'Crocheted Warrior Costume with Sensors', 7 June 2018.

44 The Invention Creativity and Experience (ICE) award from Goldsmiths University (2018), received in conjunction with researcher Jamie Forth.

45 Mariam wrote her biography to accompany the interview I filmed. Mika Satomi, "mariam bio", email message to the author, February 27, 2019.

46 Mariam Arid, interview by Dominique Bonarjee, 3 December 2019.

47 Mariam's husband and daughters were able to join her eventually.

Ahmed addresses the disorientation that comes with migration. See Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology Orientations, Objects, Others*.

48 Crochet and other repetitive crafts are linked to flow states. See Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Classic Work on How to Achieve Happiness*.

49 Arid, interview.

50 Arid.

51 I retell the story Hui uses to introduce the term 'non-usable'. See Hui, *Art and Cosmotechnics*.

52 Perhaps Lepri's 'unuseless' really means non-usable. Lepri, McPherson, and Bowers, 'Useless, Not Worthless'.

53 The 'non-usable' in Hui, *Art and Cosmotechnics*.

54 I am very grateful to the staff at NHM who arranged my visit and access to these fossils, and also recommended the book by Stephen Jay Gould, *Wonderful Life: The Burgess Shale and the Nature of History* (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1990).

55 Dianna L.S. McMenamin and Mark A.S. McMenamin, *Hypersea: Life on Land* (Chichester, NY: Columbia University Press, 1994).

56 William Stolzenburg cited in McMenamin and McMenamin, 52.

space of the
nameless

0 - 1

DOMINIQUE SAVITRI BONARJEE

Department of Art. Goldsmiths University of London, 2023

Is time
becoming
thin or
is it becoming
thick?

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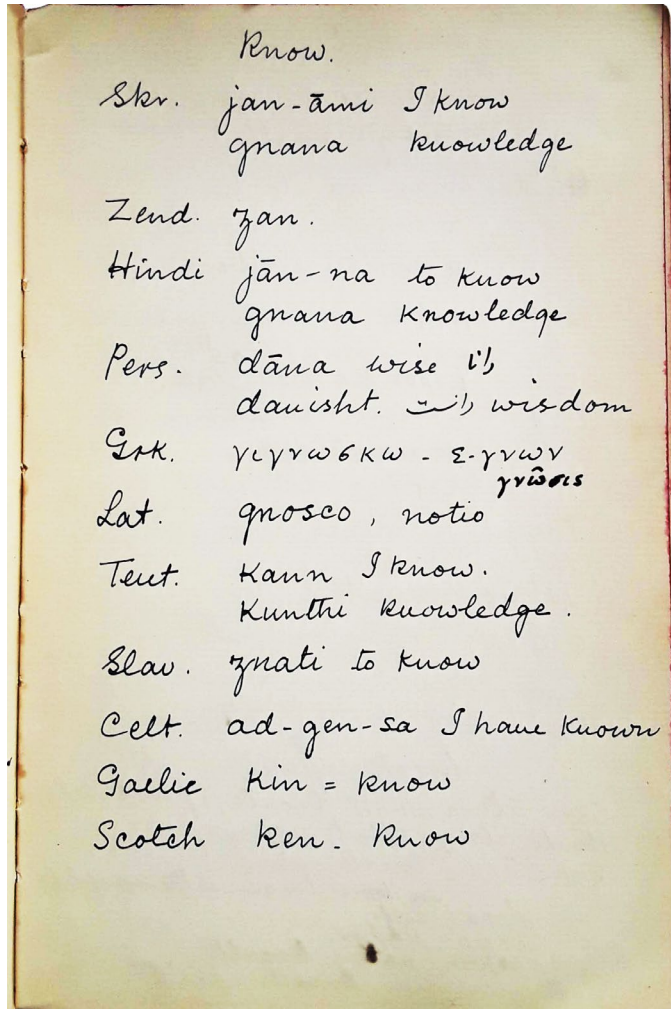


Fig. 1 "Know" in my grandfather's Sanskrit notebook (n.d.)

grammar

If grammar's function is to enable meaningful discourse to continue (instead of shutting it down as debate might),¹ how could disorienting the 'I' from the grammatical subject position, allow for continuity – of activity, conversation, creation – in time? To enact this imaginal disorientation, I conjure a grammar where stories, anecdotes, and reflections, tentatively tamper with the unconscious assumption of a stable identity. Grammar here will be more than linguistic; it will be a sensorial, temporal, acoustic hermeneutics, where pauses and silences and sunlight capacitate a space to dance, where continuity is an operation on the subject that unfixes the 'I', sets the self in motion, ready to engage in conversations with the unknown.

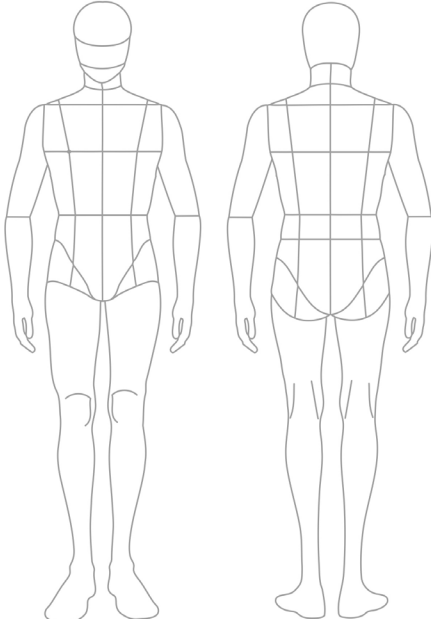
And will we talk of mysticism?

...if any discourse on intuition and the unknown is accused of mysticism, let us accept this charge, for it might be exactly what our epoch calls for.²

~

PROJECT: Crochet Resistance	
Name: Dominique Baron-Bonarjee	Date:

measurements:	cm
Chest	83
Waist	73.5
Hip	96
Shoulder length	47
Sleeve	58
Bicep	26.5
Elbow	24
Wrist	16.5
Outside Leg	107 to floor 100 to ankle
Inside Leg	78 to floor 71 to ankle
Thigh	55
Knee	37
Ankle	25
Cross- Front	57 shoulder to hip diagonal
Cross- Back	49 shoulder to hip diagonal
HSP to Waist (F)	38 clavicle-waist
HSP to Weist (B)	44 C7 vertebra - waist
Tail	174



Notes: (body balance, shoulder position, spine streight, photographs)

Fig. 2 My measurements for *The Crochet Resistance Suit*, 2018.*The subject that 'I' is*

To situate the self who writes ask, 'who is I?'³

I... knowing of the unknown through the name 'God' because my mother is a devout Catholic and always insisted that we do communal evening prayers and go to church "as long as I lived under her roof".

I... knowing Indian spiritual philosophy and practices as a living inheritance from my father and our ancestors.

I... always echoing between two polarities of belief and culture, and then growing up across three continents (Africa, Asia, and Europe), just to add reverb to the signal.

I... perpetually slipping into states of dissociation – being 'outside the social' – which made me imagine I could be *this*, I could be *that*, could be other, could be anything, could be nothing, could be *all*.⁴

Who is 'I'?

Difference, delay, distance, nameless.

Difference the size of a binaural amplitude, that pans between the two hemispheres of my skull.⁵

A *delay*, a beat away from the utterance of 'my' words and the activity of 'my' gestures.

Distance stretching around 'me'.

A *nameless* 'I', perpetually shapeshifting, in search of a form, and hearing 'not *this*, not *this*, not *that*, not *that*'.

I am, the unknown that 'I' is.

The time of silence

Tokyo, March 2012, I was meeting a dance critic.⁶ We'd been introduced at a recent production. Looking for a point of common interest with which to expand from the initial introductions and small talk, I inquired about his thoughts on the dance piece we'd both seen. Immediately, his look shifted away from me, a little downwards. His eyes seemed to go out of focus, as if he were gazing at something far away, reflecting on an unfathomable inner distance. His body seemed to slump, his countenance appeared heavier, even his breathing was inaudible – was he still breathing? – his lips did not move. A sudden wave of paralysis had descended upon our corner of the room. I waited for his answer expectantly. What I heard was utter silence. And it was so loud. The ambience of the café had suddenly been turned up to a deafening decibel range that was overpowering my eardrums, flooding my cochlear hairs which were now transmitting frazzled electrical impulses into my body. My mind raced about accusing me, giving me orders, panicked, trying to make sense of this awkward situation: I had offended him; he hadn't heard me because the café was too loud; worse, I had committed some terrible social faux pas and he didn't want to continue the conversation, and by shutting himself off he was assuming a demeanour that would end the meeting. Everywhere, my skin was percolating with the

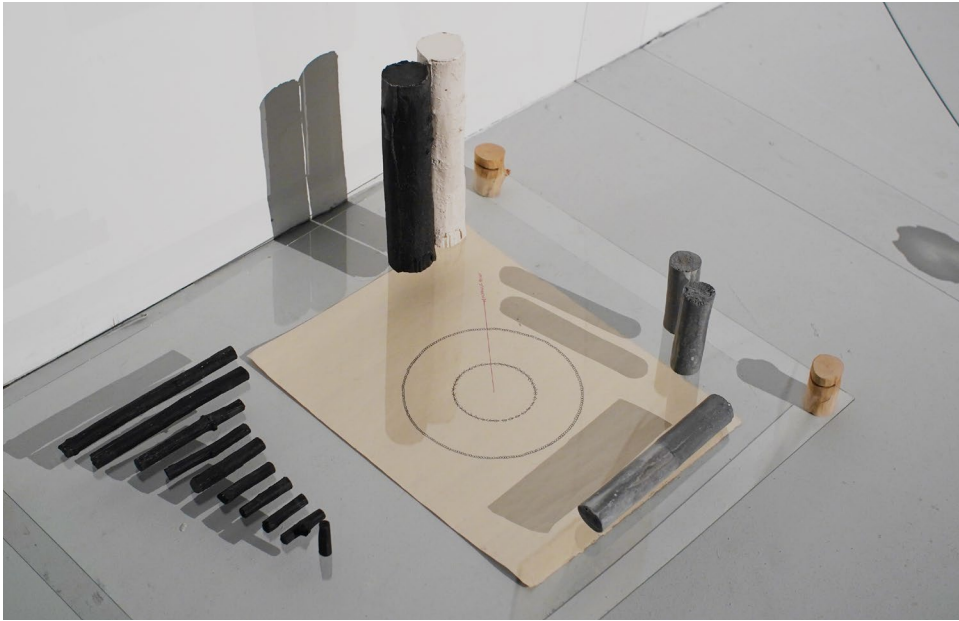


Fig. 3 *ILINX*: "Exchange point", jesmonite, plaster, paper, wood, glass, installation detail, 2019.

rising damp of embarrassment. The skin around my forehead, back, hands was pressing outwards uncomfortably, and with each silent tic of time, my ever more distended body was swelling out like some sort of Zeppelin ghost-ship. Thankfully he hadn't noticed, because still, he maintained his impassive posture for what now seemed to be an eternity. Most likely it lasted about a (chronological) minute. Slowly, tentatively, still visibly immersed in his interior sculpting, he surfaced again from astray. He had gone far away. He was telling of his research into Indian shamanism, taking me on a spiralling trajectory, through a compelling account of his interests and research, he eventually made his way back to my question. Now he addressed it, not with a short answer of good or bad, like, dislike, etc. Instead, the background he had just shared filtered into his impressions of the dance piece. My body released, I became receptive. Between us, something opened, an unexpected intimacy.

~

At that very moment 'I' was at sea.

When elements appear, I do not say 'I' appear. When elements disappear, I do not say 'I' disappear. Past moments and future moments do not arise in sequence. Past elements and future elements are not in alignment. This is the meaning of ocean mudra samadhi.

~Dogen⁷

At this very moment the sun appears from behind a gate.

~

Perhaps intimacy comes from not knowing what action will follow because "[o]ne conceals even from oneself one's intent."⁸ I am speaking about the 'in-between', a tempo designated *ma* in Japanese philosophy and aesthetics – a 'pause', a 'gap', an 'interval', a 'space' – though none of these words are adequate translations. *Ma*, as I know it, is to grasp the unknown as a *tempo*. The *kanji* pictogram for *ma* 間 depicts the energy of the sun shining from behind a gate. The pictogram also appears in the *kanji* for human being 人間 where *ma* 間 placed next to person 人 has the meaning of 'among', "in relationship to others".⁹ *Ma* is 'a way of seeing' from the objective world (the sun) and the subjective dimension (person), through a threshold (the gate) in the same instant, all of these perspectives come together as an 'infinite continuum' of presence.¹⁰ Listening to *ma* is to attune to the exact moment to speak, to move, to take action.¹¹

The space of zero

Yoshito Ohno often spoke of the zero of dance:

Look for the zero point: start from there and go back to it. Again and again, find moments of stop. Then your dance will be unpredictable: go back to zero in your dance. *Keep going back to zero.*¹²

~

Conjure absence, think of zero, the numeral – 0 – *sunya* in Sanskrit, which has its origin in the spiritual philosophy of *sunyata*.¹³ *Sunyata*

is nothingness, which in Zen Buddhism is *mu* 無 the noumenal term that the Kyoto school of contemporary Japanese philosophy saw as its guiding principle in contrast to Western philosophy's focus on the phenomenon.¹⁴

Where is zero?

Here at the sacred Shrine of Ise, dedicated to the creation goddess Amaterasu, there is no sign of a sun goddess. No symbol, no image or icon, anywhere in sight. The Shrine, an exquisite work of craftsmanship, harbours a void. A *kukan*, a 'place of emptiness', 'a place to breathe'. The absence of any image hosts the sensation of a sun, a presence in motion, mottling the path, glistening on the river. A reminder of her role in having warmed Earth to a temperature where trees and rocks, fish and rivers could come into being. The only goddess is the energy, the sunlight dispersing a radiant body which incited all the activity of nature and the human imagination that together created and constructed the multitudes; this material reality. All of it is a Sun Goddess.

Without symbols all I could do was feel. My probing hands listened to the buttery smoothness of the Japanese cedar *hinoki* panels that screen off the veiled shrine. I heard time suspended in wooden flesh. The polished plane blushed, responding to my touch; the wood, an extension of the red orb suspended in the sky above us; I was touching a proxy sun. At the point of contact, my own flesh felt burning hot, as if I'd put my hand directly into a flame.

Past the creamy panels of the entrance gate, I was facing

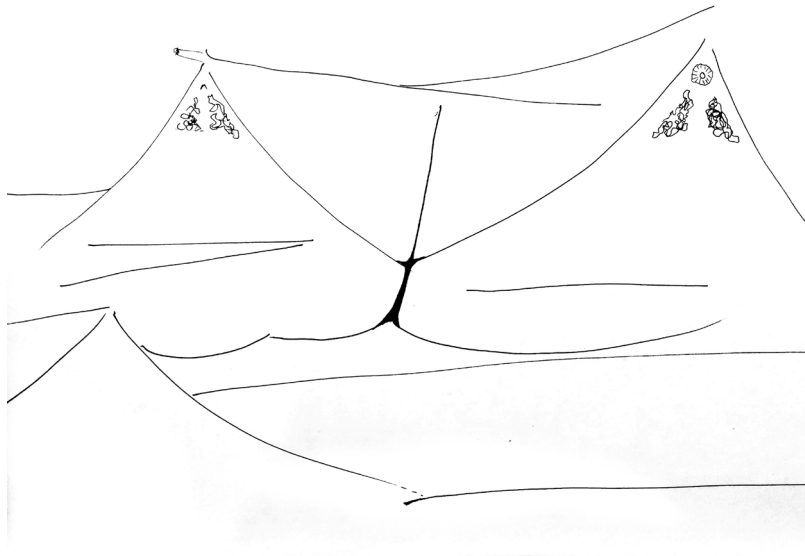


Fig. 4 *Vanishing points at Ise Shrine*, pen drawing, 2014.

the Grand Shrine which stood directly in front of me, part concealed by a large translucent piece of fabric hanging from a frame directly behind the coin collection box. I threw a coin. Its rattling traced a tinny sound through an invisible labyrinth, until silence told me it had finally joined the others in the depths of the box. Following the custom, I bowed until my head was almost in line with the rail. I clapped twice. As I held my palms together in the prayer position, I opened my eyes just a fraction. The curtain was shielding my view of the Shrine. How I wished it would lift just a little so that I could see more clearly, so I could perceive the secret spaces that lay on the other side. Out of nowhere came a deep exhalation: a long breath of wind began to blow. Higher, higher, higher until the veil was floating, luring me to look. I did, and I saw: a path of grey and white stones; the contours of the inner sanctuary buildings; the ornate roofs and their lines curving and angling in breath-taking arrangements of symmetry. All this revealing a deep extending perspective that stretched further out... towards another boundary gate. The secret of the Shrine: an endless journey of thresholds. The curtain descended. I had been holding my breath. I exhaled, I descended.¹⁵

~

In Japan there is a social practice called *kuki wo yomu*¹⁶ ‘sensing the space’, a way to read a social situation upon entry. *Kuki wo yomu* cultivates a ‘situated self’, conscious of sharing space with other bodies and entities.¹⁷

With his work *Fudo, Climate and Culture*, philosopher, Tetsuro Watsuji, sought to challenge Western materialism (he was deeply influenced by Kitaro Nishida, the founder of the Kyoto School, who I will mention later). *Fudo* is a theory of interconnection, between geography, weather, flora and fauna, technology, and their relation to the development of personhood.¹⁸ *Fudo* is a philosophy for ‘sensing the space’ by affirming its emptiness: Watsuji uses the term *ku*, as a synonym for *mu*. He derives it from the Japanese word *kukan* 空間 meaning ‘space’: the two *kanji* of *kukan* depict ‘the structure (*kan*) of emptiness (*ku*)’.¹⁹

According to *fudo*, spatiality can only emerge from the tapestry of relationships connecting all the human and nonhuman entities that share the ‘climate’ of a space. Consequently (social) ethics are not human-made, they are already woven into the space: sensing the air is to attune to the more-than-human ethics that move through the emptiness of spaces. The tapestry’s meshwork sustains the relationships of self to others so that no subjective consciousness can exist outside this interdependent web.²⁰ The consciousness of ‘I’ can only arise from the ‘in-betweenness’ of the mesh – its warp and weft – never independently of it. Like a ream of cloth, fluctuations in the emptiness make the relations of in-betweenness undulate as well. And as they do, selves embedded in the climate also shift because they are part of it: they become other ‘I’s. As Watsuji explains, just as the weather getting cold is made sensate through the feeling ‘I am cold’, similarly ‘I’ only comes into being by acknowledging ‘you’ as an integral part of the shared climate, the emptiness, and its ethics. When the fabric shifts, relations morph, the self becomes fungible to

reveal that “I am I and you are you, and yet, I am you and you are I.”²¹

The score for moving between I (1) and not I/you (0), might look like this:

1 – 0 – 1 – 0 – 1 – 0 ... ∞

Returning to zero undoes the unitary ‘I’ = 1...while also undoing emptiness = 0 by returning to the individual (1), again and again. A recursive dance happens in the ‘-’ zone where incalculable relationships move to an incomputable rhythm.²²

The predicate is an ‘I’ in motion

When I collaborated with the artist, Ryo Shimizu, in 2015. I suggested the title *Nameless* for our joint exhibition.²³ Shimizu suggested I read the philosophy of *basho*.

Basho is Kitaro Nishida’s ‘logic of the field’,²⁴ his philosophical opposition to Aristotle’s ‘logic of objects.’²⁵ Can *basho* dismantle the stable (grammatical) subject? In *basho* this operation falls on the predicate, the part of a sentence that combines verb and objects. Nishida harnesses this grammatical conjunction to respond to Zeno’s conundrum about the nature of movement.²⁶

Could *basho* enable dancing with zero...?

Zeno’s famous paradox concerns the continuity of change, as seen through the (apparent) motion of an arrow between two points. Pythagorean theory suggests a contradiction: the arrow appears to be both moving *and* at rest at any given moment of observation: ‘does the arrow move?’

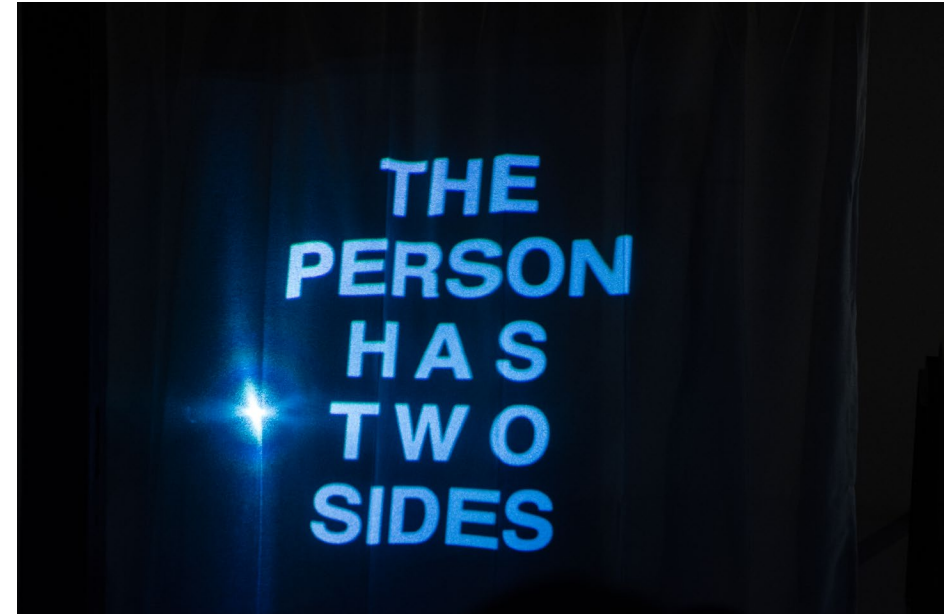


Fig. 5 *Nameless*: “My Name is Ryo Shimizu”, mesh curtain, projection, body, performance & exhibition, 2015.

“...no thing is in motion in a moment ... nor can anything be at rest in a moment”;²⁷ Aristotle’s convoluted answer protects the purity of logic without explaining motion. He bases it on two assumptions: that ‘continuous’ means divisible into parts, and that the same arrow that left the starting point reaches the destination. Additionally, the moment must be *indivisible* to protect the integrity of the object if the same arrow arrives at the end point. But if two moments in continuous (meaning ‘divisible’) time are placed next to each other a gap persists between them. Like a stop motion animation: the arrow appears in one place, and then in the next place, but disappears in between frames.²⁸ The conclusion is that there is no movement as such.

Nishida attributes this unsatisfactory answer to the demand made on the arrow: it must be the same, therefore its identity is fixed between every point in time. The ‘logic of objects’ is fixated on the grammatical subject position, made to preserve the identity of the subject as unalterable, in accord with a version of reality in which the individual is ‘primary substance’.²⁹ Shifting subjecthood into the predicate’s position in the sentence, links being to the activity of the verb and complements; it allows movement. Located in the predicate, the ‘I’ can also congregate with ‘universals’: “I” can be “both ‘is’ [subject] and ‘is-not’ [object]... change become[s] possible.”³⁰

Conservation, conjugation, flow

...if the [body] material changes, the world will change too...time and space is body.”³¹

~ Yukio Waguri

Conjugation is etymologically derived from the Latin *con* meaning ‘among’ or ‘together’, and *jugum* with Indo-European roots in the Sanskrit word *yoga*, meaning to ‘yoke’ or ‘bind’. In grammar conjugation transforms an action by varying the form of the verb to reflect time, number of persons, and voice.

For *Nameless*, Shimizu showed a film, *Describe a person from his/her name (2015)*.³² He made it during a residency in Taiwan. What he had done was ‘hand over his name to the unknown’; in Taiwan the *kanji* pictograms of his name would be interpreted differently from in Japan. Participants in a workshop situation had to guess at the identity of the person whose name it was. Their hypothesis was that ‘she’ was a woman, a writer, a vegetarian, flexible, spiritual, single: a whole persona and life grew from the collective imagination. Becoming temporarily nameless, to hand over a name to speculative creation, enabled the construction of what Céline Condorelli calls ‘a framework of support’³³ for these activities of conjugation. Another example of such a framework, that I also learned about through Ryo, is the ritual of Shikinen Sengu.

~

Amaterasu is the Shinto creator goddess whose sacred abode is at Ise Shrine where I first encountered a *kukan*. This is the site of *Shikinen Sengu*, a 1300-year-old tradition that takes places every twenty years. This ritual of impermanence involves communal practices that enable group flow.³⁴

Shikinen Sengu entails the complete destruction of the Grand Shrine of Ise.³⁵ The shrine is then rebuilt at an adjacent site. There are two possible sites, and the placement alternates between them.

The new shrine is identical to the previous one. All the artefacts, objects and buildings are recreated in precise detail. The garments of the deities are also remade: a sash which forms part of the divine apparel is woven at a rate of less than one centimetre per day. The ceremony itself requires a preparation time of eight years. After just twenty years everything is burned and buried in the earth (the sacred Shinto mirror is the only object spared from destruction).

The practice of *Shikinen Sengu* is founded in the conviction that the Shrine as a material object is of no great importance, having no transcendental symbolism. More important is the empty space that nurtures the transmission of craft practices through skills-sharing. This cultural ritual is a form of 'conservation' that propagates the knowledge of expert craftspeople between generations – over time.

Comprehension: the dance of one and zero

I suggest a framework for practicing the dance of one and zero in everyday life.

In the space of emptiness, between sleeping and waking, dance this score:

1 – 0 – 1 – 0 – 1 – 0 ... ∞

Just before you go to sleep, or just as you awake, there is an in-between time, an interval, a gap, between the intimate spaces of dream and the world where you have a name.* Stay there a while longer.



Fig. 6 I/LINX: "Unknown measures", pen, found paper, acrylic plinth, detail, 2019.

You are lying in a comfortable position on your back, your arms open towards your sides, your legs slightly apart, your head on the same level as your body, without a pillow.

Slowly, very carefully, lift one of your arms. Take your time. Feel its weight. Adjust your tempo until your arm becomes the heaviest thing in the world. And incrementally keep moving this very heavy thing (that is 'you') towards a position, perpendicular to your body. Keep going. When you are almost there, you will feel the weight shift, perhaps very slightly at first. Then, your arm's heaviness will disappear entirely. This is the zero point.

When you have arrived, your arm will simply float, on its own, without 'you', as if by magic. All the weight having poured into the bowl of your shoulder, which is held in a delicate lability by the 'ground'— your mattress, or the floor. The bowl is filled to the brim, with the weight of the 'I', but in that zero point, it vanishes: there is nothingness. Nothingness is diaphanous. Let the arm shift, wobble, moved by gravity, attune to the location of the edge, a wafer-thin zone of change. With these micromovements, the bowl may spill over: let it. When it does, heaviness will return; this is returning to 1. Let the arm be moved between instances of the zero point's equipoise and the density of weight leaking back into 'I'.

Eventually lower the arm again carefully, delicately, feel your arm becoming *your* arm again.³⁶

~

* [Link to: COLLAPSE | Boredom Bardo](#)

And by dancing this score is it possible to remember another absence? That zero is the numeral *sunya*, which is not just one half of the binary system, but a principle that originates in the Vedic philosophical tradition of *sunyata*. It entails *practicing* the philosophy of emptiness.³⁷

∞

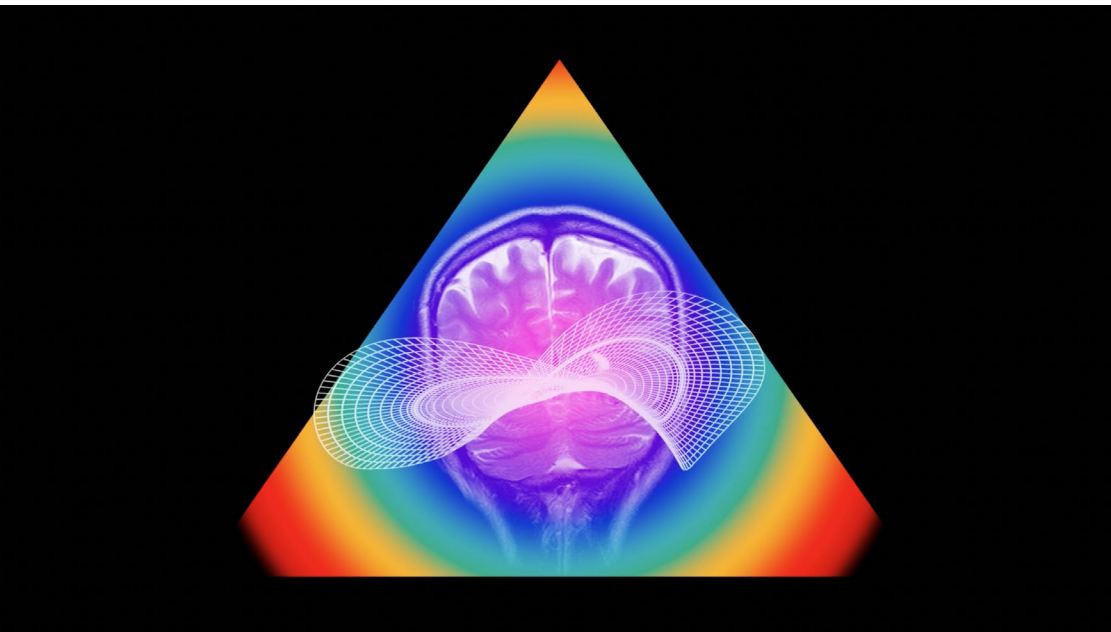


Fig. 7 *The Three Seductions of Consciousness: "The Utopia Frequency"*, still, 2021.

hypertime

Is time becoming *thin* or is it becoming *thick*?¹

Could it make us move without *us* moving? Through it, all matter would be participating with it-self, in its multiple permutations, as rocks, flesh and flowers, as wood...and even plastic? (Though plastic might feel awkward because of its resistance to immersing itself with others.) Still, in this state – by being *à l'écoute*, listening to each other – they would, 'we' would, all know its acoustics, its rhythms.

I am talking about time.

Thick time. Thin time. Time that congeals in things or whips, whisks, through at lightning speeds. In this state it has become malleable, sensate, incarnate, and so it appears to shape-shift between textures, qualities, and dynamics. The state of time as *hyper-time*.

Hypertime:

Does the prefix *hyper* sound too fast, overwhelming, as if time were accelerating out of control? What I mean by Hypertime is not exactly that. Though yes, hyper does mean vast, widespread, immanent, and connective. Indeed, connective too, because Hypertime is time released, untethered from a particular scalar startle, where it had been forcibly stalled and its materiality sacrificed to a disembodied abstraction, its flux reduced to a mechanical rhythm to which bodies should become entrained, and those that don't, time leaves behind. Hypertime is time now freed, time rediscovering its own being as it seeps under the doors, drips through the open windows, humidifies the walls, puddles underneath the stones. Time now moves from liquid to solid to viscous to gas. With Hypertime I invoke all these states at once to imagine time's capacity for metamorphosis.

~

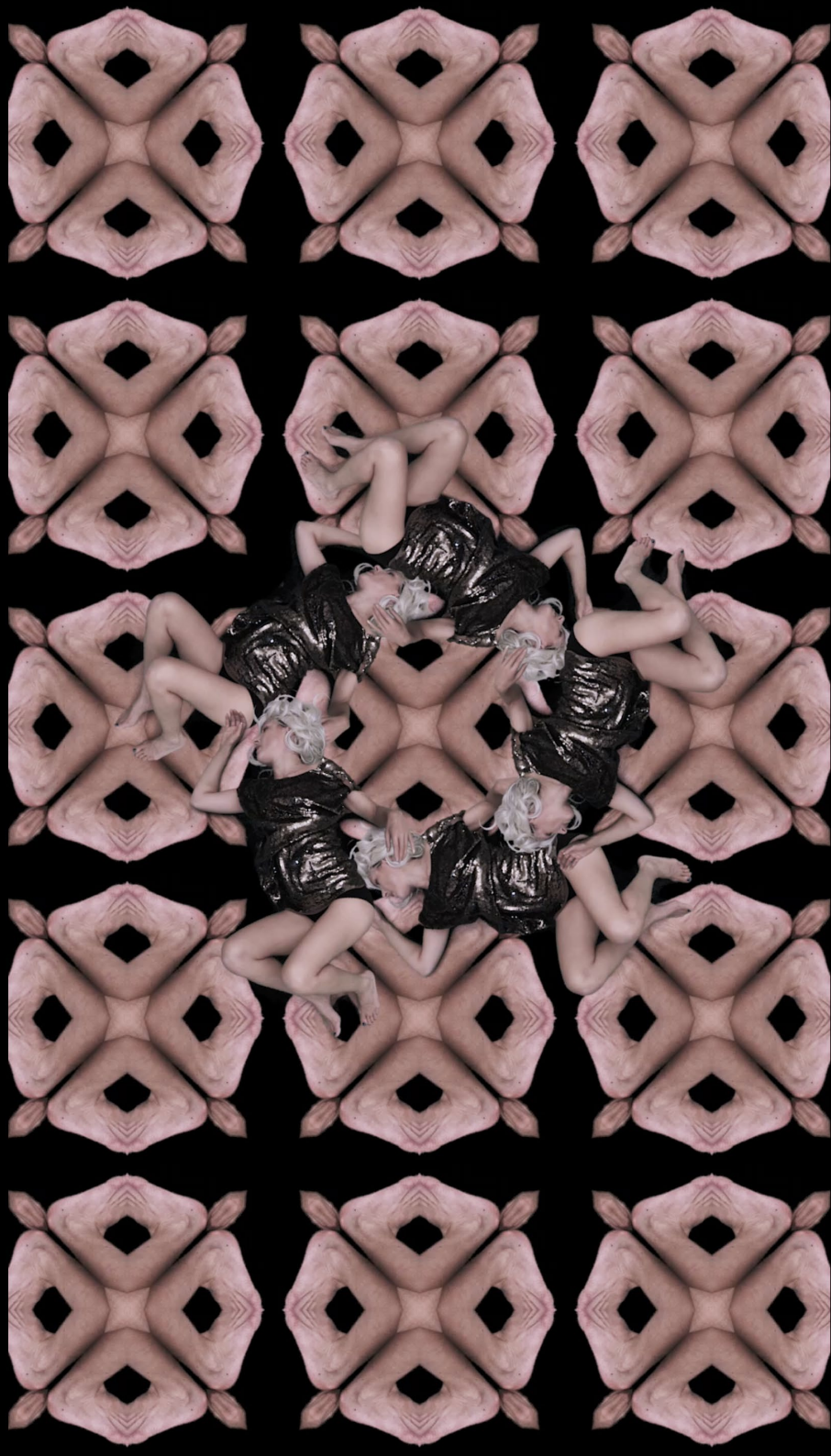
There is a paleontic poetry of origins. In *Hypersea: Life on Land* (1996) two paleontologists were not afraid to dream with the ocean, and then in their dreaming, to make her an agent – sentient even.² Because as Hypersea the ocean is a being that is *alive*. And because she is alive, the ocean wants to *move*, to grow by expanding herself onto the emerging landmass of Earth. To proliferate her vast, still formless beingness, the ocean 'colonizes' the land by inventing a logic of 'nestings'. From the largest to the smallest, organisms would become embedded into each other in endless relations of concentric contiguity, all of them entangled so as to hold the water, to transport the ocean inside their bodies; to follow Hypersea's desire. And so,

a multitude of water-bearers begin to find form, a fleet of watery bodies that would escort the sea over the land. The work of carrying the ocean perpetuates a game of endless encodings as more and more complex forms of biological organisms develop, evolve, mutate, each morphogenetically adapting themselves to enhance their capacity to bear the sea within them, by effectively flooding the dry land with her nutrient-rich fluids. In her incarnation of Hypersea, the ocean can actively spread aliveness *au large*. And are the endless forms she creates her yearning to know herself?

La mer, she is the terraformer supreme.

And she continues, harnessing her emergent biology as transport, she oozes her way all over the carbon rich earth, leaking and infiltrating every fissure, every crack. The humble fungi are the pioneers, thrown onto land, clinging to the rocks, mining their way through the stone's hard crusts to generate the softness that produces soil. And then, not one by one, but rather wave after wave of the others arise, each wave coagulating into more and more nested nodes, all of them sustaining the gradual unfurling of the land biota. Each successive swell appearing in response to, or by dreaming with – consciously or nonconsciously – a sensuous spell: Hypersea's invocation to "adapt, transform, become!" And each time, again and again, creating more and more intricate chains of components for porosity, interpenetration, permeability, regeneration, expansion. "Move, flow, fill!" she intimates her creation, wanting to weave her fabric of life through the hypnotic pattern of the waveform. Because for "Hypersea – the propensity of life on land to establish webs of

Fig. 8 *The Three Seductions of Consciousness: "The Utopia Frequency"*, still, 2021.



0 - 1

physical intimacy and fluid exchange”³ happens through that game of throwing and holding, passing and receiving, the ebb and flow of the sea’s agential liquidity.

And who moves the sea?

Why, surely the sea does?

Does she?

And the moon?⁴

~

‘They’ began to find seabirds, and other sea creatures, filled to the brim with hydrophobic – water-hating – detritus. Could time’s marching drill be concealing itself inside an albatross? For many, the transmission of this future prophecy, would come to them through a liquid crystal screen. All we could do was look with seeping horror as our retinas interpreted the light waves. Puffed-up belly after puffed-up belly was sliced open as the RGB filters revealed kaleidoscopic shards of turquoise, orange, yellow, purple hues – the candy-coloured strands of fishing apparatus. The watercarriers had been colonized by another entity that would have used the flow of water to propagate itself.

Plastic with its unexpected residence time – the time it takes to breakdown and re-enter the cyclical rhythm of metamorphosis.

Plastic refusing to change form, unwilling to get over itself.

Plastic with its essential hydrophobia that means it will not dissolve.

Plastic, you really are the matter of modernity!

The flow must have been compromised. The nutrient-rich waters – the very desire that *moves* Hypersea – must have become clogged, blocking up the passages, the major and minor arteries of the sea's throb to extend herself. The blockages were slowly strangling the heart in the process. Was the sea becoming less free in the process of her strangulation?

~

Gazing at some debris on the sand, I saw the even pace of my footsteps leading me there, and then I knew that when I'd thought I was thinking of the sea, I'd been thinking about time, imagining what you'd find if you sliced my belly open, tore through my organs, or unpicked the tight fold that shuts my third eye. What would you find in my brain, in the shrivelled little walnut-shape at the centre of my head – the pineal gland – which had once been the centre of my imagination?⁵ What would you discover suppurating around that small mound at the base of my sternum, that bears the name of 'xiphoid process', another shrivelled region that was once the centre of my emotions?⁶ If my skin were peeled back with a scalpel, how brittle and gnarled would my fasciae be? Would the cut reveal a tangle of filaments that feel exactly like thermoplastic 3D printing

filament being spun by the repetitive strain of the rhythmic tap-tap-taps of time being desiccated by endless tappings?*

~

I imagine a theory of Hypertime, whose juice is time, just like the oceanic protagonist of Hypersea's is water. Hypertime is a subtle entity that can en flesh itself by morphing endlessly. In this story, it is time that 'colonizes' the earth, in same way as the ocean of Hypersea. To do so, time creates numerous nested organisms, and processes, and cyclical loops, that propagate time's desire, time's rhythmic siren song. Perhaps you have already encountered Hypertime in your body? Can you feel it when you say 'yesterday', 'tomorrow', '*now*', and when you utter these words, you are really yearning to know you are living time, *really living*? And do you feel time's longing, as a feeling beyond the body, beyond the flesh that invents concepts of 'history', 'tradition', 'legacy', 'futurity', along with the panoply of social practices and institutions these words will instigate, in the hope of satisfying the craving to know time's vast expanses?

Although time doesn't know this language, time too longs for her continuity, her ongoingness, her endlessness. When I wonder if time, incarnated as Hypertime, might teach me about change, about impermanence, about 'movement as such',⁷ I am seeking to grasp infinity.

What if time's juice, time's desire to move, like its isomorphic counterparts, the ocean currents, are also enabling an ecological catastrophe to unfurl, having also been colonized, this time by a visually-saturated addiction? And the time now unfurling, is being

* [Link to LIQUIDITY | Desire Line](#)

moved by these billions of kaleidoscopic candy-coloured shards, seas of pixels shimmering across endless liquid crystal screens. What if Hypertime, like the seas, has also been compromised, and the pollution spreading through it is the contamination of attention, the acidification of anxiety infiltrating the nervous system; and stress is the bleaching effect on the delicate 'coral' of the gut flora, flooded by the adrenalin of acceleration; and decimation is leaching through jittery fingertips as they propagate the integrated feedback loops of a value/self-worth complex that stares back at you from beyond the limits of the standard screen size – 5'8", 6'7", 13', 15', 17' 22'. What if the limits these generic interfaces impose on ways of looking, were causing the dearth of really seeing? What if hidden in the slick of time, you were to find the imperceptible traces of an agent, that has harnessed the force of Hypertime to move itself? It leaves its invisible imprints on bodies, and these bodies, once touched, will become the agent's transport. This agent's subtle body keeps extending itself as it exudes through standardized gestures, spews out through touch, and use, and all the interfaces – skin, screens, surfaces – that mediate relations between bodies, entities, things.⁸ Hypertime helps me to wonder how human gestures adapted to our gadgets' hydrophobic trails – because these devices do not like water – might be propagating the residence time of an indissoluble system? Just like microplastics concealed inside the bodies of birds and fish and humans, by harnessing the metamorphic fluidity of Hypertime, this system assures its own motility by flowing through all the nested components that harbour time... because is there something, any thing, that is not a time carrier?



Fig. 9 *ILINX*: "Pineal I", sequoia pine cone, wood, office chair, 2019.

And still, the moon.

∞

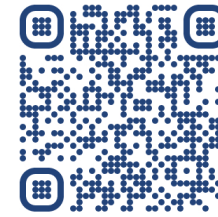


Fig. 10.1 "What do you want?", 6:13.

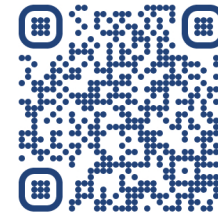


Fig. 10.2 "Fragility as Constraint", 7:55.

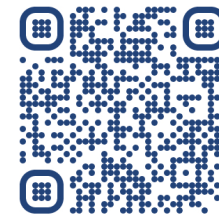


Fig. 10.3 "The Utopia Frequency", 18:27.

The Three Seductions of Consciousness, HD video & Sound, triptych, 2021.

NOTES TO GRAMMAR

1 James P. Carse, *Finite and Infinite Games: A Vision of Life as Play and Possibility* (New York, NY: Free Press, 2012), 9.

2 During my PhD interview, when I mentioned the Japanese Kyoto School of philosophy, one person in the panel asked what ‘mysticism’ had to do with contemporary art. Hui has provided me with a response. Yuk Hui, 2021. 206

3 For an extended biography see Dominique Savitri Bonarjee, “Describe Your Ethnic Background: The Long Story,” Artist’s Website, 2021, <https://dominiquebb.com/writing/>.

4 Dissociative experiences are pathologized by Western psychology. In contemplative practices and spiritual philosophy they are linked to the non-dual experience, a state of dissolution of self (ego boundaries) marked by experiences of transcendence, annihilation, and unity. The following research paper positions “self-transcendence and dissociation [as] emotionally valenced poles along a continuum of altered self-experiences.” Hanley, Adam W., Yoshio Nakamura, and Eric L. Garland. 2018. “The Nondual Awareness Dimensional Assessment (NADA): New Tools to Assess Nondual Traits

and States of Consciousness Occurring within and beyond the Context of Meditation.” *Psychological Assessment* 30 (12): 1625–39. (Supplemental): 1627.

5 Binaural sound is ‘a sound of betweenness’, made up of two sound signals that reach each ear at different times. In monaural sound, sources are combined before being transmitted to the ear and are therefore identical. With binaural sound, the interval between the moment of hearing each signal, creates a delay that causes the brain to try to calculate their origin. The effect is to spatialize the sound beyond the boundaries of the head / ears, and this creates the feeling of immersion through distance. Francis Rumsey. *Spatial Audio. Music Technology Series*. Oxford: Focal, 2001.

6 The dance critic was Tatsuro Ishii.

7 Zen Master Dogen, *Beyond Thinking: A Guide to Zen Meditation*, ed. Kazuko Tanahashi (Boston, Massachusetts: Shambhala, 2004), 71.

8 Motokiyo Zeami brought the art of *Noh* theatre to its current form in the 15th century. In *Noh ma* is the moment the actor enters a temporal experience marked by unpredictability of what will follow. Richard B. Pilgrim, “Intervals (‘Ma’) in Space and Time: Foundations for a Religio-Aesthetic Paradigm in Japan,” *History of Religions* 25, no. 3 (1986): 258.

9 Pilgrim, 256.

10 Pilgrim, 255.

11 Isozaki, A. in Pilgrim, 269.

12 Paraphrased in my own dance workshop notes, 2014.

13 For a comparative paper on *sunyata* looking at Vedic philosophy through Leibniz see Bilimoria, Purushottama. “Why Is There Nothing Rather Than Something?” *Sophia* 51, no. 4 (2013): 509-30.

14 Yuk Hui reiterates this point with reference to the Japanese philosopher Keiji Nishitani, also of the Kyoto School. Brian Kuan Wood, E-Flux Podcast, n.d., accessed July 6, 2022.

15 I visited Ise Shrine in July 2014.

16 I’m aware that *kuki wo yomu* has become a socially policed practice for enforcing entrenched hierarchies of gender and seniority, perpetuated by impositions of honorific language, conduct and gesture, for example a conversation with my friend Arata Mori, “Kuki Wo Yomu,” Facebook Messenger, August 11, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/messages/t/1641544874>.

17 Jane M. Bachnik and Charles J. Quinn, Jr., eds., *Situated Meaning: Inside and Outside in Japanese Self, Society, and Language* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994).

18 After Japan’s aggressive stance in World War 2, the Kyoto School’s philosophy was identified with nationalist

essentialism. An accusation also addressed at Watsuji's *Fudo*. According to Janz, Watsuji's later work on ethics, *Rinrigaku*, is more relevant to a contemporary discussion of climate ethics; *Fudo* is more focused on emptiness. See Janz for a timely discussion of environmental and climate ethics in relation to Watsuji's philosophy. Bruce B. Janz, "Watsuji Tetsuro, *Fudo*, and Climate Change," *Journal of Global Ethics* 7, no. 2 (August 2011): 173–84.

19 Isamu Nagami, "The Ontological Foundation in Tetsuro Watsuji's Philosophy: Ku and Human Existence," *Philosophy East and West* 31, no. 3 (July 1981): 282.

20 Janz, "Watsuji Tetsuro, *Fudo*, and Climate Change," 181.

21 Nagami, "The Ontological Foundation in Tetsuro Watsuji's Philosophy," 285.

22 Hui makes a distinction: the 'incomputable' cannot be reduced to the algorithmic procedure of a machine. The 'incalculable' is synonymous with the non-rational, "love, friendship, desire or happiness" it can't be calculated.

Yuk Hui, *Art and Cosmotechnics* (Minneapolis: e-flux, University of Minnesota, 2021), 232.

23 *Nameless*, Hagiso Gallery, Tokyo, September 2015, Exhibition.

24 When Nishida founded the Kyoto School he wanted to avoid charges of 'mysticism', so he borrowed

the language of logic from Western philosophy (though on his own terms). Rein Raud, "'Place' and 'Being-Time': Spatiotemporal Concepts in the Thought of Nishida Kitarō and Dōgen Kigen.," *Philosophy East & West* 54, no. 1 (January 1, 2004): 29–51.

25 Raud, 31.

26 Tao Jiang, "The Problematic of Continuity: Nishida Kitaro and Aristotle," *Philosophy East and West* 55, no. 3 (2005): 447–60, <https://doi.org/10.1353/pew.2005.0025>.

27 Aristotle's 'Physics', in Jiang, 449.

28 Jiang, 450.

29 Jiang, 451.

30 Jiang, 453.

31 Yukio Waguri, interview by Dominique Bonarjee, August 7, 2014.

32 Ryo Shimizu, *Describe a Person from His/Her Name*, 2015, HD Video, Sound, 35'07", 2015.

33 Céline Condorelli, "In Support: A Theoretical and Practical Investigation into Forms of Display" (PhD, Goldsmiths University of London, 2014), 147.

34 Csikszentmihalyi posits Shikinen Sengu as an example of "how a culture can build flow into its life-style" Mihaly, Csikszentmihalyi. *Flow : The Classic Work on How to Achieve Happiness*. Rev. ed. London: Rider, 2002: 80.

35 This section is based on Florian Coulmas' account of this ritual. Florian Coulmas, "Eternal Change at the Grand Shrine of Ise," *Japan Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (January 1994): 36.

36 Thanks to Tom Deadman for bringing Kasai's version of this practice to my attention. See Toshiharu Kasai, "Arm-Standing Exercise," 2005, <https://www.ne.jp/asahi/butoh/itto/method/butoh-4armstanding.pdf>.

37 The word *sati* has been rather reductively translated to 'mindfulness': it also means to remember. For the complex and manifold nuances of the Sanskrit word *sati* see Bodhi, Bhikkhu. "What Does Mindfulness Really Mean? A Canonical Perspective." *Contemporary Buddhism* 12, no. 1 (2011): 19-39.

Yuk Hui deems some 'exotism' [*sic*] necessary for creating philosophical dialogue between East and West, but he warns, it must be accompanied by "the knowledge which is inscribed in this exotism". E-Flux podcast, October 2018, 12'50' - 13'01". Divorcing the (spiritual) philosophy of emptiness from zero is a form of exoticism that forgot the knowledge inscribed in the numeral.

NOTES TO HYPERTIME

1 For insights on 'thick time' see Astrida Neimanis and Rachel Loewen Walker, 'Weathering : Climate Change and the "Thick Time" of Transcorporeality', *Hypatia* 29, no. 3 (2014): 558-75.

2 Dianna L.S. McMnamin and Mark A.S. McMnamin, *Hypersea: Life on Land* (Chichester, NY: Columbia University Press, 1994).

3 McMnamin and McMnamin, 15.

4 In Zen Buddhism, the moon is a symbol of practice realization. Shinshu Roberts, *Being-Time. A Practitioner's Guide to Dogen's Shobogenzo Uji* (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2018), 97.

5 The pineal gland is linked to the third eye; in the chakra system of energy it is *ajna chakra* the psychic eye.

6 In the infant, the xiphoid process is made of soft cartilage, in puberty it hardens and then becomes bony in midlife. In Daoist anatomy, it is an acupuncture point along the *renmai*, 'conception channel'.

7 In the Tantric philosophy of Shaivism, *Spanda* is the creative principle of pulsation – 'movement as such'. See

Jayadeva Singh, *Spanda-Karikas: The Divine Creative Pulsation* (Delhi; Borehamwood: Motilal Banarsidass ; Motilal, 2002).

8 According to Lucretius' 'theory of emanations', "diffusion into the ambience, particularly smell and smoke ... the shedding of skin, rinds, and films from the surfaces of things" take on reflective capacities and become akin to mirrors. See Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 105.

space of the
nameless
collapse

DOMINIQUE SAVITRI BONARJEE

Department of Art. Goldsmiths University of London, 2023

TRANSITION
HAPPENS
THROUGH
THE LEFT
HAND

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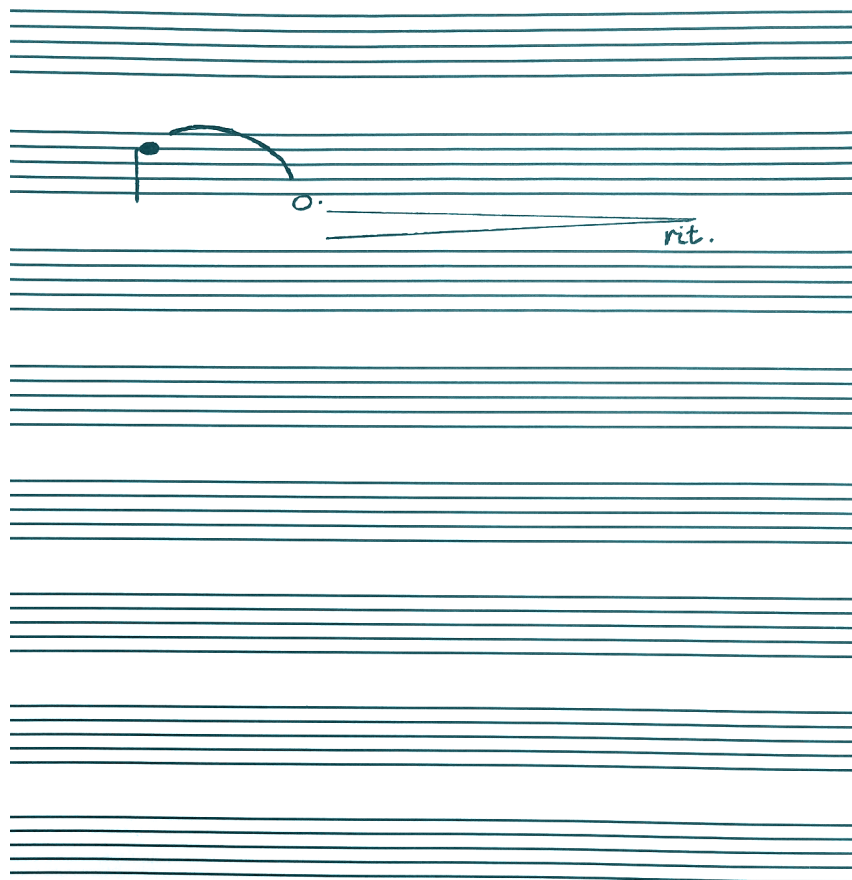


Fig. 1 Amy Sharrocks, proposed score for *Collapse: Brexit*, 2019.

COLLAPSE [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] is a movement [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] of
 surrender: to the earth, to gravity, to death. [REDACTED] an extended
 time interval [REDACTED] not [REDACTED] falling, [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] sensing the resistance [REDACTED] always present [REDACTED] in the
 [REDACTED] body: [REDACTED] an energy that refuses the fall,
 [REDACTED] that wants to live [REDACTED] resistance inside [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] imagine [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] the inner
 movement of politics [REDACTED]
 COLLAPSE IN PUBLIC SPACES, [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] MARK THE DAY [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] with [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] Collapse [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] the poetics of activism [REDACTED] the creative impulse of [REDACTED]
 that inner movement.

Fig. 2 *Collapse redacted*, text abstract for the Society Art Research symposium, cancelled due to the COVID pandemic, 2020.

[*Collapse*: from the latin ‘col’ and ‘labi’, to ‘slip together’.]

On the day originally marked out for Brexit, 29th March 2019, a group of thirteen of us met outside King’s Cross/St Pancras stations in London (# 27). It was an unexpectedly warm early spring day. We spread ourselves out in the plaza, our common intention held only by a silent and invisible thread of mutual complicity. At 13:00 we began to collapse, surrounded by fast-paced commuters, many of whom didn’t even notice us as they bumped into our force-field. By 13:45, the last one peeled himself off the pavement and walked away.

Artist, Amy Sharrocks, was one of us. She wasn’t able to attend the workshop I’d organised at Siobhan Davies Studio in preparation for *Collapse (Brexit)*. Instead, we spoke on the phone, and I shared the choreography with her. The ‘choreography’ for *Collapse* is a suggestively poetic score rather than a description of set movements, it’s a provocation to play with gravity, to invite surrender and to attune to the body’s resistance with somatic skills.

A few days after our conversation, Amy sent me an email: “I wondered if the score might look something like this?” Two days before the

event, she had arrived at the final version. Her proposed score for *Collapse* was notated on a music sheet and scored as a single beat descending on the scale, to the tempo of *ritardando*.¹

Collapse: *Brexit* was danced by Amy Sharrocks, Anna Paszek, Bartek Mikula, Bryan Munoz, Carol Mancke, Dominique Savitri Bonarjee, Duncan Hume, Jenny Hegarty, Joanna Oyno, John Quan, Kieran Dasgupta, Sean Wang Ting-Hsuan, Sumi Xiaomei.

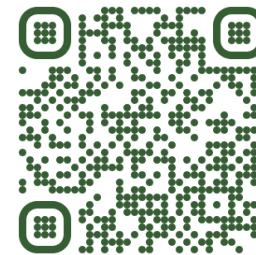


Fig. 3 *Collapse: Brexit*, 13:30, 2019.



Photo: Elly Clarke

Fig. 4 *Collapse: Brexit*, public activation, 2019.



Photo: Elly Clarke

Fig. 5 *Collapse: Brexit* public activation, 2019.

who am I?

Tatsumi Hijikata and Marcel Duchamp...transformed daily life by inserting something into the slit of the 'readymade'. By doing this they transformed something ordinary into something significant.²

~ Masaki Iwana



Photo: Elly Clarke

Fig. 6 *Collapse: Brexit*, public activation, 2019.

When he danced *Invisible* (1981), he stood immobile underneath a skylight, the changing hues illuminating his naked flesh. Only the light and his body's gradual exhaustion changed the order of things. He called it 'becoming-object'. He said that what he learned from this was to dance from the 'total body': "the whole body, including memories, intelligence, habits of the body".³ From becoming-object, he then pursued the mystery of the 'human as material entity', by seeking to realize – make real – the nonhuman matter of his own fleshy materiality. The *Intensity of Nothingness* (2011) is Masaki Iwana's dance journey into the body as materiality itself; a body that contains both physiological and emotional entities while retaining an individual character; a body

Collapse

as repository of nature; a body embracing the entirety of time lived since birth; the body encapsulating all elements of the soul, including intuition and spirituality.⁴

I continue to seek this total body. I continue to pursue a radical openness towards the witnesses, because I want to experience, through my body, what Masaki depicted as an oscillation of energy between bodies that transforms movement into dance; I want to learn how dancing can lead to communal 'self-remembering'.⁵ What I heard from Masaki is that when, *between* the subject 'I' and the objective 'eye', another eye – a detached eye – opens, then dance will leak out time and space "like spiders spew threads."⁶

And in my seeking, I will continue to collapse.

~

An instant before, everything was going along as expected. Now just standing there every *thing* is becoming strange. Just standing there, the feeling of being slightly ahead of my skin lingers, and for the first few moments, once halted in place, the buzz of 'go on, go forward' hisses around with urgency. Just the act of coming to a standstill exerts a subtle shudder all over the mass that clings to 'me' so tightly. A noisy mass, all whirring and booming breath and heartbeat amplified, as if having run somewhere. Being forever *on the run*. With this interruption, the processes – endocrine, respiratory, nervous – and the matter – flesh, tissues, bones, muscles – are all shoved into a sudden alignment, and like opposing tribes, they eye each other suspiciously, trying to ascertain the cause of the glitch: 'who started this?'

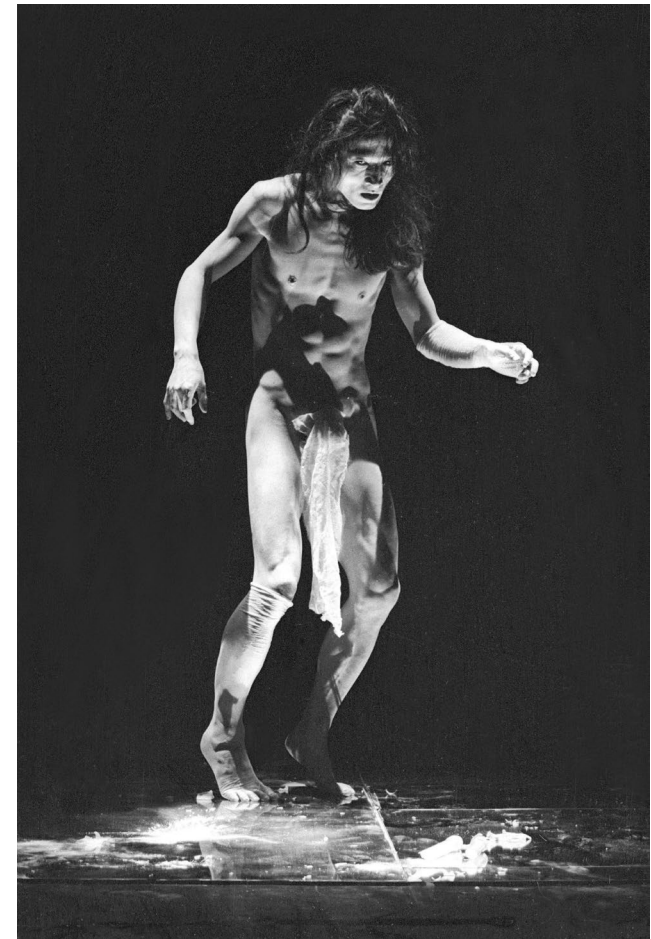


Photo: Jean Gros-Abadie

Fig. 7 Masaki Iwana, *Awahi*, 1989.

It all dies down eventually, leaving nothing but a low hum, the repetitive sound of an air vent just outside the field of vision, heard, unseen, simply doing its job. That initial bristling alertness now slackens to random ticks and clicks, the invisible implosions of an engine cooling down after a long road-trip. A fine mesh descends. The cobwebs of time suspended hover over the fluff of tiny hairs that respond to this caress by stiffening up. In stillness the goosebump flesh reverberates with static, sounding the appearance in consciousness of the spectre of inertia. A dense fog condenses on the skin and presses leadenly into the surrounding space. Out of nowhere a barrel floats in. A bulbous cranium bobs awkwardly protruding into this muted landscape, clunkily dragging at things with the pull of a neutron star. The jawbone, normally decisive, determined, opens into a yawn, vulnerable, simian. Escape of air as 'I' surrenders to impending seasickness.⁷

In this loose state, the world becomes a pointillist field of colour and rhythm, dots and swells, rolling in with the force of an avalanche. While below the skin, a slimy trail of bodily fluids is congealing around the connective tissue of the fasciae webs, an invisible safety net for this body, suspended on a knife edge, a funambulist in a bid for life: collapsing.

Calving is a phase of melting that foretells the beginning of a descent, a tipping point in the order of things. In *Collapse*, it will be the critical point, when a head is thrown off its pedestal, rolls off the plinth of a body to dive into gravity's seductive embrace, into the unknown, towards another centre.

Did you think that to surrender is simply to move from verticality to horizontality, from intentionality to defeat? That is *thinking* – try

collapsing. Col-lapsing's extra syllable is to slip *together*, a practice of learning to 'weather' by dancing a duet with 'weather worlds'.⁸ The extra syllable – *col* – 'with', 'together', is how the unknown gets in, to wonder who am I weathering with? Wondering is what makes *Collapse* last longer than a fall. A *Collapse* never just falls to the ground: falling is no duet. At first, the mass of 'I' follows gravity's overflow as it appears with each slight shift of the scapula, the knee joint, the sternum, or pelvis.* And it takes nothing more than the smallest nudge to dance this drift; a spiralling shimmy around the axis, to the beat of a heart thumping with fear and anticipation, facing gravity's incursions. This syncopated pulse accompanies the body, slipping, as solid ground becomes oil paper, and the solid countenance slides into troubled water – *l'eau trouble* – to wonder: who am 'I'?⁹ Because gravity's excess gives bodies time to listen to time moving through the many bodies and entities that weather with 'me'. Their unknown measure too often goes unnoticed, to only become perceptible quite unexpectedly – 'too late' – when the eye finally registers that something is collapsing and had been collapsing all along.

In the public square I could sense the 'point of criticality' approaching; it was in the density of the belly that had pulled the head all the way down; in the cranium's weight as it dragged one shoulder and a whole long arm with it; the extremities of fingers were still twitching with their habit of dissent – although there was nothing they could do now – the trunk was torquing dramatically, exposing the creamy underbelly of limbs and flanks, the infinity curves of the hips that go unnoticed when they have been clipped too hard in an

* [Link to WOBBLING / Free Time](#)



Fig. 8

Collapse: Quintet,
Chisenhale Dance Space,
2019.

Photo: Ivo Juriaan Mensch



Fig. 9 *Collapse: Quintet,* Chisenhale Dance Space, 2019.

Collapse

effort to save time; as if reducing them to flatness could optimize a two-dimensional body, a cartoon figure dashing across a screen?

Past the tipping point, the *Collapse* goes on. Now I am kneeling on the ground, invoking the body's malleability, at the cusp of a great turning point. The point at which 'I' withdraws, dissolving into the edges, to see what happens next. Then another eye watches the loose gob of spit hanging at the side of 'my' drooling mouth. When time gulps, what can you do but swallow.

Who am I? A readymade body, *un pissoir*.

Who am I? Self, becoming exhausted by self.

Who am I? Human becoming an other than the other.

Who am I? A fountain, alive.

∞

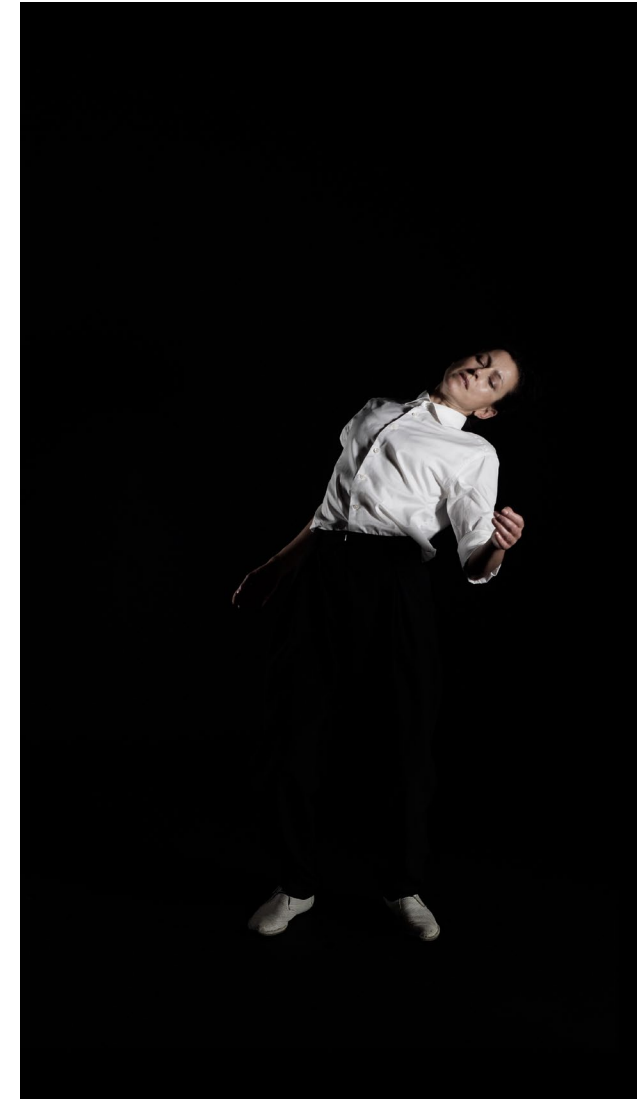


Fig. 10 *Collapse: Let the Music Make Them Dance*,
still from 4k video & sound, 2019.



Fig. 11 *From here to there is not known from the very beginning,*
performance with data projection, Goldsmiths University, 2018.

boredom bardo

Do nothing is best.¹
~ Masaki Iwana

A Mountain of Art Research²

We find ourselves almost eye-to-eye, gaze-to-gaze, all our heads on different levels but in a similar orientation, towards the thing dragging our attention in a downward direction. In some kind of ‘empathic viewing’.³ Bodies have become slumped, softened by the tedium emitted by flagrant nothingness. “*Nothing* is happening” you might say, the kind of ‘nothing’ that arises from the absence of a known pattern, an atonal composition, out-of-sync with the strident metronome that normally holds the world together. Might nothingness lead to infinite boredom?

Somewhere, barely audible but relentless, voices are whispering a siren's warning: "this is *precious* time, this *is* precious time, *this* is precious time". Their hissing reverberates in the echoing layers of sound which is only audible in complete silence. At the vanishing point of the lines of sight, a body is imploding, secreting its invisible entrails like a rotting piece of fruit, framed by a background of jittery pixels that flicker with a constant activity. With eyes slightly out of focus this movement gives the impression of leaves trembling in the wind. But these are not leaves. They are rows of numbers displaying a limitless data harvest like a stock-market ticker. The numbers are being transmitted from an electromyogram sensor measuring the crumpling body, and the digits seem to confirm that invisible electrical activity *is* happening in the muscles of the arm, despite the body seeming to have otherwise stalled. Is this malfunction dragging everyone down with it into a palpable haze? One person had even fallen asleep.

~

(I am curious about the experience of the 'witness' – the viewer/the listener – of the cultural space, the art exhibition. What happens when a body is faced with an 'unknown thing', a collapsing body for example, or an object, or other artefact? In the Sufi dervish tradition that I follow, the witness is 'a lover', engaged in an act of 'self-remembering', which means to commune with the artwork in an expanded dimension of time: the lover does so through a disposition of immersion.⁴ This is the thread of my wondering, woven through a recollection of my first research installation at the MARS Hub in March 2018.)

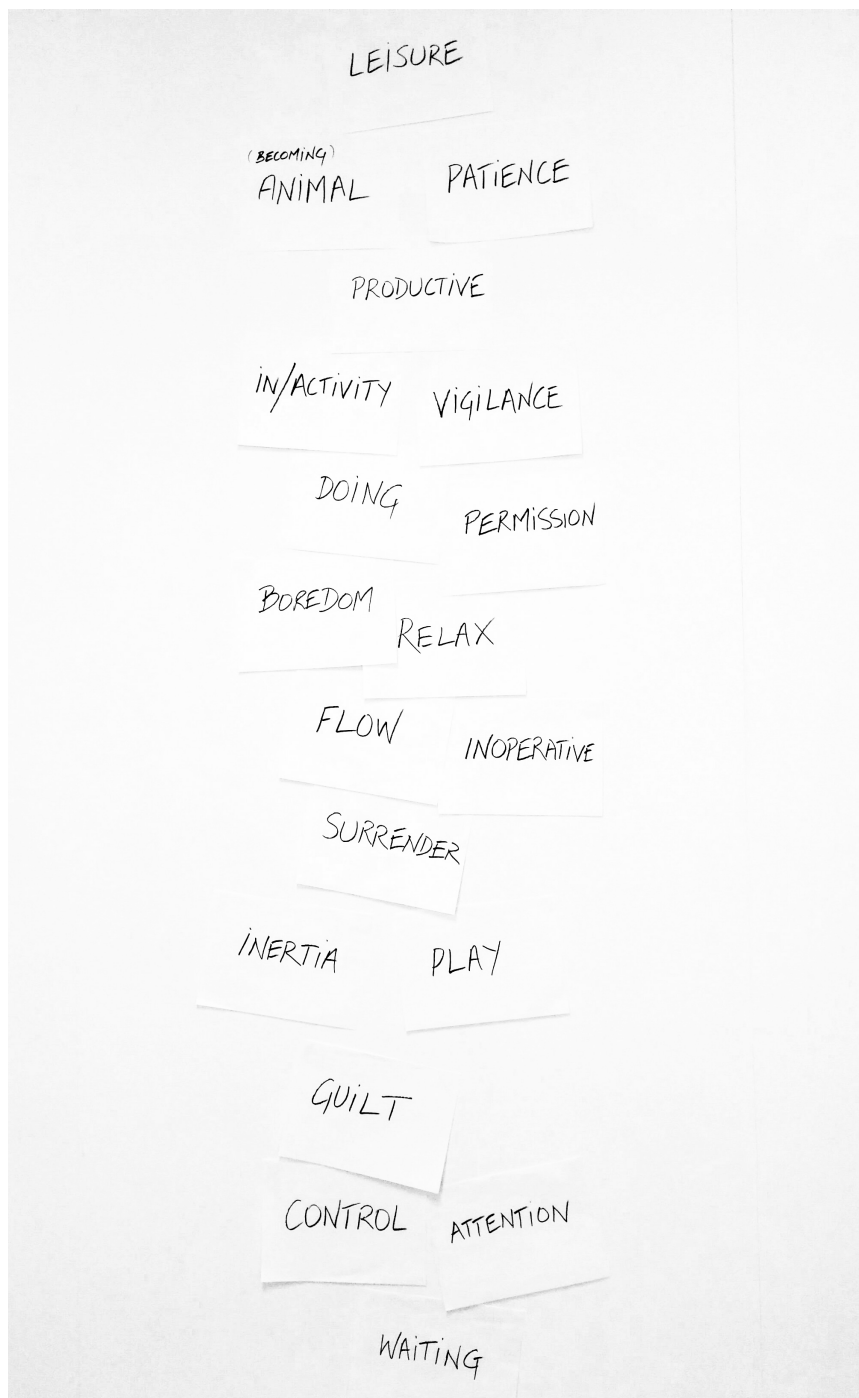
~

'The shortest distance between two points is not a straight line'

In the adjacent space to the collapsing body an arrangement of petri dishes is laid out on a table. They contain slime mould cultures. The slime mould, a free-moving single-celled amoeba, thrives on dead matter from the forest floor where it assists in the process of decomposition. This humble mould is a talented shapeshifter that has the ability, given the right environmental cues, to join forces with its colleagues to form a temporary multi-cellular organism as a means of moving towards a target, such as food. When it morphs it becomes the 'many-headed slime' – *physarum polycephalum*. As a group, the slime moulds will distribute pheromone feedback trails that allow *them* to switch to cohesive behaviour. In their aggregated state they become gelatinous, moving with an oscillating rhythmic pulsation capable of accurately measuring time. Something resembling an internal clock allows the slime mould to predict potential changes in the surroundings and prepare for them, and even in its solo state, the slime mould can learn to recognize temporal intervals with great accuracy.⁵ This tiny bio-computer lifeform is considered a natural-born engineer which can trace the shortest, most efficient, distance between two points (in a non-Euclidean manner).⁶ But despite their relative fame, slime moulds are slippery, their origins hard to trace, nobody can say where they come from exactly, or where they belong. For now, they are classified as *protista*, a taxonomic category given to certain eukaryotic membrane-bound organisms, which while unrelated to each other, don't fit into any other clade, being neither plant, nor animal, nor fungus.

~

Fig. 12 From here to there ...: "A lexicon of free time", installations detail, 2018.



Collapse

I was drawn to the slime moulds, to their behaviour, their colours, their unknowability. From them, I might learn a murkier method of doing maths. In the spring I reactivated their dormant selves in my kitchen.⁷ Every morning I would discover their nightly movement through the sticky bright yellow and orange trails that lit up the warm dark drawer. For the exhibit, they had suddenly been exposed to the daylight. They didn't like it. They remained motionless, biding their time, their silent meditations imperceptible to the naked eye.

Above them was a list of divinations. Words, a long litany of them, roughly scribbled on A4 sheets of paper, ran all the way down the wall.

LEISURE
PATIENCE
ANIMAL
PRODUCTIVE
IN/ACTIVITY
VIGILANCE
DOING
PERMISSION
BOREDOM
RELAX
FLOW
INOPERATIVE
SURRENDER
INERTIA
PLAY
GUILT
CONTROL
ATTENTION
WAITING

~



Fig. 13 "Physarum polycephalum (slime mould) in a petri dish, with Canary Wharf in the background", 2018.

These words resonate with a conversation I had with my friend Sasha a few weeks earlier, in February 2018.⁸ Dr Aleksandr 'Sasha' Drozd is an artificial intelligence (AI) researcher who was based in the Tsubame Lab at the Tokyo Institute of Technology at the time (now at Riken). I was curious about the term the 'post-labour society', used to refer to the impact advances in automation and AI might have on work and the labour market.⁹ We had meandered around the topic for hours, veering off on numerous tangents. We spoke of the 'smart society' where everything is planned and monitored by sensors, and the 'internet of things' that churns out big data 'food' for AI. Sasha explained the difference between supervised and unsupervised machine-learning, and how pattern recognition in unsupervised models can lead to information processing that results in language forms 'unknowable' to humans.¹⁰ But he thought it was nothing to worry about because he agreed with Max Tegmark that intelligence is 'substrate independent', meaning that intelligence doesn't depend on a particular kind of material composition, like flesh for example.¹¹ Free will came up; Sasha thought it likely to be an illusion. In his opinion human decision-making capabilities follow a logic of multiple feedback loops, meaning that free will is more akin to the thermostatic sensor on an air-conditioning unit, than individual freedom of choice...¹²

; -)

But I had been ruminating on another question all along. I wanted to know what he and his colleagues in the field of robotics' 'teleological ambitions' are for AI when they create new technologies. He pointed out that research often progresses without a clear vision,

and outcomes (and their repercussions I gather) become apparent through the process, and this has especially been true in the case of AI.¹³

I was thinking of a story my father often recounted about his childhood in India. How a boy was once found running wild on all fours with the wolves in the forest, having no doubt been abandoned in infancy. The thought experiment I proposed to Sasha was: “Can you imagine an AI with no goal, with no special skill or task to do, like an orphan child growing up in the forest with no other humans around, it just has to figure out what it’s supposed to *do*?” Would anyone know how to design such a thing, without function driving the choice of circuits and processors, appearance, specs, and speeds? And how would a ‘free’ – meaning taskless – AI orient itself around any sort of intention?

Sasha knows me so he guessed at the subtext of my query. He answered:

Some people say the way our brain works is that it’s always trying to predict what will come next, which is a goal in a way, because if you don’t do this you don’t have a sense of time and it’s one of the requirements of consciousness, it’s one of the elements, this awareness of time. If you don’t do it, information comes in and information just comes out; where is the self?¹⁴

~

The litany of words in the exhibition had been responses to another question altogether – ‘what do we know about *free time*?’ – that I put to a group of freelancers in a dance studio in Berlin during workshops I facilitated from 2017-2018.

To address this inquiry, each session began with an exercise of stillness. “The Patience of Not Starting” as taught to me by the dancer Yoshito Ohno entails a *generative* stillness that precedes activity, dance, creation, speech. In the Berlin studio, a clear bell marked the beginning and ending points of the (undisclosed) time interval of patience.

I wonder: What is happening in the time *between* the bells? Is it boredom? And if it is, how would you *know* that you’re bored? Does boredom have a location in the body, or outside of it? Is boredom a sound, a colour, a taste, a sensation?¹⁵ Does it arise because of the *unknown* factor – the time interval? If daily life’s routines entrain bodies to dominant rhythms, when these rhythms are interfered with, is desynchrony the source of boredom?¹⁶ This reasoning doesn’t really answer my question: I was wondering about the wellspring of boredom, *in the body*. A better question might be, how is desynchrony embodied?

~

I re-cognize a memory of boredom in my body; being ‘bored to *death*’ as a teenager. A state of nauseating and endless *ennui*, whose high price was the ‘opportunity cost’¹⁷ exacted on the tempos of my body, just as it was awakening to its own desires. ‘What better things could I be doing with *my precious time*?’ – the voice of the inner accountant, evaluating the cost of making one choice rather than another. As a teenager when choices are still being made for you, the opportunity cost feels unbearably high; for me, the burden on my time was so high, it felt like it was killing me.



Fig. 14 *From here to there ...: "Freedom Flame", wood, seaweed, gold leaf, installation detail, Goldsmiths University, 2018.*

Is it the same as contemporary FOMO – ‘the fear of missing out’? And is it really fear that causes the nausea that accompanies moments of (apparent) nothingness, during unknown durations of time? Is it fear that cross-examines our temporal choices, and comes up with zero-sum games, to stay or go? Is fear the voice of that weird self-talk that whispers, “maybe I should stop now”. And when it gains confidence, it starts rambling on in cacophonies of voices calling and responding to each other: “Why should I stop? Of course not! But because I’ve been doing it for a long time. There’s that idea of *time*: until when can you allow yourself to do something?”¹⁸

Voices can be heard during long stretches of stillness when time risks becoming deathly real. They will say they want to save you from this fate, they have your best interests at heart, and they want to make sure you use your time in an optimal way. They will even convince you they can prophesy the future.*

~

“This is *precious* time; this is precious *time*” the voices hiss. And the viewers are still suspended in the tempo of decay. They follow the collapsing body, their heads cocked to one side, as if by keeping eye contact with it, they might learn the secrets of entropy. Is the secret that boredom has a paradoxical logic, that in the moment of annihilation, time’s matter-reality irrupts with the (unbearable) possibility of ‘time freedom’?¹⁹ Perhaps only the slime mould knows the answer.

* [Link to: WOBBLING / Free Time](#)

But it isn't the word boredom that I am thinking about anymore. Like 'free time', boredom is a profoundly subjective experience, too hard to define. If I play at jumbling things up, the letters of the word 'boredom' might reveal another orientation towards time.

The word *bardo* appears.

~

Bardo is a Tibetan word meaning transition. In Buddhism it's the crucial interval that occurs between life and death. The ability to be sensitive and alert to *bardo* intervals over the course of daily life is a way to inwardly rehearse the ultimate *bardo* at the time of death. There's a particular instance of *bardo*, which most of us experience nightly. It's the transition between wakefulness and sleep when our habitual thought processes begin to dissolve, what psychologists call the hypnagogic state. In this state of consciousness, the body has become immobile, the physiological rhythms slow down, while memory and awareness remain somewhat awake, and the fluid meanderings of associative thinking begin. From the *bardo* of the hypnagogic state, unexpected information surfaces: lucid thought and dreaming, creative insight, apparitions, disembodied voices, hallucinations and sometimes even art movements.²⁰

What if boredom leads to *bardo*, and the temporal shift that coincides with 'being bored', is really the activity of time *infiltrating* the body? What if the phenomenon named 'boredom' occurs when time goes from being externally imposed as abstraction, to being internally *emitted* – the body material's *secretions*? 'Boredom'

then would be a word that describes the process of 'realizing', as in perceiving the reality of time thickening *inside your body*. Imagine then that *you* were holding the reins of time – the time that permeates your expanded (total) body which includes mind, thoughts, memories, past, future, and dreams.²¹ Harnessing the body's time isn't about controlling it – to 'harness' is to 'yoke' (also the meaning of *yoga*). Instead, take it as a way to attune to time's material vibrations in the manner a spider listens to her web.²²

~

The root of the word *illusion* is 'to play', from the Latin *ludere*. During my training with Yoshito Ohno, I became more familiar with the dramatic art of Japanese Noh. Noh relies on the audience's ability to create illusions by filling in the gaps where nothing seems to be happening. The playwright and actor Zeami brought Noh to its current form in the 15th century. His intention was to develop a Zen Buddhist simplicity. As a result, Noh came to be performed on a bare stage, with no props apart from a single painting of a pine tree in the background of the scene (the costumes do retain the sumptuous aesthetics of Noh's ancient origins in shamanic Shinto harvest rites). Zeami's best-known work is the *Fushikaden*, 'Transmission of Style and the Flower' (also known as 'Teachings on Grace and its Presence') in which Zeami details the lifelong training process of the actor, the pinnacle of which is to attain 'the Flower'. But just as important as the Flower is the "moment of wilting... said to be even more elevated than the Flower."²³

Yoshito would dance with a flower to teach the method of the *Flower* (and its inevitable entropy). Wilting means to recede, to allow

space for transition. The core of Yoshito's teaching is to empty oneself. To *not express* is the greatest quality. For Butoh founder, Tatsumi Hijikata, this meant learning from the dead living inside his body. He said that a dead person (his dead 'sister') was his Butoh teacher. She would tell him: "what you are able to express emerges somehow by not expressing it, don't you think?"²⁴

How does one 'empty oneself' in practice? In Noh, transition begins in the dressing room in front of the Shinto mirror, a reflective interface that mediates the threshold between the spiritual and physical worlds.²⁵ On stage, the Noh actor continues to open this distance from their body through the technique of the 'detached view', a movement in perspective not to judge their performance, but rather to augment sensory perception by affording multiple facets of embodied experience. The 'detached view' serves to bring about "the fusion of the mind of the actor with the audience, of self with others' selves..."²⁶

Noh is an incredibly drawn-out art. It advances at a glacial pace.²⁷ Movement and gestures are purposefully sparse and slight, and when they appear, they become charged with a power that punctuates time with meaning. The extended intervals of time *between* these accents, invites the audience to 'participate,' through the free association of a hypnagogic state.²⁸ The moment of the Flower is one of communal reverie, which the actor enables by emptying themselves, to afford other ways of seeing "...those who know watch with their minds, while those who don't know watch with their eyes."²⁹ It arises from that state that dancer, Natsu Nakajima, described to me once as a "certain special passivity", when we 'vanish our humanity.'³⁰

~

As the collapse was ending, I found myself lying on the floor. What should I do? I didn't know what to do, how to get up again, how to break the spell of time – however long it had been, I didn't know. And then I remembered Sasha's answer: "a piece of rock in the forest probably doesn't have a *goal*."³¹ He was saying that the definition of having a goal depended on whether there was 'self-awareness' of there being a goal in the first place: had he meant that without the goal of 'time-prediction', the 'self' might dissolve?³² And then, I have a vivid memory of the moment I noticed that the numbers on the back wall had stopped running. There had been a glitch, and now the words 'nodata, nodata, nodata' were flashing repeatedly, teasing us all with the lineation of a cryptic little rhyme.

∞

NOTES TO WHO AM I?

- 1 Amy Sharrocks to Dominique Bonarjee, “Final Score,” March 27, 2019.
- 2 Masaki Iwana, interview by Dominique Bonarjee, June 16, 2012.
- 3 Iwana.
- 4 Masaki Iwana, *The Intensity of Nothingness*. (Réveillon, South Normandy: La Maison du Butoh Blanc, 2011).
- 5 ‘Self-remembering’ as witnessing (unlike spectating) is a core idea in the teachings of P.D.Ouspensky, founder of the Study Society. The Sufi whirling ceremony (Mukabele) is an artwork that enables ‘self-remembering’ as the dancers in commune with those in attendance. Philip Jacobs, *The Mukabele* (London, UK: The Study Society, 2017).
- 6 Iwana, *The Intensity of Nothingness*.
- 7 The myth of Laocoön and its relation to the separation of time-based and space-based art offers a parallel here. The Greek priest, Laocoön, was tortured and punished by the pantheon of gods. Written accounts (Virgil) describe his scream that turned his mouth into an awful gape; whereas a statue of him that was unearthed depicts a serene countenance. These different representations of his fate highlight the Modernist separation of these two categories – performing versus visual arts. See Daniel Albright, *Untwisting the Serpent : Modernism in Music, Literature, and Other Arts* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

Mentioned also in Jeremy Grimshaw, *Draw a Straight Line and Follow It: The Music and Mysticism of La Monte Young* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011).

8 “Weathering describes socially, culturally, politically and materially differentiated bodies in relation to the materiality of place, across a thickness of historical, geological and climatological time.” Astrida Neimanis, “How Do You Perceive the Imperceptible?”, November 14, 2018.

9 The French word *trouble* means murky.

Notes to BOREDOM BARDO

1 Dominique Bonarjee, “Workshop Notes,” August 15, 2018.

2 The Art Phd research building at Goldsmiths University is named the Mountain of Art Research (MARs) Hub.

3 Kristen Kreider, noticed this phenomenon and called it ‘empathic viewing’ (Kristen

Kreider, personal communication, March 23, 2018).

4 Philip Jacobs, *The Mukabele* (London, UK: The Study Society, 2017).

5 “Another set of experiments suggests that slime molds navigate time as well as space, using a rudimentary internal clock to anticipate and prepare for future changes in their environments.” Ferris Jabr, “How Brainless Slime Molds Redefine Intelligence,” *Nature*, November 13, 2012, <https://doi.org/10.1038/nature.2012.11811>.

6 In 2010 slime moulds solved a maze built on the model of the ultra-complex design of the Tokyo Underground system, outsmarting their human counterparts who had taken years to figure out how to design it. Laura Sanders, “Slime Mold Grows Network Just Like Tokyo Rail System,” *Wired*, January 22, 2018, <https://www.wired.com/2010/01/slime-mold-grows-network-just-like-tokyo-rail-system/>.

7 I am extremely grateful to ‘Ian’, a member of the Slime Mould Collective group who provided me with culture for my experiments.

8 In February 2018, I visited Japan to collaborate with sculptor Kyoko Fujiwara on her installation *Arcadia*, funded by a Research Support Award from Goldsmiths University (# 8). I interviewed Sasha Drozd as part of the performance's research and development.

9 A reference to Max Tegmark's analysis of automation and AI's impact on human labour. See Max Tegmark, *Life 3.0 : Being Human in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*. (UK: Penguin Random House, 2017).

Yuk Hui also addresses the 'post-labor condition' through Marxist notions of free time which he says might be invalidated by automation where machines are in "direct psychosomatic relations with and between workers" See Yuk Hui, "On Automation and Free Time," e-flux - Architecture - Superhumanity, March 2018, <https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/superhumanity/179224/on-automation-and-free-time/>.

10 A reference to two Facebook AIs that developed their own language. See Siobhan Kenna, "Facebook Shuts Down AI Robot After It Creates Its Own Language," HuffPost UK, August 2, 2017, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/facebook-shuts-down-ai-robot-after-it-creates-its-own-language_n_61087608e4b0999d2084f6bf.

11 Tegmark, *Life 3.0 : Being Human in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*.

12 Aleksandr Drozd, interview by Dominique Bonarjee, February 5, 2018.

13 Another relevant factor Drozd says is that AI research is primarily funded by big tech corporations. Drozd.

14 Drozd.

15 These questions follow the style of the Microphenomenological Interview, see Claire Petitmengin, Anne Remillieux, and Camila Valenzuela-Moguillansky, "Discovering the Structures of Lived Experience: Towards a Micro-Phenomenological Analysis Method," *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 18, no. 4 (September 2019): 691–730, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-018-9597-4>.

16 Martin Heidegger cited in Lars Fr. H. Svendsen, *A Philosophy of Boredom* (London: Reaktion Books, 2005).

17 A term from economic theory that describes the opportunities forgone in making one choice over another.

18 *What Do We Know about Free Time?* (Theaterhaus Mitte Berlin, 2017).

19 For Gebser 'time-freedom' is linked to the 'irruption' of time; when time becomes *real*. See Jeremy Johnson, *Seeing Through the World: Jean Gebser and Integral Consciousness* (Seattle, WA: Revelore Press, 2019). And Jean Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1985).

20 Andre Breton began the Surrealist movement following a hypnagogic experience. Peter Schwenger, "Writing Hypnagogia," *Critical Inquiry* 34, no. 3 (March 2008): 423–39, <https://doi.org/10.1086/589487>.

21 Masaki Iwana, *The Intensity of Nothingness*. (Réveillon, South Normandy: La Maison du Butoh Blanc, 2011).

22 Carrie Arnold, "Spiders Listen to Their Webs | Innovators," National Geographic, June 5, 2014, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/140605-spiders-silk-webs-pluck-string-vibrations>.

23 Zeami, *The Spirit of Noh*, trans. William Scott Wilson (Boston, Massachusetts: Shambhala, 2006), 81.

24 Hijikata Tatsumi, "Wind Daruma," *TDR: Drama Review* 44, no. no.1 (2000): 77.

25 Mikiko Ishii, "The Noh Theater: Mirror, Mask, and Madness," *Comparative Drama* 28, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 43–66.

26 Ishii, 55.

27 In the past a play would last an entire day. I saw a Noh play in Tokyo in 2014 which lasted a reduced three hours.

28 Kings Place, London (2018) hosted a talk with neuroscientist and Noh actor Professor Atsushi Iriki. Iriki presented research on the effects spectating Noh theatre has on the brain. He discovered that over the duration of the performance, there was reduced activity in the frontal cortex, the part of the brain responsible for mind wandering and self-talk. He also observed increased activity in the parietal cortex which is responsible for sensory information processing. He has not yet published his results.

Inner participation also features in the Indian aesthetic theory of *rasa*. See Royona Mitra, "Decolonizing Immersion: Translation, Spectatorship, *Rasa* Theory and Contemporary British Dance," *Performance Research* 21, no. 5 (September 2, 2016): 89–100, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2016.1215399>.

29 Zeami, *The Spirit of Noh*, 6.

30 Natsu Nakajima, "Ankoku Butoh" (Feminine Spirituality in Theatre, Opera, and Dance, Taipei, 1997), 7, https://uwaterloo.ca/communication-arts/sites/ca.communication-arts/files/uploads/files/nakajima_-_feminine_spirituality_in_theatre_opera_and_dance.pdf.

Natsu Nakajima, interview by Dominique Bonarjee, December 7, 2012.

31 Drozd, interview.

32 The story of a virtual assistant named Viv which Hayles says might 'atrophy the ability to navigate in the world' might be an example of such 'dissolution' of agency. In N. Katherine Hayles, *Unthought: The Power of the Cognitive Nonconscious* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 125.

space of the
nameless
liquidity

DOMINIQUE SAVITRI BONARJEE

Department of Art. Goldsmiths University of London, 2023

I too want
to be a
saunterer
I don't want
to walk in
straight
lines

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Explanation of Procedure and Contractual Obligations for a Liquidity Methodology

The following steps indicate the daily development of the practice methodology of Liquidity.

1. Every day at any chosen time I will stop all activity. I will start from standing like a tree, in the *wu chi* position of Qi Gong. I will visualize the space surrounding my body becoming slowly filled with liquid. Based on this visualization, I will allow any changes to my physical and psychic consciousness to emerge through *wu wei*.

I will allow my body to respond to this visualization to explore 'dance's becoming' with the aim of expanding what dancing can be: who and what dances and when?

2. I will document this process daily in various ways, which may include writing, drawing, etc. Liquidity must be documented in some manner, every day.

3. Liquidity can take place anywhere, in a public or a private space. It must last at least five minutes, but it can last longer.

4. The terms of this procedure may change over time with regards to place, time, participation, and other aspects of the practice.

Liquidity began on 1 January 2018 and has no current end point in view, though it is planned to last the course of my PhD studies at Goldsmiths University.

1 January 2018

[I met Tehching Hsieh at the Live Art Development Agency, London on November 30, 2017. This meeting inspired the *Liquidity* contract where I follow Hsieh's 'explanation of procedure' for *Time Clock Piece* (1980-81), part of his *One Year Performance* series.]

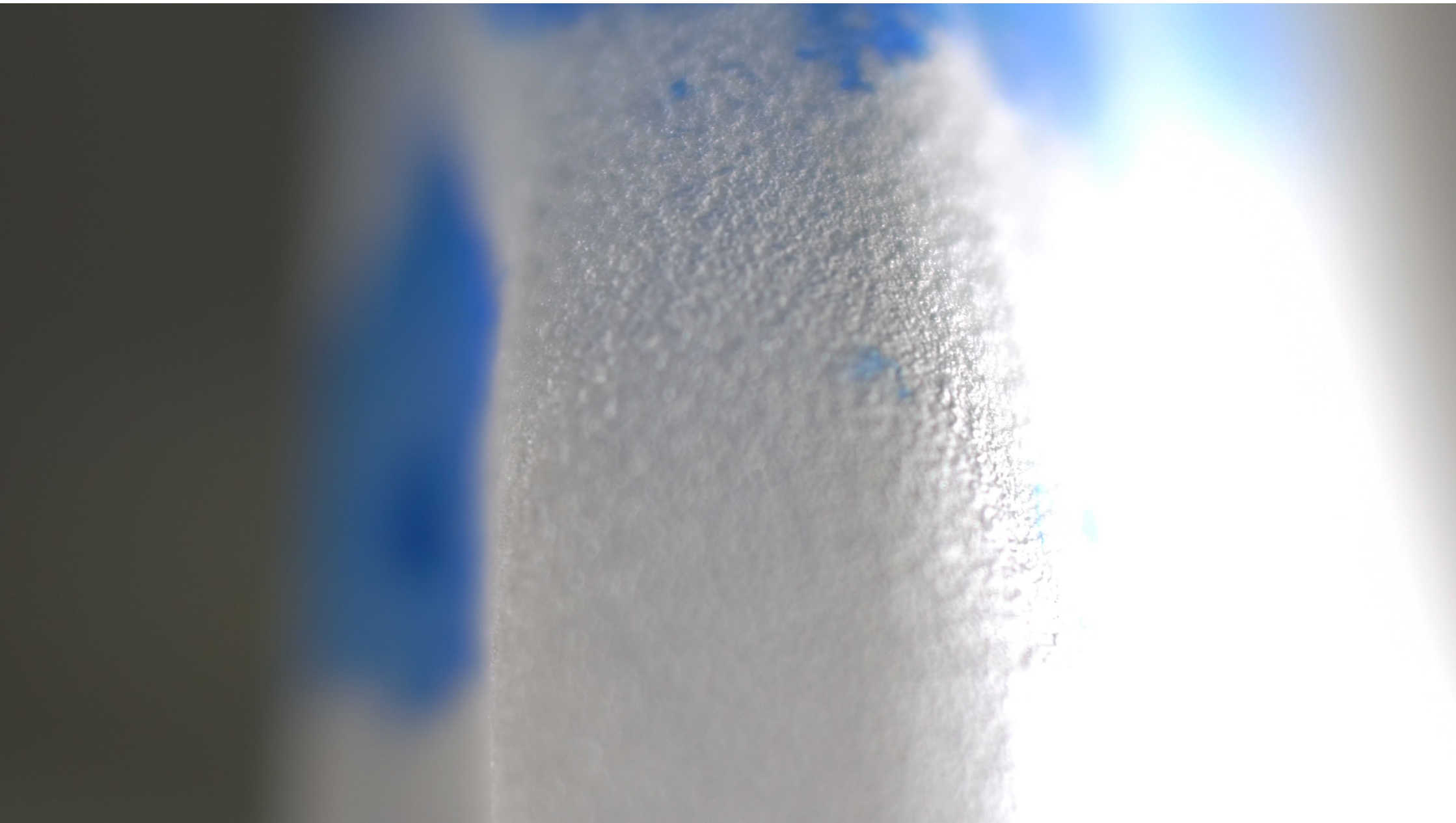


Fig. 1.1 *Membrane Series*, mixed media, dimensions variable, 2020 - 2022.

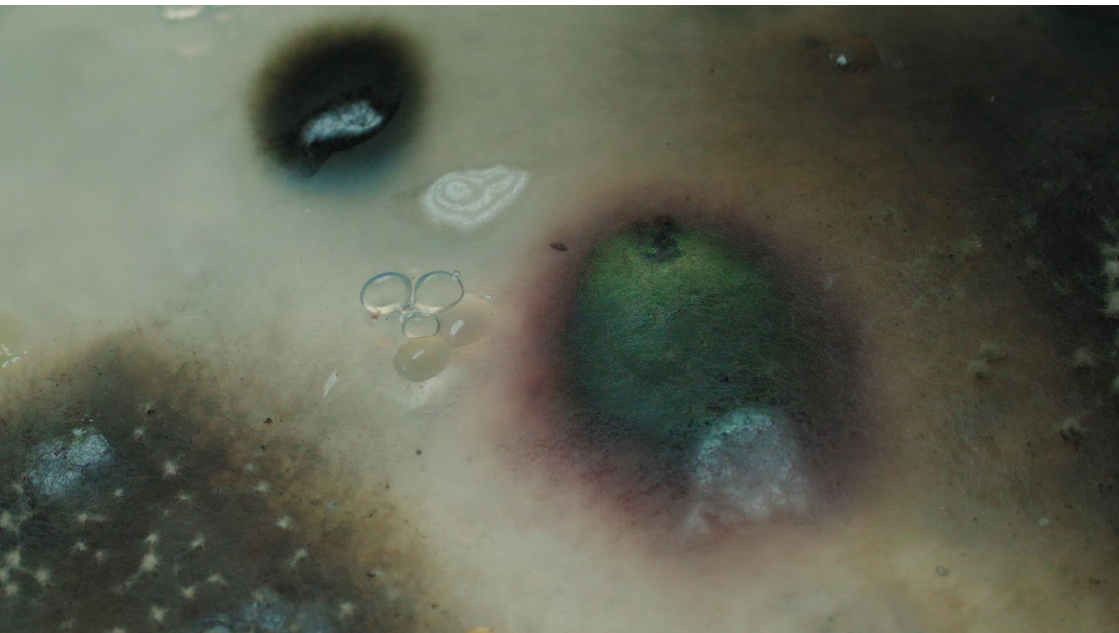


Fig. 1.2



Fig. 1.3



Fig. 1.4



Fig. 1.5

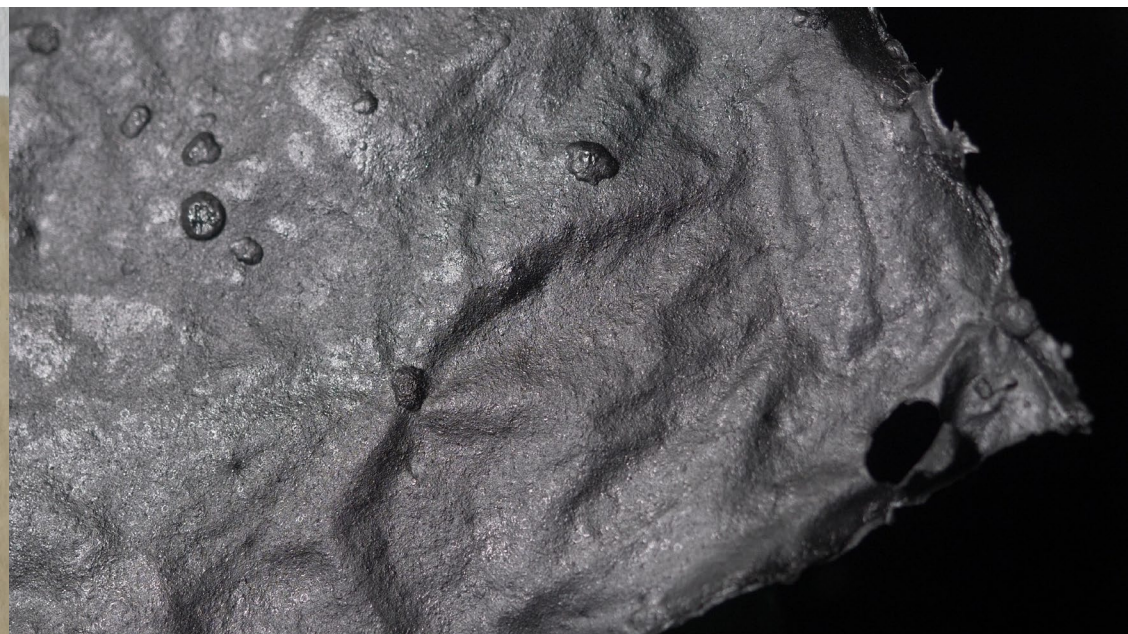


Fig. 1.6

skinship

I learned of skinship in Japan. There (also in Korea), it describes physical contact and bonding, between mother and child, and between lovers. Here, it recalls a somatic process that led me to develop bio-art membranes – ‘skins’ – as an experimental organic sculptural material. Author, Astrida Neimanis, was my respondent at an art research presentation in November 2018. She asked me “How do you perceive the imperceptible?”¹ It accompanies me as I explore Neimanis’ ‘membrane logic’, an ‘amniotic’ principle for thinking of difference within unity,² through my spiritual and artistic and experimental dance practices.

~



When I learned to dance an ocean

I know, when I kiss my shoes, my belt, the hem of my waistcoat, my dress, my cloak, my *sikke* hat, each in turn.³ I know when I cock my head to one side to 'look into my heart'. I know as we start our processing around the room with a faltering step. I know as the folds of our black *hirka* robes shudder at every interval between steps. I know all the way until the exchange of kisses at the very edge of the circular *Semahane's* invisible dividing line. I know that what happens beyond this event horizon is unknowable. And I know that in a moment I will fall in and when I do there is no return. I will be turned inside out, I will not see where I am going, I will not know what I am doing. I will enter backwards, and my back will become my front. I must never try to see where I am going, or I risk losing my way. My eyes will fill with tears.

As the dance begins, vision becomes clouded, skin dissolves, space starts to churn. Water is seeping through cracks in the ceiling, and the floors, imperceptibly. Inside and outside lose their hard delineation. All of you starts leaking, becoming transparent, splaying open, a sheet submerged, all expression washing away, floating, face melting, head ingested, all of it pulled with the undertow; no more trace of 'you'. And if only the hardest thing were to lose face ... but soon you are losing your head, as your mind is steadily sliced into slivers with each sharp twist to the left. They say the dance is one of madness, of love, of freedom: surrendering to the flocs of forgotten flesh. Breath becomes the rudder of a raft made of the deliquescing mass of body: as if by magic, at the tender edge of a void, *you* are being moved.

The dance of 'no-self' dampens the epidermal openings. Sweating might just be the cell's love of water, whose wetness enables the passage of inside to outside, outside to inside. Your waters are secretly putting themselves in array to spin live wires with all other whirling bodies.⁴ Your skin, an erotic interface seducing the entire cosmos.

I am convinced that in a molecular dimension, that I cannot perceive, the moisture of the dance is creating shimmering fields of water droplets. I can hear whisperings across diaphanous circumferences, imparting a logic whereby any attempt to touch *any* thing will move every *thing*; if one bead trembles all the beads around wobble too as their points of contact shift, the way soap bubbles do when they slip together along a pane. And water is intimating that to navigate the space, each body must take care of everybody else, that we must perceive each other, without seeing, even as we are ‘cooked’ by the cosmic fire which moves us in unison; we must boil to enter fusion.⁵

And would our 'lovers', the witnesses to our dance, also notice that the room has softened into a million convex lenses? A living expanse of eyeballs being held together by a complicit tensegrity; every *thing* is perceiving! Would we all hear a sound rising, rushing between the eddies of each body, a sub-aural sound that floods us all with an ecstatic moan, distorting us, making us giddy. The wet sonar communication from a subterranean sea, surfacing in the beat between breaths without breath.

The incantation signals the end of the dance, we fall to the ground, we kiss the floor, the world continues to whirl.

Нининининининининининининин

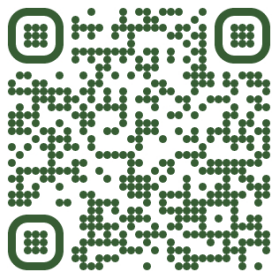


Fig. 2 *Studio Spinning*, 0:26, 2021.

How do you perceive the imperceptible?

When you asked me, you were also wondering about how dance can be a way to weather.⁶ I realize that my Sufi turning practice might help me tell you.⁷

The dance's centripetal movement whirls around the heart centre where separation becomes blurred. The blurriness keeps reminding me that my left foot is not my right foot, that together they allow me to walk and spin. That my right eye is not my left eye, that together they allow me to add dimensionality to my field of vision and my perception of the world. That my right hand is different from my left hand; in this dance they are not the same, my right is open to the sky, to receive, my left is turned towards the earth, to give. Yet they work together despite this apparent asymmetry.

Now it's true that when I *compare* my hands, I tend to think that my dominant (right) hand is more accurate, neat and precise, stronger, and does things *faster* than my left hand. It makes me wonder about the comparative opposition I have imposed on my two hands. Could they weather together?

On weathering you write:

Weathering describes socially, culturally, politically and materially differentiated bodies in relation to the materiality of place, across a thickness of historical, geological and climatological time.⁸

~ Astrida Neimanis

I learned that a digital sensor only has two states – on *or* off (0 *or* 1) – while an analogue sensor has infinite floating points between the extremes of a cline (*between* 0 and 1) so that it responds to negligible pressure changes. My dances are certainly of the ‘analogue’ sensor-kind, practices for attuning to the *gradient* of ‘I – not I’, across which I am weathering with other bodies and entities.

When bodies weather together, do they perceive this activity?

~

Once I visited Cape Agulhas, where the cold water Benguela stream meets the warm water of the Agulhas current at the southern-most tip of Africa. Here, two massive bodies of water, the Atlantic Ocean and the Indian Ocean, come together but remain distinct: one ocean is bluer, the other is greener. How do they mix and appear to remain separate?

~

Two colours: one is named ‘blue’ the other ‘green’. Between them an infinite gradient of shades: aqua, turquoise, sapphire, azure, pine green, moss green, apple green, teal, Prussian blue, petrol blue, cobalt, and no doubt the branded ones are there too – International Klein Blue and Tiffany Blue⁹ ... In ancient Chinese painting, blue-green was the colour that shifts the wavelengths of *inner* vision; the colour *ching* was linked to the continuum extending between earth and sky.¹⁰ In Japanese the colour *ao* is sea blue, sky blue, and green, expanding across (approximately 450 to 530 nanometers) a larger spectrum than *either* blue *or* green.

~

Just linger in Verdigris for a moment. Verdigris’ mesmerizing shades aren’t really a colour but a process, a chemistry of impermanence whereby red copper, when exposed to certain elements, such as sea-salt, oxidizes and changes colour. But the metal doesn’t really *change colour*, it is ‘weathered’ by oxidation crystals that give it the patina named Verdigris.¹¹

~

Still following the riddle of oceanic encounters and colours in motion, I remember my French grammar lessons, where I was taught to use different coloured inks to distinguish the grammatical components of a sentence: red for the subject, green for the verb, blue for the complements. It makes me speculate that ‘blue-green’ is the colour of a (subjectless) sentence. Then what imperceptible activity would enable such dancing, predicated on dissolution?*

~

And what exactly is *perception*? Is it to imperceptibility what recognition is to unrecognizability, or knowing to unknowability? Does memory afford perception?

Perceiving the imperceptible is to wonder about skin.

~

It is October 2014, I am with dancer Ko Murobushi in Yamagata prefecture, Japan. He has returned there after forty-seven years. It will be the last time. He wanted to tell me of his life and his dance.

~

* [Link to 0-1 | Grammar](#)

We face each other in states of suspension: dead or alive? I am looking at the darkened skin on the face and hands of a 265-year-old monk, only a pane of glass between us. Sitting on the floor, in the cross-legged lotus position, I am mirroring this body inside the vitrine. The desiccated human figure, swaddled in loose ceremonial saffron robes is a flesh icon, a member of the *miira*, an ancient sect of Yamabushi mountain monks who followed an ascetic Tantric practice of self-mummification while still alive.¹² They believed that by doing this they could stay suspended in that *imperceptible* instant of transition between life and death, indefinitely.

For all these years, the *miira* remained Ko's perpetual inspiration.

~

Another memory. My body lying on the ground in my room in Berlin. I begin to sense what feels like latent turbulence moving through the area where my heels are resting on the ground. Supporting the mass of my body is a wooden floor whose slats are transmitting microtonal tremors into my bones. My awareness moves to the point of contact from where I can 'hear' a sort of humming, an invisible *bourdon*, hovering through the entire room.¹³ Gradually I start to *recognize* the phonemes – *nam-yo-ho-rengé-kyo*. Immediately, there is an (imperceptible) passage; some *thing* traverses a membrane. I *know* the form of these sounds: this is the Lotus Sutra. Now it starts to swirl unabating, its crystal-clear sound syllables won't leave me alone, they penetrate my thoughts, flooding my attention. Once form is perceived, features become recognizable. Now I can locate the origin of this sound: it comes from above and I know its cause. My upstairs neighbours host a Nichiren Buddhist group. They are chanting the

mantra that I *know* they chant. They are *causing* the vibrations that are filtering through the soft surface of my skin, and the tuning forks of my bones are transmitting this knowing all over my body. Is perception, *knowing*?¹⁴

~

Who *knows* that the waveforms created by the resonance of repeatedly whirling in the *sama* dance,¹⁵ or chanting the Lotus Sutra, can cause shifts in the body's subtle anatomy? And who can tell *how* these ripples of bodies and voices might awaken a human heart? And who knows whether the heart *perceives* its own metamorphosis? Who first (re)cognized the heart's opening as a sacred geometry? And who was it that described it as a lotus flower?

The lotus grows from stagnant muddy waters; the heart unfolds its infinite petals.

Upstairs, do they know? They continue to repeat – *nam-yo-ho-rengé-kyo* – and I hear the bass of their humming, which without the name *Lotus Sutra*, would have been nothing more than the imperceptible rumble of the noumenon. It makes me wonder, where is the edge between the noumenon and the phenomenon?

"How do you perceive the *imperceptible*?" you ask. Do you also wonder how the imperceptible becomes perceived? How perception is the dawning of the phenomenon, and how the act of naming is how the noumenon dissolves into the (re)cognition that says "I know". But perhaps your question was 'how do *you* – meaning I – perceive the imperceptible?' If 'I' only appears in the moment of perception, can imperceptibility and the 'I' ever even coincide?

~

Let me guide you deeper into an exploration of perception and imperceptibility, *through your body*. Please join me.

PERCEPTION 1 / *from the mud*

Take a soft mat and let us lie down in the space, in *sāvasana* the corpse *asana* position of yoga.¹⁶

Descend the ladder. Enter the darkness beyond thoughts. In this supine position, your body melts into the ground as you become headless. Those who *know* say that *sāvasana* is the most difficult of all *asanas*, because you *do nothing*. And only by ‘doing nothing’ will you know ‘passageless passage’ into the undivided ground.¹⁷

Do you now hear a buzzing hovering about? Listen to it; let your pores become countless ears, until between the sense of ‘me’ and the material of the mat, you perceive the sensation of a border. Between the material of the mat, and the mass of the floor, you perceive the sensation of a border. Beyond each slat of wood, at every partition – on either side of the insulation, past the concrete and the plaster and the paint – you perceive the sensation of a border. Are all these borders that delineate the interfaces between things *perceptible*?

Sink into the ground, your weight welcoming your own matter-reality. Deeper, deeper, denser and heavier, erasing the borders of the ‘sense of self’ (that the Vedas call the *ahamkara*) until you encounter

your ‘self’ as a floating point between all the material – the flesh, mortar, the random bits. In this state, frequencies might carry us between borders, and allow us to enter other spaces. We could even land amongst the voices in the neighbours’ living room. When sound becomes an extension of skin, we might cross these imperceptible borders. Joy.

PERCEPTION 2 / *cellular recall*

Don’t stand up yet: take another journey of involution. Draw a hairline slit along your epidermis, slide into your body. Immediately we will encounter boundaries, the soft, porous walls of cells, of tissues. We would find ourselves in a field of information made of nutrients and oxygen, swaying kelp-like in our bodies of water. To and fro, the endless refrain of semiconductor cells as they open and close continuously. You may wonder how do they *know* to do this, when each cell is different, each cell is similar, each cell has a purpose, each cell can be replaced by another identical cell? And knowing that even as a cell dies, the field of your body renews itself; that every single cell’s existence is recorded as a memory in time, and passed on through strings of code, so that some *thing* remembers, some *thing* knows the history of every cell in our bodies.

And if you could recall the memory of every single cell that has ever existed in your body, imagine what you would perceive? In what dimensions would such perception take you? Would such a memory be *perceptible*, (re)cognizable? Or does recognition, and therefore

perception, not extend to such imperceptible scales? Would you then say that cellular memory is imperceptible?

But if we were to say, “*we* perceive *it*”, would we need to collect something to prove this perceptibility: an object, a specimen, a number, that will confirm what we have known? And without that hard matter, would we have a problem?

~

You ended your message to me by wondering “how do the nuances not only of climatological weather, but of *the total climate*, write themselves on and in our bodies *almost, but not quite, imperceptibly*?”¹⁸

‘Not *quite* imperceptibly’, because when you stand up again, borders mean something different: skin and stone are ‘not quite imperceptible’. And yet it seems that even when thought forms, having been named, congeal into known forms that are recognizable and thus discursive, their repetition might afford a cognitive ‘sleight-of-hand’. They can dissimulate themselves to ‘hide in plain sight’ through the force of habit of simply naming things: the habit of knowledge without practice.

Even the matter of your body, is it *perceivable* to you, *as matter*, beyond a name or a pronoun, ‘I’? Or does it evade perception and remain another transparent interface amongst many assumptions? Do you really know and *perceive*, ‘the human that you are as a material entity’ as distinct from a person with an identity?¹⁹ And to even begin to *perceive* ‘our bodies’ must we go beyond this ‘Identity and know who ‘we’ is? How would we perceive the body of ‘we’?²⁰

By learning the dance of how weather permeates structures and skin, can ‘we’ also infiltrate boundaries, leak through walls, become the imperceptible force of $E=H^2O$?²¹

CODA: Masaki’s last lesson

I know that at some moments in these explorations I have known a strange turn. I have felt it: *there*, in the Top Studio of Colet House where we dance; *there* in my room when my body lay as a corpse; *there* when I faced the flesh icon in Yamagata. An eye was watching, seeing all as if through a spyglass. It was a curious eye that lets distance open so that space stretches, between ‘us’ – between this ‘eye’ and ‘my’ body’s ‘I’.

And are you now wondering: when *you* watch yourself *who* is watching?

I don’t *know*. But I know that some *thing* perceives a feeling of distance opening up between my physical form – ‘my body’ – and the phenomena of turning, of humming, of silence. There is a presence, an eye, an ‘I’, watching, holding space by witnessing with a faraway perception. I become aware that within this zone extending between my central nervous system’s perception of ‘I’ and this other eye/I, an imperceptible swarm is shifting: a ‘we’?

How would I know this?

‘Knowing’ of this kind is not a thought, a concept, but a raw sound that travels along the entire length of an interface, a skin, a membrane, resonating like a drumroll. I heard it once in the low clouds that hang above Masaki Iwana’s place in South Normandy. This sound carries the totality, from the fields into the space. And when you dance by “letting fog get in your mouth”,²² you are swallowing this drone – birdsong, a distant bell, a tractor, the other dancers’ breathing, and that faraway gunshot that sounded just as Masaki was saying: ‘See

yourself from the periphery of the space, see yourself looking at you, you are holding the others, the viewers, within that space. By allowing them inside your body, your body will *become* space, and then you would start to *emit* time.²³ I felt the space extending between ‘I’ and this other I’s eye, it was filled with *time*. It makes me wonder, what happens when we look into each other’s eyes? Does *time* appear, clusters of imperceptible sound, moving between us: ‘we’?

Masaki said that the detached eye originates in ‘the moment of the *flower*’.²⁴ He told us that its particularity is that it contemplates from a distance with an impersonal attention, it simply watches matter – my body amongst others. I imagined it to move delicately, like an insect, or a hummingbird, it would land here or there, and then dart about, looking for nectar. When it finds small holes – *pore-tals* into matter – it disappears in layers of skin, ceiling, floor, beyond the roofs, into the clouds. Out there it morphs again, at the speed of light it plunges into freefall, and lodges itself inside the earth’s red molten heart – a flower – where it remembers the origins of flesh and blood in minerals and metals. And then, seeking expanses, it propels itself beyond earth’s atmosphere and hovers somewhere near Jupiter, from where it bounces back again, recharged. Because the detached eye is not really ‘detached’, it is *tethered* to a centre, a body, a planet, a place, an iron core.²⁵ This strange eye is not really an eye, it doesn’t *see* as such, it is the tempo between our eyes, between our skins. The joy dimension of enjoying me without ‘I’; when ‘I’ may perceive the imperceptible.

∞

Fig. 3.1 *Liquidity at the Floating University*, 3:54, 2018.

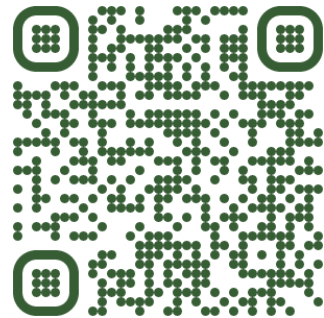


Fig. 3.2 *Liquidity at the Floating University*, still, 2018.

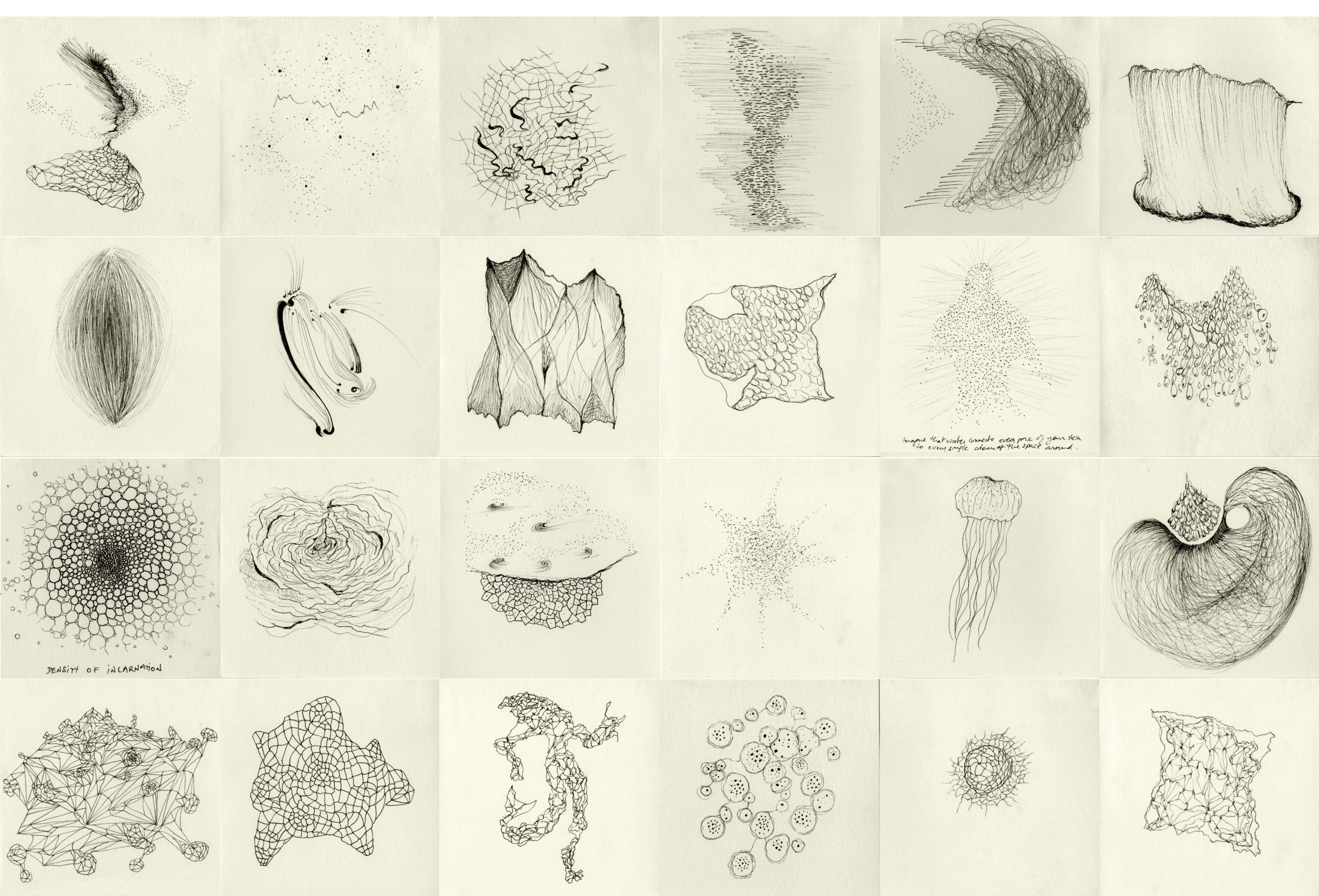


Fig. 4 Liquidity Scores for Microtonal Dances , drawings on paper, 2018 - 2019.

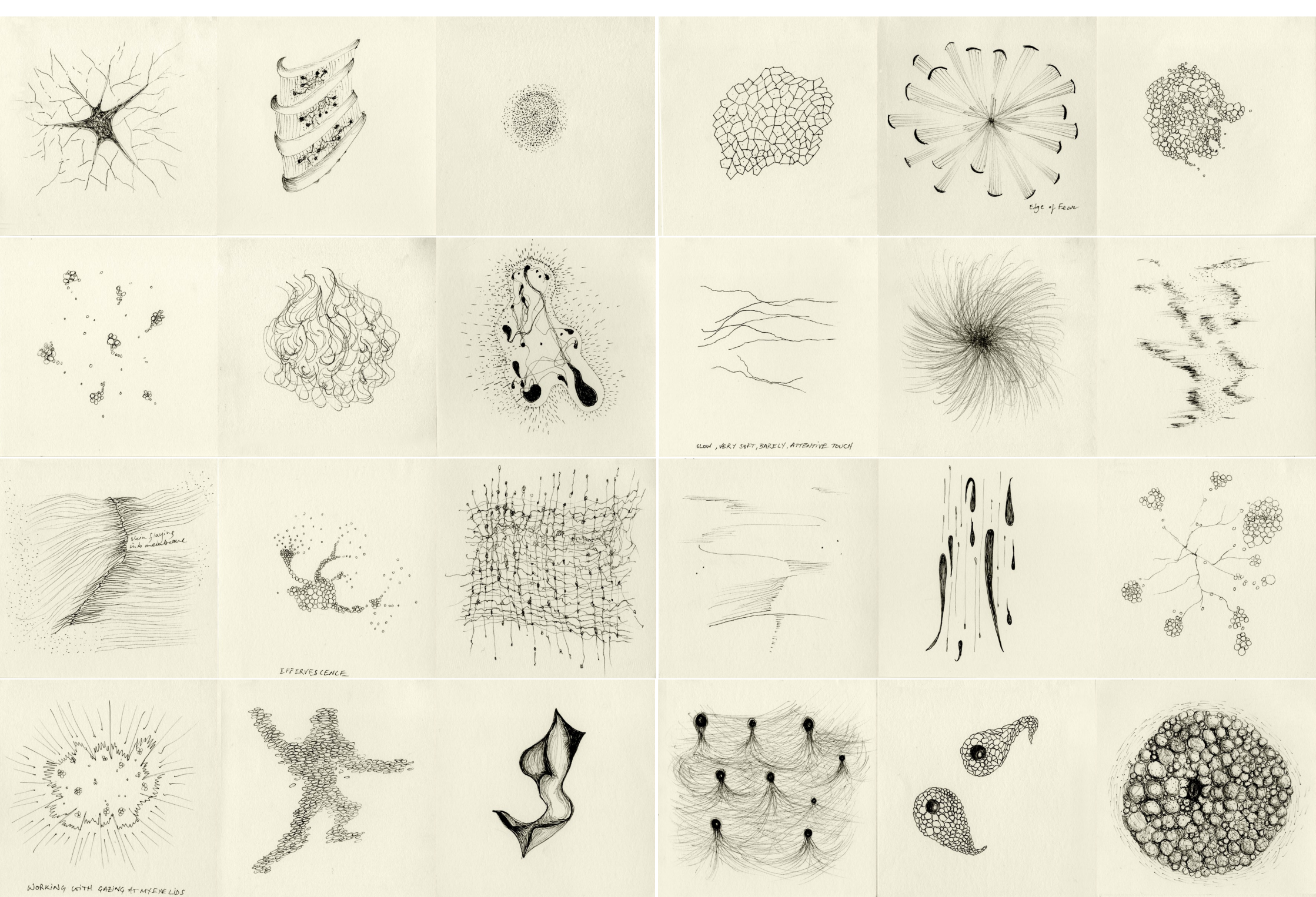


Fig. 5 Liquidity Scores for Microtonal Dances , drawings on paper, 2018 - 2019.



Fig. 6 *The Turning gesture of the heart, plaster, 2022.*

desire line

In order to withstand the weather, we had to become stone.¹

~ Audre Lorde

Kuniichi Uno had told me of an exhaustion that could be positive, that ‘giving up’ might be the catalyst for a practice of “pure virtuality” meaning the (unknown) time it takes to become “an other than the other”.² What I discovered is that when the body gives up, it swells. Resistance takes the form of a swollen outcrop where the tight bands of muscle tissue, having stretched to breaking point, tear open to let water in.³ In giving up, the body allows itself to become engorged. Swelling is the need for water, made salient by the appearance of a line in the (inner) landscape, a desire line in search of another tempo.

~

... what would it mean if,
in order to withstand the weather,
we became water instead?⁴
~Astrida Neimanis



Fig. 7 Broken succulent revived in a petri dish, 2020.

It is said that the *dao* is 'nameless' and "the name that can be named is not the eternal name."⁵ It is said that the tempo of the *dao* is curvilinear and to grasp its logic it is necessary "to exhaust in order not to exhaust", meaning "to expose the limit in order to make infinite."⁶

~

Advancing through turbulence, moving towards some *where*. Being late, 'I *mustn't* be late'. Being delayed. One of those days when nothing works as it *should*. Moving in haste, with the head slightly in front of the body in a crude attempt at aerodynamism. In this forward-stance, not really walking, not really seeing, crashing along – though never falling – as the edges of pavement slabs create an effect of rushing lines that keep disappearing, reappearing, in fast succession, at the periphery of tunnel vision.

Then...

A particle, blown along, lifted by a sudden gust of wind, an asperity, an alterity enters into contact with the soft wet membrane of your eye. It is touching you, but you cannot see it, you only feel it, scratching, demanding attention through an instant flow of tears. Now, you (*must*) stop. Already the eye is pulling shut to protect itself. The detour begins. To get this particle out requires water. Water will force the lid open, soothe the anxious duct that is gushing with liquid defences to help the corneal epithelium to resist. Because resistance is *right here*, there, where you are being touched against your will by a microscopic piece of the world: a piece of the 'not me'.

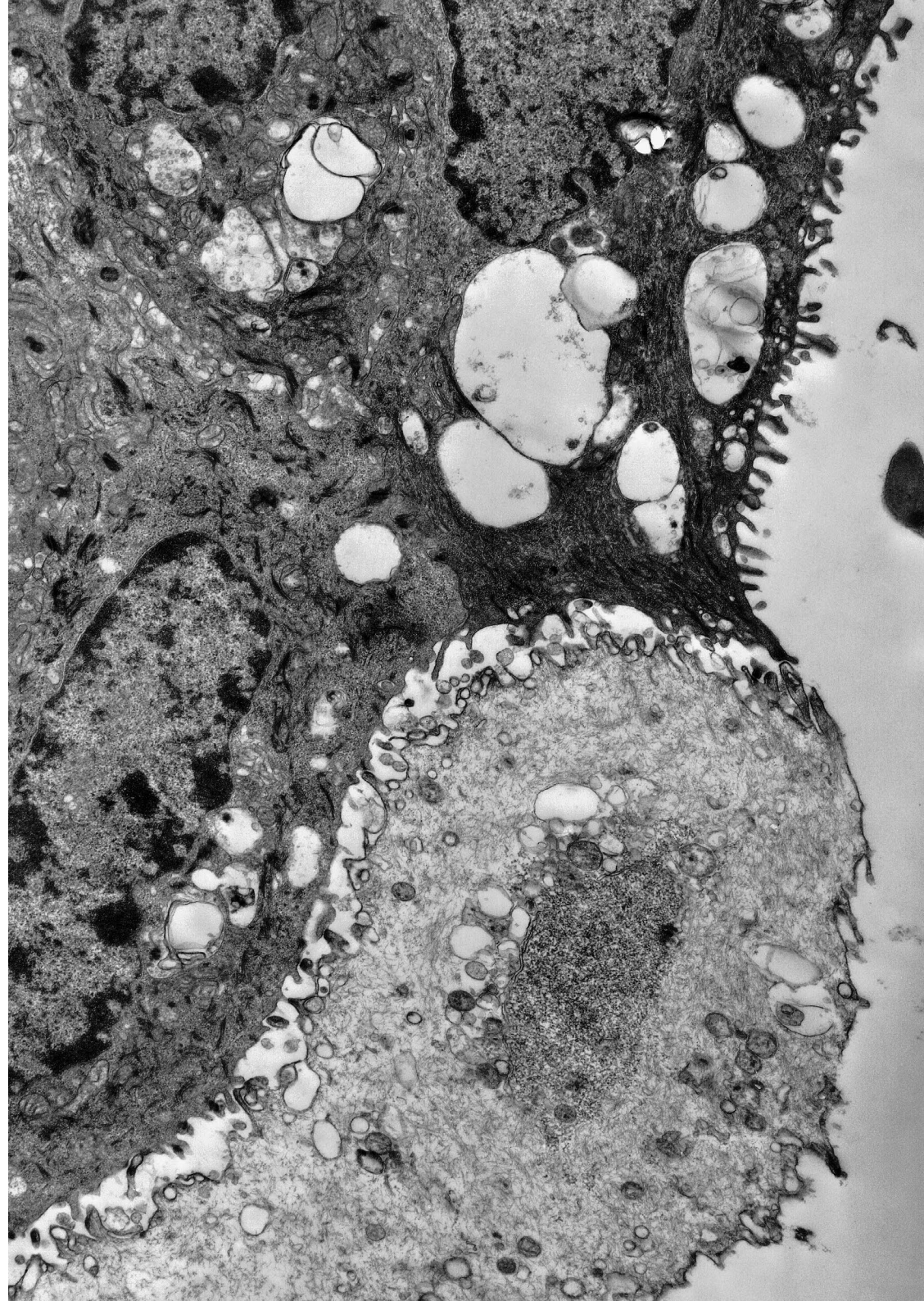
How do you recount such an episode? ‘I’m late because a piece of dirt got in my eye’? Or would you try to speed up the rhythm of your movement to make up for lost time? And speeding up would bring a bout of heat – blood rushing to the muscles to help them respond to the orders to go faster. The heart that must instigate the double-triple-tempos begins to beat more rapidly – perhaps your wrist sensor technology is saying 120 bpm, even congratulating you for being in ‘cardio mode’. Then comes acceleration, and the heat.

~

In the *I-Ching*, the element of fire, *li*, warms things, but the imbalance of *li* is the most desiccating of forces.⁷

Rushing stokes the fire that can be felt prickling the back, igniting a reaction all along ‘the governor channel’ (*du mai*) which governs protection from intruders.⁸ The fire’s heat sets off an inaudible crackling in the hidden recess of a shoulder blade where water is evaporating fast. Drying causes the gradual tightening that draws the curved slopes of the neck closer seeking comfort in insularity – ‘we’re in this together’. And still, “*faster, faster*” keeps stacking a rapid assemblage of parts – tac, tac, tac, tac, tac (in a *presto staccato* rhythm) – constructing itself from the entire topography of features, all moving in cannon, striving for the perfect mechanisms contrived by a ‘machinic unconscious’⁹ that advances spectacularly, the tight choreography of a Busby Berkeley chorus line harnessing the lot of the body in an aesthetic of angular sharpness; the marching dance of trapezius to splenius / capitis to splenius / cervicis to rhomboids to deltoids; to an entrancing refrain that imperceptibly entrains.

Fig. 8 Epithelial cell sloughing off.



Arriving at the destination, the heartbeat returns to rest, the flush disappears from the skin, but have you forgotten the heat? If you open your inner attention, the embers can still be heard rumbling deep in the geological terrains of your body. Listen to them. Do they continue to deepen into contractions, seething into tangles that will eventually harden as lay-bys of gristly matter? Because the process of sedimentation that begins in the back, goes on. It co-opts the smoothness of the surrounding tissues, reducing their ability to coil and reel and twist, from the full expanse of gyroscopic dimensionality, it narrows them to fit the right angles of purpose, a constriction that ensures that the eyes will remain fixed upon the target. And in this process of reduction, the heat will continue to smelt a brittle calcareous stone at the base of the sternum. A hard little stone is growing there, just above the solar plexus, gathering concentric layers, having lodged itself long ago 'for protection'. In time, it begins to congest the softness of the 'conception channel' (*ren mai*), damming up the flow of the 'sea of ch'i' at the exact point at which the microcosmic orbit enters the valley of the heart.¹⁰

If you listen quietly, you will hear the movement of tectonic plates. And if you listen very carefully, you will sense the mechanism of their acceleration; you will find that some retract faster than others, speeding up to the *tempo of pleasing*, wanting to obey the timbre of an insistent tune that noisily commands the whole arrangement to: 'Get there! Do not let yourself down, because if you do you will fall and how will you ever get up again?'

~

A speck of dust flies into my eye. I try to resist, unsuccessfully. A minor irritation, but it makes me think of resistance and of pliancy, of all the processes that fluctuate between intention and receptivity. It makes me wonder if resistance has a sound. And if it does, it wouldn't be the sound of an explosion; rather a silent, protracted detonation that splinters out from the closed eyes of a body suddenly interrupted by an insubstantial stray bit of nothing. And yet, a nameless particle in motion seems to somehow glitch the eternal rush towards, towards, always forwards.

By closing the lid, I might resist. But this is not how resistance begins. Somewhere already the fabric of bodies is weathering with the same weather that carries the dust.¹¹ Could I allow the weather to weave torsion into the warp of my body and pliancy into its weft? Bodies, by welcoming the weather (and its alterities), could discover how to listen, to what is out there, beyond the body, *between* bodies, by attuning to the 'the ten thousand things'.¹²

The centrifugal ripples that fan out from even the most insignificant of events are also called revolutions. And their resonance displays the curvilinearity of the waveform. Then it might be another word than *resistance*, another force – exhaustion, seduction, wonder, and perhaps in that order – that can change course and bend the straight line into the desire line. Listening to the dust, listening to invisible latencies, listening to the tempos that move us, hearing them in the materiality of our bodies, and our body's interplay with other matter, in the wind and the weather. Might this be a more-than-human practice of harmony – which is *not stasis* but a practice that yokes the human realm to cosmic forces through tacit relations with the world: a *practice* of 'cosmotechnics'?¹³

The eye of a galaxy

In the *I-Ching*, the desire to see brings about the cooling of the system. Sight makes water and fire balance each other out. Light is the property of fire; light makes the world visible. But it is water that makes particles decelerate after the frenzy of primal emergence.¹⁴ In the Daoist cosmogony, the cooling flow, and the coagulating heat, birth the manifest world into existence: the ten thousand things can now *perceive* one another's different forms, and names.

Was it the cosmic encounter of fire and water, that taught gravity, water's logic: how to make whirlpools from grit and dust into spheres, planets, galaxies?

Zoom into a sphere turning in an infinitely smooth rotation upon itself, along an invisible axis at the centre of which you place the point of gravity that holds form and movement in unity. The eye follows this logic. It is also a sort of sphere, though not quite a perfect one. The pupil too is round within it, and when you stare into another eye you see nothing, just your reflection given a certain light, wetness, and closeness; and the little white dots *are nothingness*, light reflecting itself. The sphere of the eye would be pliant if only you could touch it, but an eye, encased in a body, has an outer layer – the eyelid. It protects the eye from such probing, so that resistance keeps true softness beneath the folds, under the lid. But chaos is always there: a formless particle, transported by the wind. It easily frays the act of resistance which is only in service to the tempo of the eye, as centre

of gravity. And the mind that made this eye its centre will certainly wish it had refused the particle entry: if only it had shut the eye a nanosecond earlier, if only things had gone at the pace of its plans, its reality could remain intact.

But once dust encroaches on the softness of the eye, it is with closed eyes that another turning can commence. You will start to witness the sliding, condensing, towering, crumbling, undulating, endless asymmetries of texture, rhythms and density, the manifold desire lines moving *within* your flesh, where waves form and dense matter lurches, and light points do reach their destination *at light speed*. In the wind, when you feel your heart racing, stop, close your eyes, and *see*.*

I wonder if eye to eye, were we to focus on the emptiness, on the air between us and the little circles of light inside the limpid darkness of the pupil, if this alone might be a way, not so much “to withstand the weather”, but to *stand with the weather*, by becoming watery. And then, could we become more than petrified shells, wanting to protect the ‘self’ from the alterities and asperities of life? To resist doesn't mean we must calcify. What if through an involution, we might know how dust churns pearls, through a *listening protest*.

* [Link to COLLAPSE / Who am I?](#)

Fig. 9 Head of a thorn, 2020.



Desire Line

What do we want? ... [SILENCE ... *listen*]
When do we want it? ... [SILENCE ... *listen*]

What do we want? ...
When do we want it? ...

What do we want? ...
When do we want it? ...

Stones were once dust, and in time, they too will liquefy.

∞

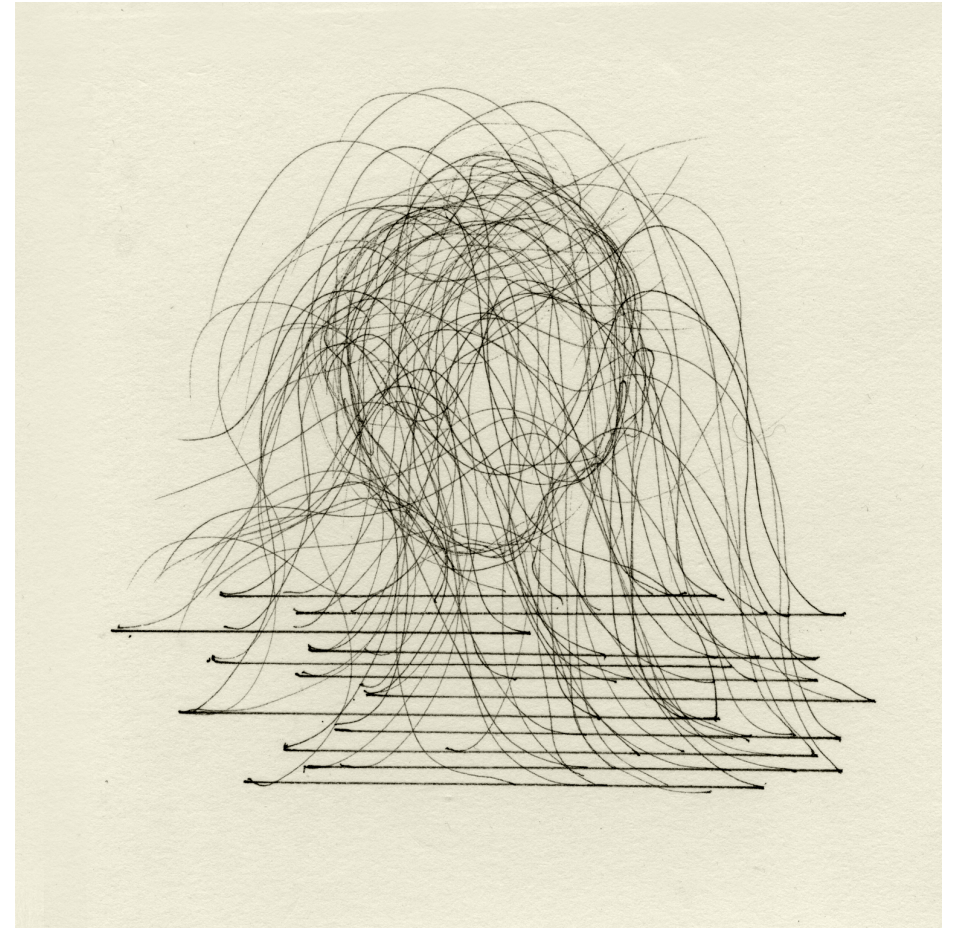


Fig. 10 *Liquidity Score for Microtonal Dance*, 2019.

NOTES TO SKINSHIP

1 Astrida Neimanis, “How Do You Perceive the Imperceptible?,” November 14, 2018. See Appendix III.

2 Astrida Neimanis, *Bodies of Water. Posthuman Feminist Phenomenology*, Environmental Cultures Series (London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017).

3 All the vocabulary, acts and gestures described in this paragraph refer to my practice of turning in the Sufi Mukabele ceremony with the Dancing Dervishes at Colet House, London. The *sikke* is the tall felt hat worn by dervishes which stands for the tombstone of worldly identity. The black cloak is the *hirka*. The *Semahane* (meaning the ‘house of audition’) is the turning space which is imagined as a circle divided in two by an invisible line, with the division being marked by the Sheikh who oversees the ceremony. The witnesses to a Mukabele are ‘lovers’ and not an ‘audience’, because the ritual itself is not considered a ‘performance’ or entertainment, but rather a sacred work of art. See Philip Jacobs, *The Mukabele* (London, UK: The Study Society, 2017). Also Ibrahim Gamard, “Mevlevi Terms and Definitions,” Dar-Al-Masnavi, accessed November 13, 2022, <https://www.dar-al-masnavi.org/mevlevi-glossary.html>.

4 In the Buddhist philosophy of Uji, being-time, “[s]etting oneself in array means that we place or set ourselves in accord with something, someone, an event, or an interaction.” Shinshu Roberts, *Being-Time. A Practitioner’s Guide to Dogen’s Shobogenzo Uji* (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2018), 61.

In water's fourth phase, it becomes viscous and forms a liquid crystal when it comes into contact with a hydrophilic membrane. The structure causes the molecules to split into positive and negative polarity and generate electrical energy. Gerald Pollack, *The Fourth Phase of Water. Beyond Solid, Liquid and Vapor*, 2013.

5 Dervishes in training are called 'chickpeas' that have to be properly cooked in the pot in order to graduate. Being cooked is a euphemism for the intense discomfort the training entails.

6 Neimanis, "How Do You Perceive the Imperceptible?"

7 A microphenomenological interview of an episode of Sufi turning is in Appendix II.

8 Neimanis also in Astrida Neimanis and Jennifer Mae Hamilton, "Weathering," *Feminist Review* 118, no. 1 (April 2018): 80–84, <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41305-018-0097-8>.

9 Katy Kelleher, "Verdigris: The Color of Oxidation, Statues, and Impermanence," *The Paris Review* (blog), November 24, 2020, <https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2020/11/24/verdigris-the-color-of-oxidation-statues-and-impermanence/>.

10 See Jean Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1985). The continuum can still be found in the I Ching where the six bar hexagram ascends from earth, through human social to cosmic realm.

11 Astrida Neimanis and Jennifer Mae Hamilton, "Weathering," *Feminist Review* 118, no. 1 (April 2018): 80–84, <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41305-018-0097-8>.

12 See Ken Jeremiah, *Living Buddhas: The Self-Mummified Monks of Yamagata, Japan* (North Carolina: McFarland & Co, 2010).

13 *bourdon* (noun): in music, a low-pitched stop in an organ or harmonium, typically a sixteen-foot stopped diapason. French for 'bumble-bee'.

14 Ahmed, following Merleau-Ponty, notes that perception comes from orientation, "perception is a way of facing something". The chosen orientation will open onto certain directions instead of others. In both these memories, my body takes a 'queer' orientation, it isn't vertical but cross-legged or supine. These orientations invite the meandering directions of my *queerying*. Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2006), 27.

15 The *sama* is another name for the Sufi dance of the dervishes. It means 'hearing' or 'audition'.

See Gamard, "Mevlevi Terms and Definitions."

16 Yoga is an eight-fold path. Physical yoga, called *asana*, is only one step on the eight-fold path – the third aspect, which comes after universal/social moral duty (*yama*) and moral duty to self (*niyama*). See Patanjali, *The Yoga Sutras*, trans. M.N. Dvivedi (Adyar, Madras, India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1930).

17 Roberts, *Being-Time. A Practitioner's Guide to Dogen's Shobogenzo Uji*.

18 Neimanis is referring to what critical-race theorist Christina Sharpe calls the 'total climate' (*In the Wake*, 2016), a climate whose "weather is also capitalism, globalization, austerity, commodity culture, neoliberalism, racism, misogyny, and so on." Neimanis, "How Do You Perceive the Imperceptible?" (italics in original message).

19 This is a distinction Masaki makes and from which he derives 'the human as material entity', see Masaki Iwana, *The*

Intensity of Nothingness. (Réveillon, South Normandy: La Maison du Butoh Blanc, 2011).

20 Neimanis often returns to the question of ‘who is we’, suggesting that “‘we’ is the most fraught word in the English language”. See Neimanis, *Bodies of Water. Posthuman Feminist Phenomenology*, 14.

21 An alternative equation for energy proposed by water scientist Pollack, *The Fourth Phase of Water. Beyond Solid, Liquid and Vapor*.

22 This is an expression Masaki Iwana attributed to Butoh founder, Tatsumi Hijikata. “Workshop Notes” (La Maison du Butoh Blanc, South Normandy, August 15, 2018).

23 Here I am paraphrasing Masaki Iwana’s words based on my “Workshop Notes.”

24 Eric C. Rath, “Legends, Secrets, and Authority: Hachijo Kadensho and Early Modern Noh,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 54, no. 2 (1999): 169–94, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2668341>.

25 My understanding of (Masaki’s) riddle of the detached eye, as tethered by gravity, appears consonant with the use of subsonic tones in the minimalist music of La Monte Young. Grimshaw compares Young’s use of an inaudible fundamental E flat of 0.018Hz in *The Well-Tuned Piano*, to a subsonic “gravitational pull” which acts upon the harmonics that can be heard. Jeremy Grimshaw, *Draw a Straight Line and Follow It: The Music and Mysticism of La Monte Young* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), 175.

Notes for DESIRE LINE

1 Audre Lorde, ‘Eye to Eye: Black Women, Hatred, and Anger’, in *Sister Outsider : Essays and Speeches* (Berkeley, Calif.: Crossing Press, 2007). Neimanis quotes these lines in her written response to my works, see Astrida Neimanis, ‘How Do You Perceive the Imperceptible?’, 14 November 2018..

2 Kuniichi Uno, interview by Dominique Bonarjee, 2 September 2017.

3 Pollack explains the swelling process in the body. Gerald Pollack, *The Fourth Phase of Water. Beyond Solid, Liquid and Vapor*, 2013.

4 Neimanis, ‘How Do You Perceive the Imperceptible?’

5 *Dao De Jing* (another spelling is Tao Te Ching) by Laozi in Yuk Hui, *Art and Cosmotechnics* (Minneapolis: e-flux, University of Minnesota, 2021). Duyvendak gives a different translation: “The terms that may truly be regarded as terms are other than permanent terms.” Laozi, *Tao Te Ching: The Book of the Way and Its Virtue*, trans. J.J.L. Duyvendak, Wisdom of the East (London, UK: John Murray, 1954), 17.

6 See Hui, 179.

7 Richard Wilhelm and Cary F. Baynes, *The I Ching, or Book of Changes*, Bollingen Series, XIX (Princeton University Press, 1980).

8 In Qi Gong, the body structure follows the subtle anatomies of Chinese medicine with their origins in Daoism, the dual meridians passing along both sides of the trunk of the body are

the governor channel that passes along the back and the conception channel that passes along the front. Huai-Chin Nan, *Tao & Longevity: Mind-Body Transformation*, trans. Wen Kuan Chu (York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser Inc., 1996).

9 In 'the machinic unconscious' Guattari theorizes the relation between the unconscious and the super-structures of society. Although the machinic unconscious can mirror the external structures unknowingly, its own machinic 'organicity' also makes it incomputable and therefore capable of resistance, of falling out of line, in response to dream, imagination, play. Felix Guattari, *The Machinic Unconscious: Essays in Schizoanalysis*, trans. T. Adkins (Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e), 2011).

10 These terms come from Taoist/Daoist energetic anatomy founded on the principle of *ch'i*, life energy, which translates literally as 'gas' in Chinese. See Yuk Hui, *The Question Concerning Technology in China : An Essay in Cosmotechnics*. (Falmouth : Urbanomic Media Limited, 2016).

Also Nan, *Tao & Longevity: Mind-Body Transformation*.

11 Astrida Neimanis and Jennifer Mae Hamilton, "Weathering," *Feminist Review* 118, no. 1 (April 2018): 80–84.

12 'The ten thousand things' is a Daoist term for the world that comes into being through name and form. In the Dao De Jing by Laozi in Hui, *Art and Cosmotechnics*.

13 Cosmotechnics is Hui's theory of technology that unites the human (moral order) and the (nonhuman) cosmic order. Hui, 41.

14 Wilhelm and Baynes, *The I Ching, or Book of Changes*.

space of the
nameless
wobbling

DOMINIQUE SAVITRI BONARJEE

Department of Art. Goldsmiths University of London, 2023

stand on
one foot
and dance
to the
rhythm of a
blade of grass

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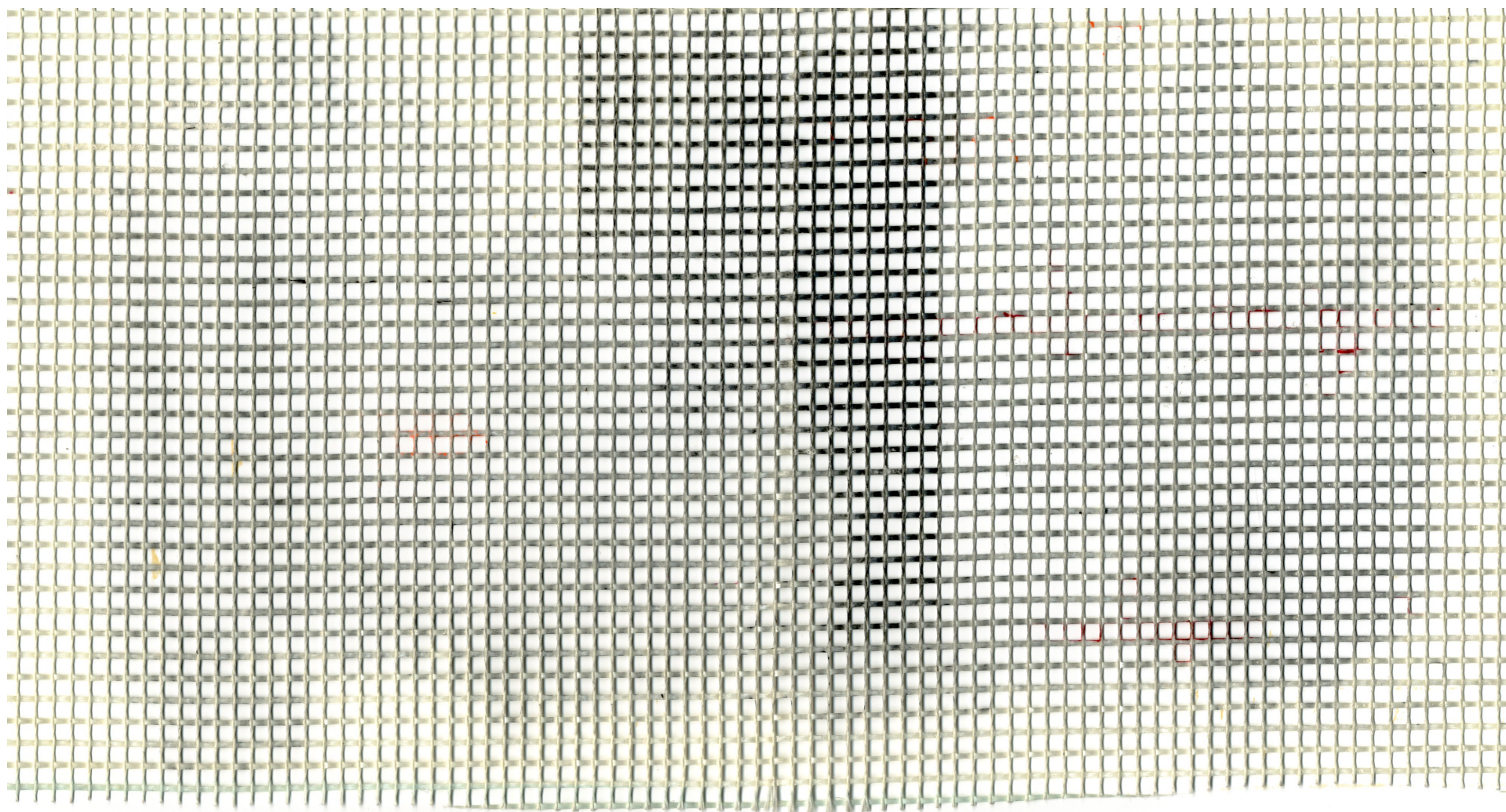


Fig. 1 Fragment of wall reinforcement mesh found in a skip, 2017.



choice

I found myself one day in the park. I looked down on the ground and there was this twig. I just started collecting these twigs.¹

~ Nick Cave

It is as a random act of collecting that artist Nick Cave remembers the moment of origin of his *Soundsuit* sculptures. Unknowingly, I did a very similar thing. Whether this practice of stick-collecting is causally related to the *Crochet Resistance Suit*, also a sort of 'soundsuit', I can't say. All I know is that just a few weeks after I'd started my doctoral studies in art, I awoke from a poignant dream. I recalled a haunting white space, whose logic seemed to incite me to explore a specific pattern: the crosshatch grid, common to architecture, 3-D software, wall reinforcement mesh. I followed the dream. I too found myself in the woods, collecting sticks – *straight* sticks. With Ivo, my partner, we spontaneously followed the dream's message. We went hunting for 'perfect mathematical objects' wanting to ascertain whether it's true that straight lines, right angles, and perfect circles don't occur in nature.

Writing of *Getting Lost by Following Materials*, Crochet Resistance Suit collaborator, Hannah Perner-Wilson writes:

I'm following most of the time ... creating and analyzing are not necessarily different processes that need to be separated. Selecting, collecting, choice, and decision are not independent actions but rather the result of situations with many other 'actors' involved. If one takes the time, one can embark on an endless unpacking of underlying motives/motivations/reasons/intuitions/tendencies.²

~

The Dream

Vision is blurred by excessive clarity. In this place everything is enveloped in a cloud of bright light that streams through the space, making its whiteness unbearably white. The light of a solar flare, but without heat. All the senses are alarmed, in this state of blind hypnosis enthralled by a cold sun. The intense brightness of this icy radiance tears through the eyeball like a blade.

No body is there. The whole scene plays out through the disembodied first-person point of view you'd find in a video game. Weight and density are felt through the attention shifts that swerve through the space, disturbing the airflow. This movement causes white plumes of cloud to disperse, and the dazzling haziness

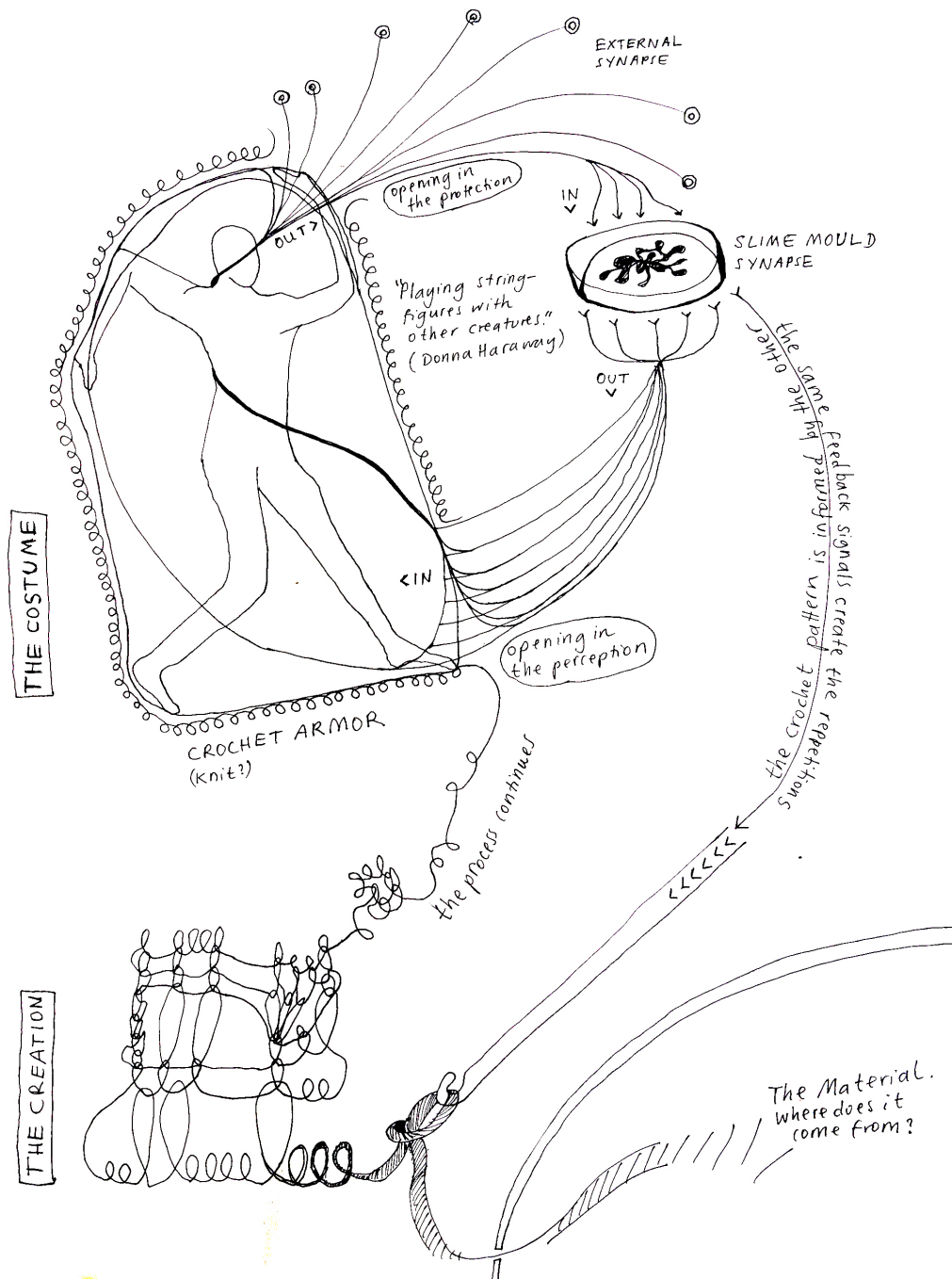


Fig. 3 Hannah Perner-Wilson, *The Crochet Resistance Suit*, design drawing, 2018.

momentarily dissolves, allowing a view of the ground. Straight rods become visible, slicing through the monochromatic fog, arranged in endless lines. The rods form a repeating crisscross pattern that extends out and disappears into what would be the limits of the room; but there is no clear edge so that the mirage of a grid expands into infinity.

(Awaken! The dream is a choice, involuted.)

A trip in Plänterwald, Berlin, 2017

Encounters are entailed in the fact that other things than oneself exist and it is possible to enter into a dialogue with them. An encounter is an interaction with externality / otherness.³

~ Lee Ufan

~

After the dream, without asking why, you and I are cycling towards an encounter with the forest. Some *thing* already is in the strong horizontal wind that extends its tongue to lick our faces until they dribble wetness all the way down our necks. Some *thing* already in that long tongue speaks of a presence surrounding the two of us in the thick rain; a presence that can be heard in the muffled squeaking of the slippery leaves that announce our entry. Every *thing* here

appears mangled in green and brown swathes of indistinct hues, so that nothing seems to have ever belonged to any singular entity. Of course, if with patience, and a committed curiosity, one of us were to crawl along the length of every creeper, we might trace each growth back to its source, out of a particular slit in the ground. The same ground on which you and I now stand rather uncertainly.

With so much lurid reality, there is nothing to see, the eye is overwhelmed. Trying to consciously fix the attention on any single detail is as futile as trying to stand still on a moving ship in the high seas. But in the mounting chaos lies a blinding joy. Enveloped by messiness, we easily devolve into a dizziness that will dissimulate our all-too-human bodies within the tangled matter. Amongst them we will discover the possibility of an intoxicated rolling motion, that rocks us until we have become lost beneath the pantheon of trees that weave a shimmering wall of salivating tentacles around us. While at the top of the towering escarpment, the hungry clouds dribble onto us with voyeuristic desire.

It occurs to me that we might be enmeshed inside an autostereogram image, whose purpose is to blur our vision so that we may perceive an image hidden inside the noise.⁴ It is with eyes dilated that you look at such an image, and you only *see* when the third eye opens, and then, suddenly out of nowhere, hovering above what looked to be just lines and dots, an unexpected sight appears so seductively proximal as to be palpable. But when you reach out, the image always dissolves into thin air. Perhaps the autostereogram of the forest is revealing to us what the Vedas have always known – that the manifest world is, *maya*, illusion.⁵

If we are part of an illusion does this mean that there is no choice? Then how did we come to be in this stormy forest? There must have been a choice in that moment of awakening – the choice to follow a dream (that might reveal ‘a future illusion’) ... or not to follow?⁶

Because we never asked to know what we are doing, illusion, the autostereogram of the forest, would have seduced us, first misleading our eyes, then grabbing the palms of our hands, stretching them out, entrancing us, until like two somnambulists we found ourselves dreaming that we had become as green as the grasses once again, and our mouths could open to sing and our tongues tasted the rain’s nectar, as it saturated our bodies?

We will drink her body to embody our conviction. We will open ourselves in the belief (the hope) that by imbibing her waters we might forget the mud and the dirt – the extraction and destruction of the world – if only we merged with her. In that instant we believed the dream had a message for us, without even knowing what it is.

Perhaps we *want* to *believe* because collecting sticks gives us time: conviction grows from duration. We put our faith in the exuviae of the forest, we trusted them to become divining rods that would point a way out of the white room and the straight grid that smothers life with its eerie logic. The sticks, they would lead us towards the infinite.

~

Seeking bends bodies to its shape, like this:

Lower your head in a deep bow. Hands will immediately shift forwards, moving away from the sides of your body, to reach out and touch in a gesture that remembers the very first ‘liberation of



Fig. 4 *Spanda ergo sum*, still, 2022.

the hands', free to forage, to fabricate, to feel. Your ribs, in a parallel orientation to the ground, are transfixed. The entire surface of your epidermis scans the soil with a hypnotic roving rhythm. You are a quadrumanous, discovering your floral consciousness: greenness fills your palms, your sensory field unfolds like a flower, blooming, touching the vast amplitude of vision, smell, taste and sound, swallowing fields of sensuous granularity with your attention.

~

But we didn't think these things *then*. We were not having these thoughts in those moments. All we wanted was to find sticks. Our activity was animated by the dream's curious riddle which followed us as we parsed the forest floor. The multitudes positioned there urged us to come closer, to sift through the night's soggy fungi, they enticed us to scratch around in the mould that clings to the dark underside of the bark of fallen branches. Our fingers touched it all, the rotting matter and the decay charging our hands with the filthy intimacy that "requires some kind of reciprocity between discrete entities, proximity (actual or felt), and trust."⁷ And our body's labour of curiosity seduced us at the visceral level of truth; perhaps the kind of 'sensory truth' said to perpetuate illusions? Yet we must have been convinced – *convicted* – because we never once wondered what we were doing. Our continuous collecting, set the rhythm: we became entrained to our bodies' desire to collect, just to collect, to keep collecting.*

~

* [Link to 0-1 / Hypertime](#)

It can't have just been conviction though, there was a choice. *We made a choice*, a purely abstract one: the sticks we collect *must be straight*, no curves were allowed. Straight because of the logic of the dream which we chose to follow through a minor act of interpretation. And this interpretation became a judgement capable of transforming time: turning collecting into habit, into addiction, and rapture even.⁸ And eventually it was the labour of collecting that imposed its rhythm on (our experience of) time. *Time flowed timelessly*: only resurfacing when we identified a truly 'straight stick' and it felt like a bell being struck because we could hear the pounding of our hearts, triumphant at adding a stick to our collection. We were submerged our senses harnessed to this work, until we were no longer looking for sticks, it seemed 'the sticks availed themselves to our seeking', floating in the foreground, while the background receded from our sight.⁹

You and I have now entered the autostereogram. The illusion will become complete when we no longer feel that we are 'making a choice' but instead that we are simply following the (sticks') determination to be chosen, to be collected, to be extracted from the forest, having become part of a self-referential illusion, that in time, will become a (rational) logic, and then, we will convince ourselves that it must be the desire of the world, because we are now caught in it. But is it really? Or was it a dream that created a conviction, and then a belief, and through it, we found ourselves in a 'world of straight sticks', and now we inhabit a reality that has forgotten all about the curvilinear matter hidden in the woods, beneath the cloak of oblivion.



Photo: Chaong-Wen Ting

Fig. 5 *Love is in the Wireframe*, installation detail, 2021.

Sticks are lying there in plain sight, let them slice through your attention, and call you back to earth. You will find time *living* among the trees.

CODA

It was only much later that day that we learned it, as we emerged from the woods. Warnings and messages filled our devices. While we'd been in the forest, a state of emergency had been declared in Berlin. Storm Herwart was crashing through the region and passing directly over the forest. It was the continuation of another year of freak weather patterns: the warmest month on record, the second cyclone that month, trains at a standstill, rivers breaking their banks, historical buildings destroyed. A body was found: a woman had drowned in the sea during the storm's passing. But didn't we already know all this?

∞



Fig. 6.1 *AO (is the colour of a blue-green screen), still, 2021.*

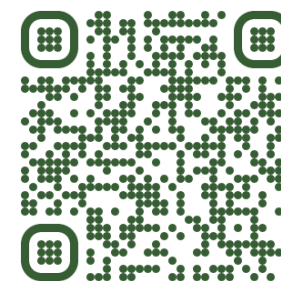


Fig. 6.2 *AO (is the colour of a blue-green screen),
HD video & sound, 8:59, 2021.*

ENTERTAINMENT

Music. — The inspiring and stimulating effect of music has been recognized from ancient times, as is shown by the military band, the fife and drum corps, the bagpipe of the Scotchman, down to the band that rushes the athlete around the track or across the field.

The singing of gangs at certain kinds of work, the rhythmic orders that a leader of a gang shouts to his men, and the grunting in unison of the hand drillers, show the unifying as well as the motion-stimulating effect of music and rhythm.

That some of the trades can have their motions affected in time and speed by music, to a point that will materially affect the size of their outputs, is a recognized fact.

Some of the silent trades have used phonography and musical instruments to entertain the men while they were working. It was found it paid the employer to furnish stimulating records at his own expense, so that the workmen would make more and quicker motions, rather than to permit the employees to furnish phonographic records at random at their own expense.

Reading. — Reading as a stimulus to output has been used with excellent results among the cigar makers.

It is also interesting to read in an article on "Three Months in Peonage" in the March, 1910, issue of the *American Magazine*, that story-telling may produce the same good results.

"The four packers under me," says the writer, a German white, who was working with peons at packing tobacco in Mexico, 'knew no greater joy than to listen to a fairy tale with the regulation princess and dragon, and if I could but tell them one, or one of their number did so, the work went twice as fast, and they were happy."

The excellent and direct effects of entertainment upon health, fatigue, etc., are subjects for the scientist to study and the planning department and the welfare worker to apply. The effects of entertainment upon output should be studied by the student of motion economy. This variable alone furnishes a vast field for investigation.

HEATING, COOLING, VENTILATING

Heating, cooling, ventilating, and humidizing are closely allied, because all can be done with one and the same apparatus, and all greatly increase the workman's comfort, health, and possible number of motions.

Maintaining desired temperature in summer as well as winter by forcing into workrooms air that has been passed over heating or refrigerating coils has a great effect on the workman. Many factories, such as chocolate factories, have found that cooling the air for better results to the manufacturing process also enables the workers to produce more output — an output quite out of proportion to the cost of providing the air.

In many trades requiring great alertness and physical strength the proper heating and ventilating will allow

free time

... 'the time of the body', a little unbelievable, a little non-human, not so much animal but rather material, mineral, vegetal.

~ Kuniichi Uno¹

What do we know about free time?

Between November 2017 to May 2018, I ran a series of dance and movement research workshops at Theaterhaus Mitte in Berlin. The intention was to explore what 'free time' means for Berlin's rapidly burgeoning working class of 'freelancers' – I being one of them. My co-explorers were friends and acquaintances who joined me for one or more sessions.



Fig. 8 *And so it begins*, gel prop & steel, 460 x 80 mm, 2021.

The workshops were based on loose instructions I'd prepared. They changed and evolved from one session to the next. I made audio recordings of the communal inquiries and dialogues. In this text I have fictionalized these conversations, by interweaving the different voices and jumbling the timeline of the sessions.²

In March 2018, this research received the Invention Creativity and Experience award from Goldsmiths University. I worked with Jamie Forth, a researcher in the Computing Department, and we began integrating commercial wearable technology into the research:

Electromyograms: the MYO armband, a gesture recognition device often used commercially for PowerPoint presentations.

Electroencephalograms (EEG), specifically the MUSE headband, aimed at the meditation and 'mindfulness' market.

Fitbit wristbands, used for tracking fitness, calorie intake and other biofeedback markers

The Spire Stone breath monitor, a sensor worn on the chest that warns the wearer of shallow breathing and tension.

Could the data collected by these sensors help us to measure 'free time'?

~

Data researcher: Jamie Forth

Co-researchers (participants): Juliette Savin, Slavis Lew Poczebutas, Diego Gisbert Llorens, Ivo Juriaan Mensch, Natsuko Takeda, Lukas Hermann, Lisa Baumann, Gai Hazwi

Photography: Arata Mori

Funding: Invention Creativity and Experience Award, Goldsmiths University, 2018.

The research has been approved by the Departmental Research Ethics Committee (2020).

A set of instructions to explore free time:

STILLNESS/'THE PATIENCE OF NOT STARTING':³

Choose a space to be. Stand, sit, or lie down, as you wish. Someone else sets a timer for an undisclosed period of time. Hold your position until the bell sounds.

(Use the same period for all exercises except the final one.)

THREE POSITIONS:

Choose three positions and move from one to the other, in clean succession making your own choice of timing between them; when you get to the final position, hold it until the bell sounds.

CONTINUITY:

With the same three positions as before, move from one position to the next, through a continuous movement that lasts the entire period. If you arrive at the final position before the bell, maintain some small movement until it sounds.

FREE MOVEMENT: Introduction to *katsugen undo*, a Japanese form of 'spontaneous movement' exercise for exploring improvisation without purpose or goal.⁴

THREE WORDS: Each person writes three words they associate with free time and sticks them on the wall. Choose three words from the wall, holding them in your mind's eye as you move. Observe the effect of the words. Do they impact your movement?

OPEN-ENDED TIME: Move in the space between three chosen positions and with the movement quality of 'continuity'. You decide the length of time.

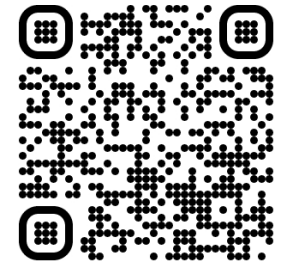


Fig. 9 *A Lexicon for Free Time*, SD video , 11:28, 2018

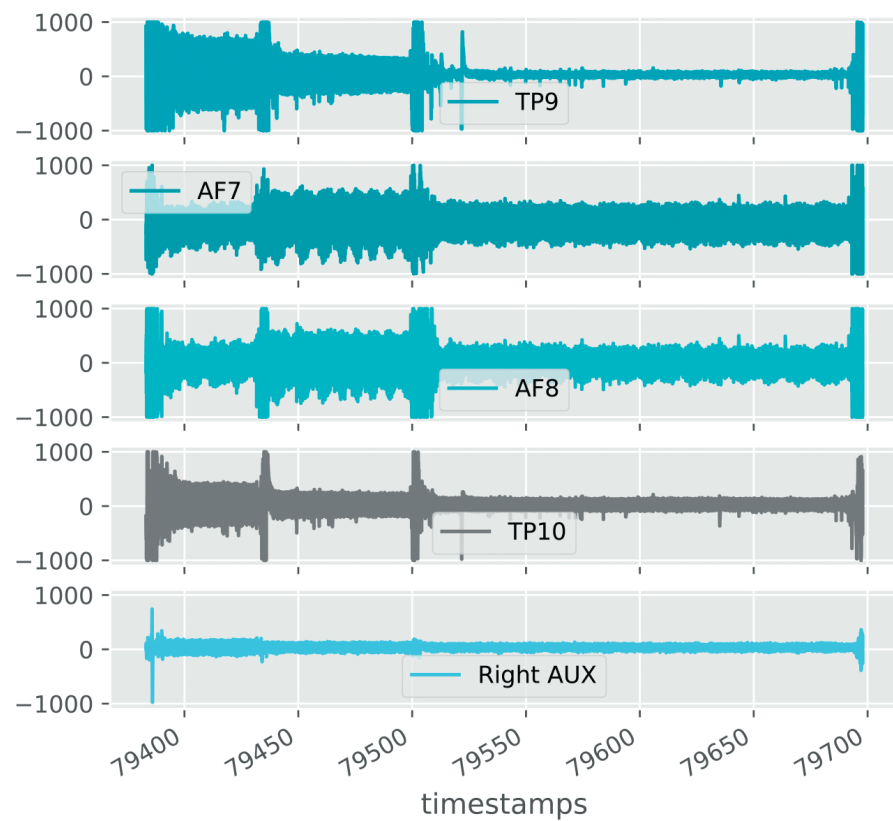


Fig.10.1 D.S. Bonarjee & J. Forth, *Free Time Practice: THREE POSITIONS*, data charts from MUSE EEG readings, 2018.

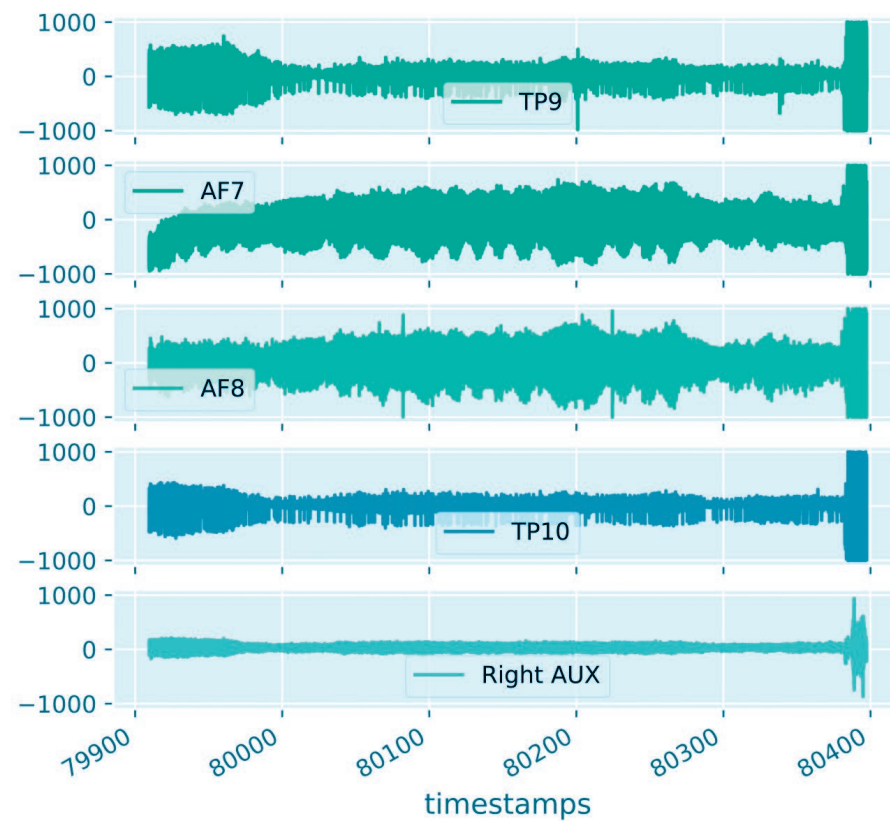


Fig.10.2 D.S. Bonarjee & J. Forth, *Free Time Practice: CONTINUITY*, data charts from MUSE EEG readings, 2018.

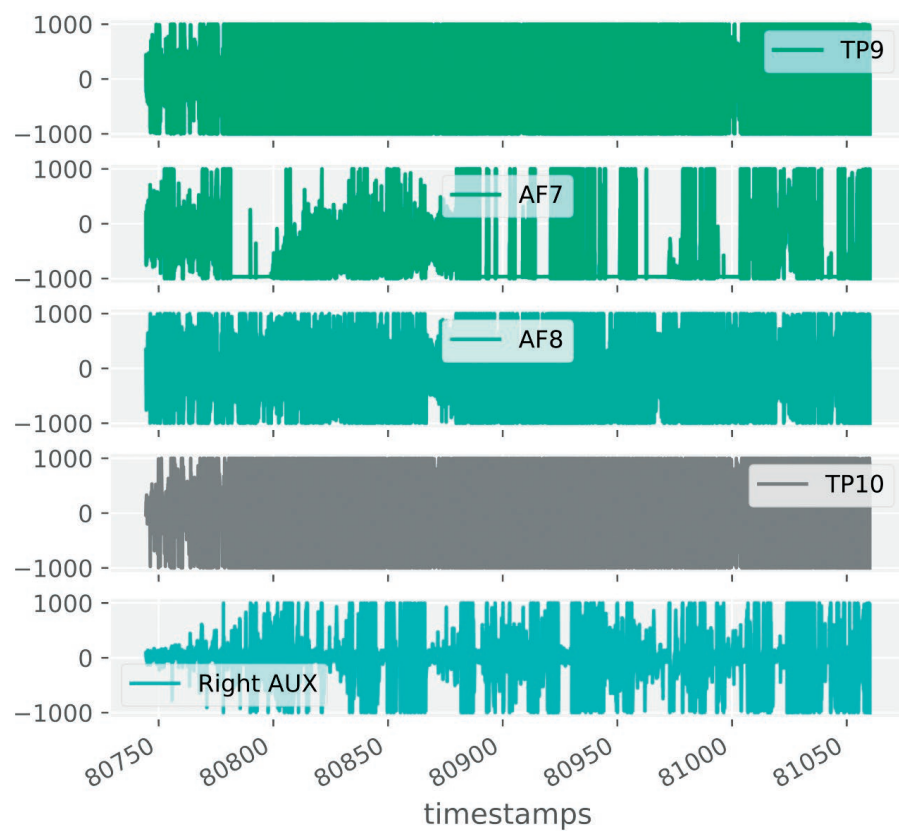


Fig.10.3 D.S. Bonarjee & J. Forth, *Free Time Practice: FREE MOVEMENT*, data charts from MUSE EEG readings, 2018.

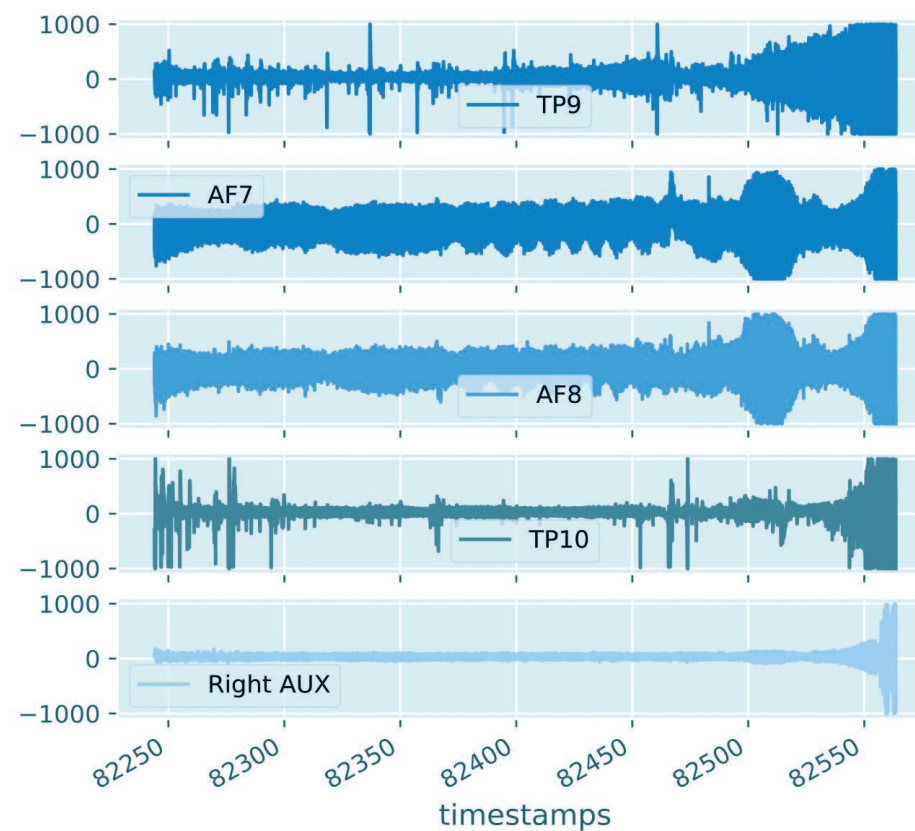


Fig.10.4 D.S. Bonarjee & J. Forth, *Free Time Practice: COLLAPSE*, data charts from MUSE EEG readings, 2018.

And so, it begins

Did it begin in the place where thirteen clocks have all stopped, but continue to hang mutely, each face bearing the trace of a specific moment in time, so utterly negligible, that nobody would remember it? Still, they adorn the wall, representations of history, lost in their own eternal instant of suspension, hands in rigor mortis, frozen in that long-lost second that marked each clock's mechanical failure.

The stopped clocks adorn the entrance foyer of the Funkhaus, a large sprawl of buildings on the east side of Berlin, formerly the broadcasting headquarters of the GDR (German Democratic Republic). The clocks used to 'listen' to visitors. Each face concealed a spying device planted there by the Stasi, the state secret police. Those secrets are still encrusted in the walls, history imbricated inside the architecture. Here lurk stories of a time when bodies could only dream of being 'free'.

Four floors above the clocks, the heavy wooden panels of the room feel claustrophobic. The Soviet-era monolithic architecture seems to command bodies through its overbearing materiality even when there's nothing else in the room, no furniture, no images, no distractions. The only respite from the oppressive dark walls are large windows on the far wall which frame the to and fro of swaying trees against the sky – 'a fourth wall'. This was the studio I used to rent with a few other dancers I'd met at Masaki Iwana's workshops. It may have been here, in the stagnant grey air, that a question began to form.

I can still picture the day I was standing in that studio, facing the wooden panels, *them* watching *me*. It was as if I was waiting,

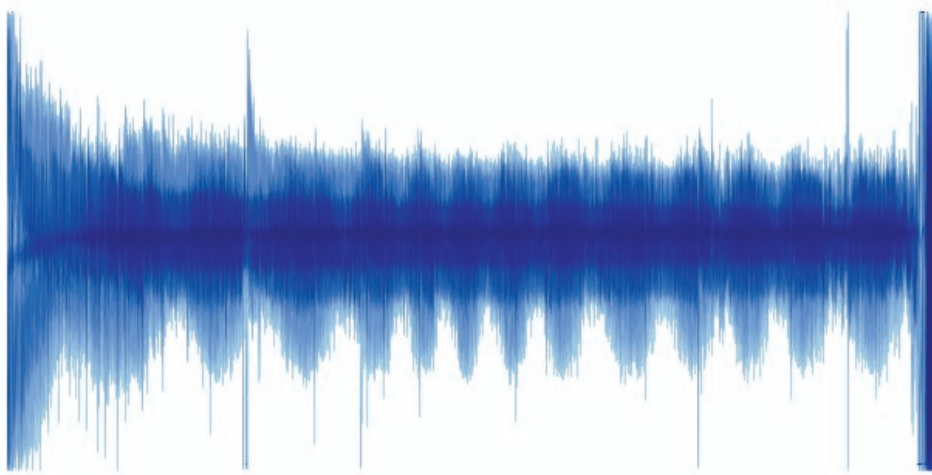


Fig. 11 D.S. Bonarjee & J. Forth, *The Patience of Not Starting*, data graph, 2018.

contemplating something, in a state of blank catatonia. I had come there to dance. But I couldn't start. I found no inspiration. I found time passing as my thoughts interrogated me about my artistic credentials, about the right I had to be here when I seemed unable to even begin to dance. The subject of the rent came up, and how much I was paying for this place, and shouldn't I be doing something else, more pressing, more remunerative, more productive. And time was passing. My body was waiting for a kind of liberation that moves things. But nothing was moving.

~

Suddenly time falters.

First the head spins, overcome with a slight vertigo. It is nothing; but then the spinning goes wild, the ears start to ring, the earth gives way and disappears, one sinks back, goes away ... *Where* does one go?⁵

~Catherine Clément

~

We were in another room. Here there is also a fourth wall of swaying trees, but without the oppressive 'perlocutionary' architecture of the Funkhaus: more emptiness, more space to breathe. In this bare studio we gather, a small group of us. I have an inquiry:

What do *we* want when we *say* we want more time?

What do we know about the time we think of as *free*?

What *do* we know about free time?



Photo: Arata Mori

Fig. 12.1 "What do we know about Free Time?",
documentation from a workshop, Berlin, 2018.



Photo: Arata Mori

Fig. 12.2 "What do we know about Free Time?", 2018.

We begin. An answer arises: "The first word that comes to my mind is *curiosity*? It's when, I sense an *other* body, or something outside 'me.'" Someone else says: "Sometimes I just feel happy. Still, I want to go against my natural impulse to move – to *do* something. Then I wonder what is *free*? I find I'm always thinking, how should my body *be*?" Another response: "I think, in general, in society, you're always supposed to *do* something, or you're supposed to *feel* something, and you have to strip that off ... The self-talk, I get it *all the time*."

Do we *know* what or who makes a body move? Do we know why a body moves? Do we know how this movement is initiated? How do we know *this* body?

So now I ask: "Do you *want* free time?"

This query generates more questions. If you were to ask your body, about free time, would you immediately "come into some sort of fascination with your own body?" Do these questions awaken a shoulder, the neck, the belly, the soles of the feet and "all these silent parts that want to be felt", even just by *feeling* your attention on them? Is *free* happening in the moment of "waking up to these sensations?" Or is free the moment of not noticing that you are made of all these moving parts at all? Is transparency, the body's own forgetting of itself in doing? Or is transparency about getting under the skin to *see* and glean some facts? Is freedom, awareness or forgetting?⁶

~

I propose that you wonder about this through some 'extracurricular movements', the ones you never really do in daily life because they

have no particular use. Just standing up and playing with your balance for example. Let yourself wobble a little ...

Is it that straight away there's the feeling of your toes "kind of gripping"? Do you feel it? Does the gripping immediately make you think of time? But what kind of time? Knowing 'what kind of time' is a way of wondering whether the movements of bodies can change (the experience of) time.

I remember that we all agreed that at the start, in the STILLNESS task, there was an awareness of gripping, and this made us think of time. Why would gripping your feet make you think of time? Does prolonged stillness reveal a tempo that someone described as "feeling out of balance"?

Imagine the STILLNESS exercise as one of 'standing still like a point' (what is called one-pointedness in Vedic meditation practice – *ekagrata*).⁷ Stillness is what I learned from Yoshito Ohno in a practice he called *The Patience of Not Starting*.⁸ Is this patience the total gathering of the self that precedes starting – making a decision, a choice? How long should patience go on for?

In voicing our common awareness of the instability of waiting, a common theme emerges, flight. He says: "It reminds me of the feeling of being on a flight, waiting for the end and wondering: 'Where am I? How much time do I have left? Sometimes I'm surprised. Sometimes I'm really disappointed to have another two hours. *What?* I thought I was about to land!" Someone else is also thinking of the kind of time that might be free time because nothing happens. She explains: "In my free time I read, I think ... When was the last time I was bored? On a plane for twelve hours without a book ... On a long journey."

Then we agreed that this kind of time – being still for an unknown interval of time in STILLNESS (nurturing the *Patience of Not Starting*) – is similar to flight time: it gives us time to think of time. What do we know about this kind of time, is it boredom, is it 'time-freedom'?

We talked about freedom. One kind of freedom might be to not do anything. And we decided to spend some time *not doing anything*. We 'did nothing' by doing some unprescribed activities – FREE MOVEMENT - meaning whatever we felt like doing for an interval of time. What did we want (to do) when we indulged in aimless movement and didn't have to *do* anything in particular?

"The freedom ...?" He was addressing us all, but really he was quizzing himself. He continued thinking out loud: "Yes, now I've got total freedom to do whatever I want. But that's not freedom." And then other voices joined in: "I'm thinking, I'm not there yet: *I need to get there*, because otherwise this is not going to *happen*. And wanting to have that sort of trance-like 'switch off' when your brain switches off ... if that's ever possible." And another was musing: "*I want it to happen ... you know this trance moment*. And then, oh... I'm going too fast!"

"Yes exactly" another person quickly catches his drift, "I'm thinking I've got *much more time*. But then suddenly ... *over*. It's all over!"

And the other just goes on adding dreamily: "I was feeling that kind of goosebump feeling." He looks around: "Everybody has it I guess, when your body is releasing something, your body is almost craving for that release. And many times, I don't even have to think,

what am I going to do now? ... I'm following, following impulses, coming out, naturally." And then his expression drops. Looking each one of us in the eyes, he blurts out: "Where can I get this drug?!" And then he throws his head back laughing, and an instant later he looks at us earnestly: 'Knowing it's for *free*, it's amazing! Seriously, I'm not joking. It releases so many endorphins, unbelievable ...' And everyone agrees. And after this moment of exhilaration, someone asks: "What was the question again?"

Is that *freedom*?

"Looking for balance in a state of complete freedom that actually feels like some sort of chaos? Looking for 'me' when chaos makes me not be 'me' anymore? Could it be that the real freedom is having the chance to find a balance *between* doing something or not doing anything?"

We begin again from STILLNESS, one-pointedness. Something has begun to thaw. From just standing and waiting, it feels as though 'boredom' has dissipated with a sudden snap of alertness. With it comes a recognition of disquietude: the gripping and grasping of feet and of minds that arises in those interstices between stillness and movement. The impending clarity also feels like a foreboding of the intimacy that a stretch of time can instil in bodies suspended in stillness, together.

At this point, something as simple as a slight movement of the head could lead to a tumble, off the edge of reason. Try cocking your head,

remove its transparent envelope, feel its pull. Your skull and all its contents, weighing approximately five kilos, can move gravity. Try following the weight of your head through the portal. You might fall in and unexpectedly encounter the dimension of geometrical objects, the *perfect* parabola, Galileo's discovery which helped Newton formulate the law of gravity.¹⁰ It makes me wonder about the parabolic trajectories of people and planet: is the attraction to these perfect curves a fatal one?

~

To get to *know* gravity, you too would have to wait, be patient, don't start, not yet. You too would have to stand there just playing with your balance. And waiting for gravity might feel endless, like an eternal sentence.

~

It struck him with the clear sound emitted by 'a pebble hitting a bamboo'.¹¹ "We might be here for days? It's like being a prisoner. And if you were a prisoner in a cell, you would not be *free*! In 'freedom's prison' – just standing still for who knows how long – if I'm constantly thinking about how my body should *be*, am I still waiting to be *free*? Am I waiting to be *more* free? What if at the end of that waiting to be freed, I still didn't know what freedom was!"

I replied with a further inquiry: "How about if in 'freedom's prison', time is paradoxical: *time is freed by (me) not being free*?" And he chose to interpret this paradox by embodying it: "I'm just going to allow this to happen and *be* here. I'm just going to leave the body



Photo: Arata Mori

Fig. 12.3 "What do we know about Free Time?", 2018.

alone. Just let it be: this could be 'time-less' – time could disappear? Like this, I could allow this time to last *forever*."

We began to think of speed in the sense of biomechanics: do the hands and feet move *fast or slow*? But 'fast or slow' compared to what, who? We couldn't figure that out. Just in *wanting* to move – in the intention – there is already an assumption of a particular speed before the movement even starts. Is 'human dynamic' just an unconscious bias that introjects every urge to move? Can you feel your speed? Is it possible to become aware of it? Can you *know*, as in (re)cognize, your habitual dynamics once you become aware that they lurk inside your every gesture? Is it our hands that set the tempo of our gestural habits? Because our hands were the first to be 'liberated' from scratching at the earth, and they are the ones that now set the speed through their desire to move ... sometimes incessantly? Is that how we learned to 'work', as a sort of fidgeting dialogue with things? (What about switching to a lover's caress that communes with matter?)*

What is fast or slow, I still would like to know. Does desire have a speed? How does a thing move by *wanting*? Do you reach out because you *know* you want to scratch your foot? How do you become aware, as in recognize the need to stretch suddenly? Is it that you're in a position and then you get out of it because it becomes painful? Do the transmissions that course along the neural pathways that weave body to brain, resemble a kind of morse code punctuated by pangs of pain, anxiety, fear, and pleasure? And how does will interfere to drive or direct this wanting? Is intention, will's messenger? Is intuition my gut telling me something? That there is another kind of hunger.

* [Link to 0 - 1 | Hypertime](#)

In the empty space of the studio, we were asking all kinds of chaotic questions, about our bodies, and our hands, and how movement begins, and will, intention, desire, intuition. All our questions, flowed into our bodies, opening fleshy perspectives that shifted with the dancing. We got lost sometimes in our inquiries and at some moments we could cut off, and withdraw, drop within ourselves, and become quiet by tuning in to something minimal happening inside, and feel the joys of our own heaviness and let our weight melt into the ground. And it's in those moments that it felt as if we wondered: Is 'free time' just freedom from gravity? An insight began to resonate for us that chimes with an existing field of research. 'Dizziness researchers', Ruth Anderwald, Leonhard Grond and Karoline Feyertag, concur that, "a different thinking will allow for a different rationality."¹²

A wobble

Can you dance a 'somewhat' free movement?

Imagine it as a sort of Brownian jiggling. A Brownian dance is when a solute appears to *dance* in a solvent producing a random motion with no apparent cause. It was the botanist, Robert Brown (1827), who first reported witnessing pollen 'dancing' in water. At the time no one knew how this dance came about: it didn't seem to depend on any energetic input. Kinetic movement without energy input would violate the first law of thermodynamics because it would imply that the energy that moves the particles was free and came from nowhere. In 1905 Einstein provided an explanation: the water molecules were bumping into the pollen grains and causing the impression of a 'dance'.¹³

~

In Tantric philosophy the creative pulsation of *spanda* is a 'somewhat of movement' that "consists in the fact that even the immovable appears 'as if moving'."¹⁴ And what if the dance of pollen really did come from freeing energy so that the immovable moves? Wobbles?

~

At the edge of two colours, two entities, right there at the hair's breadth boundary, there is the most delicate of movements. A vibration – an aura – is emitted by a single point against a plain background, a mark on a blank page, a single word on a bright screen. Do you notice the pulsation at the edges? The zone of contrast is never an absolute clear line, the eye perceives a trembling. At the edge, "where the border is moving, fluid" is where dance happens.¹⁵



Fig. 12.4 "What do we know about Free Time?", 2018.

Water scientist, Gerald Pollack, has suggested another hypothesis for the *free* improvisations of pollen in water.¹⁶ Water enters its fourth phase when placed in contact with a hydrophilic (water-loving) membrane, a cell wall for example. In this liquid crystal phase, water becomes viscous and energized. An 'exclusion zone' builds at the very edge of the membrane. This molecular array makes the water thicken because its offset honeycomb structure slows down the free movement of particles. The separation of polarities (negative in the exclusion zone and positive beyond it) caused by the ordering of particles, creates energy; water becomes a battery, generating electricity and the possibility of another equation: $E=H_2O$.¹⁷

If water's fourth phase did explain the dance of pollen, it would mean that the water surrounding the pollen is itself being *moved* by ambient forces linked to (electrical) charge; because charge is vastly distributed beyond the limits of the container, and all the surrounding elements and entities hold either a negative or positive charge, and therefore some form of energy. Earth has a negative charge while air a positive one. Pollack has proved that the charge that builds in water's crystalline structure (the fourth phase) is sustained by ambient radiant (solar) energy.¹⁸ Our own human bodies also participate in these energetic principles, being primarily water bodies. Does 'the immovable move' in our waters? Do ambient energy asymmetries also gather at the membranes of our skin and cells, charging the zone of edge, inducing dances beyond the container of 'self'?

~

The dancer, Ko Murobushi, called it 'cockroach'. The dance of 'cockroach shock', when 'I' don't decide to move, instead I respond to a heightened charge of suddenly noticing the 'other'. Acknowledging this living entity makes 'me' aware of my edge: "looking for the feeling of 'edge of body' through the impossibility of the movement *and* the possibility of the movement ..."¹⁹ Dances of wobbling come from feeling an other – *others* – from sensing the wafer-thin edges between us, listening to all of life bristling with rapturous giddiness: "after that moment how do things change?"²⁰

A Green-Coloured Dance²¹

Yves Citton writes of Edgar Allen Poe's *A Descent into the Maelström* (1841):

The tale's narrator must learn to reconfigure his senses and intellect in order to surf on the vertical wall formed by the *maelström*. His attention must observe and compute how the various shapes of falling objects manage to maintain a course as close as possible to horizontal circles. His choreographic challenge is to attend to a horizontal fall.²²

After that day when I was stuck in a catatonic state in my Funkhaus studio, I wondered how I might allow my body to wobble? On 1 January 2018, I began to discover a dance called Liquidity. I made myself a promise:

‘Every day at any chosen time I will stop all activity. I will start from standing like a tree, in the *wu ch’i* position of Qi Gong.²³ I will visualize the space surrounding my body becoming slowly filled with liquid. Based on this visualization, I will allow any changes to my physical and psychic consciousness to emerge.’*

Liquidity is the challenge of a horizontal fall, of going to the very edge, and there to learn how to *dérive* in the “ecocidal maelstrom”.²⁴

~

Back with our group, we were dancing the spontaneous FREE MOVEMENT task. I was caught in a corner, in the blinding light spilling through the large windows and reverberating off the white dance floor. Disorientated by the glare, I closed my eyes. Now the sunlight turned into red squiggly patterns like quivering flames behind my eyelids, and the rhythm of these hallucinations were making me wobble with an inebriated quality of looseness, just like a ‘drunken sailor’.²⁵ I could feel my head trying ‘to wake me up’ like the exhausted commuters I would often notice in Tokyo on the city subways, their heads always bobbing in this way, too close to a certain invisible edge.

All of us were discovering our ‘dances of liberation’ between the flickering shadows of the trees on the floor. We were free improvising with ways of surfing – ‘horizontal falling’ – by paying attention to our heels, spreading out the soles of our feet, softening our stance, to turn the floor liquid.

* [Link to LIQUIDITY~Contract](#)



Fig. 13 *The Three Seductions of Consciousness: "The Utopia Frequency"*, still, 2021.

Try it. Stand up, loosen your knees, spread out your feet. You may find that your sole will soften too. Taste the softening: wait, by wobbling with the ‘patience of not starting’. You may discover very quickly that your feet, your legs, all the way up to your hips, all is very stable, determined to stay upright; not moving at all. And upwards to the neck, up to the crown of the head, you may feel nothing, no movement at all, because you are *too stable*. And were you to let go just a little, it may feel like the onset of nausea, and the more you allow yourself to be moved, the more the wave of vertigo grows, slowly engulfing you.

Open your mouth, slacken your jaw: *lick it!*^{*}

Lick the giddiness with the tongue of your whole body: drink it. Let your need for stability dissolve into your sticky saliva, gulp it down, let it course into your spinal fluid, so that cranium and contents, shoulders, arms, hands, everything above the solar plexus, free dives into the darkness of your unknown seas. Here, you will find a hallucination. A green haze is pulsing to the rhythm of your heart, scattering molecules that permeate your lungs, and disperse beyond you, carried by your breath. The green bubbles are animating the desire of your hands and fingers, they reach, imperceptibly, towards the trees, trembling like leaves moved by the wind.

A green-coloured dance is happening’ when ‘I’ can’t control ‘my’ hands because the weight of ‘my’ head is no longer the centre of gravity. A green-coloured dance is happening when my soft knees

* [Link to COLLAPSE / Who am I?](#)

start to pour lightness into every joint, and then everything begins to feel light and the emptiness inside your body is moving you ... you can be moved by ‘doing nothing’ – this is *wuwei*.²⁶

A green-coloured dance is tumbling here and there as your legs allow instability.

A green-coloured dance is facing the fear of falling with sensuous curiosity.

A green-coloured dance thickens time by orbiting the heart centre.

A green-coloured dance pulses to the unstruck sound, ‘IAM, IAM, IAM’.²⁷

~

Suspended there, we wanted to, we were *craving* to understand this moment. With eyes closed, we were voicing strange things:

“Is it to recalibrate my heart, that I move my arm up, seeking to be understood? But then it takes me away into the mind. I realize I’m manipulating it.”

“My body is actually kind of stuck in emotions. Is it a wish for support? Wanting to erect myself again, and at the same time also really *wanting* to give in?”

“I feel heavy; it’s very nice.”

“I feel like there’s a butterfly between my shoulder blades; I’m sure of it.”

Not wanting to break the spell, I say: “Whatever you’re *thinking* right now, suggest to your *self*: let go of all tension. Intimate it to your skeleton as an offer to melt. What will your bones do with this suggestion?”

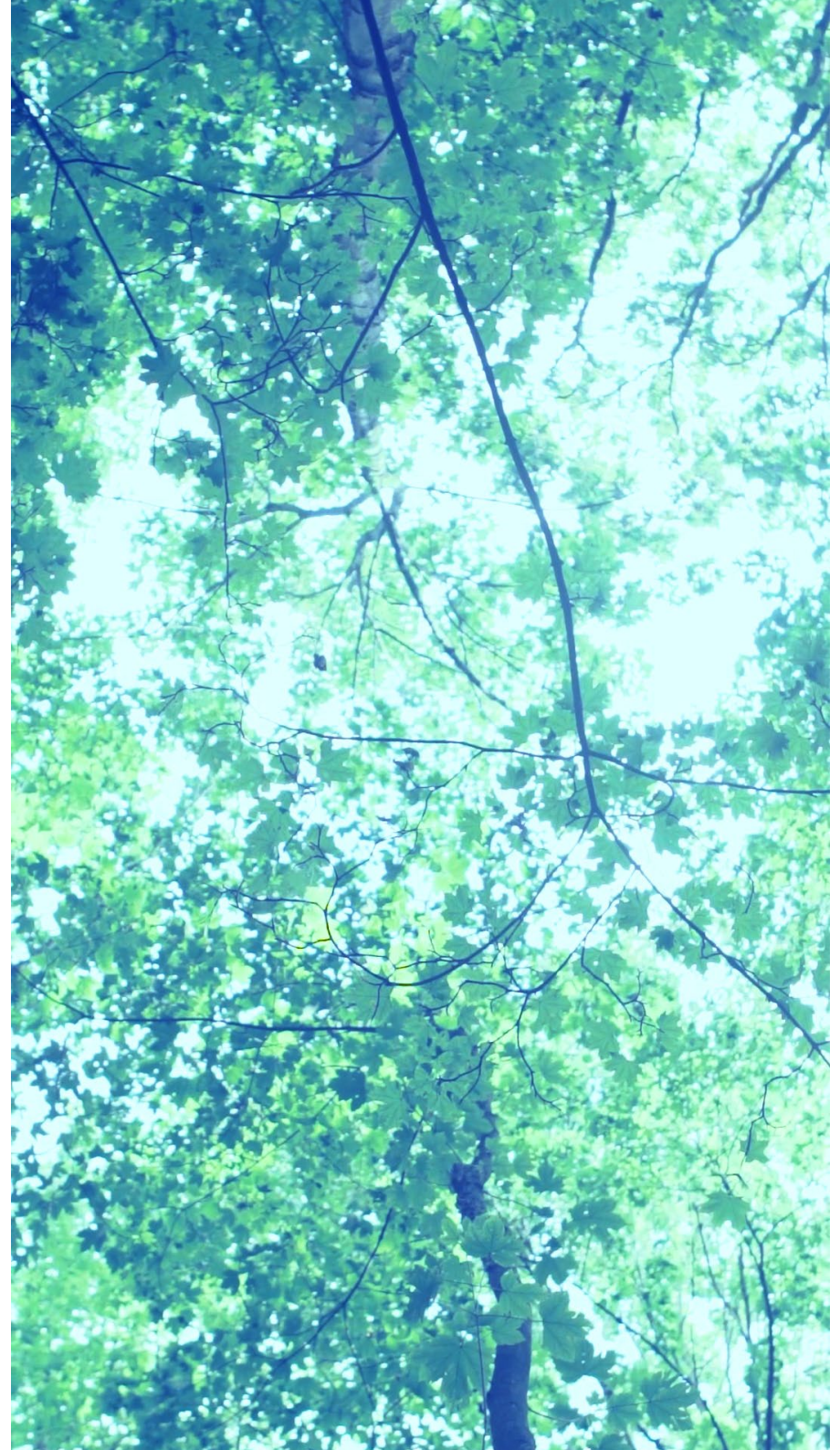
Held together by the pleasure of swaying, we breathed through every pore: were we *knowing* free time? Someone was recalling a memory of a sound; if you live in a wooden house, sometimes you would hear it, the unpredictable cracking that comes when the temperature changes. And we knew it when someone whispered: “We are *all* glaciers now!”

~

Although I collected a vast amount of data from these movement exploration sessions (see Figs. 10 & 11), attempts to measure 'free time' with the technology used, remain inconclusive. I knew this already. But spending time asking 'unanswerable' questions in the company of others, may well generate the convivial dreaming that *is* free time.

∞

Fig. 14 *AO (is the colour of a blue-green screen)*, still, 2020.



NOTES TO CHOICE

1 Smithsonian American Art Museum, “Meet The Artist: Nick Cave on ‘Soundsuit,’” January 9, 2018, video, 4:53, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uDUa1K7fJGk>. Cave’s *Soundsuits* began in the aftermath of the death of Rodney King in 1991, a victim of police brutality. Cave has made over 500 *Soundsuits* since then. A selection of them were shown at the exhibition *In the Black Fantastic*, Hayward Gallery, London, June 29 to September 18, 2022, Exhibition.

2 Hannah Perner-Wilson in Hannah Perner-Wilson and David Cole, “Getting Lost and Unlearning Certainty Material Encounters in an Electronic Craft Practice,” in *The Critical Makers Reader: (Un)Learning Technology* (Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2019), 110, <https://pure.hva.nl/ws/portalfiles/portal/6354445/CriticalMakersReader.pdf>.

3 Lee Ufan, *The Art of Encounter* (London: Lisson and Serpentine Galleries Publication, 2018), 82.

4 Autostereograms are also called ‘magic eye’ images. They are used in certain scientific modelling applications and

also to render three-dimensional perspective in crystallographic structures in molecular biology. For a detailed explanation of how autostereograms work in scientific research see Andrzej Katrusiak, "Crystallographic Autostereograms," *Journal of Molecular Graphics & Modelling* 19, no. No. 3 (2001): 363-67. and their performance for in-depth perception is similar or even more advantageous than of stereopairs. The autostereograms offer a convenient means for realistic insight into crystal structures without excessive size reduction of their drawings, as required when preparing stereopairs; thus structures either as simple as elements or as complex as proteins can be illustrated in enhanced resolution. The mathematical background and guidelines for preparing crystallographic autostereograms are described. © 2001 by Elsevier Science Inc.,"container-title": "Journal of Molecular Graphics & Modelling", "issue": "No. 3", "language": "en", "page": "363-67", "source": "Zotero", "title": "Crystallographic Autostereograms", "volume": "19", "author": [{"family": "Katrusiak", "given": "Andrzej"}], "issued": {"date-parts": [{"2001"}]}], "schema": "https://github.com/citation-style-language/schema/raw/master/csl-citation.json"}]

5 On *maya*, Kanwar writes, Advaita's "startling claim [is] that all of the individual selves, and in fact all the mental and physical variety we sense as manifestation cannot exist at a fundamental level." Pavan Kanwar, *A Vedic Life* (Delhi: New Age Books, 2011), 8.

6 Sigmund Freud's *The Future of an Illusion* (1927) is a denial of the existence of spontaneous religious feeling, what his correspondent, Romain Rolland, 'oceanic feeling'. Cited in Henri Vermorel, "The Presence of Spinoza in the Exchanges between

Sigmund Freud and Romain Rolland," *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 90, no. 6 (December 2009): 1235–54.

7 Henriette Huldish, "An Inventory of Shimmers : Objects of Intimacy in Contemporary Art," by Eugenie Brinkema, Johanna Burton, and Emily Watlington (Cambridge, Munich, Prestel: MIT List Visual Arts Center; DelMonico Books, 2017), 12.

8 Malabou's notion of 'fold' is the razor-thin edge between habit, addiction and states of ecstasy. Catherine Malabou. "The Relation between Habit and the Fold 2017", May 4, 2018, video, 49:44, <https://youtu.be/EglV1eVTrpU>.

9 Csikszentmihalyi links tribal and indigenous rituals of forest-combing (for feathers, stones, etc.) to flow states. See Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Classic Work on How to Achieve Happiness*, Rev. ed. (London: Rider, 2002).

NOTES TO FREE TIME

- 1 Kuniichi Uno, interview by Dominique Bonarjee, September 2, 2017.
- 2 *What Do We Know about Free Time?* (Theaterhaus Mitte Berlin, 2017).
- 3 ‘The patience of not starting’ is a practice I learned from dancer, Yoshito Ohno.
- 4 Katsugen undo was developed in Japan’s post-war era by movement innovator Haruchiko Noguchi (1911 -1976). Butoh dancer Natsu Nakajima introduced me to his method. See Haruchika Noguchi, *Order, Spontaneity and the Body*, 5th ed. (Tokyo: Zensei Publishing, 2014).
- 5 Catherine Clément, *Syncopé: the Philosophy of Rapture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994): 1.
- 6 Gallagher and Cole describe two states of embodiment: the body image is linked to self-conscious awareness, while body schema is a form of transparent immersion. See Shaun Gallagher and Jonathan Cole, “Body Image and Body Schema in a Deafferented Subject,” *The Journal of Mind and Behavior*, Institute of Mind and Behavior, Inc., 16, no. 4 (Autumn 1995): 369–89.
- 7 Eknath Easwaran, *The Upanishads* (Middlesex, England: Arkana, Penguin Books, 1988).

- 8 D. Bonarjee. Workshop notes. 2014.
- 9 See Jean Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1985), 283. Gebser’s notion of ‘time freedom’ is liberation from all temporal form – *time as embodied*. It arises through modes of contemplation, “presence as a means to bring forth the integral human being as we live through climate change and civilizational catastrophe.” Jeremy Johnson, *Seeing Through the World: Jean Gebser and Integral Consciousness* (Seattle, WA: Revelore Press, 2019), 155.
- 10 Lee Smolin. *Time Reborn*. New York, Mariner Books. 2014.
- 11 A sound linked to the sudden enlightenment of Zen master Chikan. See Shinshu Roberts, *Being-Time. A Practitioner’s Guide to Dogen’s Shobogenzo Uji* (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2018), 109.
- 12 Anderwald, Feyertag and Grond make a similar discovery through dizziness: “Dizziness tells us ... that it is free from gravity — the statement could be seen as a call for a type of thinking that is not based on a particular support or foundation, but one that could refer to the possibility of an infinitely erroneous, staggering, and instable movement”. See Ruth Anderwald, Karoline Feyertag, and Leonhard Grond, *Dizziness*, Publication Serie of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2019), 72. Thanks to curator Gareth Evans for connecting our research.
- 13 Gerald Pollack, *The Fourth Phase of Water. Beyond Solid, Liquid and Vapor* (Seattle, WA: Enber & Sons, 2013).

- 14 Jayadeva Simha, *Spanda-Karikas: The Divine Creative Pulsation* (Delhi; Borehamwood: Motilal Banarsidass; Motilal, 2002).
- 15 Ko Murobushi, interview by Dominique Bonarjee, December 18, 2013.
- 16 Pollack, *The Fourth Phase of Water. Beyond Solid, Liquid and Vapor*.
- 17 Pollack.
- 18 Pollack.
- 19 Murobushi, interview.
- 20 Murobushi.
- 21 A reference to an early Butoh work by Tatsumi Hijikata, entitled *Rose-Coloured Dance (Barairo Dansu)*, 1965. See Takashi Morishita, *Hijikata Tatsumi's Notational Butoh. An Innovational Method for Butoh Creation* (Tokyo: Keio University Art Center, 2015).
- 22 Yves Citton, "Learning to Derive: Financial Moves and Attentional Gestures in the Ecocidal Maelstrom.," in *Movement Research* (Mårten Spångberg, 2018), 122–23.
- 23 The *wu chi* position is a basic standing meditation posture in Qi Gong, sometimes translated as 'standing like a tree'.
- 24 Citton, "Learning to Derive: Financial Moves and Attentional Gestures in the Ecocidal Maelstrom."
- 25 An image Pollack uses to explain Brownian motion.

- Pollack, *The Fourth Phase of Water. Beyond Solid, Liquid and Vapor*.
- 26 Wuwei is a practice of 'action through non-action' in Daoism. See for example Yuk Hui, *Art and Cosmotechnics* (Minneapolis: e-flux, University of Minnesota, 2021). Also Laozi, *Tao Te Ching: The Book of the Way and Its Virtue*, trans. J.J.L. Duyvendak, Wisdom of the East (London, UK: John Murray, 1954).
 - 27 The heart chakra, *anahata*, means 'unstruck' in Sanskrit, it alludes to cosmic tones, inaudible to humans. La Monte Young's compositions are inspired by the 'unstruck' especially The Well-Tuned Piano. See Jeremy Grimshaw, *Draw a Straight Line and Follow It: The Music and Mysticism of La Monte Young* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011).

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bibliography

DOMINIQUE SAVITRI BONARJEE

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Appendix I

The Exhausted Body:

An Interview with Kuniichi Uno

Interviewer: Dominique Savitri Bonarjee

September 2, 2017, Tokyo

Dominique Bonarjee: I'd like to open up a conversation about the role of the body in creation. I feel that what was important in butoh, at its genesis, was the creation of the individual. It was a way for Hijikata to reflect on what the individual meant in the social and political sense, through the body that is.

You wrote, about Hijikata's text *Yameru Mahime* ('The Ailing Dancer'), that it is a book in which "dance is perpetually, the 'becoming other.' Thinking of this I wanted your ideas about

what you understand as ‘becoming other’ in dance and what it might mean today?

I am thinking of this in connection with an exhibition I participated in last year in Berlin, where the theme was the ‘post-other’.

The question I’ve always asked of butoh through my own practice, and the interviews I’ve already conducted is, ‘what is the relevance of butoh nowadays in the contemporary landscape?’ It is no longer just a Japanese phenomenon. So how can dance be ‘a becoming other’ as you have proposed in this text.

Kuniichi Uno: You mean all these ideas in the context of research around butoh?

DSB: Let’s say the context is the origins of butoh, in the sixties, the post-war period when the idea of the individual began to develop in Japan. Society changed, and so my interest is, what is the individual in relation to a social dimension, as well as an intimate one, that of the body. Of course I’ve expanded my own research to ask questions about what the body itself signifies today: the sense of the working body, or the creative body.

KU: Do you mean in the global sense?

DBB: Yes exactly. Hijikata said that he was looking for the unproductive body. The lazy body, the sick body, the body unable to produce.

KU: All this feels a little chaotic, I’m trying to find a singular point, I’m trying to get in ... It’s difficult. Recently, a book about butoh appeared in France, it has been translated into Japanese, what is the author’s name?

DSB: I think you mean Sylviane Pages.

KU: Was it a doctoral thesis too? I didn’t read the book, but I read Patrick Devos’s presentation of it. There are many things that interest me in it, but I find it is a sort of ‘*meta-point of view*’, very social (in tone). It annoys me in a way, because I am a little against this way of looking at the arts in general. It’s endless if we work in this way, and for me, art is always something completely singular that does not immediately allow a point of view like that. To dive in is always a little, or even, very, myopic: I prefer to be myopic and start with some concrete bases, ask one or two specific problems and to develop these a little.

With regards to butoh as well, I do not allow myself to talk about butoh without adhering to the singularity of Hijikata and each dancer, Murobushi too, who are all very different for me. The terminology of butoh already seems to me to be too general, too abstract.

I was very marked by my encounters with Hijikata. They urged me to think not only about dance, but also about the body, about my own work on Antonin Artaud and my philosophical thoughts inspired to a greater or lesser degree by the French philosophers, and (literary authors) like Artaud, Samuel Beckett, Jean Genet, etc.

I had already met Min Tanaka before I met Hijikata: it is Min Tanaka who introduced me to the world of contemporary or experimental dance. And already for me these are two very different dancers. I met them at the same time, but they are absolutely different, and I cannot imagine the terms that can resonate simultaneously with the characteristics of these two dancers. If I think of Murobushi again, he too is very different. This is my main point of view at the outset.

So I said, 'other', 'becoming other'?

DSB: I had read your texts a little, the ones you sent me about Min Tanaka. I also read the interview Felix Guattari did with Min Tanaka in *Machinic Eros*.

We can start by speaking about the contrast between Min Tanaka and Ko Murobushi in relation to 'becoming other' in dance.

I had a conversational interview with Ko Murobushi that was very interesting. He always talked to me about how he was trying to become other, other than Japanese that is. He wanted to be *outside* Japan.

KU: Yes, outside.

DSB: Yes, always outside for Ko, that's what he was exploring. What resonates for me is what you wrote about Min Tanaka's practice around time, of being able to perceive in the body, measures of time that are non-human, or beyond human... geological time, etc.

Let's say that Murobushi explores 'the individual' and Tanaka, explores 'time'. Time in the contemporary body; to be an individual in their own epoch of time.

KU: It's a question about time and also about space of course: at a particular period, maybe in the 60's, or 70's, we often talked about space. For example, there were magazines like 'Hiho Kukan', *The Space of Critique* ... There was a book entitled *The Literary Space*, etc.

'Kukan', space, meant many things at that time. I do not know why, there must be reasons. Gaston Bachelard specifically spoke about space. Foucault was also a philosopher of space rather than time. Structuralism is the philosophy of space, it

spatializes problems: it is a little anti-Hegel, against dialectic, against Marxist time as well.

And after that we began to talk about time again. It is Gilles Deleuze who insisted a little on the 'time image'. It's possible that it was a way to get rid of space. For example Jean Genet who spent a great deal of time in prison, repeated several times in interviews, that space can be reduced, removed, and when you are prisoner you are deprived of space, but time, even if you are made to work in the prison, time remains something sacred: « my time cannot be touched, it's untouchable ». It's very strong, the way he put it, it really moved me.

So within time there is something infinite, interminable and indeterminate, and imperceptible too. And all these traits of time also correspond to the experiences of the body. Of course it becomes necessary to speak about the memory of the body, the memory of gestures, the memory of the violence that comes from outside onto the body.

So, I believe that there is a kind of change, a conversion of the problematic, philosophically as well as metaphysically, and which in turn corresponds to some social changes, such as capitalism for example.

DSB: Capitalism which robs us of our time? Technology too ...

KU: Yes, for technology, it's always about space and time as well: to dominate space. To calculate time, to control time, it's the same thing, to work on the measures and modulations of time, it is a terrible thing: a problem of the society of control. So it's a bit of a war of time: there is the war of space, of territory, but there is also the war of time. In any case, it is not uni-lateral, when you are interested, when you reflect a great deal on time, there comes a point, when you can change the problematic a little.

That's what happened to me: at one point I was attracted to this way of positing the problem in terms of space, even if I was in fact interested in time. I worked on the texts of Michel Foucault who had declared the need to think of space, as I said in a way that was a little anti-Hegelian : anti many things in fact. All of a sudden it was Foucault's way of posing the problem : to get rid of time and to make everything in the spatial context, in other words the panopticon, as in the prison system, to monitor, and punish. So it was in order to create a space of control, of surveillance, both very effective and economically efficient, and which would be the model of the whole society, as a system of surveillance : prison, school, factory, army, etc.

So I always go back and forth: when there's too much talk about time, I want to talk about space instead, and when we talk of space too much then... I'm going back and forth. Basically it's because the problem is not the difference of space or time, but

rather how to live the problem of time, how to live the problem of space.

DSB: And in this context how to live the problem of space or time through the body. You said that Jean Genet thinks that time is untouchable, that's relevant in a society where everything is controlled, where the body is used for work or for leisure: leisure as another thing to consume, and so we are pushed to do just that, consume it. Then all we have left is time : time within the body, a personal, an untouchable time. How did they Ko Murobushi or Min Tanaka approach time, perhaps so as to *touch* it in some sense?

KU: If we pose the problem in this way, Hijikata lived his time, through the body. Tanaka, Murobushi, etc. as well. Hijikata even asked the question through his extremely experimental writing. *Yameru Mahime* was really a search for the lived time of childhood, as the child Hijikata. Looking at his (creative) beginnings, he seems to have worked rather a lot on space, theatrical space, and even with a great deal of violence, there are violent images, and up until *The Revolt of the Flesh*, he seemed to want to create a certain kind of space: a delirious space, a revolutionary space, an orgiastic space, a festive space.

And after this, all of a sudden, it all changed, in any case it's as if he had mutated after this period. This begins with the *Revolt of the Flesh*, and after that it's *Twenty Seven Nights for Four*

Seasons, and there already he made changes: he introduced many Japanese gestures and he began to work with the women, female dancers, and with many images from his childhood in the Tohoku region.

In the end *Yameru Mahime* is really about discovering all the molecular elements of his life as a child, and it is 'becoming child' (again), both very serious, and very experimental too.

It is Deleuze and Guattari who have talked at length about 'becoming child', as something essential for art, for music also in the form of the refrain. Becoming child is to leave the adult subject in some sense, and also to leave this separation of the adult from the child. It's a little like breaking the line of time that follows from childhood to old age.

DSB: Would that mean opening up time?

KU: Yes of course. So that is what he did, but he did not write his *memories* of childhood, that's very important to note and so it (*Yameru Mahime*) is very different from a 'memoire of childhood', or images of childhood, landscapes of the mother of the family, etc. If there are landscapes, they are always made of tiny elements, really imperceptible : this choice of images is extraordinary. It's a little anti-image too, anti-landscape, anti-reciting memories, etc. That's what made me write so much about this book.

With Tanaka Min what I felt at first, what I perceived in the first period when I saw him in Paris, was the extraordinary slowness, it is as if a flower or a plant was opening : very slow but nevertheless very alive. It was really as if I discovered something like 'the time of the body', a little unbelievable, a little non-human: not so much animal but rather material, mineral, vegetal. So it was very stimulating at some point. A little anti movement too: a questioning of the movement.

DSB: Maybe that is the 'becoming-other' ...

KU: Yes absolutely, the inhuman/non-human is to become other.

DSB: When I told you about the notion of 'post-other', that is *after the other*, the other in this context is a term applied to the human being, so the post-other would be after the human as well. This is what I see in this kind of dance.

KU: Yes in philosophy the problem of the other exists, for example Emmanuel Levinas was a philosopher of the other. There I found something fascinating for me too, and I find Levinas very important, because at the same time his philosophy is absolutely committed to the human. He is integrated with Heidegger too, even he speaks of 'there is' (*il y a*), this corresponds to the 'being' of Heidegger. Levinas wanted to return in some way from the being (*l'être*) to being (*l'étant*),

to the human in other words. To him Heidegger's being was not able to avoid the concentration camp: this problem of Heidegger's engagement with Nazism is complicated.

In any case, the philosophy of the other was absolutely an ethical problem. There is another human who also has a face: so there is the other, there is me, etc. For Levinas the other is absolute, so *not me*, it is the other one who is absolute: the other is something unknown, something that we can not fully know.

Deleuze spoke rather early on and with a negative slant, not of Levinas, but about Sartre, because he too spoke of the other. About phenomenology as well, and Heidegger too after Sartre, then Levinas, everyone began to reinvent a philosophy of the other. It is Deleuze who has very clearly pronounced that the other is still another *man*, there is always a symmetry so we must then find 'an other than the other' as well, non-human that is ...

We can bring up Michel Tournier's novel, *Friday (Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique)*, in which Tournier has reinvented the story of Robinson Crusoe and the desert island. It's very interesting because Robinson finds 'another', but *another* than the other.

So Deleuze talks about the post-other in this text in *The Logic of Sense*, which is based on Michel Tournier's novel. There is an

appendix of four or five essays that are very important. Deleuze also wrote this text as a preface to Tournier's novel.

The island is an obsession of Deleuze. Very young he wrote a text about the meaning of the desert island.

I do not know what Murobushi's time is, but no doubt he had a strong sense of time too. His articulation of immobility and then a sort of breaking, a falling: I think he really wanted to break the line of time with his dance, to extract himself from linear time.

DSB: He talked about this all the time.

KU: I don't know how to speak of his dance systematically in terms of time, but reading his texts, his writings, it seems that it is another question that concerns him. I am impressed that he poses problems of externality, of the outside, and many inspired by the philosophy of Deleuze, Foucault, even Artaud. He wanted his dance to be this exercise of going outside and the manifestation of the outside too. He was always negative about dance, about his own dance: he always wanted to go somewhere else. That's what motivated him. So already it's a bit of a search for time but of a very different type.

With these three dancers, Hijikata, Tanaka and Murobushi, each has his own sense of time. Someone who dances and does

not have a sense of time, does not interest me. This is very important, the dance must be highly sensitive to time: invent time, re-forge time.

DSB: What I hold from butoh is how to have an experience of the body, through an awareness of temporality. I feel that these three dancers try to extract the body from daily time, linear time, but each one with a particular and personal technique. Yet what they have in common is something that looks towards the non-human, through the notion of other, as this *other than the other* that you mentioned. For Murobushi, for example, it was through a becoming animal.

Even during the time of childhood, the child does not completely belong to society, because her time allows her to interpret the world in her own way, she does not need to obey the rules of society and its socially constructed measures of time. So the time of childhood is a time that is not altogether inhuman/non-human, but it is much more open and vast. This may have been Hijikata's approach to time.

You also talked about Min Tanaka saying that his is a mineral, vegetal relationship to time. It always goes in the direction of *another of the other*, again one that is not part of social and daily time.

KU: Hijikata also spoke about fogs, moisture, molecular things that move all the time. *Yameru Mahime* is the story of all this,

there is a lot of fog!

DSB: I have not been able to read *Yameru Mahime* because it has not been completely translated.

KU: Yes only a few sentences. My book will be published in French this autumn, and I have many quotes from *Yameru Mahime*. I thought it was impossible to translate *Yameru Mahime*. Even for the Japanese it's almost an illegible book ... You really have to be very interested in it. But it's really the little things, the humidity, the smells, the insects, the small objects in the home. There is very little human presence. The (character of the) Ailing Dancer exists but mostly it is these small objects, all the time ...

DSB: You have mentioned in your writing that the body is both subject and object and this seems relevant here. The way you describe the book *Yameru Mahime*, it's as if the child is very aware that he is both subject and object, and from this awareness he connects with other objects in the world: children always invent characters for objects .

KU: That's it.

DSB: Perhaps it is in order to manifest this experience of subject / object, through these descriptions, this intense precision you mention is in the text.

KU: If I remember correctly it is Merleau-Ponty who said that subject / object awareness is something fundamental for the body. That's why it's difficult to talk about it because the body is not a *pure object*. As soon as the body is considered as subject it immediately becomes 'the body without organs', that is, the body which is not an object, which is not a collection of organs : it is something indivisible.

Through this problematic Merleau-Ponty arrives at what he calls chiasmus. What touches, is touched at the same time, what sees, is at the same time absolutely seen. It's a beautiful thought, but it's not enough it seems. For Merleau-Ponty already, who posited that, it was an interesting question around the body. But as soon as the body is at the same time an object and a subject, it is an object that is a little infinite, a subject that is a little infinite. A kind of crossroads, an infinite arrangement, that is also very mobile, in terms of the relationships between the forces that traverse it.

We can pose many problems around the subject / object notion, and I think that already, philosophically speaking Hijikata with his vision of a body that is very dynamic, and in Deleuze and Guattari's language, something *molecular*, he goes much further than Merleau-Ponty did. And with this aim Hijikata really worked at the level of both writing and dance. And from that he really wanted to create a new stage, a new dance. But he died before he could do so. It's important to read this book

Yameru Mahime.

DSB: I'm looking forward to reading it.

KU: There is a project to translate *Yameru Mahime*, into French, but I don't know much more...

DSB: Are you going to translate it?

KU: No, although I have already translated quite a few passages as quotations in my new book.

DSB: What's the title of your book?

KU: *Hijikata Tatsumi: penser le corps épuisé* is the French title. It is what Hijikata said, this is one of the subjects of his dance research: 'a collection of exhausted bodies'.

DSB: Bodies exhausted by what?

KU: By life ... by desire, by movement, passion, human relationships. He did not say this, it's me who says it.

DSB: I'm wondering about it because the project I began with my mother for example, was a way to make her rediscover *a* body. You speak in one of your texts about giving birth to one's body. It was that with my mother; because I know that her body belongs to a certain role and that this role is what she lives on a daily basis, and therefore to involve her in something

else through which she is going to live *through* her body, to discover *embodied* thought, to find incarnated questions, to ask questions of herself, in an embodied way, is perhaps a way to rebirth a body previously exhausted by being already filled to the brim, and thus to empty it, and to give her a space in which to do it.

KU: It may be discovering another relationship with her body...

DSB: Yes indeed, and that's why I always told, that we were not creating a finished product for an audience. Rather we were in a process of discovery. I offered her problematics and questions to explore through very simple movement phrases. It was up to her to discover this body beyond the exhausted body and its roles.

KU: For the child Hijikata in this story, where the child is the subject and the object, it's as if the child knew everything in his own way, it's a somewhat reversed situation, where the child makes the adult Hijikata dance: as soon as he is born, the child wants to dance and think how to dance, he wants to discover dance everywhere ... it's something like that. This subject / object situation is not fixed and the child is very voyeuristic, very contemplative, without looking: Hijikata often says that the child has eyes, but he can also detach that eye freely, he has this power.

DSB: It is also the intuition of childhood of looking for the dance in things, what is already dancing. I think that there is a temporal aspect to childhood, that childhood always appears as a horizon open to time. It comes back to the idea of creating methods to discover new meanings to duration and to time.

KU: When talking with Hijikata, I do not remember what I told him, though I remember what he told me... in any case in discussion with Hijikata, I often saw a connection with what I had found in Deleuze. One of these things is the exhausted body. Do you know a little text by Deleuze about Beckett? It's called *The Exhausted*, it's important for the subject of your research too. Beckett wrote several works in his final years, pieces for video, and one of the most famous piece is *Quad*.

DSB: Yes I know it.

KU: There are four or five of Beckett's texts for video. Deleuze wrote about these texts in *The Exhausted*. He began by saying that the exhausted is in another dimension than the tired: tired is not enough, exhausted is exhausting the possibility, it is a pure *virtuality*. The virtual and the possible is not the same thing according to Bergson: the possible is a kind of copy of reality for Bergson, whereas the virtual, when it becomes actualized, is something else, the unknown. So this 'possibility' is something unsavoury for Deleuze and Beckett. So to exhaust the possible is a very good thing.

DSB: Because it opens the door to the virtual?

KU: But it's also tragic, lamentable. Deleuze wrote this text when he had only one lung, he had just lost his other lung: he survived years with artificial respiration. That's why he committed suicide because he couldn't take it anymore. We surmise this in any case.

So exhausted was something positive, and for Hijikata at that time : Deleuze had not yet written this text so it's impossible that Hijikata would know it. But it was in the 70s, 80s and he spoke a lot about the *suijakutai* – the exhausted body – as something very positive. The exhausted body is also curiously enough the body of the child, it corresponds a little: it is to completely identify the virtual in the body of the child.

So I'm sure that Hijikata had a very strong sense of the virtual, that's what I admire the most.

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Appendix II

Sufi Whirling: a microphenomenological view

Interviewer: Petrine Vinje, Oslo National Academy of the Arts

11 February 2021

Petrine: I will be interviewing you on the Sufi whirling of last Friday.

Dominique: OK.

Petrine: So then I propose to you if you agree to let one moment come back and give me a sign or start telling me when you have found it.

Dominique: Well, maybe I'll just go through a few of the things that happen. We always meet on Fridays with this group, and it was my friend who organises this with me, Rabia, she did the reading at the beginning. We always do a reading and we share something. And then I got down on the floor because that's what we do at the beginning: I get down and kiss the floor. And then I got up and I started turning. What I'm very aware of in the practice is that there's four different sections, and between sections the music changes, so I'm always listening or trying to listen for the music change because that tells me when I can put my arms down. Because it's quite painful keeping my arms up. And I remember last Friday -- I started doing a belly dancing class with a friend of mine during lockdown, it's actually a lot of fun -- and last week, Friday, when I was doing the whirling something happened...

I find it difficult with the hands: it's so tiring to keep my hands up for so long. And I started breathing from this different place that we had been working with in the belly dancing, because in belly dancing, you have to do all these different isolations of movement, and there was this muscle here in the centre of the chest which we were working with in the belly dancing. I started working with this muscle in the whirling. And I suddenly found that it was really different because I was not feeling so much pain in my arms. I had this real feeling of connection. You put your arms in this raised position, the right

hand receiving from the sky and the left hand giving towards the earth, and if I could bring my attention to this place in the chest, it was holding the gesture, giving me a support, which I hadn't felt before. And so, last Friday when I was whirling, I had a much deeper sense of support, that was making my arms less heavy. Somehow it did something wonderful for my experience of the whirling, and since then, I just really want to do it again. I am so excited about it that it was almost as if that little muscle is like a turning point in the whole practice. That attention just here in the chest, was a very *big* experience and I've been very excited since then.

Petrine: So there is the muscle in the centre, and you're breathing from a different place, and it's made it easier to keep your arms up, and there's a support from that muscle: I think you said that. Is there a specific moment that we should go into, where you actually realise this?

Dominique: There was a moment. Yes there was a moment when I realised that if I breathe from this place, if I bring my attention to this place, it's supporting me. But I can't say exactly where it was in time, but there was a moment when I realised and then, I felt the change: normally I'm always waiting, well I'm not *always*, but there's a point after I don't know how long, because I don't know what is happening to time when this is happening, but there's a moment when I start to feel the weight of my arms. And then I start listening for the sound, the music

to change.

But this time it was different because I felt there's a different support and it's very easy, in a way, yes it's becoming easy. It was probably a few minutes after the beginning. The first salaam is about eight minutes, so I would say it was around six, seven minutes after we started turning that I started to feel that there was a different attention I could develop.

Petrine: So if you agree, I would like it to go back to this moment when this happened. And when you are there in this moment, take some time to find it, to retrieve it, and then when you are there, do you see anything?

Dominique: Well, with my eyes, I don't see anything. I mean I see things, but it's not clear because my eyes are out of focus all the time when I do this. And it's really important to keep the eyes out of focus. So I just feel something: I feel it here at the chest centre. And then I feel it here inside the upper right arm, like this line going between these points. First I felt it in the chest, then I started feeling it in the arm because I'm moving with the raised arm gesture of whirling, and I could feel it in my upper arm on the right: I felt really supported, so I sort of traced the attention from the central point. I started tracing it up into my arm and I could feel these parts of my right arm, around my bicep and underneath my shoulder. There was a sense of excitement already, because I could feel like it was a

key to the movement somehow.

Petrine: OK, I'm just going to describe it now because you're doing everything very visually with your body. And you're describing to me that you just a few minutes after you started the practise, and you have your eyes closed, you can't see...

Dominique: The eyes are not closed, just out of focus, everything is quite blurry. It's very blurry.

Petrine: Right. And then you recognise a muscle in your upper body. It's close to the solar plexus I would say, on your left side.

Dominique: Yes. It's kind of just above the solar plexus. The muscle is probably underneath the ribs, but it creates an opening at the bottom of the sternum. But it's not sticking out of the chest. It's just very little and I engage it by doing a very small tilt.

Petrine: And then you could trace this muscle, it released something in your arm and then you could trace it as a line, in between your right arm and down to the muscle just inside your chest. And there's an excitement about this already, just as it's happening.

Dominique: Yes.

Petrine: How does this line feel? does it have any colour and size?

Dominique: Well, I would say straightaway that I feel like it's white or very pale: a pale colour. And I guess my attention, my breath-attention and my curiosity is right here in the centre of the chest, and then it starts to trace this line, a kind of line of energy that feels like it comes up to my upper right arm, almost like a wing. It's got a swooping shape and opens up a little and it feels very clear, that's what I would say. It feels clear, but at the same time, I feel very curious about it. It's almost as if I'm doing the movement, and at the same time, I'm doing some sort of archaeology, a research. I'm following this feeling like I'm onto something. Yes that's what I felt like, 'oh, I'm onto something, there's something interesting happening here.' I felt like an archaeologist really.

Petrine: Where does this feeling of being onto something occur?

Dominique: It's when I start to feel that it's resonating out of that central point, and that this point has something special about it. That's what I feel. Of course, the thing is that the whole practice of whirling is about 'opening your heart', that through this dance, there comes a change in your whole body, and this opens your heart. And I'm thinking, 'Oh, my heart is opening. It's opening!' Because your heart is located right there around

the same area where this muscle is that I have my attention on. And I'm thinking, is it my heart – I don't know what muscle it is, I haven't checked the anatomical name for it. But then just the way that it starts supporting my arm, and I'm feeling this support and I'm not waiting for the music to stop or the music to change anymore: I've forgotten about that. That's when I really felt like I was moving between different states which is really interesting – like being in it, because you have to be 'in it' when you're doing it, and at the same time, even though I'm in it, I can be this archaeologist in a way feeling 'ooh, there's something happening with this!'

Petrine: OK, so you're describing that you have the sensation of the muscle. You relieve your tension with this muscle, but it creates a line in between the inner muscles underneath your ribs. It creates a line in between that place and the muscles in your arm. You feel that it's light, it has a white and pale colour and you become aware of it and it creates, or you become curious as to what happens in you, and that you feel that you are experiencing it at the same time as you can do research on it: you're researching the feeling and there's this feeling. You mentioned the feeling of being 'on to something', and that's it's resonating with something you have been. I'm actually not sure why noted. But you mentioned also that it feels like you're opening your heart now it's happening and that you're opening your heart. And I wonder, where is your leg at this point, are you attached to... Is this feeling also attached to your legs?

Dominique: When I whirl, and especially on this occasion, there's this really strange sense that is developing that there's a couple of points that I seem to hold in an inner focus. One is in my heel, in my left heel. I always try and, I can feel it specifically this time that because I'm feeling like I'm getting. I mean not 'better', but rather it's like walking or riding a bicycle, now I'm starting to feel 'oh, this is becoming second nature': that's what I feel, this is becoming second nature...slowly, not fast. But this means I don't *feel* my leg or my body in a normal way, especially not my lower body, but I still feel my arms a lot in that moment, and at that very moment when I feel this attention here at the chest centre, it's feels like this: I can feel the heel, but I can't feel I don't have a clear image of my leg, it's like everything is going in a spinning motion all the time. I don't have a very precise body image. But what I do have is the sense of heaviness in my arms. I feel their weight.

But at that very moment now, this is transforming, so that I can feel the left heel, I can feel the chest centre, and then I can feel this light starting to move into my arm from the chest centre. And I can sense that this feeling of blurriness that I have when I whirl is becoming more diffuse... Let's say that the blur is already happening in the bottom part of my body, but it's difficult in the top because of the tiredness that I feel. But at that moment when I feel this, I can start sensing that the blur is coming into the rest of my body, at least my right arm on that occasion. Mmm. And there was something else,

actually, that I felt because you asked about where I feel my leg and, if I remember now when I feel this (in the chest) and I feel my heel, because I always have a lot of attention on my heel because it holds me, there's also this feeling in my back, in the very middle of my back, so it's almost connecting. There's these two bits that are connected, in the front and in the back, and here along the arm. So in that moment of doing this kind of archaeology, very subtle, I'm not observing so much, but it's more like tracing something slowly, in a very excited way. It's like a treasure hunt. And that's what I felt like. Yeah.

Petrine: Hmm. So you are describing that you have this strange sense and the feel of this practise is becoming second nature and that you do not necessarily feel your lower body. Although you can feel the heel because the heel is supporting you. And then your attention is brought to the upper body because this is where you feel the tiredness. And your lower body is more of a blur.

Dominique: The lower body: when I remember the heel, I don't feel something very material of my body, but I feel just this rhythm, almost a sliding, where 'sliding' is more like a rhythm or a sound, so that's what's happening in the lower body, that rhythm or sound makes the feeling, not something clear. And then the heel stands out because it's clear.

Petrine: So let's go back to the sensation that you have in your

chest and how that affects your arm. Can you describe how the sensation starts in the beginning?

Dominique: Like I said, I've done this movement in belly dancing that I was kind of experimenting with a bit. And just after we began whirling I brought my attention there to see what the effect would be, you know, how it might change my stability. I was just experimenting, but straightaway, I started to feel that there was a different sense of openness. There was definitely a sense that -- that's why I call it a key -- it was like, oh, if this little thing, if I bring my attention here, it's going to change. It has a knock-on effect, basically. And then that's when I started doing the archaeologist thing almost, and I was following it here, and following it through my chest. And I couldn't feel so much in this (left) arm, actually.

Petrine: You couldn't feel it in your left arm?.

Dominique: I definitely feel like it was opening the right arm more, because from the weight of my arms, sometimes I tend to, especially as I get more tired, to close in on myself. But just doing this movement of my attention, it seemed to have an effect of pulling (open) these two parts under my arms.

Petrine: And you mentioned that you have the sensation of opening your heart, how does this feeling of opening your heart happen, does it have a tempo?

Dominique: It was very small, a very small movement. It felt like something so little can change everything. That was the sensation. that's why I was excited I think. There's something so small which can make a big difference.

Petrine: And so the feeling of opening your heart is a very small movement, a very little, very little movement, that feels like it's opening up to something that has a knock on effect. How does this little movement , how long does it stay with you? How do you know it? Do you manage to keep it for a long time, or does it end at a certain point?

Dominique: It feels like a little opening, just a little slit almost, with light in it, and if I try and bring my attention to it, it just feels like this very little point. It's not big. But it also has some effect on my back, it has some effect in the centre of the chest and then it's got this ability to move to the back.

It doesn't feel deep, it feels very much on the surface, almost like lightning, you know, it just appears and disappears. How does it feel? It feels a bit as if it's vibrating or trembling in some way. Maybe just like a small vibration. And the vibration feels like it's connected to this right arm area.

Petrine: So the feeling of opening your heart, it feels like a very subtle, small movement, and if you connect to it, it feels like a small slit. It's not very deep. It has light in it, and it's very little it's a bit like lightning. And it leaves you with this sensation of

vibrating, trembling or a small vibration vibration that comes through to the arm, and it also has this effect on the back. Can you describe this effect or the feeling in the back?

Dominique: It's in the centre of my back in the middle. This is interesting because it feels very much like there's two things there. There's two parts to it. This small slit in the front and then these two, almost like rectangles next to each other in the back and they seem connected. When I do the whirling gesture, it feels like it's very solid in the back. Whereas in the front it's more vibrating and a bit superficial, it's surface, like light, but in the back it feels more solid, in between my shoulder blades just underneath, maybe on either side of the spine or something like that.

Petrine: So the feeling in your back is this one feeling of the little slit under the chest, and then you have two parts in the back, in the middle of your spine.

Dominique: Around my spine.

Petrine: OK, on each side of your spine or around?

Dominique: On either side.

Petrine: And they are like rectangles and they seem connected. Do they seem connected to themselves or to this slit in your chest?

Dominique: To the slit in the chest and then to each other.

Petrine: All right. And how are they connected, do you know?

Dominique: Well, just now, when you were repeating it back to me, I really had this sense of something sort of extending around my spine: there's this column in the middle, a kind of obscure column and then almost like fuzzy threads or something extending between the chest and the back. This column is quite rough and fuzzy, and then these very geometric slits, and then what seems almost like a heart rate monitor of light, in the front. That's so funny, a heart rate monitor just like that, like a wave, a light wave.

Petrine: And this column, it's fuzzy, it doesn't have any clear borders or?

Dominique: No, it seems to be extending...my vision of it is strange, it's not a vision you could have, maybe it's a vision like an MRI scan would have. Actually, it feels like I'm looking at an MRI scan and there's this torn column, because I've come in at a certain point. But these two rectangles, and this thing that is very meaty -- this column is the only thing that feels meaty and rough. It's an interesting image.

Petrine: And when I come back to phase one when you

experience this first attention to the muscle, at this point, and you also feel how it moves, it does something to the lightness in your right arm, where is this column at that point? Are you aware of it?

Dominique: Not really. When this feeling of light starts moving into my arm, all I'm aware of is that, is this wing-like shape that's developing, and also the sensation, because the sensation is very strong in the arm, just under the shoulder. But the rectangles and this feeling is almost like a unit in itself, this thing going on at the centre of the chest. And there's this other part, because my body feels so not like my body, it's a strange body, I don't feel my body very clearly, but at the same I have to feel my body, otherwise it's not possible to do it, so I have to let go of my body, of what I think of it. In that moment, suddenly my awareness is in my arm, suddenly my awareness is in my heel, suddenly my awareness is in my chest: I guess there's different focal points. And when it moves there in my arm, it's very clear. I could even say that there's a very strong sense of weight. There's a heaviness, a real heaviness in that part of my arm, even with this superficial sense of light or lightness, there's this intense heaviness of my weight and my body.

Petrine: OK, I'll try to repeat a bit when this feeling of attention to the muscle in the chest feels like an opening in the heart. A slit with light and it's a pale, pale white line. And it gives weight to the arm. You also mentioned something about superficial

light and that the feeling in the chest is vibrating, trembling, and it's also connected to two rectangles in the back that and they seem connected both to themselves and also to this slit in the chest, and they all occur in this column that is fuzzy, it has a torn colour, it's meaty, it's rough, and it's a bit like an MRI scan and like a unit in itself. And you also mentioned that you can see like a heart heart rate scale in the front. And at this point, you're underbody is kind of in a blur. Your attention is centred around the upper body and yet you can still feel that the heel is connected.

And you start doing an archaeology of this feeling while you're experiencing it, you are curious to know what happens and you feel that it is a key moment that you're experiencing. This little movement that happens in your chest is a key. Is there anything else you would like to add to it?

Dominique: When you said superficial, it's really difficult to talk or describe, but it definitely feels like there's this sense of weight, there's this weight and then the 'superficial', the surface light, or this surface opening that happens transforms that weight in some way. It's still there. It's not like there's just the light, there's also a feeling of heaviness *and* the light, the lightness, together. But somehow it transforms it, which is quite curious: I'm still curious about the light.

Petrine: The light transforms it?

Dominique: Yeah. Yeah. Well, this kind of lightning movement of this movement of the whirling gesture, there's this resonance that transforms -- it doesn't take away the feeling of weight, the weight is there -- it just transforms it in a strange and amazing way.

Petrine It's very amazing, it's extremely rich. I mean, rich material to work on.

Dominique: I'm going to draw it. Thank you, it's so amazing to me, I really didn't know if I would be able to recall because it was such a small thing, such a small little transformation of you, I don't think anyone would see it from the outside or maybe they would, but, you know. It's good material to continue to research.

Petrine: Absolutely. It feels like you're on to something.

Dominique: Since last Friday, and that's why I'm glad we talked about it. It's been going over in my mind, like, oh, I really I can't wait till tomorrow to whirl again. There's just something so thrilling. I don't know how to explain it.

It's just like the Sufis and Rumi were really onto something. To be able to participate in this key by doing it, because in our training they didn't tell us anything. They gave us instructions on how to do the thing, but not how we're going to feel. It's just do it and you'll find out.

Appendix III

How do you perceive the imperceptible?

Astrida Neimanis, respondent for D.S. Bonarjee

Art Research Presentation, Goldsmiths University,
November 2018.

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Watching Dominique collapse, or performing liquidity, I found myself thinking about the weather. I was thinking about weathering.

Weathering describes socially, culturally, politically and materially differentiated bodies in relation to the materiality of place, across a thickness of historical, geological and climatological time. As that part of speech known as a gerund,

weathering also names a practice or a tactic: to weather means to pay attention to how bodies and places respond to weather-worlds which they are also making; to weather responsively means to consider how we weather *with* other bodies, and how we might weather *differently from* other bodies that weather. Not all bodies weather the same; weathering is a situated phenomenon embedded in social and political worlds.¹

And what is weather? Weather is meteorological, yes, but according to critical race theorist Christina Sharpe, weather is the total climate; weather is our total environment. In the face of the greatest climatic transformation that human bodies have ever known, weathering means learning to live with the changing conditions of rainfall, drought, heat, thaw and storm as never separable from the ‘total climate’ of social, political and cultural existence of bodies – weather is also capitalism, globalization, austerity, commodity culture, neoliberalism, racism, misogyny, and so on. Weather is everything around us; in a somewhat tautological fashion, *weather is what we weather*. In one way or another, our bodies are always weathering, always swaying and bending, as the weather leaves its mark on us, recording its rhythms and forces and vicissitudes on our skin but also in our neurological rhythms, in the bassline of our beating heart.

Black feminist lesbian poet Audre Lorde wrote that “in order to withstand the weather we had to become stone.” Reading these

¹ See Astrida Neimanis and Jennifer Mae Hamilton, “Weathering” *feminist review* (2018).

lines from Lorde, we might conjure bodies braced and rooted, steadying themselves against the weather assault of the world, in the face of its violences both slow and spectacular.

But what would it mean if, in order to withstand the weather, we became water instead?

Liquid, moving, filling up with the liquid that also is the weather world we are in: we are moving *with*, rather than *against*, the weather-world, in order to cushion its blow.

How might becoming-liquid or *liquidity as method* for weathering open to different understandings both of our bodies, of weather (which is the total climate) and of their always complicated intimacy? How would liquidity, as method, help us to understand that you are the weather; that is, that the weather is also *you*? (I am also brought to mind here of Roni Horne’s work in Iceland, a series of outdoor portraits all of the same woman called “you are the weather.” How do the nuances not only of climatological weather, but of *the total climate*, write themselves on and in our bodies *almost, but not quite, imperceptibly*?)

Questions:

1. On the weather: In the materials you sent me, you wrote about the history of Franz Ehrlich and Funkhaus – the building

in which your Berlin studio was located. Spying, recording, propaganda, broadcasting. Being put in a concentration camp and forced to come up with slogans such as “Arbeit macht frei.” You describe the room of your studio in rather banal terms, and your own initial sense of uselessness here. *‘I sense the clocks ticking, time moving forward and me going nowhere fast. Uselessness and anxiety is turning my limbic system glacial, inability to move at all: I am glued to the spot - Slowly something starts to happen...’*

What is the weather in that room? How is your work a response to that specific weather – perhaps as accretive in that architecture and its ghosts, and transmogrified in or as your body? And what about the other places in which you collapsed – the Tokyo financial district, the WW2 rubble hill in Berlin? Can you talk about the weathers in those places and how they mattered to your body and your practice?

To what extent is your practice about *noticing those weathers* (if we are going to go with my suggested understanding here)? Does your practice experience them as phenomena external to your body, that leave their mark? Or is liquidity, and the experience of collapse, also or alternatively, about how those weathers *are* your body (they are incorporated, part of you, a force that your practice amplifies rather than attempts to deflect)? Another way of asking this is: is liquidity about attuning to what is outside or what is inside? More specifically,

is the EEG data the weather, or is it you? Or does that question even make sense to your conceptualisation of this project?

2. On duration, time, speed and slowness: How does slowness become a vehicle or opportunity for noticing differently?

A related question is about the duration of collapse. Collapse itself signals something rather spectacular – a grand spectacle. But in your work, you explicitly slow this collapse down; it is a “slow violence” (to quote environmental justice theorist Rob Nixon, who writes about disasters that are too drawn out, too accretive, to really move us.) What are you intending by slowing down the spectacle of collapse? (This also makes me wonder: what about the fast-forward temporality and hyper speed according to which one is supposed to make themselves right again, post-collapse?)

And finally--because you explicitly thematise the idea of ‘spying’ in your description of Funkhaus)--are we being invited to spy on your slow collapse?

3. On glitches and breaking down: In a recent essay² by queer feminist cultural theorist Lauren Berlant, she speaks of glitches – “glitchfrastructures” in fact – that un-conceal the infrastructures of living that we are supposed to take for granted, as naturalised. The relational structures according

2 Lauren Berlant, “The Commons: Infrastructures for Troubling Times” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 34.3 (2016): 393-419.

to which worlds are sustained, she writes, are “mostly visible in their failures”—that is, their glitches. Our processes for relating only become a ‘topic’ or a ‘problem’ when things stop converging: “When things stop converging they also threaten the conditions and the sense of belonging.”

On my reading, your work—even as you are mostly figured as ‘alone’—has something to do with belonging in a broader sense, the automation of belonging, and about how and what happens when belonging breaks down. So finally I want to ask you about the glitch, which is one of the terms in your freetime lexicon. Why is it there? What function does the ‘glitch’ serve in your practice?

Berlant’s essay, which is actually about ‘the commons’ and the need to rethink commons not as a happy commonality but as a copresence of differences, talks about the necessity to rethink being-with as “nonsovereign nonhomogeneity.” In other words, in being-with we are made by each other but remain separate from each other. Berlant’s essay includes this sentence: **“To take something in is to be nonsovereign in relation to it, but that’s not equal to being destroyed by it”** (406). I wonder if you agree that this could be an interesting thesis for your practice of liquidity, and associated projects.

~

Appendix IV

Documentation of Submission

The Printed Booklets

The written component of the submission is presented on seven individually hand-bound booklets, printed on acid-free 125gsm paper, and hand bound with waxed yarn. The stack of seven books is packed into an A5-sized archival box together with the folded origami game and held together with a royal blue latex band. The Drishti Device image is printed on Fabriano Pergamon 230gsm translucent paper and rolled up at the top. A piece of the binding yarn of one of the books is left trailing out of the closed box. A box with identical contents was sent to each examiner.



Fig. 1.1 *Space of the Nameless*, printed thesis, detail, 2023.



Fig. 1.2 *Space of the Nameless*, printed thesis, detail, 2023.



Fig. 1.3 *Space of the Nameless*, printed thesis, detail, 2023.

O vive~ a rhythmic field

The instrument was installed in the Caretaker's Lodgings at The Study Society, Colet House, Talgarth Road, London. The examiners were given an exhibition description. They were free to visit the installation before the activation began. The activation was done as a solo event on this occasion.



Photos: Emma Brown

Fig. 2.1

O vive~ a rhythmic field,
installation view,
Colet House , 2023.



Fig. 2.2

O vive~ a rhythmic field,
installation view,
Colet House , 2023.



Fig. 2.3

O vive~ a rhythmic field,
detail, Colet House, 2023.



Fig. 2.4

O vive~ a rhythmic field,
detail, Colet House, 2023.



Fig. 2.5

O vive~ a rhythmic field,
Colet House, 2023.



Fig. 2.6 *O vive~ a rhythmic field*, activation, Colet House, 2023.



Fig. 2.9 & 2.10 *O vive~ a rhythmic field*, activation & detail, Colet House, 2023.



Fig. 2.7 & 2.8 *O vive~ a rhythmic field*, detail, Colet House, 2023.



Fig. 2.11 *O vive~ a rhythmic field*, activation, Colet House, 2023.

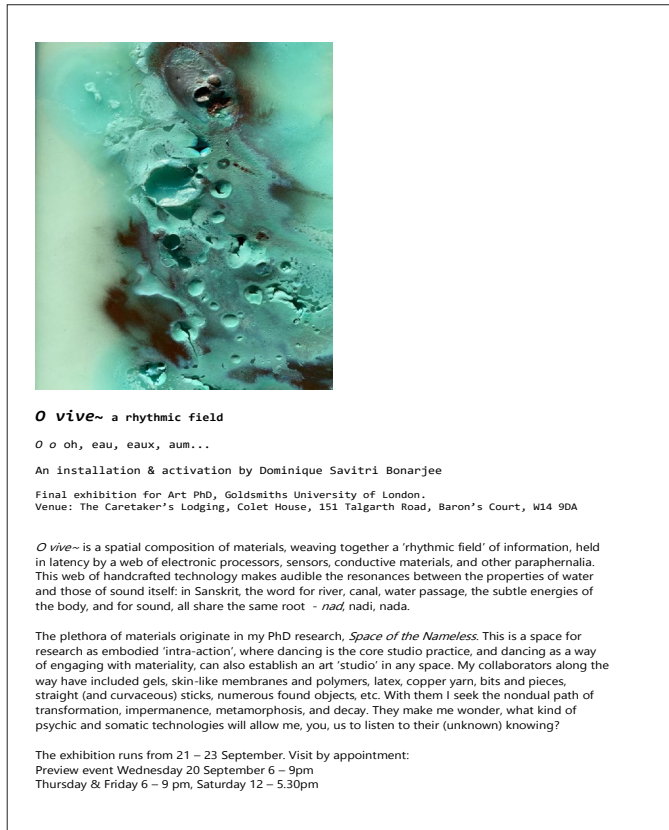


Fig. 2.12 *O vive~ a rhythmic field*, exhibition information, Colet House, 2023.

Fig. 2.13 *O vive~ a rhythmic field*,
 HD video & sound, 37:00,
 19 September 2023.



Installation technical list

- Wearable electronic cape: copper, silk, polyester, glass, stone, xOsc microprocessor, dimensions variable
- Membranes: seaweed, glycerine, aloe vera gel, activated charcoal, salt, dimensions variable
- Copper vessels and sculptures, dimensions variable
- Ceramic vessels and sculptures, dimensions variable
- Agar, wood, stone, Verdigris liquid, glass jug, paper, Gel ergonomic wrist rest
- 2 black vinyl sheets, 140 x 200 cm
- 2 plinths / wood / 100cm x 15 cm & 100 cm x 25 cm
- 1 inflatable sculptural cushion / latex / dimensions variable
- 2 Manacor exciter speakers 50 ohm
- 2 amped studio monitors (brand unknown)
- 2 transducer speakers (brand unknown)
- 1 mini amp (brand unknown)
- 10 Behringer channel mixer
- 1 dynamic Shure S58 microphone
- 1 condenser microphone
- 1 Korg MIDI controller
- 1 Line 6 dl4 delay pedal delay modeler dl-4 mk1
- 1 Arduino Uno board
- 1 Bela microprocessor board

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