

SCORES
IN PROCESS

dedicated to all the researchers
and workers of a.pass

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Printing & binding: Gillis, Brussels

Produced by a.pass | www.apass.be

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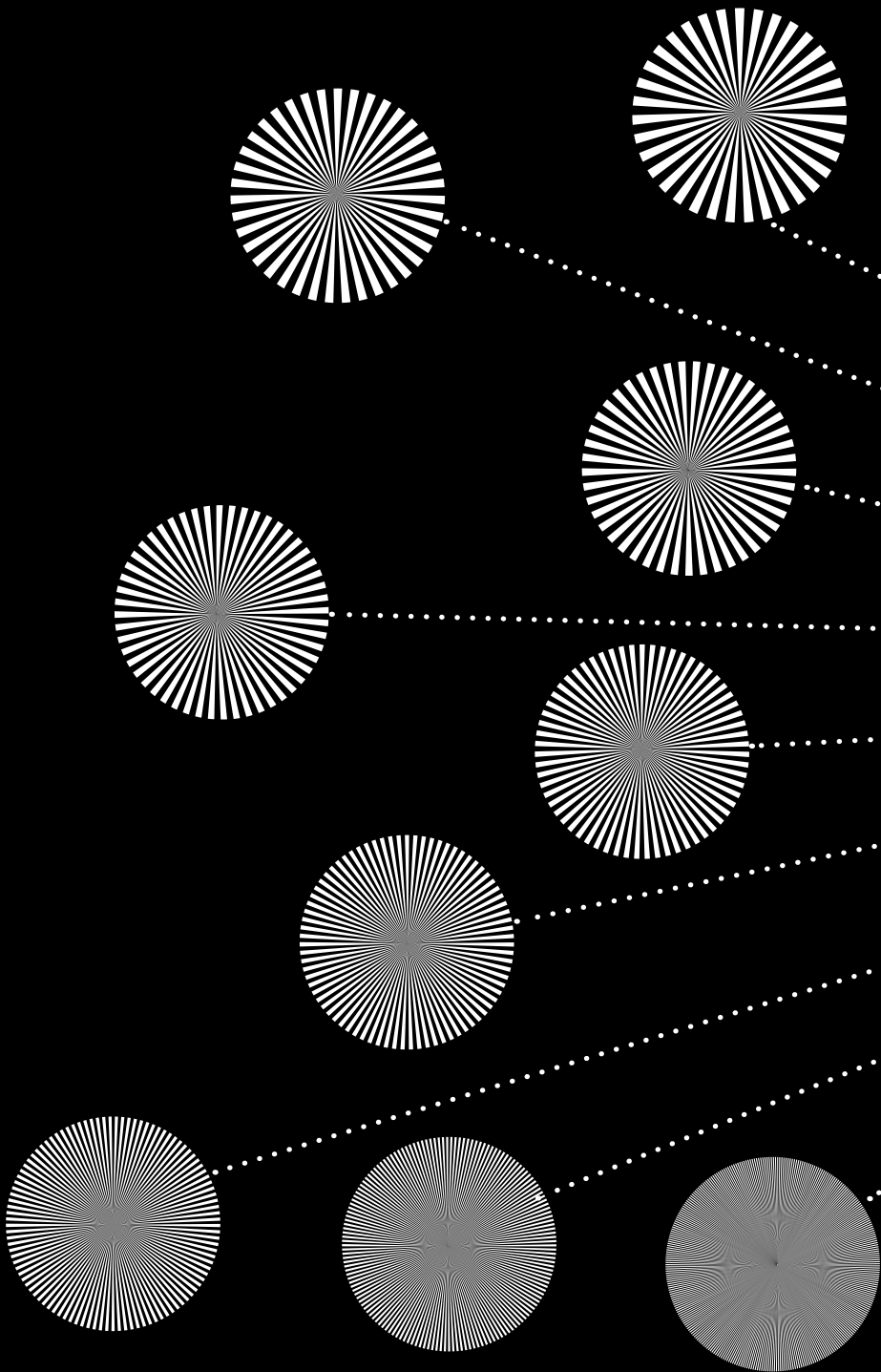
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WRITING SCORE

a tool for documentation

Lilia Mestre

This score is based on a Q&A procedure between the participants and will be practised on a weekly basis throughout the block.

The aim is to discuss and write on a regular basis following the individual and collective practices at a.pass. It will make us develop a discourse on our practices and construct a documentation system that communicates the knowledge and experiences we will process.

With the writing material resulting from this score we will create a publication at the end of the block. The construction of the book will be done in dialogue with the participants in the Writing Score.

Camila Aschner-Restrepo

In January 2014 Lilia Mestre gathered a group of participants in the a.pass programme for an ongoing workshop centred around **writing scores**. Even though none of us was sure about the meaning of the exercise, we submitted to it with a big 'yes', eager to see where it would take us. The task began as a simple exercise of **writing** questions to each other, which each of us would also answer in **writing**.

Weekly meetings were scheduled as deadlines and encounters for the exchange. A group of people from all kinds of backgrounds and devoted to 'artistic research' assumed the task of formulating a question that the writer thought would be useful for the addressee in terms of his or her own research project.

Timidly, we started asking each other simple questions, clarification questions coming from a lack of **knowledge** about the others' projects. During the meetings, we would sit together around a table and read questions and answers out loud. As each of us gave voice to our own written words, the idea of scoring exchanges became clearer and began to acquire new meanings. The **writing** became public and performative as we became more and more aware of the power of the words we were directing at each other and the group.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1 -

Score sessions are organized on a weekly basis.

- 2 -

Participants come together to discuss their case, work process and interests following the block programme.

- 3 -

Before the end of each session we assign the interviewer and interviewee for the following week. A Google document is then created with the number of the session and the names of the participants.

- 4 -

Each participant asks a question by e-mail (and copy-pastes her/his answer on the weekly Google document) to one of the other participants.

- 5 -

Take a maximum of two days to ask your question so the person has at least four days to respond before the next session.

- 6 -

Each participant answers by e-mail and copy-pastes her/his answer on the weekly Google document within the following four days.

- 7 -

If you want to join the score, formulate a question and answer it yourself. Join the meeting to read your question and answer.

- 8 -

We do not read answers if the writers are not present. If you miss a session, you can join in with your last question/answer in a later session.

- 9 -

Reading the answers is the collective core of the system and the generator of new questions.

Collaboration is one of my concerns for the block Jan.-April 2014. How can we construct a tool for collaboration in which individual projects are still autonomous? And how can we track the movements that happen within a collective practice, the contamination, the disagreements, the emergence of a thought, the revelation of a process?

What started as simple questions became complex letters in which we exchanged thoughts, ideas, desires, fears and **dreams**. Week after week, each of us gave shape to our own project in order to share it with the others, while the exercise made us redefine the very meaning of 'artistic research'. Together we drew a map of exchanges and addresses to each other with no design other than the desire to engage in an ongoing dialogue or start a new one. Every session opened up spaces of desire for **writing** and dialoguing, new questions, new meanings of being together.

Enunciating the questions sets the tone of communication and reciprocity. To elaborate on the answers takes seriously what one thinks besides one's own presence. Between the question and the answer there is time. We work with the immediacy of thoughts that can be moulded, crafted. We work on writing practices and the capacity of language and poetics.

The reading out loud of one's own writing is confrontational in many ways and functions as a mirror of the performativity of the writing itself. It creates collectivity.

In an age when the custom of letter-**writing** seems to be disappearing, we built a community centred around complicity and mutual care. Through questions and answers, together we interweaved stories and characters, re-imagining ourselves and our projects through a constant process of reflection and (self-)observation. **Writing** brought up a thought process focused on building bridges for conversation while we assumed the exchange as an exercise of generosity towards each other and the group: never show up without an answer and always give the best of yourself. **Writing** became a gift to each other, which made us abandon the fear of self-exposure and develop a sense of intimacy within the group.

Working with scores comes from the desire to create set-ups for interpretation, to pay attention to the present, to being-there, to what that making-sense signifies besides effective understanding. I am interested in collective systems (e.g., workshops, collaborative projects, intersubjective set-ups) that propose a filter through which to observe and construct modes of operation.

I am interested in creating a field of experimentation between what we designate as rules (law) and what they propose as practice models. What is the space of action, transformation, autonomy and emancipation within these systems of operation?

I see scores as working tools that deconstruct and reconstruct content. I see scores as a tool for the implication of the self and the other.

The following pages are the traces of these encounters and dialogues. The reader will see that they bear witness to encounters and events that took place outside the weekly sessions, as the weekly meetings also became a space to reflect on the things going on around us and every other exchange we had during the block. This is by no means a finished project or a closed dialogue: the desire to keep the conversation going has made us decide to continue with the exercise from close and far, proving that what we built together exceeds the space of these texts into our lives and our work: individually yet together.

Camila Aschner Restrepo

Artistic practice is writing in whatever way. Organizing senses. The post-master programme a.pass bridges language-based discourse with other discourses. Making sense is experiencing. I want to write with words as I write with movement. As I write in the act of perceiving.

Why, what and how am I doing what I am doing? In wishful thinking, I think art is inherently political by its condition of proposing the transformation of a given system. It is very important to make that politicness circulate, macerate and create points of exchange exactly where the individualistic society we live in castrates the dialogue between differences. This book is a trace, a tool, a collective experimental platform made with the contributions of all a.pass participants.

Lilia Mestre



SESSION 1

QUESTIONS by 1.01.2014, 12pm

NEXT MEETING: 24.01.2014, 4pm

LOCATION: apass

MAITE TO MALA

RARES TO GAJA

DAMLA TO JULIA

PIERRE TO VICTORIA

GOSIE TO MAITE

JULIA TO PIERRE

CECILIA TO DAMLA

SAMAH TO CAMILA

CAMILA TO GOSIE

ELKE TO ANNA

GAJA TO ELKE

MALA TO LILIA

ANNA TO SAMAH

VICTORIA TO RARES

LILIA TO CAROLINA

SI MAITE TO MALA

During the Chinese Whispers workshop (based on circuits of interpretation of an image, object, movement etc. used as a vital force for artistic inspiration) you were working with some photos of mine, translating them through the Kabbalah system into what could be called a dramaturgy. How do you then construct the dramaturgy of your work with a spread card?

In my PhD on ethics in performing arts I write about diverse emergent or existent artistic practices. Each of them is a singular study case. So I translate your question into how do I construct a dramaturgy of a particular PhD case, on which I write, through a set of Tarot cards? Let me take your photo of yourself with plants to experiment with what a dramaturgy based on dreaming is like. In any case it is a dramaturgy of the process of writing about a specific case I study, where sometimes I use the cards as an interface or a stage for a dialogue with the case. Cards expand the thinking process about the case by accessing and activating the affective and imaginative mind. With them I open the case in the same way I would, as a Kabbalist, open a dream by seeking to know 'the real question of the dream'. How to do it?

1. **Take up a case and something that represents it.** (Maite's photo with plants)
2. **Look at it attentively.** Make a diagram of responses and thoughts about the case. Assemble associations and map out questions, topics, concepts and relations within the case. Diagram displays the matter and form of the case.
3. **Locate the question of the case.** Or choose the most resonant concept or image of the case. The clearer the question the better. It sets the intent for the conversation with the cards.
4. **With this question or image in mind, take a card from the stack of cards.**
5. **Contemplate its forms, colors, movements, directions and numbers.** Make a diagram of responses and thoughts about the card. Assemble associations and map out questions, topics, concepts and relations within the card.
6. **Weave a response bringing together the insights of both diagrams while focusing on the 'real question' of the case (dream).** Let insights about the case emerge as an answer to the question of the case. Write until thoughts emerge. Then stop.
7. **Or: Work with a spread of cards.** This can be done in different constellations. Each card within a constellation opens a different aspect of the case represented by the first card. Choose the different cards and place them on their positions within a constellation, each position in relation to the first card representing a specific aspect or perspective of the case.

Look closely at the cards as aspects of the case. Then weave a response bringing together all the different aspects while focusing on the 'real question' of the case (**dream**).

As a **dreamer** of this **dream** – Maite's photos with plants – this **dream** for me is about how I am in and how I relate to the surrounding world.

I see the naked body of a female figure in a white environment. As a cotton-wool of infancy it fills me with a sense of purity and innocence. She is standing erect with an intensely green plant on each side of her. Plants too insist in erect **presence** next to her. She looks stern but something in her exposure and withdrawal into the kingdom of plants moves something in me. She looks at me with un-human gaze, more like a gaze of a meek animal. The meekness of the figure addresses me without imposition but rather as an open question. How am I in the world? How open, how exposed to hesitate in the between-ness? How daring to linger within a relation where I do not know? Can this fluid openness grow and expand? Can I look with my eyes wide shut and see?

Displacement of her naked body reveals her vulnerability. The vulnerability resonates within me. I too am slowly opening up next to her. Giving in. Surrendering. To the image. Into relation with it. With her. Just being with. As if her hesitation in the space of the im-possible causes me to hesitate too. This is a non-place somewhere on the edge where the human world collides or merges or stands next to the kingdom of plants. The juxtaposition of body with plants reveals the im-possibility of becoming a plant. It amplifies the measure of being human. The borders of the skin. Or it displays the remnants of being human while perhaps drifting into the kingdom of plants. Drifting into the im-possible. This is perhaps what remains of us somewhere in an unknown present, where we, stripped of our human constraints, linger in an encounter with the others. Where there's more space, openness, fluidity and grace. It fills me with hope and with longing.

>> next question to MALA p52

SI RARES TO GAJA

Can you tell me how you make communicable your artistic research? I know you don't necessarily consider it art(istic) but maybe you can consider it this time.

Here are some supporting questions:

Do you find that you use certain key terms? Is there an authority figure you quote? Any notable artists that have worked in a similar way? Do you use little experiential devices to make people understand what you are doing? What science or research frame do you base your research on when it is artistic research? Do you use presentations like Power Point or more experimental set-ups? Have you communicated your research to a general audience as artistic research or mainly in an a.pass setting for beginning/end block?

Dear Rares,

The key terms I often use are: phantom sensation, memory, somatosensory/motor cortex, homunculus (phantomculus), perception and hallucination. As for the people that inspire me, I would say Neurologist Oliver Sacks, Neuropsychologist Alexander Luria, and Neuroscientist Peter Brugger; all people who have great empathy towards their patients. Through deep inquiry into the subject, they manage to open it up to contexts outside the scientific world. Through their **writing**, they unpack questions of what it means to be human, in the spirit of romantic science.

Luria noted in his autobiography that before laboratory methods became so developed, the classical descriptions of patients conveyed the beauty of the art of science. I also believe that the beauty unfolding in a **practice** of reflection on perception and **movement** similar to the scientific in its detail is something that one can profit from in both workshop context and everyday **life**. Also neuroscientific language which describes phenomena of phantom sensation is very relevant for describing what a performer is experiencing while moving in the realm of the sensual.

Thus the notion of 'romantic science' rather than artistic research is something close to me. It also corresponds to the tradition of the theatre laboratory and how it historically referred to prevailing conceptions of the human body. It seems that since the end of the 20th century and the 'Decade of the Brain' (an initiative in the USA from 1990-99 promoting the benefits derived from brain research) or the Human Brain Project (a similar project launched in Europe in 2013), the most powerful discourse on the body is the one produced by neuroscience. And it is slowly beginning to penetrate the humanities.

Let me cite Luria here:

"Romantics in science want neither to split living reality into its elementary components nor to represent the wealth of **life's** concrete events in abstract models that lose the properties of the phenomena themselves. It is of the utmost importance to romantics to preserve the wealth of living reality, and they aspire to a science that retains this richness. Of course, romantic scholars and romantic science have their shortcomings. Romantic science typically lacks the logic and does not follow the careful, consecutive, step-by-step reasoning that is characteristic of classical science, nor does it easily reach firm formulations and universally applicable laws. **Sometimes** logical step-by-step analysis escapes romantic scholars, and on occasion, they let artistic preferences and intuitions take over."

There is a certain tribe of dance artists who I believe work in a similar way (and whom I also very much admire). These include:

Deborah Hay, Lisa Nelson, Rosalind Crisp, and Eva Karczag; all working in experimental dance, observing their own perceptions, and asking questions about them through choreography or **scores**. In this way, they make the basic notions of human functioning beyond society, geography, and gender visible to the spectator.

In terms of experimental devices, I use them here and there; exercises with drawing, vision, and touch. I've also recently been recording and presenting the outcomes of my research outside of a.pass in workshops as part of a residency and in dance seminars.

>> next question to GAJA p44

SI DAMLA TO JULIA

What is the potential of (or relation to) reenactments for community building? How can the different layers of participants and audience for reenactments get involved in these built communities? How does the troublesome theme of the reenactments you are interested in, namely war, affect the communities they take place in?

I
(...)

II
ESCAPE

“Living History” (LH for short) re-enactors of the Second World War in Belgium, further referred to as ‘players’ in this text, choose collectively an excursion into something between game and theatrical play.

The scenes are set during what re-enactors see as “the last beautiful war”^[1]. WW II here is a story of liberation. It is a big narrative, where every man seems potent, needed and drafted, looking his enemy in the eye in a body to body war.

Electronic information streams. The manifestations and demands of contemporary **life** are far away for a weekend.

“Living History” players escape the belittling duties and perceived impotency of everyday together, like other groups of men might go fishing or hunting.

In the game of “Living History”, a borrowed pride manifests in a uniform. Uniforms are designed for that purpose also, and they are loaded with the history of every body we saw wearing them. Picking up daredevil characters from movies is what part of the “Living History” players do. But that is not all of it. I want to talk about some other aspects that seem more intriguing to me.

Community building by bodily shared experience

The first thing that connects “Living History” players of WWII is the **practice** of military discipline. Together, they form their identity through military gestures and tests of bodily endurance. In this way, LH playing is partially the building of community through a synchronous bodily experience. It is playing on the limits of bodily resources, in the same way a synchronously performed group sport or defined in phrased gestures does.

Community building by shared austerity

Additionally, the imaginary reality contains being together in a precarious situation for weeks, months, or years^[2]. This imaginary situation transgresses the contemporary comfort **lifestyle**, where everything is taken care of and pre-governed. The austerity of the open field or forest as a game space and the reduced amount of available objects brought into it challenge the players to acquire and play out survival skills together.

Sharing identity in transgression and subordination

The players dive into a shared group identity, they cherish equality under the inspiration of martial law. When imposed martial law allows carrying weapons and killing, but at the same **time** it deprives citizens of rights and free will.

Moreover, a spatial transgression is brought forth by the game of war. The players are reclaiming and engineering public space as a ‘war theatre’; imagining themselves being real soldiers creates an imagined status, which is both more potent and more impotent than the civilian.

A transgressive game between potency and impotency

The players hold on to weapons that serve as artifacts of violent potency.

The weapons of German gun manufacturer Mauser are popular. Though the company changed names^[3] after the war, they still supply weapons in armed conflicts all over the world.

But the weapons in the game of “Living History” are demilitarized, impotent: they can never fire. In this game of grown-up men, who we’d rather imagine using real weapons, they are also artifacts of impotency.

Neo-Nazis or other militant violent groups might buy real weapons to hurt, disempower, and kill. The “Living History” community only plays with war’s rituals of empowerment, hurt and disempowerment by mechanical violence.

To be able to play a game, the secondary thinking processes are essential. Secondary thinking processes allow one to differentiate between “a few” and “all”, something a psychotic person, or a person with a totalitarian viewpoint is not capable of doing. As Gregory Bateson^[4] puts it: in the game, the map is at the same **time** the territory (primary thinking process) and not the territory (secondary thinking process). When a re-enactor shoots another with an impotent weapon, shouting “Hep!”, to attract the **attention** of the person he aims at, both know this is no deadly shot. Still, the other person when looking into the barrel at that moment, knows what is conjured up, what they evoke together, and what connects them now; the commonly imagined transgression towards death. Here the picturing stops and opens up into something else.

III OF VALUE

Pragmatic blind spots

There is a lot missing in the game of "Living History", if we consider that it might be understood as an attempt of a balanced historiography. My biggest concern with "Living History" is that the suffering caused by war is largely eliminated through a euphemistic display. In most cases, it doesn't show any negative effects on the civil population, who rarely play a role at all. LH rarely displays a wounded soldier that shows agony. The amateur play of LH, set out in the open places of everyday **life**, avoids conflict with the public by avoiding hardship in its display. At no point does its choreography achieve the dramaturgical depth of a professional play inside of the protective confines of the theatre building.

Indication and triggered articulations

Meanwhile I find the nature of what is displayed an interesting indicator. It points out terrains of negotiations of interest and tolerance between the population/public and the players.

In the example of the Wallonian LH scene, historiographical images from the media are clearly adapted to the needs of the participants today, **sometimes** clashing with the surrounding population's memories. Open conflict happens rarely. Maybe the opposing Belgian population, if existent, hides instead behind curtains rather than contesting openly the right of LH events to happen in their given form.[5] "Living History" re-enactment in Europe connects players and public on the spot with a common past of WWII given by family histories. Often these are stories of a experienced impotence as citizens or soldiers of an occupied state, not having been able to defend it against the invaders. I witnessed memories, stored in families unspoken for generations, uttered quietly for the first **time** in decades at the campfires of WWII "Living History".

Some "Living History" re-enactments are reopening banned scenes of occupation. Some are contending themselves to scenes of a vacuous, utopian front or the glorious Liberation. Generally, they conjure scenes from the past and re-root these scenes in the collectively performed fiction of being soldiers; the role of the potent, fighting man is common ground.

A totalitarian game or a conservatory play?

The rules of the game are fundamentally conservatory; mimicry of historiographical images is the rule. The produced images of LH, justified by "the duty of memory", imply values temporarily set for the community. Temporarily embodying the same values for the **time** of the performance (discipline, male potency, solidarity, defending their values/territory/kin/objects, facing or carrying death) is of prime importance for the harmony of the game, and functions in order to deliver the wanted outcome of the play. Disharmony and conflict outside of the armed ritual is not a goal. Does the performance of their values impose this version of history onto the population by their sheer publicness?

For some, it is just a role-play game; one playful role of many which they interchange in their **life**. These players don't long for really being bound to an army. They would not like to be in a real war. For them, it is an exciting game of domination, subordination, shared identity, and endurance, which fuse in the broad frame of family and national history.

For others with a more, as Fromm ^[6] calls is, totalitarian character, the values of the military system are the main values they cherish and act out, in a longing for dissolution or position in a bigger, clear, structured whole, and for being the subordinate co-owner of a common bigger potency.

The discriminatory nature of the game shows in the limitation on those who might participate: women, the elderly, and children not allowed. Men who do not conform to the common image of the Caucasian WWII soldier might have a hard **time** participating.

Does the position between outdoor game and historiographical play harbor a double bind here? Can the "Living History" re-enactment neither present an accurate, historiographical image of war without terrorizing the population, nor develop a performative game to work through collective issues - without losing its recognizable nature?

Engineering care and destruction, self-organization and transgression, indifference to the pictured military, "Living History" groups function in an unofficial, loose network. They are governed in a decentralized way. Program points are negotiable, discussed in the groups before the action. There are no absolute orders.

Mutiny, when expectations of players are not met, can lead to spinoffs and the blossoming of new groups forming between weekends. A certain degree of grassroots anarchy ^[7] is possible - inside of the tight goal to form a historiographical picture and inside the enclosing state's legal limitations.

Of course the radicalism of the discussions and changes is smaller than what we would expect from critical art production. The conservative ritualization of folklore is never far in "Living History" of WWII.

Still, heterogeneous groups during the same weekend are combining gestures of engineering, care, and destruction. This transgressive combination of gestures, performed through mimed acts of difference cannot often be found in profane routine^[8].

The heterogeneous players learn from each other to embrace different aspects of performing these transgressions between the exercises of drilling, shooting blanks, sleeping in self-made shelters, and making soup on a campfire for their co-players and visitors.

They build amateur communities that level their norms through the acted out combination of their members' needs and desires. To these embodied redefinitions, the systematically imposed daily **life** stands in stark contrast. After the weekend they might **dream** of negotiating it, while staying fit – just in case.

[1] Interview with B. in „Devoir de Mémoire“, part IV of my installation as shown in ZSenne artlab in April/Mai 2014

[2] Interview with G. in „Devoir de Mémoire“, part III of my installation as shown in ZSenne artlab in April/Mai 2014

[3] Now Heckler & Koch, exporting first G3, now G36 rifles and production licenses everywhere between Iran and Mexico. Source: Dossier, p 16 in: Die Zeit Nr 51, 12. Dezember 2013

[4] Gregory Bateson: Eine Theorie des Spiels, originally published in English in: APA Psychiatric Research Reports II, 1955

[5] I couldn't find any open protest against the Living History events in Belgium. In Germany or even France, that would be a very different story. In Germany, Atac protests loud and openly against Napoleonic reenactment. In France, so I heard, wearing a German uniform could get first degree witnesses to spit at you.

[6] Erich Fromm, Escape from Freedom, Farrar & Rinehart, 1941

[7] Homer and Herodotus are quoted as using the term "Anarchia" for a group of people or soldiers without a leader on http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anarchie#cite_note-Schm.C3.BCck-2.

Meanwhile the living history scene is closely watched by the Belgian defense. The Flemish military voices the wish to centralize the organization of living history reenactment under military governance.

[8] Generally, open displayed gestures of destruction are outsourced to a military excluded from civil life, care usually to women and engineering to the producing consumer goods industry.

>> next question to JULIA p63

SI PIERRE TO VICTORIA

In which way is the tension in your research between aesthetics and feminist activism productive? Could this tension become a germ to trigger a process of change?

come as constructive

leave as productive

this is the myriad

of this paradigm*

*the unknown singer

It was quite risky to bring the topic of the wedding into the field of contemporary performance research. What there could be intriguing apart from the national geographic eye? It is quite complicated to agree with the chosen definitions. I do differentiate (feminist) activism, which is a form of amateur direct politics and engaged (critical) art, the creators of which may be organically integrated within the liberal economy, meaning that they may do engaged art but don't participate in the immediate policy making. To spread and propagate feminist ideas and values I join the manifestations, creating instant art in the form of boards and logos, which may be considered as a tactical step in the takeover of the system. Meanwhile, in order to deal with more complex and mostly "latent" issues of reality I apply the method of artistic research.

Now, what does productivity mean in this context? Will my art change the system? In particular, does my artistic research on traditional weddings assist in the alteration of the traditionalist model of patriarchal superiority and the forging of the female subjectivity? Yes, on certain level. Striving for revolutionary change in the system may be inscribed in the work or left for the interpretation of the beholder. The productivity of these actions (critical art) may be somehow compared to the process of speaking about personal trauma in psychoanalysis. Similar to the psychoanalyst, the artist doesn't know where exactly the problem is hidden. However he/she tries to approach it with an appropriate lens and zoom in on it for him/herself and others, allowing it to be understood. In psychoanalysis, the verbalization and acknowledgment of the trauma is considered a path to the cure.

>> next question to VICTORIA p65

SI GOSIE TO MAITE

Michael Pollan demonstrates in his book 'The Botany of Desire' how people and domesticated plants have formed a reciprocal relationship. He explores how plants have manipulated humans to gain evolutionary advantage as much as humans have manipulated plants. So, he asks, who is really domesticating whom? Pollan describes the reciprocal relationship between humans and plants as one of reciprocal fulfillment of desire. What role is desire playing in your research? Could the research itself be translated as desire? The desire of whom?

Domestication is the point of departure in my relationship with plants. Once they affected me and I started observing them, I understood that they could give me something more than physical outcomes. Since the beginning, I was really amazed by their behavior in terms of silence, serenity, and acceptance. With certain plants, if I am capable of slowing down to their temporality, they can domesticate me (understanding domestication as "the process whereby a population of living organisms is changed at the genetic level, through generations of selective breeding, to accentuate traits that ultimately benefit humans" or in my case, human and non human bodies). It could mean a great challenge and transformational process for society.

Then, it's normal that a desire (a fundamental motivation of all human action) appears towards that object that could change my state through the domestication mentioned above and convert it in a more valuable one. The promise of a valuable mental, emotional, and physical transformation makes me desire the plant. Going further, if we consider that plants are fed by our physical, emotional, and mental rubbish, it's totally understandable that they also desire us.

>> next question to MAITE p64

SI JULIA TO PIERRE

Dear Pierre,

On Friday you mentioned being curious about what we might ask you about your work as an artist or researcher, as we only know your work as a "mentor", or, naming it as you prefer, as a very inspired and inspiring dramaturge.

I am curious too about you as a focal point of your own work!

Do you handle certain tools, methods, or **practices**, which translate your seemingly fountainous inspirations into patterns or decisions on the road towards form, narrative, or dramaturgy?

Hello Julia,

I am sending you two "poems".

Concerning **practices** and decision-making processes, I change both my methodology and my **practice** and decision making process every **time** I make something new. The different problematics I explore produce different methods.

POEM #1

Establishing Reality

Every thought and every action is reticulated, vascularized, connected to a network of related thoughts and actions, either virtual or actual.

Every step in our existence is only one of a number of possible steps.

The step is thought, made, acted out but is thought, made and acted out in a network of other steps as opportunities perceived or not, thought or not, imagined or not, present or not.

But what is even more complex is the relation between the step and the virtual network of possible steps.

The step resounds with possibilities "in" and "by" the network.

Or better, the network creates the step and the step creates the network through a resonance.

And the next step and then the following steps are resonances of the network resonating through them.

The network materializes by and in the next steps, which create a network becoming a path creating next steps.

So one should say, instead of "the step-by-step of our existence", "the step-by-step of *the* existence".

It is truly the existence that walks and by walking establishes reality.

A reality "made" by walking, through the act and the experience of walking itself.

The reality of my/the existence is experimental and I'm "making" my/the existence by the experience that I have from it.

But. I'm sure of nothing.

Everything, including me, can fail at any moment.

The walking can stop, take a wrong turn, get lost, and existence and reality vanish with it.

I am in charge of the smooth running of the walk, yet nothing tells me how to walk, where to go, how to find my way.

Existence is experimental, yes, but I am responsible for the experience without any instructions.

The reality of my existence is an experience undergone in thick fog

I establish reality without model, without project, groping on a dark path.

POEM #2

Practical theory of the world

Thinking is articulating.

Thinking means articulating.

For instance, let's consider the world,

Seeing the world, observing the world and then, thinking the world and, therefore, articulating the world.

Thus, thinking the world is articulating the world.

But the world causes an incident and we have a problem.

A situation.

The world is not and cannot be articulated.

One can articulate. But the world itself remains in itself, un-articulated.

Thinking, articulating, only represents the world.

Thinking addresses an articulated representation of the world.

Thinking / articulating the world is not a substitute for the world.

Thinking / articulating the world is always already being out of the world.

QED.

One may believe in "changing the world" by addressing a representation of it.

That is to say that a thought of the world becoming a structured representation of the world becomes an ideology.

That is to say an instrumentalizing vision of the world, exploiting a pre-determined relation with the world, leading one to believe that one has changed the world.

In reality, it is not what it seems.

Only the discourse has changed, not the world.

If it is not possible to produce a thought of the world that is not also a determination of the world, then let's try to produce a thought of the world that also, and at the same **time** as the thought itself, thinks its relation with the world.

A theory that would not only represent but would represent in relation.

A careful theory, attentive to the elaboration of a dialoguing **practice** with its object.

Here, the world.

A theory, therefore, grasping the world in a certain manner that would produce not only a representation through extrinsic discourse but also would produce a **practice** of relation with the world, from within.

A theory that would experimentally **practice** its thought on the world and in the world.

A theory that would reinvent the world practically.

A world practically theorized.

>> next question to PIERRE p62

SI CECILIA TO DAMLA

Dear Damla,

On your score, presented at Lilia's workshop, I saw a tool for an orderly confrontation. The score allows us to create a conversation outside the frame and the conventions that "usual communication" has, but at the same time within the structure of a contract. So, could the score be understood as a tool of control?

Does it stage a kind of "reenactment rebellion"?

In which way could confrontation be taken as a main concept related to the score and how does it related with your own research?

How would you relate Foucault's idea of "internalized authority" and your research?

I don't understand **scores** solely as a tool of control. In terms of my research, I can use **scores** to detect underlying conditions of disengagement as urban **scores** for disengagement. In that sense security measures, traffic rules, codes of conduct, social contracts of kindness, wisdom, ethics, etc. could be handled as **scores** and these kinds of **scores** probably serve mainly as tools for control. However, I think **scores** could also be used as tools of inspiration, creation, and production of content. I am already planning to propose some urban **scores** that could initiate an alternative experience of the city. I think here the distinction lies in the transparency and openness of the **score**. A concealed **score** without gaps for its performer to interpret would serve more as a tool for control. On the other hand, the very **acknowledgement** of a **score** provides the performer with the agency to choose whether or not to abide by the **score**, opening up various ways to deal with the **score**.

The exemplary **score** that we proposed in the workshop provides this **acknowledgement**, but in terms of openness it doesn't have gaps large enough for a performer to fill in. It verges more on the shores of control, so I understand why you are questioning it. Still, I think avoidance of confrontation is one of the issues that I see as a cause of disengagement. So, working on more open **scores** of confrontation and focusing on how to initiate/make possible confrontation with a **score**, could be a thread to follow.

Dealing with underlying conditions of disengagement, I think I am addressing the concealed structures of power rather than the obvious ones. So, I have a lot to relate with Foucault's theories on power, its "capillary action". Specifically, one of the branches I want to work on within the Public Disengagement Clinic is "Autoimmunity Studies" which focuses on internal police and the internalization of power. But as you can see from superficiality of my answer, I am aware of the connection, but also need to deal with it more in depth :)

>> next question to DAMLA p48

SI LILIA TO CECILIA

In the last week workshop 'score generator', after the exercise of describing an object or surface by its characteristics and associations, you spoke to me about Francis Ponge and the book 'Le parti pris des choses' ('The voice of things'). Because I'm very interested in the relation we establish with 'things' I researched Ponge and got to his idea of 'objeu'. In Wikipedia: The objeu is the act of pointedly choosing language or subject matter for its double meanings, hidden connections, and sensory effects on the reader. I had to think then about your double focus presentation in the opening week and would like to ask you to elaborate on the place 'in between' these strategies proposed, and how you think they operate.

Three answers and a small thesaurus to Lilia's questions.

1. These strategies proposea ways to elaborate on the place 'in-between'.

Answer one.

These strategies propose a place "in-between"; ambiguity and confusion as tools, blurriness as a "shape", and free association as content organization. There is an intention for non-deliberated **knowledge** that arises on the edges of narration. It is unpredictable. It is neither controlled nor intentional, finding not searching, public and intimate. Threshold. Border. Tangential. Indirect. These strategies produce: confusion, recognition, humor, and hidden connections through the use of metaphors, symbols, and parallelism.

Answer two.

I am particularly interested in the concept "In between", because I think it has to do a lot with my work and structures.

January the 6th, I wrote in my notebook: "The space in-between things is where you have to work". Someone had said this sentence, "in-between" the conversation on the third floor during the opening week. Nine days later, on January 15th I received an email from a friend that read: "...did you know, liebe Cecilia, that when you touch something, someone... you never actually really touch. There is always an infinitely small gap between you and the other. The sensation of touch comes from an electromagnetic field between the elements. So we can't actually touch anything or anyone. Anyway...".

This email conversation reminds me of something I wrote some **time** ago: "The gap between the bodies is the space where they touch each other". (El vacío entre los cuerpos es el espacio donde estos se tocan). So in its first meaning: "in-between" would be a place of emptiness. Gap. Silence. But also the blank space that actually articulates and makes possible communication. "In-between", could mean either space of confusion or space of silence.

Answer three.

The relationship between "in-between" and "around".

Interior/exterior.

We went together to the toilet. Inside, there were those flies flying around. Someone has left an apple in the trash last week and the flies came for it. C was thinking of death and decomposition, and thought of dots in a **score**; an ephemeral and absurd **score** with no traces or ability to be played again. It was a **score** that decomposed as it played. The idea of "around" came as a consequence of observing their flight.

Around language, around performance, around... it is a key word since one of the things I pretend to work with (the audience) is somehow "around" and "in between". During the presentation someone asks if I want to disappear through the presentation itself. The strategy of presenting this double or triple or "n" discourse was meant to be true to the shape of my own thought. Multiplicity and disorder, several directions at the same **time**.

2. And how do you think they operate.

(Thesaurus) They operate by:

Free association, association of ideas, chain of thought, inner monologue, interior monologue, mind mapping, train of thought, word painting.

Metaphor, analogy, comparison, figure of speech, phrase, figure, condensation, trope, metonymy, figurativeness, image.

Mirroring, echo, embodiment, glass, show, imitate, copy, reflect, simulate, represent, emulate, copy

Parallelism, affinity, correspondence, doubling, equivalence, facsimile, image, similitude.

Collage, pastiche, compilation, patchwork, potpourri, collection, reappropriation.

Emotionality, susceptibility, impressibility, sensibility, impressionability.

Play game, performance, show, entertainment, hit.

Polyphony, chord, blending, concurrence, unity.

SI SAMAH TO CAMILA

I really liked the parallel narratives of torture and crocodiles (I must sound a little mad in that sentence!). But the underlying tension of our stereotypical understanding of crocodiles lends itself well to the overall readings of violence and torture; although the crocodiles seem quite peaceful in your story. I am interested to know how your research on contemporary theatre and violence in Latin America, and its instigation of testimonies overlaps in your practice. How do you want to engage the audience in different contexts with these narratives? How might context affect the work? I am interested in your thoughts on how micro-histories engage audiences in different contexts.

Dear Samah,

Your question touches on a very important point in my research, which deals with the tension between private or micro-histories and the grand scale, official narratives that account for the conflict. For me, part of this tension lies in the fact that official accounts usually de-personalize both victims and perpetrators and deprive them of their names and faces—in a way, they kill them a second **time**. I have found that for audiences, in general, it is easier to connect to stories of individuals, and that it is at the moment when a true victim appears in front of them that everything becomes real. Which brings me to the second point, which is the tension between truth and fiction. I am very interested in the ways in which the tension between these two registers can be stressed through emphasizing the "real" as an effect that becomes a shareable experience and a space for contagion. I have studied the ritual aspects of this phenomenon and I could tell you more about that on another occasion. A large amount of theoretical and historical works on the subject of "testimony" have come out over the past couple of decades: one big group comes from the trauma theory people who began working with testimonies from holocaust victims and another comes from the Latin American Subaltern Studies School, where testimonio is treated as a literary genre in and of itself, arguing that the problem of truth should be dismissed in the name of the real.

Now, regarding the crocodiles, I'm sorry but you got the wrong man-eating animal. Mine are hippos. I am especially interested in them because they carry a history of displacement in their own bodies, but your question makes me think of whether or not they themselves could be displaced by some other animal without losing the metaphor. This is something I would have to think more about.

SI CAMILA TO GOSIE

Dear Gosie,

Last week, when you introduced your practice to the group, I was fascinated to see your experiments and felt very much connected to their playfulness. I got, however, a little lost in the theoretical discourse around them and couldn't figure out the connection between the experiments and some of your research concepts. How do you see this connection between your practice and your theoretical constructs operating? How does one inform, illustrate or guide the other? I am particularly curious about this after seeing "Anette" come to life this week. It made me think that there is a "character" for every kind of research. Who would be the character for yours?

Dear Camila,

Thanks for your question. For a whole week, I was like a madman chasing the character of my research. I felt like a person disguised as a tree looking for my roots (a viewpoint for my research) in a very very very big and above all, dense forest.

There were many possible candidates, but after reading, walking, **dreaming** and a little bit of talking, I was convinced that none of them were suitable for the job so the vacancy remains unfilled (unless I take it).

There was my shoemaker. He lives around the corner in a house filled with shoes and surrounded by the smells of it. He is really a master in fixing demolished heels, but **sometimes** he encounters more complex problems and then it gets interesting. I wait and while waiting, I see him doubting, trying and thinking about elegant solutions, and a whole process unfolds in front of your eyes.

In contrast to him, I will always remain frustrated in my kitchen/atelier.

Nevertheless, my own craftsmanship opens up a new universe of possibilities. The possibilities created by failure, errors, and difficulties are at the core of my work. Thus, as a craftsman in his workshop, I uncover a process. In my work, I present the ungraspable through a process of constant and unremitting experimentation where failure is a defining element, errors are being exposed, and in the end, if we go back to my shoemaker, the client leaves with a shoe even more damaged than before.

Another craftsman, monsieur Leys for miroiterie Leys, whom I used to visit often and who over the years became my ideal (my **dream-me**) put a mirror in front of me and showed me I was certainly not him. I AM A BRICOLEUSE.

Reading or better said 'bricoling' through 'La Pensée Sauvage' (Lévi-Strauss), I realized that the character of my research lives in a tribe somewhere on the Samoa Islands. To be honest, the bricoleur in his book is me as me, myself and not the/a 'character' of my research.

A bricoleur works from within a structure in order to build out of it: "the materials of the bricoleur are at hand and have had a use.... and they can be used again either for the same purpose or for a different one if they are at all diverted from their previous function." (Lévi-Strauss). Thus, a bricoleur is conservative. The domesticating of the eerie, the wild and the untamed, as I do in my work, is probably more suitable for a horse whisperer than a freedom fighter.

But then again, where do I rest and unpack my case?

I wish I could give a more profound answer to your question, but for now I will put my head on a restless pillow.

Greetings,

Gosie

>> next question to GOSIE p60

SI ELKE TO ANNA

Looking at your presentation at the end of the Score workshop, I wondered how much you find the authorship of your work a mere inconvenient step to come to the construction of a shared experience. In other words, how far do you feel you have to deflect your authorship by masking it through role-playing (the bureaucrat of the Ministry) or pseudonyms (the shared author), in order to be able to come to a more profound sharing of your research? And how does that function for you?

Dear Elke,

The question I want to raise is more important than my authorship. My opinion can be visible but not necessarily the point of interest. How I present my question can take many forms. It can be me as a person, but it can also be a photo, text, sound, a book, or a series of symbols/images. The material is chosen as a means of communication based on its ability to address the viewer.

The persona enables positioning. The voice comes from a person that is my construction and obviously cannot be as complex as a real person. For me the persona is different from co-authorship. The bureaucrat "persona" is a mirroring of a certain aspect of society where I try to embody different kinds of government employees and blend it with my own experience of government work. To be the person that tries to help everyone with his or her needs and at the same **time** stick to the rules of society/law is a destined-to-fail effort. As my persona, I can be more extreme in my opinions, actions and relations to make the bureaucratic machine visible. That persona is a tool to present a certain aspect of society and explore how we interact with it, how we are controlled by it, and how we at the same **time** reinforce it. I am also interested in opening up a way to play with that control and levels of comfort/discomfort and trust/distrust.

The creation of a role might formulate things clearly, but with the shared-authorship or the collaboration processes I feel I blur my own artistic linearity and create a break in my personal cognitive process. Working together with someone else makes me compromise, improvise, and listen to references other than my own. That complexity the work gains through working together is very fruitful to me. The communication with the one you work with will always be up for interpretation, since our experience of language, situations, and references, is always slightly different and our needs or desires will only remain semi-transparent.

>> next question to ANNA p58

SI GAJA TO ELKE

Do you think sustaining a **practice** is creating **time** for habits to appear?

Or is it instead a **time** and space measured by the sensation, which does not intend to transcend the threshold of experience? But if it would, is this transcendence creating a space for a subject or is it possibly creating an abject space within the practice?

In my understanding of artistic research, I indeed put a great emphasis on the **practice**. The **practice** of ideas, of **movements**, of materials, the 'putting into **practice**' of what connects your research to your body, your thinking, your agency in the world. The interesting thing in insisting on the **practice** (in letting it unfold itself with its own consequences) is that this is the point where the it starts to dictate its own **time** frame. Its unfolding has a certain rhythm to it that demands your 'subjection'. Its unraveling and the path it creates for you to walk takes unforeseen twists and turns and can easily disorient you, dissolving your sense of intention or direction. In my experience, this dictatorial, or 'enlightened despotic' character of a **practice** (of your concepts put into **practice**) is indeed creating a certain framework in which new habits appear. Habits are understood as repetitive actions; set-ups insisted upon until they unveil what they can possibly tell you. Habits, in that sense, result from the discipline demanded by the unfolding of the **practice**. For example: the need for making **time** for a body **practice**, a warm-up for the thinking process, a transformation of your social engagements, a regularity of exercising (body and mind), a space for concentration, isolation, collaboration, etc., and the **time** to reflect on all these **movements** and choreograph them into understanding, experienced and embodied.

But on the other hand this **practice**, approached as an attitude, as a way of working and living, will start to question you; contextualizing your preconceptions, uprooting your old habits through the liberating force of the discipline demanded. This is the surprising double-edged outcome of a **practice** taken seriously. When you follow up on what is revealed, discipline turns into clarity, into the liberation of old habits. Breaking up the false promise of 'freedom', which so often only produces more of the same. Since 'freedom' taken in the superficial way is promoted day in and day out, nestled in every possible crevice of our personal and public lives, it seriously lacks in subversive potential, criticality, or any kind of serious engagement with the world. Because **time** and again 'freedom' gets reduced to a being 'free from'. And the 'from' we are freed from, is exactly the material consequences which would allow our actions or decisions to make sense, to mean something, even if only to ourselves. An action free of consequences, free from material constraints, produced in an obstacle-free dystopia (or a capitalist white lie) is an empty gesture; a critical smokescreen.

In that sense there are different ways to interpret the 'subject' of the research, that probably answer to two different ways to interpret what we mean with this term. The first one I already touched upon at the beginning of my answer; the research **practice** when taken up seriously, as a journey without clearly marked end, will step by step begin to unravel your subject-ness by revealing the normative schemes that have become embodied in your 'normal **life practices**'. The **practice** then proposes another, more tentative way of dealing with **time** and space, as concretely experienced in the research. And as such, 'you' (or rather the 'I') get resubjectivized by the 'rules', the 'demands' of the **practice**.

In another understanding of the term though, the 'subject' is that which has agency, which can perform change on its environment. It is the place from which discussion and the sharing of ideas and points of view can take flight. In that sense, I think the **practice** can be considered as this place that offers agency to whomever **practices**. The **practice** is then the subject that distributes this agency. The **practice** becomes a subject in opening up a common space in the layout of its unfolding regulations and potentials. Marking a necessity for debate, for doing, for a public experience and **practice**. It is the activation of the research, the moment the research is put into the world, allowed to breath and breed with what surrounds it, demanding nourishment, nurture, and **attention**, to be able to thrive. A **practice** like a Tamagochi, a technological (in the sense of 'put together') tool that will start to rule or bend your **life and knowledge practice**.

The **practice** inscribes itself in its relation to the world and invites you to follow its alien logics as they become clear in the doing. Leading you into experiences that were not part of your mind frame or aesthetic taste palette before. And that is where I can understand your question about the 'abject'. In practicing the unknown, you might come to embrace that which possible offended or repelled you before. Step into the danger zone of possibly 'betraying' who you thought you were. Enter into another worldview, another set of relations with what surrounds you. In that sense the **practice** might indeed become abject, or even destructive to your sense of self. It might need you to let go or confront what frightens you or alienates you from yourself. It might very well become the starting point of 'undoing your subjectivity'.

>> next question to ELKE p67

SI MALA TO LILIA

Lilia. Could you elaborate on scores as 'collective dispositives' that allow for or enable the emergence of 'new' knowledge? In what way are scores relational and how is the relationality of the score a key factor in the production or the processing of knowledge? What is the importance of accident in the process of emergence of knowledge produced or processed in/by the score?

By framing **scores** as 'collective dispositives', I see the invitation to engage and relate with the 'other' (the other already being the structure of the **score**) plus all the other elements involved in the game: other people, objects, audience, the space and context where it happens, etc. In the dealing with those 'others', the process of negotiation creates and makes visible sensible formulations for the construction of meaning on a collective ground.

One could say that 'new' **knowledge**; reformulated **knowledge** or acted out **knowledge** is a political act, by putting into action consciously or unconsciously a relation between the self and the other. This endeavour enables the emergence of ideas, orientations, inclinations, and transformation of a given situation. The departure point is modified by a series of actions, behaviours, energies that cross, interact in a given temporality and spatiality. And by framing the field of action and rendering visible the agency of all elements in play, the **score** becomes a tool for acknowledging **knowledge-in-process**.

I believe one thing is never one 'thing' alone. One 'thing' exists in a network of relations that are not linear, that are from different natures and belong also to other constellations. That's why **knowledge** is not universal/absolute but specific to the context where it emerges, is processed and constructed. That's why it needs to be **practiced**. That's why it doesn't stay still but is in constant **movement**.

I would say that the accident is a strong evidence of **knowledge** processing. It brings to the fore an unforeseen relation, the unexpected. It changes the temporality of the situation; it creates new points of view. It makes the live alive. I see **scores** as triggers for accidents that instead of being avoided are embraced. It's a call for risk taking on unstable grounds, for imagination and the manifestation of emotions, ideas, and states of being, not as ideologies but as awareness of the being in the present. It's the state of **attention** mingled with the desire to play.

>> next question to LILIA p74

SI ANNA TO SAMAH

What do you think art means for a country at war or in conflict? What is the need for art and what can art do for the people and the situation? Is it different from a country at peace?

The first thing I am prompted to say is that the question of the function of art in society, or how art engages its context(s) is probably an on-going one in politically stable and unstable milieus. Essentially, I am not sure that there is a difference in the function of art in varying contexts if we agree that whatever positions or actions artists take, these are essentially political and critical ones that engage audiences in the questions and issues they are presenting.

But this question is clearly directed to the context of the Arab world and that is the perspective from which I will answer. In the local context, artistic **practices** including theatre, music, and **writing**, are tools for a community to engage in a process of reflecting on the issues they are immersed in. And if we were to imagine this for artists working in marginalized or displaced communities (such as immigrants and refugees) the function of making and engaging in artistic **practice** is important for people to process their experiences in their contexts, contributing to a larger discourse on the human condition.

Perhaps during 'war or conflict' (terms I would use with caution as they lend themselves to the stereotypical rhetorics of the mainstream media) artists find more urgency to use their **practice** as a form of resistance. Examples that quickly come to mind are the South African apartheid **movement** and their instrumentalization of music and Egyptian artists/activists use of urban arts and documentary video to counter military propaganda. Both groups used these mediums to engage a larger audience spectrum, and the actions provided an opportunity for artists to reposition themselves and their work as civic engagement and independent activism. The same was true for Palestinian artists who, following their displacement from their homes as a result of the Israeli colonization and the declaration of the State of Israel, found the urgency to use their **practice** as tool for resistance.

In the international context, it becomes a little trickier as artistic **practice** can be more easily appropriated and instrumentalized in positive and negative ways. Nevertheless, if the artists' autonomy is not compromised and does not feed into a propaganda machine, artistic works participate in producing alternative narratives, challenging historiographies and their production mechanisms. I also believe that each **time** period has its particular conditions that affect the artist, the object, and how it engages its audiences. The systems in which artists have produced in the Middle East for example, have witnessed fast-changing events that force us to first understand the new 'rules of the game' that in turn inform our reading of the work.

>> next question to SAMAH p42

SI VICTORIA TO RARES

Imagine you are invited as a cook to a Romanian wedding, but you are supposed to plan only an individual wedding menu for a bride and a groom. Considering your knowledge of a traditional Romanian cuisine, write a plan of several dishes (I am especially interested in the ingredients) for each of them that could be considered as a culinary ritual of connection through consumption.

>> next question to RARES p100

SI LILIA TO CAROLINA

After seeing your sound installation I would like to ask about the relation between physical space and sound space you are trying to develop. In what way does this affective relation to space through sound connect the individual experience to the collective experience?

I see the physical space as the one that gives me possibilities to work on the sound space. I chose to work with the corner that could provide plural relationships between the sounds, not only in terms of the positioning of the sound sources and then exploring the aesthetics of the wires, but also in approaching the external existent space. In this specific case (my sound installation at a.pass) I see the sound space as the "foreigner", in the sense of adapting and at the same **time** taking on the potentialities of the new space. During the process, the sound space is a layer added to what has been offered, but afterwards I cannot see it like this anymore. I can only perceive both as one entanglement of powers/forces pulling me in different directions. The sound space is a way to learn more about the physical space and deepening our/my relationship with it.

As for the second question, I hadn't reflected a lot about before. My decision to use sound as the main material of my work was firstly related to the idea of constructing places out of something we cannot see so the perception would be closely related to the experience. Without intentional visual stimulus, the environment becomes the stage, defined by the people, and in this way, soundscape experiences are connected by the interference of one visitor to another.

>> next question to CAROLINA p45



SESSION 2

QUESTIONS by 02.01 2014, 12pm

NEXT MEETING: 31.01.2013, 5.30pm

LOCATION: apass

JULIA TO SAMAH

CAROLINA TO GAJA

ANNA TO CAROLINA

MAITE TO LILIA

GOSIE TO DAMLA

LILIA TO CAMILA

MALA TO CECILIA

CECILIA TO MALA

DAMLA TO ANNA

ELKE TO GOSIE

VICTORIA TO PIERRE

GAJA TO JULIA

PIERRE TO VICTORIA

NICOLAS TO NICOLAS

CAMILA TO ELKE

S 2 JULIA TO SAMAH

Dear Samah, this question is about timing in your work.

You were writing that the systems artists use in the Middle East produce fast changing events. These events force us "to first understand the new 'rules of the game' that in turn inform our reading of it."

Do you, in your artistic practice of painting and other media, use counterpoints to "first understand the new 'rules of the game'", counterpoints which source themselves in immediate re/interactions to sudden input?

Is there a chronological order to these different processes in your methodology?

You showed us an example where you read a famous, utopian speech from many years ago in a marketplace. How do you relate to traditional/external given scores/scripts in your work?

For the first part of your question, concerning my current research entitled Chicken Scribbles and the Pigeon that Looks like a Frog on the relationship of aesthetics and political moments in Jordan, Palestine, and Iraq, I had to look up the definition of counterpoints! I hope what you meant with this word is: in contrasting yet parallel narratives, so I will answer according to that definition. In the end, I am looking for a poetic, rhythmic, or alternative element that can become a thread that points towards the political, or what I referred to as the "rules of the game" in my conversation with Anna Sörenson. This abstracted element would refer to the political and at the same **time** become a **score** for a film or performance.

A work that comes to mind here, that layers a historical event narrated within a strong musical component is the film '1395 Days Without Red' by Šby ut Redt ć & Anri Sala. The underlying **score** is musical; Tarkovsky's Pathetic and "The city it is shot in is Sarajevo, [it follows a woman who walks] the route known as Sniper Alley during the siege of the city endured by its citizens for 1395 days between 1992 and 1996. The woman is reliving the experience of the trauma of the siege. It is her individual journey through the collective memory of the city." 2

The counterpoint in my work is the political history, but I need to be careful because I do not think my work should be recounting history, which is already accessible from countless sources and is fundamentally not the subject of my work. While the political history is a key underpinning for my research, I am hoping to steer away from it as its a discourse that artists from the Arab world are encouraged to produce, and I generally find it frustrating to end up

in a political discourse rather than an artistic one, unless that is the intention of the work.

The storyline may be linear or chronological, as is the case for most historiographies that would otherwise follow a **timeline**, but in reality as we are more aware now, history ends up taking a more dynamic shape that has many crossovers in events, people, and geographies.

As for the second question which is related to an earlier performance intervention "Where Are the Arabs?" 2009. The script for this performance was taken from speeches of Egypt's president, Gamal Abdel Nasser, between 1958 and 1963, the years of the Arab Unity Republic project. The script of the performance is made up with parts of his speeches that focused on unity to attain strength for Arab countries and dignity for the Arab people. From these selected paragraphs, I rearranged them from their chronological order so that they would create continuity for a single, long and repetitive speech on Arab unity. I made negligible edits on content, as the idea was to re-present it in its original form in the contemporary moment to see how it resonates (or not). Repetition is the only element I consciously intended throughout the script with the intention of both mimicking repetition used for emphasis (in the Arabic language) yet simultaneously producing redundancy.

1. Scores meeting, week 1, 24th January 2014, a.pass 3rd floor.

2. <http://www.mif.co.uk/event/sejla-kameric-anri-sala-1395-days-without-red-projections-works-from-the-artangel-collection/>

>> next question to SAMAH p82

S2 CAROLINA TO GAJA

Sometimes, when I think about your research (phantom limbs) I have the impression that in one way we all feel we have an incomplete body or incomplete relationship with our body. Do you think that the body practice you have been developing in your research can function as a way to understand better and/or acknowledge this incompleteness, or even to improve the bond between the mental and physical aspects of ourselves?

I like to think of phantom sensations, as I understand them through the context of the body, because the problematic they create produces a kind of parable to talk about more general subjects, while bringing down the abstract to something more concrete—to the self divided by the sensorial signals of something physically missing (body/mind mismatch). The fact that phantom pain is the reason why science is investigating the subject is emblematic for Western medicine. Nevertheless thanks to this fact, we also learn about all other phantom sensations (the **movements** of the phantom, phantom telescoping, itching, tickling, etc.), which accompany the mourning of the body member, and other more complicated processual issues, like where the difference between imagination and actual **movement** lies.

I think we are always incomplete, as we are always in the process of relating our previous experience to the one that is present, even though we tend to forget about this in order to act efficiently in a world of changing circumstances. In that sense, I don't really think my research is aimed at "completing the incomplete". The experiences of sitting on a wet chair or running down the stairs or seeing people moving around, all create the palimpsest of our bodily constitution, priming us for certain future realities. However our bodily actions are worn out and without sensuous power, due to repetition and processes of automatization that allow multitasking. And to paraphrase Nietzsche (out of the context), they are like "coins which have lost their pictures and now matter only as metal, no longer as coins."

My interest is not in becoming consciously aware of all this piling up, but more to observe the changes with a bigger distance, allowing myself to feel the wider dimension of a single experience.

The workshop with Lisa Nelson is very informing here. In a way, she is building the sequence of exercises, each of them influencing the next, and the previous one also reconsidered through our bodies. But even when we are working with the **life** span of sensations, letting them rise in our consciousness and later letting them go, does not necessarily mean we gain clearance with every new step. There are always small traumas that invade our systems

more than others, and they will sustain our vague interest in some sensation for longer, or even change the whole pattern of relating to things. But they can also create the constant feeling of maladjustment, which can be better understood by phantom sensations at work and which are beyond our conscious control. I always thought injuries (traumas, wounds, etc) are the best teachers. Maybe it's also my Western thinking, but thanks to these small traumas I can examine my own perception in greater detail through the phantom processes.

>> next question to GAJA p89

S2 ANNA TO CAROLINA

You answered: "The sound-space is a way to learn more about physical space and improve the relationship with it." You also addressed the sound-space as a foreigner or a stranger and I found that really interesting. To think of the sound-space as a stranger you meet when traveling, that is what will help you understand and provide you with the relationship to the new physical space. Does this also raise new possibilities of communications when we travel? Are some sound-spaces more informative than others? Can they help us adapt to a place faster? Do we have private sounds-spaces in relation to our culture that make us more or less of a "stranger" when we travel? And finally, what sound-spaces have been important to you?

When I previously talked about sound-space I was discussing the artwork and not the environmental sounds that can be seen as plural layers of the space. Sticking to the art piece as the subject, I think one sound-space can be more informative than another. It will always depend on the artist's intentions while producing it. As much as I used voices, my aim was not to offer to people a specific experience. For me, the voices were an immaterial **presence** floating around the physical space and in this way they were "informing" our familiarity to it. In general, I believe there is always an intrinsic relationship between the listener and the sound piece because it automatically requires silence and a sort of state of **attention** to the atmosphere created.

On the other hand, I like very much this idea of thinking of the sound-space as existing layers of our surroundings. They will be, just as in the case of the artwork, very subjective constructions of a specific moment inserted in a specific space. I can see these sound spaces as connections we make with previous experiences and/or new ones we promote in order to establish bonds with the new space; what you called "private sound-spaces in relation to our culture". When it comes to travel I don't really see them as directly 'informative' or 'helping to us to adapt' but as mechanisms we produce to be informed or to adapt.

Regarding the last question, I can easily say Brussels is the sound-space that has been important to me. I discovered silence when I moved to Brussels, meaning, I became aware of the new environment through the sounds I could hear that I had never listened to before. I got addicted to it, listening and listening and listening for hours to a house, a person, or an action. This shift in the way I look into certain spaces is the strongest liaison I keep with Brussels.

>> next question to CAROLINA p80

S2 MAITE TO LILIA

If we think of actions towards human bodies we could say these are humanized actions but towards non-human bodies. These actions are developed in the infertile terrain of utility. What then do you think happens to a human action when it's performed towards an object? What is this action unfolding and what are the nuances acquired by the shift?

I interpret human action as an affective gesture towards one's own body or towards another external body. Any kind of body.

I have the tendency to think that actions performed by humans are human-like. We anthropomorphize the world around us and interpret the other as our own image. It's hard for me to think that a human outside the domain of what is human can perform an action. It's also very hard for me to think that I can observe an action (which is an action in itself) from another point of view other than my human condition. Sometime I think this is an unfortunate condition. The actions we perform are categorized in many different ways and this categorization produces cultures, ethical parameters, language, juridical systems, etc. We human beings are dependent on grids of operation in order to understand, advance, and project into the future. The thought we could

operate in any other way is a source of experimentation and in it I relate very much to the performing arts, mostly to dance or body **practices** that insist and invest in another redistribution of the body. What would happen if I would find myself in the middle of a forest without the resources I'm used to but with other ones? The utilitarian use of things is real. We need things. We touch, consume, and breathe because we need to. The difference is the acknowledgment of what those things are and how we are relating to them.

Spiritual **practices** channel the other, attempting to incorporate the uncanny and enlarge the spectrum of what is there. It make me think now of Viveiros De Castro, the Brazilian anthropologist that studied Amerindian tribes. In those tribes the differentiation between 'humankind' and 'humanity', or the human species and the moral subject is not as concrete as it is for the so called Occidental civilization. The inclusion of animals, plants, and objects in the construction of the self and the world opens up another way of looking at humanity.

It makes me want to refer also to Jane Bennett and her book "Vibrant matter, a political ecology of things". She writes, "Affects create a field of forces that do not tend to congeal into subjectivity" (David Cole). What I am calling impersonal affect or material vibrancy is not a spiritual supplement or "life force" added to the matter said to house it. Mine is not a vitalism in the traditional sense. I equate affect with materiality, rather than posit it as a separate force that can enter and animate a physical body. In my work and mainly in the past few years, I have focused on creating strategies for an encounter between human and non-human bodies. The in-situ performance 'Live-in room' and the stage performance 'Moving you' want to destabilize the functionality of objects and encourage them to voice their individuality. I wanted to create another kind of relation with things where the uncanny appears. In these performances the audience is also invited to imagine their own sense of things. In both pieces we work with domestic objects with which we have an affective quotidian relationship. The over-riding purpose is to dive into a system of associations, which allow us to reinvent or be aware of a personal/singular system of references.

Those singularities intertwine with each other creating another ecology of relations where the affect conducts the unfolding of **time**.

Another reference text to my work would be: "It-tingly Variations in space" 'The owls are not what they seem' (On the democracy of objects in trans-functional space). By Elke Van Campenhout about the performances 'Live-in room' and 'Moving you'.

>> next question to LILIA p74

S2 GOSIE TO DAMLA

Dear Damla,

In answer to the previous question, you stated that ethics are a mechanism for control. I was quite intrigued by that. If you were a doctor in the 'Public Disengagement Clinic' and had to swear a Hippocratic Oath, a promise to ethically care for the body while treating it (I realize that the fact of swearing an oath to Hippocrates is probably rather problematic in the context of your research), how would you formulate/perform your anti-hypocritical disengagement? Is there a place for ethics and, if so, what could be the meaning of care and what is the status of the body?

But, maybe there are no doctors in your clinic. Are there?

First, I need to clarify two misunderstandings. The mention of ethics in my last answer doesn't stand alone, but is intended as a part of the phrase "social contracts of kindness, wisdom, ethics". It is not the concepts themselves but the social contracts framing them that I criticize as mechanisms of control. Also, I do not use the term "disengagement" as an ideal to be formulated/performed anti-hypocritically or otherwise, but as a syndrome (a complex of symptoms) that needs to be recognized and counteracted. I hope my answer now will make more sense with these clarifications.

Ethics is a concept that I dare not talk much about. What I problematize about ethics is the production of unquestionable behavioral values under the guise of what is and is not ethical; the use of ethical judgments to proffer firm values out of obscure descriptions, the exclusion of further consideration and discussion, or the occasions in which concern for "ethical behaviour" has an influence over patterns of thought and behavior in society. I problematize ethical judgment with its claims to universal right or wrong for undermining personal determination, disengaging society from proposing authentic arguments and re-/actions about ethical issues, and governing desires by creating and suppressing them.

Medical ethics is another of these problematic examples. It places a value on human **life**, swearing to care for the body as if "health" is an unequivocal concept, and monopolizes the body and health depending on capitalist values.

However, I have a strong affinity for Deleuze's approach to ethics, which he states as "not to be unworthy of what happens to us."* This definition demands attentiveness, consideration, and action in respect to what happens to us. This approach to ethics also has a very central place in my research, through posing almost as an antonym to disengagement. However, I don't

use the term clinic in a very literal way, where some "patients" are admitted and "cured". So, what is at stake is not an "ethical care for" and the stated "attentiveness, consideration, and action" are not the methodological pledges of the clinic. Rather, it is the very quality of experience that the research and the clinic are looking for.

The status of the body within the research and the clinic is described accordingly. In the introduction to her workshop, Lisa Nelson described the focus of her interest as the automatized **movement** of the body that disregards its desires, acting unconsciously (out of habit) within a lack of **time** and agency. I think there is a strong parallel with my research in this description. The difference is that my focus is the disengaged behaviors of the social body rather than the automatized **movements** of the physical one. The social body for sure is not exclusive of physical body, but for example in the texts of the former Public Allergies Clinic, I used the word body to indicate individuals, groups, and communities, as well as buildings and cities as physical spaces or governmental centres, etc.

Lastly, I consider professionalization as a major factor in disengagement and de-professionalization as a central element in my research. Although, I still don't know how this would work in **practice**, the clinic is not intended to have any doctors in the conventional sense. Maybe it is intended to make doctors out of all of us.

*Deleuze, Gilles. The Deleuze Reader. Ed. Constantin Boundas. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993: pg 78.

>> next question to DAMLA p91

S2 LILIA TO CAMILA

When you presented your work in Opening Week, you were working on several types of writing that seemed to bring to the forefront the issue of ‘truth’ in a critical way. The text was neither simply a factual description of a situation, nor a testimony or a fiction, but rather an alternation of genres. By displacing the content of the text into several writing formats it allowed me to engage differently with the (hi)story and to think of the real as a more complex affair. I would propose that you elaborate on the thoughts that brought you to make that choice in relation to your case.

Dear Lilia, it is hard to describe my thoughts about something that came more as an intuition. “It” erupted in the middle of an attempt to grab something I, in many ways, thought was right in front of me, just waiting to be apprehended. For many years, every **time** my **writing** was going well I would find a new boundary for articulation. I can only describe this as the irruption of the unnameable. It began to come out of every corner of every text, speech, testimony, and image. And then it spread out to every corner of my own **writing**, reminding me that every attempt to write, to make an inscription, carries within itself an erasure. When **writing** becomes an exercise of concealment, one has to start minding the gap it leaves behind. I have started to think about ways to write around, within, and over this gap. One solution I have found is to circle it, navigating its surroundings. Language, in this exercise, becomes a powerful tool to give a name to the unnameable, making it appear as an image. But even then, it will only be comprehensible through fragments. It is a very frustrating exercise, but it allows for the appearance of new registers of discourse; new words grouping in unexpected ways. It’s like a reversal of power in the sense that one (the writer) is at the mercy of the demands of everything which lies in that gap. Each thing will demand a different language and will appear as a new articulation. It’s also a reversal of a radical idea of the performativity of language.

I’m afraid all of this sounds like pataphysics, so I will try to bring it to the physical realm. In my experience most of the unnameable comes from the boundary between language and bodies. Bodily experiences like pain can’t be described except in metaphorical ways, comparing them to things that happen outside of the body. The same goes for actions that produce the pain. From sickness to torture, every phenomenon that transgresses the body opens up a gap in language. And this is as violent for language as it is for the body. Some other unnameable things come from the impossibility of putting fragments together, **sometimes** with dire (political) consequences.

In response to fragmented stories, fragmented bodies, and even a fragmented self (my self, in and out of **writing**) that can’t be arranged in a linear form, I’ve decided to embrace those fragments and leave them as such to speak by themselves. What happens then is that those boundaries you refer to between truth and fiction don’t matter anymore. It is, after all, just like the stories we tell ourselves and live by.

>> next question to CAMILA p119

S2 MALA TO CECILIA

Cecilia. In your answer to Lilia’s question about the place ‘in-between’ that your working strategies propose, you said, “What these strategies propose as a place ‘in-between’ I think is ambiguity and confusion as tools, blurriness as a ‘shape’ and free association as content organization with intention for non-deliberated knowledge that arises in the edges of narration. These strategies produce: confusion, recognizance, humor and they create hidden connections through the use of metaphors, symbols and parallelism”. I have seen some of the performance recordings and read some of the poetry on your website. I can see how you apply these strategies to the work. I also know you are now writing your doctoral thesis about filmmaker Pedro Costa. I was wondering if you also apply these strategies in your theoretical writing and, if so, to what extent, and how? What then are the qualities of such a theoretical text? And how does it work on the reader?

Dear Mala,

Thanks a lot for your question. Right now, this is a key issue in my work. How can I be consequent between my **practice** and my theoretical **writing** and how can they interact? For me, it is easier in performance, to go towards “theoretical material” that interweaves with personal experience and creates intimate and interactive **practices** and discourses. But how to apply those strategies in the theoretical **writing** is more complicated to me.

As a clarification, I should say that I already wrote the thesis on Pedro Costa. Now, I am **writing** on audience interaction. Nevertheless, there was an attempt to try “another kind of **writing**” in the Pedro Costa essay, which might be mainly because of my own difficulty in trying to follow an academic pattern. What I tried was to relate it with my **practice** in a very simple way. I wrote around three main points:

1. Space
2. Words
3. The relation between reality and fiction in his cinema

These were the three main points and they were organized around three of his films:

1. No Quarto da Vanda
2. Oû gît voutre sourire enfoui? Onde jaz o teu sorriso?
3. Juventude em Marcha

I wrote it as a kind of internal monologue speaking with myself through his cinema using these three frames as an anchor. But still I felt it was insufficient.

What are then the qualities of such a theoretical text?

In "Le rire de la méduse", Hélène Cixous points out the characteristics of "Écriture féminine": body, unconscious, desire, the rejection of "official male ways of thinking/ structures", and also the notion of "l'écriture comme résistance" (edges, remains, etc.) I think the main qualities of the text are related to these characteristics. I also connected with the notion of "dissemination" by Derrida; there is not a unique and exclusive meaning, a singular truth, but rather a text with plural scattered meanings and themes whose differences engender meaning.

And how does it work on the reader?

I think it can work in a very precise and intimate way within the reader. It allows the reader to appropriate the text by bringing part of themselves to it and through that process to complete it. It functions on a personal level but at the same **time** can work with general questions on a theoretical level. Since it can have many shapes and the capacity to embody different genres, it is versatile and accurate, though on a formal level it is paradoxically diffuse.

>> next question to CECILIA p116

52 CECILIA TO MALA

Dear Mala,

At your presentation, I was very interested when you introduced the diagrammatic writing as the "shape" of your research. On one hand, I thought that using such writing was very coherent with your theme (I imagine a kind of "multiple narrative" related to collectives). On the other hand I saw it as a possibility for my own research, since I have a complicated relationship with structures. I was immediately fascinated by the possibilities this type of writing can have. So I started to investigate a little. But when I looked for images on the Internet about diagrammatic writing, I found a lot of those diagrams have this "business/PowerPoint look" and I was a bit disappointed. I didn't find in those diagrams what I really liked yours (particularly the one you presented as an answer to Maite) because there was another layer of "composition" in your diagram and an aesthetic conscience.

Do you think it is possible to give to the diagrammatic writing a kind of "visual/artistic value" as in some data interpretation?

My concern with diagrammatic **writing** is an attempt to move away from the linearity and rationality of **writing** and set up a **practice** of **writing** that activates the different bodies of both the writer and the reader. It is performative in that it engages the corporeal, the imaginative, and the rational. It is eventful in the sense of the emergence of a thought or insight that arises in the process of **writing** or reading. It's not about conveying the content of a thought or phenomena, but instead about **writing** or reading as a creative act of thinking. Ultimately I am interested in the living thought or living experience of thinking. The work with diagrams is a kind of formative path to creative imagination. I'll return to this later.

I imagine diagrammatic **writing** to be a form of relational **writing**. It's about mapping the **movements** of thoughts and the relations between them. It's about opening up to and activating the spaces between concepts and images. It's actually about different aspects of 'being with'. It's not just about the relations of elements and forces within a particular diagram, but also about the relation a diagram requires from us, so that the thought (sight) that is 'folded' in it, can unfold (in-sight) through a process of our relating to it. As such, diagrammatic **writing** requires a performative reading; an engagement that is an experience of thinking, wherein thinking includes the faculties of feeling and imagining. Feeling the resonances, imagining correspondences, contemplating connections within a concrete relational map of the event of a thought in development. It's a way for the reader to become a vehicle for the emergence of a thought, perspective, or unknown configuration of relations, becoming a vehicle for insight. The action of diagrammatic **writing** or reading is a **practice** of relating, connecting, and structurally thinking, with relevance to one's own particular situated embodiment now in this particular moment and particular context. Ultimately, it is a **practice** of looking within while looking with-out, asking questions and receiving **knowledge** in return. In this sense, a diagram is an interface (not unlike an oracle) that connects one to the source of **knowledge** within oneself. In this sense, it is a **practice** of stopping, pausing, looking closely, and listening with one's body; **dreaming** the connections and correspondences between analogical forms, exercising practical thinking while allowing forms (of consciousness) to unfold in a line of an experienced in-sight. In order to set in motion the different bodies in a process of thinking, I use diagrams as visual forms or figures of thought. These forms have the potency to activate different the sensorial, affective, and rational bodies of the reader.

I have been researching in data interpretation. When I asked one expert about the problems with DI, he told me is the biggest one is when designers go "so artistic" you do cannot understand the data anymore. Do you think this miscommunication could be one of the characteristics of diagrammatic **writing** and, if so, which kind of values does it bring?

Diagrams as I understand them do not fix the **knowledge** or meaning of what they represent. Actually they don't represent. They are not fixed forms of thought. Rather, they are abstract visuals delineating lines or figures of thought,

their directions, qualities, **movements**, patterns, and dynamics. They are essentially dynamic. They trace thought as an event, as a moment of change, shift, or transformation, within the mapped system; an emergence of something that was not there before. They are 'proliferators of a process of unfolding', which contain a structural possibility of putting relationships in the foreground and describe the alignment of the elements. Positional relationships are important and the 'authorial viewpoint is always immanent to the field of observation'. Every fixed point in a diagram can become pivotal.

A diagram pertains to the hesitation of thought. There is a question of how to make a diagram that is not self-affirmative but rather open, fragile, vulnerable, and processual. How can a diagram remain in the mode of permanent hesitation to address one's thought and make it vibrate in response, but also ask the reader to be in relation with it, resonate with it, negotiate its content and its relevance? It stirs up 'relational thinking', generating 'a kind of cognitive sweep that extends the possibilities of thought' by opening up spaces for thought and experience.

Info-graphics, for example, are really about how to create visuals of an event that embraces the whole complexity of the specific event and yet remains simple enough to be understood by the reader. But in a way, info-graphics are linear in comparison to divinatory systems. They are structured as a number of elements and their possible combinations. They can be read in different directions and thus function in a non-linear way. I am looking for a way in-between these two different ways of diagrammatic **writing**. I am interested in the way info-graphics condense data and at the same **time** want to create a system of **writing** that works like divinatory systems. I am looking for a way to integrate the two and use them as a tool for the activation and displacement of relational thinking into the imaginal and the corporeal, where thinking is experiential and insightful.

Let's say a diagram opens up a space for thinking. It requires the reader's engagement and a response. It addresses one's responsibility in a process of unfolding of a thought. A diagram is a partner in dialogue. Perhaps dialogue is more about miscommunication than communication or at least about both; even more so if a process of thinking together is to be a creative act. A misunderstanding opens up a perspective that was not contained in the original understanding so it creates a tension between two points. It adds something new and creates a possibility for the **movement** of thought into something else. It opens space for the emergence of something that was not there before in either of the two sources of communication. Thus, a new way of seeing and understanding, a new perspective, a new configuration of thought can emerge. The point is not therefore the reproducibility of **knowledge**, but the unexpected, the yet un-known that appears on the horizon of our thinking together.

Diagrammatic **writing** is therefore a form of **writing** that asks all sorts of questions. How do we value **knowledge**? How do we understand the means with which we generate, transmit, and disseminate what we understand as **knowledge**? The use of the diagram as a form of thought and the use of di-

agrammatic **writing** as a vehicle for relational thinking aspire to question this and attempt to do so through an alternative mode of **knowledge** production. In a way, it questions the prevailing ways of reproduction and legitimization of thought. It questions the authority of objective **knowledge** based on an almost authoritarian and binary mindset with an external disembodied, absolute, and irrefutable point of view. It understands **knowledge** in relation to concrete embodiment, situated and conditioned by its context, and thus as multiple situated points of view in dialogue and exchange that enable their growth and extension in the assembling and comprehension of **knowledge**. **Knowledge** is therefore relational, dependent on a context, a history, an environment, and the embodied perspective of the one knowing. And perhaps **knowledge** is a knowing assembled through receiving, not learning. Every reader of a diagram is a singular context, a specific concrete environment into which a diagram is embedded, a repetition of the displacement of a form of thought; an opportunity for a creative misunderstanding, an emergence of an assemblage of diverse perspectives.

Furthermore, diagrammatic **writing** questions the solely rational as a way of knowing. It is a way of affirming other sources of **knowledge**. It is really about how to access our **dreaming** without turning irrational, how to engage the corporeal and the imaginal in the process of thinking without collapsing into fantasy. It is about how we employ different agencies or modes of thinking such as feeling and imagining and what this can do to our thinking and to the process of the unfolding of a thought. How can thinking be a creation and not a reproduction of thought? What is thinking as an experience of **life** and **presence** in the objects of thought? What is thinking with integrity of an insight or a revelation, where **knowledge** is received from the source within or in relation to the other (the other inside or the other outside of oneself)?

How does free association work in diagrammatic writing?

I prefer to talk about **dreaming**. In a Kabbalist way of understanding, we **dream** all the **time**, not only at night. Night **dreams** are just some of the images that pop to the surface of our conscious mind. This amazing wide river of **dreaming** continues even while we are awake and fully conscious. We **dream** all the **time** because we have a body, which is constantly experiencing. The body is exposed to an incredible influx of information, both from within and from the outside, which it is processing all the **time**. We have lost the connection to **dreaming** as a form of knowing. But **dreaming** is the knowing of the body with everything that the body is. The Kabbalist understanding of **dreaming** works analogically. It is about how forms relate, how they attract each other, how they fit. As announced in hermeneutic maxim 'as above so below' **dreaming** follows the logic of analogy. When I say I 'open a case as a **dream**' I follow this logic of **dreaming**. The associative thinking is of course a part of this procedure of opening (a case as) a **dream**. But there's a whole other dimension to the **dreaming** because **dreaming** is the body

experiencing itself and everything that is in relation to it, whether it is close or far (knowing distances does not make a difference). With the use of diagrams and diagrammatic **writing** I am looking for a way to invite back **dreaming** as a way of knowing. This is a way of knowing that inextricably engages the body and imagination as agencies of knowing. For all I have said of it, the diagram makes for a great tool for **dreaming**. **Dreaming** itself is diagrammatic. **Dreams** are diagrams or constellations of forms, **movements**, directions, colors, moods, and emotions. Thus, the work with diagrams opens a space for seeing through **movement** and relation, the intent of which is a **life** that escapes fixity in thought, perhaps for misunderstandings, mistakes, nonsense, even humor. It requires the all-knowing judgment to surrender into hands of the figure of a Fool.

Regarding the method you proposed last Friday, how does an object speak about a work? When I 'open a case' I follow the Kabbalist procedure of **dream** opening, which is a trademark of my teacher Dr. Catherine Shainberg (the founder of the School of Images in New York, which works with the ancient lineage of Sephardic Kabbalah). It consists of four levels of opening: reading the story of the case, reading the pattern of the case, figuring the real question of the case, and finally making a correction in response to the **dream**. These are the steps to knowing the case by **dreaming** it.

Perhaps the attempt for diagrammatic **writing** has to do with how I understand myself in relation to **knowledge**. Can this be a relation of trust? Can I undo myself as the author of my thoughts and as the owner or keeper of my **knowledge**? To what extent can I not know and linger or hesitate in this non-space of not knowing? To what extent can I pause in silence, emptying myself of myself, undo myself as a figure of knowing and become a vehicle or a transparent mirror for **dreaming** the other (the case)? If I am that, can I just watch what I see in the mirror, without interfering and be totally present in it? Can I then see its forms, colors, **movements**, directions, rhythms, patterns, and the questions or intents that drive it? The object of thought is a vehicle for **dreaming** and my **dreaming** of it is situated and conditioned. I **dream** it through a specific prism that is my body, my perspective, and the language of my **dreaming**. There is no **dream** outside of its context. **Dreaming** is unique to each one of us. It is never generic. But the multiple different **dreamings** of a particular case can create an assemblage of **knowledge** about this case or the object the **dreaming** focuses on.

This is why I am particularly interested in collective **dreaming** processes as a way of thinking and processing **knowledge** together. I am working on constructing a form of collective performative reading that can unfold a still folded thought. This then is a collective thinking processes, where each person from the group is an activated vehicle for performative reading and also where the whole group becomes a vehicle and the spaces in-between become non-space where thought can happen. It is a multi-fold non-place of wonder, hesitation, and most importantly **presence**. It is practicing thinking, but thinking without permanently collapsing into fixations, identities, meanings, or subjectivities. The question is how to let something emerge that was not there before, something that was not

seen or thought of. How is **knowledge** assembled and re-assembled, composed and re-composed through different singular sources? This is **knowledge** in flux. It is **knowledge** as creation. It is always already being rewritten, just as Talmudic writers were constantly re-**writing** the Old Testament to unfold the multifaceted **knowledge** generated by the sacred text.

I like the idea of setting up and conducting collective reading sessions of the book, of the diagrams in the book once when it's done. I'm interested in how a collective thinking process expands the horizon of our thought. And how we assemble and process **knowledge** together. What is the way that emerges in the process as an assemblage of forces, prisms, languages and ways of seeing and **dreaming** ourselves into a new configuration? How is **knowledge** creation and how is creation **knowledge**? To what extent can we undo ourselves as a collective and become a flowing mass, a vehicle processing or **dreaming life** in the form of a thought in emergence through a (collective) mind, an intelligence – something that is there and isn't there, that belongs to everyone and no-one, that is present and given to our disposal only if we are still enough to be moved by it?

>> next question to MALA p83

S2 DAMLA TO ANNA

Hi Anna,

I have two questions for you that could be interrelated depending on your answer.- In opposition to my Kafka-esque, almost encroaching and maybe cliché vision of bureaucracy as deviser of false desires, your bureaucratic persona introduces a human, almost sympathetic dimension to the bureaucratic machine ("the person that tries to help everyone with his or her needs" as you put it). Can you elaborate on these multiple dimensions of bureaucratic machine, how you approach them, and the double-bind which destines it to failure?

- I recognized in your last answer you emphasize "to make the bureaucratic machine visible" and "to express" its operations. How do you feel about using the potential of a persona to inscribe the operations of the bureaucratic machine on its audience within performance cases? How far could or should the ways, as you put it, "to play with that control, levels of comfort/discomfort and trust/distrust" go, in your opinion?

The bureaucrat is a complex character for me to unpack because s/he is a person we find in many different situations in society with very different functions. S/he also operates differently depending on things like hierarchy, personal sense of responsibility, and personal sense of his/her possibilities. In order to function the most effectively, bureaucratic machinery is inherently routine in form. The bureaucrat is often trapped into participating in a very limited role.

In order to get the job in the first place, you have to have **knowledge** of or be willing to learn the particular workplace rules, laws, and routines. Once the job has begun, the bureaucrat usually has a specific task and little to no **knowledge** about the rest of the organization she/he is in. Therefore, your work is only your responsibility and there is no **knowledge, time**, or possibility to criticize the whole system. Too many forms and insufficient individual problem solving skills plague many Bureaucracies. When one questions or challenges the functionality of the system, the answer is often given as "internal procedures."

Therefore, I see these problems with bureaucracy as being tied to labor. The person who needs a job is already stuck in this situation. In order to survive in modern society, individuals are often obligated to participate in the machine; this is the root of its nature.

You can enter with the best personal intentions, but you are still part of the machine. Maybe you have to refer people that are pressed for **time** to another department, because you don't know how to help them. Not because you don't want you, you simply don't know how to; you are hired for

something else. You are in a position to interpret externally imposed rules regardless of whether they align with your own. How much are you willing to compromise in order to keep your job? Do you stay in your position for a potentially greater good or do you stop caring about your work and just put in the minimum effort?

When I created "Your Application is Pending", I thought it could be potentially interesting to use myself as an example; even if you are an understanding and compassionate bureaucrat, you are representing an inherently problematic system. When I did my interviews with people as "the Head of the Department," I invited them to play with me since everybody knew this was not a "real" department. As for the boundaries of "levels of comfort, discomfort, trust or distrust," my aim was to juxtapose the informal personable meeting with harsher bureaucratic procedures, demonstrating the agony not only for the people being served by the machine but also for the bureaucrat.

>> next question to ANNA p67

S2 ELKE TO GOSIE

Dear Gosie,

Rereading your previous answer, I got interested in the relation between the 'conservative' approach of the bricoleur (the taming of the materials) and the simultaneous, seemingly absurd, liberating gesture of your methodologies. Although the materials of the bricoleur (the set-up of the test situation, the formulation of the hypothesis, etc.) indeed smell of a kind of old-fashioned scientific thoroughness, the combination of method, question, and translation opens up so many crazy lines of interpretation and failure that what is produced can hardly be said to conservative. In that sense, I thought of introducing another figure to your research. I was thinking of the Fool from the Tarot: the one that starts walking without knowing where it will lead him/her, one foot already in the ravine, but his/her smile still intact. The fool as the one that asks questions that unravel the fabric of knowledge. The only method, the path that stretches out in front of him/her, that has to be followed and accepted in all its consequences; the fool as the naïve explorer. So the question is: do you feel that the naïve quality you use in your work protects it from being conservative? Do you see naivety as a liberating gesture?

Dear Elke,

Thank you for introducing the Fool to me (or me to the Fool). When I read your description of the character of the Fool, I could immediately and very happily relate to it.

While scribbling around, the shadow of Icarus loomed at the horizon, happily getting bigger and bigger, taking all kinds of funny forms and at a certain point,

I fooled around in darkness.

The smile: My struggle with classification, from where my research started, directed me at a question about **knowledge**: Can we know everything? (oooooh, so naïve – the smile). What about the sublime, stuff that does not fit in our heads, that passes the limits of our minds? The contact with the chaotic, that threatens all construction of meaning, above all frightens me. I want to shuffle it under the bed, or better, just ignore it. In the mean **time**, a powerful attraction goes out from the thought that we are all lost in an extreme apathetic world. The contact with the chaotic or maybe even the disgust, reveals something that is essential to the construction of meaning.

The fool in me meticulously builds sandcastles to enthusiastically encourage the waves to destroy them at sunset (in case I have the patience to wait for that) and indeed I smile.

The liberation: The natural habitat of my **practice** is my kitchen. The idea that naturally flows from this setting is that if something fits in my kitchen, it also fits in my head. Even more important in my work is the digesting of this 'it'. I cook, boil, blend, stir, fry, ... earthquakes and volcano-eruptions... to ultimately devour.

It is not the results of the digestive process (the excrement) that is the most important. It is the digesting itself that rewards **attention**. The result of the process is mostly disappointing. But what could be considered a failure in the end is the result of a process that provokes a dynamic in which I realize the body is limited and the tools even more. It is in the end this struggle, these deficiencies that I expose shamelessly. I surrender over and over again. This is certainly a liberating act.

The path:

The digestive process is a path to be followed. There are usually no side-tracks and no turning back. It's obviously a path that has to be accepted in all its consequences. It is slide-y and slippery and surely not what we would call a 'laboratory situation' in which experiments could be carried out in a controlled way.

Naivety, the word intrigues me.

Apparently it comes from 'nativus', another path to be followed, the path that leads us into this world. The naivety that I present in and through my work is a way of dealing with the same world, a trying to understand/accept that we cannot actually understand. Never challenge the gods!

PS: After **writing** this, I ask myself when, if ever I will be up to gently massaging the borders between the world and myself, the in and the out, the light and the dark. I think it was Lévi-Strauss who mentioned something about the dance of fools in the Twilight Zone.

Greetings,

Gosie

>> next question to GOSIE p78

S2 VICTORIA TO PIERRE

Pierre, I found your response to Julia's question quite interesting, especially in relation to your question for me and my practice. Sorry, if I took it too seriously. Maybe I should have responded on the same level of poetic abstraction? Anyway, talking in prose, I would like to concentrate on a second poem of yours where you are talking, quite utopically (in tone and context) about the necessity of some kind of universal theory that would become not a representation of the world, but a thought of it, and more importantly that would represent its relation to the world, being at the same **time** sensitive to the production/involvement of new interactions between objects/subjects. This theoretical absolutism, which moreover is able to alter the world on a practical level, sounds quite dangerous to me (like any absolute power) even if it is initially thought of as flexible and controllable. Is this striving for a theory that "would grasp a world in a certain manner that would produce not only a representation through extrinsic discourse but, in addition, would produce a certain practice of relation with and of the world from within" a form of the objective idealism of Plato or even neo-Hegelianism? How does it differ from other "instrumentalized" lenses of critical theory which also intend "to liberate a being from the circumstances that enslave him/her" with the mode of a critical mind? Isn't critical theory something that creates a certain practice of relation to the world? Don't you think that the variety of theories and approaches of analysis/practices enrich the understanding/practicing of the world rather than alienating us from it?

>> next question to PIERRE p154

S2 GAJA TO JULIA

Dear Julia,

What struck me in your last text the most it was this quote:

"Martial law allows, when ordered so, to carry weapons and kill, but in the same **time**, deprives of citizen rights and free will" is that it's a bit like the Kierkegaard's Either/Or. The idea of "Either/Or" is very different from "not only, but also", and so Kierkegaard, who conveys through the narratives of A and B two directly different approaches to life (aesthetical and ethical), is sometimes criticized for giving the choice under such circumstances.

Nevertheless when it comes to thinking about entering the military with a possibility to kill, it seems to me a bit like that; it opens different dimensions of life. After the war, this boundary is much blurrier, but in **times** of peace it is quite strict. These happenings you investigate (the "Living History" re-enactments) create a fictitious zone of something in between, and what keeps it "safe" are the strict structures of the game and roles.

You call the people engaged in it "players". It strikes me because Harald Welzer, when writing about why average people commit mass murders, is mostly referring to role-playing. He is writing that mass murder is a social process in which people find and justify their roles. He gives the example of two soldiers who agreed one of them would kill mothers and the other their children; the second one would thus be relieved of the burden of killing a child, because this child would probably have a very difficult life without its mother.

I am wondering if you could say why the term play or game is essential and how it connects with the construction of the self by a living history player.

Dear Gaja,

A re-enactor in "Devoir de mémoire" says: "We don't want to be political, because we want to stay flexible and to be able to take all roles. He is talking about avoiding confronting issues of ideology in WWII re-enactments, but I like to listen to this sentence in a generalized way. In everyday **life**, parallel to games, so much is faded out as well in order to make pragmatic choices. You might say that all of us are people who are "only" killing children or mothers, in a sense, as our **lifestyle** of global economy dilutes the consequences of our actions. Think cell phones, laptops, plastic, clothes, etc. As art, a game or a play focuses perception on only a few direct elements through its rules. It makes the tensions implied by decisions visible.

To me, these games of military re-enactment and the gaps and fade-outs in their scenarios make a nicely visible model of how the construction of normality works.

>> next question to JULIA p152

S2 SAMAH TO MAITE

Sorry for the delay! I had no Internet since yesterday!

I am curious about your relationship with potted plants, and particularly the key words that you used: isolation and uprootedness. Can you talk a little more about how you connect with these states personally? How do they affect you? How does it affect your relationship with the plants? Is there a power dynamic that is affecting you or you are affecting them with regard to these two states, or is this a sympathetic sensibility that you feel is equal between you?

Isolation and uprootedness are two states that make me empathize with potted plants. To be uprooted is to be disconnected from earth. You are in connection to earth when you do the 'things of the earth' (family, house, job, etc.); things that have a relation with the material world. Furthermore, a connection with materiality is related to confidence, acceptance, self-esteem; to take **life** for what it is, not trying to escape it. Escaping is to be uprooted, flying away from the responsibility as the human being you are, the woman you are, the daughter you are, the place you came from, etc. Physically speaking, to be uprooted means to not feel your feet touching the ground, to have a strong stinging on the crown of your head, and so on. This connects with isolation because you will not feel a part of the world you are living in. You can see this world and you can live in it. But you have the sensation that there is a transparent wall obstructing your interaction with it. Anyway, I find it useless to talk about these kinds of experiences because as experiences they are made to be experienced and felt. There are things that cannot be understood with the mind and, unfortunately, up to now they do not have a space in the social field.

S2 PIERRE TO VICTORIA

One could observe in your work a certain contradiction between critique and aesthetics. How do you resolve this apparent contradiction if you find any? What is for you, the relevance of aesthetically processing a critical/political issue? Do you consider yourself to be working in a field of tension framed by two polarities – critique and aesthetics? If yes, why? If not, can you qualify the lines of tension that underlie your project?

Dear Pierre,

In order to answer your tricky question, I'd have to ask you more specifically for the concrete examples of contradictions in my research between aesthetics and politics, because I don't see any fetishization of political issues and the irrelevance of the proposed topic and method. The element of poetics that is definitely present in the research might have confused you and made you consider it a detachment from the critical principles. However, in order to clarify the situation the following issues should be mentioned.

First of all, it should be said that aesthetics are not principal for me in my reflection on the performativity of the wedding ritual, meaning I do not believe in the autonomy of an artwork or Greenberg's complete purification of the medium. Then, logically, I'd have to find myself on the side of Guy Debord, for whom art is at best a device that could be appropriated in order to expose the author's committed critique of ideology. That's why I understand your appeal to define both my position as an artist and appropriate ways of approaching the topic.

Now, the poetics in my concrete case are paradoxically applied as a tool for increasing and strengthening the millstones of the critique, trying also to avoid one-sided dry predictability. The illusionary ambiguity of the position that poetics may contribute is, in my opinion, even more productive because it leaves the door open for questions, opinions, positions, and judgments. It allows me to research the context. Moreover, poetics are productive in the alteration of the "the distribution of the sensible" (Le partage du sensible). According to Rancière, something that is evident in the sensory reality and which structures the relationship between seeing, speaking and doing, is integrated in the same way within the system of domination and subordination. Thus, to change something in the distribution of the sensible means to change something in the social realm.

S2 NICOLAS TO NICOLAS

What are the conditions for productive fragilities?

fragility = chaos (=) crisis ?

fragility ≠ liquidity; but liquidity might be chaos

fragility = inconsistency (inconsistent constructs of thoughts)

productive = generative, transformative

First image: Bursting bubbles. I gather many concentric bubbles in many of my parallel active spheres. They are vibrating against and with each other and just by coincidence they don't touch each other when they burst. It would cause a chain reaction toward total collapse. If I trust the vibrancy, I trust the coincidental.

Second image: Trust. Something is telling me that small, wacky plank, here, under my feet will let me pass the abyss. Probably not the plank, but something else. Probably not even something else, but my Self. I trust, despite the fact I know the opposite!

Third image: Storm of disturbance. Periods of recreating my centre point are the most productive phases; those transformations from one state to another. Globalised economy is misunderstanding growth. It sees growth as linear and numeric. But growth is a horizontal stretch and a passage at the same **time**. It is walking within the storm with a storm in myself.

Fourth image: Islands. I always need to feel just enough strength in order to be able to swim between the islands. **Sometimes** it helps to catch a glimpse of the islands in front of me, behind me, surrounding me. I find a real calm though by looking at the clear, empty horizon. Real disturbance comes with the **movement** of the waves (wag the dog). Real insight comes when the sea is clearing up and I can see, for a short second, how the storms are changing the grounds.

Fifth image: To be developed.

>> next question to NICOLAS p146

S2 CAMILA TO ELKE

Dear Elke,

Picking up on the question about the "abject" that was raised last session regarding your project, I would like to hear more from you about the ideas of betrayal and alienation in relation to a newfound aesthetics. In particular, I wonder how you see this eruption in relation to the viewer/audience. I have in mind the Battery at Zsenne last December, especially the following quote about the project: "Global food industry, the implosion of the local food markets, health issues and ethical questions keep us occupied all the **time**. In response to this feeling of loss of control Bureau d'Espoir has developed Hunger artist and Anorexic strategies."

I would like to know more about the control ethics behind the project. First, how does hunger (which is, in fact, a very powerful mechanism of the control and distribution of power) become an artistic practice? How does framing 'the hungry' as an artist while displaying/displacing her in the space of an art gallery affect the meaning of the experience? Second, regarding Anorexia, where do you see the exercise of control operating in the practice? If Anorexia is, in itself, a loss of control (and one could even argue the practices you refer to in the description are also forms of Anorexia) how do you recover control through its experience? In a world where it has become a widely spread disease, do you think it runs the risk of becoming "fashionable" or "trendy" or "stylish" when it is set up inside an art gallery? And finally, how is that operation different from the one that the mass media performs every day?

Dear Camila,

1. About the control mechanisms and hunger:

The Hunger and Anorexic **Practices** that Bureau d'Espoir develops are strategies to break through the conditioning grid of social **life** and economics as we know it. Our lives are regulated by desires that cannot be fulfilled, cravings that can never be pacified, the 'hunger' for more that is actually non-defined in its object. What the Hunger Artist does, in its first instance, is to make these cravings palpable and visible. In that sense, the HA is quite different from the Anorexic Worker (AW).

Whereas the HA announces a cut, a break in the pattern of consumption, of taking in, of sustaining the body, the AW works on redistribution. In other words, where the HA says NO in a clear refusal to keep on playing her part in the political, economic, or social scene, the AW answers by saying 'I would

prefer not to,...', undoing the refusal, messing up the social scene of decision-making. Concretely, the Hunger Artist embodies the strategies of the Hunger Strike: the weapon of the politically abused, unseen, denied. Her struggle is one of emancipation, gaining a voice through the wasting of the body, creating a clearly existential ground whereupon the question at stake gets reformulated.

As shown in the movie 'Hunger' by Steve McQueen this kind of political action goes beyond the level of the negotiation or even blackmail of the social order. It reframes the social order by pointing to its dead end, its point of no return— death. The HA in that sense fights for a bigger cause, a greater good. The always-present potential of death at the end of the action, turns the protest work into a dramatic, sacrificial gesture.

The AW on the other hand, is a figure that challenges her being reduced to a pathology. The AW challenges the idea of the 'normal' body, but also of the 'normal' meal **times** and the structure of social gatherings. By refusing to consume in the way 'everybody does', she also refuses to be consumed by the social machinery that keeps everything/everyone in place. She takes leave from consumption **time** and space, borrowing her strategies from both the 'Model' (the pure outside, that estranges herself from the normative difference between surface and depth) and the 'Hermit' (the spiritual anorexic or the mystic that distances herself from society-as-it-is).

2. The Battery and the social machine

What Bureau d'Espoir did with the Battery was to make this process of refusal visible and experienceable, in the neighborhood. The Anorexic Workers in the batteries were there, working on the non-spectacular character of banality and insistence. What could have been a spectacle of hunger and suffering (much in line with feminist performances of the 60's and 70's) was in that sense 'anorexified'; stripped of its usual direct meaning and understanding. The batteries referred to the social control machines of work **times**, the division between the professional and the private, the normative grid of 'what we need to be happy or fulfilled or entertained'. What looked at first perhaps like a horrible situation (being enclosed for 22 days in a box that doesn't allow you to stand up, and allowing yourself only anorexic food portions) through the insistence of the project, transformed little by little into a machine that overstepped these norms; banality became a source of interest, boredom a token of reclaimed **time**, the anorexic portions the possibility to really smell, taste, and become mindful of the food. Whatever entered the batteries gained momentum, becoming important, valuable, recognized. And in that sense temporarily estranged from the consumption cycle of the endlessly renewed, always replaceable, stream of objects and things.

Towards the neighborhood this insistence, in whatever way it was understood, created a sense of mutual recognition instead of spectacular alienation. The battery itself became a desirable space to spend **time** thinking, taking distance from the Christmas craze, etc. In other words, the Batteries took the restrictive, disciplining machines out of society (the chicken battery, the love hotel, a room in an old-folks home) and turned them into a space for reclaiming **time** and imagination, being and breathing (more like the monk's meditation cell, a tent, a womb). The spiritual as an antidote to the economic machine, the taking leave to find your place in the neighborhood, not eating in order to appreciate food fully, etc. So it is an upside-down machine, producing through insistence the opposite of what the machine is presumed to produce.

3. Transdisciplinary practice

It is in the anorexic confusion that the situation can re-appear. In the 'real anorexic' situation, for example, the meal is no longer a mechanism that confirms the unity of the family. Producing these kinds of gaps in the understanding of it, can possibly instigate change and agency in the contact with others. If a situation is not quite what it seems, it creates the freedom for the other to enter into it, and aid in its imagining. For me, the way to do that is to mix up political theory, social choreography, spiritual **practice**, and economic analysis. To open up gaps between the fields, so that through the gaps their connection can become clear.

>> next question to ELKE p139



SESSION 3

QUESTIONS by 02.02.2014, 12pm

NEXT MEETING: 06.02.2014, 8:30pm

LOCATION: Chez Philippine

CAROLINA TO VICTORIA

ANNA TO LILIA

GOSIE TO ANNA

SAMAH TO GOSIE

GAJA TO CAROLINA

LILIA TO SAMAH

NICOLAS TO MALA

DAMLA TO GAJA

VICTORIA TO DAMLA

PHILIPPINE TO PHILIPPINE

S3 CAROLINA TO VICTORIA

As much as I come from a place where rituals and tradition strongly connect society, I was never personally confronted with questions from my family concerning raising children or getting married. At the same time, when I see you performing (the ritual of singing, producing precise movements and repetitions) or while watching the video where your grandmother is sewing the dress for you, I feel my struggle between the sense of being free from 'traditions' and at the same time the lost-ness of not having these sort of bonds. Do you think your research (and the way you develop and present it) is, in one way, a freeing ritual? Or perhaps, looking at it the opposite way, a restorative ritual?

Thank you for your question. First of all, I'd like to answer you with a question. Are you sure that not posing a question of a marriage and other conventional family issues in an explicit manner actually liberates you from the submissive position in the system of traditional values and norms?

I won't 'invent a bicycle' by stating that there is something like 'body memory' from our ancestors and that this 'body memory' carries millions of habits that are rooted in your everyday life. (We know how to lull children to sleep, how to catch easily the melody of the familiar music, how to dance listening to that music.) We are actually sewn from these pieces of our memory in everyday behavior, which makes us who we are. We can, of course, state that we have exorcised the rudiments of the traditional culture in us, but we cannot exorcise our body. It doesn't belong to us in this sense. Even after our death our body will be treated in the way our cultural heritage demands.

The transmission of these habits is an absolutely quotidian matter, not lit with the stage lights and devoid of bright decorations that might indicate its consumption and digestion. This is why the everyday is so questionable for me and in particular these habits, the patterns that constrain my body and the schemes that structure my behavior. What kind of litmus paper do I use to reveal them? How do I distill the dark water of everyday and obtain the solid matter? How do I recognize that I have already swallowed a pill?

One of the strategies I used for this is desecration, in the form of the irreverent attitude toward sacred actions and objects. In particular, I **practiced** the alteration of the context of actions or objects in order to assist in revealing the hidden controlling levers (vocal and somatic). This is a method of the ritualistic undressing of the process, which preserves some of the features of the initial pattern. To certain extent, this action may be also called carnivalization; the of the ritual, putting it upside down, but also escaping

from the conventional and canonized ways of doing that. The carnival is always an integral part of any ritual. It is the antidote to the seriousness of the procession and the act of liberation from the rigid structure, but always performed according to concrete rules. For example, in Russian wedding culture there is a tradition of cross-dressing on the second day of the fest and playing the opposite gender roles, thus ridiculing the whole wedding procedure. However, the pivotal characteristics of the wedding (like the temporality and the performativity of the actions) were maintained. That is why I believe my research relates very much to the essence of the carnival that is looking for the alternative languages of translation and overcoming the established patterns of behavior.

>> next question to VICTORIA p109

S3 ANNA TO LILIA

Dear Lilia,

When you spoke about your work in your last answer you mentioned you “wanted to create another kind of relation with things where the uncanny appears.” I find this interesting. In order to create this shift in how we see the things, the (maybe utilitarian) objects around us, in which ways do you operate to create that shift? You mention spiritual practice, which is kind of mysterious to me, and maybe you did not mean it in relation to how you develop your work. Or did you? Could you perhaps describe the transition when you make the uncanny appear? Also, do you find your work political and if so, in which way?

Dear Anna,

I’m very interested in shifting the logic of things in order to see them differently, in order to make visible other unexpected relations. By perceiving the layers of things through the matter, history, aesthetics, shape, **movement**, affects, thoughts, etc. that constitute them, one can get to amazing combinations that shift our logics and reveal paths for thought and sensation. The uncanny, is a good concept because it mixes the very familiar with the strange, the foreigner.

When I’m doing performance, I think I’m searching for what I don’t know yet, to be puzzled by it and to engage temporally in another sense of things; entering a state of confusion, shifting the status of what we recognize as stable together with enjoying a temporary sense is a good tool for me to understand (as much as I can) how I function and what meaning I give to what surrounds me. I use often displacement (giving things another value, functionality, **movement**, etc.) and subtraction (focusing on one quality) as tools to provoke a different contact and communication between things we are familiar with.

One of the strategies of displacement I use is sound and voice. Here follows an excerpt/description of the performance “Moving you” in the frame of the project SI where I shared this **practice** in a laboratory situation. http://issuu.com/cdelab/docs/si_artist

“The piece “Moving you” deals with the relation between subjects, objects, sound and **movement** and proposes a frame where affect appears as the generator of **movement** and change.

In this piece I developed a system to give sound to objects which I called voicing out objects. This system consists in attributing a specific vocal sound

to an object and to produce this sound each **time** one gets in contact with that specific object. We then arrive to a collection of objects and their several corresponding vocal sounds. This interaction with objects produces a relation between the subject, the object and the environment, creating a kind of dialogue between matters. One could say that the performer lays in between these relations. To be explicit about my intentions, this voicing out is not a representation of the objects neither of their feelings but tries to bring **attention** to a possible mode for interaction.

The other component of “Moving You” consists of the displacement and replacement of the objects in different positions and relations creating therefore several constellations ready to be changed. “

<https://vimeo.com/14736537>

In my previous answer I spoke about spirituality as a tool for change but I don’t use it in my work.

In relation to the political, yes I consider my work political in the sense that it engages in another organization of things and in the communication of such possible organizations. It questions very much the place of objects, organic or inorganic matter, as well as their inherent cultural value in how we perceive the world. It wants very much to **acknowledge** what we pay **attention** to when we are living and how that delineates our relation with our environment. To act upon, to communicate experiences, to challenge the stability of systems, to bring focus to the present and the context we are in, moment by moment, to engage are aspects; I see these things as political. To give voice to the ‘other’, those whom we don’t identify as similar to ourselves, to shift the supremacy of the human, to think democracy and ethics beyond just people, these are issues I believe need **attention**.

I create **scores** as modes of operation and communication. These are strategies to invite the performers and the audience to be in the moment; playing, imagining, and creating senses. Here is a link for my last performance: “Ai! a choreographic project” in collaboration with Marcos Simões.

<https://vimeo.com/85016784>

>> next question to LILIA p96

SS GOSIE TO ANNA

Dear Anna, the way we spoke about bureaucracy and bureaucrats during our Anette-sessions was mostly linked to their obsessive neurosis and ritualistic practices; the 'burocrazy' aspect of bureaucracy. How can this burocrazy aspect inspire the political conditions of the system we are actually living in?

The Department of Burocrazy

In the Department of Burocrazy we take the production of fantasy very seriously. In order to produce, import, and export fantasy we have to constantly change the way we think. In the morning we put a fruit snack in our hats and go to work. Every day we try to find a new way to the office, this helps us to explore our minds. It also makes it impossible to have set office hours because it can take different amounts of **time** to get to work. Occasionally we need to walk backwards. Often we talk to everyone we meet on the street. Once in a while, getting to work takes the whole day. Occasionally, it can take a whole week.

Our morning meeting can therefore start whenever (though we try to have it before lunch). Together we fold a very large paper that everyone keeps his or her notes on from the meeting. We then color co-ordinate our fruit snacks and talk about what we **dreamed** that night. We document our **dreams** and index them according to size and length. After the morning meeting we try to take as many personal meetings as we can during the day, especially with people we've never spoken with before because we've found this stimulates our fantasy. Re-meetings occur, and if someone comes back more than three **times** we usually hire them to work with us. During the meetings we try to share as many memories as possible, especially the important ones and the unimportant ones. All meetings are recorded and for every single person we meet we paint a small watercolor portrait. Then it is **time** for lunch.

We have a lunch break from one to three and someone reads a story out loud. If one is not in a story mood, one may skip it. Then everyone that wants to nap may nap. Every office has a daybed and a dimmer because everybody knows we think our most important thoughts when we're asleep.

After lunch we try to stimulate our senses in various ways. **Sometimes** we do it together and **sometimes** alone. We find it very important to ask one meaningless question a day. It can be asked of a coworker, but it could also be asked an individual outside. **Sometimes** we also need to have a second morning meeting for the people who just arrived at the office because they

took a difficult route to get there. If someone wants to report a **dream** from their nap, we want to take the **time** to write it down and index it as well.

When the indexing is done, we talk about the weather. **Sometimes** the discussion about the weather can take the rest of the day. **Sometimes** it's a five-minute conversation. The rest of the day we plan individually (but **sometimes** in pairs). We have an office cinema and a cooking station so that we can explore our minds and our senses. The office normally closes at 6pm.

Once a week we invite a person to come and talk to us and inform us about a special subject we need to learn more about. We encourage our staff to travel to a new place every year and we change our routines according to the season.

Just like any other Department we are not sure how big our political impact is on today's government, but we always send them our annual report.

>> next question to ANNA p102

S3 SAMAH TO GOSIE

Hello Gosie!

I am intrigued by your relationship to failure. It seemed to come up a few times in the last few conversations (like in your observation of the shoemakers' not-quite-so-good solutions for heels, and how in some way you felt connected with his work). I am wondering if the lack of success is an awareness that is present from the beginning of the process, and if so perhaps this allows you a sense of freedom to indulge in the process? Or is it that a determination to overcome failure has become a driving force for the process? Or is it something else?

Hi Samah,

"Try again, fail again, fail better" (S. Beckett).

Your question made me think of the story of "Bouvard and Pécuchet" (Flaubert). Could it be that I'm them – another persona for my research? Bouvard and Pécuchet are two clerks (bureaucrats, as Anna would say) who spend their days copying texts. The two figures meet by chance on a sunny bench in Paris and become close friends. If one receives an inheritance, they plunge into an adventure, buying a farm. They leave their desks and the city behind and instead of copying texts they bring these texts now into **practice**. They gather all the **knowledge** they need for farming from books (encyclopedias, theoretical textbooks, etc.) They apply their acquired **knowledge** in chemistry, medicine, astronomy, archeology, history, literature, politics, hygiene, magnetism, witchcraft, philosophy, and religion directly to the soil. But the two friends remain above all city birds (office clerks) and all their experiments, with the best of intentions, fail. Any **knowledge** in the books turns again and again into failure when applied in the real world.

Just like Bouvard and Pécuchet, I try different recipes and prescriptions I gather from books and films. Like Bouvard and Pécuchet, I fail, because every prescription is different for every individual who carries out the recipe and varies in every different situation. Bouvard and Pécuchet's near-religious belief in the power of what is written is an adventure doomed to failure. If you really want it to be real, you have to go down and touch it. The world in their garden and my kitchen is less reliable than you or I might think.

Contrary to the two clerks, I have no aim to succeed. In this sense, over-coming failure is not a driving force in my work. When my recipe for lightning fails, when I fail not to be knocked to the floor by a beam of electricity self-produced, I indeed try again. I try again to fail better. The failures bring me to answers I did not have a question for or to questions I cannot answer.

Failure always carries with it a certain degree of existential threat. It is like a sudden outburst of nothingness in the middle of existence. It shows the cracks in the fabric of being and knowing. Failure can be experienced, but not grasped. It is an approach to the limit and a glimpse of what is beyond this limit. It suggests again a path. In the end, we are all destined to fail.

I cannot be there tonight to deliver you the answer on your question. I'm experiencing a severe outburst of hernia-itis. As much as I accept the failure in my work and indeed use it as a driving force of the process, the failure of my body is a much more difficult one to deal with. It is a burden and I sooooo much hate it. I literally feel petrified, slowly turning into solid rock.

Have a nice evening,

Gosie

>> next question to GOSIE p126

53 GAJA TO CAROLINA

Dear Carolina,

As far as I understand your last work, even though you were using voices and narratives about familiarity and “feeling at home”, you are actually creating a sensual platform with the set up of microphones producing sounds. It appeals to the abstract archives of my sensual memory; as people who speak a foreign language but in a calm way (and there is also the sea), that is mixed with being informed that they are speaking about home.

As you are positing these sound-spaces as a connection we make with previous experiences in order to establish bonds with the new space, I wonder to what extent you are opening your work to the possibilities of synaesthetic shuffle since synaesthesia is known for strengthening memory.

Dear Gaja,

It is very nice you mentioned this term at this point! During the first moment of my research in Brussels 2010/2011 I was strongly connected to a new feeling, which I named in the paper I was **writing** as ‘synaesthetic memory’. I understood it as a sort of glitch in my daily **life** in which I felt in two different spaces at the same **time**. I recognized it as a loop of memories generating noises in my mind, images and feelings constantly appearing and disappearing, which caused an uproar of thoughts produced by arriving at a new space. It was like a space trip in which my body would not move, however I could strongly feel myself in another place. Everything happened very fast. **Sometimes** I could not even realize what was happening. I could just understand it when “I was back”.

In my understanding, this synaesthetic memory I worked with shows how critical for the body it is to “understand” the territorial shift, to balance the links with the experience of the space left behind and at certain point to find/produce home devices; bringing the familiar in and coping with the new space and with what it might offer you. Awareness and **time** are essential in my opinion; the **time** for the body to create its extensions and grow familiarity. In her novel ‘The Lover’, Duras writes about a comprehension of **time** in relation to the journeys and waitings:

“For centuries, because of the ships, journeys were longer and more tragic than they are today. A voyage covered its distance in a natural span of **time**. People were used to those slow human speeds on both land and sea, to those

delays, those waitings on the wind or fair weather, to those expectations of shipwreck, sun, and death.”²

In this sense, I believe that sound-spaces, as environmental layers one produces, can trigger memories or produce connections with previous experiences when one intends to do so. I definitely see my spatial learning through sound as an attempt to shelter the tactile and the imaginary together, proposing to create an atmosphere of confrontation between the well-being and the anguish related to the **life** shift.

1 - Ahmed, Sara. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Duke University Press, Durham and London. 2006

2 - DURAS, Marguerite: *The Lover*. English version. Pantheon, 1998. Original title: *L'Amant*, Prix Goncourt, 1984, p. 84

>> next question to CAROLINA p115

S3 LILIA TO SAMAH

Samah, you speak about parallel narratives between political discourse and artistic discourse. It came to my mind that artists who work with over-identification create a blur between mediatized reality and performance. Or artists that work with Historical facts and use fiction are able to stir the sensible. I thought of Rabih Mroué, the Atlas Group, Rimini Protocol but also Christoph Schlingensief, and the Yes Men.

I would be interested to know how do you relate to fiction, which strategies you are interested in investigating, and what you think they produce. I know some of the artists you mentioned, and others I had heard of, so it was a chance to look them up, which was informative. I actually have not related to fiction, unless there is something I missed in my work! As for my strategies, so far I have used humor as a way to navigate political subjects. By creating a different entry point in an otherwise complex subject that is connected to events in the recent past and proceeding to unfold it in the present moment. Generally, trying to understand our recent history is a very pressing issue, as it has become evident how quickly the events unravel and histories go undocumented. I am not sure what this strategy produces for the audience, but for me it provides an alternative to the daily political discussion that can become a little boring, stuck in its ideas and stagnant in its imagination! So maybe what I am doing is creating ways to engage with a history and a subject that is currently being discussed in repetitive rhetorics I find have done more damage to people's ability for critical reflection, never mind activism that might offer alternatives to the status quo.

Mediatized realities is a subject I tackled in two recent works. The first is Jericho First 2012, an intervention in the town square of Jericho in Palestine where I invite people from the street to join a discussion on ideas and imaginations for an alternative solution for Palestine, one that is not related to the orchestrated narratives presented in the media. Another is a performance in 2014, The Arab **Dream**, which interweaves a **dream** with excerpts from Susan Sontag's book 'Regarding the Pain of Others', questioning the political imagination and confronting the audience with their (desensitized) relationship to media images of death.

>> next question to SAMAH p138

S3 NICOLAS TO MALA

I would be interested to know a bit more about dreaming. Did it last night, but it appeared to be such a multilayered concept that, in the morning, I didn't know anymore what not-dreaming is. I even dreamt about thinking about dreaming and tried to formulate my sentences to you, Mala, while my head lay under a pillow and my imagined hand failed to draw a "diagram" for you. Consciousness folding into half-consciousness and subconsciousness flashing into concrete thoughts.

How do you experience these manifold multilayered dreaming modes in collective dreaming?

Yes, **dreaming** is big. Perhaps there is nothing outside of **dreaming** and **dreaming** is all there is, the matrix of the universe. I always wanted to know how to interact with it in a conscious and intentional way and this is what brought me to Kabbalah or Jewish esoteric **knowledge** tradition. To be precise, I speak of the technique of Sephardic Kabbalah, which is one of the ways of Kabbalah, or pure Kabbalah (kabbalah means 'receiving') in that one 'receives' through one's inner gazing. This work of revelation or receiving is a **practice** of conscious and intentional engagement with **dreaming**. In a way, there are no 'teachings' because all that is needed is to learn a way of **dreaming** that teaches through revelation. This is a rather a **practice** of call and response with all the **dreaming** in which we partake, the still folded, the already unfolded. And to ask the 'right question', to hold space open for a response to come in, is an art in itself.

If I look closely to your question (**dream**) and the image you sent me as a **dream** and work with them through **dreaming**, perhaps this can serve to unfold and elucidate some of the aspects of **dreaming** and how I **practice** it in interaction with the concrete reality I encounter.

When I look at your **dream** as a secondary **dreamer** of this **dream**, I see myself trying to get my head around **dreaming**, its complexity and its paradoxical being-ness. (In my **dream**) I am using my **dreaming** to understand it but all my **dreaming** is showing me are my efforts to articulate my thoughts around it and even to draw it in a form of a diagram. It is showing me how I am failing to do this. To me it is striking that my **dream** presents this process by showing me my head covered with a pillow while I am doing the **dreaming**, the imagining of what the **dreaming** is or could be. The fact that my head is covered while I am attempting to draw gives a direction. It reminds me of the Queen of Hearts from Alice in Wonderland who screams: 'Off with her head!'

That's how **dreaming** is done. You have to cut of your head. There's no other way. It's a way to open a space for **dreaming**. You have to empty yourself of yourself. You can address the **dreaming** with a question, just like you did in your **dream**. But then you have to hold the space open for the **dreaming** to respond with an answer. You cannot force it or push it by trying. If you do so it will hide itself from you. You have to do it lightly, with ease, just like dancing or making love. When you stop trying, it happens, it just unfolds itself. It's action through non-action and you are all in the experiencing of it. You are the creator and the witness at the same **time**. Just like it happened to you the morning after the **dream**. You 'just stumbled over an old image. Exactly, last night experience...'

For me, if I **dream** your **dream** the image you have found and sent me is exactly the diagram you failed to draw in your **dream**. But the moment you let go of trying, while your question still lays in your subconscious mind, the **dreaming** brought the diagram to you in the form of an old image as something you already know. As if by accident, you stumbled on this old image in your waking **time** and so for me, as a **dreamer** of this **dream**, it is hard to think of an accident in **dreaming**. To me it feels more like I am here in this moment present with a question, which from the deep forms my intent and which, regardless of whether it is conscious or sub-conscious, operates as a call that seeks a response from the rest of the **dreaming** matrix. You are calling for something to come to you, in a certain **time**, in a certain space, in a certain constellation. What comes to you and the way it comes, assembles, and configures with you into a specific event, is conditioned not only by your question but by many other things; by how clear you are (or not), how clear your intent is (or not), how you hold your focus in your subconscious mind (or not), by how you hold the space open allowing **life** of **dreaming** to flow through you (or not)... All of this conditions how things will manifest (or not). And the Kabbalah teaches you how to manifest or how to contribute to creation consciously and intentionally through receiving.

The image that comes to you as a response to your question is a very interesting one. It is interesting to look at it closely to see what is it saying in relation to your question about what this 'multilayered concept' of **dreaming** is that leaves you 'unable to know what non-**dreaming** is'. The way you formulated the question to me and to which your own **dreaming** has responded through this image you stumbled upon is interesting too. You say:

'Consciousness folding into half-conscious and subconsciousness flashed into concrete thoughts.' It is interesting to look at your choice of wording and see how it relates to the image that comes to you as a response to your wording. Language matters in the Kabbalah. In Genesis we read: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' The word is the spark of creation or our co-creation with god if you will. You light the fire with the word through which the breath of creation flows. The word intends a shape; it calls for a shape to be created. It is the seed of a specific form that is always first intended and then manifested.

And if I look at the image it is you in bed. You are in a state between sleeping and waking. In the image you are multiplied four **times**. You are a multi-fold, a multi-fold of bodies of you, you as four, four different aspects of you between **dreaming** and waking. You are folding or perhaps unfolding into the **dreaming**. To me this image is about me **dreaming** myself **dreaming** myself **dreaming**... or a **dream** within a **dream** within a **dream** within a **dream**... The multi-fold as events of you taking place at the same **time** as there is no **time** in the **dreaming**. All there is, is the present. Not just the present of the image of the four aspects of you but also the present of the one watching the image, while the image imprints itself in the consciousness of the watcher. It is the flow of consciousness multiplying itself. It is consciousness fortifying in the now as **dreaming**. And me **dreaming** your **dream** in response is just another layer of the same **movement**. For me, the image speaks of this infinite flow of a folding and unfolding consciousness through **dreaming**, through images. This image being your own answer in response to your own question inherent in the **dream** where you fail to 'know' the difference between **dreaming** and non-**dreaming**. To me, it is uncovering the fact that **dreaming** knows no difference between **dreaming** and non-**dreaming**. There is no separation, only multiplication of **dreaming** ad infinitum. There is the **presence** of a mirror next to a wall in the back and the **dream** is the mirror image of reality constructed by the conscious mind. And there is a bed cover that works like a big black spot right in the middle of the image out of which or into which the four of you fold. The black cover reminds me of a saying: 'There is no seeing without a garment', which means it is the **dreaming** that 'holds the space for the infinite essence'.

To my opening I add a quote from the book **A Dream Within A Dream: The Prism of Imagination** by E. R. Wolfson:

'...the oneiric imagination is privileged as the way to reach the unknowable and unnameable essence, as it is the mental faculty that combines opposites and thus points to the mystery of equanimity, the state of indifference wherein opposites are identical in their opposition. Restoration to infinity – the mystical nuance of the traditional notion of repentance, teshuvah – is predicated on the removal of consciousness, which is indicative of exile, but also on the illumination of the supernal light, the vestment of concealment, since it is only by being concealed that the concealment can be revealed as concealed. Through the **dream**, therefore, the schism between sleep and wakefulness, exile and redemption, is itself transcended in the luminal darkness where the disparity between dark and light is no longer operative.'

In Talmud, which is the rabbinic commentaries of the Old Testament, it is said 'every **dream** unopened is like a letter left unread'. It is also said 'a **dream** follows the mouth.' It means that through a **dream** our body is addressing us with a question we can choose to respond to or not. Also, it is said that 'every interpretation is actually a capability to actualize a **dream**, to answer to the question in it and doing so shape reality'. Choosing to dialogue with

dreams and responding to the necessity they bring about inevitably changes you. A transformation occurs. For the more you look inside, work with images of your **dreaming**, respond to them, and let them be your guides, the more light you bring in. And the light inevitably transforms you. This work is really an alchemical process and there's no end to it.

This is how I read your **dream**, inspired by your 'interest to know a bit more about **dreaming**'. That said, what then is for you the real question of your **dream**? And what is your response?

Now, about the collective **dreaming** and 'how I experience these manifold multilayered **dreaming** modes in it.

Collective **dreaming** is a **practice** I am currently developing as an extension of the **practice** of **Dream** Opening. **Dream** Opening is a very simple **practice** of 'opening **dreams**' but in way it takes years to master. The techniques of **Dream** Opening as well as collective **dreaming** are forms of **dream** interpretation.

Last **time**, I said that 'all **dreams** follow the mouth' is the saying considered most important in the Talmudic **dream** book since it encapsulates the quint-essential aspect of the rabbinic hermeneutic related to deciphering **dreams** and their symbols. A **dream** is understood as a form of prognostication. The predictive value of **dreams** is to inform one about the future. At the same **time** the **dream** 'also provides one with the opportunity to repent and to change one's ways'. It is interesting that a **dreamt dream** as such is considered to be hermeneutically neutral. Something flows through it – as a (diagrammatic) structure – but it doesn't have a fixed or inherent meaning in itself. Whatever is present in the **dream** is present only as a potential of what's to come. The **dream** does not 'make sense' yet. This is why in Talmud it's also said that 'every **dream** unopened is like a letter left unread'. A **dream** requires interpretation and the upshot of the **dream** is determined by its interpretation. For **dream** interpretation is a mode of performative speech that has the potential to shape the course of events. To say that **dreams** depend on interpretation does not mean simply that the interpretation retroactively bestows sense and meaning on the **dream**, but that interpretation confers reality upon the **dream** and as a consequence the **dream** shapes reality. The power of interpretation is to tap into the potential present in the **dream** and thus transform the meaning of the **dream** into reality. It is said that 'there is no **dream** that does not have an interpretation', which means that the interpretation is constitutive of the **dream**. There is no **dream** without an interpreter and no interpreter without a **dream**. The outcome of a **dream** is determined by the interpretation that is put upon it; its fulfillment – whether for good or for ill – is activated by the interpretation, which actualizes the **dream**, and in doing so shapes reality.

The interpreter actively participates in the creation of the meaning of the **dream**. She speaks it in a certain manner that gives shape to the identity of the interpreter. The interpreter that interacts with the **dream** in return is somehow defined by it too. The **dreamer** weaves the **dream** through which the **dreamer** is woven.

With each effort to interpret, the imaginal topography or the hyperspace of the **dream** changes. This is somehow in line with quantum physics, where observer determines the properties of the observable object, but also of the multiple simultaneous interpretations that confer meaning upon and blow **life** into the **dream**. In this sense, there are as many possible interpretations as there are interpreters. Therefore, the **dream** has multiple meanings. But there is something even more intriguing in all of this. Not only are manifold interpretations of a **dream** possible, it is said 'they will all be fulfilled'. Perhaps this is more difficult to imagine, that there are as many possible realities bestowed upon the **dream** or generated by the **dream** as there are interpreters of a particular **dream**. Thus every **dream** generates multiple realities coexisting simultaneously as mirror images of the one (original) **dream**.

If I refer back to Nicolas' image as a **dream**, it suggests to him a multi-fold of versions of himself unfolding simultaneously in **time**, and if given to different interpreters, they generate multiple possible readings of his **dream** of which they are all equally meaningful and will all be fulfilled. **Dreams** fold onto each other. **Dreams** unfold out of each other. They are simultaneous and connected since they are all one web of **dreaming** in flux. They are all different in their imagery, their qualities, intensities, and speeds. And yet there is something like a ladder of **dreaming**; Jacobs Ladder, which leads from fluorescent nightmares and repetitive **dreams** to clear **dreams** and then all the way up to the **dreams** of light and **dreams** of unity. This ladder of **dreaming** is a path of gradual ascension of a soul into awakening, which can only be 'waking from the **dream** that we are **dreaming** that we are waking from the **dream**', or which can only be the 'waking from the **dream** within the contours of the **dream**'. Again, there is no way out of **dreaming** for even awakening takes place within **dreaming**.

Every awakening is 'fleeting and flimsy like a **dream**'. But what the **dream** offers on this path of awakening is what I have mentioned before, an opportunity for repentance or Tikkun, which means to repair or to heal whatever needs to be repaired or healed within the body of the **dreamer** so it can realign itself with itself. The **dreaming** in a **dream** reveals the necessity or the question of the body in the given **time**. The images of the **dream** show what needs repair and thus create an opportunity for 'whatever is not in place to return to its right place' within a **dreamer**. Let's say something is hindering the intent within the body, the body's will and its direction in the given **time**. The **dream** shows the intent and the hindrance and it suggests how to repair it, so that the flow can flow unbound.

Dream Opening is a **practice** of opening **dreams** by looking for the right question that conveys the concrete and specific necessity inscribed in the **dream**. A collective of secondary **dreamers** or interpreters opens an original **dream** of one of them by way of **dreaming** its necessity and its question back to the original **dreamer**. There are multiple interpretations and each is correct as long as it is tied to the intent of the **dream**, even though that intent is exposed only through the weft and warp of the exegesis that unravels in **time**. The original **dreamer** is thus in-formed by the imagery and meaning that are being mirrored back to her. And thus she can let her body and her **dreaming** body resonate with their imagery and be moved by it; moved towards repairing whatever needs repair, towards healing whatever needs to be healed. The latent is made manifest through the interpretative gesture and enables for whatever needs it to be transformed. In this sense 'the **dream** illuminates the concealed matters of the vision' and 'the interpretation exposes what is hidden and is hence said to be greater than the **dream**'.

A similar procedure is used in the **practice** of collective **dreaming** where a **dream** is replaced by a text or object or a **movement** sequence etc. which is worked with through same procedures as a night **dream** in the **dream** opening. For example, a text is 'opened' by the collective of secondary **dreamers** who perform its interpretation. I call this action a stringing together of words, images, sounds, or voices. In this performative speech the interpreter allows the body to speak in response to the original material that is proposed. The first rule is the allegiance to the original material and its intent. Just like a **dream**, a text can be read either from start to finish or from finish to start. Within the linear circularity I seek an opening to the hyper-dimension of the **dream** wherein all is embedded. 'A **dream** is an archetypal image cast from and upon the screen of the blank space of infinity and deflected in the imagination of each individual **dreamer**.' And the images or words strung together by the interpreters are further mirroring and further deflecting the 'original'. One **dream** looms into another **dream** and into another **dream** as an infinite mirror. This is how collective **dreaming** works to allow for the emergence, the processing and development within a creative gesture. The potential latent in the original material is unfolded and processed through multiple interpretations and variations. The structure of collective **dreaming** allows for collective intelligence to be accessed and activated. It allows for the collective to function as 'the screen of the blank space of infinity from and upon which image can be cast'. To be the body of the flute through which the breath blows. It allows for the unfolding of the web of **dreaming**, for **dreaming** to flow as images, words, gestures, **movements**, sounds, tastes, smells that arise to be strung together only to dissolve. It allows the collective of **dreamers** to weave the **dream** through which the **dreamers** are woven.

>> next question to MALA p98

S3 DAMLA TO GAJA

I understand from your previous answer that you handle phantom sensations as processes potent with expanding perception. Is it possible to induce phantom sensations or to underline already existing ones as a method of "disorientation", in the sense that Lisa Nelson suggests the word as a way to create shift in habits of perception and to expand attention?

In your experiences working with phantom sensations are there any examples of practices that you've already used in this way, or can you imagine/describe examples of practices to introduce phantom sensation as disorientation?

Dear Damla,

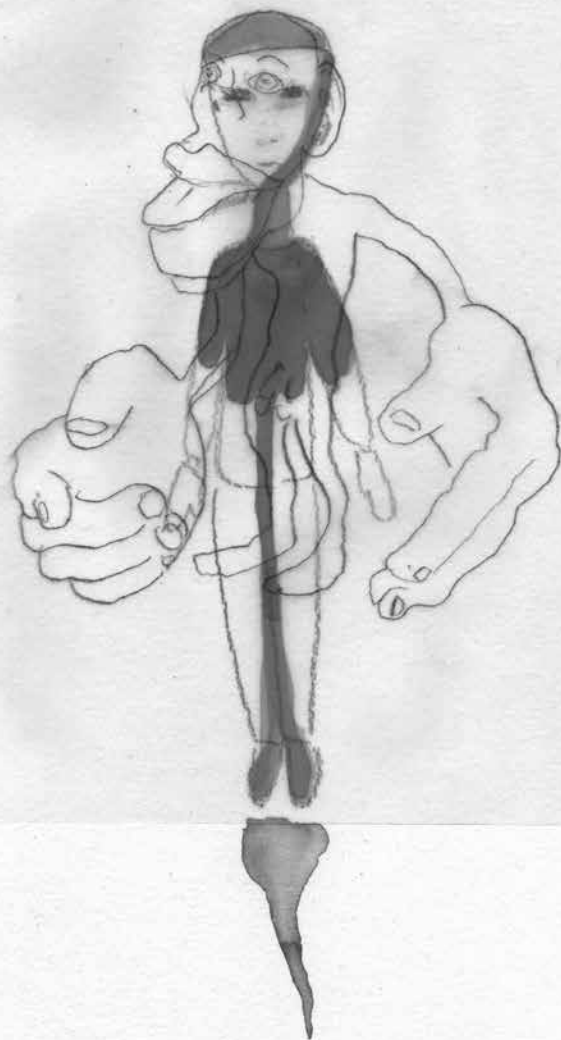
It is possible to induce "phantom sensation" without amputation through anesthesia of the limb, as they often do in phantom studies. Then it is a 'reversible lack of awareness', an action potential cannot arise from the receptor in the limb. The signal conduction is inhibited and thus participants of the experiment can report on the sensations of the "phantom limb". It is always strongly connected with the visual factor. Melzack and Bromage (1973) found changes in the position of a phantom arm after an anesthetic nerve block. When participants looked at the real limb, the phantom arm suddenly coincided or fused with the real arm in 65% of the participants. But the dissociation between phantom and real limbs occurred again when the eyes were closed.

In the research on phantom sensations we don't use nerve blocks, but we work a lot with eyes closed, and with extensive stimulation of body parts, or with insistent **attention**, that creates new proportions of the phantom body; the body of awakened receptors with its own form within the form of the physical body.

This work provides a lot of disorientation, as the body achieves a different awareness of itself, and thus creates unfamiliar paths for action.

The example would be the exercise of phantomculi - where we play on the notion of homunculus in neuroscience [see the picture] - which is the figure of a small person representing the proportions of the body in the sizes of their correlates in the brain sensory motor cortex. Through long stimulation we temporarily disorientate the previous body schema. The parts of the phantom body which are stimulated become larger in our consciousness, more heavy, more eager to move, more open to stimulation - they become the leaders of the body. That doesn't necessarily mean that one will decide to move with them only - what is interesting also is to observe how much **time** it takes for the other body parts to "catch up" with the stimulated ones. It's a process similar to what Lisa Nelson might be proposing in searching for the "antidote" of the position.

HOMUNCULUS



Also in the call for touch exercise, where you ask with your eyes closed for a touch in a certain place on your body (i.e. left elbow) – and then receive it from your partner. This is always a bit tricky because there would always be an incongruence between what kinds of touch and where you are expecting it, and what are you actually getting. And now how do you react to this incongruence, to this mismatch – in **movement** but also in your bodily awareness? Do you extend the surface of your receptors ready to receive touch, and create a bigger platform of welcoming receptors in the next call, or you insist on the places you imagined, and stay discontent (also in a productive: critical way) with what you are getting? This exercise was created to induce the association between call for touch and the following sensation of being touched. It was a priming step to another exercise, but it evolved into exercise in which you can observe also your own traveling **attention**. How do you choose to call for the next place on your body? What are the mechanisms and the paths that **attention** is taking? Is it antidote? Is it correction? Or maybe you are actually following the sensory map of your brain, taking much smaller distances from one place to another, than it appears (i.e. as in Ramachandran experiment: the cheek is close to the representation of the arm in the brain map of the body). So yes, I think the **practice** can expand the processes of perception and creates spaces for redirection.

>> next question to GAJA p113

53 VICTORIA TO DAMLA

Damla, I am really interested if your research on civil/social disengagement may be completed or added with a **score/ritual** that may sound as a partial solution of this “disease”. And by solution I mean any strategy that reveals it and assists in its recognition. Could you give an example? Could these strategies be also applicable in smaller collectives like communes, artist groups, etc.?

Victoria, the question you are asking is actually the general and basic ground of my research. But it is very informative to get such a question:

--- NOTE TO MYSELF!!! ---

I still have a long way to go to make my research available for others to understand; even the things that I thought to be basic are not clear for everyone!!!

My problem is a general state of alienation from the processes governing our daily lives, withdrawal from their responsibility (response-ability), the lack of belief in or imagination about possible alternatives in the contemporary society.

So, to be able to deal with this very general and abstract problem I started to call it PUBLIC DISENGAGEMENT. The naming, itself, is an attempt to clarify and specify my problem.

Although, I chose to borrow and visit a medical discourse, I avoid calling it a "disease" and prefer to use "syndrome". In contradistinction with disease, and despite its widespread connotation, syndrome, is not a necessarily a medical term and doesn't connote any health or normality issues. By definition, it is a group/complex of symptoms that are thought to be occurring together or somehow associated.

So, leaning on this hypothetical and yet-to-be-resolved character of syndrome, I call it PUBLIC DISENGAGEMENT SYNDROME. This is an attempt to collect and investigate various symptoms and try to associate them with each other.

Then the practical dimension of the research is framed as a clinic, which is devoted to the recognition and treatment of PDS (Public Disengagement Syndrome). Just a few words to clarify these two: Recognition, stands for the screening process to detect symptoms, point out some underlying conditions within society, and specifically, under urban conditions, it also aims at depicting some quotidian situations as symptoms. As I am dealing with habitual, inscribed, and normalized behaviours here, the very recognition of public disengagement has a treatment value. And with treatment, I don't mean the elimination of symptoms, fixing the society, or the replacement of disengagement with engagement (maybe some degree of disengagement is what makes it possible for us to survive and carry on with our lives). Instead, I aim at underlining existing disengagements and proposing new playful situations that counter-act public disengagement to create alternate occurrences to disengagement.

So, the PUBLIC DISENGAGEMENT CLINIC is already there for these recognition and treatment purposes. However, the problem is it couldn't yet establish its own methods and filters, other than my own lens! The attempt is to be able to change this part of the answer, as soon as possible!

With regard to smaller communities with specific concerns, I think they carry a potential to propose alternatives to public disengagement, at least within their own field. A task of the clinic is to point out the existence of these alternative social occurrences and to document them. Various communities that attempt to pay **attention** to, to consider elaborately, and to act on some dimensions of their lives that they have withdrawn or been excluded from, could be examples to this. My favourite but still hard to speak about example would be the communes that erupted around Turkey in Summer 2013 with the initiation of Taksim-Gezi Commune. Another simple example that I like a lot is PapaDouala – Bicycle Repair Atelier. This is a small space in St. Gilles, where a group of bicycle lovers gather twice a week for a couple of hours to help people repair their own bikes. Apart from

its capacity for community building and non-commercial exchange, it's an open space one can attend without relating to bike repairing. Yet, most importantly it introduces one's bike to oneself; it is no longer a strange mechanism that you have to take to a professional when it breaks down. The experience and skill shared at PapaDouala transforms the bike from a mere tool or vehicle to an object of care and the subject also into a capable subject by empowering them over this simple process of their daily life.

>> next question to DAMLA p111

SS PHILIPPINE TO PHILIPPINE

When I try to look at the performative work I am doing as an observer, as a spectator, I realize that much more than with non-performative work (i.e. installations) I find that being both inside and outside of the work is a dichotomy that doesn't offer me an image. I cannot actually visualize the work which I am directly, physically a part of. If this is the case, what do I reveal to myself in this work?

This is difficult to answer. But or perhaps because the question itself is rather significant, it exposes something that is inherent to the work in the way I am executing it now and to my investigation into the dynamics between an original and its copy or simulacrum. It is my idea that there is an essential loss that occurs within the resurrection of the copy that reflects onto the original, revealing or emphasizing the frailty or finiteness of that original. In making both the self and a representation of the self the tools in a piece of work, there is no space left within which to take distance. In that sense, what it reveals or achieves is perhaps the undergoing, without distance, of the moment of confrontation between original and its performing copy.

>> next question to PHILIPPINE p104



SESSION 4

QUESTIONS by 09.02.2014, 12pm
NEXT MEETING: 12.02.2014, 6pm
LOCATION: Chez Philippine

PHILIPPINE TO LILIA

ANNA TO MALA

LILIA TO RARES

CAROLINA TO ANNA

CECILIA TO PHILIPPINE

DAMLA TO VICTORIA

SAMAH TO DAMLA

CAMILA TO GAJA

MALA TO CAROLINA

VICTORIA TO SAMAH

GAJA TO CECILIA

RARES TO CAMILA

S4 PHILIPPINE TO LILIA

Hi Lilia,

You said, as part of your last answer to a question from Anna, that in a performance you are “searching for what I don’t know yet, to be puzzled by it and to engage temporally in another sense of things. A state of confusion, figuring out what’s going on...”

From what I have been able to see of your work, it looks like your performances are quite scripted. I am curious how you combine the scripted with the unknown, the unexpected, and how to be both prepared and unprepared (or prepared to be unprepared) and how to know where the opportunity for this puzzlement lies?

Thank you so much for the question. I think my interest really takes place in between the two aspects you are referring to. On one hand the script/ structure/ form and on the other the interpretation/the performative/the act of playing, happening at the present **time** in a public constructed space. And my question has been: How much flexibility can I give to the script in order to be where I find most interesting, the play act (not just the act of play as in theatre but also the act of playfulness and imagination). What kind of **writing** needs to be done in order to be in the moment, not to achieve authenticity but to engage in the present **time**? I see this strategy as well as an act of resistance, of not wanting to make sense globally, in totality but within the moment by moment. To be in dialogue with the given structure, to set the parameters of communication, to be able to engage in the act of being present, to be with the capacity of focus, of detail, of choice, of surprise, of change, to be listening, to not foresee but create relations when things come to you and you come to things. As in the craftsman’s **practice**, you see all the stages of the work. And in here lies maybe the political act again because the interest is to join the process and the product as dependent on each other, to be able to have both at the same **time**.

Live performance has the quality of such immediacy; it disappears when it’s over. But not all live performance wants to give emphasis to that quality as a force, as the capacity of agency of several elements at the same **time**, and the negotiation between them.

So to reply to your question and in the frame of the performing arts and its dependency on an audience, I’m very interested in formats that are explicit in their functioning and where I can see the agency of all elements and where I can play with them.

When you refer to my scripted performances, it makes me think about the shift that’s happened in my **attention** in recent years. I was more used to searching for

the unexpected in rehearsal and then **writing** it down, creating a structure to make it appear again. But by the end of the performance “Moving you” the method changed; we know the rules of the game but we don’t know the shape things are going to take. And in “Ai!, a choreographic project” the entire piece is based on those principles, both performers and audience are figuring out what can be done, what is being created and how we relate to it.

I guess both strategies are interesting but they operate differently. In order to keep the **presence** in the present you have to **practice** it. In a scripted version you **practice** repetition until it’s part of you, embedded in your being, so you can play it as if it was the first **time**. In a **score** based performance you rely on the form and **practice** playing, listening, and engaging with different entrances to the game. You **practice attention**, listening, flexibility, and openness. In both cases one has to be familiar with the conditions in order to invite the unexpected. But the unexpected is not often a big spectacle. Rather, it is the appearance of what is already there but not yet seen.

My regular warm up:

Lie on the floor; scan your body bit by bit starting with your toes ending with your head and hair.

Pay **attention** to your breathing. Don’t change anything, just **acknowledge**, feel the air coming in and out of your body, notice the moment in between the inhale and the exhale.

Stretch your body as if you just woke up. Go gently, feeling the places that need to be stretched and the ones that need to be massaged. Use the floor as a body you can work with, a body you can push towards and against. Try to touch every single place in your body.

Come back to lie on your back. **Acknowledge** your sensations and thoughts. Focus on your breath again and little by little start making some soft sounds like a baby; they frequently express their feelings vocally. They are always ready to push out a really loud sound without hurting themselves because they warm up. Treat the voice as you treated the body. Focus on your desire, on what it feels like doing, humming, singing, whispering, talking.

Start moving again combining **movement** and voice and play for a while. If your eyes have been closed open them or vice versa. Play with the eyes open and the eyes closed.

When you feel like it, start to include the environment actively in your sensations and thoughts. Keep dancing and go on for a while.

When you are done with your dance comes to a rest, close your eyes and review what you have experienced.

Go to your next activity.

S4 ANNA TO MALA

Dear Mala,

Your text about **dreaming** was very inspiring. I wonder how **dreaming** is different from creative thinking and/or fantasy for you and what kind of relationship it has with language? I tried to **dream** a fantastic question to you but failed, maybe because my **dreams** have very little language. I refer to what Lisa Nelson calls "my poor animal self", waking up trying to remember my **dream** in my waking state and finding a total loss of language, but strong images and senses; language that you seem to make dance with ease over the white computer page. I can paint diagrams for the rest of my **life** being perfectly happy. But formulating a text or question in relation to the image seems infinitely hard. How does that work for you?

I would prefer to write about the difference between fantasy and imagination. Fantasy is a form of wishful thinking, perhaps a way of moving out and away from the present and the body present in the present. Perhaps it is a subtle form of alienation or self-anesthesia, a fall from the 'small still voice'. It's interesting how we use the word and its variations. Fantasizing is defined as 'indulging into **daydreaming** about something one desires'. Fantasy is a 'faculty or activity of imagining things, especially things that are impossible or improbable'. I experience fantasy as an action that shifts me out of my **presence** to myself and catapults me into a virtual space of the possible but perhaps improbable. It's tricky. Everything that surrounds us is made to trigger and seduce us into fantasizing. I think it is a way of dispossessing, disconnecting, and thus disempowering us. The difference between fantasy and imagination is something I clearly experience in my body. The body tells me immediately if I am in one or the other. Fantasy perhaps shortly excites me but eventually makes me feel tired and weary. Imagination on the other hand is restorative and transformational. The more I engage with it the more empowered I become. Imagination always has to do with the body. Imagination is the language of the body. It is the imagery of all of the **dreaming**, of all of the experiencing of the body. We feel these images. We experience them. The imagination returns us into the present and into **presence**. It brings us into a place where we are present to ourselves and to our experiencing within the present. And so **dreaming** of which I speak has to do with imagination because it is our bodily experiencing. Every moment we are experiencing (360') everything that is coming to us through different modes of perception from our surroundings or from within. The body is this great river of **dreaming** that flows all the **time**. The night **dreams** are just the pop-ups that reach into our conscious mind but actually this same process of **dreaming** is happening all the **time** with the same intensity as in the night

dreams. We are just not aware of it. The body's way of processing all the information it is continuously receiving, on all the different levels of its being-ness, is through images. Here's a beautiful quote about how the conscious mind is purified and ignited by means of **dreaming** and its parabolic imagery. 'Sleep is the apparatus by which the heart – 'the point in the **dream**' – can form images of that which is beyond all images'. The night **dreaming** enables us to witness the imagery that veils in a garment the mystery, that which lies beyond and pervades all. That is what imagination enables in us. This is why I say imagination is restorative, transformational, and empowering. It is an agency, a faculty, or a vehicle within us, which enables us to create bridges through creation of imagery, and connects us to the great flow of **life** or to that which lies beyond. 'To choose **life**' is a great opportunity and a great power we're endowed with. If I tend to **life**, it fills me with more **life**. **Life** tends to restore whatever needs to be restored in the body of the **dreamer**. It tends to transform whatever is in the way just as a river carves the stones to flow freely, to flow wide.

Now about the language: For a while in my performative **practice** of **dreaming** I have been developing a way of producing language-based material, where thoughts and images are generated and processed from an intersection between the mind and the body **dreaming**. The key to this **practice** is to focus on what I feel or what I am experiencing in the present. Then I zoom in and look and pronounce closely what is there. I pay **attention** to details. I hold a question or topic in focus as an intention, to which my intuition responds. Then I open the space. I try to keep it open wide and uninhibited. I allow whatever is coming to my **attention** to be scanned and processed into words, moment after moment again and again until I feel the thought has arrived. The key to the **practice** is to hold the focus on the question without interfering. I just watch the process happening through me. Without conditioning the flow with my likes and dislikes, my judgments and doubts. I try to keep the space open wide so that **dreaming** can happen, so that language can happen, so that **writing** can happen, so that a thought can arrive like an arrow with its own intention and necessity revealed. I am looking for a way that **dreaming** can generate thinking. **Dreaming** delivers thoughts as insights, as discoveries. It opens a place of wonder.

Currently I am looking at how thinking arises from **dreaming**. How is thinking an image-based process or generated through image-based language? Images speak on multiple levels and their mobile meaning is always dependent on the context. To give an example I use an image of flooding from a **dream** of a friend who is an architect; an image of flooding in his case was being flooded with emotions, emotions flooding the space between him and another in an intimate relationship, and finally it happened that the cellar of the house he was building at the **time** flooded. Encountering the real flood at the construction site and having to deal with it helped him address his emotions. When language is open to **dreaming**, it is a structure through which the breath can flow. Then perhaps thinking can be a living thinking again.

S4 LILIA TO RARES

Dear Rares, you've been collaborating with several people in the past months and I would like to ask you how do you see collaboration in your work? Where does your practice start and your collaborator's practice end? Where do they mingle? I'm asking this question because so far I see your projects as researches on other people's research. I see it as a critical project that injects content using food and the rituals that accompany it, like a feedback practice between different researches. I would be very interested if you can elaborate on this.

Why I collaborate: any 7 out of 101 reasons (partly answers the question)

In no particular order:

1. I don't do catering! I'm interested in artistic research and a.pass is a place where being smart, both emotionally and mentally, is on the agenda. The research cases are complex and meeting people during presentations or workshops, you may not always understand what they are busy with. In this context, it is more important to "use" than to "contemplate". So if you really want to see what people are busy with, collaboration is a great way to sharpen the image and learn from very smart people. And there are just so many of them! I don't feel like a kid in a toy store but rather like a reader in the library: now let's see something about affect because this is something I'm really neglecting.

2. Ivan Illich and Nicholas Bourriaud. If conviviality and the aesthetics of collaboration are so great for the audience, why would they not be for the artists themselves also great? It would be like chefs who refuse to eat good food: "Everything good: we serve! We eat only canned food!" Collaboration is definitely a tool for conviviality. Just like food, it allows for diversity but is also a frame for an individual to reach their full potential. Bourriaud talks about relational aesthetics as symptomatic of the shift from goods to a service economy. Who in a.pass deals with goods? We are all dabbling with services. From visual artists to dancers, our art is a service in the most classical ways: *inseparable from the person who is offering the service; *the service disappears once the service provider stops the action; *the service cannot be stored; *the service cannot be experienced beforehand etc. I'm interested in these issues in my work with food. How could I not be interested in these things when I develop my research?!

3. For Eastern Europeans travelling is not always easy as we are still kind of trapped by borders. For the average Joe, if you have some financial resources you really don't invest in travelling and looking for feedback from other like-

minded locals. Meeting a.pass participants from all over the world is very healing in this respect. **Somet**imes better than travelling because you get to hang out with the best and brightest! (Of course, we all have our idiots but they mostly stay at home).

4. Something new. I noticed **somet**imes a worry about originality or ownership of the work, not manifested by the people I'm collaborating with, but by others. I must propose the concept of the portmanteau performative; a work that in the end belongs neither to the other or to me, but that when done well, furthers both my research and the research of the other. And also the result of this collaboration is something new or original in that specific way until two people come together again.

5. I also compensate for my lack of **time** attending all of the a.pass workshops through learning from my colleagues in these tailored workshops for two. These come with a flexible program and very direct work together where you don't get to skip anything and everything is very direct.

6. None of the collaborations so far have been disappointing in any way, so I am not discouraged and I don't want to stop collaborating. I met great people who were very nice and who reminded me of **time**, temperature, and ingredients. The only disappointments I had so far in terms of collaborations were with the collaborations that did not happen, precisely because they did not happen.

7. Synergy! You know "2+2= 5". Working with food and art and I am absolutely sold. Interdisciplinary work is the greatest thing there is!

>> next question to RARES p142

S4 CAROLINA TO ANNA

Dear Ms Sörenson,

I hope you are well. I have seen a picture you posted online under the title "Burocrazy" –please see the picture attached here. Looking at the picture and then, immediately after, re-reading your answer to the question from last week in the form of a very performative text, I would like to ask if you could please narrate the space of Burocrazy in order to illustrate how Burocrazy is displaced. If you think there is not such a thing as the Burocrazy spatiality, please disregard this request.

If you have any question, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Carolina Goradesky

Ps. Source of the picture: Artforum. Accessed February 2014. http://artforum.com/news/page_id=0#news45183

Dear Miss Goradesky,

Thank you for your interest in the Department of Burocrazy! It is my pleasure to answer your question in regards to our **practice**. In the Department of Burocrazy our main focus is the production of fantasy, as I stated February 6th 2014, at the residence of Ms Hoegen. That means we always have to be ready to make our offices appear, disappear, and reappear. The first office I imagined was when I was 7 years old. My friend Hanna and I created the office space on the floor of my room, consisting of a typewriter, an old unplugged phone, a bulletin board, a stapler, and a notepad. We stuck pencils behind our ears, answered the phone and wrote down everything our clients said on notepads. We stuck the notes on to the bulletin board as we took turns providing the soundscape of the typewriter.

Since then I have been in many offices. When I was still just a bureaucrat in the Department of Burocrazy, one of my favorite Burocrazy office spaces I worked in was located on 50 Pine Street. To enter the building I would have to call a phone number, no one would answer, but a buzzer would sound, indicating the front door was now unlocked. Entering the space, there was a very small lobby, where you would have to wait for the elevator to arrive. Not because you called the elevator, but the elevator would arrive because the building could feel your **presence**. If you did not have the correct **presence** the elevator would not be summoned. You would have to take a walk and try

again later. If the elevator arrived, you would step into it and it would take you to the floor where you were supposed to work that day. It could be the same office space a couple workdays in a row. However, you could also arrive at the office archive, a Chinese dry cleaning service, a stamp factory, or a paper shop. Every once and a while you would arrive in the basement, a tricky challenge to navigate your way through garbage and storage until you would find other people down there. Wherever you arrived, you had to work there that day or at least until lunch.

As the Head of the Department, I have over the years perfected the art of making my office appear and disappear. When necessary, I have opened my office on a bed, a kitchen table, or under a tree. All I need is my computer, phone, notebook, pencils, and pencil sharpener. Occasionally, I can make it appear with just a pencil and paper. When I make my office appear for longer periods of **time**, other materials can find their way in; scissors, a clock, a ruler, paper clips, folders, etc. When I became the Head of the Department I obtained my own official stamp and inkpad so I could help other people to travel, interviewing them and creating formal documents. I have also developed a rare skill to make printers appear, a talent that I have been practicing for a long **time**.

I have opened my office in a diplomat's apartment in Brussels, I made it reappear in a storage space in Miami and I even had it open for six office hours in an old flower shop in Sweden. I hope that when I have perfected the art of fantasy creation, the Department of Burocrazy will have several buildings all over the world, making offices disappear and reappear, producing fantasy and making printers appear when we need them.

>> next question to ANNA p134

S4 CECILIA TO PHILIPPINE

Querida Philippine,

I share with you three desires on your research. I apologize, because they are long introductions, but I find them necessary in order to communicate the ways those ideas came to me.

On distance

I went to bed thinking on the question I should formulate to you today and trying to dream it. (I love that idea from Mala's last answer). Instead of dreaming it, I dreamt of an old guy I once found in Mallorca. I was having a beer with some friends and the man wanted a cigarette. Since no one had anything but rolling cigarettes and the man didn't know how to roll, a friend start to roll it for him and in the meantime he turned to me and proposed a game. The game consisted of moving five coins on a table and with the minimum amount of moves, get those that were on the edges together, or something like that (I don't remember very well). Of course I failed the task since I have never been good at that kind of logical games, and the guy ended up showing me how to do it. The trick consisted of leaving a distance in between the coins so you can flip another one in there, so in one move you somehow manage to move more than one. The guy said in my dream: "Everything in life is a matter of distance".

I woke up this morning in Madrid with the question in my head. The question got wet underneath the shower. It almost fell down when I opened the fridge and it got a bit sticky with the honey. But it came back again after breakfast in perfect shape when I thought "I have been in Brussels for one month and I didn't manage yet to really connect with the city". This morning I find myself actually missing Brussels.

Distance.

Can you think of any mechanism for taking a distance from yourself when being part of a performative work?

Is that distance really possible in any other kind of creative work (i.e. installation work)?

What is the difference between "being present" through a work of art in which you are not directly (re)present(ed) but still there, and becoming yourself "the object" in a performative work?

Do you think it is possible to achieve, through practice, an objective vision of your work as a performer?

How would you present yourself as an "object"?

On mirrors

Then I made one of those teas with messages (which I love and follow as a kind of daily oracle) and it says: "We can find ourselves only in someone's mirror". I recognize a slight smell of "new age" fragrance in the message, but still it is revealing, because at the last session at your house I thought of mirrors. I like the idea that it was actually you posing a question to yourself and I think it cannot be better since it is a problem you have with your own perception, your own image in performative work, and maybe it cannot be answered by anybody else but you.

I was reading in Jacques-Alain Miller: "The first link of the subject to the other, in terms of desire, is recognition".¹

So, could the others, as an audience, work as a mirror for you? Could that "solve" the problem of your own auto-perception?

On copies and originals

I was deeply touched by that idea of yours that "there is an essential loss that occurs within the resurrection of the copy that reflects onto the original, that reveals or emphasizes the frailty or finiteness of that original".

These days I am also fascinated by the idea of detail in relation to copy and original, and more precisely, with Giovanni Morelli who invented the Morellian² Method to recognize original paintings from copies in Renaissance paintings.

Morelli is also the character of one of my favorite novels by Cortazar: Rayuela (Hopscotch)³ I am interested in him because the writings of Morelli⁴, Cortazar explore the mechanisms for the construction of the novel, mainly the desire to write with the reader as a co-conspirator, and I think there are possibilities of applying such a method to performative work.

Both Morelli's are somehow interested in the notion of "authenticity" within the shape of things.

So do you think that in the exercise of these "details" in your performative work, you could find a way for something? (This question is still an intuition.)

1 Miller, Jacques-Alain, Los divinos detalles. Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2010.

2 As an art historian, he developed the "Morellian" technique of scholarship, identifying the characteristic "hands" of painters through scrutiny of diagnostic minor details that revealed artists' scarcely conscious shorthand and conventions for portraying, for example, ears. (Wikipedia).

3 Hopscotch is an introspective stream-of-consciousness novel where characters fluctuate and play with the subjective mind of the reader, and it has multiple endings. This novel is often referred to as a counter-novel, as it was by Cortázar himself. (Wikipedia).

4Nota inconclusa de Morelli: "No podré renunciar jamás al sentimiento de que ahí, pegado a mi cara, entrelazado en mis dedos, hay como una deslumbrante explosión hacia la luz, irrupción de mí hacia lo otro o de lo otro en mí, algo infinitamente cristalino que podría cuajar y resolverse en luz total sin tiempo ni espacio. Como una puerta de ópalo y diamante desde la cual se empieza a ser eso que verdaderamente se es y que no se quiere y no se sabe y no se puede ser."

Unfinished note from Morelli: "I can not ever give up the feeling that there, glued to my face, interlaced between my fingers, there's like a dazzling burst into light, an eruption of me toward the other or the other in me, something infinitely crystalline that could curdle and be resolved in the full sun without **time** or space. As an opal and diamond gateway from which one begins to be what one truly is and what you do not want to be and you didn't know you can and cannot be."

Querida Cecilia,

Thank you so much for your intriguing questions and keen observations! I will try to address as many of them as I can, but I will tackle them in random order.

In the past weeks I began to suspect (and after talking to Ana Hoffner I became sure) that the terminology I was using, especially "original" and "copy", are imprecise and misleading with regard to what I am trying to talk about. Thinking about for example the performance by Kevin Atherton* to which I often refer, where the artist engages through a video projection in a semblance of a conversation with himself as a man 20 years younger; what fascinates me here is the 'science-fiction-like' quality of this conjured situation. Imagine! To be able to talk to yourself as you were, then, whenever, 10 minutes ago or 20 years ago. It doesn't really matter; it's a kind of **time** travel paired with an out-of-body experience, both exhilarating and lugubrious. There is an aspect of 'overcoming' death, but at the same **time** it's utterly frightening because it is death. We can't be alive and in two places at the same **time**, so one of the two men must be dead. (Which one?!) However, we are quite able to indulge in the game. We can be thrilled by the fantasy which is being acted out. But part of the thrill surely comes from the horror, the **presence** of death suspended in our game. Both temporality and distance play a role in this game. Temporality creates distance, even if it's just minutes or seconds of **time**.

Joan Didion writes in her short but precious essay "On Keeping a Notebook":

"It is a difficult point to admit. We are brought up in the ethic that others, any others, all others, are by definition more interesting than ourselves; taught to be diffident, just this side of self-effacing.(...) But our notebooks give us away, for however dutifully we record what we see around us, the common denominator of all we see is always, transparently, shamelessly, the implacable "I."

(...) And sometimes even the maker has difficulty with the meaning. There does not seem to be, for example, any point in my knowing for the rest of my **life** that, during 1964, 720 tons of soot fell on every square mile of New York City, yet there it is in my notebook, labelled "FACT". Nor do I really need to remember that Ambrose Bierce liked to spell Leland Stanford's name "£eland \$tanford" or that "smart women almost always wear black in Cuba," a fashion hint without much potential for practical application. And does not the relevance of these notes seem marginal at best? (...) What kind of magpie keeps this notebook? "He was born the night the Titanic went down." That seems a nice enough line, and I even recall who said it, but is it not really a better line in **life** than it could ever be in fiction?

But of course that is exactly it: not that I should ever use the line, but that I should remember the woman who said it and the afternoon I heard it.

(...) It all comes back. Perhaps it is difficult to see the value in having one's self back in that kind of mood, but I do see it; I think we are well advised to keep on nodding terms with the people we used to be, whether we find them attractive company or not. Otherwise they turn up unannounced and surprise us, come hammering on the mind's door at 4 a.m. of a bad night and demand to know who deserted them, who betrayed them, who is going to make amends. (...) I have already lost touch with a couple of people I used to be..."

What do you think of that Cecilia? If you like I will send you the PDF with the whole text; I think you will enjoy it.

The man talking to a projection of himself, as he was some years ago, is looking at a version of himself. **Time** and space, or a space of **time**, have intervened. It is that space of **time** that creates the distance and that distance creates the tension; the impossible-made-possible, the resurrection of a former self.

Perhaps then this is all about versions without any original. A former version of myself is just as original as the one I lug around now. To apply this line of thought to performativity, looking at oneself perform, taking distance and the role of an audience, I think we look at ourselves through the audience, the eye of the beholder. In fact I have to insert here a small fragment of a conversation I had with Stef Meul and Mauro Romito:

"**P:** As a matter of fact, we need to rephrase the question: 'Are you here' does not make clear if it is about the 'you', the 'here', or the 'being'

M: True

S: Also, you imply that you can be in two places at the same time. How?

M: I can disappear from here.

P: But you are still here.

M: I am here, but I am not here.

P: Then you have to be in two places, which is not the case.

M: But I am here.

S: To be in two places at the same time, seems a contradiction.

P: It is a contradiction.

M: I love space and time.

S: Then being here and there, being a contradiction, might be a matter of words.

P: But we feel the being here. It is not purely semantics, unless we agree that all we do is codification and therefore semantics.

M: Of course, I feel. But when you go away: do you know when you go away?

S: Like going away? So going away means to a place to go from a place?

P: You can say: "I am here". But can't really say: "I am there", because you take yourself with you.

M: I am there in your eyes.

P: Ah, yes.

S: Also: the image lies in the eyes of the beholder.

P: And by the same token: the person lies in the eyes of the beholder.

M: Can you close your eyes please?"

In fact I think the whole point of performing, the desire to perform, to stand before the other is to place oneself in the eyes of the other. Yes, just as you said, we seek in the other, like in the mirror, an apparatus through which to see who we are, how we are perceived, how we would perceive ourselves if we could look through the eye of the beholder and, most importantly, to confirm that we are.

Although I have not finished with your questions I think I should stop here because I can already hear Rares sighing: "too much text!!!"

Thank you again, I am really enjoying this conversation and am eager to ask you some questions too: come back to Brussels soon!

xph

*Kevin Atherton, "In Two Minds", 1978-2011

S4 DAMLA TO VICTORIA

I would like to follow and elaborate on a question you've asked yourself last week: "What kind of litmus paper do I use to reveal them?" I understand "them" - in terms your research, which you describe as questioning everyday life, as latent, hidden habits, patterns, schemes, and structures that are rooted in everyday life. However, you focus on the performativity of the wedding ritual as the object your research. Is the ritual the litmus of everyday life? Is the ritual a tool for you to research the context of everyday life? Can you elaborate on the relation between ritual and everyday life?

Throughout your former answers, I've sorted out "desecration" (as the alteration of the context), verbalization, and exposure as ways for revelation of the hidden; what other kinds of litmus papers do you consider, think of, or imagine?

In order to respond to your questions, let's define first what is "the everyday" and the difference between that and "the ritual". The Russian scholar, Sergei Markov, involved in the study of Russian *posvednevost* raises a question: "What is the everyday? This word refers to the world of everyday life as opposed to the everydayness of celebration, routine as opposed to spending savings, and tradition as opposed to innovation. It is a cross between a high and low, between the ups and downs of the spirit of the flesh."^[1] Furthermore, Lefebvre, one of the cult historians of the Annales School, argues that production of **knowledge** is effective within the framework of the investigation of everyday things.

And yet our consciousness of each of these things becomes transformed and loses its triviality and its banality, since in each thing we see more than itself; something else which is there in everyday objects, not an abstract lining but something enfolded within which hitherto we have been unable to see.^[2]

He considers that the everyday being is a core of reality, deepness itself. Though, I'd say that the everyday is a surface, where the real is contained; albeit it has to be unraveled in the same way as small clots of minerals are distilled in water. The other scholar reaffirms this suggestion, considering that everyday is "the surface", which encloses constellations and structures of the social order:

The everyday **life** is not reducible to conscious, unconscious, ideas, feelings, morality, or economics. Daily being is a surface, a border, which intertwines ideas; the inhabitants of the higher spheres and feelings, emotions, desires, from the very depths. These events form the weave, which, like the singular point in mathematics, represent moments of bending, or fracture lines of development. Everyday **life** is not only the thoughts, feelings, and desires of the people. It is above all, the order, fixed institutions.^[3]

It is important to mention that the research of the everyday has become significant for me recently in relation to the Dowry project that I am developing together with my grandmother and mother. The context of home conversations, dialogs and comments of my relatives regarding my future **life**, marriage, husband, and my female behaviour, was delved into the everyday routine and it has been very difficult for me to feel the real influence of these "instructions" on me. To which extent are they invisible? What do they do to me and to my body? How do they structure me, roughly speaking?

That is why I've decided to change the context of these conversations, and sort of purify the everyday by asking them to embroider the wedding dresses with the concrete phrases that are the principal guidelines for my future marriage. What do they consider as the key secrets for executing their plan of my successful **life** as a wife? How would they conceptualize clearly their worldview they want to teach me?

The monotonous, quotidian, and long process of embroidering with **time** is shaped into nice letters of white silk threads on white tissue. Thus, the invisibility and impertinence of the discourse is somehow canonized, transferred from the sphere of quotidian chatting into a material shape accompanied with the pseudo-ritualistic procession.

To continue, it should be also mentioned that ritual is not the litmus paper of the everyday for me. Moreover, the tool I am using I wouldn't call a ritual at all, but a pseudo-ritual. A ritual is a stereotyped sequence of activities that involves gestures, words, and objects, performed in a sequestered place, and designed to influence preternatural entities. While the strategy I apply seems to be a fake resemblance of the invested **time**, efforts into the insignificant or even **sometimes** invisible elements that constitute an vital part of the original ritual. They are a kind of apocrypha, the unrecognized canon, skipped from the views of believers. The persistence and uselessness of the actions are both the intention to consolidate the actions, to create a tradition out of the alternative and also to sharpen a critical focus on the latent elements that forge our subjectivity, this everydayness of the celebration.

As to the last question- I'd have to think a bit more:)

[1] Boris Markov, Храм и Рынок. Человек в пространстве культуры The Temple and the Market. The Man in the Space of Culture) (St.Petersburg: Aleteya, 1999), 256.

[2] Henri Lefevre, "The Knowledge of Everyday Life," in: The Critique of Everyday Life (London: Verso, 2002),

http://books.google.es/books/about/Critique_of_Everyday_Life.html?id=LOd7RB961T8C&redir_esc=y

[3] Oksana Gavryshyna, "Теперь восхвалим славных мужей...": понятие о "повседневности" в фотографии Уокера Эванса,"(Let's will praise these famous men..."The notion of "everyday" in the photography of Walker Ewans) Neprikosnovennyi Zapas, no. 4(54), (2007), <http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2007/54/ga21.html>

S4 SAMAH TO DAMLA

Dear Damla, sorry I didn't know Saturday was the new Sunday :)

I am very excited by your ideas around disengagement. While the word clinic is for me somehow a little disconnected from the beautiful examples you gave, I am curious if you could perhaps talk a little more about how you see that your proposition for a clinic crosses over with the real life experiments of PapaDouala and the communes, as set-ups for exchange and life practiced beyond the capitalist/political systems we operate in today. I see that your life choices and your research are very connected, right? And if this is the case, then how would the clinic fit into this as a performative action, that is in itself also questioning or addressing political performativity? I ask this in reference again to the live examples you gave of alternatives that are functioning to provide alternative strategies for disengagement.

My path to the notions of syndrome and clinic passes by the recognition of the allergic condition in my focus of critique and the consequent elaboration of the notion. Later, I realized the connection between my choice of syndrome and clinic as frameworks of my research and the 'clinical approach' of the inspirational theoretician to me, Gilles Deleuze. So, although he was not my departure point, I can have recourse to Deleuze's courtesy to back up my 'clinical approach'.

"The Essays Clinical and Critical" is a late work of Deleuze composed of analyses of various literary figures and their works of literature. Yet, the implications of his convergence of literature and medicine are existent in his earlier works like "Logic of Sense" or "Coldness and Cruelty". For him, the symptomatological method sets the common ground of literature and medicine. He even goes further to claim: 'There is a great deal of art involved in the grouping of symptoms, in the organization of a table where a particular symptom is dissociated from another, juxtaposed to a third ... Clinicians who are able to renew a symptomatological picture produce a work of art'.* And conversely, the work of the artist is to distinguish, to isolate symptoms within the tightly woven canvas of civilization and to propose them in non-preexistent concepts.

The notions of clinic and syndrome – as a complex of symptoms – that I am relying on, strive for such a diagnosis of the contemporary condition that I am suffering from myself and that I feel a large portion of the society is inflicted by pandemically. The performativity and hopefully the political potential lie in this recognition and indication of signs (of complication) in the seemingly unremarkable flow of common, habitual everyday **life** in good shape.

At this point of my research, I think the main artistic quality (as Deleuze proposes it) in the presentation and organization of symptoms as a syndrome. Ultimately, there is not yet a particular syndrome, if I improvise for an example, such as Bell Jar Syndrome**.

Moreover, there are two other clinical activities, which Deleuze views at **times** more reserved to medicine: etiology, the search for causes and therapy, the development and application of treatment. However, these activities are not devoid of artistic or performative potential. (These yet to be elaborated and developed!!!) The examples that I mention in relation to Public Disengagement Clinic project coincide with the therapeutic activities, but with the distinction that they are not proposed by the clinic itself. Yet they are important to me, first of all as symptoms of conditions counter to PDS showing that alternatives exist. Also, they are examples that could tip me off for proposing further methods or situations of treatment. And lastly, they propose a scope for foreseeable approaches of treatment, giving also a glimpse of the level of medical seriousness in the clinical approach.

I don't want to skip the question of performative politics and how I relate the examples I've mentioned to this notion is, but I think I can answer them at length in a different context. What is crucial to me in the context of research is that the political could be performed at the level of everyday, more beautifully and strongly than at ideological or executorial levels.

* Logic of Sense, p237.

** in reference to Sylvia Plath's autobiographical novel The Bell Jar.

>> next question to DAMLA p129

S4 CAMILA TO GAJA

Dear Gaja,

I think I told you once about a puppetry performance I saw a few years ago called "The Phantom Limb," about an old guy (a true story) that kidnapped, killed and ate little boys and girls in Brooklyn in the beginning of the twentieth century. Ever since, I have been trying to understand the relation of the title to the story, since it has nothing to do with amputations or losses but, in a way, to a certain "gain"; an incorporation of another through an act of cannibalism. Maybe you can have a better idea than me. I found some clips online and attach two excerpts here, seduction and destruction:

<http://youtu.be/8TjEFaxEaZM>

http://youtu.be/mxOVHcWB_9Q

I'm particularly fascinated by the way in which both the performance and your research connect tenderness with cruelty as two faces of the same phenomenon. As I watched this again and heard you speak about your research in our last meeting, I am reminded of the idea of the phantomic as something haunting. Jacques Derrida said that the ghost's temporality is never the present. All ghosts come to us either from the past or the future, but regardless of where they come from, their essence is to return and to haunt through each return. The movement is always marked by desire. I wonder how these ideas of the phantomic resonate with your research (if at all). I'm thinking particularly about the phantom as the result of an unprocessed loss that performs a specific action on memory and perception. Is temporality part of your interest at all? And what would be the place for desire in the method you work with?

Temporality

So I think that the determinant of phantomic experience in terms of its temporality is its **presence** in the present. I was more occupied with this subject

in the beginning of the research; what is its connection to memory (marker of the past) and imagination (possible future)? For example is phantomic experience the productive aspect of memory that Deleuze writes about, how a block of memory is something that recreates the present moment instead of just tying one to the past, and through which the past can be lived differently? But then if you look at Plato's anamnesis – the concept according to which our new experiences are recollections of something that the soul already

knows from before, then sensations are getting less obvious in terms of their temporality. Because, going back to the phantomology, how can a person who never had hands have a phantom sensation of them?

Phantom experience's closest relative is hallucination. And hallucination is the fake perception, or the moment in which the world graspable in one way or another by others is placed next to world created by rebellious neurons of my own. The work of distinguishing between these two modes of experience, and the possibilities this parallel gives in case of the performer are central problems for me.

Desire

I don't use the word in my **practice**, but the intention is there. Maybe not exactly though. I would rather call it "insistence on **attention**". Remembering that "**attention** is the rarest and purest form of generosity" (Weil), and that "Master's eye makes the horse fat" I insist on **attention** to some sensations that we develop in the **practice**, in order to sustain them, to make them fat. So fat that they become phantom, that they have a potential to compete with standard perception of the moment.

Horror and Tenderness

When I talked with Lukasz, who suffers severe phantom pain and who apart from losing his leg in accident underwent frost bite of his stump and several minor accidents and operations to "correct" the previous operations, we were laughing a lot, at the nature of phantom experiences. I think it undoes the problem. In my **practice** I relate to a similar tension, funny and serious. I think serious can also be funny, and the funny can open up to the serious.

And regarding the puppet theatre, I recently read about ghost dance and Indian wars, and about the Indian's belief that mutilating the corpse would handicap the victim in the afterworld. (See the drawings of Red Horse from the Battle of Little Bighorn.) It resonates for me with the fragment of the performance you gave a reference to on Youtube, when a man is taking off the limbs of the puppet one by one, and then placing this deconstructed body on a pile. Then it made me think that preserving the completeness of the dead body corresponds not to its previous **life** on earth, but to the state of the soul of the dead person, and thus it is close to the idea of the physical body sheltering the phantom body, and the phantom being revealed by amputation. The title of the play you saw could have something to do with it.

>> next question to GAJA p131

S4 MALA TO CAROLINA

Carolina. If you put yourself into an imaginary future or into potentially possible present how would you use synesthesia as a main motor/drive of your work on building/developing sound scenography? How would these spaces of sound be built? By which principles they would operate and perform? Would they develop in **time**? How would they affect the 'spectator'? What exactly is a synesthetic event and how does it occur in a synesthetic set?

I am reading reading reading the question, very intrigued by the fact that I have no idea how to answer it! When I used the word synesthesia I was referring to the feeling provoked by memories that would trigger the physical sensation of being in a different space than the one where the body actually was. That was it, what could I say more [...]

I decide to go on with Wikipedia -Synesthesia [also spelled synæsthesia or syn-aesthesia, from the ancient Greek σύν [syn], "together", and αἴσθησις [aisthēsis], "sensation"] is a neurological phenomenon in which stimulation of one sensory or cognitive pathway leads to automatic, involuntary experiences in a second sensory or cognitive pathway [...]. In one common form of synesthesia, known as grapheme, color synesthesia, or color-graphemic synesthesia, letters or numbers are perceived as inherently colored. In spatial-sequence, or number form synesthesia, numbers, months of the year, and/or days of the week elicit precise locations in space (for example, 1980 may be "farther away" than 1990), or may have a three-dimensional view of a year as a map (clockwise or counterclockwise), after all if I would put myself in an imaginary future it would be nice to do so through a 3D view, clockwise or counterclockwise; a future in which I am able to synesthetically visualize this period. Let's say I have a 3D view of a counterclockwise future.

Considering what I have previously discussed about sound-space, they are existent layers of our surrounding. They are in-present, they belong to the specific moment one grasps them. But at this point, this exact moment of the perception, of the awareness of its existence, this sound space is transformed in a subjective construction. It is in this instant my imaginary future starts to go counterclockwise. Empowered by my synesthetic abilities, I see and conceive this view as memories bridging different spaces. That's how my sound space is built as a net of memories that will overlap with reality, and one cannot know anymore where she/he is. The sound scenography intends thus to confuse or to give a place for disorientation as part of the process of awareness. Why? Because to be able to operate, this space of sounds needs the spectator. It needs **attention** and openness to "touch" these suggested slots when one's memories are triggered by sounds. The scenographic is the mechanism of temporality established between future moments, in which I sketch possibilities, a present moment indicated by the awareness of a sound-space and previous experiences, which starts to appear with different intensities throughout memories.

As of the last question, I can imagine that a synesthetic set is one that promotes a sort of union of senses. We could say that if you stimulate only the hearing, or if you add sounds that do belong to a certain space, it can cause the stimulation of vision, indicating a closer observation of the existent site or triggering images.

>> next question to CAROLINA p133

S4 VICTORIA TO SAMAH

Samah, I am going to ask you the question that I asked myself recently. How would you define briefly the Western canon of contemporary art if there is one for you? And which media/methodologies would you apply if you had to omit that canon in your research? How would you communicate the topics that interest you to the public?

>> next question to SAMAH p127

S4 GAJA TO CECILIA

Dear Cecilia,

From some interviews with Pedro Costa, I found his method similar to sociologist Jean-Yves Petiteau's approach of deep listening to the interviewee person.

I find intriguing the necessity of subtleness defined by devotion to listening in encounter with the other, that is a trigger for opening the relation with the space of the other, the environment of personal identity. "To be listening is to be on the border of meaning," said Petiteau once in a pass, and he also referred to listening as an action admitting that one doesn't know.

In the context of the performance, it is usually the audience in the position of listener, and I think in contemporary art this attitude is often naturally honest, which is determined by the nature of emerging art. But I remember that you experimented with the position of listener in one of your projects (or in more?) How did you experience the listening from the place where you are expected to "talk"?

Dear Gaja,

Thanks a lot for your question; it opens a lot of possibilities and paths. I did not know Jean-Yves Petiteau, but he has a sympathetic name for me (in between something small and a boat) so I started to look for his name at the Internet and I found two things:

- A picture of a nice small man, that goes with his surname, (but still not sure if it is him).

- A brief description of Jean-Yves Petiteau, in wikipedia that says:

«Jean-Yves Petiteau pratique notamment la méthode de l'«itinéraire», une démarche d'enquête, qui interroge la place accordée à la parole et à l'image. Lors de la journée de l'itinéraire l'autre devient guide. Il institue un parcours sur un territoire et l'énonce en le parcourant. Le sociologue l'accompagne... Le territoire est à la fois celui qui est expérimenté et parcouru dans l'espace-temps de cette journée, et celui du récit métaphorique. L'interviewé nous livre en situation une histoire au présent et la mise en scène de cette journée particulière confère à son récit la portée d'une parabole. Dans ce projet, la narration est appréhendée comme ce qui donne sens au réel, ou plus précisément le sens se construit au fil du récit. Il se réinvente au présent. Il se fait chemin faisant dans le temps. Dans son déroulement, le récit dévoile des lieux. Il offre une nouvelle appréhension du territoire.»¹

I try to not forget the question, but immediately, Jean-Yves Petiteau is friends with Baudrillard and "parcours", guide, narration, territoire and specially: itinerary, which is one of my favourite subjects, become so appealing that I need to let myself go that way for a while. I found out that JYP was working together with Straub and Huillet in a film called: "L'itinéraire de Jean Bricard", a film in which they follow the course of river Loire. So, I followed as well the itinerary; I am swimming through it. I see images of the river banks and trees. I imagine a film in slow motion, which also speaks about death. "Nuestras vidas son los ríos que van a dar a la mar, que es el morir..."² So, **life** itself as an itinerary. Daniel Huillet and Jean Marie Straub were the subject of one of Costa's films, which is called: "Danièle Huillet, Jean-Marie Straub, Filmmakers - Where Does Your Hidden Smile Lie?"

In this film, in the process of editing a film, they discover that the smile of one character does not take place in the mouth (privileged organ for communication and language) but in the eyes. It is a silent smile that travels from mouth to eyes, and the position of the filmmaker is actually to be listening.

Silence as a possibility for listening and understanding, silence as communication; I think what you describe is the position of the observer.

So, this is the beginning of our itinerary, which connects silence, JYP, Straub and Pedro Costa with a concrete question: how do I experience the listening from the place where I am expected to "talk"?

I could say:

I do not understand performance as the play where I am supposed to talk. In performance you are expected to talk, to act, to give, to produce... but also to be silent and to not make noise. There is also for me another way of making in performance which has to do with creating the conditions for the audience to talk, to give, to produce together with the performer and also to be silent together, to be quiet, to receive, and to not produce anything... and even to question the very idea of producing nothing more than feelings or impressions.

Performance could be a wider term. In a pass there is a lot of talk. I usually like to listen, first 'cause I feel I have not so much to say and second, because in the listening there is also the possibility to identify textures, personalities, gestures, interests, and projections which are difficult to perceive if you are so involved in the conversation. I do mistrust words. I listen while I draw, because drawing has been always a mechanism of concentration to me. To draw is also to trace an itinerary.⁴

I am experiencing the listening from the place where I am expected to "talk" as a mechanism for understanding and experimenting the shift of positions, a possibility and as a play.

There is also one line you referred to about JYP "And he also referred to listening as an action admitting that one doesn't "know" that makes me think of another possible itinerary. In her first question addressed to me, Lilia asked me about Francis Ponge. It is curious that one of the characteristics of his poetry is precisely, that he places himself as a subject that "doesn't know". Through this strategy, he is able to look at things as if they were completely new. No prejudices, no expectations... Just as I like to imagine myself as an audience.

¹ «Jean-Yves Petiteau practices specially the method of "itinerary", an investigative approach that questions the place in accordance with word and image. During the day of itinerary, the other becomes guide. It establishes a path over a territory and enunciates it while going through. Sociologue goes with him.

Territoire is at the same **time**, that which is experimented and followed in the space-**time** of that day, and that of the metaphoric narration. The interviewee gives us one history in present and the staging that this particular day confers to his narration is the scope of a parable. In this project, narration is considered as that which gives sense to the real, or more precisely, sense is built throughout the story. It reinvents the present. It makes itself path progressively on time. In its development, the story reveals places. It offers a new apprehension of the territory.»

² "Nuestras vidas son los ríos que van a dar a la mar, que es el morir..." ("Our lives are like rivers that go to the sea, which is like death.") Jorge Manrique. Coplas por la muerte de su padre.

³ Nothing more than feelings. Nina Simone singing at the Festival de Montreux en 1976. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EbXYm7PLkew>

⁴ Ingold, Tim. Being Alive: Essays on movement, knowledge and description. New York: Routledge, 2011. And Lines: A Brief History.

>> next question to CECILIA p161

S4 RARES TO CAMILA

How is your participation in a pass benefiting you in terms of new knowledge (or maybe shifts in old knowledge), and what kind of long-term changes is this new knowledge likely to generate (if any)?

Dear Rares, it's hard to give you now a definitive answer for something that is still "in progress." I can, though, begin by telling you that one of the biggest lessons I've got is that of patience; to be less anxious about results and indulge more in processes of research and learning. I have noticed this shift also in the way I write and define my project(s). Patience has come to me with becoming more process-oriented, a different way of observing.

>> next question to CAMILA p136



SESSION 5

QUESTIONS by 15.02.2014, 12pm

NEXT MEETING: 19.02.2014, 6pm

LOCATION: a.pass

CAROLINA TO PHILIPPINE

GAJA TO LILIA

VICTORIA TO GOSIE

GOSIE TO VICTORIA

PHILIPPINE TO SAMAH

LILIA TO DAMLA

SAMAH TO GAJA

DAMLA TO CAROLINA

55 CAROLINA TO PHILIPPINE

Dear Philippine,

In your last answer I thought it was interesting that you used the term 'death' and 'overcoming death' to describe possibilities for this situation to take place. When I saw during your presentation, the video of Kevin Atherton, the artist engages through a video projection, in a semblance of a conversation with himself as a man 20 years younger, I had a different thought regarding this possibility. I saw it as a double-layered life, in which present and past can be connected by one's self-reflections, in which we would be able to "over-experiment" life by revising ourselves. It is as if we could show up to ourselves "unannounced and surprise us, come hammering on the mind's door at 4 a.m. of a bad night and demand to know who deserted them, who betrayed them, who is going to make amends." - following up your quote from Joan Didion's work.

Do you search for these "yous" left behind that would maybe come back to confront you in your practice? Are you concerned with keeping in touch with some people you used to be? If you feel like it, could you elaborate further on your idea of overcoming death in relation to your practice?

Dear Carolina,

Thank you so much for your question. I completely agree with you that there is a "double-layered **life**, in which present and past can be connected by one's self-reflections, in which we would be able to "over-experiment" **life** by revising ourselves."

This is exactly the "science fiction-like" aspect I mean. I think that finding oneself in the company of another version of oneself poses a set of different, quite contradictory kinds of situations or ideas of situations.

To answer your question I would like to refer to something that happened today in the workshop with Veridiana. We were asked to follow someone in or from the Gare du Midi. I decided to look for people who I could perceive as being a version of myself; myself, for example, at a different age or as a different sex. I first chose a girl, younger than me now, and blond. But like me she had sharp facial features and she was fiddling with her phone and trying to decide whether or not to buy a ticket and being nervous about not finding the person she was waiting for, even though she knew it's highly unlikely they wouldn't find each other. In this behaviour I recognized myself. I followed her for quite a while, she finally found her travel companion, a girl with a baby.

And then she revealed herself as being, in many ways, my opposite version... Efficient, organized and totally into the baby. I left her when she got on a train.

Looking for a new self, I happened upon a middle-aged man with a beard, a black coat and a small backpack. I knew immediately that he was me as a middle-aged man for reasons I will explain. We took the metro. We sat close together. He had a short conversation with the man sitting next to me and he turned out to be British. I call him David and I am **writing** him a letter. The letter, unfinished, is my answer to your question.

Dear David,

I was following you today. I chose you because you flap your right foot whilst you walk as if it is slightly out of your control, but in a pleasurable way, you like to let it do its own thing like that: comfortably confident that it won't run away from you, you let it skip and play on the end of your leg.

I chose you because I too have a flappy right foot you see.

I felt very very happy in your company. You are clearly a really nice person and we get on ever so well. We don't even need to talk. We just sit together, our knees almost touching and as I am thinking how lucky I am to have found you, that I am delighted that you are my middle-aged-male version, you do this extraordinary thing: you take out a paperback book, I stretch my eyes, they are almost turning a corner to catch sight of the title and their reward is: "The Examined **Life**; How to Lose and Find Yourself".

Sadly soon after the first part of the subtitle already happens: I lose you-who-is me.

But I know I will find you again because you told me so yourself.

In the meantime I will find out as much as possible about what you are telling me. I look for your book on the Internet and find a review. Apparently the writer, Stephen Grosz, is a psychotherapist and in the book he discusses cases and people he has treated. I read the following lines:

"With Anthony, who at 29 has been diagnosed with HIV and begins sleeping through his sessions, Grosz finds himself losing all sense of **time**: "whole sessions could go by in what felt like minutes, or just the opposite". In "Through Silence", my favourite piece of **writing** here, they together come to understand these supervised naps as a kind of rehearsal for death."

Well, David, I must say you are very astute. You are quite right that I associate the fascination with "different versions of the self" with death: paradoxically both with overcoming death and with dying. Overcoming, because to find oneself in the company of another of oneself is a perpetuation, a transcending of the one body-one soul- finite and singular being into a multiple or multipliable being.

Death is there because, of course, such a thing is impossible. I cannot be I both as I and as you. So one of us is not. One of us is gone, dead, if not actually, then at least as a premonition, a promise. Like the painted portrait of the grandfather hanging over the fireplace promises, embodies his passing, even when he is still with us. It is waiting for him to die so it can become the version of him that remains.

A rehearsal of death is such an interesting way to put it.

....(to be finished)

>> next question to PHILIPPINE p145

S5 GAJA TO LILIA

Dear Lilia,

So I would like to ask you about the title of "Ai! a choreographic project."

How do you use the term "choreography"? Because while the term is climbing at peaks of its exposure in a variety of contexts, in the field of new/experimental dance practices its meaning is mutating, and evolving. Choreography can no longer be seen as set of predetermined movements in a sequence, and reposing the question of Durning and Waterhouse "When we speak of choreography what are we speaking of – the process, the outcome of the process, the score that is performed, the translation of score by the performer, and/or the performative event itself?"[1]

You made a similar list out of the components of your work:

To be in dialogue with the given structure, to set the parameters of communication, to be able to engage in the act of being present, to be with the capacity of focus, of detail, of choice, of surprise, of change, to be listening, to not foresee but create relations when things come to you and you come to things.

I am wondering however, if the term "choreography" introduces a special order of relations between these things, or differentiates the weight of things? How does your practice reinvent the notion of choreography?

[1] Jeanine Durning, Liz Waterhouse, Out-score/ In-score workshop. Teaching Artistic Agency in Contemporary Choreographic Practices.

Choreography is the **writing of movement** in a given space/**time**. There has been a big leap from choreography as the **writing** of dance **movement** to assure its re-productibility; from dance gaining the status of a real art like the **writing** of music, from the necessity to document choreography as seen in contemporary art.

In our days, choreography is a term that has been used in very diverse disciplines and its field of action is not just in the domain of dance but also, in any domain giving **attention** to the **movement** of things or to the **movement** of physical (and maybe also para-physical) elements within a context.

I obviously take choreography as the **writing of movement** but I could also say the **writing** of affect. If I frame a space/**time** context and start looking/listening to the **movement** that manifests itself within that frame I'm paying **attention** to choreography. What are the desires, orientations, inclinations and intensities of the elements that are present in that context? What kind of events or micro-events do those **movements** create? How do the events form themselves and how do they dissolve themselves? How many layers do those events propose? What is my point of interest in that observation?

Here is where the **scores** come in not as choreography but as structures that make choreography emerge as **writing** or drawing a trajectory of relations. I'm interested in observing when and how things get mobilized, not only as a performer, but also as an audience.

If the **attention** is dedicated to these factors there is a high state of **presence** and present. And these states concern the individual and the collective. One and multiple, the crossover of these limits seem so obvious but they are never established; the interchanging of the focus between me and the other; the sharpness and the dissolution of one in the other; the negotiation happening; the emergence and emergency of things.

My questions are then: How do these **movements** create language? And what kind language is created?

As much as the **movements** are written, they are erased. There is nothing else that the act of **writing**; the act of **writing** of the players involved and the simultaneous erasure of that same **writing**. It's as much a **movement** of appearance as a **movement** disappearance. Choreography is ghostly, it is and it is not. And now it makes me remember the opening sentence of Brian Massumi's book Parable of the Sensible that says: "Concrete as concrete doesn't". I love its ambiguity, its vacillation between sense and nonsense. And then yesterday in a conversation came this sentence: "Present as present isn't... as a condition of performance."

I don't know if my performances reinvent the notion of choreography. They do to my own understanding of relations, in trying to create frames for encounter that question a familiar ordering of things. I have an inclination to work with domestic objects as they are so close to me. I know the chair I sit on, I know the cup I drink from, or do I?

>> next question to LILIA p188

§5 VICTORIA TO GOSIE

hi Gosie,

You must forgive that I am not so virtuous in using my imagination in the questions like you are and I also cannot do it because I didn't hear you speak about your project, because I wasn't in the opening week. The only work of yours I saw was one in Antwerp and the collaboration with Anna, from which it's difficult to know the issues you're working with.

So, my question will be simple: how would you explain to me about your research without using words?

And as a person, what is the implication, desire, and drive of things? What are the conditions that facilitate or obstruct (just to mention the two opposites) **movement**? Is there such a thing as **no-movement**?

>> next question to GOSIE p148

§5 GOSIE TO VICTORIA

Hi Victoria,

When you talk about your project, the following image springs to my mind: I see you descending the stairs in your wedding gown, like Moses coming from Mt Sinai. Everybody is waiting for you, at the bottom of the staircase, and is completely paralyzed by seeing your grace and beauty, while you are secretly enjoying the mirrored, hidden, probably satanic messages on your naked skin.

What is the status of the written word (in this case embroidered) for your work? Where does its strength/weakness lie? How does it feel to be clothed/dressed in words?

Greetings,

gosie

>> next question to VICTORIA p217

§5 PHILIPPINE TO SAMAH

Dear Samah,

Wow, you are in New York right now, yeaaaaah!

The question I would like to ask is related to your presentation of "Where are the Arabs?" tomorrow in the New York context and it's also somewhat related to Victoria's question to you last week.

When presenting this work in, for example, MOMA, there is an array of transpositions that need to be carried out or that happen on their own accord. (To start with, there is already a sort of question in my choice of the word transposing rather than translating: I feel translation implies an impossible expectation (that the translation of a thing closely resembles its original) while transposing seems to me to give space to the shifts and alterations that unavoidably occur. Do you agree?)

To name the most obvious transpositions, the initial work is a live performance, which took place in several public spaces and on TV. The spoken language is Arabic. In MOMA, it will find itself in the museum context, in the form of a documentation of the original performances (at least that's what I presume). There may be some subtitles indicating the meaning of spoken words and the sound of the words will fall very differently on the ears of the audience than it does on the ears of an Arab speaking, a Turkish speaking, or a Japanese speaking audience.

Can you indicate what this version of your piece is in comparison to other versions you have made in other contexts, and how does this version reflect back on the initial versions of the performance as they occurred in the marketplace, on the street corner and on TV?

Good luck and very best wishes for your talk and presentation tomorrow! See you next week!

The work "Where are the Arabs?" 2009 as an intervention in public space using performance and video, in which I probe the audience's relationship with **dreaming**, utopia, and the recent Arab history of the Arab Unity Republic project of the 1960's. I was having such a good **time** following my parents and their friends around during my rehearsals, presenting them with the speeches that moved them to protest in the streets in different parts of the Arab world, against corrupted systems, and dirty politics. I wanted to see how people in the streets, who may or may not have lived my family's experience of that **time**, would react, and how the words would resonate.

I like the idea of thinking of myself in different versions. It's really helping me look at this work differently. In its conception, there are two versions of me; one is performing live in the public spaces in downtown Amman (the vegetable market, a small lingerie street, and in front of the most famous sweet shop, Habibah). The other is a recorded video performance, where I speak directly to 'the nation' in my clean white shirt on TV screens in bars and cafes around downtown Amman.

In the beginning, I was trying not to present the documentation of the work. Then I was invited to perform the intervention in an exhibition in Abu Dhabi called Disorientation II, and at the very last minute I was informed that we did not get permission to perform in public space. So in the span of 24 hours I was confronted with the reality of a new version of the work.

The video documentation of the performance in public space brought to the surface another reading, specifically of the gender politics of the public space. There I was talking politics to a sea, confronting this tense political dynamic of men and women in the streets, breaking cultural norms.

Then, the other version of me in the video performance, played on TVs in restaurants, cafes and bars is appropriated by the hushed rooms of the white cube, where I am suddenly taken seriously, carefully listened to, not ignored or laughed at as was the case in places of leisure in the city.

Then there is static me, caught red-handed in a photograph. I look serious, well maybe only for a minute, but then as your eye moves across tomatoes, underwear vitrines, desert plates, and many men, the distance between me and my small audience reveal the tensions and absurdities of an image, without words or us knowing the context or the occasion for such a crowd, the gender issues again come to surface.

I will ask you the next question already; how do you receive this work as an audience member? I can share the full-length video with you for this.

>> next question to SAMAH p138

S5 LILIA TO DAMLA

Dear Damla, your Public Disengaged Clinic makes me think about nurses and doctors and for some reason zombies attacking hospitals. A society eating itself up, in a state of total disengagement, an unethical state of being where the fear of death and pain is not at stake any longer; the kind of science fiction imagery that reveals the impotence of the power state. But I know these are not the images that you are working with.

My questions are: what are the aesthetics of the Clinic? And how does it operate? I know that you didn't start the **practice** and that will be your next step but I would be curious to hear about it as a plan for the future and imagine how the conditions, actions, and discourse of the clinic are as a fiction.

Maybe this is not a helpful question and if not let me know. I got quite intrigued by the Voliere (bird house) image proposed by Gosie Vervlossem in our previous meeting and thought it would be interesting to create a fictional field of operation.

Hi Lilia,

Well, the question is about an area that is not clear for me yet, but maybe to fantasize about it would be helpful for me in the end. So I'm happy to keep my question. Thanks!

My imagery does not amount to zombie attacks, but my bringing up among science-fiction dystopias is surely at the foundation of the project. Moreover, looking around I feel myself in a dystopia where Brave New Worlds and 1984s look like some oasis. There aren't even any freakish virginity pacts that we fiercely stand up for; nothing fierce, no standing up for!

The clinic is probably not the most opposing or resistant image! To the contrary, it is one of the most powerful regulative structures. Maybe it is the reason I fell for the image of the clinic, to be able to work from inside, together with the image it provides me the possibility of alternatives to this day of doom; to claim vitality of the issue on one hand and cherish **life** (beyond survival and productivity, for sure) and its ethical quality (as in "not to be unworthy of what happens to us" without particularizing or idealizing any particular) on the other.

Yet, I feel the urge to repeat myself, the clinic is not a conventional medical institution, nor an institution, not even a place or a methodological reference. It is only an umbrella discourse for various **practices**;

a discourse not necessarily terminologically medical (although I enjoy submitting to the terminology) but an umbrella of vitality and revocability of public disengagement.

What falls under this umbrella? Well, truly I don't know much yet, I'm not even sure if the name of the syndrome would stay Public Disengagement, before I started to play with it. But there are some qualities I can foresee:

Seriousness

The **practices** of the clinic should be approached with utmost seriousness. This corresponds foremost to the vitality of the syndrome that I mentioned and provides the tone of the approach in any **practice** of the clinic. The careful consideration, profundity, and the significant degree of devotion to the activity are attributes that already counter-act disengagement by themselves. However, there is a shift in the focus of **attention** and the emphasis of the seriousness. The contemporary everyday **life** is hardly devoid of seriousness; to the contrary, most regulative structures are examples of designated engagements. Then, the **practices** of the clinic should turn over the attachments of seriousness to commonly unserious issues.

(to the brink of absurdity but not absurd)

Yaşamak şakaya gelmez,

büyük bir ciddiyetle yaşayacaksın

bir sincap gibi mesela,

yani, yaşamının dışında ve ötesinde hiçbir şey beklemeden,

yani bütün için gücün yaşamak olacak.

(Living is no laughing matter:

You must live with great seriousness

Like a squirrel, for example I mean without looking for something beyond and above living,

I mean living must be your whole occupation.)

Playfulness

Dysfunctionality

Diversity

Scratching desires

Will

Devising responsibility

>> next question to DAMLA p137

S5 SAMAH TO GAJA

Hello everyone, yes I am in New York, hence the delay in posting the question. It's 8:30 am here and New York is covered in white snow!

Dear Gaja,

My question is concerned with your **practice** and the point where you cross over from research and theoretical, or even real **life** understanding of phantomic experiences in conversations with people who live them, to performance. What are the threads, words, or ideas that become starting points for exploring this on a physical level? And I was also wondering if you have, or would consider taking drugs in order to become closer to the phantomic sensation, or is that not what you would like to achieve?

Dear Samah,

One doesn't need to take drugs to come close to the phantomic. The idea of Sacks is that the phantom body is only revealed by amputation, but it exists as such in everybody (or not as in cases of xenomelia). To trace the phantomic body within one's own body is largely a matter of directing **attention**, to certain aspects of the stream of sensual consciousness.

People who experience phantom sensations talk about it in a very casual way, and often compare it to a more "universal" experience like the fake feeling of one's phone vibrating.

At this moment, after pretty profound residency work focused on touch and tactile stimulation, where we observed the physical outcomes of induced changes in proprioception, my practical research moved to the **practice** of Aiki ken, where apart from the warm-up that works with touch in a very particular way leaving strong marks on the sensual body map, the **practice** aims at embodying the wooden sword.

The sword until its weight and length should become the prolongation of your own body, and is included in the mechanics of the body. The **movement** of the sword is very closely bound to the **movement** of the hips, and the technique employs minimal use of muscle involvement, and maximum of gravity tricks, almost like when you think about the **movement** of the skeleton. So a sword becomes part of your body. But what is interesting is that you also have exercises without a sword, but within which you are moving according to the logic produced by a sword, so it is clearly the work of a phantom sword that often grants efficiency in certain **movements**, that are directed against your opponent.

I think also that the long **practice** produces changes in the bodily-self model. And as in phantom limbs, an integral part of feeling unity with the phantom is the feeling that the phantom is part of oneself. So the sword becomes the part of oneself, but unlike in situations of "misunderstandings", when people forget that they have no leg and fall, in Aiki there is a whole system of sustaining phantom extension of **movement**, that apart from bringing better effects, also create a certain aesthetic that is produced by measures of distances and particular dynamics. But of course Aiki, apart from using the phantom of the sword, uses a lot of imagination directed at remapping the body, the whole body is marked with metaphors. Last **time** my master gave me a lesson, I learned that I have to erase my shoulders, that I have the place of work in the middle of my palm, and that my fingers become like octopus legs **sometimes**. All this addresses the bodily self, recreating it.

This kind of self, the bodily self, is something largely studied in neuroscience at the moment; the idea is that bodily self is genetically determined, but can be modeled by sensory experience as well. But the bodily self is not only a matter that is passively modeled. It is also understood as a power for action so that it determines our perception of the environment in terms of possible actions. I have no ambition to summarize findings in this field at this moment.

S5 DAMLA TO CAROLINA

Hi Carolina, knowing that you won't be answering this week, I have stretched my question due date a bit. Sorry!

Encountering your installation at the opening week, the design of sound sources proposed for me some particular physicalities to be able to have an intimate relation with the sounds. These physical postures corresponded to instances of my kinesthetic memory particular to familiar spaces. This kinesthetic trigger added up with the sound for an experience of familiarity in my case. Was the placing of sound sources intended to propose this kind of physical response of the audience? Even if it was not the case for your installation, do you think it is possible to provide the audience with a particular physicality through the design of sound space, in general? Are you or would you be interested in such a mingling between audio and kinesthetic memory?

Dear Damla,

Firstly, I have to admit I really liked your testimony regarding your experience in the installation. It is interesting to have this information that goes beyond aesthetics and technicalities.

As to the position of the sound sources, my intention was to place the sources as an indication of the relationship between the encounter I had with narrator and the space in Brussels. I am not saying I tried to describe or translate the encounter in doing this, but to question the distribution of the sounds in relation to the one that hears them. I am sure there are sound installations where the intentions of the artist are quite clear or at least that the sound piece is so present that it is impossible to miss the point. The position of the source, in my opinion, is essential to determine the layers of space and propose sensations to the listener.



SESSION 6

QUESTIONS by 22.02.2014, 11am
NEXT MEETING: 26.02.2014, 10am
LOCATION: a.pass, Half-Way-Days

GOSIE TO CAMILA

ANNA TO DAMLA

CAMILA TO SAMAH

PHILIPPINE TO ELKE

DAMLA TO RARES

ELKE TO ANNA

SAMAH TO PHILIPPINE

MALA TO NICOLAS

RARES TO GOSIE

S6 GOSIE TO CAMILA

Dear Camila,

Last week I got intrigued by your double-headed dragon-bracelet. I see a lot of hand **movement** in your work (the finger puppets, the **writing/typing**, the game you made in Nicolas' workshop) and the double-headed dragon appears to me as the gatekeeper(s) of the work/the research? How is the dragon getting along with your hippos?

Greetings,

Gosie

Dear Gosie,

You know how it works with gatekeepers: they can protect you to the point of suffocation and get in the way of every single action you attempt to perform. She is very possessive and reacts very strongly to everything that comes close, always getting in the way of anything that my hands try to do: typing, cooking, folding paper, playing with puppets. In the beginning it was very hard for the hippo, but they've grown fond of each other and have started to get along really well. I have the suspicion that they do all kinds of things behind my back when I leave them alone and **sometimes** I'm afraid they will run away together. For the **time** being, the dragon is beginning to reconcile with the rest of the objects, but what they will end up doing together is still unclear to me.

>> next question to CAIMLA p165

S6 ANNA TO DAMLA

Dear Dr. Damla

It has come to the Department of Health's attention that the Disengagement Clinic is in full operation. We would need a report of your day-to-day activity. How, when, and where are you disengaged and what are the clinical parameters of your operation? Do we need to order uniforms and identification cards for you? If so, what color, shape, and size do you find most suitable? All branch organizations need to be reported too. Please reply by Wednesday 26/2 2014.

Thank you,

Head of Department,

Anna Sörenson

Brussels , 07/03/2014

To the Honourable Head of Department, Anna Sörenson,

The Public Disengagement Clinic is honored by the attention of the Department of Health. We respectfully apologize for our delay in response to your appeal and hope you would excuse our delay due to the inconveniences of H-W-D (Heavily Within Disengagement) condition taking place at the clinic last week. Yes! Unfortunate but true, our clinic established for recognition and treatment purposes Public Disengagement Syndrome (PDS), was found to be severely suffering from the syndrome itself.

Due to its above-mentioned condition, the clinic is currently practicing disengagement instead of counter-acting it. So it is lagging behind and withdrawing from **practice** on a daily basis, no matter when, where or how. Planning, projecting, abandoning the plans, and replacing them with "better" ones; yet conscientiously avoiding actualizing any of them constitutes the daily, even hourly cycle of the clinic.

Currently, the clinic is actively disengaging among three branches: Autoimmunity Studies, Urban Vacuums Studies, and Hypersensitivity Studies. The Autoimmunity branch is working nowadays on the Public Cranes Project, which was finally put into **practice** after a very long procrastination process. The clinic proudly presents the invitation-documentation link of the project, (<https://www.facebook.com/public.cranes>) for you to follow its stagnation. The Urban Vacuums Studies, which is basically planned as a documentation

branch focused on archiving and dissemination of therapeutic centers, situations and instances, with a potential to propose alternatives or to counter-act the disengagement that exists in Brussels independent of the **practices** of the clinic is at this moment in **time** struggling with being drowned in its inability to capture the potential in its case study, namely Communa. The Hypersensitivity Studies, which once worked on public allergies is in retreat in its hole, maybe **some**time, somehow to be reactivated.

For the moment, the clinic is in need of a logo and a publicity video that demonstrates the disengaged condition of the clinic itself as a cautionary tale for the public, to be wary of the syndrome. The Department's moral, physical, and therapeutical supports would be appreciated.

With our warmest regards,

P.D.S. Damla Ekin Tokel

(on behalf of Public Disengagement Clinic and all the sufferers of PDS)

>> next question to DAMLA p194

S6 CAMILA TO SAMAH

Dear Samah,

A few weeks ago, in your response to Lilia's question, you said that your work had no relation to fiction "unless you were missing something about your work." Last week, when Elke asked us to bring objects that spoke about our research in either political, performative, or ritualistic ways, you chose to bring books. I still don't know what the books were about, which makes them even more of an object to me. This is, I think, a matter of use value: the same operation that the museum performs on objects when it takes them out of context (the world of use) and displays them as examples of something else. But that "something else" is always going to be a fiction. After all, politics, the ritual, and the performative, all exist in the realm of fiction. One could even argue for a similar operation happening in the case of the question from last week (about the documentation of performance as a new work). I would like to know what your thoughts about this are and, if you so wish, to reflect upon the possibilities opened up by treating a book as an object (stripping it off its content, authority, sacredness, and even truth). How could this operation on language (but also "academic," non-fiction **writing**) inform your work in new ways?

>> next question to SAMAH p176

S6 PHILIPPINE TO ELKE

Dear Elke,

I have been browsing, with great interest and curiosity, the website of the Bureau d'Espoir (www.bureauudespoir.org). I stumbled upon the following:

"Chinese artists used to change their names three times in their career in order not to be linked all their lives to the same work. In this way they gave up on the concept of the "I" related to a name, in order to reinvent themselves. In other words: they gave up their personal authorship in order to free themselves from the weight of the past and open up new possibilities."

We were talking this week about the attraction of multiple lives and identities: schizophrenic **practices** or, a term that apparently has recently been coined in the States: slash careers (referring to the slash that turns up in the notation describing a person's multiple careers or trajectories: "artist/veterinarian".)

When, as an artist, your **practice**, research, and **life** all become so intertwined and the one is not really separable from the other, as is your case I believe, the slash becomes redundant. The **practice**, though multi-stranded, is a unity, and the identity, though multi-faceted, is one.

We briefly touched upon this subject in our conversation and I would like to ask what you think about the fact that this unifying mechanism kind of takes away the playfulness and sense of freedom that can come with the slash, or the schizophrenia, or the name changing that the Chinese artists adopted. Do you experience this as a loss? Is it a significant loss (for you and in general) or is it only nominal? Can this loss be avoided (and do we want to avoid it)?

Best wishes,

Philippine

Dear Philippine,

Maybe I'm not so much of a multi-tasker or maybe I see the slash career description rather as a label put on a (quite evident) state of affairs rather than a **life** or career choice. I mean, we always already find ourselves caught up in very different roles and identities in our **life** and work. I am an artistic researcher, alternative manager, schizophrenic woman, citizen of a complicated but rather uneventful country. I am an anorexic worker, tentative (but

insisting) feminist, tarot reader, shop owner, ex-singer, ex-partner and ex-critic. I am a budding Buddhist, stumbling fiction writer, practicing tantrika, potential abbess, and phantasmatic nomad, hermit and owner of 6 polar dogs, living on the abandoned shore of a frozen lake at the brink of the pole circle in what I have come to think of as Norway. When I was working on schizophrenic **practices** about two years ago, I found them interesting not because they managed to combine all kinds of seeming oppositions smoothly, but exactly because they intensified being them *at* the same **time**. How can you sustain different, and often contradictory 'senses of belonging' *at* the same **time**, and let them resonate in a heterotopic space of reference, imagining and political aesthetics. In the working period around schizophrenic bodies, the task was rather literally to go and look for a **practice** that would put you simultaneously in different **time** and experience zones, sustaining the conflictual character of this experience. In a literal sense this meant to displace your sense of self, from the body, to a space outside of it, or even outside the space 'you' were at work. Attaching yourself to an idea, an inkling of an outside, an imaginary body or space. And extending this experience to different spaces and qualities of being *at* the same **time**. As such creating a kind of 'monster body', an impossible experience, a loss of the sense of self combined with a heightened awareness of an intensity that overruled the mind's confusion. This was rather an extended performance exercise **practice**.

But in the work 'Battery' of Bureau d'Espoir (the 22 day durational performance of living in a 1m40 cube in the window of the ZSenne art gallery) the 'schizophrenic' experience was rather redistributed to the passers-by, to the people confronted with the performance image. Here the attempt, rather than the one of creating a 'schizophrenic body' of experience, was to create a 'schizophrenic image': one image of a woman sitting in a box for 22 days, doubled up by a second one (me and performer Veridiana Zurita were both occupying one window), doing nothing in particular. What we wanted to do is to create an image that reshapes itself under the gaze of every onlooker. To create an experience that doesn't allow itself to be read in one go. An image that might refer simultaneously to city poverty, feminist history, the decaying body, solitude, spirituality, transformation, prostitution, social engagement, hermit **practices**, political protest, etc., and still insists on being devoid of spectacularity.

In reference to the quote of the Chinese artists, I think I prefer this messiness of identification over the skilful multitasking of today's worker, who magically transforms herself to fit any occasion. The pressure on the multitasking mother, lover, career woman, sports coach, and talented home chef has proven a bit too much, turning the feminist accomplishments from an emancipating gesture into the curse of branding ourselves as virtuosos magicians-against-all-odds. The multi-tasking imperative of 'Enjoy your Freedom to Be Whatever you Want!' enslaves people in a much more efficient and effective manner to the ways of capital than the stay-at-home model ever did. Perhaps I'm exaggerating. But what I like about the 'monster model of

belonging', is that it is socially awkward, badly adapted, always bringing too much luggage to the occasion (i.e. performing not only the accomplished career person, but also the old-fashioned revolutionary, feminist or schizophrenic at the work negotiation table, can seriously mess up the demands of efficient management), is that it always somehow questions the public 'I' that is being called for. The 'I' of the contemporary artist, for example, and what she is/is not presumed to do, to address or to think, where and when. The 'I' of the alternative consumer, and the ways in which her responsible buying choices always seem to clash with her phantasmatic self-image. The 'I' of the one belonging to what is left of the left, the one that is left without a space for political action. If we deal with these different personae not as separate entities that can be distributed into different **time** zones, only peeping out of the box at the 'right' **time**, they become constant ethical disturbance points that announce themselves in all their contradictory, insane, unregulated force. In all their schizophrenic power. Showing off the 'I' to be nothing more than the embodiment of all the relations and forces of a schizophrenic world crossing its body.

>> next question to ELKE p163

S6 DAMLA TO RARES

There was quite an awakening question you asked me at PAF that I would like to return to you in reference to our reading session on Rancières text: What is the RISK that you are taking? I remember you mentioning the word several **times** referring to not having the proper material, **time**, or preparations for a particular demonstration, but these in general, seem to me as practical risks concerning the execution of a demonstration. Instead, I am curious specifically about the risks concerning what you are curious about regarding food/food demonstrations or what you would like to learn through them? (depending on which one best defines your approach) How you could radicalize these risks, within your research methodology?

I don't like the fact this is an explanatory question rather than a generative one, but it's still something that I'm truly curious about. Yet, if the answer is so basic and obvious to you, let me know and I can change it. Learning by risking.

An unfinished personal risk assessment with no risk management plan other than exposure

Risks

Learning **times**

Incidence

(How likely is this to happen on a 1-10 scale?)

Impact (What would be the impact on a 1-10 scale?)

Allowing yourself to become vulnerable to both the performance and to yourself is your number one responsibility.

All the **time**

10

10

People are hungry for food or entertainment and want instant gratification.

Performance

8

8

I have a problem of sensing other people's **time** during the performance, and adding food and the interior **time** of people involved in the performance (as most of them are interactive), adds to the risk of the temporalities clashing and creates an even greater tension.

Performance

10

6

You can and will have, production problems: under-baked, over-baked, proofing was too long, turns out the ingredients were absolute chemical junk and they did not caramelize, or something did not close right and resulted in a spill that takes hours to clean etc.

Before and during performance

5

5

Consumers can always reject your nutriment. Not necessary due to bad/good food/emotions but rather a situation of matters not fitting, with your audience and not being able to turn a dinner around at any point and seeing it all evolve into a nothing-creating-flop, leaving people cold and unengaged. Miscommunication is always a possibility.

Performance and post performance

5

8

At **anytime** in the kitchen there are numerous professional risks ranging from thermo-mechanic to chemical, all a multitude of ways in which you can lose your fingers or eyesight, either for a while or permanently.

Before and during performance

4

8

>> next question to RARES p170

S6 ELKE TO ANNA

Dear Anna,

You were talking about the need for the bureaucrat to spend some **time** in therapy to deal with her frustration of being part of a machine that doesn't allow her any kind of 'real' agency. I would like to know if through her therapy, you are able to diagnose/treat the whole bureaucratic machine, or if the therapy is only for the 'character' of the bureaucrat. In other words, is the therapy dealing with the psychological state of mind of the worker or the constipation of the whole bureaucratic regime?

Dear Elke,

The identity of the character is supposed to mirror the entire machine. By embodying the machine with all its problems and the loopholes, I attempt to diagnose the whole machine via therapy; the constipation as you put it. Thinking a little more about it, I realized it's a tricky thing to do. My approach is that to personally embody some of the problems of bureaucracy I have a need for order and organizing. I try to index and apply systems to the world around me in an endless quest for efficiency, for reasons inexplicable even to myself. Discipline and order is not something I lack. I exaggerate and over-identify with these sides of myself while performing my character, the Head of the Department. Instead of being skeptical of these qualities, I explore them. I also explore them together with the person I was interviewing in "Your Application is Pending." Therefore, the interviews became a research method for finding this character and recognizing her/his (because I am not sure if my bureaucrat is a she or a he) limits and possibilities. In this role, I identify with the unhealthy system, obeying authority, and using my own powers of control. I believe everyone that takes part in the machine suffers from this, whether their participation is conscious or unconscious. I also believe that you are a part of the machine whether or not you want to be. I think it is extremely difficult to see the whole machine, including the problems within, making diagnosis even more complicated. I hope that analyzing a part of the problem will still feel like a relevant conversation, because I am unsure that the people maintaining it, can be separated from the machine.

>> next question to ANNA p159

S6 SAMAH TO PHILIPPINE

Carrying on from our last conversation, about how I think about the documentation of a performance/of my work "Where are the Arabs?" when it is presented in the gallery context, I would like to know how you perceive this work as a viewer? I will share the full-length video with you to watch and react to.

Dear Samah,

To start with, I think it's perfectly acceptable and fine to present this work as you do, especially if, as you described, the work is contextualized. More importantly, since you present the video together with photos and a text, you are making it quite clear that this presentation is a representation of the original performance pieces. It is a version, but not one that pretends to be the same or even close to the same, as the actual performances.

Watching the video I feel I can gain some level of access to those performative moments. I can catch, I think, something of the humour, the tension, the confusion and the weight and meaning of the moment.

My question last week was actually about something close to, but not the same as, this issue. I was curious about your thoughts on the repercussion on the original performance that these other versions in different contexts have. What does the showing of the piece in the MOMA do to the performance in the market place? I ask this because, as it is a significant shift in context, it must create a shift in the content. For example, one could say that transposing the piece from the street to the institute de-politicizes it. In the art-context the action is safer, less provocative, less political. The fact that the action in the street was destined to live on in the art-context, the institutional context, even the international context, charges that first moment in a different way. It enters it, retroactively, into the realm of the aesthetic.

Conversely, one could say it makes the original performative act all the more political: this act is given a much wider visibility than the market place, so it is mediatized. It is transported to 'exotic' contexts (exotic to its primary place of occurrence) and 'let loose' on diverse audiences in diverse places. This, too, moves backwards through **time**, retroactively changing that market moment. That performance is no longer, as the audience and you yourself felt it at the **time**, just for you, in that particular space and **time**. No, now the world is there with you, looking over your shoulders with you and at you, with glasses that are completely different colours, seeing, through their own particular interpretation, what is probably a significantly different occurrence. This has been added to that moment and therefore the moment, the event, the performance is altered.

>> next question to PHILIPPINE p220

S6 MALA TO NICOLAS

Hearing your text on 'conditions for productive fragilities' I am curious about what kind of entities fragilities are? Are they material or immaterial? Hypothetical or actual? Once the conditions are there for them to be, what do they themselves produce? What is their specific modus operandi and in what way do they relate to inconsistency, which you say equals fragility? Or are there many? How do they relate to themselves and the other(s)? And how do they affect the other? Is your Shadow Parliament a productive fragility? And if so, how does/could it operate and what does/could it produce in relation to the context that contextualizes it? How can fragilities act while remaining fragile? And so what is the force of the fragile?

Dear Mala

"Fragilities" might be quite a wacky concept in my head yet. I'm carrying the word in front of my inner eyes, turning and twisting it around, trying to make sense of it.

Looking at "fragilities", it seems hard, for me to decide, whether it is a symptom or a condition.

Fragilities as a symptom: This could be an unavoidable reaction to something stable, a concrete action in reaction to something dynamic, or a tension-full interplay between entities.

Or do we have to see fragilities as a condition? A constant mode of being? A situation under constant change? An entity of distrust? Or an entity of permeability?

As a symptom it is immaterial. As a condition it is inherent to a certain material.

Most likely, I don't have to decide. I experience it in both conditions.

For example a.pass:

I was reacting with my entry question on a discussion we had during a general evaluation meeting with Elke and Peter Strijdonk. Peter is invited as an organizational developer (coach) for an official evaluation procedure. Together, we found out that we need to frame these evaluations under the aspect of "sustainable liquidity."

Sustainable liquidity - Is this what a.pass is heading for?

I would say most of us would agree that a.pass needs to remain on the one side hyper-transformative and on the other side needs something, which conducts this transformation into a good constant flow. Liquidity is the uninterrupted access to the sources, as well as the current meandering of information between situations.

The aim, per se, is not the problem; the different interpretations of it and the different experiences we had with such 'flows' are the curtail momentums, where the constant transformation might become a fragile entity. This fragility is the daily, actual work. In this sense, fragility is not hypothetical, it is there, and it is experienced as the permanent entity we are reacting to.

Since I'm in the job of the Program Coordinator, I discover on a daily basis new factors in play. All of them have their fixed points, their grey zones, and their loose momentums. I would love to see the structure we have to compromise on, in order to keep the free space for jumping into the artistic unknown as a playground.

It has to be the fixed points that turn the potential liquidity into fragile challenges, which finally will keep the liquidity running.

'Risk' has to come into play! Risk is the tool, which keeps fragilities liquid. Fragilities without risk will immediately invoke structures, limits, and borders of established mechanisms of thinking and acting. Fragilities without risk will hold themselves onto the shivering existence of their built-in breaking points.

Fragilities need risk, and in order to risk, you need to know at least one rule of the game; one eye closed, one half-open. Or, what does it mean to go blind? Which senses, which alertness do I need to activate, in order to feel free within the risk. I don't want to say that one needs a stable ground in order to reach beyond. No, we need those tools at hand, which enable us to challenge the fragile.

Production or operation:

If fragilities were symptoms, they wouldn't be products; they would be consequences in so far as, fragilities are conditions, which would have to be operations, which produce consequences. Together they are fragilities as performance, which create outcome in the form of crisis.

This thought sounds inconsistent and while **writing** this, I feel the inconsistency in my head and immediately I would like to blame myself for being so abstract. "Abstract" is a fixed point in my head. It comes with a fixed desire to be in concrete flow. And suddenly I find myself caught between the fixed points, which turn the proposed fragility into a synonym for weakness.

I look to the islands. I look to the horizon. Somewhere out there, has to be its strength.

A last thing:

Probably I could say that I see fragilities as affirmative products, products of affirming fragility. When I asked myself in my opening question after their productivity, I was thinking of something beyond this self-affirming creation of fragilities. I even hoped – I think – that the fragilities themselves would create affirmative products.

Probably it's the longing for dynamic springboards, which let me jump, dynamically swinging, after I take off. Sounds poetic, but don't know what it means to be honest.

>> next question to NICOLAS p171

S6 RARES TO GOSIE

'What hunger is your work satisfying for you and your audience?'

Dear Rares,

A few years ago I climbed Mt Ararat, the mountain where the Ark of Noah landed after the Great Flood. I climbed the 5137-metre giant and when I stood on top of it, I cried. I could not open my eyes. I did not see anything. And before I knew it, I was back on sea level.

After a Kurdian marriage party and a travel to the land inhabited by the descendants of Noah, I went to the village where I was born, in a flat sandy region on the outskirts of Belgium, called 'Kempen'. One thing that always intrigued me about the village is the fact that it was for a long **time** ruled by nuns from different convents. In particular, one nun attracted my **attention**; Sister Rumolda. Sister Rumolda had the stigmata, the wounds of Jesus on the cross, on her hands and legs. After descending Mount Ararat, it became clear to me that Sister Rumolda must have suffered from severe hysteria, which she realized not in an upward **movement** as most hysteric women do but in downward **movement** through caves and gaping holes, who were constantly spitting lava. (Do you know this famous pictures of the women in la Salpêtrière where they turn into mountains? La Salpêtrière is a former gunpowder factory and the hospital where Lady Di died.) In fact her hands broke open, with the pressure of her blood (most hysterical women suffer from high blood pressure). PS: The symptoms of hysteria and altitude sickness are overlapping, like a mid-oceanic rifting zone. One day, I sat down at her grave and I wrote her the following letter :

Dear Sister Rumolda,

During my research in the past few years, it became clear to me that the mythical ground of human **life** is lying under the earth crust and that my longing for mountains, my mons-algia, is actually a transparent case of nostalgia.

My **lifetime** longing to climb a mountain, or better said, "the mountain", is clearly a sublimation in the purest alchemical sense, a sublimation of my longing for the core of the earth.

The beating heart of the earth, the centre of the world, is unknown and the ultimately mysterious. Scientific theories formulated about the underground are mere extrapolations. (My fascination with the mysteries of nature, the urge to penetrate and decipher the inner structure of matter, all these longings and drives denote a nostalgia for the primordial, the original.)

One thing is sure; mountains are clear symptoms of the gigantic mystery that is constantly happening underneath our feet and people in general (especially me) are in no condition to resist the power of low air pressure. As a result, I long to fly.

Greetings,

Gosie



SESSION 7

QUESTIONS by 02.03.2014, 12pm
NEXT MEETING: 07.03.2014, 6pm
LOCATION: a.pass

PIERRE TO JULIA

MALA TO PIERRE

PHILIPPINE TO MALA

SARA TO HANS

CECILIA TO ANNA

HANS TO CECILIA

JULIA TO ELKE

ELKE TO CAMILA

SAMAH TO SARA

KRISTIEN TO KRISTIEN

SILVIA TO RARES

ANNA TO NICOLAS

NICOLAS TO SILVIA

RARES TO SAMAH

S7 PIERRE TO JULIA

Could you describe and elaborate, on the decision-making process shaping the editing of your films? The way of filming, the choices of the image materials, the cuts, the mix etc.? Do you plan the whole thing ahead of time? Do you plan while in the process? Or are you following your intuition all along?

Do you consider that process as a method?

Dear Pierre,

In my working method, I like not completely trusting the self-evidence of banality, but instead keeping the doubt. People I interview in this project, Devoir de memoire, tell me: "This is evident!" Dogmatic theoreticians tell me the contrary: "That is evident!"

I love following the trails of polarizing preconceptions while developing a project, but I try to avoid trusting the a priori.

In that sense, the fieldwork happens in a phenomenological approach, to get acquainted. I try to get as close as possible, to pace and catch textural, bodily reflections in the material. Theory is developed alongside, while visiting and observing the event. Later in my editing, when I can see better, I negotiate the found preconceptions with the material I collected. It is a great way of talking to yourself and others.

The final message is rather a frame, deploying when I combine and work out the recorded field notes.

In my documentary Parking B from 2009, the theatre maker Thomas Belling describes in an interview how he experienced the collaboration of art school students and "sans papiers" during the hunger strike in the VUB Universities subterranean parking lot. For the famished hunger strikers, there seemed no space left for nuances; you're either with us or against us. The documentary students in the project that insisted on the nuances were not allowed to come back after a while.

In 1971, Sloterdijk named polemic simplification as an important element for a "fighting realism", which Hitler had already explicitly described as an essential propaganda method[2]. Polemic simplification is still something to deal with and a theme in my work.

Without wanting to accuse "Living History" re-enactors as propagators of Nazi ideology or as consciously aiming at actual power structures: their scenarios are equally simplifications of reality.

One reason for these simplifications is formulated as keeping a respectful distance from those who lived through WWII and their families.

A second reason is pragmatism. The narrative is directed by accessibility, determined by the available resources in costumes and machines. Besides, a playable game scenario should provide entertaining action for the participants.

In my work I aim to de-simplify, while in the final product I have to keep track of these same factors of communicability. I include surrounding elements in my compositions, which are faded out by the game scenario reality but still visible to the camera: architecture, neighbours, visitors, photographers.

A touchstone that helps in communicating this work "Devoir de Memoire", is the spectral **presence** of totalitarian ideology and how participants relate to it. Interviewees generally promote the simplifications of their play. While explicitly opposing ideological identification with their subject, they are still haunted by it, at least when the spectator is watching them in my videos. Modulating the slightness of this haunt, having it appear and disappear, crossing the simplifying architectures of militaristic and entertainment efficiency is fascinating to do.

>> next question to JULIA p182

S7 MALA TO PIERRE

Pierre.

In your second poem you said, "If it is not possible to produce a thought of the world that is not a determination of the world, then let's try to produce a thought of the world that also, and at the same **time** as the thought itself, thinks its relation with the world. A theory that would not only represent but would represent in relation. A careful theory attentive to the elaboration of a dialoguing **practice** with its object... A theory, therefore, grasping the world in a certain manner, that would produce not only a representation through extrinsic discourse but, in addition, would produce a **practice** of relation with the world, from within. A theory that would experimentally **practice** its thought on the world and in the world. A theory that would reinvent the world practically."

Could you please elaborate on how you understand and **practice** theory as an "experimental **practice** in relation with the world"?

Thank you!

Dear Mala,

Thank you for your question, which points at crucial standpoints for me.

I will develop an extensive answer during next block, from May to July 2014.

I hope you are doing well. Pierre

S7 PHILIPPINE TO MALA

Dear Mala,

I would like to go deeper into something you touched on in your last reply to Anna (**scores** block week IV). You said: "Fantasy is a form of wishful thinking, perhaps a way of escaping the present and the body present in the present. Perhaps even a way I dissociate myself from my present self. Perhaps it's a subtle form of alienation or a fall from 'small still voice'. [...] Fantasy is a 'faculty or activity of imagining things, especially things that are impossible or improbable'. It seems it is an action that shifts you out of your **presence** to yourself and catapults you into a virtual space of the possible but improbable".

When you dissociate yourself from your present self, what happens to that self, how does it spend its **time** without you? Is it with you as a spectator while you re-associate with past selves, maybe future or unidentified selves, or is it dormant? Is there perhaps no sense in speaking about 'spending **time** without it' because it simply is or is not?

I know the question may seem a bit odd; I suppose I mean it in a playful, abstract rather than mystical sense. So I'm appealing to your agility of thinking for, perhaps not an answer, but a venture into possible ways of approaching the underlying question: If this notion of various selves becomes an object of research and artistic production, with what words and thought processes could it be handled?

Best wishes,

Philippine

I used to work with the idea of different selves as identities, as figures, but the more I have become engaged with **dreaming** the more this sense of self as an assemblage of identities or characters has fragmented into a constant flow of assembling and re-assembling images. I see images perhaps as 'selves'. Perhaps it is better to no longer use this expression. Images for me are living forms of consciousness. Let me give you an example of an exercise, which can enable an instant revelation in you:

Close your eyes. Breathe out three **times**. With each exhalation you see a number, starting from three to one. See the number one tall, clear and very bright. See within yourself the body core of your identity. What do you see? How does that feel? Breathe out one **time** and open your eyes.

With an exercise like this you need to pay **attention** to the first image you see and be honest with how you feel it. This is to avoid any manipulation or willful changing of your own imagery that only covers up what your intuition or the **knowledge** of your body reveals to you. Upon receiving the image of your body core through an experience, you can **practice** and experiment being it and living with it. You just think about it and feel it. If you pay **attention**, you might experience a shift of your body core into the received image whenever something in your **presence** changes. Not only can you shift into image and allow it to take over for a while, you can allow it to bring you to experience and create/operate within the world differently. In fact, the more you do so, the more you understand that every image is imbued with a certain quality of being, a certain power, will and knowing. This is why I say for me the images are living forms of consciousness. Being living forms of consciousness, holding them in focus while leaving the space open for them to operate through you. If you manipulate or willfully change the imagery you receive you are back in the fantasy of how you think things within you or outside of you or in relation to you are or should be, which is based on what you already know, based on your past experience. In this sense, fantasy moves you out of your **presence** to yourself in the present.

For me to conceive all **dreaming** as a flow of living forms of consciousness has been an absolute revelation. Because conceiving everything as **dreaming** moves me out of the conditioning of thinking in terms of divisions between in and out, subject/self and object. The manifest forms are all one and the same **dreaming**. So on the field of the imaginal (which is the field of **dreaming**) there are no separations.

In his treatise "Practical Training in Thinking", R. Steiner speaks about how to have the right attitude towards thinking. Here is a beautiful passage:

"No one can come to a right feeling about thought who imagines that thought is something which merely takes place within man, inside his head, or in his mind or soul. ... to get at the things through thoughts, then the things must already contain the thoughts within them. The thoughts must be there in the very plan and structure of the things. Only so can I draw the thoughts out of them. ... When man thinks about things, he is only thinking after, he is only re-thinking, that which has first been laid into them. We must believe that the world has been created by thought and is still in continual process of creation by thought. This belief, and this alone, can give birth to a really fruitful inner **practice** of thought." In a way, this paragraph says **dreaming** or 'thoughts' are present everywhere. The world is built up by thoughts, by **dreaming**. But one needs to develop the **practice** of what he calls practical thinking so that one's thinking can be ignited by the thought or **life** of the world. In the exercising of practical thinking I find many similarities with **dreaming** technology.

In developing a form of diagrammatic **writing**, I have been thinking about how it can serve as a medium for the performative act of **writing** or reading and as a vehicle for thinking as a creative act – creative in a sense of what another great thinker M. Scaligero in his Treatise on a Living Thought calls living thinking based in creative imagination. It is a thought 'born from the world's essence'. Thinking is not separate from the act of perceiving. It is a form of experiential contemplation of the forms or phenomena of the world. It is 'the rising of the force of the image from the inner form of that which we behold'. We infuse the imagining aroused by perception. For the 'images in which the forms of nature and the world arise are the imagining that allows us to encounter the force that gives birth to them. We can experience this force before it becomes thought...' It is a way of 'activation of our inner being' and opens us to a living experience of thinking, which is all about receiving knowing and resonates further throughout our different bodies. It is way of 'rekindling light in the form of creative imagination'.

In my research, I have been focusing on how to set up a format of thinking together through the use of images, so that this **practice** of thinking as **dreaming** through the use of creative imagination becomes training in living thinking. This is how I came to the idea of diagrammatics based on imagery, which I am currently developing. The first attempt was to develop a domino game with imagery cards that could stir thinking in a certain direction. The **practice** of thinking as **dreaming** is really about being present, observing attentively what is here now as if we are what we are seeing, seeing or imagining as clearly as possible, knowing that there is an inner necessity or intentionality in the 'things themselves' and that we can become conscious of these thought-forces within the things themselves if we dive into them and have an inner relationship with them. Gradually the **practice** allows us to perceive that we are 'entering into the very **life** of things' and that 'our thought is living and moving in the things themselves' so that 'the thought lives and moves with the necessity of things'. Contemplation and seeing are thinking. The domino game with imagery cards is a first attempt at developing a **practice** of thinking as **dreaming**.

>> next question to MALA p182

S7 SARA TO HANS

Dear Donkey boy

I've been thinking about pictures that tell stories, and found myself discovering that I don't know a single picture that doesn't tell a story (sometimes an image can tell a very short story). Mostly I believe we are surrounded by images... in fact, they are omnipresent, working as containers for messages, more or less motivated by 'symbolic texts' that mediate our experience of the world, creating narratives, as a sort of interface.

So, I wonder how responsible we are in the creation of images that evoke a certain content, and how sometimes this over-existence of images-messages-content can turn into a kind of symbolic toxicity, or even worse, can turn into nothing else but a vague existence (like the outer space waste that floats forever with no gravity, desperately hoping to bump into something). So... what are we doing with our stories?

Dear Sara,

I agree, every picture is a story and they are indeed omnipresent, which maybe leads to a reduction of their symbolic value. We become cynical towards them, we don't care for them.

So what do we do with our stories? We over-produce them, thanks to modern technology that forces us practically to carry a camera everywhere. This leads to a flood of images that we don't revisit in a critical way. That we just throw out, into the world, in the hope we might hit something, somewhere.

I think we should frame them again, hang them on the wall, place them on the mantelpiece.

Hans Andreas R.

>> next question to HANS p190

S7 CECILIA TO ANNA

March 2, 2014

Anna Sörenson
Head of Department
Delaunoystraat 58-64, B17
1080 Brussels (Molenbeek)

Belgium

Dear Miss Sörenson,

"The universe (which others call the Library) is composed of an indefinite and perhaps infinite number of hexagonal galleries, with vast air shafts between, surrounded by very low railings. From any of the hexagons one can see, interminably, the upper and lower floors. The distribution of the galleries is invariable. (...) The Library is unlimited and cyclical. If an eternal traveler were to cross it in any direction, after centuries he would see that the same volumes were repeated in the same disorder (which, thus repeated, would be an order: the Order). My solitude is gladdened by this elegant hope".¹

In our last conversation, we talked about Paul Cortazar Otlet the creator of the Universal Decimal Classification (UDC) "which provides a systematic arrangement of all branches of human **knowledge** organized as a coherent system in which **knowledge** fields are related and inter-linked".

I keep thinking about order and organization as related to your bureaucratic machine. Is the notion of "order" a consequence or is it the generator of the system? In which ways do classification and categorization feed the system? What kind of intimate operations does the system of classification imply? Is it possible to imagine an order that is driven by disorganization? Is chaos a possible order? How would you place the concept of apparatus/dispositive into your organization?

Sincerely,

Cecilia Bartleby

Scrivener. IWPNT Co.

¹ "The library of Babel". Jorge Luis Borges.

Dear Cecilia,

I think before order and organization there needs to be a collection. Since I was little I collected things, ordinary things like bookmarks, stickers, stamps or pretty erasers in beautiful shapes and colors. I also collected other things like shells and stones. I also collected really strange things like pencil shavings, I stored them in jars and neatly organized them. I had aquariums too, not only one, I had three, and it was a pain to clean them, but different-sized fish went into the different-sized tanks. I also had a collection of toothbrushes; really pretty, unused toothbrushes. But it was hard to find new toothbrushes to add to the collection, so I bought new ones and started to melt them with a lighter. I created new toothbrushes in shapes I thought were interesting. It smelled horrible burning the plastic, but they looked both funny and pretty.

Many **times** I pondered over this need to collect. I thought there was something a little unhealthy about it; like I was obsessed with things, more and more things. I wondered if I desired the things themselves or was it that I desired to organize them instead? But why was it so satisfying to organize?

I think it goes back to the toothbrush. What is a toothbrush? Imagine a toothbrush; a stick with some kind of hair or pointy straw on it so you can scrub your teeth. Imagine all toothbrushes you can possibly think of... think of lining them up in a long row. You organize them by size, color or shape. For me this is where it happens, when I can see them, many of them, in all their differences I can also start to imagine how a completely new toothbrush would look like. With all the variations, the essence of the toothbrush can really emerge. For me, organizing has never been about pointing out what is wrong or doesn't fit into the collection. If something doesn't fit it sets the parameters for a new collection, a new spectrum to see the object, a new way to understand the world; to make the world reappear and imagine it beyond what it can be. Therefore I end with Walter Benjamin's "Unpacking My Library": To renew the world order is the collector's deepest desire...

>> next question to ANNA p215

S7 HANS TO CECILIA

Dear Cecilia,

I couldn't help but notice that you always are busy with your sketchbook, taking notes and drawing.

I wondered what the importance and status of your sketchbook is.

Is it interchangeable and just a notebook? Or is it an extension of yourself, which is treasured? Are there certain kinds of sketchbooks, paper, pens, pencils, etc. you prefer or do you use whatever is at hand?

And how does this personal, sensitive, graphic, analog approach end up in more sterile websites and (online) questionnaires?

Dear Hans,

I love your question, thanks a lot. I will start by the end.

Epilogue: When the analogue meets the sterile digital or the infertile itinerary of a hygienic dispositive.

I have been always fascinated by those things/processes that transform their 'nature' into something else dynamos (from mechanical energy to light), sublimation (from solid to gas), transubstantiation (from bread to body), or those cassettes adapters for a car that transform the mp3 digital signal into analogue; all kind of substances and converters that fulfill the characteristic of 'in-between'.

Somehow I perceive my work as a mix of those different mediums, but also the mediums as intimate approaches. They are diverse and different in their conditions and manifestations and hold different relationships with technology.

First Chapter: The Treasure Island and the map.

According to this, my notebook is both important and unimportant. It is just a notebook but it is also "the notebook". That will change with **time**, like all affections, and some other notebook will come to occupy my heart. But at this moment, the animal you have seen several **times** hidden in my hands or peeping out from my bag: black and white, made out of sheets and traces, it is an animal of memory. So in that sense, yes, it is an extension of myself.

I guess I like the idea of a register, because I also like diaries, photocopies, or photographs. **Time** and again, you look at the notebook and you do not recognize it as yours. So memory interweaves with forgetfulness, as they are part of the same phenomenon.

In a pass, the notebook also works as a tool to allow concentration to happen. I cannot do the same activity for a long **time** without moving, especially if this activity is related with thinking. I like to think while drawing or walking.

About the notebook itself, I am concerned about the pages, the shape, the quality... This one I bought at Schleiper. That morning, it took me ages to choose one. A friend of mine was visiting me and he was deadly bored with waiting. He thought I was a maniac. But it is difficult to choose a notebook, for sure you know... I bought it but I was not completely happy with this one, because the cover is too 'important', too luxurious and the notebook is quite heavy to carry around in my bag. Besides, the pages are too good a quality to sketch, you know? I prefer a middle quality paper so I don't have the pressure of making something 'up to scratch' but just to scratch the paper. But I like that it seems quite honest as a notebook and even docile. It ended up not being at all docile. On the contrary it has a strong personality. Somehow, the quality of the paper has provoked a not very usual way of drawing for me. All the drawings I am making are quite clean and composed... That's not so good... But I am already submissive to it.

I have been using a black 0.4 pencil. Now it is over and I am using another one, not that specific. **Sometimes** ink is also ok.

>> next question to CECILIA p184

S7 JULIA TO ELKE

Dear Elke,

I have been reading your diary from the battery. On the 31st of December 2013, you were asking:

"What is 'relating' when you resist? What kind of becoming is possible when we let the other 'invade' us?"

I feel that what is relating when we resist is our surroundings.

Talking about surroundings, here are some:

Zen

We were talking with Philippine about the way that Zen riddles can kind of blast away identity definitions relating us to the environment and leave us in the open.

Invitation

You said that artistic work needs an invitation for the receiver to engage in it.

Architecture

This invitation is chosen, is often designed by the artist as an architect, literally a chief builder.

Matrix

How do aesthetics correlate to what Laerman describes as the political need for a matrix for social reflectivity of possible thoughts, ways and solutions getting born in (artistic) collaborations?

What is the role of aesthetics in your work, in relation with these four terms?

How do you see your aesthetics affected by the multiplicity of singularisations that emerge in a collaborative environment as a pass?

Dear Julia,

That is a complex question, but I'll do my best to carefully work through all its aspects and see where we end up. Since you quote from my Battery diary, I will again answer this question through the perspective of that particular **practice**. Yes, I am very interested in the seemingly paradoxical relation between 'resisting' and 'relating'. How to resist through relating; how to resist without refusing, denying, ignoring, or opposing the obvious? And how to relate, to create a common ground, to share the necessity to speak of the moment, without affirming the banal, the sappy aesthetics of un-differentiation, the false promise of cosmopolitan egalitarianism.

In my artistic research I try to find the agency I feel I lack as a citizen: to speak, to share, without being drowned out by blog voices, ersatz discussions. How to relate without being forced into an argumentative debate that usually ends up in the same deadlock it started from? In my research I am dedicated to taking care of my relating and resist the **practice** becoming personalized. How does my resistance not become a spectacle of resistance, a mute rock of ideological critique, an opposition that only affirms the importance of what it resists? Suggesting this binary is the only possible way to perceive the world. Since I do use my body as the experimental field for relating to an outside, as a mute but sensible speaking partner, I think I have to empty that body of ideological stuffing. Become pure surface, no more than a skin, an object that escapes being pinned down by the multifold images projected on it.

Indeed the Zen **practice** is a great inspiration for me. Not only because the Buddhist **practice** is a great tool in experiencing and understanding the simultaneity of being (connected) and not-being (one: unique and isolated I). Or as Thich Nhat Hahn (the Vietnamese monk) put it: 'to be or not to be, that is not the question'.... But also because in Buddhism the experience of the self always already includes the connectedness of that self with all the rest, all that surrounds it, and as such any kind of individual resistance cannot but be related to the world. And even more, because the Zen koans are masterful exercises in ambiguity: on one and the same question (Like: does a dog really have the Buddha's essence) the Zen master one **time** answers with yes and the other with no, to make sure the apprentice doesn't start to rely on false certainties. I like that idea very much. In creating an image with my body, I do not want to state or represent an idea, nor do I want to become people's mirror, I simply want to mark the space that connects us: our commonness.

The architecture of the space/the environment is in that sense very important. In an old-fashioned scenographic sense the framing of the space intensifies whatever it makes visible. In a theatrical sense this framing renders the space hybrid: by drawing **attention** to it, it loses its self-evident 'meaning'. It opens up to multiple interpretations. And by keeping the space spare, square and banal, the interpretations can vary widely. In a performative sense though, this space can very easily produce the spectacular, provoke, pronounce, and

become rhetorical. There for me it is important to 'resist' the inclination to become 'object' as well as 'message', since both embodiments prevent the 'problem' from circulating through both our bodies (mine and the viewer's) and, again, marking the commonness that relates us. Therefore I embrace banal **practice**, everyday gestures done in everyday **time**. The femininity is there but refuses to become Woman, the actions are there but refuse to become Protest.

I think I am looking for a contemporary 'arte povera': a performance **practice** that is practically empty of a matrix for thought, at least in the relation to the viewer. (In the making process, of course there is a sense of urgency shared, although I doubt very much if this urgency would be the same for all contributors). Or better: the matrix is a purely aesthetic one: in this case the 'box' of the battery, the simple cube for framing and projecting, the form that makes something visible but doesn't define its meaning.

>> next question to ELKE p181

S7 ELKE TO CAMILA

Dear Camila,

Since it came up several **times** in the last weeks, I would like you to expand a bit on your notion of 'violence' in any given situation. When you remarked on finding yourself in a 'violent situation' in the silent working day during the artistic research workshop, I kind of understood you meant that you were somehow forced into a mode of working you had not personally chosen, but then this is the case in most working situations. So: do you refer to this violence as a political one, the experience of a hierarchic structure that deprives you (in this case literally) of your voice? So what to do then with the clearly subjective character of this experience (some people found the same situation liberating and restful)? What is then the character of this 'subjective political'? Also, when I experienced your artistic research station, and was left there all to my own devices, asked to read some extremely violent texts, without any contextualization or care taken of how this might affect me, I asked myself how you rationalized this kind of violence. What kinds of violence are 'allowed' within a research environment and to what end? And again, how to deal with people's subjectivities?

Dear Elke,

You mentioned the lack of care towards the people approaching my material. I only realized this being a problem when you brought it up during our recent conversations and am sorry you felt this way in relation to the installation I put together for halfway days. In a way, I wanted to expand the exercise of giving my research a spatial dimension through a sharing of my working methodology. I believe that any type of research implies some kind of fragmentation (every archive, every corpus comes to us in a fragmented way) and as I mentioned before in response to Lilia's question for session II, I have decided to embrace the fragments and work with them as such, instead of constructing a polished, linear narrative. So my idea was that the visitors of my station would have a similar experience to the one I have when I encounter these texts and objects about violence, torture, and forced cannibalism and look at the ways in which different people with different backgrounds relate to the same corpus. And then, of course, my research is about fragmentation in more than one way. The notion crosses over physical and discursive registers. It is both literal and theoretical.

I realize that the encounter of these "things" can be very striking and violent (I've lived with those demons for several years) but I also think trying to make it less monstrous, or attempting to conceal it is even more violent (it is, after all, a second killing and an erasure that official narratives perform every day). I also think it is a very intimate encounter, and being present there to accompany the visitors would have broken that intimacy. So yes, I agree that the sharing of somebody's **practice** can be felt as violent by someone else—as in the case of the "silent day" proposed by Lilia—and I don't necessarily believe that this is a bad thing. I saw that specific case as an opportunity to think about the risks of involving other people into a **practice**, as well as reflecting on my own impulses and feelings when I am around a specific group of people, working on a specific kind of material in a specific kind of way.

So, to respond to the other part of your question, I don't think there are acceptable or unacceptable violences that can be brought into an artistic **practice**, although I would agree with your implicit statement that one has to be careful about their effects, if only to be aware of them and not necessarily prevent them. I wouldn't write violence between marks, mostly because I also believe that it is a rather subjective experience and in the way it is always absolute and truthful when experienced. And then those subjective responses can be very informing for the research itself. Yes, the researcher is in many ways like the wolf: an opportunistic animal constantly waiting for the moment to attack, but it can also be the kaleidoscope, the girl, the giraffe. I guess it depends on the way you relate to your subject. The real question is what you make of it, what you produce. Being able to share an experience is already something—if only a beginning—on the way to build an understanding.

>> next question to CAMILA p219

S7 SAMAH TO SARA

Dear Sara,

I am finding it hard to understand the images and the video you have shared in your work, so I would like this question to help me gain a better understanding of the research questions that are driving you. What I have seen in the video, and tried to follow in the subtitles is a reflection on melancholia in relation to loss of the (historical) object, and how our projected emotions and psychological mindsets influence this relationship with loss.

Can you take me through how the images you presented in the Halfway Days relate to this video, as I find it hard to grasp points of reference through which to build an understanding of them as images, and their juxtaposition, and how this is connecting to the narrative built in the video.

Dear Samah,

I'm working with the same imagery, same symbols, same **movements**...same trouble.

With the images I presented in Halfway Days, regardless of their final formal aspects (the installation), I wanted to depurate and test my own symbolic system, in terms of potencies. Maybe it's important to mention that all of these productions relate to the very core of my research; that is to say, they are all experiments, means of questioning the idea of the subterranean, as a space for resistance (with space for resistance I mean a space that by its own qualities, is in a continuous transformation, in a permanent crisis, and therefore can possibly escape a certain... institutionalization).

So, I wonder if these combinations of images could trigger these "qualities", if they were crossed by them, symptoms of them, or mere representations of them.

>> next question to SARA p206

S7 KRISTIEN TO KRISTIEN

07 Mar 2014, at 16:38:

Here is the question to your answer... -

There was a passage marked in the book, page 207: "What I shall try and make her understand,' she said, 'is that you are not one man between two women, but that all three of us form something very special, something difficult, perhaps, but something which could be beautiful and satisfying."

Is this how he wanted me to take the book, as a lesson in the construction of something 'beautiful and satisfying', and that I should be assured that he understands his place in such a space?

But no sooner had I begun reading the book, than it seemed to me to be about something more fundamental, something I would need to learn if I was to construct not just a play space of 'three', but a space given form, a shape given to my **life**. How to work at the point of desire?

"...because I'm convinced that wherever I go, the rest of the world will move with me. That's what keeps me from having any regrets." "Regrets for what?" he asked. "Having to live only in my own skin when the world is so vast." Gerbert looked at Françoise. "Yes, especially since you rather live such a well-regulated **life**." He was always so discreet; but for him this vague answer was almost audacious. Did he think her **life** too well regulated? Was he passing judgment on it? I wonder what he thinks of me . . . this office, the theatre, my room, books, papers, work. . . . Such a well-regulated **life**. "I came to the conclusion that I must resign myself to a choice," she said. [15]

[...]

Was he, too, aware of the touching, though transitory, intimacy of the last few hours? The two of them were enclosed in this circle of rosy light; for both of them, the same light, the same night. Françoise looked at his fine green eyes beneath their curling lashes, at his expectant mouth. If I had wanted to. . . Perhaps it was still not too late. But what could she want? [16]

[...]

"Well, look," she said, "this is what you're going to do. Lie down on the couch and sleep. I'll finish looking over this last scene..." "And you?" "When I've finished I'll get some sleep too. The couch is wide, you won't be in my way..." A few minutes later she turned around in her chair. Gerbert was lying on his back, his eyes closed, his breath coming in regular intervals from between his lips. He was already asleep. He was beautiful, and she sat there gazing at him for some **time**; then she turned back to her work. [17]

[...]

"There," said Françoise. She glanced at the manuscript with satisfaction. "Let's hope he likes this. I think it'll please him." She pushed back her chair... and slipped under the cover beside Gerbert.... She looked at Gerbert's smooth eyelids, at his lashes, as long as a girl's; he was asleep, relaxed and indifferent. Against her neck she felt the caress of his soft black hair. That's all I shall have of him, she thought... And yet she had no regrets; she had not even a right to that melancholy which was beginning to number her drowsy body. This was renunciation, final, and without recompense. [18]

Chapter one, Simone de Beauvoir, *She Came to Stay*, New York: W W Norton & Company, 1954. (Originally published as *L'invitée*, 1943.)

On 07 Mar 2014, at 16:41, Kristien Van den brande

I won't read it before I've finished my answer.

On 07 Mar 2014, at 17:46, Kristien Van den brande

Just last week I read Gertrude Stein's text on punctuation marks and her desire to make **writing** go on and on, delimiting the colons, brackets, commas, question marks... for they spoil the line of **writing**. If the **writing** itself already contains the questioning of the question, then there is no need to enclose the question with murals or walls. My entry in the **Writing Score** Meeting is a question that I formulate and answer myself. But I deflect and keep only the question mark, asking an outsider to this group, who loves to quote Groucho Marx - I don't want to belong to any club that will accept people like me as a member - to send me the question just before leaving for the meeting. In the meantime, I prepare my answer - thrilled, and dreading, to think that I might face the questioning of the question for the first **time** in front of a group. Reputation and responsibility. It's not the question mark standing alone that I'm left with, it's the doubling or tripling and troubling of its mark as it trembles and sweats it out, having climbed aboard a porcupine. At 10pm this evening Metzger's film **Score** is screened at Cinema Nova - Radley Metzger, whom I was introduced to last summer, when this Groucho Marx lover gave me *The Image* (a book he said was authored by Jean de Berg, pseudonym for Catherine Robbe-Grillet, with a preface by her husband under the pseudonym of P.R. in homage to Pauline Réage, pseudonymous author of *Story of O*, then adapted for screen by Metzger), which I read in the botanical garden in Lisbon. As a child I loved to solve mathematical problems by using the symbols of mathematics, counting and reasoning back and forth, until problem and solution fit. But I had less taste for physics, for its relation to the real world. I love to take fiction as **score** for **life**, and **life** as a **score** for fiction. Minimizing the gaps between work and **life**, but at the same **time**, whimsical as the virginite, sometimes rejecting, sometimes affirming a desire of which the purpose and the meaning is to be invented and unraveled by following the tracks of association and clairvoyance, metaphorizing what is to be taken literal or literalizing what is to be taken metaphorical.

S7 SILVIA TO RARES

Rares,

How do you think that the flaw of having lost the card to buy the bread in the former red Romania when a toddler, which lead you to go through all the process of facing the `socialistic` consequences of a shameful act and an eventual feeling of deep rooted guilt, could have potentialized your declared tendency for a gastrosexual artistic **practice**, so many years later?

Did gay and gastronomy, become somehow related since then, and if working with food (baking bread, would unconsciously soothe and calm the wound of dishonor) that emerged with having lost the card of acceptance to have access to such a primary basic urge, as the fact of being homosexually oriented? In other words, could your dedication to gastronomy, with your baked rainbow colored breads, be a **practice** which is still paying off a deep hole in the sexual education of the erstwhile political system? Do you think gastronomy, its chemical and shape transformative virtues and its prominent science of taste, is related to sexual orientation in your **practice**?

And could the over-mannerisms of acting camp have emerged while trying to find an impertinent theatrical expression to challenge ignorance, while grabbing **attention** to deliver updated **knowledge**, manifested in your performative **practice** of today?

I apologize if the set of related questions appear to inquire into a somewhat psychoanalytic intimate territory.

Dear Silvia,

Thank you, I really liked your analysis. It made me feel like an artist.

I can imagine how someone who comes into contact with `my **practice**` in this case as the first case, could open such an interesting idea like starting a gastro-sexual **practice**. I made a mental note of this development possibility.

Explanation: In the case of the presentation at Volksroom, I worked with my identity as a gay person. But in general I prefer not to allow the personal identity to take over because I have participated in a lot of performances where the art no longer satisfies anyone's need except stroking the practitioner's ego. I am fully involved when I work and my person is feeding the performance but I am just not building the general structure according to my own image. What is undeniable is that in this case I was interested in working with an uninterrupted, autobiographical emotional self. Exercising opening

up to others was part of the investigation in this particular case while all the **time** having a dialogue with another performer on the theme of loneliness: what it is, how it works, what are the degrees of it, how can you break the spell. So working on this and exercising with the personal-emotional, I came upon the theme of how I used to be chatty when I was young. Chatty but not defensive. And from there onward it all worked out with the white bread as carrier of the personal gay self and loosing the bread card as a dreaded sign of "not being allowed to".

Conclusion: So, in direct response to your somewhat psychoanalytic intimate territory all I could say initially was: "Why... yes. Yes, of course!" But all in all, I don't feel strongly about sexual identity in my **practice** because I don't think it presents a sense of urgency.

>> next question to RARES p194

S7 ANNA TO NICOLAS

Dear Nicolas,

How are things in the shadow government? How is the day-to-day work going? In the Department of Therapy here in Stockholm we wonder if we spend too much **time** thinking about our own mental health and too little **time** thinking about the mental health of the people? What do we want mental health to look like in the future? Any thoughts on the matter?

Dear Anna

I have to admit the Shadow Government is relaxing in the shadow! Day by day it opens its eyes for a sec, for a glimpse, to take a short glance at the word - or let's say the "state of the arts."

The Shadow Government is for now only working as a fantasy and I would be very happy if it would be transformed at least to a phantom, making its rounds to different people and groups and doing its mischief.

I know procrastinating such an idea is very dangerous, and probably not at all healthy! Such a suspension is symptomatic for the diseases you are talking about. The only real treatment lies in its reanimation.

What could be the measurements and medications of such a reanimation? Who will do it? What kind of substances would we have to inhale to cure? And what are the logics and principles of action behind these treatments?

Let us take a homeopathic cure:

We would have to treat the disease with its own illness: 'too much **time** thinking about our own mental health!'

What is the problem? In order to take a precise diagnosis we have to ask what symptoms are in the foreground? Is it 'too much **time**' or is it instead 'our own'? The real problem is our relation to 'our own'; the 'too much **time**' is rather a consequence of this relation. So we can say we should spend diluted portions of **time** on thinking about this subject, if possible with people; a homeopathic pill-like art event, hyper self-centered about global health. (In German we call the pills Globuli)

So, what is the state of our own mental health? Here it is important to understand what it means, that what we normally consider as 'our own' is not at all our own anymore. This place is occupied by common sense, which I naïvely would see here as a direct opposite of the general intellect. True, Pierre? Does this mean, that when we think we spend too much **time** thinking about our own, we are in fact thinking about something we share with everyone and therefore we are always thinking in a common body of 'the people'? The Homeopathic dilution of this thought could bring us to ask, how it is that we consider 'our own' not always as 'the people's', and what consequences this has for the people and for ourselves - that we are not doing it - if we are not doing it?

What could be an institutional cure?

In terms of the Shadow Government we would have to think of it in relation to other potentials of existing institutions. Let us first take a potential institution: Damla's proposition of the "Public Disengagement Clinic". A Shadow Government could engage this Clinic for some outsourced jobs (privatization), or it could force it under its wing by making it into one of its departments (socialization). Or you Anna, could make the Shadow Government into one of your departments and use the PDC to wash your content (corruption). Or we put everything into one pot and exploit this commons until we don't know anymore what we are talking about (condense).

Same we should approach in relation to a.pass, the Beursschouwburg, the whatever-festival, and then let's grow - homeopathic dilution. then we infiltrate the pirate party, the NV-A, the KVS, the VGC, the Walonie, the etc.

All us, our own! Mental health!

On these wings we can say that the mental health of the people we want to see in the future, will have to be inseparable from our own mental health we are struggling to take care of today.

S7 NICOLAS TO SILVIA

Dear Silvia

You knew very clearly what Elke tried to describe, when she was telling about her experience watching Darr Tah Lei's burning ice. She described it as a nicely disturbing feeling, which she could not pin down 'critically' to a clear experience. You spontaneously called it a post-dualistic experience.

I kind of understood what you meant in that moment, but I remember, thinking, it might be bit short taken. I couldn't believe that the image 'only' talks about the problematic dualisms ice/fire, real/fake, black/white and does not make a statement about the grey zones in between. I understood it as a message and not as a performative vertigo.

After the evening today, seeing Kenneth Anger's films and learning about your relation to him, I started to smell the abyss in performing the post-dualistic vertigo, and I would love to hear more about it.

It is obvious to me, that the whole OMNIADVERSUS project is very 'vertiginously' performative, but I wonder how this performativity is entering the different zones and layers of your concrete works and **practice**.

Nicolas,

This question was quite tough to answer, by virtue of the fact that it touches the very substratum of the OMNIADVERSUS project. You innocently led me to having to accept the non-operative post-duality beyond my **practice**. I have always known this since the beginning; nonetheless I have been trying to see how long I could fool myself/you all (giggling) in order to convince myself that my ideal was maybe not just another illusion. However, in order not to drown myself into fraudulences and detour from what I guess is the most interesting part of my artistic research, I am now exposing to you and to all of the collaborators of this project that there is nothing vertiginous about OMNIADVERSUS.

A dual effect would be a situation pending from one side or another, where both sides are not interacting with each other harmoniously. Assuming that harmony is a rather abstract concept and often very subjectively addressed, a dual effect would happen more likely when an obvious clash of ideal opposites occurs towards a hypothetical crisis, which will induce or sort out a problem in creativity, or simply when this clash leads to the potential energy evolved by the two parts towards entropy, be that this entropy implies loss or an attainable, unpredictable gain.

In a post-dual effect, as I imagine and propose it, this clash does not occur. Instead, the oppositional is searched and found in the one itself, the one

without two, rather contaminated with several. The post-dual effect is not perceived here as an evolutionary step undertaking duality, only the perspective changes. The opposite is no longer searched in the other but in itself as a multiplicity. There is no projection occurring. The mirror stops functioning, becoming useless or an obsolete trigger of duality. The role of god as the highness (the duality keeper) vanishes, since there is no longer anything to be achieved outside the one that became multiple. Every little particle becomes a defragmented god, free from "complementarization", complete and entire in itself as a part. The artist, the demiurge, the priest, or shamam are no longer required to **practice** their mediator function. As an artist, I consider myself an "artifact" originated in a system, which is hooked on its own dual fragmentation. As an artist, I am demanded to deliver the sublime, to create admirable paths, highways of wonderfulness – constructed or deconstructed, enchanted ropes able to connect the distance between extremes, the one and its projection, anesthetizing through aesthetic means the inevitable malady. In a post-dual paradigm, the distance between the source and its spectrum is invalid, proving that one contains and is contained in itself within the other. What has been previously sought in the exterior is found in the interior. Indeed, through a post-dual perspective, interior and exterior vanish into neutrality, leaving no trace.

I think that Darr Tah Lei's Burnt Ice pieces are provoking that nicely disturbing feeling felt by Elke, and have been previously described as stunning by other viewers, because the ice is showing an occult, unrevealed characteristic, a secret self-contained oppositional version of itself within itself. A hidden assembled opposite as an absolutely integrated part of it all. It is as if suddenly it became obvious that ice reaches its functional plenitude as an element when it burns, and therefore, its invisible morphology and texture, when revealed by the paint applied to it, is exactly like the morphology of its opposite. Having said that, I am arriving at the conclusion that what I assume as post is actually pre; a pre-dual state of existence, which has always been completed within its complements, but which has been fragmented by a default bifurcation in our perception, a one-eye blindness.

(I have been induced to call it a post-dual effect without having analyzed it properly, I guess because as an experience it feels that something is being discovered, thus post.)

The disturbing or anxious challenge may also be instigated by the fact that when experiencing something which appears complete, we are not being allowed to interact and take the usual position of the other, or to pin it down critically, being confronted with a sort of abyss for not being able to break off our free fall, instead of crashing into the usual mirror. Moreover turning the outside point towards ourselves, as a ricochet shot of our observation. Either confronting or complementing, this is rather determinant in harassing us to search the dual within ourselves, and no longer in the objects beyond.

So, where do I think post-duality meets vertigo?

In my **practice** I do create multiplicity in an attempt to escape the unidirectional mirror. I'm convinced that multiplicity does not necessarily resolve duality as a failure, however it abducts determinant positions, which tend to seek their objector for the sake of clashing. There is not a complementary relation of the opposites occurring but a "multiplementary" process of becoming, which defuses and ends up dissipating the functionality of the dual.

My OMNIADVERSUS **practice** is a compromised solution, partly immersively existential and partly representational. The immersive existential performance occurs when I throw myself pretty undefensively into a sociopolitical and cultural field unknown to me, having dropped my "at-birth" identity behind, to indulge in self-produced identity experiences, which avidly dérive in an immanent becoming. Representation occurs when I forge my immersing in and immersing out being, becoming, or existing specific characters into an art piece. The fact I'm framing the experience of immanence, and all that occurs in the process of becoming another persona under specific conditions and from a specific state or location of being, prevents me from experiencing the post-dual effect. I'm actually manufacturing the dual, while hacking the one to be perceived as other(s), dichotomizing it as an icon, converting it into an image of rescue, frightened with the social threat of not being perceived at all. Here is where one of the important fragilities of OMNIADVERSUS lies. This fragility reveals assumed defeat to the representational rules as an initial condition of the project when it was created, or more likely, an aware longing for a natural dismantling of its overall adverse structure.

OMNIADVERSUS is not vertiginous, it is a very well constructed and constituted structure, which supports its multi-tentacular operations. Its performance is rhizomatic but since there's an act of counterfeiting in the mediation of the rhizomatic art piece, I have to admit that at least a layer of its base, can also be seen as dual, or rooted. Luckily **life** has shown me that "none structures" as opposed to structures, are what last. I will be living OMNIADVERSUS experiences maturely, enjoying vividly while its propositions remain fresh and endure. Foreseeing whole-heartedly the instant when, in a liberating breath, the structure will no longer be sustainable and is doomed to crumble and crash. If I ever have the bravery to drop down the representational mechanism of projection that this construction carries with itself, I would moreover, probably, eventually, vertiginously become... as burnt ice does... a full version of myself? That would be vertiginous.

>> next question to SILVIA p206

S7 RARES TO SAMAH

Dear Samah,

If we believe that art and philosophy have the capacity to produce breaks or ruptures in the smooth flow of habitual being and thinking so that "our typical ways of being in the world are challenged, our systems of **knowledge** disrupted. (and thus) We are forced to thought (...) the rupturing encounter also contains a moment of affirmation, the affirmation of a new world, in fact a way of seeing and thinking this world differently. This is the creative moment of the encounter that obliges us to think otherwise." (Simon O'Sullivan - Art Encounters: Deleuze and Guattari)

Then I would like to ask you, in the context of your work, to consider/define/express/attribute meaning to the:

Breaks and ruptures· Typical ways· Moment of affirmation· Thinking otherwise. Thank you!

Taking the quotation of Simon O'Sullivan as a starting point for elaborating more into breaks and ruptures, which in the quote indicates a moment from which something new is born that challenges the status quo; a change that may bring forward something good. Whereas my breaks and ruptures are related to violence and force; unlike for example, if my daily route was interrupted by heavy traffic that caused me to reroute my usual course from point A to point B, and allowed me to discover an alternative route, and a new part of the city.

The ruptures I am concerned with are caused/forced by the political (and economic) interferences in the constant re-shaping of people's lives. Unlike the term that is used in the media to describe our region as a 'region of conflict' which indicates that the conflict comes from within, whereas in reality it is the playing out of external political agendas that induces 'conflict' and they lead to loss. So the 'affirmation of a new world' is not so affirmative, but it definitely opens up/forces something new.

I am drawn to loss, meaning I am interested in what happens as a result of loss.

How do people realign themselves as a result, what new trajectories form? Because this 'thinking otherwise' is burdened by loss, and re-location, and disorientation. So the new world carries with it the old lost one. It's not a clean break, but a traumatic one, like a lacerated wound.

So in relation to my research, the violent ruptures have forced/allowed practitioners to redefine their function, their position, their agency in context of the new world and realities they are faced with. And yet, it is not one

single moment that remains the reference point, but a series of events that force/allow these reconfigurations both physically/geographically, and more specifically in my research question, aesthetically. I am looking at the representation of the lost land and lost home, and how it is reimagined in exile, by associating/linking them to ruptures.

Perhaps the moments of affirmation were in the gestures artists made in their works, a way to say 'we are here and we still exist' so resistance and affirmation are one and the same. Not the affirmation of a new **life**, but an affirmative action to preserve the past. Maybe a slightly romantic view, and too isolated from the systems that artistic production functions within.

I am not sure that in this context, art and philosophy would have the capacity to produce breaks and ruptures. Or maybe I am unable to imagine how this might be beyond how the political has produced the rupture.

>> next question to SAMAH p192



SESSION 8

QUESTIONS by 09.03.2014, 12pm

MEETING: 14.03.2014, 8pm

LOCATION: a.pass

MALA TO ELKE

LILIA TO MALA

CECILIA TO JULIA

KRISTIEN TO CECILIA

DAMLA TO LILIA

JULIA TO HANS

HANS TO SAMAH

SAMAH TO RARES

ELKE TO DAMLA

RARES TO KRISTIEN

S8 MALA TO ELKE

Elke. In the workshop on General Intellect you wrote you are 'starting to mistrust collectivity' and 'question the functioning of collective set-ups as possible motors for change'. As I understood, you pointed out several challenges or problems in relation to collectivity that you yourself need to address. But you have also stated your interest in other possible understandings of the 'I' and of COMMONALITY.

- (Borrowed) terminology our imagination of collectivity is based on
- Collective as a space for idiosyncratic ideas and **practices** to appear that easily collapses into a closed ideology (to which a collective may pertain)
- The architecture of inclusion of different clear, individual voices into a collective
- The potential of the models of togetherness and research to break the status quo in understanding the value (but do not necessarily do so)
- Models of togetherness and research that can possibly be implemented in the outside world and be **practiced** in daily life
- A possible understanding of 'I' as the outcome of social relations and ethics that exists only as a point of intensity created by the relations that cross it. The body is the carrier and marker of economic, social, psychological, geological, and material forces that build up our common space. Every I-body has the power to affirm or to block these energies, making some relations stronger and more powerful in the common social body and of blocking others
- Using the 'I' as a social territory for experimentation (I am only in as far as I'm part of)
- Other possible understandings of commonality

I would like to ask you if you could further elaborate on how you see these as challenges or risks of the contemporary collectivities that need to be critically addressed and made visible. What would then be an alternative understanding of commonality and how it can potentially generate another view on the politics, ethics, of what constitutes work, and what constitutes responsibility?

Thank you!

Dear Mala,

This question is so fundamental to my **practice**, but also so complex, that I am going to answer you IN my **practice**, by answering it by a Tarot of Hope reading, taking each of your starting points as a concrete question to the cards. You can read in the SCORES REVISITED section, page number 102

>> next question to ELKE p212

S8 LILIA TO MALA

Dear Mala,

I'm very curious to know how you create passages between your PhD investigation, your **writing practice**, and your performance work. If I understand correctly, the **Dream Lab** is an experimental platform for collective **practice** where several aspects of your interests come together. I'm interested in mixed formats and the assembling of **practices**, how they contaminate each other, generate material for observation, and address an audience.

I would be very interested if you can elaborate on this. Thank you!

Lilia. It's too long to explain all the passages and assembling of all my different interests and engagements, so I will only briefly say what **DREAMLAB** is because it is the platform that serves as an intersection of all the formats and **practices**, which all are rooted in **dreaming**.

DREAMLAB is a mobile interdisciplinary laboratory for research and development of **dream** and imagery work in the context of performing arts. It serves as an interdisciplinary environment where professional artists meet in different formations, set-ups, and contexts for the purposes of inventing, developing, sharing, and exchanging methodologies of creative **life**, work, or thought based on activation and engagement of body and imagination. Diverse artists and researchers concerned with techniques of engagement with body and imagination as well as with questions stirred by it have taken part in the research itself or have contributed to the **DREAMLAB** events.

DREAMLAB was established in 2011 and has since then been dedicated to the spirit and ethics of experimentation with, research and application of technology of **dreaming**. It aims to develop specific techniques, strategies and tools of **dreaming** (individual and collective) for revelatory and transfor-

mative purposes and for the enhancement of creativity in different fields of human endeavor. Not only performing arts, but also in areas such as business and education. Not for the sake of progress, but perhaps for the sake of space that opens up in between strong, idiosyncratic voices; only then can we weave collectively that which has 'not yet' to come.

>> next question to MALA p220

S8 CECILIA TO JULIA

What we don't know yet.

Lucrecia Martel said once, that to choose the script, to prepare the technical and human resources... all those mechanics of the film, it is like putting together and organizing all the elements we know, in order to make possible something that we don't know yet.

I thought about that when you spoke about your gut feeling when you are making decisions while editing a film or when you mentioned the intuitive way you make it or how sometimes, fragments are grabbing each other.

As a filmmaker (as a creator...), do you think we are only able to create the scenario for things to happen and organize themselves? Up to what extent do we "decide" consciously in our work?

Alice in Wonderland, foxholes and landscapes.

For a long time, when one director we liked died, a friend and I were going to celebrate his/her death by eating in a restaurant from his original country (Antonioni: an Italian restaurant, Bergman: a Swedish one, Angelopoulos: a Greek one...) and we dressed for the occasion as one of the characters of his films. Alain Resnais died last week. The day he died, I decided to watch one of his films, because my friend is far away so I cannot go to a French restaurant and wear an elegant dress.

I chose: "Nuit et brouillard". In the film he walks across the concentration camp in order to reconstruct the horror of the war. I was impressed by the eloquent emptiness of those spaces and their "weight". Related with your films: How does the landscape appear in your films since this landscape it is not occupied but rather "landless", dispossessed from its wounds, from its footprints? How is it to inhabit that "landscape after the battle" but within a fake recreation going on? Is there a memory that resides on the landscape?

Posing

I remember about one of the characters in one of your films and how he was mainly concerned about how the **presence** of the camera could "change" the meaning of what happened (the scene at the "fake" graveyard). I related it with the idea of "pose" by Roland Barthes "in the process of 'posing', I pose, I know I am posing, I want you to know that I am posing. [...] What I want, in short, is that my (mobile) image [...] coincide with my (profound) self" (Barthes Camera Lucida)

How is it to make a portrait of those who are already in the pose of a pose? How would you relate with the idea of a camera as an instrument that can steal your soul? Is there something similar nowadays with the obsession for controlling our own image?

On editing

In "Notre Musique", Goddard says in a conference:

"For instance two actual photographs that present the same moment in history. Then we see that truth has two faces. (...) In 1948 the Israelis "thrown" themselves to the sea towards the Promised Land and the Palestinians do so to the point of drowning. Shot-countershot. Shot-countershot. The Israelite people arrived to fiction. The Palestinian people fall into documentary.

«Les Israéliens retrouvent la fiction. Les Palestiniens tombent dans le documentaire»

How would you apply this sentence to your films? Is there any relation with the "making" of the characters and with the editing processes and how you place the images or how you intervene in some narrative elements like music, or the disposition of the fragments or the very decision of which fragments are in the film and which are not in?

S8 KRISTIEN TO CECILIA

So C,

My fellow traveler was about to tear your Hopscotch in two parts because it was too monolithic to accompany us on the road. Just in **time** I the fetishist said, if you so please, then any book, but not this one, because even though it speaks of two sides I had been jumping around inside it and intended to continue so. Instead I squeezed the tiny Handbook for the Itinerant by Brandon LaBelle in the little rucksack. And a pencil. I marked something for you.

Night made from this crowd of the interior **life** - a collectivity inside; that echo and resound, to make contact with the outside, **life** on the street, and in the world. A double-**life**, not of the self, but of the crowd: the self and the crowd, a crowded self. That is, a self full of ambiguity; a night-self.

A night-step.

Searching for another geography, a **nighttime** geography for encountering more than meets the eye. Where the visibility of the city disappears, into the smooth darkness that throws shadows into new perspectives. The night has no map, only the passion and longing of the step; of meeting the other.

The night displaces the centrality of the gaze in favor of embodied sensuality, orienting speech and word, and the power of the look, toward nocturnal languages: one of laughter and tiredness, **dreamy** utterance and **dreamy** steps - the step and the voice.

Strangers.

(...)

Love, and loneliness: the emptiness of the night takes over, tossing us into the mysterious quiet. Such quiet though, is where new friendships are made. In this space of emptiness, under the shadowy drapes of night your words pierce me, finding their way under the skin. A whisper that breaks down not only the city, as a functional construction, but this body; in other words, we drift.

(...) There is no absolute perspective in such a scene, no outside reference by which to organize our words, our steps. Pure restlessness; pure night. And those speech-steps drumming out their own pattern: like when we'd lie back in the grass, not knowing exactly, but sensing in the pull of the wind that more would come. To **dream**, might this be the production of the night - to set the heart beating, to unsettle the patterns of the day and let loose other thoughts, other words? (...)

Once more I become the copyist.

I wanted to ask you about diaries and other **writings**. When for you is the **time** of **writing**? Or when is the **time** for which **writing**? I remember you saying that you attempt to resist a masculine **writing** - is it then its 'siteoppo' you set out to grasp, a feminine **writing**? You immediately denounced 'the little feminist' as something of your past. In Hopscotch I marked "Only Oliveira knew that La Maga was always reaching those great **timeless** plateaus that they were all seeking through dialectics". I have to read on to know about La Maga. And if I read on will I know about you? What 'strategies' (if that's the right word) do you use to reach great **timeless** plateaus (if that's what you reach for) in-between day/night, masculine/feminine, work/**life**, etc.?

Cecilia's answer to Kristien:

Airport. Interior. Day. A strong light is coming from the left. A whole wall made out of glass. Announcements of flights. People passing by. Something in between an incessant **movement** and slowness. In a bar sounds "Because the night." by Patti Smith. THE FELLOW TRAVELER is drawing the passengers in her notebook. There is a man with a particularly extreme profile, the kind she likes to draw.

Kristien is looking through the window of her apartment. It is night and Brussels is full of lights. Silence. She has a tea, while starting to scratch a question out of her notes. She doesn't have a clear idea yet of what to ask. She herself is thinking to write a diary at some point... Never found the **time**. So she starts to think about the precise **time** for **writing**.

Kristien: - I wanted to ask you about diaries and other **writings**. When is for you the **time** of **writing**?

Or when is the **time** for which **writing**?

THE FELLOW TRAVELER: To write a diary is to be committed to a **practice**. It is also a way of being aware, it is a kind of memory and a trace. Usually I am a morning diary writer and a night letter author. In the morning I like to write almost when I wake up, I like to write my **dreams**, **sometimes** I like to write about the previous day and it flows... My night self it is lighter, I **sometimes** need to write also. The **writing** then is more ambiguous, filled with possible directions and vague. It is **dreamy** and watery like night itself.

Kristien has a sip of her tea. It is getting cold. Same space, both of them. Kristien looks at the notes from last conversation with THE FELLOW TRAVELER, there it is... they spoke about "feminine **writing**".

Kristien (typing in her computer): I remember you saying that you attempt to resist a masculine **writing** - is it then its "siteoppo" that you set out to grasp, a feminine **writing**?

Music from the bar has finished and there is an insistent chain of ads instead. Light is even brighter in contrast with the soft-lit room at Kristien's. THE FELLOW TRAVELER takes her headphones and starts to listen to "Love will tear us apart" on her computer while she writes her next answer:

THE FELLOW TRAVELER: Miss Salama is a lady who only writes by tearing books into words, sentences or paragraphs. She takes the book to her table, weighs it in her hands, take the scissors, glue and a piece of thick paper. She chooses carefully the material from the book and builds a new text by placing the selected elements together in a new way. Most of the **times**, she works just with one book. She loves nineteenth century novels because they are full of words and long sentences. She creates a new text out of the original, by diving in the new meanings that appear between the new structures. I also think something similar might happen when you learn a book or when your copyist self takes over. In both cases, you need to break the book and then to reconstruct it. Maybe any reading does so. You try to be faithful to what was written before. But necessary in that exercise, is a break that comes out from memory, from the very exercise of it or just from interpretation.

When I referred to "feminine **writing**" or *écriture féminine*, I think of breaking, drawing, gluing, appropriating and weaving the text. I think of many possible **practices** of **writing** that do not privilege the "masculine" (but also white, European, middle class...) discourse of reason. I think of structures that respond to themselves, not to a pre-existent structure where your words are supposed to fit in. In that sense, yes. I move towards that type of **writing**. I wonder: How to embody other voices? Accents, particularities, differences, imprecisions, non-linear structured discourses, emotions, memories or even pieces as Miss Salama does.

One more character has entered the scene. THE FETISHISTIC SELF moves slowly in his tall high heels. He just hears about tearing books apart, and he wants to protect us from such **practices**. THE FETISHISTIC SELF is almost always a conservative figure. Obsessed with objects, collections and rituals. He asks us for stillness. He decides to sit down and listen.

Kristien is thinking, she remembers THE FELLOW TRAVELER said something like "the little feminist inside her". How does it relate with that **writing**?

Kristien: You immediately denounced 'the little feminist' as something of your past...

THE FELLOW TRAVELER and THE FETISHISTIC SELF move nervously in their sites. They do not agree. THE FELLOW TRAVELER just realizes that, of course, THE FETISHISTIC SELF does not like to talk about 'past'. THE FELLOW TRAVELER starts to write quickly. THE FETISHISTIC SELF looks over her shoulder.

THE FELLOW TRAVELER: I do not remember to use 'the little feminist' expression but for sure there was a little feminist 'I', since I have six sisters, my house was plenty of women and I was conscious quite early about inequalities and violence towards women in many senses. I have a clear memory of reading 'the second sex' and 'A room of one's own' when I was about eleven years old.

Those two books were on my sister's shelf in the room we both shared; from there, to be conscientious about what is called 'the woman condition', and be active in feminist and lesbian groups. I do not consider the little feminist as something of my past but present in a different way, from essentialist feminism of my early years, the queer-LGBT feminism. So I guess it is again, not that much about feminism but feminisms.

Kristien is again looking through the window. THE FETISHISTIC SELF is besides her and takes Hopscotch in his hands. Kristien smiles... Maybe that book doesn't belong to her anymore since he was the one who saved it. They look together at the book, pages start to fly up to a point where Kristien has underlined

Kristien: "Only Oliveira knew that La Maga was always reaching those great **timeless** plateaus that they were all seeking through dialectics". I have to read on to know about La Maga. And if I read on will I know about you? What 'strategies' - if that's the right word-do you use to reach great **timeless** plateaus-if that's what you reach for in-between day-night, masculine-feminine, work-**life**...?

THE FELLOW TRAVELER is a bit distracted. There is suddenly a long queue of people in front of the counter. It is already **time** to fly? Why do those people wait standing instead of sitting down and relaxing? But Kristien's question brings her to a memory. She thinks of the expression in the Spanish edition of the book: "Ella navegaba los ríos metafísicos..." That's what Oliveira says about la Maga. Is it possible to translate "ríos metafísicos" into "**timeless** plateaus" (There should be another sentence that she does not remember from the text).

"Hay ríos metafísicos, ella los nada como esa golondrina está nadando en el aire (...) Yo describo y defino y deseo esos ríos, ella los nada. Yo los busco, los encuentro, los miro desde el puente, ella los nada. (...) Ah, dejame entrar, dejame ver algún día como ven tus ojos".¹

THE FELLOW TRAVELER answers: I **sometimes** feel much more like Oliveira... This question is beautiful. In Rayuela, what is disturbing to me is that idealization of La Maga as an intuitive being, natural and instinctive just because she is a woman. While Oliveira it is trying to grasp any meaning out of his **life** through thoughts and binary systems that he depreciates but he cannot understand, La Maga comprehends meanings without any analysis, in that intuitive and 'wild' way. I should need to read it again, but that's what I remember. What interests me about Rayuela, is not its content (which is also beautiful) but the shape of the book and the beautiful idea that talks about the mechanics of building itself and allows the reader to find his/her own way through the text. I look at things from the side of the river. It is rare that I manage to dive in them. And for sure it is not through thoughts, not even by words. But I feel indeed night-morning-feminine-masculine-**life**-work without any strategy to reach those **timeless** plateaus, beyond withdrawing and trying to let them come towards me.

¹ "There are metaphysical rivers, she swims in them, like that swallow is swimming in the air (...) I describe and define these rivers and desire this rivers, she swims. I look for them, I find them, I look at them from the bridge, she swims in them. (...) Oh, let me in, let me see some day as your eyes see."

S8 DAMLA TO LILIA

Dear Lilia,

I find your various depictions of **scores** very compelling, with your focus on their potential for **attention**, awareness, unexpected, playfulness, or affectivity, for present, for dis-/re- organization of things, etc... However, I think realization of these potentials is equally or even dominantly dependent on the 'mode of engagement' of an interlocutor of a **score**. I saw your note "ADD Warm-up" at the end of your answer for the fourth week that I'm guessing related to this issue of modes of engagement.

Could you elaborate on the specificities of "warm-up"? What is a 'mode of engagement' with **scores** and how this specific 'mode of engagement' could be induced in the realization of the potentials of the **scores** you mentioned?

(To specify my question more: I have in mind 'everyday **scores**', such as procedures, social contracts, habits, etc., that I relate to disengagement and diverge from the 'artistic **scores**'. I'm using the term only to distinguish from what I referred to as everyday **scores** for lack of affectivity, **attention**, displacement, and agency. This is the reason I want to point at the 'mode of engagement' with **scores**.)

Dear Damla,

Maybe we should develop warm-ups for **life**. I like this idea. Let's warm up **life!** Maybe we, as citizens, are lacking rituals that touch affectivity, **attention**, displacement, agency. Or rules for resisting an overpowering system that dilutes desire and increases consumption.

(Another thought). Let's say that all of us work (deal, are in touch) with ethical parameters and self-**knowledge** in order to process the continuum. The simple fact that nothing stops can be a very cruel condition of **life**. We can't pause, rewind, sustain, or stop any event in a systematic use of **time**. In the arts, we can bring questions of temporality and linearity to the front, we are occupied with suspension and transgression of **time** and borders in order to access the complexity of **life**, and here I see a radical difference between **life** and art (and very much with performance). Performance transforms our regulated conception of **time** but **life** goes on, on the tick of the clock. But they transgress each other, create passages in between and re-invent themselves.

As a fast exercise, if I would think about transposing my **practice** (choreography) to the public sphere as a very direct proposal for resistance and observation. I would maybe like to import a **score** (for example Lisa Nelson's Tuning **Score**), into the private and public spheres as a counter-social choreography. (And I smile...) I am not interested in dance in public space. I can't see how that can change anything in the perception of the public space. If I choose a Lisa Nelson **Score** it is because it can apply to everyday **movement** and gestures using very simple tools like start, pause, rewind. I would be interested to observe how **time** would contract or expand. It would be a way to perform, experiment, and communicate the doer's observation in a daily regular situation.

When I'm in contact with the larger world we live in, the streets, social services, bureaucracy, etc, I fold into a 'common' functioning. That matrix allows such diversity of encounters, people, **practices**, temporalities that flow... I can pay **attention** to many things or to nothing. I scan, I select, I compose.

I find quite remarkable the co-existence of different worlds in a city, as I find remarkable an ecosystem in nature. I'm thinking this functioning is not just rational but also empirical, sensual. Amazing that we can go from point A to point B passing through so much otherness without crashing. It's a maze (ing). I see my work as a tool to observe ecosystems, discover their modes of functioning, and be surprised by the characteristics of their singular elements. Any kind of frame creates a territory. My desk is a world. I want to share. I will make a performance.

After a deviation I can answer in relation to the warm up as preparation to the engagement in the 'playtime'. In my performances in order to be available as much as I can to be at the present **time** and available to encounter the other (people, objects, thoughts) I have to raise my sensibility and for me that has a lot to do with the body. To excite the physical signals (breathing, voicing, opening up the joints, being aware of the flow of thought, where my eyes are, how I feel, what kind of order the body has), to focus so much on these that anything that appears is worth investing on, anything that appears is curious.

I like to think about the reliability of the body in the act of being. Then this state of **attention** is exhausting and can't be **practiced** in a total way, meaning all the **time**. What this intense state of **attention** does though is that it resonates, spills into the other kind of **time** regulation and here it informs me and changes the way I relate.

So I engage more in my desires and make decisions that include a larger me, my relation to ethics, my intuition; to look instead of not looking; to smile instead of blocking affect, to decide to be amazed by what is there.

>> next question to MALA p220

S8 JULIA TO HANS

Dear Hans,

If every image tells a story, how do you choose the images you edit?

How do you choose those that, in contrast to others, you frame, hang on the wall or put on your mantelpiece?

Is it a real mantelpiece that would mean a lasting **presence** in the house? Or do you have many makeshift mantelpieces that form a **fleeting presence**?

Do they maybe still get hot?

Or do they stay cold when central heating is installed under the window?

How do you avoid your house catching fire or getting too crowded?

Dear Julia,

On editing

This question is very hard for me to answer. Yes I do have a Masters degree in audiovisual arts, and I am 'trained' in it in some way, but (luckily) I was always somewhere on the fringe of it.

In the projects I have realized, the editing, or the choice of images never has been a question. I never started from what I had filmed which I then had to glue together in one way or the other. In most of my projects I know what I want to film before I had a camera in my hands and I know who would actually be in front of it.

But even then there are several takes, not so much as in a 'regular' movie production, but at least more than one. The one that I choose for the final cut than, is the one that strikes me the most, the one that surprises me the most and with the best rhythm. It's a gut feeling for me, something that I can't really explain, no recipe.

When I say I know what I will film before anything else, that is true in every case except one.

Once I created a film, for which I had everything thought out as usual, but while filming this project, everything collapsed.

The big difference in this project, in comparison with all the previous ones, was that I wasn't behind the camera but in front of it. I was the actor.

(I am talking about "Hermitage" you kind find it on www.vimeo.com/hansandrears, just look for "Hermitage" it is there somewhere! If I think about it, this is the first step towards my graduation project "Optical Theater of the Sinners" in which I also perform myself and in which I found my interest of the Demiurge, who is related to the Hermit in many ways, in my opinion.)

Okay, maybe that wasn't the only reason why the project collapsed, but it indicates a shift and risk I took in this particular project.

While filming, I realized that everything I thought of before, just wouldn't work out as planned. And there I sat, on the doorstep of my studio, with my cameraman and assistant, discussing how this wasn't what I wanted. They agreed. But they also convinced me to just keep going and improvise.

We went back and did as they said. In the end I had a bunch of images which I hadn't planned and had no clue what to do with. I had to edit.

To edit means to revisit the story you have written before filming and see what gets to the level of what you have imagined before you started filming and what has risen beyond that. That is what you have to deal with, to shuffle with, to play with, to be creative with, to see things that you were looking for and those that you were not looking for.

And that is, I'm afraid, the closest I can get to answering a question about editing at this point.

On the mantelpiece

When I talked about the mantelpiece before, I used it as an image.

Something that is associated with a home, with familiarity; a central place for people, a family, to gather around. If there would be images on it, those would have to be of some importance;

not random, but chosen and framed.

I actually never have known a mantelpiece myself.

Oh... wait. That's a lie. We actually had one! One of the decorative kind in which at first gas heating was installed. But since the building I grew up in was built in the 1950's, the actual mantelpiece was just there out of nostalgia.

For me, it was always hidden behind the couch and I only saw it when my mother vacuumed behind it, or when I lost (part of) a toy. It was just a handy shelf, right behind you to put your drink on while watching TV. That was the mantelpiece of my youth.

And then with just a few hits of our household hammer on a chisel, my father took it down as a symbolic act to start the refurbishing of our home.

The only real mantelpiece I can relate to as a mantelpiece is the one in the house where my parents live now. It isn't a working fireplace anymore, thanks to central heating etc. but the mantelpiece itself is still there.

Above it is an etching, one we all fell in love with when we saw it... my parents, my sister and I at least; my brother was too little to even realize. The only picture on the mantelpiece is one of my grandmother and grandfather, sitting on a bench in the sun, heads together, both sleeping, relaxing on vacation.

A mantelpiece, a pedestal, a sacred space, a place for well-chosen images to remember.

Hans Andreas R.

S8 HANS TO SAMAH

Dear Samah,

I was rereading all the questions you have received and the answers you have given.

In the answer you gave Rares last week this interesting sentence is singled out, because it was the end of the page:

"I am drawn to loss".

Combining this with the fact of ruptures and breaks, I wonder how the fact that you made that 'hard-cut'" to come here and live in Brussels, follow the a.pass programme, is something symptomatic of you as a person and as an artist? Is it something that you do deliberately? Is it something that feeds you? Or is it something that happens unconsciously?

The parallel you draw between the sentence "I am drawn to loss" that refer to my work and the relationship between political ruptures and aesthetical transformations in visual **practices**, and making the break to come to Brussels for a year, are perhaps a little harsh. The ruptures I research are caused by external forces and are different from a personal decision to pursue a learning environment. But as I understand, your question is more about how I relate to loss and ruptures in both my work and my real **life** decisions, it is an interesting parallel. Two different ideas come to my mind.

Your question also reminded me of a conversation I was having with a Syrian man, who had recently moved to Jordan because of the mess in Syria. He asked me where I was traveling to, and after I excitedly explained, he asked in Arabic:

This translates to "Why would you want estrangement in a new place, wouldn't it be better to be around your friends and family?" Of course I felt ashamed, talking to a refugee about exploring new possibilities in **life**. He had just lost his newly bought, fully furnished home in Damascus.

The complex idea of identity and belonging, which I am not going to even attempt to go into on a theoretical level here, is an on-going subject of discussion with my friends. Perhaps our generation, as second or third generation refugees, or ethnically mixed persons, has an easier **time** being children of a world that connects with ideas and **lifestyles** from different parts of the world, and we are able to disconnect from our 'home'. While the decision to cut ties with what has been your home for a long **time** is a very difficult one, there might be opportunities in other places which would at least allow you to plan for the next one or two years, knowing "political unrest" as they choose to define it, is not going to disrupt your humble two-year plan.

Additionally, artists have historically found inspiration in traveling to new encounters, challenges, and conditions that allow them a fresh look at the world. I don't recall in which film on the arts, one artist says that when you are away from your home, you are able to see the ideas you are researching more clearly. And I agree that distance helps to bring some clarity. Maybe its the isolation from the day-to-day pressures of your hometown, with its social and family obligations, or the monotony of the everyday that jeopardizes the creative process or produces stagnation for some **time**. Somehow the change of country offers a clean slate to see things in a new light. A place like Brussels has a lot to offer in terms of shows and exhibitions, which is not so much an option back home. Additionally, a.pass is a place that challenges me by creating an environment for research, learning and working. All these put together are good reasons for a break from the home turf.

S8 SAMAH TO RARES

Dear Rares,

I have not had the pleasure of seeing you perform live, apart from the opening week at your house. But I think - or maybe I hope - that I am slowly building a better idea of your **practice**. I also re-read any past questions and answers for the **scores** meetings. (By the way, I really liked Victoria's question to you in week 3 or 4. I don't recall if you would consider answering it). Nevertheless, I am curious about what comes after the performance. So if you pose an idea that you want to investigate by engaging an audience. I am wondering if there is anything that lives beyond the performance?

S8 ELKE TO DAMLA

Dear Damla,

Since your last answer seemed to suggest you yourself were going through a bout of disengagement, I would like to ask you to list, in whatever way you think is logical, what 'moves' you. It can also be what has moved you, but no longer does the trick. What you expected to move you, but failed to fulfill its promise... what moves you in a political way, a romantic way, an engaged way, etc. Please also describe the **movement** that appears when you feel moved by circumstances.

Dear Elke,

Since I read your question I keep asking myself - what moves me? It's been a long **time** that I've been asking the question the other way around - what obstructs my **movement** - I don't any longer know whether I move anymore, or even am moved at all. But I also consider that it may only be a matter of vantage point, even a matter of high or low tides...

I'm not even sure if I can isolate whatever moves me or find the deepest urge... Anyway, a list, however it comes out, with the ones I like and I don't like:

My alarm clock, although it's failing to go off recently, **movement** comes the most diabolical invention of the era - the snooze button!

The discovery, when I smell the lead for something I haven't got, tasted, touched, or embodied before - like the demonic character of snooze button lately in my **life** - the first move is a smile, a moment of joy that accelerates until I leave it for behind, disappointed, the moment the discovery is exhausted...

It takes the shape of "Curiosity", romantically, unfolding enough to hook my **attention** yet still concealed; moving fast forward, sweeping like a storm, to consume it all in the blink of an eye.

Danger moves me a lot, the taboo, prohibition; maybe not the outrageous ones but the moments when most step back or hesitate, with a courage of ignorance until it's proven not to be dangerous anymore.

A small sparkle, long after push comes to shove, flaring up hard to wither away soon, leaving a long-lasting bad taste in my mouth and never resolving the push nor the shove.

Sounds like my wretched country blasted so-called "for some trees", after thirty years of explicit and systematic suppression and annihilation transformed them all to the point of irreversible.

The first compelling sentences of the short story, to be written in a matter of minutes until it reaches the peak, left aside never to be completed.

HATE TO CLAIM but - due dates, duties, to do lists on my agenda just move me in craze and self-hatred, getting done without getting satisfaction - turning what I want, what I decide, what I asked for into a burden.

Somet**ime**s the reminiscence of the unique feeling of fulfillment that I experience for doing something, moves me with only a bit of pushing and a bit of dragging until I get on track; it's all about inertia in the end. Wrongdoing, for sure not against me - then it becomes defensiveness, isn't it - with the assurance of the just (!?) third eye but always to take sides against the one with the upper hand. Well, this I lost now. After all, I'm turning into a "nice" person from the pain in the ass I used to be - or I cleared myself from all judgment in the political righteousness of postmodernism.

The HOPE, the hope that it could actually change something, with a move that fades away (just/long/somewhere) before it actually changes anything.

The fleeting moment that I feel I'm saying something interesting, making me write this all, until gradually my distaste over what I wrote takes over before I exhaust the list or even start to write really something!

S8 RARES TO KRISTIEN

Dear Kristien,

I would like to ask you about your working definition of artistic collaboration and maybe if you could refer to the long term effects of artistic collaboration. Could you refer to the collective research project that resulted in the book 'Brakin. Visualizing the Visible' and the KITCHAIN project participation (just so that it is not restricted to the profession of dramaturge). Thank you!

Hello Rares,

I've adopted THE FELLOW TRAVELER's diary and letter **writing** to make of my answer a working definition at work; a long-term forerunner of a travelogue to come, 7 days of **writing**.

"Nous voulons être les poètes de notre vie, et d'abord dans les plus petites choses et les plus quotidiennes." (Le philosophe-artiste, p123)

Saturday March 15, 2014

Blood ties must be renewed



A screen shot of Rivette's *Céline et Julie vont en bateau* - a film I saw only recently. It is an alluring collaboration between two women caught up in a vertiginous trespassing of fiction, fantasy, memory, telepathy, clairvoyance, déjà-vu, within the parallel worlds of film, theatre, cabaret, cartoons, books, **life**. It (usually) starts like this: a redhead woman reading a book of magic in the park, a more vagabond brunette drops her sunglasses, then her scarf, as she rushes by.

The redhead shouts to no avail, picks up the lost items and starts following the stranger through Paris, into the rabbit hole of imagination, memories, friendship, magic, mystery, girlish craziness and laughter...

Most of the collaborations I have been involved in are one-on-one with women* and most of them have included, like in the film, the intimacy of shared lodgings. In Rivette's film the living together is invasive, as if there is no limit to the girls' exchange. They become one, or counterparts - esprit et persil, clever and clover - continuously swapping identities. I take it as a somewhat romantic ideal of collaborating with future and past, public and intimate, self and others, **life** and fiction. And of improvising between **life**, a script, the camera rolling - and of the condition of trust this improvisation builds on. Rivette chose Dominique Labourier as the counterpart of Juliet Berto, because he had often seen them together, already friends. Usually I'm skeptical, scared even, to the point of being paralyzed, when collaborations pretend to be technical, dividing tasks and clearly defined roles to achieve a set goal. I like the trespassing when a collaboration starts with a thick and moldable fog of desire and drive, not just to carry out, but to relate, and to be transformed. Nightfall, cold wind, slippery ice off-track, a sip of whisky, holding each other by the elbows, walking down the mountain after having climbed too far up... Perhaps a romance only possible between lovers, best fiends, or children. My relation with dramaturgy as a profession (as outside eye, if you like) is a bit complicated there.

In *Céline et Julie* there is one scene where the intensity and excessiveness threaten to flip over into something acidic. Like when children play: one minute there is an immediate understanding of what is being invented, the next the game is abandoned and gives way to heated passions, a distrust seeps in, jealousy, irony, silence, something uncontrollable, a provocation, old ache, non attentiveness, double layers of meaning, perhaps not intended to mean anything... A needle willingly poked or accidentally dropped into a weak spot. In *Céline et Julie* this occurs around the question of lineage. Both girls appear to have no family; one hasn't a family and the other has no active relation to hers. The story they will descend into is related to Julie's past. Though the red hand occurred earlier, she's the first to have it marked on the back of her shoulder. It becomes the entry into a riddle: blood ties must be renewed.

* Collaborating with women: I don't know how sex/gender plays a role in my collaborations - for now it's just a remark.

Sunday March 16, 2014

L'irresponsable

The Groucho Marx Quoter* and me have just started a small reading group. Yes, a group, two people. Our first reading was planned for last Wednesday - the day your question about collaboration arrived. We would read *Le Philosophe-Artiste*, a book by Jean-Noël Vuarnet, and start with the chapter *Le gai savoir*.

The first reading -subsection: 'Le philosophe-artiste' - he missed. Not having been out lately, he took the opportunity to go round some of his favourite bars. He texted me: "It's too late no?" I sent him the paragraph I had just been reading:

"Ce que crée le philosophe-artiste, c'est d'abord lui-même - sa propre ivresse, sa plénitude - ou sa folie. (...) "Pour qu'il y ait de l'art une condition physiologique est inéluctable: l'ivresse. Il faut d'abord que l'ivresse ait intensifié l'excitabilité de toute la machine: point d'art avant cela. Toutes les formes d'ivresse, si diversement conditionnées soient-elles, ont pareille vertu: avant tout l'ivresse de l'excitation sexuelle, cette forme la plus ancienne et la plus originelle de l'ivresse." (p123)

A genuine wink.

The second reading -subsection: 'L'irresponsable' - was tonight. He missed it. Again! He made a film date with a girl and forgot and forgot to cancel the reading date with this girl. Outraged this **time**, I blinked with saucer eyes. Two missed starts and no apologies whatsoever! I'm tempted to classify this as a failed collaboration.

(The reader of nice perceptions will here perceive... Groucho Marx Quoter... groups... etc... [in reference to Bartleby, to be read from memory])

It reminds me of another reading group I was part of. We went on for almost two years, once a month, just for the pleasure of reading together, without an institutional or project frame around it. Then it evaporated. It's an on-going challenge to keep the intensity of these loose floating junctions. How to rely on commitments and desires that are not grounded in anything but the sharing of the act itself?

Watched Le Pont du Nord, another Rivette film, in which the eyes are pivotal: Max is everywhere and sees everything. Another riddle, this **time** structured like a goose board. And another intriguing collaboration between two kinless strangers, who in real **life** are mother and daughter (3 years later, at the age of one day from 26, Pascale Ogier died of a heart attack, caused by an overdose).

* He of: I don't want to belong to any club that will accept people like me as a member.

Monday March 17, 2014

wink, blink, Max sees it all

Fellow T's reply to my question arrives. I send her a winking kiss and dance to her songs. Because the night belongs to lovers. Love will tear us apart, again... Orpheus plays his lyre and tries not to look back - still there Eurydice?

Fellow T's morning **writing** is of the diary, in which she describes the previous day and her **dreams**. The night **writing** is addressed, in letters. It is lighter, more ambiguous and fluid.

Eventually resolved to go on reading L'irresponsable by myself and sent the shameless Philosopher-Artist another fragment of the text:

"A l'univers des 'apôtres de la vengeance', Nietzsche, poète de l'innocence et de l'oubli, contre le jeu des moralistes religieux joue le 'jeu des créateurs'. A dieu pensé comme Créateur et comme Maître responsable ou Père, Nietzsche oppose l'artiste ou l'enfant - une autre royauté, une autre création -, royauté sans responsabilité, création sans lourdeur ni faute, sans norme, sans paradigme et sans garant, dont la mort de Dieu, entendue comme joyeuse nouvelle, est le seul fondement. Pour que l'innocence soit possible, il faut 'émietter l'univers', perdre le respect du Tout' (...)." (p141)

The Don Quixote in me exhausted himself. The evening **writing** yawns with swollen eyes, and tentatively brushes off the solitary swearing of the last 24 hours and all the dirt dumped on the nearly abandoned newborn collaboration. Bloodthirstiness gives way to **nighttime** fabulation. I find consolation in sharing a reading group of 4: me, l'irresponsable, his Absence and his Concept, phantoms of each other. Let's assume we covered the two subsections of the book the four of us together. It is often the case when a man is browbeaten in some unprecedented and violently unreasonable way, he begins to stagger in his own plainest faith. He begins, as it were, vaguely to surmise that, wonderful as it may be, all the reason and all the justice are on the other side. Accordingly, if any disinterested persons are present, he turns to them for reinforcement of his own faltering mind.

"Absence, what do you think of this? Would I not be justified in immediately dismissing l'irresponsable?"

"Excuse me, that is for you to decide sir, I think his conduct quite unusual and indeed unjust as regards Concept and myself, but it may only be a passing whim."

"Ah, you have strangely changed your mind then. You speak very gently of him now!"

"All beer", exclaimed Concept, "gentleness is effects of beer. You see how gentle I am sir, shall I go and black his eyes?"

So saying Concept rose to his feet and threw his arms into a pugilistic position. He was hurrying away to make good his promise when I detained him, alarmed at the effect of incautiously... etc [Bartleby, to be read from memory]

How to proceed... *orpheline* reader, *sans Père, sans amèrement*? Do we continue reading with l'irresponsable who idealizes risk but abandons us when the dragon breaths fire? Or shall we have a slightly less risky, but at least real, collaboration with only the Concept and the Absence of him?

I need to add that l'Irresponsable (the real one) says he doesn't read French: I was to translate the text to English for Him. Now, is it Him or Max playing tricks on me? Is this the translation He proposes - chapter one on *ivresse*, chapter two on *oubli* - instead of French to English? Or is this Book summoning itself, offering me a riddle much like Rivette's films?

Tuesday March 18, 2014
rompre la tête et y mettre le feu

Le Pont du Nord is almost entirely filmed outside. Marie, just released from prison, suffers from nausea when inside. The journey starts in the inner city of Paris and a goose board transposed on the map of the city leads Marie and said Baptiste* further and further into the outskirts of Paris: the inn, the bridge, jail, thorn bushes and labyrinths... It reminds me of the Brakin project you asked about. We spent much **time** trying to define the edges of the city. I promise to write about it tomorrow.

Baptiste decapitating a Max. Fellow T takes her headphones and listens to Joy



Division. The dragon, guardian of bridges, soon to be defeated by Baptiste.

“Pour chacun des trois, cette répétition joue par rapport à un désir de rompre la thèse, ou la tête - non seulement en la coupant, mais en y mettant le feu.” (p133).

* John the *Baptist*: forgiver of sins, purifier of bodies. Decapitated on request of dancing Salome. Does Salome bear any relation to the scissors of Miss Salama, mentioned by Fellow T, cutting through the body of texts? Or to *Le Philosophe-Artiste*, beheading idealism, only to walk on the ceiling of a world upside down?

“L'idéalisme, volonté d'un discours sans corps, s'appuyant sur l'idée que “seule la forme pure de la pensée est digne de la pensée” n'est peut-être, depuis toujours, qu'un refus de penser la question du style - et d'interroger la philosophie comme art.” (p127-128)

Wednesday March 19, 2014
break or chain?

The project that resulted in the book Brakin; a neologism referring to the two closest capital cities (Baptiste! Salome!) in the world, taken as one but still alluding to breaking. Couldn't be more of a schism-cross with the other project you bring to mind... Kitchain.

“On est artiste à ce prix que ce que les non-artistes appellent forme, on l'éprouve en tant que contenu, en tant que la chose même. De ce fait, on appartient à un monde à l'envers: car désormais tout contenu apparaît comme purement formel - y compris notre vie.” (p122)

L'Irresponsable, who often stands on his head when philosophizing, would've liked to read these passages with me. Especially when it comes to questioning the distinction between work and life.

walking alone / short intervention
 transgressive / eating together
 exhaustion / representation
 existential / artist aura
 exposure / social talk
 outskirt /
 fritter / art fest
 / veggio

out / in

Both invoke an idea of 'the social' - whether that is by resisting it, embracing it or questioning it. (Need to work further on the different concept of 'the social' they rely on. For now just the description of the projects.)Kitchain is a set-up by artists António Louro and Benedetta Maxia. Its context is the art festival; in this case a festival on 'The Social Contract'. They offer their moveable kitchen to people to come and cook outside of the house, using their ingredients of the day. They also invite the other artists presenting in the festival to engage in cooking blind dates with small groups of audience. It's meant to 'democratize' - but the artist aura lingers behind the proposal, as something to play with.

Brakin: A pre-existing frame set up by architect, urbanist, artist, writer Wim Cuyvers, who took 6 researchers from different disciplines on board. A research on public space, defined as space for transgression. According to Cuyvers, these 'public spaces' have something in common, a similar architecture that accommodates a more existential communication beyond language. When 'the house' fails to accommodate our transgressive needs (sex, alcohol, sleep...), we would all read public space in a similar way, and potentially meet when most exposed.

But your question was about collaboration, not only about 'the social'. Within Cuyvers' invitation all of us worked alone in the city. The frame set out accommodated very different approaches and interests. I spent most of my **time** in graveyards where the homeless (street children, prostitutes, cross-dressers...) took the graves for their beds.

Evening dinner was the **time** to bring materials together within our research group. I liked very much the combination of freedom, difference and dialogue within this project. My first 'professional' experience, up to date the most 'bouleversing' one.

Thursday, March 20, 2014

Retied

The Philosopher-Artist sends regret

relief

retied.

The big Irresponsible becomes l'irresponsable and all of us shake ass. The Irresponsible, l'irresponsable, his Absence, his Concept, the Book, Max, **Life**, me. Fellow T is dj. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YNf62w7SGDs>

The concept, absence and reality of a person - the concept, absence and reality of a collaboration - all rub against each other. Reminds me of the text Living together on stage by Jeroen Peeters*. Parallel to the question of the political (as discourse or representation) and politics (as actual engagement or action), he asks about the relation between the social (as subject matter) and actual processes of artistic collaboration. How close do we allow them to be?

"A creative process is not only a site of collaboration and negotiation, but indeed also shaped by the actual living together of artists in residencies, by quarrels and personal crises. These aspects don't get much attention in discourses on collaboration, nor are they tangible on stage. Not that the performing arts should become private and confessional, but if living together is at issue on stage, then to what extent do artists allow the social aspects of collaboration to affect it?"

"In her study of Antigone, Judith Butler asks, "Is there a social life left for kinship, one that might well accommodate change within kinship relations?" Following her deconstruction of the distinction between the symbolic and the social, we may as well ask: Is there a social life left for artistic collaboration, one that might well accommodate change from within? Or is collaboration bound to become a lofty fetish in the performing arts, severed from the living practices it pretends to host?"

* <http://sarma.be/docs/1089> and <http://sarma.be/docs/1307>

Friday, March 21, 2014

Packing my bag, preparing for PAF.

For the long-term travelogue to come, I will take with me: ties, a scarf and sunglasses, red... or rather blood-thirst-quenching black label Johny the Baptist Walker, excess, intensity, drive and desire, Max and his wife Masha*, little Orphe-line, her goose board and other riddles, trust, fire and risk, improv 600mg FORTE, Concept and Absence of course, schisms to bridge, make-up, the headhangover-banged Philosopher-Artist, dj Fellow T and a 1000 asses.

I forgot to introduce Masha: indeed the wife of Max, also the mistress of the Philosopher-Artist, and my best friend.



SESSION 9

QUESTIONS by 17.03.2014, 12pm

NEXT MEETING: 25.03.2014, 6pm

LOCATION: PAF during End-Week

SARA TO SYLVIA

SYLVIA TO SARA

ELKE TO LILIA

CECILIA TO DAMLA

LILIA TO ELKE

CAMILA TO ANNA

ANNA TO VICTORIA

VICTORIA TO ANNA

DAMLA TO CAMILA

VICTORIA TO MALA

CAMILA TO PHILIPPINE

S9 SARA TO SILVIA

My dearest Silvia,

I'm very curious about the way you organized your living-experience-beings.

I wonder when do they step forward and you retreat (does this occur?) and how all the experience is structured, inscribed and made functional (operative)?

S9 SILVIA TO SARA

Dearest of all,

I find your research is broadly focused on past historical happenings. To me it seems clear how fascinated you are with some unbelievable facts of history, and how incredulous you might be with the impossible plans for the construction of a society that indeed has become true. I have been finding myself often formulating a question (or two) in my mind about your approach: How does your pleasure in observing a certain horror vacui of history, which is contained in the fully meaningful images you surround yourself with, place yourself and create your experience as an artist in this incredulous society? I suppose there is a state of affairs being conducted by you, which emerges from the millenary purport of those images that intensify your attention creating a bridge towards a "contemporary" problematization in your film practice. How is this occurring?

Dear oh dear..

Maybe all societies (ancient and contemporary) share the same problems in their innermost nature, regardless of the interface or technology from which they express it. Maybe we are not so changed throughout the (millions of) years, after all. I think many times, about that Cosmos episode, back in the 80's, where Carl Sagan explains how the brain evolved from the lizard stage to a more sophisticated stage, and how we can also find this perspective of evolution in ancient mythology or in Wagner's Götterdämmerung for instance.

These constructions normally capture certain symptoms, maybe even a state of crisis, which implies rupture...decadence, but also change. Symbols are replaced, mythology is revolutionized, heroes die and are re-born as something else. Bringing this imagery, charged with ancient symbolic features, as debris or ruins, to the scope of contemporaneity, amounts to say, that perhaps we move in circles, that every ideological construct it's a becoming-ruin in itself.

As for my experience, of history, I said it before, it's mediated by a profound melancholy (in the same way that a melancholic person grieves the loss of something he never possessed) which can be very close to a feeling of disbelief in whatever is being constructed here and now, this, not being unchangeable (closed), is latent though, and transversal to small and larger scales of collective constructions. The horror vacui history and archive suggest, it appears to me, a very complex sort of narratives, that is to say fictions. This opens up to the possibility of re-writing, or, if you prefer re-inventing history, which seems only fair to me.

S9 ELKE TO LILIA

Dear,

Reading through your previous answers I was struck by the similarity of some of our conceptions of work and the world. This is of course not a coincidence since we have been working and talking together frequently, but it was good to revisit some of these stages of work. I think the first time we really started to compare notes and come to a common understanding of 'what it is we do' was in the 'Live-in Room' project you refer to: an object/apartment sound installation in which the visitor has to negotiate his own performance by triggering the (sound) objects, finding her way around the space, trying to figure out the relation between the sound and the objects (chairs, cups, rug, ...) etc. From this moment of dealing with 'enchanted' objects, we both moved on in parallel but also differently. I can now see a clear line between that moment and my later developed interest in trees talking politics, my trying to become an object, loss of self, etc. Could you also sketch the way the development of your work in the last years has influenced your life choices? How the way you dealt with things started to change the way you dealt with life (politics, work, relations, power, femininity, whatever fits...)?

Dear Elke,

Your question is quite similar or as I understand it goes in the same direction as Damla's last question. What is the relation between my work and **life practices**?

The relation is the '**practice**' and here I quote John Cage:

'Art comes from a kind of experimental condition in which one experiments with living'.

In this way there is no distinction between work and **life practices**; one re-invents the other. But your question is pointing to a concrete out-put of my art **practice** in my **life** choices. Art making enlarges my perception and my ability to observe and apply **knowledge**. It makes me create conditions, systems to perceive **life** and understand what there is. My changes encompass the changes in the world and they are all temporary, as examples of the now:

The ethical standpoints are more exacerbated, the acceptance larger, the distribution of **time** a contradiction, the dedication to re-actualize my self strong, the nervous system a contradiction, the femininity empowered, the discourse sparking, the self esteem nurtured...

Marginality is a tool I will never let go, family a continuous experiment, **knowledge** something to listen to and embrace, the desire to engage a form of flying, the tears a kind of poems, the smiles empathic, the responsibility is fire, the skin falling smoothly...

Taste is less important, owned objects are been given away, animal consumption reduced, the affirmation of queerness is shining, the body is awake.

The fear of violence is constant, the astonishment regarding political procedure huge. Still, there is a dislike of the police.

The curiosity keeps flourishing, the other is a surprise, motherhood happily embedded, the sensation of me peaceful, the dance is wonderful, insomnia dreadful but no sleeping pills, nature rules in whatever way, paying **attention** to **attention** a political act, looking twice a tool for change,

Silence a gift, trust a gift, being here a gift, thinking a gift, sensing a gift, fantasy a right, disagreement a right, difference a right, exercising encounter a must, vibrant matter a must, being alone together the best, peacocks like old kings a must, it looks like that... a must,

Being in and out at the same **time** a condition, tiredness concrete, battery full, battery empty, it encompasses the world around me.

Re-**writing** a necessity, **writing** senses, not **writing** is not drawing, is not tracing, is not incorporating, dislocating, don't be so serious, don't take things for granted, don't drive a car yet, don't own big things, don't misuse power is an important principal, respect authorship, disrespect authority, violence inexplicable, the fluidity of things a relief, stimulating the drive as a warm up, generosity a must, desire a word to not forget, ears, eyes, nose, brain, skin, sex, guts, heart awake.

S9 CECILIA TO DAMLA

Dear Damla Fish,

Navigator of urban seas.

Last time we talked you showed interest in Leopoldo María Panero, the poet I was working with for the video work in the General Intellect Workshop. I brought Panero to the scene, because I would like to think about solitude within the frame of community and how to relate concepts such as intimacy, the personal and the public, and the communal to the "discussion" during the workshop on differences and equalities.

There is a sentence in the video and I would like to ask you what it conjures for you, since you have also been working with Foucault and public disengagement.

"In prison, the hateful dichotomy between public and private, breaks ...breaks the detestable social configuration of isolation. It is the only place where friendship is possible. A friendship that lasts the **time** that the imprisonment lasts... Because later I have met outside the prison, friends from jail and that has been a disaster (...) outside, the 'I' gets stronger and it commences the most inutile and bloody war, the war of 'being I'.

For what it would be a need that the other didn't exist. This is what generates the exchange of humiliation that structures today's society, rather than market exchange."

What does this paragraph mean to you within the frame of your research question? Why did Panero interest you?

Dear Cecilia,

The Little Black Fish, and the Cruel Venturer

First of all thank you for the "fish" epithet! I don't know if you know the story but the courageous and cruel ocean adventurer "Little Black Fish" of the Iranian storyteller Samed Bahrengi had always been my childhood hero - like many others in my generation and in my geography with parents of leftist leanings.

Panero, and self-destructive-exposure

I haven't known Leopoldo Maria Panero before your introduction to him; but only through what I've heard of him via Wikipedia. It's a shame I cannot read him in Spanish. What struck me most, especially in resonance with the present state of my research, are the "autobiographical ... character of obsessive inner monologue", "self-contemplation and (self)destruction", and the "triumph [of adolescence], and the destruction and disintegration of the adult conscience with it"* , which are mentioned to be some of the keys to his work.

Since the middle of the block, my research is forcing on me a double trajectory: While on the one hand I am still trying to understand and delimit 'public disengagement' and to create, propose, and strive for practicing research modes - hopefully in the City, on the other hand my cycle of incessant proposing, projecting and abandoning **practices** turned into a secondary research trajectory, namely 'research as symptom of my own disengagement', that even overwhelms the main one. This secondary route manifested itself inescapably in my half-way-days station with a clownish performance of self-exposure in failure and with its call for therapy; a persistent self-scrutiny, a frantic and consuming self-exposure, a sarcastic pattern of self-implosion.

A falling 'out of **life**', struggling with the fact that "there is nothing that can be still less than your soul", learning to live with the question "how dark is your name"**...

Quote, and public disengagement

I fell for the quote at first sight, I wanted it to tell me more, more of its words beautifully in tune with what I try to depict as public disengagement. The polarization of public and private, as if they are mutually exclusive. The withdrawal, introversion, retirement into one's own shell. The portrayal of the other as limitation, being amongst others as a burden. These constitute one huge thread of what I try to determine as public disengagement.

Although I don't totally agree. For me, it is not the struggle for 'being I' that generates the contemporary disengagement but one's continuous annihilation, obliteration, the expulsion from possibility and capacity to affect and be affected that turns 'being I' into a warfare rather than an art amidst others.

Prison, and the semiprivate room

Lately, I discovered an article of Ellen Rooney, called "A Semiprivate Room", basically which borrows the term from the semiprivate room of a hospital and argues against the cliché of the academic ivory tower by translating it into a classroom to claim the academy's potential for 'public discourse'. (Well, a diminishing summary but just enough for the sake of the argument.) Rooney depicts semiprivate as an alternative to public-private opposition as a site of self-revelation, critical exchange, 'fundamental individual (and indeed individualizing) urgency and crisis, where a certain impersonality and vulnerability to public scrutiny is the structuring principle of even the most deeply felt personal experience'*** where nothing is ready-made but produced through interaction. Although there is a contingent and accidental aspect in their gathering, the inmates of the semi-private room share an ontological condition, reminding me of the 'pre-individual ontological condition' in discussions of 'general intellect'. While the strangers in proximity create a 'peculiar', impersonal intimacy in which they inevitably interact, the exposure of privacy facilitates a certain mode of **attention**. It is a sphere of encounter with the unfamiliar, in jeopardy of failure and unavoidable transformation - potent but not endowed with emergence of new thought, of unknown. At least among many other arguments of Rooney that I oppose, these constitute the frame of a semiprivate room, which spatialize my desire for anonymous intimacy to counteract public disengagement.

In this sense, Panero's account of prison, its depiction as "the only place where friendship is possible" strongly resonates with the idea of the semiprivate room; the prison to counteract disengagement. Neither prison, nor the semiprivate room are utopias. In fact, Rooney also accentuates discipline, referring both to various disciplines of academy and as a system of rules of conduct, possibly coercive, exclusive as much as inclusive character of the semiprivate room. Yet I would like to ask Foucault, as much as I am trying to answer myself: is it possible to instrumentalize the semiprivate as a facilitator of transindividuality, peeling the disciplinary **practice** off it, not yet as a utopia, but an in-between of public and private not necessarily egalitarian or utopic but an attentive and questioning space, critical and emergent, not free of fear or anxiety nor of desire and hope, a space of encounter, subjectivization amidst public, of transindividuation...

* http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leopoldo_Mar%C3%ADa_Panero

** <http://vimeo.com/88435658>

*** Rooney, Ellen. "A Semiprivate Room". *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*. 13.1 (2002), 128-156.

S9 LILIA TO ELKE

Dearest Elke,

I empathize with the idea of re-taking the Arte Povera term, in the sense that Arte Povera encompasses a **movement**. It goes beyond the personal choices of artists but engages in a 'common' ethical sense that is not an ideology but a set of concerns or questions that surround us here and now. In many ways, today's society has to do with similar social, environmental, economic and political concerns that were already present in the 60' and 70'. The quasi-global attitude towards the consumerist society is still a very complex issue, an issue that makes us belong constantly (It's like air). Here there comes the question on how to be part of society? Where does one invest? Act upon? Create?

I was surprised by the sentence in your last answer: "...a performance practice that is practically empty of a matrix for thought, at least in the relation to the viewer." I see the matrix as a 'form' that can bring together the several, not just the thought but the sensible, the combination between our different ways of understanding something.

I think Bureau d'Espoir very much opened the link between several **knowledges**, points of **attention** etc. in a matrix for thought where thought includes: I think with my body and with everything that surrounds me, and then here I think art becomes political without being politics.

It would be nice if you elaborate on this. Thanks!

Christian Boltanski, inspired by Pistoletti 'Venus of the Rags' (arte povera)

Dear Lilia,

I think the question about the arte povera, and the question about the matrix for thought (and action) are different ones, but of course they are and should be related. But let me first try to answer them separately and then link them together. For now I will just point out the different topics I want to address in this text, and work them out later.

Re-visiting arte povera

On the level of materiality:

The arte povera **movement** was definitely a moment of redirecting the gaze of the pop art and minimalist strategies to the materiality and the crafting of the art object. Working with materials that were at that point 'unusual' in the arts economy: pieces of wood and stone, debris, 'poor' objects that represented no value whatsoever in the then arts economy. Materiality was as much as possible de-artificialized, in the sense of minimizing the artist's transformational role in dealing with the objects. In other words, in the power relation between the subject artist and the material object, the object gains a voice and is put in the middle of the production of sense. The object speaks at that moment of and in itself, and is not, as in the then popular conceptual gesture - reduced to a logics of mismatching materiality and reference, which is primarily an intellectual endeavor. The arte povera tried to return the arts event to the moment of encounter between the spectator and the object, returning the agency for interpretation and valuing their mutual exchange to both parties. In that sense it was an anti-institutional, anti-capitalist gesture; anti-institutional in the sense it broke with the self-referentiality of art as only referring back to its own history and preconceptions, elasticity and values, and in the anti-capitalist sense as producing objects, made of 'cheap' materials, not laying the emphasis on the big transformational gesture of the artist, not making them part of the economy of objects as it was at the **time**. Of course an arte povera of today has aesthetically not necessarily anything in common with the arte povera of the 60's and 70's. Only in so far as it develops another economy of value of the simplicity of gesture, and the redefinition of production and relationality can my interpretation of arte povera and its historical predecessor be linked.

On the level of economics:

(image: Pistoletto, Venus of the Rags)

Thinking about the capitalist critique of arte povera, for me it is also about showing the artificiality of what we have come to understand as 'nature'. If you look at some of the landscape art works of Robert Smithson (who didn't belong to the arte povera group, but often placed similar works, like the artificial gardens of water parks, in a museum context) the interest for me is not so much in their monumental transcendental power, but rather in the way they blur the boundaries between technology and nature. They make nature visible through artificializing it (making it 'worth looking at') and in that way they also break the self-evident nature of the capitalist valuing of some things as interesting and others as not, and 'naturalizing' this highly ideological framing as the 'common sense' of art production. Arte povera very much questioned this 'common sense', by introducing works that could not be sold, that didn't fit into the gallery of museum, that were falling apart through **time**, and thus could not be collected, etc. It also points out the highly manufactured character of the landscapes that mould our cultural memory, our references and relations, our perception of the world.

On the level of time:

(image: Christian Boltanski, inspired by Pistoletto Venus of the Rags')

Also some of the works introduce a very specific relation to **time**: on the one hand of course the monumental works, but also the works made in the forest, or out in nature, that would take on a quality of **time** out of the logics of effective value distribution and consumption. Often the work is not seen, or only accidentally, or only through its documentation (that can not be sold). It is placing the work and the importance of the act of making it in a logics of **time** that escapes easy recuperation. But on the other hand, the work never loses its artificiality; its arty quality of aesthetics. It never becomes one with its environment.

Or, as Robert Lumley puts it, describing the work of Iannis Kounellis: "Kounellis shifts the frontier of what can be defined as art, but there is never the idea that art should be dissolved into **life**. On the contrary, art is given a new message as a rite of initiation through which to re-experience **life**." (Robert Lumley)

Arte povera in that way was also an attempt to save art from its mere historicity of recognition, and adds indeed an initiation element to it; art as a tool to transform your relation with the environment: reinterpret, rearrange, reframe your 'matrix of understanding' by bringing things together that were not considered to be of the same order (art/debris, art/nature, simplicity/complexity, community/artist genius).

What is kept from the monumentality of the works in the poverty **practices** I am interested in, is not their sheer scale, but the fact that they mark **time**, that they are vessels for memory, that they can not be ignored. If we look at the individual body as a monument (as I try to do), the body becomes a vessel of social memory, a marker of past and ongoing 'wars' (economic wars, gender, wars). The 'object' that cannot be ignored'. It is asking for **attention**. It is always in the way.

(image: Bruce Mc Allister, oil contamination area)

And that brings me to the second part of the question. I would translate the arte povera into a performance **practice**, in which the body becomes the material to work with: it is cheap, is not particularly valued in a society as it is, if not upgraded through fashion of other economic statements of status, beauty, sheer man-power. Using the body opens up a transition zone for experimenting capital/value, the 'common sense' of the community you belong to, reclaiming **time**, etc. (Side remark: today's 'arte povera' for me also exists in the art projects that are somehow biological: growing fields in the city, photographs of oil disasters as paintings, etc.) What is important here are the aesthetics: again it is not about transferring a message, but about opening up a field for transition of ideas. And it is the aesthetic quality of the work that does this: that makes the artificiality of the matrix appear, and suggests another way of constructing reality, of making

life into one's own 'art work', namely a makeable work, a work in transition. The transition being situated in the relation between, in my case, the body of the performer as a marker of the relations that construct it, and the aesthetic gesture that transforms one of these relations and as such also transforms its environment. The poverty **practices** in that sense return the agency to every one of the participants to the aesthetic experience. It is a body marking the process of individuation both as a process of acceptance and of agency. It is the **practice** marking the process of constructing the matrix in relation, rather than proposing a matrix for understanding. It is a **practice** marking the transindividuality of that process, while pointing out its potential of being changed IN the process of becoming aware of what is happening, which happens in the aesthetic **attention** to the situation.

S9 CAMILA TO ANNA

Dear Anna,

Last night we began a conversation regarding your therapy sessions as a bureaucrat and their recordings as part of your corpus of work with this specific persona. I couldn't help but noticing, in the movie, a reversal of the figure of the Head of Department, accompanied by a certain "shrinking" of her image. We discussed a little about our own shared preconceptions regarding therapy but also the position it forces the patient into. Watching the Head of the Department undergo therapy and look confused and troubled made her much less intimidating to me and in many ways powerless (precisely because one of her biggest powers is that of intimidation). I would like to hear more about your choice for this format, since you mentioned yesterday that it enabled you to speak about aspects of your project that you couldn't otherwise. Is this a problem of **knowledge** or is it about the place (or lack of it) for something in a particular universe? What does the gesture of submitting one power to another do to the head of department as a persona and as a project? How do you think the movie would affect the potential applicant's image of the process? Do you believe you still have the same kind of power and do you still believe in what you do or is this something like the Head of Department's retiring plan? How do you feel today, Ms. Sörenson?

Dear Ms. Aschner,

With the therapy I wanted to invite the viewer to identify the problems of the machine via my conversation with Magnus. I think to pose this identity of the bureaucrat in all his/her complexity (human, helpless, stressed, angry, arrogant or elitist) is not about gaining or losing the power of the bureaucrat, but pointing to another problem. I think that the collapse of the machine is actually what makes it work so well. Where the system fails, there is always a person that has to take agency for the problem, solve it, and so the machine continues to work. In the interaction with the system, the frustration and the negotiation with it, it is so hard to see when we cross the line, when we are submitted into the process. When the bureaucrat in the therapy says, "Well, even if the system is not perfect, it is still the only system we have, right"? His/her **sentiment** is "I am filling in the little holes and gaps and so, I can help another person." This act, an act that is quite humane I think, but it is also what is keeping the machine alive. This is also the moment when we all are defeated, or to use the metaphor in the movie, we are all in the "hole" with our shovels, and can't see the whole structure.

I think the therapy format (or the dialogue format) allowed me to expose my inner struggle; the struggle between being (a part of) the system (the bureaucrat) and criticizing it (the therapist or humanist) at the same **time**. In the therapy setting I had the opportunity to be emotional, for me this was important, to be able to contradict, avoid, and be irrational. I believe the machine embodies exactly these problems. It is contradictive, ignorant and irrational, even though it poses like it is not, and this was a way to expose that. So for the bureaucrat to submit to the therapy format was to make another part of the machine visible. I also think that the power relations between the therapist and the patient are another kind of apparatus, where both of them hold different kinds of capital. Power also recognizes power, because it lives in the same system and needs to believe in that system to maintain the particular power. For instance, the State is the overarching power, but it also gives a little bit of power to the people living there in the form of citizenship. Without a state we wouldn't need citizenship, but with the State as the "big power" we are now concerned holding our little power.

With the film as a part of the whole Department and Bureaucracy project I would like to invite the viewer to first build up the image of power and then pick it apart with me. To first recognize the representation, the wall with the watercolors, "Genuine Government Issue," then to submit to it, like the audience do in the interview, "Your Application is Pending," get indexed by it and also lose a part of your identity in "The Analogue Database" and then to see it fall apart in "Therapy with a Bureaucrat." I don't think it is the end of it all, so Ms Sörenson, The Head of the Department, won't retire just yet. As for the questions of her well being she sends you this brief note via telegram from France:

"Dear Ms Aschner STOP The suit is at the drycleaners STOP Gone to the woods STOP Still in full control STOP See you in April STOP Best Regards, Ms Anna Sörenson, Head of Department"

S9 ANNA TO VICTORIA

Dear Victoria,

I was looking at the video you made with your mother and grandmother, when they talk about marriage. I really liked the film in many ways, this certain set of values of a generation and potential differences: this ritual, the marriage, might bring to one's life.

Your camera was retelling their stories. But what about yours?

I don't mean in your private **life**, more your personal values of marriage for your generation. Are you looking at marriage as an archeologist, like a strange ritual that soon will be forgotten in our modern day? Or are you looking for hidden cultural meanings in the Ukrainian marriage ritual? Or the political meanings in marriages over borders?

PS. I am leaving out the silly part of the question I promised you; let's take that one over a glass of wine at PAF instead... DS.

Today I was embroidering my wedding gown in the courtyard. I was thinking about many issues as my needle was shaping the letters, including the question you've asked me. **Sometimes** I was really logical and consistent following the **movement** of the thread, but **sometimes** I jumped from issue to issue as I was moving from letter to the space. Every **time** I was occupying a new space of the tissue with my white silk thread, I intended to grasp a new detail of the unknown cognitive terrain.

Here are some of the notes I managed to remember while embroidering the letters of the final weave. The first letter was

D

Doubt/dichotomy. Doubt is something that encompasses this topic, especially now and especially in this context. Doubt is something the audience is confronted with waiting for the ultimate answer. Is it still actual? Do we still have to believe in dull ceremonies? Damn, just do it and say that this is a rudiment of the previous decades or don't hesitate in criticizing the traditional deviance or demonstrate that you are one of the club. You do like doing it, don't you? Delirious and exotic images don't have to confuse and the letters have to be clear.

Omnipresence of the wedding discourse is obsessive. One cannot omit it. It's overwhelming. Once you are not married, you have to do it in an alternative way. You have to become one, on Facebook, for example. One day you just announce your relationship or just start operating with the term partner. The only change that is visible is subtleness. Over the centuries of the pain of becoming, I have left with this short and senseless quick jump. Short step, so quick and blurry. Not seen to everybody. On the edge of feeling and being dead, it's on the border of being and not being. How do I transgress, how do I feel the effect? Over night or only on occasional moments? Is that an end or beginning? Alpha or omega?

M

Meaning. What on earth does that mean? Mad or marry? To mean or not to mean? Meantime, I am trying to be less political. May I do it by wearing my grandmother's wedding gown and not buying a new one? Am I less political if I don't tell about the division of money between me and my partner? Finally, am I less political by saying partner and not boyfriend and husband?

Moreover, I found out today that the word husband in English is also a verb that means to manage and to economize. For example, you could say I husband my husband; or husband husbands on wives; A girl likes husbanding; Husbanding assets, you'll gain success; etc

OOh, again.

H

Hierarchy. How about placing myself somewhere? Somewhere in a horizontal position... However, I'll never be sure if I am not seen and judged vertically; for example, if I will lie at the foot of the Ukrainian part of the Carpathians I have no guarantees that a random Romanian citizen that looks at me from his/her peak would still think I am in horizontal position? Hopefully, he/she at least sees me and projects the stories about what I am and who he/she is in this totality.

S9 DAMLA TO CAMILA

Dear Camila,

The way you explain your language and your approach to material, for me, corresponds to the notion of cruelty rather than violence. The cruelty whose origins go back to crude, as your choice to present unpolished; or the cruelty of encounter, "of calling thought into question, of attacking thought with problems"*, of "creating gaps" potent anew to emerge; the cruelty as in Artaud's "Theatre of Cruelty" which "must be taken in a broad sense, and not in the rapacious physical sense that it is customarily given. The right to break with the usual sense of language, to crack the armature once and for all, to get the iron collar of its neck, in short to return the etymological origins of speech"***...

Do you think there is such a difference between violence and cruelty, between the content and form of presentation of your research, between the wolf and the Brothers Grimm? Or how do you relate your research to the notion of cruelty as Artaud proposes it?

* Dale, Catherine. "Cruel: Antonin Artaud and Gilles Deleuze." A Shock to Thought: Expression after Deleuze and Guattari. Ed. Brian Massumi. London: Routledge, 2002: 87.

** Artaud, Antonin. The Theater and its Double. Trans. Mary Caroline Richards. New York: Grove Press, 1958: 101.

Dear Damla,

Thank you very much for this question. It touches on very important aspects of my work for many years now. Regarding violence and cruelty, I don't think they are the same thing and therefore believe they are not interchangeable. Although, I do believe they are very much related to each other in the sense both imply some sort of transgression. I regard Artaud's definition of cruelty as very important for the way I structure my project. He proposed cruelty as action, but action in an 'absolute' way, which is creative, transformative, and shocking at the same time (even violent, I would add). Something that is cruel shakes all the fibers of the being. What Artaud called paroxysm of **life** and compared to the effects of the plague in the body; a sort of killing without destroying, which in turn is very similar to Bataille's postulates about expenditure. Both are very related to the notion of sacrifice; the creation or opening of a space for the sacred to emerge. It is within the frame of these definitions I find a space to speak about cruelty in my research. In this way, content and form are indistinguishable from each other; the wolf and the Grimm Brothers are the same character in this story where the boundaries between victims, perpetrators, and witnesses are blurry. Everything that is cruel is violent (in its most transgressive power), but not everything that is violent is cruel (in its most complete way).

S9 VICTORIA TO MALA

Dear Mala,

If we assume that getting married (in particular the ceremony and preparation) is both my **dream** and **nightmare**, could you dance it here for me in any form? Particularly, I am interested in the methodology of the translation of imagination into an image you use in this particular project.

Hugs.

S9 CAMILA TO PHILIPPINE

Dear Philippine,

As I sit down on this beautiful Sunday morning and read through your previous answers in order to find what it was that seemed so urgent for me to ask you, I am reminded that questions have to be asked as soon as they come to mind, so I'll try and do my best to rephrase my thoughts. During Halfway Days you and I had a "silent conversation" about death and doubling. We never, however, talked about the mirror standing behind you on the wall—which was, in fact, the first object you picked for your station, remember? There is a thing about doubling and mirroring that seems to reproduce, to bring up immortality, but then there is a sinister character to this. I shared with you Julio Cortázar's story about the first man who discovers he is mortal when he finds his younger double and watches him die. Borges feared mirrors more than anything and wrote about their sinister character regarding reproduction, the lack of rest, the lie, the reflection. It seems impossible for me to conceive of doubling and mirroring without thinking about death and the urge to overcome it, and then I remember how this all started: your puzzlement in the face of not being able to see yourself perform from the outside. I know you have kept thinking about this throughout the block and I'd like to know how you see this problem now. Lastly, some more Borges; in his lecture on immortality, he claimed that we all are immortal by virtue of the traces we leave behind without knowing. He claims that every action and thought will become part of the "history of the universe" even if we are not aware

of this (to later affirm that it's actually preferable not to know). It is hard to think about this trace (an observable one, even) when one deals with ephemeral "objects" such as performances or reflections on mirrors. How do you measure this trace? Do you believe in it at all? Could this be a solution to your problem?

Hi my dear,

Thanks a million for your Q. To start with, I should like to transcribe part of the notes we made during our silent conversation to which you refer, because we touched on a lot that is relevant for your question.

C: If I found my double, would I see it, would I know?

P: Maybe it isn't a question of could you see it or know but would you choose to: would you want to **acknowledge** yourself (in the other)?

C: Would I be able to watch my double die?

P: (Would I be able not to? Could I look away?) Funny you should ask this, I was **writing** about this yesterday, if the man in the metro who is me dies, what happens to me?

Actually I would say that to **acknowledge** your double, or as I prefer to say, yourself in the other, it is an ending that could be called death. The existence of another version of the self, irrevocably changes the version it was, therefore what was, is gone, this is a kind of death.

C: If my double dies, do I die?

P: Following the same logic: yes.

C: (...) multiplying images in a hall of mirrors... Does having a double make me immortal?

P: Following the same logic, yes.

C: How many **times** would I have to die?

P: Infinitely. (We are always dying).

C: I never found my double.

P: Neither did I: what I found was not my double (in the sense of a physically very similar person.) What I found was a version of me as a middle-aged man, so: a possibility of what I could be, or am.

C: Doubling is death is doubling etc.?

P: Well yes, doubling is an end, a death, the end of what was singularity.

Once there is a plural there can never be singularity again. Or: plurality erases singularity, also retrospectively.

I was talking to friend the other day, who is one half of a pair of identical twins. I asked him if he considers his brother a version of himself. "Yes, absolutely," he said. In fact I even appropriate his history. I tell stories about things he experienced and forget that they happened to him, not me. A similar thing goes for talents and capabilities. There are some things he is really good at that I have somehow imbued into my own self-image. The fact that he can do them serves and suffices for the both of us.

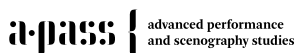
The mirror is both a symbol for doubling and an apparatus with which we can play at doubling, a simulator. Technology offers more sophisticated options like video projections, avatars, etc. These toys and the games we play with them, fascinate me. We play them all the **time** and we play them in earnest. In fact, I am beginning to seriously doubt if there is any difference (that is, any meaningful difference) between game and nongame in this case.

SCORES IN PROCESS

This part of the Scores Publication contains the texts of the a.pass researchers as they were produced over a period of three months:

Ideas get shaped as we progress from week to week; blurry concepts become clear, stable territories deteriorate. From week to week, thoughts travel from one project to the other, misunderstandings prove to be productive, or not...

As an experimental playground for sharing thinking and doing, this part of the book is as messy as it is revealing. Step by step the reader is invited to become part of the researcher's itinerary, its bends and turns, its momentary revelations and recurring blind spots.



This is a publication by the a.pass research centre, created from the Scores Writing practice proposed by associate program coordinator Lilia Mestre during the a.pass block January - May 2014

a.pass (advanced performance and scenography studies) is an international research and training centre for artists and theoreticians, based on the principles of self-organization, collaboration and trans-disciplinarity.

Out of the notions of performativity and the performative space, a.pass offers researchers the possibility to develop their skills as independent artistic researchers in a collective learning environment, constructing their individualized curriculum in constant dialogue with the other inhabitants.

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a.pass is supported by the Vlaamse Gemeenschap

