

PRACTICING INTERSTICES

DEVELOPING TOOLS AND METHODOLOGIES FOR A
DRAMATURGICAL PRACTICE INFORMED BY SOMATICS

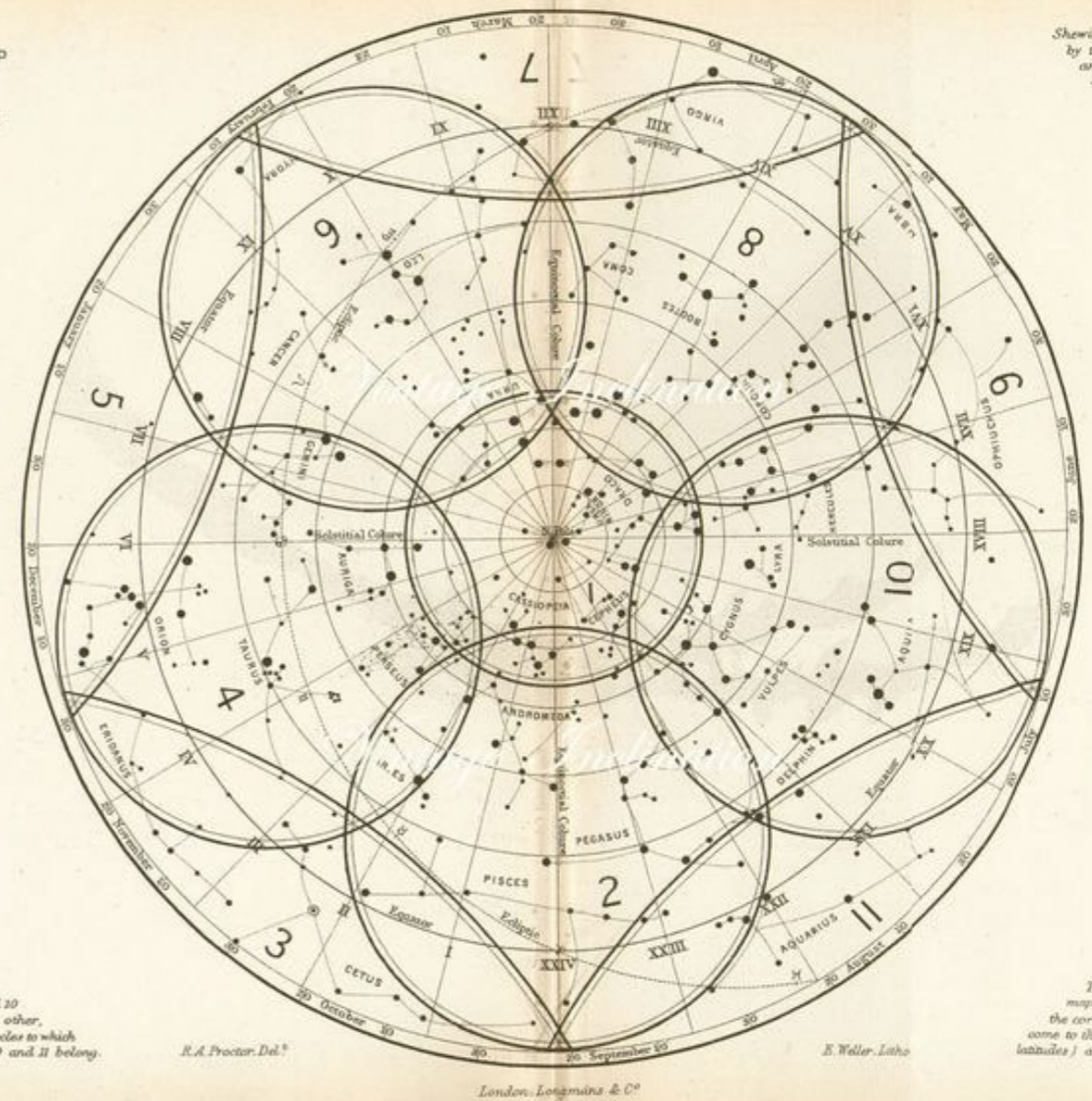
Nassia Fourtouni

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

"I want something I don't yet know."

John Cage

NORTHERN
INDEX MAP
1880
On the Stereographic
Projection



Showing all the space covered
by the six Northern maps,
and those parts of the
Southern maps which lie
North of 11° South Dec.

On the globe the
circles 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10
are equal to each other,
and also to those circles to which
the overlaps, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11 belong.

R.A. Proctor, Del.

E. Weller, Litho

The dates round the
map are those on which
the corresponding meridians
come to the South (in Northern
latitudes) at midnight.

London: Longmans & Co

I came to a pass with a research upon dramaturgical practice with a focus on the initial phase of a creative process, namely the phase where things are not yet shaped, the phase of nothing.

Having in mind the dialogical relationship in which most dramaturgical practices take place, the first scores I developed were about dialogue and conversation. Gradually, the scores and methodologies developed borrowed the form of a somatic lesson.

In my work I bring together text and experiential anatomy, shaping an expanded dramaturgical practice that can vary in form and content depending on the given context. The aim is to facilitate the appearance of embodied aesthetic experience by addressing the inner sense.

The practice manifests in installations, scores and somatic lessons. Also, it functions as a critical commentary on authorship and the seductive power of language, mainly in relation to the use of instructions.

MAKING / CONDITIONS
BLOCK 18/I CURATED BY NICOLAS GALEAZZI

FROM SPEECH TO TOUCH

REVERSE CONVERSATION/ PRESENTATION

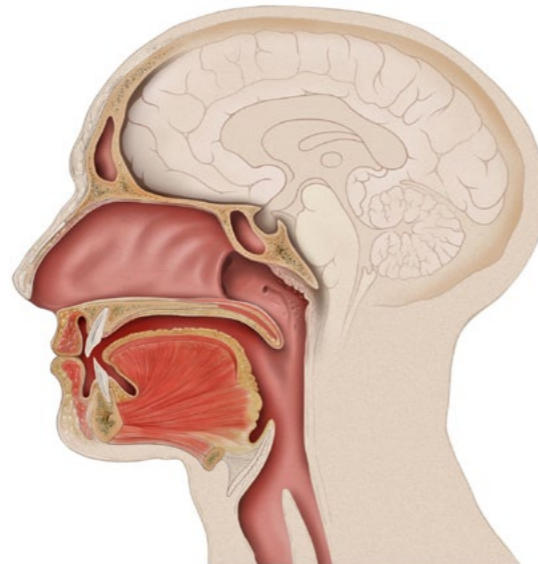
ONE-TO-ONE SOMATIC LESSON ON ARTISTIC RESEARCH

SCORE ON TOUCH, INTERRUPTION AND CONVERSATION

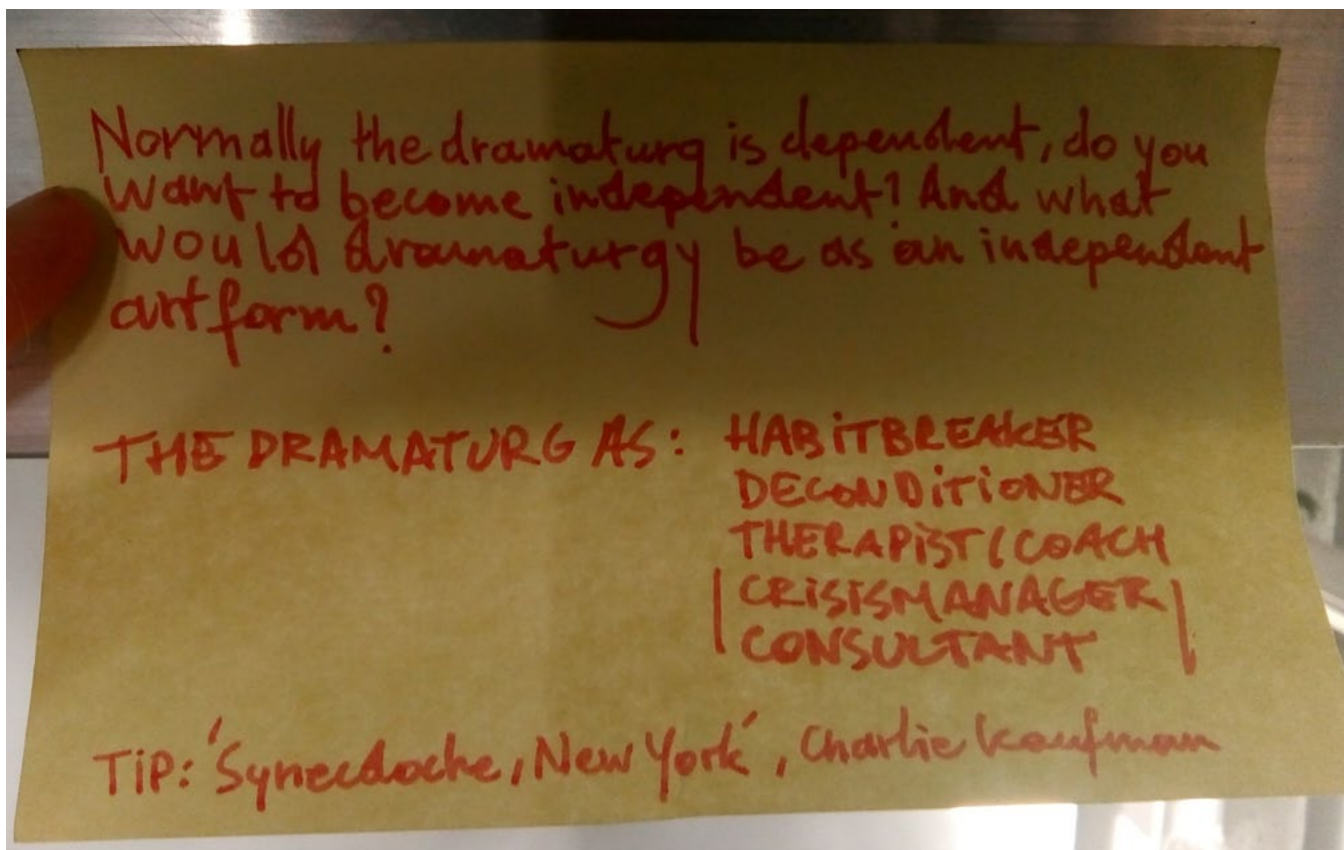
REVERSE CONVERSATION / PRESENTATION

January 2018, (a.pass)

a.) What are the 'assets' of your research? What are the material or immaterial things, that you have at hand for your research.



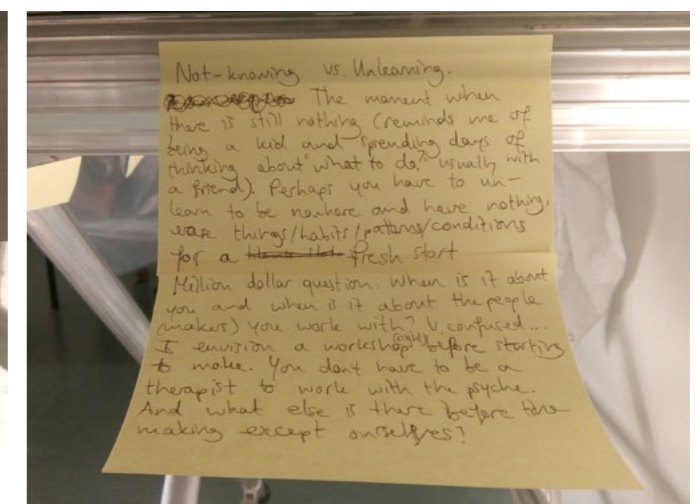
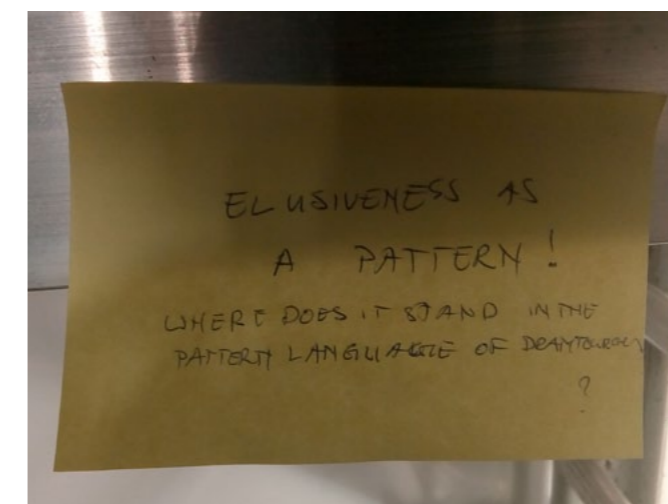
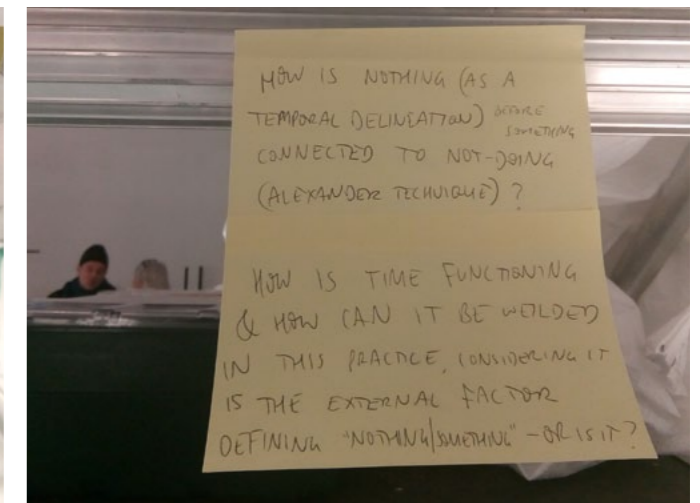
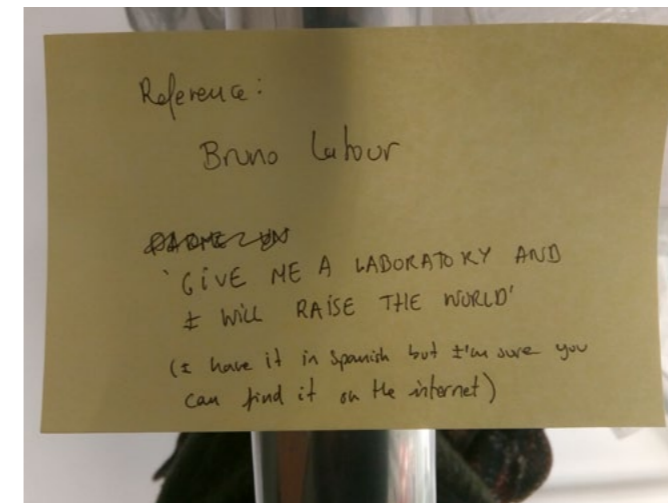
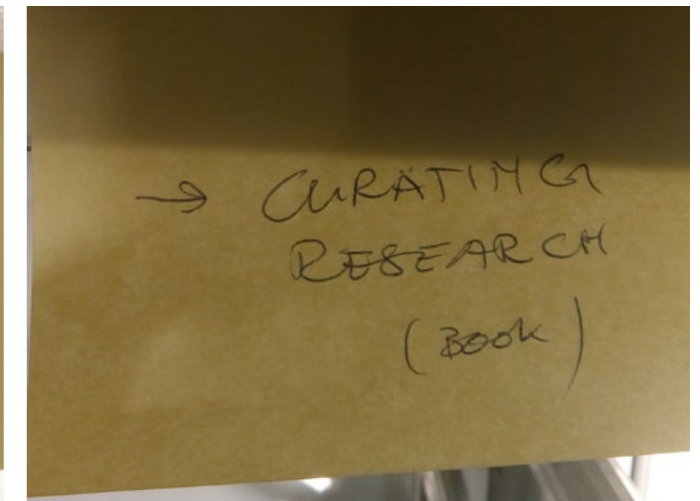
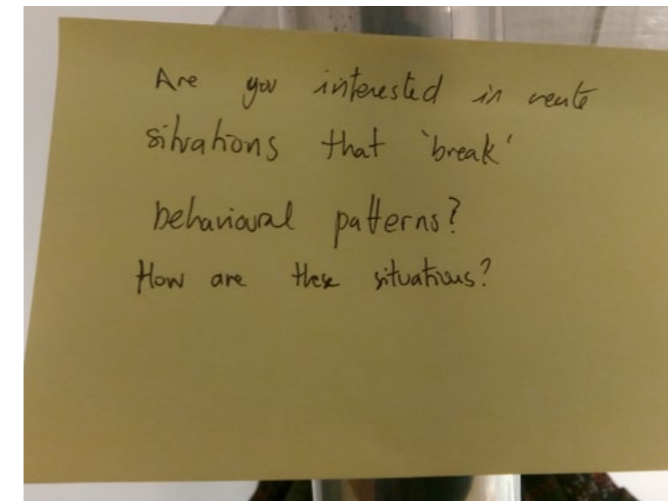
b.) What are the needs and problems of your research? The material of immaterial things, that you don't have them yet in your hands.



6 - from speech to touch

Instead of focusing my presentation on myself speaking and explaining my project, I proposed a reverse conversation/ presentation. The only info I gave was that I am developing a research on my dramaturgical practice. Then, I invited the group to ask me questions about it. The main idea was to start from a place of not knowing and see what kind of conversation this tool would generate. What I wanted to avoid, was to guide the conversation. It was an attempt to equalize the conversation among the people in the group. I answered all the questions but, unfortunately, I didn't record it.

Below, you can see photos from the feedbacks after the presentation.



7 - from speech to touch

ONE-TO-ONE SOMATIC LESSON ON ARTISTIC RESEARCH

March 2018, (a.pass)

A first attempt on hybridization of somatics and dramaturgical practice.

A first attempt on horizontality (experimenting with a 90 degrees displacement of the person receiving the somatic lesson)

Soft touch and manipulation of the body parts by myself.
Instructions on the use of the eyes and observing the breath.
Observing the traveling of the gaze.

Important notes:

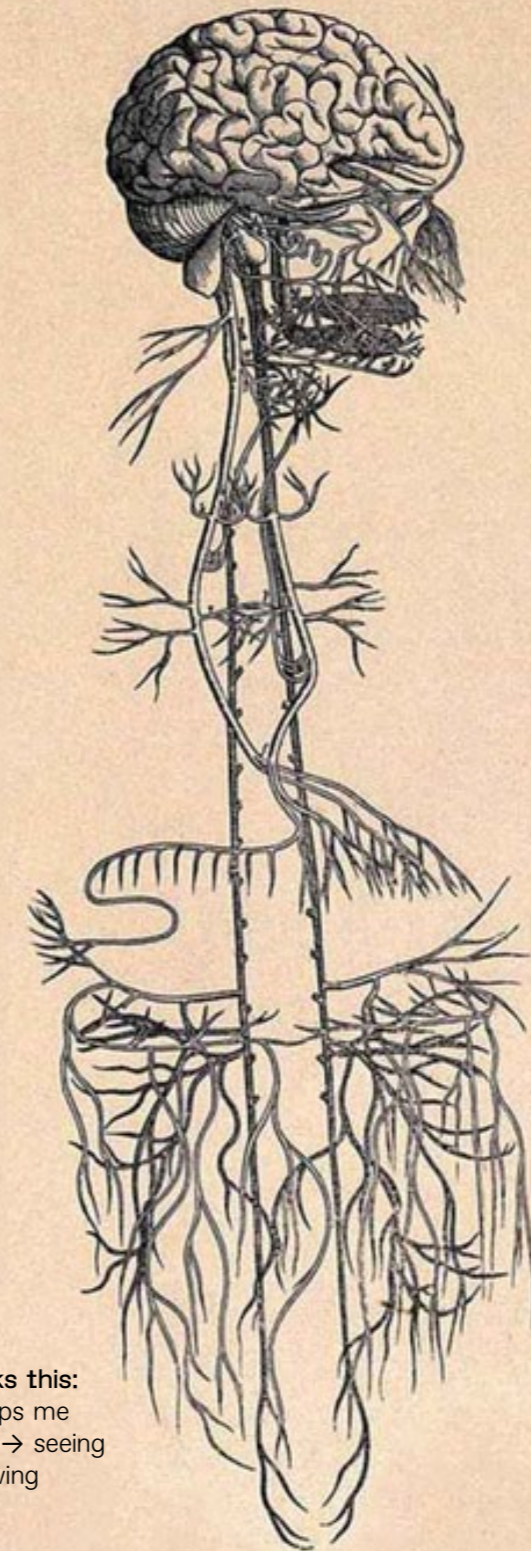
- Agreement on the confidentiality of the content of the conversation.
- I asked for written feedback afterwards, only for personal use, not for sharing with others.

Thoughts I had after this experience:

Thinking about fake therapy.

To still keep the research question open.

To develop these ideas while keeping the complexity.



I found in one of my notebooks this:
"The attitude of the unknown helps me
discover the dancer-dramaturg". → seeing
my practice as a kind of de-knowing

SCORE ON TOUCH, INTERRUPTION & CONVERSATION

April 2018, (PAF)

Score on touch, interruption and conversation

- In couples.
- Time is set.
- Pauses are set → so they can cause interruptions

First part:

- One person is lying on a mat and the other is giving them information through touch.
- 5 minutes of shaking the torso - 1 minute of doing nothing.
- 5 minutes of manipulating the head - 1 minute of doing nothing.
- 5 minutes of manipulating the arms and the legs - 1 minute of doing nothing.

Second part:

- Same order but the person receiving talks in - Stream of consciousness on habits in relation to artistic research.
- Exchange roles for both parts.

General instructions:

- Direct your attention to the part that is touched without losing the sense of your whole body.
- Observe the relationship to your breath - speak in exhalation.

Context:

- Habitual posture is related to habitual action.
- Husserl's concept: "epoché" → stopping the flow of habitual thoughts and belief structures long enough to perceive the phenomena of the present moment.



Instructions for the feedback

- 8 minutes talking, 2 minutes pause (three times)

**MILIEUS, ASSOCIATIONS, SIEVES AND OTHER
MATTERS...**

BLOCK 18/II CURATED BY PIERRE RUBIO

FROM TOUCH TO TEXT

TRAINS OF THOUGHT N°2

WHAT CANNOT BE SAID / SCORE ON SILENCE

NEITHER DISTANCE, NOR EMPATHY READING SCORE

WALK IN THE FOREST

TRAINS OF THOUGHT N°2

May 2018, (a.pass)



Guidelines:

- 1) This text will be performed in some kind of slow motion/slowness. There will be silences too.
- 2) I invite you to close your eyes. I will let you know when to open them.
- 3) And observe your body while listening. Ground your attention on your sensations. Imagine yourself as being seen from the outside. Observe without correcting.

(...)

Somebody said:

Reality is a very subjective affair. I can only define it as a kind of gradual accumulation of information; and as specialization. You can know more and more about one thing but you can never know everything about one thing: it's hopeless. So that we live surrounded by more or less ghostly objects.

(...)

Now think of your neck. Where does your head end and where does your neck begin? Can you be specific about that?

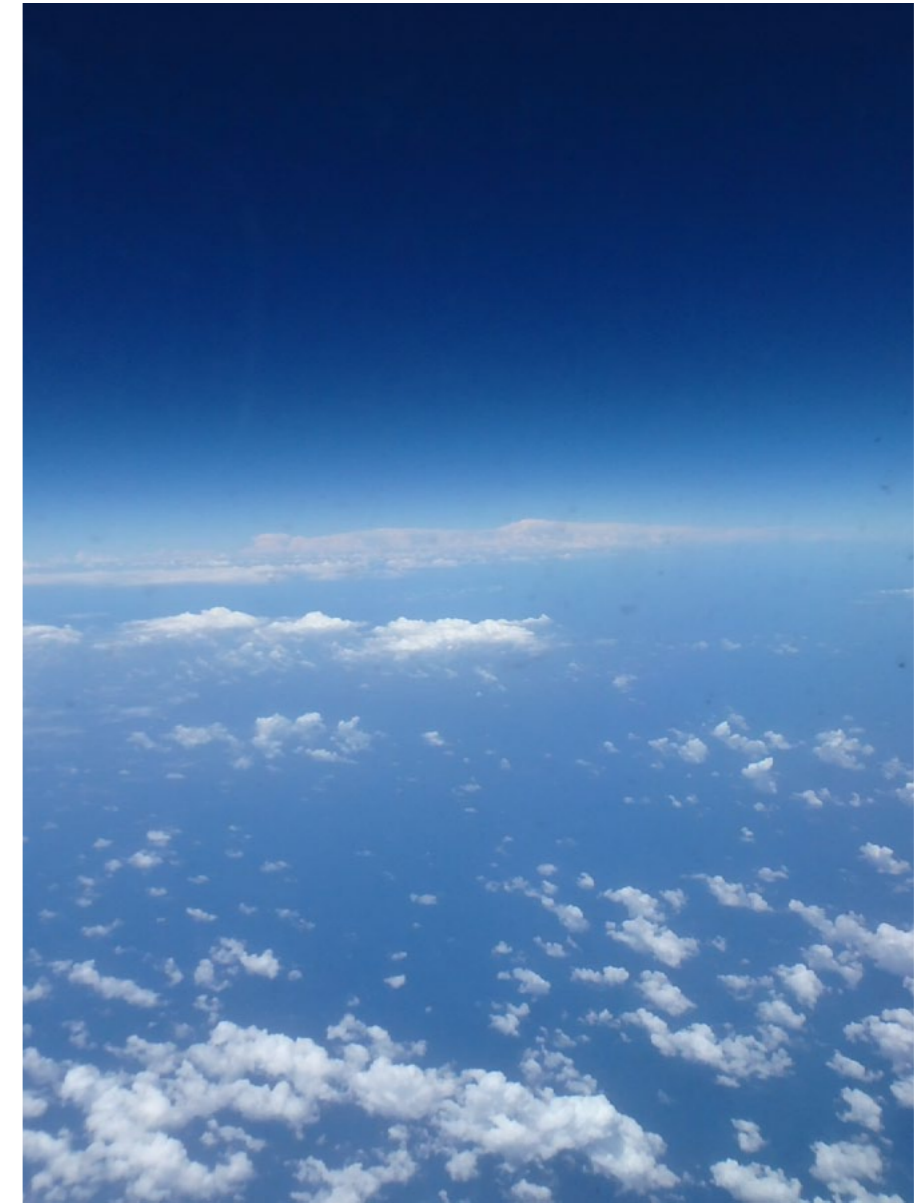
(Silence)

Now observe your breathing. Its rhythm. Is it possible to observe it without changing it?

(Silence)

(...)

Somebody told me that Freud had a difficulty in looking his patients in the eyes, and for that reason he decided to ask them to lie down while narrating their stories. And that was the beginning of psychoanalysis



I keep thinking about that.

Is there a problem or a difficulty I have in practicing what I want to do that led me in dealing with it in such a manner?

Now travel with your attention towards your pelvis. Is the pelvis part of your torso or part of your legs?

(...)

Somebody said:

We are creatures of habit; given a blank we can't help trying to fill it in along lines of customary seeing or saying. But the best poetic lines undermine those habits, break the pre- off the - dictable, unsettle the suburbs of your routine sentiments, and rattle the tracks of your trains of thought.

Now think of your eyes. Can you soften your eyes? There are muscles around the eyes too.

Somebody said:

"There was already a space. I thought «Why do I have to manipulate it? Why am I to put things in it? Why things? Why change it?» If making things means adding human force, no, that's not what I am doing. What does it mean, for me, to co-exist with the already existing things, to co-exist with what had existed, and what has not existed yet but might?"

Now I would like to ask you to think of the following question:

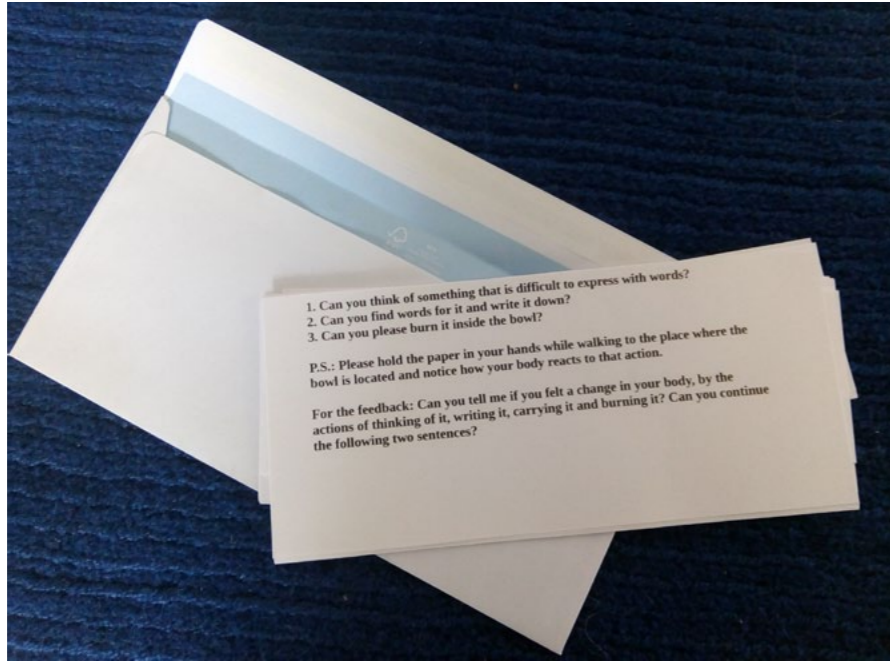
What is the opposite for a body? Try to find a word. You can share it with me at the pad.

* Open your eyes.

* In case you want to know who said what, ask me :-)

WHAT CANNOT BE SAID / SCORE ON SILENCE

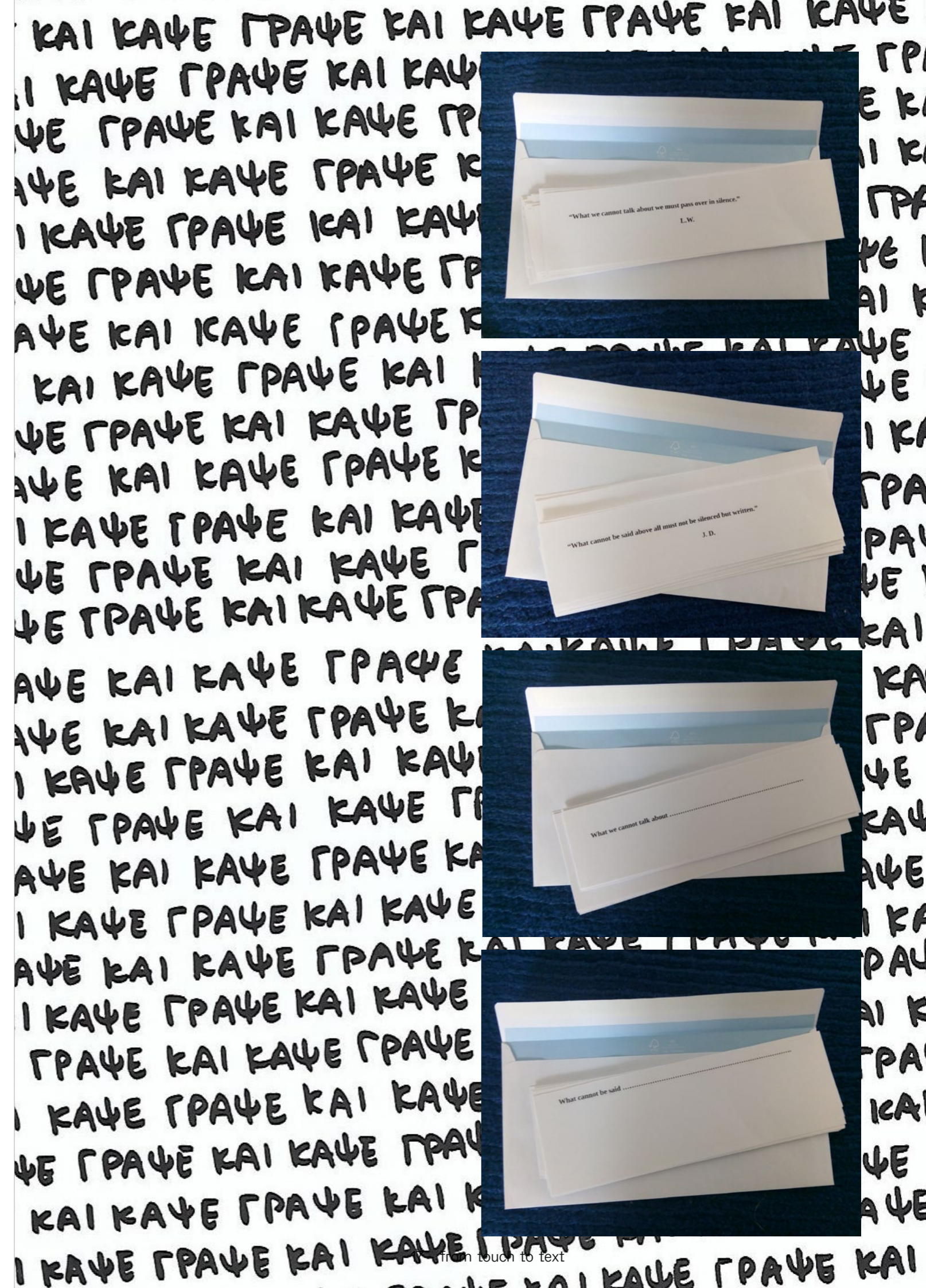
June 2018, Zsenne ArtLab



1. Can you think of something that is difficult to express with words?
2. Can you find words for it and write it down?
3. Can you please burn it inside the bowl?

P.S.: Please hold the paper in your hands while walking to the place where the bowl is located and notice how your body reacts to that action.

For the feedback: Can you tell me if you felt a change in your body, by the actions of thinking of it, writing it, carrying it and burning it? Can you continue the following two sentences? (optional)



NEITHER DISTANCE, NOR EMPATHY READING SCORE

June 2018, (a.pass)

Score about reading:

How to Talk About the Body?

The Normative Dimension of Science Studies

by Bruno Latour



Part A: Preparation for the reading

1. Intro - imaginary door
2. Explanation on constructive rest
3. Reading backwards - standing - in couples (explain who holds the paper)
4. Reading backwards - in constructive rest - in couples (<<)

Part B: Reading

5. Normal reading - in couples - change roles every 10 minutes

Options (during reading, for the one who reads): i) rest and digest for 2 min (card)*

- ii) change location in space
- iii) choose a non-habitual position to read
- iv) choose the volume of your voice
- v) repeat something from the text

(<<, for the one who listens): i) rest and digest for 2 min (card)*

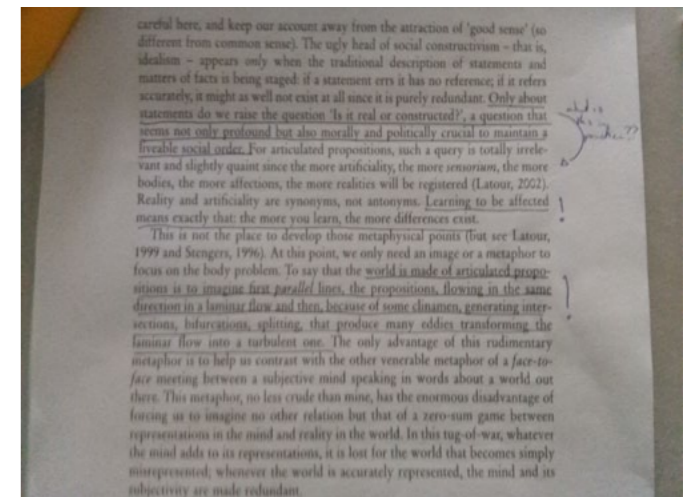
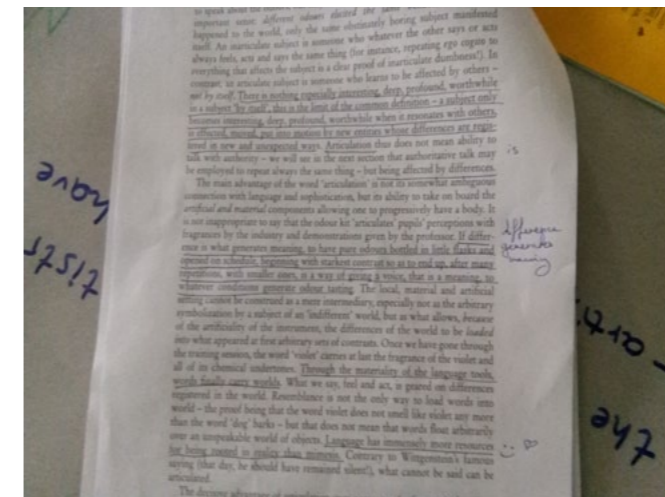
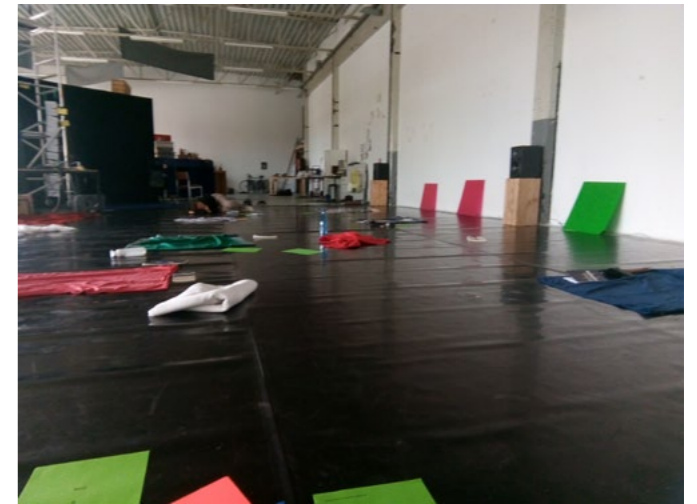
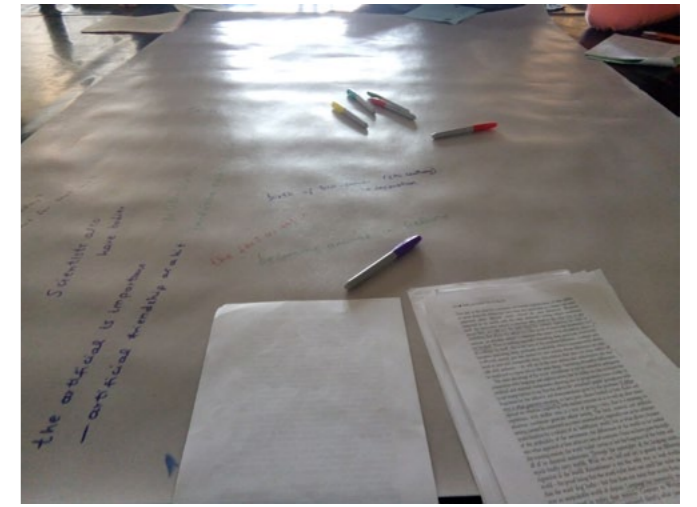
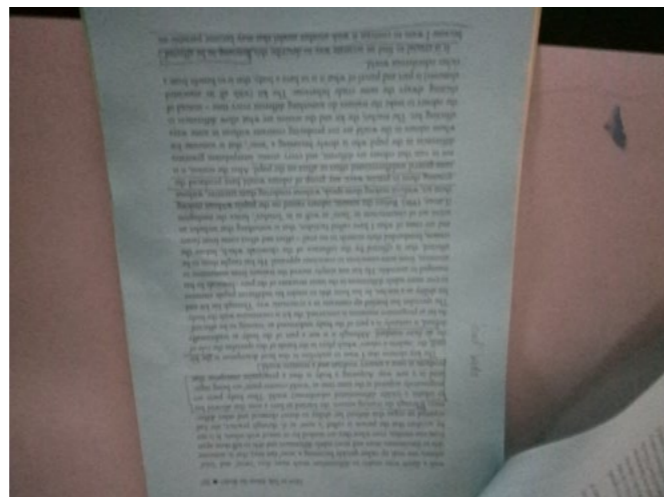
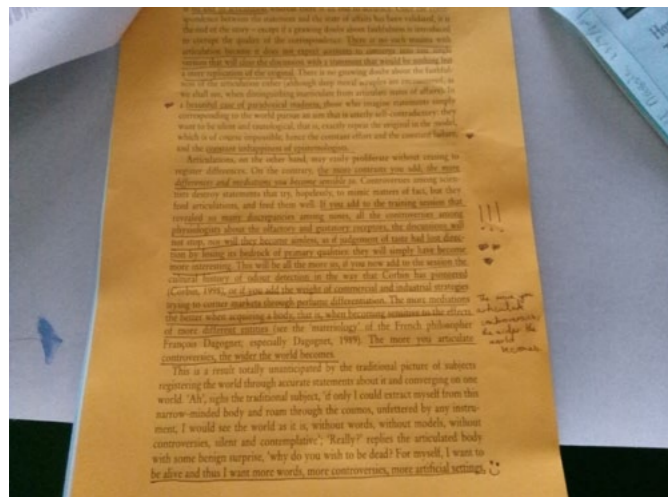
- ii) eyes open or eyes closed
- iii) choose a non-habitual position to listen
- iv) ask to repeat something from the text

6. Silent reading (to oneself) - Underline the excerpts you find a connection to your practice or artistic practice in general

7. Discussion - reading of the chosen excerpts

*When the one who listens chooses to use the card 'rest and digest', the other person has to stop reading.

Important reference: *Francisco Varela and The Gesture of Awareness: a new direction in cognitive science and its relevance to Alexander Technique*, by Rachel Zahn



WALK IN THE FOREST

July 2018, (PAF)

Score on walking & reading:

Social Choreography: Ideology as performance in dance and everyday movement

by Andrew Hewitt

Important reference:

Deep Listening: A Composer's Sound Practice

by Pauline Oliveros (p. 20, Extreme Slow Walk exercise)



This is a map for today's walk:

- It is divided in five parts - with four pauses inbetween.
- The score is a suggestion to do altogether.
- If, at any point, you feel that it is difficult to follow the score, stop for a bit, walk as you want and start again.
- If you are in couples, communicate your needs.
- For our return from the forest back to PAF: Normal walk, as you want. When you want, try to walk like sb else from the group. Do it for a bit, then go back to your walk, then pick up another person, etc.
- * Instructions for the extreme slow walk: Move as slow as possible, step forward with the heel to the ground first, let the weight of the body shift along the outside edge of the foot to the small toe and across to the large toe. As the weight of the body fully aligns with that foot, then begin the transition of shifting to the other foot. Small steps are recommended as balance may be challenged. Maintain good posture, with shoulders relaxed and head erect. Use your breathing. The challenge for this exercise is that no matter how slow you are walking, you can always go much slower.

Suggested score:

- Extreme slow walk *
- (in couples) Walking with eyes closed [one person walks with eyes closed and the other takes care of them]
- (in couples) Walking backwards with eyes open [one person walks backwards and the other takes care of them]
- Normal walking
- You are inside the forest now. Find your tree and stay there for the reading of the text. There will be a pause for doing nothing for 5 minutes every 15 minutes.

PAF

Walking with sb plus reading

Big road

FOREST

PAUSE

PAUSE

PAUSE

horses

REST and DIGEST

DEGREES OF LIBERATION

TIME PASSING DIFFERENTLY

SOMATIC APPROACH

EMPATHY

DISTANCE

NEITHER NOR

PREPARATION

DOOR

DELAY / SLOWING DOWN

NON-HABITUAL

SILENCE / INTERRUPTION

HABIT

UNLEARNING

BACKWARDS

WALKS

READING SCORE

DREAM

THE THING IS STRONGER THAN



20 - from touch to text

2

Stumbling and Legibility

GESTURE AND THE DIALECTIC OF TACT

... the most general of the senses. We could well see or hear with just one small part of the body, but in order not to be automata that can be destroyed or dismantled without even noticing it, we require the sense of touch in all parts of the body.

[... la sensation la plus générale. Nous pouvions bien ne voir ou n'entendre, que par une petite portion de notre corps, mais il nous falloit du sentiment dans toutes les parties pour n'être pas des automates, qu'on auroit démontés et détruits, sans que nous eussions pu nous en apercevoir.]
—Chevalier de Jaucourt, "Le Tact," in *Encyclopédie*

Having suggested in previous chapters ways in which social choreography informed the project of nineteenth-century aesthetic socialism, I now wish to locate such social visions within a broader Enlightenment tradition of thinking about the relation of the physical body to the body politic. That is, here I will begin to examine the choreographic in its second dimension—as not only a disposition of bodies in social space but as a way of educating the individual body in its experience of itself and in its movement toward language as an expression of that experi-

Stumbling and Legibility 79

ence. In terms of the "aesthetic continuum" outlined in the introduction, I will examine the threshold at which the aesthetic in the most fundamental sense (as sensory experience) passes over into "the aesthetic" in the more limited sense—as a socially endorsed framing of the sensual. Thus I will address physical movements that would not ordinarily fall under the rubric of choreography in the more limited aesthetic sense in order to examine the way in which bodily experience prefigures and prepares for the Enlightenment subject's passage into language. While my consideration of the body will constantly parallel an Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment reflection on writing and legibility, it is my contention that the possibility of "reading the body" has always been posited only in retrospect—as a utopian originary moment in which meaning was supposedly immanent, embodied, and uncomplicated by its social situation. I will argue that over the course of the nineteenth century repeated attempts were made to subject the body to a specific regime of legibility in continuance of an Enlightenment hermeneutic tradition.

By and large, these attempts—which built on the pseudoscience of eighteenth-century physiognomy—succeeded in suppressing a more radical strain of thought that recognized both the contingent nature of the body's movements and the importance of aesthetic criteria in establishing a social choreography. I do not, then, offer here a chapter that "reads the nineteenth-century body," but rather one that seeks both to locate the very possibility of bodily reading historically and to reexamine moments of critical stumbling in that hermeneutic. I will argue for a "dialectic of tact," in which social choreography is presented as a necessary accommodation to the state of a society fallen from grace (or self-immanence). This fantasized state of grace—the originary moment of true and immanent democracy—was figured as a situation in which the direct physical communication of members of a community with each other was still possible.

The pivotal figure in this chapter is the nineteenth-century French theorist of theatrical deportment and declamatory gesture, François Delsarte, who built on a tradition of speculation about the body's relation to language in order to develop a systematic study of physical deportment and public speaking that was immensely influential for the body consciousness of the educated middle class in Europe and America.¹ As a figure who fuses the taxonomic zeal of the encyclopedist with

21 - from touch to text

SETTLEMENT / UNSETTLED STUDY
BLOCK 19/I CURATED BY VLADIMIR MILLER

FROM TEXT TO SPACE

PERCEPTION IS READING

15 MINUTES OF HORIZONTALITY

TACTILE AUDIO TOUR

PERCEPTION IS READING

January 2019, (a.pass)

SCORE ABOUT THE SETTLEMENT

Perception is reading*
(score on looking)

Note: In relation to the current settlement, the present score was composed aiming on combining eye exercises, writings on observation and implying dramaturgical practice as a mode of looking (Maaïke Bleeker)

Part A: Somatic reading of 'The Observer and the Observed' (chapter from the book 'On Dialogue' by David Bohm and an excerpt from Georges Perec's 'Species of Spaces')

1. Constructive rest (eyes open, 15 min)
(with my instructions concerning the eyes)
2. Reading to oneself -in constructive rest 'The Observer and the Observed'
- pauses of 5 minutes to do nothing
- interruptions of my voice giving instructions for the eyes
3. Reading Perec's excerpts, free position: standing, sitting, walking, lying on the floor, etc.

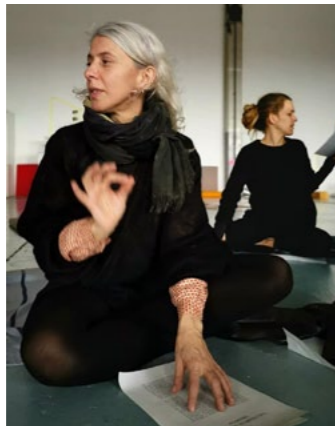
At your own timing, you choose when you suspend reading and do the following actions in a row:

- i) looking outside the window
- ii) staring at a specific point in space
- iii) eyes wandering in space
- iv) look at somebody in the eyes
- v) looking behind yourself
- vi) close your eyes
- vii) looking at the ceiling

(all actions happen for as long as you want)

- whenever and if you want you go back to constructive rest

* quote by Walter Benjamin



The space of our lives is neither continuous, nor infinite, nor homogeneous or isotropic. But do we know exactly where it breaks off, where it curves, where it disconnects and comes together? We confusedly experience cracks, gaps and points of friction, sometimes vaguely aware that something is stuck, that it breaks loose or collides. Though we seldom seek to learn more about it and more often than not, wander from one spot to another, from one space to another, without measuring, without taking into account or considering the course of space. The issue is not to invent space and certainly not to re-invent it (too many well-intentioned individuals are already there to reflect upon our environment...), the problem is rather to question space, or more exactly, to read space; for what we call everydayness is not the obvious, but opacity: a kind of blindness, or deafness, a sort of anesthesia.

From these elementary findings the book develops, the diary of a user of space.

Georges Perec, "Prière d'insérer", *Espèces d'espaces*
Species of Spaces. 1974.

Space

We use our eyes for seeing. Our field of vision reveals a limited space, something vaguely circular, which ends very quickly to left and right, and doesn't extend very far up or down. If we squint, we can manage to see the end of our nose; if we raise our eyes, we can see there's an up, if we lower them, we can see there's a down. If we turn our head in one direction, then in another, we don't even manage to see completely everything there is around us; we have to twist our bodies round to see properly what was behind us.

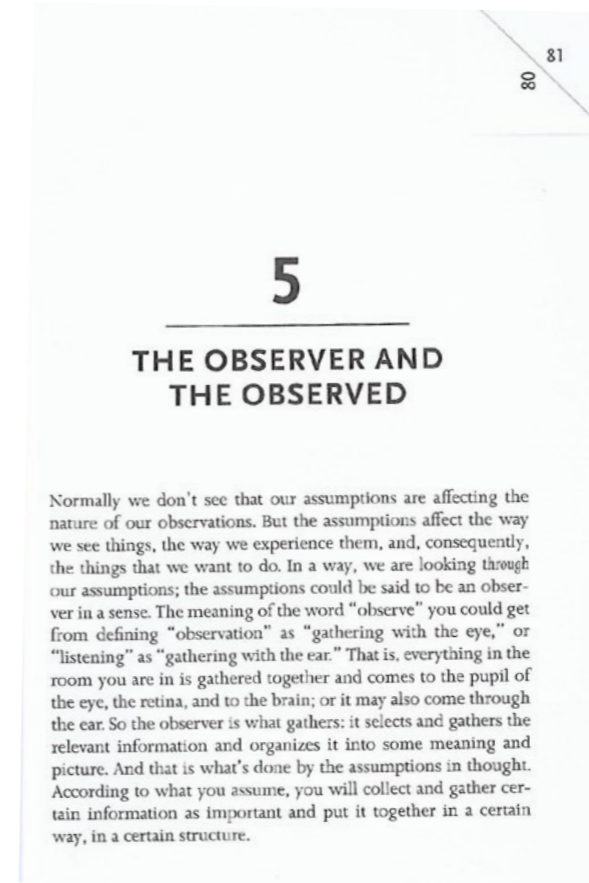
Our gaze travels through space and gives us the illusion of relief and distance. That is how we construct space, with an up and a down, a left and a right, an in front and a behind, a near and a far.

When nothing arrests our gaze, it carries a very long way. But if it meets with nothing, it sees nothing, it sees only what it meets. Space is what arrests our gaze, what our sight stumbles over: the obstacle, bricks, an angle, a vanishing point. Space is when it makes an angle, when it stops, when we have to turn for it to start off again. There's nothing ectoplasmic about space; it has edges, it doesn't go off in all directions, it does all that needs to be done for railway lines to meet well short of infinity.

On Straight Lines

If I mend at this rate, it is not impossible... but I may arrive hereafter at the excellency of going on even thus:

which is a line drawn as straight as I could draw it by a writing-master's ruler...



Normally we don't see that our assumptions are affecting the nature of our observations. But the assumptions affect the way we see things, the way we experience them, and, consequently, the things that we want to do. In a way, we are looking through our assumptions; the assumptions could be said to be an observer in a sense. The meaning of the word "observe" you could get from defining "observation" as "gathering with the eye," or "listening" as "gathering with the ear." That is, everything in the room you are in is gathered together and comes to the pupil of the eye, the retina, and to the brain; or it may also come through the ear. So the observer is what gathers: it selects and gathers the relevant information and organizes it into some meaning and picture. And that is what's done by the assumptions in thought. According to what you assume, you will collect and gather certain information as important and put it together in a certain way, in a certain structure.

You could imagine a television program on the observer and the observed. There would be one person who would be the observer, and the other would be the observed. They would go through all the motions, so that one was quite carefully looking at the other, and the other was somewhat uncomfortable being looked at. You would get a feeling that the observer was looking at the observed. That's just the sort of thing going on in the mind: thought is producing an image of an observer and an image of the observed, and it's attributing itself to a thinker who is producing the thought and doing the observing. It's also attributing its being to the observed at the same time, just as we do ordinarily with regard to the body.

Just as I can observe the room that I am in, I can observe my body. But I also know that I am my body, and I experience this in another way, through sensations. This experience is then reproduced inwardly, through imagination and fantasy, as the observer and the observed. And as with the body, this is felt to be reality, the reality of the self.

This is a suggestion as to how it may work - that thought has come to attribute itself to an image of an observer, a thinker. This gives it much greater authority, because it has then apparently come from a being who should know what to think. On the other hand, if it's just going mechanically, it might have no more significance than a computer. But if you imagined there was a little being inside the computer, this too would take on much greater authority.

Consider the case of a blind man and his stick. If he holds the stick tightly when he is tapping, he feels the stick is "me" - he feels that he contacts the world at the end of the stick. If he holds the stick loosely, the stick is not me, but my hand is me. But then he may think, "My hand is not me, I want to move 'my' hand." Therefore, there is something further inside that is still me, which is moving my hand. He keeps going more and more inward, taking off more and more, and saying, "That's not me,

Therefore, the assumptions are functioning as a kind of observer. When we observe we forget that, and we are looking without taking that into account. But this "observer" profoundly affects what it is observing, and is also affected by what it is observing - there is really very little separation between them. If the emotions are what are being observed, then the "observing" assumptions are profoundly affected by the emotions, and the emotions are profoundly affected by the assumptions. On the other hand, if you say the emotions are the observer, and are determining the way things are organized, then the assumptions will be the observed. Either way, the observed is profoundly affected by the observer, and the observer by the observed - they really are one cycle, one process. The separation between them is not very significant.

If, on the other hand, I observe a chair on the other side of the room, what's going on in me is not very much affected by the chair; and what's going on in the chair is not profoundly affected by me. We could say in that case that the observer is significantly different from the observed. But when looking at your emotions or looking at your thoughts, that cannot be the case. Similarly, when looking at society or looking at another person, what you see depends on your assumptions, and you will get an emotional reaction from that person which enters you and affects the way you see.

Therefore, at a certain stage the distinction between the observer and the observed cannot be maintained, or as Krishnamurti used to say, the observer is the observed. If you don't put the two together, the observer and the observed - if you don't put the assumptions together with the emotions - then the whole thing will be wrong. If I say I am going to look into my mind but I don't consider my assumptions, then the picture is wrong because the assumptions are looking. That is a common problem of introspection. You say, "I am going to look at myself inwardly," but the assumptions are not looked at - the assumptions are looking



that's not me - I am going to look at these things, they are not essential to 'me.' And he may get the feeling of the internal organs, the sense of the muscles, and think, "They are not me - I am just looking somewhere inside." And he could go on, peeling off the layers of the onion until he got to the very essence, the center, which at some point would really be "me." At some point he would say, "There must be some essential innermost 'me' that sort of looks at everything." That's the way people are thinking - everybody feels that way.

I am suggesting, however, that thought is a system belonging to the whole culture and society, evolving over history, and it creates the image of an individual who is supposed to be the source of thought. It gives the sense of an individual who is perceived and experienced. This would be conducive to the next step, which is for thought to claim that it only tells you the way things are and then the individual inside decides what to do with the information - he chooses. This is the picture which emerged gradually; thought tells you the way things are, and then "you" choose how to act from that information.

You may look at this and try to reason and see what is wrong. You begin to doubt, saying, "Whatever is behind this is doubtful." But very often, the first questions you ask will contain the very presupposition that should be doubted. As an example, I may question some belief, but I may question it through what amounts to another belief. So you have to be sensitive to the whole of what you are doing. What happens is that it seems that there is a "doubter" who doubts. Somewhere "back in the back" is somebody who is observing what is wrong, but he is not being observed. The very "wrong" things which he should be looking at are in the one who is looking, because that is the safest place to hide them. Hide them in the looker, and the looker will never find them.

15 MINUTES OF HORIZONTALITY

March 2019, (a.pass)

The idea is the following:
everybody is in horizontal position with eyes open
me too
and I start speaking
mentioning
as many notions as possible
in relation to my research
an imaginary journey
from one concept to the other

My research is about:

- horizontality/ horizontal bodies
- authorship
- manipulation/ seduction of words
- perception of one's body in space

While writing this, I remembered a quote by Deleuze, that speaking is dirty, whereas writing is clean.

I wrote that text

But now I am saying it

I consciously chose the first time slot cause the earliest it is during the day, the less control we have. But it could be also the last time slot of the day, because the more tired we are the less control we have. I mean, in terms of revealing habits.

Draw your attention towards your wrists.

Draw your attention towards your ankles.

Direct your attention towards your neck.

The wrists and the ankles are the necks of the hands and the feet.

If the neck is relaxed, then they are relaxed and vice versa.

Recently, I am trying to think of my dramaturgical practice as a craft
to think of the materials and how they are used
is it thinking
is it writing

guide your attention towards your neck

space
movement
mediation

reading of texts
scores
sensorial experience

logocentric or not

non-doing

questions/
affirmations

what is my speech doing
what does it promise
(a reference to Shoshana Felman)

conversational hypnosis
sounds dangerous
but it is related to NLP that is considered
pseudo-science by many
should I take it seriously?

Maybe what I do is fake too
some kind of fake therapy

But I know I am interested in
conversation/
dialogue/
silence



Initially my project in a pass was more directed to conversation but lately it seems that I am the only one speaking. The use of voice in somatics is something I should research in depth.

to be able to differentiate
to recognize the force of habit

awareness/
breathing/
posture/
directions/
thinking/
proprioception

In Somaesthetics, Professor Schusterman...

The question of the public
Whom am I addressing?

Somebody said that dramaturgical practice and somatic practice

are practices of mediation

And I see myself as a mediator
But, what is a mediated body?

And what is the notion of landscape in my body?

In the end, it is about making decisions on space, time, movement

This is first sketch on what I am planning to do in Kanal - a somatic practice on the relationship between hands and making.

Richard Sennet (excerpt from "The Craftsman")

Thinking and feeling are contained within the process of making. [...] Every good craftsman conducts a dialogue between concrete practices and thinking; this dialogue evolves into sustaining habits and these habits establish a rhythm between problem solving and problem finding. [...] There is nothing mindlessly mechanical about technique itself. Western civilization has had a deep-rooted trouble in making connections between head and hand. [...]

You Begin Margaret Atwood

You begin this way:
this is your hand,
this is your eye,
that is a fish, blue and flat
on the paper, almost
the shape of an eye.
This is your mouth, this is an O
or a moon, whichever
you like. This is yellow.

Once you have learned these words
you will learn that there are more
words than you can ever learn.
The word hand floats above your hand
like a small cloud over a lake.
The word hand anchors
your hand to this table,
your hand is a warm stone
I hold between two words.

Outside the window
is the rain, green
because it is summer, and beyond that
the trees and then the world,
which is round and has only
the colors of these nine crayons.

This is your hand, these are my hands,
this is the world,
which is round but not flat and has
more colors
than we can see.

This is the world, which is fuller
and more difficult to learn than I have said.
You are right to smudge it that way
with the red and then
the orange: the world burns.

It begins, it has an end,
this is what you will
come back to, this is your hand.

TACTILE AUDIO TOUR

March 2019, (Performatik / Kanal Pompidou)

“Tactile Audio Tour” is a recorded score that invites its audience to dis-cover the space we currently (co)inhabit. Provided individually via headphones, spoken instruction will facilitate a walk in the space, focusing on the use of hands and eyes, on the notion of craft and on looking as making.

Duration: 15 minutes

Voice: Philipp Gehmacher

Excerpt used: The strange order of things: Life, Feeling, and the Making of Cultures by Antonio Damasio



Tactile Audio Tour score

Welcome to this 'Tactile Audio Tour'.

This voice invites you through imaginary and actual walks in and through this space. Sometimes I will ask you to actually walk through space, sometimes just to imagine walking.

There is no right or wrong way to do this.

The track includes pauses but feel free to have a pause in your own time.

Scan the space and choose a distant point across this space. Now imagine yourself walking till that point without actually doing it.

Now look behind you for a second.

Now imagine yourself walking slowly through space, as precisely as possible, without doing it. Just imagine your body moving in this space.

Let it go and look behind you.

You can start walking in the space now - the route you previously imagined.

Imagine that instead of two arms and two legs, you have four arms. Imagine yourself walking with four arms through this space without doing it.

(Pause)

Choose any direction and walk normally in space.

While walking, direct your attention to your hands.

Bring your fingertips together. Do it a few times and let it go.

“Most animals walk on all four limbs, so they have four legs, not two legs and two arms”. Only humans, primates, and a few other creatures have structures that can be called ‘hands’, and so humans are the only ones that can have “arms”.

“The hands and feet of all primates, except for humans, are designed for grasping. Humans have hands designed for grasping, but not feet! Humans have opposable thumbs. That means they can cross their thumb over to the opposite side of their hand and can touch their thumb to their fingers”.

Keep walking through this space but initiating the movement from your arm. You can try out variations, initiate the movement from different parts of the arm - the shoulder, the elbow, the wrist or the micro-movements of your fingers.

Follow this movement of your arm with the movement of your eyes.

(Pause)

Do it a few times and then leave it.

Now zoom out and look at the space. Try to see the whole picture. Everything that you see is made by hands.

(Pause)

Choose a direction and follow it.

Look into other people’s eyes when you meet them.

Now stop and rest for a moment. Think of rest as a kind of reset.

Close your eyes.

Imagine that the space is empty.

Now open your eyes again.

Bring your hands in front of you and look at them.

Leave it.

Choose a direction to go. Place one hand on the chest, pushing it the opposite direction of your walking.

(Pause)

Leave it.

See the space around. Are you allowed to touch what is exhibited?

Choose a material of whose texture you are curious and touch it carefully.

Let it go.

Now imagine yourself walking backwards. Don’t do it yet.

Walk backwards slowly for a few seconds.

Leave it.

Stop and rest for a bit.

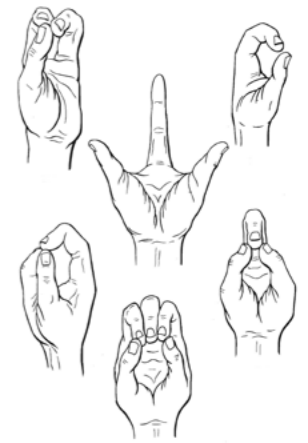
Notice your inner dialogue.

Close your eyes with the palms of your hands and stay in this kind of darknes

If possible, choose a direction and go along it.

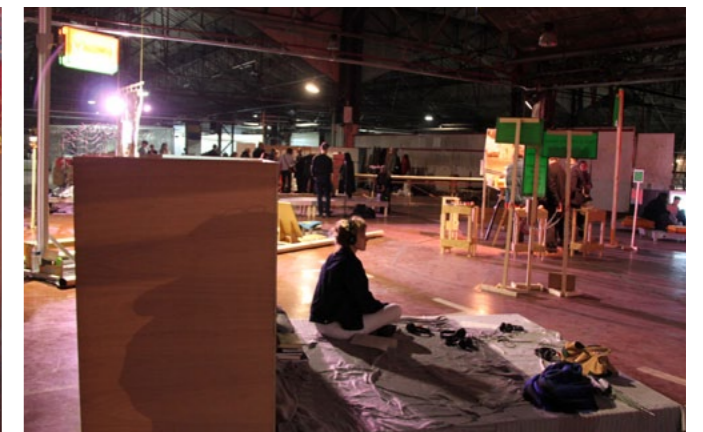
Leave it and find a place to rest for a while.

“In the theater of your mind - your own Cartesian Theater - why not - the curtain is up, the actors are onstage, speaking and moving about, the lights are on and so are the sound effects, and here comes the critical part of the setting, there is an audience, YOU. You do not see yourself; you simply sense or feel that in front of the theatricals onstage there sits a sort of YOU, the subject-audience for the show, inhabiting a space facing the stage’s indelible fourth wall. And I am afraid even more bizarre stuff awaits because, on occasion, you may actually feel that another part of you is, well, watching YOU as you watch the show.”



“But the craft of the hand is richer than we commonly imagine. [...] The hand reaches and extends, receives and welcomes - and not just things: the hand extend itself, and receives its own welcome in the hands of others. [...] Every motion of the hand in every one of its works carries itself through the element of thinking, every bearing of the hand itself in the element. All the work of the hand is rooted in thinking.”

Martin Heidegger, 'What calls for thinking' in "Basic Writings", Harper & Row, 1977, p.357



END-COMMUNICATIONS
BODY VIRTUAL INSTITUTION

WAITING ROOM MEDITATION

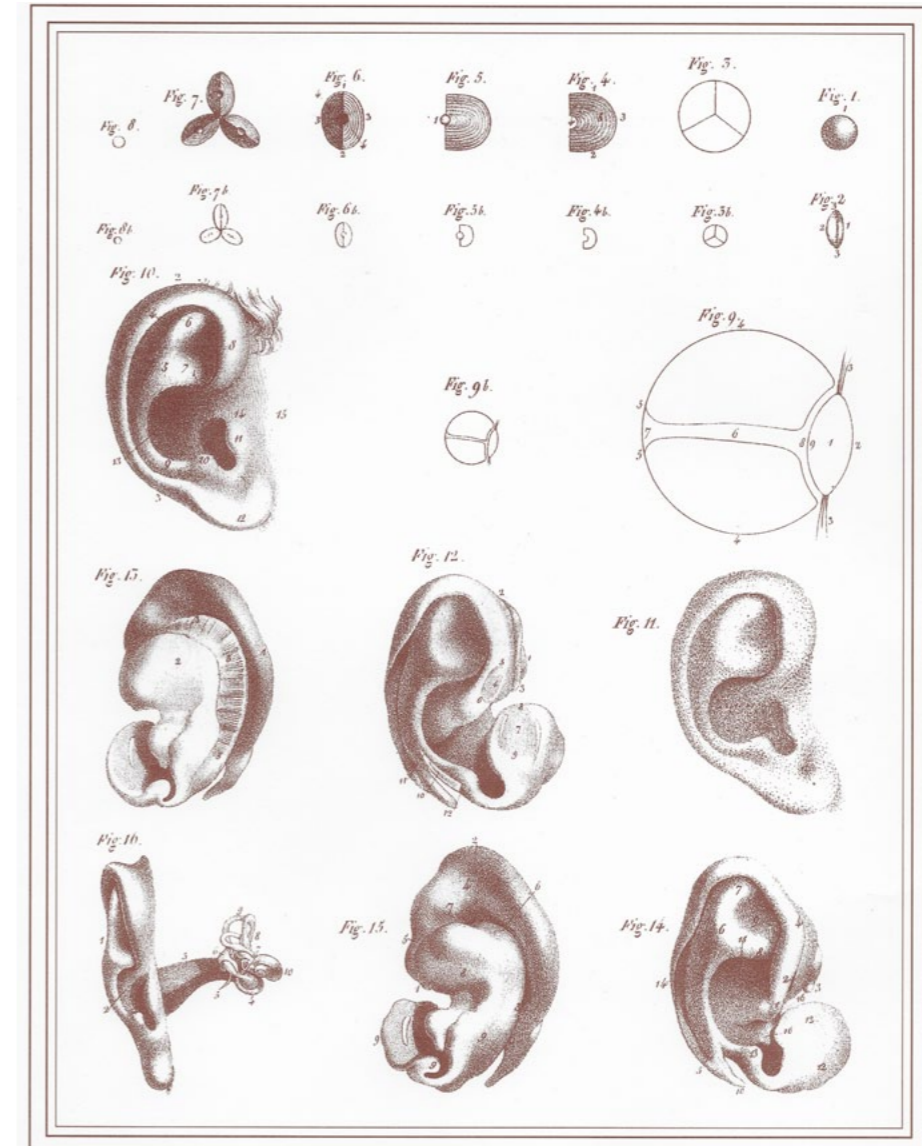


The Job Application By Robert Walser

Esteemed gentlemen,

I am a poor, young, unemployed person in the business field, my name is Wenzel, I am seeking a suitable position, and I take the liberty of asking you, nicely and politely, if perhaps in your airy, bright, amiable rooms such a position might be free. I know that your good firm is large, proud, old, and rich, thus I may yield to the pleasing supposition that a nice, easy, pretty little place would be available, into which, as into a kind of warm cubbyhole, I can slip. I am excellently suited, you should know, to occupy just such a modest haven, for my nature is altogether delicate, and I am essentially a quiet, polite, and dreamy child, who is made to feel cheerful by people thinking of him that he does not ask for much, and allowing him to take possession of a very, very small patch of existence, where he can be useful in his own way and thus feel at ease. A quiet, sweet, small place in the shade has always been the tender substance of all my dreams, and if now the illusions I have about you grow so intense as to make me hope that my dream, young and old, might be transformed into delicious, vivid reality, then you have, in me, the most zealous and most loyal servitor, who will take it as a matter of conscience to discharge precisely and punctually all his duties. Large and difficult tasks I cannot perform, and obligations of a far-ranging sort are too strenuous for my mind. I am not particularly clever, and first and foremost I do not like to strain my intelligence overmuch. I am a dreamer rather than a thinker, a zero rather than a force, dim rather than sharp. Assuredly there exists in your extensive institution, which I imagine to be overflowing with main and subsidiary functions and offices, work of the kind that one can do as in a dream? –I am, to put it frankly, a Chinese; that is to say, a person who deems everything small and modest to be beautiful and pleasing, and to whom all that is big and exacting is fearsome and horrid. I know only the need to feel at my ease, so that each day I can thank God for life's boon, with all its blessings. The passion to go far in the world is unknown to me. Africa with its deserts is to me not more foreign. Well, so now you know what sort of a person I am. –I write, as you see, a graceful and fluent hand, and you need not imagine me to be entirely without intelligence. My mind is clear, but it refuses to grasp things that are many, or too many by far, shunning them. I am sincere and honest, and I am aware that this signifies precious little in the world in which we live, so I shall be waiting, esteemed gentlemen, to see what it will be your pleasure to reply to your respectful servant, positively drowning in obedience.

WENZEL



For the a.pass end-communications, I am developing

Waiting Room Meditation,

an in situ audio installation about the past,

the present and the future of the building,

using excerpts from texts by

Virginia Woolf,

Robert Walser and

Ivan Illich.

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