

End Communications May 2018



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**Flanders**  
State of the Art

# End-Communications May 2018

Lilia Mestre

For the End-Communications the a.pass researchers Luisa Fillitz, Esther Rodríguez-Barbero Granado, Eunhyung Jeong, Marialena Marouda, Ekaterina Kaplunova and Shervin Kiarnesi engaged in the practice of *Writing Score*. They met weekly for a month and a half devising questions and answers to each other about their research. This group met during the block “The problem of the Score” in the summer block of 2017 and decided to use the score method to continue collaborating and expand their concerns.

The six research cases come together through concepts of absence, invisibility, history and knowledge. They research in various ways to bring what seems to be ungraspable in the construction of subjectivities to the fore. Subjectivity here, not as an individual subjectivity, but one that collectively builds and positions (in transformation) outside of oneself. Subjectivities as constituted by cultural, economical, social and other interactions and seen as complex narratives that mediate our perception(s) of the world. How do we make sense of what is pertained as ‘real’ and how through the generalization of such a standpoint one is unable to connect with the singular, and its inherent complexities? What ethical utterances can appear from this way of addressing the world?

Following up on the idea of co-making worlds, a.pass positions itself as a collaborative environment for the investigation and expression of artistic research. The mediums of the research are multiple and often combined. The cross disciplines and their interaction forces each specific (or even disciplinary) methodology to break down and instigate the construction of singular ways of doing/thinking. This approach orients artistic research out of a categorical way of understanding knowledge production in the arts as much as it opens up distinctive and particular forms of addressing relationality, we could call undisciplined.

The work of the six researchers entails combined forms of research on what can be called transdisciplinary research in order to open up the complexity of the objects of study through combining experiential approaches.

Luisa Fillitz's research positions itself on the relationship between physical and metaphysical realities and questions the predetermined borders of affect we take as 'real'. Esther Rodriguez-Barbero Granado works in the domains of architecture and body as constructors of performative space. Eunkyung Jeong, through a daily drawing practice, researches the idea of time within diverse forms of existence as the stone and the self. Marialena Marouda's research on the ocean problematizes scientific knowledge as the single epistemology of nature. Ekaterina Kaplunova develops a systematic approach to family relations and cultural lineage in relation to the multifunctional artist, and Shervin Kiarnesi addresses the undocumented performance of everyday life as an invisible event produced within the confines of art.

In addition to the score practice that produced individual reflections within the collective practice, three conversations took place on a specific topic underlining a common concern for the respective duo. Esther and Shervin discussed the relationship to the audience in their practice. Luisa and Marialena focused on the production of knowledge through their approaches. Eunkyung and Ekaterina on autobiography and the self. The reader can find them in addition to reading the individual Scores.

This publication supports the individual research developed during one year of the collaborative platform of a.pass. It functions as a companion to the 'performance's the participants developed within that year. At an event at the Decor Atelier, taking place the 24th & 25th of May 2018, the research of the six participants are shared performatively. On the 26<sup>th</sup> of May 2018 at Brew this publication is launched.

The question of the performative is central to the a.pass program. At a.pass we engage the critical reflection of the processes that legitimize knowledge. We constantly invent ways of sharing research. The notion of performativity concerns the agency of what the research proposes in its exposure or communication with the world. The researchers in a.pass unfold artistic research as knowledge production within art practice by providing a dialogue between doing and thinking art. They challenge the paradigm of the authority of the word by proposing alternative and possibly "minor" ways of attaining and communicating knowledge.

As K. Barrad puts it, “A *performative* understanding of discursive practices challenges the representationalist belief in the power of words to represent preexisting things. Performativity, properly construed, is not an invitation to turn everything (including material bodies) into words; on the contrary, performativity is precisely a contestation of the excessive power granted to language to determine what is real. Hence, in ironic contrast to the misconception that would equate performativity with a form of linguistic monism that takes language to be the stuff of reality, performativity is actually a contestation of the unexamined habits of mind that grant language and other forms of representation more power in determining our ontologies than they deserve.”

All this concludes in positioning artistic research in a place of engaged vulnerability for the sustainability of the blurry zones- “displacing shadows in “light” regions and bright spots in “dark” regions”, as K. Barrad puts it. This publication is a joined venture to realize a 4th iteration on ScoreScapes- research on scores as a pedagogical tool, developed by Lilia Mestre in the a.pass context.

This publication serves the SCORESCAPES research and the End-Communications of six a.pass researchers. It adds to the previous iterations of scores as tools to practice dialogue and intersubjective formats for exchange in artistic research.

Before finishing the a .pass program in May 2018, the six researchers worked for a month and a half in an adapted score to produce this publication. More information can be found about it in the following pages.

The scores instructions you will encounter in this book are copy left and to be used as pleased.

End Communications Score  
**THIS IS 1000 LITERS OF FUEL. SO-**

**7**

## Writing Score for a publication

- To make this publication the 6 researchers exchanged questions and answers for 6 weeks.
- They met in each other's places to share the work. It was possible to participate by sending virtually.
- After the 6 weeks score they had a residency at Nadine - laboratory for contemporary trans-disciplinary arts. During the one-week residency they worked on editing their answers and the assemblage of the material for this publication.

### INSTRUCTIONS

- Meet or send questions once a week- time and place for the following session is decided at the end of every session.
- Bring food to share.
- There is no public. The Participants of the score are their own audience.

### To start:

The gift: In the first meeting bring a text that states your current research. Read it out loud.

### The questions:

Chance procedure: After reading each text out loud, assign by chance procedure who is asking questions to whom for the next session. (Write the names of the participants in small papers, fold them, put them in a container and everyone picks one)

Timing: each participant has two days to formulate a question and send it to the person s/he is assigned to. Questions are sent by email.

- **The questions are a dialectic tool to engage in the discursiveness of artistic practice and research.**
- **The questions aim to argument what is at stake, its implications and further relations in the artistic research environment.**
- **The questions are the indicators of the dialogical potential of each research project.**
- **The questions are the motor of a process of sharing, contaminating, contradicting, thinking / making together.**
- **The questions are an intrinsic and important component of the score.**
- **Think them, contextualize them, offer them.**
- **Think them as for a publication.**

### The replies:

- After receiving the question an answer must be developed within 5 days.
- Consider the answer for a publication.

### And so on...

- After everyone reads the answer out loud, assign the next questions. Decide on a place and time to meet next session.
- This process restarts every week.

## Biographies

**ESTHER RODRÍGUEZ-BARBERO (Madrid, 1984)** Performer, choreographer, architect and researcher in the arts. Specializing in contemporary dance combined with architectural studies (ETSA Valladolid), she achieved a Master in Performing Arts Practice and Visual Culture by the UCLM in collaboration with the Reina Sofía Museum. Her work operates between choreography, performance and architecture, using principles from these disciplines to design artistic and social practices. Her trajectory intersects differing contexts activated using operations of displacement to consider body presence and spatial relations. Currently she designs spatial practices by which the audience can experience alternative ways of engaging with specific places and the elements present in daily routines. By rethinking habits and behaviours she proposes choreographic approaches to expand performative space. She is currently developing an artistic research in a.pass (advanced performance and scenography studies) with the project Guided Tour.

**LUISA FILLITZ (Vienna, 1985)** with a background in movement studies and dance she researches the question of relational dynamics through an interdisciplinary kinetic approach. She studied theatre-, film- and media sciences in Vienna (A) and Bern (CH) as well as art and culture philosophy at Zurich University of the Arts. For an expanded approach to the connection of fine arts and movement studies she completed the Laboratoire

d'Étude du Mouvement – the scenographical institute of the École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq (F), focusing on kinetic translation of movement into space. In may 2017 she relocated to Brussels to participate in the post Master Program a.pass - advanced performance and scenography studies.

**EKATERINA KAPLUNOVA (Elista, 1983)** artistic practice fluctuates between research, reactivation of (personal) history and speculation. Through various media and settings, her interests render semi-fictional visual narratives including autobiographic elements, folklore, performativity, social roleplaying, masks and characters.

After receiving her MA degree in Fine Arts at LUCA School of Arts Brussels, she continues her practice through artistic research at advanced performance and scenography studies (a.pass) in Brussels. Her work currently engages reanimated family history, generational clashes and storytelling, revealing common patterns she applies on the position of the composite artist.

Parallel to her artistic practice, Kaplunova is involved in several collaborative practices: she is part of the curatorial team of the independent artist-run space 76,4 in Brussels and of the research team working on the projects of partnership with Eastern Europe and Russia at BOZAR Center for Fine Arts in Brussels.

**SHERVIN KIANERSI HAGHIGHI ( Shiraz, 1983)** is a visual artist and researcher. In her work, she investigates how 'invisible per-

formance' can make use of the gestures we employ in our everyday routines. She focuses in particular on concepts that seem to articulate a deficiency, such as slowness, failure or laziness, and seeks to question the hierarchy of experience that such concepts suggest. Her work mostly happens in public or other non-art spaces where people do not normally expect to see an artwork. Currently she is a PhD researcher at Luca School of Arts. She lives and works in Brussels.

**EUNKYUNG JEONG (Seoul, 1984)** is a South Korean visual artist, writer and scenographer based in Brussels. Her principal interests are conceptual drawing and writing practices using literary strategy and time-based media installation. Jeong majored in visual arts( BFA) at Korea National University of Arts and studied at ZHdK (MFA) in Zurich. Currently she is doing artistic research on the idea of time within diverse forms of existence as the stone and the self in a.pass (advanced performance and scenography studies) in Brussels.

**MARIALENA MAROUDA (Athens, 1982)** works in the fields of performance art and choreography. She studied philosophy and visual arts at Columbia University in New York, USA and continued her studies at the Institute for Applied Theater Studies at the University of Giessen, Germany. She is currently developing her research project Oceanographies in the framework of the artistic research platform advanced performance and scenography studies (a.pass) in Brussels, Belgium.

Marouda is interested in performance as a tool for attaining and sharing an embodied knowledge about the world. Her current work focuses on oceanic space, through which she speculates on an alternative oceanographic institute based on (inter-) personal ocean mythologies.

**LILIA MESTRE (Lisboa, 1968)** is a performing artist and researcher based in Brussels working mainly in collaboration with other artists. She interested in art practice as a medial tool between several domains of semiotic existence. Her principal medium is dance and choreography. Mestre works with assemblages, scores and inter-subjective set ups as an artist, curator, dramaturge and teacher.

As a researcher Mestre is interested in forms of sociability artistic practice propose. She thinks that those forms of sociability display ecologies of relation that become perceptual learning processes constitutive of affective and ethical value. From the black box, to the white cube, the class room, the auditorium, to the public space she has been developing performative strategies to engage in the questions of what is present and how can it manifest itself in each particular situation. She was co-founder of Bains Connective Art Laboratory. Since 2008 she has been mentor, workshop facilitator and associated program curator at a.pass (advanced performance and scenography studies) where she has been developing a research on scores as pedagogical tool titled ScoreScapes. She's currently a.pass artistic coordinator and co-curator.



## **Luisa Fillitz**

The questions of the score have been left as they were posed. The chronology of the answers stayed the same. Only the visual part has been reworked according to their meaning and the work itself.



Dear Luisa,

How many dots make the now?

How many dots make the here?

How many dots make the nowhere?

How many spots make space in time around  
silence or sound between absence and  
presence?

A minimal intervention is that which poses in the existing by touching it in just  
the necessary spots.

It lies over a reciprocity between the structure that hosts it and the materiality  
of the intervention as it is so that they speak to each other.

And the new one reveals and makes visible a relation or a connection that (may-  
be) was there before and we were unable to see.

That is what it does,

it connects the dots of the invisible.

Me, as the one proposing a question, I connect the dots in order to give mean-  
ing to this question. You, as a reader, you connect the dots to give meaning of  
what you are reading. For that we have to go further on. The meaning of what  
we are interpreting will be changing each time. As for that, as a questioner or a  
reader, will move through the space in between the dots. Either with our eyes,  
either with our fingerprints. We will be making an alphabet, a new language,  
through the relations that are in between the dots. How did that language ap-  
pear? What does it communicate? Pay attention, it seems to say.

Pay attention at this moment cause after I will no longer exist, it seems to claim.  
After all, what is to be fixed?

Dots of kisses

Esther

absence  
moving presence

now ?

elastic space

t-here

shifting

dots

t lines

behind ?

dynamics

reconsiderations

positions



presence



non- around



w-here ?

rhythms



perspectives

merging



in place | without place

change



stable

mobile

elasticity

?

non-silence

stretch

non - between

holding

presence

permanent



elasticity

neither

nor

relevant

?

?

interlaid

non-silence

different times

t-here

w-here

?

environment

?



Silence = (Im) possible state of stillness = materialising as a silencing

‘in the non silence of different times’

Noise = (Un) wanted sound

Dear Luisa

Your work could be identified as a series of conversations consisting of different materials and formats but using the same language and harmony.

You mentioned the ‘in between and around’ in your research, but what of the ‘with-in’?

Each time, as you walk -in it, your work explores an exteriorized form of space, that has a certain volume.

Volume: to measure the space

Volume: amplitude of space

Volume: to convert the space

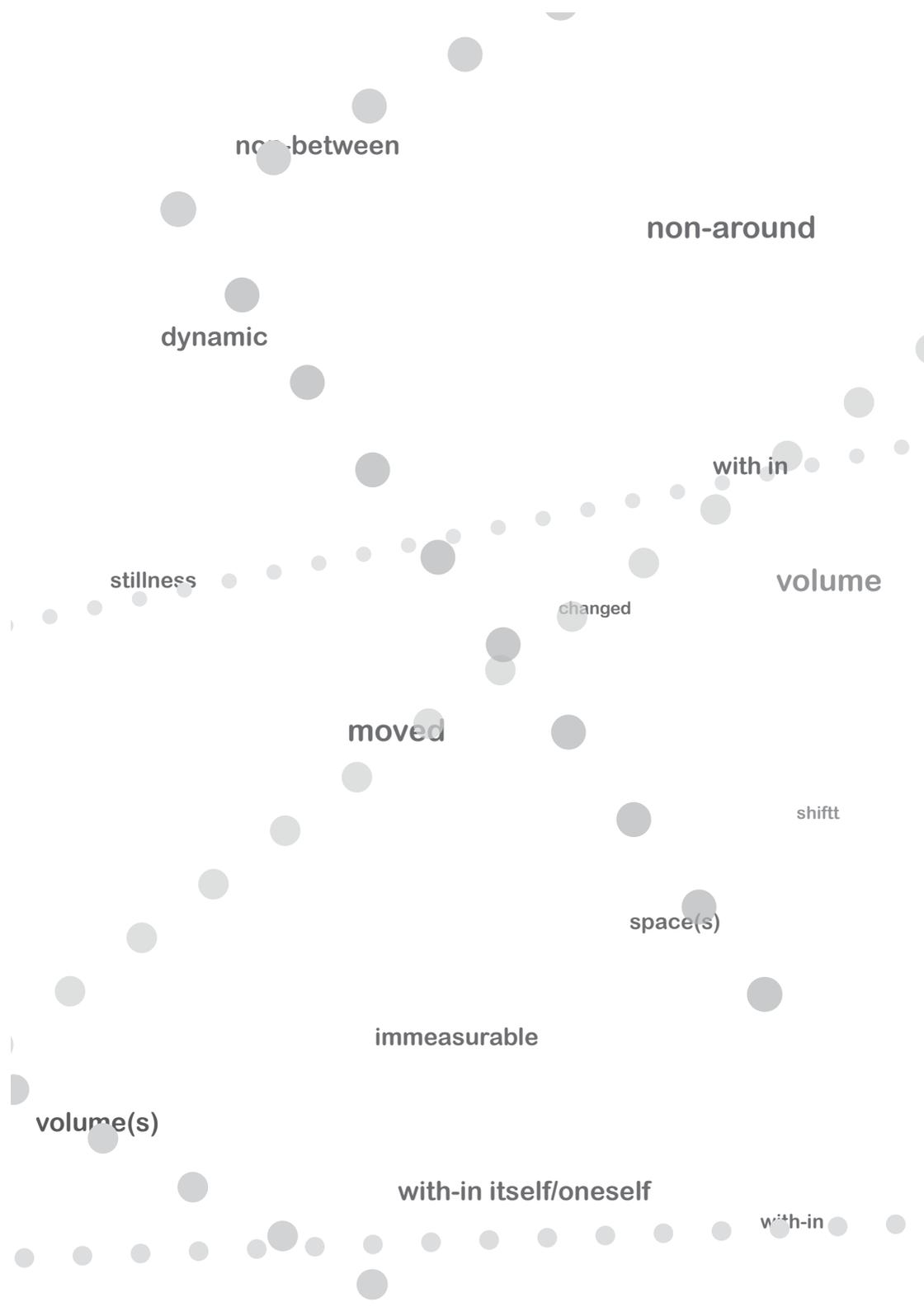
Volume=the space

Consider volume as something with-in but utterly separate. Consider volume as the invisible and unmarked presence of space. Now consider volume as lost in space, intended more to limit, than delimit.

What are the measurements of the volume in your work?

Best of the best

Shervin



non-between

non-around

dynamic

with in

stillness

changed

volume

moved

space(s)

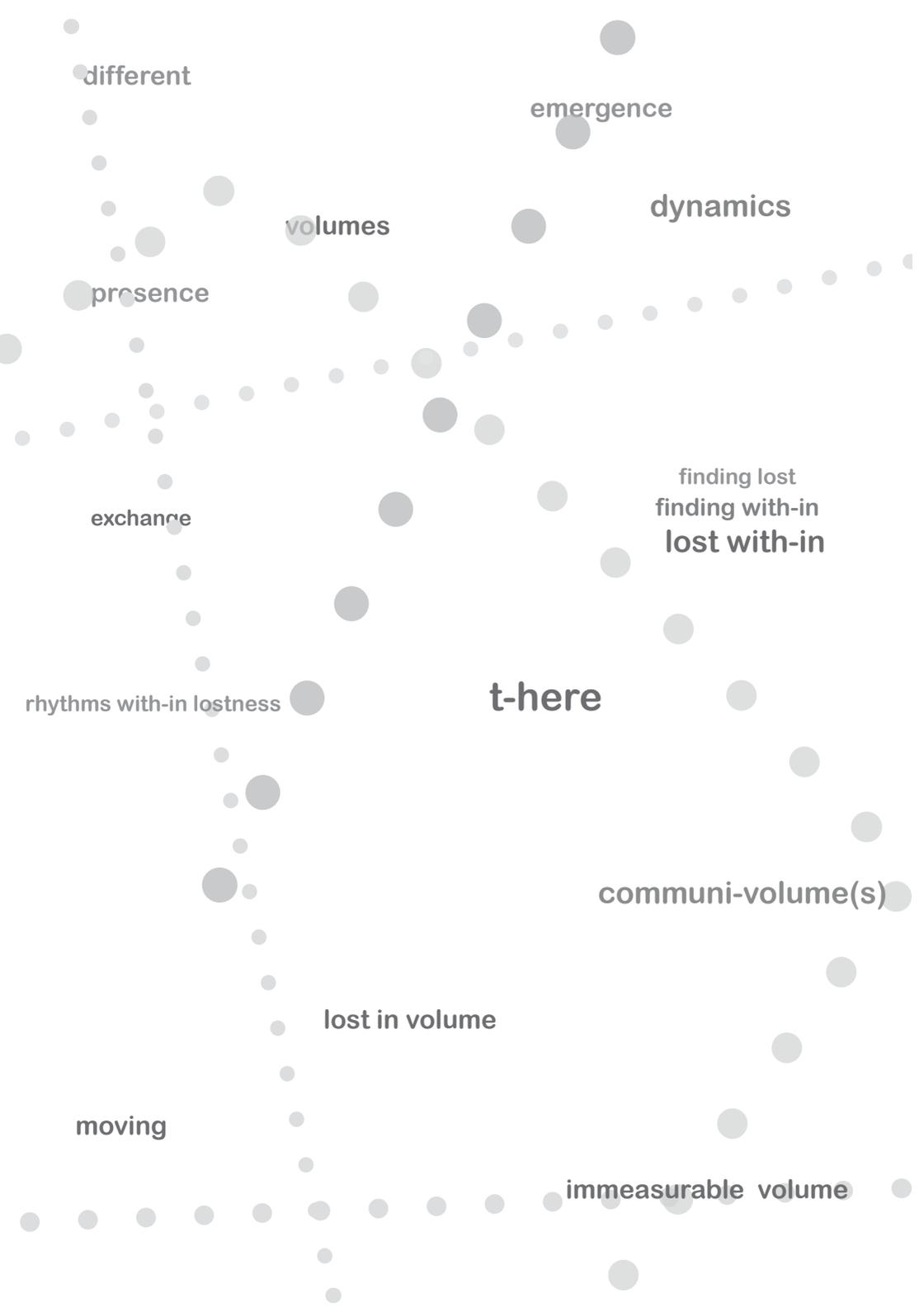
shifft

immeasurable

volume(s)

with-in itself/oneself

with-in



different

emergence

volumes

dynamics

presence

exchange

finding lost  
finding with-in  
lost with-in

rhythms with-in lostness

t-here

communi-volume(s)

lost in volume

moving

immense volume



Hello dear Luisa,

I found it interesting that your speculative-artistic approach about the space  
and your structured way of writing are somewhat alike.

What does “being lost” mean to you and your practice?

Is “floating” your own way of surviving from the chaotic waves, vibrations, tension derived from different beings?

You are dealing with three dimensions in terms of physics, like  
space,  
length,  
width and  
height.

Are you interested in fourth dimensions as well?

Like time in physics?

Time in physics is defined by its measurement: time is what a clock reads. In classical, non-relativistic physics it is a scalar quantity and, like length, mass, and charge, is usually described as a fundamental quantity.

Time can be combined mathematically with other physical quantities to derive other concepts such as motion, kinetic energy and time-dependent fields.

My impression is that certain TENSION you are building up through your installation is crucial, try to expose the confrontation of different energies -----  
----- (string ‘things’ using the strings!), breaking the natural flow and creating obstruction in order to perceive a space as a phenomenon? Something like ontological ideas about the correlation between humans and ‘things’? “Vital materialism“ by Jane Bennet?

Biggest-warmest echo to your space,

Eunkyung



...  
indeed!  
... being ... environment ... time  
... matter ...  
being forced to deal with three dimensions ...  
to speak about multiplicity of dimensions ...  
as an approach of a question on communication • how to  
embrace a fourth dimension • ? ... often  
described as time • ? ... overcoming ...  
... moment ... space ... time  
... not as such •  
movement ... as the inner force ... but move-  
phenomenon • maybe • ? • ... as a kinetic  
dissolving ... one by one ... dis-  
but occurring as presence ... encountering  
... exchanging ... dissolving ...  
emerging ... regenerating  
• chaotic waves • to be lost ...  
is re-finding • t-here • lots-  
ness ... reconsidered position ... by vibration of  
energetic phenomena • inner dynamics • how to face this  
reflections • ? ... by the string ...  
the string as line • obstruction • ? •  
is it • ? • in the mind • ?  
• but the string ... elastic presence  
... elastic line ... elastic matter  
... like being • ? • like  
time • ? • like environment • ?  
• how to measure dimensions of presence • ?  
• by presence • ? • with-in presence  
... resonating in exchange ... like the  
rhythmic of words • is this a communication • ?  
• ... ?  
• ... ?



My dear Luisa,

Here's my question. I'm very sorry to be a week late!

You write: „but even overcoming time issues“ and I wonder ...

Your text looks to me like a musical score. The spacing of the words, the gaps between the words and the dots but also the different numbers of dots (one or three) give an impression of rhythm when reading.

So I was wondering about music in relation to your text. Could you maybe perform the text as a piece of music? And if yes, what would it sound like? Could you record it and play it for us?

Many kisses!

Marialena

• •••• •••••

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**different rhythms**

**to hear**

**to see**

**to sense**

**vibrations in multiple ways**

**intervals**

**exchange**

**resonation**

**of perspectives**

**of positions**

**creating**

**an “espace sonore”**

**the moment you have been reading over the dots and words**

**in your way and in your form**

**intervals**

**intonations**

**colours**

**you are part of it**

**to resonate**

**it is done**



Dear Luisa,

I want to ask you about abstraction in your work and I don't know how. How does one tackle the abstract matter like space, time, silence, sound, perception, dimension, absence, presence, vibrations, existence, movement, environment etc.? Who or what is the measure of these notions? It seems to me the feeling of „being lost“, that Eunkyung mentioned in her question, somehow a predictable and even inevitable result or side effect while dealing with these concepts.

And what does embodiment of these notions do to you?

The image of the spider, already appearing in our score conversations, is persistently coming back to my mind with regards to your string installations as well as your structural writing.

Generally spiders use their webs as a device to capture prey. But apparently there are also specific types of spiders that weave the cobwebs or tangled webs, which they abandon after construction.

Those tangled architectural constructions made for the sake of simply being or the sake of performing themselves make me think of your temporary string installations.

And I wonder if you intend them to be a device to measure the abstract notions of spatiality or they are designed just to perform themselves? If this is a device, what is it for? And how specific can you get about the abstract, does it interest you at all?

Many greetings from Russia!

Xxe

Measure:

dimensions (i.ex. m2), time (i.ex. sec), sound (db), vibration (hrz),  
movement (i.ex. km/hr)

No ,measure':

silence, absence, presence, existence, perception, environment

Space, time, silence, sound, perception, dimension, absence, presence, vibration, existence, movement, environment ... what if we consider these "abstract notions" as matter? This switch from abstract to concrete provokes first of all questions about measurement. How is matter measured? By whom and through what device?

My installations invoke different ways matter is captured and made tangible. One way is to use established devices like scales, clocks and rulers, decibel meters and translate it into standardized systems: meters, herz, seconds, miles per hour. Another way is to use the device of language: to describe presence or absence, or the characteristics of an environment. But matter can also be made tangible through forms of embodied measurement: acts of representation, mimesis or intervention. The last method is usually seen as transformative while the first supposedly serves utility and compatibility, and therefore appears neutral/non-invasive. But I would like to take it in another way. What I am curious about is how measurements are kind of transformative and interventions can be forms of measurement. In each installation I try to assemble different forms of expanded measurement, in order to research how these matters are made tangible.

The parallelity and elasticity of measuring is important to me because it helps me work on what I would call „the inner dynamics of matter“. These inner dynamics function as a compelling vibration, a resonance that makes you move and position yourself. It causes both action and reaction, even if nearly detectable. Through its inner dynamic presence, matter reveals its instability or unfixed nature that might cause shifts of position in other matter around it. And when I say matter, I also include humans and other living beings.

The way I am writing has something to do with it.

Inner dynamics are also at work when you write or speak. For example, the way a word is spoken - through intonation, timing and context - produces a response and hence a positioning that is independent of its meaning, but reflects its inner dynamics. I experiment with the notions of ‚around‘ and ‚between‘ to create environments where positions can be parallel, where measurements are inseparable, where placements are fixed and unfixed at the same time.

This continuous shifting in perception I try to evoke is a way to underline the instability of any position and the impossibility to fix them. Terms like „around“ or „between“ are only a matter of position and therefore actually do not exist on their own. I try to test out what it means if no „position“, no hierarchy and no separation is taken as a given - what would a constant possibility to intervene, to switch and to change then mean?

I want to collapse ways to measure matter and thereby generate consciousness of its ‚inner dynamics‘ and attention for the dynamics of who and what moves. To thereby question „around“ and „between“ from „within“.

Therefore, in my perception, these matters are performing themselves, which makes us resonate, taking and changing positions – conscious or unconscious. Which does not actually exclude the multiple and overlaid presence of matter.

The notion “being lost” occurred in my mind by reflecting on the parallelity and elasticity of measuring. To me, this has no negative meaning. I understand it more as a way of consciousness to one's position and its continuous shift understood as an open possibility of intervention.



## **Esther Rodríguez-Barbero**

The first gift is named 'How to unfold this toolbox?' The Questions I received are grouped and separated in topics. There is a only one answer for all the questions that touches all the topics raised. On the left pages are the practices done related with what is being said in the answer.



Dear reader,

For some time now I have been thinking of the idea of a manual for inhabiting spaces, taking experiences of the guided tours I've been doing as a point of reference. I fantasize about this as a way of sharing the methodology of the research and also as a potential to document the guided tours and activate them each time and perform them so to speak. I have been fantasizing of a trajectory that can be done while reading the manual as a game with cards, and the cards as input. I divided this input into three categories: spaces, actions and questions.

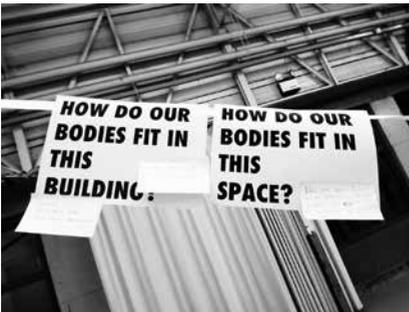
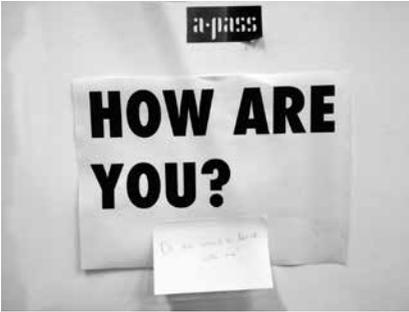
The research project 'Guided tour' I have been developing lately is a performative tool for "space thinking." It is a tour, rather, for inhabiting, or a spatial trajectory. Or perhaps, just an encounter with the non-visible, with what is behind, with what we are unable to name as of yet. 'Guided Tour' aims to make one think/name/inhabit/move space from within the body, in order to affect and be affected by the bodies/ objects/ limits/ dimensions/ stories/ speeches and rules shaping it. They are designed using choreographic, performative and architectonic principles. Their purpose is to form a relationship with the body that performs them to the surrounding architecture.

There might be a contradiction in trying to fix the tours by making this manual as they have their own life, but I would rather think of it as a way to expand and transfer that knowledge.

Also I want to work around the idea of presence. In order to guide the tours I adopt the role of 'mediator' so the proposal is to transfer this role to the manual so each person that takes it can perform it.

This score is media to build this. The first thing that comes to my mind in order to do so is to really understand what is going on in the tours. This might sound banal. What I mean is that there is something inherent to the tours that has to do with a way of perceiving, looking, visualizing and envisioning things. In this way, I guess, it crosses two different approaches of understanding space.

On the one hand, a training in architecture makes one 'think in 3d' meaning you develop the ability to envision and build objects, such as buildings, to be inhabited by others. In this process, a division is established between subject and object and space appears as something to be modelled, designed and somehow consumed.



The other approach is the knowledge of space that appears with movement. When you move, for example while dancing, one of the things that happens is you activate the peripheral glance (not only through dancing but any sport develops this). This particular perception allows you to measure distances, to establish a relationship with what surrounds your body. Your body is affected by the surrounding environment and the environment is affected by it. It's in this space, which in proxemics would be called dynamic space, where relations can be established. Marina Garcés would say 'peripheral glance belongs to an involved eye: involved in the body that looks and involved in the world in which it moves' (my own translation). In other words, it allows you to create space with your movement. What it doesn't allow you is to control, and this is where it breaks the traditional approach from architecture, which usually uses a panoptic view. Maybe what I want to do is an analogue 3d modelling design software where the main tool is your own body and perception.

One of the tools used for the tours are questions related to space. As a step in-between the guided tours and the manual, I did a tour where I placed the questions at the spaces where they belonged or they were related in some way. Here are some pictures.

See you soon,

Many kisses

Esther

# Questions

*Dear Esther,*

## Tools

Q1. Ekaterina

You speak about body as a main tool and it is interesting how the word manual refers to the hand, and hand refers to a tool, and a tool box or tool chest, referring back to the body- container of perception.

Thinking about this associative chain further- the analogue 3d modelling software you are speaking about makes me think about the example of soft architecture, like this project “Interior Weather” by the architect Philippe Rahm. In this project (change of) space is perceived through the senses instead of walls, by the parameters of temperature, light intensity and humidity. The perception of the body becomes a tool for “understanding” space. As I understand, you in turn propose to use the body as an object and subject at the same time. The body moves creating the condition- the space, while simultaneously being an occupant and perceiver of that same space. Similarly, it seems, your toolbox and a manual have a quality of being an object of use and an agent that is unfolding, exposing and possibly using itself.

I’m looking forward to the chapters “What type of tools are these?”, “How to use the tools?”, “What are the side effects and when to use with caution?” and “What are the users expected to experience?”

## Manual definition

Q2. Marialena

...the idea of a manual for (discovering) uselessness is very interesting. You say the manual is a tool for letting things perform or a tool for the „user“ to perceive this performance. You indeed create a situation in which the thing/building you are working on and with can appear not just as a useful object, but indeed as a subject, that can affect and influence my/our movement, thoughts and work within it. This reverses the anthropocentric ideology that seems deeply rooted in a conventional manual. Manuals usually suggest/present a way to interact with things in which „I“ handle the thing but the thing does not handle me back. But with your manual, what is opened up is a dialogue between myself and something. In this sense: the reader/user is asked to give away some of her agency towards the thing she is handling. What your manual tells me about inhabiting is that to inhabit is not only to affect but also to be affected by something. „I“ is not the only one acting upon things; things and building also act upon the „I“. I see it as a manual for the post human era.

(How does this affect our understanding of the „user“? We are no longer focused on use?) So maybe it is not uselessness we are speaking about but something beyond use. Those tours manage to make the thing appear as a multidimensional organism that interacts with me whether I realize it or not.

Regarding radicalization: maybe it would be useful to ask you what exactly is a manual (for you) and what does it include? What are its characteristics? Is it a book? Is it a text? Is it something that speaks to you? Is it something through which you can speak to others? Is it something through which the table can speak, for example? And what things does it include that are maybe less evident? Does it include friendship, for example? Collaboration? Weather conditions? And is it a score for an activity of inhabiting or its documentation?

I guess I am once more looking for a „definition“ of something by means of a list of elements that make it up. Which maybe says as much about the person asking as about the thing asked...

Hope this makes sense. This mail includes a lot of questions so I guess maybe you can find one which might be „useful“ to you (just kidding:-)

## Q5. Eunkyung

Indeed, your 'manual' works very well as the role of mediator in the situation you propose. It is quite an organic way of approaching how people can engage with the space very naturally, but also gives different perceptions through the practical instructions in the manual. Yes, the manual originally functions to provide the practical instructions how to use something, but the thing I found interesting is your manual also includes 'questions' while activating the space and object. That somehow gives opportunities to open up the possibility; breaking the conventional manual and suggesting inter-communication between the things and the actant.

I guess you are also questioning a "manual" itself as you are questioning the role of functionality in buildings, architecture and a specific object. How different then is your own manual? And could you formulate what your own definition of a manual is?

## Situation and context

## Q3. Luisa

to approach- to perceive and thereby rethink the surrounding movement, allowing a relationship, allowing knowledge by activation.

Within the toolbox, your manual, and a general idea about being activated, and also activate in the meantime a space/place that a person crosses. So far, there was also another moment that made the experience different to me- these were the little hints you gave. Information mixed with suggestions to imagine people and stories of the place or the object that one is approaching. With this small information we get to know "colour" also the relationship and maybe even the movement and behaviour we create in that moment.

I am not sure if this question makes sense for your approach: I think very much about how you speak in terms of relating to the surroundings, the architecture, the objects through seeing it from different perspectives, through moving and even activating and being activated by the space/place/object and thereby generating a specific form of knowledge.

So I just wonder, if you would plan to do another manual- is it necessarily related to a specific object or place? Did you think about creating such a manual for any situation a person is in? ... Like if I had your manual with me I could at any time and place still take a look at it?

What would happen then with the stories, information, about people, objects, the places? Or even concrete: thinking of a publication of the manual- will it be based on a specific environment that it is related to- or any environment? Meaning, which place takes the little stories and informations on your work? Would it become activated in the imagination?

Curious to dance further with your suggestions.

## Guided Tour

### Q5. Eunkyung

Looking back through all your questions and answers, I found it impressive that I can somehow clearly recognize the process of development of your thoughts; how your initial ideas on 'architecture and body practices' expanded into a full-blown research trajectory about a 'manual for inhabiting space' and the 'guide tour' as its methodology.

I'm also wondering if the manual can be used more and more specifically, and your guide tour can be applicable into a very Site-specific project.

For example, I somehow keep imagining- what if the guide tour is designed and happens specifically for a particular location that has to be discovered or provoked by you.

I mean, taking a certain location into account first and then, building up several manuals for all the elements (objects) in the location in order to rethink the multiple (political, social, historical..) contexts of the location. Or to provide different modes of attention to it. Do you have some specific location in mind in the future to develop your work in this way?

## Audience

Q4. Shervin

(See the interview between Esther and Shervin about audience, page 134)

Much love,

Ekaterina, Marialena, Luisa, Eunkyung, Shervin



# Answer

*Dear Ekaterina, Marialena, Luisa, Eunkyung, Shervin:*

Thanks for your very revealing questions. I will present a summons of all the answers where the concepts that appear through all your questions regarding the tools, the definition for the manual, the situation and context, the principles of the tours and the audience position, are addressed.

## Tools

The toolbox is a container for the research. It holds, on a smaller scale, the concept of a building. Something that contains. I took the box in order to distance myself from the research, and try to create outcomes, procedures and methodologies. To materialize the immaterial. As you said, toolbox refers to tools, to something manual, to something for fixing or building sth else. So what does it fix or build? This remedy is supposed to enlarge the life of something, the utilitarian life. What is the life of a building? What is the life of a common object such a table?

A tool that is contained in the toolbox is the manual. Last week I wrote the first draft for the manual. It was written for a very specific object and a very specific situation. A manual on ways to inhabit or perform a 500X120x100 cm table. A table which is in the main corridor at the 4th floor of the Bottelarij Bellevue building. The manual was designed to be read in a collective reading for 12-14 people around that table. I called it 'Express manual' because I wrote it very fast. I spent four days at that table, doing several actions and practices and from there, the material for the manual arose. It is not a common table, it is not the table you would have at your house. It is bigger than normal, so it is difficult to find its functionality. The manual is a medium to find ways to relate to the useless characteristic of that table. It's a tool itself, but for what? The same as the table, it is a table, but for what? I guess that relates, on a larger scale, to the role of functionality in buildings and architecture. Also, to the different uses of the areas of a building. So, the manual reflects upon the relationship between materiality and what is behind this and poses the question of useful-useless. Maybe the manual is a side effect itself. The users would get the ability to make things perform i guess, a way to enlarge the life of things...



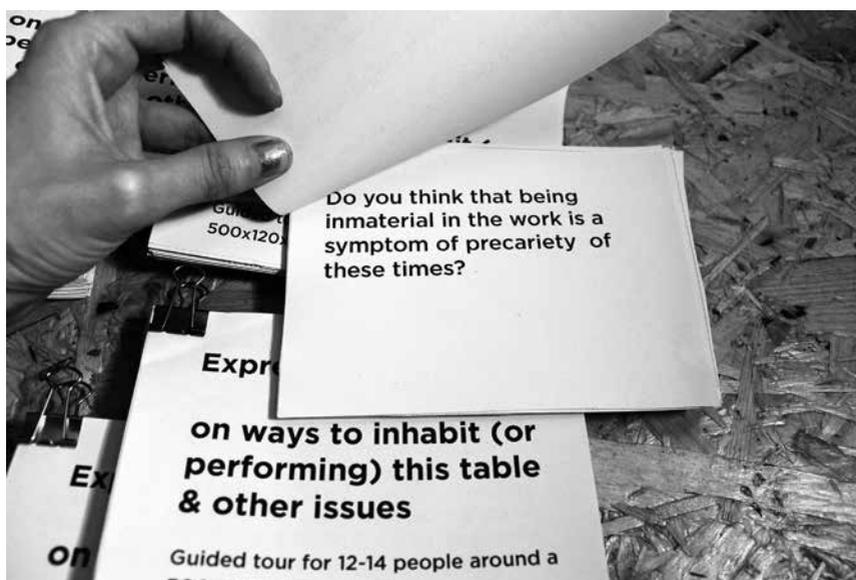
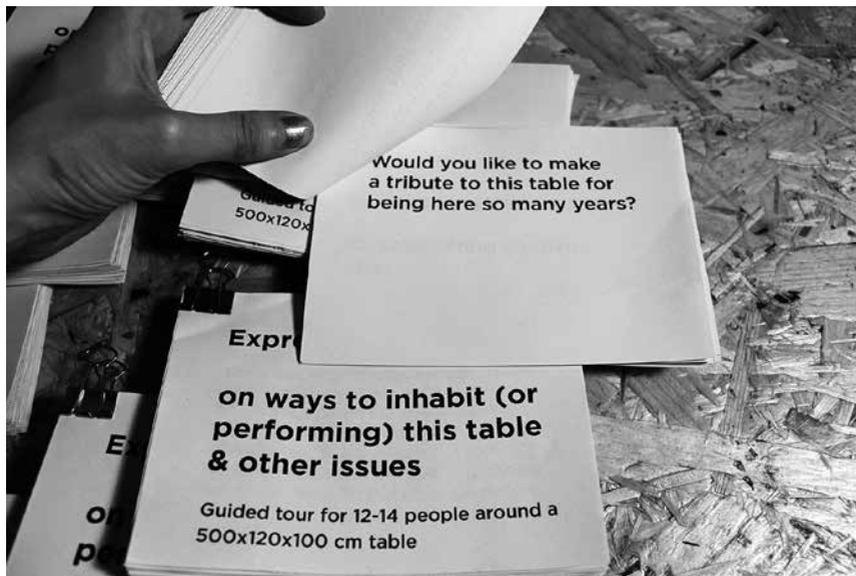
## Manual definition

In the beginning, the idea and the concept of the manual was pure intuition. I didn't check any manual as a reference, I know most manuals are also a kind of guide to get some knowledge about something, so there is a goal to achieve after you use it (because manuals are for using them), you will get certain knowledge and abilities. The idea was to hack this concept of efficiency somehow, and also, the same as the tours- to challenge the notion of what kind of knowledge is legitimate. That's why in this manual you won't find a solution for anything, but rather an invitation to 'think' or 'feel' as an object you would be supposed to learn how to use. But through this manual maybe what you get doesn't have to do with that but with a kind of empathy. For the moment the manual follows the structure and the principles of the tours.

It is not by reading it that you learn, but by establishing a relationship with the thing itself, by going to that thing over and over again to try to understand its language. Somewhere I read the procedure by which our brain learns is that first comes the motivation, then comes the attention and then the memorizing. We need to get excited to be able to learn. This manual speaks to the irrational side of learning. How can I get excited about something I am really used to? How can I look to the table on another level so I can understand its language? And then what is it really telling me?

That's why in the manual there is an invitation to read lying on top of the table, for example it is not something random, it is because the action makes a difference in attention to what you are reading. Your attention is shifted, as by doing (or envisioning) that action, the habit of using the table the way you usually do is broken. When you break a habit you start to experience other emotions. That process consequently opens a new space for encounters and other relations to appear.

I chose the word manual and not just book because manual appeals to learning and to action, learning through action. It appeared as the most coherent step to take and I followed it. It is now that I am giving meaning to that choice. I couldn't formulate a definition of what a manual is (for me) if I didn't have that experience before and even now, I feel a resistance in doing so. As if by defining it and trying to fix it, everything that makes it alive, would disappear. With that 'everything,' I refer to what is unspeakable, what is unknown, what makes us get excited. I am afraid that if I fix it too much it will lose its purpose. I know there is a contradiction here, since the mere fact of making a manual expresses a desire to fix something. Maybe what I'm trying to fix are just tactics to not take things



for granted, to relate with the being of things. Tactics for opening a space where things can be revealed or can appear. I find the manual is fixing these tactics but what happens after, that cannot be defined? What I propose through the manual is an attention to other kinds of knowledge, that cannot be defined in rational terms. This knowledge comes from a sense that builds up through experience. So when someone says 'I know' in those terms it means something completely different, it means that you can feel it even if there is no evidence, there is a sort of intuition.

After that first draft, I started to work on another version of the manual that maintains the table as the object, but instead 'specific table' I would say 'general or standard table'. If you think about it, a table is just a horizontal surface separated 75 cm from the floor where we can do exactly the same things we do on the floor. The chair was invented first and then came the need for a horizontal surface at the height of the hands. I'm writing this while I'm having a nap on top of a general table. It feels weird to be lying separated from the floor actually. But maybe there is not such a difference between lying on the floor of the first floor of a building. Both are separated from the ground. It is just a matter of height.

Presently, I have a clearer idea of what the manual is for me and why is it called a manual. What it proposes inside is, in fact, a tour, since it has a timeframe and a trajectory and leads an experience. The trajectory is a sequence, a choreography that builds up an approach to the object. If I would be 'correct' about the content, the name for it wouldn't be manual but *Guide*. I choose the word manual. I do it to address or redefine the notions of use. In fact, the mere concept of it is a bit absurd, since you don't need a manual in order to know how to use your table, you already know it. What is proposed to be shaken is that preconception, the fact you already know how to use it. At some point, in the book 'Queer Phenomenology' by Sara Ahmed, she says sth about the connection between the words habit and inhabit. I am constantly using both and I had never thought that one contains the other. After, I was thinking in order to inhabit there is an operation to be done that entails breaking, or more precisely, bringing an awareness to the habits that are already there.

If the manual is too general it loses that small information, specific to the place, that 'colours' it, as you said. I had some problems dealing with site-specificity in this general manual. That small information appears in the relationship between the living environment that surrounds the object and the object itself. The situation in which the table is placed turns important. There relies the contradiction with the idea of doing a manual for a general table. I guess the answer would

### Practice for writing a generic manual

#### Practice 3

You enter the space, you have the keys, maybe you don't work there but you pretend you do. You go to your desk, the desk is your spot, nobody else is supposed to be there. You borrowed that spot from someone, you asked to use this table, you don't own this table. It's just borrowed for a few hours. The space is empty, and the desk is in a smaller cubiculum. You enter and look at this table, see how it is and after do the actions. After that, some people enter, they were on a lunch break. Now they come back to their desks. One knocks on your door. You come out, say hello and introduce yourself and talk a bit about life. Maybe you know some of them, because they know the person that lent you this spot, maybe you don't know them. You say you are there to work, but not specifying. Go back to the cubiculum. The door is ajar and you can hear the typing. There is also the noise of the air conditioner. From this spot you can see the whole city from above. All the houses are the size of a finger. In front of you there is a wall and a window on the left. Just in the building in front there is another building, very similar to yours, with other desks and cubiculus. It has a facade made from glass so you can see them through the glass.

You lie down under it facing up. In a hollow under the wooden crates that are above your head you find a pen. It says 'GCSC international Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture'. There is also number 17 written on crates. You open them from underneath so you can't see what is inside and if there are things or if they are empty. Crates are a very personal element. It can be an intimate space. If you could see what is inside, you would know more about the person that owns that table. You don't look inside, it's an intimate space. Maybe there is nothing. You decide not to know, just see the things that are visible. Do you think things that are not visible don't exist? (What is invisibility? Is invisible being present but camouflaged? Are you visible or invisible? Have you ever felt invisible?)

If the answer is yes maybe you want to look inside the the crate to find an answer.

(if this table doesnt have a crate you can go to p. X to read the answer)

If the answer is no....(go to the next table)

appear trying to create different situations 'at' the manual. That is to say if the specificity of the table comes with the situation in which its inscribed then how can I draw or envision different situations 'through' those small stories in the manual? To clarify it a bit with an example I would say that it's not the same as a table placed in a cafe, for example, as the same table placed at your house. So i would have to attend to the multiple possibilities of how a table can be (regarding shape) but also the multiple contexts in which it can be inscribed.

I need to clarify the same i do with the table i would like to do it with each element of a building so i can observe how each element performs. This operation, to look very close to each element by reducing the scale will inform the guided tours by telling the common patterns.

In order to write the manual I decided to spend some time at several places that have tables- these places have different characteristics. I designed a methodology to follow at each place that involves doing several actions with the table. I chose five different places: a cafe, a library, an office, a house, a workspace. Some of them are public spaces and some are private. For the private I ask someone if I can go to the place where they work and spend three hours at their workdesk.

You find a book on a shelf close to you: 'Yes, but is it edible? The music of Robert Ashley for two or more voices. New documents. P51 Celestial excursions'

Here is the answer you would find inside the crate:

*'-For a couple of years I worked with a person who is gone now. We were really close.*

*-We did a lot of things together and we laughed a lot. But he never got the things.*

*-He got a small piece of Chinatown, but that's not too important. What's important is...he drank a gallon of iced coffee every day. He taught me to drink iced coffee.*

*-So, he's got iced coffee. I can't drink a glass of iced coffee without thinking of this person, and that's a lot.*

*-We could get into smaller things or just parts of things, but we don't have to. I just wanted to give you the idea. As long as we are on the subject I should remark on sth even more mysterious.*

*-My consciousness, to use a phrase. When I talk to myself, or even when I try to say sth... an idea, like right now, I am always addressing someone. I usually know exactly who that person is. There's no point in me naming any person. The person changes. And probably... you wouldn't know any of the people anyway. Its not abstract, like you might think. What do you call those things attached to all objects?'*

**Methodology for writing the manual:**

(Actions to be done: Sitting, writing, sitting on top of it, lying on it, sitting under it, standing up on it)

(During all the time you are open for encounters)

1. Go to the place
2. The moment you enter the space you are performing
3. Select a table
4. Observe the context
5. Make the actions (after observing the context, decide the procedure, sometimes the actions come first sometimes the drawing)
6. Draw the table (note the characteristics such as size, materials, elements...)
7. Write the impressions about the actions performed
8. Perform more actions if needed
9. Write what is happening at the space and continue performing actions until you come to a question
10. When the question appears, find a strategy to find an answer (if there are books around choose one, open on a random page and read till you find a possible answer; if there are people there ask them; the answer can also be an action)
11. Transcribe the answers



Facade image credit: [www.antitapas.org](http://www.antitapas.org)

## BOTTELARIJ BELLEVUE BUILDING

### BUILDING DATA:

**Location:** Rue Delaunoy 58, 1080 Molenbeek-Saint-Jean. Brussels (Belgium)

[bottelarijbellevue.be/en](http://bottelarijbellevue.be/en)

**Current use of the building:** multidisciplinary (temple for corporate events, offices, theater school, Evangelic church, architecture studio, artist studios, apass)

**Past uses of the building:** beer factory

**Character:** Private - (general public use)

**Other:** In 2007 the building was bought by the Sacha S.A. group and started to be renovated.

### STORIES DATA:

**Stories generator:** Moustafa – building keeper (through Zoumana Meite as listener and french translator)- and stories from the audience in the format of conversations

**Characteristic of the stories:** stories related with Moustafa's job (what makes your work difficult with how people use the building?); stories of the audience about their impressions of the place at their first encounter with the building.

### TOUR DATA:

**Space trajectory of the tour:** from the 4th floor to the entrance, through the elevator and the waiting areas

**Movement score:** people are invited to sit on a chair, as we change space they are invited to move with the chair to the next space. We make a circle and sit with the chairs at the common areas.

**Storytelling score:** When we sit either we have a conversation (elevator) or I share the stories of Moustafá (waiting area, entrance). The questions for the different conversations were: how was the first time that you arrived at this building? How was your trajectory, impressions feelings? Who did you encounter?; How does your research or art practice fits in this building? (audience was artistic researchers).

**Date of the tour:** 13-14-15/06/2017

**Number of people:** 2-3 people each tour (limited to the capacity of the elevator)

**Duration:** 40'

**Time spent there:** 6 months

**Documentation:** Audio recording

## Guided Tour

With regards to the question on the guided tours, all the tours are site specific. I learn the place (history, context, where it is placed socially and politically, how it is inhabited or used...) and then I organize the information regarding affects. Events that affected the place, how does it affect me and how can I affect it, or move it, and how can this be expanded to other bodies. This notion of affect is taken from Spinoza which refers to the body as it is capable to affect or be affected by. A transition is taken from one state to another. He says that what defines a body is what this body can do as it moves forward. These states of being are continuously changing, and the abilities or capabilities of the body referring to what it can do are redefined in each step as it moves.

When I study the place there is a part that belongs to site-specificity, each building is different and has its own way of 'speaking' and its own potentialities on how to be performed. But there is also something about standards when we reduce the scale and go to the elements that conforms each building (basic ones: wall, floor, window, door). I would like to also study the performativity of each of those elements to find out patterns between them in the different buildings.

I am interested in buildings that have been renovated and their use changed, that are spaces of public access (either private or public character) or workspaces. I am interested in making a topography of these changes through different cities. To track the changes that configure that topography during the real estate bubble years and after. For example, buildings that used to be factories and have turned into cultural spaces. For the moment here is a list of some buildings where I've already done a guided tour or I have plans to do one in the next months. I am working in index cards for each building and tour where all the information is gathered (as the one in the left page).

Bottelarij Building – Brussels -Leal Theater- Tenerife- Decoratelier – Brussels -  
Centro Cultural Conde Duque- Madrid - La Casa Encendida – Madrid - Centro  
de Arte Dos de Mayo – Madrid - Sir Henrys – Cork

More information can be found here: [www.estherbarbero.com/guidedtour](http://www.estherbarbero.com/guidedtour)



14/09/2017 Leal Theater, Tenerife, Spain  
Image credit: Javier Pino, Leal Theater

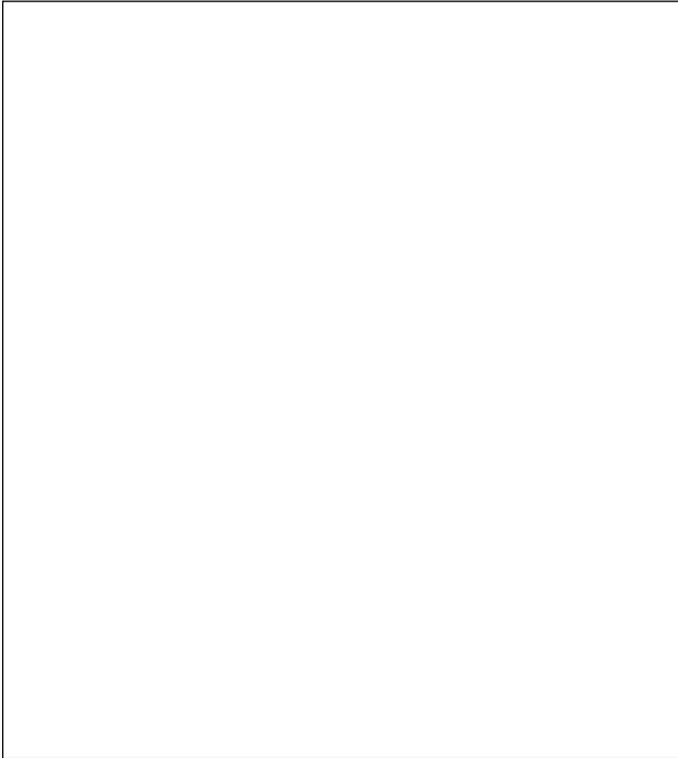
## Audience

There is a blurry line for me between audience and the frame of the performance in the guided tours. There is no separation actually. If I call audience the people who are doing the trajectory with me, then the audience is part or inside the performative space. For me, the audience wouldn't be the people that are doing the trajectory but, the ones who are completely outside. The performative space is being built as we move forward. We, as a group, build it. We become a group by moving. For this, for becoming a group moving together, I have to give them the necessary information so that I can have their trust, so that we can go together.

I guess that my responsibility is to build a safe space so they can follow me. Not only in the discourse but also in the moving. I always try to think what the necessary information is that you would need in order to be able to follow me. For this I try not to take things for granted. So, I give all the information. What is important is something underneath that information that has to do with the situation created.

This implies a very vulnerable position. I always try to think of the worst scenario that can happen. I think that everything can fail and then if that happens, what should I do? Lets say I always try to think of a plan B if everything fails. For example, if I ask to help me move sth and nobody answers. Or what other possibilities of engagement can exist. I have an idea of what might happen but I always get surprised by what appears. I guess that is what I'm looking for- to actualize again and again the capacity of getting surprised by what is already there, of being curious, and that is what I try to communicate.

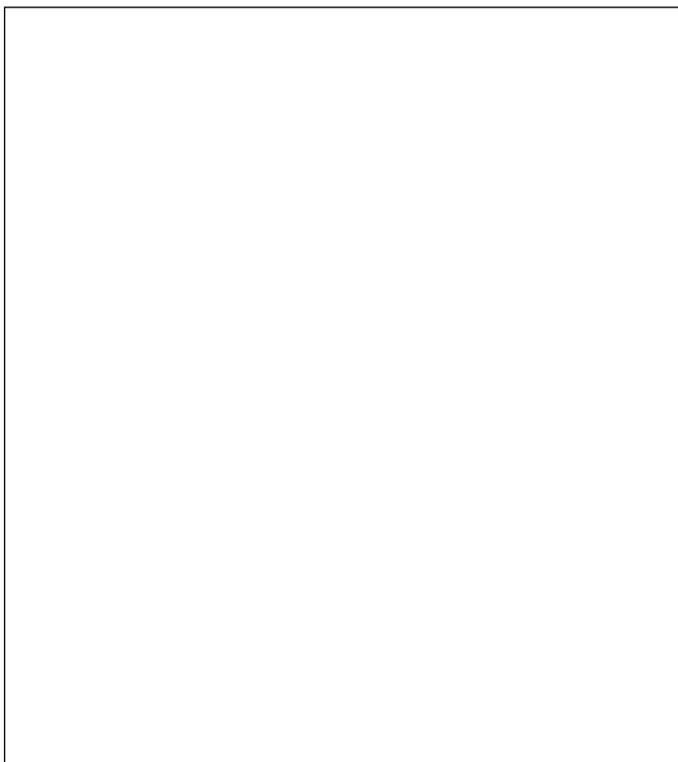




## **Eunhyung Jeong**

A rectangular frame (100×90mm) is one of the constraints that I use for my drawing practice, a series of A4 size drawings. I apply the same frame to every page.

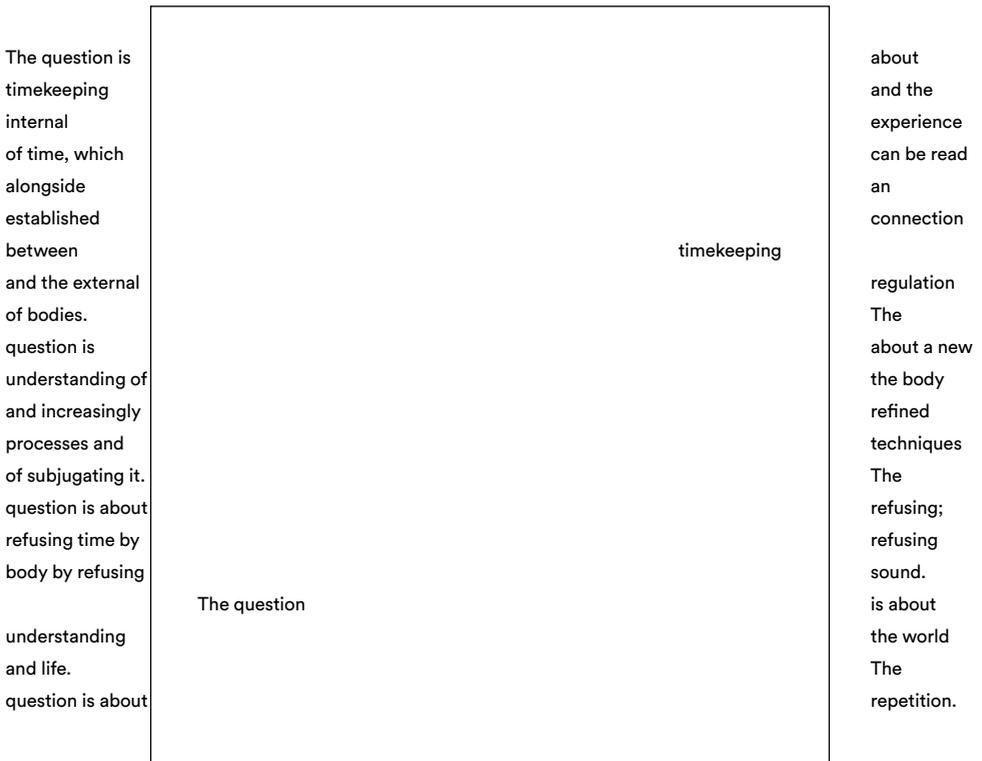
The frame is used as a space for selected words from the questions that I received and as a communication mechanism that provides context .



**Question 1.**

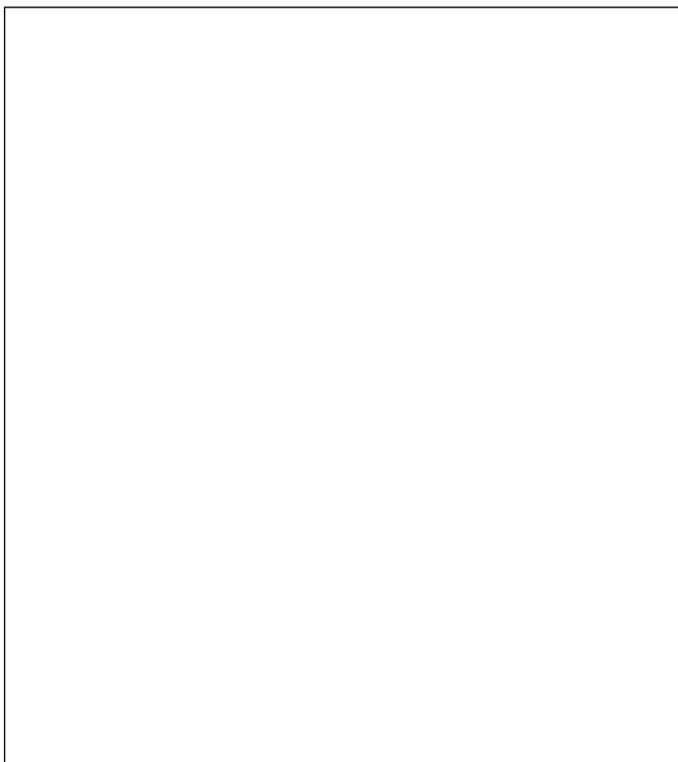
The question is irrelevant, and need not be formulated.

The question is about changes in the internal experience of time, which serve as a reminder of timekeeping in interdisciplinary contexts, offering the opportunity for new historical narratives to emerge.



The question is about the exploration of the relationships between the symbolic and the real, and between the practice of art and of exemplary and limited direct actions that are geared towards the betterment of human and natural environments.

The question is about the real question.





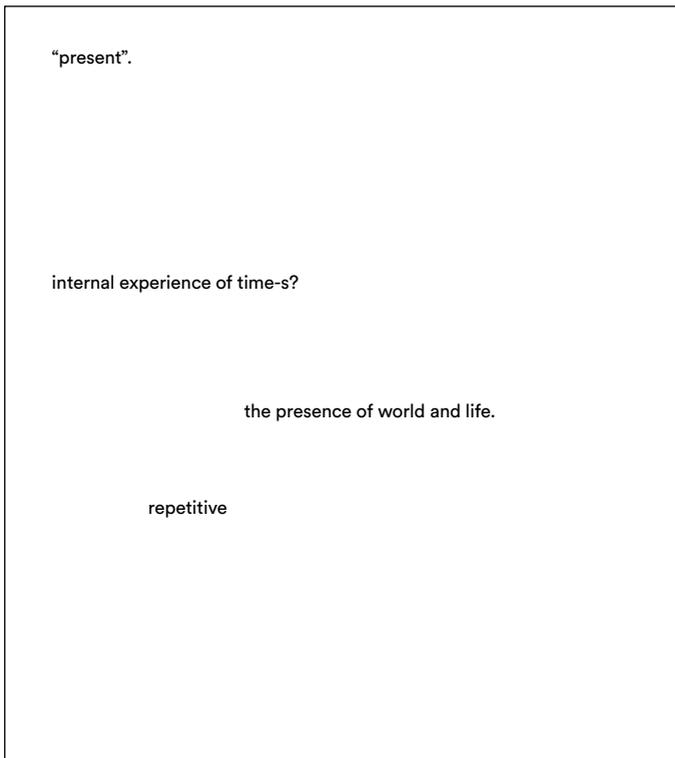


**Question 2.**

Time-s of a stone, time-s of drawing, time-s of being - different times coming together - from the macro to the micro. Times changing before the change is realized.

A realization of time-s interfering. If I think on time I cannot avoid coming back to it as an "illusion", not able to be grasped by the different times in a

To set the starting point is - who is the one out of where? point of in an the presence including your present of you presence to how is referencing - is it? point out the - if so - how to presence repetition

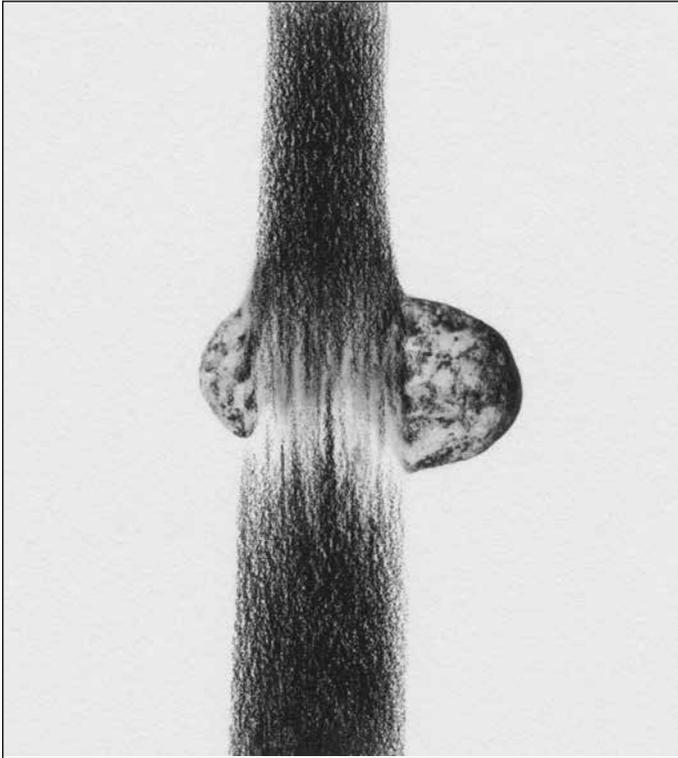


present a to be found setting it - What is the presence - regarding of the stone change and understanding How would understand exist? And doing presence? Or does it change? grasp the within - regarding

repetition as the always changed reoccurring of moments that have been?

Is the being of the stone a repetition of change? - if yes - how would you relate your "self", your understanding of life and world to the expression repetition of change?







**Question 3.**

Do you know *Her*?

How well? How is a normal day in the life of her?

What does she do? Is she an artist?

Where does she come from? In which language do you talk with her?

Does she  
the rock cycle?  
than you or  
the same?  
her for coffee?  
How does  
Are you  
could you say  
the most? Is  
when you need  
friends, would  
closer to  
thing she  
most? Does  
traveling? Has  
lot? To where?  
live in  
last time you  
other? Can

she

one of the characteristics of her personality

her?

Brussels

or somewhere else?

she draw?

know about  
Is she older  
younger or  
Do you meet  
or tea?  
earn money?  
friends? If so,  
do you like  
she there  
If you aren't  
you like to get  
What is the  
enjoys the  
she like  
she travelled a  
Does she  
When was the  
saw each

Do you consider her a strong person? If yes, what do you think made her strong? Does she talk with her family? Are they far away? Could you say something about them? Do you consider her a 'good' person? Why? Do you think she is lucky in her life? (to be continued...)

P.S. Would you introduce us some day? Do you think we can get on well? Why?

## SELF LIFE DRAWING - She thinks herself as a symptom of ( ).

From the ancient Greek, αὐτός-autos means SELF and βίος-bios means LIFE and γράφειν-graphein means to WRITE or DRAW. Auto-bio-graphy, it is a self-written account of the life of oneself.

Since she arrived in Europe, she has been having some difficulties each time she introduces her name to people. When first meeting people, she consciously repeats her name several times, as clearly as she can. However, the pronunciation of her name is never familiar to them and so, normally people automatically react and say, "Sorry, I don't think I can remember your name. Could you remind me later?"

In fact, she thought repeating her name again and again was kind of a hassle, yes, it was a matter of effort. But on the other hand, not always bad. She would even feel happy now, because she finally has a strangely special name in different cultural context. Her name 은경 is one of the most common names in Korea, especially quite popular for a woman's name from her generation.

She has always been wanting to have a special name. Finally when she left her country, her humble name started to transform into a special, unique name.

Her name is 은경, the combination of two syllables: 은 (eun) and 경 (kyung). It can be written in Chinese characters;

銀 (eun) 景 (kyung).

The Chinese character, 銀 (eun) meaning 'silver' and 景 (kyung) meaning 'shiny, bright, luminous'. So, the meaning of her name is 'shiny silver'.

She imagined the shiny silver: a strong ray of sunlight shines on a little, beautiful piece of silver in a vast stretch of some unknown land...or?

Sadly, however, her joyful interpretation didn't last very long.

Her name was given by her grandfather. He gave all his grandchildren names as the head of the family. It was something typical that it can take for granted in the traditional Confucianism family, indicating grandfather's biggest authority in the family system.

Here is another name he made: 수호, 守 (soo) 虎 (ho).

守 (soo) meaning 'protect or govern a nation' and 虎 (ho) meaning 'tiger, brave or courageous'. 수호 (sooho) is her older brother's name. Her grandfather has pondered long and deeply to make this name, putting in his desire for his beloved grandson to become 'a brave tiger protecting or governing a country' in his real life.

For some reason, since she has known that tiger, she never feels satisfied with her name, a shiny silver.

With this reflection on her name, she started to have a sense of self-awareness and took serious notice of what the world around her is. Her perception of the world began to shake.

And she thought, what if her name 은경 had different Chinese characters?

A shiny silver often feels that she thinks herself as a symptom of (something).

She thinks herself as a symptom of her name,  
she thinks herself as a symptom of shiny silver which cannot become a brave tiger protecting a nation,  
she thinks herself as a symptom of the Confucian traditions of her family,  
a symptom of her grandfather and the paternal authority, a symptom of social or cultural frame that has an inherent idea of a passive role of women, a symptom of her mother, a symptom of many other women who are forced to be supportive to the family or the androcentric-hierarchical system, a symptom of the radical social shift in Korea from 'we-culture' (community, family, male-dominant, power-centered) to 'I-culture' (independent, autonomous individual, self-focused).

She thinks herself as a symptom of Korean society that she lived.

She thinks herself as a symptom of the unreachable state that has physical and psychological distance between where she is living now and where she lived before.

She thinks herself as a symptom of the gap between the value she would like to pursue and the value she was trained to believe in.

How does she deal with this continuous alienation problem? How does she make a balance? Where is the center that she can keep a balance? And what is the center? Herself? Or the World? What is the frame? Does she always need a frame

to find a center?

Auto(self)-bio(life)-graphy(drawing) is a journey to find a self-center to think about a symptomatic self in relation to the world.

Back to the story of her name, she imagines so called 'what if' about her name, the different combinations of Chinese characters.

What if her name had different Chinese characters for 은(eun), for instance, 鬪 (eun) meaning 'the sounds of two fighting tigers' instead of 銀 (eun) meaning 'silver'?

And what if she had a different 鯨 (kyung) meaning for 'whale' instead of 景 (kyung) meaning 'shiny'?

So to speak, what if she was called **'a mountain of a whale making a growling sound of two fighting tigers'**

instead of 'shiny silver'?

Trying to manipulate or subvert her name which is destined is a way of being liberated from the constraints of her name and creating a new identity.

At least she is against the typical principle of making women's name in Confucian context, at least she is making a small crack in her grandfather's authority. At least she can be on top of a brave tiger protecting a nation...?

虎  
白



## Marialena Marouda

I used waves, weaving and conversation as principles for editing my material from the score.

My initial gift, which was a love letter, unfolded into a series of questions and answers. By answering in-line in light gray, I wove the material into each other, simulating a conversation from what was initially a written correspondence.

Titling the conversations helped me navigate through the material. In a few cases I shortened the text –marking [...]– or paraphrased in order to make the formulation more precise.



## Gift: Love Letter to an Insufficiently Known Entity

Dear Ocean,

I hope this letter finds you well. As well as you can be nowadays, anyway. I write even though I know that I cannot speak with you directly. My words cannot reach you as they can reach another human being. And still I want to tell you this:

I miss you. I desire your presence and bodily proximity. The million ways in which I encounter you, and have encountered you in the past, I am now missing. And I am trying to find you on different places on this earth, to meet you again in your different facets, travel to your different shores. I love your surface, which changes constant colors and textures, mirroring the sky and following the wind that touches it. I love the way you reflect the light, or swallow it in your depths, the way you move, your sound when your waves crash on the land, how you surround my body leaving your salty traces on it. And even though you seem to be present – systemically present – in so much of what is happening around me it is still difficult to listen to you and hear your take on things. Your raised voice seems smothered somehow.

So I am working on an institute. It might as well be called the “institute of desiring ocean(s)”. I am having conversations with people where I try to make you present in the room(s) with us.

I plan to visit scientists, swimmers and sailors, divers and fishermen, fellow artists, family and strangers. The conversations start by telling stories of the ways in which we encounter you. How your presence affects us. How exactly we carry you with us.

To those conversations I bring with me some objects: microphones, two speakers, a pencil, a notebook, a water bottle, a flashlight. To those objects I bring, some others get added belonging to my hosts: a beanbag, a sofa, sand. All enter the conversations and influence them in their own way.

I already have been talking to some friends, and you seemed to appear in one or two cases. Do you remember this? It was nice to see you again.

Love, Marialena

## Conversation 1 (Luisa):

### On Finding (the Institute)

Dear!

Dear Luisa,

A soft wave gently arriving at the sands. Some parts rustle on the left, some water particles chortle delightful on the right. all at once but never the same.

”” ” “” “

The entire source of memories come to mind.  
A whole range of different sound qualities whisper in my ear.

” ” ”” “

My tongue wants to grasp the unique taste of salt on my lips.  
My eyes long so see an unfinished horizon.  
Stable through all the movement that it inherits.

“” “ “” ” ”

Endless sparkling reflections of the sun.  
Playing a notation navigated by the waves.

”” ” “”” ” ”

An amazing unknown somewhere out there.  
Far and deep.

”” “”” ” ” “ “

Inhabited by animals, plants, stones, ships, humans, ferries.  
Inhabited by dust, oil, chemicals.  
Employed and independent beings.  
Crossing each other within engaged traffic.



## Conversation 2 (Ekaterina):

### On Courage and Perseverance

Dear Marialena,

Dear Ekaterina,

I admire your ambition to create an Ocean institute. Somehow the contrast between you- initiator of the institute- and the immensity of the ocean, and with it the amount of personal encounters, is quite radical. I wonder what is larger- the internal life of the ocean or the myriads of stories about the ocean people keep in their memories and the lives it has changed...?

Saying this I would like to ask you- where do/will you find courage and perseverance in keeping such an ambiguous and intangible body and organization working?

It seems so huge for one person to sustain its functioning. Are you thinking of collaborators or institutional partners? Does your institute consider recruiting new dedicated and passionate agents? What is the future of the Ocean Institute? And how can we help?

You ask about courage and perseverance to initiate and keep the ocean institute alive. I am interested in the personal character of this question, which is asking for the strength of my body, mind and soul to bring about an institute as art work. Usually for funding applications, for example, this physical, emotional and psychological strength is often something that is taken for granted. As if an artist has an inexhaustible reservoir of energy and passion that she can always access and put to work...

It is true at the moment I don't have much energy at all for coping with the multiple challenges I face- not only regarding the ocean institute but also the bureaucracy of my personal life. The simple fact of having moved from one country to a neighboring country exhausts me. A simple displacement of 3 hours worth of train travel and its consequences is bringing me to my limits. So imagine the consequences of a constant flux and infinite movement the ocean implies. How to deal with that?

The truth is, with this institute I am trying to change the principles according to which I work. To not think of the institute so much in terms of production or creation but rather in terms of transformation or exchange. What if I conceive of the institute not as something new I have to give birth to, but as something already present I am exploring and transforming? The institute is not about building something out of nothing but about re-connecting and relating to something already present. It's about restoring (human) relations to oceans and with this, restoring connections to worlds. This practice of "worlding" actually gives me a lot of energy; it feels curing, in a certain sense. Worlding- not necessarily in the sense of making worlds, as in reconnecting with the world(s) of which I am/we are. The image of weaving comes to mind here and the fact that the spider woman, the weaver per se, is one of the key figures in Amerindian mythologies. Which brings me to the philosophy of Perspectivism of Viveiros de Castro. Here I quote a passage from his text „Exchanging Perspectives: the Transformation of Objects into Subjects in Amerindian Ontologies“:

„The idea of creation ex nihilo is virtually absent from indigenous cosmogonies. Things and beings normally originate as a transformation of something else: animals, as I have noted, are transformations of a primordial, universal humanity. [...] The idea of creation/invention belongs to the paradigm of production: production is a weak version of creation but, at the same time, is its model. Both are actions in — or rather, upon and against — the world. Production is the imposition of mental design on inert, formless matter. The idea of transformation/transfer belongs to the paradigm of exchange: an exchange event is always the transformation of a prior exchange event. There is no absolute beginning, no absolutely initial act of exchange. Every act is a response: that is, a transformation of an anterior token of the same type. Poesis/Poesies, creation/production/invention, areis our archetypal model for action; praxis, which originally meant something like transformation/exchange/transfer, suits the Amerindian and other non-modern worlds better. The exchange model of action supposes that the subject's "other" is another subject (not an object); and subjectification is, of course, is what perspectivism is all about.“ (p.477)

I was thinking of contributing some documentation material of my own encounters with the ocean from the last year.

Here it is!

[see images on p 100]

### Conversation 3 (Shervin):

#### On Water(s)

Dear Marialena,

Dear Shervin,

Please gather these things first (you will need all of them for my questions)

One sheet of white A4 paper

A couple of colored pen(cil)s

One bottle of Spa water (50cl)

One teacup of tap water

One glass of filtered water

One glass of salt water (1/2 salt)

One bottle of Bru water (50cl)

My initial response to your score was quite critical and resistant [...]. The fact I had to buy things and the effort and time this would involve angered me. What is more, I did not see the question in it [...].

Still I wanted to try to fulfill it. It took me almost one week before I bought the waters -Spa and Bru. I did not own a water filter, and I decided it was too expensive to buy one for this purpose, so I replaced filtered water with tap water in action 3. Other than this I tried to follow the instructions as precisely as I could.

**Action One - walking - Primary situation:**

Find your favorite street in your neighborhood and walk there for 5 min. Come back home and drink half the Spa water in one go. Draw a line on the paper (choose the pen(cil) color and line thickness carefully). When you finish the

drawing, slowly drink the rest of the water.

Action Two - Rest situation - Essential movement:

Find the best and most comfortable position for you and drink the tap water.  
Draw a line on the paper (choose the pen(cil) color and line thickness carefully) .

Action Three - moment of time - Present - Future :

Lie down in your bed and think about future actions. When you feel thirsty, drink one glass of filtered water. Afterwards: draw a line on the paper (choose the pen(cil) color and line thickness carefully) .

Action Four - Energy - Decreasing - increasing :

Try to drink one glass of salt water slowly while you are walking in a park or any green space in Brussels. Afterwards: draw a line on the paper (choose the pen(cil) color and line thickness carefully).

Action Five- Approach-Withdrawal :

Choose an action and consider:

The action requires approaching (an)other person(s)

The action demands withdrawal from the other person(s)

Before you start to do the action, drink one bottle of Bru water.

It is very important to follow the structures from One to Five.

It took me two to three days to complete the steps of the score in the right order. Doing them made me realize most of the steps could be integrated in my everyday life without almost any change in my routine. I internalized the score and it was just a matter of defining the action for myself and drinking (the specific) water. When I walked down my favorite street, the last five minutes of it was part of the score, when I was laying on my bed thinking what I want to do for Easter I just had to realize it was part of the score and drink the filtered/tap water afterwards. Going for a walk in the forest I took some salt water with me to drink, walking down the street I drank the Bru and approaching and distancing myself from a passer by was part of the score.

I can relate to this experience with what I was writing in my answer to Ekaterina about the (art) work, not as an act of production, but the transformation of something (into something else). What happened during the enactment of your score wasn't a creation of a „new“ thing but the transformation of how I perceived my everyday life and activities. Other transformations were also involved: the transformation of water -whichever water- into bodily fluids, for example. Also, most strongly with the drinking of the salt water, the feeling with every glass of water I drink, the ocean is entering me, and I am becoming it. This is happening daily. In the end I enjoyed the poetry inherent in the slightly absurd situation of carrying three different water bottles with me for three days or so.

**After the action: draw a line on the paper (choose the pen(cil) color and line thickness carefully).**

**Please send us the lines you drew with an explanation of your choice of colors and line thickness.**

Regarding the choice of colors and line thickness: I used the only 5 colored pencils I found in my pencil case and decided to sharpen all of them to the same approximate thickness. The choice of color for each action was intuitive so I think any attempt to rationalize it here would be inadequate.

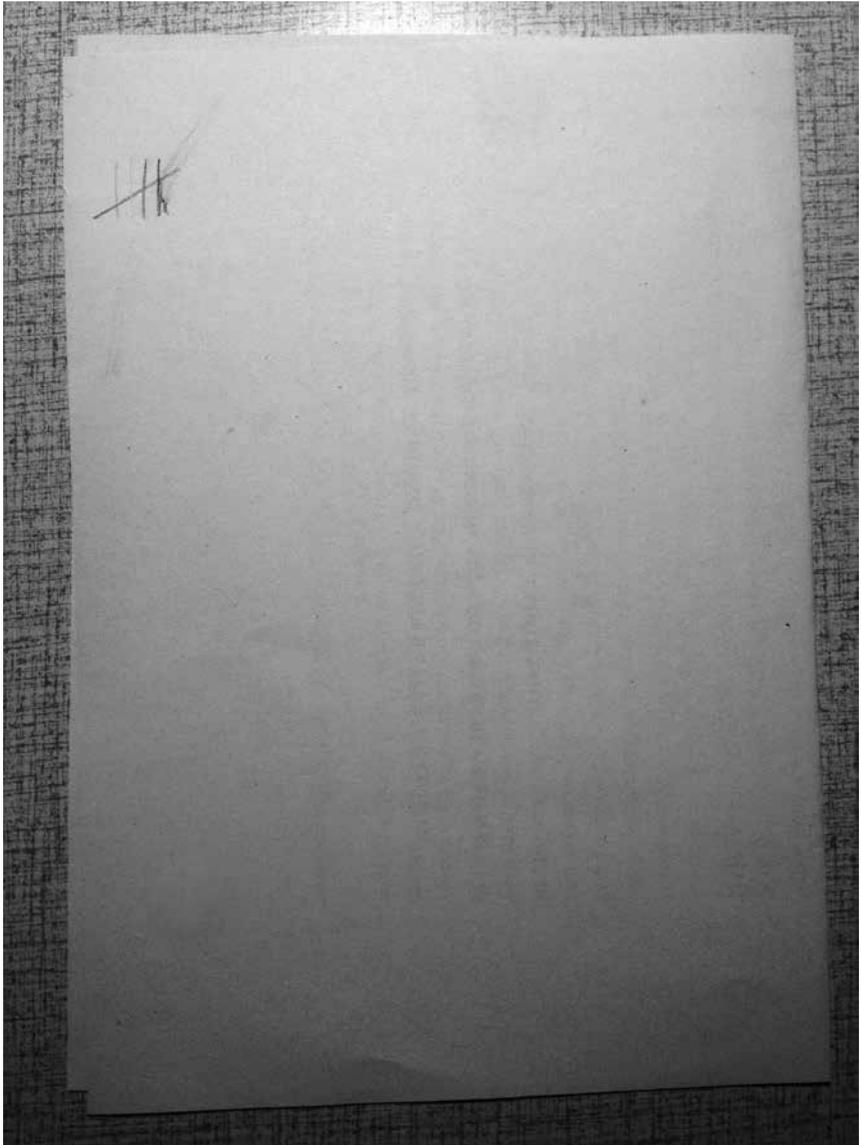
However, I still don't really see the question in your score [...]. This is not really an answer but more of a description of what the score set forth.

**Best**

Best,

**Shervin**

Marialena



## Conversation 4 (Eunkyung):

### On Weaving

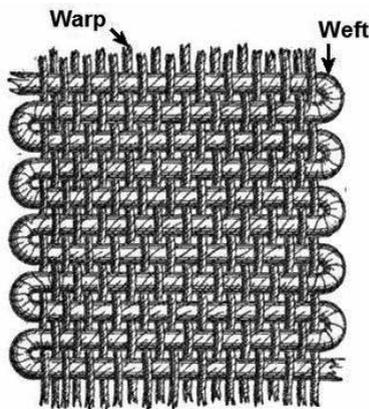
Hello, dear Spiderwoman working for the Ocean Institute, Marialena!

My dear Eunkyung,

[...] [B]ack to your answer to Ekaterina's question- I somehow found it interesting to see your way of positioning yourself as a weaver for your artistic practice. Weaving is a really good way to deal with the immensity of the oceans; like you mentioned, the constant flux and infinite movement that oceans imply and its possible stories.

Your Ocean Institute seems to be operated by processes such as summoning, choosing, collecting and archiving many different human relations to the Oceans. Your role as a weaver is way of approaching the Oceans.

[...] Are there any specific rules in your weaving process? What is your warp and weft in the Ocean institute, for example,?



What is the contact point between the two— would that be where you are?

1. Rules of the Weaving Process (micro-level)

I would say the ocean conversations are the thread of the ocean institute. I think your question about the rules of weaving relates to how different threads are linked to each other. It therefore addresses the dramaturgy that guides the development of the work.

The conversation itself has simple rules:

*Preparatory Steps*

- Ask a person if/ when they would like to have an ocean conversation.
- Make an appointment.
- Visit them at their living or work space.
- Bring some instruments that can be used if necessary (sound equipment and water bottle for example).

*Structure of the conversation*

- Briefly introduce the work and the guiding motivation behind it.
- Ask mainly two questions:
  - a. about one's relationship with the ocean.
  - b. about an element of ocean that is particularly relevant and the person would like to demonstrate.
- Take notes to document the conversation.
- Give all your attention to the person and engage in the conversation.
- The conversation can remain informal and light throughout.

- During the demonstration try to support the person to realize their demonstration as best as you can.

**Weaving makes patterns; I wonder what specific pattern or what kind of big picture you would like to design or explore through this institute?**

### 2. Rules of the Weaving Process (macro level)

At the moment, I am looking for the patterns that arise from the different conversations. What connects the different conversations to each other? Or, in what way does one conversation lead to another conversation?

I am looking for things repeating between conversations.

- Words that repeat lead to specific summonings. Common words could therefore be one element connecting the conversations.

- Some conversations are connected by the use of the same instrument for demonstrations. Specific instruments that repeat also lead to specific summonings.

- It is often the case one person I have a conversation with leads me to another person to contact for a conversation. This also created a pattern connecting conversations to each other by following the bonds connecting different people.

**How does this institute affect us? How can we recognize its value, and develop a new understanding of the Oceans through it? Yes, we all have a desire to learn more about an 'insufficiently known entity' (at least for me, it somehow gives a feeling of liberation!).**

### 3. Relevance of the institute on a broader scale

The relevance of the institute lies in its attempt to communicate the knowledge that lies inherent in the encounter with the ocean. This encounter the institute understands as taking place between two subjects and not between a human subject and a non-human object. What are the implications of this encounter and what tools can be used to reflect upon it?

In essence, the political significance of the institute lies in its attempt to summon the ocean as a subject. I will continue thinking about this question

and I hope the answer will appear after the first two points become somewhat clearer...

Lastly, I also want to contribute one of my beautiful oceans I encountered on a hot summer day in 2016. Enjoy.

[see images on p 101]

Warm oceanic energy for you

Many kisses,

Eunkyung

Marialena

## Conversation 5 (Esther)

### On waves

Hi dear,

[...]

Thinking about the movement of the waves and the parallelism with how the conversations are linked to each other, I'm curious to know how does this happen. Could you elaborate more? If the conversation with someone leads you to another person with whom to have another conversation, I'm wondering if this second person is directly addressed in the first conversation or, how is the connection made? Is it about the memory that is 'summoned' in the first conversation? Or how do you make the connection between them?

Sometimes the planning of the conversations evolves organically, sometimes more systematically. So it can be that one person, P.H., for example, directly urging me to talk to G.V. Which I then do. So I get in contact with G.V. and say that P.H. said we should talk. If she agrees, then we organize to meet.

It can also happen that during my conversation with someone, I mention a previous conversation because I see a similarity in the storytelling. Or in the elements mentioned for the demonstration. In the case of G.V., I used the demonstration we came up with P.H. as a „warm up“, in order to enter the new demonstration. I did this because I found a great similarity in their descriptions. Similarly, in the conversation with L.M., I used the demonstration of P.H. as a warm up.

I am therefore interested in all the different ways in which one conversation can weave into another conversation. As a result of this weaving, a meeting between two people suddenly starts including more people and things than was initially intended. This is inspiring also in terms of what it means to archive. If previous conversations enter the current conversation then the archive is already present in the conversations themselves and not something that takes place „outside“ or „after“ them.

Regarding the connections between the conversations- I'm also thinking about the moments of presentation, when you open up the conversations, reading them to a wider public and performing the demonstrations. How do you make the decision to

share some conversations and not others? How do they speak to each other? Is it also about weaving? What is the dramaturgy of that moment?

At the moment, I don't have many conversations written down. So I presented the only two that I have. But indeed, the documentation of the conversations forms an archive and it is a very important question of how to choose which part of the archive to present. I imagine I could choose to present the conversations that are connected to each other in different ways. Like in a dictionary, where you have a term that is defined, and then related „connectives“. How the connectivity is defined is still something to work on.

In the presentation at PAF I received the Ocean in a very nostalgic and 'nice' way. I have the feeling that it has to do with your own experience of it, and your own relationship to it. I'm wondering if you are aware of that, if that ideal notion of the ocean is what you want to present to us. Are you interested in the 'dark side' of the Ocean? How do you deal with storms, solitude, vastness, depth and darkness that are also linked to it? Ocean has a very powerful energy that can also be very destructive and embrace experiences that are not easy to revisit. Are you interested in dealing with those experiences also? If so, how do you build a safe space for that? How do you support the person 'in' the conversation and how do you work with that in the moments of sharing? And then, what is your role?

You address the openness of the archive towards traumatic ocean experiences. More generally, you ask how the archive can include experiences of ocean that are very different from my own. How can I make a proposition, which leaves the space open for a radical rethinking of this proposition, rather than just reproducing similar visions to my own? This is a crucial question I have to address.

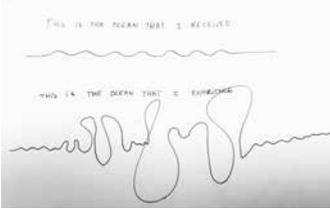
Your question also suggests becoming aware of the practice of the conversation almost as a form of therapy- an ocean therapy. I already asked a friend, who is currently doing her masters in art therapy to help me out with this one...

As a personal interest, I would like to see all the faces of the Ocean present in the institute. This shaking energy can add another layer to the moments of conversation and also to the dramaturgy of the performance. Waves are not always homogenous, they change size and shape, turn into storms, move things, shake the surroundings and after they may remain calm again. Also, regarding the audience in these moments of presentation, limiting the conversations you share to a very specific relationship to the ocean may close or limit the summoning. For some people the summoning may not work since they can't or don't want to relate to those experiences. As I under-

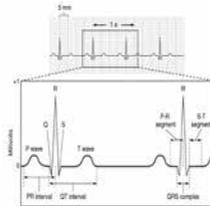
stand, the summoning happens in the connections that each person is able to make through their own history revisiting the Ocean at the present moment and not only through the conversations, but in the moments of presentation. I am thinking of what Jonathan was saying regarding this: in the moment you performed the demonstrations, he felt excluded from the common summoning because personally he had an experience of ocean that was very different from the ones demonstrated.

I agree.

I send you a sketch of my own experience with Ocean.



Coming from you, your sketch reminds me of an EKG (from the word ElektroKardiogramm in German). First case would be the regular pattern of a heart beat.



The change looks very similar to the change of pattern during a heart attack.



Waves of electricity in this case represent the rhythm of the beating heart. I was wondering if you would like to have a conversation about this. Until then, I'll try to get better at dealing with it.

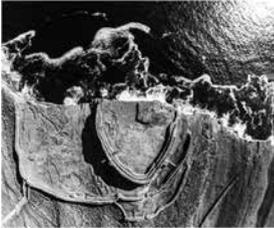
Waving kisses back,

Esther

Marialena



Buatheh, Iran, Sharvin, 21.02.2018



Inis Mór, Ireland, Eazier, Horizon, 10.07.2017



Hydra, Greece, Sound (Haves), Maniatis, 22.07.2017



Breskens, Netherlands, Dream (Nightmare), Esther, 29.07.2017



Big Sur, USA, Immensity, Caroline, 13. & 22.01.2018



Estrada de Camburi, Camburi, Brazil, Salt, Veridiana, 25.07.2017

Lisbon



Audresselles



Mumbai



Nice



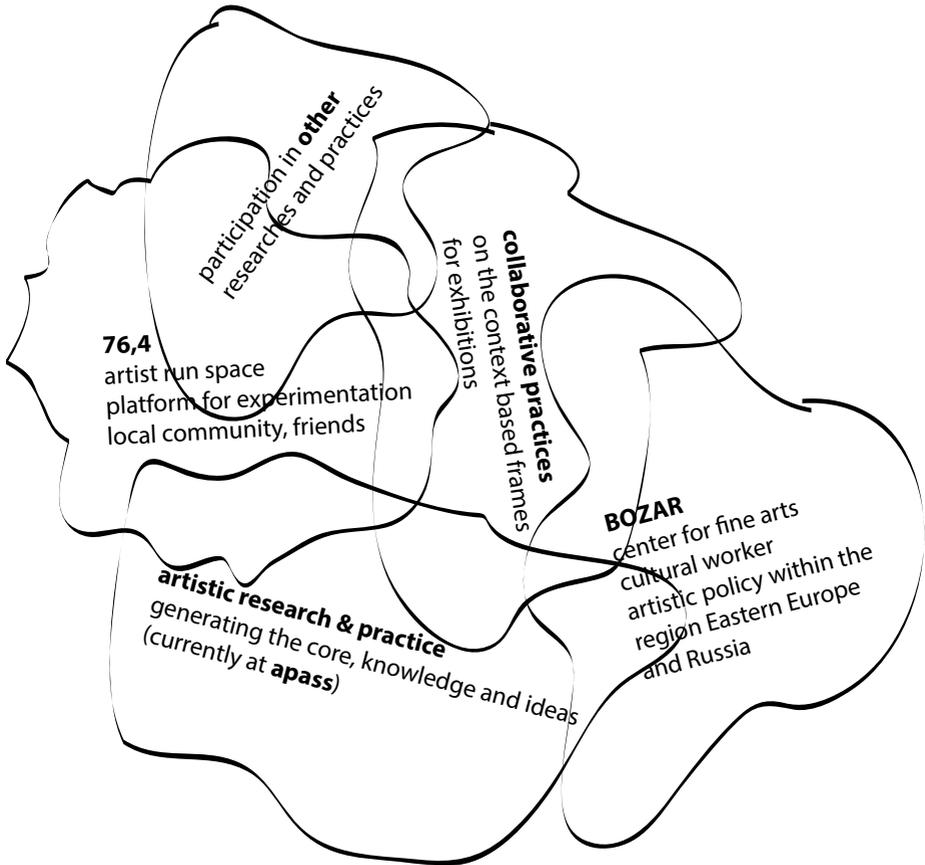


## **Ekaterina Kaplunova**

During the Score practice I adopted a way of reflecting on the received questions through graphic diagrams, providing additional information necessary for reading these drafts. This section is organized according to this principle.

## DIAGRAM 1

A.



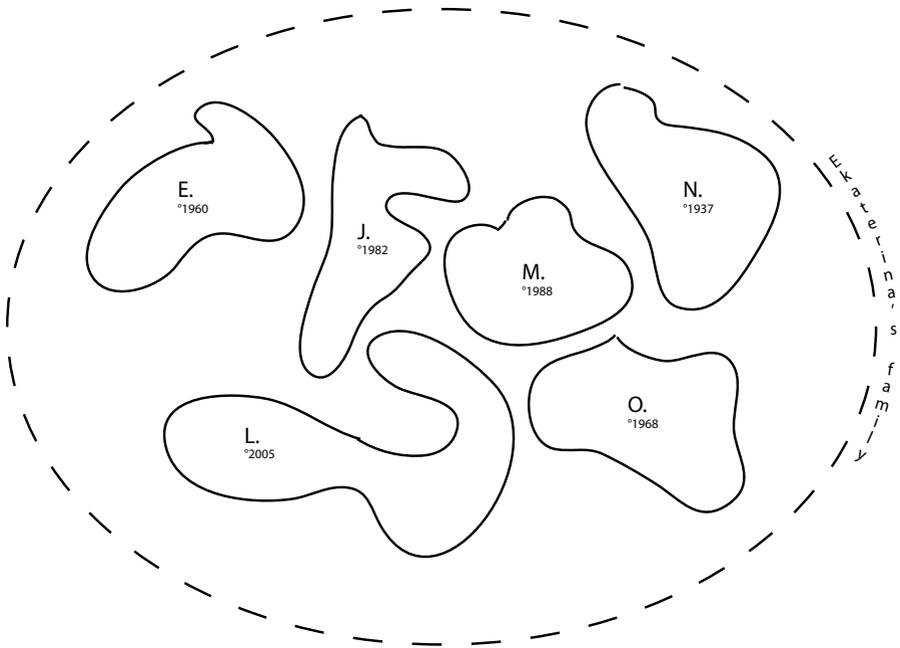
These two diagrams establish a matrix consisting of two vectors that direct my current research at a.pass.

A. The diagram represents me as a 'composite artist' at the current moment, combining different practices, functions and roles in various art institutions within the cultural field.



A 'composite artist' is a multi-footed character that effectively blends different aspects of life and work together, appropriating multiple artistic skills, innovative strategies and flexible positions in order to maintain the function of the symbiotic organism of artthood, where economy and creative process are interlinked and also generate each other.

B.



B. The diagram represents the subject of my multi-shaped research, developed at a pass – 6 semi-fictional characters based on conversations with 6 women from my family that represent different generations, living during the Soviet Union period, its collapse and the aftermath in contemporary Russia. The research project addresses socio-political shifts, cultural lineage, performativity of gender roles, autobiography and fiction.

I developed a specific method of conversation emphasizing the nature of knowledge collected

through oral tradition of storytelling. The method proposes an interviewee randomly selects cards with keywords related to different subjects addressing personal experience and positioning.

After collecting the material I began to transform it, adding a speculative layer by translation, editing and recomposition of it. Those 6 female portraits transformed into characters O. N. J. L. E. and M. that form a complex interactive ecosystem.

## EUNKYUNG'S QUESTION

As I understood it, there are two crucial elements of your project:

Ekaterina's identity crisis (in Europe, 2018) and the stories of 6 women in Ekaterina's family (from Soviet society until current Russia).

I would like to know more about "the bridge" between the two.

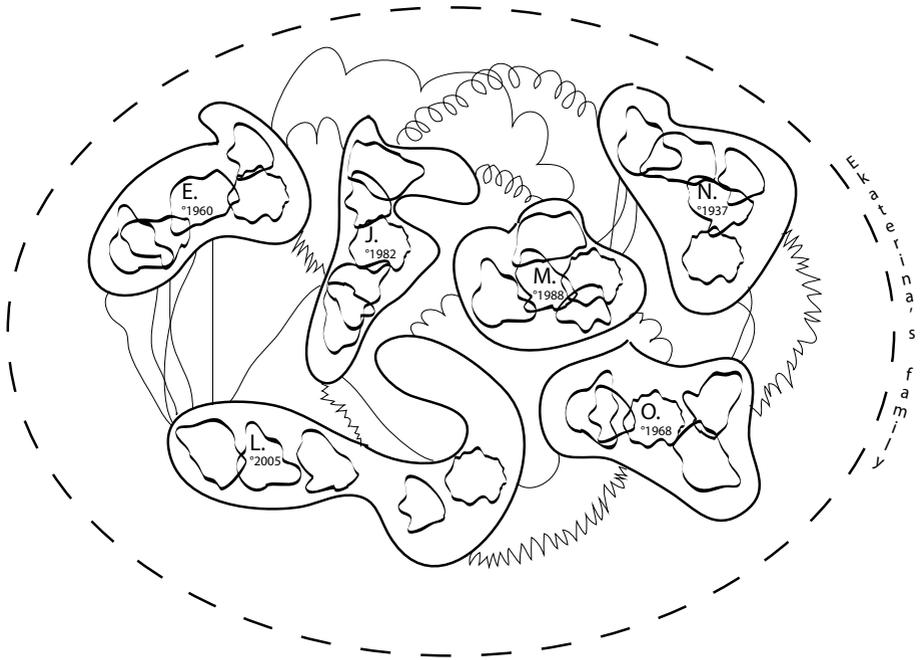
- How does your current situation bring you back to your family stories, especially those of women?

In other words, what caused you to think about the relationship between the collective women stories in your hometown and your current identity crisis?

- Where is your position among the 6 different generations of women (with the big time & geographical gaps) and how do you connect them with your own stories? Or with what kind of thread would you like to weave them together?

- How the gesture of 'rewriting' women from your family affects your current crisis?

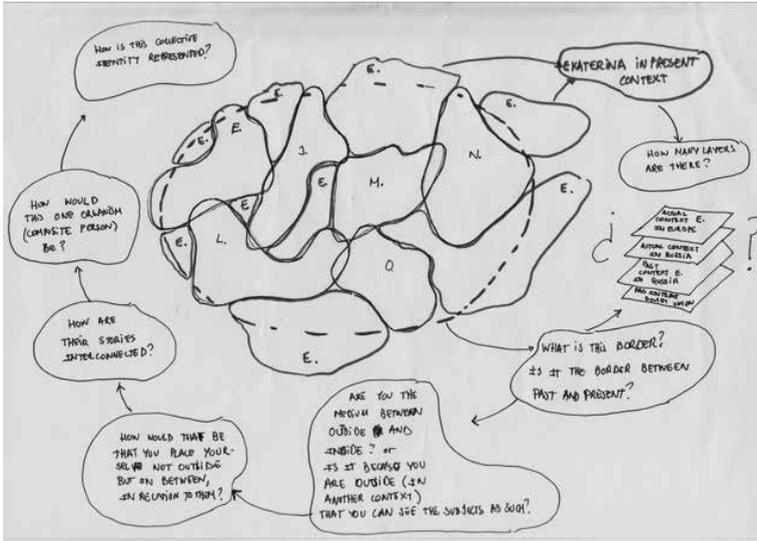
DIAGRAM 2



By re-encountering 6 women in my own family and their relationship to the history of the country, gender roles, family, generations and feminism, I searched not only to bridge them through time and geography, but also to inscribe myself somewhere in line with their experience. My desire was to interlace my own identity in this

ravel of personalities to find affinity not only by consanguinity, but also in relation to every individual. They are all individuals, but all together they represent a collective identity, some sort of body that carries distinct, but incorporated personal stories.

# ESTHER'S QUESTION



In your previous question you were asked about the bridge between the two main elements of your research, your identity crisis and the connection with the stories of 6 women in your family. As I see it right now, there is still a differentiation: two identities drawn separately but interconnected and a desire or an approach to merge both into one character combining the seven identities (the 6 women + your own story). Here I send you a question around this desire I sense, in the format of a drawing, and the question above all would be: how can this be envisioned or embodied as a collective identity?

DIAGRAM 3

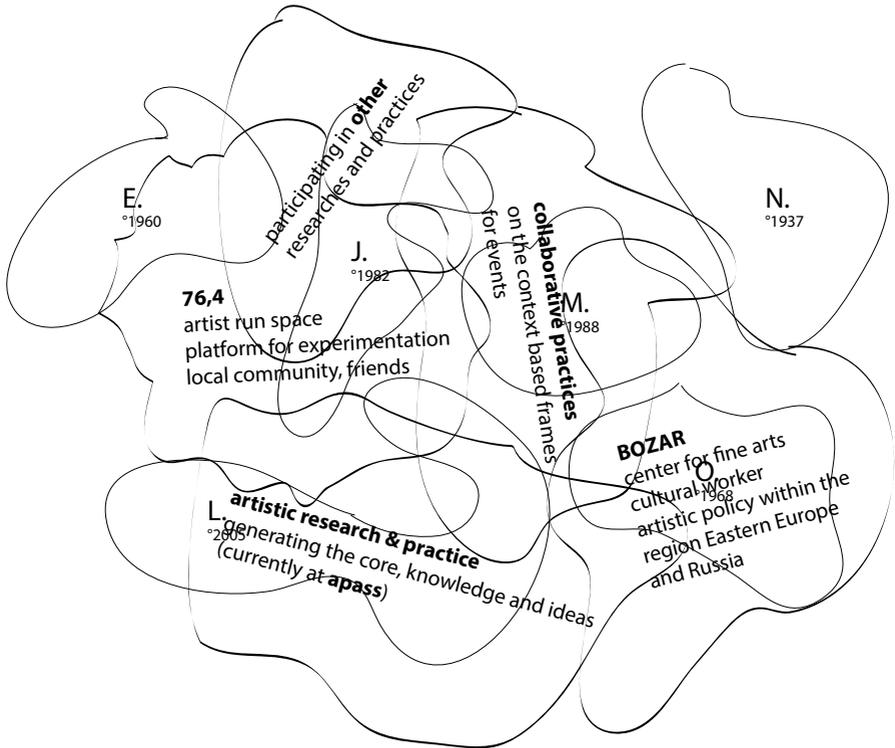


Diagram A. ('composite artist') superimposed on diagram B. (research) reveals common patterns of self-instituting & research methodology. The multitude of narratives within each character and the various institutional fields supporting a 'composite artist' allow us to perceive them as relational containers. Each container has a particular form, dimension and agency. An assembly of those con-

tainers generates a certain system or ecology, that in turn reveals a common symbiotic pattern.

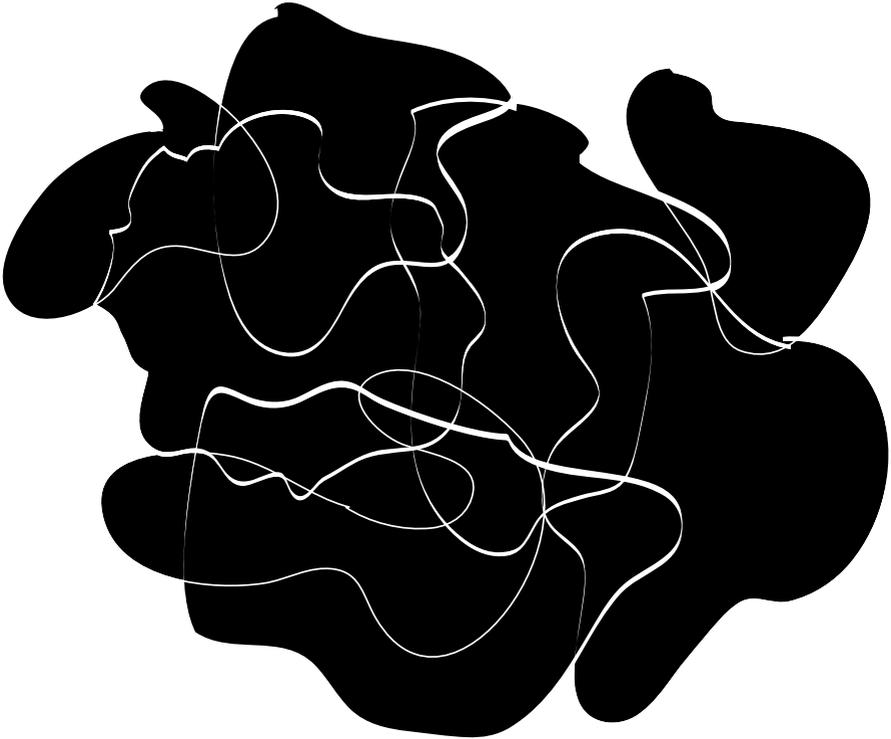
Unlike the academic research methodology which would require me to treat myself as one of the subjects of research and add a 7<sup>th</sup> character, I choose to use the pattern of my own composite identity as a measuring apparatus.

## MARIALENA'S QUESTION

Regarding composite selves: it appears there are two main threads with which you are struggling; a) your „self“ as an artist/ curator/ cultural worker and b) your „self“ as a woman in a Russian context in relation to women in your family.

Could you imagine what else you are made out of that goes beyond the blood relations you have with your family and your self? I am thinking mainly of non-human actors that shape who you are. How would those elements enter into the diagrams you make? I guess I am proposing an even greater complexity in the system that might allow for a disequilibrium and a shift away from the family as a factor shaping identity...

## DIAGRAM 4



Family is a pattern I chose to work with. It is one of the doors in my research through which I access the narratives, the history and the self.

It's a short cut, the tool-model with which I'm 'hunting', like a fish net or a sieve that filters my catch.

And besides the blood relation it is full of non-human factors: songs and multi-coloured dresses, dinners and the smell of blossoming acacia, hamsters and parrots, steppes and blackcurrant, tulips and snow, toasts and tears, tape-recorders and oak shelves, watermelons and fur coats, football and kisses, mint oil and flies, sheep, pigs

and chickens, fake Barbie and cathode ray tube TV set, boiled potatoes and patterned wallpapers, dogs that were never yours and cats that were never yours, pollen and copper tanks filled with water, ballet shoes and chewing gum, black coffins and dusty window panes, fallen airplane and sunny balcony, long roads and white cars, low houses and candle lights, accordion and nightmares, fevers and duvets, dry soil and soft wind, thick books and red dial phones, stinky ointments and bad news, thyme teas and ugly hospitals, fresh paint and cuckoo clock... It's all there and is part of it.

## SHERVIN'S QUESTION

Today while thinking of your research, Burnt Norton by T.S.Eliot came to my mind:

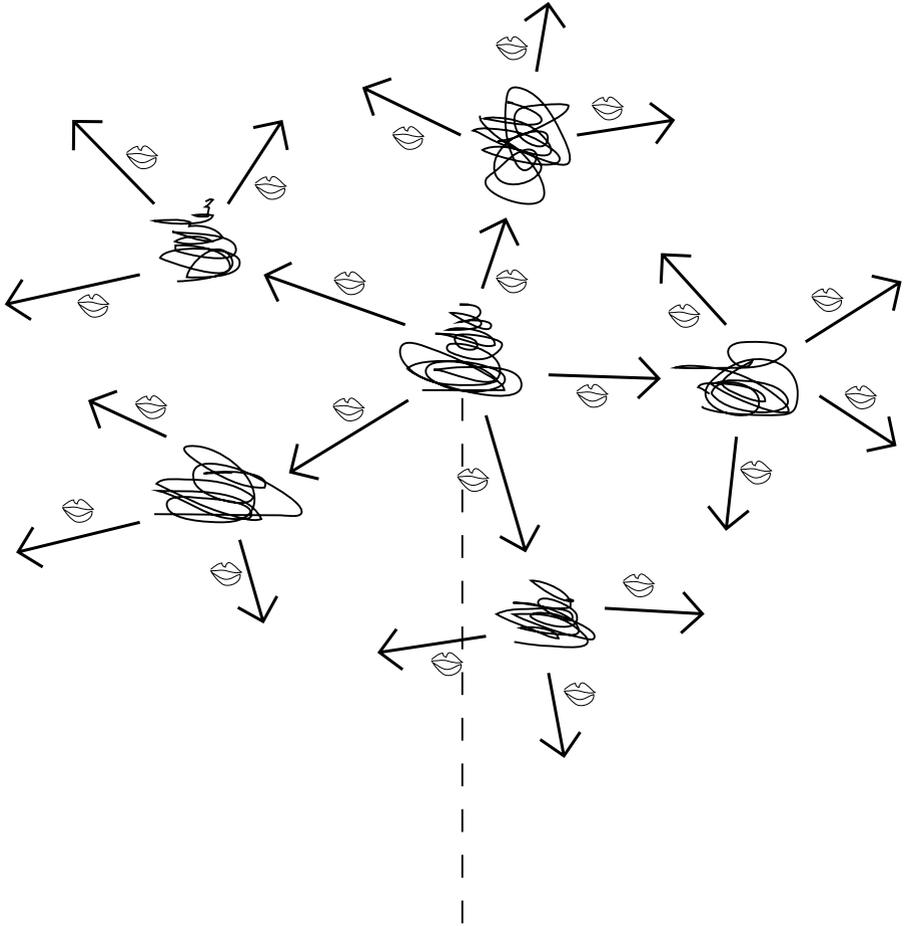
*Time present and time past  
 Are both perhaps present in time future  
 And time future contained in time past.  
 If all time is eternally present  
 All time is unredeemable.  
 What might have been is an abstraction  
 Remaining a perpetual possibility  
 Only in a world of speculation.  
 What might have been and what has been  
 Point to one end, which is always present.  
 Footfalls echo in the memory  
 Down the passage which we did not take  
 Towards the door we never opened  
 Into the rose-garden.*

I am always fascinated the way you are using varied media from words, to sculpture and installation... in your work.

My main question: what is the relationship between the visual, physical, tensile properties of materials and the unfolding of time in your research project?

Using the oral tradition of story telling I imagine your project has a special time-line- what does it look like? What is its role and function? What are its parameters or limits?

DIAGRAM 5



The varied media related to the various languages I use in my work. I guess one could call it an attempt to find auxiliary artistic language constructed from the skills and knowledge we share with each other in a common contemporary reality. Our lives are blended, direct and boundless, hence my visual Esperanto-like handling of the subject.

~~When~~ it comes to oral tradition, narration and memory, time has little to do with linearity. The events, actors and their perceptions are being evoked in clusters out of the large fabric of life.

Time becomes complex. Memory is an instrument whereby its principle function creates fiction, speculating about the history. While history is linked to the chronology, universalized linear time, memory, conversely addresses time in a sensory and subjective way, re-writing itself every time, again and again.

The stories told leaning on personal memories form an ever-evolving and transformative web of parallel history where fiction and reality are inseparable.

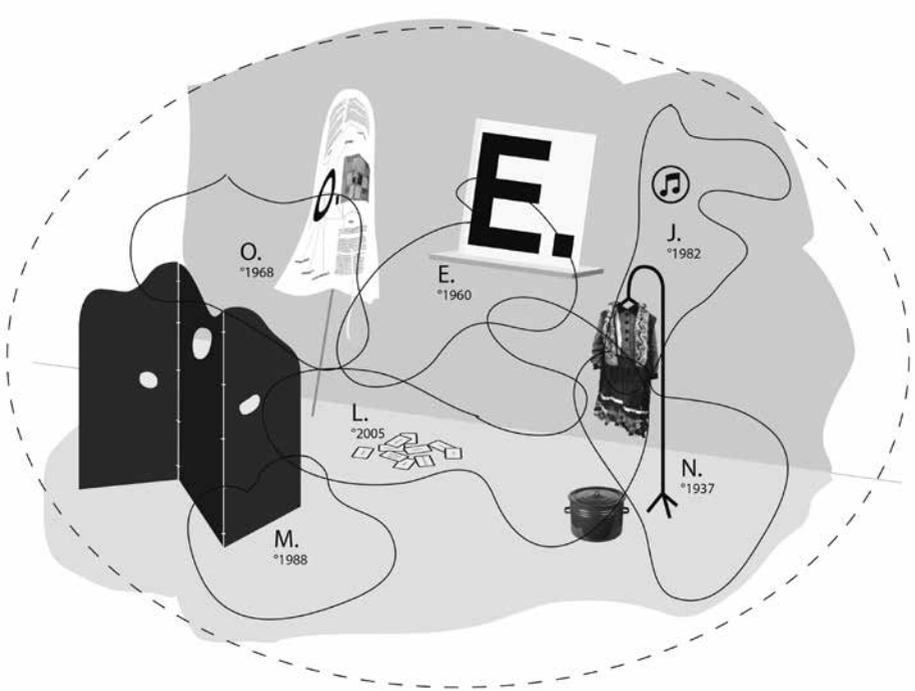
# LUISA'S QUESTION



Regarding the complexity of your diagrams- the circles overlapping somehow merge- I am finding moving elements in your drawing. My eye is permanently shifting ... striking from one form to the other - might this be a way to read your identity? - if yes, how would you approach it in artistic form?

Thereby, I am very curious about the mention of narratives and oral tradition that, as far as I have seen, are involved in the "research of identity"? ... regarding this oral tradition I wonder which way narration is in terms of language, voice, intonation a point in your work and, if yes, how would you explain its relationship to identity and/or crises, to culture, to feelings, to tradition, to present and to the past? Are you interested in approaching it through your work? If yes, in which way can you imagine it?

## DIAGRAM 6



Each subject of my research project requires a specific study approach and a relevant manner of representation. The materialized form of each character varies in medium and accessibility, depending on the essence of its identity. Here is where the figure of the multidisciplinary 'composite' artist will execute the final presentation of all 6 characters and the way they exist together in one physical space. The diagram 6 sketches the possible installation that stages 6 characters O. N. J. L. E. and M., represented by various means. The stage is a flexible scenographic backdrop that will feature a mini exhibition with

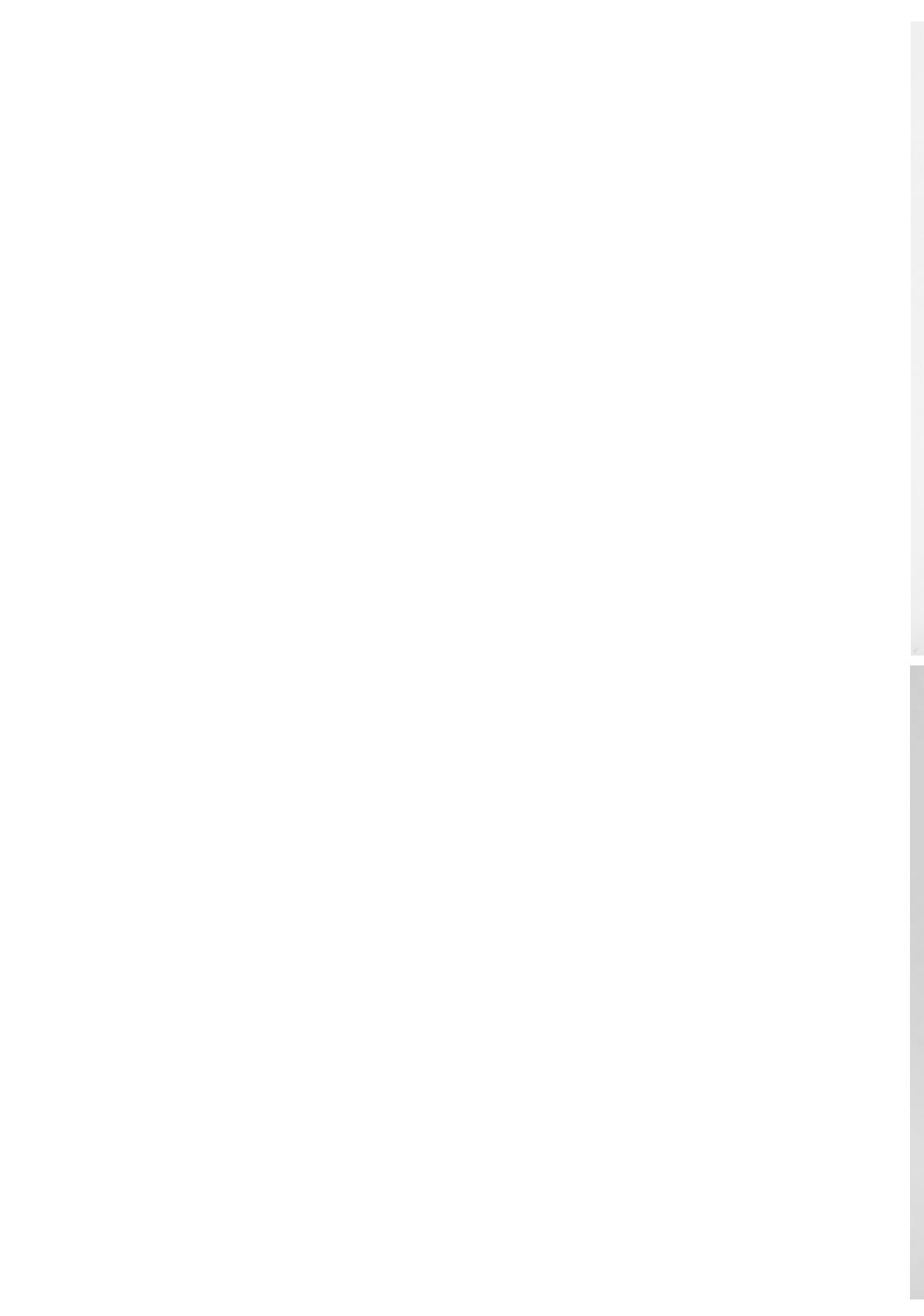
objects that echo the stories representing each character:

- O. – a stick-figure carrying a sheet of textile with printed mind map of the character
- N. – a performative costume and makeup substances, reconstructed according to the N.'s description
- J. – a song
- L. – a deck of cards with text fragments
- E. – a large-scale book with graphical narrative
- M. – a human size paravent-mask



## **Shervin Kianersi Haghghi**

The conversation about my work has started with an action (from my side) this was followed by a series of questions and answers in the form of a letter. I kept the original structure with the same order.







Dear Shervin

I hope this letter finds you well. Last Monday the six of us met for our first score meeting for end presentations. The proposed medium was writing and the proposed content of the text was our individual parcours (trajectory) during a.pass. In this framework you proposed the following (and I hope I can reconstruct it correctly here) your favorite letter was the letter “O”, you said. You put some cacao in a small ceramic container and passed it around. By starting the action you proposed each of us make a fingerprint with her index finger in the cacao and passes the container on. You took two photos to document this: one of the cacao without any traces of fingers or prints and another after the action, of the cacao full of traces. Before and after “O,” you said. Then you poured the cacao back into its small plastic bag, packed the ceramic bowl away, and all the traces were gone, left only in our memories.

I perceived your proposal as a generous and playful gift of cacao powder stuck to each of our fingers (and the almost childish pleasure of licking it). I also thought of it as a ritual of coming together as a small group, by each stepping, or rather fingering, over each other’s prints on the cacao.

I would be interested to know how this ritual of before and after “O” is related to writing for you. That is, how do you define writing as traces left by index fingers on a small pile of cacao powder? If this is writing, how is the letter O relevant in it? Why is it more relevant than other letters, for example, why is it your favorite? And, lastly, why separate the time “before” and “after” “O” ? I perceived “O”, for example, not just as a point in time, but as a line, a process of fingerprinting and tracing over others fingerprints and licking fingers in succession. So why not say during “O” instead, where “O” is a duration?

Best

Marialena



Dear Marialena

On January 3, 2018, at precisely 13:00, I was in a contemporary art centre in Marrakech.

It was sunny [outside]. As usual.  
The exhibition was in a dark space. As usual.

It was a very special moment. I can describe it, simply as a sad moment. I am sure it was sad, [because] I was sad. It was the kind of moment in which the sadness stems from a sense of disconnectedness from “everything”. A sense of being outside of everything. The sense an invitation to be a part of something was never extended. What would one call that sensation? To feel detached? The root cause of this sensation is not known. You are not even aware of what it is you wish to be part of. Maybe the thing is nothing but still, you would like to feel that you are part of it - by means of a position, a gesture, or a feeling. Even if that something is nothing.

I jumped out from the dark exhibition, into the courtyard, which was extremely sunny. I sat on the only bench, moved my face up towards the sun to burn my eyes. I looked at the sun and I took a picture of it without thinking, without being able to see anything. The light shined into my eyes and into the camera's lens. I took a look at the picture and it showed an “Oo” shape. I can send you the picture, if you'd like. When I saw the picture, the first reaction in my mind was “Oo”.

My mind's second reaction was to send it to G.N. I always do that when I feel detached. What would you call the child-like desire to be connected to someone special?

On January 3, 2018, at precisely 13:26, I sent my picture by WhatsApp to G.N.  
On January 3, 2018, at precisely 16:06, G.N replied by WhatsApp, and sent me “Oo”.

*How is it possible to enter into and observe an unknown and abandoned space without automatically thinking of a specific function and destination for it?*

The letter “O”'s geometrical figure has often provided a metaphorical expression for complex concepts, either philosophical, or historical.

Time, arguments, groups of people, or music normally proceed according to a linear order, but they can also be imagined to have a circular motion.



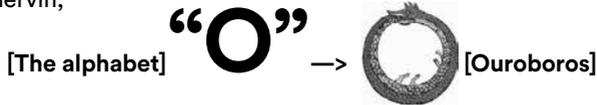
In opposition to any historicist or evolutionist determinism, to the typical timeline of a CV, or to the statistical graphs of economic growth, the metaphor of the “O” proposes an ecological and holistic vision. Where cause and effect, growth and decline are intertwined in a general balance, where one can make experience of the unexpected return of things, of sudden jumps and of supra-temporal connections between faraway events. The idea of moving in an “O” around something (either a problem or a concept) is commonly associated with the condition of fruitlessness. But in the development of a body of research, especially in an artistic context, the metaphor can help to frame and give meaning. Not only to a condition where work is shared in a non-hierarchical way, but to an approach that does not face a problem to find a solution, but rather to consider it from differing points of view. To find its abnormalities, its nuances, its ambiguities. The 360-degree approach can, in fact, be free from the restrictions of right-or-wrong judgments. It can linger in any characteristics of a given situation, and therefore be able to unveil, and use its different cognitive, expressive, and critical potentialities.

Best

Shervin



Dear Shervin,



and the Ouroboros, a dragon that continually consumes itself, is used as a symbol for self-reference.

Can you imagine your “360 degree approach” in relation to this symbol?

Are you trying to find a relationship of dynamics between your ‘self’ and a given situation?

“Sometimes making something leads to nothing.” by Francis Alÿs



Push a block of ice through the street ----- until the ice cube is suitable for a whisky on the rocks!

Doing something more than nine hours producing ‘nothing’. Shervin’s intervention, the artistic gesture, somehow reminds me of the power of the sentence “sometimes making something leads to nothing.” Here I try to reverse it: “sometimes making nothing leads to something (+powerful)(+political)(+critical)(+relevant) towards the world”. How do you think? Through the interplay of something & nothing/ doing& undoing/ relational politics& the environment...etc, then what specific given situation/context would you like to discover? Is it important for you? Is your metaphorical “O” as unknown/abandoned space related to existential matter in philosophy? Or could it be specified as a sort of social satire or institutional critique of conventional systems? Thank you for continually sharing the joyful experience of smelling the silhouette your invisible performance, cheers!



Best Eunkyung



Dear Eunkyung

Nothing Has More Value Than Nothing

Best Shervin



Dear Shervin

I would like to come back to your story from Marrakesh, the sadness you felt and the symbol you encountered through the lens of your camera.

Following the chronology, in the beginning it was “Oo” - there in the sunny Marrakesh in the snapshot you took and about two months later inside the glass house in Brussels we witnessed “O” formed by your hand with a cacao powder on the bottom of a mug.

There is a big significance in the transformation of the key symbol - from “Oo” to “O”. With its totality, solipsism and holistic perfection, “O” alone is detached from the bigger context, hermetic and, you could say, sad. Maybe even sad in the way you felt on the 3rd of January around 13:00.

So my question is why “o” is missing? Where is this powerful energy “O” and “o” charge each other with? The kind produced by the clinking rims of the cocktail glasses in the hands of friends?

Isn't it the relationship between these two almost identical symbols that form a multiplicity of lavish possibilities for linking to everything, something or nothing?

If “Oo” has a solar origin in your story, in which dimension does it exist and what is its surface - a circle or a sphere? I know it's not a circle - cacao powder is a transfiguring substance and definitely belongs to a multidimensional realm. At last - do “o” and “O” intersect like two intersecting disks that form a *vesica piscis* type of lens, reflected back in the viewfinder of your camera?

Does nothing+nothing=something? Or even everything?

Best

Ekaterina



Dear Ekaterina

Best

Shervin



Dear Shervin

To me, your work poses fundamental questions of the invisible structures and information in daily reality. By using the terms “invisible,” and “nothing,” and the letters “Oo”, according to your work, you turn attention and curiosity to what is behind, what is inside and what is within.

I take the letter “o” as a hole that is not empty but rather filled with the invisible. To experience, to imagine and furthermore, to think about, responsibility in art. In Zen Buddhism, as far I understand, “nothing” has an important relevance and is often mentioned combined with emptiness. The terms are not used in a negative manner, but moreover, confirm a co-existence with “something-ness.” There are two perspectives of nothing: nothing as necessary for something to exist, and the absolute nothing described as the place where everything exists. Therefore it is a pre-state of evolvment where all forms become actualized. (Kitaro Nishida).

“Nothing” is combined with the act of seeing; it is described as pure seeing and as a negation of all qualities - a seeing into a sort of inner truth - one’s inner truth. Or the ultimate nature of things. (Suzuki) Furthermore, it is explained as equal to “being” which approaches a non-dualistic experience that, as I understand, undermining hierarchies. (I also see a reference to your concern, in thinking of your explanation of the relational structures of public and artist in your work). What sounds far away as a philosophical concept here is meant to be experienced directly in daily life. Therefore I allowed myself to speak about it as I very much understand your work in this direction (please correct me if I am wrong).

For me, your gift of the “O” is more than just a letter. It is a circle that might be a circle, but could also be seen as an “O” filled. An active hole regarding holistic theories. A “document” revealing your experience in Morocco. A document is not only meant to archive but it becomes a piece of engagement and activation, therefore a continually ongoing work through which the concept of nothingness involves imagination as a motor that drives thought further behind what is unseen and unmentioned. Similar to what we experience in our daily life (conscious or unconscious).

If I take the second o of the original experience that you made in Morocco, to me, “Oo” in this form could be the mathematical “endless sign”. I know you did not mention it yet, but in terms of nothingness as filled “suchness,” could you see any relationship to the endless sign that occurs in the invisible? Could you see a relationship to it in your work with various layers of invisibility or invisible information? (in your way of documentation as an activating proposal that can go on and on...).

best, Luisa



Dear Luisa

Invisibility<sup>1</sup> is the topic, which of course runs all through the history of culture. All forms are the question of invisibility and visibility - presence and absence, full and void - or so called presence and so called absence - although quantum physics today will certainly say there is continuum of subatomic particles that are inter-acting<sup>2</sup> and therefore there is no presence and absence but continued movement of coming into the world. It is dependent how subatomic particles interact with matter.

Best

Shervin

1 Indeed, all around us is an invisible world of norms, thoughts, and behaviours - a world unspoken. My artistic medium is a kind of mimic, used, when warranted, to highlight fragments of the invisible world, with the aim of making them visible, of telling their story. Crucial, however, is that I purposefully bypass the traditional means of making them

visible ('documentation' or the recorded image). This is so the invisible transforms into visible imagery in a different way: through the imagination. Imagination is the doorway to the production of knowledge and artistic research, and I believe that the Invisibility activates our imaginations and gives more value on understanding the world that we are living in. To make invisible habits, behaviours and thoughts visible, I choose to make my artistic medium invisible. Which is to say, without using or recoding images directly as such the status and the creation of the image becomes visible in a different sense. In practical terms this means throughout my research and via my performances I am mapping out various forms and new developments in the question of documentation as performance. In order to create a form of communication between the

performer(s) and the audience and/or between the performer(s) and the public spaces I am examining different ways in which these parameters interact with one another in the means of invisibility and visibility.

2 The concept of Intra-action introduced by quantum physicist Karen Barad. She switches 'inter' (meaning 'among') for 'intra' (meaning 'from' or 'within'), thus changing how we understand the word 'interaction'. 'Interaction' signifies the existence of the individual is independent. However, 'intra-action' signifies that individuals exist within the materialization of relationships because of the existence of a given interaction.

The question in my work is not the absence of the work, but the possibility of jumping levels in between the daily and the artistic environment, in between the visible and the invisible, creating thereby a critical space to the meaning of image and information and being capable of transforming any recognizable artistic expression - painting or videos, performance or concerts - into a processing means rather than an end.

## Envisioned Situation

A conversation between Esther Rodríguez-Barbero Granado and Shervin Kianersi Haghighi. This conversation happens the first day after the End Communication in Decor Atelier while having a drink.

•

**Shervin: How is your feeling regarding the audience? How do you refer to people while giving a tour? An audience?**

Esther: There is no defined line for me between audience and the frame of the performance in the guided tours. There is no separation actually. If I refer to the audience as the people performing the trajectory with me, the audience is part of or inside the performative space. For me, the audience wouldn't be the people that are on the trajectory but the ones who are completely outside. The performative space is being built as we move forward. We, as a group, build it. We become a group by moving.

**Shervin: In your work, I see people as an audience. They are there by invitation to be in a clear frame and be part of your tour. They are aware of your work. In my work there is a separation between the public and audience.**

Esther: What is the difference?

**Shervin: The audience is there by invitation, they know they've accepted to see an art piece and are aware of their role. The public is there by chance. I use the term "spect-actor," created by Augusto Boal. It refers to the dual role of those involved in the process as both spectator and actor, as they both observe and create dramatic meaning and action in any performance. I also use the term "Actant" which is more connected to the role of performer. Actants are themselves and incarnate only themselves and have stabilizing behaviour according to their own nature and abilities.**

Esther: So in my work maybe the audience is the public, the public is actant.

Esther: They are there by invitation. I like to play with expectations and with the fact they don't know exactly what will be. It is clear they are doing a guided tour as I say it at the beginning but then, inside the tour, I like to break the boundaries of what is expected and also from a performance in the traditional way (theater space with stage, audience sitting and a separation between them and performative space).

Esther: At the presentation today I included your documentation in my tour. I was talking about chocolate and proposing to the audience to make

an action before eating the chocolate at some moments of the tour. What was your role when you were between the people and I was presenting your documentation?

**Shervin: I was an audience member during your tour but the moment you presented my work I witnessed it as the artist of the work. It is always important for me to be clear (specially for myself) to have a clear role as an artist. I decided to become an artist because I wanted to be free. Freedom is the condition of responsibility. To be an artist is not a question of form or content, it is a question of responsibility. I decided to work as an artist because only then can I be totally responsible for what I do.**

Esther: Do you know if it was clear to the audience (those who don't know your work) if it was your work?

**Shervin: I don't know, maybe yes. Because you mention my name before each action.**

Esther: In this case, where is your responsibility as an artist?

**Shervin: It is always the moment when I decide to do research and make a piece.**

Esther: When I present your documentation during my tour, where does my responsibility towards your work begin?

**Shervin: The responsibility began when you accepted the collaboration.**

Esther: It is a shared responsibility for me. We should understand each other's work and methodologies to find each other to find out where I can place your work, which was a documentation of your previous performances, inside my tour.

**Shervin: I agree it is a shared responsibility because, for me, it was important to present my documentation through someone else. I also wanted to be clear that it was a presentation of documentation and not an art piece.**

Esther: Do you think it was clear for the audience it was documentation and not an art piece?

**Shervin: I don't know, but after your tour some people asked me about the chocolate and I explained more about the idea.**

Esther: I am wondering how important it is to make it clear for the audience?

**Shervin: It is a presentation of artistic research so it is important to be clear as much as possible. But if it were in an exhibition space, it would be different.**

Esther: I see each context, situation and piece as having its own audience.

The audience is a very important element of the work and research. It constitutes its core somehow. It is never separate.

**Shervin: How much do you feel responsible to your audience?**

Esther: I guess my responsibility is to build a safe space so they can follow me. Not only in the discourse but also in the movement. I always try to think of the necessary information needed to be able to follow me, so I try not to take things for granted. In becoming a group moving together, I have to give information so I can maintain their trust and we can go together. What is important is something underneath the information that has to do with the situation created.

**Shervin: I understand in your work you activate a certain curiosity, you always want to activate something-something that nobody has noticed before- how do you do that? Because in my work one solution is to filter information as much as possible.**

Esther: I am doing the opposite. I give all the information so I can create space for trust. I never know exactly what will happen. I have a script and some resources, but what is actually important is what happens every moment. There is a lot of improvisation actually. This implies a very vulnerable position. I always try to think of the worst scenario that could happen. I

think of everything that can fail and if that happens, what would I do? Let's say I always try to think of a plan B if everything fails. When I say a plan B I mean be open and aware of what is happening, so I can read the situation and respond to it. When I say failure I mean the capacity to get rid of what was already planned to adapt to a new situation that appears and I didn't expect. For example, during the tour when I was speaking about the fact a part of the entrance was used to stack the carpets when it was a factory, I asked someone to help me move a very big bench in the area so that we could see some inscriptions that remained from that time. When we moved it, some words appeared underneath that said 'Why did you move me?' The person helping me read them out loud and answered the question and started to explain why she did in a very funny way and people laughed. At that point I decided to continue her story, to include it in the next part of the tour. I could not foresee what people's reactions would be. I try to think what to do if nobody answers and the different possibilities of engagement that exist. I have an idea of what might happen but I am always surprised by what appears. I guess that is what I'm looking for: to actualize again and again the capacity for getting surprised by what is already there, of being curious. That is what I try to communicate. It's about dealing with findings, discoveries and the failure of not finding anything at

all, but being in a constant state of curiosity.

**Shervin: Error and failure are part of the process of growth and evolution in general, in contrast with the myth of perfection. Good to think how failure can be free from its own definition. Dealing with failure breaks the negative dogma and can open other possibilities.**

Esther: Mmm back to the question of the audience- what does it mean in your work?

**Shervin: The question of invisibility in my work started with the question of audience and its role in my work. In my practice there is a blurring of the lines between the artist and the audience in my performances (meaning their roles and their awareness of the roles are thrown into question), and the place of action, and even its precept, is no longer straightforward. I am interested in the audience as witness, with an aim to discover how the role of the audience can be displaced. Can a mere spectator become a 'spect-actor'? In what manner are the roles of the audience and the performer (pre)defined, and how can they be changed or transferred?**

Esther: What do these kinds of performances do?

**Shervin: It has to do with breaking**

**structures. I don't seek to create newly structured spaces. I like to invite all parties to be contributing participants in the laboratories of the in-between spaces. Meaning the questioning that shapes the thought processes of these amorphous spaces is limitless in possibility.**

Esther: Yes, for me this is also important. To break the existing structures and preconceptions of how different spaces and elements are used in daily life. To prepare for tours I do a series of "spatial practices" which are small performances at different locations in the building. I study how each space 'behaves' and what its performativity is. How is it inhabited? How can the different potentialities be speculated upon? These are the keys to define the different elements I use in the tours to design performative spaces. In this practice there is no audience and I see this is a strong connection with your performances.

# We are not from here anyway

A conversation between Ekaterina Kapunova (E.K.) and Eunkyung Jeong (E.K.J) As a method of having a conversation, we decided to select keywords relevant to our research, merge them, and use them as an apparatus enabling associative dialogue. The keywords: autobiography, patriarchy, composite, the self, play, memory, frame, narratives, individual vs. society, generation, constraint, role, pattern and fiction.



## INTRO – REARRANGING WORDS

E.K: ...The self somehow becomes a pivot from where our research expands to a larger scale, like concentric circles around the center. Through unfolding *the self* you can also discover the universal that belongs to a lot of people, like generation, or memory, or role, or individual vs. society. Somehow it is a kind of compact, compressed entity— *the self*. We work with this notion in different ways and it is a tool of the research- through life's trajectory and the implications around it.

**EK.J: Especially for artists, and for artistic research, understanding the self is at the core. The self is precarious in a way that is always affected by conditions where you are situated. I think it is a very useful tool to think about the world through this examination of the self.**

EK: I totally agree. I would say my method is to study the first or the second circles around the self, specifically for current research. The self is something unstable, always changing, always being affected by the surrounding factors.

**EK.J: In this sense, the question of 'individual vs. society' is quite connected. I often say I feel myself as a symptom of (something), for instance, a symptom of society, family, culture or religion etc. Everyone is individual but they are framed in several specific contexts of society. This is an undeniable connection.**

E.K: Somehow the frame, the constraint you brought up is interesting. Even if you try to escape the frame, which I think you also did by moving from Korea to Europe- there is always a new one to be confronted with, an inevitable overlapping of frames.

**EK.J: The people like you and I who left their hometown and live in different societies are confronted with different values and expectations...sometimes I have difficulty with it.**

EK: I thought about the word 'belonging': belonging to something, like groups, society, country, nation and gender. I also have difficulty feeling a sense of belonging. Anywhere actually.

**EK.J: Especially here in Brussels, now in a.pass, it is a multi-cultural environment. But how do you think about this multi-cultural thing? I feel sometimes**

**alienated from the idea in a way. For me, this is also a way of framing of society, closed to an illusion.**

EK: I agree it is an illusion. People from different origins live together and form diverse communities but it happens unintentionally. It is a naturally formed fabric and of course you don't immediately feel you belong. I wonder about the scaled down model of society, which is a nuclear family. I already find a difficulty to belong there.

**EK.J: Yes, the first constraint you encountered after your birth is the family. The notion of family is always a controversial topic for me. Especially the family in Confucian tradition based on patriarchy, a father equals a king or governor equals God. This kind of symbolic hierarchy in the family is the model of the nation. I was born into big family, more than 3 generations lived together. By experiencing the rapid industrialization and modernization of Korea, the family type transformed from the big family into the nuclear family. I experienced both. But still, the hierarchy including age and gender has not changed. The role of women is still supporting, serving and sacrificing to the androcentric system.**

E.K: Yes, In Russia, you could say there is a dominant patriarchal model but the daily functions of the family and the decisions made are the domain of women. For performance, they take over the role of a submissive, supportive female "on

the side", but in private daily life women can be very dominant. In this sense we can speak about an internal matriarchy. The multiple female roles and the ability to switch between them are the subjects I actually study.

**EK.J: It is about the capacity to embrace numerous roles.**

E.K: Yes. I guess the word 'composite' relates to this idea. I brought it up thinking about the position of a contemporary artist, being a multidisciplinary actor, combining different roles, functions, techniques within the cultural and artistic field. An identity that is generally never fixed, it is dynamic.

**EK.J: This suddenly reminds me of one quotation from Friedrich Nietzsche: "Do you know what Life is to me? A monster of energy...that does not expand itself but only transform itself...play of forces and waves of forces, at the same time one and many...; a sea of forces flowing and rushing together, eternally changing."**

E.K: A "monster of energy" is an interesting metaphor...

**EK.J: Life is indeed a monster of energy. Each individual is situated in the process of transforming, the identity cannot help but be dynamic, like you mentioned. In this sense, the capacity to survive in this monstrous energy is somehow very important.**

E.K: Like a survival method. I was intrigued by the word ‘monster’ actually, because ‘monster’ is also implying some sort of hybrid, composite creature. It is a mixture of human, animal and a sort of deity. I should think about the monster or a ‘monstrous artist’ - a freak of nature, an outsider, and at the same time, omnipotent creator, a prodigy.

**EK.J: Then, we can think about the role of capacity and fictional autobiography together?**

EK: Fiction is the way to escape the fixedness of your biography. As an example, I have to think about your presentation in PAF, when you talked about your name and an attempt to transform its meaning.

**EK.J: Yes, the meaning of my Korean name comes from Chinese characters. So, giving a name means selecting specific Chinese characters that construct the meaning of the name. I imagined the different combinations of Chinese characters for my name are pronounced the same, but written differently. I can then be liberated from the original meaning.**

E.K: Maybe it is the first constraint or frame you encounter. It is given and you have to carry it through your life. I also work with names, using constraint in representing the name. Each of the 6 women I interviewed transformed to a semi-fictional character has a name, but reduced to the first letter. I think it is also an attempt to rewrite those identities, or open them up through reduction.

**EK.J: In the classical novel, you name the people with initials as a way of entering the fiction.**

E.K: Exactly. It is about narratives. The identity is enclosed in the stories the character tells. The name doesn’t really change anything. It’s just a tag and a label to distinguish.

**EK.J: And what about ‘play’?**

E.K: Transforming stories is also a playful gesture.

**EK.J: For me, playfulness is very important as a tool. Somehow the heaviness of larger notions evaporates into lightness. I guess that’s the role of fiction and playfulness.**

E.K: Exactly, it is liberating! It is also in the nature of artist hood, in a playful, performative gesture of transforming reality with the potential to become political. When taking a distance from our conversation, I was wondering- did you think about the possible duration of the research on *the self*? How long can you occupied with this?

**EK.J: Duration. I think as long as I work on my research, the interest of the self goes on forever. What I’m always conscious and careful of is how relevant my interest is to the real world. The balance is important in not making a self-indulgent outcome.**

E.K: So *the self* is not at all a subject, it is the ground for research?

1. Performing Arts Forum in St Erme, France

EK.J: Yes. From the ground, how far I throw the ball to the world- this kind of thing. At the same time, I try to make my work or myself as an artist not be consumed in an exotic way and not fall into self-exploitation. It is tricky somehow, you know, we are not from here anyway.

E.K: Yes, this is the danger, not to misuse it. Just thinking - would you do the same type of work if you lived in Korea?

**EK.J: I always think about that actually. Of course, the physical distance makes us think about a thing differently. I would deal with the same subject in Korea but maybe from a different point of view. I'm thinking more about how I deliver contents to differing audiences. For instance, sometimes I have to put more effort into explaining the context in Europe, like the notion of Confucianism to speak about my autobiography. If I present the same work in Korea, adaptation is somehow necessary. Normally I'm careful of how far I explain and how far I express without explanation, this kind of thing. And you?**

E.K: I'm not sure if I would do the same kind of work if I lived in Russia. For me, the distance allows me to investigate that subject. If I lived in Russia, it would be too close to study and reflect on the surroundings. I need distance. When something is your daily life, it is very difficult to separate yourself and think critically.

**EK.J: Going back to the topic about the self- what is your concern regarding the research on the self?**

E.K: I guess revealing common patterns that will extend on a universal level. I believe we belong to a generation that is in need of re-visiting, re-writing and re-thinking life.

**EK.J: Somehow I believe, I don't know if it's right or wrong, but I believe when you work more and more specifically in an authentic way through yourself, it becomes universal. But on the other hand, authenticity is a problematic term in a way.**

E.K: Your relationship can only be relevant to the world if it is authentic. It is a sensitive subject. Can we speak, for example, about the authenticity of the multifunctional, composite artist? Where is this genuine experience located if the self is dispersed and always shifting? But still, from the other side, especially in the age of selfie-culture, you have to maintain a balance and not fall into narcissism.

**EK.J: Sometimes I make a joke- you know the flower narcissus? Looks good and attractive but a bunch of those flowers smell like shit. So, my point is that if you go deep into yourself in a narcissistic way, you might also smell like shit, no?**

# On Sensing Knowledge

A conversation between Luisa Fillitz and Marialena Marouda

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**ML:** In my work I focus on relational knowledge. It's a form of knowledge that exists before one separates ones own person from the world in which one lives and of which one is. It is a shared knowledge, therefore, before there is the separation between a "subject" and an "object" of knowledge. I believe that one is a library, a library of experiences. With my work I seek to find access to this lived and experienced knowledge. I would like to make those experiences communicable – by means of language but also by means of mimetic processes that go beyond language. I am interested in the concept of the living archive. I find it a challenge to try to archive a living knowledge. In a conventional understanding of scientific knowledge, the study of something often implies the killing of this thing. I was told by a marine biologist, for example, that one specimen of all existing species in the world is stored in a natural history museum. But in order for the organism to be stored there, it must first be killed. All species of this world are collected and classified in one place, but they have to be killed first. How can the fact these beings are living beings not be considered as relevant?

**LU:** The English expressions "to make sense" and "to sense" show a strong connection, which comes very close to my understanding of generating knowledge. It may seem like a contradiction, but I think intuition, sensing, imagining, fantasizing and the context in which knowledge production takes place are components that cannot simply be left out when one talks about knowledge. I do feel they influence the way in which information is received, processed and exchanged. Taking these notions into account led me towards a critical approach to what is described as "objective" and "factual" knowledge, because through these components the generating of knowledge seems an experience that is quite individual.

I am reflecting on different perspectives that come together and complement each other within an interplay of different distances. I am interested in the ways in which the context of the mentioned notions have an impact on this evolvement of perspectives, and on the way we observe and perceive.

## INTIMACY AND BEING ENGULFED AS KNOWLEDGE STRATEGIES

**ML:** When we talk about knowledge that is based on sensing and abstract or scientific knowledge, we are talking about a difference in the positioning of the researcher.

**LU:** ...a difference in the distance?

**ML:** Exactly. A difference of distance. So how close one looks into a topic that one researches and how embedded one is in this topic. I find it interesting that we talk

about intimacy and distance in terms of knowledge. An academic knowledge and writing –also in relation to the writing of a dissertation, for example - expects the researcher to prove a certain distance towards and an overview of the topic he/she is researching. But in our work we are dealing with both physical proximity and the vulnerability that results from this proximity, as a constitutive element of knowledge.

Michel de Certeau writes in relation to walking in the city that as a pedestrian and inhabitant of a city, one experiences it through one's own body and is therefore engulfed by it. The physical experience of inhabiting the city is not about having an overview of it. In my work I try to get to the core of this experience of knowledge as intimacy and inhabiting.

LU: Being engulfed, even being lost, is valuable to me because, expressed in simple terms, it gives me the opportunity to find. Being lost functions as a motor to independently generate experience and knowledge. In this process there is no differentiation in hierarchy between differing forms of knowledge. The so-called “scientific” and “embodied” knowledge are interacting permanently with each other.

**ML: Regarding proximity: I think that poetry can be an attempt to communicate knowledge that comes very close to the body. Trying to put into words this knowledge that springs from intimacy and vulnerability is poetry for me.**

LU.: I feel the thought that knowledge is

not unchangeable is an important point. It communicates specific points of view. Furthermore there is always a transformation implied in the passing on of information. So this notion of knowledge as “unfixed”, seems to me important to keep in the mind. Therefore the creation of knowledge is like a collage, This destabilizes a certain hierarchy between knowledge and questions the status of objectivity.

**ML: When you say collage I am thinking of knowledge as a fragment. One has only the possibility to perceive fragments. There is never the possibility of the 360 ° view.**

## STRINGS AND CONVERSATIONS AS KNOWLEDGE INSTRUMENTS

**ML: I would like to talk about the string and the conversation as instruments that we each use. How much do we trust those instruments?**

LU: Hm... I feel the line in the form of the string has been present in my work for a long time. I cannot remember exactly when I began using it.

According to specific ideas or subjects I have in mind, I tend to choose the respective instruments, materials, methodologies that can best express it.

In fact, more often than not it happens that I do not yet know the instrument I will use beforehand - I mean in its qualities. I am kind of driven to it and so I start figuring it out. In that sense, it is also a matter of intuition.

**ML: ...Maybe the string or the conversation are ways to relate to the world...They are like bridges to the things we want to know. I believe it is important to realize those instruments are not neutral. An instrument creates a very specific approach to something – this is very important to keep in mind when talking about our work. When one perceives my work, I think one very clearly perceives it through the frame of the conversation. And when one perceives your work I think the frame of the line or the string –the three-dimensional line- is essential.**

LU: As you say the choice of instrument is not innocent. Still I think, for me, it also depends on what I want to share and which instrument gives me the opportunity to do so.

I guess until a certain point in my research, it is important that I stay with a certain obsession in terms of the instrument I use. However, it is also important for me to be able to change my instrument, when I find that its possibilities are exhausted or it no longer serves the purpose of the research.

**ML: I find it interesting that you say “The line/string was always there”. For my work what was always there was the form of the conversation –with a person and/ or with a non-human entity. (...) I’m interested in conversation as the medium that connects me to something or to someone I don’t know and with which I might not share the same language.**

LU: Indeed I think there are things that you want to speak for which there is no language; for which no words seem adequate.

**ML: Exactly - language as an instrument only communicates certain contents. I believe that what happened during a pass, was very important in this sense. We were encouraged to observe what instruments we brought with us and what those instruments can do. What do those instruments mean for oneself and one’s work? What does the string mean for you, for example, and also what are its limitations? When talking about knowledge, I think it’s important to realize what it is that one wants to communicate to the world and how one chooses to communicate it. What is the relevance of feeling, intuition or being lost for oneself?**

LU: I think a relevant point is also responsibility. In what form do we generate knowledge “or “experience”? And how accountable do we hold ourselves towards this knowledge?...I consider it my responsibility, for example to constantly question myself and what I am doing, to “listen”, to observe, to learn, to develop -yes, I think that is my responsibility in my personal life and in my work.

**ML: I believe the responsibility you’re talking about relates to how one wants to face the world and what relationships one claims to be relevant. Responsibility also implies the responsibility over one’s own instruments. The self-consciousness of the methodology inherent in one’s own work. I think in this sense, art is also – as science can be considered to be – a discipline that communicates through very specific forms. What are the forms we use or invent as artists? What content do those forms produce and at the same time, what history do they have?**



BADOIT

# WRITING SCORES

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## End Communications May 2018 **THIS IS 1000 LITER FUEL. SO -**

**This publication presents the SCORESCAPES research-scores as a pedagogical tool - by Lilia Mestre as well as the End-Communications of six a.pass researchers.**

Together with the booklet *Medium Score/Tectonic Friendship* it forms the fourth iteration of scores as tools to practice dialogue and intersubjective formats for exchange in artistic research. Before finishing the a.pass program in May 2018, the six researchers Luisa Fillitz, Esther Rodriguez-Barbero Granado, Eunkyung Jeong, Marialena Marouda, Ekaterina Kaplunova and Shervin Kiar-nesi Haghighi worked for a month and a half in an adapted Writing Score to produce this publication.

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Every four months, each time at a different venue, a different group of a.pass researchers conclude their trajectory with an End-Communication.

a.pass is an international platform for artistic research practices, based on the principles of self-organization, collaboration and trans-disciplinarity.

Out of the notions of performativity and performative space, a.pass offers researchers the possibility to critically develop their knowledge as independent artistic researchers in a collective learning environment, constructing their individualized curriculum in constant dialogue with the other participants.