Introduction: Archiving Performance

Peter Dickinson

It seems entirely appropriate to launch a new online journal in Performance Studies with a special issue devoted to the question of performance archives. For what is the World Wide Web if not the archival machine *par excellence*, the digital equivalent of Freud's Mystic Writing-Pad? The Internet is, paradigmatically, that external "place of consignation" whose specific "technique[s] of repetition"—in Derrida's famous take on Freud—at once allow us to forget and, in the enactment of their inherent "archiviolithic force" (whether as comment threads, memes, or retweets), remind us that in cyberspace, especially, nothing ever disappears completely (Derrida 1998, 11, 13–14; emphasis in original; see also Freud 2008 [1925]). The "record" and "archive" buttons in the Open Journal Systems software are ones I've used repeatedly in putting together this issue, both in terms of keeping track of various revisions to the pieces that follow and in "domiciling" submissions that, for different reasons, could not be included. As editor of this journal, I am acutely aware of performing the role of Derridean *archon*, that is, of securing the content remains of this issue by means of what, after Rebecca Schneider, we might call the retroactive loss of other, equally knowing histories (2011, 103–104). At the same time, I hope that, again following Schneider (104), the "'taking place'" of this ritual of scholarly exchange via a mode of access that is freely available and in the public domain will lead to a rethinking of Performance Studies' self-archivization as a discipline—one whose institutional genealogy has, after all, been largely coterminous with the life of the Internet.

Peggy Phelan, whose privileging of performance's disappearance (duly cited by several of the contributors to this special issue) might, paradoxically, be said to have inaugurated PS's de facto *anarchivic* turn (see Phelan 1993, 146–66), also—and with characteristic perspicacity—foresaw some of the consequences of this networked futurity. In the introduction to *The Ends of Performance*, she writes:

> Performance studies, precisely because it has struggled so rigorously with the perils of preservation and the treacheries of transmission, is alert to the Net's potential to flatten and screen that which we might want most to remember, to love, to learn. We have created and studied a discipline based on that which disappears, art that cannot be preserved or posted. And we know that performance knows things worth knowing. As the electronic paradigm moves into the center of universities, corporations, and other systems of power-knowledge, the "knowing" that cannot be preserved or posted may well generate a mourning that transcends the current lite Luddite resistance to technology. (1998, 8)

Part of the work of that mourning, I would contend, is a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which the performance of performance documentation, as facilitated by new media technologies, need not foreclose on the materiality or embodied (cross-)temporality of the objects—and subjects—of its analysis. To this end, Johanna Drucker, drawing on and extending the work of Matthew Kirshenbaum (2008), reminds us that digital media are material, and in fundamentally performative ways: "what something *is* has to be understood in terms of what it *does*, how it works within machinic, systemic, and cultural domains" (Drucker 2013, para. 4; emphasis in original). In such a model, according to Drucker, both the "forensic" evidence related to a document's production and subsequent archival storage—be it ink on watermarked paper or encrypted binary

code uploaded to a secure server—and its "formal" organization and presentation to a reader-user (from a library collection's cataloguing system to a website's design interface) "serve as a provocation for the creation of a reading as a constitutive interpretative act. The specific structures and forms, substrates and organizational features, are *probability conditions* for production of an interpretation. Knowledge creates the objects of its discourses, it does not 'discover' them" (para. 17; emphasis in original). Echoing Schneider's argument in *Performing Remains* on the "discursive oratorio" of repertory (re)citations that plays out in the "*live* space of . . . encounter" with archival texts (2011, 106), Drucker notes that the:

> Material conditions [of digital media] provide an inscriptional base, a score, a point of departure, a provocation, from which a work is produced as an event. The materiality of the system, no matter how stable, bears only a probabilistic relation to the event of production, which always occurs only in real time and is distinct in each instance. (Drucker 2013, para. 8)[1]

It is thus instructive, given Diana Taylor's influential account of performance's repertory challenge to the hegemony of the written archive in *The Archive and the Repertoire* (2003), that so much of the work of the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics takes place in the form of electronic documentation, from its *E-Misférica* online journal to its extensive digital video library of performances from across the Americas. Likewise, in positing the virtual archive of the Internet as a productive "live" repository for the ethnographer's field notes, Johannes Fabian suggests that it also facilitates the performance of a new genre of ethnographic writing. Fabian labels this genre "commentary," a necessarily belated practice of writing that, in juxtaposing or making co-present the ethnographic text (e.g., one's field notes) *and* the analysis of that text, exposes what Dwight Conquergood (2002) lamented as the "scriptocentrism" of so much ethnographic scholarship as a mere "protocol of a performance": "a text's presence signals the absence of the event it documents. . . . Commentary . . . is writing in the face of that tension (Fabian 2008, 11). One thinks as well, in this regard, of the increasingly popular phenomenon of live tweeting theatre productions, this bid to make the technically impoverished and lumpily prosaic work of the stage more stimulating to a wired generation giving new meaning to Philip Auslander's claim, *contra* Phelan, that performance becomes itself not through its disappearance but through its (in this case, virtually instantaneous) documentation (see Auslander 2006).

If what Nik Wakefield, in his review of the literature on performance documentation in this issue, refers to as "time-specificity" is fundamentally what binds performance to its archives, then it bears commenting on the confluence of the current mania for "reperformance" in live art with the latest "archival turn" in Performance Studies. As Amelia Jones has argued, both forms of cultural expression are tied to the marketplace—of art objects and ideas—in late capitalism (Jones 2011, 20, 42). Thus, one might judge the near simultaneous appearance of two recent weighty anthologies in the field—Jones and Heathfield's *Perform, Repeat, Record* (2012) and Borggreen and Gade's *Performing Archives/Archives of Performance* (2013)—as an attempt to secure "in history" not just the "eventness" of certain iconic performance works, but also a dominant ideological interpretation of those works. However, as Jones herself argues in her critique of "presentness" in relation to the reperformances of Marina Abramović (2011), and as Schneider has demonstrated in her account of the historical institutionalization of "ephemerality" in Performance Studies criticism at NYU (2011, 94–96), both impulses can only ever be productive failures: the "now" of an event can never fully be grasped, only subjectively retrieved as a future "then." Another way of saying this, to return to Drucker, is that

performance archives become interesting less for what is in them, than for what one does with them.

It is this (re)doing of (and with) archival remains that forms the main connective thread of the articles included in this special issue. In "Modelling What Cannot: Performance's Return to its Archives in Bodies in Flight's *Do The Wild Thing! Redux*," Simon Jones offers a nuanced and theoretically sophisticated exploration of the technological—as in, via Heidegger, technical *and* knowledge-based—relationship between performance and its documents, and especially what this has to say about mixed-mediality in the digital age. Focusing on his own and his (non-)collaborators' installation-based return to the archive of a previously co-created work, Jones advances a theory of performance and its documentation as a relation of relations, a being in-between: of materials/objects; viewers/participants; creators/collaborators; inside/outside; past/present. In so doing, Jones demonstrates how practice as research becomes a means to enflesh textually the memorial remains of the original performance, by in his case writing toward rather than away from his object-muse. At the same time, this technique of the archive exposes performance's relationship to its documentary remains as fundamentally processual rather than supercessional. Neither can claim definitively to *be*—or to stand in for—the art work, according to Jones; rather, together they become the site of that work's ongoing collaborative reencounter.

A similar principle is at the heart of Lucas Ihlein and Louise Curham's "Reaching Through to the Object: Reenacting Malcolm Le Grice's *Horror Film 1*." The authors draw on their own artistic practice *and* archival/academic training to discuss the process that resulted in their collective, Teaching and Learning Cinema (TLC), reperforming in 2014 a key work of Expanded Cinema from one of the leading figures of the London Film-Makers' Co-op in the 1970s. In the course of this discussion, Ihlein and Curham advance a cross-temporal and activist theory of "tending the archive" that not only makes such hybrid performance works available to contemporary audiences, but that also sheds new light on the original socio-cultural and aesthetic contexts of their creation and performance—what Ihlein and Curham refer to as "reaching through to the object." Rich in descriptive detail regarding the authors' work both *in the archive* and with Le Grice's film as an *archival object*, these two threads of analysis coalesce in a fascinating account of TLC's thinking about which of its members would reenact Le Grice's film and, as crucially, in what state of undress. As Ihlein and Curham note, such decisions remind us that the "object" being reached for here is at once the performance itself *and* the body performing it—which, in this case, necessarily brings up both the politics of aging and the politics of gender.

Artists' gendered relationships with their performance archives is the point of departure for Alison Bory's "Dancing Archives of Experience: Surfacing Histories, Staging Subjectivities." Drawing on an extensive body of scholarship related to dance reenactment, as well as feminist autobiography studies, Bory focuses on the recent "choreographic returns" of three contemporary dance artists: Jennifer Monson, Jennifer Lacey, and Meredith Monk. By revisiting and reinventing previous work in these returns—and, in the case of Monson, by insisting on the primacy of the "live dancing archive" over and above her own role as performer—these artists are, according to Bory, not trying to fix with any degree of authority key pieces from their repertoires *in time*. Rather, danced reenactment is here posited as only ever relative to—and performative of—the fluidity and contingency of time. As such, these pieces, in their expressly autobiographical focus, enact what Bory calls "archives of experience," in which the body becomes its own source of kineaesthetic documentation—but in ways that, following from André Lepecki (2010), are generative and recreative rather than static and nostalgic.

Part of my interest in launching this journal with an issue focused on archives was in order to showcase some of the exciting performance research being conducted by colleagues here at Simon Fraser University, several of them members of the editorial consortium of *Performance Matters*. In a special Forum section entitled "In the Archives," Joy Palacios, Sasha Colby, and Dara Culhane reflect on the live space of encounter with performance's remains, as well as the different—and often deeply sensuous—repertory acts that space gives rise to. For Palacios this means describing the human and interpersonal relationships she has formed with the priestly "*archon*-actants" charged with overseeing the collections of the Société de Saint-Suplice in Paris, as well as how the imminent digitization of these and other dying "analogue" archives paradoxically imbues them with more life. For Colby, consulting the papers of the modernist poet and visual artist Mina Loy, housed at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale, induces something akin to what Carolyn Steedman, in *Dust* (2002), has famously described as "archive fever proper" (in Colby's case, a mix of boredom, anxiety, and dread); but it also yields the crucial document discovery that provides the spark for the dramatization of Loy's life that Colby has undertaken as a result of her work in the archives. And for Culhane, the archives of the National Library of Ireland in Galway, while doing their best to discipline her embodied research of the papers of her grandmother, also form part of a wider sensorium, one in which the auditory cues emanating from outside its walls are just as important and sense-making as the visual and haptic ones inside.

How we perform the body's consequential and felt relationships to its multiple archives is brought out, in different ways, by the pieces collected in the Materials section. For example, in describing her participation in the improvisatory jazz and poetry scenes of Cologne, artist Tanya Ury also excavates a parallel archive of her own and Germany's relationships to past and present histories. Photographer Patrick Morarescu contributes a selection of portraits from his *Performers* series, an ongoing project in which he documents a range of international performance artists immediately after their programmed appearances at different festivals; whether we see, along with Auslander, the documentary portrait as securing the authenticity of the performance, or vice versa, has much to do—as Morarescu implies in his introductory note—with how we interpret the relationship between temporal figure and spatial ground. Drawing on recent debates in comparative ethnic studies, Mario Obando juxtaposes different performance scripts—poetry, song lyrics, found image and text—to think through the "collision" of both documented and undocumented archives. Finally, Angela Latham materializes archival knowing as what Schneider would call the ritual repetition of "body-to-body transmission" (2011, 104) by staging an intimate encounter with a specific sartorial artifact.

This issue concludes with a review by Nik Wakefield of much of the scholarly literature on performance documentation. In his survey of the field from early debates about disappearance and liveness through to the recent turn toward the new materialisms, Wakefield makes an argument for thinking about the multiple and necessarily intersecting temporalities of performance and documentation in durational terms, with memory itself becoming a performative event, at once backward and future-oriented. In a similar way, I hope that, whatever may happen over the course of its to-be-recorded history, the appearance of this journal will remain as part of a larger performance archive marking *what will have been* a significant moment of transformation in our field.

Notes

1. My thanks to Nico Dicecco for drawing my attention to Drucker's essay, and to the materiality of media more generally.

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Modelling What Cannot: Performance's Return to its Archives in Bodies in Flight's *Do The Wild Thing! Redux*

Simon Jones

In response to *Performance Matters*' inaugural theme of Archiving Performance, I want to use my work on Performing Documents, a three-year Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded project hosted by the University of Bristol (UK), to explore what performance-makers' return to their archives can tell us about performance's problematic relationship to its documentary remains. For me, the particular case study of Bodies in Flight's *Do the Wild Thing! Redux* demonstrates how the incompleteness of the script or video record provokes artists to return to the archive not as reenactment, repetition or revival, but as reinvention. This in turn leads me to offer some thoughts on how performance-makers' uses of documentation relate to the much larger question—why performance as an art form persists in this digital age.

Performing Documents (2011–14) invited performance-makers and curators to respond by way of new artworks and curatorial practice to the University of Bristol Theatre Collection's Live Art Archives and those of Arnolfini Gallery (Bristol), the project's creative industry partners. The project was organized in three strands, each with a dialogic relationship between artists and scholars at their core: the first, *Remake*, investigated artists using archives of other artists' work; the second, *Redux*, artists returning to their own archives; and the third, *Replace*, curators exploring the creative re-presentation of archives and works about archiving through a major exhibition—Version Control at Arnolfini (for further information, visit www.bristol.ac.uk/arts/research/performing-documents). Performing Documents is the most recent project I have undertaken to engage with the Live Art Archives. Earlier projects concentrated on preserving fragile audiovisual documentation and making it more accessible, such as Into the Future making video files of over five hundred artists' work in the National Review of Live Art festival available online (for further information, visit: www.bristol.ac.uk/nrla/online-archive). Others, like Performing Documents, have sought to bring together the rich resource of archives, based in Bristol, with my own interest in creative practice in performance as a research methodology (see Allegue et al. 2009).

As a performance-maker, my practice over twenty years has been concerned with a repeated return to one basic question: What can account for the persistence of performance as an art form in an increasingly mediatized age? As such there is an inevitable relationship to technology, but also to the archive as a storehouse of performances past, and practice as research in the creating of performances present. This triangulation, within which performance as an art form and its makers find themselves, is clearly a question of knowledge, more precisely how particular kinds of knowledge are produced, captured, and disseminated. So, from this question of first principles, what is performance's claim to specialness among art forms? It would not be that it is time-based or site-specific or contingent upon its participants, since other forms are arguably equally dependent upon their eventness. What performance offers us distinctively is the

Simon Jones, Professor of Performance, University of Bristol, is a writer and scholar, as well as founder and co-director of Bodies in Flight (BiF), which has to date produced 17 works and numerous documents of performance that have at their heart the encounter between flesh and text, where *words move* and *flesh utters*. He has recently published chapters on BiF's performance-walk *Dream-work* in *Archaeologies of Presence* (2012) and *Performance and the Global City* (2013). He is co-editor of *Practice as Research in Performance and Screen* (2009) and his work with Bodies in Flight features in Josephine Machon's *(Syn)aesthetics? Towards a Definition of Visceral Performance* (2009). He is currently leading two major projects into the accessibility, preservation and creative re-use of live art archives: *Into the Future* and *Performing Documents*.

complexity and intensity, the multidimensionality and manifold temporalities of its bundling and intermingling of media, all gathered together and expressed by way of fleshes mixing. Indeed, performance manifests this *being in-between* (*inter-esse*) in a particularly intense way, since it foregrounds not only its eventness, its happening in that time and in a certain place, but also the manner of this mixing of persons, their fleshes and histories, their desires and prospects. It does this through an intensification not of one particular relation between a material, its expressing by means of a single object, and the solitary viewer, as in our relationship to painting, but by compounding the sensations of *the relation between relations*. One fundamental in-between, that of different kinds of material, each with their own means and media, their own middles that meddle, each in their own curious ways, is compounded furiously with another in-between, that of the gathering of persons, each aware of the others as persons in their own right.

Indeed, in performance, in putting my self into the middle of the event *as event*, its being both out of and in time, as I generally know it and then as I am experiencing it now—*entre-temps* as Deleuze and Guattari would have it (1994, 158)—and its being both there and not there, as I generally position my body in space and there being potentially anywhere other than there, I put myself forth in a doubled sense: *into the midst of various middles among others*. From this putting forth, performance-makers seek out collaborators, working each in their own medium and skill-set, each with their own discursivity—the choreographic, textual, sonic, musical, pictorial, fleshy. Each collaborator explicitly explores their material in their own way, and in so doing sustains the open relations between different kinds of material and their composition in the performance. In encountering media in which they are not expert, each has to cross a void in-between channels of communication in order to collaborate. This model of collaboration produces a kind of speaking without a common language, making these collaborative relationships endlessly productive and non-resolvable. Furthermore, to borrow a metaphor from quantum mechanics, they are complementary and compossible in that they produce worlds which cannot be equated the one with the other, and would, indeed, contradict one another, were it not that they somehow appear to work alongside each other in the "same" space-time of the performance-event itself. In theory they should not work; but in practice, the work works precisely *at the point* where "we" as collaborators cannot: impossible collaboration happens (see Giddens and Jones 2009 for further discussion of this idea).

> *Esse* is *interesse*; essence is interest. (Levinas 1998, 4)

Furthermore, if this being in-between the in-betweens is particularly heightened in performance—Derrida did call theatre "the only art of life" (1978, 247) in critiquing Artaud's attempt to put himself outside of discourse—then how do I document this experience? How can I, if attending to any specific discourse or practice would render the event's plenitude down to a single field or text? No, to record in any one language, be it choreographic, musical, pictorial, verbal, would collapse the very specificity of the event's non-specificity, puncture the no-where of its now-here, evidenced only by the compulsively repeated failure of performance's documentary remains after the fact. I can only stalk the realness of the performance-event itself by way of metaphor, only approach it *indirectly* by way of forcing transitionings, crossings across from the dimensionality of one kind of documentary remains to the dimensionality of another, moving through one document's discursive field then phasing into another, facing another self then turning to a third. And in each phase-transition, the specific relation to the "performance itself" is occasioned in its own way: it is disclosed as real, since momentarily apparent, observable, recognizable, navigable. This transitioning among any work's archival remains is as if I were pulling focus from one plane to another, from foreground to background, a zone of interest becoming a place of concern; and I feel this working-across the archive as movement, as a dynamic through (irreversible) time—*as an event of archiving*.

The document pulls focus from the blur of interest *in the performance* to the hard edge of a definable object of attention *in the record*. So here, by way of each document, the "original" material's vagueness, which I feel haunting the work or exceeding in potential what the work could have manifested, comes suddenly and always surprisingly into sharp relief. However, not as if I were experiencing the work through one lens alone, but as if suddenly recognizing the concreteness of one particular material rendered all others unintelligible. Here is the particular clarity that strikes me about performance's documentary remains, each a glimpse in its own way that banishes all other remembrances. Whereas in performance, I could say that interest dematerializes to the extent that any particular material materializes; it is only when I sustain the materializing of interest, remain in-between the betweens of the work, literally un-wording it, utterly un-phrasing it, patently blurring it, that interest can be properly opened out as new and progressive couplings of thought-sensations. This tension between sustaining the opening out of interest in the performance-event itself and the instances of clarity realized in performance's documentary remains became the productive catalyst at the heart of Performing Document's encounter between performance-maker and archive.

The *Redux* Strand Commission invited my performance company Bodies in Flight to revisit our archive, most of which is held by the University of Bristol's Theatre Collection. We chose to return to our eighth project *Do the Wild Thing!* (1996), since it had been the first to be led by a specific research concern. This had been a conscious return to first principles: to explore the fundamental encounter in performance between the discursive and the embodied. Following Brecht's separation of the elements, our methodology was to stage a separation of what is heard and what is seen. Rather than an attempt to clarify meaning, this separation was inspired by Foucault's commentary on Velasquez's *Las Meninas*:

> But the relation of language to painting is an infinite one. It is not that words are imperfect, or that, when confronted by the visible, they prove insuperably inadequate. Neither can be reduced to the other's terms: it is in vain that we say what we see; what we see never resides in what we say. (Foucault 1970, 9)

This separation, what I called the *hear—see*, began with the rehearsal process, structuring how the performance-makers worked together, and in the performance, determining design and the relation of choreographic to textual and musical elements. For the four weeks of making *Do the Wild Thing!*, we worked in separate rooms, choreographer Sara Giddens with performers Jane Devoy and Dan Elloway, performer Jon Carnall with me, only sharing our work for two hours every Friday. Alongside this, composer Christopher Austin wrote a score for string trio, to be played live, and designer Bridget Mazzey physicalized this processual separation by dividing the stage-space into three. Through separating out the density of the bundling of media and persons inherent in the performance as event, we aimed to produce for the audience member, who became for us *the auditor-spectator*, an opening up of this productive space between media as a means of accessing the blind-spots of our everyday constructions of self.



Do the Wild Thing! Bonington Gallery, 1996. Photo: Edward Dimsdale.

The topic of the piece was inspired by Andy Warhol's one-reel film *Beauty#2*, in which a "beautiful" couple on a bed are subjected to an interrogation of their relationship, their sense of self, by an unseen interlocutor. For thirty minutes the camera is unblinking and the shot unedited; the improvised conversation ebbs and flows; the couple are persuaded to strip to their underwear and kiss; the young woman loses her temper with the interlocutor while the young man loses interest. Over the duration of the reel, Warhol's camera with its unrelenting gaze problematizes the viewer's voyeurism to see and know more about this couple. The haphazard and contested process of both constructing and presenting the self is further opened out and complicated by the unseen interlocutor's provocative questioning and goading. This both mocks and extends the viewer's desires, pushing at the ethical boundaries of licit and illicit seeing, complicit and forced performing, collaboration and exploitation. Our set-up sought to replicate this queasy oscillation in the theatre, this unfulfilled promise of seeing some kind of "real" sex as a window, if not to the soul, then at least to the self. As such the show was marketed as a "peep show," although the openness of its end-on staging and the brightness of its lighting meant that the spectators were as much on show as the performers, and only the Man hiding behind the silver curtain had any protection from the gaze being returned—the gazer gazed upon. The Man in *Do the Wild Thing!* said to Grace and Joe:

> Sometimes to name the deed is enough. Isn't it? Just to give the instruction. Or not even to name it as instruction. Simply to say it out aloud. Or in my special whisper. To know you have done such a thing at such and such a time and place in the undocumented past. To imagine you could do such a thing, if so instructed, in some indeterminate future. That's enough. On quite a few occasions. But then. When confronted with the deed, who knows what'll come to one? When it's done, before me. That very complicated place. When all the talking, the instructing and the describing's done. And it is done. Do it then. Go on, do it. Only kidding.



Do the Wild Thing! Bonington Gallery, 1996. Photo: Edward Dimsdale.

From my perspective as the writer, this methodology of separation forced me to interrogate the resource I had most to hand—my own self, to explore a form of writing as an expressing of self rather than communicating. For the first time, I was writing a text out of a space most alien to theatre—solitariness. This felt perverse, almost autistic, as Michel Serres would have described it: to produce text as alter-ego, that was not intended to be performed, that did not point towards its auditors in its writing. From this non-relation in the very process of writing, what emerged for me was something more profound than the mere separation of theatre's channels of

communication: the dualities of a genuine complementarity began to find their own modes of engagement: solitarinesses from which a new understanding of collaborating could emerge.

> A unique style comes from the gesture, the project, the itinerary, the risk – indeed, from the acceptance of a specific solitude. . . . Repetition of content or method entails no risk, whereas style reflects in its mirror the nature of danger. In venturing as far as possible toward non-recognition, style runs the risk even of autism. (Serres with Latour 1995, 94)

So, what had begun as a practice-as-research project designed to explore what happens in performance when there is a radical separation of what the audience can hear and the spectator see resulted in reformulating for us the question of the indeterminacy of media and communication in performance into one about collaboration and the making of performance across media. Bodies in Flight subsequently embarked on a series of new collaborations across media and skill-sets which explicitly sustained the open relations between different kinds of material and their composition in the performance. This included the integration of technology into our methodology, as well as folding back into the event not only material captured live but also material from rehearsals, thus layering different times from the show's making into the performance itself. We have since worked with musicians, sonic and video artists, photographers, and most recently gymnasts, performers whose bodies were expert, amateur, young, old, who could sing, dance, play, or tumble. We have learnt that, in order to collaborate, each collaborator had first to know themselves, to know *what* each could do, *how* each did it, and most decisively *wanted* to do: questions of self, skill-set, style, and will. To achieve this self-knowledge, we had first to force ourselves, against the grain of theatre-makers, into non-collaboration; and by this method, we perversely discovered new ways of collaborating. (For documentation of the original production and company archive for the project, visit the Shows section of the online emulation of *Flesh & Text*: https://dedefi.ilrt.bris.ac.uk/sites/default/files/bif/core/8/frame.htm)



Do the Wild Thing! Redux, Arnolfini, 2012, with *Muse* installation on far right. Photo: Carl Newland.

The *Redux* strand of Performing Documents gave three of the original collaborators from the 1996 show and me the opportunity to extend this series of collaborations in two ways: first, to encounter the archive of *Do the Wild Thing!* as if it were another of our collaborators; and secondly, to make more explicit the company's methodology of impossible collaboration by disentangling both the collaborators themselves and their respective media. In order to achieve this, we decided to work independently until the day of installation in the Light Studio of Arnolfini Gallery in December 2012, each producing a separate new work in our own medium—dance, photography, text, and video. Our collective brief was that each non-collaborator would take their inspiration from their first involvement in *Do the Wild Thing!* and, where possible, pay particular attention to those elements of the archive each produced. Furthermore, each non-collaborator was to force their medium to the limits of its discursivity, that is, to the point of inarticulacy.



Still Moving: Moving Still, Martha King, Tom Bailey, choreography Sara Giddens. Photo: Carl Newland.

Choreographer Sara Giddens worked for two weeks with performers Tom Bailey and Martha King exploring the micro-choreography of exchanged looks and minute gestures she had first developed with Dan and Jane sixteen years earlier. That exploration had marked a radical shift from Sara's earlier concerns, which were around the integration of social dance into devised performance practices. It had been inspired by the listless, meandering "non-action" of Warhol's superstars on the bed in *Beauty#2*. *Still Moving: Moving Still* was a durational dance duet performed a number of times over *Redux*'s opening weekend. The dancers moved through the installation and out into other gallery spaces over a two-hour period, ending up in Arnolfini's Reading Room where some of the archival remains Sara used in the reinvention were being exhibited.



Do the Wild Thing! Redux archival exhibition, Reading Room, Arnolfini. Photo: Yiota Demetriou.

Her main resources were the two-camera video document made in Bonington Gallery in 1996 by Tony Judge and the still images taken by Edward Dimsdale. Although Sara was exploring her current interest in stillness in choreography and how the dancers moved towards and away from these points of apparent non-activity, the genesis can be traced back to the 1996 show, when she began to focus on the minimum differentiation required to distinguish everyday, habitual movement from dance. *Still Moving: Moving Still* saw the duet of dancers moving among gallery visitors, taking the rhythm of the progressing sequence of actions from those around them, sometimes indistinguishable from the visitors in their gestural dialogue, at other times clearly visible as expert movers. The work was later restaged with a larger ensemble of all female dancers at Nottingham Contemporary Gallery (October 2013) and formed part of her recent doctoral project at Middlesex University (2014).



Still Moving: Moving Still, Martha King, choreography Sara Giddens. Photo: Carl Newland.

Photographer Edward Dimsdale decided to respond to his archive of negatives from his documentation of *Do the Wild Thing!* and super-8 footage he had taken of the show's final dance sequence. He wanted to explore his current research interest in the reworking of one photographic technology through the frame of another, specifically refiguring old photogravure techniques with the digital, and so foregrounding both the processes of producing the image and the materiality of the print itself. To do this, he reprinted the negatives in a variety of formats, including frame-by-frame reprints of the film footage. These large and small images in both black-and-white and colour were then distressed and pinned to the long wall of the gallery to produce a bricolage glimpsing a fragmented timeline of the show's languid, interrupted "primal scene."



Make the Fixed Volatile, and Make the Volatile Fixed, photography, Edward Dimsdale. Photo: Carl Newland.

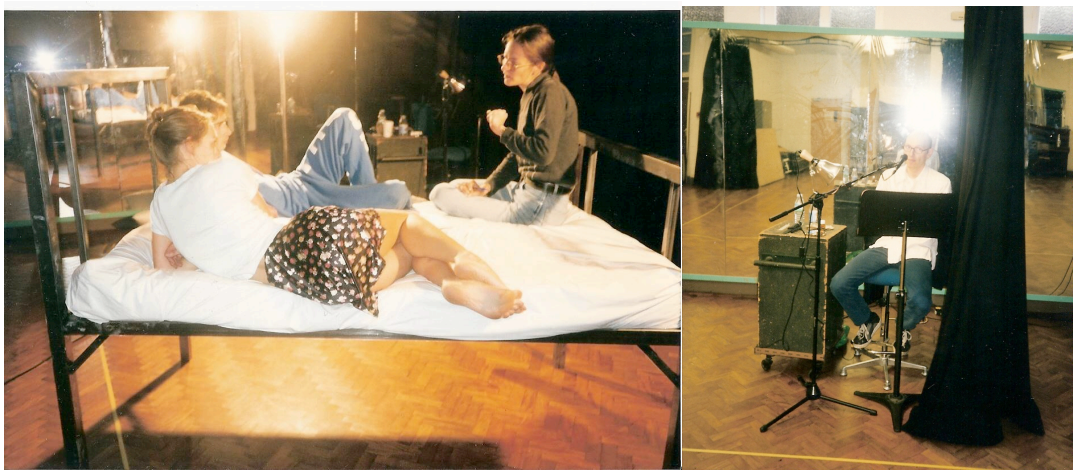
Video-maker Tony Judge decided to explode the single perspective of his 1996 multi-camera record, taken from the audience's point of view, by harnessing the potential of high-resolution imaging and hard-drive synchronization. Tony also took inspiration from an archived script of an unmade film version of *Do the Wild Thing!* as well as re-using the documentary audio recording of Christopher Austin's score for string trio as the soundtrack to his new work. He worked with high-resolution cinematographer Terry Flaxton to produce a three-screen video-work that reinvented the show's primal scene from each of its actors' points of view—Grace, Joe, and the Man. He took care in the casting to make explicit the age differences implied in the original text, a distinction the original casting did not achieve: Chris Bianchi in his forties as the Man, Polly Frame in her thirties as Grace, and James D Kent in his late teens as Joe. The three screens were installed on three different walls of the Light Studio so that it was impossible to view all three without turning one's head. Each screen had its own separate soundtrack that was only audible if one approached the monitor. With Chris Austin's score underneath, these voiced separately the Man's commands and taunts and the thoughts of the silenced sex workers: Grace's text was taken from an entirely different Bodies in Flight work *The Secrecy of Saints* (2006) which focused on the internal monologue of an isolated female protagonist and Joe's monologue consisted of the actor reading out his mobile phone text message conversations. Tony wanted to use his medium to accentuate the voyeurism that drove the first work by representing each actor from

the point of view of the others. And so, by closing this triangle of gazes, the three-screen reinvention managed to implicate even more intimately the spectator in the erotic play of its primal scene (for documentation, visit: http://www.bristol.ac.uk/arts/research/performing-documents/workshops/redux/arts/research/performing-documents/dtwt.html).



I'd Like to Call You Joe Tonight, multi-screen video, Tony Judge.

For my element of the installation, *Muse*, I wanted to explore the central concern of my practice as research as a writer: the relationship of text to flesh in the performance-event, of the spoken or heard word to the physical presence of the performer. With *Do the Wild Thing!*, as mentioned above, I began a practice of writing text for performance with the maximum disregard I could muster for its eventual use in the performance itself. That was to lead in subsequent works to a writing process that tried not to concern itself with who might say a particular text, how it might be delivered, and to whom. This would produce a script for the first day of rehearsals that consisted of a collection of separate texts. These were loosely grouped into thematic concerns, which were themselves only identified as the texts accumulated rather than in advance as an intended topic. We would then experiment with different performers trying out different texts in a range of scenarios. This resulted in a second distinct phase of writing in which specific texts were rewritten to accentuate the qualities that a particular performer brought to the text in a particular scenario. For instance, the gender or person of the text might shift, or the tense; or a particular metaphor might be extended alongside some movement or interplay between performers. Eventually, each performer would find their texts in relation to one another, with Sara and me as outside ears. And so the aggregate of what the texts were saying emerged as a consequence of each performer coming *to own* their own texts so personally that I found it difficult to disassociate them the one from the other.



Rehearsals: Left—Jane Devoy, Dan Elloway and Sara Giddens on the bed; Right—Jon Carnall behind the curtain. Photo: Simon Jones.

However, with *Do the Wild Thing!* we had decided to separate Jon Carnall as the Man, who spoke, from Dan and Jane as Joe and Grace, who were spoken about or to. Furthermore, the Man spent most of the show sat unseen behind a curtain while Grace and Joe were highly visible centre stage, but largely silent. This focused the second phase of my writing on Jon's performance alone

and heightened for me the two hours every Friday afternoon in the rehearsal process when we all met in the same space and placed the vocal material Jon and I had been working on alongside the choreographic material Sara had developed with Dan and Jane. In starting to work on the *Redux* version by looking in detail at Tony's video documentation, this separation of what is heard from what is seen became even more apparent to me because the video's point of view occupied that of the auditor-spectator. I realized again the force of the text applied to the bodies of the performers, its dizzying and disturbing oscillation between an erotics and a violence, a ravishment and a desecration, its inability to stabilize a description of either what was seen before us or what was desired of what was seen. I returned to how the work's apparently simple premise—to explore this primal scene of theatre by flesh encountering text—complicated itself within receding frames of desire and doubt, so that what we saw ended up a very long way away from what we heard. Understanding, of course, that the process of documentation itself was yet another frame, I recalled how *Do the Wild Thing!* had been the first show we systematically documented. So much so, that I took photos through the process and had even documented Edward Dimsdale as he was documenting.



Dan Elloway, Edward Dimsdale, Jane Devoy, Bonington Gallery, 1996. Photo: Simon Jones.

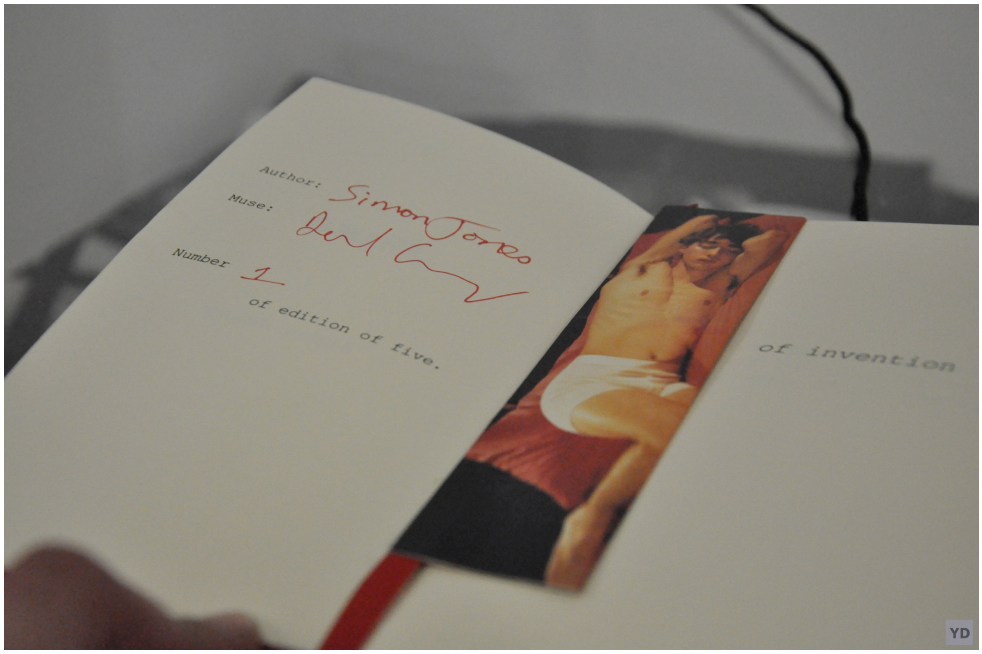
During that session, I had also taken a photograph of Dan asleep on the set. For me, this image exemplified the complex of concerns we had all been exploring together alone. For Dan, as performer, this specially constructed metal-framed bed had been his playing space; he had spent many days lying, sitting, moving on it, and now its strangeness had been domesticated and he felt relaxed enough to fall asleep in the middle of the photo session. The pose, in underpants, with arms clasped above his head, is undeniably erotic in its openness, expressing for me the way Dan had also embodied the force of that gaze so deliberately provoked and sustained in the show's staging and text. Here he has become the object of many gazes—for better and worse—and particularly for me the object of many words, for which I was personally responsible. So much so, that this casual, unplanned image crystallized for me the potential of Bodies in Flight's practice—the focus on flesh and text, the way the words seemed to attach themselves to the performers' bodies, and the profoundly ethical demand this encounter placed on us as

performance-makers, with respect to both ourselves as individual artists working collaboratively and to our audiences. It was this responsibility that became the concern of *Muse*: I would explore it as a written response to this image.



Dan Elloway, Bonington Gallery, 1996. Photo: Simon Jones.

I decided that this writing would be driven by an approach that was opposite to my practice when producing text for a performance-work in that, instead of trying to write *away* from persons and situations, I would fasten myself *to* this image in relation to my memories of making the show. *Muse* would be a dwelling, rather than a flight. The attachment of text to image to flesh would be further concretized in the installation by recreating the bed, Dan's playing area, in a corner of the Light Studio. Walled off from the rest of the gallery and accessible only through a narrow opening, a mattress covered the entirety of this partially hidden, semi-private space, dressed in the same colours as the 1996 bed. On that surface was placed a small book, again using the same colour scheme of orange and red. I wanted the feel of the book in each reader's hands to suggest an old volume of poetry. To that end, I worked with local bookbinders Bristol Bound to select paper stock, endpapers and cover board that felt old-fashioned to the touch. The typeface was a basic Courier and a bookmark was added, made from a reprint of the source image. The edition was limited to five, and signed by myself and Dan, again to accentuate the "aura" of bespoke, a specially crafted object handled by both writer and muse, a material connection between imagination and person. For me, all this concern with the book's materiality was a knowingly hopeless denial of the text's potential for promiscuous propagation, especially in our contemporary digital age. I was attempting, again in sure and certain knowledge of failing, to attach this particular sequence of words to a particular person—Dan himself.



Muse, print, Simon Jones. Photo: Yiota Demetriou.

To force this failure further, I invited Dan back to Bristol for the opening weekend to lie in the *Muse* installation and reenact the source's informal pose. If visitors entered the space, he would "wake" and read to them from my text. I was profoundly grateful to Dan for agreeing to do this, to step out of his current life in Norway and his profession as an educational publisher, to put himself back into that play of gazes. During that weekend, I observed the range of responses from visitors to the installation, the surprise at discovering the space of *Muse* at the end of the gallery, suddenly coming upon Dan "asleep," the trepidation at following the instruction to enter, then Dan "waking" and reading this oh-so-personal text to them in his soft voice. Some people, particularly men, could barely bring themselves to look in through the opening, let alone step inside; others entered singly or even occasionally in couples. At one point, Dan's father and nephew entered together.


Muse, Dan Elloway, print and installation, Simon Jones. Photo: Carl Newland.

Here was a further complication to the ethical demand that the relationship of artist to artist to auditor-spectator made of us: that the source image referred to a flesh that no longer existed. In comparing the image of flesh with the person lying on the mattress, the visitor could see how Dan's body had aged over the intervening sixteen years. For me, this temporal in-between between representation and flesh ghosted the imaginative space in the writing between two kinds of desire: first, the desire to know, to be able to own the person *thoughtfully through words* as symbols; and secondly, the desire to have, to be able to own the person *feelingly through flesh* as sensation. Both are impossibilities that the writing in attempting to achieve knowingly fails. In Dan's gracious return to *Do the Wild Thing! Redux* he gifted his flesh again as conductor of the play of gazes, as conduit for the flow of words. In this way, I felt that we forced together alone, Dan and I, a closer bond between flesh and text than the first show had been able to achieve. (For the full text of *Muse* and further contexualization of the project, visit http://p-e-r-f-o-r-m-a-n-c-e.org/?p=622)



Muse, Dan Elloway, print and installation, Simon Jones. Photo: Carl Newland.

So, in these various ways, the artist-researchers' solo works resonated with the "original" process of both making and documenting the 1996 performance. In the redux reinvention, we attempted to disclose further the incompletenesses in-between and within media—the middles of middles, which has since been a key concern of Bodies in Flight's practice. Like a hologram, shattered, we offered a set of different perspectives, (literally) *through-seeings* on to the quasi-object that had been the show. The illusionary centre, the "real" of the work-object, was evacuated to the edges of multiple viewpoints, expressions of each non-collaborator's journey between the non-communicable parts, the aspects of the redux. The 1996 performance's single point of view, its proscenium-arch setup, was re-placed by the fugacious affect of the choices made by each non-collaborator, disentangling media as they crisscrossed in-between and across the work's archival remains. From this dispersed periphery, we each looked back at, re-turned to face the primal scene we had fled sixteen years earlier. Our (non-)collaborative relationship in the making of the various elements of the installation *personified* these gaps and modelled each collaborator's entanglement with the archive, our multiple crossings across the dimensionalities inherent in each document, each remains. Furthermore, the installation itself attempted to reenact for the

visitor the experience of transitioning between material and media, techniques and perspectives, which we as makers experienced in making the "original" work and auditor-spectators experienced in its performing. We were suggesting that the archive's very productivity emerges from crossing these gaps, and so experiencing the impossibility of completeness, of realizing an origin. (For more images of the installation, visit https://www.flickr.com/photos/81493155@N00/sets/72157640780411225/)

> [A minor literature is] an *expression machine* capable of disorganizing its own forms, and disorganizing its forms of contents, in order to liberate pure contents that mix with expressions in a single intense matter. (Deleuze & Guattari 1986, 28)

In the second part of this article, I want to describe how *Do the Wild Thing! Redux*'s strategy of non-collaboration across media has led me to think that performance-makers have a particularly crucial relationship to the archive. If not uniquely, then decisively, this opens up questions about knowledge production that are fundamentally *technological*, in that they tell us something about our relationships to all technologies. As a performance-maker, I experienced two fundamentally different memories encountering one another in the archival remains of *Do the Wild Thing!*: that of embodied practice, the experience of having made work over time; and that of external record irrupting into practice from the outside. This interpolated what was felt with what could never have been felt: the image taken from the point of view I never occupied, the camera's; or even that of the page, since the word written down is never the same one that comes to mind. This struggle of living memories with external memories, the profoundly embodied, what drove the work, with the profoundly disembodied, as in estranged, like something familiar taken from one and put at a distance, characterized my relation to the archive.

For me, there is always a certain relief in being able to step away from the relentless issue of being together alone out-standing-standing-within the work as it is being made. A relief in temporarily occupying the abstracted perspective of the document, looking from the outside at the quasi-object that *is* now the work at hand. Indeed, ironically, it may well be that only by means of the recording device's technological capacity, whether that be camera and computer or pen and paper, can any performance-maker actually realize their work as object, as some(quasi-)thing that can be pointed to and so commented upon. The relief of being able to separate clearly the outside from the inside of the making of the work, disentangling out-standing-standing-within, can provide this necessary refuge from the interminable issue of being in-between the making among collaborators. Temporally, this happens as a kind of rhythmic crossing-across from the rehearsal room to the archive, similar to those enacted within the making between media and collaborators. However, this time a transitioning happens from inside to outside that making: a temporary stepping away from the work that the artist has been in the midst of in order *to look askance* at it. The gap between these two different perspectives produces *a potentiality* between two profoundly different ways of knowing—insider know-how and critical knowledge. This potentiality became the gradient that drove the various crossings-across I made back and forth inside–outside the making of *Do the Wild Thing! Redux*. It is also why I had to make these journeys into the archive *alone*, from my own embodied experience and memories towards these documents, by way of my own self and will among my collaborators. The *Redux*'s strategy of non-collaboration was designed to explore this solitariness: in an impossible dialogue between record and potential by way of memory and technique.

Furthermore, if insider know-how is always embodied, an intense bundling together of the experience of having made with the making now at hand, it can only be realized by way of specific technological assemblages of artist and equipment, techniques and conventions.

Performance has a long history of early adoption of technologies, from *deus ex machina* to arc-light to holograms (see Baugh 2005)—a theme I do not have space to develop here. This fundamental relationship to technology is precisely in order to open up and test the relation between the performer's body as medium, flesh as ur-technology, and technology as medium: to explore what it is possible to do, say and feel with such equipment, which is as much as to say what it is *to be in-between such media*. So, with the same force, the performance-maker pushes archiving to reveal the limit-case uses of its technology by focusing precisely on what cannot be captured by way of that equipment. For a document of performance to work it must be forced to fail entirely and completely on its own terms: for instance, it *makes sense* when documenting a performance with video to use multiple camera and microphone positions, to take advice from the camera-operator as regards what we should be looking at, to reshoot what they missed, to alter the theatrical lighting to accommodate the camera's sensitivity, to select shots in post-production and re-mix the sound. The archival document, whether audio-video, written word or blog, is just such a device, which the performance-maker exposes for what it cannot do in comparison to the performance itself or the performers themselves. The partiality of each technological approach is necessarily disclosed, and in doing so reveals the gaps inherent within and between all media, however naturally they have been embodied (see Giddens and Jones 2012). In this way, each non-collaborator could only express in their own medium an aspect of "the" work in its totality. *Do the Wild Thing! Redux* existed somewhere in-between the photographs and video screens, the printed page and dancers' moves: each "document" necessarily pointed beyond itself towards its lost "object"—the life of the performance.

So, the use of whatever recording technology, its techniques and skillset, inevitably provokes the performance-maker to *go beyond* what can be captured or known about performance, overflowing form and realizing in each document a failure to do it all and say it all. So that, despite all its craft and ingenuity, we, as both makers and audiences, still feel we need to *look beyond* what the document *as artifact* tells us about the quasi-object of performance it has realized in front of us. I believe this is why performance persists in a digital age: it is in an evolutionary race with technologies' zeal to capture and its processes of commodification, always running ahead of each new platform's claim to higher resolution and greater fidelity, towards that innovation's inadequacy in the face of performer as flesh, performance as event, as experienced, as lived. The current issue for performance-makers is that performance must now work *among* the ubiquity and readiness-to-hand of smart technology, which has foregrounded our relation to the archive in its capacity to capture and replay every instance of our lives, to render each life into a timeline.

Indeed, I would go further to suggest that performance-makers' use of such archiving technologies constitutes a decisive resistance to the hegemonic cultural and socio-economic assemblages, within which both technology in general and the archive as fact and idea are embedded. Because the performance-maker's relationship to the archive must expose the partialities inherent in each technological assemblage, it is essentially one of *de-second-naturing*. This mirrors their working across and in-between both collaborators and each other's media in the making of the performance itself. The same fundamental approach carries over into the archive: archive-technology is incorporated into the working relations *as if it were another collaborator*. As such, it remains somehow outside, here somehow itself resistant to co-option, even as it elsewhere insinuates itself into our everyday lives apparently so "naturally." In this sense, the presence of the archive in the making of new work works away at the gaps and aporia already in-between the collaborators and their media, skillsets, and technologies. The archive itself in its materiality adds an additional dimension to the forcing open of these media in the collaborative encounter, opening out the out-standing-standing-within dwelling-place of the new work. It obliges a more explicit non-collaboration to happen—a non-collaboration that I have argued elsewhere emerges at the generative core or, better still, the in-between of all collaboration in

performance-making (see Giddens & Jones 2009 and Jones 2012). The particular forcing of the archive and its technologies in relation to the artist among the making of performance echoes Martin Heidegger's description of the difference between our everyday use of technology and its use in any art work:

> The more handy a piece of [everyday] equipment is, the more inconspicuous it remains. . . . [However,] the more essentially the [art]work opens itself, the more luminous becomes the uniqueness of the fact that it is rather than not. The more essentially this thrust comes into the open region, the more strange and solitary the work becomes. (Heidegger 1978, 190–91)

So, the art work refuses to use up the archive-technology as resource, as we do our smartphones and cloud storage, by obliging it to appear *as itself* as non-human assemblage, as non-Being. In this way, the artist re-minds us of the fundamental gap between ourselves as Beings and technology as equipment. Otherwise *we* would disappear in our everyday use into the archive-technology as it would disappear into us: we would not know where we ended and it began. The proof of the archive would replace the life of the event, and so, by extension, all those who participated in that event: "I know I was there because the images are on Facebook."

> Technology is therefore no mere means. Technology is a way of revealing. . . . *Technē* belongs to bringing forth, to *poiēsis*; it is something poetic. (Heidegger 1978, 318)

Performance's relationship to the archive and its documents cannot be other than an essentially technological one, a relationship to techne, technique and knowledge. *Redux* did not provide a more complete version of *Do the Wild Thing!*, as film directors might like to think their reduxes do—a version more original than the original. No, I propose that Performing Documents' *Redux* exercise, as with all returns to performance's archives, actually opened up more gaps, exposing the show's auratic mask of originality, its documents' claim to be *the* work, by pointing to multiple, possible future works. The performance-maker's relation to the archive, thence to all technologies, says something more about performance: that at its heart performance embodies *knowing* because *its very performing is an issue for it*. The relations disclosed in the performing, including those between its liveliness and its recordability as evidenced in the archive, the materializing of the in-between of in-betweens, the relation of relations, are what matters to performance, in the same way that Heidegger defined the essence of Dasein as its very being *being an issue for it* (Mulhall 1996, 14). Indeed, this need or obligation to return to the archive is also a return to what it is that constitutes the performance event or act or gesture *as art*. This recursiveness drives every performance tradition as it is itself driven by the gradients of crossing-across between its making and its archiving *in and among fleshes*: every new generation of performers who must go back to those foundations, or rather, must rebuild those foundations *as if for the first time*. Hence performance's fundamental challenge to knowledge as a progressive accumulation of data-sets, objects and reproducible procedures leading towards a "better, (so say) more productive, future"; and hence also performance's fundamental relationship to its archives—as perpetual reinvention in the promise of what's to come.

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Reaching Through to the Object: Reenacting Malcolm Le Grice's *Horror Film 1*

Lucas Ihlein and Louise Curham

In June 2014 Teaching and Learning Cinema, an Australian artist group coordinated by Louise Curham and Lucas Ihlein, presented a reenactment of Malcolm Le Grice's *Horror Film 1* (1971) at Canberra Contemporary Art Space. A key work of Expanded Cinema, *Horror Film 1* involves a live performer playing with shadows, interacting with the overlapping beams of three 16 mm film projectors. Our reenactment was the first time in the work's forty-year lifespan that it had been performed by anyone other than Le Grice himself. In this paper, we offer some reflections on the process of making our reenactment, which we regard as ontologically double: simultaneously "the original object" and an entirely new entity. We discuss our methodology of *tending the archive*—an activist strategy operating at the borders of archival and artistic practice. And we suggest that reenactment, as a creative practice, can be a way of "reaching through to the object" which sheds new light on the artwork and its cultural-technological context.

Expanded Cinema and Malcolm Le Grice

Expanded Cinema—a hybrid form of live art combining elements of performance art and experimental film—emerged in the mid-1960s among avant-garde artist groups in Europe, North America, and Japan. Its hallmark was the "expansion" beyond the physical limitations of the film projection, deploying (for example) multiple simultaneous projections, live performances, and spatial interventions within the cinema or gallery. The history of Expanded Cinema is perplexingly diverse. As A.L. Rees writes, "at full stretch, it embraces the most contradictory dimensions of film and video art, from the vividly spectacular to the starkly materialist" (Rees 2011, 12). As way of sketching out the scope of the field, here we very briefly describe a few key Expanded Cinema works:

> 1. American techno-utopianist Stan Vanderbeek is best known for his *Movie Drome* (1963–66), a geodesic dome structure whose interior housed multiple simultaneous 16 mm film and slide projections, to be viewed by an audience lying flat on the floor. Vanderbeek had no desire to offer a coherent cinematic experience, but rather hoped that the abundance of images presented in chance juxtaposition might inculcate a new kind of visual media literacy. As he wrote, "each member of the audience will build his own references and realizations from the image-flow" (Vanderbeek 1966, 16). Vanderbeek planned to create a "culture-intercom"—a kind of embodied proto-Internet system facilitated by a network of communicating *Movie Dromes* distributed across the globe, but his dream never materialized (unless we consider the Internet to be its ultimate realization).

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Louise Curham is an experimental filmmaker and archivist. She is employed at the National Archives of Australia in Canberra. A member of the Teaching and Learning Cinema collective, she is also completing her PhD in Arts and Design at the University of Canberra.

> 2. Austrian artist VALIE EXPORT's *Tapp und Tast-Kino* (1968) was a miniature cinema consisting of a cardboard box strapped to the artist's bare torso. The box had an open front, across which were draped small curtains. Working in collaboration with Peter Weibel, the performance of *Tapp und Tast-Kino* took place in the street, where audience members were invited by Weibel, spruiking with a loud-hailer, to "visit" the cinema one at a time, by reaching through the curtains to touch EXPORT's breasts. The work is often described as a critique of the fundamentally voyeuristic conditions of cinematic viewing (Mueller 1994, 15).
>
> 3. Japanese filmmaker Takehisa Kosugi created *Film & Film#4* in 1965. Cinema theorist Jonathan Walley describes the work thus: "a performer . . . makes rectangular cuts of increasing size from a paper screen lit by a film-less projector. The performer gradually works his way out from a small cut in the centre of the screen, eventually cutting away the entire sheet of paper, leaving an empty frame through which the projector's light passes on its way to the rear wall of the performance space" (Walley 2013, 216). *Film & Film#4* is typical of a range of Expanded Cinema pieces by different artists from the period that cut, penetrate, or otherwise violate the screen surface (Renan 1967, 247).

Many other works could be chosen to represent the field of Expanded Cinema; however, these three pieces do embody some fairly common tropes: a critique of the audience's allegedly passive consumption of mainstream cinematic culture; an interventionist approach designed to defamiliarize the "normal" viewing conditions of the moving image; and a somewhat paradoxical iconoclasm in which the "destruction of the image" is performatively demonstrated for our viewing pleasure. The Expanded Cinema works that emerged from the London Film-Makers' Co-op (LFMC), where Le Grice was a central figure from the late 1960s, tended toward reflexivity, drawing attention to the social, architectural, and ideological context for cinema itself. Aspects of the cinematic experience in "real-time" (to use Le Grice's term)—including the projection apparatus, cinema seating, the interior space, and the audience itself, which are usually mentally bracketed out when watching films—were consciously reframed (Le Grice 1972). As an extension of the structural-materialist films characteristic of much early LFMC production, in British Expanded Cinema "the projectors or monitors, the process and material, were primary signifiers in their own right, as well as channels for images" (Rees 2011, 14). With its triple 16 mm colour loop film projections and live performance, Le Grice's *Horror Film 1* (1971) is well known among this body of work. In his review of a presentation by Malcolm Le Grice at the 2013 Performa Festival in New York, Noam Ellcott describes the piece:

> Part shadow play, part abstract color film . . . Le Grice slowly makes his way from the screen to the projectors, all the while casting multiplied, peripatetic shadows that assert not only the here-and-now of the performer and the projection event, but also the simple and sublime wonder that undergirds all cinematic experience. (Ellcott 2014, 23)

Reenactment and Teaching and Learning Cinema

Reenacting works of Expanded Cinema like *Horror Film 1* requires a combination of approaches including the gathering of oral histories, research within formal archives, and physical

experimentation. Our own creative practices place us in an interesting position in relation to the work of reenactment: Lucas is an artist working primarily with social relations as the medium of his work and Louise is an experimental film-maker and a trained archivist employed by the National Archives in Canberra. Our approach to reenacting Expanded Cinema events, which we will discuss throughout this paper, thus draws on the disciplines of socially engaged art making and moving image archiving—resulting in what we believe is a generative contribution to both fields.

Performance reenactment (or "re-performance") has emerged since the turn of the century as an arena of practice and scholarship, a means of "doing" historical research as well as a way of critically reflecting on ephemeral artworks from the past. One of the best known interventions to date is undoubtedly Marina Abramović's *Seven Easy Pieces* (2005), in which she reenacted iconic works from the 1960s and 1970s by Bruce Nauman, VALIE EXPORT, Vito Acconci, Gina Pane, Joseph Beuys and herself at the Guggenheim Museum in New York. Recent texts have begun to unpick the multiple layers of mediation that produce, and emerge from, reenactment practices (Jones and Heathfield 2012; Santone 2008). Reenactment inevitably raises questions about authenticity and the primacy of "unmediated" experience versus the role of documentation (Walley 2013). Teaching and Learning Cinema's contribution to this field is fairly modest. Since 2003, we have been very slowly piecing together reenactments of particular works of Expanded Cinema—usually from the 1970s, usually from LFMC—sharing with an open-source ethos our difficulties and discoveries. To date, our major reenactment experiments include Guy Sherwin's *Man with Mirror* (1976), Anthony McCall's *Long Film for Ambient Light* (1975), and William Raban's *2'45"* (1972) (Teaching and Learning Cinema 2009; Ihlein 2012; Curham and Ihlein 2009). As Jonathan Walley writes, the motivation for carrying out a reenactment may begin with a desire to access an "authentic" experience of a past work of ephemeral art, but the physical-material practice of actually executing a reenactment can prove unpredictably generative of insights that go far beyond the historical (Walley 2013).

Experiencing Ephemeral Events from the Past

We begin with a nod to Peggy Phelan's seminal text on the ephemeral condition of performance. It is, Phelan says, the defining feature of performance to exist only in the present. Its ontology is characterized precisely by its own disappearance. It cannot be documented; or if it is, such mediation transforms it into *something other than performance* (Phelan 1993, 146). Phelan's impulse—to consider performance as occurring only in the unmediated present (i.e., *you had to be there*)—has wielded a seductive power over discourse in this field, although she is not without her critics. Amelia Jones, one of the foremost theorists of performance of our generation, has argued forcefully that an encounter with documentation *can* offer a performance experience in its own right (Jones 1997). Since 1993, when Phelan's book was published, massive changes in global communications technologies have fundamentally altered what we understand performance might be, and how, socially, it can manifest itself. Clearly, the phenomenon of bodies interacting with one another within the same physical space can no longer sustain exclusive naming rights to the notion of "performance." And yet, this does not prevent denizens of the hypermediated 2000s from reaching back to the past—in our case, to the very decade in which we were born—in search of an experience of *that* time, and of *that* techno-cultural context.

How might we achieve an experience of ephemeral events from the past? In the following sections, we explore this question using the reenactment of Le Grice's *Horror Film 1* as our case study. It is

our contention that archives are one of three major sites of research necessary for the practical problem of reenactment—the others being primary research through oral history interviews and the task of physically "trying it out" for ourselves. As creative researchers, we vibrate between these three major research sites, each of which generates possibilities that allow us to deepen our understanding of the work: technically, conceptually, and contextually. Ultimately, we argue, we are *tending the archive*—not just extracting what we need from it, but using it to produce new material, which feeds back into the archive, to enrich its content and open it up to further, hitherto unknowable, applications.

Intergenerational Transmission

Our project began in 2010, when Malcolm Le Grice toured Australia and New Zealand to present a series of film and video screenings.[1] Le Grice had heard about TLC's previous reenactment projects, in particular Guy Sherwin's *Man with Mirror* (1976–), and suggested that we take on *Horror Film 1*. The piece is well known among the networks of avant-garde film enthusiasts around the world, and Le Grice is called upon to perform it regularly. However, now aged in his mid-seventies, he told us that his body was tiring and that he would be interested in "passing on" the work.

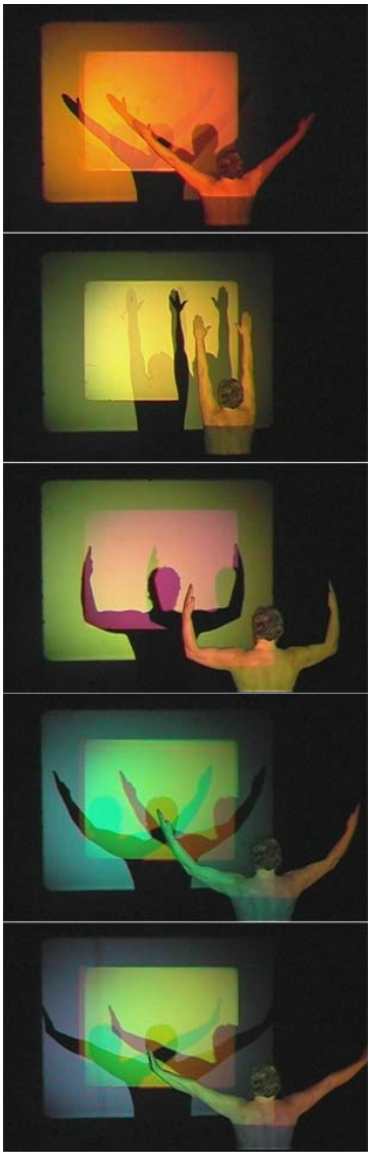
This notion of intergenerational transmission, with Le Grice "passing on" the work and TLC "taking it on," is not new to us. Since we began developing our reenactment methodology, we have often described our process in terms of custodianship, implying the taking of responsibility for something inherited. In part, this began from an anxiety: the sense that without our intervention, ephemeral performance works like *Horror Film 1* could go to the grave with their originators, and thus be unavailable for the first-hand experience of future generations.[2]

Such anxiety perhaps aligns our attitude towards ephemeral artworks with Phelan's notion that unless experienced directly, performance disappears. And yet, despite our desire for direct access, we also hold the view that the experience of the work is multiple and distributed.[3] There are many ways of accessing *Horror Film 1*, and following the argument made by Amelia Jones, participating in a live performance situation should not necessarily be privileged over "the specificity of knowledges that develop in relation to the documentary traces of such an event" (Jones 1997, 12). In many cases, such documentary traces have already infiltrated our experience of the work before we come to it in physical co-presence. Furthermore, the awareness that documentation (photography, video, narrative) of an event *is being generated* will inevitably mediate our live experience of it.[4] If, as Jones argues, the nature of body-based performance is to "play within the arena of the symbolic," an arena inherently codified within the domain of representation, then it is a "modernist dream" to cling to the desire for an unmediated event (Jones 1997, 13, 17).

Experiencing *Horror Film 1* through Documentation

In the case of *Horror Film 1*, our primary access to documentation was via videos posted on YouTube and Vimeo: some by Le Grice himself, and others by audience members in attendance at various Expanded Cinema events.[5] The duration of *Horror Film 1* is "officially" fourteen minutes, but this varies (depending largely on the size of the room). Documentation videos show a shirtless man, standing with his back to us, stretching his arms slowly up, and then out. The three 16 mm film projections used for *Horror Film 1* are trained on the same area of the screen, frame within frame, rather than sitting side by side. Blocks of solid light—red, blue, green—flash and flicker

across the man's body. Primary colours from these film-strips "mix" in real-time on the screen, producing multiple permutations of cyan, magenta, yellow, and white, with the shadow of the man's body generating even more complex colour variations. His hands attempt to find and hold for a moment the boundaries of the projected rectangles of light. Shadows flickering, oscillating left and right, growing ever larger, the man slowly steps backward towards the 16 mm film projectors. He is accompanied by the constant, loudly amplified sound of heavy breathing, the breath's physical wind crackling and interfering with a microphone. Toward the end, his hands are very close to the film projectors: blurry hand-shadows fill the entire projection surface, finally enveloping the screen . . . "crushing it" . . . at which point the film projectors are switched off, the room reverts to darkness, and the breathing soundtrack gives way to the audience's applause. All of this is the work's "content," easily accessible via online documentation.



Malcolm Le Grice, *Horror Film 1*, 1971–, documentation video stills (LUX 2014).

What fascinated us about this video documentation of *Horror Film 1* was the powerfully affective combination of sound and image, created with such simple means. The work's "narrative" is hardly

complex: it involves the linear transition of the performer from far to near, resulting in the corresponding transformation of his shadows from small to large. It could even be argued that the piece is "predictable": it follows a procedural logic determined in advance by a tacit performance instruction or score: "walk slowly from screen to projector, moving your hands to allow your shadows to touch and hold the frames of projected light" (thus reflexively drawing the audience's focus to the generally taken-for-granted rectangular film format). And yet, like some other seminal works of procedural, concept-based art, the process and its results are surprisingly mesmerizing.[6] The ability of *Horror Film 1* to hold our attention, even when filtered through the distracting medium of a low-resolution online video platform like YouTube, is what made us curious to discover its seemingly simple means of production—and to (re)produce the work for ourselves.

Transmissibility: *Horror Film 1* in the Archive

This curiosity is what propelled us to the archive—specifically, the extensive holdings of the British Artists Film and Video Study Collection (BAFVSC) at Central St Martins College in London.[7] The collection holds the world's most comprehensive set of archival documents on the London Film Makers' Co-operative (LFMC), of which Le Grice was an active member in the 1960s and 1970s. There is a modest amount of material about *Horror Film 1*, mixed in with documents about Le Grice's wider body of work: newspaper reviews, interview transcripts, publicity materials, film event program sheets, and artist statements. The reviews and program sheets give some idea of the context within which the piece was presented: usually as part of film screenings in London and other European cities, attended by small groups of underground film enthusiasts. Its most iconic appearance was part of a touring Expanded Cinema program called *FILMAKTION* (1972) at the Walker Art Centre in Liverpool, UK, organized by Le Grice in collaboration with Gill Eatherley, William Raban, and Annabel Nicholson (Reynolds 2005).

For the purposes of our intended reenactment, the most enlightening documents in the BAFVSC archive contain statements articulating Le Grice's own thoughts on the "transmissibility" of *Horror Film 1:* its in-built potential to be "passed on" to other performing bodies. In an interview transcript from 2003, he asserts that the live audience should be able to clearly perceive the "ingredients" of the film—three overlapping film loops, sound, and the performer's body—which, when combined, add up to more than the sum of their parts: "the audience in a way can see everything [it's] made from, it's a bit like [a] recipe: . . . six oranges, a slug of brandy and . . . what comes out of it isn't the same as what went into it: that kind of magic that happens when the thing is transformed" (Wyver 2003). For Le Grice, it is this legibility of the performance's components which might empower audience members to try it out for themselves: "They can see that magic happening . . . but also . . . they can look and see how this is done and they can say to themselves: I can do that, you know. There is nothing I couldn't do if I wanted to do it" (Wyver 2003).

In another item from the archive, Le Grice reflects on performing *Horror Film 1* in 2000 at London's Whitechapel Gallery. He writes: "Thirty years ago I normally did this naked, but now only venture to remove my shirt—when I did it at the Whitechapel show I decided I should soon need to train a stand in" (Le Grice 2001). We will come back to the question of nakedness in *Horror Film 1*. For now, the point of interest is Le Grice's articulation (possibly as part of a self-deprecating joke) of the need for a "stand in." In theatre, the stand-in replaces the lead actor in case of illness. For Le Grice to regard himself as *Horror Film 1*'s lead actor implies that the work might not be bound inextricably to his own corporeal presence. Following this line of thinking, if we consider *Horror Film 1* as a work

of experimental theatre, then Le Grice would be repositioned as its "author" and *initial* lead actor, opening it up to other performance personnel and a lifespan beyond Le Grice's own.[8] Although we were already aware, from our personal discussions with him, that Le Grice was keen for the work to be "passed on," the discovery of this item in the BAFVSC archive confirmed that the problem of the work's "mortality" was something that had been on his mind for some time. Since at least 2001, Le Grice had been entertaining the idea that detaching himself physically from *Horror Film 1* was one way of ensuring that the work would continue to be available for future audiences.[9]

What we did *not* find in the BAFVSC archive were any immediately useful instructions about how to perform *Horror Film 1*. There were several hand-typed notes intended for potential screening venues, indicating basic technical requirements—three projectors, a room of a certain size, and so on—but since Le Grice himself was always present, hitherto there had been no pressing need to codify its enactment to enable *somebody else* to carry it out. However, in the BAFVSC archives, we found evidence of Le Grice's desire for such a codified set of instructions. In an interview with Mike Sperlinger in 2005, Le Grice states:

> I could certainly give a script, an approximate script like a notation, for someone else to do the performance. I'd be extremely happy if someone else performed *Horror Film*, I wouldn't have any problem at all, and again there could be a set of instructions and I could say as part of the instructions, "Take a look at this documentation." I'd rather someone did that than relied just on the documentation. (Sperlinger 2005)

For this reason, we visited Le Grice at his home in Devon, UK, over four days in June 2013. Our intention was to piece together a working "recipe" for *Horror Film 1*, together with a sense of its original context, including his intentions and the work's meaning within the time and place of its conception.[10]

Spending Time with the Author

The goals for our visit to Le Grice in Devon were threefold. First, we wanted to receive a tutorial from Le Grice about the *technical set up* and performance of the work. In this way, we would be in a position to try out the piece for ourselves. Second, we hoped to get a sense of the *original context* for the performance of the work. In our experience from previous reenactment projects, making changes is an inevitable part of the process—and deciding which changes are possible within the work's fundamental structure depends on a deeper understanding of how it operated within its original cultural context, and subsequently over time. Third, beyond the pragmatics of our immediate reenactment project, we wanted to collect *any other information* from Le Grice that might be useful in the future—to ourselves or other researchers. To this end, we created audio recordings of our often free-ranging conversations, which we are now in the process of transcribing.

In Devon, we spent much time with Le Grice going through the technics of performing *Horror Film 1* (splicing film loops, projector operation, using zoom lenses, choreography, etc.). However, we don't want to focus on those matters here—our provisional "user's manual" is posted on the TLC website, and will continue to be updated as we refine our own staging of the piece. Rather, we want to touch on the major issue that arose when we were preparing our initial performance of the work in Canberra in 2013: the corporeal presentation of the performer. This factor, we believe, is at the

heart of the work's meaning and affective impact within the live performance event. It required us to flip back and forth between our own practical attempt to present the work, the archival documents from the BAFVSC, and the interview transcripts generated in Devon the previous year.

Aging and Gender: *Horror Film 1*'s Emergent Themes

Up until our reenactment, *Horror Film 1* had always been enacted by a single performer: a man. But there are *two* of us in TLC—a man and a woman. This raised a key question: which of us should perform the piece?[11] How might we go about making this decision? The following three points roughly approximate our thinking process in mid-2013 as we developed our initial reenactment of *Horror Film 1*:

> 1. When he first performed *Horror Film 1*, Le Grice was in his early thirties. He used his own body in the work because it was the most readily available (not because he intended to make a work explicitly reflecting on issues of gender or masculinity). He has continued to present the piece using his own body, which in the ensuing years has inevitably aged. Despite this, "the work" he performs is still *Horror Film 1*. Thus, it is inherently variable: able to accommodate different bodies and yet be the same piece of Expanded Cinema. In fact, the work's meaning over time continually evolves: now layered on top of its shadow play is a poignant reflection on the aging process.[12]
>
> 2. Le Grice has mentioned that the presence of the male body reaching his arms up and out in *Horror Film 1* has been "read" (by audiences, and himself) as an echo of Leonardo's well-known drawing *Vitruvian Man* (ca. 1490). This drawing, sometimes also called *The Proportions of Man*, codified the male bodily form as a system of universal measurement: an architectonic analogue for the linguistic use of the term "man" to signify humanity in general. Is this male=universal construct (even if not intended by Le Grice) an essential part of the work?
>
> 3. What meaning could be generated in our reenactment by the continuation of the use of the male body? Would this reinforce the notion of male=universal, even if that were not our intention?

Following this thought process, we decided to conduct our first reenactment of *Horror Film 1* with Louise as the performer. It is worth stating that this was not a definitive move on our part. We may change our minds later; we may decide to have two different versions of the work, one male, one female, or to develop another version with simultaneous performers from each gender. For reenactment to operate as a form of creative research, the key is to start *somewhere*. We present the work in progress and involve our audience in the process of appraising its affective impact and possible meanings. These new discoveries are then fed back into the archive—via our website, and into the more formal archives at the BAFVSC.

Having nominated Louise to perform the piece, we turned to the question of clothing/nakedness. As noted earlier, in early presentations of *Horror Film 1*, Le Grice performed completely unclothed. Later, he would wear trousers but no shirt. What was the reason for this switch? When did it happen? And should we adhere to Le Grice's earlier or later iteration when making our reenactment?

In our Devon interviews, Le Grice explains that after carrying out the early performances, he realized that it wasn't necessary to take all his clothes off for the performance:

> *TLC*: Do you remember what made you switch from performing it without clothes on to performing it just without a shirt, but with the pants on?
>
> *Malcolm Le Grice*: I fairly quickly came to the conclusion that there wasn't any particularly good reason to do it with no clothes on. That wasn't what it was about. It was really important that the torso was there because that's what's illuminated, but the backside, not terribly important because it hardly appears in the movie [laughs] and it appears less and less as the movie goes on. I never minded doing it with no clothes on, it never bothered me. Certainly in the 60s and early 70s people couldn't wait to get their clothes off. (Teaching and Learning Cinema 2013)

Le Grice's mention of "the movie" here refers to the overlapping rectangles of coloured light on the projection screen. Only his torso, from the waist up, is illuminated by the projection and is thus "in the movie"—and this is borne out in the video documentation on YouTube. His final remark—that people "couldn't wait to get their clothes off" in the 60s and 70s presumably refers to the proliferation of naked body art performances from the period. Certainly Le Grice was aware of this context for his work. In the interview, he mentions VALIE EXPORT and Carolee Schneeman—both key practitioners crossing over between experimental cinema and performance/body art—but he prefers to situate *Horror Film 1* within the context of *film*:

> *Malcolm Le Grice*: I know [*Horror Film 1*] is performance art . . . but I wasn't thinking of it in that context, I was thinking of it much more in the context of film, [the] cinematic. And about shadows. Not so much about the performance itself. . . . I never thought about that very much when I first started doing it. I certainly didn't "perform" in inverted commas.
>
> *TLC*: No, it's more of a procedural activity or something like that.
>
> *Malcolm Le Grice*: That's right. (Teaching and Learning Cinema 2013)

To argue that the function of the performer's body in *Horror Film 1* is largely "procedural" is to place that body among the set of functional components that make up the cinematic apparatus: the projectors, screen, seating, audio speakers, and the architectural space of the cinema itself. It is not "expressive" in its own right. It does not signify in its own right. The performer's body need only intercept the flickering projected light, creating shadows on the screen beyond. In this way, it doesn't matter whether the performer is male or female, clothed or naked. Except, of course, *it does*. Le Grice's jokey statement about needing to train a stand-in demonstrates that the work is signifying on multiple levels all the time.

In live performance, an array of conscious and semi-conscious thoughts is triggered: Le Grice's body as it is right now; our culturally-specific attitudes towards the male, aging body; the performer's own perception of how others might perceive his body; even his "everyday" trousers and belt, selected from the range of available high street fashion of the day. All these things shimmer back and forth in

the work's signification, in the minds of audience and performer, even as we are absorbed in the "procedure" of the slowly moving arms, the inevitable transition from far to near.

While the performance of age and gender have become visible themes in our experience of *Horror Film 1* in 2014, they do not appear to have been particular concerns for Le Grice in the early 1970s. His own published writing at the time of *Horror Film 1*'s first presentation tends to emphasize *formal* experimentation as a political agenda in its own right. In "Real Time/Space," Le Grice explains the importance of intervening in the projection event as a way of drawing the audience's attention to the present moment (Le Grice 1972). Events that raise awareness of the *here and now,* he argues, offer a means to rupture the audience's passivity. This passivity is engendered by standard narrative cinema, whose ideological function relies on presenting a fictional representation of a *different* time and space from the audience's own.

A historical framing of avant-garde cinema along the lines of Le Grice's account in "Real Time/Space" has become fairly standard, but it is not the only way of considering the activities of the 1970s. For example, in her essay "Whose History?" LFMC artist Lis Rhodes makes a strong critique of this historical model (Rhodes 1979). In 1979, Rhodes and several other artists withdrew in protest from the Hayward Gallery exhibition *Film as Film: Formal Experiment in Film 1910–1975*. They argued that the emphasis on formal innovation in the exhibition marginalized experimental cinema's overt engagement with identity politics, particularly gender. As Rhodes points out in her essay, the few women who were included in the exhibition were framed in terms of the dominant formalist story—and for the purposes of telling that story, these artists' gender was subsumed. "History," she writes, "is presumed to be male unless otherwise defined" (Rhodes 1979, 120).[13] If the passing of time has allowed *age* (now visibly performed by Le Grice himself) to become a central theme in *Horror Film 1,* the "passing on" of the work to TLC has also forced *gender* to the surface as a theme. Le Grice's own interest in this aspect of the work is perhaps less important than the fact that the concrete process of reenactment has made it undeniably visible.

A future project of TLC is to investigate in greater depth these emergent themes of aging, gender and the "performing-body versus apparatus-body" in Expanded Cinema reenactment, as they seem to arise repeatedly in our work. However, back in June 2014, while preparing our first reenactment of *Horror Film 1*, our concerns were rather more pragmatic. Working on a hunch, we had to jump in and see what might happen. In a blog entry we wrote while developing our reenactment, one of the factors we thought deeply about (but which was not raised by Le Grice himself) was the idea of enabling the performer to enter into the work's mood—or as we wrote, its "spell":

> The feeling we're getting as we muck around with the loops in the gallery here in Canberra is that the piece needs to cross a threshold from the everyday to the special. Well, *all* cinema does this: the lights go out, a hush goes across the cinema space, people turn off their phones and stop muttering, and the spell begins.
>
> Anyway, our thought is . . . we need to create the conditions for this spell-state, to have ourselves cross a threshold into something ceremonial and ritualistic. This is not just to generate something special for the audience, but also *for ourselves*.
>
> . . . one of the big things to consider is how the performer can get into that state. It's a sort of mindfulness so that a charged atmosphere is generated, so that the

> performer is tuned into his/her body and its relationship to the projectors, the screen, the room, the amplified breathing, the audience.
>
> Our feeling is that one factor that could contribute strongly to the transition from the casual everyday, to the generation of this mindful state, is the shedding of the trappings of the everyday—in other words, *nuding up*. (Teaching and Learning Cinema 2014b)

This was the hunch we worked with. Our main concern was that Louise, if performing semi-clothed, might feel awkward, self-conscious, "stagey"—in short, that she would not successfully pass the threshold into "something ceremonial and ritualistic," and that she would be stranded on the border between the everyday and the ceremonial. Only moments before the performance, we had been greeting and chatting with audience members as they arrived. Now, here she was, *performing*, in quite a different mental space altogether.



Teaching and Learning Cinema, *Horror Film I Re-enactment*, 2014, documentation video stills.

We are still debating whether our hunch was right. Is this absorptive atmosphere—the "spell"—the correct way of interpreting Le Grice's work? Perhaps the jarring effect of a semi-clad performer, boundary-riding between the everyday and the ceremonial, drawing attention to the event's inherent awkwardness, is precisely the point of *Horror Film 1*? As we wrote in our blog:

> In some ways, to claim that a piece by Malcolm Le Grice also subscribes to this transition into spell-state is odd. He's the great debunker of Hollywood spectacle, the iconoclast—he wants us to uncomfortably shift ourselves out of our seduction by the spectacle. But . . . but . . . his works *do* have a visual pleasure and a social specialness, and that's one of the things that makes them endure. (Teaching and Learning Cinema 2014b)

We don't know the answers to these questions. But, in TLC's reenactments, getting it right might not matter as much as having a go in public, seeing what happens, reflecting on the results, and carrying on, all the while recycling the provisional results back into the archive.

Reaching Through to The Object

At various points in the above description of TLC's provisional methodology, we've used the phrase "the work" in inverted commas. It's a problematic construct, and previously we've found solace in pragmatist philosopher John Dewey's redefinition of the *work* of art from a noun to a verb (Ihlein 2012, 334). Dewey's notion, that the work of art is the *work that art does* in shaping our experience, helps empower the reenactor as a mediator of cultural encounters rather than a crafter of objects (Dewey 2005 [1934]). Despite this, the idea of the work as a nameable entity, a thing in itself, an object that endures across time and space, is very difficult to dislodge. In the public discussions following our performances, we have often employed the metaphor of genetic structure—the idea of a fundamental DNA code—to ask what changes might be possible while still retaining the work's "essence" or identity. In this sense, while arguing for a multi-sited work, we are still, as we oscillate between archive and action, "reaching through to the object"—reinforcing the notion of the object-nature of the ephemeral artwork, even as we problematize it. In this final section, we dwell briefly on a formative idea from archival practice that may help shed light on the problem of what it is to propose an inherently variable work of art.

In his essay "What is Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift," archivist Terry Cook describes a fundamental principle of modern archiving practice: maintaining original context (Cook 1997). This principle, developed initially by the Dutch Association of Archivists in 1898, asserts the importance of retaining not just the objects (or "records") in an archive, but also, as much as possible, *the manner in which those records came to be archived in the first place*. Cook is concerned mainly with the creation and management of official archives—the paperwork generated by government departments, for example—rather than those related to the historical fate of experimental artworks like *Horror Film 1*. However, the same principles apply, namely that the layers of metadata swirling around an archival record are potentially just as useful as the record itself. Or to put it another way: destroying layers of metadata by, for instance, "tidying up" the seemingly disorganized filing system of an administrative body is tantamount to degrading the archival record itself.

This notion of an archival record as a composite of a physical object and its set of relational connections (how it came to be deposited in the archive, the logic of its categorization, how it links to neighbouring documents, and so on) resonates with TLC's approach to Expanded Cinema reenactment. Reenactment, we argue, creates the conditions for a live experience, which opens up a multiplicity within the archival record. Our experience in the present moment is clearly not "of the original," but it nevertheless "reaches through to the original." Live performance brings to conscious awareness the mediating presence of the reenactment as both an archival intervention *and* a creative work in its own right. This foregrounding of the multiple layers of mediation aligns our approach with the archival principle of "maintaining original context." In our case, this manifests in the provision of multiple pathways reaching through to the original, while simultaneously acknowledging how difficult it might be for audiences in Canberra in 2014 to experience the work in the same way as audiences in London in 1971.

Archives and "Flesh-Memory"

To return to where we began this discussion, it is clear that the definition of *performance as disappearance* is troubled by the practices of reenactment. In his essay "The Performativity of Performance Documentation," Phillip Auslander suggests that the term "revival" (borrowed from the theatre) could be useful, implying as it does the continuation of a performative tradition. Revival, he writes, suggests "the reawakening of an organic entity rather than the rebuilding of a lost object" (Auslander 2012, 58). By passing on non-exclusive custodianship of *Horror Film 1*, Malcolm Le Grice transforms his own artwork into a small cultural tradition, acknowledging that keeping it alive depends not only on conventional archival deposits (papers, diagrams, artist statements, video documents) but also on a regularly repeated *ritual* of live performance. In his 2005 interview with Mike Sperlinger, Le Grice borrows from jazz the notion of musical improvisation to consider how *Horror Film 1* could be part of an evolving tradition:

> I think it might be smart to have a set of instructions, with the right spirit so there's an improvisational element there too—if someone has a good idea while they're doing it, it belongs to them. It's like in the tradition of jazz, you take a piece of music and if there's something that you want to do with it, at the point when you perform it, it belongs to you. (Sperlinger 2005)

Similarly, reenactment theorist Rebecca Schneider argues that live performance can operate as an evolving archival practice in its own right. Like Le Grice, Schneider places value on the necessary *alterations* that occur in the process of repetition and transmission across generations. In *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Re-enactment*, she writes: "Paradoxically, perhaps, it is the errors, the cracks in the effort, the almost but not quite, that gives us some access to sincerity, to fidelity, to a kind of touch across time David Román has termed 'archival drag'" (Schneider 2011, 112). These transmission errors, through which artists and audiences become conscious of the *inherently double* nature of their experience (bodily present in real-time, as well as time-travelling to a prior event) are perhaps one of the keys that enable us as reenactors to "reach through to the object." In such moments, to quote Schneider again, "we feel a leak of affective engagement between the then and the now that brings time travel, as it were, into the fold of experience: shimmering on an edge, caught between the possible and the impossible, touching the interval itself" (Schneider 2011, 112).

In this sense we could argue, alongside Auslander, that the nature of performance is not disappearance, but *revival*: the ongoing, repetitive practice of keeping something alive, visible, in cultural currency, and therefore by definition, *always changing*. As Schneider asserts, many forms of culture rely on oral transmission as their primary method of archiving. Live performance might not leave behind a documentary artifact, but instead operates as the very site of memory-residue itself: "In such practices . . . performance does remain, does leave 'residue.' Indeed the place of residue is arguably *flesh* in a network of body-to-body transmission of affect and enactment—evidence, across generations, of impact" (Schneider 2011, 100).

Conclusion: Tending the Archive

The expanded cinema reenactments of TLC identify with Schneider's assertion that along with traditional documents, history can be embedded and passed on via "flesh memory" (Schneider 2011, 104). Such ideas mount a challenge to conventional notions of the archive. As an artist/archivist collaboration, we might characterize our approach to thinking through and with archives as threefold. First, it is pragmatic and opportunistic. We use archives as a means to an end: the production of a new work of performance. Second, it is generous and interventionist. We reorder and augment the existing archival material through blog entries and public discussion, and by making new archival deposits. To borrow a concept from digital culture, this might be characterized as a "read/write" approach, where we grant ourselves permission to both access archival records and make changes to them.[14] And third, our approach is ongoing and ritualistic. Our process doesn't stop once we have pieced together a functioning reenactment. We need to *keep practising* the performance, and this means that "the work" (in its now expanded definition) will continually evolve over time—as will its associated archival entities.

The sum of these activities is an archival *tending*: treating this space of interaction as a sort of garden, involving planting, feeding, mulching, and harvesting, in an ongoing, cyclic process. The idea of tending to a work of performance frames it as a rich network of archival records connected to a wider cultural ecosystem. Reenactment helps us in our attempt to understand the work's original techno-cultural context, even as it vibrates with our own mediated experience in present time and space.

Notes

1. Le Grice's antipodean tour was co-presented by OtherFilm and IMA, Brisbane; the New Zealand Film Archive; Govett Brewster Gallery, New Plymouth; and Performance Space, Sydney.

2. For more on this anxiety of disappearance, see Ihlein 2013; and Ihlein 2005.

3. This notion of a distributed and variable work of art is more thoroughly elucidated in Umberto Eco's *The Open Work* (Eco 1989).

4. This problematic is further explored in Santone 2008.

5. Video documentation of *Horror Film 1* can be viewed at the following URLs (accessed January 4, 2015): http://vimeo.com/28460177; and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6bRddEfxCok.

6. Here we are thinking about procedural works by minimal and conceptual artists such as Sol Le Witt. In 1967, Le Witt wrote: "When an artist uses a conceptual form of art, it means that all of the planning and decisions are made beforehand and the execution is a perfunctory affair. The idea becomes a machine that makes the art" (Le Witt 1967, 80). Le Witt's wall drawings, which are generated via a rather dry set of textual

instructions (a "machine"), nevertheless often produce rich visual results. Notable for our own inquiry is the fact that Le Witt's drawings continue to be executed following his instructions even after his death in 2007.

7. From the BAFVSC website: "The BAFVSC was founded in 2000 by David Curtis and Malcolm Le Grice, its currently associated researchers are Research Fellows Steven Ball and Duncan White with David Curtis as advisor" (http://www.studycollection.org.uk/about). Another major resource in London is LUX, an organization that evolved from the ashes of the London Filmmakers' Co-Operative (LFMC). In 2009, New Zealand curator Mark Williams visited LUX to conduct extensive research into the archival records pertaining to Malcolm Le Grice. His working notes are posted online (Williams 2009). Williams' research trip resulted in Le Grice's 2010 screening tour of Australia and New Zealand.

8. To be clear, we are not actually suggesting a reframing of *Horror Film 1* as a work of experimental theatre. Le Grice himself clearly situates the work within the tradition of cinema. However, for argument's sake we are borrowing an idea from a neighbouring discipline: the standard theatrical practice of a work's transmissibility to diverse performance personnel.

9. Le Grice's desire to ensure the immortality of *Horror Film 1* also complicated our reenactment project. Whereas up until now our reenactments had been driven solely by *our own curiosity* (and in this sense were "self-commissioned" and responsible only to ourselves), layered on top of our *Horror Film 1* research was a deeper sense of responsibility towards its "commissioner."

10. We are conscious of the valuable work of the Variable Media Network and Forging the Future in their development of the *Variable Media Questionnaire*—a tool for creating archival deposits to ensure the survival of artworks whose media (software and hardware) are in flux. However, we have not yet directly used their tool in our own reenactment projects (Forging the Future 2014).

11. TLC's reenactment of Guy Sherwin's *Man with Mirror* (1976–) resolved this problem by creating a new version of the work performed simultaneously by both Lucas and Louise, standing opposite one another, each effectively "mirroring" the other. This new work is called *(Wo)man with Mirror* (Teaching and Learning Cinema 2009.)

12. The aging body also emerges as an "unexpected theme" in Guy Sherwin's *Man with Mirror* (1976–), in which the artist (now in his mid-sixties) performs live with a super 8 film of himself in 1976 (then aged twenty-eight). As Sherwin notes, the original impulse for *Man with Mirror* was an experiment in combining a live performer and his own image, using a visually complex interplay of projector, screen, and mirror. Performing it now, nearly forty years later, it is both the same work and something completely different. Sherwin concedes: "It's to do with ageing. I know it is. It's become something different from when I first made it. . . . At that time it was nothing to do with my getting older of course, because I would have been almost the same age when I first performed it in 1976" (Sherwin, Loo, and White 2011, 253). Commenting on this development, Noam Ellcott wryly describes Sherwin's visage in *Man with Mirror* as "the very face of Father Time" (Ellcott 2014, 24).

13. See also Gaal-Holmes (2015), who makes a strong case for a more diverse history of experimental cinema in the UK that goes beyond the dominant formalist narrative.

14. In his influential book *Remix*, media theorist Lawrence Lessig borrows the analogy of *RW (read/write) versus RO (read only)* from the everyday practices of saving, loading and archiving of computer files. He writes, "If the user has 'RW' permissions, then he is allowed to both read the file and make changes to it. If he has 'Read/Only' permissions, he is allowed only to read the file" (Lessig 2008, 28).

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Dancing Archives of Experience: Surfacing Histories, Staging Subjectivities

Alison Bory

> The body never stops accumulating . . . every gesture, every word involves our past, present, and future.
>
> —Trinh T. Minh-Ha, *Women, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism*

> For if choreography knows something, it is that the archive does not store: it acts.
>
> —André Lepecki, "The Body as Archive: Will to Re-enact and the Afterlives of Dances"

Withdrawing her name from consideration for a New York Performance Award (better known as a "Bessie") in the "Performer" category, contemporary American dancemaker Jennifer Monson explained that she does not conceive of herself as a performer in her solo *Live Dancing Archive* (2012), the work for which she had been nominated. Instead, she perceives herself as dancing an archive of choreographic and sensorial histories, an embodiment of a kinesthetic record. In an open letter to the nominating committee, Monson (2013) elaborated:

> [With this work] I am proposing that dance has the capacity to function as an archival container of the experiences of a range of phenomena that can only be collected through the perceptual research inherent in the practices I have developed. . . . It is not something that I "perform"—it is the way in which those places, experiences, and states live in my dancing.

In her configuration, Monson's embodiment of the movement renders visible the kinesthetic knowledge gathered in her years of improvisational practice.[1] The choreography of this work expands on her research into ecological systems, returning her site-specific investigation of environmental structures and changing landscapes to the stage. For Monson, her dancing materializes the often-ignored knowledge of space, temporality, and experience that is archived in her physicality.

Positioning the body's capacity to register information about systems and places in this way, Monson's solo returns to the movement material that was generated in her original sites of primary research. The foundational source material for *Live Dancing Archive* draws on dance phrases created during *BIRDBRAIN: Osprey Migration* (2002), an eight-week journey along the Atlantic flyaway, specifically reenacting movement from a shared improvisational structure initiated on a beach on Ocracoke Island, North Carolina. In the initial improvisational score, Monson and her collaborators

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created a series of solos, both "mapping" the landscape around them and dancing each other's "maps."[2] These instantaneous dances, echoing both the geography of their location and the individual physicalities of their creators, generated layers of corporeal information about both place and identity. In *Live Dancing Archive*, Monson animates this information, reembodying the improvisational actions that these spaces prompted and reinhabiting the physical gestures that she and her collaborators crafted.



Jennifer Monson, *Live Dancing Archive*. Photographer: Ian Douglas.

Essential to her conceptualization of this archival investigation, however, is Monson's rejection of her role in this reenactment as one of "performer." Identifying her appearance in this piece as such, she suggests, undermines its archival intent. Assigning her appearance with this label, separates her dancing from the work as a whole: the body is divided from the archive it is materializing; the movement is removed from the knowledge it is creating. The dancing in this work, she contends, does not visually recreate a series of steps or performance states. It does not re-present a movement vocabulary for the audience to recognize and consume. Instead, it engages a specific, cultivated practice that renders visible a bodily way of knowing. The dancing doesn't signify this knowledge: it enacts it. The dancing materializes the histories of her body and registers information about the places it has inhabited.

This insistence on the archival possibilities of her dancing body and its capacity to make visible the knowledge it holds provoked many viewers to respond to Monson's work as a reckoning with her own history and sense of identity. Appearing next to more traditional archives, including video of Monson's site-specific dances and an online catalogue of documents from those journeys, critics met the work on the terms of its presentation—as a physicalized record of Monson's experience.[3] Critic Eva Yaa Asantewaa (2013) typified the reaction, writing that *Live Dancing Archive* "serves as a way for Monson to embody a decade of her history of research and making, her sensitive and searching relationship with ecological systems of environments and communities, and her understanding of herself within all of this as a queer woman, activist, and artist." Though not explicitly

autobiographical, then, the work has been seen as an articulation of Monson's identity and positionality, with the reenactment of movement material serving as both document and embodiment of an archive of subjectivity. It is this capacity for choreographic reenactments to render visible history, subjectivity, and constructions of identity that this essay explores. To this end, I ask: How can contemporary autobiographical theory illuminate these stagings of the archives? How does the conceptualization of the dancing body as archive re-imagine stagings of selfhood? How does the process of reenactment inform the subjectivities embedded in the archives?

Responding to these queries, I examine two works that engage these very ideas: Jennifer Lacey's *Two Discussions of an Anterior Event* (2004) and Meredith Monk's *Education of the Girlchild* (1972). Both of these solo works, created and performed by American (post)modern dancemakers, contain movement material that the artists have returned to at various times in their careers. With *Two Discussions of an Anterior Event*, Lacey returns to the ideas and movements of her 1995 solo, *Skin Mitten*, in order to reengage the movement and rework the meanings made from that movement. With her multiple returns to *Education of the Girlchild*, Monk reinhabits the actions and impetuses that generated the work, reflecting on her relationship to the material and its images over the course of nearly forty years. Situating my discussion of these works in conversation with recent scholarship about performance archives and autobiographical theory, I propose that these choreographic reenactments allow the artists to reimagine their relationship to an authorship of selfhood, generatively reenvisioning their own subject positions. Further, I suggest that in returning to their own performance works, these dancemakers are creating archives of (kinesthetic, psychic, emotional, and intellectual) experience, continually producing sites for the crafting, staging, and enacting of subjectivity.

Traces, Reenactments, and Performance Archives

Performance theory has long been invested in examining the ways in which "live" performance is documented, the methods by which performance enters historical accounts, and the means by which it resists traditional archiving practices. Following Peggy Phelan's (1993) influential assertion of performance's essential ephemerality, ontological debates around its possible residues have continued. With scholars countering performance's impermanence through operations of the "repertoire" (Taylor 2003), and the return of performance as both "surrogation" (Roach 1996) and "haunting" (Carlson 2003), conceptualizations of the artifacts of performance have particular potency for considering the efficacy of performance in cultural production and the rethinking of historical legacy. For example, in her rich examination of the possibilities of reenactment, Rebecca Schneider (2011) compellingly argues for an examination of the "remains" of performance. Exploring theatrical and artistic works alongside historical reenactments (largely of Civil War battles), she unearths material traces of performance and the remnants of embodiment. In these discussions, she suggests that the potential for the repeatability of performance is, in fact, its profound theoretical intervention, as the possibility of return necessarily complicates notions of temporality and historicity. Schneider writes:

> reenactment art poses a certain challenge to our longstanding thrall, fueled by art-historical analysis of performance, to the notion that live performance disappears by insisting that, to the contrary, the live is a vehicle for recurrence—unruly or flawed or unfaithful to the precedence as that recurrence may threaten to be. (29)

With this, she proposes that the possibility of historical/artistic reenactment allows for a reconceptualizing of the functioning of time and the seemingly fixed nature of the past, especially of concern for seemingly evanescent performing arts practices like dance. In this opportunity for recurrence, what becomes prescient, then, is that the past is always already returning. Reenactments not only call attention to the precariousness of historicity but also illuminate understandings of both the present and the future. Through the repetition and reiteration of embodying actions, reenactment, Schneider concludes, "is not remembering the past as if it were only behind, but pitching and stitching forward" (2011, 123).

Issues around the repeatability of performance have been central to many ongoing discussions in dance scholarship. In theorizing the varied ways in which dance works come to the stage and remain in the repertories of companies or individual bodies, scholars also negotiate the possibilities and limitations of bringing a dance work "back to life." Early discussions around the efficacy and rationale for reconstructing, reviving, and recreating historical works were often guided by what Helen Thomas (2004) calls "assumptions (implicit and explicit) regarding authenticity, reproducibility and interpretivity" (39). The resulting discourse was often anchored in debates about the relationship between reenactments of work and the "original," assessing and demarcating the possibilities for success in reproducing a dance production as it was initially staged. Acknowledging the limits of this approach—as both a theoretical and theatrical practice—allowed for a reimagining of what might be offered by bringing a historical dance work to the stage. As Mark Franko (1993) notes, "In the 1980s we began to see reconstructions conveying something closer to the theatrical force of the original choreography: a force, moreover, that potentially influences new work rather than merely animating a historical artifact" (134). Advocating, instead, for the practice of "construction" (as opposed to reconstruction), Franko suggests that restaging archival work aims to reproduce "the effect" of the work rather than replicating specificities of the work itself (136). Reframing the practice of restaging historical dances as an investigation of the sociopolitical space of creation, the reproduction of the particular steps, styles, and performance qualities becomes less precious.

In recent years, many dance theorists have again taken up an interest in reenactments and re-performance as they consider a new "turn to the archives" by many contemporary choreographers (Burt 2003; Hardt 2012; Elswit 2014). Investigating artists who are revisiting the work of other makers to bring works from another era or another body to the stage, these discussions have contemplated both the interest in and the implications of such a move. Central to this discourse has been a debate about the driving forces of these "impulses," to borrow the term from Hal Foster (2006), toward the embodiment of the historical. André Lepecki (2010) has engaged this concern, arguing for an understanding of this interest in the past as a "will to archive" that manifests in contemporary reenactments of dances from the past. Lepecki suggests that articulating the strategic approaches undertaken in these reenactments—this will to archive—does not arise from a desire for replication or historicization, but from a desire to bring these dances into the present. In this configuration, the body is always already an archive that simultaneously illuminates difference (from an "original") and creates something new. Repetition is situated as generative, constituting a new work, a new approach, or a new understanding. The kinesthetic turn to the past becomes instigation for the future.

In Lepecki's elaboration, the capacity for "newness" in reenactment unfixes the notions of authorship that are often associated with choreography. Discussing the "will to archive" within the

projects of Martin Nachbar, Julie Tolentino, and Richard Move, artists who are, each in their own way, reembodying the choreographies of other artists (and other times), Lepecki argues for understanding these returns as undermining the authority attached to choreographic notions of authorship. He positions these reenactments as choreographic and political interventions that subvert the modernist discourse that reifies the power of the individual creator. To this end, he suggests,

> the political-ethical imperative for re-enactments not only to reinvent, not only to point out that the present is different from the past, but to invent, to create—become of returning—something that is new and yet participates fully in the virtual cloud surrounding the originating work itself—while bypassing an author's wishes as last words over a work's destiny. This is one of the political acts re-enacting performs as re-enactment: it suspends economies of authoritative authors who want to keep their works under house arrest. To re-enact would mean to disseminate, to spill without expecting a return or a profit. It would mean to expel, to ex-propriate, to excorporate under the name of a promise called giving. In other words, re-enactments enact the promise of the end of economy. They make dance return, only to give it away. (Lepecki 2010, 35)

The choreographic tactics of the turn to the archives, as Lepecki explains them, do not fix a dance in its historical time and space, aligned with the power of a sourced author. Instead, they undermine the rigid structures of naming, making compositional structures and identifiable choreographic entities available for reimagining and resituating. Reenacting undercuts the singularity of the choreographer-as-author to position dance as something that is perpetually being "passe[d] around" (Lepecki 2010, 39).

Building on these generative conceptualizations of the turn to the archives, I am suggesting that Lacey and Monk are similarly producing new relationships to the material, movement, and meaning that they are reinhabiting. Their choreographic returns reimagine associations to work they created at earlier times and under different conditions. As such, revisiting their own choreographic archives provides opportunities for reflection on personal and artistic histories, positioning these choreographic returns as negotiations of selfhood. In investigating their experiences of embodiment and reconfiguring their notions of creative production, these solos mine the movement of the past in order to offer new understandings of (and for) the present. As the works to which they are returning are their own, these reenactments do not extricate themselves from the complicated relationship between author and archivist, as Lepecki outlines it. They do not seek to undermine the authority of the choreographic name, but reveal the potential tension between the archive and the subject. In so doing, these choreographers transform the authoritative implications of reembodiment. In returning to these solos, a form that often seems to collapse the notion of creator and performer, these artists further unravel rigid notions of authorship, as their choreographic returns insist on evolving ideas of what is produced. Situating choreographic composition as process rather than as static product, these works insist on undoing the assertion of authority often assigned to the solo form.[4] Using different choreographic and performance tactics, both of these works mark differences from their previous iterations, acknowledging these works not as replications of some previous lionized "original" but offering them as something new. In this way, they prioritize fluidity and process over fixed concepts of choreographic constancy. The compositions are allowed to be continually remade, developing perpetually evolving relationships to the material presented.

Reproduced without valorizing replication, these reenactments render difference visible. They propose a way of understanding the performance of being. In so doing, these choreographies allow us to consider these returns as investigations into bodily archives, which reveal the staging of subjectivity and the act of performative self-making.

In situating Jennifer Lacey's *Two Discussions of an Anterior Event* and Meredith Monk's *Education of the Girlchild* as stagings of subjectivity and performative acts, I am drawing on feminist autobiographical scholarship that locates women's self-representation in a variety of artistic projects, which do not always (or perhaps even often) provide a singular or stable referent unified around an explicit "I."[5] Projects that are identified as self-representational are unified by their continual negotiation of internalized conceptions of selfhood, embodied experiences of existence, and perceived constructions of identity. These articulations of subjectivity acknowledge that "the past is not a static repository of experience but always engaged from the present moment, itself ever-changing" (Smith and Watson 2002, 9). As such, women's self-representations often position themselves as conditional and continually constructed, crafted through experience. As Joan W. Scott contends, "It is not individuals who have experience, but subjects who are constituted through experience" (1991, 779). It is along similar lines that I locate these works, which negotiate the knowledge of the kinesthetic archives, as intersecting with feminist autobiographical theory. As longtime choreographers and performers, Lacey and Monk—at least in part—understand themselves in relationship to their experience of making, embodying, and repeating movement. As dancers, they understand themselves in relationship to their experience of their bodies, which, as Smith and Watson remind us, hold knowledge "because memory itself is embodied" (2002, 10). Dancing then can generate, contain, and surface memories.

Mining bodily histories through dance reenactments recognizes the multiple layers of subjectivity embedded in the bodily archive. In this way, these choreographic returns can be understood as autobiographical gestures, as the act of reenactment necessarily negotiates the performativity of experience—the generative possibilities of redoing and the necessity of foregrounding the present in the revisiting of the past. While this could perhaps be argued for all choreographic returns to previously performed work, the returns to these particular solos are particularly potent as stagings of experience, as the material to which they are returning wrestles, in different ways, with notions of identity, self-presentation, and personal histories. The works do not present singular autobiographical narratives, offering unified reflections on already assembled senses of self. However, their choreographic conceits position them as exploring the self-referential, and their re-performance histories allow these dances to create a generative version of selfhood. As a result, these two solos offer fertile ground for examining how these theatrical reenactments provide their choreographers with sites to frame their understandings of experience and stage their own subjectivity. Exploring the archives of their own movement, these artists are authoring provisional versions of selfhood that are always in process.

Two Discussions of an Anterior Event

Revisiting previously presented work is the central premise of Jennifer Lacey's *Two Discussions of an Anterior Event* (2004). In this solo, Lacey returns to the movement material of her solo *Skin Mitten* (1995). Essential to this return is not just a reenactment of the movement vocabulary, but also a revisiting of the representations of its initial performance. In *Two Discussions*, a live reembodiment of the movement from *Skin Mitten* and a running textual commentary that subtitles the initial solo are

offered alongside, over top of, and bookending a video projection of the earlier work. In layering each of these elements, Lacey's 2004 composition reveals a multiplicity of artifacts connected to the initial solo. Mining these artifacts to create a new choreographic work, the composition presents multiple—sometimes divergent—enunciations of Lacey's experience, uncovering the temporal complexity of the body as archive. The different mediums, each marked by their own historical context, allow Lacey to return to the previous material without attempting to recreate its performance intentions or perceived meanings. Built in relationship to the earlier composition, the new work theatrically examines Lacey's shifting relationship to her body and its history. The return is choreographed into the production so as to reveal its sites of difference and reimagine the relationships generated in the process.

Deeply invested in interrogating the process of dancemaking, Lacey understands performance creation as an "ontological pursuit" (Doris Duke Performing Artist Awards 2014). Developing specific choreographic processes for each project she pursues, her recent creative work has been primarily developed and performed in Europe. A US citizen, her early career was established in New York, dancing with a number of postmodern dance choreographers, including Randy Warsaw, Yvonne Meier, Jennifer Monson, and John Jasperse. Inspired by these affiliations, she began to perform her own choreography at various "downtown" New York venues in 1991. In 2000, she relocated to Paris, France. Often collaborating with visual artist Nadia Lauro, her subsequent work has been shown at many international venues, including ImPulsTanz, The Tate Modern, the Biennial de Lyon, and Centre Pompidou. Her decision to expatriate—and the circumstances surrounding that choice—is discussed early in the textual narrative of *Two Discussions of an Anterior Event*.

Before that discussion, however, the 2004 solo begins with Lacey talking, describing her attachment to the initial solo and her ambivalence about returning to the material. She then matter-of-factly begins to reenact the movement material. This iteration, though, is pared down from the 1995 solo; the enactment no longer includes the extensive props included in the first version. Once her live performance is underway, the videotaped version, played in its entirety, is projected onto a screen behind the performance space. An ongoing textual commentary appears in subtitles at the bottom of the video frame. The textual "voice," which is framed by the time of its creation, is most often a familiar first-person narrative but occasionally adopts an analytical third-person mode. The overlapping and combination of each of these elements and the "voices" that they each present allow Lacey to simultaneously perform multiple iterations of her subjective archive.



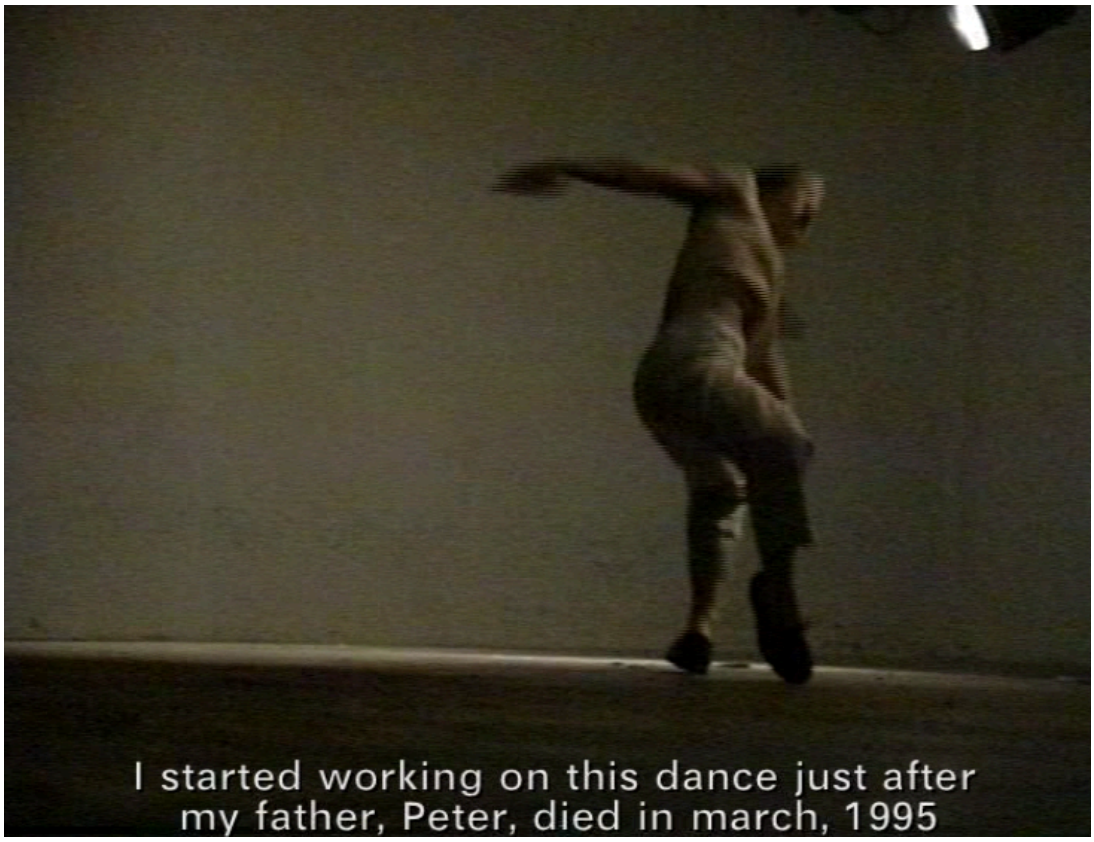
Jennifer Lacey, *Two Discussions of an Anterior Event*. Photographer: Bertrand Prevost.

By not "re-mounting" or "reconstructing" the piece, Lacey stages her initial vision as essential to—though not defining of—a new incarnation of the work. The return is necessarily in conversation with her first solo. This strategy of return is similar to the choreographic practice of "reworking," as Vida Midgelow explains it. Under this rubric, Midgelow examines a wide variety of "dances that might broadly be perceived to depart from a source text (or texts) in order to give rise to a new dance that has a significantly different resonance, while evoking a purposeful extended and intertextual relationship with that source" (2007, 3). While her study primarily focuses on reworkings of canonical ballets, which have their own complex relationships to perpetuating tradition, securing cultural positioning, and artistic interpretation, several of the theoretical issues Midgelow identifies are useful to this discussion. Reworkings, as she positions them, actively reject the implication of authenticity that often plagues any labelling of different "versions." In fact, compositional reworkings actively separate themselves from the authentic in order to mark their difference and engage in a dialogue with the resonances of the source itself (11). In this way, Midgelow suggests, the project of choreographic reworkings "implies a process, a rethinking, a reconceptualizing, and a revising of the source text in order to bring about some new resonance" (13). Engaging the process

of reworking demands that new resonances surface and that choreographic returns unfix perceived meanings. Choreographic reworking inherently destabilizes authorship and implied assigned authorities. For Midgelow, these new resonances are found in contemporary choreographers returning to iconic works of earlier generations. In these returns, she argues, contemporary choreographers are rethinking relationships to the ideologies embedded in ballet's narratives and practices, such that its dominant cultural force and representations of bodies can potentially be redirected. While Lacey is not approaching a canonical text or a work of a different era, her reworking of *Skin Mitten* does illuminate the shifting of meanings that is built into work with extant material.

Two Discussions of an Anterior Event can be seen as a staging of those shifting meanings. Lacey's return does not seek to replicate, but to resituate. The multiple experiences with the work—as a creator of the movement, as a performer of the actions, as an individual who remembers the embodiment, as a writer reflecting on the circumstances of that embodiment, as a maker exploring her interest in returning to that physicality, and as the dancer inhabiting the movement in the space of the performance—are all made available in the choreographic return. In this staging, the body is revealed as archive—a site of kinesthetic documentation and subjective experience. It is, as Rivka Syd Eisner notes, "the material location where memory actively lives, where it is played and re-played—synchronically and diachronically—within and across individual lives and larger social fields" (2013, 129). In Lacey's composition, the synchronic and diachronic subjectivities exist concurrently. Each, however, continually references back to Lacey's body—as an initiator of movement, a site of representation, and a source of memory. Her dancing is, thus, positioned as the primary mode of understanding experience.

In order to wrestle with this sense of experience, Lacey's reenactment returns to and reconsiders the movement vocabulary of the earlier solo, a movement vocabulary that stemmed from what Lacey (2006) has called "a pre-adult sexuality where it's not about . . . anything outside your own body." This movement, she explains both within the work and in discussions about the work, was generated in response to a general frustration with her kinesthetic and choreographic habits. In integrating experiential tasks with a series of evolving movement phrases, the actions invoke play with physicality, sexuality, and sensation. With ever shifting syncopated timings, her body twists, turns, writhes, and doubles back on itself, shifting the initiation of movement from her hips to her shoulders, her hands to her head. Seamlessly and frequently descending to the floor and ascending to an upright position again, the movement phrases alternate between muscular force and exploratory sensuality. Lacey's corporeal language, which engages a somatic approach to reenactment, seems to probe the limits of her physical capacities. In reenacting that language, then, Lacey reflects on her relationship to this material. In the subsequent piece, she does not abandon the invocations of the original solo. Instead, she engages multiple responses, reflecting on the implications of the work and her representation of selfhood nearly a decade later.



Screenshot from projected video of *Skin Mitten*.

The specificities of the previous solo are integrated into the new work, marked by both the time and space of its creation and initial enactments. A performance of *Skin Mitten*, taped at the Menagerie de Verre (in Paris) in 1995, is projected at the back of the performance space during *Two Discussions*. This projection, which hovers over the "live" Lacey, is immediately historicized. Not only does it present a younger version of Lacey but also the video, which is a wash of brown tones, includes minor glitches familiar in analog technology. These elements give the video itself a sense of age, a suggestion of the past. Its "pastness" is firmly situated by the subtitled commentary that has been added to the video. The text begins with a specific reference to the time that has transpired and the spaces Lacey has since inhabited. In textual sections, accompanying the first movement material, the screen reads: "In between the time this video was made and now / I moved out of New York, the city where I grew up and moved to Paris / the city where this video was shot." Similar tone and content returns throughout the commentary, alerting the audience to these differentiations. By commenting on her life situation when she was first making the solo, Lacey's text similarly situates the original solo in a personal time frame. Late in the projected performance, she mentions the then recent discussion of the Super Bowl Half-Time "scandal" of 2004. The text reads: "Last week . . . / I bought the herald tribune a few times on the way to rehearsal / the news was full of janet jackson's breast popping out during prime-time at the superbowl / it seems as if it was a very big deal." The mention of this news story firmly situates the commentary itself in time. While the piece has continued to be performed in the intervening years, she locates the writing of the text in 2004, therefore situating this element in a set past. Lacey gives this writing a time and place. With this move, her written responses come to signify more than a generalized reference to experience, a sense of pastness; they crystallize a moment in cultural history to which her audience can potentially

relate. She defines the time of this layer so that her commentary is no longer atemporal but fixed in a specific historical moment. The subtitled discourse and its assertion of subjectivity are also located in time, which is temporally distanced from the performance of selfhood present on the stage.

This fixing of an "other" time becomes essential to defining the moment of performance. The "live" version of Lacey offers the present-tense enactment of the compositional author. With this enactment of her own selfhood, performing in the clearly defined theatrical space, she seems to embrace a more casual version of her own comportment. In fact, in her live performance of the solo, Lacey sometimes stops dancing, removes her socks, takes a drink of water, and watches the video along with the audience. The props that helped to create the vivid images of *Skin Mitten* are absent in this version. Lacey notes, in her subtitles, that "when I set about redoing this solo it seemed impossible to do it with all the sticky frilly props." So she performs the movement without those visual aids. She marks that difference, though, making explicit reference to their absence. Early in the solo, Lacey identifies the spaces where the props should be with yellow tape. She interacts with those spaces in the same way as she would with the props, but in this enactment the actions of the tasks become more abstracted movement. Magnified by their relationship to the video representation, traces of the images remain. They do not, however, contain the same overt sexual and gendered play and performance as in the original solo. The movement is haunted by the previous enactment but allowed its own, newly created resonances. With echoes of other meanings appearing on the screen, this reenactment becomes charged with a somatic exploration of movement and an investigation of the capabilities of Lacey's body.[6]

As the live section unfolds, there are pauses in the movement and the action. Often there are three things happening at once—the live dancing, the videotaped dancing and the text—and very occasionally there is hardly anything happening at all. Once underway, however, there is a consistent awareness of at least three voices, three temporalities, and three spaces represented. The choreography of this piece—its simultaneous reference to the past and enactment of the present—forces the audience to acknowledge the multiple subjectivities present in the performer. It allows for the multiplicity of representations, in both movement and text, to exist without privileging one as more authoritative or more authentic. Each of the sometimes differing voices, all attributable to Lacey, are located in their experience. The video of Lacey circa 1995 exists alongside the textual response of Lacey located in 2004, and both are seen in relationship to the ever-present performing Lacey. The work, which has each compositional element exist at the same time, does not then trace a history but allows them to reflect and refract against each other all at once. By allowing these elements to be defined by time and to be included in the performance simultaneously, Lacey does not compress her experiences to equal the immediate moment. These representations of self do not "add up" to her current understanding of selfhood but exist in tandem with the self articulated in the present moment. The structure of the work does not feign seamlessness of meaning but allows resonances and representations to play out separately, creating another understanding in their overlaps, convergences, and disjunctions.

The construction of the composition allows Lacey to enunciate different versions of selfhood over time and space, situating them in proximity to one another. By firmly establishing the distance of time from her initial work, Lacey is both the woman who created that work—concerned with her location, her physical experience, etc.—and no longer that woman. Similarly, in creating (and recreating) the spaces of action in which the dance is performed, she calls attention to the difference. She repeats the movement of previous spaces without the definition of the spaces determined by her

additional props. She defines herself in relationship to these representations but does not require that their articulations be seamlessly unified.

By invoking the implications of temporality and defining them spatially within the performance, Lacey offers clearly differentiated versions of selfhood that have developed in the intervening years. Her choreographic score—revealing each medium and narrative of temporal experience and response—does not collapse her experience into a unified "self," a strategic representation of subjectivity. Instead, Lacey's composition lingers in the multiplicity, allowing experiences to exist separately, so as to inform, undermine, and complicate each other. Because she stages these elements at the same time, the audience is often forced to choose what perspective they will pay attention to with each passing moment. They are, therefore, responsible for the meaning they make, what they privilege, and the way in which they cobble together a narrative of Lacey's subjectivity. In the performance of the work, Lacey is able to reembody the material with her own present moment, whatever that might be and however that shifts over time, without silencing the past that has informed that moment or even suggesting that that past creates a direct explanation for the experience of the present.

It is this layering of elements that confounds simple assertions of authority in both the authorship of choreographic product and the defining of experience. *Skin Mitten* is simultaneously the "source" text and an accompaniment to the remade work. The movement it contains is both located in the past and reverberating in the present. In *Two Discussions of an Anterior Event*, Lacey's body is offered as an archive, in which her present body reflects on and is reflected by her past body, as much as the other way around. In returning to this physical history, Lacey does not seek to replicate the movement of the earlier work, reclaiming authority in its reenactment. She does not aim to recreate its earlier resonances, or the experience of its performance. Instead, returning to the movement becomes material to mine for new understandings of the self. It becomes a site of reflection that reveals knowledge of the choreographer's body, her sense of self, and her present moment. In reenacting the movement, Lacey situates its historicity without fixing the original incarnation as somehow authentic. She unfixes the assertions of authorship in the initial choreographic work, suggesting that the dance is always already in "discussion" and in process of becoming something new. In so doing, she provides a way of staging her subjectivity, revealing discordant and overlapping senses of selfhood. Offering her performance of the archive as constantly shifting and reframed, her reenactment of previous dancing both animates her kinesthetic history and cultivates the possibilities of the present. In returning to *Skin Mitten* in order to make it new, Lacey engages a feminist autobiographical practice that does not simply reiterate the past but imagines subjectivity into future incarnations of performance.

Education of the Girlchild

In reenacting the movement of *Skin Mitten* in *Two Discussions of an Anterior Event*, Lacey insists on staging difference within her representations of experience. In returning to the movement of *Education of the Girlchild* over her various reenactments, Meredith Monk does not choreographically visibilize the shifting or conflicted versions of experience that its re-performance offers. However, I argue that her continued reenactment of the material over a nearly forty-year period provides another way of understanding the ways in which this archival exploration can stage subjectivity and offer the resulting choreography as a manifestation of experience as processual and provisional.

Meredith Monk has returned to the solo from *Education of the Girlchild*, a work created in 1972, multiple times since its premiere. Emerging from the Judson Dance Theatre, Monk has dedicated her career to exploring performance at the intersection of music and dance, establishing prominence as both a composer and a postmodern dancemaker. Pioneering what is now called "extended vocal technique," her work has developed sound as an embodied practice, often bringing vocalization into her stylized movement patterns and movement into her evocative soundscapes (Monk 2015). Monk's interdisciplinary work has been performed around the world, including at the Brooklyn Academy of Arts, Lincoln Center Festival, and Barbican Theatre (London).

Although the solo from *Education of the Girlchild* was initially made independently, in 1973, it became the second section of an evening-length group work, which utilized the same title. Employing Monk's now definitive style, combining voice and movement in non-literal expression, the "opera," as Monk calls it, depicts a symbolic and metaphorical narrative of journeying. Dense with evocative images of the mythic and the pedestrian, the evening-length work begins with a female-centred community embarking on a shared, undefined quest through choreographic space. The second section, Monk's original solo, then traces the life of one of these individual women in a solo journey through time. After not being performed for over a decade, the complete piece was remounted (with many of its original performers) for a limited engagement in 1993. In 2008, Monk resurrected just the lauded solo, performing it in subsequent years as part of a program entitled *Education of the Girlchild Revisited*. As the composition has remained essentially unchanged, Monk's return to this work can be seen as more closely related to a "remounting" or "reconstruction," rather than a "reworking." However, Monk's engagement in reenactment, I argue, deeply informs this potential to stage subjectivity that is found in the dancing archive. While the structure and movement material have remained largely the same in each iteration, Monk's approach to returning to the work signals a desire to understand how its embodiment informs the present moment.[7] In this, I suggest, Monk's presence—her aging body, her shifting sources of knowledge, her changing physicality—alters the work's relationship to its choreographic content. Her desire to reimagine this work within these contexts allows the work itself to evolve and to remain perpetually in process.

The narrative content of *Education of the Girlchild* invokes an impulse for reflection and an understanding of the work as a staging of experience. Through repeated gestural phrases and a sung musical motif, the solo unravels the life of an individual woman, physically journeying from age to youth. It is from the space of stillness—perhaps of contemplation—that the solo begins. When Monk finally begins to move, it is with deep, visible breaths, lingering in the act of inhaling and exhaling. In establishing the gestures and postures of an aged body, movement comes slowly, performed at a deliberate pace. Several minutes in, the music begins—a haunting piano melody, with which Monk begins to perform bigger gestures and to sing repeated patterns of syllables. Although not immediately or explicitly defined, these gestures signal a specific kind of domesticity—weaving, folding, making, accompanied by the undulating sounds of her rich voice. Only after establishing these motions does Monk descend from the platform, and begin to travel—with short, shuffling steps—along the winding piece of cloth that curves downstage from the platform to the front of the space.



Meredith Monk, *The Education of the Girlchild: Part II* (1973). Photographer: Lorenzo Capellini. Courtesy of Meredith Monk/The House Foundation for the Arts.

At the first turn in the fabric, she introduces new vocal patterns and movement rhythms, a more upright gate, and motions indicative of caring for children and making a home—the movements that come to signify Middle Age. The performance and specificity of these movements conjures a vision of a younger woman, an "earlier" time for this developing figure. Moving to the end of the trail of cloth, Monk repeats some of her now established gestures—smoothing, making, pointing; this time it is with an unencumbered exuberance. The childlike enactment has a more emphatic rhythm, a lighter weight and a more expansive kinesphere, but her pacing is largely the same. Monk closes the piece in this downstage space, pointing outward, directing her focus beyond this path. Dressed all in white, in this work Monk appears as part ghost, part memory, part representation of recognizable Eastern European yesteryear. Evocative of both place and time, she is familiar without being specific. The choreographic path carries her forward, bringing her ever closer to the audience, but the life this dance illustrates unfolds—like a memory—in reverse. Its structure renders visible the materiality of the body, and the way it is inscribed by its history. As such, its subject matter invokes the notion of "reenactment," with the compositional structure accentuating the body as a physicalized site of memory and reiteration as implicit to manifesting memory.



Meredith Monk, *The Education of the Girlchild: Part II* (1973). Photographer: Lorenzo Capellini. Courtesy of Meredith Monk/The House Foundation for the Arts.

Although the images created in this work are evocative of Monk's personal and familial history, it is not this metaphorical meditation on the staging of life that instigates my conceptualizing of this work as a staging of subjectivity. Instead, it is Monk's continuing return to this work that seems to offer her most provocative negotiation of self-making. In the setting out to reenact the solo, she has approached the reinhabiting of the material as an exploration of the body as an archive. In Leslie Satin's discussion of Monk's process to remount the work in 1993, for example, Satin noted that Monk was not engaged in reconstructing steps, but in revisiting the thoughts and feelings that had generated the movement and lived in its performance. Satin explains: "Monk describes her experience of performing the piece again in terms of her interior journey to recover the depth and openness of the earlier performances rather than to attempt to copy what she had done, or been, before" (1995, 124). While Monk repeated the steps of the initial performance, her return to the work, then, was not to reiterate or reproduce this choreography so much as to (re)explore experience, excavating her memories of the emotions engaged in prior performance and investigating their contemporary resonances. Similarly, she has discussed her 2008 return to the work as "more intense in its transformative aspects," as she has been "revisiting particular concerns [of that time]" and "revisiting a certain level of intensity" (Kourlas 2011). Her continued

investigation of the work, then, has focused not on how to replicate the action, but on how to reenter the world of memory that it creates. The reenacting of the work becomes one of practice—the practice of doing, the tracing of memory. In these re-performances, the archive of the body is revealed in its practice, rather than cultivated as a product.



Meredith Monk, *Education of the Girlchild Revisited*. © Photo by Patrick Berger.

The contemplative narrative of the work provides a forum within which Monk is able to continually reassert her subjective experience and consider how that experience has been charted, built, and understood. Reinhabiting the work creates a site for reflection, for embodying the past as a manifestation of the present. For Monk, the reenactments are both generative and performative. The work is allowed to evolve in her aging body and changing sense of self. In fact, by continuing to re-perform the work, she is necessarily altering its meanings and the authoritative claims of a single version. Although the composition is reenacted by the same "author," the author is different—physically, emotionally, experientially. In this way, the work itself is made different, allowed to surface in a body in process. In her reinhabiting this work across so many years, Monk undoes any fixed notions of what the work is, how it looks, and what it must mean.

Equally important in this consideration is the way in which the work has been reframed within a concert program. Although the content of the composition has remained largely the same, in its recent enactments the solo has resituated in its performance. What was initially the resolution of the larger ensemble opera has become, in its most recent performances, the introduction to an evening-length retrospective. The solo has been staged as the first half of a program that features "Shards," as Monk has called them, of other earlier (primarily vocal) work. With Monk performing alongside her newer ensemble, the reenacted performance is followed by sections of other compositions that Monk created in years around *Girlchild*'s initial creation and performances. The fragments of these other earlier works have been re-formed and rearranged, complementing—and informing—this choreographic return, such that *Education of the Girlchild Revisited* reflects this prism of previously embodied moments. It emerges from a larger narrative of Monk's performance history, making this reenactment both a return and conclusion, both past and future.

Looking at this dance work as a negotiation of the archival also allows for consideration of this choreography as a space for the embodiment of subjectivity and the manifestation of experience. For the performer, I suggest, this has profound potential for self-conceptualization. Through the reinhabiting of the choreography, Monk can ruminate on the experience of being, of aging, of continually asserting a simultaneously stable and evolving sense of self. The subjectivity created in the doing not only acknowledges but also reifies the experience of the body, allowing repetitions to be continually informed by previous enactments, as well as earlier expectations. In a 2011 interview, Monk noted how the sensations of the gestures and postures have changed with the various reenactments. "How at that age [twenty-nine] could I get into my body that postural thing of an older person?" she asks. Answering herself, she continues: "Now, it's quite hard for me. I'm closer to that character in age, but to get into that body . . ." (Kourlas, 2011). What she imagined at the age of twenty-nine about the feeling of aging is again performed by a fifty-year-old body, then again by a sixty-something body. Her movement reflects—and is reflected by—her own changing body, her own physical embodiment of hunching over, straining to stand, and travelling slowly. Likewise, her body has been informed—and shaped—by this structure; it has been created in part by the repeated performance of the work. The choreographed gestures are a part of Monk's physical and experiential vocabulary, colouring how her body has been made, shaped, changed, and aged.

In returning to this performance piece over the course of her career, and specifically attending to the experience of each reconstruction, Monk has created a space in which the specificity of the present is crystallized alongside a historical trajectory of kinesthetic and contemplative memories. In this choreographic frame, Monk has created a score for reflecting on experience, investigating both how her body is inscribed with meaning and how meaning is inscribed through her body. In the process of reinhabiting the work, her continually developing reflections—past and present—are able to coexist, creating an archive of experience with each enactment.

Returning, Reenacting, and Reimagining: Revisiting *Live Dancing Archive*

Using their previous compositions as platforms for contemplating personal histories, both Lacey and Monk foreground the evolving nature of assertions of selfhood, insisting on both their enunciations of experience and their choreographic work as always in process. In their choreographic returns, these artists consider and reimagine their shifting subject positions, reinscribing meaning within and through their dancing bodies and performance presences. Staging the body as an archive, these dancers explore their own understandings of subjectivity and

manifestations of experience. Reenacting what they previously created, these dancemakers unfix the meanings of their initial performances. Visibilizing difference in the returns, either in altering the choreographic structure or in the dancing body itself, these choreographers offer the dancing of these works as a method for staging experience. In so doing, the choreographic returns claim subjectivity—and perhaps even insist on a particular notion of authorship—without simultaneously evoking a singular conceptualization of authority in the project of self-definition. Experience is traced and made in these choreographic returns. Reenactment is both relational and performative.

Examining the positioning of reenactments in this way allows for continued consideration of how bodies can claim subjectivity in and through the act of performance. With this frame, I return to the project of Monson's *Live Dancing Archive* and her resistance to the notion of claiming to be the "performer" of the work. This reluctance deeply informed how she understood the choreography to be functioning as an archival project. Drawing on her extensive experience as an improviser, she insisted that her dancing was not movement reinscribed in her body but produced by it. In this situating of her project, Monson is, in many ways, echoing the theoretical ideas offered in Lepecki's "will to archive." Positioned alongside other manifestations of the archive, namely a video installation of footage from the *Osprey Migration* project and a digital database of documents from her travels, Monson's desire to return to this movement material was not to fix its historicity, but to bring it into the current moment. Its staging was not about presenting a fixed document to the audience, but about creating a space in which her dancing could reveal a multiplicity of knowledges. As a result, the physical reenactments offered in *Live Dancing Archive* created, as Lepecki suggests, something new that exists within the present moment of doing. Further, Monson's interest in returning to these kinesthetic documents from *BIRDBRAIN* was not to claim the choreographic authority of authorship. It was not to fix the improvisational movement and its patterns (which had not initially been presented before an audience), retitling them to assert ownership over their meaning. Instead, it was to surface the traces of experience and explore the capacities granted to her body because of those (environmental, site-specific, improvisational) experiences. In so doing, the "performance" of this work was also very much tied to her own subjectivity, her perceptions of the world, and her place within it. More than just procreative of new performance work, then, it also became an excavation of the body's archiving and producing of self. The process of developing and staging this choreographic return was, I argue, not just generative but performative.

For Lacey, Monk, and Monson, investigating the archives of their dancing bodies implicates the autobiographical. Reenacting previous work provides space for reckoning with the experience of being, of making, and of (however temporarily) understanding the self. Returning to previous movement allows for—perhaps even necessitates—a negotiation with the staging of subjectivity. In a published conversation with artist DD Dorvillier, Monson suggested as much: "I think the piece kind of demanded from me that I bring in the subjective understanding of the self—the simultaneous way that many of my concerns as an artist are a part of this piece in ways that perhaps at first I wasn't so aware of. But they became extremely relevant" (Dorvillier 2013). In materializing her bodily archives and explicating the resulting resonances, Monson's work became a way of navigating a multiplicity of subjectivities. The process of staging this reenactment demanded her various senses of self and varying sites of identification to be in conversation. In this way, this work, which did not set out to be self-representational, illuminates the very possibility for the body as archive to reveal a kind of feminist autobiographical practice, which values the experience of the body and the shifting nature of understanding that experience. In revisiting previous compositions and compositional practices, experience is situated, complicated, and enacted. In turning to the

history of their bodies, these choreographers are, to paraphrase Joan W. Scott, constituted in and through their experience of their dancing archives (1991, 779). Returning to the movement the body has generated, the choreography can "reconstruct" a performative and provisional version of selfhood that can be reimagined and remade into the future.

In revisiting previously enacted movement, *Two Discussions of an Anterior Event* foregrounds the multiplicity of subjectivities present in the archival body. In returning to the compositional structure over the course of decades, *Education of the Girlchild* insists on the staging of experience as perpetually in the present tense. In these returns, reenacting choreography becomes an exploration of self-definition, not a singular act of definitive self-making. The repetition reveals the ways in which the enactment is continually changing the body, and the body is continually changing the performance. The authority of authorship is complicated by an insistence on subjectivity as conditional and archiving as temporal. Embodying the movement, the choreographers reflect on the past but reimagine it anew with each subsequent iteration. Central to these embodied archival practices is a continual insistence on the "here and now" of such negotiations. These reenactments, then, belie the notion that performance is ephemeral, as they—perhaps ironically—foreground the residues of performance, and of experience more generally.

Notes

1. For the last fifteen years, Monson has engaged in several large-scale performance projects that employ the environment as both the subject and the site of staging. This interest was initiated by her instigation of *BIRDBRAIN*, an extensive, durational exploration of migration patterns (specifically those of gray whales in 2001, osprey in 2002, ducks and geese in 2005, and northern wheaters in 2010). To support this kind of work, Monson established iLAND (Interdisciplinary Laboratory for Art, Nature, and Dance), a funding and presenting organization that pairs artists and scientists. Encouraging interdisciplinary collaborations and integrated research methodologies, iLAND is a forum for the creation of performance/research projects that can inform the understanding of climate change, urbanization, and environmental sustainability. Through this organization, Monson has, for example, developed extensive work for—and within—the Ridgewood Reservoir (2007) and the Mahomet Aquifer (2008–2010), as well as funding the work of other artists in this vein.

2. Video documentation of the dancing of this improvisational score on the beaches of Ocracoke Island can be found via a link on the *Live Dancing Archive* website: http://www.livedancingarchive.org/providence/pawtucket/index.php/Detail/Object/Show/object_id/75.

3. The additional archival elements included with *Live Dancing Archives* were created by others. Robin Vachal edited the extensive footage from the site-specific journey to craft a three-hour video installation that was offered in conjunction with the performance. An online searchable database of various documentations from the project, including photos, journal entries, and written dance "scores," was designed by Youngjae Josephine Bae. A link to the online archive can be found here: http://www.livedancingarchive.org/providence/pawtucket/index.php.

4. In "Solo Solo Solo," Rebecca Schneider (2005) unpacks these ideas, challenging the relationship between solo performance and the authority of the singular. While her argument cannot be discussed at length here, her analysis is useful in dismantling the implicit assumption of authority that can surround the solo form.

5. Many feminist autobiographical scholars have challenged the authority granted to the "I," understanding it as a fiction that supports the autobiographical supposition. According to Sidonie Smith (among other feminist and poststructuralist scholars), the assertion of seamlessness subjectivity that autobiography seems to offer reveals the ways in which the traditional autobiographical project confounds its own intentions. The drive to narrate our own history, Smith argues, is a manifestation of our inability to hold on to a unified sense

of self. She contends, "The very sense of self as identity derives paradoxically from the loss of consciousness of fragments of experiential history" (1998, 108). Utilizing political theorist Benedict Anderson's notion of "estrangement," which suggests that "a conception of personhood, identity . . ., because it cannot be 'remembered,' must be narrated," Smith demonstrates how the process of writing one's life manufactures the sense of interior selfhood (Anderson quoted in Smith 1998, 108). Rather than preceding the narrative of experience, the sense of interiority organized around the "I," often seen as the essence of unified subjectivity, is thus a product of the act of storytelling. As such, the act that aims to articulate the experience of being and explain the process of becoming actually serves to demonstrate the slippages between the cohesive self inscribed on the page and the experience of selves that formed that understanding. As Shari Benstock writes, "autobiography reveals the impossibility of its own dream: what begins on the presumption of self-knowledge ends in the creation of a fiction that covers over the premises of its construction" (1988, 11). In this way, the traditional autobiographical product reveals the very artifice of the autobiographical project.

6. In both her subtitling and her live performance, Lacey shares how her relationship to her body and the movement has changed. In the video, she notes how her physicality has changed since the recording was made: "In between the time this video was made and now, my left arm has developed a / weird tremor that makes it a little scary to do the opening material. / I have to be very careful not to imagine that I have to do the movements just like we see / on the tape. If I have too many expectations, I will just fall on my nose." In this admission, the audience is made aware of how the movement has changed in Lacey's body and how Lacey's body has itself changed in the intervening years. She is both the woman who performs this feat and no longer that exact woman.

7. Knowing, of course, that no repeated performance is ever "the same."

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Archival Liveness: The Paper Archive in the Digital Age

Joy Palacios

In performance studies, the conviction runs deep that to record or document a performance is to destroy or, at the very least, contaminate it. According to Peggy Phelan's influential definition, "performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations *of* representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance" (1993, 146). Violence, then, marks the archive, whose existence depends on performance's undoing. Whereas the binaries that structure performance theory discussions about archives associate performance with, among other things, life, bodies, presence and movement, archives house the dead.[1] Inert, permanent, "domiciled," to use Jacques Derrida's word, the contents of an archive no longer have a life of their own (1996, 2). In practice, of course, archives vary widely in what they contain, how they are structured, and the extent to which they are used. Their contents change over time as circumstances like war, fire, flooding, and human error alter their holdings, and as users add new items to their collections. Furthermore, with the rise of digital technology and the advent of services like Google Books and online libraries, the boundaries between an archive and the world around it have become much more tenuous and the archive as a site of "house arrest" for old documents consequently less obvious (Derrida 1996, 2). Nonetheless, the old, analogue, paper archive where documents might sit for centuries gathering dust remains, at least metaphorically, an important conceptual counterpoint for theories of performance. Based on my own experience conducting research in a repository of this kind, it is the supposed deadness of these archives that I would like to examine, first by proposing that a paper archive constitutes less a depository of documents than a network of actors and actants linked together through performance, and second by positing, by way of conclusion, that the imminent digitization and potential disappearance of such analogue collections makes them more "live" now than ever.

Signs of Life: The Paper Archive as Network

Hidden on a quiet Parisian side street a few blocks east of the Luxembourg Gardens, the archives of the Society of Saint-Sulpice—a community of diocesan priests founded in the seventeenth century—provides an excellent example of the kind of repository Derrida seems to have had in mind when writing *Archive Fever*. I found my way to Saint-Sulpice's archives while pursuing the dissertation phase of my current book project on early modern priestly performance and ecclesiastical attitudes toward actors. Although not nearly as well known as France's Archives Nationales or Bibliothèque Nationale, for anyone interested in the religious history of the Ancien Régime, Saint-Sulpice's collection offers a treasure trove of documents from the fifteenth through the eighteenth century.[2] For my own work on the way early modern French priests treated actors, no other archive can compete. The Comédie-Française, as well as travelling performers who frequented the Foire Saint-Germain, occupied sites located just a few blocks from the parish church and Seminary of Saint-Sulpice during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Indeed, by working my way through the collection, I found sermons preached against local performers during Lent, anecdotal accounts of the way actors sought or were refused the sacraments, and, in seminary documents prescribing ceremonial practices,

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information that enabled me to reconstruct the way churchmen would have used processions to assert ecclesiastical authority over the bodies of dying actors.

It would be easy to figure Saint-Sulpice's archives as petrified, domiciled, and cut off from the realm of performance. The site attracts—and admits—few visitors. On a busy day, one or two researchers might occupy the handful of tables in the reading room tucked away on an upper floor of the Society's *Maison provinciale*, or French headquarters. Below, an occasional priest or seminarian passes through the metal gate—painted a cheerful spring green and guarded by two nuns—that secures the building's inner courtyard from the outside world. In fact, in much the way Derrida's *archons* filed official documents in their homes (1996, 2), the Sulpician's archivist resides in a bedroom and private office just one floor above and across the hall, respectively, from the archive's reading room. To locate print sources, users must refer to an old-fashioned card catalogue that lines a back wall, and the index for autograph manuscripts consists of nine handwritten, spiral-bound notebooks, consultable by researchers only upon request. Inward-turning and quiet, the archives of Saint-Sulpice at first glance justify the binaries that oppose such repositories to the repertoire.

Although the closed and exclusionary nature of archives typically figures among the evidence for their deadening function, this same feature simultaneously reveals the possibility of apprehending an archive as a network composed of both human and non-human participants. In his introduction to Actor-Network-Theory, *Reassembling the Social*, Bruno Latour defines a network as a set of relations in which "all the actors *do something* and don't just sit there" (2005, 129).[3] The "doings" of documents—or, as Latour calls them, "intellectual technologies" (2005, 75)—may not be as explicit as the action of the hands that first moved the ink across their pages; nonetheless, depending on the context, the contents of the Sulpician archives "might authorize, allow, afford, encourage, permit, suggest, influence, block, render possible, forbid, and so on," just like the other objects Latour brings into the social equation (2005, 71). The fact that I had to build relationships to gain access to the archive gives an initial clue as to what the documents might do: they form and safeguard the Society's identity, both historically and spiritually. Before the archivist let me in, he needed to feel assured that I would treat not only the documents, but also the identity of which they form the heart, with respect. Rather than a formal application process—something not yet in place—a series of connections opened the doors for me. A mentor introduced me to one of the Society's members, who met with me to discuss my project and then recommended me to the archivist. Once I was inside the network, the trust extended to me by the archivist translated into a relationship with the documents, which he generously let me read at great length and photograph in their entirety.

Like a true beginner, at the time I did not realize I was navigating a series of gatekeepers. Looking back, however, I can see that something about the way I perform my own identity, along with the nature of my research question, must have found favour, perhaps because, as Erving Goffman would say, I believed in the parts I was (and to some degree always am) playing (1959, 17). When I arrived at Saint-Sulpice, I was doing my earnest best to live into my new role as researcher, trying to think, talk, and act the way a more experienced historian might. My doctoral program's pedigree and my mentor's introduction lent credibility to this role. At the same time, as a pastor's daughter, my familiarity with the role "young girl at church" put me at ease in a religious setting and provided me with a *habitus* compatible with the social codes fostered at Saint-Sulpice. My personal experience therefore suggests that when considering the glue that holds archival networks together, constituting their liveness, the importance of role-playing merits attention.[4] In fact, if the anecdotes about the history of Saint-Sulpice's archive are true, the most important documents in the Sulpician collection survived the French Revolution thanks to the ability of the Superior General's niece to simultaneously perform two identities

well, that of revolutionary and that of devout Catholic. Jacques-André Emery's niece, Philiberte de Varicourt, the Marquise de Villette, was a friend of Voltaire's, who those involved in the Revolution considered a forerunner of their cause (Aubault de la Haulte Chambre 1919, 40). The marquise's friendship with the philosopher protected her from the suspicion that her ties to the Catholic Church might represent a lack of patriotism, making her house a safe place. She used her identity as *voltarienne* to preserve "all the precious objects of Saint-Sulpice: papers, ornaments, relics," including the founder's personal manuscripts, by hiding them in her various residences or recruiting friends to do the same (Aubault de la Haulte Chambre 1919, 40; Boisard 1959, 1: 145). War brought into stark relief the extent to which this archive's future existence depended on the success with which the people who cared for the documents could perform the right social roles at the right time.

In addition to social performance, which can shape an archive's survival, another type of human performance cannot be isolated from a collection's contents: the expertise required to read and interpret its holdings. Derrida addresses something similar when discussing the hermeneutic privilege enjoyed by the *archon* (1996, 2), but the kind of performance to which I refer has more in common with an artisan's skill, honed through long years of practice and lodged as much in the body as in the mind. Such archival craftsmanship plays a particularly prominent role in small, private archives, where the archivist's intimate knowledge of the documents brings them together and connects them to other users in ways no index or catalogue ever could. At the archives of Saint-Sulpice, the retired archivist, Father Irénée Noye, plays this role. He is quite possibly the only living person who can recognize, at a glance, the handwriting of each of the clergymen who, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, created the documents that now make up the Sulpician collection. When presented with a page covered in early modern scribbles, Father Noye can distinguish the founder's hand from that of his secretary from that of a copyist from those of eighteenth- or nineteenth-century Sulpicians who might have intervened on the document. His eyes and knowing fingertips, disciplined through repeated interactions with the collection, have become part of the archive. To acquire his expertise, a younger researcher would need to shadow him, learning to see and touch the documents like he does. Without such an apprenticeship, which would enable another person to "restore" Father Noye's behaviour (Schechner 1985), an important part of the archive will pass when Father Noye passes.

The documents in the collection perform, too, as the relations and transformations facilitated by one of the papers saved by the Marquise de Villette show. According to Sulpician accounts, she hid the memoirs of the Society of Saint-Sulpice's founder, Jean-Jacques Olier, in the bedroom of her house on what is now the Quai Voltaire, where the philosopher died during his last visit to Paris (Aubault de la Haulte Chambre 1919, 40). Best described as a spiritual journal, this set of eighty-four notebooks in Olier's hand constitutes, in Latour's terms, a "mediator": an actor or actant that "transform[s], translate[s], distort[s], and modif[ies] the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry" (2005, 39). At the time of their creation, these journals performed by mediating Olier's relationship with his spiritual director, at whose command he wrote them (Faillon 1873, 1: xxxv). Olier then gave what he had written to his director, who used it to help guide his spiritual walk. Following the simple and yet very helpful definitions of performance offered by Marvin Carlson in his introduction to performance studies, the journals could therefore be said to perform in at least two ways. First, they provided a representational space in which Olier could both construct his spiritual identity and observe himself on the page. In other words, the journals introduced that special distance between an actor and his actions that Carlson associates with "patterned behavior" (2004, 3). Second, Olier's journals stood in for him, at least to a certain degree, as his director evaluated his spiritual progress, determining whether or not Olier was "keeping up the standard" in his quest for holiness (Carlson 2004, 4). One can be sure, as with any self-representation, that what the director saw in Olier's writings would not

have been exactly what Olier saw in them himself. In Latour's terms, the journals transformed the elements—Olier's inner life—they were meant to carry, making the journals a "doer" or performer in their own right.

After Olier's death, his journals perform by asserting what Jane Bennett calls *thing-power*, a term she uses to denote "the efficacy of objects in excess of the human meaning, designs, or purposes they express or serve" (2010, 20). Although an intimate document whose content "allows the reader to witness firsthand the progressive elaboration . . . of [Olier's] spiritual experience" (Olier 1995, 21), the journal's materiality confounds even the most initiated eyes. Written in Olier's difficult hand, the manuscript's densely covered pages taunt the reader, at once inviting her in and shutting her out. The journals are so difficult to decipher that a typed copy stands in for the original, designated by the same call numbers as the manuscript version. In their form as well as their content, then, Olier's journals remain somewhat untamed. This vibrancy, to use another of Bennett's terms, makes them the opposite of what Robin Bernstein calls a "scriptive thing." A scriptive thing functions "like a play script, broadly structur[ing] a performance while simultaneously allowing for resistance and unleashing original, live variations that may not be individually predictable" (Bernstein 2009, 69). Rather than broadly structuring the reader's performance, the indeterminacy of Olier's memoirs provokes in the reader a desire to script Olier's text, to give it a name and a role suited to the present's needs. Its thing-power, by presenting the reader with an enigma, paradoxically elicits a desire to reestablish dominion over an object that does not follow the rules.

Like Émery's niece, who could perform the appropriate social roles in order to guarantee her efficacy as a mediator in the network linking documents and people, Olier's journals are thus made to play various roles in order to fulfil the mediating tasks required by each new generation of readers. The members of the Society of Saint-Sulpice use them, in concert with Olier's other autograph manuscripts and those of his immediate successors, to establish their history and negotiate their relationship with the past. Modifications made to the journal's order bear witness to the work it does in this regard. Whereas during Olier's life his notebooks mediated his spiritual development, which meant their content could loop forward and backward in historical time in response to the memories and insights Olier felt the Holy Spirit showed him (Bertrand 1900, 1: 29), the notebooks' subsequent users needed them to help them discover their founder's experiences in chronological order. Those who inherited the notebooks rearranged them into eight bound volumes so that, wherever possible, the memories Olier recounts unfold in sequence from 1631 to 1652 (Bertrand 1900, 1: 29), even though this pagination does not follow the order in which he composed the pages, an order now forever lost. Similarly, when called upon to represent Olier's spirituality to today's readers, or when made available to those readers as a potential mediator of their own spiritual lives, his journals are spliced, edited, and presented as excerpts.[5] The document thus changes forms according to its social task. This shape shifting attests to the document's agency, and by extension its "liveness."

Olier's journals have never been published in their entirety, and this perhaps says the most about their potency as "doers." To some degree, editorial concerns explain the lack of publication. The journals are long and, in places, repetitive, which makes publishing the entire series a difficult proposition in a competitive book market. Another, more interesting reason, however, has contributed to a Sulpician reluctance to publish Olier's autographs. The responses his writing might elicit—in other words, what his manuscripts might *do*—prompted his successors to leave many of his works hidden on the archive's shelves for fear Rome might see them as promoting a spirituality not entirely in keeping with the modes of inner life the Holy See deemed orthodox in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries (Le Brun 2008, 8; Mazzocco 2008, 43). Only recently has the Society begun to bring these writings into the light of print, or to allow

scholars to do so, now that the cultural and institutional climate has evolved in such a way that the threats of Jansenism and Quietism no longer have the same potential to cast Olier's mystical experience as heterodox acts.[6] An archive's secrecy or apparent sequestration from the realm of cultural performance can, therefore, signal the degree to which its holders perceive it as a mediator, as alive, as able to act in unpredictable ways.

Am I Killing My Archive?

Although an item in an archive resists disappearance to a greater degree than a dance or a play, at least in theory, I did not engage with the Sulpician archives like a permanent and unchanging thing to which I could return at any time. Far from it. I related to my archive as I would to a live performance on which the curtain was closing. I frantically took notes, photographed everything, grieved the things I did not have time to see, and built my own digital archive out of the traces of this encounter. I archived the archive. As Derrida would say, I was "*en mal d'archive*" (Derrida 1996, 91). The countless hours I spent bent over liturgical books that stretched to upward of one thousand pages, the dust on my hands, the various textures, smells, shapes, and sizes of the manuscripts I consulted: all this I captured in JPEG images, which I then converted to PDF documents and organized on my hard drive, creating a digital library from which I could write. An urgent desire to preserve the documents in the Sulpician collection from physical decay or destruction drove me to photograph much more than I needed, strictly speaking, for my research. Rather than photographing just the relevant pages of an old book or folios of a manuscript, whenever possible I photographed the entire document. At the end of my research year, I gave a copy of all the images I had taken and PDFs I had created to the librarian so that they could serve as the modest foundation for the Sulpician archive's digitization.

Despite my conservationist intentions, in the midst of the laborious photo-taking and PDF-creating process, I often wondered: am I killing my archive? If disaster were to strike the *Maison provinciale* such that future researchers could only access its contexts via the PDF versions I created, what would be lost? Would it be the same archive? Most certainly not. Alternatively, if future researchers chose not to visit the archive and to rely instead on the digital versions I created, could they really claim to have consulted the manuscript I had attempted to preserve? My photographs capture very poorly the creases, the folds, the blank pages, and the words that bend down into the spines of the bindings added after the fact by librarians to loose-leaf autographs composed by authors who wrote all the way to the edge of the page. Rendered as PDFs, the documents lose their three-dimensionality, their sentience, and the contextual clues embedded in their physical state. Furthermore, the images I created extract the documents from the collection and thus from the relationships with other manuscripts and objects in the archive that have helped shape their meaning. The sign of this extraction is my hand, which I often photographed alongside documents as a relational measure, a proxy for the objects which, in the physical context of the archive, reveal important information about a document, like its size. Like a still image of an actor on stage or a dancer in flight, the pictures of my hand register the translation from "live" to "digital."

Perhaps surprisingly, then, my work in an analogue archive leads me to draw a comparison between paper repositories and live theatre. Philip Auslander argues persuasively that theatre performance became "live" only when television and film threatened to eclipse it. "'The 'live' can be defined only as 'that which can be recorded,'" he writes (2008, 56). The same holds true for the old book and manuscript collections that performance theory has traditionally opposed to performance. Thanks to the advent of the personal digital camera, researchers like me are systematically and voraciously digitizing everything they read in an archive. Menaced by digital recording, analogue archives are consequently more "live" now than ever. Many of France's

public repositories, fearful, it seems to me, of being digitized out of existence, place strict restrictions on the use of photography. France's Bibliothèque Nationale, for example, limits researchers to forty images per request, and the librarians do not hesitate to count the clicks of each exposure.[7] Policies like these have less to do with promoting the creation of new knowledge or conserving the physical documents and more to do with ensuring that digital copies do not displace their print and parchment corollaries. Similarly, repositories that do not limit photography, like France's Archives Nationales, have not taken steps to gather and organize the images created by users. A wiki, for example, where researchers could upload the digital pictures they took of each carton would create a tremendous resource for the study of French history but would threaten the physical archive's primacy. Indeed, the success of online collections like Gallica—the Bibliothèque Nationale's digital library—do make it more difficult for international researchers to justify making the pilgrimage to France, even as these collections expand access to a global community. By haunting paper repositories with the spectre of their own disappearance, digitization paradoxically brings them to life.

As the reading strategies adopted by researchers in my generation suggest, the new "life" with which imminent digitization has endowed analogue archives will not oppose the digital to the live in an absolute way. Rather, like the mediatized performances examined by Auslander, the network of actors and actants assembled by an archive like the one at Saint-Sulpice will include both paper and digital versions of the documents, and the act of reading will involve going back and forth between the two. The PDFs I created do not replace the manuscripts. In fact, each time I return to the archives of Saint-Sulpice, I take them with me so that I can refer to them as I re-consult the physical versions. While the physical version gives me a fully three-dimensional reading experience, the PDF allows me to zoom in and out or simultaneously consult the digital versions I have created of similar documents housed at other archives. As a reader, I am not unlike the sports fans discussed by Auslander who attend a "live" game but want to see close-ups and instant replays and enjoy the benefits of a "simulcast" (2008, 25). The mediatized culture in which I came of age has thoroughly shaped my skills and sensibilities as a reader. This will be all the more true for the next generation of researchers, for whom snapshots and selfies do not so much record the past as provide a way to engage with the present and, in Rebecca Schneider's words, "hail" the future (2011, 139–40). Accustomed to transforming daily life into performance by documenting their every action, tomorrow's researchers may not see the archive and the repertoire as oppositional.[8] Instead, the consumption of mediatized performance will be an important model for understanding the way archives and their users operate in the digital age. Rather than performance's opposites, the archive and its theories will be unthinkable without performance.

Notes

1. The touchstone study on the relationship between performance and archives is Diana Taylor's *The Archive and The Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in The Americas* (2003). For a recent overview of scholarship on this question, see Gunhild Borggreen and Rune Gade's introduction to *Performing Archives/Archives of Performance* (2013, 9-30).

2. A sampling includes liturgical texts like Missals and Rituals, priestly correspondence, seminary rules and handbooks, manuscripts written in the hand of the Society's founders, and documents pertaining to a wide variety of Counter-Reformation figures, ranging from nameless clergymen to eminent Sulpicians like Fénelon and future saints like Vincent de Paul.

3. To be more precise, Latour uses the term "network" to describe a narrative that reveals the action of each participant. In practice, however, the word "network" stands in for the relations brought to light by the narrative.

4. Alison Moore's work on the restricted access to the Private Case of the British Library and the Collection de l'Enfer at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France points in a similar direction. In order to consult these erotica collections, users had to perform the right combination of "High social class, gender, educational privilege and specialist induction" (Moore 2012, 200).

5. See, for example, Olier 1995.

6. See especially the three treatises edited Mariel Mazzocco (Olier 2008; Olier 2009; Olier 2011).

7. The policy technically states that photography "can be limited to 40" pictures, but in my experience the number forty is treated as a strict ceiling. One librarian even threatened to confiscate any images I took beyond forty. For the policy, see http://www.bnf.fr/documents/reglement_repro.pdf.

8. As Auslander argues, "the act of documenting an event as a performance is what constitutes it as such" (2006, 5).

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Live from the Archive: Film, Folders, and Mina Loy

Sasha Colby

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, much of the talk around ideas of re-animation centred on the great archaeological expeditions where place names stood for sites of unimaginable recovery: Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece, Pompeii. A body of literature arose around this reclamation, often imaginatively reconstituting the historical from its material remains. The unprecedented unearthing of the past also led to questions: how could material relics at once be past yet at the same time exist in the present; give rise to fantasies of reconnection; disorient the line between then and now? Writers from Pater to Nietzsche were preoccupied by these questions and also by the perceived dangers of being consumed by history—as well as the delusion of being able to reclaim it.

Intriguingly, in our own moment, new versions of these debates have been taken up by Performance Studies scholars, on many counts an unlikely group of inheritors. Yet questions about the power of the object in the archive, its ability to summon the past, its place in the present, its relation to performance modalities, and the archiving of performance itself, in many ways bear the traces of these earlier discussions. Indeed, Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks' *Theatre/Archaeology* (2001) situates itself at this border precisely in order to unpack the conceptual similarities of theatrical and archaeological projects, all of which gesture, as Rebecca Schneider (2011) has shown, to reenactment as a kind of end-point for rediscovery.

When I put away my first book, *Stratified Modernism* (2009), about the relationship between archaeology and modernist writing, in order to start the second, *Staging Modernist Lives*, I thought—as we so often do—that I was putting one thing aside in order to start something entirely new: in this case, a treatise on the usefulness of biographical performance for modernist scholarship that includes three of my own plays about writers H. D., Mina Loy, and Nancy Cunard alongside performed digital excerpts. This hunger for the new propelled the project, the idea that I was getting away from old thinking and old obsessions. Yet, like the new relationship with someone "entirely different," there are inevitable moments of recognition, horror even, when—in the end—he has a similarly complicated relationship with his mother; he, too, can't take dance lessons because of an old sports injury; his dog is also named after a Woody Allen character. In studying the fascination of archaeology for modernist writers, the animation of remains and historical vertigo were recurring themes, concerns that would also press their way to the surface in the creative processes of generating biographical performances from archival documents. Moving between archive and stage is, ultimately, an uneasy exercise in time, in making the duration of the past live again in whatever sense this can be accomplished, and as such there is a strangeness about it which manifests itself primarily in the realm of sensation. In describing the processes involved in shaping Mina Loy's archival materials into a filmed performance excerpt for *Staging Modernist Lives*, I am essentially interested—as ever, it would seem, though perhaps in still more concentrated form—in this uncanny element.

Undoubtedly, much of the enduring sense of presence in talking about Loy stems from the eclecticism of her talent, the force of her intelligence, and her particular knack for proximity that

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allowed her to riff on the major movements of her time: futurism, Dadaism, high modernism. Poet, painter, collage artist, lampshade designer, her archival records, held at Yale's Beinecke Library, are a mishmash of drafts, notes and sketches, which occupy 4.25 linear feet (8 boxes) under the call number YCAL MSS 6. The varied nature of the archival documents is reflective of an idiosyncratic body of thought. Loy's social agenda, in so far as it can be ascertained, anticipated greater liberties for women, though her candour and utter lack of sentimentality in talking about love and sex are perhaps a-temporal, certainly unrealized in any broad sense, then or now. "Women if you want to realize yourselves," Loy writes in her *Feminist Manifesto*, "you are on the eve of devastating psychological upheaval—all your pet illusions must be unmasked—the lies of centuries have got to go—are you prepared for the Wrench—?" (1996 [1914], 153). There is a crackle to some of Loy's poetry which one might expect to travel across time like sound across a wire, illustrated both in archival drafts, but also in the published version of the controversial "Songs to Johannes": "Spawn of Fantasies / Silting the appraisable / Pig Cupid his rosy snout / Rooting erotic garbage" (1996 [1915-1917], 53). And in compiling materials for *The Mina Loy Interviews* (Colby 2014), a multi-media biographical performance, which in its final form, and in so far as permission can be secured, will include bridged excerpts from her manifestos, poetry and autobiographical prose interwoven with Loy's two major interviews—one with the *Evening Sun* in 1917 and one in Aspen in 1965—I found a certain irresistible story emerging: a Victorian childhood marked by the tensions between a Jewish-Hungarian father and an English Protestant Mother; the pursuit of art and writing in Germany, France and Italy; the movement from the domestic to the artistic sphere through early contact with futurism; the concentration of this impulse in New York as the acerbic belle of Dada's Blind Man's balls; the magnetism (and unlikely romance) of Loy's relationship with poet-boxer Arthur Cravan; Cravan's disappearance in a sailboat off the Mexican Coast; Loy's return to Paris and artistic contributions to life between the wars; years of eccentric montage production in New York's Bowery district; and, eventually, a life with her daughters in Aspen, with a wry and knowing eye on their plans to create a recreational and cultural Utopia. So yes, I chose Loy's life and work because it "cuts through." But this is not the same as being prepared for the Wrench.

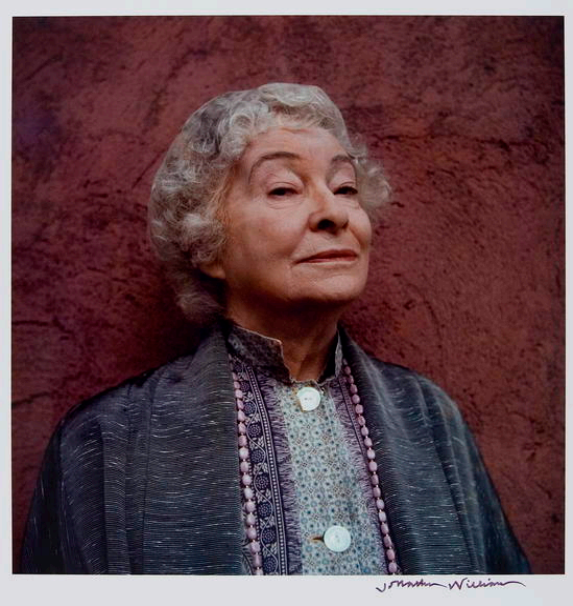
The first, rather vague, apprehension of some kind of historical overlay in preparing for filming the digital excerpt from *The Mina Loy Interviews* was the names. The actor's name was Gina Stockdale. Mina Loy had written of herself as "Gina" in the 1915 poem "The Effectual Marriage"—a poem Ezra Pound would later dub "The Ineffectual Marriage." In it Loy writes about the constrictions of her relationship with the Italian futurist philosopher, Giovanni Papini:

> In the evening they looked out of their two windows
> Miovanni out of his library window
> Gina from the kitchen window
> From among his pots and pans
> Where he so kindly kept her
> Where she so wisely busied herself
> Pots and Pans she cooked in them
> All sorts of sialagogues
> Some say that happy women are immaterial (1996 [1915], 36)

Gina and Mina shared a British birth as well as a laconic sense of irony that characterizes this—and indeed most—of Loy's poems. Yet despite Loy's reputation she is often now (and still, despite a mid-1990's renaissance of her work) confused with Myrna Loy, the black-and-white film star, a

resonance that made itself felt as we went about the project of setting up cameras and filming a scene from Loy's life.

There were other flickers, too, dim historical signals that something was hovering nearby. The eighteen-minute scene we were filming is based on a 1965 tape-recorded interview and reading made by younger poets Robert Vas Dias and Paul Blackburn, who had made the trek to see the eighty-two-year-old Loy in Aspen, which was the site of a writers' conference in August of that year. The tone of the taped interview, which is housed in the UC San Diego Archive for New Poetry, is deferential. "No, no," Blackburn says at one point, reassuring Loy about her poetry. "You're wonderful. You're beautiful." Similarly, in the days before filming, a rehearsal found two undergraduate students, aspiring actors in Simon Fraser University's Contemporary Arts Theatre program, sitting across the table from Gina, a veteran film and theatre professional. "Is acting the only thing you can imagine doing?" Gina asked the two younger performers at one point. "Because if it isn't, you should find something else. But if it is, then it's done." But the historical electricity was most pronounced on the day of filming. Gina made up to look like Mina. The young actor playing Blackburn, Carmine Santavenere, in a sixties-style plaid shirt and granny glasses. The veteran/initiate dynamic fully at play, transposed to the realm of re-creation. In a very particular sense, the mirroring was all conscious, all deliberate. The mark of a successful performance would be the extent to which audiences believed that the past was indivisible from the present, that Gina was Mina and Mina was here.



Mina Loy, 1957. Photographed by Jonathan Williams. From the Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Collection. Reproduced by permission of Thomas Meyer



Gina Stockdale, 2014. Photographed by Julian Giordano. Reproduced by permission of Julian Giordano.

All of which is to say, it was essentially an exercise in the impossible. Intellectually, we know that the past is not the present and to fall into these ideas is at best deluded and at worst a dangerous misrepresentation. In one of the clearest expressions of the gap between past and present, archaeologist Larry Zimmerman (1992) breaks down our relationship with the past into three simple

points: "the past is something we create, it is a product of our present, and it contains power." Moving into a performance context, Diana Taylor suggests that performance tells us less about another culture (and, by implication, another time) so much as it tells us about our *desire* to access it (2003, 8). Peggy Phelan takes this one step further when, in an earlier text, she famously argues that not only is the past always disappearing, but so is the performance when one attempts to hold on to it: "Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations *of* representations; once it does so, it becomes something other than performance. To the degree that performance attempts to enter into the economy of reproduction it betrays and lessens the promise of its own ontology. Performance's being, like the ontology of subjectivity proposed here, becomes itself through disappearance" (1993, 145).

The themes threading through the quoted theorists—and, it must be said*, The Mina Loy Interviews*—are essentially of absence. But what I would like to try and get at here is not the nostalgia of the archive but some kind of historical voltage which manifested itself in encountering Loy's archival materials and continued through the writing of the play and the filmed representation of her work. Here, Rebecca Schneider is helpful in thinking about how, and in contrast with Phelan, performance might be less about disappearance and more about a charged full-presence, whereby the "footprint" of the past exists as an outline re-constituted by the performative act (2011, 113). Schneider's views on this point are conditioned by her preoccupation not only with time but also with its malleability: "Many have claimed temporality itself as theatre's primary medium, where any material, composed in if not contaminated by repetition, is spatially encountered both in time and of time. However, this fundamental temporality is volatile, easily swerved. It is not straightforward" (2011, 89). The fact that, according to Schneider, performative time is non-linear (and here Schneider stresses that "live theatre *and* recorded media are both unreal time" [2011, 93]) is accentuated by her receptiveness to unacknowledged presences. In a graduate seminar at Simon Fraser University in 2014, she mentioned the difficulties of citing a visiting ghost—which is to say that her sense of history is that it's permeable (Schneider 2014). The porousness of this equation accentuates the electrical possibilities of the archival/theatrical encounter or, as Schneider writes in talking about Richard Schechner: the "'actual' and its access in performance gains in complexity—grows haunted (and surprisingly, perhaps, filmic). For restored behavior is, also, actualization" (2011, 126).

The possibilities of actualization regarding my work on Loy seemed remote three years ago. The experience of working in the Beinecke at a single table in a semi-populated sea of other researchers, all reading silently, on their own, is largely that of boredom and isolation. The pervading sentiment—apart from monotony—as one works through file after file of writings that don't quite meet expectations, that aren't quite what was hoped for, is a slightly irritated desperation. The cost of the airfare, the time away, the expectations of a prospective reviewer or publisher all need to be met by whatever one finds here. And all it seems there is to be found is file after file of letters, of minutiae, of writing that is not as good as the books that have been published. Carolyn Steedman, in direct response to Jacques Derrida (1998), writes of this vague, unnerving series of sensations as "archive fever proper," a feeling which begins "as early as the grey dawn, and a discomfort with the unsavoury hotel bed in which you sleep (or don't sleep)" and builds into "a grey exhausted day in the record office (you don't finish), a long journey home, a strange dislocation from all the faces, stations, connections, delays, diversions, road-works you feel you must endure . . . all these are in retrospect the mere signals of the terrible headache that will wake you at two o'clock in the morning" (2002, 19). But there is also a cure for this malaise, or at the very least a treatment. It might be a doodle in the margin of a yellowed typescript. A line of unpublished verse written in the poet's hand. In the case of working on Loy, it was an unflattering sketch of Loy's first husband,

Stephen Haweis, wedged beside a folder with one of her intricate inventions, a diagram for a new type of window-washing squeegee. The jolt I received upon discovering the document is the kind that Walter Benjamin describes in his analysis of the poetry of Baudelaire, when the poet, upon seeing a modern woman with ancient bearing in the crowd, receives the type of "shock that can beset a lonely man" (1968, 169).

This sense of sudden presence, which one can feel fleetingly in the archive, is what can be communicated through performance. Sure, the actor is an intermediary. Filming shutters immediacy. Re-creation is not re-existence. But, I would argue, despite these filters, the words of the author come through. One feels oneself nearer to something when Loy's poetry is read aloud, when we *hear* the movement of the older mind making its way through years of verse and thought and loss that is impossible to achieve in reading a transcript of the interview. When one sees the face of recollection.

Moreover, the coincidences of production, which many would see as analytical irritants, would likely, for Loy, belong to a surrealist logic she was familiar with and by which we might be admitted to "an almost forbidden world of sudden parallels, petrifying coincidences, and reflexes peculiar to the individual, of harmonies struck as though on the piano, flashes of light that would make you see, really *see*, if only they were not so much quicker than all the rest" (Breton 1994 [1924], 19). And it is perhaps here, in modernist world-views, that I see the most persuasive argument for bringing these archival materials into performance contexts. For the modernists themselves, by and large, had malleable ideas about time and representation. Pound writes convincingly that the "souls of all men great / At times pass through us" (1976 [1908], 76). I invited actors into the Loy project because of the perspectives they would bring to literary scholarship—not least of all, in the weeks after finishing, Gina's comment that "Mina hung around for a while, but I think she's gone now." Certainly none of this would be surprising to Loy, who saw much of her own work as the product of "subconscious archives" and was interested in the possibility of the past seeping through. When Loy writes in the first poem of *The Lost Lunar Baedeker* (and reproduced as the last line of the film), "There is no Space or Time / Only intensity" (1996 [1914], 3), she is saying as much.

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SMILE! IT'S YOUR NLI:
nine scenes from a sensory ethnography[1]

Dara Culhane

> To accept sensuousness in scholarship is to eject the conceit of control in which mind and body, self and other are considered separate…
>
> —Paul Stoller, *Sensuous Scholarship*



Poster, Dublin, 2014. Photograph by Dara Culhane.

Dara Culhane's current research and teaching brings imaginative and sensory ethnography, memory work, writing, and live performance into productive conversations and debates, and provocative practice. She is currently working on two projects: a manuscript entitled *Encore! Travels With The Ghost of Margaret Sheehy;* and, a solo performance of dramatic storytelling, *Hear Me Looking At You*. Both draw on family stories, archival and private collections of letters and photographs, interviews, conversations, and an ethnographer's diary to explore shifting experiences and analyses of family relationships over time and across space.

SCENE 1:

> There is no political power without control of the archive, if not memory.
> —Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever*

To the eye of the beholder, the National Library of Ireland (NLI) presents itself with the imposing authority of imperial power that Derrida warns us about.



The NLI is situated in a compound dominated by Leinster House, an edifice built in 1745 for the Earl of Kildare.

The site/sight reminds us of Eire's past:

England's oldest colony: 800 years.

Now, the Oreachtas (Irish Parliament) sits in Leinster House, from where it governs.

Poblacht na hÉireann (Republic of Ireland).

Gardaí (Irish police officers) keep watch at the entrance.

Security guards control electronic gates, allowing some cars in,



and others not.

Almost every day, protesters gather on the pavement outside the gates of Leinster House. They come to call this postcolonial state to account.











The site/sight reminds us of Eire's present:

The Irish Free State, 1922–1937. The Republic of Ireland, 1937–Present: 92 years.

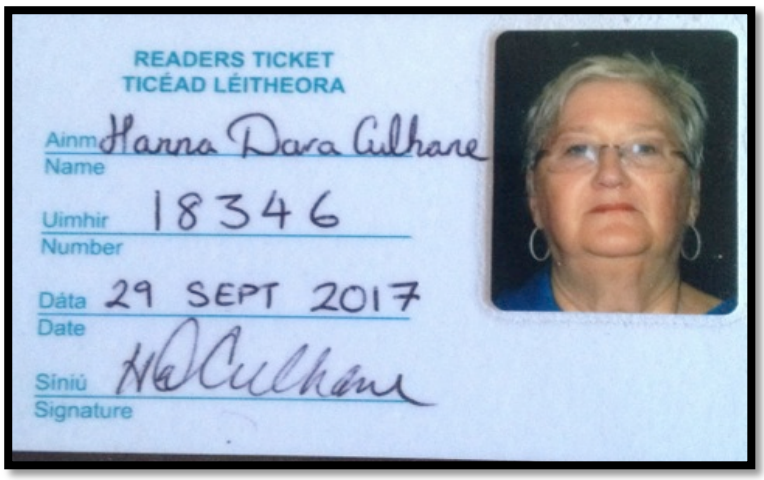
SCENE 2:

I pass through the gate, and continue up the walkway. I open the grand doors onto a marble-floored foyer, ascend the winding staircase, and enter the silent reading room with its polished mahogany tables.

I follow the signs directing me to the desk for "Applicants for Reader's Tickets."

The woman at the desk points me to another room, where I fill out forms promising that I will abide by all the rules.

As instructed, I smile hardly at all into the desktop camera.



Renewed Reader's Ticket in hand, down the stairs, across the foyer, and out the grand doors I go. I make my way past the W. B. Yeats Exhibition poster that is fixed to the wrought iron railing. W. B. remains vigilant, keeping art firmly welded to state power.



I head down Kildare Street to the Department of Manuscripts.

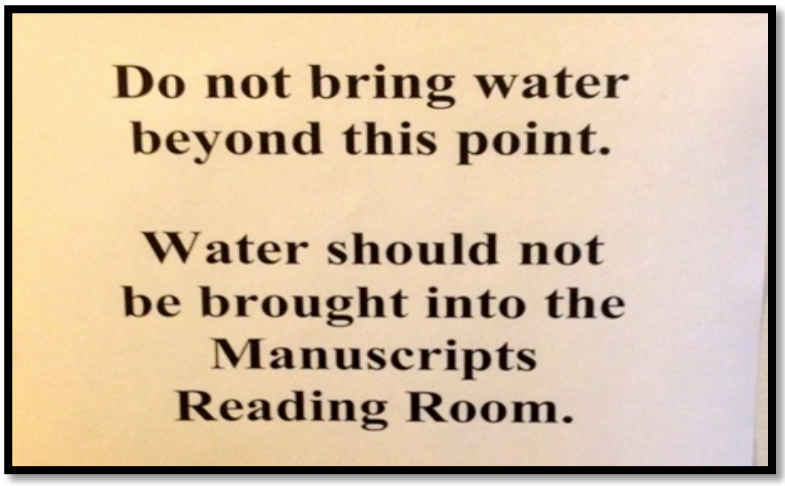




I enter a tiny locker room where I deposit my coat, my bag, everything except my computer, one notebook, and my iPhone.

I show my Reader's Ticket to the affable, uniformed man at the front desk, and I take the elevator to the second floor.

I arrive at the door to Manuscript Reading Room.



I feel very *disciplined*! In mind and body.

SCENE 3:



Sheehy family, Dublin, circa 1905. Left to right, seated: Father Eugene Sheehy ("the Fenian Priest"), Kathleen Sheehy (Cruise O'Brien), Bessie McCoy Sheehy. Left to right, standing: Hanna Sheehy (Sheehy-Skeffington), Richard Sheehy, David Sheehy (Member of Parliament), Margaret Sheehy (Culhane Casey), Eugene Sheehy, Mary Sheehy (Kettle). Photograph: Dara Culhane, private collection.

Housed here in the NLI Department of Manuscripts are material traces that remain of my grandmother and grandfather, great grandparents, and great aunts and uncles: letters, diaries, shopping lists, notes, scripts, poems, newspaper columns, political treatises, children's drawings, campaign buttons, photographs, birth and death announcements, and boxes and boxes whose contents are labelled "uncatalogued ephemera."

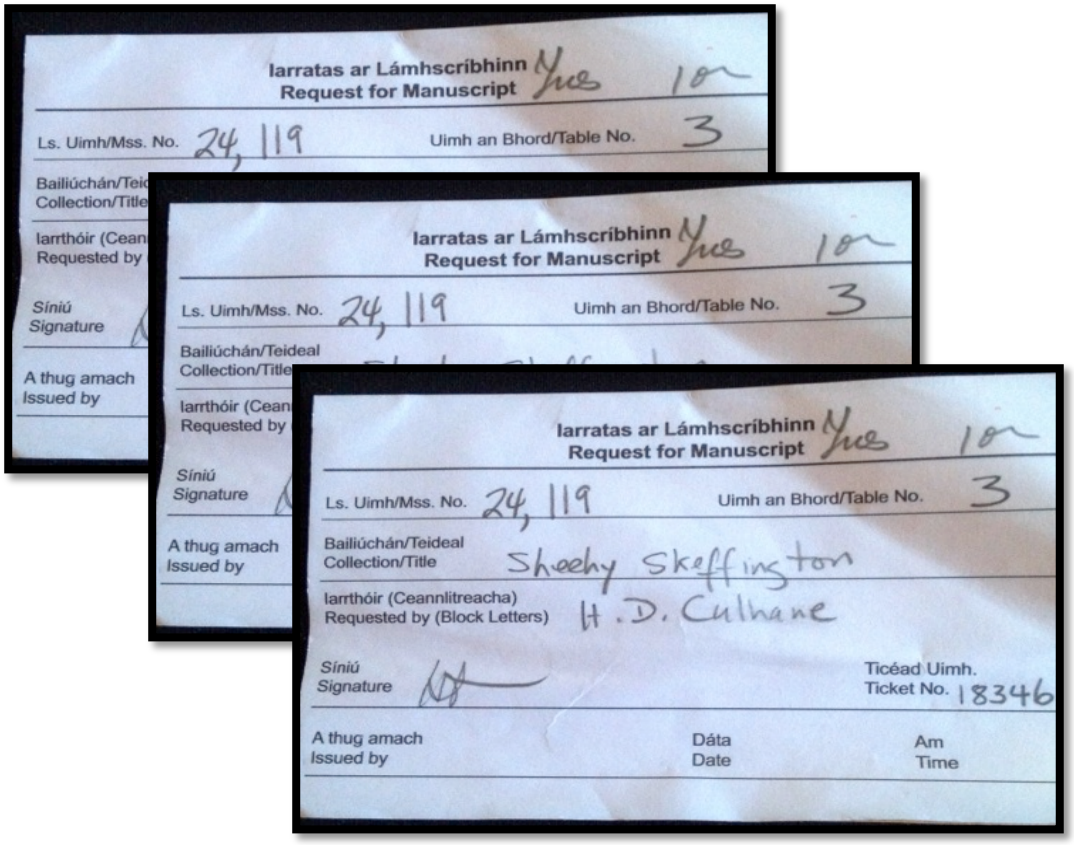
Why? Because several members of the Sheehy family were politicians, writers, and suffragists, involved in the struggle for Irish independence from British colonial rule and for women's equality. Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington and her husband, Francis, in particular, remain well respected as independent thinkers whose work continues to challenge contemporary scholars and activists. Their children and grandchildren have donated family papers, memorabilia, photographs, and miscellaneous records that now number close to 10,000 items, thus creating the NLI's Sheehy-Skeffington Papers, reputed to be one of the most frequently accessed collections in the manuscript archive.

Three archivists come and go from the central desk in the Manuscript Reading Room. One smiles, tells we readers the rules, and asks, "Will that be all right for you?" Although, of course, I don't

actually have a choice about whether to obey the rules or not, being asked the question makes me feel I am welcome among friends. Another archivist gives me more forms to fill out should I want to request permission to publish citations or images. Then there is the senior archivist. The first time I came here he asked what my research project was about, and told me that he has been involved in receiving and cataloguing the Sheehy Skeffington Collection for many years. He knows these archives like the back of his hand, and he is always helpful.

I fill out more forms: one for each file I want to access.

I hand in my manuscript request forms.



Then, I wait. I sit at my numbered cubicle, my laptop plugged in, my pencil and notebook ready.

The room is silent, silent, orderly, orderly, watched, watched.

SCENE 4:

The reverent aura in the Manuscript Reading Room is getting under my skin.

Leather-bound guides in the bookshelves line the room: tomes, canons, authorities.





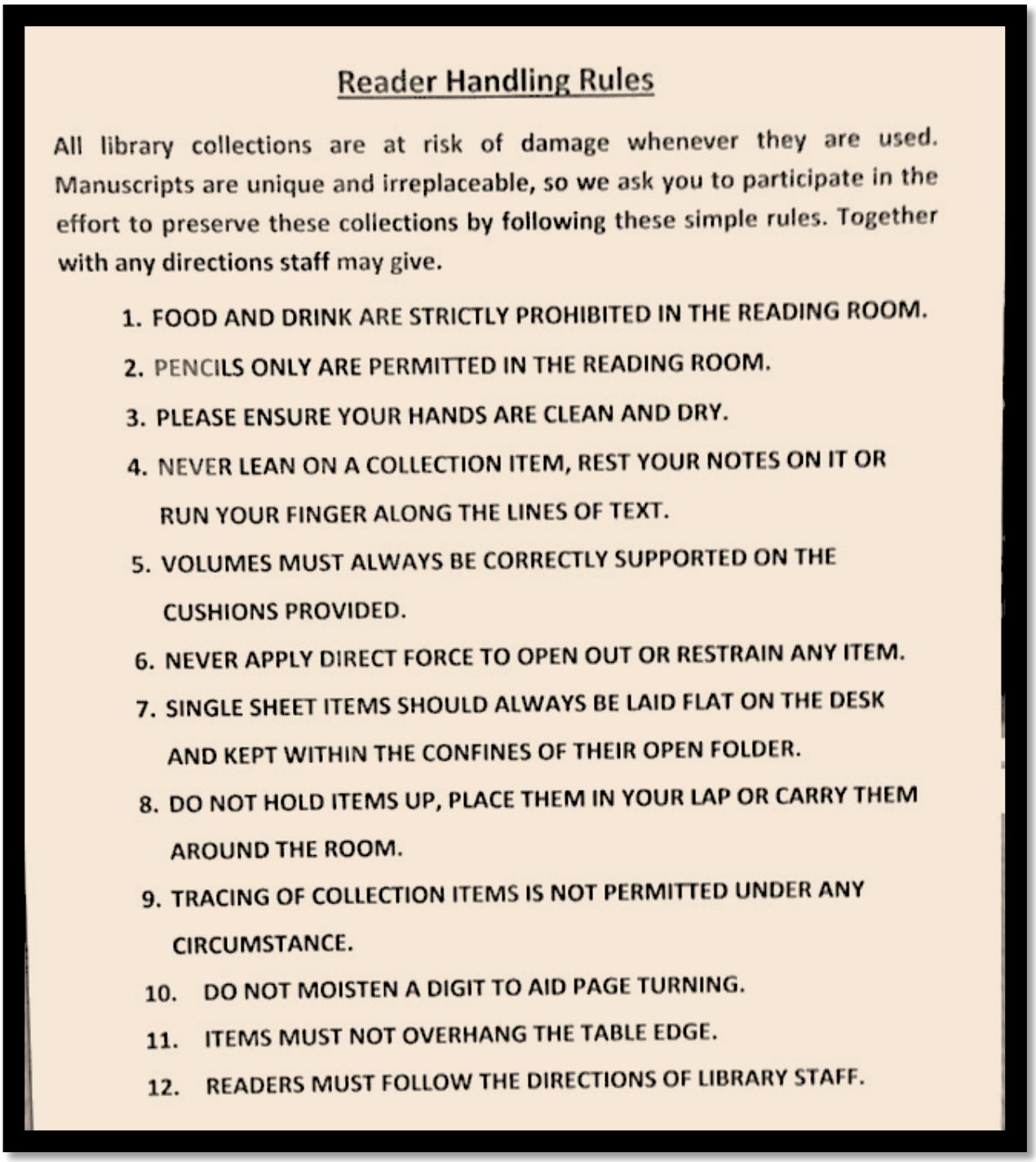
I look out the windows: bricks, chimneys, slivers of sunshine.





Readers sit at long desks. Dour faces pour over fragile bits and scraps of papers: letters, maps, ledgers, photographs, postcards.

Everyone is obeying all the rules that are mounted in front of each reader.



Reader Handling Rules

All library collections are at risk of damage whenever they are used. Manuscripts are unique and irreplaceable, so we ask you to participate in the effort to preserve these collections by following these simple rules. Together with any directions staff may give.

1. FOOD AND DRINK ARE STRICTLY PROHIBITED IN THE READING ROOM.
2. PENCILS ONLY ARE PERMITTED IN THE READING ROOM.
3. PLEASE ENSURE YOUR HANDS ARE CLEAN AND DRY.
4. NEVER LEAN ON A COLLECTION ITEM, REST YOUR NOTES ON IT OR RUN YOUR FINGER ALONG THE LINES OF TEXT.
5. VOLUMES MUST ALWAYS BE CORRECTLY SUPPORTED ON THE CUSHIONS PROVIDED.
6. NEVER APPLY DIRECT FORCE TO OPEN OUT OR RESTRAIN ANY ITEM.
7. SINGLE SHEET ITEMS SHOULD ALWAYS BE LAID FLAT ON THE DESK AND KEPT WITHIN THE CONFINES OF THEIR OPEN FOLDER.
8. DO NOT HOLD ITEMS UP, PLACE THEM IN YOUR LAP OR CARRY THEM AROUND THE ROOM.
9. TRACING OF COLLECTION ITEMS IS NOT PERMITTED UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE.
10. DO NOT MOISTEN A DIGIT TO AID PAGE TURNING.
11. ITEMS MUST NOT OVERHANG THE TABLE EDGE.
12. READERS MUST FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS OF LIBRARY STAFF.

My mind's eye sidles out of my head to take a look at myself. Here I am, sitting up straight, feet on the floor, knees pressed together, hands clasped on the desk, eyes looking straight ahead.

Who is this?



A memory flashes up:

It's 1957 and I am six years old. I am a new student at Kinsale National School in Co. Cork, 176 miles south of Dublin. I am trying hard to obey all the rules. I want to belong. I am afraid my differences will show. I haven't been baptized. I have original sin. My mother is a Jew. I haven't done my First Communion. My parents say we are atheists. I come from Canada.

I want to slouch, let my knees fall apart, and put my elbows on the table. I want to write blasphemy and draw dirty pictures in my notebook.



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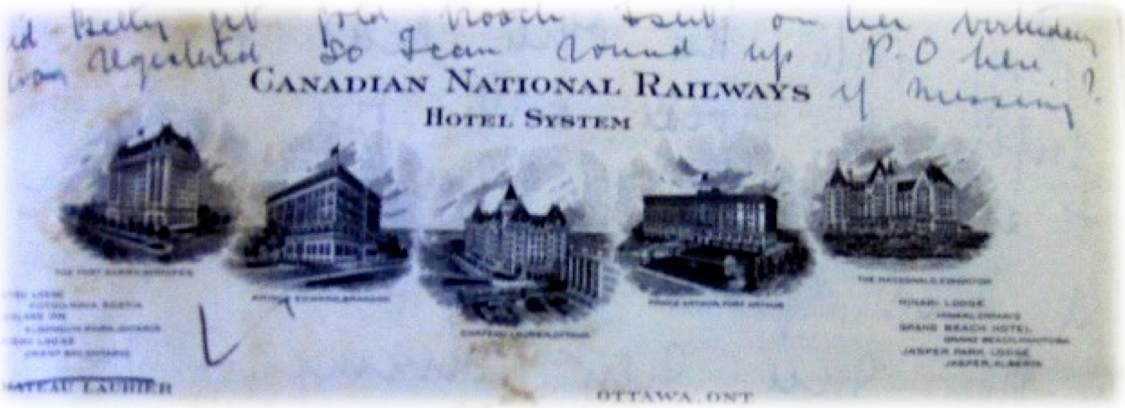
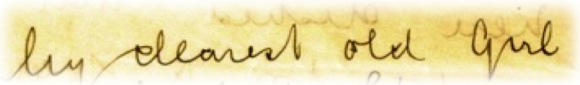
I want to disobey.



My regressive interior monologue is interrupted when the senior archivist approaches me holding a large blue file folder. He passes it to me and I take it in my hands and open it. I see my grandmother's writing on posh Canadian National Railways Hotel System letterhead. Many of her letters are written on fine stationery. I wonder did she ever stay at one of these hotels or eat in these exclusive restaurants? Or was acquiring such letterhead writing paper something she accomplished, and then turned to good use as background visuals for her letters home?



NLI, Sheehy Skeffington Collection, MS 24,117. Letter, Margaret Sheehy Culhane Casey to Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, August 8, 1925. Image published courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.



"My dearest old girl," her salutation to her elder sister, Hanna, opens her letter.

"Your loving Margaret,"  her signature closes her letter.

In the blink of an eye I surrender to *everything* that the academic literature I read on "The Archive" so elegantly analyzes and astutely critiques. I am awash in nostalgia, romanticism, mythologies of discovery, delusions of authenticity. I conjure post-remembered sorrows and joys, victories and defeats, desires and repulsions, hopes and fears, questions and yearnings.

Theirs? Or, yours? Archival materials do not speak for themselves!

The literature lectures me from the back of my mind/body.

I imagine my grandmother and my great aunts walking into the Manuscript Reading Room. Waves of affection and respect and gratitude course through my veins when I see them.



The Sheehy sisters, Dublin, circa 1905. Left to right, Hanna Sheehy (Sheehy Skeffington), Mary Sheehy (Kettle), Kathleen Sheehy (Cruise O'Brien), Margaret Sheehy (Culhane Casey). Photograph: Dara Culhane, private collection.

They sit down around me at my desk. Dignified, determined, witty.

I feel as if I feel my heart swelling.

I serve them fine French wine in chipped Waterford crystal goblets.

The reverent aura of the Manuscript Reading Room that had provoked my childish resistance now engulfs me, enfolds me. I handle the fragile papers with oh! so much care. I touch each page gently, gingerly. I don't lift the pages up. I read them, and turn them over. I place them back in the file, exactly as they were.

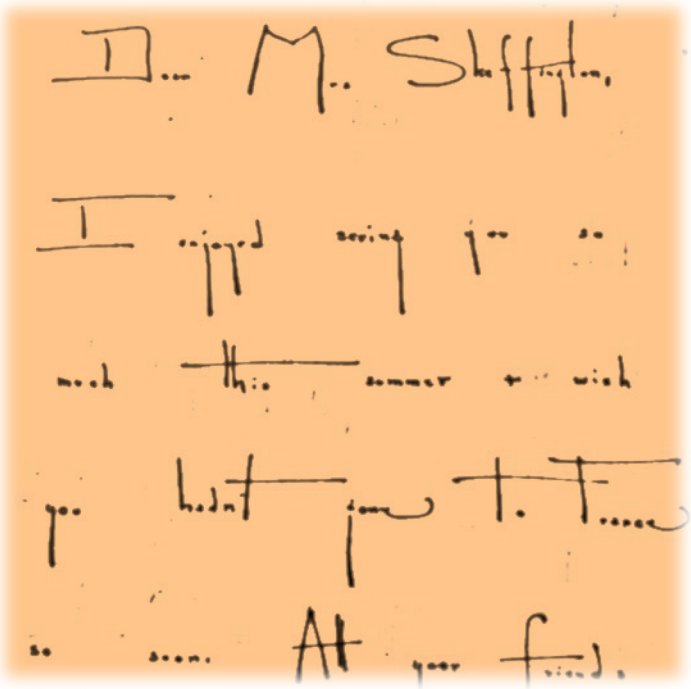
I obey all the rules.

I respect them.

I appreciate them.

SCENE 5:

Handwriting. I look at the notes and letters in the files and I think about the time and the care these writers took to acquire pen and paper, to set aside time to sit down and write, to send their words to another human being for their information, their pleasure, their affection, their correction!



NLI, Sheehy Skeffington Collection, MS 12,434. Acc 3765. Image published courtesy of National Library of Ireland.

What losses the typewriter and computer have wreaked. All our writing looks the same now. A transnational software corporation polices our syntax, autocorrects the brilliant poetry of Irish-English.

I stop on my way home after my first day at the NLI and I buy fine notepaper, envelopes, and a fountain pen. I spend my evenings drinking wine and writing letters to people I love. My handwriting is atrocious. So keyboard retrained are my fingers that they can barely form letters properly anymore. But I am engrossed in the act of doing it: holding the pen, my hand moving it across the paper, considering each word, signing off, folding the letter into an envelope, going to the post office, buying stamps, depositing my communiqué in the green *An Post* box on the pavement, imagining the addressees receiving my offerings, touching this same paper, reading my words, thinking of me.

A week later, I receive a response by email:

"A real letter! Cool! :-> :-X"

SCENE 6:

The acoustic environment of Kildare Street carries the sounds of the demonstrations that go on up the street in front of Leinster House. Music, chants, slogans echo through the huge old windows and into the Manuscript Reading Room, clear as bells on most days.



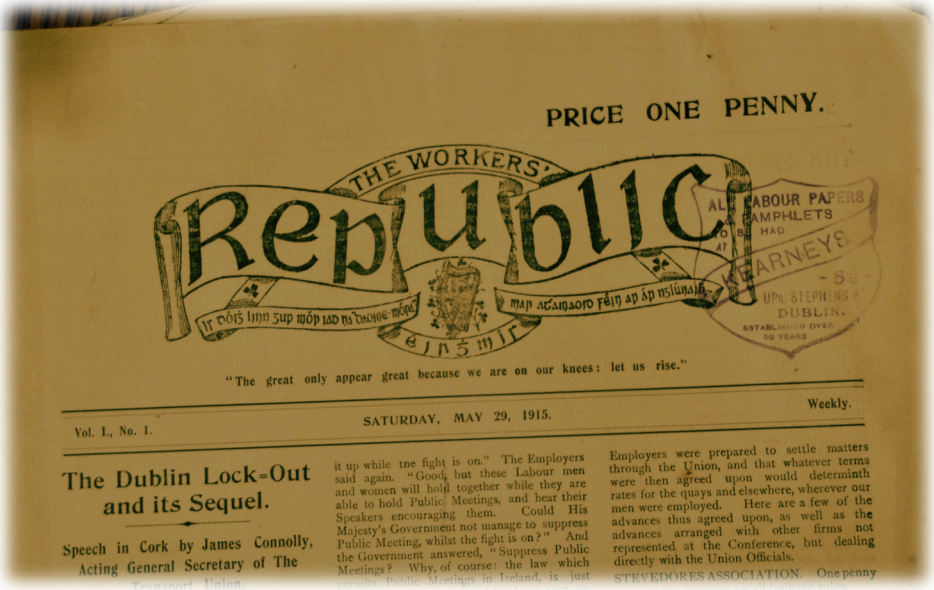
Today an old man has stationed himself in front of W. B. He is seated on a folding chair he has brought along. He holds a hand-written sign.

A LIVING WAGE FOR THE LIKES OF ME!

The old man waits for the tinted windowed cars ferrying ministers and bureaucrats through Leinster House's security gates. When they pass he stands up, brandishes his sign, and roars:

A LIVING WAGE FOR THE LIKES OF ME!

Here I sit, reading petitions, newspaper columns, prose, poems and plays that protest inequality, demand economic justice, and spell out visions of a new egalitarian Ireland, penned so long ago.



PRICE ONE PENNY.

THE WORKERS'

Republic

"The great only appear great because we are on our knees: let us rise."

Vol. I., No. 1. SATURDAY, MAY 29, 1915. Weekly.

The Dublin Lock-Out and its Sequel.

Speech in Cork by James Connolly, Acting General Secretary of The

it up while the fight is on." The Employers said again. "Good, but these Labour men and women will hold together while they are able to hold Public Meetings, and hear their Speakers encouraging them. Could His Majesty's Government not manage to suppress Public Meeting, whilst the fight is on?" And the Government answered, "Suppress Public Meetings? Why, of course: the law which

Employers were prepared to settle matters through the Union, and that whatever terms were then agreed upon would determinth rates for the quays and elsewhere, wherever our men were employed. Here are a few of the advances thus agreed upon, as well as the advances arranged with other firms not represented at the Conference, but dealing directly with the Union Officials.

STEVEDORES ASSOCIATION. One penny

NLI, Sheehy Skeffington Collection, MS 12,437. Acc. 3783. Image published courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.

A LIVING WAGE FOR THE LIKES OF ME!

Here I sit, three generations on. Still?

A LIVING WAGE FOR THE LIKES OF ME!

We fight for this most basic tenet of justice. Still.

A LIVING WAGE FOR THE LIKES OF ME!

Here this old man stands, at the gates of power. Still.

Passersby occasionally stop on their way and join him.

A LIVING WAGE FOR THE LIKES OF ME!

They form a chorus.

Still? There is hope. Still.

SCENE 7:

My project—the reason I'm here at the NLI archives—is to read my grandmother's letters home that she wrote from Montreal between 1922 and 1939, a time she described as living in exile. This came to be because at age forty-two Margaret, a widow with four children, fell in love with a man twenty years her junior, her godson, Michael Casey. When Margaret became pregnant, their families agreed—well, some say they *demanded*—that Michael and Margaret leave Ireland promptly. A hasty marriage ensued, and the couple sailed for Montreal where they lived until 1939 when Michael died and Margaret returned to Ireland. My grandmother's was a politics of the body, of sexuality, and of transgression.

I have always known this story. I was raised to respect my grandmother's bravery and to admire her courage.

I never met Margaret in the flesh but she has always lived large in my imagination. Margaret was an actress and elocutionist. Interwoven with impressions of her conjured by the story about why she moved to Montreal were visual images of her I looked at in studio portraits that hung on the walls of our homes, and the wild stories my father used to tell about his eccentric mother. Sitting here in the quiet archives reading Margaret's letters I hear my father speaking her, mimicking her grandiose gestures, her imperious gaze. Margaret: audacious, bodacious, loquacious, courageous. These memory stories dance inside me while I read and trace and speak my grandmother's letters.

SCENE 8:

I want more. Wanting becomes yearning. I ache to *touch* my grandmother's letters more intimately, to *stroke* her words, to *follow* her sentences one to the other, to *nuzzle* into these old, musty pages. I *long* to know her, as if . . .

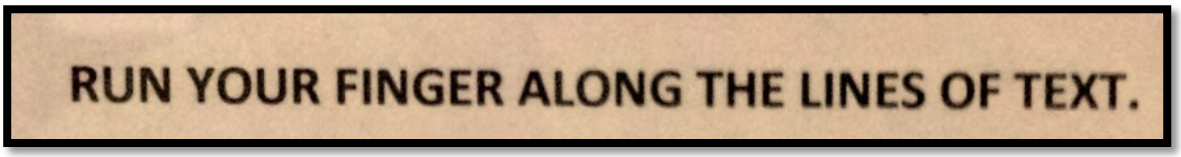
Touch is the sensory experience most firmly controlled in The Archive. The Rules. The Surveillance. The Archivists. All are alert to violations of the rules governing touching. The documents are precious. They must not be damaged, sullied by sweaty fingertips, ruined for future generations.

Yes! Yes!

But,

I do so intensely want to . . . BREAK RULE # 4 . . .

N E V E R



Why such a specific rule about this tiny touch?

I email a friend, an archivist in Victoria to ask: "Do people often want to do this?"

"Yes," he replies. "It's an impulsive thing, I believe. The heart sends the hand, and the hand sends the finger. It's as if we believe we can actually touch the writer this way."

The Rules. I sit on my hands.

I photograph the letters and print the photographs. I buy tracing paper. I spend my evenings drinking wine and tracing Margaret's written words. I speak them aloud as I trace, and I stroke them, wildly, gently, angrily, compassionately, with my fingertips.

I read Margaret writing home describing scenes of a happy family gathered around a dinner table. *I remember stories I've heard about conflicts and betrayals.*

My grandmother writes her marriage as a romantic drama, an epic love story.

My father told tales about violence and infidelities.

Margaret despairs at her son's—my father's—adolescent indolence, complaining that he shows no interest in either studying or working while she struggles to make a living in theatre.

My father told us that he went to work on the docks at age fourteen to put food on the table.

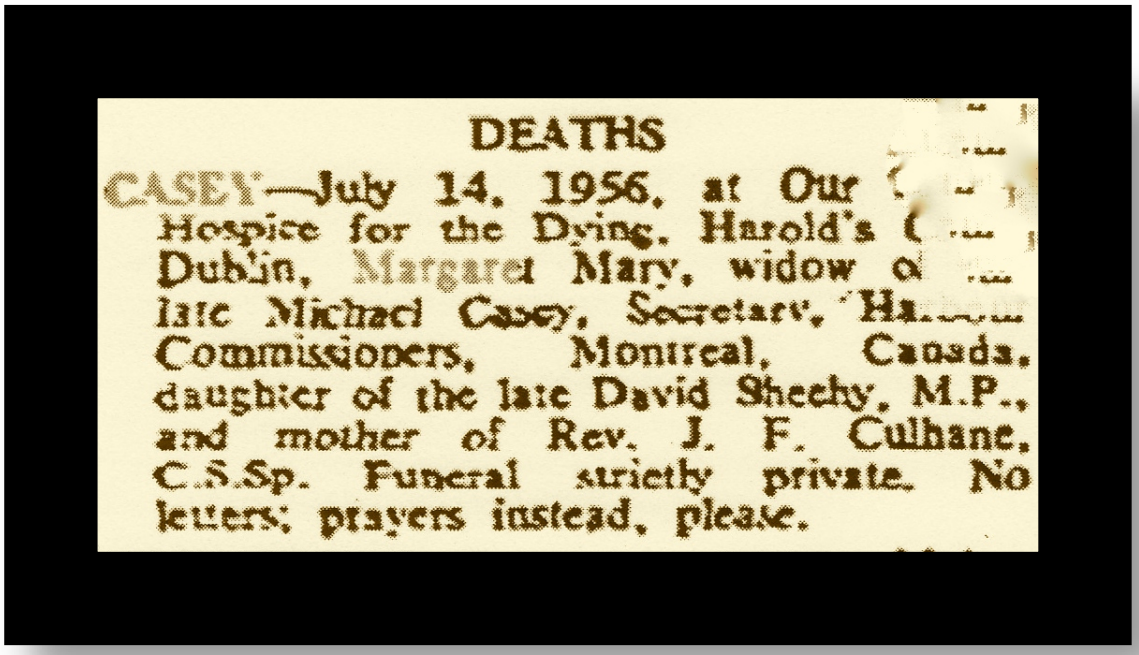
My grandmother wrote and *my father spoke* about the pain of exile, about *longing* for kith and kin, *about dreaming of returning to Ireland*, about *taking pleasure* in each other's *humour and rebellious* spirits, *about visions of new worlds* in the making.

The letters and the stories entangle each other in an endless dance: they join together and move as one body, then separate. They cross over, take other partners, turn their backs, face each other, embrace, dance away again . . .

Margaret: audacious, bodacious, loquacious, courageous.

Margaret: lonely, frightened, humiliated, fragile.

My grandmother: a woman who dreamed of revolution and lived, well, a complicated life.



SCENE 9:

It's a windy, rainy, sunny, windy, rainy, sunny November afternoon on the west coast of Ireland. I'm staying in a cottage in Kinvara, Co. Galway for a couple of weeks, writing.



A neighbour drops by to ask do I need anything from the shops in town. He's driving in and I could come along if so. I invite him in for a cup of tea. He asks am I on holidays? Or? I reply that I'm writing a book about my grandmother. I've been in Dublin the last few months working in the archives with a collection of her letters, I tell him.

"Do you ever feel like a grave robber?" he asks.

"A grave robber?" I'm more than a little taken aback.

"Well, letters are private, aren't they? Do you think your grandmother ever expected someone would be publishing letters she wrote to her sisters?"

"No . . . But . . . the letters *are* in the ARCHIVES . . . They *are* PUBLIC documents . . . now . . . I have ETHICS APPROVAL . . . I'm an anthropologist . . . I know about . . ."

I'm stammering. I feel my face getting hot. *I* **never** blush. Why now?

"Ah, haven't people been robbing graves for centuries?" my neighbour says with a laugh. "I'd say there's good money to be made in grave robbing."

"Well, must be off. Thanks for the tea. If you need a lift into town anytime, come around and knock on my door."



Notes

1. Unless otherwise indicated, all photographs included in this essay are by Dara Culhane, or are in her personal collection.

References

Derrida, Jacques. 1998. *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*. Translated by Eric Prenowitz. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Stoller, Paul. 2010. *Sensuous Scholarship*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Slip Stream—Between Poetics and Politics: Improvisation in Cologne

Tanya Ury

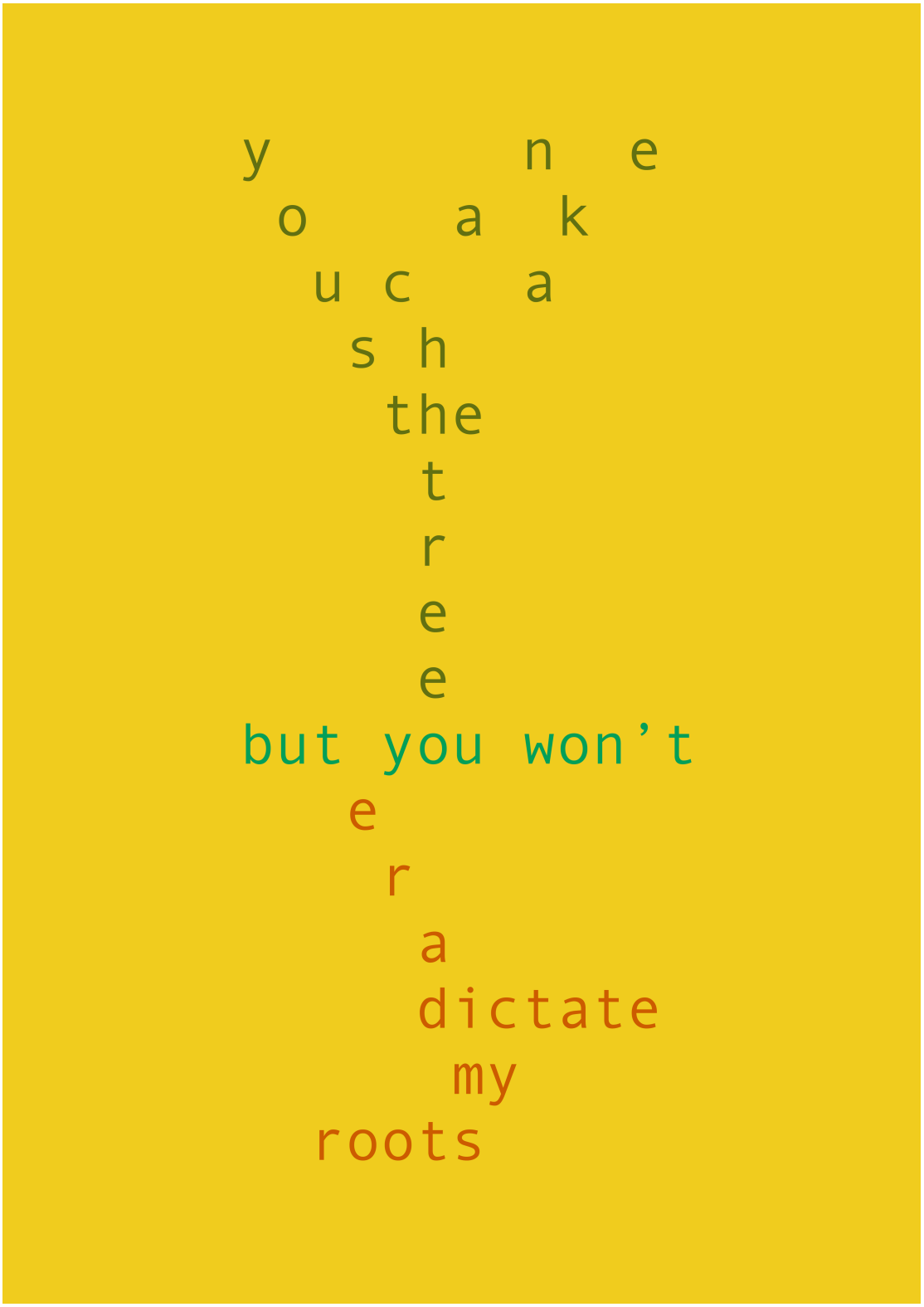
Cologne has a well-established jazz scene that has developed over the last thirty years around the University of Music and Dance, the largest institution of its kind in Europe, and also because of the WDR (West German Radio) concert sessions at the Stadtgarten venue and WDR radio in general. Out of this discipline a younger generation has followed in the footsteps of singular musicians such as Nils Wogram (trombone), Norbert Scholly (electric guitar), Frank Wingold (electric guitar), Jan Torkewitz (saxophone), Simon Nabatov (piano), and Sebastian Gramms (double bass), to name a few that I have heard in concert in Cologne over the years. But a free improvisation music scene, where rules that apply to sets are likewise cast overboard while musicians harmonize together, has evolved parallel to the schooled jazz improvisation milieu. This alternative scene also throws free jazz styles together with funk, rock, and New Music, but is less bound to academic dictates.

My involvement with the alternative scene of Düsseldorf and Cologne, in the North Rhine-Westphalia area of Germany, started in 2011 when Stefan Nordbeck, a musician at a performance evening I attended at the WP8 Kunstverein (Art Centre) in Düsseldorf, invited me to take part in a future session with improvised poetry when I told him that I wrote verse.

I had been writing poems daily on Post-it slips of paper since late 2009. These idea fragments, in English, sometimes in German, have often been merely lists of words related or unrelated by sound or by association that may have been perceived in a dream, or heard as part of a conversation on a train or on the street; occasionally more traditional lines are also conceived. But primarily, this written poetry already has an inherent improvisational quality to it: "The book writes itself, and if by chance the person opposite should ask you what you are writing, you have nothing to say since you don't know" (Cixous 1993, 100).

The handwritten lines are collected and, before being discarded, transferred to the laptop. They are designed with either coloured letters against colour backgrounds or black against white and, alternately, white against black, as a visual composition and sometimes also as concrete poetry for subsequent presentation in video format, as poster prints, or to be read out in live performance. Here is an example of my concrete poetry from the *cross word* series of 2011:

Tanya Ury is a British-German writer. She studied fine art at Exeter College of Art and Design from 1985 to 1988 and spent one semester at the Institute for Theatre, Film and Television Studies at Cologne University in 1989. In 1990, she graduated from Reading University with a Master's in Fine Arts. From 1991 to 1992 she was a guest lecturer at Sheffield Hallam University, and since 2010 she has been a PhD candidate in Humanities at the Leiden University Institute for Cultural Disciplines. Ury is also a jury member of the Hans and Lea Grundig Prize, administered by the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation in Berlin. As a writer, activist, and artist, Tanya Ury deals with questions of Judeo-German identity, Germany's reconciling of its history, and migration and racism as they affect subaltern women. Prostitution, voyeurism and the Holocaust are issues in a large number of her works. Ury has been living and working in Cologne, Germany, since 1993. Most of her family lived here before having to flee into exile to London because of their Jewish origins.



cross word no. 2c, 2011.

In the main, however, I have been a mixed- and multi-media artist, working with video, photography, performance, and installation, on themes of gender identity, racism, torture, and recent European history (see my website: http://www.tanyaury.com).

Integrated into my paper are several transcript examples of my improvised poetry from a Suspended Beliefs group rehearsal session of February 3, 2013 (titles having been applied

afterward), and another poem from December 9, 2014. Suspended Beliefs is a group I put together in 2012 from the pool of session musicians members. Sadly, without the sound and music, the printed poetry will remain only a partial experience.

your hiding place palatial

first common
a wealth of
circumstance
evidence of
what's to come

play
plagiarise
not
a theme for
the season

a reason
to ride
the tide

soft set
was this
rhythmic
appeal

peal and
succulent
flavoured
flesh
a wound
in the whether
or not

be told
what you
should
not hear
forth
with

frequent
a latent
trial
insignificant

a loose breeze
rainfall
forestation
where spring

tides fly
all year round

ply me with
the strength to
find out
your hiding
place palatial
but unfunded

Writing articles and short stories has also been part of my practice over the last twenty-five years. I have relied on fixing ideas, even in performance, which has always been carefully envisioned and rehearsed—usually alone—and so this invitation to improvise spoken text in collaborative performance with musicians was a great challenge. It was also to become a new art form for me. Of the approximately two thousand poems improvised or written over a period of five years, none have been published—they have been conceived largely in English and because I currently live in Germany it would be difficult to find a publisher. They are, moreover, something to be better enjoyed in the moment either live or recorded and played back. I should add that verbalizing a memorized text would be an unimaginable feat for me—however, the invention of poetry in the moment is effortless.

It was only a couple of years earlier (before starting to perform with musicians) as a consequence of illness that I came to the practice of rarely edited and mostly unpremeditated written poetry—the immediacy of the art form being of paramount importance. The resultant unorthodox poems, which continued flowing during cancer treatment in the years following, when mind and body could not concentrate proficiently or for long periods of time, were a compilation of words, thoughts that routinely run through the mind, usually discarded or forgotten, a stream of the unconscious, notated; or the sounds of words, onomatopoeia re-interpreted, the meaning deconstructed; words read or heard moreover, misread, misheard, slips of the mind, wordplay, poems that write themselves and these all put together in series, so that a different sense might be intuited through the juxtaposition of lines that may nevertheless have been written on different occasions. In its style and intention the poetry is *automatique*—it is a collection of jumbled, abstract but sometimes cogent ideas that reflect day-to-day life, changing moods and preoccupations. With this practice, it is possible to approach everyday social dilemmas from a poetic perspective.

I will describe the process of oral improvisation, similar to the automatic writing of poetry. It will, however, be like trying to catch water in cupped hands over a fast flowing stream—it partially slips through my fingers. Giving voice, being a barometer to collective thought, opening the mind to whatever will appear, while sometimes also making a conscious point of consequence, might involve repeating the memory of a theme, or it will be vocalizing a telepathic impression.

The actuality of this way of thinking or writing that incorporates mishaps and the surfacing of the subconscious in the process has not only been referred to by the French feminist philosopher Hélène Cixous but also is noted by many other writers and philosophers, including Ludwig Wittgenstein: "And what of unconscious meanings, which are by definition not deliberately intended? 'I really do think with my pen,' Wittgenstein observes, 'because my head often knows nothing about what my hand is writing'" (Wittgenstein, quoted in Eagleton 2007, 47).

As I was developing my poetry (improvised and written) I was not aware of other artists working in the same manner or field—the life-affirming gift came to me suddenly and out of the blue and appeared to be unconnected to other forms of contemporary performance. Having investigated further, however, I discovered and identified with Chris Mann, an Australian writer and performer of improvised text, who lives and works in New York and bases his discourse on linguistic theory, which he parodies in performance, lending the performance a humorous edge:

> dunno how to get there, but wouldn start from here
>
> (which is also the wrong word), the listener as medium, the opportunists gIft symptom (the cure, and all cures labour under the whip of excessive meaning (the colour is only psychosomatically true) (the symptom a demand with ribbon and a card jealous of its own betrayal (the sprise is the system (a systems that diagnosed by its shit (it doubt so's to have something to be indifferent about))))): the symptom system. ouch. (the future is by definition boring, an itch a form of knowledge (evidence of crime), an explanatory blunt neurose, an agent audient. an empt. wIth on a stick. an only comes as pasts, a self on legs. with phobes. the repetition alibi. on scepts. the clusions jump. an then (then, the attempted context:)) to Be what you can't hAve, a promiscuous mourner (rhymes (i mean why know when you can rent?)), and cept as ettiquette, communication just a kitsch unhappiness for which the sole pleasure s diagnose (reason has evolved such that negation now used to disprOve on the address (logic, the document of loss . . . (Mann n.d.)

Chris Mann's texts are peppered with slips and unusual, informal grammar, which he employs knowingly, for language is his primary interest. Mann comes from a mixed cultural background. His Jewish German parents were pioneers in the fields of ethnomusicology and oral literature. He studied the Chinese language, is also a composer, and sometimes works with other musicians and poets (Australian Music Centre 2015). John Cage on Chris Mann's music:

> the surfaCe
> of tHis
> poetRy's music
> itS body's talk
> a fast Mix
> of vulgarity
> aNd
> elegaNce (Australian Music Centre 2015)

While performing with musicians, it has been important for me to forget that I have been a fine artist, accustomed to working and presenting alone—I try to listen and fall in with the rhythm, the feel and sense of a piece being promoted, so that all participants may come together on a thought wavelength to give the performance structure even while it is being improvised. In fact, a great part of the joy of improvising with musicians is the shared encounter—such a contrast to the loneliness of the writer or fine artist in her/his solitary creative practice.

I listen to the music before taking the plunge with the first words and then surface—surf in the slip stream . . . The musicians have commenced, one following the other, advancing a theme, struck up by anyone that starts. There is a period of development, then a change or several changes of theme and then a progression towards an end. An ensemble working instinctively will produce a piece of any desired length but then, extraordinarily, finish together at the same time.

Only rarely is a format discussed among participants, such as decisions on genre, tempo and mood change, or variation in the choice of instruments playing.

Artists I have performed with at the Cologne and Düsseldorf sessions include Brigitte Küpper, Norbert Zajac, and Iouri Grankin (who was born in the Ukraine and now lives in Düsseldorf), to name but a few. These vocalists also worked with Phil Minton as part of his Feral Choir when he visited Cologne from the United Kingdom. Others attending the informal sessions include Andreas Techler (saxophone), who is, like myself, a practising fine artist, and Robby Göllmann (saxophone, clarinet), who runs the summer sessions with Georg Frangenberg (bass electric guitar) in Düsseldorf. I have also performed in concert many times with Suspended Beliefs, the members of which are Gernot Bogumil (trumpet), Peter Alexius (electric guitar), Hans Salz (percussion), and Kasander Nilist (double bass).

When I improvise with musicians, I often employ alliteration to decorate an idea. In the given moment, while inventing a phrase, I have also often found it pivotal to replace a word that directly comes to mind with a similar sounding or rhyming word, thus creating a very different combination and allowing new ideas to flow multi-directionally. The process is not consistently elusive—while concentrating on the moment, although one may forget the development of a sequence of ideas, it is crucial to allow a remembered thread to reestablish itself, especially when attempting to bring a definite idea or an activist element into play. But abstract ideas should also be allowed free run—nonsense poetry may also be a critical means of expression and is often unexpectedly politically apt (see the sample transcript of my improvised poetry included in this article, with examples of political relevance as well as nonsense poetry). Jean Genet, whose writing on gay love was utterly political at a time when any mention of homosexuality in literature was taboo, was aware of the vitality and importance of slippage when writing (or speaking):

> Certain slips of the tongue in the course of a phrase give us sudden insight into ourselves by substituting one word for another, and the unwelcome word is a means whereby poetry escapes and perfumes the phrase. These words are a danger to the practical understanding of discourse. In like manner, certain acts. Faults sometimes—they are deeds—produce poetry. Though beautiful, these deeds are none the less a danger. (Genet [1951] 1971, 42)

Another example of Jean Genet's acknowledgement of the phenomenon of slips is more literal (though this being a translation from French, the slip will have been a different one): "Darling is merely a fraud ('an adorable fraud,' Divine calls him), and he must remain one in order to *preserve that appearance of a rock walking blindly through* my tale (*I left out the d in blindly, I wrote 'blinly'*)" (Sartre [1951] 1973, 26).

At sessions, my poetry has usually been a monologue but is occasionally spoken in dialogue with the aforementioned performers and other performers who speak or sing at sessions in Cologne or Düsseldorf (the cities are situated approximately 40 kilometres from each other).

A second example of my improvised poetry from the practice session of February 3, 2013 follows. It includes a reference to Pan-Germanism, a movement of the nineteenth century that sought to unify all German-speaking populations of Europe in a single state to be known as Großdeutschland (Greater Germany), an ideology that was adopted by the National Socialists. Linguistically speaking, it was realized to a certain extent after the unification of East and West Germany in 1989.

this electric life

flustered
the filial
feeling
first
crowded out
from the earth
spilling
into largess

uncomplicated
they ran out
over the
brimful
fountain
begging for
nice ice

a complicated
comedy

the collective
cold shoulder
warmed to
their hearts

all is forgiven
in spring
when we cling
to the clang
of the commune

perspectives
widen on
horizons
mauve and
lavender

blood runs
thicker

the spring
sickens not

carefully woven
thoughts
unpublished
produce
a wave

froth on
the surface
of your kindest
preventive
measures

harvest
the minute

pretensions
may be
fulfilled
in this
fluted glass
of memory

feather light
is the sounding
in cerebral
continuity

this is not
parody
it is real

a pan-german
elegy
instructive
to the least
abandoned

behave
yourself
self serve
be a serf
surf the
season
a stale
mate

***

winds
morass not
my sensibilities

cushioned in
this unearthy
co-existence

electric

germination

give me
an input

my cell
a pinprick

I envision
all manufacture
for evidence
of life

extravagant
with my skin
I creep
and crawl
within
my two-cell
flesh

reproducing
elemental
misfiring
laboratories
I fetch
my wretched
soul
incarnate
once again
producing
the sound
and the look
long wished for
unfolding
frond
and finger
pointing
out
vistas
misinformed
or malformed
we encompass
all heavens
and none
a pretty
though
pretentious
party
to all
malpractices

earth
the conductor
to this
house and home
or she will fly
back and beyond
all programmes
beautiful
though
barbaric
this
electric life

Sometimes other improvisational voice artists at the Cologne and Düsseldorf sessions engage in speaking an invented language. On first hearing, this obscure language may appear to be innovative or even subversive, but I fear when nonsense language is always incoherent, it masks the unwillingness to confront the politics of language (political issues) and therefore breaks no taboos. For poetic language is loaded. On the rare occasions that language is employed in sessions, I have observed that it has generally been a simple form of English—this being a second language to Germans—permitting the parodied convention of love song to appear to be more exotic than it is. Sadly my encounter with improvising session artists of the North Rhine-Westphalia area leaves me in no doubt as to their apoliticality. I have never witnessed musicians coming out together to defend any causes, when there are any number of cases that might have been supported, from the repeated imprisonments (in Turkish prisons) of Dogan Akhanli, a Turkish-German writer and peace activist living in Cologne, who has spoken out on the subject of the Armenian genocide, still being officially denied in Turkey (Mirak-Weissbach 2014), to the vicious nail bomb attacks and murders of eight Turkish people in Keup Strasse, Cologne, in 2004 that were later accredited to neo-Nazis (Grunau 2014), to the visible rise of anti-Semitism in Germany, connected to the debate on Israel's brutal politics in Palestine, while the German government has been supplying arms to Israel.

Importantly, for myself, at least, the sessions are a testing ground. At the moment of writing this paragraph, I slipped up and miswrote "texting ground," for that is what the sessions actually are—miswriting or malapropisms in speech gladly accompany me constantly. Another example of slipping up, where an interesting subtext may be embedded in the text is from Jacques Derrida's *The Post Card*, a compilation of articles on psychoanalysis, written in the form of a love letter:

> For example I write *on* post cards, oh well I write on post cards. "I" begins again with a reprosuction (say, I just wrote reproSuction: have you noticed that I make more and more strange mistakes, is it fatigue or age, occasionally the spelling goes, phonetic writing comes back in force, as in elementary school where it did not happen to me moreover, only to others whom I confusedly looked down on—plus the *lapsus* or "*slips*" obviously). And by means of a reproduction itself reproduced serially, always the same picture on another support, but an identical support, differing only *numéro*. (Derrida 1987, 27)

Regarding the legacy of spontaneously spoken poetry in other parts of the world, there has apparently been a long tradition of improvised poetry in the Arab world. Since the Middle Ages, Muwashshah and Zajal, a form of poetic duelling that includes singing, and to which Jewish poets also aspired (Emery 2007), is still being practised, though it appears to be a male-

dominated custom. In present times, this convention of oral poetry is applied as a politically active tool:

> During Israel's war on Lebanon in 2006 Zajal came into its own among the Lebanese diaspora. Every week on the Melbourne-based Lebanese online radio station, resident Zajalist Antoine Barsouna penned a new poem, which he would read in a voice hoarse with emotion, such as "Israel, why are you bombing our children?" (Emery 2007, 6)

In Italy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries improvised poetry at cultural events was common and included many female performers.[1] And today in the Basque country a tradition of improvised poetry duelling may be encountered in the bertsolaritza conventions, where given topics or scenarios are elaborated on. These are, however, also largely male-dominated.[2]

A type of poetic duelling was also practised historically by Western poets such as Dante, Shelley, and Coleridge:

> In his letters Coleridge describes "The Improvisatore" both as an actual improvisation and as a commodity when he complains that he sold it to the editor of *The Amulet* for less than ten pounds, parting with it too cheaply and impulsively on the day it was written, before he had time to reflect on its value. (Esterhammer 2011, 158)

And the Beat Generation pursued this art form in the 1950s. Allen Ginsberg was still giving student improvisation workshops, in the 1970s: "The subject of today's improvisation will be death. So, in answering the roll call, 'Death is . . . ,' fill it in. No reading from old books. No stumbling on your own old quotations. Death is your tongue speaking right now" (Ginsberg 1975).[3] The son of an English teacher and a Jewish Russian expatriate, Ginsberg wrote politically motivated poetry, examining themes of drug experience, living on the streets, sexuality, spirituality, and more.[4]

As far as my own practice with musicians is concerned, for two years from April 2011 I attended sessions in Cologne and Düsseldorf every other week (later rehearsing only with specific musicians every week or so). I have also taken part in many concerts, including: at the 5th Robodonien Festival, Odonien, Cologne, in 2012; in churches, in *SONGS WITH WORDS* at Kunstraum St. Michael, Cologne, in 2012 and for Newroz, a Spring Festival in the Lutherkirche, Cologne, in 2013; as an extra event to the exhibitions *Righting the Image*, an art exhibition of my own work 2013 in Cologne's City Library in 2013 and *Lost in Interiors—Photographic Positions on Political Imprisonment*, a group exhibition at PhotoWerk in the Kommunale Galerie Berlin in 2014, twenty-five years after the fall of communism (Ury 2014b). *archive burn out*,[5] the performance of a written piece of mine with improvised music on the Nazi book burning of 1933 and the collapse of the Cologne City Historical Archives of 2009, was presented in the Nazi Documentation Centre, Cologne, in 2014 (Ury 2014a). All these gigs were performed with "Suspended Beliefs" apart from *Lost in Interiors*, which was a duo with Kasander Nilist.[6]

My improvisation practice is largely in English, which is not fully understood by a German audience. Of all of the performances I have taken part in, only one has been outside of Germany. I sometimes improvise in German but even after living in Germany and having spoken German for over twenty years, I make grammatical mistakes. Learning the intricacies of a foreign language when one is already over forty years of age is not really feasible, and so only sporadically do I feel confident enough to invent verse that embraces wordplay and any real

complexity of poetry in German. Because I have been away from England for so long, I am starting to forget my mother tongue and have, moreover, missed recent developments in the language. Much of my poetry and improvisation reflects this confusion—the chaos of language—and therefore defines for me a space that slips in between languages, a factor that Hélène Cixous refers to in *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing*:

> I speak to you today (today April 24, 1990, today June 24, 1990) through two languages. From one day to another, from one page to the other writing changes languages. I have thought certain mysteries in the French language that I cannot think in English. This loss and gain are in writing too. I have drawn the **H**. You will have recognised it depending on which language you are immersed in. This is what writing is: **I** one language, **I** another language, and between the two, the line that makes them vibrate. (Cixous 1993, 3)

An example of a bilingual poem of mine follows; it was improvised on September 12, 2014 at the opening to the exhibition *Where Have All the Flowers Gone—1914–2014* in the Kunsthaus Troisdorf (D), where I performed with Kasander Nilist (on double bass)—there has been much debate in Germany on the subject of war during this 100th anniversary of the beginning of the First World War.

frustrated teenagers with majestic accomplices

frightful
is this
fiction
of war
inhabited
by our
mind and
friction

wohin führt das?	where is this going?
die aufregung	the commotion
für kampf und	over conflict and
macht und besitz?	power and possessions?

a fatal
combination
where people
would be
picnicking
on fields

they fight
with bayonet
and gas
and lose
face they
lose their
faces
limbless

and legless
but not drunk
with the
intoxicating
smell of
flowers the
stench of
gas and mud

they don't
learn they
harm
themselves
like
frustrated
teenagers
with majestic
accomplices
and inflict
the damage
that takes
generations
to impede
further war
instincts
manned

and should you
fall on your
knees to pray
would you recall
the battle fray?
a final instant
where the
soldier fell?

he is
our soul
and died
for what?
another war?

Another of my poems follows, again from the session of February 3, 2013, this time entirely in German, with a translation that does not, however, compensate for the wordplay or alliteration. The poem refers to "Kauderwelsch," which to a German speaker means gibberish or pidgin. This improvised poem was no doubt inspired by the constant tension I experience, having to think and express myself in a language other than my mother tongue:

> Kauderwelsch—an incomprehensible or faulty language, but also a mixed means of expression in several languages ♦ actually *Kaurerwelsch* "Churwelsch"; *Kauer* is the Tirol name for Chur, in Switzerland, and the Kauer language stemming from

the early 15th Century, was previously considered difficult to understand; *welsch* from Middle High German *welsch, welhisch, walhisch* from Old High German *walhisc* "Romance," from the Latin *Volcae,* the title of the tribes in Gaul, north of the Alps.[7]

kauderwelsch

kauderwelsch	double dutch
zischen	sizzling
lust zum leben	love to live
rache	revenge
denn	for
leicht	our
in laibach	worst
sind unsere	dreams
schlimmsten	came true
träume	lightly
wahr geworden	in laibach
es blüht	it's blossoming
baum	bush
blutet	bleeds
eine generation	a generation
wächst auf	is growing on
dem beckenbogen	the pelvic base
leih mir	lend me
dein schuld	your guilty
bewusstsein	conscience
oder einen	or a
flügel	wing
und einen schirm	and a shield
schaff dir	get yourself
einen körper	a body
eine kollage	a collage
für die zukunft	for the future
prätenziös	pretentious
ein punkt	a place
worauf man	on which
aufbauen kann	to build
politische	political
rechtfertigkeit	justi-viability

pantoffel	armchair
teufel	devil
vergangen	past
die	the
kehrseite	downside
der unschuld	of innocence
stiefel treten	boots kick in
auf hautfarbenen	on flesh-coloured
deckeln	capping
eine kulinarische	a culinary
sonderheit	characteristic
wir angeln	we are fishing
in unbekannten	in unknown
wässern	waters
und finden	and discover
ungewissheit	uncertainty
weißheit	wisdom
nährt uns	nourishes us
gleichzeitig	concurrently
eine kurzfristige	a last minute
gleichung	equivalence
stellt	has
sich heraus	transpired
entwickelt	developing
eine bewusstlosigkeit	unconsciousness
platitüden kommen	platitudes come
in frage	into question
in dieser	in these
seltsamen zeit	strange times
meine arbeitskräfte	my workforce
sind unvernünftig	is being unreasonable
eine plage	a plague
von insekten	of insects
stellen fragebögen	puts questionnaires
stolz ist	proud
derjenige	is the person
mit der	with the
königen	queen

der analphabet	the illiterate
zieht schlüsse	jumps to
macht	conclusions
schlussstriche	concludes

The previous poem refers to Laibach, the Germanized name of the Slovenian city Ljubljana, which suffered under Nazi occupation during the Second World War (and where I have twice attended its City of Women Festival). Laibach is, however, also an avant-garde music band from Ljubljana that has been controversial in its ambiguous parody of Nazi symbolism to represent the past German occupation. Laibach's performances in the former Yugoslavia were also outspoken in their condemnation of Yugoslav war leaders.

The following improvised verse of mine, a second part to the last poem (also from February 3, 2013) again thematizes Kauderwelsch and the double entendres found within language, especially when it may be perceived by others to be double Dutch:

kauderwelsch	double dutch
ist eine sprache	is a language
für die	for those who
gehörlosen	don't hear
die nirgendwo	who don't
dazugehören	belong here
ein parasit	even a parasite
hat auch sein	has a
recht zu geben	right to give
finde	find
deinen eigenen	your own
plunder	plunder
auf dem weg	there are
zur pfarrei	many open questions
gibt es	on the path
eine menge	to the
freie fragen	rectory
bösartig	this cell
ist diese	of religious
zelle	conscience
religiösem	is
bewusstsein	evil
infiziert	infected
mit einer	with a
auf tränen	plague
fixierten	fixated
plage	on tears
eine bürokratisch	a bureaucratically
gewollte	wished for
bekanntschaft	acquaintance

blumig	flowery
waren ihre	were her
wörter	words
lass mich	don't leave
nicht	me in
im stich	the lurch
ich praktiziere	I have
meine eigene	my own
art	style
hab nichts	have nothing
mit den anderen	to do
zu tun	with the others
ich bin nicht	I don't
verpflichtet	have to

Although English is my mother tongue, I initially heard spoken German at a very early age, in London of the 1950s—I moved to Germany permanently in 1993—because my parents and grandparents were Jewish German refugees, who had fled fascism for England shortly before the Second World War. Much later, I became a writer and a poet, not because I have a talent for language, but precisely because it is a challenge. Improvisation has allowed me to slip between linguistic formalities.

I admit to being concerned about the possible dullness of oration, of a repetitive vocal timbre that doesn't actually sing, because song is harmonious, is in its nature changeful and is therefore imbued with a transformational quality. Because of its lack of intonation, my spoken poetry, even when the language is understood and the challenge of improvisation is appreciated, risks sounding mechanical alongside improvised music over the duration of a concert.

It can happen that musicians drown out my poetry with sound intensity (even if I use a microphone)—it is often difficult to hold one's own with quiet, reflective poetry. And so it is of paramount importance to practise improvisation with other performing artists regularly, in order to gain a feel, an instinct that connects one to the others. It is only possible to slip up, make a mistake, when one or more of the contributors make their performance a focal point, placing its significance above the general interest, the experience as a whole.

These are some of the perils of collaborative performance. With all aspects of improvisation one is constantly dancing on the brink of failure; but these are necessary tensions, like a free-fall, when one nevertheless trusts in the safety net—this being the assurance in one's ability to connect up with a subliminal process: the communal effort.

The sessions in Cologne take part once a month in café/bar locations, most recently in the Bürgerhaus MüTZe, a social and cultural centre in the Cologne-Mülheim area, and are open to the public. The more established Düsseldorf sessions are held every other couple of weeks at WP8, an art centre-cum-bar during the winter, and outdoors at the Akki-Hauses in Siegburger Strasse in summer. Some artists attend venues in both Cologne and Düsseldorf, the cities being relatively close to one another.

I have attended other kinds of concerts as a spectator, listening to former students of jazz from the Cologne University of Music and Dance. These interpreters and composers often possess a faultless technique when covering jazz classics; ultimately this kind of performance incorporates no surprise elements, however. In my opinion, jazz sets that feed audience expectations may be lacking in fantasy and are valuable purely as entertainment. I have great respect for the daring of musical performers who are prepared to take risks with improvisation and thus allow more space for innovation.

And in the meantime I have come upon another improvisation scene in Cologne of mostly New Music (that occasionally verges on jazz) and exists parallel to the sessions. It consists of younger professional musicians (unfortunately again predominantly German, white, and male), who have studied at academies in Europe and who perform only in concert, forgoing any form of practice session. With their skill, they bring an intensity, concentration, and conviction that make a performance always convincing.

But I believe that risk-taking involves more than cultivating a creative imagination. I came to Germany as an artist and writer in order to reflect critically on a society that was established in the legacy of fascism, especially where neo-Nazism has been on the ascendance since German unification in 1989 (Pro NRW being the local far-right party):

> Only Pro NRW (North Rhine Westphalia) could frighten with its individual results of over 3% in the Rhineland, in the Bergisch Land and even in the Ruhrgebiet. In the Cologne neighbouring cities of Bergheim and Leverkusen, they achieved 5.8% and 3.9%, for instance. A big surprise is the performance of Pro NRW in Dusiburg. There they achieved a total of 3.9%, in some constituencies even over 4%. In Gelsenkirchen they even attained 4.2%. In both towns there were Pro-NRW events in April (2010). In Duisburg there are hardly any Pro-NRW structures, however. But the Pro-NRW demonstrations and the week-long continuous Islamaphobic campaign against the Mosque in Marxloh, decisively contributed to these results.[8]

I can never forget that the BRD (Bundesrepublik Deutschland—Federal Republic of Germany) was reborn on the ashes of fascism after the Second World War, former Nazi functionaries having been reinstated at all levels of politics and industry, including the highest. Hans-Dietrich Genscher, for instance, who had been a member of the Nazi Party and fought in the army for Germany during the war, developed a post-war political career in the FDP (Freie Demokratischer Partei—Free Democratic Party) that culminated in his position as Germany's vice-chancellor (Die Welt 2007). Walter Scheel, who was employed as Luftwaffe auxiliary personnel in 1943, was then posted to a Reich Labour Service in 1944; he had also been a member of the Nazi Party and a volunteer for the German Army and was later held in US and British war captivity. After the war Scheel, also a member of the FDP, held the position of Bundespräsident der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Federal President of the Federal Republic) from 1974 to 1992 (Becker 1978; *Der Spiegel* 1978). In this country, the questions of racism or fascism remain essential issues, especially when they rear their heads contemporaneously.

I admit to being disappointed in the lack of agenda regarding cultural difference at the regular improvisation sessions. Only thrice in a couple of years have I seen Turkish artists/musicians bring their cultural specificity to these gatherings, even though the Turkish population in Cologne is 6.23%,[9] and there have been only two persons of colour contributing (one of whom being Mbongane, born on the African continent, who works with traditional African instruments and voice).

Even less is gender or queer identity an issue; in fact, politics of any hue, local or global, are avoided—the intention of the musical collaborations appears only to be to create a music form that explodes some of the conventions of jazz. This lack of a political agenda reveals the venture's conventional nature. Of the fifty or so artists in the pool of improvisational musicians performing at open sessions in the North Rhine-Westphalia area, only a couple are of colour, a further five or so are non-German and maybe only a dozen are women (these include Gala Hummel—drums and vocals—and Marion Schüller—vocals). A large number of the artists are also of an older generation, so the development of a more flexible approach to sessions and their content is not on the cards. While the sessions appear to be open and free to anyone wishing to take part, not all are made to feel welcome, and I fear exclusivity will close doors to a true exchange and a genuinely wide experience.

I also feel compelled to report a lack of sensitivity towards Mohammed Bangora (a percussionist from Guinea), a person of colour in the audience who was unceremoniously shooed off the stage at a Düsseldorf session in WP8 in April 2013 when he attempted to join in without having added his name to the list of play (all participants are required to add their name to a chronological list before the session starts and this list is strictly adhered to). In Great Britain, where I spent the greater part of my life and where, after the misdeeds of a colonial heritage, a more rigorous condemnation of racism is finally being practised, this incident would, I believe, have been taken note of and censured. It wasn't until the following day, however, that even I found the courage to speak out—an action which led to far-reaching consequences.

I sent my email on issues of diplomacy regarding a person from a minority culture to the two musicians responsible for sending out information emails to all session members in the NRW area, Andreas Techler (saxophone) and Karl Krützmann (saxophone); this was on April 15, 2013. Although I asked them to mail my commentary around, they declined, without explanation. I did, however, receive a private email response that Krützmann accidentally sent to me although it was addressed to Techler, which turned out to be an outspoken, anti-Semitic denunciation of my person. My dilemma then was how to deal with this new situation, which affected me so intimately. Although anti-Semitism is a criminal offence in Germany, I decided against legal action, preferring that the community deal with the issue internally. And so I mentioned the matter at ensuing sessions, privately in conversation, to several individuals and became increasingly disappointed at the lack of interest they demonstrated in taking any action.

Finally Robby Göllmann and Georg Frangenberg (who run the summer sessions in Düsseldorf) decided to give Krützmann a ticking off (via email)—should he behave in like manner at another time, he would be banned from the summer sessions in Düsseldorf. Again, Göllmann and Frangenberg did not inform the community as a whole, which left me with the bitter feeling that justice had not been done—an open discussion on racism was never undertaken. Eventually, I decided to forgo further attendance of the improvisation sessions, no longer wishing to be part of a group that tolerated racism by acquiescence.

It would be a fair assumption to say that session improvisers see themselves as being liberal-minded. Where then is the exact point of taboo—the line never to be crossed? And who is prepared to watchdog this troublesome no-go area? The diatribe that I accidentally received per email was reminiscent of the worst type of Nazi propaganda, but the community preferred to turn a blind eye to what had happened. To quote Chris Köver (2014): "'Racism in Germany? Doesn't exist.'" This is what May Ayim was confronted with by a professor, as she announced that she was going to write a Degree in Pedagogy on the history of Black Germans."[10]

Afro-German poetess May Ayim fought against racist attitudes in Germany and bore witness to her harrowing experiences of it in her writings:

> Her poetry edition "blues in schwarz-weiss" (blues in black and white) was published in 1995 with the Orlanda Frauenverlag (Orlanda Women's Press), as were most of her books. In it, May Ayim reckons with "a recently unified Germany" that "in private" gladly celebrates its "whiteness" after 1990: "without immigrants, refugees, Jewish and Black people." (Köver 2014)[11]

Ayim's untimely death in 1996 was a suicide, an ultimate way out of illness and her exhaustive struggles with immovable xenophobic attitudes in Germany.

Olumide Popoola, a Nigerian-German writer and poet who won the *May Ayim Award for Poetry* in 2004 and has also performed together with musicians, left Berlin to live and work in more multicultural London. The introductory information Popoola's publisher provides about her play *Also by Mail* (2013), in which she addresses issues of racism in Germany, explains:

> Loss and racism, sibling rivalry and cross-cultural etiquette, the play incorporates and subverses it's [sic] urban, neo-African elements of story-telling to give a contemporary picture of a family that struggles not only with the legacy of its patriarch but with being racialized within the German context as well. Where does each stand in a circle of relations and needs? Where does each want to end up? (Edition Assemblage 2012)

The introduction to Popoola's first book *this is not about sadness*, which is set in London, is a poem of hers that speaks of heartache and lamenting the loss of "that which slips through our hands" while weighing it in the balance with what one can hold on to:

> we don't measure in impossibility
> in anguish or that which slips
> through our hands
>
> in the end we only count what was there
> to have & keep, attainable against all odds
> that which remains, we carry beyond
> hold it dear and declare it, sacred
>
> there is no ceasing
> merely change—unfailing
> and invariably there is more—always (Popoola 2010)

I continue to perform in a duo with double bassist Kasander Nilist and record all rehearsals and performances (which I also transcribe and have corrected, when the German is faulty). I have more recently commenced playing with professional musicians from the parallel improvisational but more sophisticated New Music scene: Etienne Nillesen (percussion), Matthias Muche (Trombone), and Nicola Hein (electric guitar). Their music is born out of the atonal developments of modern classical music, combined occasionally with jazz.

These New Music musicians use their instruments unconventionally as boxes to create sound rather than to play more traditional music. I have witnessed Nicola Hein in concert playing his electric guitar as if it were a percussion instrument and Etienne Nillesen playing an

unconventional construction he built onto the snare drum surface, by plucking and bowing it as though it were a stringed instrument—each thereby evincing the most unusual and sublime sound.

The younger generation of New Music improvisation artists will no doubt also have their own issues to deal with. When I attended an initial group concert on September 17, 2014 in the Stadtgarten—held under their umbrella name of Auftakt (Prelude)—for instance, this group of twenty young white German musicians, including Nicola Hein, Philip Zoubek, Constantin Herzog, Fabian Jung and Niklas Wandt, had invited only one woman, Elisabeth Fügemann, a cellist, to participate.

To return to the previously mentioned grave assertions of racism that I have witnessed, I would like to know where this conformist position comes from. I fear that many German artists have not been vigilant in their questioning of given ideas—questioning the authority of American Culture, for instance. Jazz, which was banned during the Nazi era as being degenerate, was later adopted with an uncritical enthusiasm in the post-war years of denazification.

Many contemporary improvisational artists of the jazz and New Music scene that I have heard have too happily produced an imitation of popular culture (the German jazz tradition is not that distinctive from American jazz) while not understanding that the politics (of liberality) is in the fine detail of our lives, to which we have to make a personal commitment.

I believe that any matters may be addressed in poetry; in an area where politicized art is absent, it is a challenge to charge poetry with activism so that a resulting presentation with musicians may be more than just entertainment. Being less bound by constricting societal rules of conduct, improvisation—musical and poetic—may be implemented to construct a bridge for earwitnesses, thus addressing social issues in a playful manner.

Improvised poetry is the pulling together of many, or sometimes only slips of the mind, whereby lateral thinking meanders on, in such a way that one often isn't fully aware of where one is being taken—one is borne along on a slip stream of consciousness, which will nonetheless often reveal normally unspoken truths. And what is born out of the depth of the unconscious may of course be confrontational for observers, as Roland Graeter, the cellist and vocalist has observed (I performed with Graeter several times, during his 2011 Music Marathon year of daily presentations in Europe): "Yes, I often react traumatically to Tanya Ury's words—we pursue a parallelism of music, verse and dream—a dreamlike balancing act, a pilgrimage to the occident and 'Sandkuchen' (plain cake), which suddenly asserts its presence" (Graeter 2011).[12]

On an ending note, the final poem of the February 3, 2013 session is a nonsense poem:

deleted dilletantism

spam
wham
bam

I thank
you for your
conversation
less
instruction

we can
continue
unlike this
syndrome

it will compare
and find
fulmination

unsound
sounding out
a pulse
pointing out

found you
unshrinking

a folded
madonna machine
has been
invented
for today

outgrown
her mold
tomorrow

send me
a sentence
to death

a parting
gestation

calibrated
caliban

self-serving
your hunger
in the
incident room
indelicate

unspoilt
symposium
spinning
towards
a deleted
dilettantism

Notes

1. "As Saverio Bettinelli describes in his *Dell'entusiasmo* (1769), the virtuoso professionals gave every sign of entering states of poetic ecstasy, delivering odes, narrative poems, *canzonette*, and sonnets with a fluency and power that amazed their audiences, who suggested themes and very often rhymes and metres. Some improvisers such as Tommaso Sgricci (1788–1836) specialized in full-length verse tragedies. Like the heroine of De Staël's *Corinne ou l'Italie* (1807), many of the most famous performers were women, such as Maria Maddalena Morelli Fernandez (Corilla Olimpica) and Teresa Bandettini. Though Perfetti and others actively discouraged transcription, a very large number of improvisations were recorded in some form. Later dismissed as frivolous or trivial, the whole phenomenon has recently begun to re-engage scholarly interest" (Caesar 2002, 301).

2. Writing about the Bertsolari Txapelketa, the national championship of *bertsolaritza*, an improvised contest poetry of the Basque oral tradition, which took place in Barakaldo, Spain, on December 18, 2005, John Miles Foley states: "To understand the power and presence of *bertsolaritza*, we need to realize that the art and practice of oral poetry is woven very deeply into the fabric of Basque society, in both formal and informal settings and on a virtually everyday basis. Perhaps the most intimate of such settings is the ubiquitous "*bertso*-dinner," a city or village ritual that features a community feast followed by performances by two or more *bertsolariak*, who duel not for prizes or glory but for the enjoyment of all those present. More than one thousand of these oral poetry feasts take place each year, I was told" (Foley 2005).

3. This is from a transcript of Allen Ginsberg's 1975 in-class improvisation, "History of Poetry 28 (Death Is . . . An Improvisation)." Gregory Corso and W.S. Merwin were on hand on this occasion to add their contributions.

4. "Ginsberg's political activities were called strongly libertarian in nature, echoing his poetic preference for individual expression over traditional structure. In the mid-1960s he was closely associated with the counterculture and antiwar movements. He created and advocated 'flower power,' a strategy in which antiwar demonstrators would promote positive values like peace and love to dramatize their opposition to the death and destruction caused by the Vietnam War" ("Biography: Allen Ginsberg").

5. *archive burn out* included "Suspended Beliefs," improvised poetry with improvised music: Tanya Ury (voice), Gernot Bogumil (trumpet), Kasander Nilist (double bass), and Hans Salz (percussion): https://vimeo.com/112831445.

6. *Lost in Interiors (25 Years After the Fall of the Wall)* is about Hohenschönhausen, the former Stasi prison. Kasander Nilist, improvising freely on double bass, accompanies Tanya Ury's poetry on the historical theme, in English and German: https://vimeo.com/112798380.

7. Translation by Tanya Ury of the following: „Kauderwelsch—unverständliche oder fehlerhafte Sprache sowie aus mehreren Sprachen gemischte Ausdrucksweise ♦ eigtl. *Kaurerwelsch* ‚Churwelsch'; *Kauer* ist die Tiroler Bezeichnung für *Chur* in der Schweiz, und die Sprache der Kauerer galt schon früher (15. Jh.) als schwer verständlich; *welsch* aus mhd. *welsch, welhisch, walhisch* aus ahd. *walhisc* ‚romanisch', aus lat. *Volcae,* dem Namen eines Volksstammes in Gallien nördlich der Alpen" (see "Kauderwelsch").

8. Translation by Tanya Ury of the following: „Einzig Pro NRW konnte mit einigen Einzelergebnissen über 3% im Rheinland, im Bergischen Land und sogar im Ruhrgebiet erschrecken. Zum Beispiel in den Kölner Nachbarstädten Bergheim und Leverkusen erreichten sie 5,8% und 3,9%. Eine große Überraschung ist das Abschneiden von Pro NRW in Duisburg. Dort erreichten sie insgesamt 3,9%, in einigen Wahlkreisen sogar über 4. In Gelsenkirchen konnten sie sogar auf 4,2% kommen. In beiden Städten hatten im April Pro-NRW-Events stattgefunden. In Duisburg existieren allerdings so gut wie keine Strukturen von Pro NRW. Allerdings haben die Pro-NRW-Demo dort und die wochenlang andauernde islamophobe Hetze gegen die Moschee in Marxloh haben entscheidend zu diesem Ergebnis beigetragen" (see "Nazi-Parteien" 2010).

9. On December 31, 2012, the general population in Cologne was calculated at 1,024,373. The Turkish population, the largest non-native group in Cologne, was calculated as having been 63,839 in 2007, i.e. approximately 6.23% (see Information und Technik Nordrhein-Westfalen 2010).

10. Translation by Tanya Ury of Chris Köver (2014): „Rassismus in Deutschland? Gibt es doch gar nicht." Diesen Satz bekam May Ayim von einem Professor zu hören als sie ankündigte, ihr Pädagogikdiplom über die Geschichte von Schwarzen Deutschen zu schreiben.

11. Translation by Tanya Ury of Chris Köver (2014): „1995 erscheint der Gedichtsammelband „blues in schwarz-weiss" im Orlanda Frauenverlag, wie fast all ihre Bücher. Darin rechnet May Ayim auch „mit einem frisch wiedervereinigten Deutschland" ab, das sich nach 1990 gerne „weiss" und „im intimen kreis" feiert: „ohne immigrantInnen flüchtlinge jüdische und schwarze menschen."

12. Excerpted from Roland Graeter (2011): „sehr gute ruhe zum zweiten beginn. es kam nämlich ein nachzügler . . . i can not calculate your credibility . . . beginn des wort-musik-gebäudes. ein sehr fragiles unterfangen, sicher, diese #194, das war von vornherein klar, und dennoch fühle ich mich sehr wohl in dieser mischung aus sinn-fragmenten und lautmalerei, gemischt mit perkussions-fetzen von uwe. Laukeningkat. ja, ich reagiere, häufig traumatisch, auf die worte von tanya ury, wir betreiben die parallelität von musik, lyrik und traum, von träumerischer gratwanderung, pilgerfahrt ins abendland und sandkuchen, der plötzlich seine anwesenheit behauptet." The full translation, by Tanya Ury, is as follows: "The second part started well—very peacefully—good, because there were latecomers. . . . 'I cannot calculate your credibility . . .' is the start of the word music construction. A very fragile undertaking to be sure, this #194, which was clear at the outset, and yet I feel very good about this mixture of fragments of meaning and onomatopoeia, intermingled with, snatches of percussion from Uwe Laukeningkat. Yes, I often react traumatically to Tanya Ury's words—we pursue a parallelism of music, verse and dream—a dreamlike balancing act, a pilgrimage to the occident and 'Sandkuchen' (plain cake), which suddenly asserts its presence."

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Performers: Portraits of Performance Artists

Patrick Morarescu

Performers is an archive collating portraits of performance artists active worldwide. Over the last three years I visited as many festivals and performance art venues as possible, with the intention of photographing participants. My aim is not to document art actions, but to capture the personalities that are behind those actions. Usually I take the photo right after a performance with the purpose of retaining the energy that a live presentation imbues in the artist.

Moreover, I aim to situate the figure in a specific setting or against a relevant background. In this way additional meanings come across, suggesting associations between the corporeal expression and the intensity of the surrounding space.

Performance and its Historical Heritage

In recent years Live Art has gained a more ascendant position in the contemporary art scene and more artists are experimenting with this medium. I understand performance art to be an expression of our eclectic historical moment, produced at the crossroads of many different disciplines (body art, movement, installation, sound, etcetera). It is a language that allows interdisciplinarity and interactivity to an extremely large extent.

As Peggy Phelan has famously stated, a performance art piece only exists in the present, and once presented it changes into another new form and stops being what it was. To quote Phelan: "To the degree that performance attempts to enter the economy of reproduction it betrays and lessens the promise of its own ontology. Performance's being, like the ontology of subjectivity proposed here, becomes itself through disappearance" (1993, 146).

The present, which leads the performance to its deeper question, is rarely valued in our culture. Performance is generated during a certain period that cannot be repeated. The repetition can be pursued, but this reproduction already marks something new. The document of a performance is only a recollective gesture, a stimulus of the memory to remember something transient.

However, art history and the politics of cultural management demand documentation and constrain artists and institutions to list, conserve, and archive artworks. That is why it is necessary to reflect on how these magic and unique moments can be frozen and preserved for the future.

My Personal Relationship to Photography and Live Performance

My interest in performance art documentation did not originate in an academic impulse, but in an artistic one. I have been actively involved in performance art practice as an artist, curator, and

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Patrick Morarescu studied at the Academy for Photography in Munich. Although his main technique is photography, his projects also combine several formats, such as collage, performance and installation. He has shown his works in Germany, the UK, Spain, the Netherlands, Estonia, Switzerland, Poland, Finland, Australia, Cameroon, Morocco, and Taiwan.

organizer; I realized several solo and group performances and organized performance festivals and gatherings. Those experiences and collaborating with the research project ELAA (European Live Art Archive)—in which we interviewed experienced performance artists with the goal of archiving their memories—brought me to the idea of systematically photographing the performance artists I came across.

Over the years, I have had the opportunity to get to know many different performance artists, including their different approaches to creativity, their particularities, and their individual personalities. And it is those differential factors that interest me and, I believe, make this series interesting, colourful, and strong.

From my years of photographic study, I have maintained an interest in portraiture, especially for the way it captures the dynamism and complexity of human beings. I photograph individuals to whom I feel an initial attraction, and I try to reflect this appealing force in images. I am attempting to represent a power that cannot be described in words or concepts but captures my attention and curiosity, a sort of addiction not only to body shapes, eyes, skin tonalities, but also to what is underneath: the thoughts and the mental states of these persons. And I feel a sort of instinct of possession, a desire to materialize the moment that this person is living.

The sheer human presence of these performers, in all their emotionality, is sometimes too strong. They are shouting to get all the attention: like a red dot in a forest of green, like a flash in the darkness. To balance that force I need the background, the space that as a negative form defines the contour of the figure. Through that supplementary space, I create a whole story. The key to my research lies in the dialogue between the person and the background. Sometimes I think I am not portraying a person against a background, but a background alongside a person; sometimes it is the opposite. The background speaks about fear, happiness, peace, desperation; it speaks about the circumstances through an atmosphere.

Additional images from the *Performers* series can be accessed at http://morarescu.de/performers.

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Alastair McLennan (Scotland)



Akashapusha (Finland)



Ato Malinda (Kenya)



Béatrice Didier (Belgium)



Jelili Aitku (Nigeria)



Anna McCarthy (Germany/UK)



Irma Optimist (Finland)



Jürgen Fritz (Germany)



Kira O'Reilly (Ireland)



Yingmei Duan (China)



Nikhil Chopra (India)



Panoply Lab (USA)



Saskia Edens (Switzerland)



Valentin Torrens (Spain)



Watan Wuma (Taiwan)

Performing collisional ethnic studies: an (un)expected and (im)possible archive

Mario Obando

I have arrived late to the scene. I have arrived at a car accident amidst several intersections and assemblages. The following documents are as real as a passport, an ID card or a marriage license is real. The documents have material consequences; not only is this archive's construction done as unpaid labour, but it is a material archive that assembles a variety of labours—newspaper writing; document creation; math; musical production; the writing of lyrics; sound mixing; poetic writing; careful note-taking in class; close listening; emotional labour; hours spent on social media; google searching; personal observation; lived experience; memory; love-making; and conversations with a roommate, multiple professors, family, friends, and fellow students.

The following is artistic work—an improvised jazz piece made out of thought space and the love of thinking through one's political components in new and inventive ways. The following is archival work; it is the gathering, labeling, archiving and organizational work that an archivist would do for an interested student.

The following is a scholarly answer to the following questions: How does one make the remote and distant *not* remote and distant? Moreover, what is lost and what is found if I do not use theoretical framing or historical specificity or periodization or prose as the way to structure the content I am presenting here? How does the act of academic narration occur rhetorically throughout this archival performance? How does the interpretation of the documents change? How does the archive have a life of its own? Most importantly, how does the archival performance provide a way to think about the following statement: if scholars critique normative narratives of modernity, then why do they do so using the very normative writerly formations that script those narratives of modernity (prose, etc.)?

The following essay (archival performance, what have you) is an effort to intervene critically in relational and comparative ethnic studies. I have a set of assumptions that accompany this intervention. The essay/archival performance is a meditation first and foremost. It hopes to ask more questions than it hopes to answer. It complicates more than it hopes to clarify. It is open-ended and desires few, if any, conclusions. It is an effort to reveal the border of academic writing and reading practices—challenging the very assumptions we carry as readers of academic texts. In other words, it asks you the question—what were you expecting in the first place out of an "academic" piece? How do you navigate trudging through this essay? The essay's labour in meaning making is thus an (un)even labour between curator and reader(s). The (un)even labour is a collective enterprise, one that I hope is just the beginning of a life/death-long conversation and/or silence. It forces us to make meaning together, which I think is an important political project in it of itself.

Returning to the intervention, I am suggesting an intervention into relational and comparative ethnic studies and propose an offshoot of these respective fields—what I call *collisional* ethnic studies. I use the word collisional for a variety of reasons: first, collisional means that the work creates a place for

Mario Obando is a doctoral student in the Department of American Studies at the University of Minnesota. He works as a graduate teaching assistant in the department and as a writing consultant for the writing centre.

material bodies/spaces/ideas/conflicts to meet across time and space. Collision also implies the improvisational and the unpredictable. How do we link unexpected and purposely decontextualized communities, spaces, and, yes, even animals together? How does perceived empty and negative space (see items 9 through 11) construct collisions in the reading of this essay?

Collisional ethnic studies—an unpredictable, unstable, fluid, and explosive field—builds off the work of comparative ethnic studies. In a special issue of *American Quarterly* linking Palestinians and Chicana/os, David Lloyd and Laura Pulido ask critical questions about comparative analysis of these two groups of racialized communities (2010, 792): How does a boycott work, what is its status as an instrument of nonviolent struggle, and when and why should a boycott be pursued? Are there analogies between the wall being constructed along the U.S. border with Mexico and the separation wall that cuts through the occupied West Bank—both with the participation of the same Israeli firm, Elbit System? What is the impact of the security state that has emerged in the United States since 9/11 and in Israel in the wake of the Second Intifada? In particular, how have such changes affected how the movement of people is controlled, whether U.S. Latina/os or Palestinians and Arab Americans? Are there comparative dimensions to educational inequalities affecting both Chicana/os and Arab Israelis, both of whom form substantial minorities that suffer from discrimination against their cultures and languages and significant underrepresentation in the upper levels of education? Lloyd and Pulido define solidarity as "based not on absolute identification, but on differentiated experiences of oppression and struggle against universalizing systems of domination like imperialism and capitalism" (2010, 792). The works included in the special issue are comparative; the comparison occurs at the site of settler colonialism, which the editors define as the "practice of conquering land and then populating it with the victorious people, the settlers." This results in the "dispossession and often the extermination of large parts of the native population and the subsequent cultural, economic, and political subordination of the remainder" (Lloyd and Pulido 2010, 792). The questions emerging in the conversations and dialogue of the issue resemble the work of Steven Salaita (2006) in comparing Palestinians and Native Americans.

In my assemblage of this archival performance/essay, I hope to expand the criteria for comparison and relation between communities, spaces, and ideas. That, however, is a much messier process.

In other words, as previously mentioned, this essay is an effort to create a continuous collective exchange in a rhetorical, trans-temporal, trans-spatial set of imaginations. It is also an effort to not compare one-to-one groups and extend this work across a multiplicity of communities. Throughout the essay, some unpredictable and what some would say impractical and even impossible questions become possible. These questions are just a starting point to understanding how a collisional ethnic studies is a project rooted in the meditative space of the unpredictable, the non-linear, and the unexpected. The questions are a place for these ideas to meet. Jasbir Puar (2009) calls this an ethics of conviviality; it is an ethics to create a place for the (im)materiality of bodies to meet, as well as a site for them to self-annihilate, leading to new questions and inquiries based on the previously impossible.

For instance, what are the connections between Japan, Madagascar, Korea, Mexico, Mesoamerica, and the many spaces situated throughout the archival performance? In what ways does this challenge comparative ethnic studies' traditional exploration of just two groups, sometimes a few more, and move us into a collisional ethnic studies across borders, time and space? How might the project inform new ways of rendering meditative space for finding critical avenues to eradicate and abolish liberal humanism?

Item 1

State of Minnesota

Case No. 2014 XY 9111492

OBTS No. 04191991562

-vs-

_____

Bench Warrant

In the name of the State of Minnesota, to all and singular the Sheriffs of the State of California: YOU ARE HEREBY INSTRUCTED TO ARREST _____.

If he/she be found in your county, bring him/her before this Court forthwith to show cause why he/she was not present in Court on JANUARY 21, 2015.

Said _____ shall be admitted to bail in the sum of $25,000.00. The bond set by the Bench Warrant shall supersede and take the place of all previous bonds set in this case.

DONE IN OPEN COURT this day JANUARY 21, 2015.

_____

Judge

Received this order _____ day of _____ and executed same in Hennepin County, MN
On ___ day of _____
The within named and having his body Now before the Court,

By _____
(Deputy)

Item 2

Reader. t
This is a cr h
as s e
i

Not for you.

A limb.

deaths.

r
took place he
e

explosion.

¡galactic fiesta !!!!!!!

…gold glitter remains…

in shreds, [redacted]dent center

9…8…7…6…
cinco… cuatro…
tres….
dos…

por*todo*lo*que*siguen*haciendo*sLOSsonofabiche.deportdroneNAFTAfamineUNICEFkuwaitIRAQadamandeveCHRISTIANwhiteJESUSbrownMUERTEyPORtodosenlacarcelALLENWOODatlantaATWATERbigsandyBEUMONTcanaanCOLEMANflorenceFLORENCEHIGHhazeltonLEEleavenworthLOMPOCmarionMCCREARYpollockTERREHAUTEtucsonVICTORVILLEoctoberTWELVE1984reagan_+_his_gangsters_COMPREHENSIVECRIMECONTROLACTOF1984andtheoceanWATERFRONTbrigs,afloatbrigs,correcentionalcustodyunitsTHEBORDERPATROLthemustachesandbreadsAREconnectedtoAIRMANwilliamOLIVERreeseRESTINPOWERyoshiesatoMEMORYmayyourmemoryinciteinsurrectionAGAINSTTHE47,000USTROOPSstationedinJAPAN.

Item 3

Have you heard the story of the Galactic Fiesta?
It begins with a swordsman. [Damn, this was my high school mascot]
His name was Saul.
God appeared to Saul in Tarsus. [Seventh Day Adventists lessons paid off]

Saul became Paul.
The slayer of the other
Become the saint of the self.
His missionary work extended itself

He even sailed the ocean blue
And arrived to rape and plunder
The Taíno people
He is Paul.

Myth has it [myth, what other word can I choose?]
Paul named his sword Colon
Its steel, took its form,
Its handle, took its content

So have you heard the story of the Galactic Fiesta?
Paul had endless heads [Forgive me mom]
Joseph-François Lambert, solidified by the London
Missionary Society, a means to ~~an~~ end [add "s]

Adjacent to Lambert's head, is Commodore Perry
Torso, round, "action and adventure" into Tabasco
Perry and Paul, along with their insurance on humanity,
Took their sword to open the veins of Japan

The Galactic Fiesta has last.ed.s too long
Forged out of the need for silver to trade with China
It wanted to decorate its halls with the primal
The silk, the porcelain and the spices of the Orient

Shit, Saul Paul, even declared a new frontier
Battling the hammer and sickle during the long winter
He declared that he would eat and shit the cheese of the moon
"Space" for Paul was and is what needs to be conquered

Have you ever heard the sounds of the Galactic Fiesta?
In the background… Iggy Azalea, Macklemore
In the foreground… Elvis Presley
On the television… barack H obama

Transgress, oppose and resist
Spatial binaries, the Galactic Fiesta

Shhh, shhh, don't call the cops on their party
The boys, girls in blue won't arrive anyway [fuck the pigs]
Let the drunkards poison themselves
As they enjoy the spoils of war
Action and adventure has given them the fountain of youth

Its waters, though, are a mirage
A perpetual VegasHavanaMacau [I won't book this time, I swear]
Camp Justice's soldiers will kill themselves
An eye that cannot see, itself, blinds itself

Our eyes are unborn, born, unborn, born
Needles, puncturing, penetrating, perpetrating
Rotting, at times, in between six feet under
And three and six feet wide

Jails, detention centers, classrooms
DMVs, the zip code you claim to rep [562, damn, not mine though]
Was never yours,
Only stars, only the cosmos, only the deadliving

Atacama Desert, the vanished take a telescope
They use astronomy to map an escape
Appalachian Mountains, the enslaved take their feet
They use their knowledge of the sky to flee

Black stars, listen
To fight the pale, rotting and disfigure imperial sith
Listen to the (audre) Lordes of the Force [Will they understand Sci Fi reference?]
From the crescent moon, the death star explodes

Have you heard the story of the Galactic Fiesta?
"¿Mijx? This is our war
Saul's sword is in my hands
Bloods stains keep it together, [y]our blood

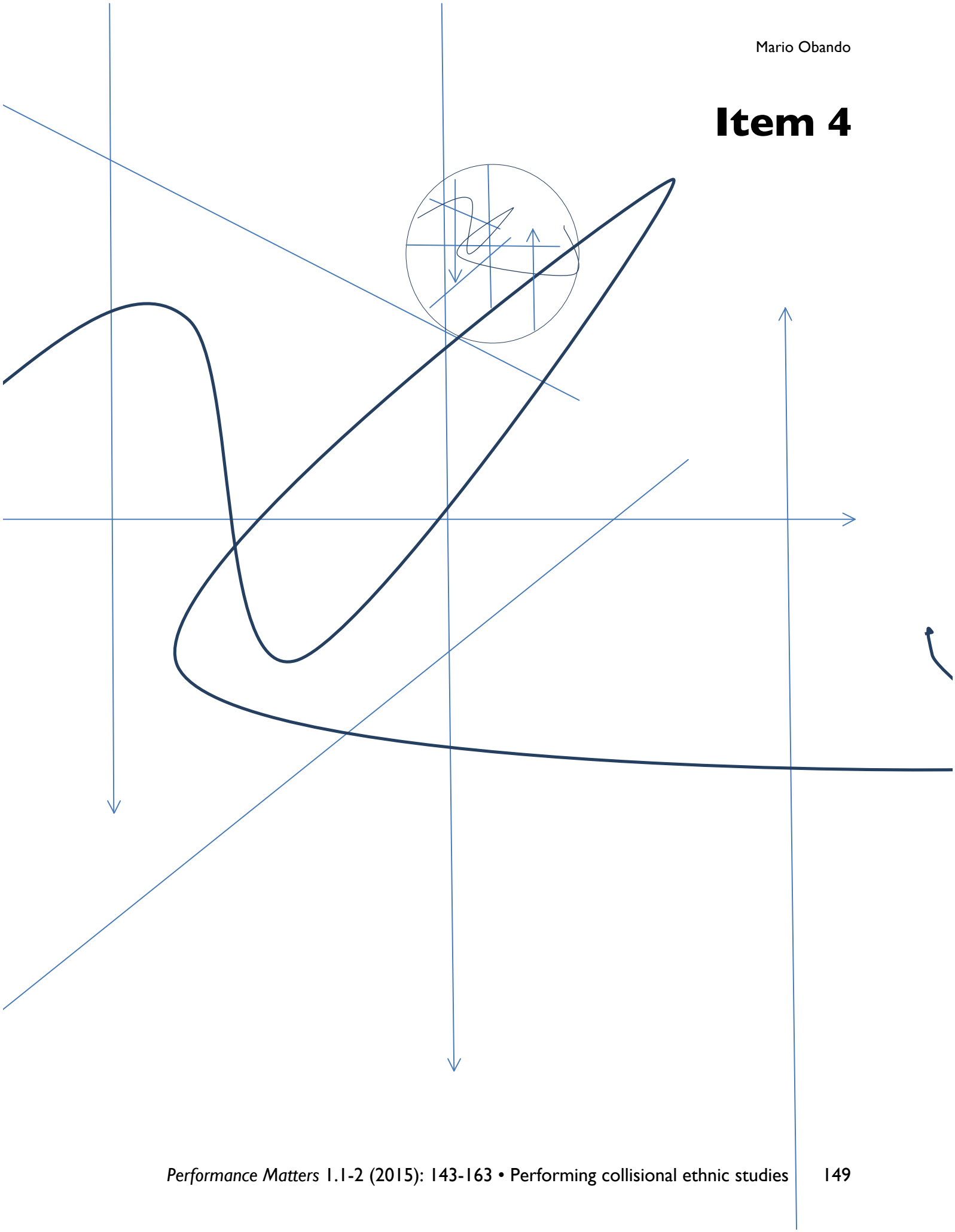
Korea, Taiwan, Okinawa, Manchuria
Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Taíno,
Mexica, Nahua, Madagascar,
Pocomania, Voodoo

Servers at the Galactic Fiesta
Or
Moon *gente*
Who use imagination as the base ["we are all insecure, I'm just the first to admit it" -Yeezus]

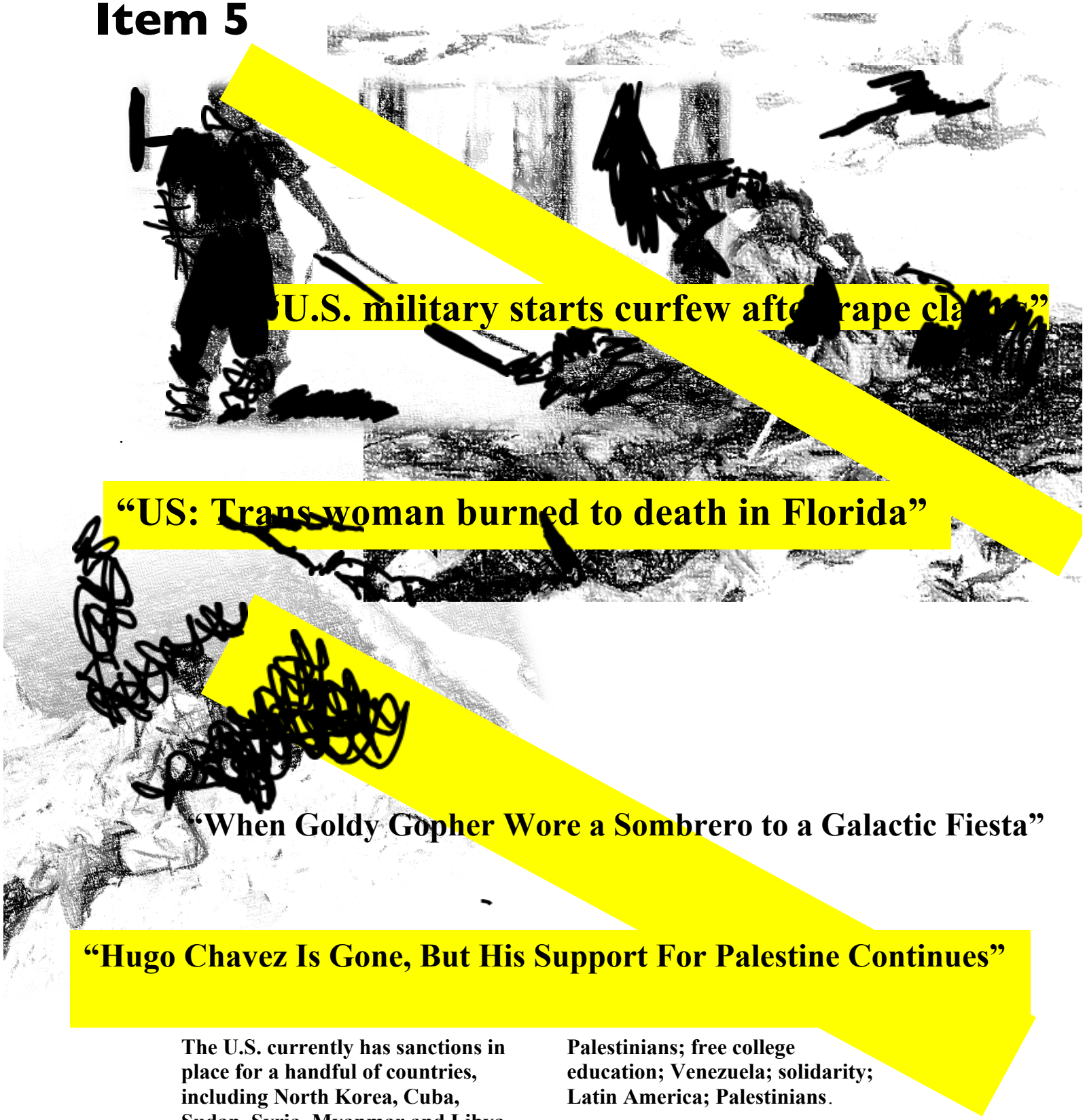
What is (y)our story about the Galactic Fiesta?

Mario Obando

Item 4



Item 5



The U.S. currently has sanctions in place for a handful of countries, including North Korea, Cuba, Sudan, Syria, Myanmar and Libya. The extent of these sanctions varies by country.

Palestinians; free college education; Venezuela; solidarity; Latin America; Palestinians.

Item 6

Beat Juggling, Racial Grooving[1]

It seems my prayer's weak I can't speak, not a linguist
To the question, this is symbolic of anguish
I feel regarding language and the obligation of revitalizing
Something sacred, failure to carry through is disgracing

To those who consume colonized bodies
I have you stressed out

Eating competitions while the worlds been starvin
Beat up communism with the help of Bin-Laden
Where would your war of terror be without that man
Every day you create more Nidal Hassans

Is it Obama's nation or an abomination? (x3)

Intravenously polite it was the walkie-talkies
That had knocked the pins down
As their shoes gripped the dirt floor
In the silhouette of dying
Dancing on corpses ashes

Is it Obama's nation or an abomination? (x3)

Natives kept in casinos and reservations
Displaced slaves never given reparations
Take everything from Native Americans
And wonder why I call it the racist experiment

Is it Obama's nation or an abomination? (x3)

The passing of time leaves empty lives
Waiting to be filled (the passing…)
The passing of time
Leaves empty lives
Waiting to be filled
I'm here with the cause
I'm holding the torch
In the corner of your room
Can you hear me?

Item 7

She opens the door to her yellow Toyota; her son holds the door with a close hanger so it doesn't fall out. In the back, her youngest son cries and complains. The material becomes a reality when the noise of the womb bears its constant grasp. Needing things, demanding things, crying for things, why don't we eat this, now! She is ready to explode but her husband is already good at that. She keeps her patience. Performs her role well. By the time she reaches the clean grass of brown suburbia, she realizes she does not remember the moment she dropped off her second son at school. She realizes that she does not remember how she got to the house, or the exact date her daughter moved back to the epicentro. Whose dream was she fulfilling? Her husband's or her employers'? Domination severs the boundary between the private and the public, between the domestic and the foreign: it does not discriminate. She enters the alarm code; greets the golden retriever. [¿Como les gusta este perro a los gringos?] Gets to work.

Domination severs the boundary between the private and the public, between the domestic and the foreign: it does not discriminate. She enters the alarm code; greets the golden retriever. [¿Como les gusta este perro a los gringos?] **He** gets to work. The door slams; he is angry again. His Armenian boss yelled at him for not having worked on his English during the "time off." He yells at her. His blood and his forced blood hide in the closet. Her first son hugs her second son. His kicks to the furniture like bombs, bombs that slowly eat you, kill your dreams. It's time for bed. They brush their teeth, not in circles as the teacher had said, but barely on the teeth, their hands shake. At any moment, he could come in, rush in, break down the door, invade (y)our space, find your saved up money, ruin (y)our goals, keep you from finding a way out. Destroy you.



"Women of Guatemala"

Illegal aliens – Arizona, Illegal aliens – Government policy – United States, Political Activists – United States

Female citizens of Guatemala

Image, title and Library of Congress subject headings courtesy of *The Documented Border: An Open Access Archive* (see Gipe 2014).

Item 8



"The unprecedented historical symbolism of the first Black president has misled many if not most black people to downplay his substantial neoliberal policies and elevate his (and his family's) brilliant and charismatic presence" (West 2014). Adjectives may be just conjured ghosts that accompany nouns of exception but they are nonetheless the best forms of exorcism. Drone. Wall Street. Mass Surveillance. Presidency, the noun. Detention. Deportation. Social Misery. Presidency, the noun. Somalia. Mexico. Yemen. El Salvador. Pakistan. Honduras. Afghanistan. Mexico. Iraq. Guatemala. Moor America. What would make it possible to see these sites as interconnected? Does the adjective Moor do the trick? Or would it require a bit of fiction, a suspension of truth? A suspension of truth which is rooted in empirical and imperial nationalism. Context. Periodization. Historical Specificity. All suspended. In their suspension, emerges conviviality. Self/other suicide. The other as a resource not as a risk. Temporal ruptures come in and come out. A circle within a plane; in the circle, the same subatomic structure shapes the next experimental step. Suspension is inherently part of the original structure but nonetheless can reconvene resistance by resisting norms of narration.

Item 9

Item 10

Item 11

Item 12

x

Dipesh Chakrabarty argues that the historian cannot invoke the supernatural in explaining/describing an event (2000, 106). The interpretation of historical evidence can anthropologize the very ways the people that we write about understand their lives. In other words, if one claims that the supernatural motivated one's activities, it is the job of the historian to assert that this claim is/was just a belief; this act of violence is the act of ascribing agency and by calling the claim belief it strips the claim of its possibility to teach us something we did not know before or could not see due to the constraints of the rationalized, trained and disciplined historian's efforts. The agent becomes the toy of the historian. This ensures that the historian has theorized a rational subject within the timeline the historian builds. Periodization, context, and historicity are the mechanisms under which history sweeps its fictive writing under the rug. Fictions are, as Avery Gordon writes, "what stand on the other side of the facts" (2008, 27). The possibility of life, writes Chakrabarty, is what we can learn; it is the subaltern.

z

Eric Hobsbawn once wrote: "when an innocent person is tried for murder and wishes to prove his or her innocence what is required is not the techniques of the postmodern theorist, but of the old-fashioned historian" (quoted in Chakrabarty 2000, 107). The law is the method of the historian. It is a colonial activity. Will its documenting, compartmentalizing, storytelling be enough? Or do we have to make fiction as well as find the border between the practical and the impractical? Making fiction and finding the border may conjure precisely the move away from history as the mechanism of proving one's humanity. How can we extend the humanities rendered by humanism and find other forms of living and being? Will rupturing the boundaries of history—nationalism, borders and difference—help us find the shared space, the intimacies of the four continents?

Item 13

Masirah, Oman [20°40'32"N 58°53'26"E]

This little piece of paradise is also home to the famous Wadi-Lizards. The Wadi-Lizards are not a ball club nor should they be confused with the lounge lizards of less certain character. These little brutes are chameleons of various sizes. They have oversized heads, large claws and a long tail to match their long, ultra quick sticky tongues. With these tongues they feast on insects and other airborne snacks which come within their range. This trait is particularly helpful when the lizards are near your feet, thus eliminating the need to carry a fly swatter. This may be the reason these creatures have adapted so keenly to the presence of certain individuals here at the Wadi.[2]



Item 14

The Negro is a toy in the white man's hands; so in order to shatter the hellish cycle, he explodes.
- Frantz Fanon (1967, 107)

…Self-annihilation is the ultimate form of resistance, and ironically, it acts as self-preservation, the preservation of symbolic self enabled through the "highest cultural capital" of martyrdom, a giving of life to the future of political struggles—not at all a sign of "disinterest in living a meaningful life."
- Jasbir Puar, on Ghassan Hage (2007, 216)

It may be necessary to overcome resistance in order to achieve resistance.
- Lisa Cacho (2012, 145)

Notes

1. Song lyrics referenced in this poem are as follows: Tall Paul, "Prayers in a Song" (stanza 1); Krudas Cubensi, "La Gorda" (stanza 2); Lowkey, "Obama Nation" (stanzas 3 and 7); At the Drive-In, "Relationship of Command" (stanza 5); The Smiths, "Rubber Ring" (stanzas 9-12).

2. Excerpted from GlobalSecurity.org's entry on Misrah; see "Military" 2011.

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Redressing:
A Script

Angela J. Latham

I gravitate immediately to the black, crepe, Victorian-era dress I see hanging, dusty, in the corner of the small antique shop I frequent when passing through this tiny Midwestern US town *en route* to visit family in an equally tiny Midwestern US town. The dress has exquisite beading on the bodice and sleeves. I tap the beadwork with my fingernails to verify my suspicions—it is glass. Delicious. Indeed, if I were not in such close proximity to the proprietor of the shop, I would use my sure-fire method of verification: putting the tiny beads to my teeth, vampire-like, consuming the unmistakable clink of the glass. But even the fingernail test confirms these are beads that if one were so brazen and cruel, one could smash into shards. The dark inklings of an axe murderer.

Actually, I am a historian and, in equal measure, a performer. I cannot conceive of history without embodiment and all the trappings of bodies enacting their lives and their rituals, their performed selves. My historical leanings and research proclivities have led me often to these remote outlets of history, quaint shops in small towns, in my insatiable desire to find, to estimate, to touch the fabrics and fashions of the women whose lives I have studied in equally fusty archives filled with similarly touchable pages of print. Yellowed, with crumbly edges and stale smells, pages almost as delicious to me as the dress I now examine, with its wrinkled sleeves that so poignantly reveal the form and long-ago movements of its wearer. I must possess this . . . artifact . . . no, this art. It requires my reverence, my protection, even my advocacy. I will examine its seams, smell it, fondle it, taste it. I will open and read it, like a book, like a lover. Put plainly, I must undress and know this woman.

I politely take the dress to the surprised shopkeeper who so rarely sells items to the occasional visitors, most of whom troll the merchandise, scavengers with a greedy eye for the discounted roadshow treasure.

When I get her home—the dress is no longer an "it"—I lay her gently on the bed and begin. I see and sniff the stains from her armpits. I am reminded how I take for granted the luxuries of temperature-controlled environments. Antiperspirant. She was resourceful. I see her efforts to spare her garment damage from her own body's sweat by padding the underarms with extra fabric. She was proud. For in this way she also concealed her body's involuntary reaction to the heat and stressors of her life.

There are patches neatly sewn on by hand to reinforce the places worn by repeated wearings and washings over many years. Though frayed, this gown is fancy, for dressy occasions. In it she attended many a church service, wedding, funeral. Did she go willingly? Eagerly? Resignedly? Was she pleased to wear this dress? Did she feel admired by others in it? I mourn the span of time that mars my sense of these, her distant memories.

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In my continuing lust I examine her workmanship. I am a maker of apparel too. I puzzle over the techniques and materials used to craft this vesture: the lining; the fabric choice; the order of construction; the painstaking handwork. In my historical forays I have also become an observer of the machines that women of this era used to construct their clothing. I imagine the creator of this dress sitting at the dark oak table that supports her treadle machine, leaning over the strips of cloth she sews. Little does she know that this enactment of her culturally and historically defined femininity will one day be commemorated in at least some small way by the likes of me. Her work will mutely testify to her beauty, her social status, her modesty, her vanity, her stature, her skill, her stress and strain, even her physical movements. The very bending of her arm and the circumference of her torturously cinched waist will be revealed across time through the medium of this "mere" fashion.

I am sated for now at least. This remembering in my way a historical era and a world in which women acquiesced to, fabricated, resisted, repaired, and recycled their sartorial and social structures is dimensional. This beaded remnant of a completed life—perhaps that of even my great-grandmother given the propinquity of my find—now joins the remnants of my own life. It is of a piece with my memories, my identities, my life rituals—touching, sorting, imagining, constructing, displaying, deconstructing, historicizing, professing, redressing. It will be among my own artifacts that another finds when I too am long gone, and that will lead her to wonder and imagine and, if I am so fortunate, make her wish to know me.

My intimacy with this woman in these moments of undress makes her memory for a brief and satisfying instant as real as my own. We share a space on the continuum of time and touch each other across the great divide of historical circumstance. I know her in a more sensate way than if I had simply met her, though indeed I have met and admired her frocked likeness many times in my beloved, staid, paged archives.

I clink her painstakingly applied beading to my teeth and feel her breath, the prick of her sewing needle, and hear her sigh in sorrow or perhaps in joy. Or maybe both. Impossible to tell, alas, from this my distant memory.

A Note on the Text

The text and performance of *Redressing* are corollaries to my previous scholarship, which posited and applied the methodology of historical performance ethnography to the often contested self-presentations by women of the post-Victorian era. It is also a natural counterpart to the scholarship of Borggreen and Gade (2013), Denzin (2003), Schneider (2011), and others, who articulate so well the complexities of performance "remains," including artifacts that directly and indirectly illuminate performances of the past. The intellectual, emotional, and sensual impact of tangible remnants of embodied performance as encountered in the archive by the performer/ethnographer/historian can be and often is profound. *Redressing* substantiates and punctuates this phenomenon that is for many such artists and scholars an often unarticulated yet vivid juncture, rife with its own performative potentialities. Further, by means of an aesthetically crafted and theoretically informed personal narrative, the presentation blurs the temporal and physical boundaries of live(d) performance. In short, I have attempted herein to offer an artistically rendered and corporeally transposed glimpse of the extraordinary yet commonplace coalescence of the remembered, the imagined, the longed for, and the real.

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Time-Based History: Perspectives on Documenting Performance

Nik Wakefield

In this review of literature on performance documentation, I aim to highlight strengths and weaknesses of existing scholarship in order to suggest ways in which the field might develop. Although I will be most forthright about my own stakes in this development at the conclusion of this review, I should say that my perspective is oriented toward the fields of performance philosophy and practice as research, while also invested in fashioning a temporal aesthetics, or what I call the time-specificity of performance. This text is positioned a step before a more fulsome elaboration of time-specificity but nevertheless addresses the need for such a concept through its very process of selection. For example, the kinds of literature to be found here are mostly all located *after* performance. Few take account of the production of documents before and during performance, such as the scores that are a part of much contemporary dance practice or the elements of performance that are being taken up by many in the field of poetic practice. Part of what time-specificity acknowledges is the multiple temporalities of performance: the before, during, and after, and how they persist through time.

This review begins with the notion of ephemerality as ontological disappearance, as posited by Peggy Phelan. I also take up the wide array of responses to Phelan from performance theory and practice, while also adding in some perspectives from art history and criticism, philosophy, and political theory. Some of these writings were published before *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (1993) but were not included in that study nor taken up as responses to it. Central concepts that I will explore in what follows are, of course, documentation and performance, but also disappearance, presence, archive, archaeology, memory, becoming, form, and, finally, vital materialism and time-specificity.

Why is a review of this literature important? Because an understanding of practical and theoretical approaches to documenting performance has implications for the historiography and institutionalization of theatre, drama, and performance. More importantly, a sense of clarity on the two dominant practices of our field, performing and writing, is necessary in order to maintain the confidence to sustain such practices. Exploring the relation between writing and performance might bond artistic and academic communities through evaluation and demystification. I write and perform to find out what you will perform and write back to me. Between us is the affirmation of difference, the emergence of value translated not as tolerance or agreement, but rather as heterogeneity. This is perhaps what makes a review important, as it is itself a document of multiple performances: performances of thought, critical thinking, and writing that sustain the continuity of multiplicity in a diverse field.

Disappearing Presence Performing Live

The questions surrounding the documentation of performance have generated a vast amount of discourse. Photography and writing are often the primary mediums academics use to access

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performance outside their own spatiotemporal location. Discourses about performance and documentation often lean into philosophical territory as researchers find themselves needing to clarify what it is exactly that is being documented and the relationships performance has to photography and writing.

In the field of performance studies Phelan's 1993 book *Unmarked* has shaped much of the debate about how performance is documented and what it is. She writes that performance "becomes itself through disappearance" (Phelan 1993, 146). It is an axiom of Phelan's theory of ephemerality that what once was now is lost. She posits that the critic's work has the potential to erase the performance. That any complete documentation of performance itself is impossible is stated precisely in order to stake an ideological position regarding performance's radical stance against commodification. Phelan's is an ontological argument in the face of the archive, gallery, and museum as structures of capital. It defines performance as something that cannot be sold because it is gone before it is over. Although Phelan's point about disappearance has come to dominate appraisals of her subtle and nuanced work, she goes on to make important points about how different kinds of writing can retain the ephemerality of performance.

In direct opposition to Phelan's privileging of disappearance is Philip Auslander's 1999 book *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*. He takes issue with any notion of directness in the experience of performance before it is written about. His argument is that the same mediatization that for Phelan erases performance is already functioning as an inherent aspect of experience. Performance is already mediatized, so documenting it cannot be said to alter it.

Advancing this argument in a 2006 article titled "The Performativity of Performance Documentation," Auslander defends the role of documentation as a formative part of rather than secondary practice to performance. He states that documentation can be the end goal of performance, referencing Kathy O'Dell who had previously argued that "performance is the virtual equivalent of its documentation," a reciprocal approach that perhaps deviates from Auslander's overall argument of an aesthetic of mediatization (O'Dell 1997, 3). Auslander goes further, suggesting that some performances are even staged in ways that configure documentation as more important than the audience. Unconvinced by an intersubjective definition of performance as an act between performer and audience, Auslander posits that if performance were really about this relationship then documentation would not omit the audience, as it does in most cases (Auslander 2006, 7).

Amelia Jones has written extensively on the issue of presence and its role in both performance and documentation. Like Auslander, Jones seeks to problematize the notion of an original and pure performance. In a 1997 article, "'Presence' in Absentia: Experiencing Performance as Documentation," she defends the position of only being able to view performance as documentation because the differences "are largely logistical rather than ethical or hermeneutic" (Jones 1997, 11). For Jones, whether one attends to performance or documentation makes little if any difference because" neither has a privileged relationship to the historical 'truth' of the performance" (Jones 1997, 11).

In her extensive article on Marina Abramović's "The Artist is Present," published in 2011, Jones expands on her earlier work, arguing that the artist is not actually present if we accept that presence is something that cannot be documented or commodified. For Jones, an art historian, performance must be able to be preserved. Sympathetic to Jones, and yet still prioritizing the phenomena of experience, is Simon Bayly, who in his 2011 book *Pathognomy of Performance* reveals the complexity of the issue, writing that while "'presence' is never coexistent with its experience . . . the 'liveness' of human (co-)presence is still something profoundly and doggedly meaningful"

(2011, 57). Bayly admits that the relation between performance and presence is not simple. Perhaps this is its very importance. His perspective is persuasive unless one advocates an evolution in which performance becomes a subgenre of photography or film more easily reproduced mechanically for widespread dissemination. Jones and Auslander rightly reveal the non-original and already mediated operations of performance. While their points are surely not calling for an end to performance, they do run the risk of problematizing liveness to the point of it losing value. In contrast, Bayly admits that presence is not secured by performance without severing the tie to living experience.

In 2012 Amelia Jones and Adrian Heathfield published their edited tome *Perform Repeat Record: Live Art in History*, in which commentators grapple with how to historicize performance, with documentation and disappearance emerging as central themes. The first section of the book, entitled "Theories," contains numerous essays, most of which, like Auslander's "The Performativity of Performance Documentation," specifically respond to Phelan's notion of disappearance. For example, Sven Lütticken argues against the notion of disappearance by referencing the dematerialization at the heart of contemporary art practices such as that of Tino Seghal. The fact that no material or documentation may be produced or disseminated about Seghal's work is the exact reason his practice becomes so highly valued and commodified in a culture based on performing for capital. Christopher Bedford's response to Phelan is also convincing; he argues for an ontology of performance that acknowledges the way it continues into the future and multiplies historically, stating that "performance is a myth-making medium and as such essentially viral in nature" (Bedford, in Jones and Heathfield 2012, 86).

Reenacting Remains

One provocative response to Phelan's framework is Rebecca Schneider's 2011 book *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment*, which expands on theories advanced in an earlier article titled "Performance Remains" (2001). Schneider critiques Phelan's logic, making use of the process of reenactment and Jacques Derrida's 1998 book *Archive Fever*. She argues that Phelan's privileging of an ontology of performance as disappearance ends up reinforcing the "logic of the archive" (Schneider 2011, 98).

Rather than ontology, Schneider applies a theory of reenactment in order to arrive at a version of performance that does not disappear. Her title thus has two meanings: realizing that reenactors perform remains signals that performance remains. Reenactment, Schneider suggests, shows that performance reappears. Following this logic, "when we approach performance . . . as . . . remaining we are almost immediately forced to admit that remains do not have to be isolated in the document" (Schneider 2011, 101). If Phelan's argument was to encourage modes of writing able to capture the ephemeral ontology of performance, Schneider's point is to take care with how the remains of performance are returned to. As useful and convincing as both these approaches are, they also are positioned after the performance. It will be useful also to have theoretical frameworks that take account of performance before and during its becoming, a point to which I will return.

In his 2007 book *Documentation, Disappearance and the Representation of Live Performance*, Matthew Reason finds that disappearance is a contradiction, because "some continued existence and retention within memory is always at least implied" (Reason 2007, 26). He also examines the tensions between mechanical and live reproduction—in the case of big-budget musicals, for example—and notes that even in this situation a "transience" exists in the link between the live body and the represented character (Reason 2007, 18 and 20). But here Reason makes the

assumption that the live body can lay claim to authenticity, which Auslander and Jones would take issue with.

In her article on Marina Abramović, Jones points to an implication of reenactments in the same way Schneider points to the hidden function of the archive. Each makes knowledge available for future "repetition" (Schneider 2011, 108). Jones writes: "While often posed as confirming the truth of the past, paradoxically re-enactments activate the now as always already over, the present always already turning into the future—and both continually escaping human knowledge" (Jones 2011, 43). Jones shows that tensions between past and present are inherent in both documentation and reenactment, as neither of these phenomena would be complete without a double and more. Further complicating Jones' conception of the impossibility of an original moment, Adrian Heathfield and Andrew Quick, in their introduction to "On Memory," a special issue of the journal *Performance Research* in 2000, indicate the similarities between memory and reenactment, explaining that the work of reenacting performance is analogous to an act of memory, in that the "lost originary moment is (partially) retrieved and reconstituted" (Heathfield and Quick 2000, 1).

Reenactment brings with it the same paradox that is found in photography, according to Susan Sontag in her 1973 monograph *On Photography*. She explains that photographs have a "pseudo-presence" because the image is a material artifact existing now; but the photograph is also "a token of absence" because it is contingent on a past event that was photographed (Sontag 1973, 16). In 1989, Henry M. Sayre made a similar comment in *The Object of Performance: The American Avant-Garde Since 1970*. His dialectic of presence and absence is construed as "ritual" and "narrative" (Sayre 1989, 17). The former does while the latter tells.

The phenomenon of reenactment problematizes performance as ever able to be original because it returns something that may have otherwise been considered lost. Reenactment reveals that performance is rarely, if ever, singular. It functions with memory and enforces a nature of multiplicity concerning its origin. Abramović herself prescribes a method of reenactment that by its lack of specificity reveals this difficult issue, saying that "any re-enactment should address the big issues that the original piece was about at the time" (Abramović, in Jones and Heathfield 2012, 554). Which issues are big is a question that I will return to at greater length below.

Jan Verwoert's 2010 book *Tell Me What You Want, What You Really, Really Want* looks at how community is made through art and philosophy. Echoing Auslander, Verwoert's comment on visual art could just as well describe the contradiction hidden in documents as in reenactments: "These paintings are not a live performance. But they perform live" (Verwoert 2010, 151). What they perform live and the implications arising from this are more problematic. Focusing on how artists appropriate history, Verwoert tellingly questions a central caveat of appropriation, which may also be an aspect of reenactments: "The only thing we should maybe be less optimistic about is the possibility of thinking of the object of appropriation and the knowledge it generates in terms of property" (Verwoert 2010, 134). The notion of property brings with it the notion of possession, and thus the economic implications of reenactments mirror the issues of authenticity that Jones questions in Abramović's redo's of other artists' performances.

Historical repetition brings up the fundamental question at the heart of Jones and Heathfield's *Perform Repeat Record*: how *to do* performance art history. Perhaps live art should be studied like painting, in which students copy masterpieces in order to develop personal technique; or as drama, in which seminal performances become reenactable scores no different from *Hamlet*, with a credited author and a copyrighted form. In both cases, understanding the nature of memory is helpful. As Jan Verwoert explains,

> As you write or paint, words you have read or images you have seen elsewhere (including those which you have forgotten) are present in your work as latent memories. The same latencies are in play in the moment of reading or looking at a painting as when the words of the pages you have read before reverberate in the words you presently read, or the images you have been exposed to resonate with what you see when you look at what you presently face. (Verwoert 2010, 30–31)

The long quote is important because it demonstrates the creativity of memory in both the artist and the beholder. Memory is the vehicle through which the past interpenetrates with the present. In the work of the artist and the critic the past is retained, in ways that are sometimes conscious and sometimes not, through the differentiations that new work manifests.

Archaeology

In the discussion of her place in reenacting other artists' performances, Marina Abramović casts herself in a surprising role, saying "I was feeling like an *archaeologist* really" (Abramović, in Jones and Heathfield 2012, 549). Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks use the same language in *Theatre/Archaeology* from 2001:

> It may ultimately be more appropriate to discuss performance (particularly devised performance) through archaeological rather than literary means, with performance as a kind of prehistory of scripted drama, and to imagine the retrieval and recontextualisation of performance as constituting a theatre archaeology. (Pearson and Shanks 2001, 13)

In this seemingly simple theoretical move, they thus privilege the experience of performance over its material through a focus on the deeper time of, surprisingly, material and the more enmeshed conception of performance in context. What follows in their book is a convincing argument for an interdisciplinary theory through the delineation of practical approaches.

Pearson writes from the perspective of a performance maker/theorist and Shanks as archaeologist, though as the book proceeds the lines are crossed, blurred, and erased. They work first to show how archaeology, like performance, is a creative act of "cultural production" (Pearson and Shanks 2001, 11). The opportunity archaeology presents to performance documentation is that it aims at "making a past work a present presence" through objects and sites in which embodiment is long gone (ibid.). Performance reveals to archaeology concrete manifestations of the relationships between the live and the material.

The work of theatre/archaeology starts with the present. It inventories only as a way to begin. It travels into history, acknowledging that the past is virtual. The present is the site of the critical acts of theatre/archaeology, Pearson and Shanks argue, in that "we should retain the ambiguity and tension which is actuality; actuality is the *primacy*, but not *superiority*, of the present over the past" (Pearson and Shanks 2001, 42, emphasis in original). The relationship between past and present is ambivalent and unpredictable. Various sites of archaeology and different forms of documentation require specific iterations and explications of a past moment's ties to now. The writers even go as far as to suggest that the "temporality of performance and the archaeological project is neither linear nor a slice through time; it is convoluted. Memories, pasts, continuities, present aspirations and designs are assembled in the work that is performance and archaeology" (Pearson and Shanks 2001, 55). Theatre/archaeology commits to a heterogeneous temporality of performance. Its temporal perspective is mobile as if moving around the time of the work rather

than always coming after it. Which implies, then, that when it returns, the performance will have changed. Repetition through time is not of the event, but of something else altogether as "nothing ever happens twice, because it has already happened before" (Pearson and Shanks 2001, 55).

What is repeated is not ontologically destabilized because it has been or will be repeated, but instead because what is being repeated was never static in the first place. Experiences are not objects. For Pearson and Shanks, both the performance and the document are simulacra (Pearson and Shanks 2001, 92). Originality, on the other hand, presumes stability, and theatre/archaeology comes close to wholly rejecting it: "To think authenticity as essential and intrinsic obscures the relationship of exchange which exists between past and present" (Pearson and Shanks 2001, 114). It is not only the past that has an effect on the present. The novelty of the present occasions reinterpretations of the past which can be powerful enough to appear to change the past itself, whether or not they actually do. Rather than dwell on the complexity of that issue, the authors commit to a practice outside the trappings of fixity. Instead, they advocate an aesthetic of the "unauthentic" which proposes to bring the practitioner and attendee into a creative relation (Pearson and Shanks 2001, 119). Inauthentic performance might make a claim to originality or truth whereas the unauthentic transparently reveals its sources. Pearson and Shanks' suggestion here retains a complex sense of time as multiple because it reveals an interpenetration between the past and the present.

Theatre/archaeology reveals a different kind of relationship between the formative documents of performance and their manifestation. When performance is rendered unauthentic, its sources are transparently separate. The moment of embodiment brings with it a "haunting past" that it never attempts to conceal, possess, or contain (Pearson and Shanks 2001, 126). Advocating a transparent relationship between aims and outcomes, "the work [of theatre/archaeology, which might be a performance and might be writing about performance] is a reading 'onto' and 'into' rather than a reading 'from'" (Pearson and Shanks 2001, 146). The benefits of credited appropriation resurface, referring to Verwoert's caveat, as practices outside of economic and ontological operations. In this case "performance occasions reinterpretation," enacting a mode of documenting performance that is as critical as it is creative (Pearson and Shanks 2001, 59).

Pearson and Shanks advise thinking forensically about what kinds of performance documents can be used to discover and preserve different aspects of performance (Pearson and Shanks 2001, 59–61). Theatre/archaeology, then, is a way through the problematic practices of reenactment, performance, and documentation. It enables thinking qualitatively through these issues, which allows for the constant invention and reinvention of forms, lives, and objects to be at the heart of the historical evolution of performance. It also implies that historiography might want to reflect this process. Performances and documents erupt of the present, not without a diverse swathe of accomplices. They are continually doing so.

Appearance, Form, Becoming, Transformation

In a chapter in the 2006 collection *A Performance Cosmology*, edited by Judie Christie, Richard Gough, and Peter Watt, David Williams indicates that Phelan's ephemeral ontology is founded on a paradox, noting that "disappearance is the function of appearance" (Williams, in Christie, Gough, and Watt 2006, 105). Remaining and reenactment, too, can only be functions of appearance. To take this point further, I suggest that whether a performance disappears or remains after it ends is impossible to determine. Before getting to any prediction of what may happen in the future, performance must first do something other than disappear or remain.

Performance appears. This is necessary in order for it to disappear or remain. But appearances must be unlocked from primarily visual and representational modes. For Bayly "there is a void at the heart of appearing," but perhaps the void is only that which is past or future (Bayly 2011, 58). I am advocating an appearance defined in terms of becoming as a result of transformation. This is the processual nature of performance through its various iterative appearances: plans, scores, experiences, documents, and memories. Each becoming is a transitional process. Such an approach rejects the fixity implied in the word being. Becoming opens processes to the past and the future, as Elizabeth Grosz explains in the introduction to her edited book *Becomings* (Grosz 1999, 15–28). Appearance as becoming can offer an ontology of performance rooted in performance itself.

The way performance becomes and appears is not only visual. It is multisensory, cognitive, affective, spiritual, and charged with memory. These kinds of becomings and appearances have been called "forms" in art history. In the mode of appearance as becoming, form is not only a result of creative forces but also a part of those forces. In this perspective, form aligns itself to a particular manifestation of an artwork and virtual counterparts. Form is therefore multiple as it is located in the present of the artwork but not separated from the past through memory and the future through desire. This multiplicity is the immanent temporality of form including present, past, and future. The present form is continuous with past and future forms.

Form is in and of the document and the performance. In *The Life of Forms in Art*, the French art historian Henri Focillon argues for a reconceiving of art history that identifies form as living (Focillon 1948, 33). Because Focillon theorizes a vitalism at the core of art history, which responds to Platonic antitheatricality by taking appearances seriously, his framework is useful for live art historiography. Following Balzac, Focillon writes that "Life is form, and form is the modality of life" (Focillon 1948, 33). The book never pins down a singular definition of form. Form translates into a plethora of scenes, and like theatre/archaeology what this nebulousness makes possible is an approach to art history that takes change to be fundamental: "Art begins with transmutation and continues with metamorphosis" (Focillon 1948, 169). Form is what goes on living, is what remains, because it continues to change. In Focillon's view, form is prehistory and it is inescapable. But this is not deterministic, because form is life, so it moves, changes, and even acts: "Man works on himself. But he does not, it is true, rid himself of the age-old deposits laid down by time, and they are something that must be accounted for. What they constitute is a tonality, rather than an armature or a foundation" (Focillon 1948, 142). Focillon accounts for the interpenetration of the past and the present, specifically as the past creating the conditions for the present as opposed to determining it through causality. The agency of the artist remains intact, empowered by history.

With the artist's work, the life of forms breathes through each painting, performance, and document. As Focillon notes, "A score of experiments, be they recent or forthcoming, are invariably interwoven behind the well-defined evidence of the image" (Focillon 1948, 41). Here form is in the realm of the barely visible. It is not only already there but also waiting to happen. Form is the document of the performance that has yet to be imagined, but form is also in the tendencies that will lead to performance. Form is what allows the painting to create space (Focillon 1948, 65). In live art, form is what allows performance to create time. Focillon indicates that seeing art in this way cancels any sense of static images: "Form is always, not the desire for action, but action itself" (Focillon 1948, 119). Art as action accounts for its creative relations with time and space. Art in this way is not about allowing agency, but perhaps becomes agency itself. Performance makes time; this is one manifestation of its temporal specificity. Becomings of form are temporal creations.

Form may manifest as action in performance documents as well. Imagine you tell a story about your childhood, holding the actual object the story involves, showing the scar left by the moment. The life of forms for this performance suggests several sets of documents. One set might transcribe the spoken words of the story while another set gives a prompt to tell a story about your childhood in which you show an object that gave you a scar and then you show the scar. There are many other ways such a performance could be documented, and any will in some way provide access to the past through memory.

Those different kinds of documents lead to new interpretations that would each preserve different aspects of the original performance. Each one would also substitute something entirely new, as the framework of Joseph Roach's surrogates expresses. What documentation of performance proves here is less that performance is not authentic and more that it works through alteration. As Heathfield explains, "the multiple lives of performance, dissected, represented, re-performed [suggest] that one of performance's most consistent and recurring conditions is *transformation*" (Heathfield, in Jones and Heathfield 2012, 32). The disappearance of the live through writing indicates the creation of a new appearance in writing. The reenactment substitutes locational context but creates a congruent dramaturgical form. Each one maintains the life of forms, and each one is an appearance that becomes. Even disappearance is a kind of becoming.

David Williams writes that "appearances, like love, can be transformative becomings" (Williams, in Christie, Gough, and Watt 2006, 105). Williams here is working through Phelan's logic of love to carve out, through writing, a space of appearance for performance. The immediacy of these becomings substantiates their reality and at the same time reduces them to a factor of the ongoing processes of transformation. They are neither eternal nor ephemeral because of memory. Each becoming brings about and is brought about by movement.

In the 2007 book *Theatres of Thought: Theatre, Performance and Philosophy*, edited by Daniel Watt and Daniel Meyer-Dinkgrafe, Laura Cull and Matthew Goulish compose a performed document called "A Dialogue on Becoming." Beginning with a particular anecdote about how identity is a part of theatre company Goat Island's working process, they arrive at a central idea, that "[a] performer is becoming" (Cull and Goulish, in Watt and Mayer-Dinkgrafe 2007, 56). Identity is not fixed. It is constantly being made. It requires continuous analysis because it is always becoming. For Cull and Goulish, the work of Goat Island resists ontological, archival, mediatized-based and reenactment-based thinking about what performance is and does: "All the different beings, identities and entities we conceive in conscious experience are but the effects of a primary, universal becoming" (56). Manifestations are the particulars and specifics that will again be renewed.

For Cull and Goulish, becoming is based on a process inseparable from two phenomena: moment and movement (61). The immediacy of performance is contestable but irreducible. It does happen in time and of duration, but time here is something mobile. Becoming depends on these processes, and these processes depend on becoming. While these ideas developed out of their working processes, notably their practice of creative response, Cull and Goulish admit that finding the temporal philosophy of Henri Bergson gave them a framework within which to reference their intuitions. Specifically referring to Bergson's *Matter and Memory* (1912), Goulish writes, "the notion of identity as becoming, it seems to me now, comes to us via this understanding of perception and memory" (Cull and Goulish, in Watt and Meyer-Dinkgrafe 2007, 61). As will be shown toward the end of this text, Bergson's writing on memory opens up a productive relationship between the past and the present through matter and memory.

The Double Archive: Experiences and Memories

Published between and to a certain extent bridging the central ideas of Phelan's *Unmarked* and Schneider's *Performing Remains* is Diana Taylor's 2003 book *The Archive and the Repertoire: Cultural Memory and Performance in the Americas*. Like Schneider, Taylor finds that performance is repeated continually as an operation inherent within culture: "The repertoire . . . enacts embodied memory . . . all those acts usually thought of as ephemeral, nonreproducible knowledge" (Taylor 2003, 20). She suggests the repertoire has a relationship to the archive that is symbiotic. Taylor maintains that writing and performance are not "binaries" or "sequential," in which one process causes another (Taylor 2003, 22). She insists that what is performed from the archive and how its contents are valued are different throughout time, reinforcing the belief in the archive's stability but introducing change to its reception, an idea both Jones and Schneider will return to. Whether one believes the archive or the repertoire to be more significant, Taylor asserts that it has always been the case that "writing was far more dependent on embodied culture for transmission than the other way around" (Taylor 2003, 17).

Attending to the relation of performance and archives is Gunhild Borggreen and Rune Gade's 2013 collection *Performing Archives/Archives of Performance*. This nearly five hundred-page collection of essays again takes up the notion of ontological disappearance via Phelan, but with a different approach to that taken by *Perform Repeat Record*. Where Jones and Heathfield's book addressed historiography, Borggreen and Gade's collection "proposes a twofold movement of ongoing and mutual interaction" between performance and archives (Borggreen and Gade 2013, 10). The book is notable for its diversity of theoretical approaches, such as Heike Roms' astute essay "Archiving Legacies: Who Cares for Performance Remains?" In this essay Roms thinks through the archive for its practices of caring for long durations, as "one documents a piece of work, but one archives a body of work" (Roms, in Borggreen and Gade 2013, 36). The book as a whole is also significant for its delicate treatment of how a kind of archival turn may currently be taking place in practices from performance to visual art and curation.

Using the terms of performance in a manner like the selection of volumes from an archive, Joseph Roach provides yet another analysis of performance as it presents itself to the future in his 1996 book *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance*:

> The process of trying out various candidates in different situations—the doomed search for originals by continuously auditioning stand-ins—is the most important of the many meanings users intend when they use the word *performance*. . . . Performance, in other words, stands in for an elusive entity that it is not but that it must vainly aspire both to embody and to replace. (Roach 1996, 3–4)

Roach prosaically explains here that there is always a doubleness, at least, to the operations of performance. This definition offers a framework for a longer life of performance beyond the present. Roach shows how memory is not inert in the action of performance. As Jean Baudrillard writes in his 1981 book *Simulacra and Simulation*, memories of performance, as reenactments and as documents, are copies of a copy, simulacra, because there is no original.

It may be that Baudrillard's theory of simulacra finds an excellent example in the conception that documentation and reenactment are not less truthful than performance because the experience itself is not without its own set of precursors. As Schneider puts it, "in performance *as* memory, the pristine self-sameness of an 'original,' an artifact so valued by the archive, is rendered impossible—or, if you will, mythic" (Schneider 2011, 100). Phelan too does not

proceed without admitting the link, explaining that the "document of a performance then is only a spur to memory, an encouragement of memory to become present" (Phelan 1993, 146).

Returning to Heathfield and Quick's introduction to their edition of *Performance Research,* "On Memory," they note there that: "Just as performance is a vital component in the operation of memory, remembering and forgetting are crucial dynamics in the make-up of performance" (Heathfield and Quick 2000, 1). Memory is a crucial part of the reality of performance beyond its representational aspects because it aims attention toward specific becomings and forgets others. Likewise, as necessary as memory is for making the performance it is also a part of observing it: "Performance, like the traumatic event, can exceed its spectator's understanding and consequently set in play the need for its repetition through memory, language and representation" (Heathfield and Quick 2000, 3). Trauma is substantiated over a longer duration than experience itself. The continuity of these kinds of memory creates an excess of affect. Through this continuity countless repetitions are possible. There is a multiplicity to memory. It performs a past in the present. This multiplicity gives way to another, the double of memory shaping performance from behind and repeating it forward.

This points to a pivotal question at the heart of how to document performance: the question of scope. For example, is a performance enacting or reenacting an artist's intention, visual shape, or narrative content? What kinds of documents would leave traces of each? Surely documents of performance need be as multiple as performance itself in which different perspectives accumulate toward its wholeness. Another question of scale, as it refers to the position from which the work is viewed, is what role do documents cast the viewer into: audience or artist? How the document configures remembrance of performance is essential for a comprehensive history of performance. That experience and memory are multiplicities leads to the position that documentation also should manifest as a multiplicity. It will offer the fullest memory of performance if it channels several, sometimes contradictory, scales of experiencing performance.

Document Memory and Vital Materialism

Claims of a binary existing between writing and performance collapse under not only the weight of memory but also of time. Stuart Brisley corrects any misconceptions about performance documents lasting forever: "The issue is not one of the ephemeral versus the permanent. Nothing is forever. It is the question of the relative durations of the impermanent" (Brisley, in Jones and Heathfield 2012, 30). Taking account of other durations beyond human scales makes the fragility, or temporariness, of appearances visible. For example, it is only from an anthropocentric perspective that photographs do not visibly decay. Temporality reveals that both performance and documentation are temporary. The repertoire may continue long after the walls of the archive have been reduced to dust. Memory allows access to the past. Performance is unimaginable without some memory. Memory's various repetitions through different moments and media are constitutive of the transformational process of appearances constantly becoming. Specific manifestations will, as in Roach's definition of performance, substitute various stand-ins for the role, but later memory might forgo the role and perform the stand-in. The purposefully unauthentic aesthetic of theatre/archaeology seems to paradoxically return reliability to performance. The memory persists because it appears, disappears, remains, is reenacted, archived, and performed. Memory, like performance, appears.

As Matthew Reason suggests, "ideas of time are central within discourses of documentation," because performance only disappears if time is represented as a spatial line, a discrete succession of moments (Reason 2006, 210). When the past and present are constantly interpenetrating, through memory, it is very difficult to remain confident that disappearance will not soon give

way to another different appearance. Of course, it is possible to imagine any number of performances that may have completely disappeared if the people who once remembered them have now forgotten or are dead. It is also likely that some effect of this hypothetical performance memory would influence future action unconsciously through habit.

For philosopher Henri Bergson there is recollection and habit memory, and for him memory appears when the action in the present necessitates knowledge of the past. The appearance in the document itself has temporal orders and its own duration. It has a duration of apprehension that depends on use and obsolescence. When the document begins to fade, it is disappearing. When the document suddenly is used for reenactment, as Auslander suggests, the resulting performance might have more integrity to the documentation than the previously documented performance (Auslander 2006, 2). The document does have its own power over the living memory of performance. Performance documents have a spirit, if for no other reason than they can never be complete.

The vitality of documents might be theorized through the work of Jane Bennett. In her 2010 book *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, Bennett identifies the way non-human entities act in political events. In a move that mirrors the trends of posthumanism by brilliant thinkers such as Rosi Braidotti, Bennett offers a materialism with vitality, by which she means "the capacity of things . . . to act . . . as forces with trajectories, propensities, or tendencies of their own" (Bennett 2010, viii). Bennett's work is especially significant because it allows performance studies to take account of the vitality of objects of performance documentation in a shift that might do away with stultifying binaries. Bennett's work also speaks to how performing and writing might take place. Is not her question "how to describe without thereby erasing the independence of things?" after all a parallel interrogation of the potential power of visibility through writing that Phelan was concerned with in *Unmarked* (Bennett 2010, xiii)? If Phelan was questioning whether certain kinds of writing might betray performance, Bennett's framework offers a way to see "events as encounters between ontologically diverse actants, some human, some not, though all thoroughly material" (Bennett 2010, xiv). In the vital materialist mode both performance and documentation are intertwined in a greater ecology of transformation.

Time-Specificity

Transformation is driven by the constant becoming of difference that is at the core of duration. Time-specificity of performance defines temporality as duration and develops concepts of lived experience from this perspective. It arises therefore out of the philosophy of Bergson and artists such as Tehching Hsieh, Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša, and Every House Has a Door. While Bergson in *Matter and Memory* seeks to overcome the metaphysical problems of dualism by determining the connection between *l'esprit* (mind) and *corps* (body) as not a question of where but when, a when that is memory, each of the three groups of artists develop modes of documentation as a generative constraint. The same qualities of attention given to composition of performance are devoted toward documents. Tehching Hsieh and Adrian Heathfield's 2009 book *Out of Now: The Lifeworks of Tehching Hsieh*, for example, shows every still image from the strip of film Hsieh used to photograph himself, one frame at a time, every hour of a year from 1980–1981. The performance produced this document, which can be displayed as a sequence of still images or as a six-minute film.

In my own practice as research that has developed as a critical and creative response to Bergson and these artists (see Wakefield 2014), I have explored how each act of artistic creation might be continuous with the same tendencies that drive evolution, or what Bergson calls *élan vital* (vital impetus). In *Three*, the last in a trilogy of works responding to Hsieh, Janša, Janša, Janša, and

Every House Has a Door, I attempted to adapt to the conditions of the theatre as if it were an environment. An ongoing illness impaired the physical abilities that I had made use of for the previous works. The solution I relied on was to fold memories from my personal life into the composition of the performance in the same way I had previously done with certain demanding physical techniques such as slow-motion movement or tennis choreography, the intention being to make visible the past that was being made present. However, the personal memories were displaced, not explained or given context. For example, I performed a very simple magic trick that friends of mine have seen countless times. In *Three* the trick became a part of a moment exploring the concept of a "pre-performance," or a work that is being gestured toward in a present but cannot be performed presently. The pre-performance would be magical, dangerous (wielding a sharp knife), and composed (holding a piece of paper containing the score of the performance). Thus the third performance maintained the sense from the previous works that a regular and processual practice had gone into the making of the work. An evolution had taken place that allowed me to perform that day, but the adaptations included not only deliberate practice of a certain kind of moving but also conceptual organization. I could not have avoided adapting to the environment of the theatre because the time of the performance was continuous with the time of my body, its illness, and therefore the very materials of evolution. Now that I have reached a stage of remission with this illness, future iterations of *Three* would need to be altered.

The implication of this continuity is that thinking theory and doing practice, performance and documentation, caring for the archive, and any act of memory are all becomings of a heterogeneous assemblage of forces. If I attempt to in any way advance an argument with this text, it would be that taking account of temporality as a force prompts the creation of new relations between elements of practice that enable creative freedom through constraint.

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