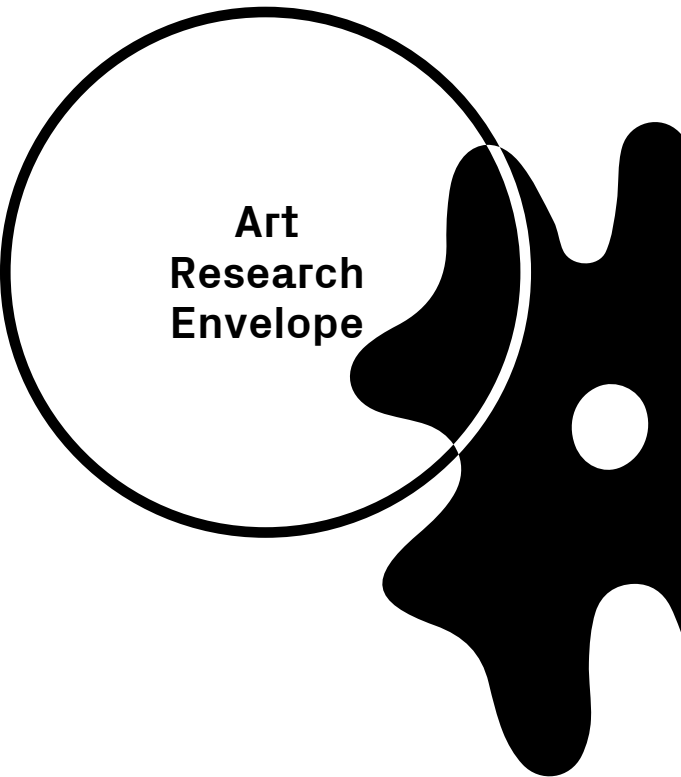


DARK SPECTRUM OF LIGHT
 PORTAL
 WORKING CLASS
 ARCHIVE
 ETHICS
 RESPOND
 SIMULATION
 DIFFRACTION
 SONIC MEDIA
 WORLD(BUILD)ING
 critical distance
 role of researcher
 role of technology

Circling
 participation
 collective bodies
 care snow
 VERBAL / NON-VERBAL
 HOMEEMOHO
 FUTURE
 NOW
 Tension
 circulation
 Togetherness
 Marginalized contexts
 ARBITRARY
 FICTIONAL
 PERSONAL
 symbiotic ritual
 affectivity
 killing process (ceremony)

Milieu
 Wildness
 Umwelt
 horrible mood
 workflow
 documentation
 collaboration
 symbiosis
 model
 discipline
 organism
 aesthetico-logic
 Construct
 Physically
 World-Making
 Multiperspectivity

“#5” is the fifth issue of an open format documenting relevant developments in the field of art and research, published by Zentrum Fokus Forschung.



Intro: Art Research Envelope #5

The White Space Between Our Words

It is this dizzying emptiness that awakens the tormenting desire to know, that brings on labour pains.

Sarah Kofman, *Beyond Aporia?*

It all goes to-gether and doesn't require that we try to improve it or feel our inferiority or superiority to it.

John Cage, *Silence*.



Meandering

The following text attempts to notate one of our meandering conversations. We get lost and find ourselves in territories unforeseen – matching the diverse approaches to topics, matters, and methods in the PhD in Art programme. Such processes of loss and re-orientation bring with them the danger of aporia. They can be difficult, painful and may require mediation, mitigation, or midwifery, as Sarah Kofman indicates. John Cage's writings have accompanied us for many years. The openness that Cage formulates is contagious. This openness, however, has nothing to do with indecisiveness or passivity. Instead, it speaks to the artist's work and the relationship between potential, dizziness, and certainty in artistic and (artistic-) research work processes. Last year we spoke with Tim Etchells, the English playwright, performer, and visual artist, for our sound installation and podcast *On Certain Groundlessness*. We asked him how he navigates through the uncertainty of co-creative artistic (-research) work.

Tim's Answer

“One of the things we learned is [to understand] the temptation to look at the improvisational tapes, the re-

cordings and say, “we like that bit, and we like that bit” and we make a performance that combines all the good bits. The problem is that it's not working because what you miss is all the labor and all the time that was spent getting from this first beautiful moment to the second beautiful moment. The integrity of the second moment is built upon the struggle that takes place between these two. It is deeply, deeply connected, and what we learn is: when we are scoring the improvisational moments we need some of the noise in place. We need to leave it in places and times where we are not quite getting it because that guarantees the relationship; that is the conversation.”

The Milieu and the Nomad

In terms of getting somewhere, maybe a state of mind, to ... perhaps a space of imagination: where does this conversation take place, or what kind of images come to our minds when we bring up the word *milieu*?

Crossing the Sahara, we ponder: is it the largest desert or simply a very large and well-known one? The well-known, whether as a concept or geography, instantly appears to be closer, larger, and more significant. As soon as a distance to the familiar and habitual is introduced, other perspectives and approaches emerge—twisted, subversive reflections, shattered fragmentations that coalesce and transform our recollections of the once familiar. “Wonder is study. Curiosity is attentive.” writes Katherine McKittrick. The nomad travels in search of fertile grounds.

So which milieu does artistic research need?

Milieu invokes ecologies of the animate and inanimate, human and more-than-human elements and multitudes. It reminds us of N. Kathrine Hayes' notion of *distributed cognition*, which means “the embodied subject is embedded and immersed in environments that function as distributed cognitive systems.” Artist-researchers need a humus that nurtures, develops, clarifies, or composts topics and practices, matter, focus, and energy. It supports artist-researchers to venture into the unknown or not-yet-fully-known. This humus can develop a community of practice with peers and supervisors, allowing for artistic and intellectual stimulation and exchange or, conversely, withdrawing, taking a break, and reflecting. In philosopher Marcus Steinweg's words: “Turbulence is part and parcel of thinking. The subject is dizzied. Sometimes it crashes. No thinking without risks. The most dangerous option is not

always the best one. The altogether safe one, meanwhile, is not one. What philosophy shares with art is that they hazard the venture of not knowing.” A fertile milieu enables us to endure and investigate turbulent territories.

What Brings Radicality and Risk in Balance?

Through our journeys, we leave traces. Together we create conditions that develop into determinations of conditions, through movements, touches, and stories and their many preliminary stages. It is always exciting to search for remnants where past determinations are still being held, as a treasure or legacy, which also lie hidden in milieus. Traveling, we take risks. Through the adventure of not-knowing, these risks grow, together with the important question of how much risk is bearable ... With the programme, and formats such as *Envelope*, we create a framework to navigate such risks. A milieu creates conditions for questions or reveals what is in question. Perhaps a milieu merely summarizes or coalesces conditions; allows us to become aware of its constitution without determinative. (And: Isn't it interesting that “determining” is practiced in the field of biology, but if one is determined by something, it becomes the subject of political science?) Advocating for indeterminacy seems necessary in this regard, as a matter of keeping things open, i.e., not allowing precise definitions. The *Envelope* requires a detachment to embrace the multiplicity. How exciting to call this approach nomadic, especially since it enables us to roam space and time ...

Starting a PhD in Art project, or any artistic or research endeavor, requires subjecting oneself to a space of suspension. We need to venture into the unknown, create a path through uncharted territories. How shall we proceed on such unstable grounds?

Facing the unknown indeed requires collaboration, rigor, determination, creativity, and strength. It includes finding a way to “give name to the nameless so it can be thought,” with Audre Lorde, and to express the yet unknown, what lies in the shadows or has not yet taken shape. Creating from the unknown also requires the long and disciplined challenge to form and formulate the potential findings and reflections, for scientists, as well as for artists and artist-researchers. The difference, according to Rebecca Solnit, is that scientists strive to “transform the unknown into the known, haul it in like fishermen; artists get you out into that dark sea.” Artistic research allows for both experiential and reflective modes of perceiving, understanding, and communicating. It is a field rich with potential and possibility.

So, Understanding Entails Keeping Things Risky and Open?

“The great image has no form,” insists philosopher François Jullien. “The image or great work has no form exactly because it is not limited by one single form. It stays within the compossible, on this ground/foundation (*foncier*), which can't be split into opposites and therefore is apt to expansion.”

We can interpret this in the following sense: an artwork, which claims to be finished, is dead, lifeless, to the artist who created it. All interest lies in this moment of the “just before,” when the artwork lingers in the realm of non-separation and elementary ambiguity. We remain at this stage of the compossible, which is potentiality not yet defined, formed, or limited. Staying a nomad, in motion, in flux, in learning mode, is, on the one hand, a challenging part and, on the other hand, a rewarding aspect of artistic research. In this process, in the moments in which new openings and possibilities emerge again and again, we can get lost easily, or we think ourselves lost, or having abandoned a set goal. We understand all these moments of loss as simultaneously active and passive. When dizzy, we lose our balance, consider ourselves lost, lose control, focus, and orientation, and reach out for whatever promises us equilibrium. Regaining balance can be facilitated through social encounters, collaborations, works of art, theories, or even walks or travelling. However, achieving somatic, social, emotional, or metaphorical balance always requires action. It is not a passive condition: balancing is something we need to do and make happen. We are in balance far less often than we believe. The desire to know or understand something, for example, will, metaphorically, throw us off balance. However, this state of imbalance constitutes a fertile, albeit uncomfortable, condition or milieu.

“The sharing of ideas (no beginnings, no ends) enables a terrain of struggle, through which different futures are imagined.” Katherine McKittrick

We return to the milieu, the condition, the struggle. Which conditions? Perhaps this is not so much about system, rather than a dynamic milieu, about “staying in motion,” being on the move. To move can also mean: to lose.

We can lose many things: Orientation, focus, beloved ones, flora and fauna, or accustomed climatic conditions ... let's think about landscapes and environmental change. Solastalgia, a neologism that describes our

feelings of loss – a loss of natural milieus that has become prevalent, at the latest, with the Anthropocene. In the context of human-made change, every path could become a trace, every trace a change, and every change a loss, possibly. We may experience this when a glacier retreats from the Austrian mountains inch by inch, or calves dissolve into the Arctic Ocean, when a mountain slides, or a forest burns ... One must take it seriously. Different forms of silence prevail, and we must remember the deictic qualities imprinted on its manifestations, the imprinted signs of silence. Art, above all, has the possibility of shaping such silence and its communicative qualities. Communication remains the very fabric of society, and we approach it transformatively, intervene in and for its future through art and the method of using silence as a special tool.

What if silence loses its transformative capabilities and becomes a curtailment or burden? As a field of potential, artistic research can also be approached as a way of escaping the silencing of artists. It emancipates artists to investigate, synthesize, interpret and communicate their findings. As part of this process, we try to wrest words, forms, formats, communicative and relational material from the non-said, the non-formulated. And not everything needs to be moulded into words. In his *Poetics Lectures*, however, Max Frisch states at the very beginning: “What is important is what cannot be said, the white space between the words. The words themselves always express the incidents, which is not what we really mean. What we are really concerned with can only, at best, be written about, and that means, quite literally, we write around it. We encompass it. We make statements which never contain the whole true experience: that cannot be described. All the statements can do is to encircle it, as tightly and closely as possible: the true, the inexpressible experience emerges at best as the tension between these statements. What we are presumably striving to do is to state everything that is capable of expression. Language is like a chisel, which pares away all that is not a mystery, and everything said implies a taking away.”

In artistic research, we combine the movements of impulse, imagination, and inquiry or research to “encompass,” as Frisch calls it. We know what is said, formed, created, is a perspective and will perhaps elude us anew. Remaining in the open and finding an apposite form are movements of finding liminal equilibrium that accompany every process and shall not be viewed as oppositional.

This *Envelope* provides an outlook across the sea of knowns and unknowns that candidates from the PhD in Art programme explore, and so does the cover image that highlights keywords from their respective artistic research projects. Esteemed readers, we hope you will join them and enjoy venturing out to sea in this year's edition.

Ruth Anderwald + Leonhard Grond, Alexander Damianisch

References

- Anderwald, Ruth; Feyertag, Karoline; Grond, Leonhard (eds.) (2019): *Dizziness—A Resource*. Berlin: Sternberg Press. URL: <https://doi.org/10.21937/9783956795213>.
- Etchells, Tim in conversation with Anderwald, Ruth; Grond, Leonhard; Sergio Edelzstein (2023): *On Certain Groundlessness*. Immersive sound installation and podcast, Oh WOW! productions. (forthcoming)
- Frisch, Max (1985): *Lecture at City College, November 1981*. Part One. Translated by Lore Segal. In: *Fiction*, Volume 7/3 and Volume 8/1.
- Hayes, N. Kathrine (2017): *Unthought, The Power of the Cognitive Nonconscious*. Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Jullien, François (2015): 'In Conversation with François Jullien: Making Ambiguity Fertile is the Present Mission of Thought. Interview with Karoline Feyertag'. In: Anderwald, Ruth; Feyertag, Karoline; Grond, Leonhard (eds.): *Dizziness—A Resource*. URL: https://arepository.akbild.ac.at/view.php?uid=11049&t=3c2403118ba5d429971b190c982658cd&org=/eyebase.data/dokumente/1024/11/00023693_m.pdf.
- Kofman, Sarah (1983/1988): 'Beyond Aporia?'. In: Benjamin, Andrew (ed.): *Post-structuralist Classics*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Lorde, Audre (1985): 'Poetry Is Not a Luxury.' Reading 62. In: Shaw, Susan M.: *Women's Voices, Feminist Visions: Classic and Contemporary Readings*. 5th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2012. URL: <https://makinglearning.files.wordpress.com/2014/01/poetry-is-not-a-luxury-audre-lorde.pdf>.
- Lorey, Isabell (2015): *State of Insecurity*. London: Verso Books.
- McKittrick, Katherine (2021): *Dear Science and Other Stories*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Steinweg, Marcus (2022): *Turbulence*. URL: <https://www.on-dizziness.com/resources-overview/turbulence>.
- Wenger, Etienne (1998): *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

List of participating projects

- Margit Busch: A garden for a fish, Supervisor: Virgil Widrich
- Andrew Champlin: Technique Concerns: Ballet Practice Against the Western Archive, Supervisors: Ruth Anderwald + Leonhard Grond
- George Demir: Ancestral Junctures: On the expansion of ancestral mythologies, Supervisor: Hans Schabus
- Cristiana de Marchi: Casting a shadow. On disappearance, emptiness and the haunting power of absence, Supervisor: Judith Eisler
- Jošt Franko: The Migrating Image, Supervisor: Gerhild Steinbuch
- Barbara Graf: Stitches and Sutures, Supervisor: Barbara Putz-Plecko
- Joseph Leung: Post-digital Angst - An Arts-Based Research on the Manifestations of Angst in the Digital Milieu, Supervisor: Gabriele Rothemann
- Conny Zenk: RAD Performance – Driving Voices of Resistance, Supervisor: Ruth Schnell

Credits (projects)

As detailed on the individual project posters

Imprint and Details (Cover)

University of Applied Arts Vienna
Zentrum Fokus Forschung
Oskar-Kokoschka-Platz 2
A-1010 Vienna
www.dieangewandte.at
zentrumfokusforschung.uni-ak.ac.at

Publication Team: Ruth Anderwald + Leonhard Grond, Alexander Damianisch, Wera Hipperrother
Proofreading: Melanie Sindelar
Graphic Design Publication: HammerAlbrecht, Nestroyplatz 1/3/34, 1020 Vienna, hello@hammeralbrecht.design

Special Thanks to the Supervisors of the Artistic Research PhD Programme.
Vienna, 2023.

ISBN: 978-3-9505090-2-1
ISSN: 2960-4818 (Print), 2960-480X (Online)



Envelope in RC



read issue 5 online



Chapter One

Squaring-off technique: Lunging against the wall



Parallel

I place my hands flat against the wall
Tilt my pelvis back,
lengthening my spine in two directions
Seek one heel back in space
and place it on the earth

Push between my front foot
and
back foot
equally
Transferring energy from down into
earth up into pelvic floor

hips meet like eyes
a pair seeking connection

Lifting it up
circling around
and dropping the pelvis down

Through my feet and into the earth



I expand my hands against the wall,
Lover.
I stretch my feet wide against the earth,
Lover.

The space between my legs is great
I spread out my toes
Press my skin
Hands and feet
Hips and shoulders

Cushions between

I am the earth
I am the wall
I am the cell
The life that is
shared between the earth and the wall
energy exceeds my shape
I could take flight
the earth and me

Squaring is not boxy work.

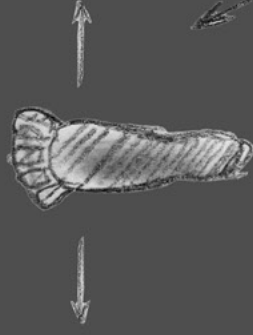
Andrew Champlin,
6:23 pm, March 27, 2023

Perspective: An amazing
calve stretch. Feet are
parallel and both knees
track forward in
alignment with the
center of each foot. Heels
touch and press into the
floor.

Explore: Try tucking
your pelvis, and you
might feel a hip flexor
stretch as well as a calve
stretch. There are two
ways to stretch the calf
muscles, by switching
anchor points in the foot
(1 and 4, and 2 and 3).
Try both sides and see
how they are different.

Passing wisdom: A
very wise teacher
once told me that
while strengthening
and stretching the
body, imagine a
flower inside your
mouth in full
bloom.

Passing wisdom:
Push from the
strength in your
back, directly
into hands. Start
gently and
increase with
ease.



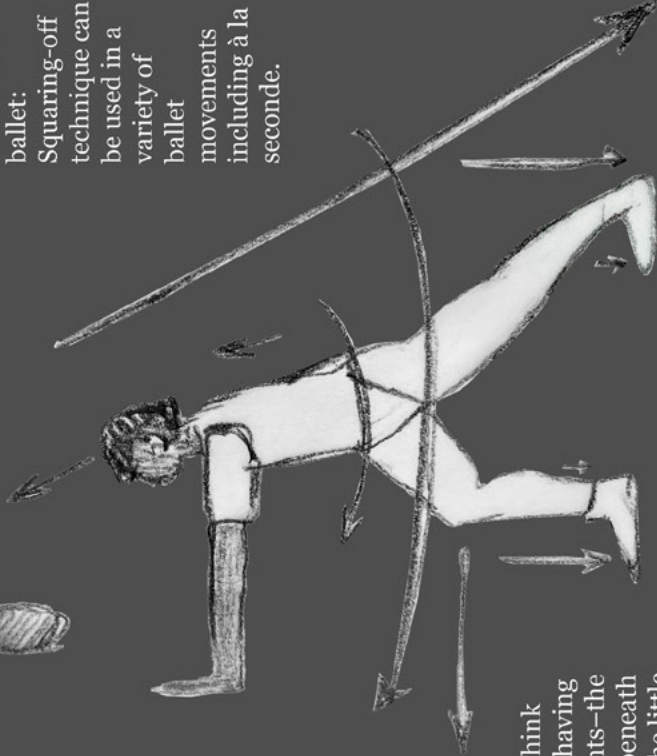
Points of foot: Think
about each foot having
four special points—the
ball of the foot beneath
the big toe (1), the little
toe (2), and each side of
the heel, the inside (3),
and the outside (4).
Distribute your weight
over the four points
equally, sending your
weight down through
them against the lift of
the center of your head
towards the sky.

On force: Increase
when equal.



I could be wrong:
Squaring-off my
shoulders and hips to
the wall makes me feel
purposeful, like I am a
pilot, and I am landing
the plane smoothly on
earth for the safety of
all on board.

Relation to
ballet:
Squaring-off
technique can
be used in a
variety of
ballet
movements
including à la
seconde.



Squaring-off technique: Lunging against the wall

Chapter One

Self-Interview

Andrew Champlin on his research project, *Technique Concerns: Ballet Practice Against the Western Archive*

March 27, 2023

Are you surprised to be on the path of a PhD in artistic research and what brought you here?

When I started dancing, I could not have imagined I would pursue a doctorate degree, especially because in the United States, where I come from, a Master of Fine Arts is the terminal degree for dance in higher education. The idea came about decades later, after migrating to Europe, and taking account of the accumulation of my experiences learning, creating, performing, and teaching movement. I have always been inspired by artists who cross disciplinary lines and I see my presence in academia as a crossing that will broaden my understanding of my art and my capacity to share those perspectives with other people.

Why is artistic research of interest to you?

I am compelled by the notion of transdisciplinary strategies in art and education. I am interested in the connection between the body, bodies, and the environment. The place where alternative directions meet. I want to know how others see things, especially artists. Artistic research and being peers with artists coming from diverse practices allows me to understand knowledge as something more intimately experienced and circulated. I think creative research can be symbiotic with academic scholarship, help refine theories of knowledge and challenge outmoded conventions.

What is the general area and aim of your artistic research?

I am interested in the murky spaces of embodied knowledge, contemporary aesthetics, and movement authorship and the potential of my experience as a body-crafts-person to enliven conversations about ephemeral art and culture.

How is movement coming into your research as a theme?

Connecting movement to thought is beauty in an everyday type of feeling. Being present in my body as a collection of experiences and aesthetic rhythms allows me to draw structures from a moving set of meanings. Amplifying recognitions or knowledge that might have been mere tiny feelings allows me to play with the scale of attention and recreate phenomena that might have been previously mute. For years, I have been mentored by a woman who is so expert at bringing minute details about movement to the attention of large groups of people in her teaching. Of course, this is possible in performance, but I am also interested in the way movement is called upon as a conduit for thinking and feeling simultaneously in educational settings where spectatorship is less at stake than processes of becoming knowledgeable about one's body. The way in which embodied knowledge extends out and makes connections into the world, in terms of aesthetics and ethics, is also an important thing to talk about when we talk about movement techniques.

More specifically, what is the topic of your research?

My research examines ways in which ballet is a flexible art form that can be taught through experimental approaches that test the limits of historical practice and classical representation.

What are people discussing regarding ballet pedagogy these days?

Research on ballet goes in a couple of different genre directions. There are iconic memoirs that give readers intimate portraits of life experiences inside the world of ballet, and there are perspectives published in more sports science and dance studies literature about training and performance. Significantly, renewed conversations about ballet culture and the urgency of reflecting on colonial conventions are creating change in ballet and other Eurocentric art forms in terms of practice and theory. Through intimate dialogues and social media, I have sensed a lot of reflection going on about how certain standards and ideals are embedded into contemporary social spaces vis-à-vis the interface of artistic practice and institutions. Since the pandemic and the rise of the Black Lives Matters movement, there has been a fresh wave of anti-racist and feminist discourse connected to professionalized ballet, especially in the United States. There is exciting work going on in the field that corresponds to reimagining institutional structures to align more with queer notions of belonging in the world, or at least to acknowledge different points of view when it comes to self-cultivation and performance.

What roles do reflection and theorization play in your artistic work?

Practices of reflection, looking back in time, inward to the body, and exchanging perspectives gives me information to reimagine what else could be in the culture surrounding the art form that I love. My intention with the PhD is to practice the labor of translating bodily meaning to other cultures of meaning and interpreting that choreography by articulating a critical stance. When I entered university, I was reflecting on my departure from a ballet career due to an injury. At that time, I didn't have a language to describe my embodied sensibility, but through proximity to mentors, I found theorization to be a strong partner to creativity. Several years ago, I decided to integrate my interest in ballet into research environments by teaching, which blended aspects of my postmodern and contemporary dance education with social sciences and theories of culture. I choose to think about ballet as being more expansive than an art form. In fact, I am rather interested in the elasticity of the form. My experience with ballet has been accompanied by experiences of seeing and practicing other art forms, collaborating with artists of varied disciplines and demographics, and learning somatic methods that have much less to do with displaying the body than with experiencing the depth of our human structures and expressing the need for connection.

You are at the beginning of a long process. What is your current sense of the big picture for the project?

My doctoral project is a self-reflexive theory of counter-cultural ballet practice, which will take the form of a queer manual of ballet technique. I will examine art and education discourses. Although my project is self-reflective, there are many voices I wish to explore. Through the process, I am moved to expand my artistic practice and integrate media, representation, and communication from visual arts. The other side of this exposé is an example of my ongoing work visualizing experiences of the body and knowledge transmission processes.



The project *Stitches and Sutures* explores ways to visualize physical sensations. Since lived experiences evade visual representation, their visualization requires some kind of vehicle. In search of images, its subjects are conspicuous bodily sensations that deviate from a “normal” bodily perception. These are self-experienced sensory disturbances caused by multiple sclerosis (MS), such as burning, stinging, trickling, pulling, spasm, hypersensitivity, numbness, standing in water, or the sensation of being wrapped with strange layers. Certain sensations mimic the sensation of touch without being triggered by external stimuli, and evoke an alienness. The sensation of a foreign body being grown together with one’s own, like fibrous tangles or agglomerations (fig. 1), is irritating, because one cannot distinguish whether this tissue is foreign or one’s own.

This text includes short questions, followed by a second sequence of the same letters with short responses.

A: What visual languages do I refer to in order to visualize bodily perception? (Graf, 2021).

B: How does exploring physical sensations affect the emotional experience and the coping with chronic illness?

C: Sensory disorders are often described verbally but rarely visually. How do the images communicate? Do they evoke imaginary corporeal sensations?

D: Which methods do I use to explore lived experiences within my context?

E: What are the possibilities for visually representing physical sensations, and why do they only approximate bodily sensations and require a vehicle for their embodiment? (Graf, 2020).

F: Having produced body sensation images, collecting related embodiments, and categorizing them, the question emerges: does a playful approach provide a new opportunity for interacting and communicating through images?

This playful approach is the focus of this text/image feature. The image panel shows individual images from the collection that others might change or rearrange (including images provided by recipients). The sources of these images are a combination of my own (works before and after MS diagnosis ¹) and those I “found” in the *Kunsthistorisches Museum (KHM)* Vienna. The criteria for the image search included a resemblance with impressions of my sensations, as well their corporeality. Removing a detail from its context might do injustice to the painting, but not necessarily to the detail of its corporeal expression.

Examples: the nebulous and fibrous-fluffy encased hand in Correggio’s painting (fig. 2), a pencil drawing with a fibrous surrounding space (fig. 3), a sculptural hand box (fig. 4), a hand covered with a biomembrane (fig. 4) and a fibrous fabric (fig. 6).



fig. 2, Correggio, *Jupiter and Io* (detail), c. 1530 (KHM)

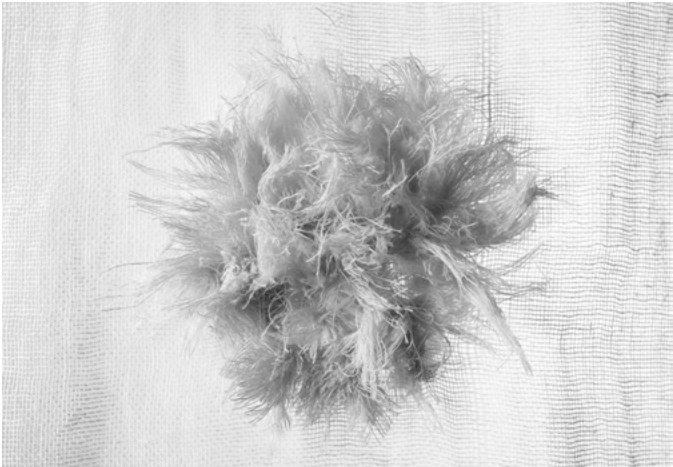


fig. 6, Barbara Graf, *Fibrous Structure*, 2022

¹ In 2017, I was diagnosed with MS. Certain symptoms of the illness are strikingly similar to artistic works I produced before the diagnosis. The strange sensations are caused by the disturbed transmission of the nerves in the central nervous system, and not caused by peripheral nerves, even if they are felt there.

References:

Barbara Graf, *Stitches and Sutures*, in: *Envelope #3*, Alexander Damianisch, Margarete Jahrmann (eds), Zentrum Fokus Forschung, University of Applied Arts Vienna, 2020, n. p., https://publiccolloquium.uni-ak.ac.at/2020/ZFF_ArtResearchEnvelope_3_web.pdf, accessed on 11.03.2023.

Barbara Graf, *Stitches and Sutures: From Physical Sensations to Forms of Perception, Imagination and Representation*, in: *Envelope #4*, Alexander Damianisch, Margarete Jahrmann, Wera Hippersroither, Marianna Mondelos (eds), Zentrum Fokus Forschung, University of Applied Arts Vienna, Research Catalogue, 2021, URL: <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1193650/1264769/0/0>, accessed on 11.03.2023.

Barbara Graf, Patrick Altmann, Henriette Löffler-Stastka, Die subjektive Verarbeitung chronischer Symptome und Schmerz bei Menschen mit Multipler Sklerose: Visualisierung und Externalisierung als Ausdruck der Lebensqualität, in: *psychopraxis.neuropraxis* 25, pp. 107-112, 2022, URL: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00739-022-00779-8>, accessed on 11.03.2023.

Jacques Lacan, “Conférence du Mercredi 11 Mars 1964” (later published in: *Le Séminaire, livre XI*), URL: <https://ecole-lacanienne.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/1964.03.11.pdf>, accessed on 11.03.2023.

Karl-Josef Pazzini, *Bildung vor Bildern: Kunst – Pädagogik – Psychoanalyse*, Bielefeld: Transcript, 2015.

Sources of panel images: *Kunsthistorisches Museum (KHM)* Vienna (details, photos: Barbara Graf): **1_1:** Jacopo Tintoretto, *Susanna Bathing*, c. 1555/56. **1_2:** Garofalo, *The Resurrection of Christ*, 1520. **3_4:** Johann Bocksberger the Elder, *Emperor Ferdinand I*, mid-16th c.. **4_2:** Perugino, *Baptism of Christ*, c. 1498/1500. **4_4:** Correggio, *Jupiter and Io*, c. 1530. **5_1:** Federico Barocci, *Monsignor Giuliano della Rovere*, c. 1595. **5_3:** Peter Paul Rubens, *Assumption of the Virgin Mary*, c. 1611/14-1621. **7_1:** Jacopo Tintoretto, *St. Hieronymus*, c. 1571/75. **8_4:** Caravaggio, *Madonna of the Rosary*, c. 1603.

All other images: 2017-2022, except: **3_3:** 2009, **5_2:** 2012, **6_3:** 2005: Barbara Graf



fig. 4, Barbara Graf, *Hand Box no. 9*, sculpture, 2005

A: Works created before the diagnosis of MS serve as a resource to formulate the strange symptoms. Comparative incidents, such as wearing a glove or sock, result in more narrative formulations. Inspired by visual structures of science and art, I use them as a kind of drawing alphabet. A bacterial cellulose film (SCOBY) serves as a body-imitating membrane. Textile fibres serve as the medium to stitch fibrous sensations. And “found” images from the history of painting provide another way to approach sensations.



fig. 3, Barbara Graf, *Drawing no. 226*, 2020

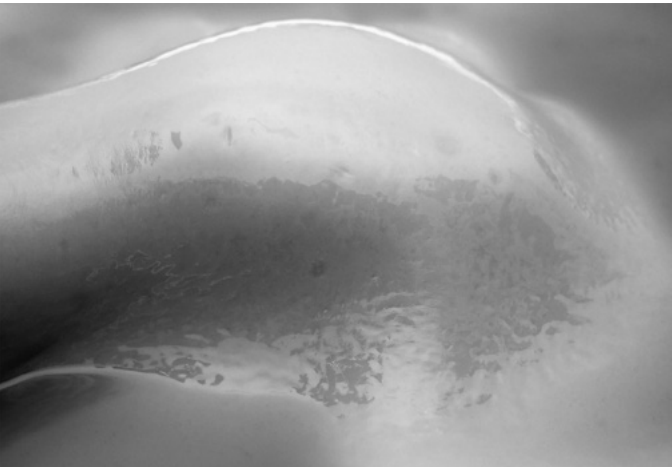


fig. 5, Barbara Graf, *Biomembrane (SCOBY)*, photograph, 2020

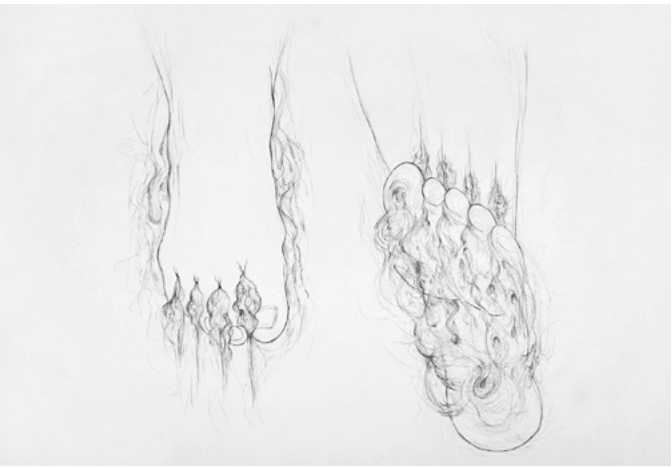


fig. 1, Barbara Graf, *Drawing no. 250*, 2021

B: Through introspection and externalization, the alienated body can be understood as one’s own again and gives the unpleasant and distressing sensations a different place than the body to which they are inevitably bound. By actively taking the symptoms into one’s own hands (fig. 7), they acquire not only a different position, but also a different quality (Graf, Altmann, Löffler-Stastka, 2022).



fig. 7, Barbara Graf, *Drawing no. 245*, 2021

C: Feedback from people living with MS, clinicians, and others endorse that visual representations provide another way to empathize with a physical condition beyond verbal formulation. Nevertheless, they also resonate with other disorders or momentary incidents unrelated to a chronic illness.

D: Through the stitching of images (Pazzini, 2015, p. 169, p. 184) in the sense forming a ‘suture’ ², I transform this concept as a method for the artistic process. Both the approach and the structuring of the textile material refer to the project title *Stitches and Sutures*. In reference to Lacan’s suturing process, the present retroactively connects itself to the past (Lacan, 1964, p. 228ff). As an artistic and psychological release and fabulation, I attempt to imagine the suture as also anticipating the future (fig. 7).

The different approaches of creating images reveal how they are influenced by one another. The first drawing of the project could not be repeated, as later experiences changed the perception of the supposed same symptom and its visual representation. Recording “pure” sensations is impossible since they are already perceptions the moment they appear. And the observation and the recording have an impact on actual lived experiences. As a suturing process, conscious and unconscious images and experiences serve as vehicles to give language to the invisible. This vehicle is an instrument and an appearance behind which the flexible content is concealed.

E: Among these explorations are quasi-seismographic phenomenological graphic recordings of currently experienced symptoms – drawn comparisons with everyday incidents as narrative representations – found images while re/searching at the *Painting Gallery KHM* – relationships between cultivated biomembranes and one’s own body, focusing on the resulting photographic images, rather than the haptic experience – textile sensations as experimental embroidery referring to sensations in their tactile quality, but also evoking bodily experience through the penetration of fibres through the fabric.

F: The playful arranging and acting with very different visual representations enables a reflection on bodily perception and the experience with touching materials. The similarity of the images, as well as their difference, even to the point of contradiction, opens the project up beyond the context of personally experienced sensations to narratives of imagined corporeality.

² Jacques Lacan describes the ‘suture’ as a more or less fixed connection, formed by the ‘points de capiton’ (variously translated as ‘quilting point’, ‘anchoring point’ or ‘holstery button’), several anchoring points form the signifying chain as a diachronic production of meaning; the subject is thus continuously reconstituted through the retroactive suturing.

Barbara Graf lives and works in Vienna and is an artist as well as a Senior Lecturer at the University of Applied Arts Vienna. Artistic Research PhD Project *Stitches and Sutures*, in progress since 2018 at the University of Applied Arts Vienna, Supervisor: Barbara Putz-Plecko.



Cristiana de Marchi, Building a fallen wall (Absence is a space of confinement), 2022-2021

Absence is a Space of Confinement

Cristiana de Marchi

Architectures of **confinement** are imposing and suffocating, they prevent those subjected to their immanence from living with ease and, often, in a dignified way. And yet, against the crushing feeling of hopelessness, those same architectures can be perceived from a perspective of resistance and evasion, as a reality to contrast in order to achieve freedom.

Absence is a space of confinement engages with the unresolved interaction and tension between the human body and the abuses and inequalities deriving from oppressive judicial and legal/ised systems.

As an act of empowerment, the attempt to overgrow the architecture of confinement becomes an extreme acknowledgment of the potential of the bare body to face stronger political powers: it brings the human body to the centre of the investigation.

The completion of the wall (Monument to the fallen Wall) has brought to light many more interrogations than those it could possibly answer, as the “finished” work introduced additional questions: on the nature and terrain of conflict; on the obscuration of the other as a result of political agendas first, and, later, of the consequences of their implementation; on the physical wound inflicted on the ground and on the conscience of those secluded by the barrier; around the loss of lives and of their future expectations.

Monument to the fallen Wall (2021-2022) addresses the notion of political irreconcilability as a form of negation, in contrast with the romanticised, nostalgic approach that is more generally associated with the idea of absence, in its declination of longing and reminiscence.

Absence is here investigated as the result of conscious, political decisions; as the effect of an act of violence that creates a division, a disconnect, a gap; as an attempt to **annihilate** and to negate existence.

The physical imprint of the wall on a territory necessarily translates into a chronology, where the historical point of view – a retrospective reading of past events through the lens of an interpretation that can be based on different, and often

contrasting, parameters – is only one of the positions to investigate. The impossibility of bridging the gap that separates **the Before and the After**, the irreconcilability of the interruption, of the fissure introduces another perspective, one that eludes strict, and reassuring sequences of facts.

Lebanese artist and writer Walid Sadik’s firmly stands against embracing the role of victims, for those suffering systematic human rights violations, and introduces the question of responsibility by questioning whether we might be afraid of “finding ourselves relieved of historical responsibilities”. He also establishes a relation between the relief of responsibility and accepting the position of the victim, which, by itself, is an admission of fragility: being incapable of dealing with history as an active actor, being a victim becomes the way to be looked after.

By objecting to the tropes of trauma theory, framing the subject as a victim, and alternatively adopting the **labour of missing** theorised by Sadik, as a strategy of resistance, the labour of missing then fully addresses and redirects the question of how **to give substance to absence** and **to reclaim agency**.



Cristiana de Marchi, [Untitled in White] , 2022

Cristiana de Marchi (b. Italy. Lives and works in Dubai, UAE)

Cristiana de Marchi’s practice explores social and political terrains, from memory, places of the past and present, identity and contested borders to the paraphernalia of contemporary nationhood. Using textiles, embroidery, film and performance, she instigates processes that draw attention to currencies of power by exploring their structures.



Zentrum Fokus Forschung
University of Applied Arts Vienna



SOUND RIDES

A MANIFESTATION OF A COLLECTIVE CYCLING BODY OF SOUND

Conny Zenk, 2023

HOW IS A COLLECTIVE BODY SHAPED THROUGH COMMUNITY PRACTICES SUCH AS CYCLING?

WHAT DRIVES THE SOUND OF YOUR CITY?

Imagine you are moving through the city. Queer thoughts, and the sound of an inclusive and feminist city accompany your ride. It is a cold but sunny day, and finally you arrive at your destination. A park in the middle of the city of Vienna, where you can already hear the speeches of the participants of the Take Back the Streets demonstration, via a mobile sound system. Suddenly someone approaches you and gives you an arrival card – a spoke-card. You arrived at the meeting point of our Sound Ride, and soon we will ride together.

WHAT ARE THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF COLLECTIVE PRACTICES WITH SOUND IN URBAN SPACE? WHAT KIND OF POWER RELATIONS CAN NOISE, VOLUME AND A CRITICAL MASS REVEAL?

A collective body of sound emerges as a referential structure or a multiplicity of relationships in the city, reclaiming space, by using the bicycle as a medium and carrier that is, above all, audible.

The bicycle unfolded as a medium of resistance: the suffragettes cycled around Leicester promoting the women's rights movement, at the beginning of the 20th century. Rosa Mayreder, an Austrian writer, feminist activist, philosopher and musician stated in the early 20th century, that "The bicycle made a greater contribution to the emancipation of women from upper echelons of society than all the efforts of the women's movement combined." (Mayreder 2018) In Vienna monthly Lunar Rides are connecting and empowering FLINTA (female, lesbian, intersex, non-binary, transgender, agender) people to Take Back the Streets and create mobile safer spaces within a collective group ride. Thinking with Leslie Kern in *Feminist City*: "The city has been set up to support and facilitate the traditional gender roles of men and with men's experiences as the 'norm', with little regard for how the city throws up roadblocks for women and ignores their day-to-day experience of city life." (Kern 2016) How can we create spaces to live our identity and be in solidarity? How can we co-create inclusive and feminist urban spaces and create a path of feminist action in public space?

The cyclists are a manifestation of a questioning of the city, its power structures, and its impacts. Squares and other (in-)significant locations get occupied: the city becomes a stage, with bicycles as a chimaera, part vehicle, part instrument, part actress.

With each Sound Ride, a collective body of sound is created, a multitude of (amplified) voices and relations in the city. The acoustics of the urban space complement, overlay and extend the electronic compositions, and following Brandon LaBelle's perspective, "... acoustics dramatically contributes to a sense of orientation as well as belonging, lending to how we navigate through spaces and environments in capturing a sense of place: how we synchronize, attune, and align with others." (LaBelle 2021) In this sense, acoustic and spatial experiences are created through the choral movement of bodies and loudspeakers on bicycles.

Cycle Circle Dance is another example of bicycle culture popular around the turn of the last century, in which quadrille, gymnastics, and parade elements were danced with the bicycle, and which was performed in gymnasiums or on squares throughout Vienna and other cities in Europe. From the very beginning, Cycle Circle Dance, or in German also named Radreigen, was practiced as a publicly visible and gender-open sport, – as a dance visible to all in public places, which constantly reformed itself in the gender constellation. This fluid aspect in a historical movement practice inspires us to take up a tradition that has disappeared and transform it into a contemporary context. Fluidity, aspects of the hybrid, and the in-between are developed into a choreography of a contemporary Cycle Circle Dance and reinforced by the choral composition of sounds.

Thinking with Pauline Oliveros, "[h]earing is something that happens to us because we have ears – it is our primary life, and maybe all of our lifetimes. Listening is what creates culture. Listening is very diverse and takes many different forms as cultures take many different forms." (Oliveros 2005) In this sense, I would like to consider co-creation as a process of artistic research to open a dialogue within a diverse field of practices and to connect various fields of knowledge.

In the words of Sara Ahmed in *Cultural Politics of Emotions*: "What moves us, what makes us feel, is also that which holds us in place, or gives us a dwelling place. Hence movement does not cut the body off from the 'where' of its inhabitation, but connects bodies to other bodies: attachment takes place through movement, through being moved by the proximity of others." (Ahmed 2015) Drawing on this sentence, I am interested in finding methods and vehicles through performing and creating spaces of encounters of collaborative thinking and working. I am entering a dialogue with different experts, practitioners, artists and researchers to reflect and evaluate a process of curiosity, translation, and artistic practice. Additionally, I seek to explore questions on the appropriation of space, participation, and negotiation of the city and urban history as an inclusive and feminist space. Artistic methods and strategies, such as interviews and workshops, performances, and concerts in public space will serve to immerse and negotiate the city's atmosphere, soundscape, and sonic architecture.

"IF YOU COULD RIDE THE WAVES OF YOUR FAVORITE SOUND,

WHERE WOULD IT TAKE YOU?"

(Oliveros 2005)

Bibliography

Ahmed, Sara: *Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Edinburgh University Press. Routledge, 2015
Butler, Judith: *Anmerkungen zu einer performativen Theorie der Versammlung*, German edition: Suhrkamp Verlag Berlin 2016
Federici, Silvia: *Re-Enchanting the World: Feminism and the Politics of the Commons*. Oakland, California: PM Press, 2019.
Haraway, Donna J.: *Staying with the Trouble, Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, Academic Press 2016
Latour, Bruno: *Kampf um Gaia, Acht Vorträge über das Klimaregime*, Suhrkamp Edition Berlin, 2017
LaBelle, Brandon: *Acoustic Territories*, Second Edition: Sound Culture and Everyday Life 2019
Kern, Leslie: *Feminist City: How Women Experience the City*, UNRAST-Verlag, Münster 2020
Mayreder, Rosa: *Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit*, Eva Geber (eds), Mandelbaum Verlag, 2018
Müller, Gin: *Possen des Performativen: Theater, Aktivismus und queere Politiken*, Transversal Texts Eipcp 2015
Oliveros, Pauline: *Deep Listening, A Composer's Sound Practice*, Deep Listening Publications 2005
Schafer, R. Murray: *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*, Verlag Simon & Schuster N.Y., 1993
Virilio, Paul: *Fahren, fahren, fahren ...*, Merve Verlag Berlin, 1978



Q
W
E
R
T
Y

U
I
O
P

A
S
D
F

G
H
J
K

L
M
N

B

V

C

X

Z

Y

F

D

C

QUEER ANCESTRAL MYTHOLOGIES

*"[We] tell each other stories. Each story we tell is a fragment in an endless shape-shifting mosaic."
Three Thousand Years of Longing (2022)*

Queer narratives have historically been cast aside and placed in a certain "in-between" by hegemonic-heteronormative history-writing. At the same time, this "in-between" can be perceived as a loophole, a gap with the potential to generate a space where one's own historiography emerges, self-empowered and based on multiple and hybrid alternatives, in which an alignment within different ancestral lineages becomes possible. In the search for a collective past, to place oneself in a larger context of human history, the possibility of creating alternative mythologies exists in which past histories can be made present. The only way to prevent what you are from being used against you is to speak about yourself before others do (see Salzmann 2019: 13-14). And taking the space to construct, define and position one's own queer ancestry against ascriptions by others can help overturn possible established narratives and offers a possibility of researching and aligning oneself within a historised queer-ancestral lineage.

"We as [queer] people, we get to choose our family, you know. We get to choose the people that we're around. [...] I am your family. We are family here." RuPaul's Drag Race (2013)

Including queer histories in one's ancestral mythologies allows them to flow into one's lived subject constructions, which is an act of subversive protest. It not only forces the "outside" to reimagine their own positioning in contrast to one's own, but simultaneously can also expand the perception of possible historical ancestors. Aligning oneself within queer histories essentially represents the space of action in which an exclusively factual or supposed naturalised reading and categorisation of ancestry can be dissolved, and the concept of individual ancestral lineage expanded.

Which queer historical figures, cultural products, time periods, historical events, geographies, stylistic expressions or even materials have influenced my queer performativities and identities? How have they informed my aesthetic and theoretical practice as an artist? The exemplary research and reconstruction of my personal mythologies of ancestry and heritage through a contemplative approach serve as a starting point.

"What I know is, our destinies are not decided by our fathers or grandfathers or [...] great-great-great-great grandfather. The smallest, most inconsequential thing can take you on a new course. You just have to see it...and seize it." Lovcraft Country (2020)

Taking up the space to construct, define and position one's own ancestry, beyond nation-statehoods or race, in a self-empowered way, against the ascriptions of others, can help overturn possible fixed narratives and offers the possibility of researching and the alignment with historical ancestors. In an Instagram post about the existence and struggles of transgender people throughout history, gender non-conforming author and performance artist

Alok Menon wrote: "I get so annoyed when people dismiss trans and gender-non-conforming people as 'new'. We have been here since the very beginning - it's just that society has tried its best to disappear us. My transcestors would sometimes be arrested 20 or more times for existing in public" (Menon: 2021).

In their post, Alok not only aligns themselves in a historical lineage, tradition and ancestry of transgender people, but also gives them the title "transcestors". By combining the terms "trans" and "ancestors", it becomes clear that these ancestors are merely one lineage among many they could have chosen from, focusing on their transgender ancestors of the past. When discussing professional or institutional heritage, people often say: "I'm from media art" or "I'm from University XYZ". This highlights an alignment within traditional professional mythologies that expose fragments of a selective subject construction. So, when Alok speaks of "transcestors", would it not also be possible to speak of "queer-cesters", "labour-cesters", "education-cesters" and other "cesters"?

In fact, identity is a never-ending process of becoming - a process of changing identifications, not a single, complete, finished form of existence (see Dardan 2021: 88). A singular location in a singular nation-state, religious community or any other faction hence does not suffice to define a person's heritage and ancestry, let alone characteristics, experiences or memories. The question "Where are you really from?" locates people in a rigid construct, although everyone is part of several groups and thus also capable of creating and choosing their own subjectivities and aligning themselves within multiple compositions of ancestral-mythologies.

"Female monarchs lay eggs along the route. Every history has more than one thread, each thread a story of division. The journey takes four thousand eight hundred and thirty miles, more than the length of this country. The monarchs that fly south will not make it back north. Each departure, then, is final."

Only their children return; only the future revisits the past." Ocean Vuong (2019)

Bibliography
Dardan, Asal (2021): Betrachtungen einer Barbarin. Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe.
Green, Misha (Writer), Sackheim, Daniel (Director). (2020, November 13th). Whitey's on the Moon (Season 1, Episode 2) [TV series episode]. In: Abrams, J.J.; Carraro, Bill (Executive Producers); Lovcraft Country. Afemme, Monkeypaw Productions, Bad Robot Productions, Warner Bros. Television Studios (Production Companies). 04:7:55
Menon, Alok [@alokvmenon] (2021). Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CQfO4domEp/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link (27.03.2023)
Miller, George (Director) (2022): Three Thousand Years of Longing. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Elevate Production Finance, Sunac Culture, Kennedy Miller Mitchell (Production Companies) 1:29:07
Murray, Nick (Director). (2013, March 11th). RuPaul Roast (Season 5, Episode 7) [TV series episode]. In: Bailey, Fenton; Barbato, Randy (Executive Producers). RuPaul's Drag Race. World Of Wonder (Production Company). 04:04:7
Salzmann, Sasha Marianna (2019): Sichtbar. In: Aydemir, Fatma. Yaghoobifarah, Hengame (ed.): Eure Heimat ist unser Alutraum. Berlin: Ullstein, S.13-26.
Vuong, Ocean (2019): On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous. London: Penguin Randomhouse UK.



POST-DIGITAL ANGST



Zentrum Fokus Forschung
University of Applied Arts Vienna

by Joseph Leung Mong Sum
www.leungmongsum.com

POST-DIGITAL ANGST - Research Context and Keywords

"The form of anxiety has changed, but the experience remains relatively the same". (May, 1977, p. xv)

Despite the rapid technological advancement of our time, anxiety remains an issue many must confront. Nonetheless, manifestations of anxiety have varied in the post-digital context, and my research aims to survey these changing form(s) of anxiety (or Angst) by asking "How is Angst manifesting across the Digital Milieu, and which form(s) does it take?"

I shall first illustrate the two key concepts that underpin this research, namely (1) "Angst" and (2) the "Digital Milieu":

Angst

With the consideration of the semantic nuance that exists across the English term "anxiety" and "anguish", my research will adopt the German word "Angst" to incorporate the broadest sense of the concept.

Angst is a phenomenon both "physical" and "psychological", one that situates between "corporeity and mentality" (Bergo, 2021, p. 4). My research will follow Bettina Bergo in considering Angst as an affect; in the sense that we are affected by it both sensually and emotionally (ibid.), thus positioning it in the middle of the mind-body dualism.

In addition, Angst does not only function within the individual but also travels across relations. Following Ahmed's "the sociality of emotion", where emotions are considered "social and cultural practices" (Ahmed, 2014, p. 8), this research will study the sociality of Angst in a relational context. Hence, Angst will be examined as an affect functioning across body and mind, as well as the subjective and intersubjective.

Digital Milieu

My research holds that the Digital Milieu is chiefly characterized by the habituation of digital technology, which has become so naturalized that we remain unaware of the "digital-ness" of our lives. This is akin to the notions of the "Post-digital" or "Post-internet", where the milieu is not only confined to the so-called digital realm but encompasses many other co-existing dimensions that are permeated by digital technology. It is not only digital, but also personal, political, physical, ecological and much more – in the sense that all these aspects are entangled with the digital, just as much as the digital is entangled with these aspects in turn.

The milieu is also a field where the circulation of "causes" and "effects" takes place (Foucault, 2009, p. 21), thus presuming the importance of relationality. The Digital Milieu is nonetheless structured by heavy circulations – of data and information, but most importantly, affect. Through this affective circulation and relations, Angst could take on various forms of affecting different bodies across the Digital Milieu.

Overall, the Digital Milieu is characterized as (1) an accumulation of various dimensions permeated by the naturalization of digital technology and as (2) a site structured by substantial circulations of, but not limited to, data, information, and affects that permeate across the digital plane and other co-existing dimensions.

Angst and the Digital Milieu

Building on the concepts of "Angst" and "Digital Milieu", the compound term Post-digital Angst thus manifests, not as a phenomenon that necessarily arises in our direct encounter with digital technology. Yet so often digital technology, in one way or another, remains entangled with our experience of it. My research does not seek a conclusive delimitation of the Digital Angst. Instead, I aim to examine the possible manifestations of such a phenomenon through artistic practice.

Reference List

- Ahmed, S., 2014. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. 2nd Edition ed. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Bergo, B., 2021. *Anxiety: a philosophical history*. 1st Edition ed. New York: Oxford University.
- Foucault, M., 2009. *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977–1978*. Paperback edition ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- May, R., 1977. *The Meaning of Anxiety*. Revised Edition, Reissued 2015 ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Project Propositions and Structure

A common usage of the term "Digital Anxiety" situates it in a pathological context, where individuals struggle with anxiety arising from their engagement with digital technology. While this could be a form of Post-digital Anxieties/Angst, my research holds two counter-propositions for enabling other formulations in this project:

(1) First, the phenomenon of Angst should not be regarded as purely detrimental. My research intends to reveal the possible implications and meanings of Angst in the post-digital context, which could be resourceful and enriching.

(2) Second, this research does not only consider Angst as a subjective phenomenon but also an intersubjective one; it is simultaneously an individual affect, as well as a wider socio-cultural practice. This approach enables the various forms of Angst in the Digital Milieu, ranging from a personal sensibility to a socio-cultural intensity, or at times, a political apparatus.

-

Based on these counter-propositions, the project is structured into a three-level architecture that concerns the "personal", the "social", and the "political" dimension. This structure enables the research to examine three main renditions of Angst in the Digital Milieu, which are detailed as follows:

On the personal level, my research will first explore "*Direct Angst*", which denotes the Angst residing in our immediate experience in the Digital Milieu. The project will take on an existential approach in examining the various anxious moments in the post-digital context (e.g., the loading screen, the notification sound, or the freezing of the computer, etc.) in an attempt to reveal the existential and spiritual insights that they potentially entail.

On the social level, my research will examine the "*Dynamics of Angst*". In this context, Angst is not only considered as an individual affect, but also a collective one; that Angst could perform as a dynamic force that travels across relations and functions as a socio-cultural practice. From this perspective, the project will examine the "sociality of Angst", which indicates Angst's potential to circulate and affect different bodies in the milieu.

On the political level, the research focuses on the "*Dispositif of Angst*", which concerns how Angst could be exercised as a strategic and political device in the Digital Milieu. If Angst is approached as an interpersonal force on the social level, it is hitherto considered as a type of power, functioning within an ensemble of power relations between various entities, institutions, and discourses amid the habituation of digital technology.

Overall, through the examination of "Direct Angst", the "Dynamics of Angst" and the "Dispositif of Angst", my research contributes to the articulation of the "Post-digital Angst" and its manifestations.



THE MIGRATING IMAGE

JOŠT FRANKO

In my artistic practice, I have been researching topics such as migrations, forced displacement, worker's rights, counter-narratives, and communal deliberations of the precarious lives. Using photography, text, fieldwork, and collaborations as a form of engagement with social issues, my research focuses on the many lost, unspoken or unheard narratives of the displaced communities in the Balkan peninsula. It focuses on Belvedere, Ježevac, Mihajlovići, Višća, Sokolac, Karaula, Barake, Mrdići, and various other still active refugee centres and spaces of forced migrations in former Yugoslavia, which have been housing displaced people since the 1990s. It considers these refugee settlements as spaces of existing situated knowledge, counter-narratives, and parallel histories.

Using artistic means to explore the consequences of war that has ravaged the Balkans, the research project, titled The Migrating Image engages the aftermath of the conflict, as what Okwui Enwezor (2008, p. 40) rightly noted the documentary form rarely displays, namely the ultimate fate of people once at the podium of worldwide events. To do so – inasmuch in the world of professed post-truth as the general crisis of documentary culture – my research argues that “photography can only arrive – and perhaps more importantly should only arrive – late” (Roberts 2014, p. 107). Only through the necessary lateness of the (migrating) image can the research of the aftermath be brought into an extended discursive life and engage with the social issues it intends to explore.

The Migrating Image argues that embracing the lateness of the aftermath image and aftermath-of-the-image allows for expanding documentary practice into a collaborative and communal strategy – of returning to the scene, and reexamining it over a period of time. Most importantly, it allows the research to consider the aftermath as an incomplete and ongoing history.

The artistic examination of forced displacement in the Balkan peninsula considers the formal and informal refugee settlements as spaces where the history, culture, and heritage of those subjected to erasure and annihilation during the war remains preserved. My work, therefore, tries to collect, record, imagine, and articulate parallel histories and alternative narratives within displaced communities. It tries to create an archive (or rather a counter-archive) of and with individuals and communities permanently displaced by conflict and sustained in precarious conditions by means of political uncertainty, social segregation, and economic deprivation. Working in a communal manner, The Migrating Image proposes that research subjects become collaborators and co-creators, merging art and life, thereby blurring the distinction between consumer and producer, audience and author, subject and artist-researcher. Involving numerous co-creators and co-authors this collaborative work thus strives to organise the counter-archive, record existing situated knowledge and narratives, and put them on display as a way to protect and advocate (Holert 2020, p. 17).

Through analytical lateness of visual documentation and collaborative deliberations, the project results in a series of photo-text publications, specifically through appropriating the newspaper form and format. Through such a form, referring to the photo-text documentary practice of the 1930s

and 1940s, the project does not aim to discover the unknown but rather to “organise a wealth of existing knowledge into a complex aesthetic product from which new meaning could emerge” (Beimann 2008, p. 14). By using appropriated newspaper publications, the project strives to create and collect parallel histories, organise alternative knowledge, heritage, generate collectivity, and reconstruct a culture of those left out of body politics and representational frameworks. It attempts to create a collective image of the present and presence, address the question of refugees politics, their rights, claims, wishes and aspirations, and their potential return, or instead, the permanency of their situation. As Eyal Weizman (2012) argues, deliberating a political dimension and potential empowerment of refugee settlements – moving beyond a mere repository of national memory – rejects the accommodation to an unjust political reality and the *politique du pire* seeking to maintain misery, and instead invests it with political meaning. Throughout its artistic examination and communal deliberations, this research project questions how to structure documentary imagery as agents of new potentiality – of history, historical absences; of political and social imagination; and of new possibilities. How can the struggle for continuity and the dispossession of memory inform the identity of displaced and exiled individuals? Can the form of an appropriated newspaper publication address new potentialities for (and images of) people and communities on the fringes, and can it reconstruct them through strategies that negotiate the limits of representation? How can a communal project act as a “sphere of emancipation for an autonomous public”? (Holert 2020, p. 79).

Ultimately, my artistic research delves into the question of “how art can contest the erasure of refugee experiences from collective memory and understand their place in historical consciousness.” (Tello 2016, p. 34). The Migrating Image, therefore, understands its role as artistic and social research specifically through a space of potential social and political activation, co-creation, narratives of resistance, and counter-archives made up of suppressed and situated knowledge and experiences empowering participants to pursue a project of a transformed society.

References

- Beimann, Ursula. (2008). *Ursula Beimann: mission reports: artistic practice in the field: video works 1998-2008*. Umeå: Bildmuseet.
- Enwezor, Okwui (2008). Documentary/Vérité: Bio-Politics, Human Rights, and the Figure of “Truth” in Maria Lind and Hito Steyerl. *Reconsidering the Documentary and Contemporary Art*. Berlin: Sternberg Press.
- Holert, Tom. (2020). *Knowledge beside itself: contemporary art's epistemic politics*. Berlin: Sternberg Press.
- Roberts, John. (2014). *Photography and its violations*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Tello, Verónica (2016). *Counter-memorial aesthetics: refugees, contemporary art, and the politics of memory*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Weizman, Eyal. (2012). *665: The Least of All Possible Evils*. [online] www.e-flux.com. Available at: <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/38/61213/665-the-least-of-all-possible-evils/>.



心若鏡
2017.7.21 陳曉辰 書明源軒

about fish, gardens, gardening and a gardener

Else Sibil Somone, a transcrist from the future,¹
suggested interviewing me when I told her I was
struggling with a text for the envelope #5 issue.
I thought her suggestion was a good idea, and we
set to work. The following text is an interview with
me by Else Sibil Somone (ESS). It is about a fish,
gardens, gardening and a gardener as a model
system for a utopia that does already exist.

an interview

ESS: Your artistic research project a garden for a fish is a research venture that revolves around a fish called Danio rerio in scientific nomenclature, or zebrafish in everyday language. This fish became quite popular as a vertebrate model organism in biological and medical research in the last decades. Garden and fish, how do they connect and why a garden?

I: In *a garden for a fish*, the zebrafish likewise plays the role of a model organism – not just the fish, but also the garden, and the gardener. Fish, garden and gardener form a model system encompassing research practice and material manifestation. It is a field of the sensual as well as the conceptual, a garden of aesthetico-logical² practices. Gardening and the garden serve as metaphor, concept, method and material manifestation to investigate resonant relationships and interactions through which phenomena emerge.

A garden for a fish is primarily an underwater garden. It is set up in my living room. For the fish, the aquariums are artificial islands in a sea of air³, an underwater world that I cannot physically enter although inevitably shaped by me. But it also shapes me in turn, as the gardener.

ESS: What do you associate with ‘garden’ and ‘garden’?

I: When I think of a garden, I quickly associate it with paradise. The Garden Eden immediately comes to mind; moreover, the etymologies of both words refer to the same idea: an enclosure. An enclosure, but not closed. It is a permeable system that connects to many other systems. A garden is constantly transforming, a polylogue in which various actors and agencies, humans and non-humans, organic and inorganic matter, are involved. Gardening stands for a practice that places attention on interrelationships and processes, and sharpens the senses for the permanent intra-actions⁴ – to use Karen Barad’s terminology – that shape beings. A garden is something that has to be cared for.

ESS: You told me that you once owned a garden. Can you tell me more about your personal gardening experiences?

I: Yes, I once owned an allotment garden in Bremen, Germany. Bremen has a distinct Schrebergarten culture. It is always a pleasure for me to cycle through the Schrebergarten areas. Each garden represents a personality, reflecting the owner’s skills, needs, physical condition, knowledge, dedication, taste, monetary resources and available time. It says a lot about people, but also about fashions and prevailing world views. I loved the garden. When I moved to another city, about 7 hours away by train, I spent a week in the Bremen garden from time to time to prevent it from turning into a complete wilderness and no longer being recognisable as a garden. In the end, I sold the garden, but I deeply enjoyed the time I spent there. Seeing how things have evolved without human interference – and then gently taming the wilderness by inhabiting it, by spending time in it; it was a pleasurable time.

ESS: Could you describe your gardening practice?

I: Chaotic, from the perspective of an outside observer, I would say. To such an observer, it must seem like a person randomly doing things here and there. In a time-lapse, you would see someone trimming a hedge but stopping in the middle, then rushing through the garden and coming across the compost that is calling for attention, starting to deal with it, only to stop again to respond to another call for attention, and so on. It seems chaotic, but ultimately forms a cycle. I return to the hedge and all the other things that have been calling for attention – and in the end, most tasks have been accomplished. Ideally, it’s a flow, a natural happening. A conductor who becomes one with the orchestra.

ESS: Does this relate to the paradigmatic aspect of the garden?

I: In a way, yes. For me, paradise is associated to utopia, especially the kind Ursula K. Le Guin is addressing, a utopia “that if it is to come, it must exist already” (Le Guin, 1989). A garden is something like an archive in constant transformation. It stores memories that project paths into

the future. It inevitably points to the not-yet in the here and now. For me, this comes close to the idea of a utopia already existing.

Apart from that, I agree with the notion of the Zen monk Hakuin Ekaku (白隠慧鶴 1686–1768). According to him, jōdo-teien (浄土庭園), the Japanese equivalent of the Garden of Eden, the Pure Land Paradise Garden, is not so much a place as it is an attitude (Deane, 2015).

ESS: So is gardening an attitude?

I: You could say so. Shunmyo Masuno, the only contemporary Buddhist priest who designs Japanese-style gardens, said in an interview: “I design landscapes that best describe one’s state of mind achieved through religious practices” (Masuno, 2009). I myself do not engage in religious practices, but I do try to sharpen my consciousness and my senses. For Shunmyo Masuno, the act of designing gardens, the act of constructing gardens and being within a garden, ties in very closely to the idea of cultivating consciousness (Locher, 2020).

ESS: It seems like our conversation about gardens and gardening could go on infinitely, but to close the circle, I would like to return to my initial question: Garden and fish, how do you connect the two and why a garden? I got a good impression of “why a garden”, but what connects the fish with the garden?

A model organism such as the zebrafish is used to understand a plethora of biological processes. It is assumed that the knowledge gained from the model organism can be extrapolated to other organisms. This implies isolating single phenomena in order to understand their mechanisms and usually requires controlled environmental conditions. Life outside the laboratory, however, is usually marked by constantly changing conditions and manifold interactions that can hardly be unravelled by purely scientific methods alone. In *a garden for a fish*, fish, garden and gardener together form a model system in which approaches are explored that do justice to this entanglement. Gardening, both literally and metaphorically, is such an approach and possibly a way (that is not a way)⁵ which might lead to the utopia that must already exist in order to become.

ESS: I think these were appropriate closing words.

I: I agree.

1. Else and transciency were introduced in my master thesis (F-THEN-ELSE. Welcome to transciency, 2016. See also Preis der Kunsthalle 2016).
2. I am referring to Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714 –1762), a German philosopher and educator who coined the term aesthetics. For him subjective truths are different points of view of the singular metaphysical truth (Baumgarten, 1988, p.53, § 423, 424). Subjective conceptions are either conceptions of the mind (of the logical faculty of apprehension) or sensual conceptions and thus aesthetically true. Logical and sensual conception combined form 'aesthetico-logical' truth. (Baumgarten, 1988, p. 57, § 427)
3. Alexander Kluge said in an interview: “There is a saying that ‘lakes are islands for fish’. When we fish get into new waters, we change. Evolution goes on. The soul is an underwater creature. It is fluid and changes constantly.” (Kluge, 2017, p. 63)
4. Intra-action: a neologism introduced by the American feminist theorist and physicist of theoretical particle physics and quantum field theory Karen Barad, expressing that phenomena or objects do not precede their interaction, but that ‘objects’ emerge through particular intra-actions.
5. “If utopia is a place that does not exist, then surely (as Lao Tzu would say) the way to get there is by the way that is not a way. And in the same vein, the nature of the utopia I am trying to describe is such that if it is to come, it must exist already.” Ursula K. Le Guin. 1989, p. 94, 95

Bibliography

- Margit Busch, IF-THEN-ELSE, Welcome to Transciency, master thesis, University of Applied Arts Vienna, Art & Science programme, Vienna 2016
- University of Applied Arts Vienna, Kunsthalle Wien, (eds.), Margit Busch. If-then-else: Welcome to Transciency, Preis der Kunsthalle Wien 2016, Berlin: Sternberg Press 2016
- Baumgarten, Alexander G., Schweizer, Hans R (ed.): Theoretische Ästhetik. Die grundlegenden Abschnitte aus der ‘Aesthetica’ (1750/58). Lateinisch - Deutsch, Hamburg: Felix Meiner 1988, p. 53, § 423, 424 and p. 57, § 427
- Alexander Kluge, Museum Folkwang (ed.) Pluriversum . Leipzig, Spector Books, 2017, p. 63
- Ursula K. Le Guin. A Non-Euclidean View of California as a Cold Place to Be, in: Dancing at the Edge of the World. London, Gollancz, 1989, 80-100 here: p. 95,95
- Andrew R. Deane, Chapter 4: The Paradise Garden, Handbook, Part 1: Design & Craft, Nov 30, 2015, URL: <https://japanesegardening.org/handbook/the-paradise-garden/>, accessed on 01.02.2023