Anywhere IV

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Art at the Outermost Limits
of Location-Specificity

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Simone Douglas
&
Sean Lowry

Project Anywhere is a conduit for illuminating the existence of art potentially located anywhere on earth. Using a peer reviewed global exhibition model and dedicated website, it is designed to evaluate and promote artistic projects presented outside traditional exhibition spaces and circuits. A key feature of Project Anywhere's innovative evaluation model is the substitution of the figure of curator with a democratizing blind peer evaluation system. Significantly, this peer evaluation model differs substantially from traditional research evaluation systems, which typically endorse the quality of project "outcomes". Instead, by emphasizing evaluation at the proposal stage, our double-blind peer review process privileges speculation, and risk-taking over project "realisation". Representations of projects hosted as part of Project Anywhere's global exhibition program are featured on the homepage for one year, updated throughout the hosting period, and then made permanently accessible in the exhibition archive.

Project Anywhere accepts both individual and collaborative proposals from artists, curators and researchers working anywhere in the world. Projects can be highly speculative or discursive in nature and can extend or contradict existing methodologies. Project Anywhere affords independent validation, feedback, and international dissemination across a range of platforms for art and artistic research at the outermost limits of location-specificity.

At the cessation of the Project Anywhere annual global exhibition hosting period, all selected contributors are invited to develop a short page-based response. These responses are then presented in our biennial publication *Anywhere*. All the contributions featured in this edited publication have been developed in response to artistic projects originally selected for inclusion in Project Anywhere's 2019 and 2020 exhibition programs. The contributing artists, curators and researchers were all invited to develop a text/image piece that is neither straightforward documentation nor scholarly text. We are delighted to share these extraordinary 're-imaginings' in this our fourth issue of *Anywhere*, and the second designed by Ella Egidy. Acknowledging that it is not possible to wholly explain or describe an artistic project, the contributions featured in *Anywhere iv* should instead be seen as alternative portals into their respective worlds.

The publication was designed and published on the lands of the Boonwurung and Wurundjeri people of the Eastern Kulin nation. CoVA / University of Melbourne would like to acknowledge that we work on land belonging to the world's longest living continuous cultures, and that sovereignty was never ceded.

PROJECTS

A Guide to Remembering: The Colonial Amnesia Project

Tania Blackwell

Tania Blackwell *Whitewashed History*, 2021, Film still, TRT:23:00

We tend to remember some things and forget others. Sometimes, we are conspicuously reminded of certain things by our government, in our education, or within community. Sometimes, however, the truth is blocked out unconsciously. Then, of course, there is outright denial. Sometimes, not knowing something and then hearing it for the first time can feel confronting. Sometimes, being reminded of a truth that has been actively suppressed for a very long time can also feel confronting. In following the history of the Black Line (1830) and the Black War (1823–1831) in Tasmania during and following colonial invasion, my research initially set out to physically map the region using parallel lines to connect the violence of this dark history to my own family. As part of this process, I was determined to both explore the still largely rugged Tasmanian landscape and map my convict ancestry and parallels to British invasion. Based on a historical map of the Black Line, I decided that Lake Echo was my destination. It was near here that my convict 3rd great-grandfather Daniel Blackwell (1822–1907) was given a ticket of leave but without an opportunity to ever return to England. Consequently, he was granted a parcel of unceded land in Victoria Valley near Lake Echo bordered by the river.

There is a sense of familiarity in the landscape when you are Tasmanian. As kids we would frequently wander through the bushes on our own. I have never had a problem driving in remote places alone, that is until I turned off on a dirt road to Lake Echo frequented by fishers. I thought it would be ok. Without reception or maps, I finally found the road to the water.

It was here at the edge of the lake that I started to imagine the physical bodies of the invaders. I then started to use white lines and my own body to create a division in the landscape. Unexpectedly, this action of making and doing felt connected processes of activating and interpreting memories. The silence now felt deafening and somewhat overwhelming at the edge of this lake. I don't know for sure if anything occurred here. At any rate, given that it is a dam now, I wondered if it was perhaps the sorrow of the loss of culture and memory that I was feeling.

Dead trees, partially immersed, pushed through the surface of the water. I felt an uncanny sense of haunting, and of absence and loss. Although I had arrived with a sense of belonging, I left feeling quite displaced. I began to see differently. I was now seeing through the lens of a thief. I now knew that I was trespassing. This moment resonated in a particularly powerful and resonant way. This deeply experiential and transformative moment at Lake Echo would in turn form the basis of my research for the *Colonial Amnesia Project*. When I left, I looked in my rear-view mirror and saw what looked like a scar tree that marked the passage to the water. Tellingly, I didn't see it on the way in. I had entered with colonial ignorance and left with colonial guilt. Although we cannot undo, erase, or deny the past, we can disrupt the continuity of the unknowing. This process of

Terra Nullius is something that is so problematic and so arrogant. To think that no one was occupying a piece of land before you got there.

—

Taj

Tania Blackwell *Whitewashed History*, 2021, Film still (detail), TRT:23:00

memorialising through actions and encounters enables a deeper connection to the intangible, and in time, a reconfiguration of the self. It enables memory to be threaded through our entire being, lest it ever be forgotten.

Following this experience, encounter and exchange, early iterations of this project involved participants reading *The Guide to Remembering* book. While the small black book was being read, participants were filmed and then invited to comment during or after reading the book. Participant responses were raw and felt authentic. As participant Suzie put it, for example, "we do push it to the back of our minds because it is quite confronting". For participant Taj, "Terra Nullius is something that is so problematic and so arrogant. To think that no one was occupying a piece of land before you got there". It is from this position of vulnerability that I would seek a deeper recognition of the narratives being revealed.

My ongoing creative research seeks to present a new memorial typology of landscape derived through social exchange and collective encounters that can be transferred beyond the boundaries of any one site or place. At its core, the project is about truth telling and highlights the lack of recognition of the frontier war that occurred in this region. These narratives are not meant to be comfortable. In the act of remembering these atrocities through a poetic provocation. I aim to disrupt colonial comfort and acknowledge the history. I believe that is that through participating and engaging in the project and its 'poetic provocations' (as a tool for remembering), that the experience of memorialization might embed on a deeper level for those that participate. It is through participatory practice that knowledge and truth-telling might resonate on a far deeper level than via physical memorialization alone. This memorial typology might transcend time and place, and in doing so, bring the act of remembering to the forefront of our being.

Prior to the pandemic, I had planned a residency in Bothwell to try to broaden this connection to the history through social participation—such that a comparable sense of connection to truth-telling that that which I experienced could be felt by others. Here, my aim was that through shared connections, such knowledges might become embedded in our being and become present and challenge perceptions of privilege (as those not *of* the land continue to occupy the landscape). Due to limited mobility, I devised alternative methods to communicate with the community. First, a series of images and photographs related to the project were printed on small cards and mailed to local community hubs and surrounds. These provocations included images of the local landscape augmented with words such as "haunting" or statements such as "lives were extinguished to make room for mine" as vehicles for contemplation, conversation, and potential future engagement.

Now that travel restrictions have eased, Ratho Farm in Bothwell (established in 1822) will host *The Dinner Party*—a new performative work developed during

2021. Again, the local community will be invited to participate as key agents in the work. The event will take place in the original dining room of the homestead, which is filled with early colonial furniture and fittings. (One can only imagine the memories and drama seeping throughout the carpet and walls.) It is also hoped that the relative decadence of the meal will reinforce the inherent privilege and colonial comfort that is so conspicuously at play. Intermittently, this conspicuous comfort will be disrupted, with each dinner guest asking a question from a series of handmade cards designed to provoke dialogue and truth-telling. This interaction at the dinner table will be recorded and later presented in a new configuration. This work is due to be completed in mid to late 2022. Significantly, this experience of artistic production with limited site access during a pandemic has invariably presented challenges. Yet it has also revealed new opportunities. Digital representations of this work will now be able to be materialized spatially elsewhere in space and time.

"The Black War has ended here after two months' campaign of 3000 men....but I fear we shall not so soon get quit of the blacks: murders continue by them - constantly."

"You would not know Bothwell now - so many fine Palaces in it."

Alexander Reid, Bothwell.

Brown, P., 1977. Clyde Company Papers. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, p.110.
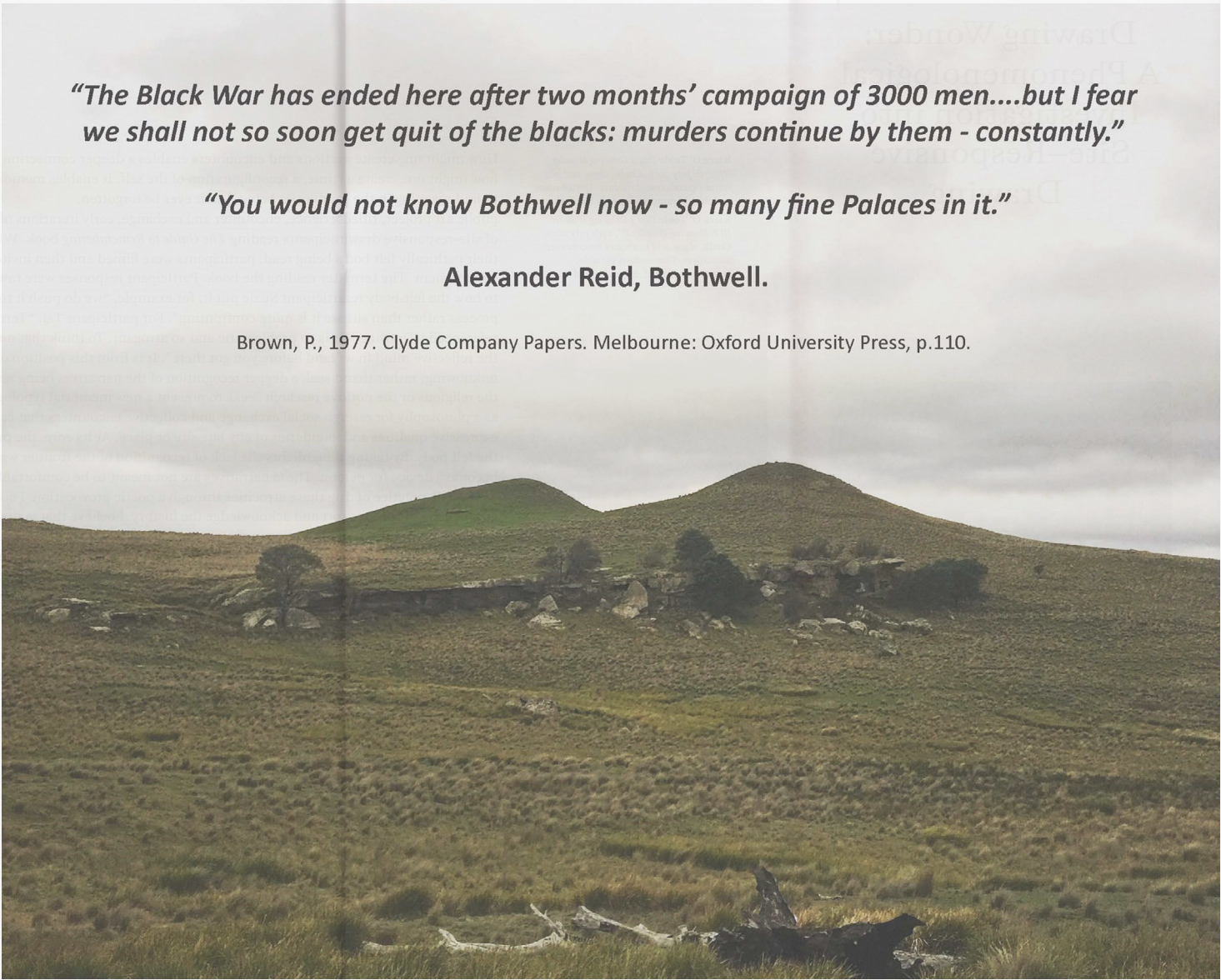
Drawing Wonder:
A Phenomenological Investigation into Site–Responsive Drawing

Kiera O' Toole *Day 3 Drawing Wonder III*, 27th July 2019, Chalk, algae and sea water on concrete structure, Dimensions variable, Dunmoran Strand, Sligo, Ireland

Kiera O' Toole *Day 4 Drawing Wonder III & Drawing Wonder IV*, 27th July 2019, Chalk, algae and sea water on concrete structures, Dimensions variable, Dunmoran Strand, Sligo, Ireland

How might one create a *holding space* for wonder through the act of drawing? And how might one create a space of unknowingness while being in a state of awareness to find meaning in the lived experience? 'Drawing Wonder' is part of an ongoing public art project, titled, *Office of Public Wonder* (Fig.1). In this iteration, a series of site-responsive drawings attempts to affectively involve the viewer through their pathically felt body and invites the viewer to consider how one feels in their environment. The term 'site-responsive' is utilized in this research as it alludes to how the felt-body reacts to the site as an inherent part of the art making process rather than site specific, which can be site-orientated, site-related or site-referenced.[1] 'Drawing Wonder' (Fig. 2) observes a Socratic concept of wonder as the reflective mind in wonder that is transfixed and simultaneously restless and unknowing, rather than a wonder that is tied to the unintellectual, the fantastical, the religious or the notion of the Sublime.[2] My art practice employs phenomenology as a philosophy for research to examine how drawing can intuitively record the expressive qualities and 'emotional vibrations' of a site's atmosphere through the felt body. By taking a phenomenological attitude, the drawings in this project become a device for perceiving and understanding the hidden aspects of a site.

The practice of drawing as research in this instance extends beyond the atmosphere of the studio to everyday public spaces and will illustrate how drawing has the capacity for 'us' to pathically experience 'our' being in the world.[3] New Phenomenologist Tonino Griffero's concept of 'pathic aesthetics' underpins my practice and research in his theorization that there is meaning already in the world.[4] Here, the concept of aesthetics refers to the original intention for aesthetics by Alexander Gotielb Baumgarten's (1714–1762) 'sensible aesthetics' as the foundation of experience.[5] Aesthetics as being 'pathic knowledge' supports my research and offers insight to my thinking and ways of making. For Griffero, 'pathic' does not refer to pathetic or pathological but rather a letting go where one is 'subject to' rather than "subject of."[6] Griffero's concept of pathic is understood as the "affective involvement that the perceiver feels unable to critically react to or mitigate the intrusiveness of."[7] In other words, we are open to what happens to us rather than what we do. Griffero states that a person who is pathically involved cannot wonder about their meaning of their involvement but only respond to wonder based on their pathically felt body. Both pathicity (immediate and involuntary) and wonderment (reflective) require being open to disorientation in the everyday. Therefore, to create a space for meaning whilst drawing in-situ, I must be 'subject to' the site's atmosphere in what Griffero calls the 'chaotic multiple of experience' and what phenomenologist Max van Manen refers to as the changing 'moods of landscape'.[8]

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Providing a premise that 'drawing is phenomenology,' practitioner-researcher Deborah Harty richly articulates the oscillation of the states of awareness that occurs within the drawing process between the environment as background and the awareness of mark making.[9] Critical to my research is the hypothesis of there being an alternative concept of 'atmospheres' that might provide a richer and more meaningful account of what is usually referred as 'background' or 'environment' within the drawing process. I shall illustrate through my engagement with 'site' how the philosophy of atmospheres provides a theoretical understanding of the influence of a site's atmosphere on the felt body as how one feels in the everyday 'lived space.' According to Böhme, atmospheres can be characterized as vague spaces with particular moods that can be produced and perceived.[10] By recording the atmospheric tone through in-situ and site-responsive drawings, I argue that the atmosphere and the artist 'co-create the world as we draw it.'[11]

The pathic approach to drawing is tied to pathic knowledge, meaning the felt body, the presence of the drawer and their tacit knowledge within contingent situations in a pre-reflective manner. Therefore, the drawing processes of drawing in-situ and site-responsive drawing records the 'emotional vibrations' of a site's atmosphere as perceived through the 'pathic sense and emotive modality of knowing' of the drawer.[12] A core aspect of Griffero's 'pathic aesthetics' project is the notion of half entities or 'quasi-things' which have expressive qualities that radiate in atmospheres. Quasi-things (e.g., wind, townscape, twilight) are always felt in the present and they have no edges or solid form, and are sporadic.[13] Atmospheres affect us emotionally as a specific and singular perceptual tone such that it is possible to discern how a site's atmospheric tone changes as it registers
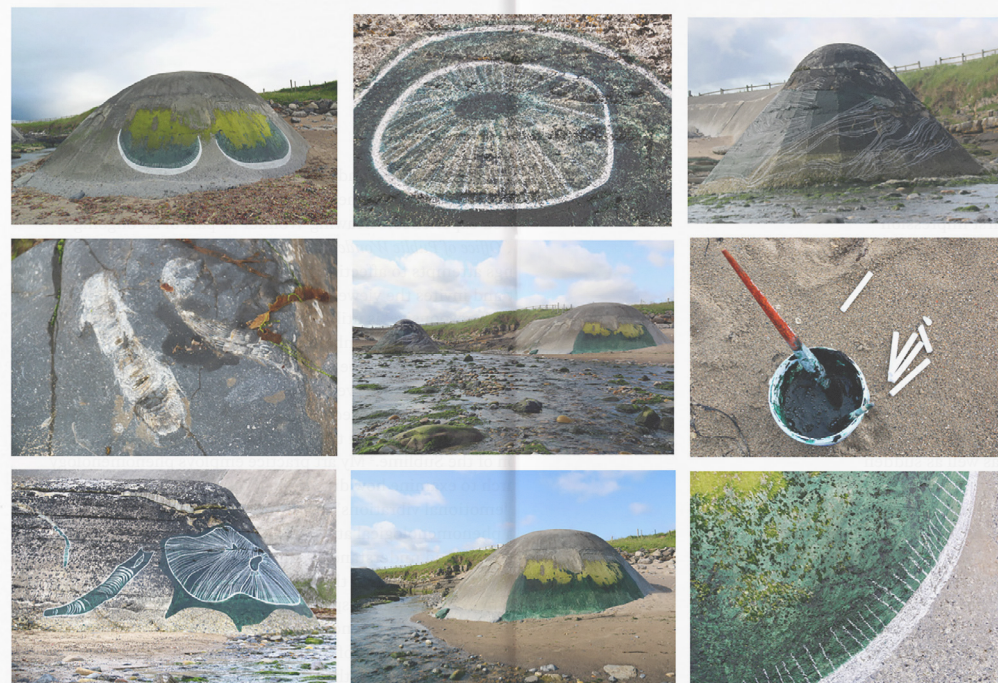
in the felt body due to "anesthesiologic and quasi-thingly sensibility."[14] This atmospheric tone, which is suffused with the affordances of quasi-things, affects the felt bodily sense of the drawer because it "awakens an echo in her body and because the body welcomes them."[15] Therefore, I posit that atmospheric perception effects the drawing outcome given that drawing can "record the trace of the drawer" and the emotional tone of *that* atmosphere and no other.[16] The atmospheric feeling is revealed from the initial mark on the surface which is an immediate affective and felt bodily experience. To 'feel' an atmosphere the drawer must be open and pathically (intuitively) attuned to a site's atmosphere, including the material, temporal, and corporeal characteristics.

Van Manen queries how best to describe the phenomena of a lived experience which is 'elusive' and problematic in trying to describe things because they are 'no-things'; nothings.[17] Yet, van Manen also advocates that we can create 'some-thing' that describes the holistic pathic aesthetic experience of the perceiver. When I draw something in situ, the perception of *that* 'some-thing' inevitably influences me one way or another. I record the perceived affordances that occur between the felt body and the environmental–qualia, not an associated representation of something. Consequently, drawing in-situ expresses my pathic experience of a site's atmosphere. Using pencil on paper, I draw various quasi-things such as bird sounds, the wind, or the lapping of the sea all of which seemed elusive and never wholly describable. The method of drawing in-situ expresses the gestural lines, the speed and direction of lines and the degree of pressure. These drawings are a way of attuning to the site's atmospheric tone rather than sketching objects or preparatory designs for the site-responsive drawings.

The site for 'Drawing Wonder' (Fig. 3) is two large bulwarks at the end of Dunmoran Strand surrounded by the Ox Mountains and farmlands in County Sligo in the West of Ireland. Note, a site is chosen only if it awakens a first impression and if it is located on or near a public walking area. It takes approximately 30 minutes to walk to the bulwarks. The initial marks were drawn directly onto the concrete surface only when the felt body was stirred by my pathic sense. I recognized the pathic sense when it evoked the atmospheric tone.[18] Layers of algae powder and seawater were initially applied before drawing with chalk. I began the drawing process from an intuitive process through which each line informed the next. Drawing repetitive lines becomes an act, a trace of the bodily experience and a basic leitmotif for the drawing process. Throughout the site-responsive drawing the chalk continually broke on the rough concrete surface, quickly replaced by new sticks of chalk. This act of interruption, as well as sudden unidentified sounds or the sense of being watched by a passer-by, impeded the flow of the drawing process. This process generated an innate awareness of the drawing process while continually being receptive to the affective and involuntary influence of the atmosphere.[19]

As I have illustrated previously, the atmospheric charge always and already influences the drawing process and in turn affects the felt body. The site-responsive drawings as mentioned above makes visible the correlative perceptual relationship between the atmospheric charge and the drawer which affects and is co-present in the drawing. Furthermore, when I draw something in a particular way it is always meaningfully integrated with the site. The site-responsive drawing is resolved only when it resounds in the felt body of the drawer and validates the pathic experience as an 'evidential understanding or truth that stirs our sensibilities'.[20] Therefore, drawing is a record of an experience and a way of materializing a site's emotional vibration. The drawing does not facilitate a representation of the human psyche but opens a different realm of the human existence, which is that of a pathic experience. Throughout this project there has been no attempt to create representative or illusionary drawings. Rather, the goal is to instill an orientation of openness within the drawing process to, as van Manen says, 'reawaken the basic experience the world,' and in doing so, we may 'hear the uncanny rumble of existence and create a *'holding space'* where wonderment may be sustained.[21]

1 Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another, Site Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts & London, England: Mit Press, 2004), 1.
2 Genevieve Llyod, *Reclaiming Wonder: After the Sublime* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 16.
3 Max van Manen, *Phenomenology of Practice, Meaning–Giving Methods in Phenomenological Research and Writing* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, Inc., 2014), 268–271.
4 Tonino Griffero, foreward to *Places, Affordances, Atmospheres, A Pathic Aesthetics.* London: New York: Routledge, 2020), ix.
5 Gernot Böhme, ed., *The Aesthetics of Atmosphere,* trans. Jean-Paul Thibaud (London: New York: Routledge, 2017), 91.
6 Griffero, *Places, Affordances, Atmospheres.*
7 Tonino Griffero, foreword to *Quasi-Things, The Paradigm of Atmospheres,* trans. Sarah De. Santis (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2017), vii.
8 _____Van Manen, *Phenemenology,* 269.
9 Deborah Harty, "Trailing temporal trace" in *Drawing Ambiguity: Beside the Lines of Contemporary Art,* ed. Phil Sawdon and Russel Marshall (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2015), 51–65.
10 Böhme, *The Aesthetics of Atmospheres.*
11 Laurence Schmidlin, "Drawing as a Tool for Mapping the Body in Space" in *Body, Space, and Place in Collective and Collaborative Drawing,* ed. Jill Journeaux, Helen Gørill and Sara Read (n.p.: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2020), 39 -51.
12 Van Manen, *Phenemenology,* 269.
13 Griffero, *Places, Affordances, Atmospheres;* Griffero, *Quasi-Things.*
14 Griffero, *Quasi-Things,* vii.
15 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception,* trans. Colin Smith (London, New York: Routeldge, 2005), 4.
16 Deborah Harty, "Drawing//experience, a process of translation," (PhD Diss., Loughborough University, 2009). https://hdl. handle.net/2134/10911.
17 Van Manen, *Phenomenology,* 242.
18 Ibid., 269.
19 Harty, "Drawing//experience"; Deborah Harty, "drawing// phenomenology//drawing, an exploration of the phenomenological potential of repetitive processes," *TRACEY| Journal* (January 2012). https://repository.lboro.ac.uk/articles/ journal_contribution/drawing_phenomenology_drawing_an_ exploration_of_the_phenomenological_potential_of_repetitive_ processes/9335147
20 Van Manen, *Phenemenology,* 269.
21 Max van Manen, "Practicing Phenomenological Writing," *Phenomenology + Pedagogy* 1, no. 2 (1984):40. https://doi.org/10.29173/pandp14931

Firmament

We inherited the constellations above us from our ancestors, throughout thousands of years of mystical sciences, religion, philosophy, and politics. They are ancestral mysteries meant to stay unresolved. They are the writings on the ceiling of our cave.

—

Niccolò Moronato

Jessica Taylor
on
Niccolò Moronato

Firmament is an ongoing, multi-media, cross-disciplinary project and body of work by artist Niccolò Moronato which is located on the Earth-like planet Trappist -1e (discovered in 2017 at 40 light years away from us). Here, I say 'located' in the intentional way in which Walter Mignolo and Catherine Walsh locate their project of decoloniality in the place where they think—that is, an act of positioning in itself which is provoked by the history of that place since the inception of coloniality. Significantly, in doing so, they acknowledge that 'their thinking does not end nor are they only located there.'

To locate in this sense is to think from a place with the history of that place and beyond it. Moronato's choice of an alternative 'side' of the sky as the position from which to think is an attempt to challenge our geocentric knowledges and de-link from the weight of our inheritances on Earth. The Trappist vault is a sky with no orientation, where the locations of stars previously identified no longer exist and the constellations that have been mapped no longer serve their original purposes. *Firmament* consists of drawings, video works, performance, workshops, installation and artificial intelligence, the multiple formulations of which all assume a vantage point located on Trappist -1e. This location does not ignore the conditions of life on Earth or pretend that the reach of colonialism disguised as exploration does not extend into space, but instead it seeks to decenter Western scientific discourse and imagine multiple, different 'Earths'.

The analytical frame of *Firmament* enables us to point at the force / gravity of our inheritances – the myths and stories that are the presumed objectivity of scientific knowledge, the masked naturalization of biological determination, the sedimented racialization of geography, the white-walled neutrality of the museum. *Firmament* does not attempt the delicate unpicking of these inheritances. Instead the project provides us with a location from which to view their constructed nature and imagine alternative universes.

Fundamental to *Firmament* is its openness and its prioritization of curiosity and wonder over authority and knowledge. The title itself ironically denies any attempt at fixity, reminding us that nothing remains firm, especially our attempted control over our planet. While the history of man's exploration was undertaken for the sake of 'advancement', Moronato's quest for discovery lies in a belief that collectively we can move, think and live differently.

His re-tooling of the very devices he critiques stands in contrast to my own tendency to abandon the tools that no longer serve me. Moronato uses twentieth-century navigation and bathymetric charts as materials for his drawings, rendering them canvases upon which to plot new constellations. He reminds us that scientific maps and charts are subjective instances of mark-making, and he buries them in pigment, building upon them with graphite and ink, allowing new maps to come in and out of focus.

Here, I need to grapple with the levity with which Moronato approaches maps. A methodology of the deep unearthing of alternative geographies and readings of landscape has driven my research for the past year, and in one fell swoop Moronato shows us that we can respond to the fallacy of map-making and the subjectiveness of orientation by simply re-calibrating ourselves in order to reveal and refuse historicized conceptualizations of the universe and our position within it.

To re-orient the point of our astronomical observation for Moronato is to demystify the sky and observe it as public space. This change of perspective undermines single, authoritative readings of the world but is also itself a construction, a myth which brings with it a new set of preconceptions that we move against. To ensure the project's instability, Moronato embraces collaborations with other practitioners, as was the case with the public programme *An Alternative Map of the Universe* which departed from Firmament and was co-curated by Moronato, artist Abbas Zahedi and myself. Presented in London in 2019, the programme brought together artists and thinkers who, through their work, assume critical observation points. It also included a 'Star Survey', a workshop that Moronato hosts for members of the public to imagine their own constellations.

These invitations to participate lend to a growing body of work and an inter-subjective archive of constellations. This archive itself becomes a map of accumulations, holding the potential to be a map that contains all maps. This potential sky is created through the perceptions of an always-increasing number of people. Moronato projects fragments of constellations as viewed from Trappist -1e onto walls and screens, inviting members of the public to collectively envision what the constellation could look like, their visions expanding beyond the limits of the slide to the
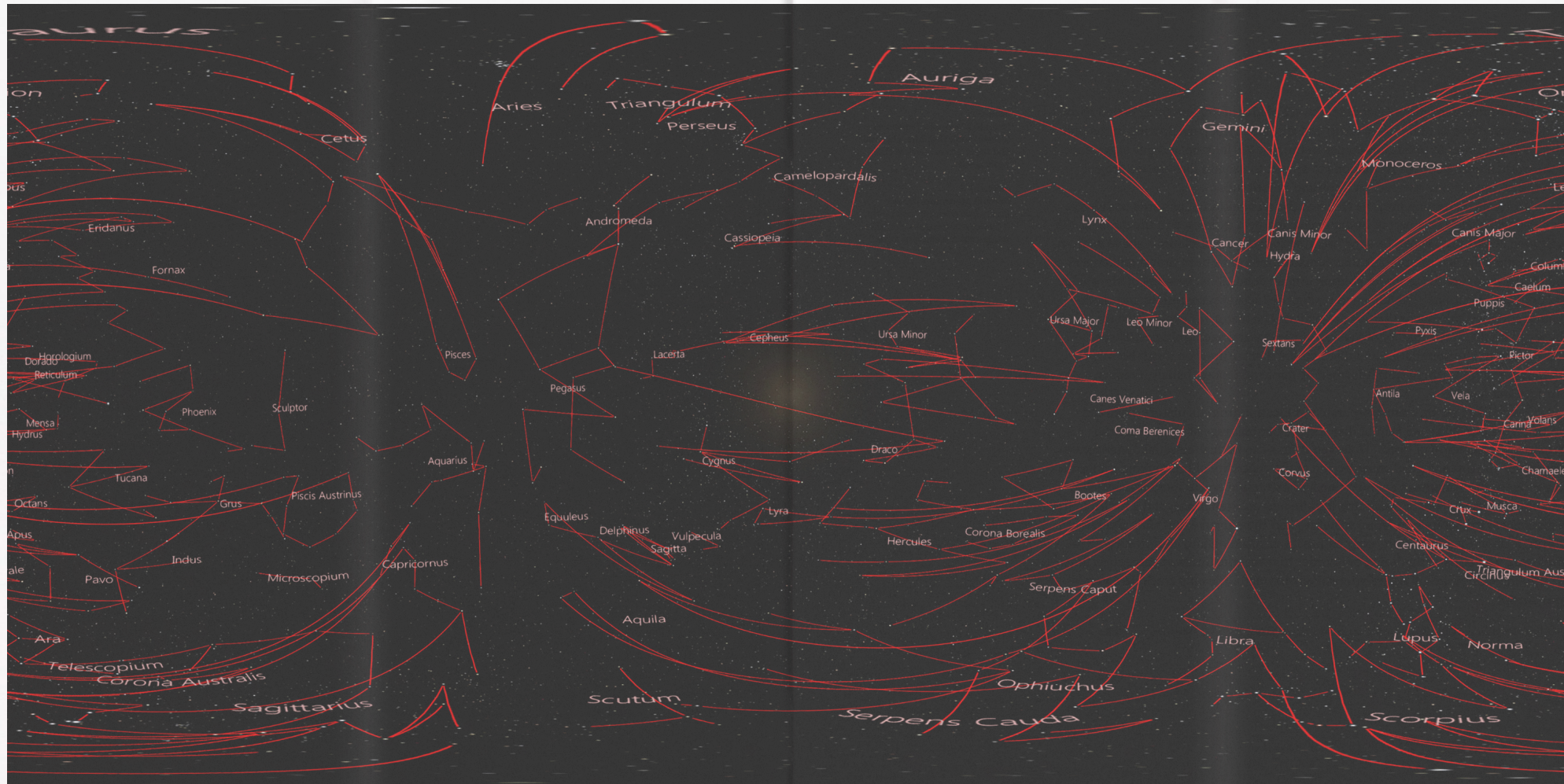
Niccolò Moronato and Space
Visualization Lab of the Adler
Planetarium *Terrestrial constellations
as seen from Trappist-1e, 2018,*
Equirectangular digital projection,
Variable dimensions

outermost limits of location. Of course, the act of identifying anything is tied to our frames of reference as humans on Earth and the activity of participating in the Star Surveys is reminiscent of finding shapes in the sky. We look up and our experience of the world allows different formations to appear to us, and likewise we project onto the projection our own recognitions and inheritances.

Moronato is leaning into the fact that the recognition of patterns has always been and will always be a part of human behavior, best expressed in the quote at the beginning of this text. When he says "we inherited the constellations above us from our ancestors" he is reminding us that constellations have been drawn and erased and re-drawn for centuries under shifting human conditions, systems of knowledge and political intentions. Thinking and reading are acts of recognition, and mark-making and map-making are acts of projection. The history of exploration is a history of myths. It is a history of looking at the sky and seeing shapes. Those shapes, that is, the boundaries and distinctions that we draw on Earth between humans and nature, are in turn informed by our experiences, beliefs, dreams, journeys and fears.

Much like how we cannot separate our location from its history since the inception of coloniality, we cannot disentangle our readings of space from the extractive colonization of Earth. However, from a theoretical/celestial distance, we can: survey the mythological construction of the centrality of humankind on Earth; acknowledge the systems of colonization and extraction erected under that myth; welcome and participate in imagining infinite new constellations; and a multiplicity of readings of humanity in relation to nature and the universe that shift and remain unfirm. *Firmament* as a body of work embraces negotiation and compromise, employing a layering of mythologies in order to reveal the limits of perception and the infinite possibilities of our relations. For Moronato, the only truth we can rely on is change.

1 Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh, *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), 2.

(top)
Niccolò Moronato *Firmament* (detail), 2019, Graphite, charcoal and India ink on nautical chart, 240 x 150cm

(bottom)
Niccolò Moronato *The Star Survey (still from live event)*, 2019, 8 participants, 80 min. duration, Image credit: Katarzyna Perla
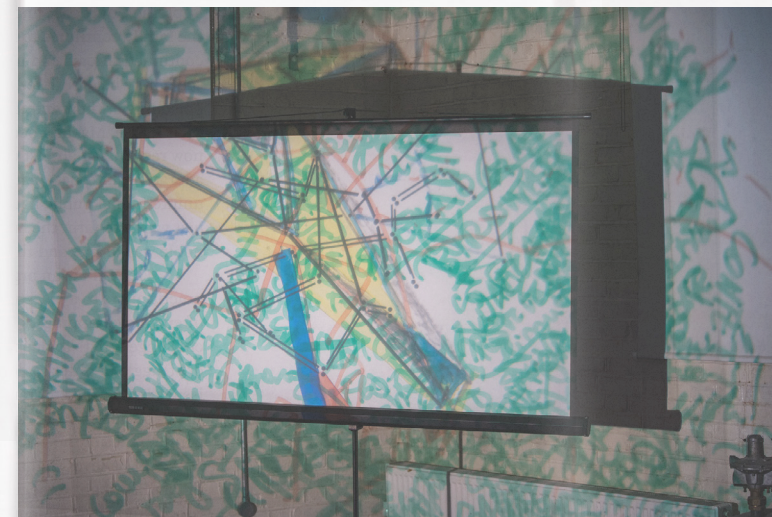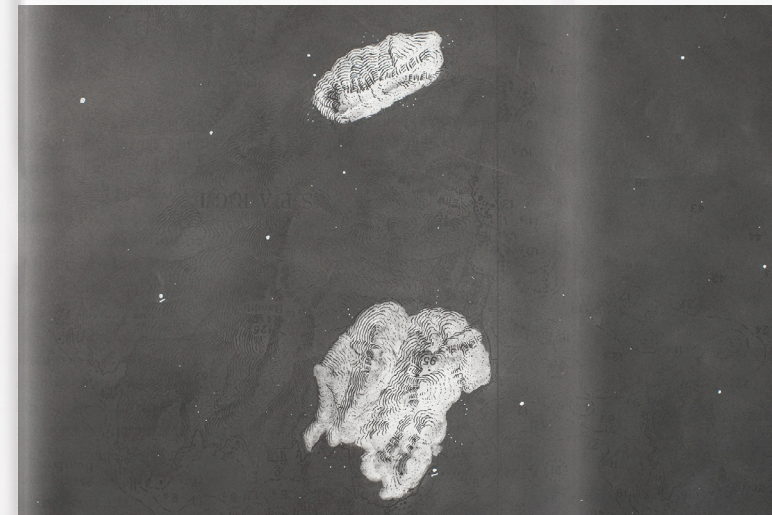
Acompañamiento

On a frigid July day in 2019, at 4000 meters above sea level on a mountainside in the Cajamarca region of the Peruvian Andes, Daniel Chaupe said to us, "Bring your artists here, because we need to be *acompañado* (accompanied)." We huddled by the kitchen fire outside his family's rammed earth house as dense banks of fog obscured all but a meter or so in front of us. When the wind whipped through and lifted the fog, we could make out the surveillance post perched on the closest hillside and a big white 4x4 driving back and forth on the access road that the miners had built along the perimeter of the Chaupe-Acuña family's land.

Above us, hanging on the wall was a painting depicting the mass protests that had taken place on this land in 2010 when the multinational mining company—which now had possession of hundreds of hectares of land surrounding us—had tried to evict the Chaupe-Acuña family by force. Several people were killed during those protests which galvanized a national movement around land and water rights and against the impunity of mining corporations. Daniel's mother, Máxima, a weaver and campesina, became the figurehead of the movement, eventually taking her family's case all the way to Peru's Supreme Court.

By the time we were sitting watching the fog with Daniel and his wife Maribel, the battle had been raging for almost ten years. Despite Máxima having won the Supreme Court case and been awarded the Goldman Environmental Prize in 2016, the family continues to live in a state of uncertainty and hyper vigilance due to continued threats and unrelenting surveillance. Over the course of the past decade, the family have suffered near-constant persecution including physical assaults, the poisoning of their animals, the destruction of their crops and the demolishing of their house. Máxima became a household name in Peru during those years and is now recognized almost everywhere she goes. That has meant both harassement and adoration; international awards but also illness brought on by the stress of being an unintentional public figure. Daniel, who lives on the land with his wife and daughter, just wants to farm the land, to prove that the black soil is fertile, that farming is a noble way of life, and that water is more important than gold.

HAWAPI is an organization that each year takes a group of interdisciplinary practitioners to a place where a particular struggle (political, social, environmental, often all overlapping) is central to daily life. HAWAPI's primary mission is to challenge artists to deepen their engagement with work related to sites of conflict or struggle in order to develop more nuanced public conversations around issues impacting communities beyond major urban centers. Providing artists the opportunity to work in these contexts compels them to grapple with the complexities of the place, in order to better understand critical regional issues. HAWAPI believes that art that wants to approach sites and conditions of struggle or conflict ought to begin with making an effort to approach and listen to the people and environments most effected in order to develop works, strategies,

> Máxima became a household name in Peru during those years and is now recognized almost everywhere she goes.

Susie Quillinan

proposals and conversations from an encounter with that particular place. This is the phase of the project we call the *encuentro*, and after we return home, HAWAPI creates opportunities to connect the works, research and thinking that happen on site with a wider public through strategies of display and dialogue such as exhibitions, public programming, publications and conversations.

When we proposed taking ten artists to camp on the Chaupe-Acuña family's land and make work over two weeks for HAWAPI's seventh edition, *HAWAPI 2019 – Máxima Acuña*, we anticipated that the family's interest in the project would be related to a need for visibility, in order to remind the public of their plight. In fact, visibility seemed to be the very thing that had wearied them. Daniel often complained of his mother being instrumentalized by the media and politicians looking for a photo opportunity or a story, who stayed only long enough to capture their images and then head back down the mountain. In the meantime, subjected to constant surveillance by the mine's security forces and local police, the family endured a condition of hypervisibility and simultaneous lack of proximity or companionship. Daniel was understandably exhausted by these circumstances, and what he and his family craved instead of visibility was *acompañamiento*.[1]

Acompañamiento as a strategy has roots in Latin American liberation theology of the 1970s and 80s and one of its most prominent advocates was Oscar Romero, the Archbishop of El Salvador. The acompañamiento that Romero advocated for was a practice of listening and learning with the oppressed and dispossessed in order to achieve the goals of mutual liberation and a new social order. Romero asked his fellow priests to take up the practice in order to better understand the reality of the campesinos suffering at the hands

of an unjust social and political system during the country's civil war. "Accompany them," he said. "Take the same risks they do."[2] What Romero described as the effect of practicing acompañamiento is echoed in what black liberation theologian James Cone has described as "a radical reorientation of one's existence in the world."[3] As one might expect, such a reorientation demands thinking anew about what one knows and *knows how to know*, opening up capacity for new ideas and interpretations to emerge.[4] In Romero's case, that even included learning to read the bible in another way and precipitated his dramatic transformation from conservative ally to the elite and powerful to radical liberation theologist, eventually leading to his assassination in 1980.[5]

Since Romero's death, acompañamiento as a strategy of radical interdependence has been taken up in other fields including global health, liberation psychology, peace studies, migrant justice movements and land rights struggles across the Americas and throughout the world. American Studies scholars Barbara Tomlinson and George Lipsitz have offered two metaphors to describe acompañamiento: "participating with and augmenting a community of travellers on a road [and] as participating with others to create music."[6] The practice of acompañamiento is primarily about being present, not intervening or trying to solve someone else's problem. Ethnic Studies Professor Laurel Mei-Singh has described this dynamic with relation to the notion of allyship.

"While allyship stresses the recognition of privilege, accompaniment breaks out of the carceral logics of innocence and culpability through a commitment to wrestling with the complexities, incoherent ideologies and experiences that emerge from uneven power relations".[7] This is not to say that acompañamiento is without its own pitfalls. It can still succumb to the risk of re-inscribing existing power disparities by working from within compromised dynamics which create the conditions for some people to accompany while others are accompanied. To this end, the practice itself demands a reckoning with the kinds of uneven power relations at work and insists on seeking mutuality, in the sense of bringing fully one's willingness for critical reflexivity and radical interdependence.

It is this commitment to grappling with complexities, interdependency and critical reflexivity in which "accompaniment redefines knowledge and the relations of power that constitute it, refusing mastery while embracing experimentation."[8] In other words, acompañamiento, demands an openness to all that one does *not* know. As Marisol de la Cadena and Mario Blaser have pointed out, "Inasmuch as knowledges are world-making practices, they tend to make the worlds they know." By insisting on the partiality of all knowledge, acompañamiento creates the conditions for truly thinking with others, for sharing, making and unmaking knowledges and worlds. It is also worth pointing out, that while acompañamiento

recognises that all knowledge is partial, it does not seek a merging of distinct knowledges towards a hybrid position. Its concern is with generating spaces for knowledge encounters in which positions or propositions *keep company with* each other.

In this sense, acompañamiento offers a way of 'knowing-with' rather than 'knowing-about.'[9] It insists on an engagement with what Suely Rolnik has called "the knowing-body" which demands the "subtle and complex work that implies making [one's] own body vulnerable to the surrounding forces and listening to its effects."[10] Just as Romero's experiences with acompañamiento allowed him to read the bible in another way, acompañamiento as a practice in the art and curatorial field has the potential to not only generate new knowledges but also to *know in a different way* the categories, histories and ideas that dominate and sometimes calcify into dogma, entrenching not only knowledges, but also the methods and modes used to generate and express them.

In many ways, this is central to HAWAPI's approach. By taking artists out of their comfort zones and asking them to make work in an environment where at times the conditions are challenging (especially to artists accustomed to working in a studio in urban centers), or the complexities of an issue seen from a different perspective are dizzying, and sometimes paralyzing, the process aims to destabilize a sense of "mastery" and calls on the artists to grapple with relations of power inherent in their practices. HAWAPI director Maxim Holland reflected on this in his essay in the publication *HAWAPI 2019 – Máxima Acuña.*

"Given the nature of the current stage in their resistance to the Conga project, it is not surprising that Máxima and her family repeatedly expressed to us a need for acompañamiento in their struggle. I believe we all internalised and tried to act on this request during our time in Tragadero Grande. This was manifested, not only through the sharing of space, time, meals, conversation, routine and labour, but also through the artists' processes, which focused on modes of care, reparation, affect and collectivity. The artists' work helped me to appreciate how acts of *acompañamiento* can draw attention to the intersection of diverse circumstances, and how this can encourage the alignment of overlapping objectives in order to pursue a necessary rebalancing of power."[11]

Daniel's call for acompañamiento that afternoon shone a light on a practice we have come to understand as central to HAWAPI and its methods. It has always been HAWAPI's approach to not stake a claim on "impacts" or suggest that we can offer something specific to the places where we go to work. Rather HAWAPI seeks opportunities for an adjacency, whereby living, working and being alongside one another constitutes a form of collective knowledge making. Acompañamiento deepens this position by proposing a relationship to knowledge making and sharing, and ultimately to rebalancing power relations, which is

partial, cumulative, durational, experimental and fundamentally based on "reaching across rather than down...confronting a tendency to operate as atomized individuals."[12] Daniel's call for acompañamiento then, marked and guided not only the seventh edition of HAWAPI, but in many ways it drew attention to a central tenet of the project, which has always been present, and it continues to encourage us to broaden the ways in which we reflect on and develop our methods and practice.

1 Although the direct English translation of acompañamiento is accompaniment, this narrows its colloquial meaning in Spanish, which encompasses ideas of solidarity, co-existence and sharing. We choose to use the Spanish term in order to highlight these connotations and honour where the term, as we are thinking about it, emerged from.
2 María López Virgil, *Oscar Romero: Memories in Mosaic* (London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 2000), 213.
3 James Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2013), 103.
4 Barbara Tomlinson and George Lipsitz. "American Studies as Accompaniment." *American Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (2013): 1–30, 11.
5 Tomlinson et al., *American Studies*, 11.
6 Tomlinson et al., *American Studies*, 9.
7 Laurel Mei-Singh. «Accompaniment Through Carceral Geographies: Abolitionist Research Partnerships with Indigenous Communities.» *Antipode* 53, no. 1 (2021): 9. doi: 10.1111/anti.12589.
8 Mei-Singh, *Accompaniment Through Carceral Geographies*, 7.
9 Boaventura De Sousa Santos. *The End of the Cognitive Empire: The Coming of Age of Epistemologies of the South* (Durham : Duke University Press, 2018), 15.
10 Suely Rolnik, "The Knowing-body Compass in Curatorial Practices," *Theater* 47, no. 1 (2017): 116–38, 131.
11 Maxim Holland, "Máxima: The Nature and Terms of a Conflict," in *HAWAPI 2019 – Máxima Acuña* (Lima: Etiqueta Negra, 2019), 76. https://ad629a77-01f9-4b9f-9a24-81cda3db6374.filesusr.com/ugd/e4ec04_6d3fdfa31df24d3084414ccc38cba98d.pdf.
12 Mei-Singh, *Accompaniment Through Carceral Geographies*, 9.

(2,2) 0 Sonic Architecture of the Inner Space

Invisibledrum Art Platform (aka Amalia Fonfara, and Nazaré Soares)

Invisibledrum Art Platform *2,2 0 – Dora, Spirithole*, 2018, Kulturbunker Dora, Trondheim, Norway.

(2,2) 0 – Sonic Architecture of the Inner Space **is a mixed media installation created as part of a collaborative between Nazare Soares, Øystein Kjørstad Fjeldbo and Amalia Fonfara.** The central component is an interactive spatial sound composition presented in blackened space accompanied by a two-channel film installation and a durational performance located in a waiting room outside the sound component. This results in a cinematic space where the external visual stimulus is removed. The interactive installation utilizes real-time rendered binaural sound systems. We have taken the structure of a (2,2) mode shamanic drum as our reference and built an invisible architecture which is experienced sonically inside a completely dark space through wireless headphones. The aural experience is limited to one person, and each decides the duration of their visit. We have developed diagrams and maps which depict a spatial sound composition made from qualities and motions of sound events. As part of the creative process of developing the sonic landscape, we have also applied methods from shamanic and animistic practices. Using these methods, we have created the invisible sonic architecture within the installation. In each acoustic room, the movements of all sound objects are linked to a ritual gesture developed for each room, weaving together the invisible architecture in *(2,2) 0*. These ritual gestures are based upon Nordic animistic cosmology, which consequently connect the cardinal directions and the four elements together: Earth – West, Water – South, Fire – East and Air – North.

To enter *(2,2) 0*, one walks through a red velvet curtain inspired by early cinema, pre-cinematic magic shows, and illusionary practices developed in theatrical settings and also informed by Heinrich Khunrath's imaginary *Amphitheater of Eternal Wisdom* or Lynchian concepts of the *Black Lodge*. An encounter with *(2,2) 0* potentially generates strong emotional and physical

Invisibledrum: Amalia Fonfara, Øystein Kjørstad Fjeldbo and Nazaré Soares
(2,2) 0 – DORA (Installation view – performer instructing visitor into), 2018, Kulturbunker Dora, Trondheim, Norway.

experiences, for the beholder is exposed to the binaural composition within a completely dark space. This demanding more aspect is accompanied by a durational performance throughout the exhibition period, which takes place in a waiting area outside *(2,2) 0*. This waiting area performs a significant role in the work, allowing the artists to facilitate and accommodate visitors entering and exiting *(2,2) 0* by providing instructional information beforehand as well as a soft transition after exiting. The waiting area also features informational papers, maps and a log where each visitor is invited to express their experiences in writing or drawing. Other moving image works are also placed in the waiting area.

"The body not as mechanical object but as magical entity."[1]

(2,2) 0 uses language found in animistic and ecofeminist practice with a view to decolonizing cognitive and somatic sensory systems, and to address notions of invisibility and vacuum within the virtual environment. This component potentially invites the following questions: How does the body relates to its environment without the external references of a physical space for navigation? How might disorienting and displacing the observer's external experience place emphasis within the body? What do we define as the virtual in contemporary media culture? What technologies, techniques and languages used work together to produce the virtual? How might we approach a correlation between technology and animism in a contemporary and digital society?

(2,2) 0 nature offers multiple possible times and realities co-existing in the same place. Consequently, visitors must use their intuitive instincts for reorientation. Although most human beings rely on sight to code spaces, by placing visitors in a completely dark environment, a new sensual hierarchy seeks to challenge cognitive

processes of bodily orientation. The interaction with an abstracted binaural soundscape expands the experience of disorientation, thus challenging a visitor's spatial perception. Accordingly, the work attempts to use technological tools to produce mental states where environments can be perceived in a nonconventional way. Interacting with the work can evoke a heightened awareness of bodily senses and thereby challenge how we perceive what Karen Barad has referred to as 'spacetimemattering.'[2] Visitors have described how involuntary memories and previous experiences are recalled, and how by entering the work, recollections of the past are evoked without conscious process.

Given its technological realization, the work also serves as an investigation into the ontology of virtual spaces, and by extension, how these are perceived through new media and sensing technology. Potential relations between body, space and technology are set within *(2,2) o*, in such a way such that the virtual and the real merged within the interaction of the dark space. The way in which the sonic architecture affects the senses fare explicitly perceived by the body. These seemingly external forces add layers of motion, speed and intensity to the different sound objects that become the events triggering the virtual within the imaginary world of the visitor.[3] Significantly, the work approaches the virtual and its relation to the potential from a Bergsonian understanding of immanence.

(2,2) o aims to create a space in which the subject is object and where, through self-negation of nothing, something will emerge:"of the subject itself, as the outcome of its own impossibility."[4] The conceptual approach underpinning the work is rooted in emancipatory views of the non-place as a space where one can escape from labor and the capital production of realities, and where ideologies cannot exploit or "win hearts and minds."[5] Consequently, meaning collapses by opposition

of qualities of the I, therefore giving rise to the potential for "corporeal reality" famously outlined by Julia Kristeva:

> The abject has only one quality of the object—that of being opposed to I. If the object, however, through its opposition, settles me within the fragile texture of a desire for meaning, which, as a matter of fact, makes me ceaselessly and infinitely homologous to it, what is abject, on the contrary, the jettisoned object, is radically excluded and draws me toward the place where meaning collapses.[6]

Meditative Devices
The research that underpins this work seeks to develop a meta-critique of sight perception in relation to virtual, real and imaginary spaces that is inspired by the ancient technology of shamanism and animistic practices used for communicating within inanimate and animate realms. From a media ecology perspective, we recognize that affect and emotion are vulnerable to new technologies. Consequently, we believe that bodily and haptic information can sometimes eclipse linguistic system. *(2,2) o* offers a somatosensory system as a tool for communication and functions as a physical system that embraces potentials in virtual dimensions thus understanding the coexistence of systems as multiple levels of resonance.[7]

Our research presents a correlation between technology and shamanism in which the technology of shamanism and shamanism of technology are inseparable. Here, shamanism is both understood as a technology to produce knowledge and as a pursuit of intuitive powers goes using technology.[8] Our practice-based research engagement with animism and shamanism is centered upon Nordic and arctic field of shamanism such as Seidr (Nordic), Noaid (Sami) and Angakkoq (Inuit). Although there are different aspects to the tradition's worldview and techniques within each culture, they all encompass a shared understanding of a real living reality of Spirits. We suggest that the technology of shamanism and that of digital technology can merge and reawaken this magical world of spirit through the imagination of our contemporary human minds, where we can come to glimpse and maybe acknowledge an animistic view of the Spirit World.

While making the work, we applied techniques of shamanic drum journeys to access our own inner cinematic space and interconnectedness with the invisible world. Every session served as a creative oracle, following steps through phases and processes of content making which inspired aural events within *(2,2) o*. The sound sources are from work field and studio recordings created from a translation of information received in our collective journeys in the historical locations. We located leaks within associative systems through dream sign strategies found
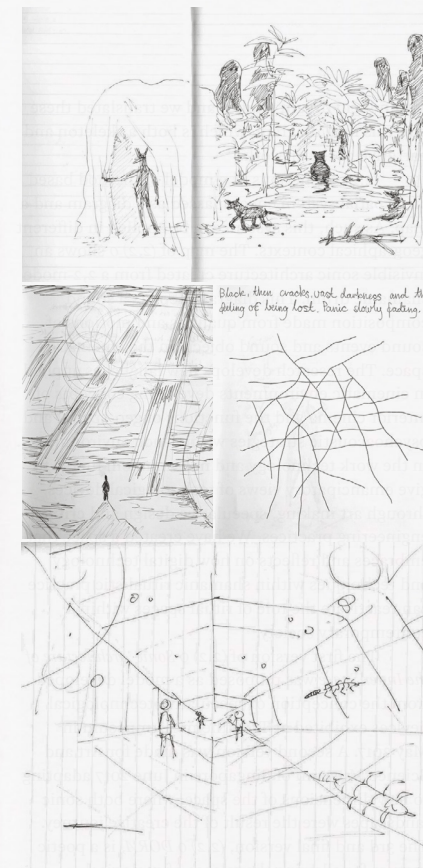
within lucid dream studies and we translated these into this final diagram, which is both a skeleton and narrative of the artwork.[9]

(2,2) 0 functions as a model or method based on a spatial system encompassed as a diagram and a map. As such, this system can be applied in different geographical contexts. The map of *(2,2) 0* shows an invisible sonic architecture created from a 2,2-mode shamanic drum. This diagram depicts a sound composition made from qualities and motions of sound events and sound objects in the cinematic space. The research develops new languages applied in cinematic environments developing concepts of interior cinema and the functions of geo-spatial and psychoacoustic strategies within such environments. In the work technology and neo-animism merge to give emancipatory views of technological devices through art making, speculative design and critical engineering practices. We have created a space that embraces and reflects on how digital technology and techniques within shamanic ritualistic practice can reactivate the role of ritual spaces within a contemporary society.

The first version of (2,2) 0 *Sonic Architecture of the Inner Space* was proposed as a model developed from the conception of speculative technological devices exhibited at Trondheim Artmuseum in May 2017. A second version was made for Art and Science Museum of Singapore in June 2017 adapting to new dimensions of the space, where both sonic landscapes were the result of the creative journey. The 3rd and final version, *(2,2) 0 DORA,* is a poetic gesture for allowing the release of geological and historical trauma of a specific site; the sonic architecture was created in June 2018 within the historical context of the World War II German U-Boats base Dora in Trondheim. The base was the largest naval base in North Europe at that time, and the strategic location in Trondheim was secured well, guarded by three other locations in the mouth

of Trondheim Fjord: Agdenes Fyrstasjon, Hysnes Fort, Brettingen Fort. In addition to its conceptual and theoretical originality, the project has received a considerable number of visitors. Many visitors have a strong physical and cognitive experience during which involuntary memories emerge from deep physical and emotional sensations. Many visitors also describe illusions of imagery given by the phenomenon of afterimages and stages of synesthesia.

1 David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World* (New York: Random House, INC, 1996). 10–15
2 Karen Barad, *Meeting the universe halfway: quantum physics and the entanglement of matter and meaning* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007). 234.
3 Eleni Ikoniadou, *The Rhythmic Event: Art, Media, and the Sonic* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014).
4 Slovaj Žižek, *Absolute recoil: Towards a New Foundation of Dialectical Materialism* (London & New York: Verso, 2014). 150.
5 Lawrence Grossberg, Affect's Future: Rediscovering the Virtual in the Actual. In M. Gregg & G. J. Seigworth (Eds.), *The Affect theory reader* (Durham: Duke University Press. 2010). 309
6 Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: an essay on abjection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982). 1–2.
7 Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002).
8 Fabiane M. Borges, "Technoshamanism and Wasted Ontologies," interviewed by Bia Martins and Reynaldo Carvalho, *TCNXMNSM* (blog), June 14, 2017, https://tecnoxamanismo. wordpress.com/2017/06/14/technoshamanism-and-wasted-ontologies/
9 *Conscious Mind, Sleeping Brain. Perspectives on Lucid Dreaming,* ed. Stephen LaBerge and Jayne Gackenback (New York and London: Plenum Press, 1988).

Invisibledrum Map of *(2,2) 0* showing the invisible sonic architecture with graphic spatial visualization of a composition of sonic qualities and motion

Islands of Time

Niccolò Masini

Niccolò Masini *Nomadic borders*, 2019, Plastic, dust, bones, desert rocks, rusted metals, and paper, Personal archive, El Boujdour Refugee camp / Western Sahara territories

Islands of Time explores relationships between the formulation of intangible feelings of belonging and the construction of geographical identity. The project attempts to transcend linear conceptions of time and instead approach issues such as memory and movement by considering past, present, and future as deeply entangled within a global geopolitical context. It examines collective memory and the archive as a representational construction with a view to weaving new historical textures. To do this, the project draws upon diasporic archives to develop a series of multidisciplinary visual/cinematic experimentations. It seeks to provide a vehicle for observing tangible and intangible migratory processes, mappings, and traces in relationship to borders and colonization, together with the economic and political forces that have imposed precarious labor conditions and attenuated other histories.

For each case study, the work will seek to draw links between political propaganda and ideologies that have defined geographical borders. To achieve this, substantial on-site fieldwork will be conducted with a view to illuminating something of the role that colonization has played geographically is areas particularly impacted by migratory processes. Accordingly, in each case study, the research will attempt to track sequences of events to identify shifting meanings and connotations associated with particular physical 'places'—be they temporary settlements, connection points, limits, crossing paths, or bridges.

The broader project includes on-site field research phases into different locations, which are all situated in geographical borders, borders of migration and of political displacements:

Location 01 – El Boujdour Refugee camp (MA/WS), Western Sahara territories – November 2019

Location 02 – Genoa/Ventimiglia (IT) – February/March 2021

Location 03 – Salina (IT), Aeolian Island – April/May 2021

Location 04 – Buenos Aires (IT), Argentina – October/December 2021

A central part of the research will involve the utilization and manipulation of both found migratory archives and living archives. This process encapsulates a spectrum of different artistic approaches to existing archives, systematic archives, unclassified archives, new archives, incomplete archives, hidden archives, and personal or third-party archives. Given the role of ethnographic practice in the creation of archives, and by extension the way in which a state controls narratives relating to diasporic cultural identity, memory, and experience using archives,

the role of archival materials in the development and sustainability of social systems can be explained through the concept of social memory. This concept can be understood from two perspectives: 1) as social individual memory—a cognitive process that is affected by the general social context in which an individual exists and, in particular, by communities to which s/he belongs, and; 2) as collective memory—a community process involving the development images of the past through groups of individuals.[1] The existence of collective representations of the past is grounded in several features of individual memory. First, memory depends on the interests of the present and is not a mechanical reproduction of past events. Second, memories are constructed as a result of the interaction of an individual with her environment.[2] Memory is a dynamic process which can change in accordance with the needs and life context of an individual.[3] Individual recollections are of course influenced by membership in communities that form the social memory environment. Communities are remarkable for common needs and interests, which become what Halbwachs called 'Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire' [social frameworks of memory].[4] Consequently, when individuals "recall" events or experiences that may precede their birth, these recollections can typically be very similar within the same communities. Social frameworks, in Halbwachs' words, are "precisely the instruments used by the collective memory to construct an image of the past which is in accord, in each epoch, with the predominant thoughts of the society."[5]

So, when does something that belongs to the realm of memory begin to be represented in the realm of history? Following the legacies of reckless colonialism, new conceptions and definitions of borders and diaspora would emerge. These "new" diasporic phenomena might include factors such as displacement, forced migration, and dispersion of individuals away from their homelands as a consequence of forces such as globalization, neoliberalism, and imperialism. What we see today is a result of centuries of forced displacement, and not simply a consequence of increased global migration in present times. Today, complex geographical insubordinations can give rise to a questioning of the very concept of "belonging." Bearing in mind that mobility is a privilege confined to specific subjects and geographies, it is necessary to reflect and reconsider diasporic phenomena in a more visual way. ` And given the nature of dystopian representation of collective memory across time, how might we present our understandings in a broader global context and layering of time? Is it by highlighting personal memories and untold histories?

Borders and border regions can be particularly revealing places for social research, especially in the present era of growing globalization and the continued growth of the European Union.[6]A border represents a place, a territory where "past" and "future" are permanently clashing. The "past" is never simply a static or

Niccolò Masini *Nomadic Experience, "Memory as a form of resilience"*, (Performance), 2019, 6 x 2 m, Sahara's sand, water, camp's water, dust, pigments, and used engine oil on linen, El Boujdour Refugee camp, Western Sahara territories (In collaboration with Escuela de Formación Audiovisual Abidin Kaid Salehand the *Resistance Sahara* Documentary by Sidal Ergüder-Zero state productions Ltd), Image Credit: Gerard Aparicio*camp* / Western Sahara territories

ossified entity. Perhaps we should conceive borders and identity from a new materialist perspective—in which the "future" is not what will unfold; instead, "past" and "future" are iteratively reconfigured and enfolded through the world's ongoing intra-activity. According to a new materialist perspective, the "past" remains open to change—for it "it can be redeemed, productively reconfigured in an iterative unfolding of space, time, matter."[7] For, as Achille Mbembe more or less put it in 2018, borders used to be places to facilitate exchange and relations.[8]

Life stories typically include multiple frames of reference. Consequently, transnational experience and biographical identities are inherently multiple, changing, and at times conflicting. Perhaps, rather than seeing layered or nested identities, it is potentially sensible to recognize a mosaic of situationally relevant identities with the context determining identity. This is especially the case within the narratives of migrants, people involved in intimate transnational relationships, and children from mixed marriages. In these contexts, feelings of diasporic and transnational belonging are relatively common. By extension, multiple attachments can be conceptualized as a dimension of 'transnational belonging,' in which mobile individuals forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement.[9]

This research, which offers as a tangible representation of the idea of a border within the context of understandings of culture in motion, will investigate the formation processes of different "confined" geographical areas, and in doing so, generate speculative hypotheses regarding the construction of memory and creation of myths. This process will involve visual experimentation divided into acts of existence, in turn aiming to create an analogy for the action of remembering and mapping movements. During the project's unfolding, moving images will serve as a tool with

which to generate awareness of the real through the imagined. It is therefore a journey to investigate the interplay of feelings of belonging and not belonging—all as part of an attempt to emphasize the inherent weightlessness and instability of any memory or un-recollection. The final outcome will seek to identify a movement towards temporality—as if a specific location, memory or thought could serve us as a metaphor for existence itself.

Niccolò Masini *Living Archives*, 2019, Various sizes, Installed study research view of collected "Living archives materials" found in Italy, Argentina, Canada and Australia.

1 Frederic Bartlett, *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932).
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Maurice Halbwachs, On Collective Memory, ed. and trans. Lews A. Coser (TChicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 61.
5 Ibid., 40.
6 Rick Dolphijn and Iris Van der Tuin I, *New Materialism: Interviews & Cartographies* (Ann Arbor: Open Humanities Press, 2012), http://openhumanitiespress.org/books/download/Dolphijn-van-der-Tuin__2013__New-Materialism.pdf; Basia Nikiforova, "European Borders and Identity from the materialist approach," *Pogranice Studia Społeczne* 27 (Jan. 2016):151–162. Doi:10.15290/pss.2016.27.01.10
7 Nikiforova, "European Borders," 152.
8 Hasti Abbasi, "The Ideology of Exile in an Imaginary Life," *Antipodes* 31, no. 1 (2017): 16–25. doi:10.13110/antipodes.31.1.0016.
9 European Commission, *The Development of European Identity/Identities: Unfinished Business: A Policy Review*, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (Brussels: European Commission, 2012), 12. http://www.mela-project.polimi.it/upl/cms/attach/20120906/175214213_9680.pdf

Lowering
Simon Fraser

Maddie Leach

Maddie Leach *Temporary paint marking, Simon Fraser Monument, New Westminster, Sept 30 – Oct 4, 2019, Image credit: Scott Massey*

2017–2019 Project commission and Fieldhouse Residency with Contemporary Art Gallery (CAG), Vancouver, Canada.

At some point between 1986 and 1988, a large section of granite disappeared from the Simon Fraser Monument in New Westminster, British Columbia.[1] In the process of relocation, from a grassy traffic island near the Pattullo Bridge to the new riverfront boardwalk at Westminster Quay, Simon Fraser 'Explorer' was lowered by a good four feet. There is no record of what happened to the removed section, and the original stature of the monument is long forgotten. This is where *Lowering Simon Fraser* began, from a simple question and an act of curiosity: what happened to that piece of stone? Barry Dykes, archivist at the City of New Westminster, suggested it had probably been left at the City Works Depot in the late 1980s, adding that the depot site was now a car park. He thought the granite block was likely to be either rubble or landfill; I liked to imagine it lodged in someone's back garden, mossy and overgrown with ivy.

In the Vancouver Public Library, I found a special commemorative book on the Fraser River published by *Beautiful British Columbia* magazine for Expo '86. The book contained a photograph of a man wearing a Nordic-style sweater and red pompom hat, crouching beside a small pile of rocks on a grassy alpine plateau. In the caption the editors claim that in the summer of '85, staff photographer Maurice Borrelly and a helicopter pilot "discovered" the source of "the mighty Fraser" at Fraser Pass in the Canadian Rockies, close to the border between British Columbia and Alberta. They described the river's headwaters rather quaintly, as a "trickle, bubbling up from under a rock and down to a pond that, in turn, lets loose a rivulet rolling down a slope."[2]

The first time I used the title *Lowering Simon Fraser* was in March 2017 for a public submission to the City of New Westminster Heritage Commission. I was seeking the committee's support to lower the Simon Fraser Monument a further five inches by removing another section of its granite pedestal and depositing it in Fraser Pass, within the "bubbling trickle" that becomes the Fraser River. My proposal described how this modest monolith would, over aeons, journey down river, eventually arriving back in New Westminster as a small stone. Using a digital sketch, with the section I wanted to remove marked in bright red, I explained to the committee that my proposition was intended as a comparatively subtle act of continuation (it was, after all, *only* five inches), but one that would make visible an inadvertent history in which city officials and property developers had *already* reduced the status of a public monument.

Three months later, to my and CAG's surprise, a general meeting of New Westminster City Council endorsed my proposal. The following caveats were added to what one could say was *cautious* approval:

· To ensure that the project respects the City's truth and reconciliation with First Nations process;

· Has the support of both the First Nations group local to where the granite is proposed to be deposited and the local Qayqayt First Nation, and;

· Has the support of all applicable regulatory authority.

What followed requires a more intricate narrative than I have available space for here. Suffice to say, securing First Nations support after the Council's approval proved elusive. A noticeable silence was apparent in relation to CAG's attempts to contact Chief Rhonda Larrabee of Qayqayt, and my own attempts with Simpwc First Nation. A creeping feeling of inertia settled over the project as emails ineffectively proxied for actual conversation between multiple correspondents. On a number of occasions, it was suggested I consider inviting an Indigenous artist to collaborate on *Lowering Simon Fraser*; that this would offer a means of traction for the project, and a more effective route to dialogue and support from Indigenous communities. Having formed the proposal in relative conceptual isolation, I doubted the authenticity of such a gesture on my part. It also raised the question of revised artistic authorship and––given the project had not emerged from any direct conversation with First Nations groups––the spectre of instrumentalization.

I suspected my hesitancy also indicated the idiosyncrasy of *Lowering Simon Fraser*, that its dogged pursuit of a small monolith (sliced from a granite pedestal, helicoptered to a remote plateau and incrementally reduced to a pebble over

"aeons") could be traced to an *obstinate* singularity on my part. Eric Fredericksen, Head of Public Art for the City of Vancouver, identified this problem in a wry observation: "When you know what you want to do, it is difficult to engage in consultation around it."[3] At the time, it was a polite way of observing flaws in the project's ineffective communication trajectory with First Nation constituencies. However, it also suggests a tacit avoidance on my part; how speaking with others, sharing, asking for opinions – those very acts of *seeking support* – risk the importation of destabilizing forces and raise potential hazards within the conceptual logic of an artwork.

If the project's success were measured on the delivery of the granite slab to the source of the Fraser River, *Lowering Simon Fraser* could be considered a failed project––a proposed action that remains (as yet, or forever) unrealized. In many ways this lack of 'conclusion' continues to haunt my own unsettled relationship to the project. Over a two-year period, other obstacles surfaced to affect the project's momentum. These included my geographic distance to New Westminster (manifested in a series of short "fly in fly out" residency periods), a change in curator, funding uncertainties and drift of institutional attention on the project. The problem became one of producing *some* kind of resolution in relation to gnawing absences in the project's actualization; a conceptual re-routing addressing the impossibility and improbability of the proposal, while also honouring the original impulse at the centre of *Lowering Simon Fraser*.

As part of the project's rearrangement, the act of dismantling, cutting, and relocating became a graphic saga: a book of fifty-three uncaptioned drawings by Vancouver-based illustrator Michael Kluckner. Closely interpreting my proposal for the monument and its itinerant history, the pictures journey the reader from the Rockies to New Westminster and back to Fraser Pass, tracking the monument's downhill progression, its celebration, and virtual abandonment. Printed on waterproof "stone paper" made from calcium carbonate, ten copies of the book weighed a surprising three kilograms. The final images depict a distant future: a caribou grazes beside the small granite monolith half submerged in a stream at Fraser Pass, while New Westminster's waterfront is beset by a rising river; a stoic Simon Fraser sits atop his squat pedestal, slowly drowning.

1 New Westminster is a municipality of Metro Vancouver lying close to where the Fraser River branches into its northern and southern arms, before reaching the Strait of Georgia on Canada's west coast. In 1858 the small settlement was proclaimed a "second England on the shores of the Pacific" and briefly held the position of capital of the colony of British Columbia (quoted in Jean Barman, *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia* [Toronto: University of Toronto, 1996], 71). New Westminster still claims the title "Royal City" in reference to its name, bestowed by Queen Victoria herself. Vancouverites usually shorten this to "New West".
2 Bryan McGill and Linda Poon, "The Fraser River, British Columbia, Canada", in *A special publication of Beautiful British Columbia magazine* (Victoria, BC: Ministry of Tourism, 1986): 4.
3 Eric Fredericksen, in conversation with the author, 31 October 2019.

Maddie Leach
Lowering Simon Fraser (book detail),
2019, Drawing by Michael Kluckner

Modernity's Bridge

Anthony McInneny,
Beatriz Maturana
and Museo Benjamín
Vicuña Mackenna

This concluding report is presented as three extended image captions: 1) the initial investigation of the Mapocho River Santiago de Chile 2015–2017; 2) the Project Anywhere proposal developed between 2017–2019 investigating heritage, place, and movable bridges; and 3) the investigation undertaken in the reality of the research site becoming the epicenter of the Chilean October Crisis 2019–2021 (18-O).

A Modern Constitution

In 1989, the Berlin Wall came down in Europe and the Western world acknowledged that its economic model was committing global ecocide. Bruno Latour calls 1989 the "year of miracles."[1] To paraphrase Latour, the Constitution between nature and science, between humans and things had, through the hybridization of language, discourse, and rhetoric, driven us to be either anti-modern (without ever having been modern) or postmodern, after which there is nothing.

In 1989, Chileans amended the 1980 Constitution imposed by the Dictatorship as a prelude to the return to democracy. In 1989, 95% of registered voters voted in democratic elections. In 1990, Chile returned to democracy relatively peacefully. In a unique, post-Cold War position as the living laboratory of neo-liberal economics, it had just elected a Centre-Left coalition, the *Concertación*. This coalition would be re-elected with different Presidents over 20 consecutive years. These governments reduced poverty from over 50% in 1990 to under 6% by 2010 and delivered two decades of economic growth. They conducted a reconciliation process, the envy of any post-traumatic country, e.g., Argentina, Ireland, South Africa.

In *Lo Que El Dinero Sí Puede Comprar* (All That Money *Can* Buy) Carlos Peña argues that Chile was democratic but not modern before 1973, modernised but not democratic during the Dictatorship of 1973–1989, and only modern and democratic after the return to democracy in 1990.[2] In *Pensar Malestar. La crisis de octubre y la cuestión constitucional* (Thinking Discontent. The October Crisis and the Constitutional Question) Peña analyses the reasons contributing to 18-O, the relationship to the 1980 Constitution and the plebiscite for a new Constitution in 2020.[3] Peña does not adequately explain the unprecedented violence and destruction of the protest.

The crisis began on 18 October 2019 with the simultaneous attack of Metro stations and city-wide looting, arson and vandalism sparked by a 30 peso (4 US cents) rise in public transport fares. Fifteen days later, in an interview on CNN, Marxist Historian Gabriel Salazar predicted that it would take four weeks of this type of protest for the Government to capitulate to protesters' demands.[4] On 15 November 2019, a Peace Accord was reached where the centre-right government delivered a raft of legislative and constitutional reforms and set the date for a plebiscite for the writing of a new Constitution. Protesters re-appropriated Victor

Jara's 1971 anti-Vietnam war song "El derecho de vivir en paz" (the right to live in peace) as the anthem and their "protests" escalated, spread, and continued. Peace came with COVID-19 quarantine on 27 March 2020.

This image formed part of a body of hypothetical and realized interventions in the three defining elements of the contemporary Mapocho River. The Museo Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna is named after the nineteenth-century Francophile Intendente of Santiago, the father of Santiago's first modernization. The canalization of the Mapocho River was envisioned by Vicuña Mackenna as part of making Santiago "the Paris of South America."[5] *Vista del valle del Mapocho, sacada del Cerro Santa Lucia*, 1854 (View of the Mapocho Valley taken from Santa Lucia Hill) is a lithograph produced by F. H. Lehnert based on the drawings of German artist Mauricio Rugendas and French Naturalist Claudio Gay. It appears in the *Atlas de la historia física y política de Chile* by Claudio Gay published the same year. In this image, the origin of the Mapocho River, running through the valley, dominates the background: the snow-capped Andes Mountain range. In the foreground of this lithograph, on top of Cerro Santa Lucia, is a group of male citizens of the young Republic of Chile. In the centre are two, bare fist-fighting campesinos, to the left, a street dog, men playing cards, children and, to the right, geologist-engineers. Cerro Santa Lucia was transformed into an emblematic park by Vicuña Mackenna's modernization in 1872.

From the same perspective as Rugendas' published drawing, in Vicuña Mackenna's public park, Anthony McInneny took a photograph in 2016. Three iconic buildings mark this contemporary skyline. The first, in the midground, is the 1970s modernist, Corten steel tower of the building now known as the GAM. This tower is part of the modernist San Borja housing project 1967–1977. In the chronological and physical middle of this housing project was Salvador Allende's 1000 day promise of a democratic transition to Socialism without falling into dictatorship of the

Historia de Chile.

VISTA DEL VALLE DEL MAPOCHO.
Sacada del Cerro de Santa-Lucia.

Anthony McInneny
Vista del valle del Mapocho, sacada del Cerro Santa Lucia, 1854–2015, 2016, Collage, 40 X 60 cm, Exhibited at Museo Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna (MBVM) Santiago, Chile in the artist's solo exhibition *Orillas, Puentes y el Torrente (Edges, Bridges, and the Torrent)*

proletariat.[6] This promise could be neither kept nor broken as the right-wing military coup occurred on September 11, 1973. The second tower in this photograph, at the same visual height, to the right, is the Torre Telefonica (Telephone tower) located in Plaza Baquedano and completed in 1993. The third tower at this visual height is on the hazy horizon, to the left. Torre Costanera (Riverside Tower) is the tallest building in central and south America and was constructed in 2013.

The collage of two views from Cerro Santa Lucia, 1854 and 2016, spatially and temporally bridges Chile's pre-modern and 19th-century modernization with a tumultuous period of the 20th-century "modernisation without modernity" of the 1960s and 70s, to create a landscape architectural portrait of a 21st-century modern, liberal democracy before the October Crisis.[7]

The existence of the bridge allows us to debate the meaning of the border which is in turn the antithesis of the barrier. We sometimes speak of the language barrier, but language is a border, rather than a barrier.[8]

For Marc Auge, the bridge is the perfect artwork. It is nature transitioning into culture. The bridge is both a crossway *and* a border. All languages can be learnt, and barriers crossed.

The Mapocho River is a natural barrier that historically breached its banks. Its course episodically branched away at the place now called Plaza Baquedano and ran down what is now the main avenue of Santiago, Alameda Avenue. The Mapocho river was tamed in the nineteenth century with a three-kilometer canal crossed by nine, modern Meccano bridges of which four remain today. One bridge is in its original site. The second and third are identical bridges and, in the 1980s, one was moved upstream to sit beside its indistinguishable twin. The fourth bridge was originally named after the Chilean Avant-guard poet, Vicente Huidobro-Garcia who, with Apollinaire in Paris, created concrete poetry. This bridge was renamed Pio Nono (Grandad Pope) after the 19th-century liberal Pope IX. This Meccano bridge was moved downstream in 1986 and was replaced with a wrought-iron railing, imitation neo-classical bridge that kept the name Pio Nono. Like readymade artifacts, the four Meccano bridges were heritage listed in 1996, i.e., the object, not the function or place of transition, was protected.[9] The Vicente Huidobro bridge, in its new location, is closed as a bridge having been converted into a theatre, and no one refers to it by the poet's name. Interestingly, the Pio Nono bridge is commonly mistaken as real heritage.

The montage of this amnesia and appropriation of history has been updated in the reality of the Chilean October Crisis 2019. Huidobro's concrete poem still sits in the artificial

NIPONA

Ven
Flor rara
De aquel edén
Que llaman Yoshiwara
Ven, muñequita japonesa
Que vagaremos juntos nuestro anhelo
Cabe el maravilloso estanque de turquesa
Bajo un cielo que extiende el palio de ónix de su velo
Deja que bese
Tu rostro oblicuo
Que se estremece
Por un inicuo
Brutal deseo
¡Oh, déjame así!
Mientras te veo
Como un biscuit
Son tus ojos dos gotas ovaladas y enervantes
Es tu rostro amarillo y algo marfileño
Y tienes los encantos lancinantes
De un ficticio y raro ensueño
Mira albas y olorosas
Sobre el plaqué
Las rosas.
Té.

riverbed of the Mapocho's canal. In the background, the poet's namesake bridge/now theatre, was, after 18 October made into a makeshift first aid center by and for protesters. The imitation Pio Nono bridge connects with Plaza Baquedano, now the epicenter of protest violence and destruction. This imitation heritage bridge is added to the montage and shows the vandalism and graffiti of protesters who also smashed up the pavement of the bridge for missiles to throw at Police.

Anthony McInneny
Vicente Huidobro as Pio Nono, 2018,
Photomontage, 20 X 30 cm

This is a photomontage of original photographs, media images and graphics concerning "events" after October 18, 2019. It is an urban landscape portrait of the area centered on Plaza Baquedano, now called Ground Zero. On the horizon of this image is the cover of a box of Andes matches with the Andes Mountain range and the words, *La Cordillera es nuestra, las historias también* (the mountain range is ours, also its history). Three vertical structures mark this horizon-skyline: 1) the monument to General Manuel Baquedano in the centre of Plaza Baquedano (centre), 2) the national cultural centre, the GAM, and its tower in Alameda Avenue (left) and 3) the Police monument on the opposite side of Alameda Avenue (right). Underpinning this landscape is the official map of the underground Metro public transport system with the blue line indicating the relative position of the Mapocho River. The bar chart of nationwide "events", October to November, is the baseline. Ground Zero, as the epicentre of "events", is interspersed with Bruno Latour's schema The *modern Constitution and its practice.*[10]

After October 18, 2019, the original research site for *The Bridge as a Readymade* became surreal, insurrectional, violent, and destructive.[11] Ground Zero was occupied by rioting, burning, looting and vandalising protesters every night, except one, from October 18, 2019, until March 27, 2020. Eighteen buildings in Ground Zero were looted, ransacked, and burnt. All street furniture and infrastructure were destroyed and used in barricades. A soccer pitch area of pavement was smashed up by protesters with hammers and crowbars for missiles. Eighty-five percent of businesses sealed themselves behind protective re-enforced welded sheet metal facades. A four-metre-high reinforced, welded sheet metal wall was created around the GAM's new theatre extension. All its glass facades were covered in riveted sheet metal. The building was vandalised,
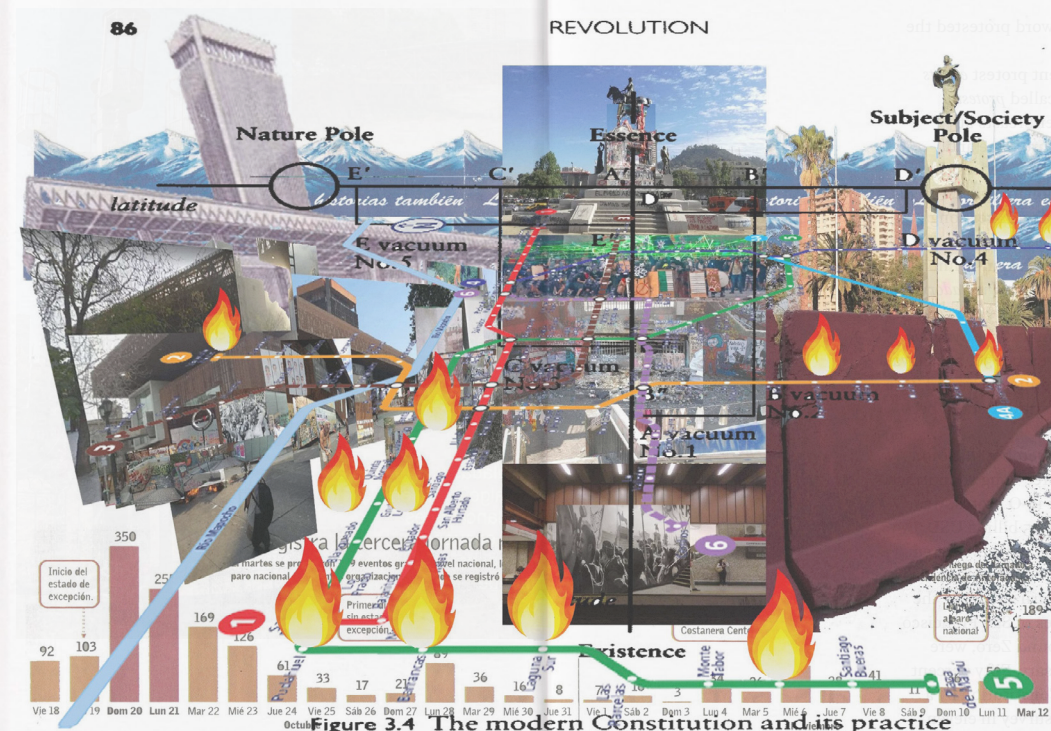
Figure 3.4 The modern Constitution and its practice

burnt, willingly covered in protest graffiti, and used as a first aid center for and by protesters. Opposite, the Police Monument, and behind this the Police Church, had a 2.5 meter concrete barricade installed in January 2020. The estimated material damage in Ground Zero for two months of protest is 106 million USD, not including the Metro public transport system damage of 250 million USD.[12] The protest violence and destruction continued. By March 2020, 104 public transport buses had been destroyed by protesters and the Metro had 77 stations attacked, 20 by arson with six stations and five trains destroyed.[13]

Inverted Reality
Before 18-O, Chile held the highest United Nations Human Development Index in Central and South America, number 42 in the world.[14] One year before 18-O, a public opinion survey identified the number one issues that the government should address: public order, crime, and delinquency. The least important of 13 issues were transport, human rights, and the Constitution.[15] 18-O began by inverting this reality through language, the selective memory of media reporting and the actions of arson, looting, vandalism, and assault presented as legitimate protest.

On October 18, protesters sabotaged the Metro public transport system with simultaneous arson attacks on 20 stations. The violent and destructive mass fare evasion campaign that precipitated this was called *Civil Disobedience*. On October 19, protesters alleged human rights abuse by the Government, Police and Army under the State of Emergency that was declared in response to the nationwide looting, arson, vandalism, and assault euphemistically called *events*. On October 25, the 1.2 million protesters demanded a plebiscite on the writing of a new Constitution and the impeachment of the President for alleged

human rights abuses in calling a State of Emergency. Not one word protested the protesters' violent and destructive *events*.

November 12 recorded the highest daily number of violent protest *events* after the State of Emergency was lifted. These 189 *events* were called *protests*.

On November 15, Chilean pop star Mon Laferte bared her breasts at the Latin Grammy's to reveal the televised message "They torture, rape and murder in Chile." She added she would loot, vandalise, and burn to redress her unsubstantiated claim. Violence and destruction become fashionable *protest events*. On November 18, protopunk Patti Smith rode into Santiago and with her song "*People have the Power*" legitimised violence and destruction as *fashionable protest* for an older audience. In the devastated public spaces of Santiago, Chilean Feminist collective, Lastesis (the Theses), launched their now worldwide hit, *El violador en tu camino* (A Rapist in Your Path). The first rapists in their lyric's path are the Police, then Judges, the State, and the President. Patriarchal capitalism was the *Systemic Abuse* justifying everyone's words, actions, and beliefs. On November 30, balaclava clad protesters organised and offered free, daytime, bi-lingual tours of Ground Zero called "The art of protest." Later, "Come Live the Chilean Revolution" could be booked on Airbnb events.[16]

Nationwide, there were 13,812 protest "events" between October 18, 2019, and March 27, 2020. This does not include the release of the three-song soundtrack. The national cost in material damage caused by five months of 18-O protest was 4.5 billion USD. The cost in lost national economic growth was 3.5 billion USD.[17] The social injury to the body politic would take another 30 years to be evaluated.

In October 2020, COVID quarantine was lifted. Every Friday afternoon since, in Plaza Baquedano, balaclava wearing protesters loot, burn and close the city center for five hours in protest. The heritage listed churches of San Francisco de Borja church (the Police Church) and Asunción, both in Ground Zero, were destroyed by protest arson attacks to mark 18-O's first anniversary. Fifty percent of registered voters turned out and 80% voted to write a new Constitution by a Constitutional Assembly. In November 2020, an international survey in eleven global cities found that 70% of respondents had read or knew little or nothing about 18-O yet, 50% believed it would be positive for democracy in Chile and 23% didn't know.[18] In January 2021, the front page of El Mercurio shows the appropriated *Fridays for the Future* looting, arson, and vandalism, now called looting, arson, and vandalism, as the number one issue that the Government should address.[19]

1 Bruno Latour, *We have never been modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1991), 8.
2 Carlos Peña, *Lo que su puede si el dinero comprar* (Penguin Random House Group, 2017).
3 Carlos Peña, *Pensar el malestar: La crisis de octubre y la cuestión constitucional* (Penguin Random House Group, 2020).
4 Gabriel Salazar, "Si el presidente Piñera tuviera un mínimo de conciencia histórica y sensibilidad social, él dimite," CNN, July 11, 2019, https://www.cnnchile.com/programas-completos/gabriel-salazar-pinera-conciencia-historica-sensibilidad-social-dimite_20191107/.
5 "BENJAMÍN VICUÑA MACKENNA: EL INTENDENTE QUE CAMBIÓ SANTIAGO," 2017, *Museo Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna*, https://www.museovicunamackenna.gob.cl/647/w3-propertyvalue-43408.html?_noredirect=1.
6 The building at the base of the Corten Steel tower was originally the UNCTAD III building, the most important urban project of Allende's government. The building known as the GAM is built over parts of the UNCTAD III building that remained after 40% of the building was accidentally destroyed by fire in 2006. The "transition to socialism" paraphrases Carlos Peña observations in 2007 about the Right-wing's alibi for the coup and, again in 2021, Peña's comments concerning the options for the Left wing in the 2022 Presidential elections post 18-O.
7 Carol Illanes, Matías Allende and Christian Bartlau, *Trabajo en utopía: Monumentalidad architectónica en el Chile de la Unidad Popular* (Santiago: Adrede Editora, 2014).
8 Marc Augé, "The Symbolism of the Border," in *Of Bridges and Borders Vol. II*, ed. Sigismond De Vajay (Zurich: JPR|Ringier, 2014), 10.
9 "Here is a thing that I call art, but I didn't even make it myself." As we know, "art," etymologically speaking, means "to hand make" (1959 interview with Marcel Duchamp by George Heard Hamilton about the Readymade).
10 Bruno Latour, *We have never been modern*, 86.
11 An analysis of the situation formed the basis of the report presented at the Art Anywhere virtual conference, Venturing Panel presentations in March 2020. https://www.artanywhere.net/venturing.
12 ATISBA Monitor, Estallido Social. Eje Providencia Alemada 2019.
13 "Balance daños 19 de octubre," *Metro de Santiago*, October 19, 2019, https://www.metro.cl/noticias/balance-danos-19-de-octubre-2019.
14 Pedro Conceição, *Human Development Report 2019. Beyond income, beyond averages, beyond today: Inequalities in human development in the 21st century* (New York: United Nations Development Programme, 2019). http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr2019.pdf.
15 Centro de Estudios Públicos, "Mayo 2019 ESTUDIO NACIONAL DE OPINIÓN PÚBLICA N° 83," June 13, 2019, *Encuestra CEP*, https://www.cepchile.cl/cep/encuestas-cep/encuestas-2010-2019/estudio-nacional-de-opinion-publica-mayo-2019.
16 This was removed by Airbnb but was advertised for a price of $25 per person that included goggles and a bottle of water.
17 Mario Mercier, "Recuento de un estallido," *El Mercurio*, October 18, 2020.
18 Estudios de Fundación Marca País, "Socios de Chile creen que la actual situación tendrá efectos positivos en la democracia del país," *El Mercurio*, November 22, 2020.
19 Diego Rojas and Daniel Inostroza, "Expertos Piden reforzar estrategia preventiva para frenar violencia de los Viernes en el centro," *El Mercurio*, January 23, 2021, https://digital.elmercurio.com/2021/01/23/C/O93TJFAB#zoom=page-width.

Museum for
the Displaced

Canan Batur,
Mohammad Golabi,
Leong Min Yu
Samantha and Ana
Sophie Salazar

Museum for the Displaced
Screenshot of Jonas Staal, 26
November 2020, Workshop:
Organisational Art, The Assembly:
Chronicles of Displacement

Museum for the Displaced (Mf D) is a cultural and social organization addressing issues of forced migration, displacement, and statelessness. In this conversation, we attempt to define our vision and objectives.

SAMANTHA Mf D was a long time in the making and is the culmination of many conversations between us. Maybe we can start by sharing what our personal motivations were to establish Mf D?

ANA We've had so many discussions thinking about our roles as curators in today's geopolitical global constellations. If we actually care about the topics that we talk about, how can we do more? We see Mf D as a para-institution that attempts to translate the experience of displacement and facilitate meaningful engagements with the issues of forced migration. We chose to have Museum in the name because many times in the past Museums have been created as solidarity movements where artists came together for a cause, like the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende in Chile (founded in 1991), the Museum for Palestine (started in 1978), or the planned Museum Against Apartheid (started in 1993), so there is a lineage there, but also because we want to hijack the power that Museums (with big M) have and with our praxis subvert the structure of Museum, a structure created by powerful nations to have control over cultural narratives. How can we take those narratives into our own hands?

MOHAMMAD For the kind of practice that we wanted to establish, there was no other space. We had to imagine how it could be or how it could manifest itself in action. Therefore, in the absence of that space, Mf D was a necessity. I think it was the only way for us to do what we do with the resources we had and create new structures for a new type of work within the realm of the arts. Here we could create our work based on our very own experiences and values. Therefore, the expectations, the labour, the outcomes were distinct; we had the liberty to rethink our relationship with the object of art and the artist. In this space, it was possible to slow down and plan for the future, even at an offbeat pace.

CANAN We were also thinking of ways in which we can bend the institutional frameworks and structures in a way that it allows us to take a step towards more radical equality. We were very aware of what it means to be injecting ourselves into this institutional ecology. One prevailing question was how to bring something different than what already exists? How we can almost sabotage certain structures for our benefit to get closer to what we

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UR CLIMATE. WHOSE POLITI

Museum for the Displaced
Screenshot of Jonas Staal, 26
November 2020, Workshop:
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believe is the right way to go forward, in close solidarity with those who are marginalised through deep listening and reallocating funding to individuals, organisations, and programmes that empower social equality for those who are in need.

SAMANTHA Well, my personal motivation for building Mf D is rooted in my idealism. I have always held on to the belief that art has the power to change the world but with the passage of time I also became increasingly aware that often Art could not overcome its limitations and was simply not enough. One of the seeds for Mf D was planted at Dhaka Art Summit 2018, where Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in her keynote lecture on the Rohingya people posed these questions "Who are we as agents of an art that is helping the world? Also, how many are we truly as a group within this institutionally validated agency? And, even, what am I?" Her words were a timely reminder that art concerned with social justice has to be supplemented with other kinds of work. This for me is the raison d'etre for Mf D, to imagine and make possible an organization that can constantly bridge the gap between, and push the boundaries of, art and activism, critical discourse and radical action. Mf D for me, and I believe for us, is a vessel for collective dreaming. Each of us may have very limited means to be able to change the world for displaced and marginalized communities through our work, but perhaps by developing an organization that calls for greater solidarity, we will be able to create a force for good and make the impossible possible.

ANA With Mf D we want to create and cross bridges where they usually don't exist. Our structure facilitates moving in between different worlds, with one foot in the international art world and the other on the ground, working with the people in situations of displacement themselves, as well as journalists, anthropologists, NGOs, and others. Mf D believes in the inspiring, empowering, and reinventing agency of art as a vehicle and tool for political and social action. It does feel like an appropriate response to the current global climate. Forced migration caused by war and extreme poverty has been increasing and will be strongly exacerbated due to the climate emergency. It was important for us to be aware of these realities and to adapt our practices in order to take them seriously into focus. In the interconnected and supposedly developed world we live in we want to state our position and condemn the atrocities that we are perpetuating around the world as a species. Despite the power of human cooperation and the abundance that exists on our planet, we are still choosing to leave billions of people in pain and misery. It doesn't have to be this way.

MOHAMMAD Also, regarding the current climate, we are amidst a global pandemic, facing an unprecedented condition where the disparities and injustices are on full display. The crisis of a remarkably fragile global economy paired with the long-existing climate disaster pushed us all into a planetary mood of despair. A mood that hits the ever-growing population of displaced people harder than any other group and demands a planetary response rooted in solidarity, compassion, and care. Art has the capacity to go beyond borders, lines, and languages. With our nomadic nature and dynamic structure, we hope to document the experience and the knowledge of the displaced.

CANAN Mf D is a gesture towards collectively inventing an alternative social institution and imaginaries that entangles artistic practices with intuitive modes of knowledge production. Coalition can be formed through a recognition that practices of dispossession, whether they are cultural, political, environmental, or economical, whether they are occurring in our immediate environment or at a far distance, affect us all. To understand coalition is a realization of an unavoidable connectedness. One could argue that relation is the condition of possibility for a new sense of connectivity to emerge. A collectivism that hints at the ability of us all to find common ways of articulating the universal, not as a value, culture, or ground, but as a practice of living and working together in dialogical, participative and radically egalitarian modes. Mf D emerged

from these desires and modes of thinking; as an expression of an open, multi-lingual totality, directly connected to everything that's possible.

SAMANTHA Throughout the process of developing Mf D we were very mindful of the role it will play and the value it can offer to the communities we are speaking to and about. Displaced and marginalized communities have long been othered and silenced by oppressive systems and reduced to being less than human, and this act of othering has also been perpetuated within art and cultural spheres. We feel that to allow these communities to reclaim their humanity, it is important to return them their control over their cultural narratives and representation. Oral histories are central to how these communities preserve and maintain their collective identity, thus to listen to these communities is both an act of resistance and subversion. A question we keep returning to is, 'how can Mf D carve out a space that is uplifting rather than imposing?' With this as a guiding principle and with the idea of practicing and nurturing intentional and radical listening, we conceptualized a Listening Room—a space that offers a neutral ground for listening, sharing, learning, and unlearning—to promote and cultivate listening as an act of openness, understanding, and acceptance.

ANA To talk a bit about the structure, Mf D works across four different acts. Apart from the Listening Room, which provides this space to exchange views and experiences, as well as share research in progress and new commissions, there are also the Chronicles,

the Multitude, and the Plays. The Chronicles includes all publishing activities in online and offline formats, as well as the documentation of all programmes, making the archive accessible to all on our website. The Multitude is where we combine artworks and materials that are recommended or donated by programme participants, creating a mixture of voices, like a loud choir. Finally, the Plays are the itinerant programme supported by partnerships in different localities, and they consist of Assemblies, Expositions, Ateliers, and Residencies.

CANAN Our launching programme, The Assembly: *Chronicles of Displacement*, took place in November 2020, with the support of NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore and Goethe-Institut Singapore. This online gathering served as a vessel to bring together practitioners working with issues around culture and migrant rights whose backgrounds ranged from journalism to policy making, visual arts to activism. We decided that it was important for us to bring together a group of individuals with diverse approaches to exploring and interrogating alternative presents and futures. One thing that we were very keen to facilitate was the sharing of knowledge and practices between our contributors, in an ecology where issues around migration are spoken in disguise, so one question that was very prevalent was, 'how can we bring that discourse into life and become facilitators of dialogues that already exist yet are somewhat hidden?' The conversations and issues were already there. This was more about bringing key contributors and practitioners together to create a space and hoping this vessel to become a conveyor of future collaborations.

MOHAMMAD The nomadic nature of Mf D and the absence of a permanent space provide a dynamic possibility of work. One that can move a bit from the object of art versus spectator to a collective experience. This experience recognizes the need to redistribute our resources and activates our capacities for solidarity and care. For almost two years, what we have been doing was planning for the future in a time of absolute uncertainty. It mattered for us to keep doing what we needed to do and keep being proactive and think of what "we" need to do in days, months and years to come to be one step ahead and prepared.

SAMANTHA At the moment we are planning our programmes for the year and building the foundation of Mf D. Our next project will happen on our online Listening Room, and we are looking forward to working with our

collaborators to realize our collective vision. We are truly excited and hopeful about what's to come as we continue to map our growth into a transnational global para-institution and community.

1 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Keynote Lecture" (Dhaka Art Summit, Dhaka, February 9, 2018).

Plastic
Mahal

Compound 13 Lab *Mesh lab screenshot of composite image: Dharavi Pipeline with Plastic Mahal*, 2021, SFM Scan, Image credit: Ian Dawson

Each day in the city of Mumbai, citizens generate approximately 12,200 tons of waste, the majority of which finds its way to Dharavi and enters one of the largest recycling centres in India. Dharavi's informal waste management sector processes between 60 and 80% of Mumbai's hard domestic waste where up to 250,000 waste pickers supply up to 20,000 people employed in grassroots recycling micro-enterprises.[1] Estimates vary, but it is thought that there are around 1200 waste recycling units in Dharavi. Of these 780 are used for plastic recycling, the majority of which are concentrated in the informal recycling centre known as the 13th Compound.[2]

Dharavi is a 'hotspot' for reconstruction and reclamation of value from the waste of the affluent city, extracted from dismissed and discarded trash through intricate and generally unacknowledged and unmapped circuits of trade and enterprise. Supply chains are complex; materials are traded on their way to Dharavi through an intricate network of itinerant rag-pickers, waste traders, sorters, broker-dealers, and wholesalers, supplying a workforce who sort and sift through tons of waste per day in cramped, dangerous, and unsanitary conditions. Specific to the intricate supply chains of the 13th Compound is the city's dependency on workers' knowledge and skills as 'citizen scientists' and the highly productive recycling practices that prevent the rest of the citizenry from disappearing under the volume of their own waste.

Via the shifting temporalities of a circular economy of *always in use*, cultures of mending and repair, customisation and upgrade extend throughout Dharavi where cycles of disaggregation and aggregation, disassembly and assembly persistently sustain complex assemblages of diverse knowledges. Into these material flows of objects and embodied knowledges are momentary aggregations in which different forms of knowledge co-exist.[3] These ways of knowing also represent the learning of skills and knowledge that are embedded in the processes of self-built and self-organized communities that make up the many worlds of Dharavi. Self-build assemblages, shaped through a confluence of shared knowledge and artisanal practices, express forms of adaptability, improvization, dialogue, collaboration, human agency, recycling, and experimentation among others. These intergenerational practices of the labour of social reproduction produce highly generative social relations outside formal training and education. Everyone contributes to the building of the home, the community, the neighbourhood and the informal economies that sustain them.

Waste as Sensorium

The maze of narrow alleyways that makes up the 13th Compound is formed of hundreds of two- to four-story 'godowns' (warehouse) with flat or narrowly sloping roofs. These godowns are a combination of corrugated steel and asbestos cladding,

These intergenerational practices of the labour of social reproduction produce highly generative social relations outside formal training and education.

usually on a timber frame, sometimes with supporting brick walls. The more robust architecture, increasingly in evidence as the neighbourhood upgrades, has bolted together steel frames. Plastic sorting is done on the ground floor, with the upper floors generally used for storage of sorted and processed plastics as well as providing accommodation for the itinerant migrant workers. The roof is then used for further plastic storage or for drying shredded plastics further along the recycling chain. The ground floors of the godowns are unapologetically gloomy. Broken light struggles to come through the open door, blocked by narrow alleyways and overhanging roofs. Typically, one or two incandescent lightbulbs provide dim illumination for the work being undertaken.

Plastic sorting godowns typically employ between three and eight sorters and a foreperson to keep the production line flowing. Sorters sit on the concrete floor in line formation, sandwiched on either side by overflowing gunny sacks. The production line takes material from the back of the godown, where unsorted plastics are stored, towards the front door where sorted plastics are re-bagged and taken upstairs, or outside, for storage prior to bulk resale. Each sorter sits in front of a different coloured plastic crate, designating color, density, quality or different polymer types such as: Low-density polyethylene (LDPE), High-density polyethylene (HDPE), Polypropylenes (PP), Polystyrene (PS), Polyethylene terephthalate (PET), Polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and Acrylonitrile Butadiene Styrene (ABS) as well as other plastics found in consumer goods. Sacks of unsorted plastic waste are emptied into a pile at the far end of the segregation line where the lead sorter takes an arm's worth of plastic from the pile and pushes it along the line, wherein each sorter removes items from the constant flow of objects. To a casual observer, the process by which plastic waste is sorted into correct polymers is difficult to follow because of the speed at which deft hands sift through, remove and disaggregate individual items from the line.

The recycling chain combines citizen science and dexterity with an intimate knowledge of the consumer world, even though most of the objects being processed are far out of reach of the purchasing power of the workers involved. Through a multisensorial process of looking, listening, touching, and observing the plasticity of individual objects, each polymer can be identified via a number of techniques: tapping, bending, snapping, sometimes biting or smelling.[4] The performativity of haptic knowledge is evidence of an almost encyclopaedic knowledge of consumer objects and the polymers of which they are made, or indeed the combination of different materials in their construction and operation. It is this assemblage of habitual, embodied, and haptic knowledge that enables the sorter to segregate at such speeds with minimal error. Considerable specialist knowledge operates throughout the waste sector. Typically, the knowledge required to sort and

disaggregate plastics at the top end of the market (with highest grades of purity) takes significant time to learn.

At the cheaper end of the recycling scale is largely unsorted plastic waste, containing an impossibly diverse array of objects with little prior segregation. A snapshot of a typical object flow comprises the plastic cover of a printer [HDPE], bottle top [PP], hair comb [PETE], squeezy shampoo bottle [LDPE], costume jewellery beads [PP], a child's inflatable armband [PVC], plastic chair leg [HDPE], hard shell of an SLR digital camera [HDPE], a plastic fork [PVC], electric piano keyboard [ABS], mobile phone cover [ABS], plastic baby slide [HDPE], ball of nylon rope [A100 polyamide], plastic plate [PVC], barbie doll [ABS], key ring [PMMA], lamp shade [LDPE], fridge tray [HDPE] and so on. Into this endless flow of variably identifiable plastic parts, largely intact objects frequently appear, a pocket calculator, vanity mirror, FM radio, domestic iron, or remote control that must be disaggregated. Many of these objects will contain a number of component materials that cannot be recycled at all. As they enter the sorting line, certain individuals are assigned to disaggregate these multi-polymer, multi-material objects. This usually entails first smashing the object on the floor or with a hammer, then peeling away layers with pliers until circuit boards, wires, metals and the guts of objects can be discarded into a separate pile that will be collated and sold to a different godown where it will be disaggregated further. Significant skill and learned knowledge of how to disaggregate with precision and at speed determines tight margins. The picking, tapping and flicking of plastic into specific containers is all done in a fluid, almost balletic action of the wrist, demonstrating extraordinary skill and learned knowledge of how to sort and disaggregate with precision and at speed,
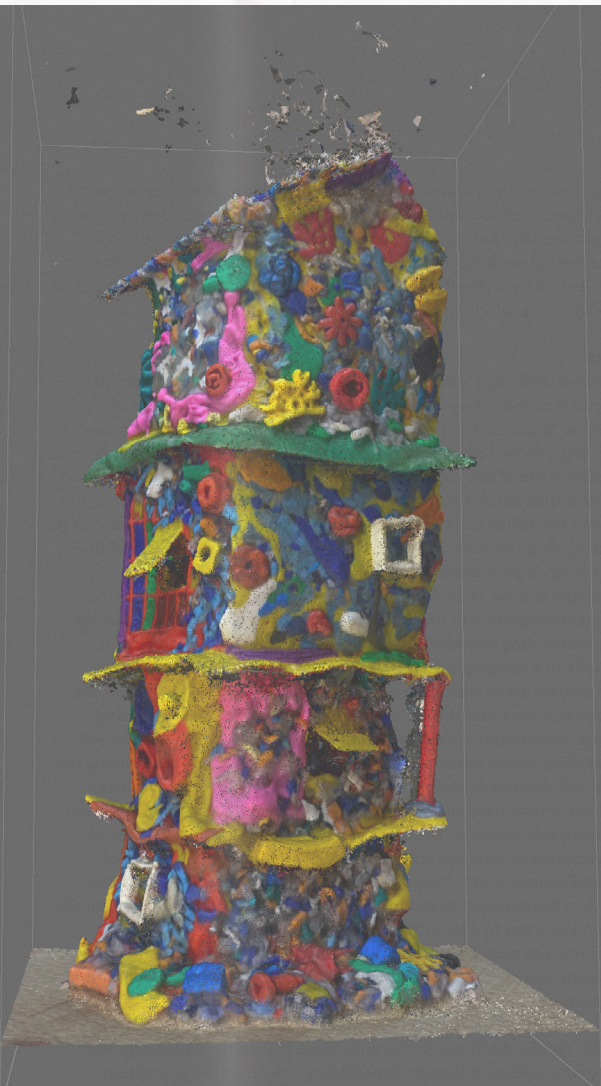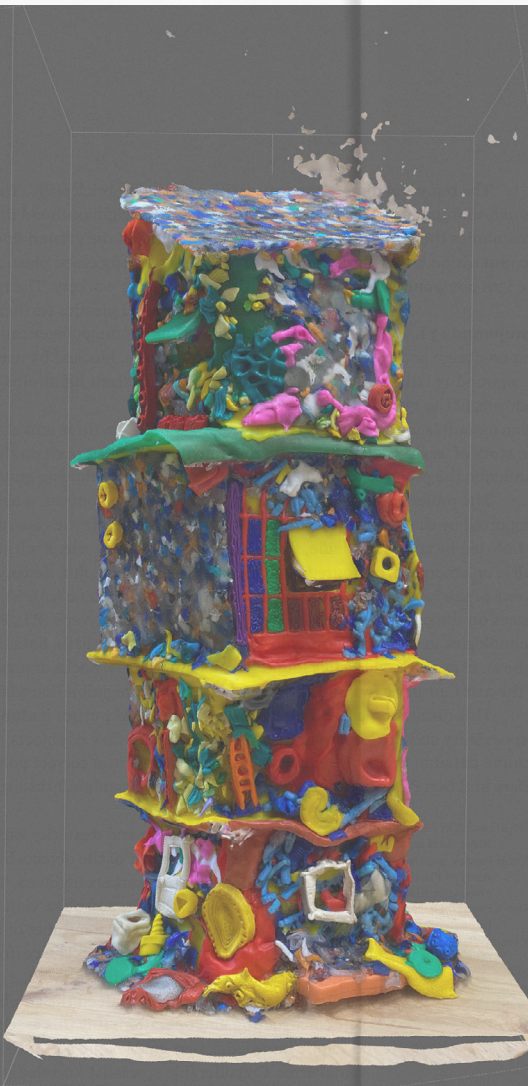
all of which determine tight margins. The improvised dance of waste processing demands constant attention and quick decision making over extended periods. Working hours are long. Sitting all day on the floor takes its toll on the body. Difficult unregulated working conditions are a staple of the trade, contamination of waste handled without gloves or protective equipment is intensified by a lack of water with which to regularly wash hands.

Plastic Mahal

The *Plastic Mahal (Palace of Plastic)* is a temporary public sculpture and political performance in the mode of a processional ritual that appears in various sites across the city of Mumbai. The plastic Mahal, built from the city's plastic waste, aggregates in the informal recycling centre in Dharavi's 13th Compound. It is made in the collective mode of self-construction that is visible throughout the informal settlements of Indian cities. Created together with the waste workers of the 13th Compound and individual recyclers, the temporary structure is a celebration of the livelihoods of all those working in Mumbai's waste management chain and their handling of the city's plastic waste.

The unique context of working in this way with people employed in the informal waste management of the city is that the very process of waste picking, collecting, and recycling operates outside of state interference or support. It happens in spite of a municipal drive for a "cleaner greener Mumbai.' In this instance the confrontation with state power is a political act that challenges the invisibility of waste work and the social status of those individuals who handle waste. The vital contribution made by informal waste recovery through the self-organized recycling sector remains undervalued and largely invisible, echoing the marginalized and disposable status of the extremely poor workers that sustain it.[5] As a process of visibilization, Plastic Mahal challenges received preconceived notions of disposable products, materials and people, advocating for the work of informal recyclers as essential and valued labour within wider systems of production and consumption. It asks, what can such a performance of plastic communicate to its participants and to spectators about the survival of Mumbai's urban poor and as a way to deal with urban and ecological crises?

Combining the role of ritual and traditional street procession, the process of making Plastic Mahal is about creating new stories, new symbols, and symbolic action, as a means of talking about the informal sector of waste management and the infrastructural collisions in the city of Mumbai that excludes, repels, and eradicates as it rapidly develops. At the same time, it aims to challenge public perceptions of the politics of human disposability – the negative perception/ marginalisation of informal labour, in particular the social class of those handling waste materials and human sanitation seen as disposable.[6]

The temporal dimension as well as material cycle mean the Plastic Mahal (as *anti*-monument) is reabsorbed into the production of new consumer goods. It combines the *permanence* of plastic itself with the *radical impermanence* of its recomposition (at the end of the performances, the plastic temple is returned to the 13th compound and recycled).

Compound 13 LAB

The co-design and co-creation process of Plastic Mahal takes place at the Compound 13 Lab (www.compound13.org). Creating together with the recycling godowns of the 13th Compound and individual recyclers, the Plastic Mahal will be an assemblage of knowledge, imaginings and individual narratives that tell the story of waste work in Dharavi. Temporarily postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic the project awaits reactivation when circumstances permit.

The project is delivered in partnership with Acorn Foundation and supported by the artist/designer/engineer residency programme at Compound 13 Lab, led by co-curators Graham Jeffery, Ben Parry and Sharmila Samant. The Lab is an emergent 'maker space' in an area of Mumbai that might be described as one of the largest informal aggregations of (re)maker and (re)manufacturing spaces on the planet. Compound 13 Lab offers young people access to current technologies in digital media, music, 3D design and printing, and is intended to be an experimental learning space where issues of work, waste and survival in the 21st Century can be explored.

This discussion of informal waste management, the biopolitics of disposability and the knowledge assemblages of waste recycling are explored in more detail in the book *Waste Work: The Art of Survival in Dharavi* by Graham Jeffery and Ben Parry.[7]

1 SPARC and KRIVIA, *Re-interpreting, Re-imagining, Redeveloping Dharavi* (Mumbai: SPARC and Kamla Raheja Vidyanidhi Institute for Architecture and Environmental Studies, 2010).
2 Nisha Pandey and Deepti Sharma, "Creating Synergy between Environment and Employment: A Case study of Plastic Recycling Industry in Dharavi, Mumbai," *Greater Vision Conferences & Seminars,* 2014, http://globalbizresearch.org/Mumbai_Conference/pdf/pdf/M4102.pdf.
3 Shiv Visvanathan, "For a new epistemology of the South," *University of London SOAS Research Online,* 2009, https://eprints.soas.ac.uk/17278/1/2012/630/630_shiv_visvanathan.htm.
4 Kaveri Gill, *Of Poverty and Plastic: Scavenging and Scrap-Trading Entrepreneurs in India's Urban Informal Economy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
5 Ibid.
6 Zygmunt Bauman, *Wasted Lives: Modernity and its Outcasts* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004).
7 Graham Jeffery and Ben Parry, *Waste Work: The Art of Survival in Dharavi* (Bath, England: Wunderkammer Press, 2021).

Compound 13 Lab *Mesh lab screenshot of composite image: Dharavi Pipeline with Plastic Mahal* (detail), 2021, SFM Scan, Image credit: Ian Dawson

Signifiers

Alvin McIntyre *Tashlikh* (video still),
2019, TRT: 06:12

Our collaborative project *Signifiers* explores the possibilities and parameters of communication using rituals as a device through creating, reenactments, and re-interpretations. This process originated from our mutual interest in inquiring and challenging the relationship between belief, perception of reality, and collective thinking, in which one of our key objectives was to break away from the limits of religious frameworks.

As *Signifiers* evolved, the physical constraints of time, materials, and environment influenced the path and shaped our project, often transforming it in unexpected ways. We exhibited our project in Germany, USA, and Japan, each of the settings contributing a new perspective. At times the work seemed altered, in a sense transforming itself through our perceptions; pieces that were complete and finished seemingly changed with each setting. In the same instance the various settings also allowed us to generate new understanding. Each location enabled us to experiment with ever-expanding ideas on ritual and the power of communication that they embody.

The original concept of *Ṛta* (from which *ritus/ritual* probably derives) in the Vedic philosophy refers to practices dedicated to aligning humans to the "regular order of the normal, and therefore proper, natural and true structure of cosmic [...] events."[1] Once a symbolic way of establishing a dialogue with "higher forces," now the term is commonly used to describe a repeated action or set of gestures related to a system of beliefs. Though religion is not the only catalyst for the expression of ritualistic undertakings, rituals are often solely associated as a function of religion. In fact, *ritual* is articulated in a vast variety of cultural and social endeavors outside of religious ends. Sports, home life, family gatherings, etc., all have components of ritualistic activity, some mundane and individualistic, others highly articulated and broadly practiced in social settings. Stemming from spiritual practices, *ritual* in modern societies echoes the former religious practices in what may be deemed a superficial engagement. Traditional rituals, although different in every culture, nevertheless, hold the capability of generating an idiosyncratic transformation in one's sense of reality:

In a ritual, the world as lived and the world as imagined, fused under the agency of a single set of symbolic forms, turn out to be the same world[2]

Our inquiry stemmed from two complementary perspectives: a re-appropriation and re-inclusion of spirituality in a world governed by a materialistic focus, and a criticism towards those forms of power that, taking advantage of humanity's need for finding a meaning in life, express their dominant logic through the exclusion of alterity. Our intention was to re-enact, and re-create rituals to offer, to transform, to shed, to discover, and disseminate knowledge.

The primary goal was not to delve into dense intellectualism, evoked by Saussurrian semiotics (his work on *signifiers*), but rather to allow for a more visceral, physical response to what was to be observed in the work.

Ritual functions as a vehicle for embodying ideas and concepts that are brought to life, it therefore *necessitates* a physical action. In this act information is translated from a system of thought to physical affirmation. In ritual the signifier and signified find their place naturally, as if caught in the exact moment before the intellect has a chance to intervene. It accesses our emotions, enabling a form of communication unattainable in the framework of written text, or spoken word on its own. In this case action of the ritual is the essential component, giving life to the aforementioned systems of communication: as a result of rituals being an *action* they are inherently fleeting, experienced in the moment. In their *aliveness* there is a constant psychological flux, due to each gesture altering and/or enhancing the experience on an emotional level. The information elaborated in other forms, such as written, in imagery, or in a verbal recounting negates the fullest understanding and opportunity of acquiring knowledge gained in the live experience. Therefore, participation, the *doing*, is the essential component.

In November 2019 our project continued with the opportunity of an artist's residency in Japan, at the Nishiaizu International Art Village (NIAV). This residency is situated in the mountains of a small village in the northwest region of Fukushima. There we presented various works generated in the context of Project Anywhere. The nucleus of NIAV is located in a former school turned community center. In one of the exhibition spaces, once used as a classroom, we designed an installation consisting of video and flora collected in the vicinity.

Aurora Del Rio and Alvin McIntyre

The use of ephemeral flora was inspired by the tradition of ikebana in the piece *Seishi* (life and death), as a tribute to Nishiaizu. Each element for this part of the installation was collected in daily meditative walks through the forests, encompassing ritual as an integral part of the experience in the mountains of the region. The use of ephemera was both symbolic and literal. In essence, all things within the universe are ephemeral. However, because of our species' lifespan, ephemerality becomes relative to who we are. It is therefore important to note that exercising a ritual is one of the ways we highlight living in the moment. Ritual, as an act, counters the ephemeral. Ephemera can, nonetheless, be functional as a representation of an act, or ritual, at any given moment. It is with this understanding that *Seishi* was added to our installation.

From the point of view of human heritage, appropriation of traditional ikebana is a non-issue. The fear and/or resentment of cross-cultural appropriation is tribalistic, and nevertheless, also very human. Like humanity's perception of a separation from nature, the separateness from any other human is also an illusion. Culture is not something that can be owned, definitively, by any one group.

We also collaborated on an installation realized in an unconventional gallery in town created in an abandoned house that was donated, after the death of the former proprietor, to NIAV. The traditional Japanese home was preserved in its original state, with all the personal effects and rooms echoing memories of its prior life. The piece created for this particular space was *Invocations to the Unnamable*. Our intent was to elaborate a method of "divination" starting from paper and ink, and statements using the recorded voices of local residents pronouncing specific remarks. Seven personal invocations were recorded and played

in speakers situated under the chairs, while the ink dripped from above onto paper below. The resulting ink shapes that were generated this way are to be interpreted as the answer to the specific question that was spoken.

Concurrently, Aurora was also working on a new video project called "Be Welcome in this Land." This work originated from a reflection on the influence of space, seen as both psychic and material entity in the perception of life. When Aurora was visiting Tokyo for the second time, it was clear to her that she could not spend more than three days in the city without feeling overwhelmed. Looking closely at this environment, she noticed how little space was left for nature in urban design. Concrete was ubiquitous from the buildings to the streets, there was with no space left for grass or trees. This prompted her to think about the relationship between the capacity of the mind to decipher symbols and the natural environment as their source. She reflected on the artificialization that nature has been undergoing in the preceding centuries, which has deeply altered humanity's relationship with the environment. Nature, once perceived as a respected force that, through signs and symbols, would guide an individual's life, is now the colonized "soulless surface" that is being exploited regardless of consequences. Perceived space contributes considerably to the comprehension of life, while constituting a reference to one's position in the cosmos. The main contrast between the environment of the city and the environment of the countryside is the lack of non-human life within the prior. As a consequence, the environment of the city allows its perception as a blank space, instead of a living organism, increasing the sense of separation of the individual from the whole.

Tokyo, like many metropolises, consumes massive amounts of electricity, which is provided by nuclear power plants in the countryside.

Alvin McIntyre *Tashlikh* (video still, detail), 2019, TRT: 06:12

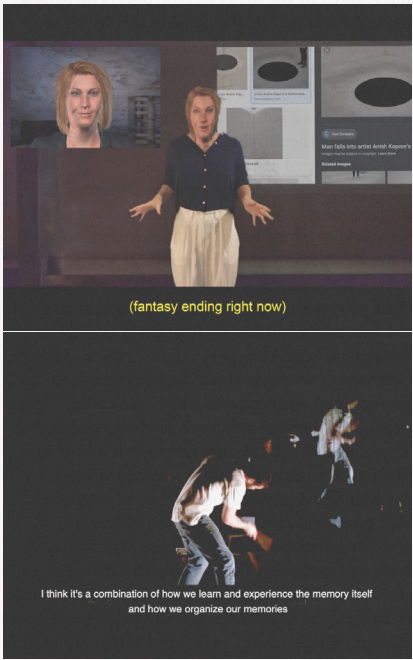**Aurora Del Rio** *Be Welcome in this Land* (video still), 2019, TRT: 25:43

Fukushima Daiichi was one of those. When arriving at Nishiaizu one notices that the landscape is interrupted by the many electric towers dispersed among the hills. "Be Welcome in this Land" is inspired by the Japanese ritual of tea ceremony: a tea made of herbs from the mountain is offered to the electric tower with the intention of welcoming a colonizer as a guest. In an utopical attempt to re-establish the missing link, the electric tower is being welcomed instead of rejected.

As pattern-seeking creatures, we tend to project our psyche onto our environment as if we were fully separate from it. It is therefore only natural, if not obvious, that our interpretation of nature is the source from which all divinities and their powers emerge. Universal symbols such as the sun, water and blood are primary examples, which have been incorporated into a form of deistic celebration or ritual. However, it is often forgotten, or neglected outright, that we humans are also the product of the very nature we celebrate and deify. Therefore, the idea of man vs nature is an ironic illusion of separation from the nature in which we are an integral part of. There is much evidence that prostrations, offerings and sacrifices to appease, seduce or influence these divinities have been a part of our collective human heritage since prehistory. This projection of ourselves onto nature is, in fact, one of the characteristics that make us human. Again, within an illusion of separation, this need, or ability to commune with nature and our environment is a key catalyst for developing work for Project Anywhere in our exploration of ritual.

1 Arie L. Molendijk and Peter Pells, ed., *Religion in the Making: the Emergence of the Sciences of Religion* (Leiden, Boston & Köln: Brill Academic Publishers, 1998), 278.
2 Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 121.

The Living

(fantasy ending right now)

I think it's a combination of how we learn and experience the memory itself
and how we organize our memories

My Husband aka Eliza Doyle and Annika Berry

My Husband *the craziest year of my life i mean ours*, 2020, Single-channel video, TRT:12:00

My Husband *Ed Making His Body a Tool*, 2019–20, Single-channel video, TRT:10:00

I'll start off by saying that
the idea of leaving the bunker came to me all at once and as soon as it arrived at
the intersection of all my brain neurons, I knew I had to act upon it I knew it was
time to go

I put my left foot err
was it my right
I think it was my right foot up onto the first metal step of the staircase leading out
of the bunker
This elevated me off the floor just enough to know I was departing from something
I hadn't even landed my toes firmly down
but the entire mood of the bunker shifted
My departure was imminent, and the walls of the bunker itself seemed to press into
me
as if begging me to stay or
tantalizing me with their sturdiness

The act of beginning to leave the bunker gave me a sense of tremendous power
and also
a terrible pang of fear
I had created an entire world inside the bunker which is to say
an entire *economy*
The economy of the bunker was printed by me on my epson printer
with the exact color of green that America prints its dollar bills with

By the time I had both feet firmly on the first step leading out of the bunker
There was no turning around. It didn't matter at that point if I glanced over my
shoulder
because I knew exactly what was behind me anyways
just piles and piles of counterfeit cash
But I'll go ahead and admit to you that
I spun around and gave it one more look

When the emergency came I lost my job
but I wasn't worried because I'd spent years preparing for this exact moment
the moment when the emergency comes and you don't have time to think
so the only thing I *could* think was "geez I'm glad I'm prepared"

I went underground and stayed there

I ate canned goods and drank aluminum packets of water
and then one day I located an emotion inside my stomach and spent the afternoon
identifying it
Welp I'll just go ahead and admit I felt useless

Above ground things were becoming
weirder
which is to say much worse
There were no job prospects so I knew I had to think on my feet

I wanted to be useful
to make something tangible
to work with my hands
I wanted to *be essential*
err I mean *to do something essential*

Meanwhile, I had inherited all of this cash from my marriage
so there I was underground sitting on all this cash. But I wanted to make something
so I said why don't I spend this *real* cash and use it to print *fake* cash?

Ok ok I'll start off by saying

I'll start by saying
that as I was living in the bunker I was slowly shedding my *self*
I was having a spiritual awakening inside that deep hole that I'd dug
and I was really starting to pull back my layers
If the *self* is a shadow caused by the light cast by the sun
I had lost all sense of that shadow down there, in that diffuse blueish LED light
worlds away from the sky and the horizon
I was a newly molted amphibian or rather
a transmutable actor inhabiting a perfect stage

After all, I had been prepping
and by *prepping* I mean *investing in* or I suppose *maintaining*
an act of faith for emergency
a belief in catastrophic change
the Shit-Hitting-The-Fan

Every day of my life for years I had been acquiring and holding onto the stuff that
would one day be

uh
invaluable

So you can understand that when I looked at my filtered water I imagined its
weight-worth in gold
And every day I lived among all these materials which
under *the perfect conditions of disaster*
would one day become priceless
potentially saving me and my family and friends and loved ones
women and children and even men too, even strangers too, maybe even My
Husband
from the full-on heave of emergency

So that's how I landed on *investment* as a belief system
How I started thinking about making money
my *own* money

I no longer dreamt of survival
but rather of moving through the emergency in complete comfort and abundance
I imagined hiding inside the ground on a soft homemade cushion of wealth

But ok ok now I'll start by saying
I was getting tired of holes
I no longer wanted to prep from a mindset of lack but rather a place of *abundance*
The scarcity mindset felt too much like
fiction

I thought, isn't it more appealing
to prep from a pile
than from a hole?

I know what you're thinking
you're thinking that
I crossed a line, and that line is the law

So I'll start now by saying that
I've acquired a new sense of responsibility
The feeling that, beyond protecting myself from catastrophe, I have some major
duty to the world
to *do something*

My Husband *Ed Making His Body a Tool*
(detail), 2019–20, Single-channel video,
TRT:10:00

how we learn and experie
y we organize our memori

Something which, if I don't do it, doesn't get done
because no one else can do it
For me, that thing is printing money

I've dug my holes and I've filled them with piles
and now it's my duty to circulate in the world

So after that I lifted my foot and stepped onto that first stair and
was overcome by vertigo
It was like I'd been six feet under, sleeping with my eyes open for days, months,
even years
And now I needed to find the handholds or footholds that would lead me to the
surface
and across it

So I stepped onto that first stair

I stepped up onto the platform of that first stair

I stepped onto that first stair
and brought my left foot
or was it my right
I believe it was my right foot
the one that I brought up next to my left
so well there I was
how do I say it
with uh, two feet
there on the stair
my hands up here, my head, my face, my lips, my neck, my shoulders
and down there, my feet, beside one another
and under that, the stair
and further back, the bunker
and in the bunker, the cash
or should I say the *fake money* should I just go ahead and admit to you that
it was counterfeit, or did I already admit that, or did you believe me
when I told you I had loads of cash

Did I seem wealthy???
Prepared???
Had I been doing well for myself before I admitted that it was fake?

I stepped onto that first stair and I admitted that the money was fake

er

I mean
I stepped onto that first stair
and I knew at that point that I had to get my head out of a hole

I mean my bunker

I stepped onto that first stair
and started to hate myself for not being on the second stair
but then I remembered something I'd learned

which is this

Don't ever write anyone off
because you don't know who you'll be with or
who you'll be
when you mistake the world for
the end of the world

My Husband (2015–present) is the pseudonym and
combined practice of Eliza Doyle and Annika Berry.

My Husband's oeuvre – comprising videos, texts,
lecture-performances – is a series of slippages
between author and subject, interrogating methods
of collaboration and questions around material &
artistic autonomy.

Over the course of our year with Project Anywhere,
My Husband invested heavily in the practice
& theory of Survivalism. Collaborating with
Survivalists and Preppers in and around New York
City, My Husband sought out the burden of threat
as a means of opening up and revealing fragilities
within our society, our ecosystem, and our selves.

In spring 2020, My Husband's work departed from
collaborations with Survivalists into a series of
explorations into the fantasies & anxieties of self-
sufficiency in a state of ongoing emergency. My
Husband's work now situates itself post-emergency:
in a dimension where the shit continuously hits the
fan (as it has all along); where bunker mindsets
have already/always failed us, leaving only a path
forward – or up and out of the ground – into new
ways of thinking about collective futurity. *What is
at stake when we mistake the world for the apocalypse?
How do our failures of imagination help us and hurt
us collectively?*

The Quintessence

Pamela Breda *The quintessence*
(film still), 2019, TRT: 01:07:00

Pamela Breda *The quintessence*
(film still), 2019, TRT: 01:07:00

Pamela Breda *The quintessence*
(film still), 2019, TRT: 01:07:00

Pamela Breda

Stargazing

My research began at night, the first time I saw the milky rift of stars scattering through the sky. Since that moment, every time I look at the dark vault extending above Earth, all my observations blend into timeless pictures of that edge on view of our galaxy. My mind floods with a sea of images and I start to wonder about the universe. Ever since I was a child, I was astonished to think that every phenomenon existing in the universe reaches us through light travelling from incommensurable distances. While I was looking at the night sky, millions of light-years away things were happening. Planets were rotating around their stars and galaxies formed in the darkest regions of empty space.

What is the universe? Is it the expanse between things? Is it an emptiness, a vacant stage for our dramas? Is it a material substance? a vessel for our experiences? What is real and what is invented in what we know about the universe? Isn't it real enough even if it exists only in the configuration of our thoughts? Thousands of years ago ancient astronomers viewed the sun and the heavenly bodies as celestial gods. They carved visual tales into tablets of the living sun and its companions, stars, and planets. Now we view the universe through the scientific gaze, and we have different explanations for what we see in the sky. But aren't these narratives as well?

They say the universe is infinite, that it hosts an infinite number of events, an infinite number of planets, maybe an infinite number of sentient beings on those planets. Surely there must be a planet so very nearly like Earth as to be indistinguishable from it. I admire this infinity. It makes me want to pierce its surface and fall through to its core. The universe is space. A three-dimensional space we live in and the time we watch pass on our clocks. It is our north and south, our east and west, our up and down, our past and our future. Space is a physical dimension waved through gravitational attraction. The stars, the sun, the weight of our own body, all are brought into unison because they all have gravitational attraction in common. Mass, like an electric charge, creates a field around bodies in the form of a curved space. Space is a structure, warped in response to the presence of matter and energy, like paper curling in a flame.

Apples fall on the Earth by breaking loose from the pull of the tree, following the path of least resistance along an invisibly curved space, until the surface of the planet interrupts their fall and forces them to stay still. Planets orbit the sun by following an elliptical path defined by their natural curve. Any body and any mass take the path of least resistance along a curved space. We all fall freely without pull, along this natural, invisible, curve.

This is the space and time we are bound to. We cannot jump off it or live outside of it. This is our universe, the vast extent of our curved space-time. People always ask what's outside the universe. The answer is nothing. There is no meaning

to the question where or when if there is no space or time. The Big Bang is the creation of time itself. There is no sense to the question: how long was it before the Big Bang happened? Time began with the Big Bang. There is no sense to the question: where did the Big Bang happen? It happened everywhere. The Earth is at the center in a sense, every galaxy is at the center. The center is everywhere and is becoming more diffuse as the universe continues to expand and cool.

The universe is inhabited by giant clusters of galaxies, each galaxy a conglomerate of a billion or a trillion stars. The milky way, our galaxy, has an unfathomably dense core of millions of stars. We stand on a small planet inside a huge cosmos. But we're alive and we're sentient. Many centuries ago, we started to observe the sky and wonder about its secrets. We built instruments to investigate the depth of the unknown. we pointed telescopes and satellites to the sky to see where it all began. We captured the signal of the cosmic background radiation, bearing information about time before organic life.

We are just observers with technical constraints, and we cannot see infinitely far out into space. We can only see as far as light has travelled since the beginning of the universe. While we try to determine the nature of our ultimate end, we slowly decipher our common beginnings. Gravity and matter and energy are all different expressions of the same thing. We're all intrinsically of the same substance. The fabric of the universe is just a coherent weave from the same threads that make our bodies. Our bodies are mostly water. Water is mostly empty space. So by extension we are space; we are the universe.[1]

Sky Stories

Astrophysics is the observational science *par excellence*. Since scientists cannot physically

touch stars and galaxies, observation and visualization are key features for the development of human knowledge about the universe. But how is it possible to know what's happening in the most distant regions of the universe?

"The Quintessence" is a long-term research exploring the visual imaginary of outer space through multimedia artworks, namely experimental films, photographs, site-specific installations, audio recordings and an artist's book. Through crossovers and the erasing of boundaries between disciplines, the project approaches visual representations of the universe as a complex narrative constructed through the combined agency of technological apparatus and human intervention.

"We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars,"[2] Oscar Wilde famously stated. The gutter is, of course, a metaphor for our daily struggles and the obstacles we find on our path. Looking into the distance of space becomes an action that can uplift our souls and make us feel part of something greater.

Throughout history, looking at the sky has meant, first and foremost, speculating about its nature, wondering about its origins and its future evolution. As a consequence, visual representations of the universe have always mirrored specific cultural, social and even political contexts. Ancient cultures studied the heavens as a way to better understand hearthly events. They transformed the random pattern of stars into shapes of humans, animals and gods. They used constellations to walk across lands and navigate through seas. In the Middle Ages, the sky was conceived as a series of transparent spheres rotating around Earth, believed to be at the center of the universe. During the Renaissance, Galileo and Newton's scientific revolutions provided a new understanding of the physical laws of the universe and opened the way to contemporary quantum theories and riddles about dark energy.

Nowadays, visual representations of the sky have become the key referents for the formulation of hypotheses about the physical, material dynamics of outer space. We are all familiar with Hubble telescope's shiny and colorful images of stars and galaxies. They are the perfect example of highly advanced observational tools employed by contemporary astrophysicists to look at the most distant regions of the visible universe. But how exactly are these images created? And what do they tell about our own specific way of observing the universe? To address these central questions, the research has been organized around three core aspects:

1 to collect space representations produced in different times by different cultures;

2 to understand how contemporary images of space are created through direct visits to astrophysical research centers and laboratories;

3 to develop multiple artworks in order to critically analyze the aesthetic and content-related features of the visual imaginary of outer space.

Narratives of outer space

Since the early 21st century, astrophysics has been experiencing a technological hypergrowth. In the last three decades scientists brought powerful telescopes to orbit around the Earth and sent probes to other celestial bodies such as the Moon and Mars, in order to take extremely detailed images of outer space's objects and events. As non-scientists, we can admire images of stars, galaxy clusters, planets and asteroids produced by space agencies such as NASA and ESO. However, we are unaware of what actually happens when the powerful sensor of an orbiting telescope takes a picture of a distant galaxy, or how a tiny mechanical gear installed on a radio station in Hawaii can shape the image of a distant supernova explosion. The raw data captured from space are never distributed to the press or published online in their original format.

On the contrary, they are strongly edited and visually manipulated in order to become more appealing to the eye of the general public. Transformed into the shiny and glossy images we are used to know, they become a popularized rendition of highly complex visualization processes performed inside remote scientific labs.

As an artistic-based research, "The Quintessence" proposes an original approach to the visual imaginary of outer space, exploring the domain of astrophysics as an evolving system, which evades the fixity of truth-encompassing statements.

The project was structured around the visist to several astrophysical research centers in Europe and the USA and the relatedproduction of audio-visual documentation, generating a sensorial representation of highly secluded scientific laboratories, often situated in remote locations and usually not accessible to the general public. A series of audio interviews conducted with selected astrophysicists and engineers provides an intimate portrait of scientists as individuals with their unique background knowledge, ideas and creative intuitions.

The audio-visual material produced during these visits has been developed through a series of subsequent stages in a series of experimental flms, photographs and audio-visual installations acting as charged surfaces in which multiple gazes – those of the artist, the scientists and the viewers – come together due to the unifying action of universal light. Multiple artworks generate an original approach to the visual imaginary of outer space at a sensorial, emotional and even supra-emotional level. The dialectic movement between visual representations and their validity status comes into question through the combination of old and recent images of outer space – glass plates, printed charts, high-end digital images of stars, galaxies and supernovea explorations – while the audio commentaries provide new

Pamela Breda *The quintessence*
(film still, detail), 2019, TRT: 01:07:00

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perspectives on topics such as scientific objectivity, personal intuitions, theoretical frameworks and material constrains.

While Hubble images are sharper than ever, and their pixel resolution constantly rises, there is a depletion of their power to connect us to the interstellar distances of outer space. Through original artworks I reactivate this power, giving new and original meaning to the light travelling through the universe. Artistic practice as research becomes a powerful tool to question the process of scientific knowledge formation and visualization. The related artworks stand as a symbol of inexhaustible and unlimited depth of meaning, speaking of something that cannot be fully grasped or comprehended, but sensed, perceived and admired.

Images of the universe are approached as surfaces and material projections, objects and components of sculptural installations. They communicate ideas of space and time that go beyond earthly boundaries through a gaze which creates folds, interruptions and non-linear sequences. Every picture of a star, a galaxy, a planet, a meteorite, a supernova takes back its original power as a unique encounter made possible by a huge number of factors.

Artistic practice-as-research exposes what is visible and at the same time suggests what is hidden. Contemporary astrophysics emerges as a complex domain of knowlege shaped by technology, human agency, cultural and individual backgrounds. This reflection can trigger further considerations on the nature of scientific knowledge, our role as humans investigating the universe and the responsabilities we face towards Earth as a tiny yet precious planet existing within a much bigger context. Thinking about outer space and its visual representations becomes a phenomenological opportunity to experience how we, as human, strive to understand the mysteries of outer space.

Astrophysical Research Centers and Observatories visited throughout the research

Bath University (UK), Boulby Underground Laboratories (UK), Bruxelles Planetarium (BE), Cortina Observatory (IT), Durham University (UK), Edinburgh Astronomical Observatory (UK), Flatiron Institute (USA), Glasgow University (UK), Gornergrath Observatory – Bern University (CH), Harvard Center for Astrophysics – Smithsonian Institute (USA), Hertfordshire University (UK), Imperial College (UK), Manchester University (UK), Max Planck Institute (DE), MIT – Massachusetts Institute of Technology (USA), Nottingham University (UK), Jodrell Bank Observatory (UK), Oxford University – Bodleian Library (UK), Padua Observatory (IT), Paris Observatory (F), Sheffield University (UK), St Andrews University (UK), Stazione Radio di Medicina (IT), Surrey University (UK), Royal Astronomical Society (UK), University College London (UK), Wien Astronomical Observatory (AT).

Online Archives and Collections

NASA Visual Archives
    https://www.nasa.gov/multimedia/
    videogallery/Video_Gallery_Archives.html
NASA on Flickr/the Commons
    https://www.flickr.com/photos/
    nasacommons/
Paris Observatoire Library
    https://www.observatoiredeparis.psl.eu/
    bibliotheque.html?lang=en
Astronomical Photographic Plate Collection
    Harvard College Observatory – DASCH
    project
    https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/dasch
The Internet Archive
    www.archive.org

1 This text is an extract from a performative talk presented for the first time at Harvard University, Faculty of Astrophysics, in the fall 2019. The text is loosely inspired by Janna Levin's *How the Universe Got Its Spots: Diary of a Finite Time in a Finite Space*, Princeton NJ, Princeton University Press, 2002.
2 Lady Windermere's Fan (1892), in Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest and Other Plays*, London, Penguin, 2000, p. 47.
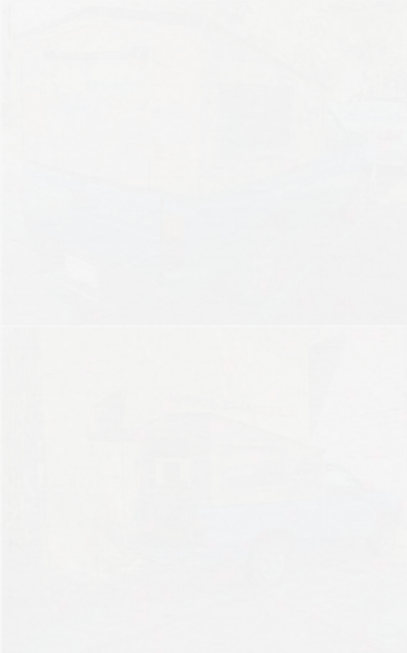
The Ruderal
Library

Hannah Hirsekorn *Ruderal Library*
2019, Wood, Metal, Seeds, Weeds,
Tinctures, 6' x 7' x 5'

Hannah Hirsekorn *Ruderal Library*
2019, Wood, Metal, Seeds, Weeds,
Tinctures, 6' x 7' x 5'

The Ruderal Library is an activated art object that represents an ecological perspective shift in the domains of the "natural" and the "urban" from opposites to symbiotic partners. Throughout post-industrial landscapes we can identify botanical adaptations to contaminated soil. Opportunistic plants remediate toxic conditions, epitomizing the impressive will of Nature's ability to adapt in the most polluted places on our planet. This shift is nowhere more apparent than in the aging railyards of America.

Seventy five percent of the world's biodiversity was lost from 1900–2000.[1] Since the arrival of the railroads in the 1850s, Chicago has been a formidable industrial city leading to the loss of its diverse prairie ecosystem. Plants able to withstand the rapidly changing landscape and climate of Chicago are not only surviving but are thriving. Our polluted, urban landscapes are increasingly becoming some of the most biodiverse environments in the Anthropocene. Instead of discouraging or dismissing this new adaptive ecology, humanity has the opportunity to readjust our perception of "nature" and "urban" and shift our trajectory accordingly. The effects of industry cannot be undone, but we can intentionally participate in the ecosystem of what remains.

The *Ruderal Library* is a mobile weedy plant seed library built into the back of a pickup truck and the anchor for a series of four events held at the four Union Pacific railroad yards in Chicago. Each event will introduce and explore, through various lenses, the aggressive, opportunistic plants of the Anthropocene and the expansive biodiversity they lay the foundation for. Partnering with urban ecology organizations and professionals, the *Ruderal Library* will lead a harvest of heavy metal hyperaccumulator plants, a workshop on herbal detoxification, a collection of invasive species seeds, and a colloquium of anthropomorphism and environmental racism.

The Union Pacific Railroad Company was responsible for completing the transcontinental railroad, and the subsequent industrial boom in the United States. The proposed locations for the events are the physical sites of the Golden Spike which connected the branches of the transcontinental railroad as well as marking the metaphorical site for the Golden Spike for the Anthropocene. In addition to accelerating the movement of people and goods, railway traffic was vital to the spread of foreign seeds. The majority of these successful migrants are of the weedy variety due to their willingness to persist in human altered environments. The rail yard provides a space for its own characteristic combination of species unmanicured and undisturbed by human intervention or conservation. Each event invites participants to take a closer look at some of the most forward thinking, biodiverse ecosystems to survive the human-impacted epoch.

As an anchor for engagement, it is an attempt to repair our fractured relationship with Earth. This will provide an opportunity for Chicago's residents

to be reminded of their reciprocal and ever evolving relationship with Nature. Woven into this understanding is the recognition that every small act of repair and restitution is also a seed for this revolution.

The positive impact of the *Ruderal Library*'s collection events will be widespread in both scope and reach. The project empowers urban dwellers to reconsider societal ecology binaries and metaphors, to explore the healing capabilities of weeds and reimagine the future of conservation and biodiversity in terms of post-industrial landscapes. This series will offer practical knowledge in conjunction with ecological perspective shifts in the form of seed saving, ecological analysis, historical context, detoxification tea preparing and soil testing to support patrons towards a formation of self-sufficiency and collective resourcing. Returning Chicago to its 1830s motto "Urbs in Horto" or City In the Garden, and how these terms are interpreted in the age of the Anthropocene, this pilot project has the potential to spread to cities across America.

1 United Nations, *UN Report: Nature's Dangerous Decline 'Unprecedented'; Species Extinction Rates 'Accelerating'* (Paris: United Nations, May 9, 2019), https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2019/05/nature-decline-unprecedented-report/.

Hannah Hirsekorn

ZÀO:
A History of
Chinese Dishcourse
through Famine
and Revolution

Siri Lee

Siri Lee *ZÀO: A History of Chinese Dishcourse through Famine and Revolution* (pages 161–2), 2019, Digital illustration, text, graphite on paper, and digital collage, 4275 x 3225 px, Image credit: Archival photo in the public domain, modifications and arrangement by Siri Lee

Premise

As a speculative history, the artist's book *ZÀO: A History of Chinese Dishcourse through Famine and Revolution*, retells modern Chinese history through "faction" (fact and fiction). This invented genre is a critical response to my study of Mao Era propaganda—itself an archive of fictions posing as fact. At the same time as this propaganda extolled China's metamorphosis into an unprecedented communist utopia, tens of millions of people were starving to death or murdered for political reasons in the Great Leap Forward (1958–1962) and Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). Today, while discussion of these disasters continues to elude western public discourse, their censorship in mainland China escalates.

To resist such erasure—and to ruminate on how one can recuperate historical memory in spite of such amnesia and trauma—*ZÀO* asks readers to reimagine 20th-century Chinese society as "Signese" society — an alternate civilization that practiced "linguaculture," a conflation of linguistic and agricultural production wherein words and food were literally the same. In linguaculture, language is eaten as "dishcourse," propaganda is force-fed as "cropaganda," and the Mao Era's intellectual destitution and physical famine become identical. In its exhumation of massive historical trauma concealed beneath exuberant propaganda, *ZÀO* deploys myriad strategies: archival images, original historical research, personal memoir, fictional storyline, bilingual (mis)translation, critical analysis, and hand-drawn illustrations. The result is a book that is generally frenetic and at times overwhelming — except for one extended moment towards the end.

Case study

With the preceding summary out of the way, I will attend more specifically to one particular chapter in the publication. "Untitled and penultimate" (all that follows is the epilogue), attempts to enter and stay with a specific traumatic event — the death of Bian Zhongyun, one of the first educators to be murdered by her own middle and high school students during the Cultural Revolution. For alleged counterrevolutionary crimes, Bian and four other educators were publicly humiliated and tortured by their students during a day-long, on-campus struggle session on August 5, 1966. Though the other educators survived, Bian did not. Her cause of death was declared "unknown" at the time, and when her husband tried to bring a suit against one of the culprits after the Cultural Revolution, the court dismissed the case because the statute of limitations had passed.
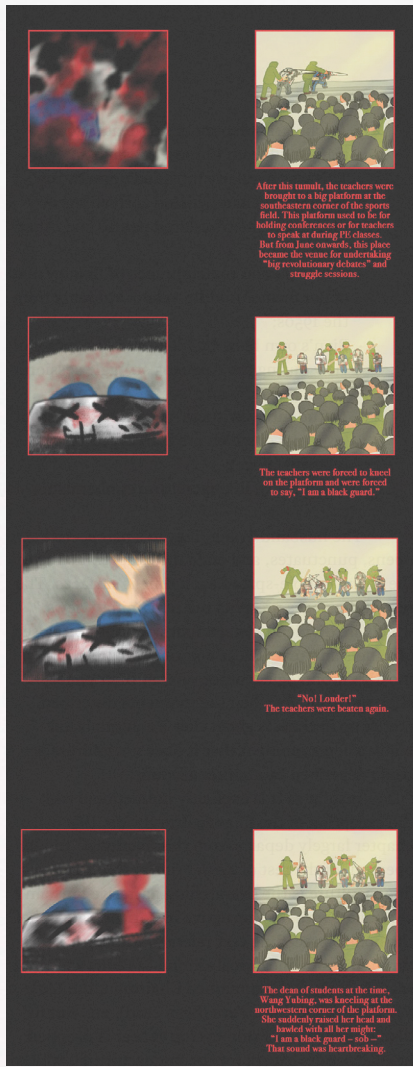
This chapter is split into multiple perspectives (or "views") upon Bian's death:

· The memories of her husband Wang Jingyao, who was not present at her struggle session and was only called afterwards to retrieve her corpse;

· A scholarly account of her death, google-translated from Chinese to English. This was regularly intruded upon by my exasperated handwritten corrections of repeatedly mistranslated names and other words;
· A first-person remembrance of Bian by one of her former middle-school students from the 1950s;
· Bian's own blow-by-blow, wordless point of view during the August 5 struggle session, as imagined by me;
· A student eyewitness' account of the event (excerpts of which are rearranged on the following page);
· ...and lastly, linguacultural euphemisms.

The husband Wang Jingyao's perspective opens, punctuates, and ends the chapter, taking up the entire double-spread each time it surfaces. The rest of the pages presents the remaining "views," which are divided between four columns composed of panels and text. These columns progress in mostly chronological order, so that their panels align horizontally when the moments described match up in time. A given view's column is left blank when a moment that it does not address is being described by another account.

Insofar as it is explicitly nonfictional with the exception of the linguacultural view, this chapter largely departs from the "factional" modus operandi of the rest of *ZÀO*. Prior to this chapter, linguaculture is the overarching narrative lens, and compliant with its alternative historical logic, all of the book's preceding text refers to Chinese history through a thin allegorical shroud — China as Signa, Mao Zedong as the unnamed Chairman, the *Little Red Book* as *Little Red Furu* (bean curd), etc. But in Bian's chapter, this side-eyeing veneer is dropped in all accounts except for the linguacultural, which

After this tumult, the teachers were brought to a big platform at the southeastern corner of the sports field. This platform used to be for holding conferences or for teachers to speak at during PE classes. But from June onwards, this place became the venue for undertaking "big revolutionary debates" and struggle sessions.

The teachers were forced to kneel on the platform and were forced to say, "I am a black guard."

"No! Leader!"
The teachers were beaten again.

The dean of students at the time, Wang Yuhong, was kneeling at the platform. She suddenly raised her head and howled with all her might:
"I am a black guard – sob –"
That sound was heartbreaking.

(left)
Siri Lee *ZÀO: A History of Chinese Dishcourse through Famine and Revolution* (pages 261–4, rearranged), Execerpts of Bian's imagined "view" (left column) and student eyewitness' "view" (right column) during Bian's struggle session, 2021, Digital illustration, 1050 x 2730 px

(right)
Siri Lee *ZÀO: A History of Chinese Dishcourse through Famine and Revolution* (pages 265–8, rearranged), Execerpts of Bian's imagined "view" (left column) and student eyewitness' "view" (right column) during Bian's struggle session, 2021, Digital illustration, 1064 x 2730 px

1 *Though I Am Gone*, directed by Hu Jie (2006; China: independent distribution), https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=eBfGc3-InrA; Youqin Wang, "Memorial for Victims of the Chinese Cultural Revolution: Chinese Holocaust Memorial," The University of Chicago, accessed December 10, 2018, http://hum.uchicago.edu/faculty/ywang/history/; Jisheng Yang et al., *Tombstone: The Great Chinese Famine, 1958–1962*, 1st American ed. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012).

lingers on as a vestige. In the shift from mass movement into singular event, authorial fictional logic loosens its hold on historiography. There is a point at which allegorical logic can no longer support the brutality of its real-world reference, and Bian's torture and death seems to be the breaking point over which linguaculture could no longer stretch without seeming utterly incommensurate.

Here, the pacing and visual tone also turn towards the measured and forensics. Radiating the Mao Era's own bombastic frenzy as reflected in movement names such as the "Great Leap Forward" and slogans such as "Surpass Britain and catch up to America" (超英赶美), *ZÀO*'s generally brisk, sometimes lurching pace can speedrun through a decade in the span of two pages. This impetuous narrative tempo is in turn replicated in a flamboyant, chaotic, and sometimes sensationalist visual style that often switches color palettes and subject matter from one page to the next, darting between poster scans, digital illustrations, comics format, and photos of museological artifacts, everyday objects and public settings.

However, in Bian's chapter, the measure of time thickens from year to minute, even second. The ensuing 72 pages track the motions of a single afternoon. Correspondingly, the art style draws taut: the pages are dominated by black negative space and unified by a distinctly regimented, literally boxed-in, visual format.

This chapter works in the tension between two contradictory drives that run throughout *ZÀO*: on the one hand, to allow for a sense of "what happened" to coalesce out of crisscrossing accounts, to create some rungs of understanding to latch onto so that the traumatic event can begin to be understood; on the other hand, to counter any such resultant reconstructions' coalescence into a clear-cut master narrative of "how it happened," to acknowledge the impossibility and even violence of imagining a coherent whole to the experience of both the traumatic event and life in its aftermath. There can be no closure, especially not when the harm itself, of both the event and the era, is still barely addressed, and has never been redressed. Each panel is both a window and a wound. When assembled side by side, these fragments do not so much fill in each other's blanks as signal the impossibility of ever piecing together a whole.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge three works to which *ZÀO* is deeply indebted: historian Yang Jisheng's *Tombstone* on the Great Leap Forward/Great Chinese Famine, scholar Wang Youqin's public archive-memorial for the Cultural Revolution, and director Hu Jie's documentary on Bian Zhongyun, *Though I Am Gone* (我虽死去).[1] In Bian's chapter specifically, much of the script comes from testimonies in Wang's archive that I translated and used with her permission, while some of the images are taken from *Though I Am Gone* with Hu's permission. In a sense, *ZÀO*'s linguacultural history and Bian's chapter form my offerings to Yang's tombstone for an era and Hu's tombstone for an individual.

I saw her weeping, her eyes full of anguish and a thin vapor of hope – hope for sympathy and pity.

My heart couldn't help but ache – I felt that her sclera hair, short and stocky build, were exceedingly similar to my mother's.

I didn't dare to think further, the terror rushed upon me: those who feel pity for the black guard will meet the same end as the black guard!

In a daze, squeezed by a crowd of people, I chanted slogans, and followed one of the principals, whose arms were twisted and body was forced into the "airplane" posture, on a tour around the campus.

BIOS

CANAN BATUR is a curator based in St. Leonards-on-sea (UK). She is the Assistant Curator at De La Warr Pavilion (DLWP) and the co-founder of Museum for the Displaced (MfD). She is currently working on three exhibitions: *Holly Hendry: Indifferent Deep*, *Rock Against Racism: Militant Entertainment 1976–82*; *All In the Same Storm: Pandemic Patchwork Stories*; and a funded research project titled *Public Roots and Beaten Tracks* for Platform Asia. Previously, she co-curated *Give Up the Ghost*, Baltic Triennial XIII (2017–19), and was one of the co-founders of clearview, a project space in London (2016–19), and the curatorial fellow in RAW Material Company, Dakar in 2019.

TANYA BLACKWELL Tania Blackwell is an Australian artist. She holds a Bachelor of Arts (Fine Art) with Honours from RMIT University (2002) and a Masters of Landscape Architecture from University of Melbourne (2018). Blackwell is currently a PhD Candidate at Deakin University. Her interdisciplinary artistic research in concerned with intangible cultural heritage, memory, darkness and questions of haunting in landscape. Blackwell seeks to activate these narratives using methods such as composite mapping, installation, photography, performance, film and writing.

PAMELA BREDA is an artist and filmmaker living between Lon¬don and Milan. She was the recipient of several art awards and fellowships, including Italian Council Award (MibaC, Italy), Cantica21 (MibaC, Italy), IMeRa Fellowship (Marseille, France) and Simultan International Video Art Award. In 2019 she was appointed fellow artist-in-residence at Pratt Institute (New York, USA). Recent international exhibitions and screenings include: TalentPrize 2020 (Rome, Italy), 'When Things Merge Into Each Other' (Wien, Austria), 'Open' (Nottingham, UK), Les sublimes Archives (Helsinki,

Finland), Sheffield DocFest (UK), Vision du Reel – Media Library (CH), ECRA Film Festival (Brazil), Revolutions Per Minute Festival (Boston, USA).

AURORA DEL RIO is an Italian/Spanish ar4st based in Berlin. She incorporates pain4ng, performance, wri4ng and sound into her prac4ce. She holds a BA in Pain4ng from the Academy of Fine Arts in Bologna, and an MFA degree in Art Prac4ce from Transart Ins4tute Berlin/New York. Her ar484c research inves4gates the rela4onship between human and nature, how the environmental space is perceived and how this percep4on influences the way reality is inhabited. She is interested in the space of poten4ality that originates when defini4on is avoided or misplaced, when a structure of reality is translated, or read through another system, and the liminal space of failure.

MOHAMMAD GOLABI is an Iranian curator, architect, and designer based in Brooklyn, New York. He holds an MA in Curatorial Practice from the School of Visual Arts, New York. With over fifteen years of experience in the Middle East, South Africa, and most recently in the United States, Mohammad has developed a rich trans-national body of politically-conscious work that interrogates themes such as colonization, war, displacement, and the environment, all of which he considers the pillars of the politics of the Global South. Mohammad is co-founder and curator at Frontview for Art and Architecture. His recent projects include *Decolonial Mapping Toolkit* and *bread and salt*.

HAWAPI is an independent cultural organization based in Peru which generates encounters between groups of artists and places where a particular struggle or conflict (political, social, environmental, often all overlapping) is central to daily life. During

these *encuentro*, the artists live and work on site, creating interventions in public space. In the months that follow, HAWAPI creates opportunities to connect the works, research and thinking that happen on site with a wider public in the capital, through strategies of display and dialogue such as exhibitions, public programming & publications.

HANNAH HIRSEKORN currently lives and works on Vashon Island in the Puget Sound. She is the director of the Vashon Island Artist Residency. Her curiosity in natural phenomenon combined with an investment in the well-being of the planet has been the driving force for her ecological and community focused art practice. She is the founder of the Golden Spike Guild, an interspecies artist collective that conducts observational research, develops strategies for following the natural supply chains of decoupled material understandings and creates with knowledge and care.

INVISIBLEDRUM (NO) is an artistic research platform investigating holistic practices and spiritual technologies within the field of art and new ecologies. We study animistic practices within transdisciplinary fields of knowledge, encompassing amongst other the arts, creative ecologies, technology, embodied cognition, healing practices, speculative design, herbology, and ethnobotany. For more information, please see: www.invisibledrum.com

AMALIA FONFARA (Denmark / Greenland) is an artist, healer, and shamanic practitioner based in Trondheim. She holds a MA in Fine Art (2015), from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology and a two-year counseling and therapeutic healing education (2015), from The Healing and Therapy School in Trondheim. Based on performance and

new media her artistic work embarks on an ontological investigation of the crossings of inner and outer landscapes through introspection of animism and contemplative healing practices, where the essences of soul and materiality are entangled in a holistic comprehension of life. Her work is often socially engaged in local environments with a strong reference to Greenland. She is a co-founder of *Invisibledrum* (NO) artist association, a platform investigating relationships and interconnections within technology, shamanism, and animistic systems in contemporary society.

NAZARÉ SOARES (Spain/ Portugal) works around notions of invisibility, imperceptibility, and magic engineering. Her practice since 2014 is developed from her interest in systems of interconnectivity and topographies of the imagination. Her practice interweaves psychoacoustic and cinematic spaces, speculative design, and performance arts, incubating spaces for ritual and incubation means. She holds a Masters's Degree in Fine Art from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in 2017 and a first-class degree in Moving Image Arts from Brighton University in 2014. In 2010 she received The Ideas Taps and Magnum Photography Award in the UK. She is a founder of the art association *Invisibledrum*. Her work has been exhibited at Art & Science Museum of Singapore, Palais des Congrès of Montréal, and Metamorf Art & Technology Biennale.

ØYSTEIN KJØRSTAD FJELDBO is a sound artist and musician based in Trondheim, Norway. He has a master's degree in music technology from the music department at the Norwegian University

of Science and Technology (2017), specializing in virtual sonic environments through motion tracking and real-time binaural spatialization. His focus lies in reexamining the properties of that which is considered artificial and organic. Musically, he is part of the multimedia group Future Daughter, involved in Trondheim's club scene as a DJ, and one of the initiators behind Lysthus – a concept aiming to merge the club with the art gallery. He is a founding member of the Lydi collective, working with interactive design for audiovisual exhibitions.

MADDIE LEACH is a New Zealand artist based in Sweden. Her sculptural projects include building a 5-metre sailboat for the roof of New Zealand's national museum (2006). She has shipped a Eucalyptus tree across the Pacific Ocean from New Zealand to Chile, and back again (2006–07); sent 325 litres of pristine water from the Te Waihou spring to Jakarta, where it vanished (2015); and coaxed a community of writers, businessmen, council officials and a newspaper editor to imagine a 'whale' made from 70 litres of used mineral oil and one-tonne of cement (2012–14). In 2017 she co-produced *The Grief Prophesy* album reinterpreting an unremarkable black metal track into a powerful lament.

SIRI LEE is an NYC-based interdisciplinary visual storyteller. A potluck of research, mixed media, and speculative fiction, Lee's work deploys image and wordplay to visualize analogies between material culture and ideology. A recent graduate from the University of Chicago, Lee has been selected for inclusion in *Project Anywhere*'s Global Exhibition Program, 2020; been an artist-in-residence at Residency Unlimited in New York, 2020; and received the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards Alumni Microgrant, 2019. Her work has been exhibited in Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York.

NICCOLÒ MASINI is an Italian multidisciplinary artist, teacher, and researcher based in Genoa and Amsterdam. He is currently pursuing an MFA in art praxis and research at the DAI (2021). His artworks fall into the realms of narrative and craft, poetry, and anthropology, which guide the audience through an engaging narrative of methods, voices, views, and perspectives. Questioning hidden rules of "culture," Masini draws inspiration from literature, history, folklore, psychoanalysis, religion, anthropology, bringing the otherwise immaterial into physical being. In 2018 he was awarded the Best Young Artist of The Year (Painting & Sculpture) by the GAMMA competition and GM conference of Tokyo.

BEATRIZ MATURANA COSSIO is an Architect (RMIT University, Australia) with a Master of Urban Designer and PhD Architecture (University of Melbourne, Australia); Director and Academic, Institute of Architectural History and Heritage, Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism, University of Chile and Adjunct Professor at School of Architecture and Urbanism, RMIT.

ANTHONY MCINNENY is a Designer (Monash University, Australia); Visual Artist (RMIT University Australia); PhD Architecture (RMIT); researcher at RMIT Contemporary Art and Social Transformation, the University of Newcastle, School of Architecture and Built Environment, where he is Co-joint Fellow.

ALVIN MCINTYRE is a Canadian born ar4st currently living and working in the USA. AMer obtaining his B.F.A. and B.Ed. he taught visual arts for over a decade. In 2011 he relocated to Europe where he acquired his MFA from Plymouth University. Employing a wide range of mediums including pain4ng, installa4on, and video,

McIntyre's prac4ce has primarily explored themes of religion and mythology. His work oMen ques4ons the "blind" adherence to religious dogmas, such as *Circumvent* (video 2019), which explores the ritual of circumcision by using a scalpel on a flower, altering its reproduc4ve organs. McIntyre's latest series has been exhibited in Germany, USA, and Japan.

NICCOLÒ MORONATO's approach to art is informed by his training in languages and economic theory. His practice focuses on errors and "flaws" in space, especially public space, intended not just as a physical location but rather as the cultural/social/linguistic/visual infrastructure affecting people's choices. His work addresses the kind of inclusion/exclusion a space can encourage, trying to expose the mindsets and norms society unwittingly adopts, opening them for play and collective re-discussion. His most recent interventions include public formats (The Star Survey, 2019, at Archivio DOCVA Milan, Gasworks, Guest Projects London) and video (The Smallest Controllable Element, 2020, at Spazio Gamma, Milan).

MUSEO BENJAMÍN VICUÑA MACKENNA in Santiago, Chile, is the Museum of the City, named after the Intendente of Santiago (1872–1875) who modernized Santiago as the "Paris of South America" including the vision to canalize the Mapocho River. Museum Director, Ricardo Brodsky Baudet. Institutional Development, Solmaría Ramírez Ahumada.

MY HUSBAND (2015–present) is the combined practice of ELIZA DOYLE and ANNIKA BERRY, comprising videos, texts, lecture-performances. Its oeuvre is a series of slippages between author and subject, interrogating methods of collaboration and questions around material & artistic autonomy. Collaborating with Survivalists and Preppers in

New York City, My Husband sought out the burden of threat as a means of revealing fragilities. My Husband's work now situates itself post-emergency: in a dimension where the Shit continuously Hits the Fan. *What is at stake when we mistake the world for the apocalypse? How do our failures of imagination help us and hurt us collectively?*

KIERA O'TOOLE is a visual artist and a doctoral researcher at Loughborough University, UK with a fo-cus on drawing and phenomenology. O'Toole's practice and research examine drawing's capac-ity to record and materialize a site's atmospheric emotional tone. Her drawing outputs include confe-rences, publications, and exhibitions within gallery and non-gallery spaces. Recent exhibitions include VISUAL Carlow, Highlanes Open Gallery and 'Beyond Drawing' curated by Arno Kramer, Ballina Arts Centre. Upcoming residencies and exhibitions include: Leitrim Sculpture Centre's Landscape, Ecology & Environmental Research Residency and 'Walking Keshcorran', a collaborative residency. O'Toole is co-founder of Drawing deCentered, an artist-led collective that explores contemporary drawing practice.

BEN PARRY is an artist, curator and researcher based in London. He holds a BA in Environmental Art from Glasgow School of Art, an MA in Urban Planning from the University of Liverpool and PhD from the University of the West of Scotland. His context driven and situated practice employ a diverse approach to medium, process and engagement using film, public interventions, text and sound. His work explores the intersections of art and ecology, activism and urbanism, including a long-standing project about waste in Mumbai. He currently leads the MA Curatorial Practice at Bath School of Art.

EDITORS

SUSIE QUILLINAN is co-director and editor at HAWAPI, an organisation based in Peru that each year takes a group of interdisciplinary practitioners to a place where a particular struggle (political, social, environmental, often all overlapping) is central to daily life. She has worked as MFA Program Manager at Transart Institute and has developed curatorial programming, editorial projects and study programmes in Lima, New York, Berlin, Melbourne, Bogotá and Mexico City. Her current research focuses on curatorial accompaniment and collective practices of reading and weaving. She is a candidate in the PhD – Curatorial Practice program at MADA, Monash University (Australia).

ANA SOPHIE SALAZAR is a curator and writer. Through undisciplined explorations of nomadic, poly-lingual, and transcultural subjectivities and expressions, her work proposes inventive ways of challenging current geopolitical world mappings. From 2016 to 2020, she was Assistant Curator for Exhibitions at the NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore. Ana graduated with an MA in Curatorial Practice from the School of Visual Arts, New York, and a BA in Piano from the Music School of Lisbon.

JESSICA TAYLOR is a Barbadian curator and producer based in London. As the Head of Programmes of International Curators Forum (ICF), Jessica co-curated the 2017 Diaspora Pavilion exhibition in Venice and film & performance programmes such as 'An Alternative Map of the Universe' (Guest Projects, 2019), 'Migrating Cities' (Tai Kwun Art Centre, 2018) and 'Monster and Island' with artist Sheena Rose (Royal Academy, 2017). Jessica also produced the exhibition 'Arrivants: Art and Migration in the Anglophone Caribbean World' at the Barbados Museum. She received a BA in Art History and Philosophy from McGill University (Montreal) and an MA in Curating Contemporary Art from the Royal College of Art (London).

LEONG MIN YU SAMANTHA is an independent researcher and producer in the field of contemporary art, and co-founder of the Museum for the Displaced. From 2014 to 2018, she was part of the inaugural team of the Research Department at the NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore. Recent projects include *NTU CCA Ideas Fest 2020, IdeasCity Singapore* (2020), NTU CCA Singapore, guest-curated by IdeasCity, New Museum, New York; *Art and Architecture Summit Singapore* and *Curatorial Conversations in Singapore* (both 2019), Frieze Academy, London; and Lee Wen Archive digitization project (2016–18), Asia Art Archive, Hong Kong, in collaboration with NTU CCA Singapore.

SIMONE DOUGLAS is a NYC-based artist, curator and writer. She is currently the director of the MFA Fine Arts Program at Parsons School of Design, The New School. Douglas' works have been exhibited at, and are held in Victoria & Albert Museum, London; Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Photographers Gallery, London; Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; Australian Centre for Photography, Sydney; and Month of the Photo, Paris. Douglas has curated for the Auckland Festival, The Pingyao International Festival of Photography and on behalf of the Getty Conservation Institute and the Australian Museum. She is co-editor of *Anywhere* and co-curator of *Anywhere & Elsewhere*.

SEAN LOWRY is a Melbourne-based artist, writer, curator and musician. He holds a PhD in Visual Arts from the University of Sydney and is currently Head of Critical and Theoretical Studies in Art at Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne. Lowry has exhibited and performed extensively both nationally and internationally, and his writing appears in numerous journals and edited volumes. He is also Founder and Executive Director of global blind peer reviewed exhibition program Project Anywhere (www.projectanywhere.net)— which is currently supported as part of a partnership between the Centre of Visual Art (University of Melbourne) and Parsons Fine Art (Parsons School of Design, The New School). Lowry is also one half (with Ilmar Taimre) of *The Ghosts of Nothing* (www.ghostsofnothing.com). For more information, please visit www.seanlowry.com