Co-Learning Score *for* Artistic Research

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Biographies

Allison Peacock is dance artist, horticulturalist, and currently a PhD Candidate at the Interdisciplinary Humanities program at Concordia University. Her artistic work focuses on the relational possibilities of dance and choreography, experimenting with forms of presentation, representation, potentiality, and imagination. Her PhD research considers the interconnections of embodied practice and environment in the comparison of contemporary site–specific dance and urban gardening. She completed a BA in Political Science and Visual Studies at the University of Toronto, the Professional Dance Training Program at the School of Toronto Dance Theatre, and an MA in Solo/Dance/Authorship at the UdK/HZT Berlin.

Christian Brun del Re is constantly changing their mind. He lets himself be surprised by dance, physical theatre, butoh, life drawing, percussion, and slowness. He grows alongside his many allies: GLAMOUR MAGIQUE, the collectif fuit.es, la société mousse, Infinite Parachute and the Grotesque. Together, they weave unruly, queer, ritualistic, and radical forms of art. Christian works from the body as a site of knowledge, memory, and contradiction, exploring vulnerability, humor, and ecstasy. He is currently pursuing an individualized master's at Concordia and slips between academic and experimental stages.

Erin Hill is a dance artist, writer, birth support practitioner and PhD student in interdisciplinary Humanities at Concordia University. Working across mediums, Hill is interested in the nuances of congruency and consent in interspecies relationships. Hill's work is rooted in daily practice and situated knowledge(s), building relations with ecological protagonists such as the sun (Sunrise Commitment, 2018) and the weather (Deep Gazing, ongoing). Erin is one half of *The Sisters of the Celestial Order of Nephology*, co–created with lifelong collaborator Nina Vroemen under the name Horizon Factory.

Kristian North is a genre-agnostic songwriter, musician, composer, and artist. Active since 2003, he has written and performed original music as both a solo artist and band member, touring widely across North America and Europe. This experience informs his compositional practice that values chance, live performance, and collaboration. He holds a BFA in Electroacoustic Composition and is pursuing an MA in trans-disciplinary research–creation at Concordia University.

Lília Mestre is a performing artist, dramaturge, and researcher working in collaborative formats mainly in the fields of contemporary dance and choreography. Currently, she is Assistant Professor of Contemporary Dance and co–director of LePARC at Concordia University. Mestre works with scores, inter–subjective set-ups and other chance-induced processes as emancipatory artistic and pedagogical tools, which have been documented in various publications. She is interested in forms of organisation created by and for artistic practice as alternative study processes for social–political reflection. Currently she holds a FRQSC three year grant for the research project Keep in Touch! Critical Embodiments for Possible Future(s). https://liliamestre.com/

Dr. VK Preston comes to performance scholarship by way of practice. Their work in performance historiography, experimental histories of the performing arts, and collaborations with contemporary dance artists and composers includes work as a dramaturge, writing on improvisation and emotions, and installations for lecture performance. VK is currently an Associate Professor in the History Department and co–director of LePARC at Concordia University. They are currently working on a poetry cycle and performance lectures on care, the hospital crisis, and cultural inclusion across a human lifespan. VK's monograph project on the witch trials, performativity, dance, and theatre emerged during fellowships at the *École normale supérieure* in Paris and *La Cité internationale des arts*. https://www.vkpreston.org/

Co-learning Score for Artistic Research #1

Lília Mestre

This practice takes place at the intersection of criticality and research-creation, offering a space where theory and practice enter a sustained and generative dialogue. Structured as a performance score, the process moves through a rhythm of biweekly encounters—a choreography of questions and responses—between the artists-researchers' members of LePARC and professor Lília Mestre.

Each session invites participants to present their work-in-process as both performance and proposition. In response, within a period of 4 days, a guiding question is shaped—emerging from within the work and posed back to it. This recursive structure allows for inquiry to evolve collectively, moving through spirals and tentacles rather than straight lines, tracing the artistic practice and the critical processes in equal importance.

How do we compose materials and thoughts? What is the performativity at stake in the sharing of them? What is the relationship between subjectivity and collectivity in a collaborative environment? What is the impact both on our individual practices and on the collective?

The practice ends with a final improvisation, while theoretical inputs—introduced along the way—serve as conceptual anchors, eventually giving form to a written essay. The process is documented along the way, becoming material for a shared archive or collective publication.

The aim is not only to support the development of a thesis argument, but to deepen the entanglement between form, concept and collective practice. It is a space to test ideas materially, to ask what thinking feels like, and to sense what performance might propose.

Score ————————————————

Meetings take place on Fridays at LeP Performance Lab at 4–6 pm.

Each participant presents 10 minutes of their work. These are artistic proposals in process.

All participants take notes of every presentation.

There is no discussion between the presentations.

There is no audience. Everyone attending the score meetings must share work.

At the end of each session, we take by chance who asks a question to whom. Each session's presentations are the beginning of a new set of questions.

The question is elaborated and sent in the form of a letter to a friend. This enables criticality, generosity, curiosity and attention to be part of the score. An artistic artificial friendship playground that eventually becomes real friendship. Or not.

The letter can include diverse materials: thoughts, references, examples, poems, pictures, games, …. And it needs to include a question to be developed for the following session.

Questions must be sent by email and copy pasted on the google folder on the Tuesday at 23h59 following the presentations.

Participants track and document their responses.

Introduction

Meeting its own edges: the margins of a lake or a leaf

Dear Reader,

Score Practice began in September 2024 and ended in April 2025, and every encounter was different except for one thing: following the score. The score became a kind of hideout for us six practitioners. As a collective and practice-based approach to research, it allowed for an open ended, spacious and rigorous space of creation, experimentation and questioning. To look at the moving parts, Score Practice organizes a type of correspondence that falls outside of the more typical letter-for-letter writing format. On one side of the correspondence is a practice or an art experiment and on the other side is a written letter. One of the score's strengths is in how it invites intuition into the fold, a kind of intuition through correspondence that partners writing and creation.

In the context of the university, this space for intuition through practice and writing has felt like a refuge:

> *Innate knowledge—intuition, speculation—is frowned upon within methodological approaches, unless they can somehow be quantified. We need look no further than our own PhD programs in research-creation to see that our emphasis on the written document is about situating incipiency, locating intuition, managing speculation. Research-creation does not need new methods. What it needs is a re-accounting of what writing can do in the process of thinking-doing.[1]*

The writing aspect in our process of thinking-doing has an important relational dimension that feels special within the university (where so much emphasis is put on individual research and achievements). Q&A, message, reply, epistle, response… Score Practice engages the relational dynamic of correspondence, but what exactly makes an exchange co-respondence?

Correspondence comes from com— "together, with each other" and respondere meaning to "respond, answer to, promise in return." Respondere itself comes from re- "back, back from, back to the original place, again, anew, once more," and spondere "to

pledge, to sponsor, to engage, to assure." Spondere is to say "I promise," and with relation to sponte, it is to do something willingly.[2] A promise has a future projection, with the momentum that whatever is promised will be carried through. Keeping this notion of carrying through, to respond would be to carry through again, to carry through anew, to carry back from the original place. Time's movement can be felt here, the carrying through carries both the promise of the future and the knowledge or location of the past. This movement of time has been very present in Score Practice and throughout the process of creating this publication.

The word correspondence brings to mind the art of letter writing, penpals. One special ingredient in posting a letter is the time it takes to receive the letter—the delay between the experience of writing and the experience of reading. This quality of delay is less obvious within correspondences of texting and emails, but still, even with extreme speed, there is a delay. Writing practices can't help but include a delay between writing and reading, can they? One thing the delay does is make obvious, or felt, the time in and of experience: when I write it down in a letter, to be read by another, in an other time than when I wrote it, I can feel time and how it always moves through experience, it doesn't stay put. "Intuition is the relational movement through which the present begins to coexist with its futurity, with the quality or manner of the not-yet that lurks at the edges of experience."[3] In that relational movement of time and intuition, correspondence can be found.

To correspond is to carry through together, again. When does the co- in correspondence really breathe? The co- as in co-composition or co-learning. It is hard to pinpoint, because that co- is a relational movement, it needs to move. Writing this introduction, I think about the difference between carrying something through together, with regard for one another, versus answering, stating, framing. In Score Practice, the Questions do not ask for an answer, but rather a response. An answer is a statement, its etymological roots suggest the meaning of a 'sworn statement'. An answer, given in reply to a question, is meant to complete the question-answer exchange. In Score Practice, the questions open up a correspondence loop that is multidirectional and spirals us forwards together.

Creating this Score Practice publication involved an editing

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1   Erin Manning, *The Minor Gesture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 42.

2   From entries for correspondence, response and sponsor on *Etymonline*, accessed October 19, 2025, https://www.etymonline.com/.
3   Erin Manning, *The Minor Gesture*, 47.

process, to make the writings and workings of Score Practice legible to you, beloved reader. The editing process unfolded online: we suggested edits, questioned the content, added comments and documentation or short texts of what each participant shared each session. This editing process felt akin to a practice of marginalia, "a 19th century practice [...] which cultivated a gesture of personalizing a book before offering it to a friend or a lover by writing notes in its margin."[4] Though those notes do not appear in the margins of this published format, the space of the margins, the movement of being drawn out to the edges, still feels present. Marginalia refers to margin, whose oldest use denotes the edges of a sea or a lake. Which became, through lettering, the edges of a leaf or of a page. Through the movement that compelled our correspondences and the editing process, we bring each other to the edges. There at the edge of lake-like experience, deep and resourceful, not yet lived nor bathed in, but intuited.

However, not all letters are correspondence.

Over the course of 2024 and 2025 students and faculty received email messages from Concordia University, usually addressed 'Dear Concordians' and signed by the President and Vice-Chancellor of the university. These letters that arrived in our inboxes were articulated as messages concerned with student safety. When cops started arriving on campus, 'protecting' the EV and Hall buildings, this was also purported to be for student safety. The safety of which students? These emails never explained why the students were striking, nor why they were out in the street mobilizing and protesting. These letters never mentioned the very concrete demands the students were making of Concordia University to disclose and divest from their partnerships with zionist organizations.[5] Rather than frame the genocide as violent, they instead framed the organizing and striking of students as violent. While the ongoing genocide in Palestine perpetrated by the zionist Israeli government is not central to

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4   Ivana Müller, "Notes," accessed October 5, 2025, www.ivanamuller.com/works/notes/.
5   Since October 2023, in response to Israel's war on Gaza, the students organized walk-outs, sit-ins, petitions, teach-ins and protests as methods to demand that the administration cuts its employment partnerships with Israeli organizations. Over 11,000 students historically went on strike in November 2024 and nearly 1,000 students voted in favor of ending Concordia student employment partnerships with weapon companies that are arming Israel (Lockheed Martin, CAE, Pratt&Whitney, and more) during a Special General Meeting in January 2025. See @sphrconcordia on Instagram for more information.

Score Practice, it is part of the environment from which we worked and wrote. And those intimate, fear mongering letters from the president offer much to think about when it comes to correspondence. They use language to hide certain information, certain movements, under other information. The letters from the president are politics, not correspondence. And these politics are an attack on that kind of movement of students and teachers that gathers itself, swelling up, taking space, a self-organised ensemble, a common—politics comes to compress, subdue that movement.

> *In the clear, critical light of day, illusory administrators whisper of our need for institutions, and all institutions are political, and all politics is correctional, so it seems we need correctional institutions in the common, settling it, correcting us. But we won't stand corrected. Moreover, incorrect as we are there's nothing wrong with us. We don't want to be correct and we won't be corrected. Politics proposes to make us better, but we were good already in the mutual debt that can never be made good. We owe it to each other to falsify the institution, to make politics incorrect, to give the lie to our own determination. We owe each other the indeterminate. We owe each other everything.* [6]

If I imagine this scenario between the students and the president of Concordia as a Score Practice, the student's Response to the president's letters was to protest, again and again (creating one of the most attended and unanimous strikes of Concordia's student history). In what ways do these forms of correspondence fold us into the future, moving from the commons? Score Practice created a space to move otherwise within the university: unproductive in the traditional sense, wayward, accumulating around the margins, a practice of marginalia in which our time and labor at the university does not correspond to what the institution designed itself for, and which might even be, in the eyes of the university, a waste of time. One can hope, at least. May this book be a waste of time in their eyes, but in your eyes, friendly reader, may it be a movement we carry through together, anew.

with warmth,
Erin Hill

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6   Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study* (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2013), 20.
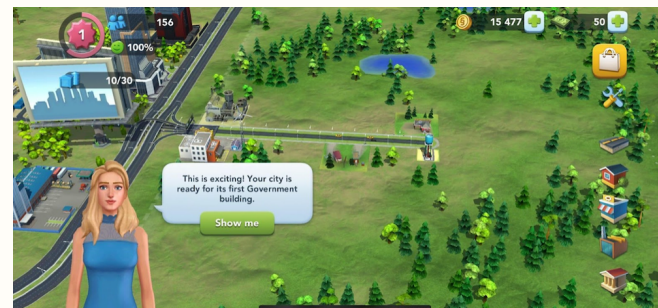
Allison Peacock

When we began our meetings in September 2024, I was in the middle of piecing together years of research for my dissertation. The process of research and then its synthesis was not very clear cut because of many reasons (obvious pandemic stuff, organizing a first time ethnographic project, an artistic practice in flux inside of academia), but I continued making artistic work related to my research around site-specific choreography. In particular, after years of visiting the Home Depot Parking Lot around the corner from my house to observe it from the perspective of a garden, I had created a choreographic work for the lot. The piece, eventually called *Future Garden*, was developed and danced with my longtime colleague Mairead Filgate, and I brought the documentation to the group as a starting place. My hope for this video was that it could be the skeleton for a choreography of many people set in the parking lot, so the duet is like a flexible sketch for a large group piece in a large parking lot. Starting with this work and a collage that I had made to suggest an expansion of the garden in the parking lot, helped me begin to see the research-creation component of my research from the outside in critical conversations with other makers. In the response from Kristian he references Ethiopian Rock Churches, and I should explain that this relates to my thinking around a 'future garden' set in a parking lot. In the many possible versions of futurity that includes ruins, botanical takeover, condominium developments, another possibility could be subterranean structures that are a homage to the materiality of the parking lot's asphalt.

Kristian ⟩ Allison ———————— **September 27**

I'm drawn to the Ethiopian rock churches. Looking at pictures of them online I am reminded of the isometric perspective in computer games. I imagine from a helicopter one would have something like an isometric perspective on the Home Depot parking lot. A fixed isometric perspective gives a convincing sense of 3D space in a 2D projection and helps players understand objects' relative positions and sizes. It is common in real-time strategy (RTS) games, roguelikes, 'God games', and city-planning games. Can you find any isomorphism between the play style, rule set, or the organisation of these types of games and your choreography of this piece? What about the function of isometric perspective in relation to your use

of the God's-eye view? Framed in something like game theory this could also speak to the *telos* of the work.'

Response ————————————

The Virtual City[1]
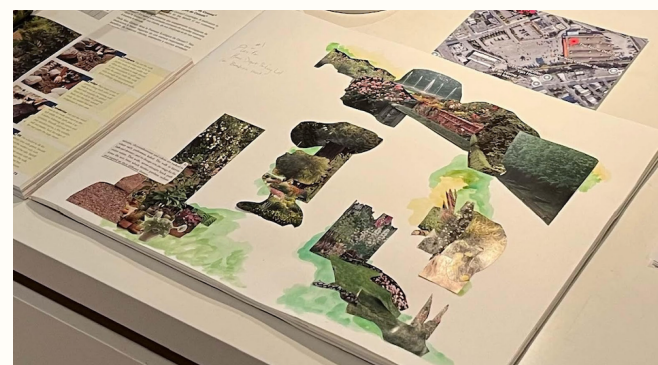
Collage Garden[2]

Future Garden/Parking Lot Moves 4 All:

1   Allison Peacock, screencapture of city created with Sim City BuildIt, 2025
2   Allison Peacock, collage, 2025

Welcome to cave land. Cave land is the invention of our friend Philip Ken. The whole strange stories about moles and you can see the moles in an hour in the other part of the theatre here.

But I'm in charge of a serious part, which is the lecture. And like every lecture in France, it has to have three parts. The first part is an exploration of why we are somewhat disoriented in space and time, at the time of the ecological crisis. The second part is an attempt, a very experimental attempt, at finding a way of visualizing an alternative topography, of our landing on earth. The third part is the more political one if you want, of the consequences of this alternative representation.

I want first to start with a small anecdote, to give you a bit of the spirit of this situation. I was in a plane, I'm sure you are also often in this situation. You are in a plane; you try to see the landscape. And this time, it was a year ago, I was above the land of Baffin, slightly west of Greenland. I was trying to watch the spectacle, which is always amazing, of the ice. But this time something unusual happened, because it seemed that the ice was actually sending me a message. I took my pictures very quickly of the screaming images as if the ice pack, which was disbanding very early last year, it's slightly better this year, was telling me something and it looks a bit like the scream of Munsch coming back to me. You know, before, in the old days when we were watching a spectacle of nature we were outside of it, that's why the title of this lecture is about being inside. But now you are no longer outside, because it's impossible. We are actually inside. Because my activity in this plane going to Canada was actually having an effect on the very spectacle of nature that I was seeing. And in that sense there is no more outside anymore. This is the title of the lecture. We have to go down, to accept now to go down into the cave. Hence the title of Cave Land.

But it's difficult to be in the cave. We are not supposed to like to be inside the cave where it is wet and dark....

(keep listening)

Week 2 Response: Dance Map for *Inside*
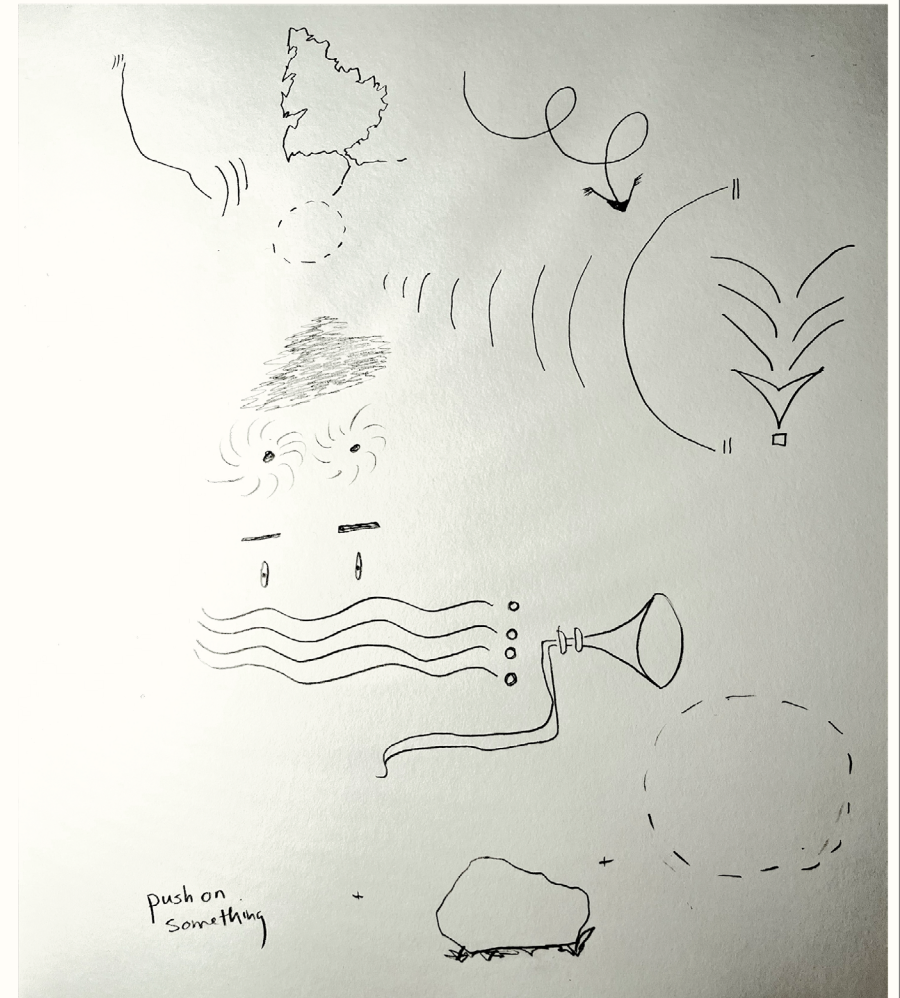
The [parking lot] overview brings to mind the objective perception of the world as a controlled environment. I had to think about Bruno Latour's lecture *Inside* (2013)[1], where a projection of planet earth as the blue planet triggers questions about the anthropocene and the geological history of place. [INSIDE.]

Layers and layers of existence.

When we were doing the dance exercise, I had a very different perception of the space because of the rotation of my body, the lack of balance and the dizziness. I was very aware of what my eyes could see and I had not imagined that sensation of space from looking at someone doing the movement. I was surprised by the difference of perception between both. We followed the lines of the black Marley dance flooring, but saw space tremble, rotate, and lose shape. A kind of magic.

I wonder if there are ways to mess up the perception of the parking lot by engaging with messy movement. To engage with the materials rather than with the structure. I am curious if you have done that kind of experiment?

The other question that comes to mind is reverse documentation. What happens if the exhibition space is not the archive but the place itself?

Response —————————————

See pages 14–15

1   Bruno Latour, "Inside: What Is the Opposite of the Global?," filmed February 19, 2013, at the Gifford Lectures, University of Edinburgh, video, 58:20, https://www.giffordlectures.org/lectures/inside-what-opposite-global.

After your performance on Friday you made an offhand comment that you felt you preferred when you stopped 'listening' to the Bruno Latour lecture while you danced…I think as a way of saying you preferred when the dance was less interpretive, considering a more arbitrary layering of the two medias as allowing for emergent meaning–making….I certainly noticed a coupling of your dance and the lecture I was listening to and found perhaps my own coincidental meanings.

Today, I would like to focus on this idea of listening to offer a generative question from my own field.

Sound studies have many theoretical models related to various listening modes. Pierre Schaeffer, for instance, defined four:

Les quatre écoutes (selon Pierre Schaeffer)	Concrete	Abstract
Objective	**Écouter** (to listen) using sound to identify its source	**Comprendre** (comprehending) semantic listening (eg. language)
Subjective	**Ouïr** (to perceive) simply hearing, sound engaging the eardrum, passive	**Entendre** (hearing) showing intention to listen, prioritizing sounds, leading to description

This is adapted from Michel Chion's *Guide to Sound Objects* (2025)[1].

In this terminology, when you stopped listening to the Bruno Latour lecture you stopped 'comprehending' the lecture, but does listening in other ways inform the dance?

Another model for understanding our interaction with sound was proposed by the [acoustic ecology] movement which considers the relationships between humans (and the more than human) and their environment(s) as mediated through sound. In some ways this movement emerged from the assumption that society was growing increasingly 'ocularcentric' and that this threatened to dull our other senses (including hearing). Perhaps here there is a

1   Michel Chion, *Guide to Sound Objects: Pierre Schaeffer and Musical Research*, trans. Christine North and John Dack, 2025.

connection to your own interests in embodiment and being in the space.

A central practice in soundscape composition is the soundwalk, as represented in Hildegard Westerkamp's piece Kits Beach Soundwalk.[2] To bring us back to the home depot parking lot, I would like to propose a soundwalk of this space as a departure point to remap the parking lot without visual aid. This might include taking note of 'soundmarks' (derived from landmark) or dominant sounds in the space (pleasant or unpleasant). Notably, R Murray Schafer emphasized interaction with the environment in soundwalks (compare 'the pitches of drainpipes', sing 'with the harmonics of neon lights', explore 'different walking surfaces').[3]

Does considering the parking lot as an acoustic environment change your understanding of its topography?

How does this environment change throughout the day or the year?

Does it change its size or shape?

Can thinking of space in this way influence your choreography?

I propose these questions merely as departure points so feel free to take this in whatever direction suits you.

Response ———————————————————

Soundscape recording of parking lot

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2   Hildegard Westerkamp, "Kits Beach Soundwalk," on Transformations, Empreintes DIGITALes, IMED 9631, 1996, compact disc.
3   R. Murray Schafer, *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* (Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1994) 212-13.

Forgive me if this is a bit long and nerdy…

I'll start with literature. Listening to your presentation this week I was unexpectedly reminded of one of my teenage heroes of subversive/shock lit JG Ballard, specifically his surrealist novel *The Unlimited Dream Company* (1979).[1] I didn't relate the darker aspects of the narrative to your work but there were some overarching similarities…to paraphrase from memory (it's been a while); Blake is a morally reprehensible and criminal main character and an unreliable narrator… we wonder throughout the book if he is awake or asleep, alive or dead, or perhaps if the story describes a sort of bardo. He steals an aircraft and crashes it into a London suburb (this is a common theme for Ballard of course, the alienation and violence of suburbs, retirement communities, industrial neighbourhoods, etc.). 'Surviving' this crash he begins to absorb and cannibalize the suburbs inhabitants for energy, eventually evolving into a kind of god or magical being who transforms the suburb into a rainforest. I'm tempted to ask you about subversion and if you situate it in your work, and feel free to address this if it interests you.… However, I also thought of another point of connection more closely following the thread of the last round of questions to do with the soundscape of the Home Depot parking lot, representation, and magical realism.

When you describe your work, I find there is an interesting juxtaposition of a kind of rational or practical logic and more fantastical aspects…for instance, the helicopter with the glass floor is at once unrealistic but functions as if with a very large budget this production could be realised (as opposed to just having the audience on a magic carpet or flying).… This raises questions that might be important if you want to consider how sound functions in the space.

In my work, I consider soundscapes as imagined spaces but also consider 'actual' soundscapes and what they communicate (a paradigm that includes the interrelated acoustics, psychoacoustics, electroacoustics, music, and acoustic ecology). I think in your initial interest in creating a sound piece you describe the soundscape in a very fantastical way which I would like to address from the perspective of acoustic ecology. Microphones fundamentally transform the soundscape—when we listen to a recording we are

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1   J. G. Ballard, The Unlimited Dream Company (London: Jonathan Cape, 1979).

listening to technology, curated narrative, and more generally just processed sound (just as the camera is not the eye, the microphone is not the ear). I am of course interested in representation and simulation (this is the difference between *soundscape* and *soundscape composition* which merges into a new soundscape in performance) but I also wonder if you would be curious to start this process with a soundwalk without technology to consider the unrecorded acoustic environment. This is the fundamental practice of soundscape composition: active, in-situ, deep listening as an ever-present compositional practice. You could spend time in the sound space and make a score or map of <u>keynote sounds</u>, <u>sound marks,</u> or <u>sonic morphologies</u>, for instance[2].

Its sound world might communicate new things about the parking lot. For example, you mentioned the noise pollution created by trucks in the day as though it is not a central characteristic of this space, but this noise pollution communicates so much about the space; aspects related to industrialisation, population density, or gentrification might be communicated to the active listener in this dominant (dominating?) sound. A soundwalk is also a good way to organise a process of referring to the soundscape in a sound art piece.

So my very meandering and rambling question is: How does magical realism play into this work? How can the 'actual' soundscape of this environment inform the 'virtual' soundscape you wish to create? What can these questions inspire when thinking about embodiment, representation, archiving, mapping, and your creative practice in general?

Of course, as always, feel free to respond in any way you wish...I would be interested in whatever this question inspires that is useful to you and your practice.

Response ⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯

<u>Dance — Parking Lot Sounds</u>

2   Barry Truax, *Handbook for Acoustic Ecology,* 1999 ed. (Vancouver: World Soundscape Project, Simon Fraser University, 1999), https://www.sfu.ca/sonic-studio-webdav/handbook/index.html

[1]

Erin ⟩ Allison ⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯ **November 22**

Dear Allison,

First of all, how great it is to watch you dance. I loved the anticipation of first listening to the audio track on its own, imagining a world, and imagining you moving/dancing within it. When I experienced the audio track for the second time, accompanied by your dance, there was something totally shocking to me! In a great way. I was surprised and intrigued by the way you approached dancing to the soundscape, the aesthetics, the form, the rhythm and the magical realist allure that your wig brought in. I had not anticipated that kind of aesthetic to overlap with the soundscape of the parking lot, and I had to reflect about my own defaults or orientations when it comes to dance/performance. Why was I imagining some kind of Anna Teresa de Keersmaeker[23] vibe. Was it because of the helicopter from last session having us view the dance from above, or because of the sound of the friction of feet dancing in-situ on the cement?

So this made me think about gaps, or missing information, and what an "audience" does to fill in what is not given to them (I'm not sure what word or idea you use to talk about the people witnessing, maybe 'public' is more accurate?). This is something I love to think about, because it

1   Still image of GIF created by Allison.
2   I'm thinking of the performance Keersmaeker created in conjunction with the exhibition *On Line: Drawing Through the Twentieth Century* at MOMA, New York. In that video, Keersmaeker dances the Violin Phase from her work *Fase: Four movements to the Music of Steve Reich* (1982). In the video produced for the exhibition, Keersmaeker is filmed from above dancing a pattern that produces a geometric shape/drawing in the sand that is covering the ground.
3   Anna Teresa de Keersmaeker, *On Line,* performance at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, January 12–16, 2011. Video documentation, 3:28, posted by the Museum of Modern Art, March 2, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E1OHl8_MPEg.

is always the case, isn't it? We never have all the information. In the work you shared, so much imagining was happening for me around the [parking lot](#), imagining certain conditions and filling in the blanks. It's like certain parts of the image are visible and others need to be filled in.

What does the parking lot make possible for your dance? Or, in other words, how does it co-choreograph your dance? I wonder how this might factor into your interest in site-specificity, especially when sharing with people in a different place than the parking lot site. Do you imagine sharing your performance work with the parking lot in locations that are **not** the parking lot?

I am thinking about the way artist k.g. Guttman uses the term site-situated performance[4], taking into consideration the history of the site, the position and lived experiences of the performer and the power dynamics at play. So my question for you is about the potential of what is and isn't present, or what information is and isn't given, for your dance practice with the parking lot. Perhaps collage techniques could be an interesting zone to think about. What does juxtaposing different aspects of your work in surprising or contrasting ways do to the situated aspect of your practice? What does leaving certain information out potentialise for the audience/viewer/public?

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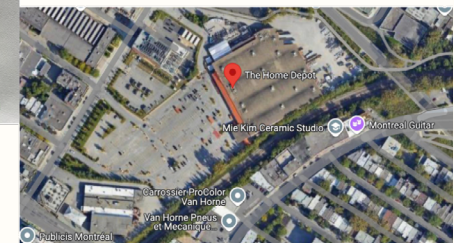
4   On the faculty webpage for Concordia University, in the section 'Research Activities', it is written, 'Situated art practice (or in-situ practice) starts with entanglement, with the encumbrances already hanging in the air. I work with performance and practice that negotiate the fullness of site (history/ architecture/context) as informing what enfolds.' Concordia University, "k.g. Guttman," Faculty, Concordia University, accessed October 15, 2025, https://www.concordia.ca/faculty/kg-guttman.html. Also see K. G. Guttman's dissertation "Territoriality and Choreography in Site-Situated Performance" (PhD diss., Leiden University, 2020), https://hdl.handle.net/1887/138189.

Hello Allison,

Your presentation last Friday (17.01.2025) combined several elements from your research. They were represented by different tiles in your laptop. The mosaics were: an aerial photograph of the [parking lot](#) you are working in, a collage made with garden magazine images, proposing an interpretation for the green areas in the parking lot, the lecture performance INSIDE by of Bruno Latour about earth representation, a red wig and a file with recorded sound of the parking lot. Besides this set up you were listening to Coltrane on headphones and interpreting two scores. You told us that we wouldn't know which of the two scores you were working with at any given time

I think of words such as [game](#), puzzle, collage, assemblage. In this presentation I thought there was an element of intrigue or a quest to be solved. An enigma! An enigma situated in the parking lot. A mystery to be solved that could give land back to the land. Maybe it is because I spent all weekend watching the films of David Lynch and I am solving evil riddles. Haunted by evil characters that invade bodies, block situations, manipulate the law, are cruel to the point of asphyxiating any form of transformation or becoming. Characters that kill with pleasure.

So here we go. The parking lot is held hostage. The land under is asphyxiated. The quest is open.

In your presentation, there are multiple references that coexist without a clear sense of logic on first viewing,but that are indications, clues, and processes that engage in addressing the enigma. Through fragmented sources of information and actions that may not initially seem to fit together, I, as the audience, must make connections or interpretations. And as the work evolves, I gather information, I click into files that send out information about the land, I hear sounds of a location. I make up a story.

The dancer with a red wig is at work. She's processing materials, reading instructions and putting into motion questions long held immobile. She is challenging conventional expectations of storytelling and engaging with a more complex, layered way of exploring ideas. She is asking for collaboration.

What if this performance is an investigation? What if the audience is an ally? What if this quest becomes an artivist case?

I am reading Rosi Braidotti's book, *Post Human Feminism*, and this paragraph caught my attention in relation to your work, and the red wig dancer, and this case:

"From a new-materialism perspective the embodied subject is flesh activated by wavelets of desire, the effect of unfolding genetic codes, and formatted by social relations. The enfleshed subject is both brute materiality and signified sociality, but above all, bodies are relational and affective. This means they are capable of incorporating external influences and unfolding outward their own affects (Massumi, 2002; Clough and Halley, 2007; Protevi, 2009). A new-materialist body is a time machine as well as a spatial object. It is a mobile entity in space and time, because it is enfleshed memory capable of lasting through discontinuous variations of intensity while remaining faithful to its core. That core is the ontological desire to persevere in one's existence, which requires a relational approach to ethics. This forms the basis for ethics of affirmation, whereby the pursuit of freedom is shared collectively by kindred spirits. What is affirmed is desire, freedom and becoming."[1]

Let me know if you have any questions. This might be a bit far out! Looking forward to seeing the next iteration of your practice!

Lília

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1   Rosi Braidotti, *Posthuman Feminism* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2022), 122.

SCORE AP January 31, 2025

1. Everyone must shake hands and agree with the facilitator:
   'What happens here will never be repeated. '
2. 4 views and characters are established:
   Couch > watcher with wig
   Back of room > seated, Montreal cityscape and can check phone
   West facing > the background of facing is a sequin waterfall, but must
       wear green screen suit
   East facing > facing forest and person in greenscreen suit is invisible
3. Facilitator puts on costume and shows the picture
4. Offers something to watch that will never be repeated set to this score

Scripts and Dead Letters

Hi Allison,

Thanks for sharing this unrepeatable proposition: so intriguing.

As a point of entry, you introduced a set of codes. You had us stand in line and make an agreement with you that you read from your phone. We sealed it with a handshake, one by one.

It was an agreement that we did not entirely understand. All of us went along with it—I think—because as a group we meet to experience propositions together, and so, in a sense perhaps we feel we've agreed in advance.

Erin quipped, "we weren't really agreeing." That's accurate.

The fact of agreements in brackets—possibly a ruse. We don't know yet.

But what if it were not? What if the stakes and agency we do have could be revealed? I presume this is what you are pointing us towards.

I wondered what would happen if this non-agreement continued to shape actual choices. Can we decide without this convention of deciding? We shake hands in a line one by one. I was reminded of Tiago Rodriguez's performance, *Catarina or the Beauty of Killing Fascists* (2020),[1] at the FTA Festival in 2023—which revealed an unspoken power of being in an audience that we often take for granted—and it showed us how to proceed as a polity to change scripts—now that this is a political necessity, reception just can't be so automatic.

This practice of disclosing 'non-consent consent' got me interested. What do we do when we make one-sided, perfunctory, or meaningless agreements? How do they affect knowledge and capital?

Maybe this happens when we stand in line, or check a box to install software—when we encounter the increasingly coercive 'audit and compliance industry' and 'click through' consent.

1   Tiago Rodrigues, *Catarina and the Beauty of Killing Fascists*, world premiere at Centro Cultural Vila Flor, Guimarães, Portugal, September 2020.

The current moment keeps proliferating non-agreement agreements. They place labour in devaluation—mass dispossession now at work in the world, in memory, and in the formats of our thought and livelihoods when this work is on proprietary platforms and subscription models.

What might happen if we do not agree?

Are we already at a point where surface 'compliance agreement' is just a routine, a checkbox? What if that casual consent includes the body and its representation in perpetuity? Its movements? Our presence and trace? I'd like to know what performers' contracts for greenscreen stipulate in fine print. It seems to me now, watching these dances, that the normalization of such agreements expands rehearsing the technical and legal erasure of their personhood. Does this mean we're entering into new ways of moving now?

The expansion of clicked-through consent makes informational asymmetry ordinary. And there are no doubt consequences—particularly for performers, I think, with contracts that include technologies like green screen for film and video games. So how does this become salient in performance (or to their performance, agency, and livelihoods)? Is that already the case—we just didn't quite keep up?

Conventional consent is not achieved here. We do not share the same experience. We each face in a different direction, distracted in some way with our tasks. To access the procedure you have to hand-check the box, and just do the thing until it stops. This is a banality of techno feudalism.

During your performance, I found myself lingering on special permission because you assigned my role the option of checking my phone throughout your dance. I'd removed the apps on it and so had only had boring emails. I realized I missed portable distractions—I wondered if I was distracted enough.

What does that do? In the performance lab, during the dancing, each of us faced a different direction, so each of us saw, as well as performed, something different. It makes me think of the sound stage—when the whole illusion remains to be added in post-production. What does that do in performers' workplaces? And what happens when such technology changes and these jobs get moved somewhere else.

I enjoyed seeing everyone in wigs and suits, without the illusions, though. I felt a little twinge of envy at the ridiculous green-screen suit. What a strange thing. Lusciously lurid that particular green—weirdly tactile as a thing.

Some years into the future, it's possible no one will know why there are so many stretchy, green, full-body Lycra suits kicking around from the early twenty-first century.

Today it's a kind of digital invisibility cloak. Green-screen suits are profoundly mutable and interesting. They also seem so standardized—like agreements to disappear in small to extra-large. These are a way of bypassing performers' flesh, let alone materialities and craft, the suit made me think about technological perspectives that are increasingly standardized, that are interchangeable realities—make that illusions—in post.

It might be interesting to disclose a 'decision tree' to each participant: if folks don't consent, don't check the box, what happens then? Somehow that thing we don't yet know feels more disruptive, insistent even, than the sum of our choices.

I hope I'm not projecting meaning onto the artefacts you invited us to play with. But I'm letting a bit of a riff let you into that not-quite-real looking at the phone while you bring work to the table just feet away. I'm interested in this 'nothing real' that gets us here. I imagined you asking us to notice.

Best,
VK

PS – I'm also reminded, at our most primate level, of Frans de Waal's videos of Capuchin monkeys. They bang on their plexiglass cages, insisting on fairness, and they point at the wrongdoer, the scientist, who gave one monkey a cucumber and another a grape. *Unfair,* bangs the monkey on the cage!

De Waal is a celebrated primatologist, and he has apologized for coining the term '[alpha male.](#)'

I got to hear him speak once, and he was quite brilliant. He showed us animals' acts of empathy as well as footage of animals recognizing themselves in mirrors.

That done, he lectured on mammalian bargains, their senses of fairness, and he makes us notice animal justice and compassion, or he suggests empathy, that seems to cross species. Here is a video of his "[Two Monkeys Were Paid Unequally](#)"—I empathize with the Capuchin monkey's drama. Like the grape, the grewen-screen suit

was *very appealing!* I got a twinge of wanting 'that thing' (the commodity, the wig, the colour, the fruit, the sweet, the leaf…). It made my entry into your non-decision-making memorable. Watching the wigs and green-screen suit dances also made me think of the recent actors' strikes—and the changing right to play—and the dispossession of the artist's performance in some of these legal and technological formations.

Response

SCORE 07.03.25

Response

This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-NC

Time: 5:00

Participants + Roles:

Allison (DJ + Dance Coach)

Christian (greensceen suit's stunt double)

Erin (student)

Kristian (struggling student

Lilia (confused alien)

VK (stoned gogo dancer turned hunter)

Objects: Wigs

Greenscreen Suit

Parking lot Sounds

Alice Coltrane Song

Vase Dance

Spiral Dance

Camo Critter Dance

Random Song

Random Dance

Bruno Latour Text

Dear Allison,

Thank you for the experimental score form you shared with us last week. I'm going to refer to it as a score throughout this letter, does that term feel appropriate to you? I enjoyed being brought into that many layered and instantaneous situation where elements from your previous responses over the past months were gathered into the room, into one moment, together. I felt a kind of searching confusion at the start where we grappled with the different possi‐ bilities on the table, and then an eruptive launch into the proposal from all of us.

For me, my launch was desire driven and very practical: I want to learn how to do the splits you showed last time. I appreciated the way you held space and took the request seriously, how you engaged with the different shapes/objects of your research as real, tangible, repeatable forms: the specific splits and the camo pants you offered me to wear while learning the move, the spiral‐ ing flower vase movement, the wig, the green suit, Bruno Latour. I am wondering about the significance of these movements and objects to you personally, how do they become a "thing", how do they make it onto the object list of your score? Do they hold sig‐ nificance to you, symbolic or practical, beyond the Score Practice, for example from your personal life or past performances? My curiosity comes from the sense that last week you shared a kind of catalogue of the different iterations of your research, it was like an archive and a catalogue and a buffet all at the same time.

Thinking back to the moment, I remember how Lília, Christian and VK were in my periphery in different costumes. Well, they were peripheral to me, but to them I guess you, Kristian and I were also peripheral. There were these sort of messy, peripheral interactions going on which I felt in agreement with, fully trusting that this is what we were meant to be doing. And if I consider where that trust came from, I think it's the fact that you framed the score with the goal that after our exploration we would each name what our role was. So we had a common goal.

Over the weekend, I found myself musing on two texts that I read years ago, thinking about the live event aspect of performance, agency and <u>spectatorship</u>: _Liveness_ by Philip Auslander[1] and _The_

1   Philip Auslander. Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture (London:

Emancipated Spectator by Jacques Rancière.[2] I don't remember these texts that well, but what does feel relevant are the modes of interaction, communing, collective creation and the role of a kind of catalogue or archive that seem to be coming through the score you created. Re-reading the Emancipated Spectator, this passage stood out:

> *Theatre should question its privileging of living presence and bring the stage back to a level of quality with the telling of a story or the writing and the reading of a book. It should call for spectators who are active interpreters, who render their own translation, who appropriate the story for themselves, and who ultimately make their own story out of it. An emancipated community is in fact a community of storytellers and translators.[3]*

I wonder about the significance of the objects within your score and what we end up producing with them through our participation. How are liveness and archive related in the score you proposed? In summary, I'd love to hear/experience/learn more about the significance of the objects in thinking about cataloguing and archiving, as well as the idea of a common goal and collective agreement in the performance score.

Okay, hope this train of thought can bring you somewhere!

Looking forward,
Xo
erin

Response

[Step touch and wave a flag to the beat of this song.](#) This strike dance can help people pass the time on strike – there are more strikes coming.

Routledge, 2023), Third Edition, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003031314.
2   Jacques Rancière, "The Emancipated Spectator," trans. Gregory Elliott, Artforum 45, no. 7 (March 2007): 271–81.
3   Ibid. p. 280.

Dear Allison,

Your picketing storytelling was fascinating.

Soft dancing,
In it
like nothing
economical,
lowercase,
un-hype
Partying
Still in it
Like [Hanging bats filmed upside-down look like a Goth nightclub](#)

Then there are the picketing flags…the Concordia and McGill flags lumped together in a storage box, an interuniversity flag salad, waiting for yet another crisis of poor work conditions.

The existence of a First Aid Kit could signify care, foresight, and resilience towards the contingent future of living and dying well together. The existence of the Concordia and McGill flags also have an affect…I wonder if their existence is symptomatic of a (albeit small scale) institutional failure.

I am reminded of Neo in *The Matrix II,* while meeting the "architect", he finds out that the machines are toying with the humans, time after time giving them false hope of a revolution only to squash them again and again.

I watch the news very closely… maybe too closely. (Colonial Outcast, CBC aka lolz aka *infinite sigh* and my favourite WSJ —〉 yes THE Wall Street Journal's instagram page, on the recommendation of none other than Noam Chomsky, true story haha). H a s h t a g — bless the comment sections. I'm starting to realize that as much as I want to witness injustice, to welcome suffering and to grieve with the entire world…I feel consumed. Seems like they win when they can't keep my eyes glued to the screen.

Another friend said that if the news is truly important, someone will tell him. He prefers to protect his happy tonic mood fizz.

Stolen moments; aAttention/time I could be spending with other people/things/thoughts/sensations.

Curiosity is the true creator of problems and by yielding to that vice, how can we expect to acquire the opposite virtue which is peace of mind?[1]

There is a study where researchers disabled the dopamine system in mice. The mice could still recognize and consume food if it was placed directly in their mouths. However, they lacked the drive to move even a short distance to get food on their own. If the food was placed just a mouse's length away, they would starve to death… give me an S… give me a T……

ADD
Attention Dopamine Deficiency
Self-Help
Yoga Nidra
Non-Sleep-Deep-Rest
Huberman Lab Podcast
Übermensch
Supplements
Take Your Pills

I'm gonna… ≈ yes ≈ … be less curious about the news and dance with my dopamine differently.

Dancing from the HEART
Drumming from the HEART —thanks Wali Muhammed for the pep talk.

How TO: Non-innocent optimism un-heroic, un-sexy responsibility without naivety + hot compost

Making friends is the best part of picketing, says Lília.

Picketing
Do not Cross
Speed dating
Picketing Zone
Friend Zone
Cuddle Puddle
Swipe right
Toilet Bowl Screen time
Research
Brain rot

We must hold space///each other yes yes & yes

Another friend is really shaken by the death of David Lynch. Before Lynch died, he used to do these YouTube "weather reports" (daily, I think?). My friend watched them all. So his death was a huge shock. He looked me in the eyes and said, *"David Lynch is dead."* And then he just stared at me and said… *"This is it."*

This is it. We're here now. What the fuck.

We are famous to be ALIVE. (This is the type of humour my brain does… a think thought : born negativistic synapse : sarcasm flipped around catching a breath of Yes-ness [hopefully]. The kind of "yes" of—"I feel you I see you"—a type of quirky optimism that pushes and pulls between the disparity of being alive in the mud and being dead in the castle.

But also a "yes" like it's a crazyyyyy crazy world … And as John Oliver says:

"We are DEFINITELY in the STUPIDEST timeline."

A n d S o l t g o e s
Soft dancing,
Talking flags
Flags bearers
Banner drop
St Laurent Flag store
Car flags fad
Be true to your school
Lineage
Master
Sky Gods

Kevin Austin: Age 80 (Teacher since 1970—retiring June 1st wrote: "The other day I was asked if I was proud of, or took pride in the university, I asked the questioner "**Why** do you mean by the word 'pride'?"[2] This line of the conversation stopped. Abruptly.'"

PS. I heard you talk about fountains in parking lots?!

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1   Mouni Sadhu, *Concentration: A Guide to Mental Mastery* (Hollywood, CA: Wilshire Book Company, 1980).

2   Kevin Austin is the founder of the Concordia Electroacoustic department. In this anecdote from Friday March 14th, 2025, he was replying to a student on the infamous EA list—a giant chain email community he started that connects about 10,000 people worldwide who are into electroacoustics. My interpretation of Kevin's humor here is that he attributes so little value to 'pride' that merely mentioning the word sends him to a logical or spiritual cul-de-sac — which he then actualizes in the conversation, the cul-de-sac, bamboozling his interlocutor.

I am part of this ongoing project, thinking with the ideas of existing without car culture.

PPS. I am listening to Kristian's music recommendation — David Hykes & the Harmonic Choir – Current Circulation

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🐾🐾🐾🐾🐾
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I≈≈I≈ 🤙👁✂️👁🤟
___ ☽ ☀ ~•••••~ ☀ ☾ '
A Love Supreme
C

Response ────────────────────────

⌚🐾🐾🐾🐾🐾🐾🎚🛏📖🤓🧑‍🦲⌚👾🎚🐾🐾🐾🐾🎭

Christian Brun del Re

For the first score, Christian shared this video: Glamour Magique, Le début des yeux, Danse buissonière

Erin 〉Christian ──────────────── **February 3**

Dear Christian,

So nice to hear about your work and watch your videos. Thank you! Some keywords that come to mind reflecting on what you shared are : glitter, magic, queer, music, composition, collaboration, connection, affinity, chameleon, costume. In my question, I'm going to focus on the video you shared with us, Le début des yeux. Two things really stood out to me:

1. the tone/quality and repetition of the sound

2. the composition of the bodies on screen, which created a kind of altered body or Frankenstein body

There is something glitchy and dissonant in the merging of these elements that captivates me. I'm intrigued by the rhythmic, repetitious aspect in both the audio and the body/bodies. It is repetitive and at the same time does not stay the same, new loops get added at unequal intervals. By new loops I mean the way the feet

stroke the face with increasing intensity, the lip syncing, the hand gestures… The word glitch comes to mind. Do you know the term glitch feminism? It was coined by Legacy Russell and in the first publication of *Glitch Feminism* as an item for The Society Pages, it is described as such:

> *In a society that conditions the public to find discom-fort or outright fear in the errors and malfunctions of our socio-cultural mechanics—illicitly and implicitly encouraging an ethos of "Don't rock the boat!"—a 'glitch' becomes an apt metonym. Glitch Feminism, however, embraces the causality of "error", and turns the gloomy implication of glitch on its ear by acknowledging that an error in a social system that has already been disturbed by economic, racial, social, sexual, and cultural stratification and the imperialist wrecking-ball of globalization—pro-cesses that continue to enact violence on all bodies—may not, in fact, be an error at all, but rather a much-needed erratum. This glitch is a correction to the 'machine', and, in turn, a positive departure.[1]*

I wonder if this quality of glitch or error is relevant to your work? If so, how does it show up in your practice and in what you create?

I found it intriguing that you mentioned flow states as well as Butoh. I have practiced Butoh a little bit and I have never thought of it as a flow state. However, in the way you described Butoh as a state of dissociating whilst being witnessed, I had a new feeling that a flow state could happen in different tones and affective registers. Those tones could be a lower, more bass frequency (like Butoh) or more glitchy, like what I perceived in the video you shared. Do you think about the affect that your work produces? How would you describe the affective register you work with?

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1   Legacy Russell, "Digital Dualism And The Glitch Feminism Manifesto," *The Society Pages,* December 10, 2012, https://thesocietypages.org/cyborgology/2012/12/10/digital-dualism-and-the-glitch-feminism-manifesto/.

Response ————————————————

let me be mad by Christian Brun del Re & Jonathon Adams

Track #2 from *DIETxCHRISTxPUPPiiixLUV PART i ~ A* 🎵 *PSYCHOLOGICAL* 🎶 *HORROR* 🐾✂️🧠🔵⚪🔵∘≈†

https://mauvebiscuitrose.bandcamp.com/album/part-i-a-psychological-horror

Lyrics, whispered by collaborator Jonathon Adams on track:

Chain me, ye Furies, to your iron beds,
And lash my guilty ghost with whips of scorpions!
See, see, they come! Alecto with her snakes,
Megaera fell, and black Tisiphone!
See the dreadful sisters rise,
Their baneful presence taints the skies!
See the snaky whips they bear!
What yellings rend my tortur'd ear!
Hide me from their hated sight,
Friendly shades of blackest night!
Alas, no rest the guilty find

From the pursuing furies of the mind!* This excerpt comes from **Christopher Marlowe's tragedy *Doctor Faustus***, first performed around **1592** and published in two main versions (the "A-text" in **1604** and the longer "B-text" in **1616**).

I presented [song] *LET ME BE MAD* w/ Jonathan Adams (from [album] *DIETxCHRISTxPUPPiiixLUV*), a video made on my phone where I wear white makeup and perform exaggerated physical theatre faces straight into the camera. Behind me, a disco blanket splinters into frac-tals through Final Cut Pro masking, while Jonathan's voice delivers Marlowe's words in a delirious, ominous tone. As the sound descends into madness, my face stutters, splits, and fuses into a single monstrous eye, distorted and pixelated, refusing to release its gaze. The result is a portrait of someone tormented by cere-bral visions—an addict of their own thought loops, hyper-reflexivity, and delirious epiphanies. By exagger-ating my automatisms to the extreme, I could observe

them: a caricature of MAD mental states.

The video was playing on my phone, which I placed in a see-through plastic bag that we passed around. I had never really shared that work before, and it can be intense—both in sound, images, and words. It felt fantastic to watch the piece as if it were a tiny, frightening fish in a bag we were holding. Having that work as a sit-down or all-consuming experience would be something else. The psychological horror video appeared in miniature—something more manageable, like a little gold-fish—even though it's portraying a character going completely mad. Coincidentally, I have an unexplained fish phobia that I'm trying to face by eating salmon and by recently changing my computer background to barracudas.

These are video stills from the video that was playing on my phone in the plastic bag:
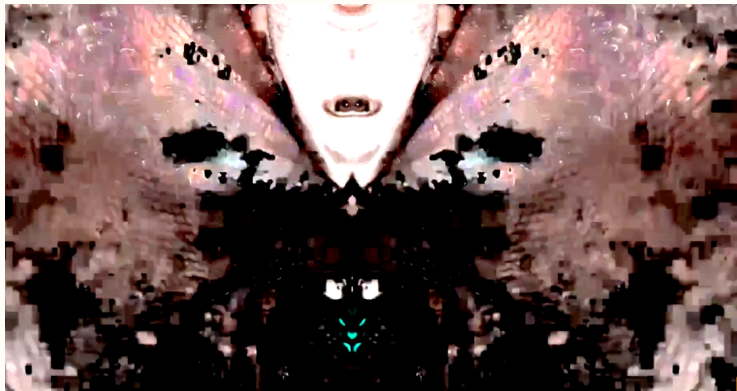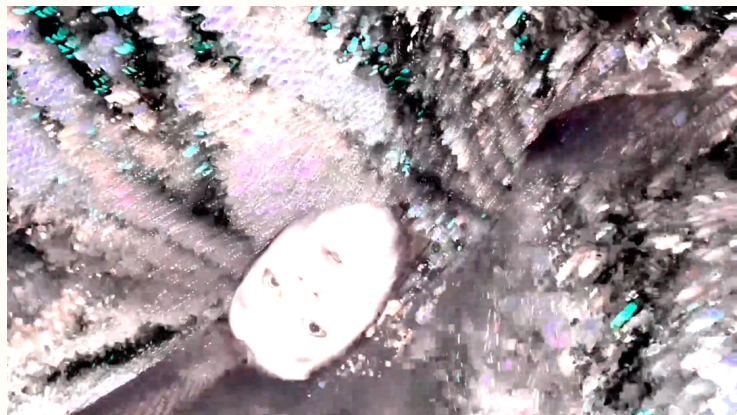
1   Christian Brun del Re and Jonathon Adams, let me be mad, video still, October 21, 2023.
https://vimeo.com/876738069/4f84ed1a29?fl=pl&fe=sh.
2   Ibid.

3   Ibid.
4   Ibid.

Dear Christian,

This week was record-breaking snowfall. The whole city's transformed. At night the snow glitters in the air. I walked home in a drift like a hallucination—there's shimmer in all dimensions, on the sidewalk, and on every surface. I felt that 3D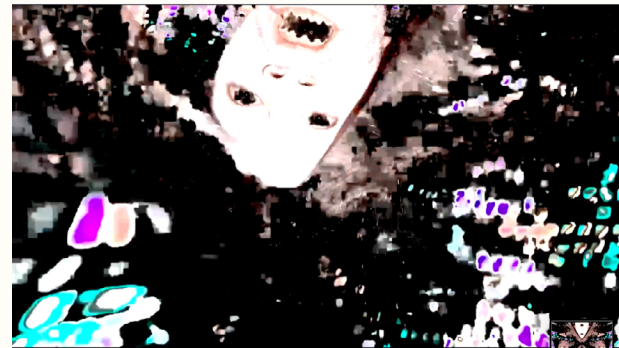 shimmer-sheen in your aesthetic, as we passed around the transparent bag containing your shimmering work in a circle. This week your acoustic and video piece stirred magic in a similar way—attractive & wonderful. Its reception was the performance. Thank you for the flickering light and roaring sound between the storms.

On Friday you circulated this work on a smartphone in a consumer plastic bag with handles. It was dancing with lights like the northern lights (*aurora borealis*) at a tiny scale.

I wonder how you imagine this interface of plastic, screen and sound. What for you is the being that you circulate among us? A machine? A work of art? An entity? A galaxy? A portal? What makes you interested in how we receive this entity and/or pass it along?

Looking down I felt I could feel an effect of eyes or of a gaze: [Gaze Perception: Is Seeing Influenced by Believing?](#)

Looking down I felt a figure, a monster maybe, a capitalist animacy.

The effect of a returned gaze is part of a relational technology. The habit of the shared gaze may be part of the smart phone's addictive means of demanding attention. It makes the brain stem part of a hallucinatory relation—the camera that gazes back. Sometimes it's a friend and sometimes a recording.

You've found a way for late-capitalist fascinations with surface, attractions of transparency, sheen and luminosity to meet, through a curious way of being with this familiar device. On the little screen I think I see eyes—there's a kind of CGI murmur and scenography. The friend gazes back with the camera—shot and counter-shot become a product, a felt sense towards which we might arrange ourselves into a frame and exceed it. I wonder if there are other shapes than a phone or if a phone is what is needed to be enveloped in all this seductive transparency. It fits our bodies and slides between technological magic and long

inheritances of imagined/imaginary technologies.

I'm also reminded of scrying—reading signs on a reflective surface like crystal balls, or mirrors, or water. It reminds me that there's a kind of haunting of optics and magic in current screen technology—especially that which is tactile and influenced interactively.

Even animated versions, where Disney villainesses see into other worlds, offer portals. Their storytelling shifts time and space with known conventions/fascinations. Watching others handling the bag with your gleaming light and scrunching sounds, passing it around in a circle, I felt drawn to sheen and surface. The source of light flickered and roared. When I received the bag myself, I enjoyed its shimmer: blue light in plastic transforming surface. Being able to touch this substance, to receive and to gift it, and to participate in its rhythm of reception and paying the gift forward, brings the night into the studio and reminds me of time within relationality and gifting.

XovK

Response

Different Eyes Exercise—"In butoh, the eyes are non-seeing."[1] . Let's walk around the space and play with different ways of seeing; different eyes—not to perform aesthetics, but to feel what happens when we play with our eye muscles. Try crossing your eyes, rolling them up into white eyes, softening into a blurry or crystal gaze, letting them wander without focus, or holding one fixed point. Try fast vs. slow eyes, eyes that grab onto objects or trace lines in the space like a window frame. Let's see what shifts in our body and imagination when we experiment with these but always keep your eyes open.

Thank you to Vangeline's book for detailing butoh eye practices, from inward "non-seeing" gazes to techniques like white eyes, crystal gaze, and internal focus, showing how vision in performance can tune us deeply into movement and oneself.

1   Yoko Ashikawa, in a work by Laage (1993), quoted in *Vangeline, Cradling Empty Space (*New York: Vangeline Theater/New York Butoh Institute, 2020), 101.

Hi Christian,

Thanks for sharing your thoughts and experiential explorations regarding gaze. Although my experience was troubling because of my current issues around the sensation of my eyes, I was reminded of somatic experiences of the eyes and head I have had through Feldenkrais. Whenever I do a Feldenkrais session around the occipital joint (close to the muscles connected to the back of the eyes) or the jaw, I have vivid dreams for about a week. There is something about tuning into and releasing this area of the body that is potent for the subconscious.

However, at the core of my question for you is the double-sidedness of 'the gaze' for a performer. Experimenting with your own gaze for performance and somatic interest is one thing, but as performers we are also looked upon. The gaze that's put on us as people is loaded with preconceived ideas and confused interpretations. 'The gaze' has a long feminist history in the discourse around male gaze (see Laura Mulvey's famous essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"). I include this quote here from the essay, because I think Mulvey describes a tension between film and psychoanalytic thought that recalls some of the tensions around body, video, performance, gender, stress, and gaze I see playing out in your work.

> *The camera becomes the mechanism for producing an illusion of Renaissance space, flowing movements compatible with the human eye, an ideology of representation that revolves around the perception of the subject; the camera's look is disavowed in order to create a convincing world in which the* spectator*'s surrogate can perform with verisimilitude. Simultaneously, the look of the audience is denied an intrinsic force: as soon as fetishistic representation of the female image threatens to break the spell of illusion, and the erotic image on the screen appears directly (without mediation) to the spectator, the fact of fetishization, concealing as it does castration fear, freezes the look, fixate the spectator and prevents him from achieving any distance from the image in front of him.*[1]

1   Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen 16,* no. 3 (Autumn 1975): 6–18, https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/16.3.6.

I guess by now there are lots of articles on the changing gaze accelerated by technology and the millions of duck face selfies born of the 21st century male and female gaze clogging up servers everywhere. But when I thought through your proposal, I think there might be a connection between psychoanalysis and your work that could be fruitful to explore. You should read Peggy Phelan's Unmarked immediately if you haven't. She writes: "An imagined history and a history of a real ocular experience have similarly weighted consequences for the psychic subject."[2] So the gaze, or the ocular, for Phelan starts to be linked to the acts of representation and experience that are embedded in performance.

These references are a little bit dusty I guess, but let me pose to you a question that could pass the idea back. How could you address the doubled gaze of the performer, either in the form of a somatic exercise or performance act? The gaze triples when the camera gets involved. Is there a boundary between these gazes that is a point of interest?

I leave you with this hilarious photograph which makes my head explode when I think about Mulvey's essay. The painting is by Lucien Freud, grandson of Sigmund 😹😹😹[3]

Good luck!

Response ───────────────────────────────

I visited my friend and collaborator Jonathon Adams, and they proposed that we improvise singing together—each of us with a cloth covering our head and face. Even though neither of us is shy about singing loudly or in front of one another, I really appreciated the cloth: it attenuated visual stimuli and promoted somatic attention to my breath and to the different resonances in my body. In Nāda Yoga, sometimes called the "Yoga of Sound" or "union through sound," these resonances are mapped out as sung vowels corresponding to specific chakras in a kind of sympathetic vibration. In my dance theory class "Discours

2   Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London: Routledge, 1996). p.4.
3   The image was of Catherine Middleton at an exhibition standing in front of the painting *Naked Man with Rat* (1977) by Lucien Freud.

sur le Corps" (DAN8006 at UQÀM), Guy Cools shared a diagram from Ann Dyer's work on Nāda Yoga, which depicts a theosophist or spiritual practitioner, in lotus pose with the chakras aligned to different vowel sounds, (Guy's marginalia notes: "Chanting is a heart-based practice").

In class, we began each session with a different somatic practice before turning to theory: When singing the vowels together, we followed the penciled spiral on the diagram, which marked the order of the chakras starting in the middle with the heart [Ah], throat [Eh], solar plexus [Oh], third eye [ee] ending with root/sacral (sung as one vowel) one vowel [OO/UU/Uh]) ending with the crown ["M" (humming) / OM], before returning upward again. We sang two cycles in unison, and in the third round the practice opened into polyphonic free form.

⌒ **Crown (Sahasrara) – "M" / OM**   ◎ 7
⌒ **Third Eye (Ajna) – "Ee" / OM**   ◎ 4
⌒ **Throat (Vishuddha) – "Eh / Ay"**   ◎ 2
⌒ **Heart (Anahata) – "Ah"**   ◎ 1
⌒ **Solar Plexus (Manipura) – "Oh"**   ◎ 3

With the cloth, we are alone together. In contrast to a similar exercise in physical theatre [with Pierre Blackburn]—where we face-off, chant and stretch into our most exaggerated expressions at one another, playing with emotion to raise the energy—here no one is watching; it is a practice of sounding with the voice and listening as a group. We veil ourselves, We make music, We listen, We feel, We come to an end naturally.

[fuit.es anarchive page documenting this exercise (with sounds)](fuit.es)

[Singing Exercise]

Dear Christian,

I enjoyed the blindfolded extended singing practice. Somehow this worked so much better than when we've tried something like a Pauline Oliveros score in the music department. It made me think about the points of connection between the different performing arts, and where modern music creation diverges from this key aspect of music (performing). I've been thinking lately about the simple notion of playing music and how this connects music with the other 'playing' arts. Intersecting with performing, but also with the generative aspect of games. From reflections on the heady approaches of electroacoustic music (in the broadest sense as studio practice), or the disembodied 'composer', I am fixated on the importance of *playing* an instrument.

While we did the exercise I was playing around with overtone singing, though I'm not very good (yet). I mentioned David Hykes' Solar Choir, I should also mention Mongolian, Tuvan, Tibetan and other throat singing cultures. Overtone singing works with the resonant cavities of the body, which is something I've been curious about in relation to the haptic dimensions of deep listening. Barry Truax and I have spoken about a particularly haptic sonic experience: humming in a resonant space of some sort (e.g. a concrete stairwell) until one finds the standing waves or sympathetic frequencies of that space. In the right conditions you might find yourself as a resonant body within a resonant body, a real merging of self and space. Brian Massumi, drawing on Simondon, asks if resonation is a kind of self reflection?[1] In relation to the singing practice you proposed, I wonder about the blindfold and the awareness of my own inner resonant cavities, and how this both responded to and called to the rest of the group...

Another thing you talked about was a performance with CLORK (the Concordia Laptop Orchestra) where a clave rhythm was first performed by the group, with all its imperfections and wcomplexity, and then quantised into what you described as a 'sterile' beat. You said you were surprised that the group members seemed to prefer this sterile rendition to the perhaps more human clave. I too wonder why people prefer quantisation sometimes, or maybe that is just what they are fed (the turn to South American rhythms in pop music

1   Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021), https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822383574. p. 36.

has given me a glimmer of hope, a tabla player I was talking with recently said, "Latin America will save us all!") I have a friend who says drum machines were the beginning of the end and another who says that it is the involuntary response of the dancing crowd that has decided for us. The club decides. Another friend, a DJ, says you can't just give the dancers what they want…you also have to give them what they need.

Ultimately your response last Friday made me think about AI, which is I guess another step towards a meta-quantising of everything. The same DJ friend was telling me she'd worked with an AI chatbot as an assistant on a dance track, and its main advice was to humanise the rhythms, nudging them off-grid so they didn't sound too stiff or robotic. Ironic. But I guess the thing is the clave rhythm is on the grid, at least when described. The score and the performance.

Do you think language is a kind of quantisation? The definition of experience?

What is it that desires flaw or perfection, and could it relate to politics?

Do you think, perhaps as a drummer, that your preference for the human relates to the notion of game? I have really grown to enjoy (as I get older) trying to perform a take from front to back in the studio (before punch-ins or editing or whatever) …it makes me think about playing a platformer game like Super Mario. Here I am reminded of a survey that gamers, as a demographic, spend more time watching youtubers play games than playing games themselves. I wonder if this might relate to preferring the sterilised clave.

You asked me about Ryuichi Sakamoto a few weeks ago. Did you see his final concert film Opus where he performs some of his most well-known pieces on piano while very sick? I found the inclusion of failures in the final cut of the film incredibly powerful and intense.

How does wabi-sabi factor in your practice?

Hope this inspires you,
Kristian

Response

I shared a *fuit.es* page I created for an upcoming performance. Using the platform, I designed what I call 'instrument pages'—visual galleries of sounds built for specific tasks. These pages house all my sounds in one place, allowing real-time interaction, overlaying, blending, or cross-fading during a performance. Their gestural, expressive layout supports improvisation, enabling live resequencing of mp3s by crossfading between tracks uploaded as sound 'thingies'. Each listening becomes a unique, ephemeral version of the uploaded sound thingies, blending and capturing fragments from different tracks in real time.

Rafa and I shared musical responsibilities for the all-nighter performance *Cartographie d'une friche* at UQÀM, choreographed by Fjord Gagnebin and inspired by *terrain-vague* sites (wastelands) ideal for DIY raves. Rafa played Yamaha CP and mini organ keyboards, while I worked with Wavedrums (a Korg Synthdrum), a Volca kick drum sequencer, and an array of noise makers and percussion. I also created a *fuit.es* page that blended my own music with Fjord's selections.

Using *fuit.es* allowed me to inhabit the space as an improvising body alongside the dancers while engaging with digital material. I could keep my eyes on the dancers as I manipulated the sounds, triggering them to play out or creating sonic fragments. With quick, playful motions on my laptop's trackpad, I let the cursor hover over sound thingies sporadically, evoking haunted radio, fleeting memories, or the lingering sensations of coming down from a rave. See website here.

Erin ⟩ Christian ————————————— April 7

Dear Christian,

What a pleasure to watch and listen to you practice the drums. The camera angle and size of the video was satisfying, like we were watching you from inside a cupboard, peaking out. I also enjoyed seeing the website platform you're working with and hearing about the forthcoming performance in the theme of *terrain vague* (empty land, waste land).

You mentioned how a terrain vague can be a place of calm and rest in the city, but also a space for raves. For me, terrain vague's feel like spaces at risk, because when you find one you don't know how much longer they will be there. Either way a sense of transience and transformation feels significant. In 2021, for Montreal's Lots of Love festival, I performed a dance piece of mine called *Sunrise Commitment* (2018) in an empty field, in what was that expanse of undeveloped land between Outremont and Park Ex. That same area is now totally developed with university buildings, student housing, and some urban ecology projects which still look like terrain vague but are not, as fences have been put up and access restricted. Leading up to the performance I would practice the choreography in an empty space at the corner near my house, where an old Dairy Queen had been torn down, plants had taken over and it was like a field. That space is now a condo building.

1   Christian Brun del Re, avec les mains fragiles, screenshot, https://fuit.es/
glamourmagique/avec-les-mains-fragile.

It makes me wonder about the name 'terrain vague' being a call for developers. I wonder if the Champs des possibles in Montreal's Mile-End neighborhood would still be considered a terrain vague? In order to keep it, it had to become a protected urban space. How do we keep these spaces underground, remaining as they are, away from developers, away from being co-opted? Have you heard the term *terra nullius*? This term is discussed widely in postcolonial studies and I will turn to wikipedia for a brief description: "Terra nullius is a Latin expression meaning 'nobody's land'. Since the nineteenth century it has occasionally been used in international law as a principle to justify claims that territory may be acquired by a state's occupation of it."[2]

Historical claims of terra nullius exist all over the world, some examples include the colonization of Turtle Island for the creation of Canada and the United States, it can also be seen in the Zionist ideology in regards to Palestine. I bring up this term because there seems to be something similar in the term terrain vague as an abandoned, empty or uwnproductive space within a city. As some-thing to be occupied, to be filled. But we know those spaces are already full of life, both nonhuman and human.

What forms of life and presence are legitimate enough for a space to be regarded as full? In terms of terrain vague, it feels really important for communities to protect these spaces—even though when they do try it's not always possible. And, in order to protect these spaces, the justification for their legitimacy is predicated on the fact that they are indeed productive. Even though productivity is not why we love them and want to protect them. If anything, their resistance to productivity and the alternatives they offer is pre-cisely why we seek them out.

There is a sentence in a book by philosopher Franco 'Bifo' Berardi that I often come back to, although at the moment I cannot find it– can't find the book nor can I find it on the internet. The book is *The Uprising: On Poetry and Finance* (2012)[3], the sentence is something about how within our current precarious times, brought on by the crisis of neoliberalism across the globe, old models of resistance will not work because we have lost the ability to be held within a common rhythm. Something like that, something about rhythm and poetry. And these two things being necessary for the health of social imagination.

2   Wikipedia, "Terra nullius." Last modified August 28, 2025. 19:01. https://
en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Terra_nullius&oldid=1308313690.
3   Franco "Bifo" Berardi, *The Uprising: On Poetry and Finance* (Los Angeles:
Semiotext(e), 2012).

From what I remember, Bifo's book asks how we can tune into a collective rhythm that doesn't get grasped up into the hands of development and finance. In relation to terrain vague, how can those spaces escape the framing of being a future lucrative project? I think the drumming session that you shared with us has something to do with that. The way you stayed in rhythm whilst continually evolving how you articulated the beat, what drum you used, how hard you hit it etc...It made me think about how masterful children can be at the [game](#) of developing something imaginary for a long time; letting it transform not for purpose, but for enjoyment.

You mentioned that when you were playing the drums the other day you found it hard to hold a beat for more than 10 seconds. Perhaps because you've been playing in a more free way lately, still within a sense of groove, but more free flowing. In the video you shared, it seemed to me that you were enjoying playing and I enjoyed listening: I was feeling the beat travel through my body, and different parts of my body were called into rhythm with the shifting patterns. Remembering that sensation now has me thinking of a dérive (a kind of unplanned walkabout through space, urban or otherwise). What might rhythm and dérive articulate for and in each other?

I also feel there's something of that quality in the website you shared with us: free flowing between the blank spaces, the images, the sound bits and the line drawings. Fragmented, but held within a whole. Because of the fragmentation, we don't hear all the sounds at the same time. Assemblages of sounds come into communion depending on where your cursor is. How do you receive and adapt to those assemblages that might happen without planning, without expectation? How do you keep in rhythm?

Looking forward to our next meeting,
erin

Erin Hill

In my first Score Practice, I talked for ten minutes or so about my current research interests. I am writing this months after the actual sharing, but I imagine I probably organized my thoughts by talking through the timeline of my interests: how they appeared, overlapped and transformed, and led me to my current doctoral research–creation around nonverbal communication and consent between horse and humans, and the role of ineffability in building those relations.

I probably started by talking about how, a couple years ago, I became interested in the notion of telepathy as a form of nonverbal communication that calls upon the intelligence of the nervous and sensory systems of the body, as well as imagination and memory. Then, I probably talked about 'Telepathic Landscapes', a visualization and movement practice I developed in 2019. The score goes like this:

1   With a partner, choose who will send and who will receive the landscape

2   The sender visualizes a landscape, they imagine themselves in the centre of the landscape, the landscape stretching 360 degrees all around them (this can be a familiar place, a made–up place and anything in between). The sender tries to spread the feeling of this landscape in their body and open themselves up to be read by the receiver. (Though I differentiate the roles by the names sender and receiver,in this practice, the idea of *opening oneself to be read* is the act of sending).

3   The receiver waits until certain images or sensations start to appear, and when they do, the receiver speaks them out loud in the first person. For example, "I am in a cold landscape. There is something flickering red to my right, maybe a bird or the sun. The cold feels wet, I sense there is water nearby…"

4   The sender listens to the receiver and continues to send their visualization. The sender tries to stay in their landscape, and not change or alter it according to what the receiver is narrating.

5   After a certain amount of time one of the partners, usually the sender, will decide it's the end.

6 N.B. In practicing *Telepathic Landscapes*, it feels potent the way the visualization of the landscape continuously unfurls, it has a pacing that is dreamlike, where one thing generatively leads to the next. After a couple of years of practice, what seems true about the telepathy at play is that the receiver is picking up on certain affects and sensations in the sender's body. The success of the telepathic transmission is more in the qualities, atmospheres and directions being shared, rather than a factual accuracy in the receiver's description. In my example in step 3, the feeling of cold comes through because the sender is visualizing walking through the woods in deep winter; the receiver senses that affect of coldness and then fills in the blanks with their own memories of what a cold landscape looks like.

Telepathic Landscapes became a subset of a dance research project engaging with labyrinths–both real and imagined, architectural and symbolic, an actual path or a spiritual path. The project was called *Deviner* and was envisioned as a music and movement contemplation amidst the grooves of a labyrinthine path. Unlike a maze, labyrinths have one single path to follow in and out. Groove in the literal sense, a long and narrow indentation, can support something or someone: a crevice in a rock can pool water, a gutter on a house ushers rain towards the ground. The labyrinthine path is a literal and figurative 'groove', to get to the centre I must continue walking forward even when the path seems to be sending me back to the beginning.

I probably then mentioned how researching labyrinths led me to the classical myth of Demeter and Despoena, an interspecies saga in which power imbalances of gender and human exceptionalism are normalized. In short, Demeter transforms into a mare in Arcadia in order to escape the lust of Poseidon. Poseidon finds her, transforms into his stallion form and rapes her. Demeter is furious, become Erinyes, goes to the cave to give birth to Arion (a horse who can speak) and Despoena (a horse-headed woman who cannot speak, whose real name is unutterable, but who some call Mistress of the Labyrinth).

Finally, I probably concluded with how that myth of Despoena and its retelling through performance is my main interest for the Score Practice.

Your research introduction reminded me of this photograph that recently turned up in my Tumblr feed.[1] One of the characteristics of Tumblr, and part of why it is a guilty pleasure for me in this academic phase of my life, is that many of the images and texts are ripped and posted without citation. However, I was struck by your discussion of pathways for choreographies, especially your work with labyrinths. I wonder if for you it is important that the pathway is material. Something like Tumblr randomises and algorithmicises data on the internet.

Are virtual pathways interesting for you? Here is a link to some basic information about the internet mapping project from Bell labs, that visualizes the movement of information in/over/through (?) the internet. I'm curious if you could elaborate more on your interest in material pathways? Would it be generative for you to speculate on how virtual pathways could influence choreographic patterns?

Response ———————————————————

This week I shared a mash-up of different *Telepathic Landscape* visualisations that I have gathered over the years (see Erin's first entry for a description of the practice). During a *Telepathic Landscape* practice, I would often audio record or write down the description of the landscape as it was spoken aloud by the 'receiver'. I selected and transcribed four of these recordings and collaged them together to create a text, which I then read out loud for the other Score participants.

By crossfading from one landscape to another, I was curious what kind of pathway might be created. Thinking about Allison's question and the idea of material and virtual pathways, I was curious about another kind of pathway I would call an *associative pathway*. Something about how the internet works feels akin to an association game. How seamlessly I bounce from

1   The image depicted a horse seeming to run free, away from an active volcano in Iceland.

link to link when I'm surfing the web, or on Wikipedia how I'm constantly falling into hours-long Wikipedia holes. In the text I compiled and read out loud, I wonder what kind of associative pathways are created for the reader/listener, to make sense or create continuity of the unusual landscape being described.

This is the text I read:

This is a forest. On the edge, it feels thick with trees. But moving inwards it is no longer full of brush and bush. The centre has turned to ash. The centre of the forest and the centres of the trees. The roots are singed. The tightly woven branches have been tapered off. Where there was leaf now a fine grey black shadow powder hangs in the air. The largest trees are in the periphery of this circle clearing, they're still standing thick, arm branches interlaced and their bark has been charred. Uncommonly contrasted for this kind of light; thick shadows standing there against the pale space of the clouded forest sky. The grey sky feels very low. Still life sound of birds calling end, light fading even more. The branches break more brittle than they usually would this time of year. Outside the circle clearing there is a grassy inlet, the grass is dense and coarse and the earth peaks in a soft mound, form- ing a small hill. The wind comes blurry edged through the grass and it is full of wildflowers, colour strewn. The plants almost cover the hole here, on top of the mound. Twenty stones or so shaped in a circle and stacked four high. The stones are black, blackened over time. But just on one side, the western side. The stones mark an entry into a well, a water well. Inside it is damp, but there is not much water here, the well has dried up. There are cracks in the wall, moisture slides in and out of the breaks. Light doesn't reach down here. The temperature is humid in between cold and tepid, it smells of minerals, standing in a vein, that's what this feels like. The edges are round and burrow into the earth creating a passage or a canal. Tiny wood lengthens out from the walls, thin tendrils of a root system. There is a dripping noise. The drip matches a feeling of dampness, like all the walls are humid, moist. There is something silver on the floor, metallic, or, it's a crack of light. It is a window high up on the wall, blue white light reaches through it. What looks like metal is actually water. The space is not very big by the sound of it. Echoes don't have far to travel. What looked like metal is a puddle, and the light from the high window is what shines in it. The ceiling's proximity is uncalculable, far away, and the concrete walls are damp. I feel close to water. Listening for sounds like waves or shoreline, only dripping comes through. The room is not big and there seems to be nowhere to go down here.

Kristian ⟩ Erin —————————————— **November 22**

The work you have presented is making me think of John C Lilly and his dolphin communication research. Lilly saw interspecies communication as a necessary stage in human evolution and as preparatory for the possibility of communication with extra-ter- restrial species. Dolphin speech research, as Lilly notes in the intro to *Lilly On Dolphins* (1975)[2], can be traced back to Aristotle.

Lilly was also very interested in telepathy. He was sure that dol- phins communicated via holographic acoustic images, using sonar, and pointed to examples of dolphin trainers who communicate through telepathic image transfers. David Dunn in his great article *Speculations: on the evolutionary continuity of music and animal communication behaviour* references a theory by Kenneth Norris, that "emotional reactions between dolphins may be read through echolocating each other's internal anatomy and that they may

1   Erin Hill, photograph, 2023.
2   John C. Lilly, *Lilly on Dolphins: Humans of the Sea* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press, 1975).

have evolved such that these concepts take on importance as internalized kinesics."[3] This ties into my interests in intermodal or threshold perception, but also seems to reinforce some of Lilly's claims that dolphins have perceptual abilities that resemble what we think of as 'telepathy' (considering for instance recent developments in neuroscience to reconstruct imagery from brain scans.[4]

I thought of one more connection between Lilly and your work via the notion of the [labyrinth] you presented this week. Predating his work with dolphin communication, Lilly is famous for another invention: the sensory deprivation tank. Conducting experiments on himself Lilly found that—contrary to the scientific hypotheses of the time that individuals deprived of sensory information would enter a sleep-like state—his long (8-10 hour) deprivation sessions were highly stimulating experiences. He developed a dedicated practice of telepathy in sensory deprivation, regularly consulting with the Earth Coincidence Control Office (ECCO) (More on his [website]) as a part of his research. This link between a kind of restriction in sensory deprivation and telepathy makes me think of your interest in both labyrinths and telepathy…labyrinths as enclosed, restricted, disorienting spaces but also elaborate topographical mental constructions encouraging (both physical and mental) movement. I'm wondering if you can speak to this duality of restriction/stillness and movement in the labyrinth, and how it relates to your practice with telepathy and image transfer? How does the labyrinth represent a restriction of movement, borders, or striated space?

Response

If I remember correctly, I shared notes and drawings about labyrinths that I have gathered over the years. Specifically, how labyrinths have a kind of dual purpose. In a more popular culture way, labyrinths, like mazes, are a puzzle meant to be played or solved. Though there is an important distinction between mazes being multicursal and labyrinths being unicursal, in popular culture that differentiation is not common. As seen in these

images below, I created a meandering pathway in the studio using two long lengths of rope, and asked the participants to walk through this path in single file. This was a setup I used during work-in-progress showings of a past project called *Deviner*, requesting audience to walk through the winding path to get to their seats. What I love about this is how, by delineating a winding path within the rectangle space of a studio, getting from one side of the room to the other becomes a much longer journey than if you could take the hypotenuse. You can see where you want to get to, but the path keeps spiralling your body back and forth, closer and farther from your destination, until finally it sneaks up on you and you're there. I called it an intestinal path in reference to the magic of the intestines, how they're all wrapped up inside our bellies. From a distance or from the camera's view it is hard to decipher the rope on the floor. Watching the participants walk this path, imagining the rope wasn't there, created an uncanny choreography, as they walked a strangely unorganized path in a simultaneous and structured way.

3   David Dunn, "Speculations: On the Evolutionary Continuity of Music and Animal Communication Behaviour," *Leonardo Music Journal 7* (1997): 69–76, https://doi.org/10.2307/1513264.
4   Yu Takagi and Shinji Nishimoto, "High-Resolution Image Reconstruction with Latent Diffusion Models from Human Brain Activity," preprint, posted to bioRxiv December 1, 2022, https://doi.org/10.1101/2022.11.18.517004.

Hi Erin,

This week I have a weird sensation of experiencing your presentation from outside as a listener and inside as a path–taker.

I will ask two questions.

Outsider Question:

I was listening to your reflections on the work of John Lilly, and I totally spaced out because for me, Lilly is linked to one of the most nightmarish things I've ever seen: his assistant painting her face to teach a dolphin English. I was waiting for you to get to the part about Margaret Howe Lovatt, but it never happened. Am I right, or was I lost in my thoughts? The photos of her were all over the internet circa 2009….but now they are more difficult to find. There are some clips of her talking to the dolphin with her painted mouth, and she explains her technique in this video.

For me what's so disturbing, is that the face paint is trying to accommodate the dolphin's vision, but it also has symbolic relevance for people. The completely black and white painting of the mouth flattens the features on the face, evoking Halloween and the make–up designs of 80s rock stars like Kiss and the Misfits, which is kind of funny actually. But I think what scares me about Margaret, is that what she is doing has left the realm of human symbolism, in an attempt to make the dolphin more human by teaching it English. In your research, does this jump to leave the symbolism of the human world emerge?

Insider question:

I am watching and experiencing your research on labyrinths, it's interesting to see your drawings and photos. This week you asked us to walk an 'intestinal path' as a group. At certain points along the path travelling as four people, we had to get quite close together at the turns. It seems like it was possible to be that close because of the path's boundary. It is very pleasurable to toy with space and have a meander, but a very strong curiosity is emerging about your thoughts on the destination. What is the destination? Is the end the destination? Is there more than one? Is there none?

This is how destination is popular on my google algorithm, when

I google 'destinati': destination; destination wedding; destination meaning in hindi; destination icon; destination meaning; destination logo; destination toyota; destination clipart; destination honda; destination movie.
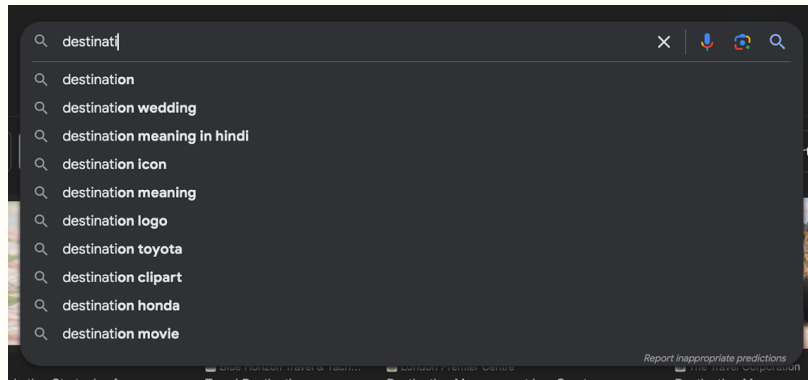
Response

Inspired by Allison's question, I did an experiment I had wanted to try for a while: zoom in on details from paintings of Arcadian pastoral landscapes from the mid-1800's. *Summer* (1873) by Pierre Puvis de Chavannes and *Dream of Arcadia* (c. 1838) by Thomas Cole. These paintings portray an idyllic pastoralism in which humans lounge with non-human animals in Peloponnesian landscapes. By zooming in it becomes more obvious what this idyllic pastoralism is formed of: white, domesticated nature. So much reproductive labor in the animals, both human more-than-human.

1   Allison Peacock, screen capture, January 20, 2025.

2   Erin Hill, collage including details from *Summer* (1873) by Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, digital image, January 31, 2025.

3   Erin Hill, *Horse Gaits Score,* digital image, January 31, 2025.

68   CO-LEARNING SCORE #1
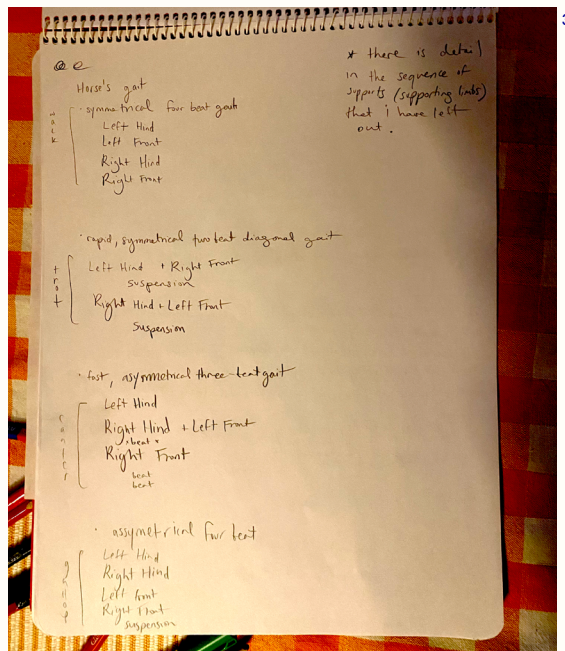
Hi Erin,

Wow, I really enjoyed the last iteration of what you are working on. What a thrill to see your transformation performing the horse. And the other two responses I also enjoyed and understood as part of a map or a guide through the broad space that you are research‐ing and compiling. I saw the paintings with transposed details, and a collection that speaks to representations of the pastoral and the animals in those settings. I saw the third dance as a turning sequence, that for me related more to the music than the other. When I compare these two danced segments you showed us, I am asking myself about the border of the representation of the horse and human. In one I see a horse, in the other I see a human, but I can see both in the other if I think about it. You produce the horse, so it comes through your body, and although a horse is not bipedal, it can also turn repetitively. I guess my loose question this round starts to speculate on the boundary between humans and animals especially in movement.

Over the weekend I was thinking about the pas de cheval, the bal‐let movement. When I learned ballet in the suburbs of T.O., the pas de cheval was a universal favorite amongst my colleagues. It broke the very functional training of gestures named port de bras, the five positions of the feet, etc. If a step imitating horses reached the jazzercising strip mall suburbs of Toronto, representwing horses must be very prominent in the history of dance … .What are you finding? What do you know?

My long‐time colleague Jon Osborn wrote a recent PhD: *Between Species Choreographing Human and Nonhuman Bodies* (2019).[1] His work challenges anthropocentrism in dance through choreo‐graphic assemblages, and he produced encyclopedic style dance works in his PhD that map different zoos through gestures co‐re‐lated to the animals in‐situ. This is the work that maps the Toronto Zoo, and you may also find his thesis relevant for your research.

Another text that scratches at the tension in dance between human and non‐human, and specifically horses, is Henri Lefebvre's chapter on Dressage in Rhythmanalysis, a reflection on practice that critiques its restriction by a comparison with animal training.

1   Jonathan Osborn, "Between Species: Choreographing Human and Nonhuman Bodies" (PhD diss., York University, 2019).

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He writes:

One can and one must distinguish between education, learning and dressage or training [le dressage]. Knowing how to live, knowing how to do something and just plain knowing do not coincide. Not that one can separate them. Not to forget that they go together … .Humans break themselves in [se dressent] like animals. They learn to hold themselves. Dressage can go a long way: as far as breathing, movements, sex. It bases itself on repetition….Dressage therefore has its rhythms; breeders know them. Learning has its own, which educators know. Training also has its rhythms, which accompany those of dancer and tamers [dresseurs]. All different, they unite (or must be united), in the same way as the organs in a body.[2]

My question for you this week is pretty open, because I am mostly curious to learn more and see more of your work. So, could you speculate more on these fuzzy boundaries between dance and animal movements, horses and dance, repetition and training, and the pas de cheval? There is a tension between the historical relationships people have with horses, so is the contemporary meaning of the horse in dance also fluctuating?

See you in two weeks,
Allison

Response

I invited participants to join me in a score. Inspired by Povinelli's *Four Axioms of Critical Thinking*,[3] I created Four Axioms of Performing Animal. I proposed to divide the room into four quadrants, and for about ten minutes we explored how to 'become animal,' shifting our approach depending on which axes we were physically closest to. The axes were: performing becoming animal completely; performing animal as form (i.e. pas de cheval); performing animal as affect; performing animal as map (spatial).

2 Henri Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*, trans. Stuart Elden and Gerald Moore (London: Continuum, 2004).
3 Elizabeth Povinelli and Stephen Squibb. "Elizabeth A. Povinelli on the four axioms of critical theory" *E-Flux Podcast*. January 22, 2018. https://www.e-flux.com/podcasts/406700/elizabeth-a-povinelli-on-the-four-axioms-of-critical-theory.

Christian 〉 Erin ———————————————————— **February 17**

Thank you for the quadrant model exercise on affect, form, map, and no differentiation last time. That's exactly the kind of thing I wished we could have explored for a full hour.

I didn't touch on my use of 'flow state' when talking about Butoh. I use the term loosely and colloquially, but I see flow as part of a continuum of altered states of consciousness. It's often described as a performance state where actions unfold without the heavy, top-down computational activity of the frontal lobe (decision-making, etc.). For me, duration definitely increases the possibility of this kind of state. I'll often choose to start my shows before the audience enters, giving myself extra time to slip into that space where my eyes roll back. I like the idea that practice can accelerate that switch, meanwhile duration is a good helper.

I imagine that becoming friends with a horse requires a different type of presence and attention. I've never taken Dorian Nuskind-Oder & Catherine Chénier's Studio 303 workshop, "Leading, Listening", but I've been very curious about it. For those unfamiliar, it's a workshop usually held in a dance space, where participants spend three days in the studio and two days on a ranch to build a connection with a horse. Do you know about it?! Have you taken it?!

Around 2019, my dance teacher, Louis Guillemette, worked with an actress to prepare her for a role where she had to interact with a horse. Louis knows nothing about horses, yet he was able to help her through body and movement awareness. I was amazed by how far-reaching that kind of practice can be.

I'm curious about 'natural horsemanship' or 'gentle training' and the idea of cultivating a harmonious relationship with a horse. We still tend to celebrate the hard-ass, drill-sergeant approach as the path to mastery, but paradigms are slowly shifting.

Recently, a friend mentioned an episode of Rick Rubin's *Tetragrammaton* podcast featuring Phil Jackson, the former coach of the Chicago Bulls and Los Angeles Lakers. Instead of hype talk and epic speeches before a game, Jackson had his players meditate.

As a musician, I do respond well to old-school drilling methods. But I've also experienced how tending to calmness not only improves technique but also helps uncover blind spots that repetitive

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motion alone might miss.

As the 303 content description says:

Over the course of the week, participants will be invited to observe their own physical and energetic habits when occupying the role of 'leader' and to explore new approaches to this role. With the help of the horses, who are both highly sensitive and non-judgmental, we will practice qualities like clarity, empathy, listening, and patience.[1]

Response

In response, I shared about two different projects:

In the short film *The Animal That Therefore I Am, by Bea de Visser* (Anotherfilm, 2019), I performed alongside an eagle, a wolf-dog and a rabbit.

Sunrise Commitment is a performance I made in 2018, which invites an audience to wake up and come together one hour before the sun is set to cross the horizon. We gather outside with tea and blankets, check our heartbeats and, bathing in the uncertain light of morning, gaze towards the horizon. In the distance, dancers and musicians play their own ode to the dawn. This performance was developed out of a year-long practice from April 17 2017 to April 16 2018, in which I would watch the sun rise every day and write about what I felt and what I saw. The writings were published in an artist book entitled 'O, which I gave to the Score Participants.

The second part of my response was a guided visualization through a seven-coil labyrinth: I turn.

When the audio experience completed, I asked the participants to tell me what they saw in the center of the labyrinth. I recorded their answers as a voice memo: I turn – Participant Answers.

1   Studio 303. "Dorian Nuskind-Oder ⅋ Catherine Chénier (FULL)— Leading, Listening." Accessed September 22, 2025. https://www.studio303.ca/en/dorian-nuskind-oder-catherine-chenier-diriger-ecouter-en-2/.

Dear Erin,

Thank you for the gift: your book.[1] It is March 10th and so I decided to read your entry on March 10th 2018 (7 years ago). In it you write:

"As I was checking my heartbeat I heard the mouse, then again now, the fridge is making fridge sounds, but some of them are mouse sounds. Sounds, they can lend themselves to each other. Sounds can also be lonely. The mouse(fridge) I never saw increased my pulse in the middle of checking it."

On Friday you acted as a guide through a labyrinth. You said there are no choices, it is a linear pathway. When we arrived at the labyrinth's centre, you asked us what we saw. I told you I could only see/imagine the labyrinth from a *bird's eye* view.

You shared with us a film you had acted in that pondered and offered a representation of various animal perspectives (the eagle, the wolf dog, the bunny, and you).

You told a story about a falconer working on the film who had lost an eye to a bird.

This is the material I will work with.

There is something that happened while you were guiding us through the labyrinth. I guess you were pacing while you spoke and so I became fixated on the spatiality of your instructions. I wondered if as you guided us through the labyrinth (turn left, turn right, etc) you were also walking through the labyrinth yourself or if you just paced aimlessly while reading. I was fixated on the aural 'image' of your voice. Where was 'I' in this performance, with the way that sound moved around me and simultaneously denoted some pathway. I felt as though I was standing on a veranda looking down at you in a hedge labyrinth.

This is a nice example of acoustic ecology. While the pacing might have been inconsequential, when I close my eyes I am drawn into sound and hear it with particular detail, and the pacing is foregrounded as the most communicative aspect of your performance. Somehow the words were harder to focus on than this spatial movement. When we tune into sound, it communicates.

1   Erin Hill, *O* (Self-published, 2018).

I can't remember why, but I think Christian at some point during their presentation said that sound is generally very abstract to most people. It is the mouse(fridge). This might be because sound can be unconscious, less of an object and more of a mood. Sound connotes before it denotes. …Still depending on what we need from our environment, an ear is often quicker than the eye. In its immediacy, it says things like when and where before it says what. The (human)ear is far better suited for temporal analysis than spatial analysis, which becomes the domain of the eye (then again we are not owls, seeing only what's in front of us).

But lately I have been troubled by the idea of 'sound' and its homocentricity. How is what I experience as sound another kind of experience for the other species on the planet? Or even those other humans whose sensory systems are all unique in their range and ability? Here I am thinking about the animal quartet. From a normative (even problematic) biological perspective, the eagle's eye exceeds the human's—including for instance a fourth photoreceptor for the perception of ultraviolet light—by contrast their hearing range is far narrower than the humans, which is narrower still than the dog or rabbits (particularly in higher frequency sensitivity). The horse also hears in this higher range. At what point do we live (or not) in the same world, move through the same laby-rinth, follow the same guide?

I wonder when the falconer lost an eye if something else opened. I have a new age book from a flea market that I've never read but have looked at the cover often called *The Third Eye*. It's written by a British grifter who maintained that a Tibetan lama had drilled a hole in his skull and opened his third eye. A private investigator claimed that Lobsang Rampa was, in fact, a plumber from Devon and had never even had a passport let alone visited Tibet. Furthermore, there is no real evidence of spiritual practice of trepanation (skull drilling) in (documented) Tibet at all. Still the idea of new openings holds some fascination. The beyond of the senses.

I would like to open a third eye into the labyrinth and experience it with the immediacy of sound. I feel as though when I am in the labyrinth I would not see much with my given eyes, maybe some stone walls or neatly trimmed hedges…which makes me wonder, did you wake up every morning just to see the sunrise or was there something else to this ritual, linear path? I've thought about these things with our laser practice, which I increasingly cannot consider 'audio–visual'…in fact I've read about the triskelion symbol

as a triple spiral labyrinth that can open the trinity eye,[2] similar to how the mandala is supposed to draw one's eyes to the centre as a launchpad to dream. Here however it is the congruence of triskelion as symbol and as pathway (the physical act of walking as meditation). To what degree is your work with duration, repetition, or linearity a way to go beyond, to fly and see with the bird's eye? To understand the labyrinth might we need a plurality of perspectives simultaneously (looking down on the labyrinth while also being inside the labyrinth)? How can we be in these many spaces at once? Can the labyrinth act as a plucking out of the eye that facilitates this transformation? Is the labyrinth just the fridge making fridge sounds or is it the mouse(fridge)?

I hope this inspires something.
Kristian

Response

For this round, I performed. I had two audio tracks, one played from the speakers in the LePARC Performance Lab, the other played from a bluetooth speaker in the hallway that leads to the doorway of the Lab. I started the tracks at the same time. I danced the four horse gaits, holding a large stick in one hand and a broom stick in the other. I tapped the floor with these sticks to produce a sound, as though I had four hooves. I played the bagpipe chanter. And I blew air out of my mouth, vibrating my lips, like a horse might.

This track played in the hallway:
Inside Labyrinth – Hallway

And this track inside the studio:
Inside Labyrinth – Studio Speakers

2   Jai Dudeja, "Awakening the Trinity Eye by Walking Through the Triple Spiral Labyrinth," *International Journal of Advanced Scientific Technologies in Engineering and Management Sciences 4,* no. 11 (November 2018): 22, https://doi.org/10.22413/ijastems/2018/v4/i11/49378.

Dear Erin,

Friday's performance was great! Wow! So many ideas.

Something that stood out is that you said you feel like your practice doesn't really change with time. That you can look at old work and you feel a continuity? (I'm paraphrasing from memory...correct me if I'm wrong).

This week I'm thinking about form constants. I think I'm always looking for them. I guess myths and symmetrical labyrinths like how you describe them (like the Tao) are like form constants: shared hallucinations. Archetypes. If a destination is fixed then maybe we start to think about flow and movement.

I want to ask you about speed in your work, and what happens if we modulate speeds? For instance, the rhythm of the horse gait. I wonder to what degree this rhythm creates imagery or form? Or what forms would be created by different rhythms and tempos? What happens if we put the horse's gait in audio-rate? To explain what I mean by this I want to echo Christian in bringing up Stockhausen and his theory of The Unified Time Structuring. Here's a paragraph:

> *"Suppose you take a recording of a Beethoven symphony on tape and speed it up, but in such a way that you do not at the same time transpose the pitch. And you speed it up until it lasts just one second. Then you get a sound that has a particular colour or timbre, a particular shape or dynamic evolution, and an inner life which is what Beethoven has composed, highly compressed in time. And it is a very characteristic sound, compared let's say to a piece of Gagaku music from Japan if it were similarly compressed. On the other hand, if we were to take any given sound and stretch it out in time to such an extent that it lasted twenty minutes instead of one second, then what we have is a musical piece."[1]*

I wonder about the sound colours of the horses various paces, ambling gaits, and so forth? Following my last question to you about dual-perspectives on the labyrinth, I wonder if thinking about the horse's gait in this way can explain how speed can relate to seeing the labyrinth (as an image, or as a mental image, or as a path to access mental image, etc)? Here is a related quote from Deleuze and Guattari:

> *All drugs fundamentally concern speeds, and modifications of speed.* [2]

Speed relates to form if we focus on the process of becoming form.

I am thinking through the unseeable sights we have seen from Allison's glass floored helicopter, or in the cellphone in the bag or in the center of the labyrinth or the triskelion. What nonsense this would be to anyone who is not in time. We are like Huygen's pendulums. Here at the pinnacle of our collective entrainment, I wonder what else is inside the labyrinth, or the horse's gait, that is unknowable at our current tempo?

I hope this inspires something and look forward to seeing whatever you come up with :)

Kristian

P.S. Busby Berkeley – Kaleidoscopic Dance

Response ⸻

For this session we visited Kristian's studio on Beaubien street. It was a wonderful vibe shift. In response to Kristian's nice question about time and speed and what can be revealed, I tried to speed up a couple recordings of a horse's gait that I downloaded from youtube. I used Ableton, though my music editing skills are minimal and I was not able to speed up the horse gait fast enough to become a tone. However, Kristian had already done so with his granular synthesizer, and played around going from real-time, faster and faster, into a tone. It was useful to hear that and also kind of breathtaking, like it made me feel out of breath, imagining how fast a horse would have to move to produce that sound.

I asked Lília, Kristian and VK to listen to the audio track I created in headphones, and to try to tap the rhythm they were hearing as long as possible. Here is the track: Horse Speeds

1   Karlheinz Stockhausen, "The Four Criteria of Electronic Music," in *Electronic Music: A Listener's Guide,* ed. Elliott Schwartz (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973), 188–99.

2   Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

Kristian North

In my introduction I spoke about a few developing projects, including my work with Mike Cassidy creating visual music for audio-controlled lasers and some active interests and processes in soundscape composition. I presented the concept of the spa as an immersive environment through its echoic characteristics, which I suppose may be by design much like the atmosphere of churches and temples.

Lília ⟩ Kristian ———————————— **September 27**

I have been thinking about immersive environments induced by synaesthesia. Hearing you speak on Friday I stayed with the fantasy that you are interested in the capacity of immersing the audience in a sort of transcendental experience by complexifying their experience through multiple sources. About one year ago I discovered Legacy Russels book *Glitch Feminism*[1] that brings the glitch as a resistant factor to the smoothness of the digital. Claiming a space for interferences. I keep thinking about the body and the skin as resistance to the smoothness of the digital. Maybe because we spoke about the SPA as an immersive environment and the possibility of bringing the full body as part of the experiment. Here I had to think about the birch leaves used on Swedish saunas to beat up the sauna users and make the blood circulate again. This is obviously my interes 🙂. I am thinking about immersion and the possibility of alienation as different from transcendental experience and want to ask you how you articulate 'error' in your work. I stayed eager for more about the laser and the analogue. I have never attended one of your performances, so I don't really know if this is a relevant observation. If you have any questions let me know!

Response ————————————————————

I spoke about the participatory nature of laser synthesis, which relies on persistence of vision to form images from a single point in continuous motion.
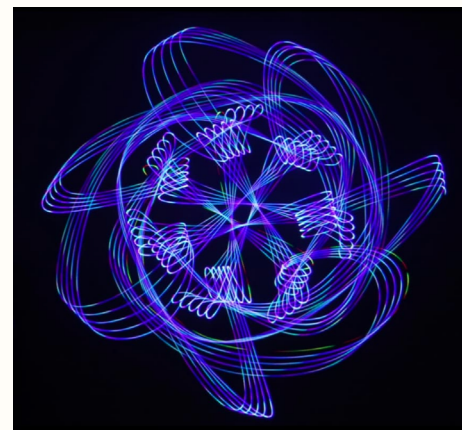
I spoke about the spa as a kind of transcendent space. And also the notion of sensory deprivation as related to the OBE (out of body experience). I spoke of stillness as a kind of journey, 'incubation' as described by Parmenides.[3] I connected this to the spa through the

1   Kristian North and Mike Cassidy, *Laser Image 1*, digital image, October 31 2025
2   Kristian North and Mike Cassidy, *Laser Image 2*, digital image, October 31 2025
3   Peter Kingsley, *In the Dark Places of Wisdom* (Inverness, CA: Golden Sufi Center, 1999).

1   Legacy Russell, *Glitch Feminism* (London: Verso, 2020).

disorientation of diffuse sound (maximum reflection) and the hissing pipe sounds which are said to be a key indication that the incubator is about to pass on to another world (Peter Kingsley further relates this to the kundalini or snake power).[4]

I presented a recording of the steam generator from Spa Carré put through several processes of auto-convolution. Convolution is a mathematical operation that calculates a weighted average of one signal by sliding a second signal across it to produce a modified output signal. In audio, convolving two waveforms in the time domain means multiplying their spectra in the frequency domain.[6]

Auto-convolution, as described by Barry Truax, is convolving an audio waveform with itself. The result of this operation is that the length of the waveform is doubled, and the spectrum emphasises its peak characterics (while thinning out the total spectra). This both draws out and emphasises peak frequencies in the sound, as dominant qualities of its inner character.

Steam Generator

Steam Generator * Self

Steam Generator * Self * Self

Steam Generator * Self * Self * Self

Convolutions – Part 1 and Convolutions – Part 2

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4   Ibid p. 128
5   After William Blake (engraved by Luigi Schiavonetti), *The Soul Hovering over the Body, Reluctantly Parting with Life,* from "The Grave," a Poem by Robert Blair, March 1, 1813, engraving, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Accession Number 17.3.2395, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/383673 (accessed October 22, 2025).
6   "Convolution," Simon Fraser University, accessed September 23, 2025, https://www.sfu.ca/sonic-studio-webdav/cmns/Handbook%20Tutorial/Convolution.html.

There is a tremendous amount to respond to in your last presentation, theoretically, visually, sonically, etc., and two aspects are of particular interest for me. First, the question of dimension in your visualisation work. In what you have presented thus far, (lasers, graphic representations of music that show the principle of auto convolution, etc.) the visualisations are expressed in two dimensions. This is already something generative as sound is often perceived as invisible (although this can obviously be argued), and I am wondering about how you are thinking about three-dimensional representations of sound? When I looked up photos of anechoic chambers there is a very strong three-dimensional manipulation of sound expressed in the architecture of these chambers.

The second question is around the tension of the/a body being both central and invisible in your work. It is the perceptive centre for sound and tactile sensation, and the receiving entity in the spa, the recording source. The sound that you played, in some iterations, twists the function of the spa from a calming scenario for a body, to an agitated scenario with the pressurized sound isolated and amplified. I guess my question could be formulated: how are the bodies involved implicated, changing, expressed and hidden in what you are working on? And how do you perceive the function change related to the autoconvolution for any potential bodies involved?

Response   ⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯

I presented a composition in progress. Both the work in progress and finished composition are below.

WIP

Mirror Life

One of the strongest elements I perceived in the composition that you played, is a tension between the 'artificial' and 'real' sounds loosely representing a forest. Over the course of the approximately 10 minutes, my experience as a listener moved from being within what I could sonically recognize as a forest, then oscillating to the inside of a mechanical tinker cabinet. The shifting mechanic and organic sounds started to push towards a visualization because I could hear a depth/position in the surround sound.

When considering the composition over the weekend, I thought of the book Insect Media: An Archaeology of Animals and Technology, by media theorist Jussi Parikka. The introduction of the book starts with a discussion of technical and military innovations based on the non-linear communication and organization strategies of insects (eg. swarms). The analysis that Parikka offers in this opening, and the highlighted 'insect' qualities that become hauntingly potent for thinking through military strategies, ask fundamental questions about the human capacity for mimesis and the troubling ethical problems that accompany this capacity. It also highlights the ingenuity of the insect world that models unique ways of operating amongst a species. Parikka points to the work of animal ethnologist Jakob von Uexküll who concluded that "artificial actors are embedded in a perceptual world, which implies that what we perceive is what we are, and animals and artificial agents are defined by the capabilities of perception, sensation, and orientation in their environment."[1] My generative question for the next phase is about how communication functions in the soundscape that you are creating with potentially artificial agents. Insects often produce sound for a specific function, so is there a call and response already embedded in your soundscape? Can the response be another phase, and/or does the response delimit the sonic soundscape?

1 Jussi Parikka, *Insect Media: An Archaeology of Animals and Technology* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), xii.

Tasting sound score:

Pour two cups of sparkling water

Place a hydrophone in the first cup (a system to listen in real time is required)

Listen to the first cup of sparkling water while drinking the second

Dear Kristian,

You presented to us an internal voyage into sparkling water. You entered a hydraulic microphone in a glass of sparkling water and made us hear it while we drank sparkling water from a similar glass. The sound and the feeling of the bubbling water in our mouths were mirroring each other. But drinking instigated a series of actions: filling the glass, holding it or not, drinking one sip or many, drinking the full glass at once, letting the bubbles dissipate in the mouth, … while the microphone was just there. It entered the body of the sparkling water and stayed.

I am thinking about the correlation of actions and want to introduce the idea of game. The potentiality of game to communicate and eventually to learn from or enter into another world. In order to learn more about that water, I need the microphone to play more with it – I need to interact with it as much as I need to challenge my own drinking automatism. I need to push the 'play' button in order to experience.

Two things come to mind: one is what would be a dramaturgical outline for the drinking proposition to become a game? And the other is what are the impressions you want to create with mimicry or immersion? In the text Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia, [1]Roger Caillois seems to speak of mimicry as a form of total belonging or as no distinction between the body and the space

1 Roger Caillois and John Shepley, "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia," *October 31* (Winter 1984): 17–32, https://doi.org/10.2307/778354.

surrounding it. A kind of game of nature which human–kind also plays:

> Among others in literature, Gustave Flaubert seems to have understood the meaning of the phenomenon, when he ends The Temptation of Saint Anthony with a general spectacle of mimicry to which the hermit succumbs: 'plants are now no longer distinguished from animals... Insects identical with rose petals adorn a bush...And then plants are confused with stones. Rocks look like brains, stalactites like breasts, veins of iron like tapestries adorned with figures.' In thus seeing the three realms of nature merging into each other, Anthony in his turn suffers the lure of material space: he wants to split himself thoroughly, to be in everything, 'to penetrate each atom, to descend to the bottom of matter, to be matter.'[2]

Response

I presented an older project *Swarmscape* (2022), made in collaboration with Mike Cassidy. This was an a–life system applying swarming algorithms, ecosystem dynamics, and game theory as compositional controls for a generative musical system.[3]
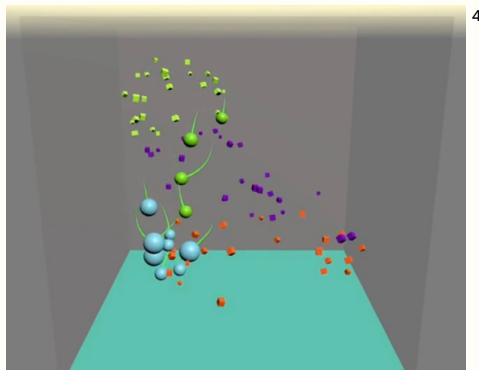
2   Ibid. p. 28
3   Mike Cassidy and Kristian North, "Auspex: Ecosystemic Emergence as Generative Soundscape," *Emille: The Journal of the Korean Electro-Acoustic Music Society 21 (*2023): 7–12, https://doi.org/10.23277/EMILLE.2023.21.001
4   Kristian North and Mike Cassidy, Image From *Swarmscape*, digital image, October 31 2025
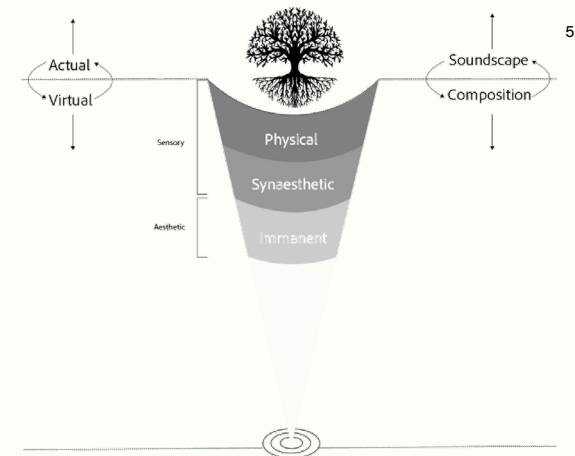
Peircean semiotics were touched upon in relation to this diagram three perceptual haptic circles relating to 'haptic aurality' and haptic listening (a listening model I am conceptually developing in my MA research). I have since moved past this organisation of the model but I will include the diagram for the sake of continuity.

Allison ⟩ Kristian ———————————————— November 22

I am of course delighted to see Peircean semiotics appear in your presentation, and, as I am looking for more opportunities to practice with Peircean logic, I will offer you a question regarding your presentation from a Peircean perspective. I would also like to note your example of Paul Ryan's 'threeing' which offers a kind of enactment of Peirce's ideas, and suggests that referencing Peirce could lead elsewhere....

First, some fundamentals:

The distinct feature of the Peircean sign is its triangulation of representamen/ground, object, and interpretant. We can use a parking lot as an example :). The ground (which has a number of terms) is considered the sign vehicle, the foundation for the sign. In a parking lot it is the yellow lines that denote a parking space,

5   Kristian North, *Haptic Diagram,* digital image, October 31 2025

the yellow lines are the ground/representamen. The object gives the sign its form. In the parking lot, the object is a parking spot which corresponds to the shape of a car. The interpretant could be understood as an interpretation of the sign–object relation, it is the implication. The classic example is that smoke is a sign of a fire (the object) – the interpretant is the step people take to make the link. Parking is the final interpretant of the parking space, that the driver enters and parks their car within the lines can be understood tri-adically. The interpretant can become the ground for another sign, which is then the process of semiosis. Peirce used the concept of *semiosis ad infinitum,* to describe an unending chain of signifi-cation of signs. Is the parked car the sign of a consumer at the mall? Capitalism in action? Does it mean that someone is lost in the woods? What then comes next? That is *semiosis ad infinitum.*

From this basic position, Peirce developed a series of sub–signs that further interrogate qualities of representation and processes of signification. He also went through several phases of developing his logic, largely grouped through his active periods in the early 20th century. One of the interesting characteristics of Peirce is that he never wrote a definitive text, he wrote many letters and short texts, and most of what is circulated is excerpted by semio-ticians piecing together the logic Peirce was developing.[1]

What becomes interesting for me, especially from the highly subjec-tive field of dance, is that the interpretant really opens up the pos-sibility for choreographies. Peircean logic is useful to think through signification and embodied action. Dance is impossible to under-stand in a 1 to 1 relationship – I made a dance about x and what you will see is x. It is more like: I made a dance about x with a bit of v, and you saw 350/x&**. This is where the interpretant function can really shine, in the haunting nonsense of experimental choreography.

Ok, so now to relate it to the work that you presented. There is much to respond to, but I will get to the question. Considering the [laser]s, I sense a precision in the visuals carried by the speed, combinations, and soundscapes. And you spoke about this work becoming an object. Does your concept of an object relate to the Peircean object? Could Peirce's concept of the 'dynamic object' be useful here? And I am curious about how you see the interpretant of this work? Because of the technology, is there a standardized or predictable perception that could influence an interpretant?

1   Albert Atkin, "Peirce's Theory of Signs," S*tanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* last modified August 23, 2010, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/peirce-semiotics/.

Response

I presented a brief demo of our three [laser] synthesiser Phosphene, made in collaboration with Mike Cassidy, which we had installed in a large auditorium for a Hexagram residency.
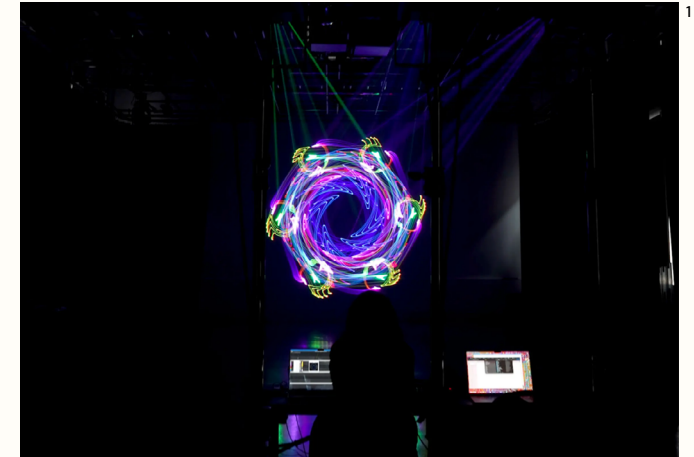
Erin ⟩ Kristian ———————————— **Janary 20**

Dear Kristian,

On Friday it was proposed that you and I incorporate a reading into our responses. Without fully knowing what Wendy Wheeler's *The Whole Creature: Complexity, Biosemiotics and the Evolution of Culture*[2] entails, I had a hunch that it might be relevant and enjoy-able to read it in relation to what you shared last week. I'm only into chapter one and I'm already a bit over my head, but I love her insistence on using the word feeling. Published in 2006, she gives a kind of overview of how complexity science developed, under-lining how the "positivistic sociology of the twentieth century was countered by both continuing marxist analyses and by structur-alism". Her discussion on objects + objectivity and language + the body in relation to Derrida's critique of Western metaphysics felt

1   Kristian North and Mike Cassidy, *Laser Image 3,* digital image, October 31 2025
2   Wendy Wheeler, *The Whole Creature: Complexity, Biosemiotics and the Evolution of Culture* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2006).

relevant, and I'd like to share a quote:

> [...] the detailed phenomenological observation that prop-ositional, abstract, conceptual language is always capable of formulating nonsense-knowledge – especially when it is divorced (as it tends to be in scientific modernity) from the experiential knowledge, borne of the body, but in which 'we know more than we can tell.'[3]

I don't mean to suggest that you are creating nonsense-knowl-edge! Rather, I'm drawn to thinking about the feelings and experi-ential aspects of your work for a viewer (spectator) and for what you and Allison might call an interpretant (if I'm getting that right). I'm thinking about how you shared the Peircian semiotics at play in your work, while also bringing in the words *object* and *sound-ob-ject*. You talked about how an object allows for temporal repeat-ability, and how sound is always an interaction between object (sound-source) and room. I don't think you mentioned these as connected ideas, but I would like to connect them and infuse them with that part of the quote "experiential knowledge in which we know more than we can tell."

If I understood correctly, you are now at a stage with your work where you're shifting from a live laser instrument towards a video... which brings in the idea of repeatability. You mentioned how we don't perceive the world, but rather we build the image of the world in our minds. I love that idea and it gives me a sense that the physical experience of the viewer is an important part of your work. I'm imagining that part of what your work does is stage that idea (of building an image of the world in our minds) – that the work allows that process to be felt and witnessed. It also seems to me that understanding how the laser technology works would enhance one's experience of it...which is not the case for all technology.

So, in all of these assumptions/imaginings/gleanings I get the sense that the viewer's embodied experience, as well as the interaction between the sound object and the room, is an integral part of the work. How does this change when the laser instrument becomes a video? Are you thinking about that? Is the generative complexity of non-repeatability important to your project, and if so, how does that factor into the next stage/phase of your work?

Response ———————————————————————
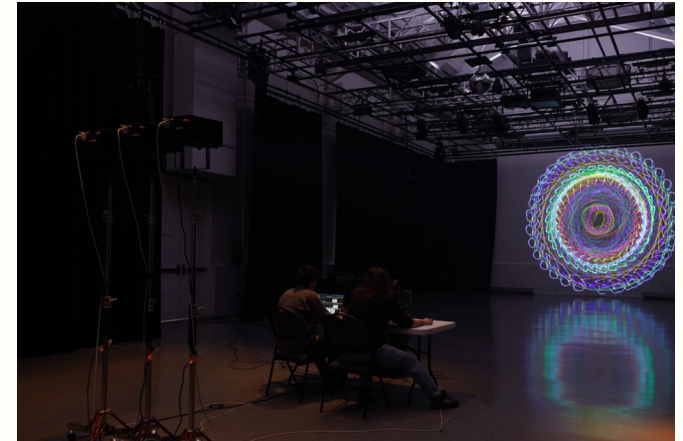
I presented the concept of the laser practice as a composition, meaning it is repeatable in the sense of something that can be practiced and performed, or recorded—even if each viewing is unique for the viewer due to the complexity of material. I distanced from the idea of "video", by emphasising the ways in which this performance shifts the atmospheres of the spaces in which it is performed. I used this to bridge back to the concept of the spa, and the ways in which the cycles of the wet room have an intended effect.

Christian 〉Kristian ———————————————— **February 3**

I love going to the spa, and I love electro-acoustic music—natu-rally, I have so many questions.

On a logistical level, I want to know: what is your agreement with the spa you're composing with? Do you work there after hours? How did this conversation happen, and did they ask for credentials?

How did you first encounter that space? What brought you to this

3   Ibid. p. 39.

1   Kristian North and Mike Cassidy, *Laser Image 4*, digital image, October 31 2025

spa—were your reasons extra-acoustical? For me, one of my friends likes to go, so I tag along. Plus, I'm a fan of hydrotherapy, especially when I'm physically active. I like it when my muscles ache, and my body asks for me to spa.

There are other reasons to visit somewhere. I might go to the movies just to be in a large, enclosed space—with low lights. Cinéma du Parc is church to me.

Prior to recording, How do you enter this spa space? Do you have a ritual to greet this spa-instrument? I wonder if you've ever felt a somatic mutation upon first entering the blue room and later, once you're fully immersed.

Low-angle morning sunlight has a bluer hue and gets us ready for the day with cortisol production and melatonin suppression and yet, blue pills in placebo trials usually have a calming and sedative effect. Have you noticed sleepiness/alertness while working there? Colour aside, just the affect of the spa would lure me into a half-wakefulness.

I'm not sure blue is the central protagonist in the following segment but I'm into suggestibility.

> *"Nearly a century ago, suggestion became one of the most popular forms of psychological intervention for inducing wart loss. One early study examined whether the introduction of a sham 'wart-killing machine' would successfully help people get rid of warts. In 1927, Bruno Bloch reported how he blindfolded patients with warts and placed their infected hands into an 'electric machine.' Unbeknownst to them, his apparatus made a humming sound but little more. To further heighten the effects of suggestion, Bloch also painted their warts with methylene blue, an innocuous pigment. After removing their blindfold, Bloch instructed his patients not to touch their warts until the blue color had disappeared."[2]*

Where does your body exist while recording?

Have you ever diffused this composition into the space itself, or other work of yours?

Years ago, there was an article about Ryuichi Sakamoto being frustrated with thoughtless restaurant music, so he curated

personalized playlists and offered them to the chef of his favorite spot.[3]

What I heard from you would definitely be on my spa playlist.

I imagine there's a multi-channel version of this piece. Kevin Austin always said that stereo was kinda mainstream.

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A Love Supreme
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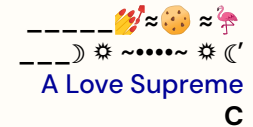
Response ────────────────

 A Love Supreme Spa Etude

Lília ⟩ Kristian ───────────── **February 17**

Dear Kristian,

Thank you for bringing us to the studio to hear your composition with a surround sound system.

I am very interested in partial views. Even dedicated to dismantling the idea of overview. Overview and obsessive control are part of the same power logic. Of course, the panopticon as an architectural construction is proof of that way of thinking control in its extreme manifestation, as Foucault well presented it.[4] The controlled people can't see the guards but the guards from the central tower can see everyone. But also, the black box theatre with its unilateral perspective and the immobility of the audience in their rows of chairs has this implicit conditioning. It wants to control people's perception and imagination by subtracting the body of the audience.

What is the difference between suggesting and determining

2   Amir Raz, *The Suggestible Brain: The Science and Magic of How We Make Up Our Minds* (New York: Balance, 2024).

3   Ben Ratliff, "Annoyed by Restaurant Playlists, a Master Musician Made His Own," *New York Times*, July 23, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/23/arts/music/ryuichi-sakamoto-playlist-caffe-regio.html.
4   Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).

imaginaries? Such a fine line. First words that come to mind are: no overview, no linear narrative, patchwork, collage, improvisation, surrealism, dream, multiple inputs, inside /outside, etc.

Nothing new.

I am thinking that when the kernel of the work, the content and the source of material is in the surroundings (periphery), it might be that the audience can enter and exit the work. As you offered, through the sound spatialization of 8 speakers in a large circle and seating us within the circle. The composition itself creates the doors to exit and enter the soundscape. Is this something that speaks to you?

In your composition amidst many sounds, you used drumming, which brought me to a total other place. The sound of the drums stood out and I can't stop thinking about it. Where are the drumming sounds coming from? What kind of meaning or status are they creating in the sauna environment? What are they dreaming of? The first word that came to mind was exoticism and I wonder what does exoticism mean to you? Or what it means in your composition? Are we traveling to the orient and the bath houses? And if yes, what connotations do those environments have in your composition? The term 'orientalism' coined by Edward Said also comes to mind and I wonder about where the doors are opening too. The other became a dreamed image of the West.[5]

Alongside the drums, I think about the sauna itself. Beautiful, 50's architecture. And a bunch of people hanging out in swimming suits listening to the composition. Where are those people hanging out? If you had to create an image of the audience in that surrounding what would it be? How would they be hanging out?

Somehow these two images are in contrast with one another. The 'pure' form of the sauna and the drumming of what I imagine being Eastern sandy landscapes. These are images that came to mind.

I couldn't look at the video of the fish swimming on one of the computer screens because they were too distracting 🙂. Hope this is somehow inspiring. Let me know if you have any clarification questions.

Looking forward to hearing your composition again.

Lília

5   Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

Response ⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯

With regards to orientalism: what I am more interested in is the juxtaposition of soundscapes that suggest immersivity and those that are actually immersive. For instance, I am frequently frustrated by the music at the spa (and I say that as a defender of new age music). In the diffuse sound field, or through the sounds of flowing water, or the hissing sounds of pipes, the immersive or transcendent nature of the spa already exists in its functional soundscape, which is only masked by incidental music taking me out of this experience.

[Spa Etude 2](#)

As an aside, this week I presented this composition in quad in the mini black box which I had booked to document Third State, a [laser](#) composition made with Mike Cassidy. While recording we noticed that the laser on the felt curtains was generating acoustic sound events, most likely through some sort of thermo-dynamic process or static electricity. This included the perception of localised sound and frequency shifts. We spent the better part of an hour behind the curtain, shooting lasers at each other's heads to hear the natural spatiality of this interaction (don't try this at home).

Somehow these two comments seem relevant to one and other, but the logic is too fuzzy to bridge the gap now.

VK ⟩ Kristian ⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯ **March 10**

Dear Kristian,

Thank you for bringing us to these studios and mappings.

Your music also re/locates us––and I notice that each time we get to listen to your work. These relocations from building to building and floor to floor bring us into your pieces as you are creating them. Such excursions ultimately intensify my memory of listening

to your work.

Lying on the wooden floor of the minibox was particularly good. I wonder to what extent, in these works made from field recordings of a spa machine, you ultimately invite listeners' attention to parallel shifts in their own changed somatic receptivity.

This attention to the state and place of listening was in the foreground again last week. The material you shared with us also offered bodily re-orientations to the depth and speed of breath, of the nervous system, and of the organs. There's a kind of pleasure in sharing works emerging in such different kinds of situations for making and listening. In that studio I could feel the sound of the work through the floor.

How does sound convey the feeling of skin? Or the sense of water dripping around us?

Our excursions to hear your work invite time for being patient (or slow) in another way. These representations seem to blend what's internal and what's external. That effect seems to mirror the stress and inventiveness of moving water in these spaces of rest and healing.

You also raise potent images of distraction and focus when you talk about the spa. I love that. Through you, we enjoy a kind of pleasure of machine kinship. Through you, we also meet the shift of feeling's locatedness and acoustic world that is also a very fluid kind of sensorial practice.

A spa is so often a prominently atmospheric, thermal experience: the heaviness of air, for example, spurs the reflection that it's hard to breathe. There's a thick sense of water in the sound's movement, as well as of durations of very warm or very cold temperatures. I had not thought very much previously of a spa's sounds–and specifically of the distracting impact of New Age music pulling you, as a sound-oriented artist, out of these somatic encounters. That does make me wish for a chance to experience engaging pieces of acoustic composition while floating in such spaces, letting slow changes of temperature, steam, or salt claim listening.

I admire your interest in the cycles and physicality of water. In a strange way, this proposal channels a kind of "Hydraulic musical automata."[1]

I'm guessing you likely know them as instruments, as water organs. Or as *ingenia*.

Apparently René Descartes went to observe these steam caves and robots in pleasure gardens. Apparently too, they could go as far as to be like androids, or even robots. I love this thought of the pleasure garden cave and concert with the steam-movement of strange beings and scenes as the source of some of his writings. Despite the fact he's often remembered as a thinker who stands in for a body-mind split we could also ask whether ultimately such thought experiments are about consciousness and sensation. (See Jessica Rifkin, "Machines in the Garden."[2])

What kind of system is this spa machinery? Does it have agency? Composition? A sense of being?

How do you feel in this boiler's presence? What are its relations? Have you been thinking of creating a concert for listeners in hot water and steam? Or in spaces of collective bathing? Or immersed in intensive, felt senses of rest?

Wishing you a glorious few weeks & looking forward to the next steps this work takes. It's always such a pleasure.

Smiles,
VK

Response

A few words on the shishi odoshi fountain:

I once received a message from Kevin Austin (who both the C/Kristians bring up throughout this practice—we both studied under and felt the influence of KA, and 2025 was the year of his retirement). The message was two words only: 'shishi odoshi'. Like many of our exchanges I did not immediately understand what this meant, but over time I found my own meaning in pondering this response. I have no idea if this is what KA was referring to, but the shishi odoshi came to

1   Patrizio Barbieri, "Hydraulic Musical Automata," in *Hydraulic Musical Automata in Italian Villas and Other 'Ingenia' 1400-2000* (Rome: Gangemi Editore, 2019).

2   Jessica Riskin, "Machines in the Garden," *Republics of Letters 1,* no. 2, Stanford Humanities Center, https://shc.stanford.edu/arcade/publications/rofl/issues/volume-1-issue-2/machines-garden.

represent the compositional function of accumulation.

The shishi odoshi fills with water until it reaches a certain threshold and at that point tips to unleash its signature sound. Its function in the garden is to scare off animals, but it has also become a kind of soothing ritournelle in the soundscape. The simplicity of its design means these events are not strictly metered.

Translating this to a generative composition framework, an accumu-lator is a register that takes its measurement as a trigger or control… considered materially this might mean a kind of storing of materials to be unleashed once a threshold is met. I guess it is also a tension and release. I was experimenting with this concept with an older, some-what abandoned composition that I shared this week. Listening again at LePARC it sounded more finished than I had remembered.

I'll be seeing you

Lília ⟩ Kristian ———————————————— **March 24**

Dear Kristian,

Thank you for sharing your composition inspired by the shishi odoshi fountain. The piece was based on the fountain mechanism which operates by shifting shape once one part of the structure reaches maximum capacity and provokes movement.

Spinning out of VK's last question, which led you to share your com-position with us, I would like to ask if you could use the sauna itself as a mechanism for the composition you want to create for that environment. Sauna as a score consists of a time of extreme heat followed by a moment to cool down. This circle can be repeated a number of times in a variety of degrees, humidity, smells, steam rituals, etc. Sauna started a thousand years ago and it appears in many different places in the world at the same time with different protocols and social practices. In searching for a reference I found this BBC article that has interesting input for this question. Here is an excerpt:

> *The sauna's spiritual aspect was important. O'Kelly explains in her book that traditionally, the ancient Finns, like Native Americans, worshiped the four elements—air, water, fire, earth—in the sauna. 'It was a microcosm of*

the three levels of the universe: the upper realm, the sky world; the middle realm, the Earth; and the underworld of the dead. All of its core symbolism replicated the cycles of growth, interconnection and symbiosis, with the end goal of altered states, raised consciousness and rejuvenation.[1]

So my questions are: can the mechanism and the spiritual/social/ health content of the sauna practice as you conceive it be the score for the music piece? And could you imagine the "concert" happen-ing while people are experiencing the sauna? What would that insti-gate in your composition?

I would also be interested in the current status of the sauna building you are working with. Who goes there? What kind of social practice happens there? I apologise if any of these questions have already been addressed.

As we mentioned in the last session, there is a ritournelle feeling going on with the score which makes me think of Deleuze and Guattari's plateau 11 On Refrain speaking about the territorialisation machine. [2] What is it that comes back and forms the territory?

Looking forward to hearing your response!

Till soon,
Lília

1   Claire Dowdy, "The 10,000-year-old origins of the sauna – and why it's still going strong," *BBC*, October 25, 2023, https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20231024-the-10000-year-origins-of-the-sauna-and-why-its-still-going-strong.
2   Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia.* 1987.

Response

Ternary cycle
Path/Incubation
Whirpool
Thermal Circuit
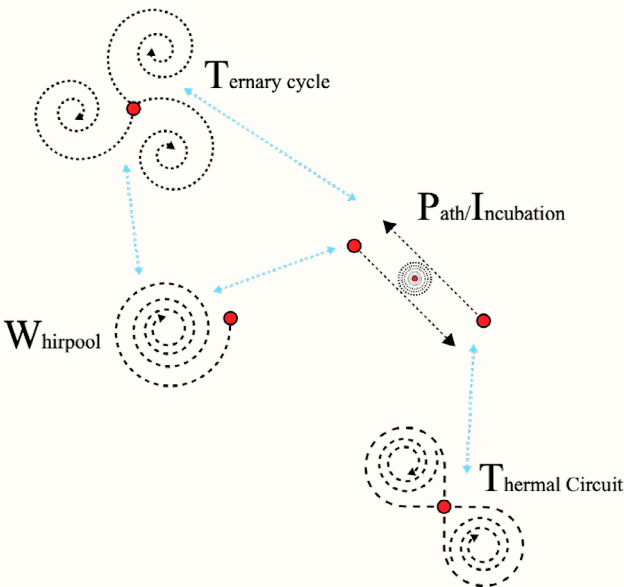
Temperature is the key structural component. Temperature relates directly to time, speed, gesture, texture. Temperature influences phase transitions (liquid⇔gas) influencing wave propagation ⁎⁎timbre. ₁
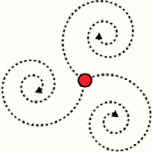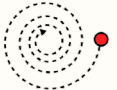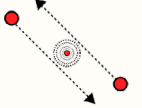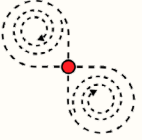
Ternary cycle
Length: Three cycles
Form: Still (texture), Wet (space)
Temperature: Hot
Sound Field: Diffuse
Soundmark: Steam Generator
Focus: Dynamic Range

Follow the steam generator.
Listen as it becomes a drop of water.

Whirpool
Length: Any
Form: Free (gesture), Wet (viscous)
Temperature: Warm
Sound Field: Interactive
Soundmark: Jets
Focus: Gentle movement

Path/Incubation
Length: Any
Form: Walk/lay (gesture/texture), Dry
Temperature: Room
Sound Field: Interactive
Soundmark: New age music
Focus: Relative movement

Thermal Circuit
Length: Any (cycles)
Form: Tension/Release (gesture/texutre), Wet/Dry
Temperature: Hot/cold
Sound Field: Free/Interactive
Soundmark: Waterfall/löyly
Focus: Cyclic entrainment

What rhythm is created in the cyclic alternation of sauna and cold plunge?
What soundscapes must be endured to be experienced?

1   Performance Score for *Wet Spa*, Kristian North

This is the week that Google released the podcast feature in their AI model Gemini, which has since been included in many models. The uncanny AI voices in juxtaposition with this kind of post-human trans-duction of unverified content felt scary. Theory without practice. I generated a podcast with some themes I had in mind which we listened to passively while looking at a score for Spa Carre. It is scary and also funny, a juxtaposition that seems particularly relevant to our modern political ethos.

[Podcast](#)

Christian ⟩ Kristian ——————————— **April 7**

Dear Kristian,

Thank you for sharing the AI death in the sauna podcast.

It was fascinating to have podcast vocal affect matched with sauna death subjects. The interaction of the two 'Podcasters' is so slick, it's cute how they practically finish each other's sentences with laxed-casual-radio-speak: yet in this case, one density of factoid answering another. So enthused by death in the sauna, they nearly interrupt one another. Now I'm listening to their breath, it's a nice touch.

I remember you affiliated AI with quantization or AI as a meta quantization of everything. I have this image of using AI for writing, and how it can be like: throwing a bunch of sticks into a language model and out comes an essay.

An image-thought perhaps shaped by this meme.
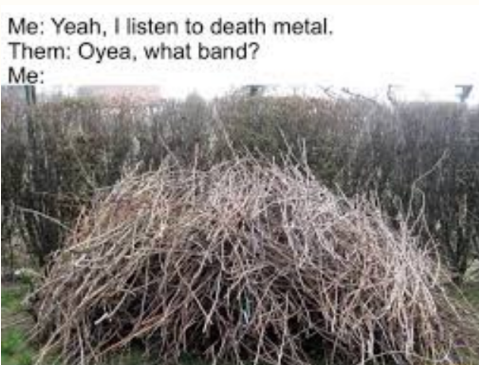
The illegibility of death / black metal band fonts speaks to me. It says: if you can't read me you will get pummelled by our sound, come to our show. The font is louder than the words.

Another thing Kevin Austin tuned me into is how incredibly good the brain is at recognising repeated audio or loops. Recently, a friend of mine used a drum loop I recorded as the foundation of his track. He told me "that beat could roll for days". When I later heard the fully fleshed-out version—complete with melodies, lyrics, and all kinds of beautiful overdubs—something about the drums struck me as uncanny. It felt like every non-looped track was a living, breathing entity in a crowd, while the drum loop was a life-sized paper cutout. At first, the cutout holds its place, blending in without question. But by the end of the track it solicited attention from not having this bio-undulation like the others.

The HD
The quantized
The forever perfect

I once saw les grand ballets russe do Mozart's Requiem at places-des-arts ≈!¡≈ awestruck, I cried… a part of me now feels like I don't need to see them again because I know they will (in basketball terms) 'shoot all swish.' Is there a type of perfection that becomes monochrome?

> "I'm so-so sick and tired of the Photoshop/
> Show me somethin' natural like afro on Richard Pryor/
> Show me somethin' natural, I wanna feel some stretch marks"[1]

I love all kinds of mainstream music and thinking about them within a quantization discourse is interesting. Most popular ideas were fished out of obscurity, sanitized and made palpable but not with ill intent. Robert Johnson-type free flowing blues has been quantized to 12 bars so that the blues could be organized and played with a group. Be-bop bands played solid structures to play way over the lines. Enter Ornette Coleman and Sun Ra who re-de-quantize music with free improvisation, heightening the textural and uncertainty on the micro-macro. Blues/Jazz had already de-quantised western pitch with wailing/tonal inflections. The White Stripes have downsampled the blues to candy coloured power chords and then also from Detroit, J Dilla, who took apart his sequencers to

1   Kendrick Lamar, "HUMBLE.," on *DAMN.*, Top Dawg Entertainment, Interscope, Aftermath, 2017, digital.

de-program his machine from the inside.

I sometimes think about 90's dance and DJ culture, where raves were not frontal, people danced in every direction, the DJ was there to serve the vibes. Fast forward to EDM as mainstream and you have crowds gather at the stage, frontal, un-miggling like just any concert.

🐱
🍪 + 🍪 = 🍪🍪🍪
🍪 + 🍪 = 🍰

On your Spa Carré score you wrote:

> *Temperature is the key structural component. Temperature relates directly to time, speed, gesture, texture. Temperature influences phase transitions (liquid<>gas) influencing wave propagation, timbre.*

I was wondering about the relationship you feel between quanti-sation and spa. Can you use time-(bound) temperatures to create uncertainty? Most spas promise something calm, quiet, soothing and even challenging if you want to push yourself. What type of variability would one experience?

I'm also curious about, as you write: What rhythm is created in the cyclic alternation of sauna and cold plunge? What soundscapes must be endured to be experienced? …

I recently fell in-love with The Mars Volta. I loved their film *Omar and Cedric: If This Ever Gets Weird* (2023).

A driving force seems to be that they had a similar taste for certi-tude/incertitude. Like riding their life knob of 'dry & wet'… I love this concert footage from the doc: The Mars Volta – Roulette Dares & The Widow.

Response ─────────────────────

> I love this question, so many observations ring true with my feelings on the state of live and recorded music. The last meeting took place at my music studio. Since Christian and I had begun to use some electroacoustic

or mathematical terminology pretty freely (if associatively), I decided my final presentation would be a kind of demonstration of synthesis concepts using my Buchla system. I focused on the spectrum from [quantisation](#) to stochasticism. Throughout this informal performance-tutorial, I related synthesis concepts to analogy and metaphor, drawing from Robert Arn:

> In electronic media the basic units are not tangible shapes or forms but forces, electrical energy: complex patterns of energy are built by inter-relating simple ones just as in more concrete forms of synthesis. In this context, however, the methods of inter-relating energy forms are of greater and more critical interest because they bear directly on the fundamental concepts of all art—analogy and metaphor. To control one thing with another is the simplest case of what we call analogy; a successful analogue relationship may result in a fusion which we could call a metaphor.[2]

VK 〉Kristian ——————————— May 13

My dear Kristian,

Thank you for sharing your studio with us.

Remembering that time and place feels like time travel. The end of semester feels like a timebomb going off. But remembering your work's stages, and reflecting back on its journey, anchors this system (or [game](#)). This score practice calls us back to [agreement](#)s. They shape the score, and we learn together. You speak of 'connecting waves.' I'm re-listening to your explanation of synthesis on headphones at the Grand Bibliothèque. And it feels like timewarp. When I return to your rigorous explanations, I imagine that I'm listening to a classic lecture on electroacoustics. The recording captures our questions and interjections—and they remind me of our excitement as you show us examples of sound waves meeting.

I could not find the entrance to the studio as I circled the block looking for ways to dock a city bike. On arrival, you and Erin took us down hallways that seemed unimaginable from your building's doors–right into a [labyrinth](#). There, you explained sound processing and quantisation, walking us through the material foundations of your practice and leading us to fresh understandings of sound and metaphor.

"In modern Athens," begins Michel de Certeau's amazing chapter on metaphor, "the vehicles of mass transportation are called *metaphorai*":

> To go to work or come home, one takes a 'metaphor'—a bus or train. Stories could also take this noble name: every day they traverse and organize places; they select and link them together; they make sentences and itineraries out of them. They are spatial trajectories.[3]

He reminds, "[e]very story is a travel story—a spatial practice. For this reason, spatial practices concern everyday tactics, are part of them [...]." Visiting differing places for listening with you also feels like a spatial practice in which all metaphors are transfers. Maybe the city bike is among them, allowing us to ride metaphors through the city. Your dialogue with Christian on metaphor also became a kind of blueprint as your work conceptually, and as a research-creation process, invited us to move between many sites—from field recordings at a spa to the music studios, mini box, and your studio on Beaubien.

Traversing these, imagining a spa I've never visited, your recordings and attention to the spa's machineries made me hope to see/hear/feel it in person. You spoke of the tendency of spas to create spaces for a bodied openness–though just playing iffy New-Age music. There's a commerce factor in quantising time at many commercial spas, in contrast with the complex social and likely ritual practices these forms draw on.

Your 'really real spa,' now made a piece of music, has always seemed to me to be a metaphor, a transfer. My imagining of the spa also lives in our conversations as a group about the process of making this composition. As a person who turns to the heat and cold of spas, most lately in grieving, I find this way of encountering your music profound.

It makes me want to ask you whether you would like to make a spa a sound installation or venue for your work. What would it be like to listen through such expansions of embodiment and specific, intense experience. How might measured cycles of heat, cold, and time, inform the listening body you're inventing with this work? Are you imagining a kind of listener immersed in such procedures?

2   Robert Arn, "The Form and Sense of Video," in *Eigenwelt der Apparatewelt: Pioneers of Electronic Art,* ed. David Dunn (Linz: Oberösterreichisches Landesmuseum, 1992).

3   Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life,* trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 115.

I can't help but recall our day at the minibox, listening supine on the ground. These changes of location help us encounter dispositifs for listening. Maybe a theatre might be a spa for electroacoustics: listening with seats leaning back, vulnerably, enduring shifts of temperature. I just don't know if such an idea would be of interest to you—but what kind of space would you like to design for listening?

**

On a completely different note, entering your studio I kept thinking of Luanda-Kinshasa, a video work by Stan Douglas, set (fictively) in a fully reconstructed sound studio from Columbia Records.[4]

The piece, as I understand it from his talk at the AGO, never repeats. Its improvisations compose and recompose recorded sequences, with randomized elements, without repeating, making new iterations at each loop of sound and video. Its set reminded me of your rather magical studio and may be of interest.

The journey with your work through this scoring practice has in some senses been reorganising our encounters, through spaces and through terminologies, in which listeners' movement informs research practices, bodily orientations, buildings and locations in the city.

My memories of the day at your studio have sprouted like late spring flowers. As the torrent of this end of semester is subsiding, my letter to you has been delayed in the flood of AI transforming the teaching and research experience. That return to listening is a metaphor I'm hoping to pass forward with this late letter. And I'm curious still about whether we could install a microphone when we meet on the 13th.

No pressure of course.
Sending care.
VK

Lília Mestre

To start the score practice I shared the website page of my research project Meeting Through Materialities, Bodies and Words. I was interested in sharing both how the project is archived and the choreographic research using movement, touch and fabulation as modalities of connection between bodies and the environment. An extract of the work can be found video at the end of this webpage.

Allison ⟩ Lília ———————————————— **September 27**

When I view the clip of the work that you showed, it somehow evokes questions/memories around Newtonian physics and chemistry: the principles about how objects behave and compositional states that change with force. In formulating this question, I looked up physics equations for different types of forces :) Considering the efforts of the performers and the movement of materials, do physical forces (friction, tension, magnetism, etc.) become part of what is generated? If so, how does the movement move to a next stage and is the composition changed? Is the audience a stationary counterpoint?

4   Stan Douglas, *Luanda-Kinshasa,* 2013, single-channel video installation, 6 hr. 1 min.

Response

Tracing Contact: Drawing, Materiality, and Relational Sensation

This performative drawing practice engaged black chalk, paper, skin, and language in an improvised dialogue between body, material, and witness. The act of drawing became a form of embodied inscription, not only leaving marks on the surface of the paper, but also imprinting on the body itself. Smudges, dust, residue: each trace testified to the force and direction of motion.

Variations in pressure and speed created shifts in texture and density—dynamic registers of the body's physical engagement with matter. Through the chalk's resistance, the drag of the material, and the marks that emerged, the body responded with its own form of knowledge—tactile, intuitive, and imprecise. These variations were in response to the question posed by Allison, concerning physics. Those present were invited to draw using the same materials. This reciprocal ges-ture extended the field of sensation to others, dissolving the traditional divide between performer and spectator.

Throughout the action, I described what I was doing as I was doing it. This simultaneous verbalization did not aim to explain, but to inhabit language as another material—one that moves, resists, and resonates alongside chalk and paper. This practice is part of my ongoing research project, Through Materialities, Bodies and Words, which investigates the interrelation of embodied process, material interaction, and discursive presence.
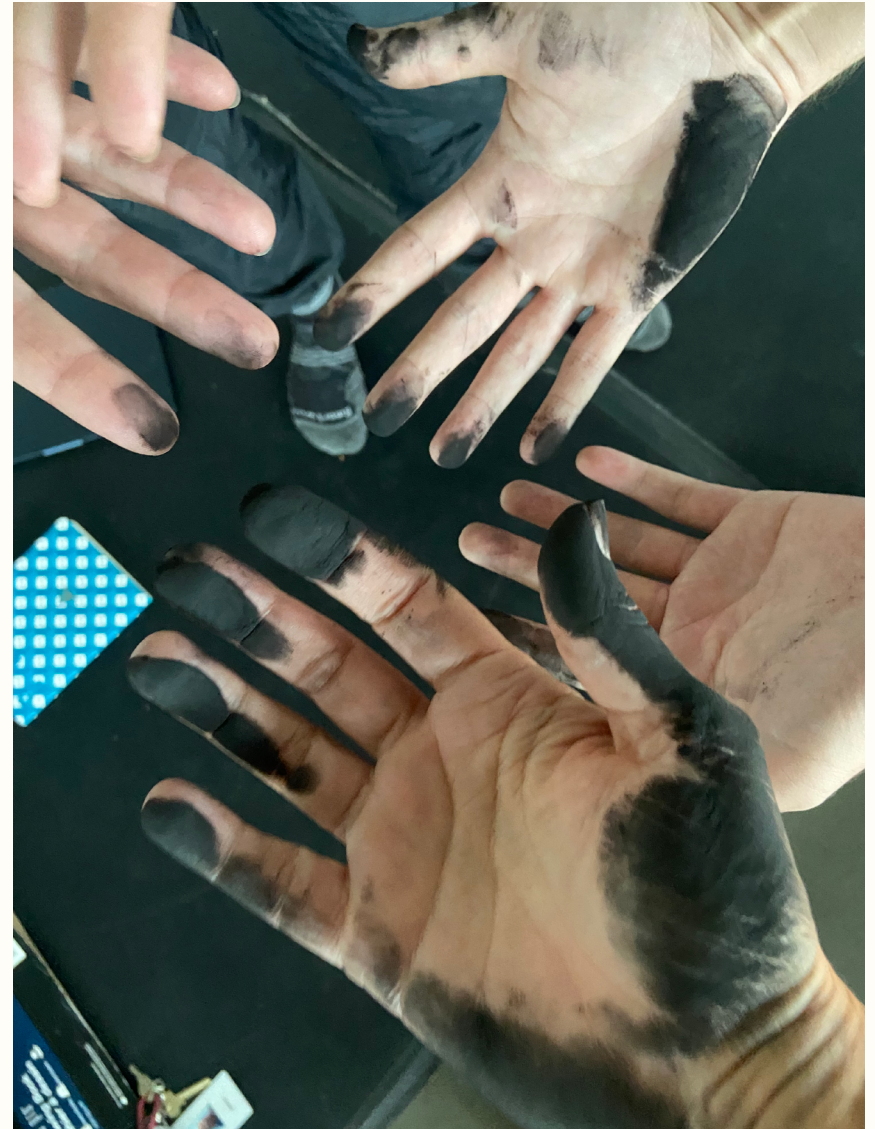
I'm interested in how or if language plays into your work. Having seen your performance earlier this year and now the performance on Friday both involved descriptive language (I am reminded of something like Husserl's epoché (bracketing)[1]). This brings several questions to mind, for instance I wonder if this description is for the audience or you as the performer or how this relates to your choice of English…but today I would like to bring my own interests and background into this and ask you about the purely sonic or even musical nature of this aspect of the performance. There is a rhythm, tonality, and articulation in spoken language, somewhere beyond the perhaps prescriptive meaning of words, that in turn carries its own meaning. I somehow think of Robert Ashley and his Automatic Writing,[2] that treats spontaneous language as musical objects for composition, when watching you perform. Perhaps these things do not play into your work at all, as I am still becoming familiar with your practice. But I want to ask you about your use of language and how it relates to choreography, music, composition, rhythm, etc…if this question inspires any tangential reply that would be welcome as well.

Response ————————————

Dislocating Meaning: Improvisation, Object, and Voice

I showed part of the choreography Moving You where performers assign sounds to objects while they manipulate them. This improvisational exercise sought to explore the disruption of habitual meaning through the use of objects and vocal sound. Each object was assigned an arbitrary vocalization. As we manipulated each object, we simultaneously produced its designated sound, creating a performance built on incongruity, surprise, and immediacy.

1   Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, First Book: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology,* trans. F. Kersten, vol. 2 of Collected Works (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1982)
2   Robert Ashley, *Automatic Writing,* Lovely Music, Ltd. VR 1002, 1979, LP.

The disjunction between the object and its sound intentionally fractured normative associations. In doing so, the exercise enacted a form of phenomenological reduction in the Husserlian sense — a bracketing of the 'natural attitude' toward objects and their assumed functions.

While I explained this performance, I gave an example with a plastic cup to which I assigned a correspondent barking sound. The plastic cup ceased to be a vessel and instead became a site of sonic and conceptual instability. Perception was no longer anchored in use or familiarity but was continually reoriented by the arbitrary logic of the performance and my explanation. The vocal sounds were not expressive in the traditional sense, but relational—they serve as affective bridges between body and object, performer and material. This interplay gives rise to what might be described as heterogeneous bodies: an entanglement of human and non-human agencies, where identity and function remain fluid.

This asks what becomes possible when meaning is dislocated from its source? What kinds of relations emerge when the body improvises with material and sound outside of functional logic?

Dear Lília,

At one point last Friday you began to show us a practice, I think it may have been in relation to the video of the performance you shared, you picked up the plastic water cup with your hand and began moving it in the air in the space in front of you whilst barking. You talked about contact with an object plus sound, and mentioned sustaining that coupling as an important part of the practice. How that sustain creates a new logic. The word sustain resonated with me and I started thinking about the sustain pedal on a piano or a keyboard. How you can hold the pedal to draw out a note: reverberation, not quite an echo…but definitely a cave/cathedral-like soundscape. I wondered about that in relation to your own practice. I have the feeling that certain object and sound partnerships would require a longer insistence on their relationship, whereas other objects and sounds might need less time to bond. I'm curious if that is part of your experience, and if it is, why do certain pairings need a longer pedal point than others? How much insistence does it take to disrupt the authority given to language and, vice versa, how much insistence does it take

to activate the suspension of disbelief and really land in the new space you're creating?

Expanding from that idea, I'm thinking of words like polyrhythm and temporalities in relation to the establishing of new logics. Do those words figure into your work/thinking?

Response ———————————————————

Dislocating Meaning: Improvisation, Object, and Voice – Round 2

I made a video improvisation on my kitchen table to experiment with Erin's question about polyrhythm and temporalities. I added several objects, assigned sounds to them and expanded the practice from the last session.

Improvisation plays a critical role in my practice. With a fixed score for improvisation, structure emerges in real time, making room for error, responsiveness, and sur–prise. My response had two video sources: the impro–visation on the kitchen table was shown on an iPad and an improvisation with a lip balm tube was shown on my cellphone.

Lip Balm

November 8 2024

VK ⟩ Lília ——————————————— **January 20**

Dear Lília,

Thank you for including me in this scores project.

I feel the epistle pull—it does something stretchy and profound to shaping address. It makes me think of taffy as I'm writing. Thank you for this reminder, extended over a few days to think, to come back to shaping questions. It is a potent way to see what sticks.

For me, your noises off–screen on video invoked sound play, the impulse to play with the noise of an engine, for example, when playing with a toy truck, making voiced effects shifts with an object from one place to another: 'vroooom'.

While I thought about this play element, I ended up going down a rabbit hole, reading about how children's play with sounds affect their learning—how, even muscularly, making noises prepares the body for sounds' expression and for enunciation. This also activates the slipperiness of sound and image in your work more broadly—what else becomes possible when (and if) the sound of objects' motion slips into unfamiliar registers?

What does that slippage ask for?

How does it move us, internally or externally? Can it prepare us to perceive movement in another way? Do little differences in move–ment and play sound anticipate or follow impulses or sensations?

Working with you on Through Materialities, Bodies and Words with things in hand, objects themselves become partners in decision-making. These relations have a wiggly mobility—they don't quite stick to one another. How are sound and image connected in your practice? Does delinking time-based relationships of movement and sound open up possibilities as a maker, performer, or witness?

For children, sound play develops speech and expression—it's a practice that transforms the mouth's musculature and even its ability to make vocalizations. Play is a precondition for speech. Play creates conditions of possibility, both sonically and somatically, but also cognitively. Does opening up elasticity between sounds and tactile experience also shape anticipatory, political, and narrative potential? Does it shape 'what comes next'?

The art of Foley—named for Jack Foley—has always seemed to me like a wonder: a trove of creative practices filled with imagination. Watching Foley videos on Youtube gives a glimpse into strange substitutions. Here, from Playstation's Foley studios, artist Joanna Fang offers that "foley at its best is changing a scene with sound."[1]

It's delightful to watch Foley artists substitute one sound-making object for another. What does a thing sound like? Substituting one thing for another offers unexpected levels of abstraction, believability, resemblance and mischief. This is a kind of pleasure, I think.

In your study, playing with pocket-sized items on multiple screens, you offer a kind of promise—ordinary things are mysteries. This play with things anticipates a theatre of objects very close to the body: in pockets and backpacks. You remind me that sound itself is a key to lived change in mediatized worlds and our places within them.

Much love!
VK

1   WIRED, "How This Woman Creates God of War's Sound Effects | Obsessed | WIRED," YouTube video, 10:32, March 29, 2023, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WFVLWo5B81w.

Response

Improvising with Nature: Presence, Representation, and Environment

The improvisational score response to VK's question at LeP Studio unfolded in dialogue with two distinct presences of 'nature': a horse painting by Albert Tannat and a living plant. One was static and representational; the other organic and alive. These two forms—one rendered through human gesture, the other growing in time—became silent collaborators in an improvised exploration of how nature is sensed, mediated, and staged.

Improvisation allowed for a form of attentive responsiveness—not performance about nature, but with these forms. The horse in paint, the plant in its soil, and my moving body shared the space. Each movement, pause, and relation became a compositional choice shaped by proximity, texture, and affect. Rather than offering a fixed narrative or aesthetic outcome, the session became an act of assemblage—a situational ecology composed through gesture, perception, and spatial relation. Nature, in this sense, was not a theme to be explored, but a multiplicity of presences to be encountered. The work resided in the emergent relations between bodies (human, vegetal, pictorial), materials, and time.
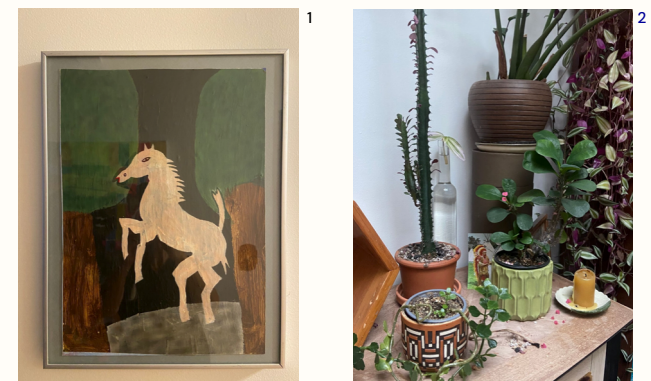
This is a pic of the painting and of another plant 🙂.

1   Lília Mestre, digital image of painting by Albert Tannat, 2025.
2   2 Lília Mestre, digital image of plants in Lília's house, 2025.

Dear Lília,

A couple of readings and a couple of questions.

I have been thinking about your performance last Friday and space. On your recommendation, I took out Architectural Body (2002) [1] from the library. It is very much of interest and relevant to where I'm trying to go with some of my own artistic practice. I like the idea of creating spaces that are life-giving or can reshape the body...I think they are getting at something like this. I love the idea they put forth of living as a 'self-marmot', which I am interpreting as creating space through experiencing space. I think a lot about transcendent and immanent spaces (the spa, music), and so I relate to their line of questioning: can we completely reshape existence, the body, or even go on living as immortals through architecture? I'm sure I've not yet grasped it and maybe never will but, from these perspectives, I am wondering if you see yourself as an architect in some way? How does constructing spaces factor into your work?

Then I am thinking about another book I have been reading by a Japanese philosopher called Hajime Tanabe, Philosophy as Metanoetics. [2] Tanabe talks about 'absolute nothingness' while centering this 'eastern' thought in western metaphysics. Contrasting Heidegger's Dasein he sees nothingness as the only possible 'absolute' from which being emerges. There is a particular focus on antinomies as a site of rebirth. Another thing this book is making me think about is its translation...about how (mis)translation transfigures the work, or my understanding of things like Buddhist texts. I think you talked about how you think about translation in this work as well. I'm wondering if you think about contradictions in your work? Or if contradictions and mistranslations might offer possibility for reincarnation in your performances?

See you soon,
Kristian

Holding the Frame: Choreography Within the Room

Filmed with a cellphone held in my hand, this improvisation took place in my sleeping room—a space of privacy and repetition. The framing was partial, never showing the whole body, emphasizing fragments: a hand, a foot, the texture of a blanket. The room's architecture became choreographic, shaping movement through its edges and constraints.

Drawing on Gaston Bachelard's The Poetics of Space, [3] the room is not just a setting but a lived, affective space—one that holds memory, rhythm, and pause. Erin Manning's concept of choreographic thinking [4] resonates here: movement emerges not from form, but from relation—between body, object, and spatial pressure.

By holding the camera, I choreographed both my body and the viewer's gaze. The handheld frame invited instability, intimacy, and a sense of shared breathing with the space. This was not about performance, but about inhabiting—moving with, and being moved by, the architecture that surrounds me.

[February 14 2025](#)

1　　　Madeline Gins and Shūsaku Arakawa, eds., *Architectural Body, Modern and Contemporary Poetics* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2002).
2　　　Hajime Tanabe, *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, trans. Takeuchi Yoshinori (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

3　　　Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (New York: Penguin Classics, 2014).
4　　　Erin Manning, *Always More Than One* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013).

Dear Lília,

What a pleasurable experience to watch the video you created. Thank you for sharing. The apparition of the sunrise and the horse felt synchronistic with my own research.

I jotted down some notes right after your sharing. I wrote:

Lília shares a video she took of herself. Framing her chest, picking up the phone, bird's eye view, hand moving forward, red curtain on the right. Though there is a lot of movement, the movement is stable and does not make me motion sick. I sense that she's filming herself and that is reinforced by the fact that we never see her hand because it is holding the phone. The lack of hand in the frame confirms that her hand is engaged, off-screen, filming herself.

These notes, along with something you mentioned about how your work is involved in getting to know the world through abstract misunderstandings, made me think of the text Savoir by Hélène Cixous. [1] I love this text, in it she writes about her experience getting laser eye surgery and the way this surgery briefly makes her vision go dark and then sight gradually returns, making the 'world' reappear with it, apparitioning. Part of what I love about this text is that I can relate, I too have trouble seeing and often don't wear my eyeglasses. I have mistaken people for other people, fire hydrants for sitting dogs, and when other people see a ship on the horizon often I just see the sea. Certainly, part of not wearing my glasses is stubbornness, but another part is my curiosity and appreciation for the soft edges, the misinterpretations, the vanishings and the apparitions.

Your video constellated a relationship between:

the camera
your hand controlling what the camera captured
the content of what was filmed
your own witnessing when at times you would gaze into the camera

How can I describe what this did? I focused in on that red curtain

which appeared so suddenly and briefly. It remained as a potential of the space even when it was no longer visible on camera. Cixous' experience of having vision, it disappearing and then re-appearing, feels reflected in your video. Especially the moment of the red curtain and the simultaneous knowledge-of and yet visual absence-of your right hand. The fragmentation of your body and of space created a hyper presence of the things that were not visually there. The things not on screen existed as much for me as those on screen.

Here is an excerpt from Cixous' text :

It moved on so fast she could see herself see. She saw sight coming. Before her floated the titles of books, still invisible sirens, and then they came away from the blurred skin and here: they stood out, features drawn. What was not is. Presence comes out of absence, she saw it, the features of the world's face rise to the window, emerging from effacement, she saw the world's rising. [2]

Do you relate to this idea of "presence comes out of absence"?

Or perhaps, that a quality of presence can come out of absence?

How does presence and absence figure into your work, and what kind of relationship forms between the two?

Wishing you a wonderful couple weeks and looking forward to more!

Xo
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1   Hélène Cixous and Jacques Derrida, *Veils,* trans. Geoffrey Bennington (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002).

2   Ibid. p. 8.

Response ——————————————————

Holding the Frame. Apparitions: Presence, Absence, and the Witnessing Gaze.

In this improvisation, the presence is again not stable, but flickering—felt through partial views, mediated

frames, and gestures that hover between exposure and withdrawal. The body appears and disappears, never fully given, echoing Hélène Cixous' theory of apparition in visual perception: that what we see is always touched by what escapes us. To witness, then, is not to capture, but to attend to absence—to what resists framing, to what the image cannot hold. The lamp changes the colour of the light regularly creating a virtual space. The cellphone, too, acts as both eye and veil—it records, but also distorts, displaces, defers. Presence becomes spectral, not in the sense of being unreal, but in its refusal to be fixed. The witnessing gaze is implicated, destabilized, made porous. What remains is not the certainty of perception, but a choreography of appearing—bodies, images, and sounds coming into view only to slip away again.

March 7 2025

Dear Lília,

You shared a new virtual architecture selfie video. There is a ladder and a mist machine; the colour palette is beige, and the mist machine emits a rainbow light. I found myself drawn to the ladder and the mist. As I watch your video, my body changes and I start somatizing the movement of the camera.

Recently, I've renewed my interest in Karlheinz Stockhausen's electronic piece Kontakte, a multi-channel composition for four speakers created between the years 1958 and 1960. It was a tour de force, a major revolutionary piece still by today's standards.

Many aspects of this work are peculiar and noteworthy, but one I'd like to focus on is spatialization and composing virtual architecture with sounds.

For Kontakte, Stockhausen chose to compose outside traditional musical conventions, which were primarily concerned with pitch (intervals, harmony) and rhythm (beats, measures, form, etc.). Instead, he was concerned with the anatomy of sound, space, states, stasis, and processes—like matter shifting from solid to liquid to air and beyond, into unknown elemental forms.

As described by Kevin Austin in his Kontakte lecture, our brains are not wired to perceive certain sonic phenomena. For example, an identical sound occurring both in front of us and behind us at precisely the exact same time, or a sound travelling 'through' space swirling around us or even diagonally / through us, the listeners. These are sound events that the brain is not accustomed to; because the physical event that would produce such a sound does exist.

In Kontakte, Stockhausen is world building; with sonic events that when projected through four speakers, create these otherworldly sensations and transport us to a place devoid of familiar reference points. As a listener we find ourselves in an unknowable virtual space.

One of the techniques he pioneered involved playing his sounds over a speaker placed on a type of 'lazy Susan' (Rotating Platform) while four microphones re-recorded this sound as it moved through space and was altered by the 'Doppler effect' (the change

in a wave's frequency caused by relative motion between a listener and a source: like an ambulance passing by, its siren shifting in pitch).

Similarly, your video also captures a particular point of view—one of virtual embodiment. I imagine my own body moving in such a way as to produce the POV of the camera in your video. My spine stretches past my shoulders, my head is loosely attached to my neck like with ball bearings, I become this jelly… shape-morphing, head-gliding.

It's curious about the hands-on aspect. That, unlike Stockhausen's sounds, your hand is present in this process, gripping the phone, which eventually causes my head to be squiggly-bouncy, while embodying this virtual gaze.

What about you? How does your body exist in relation to the gaze of the phone? Do you feel a connection to the virtual body or point of view you're capturing through the recording? What about Astral projection /// out-of-body experiences (OBE)?

My supervisor Eldad, has been practicing dream work for a long time, and I believe he said that sleep paralysis can be the first step in an Astral Projection (out body experience) but only if we are capable of not freaking out in such a state.

When you presented, you held your phone in front of your mouth. Two scores ago, I used a plastic bag to present my video. Initially, I wanted to hold my phone with my teeth, but my jaw doesn't open that way. In the end, I was happy with the plastic bag.

Is there something to be said about the way you held your phone? Lately, I've been mindful of my neck when using my phone, some-times lifting it to eye level while using it.

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A Love Supreme
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Response ─────────────────────

Holding the Frame. Gaze, Sound, Transparent Mask with Stockhausen's *Kontakte*.

In this improvisation, I held the cellphone as both frame and guide—a portal into mediated embodiment. My body was again partially seen, filtered through the device's lens inside an Ikea plastic bag, while wearing a transparent joker mask. The mask, though see-through, introduced a layer of distortion: a persona both present and unreadable.

Stockhausen's Kontakte provided the sonic archi-tecture—spatial, disorienting, immersive. Its shifting textures blurred the boundary between internal and external space, pulling the body into a state of sonic dislocation. Listening became a choreographic act, an extension of perception beyond the visible body. The phone's gaze, handheld and unstable, mimicked the experience of astral projection—a floating presence, untethered yet hyper-aware. The transparent mask amplified this: the face was in-visible and identity was both declared and withheld. This constellation—gaze, mask, sound, and mediated frame—constructed a state of **virtual embodiment:** not absence, but a refracted presence. A choreography of perception unfolded, where the body, sound, and mask coexisted in layered, unstable relation.

[March 21 2025](#)

Dear Lília,

Time was flying from Friday to today – do you think?

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a</div>

Response ————————————————

Holding the Frame. Riddle. Collective inquiry. Time- was –flying- from- Friday- to –today - do you think?

For this final session I proposed a collective improvisation in Kristians' music studio. Out of the generative puzzle question from Allison. The question had hidden cues behind each word. 'Time- was –flying- from- Friday- to –today - do you think?' The links led me to: Boy Georges - Culture Club; All the books I own #5 - McLughan; How to make a parachute ; image of ancient snakes and ladders; All Friday the 13th movie titles, including the Crossover and the Reboot ; Jelly Cam; Art as Experience John Dewey; Descartes argument on dualism;

I asked the participants to choose one of the objects I chose based on the riddle. I suggested they loop their dance/reading/ actions for the 5 minute improvisation.

Aril 18 2025

Dear Lília,

Thank you.

This week you responded to Allison's prompt from a month ago with a performance on 'loops'. I want to continue thinking with loops. In my notes after your performance, I wrote 'time' and 'transparency'.

In the denouement, I'm thinking about the score as a loop. As you wrote in Round 10 (recalling Deleuze & Guattari and ritournelle) … *"What is it that comes back and forms the territory?"*[1]

Here I think a lot of the topics of our conversations come together: territorialisation, space, movement, speed…territorialisation is another bridge between space or form and speed. Music is a kind of easy example (and I think the bird's song is one of the preeminent examples in A Thousand Plateaus); a restaurant takes a new character with every song. I share Sakamoto's concern here that Christian pointed to in Round 7. But back to loops: now I'm thinking about sampling as a neo-colonial or appropriative act, the de-re-claiming of territory. Perhaps this line of thought aligns with Erin's conversation with Christian in Round 11: regarding terrain vague/nullius…musicians seek out forgotten songs to recontextualise them, these songs then go into the world and shape everything from fashion to politics, a kind of polyscalar de-re-territorialisation. This scares me sometimes…we have to be careful.

I've started to compile all the media we have collectively put in folders alongside my notes and other things to analyse it as data. I've used AI to scan the 75 or so pages and look for emergent themes and synchronicities. Here are a few structural observations from this preliminary analysis:

1   We looped back around to the notion of glitch…it appeared in the first round of questions when you asked me about Legacy Russel and glitch feminism… The concept seemed to kind of return through Christian, first when Erin unknowingly brought Russel asking about glitch and error in his work, and in our discourse with Christian through concepts related to aleatory and chance and the control of 'natural'

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1   Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus.* 1987.

processes (which came to be referred to somewhat poetically as 'quantization')...Erin's return to glitch was a kind of refrain or central node in the work.

2   Site space and environment, another kind of refrain. This started with the isometric perspective in videogames week 1...and re-appears in several instances: Erin's labyrinth, the moving-cell phone perspective...the 'God's eye view' and how that juxtaposes with the inside-ness of embodied performance. In February you wrote: 'I am very interested in partial views. Even dedicated to dismantling the idea of overview. Overview and obsessive control are part of the same power logic.'

3   Language and its deconstruction is another refrain. This was my first question to you, about the descriptive language in your performance as reduced sound materials relating speech sounds. In a later question, Erin highlights your emphasis on 'sustain'...in your performance the words seem to punctuate this sustain or heighten its affect. VK's chopped and screwed poetry readings seemed to emphasise a similar practice. Elsewhere, Allison and I engaged in semiotic discourse and Erin evoked interspecial dialogue and telepathy. In all cases the abstraction of language or languaging of the abstract.

More loops:

Labyrinths
The triskelion
Allison's helicopter
The spinning dance on the nodes of virtual parking lines
VK's song cycles
Christian's clave
Or the Shishi odishi as a 'literal looping device' (AIs words)

I think in all cases we can see ways in which the loop becomes a kind of 'sustain creating new logics' to quote Erin quoting you in round 4.

But I'm also interested in the ways loops take us back to the beginning, over and over again.

I remember sometime at the beginning of this year you and I spoke

of this in relation to teaching. We were walking on the street, I don't remember where. How is returning to the beginning a step forward in evolution? Then just the other day we spoke of it again, another refrain.

Arthur Koestler calls this the 'draw back to leap'... from a French expression 'reculer pour mieux sauter'. He notes a retracing of steps to continue forward in a maze when one has hit a dead end... in biological terms a 'paedomorphosis' relating to the child-form in a derived species that appears juvenile when compared to ancestors: humans are the prime example, "the human adult resembles more the embryo of an ape than an adult ape."[2] This evolutionary science might be somewhat dated, but I find this is a useful analogy: the continuous drawing back to the beginning in a process of leaping forward.

If we consider space as modernist thinkers like Lefebvre or Soja or bell hooks or many others have...ideas and concepts are spaces. Like sound, these spaces may have very little in common with the more physicalist or Cartesian spaces in which they inhabit, but the bidirectional influence of these mirror spaces cannot be ignored. Foucault would call these heterotopias: "in a single real place, several spaces, several sites that are themselves incompatible."[3]

I want to emphasise quite simply the movement of spaces (ideas)... that even something that feels structurally fixed, like an architectural space, is in flux at some unsense-able time scale (we might need the isometric/God's eye perspective). Artworks as spaces are never really fixed either ...at one point we feel comfortable in them and at another we feel alienated by them. Some work does not belong in the time it is made but comes back. Songs come back in television shows and go back to the top of the charts. Aligning with a lot of my current interests in composition, I wonder about the thresholds between these points of relevance and irrelevance.

With all of this in mind, I'm curious how going back to the beginning factors into your work. I would like to know where your practice was 10 years ago, 20 years ago, 30 years ago...what has changed? What has remained...if we could have an LLM process 30 years of your creative thought, what patterns or refrains would it derive? What remains (relatively) unchanged?

And, critically, can this be a drawback to leap?
Kristian

2   Arthur Koestler, *The Ghost in the Machine* (London: Hutchinson, 1967).
3   Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics 16*, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 25.

VK Preston

For my introduction I spoke about my work on a cycle of poems, walking practices, and drawings. I presented reflections I've been grappling with on caregiving during Covid, isolation measures, and health care failure. I shared a challenge I was tussling with about turning more abstract non-language into graphic poems or scores.

Kristian ⟩ VK ———————————————— **January 20**

Hi VK

I'm still getting a grasp of your work so I apologise if this line of questioning still feels like it comes a bit from the outside.

You had us play a Rorschach test-like game of word associations. To make another association, I noted Erin's translation project in connection to this game. Your project, which comes from a very personal place seeks to address the aphasia your father experienced after having a stroke and the way perception changes after the brain bleeds. You talked about fragmentation, maps, poetry, and music. You talked about how once language became more difficult between you and your father, music was a place of connection. Since I almost only think about music I'll follow this thread. This kind of thing is supported in medical literature: the healing aspects of music run deep. I also feel strongly that music is about connection, Jacques Attali calls it "the quintessential mass activity."[1]

It makes me think about songwriting. When I say songwriting I mean lyrical song, which is kind of multimedia I guess—you have poetry and music and it all comes together in performance. I've written songs most of my life and mostly didn't think much about it. It was a vessel for performance which was a vessel for other things. Lately I try to take the craft more seriously and have thoughts about the process. This is hard because songs seem to appear out of nowhere, I can barely remember where they come from sometimes. Music is often called an 'affective' art. Thinking about songwriting: words take on new meaning when put to music,

or rather when emerging from music (I have tried many times and just can't write poetry, I need the music to contextualise the words).

Someone once told me that for writer's block one should just start scribbling a pencil on paper and it will start the thought process going again. For me, an instrument works similarly, sometimes I start to play and words just appear. This isn't to say that the words don't follow the logic of language, but rhythm and cadence and are primary and the sense making comes later. This leads me to the unconscious and embodied aspects of playing an instrument… Tabla masters are estimated to perform 8-10 strokes per second while 'simple reaction time' in human beings only allows for something like 4-5 reactions per second.[2]

While I think all of you in performance practice have spent more time thinking about the connection between things like the body and language than me, I am hoping you can speak a bit more to music (perhaps selfishly)? Music is often called a language but I'm not sure how I feel about that, I'm not sure it needs to communicate something (maybe the interpretant can help us again here). Robert Ashley, who I've brought up before in this practice, said somewhere (and I'm paraphrasing) that the defining feature of pop music is its universal quality, that rather than listening to pop songs as stories we identify ourselves in them. I'm thinking about the contrast between emotion or affect and language or communication, and if this might play into this work? I'm also wondering why you think of the collage of memories you have collected as a possible music? Basically I'm just curious to hear more about how you think this could be a song cycle or what this means to you.

Response ————————————————————

(audio recording is, I think, quite nice–starts at 35 secs).

[Keywords]

When I joined this process, in this group's second phase of working together, I brought a problem that I am working on, bit by bit, in a piece of writing. It's part of a suite of poems–a practice still new to me–in which one voice

1 Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music,* trans. Brian Massumi (University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 14.

2 Zakir Hussain, who has just passed, was one of the fastest ever supposedly, watch here.

is clearly 'languaged' while another flows from page to page in another time signature, mostly without words. What I'm trying to get at follows language with another kind of communication—intimate and understood according to its own ways—where exchange flows towards material, asymmetrical shareability.

Maybe that's music, certainly the experience I am working towards sharing accompanies raw resistance to erasure: felt exchange with another, wit(h)ness. I am trying to understand a desire, maybe that's hope, in transformation.

I'm interested in movement and feltness, outside language and after language. I was trying out materials that leave residues, as ink blots leave carbon on a page, impressions and traces full of texture and matter. Yes, as you mention, Rorscharch tests have been obsessing me with guessing, with unknowability, and also their long trace of games. What does the world offer when memories are ongoingly communicative yet not linguistic? There's a connection that I would like to sound. Music mattered and accompanied such life within a very insufficient model of care. And yes, as you mention Attali above, that is, I believe, a political economy.

What I experimented with were word associations related to the poems and images in the sequence I was trying. How do those change over time? What is their syntax? What do I need to share, that is still dialogue after language, responding to being there again and again?

Can that be a map or a score that moves across the whole?
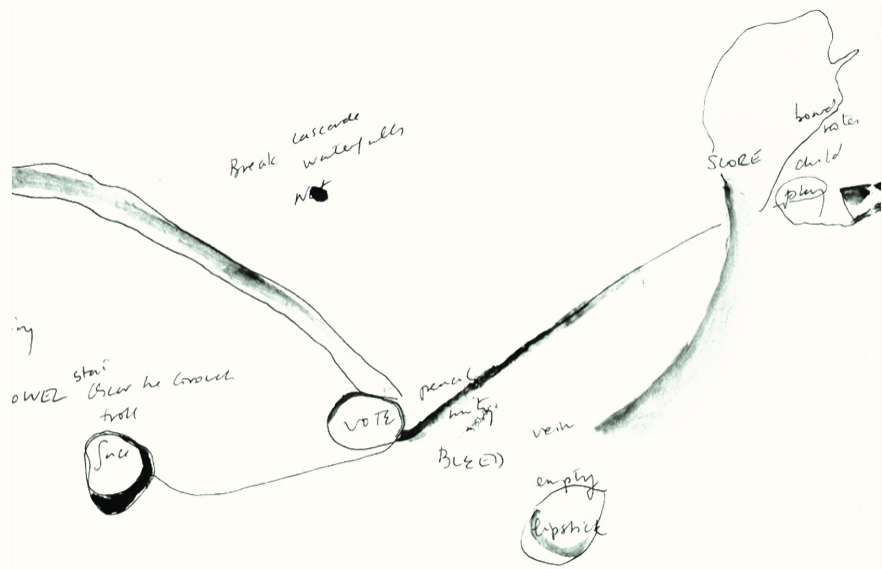
Dear VK,

Thank you for your artistry! I love the poetry and the drawings and the sounds. The writing! the writing! The craft of writing. Translating!

This kind of mania that makes one translate from one form (material) to the other. Paying great attention to detail, engraving it in the body, in the paper, in the voice, in the space, etc… transforming meaning into experience. Performing!

I found it very inspiring to think about the sound of the wording. Or writing with the sound of words. What does that do to the meaning of the words and to the encapsulated emotions?

Also, how the sound will transform and process grief. It is interesting to think of methods and tools to help support grief. To celebrate people and love. To ritualise loss.

Then I picked up This Little Art by Kate Briggs to add some of her thoughts into this question to you, and chose this excerpt:

> *Translators must write and thereby attend to the whole. Translators must write and thereby attend to the whole. But have I fully stated, yet, why this matters?*
>
> *I think of the kind of materialized reading practice performed by a guy whom Barthes once sat next to on a bus. The number 21 bus, crowded, a Sunday evening in July. This guy, as Barthes, tells it who was engaged in underlying – conscientiously with a ruler and a black Biro – "every single one of the lines" in the book he was reading. In other words, the whole book. Why? Presumably because everything – every bit of it – mattered. Nothing could be reasonably or responsibly left out.[1]*

I am curious about your next performance. What text will you choose and how the voice will read it.

Here is one of the most exciting concerts I have seen in my life! Clanguage by the Australian group Arf Arf.[2] It's mad! I met Marcus Bergner in Brussels and absolutely love his work. Not just with Arf

1   Kate Briggs, This Little Art (London: Fitzcarraldo Editions, 2017), 283.
2   Arf Arf, Clanguage, Not On Label, 1996, CD.

Arf but all of it. A great poet. Maybe some inspiration can be generated from them.

The writing suddenly became a musical score to undo. Or to translate.

<div align="right">With love,
Lília</div>

Response ────────────────────────────

I shared the following text:

[reflects Alison back]

Foley as an artefact of reality
Reproducing nature
Fragments of digestion
To put yourself in the task of something

The idea of collage returns

Such that it's impossible
Collection is a way to make it more complex
In one thing
    But
In terms of representation

It's never really the thing it's always a bit décallé

"This is important"
This is also important
This is also important

Nonsense knowledge
In which we know more than we tell

Sound is not either or

It is a kind of density
Reflected on the body
or something

The laser work ties the haptic together
With a direct accessing of the thing
A waveform practice sniffing out

Walter Benjamin

That haptic shock
of modernity this
directness

May be temporal, repeatability isn't
What I find important about the work
Right when you move your head

In soundscape ambience is the thing
an environment
playing slightly with ambience (here it's really early)

What if the audience is an ally
Reading the enfleshed subject again.

Thank you. I enjoyed Arf Arf, Lília!

What I tried after your question, after listening to Arf Arf at Studio D, was recording the 'after language' aloud on my cell phone in the studio, sounding out the non-verbal and incomplete materials from the beginning to the end of the manuscript. It became a strange song—one I later integrated within a lecture performance, Between Water and Stone with Valentina Plata and Kasey Pocius, and continue to work on.

I realised that singing the piece knitted the response into another register. Voicing long notes allowed me to scroll through images from the place, the park, the hospital, and so forth—and it reminds me of an artist, Anne Goldberg, whom I worked with during Covid. Anne works on what she calls hypernotation. As I understand it, there are always more marks than the human performer can ever possibly sing or play—each passage through interpreting a score makes or feels choices, while not trying to do all of it necessarily. Withholding becomes as operative as sounding.

Valentina and I recorded some improvisations with poems I've been working on this year as we were walking by the Ottawa river to the waterfall. As I think further about scores, and learn more about field recordings and modular synthesis, I come to find that these tools transform the material we record in place.

I am appreciating how adding the ideas across translations, which appear on the page and that include performance, keep insight in motion towards unexpected forms. This feels right and surprises me by returning me to a practice I had of writing and singing short pieces onto tape nearly two decades ago. I'm curious about how to turn some of the writing into singing practices, or even a moving practice, together

with revisiting the park and the river. That body of water runs through the poems as a cycle or manuscript, the falls as we film and visit them, and the story of grappling with grief and unjust systems. Sometimes I find, particularly while teaching, that I can test such a translation briefly in the two weeks between Score Practice meetings, but to flesh and feel that out that whole with the time it needs, I need to come back to it again later.

These descriptions describe poems, photos, videos, a sound composition, and field recordings that I first performed with in April as a lecture performance keynote. The talk follows the course of a river that I grew up alongside, in Ottawa. The lecture performance becomes an installation made up of field recordings and footage of a waterfall, remembering caregiving during the Covid–19 pandemic, grief, capitalism and the financialization of lives, "alternative level of care," and the importance of access to culture across a whole human lifespan. At the time of writing, these materials were very much in first draft, and I'm grateful to this reflection cycle as those drafts emerged.

Kristian 〉VK ——————————————— February 17

Dear VK,

This winter I am consumed by modular synthesis. I am working on compositions with and the design of a modular environment (our laser instrument) and teaching analogue modular synthesis fundamentals. I would like to apply some of this logic to your work

Analogue synthesis understands a system from a polyscalar perspective. At lower levels modules perform a specific function, but viewed from a higher level this function might be reused in many ways in the context of a system. For instance, a VCO outputs a signal that might be used as an audio signal or as a modulator, affecting another audio signal to complexify a wave.

Modular concepts cross into the cognitive sciences, philosophy, psychology and so forth, as a way of organising the mind. A central book in putting forth these theories is Jerry Fodor's The Modularity of Mind. In that book Fodor separates 'input systems' that are automatic (unconscious), domain specific (handling for instance visual perception) and encapsulated (need no prior knowledge), from 'central systems' that are domain general (integrating multiple input

systems) and handle things like reasoning, knowledge, and belief.[1]

The theories of linguistic generativists, Noam Chomsky being a central figure, also seem very relevant here. Generative grammar differs from (or downright rejects) prescriptive grammar, by focusing on low level principles, for instance 'utterances' that form a universal human language. This leads to the development of a series of modules and the study of their functions (morphemes, phonemes, syntax, semantics, etc). For instance, both 'un' and 'ness' are English bound morphemes that perform specific functions: 'un' modulates an adjective into a negative form; the adjective 'likely' (itself a combinate of 'like' and 'ly') becomes negative as 'unlikely', 'ness' is another bound morpheme and suffix that transforms an adjective into a noun, unlikely becomes 'unlikeliness' modulating the function of the word in the context of a sentence, and so on. Importantly, meaning is often not found in these low–level modules but in their combination.

Returning to signal synthesis, fundamentally all processes rely on a few basic modulation principles: the modulation of a signal's amplitude and frequency. Amplitude is the strength of the signal, frequency is the speed that the signal cycles. However, it is in the application of that signal that function or meaning begins to arise. Higher level functions, which are usually not specifically tied to modules, can be organised into a few meta categories: sources (audio) and processors (that alter a signal). When mapping functions in a flow chart diagram (which might be an interesting thing for you to try at this time?) modulators are generally categorised as 'control' of parameters on a module, or logic relating to time–based processes (when? how long?).

Applied to your work, you are modulating the speed of the words you are gathering, uncovering aspects of their internal structuring, and transforming meaning and sonority in the process. I'm wondering about other ways you could modularise your work and how these modules could be arranged or rearranged to determine new functions and create new systems with the materials at hand? How would these materials you have gathered act not only as signals but as modulators, controls or logics in the systems you are developing?

Look forward to hearing more 🙂
Kristian

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1   Jerry Fodor, *The Modularity of Mind* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983).

Response

I was curious about the technical information in your question, Kristian—I am also fascinated with signals and processes. But in this case, this context of modules and controls was new to me. So my response to your question, to begin, was to ask questions of you. These were profoundly helpful—thank you. The day after we met, I went to the waterfalls I'm working with—which were frozen in deep February. Valentina Plata, whom I am working with, is also obsessed with granular synthesis. Having talked with you about signals and transformation, I felt I could better absorb these transformations as we made field recordings in a place that's important to me—singing the score of the poems separately and then together. The process she used to transform our field recordings, *Falls,* takes this modulation beyond the improvisation.

Christian's explanations of modularising the work were also helpful for grappling with modular and granular synthesis as procedures. Because, if I understand correctly, your question approaches how to use recording to transform singing as well as singing to transform recording. The breadth of record transforms the work of memory. The piece that we're creating in dialogue also changes because these signals pass back through

1   VK Preston, photograph of waterfall, 2025

that conversation. This feels intimately right in terms of cycles over the time spans I'm interested in: seasonally, as cycles of being, as states of matter, of writing and revision, and phases of sharing these experiences with others as a lecture performance and collaborative composition. The aim is to develop this material by returning to the site over the coming year. This is one of the photographs of the waterfall from that weekend, and the scale is quite misleading as these are huge boulders of ice but seem here like little gems or sea glass.

Modular Talk

Lília ⟩ VK　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　**March 10**

Dear VK,

Your last presentation consisted of a direct questionnaire to your interlocutor Kristian about the electroacoustics terms he used in his question to your work. Later on Christian also participated in this 'performative' session of terminology clarification. Because this 'performative' clarification discussion happened in the time frame of your performative response to Kristian I stayed in a kind of intellectual contortionism in trying to integrate all the elements and continue to play the game. Out of that what comes to the fore as a question are the ideas of lexicon, dictionary, vocabulary, nomenclature, etc.

References that come to mind are feminist approaches to vocabulary and how the usage of language entails power structures. This might be far out but Rosi Braidotti with Emily Jones, Goda Klumbyte edited the book More Posthuman Glossary[1], with the aim to include and clarify posthuman terminology. The presentation of their book says: "this book extends and elaborates on that work, particularly focusing on concepts of race, indigeneity and new ideas in radical ecology. It also includes new and emerging voices within the new humanities and multiple modes of communicating ideas. This is an indispensable glossary for those who are exploring what the non-human, inhuman and posthuman might mean in the 21st century."

And then the idea of poetry came to mind as a practice that extends, disturbs and re-assembles meaning in different ways. It

1   Rosi Braidotti, Emily Jones, Goda Klumbyte, *More Posthuman Glossary* (London: Bloomsbury Academics, 2022).

could be that both practices—poetry and word definition—having very different strategies and aims can be working for the same cause. And then Nomenclature by Dionne Brand came to mind as a gesture of insisting on the power of the catalogue and its importance in the diaspora. The word 'nomenclature' and the way the book is organised reveals a power structure that contains the experience of the writer. A lived opposition.

My question is: can you imagine developing a lexicon that opens up to the experiential practice of reading poetry? A manual to read outloud. I think I am reformulating Kristian's question with formal input.

I also remember the first time you joined the score and asked us to do an associative game with words from your research. This also comes to mind now.

Sorry again for the delay of this question. As I told you in private messages there was a lot on my plate. I knew you would not be attending the next session and took that as a gift. Thanks for accepting it.

Have a great meditation session! I am looking forward to having you back in the score practice.

Lília

Response

Thank you for this generous question, Lília. I love this idea of a lexicon. I read a draft of the poem below at our last session, and I returned to it this summer when there was time to slow down. I imagine it as a piece in a few voices. While writing, I was thinking of a very old technique in music called [hocketing](that's also in a lot of electronic music). As I wrote, I was explor-ing this back and forth of assembling, disturbing and reassembling with concepts. In the Fall I'd like to shape prompts, developing this poem as a score that can be read or sung, opening up associations in different voices (I think three) into gatherings and gaps.

[Meredith Monk–Hocket Live with Theo Bleckmann](1)

Air		
a current		likenesses
a song		that praise fragments
	Our	in sand
		now
light		gritty
medium		as instruments
other than		mirroring
	Earth	tain.
synthesis		Warping
spoken		surfaces
in volumes—		of tin
	impossible	unlike us
forces		illusion
of liquid flushing		moves
through		most easily through
	apertures—	flesh.
Manual		Now
meaning		a language
a cypher a pulse, veins		prophesies
	lost	then
sets		another life
belonging		form
will invent new		among invisibles.
	logics.	If
Imagination		words
is a sky		feel
full of stories.		speed or
	Each	substance
distance		I
an illusion		could replicate
still mapping our		our
	future—	current
metaphors		as
ways		birds
of carrying		sing
	through	this
		harbinger.
modulation		
signal		
sign		
	ceding	

1   Meredith Monk and Robert Een, "Hocket," on Facing North, ECM Records, 1992, compact disc.

Dear VK,

Thank you for sharing the development of your poetry and the physical object you're creating, the little book, beautifully painted and carefully put together. I love this feeling of the wholeness of your work, and then these smaller break–offs, pieces to meditate with. The vastness of the project, including all the space between the words on the page, is present and gives a real fullness to the work. I feel grief and life when I'm with your words and the way they are composed through sound, audio recording and paper.

There's that word that comes back: 'granular'.

Something about your presentation made me want to ask a question on colour and texture.

Perhaps it's the vividness of the waterfall when you spoke about it and the presence of your bodies in your voices (you and Val) when you shared the field recording of the vocal improvisation.

Also the word granular that keeps returning. Composed or appearing to be composed of granules or grains. It's like the waterfall that runs over rocks, making them smooth but also wearing them down. Like a sandy beach; all that sand and its texture, individual grains forming together as a mass. How it clings to the feet. Inevitably, I always carry sand home with me: between my toes, in my socks, on my wrists, in my hair.

I'm thinking of the granular and the waterfall and I am reminded of *The White Diamond,* a documentary by Herzog from 2004.[1] I invite you to watch from 33:30 to 37:00.

I want to ask you about the mystery, the hidden and the inaccessible in your project. Like the waterfall and the cave filmed in the documentary, the cave is only accessible to those with wings. The film crew's German on–location physician tries to get in there by repelling down on a rope, but all he sees when he gets close is the deep dark distance of nothingness.

In Anthony Melville's response to Herzog, I hear desires and stories inspired by the knowing of the cave and the impossibility to enter it.

When I watch, I feel I enter the cave through witnessing the birds. The birds carry the cave.

What is the cave in your work?

Do the words carry something else?

Does vocalising the words build a waterfall curtain over something else? Bringing another depth into existence—even if that depth remains untouchable?

Thank you for this session

Much warmth
Erin

(Side note: I do love Herzog's work, though I wonder about the ethics in the making of his documentaries. I have not researched this very much, perhaps you have insight? In The White Diamond, he gains privileged access and information about the Kaieteur Falls in Guyana from an Indigenous man named Anthony Melville. I find the narration lacks respect in the framing and terminology used to speak of the waterfall and the oral history related to it. Yet, it's a beautiful film and it totally envelops me in its storytelling).

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1   Werner Herzog, dir., *The White Diamond* (Germany: Marco Polo Film AG, 2005), 33:30–37:00.

Afterword

Kristian North

Lília introduced me to Isabelle Stengers' concept of an ecology of practices,[1] which describes a field where practices interact on equal terms, resisting the tendency for one to dominate another. Practices in this staging are dynamic organisms, each with its own methodologies, objectives, and realities, and their active resistance is a necessary component of ecological harmony. Stengers develops this concept by considering a reductionist mode in physics, what she calls the 'Truth' of the physics worldview, which understands reality as an opposition between 'an intelligible point of view (which may be associated with divine creation) and the world as we meet it and interact with it.' She writes:

> *…defining 'physical reality' as the objective and beyond our merely human fictions, physics claims for itself an exclusive position of judgement over and against all other 'realities', including those of all other sciences.*[2]

Those other sciences include biology and chemistry, disciplines defined by irreversible processes or a fundamental 'arrow of time'—the same irreversible flow found in the human experience of living, aging, and dying. This is a thorn in the side of classical (Newtonian) physics, where time is a smooth, reversible dimension embedded in the laws of motion, gravitation, electromagnetism, and even quantum mechanics. In *Order Out of Chaos,* Stengers, with Ilya Prigogine, repeatedly critiques the universality of this symmetrical time, focusing instead on the emergence and self-organisation of 'dissipative structures'. These are systems whose stability depends on a constant, irreversible flow of chaotic energy and change. Put simply, this concept offers an alternative to the classical physical notion of order as static equilibrium, proposing instead a dynamic stability sustained by the constant dissipation of entropy.

***

While our encounters became a much-needed commons, an artistic refuge from the alienation of institutional academia, I wonder if it was a productive incompatibility, not commonality, that sustained this ecology? Here, Lília's concept of 'artificial friendship' might just as easily be exchanged for a kind of 'artificial enmity'—artificial because I immediately wanted to be friends; artificial because I am a musician among performance artists, who share a common need for an audience.

From an earlier score practice at *a.pass*, in a letter to Kristien Van den Brande, Lília writes:

> *How can friendship and artificiality be partners towards an infrastructure of care for the other. Paradoxical at first instance, both these concepts, if allied, can create the conditions for a sociability of commitment, dedication, attention, patience, and inclusion…scores, in their artificiality… set a series of scheduled moments in time and space with clear constraints, where one can perform what friendship does, and even become art friends, without having to have a friendship in the first place.* [3]

In artificial friendship, the score, in its artificiality, creates boundary conditions around a social entropy (awkwardness, snobbery, indifference, and so on), actively ordering dissipative social structures. Once in motion this process facilitates a social evolutionary process: from artificial friends to ar~~tificial~~ friends to ~~artificial~~ friends. But—as real friendship emerges—I wonder if a kind of artificial enmity must be created to sustain this process?

***

Considered as organisms, incompatibility situates practices in the feast of a balanced ecosystem while allowing them to carve an ecological *niche*. In ecology, a niche is how an organism adapts to and functions within its environment. It is a perceptual space defined through action, a wonderful concept for performance praxis. Through this action niches also create communities. Bernie Krause's acoustic niche hypothesis, for instance, describes the evolutionary emergence of a spectrally balanced ecosystem as it facilitates sonic communication.[4]

1   Isabelle Stengers, "Introductory Notes on an Ecology of Practices," *Cultural Studies Review 11,* no. 1 (2005): 183–96, https://doi.org/10.5130/csr.v11i1.3459.
2   Stengers, On an Ecology of Practices, 183.

3   Philippine Hoegen and Lília Mestre, eds., *In These Circumstances: On Collaboration, Performativity, Self-Organisation and Transdisciplinarity in Research-Based Practices* (Eindhoven: Onomatopee, 2022), 77.
4   Bernie Krause, *The Great Animal Orchestra: Finding the Origins of Music in the*

Species in this model act like broadcasters, seeking open radio channels to occupy a unique frequency band (an acoustic niche) and avoid masking neighbouring frequencies occupied by other species.

Niching balances ecosystems by reducing competition, defining the roles of predators, prey, producers, and decomposers. It is a necessity not just for individual species survival, but for collective biodiversity. Specialisation is fundamental to this balancing, to such an extent that Krause models a direct correlation between the health of an ecosystem and its experienced complexity as music.

This mirrors our encounter. The score created the boundary conditions for our ecology to emerge. As organisms in an ecosystem, our practices developed niches: specialised spaces for interaction, play, and communication that simultaneously upheld the individuality of these practices. A dance without stepping on any toes.

***

Prigogine and Stengers do not reject the mechanical laws of physics, instead, their objective is to situate these theoretical laws in the lived reality of biology, chemistry, magic, art, and poetry. The effect of this shift is to slow physics down, forcing it into relation with other ways of knowing.

Slowness, more generally, is a recurrent concept in Stenger's works. 'Slow science' functions to disrupt the tendency of disciplinary progress towards destruction, of the other disciplines and then itself. The *actual* horrors of *virtual* (theoretical) physics, frequently revealed in military applications, is a terrifying and real example of the fascistic tendency embedded in all disciplines that emerges in their acceleration towards universality. The isolationism in uninterrupted practices.

Our ecology of practices, archived here, can be understood first and foremost as a productive interruption. A transdisciplinary seeking not just synchronicities (which it certainly found) but difference. If an ecology of practices thrives on difference, then the disciplinary practices within it are kept alive by the very mechanism that slows their progress towards a self–destructive finality. Both slowness and a circular willingness to stay in the [game](#) appear throughout the score: as

World's Wild Places (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2012)

loops, labyrinths, the continuous [triskelion](#), infinite games, and a general distrust of grids, linearity, and *answers*. A collective effort to stay alive. Progress after all suggests endings.

This dissipative structure creates a space for knowledge exchanged without commodification, a knowledge Tom Cheetham calls 'counter technologies' that can help reveal that 'everything is already at hand'. And now, I will end this short reflection with a quote by him:

> I used to think that poets and artists inhabited a realm of unconstrained freedom and imagination. Poets, on this view, are the ones who flee from the harsh realities of the real world revealed by Reason, into the happy lands of fantasy and imagination.
>
> I was wrong. It is science and technology that refuse nothing. For the dogmatists of secular rationalism, Knowledge is Power. There is nothing in the universe that cannot be, that should not be, unveiled. Nothing is inviolate.
>
> And what of the poets then? They are the refusers. It is they who set limits, who disclose concrete, particular, and personal worlds. They speak to us out of intimacy. They are the guardians of the inviolate individual, of the mystery of the Person [5]

5   Tom Cheetham, *After Prophecy: Imagination, Incarnation, and the Prophetic Tradition (*New Orleans, LA: Spring Journal Books, 2013), 5.

Glossary of terms as used here

Acoustic Ecology
As defined by Barry Truax, if ecology is the study of relationships between individuals (and communities) and environments, acoustic ecology studies the relationship between "the acoustic environment, or soundscape" and listeners within it.[1]

Agreement
One meaning of agreement is to be in harmony or accordance in opinion. Another meaning is for different parties to come into some kind of binding contract. Agreements can be transparent, addressed, subtle, subconscious… agreement is at play on multiple planes. For example, in participatory performance, there is a power dynamic between the audience and the performer. Power dynamics are not necessarily a bad thing, but especially when it comes to agreements, how can we ensure that disagreement is on the table and is an open possibility.

Form Constants
Recurring geometric patterns across accounts of psychedelic experience.

Game
Organisation of actions creating strategic interaction between players.

Glitch as in Glitch Feminism
In a society that conditions the public to find discomfort or outright fear in the errors and malfunctions of our socio-cultural mechanics—illicitly and implicitly encouraging an ethos of "Don't rock the boat!"—a "glitch" becomes an apt metonym. Glitch Feminism, however, embraces the causality of "error", and turns the gloomy implication of glitch on its ear by acknowledging that an error in a social system that has already been disturbed by economic, racial, social, sexual, and cultural stratification and the imperialist wrecking-ball

of globalization—processes that continue to enact violence on all bodies—may not, in fact, be an error at all, but rather a much-needed erratum. This glitch is a correction to the "machine", and, in turn, a positive departure.[2]

Granular
A grain is a micro-event or object perceived as an atom in a larger system. Examples might be a grain of sand, a particle, or a micro-sound event. Granular describes a system of grains. From this perspective the adjective relates to texture and the parametric control of textural components (eg. in granular synthesis).

The Grid
Closely related to quantisation, the grid is a framework of evenly spaced divisions in time or space. In music, temporal grids are formed by measures or bars; in computer music resolution can be as fine as the individual sample level. Like any musical score, it is an abstract representation of time, organising the complexity of performed music and heard sound.

Hocketing
In music, dated to medieval practice, hocketing refers to the splitting of a melody across voices.

Labyrinth
While often used synonymously with 'maze', a labyrinth has a key distinction: it consists of a single, continuous path. A maze, in contrast, is a branching puzzle with choices, dead ends, and the possibility of failure. The labyrinth, therefore, ensures arrival for anyone who follows its path to the end.

Laser
Light Amplification of Stimulated Emission of Radiation. Its key breakthrough is spatial coherence, which enables a beam of light to be focused into a precise point. The laser was a major theoretical prize in modern physics, sparking a race to build the first working device. When Theodore Maiman succeeded in 1960, he described it as a 'solution without a problem'.

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1   Truax, Barry, ed. *Handbook for Acoustic Ecology.* 2nd ed. Vancouver, BC: Cambridge Street Publishing, 1999. https://www.sfu.ca/sonic-studio-webdav/handbook/.

2   Legacy Russell, "Digital Dualism And The Glitch Feminism Manifesto," *The Society Pages,* December 10, 2012, https://thesocietypages.org/cyborgology/2012/12/10/digital-dualism-and-the-glitch-feminism-manifesto/.

Parking Lot

In the context of this project, the parking lot refers to the Home Depot parking lot at 100 Beaubien Ouest in Montreal. It is a stand-in for the phenomena of large suburban parking lots found throughout North America. Please see John A. Jackle and Keith A. Skull's Lots of Parking: Land Use in a Car Culture (2004) for details about the history, development, and characteristics of North American parking lots.

Quantisation

Quantisation is the process of constraining a continuous range of values into a finite number of discrete steps. This approximates real-values to fit a predefined grid, which is a fundamental step to make information measurable and enable digital processing. Here, 'quantisation' is used metaphorically for the act of formalising a chaotic system (for instance, improvisation), subjecting it to a universal ruleset and bringing order to spontaneous processes.

Fig. A triskelion drawn by laser (L) and the same form quantised (R).[3]

Ritournelle

In the work of Deleuze and Guattari, the ritournelle (translated as "refrain") is a concept exploring how rhythms and repetitions organise chaotic elements to create a stable, temporary territory. It describes the ongoing process of an individual or group taking ownership of their surrounding environment to build a sense of order and security

Spectator (and variants: viewer, participant, listener)

Claire Bishop draws on Jacques Rancière's idea of the "emancipated spectator" to argue for a less prescriptive approach to art and politics. The political potential of art lies not in enforcing a message or a type of activity, but in creating an "autonomous regime of experience"[4] where viewers can interpret and respond freely.

3   Kristian North and Mike Cassidy, *Laser Image 5,6,* digital image, October 31 2025
4   Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*

Territorialisation

"The role of the refrain has often been emphasized: it is territorial, a territorial assemblage. Bird songs: the bird sings to mark its territory. The Greek modes and Hindu rhythms are themselves territorial, provincial, regional. [...] Sometimes one goes from chaos to the threshold of a territorial assemblage: directional components, infra-assemblage. Sometimes one organizes the assemblage: dimensional components, intra-assemblage. Sometimes one leaves the territorial assemblage for other assemblages, or for somewhere else entirely: interassemblage, components of passage or even escape. And all three at once. Forces of chaos, terrestrial forces, cosmic forces: all of these confront each other and converge in the territorial refrain."[5]

Triskelion

An ancient symbol consisting of three arms or interlocking spirals emanating from a common center. Its earliest example is carved in Newgrange and dates to the Neolithic period. The triskelion is also described as a triple spiral labyrinth, defined by its continuous path to the center. This continuous path makes the symbol ideal for generation with lasers using vector scanning—a technique that draws with uninterrupted lines, unlike more common point-based laser graphics.

(Verso Books, 2012), 18.
5   Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus,* 312.

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