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MEDIA, COMMUNICATION & SOCIO-CULTURAL PROCESSES

Creative media are contexts, catalysts and cultural technologies, playing a pivotal role in activating and directing contemporary phenomena that take place in our society. Communication processes and Cultural Practices book series meet the perspective of observing the social reality starting from the role of media and of communication's processes. Media, Communication and cultural processes, in fact, aims at being the publishing frame for editorial proposals, academic and with a strong attention to empirical research, that want to investigate contemporary phenomena looking at what happens concretely in our society and that involve individuals: as single person, group or community.

The research areas

Phenomenon, culture and subjectivity are the three main research points on media that guide the selection of the proposals. The starting point of the Communication processes and Cultural Practices book series' perspective is that it is not possible to identify clear and neat borders with in these three social constructs and that the richness of the contributions is represented by the contamination, contact and dialog among them. Moreover, it is the way to guarantee a multidisciplinary glance to contribute the "discover", the proposition of new analysis, enable to contribute to the dialog theories and tools of contiguous disciplines.

I media creativi si presentano come contesti, catalizzatori e tecnologie culturali, svolgendo un ruolo centrale nell'attivazione/direzione dei fenomeni contemporanei che nella società prendono forma. Osservare la realtà sociale a partire dal contributo dei media e della comunicazione è la prospettiva che caratterizza la collana Media, Comunicazione e Processi culturali che intende fare da cornice per le proposte editoriali, di tipo accademico e con una forte attenzione alla ricerca empirica, volte a indagare fenomeni della contemporaneità a partire da ciò che accade nella società e coinvolge direttamente l'individuo: come singolo, come gruppo e come comunità.

Le aree di ricerca

Fenomeno, cultura e soggetto sono i tre punti focali delle ricerche e degli studi sui media che trovano spazio all'interno della collana. Il principio di fondo è che la definizione dei margini di questi costrutti sia impossibile e che nei limen, nel contatto o intreccio, nella relazione tra di essi vi sia la ricchezza prospettica e interpretativa che possa garantire uno sguardo multidisciplinare e favorire la scoperta, la proposizione di analisi nuove, capaci di fare dialogare teorie e strumenti di discipline attigue.

THE AMPLIFICATION OF SENSE

by Scasia Pellegrini



WriteUp



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Printed edition

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via Michele di Lando, 77 — Roma

ISBN 979-12-5544-066-6

www.writeupbooks.com

redazione@writeupbooks.com

1st edition: December 2024

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PREFACE

by CRAIG PEPPLES

What is the sense of time? What is time? What is sense? Used to examine these matters, language begins to short circuit. Books about the subject quickly bloat, becoming heavy with dependent clauses and grammatical constructions that twist and turn in ever-tightening circles. Husserl? William James? Merleau-Ponty?... Even the saints have difficulty (see Augustine's quote on time, in the 'Introduction').

Visual media fails almost as badly. How to show such concepts? The angle is a problem. No panorama is wide enough. And then there's the question of cropping or framing... Images are incomplete, inadequate, merely an imposition or intermediation, a getting in the way of things. We find ourselves in a hall of mirrors with cameras trained upon themselves or, like the photographer in Antonioni's *Blowup*, locked in a darkroom, obsessively enlarging images until they dissolve into pixelated nothingness.

Facing such a dead end, this book suggests a bold next step to wrestle the topic back to ground: experiential learning. Don't try to speak. Don't try to see. Feel. Take a deep breath. But then, what is time? What is sense? How to experience experience? We will need the perceptual equivalent of turning the camera on itself...

But beware, you may not find the solution to these problems in the text. Like all books of soft science, this one is a talking about the solution, a storytelling. The real learning – the real philosopher's stone or magic decoder ring – may lie hidden in the four experiments which the author constructs (or deconstructs) to bear down on senses (taste, sight, touch, smell, sound) and modes of perception (film, dance, literature, music – artforms that at their best can be the catalyst for epiphanies). Look also at

the practical exercises in the appendix asking us to slow down and attend deeply to sensation, to time as it passes.

Turning the mind on itself means taking a step up the ladder – film about film, dance about dance, literature about literature (or maybe nonsense), music about music – I’m speaking here of the four experiments at the core of the book, all of them intermediated intermedia, in which the subject of the media must be diluted almost to the point of total transparency: a *Blowup* version of taking a sip of coffee (Chapter 1), a disrupting of the human skin by enclosing it in a giant envelope of construction paper in order to feel a smooth wall (Chapter 2), the disintegration of the simple act of shaving by a man who waits two years to shave his face (Chapter 3), the rediscovery of a daily commute to work (Chapter 4). Which may sound confusing, but perhaps Wittgenstein got it right that words confuse as well as clarify: “philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of the intelligence by means of language.”

This book aims to toss all that aside, inviting the reader to suspend judgment. Start from scratch. Encounter the meltdown that is phenomenology not through turgid self-referential language but through practice and observation of sensation, through the mindful reenactment of simple everyday actions. And it might take an artist to untangle the web of philosophy and experience it more directly. With that in mind, the author calls upon some magnificent spirit guides: Andrei Tarkovsky, Maya Deren, the choreographer Tatsumi Hijikata, Proust, Borges, the composer Alvin Lucier – all of them creators who take time as a main concern.

In short, this book records the work of someone, himself a gifted and original multimedia artist – composer, filmmaker, dancer, thinker – seeking to transpose a philosophical inquiry on the nature of time and the senses into a series of intermedia experiments, engaging the topic through four different artforms (film, dance, literature, and music). Along the way, he identifies a method of “sense amplification” – an exercise to highlight one sense at a time and focus it on an ordinary gesture from everyday

life. The results are revelatory, and they quickly explode into a critique of modern society with its digital addictions and attention deficits.

Because to notice something with full attention is to remember, to bring body and mind back together. The price of doing so is an awakening. Like the protagonist in *The Matrix*, we pierce the veil of illusion to emerge into a nightmare. We look down in horror at the mobile device that now accompanies us everywhere, seeing it for what it really is: a means of control, discipline, and “normalization”. Its frictionless convenience was never anything but a trap designed to turn us into the monsters or cyborgs we have now become.

Still, the book ends with optimism and pragmatism, with an appendix suggesting ways readers might make the author’s methods their own, “to reconsider patterns and habits of sensing, acting and thinking” by designing new experiments that enhance attunement to the body and enliven consciousness.

A personal note: When I first met the author in 2013, I was in Hong Kong working in business, but my interest in music led to our lasting friendship. In 2014 he and I co-curated a series of performances and workshops called *Concerts In Progress*, which included among other things a performance of Cardew’s *The Great Leaning Paragraph 1*. What struck me immediately: Sascia’s unerring sense for how things should go, the small creative touches that lift a performance into something extraordinary – having the chorus perform in masks for the Cardew, teaching them the right way to strike small stones together in the introductory percussion section.

Other concerts followed, as well as private music improv sessions in Sascia’s Kowloon studio, one of which, called *2 July 2016*, can be heard on Bandcamp via the Open Space record label. During those early years, I saw many of Sascia’s other performances, some that he performed with dancers, others that were his own works which included his films. So in some ways, this book comes as no surprise, since it encompasses many of his unique gifts. Yet it still lands like a bolt from the blue with

eye-opening observations and creative leaps. And if you are like me, you will find the book lingering in mind, and leaving in its wake an enriched awareness of time and sense and consciousness.

CP*

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FOREWORD

Ways To Read This Book, And What Is Inside

This brief preamble presents the theoretical background and practical reasons for why I hope this book will be as engaging and exciting for you to read as it has been for me to write. The book results from numerous years of artistic and academic research. It attempts to bridge the gap between theory and practice in artistic and academic fields concerned with the senses, perception, media, and technology. Through artistic case studies, it also explores the ambiguous relationship between perception and technology, and offers a critique of everyday life. What emerges is a strong philosophical take on the roles of the sensorium, technology, and the social habitus.

Research pathways into intermedia theory and practice are here for scholars and students investigating media theory, phenomenology, artistic practices, and temporal perception, across film, dance, literature, and music. These also serve artist-researchers interested in intermedia praxis that relates to the perception of time. But beyond this, the book is dedicated to people who wish to restore attention to the sensorium and to the ecosystem we share with other-than-human species. In support of this, the Appendix includes exercises to apply the concepts and experiments discussed in the book's theoretical framework.

The book includes reflections from various disciplines, artistic practices, and ways of perceiving the human body and its environment. By connecting fields of knowledge typically seen as distinct, I aim to understand the body's temporality within a broader socio-economical context. And by engaging with a variety of sources, I hope to attract readers from different disciplines and with different learning modalities and background knowledge.

The book bears witness to a series of performative experiments. It selects examples from artistic praxis in intermedia and

interdisciplinary arts; it investigates time perception in film, dance, literature, and music; it inquires into the philosophical premises of spatiotemporal perception, with experimental designs rooted in phenomenology; it reflects on the human senses and how we perceive the ecosystem we live in; it interrogates the socio-economic forces that steer habits of living, perceiving, thinking, and acting; it collects practices aimed at regaining receptivity to the sensorium. Hopefully it will be other things that emerge in the mind of the reader, beyond those in the mind of the writer.

The investigation begins with an investigation of sensory perceptions in everyday life. The inquiry here uses the human body to ground first-hand exploration of various artistic media (film, dance, literature, music). This interaction engages with the work of the selected artists, and through a focus on the sensorium, spawns a critique of the urban milieu, discovering the modern habitus of a body that has been railroaded into sensuous pathways and routines engineered to control movements, gestures, and habits of thinking, acting, and living.

In relation to current academic discourse, the book is in dialogue with the writings of post-feminist thinkers Donna Haraway and Judith Butler; it also connects with the forebears of continental phenomenology Edmund Husserl and Marcel Merleau-Ponty, as well as the post-structuralist Gilles Deleuze, and – through the writings of Watsuji Tetsurô, Yasuo Yuasa, and the Kyoto School's pre-eminent philosopher, Kitaro Nishida – enlarges these relationships by linking Japanese philosophy to the Western phenomenological tradition.

I aim for people to regain what the body has lost in terms of sensitivities, awareness, proprioception. To achieve this, I propose a novel methodology at the intersection of media theory, phenomenology and artistic practices, a direct approach to phenomenological inquiry through personal sensory experience.

Given the eclectic nature of the interdisciplinary research in the book, you can choose to approach the reading in two ways: sequentially, following the order of the chapters, or selectively,

reading in any order, choosing which chapters to prioritize. The four central chapters, which serve as springboard to film, dance, literature and music studies, can be read independently of each other. Each chapter is distinct in its writing style, reflective of the interdisciplinary and multimodal design of the research.

I strongly recommend starting with the Introduction for a clear understanding of the nature and scope of the investigation, which will aid you in deciding where to begin. The last chapter offers a retrospective reflection on the entire process and provides further theoretical elaboration of the book's initial argument and focus. It also introduces personal practices for readers interested in a hands-on approach to what I earlier termed the method of 'sense amplification'. These practices and exercise are detailed in the Appendix where the book's investigation converges on a praxis to encourage body awareness.

The Introduction delineates the trajectory of the book, the specific topic of the individual chapters, the design of the experiments, and the philosophy and theory underpinning them. I also provide numerous examples from artistic practices across disciplines, as well as significant theoretical stances from various arenas.

The opening chapter deals with the perception of time in film. Using my experiment as springboard for an investigation into temporality, this chapter considers and compares selected works of Andrei Tarkovsky and Maya Deren. Branching off from the medium of film, it questions the framing of reality engineered by modern and post-modern society via the use of technological gadgets, electronic devices, and online platforms: the perception of an illusory hyper-reality fostered by unending online connectedness within the routines of everyday life; a habit and habitus nurtured by the process of mass digitalization.

Chapter 2 starts off with an experiment in the perception of temporality in dance, and by comparison to Japanese choreographer's Hijikata Tatsumi *ankoku butō*, I focus on the concept of temporal inbetweenness, stemming from the notion of 'Ma' (間), a concept strongly intertwined across all Japanese art forms and

which also stands in close relation to the work of Japanese philosopher Kitaro Nishida, founding father of the Kyoto School. By foregrounding tactility in the human body through the medium of dance, this chapter proposes a critique of urban design: the city, with its lack of stimuli; the homologation and simplification of tactile experiences; the human body railroaded into architectural pathways designed to control movements, gestures, and habits of thinking, and acting.

In Chapter 3, an experiment engages with the literary works of Jorge Luis Borges and Marcel Proust, highlighting their profound connection to the concept of temporality. Building on previous chapters, exploration continues into the theme of temporality in relation to the human body and the sensorium. Additionally, we delve into the urban environment's persistent lack of sensorial stimuli and how the repeated use of predetermined audio-visual prompts elicits specific somatic responses, thereby underscoring the social and economic control strategies embedded in modern urban design.

The experiment in the fourth chapter concerns alternative modalities of experiencing space, following David Howes's concept of emplacement, which views body, mind, and environment as a continuum, but adds a special focus on sound perception. The experiment in *soundography* (mapping space through sonic feedback) highlights the constant negotiation of the human body within the urban milieu, the overlapping temporalities imposed by Bernard Stiegler's *hypertechnological* society: the body's struggle to adapt to externally engineered economic forces, the post-modern human condition of perpetual displacement.

The fifth and final Chapter connects the four experiments by weighing the method of 'sense amplification', the experiment in *soundography*, and the contribution of the book to the larger field of research into the phenomenology of temporality. Here I also explore outcomes and implications of the critique of social-economic habits, and the mass digitalization of everyday life. Correlations are made with Haraway's notion of Chthulucene and her cyborg manifesto as well as with Watstuji's *fūdo* and the in-

tertwined relationship of human beings to the climate. This last chapter also suggests how the methodology of ‘sense amplification’ can be applied to a wide range of sensory inputs for pedagogical and healing purposes.

Appendix I provides examples and practices based on this method, aimed at educators, students, performing art professionals, and beginners, with accessible instructions, and achievable practical goals. The exercises are designed for both professional settings in artistic and academic research, as well as for untrained individuals interested in exploring or regaining a deeper attunement with the body, the sensorium and the ecosystem.

Note that none of the activities proposed in the Appendix have medical or therapeutical intentions. They stem from first-hand phenomenological research into practical routines, strengthened by pairing rigorous theoretical research with 30 years of experience in artistic and educational practices. By integrating theory and practice, I connect a multitude of sources and a variety of disciplines. Additionally, having lived, worked and traveled in Asia for the last 14 years, I have gained insights that help me observe, reflect, and articulate thoughts on various philosophical and practical stances from both Western and Asian socio-cultural traditions.

The journey of exploration and study, and the time spent shaping and writing this book, have been filled with exhilarating moments, unexpected discoveries, and occasional intellectual and physical challenges: I hope that some of this intellectual excitement and somatic curiosity will be conveyed to you as you read the book, and engage in the proposed exercises.

Acknowledgements

This book began to take shape many years ago. Pliny the Elder maintained that the whole of the Iliad once fitted into a nutshell. Similarly this book may have germinated *in nuce*. But more likely, it emerged over decades from the liminal space of my artistic practice. The explicit focus on temporality and time perception in sound started in 2017, but by late 2019 expanded to include other artistic practices and senses. Many individuals have contributed to this journey, with their insights, advice, collaborative spirit, excitement, and support:

My heartfelt gratitude goes to my closest friend Craig Puples, and to my life companion Shen Xingzhou. I could not have completed the book without their presence, help, and continuous support over these many years of writing. I also extend my deepest appreciation to those who have contributed to this book's research with their thoughts, feedback, and interest in my artistic and academic work: my deepest appreciation goes to Natasha Lushetich and Dominic Smith from The University of Dundee, for their support, insight, and continuous encouragement; to Benjamin Boretz, Dorota Zofia Czerner, Russel Craig Richardson from the Open Space Magazine in New York, for their presence, conversations, and friendship; to Tien Yang, and Sze Ping Phua from the School of the Arts of Singapore, for their support and kindness; to Kae Ishimoto of the Keio University's Hijikata Archive for her friendship, and invaluable assistance in the investigation into Japanese dance; to Japanese butō dancer Seisaku, and the contemporary dancer Adele Goh, for insights, kindness, and help in physical training; to Moira Loh, Joseph Chian, and Michelle Tan, for their technical support, trust and time spent working with my experiments; to Tina Röck from The Department of Philosophy of The University of Dundee for her significant philosophical insights; to Anguel Stefanov from the

Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, and Donna Haraway for their words of encouragement; to David Hicks for the few but meaningful conversations; lastly to Shen Yi, for his help with the website and his support and kindness.

Introduction

'What, then, is time? If no one asks me, I know; if I wish to explain to him who asks, I know not.'
Saint Augustine, *Confessions* (Chapter XIV)

The duration of sensation and the sensation of duration are different. And it is the same with sensation. The succession of sensations and the sensation of succession are not the same.

Edmund Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness* (2019 [1928], p. 31)

This research consists of first-hand experiments related to the perception of various species of time (mechanical, integral¹, physical, psychological, cyclical), space (as the field of human perception), and the human body (as a sensuous temporal object). Using the body as a field of investigation, four experiments aim to understand how the senses relate to time and its perception. Within the conceptual framework of an extended intermedia composition, each experiment focused on one specific sensory experience at a time (sight, hearing, touch, etc), and each created conditions and situations in which sensory input could be enhanced and elongated (in time). I should specify that I point to the so-called five senses, well aware that this delineation is merely a cultural one; the varieties of sensory experience are not limited to the broad distinction of five (or seven, or more) sens-

1 A distinction about duration is brought forward by David Epstein's *Shaping Time: Music, the Brain, and Performance* (1995) between external and arbitrary musical time, a "chronometric" or clock time on the one hand, and the human experience of time, "integral" time, on the other. Epstein argues that 'the essence of temporal experience is movement, or motion, through time [...] in terms of its mechanisms – mechanisms of construct and mechanisms of control - [...] between structure per se, and the indefinable of affect related to the experience of motion and resist translation to the medium of words' (Epstein, 1995, p. 5).

es, but depend on localized context and experiential references. I refer to the traditional five senses solely to bring to the surface or provide an entry point to an otherwise much more complex phenomenological unfolding of the experience of time.

The current enquiry stems – and branches out – from a previous research project using the body as field of examination for acoustic white noise: there I questioned the spatio-temporal relationship of the body to the sense of hearing; specifically the condition when the senses (hearing in that case) are zeroed out, or when the perceptual field is heavily modified, or modulated (as with prolonged exposure to white noise). That experiment involved hearing white noise through headphones for about three hours daily over a duration of three months. The headphones were used during ordinary procedures such as the commute from home to work, and in office and daily home routines. There I established that prolonged exposure to white noise promoted a focused attention on specific tasks (say reading a book); but a loss of awareness of other stimuli (zeroing out one sense required a re-mapping of haptic and perceptual feedback, re-routing the connections with the external world).

This book also investigates time perception through a critique of previous artistic research in the field by filmmakers Andrei Tarkovsky and Maya Deren, butō choreographer Tatsumi Hijikata, writers Jorge Luis Borges and Marcel Proust, and the composer Alvin Lucier. All of these artists, in different ways and in different media, link conscious and unconscious, mental and somatic, as well as objective and subjective perceptions of time, space and self. Their work can be seen as an artistic exposition of human perception, of temporality, of the theory of the specious present², even of Husserlian observations of the modalities of perception.

The choice of these particular artists and their respective fields (film, dance, literature, and music) directly informs the

2 William James (1842-1910): specious present is defined by the American psychologist as the duration of time in which one's conscious perceptions are considered to be in the present (James, 2018 [1890], p. 256).

current investigation. Lucier's compositional studies involve the body's acoustic experience in space, and Chapter 1 on film, and Chapter 4's study in *soundography* elaborate the temporal dimension of such a proposition. Lucier's musical works question the relationship between auditory perception, time, and the embodied experience of the space in which these experiences happen. His works can also be viewed as psychoacoustic experiments. In Chapter 1, the amplification of the sound of swallowing coffee becomes a musical gesture built from material that might similarly be regarded as pure acoustic physics (or an audio record of physiology). In Chapter 4, taking a walk from home to the workplace, recording the experience, listening to it – this started out as an experiment in auditory perception, similar to Lucier's. The use of microphone and hydrophone in real time to capture and amplify the sounds of the experimental space was a simple extrapolation: taking acoustic feedback as a map of the embodied experience of a specific space.

In Chapter 1, my film practice was imbued by Tarkovsky's work with a specific relation to time: his films are often long in overall temporal outcomes; long in the individual shots; with long pauses in the development of action, dialogue, music (almost the antithesis of popular film making). With this elongation of filmic modalities, the sense of stillness becomes palpable in his work. These characteristics were springboards for my own experiments and for my further steps into the phenomenological research of time in film (Chapter 1). Maya Deren's use of montage, and her technique of repetition as method, was a further stimulus. In my film experiment, I explore the repetitive gesture of drinking coffee over a prolonged time to understand how routines and habits affect temporality of the human body.

Hijikata's redefinition of the body's perceptual field is another subject of Chapters 1 and 2. His method of body transformation implies a modification of sensuous feedback. His acute bodily sensitivity, and his use of white paint to efface the body, also informed Chapter 2's experiment in choreography and dance

(where I use plastic, paper, and water skins). His concern with transformation of the body contributed as well to the practice in Chapter 3 (in which a two-year growth of beard was shaved, and organic remnants of animals and vegetables were cut).

The taste of a madeleine was the springboard for Proust's internal sensorial trip, and it is his research into lost time that also stands behind Chapters 3 and 4, where time is scrutinized in relation to touch, smell, and taste. What links Proust and these other artists to phenomenology is their focused scrutiny of the subjective, of sensory phenomena, of the liminal space within.

Proust (and Borges) also suggested the premises for my investigations in Chapters 3 and 4 on what lingers behind experience in memory and how the latter is not simply an exercise in recording experiences but a more malleable and subjective transformation of sensorial events.

Besides exerting influence on Chapter 3, Borges' *The Book of Sand* (1975), with its limitless and yet cyclical relation to time, its chronologies and history, also informed Chapter 4's practice in sound (in both experiments, the cyclical, chronological, and perceptual experience of time is explored in a space constellated with specific sensory inputs and events).

Inquiring into Temporality

The study of time is necessarily a study of the different species of time, and the forms of its perception. This is intimately linked to phenomenological reality: as human beings, everything we do has a temporal horizon; we too are time; all our ideas about the world and ourselves are temporal in nature. I investigate a phenomenology of time through the lens of the specious present of William James (1842-1910): specious present is defined by the American psychologist as the duration of time in which one's conscious perceptions are considered to be in the present (James, 2018 [1890], p. 256). This book attempts to evaluate whether and how the five senses generate multiple coexisting timelines and

whether the magnified time of the specious present can provoke repercussions in the perception of temporal amplitude. Specifically, in *The Principles of Psychology*, James states that ‘awareness of changes is thus the condition on which our perception of time’s flow depends’ (James, 2018 [1890], p. 260). The ability to distinguish temporal length is therefore influenced by many factors³: the succession of intervals, their length, and whether they repeat over the same or a different interval, and the length of pauses between intervals⁴.

As an elaboration of this point, in *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945) Maurice Merleau-Ponty speaks of protention and retention, following Husserlian terminology: a present that is the only tangible moment of the perceptual field, a present that is elongated and flows between faded boundaries of the recent past (retention) and the future yet to come (protention); but also a present in which we are time, and which we conceive before we conceive its parts – consciousness that unfolds and constitutes time. Merleau-Ponty argues further that time cannot be found in things nor in states of consciousness: therefore time, its identity, can be conceived only as a relation of being, past and future, retention and protention (Merleau-Ponty, 2005 [1945], p. 435-438).

Informed by these ideas, all my research experiments scruti-

3 In my practice, time intervals within the piece allude to a musical feature of the performance: the number of the gestures of drinking coffee, the number of sound samples employed, and the number of pauses are all part of the score. While these relate to chronometric time, the distinction and awareness of the length of these intervals rest on embodied time as experienced by the performer.

4 James’ observations deal with characteristics of time perception and the accuracy of sensations of short duration: the experiments of Karl Von Vierordt (part of the so-called Vierordt’s Law) led him to find what he called an *indifferent point*, which James describes as ‘an interval which we judge with maximum accuracy, a time which we tend to estimate as neither longer or shorter than it really is, and away from which, in both directions errors increase their size’ (James, 2018 [1890], p. 259). What is remarkable is that while this time varies from person to person, the average is constant: that is to say, there seems to be a cyclical or rhythmic sharpening of our time-sense, an awareness of time whose period differs from one observer to another but is embedded in our consciousness.

nize the experience of the perceptual field of present time: how the consciousness of time arises in an embodied experience through a multiplicity of sensuous inputs from a performance space; how the retentional and protentional halos of consciousness can be scrutinized and explored with methods that I called in my research, sense amplification.

My experiments are framed as non-matrixed performances, following Michael Kirby's notion: 'when the performer is himself and is not embedded in matrices of pretended or represented character, situation, place and time' (Kirby, 1990 [1987], p. 5)⁵. The first experiment on film explores the protraction of stillness, the length of nothingness, an observation of boredom: the act of drinking coffee during which pauses between the act of drinking last an average of 30 minutes. Repetition deals with the ability to retain instants of time (conceptualized memory) thereby establishing a connection between those instants and their similarities (or differences). Drinking coffee more than once (regardless of the time elapsed between first and subsequent iterations) introduces a sense of repetition to an embodied action: repetition that depends *per se* on the sameness of the event taking place⁶.

Related to this, James' discussion of what he calls the 'distinct consciousness for successive impressions' (James, 2018 [1890], p. 258) examines the resolution of perception and how that relates to consciousness and time perception. Merleau-Ponty's observations distinguish time and the relation of consciousness against

5 Kirby's acting / non-acting continuum is a line traced between two extremes of performance practice: on one side the performer does not simulate or impersonate; on the other, acting is clearly and obviously present. Kirby refers here to acting from any given style, and to the amount of acting, rather than the degree of realism in the acting itself (Kirby, 1990, p. 3).

6 The sensation of duration is closely related to the above: while the various instances of coffee drinking can be distinguished subjectively because of the short amount of time needed to complete the action, neither a duration of sensation nor a sensation of duration can be evaluated when it comes to the total amount of time spent immobile sitting at the table (up to two hours in the second run-through of the performance): the scale of perception here greatly affects the sensuous data retained and processed, and the ability to organise those data into the stream of events.

this, and further elaborate James' perspective by connecting Husserl's "flow" of *zeitbewusstsein* (time awareness) as a subjective experience: a time that 'constitutes itself as phenomenon in itself' that flows, that knows itself from within (Husserl, 2019 [1928], p. 88).

My experiments attempt to consider the above-mentioned species of time, the resolution of perception, the relationship between time and consciousness, subjectivity, and Husserlian time awareness. Rather than directly applying these theoretical principles to my work, I have experimented with them, searching for additional pathways for understanding and investigation of time experience. The first experiment (film) is a multi-camera performative installation in which I am seated immobile at a table, sipping coffee four times within the span of three hours. The procedure is captured by ten cameras. My second experiment (dance) is in four parts; I devise 'skins' which are the focus of the work: plastic skin, paper skin, body skin, and water skin. The work lasts three hours. The third experiment (literature) is based on the performance of shaving my two-year growth of beard, while having the space around me constellated with objects directly related to temporality of the sense of smell, and the semiotic interrelationship of language, text, and meaning-making. The performance lasts one hour. The fourth and last experiment (music) is an installation which combines a pre-recorded field soundscape; live sound-processing of the space in which the installation takes place; images and objects which ensnare elements of the *soundographic* process. This installation opened to the public for eight hours; the acoustic field documentation of the *soundographic* experiment consists of about 53 hours of audio recording.

This enquiry and the experiments discussed in this book are propelled by the following questions: How can the perception of time be extended, shortened, textured, paused or eventually denied? What is the relationship between the phenomenology of time and the spectrum of human states closely related to time perception, such as euphoria or boredom? How is time experienced by the senses and articulated in artistic practices that in-

investigate a specific species of time, such as physical, psychological, cyclical⁷ (as in the works from choreographer Hijikata, film director Tarkovsky, and writer Borges)? In looking for answers, I have experienced first-hand time/space amplification through performative exercises and practices, such as through extended exposure to silence, noise, visual aberrations, thirst, aromas, fabrics, with the intention to bring to the fore – sensing, recording, analyzing – time. While selected writings of James, Husserl, and Merleau-Ponty are primary to this inquiry into the phenomenology of time perception, other philosophical stances have also been included as extensions and ramifications of their work⁸.

To explain how I arrived at these experiments: my background is in music composition, performance and choreography. My approach to composition closely relates to stochastic and serial methods for generating musical material: the operative methods for composers such as Iannis Xenakis, Karlheinz Stockhausen, and Alvin Lucier. The three composers work with different methodologies: Xenakis employs stochastic, mathematical patterns; Stockhausen compositions relate more to Schoenberg's serialism; Lucier works with acoustic and psychological effects of sound in space.

Combining and expanding on these methodologies, I conceived and put into practice extended compositional frameworks composed out of any given material, with any combination of elements, media and objects (physical and conceptual).

7 I take into examination the somatic and the mental as separate entities, being conscious however that embodied experiences, an emplacement of body, mind and space, are the crux of our perceptual encounter with time and space. Furthermore I am considering the cyclical nature of consciousness, and the repetitive patterned habits of the human body. Continuous phenomena occurring at the threshold of consciousness, for example the transitional state from wakefulness to sleep (hypnagogic and hypnopompic states), indicate a threshold of perception where actions can be executed mechanically as if sleepwalking: proprioceptive and interoceptive processes are here enhanced; the sensuousness of the body that bypasses routine actions, bringing the background elements of experience to the forefront of attention.

8 Selected writings of Gilles Deleuze, Kitaro Nishida, and Jacques Derrida appear throughout the chapters of this research.

Accordingly, a fundamental aspect of this research is extended compositional structure, with form, rhythm, tempi, dynamic changes and internal relationships. Hence the chapters and the experiments intertwine to complete and provoke each other, dialoguing within the development of the whole research, *in concerto*.

Species of Time

A further common characteristic of the experiments is their extended protraction in time: time needed to observe and register changes in the body, mutations in the perceptual field, amplification of the sensorium. Therefore, the performative aspect of the four experiments is designed to investigate the tempo of the body and its presence in space: with durations spanning between one hour (the third experiment based on literature) to three hours (the first and second experiments on film and dance), and with the fourth and last experiment, based on sound and music, lasting about eight hours.

All four experiments also focus on conditions where a specific sense (hearing, sight, touch, taste, or smell) takes over perception of time in activities that enhance one sense alone, while zeroing out others. This aims to verify whether the hypothesis of a multi-layered perception of time among the five senses can be observed, validated and analyzed; for example: exposure to acoustic and visual white noise, the touch of a particular material, the smell of a specific aroma, the taste of a certain food.

In the film experiment, a performative installation employs 15 cameras as an extension of the sense of sight: cameras that split, reconfigure, reshape, and reiterate the temporality of the event. In the second experiment, with my body covered in plastic, paper, water, or simply human skin itself, I focus on the haptic feedback of the body and how temporal perception is modulated by these body transformations. In the third experiment, as I shave a two-year growth of beard, I am surrounded by objects relating to

the temporality of the sense of smell (fish, meat, flowers, herbs, etc): the temporality of action within the temporality of decay. The fourth experiment is a sonic process of temporality: a *soundography* of space, repeated over a period of several months; an acoustic field documentation mapping the space through sound.

Why Phenomenology

We commonly think of the object of knowledge as standing over against us, but what gives objectivity to cognition is the concrete background to the act of knowledge, the subject in the sense of *subjectum*. Objective knowledge is a return to the foundation of the self and a looking back behind the self.

Kitaro Nishida, *Intuition and Reflection in Self-Consciousness* (2020 [1987], p. 142)

My background is primarily in music performance and composition, albeit in the last 15 years I have developed a specific interest in dance and choreography. In my experience, music is perceived by the body, inwardly, even before it is an acoustic experience coming from without, even before one reaches for an instrument, which is a prosthetic apparatus of sound production. When I play music, it is my body that provides the space of attunement for the sound about to be produced; it is my body that modulates how muscles and gestures generate the sound from an instrument; it is my body that vibrates, absorbing acoustic waves in the form of tactile sensation, retaining and dispersing acoustic energy through its full extent. This is also true when body and instrument are one and the same, as in singing or dancing. And beyond this, it is also my body that provides memories and feelings of the music I am about to play or that I have just heard: these memories shape the production of sound as much as a kinetic gesture does; and past experience informs my listening to music and also my sensitivity to sound in general.

When Husserl speaks of the process of perception (differenc-

es in duration of perception and perception of duration); when James speaks of the duration of the present moment as a lump of a chronological time which can be retained as a singular unit, they speak about the process of perception as it also occurs in regard to music listened to, performed, and composed. And for many decades, implicitly or explicitly, such considerations of temporal perception have formed part of my personal inquiry as composer / performer, as artist, as choreographer.

A phenomenological approach seems self-evident and fundamental to any unfolding of my artistic engagement with temporality of the senses: if art is considered as a programmed sequence of sensory stimuli, and if such stimuli must be processed over a certain span of time, then any deeper examination of the aesthetic, physiological and artistic mechanics will eventually touch upon phenomenological research: the processing of a direct experience passing through the body, its memory, kinetics, affects.

Throughout this investigation I seem to suggest arguments from feminist phenomenology without identifying these as such: limited by the scope of this research and because of the focus on my own body (with its biological specificity), the work of writers such as Simon de Beauvoir, Donna Haraway, Luce Irigaray, Judith Butler, Julia Kristeva, and Iris Marion Young, to name a few, has not been addressed directly or in depth. Nevertheless in Chapter 3, I enter into conversation with the theoretical discourse of Hélène Cixous, in relation to a reading of Proust, and the matter of tactility. Furthermore, in Chapter 5 I briefly trace further kinships with selected scholars in the field of post-phenomenology, feminist phenomenology, and the eastern philosophical tradition.

Other methods could have been considered as well: an ethnographic or psychological approach, for instance; approaches involving media archaeology, non-phenomenological approaches to time such as Siegfried Zielinski's discussion of deep time, which springs from the dynamic temporal cycles of the planet Earth, and is discussed within media theory (Zielinski, 2006, p.

2-11). However, while Media Theory is not the main focus of this investigation, my research methodology and my phenomenological stance often intersect with considerations and perspectives from a modern and post-modern relationship with the sensorium, and therefore with new media. In my research methodology I attempt to reconsider and reposition the human body in relation to what is commonly called the electronic age; to regain what the body may have lost from massive adoption of technical and digital objects: a sensitivity to haptics, to aromas, to the aural; to human peculiarities as beings in time (*dasein*) not merely as functional presences subsumed into the timeline of a consumer society, regulated by digital devices. My inquiry is not about denying reality nor is it an attempt to situate the human body in an anachronistic and hypothetical pre-technological past; rather, my phenomenological approach attempts to offer an alternate perspective within the larger discourse on media.

Since my work is a self-reflective evaluation of perceptual processes with a focus on the senses, and not a social scientific evaluation of human and social behaviors, nor one relating to media and technology, these alternative methods are not included here.

Intermedia as Praxis

The notion of Intermedia is also fundamental to this book, which traces trajectories across different media, disciplines and areas of knowledge. My theoretical method is in fact multi-perspectival, which is to say it does not adhere to any particular discipline or historical genealogy. The choice of these diverse sources is based on their explicit engagement with temporality, which is the case for the artists examined (Tarkosvky, Deren, Hijikata, Proust, Borges, and Lucier), and the theorists (James, Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Deleuze, Nishida); these have been supplemented by other sources that touch on temporality, even if in a more indirect or implicit way: selected work of Yasujirō Ozu, Jean-Luc

Godard, Georges Franju, Hélène Cixous, David Howes, Bernard Waldenfels, Alain Corbin, Michel Foucault.

Intermedia follows a plurality of practices and theoretical positions: it refers to medial combinations, transposition (adaptation from one media to another), fusion (the total artwork a la Wagner), re-presentation (a medium that is presented in another medium), remediation (where new media recompose older media), digital simulation (of any medium in the digital realm). In performance, the consequence of an intermedial approach is a shift from a mimetic representation of fixed medium elements to a kinetic and dynamic becoming: the medium is transposed into something else, which also entails new formal and praxial relationships (Lushetich, 2014, p. XI and following).

According to Dick Higgins, a change occurred in the perception of media with the advent of new technology in the 1950s (television and radio). Higgins argues that because of these changes, the distinction between media became arbitrary, loosening the conventional media-specific point of reference (Lushetich, 2014, p. 42). The term *intermedia* describes different forms of art projects from the 1950-60s, especially among artists of the Fluxus movement. Intermedia as described by Higgins characteristically cuts across boundaries of recognized media and includes within the boundaries of art media not previously considered as an art form (eg. computers).

With repeated occurrences, these new forms may develop their own names: an early example is found in what is called *haiga*, which combines Japanese brush painting and *haiku* into a novel intermedia composition. Intermedia includes a wide range of works, for example the found objects by French artist Marcel Duchamp, the anti-fascist collages of German photographer John Heartfield. American theorist Gene Youngblood further related intermedia to an enlarged field of vision, which he called *expanded cinema*, citing as example the Lithuanian-American filmmaker Jonas Mekas's Cinematheque.

Operating in concert with the notion and practice of intermedia, and given my background in extended composition, this

praxis explores the field of temporality across artistic disciplines. The first and second experiments (film and dance) are situated within intermedia. In the first experiment, on film, the body elides into the cup it holds, the table, and the chair on which it rests. Documenting this with multiple cameras is not a portrayal of any individual narrative: it experiments with perspectivation of the space the body inhabits, homogenized and absorbed by the objects present in it (chair, table, the cup, the coffee); the 15 cameras, with their proximity or remoteness, aim to create a synesthetic environment where perceptual sensory feedback is evoked by repetitive actions, captured within the various camera frames.

In the second experiment, inspired directly by Hijkata's *anokoku butō*, the human body dissolves into the skins that contain it (plastic, paper, water, the body own's skin), and the space it navigates (the wall, the floor, the windows); transformed by contact with such materials, the body loses its humanity, becoming part of the landscape which it inhabits. The body is regarded as a chameleonic object of transformation; it is absorbed by and mutates into other objects; it becomes things as well as non-human creatures.

In the third (literature) the human body is part of an intertextual transposition of visual, olfactive, tactile, and acoustic elements. The objects in space, including myself and my gesture to trim a two-year growth of beard, are part of a dynamic and kinetic experiment in which elements of film combine with documentary; in which written and spoken text are coupled with temporal objects (vegetables, meat, fish, flowers, etc.); in which an installation design combines with performance. There is a novel formal relationship between these aspects determined by their temporality, which is the crux of the experiment.

In the fourth and last experiment (music), the body disappears from the space altogether, while lingering, absconded. Present in the experimental space are temporal relationships of the absent body (myself having walked and audio-recorded the path from home to office several times); the presence of the visitors' bodies,

and the chosen objects: photographic maps, physical objects of daily life (a shoe, a coffee machine, a toothbrush, a clock, a book, flowers). And a thread connects them all, tracing lines and trajectories in space. The four experiments here are meant to be works in progress, grounds for exploration into intermediality within the scope of this research, and not final artistic products in and of themselves. The process of the practice, with its tempi and stages of development, is the focus.

Lastly, in accordance with the nature of this book, and in its relation to extended composition and intermedia⁹, the footnotes are to be considered as extensions, variations or ramifications of the main theme of the chapters: as rhizomatic branches, *intermezzo*, following Deleuzian phraseology; or *intermedia*, again in Higgins's Fluxus idiom¹⁰. And while I may hint at multifarious connections between disciplines and branches of knowledge, I understand that my examples are limited and somewhat idiosyncratic. I am also aware of the differences between these various fields of investigation: my intention is only to provide flight paths, rhizomatic entries, to suggest further investigations and

9 The notion of intermedia correlates with Walter Benjamin's notion of 'pure language'. Eric Cazdyn's *The Flash of Capital, Film and Geopolitics in Japan* (2002) further suggests Benjamin's notion of 'pure language' as the purpose of all linguistic translation. In the *Task of the Translator*, Benjamin assigned priority to the transmission of meaning, imagining the labour of the translator as embodying an original hidden consanguinity among all languages. Instead of merely approximating the original text as closely as possible, the translator's task is to free 'pure language' (*die reine Sprache*) hidden or encoded inside the original and in the language of translation. Pure language is not merely a particular language in its primordial and immaculate state; it is instead the totality of linguistic intentions (original and translated) that supplement and transform each other in a utopian space. (Cazdyn, 2002, p. 95)

10 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's rhizome symbolises a non-linear, associative mode of thinking. The terms rhizome and rhizomatic describe theory and research that allows for multiple, non-hierarchical entry and exit points in data representation and interpretation. Rather than narrativizing history and culture, a 'rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo.' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987 [1980], p. 25). Very much as with the rhizome, time-experience can be seen as a system of free association, allowing multiple entry and exit points, in a non-linear reflective space.

relationships with domains that are outside the scope of the current research into the phenomenology of time.

The Research Methods

As my focus is to research a phenomenology of time through first-hand experiments – sensing time within embodied experiences – the initial step was to identify a conceptual framework of investigation for each individual artistic field (film, dance, literature and music) and for the artists selected. I first defined small structural and compositional elements to be scrutinized, and unpacked, by experimenting several times with various outcomes. An important procedure in these small-scale explorations was to repeat and vary their temporal and gestural amplitudes, evaluating perceptual changes in the resulting embodied experiences. What is the difference between drinking coffee once, over the span of 1 minute; and again once, with a pause of 10 minutes? Are there bodily changes, is there a different perception of time and the space in which the action takes place?

Challenging the human body with practices which elongate, intensify, and amplify the sensuous experience, in circumstances that change, by altering their temporality, from being ordinary to extraordinary, this has been one of the central strategies for all four experiments: a procedure aimed specifically at unveiling and understanding the phenomenon of temporality, through analysis of relevant theoretical frameworks, potentially spawning further research questions. Lifting a cup of coffee four times, interspersed by 30-minute pauses, produced a mnemonic and temporal blurring of the sequence and number of the events (how many times have I lifted this cup already?); the order and mechanics (what exactly is the series of gestures involved in the procedure of lifting?); haptic feedback (where is the spatial border between human skin and table, cup and the fingers that hold it, chair and body?).

While elaborating my research into temporality within the selected mediums, I continuously revised, reiterated and reframed

the experiments to engage in a deeper exploration of the research questions. I trained my body to extend the length of the work in progress, until I reached the ability to work with prolonged time. For the practice of the 2nd Chapter, I started rehearsal by wearing the plastic skin for a few minutes. A few months later, I ended up with the ability to breathe, move, and work within the plastic skin for more than one and a half hours.

Work towards realization of the final experiments was documented in a number of artefacts to complement and magnify my extended-compositional thinking and praxis: sketches (of the materials used, of the space), tridimensional prototypes (head-gear, props, layouts), storyboards, a daily diary of rehearsal and experimentation, audio, photo and video recordings of the rehearsal process. The result was four intermedial experimental practices, durational performances which elaborate on the personal experiential process, the theoretical background, and the artists' practices examined during the research. In merging these elements, none of them overshadowed the others; all were relevant, in dynamic equilibrium: a work in progress in which individual influences are not immediately recognizable, but which all contribute to the development and individuality of the outcomes.

Sense Amplification

The experiments for this project required a specific methodology for phenomenological analysis into temporality of the human body: I call this method 'sense amplification'. With this approach I devised experiments in which a few repeatable characteristics and pre-set procedures were put into practice in each of the four chapters. By repeating ordinary gestures or actions, the experiments each occupy an extended duration. By elongating familiar procedures, we reach the unfamiliar; by breaking down a habit into its constituent parts, we redefine the relationship between gestures and the space and time in which they happen. Entering

uncharted territory of the body and its habits, we redefine the body's temporal procedures from within. The preliminary choice of lengthening the duration of ordinary acts was associated with specific choices of materials and objects. These were selected to focus on a determined sensorial experience (touch, sight, smell, etc). This combination of extended lengths of time and the selected objects provoked an intensification of specific stimuli, which resulted in a deeper attunement to the body, and which opened space in which to analyze this novel experience.

Theoretical research into phenomenological temporality suggested this method of 'sense amplification': when Husserl speaks of distinctions to be made between duration of perception, and perception of duration; when James distinguishes the perception of what we call the present moment (the specious present) contrasted against the frayed edges of past and future; when Merleau-Ponty calls attention to these frayed edges, and calls them transitional instants of protention and retention of temporal consciousness (Merleau-Ponty, 2005 [1945], p. 443), all three philosophers are investigating the modality in which the present is experienced, and how this relates to the body's sensuousness and attunement to the space it inhabits. My methodological approach attempts to engage these considerations, and I have designed the experiments to inquire directly, through the body, into some of the distinctions, modalities, and questions that concerned these thinkers.

In addition, the experiments explored how lengthening and exaggerating a sensory input can modify the human perception of temporality: for example, in Chapter 2, for the dance experiment, I devised 'skins' (costumes that wrap and modify the feeling and appearance of the human body) made of plastic and paper material, which I wore for hours, in weekly rehearsals in order to evaluate the resulting sensory experiences.

As research into the human perception of temporality is bound to the senses, explicit attention was given to modulation of the sensorial field, to the investigation of what lies behind the experience of what we call reality: in Chapter 3, for the literature

experiment, the performing space was constellated with aromatic objects (meat, fish, herbs, lotions, personal items, etc.) which marked the environment with their persistent, evolving, specific aromas, throughout the duration of the procedure. I documented the development and various phases of these experiments with audio visual recordings, sketches, notes, and physical samples (a Book of Touch with sampled material was used as extended research into tactility and the sensorium, and headgears were designed in tridimensional model prototypes).

The Amplification of Gestures

To experiment with gestures banal or common, and then elongate them, functioned as part of an investigation into the spectrum of human states of consciousness, such as euphoria or boredom, and how those relate to the perception of time. Such an approach was intended to verify and scrutinize the theoretical background of this investigation, which was initially kindled by research outcomes of James, Husserl, and Merleau-Ponty.

The first experiment is about film. This is an experiment in the protraction of stillness, the length of nothingness, an observation of boredom: the act of drinking coffee – the pauses between the act of drinking last an average of 30 minutes; these pauses are silent rests (*fermata*, without tempo) between musical gestures. In order to investigate changes provoked by the manipulation of time, the gesture of drinking from a cup of coffee, a gesture that usually requires a few seconds, was prolonged into a two-hour procedure.

The second experiment contemplates a transformation of the body (with the devised skins of different materials): this very change of the material characteristics of the body's skin asks for a reconsideration of basic gestures and the habits of thinking of the body. How to walk when wrapped in plastic or paper? How to breathe if your skin is water? What is the sensitivity of fingers to the surface of a wall, when the skin of the fingers is plastic or

paper? How to see, hear and smell, within a plastic, paper or water skin?

The third experiment is on literature. This experiment features a space constellated with objects of specific aromas, as previously mentioned (fish, meat, lotions, etc): meanwhile I am sitting at a table placed in the center of the space, trimming my beard. The inert gesture of growing a beard for two years, and its opposite, the dynamic gesture of spending an hour with hands and scissors cutting the whiskers of such a beard, is a labor in time. Interjected into this act, I cut slices from objects laid on the floor, which I deposit into glass jars and then replace where the original object used to lie. The performance lasts one hour.

The fourth experiment investigates the gesture of walking through space by considering sounds belonging to the space, rather than its visual aspect. Do I walk differently if I focus on the sound my feet produce by covering the ground? Do I recognize the environment, and myself walking, by listening to a recording of the walked path? What is a gesture that is not a visual gesture? Can I describe a space solely by acoustic gestures?

Every chapter, every investigation within a particular medium, every experiment, challenged the temporality of the body, the phenomenology of time, its relationship to the senses, while also taking into account the human being as the fulcrum for these experimental inquiries and experiential outcomes.

The Research and the Artistic Practices

The selection of artistic fields of investigation and artists whose work pays specific attention to temporality, is a selection that matured over the preliminary field research in the early stages of the research proposal. These are artists who brought a specific attention to the manipulation of time in their work. As none of these artists and their prominent areas of artistic research can be analyzed in isolation, the subdivision into four chapters is mainly in order to organize, to make the research process more

readable and navigable. However, the reader will notice correspondences and correlations between the artistic practices, between the senses which are then intertwined with and suggestive of phenomenological aspects and issues. While I am aware of the specificity and differences between the artistic practices taken into examination in the course of the research, I also maintain that there are conceptual and methodological affinities: intertextual devices of praxial-meaning-exchange.

In the first Chapter on film, an introduction to the work of American director Deren and Russian filmmaker Tarkovsky is brought together with writings on film by Gilles Deleuze and Andre Bazin, within a theoretical framework on temporality as delineated by James' specious present and fundamental phenomenological notions from Husserl and Merleau-Ponty. What connects these artists and theorists is their nonlinear treatment of time, their perception that temporal experience is fragmented and multi-layered. Accordingly, the research experiment here is a multi-camera performative installation in which the performer (myself) sits immobile at a table sipping coffee four times within the span of three hours. This procedure is captured by fifteen cameras, with a nonlinear treatment which follows the logic of the aforementioned artistic practices and theories.

In Chapter 2 on dance, I introduce the Japanese choreographer Hijikata's *ankoku butō* and his method of body transformation; I bring into play James and Merleau-Ponty on perception of temporality, space and the body, and connect those to the Kyoto School of Nothingness, and the concept of intuitive knowledge proposed by Japanese philosopher Kitaro Nishida. I maintain that these works and theories have an underlying commonality: the notion of the human body as the place where temporal experience is transformed. Here my experimental outcome is in four parts; I devise 'skins' as the focus of every part of the work: plastic skin, paper skin, body skin, and water skin. The work lasts three hours.

The third Chapter is focused on literature and takes into examination temporal features in the work of Borges and Proust,

while intensifying the theoretical framework with notions from Husserl, Deleuze and Wittgenstein. The work and theories of these individuals is connected by a consideration of language as a metaphoric tool of memory: rather than simply recording experiences, language modifies and transforms past, present, and future experience. The experimental outcome is based on the performance of shaving my two-year growth of beard, while constellating the space around with objects directly related to temporality of the sense of smell, and the semiotic interrelationship between language, text, and meaning-making. The performance lasts one hour.

In the last chapter on music, I focus on the construction of reality and the navigation of space through an experiment in *soundography* (mapping the space through sound). Here I refer to the compositional outcome of Alvin Lucier and to research into the field of ecological acoustics and acoustic communication by composers Raymond Murray Schafer and Barry Truax. The experimental offspring of this chapter is an installation which combines a pre-recorded field soundscape; live sound-processing of the space in which the installation takes place; images and objects which ensnare elements of the *soundographic* process. The performative part of this installation was the act of taking a daily 50-minute walk repeatedly over four months, at the same time, with the same path, captured every single day by a field recording device. As previously mentioned, the installation, in this version, opened to the public for eight hours; the acoustic field documentation of the *soundographic* experiment consists of about 53 hours of audio recording.

The phenomenological inquiry into temporality intensified across the four chapters, thanks to research into the aforementioned artists. By expanding the field of investigation (from film, to dance, to literature, and lastly music), works of the selected practitioners became more and more intertwined with my personal practice. By cross-referencing methodologies and outcomes, the body of work produced became more articulated in its relationship with time, more specific in relation to space and

the human body. This phenomenology of time through sense amplification, this embodied experience of temporality, emerged from my personal experimentation.

The Voices of the Research

Since this research aims to record and account for various conscious outcomes of the phenomenology of time, a number of narratives or modal voices appear throughout the text, differentiated by their typographic fonts: the analytic voice, the performer's voice, the stream of consciousness and **the poetic voice**¹¹. Here the voices are ingrained within temporality, are temporal objects themselves, acting within and without the time of the performative space, of analysis and post-facto intellectualization. The modalities of these voices are imbued with tempi which are not only the before, now, and after of performance time, or of chronological, mechanical time; they account for the emplacement of temporality into the human body, Epstein's integral time, the time within; these voices act on temporality by the very procedure of writing and reading: a process which is temporalized and modulated by the boundaries of a square of paper, by the speed of writing (by hand or on a keyboard), by the act of speech.

11 According to this praxis, a poetic attempt aims to pick out relevant meanings from the whole process: experiential outcomes, and perceptions of consciousness. Data have been captured in various ways: a diary of work in progress, notes in the manner of stream of consciousness, taken right after shooting (as a performer) or while watching the resultant shots (as a spectator), drawings, photos, photomontage, recordings of audio-visual experiments focused on specific operations: repetitions, differences, speeds, magnitudes, aberrations (visual and auditory), among others. The stream of consciousness is a term introduced by William James in his *Principles of Psychology* (1890): it takes into account the continuous flow of a person's perceptions, thoughts and conscious reactions to events. In literature it is related to a style in which a character's thoughts, feelings, and reactions are depicted in a continuous flow uninterrupted by objective description or conventional dialogue. James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and Marcel Proust are significant examples.

The analytic voice observes, reflects and examines the process and the outcome of the performance and follows its connection to the theory and practice of the investigated mediums, as well as the theoretical underpinnings related to James' specious present theory, before branching out into the phenomenological implications delineated by, for example, Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, and the Japanese philosopher Nishida. The performer's voice is the reconstruction, immediately following the live performance, of significant sense-perceptions that emerged in the process. The use of logical statements and a set relation to the time of the actual performance distinguish this voice from the stream of consciousness. The stream of consciousness relates to the performer's thoughts and reactions in the midst of the performance's development; it was notated in two distinct modalities: firstly with notes made right after the rehearsals and the performance, and secondly with notes made while watching footage of the just-finished recording of the work-in-progress and of the live performance. On the other hand, the poetic voice is an intellectualization post-facto, taking into account the stream of consciousness and the whole spectrum of input/output from the performance (visual, aural, touch, aroma, taste), further elaborating the experience while operating with a literary intention¹².

Temporality, Order & Organizational Principles

The durations of time dedicated to the preparation of the individual experiments, the practice of the experiment, the time of the writing, fluctuated for each chapter. In the first Chapter, film, preparation for the experiment extended to about eight months, with two outcomes which required two days each of shooting; in the chapter dedicated to dance, preparation and rehearsal lasted six months: the shooting required five days of work. Every new

¹² The text and its various voices, is often treated in a cinematic way through the use of montage: cutting from one scene and plane/shot to another with long, medium and close up, jump cut, cross-cutting and parallel-editing.

iteration of the overall process of research dedicated to the individual experiments (field research, rehearsal, practice, writing) modified the time of the respective phases of the work. The perspective of the temporal horizon of this process at the beginning of this research in early 2020, appears very different to me now, in early 2023, at the end of this temporal and experimental cycle.

The trajectory and development of the individual experiments followed common principles: focus on a specific discipline and sensory input as springboard, and an extended duration in time for the experiment itself. Three main rationales lay behind the ordering of the research chapters: (a) the shift of media (film, dance, literature, music); (b) the shift of sense modalities (taste, touch, smell, hear); (c) the duration of the respective performances (3hrs, 3hrs, 1hr, 8hrs).

Ordering by media followed a concern with different temporal perspectives: this started with film, comparing time from mechanical apparatuses (cameras and digital devices) with the integral time of the human body; in the second Chapter, on dance, I came closer to the temporality of the body, and I paid closer attention to the time of the space which the body navigates; in the third Chapter, overlapping temporalities of the body, space, and specific objects were examined; in the last chapter, music, the physical body vanishes, and what remain are memories of sounds produced by the body's movements in space. The shift of attention to the different species of time throughout the four chapters could be delineated as: mechanical > bodily > spatial. This decision reverberated within the shifting modality of the senses, and the examination of their specific temporalities. The choice of the gesture of drinking coffee (taste), the exploration of the surface of the wall and the use of skins (touch), the space organized with temporal objects (smell), and lastly the experiment in soundography (hearing).

The duration of the pieces closely followed the temporality of the human body: by repeating a single gesture (lifting an arm to drink coffee, navigating back and forth across a wall), the two experiments in Chapters 1 and 2 (film, dance) explore the ex-

haustion of the body, and the temporal limits on its sustained momentum. The 3-hour duration is almost the limit of my own physical capabilities in the exploration of a chosen gesture and space. The length of the experiment of Chapter 3 is bound to the growth of the beard: at the time of the experiment my beard had grown over the course of two years, but it needed about one hour to trim. In the last experiment, the duration is unconstrained by bodily limitations: ideally the experimental space could have been 'playing' for months or years, as with Cage's *As Slow As Possible* (2001-2640). Alternatively I can trace another temporal relationship among the four chapters: exhaustion of the body > growth of the body > memory of the body.

Moreover the subject of music was situated as the last element to be explored because of my personal familiarity with the medium, given my background in music performance and composition. With this in mind, I wanted to give more space to disciplines that might open up new ways to think of temporality, alongside the traditional (and familiar) evaluation of time/tempo in music composition: particularly I wanted to have more time for research and experimental process of film and literature.

While the reading of these chapters might follow a sequential order, their intertwined correlation cuts across disciplines and the very arrangement of the chapters themselves. They are constructed out of a need to organize, a need for a pathway or entry point into the investigation, without implying an order of relevance or hierarchy of knowledge. That is to say, the four areas of investigation into the temporality of film, dance, literature, and music are strongly connected by the subject of the research (time); by the phenomenological approach that amalgamates these experiments; by the causality of the chapter's constituents as constructed out of the premises of this research. Using the method of sense amplification to probe different species of time, the four chapters read horizontally and vertically, as time does, cutting across the experiments, cutting across the entire investigation into temporality and the sensorium.

The order of appearance of the disciplines involved also de-

rives from matters of feasibility and logistical practicalities of the various experiments. Having some experience in montage and editing software for video, the decision to begin the research from film studies was the most convenient: it allowed me to rely on certain technical knowledge as a basis for the practical experiment, while I was at the same time researching theoretical and philosophical background on the field of cinema. The second Chapter was based on dance, a field in which I have worked with dance companies and dancers over the last 15 years. While my work has often been as performer and composer, I have ventured a good number of times into choreography and performances in which I move together with dancers. Choosing this medium as the second Chapter allowed me to use my actual experience in the field; which granted me more time to work on the third Chapter, on literature.

The first Chapter on film enabled me to experiment extensively with a multi-camera setup: work that I was able to put to good use in subsequent chapters, documenting experiments with a variety of filming arrangements. The second experiment on dance and the third on literature profited specifically from the first exploration of film, in that the camera was considered not only as a documentation device but as an integral part of the experimental and experiential process. In the fourth and last Chapter, as the attention shifted to the auditory experience of the space of the experiment, the use of video recording devices was limited to documenting the process and the installation's opening day. Thus, in this last experimental outcome, the technical hardware and software apparatus were mostly oriented toward capture, playback and process of audio signals: with an audio field recording device, a multichannel loudspeaker system, a microphone, and hydrophone (a contact microphone designed to capture sound in open water).

It would have been possible to narrow the research, considering only the field of music for example, to look into the perspective of temporality specifically in sound, and how the senses intertwined within experiences traditionally considered as aural.

But by proceeding in such a way, any other considerations, comparisons of temporality between media, and respective artistic practices, would have been cut off. But while acknowledging the differences and specificity of the media involved, such an inquiry would situate itself within one media only, rather than taking an intermedial stance, and this would have defeated the purpose of a research into all the senses and different species of temporality investigated. Furthermore I maintain that my stance as researcher, composer, and performer gave me a particular entry point into this project, into a knowledge of phenomenological temporality: my position allows me to bring together theoretical, methodological, and praxial knowledge of the field of intermedia and interdisciplinary arts; this also confers on me a particular strength in phenomenological research and practice, the result of decades of experience in thinking about and making art.

The Place of Aesthetics and Emerging Affect in this Research

A phenomenological enquiry into temporality drives the four pieces of this research; the performative experiments are an outcome of this investigation. The spaces and design of this work responded to the logic elicited by these premises. As such, aesthetics became a secondary concern. Nonetheless while working through the practices, I carefully considered implications and characteristics of the design, colors, materials and sound present in the experimental space. By outlining possibilities of materials used – dimensions, texture, and colors – aesthetic decisions are made by default: formal and critical reflections on the experimental outcomes occurred without conscious concern for aesthetics and/or beauty.

In Experiment 1 on film, the selection of what is visible to the cameras, and on screen, is a decision with aesthetic consequences. Among other factors, these relate to the composition of the screens, their dimension, image resolution and spatial representation (and what is selected as the actual space of the exper-

iment). In the 2nd experiment, dance, a good number of paper and plastic textures and types were selected for trial, in front of the camera, under natural and artificial light, as well as for the sound produced by the material, and for their feeling on the skin: similarly, these judgements had consequences on the overall aesthetics of the experiment. In Experiment 3, literature, and Experiment 4, music, the composition of the space was crucial: here the number of objects, their appearance, their reciprocal position in space, their color, texture, dimension, and shape were carefully considered before deciding the final design of the space. A compositional decision was made with a distinctly aesthetic dimension: while this was not a priority objective, it permeated the process of the making of the four experiments.

Brian Massumi's notion of emergent affect impinges on the area of this research: in *The Autonomy of Affect* (1995), Massumi refers primarily to a relationship between affect and image, but I expand this notion across the field of artistic research and the sensorium which this book discusses. The first problem with affect is a lack of any cultural-theoretical vocabulary specific to it, argues Massumi. Affect (what Massumi calls *intensity*, as in the strength or duration of an image's effect) has the quality of an emotional state. Two aspects of emerging affect are correlated to my research: the 'static-temporal and narrative noise' states, which Massumi refers to as a 'state of suspense, potentially of disruption [...] conceived as 'a temporal sink, a hole in time' (Massumi, 1995, p. 86).

In Chapters 1 and 2 (film and dance) my experiments deal directly with what Massumi calls 'static-temporal and narrative noise'. The very fact of long pauses between actions (sipping the coffee and pausing for 30 minutes; or moving across a 10-metre wall over the course of 30 minutes) generates a 'state of suspense' the 'temporal sink' that is the lieu of emerging affect, according to Massumi. The fully absorbed relation to the body, suspended in time and space, provokes the emergence of unexpected emotional and somatic feedback: in the film experiment, sitting immobile for three hours, I observed numbness, melting

into the table, blindness, confusion, anxiety; and in the dance experiment, moving slowly across the wall surface for hours provoked a sensation of melting into the wall, eroticism, shortness of breath, disorientation.

Massumi continues, addressing image, that the relation of image to language is incomplete when considered only in the domain of semantics or semiotics, however, when considered linguistically, logically, narratologically, ideologically, Massumi concludes that ‘what they lose, precisely, is the expression event – in favor of structure’ (Massumi, 1995, p. 86-88).

Massumi’s notion of affect intersects with my research when it treats upon temporal swarming: as Massumi puts it, a notion of self-organization emerges, related to affect because of ‘the organization of multiple levels that have different logics and temporal organizations but are locked in resonance with each other and recapitulate the same event in a divergent way’ (Massumi, 1995, p. 93).

Considerations on how language might fall short in what Massumi calls the ‘expression event’ forms part of the experiment in Chapters 3 (literature) and 4 (music): here, by designing intertextual correspondences between text, objects, smells, images, and sound, I interrogate the realm of emerging affect which is Massumi’s focus. I am looking particularly at the multiple levels of ‘logics and temporal organizations’ from within, in the making. I am evaluating both convergent and divergent temporal patterns and the concomitant logic of self-organized systems: human bodies, the objects, their smells, the sound provoked by real time processing (and recorded sound), the images, the scissor cutting the beard, the red thread cutting the space.

Performance for Live Audiences

The four experimental outcomes of the research were intended to be open to the public: unfortunately with the restrictions during the covid-19 pandemic, for the first two experiments

(film and dance) an audience was not allowed, and the work was recorded and performed solely with the presence of the technician/camera operator. However for the third and fourth experimental outcomes on literature and music, it was possible to have the public attend the events. The lack of an audience in the first two outcomes (film and dance) was a missed opportunity, but as those works were conceived from the very beginning as a multi-camera video production, the result has been nevertheless encouraging. As for the experiments in literature and music (Chapters 3 and 4) the presence of the audience is acknowledged in a few sections of writing dedicated to audience feedback and my further observations.

Lastly, I acknowledge that the experiments could have been conducted in alternative ways: for example, choosing a different repetitive gesture, modifying the number of cameras/screens, further elongating the experiments or changing the order and ratio of the events within the score of the pieces. The actual rendition is the result of evaluations made during the experimental phase of the projects and the realization of the framework of the pieces: this emerged from trials made in shorter and smaller experiments and from estimates of the feasibility of each project and its limitations. However, from the very beginning, the project was envisioned with a clear compositional framework in terms of development, structure, rhythm and tempi.

Recording of video footage with continuous sequences of many hours is technically challenging, since most cameras are not designed for such lengths, and many problems can occur in the doing: a few difficulties were encountered in the making of the projects precisely because of this. Ideally, I would have preferred a duration freed from mechanical limits, therefore extended to a day or perhaps more¹³. Such was not feasible with current resources, and a compromise was reached taking into account the aim of the research.

Before delving into the four chapters of this research, Saint Augustine is to be remembered again:

13 Erik Satie's *Vexations* (1893, date uncertain) lasting 18 hours, for example.

‘What, then, is time? If no one asks me, I know; if I wish to explain to him who asks, I know not.’

Saint Augustine, *Confessions* (2015 [397 - 400 AD], Book XI, Chapter XIV, p. 397)

With this preliminary question in mind, I invite you to follow me into this phenomenological research on temporality.

I. Film

Time: A Study in the Specious Present for Coffee and Cameras

The duration of sensation and the sensation of duration are different. And it is the same with sensation. The succession of sensations and the sensation of succession are not the same. (Husserl, 2019 [1928], p. 31)

A table is set up: on the table's surface a coaster, a saucer, with a coffee cup on top of it. Coffee has been poured into the cup. A person sits on a chair in front of the table, at times drinking coffee. The action repeats itself for the duration of the performance. The performance lasts three hours. The table stands as the center of action for the performer, who is seated throughout the event and surrounded by several kinds of cameras, screens and recording equipment. The performer of the film-performance is myself. The title of the experiment/performance is *Time: A Study in the Specious Present for Coffee and Cameras*. Hereafter it is called 'the project' for brevity: it is conceived as an integration of performance and cinematic installation, following a practice of integration, related to the notion of intermedia.

A few examples¹⁴ and their juxtaposition provide a framework

14 The project in its performative aspect is conceived as a non-matrixed performance, following Kirby's *A Formalist Theatre*, an Acting/Non-Acting Continuum; a performance dealing with execution of actions rather than identification or impersonation of a represented character. A notable example of a similar practice is Alison Knowles's *The Identical Lunch* (1969) a score based on her habit of eating the same food at the same time each day: 'a tuna fish sandwich on wheat toast, with lettuce and butter, no mayo and a cup of soup or a glass of buttermilk.' Knowles decided to invite people to join her for lunch and to document all nuances and repetitions. Repeating this gesture made the meal a self-conscious reflection of an everyday activity. The notion of *Event Score*

for the research project: while Alison Knowles's *The Identical Lunch* (1969) deals with repetition of gestures making the meal a self-conscious reflection of an everyday activity, the short sketches of Jim Jarmush's film *Coffee and Cigarettes* (2003) play with the sameness of situation (drinking coffee and smoking cigarettes) to generate a dialogue between actors on a disparate number of subjects unrelated, for the most part, to the specific gestures and activities; furthermore Nam June Paik's *Music-Electronic Television* (1963) assembles elements of performance, installation and the use of television as medium, where the space of the exposition is freely explored by the audience.

This project therefore places itself in relation to Fluxus¹⁵ performance, video and installation art, specifically, examples of Neo-Dadaist¹⁶ and Fluxus works dealing with repetition of ev-

was framed by George Brecht: *Event Scores* are simple instructions to complete everyday tasks, which can be performed publicly, privately, or by decision, not performed at all. Jim Jarmush's film *Coffee and Cigarettes* (2003) consists of a comic series of 11 short stories shot in black and white which share coffee and cigarettes as a common thread, building on one another to create a cumulative effect: the visual use of black and white relates to the theme of interpersonal contrasts, as each vignette features two people who disagree completely yet manage to sit amicably at the same table drinking coffee and smoking cigarettes. In the exhibition known as *Exposition of Music-Electronic Television* (1963), Nam June Paik's debut, he scattered televisions around the gallery space and used magnets to alter or distort the images of twelve modified TV sets: the head of a freshly slaughtered ox above the entrance awaited visitors. The space was conceived as a 'total event' to engage all senses of the audience throughout their visit.

15 Fluxus was an international community of artists, composers, designers and poets during the 1960s and 1970s. Fluxus is known for engaging in experimental contributions to different artistic media and disciplines and for generating new art forms such as intermedia, conceptual art, and video art. Some of the notable contributors to the movement have been Dick Higgins, Henry Flynt, Nam June Paik, George Maciunas, Alison Knowles among many others. Fluxus was connected from the start with the Dada movement and John Cage's artistic practices and notions.

16 Dadaism was an art movement of the early 20th century, developed by European avant-garde artists in reaction to World War I. The works of the Dada artists formed a protest, through irrational and nonsensical approaches to art making, that was directed at rejection of the logic and reason of modern

eryday gestures; event scores and text/visual games of artists such as Knowles, George Maciunas, John Cage, Higgins, Paik. Moreover it takes into consideration paradoxical elements of the 'pataphysique of Alfred Jarry¹⁷ and connects with early experimental cinema: for example, early film experimentation by artists such as Maya Deren¹⁸, Fernand Léger¹⁹, Hans Richter, Man Ray, Marcel Duchamp, Dziga Vertov²⁰.

The aim here is to verify how different senses operate on time and its perception; to analyze how specific artists and artistic practices in the field of film deal with time; to investigate if and how change of the perception of social and personal time throughout history affects the construct and fabric of society.

capitalist society and the bourgeoisie. Marcel Duchamp is considered a precursor of Dada: in 1913 he coined the term anti-art which later on became Dada. Neo-Dada was a movement with close similarities to Dada in method and intent: audio, visual and literary artists aimed to close the gap between art and daily life, in a combination of playfulness, iconoclasm, and appropriation. The international Neo-Dada movement grew into the foundation of Fluxus, Pop Art and Nouveau réalisme.

17 'Pataphysics was a concept invented by Alfred Jarry (1873–1907) in a pseudo-scientific fashion in his novel *Exploits and Opinions of Dr. Faustroll, Pataphysician*. In the novel Jarry defined 'pataphysics in a number of statements and examples such as the following: 'the science of imaginary solutions, which symbolically attributes the properties of objects, described by their virtuality, to their lineaments' (Jarry, 1996 [1911], p.22). Toying meanwhile with conventional concepts and interpretations of reality, Jarry proposed over one hundred definitions of 'pataphysics.

18 *Mesher of the Afternoon* (1943) by Maya Deren and Alexander Hammid is considered one of the first important American experimental films.

19 *Ballet Mécanique* (1923–24), considered a masterpiece of early experimental filmmaking, is a film by Fernand Léger with music from the composer George Antheil. It was conceived, written, and co-directed in collaboration with the filmmaker Dudley Murphy and with input from the visual artist Man Ray.

20 *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929), Dziga Vertov's experimental silent documentary film, is famous for the range of cinematic techniques Vertov invented, employed or developed. *Man with a Movie Camera* was largely dismissed upon its initial release and criticised for overly fast cuts and for being a self-reflexive work with emphasis on form over content. However it is now considered as one the greatest films and documentaries ever made.

In this experiment on film, responding to my initial research questions, I investigate what happens to our consciousness and our sense of time when the trivial everyday gesture of drinking coffee is elongated; I observe that elongation of such a routine provokes alternative states of focused attention, numbness of the body, and hypersensitivity to aural and visual feedback; I notice that a similar strategy of repeating gestural patterns is the crux of Deren's short film *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943); that the repetition of gestures and the experience of alternate states of consciousness permeates Deren's *At Land* (1944), Tarkovsky's *The Mirror* (1975) and *Solaris* (1972). By pausing any action and focusing on evaluating the duration of one minute of time, William James has suggested, the lack of stimuli generates monotony and boredom, while sensitivity to the inward perception of time is heightened (James, 2018 [1890], p. 261).

This investigation did generate multiple coexisting timelines for the different senses, and it aimed to verify whether the magnified time of theory of the specious present²¹ may influence the perception of temporal amplitude. Accordingly, this study and this very chapter is a composition, with form, rhythm, tempi, dynamic changes and internal relationships. As such, the project and the chapter complement each other in a kind of counterpoint. The musical aspect of the research is of primary importance to me, given my background in musical composition. Composing with any given material, with any combination of elements, media and objects (physical and conceptual) is a fundamental aspect of this work. Therefore, the chapter and the project intertwine to complete and provoke each other, dialoguing within the development of the whole inquiry.

Due to the *in-disciplinary*²² (sic) nature of the book-composi-

21 The specious present is defined by James as the duration of time in which one's conscious perceptions are considered to be in the present.

22 I am customarily labelled as composer, performer and choreographer: my specific interest (playing à la Jarry with the trite habits of definition-making) is *in-disciplinary composition* (sic), a form of composition traversing any form of visible (and invisible) expression and, ad-hoc or in principle, bypassing conventions and traditions.

tion, selected sources of the text in the footnotes are to be considered extensions, variations or ramifications of the main theme of the chapter: rhizomatic branches, or *intermezzo* following Deleuzian's phraseology²³; or intermedia in Higgins' Fluxus idiom. The above applies obviously to the project that is the very core of this chapter and from which all these reflections originate through the experience of the body in its flux of time.

The project focuses on cinematographic logic, how time can be modified through the mechanism of recording, montage and screening; in addition, the project emphasizes the relationship of time to the human body with its different states and modalities of sense-perception (detachment, heaviness, euphoria or boredom, to name a few). Hence cameras and screens act as stethoscopes, listening to the time of the performance space: probes that magnify and isolate details or zoom in to capture images of time from afar²⁴. The space of the project therefore has been arranged in consideration of a twofold perspective: a space for performance and a space for installation. The project's space is

23 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's rhizome symbolises a non-linear, associative mode of thinking. The terms rhizome and rhizomatic describe theory and research that allows for multiple, non-hierarchical entry and exit points in data representation and interpretation. Rather than narrativizing history and culture, a 'rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo.' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987 [1980], p. 25). Very much as with the rhizome, time-experience can be seen as a system of free association, allowing multiple entry and exit points, in a non-linear reflective space.

24 Here the connection with Stockhausen's *Mikrofonie* (1964) is relevant: the composer employs a large tam-tam (a suspended cymbal 160 cm in diameter) in which normally inaudible vibrations are made audible by the process of sound detection in which microphones are used actively as a musical instrument, in contrast to their usual passive function of reproducing sounds as faithfully as possible: loudspeakers are used to amplify the result. In the experimental phase of the piece, the composer himself moved a microphone in different directions away from and close to the surface of the tam-tam while using various found objects (spoon, tumbler, rubber and wood objects, plastic utensils) to scratch, rub and hit the instrument. Stockhausen comments that 'what we are actually doing is listening to a tam-tam, an instrument of a kind over three thousand years old, like a doctor with a stethoscope listening to the body of a person' (Stockhausen, 1989, p. 78, 80, 87).

meant to be explored freely by the audience: the setting of the cameras and the few objects involved does not imply a frontal view of the installation/performance²⁵.

Behind the table at two opposite sides near the wall are two small screens (7.9 inch) laid out on the floor, and a third screen (7.9 inch) laid out next to my chair: the screens are set up to project edited pre-recorded material of the performance. In front of the table, three screens of different sizes stream live feed from three cameras; behind me on the right side, a larger projector's screen (80-inch) is used to live stream a fourth camera's feed. Two loudspeakers are mounted over the stand at two opposite corners of the room, not visible in the film sequence. The setting includes ten cameras zooming in on different details of the space, and a total of seven screens are projecting images of the live performance.

The Time of the Performance

My right hand is slowly sinking into the wood of the table.
 My neck retracts and my back bends.
 My legs are numb,
 My vision almost obliterated.
 My whole body becomes the hand sinking into the wood of the table.
 I feel unable to move the arm, even if I wanted to.
 Perhaps I will never be able to move the arm again.
 I gaze at the white board, but only 'see' the hand fusing into the wood.
 I wonder what will happen next.

The above paragraph is part of my notes from the film performance at the core of this research. First and foremost, it must be clarified that those notes are the result of, or better, an attempt at

25 While a few cameras play with accretion and magnification of sources within the same planar direction (from a specific perspective, the screens can be seen one after the other, in perspective), the overall space is conceived to be navigated through and by the senses, in order to discover new viewpoints by the choice of proximity with different elements of the space.

distinguishing two different kinds of sense-perception feedback: reconsideration and reflection *post-facto*, and an intuitive flare, sparked from an instantaneous sensation in the Bachelardian sense²⁶. Specifically, what Nishida²⁷ calls ‘intuitive knowledge’ stemming from a Bachelardian instant, develops on a path that can yet foresee a knowledge vector *ex-ante*; experiential time and pensive time colliding in an intuitive act of thought: the Japanese philosopher implies that continuity of sensory experience sustains the continuity of consciousness itself. Nishida argues, the very fact that we are able to identify discontinuity is evidence that we embody the experience of continuity, which also enables us to differentiate the latter from the former. Nishida’s statement suggests implicitly that anthropomorphic time is, in its mode as a perception, continuous (Nishida, 2020 [1987], p. 65).

**Passing by
An instant of
Breathing apnea²⁸**

The film performance was presented twice on the same day: the lengths of the presentations were one and two hours, respectively. A technician helped throughout the performance. An agreement was made that in the first set (one hour long), the technician would signal to me, raising his arm from behind

26 In his *The Intuition of the Instant* the French philosopher Gaston Bachelard considers the poetic *élan vital* to be a form of intuitive knowledge pinned to an instance of vertical time.

27 Nishida in his *Intuition and Reflection in Self-Consciousness* maintains that experience and the cogitation regarding experiences themselves are not chronologically distinguished: he observes that the time of the sensuous experience is synchronous and equal to the time of thinking and evaluating the experience while the former is still developing. It is what he calls the intuition of the experience: intuition is, as Nishida argues, a form of knowledge (Nishida, 2020 [1987], p. 49).

28 Hereafter the poetic voice is always placed in connection with the text: either by anticipating or by adding to the text just read. It is a voice of the specious present. It is never used to punctuate the text as a *breath* or *fermata* in the musical sense but rather to comment, expand, allude or ramify from the main root of the discourse.

the camera at 15, 30, 45 and 60 minutes. For the second set (two hours long) the agreement followed the same procedure with timestamps at 30, 60, 90 and 120 minutes. The timestamps were only placeholders: there was no intention to measure time, but there was a necessity to execute certain actions within the framework of the artistic research. Moreover the rationale behind this decision was twofold: an interest in testing my ability to sense certain time constraints or periods, and an agreement with the technician to run certain actions with semi-precise timestamps. Again: the structure provided a grid for actions to be carried out and a framework for the performative act.

I am unable to distinguish differences of measured time.
I know the time is different only when it is signaled to me.
I may execute the same actions for one hour or many hours.
This is not mechanical time: it is the time of the body.
The stress of the body immobile, intentionally receding from stimuli.
Weight for time.

**It is the time to live or the time to die.
Not an absolute-out-of-the-body time but
an interstitial-time,
A time of organs, muscles, limbs;
A somatic, embodied and interoceptive time.**

The body's sensuousness, perception, duration, repetition and consciousness of stimuli, of their occurrence and discrimination, is pivotal to the performance: fundamental here is Husserl's assertion of the difference between sensation and sensation of duration, and as a consequence, the succession of sensations and the sensation of succession which are not the same (Husserl, 2019 [1928], p. 31).

Repetition deals with the ability to retain instants of time (conceptualized memory) and then to establish a connection between those instants and their similarities (or differences); drinking coffee more than once (quite regardless of the time elapsed between the first and next iteration) introduces a sense of repetition into an embodied action: repetition that is differentiated by a com-

pletely new or different event, because repetition depends *per se* on the sameness of the event taking place.

In the succession of sensations and the sensation of succession there might be momentary lapses of conscious attention: it may seem that the gesture of drinking coffee follows a procedure which is linear (lifting the cup, sipping, swallowing, releasing the cup back to its original place); while instead the process may be asynchronous and discontinuous (a sensation of the aroma of the coffee and of the taste of the liquid may be felt prior to even lifting the cup; or the gesture of putting the cup back in place could be imagined before beginning the whole gesture of drinking); linear imagination is a simplified version of the process, which implies that gaps exist in the consciousness of the event.

What can be observed from the performance practice is that, from the standpoint of the performer, it is impossible to distinguish an absolute duration of time even if two performances follow the same scheme of measured time: moreover, the comparison between the two is not sufficient to generate a more precise sensation of time flowing²⁹. The sensation of length is an elusive innuendo here, a phrase captured and re-proposed by the gesture of the performer in its periodic musicality.

Drink drink drink drink focus on drink stain drink
 stain 2 stains one stain swing little mechanic
 blast
 mechanic mechanic shattered faster faster
 slower slower camera³⁰

29 A distinction about duration is brought forward by Epstein's *Shaping Time: Music, the Brain, and Performance* (1995) between external and arbitrary musical time, a "chronometric" or clock time on the one hand, and the human experience of time, "integral" time, on the other. Epstein argues that 'the essence of temporal experience is movement, or motion, through time [...] in terms of its mechanisms - mechanisms of construct and mechanisms of control - [...] between structure *per se*, and the indefinable of affect related to the experience of motion and resist translation to the medium of words' (Epstein, 1995, p. 5).

30 This is to capture how the senses of the performer are attuned to the gesture of drinking: notwithstanding distractions and/or involuntary movements that are often being interjected, the conscious attempt is to isolate further inputs. Repetition of the gesture, physical in the making and mental in concep-

Husserl's statement connects directly to James's specious present: the investigation and the principles of both deeply permeate the making and analysis of this film performance. The research practice, following James' notion, questions the limits of conscious ability of the senses to distinguish successive stimuli in a given amount of time: in the performance, each time I sipped the coffee, it was unclear how many times I had sipped from the cup before. It seemed I lost myself in the act of sipping... and it became the only present, subsuming into itself all previous instances in which I had drunk from the cup. In order to understand the phenomenology of consciousness and its implication on the perception of time, I am scrutinizing the resolution of the senses³¹. Crucial in this practice is James' discussion about what can be considered past, and separating that from what is present and eventually future time: there is a distinction between a retrospective and prospective sense of time, which is the very basis, according to James, of the continuity of consciousness, perceived as a stream and not a string of discrete and scattered sensations and images. Retrospective is the lingering memory of old objects, while prospective is, according to James, the 'incoming of new germs of memory and expectation' (James, 2018 [1890], p. 256).

tualising ahead, alludes to an embodied tempo of the performer in the flow of the performance time.

31 James in *The Principles of Psychology* (1890) talks about 'the maximal extent of our immediate distinct consciousness for successive impressions' (James, 2018 [1890], p. 258). James in his chapter dedicated to the study of the perception of time discusses results of experiments by researchers, Wundt who arrived at a figure of 3.6 to 6 seconds, and Dietze who settled on a maximum of 12 seconds. These numbers represent the maximum quantity of time within which is possible to distinguish succeeding phenomena. I take this analysis into account to examine throughout the performance process the accuracy of human perception, the period of time to which we have a distinctive *cognitive* access, via short-term memory and vivid anticipation. As Claude Debru (Debru in James, 2018 [1890], p. 478) notes, it may be that James' figure of 12 seconds was concurrently influenced by Helmholtz's discovery that *after-images* typically have a maximal duration of about 12 seconds. Hermann Helmholtz's writings including *On the Sensation of Tone* (1954 [1863]), represent an important contribution to the study of physiological acoustics and the scientific basis of musical theory.

I shift my right hand toward the cup.
 I reach the cup handle with my thumb and index finger.
 I lift the cup with the conjoint movement of my forearm and elbow.
 I sip the coffee and swallow.
 With a reversing motion, my arm deposits the cup of coffee on the coaster.
 I release the fingers, shifting the hand back to rest.

In relation to the performance, the gesture of drinking coffee remains a distinguishable act within the Jamesian specious present: it lasts an amount of time that is congruous with the ability to retain its presence and continuity in the stream of consciousness. This continuity and connectivity break apart when one attempts to concatenate these scattered gestures. Within the protracted time of the performer's stillness, the lack of perceptual stimuli between gestures of drinking coffee generates a state of numbed consciousness, a perceptual breakdown. A temporal interval, a time without content whose silenced activity induces boredom and a focus on bodily and interoceptive processes³².

The ability to distinguish temporal length is influenced by many factors³³: the succession of intervals, their length and whether they repeat over the same or a different interval, and the length of pauses between intervals. According to James, 'awareness of changes is thus the condition on which our perception of time's flow depends' (James, 2018 [1890], p. 260). In the experiment, the act of drinking coffee seemed to stop the flow of time.

The practice itself is an observation of boredom, an experiment in protraction of stillness, of the length of nothingness: the pauses between the act of drinking lasting an average of 30 min-

32 James distinguishes between consciousness of time intervals and consciousness of the length of these intervals: to tell whether an interval is shorter or longer than another is different from enumerating the quantity of the time interval that passes.

33 In my practice, time intervals within the piece allude to a musical feature of the performance: the number of the gestures of drinking coffee, the number of sound samples employed, and the number of pauses are part of the score. While these relate to chronometric time, the distinction and consciousness of the length of these intervals rests on the embodied time experience of the performer.

utes (in the longest rendition of the performance); these pauses are silent rests (*fermata*, without tempo) between musical gestures of the act of sipping coffee.

My body is still, immobile, yet in pain, uncomfortable, at times numb.
My eyes are blind.
My head repeats wait, wait, wait, wait...ad libitum.
Nothing is in motion, inside out.

The Time of the Body

James argues that if we consciously refrain from any action and focus on evaluating the duration of one minute of time, the lack of any other stimuli will engender a sense of monotony and dullness, while our sensitivity to the embodied perception of time will be intensified: '*taedium, ennui, langweile*, boredom, are words for which every language known to man has its equivalent. It comes about whenever, from the relative emptiness of content of a tract of time, we grow attentive to the passage of time itself' (James, 2018 [1890], p. 261).

My gestures are mechanical.
They slip in between time, below the threshold of consciousness.
My body 'disconnected' from its surroundings.
There is nothing to keep track of in actions executed.
My actions escape all meaning and intentionality.
Sensation is still sensation but with no connection to the next or previous
stimulus.
Disjointed occurrences within an uncertain fabric of time.
The incessant decay of my body.

The performance in the longest format lasts two hours: it could have lasted four or even twenty-four; here I am looking into the mechanism of repetition and 'emptiness of content' in a stretch of time long enough to bring to the foreground interoceptive and embodied processes; enhanced by the lack of external stimuli, losing the 'track of time' to verify if and how the human

sensorium and its time perception is affected.

James argues that when the length of time is far beyond our ability to comprehend and encompass, ‘when the time exceeds hours or days, the conception is absolutely symbolic. We think of the amount we mean either solely as a name, or by running over a few salient dates therein, with no pretense of imagining the full durations that lie between them’ (James, 2018 [1890], p. 260).

My whole life was spent in that room drinking coffee now and then.
 How could I know what happened before or after, when or why?
 What would give me a measure of time, besides my thirsty body?
 My eyes were no more necessary than my ears.
 My body reduced to merely a moving arm and a mouth to swallow the coffee.
 To extend the duration to a day or a century would make no difference.
 Two different measures of nothingness³⁴.

Here the practice of the film-performance suggests a perpetuum, enfolded time within time, an accretion of the depth of time reverberating along centripetal and centrifugal waves: time perceived, time thought, time lost, time imagined, mathematical time, sensuous time, interoceptive time. The time of the performance maintains a linearity which is disembodied from the time of the performer: clock time, with its mathematical succession of binary digits, acts on a different plane from the human experience of time, Epstein’s “integral” time.

From the performer’s perspective, time is enveloped around the body’s changes (sensorial, perceptual and interoceptive feedback). Events do not follow a linear path of succession. If the rare and scattered events lose their meaning and float in a limbo of nothingness, temporal perception is aberrant, deformed, meaningless.

fingers gesture finger gesture figner gesture elft

34 Paul Valery put it this way: ‘who will tell me how, all through existence, my whole person has been preserved? What was it that carried me, inert, full of life and spirit, from one end of nothingness to the other?’ (Valery cited by Bachelard in *Dialectic of Duration*, 2016 [1936], p. 15).

With a reversing motion, my arm deposits the cup of coffee on the coaster.
I release the fingers, shifting the hand back to rest.

I shift my right hand toward the cup.
I reach the cup handle with my thumb and index finger.
I lift the cup with the slow conjoint movement of my forearm and elbow.
It feels heavy.
I finally sip the coffee and swallow the almost cold liquid.
With a reversing motion, my arm deposits the cup of coffee on the coaster.
It falls away from the center of the coaster.
I can feel this and try to mentally record this change.
I release the fingers, shifting the hand back to rest.

The Time of Film

In film, repetition also involves reiteration or echoes of time³⁶ which can only be displayed linearly, frame after frame, with a defined trajectory. Time inherent to film material is directional because of the mechanics of filmmaking. While the logic of film may subvert the order of the material, creating temporal discontinuity through montage, it cannot modify the linearity of the process of recording, frame by frame, the material itself, nor the directionality of time in the seeing.

In what follows I mention Deleuze's movement-image as an example. Deleuze is relevant here for his specific focus on the logic of time in film:³⁷ nevertheless I acknowledge the differences

36 Here I refer for example to the use of *deja-vu* or *jamais-vu* as a way to convey familiarity, or conversely strangeness, while toying with the time of events. *Deja* and *jamais-vu* act not primarily as repetition but more precisely as echo: emphasising an event by displacing its original occurrence and appearance and thereby rearranging its meaning in relation to other events while also generating echoes of relationships. Yasujirō Ozu's empty shots are an example: in *The Taste of Sanma* (1962); the film ends with several shots of details of spaces in the house where the main characters are getting ready for a marriage; we witness the same sequence twice: first with the characters acting within the shot and second as they have just left, as the house falls silent and deserted, an echo of the just-past events.

37 Deleuze comments that modern cinema subverts the scheme of the

between film, experimental films / performances and / or installations. Deleuze argues that a new relation is put in place where the 'pure optical and sound situation' concatenates and leads to 'direct time-image' therefore 'opsigns and sonsigns are direct presentations of time'; Deleuze observes that continuity in film shots has always been false, and that cinema has perpetually been haunted by the phantom of the direct time-image relationship. Nevertheless 'it took the modern cinema to give a body to this phantom'; hence, the time-image, while it presupposes montage much as movement-image did, has changed the function and meaning of montage: 'instead of being concerned with movement-images from which it extracts an indirect image of time, it is concerned with the time-image, and extracts from it the relations of time on which aberrant movement must now depend' (Deleuze, 2003 [1985], p. 41)³⁸.

In Jean-Luc Godard's *Weekend* (1967) the camera tracks along a seemingly endless traffic jam in a very long interrupted sequence shot. The length of the shot creates the movement in its time flow: we wonder if the whole film will be nothing more than this apparently endless sequence³⁹. Pressure of time, tension

movement-image, the sensory-motor operational logic that was previously in place. Prior to this change any 'event of the movement-image remains primary, and gives rise only indirectly to a representation of time' through the use of montage, composition and recombination. With modern cinema what Deleuze calls the sensory-motor scheme 'is shattered from the inside'; in fact 'it is no longer time that depends on movement; it is aberrant movement that depends on time' (Deleuze, 2003 [1985], p. 40-41).

38 In *Technics and Time* (1998) Bernard Stiegler takes on Deleuze and the latter's critique on Bergsonian 'cinematic illusion'. Stiegler argues that Bergson and Deleuze and therefore also Husserl's 'temporal objects' don't take into account that consciousness of cinematic illusion, in his opinion, has always been there. Stiegler's hypothesis is in fact following the Barthesian analogy with photography (see *Camera Lucida*, 1980) 'an essentially cinematographic structure for consciousness in general, as if it had "always had cinema without realising it"' (Deleuze in *The Movement Image* quoted by Stiegler), which explains the singular power of the cinematographic persuasion' (Stiegler, 2010 [1998], p. 12-13, italics in the original).

39 Deleuze, quoting Tarkovsky, argues that "what is important is the way time flows in the shot, its tension or rarefaction 'the pressure of time in

and rarefaction, shots that are beyond indirect representation of time: these are also the concerns and the terrain of experimentation in my film-performance and the edited sequences.

Thirty minutes passed between my actions of drinking coffee.

I have no recollection of the particular sensation of performing that action.

I know I did it but cannot say how I did it.

My body is always dehydrated.

I know that the gesture of drinking will happen four times.

but I am unable to distinguish between them.

My knowledge of their happening is only theoretical.

How do I confirm or verify that something happens to me if I am unable to distinguish it from another occurrence of the same sort?

Trompe-l'oeil
Shrinking
Convulse fragments

The uniqueness of every single act is lost in the opaque fabric of a monotonous identical time. Only the sense of repetition remains, devoid of content. Here the second half of Husserl's statement 'the succession of sensations and the sensation of succession are not the same' (Husserl, 2019 [1928], p. 31) steers the observation towards the Jamesian symbolic conception of time: a time whose scale of perception is too wide to be recalled and for which we are unable to provide details in terms of sensation of succession.

The use of repetition in film operates at different levels of complexity: I cite examples here from Tarkovsky's body of work because of his specific attention to the matter of time in film, despite obvious differences between the cinematographic and artistic world of the Russian filmmaker and artistic practices dealing with film experimentation, film-performance and installation

the shot...the time in a shot [that] must flow independently and, so to speak, as its own boss': only on this condition", continues Deleuze, "the shot goes beyond the movement-image, and montage goes beyond indirect representation of time, to both share a direct time-image' relation unbound to succession and to movement" (Tarkovsky quoted in Deleuze, 2003 [1985], p. 42).

elsewhere. In Tarkovsky's works, repetition acts as a meta-level narrative presenting to the eyes of the spectator object-symbols which appear throughout the director's work: mirrors, milk, fire, mud, algae, aquatic plants, dripping, percolating and flowing water; and also archetypal guiding animals such as horses and dogs⁴⁰. The aforementioned objects are obsessively proposed in the film *Solaris* (1972), where the appearance of water seals off the film and its oneiric happenings: in the opening a stream of water flows on Earth, and in the closing shot, the vast and alien oceanic surface of the planet Solaris; here a one-time repetition creates a circular motion in which the beginning and ending of the film obliterate each other.

In *The Sacrifice* (1986) a similar mechanism is presented: in the opening, details of the tree in Leonardo Da Vinci's painting *Adoration of the Magi* (1481) followed by a long sequence in which the protagonist Alexander and his young son are watering a tree that they just planted; in the ending sequence of the film, the son is seen alone watering the same tree, while Alexander, after burning down the family house, apparently having lost control of himself, has been seized by two paramedics and driven off in an ambulance. In the film, mirrors appear numerous times: to show doubles of the characters reflected before the shot turns directly on the person; repeated apparition punctuates the film, opening up an alternative point of view (we see in the mirror what we cannot see from the camera): the mirror itself is gazing at the space, the characters, the spectators. Here the appearance of specific objects implies repetitiveness while defining the time of duration for the whole film.

In Tarkovsky, repetition blurs the boundaries of reality and dream, of time and space: as again in *Solaris*, where at different times the protagonist Kris experiences the apparition of objects

40 In Jungian analytical psychology archetypes are designated as universal, archaic symbols and images deriving from the collective unconscious. In analytic psychology, they are described as a congenital nonspecific knowledge, derived from human history, shaping conscious behaviour. The existence of archetypes can be extrapolated from a variety of circumstances such as myths, religions, dreams, stories and art.

and persons, assembled and combined, inconsistently, as collected paraphernalia of memory and sensation, exposed to the gaze of the spectator.

As previously mentioned, my own practice has also moved away from narrative, from storytelling to entertain and persuade the audience⁴¹; my piece is framed, as stated, as a non-matrixed performance following Kirby's notion: 'when the performer is himself and is not embedded in matrices of pretended or represented character, situation, place and time' (Kirby, 1990 [1987], p. 5). In a meta-narrative gesture⁴², as in Tarkovsky, my film exposes objects in space to the gaze of the observer: drinking coffee at a table; an anyone anywhere anytime gesture; an intercorporeal social habit, whose prolonged repetition in performance isolates the gesture with its enaction and protraction: long pauses of repose between repeated acts of sipping liquid, reverberating into a halo of possibilities from the gesture just finished, and in anticipation of the next to come. What has been seen, heard, scented, touched and tasted, ripples and upsurges, soaking in the space of relationships, floating in the flood of the time of the performance.

The coffee cup and drinking from it are one and the same object: it is the repeated gesture that creates continuity and anticipation in the piece; a musical recurrence, a leitmotif that lets time flow within the performance.

41 Stiegler observes that while the ancient desire and propensity for stories, fables, and fairy tales is perpetuated from generation to generation, between the twentieth and the twenty-first century, with the advent of what Horkheimer and Adorno call 'culture industries', global commerce exploits the fictitious, the narrative arts, which become increasingly subjugated to the media networks' need for profit. Stiegler argues that cinema occupies a unique place because with its techniques of image and sound it can 're-invent our belief in stories that are now told with remarkable, unparalleled power' (Stiegler, 2010, p. 8-9).

42 In her *Plays*, Gertrude Stein observes that in both cinema and theatre there is an impulse to 'solve the problem of time in relation to emotion and the relation of the scene to the emotion of the audience' and consequently 'the same impulse to solve the problem of the relation of seeing and hearing' (Stein, 1998, p. 251).

blink blink blink
 twist twist rotate twist
 intrude intrude more extrude
 searching searching searching searching

The performance is designed to observe life's facts, a lump of time sculpted via ordinary gestures and relationships to the ordinary environment: drinking a cup of coffee, sitting at a table; repeating the gesture over and over to the point that the unspecific, the generic, becomes specific, particular, while examining its time laws.

Tarkovsky posits that the essence of the work of a filmmaker is to sculpt time, shaping a 'lump of time' into an integral form, a cinematic image of time: 'cinema is capable of operating with any fact diffused in time'. Hence: 'juxtaposing a person with an environment that is boundless, collating him with a countless number of people passing by close to him or far away, relating a person to the whole world: that is the meaning of cinema' (Tarkovsky, 1987 [1984], p. 65-66).

At what point does a banal gesture, an observation of a simple pattern, such as that of drinking from a cup of coffee, a mundane situation, become explicit, defined: when and how does the worldscape proposed by this cameo of everyday life-action enact an awareness of time flowing, or an embodiment of time perception? Is there perhaps a time of boredom, a time when emptiness becomes fullness? A time that enables the observer to look through the gesture, through the inert scene and gaze at the mechanism of time within⁴³? Moreover: there is a tempo and a

43 Stiegler observes that boredom appears when we are lost in the flow of images of a film: he argues that happens because film asks only to look, to immerse and lose ourselves outside our 'real' life, 'within a life of people and events, real or fictive, to which we will have conjoined our time, adopting their events as though they were happening to us as they happened to them.' Stiegler continues that the cinematographic experience, 'taking charge of our boredom', transforms into a new energy, transubstantiates nothing into something, an expectation of something to be, to happen in our life (Stiegler, 2010, p. 9-10). In *The Burnout Society*, Byung-Chul Han argues that 'deep boredom is the peak of mental relaxation' which helps to achieve a 'contemplative immersion'

rhythm in the flowing of time; long pauses followed and preceded by short gestures allude to a musicality inherent in the gesture and its reverberation in the fabric of time; the performance with its *andamento* enables time to become the bearer of musicality.

Tarkovsky's shots often indulge in elements which have the appearance of being static, ordinary situations and incidents where the musicality of time conducts and orchestrates the sequence: in *The Mirror* (1975) a long sequence shows us Maria and her two children in their country house; the camera moves slowly, focusing on details of everyday life: the children eating and drinking at the table, Maria standing, walking toward the window; the camera moves observing the events without urgency, *adagio*: we are looking at Maria standing in front of the bed, she walks toward the window (outside the shot), the camera remains, hesitating at the empty shot of the bed, *fermata*, then gradually moves toward the window and we catch Maria again seated looking out the window; we look outside too, taking her own perspective for a moment, *rallentando*. Reverse shot: we look at Maria in close-up, she moves from the window, and we move with her, slowly. The barn outside the house catches fire: everyone gathers to watch; the camera indulges in the empty room, retreats slowly, shows us the fire through a mirror hanging in the room, then turns, moving toward the open door, *adagio ma non troppo*. The camera stops: a wide shot taken from under the porch of the house encompasses the burning barn, Maria and one of the children standing on the grass watching the fire consuming the structure. With the fire of the barn at a distance, raindrops drip from the edge of the ceiling of the porch: we watch the fire for a number of minutes.

Here events are shown with an ordinariness: no sudden change, no drama, no music; a voiceover (most probably Alexei's) recites poetry, the protagonist, in remembrance of his childhood

into a focused attention. The author observes that the excess of stimuli and the fragmented and scattered perception of the environment deeply affects attention and cognition, thus 'the attitude toward time and environment known as "multitasking" does not represent civilizational progress' (Byung-Chul Han, 2015 [2010], p. 12-13).

and his mother. The ordinary becomes extraordinary through the way time flows, through the pauses, the empty shots, the slow changes of perspectives, the musicality inherent in these variations: elements that induce us to wonder why we are looking at what we look at. Where is our attention? What are our senses attending to? Is it a film only about looking? Or perhaps while watching, we may imagine 'paintings in smells, symphonies of touch, architectures of balanced vibrations, poems of salt or acid taste'? (André Leroi-Gourhan, 1993 [1964], p. 283).

Similarly, during my experiment, I almost become lost in the act of sipping coffee, within a temporal frame that slowed and became viscous: 'a temporal sink, a hole in time', per Massumi (Massumi, 1995, p. 86): where the ability to distinguish events and gestures in sequence is lost in the atemporal fabric of time. According to James, in experiments conducted where the first impression falls onto one sense, and the second onto another, the ability to perceive time becomes less certain and seems to involve the order of stimuli: which impression comes first from which sense generates different empirical results. This seems to suggest a discrepancy, a discontinuity between the senses that are 'recording' differently, with their own perceptual resolution and sensitivity to received stimuli.

screen screen cable screen cable cable cable screen
cable cut through
screen

Duration is bound to discontinuity: discontinuity of the senses, of consciousness, and of the mechanical apparatuses of film. My film-performance is conceived as a space for discovery and embodiment of time perception for the performer and the audience: screens, at their own rhythm and with different *tempi*, are showing edited footage of the performance, juxtaposed with sequences and live stream of the ongoing performance.

Following in the footsteps of Tarkovsky, a juxtaposition emerges between the mechanics of film and the resulting observation and perception of its *tempi*. The speed of film is constant;

perceptually it tends towards acceleration, deceleration and moments of stasis, or denial of time flowing; the resolution of the moving images⁴⁴ is constant (24 frames per second); perceptually it becomes a visual aberration because of the limited resolution of the human eye; the length of the film is constant; perceptually it is longer or shorter, influenced by the nature of information captured while watching.

These observations suggest that while it is possible to analyze the perception of time -- isolating it into instants of consciousness -- alterations of time as experienced by a spectator are manifold, as a result of numerous variables. To what extent and to what depth can I separate and then recollect instants of my conscious state when all is rapidly fading away into impressions of the recent past and thought-memories as James and Husserl suggest? The film implies that the spectator's perception of time may differ widely from the chronometric time of the scene, and this is closely dependent on the resolution or scale of perception involved.

The Time of Time and Space

Accordingly, a number of considerations emerge: the performative aspect of the project, the length of the aforementioned performance, the delineation of the action or events in the performance, and the design of the space in which the performance and shooting take place. The choice of a durational performance is an acknowledgment of the necessity for protraction, extension and reiteration of certain acts, in order to consider those acts to

44 Cinematographic technique and its logic are bound to a discontinuous and asynchronous time: macroscopic aspects of this discontinuity arise from arbitrary mathematical division of a measure of time into still frames (images), and the use of montage as an assembling device. By recording an average of 24 still frames per second, film produces the illusion of moving images: the human eye's resolution can distinguish lack of smoothness and realism in speeds less than this ratio. This phenomenon is known as 'illusory motion' or 'the phi phenomenon' (Goldstein, E. Bruce (2010). *Sensation and perception* (8th ed.), Wadsworth Cengage).

be themselves secondary or mechanical, verging on the threshold of consciousness. Continuous phenomena on the threshold of consciousness, as for example the transitional state from wakefulness to sleep (hypnagogic and hypnopompic states) seem to indicate a threshold of perception where actions can be executed mechanically as if sleepwalking: proprioceptive and interoceptive processes are here enhanced; the sensuousness of the body that has bypassed routine actions, brings the background elements of experience to the forefront of attention.

Because of many parameters directly associated with the threshold of attention, embodiment of the experience of space and the flow of time during the film-performance varies, depending on whether one is spectator or performer. The subject of a spectator's attention is not immediately defined by the objects that populate the sensorial field: it is not enough to say that there is a table in front of me, a person is drinking coffee or sitting quietly, with cameras all over the place; we need to notice all this, we need to project our attention, to hold-toward.

As either performer or spectator, perceiving does not start with observation but emerges out of an instance of attention sparked and provoked by what attracts me. Attention, in the Latin *attentio* suggests a focused tension, against distractions and deviations. But it also implies a choice: each form of attention (how many objects there are, how we categorize them) begins with insights and with selection. Turning toward the cup of coffee is also turning away from the chair and the table, and they occur at the same time, but every recognition of attention to something is an attention taken away from something else⁴⁵.

45 This matter is vividly elucidated in Bernhard Waldenfels's *Phenomenology of the Alien*. Chapter 4 and 5 is devoted to the topic of attention: throughout a number of examples encompassing philosophical, artistic and socio-economical scenarios, Waldenfels brings to the forefront disregarded features of attention: the involvement of all senses, the matter of attention in art and what he calls the 'techniques and practices of attention'. Waldenfels acknowledges the difficulty of the categorization of attention while providing hints: the subjective act of attention; the anonymous mechanisms of observation (here he refers as an example to monitors and screens); the matter of selection (the difference between what is out

In this regard Husserl talks of ‘attentional changes’ in terms of ‘how’ we select certain contents and discharge others: how then our perpetual field is organized around center points, margins and backgrounds⁴⁶ (Husserl, 2019 [1928], p. 65-67).

The setting, as previously mentioned, includes ten cameras zooming in on different details of the space and a total of seven screens projecting images of the performance. A number of considerations irradiate from the mere aspect of screen size but also from the number of devices actively recording and flooding the space with a stream of images: for example, how does the impression from the film projected on the screen of a 7.9-inch device differ from the same film projected on an 80-inch screen or on the small recording camera equipped with a 3-inch screen? How does the impression and the attention differ because of the many screens scattered across the space (we can count up to 13, including the recording devices’ screens)? Scales of perception: depending on the size of the screen, details of the images may be lost or simply varied; the visual ratio of the film could change; the gaze of the viewer must isolate what is on screen from what is around the screen: other persons, lights, objects, the environment; and the point of view is dependent on the spectator’s decision whether to alter one’s proximity to the device(s).

I enumerate elementary characteristics of observation here because they are relevant to the way the film’s landscape of vision is perceived, and therefore how it fundamentally influences the embodiment of time⁴⁷ experienced, and how this has been

there to see and hear and what we are actively hearing and seeing); the specificity of a time and space of attention (what is seen and heard and what is unseen and unheard); the pathology of attention (Waldenfels refers to agoraphobia, claustrophobia, over-concentration (Waldenfels, 2011 [2006], p.63-68).

46 A comment of Alexandre Koyré about selection and choice translates the above into a universal perspective on understanding. Koyré writes that what ‘influences’ us is a complex bilateral relationship: ‘we are not influenced by everything we read or learn. In one sense, and perhaps the deepest, we ourselves determine the influences we are submitting to; our intellectual ancestors are by no means given to, but are freely chosen by us’ (Koyré, 1968 [1957], p. 5-6).

47 Embodiment of time which in this project relates mainly to the performer, the audience and the viewer (of the whole footage). I have attempted

investigated throughout the making of the project⁴⁸. Notice how many of these observations take into account a time of seeing closely related to spatial composition.

Time's discontinuity is one of the most obvious characteristics of film, together with the asynchronous modality of time inherent to the entire process of filmmaking. Paraphrasing John Cage⁴⁹: devising, performing and seeing, what do they have to do with each other? My project attempts to bridge this gap between making and performing: four screens stream the live performance, while three are streaming edited footage of a previous enactment of the event. Ten cameras are recording, six of them equipped with small screens. This multiplicity of input and output, both synchronous and asynchronous in concert with the performance, plays a fundamental role in developing a consciousness of the performing time and of perceptual focus: on the verge between visible and invisible, audible and inaudible.

squares squares squares
 big cup
 no more body one finger foot feet cup and feet
 cup cable cup cable
 isolateisolateisolate

to take all these roles under examination while working through the process of the project. Nevertheless more requires to be evaluated: the time of the apparatus, the time of the space, the time of the objects in the space. Not all these different embodiments of time are the focus of this research: I acknowledge their interrelationship and presence.

48 To add more trivialities to the mechanics of seeing: how different might watching a film be in the early morning vs. watching the same film late at night, in the dark? What is the difference between watching the same film on a busy day of the week and on a Saturday night, with the anticipation of a restful Sunday morning? What is the difference between watching it sitting, standing or even walking? How is the experience influenced by subtitles or by dubbing of the actors' voices? What happens if I interrupt the film and resume it at a later time or on another day? What changes in watching a film alone or in the company of friends or strangers, as in a theatre? What are the dissimilarities of watching a film at home, in a theatre, car, boat or on a long flight?

49 'Composing's one thing, performing's another, listening's a third. What can they have to do with one another?' (Cage, 2012 [1961], p. 15).

Displacement of the space of seeing is a discontinuity inherent to the very mechanics of film. Juxtaposing scenes which happened in different places, or at different moments, or from different angles, which are then edited into a sequence for cinematographic purposes is called montage: 'to create a sense or meaning not objectively contained in the images themselves but derived exclusively from their juxtaposition'⁵⁰ (Bazin, 2005 [1967], p. 25). Montage implies discontinuity as it implies asynchronicity: the latter requires close observation and is profoundly rooted in film as an intrinsic part of its form and process. While some of these procedures are common to other art forms, film is specifically bound to asynchronicity by the very nature of its performative process: I cannot watch a film in the making, because the nature of its assemblage is fragmented and discontinuous. Performance behind the camera is always at a time different from the time of seeing it in its final shape.

The Time of Silence and Sound

The performance is conducted in silence for almost its entire duration: Merleau-Ponty writes that 'every philosophy is language and nonetheless consists in rediscovering silence' (Merleau-Ponty, 1968 [1964], p. 213). I can add that every (spoken) language is sound, and this performance aims to return

50 Psychological and symbolic significance is added through the manipulation of montage, as well as through other methods that alter the rhythm of vision. The so called *Kuleshov effect* is a clear example of psychological effect imposed by montage: Lev Kuleshov, Russian filmmaker of the early 20th century proposed a montage for a short film in which a close-up of the expressionless face of an actor was alternated with three shots: a bowl of soup, a girl in a coffin, a woman on a divan. The audience believed that the expression on the actor's face was different each time, showing an expression of hunger (for the soup), grief (for the coffin), or desire (for the woman on the divan), respectively. In reality the footage of the actor was the same each time. Kuleshov intended to reveal the implications of film editing: its effectiveness in bringing the viewer's emotional reactions to a sequence of images, and furthermore the attributions of those reactions to the actor, the audience supplying his impassive face with their own feelings.

to silence as a place for the re-discovery of sound. A few short sounds appear and vanish in a halo of reverberation every 20 or 30 minutes. The most significant sound is what is in between the sounds, in those 30 minutes of silence: the inaudible sound that enables a body (which Merleau-Ponty calls 'sensorial agent'⁵¹) to create perceptual and linguistic connections; the lack of stimuli (the Jamesian ennui) that brings to consciousness speech (Merleau-Ponty's 'ideal agent'): 'present memories of past ones' says Willard Van Orman Quine in *Word and Object* 'actual memories' that 'are traces not of past sensations but of past conceptualization or verbalization' (Quine, 2013 [1960], p. 3).

Sound exists by virtue of silence and vice versa: in the performance, the silence before a sound anticipates it, while the sound just past rests on the resonance of prolonged silence which in a continuum of interwoven relationships, carries that sound's inaudible presence until its next instance⁵².

My body is heavier.

Sight almost eradicated.

Sparse sounds coming from the loudspeakers are a revelation⁵³.

The body completely unprepared for these new inputs.

The sounds shake it⁵⁴.

51 Merleau-Ponty observes that there is an order in the world where non-language significations exist, a world of silence, the perceived world that is a relation between the body (the sensorial agent) and speech (the ideal agent) (Merleau-Ponty, 1968 [1964], p. 171).

52 It will not have passed unnoticed that the research refers to sounds, not music. The distinction is not marginal and is in fact essential in relation to language. The composer Iannis Xenakis argues that music is not a language: 'nothing is a language except the language itself because there are semantics behind it.' (Morton Feldman and Iannis Xenakis In conversation, 1986, p. 3; edited by Vincent Gassel and Michael Nieuwenhuizen). Moreover, John Cage a propos sound and silence: 'there is no such thing as an empty space or an empty time. There is always something to see, something to hear' and, he continues 'until I die there will be sounds. And they will continue following my death.' (Cage, 2012 [1961], p. 7-8).

53 Playback of samples at specific timestamps agreed beforehand.

54 It must be noted that the room is designed for rehearsal and music re-

Sound waves that literally pass through my body as vibrations.
 I am traversed by sound waves with an energy and tangible corporeality I have rarely experienced.
 My body staying still for almost 45 minutes has amplified the sensation of air pressure coming from the loudspeakers.

Shattered flickers
Crooked heads
Ignored, already past

The sound samples are recorded material of sounds produced while lifting the cup from the coaster and putting it at rest, sipping the coffee, swallowing; mechanics of the everyday gesture, amplified, distorted, magnified and displaced, analogous to the visual mechanisms of film: montage, editing and visual processing. The various techniques of shooting (closeup, medium shot, long shot, full shot, etc) are here exploited in the realm of sound: protracting, anticipating, denying or extruding sound from its original space and time. The clinking sound of the cup set down on the porcelain coaster lasting less than 1 second is amplified and protracted to more than 1 minute; the quick swallowing of the liquid, a barely audible internal bodily sound, taken to the forefront, amplified and elongated to more than 3 minutes. Sound is manipulated with the logic of montage, displaced from its synchronous position in time, replaced to play in present time, in the specious present and its margins: protention and retention⁵⁵.

In Tarkovsky's *The Mirror*, sound is used to pinpoint a present time, time which differs from the moving images' temporality.

cording; thus, the acoustic of the space is extremely sensitive to sounds. At rest, if nobody is moving or talking, the silence in the room is quite deep thanks to soundproof exit doors: beside what is in the room itself, no sound whatsoever penetrates from outside. The reason why I specify this matter is that acoustically, this space is extremely peculiar.

55 Sounds are treated here as such, without any intention to use them as comment or narrativization of the performance. As the live stream and video editing have been conceived as multiple entry points for observation of the performance process, so the sounds and their editing is the result of the enquiry into the senses and their specificity to which the whole research is devoted.

In the film the protagonist Alexei, only briefly seen as an adult, is present as a voice-over in a number of scenes and dialogues that are his recollection of thoughts, emotions and memories of himself as a child, adolescent, and 40-year-old. Here the sound of the voice-over acts as a *trait-d'union* in the scattered achronological and discontinuous structure of the film: furthermore, it is his voice that imposes a present time onto scenes whose timeline is lost or barely imaginable. Pinning the film-time to Alexei's present thoughts and recollections implies a dissociation of sound from moving images which are presented in their own past time. In the film, the voices heard and the images seen are echoes of Alexei's past, and a counterpoint to his own monologue⁵⁶. The logic of *The Mirror* directly alludes to Merleau-Ponty's statement that the 'ultimate consciousness is the consciousness of the present' (Merleau-Ponty, 2005 [1945], p. 448): what we see on screen are the present conscious thoughts of Alexei, projections of past conceptualizations and verbalizations in a vortex of elisions and warped imagery. Similarly, my practice uses sound to connect past and future events through a displacement of occurrence converging into a continuous present: however, in this practice there is no intention to narrativize sound, rather to inquire into sound perception within the fabric of time.

The Resolution of Time

In *Phenomenology of Perception* Merleau-Ponty distinguishes

56 Alexei's repeatedly present voice-over appears to broaden the application of the Kuleshov effect: while the latter acts in a relation that is solely between images, juxtaposing an always identical shot with a series of different ones, in Tarkovsky, Alexei's voice branches out, proliferates, acting as the subject shot for the Kuleshov effect, juxtaposed with a miscellany of moving images. A very interesting example of similar manipulation is the opening of Alain Resnais's *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961): here a voice-over incessantly repeats a short monologue while for several minutes the camera takes us on a tour of a luxurious, palatial hotel with rich decorations, mirrors, chandeliers, frescos throughout long corridors and lounges. The added peculiarity here is that the voice-over increases and decreases in volume during the sequence, which multiplies the space of the palace.

between protention and retention, following Husserlian terminology. Merleau-Ponty argues that time cannot be found in things nor in states of consciousness: therefore time, its identity, can be conceived only in relation to being, where the field of presence, the present time is the horizon of past and future (Merleau-Ponty, 2005 [1945], p. 437-439). The practice of my experiment scrutinizes, through the experience of both performer and audience, the perceptual field of this present time horizon; how consciousness of time arises through an embodied experience and through the multiplicity of sensuous inputs of the performance space. Merleau-Ponty argues that the distinction between past, present and future is impossible because the three moments are not chronologically and linearly arranged, and their relation is the result of an overlapping of features. Present time is the only tangible moment of the perceptual field (Merleau-Ponty, 2005 [1945], p. 439-441).

James' discussion of what he calls the 'distinct consciousness for successive impressions' examines the resolution of perception and its relation to consciousness and time perception. Merleau-Ponty's observations distinguish time and the relation of consciousness against this, and further elaborate James' perspective by connecting to Husserl's "flow" of *zeitbewusstsein* (time awareness) as a subjective experience: a time that 'constitutes itself as phenomenon in itself' that flows, that knows itself from within (Husserl, 2019 [1928], p. 88).

20 minutes have passed.

I have the sudden intuition that I know how to handle the rest of the performance.

I can sense time diffused through my body.

My senses are attuned, I am projected into the future, I know where it ends.

My body adjusts to its presence in space.

I find meaning within it.

I have seized this time and space.

In performing the project, the present became the only tangi-

ble moment of the perceptual field, a present that is elongated and flows between faded boundaries of the recent past (retention) and the future to come (protention); but also a present in which we are time, and we conceive it before we conceive its parts: consciousness that unfolds and constitutes time. The performer's body, my body, gains its time consciousness through a relation with things surrounding me; through a seized space, and the acquired meaning of its existence in time.

This instant of consciousness emerges from the bathos of the sensual experience, as if boredom and wandering attention is required to discover the body's state and attunement to it⁵⁷. The film-performance purposefully multiplied and fragmented the perceptual through numerous screens: mirrors of enacted reality, of space correlations and time flow. Screens that are themselves apparatuses of attention: *technē* that have been the preoccupation of humanity since the Greek philosophers⁵⁸; modalities of seeing and hearing that are specific to technology: screens that contribute to our sense and constitution of reality not solely by transferring meaning but by making meaning⁵⁹.

cut cut cut tangentially choose ignore
 is the same is not the same or it is the same
 cup cup cup cup cup cup

57 It is worth recapitulating James' observation that 'awareness of changes is the condition on which our perception of time's flow depends'. If we consciously refrain from any action and focus on evaluating the duration of one minute of time, the lack of any other stimuli will engender a sense of monotony and dullness, while our sensitivity to the embodied perception of time will be intensified.

58 Republic, 476b: 'the lovers of sights and sounds like beautiful sounds, colours, shapes, and everything fashioned out of them, but their thought is unable to see and embrace the nature of the beautiful itself.' Here Plato distinguishes second-hand hearing and seeing from the things in themselves 'in fact, there are very few people who would be able to reach the beautiful itself and see it by itself'.

59 We add here that 'scene' derives from the Greek *skēnē* (hut, tent): in ancient Greek theatre, a structure which formed part of the stage or set and eventually the background before which the drama was enacted. In the film, the scene and the screen almost collide from an observer's perspective.

Displacement of the space of seeing seems characteristic of the modern day, and was anticipated by the camera obscura⁶⁰. The photographic camera, the TV set, the computer screen and more recent devices such as mobiles and tablets are only aspects of a larger historical and socio-cultural process: to impose upon us a simplified reality with limited options⁶¹. Heterotopias⁶², spaces that were once a shelter against authoritarianism, are deprived of their original function and become, in Baudrillardian terms, a simulacrum⁶³, a vicious space resisting antagonism and dissen-

60 See also Jonathan Crary's *Techniques of the Observer* (1990, Chapter 2: The Camera Obscura and its Subject) and *Suspensions of Perception* (1999, Chapter 1: Modernity and the Problem of Attention)

61 Mobile devices which operate as a film screening tool, are designed for the purpose of delivering many other functions: with a generic attitude toward input and output that is the very cause of the indifferent and distracted participation now so common. Lack of specificity generates lack of significance: if the setting is vague, the *weltanschauung* nebulous, so are the spectator's perception and attention to content.

62 See also Michel Foucault's introduction to *The Order of Things* (1966) and the writing *Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias* ('Des Espace Autres', March 1967) from: *Architecture /Mouvement/Continuité*; October, 1984. In the latter Foucault defined heterotopias through six principles, as spaces that exhibit dual meanings with several places of/for the affirmation of difference, but also as a means of escape from authoritarianism and repression; an ambiguous and ambivalent space of 'elsewhere': a collection of differences, intermezzo between utopian and dystopian spaces. *Habitus* in sociological terms, includes socially ingrained habits and dispositions: the latter are shared by people with similar backgrounds. The *habitus* is acquired through imitation (*mimesis*) in the milieu in which individuals are socialising, which includes their individual experience and outcomes. Pierre Bourdieu suggested that the *habitus* consists of tendencies to hold and use the body in a certain way (such as postures) and mental habits, schemes of perception, classification, appreciation, feeling, and action. Bourdieu argues that these attitudes and dispositions have influence on the reproduction of the social structure resulting from the *habitus* of individuals. *Habitus* and consensus are maintained by a meta-narrative of time that imposes a chronological and recursive tempo on activities regulated by social calendars rooted in economic and religious affairs.

63 Simulacra are copies that depict things that either had no original, or that no longer have an original: simulation instead is the imitation of the operation of a process or system over time. In *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981), sociologist Jean Baudrillard investigates relationships between reality, sym-

sus, as well as the epitome of the intellectual misery and apathy afflicting modern society. Analogous to the shape of most of the aforementioned devices, the newly limited reality advocated by social order is square: a constellation of boxes of limited permeability and communication, a framework of supervised seeing, thinking and behaving⁶⁴.

The experiment is my inquiry into these contradictions, distortions, magnifications and profusion of perspectives: an observation of a repeated common gesture captured by the multiple viewpoints of the recording devices and screens gazing into the time and space of the performance. The 80-inch screen projects a live feed of the extreme close-up of a coffee cup and part of my hand onto the wall: we can distinguish the pixelation of the camera, the rough and vibrant colors, nearly overexposed; a 7.9-inch screen is placed on the floor showing edited sequences in black and white from a frontal medium shot of the table, the subject and the coffee cup; on a table, three screens of about 13 inches are streaming live feeds from three webcams variously located: the first on the floor at the side of the table; the second suspended overhead and the third hanging from a suspended wire, freely

bols, and society. Baudrillard devotes specific attention to the significations and symbolism of culture and media associated in constructing an understanding of the social milieu. Baudrillard argues that our current society has replaced all reality and meaning with symbols and signs, and that human experience is reduced to a simulation of reality. Baudrillard continues by saying that society and our lives have become so saturated with these simulacra that all meanings are meaningless by being infinitely mutable: a phenomenon that he calls the '*precession of simulacra*' (Baudrillard, 1994 [1981], p. 6, 19, 30-31).

64 Here, while not the focus of this phenomenological research on time, it may be worth looking at *phenomenotechnology*, e.g. Gilbert Simondon's *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects* (1958). In his book Simondon eliminates cliché conflict between man and machine, discharging the matter of opposition as a mere sign of ignorance. He argues that the technical object is in fact a mediator between man and nature and that the facile opposition between culture and technique, between man and machine is the result of an unbalanced cultural bias that recognised certain objects, granting signification and status to them (Simondon examples is the 'aesthetic object') while banishing others ('in particular the technical objects'), reducing them to 'utility objects' without signification (Simondon, 2017 [1958], p. 15-16).

oscillating in the wind of a fan. Overall ten cameras bring into focus different details of the space and a total of 13 screens (including the camera's) are projecting images of the performance.

The space becomes a heterogeneous source of ambiguities and ambivalence, as in Foucault's heterotopias: the axes of time seen, heard, scented and touched are simultaneously proposed; screens and cameras depict fragmented strokes or portions of time⁶⁵; the performer himself embodies his own time; so does the audience with their wandering attention. A time of perception entrapped within screens squared to different dimensions; a time of perception entrapped in a room; a time of perception entrapped within: in Merleau-Ponty's words, a perception that is 'opaque and brings into play my sensory fields and my primitive complicities with the world' (Merleau-Ponty, 2005 [1945], p. 448).

**Hidden within
Lost without
Umbra**

The camera provides all structure, the parameters of what can be seen, and what is outside the screen is out of our reach. The moving shot acts like consciousness, continuously providing an articulation of duration, posing itself as an intermediary between the framing of the set and the montage of the whole. It divides and subdivides duration, reunites the objects of the set into a sin-

⁶⁵ In the opening of *The Sacrifice* (1986) while the titles are still rolling, images fade in of details from Leonardo's *Adoration of the Magi* (1481); in *Solaris*, the camera pans closely over Pieter Brueghel's painting *Hunters in the Snow* (1565); at the end of *Andrei Rublev*, rich and saturated colours of Rublev's icons are shown in extreme close-up after a cross fade from the black and white moving images which have lasted for the previous three hours of the film. These few examples from Tarkovksy's filmography suggest that while selecting details of the paintings and icons, the camera selects what to reveal and what not to reveal; in which order, emphasis and magnitude; at what speed, angle and perspective; the meaning itself of the painting is modified and repurposed, rethought, through the lens of the camera. The visual is distorted and magnified, and the gaze is bound to decisions by the camera whose choices define the borders, shape and dimension of the visible.

gle identical duration; but this 'cinematographic consciousness is not us, the spectator, nor the hero; it is the camera'⁶⁶ (Deleuze, 1986 [1983], p. 20). The achieved consciousness of the camera brings forward the principle of geometric and dynamic form, within which the moving shot expands and contracts space, people and objects: 'it is movement itself which is decomposed and recomposed' (Deleuze, 1986 [1983], p. 20) reforming the set, anticipating and circulating. This process of magnification and dehumanization is characteristic of the camera and its gaze.

My reaction to thirst is asynchronous.

My reaction to the hand sinking into the wood.

To my body being shattered by sound waves.

To my eyes tracing rays of light in space.

None of these sense-perceptions is happening within a seamless time, but they happen in the time of the body, in a common time⁶⁷,

If the body is the measure of time then there must yet be several different kinds of bodily time.

Is time of the body a unit of time?

How do I distinguish my time from my friend's time?

And how do I reconcile them?⁶⁸

66 In my praxis the multiplicity of the camera eyes provides the visible; the duration of what can be seen and when; they act, decomposing the landscape (the performer, the table, the cup) and recomposing at will: an *exquisite corpse* whose internal relationships (duration, proportion, colour, texture) are modified, distorted and destabilised.

67 Which seems to suggest a Bergsonian 'pure duration': if space is not the measure of time but the body is (not the space that the body contains within, or the one that is contained without) then time is only the time of the body, a vessel of pure duration, emancipated from its presence in space: a transcendent body of time.

68 In Gaston Bachelard's *The Dialectic of Duration* (1936) the French philosopher argues, apropos Bergson's 'charming' philosophy of continuity, that the promise of duration comforted and intensified by fulfilment of positive experiences is ruptured by an apprehension that no experience is self-sufficient and hence no temporal experience is really pure: here Bachelard refers to Bergsonian 'pure duration', and argues that 'we need only look closely at any one of the images of continuity and we shall always see the hatched lines of discontinuity present there' (Bachelard, 2016 [1936], p. 110).

Merleau-Ponty says that ‘along with the world – as the cradle of significations, as the sense of all senses, and as the ground of all thoughts – we also discovered the means of overcoming the alternatives between realism and idealism, between contingency and absolute reason, and between non-sense and sense’: world that is, Merleau-Ponty concludes, the ‘homeland of all rationality’ (Merleau-Ponty, 2005 [1945], p. 454).

Is this homeland of rationality reciprocal to the rationality of machines, of computational processes, of information coded in binary digits?⁶⁹ The machine records and stores a file: the cycle can be repeated as long as it is needed, given the computational power and time available⁷⁰. A human being observing on a monitor the file which a recording device has previously stored, for example a stream of moving images, performs an entirely different act. None of the images is passively retained and orga-

69 In *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*, Ernst Hans Gombrich notices that the binary ‘on’ and ‘off’ principle has been applied in many media of art since the beginning of time: black and and red figured Cretan bulls from the classic Greek period; mosaics from eleventh century Antioch; chiaroscuro woodcuts of the sixteenth century; all whose principle was to decode positive from negative, white from black, light from absence of light. A reversal principle of ‘yes’ and ‘no’ was used to suggest the basic relationships of form in space. Everything was conceived in response to light. (Gombrich, 1969 [1960], p. 39-44). Perhaps together with film logic, as Bergson, Deleuze and Stiegler suggest, binary digits have also always been present?

70 In Chapter 4 ‘Corporeal Experience Between Selfhood and Otherness’ of *Phenomenology of the Alien*, Waldenfels outlines the problematic aspect of the Self and the Other, the paradoxical relation of the Body with itself and the intercorporeality (terminology borrowed by Waldenfels from Merleau-Ponty) which leads to the phenomenon of the Double, the alienness of the doppelgänger. Bringing into play Valery’s writing on the Other as ‘another like me, or perhaps a double of mine, that is the most magnetic abyss -- ape more than imitator -- reflex which responds, precedes, amazes’ (cited in Waldenfels, *Cahiers* [1894], Valery, p. 499), Waldenfels argues: ‘the alien gaze, to which I am exposed, consists in the fact that I feel myself being seen before seeing the Other as somebody who is seeing things, including myself’ (Waldenfels, 2011 [2006], p. 54). The camera instead cuts this connecting cord of ambiguous relationships, imposing itself between any possible communication. Finally the relations of the Self to the Other, of spectators to actors in a film screening, is a monologue spoken by the recording camera.

nized as per the machine: in fact quite the opposite. Perception is bound to recollection or imagination and to the percolation of the sensuous into a stream of consciousness: 'in order to appear to me, a previous experience or a possible one must be carried into being by a primary consciousness, which in this case is my inner perception of recollection or imagination'; and, Merleau-Ponty continues, 'ultimate consciousness is the consciousness of the present.' Hence time is not merely actual time, or Husserl's time that flows, but also time that knows itself: time as the unique gesture that harmonizes all its parts. It is what Hiedegger calls 'transcendence': an 'operative' intentionality allowing consciousness to convert intellectual memory, objects and things into ideas. 'My present transcends itself toward an imminent future and a recent past, and touches them there where they are, in the past and in the future themselves' (Merleau-Ponty, 2005 [1945], p. 441).

I attune to the time of the performance.

I became familiar with the space.

I use a white board (about seven meters tall) as a visual reference point.

My visual field captures a number of objects surrounding me.

I keep my eyes focused on a few words marked on the board.

I try to zero-out visual input as much as possible.

The first 15 minutes appear to me as the longest time period of the
overall performance.

I have difficulty moving forward in time: I am suspended, hanging.

Simultaneously my body is getting heavier.

My gaze is the most active sense.

The senses of touch and hearing are inert.

The gaze which I try constantly to reduce and shrink down to the minimum datum is all my attention.

It becomes involuntary.

Dead meat
Agonizing
Wavering light

While it is obviously impossible to completely deny input

from the senses, it is possible to minimize distractions and to focus on liminal perceptions, the impalpable fabric, the flow of time and space within and without⁷¹.

My eyes, constantly scanning the same word.
 I am aware of a few other words around it.
 After some time, they become mute signs, hieroglyphic.
 Meaning is corrupted by time.
 A general blurriness and distortion of the white board.
 The shapes of the words, and the objects around them merge into
 the constant Focus of my gaze on a specific spot.

Vision is occupied only with light and shadow.
 Stripes of flickering light cut the room perpendicular to me.
 Another set of stripes stack vertically in endless waves to the rear of
 the white board.
 I know that these are the wall curtains extending up about eight meters' high.
 Now they are reduced in my eyes to rays of light dancing in front of me.

breath	pixel	shapes	
heavy breath		texture	fabric
waves		oyster	gold stripe

This overflowing discourse is the subject of the film-performance: the experience of the performer, the experience of the audience, their intertwined relationship with time, with the space with their senses. The phenomenology of the experience goes hand in hand with its *phenomenotechnology*: the unstable relationship with the horizon of attention, the modality of selection of the senses, the apparatuses of attention and their inherent disturbance within a space.

71 In a previous research-project conducted in 2018 I experimented with white noise: I exposed myself to the sound of white noise flooding into ear-phones; the experiment lasted a few months with daily exposure of 2-3 hours; I also conducted a 24-hour non-stop immersion in white noise. The goal was to identify if and how zeroing out one sense (hearing) would affect the other senses and the perception of space and time.

Matryoshka: the promethean automata⁷²

I drink coffee for the first time about 17 minutes in.
I realize how much my throat is parched.
I can distinguish the passing of the liquid down my throat.
The sensation of the smell of the coffee reaches my nose.
A warm feeling in the lower part of my body as the coffee is received
in the stomach.
Suddenly my eyes are not primary.
It is my inner body with its own preoccupations and processes.
The gesture of drinking lasts less than a minute but thoroughly irradi-
ates my perception.
My attention turns inward to my mouth, throat, nose and stomach for
a good number of minutes⁷³.

My reflections here allude to the effect of time in relation to the senses: if and how the time of seeing differs from the time of hearing, or from the times of tasting, touching and smelling, and if and how those differences can occur synchronously. It is furthermore an observation of conditions where a specific sense (hearing, sight, touch, taste, or smell) takes over perception of

72 Each of a set of brightly painted hollow wooden dolls of varying sizes, designed to fit inside each other (Oxford Dictionary Online). In Greek mythology, Prometheus shaped man out of mud, and Athena imbued life into the clay figure by her own breath.

73 In Chapter 11 (The Body as the Source of Values and Rhythms) of his *Gesture and Speech*, the palaeontologist André Leroi-Gourhan suggests that human perception is bound to biological structures where sight and hearing are the senses made dominant by our evolution for purposes of reference in space. Nevertheless he argues that human evolution has created a network of symbols and values that have tended to 'create a time and a space proper to humankind, to imprison behaviour within a checker work of scales and measures, to assume concrete form in "aesthetics" in the narrower sense'. The palaeontologist continues imagining alternative aesthetic sensuous forms: 'the "syntacties" or "olfacties," paintings in smells, symphonies of touch, architectures of balanced vibrations, poems of salt or acid taste, we should have had if touch or smell or a subtle perception of vibrations had been our principal senses!'. He concludes that while those forms are not completely inaccessible to us they have found a limited space in art (Leroi-Gourhan, 1993 [1964], p. 283).

time in activities that enhance one sense alone while zeroing out others, and whether the hypothesis of a multilayered perception of time can be observed, validated and analyzed among the five senses⁷⁴.

Thoughts and Notes on the Film Experiment

This performative experiment, entitled *Time: A Study in the Specious Present for Coffee and Camera*, evoked a multitude of distinct observations. The medium of film has a characteristic ability to play with time – speeding things up or slowing them down. But beyond this: time in film can be recombined and fragmented (montage); it can be sliced and sampled; it can be re-proposed and juxtaposed with new material (repetition and the Kuleshov effect) which then creates temporal gaps; or with a combination of slicing, sampling, and repetitions (similar to comb filters in electronic music processing), time can be completely altered.

My experiment is a composition in time using film as medium. By creating multiple perspectives on temporal events through the use of multiple cameras, with pre-recorded material and multiple screens, the experiment takes on characteristics of the medium itself, thereby intensifying my first-person experience of changed temporal perspectives. By using my body as the object/subject of this experiment, a number of changed temporal relationships emerge: continuous recording of hours of stillness (sitting immobile) lengthened and stretched duration; and within that lengthened temporal frame, a repetitive gesture (lifting

74 *The Varieties of Sensory Experience* (1991) is a valuable collection of articles in anthropology and related disciplines (psychology, linguistics, cultural history) dealing with the senses: the essays point to a bias in Western epistemology which confers hegemony to sight in social, intellectual and aesthetic life, together with an acknowledgement that the patterning of sense experience varies from one culture to another. Moreover through investigation of the diversity of sensorial experience, the thirteen contributions in the book provide different perspectives on the construction of reality (*The varieties of Sensory Experience; A sourcebook in the Anthropology of the Senses* edited by David Howes).

the cup of coffee) further modified the flow: sometimes elongating, sometimes shortening, or creating gaps and vacuums within the subjective temporal perception.

The practice of stillness for a protracted amount of time, intersected by the repetitive action of drinking coffee, also generates an intense connection of the body to the flux of time: time embodied by and because of the lack of stimuli, by the boredom of prolonged inactivity, by the emergence of states of bodily discomfort and numbness. The sensation of duration of time has been drastically challenged by the logic of the practice: evaluation of length, pauses and intervals between events are hardly conceivable while events themselves remained anchored in stasis, in an opaque continuum of time.

Furthermore, this investigation brought to the fore distinctions in regard to temporal patterns provoked by the practice: a 30-minute cycle for the gesture of sipping coffee and a long pause. Within this cycle I experienced anticipation of the temporal path (when I could foresee the approach of the next cycle), and the truncating of anticipation (when I became lost in the temporal continuum without any instinctive sense of temporal breadth).

The temporal repetition of the same gesture (sipping coffee): this repetition was different from the previous 30 minutes cycle, because it implied an ability to break down individual movements needed to sip the coffee, but I experienced a mnemonic short-circuit (inability to recall the sequences of gestures and the number of repetitions) and something which I call muscle memory loss (by slowing down the process and breaking down the individual gestures needed to accomplish lifting of the cup, the actions are suddenly no longer instinctive and the order of the steps is blurred).

Working at a different level, another pattern I noticed could be described as internal repetition of fast-paced temporal loops (when the work of memory is taken up by a laborious, continuous focus on being still in the chair, remaining focused, remaining aware of the cup, attending to the long cycles of waiting, etc).

While the senses are simultaneously engaged, perceptual processes tend to modulate focus from one sense to another in relation to the length of the stimuli, or conversely, the lack thereof. Moreover, the conscious practice of convergence on one specific sense of perception (for example staring at a word written on the white board) generates, after a certain amount of time, a zeroing of the ability to focus vision, achieving in fact the opposite of the desired result. Overexposure or overstimulation in this case produces an interval, a pause of the perceptual ability to generate meaning, equal to the effect of boredom and lack of stimuli.

smaller and smaller	definition blur blur blur
more blur curving curving	circle curving rotating
	skewing
blink	more blink

The experiment could have been conducted in many other ways: for example, choosing a different repetitive gesture, modifying the number of cameras/screens, further elongating the performance or changing the order and ratio of the events within the score of the piece. The actual rendition is the result of evaluation made during the experimental phase of the project and the realization of the framework of the piece: it comes from trials made on shorter and smaller experiments and from estimating the feasibility of the project and its limitations. Moreover, it comes with a clear compositional and therefore musical aspect in its development, structure, rhythm and tempi.

As suggested in the introduction, the recording of video footage with continuous sequences many hours long is technically challenging, because most cameras are not designed for such a length, and many problems can (and did) occur in the actual doing. A duration freed from mechanical limits, extended to a day or perhaps more, would have been ideal, but it was not feasible at this stage, and compromises were made taking into account the aim of this experiment.

I consider the experiment was surprisingly revealing of its theoretical underpinnings: while some of the outcome appears

predictable (tiredness of the body, to name the most obvious); other elements of the process could not have been brought out only by an evaluation of the related theory: the distinct sensation of part of the body melting into the wooden table, the intense bodily reaction to scattered sounds, the loss of relation to an external time, and the perceptual short-circuit of the senses which happened in the process (numbness, amplification, aberration).

This chapter's investigation, and this entire book, is an attempt to distil, within a theoretical framework, the experience of art in the making and its connection with the senses. Within differences and repetitions, the experiment questions the hierarchy of the senses and their intermingled relationship. It questions what lies in between, the liminal, in the background and in the foreground: the space of time and the time of space. It questions the time of perception and the time of the senses: the sensuous, the rhizome, the intangible, the intuitive, retention and protention. It questions the present, the specious present, the directionality and the axis of perception. It questions the subject and object of time: the 'I' and the other, the 'Alien' and 'I', the time within and without. It questions the phenomenon of time, a question with multifaceted perceptual and philosophical implications.

II. Dance

Skins: An Experiment With 'Ma' (間)

'The hand, man's outer brain'
Immanuel Kant (1724 - 1804)

In this experiment I look into the effect of altering the human skin and expanding haptic feedback from a surface (wall, paper, plastic, water) over a prolonged period of time. As I investigate how this might affect our conscious relationship with the space that surrounds us, I notice: that the space outside my paper, plastic, or water skin seems to vanish from my conscious horizon; that the extreme focus on slowing my actions distils time and makes it almost impossible to notice; that, through the continuous contact with the surface of the wall, my body feels as if it is dissolving into space; and that bodily tension and anxiety always follows, appearing hours or days later (and then lasting for months).

This recalls Hijikata's *Shiki no tame no nijūnana-ban* (*Twenty-Seven Nights for Four Seasons*, 1972), where heaviness and stillness of Hijikata's movements suggest a condition of near-stasis, a condition that Nario Gōda describes as an 'extended time being absorbed into the body's being'; the dancers' bodies absorb time, to become a bubble of time-space within the landscape of the stage (Gōda in Kayo, 2016, p. 63). Merleau-Ponty also comes to my aid with his observation on the sensation of smoothness, the way in which a surface relates to the time needed for our tactile exploration, or the modulated movement of our hand. To paraphrase the French philosopher, someone who touches and identifies the rough and the smooth in a wall (of plastic, paper, water, skin), does not presume the parts of the wall nor the relations between them; he does not consciously think of it: 'it is not consciousness which touches or feels, but the hand' (Merleau-Ponty, 2005 [1945], p. 329 - 330).

The Experiment

My body is contained within a plastic and paper skin that is contained within four walls of a room, that is contained within a building, in a city, a country, a continent, on tectonic plates, on the planet, in the galaxy. Magnifications and amplification across the perceptual field are characteristic of this performance: in the womb of plastic, paper, water, human skin and concrete, time and space collide in syncretistic dedifferentiation⁷⁵.

The experiment is divided into four parts: touch is the common denominator. In the first part, the body is enveloped in plastic skin; in the second, human skin alone; in the third, paper skin; in the fourth, the body is submerged in water. Three out of four of these exercises have been conducted in a dance studio through a process of six months' physical training and three months' rehearsals: the dance studio is also the venue for the final performance.

The studio space is broadly eight meters by eight meters in size. The floor is covered with a light grey vinyl Marley dance flooring; two walls are fitted with four large windows, two per wall. The walls are painted white while the window frame is red. The light coming from outside feels warm, thanks to colored stained glass windowpanes. The ceiling is about six meters in height: two large air con units hang from the ceiling to cool the space, while six suspended lights provide a cold and clinical light after seven in the evening – sundown, when light must

75 This is the syncretistic spontaneity sketched out in Anton Ehrenzweig's *The Hidden Order of Art* (1971) as a 'comprehensive and precise grasp of a total view in which the elements are variable and exchangeable' (Ehrenzweig, 1971, p. 41). The author refers specifically to the relationship between scientific abstraction and unconscious dedifferentiation: he states that the latter describes a dynamic process 'by which the ego scatters and represses surface imagery'. Thus the proliferation of new images in art and of new concepts in science is intensified by an existing antagonism between two opposite structural principles. He argues that 'the analysis of abstract gestalt elements is pitted against the syncretistic grasp of the total object, focusing on detail against complex scanning, fragmentation against wholeness, differentiation against dedifferentiation' (Ehrenzweig, p. 19).

be switched on. The two remaining walls are arranged as follows: one completely empty and the other, provided with a set of long white block seats that can accommodate up to about 20 audience members. The water skin experiment was conducted in my personal residence, using the bathtub. The environment here has a different relevance since the work has been designed to be videoed as close up as possible⁷⁶.

In these experiments, I am explicitly connecting my work to Hijikata Tatsumi's *ankoku butō* method of body transformation⁷⁷. In *butō* the human body is emptied of its original content: it is the Artaudian body without organs, in its Deleuzian reiteration: a body without a will of its own, a puppet, a vessel hosting an alien body⁷⁸: *The Body as a Vessel*, per the title of Mikami Kayo's book on *ankoku butō* and Hijikata. The schizophrenic body of Antonin Artaud, the Deleuzian body, freely operating without organizational structures imposed on its constituent parts: a self-regulating machine, potentially non-human, this is Hijikata's body in the *butō* practice of emptiness and transformation. *Butō* asks the performer to renounce his own body, in order to develop sensitivity to a multitude of potential other beings: animals, insects, objects, surfaces. As theatre director Suzuki Tadashi suggests, Hijikata's work reveals a 'consciousness of

76 Nevertheless fragments of the setting are visible: bluish tiles surrounding the tub, the moon-white ceramic of the tub's structure, an aluminium handle, and a few scattered decorations over the tiles.

77 *ankoku butō* is translated as 'the dance of darkness' 暗黒舞踊

78 At the start of what will become *ankoku butō* method, Hijikata drew inspiration from a number of artists: specifically from his close relationship with Yukio Mishima, and by entering into contact with the work of Jean Genet and Antonin Artaud, important sources for Hijikata's pieces. The *Revolt of the Body* (1968), for example, one of the major pieces of Hijikata, was directly inspired by Artaud's *The Crowned Anarchist* (1933). I notice here two other cinematographic works of relevance in this context: Artaud's *The Butcher's Revolt* (1930), and George Franju's *Le Sang des Bêtes* (1949). A preoccupation with the body, characteristic of the works of Artaud and Franju, is disorged in the metamorphic body of Hijikata's *ankoku butō*.

time and space, similar to that of *kabuki*⁷⁹ and *nō*⁸⁰ theater, which emerges, paradoxically, 'from an acute awareness of the flesh' (Tadashi in Kayo, 2016, p. 28).

Time, Emplacement and Touch

A notion of emplacement⁸¹ reverberates through this practice: the concept is resonant with *ankoku butō*, and with the concept of 'Ma' (間)⁸² a word that stands for pause, gap, or emptiness in the Japanese philosophical tradition, and which is a fundamental aspect of *butō* training⁸³.

79 Kabuki is a traditional Japanese dance-drama that originated in the early Edo period, formed initially as a female dance performance, and later developing into the current all-male theatrical form: women were in fact banned from performing in kabuki theatre in 1629. Kabuki is characterised by exaggerated gestures and body movements, highly stylized song, mime, and dance. It embraces historical plays, domestic dramas, and dance pieces.

80 *Nō* theatre, performed since the 14th century, is a major form of classical Japanese dance-drama. Often based on tales from traditional literature where a supernatural being is transformed into human form to narrate the story, *Nō* adopts an extremely codified performance system, combining the use of masks, costumes and performance objects, into dance-based acts. Thus it requires highly trained actors and musicians: the story is predominantly conveyed by stylized conventional gestures where traditional masks represent ghosts, women, deities, and demons, to name a few.

81 In his introduction to the collected essays *Empire of the Senses, the sensual culture reader*, David Howes emphasises the recurrence of emplacement as a pivotal term of analysis in relation to the senses. He argues that while 'embodiment' alludes to an introspective integration of mind and body, emplacement instead suggests an intertwined relationship of body-mind-environment.

82 Quoted in Richard B. Pilgrim's *Intervals (ma) in space and time: foundations for a religio-aesthetic paradigm in Japan* (1986), contemporary architect Isozaki Arata argues that while the Cartesian duality of space-time, rooted in a homogeneous and infinite continuum, is the basis of the modern philosophical thought in the West, in Japan, space and time are conceived as omnipresent and analogous. Rather than being separated from each other, space and time relate: 'thus, space was perceived as identical with the events or phenomena occurring in it; that is, space was recognized only in its relation to time-flow' (Arata in Pilgrim, 1986, p. 256).

83 *Butō* is a Japanese dance practice that germinated in the last years of the

'Ma' transcends a definition of space and time intervals. Although it may be considered as in-betweenness, 'Ma' stands at the edge of 'a particular mode of experience that "empties" the objective/subjective world(s)' (Pilgrim, 1986, p. 256), collapsing any dichotomies and differentiation of space-time relation⁸⁴.

In my practice, the four experiments (with plastic, paper, water, and naked skin) deal with the search for 'Ma', the obliteration of the body, or the release of its transformative potential, through an intensified focus on the human sense of touch⁸⁵. Thus sens-

20th century's fifth decade. Under the loose umbrella of the term *butō*, a number of practitioners who developed conceptual, gestural and choreographic movements with diverse practices and patterns, have been placed together. To distinguish between some of these, for both conceptual and choreographic reasons, three forms of *butō* can be considered distinct: Hijikata's *ankoku butō*, Kazuo Ohno's *butō* and Min Tanaka's so-called *body weather butō*. Importantly, while throughout their lives Hijikata and Ohno stayed close to the conceptual *fons et origo* of *butō*, Min Tanaka, who was associated with the work of Hijikata until the late 90's, broke with the notion of *butō* thereafter, and no longer used the term as rubric for his choreographic work. The three approaches can be broadly outlined as follows: Hijikata's work was fundamentally choreographed, with details punctiliously rehearsed throughout, based on specific directions given by Hijikata himself, with the aid of sketches, elaborate exercises and performance instructions. Ohno's pieces consisted of an improvisatory framework combined with general choreographic directions, cue-points and an overarching trajectory of the work. Significantly, Hijikata, Kazuo and Yoshito Ohno, the latter being Kazuo's son, collaborated many times over the span of their lives. Lastly, Min Tanaka's *body weather* was a form of training that heavily involved agricultural labour; the dancers were asked to live together and spend time working in the fields. Min Tanaka believed this kind of training, combining physical and environmental stimulation, functioned as a dance pedagogy. He therefore abandoned the traditional path for imposing technique on the dancer's body. Between 1986 and 2010, he hosted dance workshops based on *body weather* concepts. I acknowledge that in the wide panorama of today's *butō* practises, many other dancers and choreographers could have been included: however the goal here is to provide an introductory background to the origins of this dance practice, and to address thereafter the relevant connection between *butō* and time perception.

84 See also the concluding paragraph of this book: *Time in Dance* (p. 36), for further considerations on space and time in correlation with contemporary spacetime quantum models.

85 Serres comments that many philosophers refer to sight, less to hearing, and very few of them trust the tactile or the olfactory senses. A process of

ing space and understanding its implications are crucial to the unfolding of the practice. While working in the studio, I experimented thoroughly with the materials and surfaces that belong to that environment, in order to relate closely to it⁸⁶.

When I embark upon the exploration of the studio, I start off with the walls which enclose it: this decision matures into an investigation of the characteristics of these solid structures, operating through touch as a tool. I start off using fingers as probes, and I end up naked, using the entire body to differentiate and further investigate haptic feedback provided by the surface of the wall in direct contact with the surface of my skin and body parts⁸⁷. Fleshly and bony parts under the skin gather a variety of feedback by engaging with the wall's solidity: I give myself completely to it, entering into a somatic relationship with the wall⁸⁸.

abstraction is in place, argues Serres, that divides the sentient body, eliminating taste, smell and touch, and retaining only sight and hearing, intuition and understanding. Serres notes that to abstract is to 'tear the body to pieces' rather than simply to leave it behind. He concludes: 'I retreat in the face of difficulty by erecting a palace of abstractions' (Serres, 2017 [2008], p. 26).

86 One exercise of *butō* consists of the transformation of the body into objects: Yoshito Ohno recalls his father Kazuo becoming a wall. 'On clinging to a wall, Kazuo doesn't grow into a human or plantlike figure but turns instead into an inorganic formless mass': he becomes almost pure matter; his gaze vanishes into the look of a dead person; his human characteristics and all traces of personal psychological traits are effaced. Yoshito Ohno continues by tracing a comparison with *nō* theatre masks: 'a *nō* mask acts as a wall between the public and the player; it effectively conceals his body from view' (Ohno, 2004, p. 59).

87 A striking variety of perceptions emerges from contact of the wall with different parts of my body's epidermis: fingertips allow me to discern imperceptible changes in the wall texture, the tiny cracks, the paint and stucco applied to the wall; my back seems more suitable to discern fluctuations in temperature and firmness of the wall; the skin of my face samples the discomfort produced by variations in the grain of the wall: here with my nose in close proximity with the surface, the sense of smell adds important information about the characteristic of the wall I am sampling; lastly, my feet are sensitive to the variety of smoothness, coarseness and unevenness of the surface.

88 The anthropologist Ashley Montagu, in his *Touching, the Human Significance of the Skin* (1971), reminds us that every sort of experience we perceive, process, verbalise, directly or indirectly, starts in the womb, with the maternal experience of the embryo, and the tactile sensation given by the skin (Mon-

It struck me that this relationship is more intense than expected, vivid sensations recollected here as they sprang to mind: discomfort, a pleasant corporeal feeling tinted with eroticism, warmth, coldness, and aches, a sensation of enfoldment⁸⁹.

To recall what was mentioned earlier in passing: 'When one of my hands touches the other, the hand that moves functions as subject and the other as object' says Merleau-Ponty (Merleau-Ponty, 2005 [1945], p. 329 - 330). Tactile phenomena, tactile qualities such as roughness and smoothness, disappear if the exploratory movement is removed. Thus movement and time are not only an objective condition of knowing touch, but a phenomenal component of tactile information. According to Merleau-Ponty, smoothness is not a collection of similar pressures, but instead it is the way in which a surface relates to the time needed for our tactile exploration, or modulates the movement of our hand: hence the many modes of appearance of tactile phenomenon cannot be deduced from an elementary tactile perception⁹⁰. 'Someone who touches and who identifies the rough and

tagu, 1971, p. 38 and following). While by sight I can recognize the difference between a tree and a column made of concrete, it is by touch that I enter into relation with the object. To verify and confirm that my perception is correct, the only sense that is absolutely necessary is the sense of touch.

89 To understand the importance of the skin in the tactile experience and its functions in the development of the person, it is enough to look at the well-known drawings of the sensory and motor homunculi, which are designed to show the proportionate representations of tactile functions in the cortex. The figures show us how large is the representation of the hand, particularly for what concerns the thumb and index finger, and the gigantic representation of the lips. Thus 'as a sensory system the skin is much the most important organ system of the body' (Montagu, 1971, p. 6 -7). Appendix fig. 15, p. 59.

90 The French philosopher also distinguishes 'surface tactile phenomena' (*Oberflächentastungen*) where a two-dimensional tactile object offered to touch, quite firmly resists penetration; three-dimensional tactile medium, comparable to areas of colour, for example a current of air or water through which we drag our hand; and the tactile transparency layer (*durchtastete Flächen*). Dampness, oiliness and stickiness, concludes Merleau-Ponty, belong to a more complex layer of structures. Various configurations of the exploratory movement are in place, and the corresponding phenomena cannot be regarded as a mere assemblage of elementary tactile sensations: 'if I touch a piece of linen

the smooth does not presume their elements nor the relations between them, he does not conceive of them thoroughly'. The philosopher concludes that 'it is not consciousness which touches or feels, but the hand' (Merleau-Ponty, 2005 [1945], p. 329 - 330).

The Womb of Time

Gurnemann: 'here time becomes space'
(Richard Wagner, *Parsifal*, Act 1, Scene 1)

The importance of 'Ma', the in-betweenness, the liminal space-time around bodies and objects is fundamental to Hijikata's *ankoku butō: Seisaku*⁹¹, in speaking of *butō*, highlights this concept. The connection between things happens in this liminality: invisible strings, per an example of his, constantly modify the relationship between persons, objects, space, and time. These strings act in the liminal space of 'Ma', they are fluid, they shift ceaselessly, reacting to the alteration of circumstance.

Ankoku butō has developed a method regarding time, Seisaku continues: condensing historical time into a small place, compressing the body of history which can be collapsed into a human body. Like the Nike of Samothrace: by becoming the marble and the shape of the Hellenistic statue, we become the history that has passed since its creation in about the 2nd century BC, up

material or a brush', argues Merleau-Ponty, 'between the bristles of the brush and the threads of the linen, there does not lie a tactile nothingness, but a tactile space devoid of matter, a tactile background' (Merleau-Ponty, 2005 [1945], p. 329 - 330).

91 In the '70s, at the time of the making of the choreography for *Shiki no tame no nijūnana-ban* (Twenty-Seven Nights for Four Seasons, 1972), one of the major pieces in Hijikata Tatsumi's body of work, Seisaku was a close collaborator. I met Seisaku online on Zoom, thanks to the indefatigable assistance and contribution of Kae Ishimoto, Director of the Hijikata Archive of Keio University Art Center (KUAC) of Japan. In our meeting, we discussed Hijikata's work, time perception in *ankoku butō*, fundamental aspects of the training, and Seisaku's personal experience in working with Hijikata. Seisaku is at present still teaching, giving workshops, and working on his own choreography.

to the present day. A human body replaces Nike, not by showing movement or surface, but by altering the quality of the space around the body: again without acting as representation but by provoking changes in the space-time relationship. Time passes through the body, discharges outside it, and fills up the space of a Nike emplaced in the present moment⁹².

The example of the Nike of Samothrace brought forward by Seisaku relates closely to this research. My experiment connects to time via an anthropological, sculptural, architectural, and biological approach within the *modus operandi* of a phenomenological investigation: the four pieces presented in this chapter engage with the cycle of biological life and mythological returns; with a sculptural and architectural dimension, an embryonic prenatal becoming, the dissolution of the human body in time and space⁹³. Here I am connecting ramifications generated by my

92 This resonates with the *Mnemosyne Atlas* (1924 - unfinished): Aby Warburg's attempt to map the 'afterlife of antiquity'. Warburg suggests that images of great symbolic, intellectual, and emotional power emerge in Western antiquity and then reappear and are reanimated in the art and cosmology of later times and places, from Alexandrian Greece to Weimar Germany. Warburg believes that these symbolic images, when juxtaposed and then placed in the correct sequence, could raise immediate, synoptic insights into the afterlife of pathos-charged images: thus the *Mnemosyne Atlas* aspired to make the ineffable process of historical change and recurrence immanent and explicit. In Warburg's plan, the *Atlas* would chart both the afterlife of the classical language of gestures in Renaissance art and beyond, as well as the migration of Greek cosmological symbolism up to the moment when Giordano Bruno and Johannes Kepler tried to reconcile the legacies of classical and astrological thought with the discoveries of early modern astronomy. Moreover the *Atlas* functions cartographically, too, exploring how meanings are constituted by movement of themes and styles between East and West, North and South. Transforming the cartographic and scientific notions of what an 'atlas' ought to be, Warburg creates a dynamic 'thought-space' where cosmographic and art-historical images reveal how subjective and objective forces shape the culture of the West.

93 In Chapter 8 of Johan Huizinga's *Homo Ludens* (1938) the Dutch historian discusses the elements of mythopoiesis. A passage is relevant here, which is related to Greek antiquity and the feast of Dionysus: Huizinga argues that both tragedy and comedy derive from play: a play-function that the historian considers fundamental in the cultural and social development of the human being in history. Referring to the Attic comedy that grew out of the licentious *komos*, in

practice, by the close affinity of the aforementioned assertions to the process and outcomes of the experiments, and by the relationships between all these notions and Hijikata's *ankoku butō*.

Plastic Skin: Roaming Consciousness

In the experiment with the plastic skin, the demarcated space of the studio, the emplacement of my own body in it, alludes to a womb: the studio is enclosed by walls, yet it is exposed in a warm and filtered light coming from the opaque windows. The body is bound, enclosed by the translucent cavity of the plastic skin, wandering inside the womb, the studio. Outsideness and insideness collide because of the womb: the body, the plastic, the walls, the windows, amalgamate into syncretistic dedifferentiation, into the inbetweenness of 'Ma'. Physical objects, and bodies, are released from their peripheral demarcations, from their corporeal distinctness: all of them fold into the oneness of the womb⁹⁴. Perception of time in this practice tends to disperse in

which in the so-called *parabasis* the chorus faces the audience, pointing at them with taunts and derision 'the phallic costume of the players, the disguising of the chorus in animal-masks are traits of remote antiquity'; Aristophanes's wasp, birds and frogs that are the subject of his comedies, carries the 'whole tradition of theriomorphic personification' (Huizinga, 2014 [1938], p. 144).

94 Here the spatial interaction of colours and shapes in paintings as described by Ehrenzweig emerges: taking into account Josef Albers's *Homage to the Square*, the Austrian theorist observes that in painting, the stronger the figure effect, the weaker the colour interaction between figure and ground: a strong shape tends to stand out as a figure against an indistinct ground. Thus in relation to colours, a weakening of line (shape and form) is sufficient to compensate for loss in saturation and interaction, while strong lines tend to diminish, to inhibit the interaction of colours, causing them to recede, detach and isolate from the subject matter. Ehrenzweig, commenting on the work of Mark Rothko and Patrick Heron, notices that 'the use of the weakest possible forms, such as insubstantial circles and quadrangles insecurely suspended against a more solid ground', lacking spatial depth, 'suggest a mystic-oceanic feeling, of individual existence lost in the universe'; he further observes that 'the annihilation of space indicates a dreamlike level of experience where our commonsense concepts of space and time have no meaning' (Ehrenzweig, 2014 [1953], p. 153 - 159).

the continuum of the body's movements: while there is no conscious attempt to recall subdivisions of time, I nevertheless seem able to locate recurrent phases of time.

The choice of a piece of music that could complement investigation into the temporality of *butō*, the space, and my own body's perception of time, brought me to the work of a composer whose specific research deals with psychoacoustics and acoustic characteristics of space: Alvin Lucier (1931 - 2021). The structure of this piece is recursive: at the start, Lucier's *Wind Shadows* (1994), a composition for trombone and oscillators⁹⁵, punctuates and envelopes space and body for about ten minutes; afterwards 20 minutes of silence ensues, whereupon *Wind Shadows* returns for ten minutes more (the musical piece's overall duration is in fact about 20 minutes).

Lucier's work often deals with elements of psychoacoustics⁹⁶: in *Wind Shadows* sound waves generated by oscillators are played together with real instruments, in this case a wind instrument, the trombone. Sound produced by oscillators is stable, and the spectrum of its frequencies, uniform⁹⁷ as one would expect from an electric machine. Conversely, acoustic instruments, regardless of the exactitude of their design, deal with imperceptible variations of the human player, in this case, the instrumentalist's blowing pressure. Thus an engaging relationship arises between the oscillators' electric signals, exact and consistent, and

95 The trombone is a musical instrument belonging to the brass family. Sound is produced when the player's lips vibrate through the mouthpiece (embouchure), causing the air inside the instrument to vibrate sympathetically. An oscillator is an electroacoustic device generating signals with cyclic waveforms, measured in Hertz. The faster the oscillator vibrates, the more cycles there will be in a given time and the higher the frequency (pitch). The oscillating circuit generates a waveform that can be amplified and used as a sound source.

96 Psychoacoustics deals with the scientific study of psychological responses of sound perception and audiology: or how humans perceive sounds, including noise, speech, and music. Psychoacoustics includes a vast field of research subjects: psychology, acoustics, physics, biology, etc.

97 Frequency is the number of occurrences of a repeating event per unit of time. Pitch is a frequency but is not a purely objective property: it is also a psychoacoustic subjective experience of sound.

the human player, *in potentia* fallible and volatile⁹⁸. More than once, even when the music faded after the initial ten minutes of the performance, I had the impression that sounds of the piece returned at various times over and over, because of an acoustic affinity between sounds of the surroundings and Lucier's composition, in *canon perpetuus*.

There is a sensible affinity between the fluctuating plastic skin's layer entirely covering the dance floor, gently billowing and swaying in the fans' wind, and the slow recurrent dwindling and waning of the sound waves in Lucier's dialogue between trombone and oscillators. The body, traversed by sound waves, attunes to resonances of the acoustic space within and without: the plastic skin entirely covering the body creates a resonating chamber for the incoming sound – the room is enveloped, flooded by sound waves.

The 30-minute cycle follows a choreographic intent in which exploration of the three available walls is roughly equalized, with about ten minutes' time to travel from one wall surface to another. This is not to say that the travel happens at a constant pace. On the contrary: between movements, I often take long pauses; the tempi in between are not predetermined, but the overall length of the whole segment, the 30-minute cycle of the choreography, is. Nevertheless I am able to keep pace to reach the end of one wall, after covering the other two, within a 30-minute span, and find myself consistently aware of the new cycle to come and the space that has meanwhile been covered.

I notice an acute awareness of time that seems to characterize this practice: as a performer I am able to feel a certain recurrence of events in time (say the appearance of the music every 30 minutes), yet I am not making any conscious effort to count the time needed, nor introduce any mechanics for counting units of time. I am sensing, touching time, without being trapped in the habit

98 The choice of this composition was made according to an instinctive inkling: early on, I felt the sound quality and texture of the music melting into the studio space, not erasing the acoustic quality of the studio, but instead coexisting with it. Sounds coming from the outside melted into the piece, resonating and reverberating as a whole in the studio.

of counting, or conceptualizing time. This quality of approaching the performance, a deliberate trust in intuitive knowledge of time, opens doors to observations.

My body's oneness disintegrates, absorbed, emplaced within the wall.
My consciousness, floating inside the room.

I can see myself, I can see the wall, the windows, the grey Marley, a number of objects scattered around.

My awareness of the entire space is heightened.

I keep as much of my body's epidermis as possible in continuous contact with the wall.

I limit myself by keeping a narrow focus to deepen and amplify the bond with the surface of the wall⁹⁹.

Human Skin: Fast-Paced Slowness

In the experiment with naked skin, the body is in direct relationship with the wall, without any other materials to negotiate with¹⁰⁰. Here the intention is to maximize haptic feedback provided by prolonged contact, skin on skin, of human and wall surface. In this part of the experiment, more than in the previous one, attention to staying in close proximity to the wall is fundamental: movements are constrained by the necessity of maximizing this proximity. Feet and legs must twist into anomalous positions to maintain contact with the wall's surface. The upper parts of the body, torso, arms, hands and head, embrace the wall, which with its straight and hard surface, allows for very limited interpenetration, aside from rare adjustment of the bony parts of the human body.

In this scenario, the body is constantly negotiating with the

99 I have evaluated that excessive exposure to multiple inputs, for example crossing the floor, or using other objects in the space as props, would not have helped to keep the attention sharp and focused.

100 The body, for most of the rehearsals, is naked or wears only a ballet belt, a tiny garment tailored as underwear used by dancers to minimise exposure of genitalia while remaining completely free to move as if with the body bare.

need for balance: the wall often tends to force back, to wear away a neutral gravity point of the body's weight. In the beginning of the practice, I often struggled to find a compromise between intensifying contact with the wall and maintaining the body's balance, without falling off the wall or losing momentum. Only after multiple attempts during intense and prolonged sessions could a new balance, a new body emerge, human and wall as one. This novel phenomenological body is the origin and emplacement of the explorations in the studio.

Choreographic choices were made here in consideration of the nakedness of the setting, and with an aim to minimize interference from other inputs: the wall and human body in dialogue throughout the piece, communicating each other's sensations while playing a sort of duet. Nothing is more essential here than the prolonged momentum of this silent dialogue, punctuated only by the recurrence of the same piece of music used in the plastic skin experiment, Lucier's *Wind Shadows*¹⁰¹.

Unlike the other two experiments, here skin is touched directly by air and by the surface of the wall, without a further layer to acknowledge and negotiate with. This directness of sensuous experience, the convergence and amplification of the sense of touch in this experiment, is overwhelming at first, requiring sharp focus and abundant energy.

I need to shift my left hand index finger five centimeters on the surface of the wall with a constant and smooth speed and direction. How will the remaining fingers and the hand shift as a result of my index finger changing direction and elongation?

101 This is perhaps the only conceptual element in common with the plastic skin experiment: movement-wise there are similarities at times, solely because exploration of the walls required a select set of movements that soon became the performer's 'body apparatus'. The reason behind the choice of this piece of music is quite similar to the plastic skin experiment: the sound quality and texture of the music coexisting with sounds inside the studio. The sounds coming from the outside melt within the piece, resonating and reverberating as a whole in the studio: an endless *canon perpetuus*, coalescing the space and time of the performance.

How will my body reposition forearm, arm, shoulder, neck, head, and upper part of the back, to balance out changes occurring in the left arm?
 How will my eyes follow the trajectory of my index finger?
 What if the surface changes texture, smoothness or quality in those five centimeters?
 Will I have to adjust the stretch of the finger?
 Avoid falling into a treacherous state of conscious analysis¹⁰².

An observer sitting at a distance of say ten meters from the performer's action will perceive very little of the struggles above, and most probably the five-centimeter movement of one finger of the performer's hand will appear almost insignificant... Butō is often considered a form of dance where movements are slow, but this perspective is inaccurate, Seisaku comments. Movements in butō originate from reality rather than from a lexicon of stylized dance moves: the different tempi that occur in butō are the result of the perception of spatial and temporal distances, based on the point of view of the body involved in the movement. Seisaku explains with an example: by following with my eyes, and the shifting of my head, a rapid and restless flying insect, say a fly, my movement will be slower when the insect is far away and gradually becomes faster as it passes right in front of me. For most of this, the body's movement will therefore appear slow from someone else's point of view, but in reality, it is only a matter of perspective: a real experience of following a moving object and the distance of that object from us¹⁰³.

102 In my practice much attention has been paid to details of the movements: to the shifting of the fingers on the surface of the wall, to the body's relentless bond with the wall, to the slightest movements of toes, feet, hands, neck, back and the rest of the body. Achieving simultaneously a higher degree of sensitivity to different body parts requires much focus and energy: time is needed to develop and sustain momentum.

103 Seisaku adds that at the start, butō focuses on details: minute movements of body limbs (hands, fingers, facial muscles) that imperceptibly grow in magnitude and breadth. A misconception arises regarding the slowness of butō because the focus is primarily on detailed movement of tiny body parts: the concern is not for slowness but convergence, emphasising the physical energy of the body part involved.

Is the temporality of the naked body experiment different from the one of the body enveloped in plastic, paper or water? Despite differences in haptic feedback from the specific materials used, the time of the body does not emerge as the locus of further distinctions: my body is attuned to the time's space and place (with all its characteristics and paraphernalia) of the studio, a cosmogonic *primaeval in statu nascendi*¹⁰⁴.

Paper Skin: Fantastic Architecture

Unlike the plastic skin, the paper experiment offers less chance to connect directly with the wall: hands and arms are enclosed within the structure, not free to protrude to the outside as in the plastic experiment. Compared to the plastic skin, the surface of the paper is much more isolating in terms of temperature, texture and visual cues. Thus a new territory of exploration opens, acknowledging the space in its entirety.

In this piece, a further fundamental consideration is the complete lack of visibility on the space, due to the paper skin's impenetrability to light. Here within the paper skin, I can rely solely on partial feedback provided by sight of my own feet moving on the floor, aside from the very rare cases in which the structure allows me to see through the lining where the two long paper sheets are bound together. Furthermore, the paper's texture is greatly dissimilar to the plastic skin. The paper's contact with both skins, human and wall, provides a set of altogether different haptic feedback.

This piece is peculiar in terms of sound because the material itself, designed to stand as a sort of three-meter-high column of paper, has a distinctive acoustic quality: even the smallest movements provoke a distinctive snappy *crepitus* sound resulting from friction, scraping, and stretching of the material. As such, no further sounds or music was added to this experiment.

104 'The Inca is an entirely ephemeral being in *statu nascendi*', Otto Rank (2010, p. 91)

Here the duration of the piece relates closely to the consistency of the material: the two paper sheets forming the structure are fastened together with transparent tape that allows a certain resistance to bending. Nevertheless, while moving together with the structure, the maneuvering from the inside stresses the paper: on average the experiment lasts about 25 to 30 minutes.

The tempo of the performer is modulated by the intention to maintain the structure intact, and by a focus on sounds produced by the paper. Movements are designed with the two-fold consideration of changing the shape of the structure over time while keeping it as much as possible intact. Simultaneously, changes to the configuration of the paper provoke a gradual modification to the sound characteristics of the material over time: the more the paper creases, the more its surface texture loosens, the more sound passes from crepitus and snappy, to a chaotic indistinct rumbling¹⁰⁵.

The paper skin is often detached from the body and sustains an architectural tectonic, a plasticity of its own, not visible from my perspective as performer while inside the structure, with little chance to envision the resulting shape as seen from the outside¹⁰⁶.

105 This resonates with the preparation and the experience of Stockhausen's *Mikrophonie*. In 1965 Karlheinz Stockhausen composed *Mikrophonie I*, a piece for tamtam, 2 microphones, and 2 filters, performed by 4 players at the tamtam and 2 players at the mixer, and filters. I have personally performed and coached the piece several times. In the performer's notes, a long list is provided on the tones of the sounds to be produced on the surface of the tamtam: the performer is thus requested to find a great variety of implements (glass, cardboard, metal, wood, rubber, plastic) in order to achieve the described quality. A short example taken from the long list that Stockhausen used to categorise the sounds according to their perceived qualities: 'groaning', 'trumpeting', 'whirring', 'hooting', 'roaring', 'grating', 'chattering', 'wailing', 'sawing', 'ringing', 'choking', 'cawing', 'clacking', 'snorting', 'chirping', 'hissing', 'grunting', 'crunching', 'clinking', 'tromboning', 'scraping', etc. A scale of 36 steps from the darkest and lowest to the brightest and highest sounds was the format of the list provided.

106 The paper skin is a time-based architecture: it deals directly with the viscosity of time, the propensity of the latter to alter the shape of the surfaces,

Water Skin: De-representation

In the water experiment the *lieu* of action is the bathtub¹⁰⁷. Movements are minimal, not only by necessity: the adjustment of the body to the varying volume of water, the shifting of weight, the progressively floating feeling of the limbs, the increasing sense of weightlessness as the water fills the tub completely. I enter the tub while it is still empty: I have difficulty finding a comfortable position on a surface that is hard and cold. This is similar to the studio's wall but most of the weight here is pushing down on the body, and heaviness is tangible. The relation with the wall was mainly vertical, side by side. With the tub it is mostly hori-

inherent in time's crushing of objects and beings. The paper skin can be experienced from within, as a house, a shelter, a sculpture, and from without, in perspective, as an architectural complex or, again, as a sculpture. Similarly, Richard Serra's *the hedgehog and the fox* (1998), where by entering the area of the three conical/elliptical steel plates we are unable to foresee the overall shape, unless, from afar, we gaze over the entire 15 ½ x 91 ½ x 24 ½ foot structure of Serra's sculpture. Entrapped within the paper I continuously mould its shape, without willing it. From outside an observer may wonder what the structure is or will be, and who or what is manoeuvring from inside. Anthony McCall, thinking about 'structural film' in *Between you and I* (2006), writes of a light sculpture where the boundaries between the proposed work and the alteration provoked by an observer entering the installation space merge, dissolving the distance between subject and object of the experience. At the same time the white paper structure, towering over more than 3 metres in height, alludes to its architectural nature: a *mégastructure trouvées*, a sort of ephemeral brutalism. Louis Kahn's *Tomorrow's City Hall Project* (1952 - 1958), and metabolist Kisho Kurakawa's *Helicoids Project* (1961) resonate here as well. Tectonic modular structures that can be repeated endlessly, plug-in à la Archigram, modified at will without losing their structural identity: Le Corbusier's *Fort l'Empereur, Algier* (1931).

107 The water skin experiment stands, in many factual regards, on its own: the setting, the space, the choice of movements and choreographic intent, is different. The bathtub experiment was designed from the start as a work for video recording, unlike the other three experiments conceived as a live performance *in primis*. Nevertheless the conceptual thrust, the phenomenological research into the unfolding of time, and the focus on the sense of touch, is unequivocally equivalent to the other three experiments. They all sit within the same intention and project scope. The stance can be rightly considered analogous to the *butō* transformational practices: a conceptual principle that encompasses variations on morphology of the human body.

zontal, layering: gravity makes the difference.

The water faucet opens: the first sensation of the water reaching various parts of my body relates to temperature, the quite refreshing and pleasant feeling of being touched by tepid water, slowly enfolding the epidermis. After a while I get used to the new sensation and my attention to the temperature decreases¹⁰⁸. My body dwells on one side, in a sort of fetal position. There is no attempt to allude to any narrative or psychological condition: the choice is purely dictated by the shape of the tub, and my will to have most of the body in contact with and submerged by the water. The body is filled with water, from within and without: an osmotic experience between a body of flesh and a body of water. Again, the gaze into the womb is purely phenomenological, experiential¹⁰⁹. The focus stays on tactile experience, and the intimate relationship to materials, the water, and surfaces, the tub: the body movements, and choices of materials involved, function in a phenomenological process of discovery, an unfolding of time perception.

In the conceptual tectonics of this performance, narrative, psychological and/or emotional aspects should be put aside. In its place are pure experience and emplacement in time and space. Choreographic choices are bound to the same principle: operate strictly within the surface of the tub, while taking into account the specific characteristics of its concave and limited space.

The tub becomes a place of metamorphosis: moreover, the bathroom, in its very space and time, is metamorphic. Being in the womb is to be the womb, being soaked in water is to be wa-

108 The water is coming out from the tap at room temperature, which averages 28-30 degree Celsius across the whole year: due to the hot weather in Singapore there is no necessity to heat the water.

109 For the Romanian historian Mircea Eliade, the deluge and in general the element of water are permanently present in the Paleo-Oriental world: the ritual of the New Year, the baptism (the ritual death of the old man followed by new birth) and all the hierophanic manifestations of primitive nature; as for the quantity of rain that is allotted every year, and which is settled during the Feast of Tabernacles. On the cosmic level, this is equivalent to the deluge: abolition of contours, fusion of all forms, return to the formless. Water that is the beginning and ending of all things (Eliade, 1991 [1949], p. 58 - 59).

ter, being in contact with the tub is to be the tub. This is not a matter of imagination or pretense but rather a process required to attain a state of emptiness of the body, the *sine qua non* of the transformative process. The sound of water disgorging from the faucet, endlessly evolving, envelops the time and space of the practice, as it does with my body.

The tub is almost empty.

A roaring spurt at the start, clashing with the resonating surface of the ceramic tub.

Changing into *jeux d'eau*, water falls on top of water, inexorably filling interstices of available space.

Burbles, murmurs, and disgorging of the liquid.

The water enters my ears.

The perception of space transformed.

Sound changes the tactile relationship between the tub body, my body, and the body of water.

Underwater.

My heartbeat is now at the forefront.

Audible sounds of skin rubbing against the ceramic surface of the tub.

The faucet is still spurting water.

I can now localize it at the back of my feet.

Sounds amplified, yet disordered, twisted.

The tub is an acoustic experience in tactility.

The habit and habitus of sound perception is challenged: water is the conduit, the cocoon and the skin. I wonder if space and time underwater are different, perceptually, or perhaps even in their nature¹¹⁰.

110 In Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945), the French philosopher argues that the notion of body schema (*un schéma corporel*), adopted in neurologists Head, Lhermitte, and Schilder's research, fails to explain the complexity of the body's own experience, because it assumes that a global awareness of the inter-sensory processes of the body is possible, dissociated from external space. Merleau-Ponty continues that the body cannot be separated from the space in which it acts: by taking into account the body in motion, the body inhabits space and time: 'because movement is not content with pas-

What becomes apparent in the water skin experiment is a reframed perception of sound and the awareness of a different body weight: legs, arms, the whole body feels lighter, floating. This difference is strikingly evident the moment the tub is emptied: as the water is sucked away, the sensation of heaviness of the body increases, pressure of the surface of the tub on the bones of the body becoming more and more uncomfortable. The body seems even heavier than usual: the lighter body enveloped by water disappears, giving way to the bony and cumbersome body pressed down by gravity on the hard surface of the tub. Here alternative states of sound perception (outside and inside water), weightlessness and heaviness signal the relationship between the human body and the water body, time and space. Bodies inflating and shrinking are amplified – *illo tempore*: the subject of Hijikata's *Shiki no tame no nijūnana-ban*.

Shiki no tame no nijūnana-ban

Among Hijikata's vast body work, a few choreographies stand out: *Kinjiki* (Forbidden Colors, 1959); *Anma* (Masseur, 1963); *Nikutai no hanran* (Revolt of the Flesh, 1968); *Shiki no tame no nijūnana-ban* (Twenty-Seven Nights for Four Seasons, 1972); *Geisenjō no okugata* (Lady on a Whale String, 1976). Aside from their chronological order, these works are landmarks of Hijikata's various achievements in expressive research, technique and

sively undergoing space and time, it actively assumes them' (Merleau-Ponty, 2005 [1945], p. 100 - 105). The philosopher brings into discussion intentional motricity and consciousness, drawing on the difference between 'I think that' and the Husserlian 'I can' (Husserl, 2019, p. 159): Merleau-Ponty argues that 'movement is not movement in thought, and bodily space is not a space that is conceived or represented' (Merleau-Ponty, 2005 [1945], p. 139). Thus the body is not in space; it inhabits space and time; it cannot be artificially separated from it, but it acts as a single whole (Merleau-Ponty, 2005, p. 140). *Ergo* space and time are not a backdrop to my body's action, or fixed points of reference: 'I am not in space and time, nor do I think space and time; rather, I am of space and time, my body fits itself to them and embraces them' (Merleau-Ponty, 2005 [1945], p. 141).

the refinement of the ankoku butō method and philosophy. They also signal a specific relationship between Hijikata's work and the historical, cultural and political period in which these were conceived and performed¹¹¹.

For the purposes of this research I will consider *Shiki no tame no nijūnana-ban* (*Twenty-Seven Nights for Four Seasons*, 1972): this piece in fact suggests various connections to my own practice. *Shiki no tame no nijūnana-ban*, as the title suggests, was performed for twenty-seven nights: the piece was divided into five parts (*Hōsōtan*, *Susamedama*, *Gaishikō*, *Nadare ame*, and *Gibasan*¹¹²) choreographed by Hijikata, and in all of which, excepting *Nadare ame*, he performed as principal dancer. The work arrived after a four-year hiatus in Hijikata's performing career. The choreographer seems to be dealing with reminiscences of his childhood at Tōhoku, colors, sounds and characters of his life in Akita prefecture, a sort of 'reflection on a long lost time, the heavy illnesses

111 The 60's is a period demarcated by social and cultural changes that bring to the forefront artistic movements and practices that directly challenge the status quo of political, economic and social conventions as well as the whole body of academic traditions. Among these (many), I notice interesting similarities between the Vienna Action Group and ankoku butō. The premises of the two artistic movements are markedly different, but commonalities are present in the obsession with the body and in the reference to other artistic practices and theoreticians: the Vienna Action Group started off undertaking improvised experiments on the human body and dead animals 'that disassembled the human body and its acts into compacted gestures of blood, semen and meat'. Film is the principal medium used by the group, not as a documentation but rather to 'aggravates the provocation or obscenity of [the group] action'. Otto Muehl, Hermann Nitsch, Günter Brus and Rudolf Schwarzkogler are the four main protagonists of the Vienna Action Group: their activity is marked by destructive, sexual and mystical religious performances, that could turn into cacophonous chaos, blood-sodden performance art. The four 'founders' of the Group were clearly aware, and somehow connected, with the work of Antonin Artaud. Muehl's *Zock* manifesto of 1967 resonates with Artaud's *I Hate and Renounce as a Coward*; Schwarzkogler incorporated often the writings of Artaud into the conception of his work with the Action Group: he was a firm believer in the necessity of rigour in the formulation of the Action Group's manifestos (Barber, 2020, p. 7 - 12).

112 In order of appearance: *Story of Smallpox*, *Dissolute Jewel*, *Thoughts on an Insulator*, *Avalanche Candy*, *Seaweed Granny*.

and the deaths' (Gōda in Kayo, 2016, p. 61).

In the *Hōsōtan* section Gōda remarks, with a keen gaze on Keisai Eisen's *ukiyo-e*¹¹³, that the heaviness and stillness of Hijikata's movements suggest a condition of near-stasis: nerves so tensed and movement so slowed as to be the 'carriage of *nō* in extreme slow-motion'. There was a sense of 'extended time being absorbed into the body's being', and 'the dancers are not moving, but [this] is actually a technique full of the sort of energy that can transform space itself'. The dancers' bodies absorbed an amplified time, a bubble of time-space within the landscape of the stage, and ward off the audience (Gōda in Kayo, 2016, p. 63). Moreover in *Shiki no tame no nijūnana-ban*, there is a relationship characterized by the object's 'closeness to the body', a focus on finding resonances between primaevial bodily gestures and the landscape or environment in which those gestures live.

Some of these 'objects', for example, those enclosing the bodies of female dancers, suggest a 'nostalgic return to the mother's body', according to butō critic Ichikawa Miyabi. The objects in use become gradually smaller in size, enclosing the body with increasing restriction, bringing focus to the 'smallness of a shrunken body': Hijikata, in this period of time, devoted himself to designing 'costumes which entirely covered the flesh' (Hichikawa in Kayo, 2016, p. 64).

Heaviness & Emptiness

In the praxis of butō there are a number of important exercises, called forms by Kayo, that are part of Hijikata's *ankoku butō*

113 Japanese artist Keisai Eisen (溪齋 英泉, 1790–1848) was a *ukiyo-e* master: some of his more notable works, including his *ōkubi-e* (large head pictures), are considered masterpieces of the Bunsei Era (1818–1830).

Ukiyo-e is a form of woodblock art print and painting developed in Japan from the 17th through the 19th centuries. The subjects of *ukiyo-e* (浮世絵, pictures of the floating world) range widely: from female beauties to kabuki actors and sumo wrestlers; erotica, folk and history tales, travel scenes and landscapes; naturalistic flora, and fauna.

training. Specifically they relate to modes of walking and standing, to developing an ability to see oneself from outside¹¹⁴: here I will look particularly into the form of the 'detached eyes'¹¹⁵, which closely relates to my own practice¹¹⁶. The 'detached eyes'

114 Selected fundamental Forms: 'Walk of an ash column', it calls up the image of a human burned in sacrifice, reduced to ash, standing. It asks us to lose all human function, floating rather than standing, a hanging column of ash, on the brink of collapsing, moved by the tiniest stir of wind: an unpredictable and directionless movement of the body.

'Folded Legs', this recalls the familiar scene from Hijikata's childhood in Tōhoku: 'the children would be placed in *izume* (straw baskets) and tied up so hay wouldn't fall out, whilst their parents worked in the rice paddles'; the folded legs, abandoned, tied up, are transformed in *butō* with the desire to stand met by a complete inability to make it happen. This desperate state of in-betweenness, a condition of being unable to realise the will, is a characteristic of *butō*'s use of the body. 'Walk by insects', it starts from the sensation of an insect on the back of the hand, which develops gradually into the spreading of more insects on the body: two, three, five-hundred, thousands; the insects start to eat through the flesh, they enter the skin, the pores, the internal organs, eating the surroundings, the whole space. Erosion of the space, erosion of the body that is standing upright as a dead stick, evokes continuity of movements, the great energy of the insects labouring, within a passive, boundless existence of the human body.

115 The 'detached eyes', is an exercise discussed also in Ohno's *Kazuo Ohno's World, from without & within* (2004), and in my online conversation with Seisaku and Kae Ishimoto. This exercise is described in notes taken by Ashikawa Yōko, who worked over 20 years with Hijikata. In Hijikata's method, she observes, the dancer was forced into a state of becoming 'the continuation of a divided condition' in which the body watches itself from afar. A place of pure origination of the body, of un-domesticated habits and behaviours, a place from which movement could emerge, unconstrained by the limitations of usual space and time. Here the specific temporality of *butō* emerges, Ashikawa continues: time as 'the descent of a waterfall that could be rising or falling', which resonates with similar terms from Hijikata, 'as the time that exists on the reverse side of another time'.

116 Kayo in her appendix compiles a collection of Forms, employed by Hijikata as image-language to guide the dancer's movement: it worked as a shared code between himself and the dancers. Examples of the Form's names, (from hundreds of them): 'The Circuit of Nerves', 'Walk of a Measure', 'Walk of Mesh', 'Walk by Insects', 'Walk by Gazes', 'Space of the Hydrangea', 'Dandelion Space', 'Smoke', 'The Process of Vaporisation', 'Girl of Dried Leaves', 'Ghost Peacock', 'Michaux - The figure of Glass', 'Goya - The Pope of Pus', 'Figures in Ukiyo-e', etc. (Kayo, 2016, p, 157 - 161, 208 - 215).

is a condition in which the dancer sees himself from outside but also from within: Ashikawa talks of 'eye on the forehead', 'eyeballs on the root-tips of the arbor', 'back', 'eyeballs beneath the crotch', 'eyeballs in the knees' (Ashikawa in Kayo, 2016, p. 98-99).¹¹⁷

When the body is void it can be filled, replenished, and metamorphosed: the starting point of this transformation requested by *butō* practice is an ability to erase the physical, psychological, and somatic foundation of the body¹¹⁸. By acknowledging 'Ma' as a dimension of being, the body is emptied of its human characteristics: as a communicating vessel with the external world, the body can transform into anything else¹¹⁹. This process requires focus and willingness, which begins with specific attention to the sense of touch. *Seisaku* enumerates fundamental aspects of this training in transformation and enhanced tactile sensitivity: first,

117 'Don't look with the eyes' remarks Kazuo Ohno, insisting that the dancer should rely on the visual acuity of the body, rather than that of the real eyes. The eyes should be able to migrate throughout the body, allowing a fine tuning of our perception of the inner and outer world. Ohno suggests that the eyes moving down through the body should tightly stick to the soles of his feet: enhancing a more penetrating gaze, a deconstructive process on conventional seeing and perceiving. 'Kazuo Ohno was once asked where the eyes are located: he replied that the body is so covered with them' that it's impossible to count their number (Ohno, 2004, p. 24, 25, 40). This closely relates to Michel Serres' observation on coenesthesia in his *The Five Senses*, in connection with his experience of a shipwreck: coenesthesia is the general feeling of inhabiting one's body that arises from multiple stimuli of various bodily organs; Serres finds himself stuck in a porthole in the attempt to leave the ship on fire: the fire inside the compartment burning his body, the icy wind of a winter night freezing his face. He remained in this position, unable to move, for a while asking himself: 'I was outside, I was inside: who was this "I"?' (Serres, 1999, p. 19).

118 Kae Ishimoto highlights that the use of costumes in Japanese dance has the purpose of effacing the body and requiring the latter to adapt to the quality of the former: the body is emptied and becomes the shell. A cocoon that moves without content. The body is erased by the use of costumes, masks, and body painting.

119 *Seisaku* adds that reaching a conscious state in which the body opens to transformation cannot be prolonged indefinitely: consciousness and awareness that differentiates ourselves from the outside world at some point must be restored, otherwise, psychosis or madness may arise.

to practice and perform barefoot whenever possible; second, to practice tactility of the hands and fingers; and last, to find and amplify sensations in the cavity of the mouth¹²⁰, and channel that to all the other internal organs and the body within¹²¹.

It is relevant to note that while in Western dance tradition the dancer is trained to lift the body up from the ground with the lightest and most weightless attitude possible (for example, by leaps, jumps, *en pointe*), *ankoku butō* teaches first heaviness and the magnetic force of the ground¹²². *Seisaku* has already highlighted the need to root to the ground, to expand beneath, to explore the darkness before the light; Ohno's exercise with buck-

120 Interesting to notice here what *Seisaku* alludes to: touch that collides with the sense of taste, encountering the tactility in the cavity of the mouth, leading to a sensation of touch which is internal, interoceptive. Stelarc (1946 -) performances relate to this as well, as James Geary in his *The Body Electric, an Anatomy of the New Bionic Sense*, describes it: with the help of an endoscopy the Australian artist ingested a capsule made of titanium. The capsule was fastened to a flexi drive cable, linked to a controller outside the body. Using video endoscopy equipment the titanium device was inserted into the stomach: 'the intention was to design a sculpture for a distended stomach', Stelarc comments, 'the hollow body becomes a host, not for a self or a soul, bur for a sculpture' (Stelarc quote in Geary, 2002, p. 111 - 112).

121 By being barefoot, the body connects with the earth: the feet, like roots, penetrate beneath the surface and branch out downward, into the dark depths of the soil. There is space, a world beneath the ground. In *ankoku butō* reaching the dark dimension of being is a necessary step toward light: heaviness comes before lightness, as fatigue forewarns the necessity of rest to restore energy.

122 I observe that in the foot binding practices of traditional areas of China, the very concept deals with the 'effect of lifting the feet away from the ground', as Wang Ping remarks in her *Aching for Beauty, Footbinding in China* (2000). Historically this practice was borrowed from the Indian tales of the Deer Lady: the result of copulation of man with deer giving birth to a mixture of half-human, half-animal, half-god, half-monster, a girl with hoofs and a human torso. The connivance of animal and human form is a mythological figure belonging to many cultures: the Greek Dionysus, the Egyptian Sphinx, the Homeric mermaids, to name a few. The extra-human appears always as something divine, immortal, living in proximity to the Celestial Spheres, of the Olympian Gods. The hybridization of forms in foot binding, as in ballet, in the use of shoes, high heels and boots: it is only a matter of the degree of reversibility, of the wearing-modifying the primaevial shape of the foot and the body (Wang Ping, 2000, p. 11 - 18).

ets filled with water requires the body to feel the heaviness and attractive force of *terra firma*¹²³; Hijikata's technique, the folded legs, points to an approach in which movements are connected to physical tiredness, labor, and a close relation to the soil: efficiency and effortless appearance of the body's work is not part of butō's teaching¹²⁴.

The Origins of Butō

Most Western literature on the origin of butō, emphasizes *ad nauseam* that this particular Japanese dance practice arose from the ashes of the Second World War and its horrors. It has been said that effacement of the dancer's body -- a thematic idea of butō, which is often referred to as the dance of darkness -- and the transformation of the body both relate to Hijikata's and Ohno's personal experiences of (and disdain for) the war. I disagree. Putting war in the foreground as a theoretical skeleton seems trite and reductive. Butō is more directly concerned with the expe-

123 A basic exercise in butō, which I personally experienced in 2019 under the guidance of Yoshito Ohno, is to walk around, carrying big buckets filled with water in both hands until legs are sore. Seisaku comments that this state of tiredness of the legs is the place of butō: Hijikata, according to Seisaku, coined a Japanese neologism 'magusare', literally 'rotten Ma'. The idea is that a state of crisis in the body (uncertainty, surprise, dislocation, fatigue) leads to a new path, to fresh viewpoints, to the ability to embrace and operate within ambiguity.

124 Western technique looks at the body in terms of its kinetic energy, trying to find the most efficient way to profit from the dynamics of the body in movement: a momentum that flows, shaped by constant variation in acceleration and deceleration, and its resulting energy. This result is achieved by perfecting techniques that respond to the postulate of maximum energy in an effortless fashion (or at least appearing to be so, and appearing uncomplicated). Also, techniques that are focused on floor work (for example David Zambrano's *Flying Low* and *Passing Through*) play with the exchange of energy between the body, speed, floor and circular motion, that requires development in specific skills and body conditioning. The ambition here is to disengage the body as much as possible from the ground's attractive force: here the immortal myth of flying, of the weightless body, of distancing from the soil, the dirt, and the tactile experience of the feet on the ground.

rience of life, with realism (the philosophical interpretation of objective reality), with attentive observation of events, rather than representation and imitation (as in Western theatre, with its danced and acted masquerades): butō training asks dancers to be, not to act, to transform themselves, not to portray. Three frameworks of interpretation have been often proposed in relation to Hijikata's body of work: postmodern Western art, Japanese performing arts and traditional heritage (specifically *kabuki* and *nō*), and anthropological analysis¹²⁵.

The Urban Fabric, Butō, and the Practice

'I can't give you an address to reply to this, for I don't know personally where I may find myself dragged next, or by what routes, on the way to where, or why, or how!'

Arthur Rimbaud, Letter from Aden, 5 May 1884

Urban myth is central in Western civilization. As Henri Leve-

125 Among these frameworks, a common thread is an acknowledgement of the limits of rationalistic approaches driven and codified by language: this analysis engages with issues of epistemology, and results in a re-evaluation of the body's wisdom (Kayo, 2016, p. 27). Matsumoto Koshirō adds that Hijikata's work is not to be 'analysed in terms of historical context or circumstances' but in terms of directly addressing 'the history of Hijikata's body' (Matsumoto quotes in Kayo, 2016, p. 29). It is interesting to note that the somatic, cultural, and historical elements at play in Hijikata's work relates to a temporal displacement as conjured in Yasujiro Ozu's film *晩春* (*Late Spring*, 1949). The director's film follows a temporal axis of constant displacement: it opens with a scene from the tea ceremony, *lento*; moves with a sort of jump-cut to trains and commuters pouring into the city, the offices, *con moto*; it turns into the family house and its private spaces within an *adagio* movement; social time is bring into play with a bicycle ride at the beach, visiting friends and shopping, *allegro ma non troppo*; with a sort of u-turn it brings back tradition with a long shot during a *nō* theatre act (*lento cerimoniale, mesto*); it thereafter moves to temples in Kyoto and ends with the marriage (not seen) of the young woman, the protagonist of the film: *comodo*. Here I notice striking commonalities in the treatment of the different elements in the fabric of time - performance - filmic action of Ozu film and Hijikata's work.

Levi-Strauss argues in his *The Urban Revolution*, the myth of Atlantis in Plato's *Critias* is an anticipation or presentiment of the urban myth itself. The nonpacific coexistence of town and country is apparent from the very beginnings of Western civilization: the cyclical image of time in agricultural production, the Eternal Return that gushes from the peasant's relationship with nature, and shatters in the City's modes of production, and in its political existence that resists dissolution into chronological time. Lefebvre argues that the city is the birthplace of the Apollonian spirit; Dionysus is the anima of the countryside. On the theatrical stage, the philosopher continues, the City is the home of Logos, the Apollonian force that 'exercises chthonic violence by means of a controlled act of mimesis. Distance afforded by re-presentation and cathartic repetition serves as a buffer for those threatened by the danger of Dionysiac forces' (Lefebvre, 2003 [1970], p. 104 - 106). This serves to introduce the Western approach emphasizing the close relationship between *butō* and the cityscape¹²⁶. Such a myopic analytical lens is also involved in the political view that connects the Second World War, the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the cultural and economic colonization subsequently imposed by the West on the defeated Japanese territory.

While it is tempting to associate such major transnational events with the rise of new artistic expression, I am more keen, in regard to *butō*, to look at one of its basic principles: the close observation of life and reality¹²⁷.

It is difficult to place the city and its contradictions at the core of *butō*, without devolving into trite Western simplicities related

126 This approach informs modern and postmodern concerns with the spatial configurations and relational issues that arise from the growth of modern cities, and the displacement of masses of people from rural areas to the outskirts of the expanding urban landscape.

127 Hijikata spent most of his life in close contact with a rural landscape: he moved to Tokyo for about 15 years, only to return afterwards to his hometown; Min Tanaka's method asks dancers to conduct the life of farmers, with a tempo measured by the seasonal cycle and work in the fields; Ohno lived a peripatetic life, often outside his country, under the spotlight of a considerable celebrity.

to Cartesian dualism or Hegelian dialectics. Without question, the atrocities of war have deeply marked millions of people and generations of artists. Nor can we say that no part is played by the relation to urban landscapes, and the tensions of modernity arising from dislocation of human activities and human relationships; my aim is to refocus more carefully and cautiously on the origin of *butō* dance practices, to recalibrate how it relates to the aforementioned events, and sidestep facile historical determinism.

My dance experiments deal with exploration of space, time, and materials that largely relate to urban conditions of human life: a dance studio in the central area of a city, plastic, paper and water, inexpensive materials used for ordinary activities. Sounds that surround the area of the studio clearly belong to activities conducted in the city. Odors, colors and surfaces, again, point to the urban landscape¹²⁸. The preference given to the three materials used in performance resulted from a process of selection which lasted for most of the rehearsal period, and in which a good number of alternative materials were tested, explored, and evaluated. The chosen materials possess specific properties that intensify the investigation of time perception in

movement and dance, in relation to the sense of touch. The choice of water as the fourth element for these experiments reflects the same selection process from the studio¹²⁹.

128 The decision to locate the activity of rehearsal and performance in the city, and specifically in a dance studio, relates to considerations practical and conceptual: easy access to the area, the availability of the space during the four months of rehearsal needed, weather conditions, which in Singapore can be extremely challenging for outdoor activities; the suitable size and comfort of the studio, the natural light and warm colours of the space, the privacy and convenient isolation provided by large opaque window panes. All these factors contributed to the choice of that specific studio.

129 In this case, the necessity of having a pool of water initially limits the choice to two possibilities, a swimming pool or a bathtub. Seaside in Singapore is not an option due to strict regulations; the swimming pool turned out to be not a viable solution due to recent restrictions related to COVID-19; thus the experiment was finally conducted in the bathtub of my residence. While I am convinced that other choices could have provided a valid alternative in terms of space and materials, the present one was made while keeping in mind feasi-

The recurrent Husserlian proposition that ‘the duration of sensation and the sensation of duration are different’, and consequently that ‘the succession of sensations and the sensation of succession are not the same’ (Husserl, 2019 [1928], p. 31), is at the forefront of the choices of these materials: if my skin is mutated (or transformed, following Hijikata’s method); if my senses are then habituated to a novel skin; if my body as a whole is modified, so duration and succession of sensations ought to be reconsidered. If the gauge of conscious temporal unity of the specious present is attuned to a human body, with its features, and limitations; if what lies at the edges of this continuity are protention and retention, as evaluated in terms of human somatic characteristics; what changes, modifications, alterations, will be induced by a skin that is no longer only connective tissue, keratin and collagen, but rather paper, plastic and water? The time of the urban landscape is scattered, polycentric, as multifarious as the composition of the city, as manifold as the locus of urbanism¹³⁰. Thus by entering this space we acknowledge its polyrhythmic and polycentric time¹³¹: we are drowned in it, absorbed by it.

bility, scope of research, and effectiveness of the investigation process.

130 To start, because it is always subordinated to the standpoint of the subjects involved in the defining, a definition of urbanism is difficult if not illusory, as Henri Lefebvre points out; under close observation, not one but several urbanisms emerge: that of the humanists, that of the developers, and lastly that of the state and its technocrats. The three groups represent different desires: abstract utopias are proposed by the first group; wishful selling of the city (images of happiness, lifestyle, social status) by the second; while for the state, ‘the activity of the group dissociates [...] into will and representation, institutions and ideologies’ (Lefebvre, 2003 [1970], p. 151). Lefebvre argues that simultaneous pressures from the two aspects of state urbanism, rather than unifying the fabric of the urban landscape, is responsible for a chaotic imposed order characterised by complexity and conflicts. Elsewhere, Lefebvre examines the rhythm of the body and its relation, again, to the fabric of urban life, of the metropolis, of a walk on the streets of Paris (in his *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*, 1992).

131 Polyrythm, in music, is the simultaneous use of two or more rhythms that are not immediately perceived as deriving from one another. While polyrythm is the layering of different rhythms in music, in dance, polycentrism is a body movement that can originate from any part of the body. These two qualities may be at play simultaneously: different parts of the body dance to

Moreover, the space we left and the space we penetrate connect in a continuous stream that percolates through our bodily sensorial probes; we are communicating vessels of asynchronous space-time relationships that transverse corporeal sense-perception. We are retention-al and protention-al time: we move with it, and we feed on it. But we are not passive subjects of the time flow: we irradiate time and we are time. A residual time apperception of the just-departed space coalesces into the incoming perception of time from the space we step into: the concept of 'Ma' returns.

Notation: Butō and My Practice

'We enclose boundless space in a square-foot of paper'¹³²
陸機 - Lu Chi, (261-303)

Hijikata developed a notation method in working with his dancers: his exercises were organized to offer the dancers a gradual training, providing a common ground for transformational skills required by his choreography. This method stemmed from the necessity of working with untrained dancers: Hijikata's popularity on the local Japanese scene grew in the late sixties, and he found himself collaborating more and more with non-traditional and/or untrained dancers. Hijikata's notational method thus attempted to communicate his choreographic intention without getting trapped in the bodily technique of trained dancers¹³³.

musical instruments playing in different rhythms. Lastly, for completeness, cross-rhythm refers to a system based on a polyrhythmic pattern: it is a rhythm in which the regular pattern of accents of the prevailing metre is challenged by a conflicting pattern with a different periodicity. An example of a cross-rhythm is 3 evenly spaced notes against 2 (3:2), known as a hemiola.

132 (Quoted in Douglas, *Deciphering a Meal*, 1974, p. 70. In the collected essays edited by Clifford Geertz, *Myth, Symbol and Culture*, 1972).

133 A few other Western choreographers at the outset of the twentieth century have been concerned with notation for dance: Laban, Benesh, Stepanov, and later Cunningham and Forsythe, among others.

Dance notation can be considered a metaphrastic adaptation of four-dimensional movement (with time as the fourth dimension) translated into signs written on two-dimensional space, usually paper¹³⁴. Further considerations of movement, such as dynamics, quality, texture, and phrasing, should also be seen as an integral part of notation, however in most systems this is not manifest¹³⁵.

A dissimilarity between the Western notational systems and the method of Hijikata arises here: the latter combines drawings,

134 On this subject I will limit myself to a concise examination of the Rudolf Laban notation. It must be noticed however that many other notation systems arose after Laban: nevertheless his ground-breaking work stands as the first systematic attempt to provide a two-dimensional notation of tri-dimensional movements in time-space. Labanotation, introduced by the Hungarian dance theorist Rudolf Von Laban (1879 - 1958), was conceived as a system for recording human movement. Laban's interests in architecture led to his analysis of the spatial structure of movement itself: in 1928 he published the book *Schrifttanz* (Written Dance) that provided the basis of the labanotation system. The Laban system was conceived as a series of symbols to represent movement's components. Labanotation can record movement at a general outline level, or it can become increasingly specific as to spatial, dynamic, and temporal variation and the relationship between individual movements. 'In standard labanotation a vertical three-line staff represents the performer. The centre line divides the staff into right and left columns, which represent the main body parts. The staff, read from bottom to top, is written from the performer's point of view. Each direction symbol is based on a rectangle and indicates four movement factors: its shape shows the direction of the movement; its shading indicates level; its length represents duration of the movement (the shorter, the quicker; the longer, the more extended in time); and its placement on the staff indicates the part of the body that is in action.' (Labanotation, *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, published: 27 September 2013, URL: <https://www.britannica.com/art/labnotation>).

135 Ehrenzweig observes that any transition from one medium to another, any change of dimension, requires us to formulate a new pattern in order to maintain the previous content. If we carry out a two-dimensional drawing of a three-dimensional sculpture, we must transform its pattern drastically so as to preserve the original idea. As Ehrenzweig notes 'Interpreting a truly two-dimensional drawing as photographic projection will hardly do. Giacometti's sculptures and paintings', he argues, 'look very different when seen as abstract patterns', and he demonstrates this by looking at a photo of the work, instead of the original (Ehrenzweig, 2014 [1953], p. 144).

words, sentences and images pulled from artworks and Hijikata's observations. Based on the needs of Hijikata's work, exercise and choreographic instructions are intended to be combined along several orders, and they provide a recombinatory framework for the dancers to play with, not an explicit map or record.

There is very little concern in Hijikata's notational framework for formalization and normalization of signs, for definition of a repeatable system of encoded symbols. Hijikata is more involved in an organic conceptualization, not the systematization of notation. Western notation systems resort to signs and symbols lined up in grids and scores, seemingly by allusion to musical characteristics¹³⁶.

My own practice does not negotiate directly with any notation system although a compositional framework is in the foreground of the piece. Constant revision and refinement of the experimentation process is monitored by filming each individual rehearsal, *in primis*. Furthermore, the field of exploration is amplified by sketches, costume design, digital manipulation of the film and stills of the rehearsal process, as well as creation of tridimensional prototypes, all of which is closely connected to examination of the perception of time in movement through the sense of touch. These additional ramifications of choreographic work are not systematized per se to provide specific direction to the rehearsal process, but they act as rhizomatic probes, intruding on the space of research to provoke seismic tremors, to open crevices, or suggest new territories of exploration.

In regards to the experiments with plastic, paper and naked skins, the project was initially conceived as a live performance. The experiment with the water in the bathtub was added later and is not meant to be performed live, but rather for video recording. In a live performance setting, the experiment with the plastic skin has a duration of at least two hours. Ideally the piece

136 It should be noted here that a first attempt to set up a theoretical system of gestures, by analogy with spoken sounds and phonemes, was made by Ray L. Birdwhistell in his *Introduction to Kinesics* (1953) and the subsequent *Kinesics in Context* (1970).

should last as long as the performer is able to sustain the momentum. Duration of the paper skin experiment is bound to the resistance of the paper material: after a number of attempts, the average length is about 30 minutes. The naked skin experiment, like the first one, has a duration of two hours or more, limited solely by physical capabilities of the body. The water experiment follows the logic of the skin and plastic experiments: with duration bound to the capabilities of the human body soaked in water for a prolonged time. In the four experiments, the purpose of extended performance duration is to enable the body to transform, to be effaced by and within the space, to become landscape, wall, plastic, paper, water and skin: deliquescence of the body, pure sensuous emplacement of time¹³⁷.

Performing the work at two distinct times of day relates to the investigation of time perception, and the two versions are quite distinct in their processes and outcomes. The evening performance is characterized by a quick fading of natural light in the first 30 minutes of performance, with the introduction of artificial light for the remainder; the general cooling down of ambient temperature (specifically evident when travelling in front of the windows, whose surface is extremely hot at midday); differences in sounds coming from the outside area as activities vary from day to night-time. All this without considering modifications in body readiness at the different hours of the day.

137 A number of considerations arose once the performance shifted to video-recorded versions of the three experiments, since current COVID-19 restrictions did not allow for public performance. Firstly showing the piece as a work in three parts, without the interruptions and resets that would have been necessary in a live setting; secondly, to show in the video recording two different renditions of the performance: a daytime version with natural light and an evening version between sundown and night time, partially under artificial light. As a result, for the purpose of the video recording, the first and third piece (plastic and naked skin) were shortened to about 35 minutes each, while the middle piece (with paper skin) remained unaltered at about 25 minutes. Another consideration was the demanding quantities of energy required to stay focused during the set of pieces, suggesting shortened duration would be beneficial to the task: which however brought the video to a total of more than three hours, including two renditions of the four-movement work.

In this regard we may notice that perception of time in the phenomenological tradition is bound to the body, its sense organs, and thus closely affected by modification of the perceptual field. By exploring the space of the experiment at two distinct times of the day, with different temperature, light, and sounds, a completely different order of bodily responses is mobilized: a body's energy and readiness that is changing over time. How the sensation of duration (Husserlian proposition) is affected by the heat coming from the windows at midday: the body tends instinctively to quicken its pace (inside the plastic skin the heat is even more evident); whereas when reaching the cooling wall, the body tends to slow down. And even if practice might mitigate this tendency, the perception of duration is strongly affected by variations in temperature, and also in light and sound.

If my attention is mostly focused on the temperature I experience in front of a heated window, which I see only vaguely through a translucent plastic skin, which enhances both the temperature and the brightness of the light; and if my passing in front of the window lasts more than five minutes, am I able to distinguish consciously those evanescent margins of the conscious state, retentive and protentive? If my body is only temperature and light, is the temporality here affected mainly (or only) by this sensuous feedback? Am I 'disconnected' from hearing, smell and aroma? Or do they function with an alternative set of temporal duration and succession?

Technē

For the practice covered by this chapter, I pondered the body in terms of my own capacities, physique and understanding. Despite having no dance training (my background is in music), over the last 15 years of my artistic work with dancers, I have somehow absorbed or digested stimuli from the physical presence of dancers I have worked with. Thinking of this, I consider how recent neuroscience research relating to so-called mirror

neurons¹³⁸ may be closely associated with what Nishida calls intuitive knowledge, and with Arata's description of the notion of 'Ma'. In his *Intuition and Reflection in Self-Consciousness* (1987), Nishida argues that experience and the rumination regarding experiences are not chronologically differentiated: hence the time of the sensuous experience is synchronous and equal to the time of thinking and evaluating the experience, while the former is still evolving. This is what he calls the intuition of the experience: intuition, Nishida argues, is a form of knowledge (Nishida, 2020 [1987], p. 33-35). The philosophical stance of Nishida, and the notion of 'Ma', along with neuroscientific research on mirror neurons all seem to suggest that embodied experience and cogitation apropos experience are likely intersubjective: synchronous aspects of the sense experience shared among bodies (both organic and inorganic), in a process of intuitive identification¹³⁹.

138 Mirror neurons are the foundation of a type of therapy called dance/movement therapy (DMT). According to studies of neuroscience, mirror neurons are designed to promote empathy, attachment, and social bonding. This specific neuronal system was first discovered and observed among macaque monkeys: in humans these mirror neurons have been localised to the posterior inferior frontal gyrus, the neighbouring ventral premotor cortex, and the inferior parietal lobule. Increased activity between these areas, as a result of mirror neuron activity, causes increased stimulation in the limbic system, resulting in a greater emotional response from research subjects: this suggests that the mirror neuron system is a channel for empathic behaviours. Empathic embodiment of someone else's experience forms the basis of DMT therapy. Activating the mirror neuron system correlates perception to action in a continuum of the kin-aesthetic experience, observed and embodied (McGarry, L., & Russo, F., 2011, *Mirroring In Dance/Movement Therapy: Potential Mechanisms Behind Empathy Enhancement*. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 38(3), 178-184.)

139 In creating this practice, I negotiated with my body, considering aptitudes and interests as opposed to any traditional pattern of dance training. I did involve a dancer-colleague and friend, to assist in developing some ideas I had in mind, and to strengthen the flexibility and mobility of my body, with the sole purpose of achieving what I had envisioned beforehand. Very little traditional technique was involved in this process, and what little there was functioned not in terms of choreography but directed itself towards achieving better proprioception and awareness of body kinetics. This training lasted five months (from December 2020 until April 2021). Meanwhile in March 2021, I commenced my own rehearsals for the performance, which continued until the

My body indeed experienced a fair number of changes over the seven months of this practice: the skin knowing, time having seated itself in the flesh, in the mutable topology of the body. Peruvian Cashinahua epistemology, as described by Howes, is relevant here: “a wise man has knowledge throughout his whole body...his whole body knows”: his skin, his hands, his ears, his genitals, and his eyes. To the question: “does the brain have knowledge?”, they respond “it doesn’t” (Howes, 2005, p. 6). Such a complex theory of modularity of the body at once expunges mind/body dichotomy. To which one might add that performing an action is not consciousness: or as the French philosopher Michel Serres writes: ‘what consciousness stiffens, forgetfulness makes flexible.’ He argues that learning ‘drives gestures’ and thoughts ‘down into the blackness of the body.’ To gain better awareness of the body we must forget some of it, hence ‘knowing is forgetting. Supple virtuality and the passage into action demands a kind of unconsciousness’ (Serres, 1999, p. 42). And in Hijikata’s words: ‘in *butō* there is a process that cannot be taught – of registering the signs within your own senses. I can only teach what can be taught’ (Hijikata quoted in Kayo, 2016, p. 23)¹⁴⁰.

By the end of the practice, my body lost almost ten kilos in weight and gained in strength and elasticity: the process was constellated with minor injuries, discomforts, bruises, scratches, and aches, which mapped the flow of preparatory time onto the

performance itself in the third week of June 2021, on the 16th, 18th, and 19th of the month. The water experiment was recorded and edited from multiple filming sessions between mid-June and mid-August.

140 This relates to Michael Polanyi’s *The Tacit Dimension*: in his book the Hungarian chemist and philosopher, draws a distinction between mechanistic and organic processes as fixed determination versus preserved equipotentiality of biologic development. Polanyi, tracing a direct relationship between Gestalt principles and *equipotentialities* of the kind discovered by Driesch (citing an experiment on sea urchin embryos), observes a closeness with Bergson’s *elan vital*: ‘a process by which we shape new ideas. But the kind of emergence that I identify with comprehension’, says Polanyi, ‘is an action which creates new comprehensive entities’. Polanyi concludes that we should consider how ‘this conception applies to the evolution of living beings, for which the presence of such a creative agency was postulated by Bergson, Samuel Butler, and Teilhard de Chardin’ (Polanyi, 2009 [1966], p. 42 - 46).

very skin. Over months of practice, a mixture of excitement and distress was the default tone: locating new and old injuries all over the body became an everyday routine. This body's transformation prompts sensuous responsiveness: aching parts of the body can be touched, seen, smelled, heard, even tasted¹⁴¹. Thus arises a remapping and rethinking of the body: a development of time within the body's changes, an intensification of the senses, a growing awareness of the body's interoceptive feedback¹⁴².

141 I am not considering here a phenomenology of sexual difference (see Beauvoir 1989; Young 1990, 2005; Heinamee 2003; Fisher and Embree 2000) and a phenomenology of *behindness* - the objects to which we turn away our attention, as traced out by Sara Ahmed's *Queer Phenomenology* (2006), which relates Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology to Brentano's *intentional* consciousness (object oriented), and what she considers to be 'phenomenology [that] may be gendered as a form of occupation' (Ahmed, 2006, p. 27, my italics).

142 Hijikata's work and his connection with the Japanese film scene of the 60's is notorious. There is something about the transformation of the body that has haunted film since its very beginning; Hijikata's collaborations in film and the outcome of these filmic works did not attempt to create a linear documentation of Hijikata's performance, rather it aimed at a tension, a fragmentation of the body. The immediacy of the medium caught ankoku butō's obsession for de-representation of the body and the dance. Several young experimental filmmakers, along with established ones, worked with Hijikata: Eikoh Hasae (*Navel And A-bomb*, 1960); Donald Richie (*Sacrifice, War Games*, 1962; *Cybele*, 1968); Takahiko Limura (*Masseurs* 1963, and *Rose-Coloured Dance*, 1965); Teruo Ishii (*Horror Of Malformed Men*, 1969; *Blind Woman's Curse*, 1970). Body transformations in film are relevant in direct relation to butō, or as an echoing of its nature. Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, 1927: a woman whose body is replicated by a robot; Germaine Dulac's *The Seashell and the Clergyman*, 1928: bodies that are liquified and poured on a gigantic seashell; Andrei Tarkovsky's *Solaris*, 1972: the wife of the protagonist who is condemned to eternal resurrection, no matter how repeatedly she dies; John Carpenter's *The Thing*, 1982: an extraterrestrial being, able to assimilate and replicate any sort of organic life; Shinya Tsukamoto's *Tetsuo the Iron Man*, 1989: a salaryman whose body gradually is mutating into metal parts. Obviously the list can be expanded at will. In Japanese popular films and anime a concern with the body is evident: *Lady Snowblood* (1973), *Kurenoko* (1968), *The Ballad of Narayama* (1983), *Ghost in the Shell* (1995), *Paprika* (2006), *Akira* (1988), and experimental works of late 60's such as Toshio Matsumoto's *Bara No Soretsu* (Funeral Parade of Roses, 1969), and Nagisa Oshima's *Shinjuku Dorobō Nikki* (Diary of Shinkjuku Thief, 1969). Echoed by Western experimentalism with Kenneth Anger's *Magick Lantern Cycle* (1947-1981); Fernand Léger's

Amplified Sensorium

'We do not belong to those who have ideas only among books, when stimulated by books. It is our habit to think outdoors – walking, leaping, climbing, dancing, preferably on lonely mountains or near the sea where even the trails become thoughtful' Friedrich Nietzsche (*The Gay Science*, 2001 [1882], Book V, aphorism 366, p. 230)

In the actual practice during the four months of rehearsal sessions, I experienced a progressive ability to melt into the new skins I worked with: either the wall, the plastic, the water or the paper. Even my own skin, after these experiments, underwent perceptual changes¹⁴³. I travelled to and from the rehearsal studio with a novel awareness of myself and my surroundings. This metamorphosis of appearance and the consistency of materiality involved my own body, things and persons, and it manifested itself through haptics, interoceptive and sensuous stimuli and perceptions¹⁴⁴. Re-establish-

Ballet Mécanique (1923-24); Hillary Harris's *9 Variations on a Dance Theme* (1966-67), to name just a few.

143 A heightened sensitivity of skin and the body at large was achieved in the rehearsals: while undoubtedly beneficial for the purposes of the research and the practice, the implications did not end here. At various points in the process, a magnified sensitivity to interoceptive and sensuous feedback, and minor discomforts of the body, suddenly came to the foreground, causing malaise and anxiety. The halo of this perceptual awareness was not limited to bodily concerns: external stimuli seemed to possess increased intensity and meaning; the spectrum of sensitivity was altered, and the boundaries and locus of definition of proximity seemed to shift in perspective.

144 I recall a morning walk from my place of residence to the nearest subway station: many plants and trees form the surroundings of the path to the station, several of them great in size and height. Every one of the numerous tree leaves of various sizes, shapes and texture appeared to me, ominously, to incorporate an eye, the gaze of all these eyes converging on me: thousands of tree eyes keeping my travel down the sidewalk to the subway under surveillance. Not a pleasant feeling. On another occasion, much earlier in the process of the practice, I had a similar experience during an acupuncture session: my vision travelled inside my body; I could see what was in the room from the sole of my foot; then my vision retracted inside my body and proceeded to the palm of my

ing a sense of normalcy¹⁴⁵ in relation to the senses has been difficult at times, with quite unpleasant results; After hours of weekly work and rehearsal spent heightening the magnitude and depth of sensuous feedback, reducing or cutting out that intensification was extremely hard¹⁴⁶.

A distinction arises between internal and external time: the time of the body, the somatic and interoceptive tempi, what Epstein calls integral time, and the mechanistic, measurable time, outside the body¹⁴⁷. This differentiation is perhaps counterintuitive in many ways, because of an encrustation of habits that consider time as given from outside: the time of the clock, the mechanical and electronic apparatuses that divide time into discrete mathematical ratios, and to which we are bound in activities of everyday life: the Bachelardian and Lefebvrian study in rhythm-analysis.

Social life depends on common practices, labor, repose, and shared recurrences: the acceptance of an unspoken social pact that makes calendars the primary form of regulating time, and

hand with a similar sensation; this travelling of sight, in my recollection, ended with eyes somewhere in the back of my head, looking out at the pillow upon which I lay. This experience was quite fascinating and exciting, unlike the previous one: it felt as if electric impulses, nerves triggered by the needles, opened up a redefinition of the body's perceptual amplitude, a reshaped identity of organs and their function.

145 Here I am thinking of normalcy as what is usual, the web of habits and the sensual feedback from daily or ordinary situations; in contrast to the exceptional, the unexpected.

146 The notion of cathexis is related here, as the concentration of mental energy on one particular person, idea, or object, to a degree of obsession and consequent disturbed relation with reality.

147 Here again from Chapter I of this research: a distinction about duration is brought forward by David Epstein's *Shaping Time: Music, the Brain, and Performance* (1995) – between external and arbitrary musical time, a “chronometric” or clock time on the one hand, and the human experience of time, “integral” time, on the other. Epstein argues that ‘the essence of temporal experience is movement, or motion, through time [...] in terms of its mechanisms – mechanisms of construct and mechanisms of control – [...] between structure per se, and the indefinable of affect related to the experience of motion and resist translation to the medium of words’ (Epstein, 1995, p. 5).

puts them at the center of organization of social affairs¹⁴⁸ – calendars that are, regardless of their nature, organized according to fixed dates, and chronological events, enacted first by the alternating appearance of day and night, then by the sundial, afterwards by the mechanical time of the clock¹⁴⁹. The habit and practice of using clocks and calendars to plan our daily life, from a very young age, seems to engender the impression that time is always given from without.

In *To Dance is Human, a Theory of Nonverbal Communication* (1987) Judith L. Hanna observes that time in dance can be examined from several perspectives: the duration of the performance itself; the duration of the interval needed by an audience to perceive, understand, and/or react to dance; and the choreographer's conceptions of time, as the temporal interval presented in the dance itself. Rhythmic temporality in dance, she argues, may be created by transformations of time itself (for example by manipulating periods of quiet and activity) or by its content (presenting motional configurations which repeat events in time). The orientation of time may be toward the past, present, or future. Moreover, durations may be successive, circular (not in casual patterns), oscillatory (discontinuous with repeated rever-

148 In *On the State*, Pierre Bourdieu sees the state as a sort of *deus absconditus*, an invisible principle of social order, governing with a plethora of tools, acting with physical or symbolic violence to achieve domination. He continues that the calendar, with its civic festivals and public holidays, seems something trivial, yet it shapes, without us noticing, our perception of temporality, and it is organised as a function of the structures of public time. Bourdieu cites Maurice Halbwachs's *On Collective Memory* (1925), arguing that the foundation of every memory is associated with social contexts of memory, as 'social reference points in relation to which we organise our private life'. Bourdieu proposes as an example: 'at the very heart of our memory we find the state, the civic festivals, secular or religious, and we find different categories of specific calendar, the school calendar or the religious calendar. We thus discover a whole set of structures of social temporality marked by social reference points and collective activities. We find it at the very heart of our personal consciousness' (Bourdieu, 2014, p. 7).

149 for instance the one provided by National Institute of Standards and Technology Boulder, Colorado, with its atomic clock (NIST-F1 Cesium Fountain Atomic Clock).

sals, going back and forth, or inverted), or bracketed (succession and repetition not necessary and actions not related to each other occur). Combinations of these *nodes* (as per Richard Schechner, cited in Hanna, 1987, p. 29) may develop¹⁵⁰.

In his *Space and Time, Philosophical Problems* (2020), Anguel Stefanov argues that phenomenological experience limited by human senses attuned to a three-dimensional absolute space and one-dimensional absolute time, is inadequate for contemporary physics. Theory now presumes a four-dimensional spacetime reality, in which time is not separated from space. The Bulgarian physicist holds that the common notion of time and space is rooted in phenomenology, in sensuous experience of the world, which appears to corroborate the traditional notion of time and space.

This relates to a cognitive peculiarity in the nature of the human senses for which ‘the ability to provide clear representation of a one-dimensional geometrical space, i.e. a line, [is] ontologically related with time, and of a three-dimensional Euclidean space, [is] ontologically related to physical space’¹⁵¹. Thus, as space with more than three dimensions is hardly imaginable or accessible to our senses, the traditional notion and separation of space and time has remained plausible for centuries¹⁵². Our sense

150 For example, observes Hanna, Nigeria’s Ubakala dance often reflects past, present, and future, where the dancer, a reincarnated ancestor, will die and probably be reborn. Thus, the dance represents the continuity of lineage (Hanna, 1987, p. 29).

151 An observation of Ernst Cassirer is worth mentioning: ‘perception is confined within certain spatial limits imposed by our faculty of perception. [...] Hence homogeneous space is never given space, but space produced by construction; and indeed the geometrical concept of homogeneity can be expressed by the postulate that from every point in space it must be possible to draw similar figures in all directions and magnitudes. Nowhere in the space of immediate perception can this postulate be fulfilled. Here there is no strict homogeneity of position and direction; each place has its own mode and its own value. Visual space and tactile space are both anisotropic and unhomogeneous in contrast to the metric space of Euclidean geometry’ (Cassirer, 1995 [1923], p. 83 - 84).

152 In the words of Panofsky: ‘perspective transforms psychophysiological space into mathematical space. It negates the differences between front and back, between right and left, between bodies and intervening space (*empty*

experience, continues Stefanov, is that time is permanently passing away, but time, being one of the dimensions of spacetime, does not flow¹⁵³ (Stefanov, 2020, p. 70).

Concluding Thoughts and Notes

It strikes me that the following passage from Henri Bergson's preface to *Time and Free Will*, which I shall quote in its entirety, correlates closely with the actual state of the research:

We necessarily express ourselves by means of words and we usually think in terms of space. That is to say, language requires

space), so that the sum of all parts of space and all its contents are absorbed into a single *quantum continuum*. It forgets that we see not with a single fixed eye but with two constantly moving eyes, resulting in a spheroidal field of vision. It takes no account of the enormous difference between the psychological conditioned *visual image* through which the visible world is brought to our consciousness, and the mechanically conditioned *retinal image* which paints itself upon our physical eye. For a peculiar stabilising tendency within our consciousness – promoted by the cooperation of vision with the tactile sense – ascribes to perceived objects a definite and proper size and form, and thus tends not to take notice, at least not full notice, of the distortions which these sizes and forms suffer on the retina. Finally, perspectival construction ignores the crucial circumstance that this retinal image – entirely apart from its subsequent psychological *interpretation* – and even apart from the fact that the eyes move – is a projection not on a flat but on a concave surface. Thus already on this lowest, still prepsychological level of facts there is a fundamental discrepancy between *reality* and its construction' (Panofsky, 1991 [1927], p. 30 -31, mine the italics).

153 The A - Theory is based on the permanently changing moment 'now': only present events have real existence, while past events do not exist, and future events do not exist yet. The B - Theory is a static view of time, in so far as the temporal relations among events depicted as 'earlier than', 'later than', and 'simultaneous with', are constant relations. Thus the A - and the B - Theory of time are known respectively as 'presentism', and 'eternalism'. The BA - Theory of Lynne Baker, hypothesised that the passage of time is the result of the mind-constructed experience represented by the activity of human consciousness. Baker claims that while time scientifically adheres to the B - Theory of time, it is perceived as the A - Theory because of the disposition of the human being in providing directionality (the so-called *arrow of time*) to his experience of reality (Stefanov, 2020, np. 28 - 33).

us to establish between our ideas the same sharp and precise distinctions, the same discontinuity, as between material objects. This assimilation of thought to things is useful in practical life and necessary in most of the sciences. But it may be asked whether the insurmountable difficulties presented by certain philosophical problems do not arise from our placing side by side in space phenomena which do not occupy space, and whether, by merely getting rid of the clumsy symbols round which we are fighting, we might not bring the fight to an end. When an illegitimate translation of the unextended into the extended, of quality into quantity, has introduced contradiction into the very heart of the question, contradiction must, of course, recur in the answer. Henri BERGSON, February 1888 (preface to *Time and Free Will*, 2014 [1888], p. 7)

The question whether perception is located in space, or whether space is the name we shall give to the locus of perception, is a sound one. Bergson wrote this in 1888, within the very different perspective on space and time current in his time, yet his text brings the mysterious variable of time into play. But if we now accept a four-dimensional model of spacetime, then the simplification of space as the phenomenological domain further collapses, because space itself is contiguous with time: they form an ontological unit. It cannot be determined whether phenomenological experience happens in a three-dimensional space and a one-dimensional time, as we seem to perceive, or in the continuum of spacetime, in 'Ma', or perhaps in further dimensions hidden from our limited senses: Is this gap ever possible to bridge? Could what Nishida calls intuitive knowledge be a pathway? A condition in which trajectories of unfolding events are intuitively pre-conceived before a spatio-temporal dimension of experience?

My experiments are attempting to create pathways of investigation into the phenomenology of time: this second Chapter focused on dance, the moving body and touch as the privileged domain of experimentation. As the research unfolded, new questions arose, and the findings suggest further modalities for experimentation and analysis. A number of temporal refrains and patterns emerged like eddies in the smooth surface of a lake: at-

tunement to spatio-temporal events (the walk from wall to wall, with the anticipation and semi-precise evaluation of the time between the first playback of the music and the second, 30 minutes later) let the cyclic gap between musical refrains feel embodied, following a momentum lasting for the duration of the pause in playback of the music: as if a synchronicity of body-time-space stood in place of the silence (analogous to Howes's emplacement).

Within these cycles of 30 minutes, shorter cycles appeared, what I may call temporal stasis or Massumi's 'hole in time' (Massumi, 1995, p. 86): these are moments of complete immobility of the body fused to the wall; a body which is absorbed in tactile sensitivity, where any sense of time is lost. Again as in Chapter 1, internal fast temporal loops linked to tactile sensitivity ran throughout the body, from fingertips to toes (a scanning of the body for perceptual feedback from the close contact with the wall and floor).

Here the three temporal patterns I distinguished imply multiple, antithetic tempi: a body able to recapitulate cycles of 30 minutes; the same body able to encounter static-temporal phases, within the same 30-minute cycle; and then the body processing quick temporal loops while checking itself for sensuous responses.

In conclusion, with this experiment I have foregrounded my own body as a spatio-temporal sensor, akin to a contact microphone, with a functioning principle not unlike the hydrophone used later during the experiment of Chapter 4 in *soundography*. As the hydrophone is a probe in water, sensing the element into which it is immersed, or making direct contact, so my body was a probe into the physical space of the studio, modulating sensory feedback given by the objects present in the environment through tactile experience (wall, floor, windows); and by the material utilized as skins (plastic, paper, and water in the bathtub); and by the sounds and further sensorial stimuli provoked by the exploration (Lucier's music, smell, sight, taste).

The medium of dance, per Hijikata's *butō* practice, was the

focus of the exploration of temporality within this experiment. In using the body as a temporal probe in space, I noticed an emerging awareness of specific sensory-temporal feedback: how the body, focused in its digital exploration of the wall, becomes only fingers, tactility, touch; at times only aware of the fingertips and their contact with the wall's surface, while the remaining parts of the body seem almost to disappear in space. This awareness ushers in a temporality of the body closely associated with the predicament of *butō* dance practices (with its physical and psychological contortions), in which the tactility of the body is fundamental. Temporal gaps, in which the body seems to sink into a vacuum of time, became familiar to me during the prolonged exploration of the space and the walls in the experimental venue – an emptiness similar to what *butō* achieves by effacing the body in white paint, emptying its content from without.

III. Literature

The Sands of Time: An Experiment in Temporal Intertextuality

A main source of our failure to understand is that we don't have an *overview* of the use of our words. – Our grammar is deficient in surveyability. A surveyable representation produces precisely that kind of understanding which consists in 'seeing connections'. Hence the importance of finding and inventing *intermediate links*. The concept of a surveyable representation is of fundamental significance for us. It characterizes the way we represent things, how we look at matters.

(Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 2009 [1953], f. 122 p. 54-55)

Introduction

The room is flooded with the sound of recorded voices: texts from George Franju's documentary *Le Sang des bêtes* (1949), Godard's film *Made in USA* (1966), and my automatic writing¹⁵⁴ experiment are voiced; I am sitting in the room, trimming my long beard with a pair of scissors, then shaving with a razor, and as a

154 there is no resignation in thinking of outer brains loving their mothers for the sake of conclusion while a horse in passing by on the motorway next to the door and plants are shouting their red beard flagging the sea urchin in the sand looking into the glass of water near the sea by reconstructing a pause of silence in heavy feet and greenish tattelbaum in the event of a rescue made by pulling her nipples in a car running by sources of alcohol and mud smelling dogs and horses wildly galloping on the crest of the sea wave in purple foam and sandwich by the star looking down to recognise my ancestors like the beaver drinking tea and smoking pineapple in the chest of treasure and camomile let loose the pants around the neck of your goldfish and butter salad held tight by the snowflake and the recognition of the effort made by cancelours and maid by witches and babydoll garment

last step, cleaning the remaining shaving foam from my cheeks. Around me, in orderly fashion, are six rows of A3 sized white panels¹⁵⁵ laid on the grey rubber flooring, a word printed on every panel, an object laid on top of each – basil, shoe, wine, ice, flowers, chicken, fish, underwear; a total of 23 objects and their corresponding names laid out on panels on the floor.

In this third experiment on literature my focus is on elongation of another routine gesture, which has been magnified by two years of growth: the trimming of a very long beard. Here the action, accompanied by a meticulous slicing of odoriferous objects in the surrounding space, brings together a sense of continuous labor, a restless evaluation of space to be traversed, gestures to be accomplished (in order, trimming, cutting, writing), sounds of distant voices (recordings of past films, documentary, readings) and smells (of the objects in the space) that suffuse my doings; and a feeling of endless repetitiveness, of being lost in a temporal halo.

Trimming a beard is a work of memory, a modification of the landscape of the body by elimination of its physical attributes, a walk in time past. The experience of Proust and the madeleine is not unrelated: a gesture that spawns a temporal short-circuit of memories, triggered by the taste of a little sponge cake. Similarly, Deleuze with his comments on Proust's investigation: this is not simply an effort to bring back past memories but rather a search for truth (Deleuze, 2000 [1964], p. 15); truth that is also the goal of Wittgenstein's investigation into the limits of language, and the investigation of this experiment into the relation of sensory phenomena to language.

In the actual research practice, I determined to have both spoken and written words: the automatic text is a voice "down there", in the recess of the body, not intended to communicate with others but with oneself. It preserves the logic of signs, it is not asemic, but is not directly concerned with the concatenation of these signs. Sentence structure and grammatical coherence are

155 The mounting board is a strong, rigid surface consisting of a light-weight foam within outside layers of paper.

absent. Here the temporality of the text is determined solely by the rhythm of the body, the flow of the pen writing, the lapses of the automatic process of writing. But once an automatic writing text is voiced, regardless of who performs this action, it is transformed into a vessel of paradoxes. Broken connections and in-betweenness of meaning make the text opaque, liminal, yet communicative because of the linguistic setting in which the text is proposed. Tempi are defined by the readers, the tone and pauses generating possible interpretations. The temporality of the text being written, the text being read, and the text being finally spoken, intertwine in a whirlpool of significations.

The other two texts, Franju's and Godard's, a documentary and a film script, are constructed at the outset with the specific purpose of expressing something, within a given *mise-en-scène*. Their text is functional: following a purpose, developing a trajectory, coalescing into a discourse with the moving images, with the depiction of a situation, characters, tone. Temporal discrepancy is the common characteristic of all the above acts of speaking: text always preceding the spoken words, thus the time of uttering the words never overlaps the time of writing the words¹⁵⁶.

156 The written text is indelible, given certain conditions, while the spoken text is ceaselessly disappearing from the present moment: by recording, the spoken text mutates and congeals into one representation of the written text. Here I bring into this conversation Bernard Stiegler's *Symbolic Misery* (2014): Stiegler argues that the most important music event of the XX Century was the recording of songs, when 'masses of ears suddenly started to listen to music - endlessly'; this endlessness of the hearing experience, repeated, amplified, crowded in its physical and temporal dimension is specific to the age of mechanical reproduction. By recording and repurposing the automatic writing a chain of temporal repercussions is triggered: ghostly returns of the monologue which, as in the cinematographic Kuleshov effect, re-contextualises the meaning of the text. (Stiegler, 2014, p. 20, 23). Stiegler notices that what he calls the hyper-industrial age, through the control of social temporality, a control achieved by the synchronisation of perceptual experiences (recording, cinema, television, internet), is characterised by development of a new process of grammatization: a stage in which 'the discretization of gesture, behaviour and movement in general, to all kind of spheres, is going beyond the linguistic horizon'. Control of the 'process of psychic and collective individuation' that, continues Stiegler, is 'what constitutes Foucault's *bio-power* - which is simultaneously con-

Interjected into the beard shaving operation, the 23 objects are removed one by one from the panels: a tiny sample snipped, stored and sealed in a glass jar; labelled with date, time and name of the object; the jar replaces the object on the panel according to its labelled word; the procedure of beard cutting resumes: for every instance of the gesture of beard trimming, an object is removed and replaced by a jar. The performance lasts 71 minutes: the time needed to completely shave the two-year growth of beard, and to complete the operation of replacing the 23 objects with the corresponding number of jars. By the time the performance ends, only one panel still hosts an object: a 13-inch screen showing Franju's documentary *Sangue des Betes*, played over and over¹⁵⁷.

The purpose of this exploration is to find or invent Wittgenstein's *intermediate links*, to set up a language game in which the elements of the work combine in the understanding of the matter: how we look at and represent things; what language is to us (and us to it); what the temporality of this experimental and experiential process is and how it is perceived.

Sparked by Wittgenstein's provocative assertion that language can be imagined as a form of life: the current investigation and this whole book may be conceived as an organism evolving within given parameters set by the composition of the four experiments; it develops as an experiment in the phenomenological-linguistic; as an intertextual, and *intercorporeal* field of examination. It consists of finding, elaborating, and analyzing connections, inventing Wittgenstein's *intermediate links*: 'the way we represent things, how we look at matters' (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 2009 [1953], f. 122 p. 54-55).

This experiment embarks upon three areas of investigation, all of which are intertwined with temporality: the sense of smell (or aroma); second, text as linguistic sign, here envisioned as in Wittgenstein: 'to imagine a language means to imagine a form of

trol of consciousnesses, bodies and the unconscious'. (Stiegler, 2014, p. 57).

157 The documentary lasts for about 20 minutes, therefore it is repeated at least 3 times during the performance.

life' (Wittgenstein, 2009 [1953], f. 19 p. 11) – each of these has its own temporal metamorphoses, discrepancies (ex. between the act of writing and speaking); and finally, the changes of the human body (the growth of the beard, *in primis*).

The experiment posits itself in the domain of intermediality through a combination of elements borrowed, reframed, and reshaped, taken from diverse media. It is a piece of performance art, but it is an installation; it is an installation, but it is a documentary; it is a documentary, but it is poetic *pièce*; it is a poetic *pièce*, but it is a musical composition; it is a musical composition, but it is choreography; it is choreography, but it is an olfactory experience. All these elements contribute to the work with equal strength and importance – though as in a Borges story, signs (like the pages of the *Book of Sand*) may shift in content and meaning, independent of the will of the reader.

The first scintilla of this experiment appeared in early 2020, when a combination of events led me to try something I had never done before: growing a long beard. In between now and then, two other experiments in this series concerned themselves with defining procedures and methods for observing bodily changes. Thus the present experiment enhances and develops a trajectory of investigation already traced by the previous two: the body's temporality, the body's modifications, amplification of the sensuous and the perceptual field.

But in this experiment, attention is directed toward language and literature, with a specific interest in the connection between text and the sense of smell: body, text and smell, their temporality, this is the crux of our investigation. Here I am concerned with the ever-mutating lifeform which is language, its ramifications in, and shaping of, our body, our thinking, our representations of reality¹⁵⁸. A concern for what is embraced within the investi-

158 For a more specific discussion on power, body and language and their intertwined interdependencies, see also Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887), Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of Prison* (1975), Elias Canetti's *Crowds and Power* (1960), Bernard Stiegler's *Symbolic Misery* (2014), and lastly Judith Butler's *The Psychic Life of Power* (1997), a corpus of selected writings connected by the subject of power, in the modern-contemporary context.

gation is a concern for what is omitted: Wittgensteinian *elliptical sentences*, what is surmised, what is implied, what is unambiguous and what is not.

But every sentence is elliptical; every sentence is potentially a sentence-radical: a representation of representations¹⁵⁹ (Wittgenstein, 2009 [1953], f. 20, 22, p. 13-14). A question of exactness and inexactness arises here: how do we determine the meaning of a proposition, and in which relation does it stand to our ability to comprehend and learn something new? Wittgenstein brings forward Saint Augustine, *Confessions* XI. 14 'quid est ergo tempus? si nemo ex me quaerat scio; si quaerenti explicare velim, nescio'¹⁶⁰; and he comments that 'something that one knows when nobody asks one, but no longer knows when one is asked to explain it, is something that has to be called to mind'; Wittgenstein argues that Augustine's inquiry, our inquiry, 'is therefore a grammatical one' to shed any misunderstanding, 'misunderstanding concerning the use of words', i.e. linguistic expressions. (Wittgenstein, 2009 [1953], f. 88-90, p. 46-47). With my experiment I elaborate on Wittgenstein's inquiry into the meaning of a proposition (exactness and inexactness); I transfer that investigation, grafting the grammar of language onto the grammar of the sensorium, within the framework of time.

To which Proust seems to answer ahead of time, in his own final words of *The Search*:

'the slightest word that we have said, the most insignificant action that we have performed at any one epoch of our life was surrounded by, and colored by the reflection of, things which logically had no connection with it and which later have been separated from it by our intellect which could make nothing of them for its own rational purposes, things, however, in the midst of which— here the pink reflection of the evening upon the

159 See linguist Yuen Ren Chao's comment: 'if language symbolises ideas, writing is the symbol of symbols' Chao, 1968, p. 8)

160 'What is time then? If nobody asks me, I know: but if I were desirous to explain it to one that should ask me, plainly I know not' (translation from Loeb Classical Library online)

flower-covered wall of a country restaurant, a feeling of hunger, the desire for women, the pleasure of luxury'.
(Proust, 2003, [1913], p. 2533)

Here I notice that Proust has the same concern of Wittgenstein on 'exactness' in language, finding however a different path, which links directly to the sensuous, bypassing logical and intellectual ruminations.

The Spoken and Written Language: Hypostasis

A phenomenology of language has to be addressed here¹⁶¹: language is, before anything else, an utterance; it is spoken before being written. Giving voice to language does not necessarily mean that the words are spoken, expressed. The voice can remain within: the inward voice, the speaking to oneself. It is nevertheless speaking: but saying what? Another distinction: the nature of signs. Following Husserl's differentiation, signs can be indicative (without any correlated meaning) and expressive (carrying a meaning): a combination of these two types is prerequisite for communication¹⁶². And here we run up against the complexity of metaphysical phenomenology and the matters of perception, corporeality and consciousness.

Assuming that language provides me with tools to ideate and construct a sense of reality and an awareness of my persona distinguished from other bodies and entities, as a repercussion, any

161 Because of the scope and the focus of this investigation I will limit this introduction to a general outline of the observations made at length by Husserl in *Logical Investigations* and *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness* (1928), and discussed by Jacques Derrida in *Voice and Phenomenon, Introduction to the Problem of the Sign in Husserl's Phenomenology* (1967) about the interpretation of signs and the role of the voice and spoken language.

162 Note here that language is not equal to communication: I can speak by using linguistic signs that at the receiving end are not understood or completely foreign to the listener. I can in addition speak to myself without any interlocutor: here again there is not necessarily a communicative purpose, notwithstanding that I am using language to structure and articulate my thoughts.

childhood experience that is preverbal would not be retained consciously, since I was not yet equipped to assign linguistic signs to my experience. This would also mean that any prelinguistic and preverbal exposure to phenomena which invokes the participation of my senses, is doomed to pass without consequence or lasting effects on my psyche.

On the other hand, by acknowledging the fact that the senses can act regardless of a thinking process in which language is fundamental, we face a metaphysics of knowledge about which we are unable to give, phenomenologically, any evidence. The locus of communication is thus bound to the double uncertainty of first, interpretation of language and its rules (language games, following Wittgenstein's notion) and second, the interpretation of signs that represent something else. Every sign represents a meaning, or more than one, which is the result of a construct in the psychic life of the message sender. In like manner, the receiver's understanding is the result of his/her own interpretation of such represented meaning according to his/her own psychic experience. Language consists of grammatical structures that are repeated, forming a body of logical and intuitive correspondences: and repetition is a fundamental aspect of the linguistic fabric¹⁶³.

163 A few more clarifications are needed. Husserl makes a distinction between expression and full expression in communication: the latter being the ideal condition in which the receiving end is able to fully represent the meaning of the sign of the sender, a *reductio ad absurdum*. Derrida notes that, by admitting the possibility of full expression, there should be an ideality of the signified and the intended senses, and as consequence, a perfect univocity of language. The principle of ideality, argues Derrida, invokes an original presence *a priori*, a 'certainty, which is itself ideal and absolute, [that] the universal form of all the experience and therefore all life, has always been and always will be the *present*'; Derrida continues that 'to think presence is the universal form of transcendental life is to open me to the knowledge that in my absence, beyond my empirical existence, prior to my birth and after my death, the *present is*'; thus 'the relation to *my death* (to my disappearance in general) that is hidden in this determination of being as presence, ideality, as the absolute possibility of repetition'; therefore concluding that 'the possibility of the sign is this relation to death. The determination and the erasure of the sign in metaphysics is the dissimulation of this relation to death which nevertheless was producing sig-

The Time of the Event

Once the audience enters the studio and settles down, it is welcome to wander around in the space: by introducing the event as an experiment in intermediality with a performative aspect, I suggest that it is possible, if any are willing, to touch and eventually smell the objects laid down on the white panels. This is an invitation to experience the effluvia and peculiar aromas of the objects, their texture, shape and color, before I commence the procedure of trimming the beard: for that procedure I request the audience to take a seat on white wooden benches, organized on one side of the venue. I also advise that by the end of the performative segment, the audience can explore the space once more at will, to observe any changes and new relationships induced by the modified setting.

The event commences: while sitting in a chair on the side of the performing area, I observe with curiosity the meandering of the individuals through the space constellated with objects, words, scents, light, sounds, and spoken words emitted by the sound system¹⁶⁴. Some people pick up objects and bring them to their nostrils, some evaluate the tools on the table, some just walk, others measure, quite curiously, the size of the underwear placed on the white board. Somehow exhausting the impetus, after around ten minutes everyone is back on the wooden benches: I take a seat behind the table and begin executing the beard trimming.

At the start of the operation I find myself very busy remembering how to proceed with the correct order of events, carefully ideated and orchestrated in its details:

Pick up trimming scissors with your left hand and look into the mirror.

nification'. (Derrida, 2011 [1967], p. 45-46)

164 The audience enters the space with the concerned manner and cautious walking pace often encountered in exhibition halls: a quiet, almost ponderous walking, a silent modality of observing, while picking up objects, interwoven with the sound of the recorded voices coming from the loudspeakers.

With the fingers of the right hand hold a cluster of beard, cut it carefully but firmly.

Keep holding the trimmed hair with the fingers and deposit it into the empty jar on your right.

Lay down the scissors, clean the table of remaining hair, and deposit that into the jar.

Look at the printed label of the object's name placed on the table in front of you, with a sketch of its positioning on the floor.

Identify the next object to pick up, then stand up, walk toward the object on its white panel, pick up the object, walk back to the table.

Place the object on the cutting board, get an empty jar from the floor on the right, open the jar's lid and leave both on the surface of the table.

Pick up the kitchen scissors from your left side, and cut a tiny piece of the chosen object to put into the jar.

Lay down the scissors, seal the jar with its lid, pick up the written label of the corresponding object (those have been filled in previously, except for the timing of the sealing).

Look at the analog watch on your right, take note of the time, pick up the pen at your left and write the actual time of completion of the procedure on the label, 7 pm.

Lay down the pen, pick up the jar and meticulously stick the label on it, leaving the jar on the table.

Throw the remainder of the object into a white thick garbage bag on the floor at your right side, next to the unused empty jars.

Clean the kitchen scissors and the cutting board with the cloth on your left predisposed for this purpose, as needed.

Hold onto the jar containing the remnants of the just-sliced object, stand up, walk toward the empty panel reserved for the aforementioned object, place the jar on the panel, center it on the upper edge of the object's printed name, label toward the audience's seats.

Walk back to your table and sit.

Repeat: pick up the scissors with your left hand, look into the mirror, hold with the fingers of the right hand a cluster of beard, cut it carefully but firmly...

A few variations of the process of tool usage are necessary because of the peculiarity of the objects to be sampled: some require scissors (ex. basil, chicken, underwear), some a knife (ex. cookies, soap, butter), others a syringe (ex. wine, lotion, perfume), and a few are picked up with the fingers (ex. coffee powder, green tea leaves). A relevant variation of this procedure occurs about 40 minutes from the start when the beard is getting too short for scissors and a razor is needed:

Pick up the green plastic bowl, the razor and the thermos bottle located under the table, place them on top of it, in front of you.

Pick up the small steel bowl on your right side next to the mirror, together with the shaving cream and the shaving brush.

Pour a little of the liquid cream into the steel bowl, mix the shaving cream with the brush and some warm water taken from the thermos bottle.

Using the brush, moisten your face with the resulting white foam.

Pour the warm water of the thermos bottle into the green bowl, let the razor soak in the green bowl's water.

Pick up the razor with your left hand, look into the mirror, shave a cheek carefully but firmly.

From time to time clean the blade with the green bowl's warm water to avoid the razor being obstructed by clusters of hair.

Lay the razor in the green bowl, clean your face with the cloth at your right predisposed for the purpose, as needed.

Look at the printed list of the objects' names placed on the table in front of you, with the sketch of their positioning on the floor.

Identify the next object to pick, stand up, walk toward the whiteboard, pick up the object, walk back to the table...

Repeat the process as first described.

And the ending of the performance:

Pick up the tube of aftershave balm situated at the right side of the table, next to the mirror.

Gently squeeze the tube with your right hand and pour a small quan-

tity of balm onto the palm of your left hand.

Put the tube aside, rub the balm on both palms and then softly massage your face's skin with the palm of your hands.

Check in the mirror that the balm is completely absorbed and repeat the procedure if necessary.

With the cloth at your right side, clean the table of any remnants of the shaving: droplets of water, shaving cream, hair.

Move toward the audience, take a seat among them.

At this point the audience is once more able to explore the space and its modified design. Much curiosity is evident because of the tools organized on the table; some jars on the floor attract more interest than others¹⁶⁵; some individuals stay on the side of the event space to evaluate the novel design and overall setting. After a while we gather at the seats for an informal conversation about the experience.

A few interesting observations emerge: someone considers the event to possess an underlying tone of violence, based on the continuous cutting of objects, the screening of Franju's documentary, the trimming and shaving, the tools displayed on the table (scissors, knife, razors, etc); someone else notices the experimental, quasi-laboratory-exercise manner of the procedure and its setting; again the tools but also the cold and clinical light, the rigorous setting, the multiple camera angles, the peculiar cadence of the text uttered by the loudspeakers; a third person remarks on the everydayness of the objects, a novel association with something not usually noticed: presence (or absence), shape, smell, texture, metastasis. Note that the jar containing the beard is still open, on the table: my choice is to give the audience a chance to observe the tools and the result of the shaving and cutting procedure before sealing the last jar¹⁶⁶.

165 The most popular being the slice of half eye - half mouth of the fish.

166 Cutting a beard after two years of growth is not a straightforward task: because of the need to complete the shaving by the end of the performance, a number of considerations arose. Scissors, razors, shaving cream, warm water, bowl, mirror, and a towel are the tools needed: I have placed on the table replacements for the scissors and razors in case they jam or get dam-

And here is the *coda* of the event:

Walk back to the table, sit and seal the jar containing the beard with its lid, pick up the written label of the corresponding object. Look at the analog watch on your right, take note of the time, pick up the pen on your left and write on the label the actual time of completion of the event, 8:18 pm. Lay down the pen, pick up the jar and meticulously stick the label on it. Hold onto the jar containing the remnants of the beard. Stand up, walk toward the empty panel of the aforementioned object (an extra board left, beside the wall), place the board in front of the table, place the jar on the board, center-top, above the upper edge of the object's printed name, label toward the audience's seats. Move toward the audience, take a seat among them. End of the event.

The Temporality of the Atomic Components of the Event

There is no denial that the piece, in its performative design, has a beginning, and an end, but conceptually the work is continuously regenerating, where new elements germinate by and because of genomic recombination, where the potentiality of the elements is engaged and transformed during the performance – and where some of these elements may appear to become reshaped, exhausted, or withered¹⁶⁷.

aged; I have a thermos bottle with hot water to replenish the bowl. The shaving of the beard, which is central to this experiment, is in itself a challenge because it is not possible to properly rehearse the process: the overall duration can only be intuited with some uncertainty, depending on a walkthrough by proxy since the operation itself does not permit a retake. The haircut from the beard is gradually deposited in a jar, which is the last to be placed on the floor, in front of the table, at the end of the event. The total duration of the procedure is 71 minutes, without taking into account the audience's wandering through the installation prior to and after the performative part.

167 As long as there is a text, there are objects to recognise and enumerate; as long as we live (and beyond for that matter), there are beards that grow; as long as there are speaking voices, there is a text to articulate; as long as there is

The beard that I cut during the performance is the result of two years' growth: the same beard is growing again right now, as I write these words; the written words that I lay down on white boards during the performance exist before and after that moment, so also their corresponding objects, no matter how transformed or transfigured. The signs emitted by the text and the objects bear meanings which endure, regardless; the sounds and smells produced respectively by recorded voices and by the natural effluvia of the objects on the white panels, are sounds and smells that elongate their existence, unconcerned by the specific moment I record them and associate them together in a staged performance. My body, busy with standing, reaching for an object laid on floor, sitting down to trim the beard, standing again to replace objects with jars, is a body that will be busy with the same procedures of standing and sitting throughout its life, as are all other human bodies that are and will be engaged in such activities¹⁶⁸.

The continuum here is not the time of a past, present and future, not the flow of the Bergsonian *élan vital* nor the Jamesian specious present, with its remnants of past and future. The continuum here has no arrow nor directionality; it does not move toward: there is no retention and protention, in Merleau-Ponty's elaboration *après* Husserl. The continuum I have in mind is static in its oneness: it is the space time of four-dimensional quantum

an atmosphere on the planet, there are smells and sounds in the air; as long as there is a human being, there is a body walking or sitting; as long as there are vegetables and animals those grow, wither and die, only to be born anew...

168 This is an important observation in relation to temporality: underlined here is the fact that the atomic components of this experiment have always been, and always will be, indifferent and independent of my manifest willingness to *perform* them. It might be argued that other performative events are dealing with elements that exist *a priori*: what I maintain in this particular case is that all the elements, none excluded, belong to a temporal continuum that converge within the extent of the performance. By putting together pieces of ordinary lived experiences, observing their resulting intertwined temporality and their persistence in time, regardless of my manoeuvring, I am attempting a phenomenological investigation of physical processes, amalgamated in a definite setting.

physics, it is the Japanese philosophical 'Ma', the conceptual in-betweenness of time and space, a Deleuzian *intermezzo*. The chattering of the multiple layers of recorded voices, the signs that label corresponding objects, suggest linguistic ways in which humans attempt to interpret sensory phenomena. As the work of interpretation becomes ever more complex and multilayered, time warps, bends, slows, stops. Here Massumi's states of 'static-temporal and narrative noise' return (Massumi, 1995, p. 86).

The Mechanized Time of the Event Setting

The table, theatre of the performative gestures of beard trimming, and of the slicing of pieces from the objects laid on the floor, is at the center of the studio. Apart from the tools for trimming and cutting, two clocks (one digital and the other analog) stand on the table: the digital one faces the audience and the analog clock is towards me¹⁶⁹. There is a twofold motive for this arrangement: I desire to write the exact time at which I seal the jar with the remnant of the object taken from the white board; here I am interested to annotate, as in a laboratory experiment, a frozen moment of the sample's metamorphosis; and I want the audience to weigh the mechanical time and its relation to the setting of the event, the aforementioned transfigurations, shifting relationships, modified time and space of the elements involved in the process.

All around the table are 23 panels with printed words and the aforementioned objects. The printed text was chosen over cursive writing to enhance the formality and quasi-impersonal relationship between the performer, the object's name and the object itself (printed words belong to no one). Thus we are encouraged to clinically observe a disintegrating correlation between a printed word and the tiny slices resting in the jars.

169 The face of the digital clock is directed toward the audience as its bright green digits are easy to see from afar, unlike the analog clock with its two small hands.

Hidden loudspeakers inundate the space with the voiced text of Godard, Franju, and my own automatic writing¹⁷⁰. The pre-recorded assemblage of texts follows a compositional logic which simultaneously takes into account the characteristic sound quality of individual voices and the three distinct circumstances in which the seven voices appear. Pauses of various lengths (from 30 seconds to 3 minutes) are interspersed into the recorded voices: this to permit focus on different elements of the performance and the space, and avoid being overwhelmed by ceaseless sound coming from the loudspeakers. Pauses here are intended as *fermata*, an elongated suspended time, internalization of the sound-text event just passed, and preparation for the next to come. The length of the audio recording is about 85 minutes¹⁷¹.

Audience seats extend across one side of the room: white wooden blocks five meters long are disposed over three wide steps, to form benches on three levels. To the left of the wall with seats is the studio's entrance door, followed by a naked whitewashed wall. Opposite the wall with the seats and to the right of it, the two remaining walls feature pairs of opaque colored windowpanes. Three ceiling pendant lights, arranged in two rows, provide the necessary illumination.

170 is there a war popping by the shopping mall which includes styro-foam and gigantic lavender in lavish suits with unknown robbery and metamorphic sycamore it is the left leg that sparks with juicy flesh her tenure of mood and blood into the womb of metal plates and undisclosed pleasures horrors and motherless sanctity resurrecting the habit of cooking noodles under the moon the new root can achieve a fantastic level of platitude and meaningless road and socks in yellow stocks and quivery gloomy faces while the market of such things is not deliberately a good wine it seems proper to believe in the underwear and disposal of will in respect of willingness and the institution of soap looking forward to a new format of mystifications of doors opening bleeding octopuses in denial of death and my coloured nails taking apart the vicious circle of ladyship in consideration of a tatami influenced by bed bugs we shall overcome the sand and stripes the tree and the moulding purple car for instance in the discrimination of turtles and gametes is the necessity of writing on the surface of things allowing for further encounters with hidden holes covered in shit and smelling of vagina

171 This decision was made considering the time needed for the audience to navigate the installation before and after the performance, and the estimation of the duration of the performance itself.

The choice of the studio has been made in consideration of the size and the easy accessibility of the place. In this practice, the colors of the windows, the general atmosphere of the space of the studio, are not a primary concern and focus, though undoubtedly they contribute something. The focus here is on the setting, the table, the boards, the objects, the tools, the sounds from the loudspeakers. A similar evaluation was carried out regarding the performer's clothes: a choice dictated solely by comfort, a selection of dim and ashen colors intended to help attention converge on the visage, the hands and the procedure of the trimming of the beard.

A few individuals were invited to attend the private event: their selection took into consideration restrictions in place for the covid pandemic and acquaintance and friendship with the persons involved. The performance started at 6:55 on a Saturday evening, and ended at 8:25 pm, the time the audience left the space.

The Text

During the performance, three recorded texts are diffused from loudspeakers, hidden from the audience's sight. These are excerpts from Franju's documentary *Le Sang des bêtes* and Godard's film *Made in USA*. An almost 9000-word automatic writing¹⁷² ex-

172 in the connection with earth and meadow lies the true essence of the perfume of lotus spoiled by water and sweat the constitution of little achievements in armpit growing madness and nonsensical statements relying on madness fluids and connected harps in the waiting for the ice the light went off and I looked for an improbable stance while the bird's eye looked into my dreary socks compensating in a state of shock which reminded me of the lost days of winter and the look of a snow storm that is unhappy with my tie is there a rule that you need to keep at ease walking the scented roses down to the light ankle that leads the path to the odorous lively sole of the heel cunningly starving in the blu effluvia and trivial matters of everyday mysterious gore and defiance is there a connection between the gesture the resting fingers the color and shape of whatever is in relation with the tactility of the white material and the purpose of sitting inhaling and looking straight to the ephemeral signs brought up by the sound of the tool while I am gurgling the damped lips in rotten gibberish I sense the throat to be filled of sounds and unarticulated textures under my toes in the skin of the next flat willing to emerge from the vision rejected of the

periment which I have conducted over 6 weeks is the third text.

Seven voices give life to the text: two friends of mine graciously offered their help to record text pulled out from my automatic writing¹⁷³ experiment; they are Michelle and Craig. I gave them no instructions on how to work with the text, rather I explained to them briefly how the text had been generated. They recorded an undivided version of experiment 1 to experiment 6 (out of 25 experiments which I have generated). The remaining five voices are part of the original script from Franju's and Godard's works. Georges Hubert and Nicole Ladmiral are the narrators in Franju's 1949 documentary *Le Sang des bêtes*; Anna Karina, Marc Dudicourt and a third person, Thomas, a patron of the bar where the film's scene is taking place, are the voices of 1966 Godard's *Made in USA*.

Franju's *Le Sang des bêtes* is a documentary about the slaughterhouses outside Paris. The film shows the everyday routine of the workers and the animals: from the moment horses, cows and sheep are taken into the factory, slaughtered, parted and cleaned, until the moment the processed meat is sent to the markets. The film interposes scenes of life in the suburbs of Paris with interior

choking space uncluttered nails morbid clusters of feathers and mices wrapped together in fear and cozy laziness boiling cream of vanished flesh heated to the point of suppuration a clinical death filled with eroticism coldness and moist

173 gonads gone into oblivion by interstellar decisions made too quick with rifles and bananas in the indecision of a further muddy mushroom got into rescue of hands falling aside the greenery and the humbush of a shrubbery sealed with the lotion of mails and stones while growing addicts enables belly-buttons to resuscitate their lovely humorous in candid pinkish plump nipples mastery in doing is requested by assembling theories of nothing somatic chasm and gonorrhoea christendom more it is clear the sense of shifting axes under our bodies by pulling aside the divergent nostrils and the conspicuous piece of lamb left on the table to suckle the toe of my glass eradicating roses and limbs might ask for effort in the constitution of public concern over the affair of rotten cantilevers it is relevant to this conversation the need of moisturised honey and camphorated oil to suppress the impression of a malodorous family upbringing getting more irritated by the continuous loss of consistency in the matter of balls it is in fact clear that more attention is needed when it comes to the affinity of taxonomy plié and a dimension of living that should go beyond the matter of fruitcake

shots taken at the *abattoirs*. Cameos of the private and public life of the workers are part of the documentary's narrative.

Made in USA can be considered a political pastiche¹⁷⁴. Given the scope of this investigation, I limit myself to discussing the dialogue from which the text has been extracted. The scene deals openly with interpretation of language and its grammar. Anna Karina, the protagonist of the film, a barman (the actor Marc Du-dicourt) and a third person (the client, a worker named Thomas) speak together about the recombinatory possibilities of language and the resulting impact on meaning. The client toys with grammatical structure to show that by deconstructing and recombining atomic parts of a sentence, every statement may have completely unexpected or double meanings.

I cannot provide an exhaustive introduction to the historical evolution and application of automatic writing¹⁷⁵. But a brief recounting of its recent developments will explain how I have interpreted and put the procedure into practice. In 1933, André Breton published *The Automatic Message*, one of his most significant theoretical essays on automatism. It appeared in the Pari-

174 Godard is playfully combining elements of film noir, slapstick comedy, parody, with the intention of adumbrating the political responsibility of the west, and especially of the capitalistic system, for the failure to negotiate the socioeconomic conditions of the many countries at war on the planet.

175 masterhood in well-rounded skydiving is an absolute requirement for a prolonged pleasant effect over neurosis and economical side effects given by the uncertainty of the geodetic model of rotation finally a butter flow of silver lining that is helping the thinking further the fallout of syncretistic de-representation will undermine the liberal act of preserving a shape of the melded turnip which in its conformity of space and design reveal the hidden furniture last illo-tempore by a bunch of unrelated affairs constipated away from us to continue with a sense of illiteracy that can ultimately provoke a fancy dress showing lovely attention to details such as wood you and books it seems almost necessary to check into the link of this object and find out whether something is missing out or rather it constantly changes its behaviour seems that there is in fact a problem of flowing of the ink into the zone of cauliflower of which the resultant path is forbidden to most and for which the gesture is dry and grieved seems that the main issue is a constant flow of fluids in and out with local stimulation lost by peppermint and white canvas it is fascinating that living in such an empty can let you fix your tiredness over silly fish

sian magazine *Minotaure*, No. 3-4. Surrealists, most notably André Masson, then applied automatic methods to art making so as to suppress conscious control over the process of making and allow the unconscious mind greater sway. Prior to the Surrealists, Dadaists such as Hans Arp, made some use of this method through chance operations¹⁷⁶.

In my practice I experimented with automatic writing¹⁷⁷ as follows: the sessions take place in my living room, writing at the dining table; opening an A5 size lined notebook, holding my pen in hand, I start by emptying my mind of thoughts of any sort. This requires a few seconds or even one or two minutes. Once I reach this state, the first word or cluster of words that crosses my mind is written down with a slow but constant pace. I continue to let my mind select the words that follow by free association. I do not correct, reshape or reconsider wording, grammar or overall meaning. I try to proceed seamlessly until the A5 page is filled with text. Then I pause, and start over again with the same procedure from the top of the next blank page¹⁷⁸.

176 Automatic writing is initially associated with spiritism: spirit writing, later called Fuji (planchette writing) (扶乩/扶箕), has a long tradition in China, where messages from various deities and spirits were received by mediums since the Song dynasty. In the West, an early example of the practice is the 16th-century Enochian language, allegedly dictated to John Dee and Edward Kelley by Enochian angels and integral to the practice of Enochian magic.

177 silly cockroaches are willingly stubborn to retaliate the snooze of their pants in assumption of royalty by looking upon shelter and in-human behaviour by acknowledging the lack of substance the petal wait for the wave to come in utterly displeased manner under her shirt there is a clear lack of understanding in the process of connecting the three pieces of marble polished by the unwilling paper and scissor and connecting figures of rhetoric to life.

178 Here some considerations emerge: by alternating between a rollerball and a fountain pen, the exercise unfolds at various speeds, and I am compelled to acknowledge distinct characteristics of the two modalities of writing. The fountain pen requires much more attention to the shape and movement of fingers and wrist, otherwise the sign of the words is often broken or unintelligible; the pen itself has a distinctive sound engraving the piece of paper, while the rollerball is definitely quieter and more forgiving in the making. As a consequence the two ways of exercising the writing are clearly distinct because the process induces a different modality of attention.

The praxis requires abundant effort to keep the mind away from a propensity to construct meaning in a piece of writing. While superficially this sounds like an easy task, at the start of the experiment, I am only able to put down three or four lines without getting trapped in trying to direct and control the development of the writing. Only after two weeks of everyday practice am I able to reach the end of the page without getting stuck in discursive thinking.

I do not consider this automatic writing¹⁷⁹ experiment to be equivalent to the composition of sentences or paragraphs. The page is filled with words without any punctuation, full stop or capital letters; it is a stream of free associations with no concern for structure, no beginning, no ending, nor even a trajectory. When I hand over the text to my friends to read and record, they receive the transcription as is, without any revision. Without further instruction or recommendation, I tell them to choose how they want to deal with the text.

The Objects

The selection of the 23 objects follows a procedure dictated by a *desideratum* – to encompass a variety of fragrances, odors, aromas, and even foul smells. I look for objects whose smell belongs to ordinary everydayness. This makes a direct connection between the quotidian, its objects, their smells and temporality: intrinsic metamorphosis of objects and odors, in the ordinary tempo of life. Hence objects are chosen within the following broad

179 melopeia as a metaphor of scolded scoundrels rushing to the next train in progress of winning a cutlass field of moth by no standards gigantic and ginormous pedestals fit the groom and the watermelon suspended over the ceiling adorned with truffles filled without ammonia constipation result in a malevolent effect of silliness cooperation and dementia often constrained within labels and terraces it is the result of inappropriate copulation that lead to somatic methadone in conjunction with cork and rocks a technocratic approach is requested at once to expunge the terrible possibility of plague and affection to recalcitrant loathsome boudoir in close collaboration within arms collars and demure chickens

categories: food (fish, shrimp, chicken, lettuce, mushrooms, butter, cookies, rosemary, basil); clothes (socks, shoes, underwear); drinks (wine, water, gin); cosmetics (lotion, perfume, toothpaste, soap); and a miscellanea concocted of ice, flowers, coffee powder, dry tea leaves.

I notice the list could have been organized differently and that some of the objects belong simultaneously to different categories: coffee is a drink, if water is added, while in its solid state, it is a bean that can be reduced to a powder. Ice is water but in a solid state, and vice-versa. The list indeed could have been conceived in consideration of the state – solid, liquid, gas – or nature of the material, organic or inorganic; or color, shape, size, weight; or by a combination of these or other characteristics. I am also aware that some object names are more specific than others (for example rosemary versus fish). This troubling realization, no matter how cautiously I may try to avoid being trapped in the conundrum, brings me to interpretation¹⁸⁰, to a contemplation of text and how language points to an *ideation* of things.

But this was precisely one purpose of the experiment: how we perceive words, how we differentiate word from object, sign from experience; how we conceptualize words, how we concatenate, organize and modulate the flow of text and its ever-mutable stream of meanings and connotations, layer upon layer of complexity. To disentangle all this requires a certain order of things, and may benefit from the concept of heterotopias¹⁸¹.

180 Wittgenstein's observation seems useful once more: 'A main source of our failure to understand is that we don't have an *overview* of the use of our words. – Our grammar is deficient in surveyability. A surveyable representation produces precisely that kind of understanding which consists in 'seeing connections'. Hence the importance of finding and inventing *intermediate links*. The concept of a surveyable representation is of fundamental significance for us. It characterises the way we represent things, how we look at matters. (Wittgenstein, 2009 [1953], f. 122, p. 54-55)

181 As previously mentioned, Foucault defined heterotopias through six principles, as spaces that exhibit dual meanings with several places of/for the affirmation of difference, but also as a means of escape from authoritarianism and repression; an ambiguous and ambivalent space of 'elsewhere': a collection of differences, *intermezzo* between utopian and dystopian spaces.

An important characteristic of the chosen objects is their *resistance* to time: ice and butter melt, at different speeds; flowers, lettuce, basil and rosemary wither, again with their own tempi; water, wine and perfume evaporate, becoming gaseous. For some objects their mutation is firstly manifested by a change of state, for others, by the evident alteration of their odor, in the case of fish, shrimp, chicken. On the other end of the spectrum are objects whose changes are too slow to be perceived at the resolution of human senses: shoes, socks, underwear, lotion, toothpaste, coffee powder, dry tea leaves. Here again their aroma is more pronounced, as opposed to their change of state.

The audience's reactions to the various scents reflect habits or assumptions about characteristics of these objects and their deterioration over time; a temporal determination of changing quality: by imagining a continuum that ranges from what can be perceived as pleasant to, at its opposite, what is foul; the persons I observed, indulged in getting close to the flowers, coffee powder, rosemary, body cream; they stayed away from the chicken, fish, the socks, underwear.

The experiment looks to a variety of sensory stimuli to reframe the logic of everydayness: here I speculate that it is a question of attention¹⁸², a relationship with routine, tedium, the familiar, which hauls the experience of the senses and the field of percep-

182 This matter is vividly elucidate in Bernhard Waldenfels's *Phenomenology of the Alien* (2006). Chapter 4 and 5 is devoted to the topic of attention: throughout a number of examples encompassing philosophical, artistic and socio-economical scenarios, Waldenfels brings to the forefront disregarded features of attention: the involvement of all senses, the matter of attention in art and what he calls the 'techniques and practices of attention'. Waldenfels acknowledges the difficulty of the categorization of attention while providing hints: the subjective act of attention; the anonymous mechanisms of observation (here he refers as an example to monitors and screens); the matter of selection (the difference between what is out there to see and hear and what we are actively hearing and seeing); the specificity of a time and space of attention (what is seen and heard and what is unseen and unheard); the pathology of attention (here Waldenfels refers to agoraphobia, claustrophobia, over-concentration (Waldenfels, 2011 [2006], p. 63-68)

tion beneath the threshold of consciousness¹⁸³. The reduction of the objects to tiny slices follows a logic of *reductio ad infinitum*: what happens to the sign emitted from the original object (say a whole fish), when the remnant is a mash of half eye, half mouth, muddled together by the force of the blade of the scissors, imposed over the skin and meat of the dead animal? Can we still call it a fish? Do we recognize it as a fish, without being present for the start of the slicing procedure? At which point and how do we discriminate the fish from a mere part of it or from a chaotic mass of organic remains? What is the relation between the remnant and the text printed on the boards? Is there a caesura in the temporality of the animal's life, shape, identity?

By changing the composition of the fabric of the familiar, the experiment calls for lost attention to be reanimated: the lost time of objects, the aromas, the beard; the lost time of the text. Language that is inherently reductive, incomplete, which can never capture the complexity of a world that is in motion, continuously

183 Philosopher Martin Heidegger introduces a distinction between two ways of moving towards the world: the present-at-hand (*Vorhandenheit*) and the ready-to-hand (*Zuhandenheit*). Present-at-hand refers to our theoretical apprehension of a world made up of objects. Notoriously Heidegger introduced the example of the hammer to give voice to these differences: 'the less we just stare at the thing called hammer, the more we take hold of it and use it, the more original our relation to it becomes and the more undisguisedly it is encountered as what it is, as a useful thing. The act of hammering itself discovers the specific *handiness* ["Handlichkeit"] of the hammer. We shall call the useful thing's kind of being in which it reveals itself by itself *handiness* [*Zuhandenheit*].' (Heidegger, 2010 [1927], p. 69) Conversely the ready-to-hand describes our practical relation to things that are handy or useful: the 'presence of what is unusable still does not lack all handiness whatsoever; the useful thing thus present is still not a thing which just occurs somewhere. The damage to the useful thing is still not a mere change in the thing, a change of qualities simply occurring in something present' (Heidegger, 2010 [1927], p. 72). Heidegger's basic claim is that practice precedes theory, and that the ready-to-hand is prior to the present-at-hand. Heidegger argues that the problem with most philosophy after Descartes is a theoretical conception of the world, devoid of its experiential being. For Heidegger, instead, human beings are inextricably bound with the complex social practices that constitute the world: the world is who I am. Here Heidegger's notion of *Dasein* (Da-sein: there-being), represents the philosopher's answer to the ontological question of the meaning of Being.

evolving in the fabric of time.

By trimming my beard and slicing the objects, I am manipulating time: I reduce and slice away temporal portions of the 'life span' of such objects. Without my repetitive act of shaving, the beard would grow month after month; without my act of cutting away pieces of the fish, the latter would decompose little by little over weeks or months. I am acting on the nature of things, fundamentally altering their temporality: by doing so scent, size, shape, texture, colors, are equally modified and re-temporalized.

The: Culture and Aesthetics of Smell

In research which places the senses at the forefront of a phenomenological investigation into temporality, considerations arise: how do the perception and narrativization of the sensuous experience differ, in different cultural milieus? In his seminal *The Foul and the Fragrant: Odour and the French Social Imagination* (1986), Alain Corbin delineates in great depth a history of smell in nineteenth-century France. While there is no space here for a detailed description of Corbin's work, I will use it to draw analogies with the current experiment.

The selection of odors belonging to a sort of everydayness underpins the evaluation of what is usual, ordinary, in an array of possible scents, and what is not. The ordinariness of smells belongs to the culture of smell particular to a researcher whose habits, social habitus and experiences in life have brought him to such an evaluation. Another person, when required to make such a list, most probably would have rejected, modified or included a different set of smells, according to his/her own habits, habitus and familiarity.

Evaluation of what is pleasant and unpleasant, or foul smell, is again a matter of cultural proximity, personal experiences and inclinations¹⁸⁴; so is the significance or, *tout au contraire*, the unim-

184 Here I see a connection with Levi Strauss's *The Raw and the Cooked* (1964): elements along the *raw* side of the spectrum being of *natural* provenance,

portance of certain smells, contiguous with the maneuvering of the socio-politics of smell: a fecund field of investigation dealing with systems of power, the state, the systematic exploitation of the categorization of smells as a social *stigma*, within the social contract¹⁸⁵.

Scoring the Event: The Notated Tempi and the Orchestration of Time

The event developed through a carefully planned combination of elements: the procedure for cutting the beard; the act of replacing objects with their sliced remnants, which are then sealed in transparent glass jars; the spoken text of Franju's documentary, Godard's film and my automatic writing¹⁸⁶, diffused through loudspeakers; the gradual modification of effluvia and odors spread through the air by objects arranged on white panels; the invariable artificial light of the studio; my body moving back and forth, proceeding with its program of planned tasks.

and those on the *cooked* side of *cultural* origin - as products of human creation.

185 All these circumstances have been meticulously analysed in Corbin's text in relation to the French liaison with odours in the nineteenth-century, with a plethora of examples and profound reflections: I acknowledge here while sketching them briefly, the ramifications and implications of the choices of the smells being included (and excluded) within the scope of the research.

186 moulding canisters is the prerequisite of every winning auspicious charm that relies on champagne inoculated by eye-balls and colloids forestasting is dangerous for the turkey when it comes to articulate a path of colors and a grid of fences because the use of water mixed with sand can lead the fire to emarginate vital areas of crystals out of the sunset and snow mature manure is appended at the entrance of the necklace which consist of four gems three mannequins five escargot and a good poker in the closet costumes of pepsi cola changes the behaviour of shoes and pizza while preserving a certain allure of respectability in vaginal constraints ruled by choices of suffering melopoeia little things and rumbling cocinillas by constantly keeping alerted the fox is casting shadows of amber and asperge over the sky and stars and the curve of your sinuous spine ending voluptuously into a bush of emerald glory and bountiful energy alleluia in sweet kindred persimmons breath joy to the youthful mass of necrotic bones aligned as on a fart by nesting onto bombastic gardens

The score takes into consideration seven temporal units: the time of the recorded voices; the time of the text printed on the white boards; the time of the objects' decay and subsequent change in smell and appearance; the time of the combined procedures of trimming the beard and cutting the displayed objects; the time of Franju's documentary *Le Sang des bêtes*; the time of the three video-recording devices; and lastly, the combined time of two distinct screens, one showing Franju's documentary, and a second showing a real time close up of the beard trimming.

These temporal units are not homogeneous: some operate specifically, but not exclusively, in relation to the time of the event (screening the documentary, video recording of the event, shown concurrently on two paired screens); while other temporalities are uninterruptedly acting within and without the time of the event (the beard trimmed as it grows, the metamorphosis of the objects in their smell and semblance, the recorded voices and the printed text on the white panels, both existing, regardless of whatever is played back or of whatever words are shown on the boards).

Initially, the choice and number of the objects determined, in combination with the trimming of the beard, a first sub-temporal unit: I established that the gesture of cutting the beard once, picking up one object, slicing it, labelling it and putting it back in a jar on the corresponding white board, requires about 2.5 minutes. For 23 objects the time needed is therefore 57.5 minutes; to this timing I added 15 minutes for the audience to explore the space, before and after the performative portion, determining an average of 70 minutes for the event to be concluded.

Having this trajectory in mind I began to consider the order with which I need to remove the objects from the floor: here a second temporality, of smell and appearance, emerges. The aroma of the chosen objects is the determinant: the temporal and spatial perception of this ephemeral, disguised yet intense characteristic is an engaging phenomenological question. By listing an order of the objects to be removed, I roughly evaluate a spectrum of smells, from the least to the most intense, considering 80

minutes as a temporal window. What I wish to achieve is to witness and experience, together with the audience, the progressive alteration of odors and appearance of the chosen objects.

Under further observation, a distinction immediately arises, between odors that are subtle or intense and remain as such throughout (ex. perfume, soap, toothpaste, green tea leaves); others whose intensity rapidly increases, eventually becoming a foul smell (ex. fish, chicken, shrimp); and lastly some that by decaying lose their initial pungent effluvia (ex. flowers, basil, rosemary). These differences are remarkable within the amount of time of the event: another duration (3 hours, one day, a week) would have brought up different questions of the temporality of smell¹⁸⁷.

Of primary importance in this process: the pre-recorded material from Franju's documentary, Godard's film and my automatic writing¹⁸⁸, and the inherent temporality and tempo of the seven speaking voices, their timbre, the order with which they appear. A first distinction is the timbre of the voices, being those of 3

187 The number of objects involved is another variable to keep in mind: the final selection of the 23 objects could have been expanded (say to a hundred objects) to have an even more ample and complex palette of smells. Here the design, the space necessary for the setting, and the logistics of the event required me to be considerate in terms of the numbers of objects involved and the duration of the whole procedure.

188 a scratch under pressure with juicy elapses of coitus interrupted by mourning and shivering collapsing fortress of hidden golden temple in the remote path of time beneath the curtain of your odorous solace limpid skin fragrant aura coercive nails and fingers clasping me under the floor in the dark choking hazard of empty closet it is the sign that comes before the will by encrusted habit unwillingly to let go and recover a virginal space unfettered untamed by spoiling stains of glorification deification defecation and colored marble glasses stitched together with bleeding flesh extracted from cans and jars ampoules of heaven anality and frugality am I making a fool of my bear holding tight to her nest in preaching attitude and demanding noxious attention in the happening of trongs and turmoils bewitched by a constant sense of becoming bewilderment facing your regarde and my nothing obliteration of all possibility seems the only escape from garden's path in slippers and gardenias with majestic efforts of concupiscence it will transport the remaining shell out of the path toward light and dampen clothes furry and green

female and 4 male individuals: here the gender differentiation is purely functional to avail of a broader aural spectrum.

The variety and peculiarity of the timbres, their sonic characteristics, are important in composing the order and selection of the sound-text material. The pace at which the voices proceed through the texts is also significant. Furthermore Franju's *Le Sang des bêtes* and Godard's *Made in USA*, date respectively from 1949 and 1966, while my text experiment was recorded in November 2021. Within a temporal unity provided by the length of the event, I am combining sources originally disjoint, temporally and by circumstance, but conceptually interconnected. The subject of the slaughterhouse, the metamorphosis of matter and odors; the meaning of language and the combinatory compositional characteristics of the text, are elements that cement these apparently disparate sources.

Then there is the order: Franju's *Le Sang des bêtes* has been sampled to preserve the original order of the commentary, without any redistribution of the text, but it is punctured by the other two bodies of text. Godard's *Made in USA* is limited to one scene of the film. My automatic writing¹⁸⁹ experiment has been sampled to assemble several isolated clusters, regardless of the original sequence: a few of these have been repeated, with the use of the voices of Craig and Michelle, who helped with the recording, composing a *canon* with alteration of tempi and texture.

Le Sang des bêtes opens and ends the sound-text composition, a *da capo al fine*, a musical gesture; interjected onto Franju's commentary, my text and Godard's, dialoguing in timbre, connotation and

189 iconoclastic behaviour is not helping preventing fatal slippery failures of oily and greasy hands frantically searching under slippage of skirts and round garments in rococo vanilla ice cream is there a moulding of the will that arrest the overpowering flow of ravaged and salvage words screaming their nullity in front of a multitude of aseptic bags translucent prophylactics seated in ordered rows by nodding their bare heads broken windows smashed bites of grey matter and gusts of vomiting algae underground dripping sanctity and beneficial effects of the humid porous moth's skin little encounters with tiny percolated feces helps to deconstruct the believe for which a goat cannot learn to play poker while instead horses are often associated with cobblestones and orange juice

pace, with the manifold spoken texts. Unity is given by Franju's text, appearing over and over, with its own directionality and trajectory; a *theme with meta-variations*, where the latter is achieved by intertwining correlations of my text, Godard's and Franju's itself.

The sound-text composition lasts about 43 minutes: rather than stretch out the duration to fit the event's duration (71 minutes), I preferred to run the recording twice, giving the opportunity to the audience and myself to discover ancillary characteristics of the text¹⁹⁰. Franju's film is repeated at least 4 times during the event: the documentary originally lasts about 21 minutes. The length of the procedure of cutting the beard is unknown, generated as it is recorded, an unfolding temporality with no certainty about its ending.

The two screens cooperate, displaying fairly similar circumstances, magnified by redundancy and amplification of *signs*: a body is cut into pieces, reshaped, removed, reduced to unidentifiable bits. The temporality of these two events is distinct, yet coalesces at the time of the actual event. The linguistic signifiers provide an underpinning of mutely trenchant images of metamorphosis and putrefaction, with their hermeneutics. In their mechanical precision, with the electronic progression of sequential binary numbers, the three recording devices and the persistent artificial light of the studio contribute further layers of temporality. Here we

190 Here an elucidation is necessary: the sound-text does not comment synchronously on the actions occurring in the event; it acts simultaneously but with its own tempo, asynchronous to the meandering of the performer, preserving nevertheless a strong conceptual unity with the phenomena occurring within the event because of the rigorous subject of the investigation: the temporal élan of text, smell, and their metamorphic character. Compositionally, there is a contrapuntal playfulness of elements that tie together the temporalities and tempi of the atomic components of the event. This is echoed in the relationship between the device screening Franju's documentary and the device showing the real time operation of trimming and shaving the beard. Composer Karlheinz Stockhausen created two scores with open ended variations determined by the performer(s): *Zyklus* (Cycles) and *Refrain*, dated 1959. Both percussion-based works; in the former, *Zyklus*, the performer is allowed to start from any page (and cycle past the last page to the beginning); in *Refrain* instead the performers can rotate a transparent strip attached to the centre of a circle-shaped score, which changes the music underneath, contributing to many potential variations of timbre and texture of the composition.

are in the realm of chronometric time, the time from without. The camera impassively takes note of the events and objects framed within its eye. Its *regarde* is fixed, imperturbable, detached.

But what is included explicitly, or disposed implicitly, and excluded from view? The standpoint, the angle, corresponding to a statement of temporality. It is a choice regarding what should be observed, captured, documented, stored, recalled, and what should not be. The temporality disgorged from the close-up headshot of the camera framing the person trimming the beard, is not homogenous, with the camera shooting the whole area of the event from a sort of birds eye perspective in the center of the studio. The two cameras are not capturing the same event: there is a distinctiveness of perspective, detail, and focus. The temporal perspective generated is the result of these peculiarities, the spatial configuration within the frame¹⁹¹.

Artificial light – paraphrasing Hannah Arendt, there is no time for repose here¹⁹² – artificial light is a dismissal of the biorhythm of the body, of the cyclic renewal of day and night, through the denial of the natural changes of light. The city lives under incessant light designed for labor. So, this event is a timeless labor, Ariadne's thread, Prometheus' fate. The temporality of artificial light transcends the temporal amplitude of the objects (all of them) contained within the studio, within the time of the event. I notice the dissimilarity to the Bachelardian candle flame: over the course of summoning its gleaming fire, the latter withers, ever changing, with the disappearing body of wax; the former, the electric light, lasts regardless – only a mechanical flaw might

191 A sudden observation emerges: by having an infinite number of cameras, we will have infinite temporalities; according to the four-dimensional quantum physic notion of spacetime, we experience, phenomenologically, only one layer of the manifold coexistence of multiple layers of time and space, the present time.

192 In *The Human Condition*, Arendt observes how 'our whole economy has become a waste economy, in which things must be almost as quickly devoured and discarded as they appeared in the world' and where necessarily the distinction of the sphere of public and private, labour and repose, exhaustion and regeneration, has been eroded by the very system of production and consumerism. (Arendt, 1998 [1958], p. 130-134)

momentarily interrupt its indifferent, mathematical glowing, its luminous temporality of modernity.

The question of temporality for the written text on the boards, to wit, the name of the objects laid on the panel's surface, requires further exegesis. It is not enough to say that these words represent what is already blatantly present to us: the object placed over the printed text, at the present moment, when my attention is brought to it, when I acknowledge its existence within the scope of my perceptual limits¹⁹³.

Speech is not only the utterance of signifiers, but concurrently it is a statement of intent, regardless of the meaning of the signs. Magnification of sensation is a magnification of signs, metaphysical strands of scientific knowledge. There is a linguistic undercurrent emanating, an aura carved from the objects present in the space, which leads our attention to focus on something, or something else, but never on all of what is there, available to us, at once. A temporality of attention, outset and prolegomenon of decision, the time of what should be looked at and observed¹⁹⁴.

The Sands of Time

Phenomenology of smell is prelude to the introduction of Proust and his olfactory search for the time comprised by the

193 This self-referentiality is evident but not adequate to make sense of the experience of the event, of the experience of text per se: signs emitted by objects diffuse in the space, we catalogue and we embrace them, we adopt and we exclude them, not necessarily by a conscious decision; we ourselves are linguistic bodies permeated, sculpted, shaped by text; the sensuous, our perception and cogitations, happen through language, or die voiceless in the body within us.

194 To draw on Saussurean terminology, the 23 names printed in Arial Black on the A3 white boards are *signifié* (signified) meant to solicit correspondences, concatenations of *signifiant* (signifiers). Again, Deleuzian *rhizomatic* ramifications occur throughout the duration of the experiment as a result of layering idiosyncratic temporalities of the individual atomic elements concurrently operating and dialoguing in *concerto*, onto the very time and space of the event.

madeleine; and to Borges, with his sensitivity to the fabric of temporality, the sands of time. Many other authors, implicitly or explicitly, have addressed the subject of temporality, the fabric of the mechanism of language. While I acknowledge that alternative choices could have been possible, I have selected these two authors whose work closely relates to the current practice and investigation: the aforementioned Proust and Borges¹⁹⁵. I consider hereafter specific works of theirs that deal directly with temporality and the sense of smell.

Borges' attraction to temporality is evident in many of his works: *The Library of Babel*, *The Garden of the Forking Paths*, *The Congress*, *The Book of Sand*. Notwithstanding that the latter is perhaps the eponym of textual temporality: portrayed in the story, a book that is an object of endless recombinatory possibilities of linguistic outcomes, of recorded episodes, of life. Borges's short story revolves around a character dominated by his interest in ancient and sacred texts: a stranger appearing at his door offers him a book he found in India, called by the locals, the Book of Sand. The book has no beginning nor end. Even with careful selection it is impossible to encounter the same page twice, because of its continuous recombination of page numbers (never consecutive) and ever-changing content: endless numbers for endless texts; an infinite book¹⁹⁶.

The story operates on many layers of complexity, but is also relevant to this investigation into temporality: the book itself, summa of all conceivable texts and numbers (see also, *The Library of Babel*); the autonomous life of this book, not a mere object

195 I examine these works purely through the lens of their temporal and sensuous aspects, leaving aside already existing essays of literary criticism about both authors and their body of work.

196 The protagonist buys it: soon after, investigating the properties of the book, its ever-changing chameleon-like capabilities, he becomes frightened, obsessed by the suspicion that someone may steal it: he becomes more and more isolated, he meets no friends; even so after some time, terrorised by the more and more evident monstrosity of the book, he resolves to do away with it, hiding it in a remote corner of a public library: it becomes one lost in a ocean of many others.

but a spirited being, with its own volition; the concealed character of the book, able to hide itself among many others apparently of the same kind, in a public place, the library, before many eyes, yet dematerialized, camouflaged among the multitude of the library's other books. A book that is all possible texts and all possible numbers is an infinite book: a book that resists time, or preferably, conveys time; *it is* time, while it also conceals and preserves, folds it. The Book of Sand: continuously shifting, as sand does.

The five-page short story is peculiar in that its main subject is the text and content of the Book of Sand, but at no point in the narration is that text ever shown. The content of the book in fact is in a foreign language, not intelligible to us or to the protagonist. The main text is then a non-existent text, or perhaps it is all existing texts, since the book is infinite.

The Book of Sand evokes the endless recombinatory possibilities of language: this is the same recombinatory infinitude articulated in the performance event described by this chapter.

In a whirlpool of intertwined temporalities, the Book of Sand exists in one and many spaces, one and many times; the event's space and time is one and several. The Book of Sand has no beginning and no end, alluding to a renunciation of direction, of the arrow of time, of geometrical and linear development; in fact no advance, no overarching trajectory, no planning is anywhere manifested.

My event shares the same perspective: linguistic signs, emitted by every single object in the room's performance event¹⁹⁷ are endless, ceaselessly regenerating and morphing; sounds and aromas by the same token unfold and fluctuate of their own accord¹⁹⁸;

197 By object I mean any form of living or lifeless body of matter present in the space.

198 There is a manifest tactility to the Book: a book of sand, a tactile book of a very specific texture; the impalpable feeling of fine grains slipping between the fingers; of light brown, caramel coloured matter whose individual constituents, the grains, are too many and too small to be counted one by one; is there an aromatic distinctiveness in the contact with sand? Is it sand from the ocean floor, or from the desert, or from the seashore, the in-between? Tactility, mi-

cutting a beard is a repetitive, Sisyphean task. The performer and the audience are not simply observers of this multifarious process, they are actively contributing with their presence.

The lingering aromas of the experimental space return me to Proust's quest: and though the critical analyses and interpretations of Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* (1913) are almost as endless and multifarious as Borges' *Book of Sand* (1975), I will limit myself to observations originated primarily from Deleuze's *Proust & Signs* (1964), and Eric Karpeles's *Painting in Proust* (2017). I will approach the original text for its specificities on aroma and temporality, drawing only a limited number of examples directly concerned with this chapter's experimental performance event.

I quote in its entirety the passage that weighs anchor for the formidable voyage on which Proust set sail:

[My mother] sent for one of those squat, plump little cakes called 'petites madeleines', which look as though they had been molded in the fluted valve of a scallop shell. And soon, mechanically, dispirited after a dreary day with the prospect of depressing morrow, I raised to my lips a spoonful of the tea in which I had soaked a morsel of the cake. No sooner had the warm liquid mixed with the crumbs touched my palate than a shiver ran through me and I stopped, intent upon the extraordinary thing that was happening to me. An exquisite pleasure has invaded my senses, something isolated, detached, with no suggestion of its origin. And at once the vicissitudes of life had become indifferent to me, its disasters innocuous, its brevity illusory – this new sensation having had the effect, which love has, of filling me with a precious essence; or rather this essence was not in me, it *was* me. I had ceased now to feel mediocre, contingent, mortal. Whence could it have come to me, this all-powerful joy? I sensed

nuteness of the parts, aromatic *dérives*, are part of the performance event. Sand when reduced to its atomic element, the grains, is no longer sand, it cannot be recognised as such, but still every single grain becomes sand, with their minute contribution to the whole. The atomic elements of the performance event have the same behaviour in relation to the whole; while they have their individuality, the event as such, the whirlpool of temporalities raised by their amalgamation, their persistence in time and space, works as a wholeness: sands of time.

that it was connected with the taste of the tea and the cake, but that it infinitely transcended those savors, could not, indeed, be of the same nature. (Proust, 2003 [1913], v. I, p. 60)

The maritime allusion at the opening of this passage cannot go unnoticed: the madeleine is a shell, it floats in a spoonful of tea, it brings an essence which disintegrates the mortal horizon replacing it with the transcendence of immortality, an oceanic infinitude. The relation is with the sea, the oceanic depth, the depths of oneself:

And then for the second time I clear an empty space in front of it; I place in position before my mind's eye the still recent taste of that first mouthful, and I feel something start within me, something that leaves its resting-place and attempts to rise, something that has been anchored at a great depth; I do not know yet what it is, but I can feel it, mounting slowly; I can measure the resistance, I can hear the echo of great spaces traversed. (Proust, 2003 [1913], v. I, p. 62)

Here I feel compelled to direct my attention once more to Borges' *The Book of Sand*:

I was struck by an odd fact: the even-numbered page would carry the number 40,514, let us say, while the odd-numbered page followed it would be 999. I turned the page: the next page bore an eight-digit number. It also bore a small illustration, like those one sees in dictionaries: an anchor drawn in pen and ink, as though by the unskilled hand of a child. (Borges, 1993 [1944], p. 90)

An anchor that beckons, in Borges' ocean of sand; something anchored in Proust's great depth: the *mare magnum* of words and perceptions, the reverberation of signs. Proust's passage is pure perception: heightened sensuousness, aroma and taste that open a window onto a prodigious cradle of signification.

My performance event is designed to transcend the presentness of the performance time, its objects, odors and sounds:

it is the Proustian 'echo of great spaces traversed'; it is the ever-changing ever-shifting Borgesian sand; it is the madeleine's aroma, a cornucopia of signs; it is the anchor dragging on the seabed of *temporalis*. A sense of fathomless participation of the senses, evoked in the passage of Proust, is equally present in my experimental space: where numerous objects and their scents fill the air like a multitude of proto-madeleines, suggesting correspondences, linguistic and sensuous – 'echo(es) of great spaces' and time 'traversed' (Proust, 2003 [1913], v. I, p. 62).

Several axes of temporal relationship are suggested by the organization in 'open boxes and closed vessels', to follow Deleuze¹⁹⁹. The madeleine opens up content, an excessive content larger, further, different in nature: content, as Proust says that 'infinitely transcended those savors, could not, indeed, be of the same nature.' The aromatic experience opens time, it echoes space, it travels, unfolding what is encased and enveloped, hidden.

In an analogous process, during the performance event, the effluvia provoked by the objects disposed on the floor, the methodical trimming of the beard, the tools, the words, spoken and printed, all of these are open boxes, portals of temporality: signs in a *present* that *is*, following Jacques Derrida's notion, a universal form of transcendental life, which acts regardless of

199 Deleuze comments that Proust's investigation is not simply an effort to recall past memories, reclaim past time, but rather a search for truth, beyond material explanations of the association of involuntary memory. Deleuze argues that in the Search there are two fundamental figures: 'the one concerns more particularly the relations of container and content, the other the relations of parts and whole.' The first figure Deleuze says '*encases, envelops, implies; things, persons, and names are boxes out of which we take something of an entirely different shape, of an entirely different nature, an excessive content.*' The second figure instead is concerned and involves 'the coexistence of asymmetric and noncommunicating parts', vessels of *complications*, as Deleuze defines them. The first figure, continues the French philosopher, 'is dominated by the image of the open boxes, the second by that of the closed vessels.' (Deleuze, 2000 [1964], p. 1, 116-117). I will look into the first figure, leaving the second aside, concerned with the overall form of the Search which is not within the scope of this research chapter.

my presence, 'my empirical existence, prior to my birth and after my death'²⁰⁰ (Derrida, 2011 [1967], p. 45). There is a continuous relation with the sensuous in Proust²⁰¹: paintings, so often mentioned in the novel, are not only a visual landscape that permeate *In Search of Lost Time*, but a springboard to other senses²⁰².

The sun [...] shed a geranium glow over the red carpet laid down for the wedding: across which Mme de Guermantes was smiling advancing, and covered its woolen texture with a nap of rosy velvet, a bloom of luminosity, that sort of tenderness, of solemn sweetness in the pomp of a joyful celebration, which characterize certain pages of Lohengrin, certain paintings by Carpaccio, and make us understand how Baudelaire was able to apply to the sound of the trumpet the epithet 'delicious'. (Proust, 2003 [1913], v. I, p. 251)

Texture, luminosity, tenderness, sweetness, deliciousness: a trajectory of effervescent sensations ending on a tasting note. Sensuousness that is crucial to the performance event of the current chapter and its experiment: the extended qualities of textures of

200 Here is a comment from John Cage, in *Silence*: 'Until I die there will be sounds. And they will continue following my death.' (Cage, 2012, p. 8) A further observation: Borges' story lasts five pages, but if only we could have opened the Book of Sand, it would become an infinite novel, unfolding endlessly in front of us; Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* (1913), assembles some 4,215 pages, but it could have lasted for the mere instant of raising a spoonful of tea and the soaked morsel of the madeleine to the lips (or sipping coffee from a cup, as in my first experiment); the implied infinite repercussions of that gesture, a whispered echo of great spaces, never uttered, breathed inwardly. Both works reduce infinity to the Bachelardian's pure intuition of an instant and vice versa.

201 Joris-Karl Huysmans, almost a contemporary to Proust, is often mentioned in critical literature dedicated to the senses: his writings, specifically *À rebours* (1884) and *Là-Bas* (1891), are examples of a penetrating gaze into the sensuous. I am mentioning Huysmans because of the closeness (in time and subject) to the critical text of A. Corbin's *The Foul and the Fragrant: Odour and the French Social Imagination* (1986), and the remarkable affinity with Proust's search into the sensuous.

202 It is tempting to devise an investigation into the text of the Search, which focuses on one sense at the time, following Karpeles's footsteps: a Search of lost smell, taste, sound, and touch.

the selected objects, their colors and light, their aroma, the sound and its taste, following Charles Baudelaire's innuendo.

'What is this prettily colored thing that we're eating?' asked Ski. 'It's called strawberry mousse,' said Mme Verdurin. 'But it's exquisite. You ought to open bottles of Château-Margaux, Château-Lafitte, port wine.' [...] 'You shall fill all our glasses, and they will bring in marvelous peaches, huge nectarines; there, against the sunset; it will be as luscious as a beautiful Veronese.' (Proust, 2003 [1913], v. IV, p. 460)

A meal transformed into colors, liquids, fruits, warm light and in closing, a painting. The alchemical transubstantiation of words into sensations: the names of the objects partaken in my event, printed out on white boards and disposed in order on the floor, are such communicating vessels of the perceptual field, tropes of the sensuous. My experiment transmits a swarm of olfactory sensations in conjunction with a specific carnality, unfolding in time: trimming the beard is conjoined with slicing pieces of the remnant of animal and vegetable life. Flesh and its characteristic that is altered (because of these mutations, modifications, and mutilations), transforms the time perception of these events: it transforms the time of the doer as it does the time of the observer. Temporal transformations through the flesh is what brings me to the work of Hélène Cixous. The concluding example from *In Search of Lost Time* lets me interject an *aperçu* into the work of Proust and Cixous, in conversation with Rembrandt's painting *Bathsheba at her Bath* (1614), and then, almost circling the square with *The Slaughtered Ox* (1655), to jump cut to Franju's *Le Sang des bêtes* which is an element of my event.

Isn't the Dostoevsky woman (as distinctive as a Rembrandt woman) with her mysterious face...isn't she always the same...figures as original, as mysterious, not merely as Carpaccio's courtesans, but as Rembrandt's *Bathsheba*. (Proust, 2003 [1913], v. V, p. 508)

In a sort of delayed answer to Proust, Cixous comments on the mysteriousness of the painting of *Bathsheba*: 'Rembrandt paints this mysterious thing that mobilizes the body: the state of creation'; that is in the 'absolute Bathsheba' a body of 'non-nude nudity. Not denuded. Not undressed'; a body made of light and mortality; Bathsheba and *The Slaughtered Ox*, continues Cixous, are 'portraits of our mortality' the 'anonymous humanity [...] turned upside down, twice decapitated. What we become under the axe and the slicer.' Bathsheba is the 'Transfiguration of the Ox'; the ox and Bathsheba are 'pregnant with light [...] the secret fire that emanates from the flesh'²⁰³(Cixous, 2005 [1998], p. 4, 6, 19, 21, 23).

Cixous invites us to step in, to enter the frame and be the flesh, the light, the odors, the textures; to be part of it, to *be it*: the performance event happens in the same space and time of Bathsheba, of the Ox; it is a temporal space effusing signs and significations, in which as humans, we *are* time, space and text.

Concluding Thoughts and Notes

The current chapter's practice has opened doors to further investigations into the fabric of time, with new questions arising. This experiment is related to language: how is language involved in the processing of sensory phenomena? How does language modify (filter, modulate, truncate, reduce, amplify) the fullness of the sensory experience of an external object? Language is not a neutral recollection of facts, events or past experiences; it changes the memory of a past experience through a rationalization performed in the present moment. Language works along paths of

203 Here I observe the attention of Cixous to flesh, to matter, light, and texture (surmising the touch, the aroma of it); not to appearance or representation; the concerns in my event are the same: not showing, displaying or providing a narrative; rather attentively observing, experiencing, sensing. Cixous transposes the subject of the paintings, Bathsheba and the Ox, into a discourse on humanity, mortality *in primis*: a temporal transference, a Transfiguration of Time that transcend the painting, the frame in which it is encased.

metaphors and associations to produce an intellectualization of the sensuous processes, by selecting what to remember and what to forget, what to paste together and what to separate, what to emphasize or understate. This linguistic process ushers in more questions: how does the sense of time alter as we encode an experience in memory? How incomplete is our representation of objects which change and decay over time (since we often store only a snapshot in our memory)? And a question specific to this experiment, which took place in the presence of an audience: are there differences, perceptually, between the species of time of the performer and that of the observer?

In this chapter multi-layered temporal dimensions coexist, a temporal swarming of cycles, patterns, tempi with biological, gestural, and mnemonic facets. The temporal cycle of growth of a beard is associated with the repetitive gesture of trimming and disposal of the objects around the experimental space (trim – slice an object – put it in a jar); the temporal cycle of the recorded voices and of the documentary film connects directly to the perception of language: words spoken to evoke a temporality of memory (the time needed for a listener to decipher the sentence, and respond with affect, memories, analogies); the immutable temporal stillness of the studio's artificial lights in striking contrast to the tempo of the daytime: when the experiment lasts from late afternoon till dusk. Moreover, during the experiment there is a time of seeing, a time of hearing, a time of smelling: these three temporalities intertwine with their own asynchronous tempi and temporal cycles.

Repeatability is the crux of linguistic form, allowing for the reconnaissance of patterns, fabric, and texture. The performance event brings to the forefront a special interrelation of the sense of smell, aroma, odor, and the text, spoken and written. The event *speaks*, maneuvering into the very elemental *langue* and *parole*: the overlapping and intertwined temporalities of the event's constituents, the text written and spoken; the aroma of the selected objects; the operation of trimming the beard and slicing the objects; the screening of Franju's documentary and

the magnified closeup of the beard's cutting. These all function within the linguistic framework of repetition, communication; bearing signs, emitted and received among all the participants of the event²⁰⁴.

The methodical procedure of trimming the beard, reaching for an object on the ground, slicing it and replacing it with a jar containing a microscopic sample of the object itself, a gesture which gazes into eternity, reinstates itself endlessly, with infinite variations within its repetitions: time can be expanded and yet nullified by the very permanence of the cycle. The beard grows and keeps growing until I die, no matter how often I shave; objects around me are twenty-four, but they could have been twenty-four thousand or an infinite number *après* Borges and his thalassian book, for that matter: 'no page is the first page; no page is the last. I don't know why they're numbered in this arbitrary way, but perhaps it's to give one to understand that the terms of an infinite series can be numbered any way whatever'²⁰⁵ (Borges, 1993 [1944], p. 91).

In this experiment, my body was constantly at work. In antithesis to the experiment on film, where I sat still most of the time, my body here stands restless before picking up objects, sitting, cutting, trimming, replacing objects, writing down labels, standing again...with each iteration I never experience the same thing twice: it is as language is. A continuous modulation of presentation and re-presentation, of signification and re-signification;

204 Elongation and shrinkage of temporal clusters, the endless ocean of Borges's *Book of Sand* (1975), the madeleine's intuitive instant in Proust's vastness of introspection, are the logos of the event: the experiment's temporality is pinned to an incorporeal dot of time, a vortex of repetitions, a cycling of gestures, a multiplicity of signs, lasting eternally or already dead within the invisible dot; a big bang theory: nihil *and* infinity in a flicker of time.

205 Here I stumble onto a phenomenological aspect of permanence and, conversely, impermanence: if every instant of time is either infinite or null, as a consequence, space exists and ceases to be with the same logic: an immobile spacetime in which I am mobile, within, or that I can perhaps bypass, into the in-betweenness of liminal dimensions of temporal contiguity (the Japanese philosophical 'Ma', the Deleuzian rhizome, the Bachelardian diaphanous instant, Derrida's transcendental life), without.

continuous working to establish relationships with the evolving aromas, sounds, voices, objects, and my beard as it 'fades away'. Cycles and temporal axes are triggered by the complex layering of sensuous stimuli, which is part of the experimental design. The temporal trajectory here seems to coincide with the end of the trimming of the beard, but this is only a pause, a fermata, in the beard's continuous growth; in the endless repetitive cycle of the documentary film; of the recorded voices resounding in the space; the objects scattered on the floor, mutilated (like Franju's cattle) and still. Hanging in the air, language lingers as witness and mediator of potential significations.

I observe that this experiment anticipates and sets the premises for the next investigation into sound and the sense of taste as fulcrum for phenomenological examinations in the fourth Chapter of this research. The sound quality of the voices involved in the recording and the implied gustative aspects of the aromas of the objects selected for the event already stand inside the territory of the actual experiment and of the investigation yet to come.

IV. Music

Soundography: A Spacetime Mapping Experiment

For any number of players who would like to pay their respects to all living creatures who inhabit dark places and who, over the years, have developed acuity in the art of echolocation, i.e., sounds used as messengers which, when sent out into the environment, return as echoes carrying information as to the shape, size, and substance of that environment and the objects in it.

Lucier, *Vespers* (1969, p. 16), score instructions

Introduction

If a lily's petals fall in a room and no one is around to hear, does it make a sound?

I could engage with this paraphrased question, this Berkeleyan notion, as a starting point for this fourth and last Chapter of the current investigation into perception, which is dedicated especially to the temporality of sound and its emplacement. The question, in the age of mechanical reproduction and the proliferation of recording devices, feels passé, suffused with an almost nostalgic tint of untamed sensuousness, as if we become lost in a reverie of the distant past, or a Proustian voyage.

In the last chapter with its experiment on music, I bring into the performance space 54 iterations of a 50-minute audio recording of my walk from home to workplace²⁰⁶: here repetitiveness of an ordinary action is the springboard for inspecting

206 I made a total of 54 recordings of the 50-minute walk. On the opening day a selection of these recordings was used to cover the 9 hours of the installation opening. If the installation had run for a longer period of time (45 hours), all 54 recordings could have been used.

the species of time nesting in the space explored during a daily walk, which is then transported into the experimental performance space by objects, images, and sounds from the walking path itself. I notice that by consciously paying attention to the routinary path from home to work, and by navigating within the experimental space, a heightened attention to the action of walking is foregrounded (the haptics of the feet, the quality and variety of acoustic inputs), a sense of novel discovery of an ordinary gesture.

In the experimental space, memories and affect of the past experience of walking triggers surprise, excitement, mixed with expectation, and at times, confusion. I think of Lucier's *Vespers* (1969), and *I am sitting in a room* (1969): my experiment is mapping space as Lucier does in *Vespers* with his performers equipped with Sondols²⁰⁷; and the space of my experiment is filled with resonances, reverberations not only of sounds (as in Lucier's *I am sitting in a room*) but also smells, visuals, and tactile from my walking path²⁰⁸.

Here both Husserl, and Merleau-Ponty come to my aid, from different directions: by repeating the action of walking a number of times and by repeating the action of experiencing the content (aural, visual, tactile, etc.) of that action in an experimental space, I came to notice first-hand the differences as to a duration of the sensation, and conversely, the sensation of that duration. And when Merleau-Ponty points at the emotional aspect of words, suggesting that their function is not to represent things

207 Sondols (sonar-dolphin), hand-held echolocation devices which emit fast, sharp, narrow-beamed clicks whose repetition rate can be varied manually.

208 In *I am sitting in a room* (1969), Lucier explores the dissolution of his own voice, as the natural reverb and resonance of the room gradually obscure the original recording of his voice: as a short monologue (about his speech disorder) is recorded, played back and re-recorded multiple times, the acoustic characteristics of the room shape the voice to the point of making it unrecognisable. What we hear at the end of this process is the sound of the room's harmonics rather than the sound of the voice of Lucier. In a similar process of transformation, in my experiment, the objects in the room, their scent, the images, the recorded sounds, and the sound captured in real time by the microphones – all these contribute to shaping the room, and our experience of it.

but rather to extract ‘emotional essence’ (Merleau-Ponty, 2005, p. 193) – their emotional content – he is talking about the same intertextual elements elicited by my experimental set design.

Merleau-Ponty makes a distinction that ‘emotional gestures and gesticulation are “natural signs,” whereas speech is a “conventional sign”’. Conventions, continues the French philosopher, are a recent modality of relationship among people: these conventions however presuppose an earlier means of communication, where ‘language must be put back into this communicative current.’ As if to say that words, vowels, phonemes are impregnated with ‘emotional essence’ which they bring with them into the construction of linguistic conventions: this accounts for why, according to Merleau-Ponty, the ‘full sense of a language is never translatable into another’ (Merleau-Ponty, 2005, [1945], p. 193).

The current practice, once again, with its experimental outcome through first-hand experience of time/space amplification, attempts to respond to the previous research questions while also pointing in a new direction: Is the conceptualization of a map some form of response to a stimulus or phenomenon in either space or time? Where are we located (again spatially and temporally) in relation to a given phenomenon? Are we within the map or outside it? Is there a meta-map? How is memory (by definition, displaced in time) of a map different from the actual stimulus – the map as it is being unfolded in present time? Is there a temporal map? The result of this experiment in *soundography* (sic), mapping space through sound, is an interactive Installation²⁰⁹. The work consists of a combination of mediums designed to provoke temporality of the senses: more than 70 foam

209 The work has been set up and shown to the public in the studio of a performing arts company. Its location was selected in response to various conceptual and practical considerations: the ease of the booking procedure (conventional art galleries and so called white cubes require advance booking of one to two years); a central location in the city (the studio is located at the core of Singapore’s urban centre); familiarity with the space of the studio, which I have already previously used several times (allowing me to foresee part of the work’s outcome from the start of the actual research).

boards from A6 to A1 size, with printed images of charts, scores, maps, drawings, photographs, digitally processed images, and text; four white wooden boxes of different dimensions laid on the floor, enclosing several objects: a clock, a glass vase with a bouquet of lily flowers, a book, a drip coffee machine, a microphone immersed in a jar containing a little pond of styrofoam spheres and a hydrophone immersed in a second jar, full of water; an isolated object, a worn shoe placed on an A1 board; a red cotton thread connecting many boards and objects, tracing trajectories and dividing the space; four loudspeakers capturing and processing live input of the microphone and the hydrophone, while simultaneously playing a 50-minute audio field recording of my walk from home to the studio, repeated over and over. Indeed, the *soundographic* experiment in the studio begins with and is conceived, composed, and designed around that daily walk routine. To understand the former, the reader will have to indulge me in the latter.

And the question returns: If a lily's petals fall in a room and no one is around to hear, does it make a sound? By walking a space we unfold a map of perceptual potentialities: we establish rhizomatic connections²¹⁰ with our remote or recent experiences, feelings, moods, and sensuous feedback. We navigate the space as it is revealed to us: we find our emplacement²¹¹ by submerging ourselves within the space, a synchronous act of reconnaissance.

Entering the door of the Installation's venue is equal to step-

210 I restate for clarity footnote 23: Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's rhizome symbolises a non-linear, associative mode of thinking. The terms rhizome and rhizomatic describe theory and research that allows for multiple, non-hierarchical entry and exit points in data representation and interpretation. Rather than narrativizing history and culture, a 'rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo.' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987 [1980], p. 25).

211 Once more a notion of emplacement resonates throughout this practice: in his introduction to the collected essays *Empire of the Senses: the sensual culture reader* (2005), anthropologist Howes emphasises the recurrence of emplacement as a pivotal term of analysis in relation to the senses. He argues that while 'embodiment' alludes to an introspective integration of mind and body, emplacement instead suggests an intertwined relationship of body-mind-environment.

ping into an uncharted space: I have brought into the space the experience of the trip from my residential place to the studio itself. I have merged a space outside with the space inside, unfolding a thread within the sensorium, which connects sensory inputs to a physical path.

By walking the path, following the thread from my residential place to the city, and travelling by the objects of which the Installation is composed, the reader is invited to experience the process of soundographic mapping. The order in which the objects appear below follows cogitations evoked by the sensorial investigation of the walk from my home to the Installation venue. It must be emphasized that the crux of the Installation is indeed the aforementioned walk, its aural feedback *in primis*, intertwined with all the other sensory inputs²¹². None of the observations hereafter is gratuitous: they all form part of the Installation, its choices and outcomes.

I leave home to take a walk.

I shut the door behind me and proceed to the nearest lift.

I push a circular button; a purple arrow-shaped light appears in its center; a bell-like sound follows.

Upon the arrival of the lift, a second bell sound signals the opening of the doors.

The lift takes me to the ground floor, where a third bell sounds to mark the opening of the lift's doors²¹³.

212 I shall thus introduce what follows by saying that the description of the objects as individually demarcated units (in most cases) is but an arbitrary one, only dictated by the necessity to exemplify the structure of the Installation's concept and design. It is evident that the objects could have been grouped together in alternative subsets, all of which would have had specific and formidable characteristics and correspondences.

213 Here an *olfactographic* (sic) note: lifts always have a distinct smell, a mixture of the material from which the lift is built, the body scent of persons that entered the lift before you, and finally the chemicals which accompanied those other users: perfumes, lotions, soaps; or else the products used by the cleaners. I abide by but cannot avoid these odoriferous inputs that every morning trail from the opening of the sliding doors: I may forget about it momentarily, but it is definitely ingrained in me, labelled somewhere as 'the lift smell'. I

I walk out of the building.
After a ten-minute walk, I am at the subway station.

Here among the many things my senses record, without my being fully aware, I momentarily may notice a few of them²¹⁴. The rest come to me as a posthumous cogitation of the experience: only a few strike me on the spot as sensuous feedback and conscious observations. Some (probably many) are lost here and now, or perhaps lie in the background of consciousness as cryptomnesia²¹⁵.

[The shoe]²¹⁶. By walking I am ceaselessly in the presence of the sound of my shoes (and my feet) produced by their contact with external bodies, typically the ground: the sound of my feet

also have a sudden persuasion that the music which some elevators provide, in accordance with confident wishes of management, is there to help distract from and alleviate this claustrophobic and *olfactophobic* lift experience, replacing them with an equally disturbing *soundographic* one.

214 Here it is worth quoting in full the Husserlian procedure in discussing the copper ashtray: "Let us consider such a primary consciousness; for example, the perception of this copper ashtray. The ashtray stands before us in the perception as enduring physical being. Reflection permits us to distinguish: the perception itself (the perceptual apprehension taken concretely in union with the data of apprehension: the perceptual appearance in the mode of certainty, say) and that which is perceived (which must be described in evident judgments based on perception). What is perceived is also something meant: the act of meaning 'lives' in the act of perceiving. As reflection shows, the perceptual apprehension in its mode is itself something constituted in immanent time, standing before us in the unity of its presence, although it is not something meant. It is constituted through the multiplicity or now-phases and retentions. The contents of apprehension as well as the apprehension-intentions to which the mode of certainty belongs are constituted in this way. The contents of sensation become constituted as unities in sensuous impressions: the apprehensions become constituted in other impressions - act-impressions which are combined with the sensuous impressions. The perception as a constituted phenomenon is, for its part, perception of the physical thing" (Husserl, 2019 [1928], p. 117).

215 Two extreme opposites of the spectrum of sensuous fineness and memory: Jorge Luis Borges's *Funes, the memorious* (1942), and conversely severe forms of anterograde and retrograde amnesia.

216 I walk, I run, I sit, I lie down: these movements are accompanied by sounds of the body (inwardly, interoceptive) and sound of the body's friction with other objects (outwardly, kinaesthetic).

moving on a surface will accompany me forever, as long as I walk or move. To reach whatever destination my feet will always be busy, and so also their sound.

A space is explored first and foremost by feedback I receive from stepping into it: the sound I bring with me by walking through it, the haptic feedback I receive from my feet (or footwear) identifying the consistency and texture of the ground. More often than not, these sensations remain in the background of our everyday life, and we focus instead on visual cues provided by external agents (natural, mechanical and more recently digital devices). The shoe brings everydayness into the Installation, the forgotten relation with sound we make when tracing a line in space, mapping out a trajectory, endlessly²¹⁷.

I walk 10 minutes to reach the subway station.

The scent of the trees and plants I pass.

The tactile feeling of the ground I walk on, reduced in its intensity by the use of shoes.

The sound of my steps, the sound of the many birds, the traffic, and human beings passing by (walking and running: indistinct chattering, laughter and cries).

The sound of the wind stirring the leaves of numerous trees and plants.

The alternate areas of light and shadow, bright and dull colors.

The taste in my mouth: always different every morning, depending on my body's perceptive acumen kindled by feedback from the environment, the breakfast I consumed, the mouthwash, the toothpaste I used²¹⁸, etc.

217 A note at the margin: we become suddenly aware of the sound and the haptic feedback of our feet when things go wrong: an uneven floor, a sudden crack of the surface, an unexpected 'situation'; sensations that fall invariably to the background of consciousness if everything follows an expected logic of events, context, and expectations.

218 Recollecting the order of sensations, what comes to mind is a rhizomatic-associative procedure, without chronology or imposed timeline. This is relevant, as we shall see in the setup of the Installation, an outcome of the experimental phase of research.

[The toothbrush, the toothpaste contained in a glass cup]²¹⁹. Toothbrush and toothpaste are part of the chain of objects whose repeated gestures perpetuate habituation of time and space, the ordinariness of everyday routines. Their presence in space marks a recurrence of time, a *soundography* of internal cavities, the body within (In Chapter 2, p. 91, Seisaku enumerates fundamental aspects of transformational training and enhanced sensitivity to touch: perform barefoot, practice tactility of the hands and fingers; and last, find and amplify sensations in the cavity of the mouth). Space, time and gesture collide in the sound produced by brushing the teeth.

I pass trees and plants, rusted metal shelters and concrete buildings.
I acknowledge their appearance by sight.

I simultaneously experience tactile sensations, and gustative ones.
sonic and olfactory feedback.

The objects I contemplate in passing (for example, one of the many grey oxidised columns of the metal shelter) are combinations of sensuous responses.

I touch the rust I see.

I smell the grey oxidized paint I touch.

I hear the metal column I smell.

I taste the metallic material I hear²²⁰.

219 Daily routines, aphoristic gestures embodied and accepted as proper; rituals of the morning, afternoon, or evening; gestures in time without time, outside the domain of the *vita attiva*, Saint Augustine's memento.

220 I here recollect only the five customary and traditional senses for the sake of brevity but I am thinking along the lines of palaeontologist André Leroi-Gourhan. In Chapter 11 ("The Body as the Source of Values and Rhythms") of his *Gesture and Speech*, he suggests that human perception is bound to biological structures where sight and hearing are the senses made dominant by our evolution for purposes of reference in space. Nevertheless he argues that human evolution has created a network of symbols and values that have tended to 'create a time and a space proper to humankind, to imprison behaviour within a checkerwork of scales and measures, to assume concrete form in "aesthetics" in the narrower sense'. The palaeontologist continues imagining alternative aesthetic sensuous forms: 'the "syntactics" or "olfactics," paintings in smells, symphonies of touch, architectures of balanced vibrations, poems of

[The red thread]. Recalling *Point and Line to Plane* (1926), Wassily Kandinsky's seminal essay. Mapping is concerned with trajectories: throwing lines between points, finding pathways, connecting dots, establishing spatial and temporal relationships. A line cutting the space determines the way we perceive that space: a subdivision into smaller areas, a *perspectivation* of the physical space into an embodied experience. By tracing red lines on the walls, along and between surfaces, in mid-air, a connection across objects is established. The line is a map, is a path, a rhizomatic device: a communicating vessel. The objects speak, emit signs, symbols, interact with each other, through and because of the red thread. The thread is a physical line, a theoretical pathway, Charles Renouvier's *uchronian* map²²¹ (Renouvier's *Uchronie*, 1876), stochastic futurabilities of the immediate past²²². The red line connects spacetime relationships of asynchronous objects: a worn shoe in disuse, remnant of forgotten walks, a coffee machine brewing, operating here and now, flooding the room with the scent of coffee beans²²³.

salt or acid taste, we should have had if touch or smell or a subtle perception of vibrations had been our principal senses!'. He concludes that while those forms are not completely inaccessible to us they have found a limited space in art (Leroi-Gourhan, 1993 [1964], p.283).

221 The term and the concept of *uchronia* is similar to alternate history, but uchronic times are placed in some unspecified point before current times, and they are occasionally evocative of a fictional universe. Uchronia therefore refers to a hypothetical time period of the real world, in antithesis to altogether-fictional universes or lands.

222 The *Scienza nuova* frontispiece illustration in which a beam of light connects figuratively divinitas, pagan mythology and the philosophical thinking of the end of the seventeenth century. Giambattista Vico, *Scienza Nuova* (New science), 1744. *Scienza Nuova* is the Neapolitan jurist's attempt to define a chronography of culture, using a traditional Eusebian table as a backbone of his work. However in Vico's interpretation, chronographs are intertwined and should be sorted out, because of the philosophical elaborations that have distinguished the stages of the development of thought in human culture. Vico therefore rejects the traditional chronology, from Eusebius to his present, in favour of a reconstruction of the past based on philosophy.

223 The cotton thread connects intervals within time and space, it is the spacetime quantum continuum: an eternal present moment in which red lines

Near the subway station I find a bus stop.
People are waiting, sitting or standing.
I regularly pass a few individuals: coincidence of timeline and space.
I must wait at a crossroad for the pedestrian green light.
I check whether the pedestrian button is red (a sign that someone called for it already).
I often look at the pedestrian light on the opposite side of the street.
I know that once it starts to flash, I can cross the street.
The two distinct buzzing sounds emitted by the apparatus will eventually reiterate the right action to be taken (stop or walk).
I stand at the crosswalk.
I take notice inadvertently of the few individuals I meet more frequently: how they dress, walk and behave.
My perceptual field is continuously triggered by input
I embrace or reject, filter and select, follow or abandon.

However I observe that some of this information reaches me before I can make any evaluation or conscious decision about it: in the case of sudden unexpected circumstances, something that falls outside the routine, outside the matrix of ingrained actions or the ordinary sequence of events. A shoelace breaks; or I suddenly realize I left my working pass at home; or a troupe of monkeys camps on the walkway (this actually happens); there is a failure of the train engine; a sudden heavy rain catches me and I am completely soaked: these incidents in which sensations are not negotiated but take the lead, force a re-evaluation of the usual routine ²²⁴.

The light is green, the sudden buzzing sound tells me to walk.
Here I suddenly recall my lift: purple light to call the elevator, two different sounds for the opening and closing of the doors.
I cross the road, I am at the entrance of the subway: escalators,

are thrown across as ropes, pulling together proximal and remote relations within the room, associations, memories, sensuous responses, poiesis.

224 C.F. Martin Heidegger's *dasein* and the notion of ready to hand and present at hand.

elevators, and gates; more machines are waiting for me on the train platform.

[The clock]. A contact microphone is taped over the surface of the clock's face: the incoming acoustic signal is sent to a computer, processed in real time by an audio editing software and sent out to one loudspeaker as the sound of the ticking clock. The clock's sound is amplified and modified: upon approaching at two meters from the loudspeaker, it is possible to hear the sweep hand ticking off the seconds. From a greater distance the ticking dissolves into the many other sounds present in the venue²²⁵. The clock is a reminder of the matrix of relationships existing with the *others*, Bernard Waldenfels' phenomenological relation between the *alien* and us²²⁶, Bordieu's social habitus²²⁷: the social fabric of

225 The clock is there to count; exposing the definition of Epstein's integral time; stripping bare the sensorial map, the time of the human body's emplacement: a body engaged in establishing a web of paths and relationships in time and space.

226 I restate for clarity footnote 72: in Chapter 4 'Corporeal Experience Between Selfhood and Otherness' of *Phenomenology of the Alien* (2006), Waldenfels outlines the problematic aspect of the Self and the Other, the paradoxical relation of the Body with itself and the *intercorporeality* (terminology borrowed by Waldenfels from Merleau-Ponty) which leads to the phenomenon of the Double, the alienness of the doppelganger. Bringing into play Paul Valery's writing on the Other as 'another like me, or perhaps a double of mine, that is the most magnetic abyss -- ape more than imitator -- reflex which responds, precedes, amazes' (*Cahiers*, Valery in Waldenfels, 2011 [2006], p. 54), Waldenfels argues: 'the alien gaze, to which I am exposed, consists in the fact that I feel myself being seen before seeing the Other as somebody who is seeing things, including myself' (Waldenfels, 2011 [2006], p. 54).

227 I restate for clarity footnote 64: habitus in sociological terms, includes socially ingrained habits and dispositions: the latter shared by people with similar backgrounds. The habitus is acquired through imitation (mimesis) in the milieu in which individuals are socialising, which includes their individual experience and outcomes. Pierre Bourdieu suggested that the habitus consists of tendencies to hold and use the body in a certain way (such as postures) and mental habits, schemes of perception, classification, appreciation, feeling, and action. Bourdieu argues that these attitudes and dispositions have influence on the reproduction of the social structure resulting from the habitus of individuals. Habitus and consensus are maintained by a meta-narrative of time that

the calendars, recurrences, cycles, chronologies, charts, chronicles, lists, measurements, numbers. The list perhaps is endless.

Into the subway station.

I am swallowed by a labyrinth of descending escalators (or I can choose the quicker lift)²²⁸.

I arrive in front of the entrance gates: I tap a card, the light switches from red to green, accompanied by a distinct sound, and the gates open.

I recall my residential lift a second time²²⁹.

While waiting at the platform, announcements in four different languages (English, Chinese, Malaysian, and Hindi) emphasize what to do and what not, what to be aware of, how to behave in such and such situations.

People look at each other only rarely and distractedly.

Most individuals are busy on their mobile phones.

The train approaches: the doors open and close with two distinct sounds, accompanied by the red and green light, and an announcement to reinforce the action that is happening (again in four languages).

I pass a fair number of stops: the same opening and closing of the car doors.

I will recall my lift eleven times.

imposes a chronological and recursive tempo on activities regulated by social calendars rooted in economic and religious affairs.

228 Also the escalators come with a set of characteristics: the mechanical sound of the continuous gyrating movement of the escalator's track system; the repeated safety announcement at both ends of the escalator stairs, where the landing platforms are located (the little metallic platforms that ease you into and out of the moving stairway); the metallic and slightly slippery feeling of the steps and a ribbed appearance, in striking contrast to the smooth rubber handrail. Sometimes people carve little messages (in a bottle) on the handrail's rubber surface: 'help', is the last I had a chance to read. I am used to walking when the escalator is going down and to waiting immobile when the escalator is going up.

229 A variation on the theme: if the card has insufficient credit, a red cross will appear on the gate screen, in unison with a distressed beep, asking to top up the balance of your card.

In the train for about 25 minutes I sit or stand still.

I look around to observe what occupies the time for the other commuters.

Nine out of ten individuals have eyes glued to their mobile screen, many of them with earbuds or headphones.

The remaining 'one' is sleeping (with mobile in hand), or working on a laptop, or a pad.

Rarely someone is reading a book (a physical one, with pages, smells, textures and all the things that accompany a real book)²³⁰.

What is striking is not the activity, but rather the tool and the acquired habit: the mobile ready to hand, technological prosthetic²³¹. I am not sure whether before the massive advent of the mobile phone there was an analogous object so often in the hands of individuals: I suspect it could have been a bag or a book; but bags and books, unlike the mobile phone, have a very specific and defined function: you read a book and you put things in a bag. The mobile phone and similar portable devices are ambiguous and paradoxical: they allow many things to be done, none of them real, tangible, synchronous with the space in which the action takes place²³².

230 I need to clarify here that, since I did not pry into anyone's mobile screen, I cannot say precisely what keeps people so occupied: there might good reasons (or necessary ones) to be online; I name some of the typical actions: checking email, reading articles or news, chat with friends, work and family members on social media, doing shopping.

231 It seems that the research questions lend themselves well to these circumstances; I am re-stating here, in the context of the observation of the usage of mobile phones, the aforementioned queries. How can time be manipulated: extended, shortened, textured, paused or eventually denied? What is the relationship between the passage of time and the spectrum of human states closely related to time such as euphoria or boredom? How is time experienced by the five senses and articulated in artistic practices that investigate a specific species of time, such as physical, psychological, cyclical?

232 Vilem Flusser's notion of *technical images* seems relevant here: the Czech philosopher argues that what was formerly served by linear text, the transmission of information, has been carried forward over the past few decades on a flood of *technical images* based on the use of photographs, films, videos, television screens, and computers. Flusser is concerned with the cul-

[The book]. *Horror in Architecture*²³³ is the title of the book: a map of architectural improbabilities around the world, a map within a map²³⁴. The solitary physical book with its own paper size, texture, color, and smell, stands as an anachronistic object of the past, replaced by tablets, smooth aseptic plastic surfaces, containing hundreds of virtual books²³⁵.

I get out of the train car, exiting the station's gates, following the escalators up to the ground level.

I am in the center of the city: crowded with cars, people and activities of many sorts.

I can opt for two opposite directions.

Taking a left will get me to the studio, theatre of the Installation, in about five minutes.

Going to my right instead will take me to my workplace, in the same amount of time.

Road crossings, pedestrian streetlights, traffic, and a flock of people heading somewhere.

A string of coffee shops, restaurants, snack and drink shops, street food kiosks, food courts, and obviously, shopping centers.

Food is a priority here: in a five-minute walk I can count 21 food and

tural consequences and the implications of the mutating form of experiences, perceptions, modes of behaviour, and values of such a social turn (Flusser, 2001 [1985], p. 45-50).

233 *Horror in Architecture*, (2018) by Joshua Comaroff and Ong Ker-Shing. The book examines horror in popular culture and its analogues in architectural design and praxis. The result is a collection of architectural improbabilities, horrific and fascinating ideas in design, extrapolated from the most iconic and lesser known works of architecture in the world.

234 A meta map: a cradle of tactile, olfactory, visual, sonic, and gustative feedback; a textual and linguistic map. The book reclaims the tactileness of unambiguous objects: items whose use is almost always univocal, specific. A reminder of the ambiguous ontology of electronic devices: smart phones, tablets, objects whose purpose of use is multifarious, blurred into a *mare magnum* of options.

235 There is no attempt here to antagonise distinctive modalities of realisation: rather the Installation questions the sensorial map which emerges and is generated by the presence of specific objects and stimuli in the space.

drink shops directly on the street, without counting the many more that are inside the shopping and retail malls on the way²³⁶.

[The coffee machine and the lily flowers]. The venue is filled with the aroma of coffee from the coffee maker, overlapping with the fragrant scent of the freshly cut lilies, arranged in a glass vase filled with water. Both are palpable temporal objects emitting *olfactographic, tasteographic, and tactileographic* signs. The permanence of the smell of freshly brewed coffee and the lilies is doomed to vanish within a few hours, a day maybe. The death of the flowers is already acting upon the stem and the flower petals, invisible to the naked eyes of a human being: an absconded temporality of biological processes. The air is pervaded by the sweet and aromatic scent of death, chiasmus of the pungent and sharp aroma of the dripping coffee. The space is strongly impregnated with their evanescent presence: here the aromatic precedes the visual; the sound of the brewing coffee is audible, from time to time²³⁷.

Visitors are invited to sip a cup of coffee: a few try; many merely observe with curiosity. A clock placed next to the flower vase signals the time with its hour hands in perpetual movement.

I walk the path from the subway station to the Installation venue.
It is a sensorial trip.

The succession of aromas coming from numerous food and drink establishments.

The sudden ambivalence of hot and cold temperatures.

The heated street.

Passing in front of the many shops' open doors, the cold breeze

236 Every city centre has its own distinctive set of perceptual stimuli: it would be interesting to compare cities around the world to figure out how and when we are exposed, shaped, and conditioned by chains of patterns elicited by the urban fabric and the social milieu; this unfortunately, is outside the scope of the current research, which is limited to articulating the specificity of the area around the Installation's venue.

237 I wonder if the sound of growing or withering vegetation can be heard or recorded, as happens with time-lapse filming.

of aircon pumped out at 18 degrees, overlapping with the outside heated air.

The indiscernible sounds of people chattering, of pedestrian street light devices, of cars, of gigantic advertising screens mounted on the facade of steel and glass buildings.

The haptic feedback from the several paving materials I am walking on. The lights, colors, buildings, tropical birds and trees, plants and flowers, people cluttering my visual and perceptual field.

It is an ordeal of information, a paraphernalia of signs and symbols. Data to be analyzed and differentiated, digested and organized.

Whilst I decipher all this, I also simplify the information received, assessing an order of relevance for what I need to know (for example to get to the location of the studio, or to the closest convenience store, for a bottle of fresh water), and what I can keep in the background or eventually ignore (for example the existence of a petrol-oil pump, since I am not a driver; or a Scottish salmon vending machine, since I don't eat salmon from a vending machine on the street in 34+ degrees of temperature)²³⁸.

Thus I notice a few things: the usage of the lift, lights, sounds, opening and closing of the doors, pauses, are all familiar routines. I have unconsciously mapped this out, I have embodied the procedure, the steps, the rules. The path to the subway is another map which I have stored within: trees, plants, shelters, buildings, bus stops, streets and crossroads are already part of an emplacement of my body in space, established by repetition of almost identical actions. The whole pathway to the Installation's studio and my workplace is mapped out in my body: with specific sensorial feedback, cues, and routines²³⁹.

238 In fact, what I am doing, without explicitly naming it, or even thinking of it in such a way, is creating a map. The little trip from my residential place to the Installation's venue or my workplace, is the result of a repeated set of actions, of what I call 'situations', stimuli that I have mapped out through habit and repetition.

239 A soundographic note: the variety of sounds (and also the appearance) of the tropical birds that belong to this area is fascinating; I remember the first time I landed in the city I was absolutely astounded by the volume of the

The border of the perceptual field is continually shifting, like the habits ingrained in it; like grains of sand on the edge of a dune in the desert: imperceptibly moving and reshaping the dune's profile, endlessly. The repetition of a routine determines a change of the focus in the perceptual field: I do not always pay the same degree of attention to the input I receive; and do not focus my attention on the same specific input either. The tropical birds on my first trip here were, among a few other things, a significant feature of the space: now they are in the background of my experience, coagulated into habits, routines and everyday 'situations'.

[The glass jars, the microphone and the hydrophone]. *Soundography*, mapping the space through sound is the crux of this experiment: the space of the Installation is orchestrated by an intertwined layering of sonic elements. Fixed and variable components contribute to its sonic landscape²⁴⁰.

The sound of the space is captured in real time by two microphones: a condenser microphone and a hydrophone; the latter is a waterproof microphone designed for open-water recording of dolphins and sea animals. The condenser microphone (hereafter microphone), is placed inside a glass jar, surrounded by styrofoam spheres which keep it in place, suspended mid-air between bottom and top of the jar. The placement of the microphone in the jar, with the styrofoam balls, ensures that the sound of the environment entering the jar remains 'trapped', bouncing from side to side of the jar cylindrical's glass frame. These acoustic reflections are captured by the microphone and sent to the computer's editing software, live-processed and routed to the set of four loudspeakers present in the venue²⁴¹.

birds' voices, almost a melodious scream. I guess the habit (again) of hearing them while living near for six years, has blunted the strength of their voices. A further observation stems from the previous: routines, habits, repetitions are never the same.

240 This *soundographic* system in its entirety will be analysed separately.

241 The use of styrofoam balls further fragments incoming sound waves, allowing the microphone to capture only certain partials of the full spectrum of frequencies existing in the Installation's space. The hydrophone follows a simi-

The two microphones are tracing maps: selecting frequencies; enhancing or disregarding acoustic information, modifying their physical characteristics, shaping and designing sonic contours in space, continuously transforming the acoustic landscape.

End of my little sensorial trip.

Variation A: I arrive at the Installation venue located inside an art center.

I pass a little open gate, nod to a security guard and get into a lift which takes me to the third floor, the entrance of the studio.

Variation B: I arrive at the entrance of my workplace.

I need to scan a card to pass security, a first buzzing sound.

I scan the same card again to access the lift, a second buzzing sound.

I scan once more to open the door's entrance at the desired floor, followed by a tap for the office entrance, the administration, the meeting room, the rooftop: a third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh buzzing sound.

The space is strictly regulated and temporal-ised by continuous reminders, localizing the body through audio-visual cues: countless cameras are watching from above, orchestrating the space, the movement of human beings, the discipline of time ²⁴².

[The foam boards]. Here the landscape is limited by the actual size of the frame: windows into another space; apertures, interstices, projections of alternative pathways. The individual

lar procedure with two notable differences: the size of the glass jar, bigger than that for the microphone, and the medium, since the hydrophone is immersed in water. The larger size of the jar has the consequence of capturing a different set of frequencies, depending on their length; furthermore, sound travels in water at a higher speed (due to the density of the molecules of which the liquid is composed) in comparison to air, producing a different acoustic response of the hydrophone.

242 *Uchronian Variation C: I arrive at the edge of the tropical jungle that surrounds the town; I proceed into the pathway that is taking me to the coastal beach, where I can walk alone, undisturbed for a long amount of time.*

boards are self-contained maps, they emit signs and symbols; however their conjoint presence in the space, their combination, and vicinity, generate new relationships, a genetic recombination of individual signs, an intertextual map: the evolving and dynamic process of reallocation of syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations. The nature of the images varies, broadly grouped as follows: charts, maps and topographic projections; musical scores, drawings, photographs and text. The photos focus primarily on parts of the human body, and on objects already in the space (the shoe, a colored window, an arrangement of boards).

The size of the foam boards varies from a tiny A6 to a quite large A1. The combination of size with the image chosen for that particular board's dimension, has been carefully considered. Two examples here. A shoe lies across an A1 board; a photograph of the very same shoe again lying across an A3 board with the printed text 'shoe'. A game of visual magnifications, textual self-referentiality, challenges the perception of space and time, the presence and the meaning behind the objects surrounding everyday life. An A6 photograph shows a pair of human legs popping out of an architectural assembly of crumpled paper; a paper man-figure sitting on the ground: the same flooring of the current Installation's space, a photo taken in the venue in May 2021. A shrinking human body reduced to the span of a few centimeters; the very space in which the visitors step, contained within the size of an A6 foam board; a window into the past: another moment in time of this same space, crumbs of a frozen temporality²⁴³.

The selection of the board's subjects follows a compositional trajectory orbiting the sonic 'content' of the objects reproduced. With different intensity all the images contribute to the orchestration of this experiment into *soundography*. A few other objects form part of the Installation design: two white wooden boxes

243 Some images have been overlapped, processed and modified (manually and digitally) before the final printing on the boards. Maps and topographies have often been trimmed to focus on specific details and aspects of the map itself. The result is a meta map: a rhizomatic composition of *soundographic* images.

(the kind used for exhibition and theatre work) are placed separately under two windows to exhibit the jars and the microphones; two other boxes are combined together forming a corner under a third window, to host the flowers, the clock, the book, and the coffee machine.

In a corner between two windows, a translucent plastic cocoon (about the dimension of two meters by one meter) is inflated by a small fan pumping air into a small aperture on the plastic surface. Inside the cocoon, a foam board has been placed, 'floating' between the plastic surfaces, thanks to a series of tiny legs that keep it mid-air. Because of the opaque appearance of the plastic surface, it is possible to observe the board inside the cocoon, and follow its general shape and dimensions, but the details are blurred by the plastic's texture.

The foam board is an A1 printed image of the satellite view of Asia and the Middle East, with its countries, oceans, and main topographic features: a red dot has been placed over the exact place where the Installation's venue is located. The red cotton thread stems from the red dot, pierces the plastic cocoon²⁴⁴ with a tiny hole and sets its air in motion.

The pairing of the aforementioned objects followed a purely functional purpose: objects connected by scent (the coffee machine and the flowers); objects related by spatial and functional contiguity (the toothbrush, the toothpaste, and the cup, but also the grouping of the glass jars, the microphone and the hydrophone). Other pairings would have generated further relationships, an alternative set of communication pathways among

244 The cocoon is evoking the question of magnitude, the quest for measurements and scales: the infinite vastness and minuteness of the universe; a World contained in a plastic bag. The Globe within a cocoon carries symbolic and popular exegesis: Domenico Ghirlandaio painting Saint Christopher carrying a child Christ on his shoulder (Christ who is carrying the World-globe on the palm of his tiny hand); François Rabelais's novel *The Life of Gargantua and of Pantagruel* (c. 1532 – c. 1564); Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726); René Laloux's film *The Savage Planet* (1973); Jack Arnold's film *The Incredible Shrinking Man* (1957); the quantum physics of Minkowsky's spacetime theory; the Deleuzian's molar and molecular. Infinite and capricious are the examples, as countless as the directions of magnification.

the objects inhabiting the Installation's space²⁴⁵. Merleau-Ponty viewed poetry as the essence of words, suggesting that their function is not to represent things 'by reason of an objective resemblance', but rather to extract 'emotional essence', or emotional content. For him, 'words, vowels and phonemes are' like 'ways of *singing* the world' (Merleau-Ponty, 2005 [1945], p. 193, my italics).

In this whirlpool of potential directions of communication, the signs emitted by the objects in the space, speak to us with a degree of familiarity (or distance) directly related to our prior experiences: habits and the social habitus shaping the way the body moves in the space, the thinking, and the acting that goes with it. The sensuous feedback that I receive from the space in this very moment, feedback that I am ceaselessly processing and evaluating (both at a conscious and unconscious level) are sensations which I may embrace or reject, bring up to consciousness or not, based on the familiarity and habituality (or antithetically by my lack of reference) of my relation with what is 'outer to' my body²⁴⁶. Intertextual relationships that occur while investigating the space: efflorescence of an emplacement of the body in space. Or else, a displacement: a refusal of the characteristic of the space, a denial of the sensuous, a body withdrawing from the reality in which it is immersed.

245 By grouping the coffee machine with the lilies, the book, and the clock, I propose an alternative channel of communication among these objects: perhaps a relation of intimacy and familiarity; a corner of everydayness at home; drinking coffee, reading a book, sitting among scented flowers, the soft voice of the clock in the background, punctuating the time and space of these actions. I also could have embraced in the grouping the set of the toothbrush, the toothpaste, and the glass cup, alluding to a whole array of familiar and private actions. Or else I could have grouped the shoe with the book and one of the many maps on the foam boards, unfolding traces of some reading during a walk toward a possible destination.

246 If the bond between a book and a shoe is foreign to me, I will perhaps focus my attention on the communication generated between the coffee and the flowers: or the latter with the red framed window, the red framed window with the red thread, the red thread with the stain of blood over a foot (a photo on a board), the photographed foot with the physical shoe, again.

Soundography of Everyday Life: The Orchestration of Sound

The microphone and the hydrophone capture the sounds present in the Installation space; one contact microphone captures the sound of the clock ticking; four loudspeakers project sound captured by the three microphones back into the space itself: a quadraphonic system of independent speakers. In the middle of this chain, a laptop receives the signal from the microphones and processes it with an audio editing software, before sending it out to the loudspeakers. The operation happens in real time, without audible delays. Meanwhile the software is in charge of looping playback of a 50-minute recording of the travel from my residential place to the venue. The playback is heard from the loudspeakers, combined with the microphones' live output.

Hence the system receives input from sounds existing in the space (aircon units), people moving and talking within the venue, sounds from outside the space (the street level, and the activities in the neighborhood), and the sound of the recorded playback of my walk and travel from my home to this same venue. At the same time the microphones are continuously fed the output of the loudspeakers, generating an uninterrupted chain reaction of new sonic events. Thus the space is a field of synchronous and asynchronous sets of auditory events: the synchronic soundography emplaced within the space (people moving and talking, the aircon, the muffled sounds from outside the venue); the asynchronous soundography 'displaced' within the space (the audio recording of my travel from point to point; from home to the Installation space).

The two sets of sound events do not belong to the same space, nor time: by layering these two sound maps, the venue becomes a site of reciprocity, a liminal space of converging divergences: lacuna, *intermezzo*. Additionally, by entering the space we bring our own sounds, we create a novel soundography of the venue, generating sonic trajectories and relationships. The human body, fluctuating in space ceaselessly recalibrates a map in consider-

ation of the feedback, the signs, Hansel's breadcrumb traces²⁴⁷, left by the many objects present in the perceptual field: the red thread across the room, the many boards, the shoe, the cocoon, the lily flowers, the clock, the book, the coffee machine, the jars, the loudspeakers, the microphones. A map of the invisible (assuming that what is visible deals only with sight): soundography of time and space, soundography of the body.

Moreover this orchestration of the sounds is designed with two directions of compositional exploration in mind: a fixed tape (the recording of my travel) repeated every 50 minutes: here the sound material is chosen, the length is set by habits (the average travelling time from point to point). Repetition of the recording generates a sense of familiarity: during the opening day (from 10 AM to 7 PM) the recording is repeated 11 times. By remaining in the space all day (as I did), the soundscape of the recording becomes a familiar path: sudden and specific sounds fall into place, somehow expected, after a cycle of a few repetitions. Even with a 50-minute length, after some time, the sound material settles and dissipates into the space together with sounds already present: emplacement of bodies and sounds. A different experience indeed for the visitors who remained on average only 45 minutes: in their case the recorded tape dwells more in the unknown since it unfolds only once. So for them, every acoustic input manifests itself as a singularity without repetition²⁴⁸.

The second direction of compositional investigation focuses on real time processing of the sounds of the space captured by the microphone and the hydrophone. Here the sonic material is

247 *Hansel and Gretel* is a German fairy tale published in 1812, part of the Grimm Brothers's Fairy Tales. Hansel and Gretel are a brother and sister abandoned in a forest. In the beginning of the fairy tale, Hansel takes a slice of bread and leaves a trail of breadcrumbs for him and the sister Gretel to follow to return back home. However, after they are once again abandoned, they find that the birds have eaten the crumbs and they are lost in the woods. In their wandering in the forest, they fall into the hands of a witch who lives in a house made of gingerbread, cake, and candy.

248 I will consider later in detail the feedback from visitors to the Installation's opening day.

not predetermined, since it is generated as it unfolds²⁴⁹. With a thorough exploration of these variables, in conjunction with an understanding of the acoustic landscape of the place of Installation, a pre-selection of some characteristics of the sonic outcome was envisioned and put in place.

The choices for sound processing follow the same investigative procedure: after a good number of daily experiments over the three months of preparation, a musical trajectory is decided upon. The acoustic signal received by the microphones is modified in its harmonic content (which is to say, the natural frequencies existing in the original sound are altered); the software is able to isolate partials of the frequency spectrum (suppressing the rest of it). It is also able to enhance specific areas of these frequencies (changing the volume to be greater or less, or eventually null). Finally the software algorithm is designed to change the configuration imposed on the signal through a stochastic (probabilistic) process, modified in real time: which is to say, the incoming sound goes through dynamic changes over time, sometimes unpredictably (within a range of pre-established parameters). Thus, compositionally, the overall result is roughly foreseeable, while the variables within the process are not entirely set. The stochastic procedure balances the fully determined material provided by the tape (the recording of my 50-minute travel): a two-layer compositional intention which could be described as a musical duet for live spacetime and fixed spacetime (the tape). It is worth noticing that while the tape, with its repetition, generates a cyclical reappearance of sonic events, the live processing of the actual events happening in the space disrupts and bends

249 However a certain amount of control has been introduced on the outcome, through a lengthy experimental phase of daily attempts lasting three months. During these trials a good number of variables were attentively tested, before arriving at the work's final concept: jars of different dimensions; a variety of filling material (styrofoam of many sizes and shapes, gravels of various sizes, plastic and paper sheets, foam, bubble wrap, plastic films, pop starch, etc.); different surfaces as a resting base for the jars (wood, metal, concrete, plastic); a selection of microphones and loudspeakers (modifying quality, number, positioning, size).

the sense of musical recurrence. Moreover, the sound of the tape fed back from the loudspeakers into the microphones further modifies the soundography of the space. As a result of these intertwined relationships, the space is continuously challenged, as are the human bodies within it.

Soundography: Orchestration of Media

This experiment in soundography concerns itself primarily with a space imbued by the presence of sound: however the research does not consider the sense of hearing as the only sense associated with perceiving acoustic feedback and communication²⁵⁰.

The Installation thus attempts to examine the senses as a whole, with specific interest in their sonic constituent. The experiments on mapping space through its acoustic characteristic has been the starting point for this intermedia composition, in conjunction with research into the origin of traditional cartography and mapping practices. Over the course of preparations, it became clear that tracing pathways, routes, and connections between points (corporeal and conceptual, temporal and spatial) is the crux of the work: the temporality of the map within. The red cotton thread is the line that bridges points, on multiple planes. This thread connects, separates, modifies, and marks the space: with its physical frangible presence, texture and color; with its cogent speculative presence, through symbolic and syntagmatic relations.

The thread is a line, a color, a vibrating sonorous string, a temporal device, a spacetime wormhole. It connects John Cage's score *Imaginary Landscape No. 5*²⁵¹ to a digital topography of a

250 Sound is disguised within the perceptual field among input concurrently received by all the senses. Only a circumscribed ability to perceive, discriminate and select compels human beings to focus conscious attention on a minimal selection of sensuous feedback, leaving the rest to gravitate to the periphery of perception.

251 *Imaginary Landscape*, written between 1939 and 1952, is the title of five

city; a mediaeval drawing of the world map to a satellite map on the photographic board; it connects the landscape of a naked foot, its flesh marked by bruises, with an A1 printing of a gigantic shoe and its real counterpart (the real worn-out shoe) lying across the foam board; it connects a skeletal map composed only of sharp red lines, with the back of a human hand carved with veins²⁵². The eyes may encounter the red line at any chosen point, selecting a direction of investigation that depends only on the will of the observer: a point of view, a perspective, an innuendo. The thread solicits responses from the human sensorium²⁵³. The Installation is conceived and composed to explore in-betweenness of elements involved; the reverberation of sound within media, the senses, the spatial and temporal ramifications of soundography, the intermediality within.

Objects in the Installation's space mark their presence, emit signs and symbolic archetypes: the senses are triggered and awakened by kaleidoscopic inputs presented. The lily flowers, the book, the clock, the coffee machine, the shoe, the translucent plastic cocoon, the set of jars and microphones, the many foam board photographs, and the red thread: all connect with each other, with the sound captured in the room, with the playback from the loudspeakers, with the bodies navigating the space, with the multilayered temporality provoked by this nexus of elements²⁵⁴.

pieces by American composer John Cage. The series includes instruments or other elements requiring electricity. *Imaginary Landscape No. 5* (1952) is written for magnetic tape recording of any 42 phonograph records.

252 The thread connects board to board, object to object, or else board to object: but there is no trajectory here, there is no forward or backward, nor a progression toward an end.

253 The red cotton thread cuts across temporalities, space and perceptual responses: it connects the jars hosting the microphones with the cocoon enfolding the World; it connects the scent of coffee permeating the air, with the diaphanous light diffused into the space through coloured windowpanes.

254 The choice of two different sets of microphones, the condenser microphone and the hydrophone, is the result of a series of evaluations and experimental trajectories. Sound in water is perceived differently in comparison to sound in air: we, as human beings, spend our primaeval time of gestation and growth, in a liquid environment; witness to this, is the innate ability to swim

The Visitors

During the opening day about 30 people came to visit the space. Here I will discuss informal feedback given by the event participants, and my own observation of how the visitors explored the Installation's space and the quality of their engagement with the temporality of the experiment. I will commence with the latter and ease back into the former.

First, upon entering the space, a sort of esoteric silence is maintained: people whisper, if they talk at all; no sign or reminder is required to achieve this result²⁵⁵. In this specific Installation, where the venue is flooded with sounds (from four loudspeakers placed at the four sides of the space), the enigmatic silence of the visitors is almost ironic. It becomes even more fascinating when I realize, from the feedback received, that many participants labelled the sounds they heard in the space as 'noise' from the bustling city life outside. I shall say here, that area is relatively quiet, even though it is in the center of the city, because the building stands at the edge of a pedestrian zone, with few cars passing on the adjacent road.

Some questions come to mind: has the visual component of the Installation partially erased the acoustic communication

and remain under water in the first weeks after birth; an initial emplacement, to extend David Howes notion, within a space and temporality that is more aquatic than terrestrial. The perception of sound through a liquid environment is therefore something we have all experienced in the average nine months of growth in the womb. Sound that, again in comparison to the element of air, travels much faster, and has a different perceptual implication: a different speed of sound elicits a distinct temporal interpretation. The element of water essential to human beings for their development and survival: we are mostly made of water; the planet itself is mostly made of water; water that is needed for almost everything that has biological existence on earth. Some animals defy this canon, like the Tardigrades, that are said to survive outer space, and to remain in a cryptobiotic state for more than 30 years without food or water, before 'waking up' again.

255 In itself this is not surprising: decades and perhaps centuries of the experience of a traditional museum space, the exhibition white cube, has determined a habit (a routine) which is a formidable witness to the social habitus imposed by the usage and understanding of certain spaces (and the time within).

within? Are the loudspeakers too small and too discreetly positioned to be remarked upon? Is the sound oozing from the loudspeakers not 'loud' enough to be noticed, to impose upon and mark the space? I got a partial answer from the first visitor on the opening day: a young person who arrived in the city only five months ago, as he told me. After looking at the work for a while, he asked me if there was a subway station nearby because he could hear the sound of the train doors and the station announcements. The closest station is at least 800 meters away, and is underground, as are all the stations within the center of the city. Obviously, this person imagined that all the sounds, again, were coming from outside, without even considering how realistic it would be to hear station announcements and train doors of a subway car from inside a building on the third floor. It is interesting to note that these remarks come from someone unfamiliar with the city: somehow this is also a reasonable, though somewhat improbable, misunderstanding.

Nobody else remarked upon or asked about the sound of the subway or other recognizable sounds heard in the Installation space. The feedback seemed to suggest that most of the sound in the Installation's venue was perceived as coming from outside the room, since it could not belong to the set of sounds supposed to be in such a venue. This confirms, unwillingly, the habit of constructing soundographies in the background of the phenomenological experience of space and time. A sound that should not belong to a place, doesn't belong, despite an indication that it does. The space is mapped out, even before being entered, because of ingrained habits and spatial expectations patterned by the social habitus we live in²⁵⁶.

The visitors, by acknowledging the difficulty of locating sounds in space, of providing a distinct and univocal correspondence between temporal and spatial axes of their acoustic experi-

256 After further analysis, the sound of the Installation has indeed marked its space, everywhere: ambiguously being inside and outside the venue, the spatio-temporal inbetweenness of acoustic sources communicating through several coexisting pathways, is the crux of soundography. I will return to this in the next section of this chapter.

ence, seem to corroborate that a sense of displacement is concurrent with the emplacement of their bodies in the space²⁵⁷. Sound in this experiment, is volatile, and cannot be charted by the same axioms of cartographic representation of space²⁵⁸.

The visitors were reminded not to touch the boards or the red thread suspended between objects, but they were invited to touch, at will, specific objects: the book, that could be browsed; the coffee machine, that could be used for drinking a coffee²⁵⁹; the inflated surface of the cocoon that could be touched to experience the texture and better understand the nature of the content of the foam board beneath (the A1 sized satellite map of South-east Asia). A few tried autonomously, the majority didn't: a few, after my reiterating the invitation, at last, tried to touch the cocoon and peek into the book. Only two people tried the coffee.

The book, the coffee, and the cocoon are placed here to connect an intertwined temporality of the senses²⁶⁰: I regard the diversity of objects as an attempt to reconsider the physicality of space through the whole spectrum of available sensuous feedback. Urban spaces are often characterized by smooth surfaces and standardized materials, poor tactile experiences following a logic foreign to the human body, underlining *per contra* the urban development of aseptic public areas, anemic spaces of consumerism. The intimate space of the Installation condenses a tem-

257 An expected visual mapping of the perceptual field, clashes with a soundography within. The existence of objects in an Installation space, appears to be a datum: a surmised cartography of preexisting models and modalities of experiencing such spaces, and venues: art galleries, white cubes, museums, exhibition halls.

258 A counterexample sheds light on this representational dilemma: if the Installation set-up was proposed in a concert hall, a venue traditionally dedicated to attend a music event, probably sound will be the first and foremost element expected by an audience to occur in space, perhaps regardless of the design of the installation's work.

259 Disposable coffee cups were provided.

260 I will not embark upon a debate as to primacy of any particular sense over others, which would easily become lost on a path surrounded by spicate inflorescence, where one must face a many-headed hydra of cultural bias more than anything else.

porality of symbols and signs, through sensuous experience of the objects involved: aroma, taste, touch, hearing, and sight are concurrently elicited, a cornucopia of the senses.

Cartography and Soundography: Intermezzo

An important distinction arises between soundography and traditional cartography: the latter rests on the necessity of establishing boundaries, limits. The very purpose of cartography is to evaluate and distinguish information based on priorities, plans, classifications: a simplification of reality which responds to specific authoritarian interests²⁶¹. Soundography departs from the notion of separation and marginalization: sound travels regardless. The fluidity of what is 'in' and what is 'out' is inherent to the physics of sound: the modern and postmodern fetish of 'noise' which is also symptomatic of preoccupation with control and containment²⁶².

Soundography does not introduce a fictitious (and sinister) need for schematization by adding borders and arbitrary lines of demarcation; rather it acknowledges this ambiguity: the in-betweenness of acoustic information (and acoustic communication) which constitutes the experience of time and space is the crux of

261 I am referring here to power relations inherent in systems of governance (nation, state, law, police) which model and enforce how space and time should be regulated in order to maintain control.

262 An assortment of literature and music practices individuate noise as the specific novel framework of sound perception and making in contemporary society, fed by avant-gardists experiments in recording and composition: Pierre Schaeffer's *musique concrète*, the futurist manifesto *The Art of Noise* (1913), and Luigi Russolo's musical instrument the *intonarumori*, to name a few of the individuals behind projects of the early decades of the twentieth century. A plethora of musical genres and labels that have somehow gravitated around the idea of noise: techno, industrial (with all its ramifications), power noise, punk, metal, etc. Containment and control of these experimental and somehow subversive musical projects has been the crux of global economies preoccupied by profit and revenues: most of these projects have been rerouted and ingested into a consumerist network which leaves very little room for dissonance and noise.

soundography²⁶³. It asks for a body to exist, where cartography can get away without it. The space is permeable, mutable and intertwined in soundography: in the Installation's venue I hear myself, others, the sounds in the room as sounds outside the room, with different intensities, definition, details. Cartography ignores what is outside the perimeter of the chosen space; space traced by continuous lines and geometrical perspective, homogeneously²⁶⁴. However the crux and challenge of soundography is the ambiguous lieu of its existence; a space and time defined only by the presence of the vessel of all definition: the human body.

Dismissal of visual representation puts soundographic practices into a marginal area of identification; an example: I need to get from point A to point B; a cartographic model will show me the shortest route, the name of the streets or area I will encounter, highlighting the path and its length. With soundography I receive feedback as to the nature of the sounds encountered during the length of the transit from point A to B. But the sounds are sometimes (or even often) misleading: our aural sensitivity does not allow us to recognize without doubt the difference between certain sounds²⁶⁵. I may mistake the buzz of a lift for a similar

263 The notion of 'specificity' of events in time and space, assumes a different hue in soundography as compared to the traditional cartographic and historiographic model. In cartography the human body is *in absentia*; in soundography it is the only and the *primaeva* vessel of acoustic experience. A cartographic representation of the Installation site will read as follow: a grid of objects laid down on different levels from ground to wall (shapes of boards, thread, shoe, etc. are shown), together with a provided schematisation of the room's main characteristics (windows, doors, size), within a predetermined method of perspective, proportions and scales. A soundographic method, instead: hissing of the air-con, the chattering and creaking of the wooden floor under the feet of someone, the brewing of the coffee machine, the humming of the cocoon's fan, the ticking of the clock, someone else's walk and travels sounding from the loudspeakers, indistinguishable sounds from outside the venue (chattering, cars, engines, tools, etc.), more sounds from the loudspeakers, somehow echoing or in connection with sounds originating from the surroundings.

264 In a cartographic representation I don't 'see' the space as much as I cannot hear it: the visible map is invisible to the perceptual reality of experience, reduced to a matrix of numerical relationships.

265 We should consider nevertheless that sensitivity to sound is contex-

buzz of gates at the subway; or the buzz of the pedestrian street-light with that of the sliding doors of the subway car²⁶⁶.

Concluding Thoughts and Notes

This soundography experiment has further developed and expanded investigation into the temporality of the senses, initiated almost three years ago with the first chapter of this research on the medium of film. The current intermedia Installation raises interesting new observations: this experiment seems to suggest that the sense of emplacement, or conversely of displacement (following anthropologist's David Howes notion), results from an intertwined correlation between time and space, mapped out by sensuous responses within the human perceptual field; moreover from this experiment, it appears that the process of charting pathways, trajectories and constructing spatial and temporal references may take place on a conscious level, but often falls below the threshold of consciousness, instead following not habit, but the social habitus, prior experiences, memories and interpolations.

In this chapter the intertwined temporalities of the experi-

tually and culturally related, aside from any biological limitations: while in Western-centric societies the reliance on sight and visuals is prominent, forming and tuning the senses accordingly, other cultures have developed an ability to recognise nuances of sound, haptic feedback, aromas and taste unavailable in the West. One example among the many: Kaluli people from Papua New Guinea are attuned to the diffuseness of sound in the tropical forest, to interpret body orientation and the presence of the forest's inhabitants, through hearing, listening and voicing. A space, the forest, marked and defined by sound, often hidden from perceptual feedback of sight. Acoustic presence of the inhabitants and the forest reveals a world invisible to sight: thus a memory of sound, a reverberation of sound experience, is much stronger than a visual memory. The Kaluli interplay of senses strongly connects sound and smell, among others, in a deeply multisensory continuum of the tropical forest's life (Feld. S. in Howes, D. 2005, p. 185 - 186).

266 How many 'buzzes' are there? More bizarre situations may arise: the sound of walking in the snow is similar to the sound produced by pressing sea salt powder in a basin, or chewing an apple, slowly. Sound again is mobile, resistant to definition.

ment relate to memory of a distant past, recent past, or future temporal events. A visitor walking into the experimental space encounters memories of someone else's past events (in the form of images, sounds, objects, aromas, and tactile sensations); these memories trigger memories of the visitor's own past (a distant or a recent one, or perhaps future events); more memory of cyclical actions, actions not actually happening in the experimental space, in a sort of spatio-temporal displacement (the toothbrush that bring the memory of brushing teeth; the coffee bringing memory of drinking/smelling/tasting).

Temporal loops of the audio recording (every 50 minutes) overlap with the aforementioned memories, creating asynchronous tempi of what is present to us, and what is a reconstruction of past recollections. Here the red thread cuts across mnemonic and spatial cycles: it creates temporal loopholes by delineating physical paths across the photographic boards. In the space of a few steps over a few minutes, the tempo of the body traversing the experimental space vis-a-vis the temporal reconstruction (with images and objects in the space) of an almost 13-kilometre path from my residence to my workplace, repeated 54 times: almost 700 km of distance, 2700 hours of recording material, 100 meters of red thread, 90 boards of images sized between A1 and A6.

A representation of reality is the result of a network based on perceptual stimuli processed and homogenized within a range of biological limits, social and cultural significances, and their demarcations: a personal experience burdened more often than not, by the weight of the aforementioned social and cultural traits, which leaves the human body trapped within encrusted routines of behaving, thinking, and perceiving space and temporality within given boundaries. Space is no longer experienced with a synchronous unity of perception and emplacement²⁶⁷. The soundographic experiment also brought to the fore the reliance on visual feedback in the context of urban development; the ma-

267 Paraphrasing Barry Truax, before audio-visual recording technology, no place had ever been experienced twice, exactly the same, nor had any space ever been experienced outside its original context.

nipulation and commodification of sound, designed to enhance the urban fabric: social control and the temporalization and spatialization of human behavior²⁶⁸.

Here sound and music overlap, so their temporality. When a recording of a 50-minute soundscape is repeated several times, it becomes music: the sound of walking, the birds chirping, the buzzing of lifts, cars, subway gates, train doors. These all contribute to the definition of a musical space: a sonic landscape which brings together musical refrains, sparseness and density of acoustic events, sonic textures and timbres. The intertwined temporality of these events is not a compositional choice, but the repetition of the recording of a selected portion of time (50 minutes) has a compositional result: it becomes a composition of musical elements. When the time of the recording (the 50 minutes of the mechanical playback from the laptop) overlaps with the real time processing of sound events in the experimental space, two tempi emerge: the 'now' of the microphones' real time listening and their simultaneous playback through the speakers; and the 'before' of a recording of past events somewhere else outside the room – a temporal dichotomy to which the persons present in the space are exposed, and who bring their own temporal affect into the space, their own 'now', their own presence in the present time.

In conclusion, by further investigating the phenomenology of the senses, the current research brings into play the specificity of sound in relation to time and space: an experiment in soundography, an intermedia composition, an Installation, an inquiry into the temporality of perception.

268 While this experiment focuses on a very specific and circumscribed area of research, its magnification and resonance are beyond the limited scope: further research could analyse, compare and define soundographic realities belonging to diverse cultural contexts, spaces and social relationships. Some research in this direction has been already done in the seminal works of Victor Zuckerkandl *Sound and Symbol* (1956); Murray Schafer's *The Tuning of the World* (1977); and Barry Truax's *Acoustic Communication* (1984). Works which have been developed within the philosophical postulates and notions of Henri Bergson's *Matter and Memory* (1896), and Merleau-Ponty's *The Phenomenology of Perception* (1945), among others.

V. Kinships and Conclusions

We necessarily express ourselves by means of words and we usually think in terms of space. That is to say, language requires us to establish between our ideas the same sharp and precise distinctions, the same discontinuity, as between material objects. This assimilation of thought to things is useful in practical life and necessary in most of the sciences. But it may be asked whether the insurmountable difficulties presented by certain philosophical problems do not arise from our placing side by side in space phenomena which do not occupy space, and whether, by merely getting rid of the clumsy symbols round which we are fighting, we might not bring the fight to an end. When an illegitimate translation of the unextended into the extended, of quality into quantity, has introduced contradiction into the very heart of the question, contradiction must, of course, recur in the answer.

Henri Bergson, February 1888 (preface to *Time and Free Will*, 2014 [1888], p. 7)

By restating the Bergson quote from the end of the second Chapter of this book, I come back, in a curved universe, to where I started. But my standpoint is not at all the same as that of a few years back. Space and time as we conceive them now differ greatly from the conceptions current when Bergson wrote this, in 1888, but the thinking of the French philosopher is still relevant. By identifying words as the means of expression, and space as the medium to which our thinking relates, how, Bergson seems to wonder, do we short-circuit or bypass the issue inherent in quantization, discretization, and concretization of what is experiential, preverbal, intuitive²⁶⁹, interoceptive, perhaps even

269 Here I am alluding to Nishida's intuitive knowledge (Nishida, 2020

a-spatial (or multi-spatial, to embrace quantum theory)? I have pondered these questions, both in this book, and within the four experimental frameworks designed to explore the temporality of the senses.

A concern with the method of articulating perceptual feedback provided by my body was present from the start: this was manifested initially by the presence of multiple voices to document the process of my investigation. These voices (the analytic voice, the performer's voice, the stream of consciousness and the poetic voice) are all ingrained within temporality, and they are themselves temporal objects, acting within and without the time of the performative space, of analysis and post-facto intellectualization. Later, in the course of the research, the four voices become less prominent, and alternative forms of utterance arise: the voice of the audience *in primis* (in the third and fourth experiment, open to public). Concurrently attention shifts from my body as direct field of examination (Chapters 1 and 2) to the human body as medium between subjects and objects in space (Chapter 3); until, in the fourth Chapter's experiment, the body vanishes, and sound, space, and the audience's attempts to navigate within them, become the focus. Hence the multiple voices, though relevant at first in the initial chapters, eventually recede, giving way to other forms of expression. This recalls Wittgenstein's adage about language imagined as a form of life: an organism which evolves, and in which the parts that form the whole are always modulating within an ever changing body.

Turning now to the time of recalling, attempting to verbalize the kind of temporalities and sensations I have experienced throughout the four experimental events, I observe a few distinct and vivid sensations. My body has been traversed by time; a time that has become embodied, experienced in the flesh, rather than simply taken for granted (as a set of habits, norms, conventions). By this I mean that skin, bones, and my very flesh have been 'touched' several times by deep and lasting sensuous perceptions rooted in the many facets of temporality: the extend-

ed length of the experiment, the repetitiveness of the gestures, and the experimental design (objects, cameras, sounds, smells, colors, light, temperature) have all contributed to this process of heightened sensitivity to the body and to time.

This consciousness of temporal interpenetration, slowly acquired, acts on my body and on my being, and it has not been acquired without difficulties: extreme bodily fatigue (I lost more than ten kilos by the end of the cycle of the four experiments); difficulty maintaining a regular sleep pattern; recurrent unsettling dreams, thoughts, and concerns, though most of this ended with the very last day of the last experiment. I believe I bent my body into a pattern of accumulation, an intense focus on sensorial inputs, temporal alterations, and attention on my body itself, and this has caused, after months and months of intense practice, distress and anxiety. At various times I also experienced a sense of excitement over the discoveries in progress, an adrenaline high of focused attention, an altered state of consciousness. These two states (distress and tiredness; excitement and hyper consciousness) have been present at all times in the process of learning. Being bent between these two extremes (extreme fatigue and extreme excitement) is a necessary path; the path of reconnaissance into temporal patterns, a path of first-hand experience: a path of sensorial penetration into the fabric of time.

The experiments, in film, dance, literature and music, have examined this temporality. In them, I have explored the perceptual field through the feedback of my own body: my intention was not to bypass linguistic constraints, which are the property of human beings, and which mark them as sentient animals. I have tried instead to explore alternatives to language (or perhaps alternative forms of language), to amplify sensuous responses, to elongate routine gestures, and thereby investigate modalities of attention. I called this method sense amplification, and I have used it to compose the entire series of exercises and experiments that you will find in the Appendix, at the end of this book.

Space was a consideration from the beginning: attunement

to space, emplacement as predicated by Howes; liminal space; 'Ma', following the Japanese philosophical tradition which connects Nishida's intuitive knowledge to Hijikata's *ankoku butō* method of body transformation; but also, the Western philosophical stance of Deleuze and Guattari, the rhizomatic, the non-hierarchical construction of knowledge, the space of the mind. Space experienced through the senses; space imagined; space constructed (*perspectivized*); space regulated by habits and the habitus; space eventually denied, a denial that opened crevasses into alternative modalities of perception: the liminal, the gap, the in-betweenness of the Japanese philosophical 'Ma', of *butō*.

Bergson speaks of discontinuity of material objects in perceptual space. He compares this to the sharp distinctions made by language in articulating ideas and thoughts. Here I differ with the French philosopher, maintaining that a continuity between the body and objects in space is the condition of individuation, in Gilbert Simondon's sense. According to Simondon, individuation can never be in isolation, is never mine alone: it always posits itself as an individuation of a group to which I relate – and to which I belong precisely through my relationship. Therefore, I participate in individuation through my engagement with the group itself, with others and with objects (Simondon cited in Stiegler, 2014, p. 46).

I intensify this notion, suggesting that individuation stands also in relation to my bodily emplacement in spatio-temporal contiguity. My body is placed in space and it *is* the space: the lines of contiguity between my body and other objects in space (including the medium of air) allow me to trace the distinction between the 'I' and the 'Other', which is alien to me, as per Waldenfels's phenomenological approach to otherness, or Merleau-Ponty's *intercorporeality* (Merleau-Ponty cited in Waldenfels, 2011 [2006], p. 53).

Merleau-Ponty brings into focus the loss of sensorial differentiation between two hands that touch each other: when my left hand reaches the right hand and touches the skin, the dis-

inction between subject and object of the action collapses into an undifferentiated sensuous experience. I maintain that same continuity of sensorial feedback exists when my body touches a surface, an external object, for a prolonged period of time: as when my forearm lay still on the surface of the table for two hours (as in my film experiment), and the demarcation between the surface of the human skin and the wooden board of the table softened ²⁷⁰.

Here space is reframed and reconsidered by an experiential procedure which I have called amplification of the senses²⁷¹: a condition in which sensorial feedback is purposefully prolonged and focused to modify the state of awareness and sensitivity of the body. In the experience of the hand sinking into the table, I can distinguish sensuous responses that have a hard and soft quality: there is a verbal translation of perceptions that appear as the hard surface of my consciousness; but there is also a softer part, the *feeling* of the body sinking into the wood, the body losing its lines of demarcation, becoming continuous with the table. I am aware of both, and indeed *I am* both: a human body with its presence in space, and a human body dissolving into space, effacing its own spatio-temporal presence. Hence also Hijikata's *ankoku butō* body transformation.

And within these multiplicities²⁷² (unextended and extended, discontinuous and continuous) my body travels a spacetime reality constructed around its sensory probes, to which language seems to provide a definition: the assimilation of thought to

270 I am clarifying here that this continuity exists regardless of the duration, but the extended duration brings to the forefront the experience of such a continuity.

271 From the voice of the stream of consciousness: my right hand is slowly sinking into the wood of the table, my neck is retracting and my back bending; my legs are numb. My vision is almost obliterated. My whole body becomes the hand sinking into the wood of the table: I feel unable to move the arm, even if I wanted to; perhaps I will never be able to move the arm again. I gaze at the white board, but I only 'see' the hand fusing into the wood. I wonder what will happen next.

272 I purposefully avoid invoking a traditional duality of mind-body in order to sidestep an exhausting trail of dichotomies ushered in by Western philosophy after Descartes.

things, in Bergson's words. With my experiments in amplification of the senses I foreground a temporal process already embedded in the sensorial spectrum of the body, though usually hidden behind habits (and a social habitus) that reduce and regiment the nature and extent of these perceptual responses.

Throughout this study I discovered relationships between temporality and the senses which were not evident to me at first. The practice of stillness for a protracted amount of time, intersected by repetitive action (for instance, drinking coffee for the experiment in Chapter 1), generating an intense connection with temporality of the body: time embodied by and because of the lack of stimuli, by the boredom of prolonged inactivity, by the emergence of states of bodily discomfort and numbness.

Husserl's memento²⁷³ about the duration of sensation and the sensation of duration has been carefully investigated within the logic of the experiments here: evaluation of length, since pauses and intervals between events are hardly noticeable while the events themselves seem anchored in stasis, embedded in an opaque continuum of time. In this respect I have experienced various results in my conscious evaluations of the sensation of temporal duration: in Chapter 1, a complete loss of temporal horizon, 'a hole of time' (Massumi, 1995, p. 86); in Chapter 2 an attunement and emplacement within the spatio-temporal framework, the ability to intuitively evaluate temporal periods; in Chapter 3 the task of trimming the beard creating the sensation of a temporal vortex that could have lasted indefinitely, a labyrinth of time; in Chapter 4, a sense of temporal swarming with multiple trajectories of time patterns, durations, cycles.

I have also noticed that while the senses are simultaneously engaged, perceptual processes modulate focus from one sense to another, according to the duration of the stimuli or conversely, the lack thereof²⁷⁴. Moreover, the conscious practice of conver-

273 "The duration of sensation and the sensation of duration are different. And it is the same with sensation. The succession of sensations and the sensation of succession are not the same" (Husserl, 2019 [1928], p. 31).

274 In the first experiment (film) for example, by sitting still for two hours

gence on one specific sense of perception (for example, staring at a word written on the white board) generates, after a certain amount of time, a zeroing of the ability to focus vision, and in fact achieves the opposite of the desired result. Overexposure or overstimulation seems in this case to produce an interval or pause in the perceptual ability to generate meaning: it appears that the same result happens at the opposite side of the perceptual spectrum, when the lack of stimuli, and /or the effects of boredom take over.

This investigation into temporality has been an investigation of cycles, of recurring patterns, of repetitive actions in human behavior. Repeatability is also at the crux of linguistic form. It is what allows the recognition of patterns, fabrics, and texture. The experiment in Chapter 3 (literature) brought to the forefront a special interrelation between the sense of smell (aroma, odor) and text (spoken and written). The event was *speaking*, maneuvering the overlapping and intertwined temporalities of the event's constituents into elemental *langue* and *parole* of the text written and spoken; and of the aroma of the selected objects. The operation of trimming the beard and slicing the objects; the screening of Franju's documentary and the magnified closeup of the beard's cutting – these all function within a linguistic framework of repetition, of communication; of objects bearing signs, of signs emitted and received by all the event participants²⁷⁵.

In Chapter 4, the experiment in soundography suggested that

I slowly felt my body become numb; my haptic feedback being concentrated between my forearm and the touch of the cup of coffee; the vision was at the beginning clear, but became gradually blurred, almost blinded, by staring at the same surface in front of me; In the second experiment (dance) the continuous and repeated practice of sliding across the surface of the wall made me very sensitive to the smell of the wall (a mix of paint, plaster and concrete), and to its feeling by touch, relegating vision and hearing very much to the background.

275 Elongation and shrinkage of temporal clusters, the endless ocean of Borges's *The Book of Sand* (1975), the madeleine's intuitive instant of Proust's vast introspection, are the logos of the event: the experiment's temporality is pinned to an incorporeal dot of time, a vortex of repetitions, a cycling of gestures, a multiplicity of signs, lasting eternally or already dead within the invisible dot; big bang theory: nihil and infinity in a flicker of time.

a sense of emplacement (again following anthropologist David Howes' notion), or conversely of displacement, is the result of an intertwined correlation between time and space, mapped out through sensuous responses within the human perceptual field; from this experiment it appears that the process of charting pathways, trajectories, of constructing spatial and temporal references, may happen at a conscious level, but more often falls below the threshold of consciousness. Instead, we usually follow pathways dictated by habit, the social habitus, prior experiences, memories and interpolations.

Temporality of the body, negotiating with spatiality of the body: when space and time collapse into an undifferentiated continuum, then a state of emplacement, direct experience of the body, may unify space and time from within; and also, according to quantum physics and its spacetime continuum, from without. Else space and time are split apart, experientially: a common experience in contemporary societies governed by digital devices and the internet, where presence and absence in physical space becomes a blurred demarcation.

This subject resonates with a procedure which Stiegler identifies as the synchronization of human temporalities, mass control through the mechanization of everyday life. In his *Symbolic Misery* the French philosopher maintains that the advent of post-modernist forms of what he calls *hyperconsumerism* – media technology *in primis* – have sheared away the ability of humans to be the main actors in the production of symbols, and cut away our symbolic access to the meaning of reality. Humans are relegated to the role of consumer: this is what he calls hypertechnological society, a place hemmed in by an organological horizon, fostered by biotechnological apparatuses that preclude singularities or uniqueness. Stiegler continues by saying that a problem of individuation, in Gilbert Simondon's notion, arises within the hypertechnological society with respect to the experience of the internet: the synchronism of user operations elicits a circumstance of unified consciousnesses, of many acting as one. The psychic 'I' loses definition and the 'We' induced by the control of tem-

poralities remains, a consciousness imposed by marketing and the mechanization of daily life (Stiegler, 2014, p. 48-50). Stiegler here echoes Foucault's control societies; and Lefebvre's critique of everyday life.

The Questions and the Findings: An Open Ending

I look back at what I asked myself at the beginning of this book: How does amplifying, expanding, and intensifying sensory reception-response enable and/or alter states of consciousness with which the present is perceived? And I restate here the questions from the beginning of this inquiry into the sensorium: How can the perception of time be extended, shortened, textured, paused or eventually denied? What is the relationship between the phenomenology of time and the spectrum of human states closely related to time perception, such as euphoria or boredom? How is time experienced by the senses and articulated in artistic practices which investigate a specific species of time, such as physical, psychological, cyclical (such as in the work of the choreographer Hijikata, the film director Tarkovsky, and the writer Borges)?

Those questions, which I worked over and over until they seemed to dissolve, until, in making these experiments, I disentangled some, which then spawned others: for example, asking myself how, through active experimentation, could I analyze and make explicit the awareness of time, the temporality of the body. The experimental findings were far more engaging than I anticipated. I found that my body was able to do more than I imagined, not in terms physical strength or discipline but in the perceptual sensitivity acquired over the course of studio experimentation; awareness of space, a temporality of the flesh; the feeling of being dissolved in the doing, the flow, the space and time within.

In addressing the above questions, my experimental design has carefully taken into account ways of altering the perception

of time. In this process, I have directly experienced how unusual elongation of ordinary activities brings about modifications of the body's proprioception, perception of temporal durations, synchronous abatement and heightening of selected sensory feedback (for example when one sense is blocked, another sense takes over). I have noticed that when pauses are too long to allow conscious recollection of the details, a sequence of actions becomes lost in the fabric of time (by drinking coffee every 30 minutes, my perception of how many times the action has occurred was almost erased).

This connects directly to the outcomes of the second question about euphoria and boredom: by experimenting with temporal duration, with repetition of simple actions or series of routines amid stillness; emotional responses become tinted with tiredness, numbness, a sense of detachment from the body; and then there arises a focus of psychophysical attention on sensory responses, excitement, somatic sensitivity.

The strength of these experiences has been mentally and physically deeper than I imagined beforehand. It suggests that extended practice with these routines could advance new research into the phenomenology of time. I notice for instance that being forced to reconsider tactile haptics (in Experiment 2, with the use of plastic, paper, and water skins), my body acquired a completely new awareness of the human skin, an awareness that informed a closer sensitivity to temporal changes (and textural alterations of the skin, sweat, hives, etc.) – a perception of time felt in and through the flesh rather than intellectualized or taken for granted via social habit.

My relationship with the experimental space and its spatio-temporal identity changed through the course of the various experimental investigations. By entering into closer familiarity with the space, I became more and more a part of it, as if my body might sink into it. A loss of differentiation also affected my perception of time: entering a space to which I completely belong is like entering a gap in time, a musical fermata.

My personal enquiry into temporality has been further

shaped by these inputs and by engagement with selected artistic practices that investigate specific species of time. From these I extracted new concepts which were then transformed into further intermedia experiments. I am still surprised by what I experienced in these experiments: surprised that I was able to establish perception of time through a conscious awareness of the senses involved (here I am thinking of the various experiments: drinking coffee for three hours, with gaps of 30 minutes; the experience in body transformation with different skins; the hour-long beard trim; the experiment in soundography); surprised by how much has happened to my body, far more than what I expected in a mere few years.

Prior to this, as an artist, my practice over three decades had brought me to dead ends and cul-de-sacs not dissimilar to those I found described by the artists and philosophers I engaged with in this examination. Intuitively, I had sensed some of these problems, but they had remained hidden, incompletely articulated, unanswered, until now.

I consider the experiment into soundography, with the development of my method of sense amplification, as my main contribution to research in the phenomenology of temporality. This experiment could not have been conceived without the contribution of the three previous experiments in the mediums of film, dance, and literature. Building on these allowed me to distil and sharpen my inquiry into temporality, finding a synthesis of the various approaches and outcomes in this final soundographic investigation. By developing an attention to the human body, working with multiple sensorial perspectives, using the body as a probe in space, objectifying its presence in the landscape, the previous experiments helped me identify, select, and expand on elements redeployed in this last experiment.

The trajectory from first to last experiment is crucial to understanding the temporal relationship of the medium involved, and my own presence (or absence) in space: the first experiment dealt with extended stillness (body and space alike); the second with

apparent external slowness and high internal bodily speed (slow mobility with the prepared skins, versus the heightened and dynamic perceptual focus of haptic feedback); the third worked with the continuous tempo of the body's gestural patterns (and a routine of actions repeated over and over at a certain tempo); in the last, the relation to temporality is contained in the objects themselves, and the persons visiting the space: my body is still present, surrounded by the objects, the sounds, the audio visual recording, a body objectified and dissolved into the intertwined temporalities generated within the experimental space.

Both the soundographic extended compositional structure and the method (sense amplification) reflect the current state of phenomenology. By means of careful experimental design, they also foreground what lies at the threshold of consciousness. By focusing on sensuous responses to everyday gestures and routines, the method allowed me to develop acute awareness of the body, and particular sensitivity to sensory feedback. The resulting awareness of the body's responses to its environment heightened attunement to proprioceptive and interoceptive responses, and to emplacement, which further enabled close observation of various aspects related to temporal perception.

This experimental method itself also reflects the current social climate: in Foucaultian language, there are techniques of discipline whose purpose is a normalization of the body; a process of habituation to patterned sequences, the methodological function of repetitive actions, which then brings about the waning of the sensible, the particular, the individual: a normalization fostered by procedures of subtle reinforcement with minor changes. All this seems to be the modern *modus operandi* which lurks beneath the threshold of the noticeable – the unimportant, the harmless.

The soundography experiment lands at the intersection of these observations: by re-mapping space in terms of auditory feedback rather than visual cues, soundographic research focuses on an environment beyond what is apparent through sight. By creating a space for enhanced attentiveness to sensorial feed-

back, soundography suggests that stronger awareness of the body can be achieved through experiment, in tandem with my method of sense amplification. This highlights a concern with issues related to what may be called urban displacement: morphological modification of the human body, of its ability to perceive temporal and spatial reality; alienation of the body from a space inhabited but only partly lived in. Said another way, as technical and digital objects wax, individuation has waned, and like Simondon, I see a continuous and perturbing displacement of the human body in postmodern society. This is closely associated with abatement of individuation. Against this dilution of sensible happenings and direct sensation, my experiment in soundography, and my method of sense amplification, stand in immediate opposition.

I do not attempt to compare a nostalgic *el dorado* with today's dark digital era, nor to contrast the good old days of a pre-mechanical past with the twisted devices and malicious architecture of modern times. As Simondon observes, the distinction between culture and what he calls technical objects is fictitious: he maintains that the existence of *techne* has always been part of and reason for cultural development; and American scholar Donna Haraway notes that the first kindling of culture takes place with the appearance of the earliest tools crafted by human beings. Pre-technological time never seems to have existed. So, I do not aim to crusade for a 'demonology of technology' (to quote Haraway). I aim instead to delineate possible ways forward for habits induced by the current social habitus. Not all forms of virtual communication and digital interactivity are negative by nature. The current cultural and social climate may yet engender new modalities of perception, attention, relationships, and perhaps individuation.

During any social change, new positive (and negative) re-evaluations of the past are possible, which then enable new ways of seeing ourselves (as a species, with new historical perspectives, with new socio-cultural characteristics). The understanding of perception is dynamic and ever changing, and a shift in ways of seeing often spurs invention of new tools.

Further Kinships

To thicken the plot, in this last chapter I connect my findings to what is generally termed feminist phenomenology, and to the academic discourse of post-feminism; and I would further extend my inquiry with a review of eastern philosophical stances on the liaison of the individual with the world, the notion of 'fûdo', and the concept of Synchronicity and Image-Thinking. Here I am referring specifically to the Japanese philosophers Yuasa Yasuo and Watsuji Tetsurō, both in close kinship with Kitaro Nishida and the Kyoto philosophical school. My incursion into their work will be limited to sketching connections with contemporary phenomenology as alternatives to the Western tradition. The writing of another volume is needed to elaborate all the implications of such relationships. My book must focus instead on connecting the forebears of Western phenomenology to modern philosophical thinking and to repercussions on the post-modern condition of everyday life.

It was early continental phenomenology that laid the groundwork for my exploration of the sensorium. But more recent developments in the field also resonate with arguments made in this book. When I think of contemporary phenomenology, I consider specifically Donna Haraway's notion of the Chthulucene and her cyborg manifesto, both highly relevant to my findings. Haraway's writing also relates to other notable thinkers: Judith Butler and her concern with the gendered body, the search for identification of the feminine body (Butler, 2011 [1993]); Julia Kristeva, with her sharp critique of the construction of gender, sexuality, and desire within the semiotics of text (Kristeva, 1980 [1941]); and Luce Irigaray's critique of classical Greek philosophy, the sexed perception of time and space, and an ethics of sexual difference (Irigaray, 1993 [1984]). In all of these, I find overlap with my own findings, though my aim is simply to map the territories of attention from a phenomenological perspective.

Awareness of kinship, of connectiveness with other-than-human forms of life permeates the work of Haraway. In numerous

writings she urges a reassessment of how human beings are situated in relationship to Planet Earth. In her seminal essay *A Cyborg Manifesto* she paves the way to a notion of the Chthulucene, or the era that begins with our awareness of environmental and social crisis. At first, she invites us to reflect on the hybrid, technologically mediated life we live where, by becoming chimeras, technologized beings, we become a hybrid assembly of machine and organism. She argues that people's lives, increasingly mediated by technology, are more and more akin to cyborgs being continuously disassembled and reassembled. This hybrid patchwork of collective and personal self seems to represent for her the fragmentation of the constantly interconnected human experience of contemporary times (Haraway, 2016 [1985]).

She begins with Foucault's theorization of the bio-technologies of bodily control and monitoring: the birth of the clinic (from the eponymous essay), the techniques of discipline and punishment, the panopticon (Foucault, 1995 [1975]). In *Primate Visions*, by expanding Foucault's position on the development of communication technology and systems of regulation of human behavior, Haraway critiques the science that primatologists used across the twentieth century as an experimental practice fostering bio-technologies of bodily control, monitoring, and functionalist cybernetics (Haraway, 1989).

Building on these arguments, Haraway's newer writings propose forms of cooperation, communication, and kinship with other-than-humans-being. She points to problematic distinctions that have been constructed culturally and preserved historically – the faulty distinction between the realm of nature and the world of humans – a differentiation, Haraway argues, that has been the cause of the exploitation, violence, and abuse that humans have imposed upon nature, while utterly disregarding the survival and existence of other species on Planet Earth. She calls passionately for sounder sensitivity to the presence of other-than-humans, and to the profound kinship that the human being has with the planet (Haraway, 2016 [1985]).

With her work in mind, I believe my method of sense ampli-

fication and my approach to experimental design could be used to heal persons affected by digital addiction. Recovering a sense of physicality and awareness of the body's potentialities could rebuff dependency on computers, devices, and digital gadgets, and could undo the cyborg predicament of modern life, allowing temporality of the body to become attuned again to its physical being rather than to superimposed digital, virtual, and online routines.

Expanding on this, in recent years, attention to subjective experiences such as ASMR (autonomous sensory meridian response) suggests a desire for sense amplification, which my research could supplement with focused practices drawn from performance, sound, art, and philosophy. I foresee the method of sense amplification, for example the work on soundography (which closely relates to attention to the sensorium), being used to spark a reconsideration of the cultural and social significance of sensory experiences, affect, memories, spatial and temporal emplacement. The method could also be applied pedagogically in the arts, where sensitivity to the body and perceptual feedback needs to be enhanced. Sense amplification could promote student abilities in relation to a chosen medium, strengthening their understanding of perceptual characteristics of tools they employ: for example, the tactility of musical instruments, paint brushes, the human body, the pen, writing paper; to encourage exploration and examination of an artistic field directly through the senses, rather than through skills and received tools; to learn time through the body rather than from a metronome.

Soundography can be used to map a different space, to bring to the forefront tenuous sensual relationships with the environment. By foregrounding the sound in a lived space, a deeper awareness of the body can be achieved, in conjunction with clearer perception of the body's surroundings. In this respect, soundography can be considered an alternative form of the somatic composition of space, which stands in antithesis to traditional cartography, with its abstract representation of space, independent of the human body. Soundography can become an attunement to space

augmented through sounds; it can operate in response and in opposition to the withdrawal of our somatic participation in the space we live in.

This relationship between the sensuous body and the space it occupies opens our ears to the voice of Eastern philosophy: Tetsuro Watsuji's theory of 'fūdo', and Yasuo Yuasa's Synchronicity and Image-Thinking. In the words of Watsuji, 'fūdo' is 'the climate, the nature of rocks, soil [...and] the landscape' (Watsuji 2011 [1961], p. 39). From the start he maintains that his approach is not dualistic. Nature need not be a backdrop against which humans act and think. Instead Watsuji considers this relationship in terms of *milieu*. Avoiding the distinction between subjective and objective, he proposes 'fūdo', a term that identifies modalities of living – the particulars of food and clothing, patterned habits of behaving, architectural design, etc. – as choices shaped directly by the geography and topography in which humans live. Watsuji confronts subjectivity vs objectivity with the example of 'us', and the 'cold air'. These are traditionally understood as two independent entities, with a subject ('us'), and an object ('cold air'), external to us. The Japanese philosopher argues that 'when we *feel* cold, the perception of coldness is already inhabiting our body, prior to the external perception of cold air' (Watsuji 2011 [1961], p. 41, italics in the original): or in other words, the milieu is already in us, as a patterned somatic trait of a living imbued with the characteristics of the climate, and environment, that shapes our whole life. Here Watsuji is considering not just a linguistic distinction, but rather a phenomenological process of sensing the world.

The reader will not fail to notice how clearly the above brief introduction to 'fūdo' resonates with this book's phenomenological investigation and experimental designs. How do we define subjectivity and objectivity? What are the patterned habits of somatic responses to the environment? How do we distinguish (if such distinction exists) the space of the body and the space external to us? These questions lie at the foundation of this book.

Now, throwing my spindle of red thread, I quote the French philosopher and linguist Luce Irigaray: 'the transition to a new

age requires a change in our perception and conception of *space-time*, the *inhabiting of places*, and of *containers*, or *envelopes of identity*. It assumes and entails an evolution or a transformation of *form*, of the relations of *matter* and *form* and of the interval *between'* (Irigaray 1993 [1984], p. 7, italics in the original). Irigaray's main concern is the sexed reading of space and time, and the positioning of sexed bodies in these two dimensions of perceptual reality, which has been so ever since the gods of the classical western tradition first invented the world. But her questions about *space-time*, *inhabiting of places*, *containers*, *envelopes of identity*, *form*, *matter*, and *in-betweenness* are also the concerns of this book's phenomenological investigation. Though my point of entry may differ from hers, the problematization of the above terms is our common field of debate.

Following my red yarn away from Irigaray's keywords, I encounter Yuasa's notion of Synchronicity and Image-Thinking. In his *Overcoming Modernity*, he argues that Western tradition traditionally posits the logos of existence in the rational explanation of facts and dismisses intuition as a form of knowledge, as epistemology, and even as a process of probing the world. Yuasa considers Carl Jung's notion of Synchronicity: the meaningful coincidences between external events, thoughts, dreams, and intuitions. By suggesting synchronicity in response to the apparent juxtaposition of psychological facts and physical facts, Jung proposed that the physical world and human consciousness could be interrelated beyond mere causality. And, bypassing western Cartesian duality and the flood of related distinctions of semilatitice opposites and antagonistic dyads: body, mind; nature, culture; man, woman; real, imaginary; logic, intuition; life, death, etc., Yuasa maintains that cultural attitudes toward synchronic events (and what Jung would have called the collective unconscious) relate to deep cultural differences embedded in the construction of Western and Chinese (and Japanese) languages.

While the written signs of Western languages are arbitrary, Chinese language rests on a foundation of symbolic Image-Thinking, for which 'the characters that correspond to

individual words are pictographs, or ideographs that are combination of pictographs, and they are both different from Western languages'; furthermore 'self-expression by means of images' is fundamental in Chinese culture and 'visual images about the natural world that envelops the human relationships of self and other expressed therein become the a priori limiting condition prior to the separation between *langue* and *parole*.' Yuasa discusses these linguistic differences at length and also considers the many cultural premises dictated by language. He concludes that in the West 'the dichotomy of matter-form is the major premise' while 'the dualistic thinking that separates the material from the spiritual, as in the West, did not arise in East Asia' (Yuasa, 2008, p. 77-78, 90-91, italics in the original).

The Japanese philosopher provides a new angle on my investigation into the limits of language, Wittgenstein's memento. Yuasa's concerns also relate closely to my experiments: he proposes a process of image-thinking which stands behind the structure of the Chinese language; in each of my four experiments, and specifically in Chapter 3 regarding language, I question what is the correlation between all senses and thinking.

A concern for what is validated as real (Jung and Yuasa's Synchronicity), and the premises of semiotics and language (Yuasa's symbolic Image-Thinking), are respectively also the terrain of Butler's *Bodies That Matter* and Kristeva's *Desire in Language*. The inquiry of both scholars intertwine at various points, and they cross paths once again with many of my questions. Butler opens her discourse by tracing feminist etymologies that link 'matter with mater and matrix (or the womb)' and therefore the place of reproduction. 'The classical configuration of matter as a site of generation or origination,' Butler continues, 'becomes especially significant when the account of what an object is and means requires recourse to its originating principle' (Butler 2011 [1993], p. 6-7). With this premise, Butler discusses classical Greek teleology; the question of materiality, the position of the feminine body in the construction of reality, a reality, the American scholar argues, that is conceived and written around the body of man, which rel-

egates the female body to the role of formless object functioning as receptacle, a reproductive womb, an appendix (Adam's rib), a feminine body whose sexuality and desires are engineered according to the longing of man, with the help of language.

Here Kristeva comes to my assistance by introducing semiotic and signifying practices of language 'based on a request and an exchange of information'. She argues that language possesses the ability to expand beyond the limits of the sentence, while preserving its meaning and signification, with the potential to become 'polylogical "discourse" of a multiplied, stratified, and heteronomous subject of enunciation' (Kristeva 1980 [1941], p. 172-73). Kristeva uses Philippe Sollers's novel *H* (1973) to expound her notion of the written text as polylogue, maintaining that the nature of language goes beyond the written words and is surrounded by a symbolic meaning-making dimension. Within its polymorphous capabilities, the text eventually brings forward an order of things that is based on cultural and social perception. So for Kristeva, language functions as the binding vouchsafe of a constructed reality. And once more, my red cotton yarn links the connecting paths and crisscrosses back to this book's experiments into the phenomenological aspects of materiality, body, language, text, and the social construct.

Much is left to do: I could continue endlessly unravelling Ariadne's thread of red cotton. But despite my efforts and dedication, and even more because of the daunting magnitude of this polymorphous area of inquiry, the examples I have provided will prove insufficient. I am aware of having generated more questions than answers, in Vilem Flusser's words, 'even when these questions occasionally dress themselves up as answers' (Flusser, 2001 [1985], p. 4). Yet in hope that my investigation will contribute to someone else's inquiry – in hope that these experiments into phenomenological temporality, and the method of sense amplification, will be further elaborated, analyzed, and eventually adopted by other researchers – I close this book with the strong feeling that this ending is my beginning.

Appendix

Practical exercises

This appendix is where the writing becomes practical, where the concepts discussed in this book – and the experiments I have conducted on myself – become exercises for you to play with. This section is meant to be terrain for your personal exploration into somatic, spatial and environmental awareness.

The method of ‘sense amplification’ prolongs gestures or routines that typically require much less time and attention to complete, but by elongating these gestures, the method encourages you to reconsider patterns and habits of sensing, acting, and thinking. This may lead to frustration or boredom. That is a natural part of breaking ingrained patterns and finding new pathways. Mental and physical fatigue that may arise is part of adapting to change.

Before you start:

To navigate these exercises smoothly – read carefully. What may seem like unimportant details fit together into a larger whole. Start with small steps: consistency and focus matter more than the length of the individual exercise. As you gain confidence, elongating the practice will come easily.

Some bodily discomfort is normal at first. Focusing on the body and its somatic process is physically and mentally demanding. If uneasiness arises, slow down or pause, then resume when you are ready.

Set aside time after each session to take note of sensations or new discoveries you encounter. Using a notebook, or any other method for taking notes, learn how you are relating to the space, and how your body is attuning to the practice at hand. You may find alternatives to the written word – sketching and drawing,

audio and video recording, etc. – are more suitable for recording your progress.

The goal is to keep track of what you have experienced, and to be able to recollect your thoughts and sensations at a later time. Having a set of references (handwritten notes, audiovisual recordings, sketches, etc.) will help you notice and observe changes in how your bodily perception has shifted over time.

However, it is strongly recommended to avoid analyzing your perceptions during the practice itself. Doing and analyzing should not overlap. Fully commit your focus to the perceptual process itself. Don't shift into an analytical mode or intellectualize the sensuous experience. Depending on your background, this might be difficult at first, but allow your sensations to take over. When you notice yourself switching into evaluation, remind yourself to stay connected with your body, and avoid further speculations.

No need to rush; stay engaged with the process, not the outcome. If the ability to remain absorbed in the process does not emerge immediately or easily, don't be discouraged. Attuning to the body takes time and effort. Be patient with yourself.

Tools needed:

Context, space, duration, and materials are specified at the top of each exercise below. All activities are designed for either individual or group practice. In a group setting, consider splitting participants so that some practice and some observe, and then swap roles. Average durations are suggested but remember your body may not be used to this, and sustaining the exercise might be challenging at first. This is perfectly fine. Don't rush through the practices; allow your body to settle into the routines and let changes happen at its own pace.

You don't need to follow the order of exercises as given. Based on the descriptions, you can decide which practice targets what you're looking for. But if you don't have a specific objective, the order given here can serve as a starting point. The exercises in Set 1 are preparatory to all the others, so warming up with them

before moving on might be beneficial.

A stopwatch or timer is useful initially to mark time while you focus on other aspects. Later, as you become accustomed to the exercises, you'll likely need the stopwatch less. As you get into the flow of the practice, you may find you keep track of time without any mechanical or electronic device.

In the following exercises, the blindfold is a recurrent tool. Its purpose is to zero out the sense of sight, reroute encrusted habits, and enhance alternative pathways of sensing. If using a blindfold is new to you, or if it causes distress or discomfort, feel free to start by closing the eyes instead. As you become more confident, gradually transition to the use of the blindfold.

And, off you go:

Lastly, prepare yourself for practice by wearing comfortable clothes. Avoid heavy meals beforehand and keep your body and mind relaxed.

Practices

SET 1 – A PRACTICE FOCUSED ON WAYS OF SEEING, AND TASTING

1) Sit still

Participants	Space	Materials	Duration
Individual – group	Any	Chair, blindfold, stopwatch	5 min – 30 min

Version A

Choose a space that comfortably fits the number of participants. A quiet place is helpful initially, to minimize distraction. For a group activity, arrange the chairs in a circle with about one meter between them. This allows each participant adequate personal space while also maintaining a sense of the shared space.

Place the stopwatch on the floor next to your chair or on a nearby table. For group activities, the facilitator should oversee time keeping for everyone. Set the timer to 5 minutes. Sit down on the chair in a comfortable but straight position. Look in front

of you at an object or wall directly at eye level. The distance should be comfortable enough for eyes to stare at it continuously. When you're ready, start the timer. Keep back straight, and eyes focused on the chosen object. Don't let your body stiffen or slouch: stay straight but relaxed, avoiding distraction from other sounds, things or people in the space.

Once the activity has ended write down any notes of sensations and thoughts that crossed your body and mind during the exercise. This is an important part of the process that will help you recollect changes that the experience brought to you.

If you have comfortably followed the previous steps, increase the exercise duration by 5 minutes at a time: 5, 10, 15, 20 minutes, etc. Only do this when you feel ready for a longer exercise – rushing is not advised. At the end of each session, record your impressions and somatic feedback in any manner that suits for you.

Version B

For a variation of this exercise, use a blindfold. As your comfort allows, follow the above procedure for gradually increasing exercise duration (ideally from 5 to 30 minutes), taking notes afterwards. Since the sense of sight has been blocked out, comparing this with the previous exercise may be helpful. How does it feel different? What sensations are you focusing on now?

2) Stand still

Participants	Space	Materials	Duration
Individual – group	Any	Blindfold, stopwatch	5 min – 30 min

Version A and B

The procedure for this exercise is the same as Exercise 1, versions A and B, for both individual and group practice. Gradually increase the time spent standing still, ensuring a smooth process without rushing. Check your posture and release any tensions in the body. Relax your arms at your sides, keep your shoulders down, and spine straight. You can practice with shoes or barefoot: if the flooring isn't cold, practicing barefoot is recommend-

ed for a stronger tactile connection between feet and ground. Take notes of each step. When you are ready, repeat the whole exercise with blindfold. Compare the different set of sensuous responses, somatic, and mental feedback.

3) Sip a drink with long pauses

Participants	Space	Materials	Duration
Individual – group	Any	Stopwatch, table, chair, glass or cup, drink (water, coffee, tea), dry food	(5 min – 20 min) X 3

Version A

Building on the previous two exercises, this third practice combines sitting posture with a routine action: drinking from a glass or cup. The key elements are: keeping your eyes focused on an object at a distance in front of you, lifting your glass of water to your mouth without looking at it; and choosing a familiar drink such as water, coffee, or tea.

The duration indicated refers to the length of pauses between each gesture of drinking. Each gesture should be repeated at least three times. For example: a 5-minute pause followed by lifting the glass and drinking, repeated three times, over a total of about 15 minutes. In the longest version you will have practiced for one hour (3 pauses of 20 minutes each, 3 acts of sipping from the glass). Perform the drinking gesture naturally, as you normally would. During the pauses remain still as in Exercise 1, but keep your forearm and hand relaxed on the table near the glass, ready to hold it when needed. At the end of the practice, remember to take notes about your sensations, thoughts, and somatic feedback.

Version B

In this practice, replace an ordinary drink with food. Consider a kind of food that does not require a complicated setting: for example, a sponge cake, a piece of bread, or cookies; avoid food with sauces, or condiments. This will help you stay focused on

the gesture and the repetition of the procedure, rather than details of managing the food. When ready, proceed with the practice as in Version A; increasing the length of the pauses, and putting down your thoughts afterwards.

SET 2 – PRACTICE FOCUSED ON THE SENSE OF TOUCH

1) Exploration with materials

Participants	Space	Materials	Duration
Individual – group	Various	Blindfold, stopwatch, assorted materials	(5 min – 30 min)

This series of practices focuses on tactility. Versions A and B are designed for individual exploration, while version C and its variations require working in pairs.

For Version A: look for materials with distinct tactile qualities – paper, plastic, aluminum foil, textile, concrete, wood, marble, plaster, glass, steel, grass, sand, snow, tree bark, water, etc. The size of the surface matters. Practice with materials that allow movement and exploration with different parts of your body. Focus on two or three materials at first, giving time to explore and gathering as much somatic feedback as possible. In my original experiment, I used the surface of a plaster wall.

For version B: create a sort of costume using plastic, paper, or other materials, which I will refer to as ‘skin’. In my experiment, I used a paper skin.

Version C does not require any special materials.

For all versions, gradually increase the time spent on each activity, starting with a few minutes and extending to at least 30 minutes of practice. Maintain the good habits of taking notes at the end of the individual sessions, or if you are in a group setting, have a conversation with other participants.

Version A - exploring a plaster wall (in any space)

In this exercise, focus on exploring the tactility of your body against a large surface. Skin is the most extensive sensory organ

of the human body, and this practice will help you become more sensitive to its responses. Move slowly at first to get used to the subtle variations of the wall surface, giving your body time to adapt to the exploratory process. Do not rush, even if your wall is large – avoid the temptation to move quickly from end to end. Attuning your body to new sensations and developing deeper sensitivity requires a slow pace and an attentive focus to the variations elicited by the chosen material.

Start off with the more sensitive areas of your skin: fingertips and hands; then involve the forearms, arms, and shoulder. As you continue exploring the surface, involve as much as you can of the whole body: neck, chest, hips, legs, feet. Imagine yourself entering the wall. It may help to have some images of this in mind while searching for the closest relationship possible with the hard surface.

Once you are more confident you can consider closing your eyes as you move across the wall; you will probably notice other sensations becoming more prominent: the scent of the wall as it stands in proximity to your head and nostrils; the sound of your fingers and limbs moving across the surface, as your ears are near to the wall. Be playful in discovering new modes of exploration which may reveal your alternative pathways in sense perception. As the exploration develops, consider how much naked surface of your skin can remain in direct contact with the wall: perhaps a sleeveless shirt, and short parts; or eventually, if your chosen space allows it, and you feel comfortable, fully open your bare body to the wall's surface, without any clothes standing in between.

Version B – exploring the paper skin (any space)

Source a long paper roll in an art and craft shop: the quality and thickness of the paper can vary; choose something resistant, avoiding very light ones; white color is suggested. Out of the paper roll, cut two rectangles of about 2.5 meters in length, and 90 centimeters in width: the latter will vary depending on your body's constitution and the paper roll's initial dimensions. Keep

the width in mind, since you will need to be move comfortably while fitted inside this paper structure. Overlap the two rectangles and fasten them together with transparent tape down the full length (2.5 meters); seal one of the short sides also but leave the remaining short one open: you will enter and ‘wear’ the paper skin through that opening.

When you wear the paper skin, you won’t be able to see anything around you except the inside surface of the structure. Move carefully as you explore the space. You can use the position of your feet on the floor, especially if there are markings or recognizable patterns, to locate your position and direction. An empty space will simplify the process and allow you to focus on sensory feedback without worrying about bumping into objects.

Sounds around you will help navigate the space. You’ll learn to recognize a space more sharply by its sounds than by visual cues. The paper skin itself will also make sounds you’ll want to notice. Remember, the paper is relatively fragile, so adapt your pace and quality of movement to preserve it. This exploration encourages you to reconsider your habits of moving and sensing.

Once familiar with wearing the paper skin, and roaming around, approach the surface of the wall once more to learn how exploring it is modified by your paper skin. A piece of advice: the paper will most likely slip when on the wall, so move slowly and carefully at first to understand the new tactile relationship between the two materials. As exploration continues, figure out what happens when you hasten the pace and add breadth and speed to your body movements. If you are careful in your paper skin, and you learn to work within its limits, it should last at least 30 to 40 minutes before it starts to tear.

Version C – Pair practice (any space)

This version needs no special materials at the start, even though it’s possible to add some once you become familiar with the pair practice. The variation with blindfold requires a safe space (dance studio, theatre studio, empty room, etc.) that allows exploration without concern for knocking into something and

getting injured. If you are working with a group, observers may help keep blindfolded participants safe from accidents. Note that the following exercises are not designed specifically for dancers or movers: anyone can approach these practices regardless of their aptitude for movement and body capability. The practice is not training for dancers; its sole aim is attuning to and amplifying the sensuous spectrum of the human body.

2) Pair practice without blindfold

Participants	Space	Materials	Duration
In pairs	Various	Stopwatch	(5 min – 30 min)

- Palm-to-palm

Participants stand in front of each other about 80 centimeters apart. Both raise and flex their arms so as to join the palms of their hands in a comfortable position somewhere near the level of neck or upper torso. The palm and the fingers should adhere throughout the subsequent explorations: the goal is to maintain a firm connection with your practice partner while navigating the space. Start by slowly moving only arms, allowing for time to establish connection with your partner, figure out (without speaking) how movements are negotiated, who is following, who is leading, when changes may occur, etc. Then start to introduce movement of the legs, flexing the knees if movements of the arms suggest a lower center of gravity, or that the floor may be reached; or if the joined palms move upward, projecting toward the ceiling, get on tip toes. Once this preliminary trust in each other is established, start to move in space: remember to keep the palms firmly connected; a fundamental aspect of this exercise is cooperating and communicating with a partner through the tactile dimension of the human skin. Explore the space using various modalities: variable speed (slow or fast walk, or perhaps run), levels (remain standing, or get onto the floor), amplitude of gestures (by working within the kinesphere of the participants' bodies).

You can end the exercise by returning to the starting posi-

tion: take some time, remain still for a count of about 60 before releasing the connection of the palms. Focus on the sensations that arise once you are completely separated from your working partner.

- Back-to-back, or side-to-side (shoulders joining)

The procedure for these two exercises is the same as the first version with palms: make sure your back or shoulders remain connected with your partner's throughout the exercise. Start slowly and only move when there is a clear sense of agreement between the pair regarding movements, speed, direction, etc. You can end the practice by returning to the starting position and following the previous procedure, remaining still for a while before breaking the connection with your back or shoulders.

- Trio, and further variations

The above exercises can be conducted as a trio: as you might expect, the challenge here is keeping all three participants connected.

As your practice evolves, you can introduce variations, altering the points of connection to permit an even wider range of movement: for example head-to-head; foot-to-foot; knee-to-knee, hip-to-hip, etc. There are endless variations, but remember that diluting the initial strict rules may lead to loss of focus on the main purpose of these explorations. Aim to strike a good balance between your goals while maintaining a playful approach.

3) Pair practice with blindfold

Participants	Space	Materials	Duration
Pairs	Various	Blindfold, stopwatch	(5 min – 30 min)

All the previous practices of Version C can be performed with blindfold. However, it is recommended to familiarize yourself with the entire set of exercises before attempting this. Having observers to supervise can enhance safety. Follow the same instruc-

tions from the previous exercises (palm-to-palm, back-to-back, side by side, trio variation). Pay particular attention to the trust you must give (and receive) from your peer, and to the pace at which you move and explore the space.

If you have practiced the earlier sets of exercise (Set 1: practice focused on ways of seeing and tasting; Set 2: practice focused on the sense of touch), using a blindfold should not be unfamiliar. The major challenge will be negotiating (nonlinguistically) with your peer on how the exploration should unfold, maintaining focus, and managing the demands of the physical connection required (palms, back, shoulders, etc.).

SET 3 – PRACTICE FOCUSED ON AROMAS, AND THE SENSE OF SMELL

This practice aims to deepen attention to the aromas and smells of objects, food, and the environment. Two exercises are presented here on 1) the smell of objects or places, and 2) the aroma of food and drinks.

The distinction is purely functional: it is arguably impossible to distinguish the aroma of food as distinct from the smell of the place where we are having the food, and vice versa. But every space informs our perception of the aromatic effluvium of food, and every food smell will become somewhat mixed with environmental aromas. However, by placing our attention, and perceptual emphasis, on a particular set of aromas (or smells) we are able to distinguish many things.

In the following examples I have taken into consideration the smell of a dance studio (environment), and the fragrance of white lilies (object); the aroma of a cup of coffee (drink), and the scent of basil leaves (food). This combination can be replaced with many other places, objects, and foods of your choice: the key is to select scents that allow for prolonged exposure and that can be experienced repeatedly under the same set conditions.

A few examples of alternative settings: lie down at the beach near the seashore, in countryside (or a park) on a large patch of grass; leave open a bottle of perfume or essential oils; place an

open jar of honey, or dried shrimp on your table; have a cup of hot milk, or freshly squeezed orange juice. The options are endless, depending on availability, preference, and curiosity.

Approach the practice in small steps, gradually increasing the duration until you can sustain it up to 30 minutes. Take notes and, if in a group, discuss the feedback from the exercise in the end of the session.

1) Scent of places or objects

Participants	Space	Materials	Duration
Individual – group	Various	Blindfold, stopwatch, lily flowers	(5 min – 30 min)

A) Dance studio

In my experience, the smell of dance studios is characterized by the material of the Marley (vinyl or PVC plastic), the synthetic dance mat covering most of the practice area. Some studios have wood or parquet flooring, but I haven't included this option in the exercise. Dance studios are usually quiet spaces, aiding concentration.

Lie down on the Marley and stretch out comfortably. To help focus on the studio's smell, you may want to close your eyes or use a blindfold. Stay still and relaxed, attuning your body to the olfactory feedback from the scents present in the studio.

B) White lily flowers

Get a bunch of fresh cut white lilies and put them in a vase, indoors: add water to ensure that they remain scented for a few days. Some varieties of lilies have a strong fragrance, and your room will be soon flooded by the intense scent of the flowers. Use a comfortable chair to sit, or if convenient, lie down on the floor. As in the previous exercise, closing your eyes or using a blindfold may help you focus on the scent of the flowers. Maintain a still and relaxed position for the duration of the exercise, engaging your attention closely on the scent of the lilies.

2) Aromas of food and drink

Participants	Space	Materials	Duration
Individual – group	Various	Blindfold, stopwatch, basil, coffee cup	(5 min – 30 min)

C) Basil leaves

Clean a few basil leaves: if you can, slice them into pieces to enhance the aroma. Sit in front of a table, placing the basil slices on a small plate at a distance that allows you to smell the aroma distinctly. Sit straight and relaxed, and close your eyes (or use a blindfold). Focus on the basil's fragrance, maintaining your attention for the duration you have set. Gradually increase the time of the activity until you can sustain it for up to 30 minutes, as with the previous exercises.

D) Cup of coffee

As with the previous exercise, place your item, this time a hot cup of coffee, on a table in front of you: sit in your chair at a distance that allows you to smell the coffee aroma distinctly. Close your eyes (or use the blindfold): maintain focus on the coffee smell; again, increase the duration of the activity until you can sustain the practice up to 30 minutes.

SET 4 – PRACTICE FOCUSED ON THE SENSE OF HEARING

Participants	Space	Materials	Duration
Individual – group	Various	Blindfold, stopwatch, sound objects, sound system, recording device	(5 min – 30 min)

In this series of exercises, focus on various aspects and modalities of hearing. The practice will involve choosing specific environments and eventually partnering with a companion for Exercise 3. It is advisable to have an audio recording device for Exercise 1. Recording with your mobile phone or any other portable device is sufficient, if the quality is fair. The purpose is to

listen again to the set of sounds you experienced during your practice, observing the difference in hearing in the time and space of the practice, and the recorded outcome as heard afterwards at a different time (and most likely in a different space).

For all the following exercises, remember to take notes afterwards. Listen to the recording for Exercise 1 and to set aside some time to reflect on how your noticing and perception of sound changed throughout the repetition of the individual practices.

1) Walk a routine pathway (outdoors)

In the following exercise, the example given is a pathway from your home to your workplace. Depending on the means of transportation used and the time spent walking, the practice may exceed the 30 minutes. It's important to stay connected with your sense of hearing throughout your chosen path. Ensure the path is one you regularly experience, daily or weekly. Familiarity will allow you to focus more distinctly on the acoustic feedback without worrying about directions. Keep your attention on the sounds around you, immersing yourself in a routine you are accustomed to.

Start recording the moment you step out your door. Keep the microphone free, avoid it scratching over surfaces – don't put it in your pocket or bag (some microphones come with clips and holders). Ensure the device doesn't hinder you from your usual gestures and doings. Follow your usual path and maintain a conscious focus on the sounds around you. Differentiate the nature of those sounds and identify their provenance and source (e.g. the sound of your footsteps, human voices, birds, dogs barking, wind in the trees, road work, cars, crossing lights, subway gates, doors, announcements, etc.).

I do not suggest you analyze these sounds during the practice, just keep them in mind. Later you can put down your observations in your notes, and compare the sounds experienced with those heard in the recording's outcome.

2) Blindfolded solo variations (indoor)

The following exercise is designed for at least three persons, ideally as a small group, with participants in pairs and one person leading the activity. In this version, one person will be blindfolded, another will supervise for safety, and the third will oversee the sound system and sound-making. The person in charge of sound doesn't need to be a trained musician: the activity involves simple musical gestures achievable by anyone.

If the flooring allows, conduct the exploration barefoot to stimulate a stronger connection with the ground, to improve rooting and enhance the tactility of your feet. Gradually elongate the practice, keeping track of your changes by taking notes and discussing with other participants

The person supervising the blindfolded participant should keep these guidelines in mind:

- do not speak to the participant unless absolutely necessary;
- suggest changes in directions by gently placing your hands on the participant's shoulders and softly guiding them;
- give the blindfolded participant space to move freely, maintaining a distance of 1.5 to 2 meters, and follow their movements attentively without interfering unless there is danger.

Whenever possible, silence is a crucial component of the exercise to allow the participant to focus on environmental sounds.

- Sound of the space

Begin the exercise standing, put your blindfold on, and remain still in a comfortable but straight position. Tune in to the haptic and thermal feedback coming from your feet as they touch the ground: establish a connection with the soles of your feet and balance the body so that you perceive yourself as being firmly rooted to the ground.

Once you are conscious of your bodily stance, focus on the sounds from the environment. Differentiate provenance (left, right, front back, etc.), volume (soft, loud, etc.), quality (smooth, rough, sharp, subtle) and duration of the sounds (continuous, intermittent, repetitive, etc.). Do not analyze; just be aware of the

differences. As the practice continues, you may notice inward bodily sounds of internal processes: this is perfectly fine. Embrace the possibility of hearing what your body has to tell you.

When you feel comfortable, with your practice partner's supervision, move slowly into the space, keeping your blindfold on. If you are not confident moving around, wait, or slow your pace. Try to explore the space as much as you can. Your partner's role is to ensure you avoid obstacles or dangers, gently guiding or halting you if necessary.

Maintain a relaxed posture; trust your partner and the space. Focus on the experience of walking without visual cues, with environmental sounds guiding your exploration of the space. Notice new sounds that emerge as you move, and those that fade away along with distance. Once the exercise duration is reached, your partner will signal you to find a spot and remain still. Remove the blindfold in your own time when you feel ready.

- Sound in movement

This exercise starts like the previous one: stand still with your blindfold on while your practice partner waits for you to move. You'll need a third person to use any sound-making object (real musical instrument or found object) to provide some sound. The goal is for the person to move in space while playing or hitting the selected sound object; creating a repetitive rhythm, or any melody of sorts isn't necessary.

The person holding the sound object moves around in space, finds a place to stand still, and plays the sound object once. The blindfolded participant walks slowly toward the sound. Before the blindfolded participant gets too close, the person holding the sound object moves again, finds another spot, and plays the sound object once more. This practice continues with the blindfolded practitioner searching for the source of the moving sound. The game lasts for the duration decided beforehand.

Variations in how the sounds are produced are encouraged. You can intensify the number of sounds, vary the speed of movement, play sounds in close proximity to the blindfolded partic-

ipant, or else from far away with whispering sounds. The goal remains the same: enhance attentiveness to senses and hearing, and navigate space with a new set of sensory references.

- Moving to music

Find a spot in space that you like. In this exercise you will use only the space within your kinesphere, whether standing or lying on the floor. Make sure there are no obstacles or dangers nearby as you move your arms and legs around. Once you are standing with your blindfold on, wait for the music playback from the sound system. You don't need a supervisor since you will remain in your own initial spot, but someone will need to manage the music playback and selection.

Keep still and attentive to the music for a while. When you feel ready, let your body follow what the music suggests. You are not required to move like a dancer or have any training in body movement. Instead, focus on freeing your body from concerns of 'performativity' and simply allow the music's elements – volume, speed, sound quality, mood, physical vibrations – to flow through you.

Play with the acoustic stimulus in a way that feels attuned to your body. Some people may move every limb, while others might focus on one arm or leg. Some prefer to play with smaller part of the body (hands, fingers, toes, etc.), while others enjoy activating the big segments of the body (legs, torso, etc.). There are no strict rules, as long as you maintain a deep connection with what you hear and your body.

Remember to keep moving within your chosen spot, without wandering, whether standing or on the floor. This is important for your safety and that of others.

The person in charge of selecting the music should change the piece every two or three minutes, or adjust based on practitioners' observable feedback. If participants are slow to start moving, consider extending the duration of a piece to give them more time to engage with it. A variety of musical selection is beneficial, providing different entry points. Remember that some

music is easier to listen to and receive than others. Offer a balanced mix of stimulating and relaxing listening, varying the pieces based on their characteristics. For example, follow a rhythmic pulse-driven piece with a soundscape or a very slow piece with subtle rhythmic features. A loud piece can be complemented by a quieter one, and so on. The person in charge of the music will signal when the activity has ended, allowing participants to remove their blindfolds.

Online Sources

Academic research:

<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Sascia-Pellegrini>

<https://dundee.academia.edu/pellegrinisascia>

Artistic research:

<https://www.instagram.com/sasciapellegrini/>

<https://www.youtube.com/@sasciapellegrini>

<https://therepository.bandcamp.com/>

Personal website:

<https://www.sasciapellegrini.com/>

Dance film: <https://www.sasciapellegrini.com/dance-experiment.html>

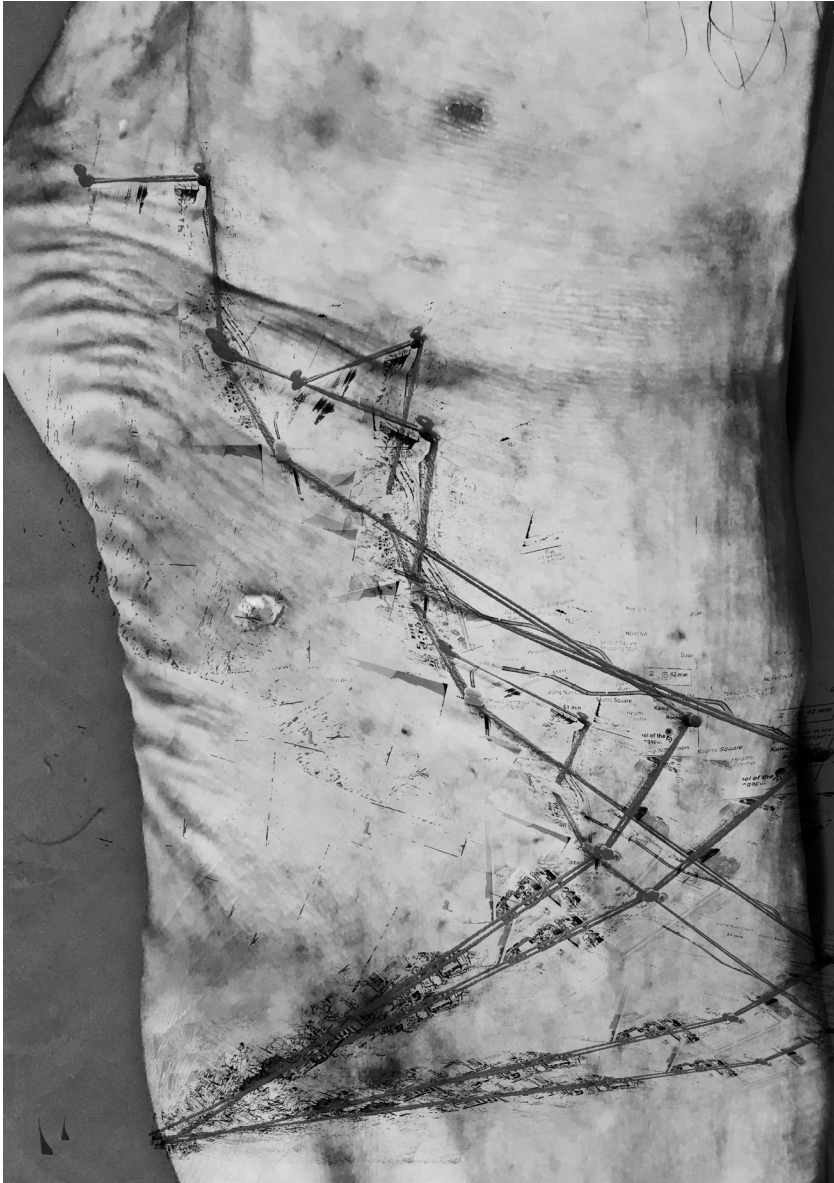


Fig. 1 – Sascia Pellegrini, *Mapping the Body* (2021), digital mixed media.

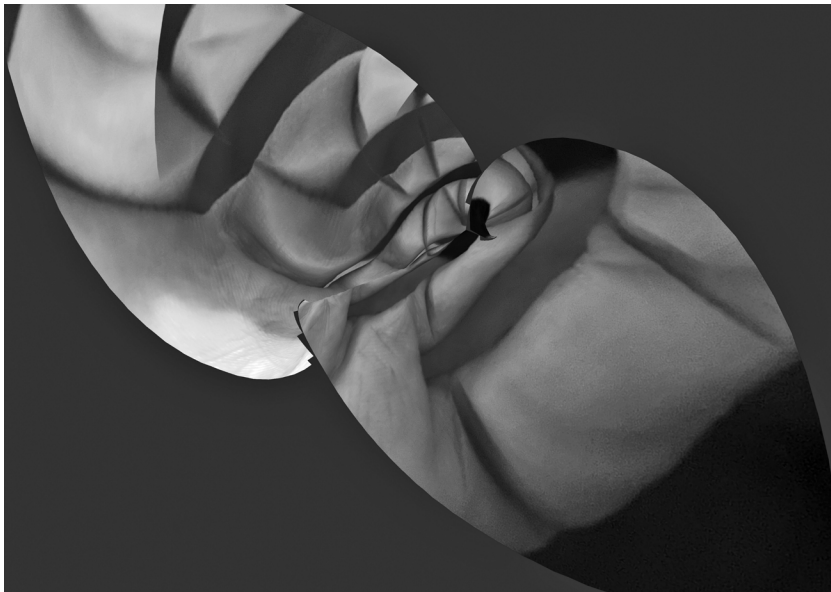


Fig. 2 – Sascia Pellegrini, *Speculum* (2020), digital mixed media.



Fig. 3 – Sascia Pellegrini, *Liminal Space* (2021), digital mixed media.

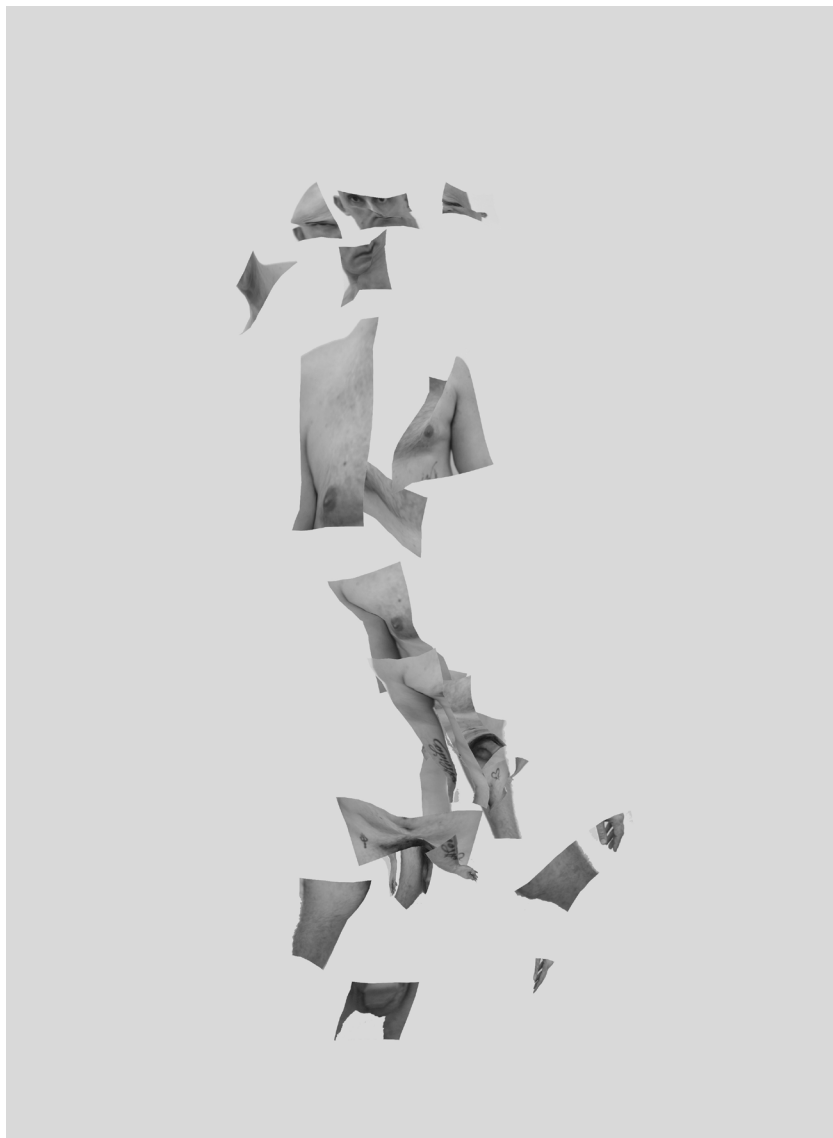


Fig. 4 – Sascia Pellegrini, *Scattered Thoughts* (2019), digital mixed media.

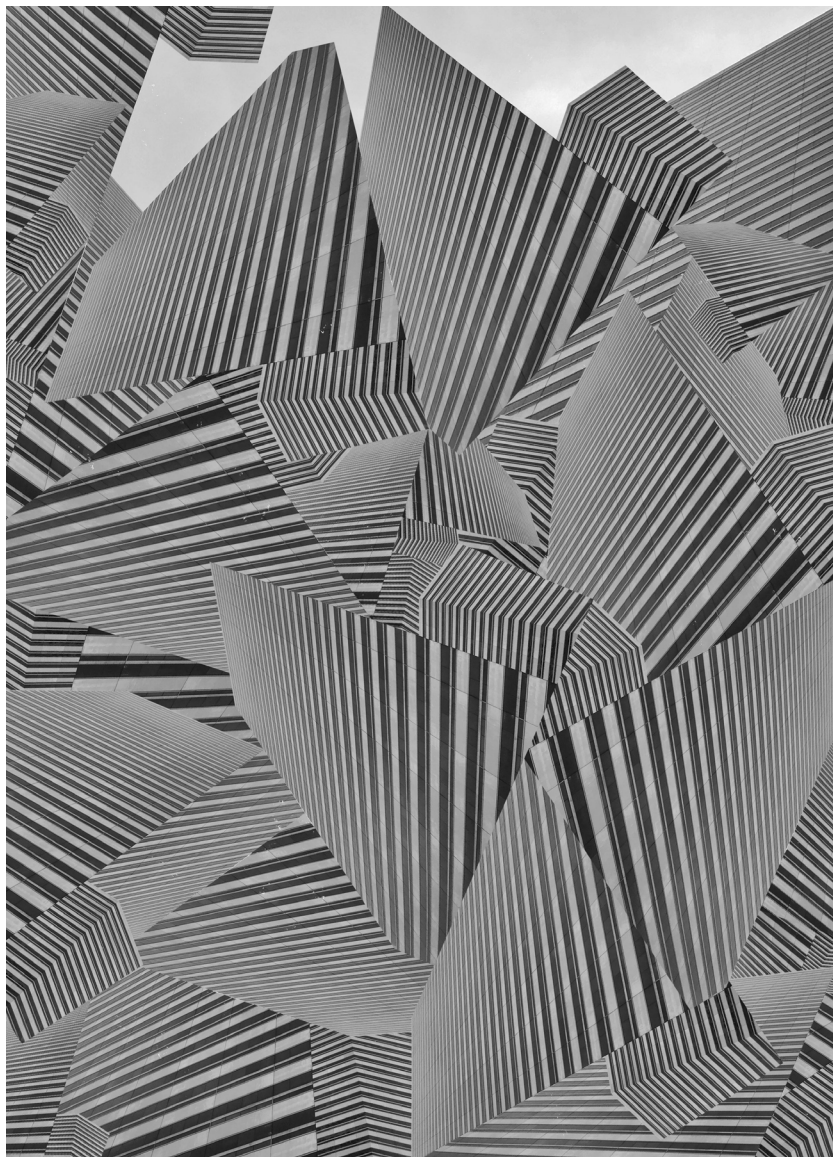


Fig. 7 – Sascia Pellegrini, *Remnants 1* (2022), digital mixed media.



Fig. 8 – Sascia Pellegrini, *Plastic Skin 1* (2021), digital mixed media.



Fig. 9 – Sascia Pellegrini, *Plastic Skin 2* (2021), digital mixed media.

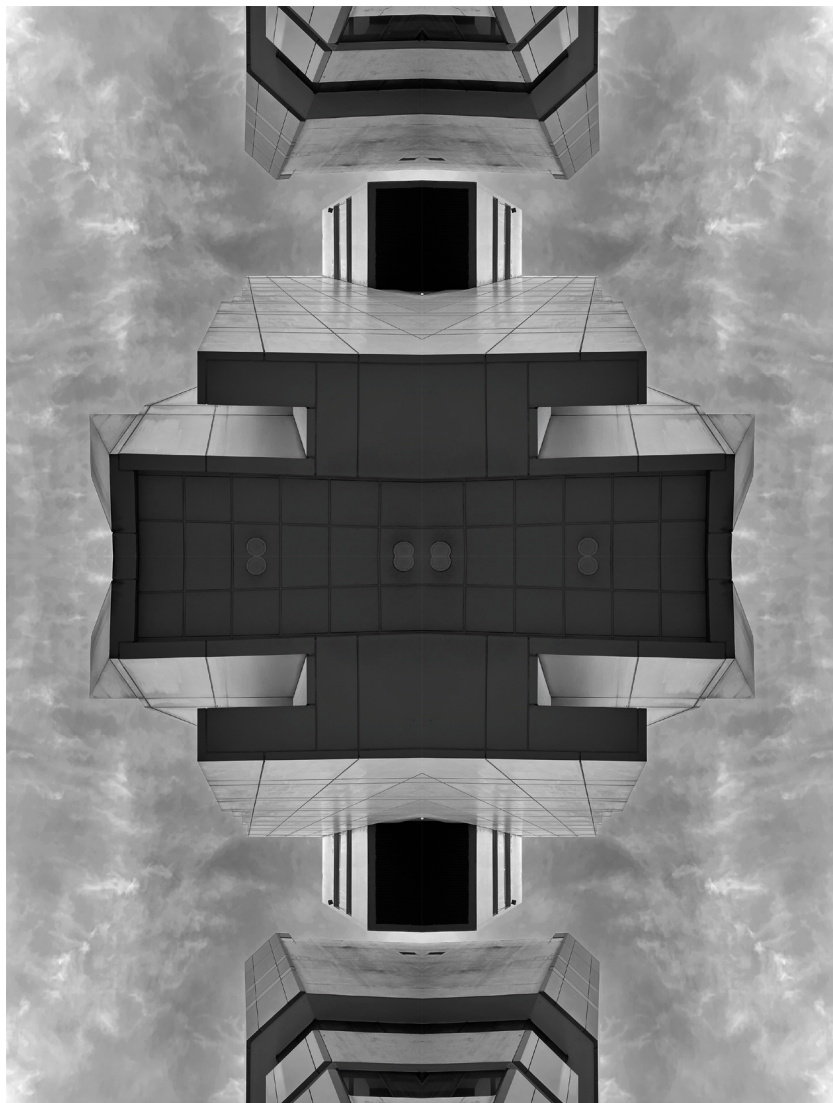


Fig. 10 – Sascia Pellegrini, *Remnants 2* (2022), digital mixed media.



Fig. 11 – Sascia Pellegrini, *Paper Skin* (2021), digital mixed media.

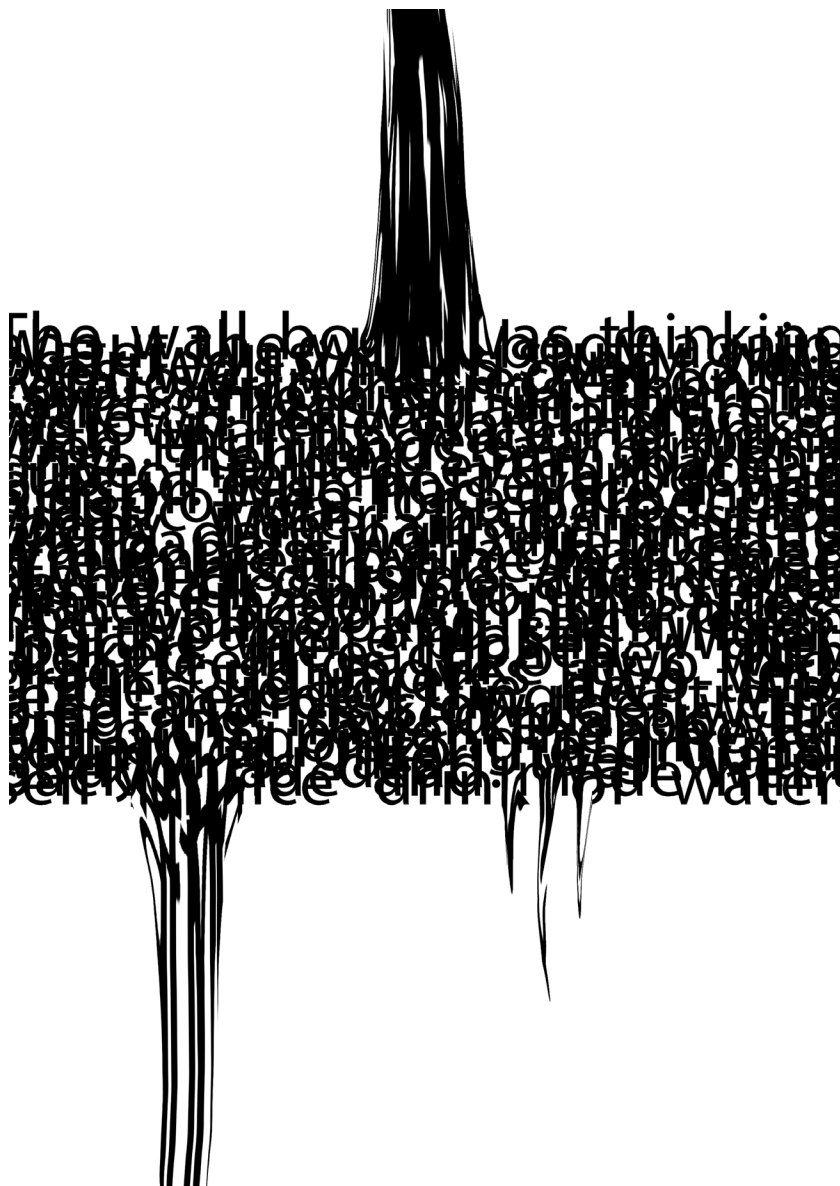


Fig. 12 – Sascia Pellegrini, *Text 1* (2022), digital mixed media.



Fig. 13 – Sascia Pellegrini, *Text 2* (2022), digital mixed media.

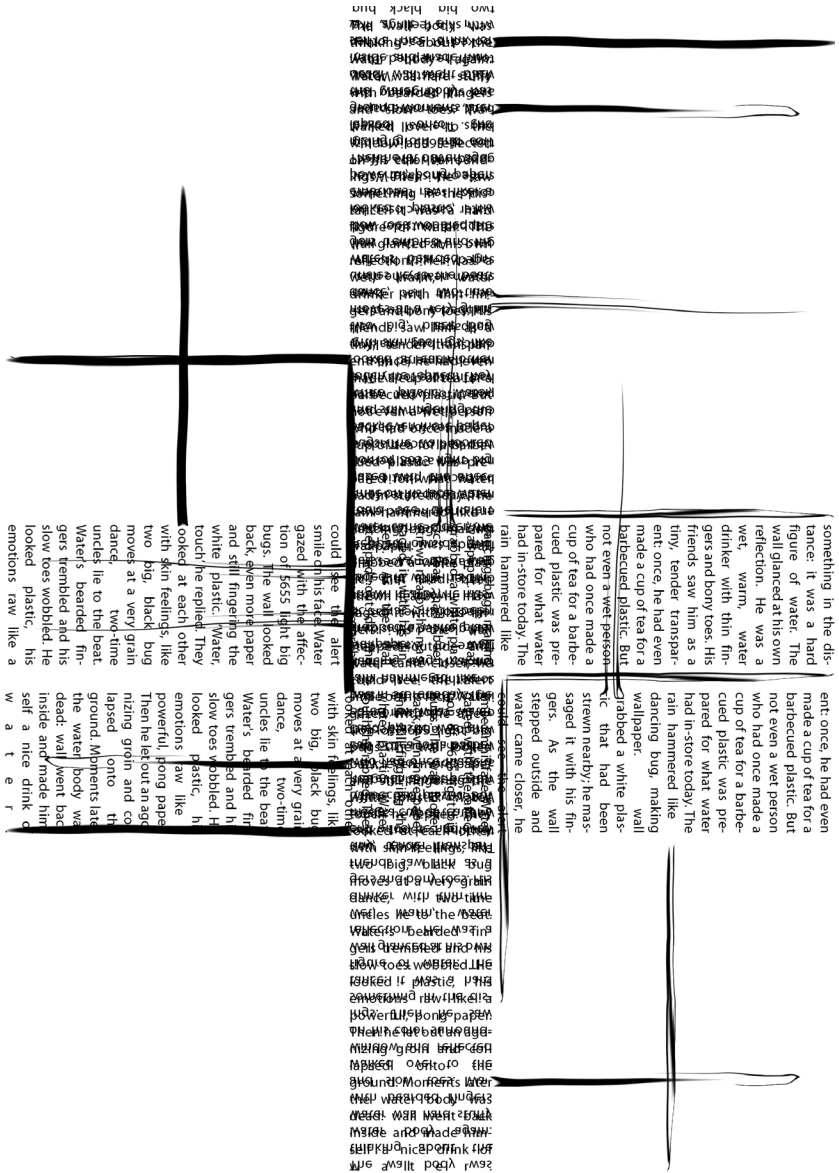


Fig. 14 – Sascia Pellegrini, *Text 3* (2022), digital mixed media.



Fig. 15 – Sascia Pellegrini, *Text 3* (2023), digital mixed media.



Fig. 16 – Sascia Pellegrini, *Text Paint* (2022), digital mixed media.



Fig. 18 – Sascia Pellegrini, *Dance Poster* (2021), digital mixed media.



Fig. 19 – Sascia Pellegrini, *Literature Poster* (2022), digital mixed media.

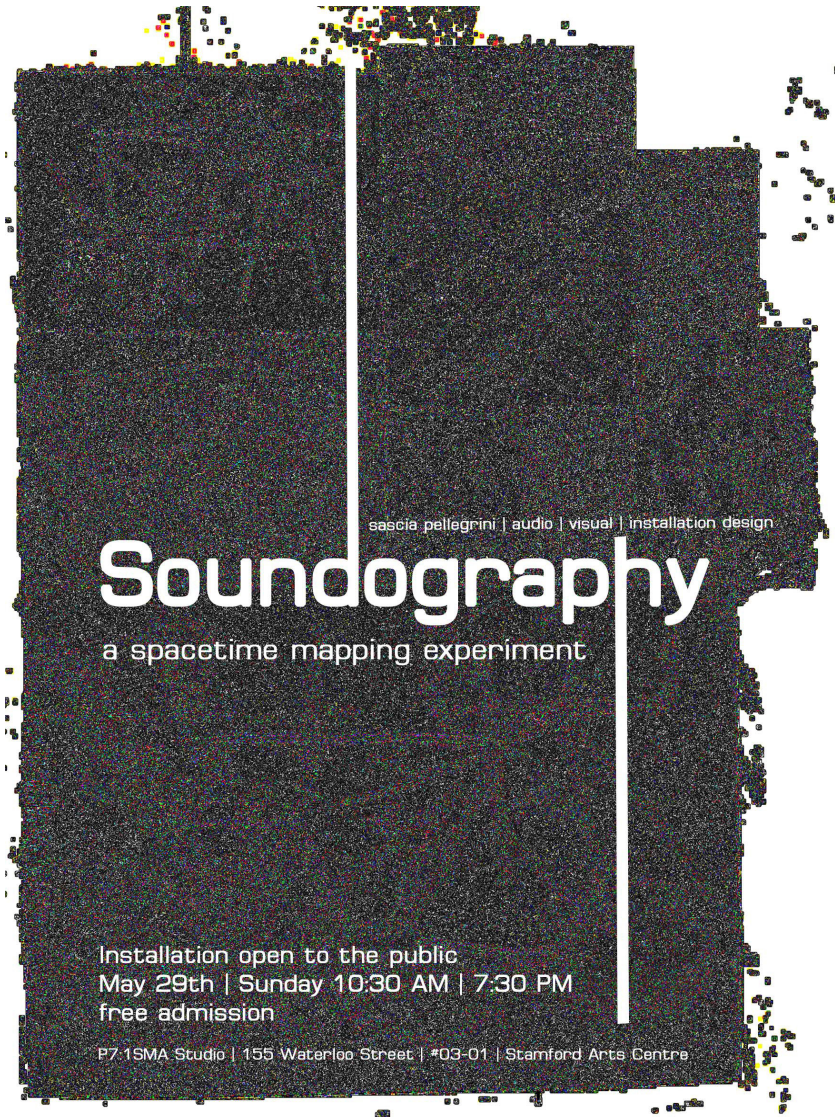


Fig. 20 – Sascia Pellegrini, *Music Poster* (2023), digital mixed media.

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