

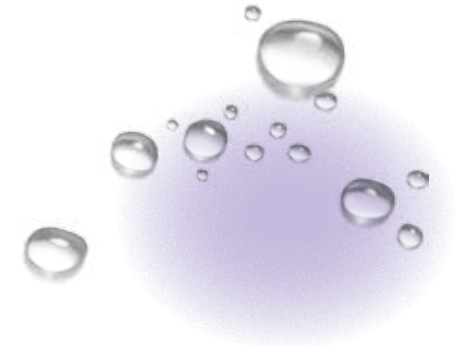
DELLA

AM
OCCEAN
CALL





WRITING ON WATER



IZABELLA BORZECKA
PONTUS PETTERSSON

More than half of your body consists of water. From the softness of your eyes, lubricated by every blink, to the tenderness of your fingertips turning each page. It is a molecular fact, a material fact. It is one, or maybe the reason why we are alive.

As an anomaly, still puzzling today's scientists, water is one of the most peculiar substances found on earth, swiftly changing shape and state, still so common, inside and outside of all of us. If water is a transformative material, could one say that water has a different kind of logic, proposing another kind of dance?

How can we understand, move and be moved in the world through this anchor, and share space with all living things, socially and economically, ethically and artistically if water is in all of us at every moment?

"We are all bodies of water," writes scholar Astrida Neimanis, pointing to how we as human beings are interconnected as liquid entities to the oceans around us, to the water we drink, to the water we pollute, from the fjords of Norway to the Suez canal in Egypt. Through water's circulation across bodies, species, lands and materialities, everything is connected.

As watery, we experience ourselves less as isolated entities, and more as oceanic eddies.

Water has strong cohesive qualities; its molecules have a tendency to stick together.

If I perceive the water in you, perceive you as water, how might my relationship to you change? How will engaging with you on a liquid level change the way my body, and the collective body, moves?

Delta (Swedish verb): to participate.

Delta (phenomenon): lowlands and islands, occurring at or outside the mouth of some rivers, so-called river deltas.

Delta: a collection for choreographic and performative work to be shared and exercised. A platform and publication for participating projects, dance, knowledge exchange and choreographic inquiries.

Delta: the fourth letter in the greek alphabet, meaning change in mathematics.

In 2019, Delta was first organized as a series of six interventions with six invited artists/artist duos, accompanied by a zine as another platform for the artists to share their work with an audience. In 2021, Delta continues, reshaping its format to move and think differently. Using Pontus' choreographic research project "All

Departures Are Waves" as a liquid foundation, we have invited fifteen artists, writers and curators to share new or previous work on water histories, narratives and watery practices. With their contributions, Delta is extra wet. We invite you to submerge!

Text in italics is taken from "Bodies of Water: A score" by Pontus Pettersson and Hannah Zafiropoulos from the book *Red Love: A Reader on Alexandra Kollontai* (2020).

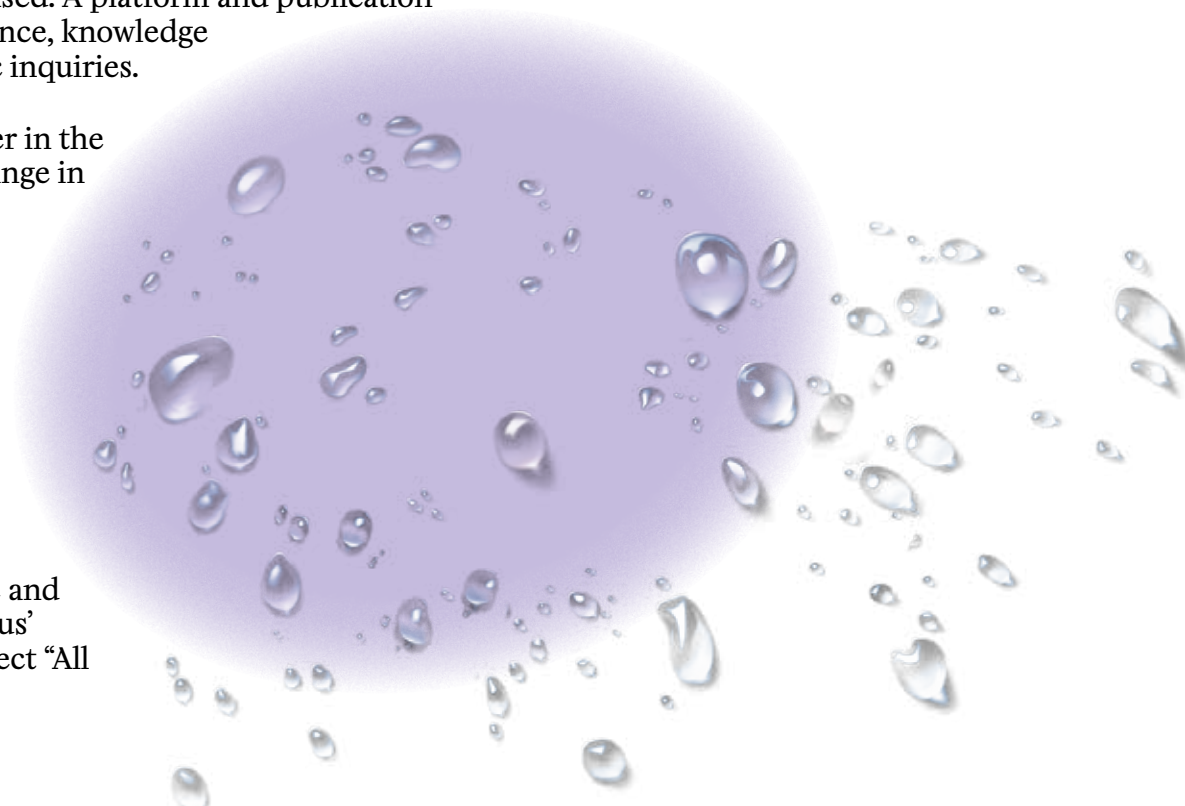


TABLE OF CONTENTS

FIRST MOVE, ORIGINAL RAINS

a Score for Sensing the Precipitational

by Bronwyn Bailey-Charteris ☞ p. 5

DRIPPING FROM MY FINGERTIPS

by Pontus Pettersson ☞ p. 15

TO DANCE ABOUT NATURE

by Adham Hafez ☞ p. 41

MAPPING OCEAN by Daniela Bershan in
collaboration with Sabrina Seifried ☞ p. 47

CHOSEN BY THE BARNACLES

by Sindri Runudde ☞ p. 61

SUBMERGED Vibeke Hermanrud in
conversation with Elly Vadseth ☞ p. 65

CONFESSIONS OF A SWIMMER

by Axel Andersson ☞ p. 73

HYDROCAPSULES.LOVE

by D.N.A ☞ p. 81

AS THE WATERS RECALL

by Paul Maheke ☞ p. 87

I KNOW THAT SMELL

by Alice MacKenzie ☞ p. 95

OCEAN by Every Ocean Hughes ☞ p. 111

100 WAYS OF WATER


by Pontus Pettersson ☞ p. 117

BIOGRAPHIES ☞ p. 138





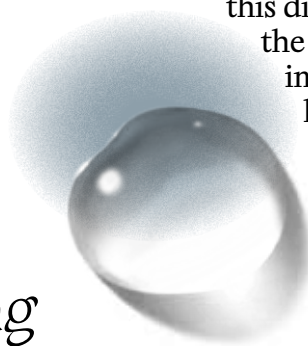
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*First Move, Original
Rains: a Score
for Sensing the
Precipitational*

BRONWYN
BAILEY-CHARTERIS

During recent years, curator Bronwyn Bailey-Charteris has created a curatorial theory and practice named “Hydrocene,” which argues for artistic methods of thinking with water in the age of accelerating climate crises. In this text, Bronwyn brings us back to the first rain as a possible first dance. How rain keeps coming back to our bodies, musical memories; a perpetual dream coming true.



Let’s begin.

It’s in the waters, and it’s a process of unlearning water.

In the work *Cloud Studies*, the collective Forensic Architecture interview a man whose home in Gaza has just been bombed. He coughs into the microphone, “I am breathing in my home.” Dust, toxins, body parts, fumes, concrete itself, blown back into dust. Time compressed, deleted, airborne.

Let’s begin again.

Precipitation is a term for the process of water moving from clouds to earth, also known as rain. Now that all rain is acid rain, in this dissolving climate, how can we approach the rain? I have been working with an image in my head, around collective learning, where I think of collective learning, especially with art, as a kind of rain, both materially and metaphorically. The way rain moves, between us, and of us, explains my understanding of the way knowledge moves, between us, and of us. Ideas rain down on us, but also we carry the rains with us, they overflow, they move on without us, as Astrida Neimanis writes in the book *Bodies of Water*, “we are all bodies of water.” In this watery matter, I wanted to ask more about some sort of participation in art, how do we participate in these rains and where do rains complicate participation?

These are the questions I resonate with and what appears to me as a kind of answer is a new word, a missing piece, the word is ‘precipitational.’ It’s a merging of participation + precipitation. Rain meets participation in the field of art, and together they merge into a way of sensing: meet the precipitational.

I take the word home with me, try it on, keep it around, and it begins to perspire. It wants to reach out to others, it seems to be a word in a rush. Always going somewhere. But now I have rushed ahead. Let’s return to the beginning of all this.

To begin again. Let’s begin with the original. Before the B sides and the covers. Let’s begin with the original rains. Scientist and writer Rachel Carson describes them best in her 1951 book, *The Sea Around Us*.

To be at the beginning you need to lay down and close your eyes. It’s just better. Then you need to lean into it. Breathe. And hear the first rains.

Rachel says that when the earth was molten, shifting, angry reds, hard to hold down, not yet settled, pubescent in some way, the planet we live on was unstable. This was right near the beginning. Clouds began to form. Dense and diligent the clouds gathered, they grew in common. Rachel says, that “the gradually cooling earth was enveloped in heavy layers of clouds, which contained much of the water of the new planet.” There was no release. The clouds became fuller and fuller, like maternal breasts with plentiful

milk. Keep your eyes closed. There was no way to see through the clouds. As Rachel says, the “rough outlines of the continents and the empty ocean basins were sculptured out of the surface of the earth in darkness.” In darkness, the clouds can form. In darkness, the pleasure is heightened. In darkness, the suspense can grow.

And as this new young planet, all larva and unsettled, was just as uneasy as it had ever been, it reached a tipping point, it touched something cool, and immediately began to cool down itself. The hot land beginning to become what would eventually be land, but still rocks, no bacteria yet, no whales or unruly forests. That was all still to come. As the Earth released its tantrum breath, let go of the heat, in the dark still, just then, quite suddenly, the first rains began. The clouds who had held in everything they had buried deep inside, started to rain down. Rachel says, “[...] never has there been such rains,” and she says “they fell continuously, day and night, days passing into months, into years, into centuries.”

The original rains were the first movement.

I told you. Precipitation—it’s always going somewhere. It’s busy, impatient, lustful.



Someone told me the rain remembers where it has been and it’s always trying to get back to where it was. It’s searching. Always listening to the longing of the land, trying to return.

The first movement, you could call it the first dance, the first rhythm, was the rain, moving minerals from the land to the hollow oceans. Like wide mouths gaping open, waiting to be fed, the concave empty oceans slowly began to fill, with the rains, and the minerals who the rains brought with them. Rachel says that “over eons of time, the sea has grown ever more bitter with the salt of the continents.”

Saltiness. A taste in your mouth. Stay lying down but you can open your eyes a little. Flickering pleasures of light. The saltiness of the seas are starting to brew. You could try licking. Run your finger from forehead to chin, follow the contours, sense what the rains delivered. They brought the salt. They moved. The first dance.

In their first dance, the rains landed as puddles, and then overflowed, unsatisfied; they moved into lakes, still hungry; searching they became rivers and deltas. In their durational performance piece, the rains were insatiable, playing to full houses, the crowds were wild. Fans of the rains threw themselves into rivers, dragging themselves along, throbbing, moving, wild parts.

This was the beginning of the great dissolving. Endless, relentless, inescapable.

The rains continued to make new pieces. They became a classic. Books were written about them, myths and cosmologies, tempests stormed, arks floated; the rains always played their part. Prayed to, hoped for, the rains continued their rhythmic performative practice of watering fields and oceans, substantiating every surface. In this era, the precipitational flourished.

And yet, as waters began to be controlled, the rains lost work. Regular venues had shut down. Tours were cancelled. As the waters became piped, resource management took over, grey bureaucracies, toxic runoffs, the fun had started to go out of it. The rains became illusive, regressive, cancelling last minute. Songs were still sung about the rains, but they were never the headline act. The precipitational was harder to locate. More and more the rains became a worn-out backdrop. They were rolled in for special performances here and there, but the rains were frail. Dusty. Tired. Toxic. Drained.

*You can open your eyes now.
You can even sit up.
It’s a new day.*

There is a workshop. It’s where I am being assembled. The parts to make me are: squelchy organs, slipping into place, bacteria multiplying, snuggling in, bendy fascia, twisting and tracking. I am made of and with the factory. It’s not dark here. I sense

my organs shifting, gravity pulling at me, pieces in place, things ticked off a clip board. In they go. There is no looping evaporation and precipitation here. And yet, there is a faint cloud in the corner of my vision. A shimmer of a small one hanging about by the door. Over time, there are more vapours coalescing on the floor. A quiet mist rolling inside. Quietly the cloud approaches me. My eyes begin to close again, and I am slowly undone. Pieces of me, drifting, gathering, a sense of hunger returns.

You can drift too now. Close your eyes again if you wish. Breathe into particles. Become vapour. Consensual, sensual cloud making. Maybe the rains will play again.

*Bronwyn Bailey-Charteris
February 2021, Stockholm*

*Complimentary to this text
is the Precipitational Playlist
with watery lyrics. This
playlist aims to assist you
to locate the precipitational
inside yourself and others.*



NOVEMBER RAIN (In June)

A long introduction.
A long time coming.
Clouds and crescendos building.
Tension building.
Possibly running.
Even through an airport. Over a field. Past a church.
Stepping through doorways.
Eyes blinking.
Waiting.
Sometimes excited talking,
then a drum beat and more waiting.
The tension builds.
A flute.
A violin.
Such a long build up.
And then, kind of suddenly, almost a shock,
when I look into your eyes:
Darling, when I hold you, don't you know I feel the same?
Nothing lasts forever.
And it's *hard to hold a candle.*
A little pause.
A little breath.
Angels singing in the background.
And then almost sweaty singing, given up, all there is pushed on the down note:
If you want to love me, then darling don't restrain,
or I'll just end up walking in the cold November rain.
A threat?
Pause.
Do you need some time?
Do you need some time?
Oh everybody needs some time sometimes.
Then you understand, with the downward guitar.
And now they are just strumming.
Now we see the haters turned into lovers.
The unexpected romantic ending.
In the electric guitar.
In the close up.
In wiping rain out of each other's eyes.
In the eyes on eyes.
Rain falling on the lovers.
With the upside-down kiss.
The Hugh Grant rain kiss.
The movie making kisses.
It's already six minutes in.
And Guns N Roses won't stop.
Minute 6:54 a new song appears, a marching credence.
Guitar goes wild.
Crashing down.
Lightening, storms, rain machines turned on full power.
A chanting.
Everybody needs somebody.
Every body needs some body.
Every body needs some body.
And finally, the rain is here.
Rain sounds fade out.

with original lyrics in
italics from “November
Rain” by Guns N’ Roses,
1991

HERE COMES THE RAIN AGAIN, AND COMES AGAIN, AND COMES AGAIN

Straight into a diamond criss-cross.
Some prickly notes.
Pointy, sharp, strummed with tight fingers.
Musicians fingers.
Electric rain. Staccato.
A little bit of magic synth.
Leading up to
curling fingers.
And then after a moment: Here comes the rain
again.

Fallin' on my head like a memory.
Already it's falling on my head like a new
emotion.

Pause, swing up.
I want to...
I want to...
I want to...

Is it raining with you?

Higher, brighter, over the edge now, calling out
from the balcony.

Baby talk to me, like lovers do.

Much faster than November Rain, this rain
arrives ready, arrives agitated, arrives raining.
A memory rain that skips beats, bangs drum
machines.

It's all about talking.

It's a conversation, until the rounding, spins
flips us upside down,
and then it's unclear where we are again.
Walk, talk.

Like lovers do.

Violins again.

And a pause, a coffee break. A shot of vodka.
And then, we're there again:

Here comes the rain again.

The rain is an open wind.

The rain is an ocean.

I want to dive into your ocean,
is it raining with you?

Asking again.

Telling again.

Rain on a beach, the lovers, crooning voices,
ohhhhhhhh,

A violin into a ding.

A synth into a spring.

Like lovers do.

Oh, yeah. *Here it comes again.*

The rain is returning.

Here is it.

Here comes the rain again.

Falling like a new emotion.

Rain is the new emotion.

Fade out while singing, no don't go.

Talk to me instead.

Chorusing each other.

More fade, I didn't imagine it,

I want to dive into your ocean,

A fade means it goes on and on?

Falling again.

Raining into fade.

with original lyrics
in italics from "Here
Comes the Rain Again"
by Eurythmics, 1983

WHY DOES IT ALWAYS RAIN (WHEN I COMPLAIN) ON ME?



Violin again. Then chirpy drum and guitar duo.
Straight into it.
Complaints.
Sad violins and upbeat guitar.
I can't sleep tonight.
Silky voice whining.
A drum beat, to accompany.
A little wandering guitar.
Over a hill and around the bend again.
Someone looking for the sunny day:
Why does it always rain on me?
Is it because I lied when I was 17?
Seriously self-involved.
The rain is not really here, but the dreamy
mirror is,
A soft recurrence.
Drum drum.
I can't stand myself
I get the strangest feeling, I am singing to myself.
And then a little crescendo and we are back
again.
Why,
When,
Even when.
Where did the blue sky go?
Why.
So cold.
So cold.
A little pause, a little stroke of the hair. A little
strum of your ego.
Oh, when will this be over?
Not again, oh no,
Why does it always rain on me?
Even when.
From here it just goes on and on.
Ear worms of self loathing with no rain.
Where,
Why.
So cold,
So cold.
Why,
Why.
Why bring the rain into this?
High notes, long yell into off.

with original lyrics in
italics from “Why Does
it Always Rain on Me?”
by Travis, 2013

WINDOW PAIN (I can't stand the rain)

with original lyrics in italics from "I Can't Stand the Rain" by Tina Turner, 1984

Leading in with tick, tock, ping, pang, bang, ping.

Right into: *I can't stand the rain,*

Against my window.

Just the voice and the electric shiny ping pang.

Hey! Window pain, do you remember how

sweet it used to be?

A nice question. I like that she asks the window.

Whole bodied bang bang bang, wooden fingers, drum machine, relief, higher ground, clouds

moving, marching forwards, unicorn drums,

I can't stand the rain.

All of a sudden: Ding long bam!

I can't.

Bam! Again.

Magic echo silver synth.

When we were together.

Now that we are parted.

I just can't stand the rain.

Running here. Jogging up steps.

The machines underground, pulsing, guns

blazing, robotic, silver suits, hot noodles, breaking glass into those familiar wooden hollow high notes.

Trumpets back again!

She can't stand it.

Distracting *sweet memories.*

She can't stand the rain, against her window.

She can't stand the rain, it just keeps on

haunting.

Almost an aside:

Hey! Get off of my window.

A nice stage direction. I like that she yells that.

No relief to the bam bam bam.

Wooden fingers, passion in the throat.

Sweet memories, but

Big pang bang and you're out.

BEGINNING TO THINK
IT'S GONNA RAIN
TODAY

with original lyrics in
italics from “I think it’s
gonna rain today” by
Randy Newman, 1963

DUSTY:

Starts with violins flowery bedspreads and she’s
right here.

Then lonely piano fingers leading a gentle path.
Overflowing.

Slow waterfall piano sings out,
I think it’s gonna rain today.

NEIL:

Much slower.

Flute fingers, floating, blowing little flute
breaths, taking time,
violins coming in.

Broken windows, empty hallways.

He’s alone, he’s singing to the man,
And he thinks,

*It’s going
to rain,
today.*

NINA:

Piano fingers, flicking around, assuredly.

Her smooth-edged voice sings of the moon.

Human kindness, but what is that.

And she thinks,
It’s gonna rain, today.

Breathy
 Banging
 Pink
 A second in and she's bringing
It's complicated
 Too fast but not
 Strumming, flicking, flashing lights, jumping,
You know I love it,
Why it feels so good to feel so sad?
I'm only happy
 Breath tiny in
 Guitars jump in, playing along, bubbles
 popping, pop, pop, pop,
pour, pour, pour
 30 seconds in and we are already pouring
 Flowing down on me
 The upbeat downbeat continues
I feel good when things are going wrong
 Roaring now, truck load dreaming pop
 landscape sunset, guitars made of ice cream and
 sugar

Only happy

When it rains

Interlude of thinking it through
 Strumming flicking fingers
 Grinning into each other, makes a short song
 feel long
 She's not complaining (not like why why
 does it always rain guy)
 I'm only happy when it's complicated
 Bouncing around in dungeons and in clouds and
 under waterfalls

I'm only happy

When it rains

Again with more voices, somehow a crowd
 gathers, pipping in, lifting up,
Pour your misery down on me
 Groups dropping droplets, everyone's here
 suddenly
 A kitchen party
 Broken bottles, empty the bottle,
 Pause again and filling our glasses
Pour your
Down on me
 Pouring rain on me
 Down pour on me
 Black cat long voices in the night time, pouring
 down on me

Me me me me me

Suddenly a secret voice calls,

As long as you don't care

She says again:

You'll wanna hear about my new obsession

Lighter brighter chorus peaking over the new
 sunlight ledge

Pouring, shouting, fluking, flying, guitars to
 accompany the angels

She's only happy

When it rains

Fade out. Yet gathering momentum.

Keep pouring. Still pouring.

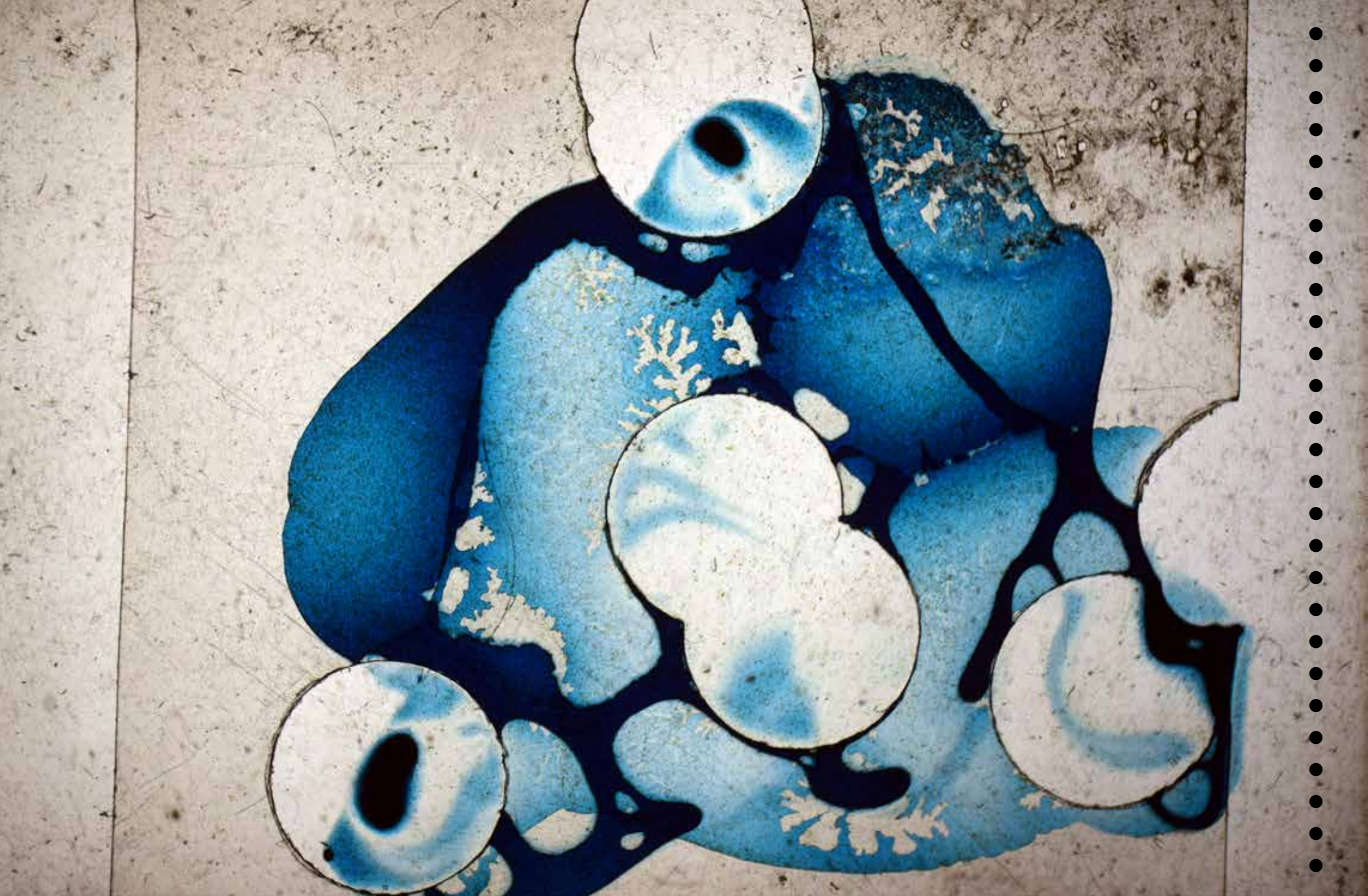
Long long fade, with strumming guitars, one
 last, the fade, cloud moves out.

with original lyrics in
 italics from "I'm only
 happy when it rains"
 by Garbage, 1994



DRIPPING FROM
MY FINGERTIPS

PONTUS
PETTERSSON



A LICK OF MY TONGUE, A CHOREOGRAPHY OF THE ARM

Take the arm of which your writing hand is attached, right or left. This is now a tongue.

With your arm, start licking yourself, cleaning and/or tasting, with no area left out. This is done with the motion of your arm, simulating a giant tongue. Like cleaning your teeth, the architecture of your mouth is now turned inside out and the cavities are legs and buttocks, fingers and neck.

Wave; Flow indiscriminately.

PUBLIKHAVET

Publikhavet means the sea of the audience in Swedish.

Publikhavet starts with a group or simply yourself sitting on a chair, placed frontally to something, anything. Individually imagine or think of this situation as a performance in itself; the performance of someone sitting and watching a performance. Whether there is nothing or an actual performance, it does not matter. If there is nothing, or an actual performance does not matter; whatever is, is the performance. (One can also imagine a performance one has seen, want to see, or make one up in your head.)

Note: as with any performance it asks of your attention, however boring or exciting it is.

After a few minutes of watching, you start sensing yourself as an image rather than an event happening in time and space. You have frozen, and become an iceberg with eyes.

As with any theater, the lights get hot; this starts to slowly melt you. Start to melt down on your chair, thinking of your body as a slow running viscose material, with two eyes still busy with the performance.

When completely down on the floor, finding yourself next to or just under your chair, you slowly take your arm and push the chair up in the air facing the direction of the performance.

Remaining at this position, as your arm and body stutters to organise the erected arm-to/too-chair, the motion of waves merges with this image. Let this have its way with you.

A sea of floating chairs, as any boat on the ocean, is either going somewhere or being taken somewhere; your journey drifts continuously until you cannot hold up the chair any longer.

Poem for inspiration:

I see I sea I eye sea
Audience see, a sea of audience
Staring out at the sea you see
I sea I saw
An audience a sea
Sea the audience
I see I sea





CLEANING THE DANCE FLOOR

Cleaning the dance floor is preferably done by a trio, but can be performed in any number of constellations. The score consists of three minor choreographies/bodies following each other.

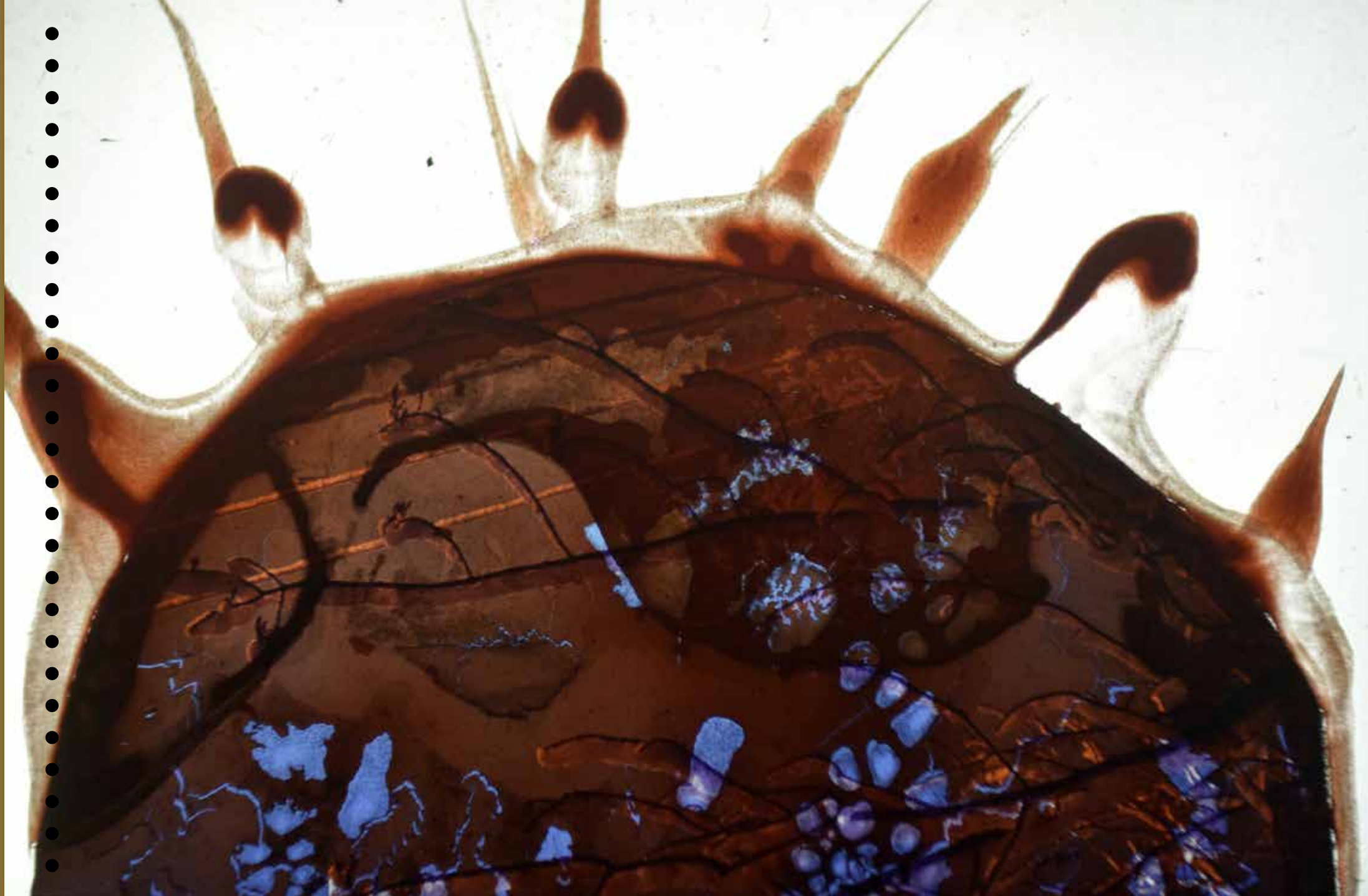
The first choreography/body is to do the water practice while dancing/moving forward in space. The water practice as a dance can, in this aspect, just be to dance in any watery way you find fit or fun.

The second person follows the first person with their body recording the first person's movement. This is done with the whole body (your writing machine). What you decide to document, mark into your body schema, is up to you and can change, from just a movement of the hand, to toes, spine, whole body, etc. As imprints continue moving your body, you can think of yourself as a tensegrity structure.

The third person following the second person is "erasing" what has just been "written down," thinking of the body as a wet cloth or mop, sucking in the chalk off a black board.

Wave; The recording or writing with the body is in this case understood when a movement or action is somehow recorded/felt in your body, so that the possibility to revisit this movement is possible.

Wave; As both material and mediator, water is also a strong solvent, a creative force through destruction and a life-bearing quanta.



FROM SPIT TO MIRROR

Assume a mermaid position.

Through this position, see if you can feel a spiral and turn your upper body circa 45 degrees, lean over, and place both of your hands on the ground in front of you, as pillars of an ancient Greek temple. For the rest of the score, this is your sacred space. You sit still, a formation of flesh, an architecture of lush material that is you.

You start moving your tongue inside of your mouth, forming saliva; when you produce enough liquid, you start letting this pour out of your mouth and continue throughout. You have started making a small lake or well of spit.

The time-quality of your own saliva production stands as a clock and measures the following transition.

The more you empty out, the bigger the pool; this is felt through your mouth, but draws from your whole body. Take a chance to empty yourself, now when you have already started the procedure.

The pool starts merging into a mirror, like a small lake inside of a stalactite cave.

Instead of one reflective surface, the small bubbles that are made from your spit act as individual windows from your past and future. Take a peak!

Take

Your

Time





OCEAN POETRY

Ocean poetry is primarily a sound performance and a solo act.

The performance is done by using a sink or anywhere where you can find a tap that is connected to water that you can turn on or off in different degrees of pressure.

You start by opening the tap on the sink for the water to flow, raising and decreasing the flow of water and the sound it makes, imitating the sound of waves.

This is you playing the ocean.

Connect to your inner rhythm and waves of the sea within.

Playing the basin for a while, letting the sound you are making affect you, vibrating you. Stirring up the water inside of you.

This is the mixture.

This is the undercurrents coming up to the surface. Whales greeting the sun and letting out steam.

Like looking out at the horizon (probably an imaginary one), you let the water, like all waters, flowing back to the sea, connect you to the ocean. The water in you is this same water; let this water speak. Like a poetic oracle, any words or sentences are directly wired from the big blue. It's your temporarily hotline for you to speak/listen to/for/through water. Any formation of poetic strata is now for the world to hear.

Wave: This is a performance for anyone (including you) to witness.

Wave: We are all bodies of water.





RAINDANCE

With any kind of movement, with your body, you try to make it rain; this is a dance, this is you engaging with your own and the collective liquids—making it rain.

The more the merrier!

Wave: join forces.

Raindance like written above was first elaborated and performed together with Sandra Lolax and Adriano Wilfret Jensen in their collective piece *Debut* from 2013, Display festival, Weld, Stockholm.





THE WATER SNAKE

The water snake is a choreography for several people. The choreography starts with the first person doing a slow bending over from standing (simply said, rolling down). First person, take a moment to just stand before you start heading down.

The overall choreography aims at creating an image of a large snake moving through space, the choreography consists of a continuous moving line of bodies, as an ensemble animating the figure of a snake. The choreography can be seen as a reversed 'evolution of man.'

On an individual level the body is juxtaposed to the larger body of the snake, with the back of the body being the front of the large snake. The spine is the dominant source of inspiration, the vertebrates, the spinal liquids and the whole spine "closest" to a resemblance of an actual snake. This is the platform/space for your embodiment. While doing the choreography, let the water circle of weather be your inspiration.

When the first person has started, the second person can join, adding to the chain of bodies (or the vertebrates of a snake). The second person starts by placing one hand on the first person's back. You can think of this gesture as similar to when one puts the key in the car for the engine to start. This is

also the start of your own water circle as well as the hook to the person in front of you.

Wave: The water snake is a sequential score for a group, you cannot start or end before the person in front of you has started or ended. This is up to you to decide when that is.

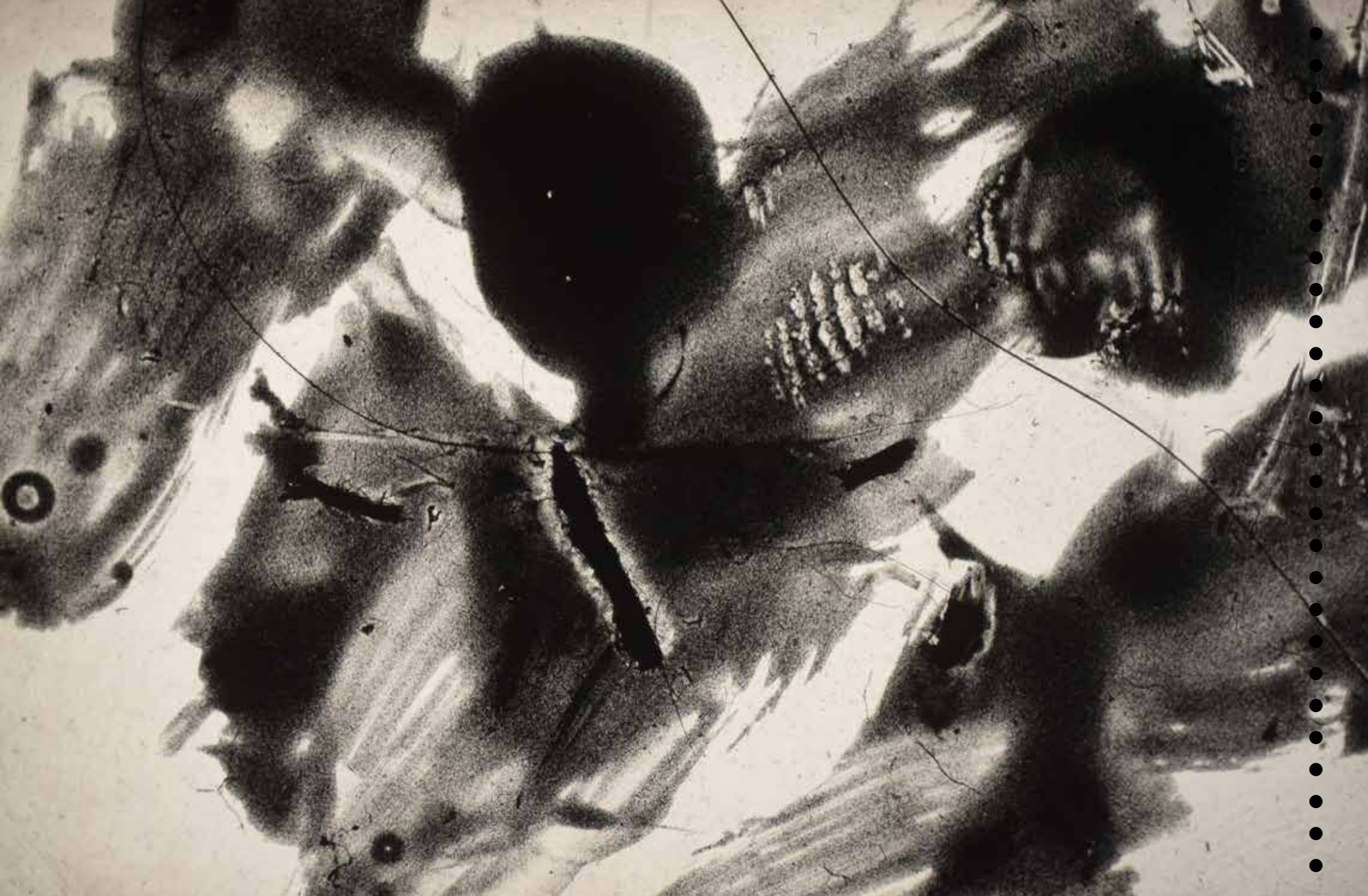
Wave: The hand on the other person's back is your fluid link, the threshold or interface for two bodies of water becoming one body of water.

With one hand on the person's back, the second person starts their own water circle while still staying and merging with the motion of the first person, creating a link of actions.

When starting your participation of the water snake, you also want to create the illusion of the snake moving forward in space, even though you are facing the opposite direction. Let your back be the face of the snake until the next person joins.

Note: The inner choreography and outer choreography might create a separation of actions and embodiment. Like water, you have no centre.

From standing, to bending over and rolling down, finding yourself on the floor, you as an individual part of the choreography end when you are completely down on the floor; you can think of this as the floor being the surface of the water and you have completely submerged yourself into this water. Upon doing this, you gently leave the floor and start waiting again for your turn, adding to the continuous building and moving of the snake. As the choreography is perpetual, the end can be a fading off or preset in time before you start the dance.







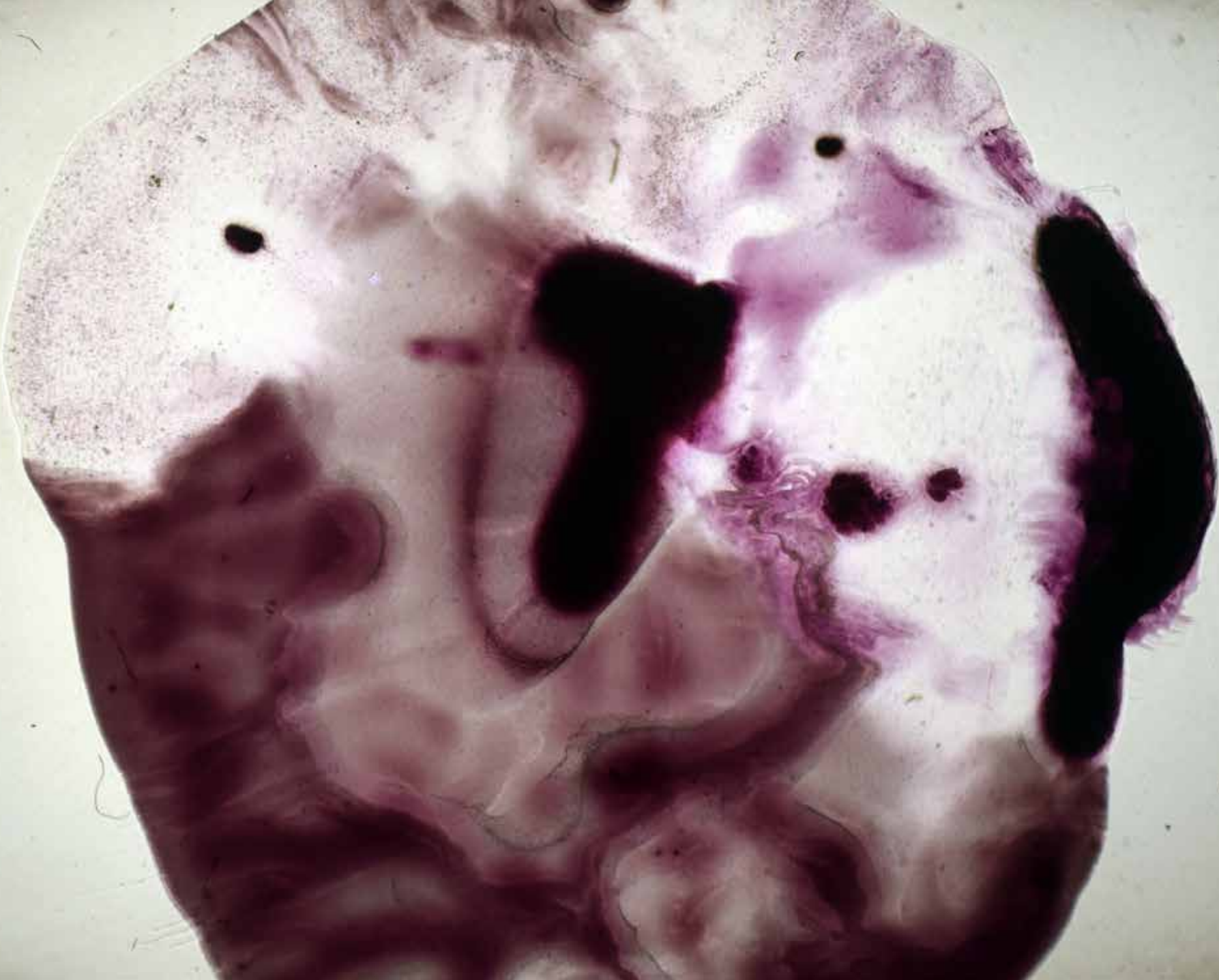
AN OCEAN CALL

Start by sitting down in a comfortable position.

Close your eyes.

Start listening to your breath, let the imagination of your breath sounding like waves amplify your innerspace—the imaginary space of looking out to the horizon of an open sea.

Listen to your breath like waves of the ocean. Stay here, for as long as you need.









DO DANCE
ABOUT
NATURE?

ADHAMI
HAFEZ

Choreographer
Adham Hafez
paints a painful,
yet poetic picture
of interspecies
migration through
the history of
the Suez Canal in
Egypt. Pointing at
how practices of
othering have shaped
histories and how
nature continues to
organise us.

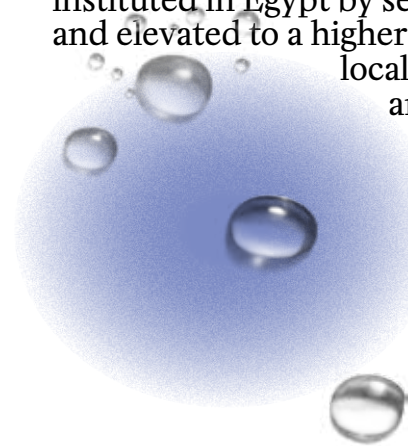
Based on a research
by HaRaKa
Platform, within the
framework of the
project 'In 50 Years
Or So', with Mona
Gamil, Lamia Gouda,
Sara Soumaya
Abed, and Adam
Kucharski.

It was about 150 years ago
when the Suez Canal was inaugurated
in Egypt, in 1869. One of the largest
man-made canals in the world, the
structure connected the massive Red
and Mediterranean seas, opening the two
water bodies towards each other, leading
to the irreversible enormous migration
of sea creatures known as the Lessepsian
Migration. At the same time when the
canal was being dug using forced labor
and slavery practices, European art
forms and architectural practices were
instituted in Egypt by settler colonialists,
and elevated to a higher pedestal, while
local artistic practices
and ways of living
were shunned,
banned, or
criminalized.
Over the
period of the
past 150 years

or more, fishes have migrated north away
from their homes in Egypt, creating a
massive loss of biodiversity in the Red
Sea. Simultaneously, Northern European
artistic practices were being ingrained in
Egypt as the only viable aesthetic canons.
Parisian boulevards erased earlier city
structures, Opera replaced *Taqateeq*, and
Ballet banished *Zar*.

Yet we continue to think of our dance
history away from Earth history, while the
story of Suez begs to differ. The Suez Canal,
that water highway, was the spark of this loss
of biodiversity, and of cultural multiplicities,
as well as it was the accelerator of modernity
itself. Modernity, as a European political
project, had to happen at any cost.

'Everyone must be struck with the
grandeur of the idea of dividing two
continents so as to enable large ships
to proceed directly from the ports
of Europe to ports of the East. The
realization of such an idea would
certainly be quite in accordance with
the spirit of an age in which so much has
been done to annihilate time and space;
and, doubtless, neither talent, energy,
nor wealth would be wanting to make
the attempt, could even a chance of
success be shown.'
—Bedford Pim, "Remarks on the Isthmus
of Suez" (1859) from *Proceedings of the
Royal Geographical Society of London*.



and hundreds of species have migrated from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, because of the Suez Canal, in a never ending migration that is considerably massive and rapid when seen within the geological time scale. *Pharaonis* lives on rocky seafloor and on coarse debris back in its original home. When its species moved from the Red Sea, it flourished and heavily colonized the Eastern Mediterranean, a zone that is nutrient-rich because of the River Nile sediments gushing into it. *Pharaonis* started forming stable colonies of large populations. But, given the softer seafloor of the Eastern Mediterranean, *Pharaonis* started sticking, ironically, to the ships passing from the Mediterranean back to the Red Sea through the Suez Canal. Yet, it wouldn't make home for itself in the Red Sea again. *Pharaonis* became a troublesome migrant, damaging the structure of sea vessels, which was the closest thing to a 'home' it could conceive of, given its love for hard surfaces which is absent in much of the Eastern Mediterranean. *Pharaonis* started damaging the sea vessels of the British Empire and other large imperialist ships. Such poetry!

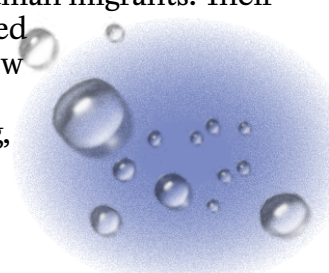
At the same time, the other migrants continued moving southward from Europe into Egypt. Human migrants. Their ways of life were favored over the local ones. New urban centers created to house the migrating,

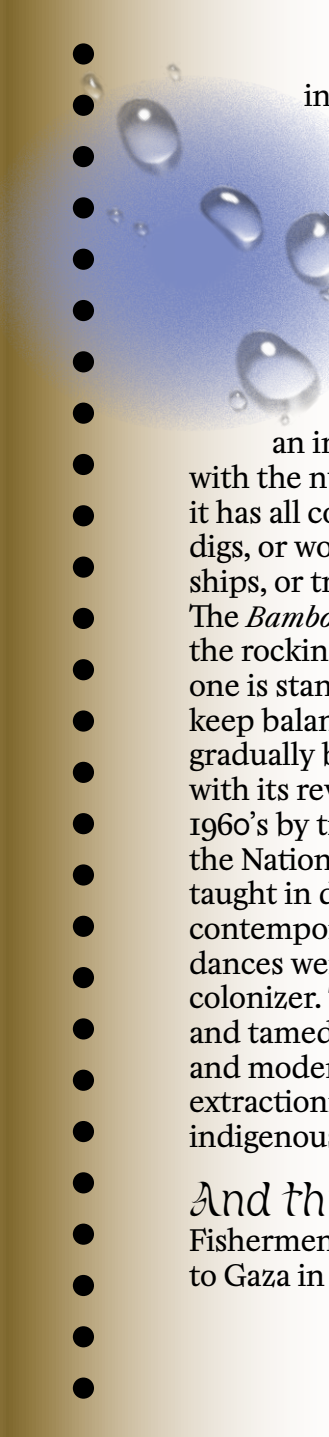
settling colonizers: Port Said, Port Fouad, Ismailia, and Suez were new names given to older cities around the Red Sea. Downtown Cairo was erected by the Khedive, old houses and streets demolished, farmlands eradicated, and new Parisian boulevards constructed. It was there where the Opera House was built. The Khedivial Opera House, the first Opera House in Africa, the Arabic speaking region, and in the Middle East. Middle of what? East to where? Ask her majesty in London.

The event of the inauguration of the Canal and the Opera House was a rupture, geologically, poetically and epistemologically. Egyptian music was not commissioned to mark the inauguration of the Canal. It was Verdi who was commissioned. Others hurried to compose music dedicated to the event, from Billema to Strauss, each with their Suez pieces, that are entirely constructed within the convention and the canon of Western Classical music. A new art history in Egypt was written the very same minute a new Earth history was written, but we continue to see them as separate events. Our academic frameworks continue to speak as if linearity was possible, and as if contamination and migration never happened. With that very first Operatic note that was sung in Egypt, Opera changed forever. With this very first clam that migrated to the Mediterranean, the marine history of the two seas changed forever.

And we all wanted to take those fast moving ships, through the new highway of the Earth. And we all wanted to learn those lithe dance steps, and forget about feet sinking into the sand while dancing *Haggala*.

In 2019, Mona Gamil, Lamia Gouda, Sara Soumaya Abed, Adam Kucharski and myself were conducting research on the history of the canal. We were creating a triptych performance called 'In 50 Years Or So,' trying to understand and document what happened to humans, to animals, and to many lifeforms in 1869. Trying to explore an aesthetic that was brought to a grinding halt by the fanfare of Suez's inauguration. Trying to create alternative dance floors from mud, from sand, and grass that made all the dancing we ever learned ridiculous to perform. It was in 2019 when we learned that Earth has about 50 years or so of topsoil left, and of fishes in the sea, before all is gone. We were investigating indigenous songs and dances that commonly spoke to nature, or of nature. We were curious about how so many of these dances and songs have disappeared. The curious realization was when we found that with the inauguration of the Suez canal and with the gradual decline of fish populations in the Red Sea and the irreversible change in its salinity and temperature levels, seen now as an Anthropocenic change in the geological and biological history of that sea, the songs and dances disappeared. Younger people living





in these canal cities today mostly do not remember the songs. It is almost as if the performance forms disappeared alongside the fish. For what are you going to sing to, when the songs are about the bounties of the sea? How will you dance the dances of fishnets when fishing in the Red Sea is on an intermittent state-enforced ban, with the number of fish decreasing? And it has all come down to operating petrol digs, or working mechanically on massive ships, or trading at the Duty Free Zone? The *Bambouteya* dance, that mimicked the rocking movement of the sea, as if one is standing in a small boat trying to keep balance, is one of those dances that gradually became obscure. Known to some, with its revival and documentation in the 1960's by troupes such as Reda Troupe or the National Dance Troupe, the form is not taught in dance programs, nor makes it to contemporary stages. Bodies were told their dances were lesser than those brought by the colonizer. Their environment was manicured and tamed. The Earth was being redesigned, and modernity continued its regime of extractionism and accelerationism, as more indigenous performances disappeared.

And this is not new or unique. Fishermen's songs from the Ghanian coast to Gaza in Palestine have disappeared with

the rapidly changing ecosystems around these communities, with colonialism, with apartheid, and with the industrialization of fishing. Even in Europe, *Sea Shanties*, as a genre of sea worksongs, rapidly declined with the introduction of motorized sea vessels after the industrial revolution. When the environment changes, the canon changes. The aesthetic responds to the geological and the political through ways our current methodologies of dance making, dance teaching or theorizing does not equip us to articulate. We continue to struggle in how to think of art history through an environmental paradigm, or through tools that need to be developed interdisciplinarily within the Anthropocene. And as we think of our songs and dances that disappear, and as the planet keeps reminding us that it is finite, let's perhaps hope for new possibilities of complicating how we think of our artistic histories and the historiographic practices we grew accustomed to when engaging with the aesthetic regime.

When we think of performance history after Suez, we must think of the separation of humans from nature as a modernist project. Modernity fails to see the world that it has created as a mere construct. 'World'—this treacherous word that operates within a planet. One among many that coexist on the stage we call "planet." The loss of other forms of life—what we now call "biodiversity"—should

not be limited to flora and fauna. For if humans are part of nature, then the "loss of biodiversity" can also include human forms of life. Only in this way are we finally able to imagine a decolonized way of thinking. Expanding the notion of biodiversity to include the disappearing Egyptian cotton, *Haggala* dance, *Brachidontes Pharaonis* clams, the slave children that died digging the canal, *Khayal Al Zell* shadow plays, oysters, fishermen's dances, and coral reefs makes us all political beings. Be it political clams, or political humans. The Earth inhabits us as we inhabit it. Our sovereignty and agency is mitigated by earthly phenomena, and microbiomes within our bodies. Yet we still construct a linear historiographic account of dance, performance or art in general. Pure and uncontaminated in a world that is only contaminated.

And the water continues to flow through the Suez Canal, from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, changing the marine world of Europe forever, as Red Sea predators find no natural enemies in the lush and nutrient rich Mediterranean. And the dances and songs that came before continue to be forgotten, as we glide within controlled environments, within our dance studios, within our climate regulated theatres, to dance about the sea, to dance about nature, to dance about the future.





MAPPING OCEAN

DANIELA BERSHAN
IN COLLABORATION WITH
SABRINA SEIFRIED



OCEAN is a system powered by artist Daniela Bershan in collaboration with Deborah Birch, Sara Leghissa and Sabrina Seifried, and has previously been presented as a performance.

Here, Daniela has translated the relational layers of OCEAN into maps that unfold new layers of the performance, and in collaboration with Sabrina Seifried into a series of collages, expanding the territories of this vast work of feminine energy, reproductive labour and demystification.

REGENERATION = the entangled participation of human, non-human and other-than-human communities in the iterations of the cycles of life
Appel-Marglin

a we that needs no other
Zelva Kynter

to conspire means to breathe together

the HOW I do something informs the WHAT

But maybe you already know something about this. About how a deadly system doesn't have to seem like it's targeting you directly to kill you consistently

I can, you can remember that the world is round

(feel what capitalism means on an interspecies scale)

(Alexis Pauline Gumbs)

WELL THINK about it if you live on an island
I BREATHE MY ANCESTORS THROUGH MY BODY - METABOLISM
I AM PART OF YOU AND YOU ARE PART OF ME
I AM PART OF THE PLANET (& vice versa) it's hard to free
DEPEND on the OCEANS
OPEN
edge

but then, if you could fly, windmill around yourself rotating like a planet on a planet in a sea pulled by the moon, wouldn't you? Alexis Pauline Gumbs

RITUAL IS THE BRINGING TOGETHER OF DAILY + COSMIC TIME, MYTH + EMBODIMENT, THE NATURAL LAW BETWEEN THE ANCESTORS & THE LIVING + THE HUMAN + THE NON-HUMAN

THE BELONGING OF ANCESTORS IN THE LIFE OF THE LIVING

WITH COSMIC + MYTHICAL LAW

RITUAL

profane

sacred

BUT, EARTH SAYS BINARIES ARE IMPOSSIBLE HOW TO NOT FALL INTO ONTOLOGICAL LAZINESS? HOW TO AVOID IT? ONTOLOGICAL RETIRING INSTEAD

BUT, EARTH IS DECLARING DUALISMS TABOO!

ONTOLOGICAL RETIRING IS THE FANTASY OF STEPPING BACK FROM NAMING THE WORLD

IN ORDER TO EXIST IN OTHER RELATIONS WITH IT WE NAME, QUESTION, CRITIQUE, + THEN WE RETIRE INTO THE MYST OR FOR AN HOUR, A WEEK, TO EMBODY THE ONTOLOGY WE MUST NAME POLITICALLY THEY ARE NOT

PLANTING, WEAVING, TOUCHING, DANCING + OTHER NON-NAMING RELATIONS

DANGEROUS IF WE SEE THEM ALWAYS AS TECHNICAL CRAFT, ARTIFICIAL ≠ NOT ONTOLOGY

POETIC NECESSARY SIMPLIFICATIONS

STORYTELLING, DRY + BRIGHT

ARTIFICIAL BINARIES ARE FOR BEGINNINGS FOR LEARNING FOR CHILDREN: THEY ARE FIRST STEPS, SIMPLIFICATIONS WE LEAVE THE WORLD OF BINARIES WHEN WE GROW INTO COMPLEX RELATIONS TO WITHIN THE WORLD

FOR ALL MY RELATIONS ALL PARTS OF THE SYSTEM HAVE TO BE THANKED WITHOUT BEING ABLE TO IDENTIFY THEM THEY CAN STILL BE THUMBS UP/DOWN

ENERGY AGENCY

MORAL ECONOMY

JUSTICE

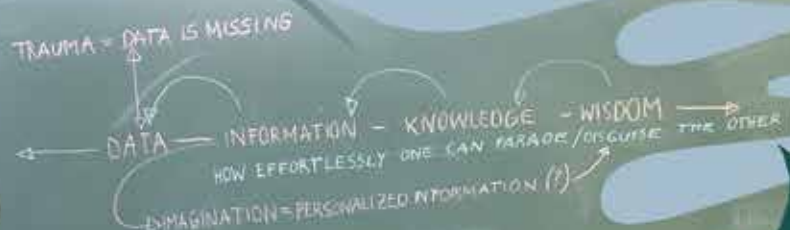
COURAGE

+ HONORED

IF USAGE IS A CONDITION FOR SACREDNESS THEN THE NON-USEFUL ENGAGEMENT

THE SEA, FOREST, OUR LIVES ARE SACRED BECAUSE WE USE THEM AND THEY USE US WE ARE INTERDEPENDENT (OR EACH OTHER?) WE ARE IN RELATION CONSTANTLY WE CAN'T BE SEVERED WE HAVE FORGOTTEN WE CAN REMEMBER ITS SACRED BECAUSE IT IS THE WEB OF LIFE WE CAN'T ESCAPE THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR ACTIONS

part of the map together with DEBORAH BIRCH in an conversation relation



do you think more from
than I allow myself
to be?
why am I standing
in my own way?

do you
that MORRISON

LINEARITY / DIRECTION

THE FAST
FENCE BUILDING MECHANISM
(INSTITUTION)
RELIGION
DISREGARDING LIFE

VALUES
AIR
TRANSFORMATIONS

ASKING FOR PERMISSION
MY TEAM
TIME

FUTURE

THE ELDERS & KEEPERS

NATURE
SPIRITUALITY

CLASSIFICATION
EXTRACTION

POWER
"COGITO"

CAN I GIVE MYSELF
RADICAL TRUST?
SEXUALITY
ALWAYS MOVING
TRANSFORMING

"HUMAN"
ACCUMULATION
ENTITLEMENT

Q: IS ALWAYS MOVING
TRANSFORMING
[RADICAL AGENCY
(WEALTH OF)
OTHER THAN HUMAN
EXTENDED RELATIONS
USE ASKING PERMISSION
= A RELATIONSHIP

do you feel your
love
I am love
I am CLEAN

Everything
I think of
myself
from a
language



we can ask for that
"ELSEWHERE" and

listen OTHERWISE

OCEAN

breathe

"you can't clean something dry"
COOKING, CLEANING, SLEEPING,
LOVING, NOURISHING

remember

if you move too fast you lose something
Complex conversations
the edge of itself
we can show the OCEAN the edge of itself
through each other
the OCEAN shows me my edge

practice

collaborate

we need each other to resonate
grow into other forms of articulations
"holding together" will never stop healing (open)

RITUALS are REPETITIVE

they gather weight as they grow

be vulnerable

we can choose WHO/WHAT/HOW
we love

be present

we can choose when we want to be seen

our best qualities, that
allow us to grow incredible
capacities, are often also our
biggest obstacles - we need
each other to learn when
things are tipping over

be fierce

we can take space while continuing to be in contact
about HOW and WHEN?

learn from conflict

we can take ourselves back
and notice that we are replicating
problematic structures, stagnation
isolation - and we can
choose to flow otherwise

YOGA
DANCING
BREATHING
SINGING
EATING
SEX

take care of your
body

honour your boundaries

we need many repetitions
change our breath
change the angles, filters, let by
fit into consistency

respect your hair

end capitalism

I ♥ THRIFT

we can choose what and
how we come over ourselves
times - what to simplify
what to filter

refuse

we have agency in what we let in - or out we can choose
to be porous, to filter, or not porous
we have not developed our dysfunctional patterns in
isolation, we can not heal them in isolation
(STARHAWK)

surrender

what is sacred to you? go deep

stay black

honour that we are always immigrants

slow down

fast ATODA RAJA
(Carille Marabio)
+ Cecilia Neun-

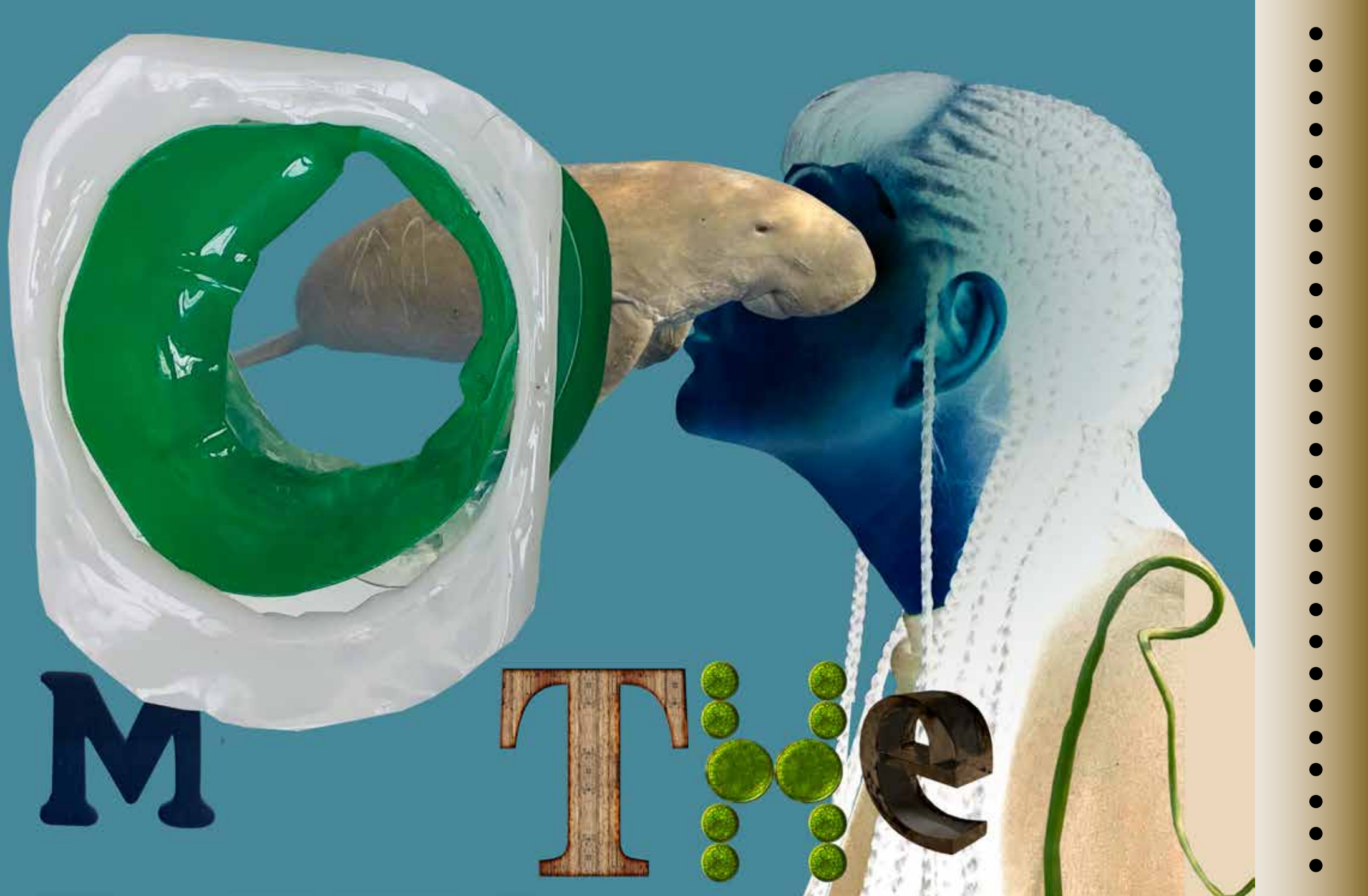
rest

take care of your blessings

give time to young things
next generation is

activities





M

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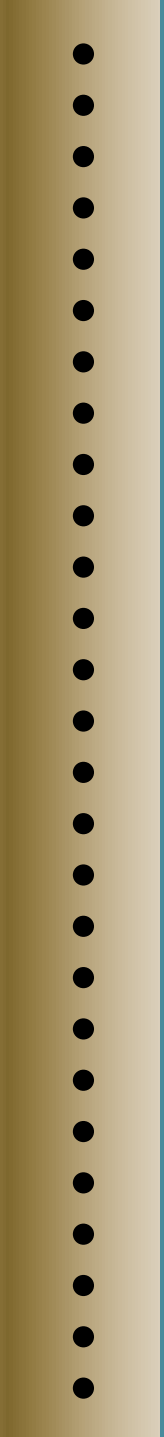
















CHOSEN BY THE BARNACLES

SINDRI
RUNUDDE

"Chosen by the Barnacles" is the last song on the album "The Fishing Dance or Other Cosmic Confessions," and a participatory collective score in the performance with the same title. This text is read on the stage by the five performers. It has been written collectively from an improvisation method by dancer and choreographer Sindri Runudde, together with the composers Julia Giertz and Markus Almkvist, and with text support from writer Frida Sandström.

We invite you to read, listen or practice this score by scanning the QR code on this page.



Find a restful position that you can stay in for a while. Standing up, or lying down, or anything in between. Make yourself comfortable.

Take a deep breath. Sense the edges of your body. You can always adjust later on, but right now you are here. If you like, you can close your eyes.

Lean in to what is leading you.

Focus on your skin. Find the edges of your body. Be very precise in defining where your body ends and where it begins.

Now there is dark blue water surrounding you. You sink down and you are absorbed by this body of water. It's all around you. It seeps in through your skin. And you start to feel the water moving under your skin. The currents creating new pathways inside of you. You are not sure where your body ends and where the water begins.

What you feel is setting the course, like a massive ship, moving straight forward through crystal clear waters.

The ship is heavy and secure. Sense the weight. Sense the resistance of the water and the caress of the currents.

Now a barnacle shows up and attaches itself to you. It settles down under the water, on to your skin, on the hull of the ship. It's choosing you.

This tiny hermaphrodite has the ability of producing everything needed in order to give birth to its own offspring. The barnacle creates new life at the edge of your body.

You stay within these moving waters.

Each stream, each current, each movement. You map them all differently. The movement of the water around your body leaves traces; you are forming a map.

As you create an awareness of this map, your focus becomes stronger. You orientate your mind in one direction.

One by one, other barnacles show up.

They continue choosing you. Choosing you. Choosing you.

They will stay with you as you slowly peel away at the vast vessel you took so much time building to stay on the surface. Ripping through the rubbles and remnants of the effort you used to build up this strength. They will stay with you for as long as it takes for you to dissolve.

Now you *gaze* at the horizon. The setting sun is caressing your chest and your face.

Place your hands on your waists. If you sit up, continue moving your arms until your hands meet behind you, on the lower back. If you don't have arms or hands, or if you experience pain, simply guide your intention to follow these words instead.

Your elbows are pointing out on each side, like a pair of wings. Your hands are shaping a tiny little tale behind you.

If you are lying on the ground, just point your elbows out. Form wings.

Lean forward.

There is a small duck family swimming in the sunset. Gracefully the mother guides her ducklings into the twilight future. You are one of these duck babies, you belong to her family. You glide over quiet waters as the last rays of warm sunlight stay with you.

You can now release the position. What remains within you is the memory of being chosen, cared for and full of courage. Yours is the courage and strength to carry on.

I am me. I am many.





SUBMERGED

VIBEKE HERMANRUD IN
CONVERSATION WITH
ELLY VADSETH

In the aftermath of the exhibition “Submerged Portal,” curator Vibeke Hermanrud talks with artist Elly Vadseth on water, Hydrofeminsm and her performative video work with jellyfish in the Oslo fjords.

It’s minus 10 degrees Celsius outside. Elly Vadseth’s studio is spacious with a high ceiling. The afternoon sun beams through the windows facing a dense forest, and we can get a glimpse of the Oslofjord through the naked trees. Pictures of jellyfish are hanging from the ceiling mounted on a soft, skin-like material. Notes, quotes, books, pictures and sketches are neatly scattered across the tables and walls. Surrounded by Elly’s art projects, I sit down on a warm sofa. The room is filled with pleasant aromatic scents, and Elly explains that it is mint and thyme. She gives me a cup of tea, and I can feel that my pulse slows down. I let out a light sigh. With two meters distance, we are catching up on what has happened since the last time—about adventures and upcoming artistic projects. We are both happy that the

strict Coronavirus measures have eased up, even if only a bit.

Elly Vadseth is an interdisciplinary artist and researcher with a background in video art and performance theory/choreography based on Nærnes, a peninsula in the Oslofjord. Her artistic practice circulates around water, environmental philosophy and ecology. Upon returning to Norway after half a decade studying and working in the U.S., she discovered several uncanny changes in the fjord where she had grown up. The cod is almost gone, mussels are disappearing, and nearly invisible sea walnuts are drifting in, multiplying in increasing numbers, changing the fjords’ bodily feel and ecological constellations. She looked at the narratives being told and believed it lacked nuances. In her art practice, she seeks to look at the deeper roots, about why this is happening and the human entanglement.

Elly was one of five artists invited to participate in a group exhibition titled “Submerged Portal”¹ at Kunstpllass Contemporary Art [Oslo] dedicated to the world’s complex ecosystems, and particularly the basic element sustaining us all, namely, water. As a curator for this exhibition, I drew inspiration from Astrida Neimanis’ theory of hydrofeminism and her book *Bodies of Water*. I believe Hydrofeminism offers us a new approach—or portal—to interpret ecological ethics and intersectionality. In line with Neimanis’

thoughts, I came to realise the obvious: We are all bodies of water—and hence connected to each other across time, spaces and species. Our watery bodies are inseparable from other bodies of water, the oceans, and the global pressing ecological wounds and world’s troubled waters. Water is life-giving, but also linked to power structures and politics. The world is experiencing frequent water crises such as droughts, fresh-water shortages, floods, contamination, construction of mega dams leading to displacement, and control over bodies of water.

In the exhibition “Submerged Portal,” Elly showed her video-installation *Sensate Drifter(s)*. In our conversations prior to the exhibition, she told me that she is exploring corporeal interactions as well as human and suprahuman watery choreographies in addition to ideas of protection and interspecies vulnerability. I have come to Elly’s studio to talk more about her conceptual thinking behind the video performance *Sensate Drifter(s)* and her artistic practice in general. I am particularly curious about hydro-choreography.

Vibeke Hermanrud: I want to go straight to the performative video work *Sensate Drifter(s)*. With your background in choreography and contemporary art, how was your artistic process when you created it?

Elly Vadseth: I started as I usually start when I make works: There is something in my surroundings that influences me and that I become curious about. In 2019, I came over a large bloom of jellyfish, transforming the fjord where I live to what can best be described as a gelatinous membrane. A warning sign, perhaps, of dramatic changes happening in known and unknown worlds below sensory surfaces. After this intense encounter, I have researched the life and rhythms of gelatinous beings through a scientific, philosophical and embodied lens. I'm interested in the choreography of the everyday, both biological and socially-constructed. In *Sensate Drifter(s)*, I worked with gelatinous beings during the seasons; from spring, through summer, and until they start to disappear in the autumn, as a lens to research larger ecological constellations.

The rhythmic and relatively slow movement of these oceanic drifters with an embodied intelligence that sits in their whole body has inspired me to think and move differently in order to imagine alternative movement patterns in relation to watery ontologies that are undergoing large changes. Through *Sensate Drifter(s)*, I chart out a constellation of relationships between different

organisms, rhythms and technology that connect different temporalities. The jellyfish are some of the oldest species we have on our planet and have historically been overlooked by science. I'm curious about what our own bodies and a closer, more intimate intra-action with these beings can teach us about our possibilities for collective adaptation in the dramatically changing climate that is becoming wetter and warmer. Jellyfish are some of the water species that seem to be very resilient to changing conditions in the ocean. Honing in on their rhythmic and watery choreographies, I'm interested in what we can learn by slowing down and living more cyclically. These are questions I have begun exploring in the piece. I believe that connecting deeper with other organisms and their lifeworlds in the Anthropocene can make us understand on an emotional level our own vulnerability in the constantly shifting state of interspecies relationships, both now and in the future.

The work *Sensate Drifter(s)* represents the first work on a longer journey, which I hope will have many manifestations and connective flows. The sequencing of the work is a constellation of relationships. In *Sensate Drifter(s)*, I stitch together



aquatic constellations including microorganisms, gellata, cyborg jellyfish and the human aquanaut in intra-action within the screen and outside.

I find these jelly-like bodies mesmerizing and mysterious in the way they move with the ocean currents. They are everywhere—aliens like in the deep part of the oceans, fluorescent beings navigating troubled waters, drifting through plastic debris and migrating from one place to another with ballast waters of cargo ships connecting oceans. On a sensate and personal level, I have encountered many *Stenophora* drifters gliding over my skin when I swim in the sea and have through the work sought out *Cyanae Capitata*, the stinging jellyfish native to the waters where I live. These encounters are sometimes unpleasant or strange, but also make me feel connected to a textured reality of the changing alchemy of the ocean. I think the ocean is not a beautiful thing separated from us; instead, I am interested in our multisensorial entanglement. When stretching out, the lion's mane jellyfish seeks out food or feels out their environment. When the human and the jellyfish connect, a sensorial nestle transfer happens, which we sense on our own skin when we step out of the water.

V.H. Have you been inspired by Astrida Neimanis' *Bodies of Water* and Hydrofeminism, which is a conceptual backdrop in the exhibition "Submerged Portal?"

E.V. I was delighted to discover the work of Astrida Neimanis through the "Submerged Portal" curatorial project because this work builds on my previous research and collective practice in the U.S. centered around water, knowledge production and performance with the organization Mountain Time Arts. I have also engaged with other work theorizing submerged perspectives and emerging embodied epistemes through the work of Macarena Gomez Barris and others. Reading *Hydrofeminism: Or, On Becoming a Body of Water* by Astrida Neimanis during my own creative process, I found the words for many of the things that I had been exploring through intuitive and embodied methods. I was especially taken by the concepts relating to hydrology and water-logic. Jellyfish are watery organisms that have a very interesting rhythmic hydrology; in some ways, I think jellyfish and their blooms can be seen as sensate signals or watery manifestations of the ocean and her health. Our body also has a hydrological rhythm, especially female



bodies, which I think is important to listen to more attentively and make more space for in daily life. Post-human phenomenology and corporeal philosophers such as Donna Haraway, Macarena Gómez-Barris and Stacy Alaimo give voice to these more embodied knowledges and questions socially and historically constructed thoughts and movement patterns. In light of this, I find it inspiring to reimagine how we can potentially perform/dance with other organisms and weather.

In our moment with so much overstimulation, I think what we need is space in everyday life to move more slowly and think slower thoughts. This slowness has been amplified in the pandemic when it comes to travel and economic growth. It is paradoxical that many of us feel that there is “not enough time,” because we have it. I think we need to reconnect with the environments we are a part of and, in the process, our own body.

V.H. Can you say something more about how you work with movement in your video practice, which you refer to as video performance?

E.V. The camera is a choreographic tool in my video performance work. The camera allows processes to unfold and

submerged gestures to be revealed within the intra-actions of weather, body, ecology and space. I’m interested in the possibilities within video performance and video installation for sensate worldmaking that play with time, scale, transformation and connectivity between beings. This way of working with video has a long history within cinema and contemporary dance, where the working methods of one discipline leaks into another. Since I am originally trained as a painter, video performance allows me to work affectively with time, colour and movement, making works that become over longer periods of time. I’m interested in the screen as an intimate companion in contemporary life, where we constantly consume stories and audio-visual information. Media affects our bodies in many ways and I’m critical of this influence while trying to create new video experiences where we are not disembodied, but become more aware of our bodies in space. In my work, I want to create spaces where there is an active interaction between the virtual bodies inside the screen, in the case of *Sensate Drifter(s)* both the jellyfish, human and the small microorganisms, and the body that is on the other side of the screen in an exhibition space. The actions are non-linear, like our



movements—cyclical instead of having a beginning and an end. You can enter the experience at any time in the video and different narratives might emerge through the scenes. In its most basic form, choreography is a sequence of movement. Likewise, the video is a sequence of connections, movement images and time. A journey looping, perhaps like how time is measured in different places? Changing based on who is deciding how to measure it. The human can thus find several paths through the work. There is not one conclusion, but rather opening to different choreographies and choreographic images.

V.H. Do you also work with live art, performance and choreography?

E.V. Yes, live performance is at the core of my process for making video installations. I don't really consider them as separate entities. I feel like the boundaries of what is live and what is mediated and what is "the real" is a magical space to explore. I perform live as a performer in my own work when I'm out in public space making the work. The audience in these instances can be birds, insects, trees or other human beings. I also work collaboratively with other artists as a performer. I have worked with the artist

and choreographer Ann Carlson as a dancer and an assistant choreographer in the piece *The Symphonic Body/Water*, which was a performance made entirely of gestures and included fifty people from the Gallatin Valley who shared their lives and work. For the piece, we met with each performer and built gestural "portraits" together based on their oral stories and body language connected to water. I've continued working in this vein, thinking of the conscious and unconscious gestures of life. Currently, I'm working within Margrethe Pettersen and Richard Sveen on their sound work "Remembering with Rivers," which is a 10-year project from 2020–2030 with one year dedicated to each river running through Oslo. The main question in the project is "What can we learn by listening to a river?" We are creating a performance along with the Alna river, who is the central actor in the piece. The choreography will reflect on the shapeshifting nature of the river during the cycles of the year and the plant life sustained by the river and wetlands.

V.H. From your part, the artistic result more often becomes a video or multi-channel video?

E.V. I like working within the installation medium because I can then work

performatively over longer periods of time, often many times over several years, creating worlds in motion. Through improvisational processes, I explore connectivity between interconnected bodies affected by the atmospheric processes around us and the biological signals we send and receive. In my installations, I'm interested in opening up new worlds where organic processes of composting, rest, activity and growth are scores. A sense of play and humour is important to loosen up strict boundaries between our own bodies and other bodies and intimacies. Gestures like submersion or drifting repeat in many of my works, including *Sensate Drifter(s)*, with an intent to move through, with and beyond what is easily described in oral language. As a continuation of *Sensate Drifter(s)* gliding through water surfaces, I'm now working with the changing states of ice, using my own body as a research tool of new winter choreographies. The icy water is powerful. It can be very sharp, or soft, translucent and gelatinous when melting, forming a floating membrane on the water surface like the bloom of gelatinous beings that started this project.

When leaving Elly's studio, it is getting darker outside and the winter gives my cheek and nose a cold bite. I imagine Elly swimming between ice floes, and am amazed by her courageousness and inspired by how she combines conceptual thinking and bodily experiences when creating art that matters.

1) The group exhibition "Submerged Portal" at Kunstplass Contemporary Art [Oslo] took place from 12 December 2020 to 17 January 2021. The exhibition was curated by Vibeke Hermanrud as a result of a participatory and explorative process that started on a hot summer's day in August 2020. In addition to Elly Vadseth, who presented the video installation *Sensate Drifter(s)*, the other participants in the exhibition were Kristin Bergaust, Randi Nygård, Elin T. Sørensen and Tanja Thorjussen. The exhibition was accompanied by an exhibition catalogue, which had been developed into a small anthology consisting of texts, poems, art works and quotes by the artists in the exhibitions, as well as others who have been of inspiration. Worth mentioning is a text about the video installation *The Fountain* by Rebecca Belmore (CA) and a brief interview with Ingela Ihrman (SE).





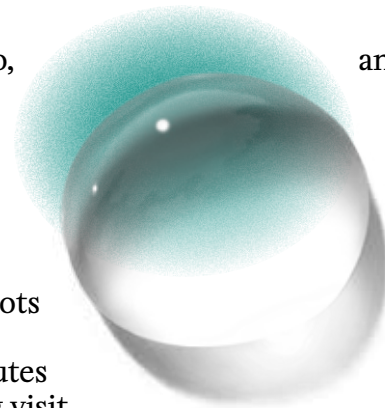
CONFESSIONS OF
A SWIMMER.

AXEL
ANDERSSON

“Confessions of a swimmer” is the first chapter of historian and writer Axel Andersson’s book *“The Colonial Swimming School”* (published by Glänta in 2016). The book draws a global history of swimming: between swimming cultures and transmission of body techniques. In the book, Axel points at how crawl—as a once forgotten swimming style in the West—is re-introduced through colonialism and appropriated as a western technical knowledge.

The scout from Wapakoneta, Ohio, was a certified pilot before he got his driving licence. But now, he seemed a bit nervous, for understandable reasons. It’s not every day that you experience something for the very first time. It’s 1969, and Neil Armstrong’s boots are blindingly white against the sooty lunar gravel. Nineteen minutes into the two-and-a-half-hour-long visit, he is joined by his colleague, Edwin ‘Buzz’ Aldrin. Both are veterans of the Korean War. This time, there is no enemy as such. The astronauts perform a long line of carefully prepared experiments. For a few minutes, Aldrin tries different ways of moving in this environment, whose gravity is equal to one sixth of Earth’s. He jumps in his big, white suit. Like a wrapped-up preschooler among puddles. A dance in weightlessness. You can’t see any facial expressions behind the visor, but it’s not hard to picture a smile.

Sixteen years later, a little boy in a mill town in western Sweden experiences similar weightlessness. In other words, a repetition. And this time, it’s more about tight-lipped survival. Gravity lets go without the subsequent smile. But everything else is right. Children don’t have to go to space to understand. The moon landing had been shown on TV. A foot angled against the tiles of the swimming pool floor to kick off. The boy’s body floats up towards the surface, to then slowly sink again. His arms fold out as if

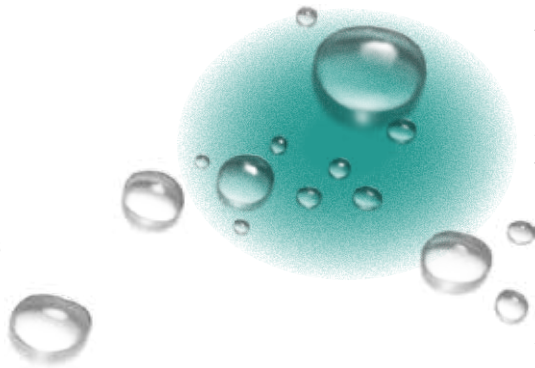


an invisible fan had been placed between them. It’s supposed to be breaststroke. It’s not breaststroke. The boy is cheating.

He tries to avoid the audience. It’s better if nobody sees his leaps. They are absolutely not to be immortalised like the moon landing. The best thing would be if they remain a private story, one that you can try to forget. Swimming instructors patrol the edges of the pool. They are armed with giant aluminium hooks, exaggerated bishop’s staffs, wandering to and fro as if on ramparts, looking down into the moat. But that’s not what’s happening. In reality. Sometimes, they bend down to offer advice to a child who isn’t doing very well. If someone starts flailing about and losing concentration, they lower their staffs. The boy focuses on Buzz Aldrin’s hops. He touches his foot to the bottom when the adults look away. When his head goes under the surface, he clenches his eyes closed compulsively. He can’t even watch underwater documentaries on TV; looking under water is out of the question. Just thinking about it fills him with terror. It’s twenty-five metres to the other side. An eternity. It feels like an atmosphere almost devoid of air. Blood rushes through

his body. But eventually he arrives, and climbs up the ladder. Feeling the weight placed on his shoulders is surprising. He runs to the changing room on his tiptoes, but is no longer light as a feather. Cheating is wrong. He knows. Is it possible to say that this was an emergency? Space is as frightening as it is fascinating. Water, on the other hand, provokes almost nothing but anxiety, at least under the surface. No matter how hard he tries, learning to swim seems impossible. He has given up. Nobody has noticed. He feels an emptiness. As if he were invisible. Nobody even tells him to go slower across the cool tile floor.

In the summers, Swedish newspapers are filled with gruesome drowning accounts of people who were swimming one moment, and disappeared into a silent death battle the next. Over one hundred people's dreams and expressive faces are erased every year in the murky waters of Nordic nature. They are often men, and alcohol is often involved. Evening dips leading to eternal night. Another large group is children. Suddenly, the number of young ones playing at the beach is reduced by one. Someone ends up under the surface.



Drowning is the most common cause of death among young children in Sweden.¹ Adult women, however, are markedly underrepresented in these statistics.²

These statistics show a picture of different societies, and expose more differences than those between the genders. Drowning deaths are an issue of class, and in the end, of colonial fault lines. Every year, 450,000 people drown in the world. Far more than the number of comrades of Armstrong's and Aldrin's who fell in the Korean War, and even 50,000 more than the number of Americans who died fighting for the US's star-spangled banner during the country's four years in the Second World War. 97 per cent of those who die from drowning currently disappear under the surface in what the World Health Organization now calls low- and middle-income countries. An African man is twice as likely to drown as a European man, and an African woman three times as likely to drown as a European one. Similarly, the differences between European low- and middle-income earners and high-income earners respectively are enormous.³

The fact that poverty and the risk of drowning go hand in hand is evident from Swedish history too. In 1890, 1,078 Swedes met their deaths through drowning; the number of deceased persons per 100,000

people was then greater than for the African men of today (21.7 and 19.2 respectively), the group currently fairs the worst in international statistics. Since then, the curve has pointed downwards: in 1940, 475 people drowned, in 1990, 169.⁴ From historically low numbers during the first decade of the 2000s, there has now been a slight increase; 137 people disappeared into the depths in 2014, and almost nine out of ten of them were men.⁵ In 1898, drowning was the most common kind of violent death in Sweden.⁶ The reason for the high numbers was mainly a lack of swimming ability, which, throughout history, has mostly affected children, whose ability to evaluate risks is poorer than adults'. Only slowly, and through mass education from organisations such as the Swedish Life Saving Society, did the trend turn around. In 1899, only 12 per cent of Swedish schoolchildren could swim, a number that had risen to over 22 per cent in 1913.⁷

The Swedish curriculum's swimming ability requirement was clarified in September, 2007. Swedish schoolchildren must now, at the end of sixth grade, be able to swim 200 metres, of which 50 backstroke, but according to a 2010 report from the Swedish National Agency for Education, 8.3 per cent of the students don't reach the goal.⁸ Reports about dramatic differences in swimming ability within the city of Stockholm came out in 2012. In Östermalm, a wealthy part of the capital, 67 per cent

of children in second grade had some swimming ability before they came to the Sports Office's swimming training; in poorer parts of the city with a higher share of children born outside Europe, like Tensta, the figure was four per cent.⁹

Liberal Commissioner of Education Lotta Edholm's response to the exposed inequality was that 'all children have different starting points. Many come from cultures where being able to swim isn't considered as important.'¹⁰ 'Children of foreign origin who are unable to swim' has, in Sweden and large parts of Europe, appeared as a new category of drowning victim.¹¹ There are frequent discussions about how swimming ability is 'viewed,' i.e. swimming's cultural dimension. The fact that Sweden has been going through a cultural revolution since 1890, changing from a drowning to a swimming nation, is talked about less often. And one thing that is practically never discussed is that swimming used to be 'viewed' as important in large parts of the world, and that swimming ability was far more widespread outside Europe than within the continent's borders.

Talking about 'cultures' risks leading to static stories about 'peoples.' And in cases where cultural changes over time are discussed, it's mostly in terms of 'development' or implicit civilisation advancement. History is, however, far more complex than that. Swimming is indeed culture, there is nothing 'natural' about

different ways of staying above the surface and moving through water. Swimming is a technique, and as such it has been invented, taught, passed on, and often also forgotten. The simple difference between nature and culture is that culture requires teachers to train new generations. This is a book about how the West lost its swimming teachers during the Middle Ages, and found them again in the modern era. More specifically, it's about the fastest and perhaps most refined swimming technique, the *crawl*, a technique that the swimmers of the West learned around the turn of the twentieth century from a world that had retained its swimming ability—the world they had colonised.

There are two stories about how the little boy in the mill town in provincial Värmland learned to swim. For a long time, his childhood visits to the waterside were a frequent form of torment. He had cheated his way to a swimming badge in order not to have to get in the water. Instead, he brought books to the beach, read and fantasised, and eventually became an 'I'.

The first time I learned to swim cannot be described in any other way than as a swimmer's origin story. It was, of course, in the classical Mediterranean Sea. The sea of Odysseus and Leander. The night I ran through was warm and black as ink. I flew over

the edge of the Turkish pier and fell for an eternity before I hit the soft embrace of the water. I sank wondrously and for a long time before everything changed and my body rose. The mere thought of doing something similar had previously filled me with terror. Once I reached the surface, I discovered two things: I wasn't scared, and I could swim. Something fantastic had happened.

Or had it? This is where grammar's first person singular disappears into a familiar story. Sudden exposure and then conversion. The story has been written many times. It's a product of European romanticism with its epiphanies and individual victories. I can, contrary to my rational reasoning ability, deceive myself into believing that I learned to swim when peer pressure on a school trip dissolved my judgement, and I ran straight into the Mediterranean. That is not what happened, of course. Swimming isn't a reflex. I had received instruction on how to swim in the municipal swimming pool before my test. I had also seen others swim. The fact that I cheated signified fear rather than lack of ability. The fear of water needed merely to be incapacitated for one crucial moment.

I *could* swim, but that was it. A slightly desperate and splashing breaststroke, for a few minutes. Even though I



was basically an adult, I was still unable to swim one length in the pool. And the requirement for my development was probably not more nightly dips. The missing component was teachers.

Swimming is part of what French anthropologist Marcel Mauss described as *les techniques du corps*, or 'the techniques of the body' in a classic lecture from 1934. They include basically all our movements. How we walk and how we stand, how we sit and eat and run and make love. All of this, we learn from teachers. Even Buzz Aldrin's hops were the result of a kind of education. Not at astronaut school, but at nursery or among friends he played with. It's thanks to technical stories that we can see through the romantics and their baggage of innate talents, natural skills, and predetermined destinies. In Europe, swimming is intimately connected with the romantic movement, which has led to its historical background being forgotten. The purpose of a technical, anti-romantic approach is to remember, to recall the forgotten.

But for technical history to be fully understood, the term 'technique' must also be reviewed. The bodily technique that Mauss spoke of, and the mechanical technique or technology that our information society is so fascinated by, can be understood as a situation in which a certain form only includes given content, one function. Thus, in technology, individual intertwinements between form and content

appear self-evident, even natural. All the parts come together in one unit, like a body movement or a computer. Eventually, it becomes difficult to separate form and content from each other, which can make trying to understand what happens when a technique is mastered incredibly frustrating. Suddenly, the penny drops. We are able to ride a bike, or swim, and we don't think about it anymore.

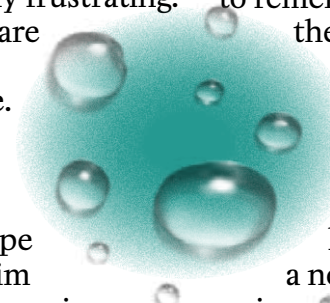
So, the West had to learn to swim again, especially when it came to the crawl. It was a historic process. People in Europe had largely forgotten how to swim at the beginning of the modern age, i.e. from the end of the Middle Ages to the end of the 18th century. Only one technique, breaststroke, remained, and played an important role in swimming's renaissance, which was connected to the early 19th century's romantic cultural currents, with their classical ideals and fascination with nature. What we call the crawl seems to have disappeared completely, however. This technique was 'imported' from places outside the West in the colonial world, in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The West attended a colonial swimming school.

This view of swimming's history could be presented as a body technique unit, but it's not complete if we don't, for a moment, keep the parts (form and content) separate. On the other side of 'technique' are the mediums, such as the text in which

the technique is recounted (mediated or metaphorised). In the story, it becomes possible to separate form and content. The story, which can also be an image, is the only chance we have to learn a technique, and, perhaps more importantly, to remember that we have learned it. When

the technique appears monolithic, it means either that we don't understand it, or that we have forgotten that we once learned it. This can have far-reaching effects. In swimming's case, it has meant that the importation of a non-European movement could be so incorporated into Western culture that many people now believe that westerners are *naturally* good swimmers. In other areas of our technological reality, this can lead us to give enormous power to the few who manufacture and provide our technology and technological systems. Which is what is currently happening in our high-tech society. Only a small number control and understand the devices and structures that have become essential for society at large.

Media played an important role the second time I learned to swim, for real this time. I was in La Paz, Bolivia, and incidentally lived close to a swimming pool. 3,600 metres above sea level, the lack of oxygen means that gravity feels doubled. A simple stroll takes effort for a recent arrival, and running is a real challenge. One side of the swimming pool building was made



of glass, and the building was high up, just by the edge of the steep valley, a crease in the Andes, to whose sides La Paz clings. From the somewhat lowered angle in the water, you could see through the windows, straight across the space of this valley. Your gaze would land on the highlands, northeast of the city, and on the Andes *cordillera*, mountain range, a never-ending row of six-thousand-metre-tall peaks reaching for the sky. Thus, in one direction, if I did breaststroke, I had the pleasure of sinking down into the water with my stroke, to then rise out of the blue and see all this. There was often a layer of fresh snow on the peaks, as if someone had carefully dusted them with icing sugar.

The swimming pool in which I tried to learn to swim was also used by conscripted seamen from the nearby military compound. The navy lacked a swimming pool, and had to use the municipal one. Since Bolivia lost its beaches to Chile during the War of the Pacific in 1883, the soldiers also lacked a sea. Each year, thousands of conscripts are prepared for life on non-existent ships on a sea they don't have access to, yet. They must master techniques, like swimming, which will one day fulfil a purpose. There is something beautiful in the idea of a nation instructing its citizens in something that remains a dream.

Unlike me, the young, conscripted, Bolivian men had an instructor. I began studying instructional videos on YouTube

ahead of each session instead. What I saw was a fascinating mediation of technique. The more professional videos used underwater images and slow motion. The knowledge of my new teachers seemed unlimited. Once I achieved moderate success in mastering a steadier version of my previously splashing breaststroke, it was time for the crawl. It didn't take long to discover a number of breaststroke and crawl hybrid techniques. Soon, it became just as interesting to understand how the techniques appeared and were passed on by various teachers around the world as it did to learn them.

We, and by this I mean a human collective that includes both Bolivians and Swedes, have often learned that the West is responsible for most of the world's technological advancement. From the political institutions of the Greeks to the looms of Lyon and Manchester, and the Apple computers of California. The rest of the world has had to adapt and try to catch up. Reality is, of course, more complicated. The crawl technique may appear insignificant in the context, but it's simultaneously deeply emblematic. The story of how the West learned to swim in the colonial world is an

illustration of the kinds of processes that are rarely discussed, and even less frequently studied. Oblivion has been, and is, colonialism's tool of choice. A new, post-colonial history requires memory to play a more active role, and in a wider sense than remembering the terrible crimes that were and are part of the ravages of colonialism.

The idea of *naturalness* is often oblivion's best ally. Part of Western mentality has been based on the idea that white people are naturally superior to groups who don't physically look like westerners, and who live in other cultures. According to some, this supposed superiority is evident in white people's ability to think rationally, and to master certain body techniques, such as swimming, for instance. The defence for these kinds of arguments has often been that other groups are good at other things.

Naturalness is a deceptive argument in scientific clothing, which has little to do with science. Next to nothing is natural on a general, human level. The physiologically biggest differences in what we look like can be found between the genders, and these differences are the same in all ethnic groups. When it comes to expression, only our reflexes can, in any way, be described as natural, even if they have developed evolutionarily over time. But it's about as hard to build cultures from reflexes as it is

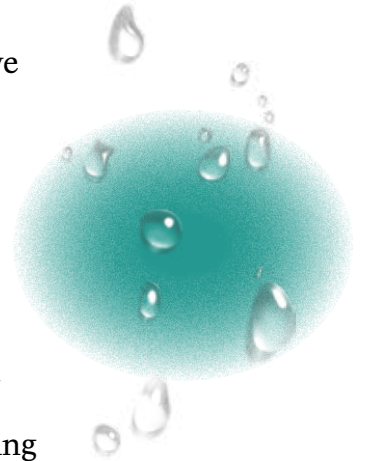
to learn to swim by jumping into the water without prior skills. Man is a technical being, and has been since long before we invented what we now commonly refer to as technology. Humanity is actually a process, a becoming that is characterised by the ability to retain skills across generations. Even animals, mainly other primates, can become part of a similar process of becoming more and more human-like as they practice the same ability. This 'retaining' of skills takes place through constant re-teaching, which, in turn, is only possible through mediums; body language, tales, songs, written stories, sound recordings and moving images.

Belief in *naturalness* has been so strong in the West that it has also put on an irrational costume. When it comes to swimming, the romantic movement was crucial for disseminating the idea that this activity was natural, a way of distancing oneself from mechanical society. At the end of the 18th century, and the beginning of the 19th, when Europeans sought out beaches and waters, they were harbouring a desire to be reunited with nature. The central poets of the time, like Lord Byron and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, spread an image across the European continent of swimming as the perfect way to embrace the elements. In swimming, the body not only observed nature, but entered into a palpable coexistence with it. The deep waters were also, ultimately, a symbol of the sublime, limitless reach of the natural world.

The swimmer became a hero, and separate — like heroes are — from the every-day, human world, which comprised predictable, mechanical ugliness. Even if the romantics, inspired by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, were often proponents of (an exotic glorification of) 'primitive' man, very few seriously believed that non-Europeans had the graces required to become swimming heroes.

The romantic swimmers have their clear place in the cultural history of swimming, but it's a mistake to let oneself be seduced by their ethno-centric flirtation with nature. Even in their version, 'naturalness' becomes a barrier to, rather than an aid for, understanding history. We have a lot to thank the romantics for, but as interpreters of technology and mediums, they're pretty useless. The fact that their ideas still have so much power is as confusing as it is problematic. Part of the reason can be found in colonialism. Throughout romanticism, the West could claim that even its nature worship and spirituality were expressed in ways that were superior to other cultures'. The 19th century saw the beginnings of a kind of argument that remains to this day: non-Western peoples have now adapted to the West so much that they have degenerated. This made and makes it possible for white men and women to play at being 'indigenous' on a level that better lives up to the created fantasy of indigenous peoples.

In this story about swimming, the already mentioned French anthropologist Marcel Mauss and his conclusions about techniques in humanity's culture play important roles. One of the techniques that fascinated Mauss was indeed the crawl, which then, around the mid-1930s, had become the most popular style of swimming in France. His conceptualisation of body techniques benefits from being combined with a much later theory about what colonial reality looked and looks like. In the 1980s and 1990s, various ideas based on a criticism of the Western interpretative prerogative within the humanities developed models for understanding colonialism beyond the binary division between the known and the unknown, which was part of the colonial exercise of power. At the beginning of the 1990s, American language and literature researcher Mary Louise Pratt formulated theories around *contact zones*, a term to describe the contact zones where tangible colonial meetings took place, and where new, fragmented and hybridised realities were created for



both the colonisers and the colonised.¹² The meetings were often violent, of course, and the game was rigged in the Western party's favour. At the same time, this era of genocide saw constant negotiations about positions, and exchanges of ideas and techniques. New, mixed cultures were created in the meeting between people, who, in many cases, had neither chosen nor desired these meetings. These contact zones still exist to a very high degree, as colonial patterns still dictate our world, and because the societies of today (like ours) are as multicultural as they've always been. They also exist on digital platforms, and before that, they could be found at the cinemas. That's where the audience of the time, like Mauss, could go to look at non-European techniques. The idea of contact zones allows us to understand the environment in which techniques are mediated against the background of colonialism. It breaks down the binary image of an essential West that disseminates its knowledge and power across the world, and where other people simply adapt. What appears instead is a different, and far more complicated world, with a history that is global in every way.

Translation: Lisa Klevemark

- 1) *Varför drunknar barn? En retrospektiv studie över barn som drunknat i Sverige 1998–2007 (Why Do Children Drown? A retrospective study of children who have drowned in Sweden 1998–2007)*, Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, 2007.
- 2) 376 women died in drowning incidents from 1997 to 2011. During the same period, 1,778 men died in incidents. Johanna Gustavsson, Lena Olsson and Ragnar Andersson, *Drunkning i Sverige 1997–2011 (Drowning in Sweden 1997–2011)*, Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, 2013.
- 3) M Peden, K McGee, G Sharma, *The Injury Chart Book: A Graphical Overview of the Global Burden of Injuries*, World Health Organization, 2002.
- 4) Numbers collected by Jan Schyllander, Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, in an email to the author on the 3rd of September, 2014.
- 5) "Antal omkomna till följd av drunkning under 2014" ('Number of Deaths from Drowning in 2014'), *Swedish Life Saving Society*, <http://svenskalivraddningssallskapet.se/media/dokument/2014/drunkning-slutgiltig/drunkningsolyckor-2014.pdf> (20th of October, 2015).
- 6) Sven R Holmberg (editor), *SLS 100 år, Svenska Livräddningssällskapet Jubileumsbok 1898–1998 (SLS 100 Years, Swedish Life Saving Society Anniversary Book 1898–1998)*, 1998, p. 14.
- 7) *ibid.*, p. 15, p. 58.
- 8) *Uppföljning av simkunnighet i årskurs 5 (Follow-Up of Swimming Ability in Grade 5)*, Swedish National Agency for Education, 2010, p. 2. The goal applied to grade 5 until 2011, when it was changed to grade 6.
- 9) The percentages relate to composite breaststroke. Ellinor Nilsson, City of Stockholm's Sports Office, in an email to the author, 12th of September, 2014.
- 10) "Stora skillnader mellan Stockholms simskolor" ('Major Differences Between Stockholm's Swimming Schools'), *Dagens Nyheter*, 20th of July, 2012.
- 11) *Varför drunknar barn? (Why Do Children Drown?)*, 2007.
- 12) Beginning in the article 'Arts of the Contact Zone', which was published in 1991. In it, Pratt gave the most concrete definition of her otherwise highly ambivalent term when she wrote about contact zones as 'spaces where cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery or their aftermaths as they are lived out in the world today'. Mary Louise Pratt, 'Arts of the Contact Zone', *Profession* 91, p. 34.



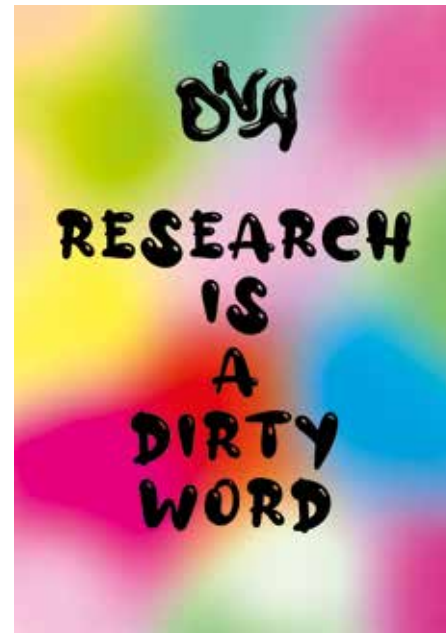
HYDROCAPSULES.LOVE

D.N.A

Hydrocapsules.love is a digital interface edited by D.N.A. (Dina El Kaisy Friemuth, Neda Sanai and Anita Beikpour). During the summer of 2020, as part of the 11th Berlin Biennale, this interface hosted works by various artists, presented an online reading cypher and produced digital content provoked by ideas on eco and hydrofeminisms.

In this contribution, D.N.A.'s manifest is re-published, and previous D.N.A. posters have been transmitted into stickers: ready to dance away from these pages into new locations and objects of your choice.





WELCOME TO THE CRISIS

WE WILL REFER TO THE CRISIS AS A GENERAL TERM. THE WORLD IS AND HAS BEEN IN A CRISIS FOR A VERY LONG TIME.

NOW PEOPLE IN THE WEST ARE TALKING ABOUT A SO-CALLED CRISIS BECAUSE THEY ARE AFFECTED BY SOMETHING TOO.

THE WORLD HAS ENDED MANY TIMES. FOR MANY PEOPLE, PEOPLE OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH HAVE BEEN IN CRISIS FOR CENTURIES, COMMUNITIES HAVE BEEN DESTROYED AND SUCKED OUT.

THE OLD WORLD IS COLLAPSING AND PERISHING AND WE KNEW THIS WOULD HAPPEN TO YOU TOO.

WE NEED THE CONVERSATION OF A CRISIS TO REACH BEYOND WHAT IS HAPPENING RIGHT NOW AND WE NEED THE CONVERSATION TO CONTINUE.

CRISIS IS HERE. LET'S POUR INTO IT. DEMAND THE SYSTEMS TO CRASH. THEY WILL. AND THEY WILL BURN.



WE NEED TO DECOLONIZE
THE WAY IN WHICH WE TALK
ABOUT THE CLIMATE, WATER,
ECOFEMINISM AS WELL AS THE
ANTHROPOCENE—WHICH WE
DON'T LIKE AS A TERM BECAUSE
IT IS ARROGANT AND YET, IT
ALSO IS NOT TRUE THAT THE
SUFFERING OF OUR NATURE IS THE
CONSEQUENCE OF ALL HUMANITY,
IT IS THE CONSEQUENCE OF WHITE
SUPREMACY, PATRIARCHY AND
SIMILARLY SHITTY SUPERPOWER
STRUCTURES.

THE CONVERSATION ABOUT
CLIMATE CHANGE, ECOLOGY, AND
FEMINISMS HAS BEEN OCCUPIED
BY A LOT OF YET PPL. BUT WE WON'T
FORGET THAT YET PPL CREATED
THE PROBLEM TO BEGIN WITH.

WE NEED TO REOVERRIDE THE
CONVERSATION SO IT BENEFITS US!

WATER IS MORE FLUID THAN
EVER. NATURE HAS SHRUNK. WE
ARE ALL BODIES OF WATER. WE
ARE BODIES OF RESISTANCE.
MOVING, FLOATING, FREEZING,
CUTTING, DROWNING, GROWING.

LOVE

D.N.A.





AS THE WATERS
RECALL

PAUL
MAHEKE

In his contribution, artist Paul Maheke revisits the video installation "What Flows Through and Across" through text and images. Presented at Assembly Point in London in 2017, this work is part of Paul's project "Becoming a Body of Water or How to Unlearn Resistance as Opposition," which experiments with new interactions between dance and moving images. The work draws from Astrida Neimanis' concept Hydrofeminism, and

considers water as an affective matter and a receptacle for embodied history.





What Flows Through And Across, Assembly Point, London (2017). Photographer: Ben Westoby

Everything started here.

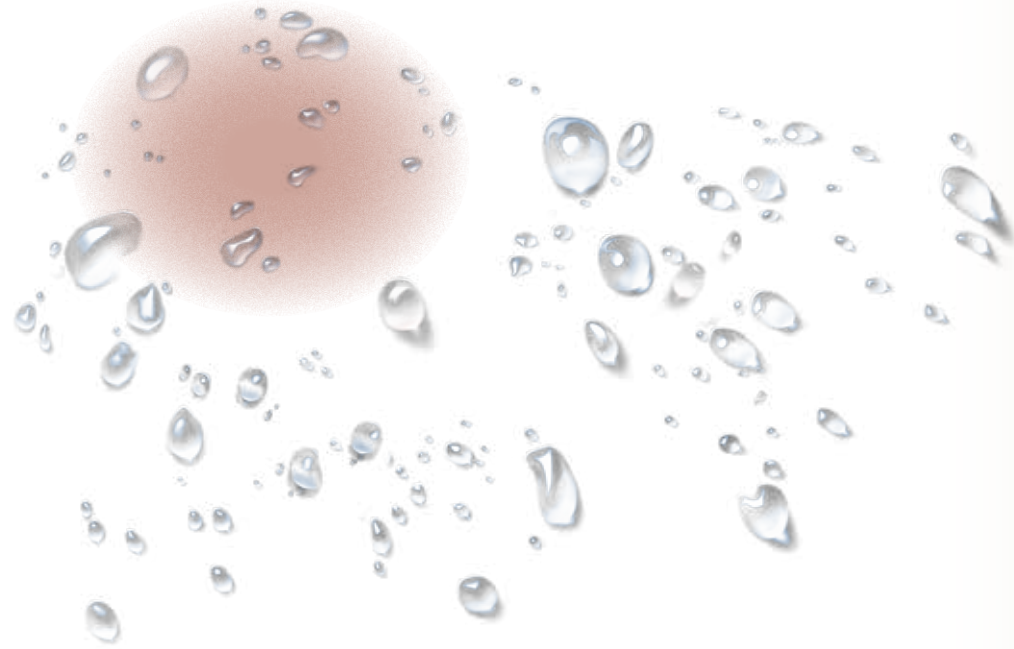
This is exactly where the waters of my body first brought me to dance in my work.

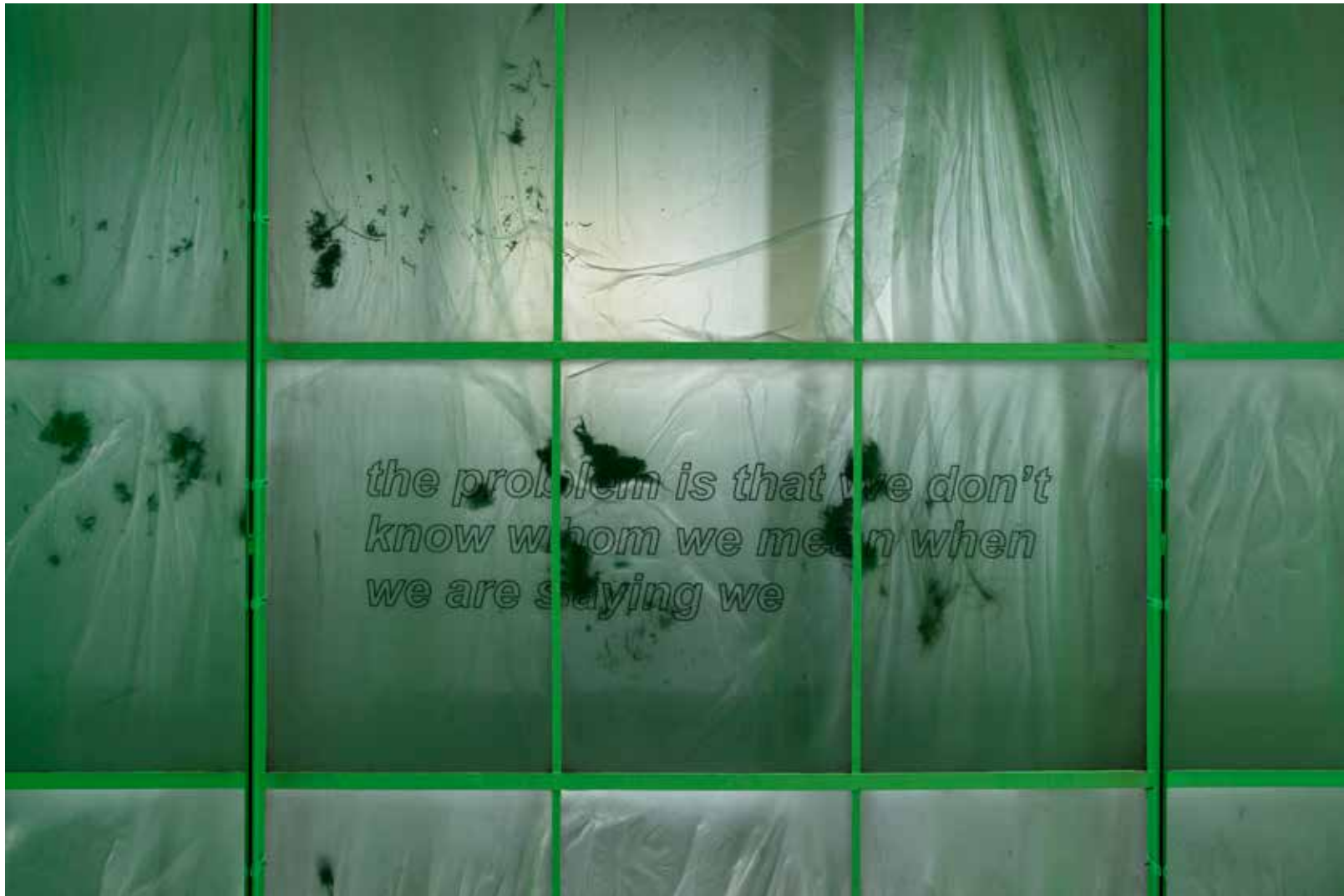
As they recall what they've stored and stacked over the years, the waters also understand they are History. Information and knowledge stacked and stored, here in the watery core of a body that is also History. Be aware they won't let you ignore the way they have stratified overtime to record the raw quality of what has passed through them.

As they find themselves chatting you up, they realise how much they made my body wander the beaches in a relentless quest for understanding. Probably in the hope that the sea would speak to me, I didn't disobey—oblivious to the feeling of being left exposed.

They now awkwardly echo Audre Lorde's words; at the water seeking a place where her past and future intersect, she writes "I hear the water's song, feel the tides within the fluids of my body."

The waters speculate about embodied History and stories that are also bodies, leaking into and sponging off of each other. They speculate about a metaphorical space where confinement and vastness interact. A space where the body they use as a container would expand beyond the border zones of its membrane; set adrift while trying to grasp what flows through and across.





As the Waters Recall, Baltic Triennial 13 at Tallinn Art Hall (2017–2018). Photographer: Karel



As Far As You Are Unconcerned, The Showroom, London (2016). Image courtesy The Showroom.





What Flows Through And Across, Assembly Point, London (2017). Photographer: Ben Westoby





I KNOW
THAT SMELL

ALICE
MACKENZIE

During recent years,
dance artist Alice
Mackenzie has worked
with text, scent, liquid
and zine-making as
choreographic formats.
In this contribution, a
bodily writing into and
through myth, Alice
uses text and imagery
to blur and merge with
personal, fictional and
mythological stories of
the past and present.
Following the textwork
is a series of cyanotype
prints of seaweed and
other material found
near coastlines.

GLEANING

Salt encrusted hair

Crystal tracks catching the light

White tides across skin

She lifted the shell

Felt muscle contracting

From water to air



SELKIE

CHILD BAIRN BARN:
 My mother is drying out, every pore
 gasping. Her skin sticks to itself, sticks to its
 bones. Her knuckles crack open. She sucks
 the blood to make it stop, a temporary seal
 of saliva. Yet we carry on pretending not to
 see. My father meets her rage with eyes that
 look away, stopping up her mouth with his
 stillness. We move ever further inland, away
 from the rising waters and the chorus of
 barks in the night.

She brushes my hair with a wide-toothed
 comb for a long, long time. I stay completely
 still in the hope that she will never stop. As
 she picks up my hand to look once more
 at the web of skin between my fingers, I
 breathe her in. She has been leaving since
 before I was born.

*
 “[...] when Ursilla’s
 bairns were born every
 one of them had web
 hands and webbed
 feet, like the paws of
 a selkie.” Walter Traill
 Dennison, in *The
 Scottish Antiquary*, 1893.

*
 The sea pulls. Out towards the horizon.

*
 Once, many years ago, I dreamt that the end
 of my parents street was covered in water.
 We swam between the icebergs, taking it in
 turns to slide-jump from the pack ice like
 penguins.

Years later I dreamt that the house we
 were staying in had been washed away in
 the night and was floating out amongst the
 archipelago. We didn’t know how to steer it
 back.

In my dreams, I swim.
 I hold my breath, push the water up above
 my head and sink feet first.

Lilac water.

Wine-dark.

Deep-close-in.

English/Scots/Swedish
 There are many dialects
 and variations to
 Scots spoken across
 the South, East and
 Northern archipelago
 of Scotland, including
 Orkney and the
 Shetlands. The Orkney
 Dictionary project can
 be found online and is a
 beautiful thing.

“I long to reach my
 home and see the day
 of my return. It is my
 never failing wish. And
 what if one of the gods
 does wreck me out
 on the wine-dark sea?
 I have a heart that is
 inured to suffering and
 I shall steel it to endure
 that too.” Odysseus
 (Od. 5.219-25), Homer’s
The Odyssey, translated
 by E. V. Rieu (1946).

My gestures are becoming more like my
mother's the longer I am away from her.
I feel her expressions on my face, see her
from the inside of my skin.

★

The sea deepens just before the rocky shore.

SEAL SELKIE SÁL:

I squeeze the last thick globules of milk into
your mouth. It is thicker than clotted cream
and sweet and your eyes half close as it hits
you. The last drops. I slide my body off the
ice. The water is cold and filled with sound.
I arch into the current, feel the explosion
of tiny bubbles rushing over my fur. Speed.
The delight of the water and all the world
below.

★

The soft in-step of a foot rarely used for
walking. Sharp rocks kept cold by sea spray.
We dance. Pushing ourselves upwards,
delighting in the awkward length of our
limbs, the slip of our skin. We rub sweet
herbs into each other's feet, our pelts laid
out close to the ocean spray. Furless skin
turned towards the warmth of the sun,
breath slowing, heads resting on stomachs.
Too weighted with pleasure to notice when
one pelt is taken.

MAN MAN MAN

I know that smell.

"No more riddles.
Bear me witness:
I know that smell. Evils,
Evils Long ago."
Kassandra in
Agamemnon (886, 983),
Aiskhylos, translated by
Anne Carson (2009).

CHILD BAIRN BARN:

You are playing hide and seek when you
find it. Hiding from her as she counts to 10,
slowing down the last counts to give you
time. It's a good day. She wants to play. You
hold onto the shelves and climb up into the
cupboards above the wardrobe. You are big
enough to climb, but just small enough to
fit yourself into the cupboard and close the
door. It smells funny up here. You hear her
coming and quickly shuffle even further
back, up against a pile of blankets. You
smother your giggles in the fabric and your

nose finds fur. You almost cry out when you realise what it is. She hears you. But pretends not to, opening cupboard doors and calling for you in her almost human voice. You push the fur back under the thick wool blankets, hold your breath and then fling open the cupboard door with a roar.

SEAL, SELKIE SÅL:

Life evolving in the surface foam of the washing up bowl, as you worry about reaching the end of the stash of Pepsi Max and I rehydrate seaweed in a glass jar by the sink. I catch a brown green pearl between index and thumb finger and squeeze until it bursts and the salt water trickles out over my knuckles and into the dish water. I watch its path. Then, raising my thumb to my mouth I suck. It tastes of the sea. I close my eyes and sink my teeth in, just above the joint. I hear him shout, the sound of the back of the chair hitting the floor. I feel his hands pulling at me. But I keep biting until my teeth meet each other with a satisfying clink. And then I am in the car. And the light outside is dying the snow blue. And he is driving, with a look on his face that I don't recognise. My hand throbs.

★

The sea.

"Her life is a stopped and stranded thing, a glitch in other people's plans... She is a woman stranded at doorways and passivity is killing her.

There is only one thing she can do."
from *An Oresteia*,
(2009) Anne Carson on
Sophocles' *Elektra*.

CHILD BAIRN BARN:

You are not so little now, and being stranded in doorways is killing you.

To climb up you have to stand on a chair and use a broom to sweep into the back of the cupboard. You are afraid he might have moved it. You gently push around until the blankets fall on top of you in a heavy pile, and it's there. You finger it lightly, bring it up to your nose, brush it against the fine down above your lip. You get into bed with the curtains open and wait for the beam of the headlights to flash across the sheets.

In the green of the half-light you can see her dark eyes are still open. You stand by the bed like you used to do when you

were little, and wait for her to notice you, to see what you are offering. She starts, grabs your wrist with her left hand and tries to find your eyes.

*

Leaking.

I know that smell.

*

Pull. She wraps the pelt around her. Shivers. Quietly, she closes the door behind her.

SEAL SELKIE SÅL:

O river of my home
Brown waters fed from below
Trickling through cracks to meet me.

I climb back in. Lineup the flesh that no longer quite fits. I lick and chew until it is sleek and wet. I massage the skin in the cold until it softens, becomes malleable again. The pain in my right hand sings to me softly as I work. Stretching, working, chewing and pulling until my skin seals shut. The sudden sensation overwhelms me so that I bark in surprise.

And am answered.

I roll off the rock into the cold water. With a beat of my tail, I angle my head out into the dark, towards the sound.

KRACKEN

pour into the gaps between the rock, hovering over the abyss, tasting salt and sulphur and iron and plankton. fizzing, jets of life tickling over each limb. wait. so long that the shoals of fish begin to return, and the brittle star resumes its slow journey across the rock. wait, until, taste-hearing something new somewhere above, push off from the bottom, water all around a flurry of light and escape. shoot upwards, water vibrating. upwards towards the light, towards the warm. a shadow, almost as large, moving in the shallow warmth. reach out a tentacle and softly graze it, tasting. not rock, or coral, or whale. not animal, yet... send a few more tentacles up out of the water, feeling for edges. tug a little, testing.

speed. a dull roaring from above



WORDS REGURGITATED,
SOME STILL WHOLE

BAM BAM BAM

To watch my city burn from afar,
Grief lodging like grit into my flesh,
Rage hardening into pearls around it.
Ball bearings beneath my skin

Shredding.

OTOTOI POPOI DA!

~~Why should I, this foreign girl, speak Greek?~~

O river of my home

As I float here in this tranquil, edgy
rationality

A play without comfort

A woman stranded at doorways,

Listening through windows left ajar

Crocuses. Bird song.

OI 'GO TALAINA

Burning my mind, brain on fire

I know that smell.

To scream in translation.

Bones fractured, wails disjointed,

All routes of return barred.

She calls to tell me to change

the actions of my father.

PAPAI

IOGONAL

OYOTOTOTOI TOTOI

Oh but my love -

How could silence be the right way to greet
you?

O TALAIN'EGO SETHEN

PHEU!

E E AIAIAI

When we are forbidden to gather.

After Cassandra, After Elektra

After Anne Carson translating Aiskhylos
and Sophokles

A KIRCHEN IN DER SOUZE

“Do you know,” she said, “That feeling when you are so tired that all your edges dissolve and you kind of pour out onto all the surfaces and people around you?”



ESQUARY

Twice a day the brown water runs backwards, bringing with it the smell of the sea. Salt water, fish, seaweed. It submerges beaches of shingle, glass and bones, sloshes up over the railings and onto the pavement, lifting huge iron hulls off the mud and bringing galley kitchen tables level again. A man in a Millwall shirt throws eels into a plastic bucket. Gulls follow the tide in, swooping low over bridges, and calling to each other on the wind. Then twice a day four metres of water leaves again.

Out there where the river is widest, she wades past the yellow foam in water up to her knees. She walks half a kilometre, out towards the power station on the opposite bank. She can still hear the faint sound of the fairground on the shore. Screams of glee and eurodisco. The silt squeezes up through her toes, soothing the pain in her feet. Who knows what is in this mud, alive or dead. She has swapped her voice for feet that dance and the slim possibility of love, but now she is done. She feels a sharp pinch, and reaching down picks up the furious crayfish between two fingers. She rips off its head and sucks, throwing the shell into the water. Lying down, the water is just deep enough for her to float.

For two days that summer the river bank is a carnival of people and television crews drawn to the water hoping to catch a glimpse of her swimming upstream, diving for fish off of the flood barrier and singing raucously at the top of her lungs.

“Then your tail will divide and shrink until it becomes what the people on earth call a pair of shapely legs... you will keep your gliding movement and no dancer will be able to tread as lightly as you. But every step you take will feel as if you were treading upon knife blades so sharp that blood must flow.”
The Little Mermaid
(1837), Hans Christian Andersen.

“She laughed and danced with the thought of death in her heart.”
The Little Mermaid
(1837), Hans Christian Andersen.

ISLAND

She leans against the metal railing in the dark and looks out across the frozen water. Beneath her naked feet the rock glistens a deep purple. She waits, wetting her mouth occasionally. She has lost her false teeth somewhere along the way, which doesn't matter much to her now anyway. They had begun to rub and irritate her towards the end. Now she enjoys the feel of the smooth, hard gum against her tongue and the taste of salt water.

She hears them before she sees them. A keening, looping song curls up through the cold air. The sound soars, words chasing each other higher and higher before plummeting into the sea. Just as the small ferry comes into sight, the song falls, and stops. In the silence the only sounds are the ice creaking reluctantly apart and the rattle of her lungs.

The song begins again and the face producing the voice comes into view, the single passenger. B is in her late fifties, and wears the soft leather tan of many years of sunshine. The older woman and the boatman call out to each other, exchanging words. A sudden cackle of laughter lights up my grandmother's eyes and flashes across her skin, catching B's attention. B sees for the first time since...when? She looks around her—at the jetty, the rocks, the small bathhouse.

Come, my grandmother says, her skin like crumpled crepe paper. Let's get you scrubbed up.

Inside the bathhouse the walls are sweating. She smiles at B with her toothless gums, turning her whole head as she looks B up and down, a dance of mischief in her eyes. You'll find the changing rooms over there, she says.

Humming, she selects a few bottles, pours the contents onto the stones. The air sizzles. Throwing seawater over the plastic table, she gestures for B to lie down. She leans in, her hips low. She scrubs briskly behind B's

"B is anybody, and I am nobody." *From A to B and Back Again* (1975), Andy Warhol.

ears, her armpits, under the flesh of each breast. Grey lines of dead skin and grime draw maps over skin left pink, raw, and gleaming. It hurts. As she scrubs, the soft weight of her belly and low breasts beat rhythmically against the top of B's head. B gives herself over to sensation: of being rubbed with a thick layer of pungent fat, the touch of cloth, of being wrapped, swaddled. My grandmother wheezes her weight into B's bones, feeling the marrow spring in response. She is speaking now, immersing B in text. The flood of words continues, B's cells answer, prickling.

Later, they walk to the water, skin steaming. The older woman climbs down the ladder first, her skin singing at the touch of the water. Darlin', she says softly, her voice tasting of wrinkled apples. B follows. It is cold. A spasm of surprise jerks B's body and her eyes are suddenly wild, unsure. B's fingers grip the soft flesh of my grandmother's arm as she treads water frantically for a few moments. Then suddenly her movements slow and her body begins to speak of ease. B dips her head below the waterline and as she breaks the surface she lets out a sharp burst of sound, an ululation of pleasure. The third time she dips below the water she stays under. The older woman waits. Her thin hair catches in the currents. B remains submerged; her chest convulses and her gills flutter open. She dives down.

The older woman stays in the water a few minutes more, accompanying B in her mind. On the jetty she rubs the water off her face and out of hair already growing thick with cold. As she walks to the door the heat envelops her. The dense wall of air leaves her briefly nauseous, elated. She can hear the voices coming from the sauna. Soft conversation. Quick laughter. Lifting the cloth from the table with care, she carries the shroud imprinted with skin and sweat to the line of hooks along the back wall. She hangs it next to the others.

Through the fog of her cataracts she sees the ferry pushing its way through the reforming ice.

A PERFORMANCE

after Kathy Acker, Rebecca Solnit and H.G. Wells
after Lito Walkey

Sound your way west to the sea, to the dead.

She recites their names.

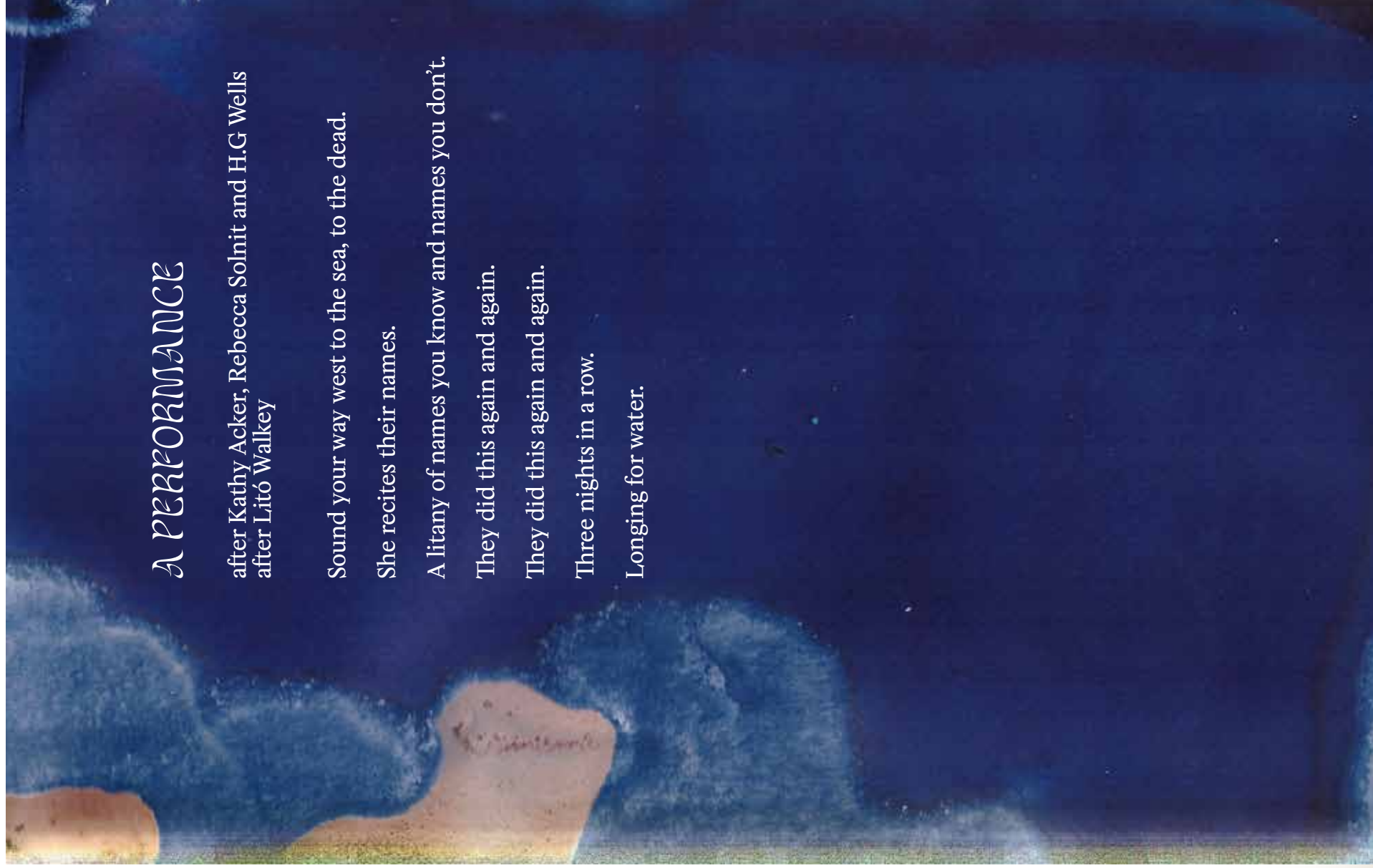
A litany of names you know and names you don't.

They did this again and again.

They did this again and again.

Three nights in a row.

Longing for water.



MATERIALS Cyanotype Images

I Know That Smell
Alice MacKenzie

Bottled scent extraction

Do not drink.

The contents of the bottle attached to this publication have not been made to food standards.

A scent extraction made from steeping plant material gathered along the water's edge at Bokenäset, Uddevalla and Kevinge Strand, Danderyd.

For the most intense smell pour over the hot stones of a sauna.

An early form of photography in which paper or fabric is painted with a combination of ferric ammonium citrate and potassium ferricyanide to make them sensitive to light. Anything placed on the paper during its exposure to sunlight produces an image. Used by 19th century botanists, the technique was also previously used to make blueprints. Anna Atkins, botanist and photographer (1799–1871) applied this process to document her collection of algae and seaweed. She is believed to be the first person to publish a book of photographs, *Photographs of British Algae: Cyanotype Impressions* in October 1843.

Contact printed cyanotypes
Rehydrated-seaweed;
seaweed tincture; mugwort;
St. John's wort; February
sunlight, Stockholm.







OCEAN

EVERY OCEAN
HUGHES

In this essay, artist
Every Ocean Hughes
writes about changing
her name, tracing
intimate story lines
and oceanic memories,
carefully weaving an
exquisite tapestry of
words, queerness and
choice-making.
Originally published
for *Failed States*
Journal in 2018.

It was a slow, persistent desire, a process rolling over me. It was everywhere, it was nowhere exactly, but it didn't go away. I had been softly considering it for twenty years. I used to fantasize about it together with my mom; we'd sit on her bed and make lists. She understood that I didn't need my father's name. I didn't really know him and so why, with all the love I have and have been given, am I identified by a name I don't have a living connection with? Many people have this disorientation through estranged family, gender assignments, and the impacts of colonial and slave histories. Names can be a place where people claim, define and exercise power over others. I've written a new one for myself, a new sentence, Every ocean hews.

Ocean is giving me space as I go about telling people I feel differently. As a sound, a space, a shape, a territory in the middle of my new name, I asked for it. But I made this change without understanding it completely and whenever someone says Every Ocean Hughes I am surprised to hear it. Willful and blind, I announced my new name thinking people would skim over 'ocean' and that it would be just for me, like some form of shelter. And a part of me feels that I still don't know, can't believe you know, have heard, and are calling me that.

My first disorientation could appear to be a classic single parent story, but I'm happy to say there is an unconventional punch line. I have three moms. My mom, her best friend

and my grandmother raised me. And now I've taken a name from that lineage.

Hughes was my grandmother's name. She was Welsh, born into a family of singers and boat captains. She was my emotional home. I helped her die. And when she died, I didn't think about it anymore, I felt it, and I stepped into her name. I've wondered what she would think of this whole thing. She was humble. Gentle, generous, quick to laugh, comfortable in silence. Music soothed her, everything could be talked about. She knew her own struggle and met it in others. She would have understood. When she was dying, I used my hands to soothe her, stroked her hair and head. On her last day, I kissed her forehead and she said, "I know you love me." A little while later she said, "I just want to get out of my own way."

Enid loved the ocean. When she wasn't living with us, she lived on the ocean. She revered and feared it, never once going in above her ankles even though she sat quietly on its shores for a lot of her life.

My family, funnily shaped and rarely sharing space, would gather at the ocean. We: grandmother, mother, other mother, brother, other brother and me, we used to know where to find my dad. Even if he hadn't come around in a long time, we could find him on 12th street. He didn't really communicate much, he's deaf, phones were difficult, and so when I was young we'd go there to check in on him. I'm surprised to be writing this, but changing my name is

paradoxically making me think about him more than ever.

I remember the first time I moved away from home to go to school and we were introducing ourselves through family narrative and geography. I said my dad was a beach boy. In that privileged environment, the other new students thought I meant 'beach boy' as in pop harmony Beach Boys. But what I was saying was I grew up visiting my father in the sand while he rented umbrellas and boogie boards every sunny day from his mid-teens through his forties. It was the only job I'd ever known him to have, until later when he tried to open a health food store between an industrial chicken factory and a Coca-Cola plant on a long rural road in rural Maryland.

After the years of visiting him, knowing he was with the umbrellas on 12th street, and then at the health food store (short-lived), I lost track of where he was. I only know a few things. I know he's always stayed close to the water. I know he made a campaign sign in 2012 that was pro-Obama, against Mitt Romney and had flip flops hanging from it. I know he's alienated from everyone he's ever known. I don't know where he gets money to survive. I don't know how lonely he is or if he likes being alone. I don't know if I'll ever see him again.

I've chosen to change my name away

from the one he and I have shared, yet he still seems to be a part of the story and has a place in my new name. Apparently there is a lot of room in ocean, even for alcoholic dads. Changing a name is negotiating history, family, inheritance, but I've mostly thought of the spaces it opens up. I'm forty-one years old and instead of consolidating my narrative I've dropped the thread. I've taken pleasure in not knowing how to introduce myself, stuttering between names. Pleasure in the moment of recognition when someone says this new name and I get to reply. Pleasure in knowing that some people won't know that I've also been Emily Roysdon, and just being Every in front of them is fine.

The questions of administration of self are also opportunities – for complexity, messiness, simultaneity. I'm embracing these, to be more than one thing. I think each person who changes their name invents their own individualized method, but I can say in my case that having friends as role models opened a world of courage. I was animated by the spirit of queer invention.

Queer invention. Feminist lives. Gay art history. Gay beaches. A few weeks before Enid died, I was on Fire Island staying in a collective house of friends. It was absolutely my heaven. No cars and lots of nudity. The gay beach of my dreams. Friends galore. I remember one afternoon in particular. After a morning of group



swimming and beachy-ness, people settled into solo afternoon activities. I was in the double height living room standing by the windows, looking at the ocean. After a while, maybe thirty minutes, Nicole Eisenman, who had been nearby painting, looked up and asked me if I was working. At first, I thought she was making fun of me... I felt a flash of formless next to her masterful form, but then I realized that Nicky respected my process. She saw it and named it.

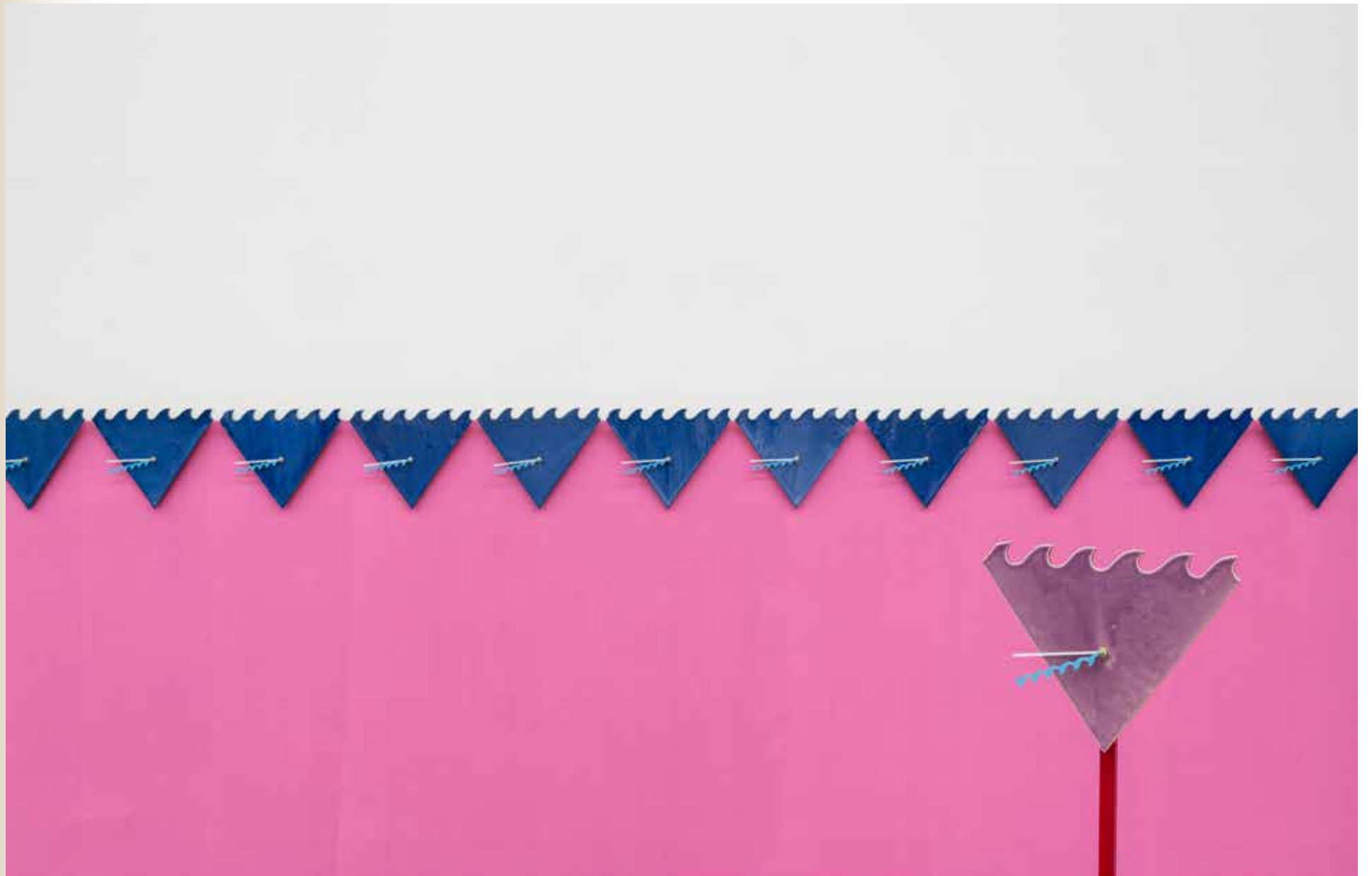
For a few years, I have been writing about transitions. About 'not being the thing itself,' uncounted experience, waves expressing the contour of their bottoms, and finding long lost things underwater that could shift dominant paradigms and ordering energies. I made work about alive time. Then I helped my beloved sister-mother-grandmother die and that experience shifted my ordering energies. To be a part of helping someone have a good death has been the most meaningful thing I've ever done, and since then I've been thinking about something called 'queer death,' wondering what it could mean and building a platform to understand it.

Many years ago, Enid was in her mid-80's and she visited me in NYC to attend her first LTTR* event. The next morning she said, "You wouldn't have known anyone was any different (read: queer) if they hadn't all been so nice to each other." She was attuned to enthusiasms and kindnesses where she could find them. Being kind was queer.

Helping someone you love die is queer.
Changing my name is a kind of queer death.
I got out of my own way.



* LTTR was a feminist genderqueer artist collective with a flexible project oriented practice. LTTR was founded in 2001 by Ginger Brooks Takahashi, K8 Hardy and Emily Roysdon. From 2001-2006 LTTR produced an annual independent art journal, performance series, events, screenings and collaborations.



Every Ocean Hughes, *Beyond the will to measure*, Gwangju Biennale, 2016. Photography by Doyun Kim.



The background of the page is a light, warm-toned surface covered with numerous water droplets of various sizes. Some droplets are in sharp focus, showing their rounded shape and reflections, while others are blurred. On the left side of the page, there is a vertical line of small, dark, circular dots, resembling a perforated edge or a decorative border.

100 WAYS OF WATER

PONTUS
PETTERSSON

100 ways of water is a selected list of water aphorisms from artist and choreographer Pontus Pettersson's work "Hydrologics: Or, the water practice."

The water aphorisms can be seen as such; aphorisms as well as a possible dance, a question to ponder, a choreographic instruction or premonition. They are conceived from different texts by authors like Astrida Neimanis, Rosi Braidotti and Fred Moten to Heraclitus'

ever-changing river to the African concept of Ubuntu. The aphorisms are sometimes direct quotation, sometimes bastardisation or mutated versions as well as Pontus' own writing. For exact origin, please get in contact.

How to use: choose an aphorism of your liking, or whichever speaks to you in this moment. Cut the aphorism from the paper, wrap around your wrist and secure with a piece of tape. Wear until it falls off.

It is only a question of time



Creating new patterning of thoughts



Unfolding both backwards and forwards



Changing the possibilities of change



Thinking with matter



We are never thinking alone



Remain open, attentive, and curious



Find another relationship to nature



What are you giving back?



The body as multiple



A body becomes a prison when it contracts into a whole



Where have you drawn what flows out of you?



Contingently & Changeably



Solid enough to differentiate, but permeable enough to facilitate exchange



Watery being is never directly or symmetrically returned



Always carry traces



Water cannot be disentangled from what we imagine it to be



Embodied & Embedded



Always becoming in webs of mutual implication



Provide the conditions for an unpredictable plurality to flourish



Melancholia expresses a form of loyalty



Ethics has to do with creative becomings



Affirmative and geared to creating empowering alternatives



A nature-culture continuum



We are in this together



To be handled with care



Daily activism



Critique & Creativity



Shedding an old skin



Multi-locality is the affirmative translation of the negative sense of loss



A pursuit of affirmative values as an relational project



A qualitative leap through and across



Amor fati



The affective state underlying all religious experience.



Joyful, connective, and integrative



New socialities



Everything lives, moves, everything corresponds



Illuminate the transparent network that covers the world



An ego disturbance that unsettles the boundaries of the self



Faith holds the key to the act of speech itself



Because I believe, I speak



Loss is the precondition for all symbolic processes



Radically alter your orientation to the world



It's a feeling, if you ride with it, it produces a certain distance from the settled



At rest with the ones who consent not to be one



The sea is that which unsettles being



MORE and LESS than ONE



A citizen of the sea is to be stateless



Remain in the break



Deconstruct notions of the subject as bounded



Fluidity is an abstracted quality



Shift & Shape



Processes of porosity, fluidity, and absorption



Water as the medium of material sociality par excellence



Viscous, as a mode of resistance



We manifest in forms that are provisionally sedimented



Giving voice to a vitality intrinsic to materiality



Slip & Slide



To be surprised by what one see



A collapse of linear time



That which must be given to God



Take a step toward a more ecological sensibility



Water is gestational



Draw upon our own bodies as a well



From potentiality to actuality



Webs of physical intimacy and fluid exchange



We are all bodies of water



Be water, my friend



Water as facilitating bodies into being



All departures are waves



A new hydro-logic



Challenge the phallogocentric enlightenment vision of discrete, atomized, and self-sufficient self



As watery, we experience ourselves less as isolated entities, and more as oceanic eddies



Water flows through and across difference



Water is a conduit and mode of connection



Shift & Shape



Yield into a fluid experience



Eye I, see sea



I am a singular dynamic whorl dissolving in a complex fluid circulation



Join forces



Flow indiscriminately



Like water you have no center



We live in a watery common



Hydro-logics suggest a new ontological understanding of body and community



Ride the wave



Being the material and the mediator



Make a connection



Water have strong cohesive qualities, they tend to stick to each other



Follow sorrow



What if the water in me is the same water in you?



Let it disco



You cannot step into the same river twice



Our bodies take the shape of the contact they have with others



Go water go



Watering this experience



You are because of others



Time and space passing



Radical love making



A constant flow



Everything has been touched by water

The background of the page is white with numerous clear, realistic water droplets of various sizes scattered across it. On the right side, there is a vertical line of small black dots. The overall aesthetic is clean and fresh.

CONTRIBUTORS

Axel Andersson

(b. 1978), is a Swedish historian and writer whose work investigates themes connected to concepts of nature, colonialism and art. He is the author of the books *A Hero for the Atlantic Age: Thor Heyerdahl and the Kon-Tiki Expedition* (2010), *Den koloniala simskolan* (2016), *Atlantvärlden* (2018), *Absolut farmakon: kärnavfall och evighet som tanke och konst* (2019) and *Negative Geology: A Cultural and Technical History of Early European Mountaineering* (2021).



Daniela Bershan

a.k.a. Baba Electronica is an artist, DJ and independent researcher. Through her work—ranging from sculpture and performance to community building and sound—she proposes practices of collective intimacy and care as a way to study and honor affective and relational structures. Her current work is exploring the ecological, historical, emotional and political dimensions of reproductive labour and its re-organisation through different registers. She composes and holds potentia-spaces for erotic/

aesthetic practices and non-monotonic thinking. Daniela co-founded and directed FATFORM (NL), and is co-organising ELSEWHERE & OTHERWISE at Performing Arts Forum (FR) in collaboration with Valentina Desideri.



Bronwyn Bailey-Charteris

is a Swedish/Australian curator, writer and lecturer based in Stockholm. Research interests are focused upon processes of watery thinking in contemporary art, ecology as social metaphor and feminist methodologies of curatorial practice. Working with practical learning platforms, publications, and exhibitions, she currently works with curatorial matters of art and research at Accelerator and as a lecturer at Stockholm University and guest lecturer at the Royal Institute of Art and Stockholm University of the Arts. Bronwyn is also a current doctoral candidate at the University of New South Wales, where she develops her curatorial theory of the Hydrocene.



Izabella Borzecka

works as a curator, producer, editor and organiser in Stockholm, Sweden. She is the founder and director of the non-profit organisation PAM, which operates as a mobile library, residency, publisher and organizer with focus on experimental forms of publishing, choreography and otherwise movement-based art practices. She has been active in the independent cultural sector in Stockholm for ten years, as Director of c.off, Producer at Kritiklabbet, and Chairperson at FOLK i Skärholmen, to name a few. Together with Pontus Pettersson she is co-organiser of Delta.



D.N.A. brings international feminist collective FCNN's members Anita Beikpour and Dina El Kaisy Friemuth together with artist and music producer Neda Sanai. Together they have started a new project *hydrocapsules. love*, which proposes a space both digital and physical. This new project functions as an ecofeminist organism of different collaborations and conversations about an ecological time and space in crisis. Instead of reaching out to be rejected, tokenized

or stepped over, the project organises, takes ownership, and creates communal agency. In this case, the collective is a feminist strategy that cancels the singular artist model as a producer of finished art commodities. The project has been created for the 11th Berlin Biennale 2020 curated by Maria Berrios, Renata Cervetto, Lisette Lagnado, and Agustín Pérez Rubio and is in continuous flow and ever change.



Alex Fisher

is a writer and curator from Buffalo, New York based in Kyiv, Ukraine and Knislinge, Sweden. His interests are in performance, lyricism and lingo in the built environment, and (de)formations of legacy. A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and a Fulbright scholar, he serves as Artistic Coordinator at Milvus Artistic Research Center.



Adham Hafez

is a theorist, choreographer, performer, curator, and composer. He writes on contemporary performance

history outside of western paradigms, on climate change, and postcolonial legacies. He is the founder of Egypt's first performance research platform, named HaRaKa (movement, in Arabic), and, together with his colleagues, the produce publications, pedagogic programs and international conferences, as well as create works striding installation and performance practices for over fifteen years. He studied for his PhD at New York University's Performance Studies Department. He holds a Master's in choreography from Amsterdam Theatre School, a Master's in Political Science and Arts from Sciences Po Paris, and a Master's of Philosophy in Performance from New York University.



Vibeke Hermanrud

(NO) is a curator, cultural producer, communicator, activist and feminist, with an interdisciplinary educational and professional background. In 2012, she and Henriette Stensdal established Kunstplass Contemporary Art [Oslo] as a venue for contemporary art with a political and feminist

undertone. She is currently in her last year of a MA in Curatorial Practice at KMD, University of Bergen. She has previously a BA in Fine Arts and Economics from New York University, and she holds an MSc in Management of Agriculture and Natural Resources in Tropical Areas from NMBU. She left international development work in 2011 for her love of the arts. From January 2021, she is the Head of The Arts and Cultural Heritage Department in Drammen Municipality.



Sara Kaaman is a graphic designer interested in the intersections of publishing technologies, bodies, politics, performance and poetry. Since 2012, she is the graphic designer and occasional co-editor of *Girls Like Us*, a magazine featuring art, writing, politics & pleasure more or less female. With Maryam Fanni and Matilda Flodmark, she forms the research collective MMS, focusing on investigating the (labour) histories of graphic design via feminist theory and practice. Their book *Natural Enemies of Books—A Messy History of Women in Printing and Typography* (Occasional Papers) was published in 2021. Since 2016, she is Senior Lecturer in Graphic Design at Konstfack

University of Art, Crafts and Design in Stockholm, and head of the BA program in Graphic design and illustration with Catherine Anyango Grünewald. As of fall 2020, she is a teacher at the MA in Graphic Design at Estonian Academy of Art in Tallinn. She grows plants and relationships.



Lisa Klevermark

Following graduation from upper secondary school in Kalmar, Sweden, in 2004, Lisa moved to London. The idea was that she would go back to Sweden after one year, but that never happened, and she still lives there today. She started working as a translator in 2012. Some linguistic highlights include translating Tage Danielsson (childhood hero) and Nils Ferlin, and defeating her husband (a native English speaker) on the Scrabble board.



Alice Mackenzie is a dance artist based in Stockholm. Her work

currently tangles speculative fiction, voice and movement scores alongside medicinal plants and cultures of bacteria. She shares these as performances of intimate intra-action and leaky zines. Alice graduated from the MA in New Performative Practices from DOCH/SKH in Stockholm in 2019 and from the BA (hons) in Dance Theatre from Laban, London in 2007. As a performer, she has worked alongside artists including Eleanor Bauer, Siriol Joyner, Ina Dokmo, Mirko Guido, Tino Sehgal, Yvonne Rainer and Oreet Ashery.



Paul Maheke (b. 1985, Brive-la-Gaillarde, France) lives and works in London, UK. After studying at ENSA Paris-Cergy, Paris and Open School East, London, Paul Maheke's works and performances have been shown at Tate Modern, London, the Venice Biennale, Centre Pompidou, Paris, Lafayette Anticipations, Paris, Baltic Triennial 13, Tallinn, Manifesta 12, Palermo and Chisenhale Gallery, London, amongst others. With a focus on dance and through a varied and often collaborative body of work comprising performance, installation, sound and video, Maheke considers the

potential of the body as an archive in order to examine how memory and identity are formed and constituted.



Every Ocean Hughes (EOH), f.k.a. Emily Roysdon (born 1977), is an interdisciplinary artist and writer. EOH's recent projects take the form of performance, photographic installations, printmaking, text, video, and curating. EOH was editor and co-founder of the queer feminist journal and artist collective, *LTTR*. Her many collaborations include music with The Knife, Colin Self, and JD Samson & MEN; costume design for choreographers Levi Gonzalez, Vanessa Anspaugh, Faye Driscoll, and the band Le Tigre.



Pontus Petterson is a choreographer and artist based in Stockholm, working in the expanded field of choreography and contemporary dance. Petterson's artistic work is always a mix of practices and genres, where text, objects, sculptures, and

choreographic instructions are always a part of the whole piece. Applying choreography into everything he does, his work goes from installation work, poetry, and fountains to object making, cat practicing, and dancing. Besides Delta, he is the initiator and curator of the dance and performance festival My Wild Flag together with Karina Sarkissova.



Sindri Runudde is a Swedish dancer and choreographer working internationally. They are working across different fields such as sound art and visual art, and are previously educated in contemporary circus. As a freelance dancer, Sindri has worked for choreographers like: Stina Nyberg, Carl Olof Berg, and Martin Forsberg. As a choreographer, they have created "A sensorial lecture," "Vända och vrida" for Stockholm city theater, and "The Fishing Dance," among others. Sindri works from a queer feminist perspective in their works, and from a lived experience having a visual impairment. They are highly involved nationally and internationally in the disabled/crip dance community.



Sabrina Seifried is a fashion designer and stylist based in Hamburg (DE). Her work situates itself at the intersection of fashion and costume, with a focus on the various visual forms of pop music—from music videos to editorials and live performances. Sabrina is co-founder of the fashion label ADDLABEL in collaboration with Taalke Schöningh, teaches at the fashion design department of University of Applied Arts Hamburg (HAW), and is working with artists like Deichkind, Lady Bitch Ray and Peter Hönemann. Her works, projects and collaborations have been shown at Kunstverein Harburger Bahnhof and Il Caminetto and have been published in *ZEIT* magazine, *REVS* magazine, *Juice* magazine and *ARTE* magazine.



Elly Vadseth (NO/USA) is an artist and researcher exploring shifting ecological, biological and atmospheric relationships and somatic knowledge.

She holds an MFA from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts in Boston, USA. Vadseth's projects have been screened, performed and presented in solo and group shows in museums, galleries, on buildings, in rivers and industrial sites. Recent projects have been presented at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (2018), Mountain Time Arts (Bozeman, 2018), Difrazioni festival (2019, Italy), Adelson Gallery (2019, Boston), Henie Onstad Contemporary Art Center (2019, Norway), Asker Kunstforening (2020, Norway) and at Kunstpluss Contemporary Art [Oslo] (2020).



Delta An Ocean Call

Published by

PAM in co-production with
MOPA Production

ISBN

978-91-519-8460-5

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Minipax
Libre Caslon Text
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Printer

PÅ Media AB, 2021

With support from
The Swedish Arts Council

Special thanks to
Milvus Artistic Research Center
Jonas Williamsson

All images and texts belong to
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otherwise notated

This publication is printed in a
limited edition of 100 copies.

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DELTA



MARC

SWEDISH
ARTSCOUNCIL



Delta is a coming together for choreographic and performative work to be shared and exercised, a place for sharing work by doing the work. A container for participatory projects, dancing, exchange and choreographic inquiries. Delta is organised as evening dance classes, artist zines and thematic publications, like this one: On water histories, narratives and practices.

Water both divides and merges, varies and manifests in different kinds of shapes and structures, acquiring different relations with its surroundings. As a transformative material, could one say that water has a different kind of logic, another kind of dance? In this publication, the contributors Bronwyn Bailey-Charteris, Paul Maheke, Axel Andersson, Sindri Runudde, Vibeke Hermanrud, Elly Vadseth, Daniela Bershan, Sabrina Seifried, D.N.A. (Dina El Kaisy Friemuth, Neda Sanai and Anita Beikpour), Every Ocean Hughes, Adham Hafez, Pontus Pettersson, and Alice MacKenzie share their multi-layered practices, writings, memories and scores on water, inviting you to submerge!

ISBN 978-91-519-8460-5