

## **Introduction.**

# **From Loss to Survivals: on the Reconstruction and Transmission of Artistic Gestures**

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This Intervalla issue on *Loss and survivals: on the transmission and reconstruction of artistic gestures* brings together articles that explore mimicry, transfer and resurgence of gestures in artistic practices. The project has its roots in a panel session organised by the TETI Group (Textures and Experiences of Trans-Industriality) at the 2014 conference of the Association of Critical Heritage Studies at the University of Canberra. The authors look at different types of artistic practices, from performance art to painting and architectural drawing, thereby offering an insight into modes through which gestures can be worked upon as revealing materials in artistic production. The volume combines studies stemming from art historical perspectives, as well as artistic research and aesthetic reflections by artists. In doing so, it aims to shed light onto some fruitful pathways through which gestures can be purposefully conveyed by contemporary artistic strategies to reveal hidden textures of our individual and collective beings.

## FLOATING PASSAGES

In a dim-lit room in Philadelphia in 2005, hanging in mid-air, the long skeleton of a wooden hull shone above dark threatening rocks. The installation by the Northern Ireland artist Brian Kennedy was entitled *Passage*.<sup>1</sup> *Passage*: “the act of passing; movement from one place to another, transit; transition from one state to another; a voyage a crossing; a way by which one passes...”<sup>2</sup> In an essay written to accompany the work, Declan Long unfolded some of the potent associations that the floating gunwale frame carried for the artist and beholder, underlining in particular the journeying, both literal, as the traveler departs on the road or the seas to reach other lands and shores; and figurative, as the artist embarks on an imaginative path to discover new unmapped countries of the mind. Yet another set of associations connected these journeys to lingering, gliding collective practices and memories, with more ‘difficult’ and ‘dangerous’ undertones:

“...think, for instance, of the potential anxieties regarding the need to ‘pay for one passage’, or the threats that lurk behind the requirement of ‘safe passage’. Moreover, this sense of journeys as either fraught with hazards or involving complex social, cultural or psychological ‘bagage’ inevitably suggests the unconscious element that may be common to all apprehensions about journeys: that is, that the journey through life is also a journey towards death.

In this regard, we might note too the strong ritual significance in the idea of ‘passage’, and Kennedy’s use of the term undoubtedly invokes notions such as the ‘passage graves’ of ancient cultures...”<sup>3</sup> Boats have long been used in many diverse cultures as symbols of the journey to the next world. Megalithic tombs were often adorned with such boats, the Egyptians built solar barks deemed to shine at night on the kingdom of the dead, Christians saw the naves of their churches as the arches that would guide them into the celestial world.<sup>4</sup> As Long remarked, Kennedy’s hull evoked not only a spatial movement, but a form of time-travelling that brought beholders in contact with distant collective pasts. On the other hand, *Passage* was also intimately connected to the artist’s personal experience as a lobster fisherman on the western coasts of Ireland as a young man. A personal experience of sea-faring mixed with stratas of collective memory in the Philadelphia installation.

## rites

A decade earlier in the Summer of 1991, Brian Kennedy had co-instigated with Alastair MacLennan, Nick Stewart and Brian Connolly an exhibition in Derry which explored such rites of passage in the contemporary age. The project entitled *Available Resources*, in reference to its meager financial resources, brought artists together to occupy and respond to an abandoned funeral parlour, in Derry, Northern Ireland.<sup>5</sup>

The vacant William Adair parlour provided different historical resonances from one floor to another. The ground floor presented a business front, the first floor dated back to the 1950s, the second floor had kept its First World War decoration, while the top floor harbored a Victorian feel. These vertical layers reinforced the sentiment of the passing of time that the place through its original function immediately conveyed. Interventions and installations in the building fed themselves on invisible spectral layers. Not solely that of the parlour’s past daily business, the men dressed in black

<sup>1</sup> Brian Kennedy, *Passage* (Belfast: Golden Thread Gallery, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> *The Cassell Dictionary and Thesaurus*.

<sup>3</sup> Declan Long, “Passage”, in Brian Kennedy, *Passage*, 17.

<sup>4</sup> *Encyclopédie des symboles* (Paris: Librairie générale française) 76.

<sup>5</sup> Slavka Sverakova & John Nixon, eds, *Available Resources* (Derry: Orchard Gallery, 1991).

Slavka Sverakova, Wandel B. Campbell & Nathalie Perreault, “Available resources: Derry, juin et juillet 1991”, *Inter: art actuel*, n.53 (1992), 38-45.

and the bodies of the departed, the community coming to pay its last homage. But also that of the lives beyond the parlour, memories of those men and women as active, or contemplative, but embodied in the streets of Derry, and of the city of Derry itself as an embodied entity. Kennedy on this occasion had worked with a light touch, by filling some cracks in the walls of one of the disused building's rooms with white plaster. *Remains Intact* used an everyday gesture of the bricklayer, as well as suggested the capacity of the artist to bring healing, to fill in the inevitable gaps brought about by the passing of time.

In reflecting on the 'modus operandi' of *Available Resources*, the artist Alastair McLennan reflected on the term 'lean means', used to describe conditions of artistic production where the acquisition of materials to put on a show are severely limited. Faced with 'lean means', artists could somehow go back to the heart of their trade:

"How can you make something effective that you are satisfied with if there isn't really much money there for buying materials? Artists can, especially if they are doing performance, focus on imagination (...) You rely then much more on simply the actual as it is, and use that as a material."<sup>6</sup>

The actual is not to be understood as a blank canvas: McLennan's *actuations*<sup>7</sup> take place in a moment of presence, yet can carry with them a range of historical layers. In Derry, MacLennan performed a meticulously timed one-hour circumvolution around the Diamond square in the city centre, in the middle of which stands a memorial to soldiers fallen during the First and Second World War. The work revisited traditional military rituals, from both Northern Ireland and beyond, twisted into a rite of secular contemporary exorcism; MacLennan, wearing both Unionist and Republican colors,<sup>8</sup> carried a globe around his neck; however, this symbol of unity unexpectedly broke at the very end of the performance.<sup>9</sup>

## A CABINET OF GESTURES

Cracks that are mended, and cracks that reappear; journeys in the present that summon voyages of the past. Gestures that use and conceal other gestures. In his 2017 *Treaty of gestures*, the literary writer Charles Dantzig playfully proposed to write a 'gestuary', listing gestures ranging from 'gesture with the hands', and 'gestures with the mouth', to 'gestures of singers' and 'gestures of tyranny'.<sup>10</sup> In each of the dictionary's entries, Dantzig traces cultural filiations of particular gestures, seen from an unapologetic personal perspective. The 'gestures with the cigarette' are that of an intensification, where 'a woman could feel more womanly, and a man more manly', with archetypes to be found in popular cinema, Rita Hayworth in *Gilda*, Bette Davis in *All about Eve*, David Hemmings in *Blow up*; 'military gestures' are encapsulated by a heavy hanging hand, sign of mighty casualness, that moves into a discussion of the elegant control of Géricault's *Cuirassier leaving the field of battle* on horseback (1814), before considering the 'regulated' nature of the soldier's gestures. This 'gesturology' is not without its pendant in the traditional reading of images: the *Iconologia* of Cesare Ripa tells painters which attributes should feature in allegorical depictions, but also the appropriate postures to use:

<sup>6</sup> Alastair MacLennan in conversation with the author, the 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2012.

<sup>7</sup> *Actuation* is the term favoured by the artist to describe his performative interventions.

<sup>8</sup> The colours refer to Protestant and Catholic communities, which in the context of Northern Ireland carried a particular weight, given the resurgence of violent conflict from the 1960s to the 1990s.

<sup>9</sup> In her critical essay on the work of Alastair McLennan featuring in *Alastair McLennan. Is No. 1975 – 1988* (Bristol: Arnolfini, 1988), 7-17, Slavka Sverakova underlines the recurrence of interplays between opposites in the work of the performer, that contribute to unveil and release *intensities*. She describes the breaking of the globe in *Available Resources*, 33. The split is also noted by Liam Kelly in *Thinking Long: contemporary art in the north of Ireland* (Kinsale: Gandon editions, 1996), 134, who describes it as "a life/death rift".

<sup>10</sup> Charles Dantzig, *Traité des gestes* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 2017).

‘*discrezione*’ should be represented as a woman of motherly aspect, wearing a cloth of gold, raising her left arm with an open hand in sign of compassion.<sup>11</sup> Consciously or unconsciously, a *mimetic* process is at work; the anthropologist Marcel Jousse stressed the anthropoid’s capacity to ‘interactional mimicry’, characterized by ‘re-play’, through which the perceptions of external expressions are recorded by humans, who are then able to reproduce them, in a memory of gestures.<sup>12</sup>

An interest in human gestures as vessels capable of guiding us into deep caves full of hidden secrets, or perhaps scriptures, has led to a number of different and sometimes antagonistic perspectives on human nature over the past century. Hence anthropology from the 19<sup>th</sup> century has looked at ‘primitive’ communities in which bodies were seen as the bearers of ancestral memories.<sup>13</sup> Sociology found in behavioral patterns a key to understand structural determinisms, from Emile Durkheim’s work on rituals and religion (1912), to Pierre Bourdieu’s early studies in Kabylie.<sup>14</sup> Structuralism in that respect could highlight how collective memories of gestures bypass individual agency, seeing in the individual body a mere pawn in the greater machinery of discursive formations;<sup>15</sup> and simultaneously stress the arbitrary and conventional nature of gestures, engulfed within an overarching system of signification, split from any essentialist urge or memory.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, phenomenology explored gestures as a privileged link to natural expression, and an embodiment of our ‘being in the world’.<sup>17</sup> The performative reaches out into the inner self to channel pure expressivity. In her introductory notes to *Migrations of gestures*, co-edited with Sally Ann Ness, Carrie Noland navigates these different literatures in order to confront the opposition between gestures understood as systemic, governed by an underlying grid, and gestures perceived as privileged conducts of subjectivity. In balancing superstructural forces with individual agency, Noland points to the need to “see gesture as supporting the survival of the past while potentially engendering meanings that bear that past towards an unpredictable future.”<sup>18</sup> While socio-historical stratas inform the articulation of gestures, their actualization in the present (in the event of the present) singles them out in a fruitful *constructive* and *differential* process.

## RE-SET

“Pathosformel: the signifying over-determination of familiar anthropomorphic representations”.<sup>19</sup> In his reading of Aby Warburg’s art historical legacy, Georges Didi-Huberman points to the spectral lineages unearthed by the attention to the *nachleben* of images, the symptomatic survivals of forms through time. An image may hide another image, to refer to the 2009 exhibition at the Grand Palais in Paris, which looked at ‘double-images’, where a basket of fruit might reveal a woman’s face, a group of naked bodies a skull.<sup>20</sup> In Warburg’s final grand oeuvre, the revealing juxtapositions of visual motifs arranged on black boards entitled ‘mnemosyne’, and originally to be seen at the heart of his library in Hamburg, a representative example would be the emergence behind the Kanephoros nymph of Domenico Ghirlandaio’s *Life of St John the Baptist* (1490) of a victory figure erupting from Roman Antiquity.<sup>21</sup> Yet with regards to the memory of gestures, the question of survivals depends upon ‘a

<sup>11</sup> Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia* (Roma, 1593)

<sup>12</sup> Marcel Jousse, *L’anthropologie du geste* (Paris: Gallimard, 1974)

<sup>13</sup> Colin Counsell, “Introduction”, in *Performance, embodiment and cultural memory*, (Colin Counsell & Roberta Mock, eds (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009).

<sup>14</sup> Colin Counsell, “Introduction”, in *Performance, embodiment and cultural memory*, 2.

<sup>15</sup> Michel Foucault, *L’archéologie du savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969)

<sup>16</sup> Carrie Noland, “Introduction”, in *Migrations of gesture*, Carrie Noland & Sally Ann Ness, eds (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008) XI-XII

<sup>17</sup> Carrie Noland, “Introduction”, in *Migrations of gesture*. X-XI

<sup>18</sup> Carrie Noland, “Introduction”, in *Migrations of gesture*. X

<sup>19</sup> Georges Didi-Huberman, *L’image survivante. Histoire de l’art et temps des fantômes selon Aby Warburg* (Paris: Les éditions de minuit, 2002) 225. “la surdétermination signifiante des représentations anthropomorphes familières”.

<sup>20</sup> *Une image peut en cacher une autre: Arcimboldo, Dali, Raetz* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 2009).

<sup>21</sup> Joseph Leo Koerner, “introduction”, in Aby Warburg, *Le rituel du serpent* (Paris: Macula, 2015) 34-35.

certain montage of time.' Far from establishing a canonical iconology, or gesturology, and not to be mistaken with the archetypes of Carl Gustav Jung,<sup>22</sup> the 'pathosformel' stands in between the animal pulsion and the iteration of cultural history, in an anachronistic relation to the present. The logic in the superposition and survivals of forms is not a straightforward motorway. The resurgence of forms in time proceeds through imprints, but also displacements, and inversions. With noticeable parallels with the Freudian's return of the repressed, and with the Nietzschean eternal return, which Gilles Deleuze explored through difference in repetition,<sup>23</sup> the survivals of gestures carry a dramatic intensity inherited from the pit of humans' history, and desires. With regards to the constructive potential of gestures, the pathosformel also helpfully points to a differential matrix at the heart of the repetition of formal motifs.

Our interest in the present collection of essays is to look at the potential of some of the ideas briefly outlined above for artistic strategies today in the context of artistic research and practice. When resetting gestures, artistic practices then might on the one hand find much to chew on in the social and historical textures that have informed and shaped those gestures from both times immemorial to their most recent inflexions. They can also on the other hand choose to work on the ever mutating surges of dionysiac explosions. Passages can be built between distant entities in order to bridge what might have appeared as an impossible gap between the present and the past. In a reflection on the Greek tragedy entitled *Le tombeau d'Œdipe, pour une tragédie sans tragique* (2012), William Marx pondered on the remoteness of the dramatic genre, known to us through highly fragmentary sources.<sup>24</sup> To try and gain some access to the forgotten world of Greek tragedy, he pointed to the Noh theatre in the Japanese tradition. Through a displacement of the focal lenses from the integrity of the text to a contextual reflection and comparison on the performative act, the author could unearth crucial indications enabling a reconstruction of the genre's historical specificity. Albeit distant in space and time, the actors of the Noh theatre could provide unique clues as to the nature of the Greek experience. Passages can also be traced in the material at hand, one that we believe to see in its entirety, only to reveal its singular position at the crossroads of multiple rhizomic trajectories. The project *The technical unconscious* organized at a stone mason cooperative in Porto by Ines Moreira and Gonçalo Leite Velho in 2013-14 exemplarily combined the use of existent working gestures, evocation and convocation of past gestures in the trade, and the unconscious transmission of gestures, in a trans-industrial space.<sup>25</sup> Whether aiming to resurrect a lost entity, or to build on the unknown facets of an existing one, artistic exploration can invest in both a cabinet of gestures, organized but non-prescriptive, and the cracks in the items on show, both roads leading to a re-visitation and potentially constructive alteration through inventive mediation.

## THIS VOLUME

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<sup>22</sup> C.G. Jung, *Les métamorphoses de l'âme et ses symboles* (Paris: le livre de Poche, 2014, first ed. 1950).

<sup>23</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Différence et répétition* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968).

<sup>24</sup> William Marx, *Le tombeau d'Œdipe. Pour une tragédie sans tragique* (Paris: Les éditions de Minuit, 2012).

<sup>25</sup> <[http://softcontrol.fba.up.pt/curatorial.php?detail\\_id=curatorial](http://softcontrol.fba.up.pt/curatorial.php?detail_id=curatorial)>

Gerald Gordon looks at such transfers in the work of Japanese Kyoto-based *butoh* dancer Yasuo Fukurozaka. In his discussion of a performance piece by Fukurozaka entitled *Prince's Moonlight*, Gordon traces the interlaces between improvised dance techniques associated with *butoh*, an avant-garde performative practice which emerged in the 1960s in Japan, and the more traditional *noh* theatre. A *noh* mask used by Fukurozaka in his performance serves as a channel between the two performative genres, between past and present theatrical performance, and between the body of the performer and the active participation of the audience through collaborative imagination.

In the following essay, Gareth Jones reflects on his artistic walking practice, posited at the crossroads between Eastern and Western traditions, historic and contemporary aesthetics. Central to his reflection is the notion of *borrowed scenery*, inherited from the *Yuanye*, a 17<sup>th</sup> century Chinese treaty on garden design. Jones evokes references to contemporary relational aesthetics, before analysing historic and contemporary definitions of *borrowed scenery*, whereby the borders between internal and external spaces and time become blurred. Highlighting the benefits of understanding this borrowing as a fluid process, Jones ends by a discussion of *Widdershins Osaka*, a walking piece inspired by both these Western and Eastern perspectives, which he first organised in Japan in 2016.

The superposition of Eastern and Western practices is also the focus of Lori Gibbs's essay on Chinese architectural drawing techniques of the 1930s. Gibbs points to the importation to China of US working drawings methods by Chinese architects trained in America. In a troubled period rocked by civil war and the Sino-Japanese war, as well as pressure from modernization processes, the use of modern orthographic drawings in the documentation of Chinese architectural buildings could play a significant role in the affirmation of a national historical heritage. Discussing in particular the drawings of architect Liang Sicheng, Gibbs explores the manner through which 'scientific' architectural drawings were seen as instrumental in the recovery of past architectural gestures, and as such could channel a distinctive form of historical knowledge.

A contrasted relation between artistic gesture and history is similarly explored by Gil Lavi in his reflection on the work of the artist Edward Krasinski. Krasinski in the 1960s and 1970s developed a practice involving the taping of a blue line, a strip of blue painter's tape, onto objects, images and people. Lavi finds in this taping gesture a striking parallel with the photographic medium, in their joint capacity for transparency as well as opacity, in similar operations of framing and doubling reality, of recording and obstructing the past and the present. As such, Krasinski's gesture reveals the often ambivalent processes active in the representation of cultural heritage, when the visible surface can obscure its underlying textures.

Visibility and invisibility are also at the heart of Johanna Bruckner's notes on her artistic practice, which explores the impact of urban transformation in Hamburg's HafenCity, Germany. In a former busy harbour district of the industrial era that came into hardships, former warehouses have been the object of public and corporate investment in recent decades. Bruckner unveils the contradictions behind Social Mix policies in the HafenCity, and the exploitive conditions of labour employed in the conversion of the area. The dance score devised with the performers on site channels and challenges technological and infrastructural forces into a bodily iteration of an alternate collective social vision.

Gestures are evoked through their many appearances, familiar and unfamiliar faces surging onto and behind the canvas, in Magnus Clausen's discussion of his pictorial practice with Gabriel Gee. Clausen reflects on a number of operations he has been exploring in his work, outlining a range of gestures used in the pictorial process together with the different paths they open up to the painter. Repetition, remembrance, assemblage, addition and erasure are amongst the recurring tropes employed through diverse alchemic variations by Clausen in a range of technical experiments that portray the multi-folded visage of his contemporary pictorial practice.

Finally, artist Delphine Chapuis-Schmitz reaches back to the French poet Stéphane Mallarmé ground breaking 1897 text entitled *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard*, and the 1969 re-reading of Mallarmé's 'dice throw' by the Belgium poet turned visual artist Marcel Broodthaers. The object of Chapuis-Schmitz's reflection is the neutralisation of the radical gesture in our contemporary global

media societies. Through Broodthaers, she unveils a path towards another understanding of gestures, that leads away from the banalization of the disruptive to an empowerment of the reader. In the proliferation of readings and re-enactments of the original text, an alternate to the ebullient transgressive turned normative can map a hopeful emancipatory horizon for our collective future.

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## BIOGRAPHY

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# Ass Mask: *Noh* Faces New Ends

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## ABSTRACT

This paper introduces Kyoto-based *butoh* dancer Yasuo Fukurozaka's approach to improvised dance. Floating between ritual and raw physicality, Fukurozaka's dance practice often focuses on committing his body to physical situations that his body – and he – do not plan or expect. Through this approach, his body's physical responses guide the creation process by locating itself within, adapting to and improvising conditional functionalities to stark and unpredictable physical contexts. In this way, Fukurozaka's dance becomes a real-time physical affective document, his body's exhibited capacities in relation to changing situations. Through a focused examination of one of Fukurozaka's performance called "Princess Moonlight," and by exploring links between his approach and the theoretical aesthetic concerns and applied methods of *noh* drama as exhibited in its stage craft, performance theory and use of masks, I analyze how Fukurozaka's unorthodox use of the *noh* mask both reveals the enduring power of this simple yet powerful ancient technology as well as illustrates the radical respect which this avant-guard improvising dancer shows for and shares with *noh's* centering of the audiences' imaginative autonomy.

## KEYWORDS

Noh, Yasuo Fukurozaka, Butoh, Improvisation, Dance, Avant-guard, Japan, Audience, Mask



## YASUO FUKUROZAKA: BODY/OBJECT/PLACE

In 2014, Kyoto-based *butoh* dancer Yasuo Fukurozaka performed his hour-long work *The Decay of the Angel*. In it, Fukurozaka explored themes of history, politics and Japanese culture as frames to contextualize and facilitate his intensely physical approach to avant-guard improvised dance, an approach which can be described as bodily documenting the processes of how his anatomy experiences, endures and orients itself in response to adverse and changing conditions. In the fifth section of *The Decay of the Angel*, Fukurozaka performs a dance entitled “Princess Moonlight.” Starting in darkness, Fukurozaka balances his nearly naked body upside down atop his shoulders. With his head obscured upstage, his bare back faces the audience and his slender legs and arms rise up into the air. As a single light fades in, the audience slowly makes sense of his oddly inverted anatomy. But, soon after, small bursts of laughter can be heard from the audience as spectators gradually realize that an object attached just below Fukurozaka’s naked ass is a *noh* mask of a young woman’s face. While undeniably humorous, Fukurozaka is not deploying the mask as simply a gag. Rather, Fukurozaka’s dance exploits the effectiveness of the mask’s traditional technology in activating the viewers’ imaginations to generate unique and private visions, characters, potentials, etc. from the mysterious and disorienting creatures which become embodied on the stage. In this paper, I will introduce Fukurozaka’s approach to improvised dance, detail the performance of “Princess Moonlight,” introduce some of the theoretical aesthetic concerns and practical methods of *noh* drama and finally analyze how Fukurozaka’s unorthodox use of the *noh* mask both reveals the enduring power of this simple yet powerful ancient technology as well as illustrates the radical respect for and centering of the audiences’ imaginative autonomy that is shared by both traditional *noh* and this avant-guard improvising dancer.

Yasuo Fukurozaka (45) was born and raised in Hokkaido, Japan’s huge and cold northern island, and came to Kyoto at age 18 to study nuclear engineering and *noh* at Japan’s prestigious Kyoto University. While nuclear engineering was his declared field of study, his primary passion for attending Kyoto University was to join its large and well supported student club devoted to studying *noh*. While in graduate school for nuclear engineering, Fukurozaka first came in contact with *butoh* when he saw and was shocked by a picture of one of *butoh*’s founders, Tatsumi Hijikata. Fukurozaka attended some *butoh* workshops, but never had an intention to perform until one of the teachers, Yuki Goza, a *butoh* dancer in Kyoto, told him: “You should stand on the stage. So, cut your hair.”

*Butoh* is an avant-guard dance practice which originated in the cultural turmoil of 1960s Japan. Founded by Hijikata, Kazuo Ono and their various cohorts, *butoh* is often outwardly recognized by dancers with shaved heads and white-painted bodies engaged in extremely concentrated and slow physical movements which distort the body and face in ways that imply disability, mutation and gravity’s weight – exploring the body in direct contrast to the uplifting choreographic grace of most other dance traditions. However, beyond any superficial outward aesthetic forms, *butoh* is a practice of intense exploration of the body as a vehicle of being, discovery and “corporeal mutation.”<sup>1</sup> *Butoh*’s genesis partly sprang up in confrontation and rejection of racist western and westernized aesthetic notions about the Asian body, namely that it was wrongly proportioned or not suitable for modern dance. However, this initial rebellion against the modern dance establishment of the time evolved into a sophisticated practice of profound explorations regarding the body as a deep source of actuality and into ways to “scrape off customs and present crisis straightforwardly.”<sup>2</sup> Many of the performance works that were staged in its formative years offered broad interrogations of taboos, cultural and social conventions and even logic itself. While brightness and light had long been established symbols for western ideals of beauty, purity, reason and good, Hijikata ventured into the darkness, using the body in its particular, momentary, non-linguistic mystery as his vehicle for exploring another and vaster way. For Hijikata, the “body was

<sup>1</sup> Stephen Barber, *Hijikata: Revolt of the Body*, (N.p.: Solar Books, 2010), 107.

<sup>2</sup> Bruce Baird, *Hijikata Tatsumi and Butoh: Dancing in a Pool of Gray Grits* (London: Palgrave 2012), 48.

restricted to an unrealized and chaotic form, but had the potential to implode cataclysmically and uniquely, in the act of gesture, with one instant of unrepeatable incandescence, to the point at which it would terminally swallow all light.”<sup>3</sup> As Bruce Baird summarizes in the first sentence of his book, “*butoh* defies definition.”<sup>4</sup> However, this is true not merely because *butoh* has no authoritative formal qualities or goals for completion against which any particular act of *butoh* can be determined to have succeeded or failed, but also because *butoh* actively works to confound the functionality of descriptive and defining systems.

Fukurozaka has been dancing *butoh* for close to 20 years, primarily in Kyoto, solo and improvised. He has never done nuclear engineering. To offer a glimpse of what his dance is like, there are a few aspects which identify his work. While none of these are forms which he strictly makes use of, they are elements that arise enough to be identified as his. He is usually almost naked when he dances – wearing only a small white loincloth – and about half the time paints his body and shaved head white. He also regularly includes some small element or moment of humor in his dance, often something which evacuates the tension of seriousness that can arise around contemporary dance. A couple of examples to illustrate his humor include his use of a flashing red police car light which he wears in place of his loincloth. Another is his recent occasional use of a rubber toilet drain plunger which he ritualistically attaches to his bare scalp and he then covers with one dangling leg of a pair of nude pantyhose that are pulled over his head. His dance movements cannot be categorized except to say that they range from stillness to highly kinetic, but both the stillness and the wildness always exhibit an intense physicality and the active energy of his body. Fukurozaka never seems to become a character or play a distinct role. His dance is always placing his body in the position of impetus maker.

Fukurozaka’s dance contrasts with the way conventional dance typically showcases the body as a document of predetermined choreographic flow and practiced aesthetic forms. Instead of leading his body through a series of imagined mental abstracts, Fukurozaka arrives at forms by committing his body to physical situations that his body, and he, don’t plan or expect, thereby allowing his body’s physical responses to guide the creation process. Fukurozaka’s dance becomes the real-time physical document that his body exhibits in relation to a situation, illustrating the concept in affect theory that “the capacity of a body is never defined by a body alone but is always aided and abetted by, and dovetails with, the field or context of its force-relations.”<sup>5</sup> Fukurozaka’s dance aesthetics float between ritual and raw physicality, creating a dance of moments from his body’s ability to locate itself, adapt and improvise conditional functionality in the stark and unpredictable physical contexts he subjects it to.

One example from 2015 illustrates his approach more vividly. In an improvised dance performed for an exhibition by abstract calligraphy and ceramics artist Kinuko Naito at a very small gallery-space near Kobe called Atelier 2001, Fukurozaka performed amidst hundreds of small ceramic sculptures displayed in rows on the uneven concrete floor. The works were tough little organic-shaped nuggets of high-fired clay. Each about 5cm tall, the pieces resembled multi-surfaced conglomerate rock forms. Each object was oriented upward, balanced vertically on its base. In the approximately 2m x 3m area where Fukurozaka was to dance, the ceramic sculptures were evenly spaced, each about 20cm from its neighbors. Performing with Fukurozaka was the improvising soprano saxophonist Tenko Hino. Fukurozaka limited his area to half of the 3-meter-long space, with the musician walking in the other half. Dancing barefoot and nearly naked except for his white loincloth, a thin shawl draped over his shoulders and a pair of dangling pantyhose pulled tight over a drain plunger attached to his head, he delicately let his feet find spaces in the rows without disturbing the works (fig. 1). But, gradually pieces began to tumble, roll and relocate themselves, coming to new positions of temporary stasis. As

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Barber, *Hijikata: Revolt of the Body*, 16.

<sup>4</sup> Bruce Baird, *Hijikata Tatsumi and Butoh: Dancing in a Pool of Gray Grits*, 4.

<sup>5</sup> Melissa Gregg & Gregory J. Seigworth, “An Inventory of Shimmers.” In *The Affect Theory Reader*, Melissa Gregg & Gregory J. Seigworth, eds, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 3.

Fukurozaka's dance proceeded, he placed his body more and more in contact with the variety of hard and projecting surfaces. His feet found unique ways to support his weight while responding to the sharp chunks underfoot (fig. 2). The rest of his body responded as well, shifting in relation to the pulls of gravity and pressures against skin. His body found specific affective means within the actuality of the conditions. Without needing choreographed guidance, the body created new and ephemeral forms. And, then Fukurozaka let his body tumble to the floor and the body/dance proceeded to document the ongoing process of discovering responses to those new and changing conditions. Each new form was always actual and always specific And, this fact reveals a truth for all bodies in the world. Nothing general has ever happened, because there is never a general sharp point of a general piece of sculpture poking into a general place of a general person's hip (fig. 3). The real world is always a confluence of particulars. And, I hope my writing here does not convey Fukurozaka's dance as being semi-masochistic pain-porn for it is not. His dance never has a nuance of "Watch me hurt myself. Pain is my message." Quite the opposite. It is as though his dance/body is an empty object, free of a human director – like how a sleeping body in a chair does not seem to acknowledge or care about comfort, custom or manners as its neck droops awkwardly or an arm is pinched into numbness. Fukurozaka's dance makes use of and documents this type of emptied out body as object, a body/object which has its own improvised methods for orienting itself within the conditions it exists amidst.



Fig. 1 Yasuo Fukurozaka, at Atelier, 2001, photograph by the author.





Fig. 2 Yasuo Fukurozaka, at Atelier, 2001, photograph by the author.



Fig. 3: Yasuo Fukurozaka, at Atelier, 2001, photograph by the author.

## NOH AND IMAGINATIVE SPECTATORS

*Noh* is the classical drama of Japan, and has been regarded as the nation's highest form of theatrical performance culture for centuries, since the time when *nob*'s revered dramatist and theorist, Zeami (1363-1443), perfected the art form. For those unfamiliar with it, *Noh* can be seen to share some comparable elements with what is available to us regarding ancient Greek tragedy, such as elevated and philosophical themes in the plays' scripts, the use of poetic language in dramatic dialogue, choral commentary, certain similar degrees of dramatic unity regarding time, place and action, as well as the use of masks and male-only actors. For such reasons, *nob* has been closely examined for potentially offering useful hints that could help scholars deduce conceptual, aesthetic and performance-craft elements that may have existed in ancient Greek tragedy but which are now unknown. Such insights into Greek drama are considered possible by studying *nob* because "the external evidence for *nob* . . . is by comparison quite extensive."<sup>6</sup> A vast amount of information is available. *Nob* has maintained an uninterrupted tradition of performance, training, theater companies, documentary commentary, contextualizing visual artwork and venues within Japanese society for over 600 years. Numerous extant plays, treatises on acting and music, masks, illustrations, stage art, notes, stage designs, theater companies and costumes have been carefully protected and passed down through generations of master-practitioners and by the culture at large. As well, *nob* has been supported by traditional and modern systems of interested students, amateur practitioners and patrons. All of this speaks to why and how *nob* has continued to live as an active performance tradition in Japan.

While *nob* is widely considered to be an artifact of high culture and has a "rather esoteric reputation" in Japan, it has a deep reach down through all levels of contemporary society.<sup>7</sup> There are chances to see, learn and participate in *nob* activities open to anyone with an interest. While not as popular now as perhaps even 40 years ago, one can still readily find gatherings of amateur chorus groups which meet to learn and practice the styles of dramatic choral singing. In such groups, it would not be unusual to find a bank president kneeling next to a kneeling taxi driver as they sing through the choral section of a play written more than half a millennium ago, demonstrating how the interest in and contact with *nob* is not limited to elites or scholars. Likewise, some high schools and universities have clubs in which students can learn, practice and perform *nob* singing, acting and music. In addition, classical Japanese dance—called *nihon buyo*—which is practiced widely and involves the use of kimonos, hand fans and declarative chant-style singing, draws a portion of its repertoire from *nob* plays and choreography.

*Nob* maintains a vibrancy in Japanese culture in a way that is comparable to, if not as widely popular as, the practice of martial arts, flower arrangement and tea ceremony. Individuals study its traditions, formal qualities and norms. This keeps *nob* existing in the culture, but also freezes it as a formalized and perfected system of traditional knowledge. *Nob* is not viewed as a vehicle for original or personal expression. Instead, it lives as a cultural asset worth protecting, enshrined like a cherished treasure rather than opened to the risks related to dynamic artistic expansion. There are very few new *nob* plays created. Practitioners look to the past for models of performance, mask aesthetics, costume design, etc. rather than experiment with new or critical alternatives. This is not to say that *Nob* is merely a museum piece, except to the degree that one might imagine that Japanese culture itself functions as a museum.

Thus, in Japan, *nob*'s vibrancy is both woven and oddly entangled with cultural pride in its genius, history, national identity and soul. And, the masks of *nob* are arguably not only the face of the theater, but also a symbol of Japan itself and its contribution to the traditional arts of humanity. Both inside and outside of Japan, *nob* is most readily recognized by the iconic carved wooden masks it uses, in particular the oval-shaped moon-white masks of demure young women and the horned, sinisterly grinning mask

<sup>6</sup> Mae J. Smethurst, *The Artistry of Aeschylus and Zeami: A Comparative Study of Greek Tragedy and Noh* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 5.

<sup>7</sup> Royall Tyler, ed. and trans, *Japanese Noh Drama*, (London: Penguin, 1992), 1.

of the *hannya*, used to portray women who are enraged with jealousy. However, most actors in *noh* do not wear a mask. In fact, in the vast majority of plays, only one performer wears a mask. This performer is called the *shite*, who plays the central role and dances at the play's climax. As only men perform in *noh*, masks are used for portraying characters that the bare face of a typical male cannot convey. Thus *noh* masks primarily depict females, gods, heroes, demons and a few unique men in Japanese history and legend. Hand carved by skilled artisans from single blocks of wood, these masks are not made to fit the particular face of the actor, but rather they are crafted based on the designs of historical masks of fame or special note. The masks are not intended to cover the entire face of the male actor, but instead positioned over the center of the face during a crucial ceremony of transformation whereby the *shite* "first denies the existence of physical facial expressions and then goes a step further to deny within his consciousness the existence of the mask."<sup>8</sup> This ceremony occurs in a special area called the "mirror room," which is located just before the threshold passed when entering the stage. In addition, the *shite* does not simply put on or wear the mask. Rather, there is an emphasis that the *shite* affixes the mask to his face, and in that act he transforms into the character to be performed.<sup>9</sup> However, in terms of practical logistics, the affixing of the mask remains purely metaphoric and thus the carved piece of wood is secured using cords tied at the back of the *shite*'s head.

As the eye holes of *noh* masks are only about 1cm across, the actor's eyes are not visible or used to show any emotions in performance. All of the emotional expressions conveyed through the mask come from controlling how it is tilted in relation to the light and the viewing perspectives of the spectators. To express happiness, the mask can be tilted up, which "brightens" the face. Tilting it down is said to "cloud" it, and express sadness. By quickly turning the mask from side to side, the mask can convey anger or other stronger emotions. From alterations of these three general mask positions, the mask's "qualities create infinite possibilities."<sup>10</sup> This open potential for a vast range of emotional expressions from a fixed mask which covers the most expressive areas of the human face is based in a sophisticated theoretical concept that *noh* is able to put into practical use. Likely derived from Buddhist examinations of the non-dual nature of self and other, *noh*'s concept channels the interdependent relationship between the performer, the viewer and the viewing space into the creation of the performance. According to Kunio Komparu, this is what "enabled *noh* to make the great transition from being an entertainment imitative of ritual to becoming a great art" and it can be summarized as a realization that the viewers are essentially engaged in the completion of the performance.<sup>11</sup> And, thus, rather than trying to control or narrow what the audience members see or interpret, *noh* facilitates a collaborative co-creative merging of audience and performance. This can take place by allowing abstraction and symbolic suggestion to engage the spectators through their individual perspectives, desires, hopes, fears and experience. In short, each audience member filters his life through the play in order to bring the play into realization. The play's art is successfully fulfilled not by establishing one authoritative view in the minds of spectators, but by the greater abundance of unknowable individual visions that exist beyond the stage's limits.

*Noh* employs various practical ways to bring about such collaborative inclusion of the audience. One way is through not trying to hide too much of the stage craft. This means that the viewer has degrees of control to look beyond or smooth over gaps between reality and fiction, using her imagination to build her specific private vision. An example of how *noh* does not hide its stage craft can be seen with the masks. Due to the mask's size, there is commonly an obvious area where the flesh of the actor's jowls, chin and forehead show outside the edge of the mask. This evident seam reveals where the real face of the actor forms something of a hybrid interface with the artistic visage of the fictional character. The actor never fully vanishes inside the dream, or, from another perspective, the dream must be sustained

<sup>8</sup> Kunio Komparu, *The Noh Theater: Principles and Perspectives* (New York: Weatherhill, 1983), 17.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 227.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 230.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 17.

by an active and real body in sleep. The imagination-technology of the *nob* mask and the reality of the performer's flesh show an obvious border of difference. And, while such a noticeable contrast between actor and character would potentially get a film industry costume designer fired, *nob* is working with a different affective intent.

To various degrees, *nob* makes purposeful and aesthetic use of revealing worlds confronting or juxtaposing one another. Indeed, a central theme of a large number of the plays is about just such "supernatural meets mundane cross-border interactions," such as monks meeting ghosts, etc. Far from trying to erase such differences and absorb the spectator into an authoritative and fully controlled vision of the art by creating a seamless aesthetic totality, *nob* trusts the spectator's imaginative concentration to respond, integrate or make use of unpredictable and chance elements.

In western theatrical traditions as well as in other Japanese theater systems, the goal is to virtually supplant the spectator's imagination with an extremely powerful and completed vision organized by the directors, actors, stage artists, musicians, technology, etc. In contrast, *nob* allows and even relies on the viewer to be an active participant in building a private or secret vision through her own imagination. Some commentators even say "the proper way to watch *nob* is in a hypnagogic state between waking and sleeping."<sup>12</sup> Drawing from the abstract and suggestive details provided by the play's text, performers, stage craft, chance, etc., the viewer creates a deeply personal experience. *Nob* does not attempt to force its creative vision and overpower the imagination of the spectator or input some closed totality that will forever hold the viewer's imagination as the signature or ultimate enactment of the play. Rather, for *nob*, "all superfluities must be expunged, for only by extreme economy of presentation can [the true intent of the character] be manifest."<sup>13</sup> And the spectator serves as a key collaborator in actualizing the character's true intent. As Komparu states:

"the viewer participates in the creation of the play by individual free association and brings to life internally a drama based on individual experience filtered through the emotions of the protagonist. The shared dramatic experience, in other words, is not the viewer's adjustment of himself to the protagonist on stage but rather his creation of a separate personal drama by sharing the play with the performer. Indeed, he becomes that protagonist."<sup>14</sup>

Facilitating this personal activation of the spectator's imagination is partly accomplished through juxtapositions of the real (actors, stage, spectator herself, etc.), the realistic (masks, costumes, etc.), the abstract (props, language, gestures, etc.) and chance (the innumerable happenings that occur between a time, place and viewer). The rather loose but sensitive interplay of such elements gives the spectator openings and blanks into which she can let various virtual imaginings develop before any particular one becomes actualized, perhaps due to a specific inspiration or connection which might appear either on the stage or from her mind. Rather than being directed into specific emotional plot points by powerfully directive dramatic triggers as is common in formulaic Hollywood films, *nob* places the spectator at the center of her own private process of creativity, catalyzing visions from elements of imagination that are not preprogrammed towards predictable reactions, attractions or activations. In this way, the spectator comes away from a performance with a private or secret experience by having ventured amidst a performance's gaps to create a unique work in collaboration with more open and freely associable inputs. This is the collective or interdependent completion of the performance.

## THE DECAY OF THE ANGEL

<sup>12</sup> Richard Schechner, *Performance Theory* (London: Routledge, 2003), 230.

<sup>13</sup> William Scott Wilson, Introduction to *The Spirit of Nob: A New Translation of the Classic Nob Treatise* the Fushikaden, Trans. William Scott Wilson, (Boston: Shambhala, 2006), 5.

<sup>14</sup> Kunio Komparu, *The Nob Theater: Principles and Perspectives*, 18.

In March of 2014, Yasuo Fukurozaka staged *The Decay of the Angel* in Kyoto at UrBANGUILD, a performance space that actively supports experimental music, *butoh* and other forms of contemporary dance. Fukurozaka is a regular performer at UrBANGUILD and is a key figure of the Kyoto *butoh* scene. *The Decay of the Angel* is a work inspired by three literary sources: the Yukio Mishima novel by the same title, the *nob* play *Hagoromo*, and Buddhist cosmological writings which describe the signs of decay that indicate when an angel is coming to the end of its life (in Buddhism, angels are not eternal beings). The performance features eight chapters, in which Fukurozaka primarily dances solo. In the finale section, Fukurozaka performs with two female dancers who also provide some brief support performances in other parts.

I will not analyze *The Decay of the Angel* as a whole, except to say that the various chapters present a range of themes somewhat oriented towards Mishima's life. The chapters and their pace are physically challenging and presented a good range of Fukurozaka's intensities, humor and dance approaches.

The fifth chapter is called "Princess Moonlight," which creates an association to the *nob* play *Hagoromo*. *Hagoromo* is often credited to Zeami, but its authorship is regularly questioned. It is one of the most popular and often performed *nob* plays. It tells the story of an angel from the moon who descends to earth out of an interest to feel what being human is like. To this end, she removes her robe made of feathers and hangs it on a tree branch while she experiences bathing in water. While she is away, a fisherman finds the robe and realizes what it actually is. The angel returns but the fisherman refuses to give back the robe. She pleads with him to return it, saying that she needs to have the robe to return to the moon. Without it, she is trapped on earth and will die. He finally agrees on the condition that she dance for him. She consents, but says in order to dance she must first have the robe back. Hesitantly, he gives her the robe, she dances and then departs back to the moon.

Given the connection to the moon and the fact that the angel in *Hagoromo* is performed using the mask for a young woman, Fukurozaka's "Princess Moonlight" is clearly contextualized by the *Hagoromo* story. But, his ten-minute dance does not illustrate the story in any direct way. The story serves as a filter of references offering a rich layer of suggestion for potential imaginative sparks.

"Princess Moonlight" starts in silence and stillness. In the center of the bare stage, a dim light from above barely disturbs the darkness, but casts shadows down Fukurozaka's inverted body. He is calmly perched upon his shoulders, his bare back facing the audience. Almost plant-like, his bare legs and arms are extended upward and their anatomical contours are shaped against the darkness upstage. While disorienting, the vaguely visible form makes sense as a body positioned upside down on a stage. But, then, as the light increases, a small shining spot appears on the white forehead of the *nob* mask of a young woman. What had made sense in the previous moment now begins to get fuzzy. The light grows to reveal the ridge of the woman's nose. The mask, affixed to the back strap of Fukurozaka's loin cloth, calmly stares out from the deteriorating darkness, its whiteness contrasting to the warm tones of the dancer's back, ass, legs and arms. People laugh, indicating that segregated worlds have been unexpectedly merged in a breath of surrealism. The high and the low. The real and unreal. The ass and the face. The front and the back-end (fig. 4). The eyes of the mask quickly become the center of my focus as a spectator. The eyes become what orients and disorients the surrounding elements of Fukurozaka's body. The eyes are the strongest center and thereby direct my mind to make sense of everything else in relation to them and the face.





Fig. 4: Yasuo Fukurozaka Princess Moonlight, photograph by Masaki Yanagida

While I never lose track of the fact that this is a dancer perched on his shoulders with a mask attached to his ass, the mask triggers my mind to make creative sense of the ongoing changes taking place. As I concentrate on the face, Fukurozaka's subtle body movements in adjusting his upside down balance become evident in contrast to the mask's utter stillness. Such differences reveal how conditions mutually orient each other. Movement defines stillness. A face posits a head or a neck or some anatomical method of linking it to the body. While this is a man with a mask on his ass, other forms are appearing, changing and vanishing. In this way, the mask starts to contextualize each different movement and position of the body in relation to the logic and power of itself as a face. As well, the mask activates orientations between the female face and the potential forms this transitional body takes. Details affect what details become. Is this a woman? And, if so, in what way? At times, the creature on the stage becomes an angelic female calmly bowing down towards the floor, her fingers drawing close to her face as though in formal apology or great thanks or preparing to eat. At other times, the mask orients the dancer's legs to become the struts of an angel's wings rising powerfully above its shoulders, or the face orients the visible anatomy into that of a grotesque monster that is haunting the darkness or a broken angel that has fallen to earth (fig 5). Each vision appears out of the same type of interdependent relationship between the actor, spectator and performance space that is activated in *nob*. Ongoing and changing orientations between the real, realistic, abstract and chance facilitate a rich complexity of collaborative envisioning, made possible by the underdetermined context of Fukurozaka's improvised dance. In the same way as *nob*'s use of understatement and suggestion open the audience to filter the dramatic action through their lives via free association and activated imagination, Fukurozaka's improvised dance is completed through the richness of the audience's envisioning. Individual by individual, the spectators breathe life from and into the dance,

catalyzing its instances with their own private memories, dreams, fears and fathoming to complete the work beyond the claim of control by any one entity. The work becomes an intensity of assembled culminations.

If we analyze more deeply how the *noh* mask is able to function as such a richly suggestive trigger for imaginative potential, we can gain more appreciation for the power of this ancient technology. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari analyze the use of masks for a very different purpose than that of *noh*. They argue that tribal Native American cultures use masks to obscure the human face in order to reunify the head with the body in a process of becoming animal. In such ritualized unification of the head-body into a single territorialized body contour, spiritual power can be accessed through possession by the animal's spirit. In this way, Deleuze and Guattari imply that the human face causes the deterritorialization of the unified head-body volume because the face affects a signifying process of decoding based on black holes (eyes, mouth, etc.) rather than body volumes.<sup>15</sup>



Fig. 5: Yasuo Fukurozaka Princess Moonlight, photograph by Masaki Yanagida

As Deleuze and Guattari state “the organization of the face is a strong one.”<sup>16</sup> The face has a great power to orient and contextually imply or determine other body elements – and even objects near the face – by using itself as the dominant reference point. The face organizes expectations regarding how a body's anatomy should be arranged, or imposes logics which make sense in relation to the face's dominant positioning. Faciality territorializes space around the face.

This idea offers a way to understand some of the suggestive power that *noh* masks wield in both the classical dramatic tradition and in Fukurozaka's performance. The mask has a territorializing power by which it can suggest or strongly orient the logic and function of elements located in relation to it. Thus, for example, the female mask employed in Fukurozaka's dance was able to influence how the dancer's legs are envisioned in relation to the mask's location and direction. When the mask is upright

<sup>15</sup> Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. (Brian Massumi, Trans.), (Minneapolis: Minnesota, 1987), 176.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

and Fukurozaka's legs are raised up behind it, there is a feeling of disorientation in the viewer. This means that the legs briefly threaten to deterritorialize the face-centered orientation logic. But, as the face's signifying power reestablishes its dominance, the viewer's imagination needs the legs to make sense in relation to the face. Thus, the legs cease being merely legs and become capable of suggesting other imaginative possibilities. The face never loses its stability as a face or the power the black holes of its eyes and mouth have to hold the spectator's gaze. Thus, for the face-centered territorialization to make sense, the face cannot be situated below the legs. Therefore, the protruding elements of anatomy rising above the face must be something else. The legs cannot be legs. Thus, in an act which reinforces the face-oriented dominance, the imagination envisions the dancer's legs to be the struts of a pair of powerful wings. And, in another example, we can see that the face suggestively orients gestural meanings to itself when Fukurozaka extends his hands up in front of the bowing mask. At this time, the hands become territorialized by the mask and the potential suggestions of the gestures are oriented as existing in relation to the face, or for the face, such as eating, prayer, contemplation, etc. (fig 6). Had the mask not been included in the dance, or had the mask not been associated with the angel in Hagoromo, the gestures of Fukurozaka's dance would have surely contained very different imaginative potentials.



Fig. 6: Yasuo Fukurozaka Princess Moonlight, photograph by Masaki Yanagida

In a similar way to how *noh* theory realizes the interdependent relationship between the actor, the audience and the stage, the various affective elements of any instant function in collaboration to bring about different potential capacities in a body. The body becomes different via interaction, resulting in different capacities. In reference to Spinoza talking about the body, Brian Massumi makes a point which echoes these ideas: “When you affect something, you are at the same time opening yourself up to being affected.”<sup>17</sup> Similarly, Fukurozaka's approach to dance, in which he commits his body to the conditions

<sup>17</sup> Brian Massumi, Interview by Mary Zoumazi, *Hope: New Philosophies for Change*, Mary Zoumazi, ed. (Annandale: Pluto Press Australia, 2002), 212.

confronting it and lets his body find new forms in response, exhibits an inherent openness to interdependent relationships with collaborative agents, an openness to becoming. Massumi continues, “What a body is, [Spinoza] says, is what it can *do* as it *goes* along. This is a totally pragmatic definition. A body is defined by what capacities it carries from step to step. What these are exactly is changing constantly.”<sup>18</sup> Fukurozaka's dance works in this very way, whereby he places his body into conditions through which the body is left to its creative devices to develop new capacities, embodying new aesthetic forms in response to the direct contextual influences of gravity, torque, exhaustion, balance, etc. In this way, his dance body leads him beyond expectations and into new actualities. He releases his body into experimental collaborations, such as balancing on his shoulders or falling amidst sharp objects, and then his body actualizes new forms in the dance that result in engaging the specifics of the real through improvisation.

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## BIOGRAPHY

Gerald Gordon is Associate Professor in the International English Department at Baika Women's University. His research focuses on improvisation, particularly in relation to music, dance, poetry and other arts practices. He has served as the director of MIIT House in Osaka, Japan, since 2011. MIIT House is a small factory which has been repurposed as a venue for improvised and experimental music, dance and performance. Gordon's ongoing research project is interviewing improvising musicians regarding collaborative aspects of instrument/player physicality and improvisation. In addition, Gordon is an active improvising musician, poet, bike rider and cook.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

# Shuttlings Between: Deploying *Borrowed Scenery* in a Contemporary Walking Practice.

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## ABSTRACT

My creative urban-walking practice entangles Eastern and Western notions of space and contemporary cultural theory in order to disrupt habituated understandings of place and power, and instil social, cultural, and environmental well-beings. This paper discusses the deployment within my practice, of techniques appropriated from *Yuanye*, a 17<sup>th</sup> century Chinese treatise on garden design. This deployment involves engagements with both the original *Yuanye* text as well as with current scholarly reconsiderations of its meanings.

*Yuanye* represents the first attempt to formalise the theories of garden design within China and is understood to have been written with the aim of elevating the cultural status of the practice to that of painting. In poetic and allusive language *Yuanye* addresses such elements as the use of water, the placement of rocks, and the orientation of trees and shrubs. The final chapter discusses *borrowed scenery* whereby features that lie outside the garden's perimeter, such as mountains, are framed by those within. During my group city-walks, performed readings and other interactions with the text transform this notion of borrowed scenery into a lens through which the city is read. Meanwhile, new research that challenges conventional understandings of *Yuanye* reinforces the theoretical framework I use to harness my practice to broader cultural concerns. In this way, *Yuanye* enriches both practical and theoretical aspects of my work.

This paper opens with a brief survey of creative walking practices, making reference to the Situationists and Phil Smith's persona-method, *Mythogeography*. I next discuss my own practice in general terms before discussing the language, propositions, and current discourses associated with the *Yuanye* text. The paper closes with discussion of the evolving ways Borrowed Scenery informs the group-walk I conduct every February in my home city, Osaka.

## KEYWORDS

Borrowed scenery; yuanye; shakkei; creative walking; relational aesthetics; psychogeography.

## INTRODUCTION

For geographer Doreen Massey, space is a site of rupture and contention with conflicts brought about by, among other things, globalisation, inequality, interpretations of ‘nature’, and the city.<sup>1</sup> Her interdisciplinary collaboration with filmmaker Patrick Keiller reveals how historical and ongoing conflicts within the landscape manifest themselves in society as imbalances of power and disturbances to cultural wellbeing.<sup>2</sup> In his poem *Hoping to trigger the end of neo-liberalism by going for a walk*,<sup>3</sup> Paul Rossiter addresses issues of landscape and history, enfolding the ideas of Massey and Keiller, and demonstrating how the practice of walking with subsequent critical insights can become the basis of a conscientious creative practice.

The number of creative practices that deploy walking among their methods has grown dramatically in recent years. These practices vary in their aims, methodologies, and outcomes but all can be said to take an approach that is *relational*. Bourriaud defines relational art as “taking as its theoretical horizon the realm of human interaction and its social contexts, rather than the assertion of an independent and *private* symbolic space”.<sup>4</sup> The interaction that has come to dominate my own praxis is that between self (subject) and place (object). I have recognised through time spent walking in cities that the relationship between the two is ambiguous, shifting, and porous. One of the instruments I use in order to explore this interaction is *borrowed scenery*, a manner or seeing (in the broadest sense of the word) that appears in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Chinese treatise on garden design.

At this point it is important to define a number of key terms. Although *borrowed scenery* can be safely understood in a common-sense way, it acts here as an overarching designation for the cluster of Chinese and Japanese terms that are influencing my practice and that require further explanation. The first of these terms is *Yuanye*, the title of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century Chinese treatise on garden design acknowledged in both China and Japan as the origin of borrowed scenery as the garden-design technique and on which this paper is centred. There is much debate on how best to translate the word *yuanye* but for the present purposes the term *the craft of gardens* will suffice. The final chapter of *Yuanye* is titled *jiejing*, and it is this term that translates as borrowed scenery. Much of the current discussion of *Yuanye* within disciplines associated with Chinese landscape architecture is focused on interpretations of this final chapter. Finally, the Japanese term *shakkei* can be seen as a translation of *jiejing*, but as this paper demonstrates, Chinese *jiejing* and Japanese *shakkei* have evolved independently over the centuries making it unsafe to substitute one for the other.

A study that crosses cultural boundaries cannot ignore the risks of inappropriate exchange whereby artefacts are exoticised, their meanings diminished, and their sources left unacknowledged in their migration from one culture to another. To allay concerns that such inappropriacies effect the present study I offer the following two points. First, Stanislaus Fung makes explicit the desire for his research to be of mutual benefit to the Eastern and Western bodies of knowledge upon which it draws.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, my own project, which builds on the ideas of Fung, does not adopt artefacts from one culture for use in another but oscillates between cultures, with the aim of contributing to each. Second, New Materialist theorists such as Jane Bennett advocate a revisiting of ‘discredited philosophies’ in the belief that they might provide pathways to fairer frameworks of ethics and justice.<sup>6</sup> Under Bennett’s terms, cultural

<sup>1</sup> Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Patrick Keiller in Doreen Massey, “Landscape/space/politics: an essay”, *The Future of Landscape and the Moving Image* (2011), 4-5.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Rossiter, *Hoping to trigger the end of neo-liberalism by going for a walk*, in *World Without* (Tokyo: Isobar Press, 2015), 98-115.

<sup>4</sup> Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (Dijon: Les Presses du Réel, 1998), 14.

<sup>5</sup> Stanislaus Fung, “Here and There in Yuan Ye”, *Design Philosophy Papers*, 1:6, (2003), 308.

<sup>6</sup> Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 17-18.



artefacts are not exoticized nor are their meanings diminished, but rather they are seen as possessing a vitality that transcends temporal, geographical, and cultural boundaries. This vitality enables them to play an active role in confronting current issues that are global and urgent. Bennett offers the atomism of Lucretius as an example of such a discredited philosophy and it is my belief that borrowed scenery also meets her definitions.<sup>7</sup>

My aim in this paper is to explore the reciprocal and recursive relationship between my walking practice and my ongoing research into *borrowed scenery*. I first provide an overview of contemporary walking practices in order to contextualize my own practice. Second, I examine the histories and contemporary discourses surrounding *yuanye*, *jiejing*, and *shakkei*. Finally, I consider the ways in which borrowed scenery is used and articulated within my annual group-walking project, *Widdershins Osaka*.

## DESIRE PATHS: CONTEMPORARY WALKING PRACTICES

While Solnit traces walking as a cultural practice to the philosopher Rousseau,<sup>8</sup> many of today's walking artists align themselves in relation to the Situationist International (hereafter the Situationists). Active in the 1950s and 1960s the Situationists can be seen as the heirs to a European avant-garde, filling the void left by the Dadaists and Surrealists after World War II. Led by the left-wing radical, Guy Debord, they were a fluid collective of artists, activists, and intellectuals for whom play, the absurd and the irrational were legitimate approaches to intellectual and artistic revolution.<sup>9</sup> Appalled by what they saw as the over-commodification and increasing banality of urban life, the Situationists developed *psychogeography* as a method by which to gauge 'the effects of the geographical environment, [...] on the emotions and behaviour of individuals'.<sup>10</sup> Psychogeography involved a quasi-scientific engagement with the city whereby movement through its streets and spaces would reveal some underlying truth. Games of chance, or absurd performances such as using the map of one city to navigate the streets of another were used to disrupt habituated encounters with space. Chief among their tactics was the *dérive*, or drift, an aimless walk that promoted 'transient passage through varied ambiances'.<sup>11</sup> Although the group dissolved around the time of the 1968 Paris uprisings, in recent years there has been renewed interest in the Situationists, psychogeography, and *dérive*. Debord, spoke of psychogeography's 'pleasing vagueness' and it is perhaps this vagueness that is responsible for so many practitioners identifying themselves with the movement.<sup>12</sup> Richardson recognises this growth in interest, and in her recent survey of British psychogeography suggests that, 'when using the term *psychogeography*, one should always be thinking of psychogeographies'.<sup>13</sup> It would be a mistake to suggest that all walking artists identify with the tradition of the Situationists' psychogeography yet recognising the role played by these ideas can help in the understanding of relational practices, whose aims, methods, and outcomes can be difficult to comprehend in terms of conventional artistic practice where product is often foregrounded over process. For many of today's walking artists, the act of walking is an entanglement of both their everyday lived experience and their creative practice. Clare Qualmann's *Perambulator* residency (2014) explored the ways in which her interaction with the urban landscape changed once she became a mother and needed to navigate the city with a baby-stroller.<sup>14</sup> For others, their engagement with walking is more tangential. Astra Taylor's film, *The Examined Life* (2014) is

<sup>7</sup> Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 17-18.

<sup>8</sup> Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (London: Verso, 2002), 14.

<sup>9</sup> Merlin Coverley, *Psychogeography* (Harpندن: Pocket Essentials, 2010), 81-102.

<sup>10</sup> Coverley, *Psychogeography*, 89.

<sup>11</sup> Coverley, *Psychogeography*, 96.

<sup>12</sup> Coverley, *Psychogeography*, 89.

<sup>13</sup> Tina Richardson, "A Wander Through The Scene of British Urban Walking", in *Walking Inside Out: Contemporary British Psychogeography*, ed. Tina Richardson (London: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2015), 3.

<sup>14</sup> Clare Qualmann, *Perambulator: Final Report for Devron Arts* Last accessed: 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 2017. [www.deveron-projects.com/site\\_media/uploads/clare\\_qualmann\\_perambulator\\_artist\\_report.pdf](http://www.deveron-projects.com/site_media/uploads/clare_qualmann_perambulator_artist_report.pdf)

an enquiry into contemporary philosophy and takes the form of conversations with, or monologues by, current cultural thinkers.<sup>15</sup> The film is structured around a series of walks and journeys, and while walking rarely becomes the direct topic of conversation, its role in facilitating, structuring, and pacing the thoughts of the speakers affirms Rousseau's observation that our minds only work with our legs.<sup>16</sup> One section of the film that does discuss walking directly follows critical theorist Judith Butler as she walks with Sunaura Taylor through the streets of San Francisco. Their conversation explores how we identify ourselves as walkers, and the material and social obstacles that the city presents to someone such as Taylor whose chronic condition requires her to use a mobility chair.<sup>17</sup> Many walking artists are keen to situate their practice within a research context, deploying interdisciplinary methods, publishing papers and presenting at conferences. Multi-disciplinary artist Miranda Whall is currently engaged in a research project whereby she transforms herself into 'a cyborg sheep', attaches 13 Go-Pro cameras to her body and walks (on all fours) the ancient drovers' tracks in the Cambrian mountains near her home in Wales.<sup>18</sup> By collaborating with researchers and practitioners from the natural sciences and creative arts, Whall's project explores both the bio-diversity and cultural heritage of the region.<sup>19</sup> Within the pluralities of practice, neologisms have begun to emerge. Performance researcher and prolific walker, Phil Smith elides methods with persona in *mythogeography*. A term born of a mis-remembering of the word psychogeography<sup>20</sup>, mythogeography advocates a re-enchantment of the relationship between a place and the subject experiencing it. For Smith, such a re-enchantment comes about through the subject (the walker) allowing themselves to develop narratives out of their encounters with place: reverie, serendipity, memory, sensual associations, puns and more, for the mythogeographer, all have the potential to enrich our connection to, and understanding of place.<sup>21</sup> With another neologism, *schizocartography*, Tina Richardson brands her own methods of urban walking, synthesising the theories of Felix Guattari with the practices of the Situationists.<sup>22</sup> Although no neologisms have revealed themselves to me in the course of my own work it is among these psychogeographers, dériveurs, perambulators, mythogeographers, and schizocartographers that I situate myself and my own engagements with place and space.

## THE EVOLUTION OF A CREATIVE WALKING PRACTICE

Central to my creative walking practice is a questioning of subject-object relations, and the allocation of agency within the world of phenomena. Contemporary theories I have looked to in order to direct my thinking have centred on New Materialism. New Materialism stands in opposition to the dualistic structures on which transcendental and humanist traditions are constructed, questioning conventional notions of subjectivity, and accounting for the agency of matter and nonhuman forces within the world.<sup>23</sup> For New Materialist thinkers,

<sup>15</sup> Astra Taylor, *Examined Life* (New York: Zeitgeist Films, 2008).

<sup>16</sup> Solnit, *Wanderlust*, 14.

<sup>17</sup> Taylor, *Examined Life*.

<sup>18</sup> Miranda Whall, July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017 First entry Crossed Paths blog Last accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 2017. [www.mirandawhall.space/?p=2670](http://www.mirandawhall.space/?p=2670)

<sup>19</sup> Whall, Crossed Paths.

<sup>20</sup> Phil Smith, Crab Walking and Mythogeography, *Walking, Writing and Performance*, ed. Roberta Mock (Bristol: Intellect, 2009), 82

<sup>21</sup> Phil Smith, *Crab Walking*, 84.

<sup>22</sup> Tina Richardson, "Developing Schizocartography: Formulating a Theoretical Methodology for a Walking Practice", in *Walking Inside Out: Contemporary British Psychogeography*, ed. Tina Richardson (London: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2015), 181-194.

<sup>23</sup> Introduction to an interview with Karen Barad, in *New Materialism: Interviews & Cartographies*, eds. Rick Dolphijn and Iris van der Tuin, (Open Humanities Press, 2012), 48; Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, in *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency and Politics*, eds. Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 8.



“materiality is always something more than “mere” matter: an excess force, vitality, relationality, that renders matter active, self-creative, productive, unpredictable. In sum, new materialists are rediscovering a materiality that materializes, evincing immanent modes of self-transformation that compel us to think of causation in far more complex term; to recognize that phenomena are caught in a multitude of interlocking systems and forces and to consider anew the location and nature of capacities for agency.”<sup>24</sup>

In setting out her own New Materialist agenda, Jane Bennett proposes a ‘methodological naïveté’ as a means of escaping the tendency towards humanistic theories of causality and agency.<sup>25</sup> To this end Bennett suggests revisiting of ‘discredited philosophies of nature’<sup>26</sup> as a possible tactic. Borrowed scenery might not meet Bennett’s definition of a discredited philosophy of nature, but it might meet Smith’s notion of a ‘radical nostalgia’ which suggests a similar return to ‘simpler times’.<sup>27</sup> In the context of the present paper which aims to address lost artistic gestures, both these notions offer useful grounds for reflection.

What drives my interest in these New Materialist ideas is that the reappraisals of subject, agency, and causality that they advocate lead to revised codes of ethics and justice.<sup>28</sup> Before discussing further how New Materialist ideas are impacting upon my practice, entangling with borrowed scenery, and offering an ethical framework to the whole, I will discuss the evolution of my approach from one that was primarily representational to one that embraces relational approaches.

My practice has evolved out of an interest in cultural and material aspects of place that first manifested itself in the drawing and print-making I did as an undergraduate many years ago. Although often abstract and with no explicit indication of location I still consider these works-on-paper as landscapes. Recently I found this representational approach with its emphasis on objects, outcomes, and products unsatisfactory, and I have gravitated to one more akin to Bourriaud’s *relational aesthetics* described above.<sup>29</sup> As a British artist, trained in the US and resident in Japan for much of the last 20 years, ‘the human interaction and social contexts’<sup>30</sup> advocated by Bourriaud have been foregrounded in my transit across and between cultures. In general terms this shift towards the relational has resulted in a focus on the process of doing rather than on the product, object or outcome. My work has become more performative; it is more inclusive and collaborative, and is reflexive to external and unanticipated phenomena such as terrain, weather and social interaction in ways my earlier work was not. These qualities manifest themselves most clearly in my on-going project *Widdershins Osaka*, an annual group-walk I lead through the streets of my current home city, Osaka, and that will be discussed in more detail below.

Elements of the cultures within which I live and move have been appropriated within my work since even those earlier works-on-paper described above. As a graduate student in East Tennessee in the early 1990s, motifs from Appalachian folk art and the state’s musical heritage found their way into my imagery. I first understood the inclusion of such cultural elements as simply quotations of something new, unknown, or other.<sup>31</sup> More recently I have come to recognise them not only as something *other*, but that this other is in some way part my *self*. It is here, with the recognition of the ambiguity, frailty, and porosity of the boundary around the subjective self that a relational practice began to emerge.

<sup>24</sup> Coole and Frost, *New Materialisms*, 9.

<sup>25</sup> Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 17-18.

<sup>26</sup> Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 18.

<sup>27</sup> Smith, *Crab Walking*, 102- 103.

<sup>28</sup> Barad, *New Materialism*, 70.

<sup>29</sup> Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 14.

<sup>30</sup> Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 14.

<sup>31</sup> I would ask that well-intentioned, youthful naivety mitigate any accusations of cultural misappropriation.



Fig. 1: Clustered works-on-paper can be seen as an early iteration of the discourse colony. Installation view, 1708 Gallery, Richmond, VA. 2007.

Now that I am based in Osaka, Japan, my practice has changed in a number of ways including a sensitivity to the dangers of cultural appropriation. It is not surprising that cultural elements such as the Americana have evolved to be more closely associated with my current situation. *Kekkai* boundary stones that signal the border between the material and non-material realms, and *fukeyi-ron* landscape theory of 1960s Japanese, avant-garde cinema. A more significant change is how these elements are being exploited within a practice that now prioritises relational over representational concerns. Whereas once such elements would be quoted as representations within completed artworks I am now more interested in how they inter-relate, and in their potential to impact on my everyday encounters in the world. To take my interest in *kekkaï* boundary stones as an example, whereas I might once have attempted to draw (represent) these mysterious objects, I now attempt to project the notion of *kekkaï* onto the world around me: might not a graffitied scrawl on a road sign, or a child's discarded toy be a *kekkaï* boundary between realms? If so, who invested it with such powers, and how should I proceed in relation to it? The cultural element, in this case *kekkaï*, becomes a catalyst, triggering the imagination and forcing a reconsideration of the world around me.

As these elements accumulate I have developed a bricolage/assemblage approach, collecting and storing them as an open-ended pool of resources from which I can draw at any time. Hand-drawn notes and diagrams; maps and photographs; photocopies and printed ephemera; found items (text, images, objects); digital images and sound recordings. What interests me most about these items is their inter-relations and their potential to act as triggers within my real-world encounters. These elements have come out of practice but have the potential to feed back into it, to be re-used in whatever way seems appropriate: a poem may be constructed out of found text fragments (to be read on the streets); images from different sources may be juxtaposed to form a photo essay (offered as an alternative guide to the city); a map found at one visited site may be given a new legend formed from the transcript of a

conversation overheard on a train (and then used to navigate familiar streets in unanticipated ways). In this way a circular, on-going process is emphasised rather than any closed or completed outcome or product. While the notions of collage and assemblage owe a lot to Dada artists such as Kurt Schwitters, my storage methods are structured around the *discourse colony* of linguist Michael Hoey (see fig. 2).



Fig. 2: Towards the Discourse Colony (extract), assembled works-on-paper, maps and other paper ephemera.

In his role as a written discourse analyst, Michael Hoey developed the concept of the *discourse colony* as a means to categorise a particular text-type for analysis. Hoey defines the discourse colony as a text (or texts) ‘whose component parts do not derive their meaning from the sequence in which they are placed. If the parts are jumbled, the utility may be affected but the meaning remains the same’<sup>32</sup> and contrasts this with what he calls mainstream texts that are linear in structure and whose meaning would be lost if their parts were jumbled. Examples of such colony texts range from shopping lists to library index systems. A newspaper editorial is a mainstream text but the newspaper itself is a discourse colony. Hoey

<sup>32</sup> Michael Hoey, The Discourse Colony: A Preliminary Study of a Neglected Discourse Type, in (ed.) *Talking about Text*, ed. Malcolm Coulthard (Birmingham: Birmingham University Press, 1986), 4.

identified nine properties that a discourse colony may display (see fig. 3).<sup>33</sup>

The Nine Properties of a Discourse Colony	
1.	meaning not derived from sequence
2.	adjacent units do not form continuous prose
3.	there is a framing context
4.	no single author and/ or anon.
5.	one component may be used without referring to the others
6.	components can be reprinted or reused in subsequent works
7.	components may be added, removed or altered
8.	many of the components serve the same function
9.	alphabetic, numeral or temporal sequencing

Fig. 3: The Nine Properties of a Discourse Colony

Hoey states that a text does not have to display all these properties in order to be a discourse colony: shopping lists for example display few while dictionaries and directories appear to display all nine.<sup>34</sup> My bricolage storage meets all nine of Hoey's properties and while the linguist took *text* to mean written discourse, my own use allows for a broader definition of the term whereby all cultural production can read as a text.<sup>35</sup> Henceforth, the pool into which items are deposited will be referred to as a discourse colony.

*Kekkai* was addressed above in order to clarify the notion of discourse colony, and although these boundary markers remain important within my practice, attention will now move to the element that is central to the present paper, that of *borrowed scenery*.

## SHUTTLLINGS BETWEEN: BORROWED SCENERY, ITS HISTORIES AND DISCOURSES

Borrowed scenery ~ *shakkei* in Japanese and *jiejing* in Chinese~ is generally understood to be the technique of including within the design or perception of a garden, elements that lie outwith. In its simplest terms it can be understood as follows. At Isui-en gardens, Nara, from the veranda of the house, the visitor can see a grassy embankment rising from the far side of the pond. From this vantage point the ridge of the embankment forms a gentle symmetrical curve across the plane of vision. Almost directly behind this curving 'horizon' another similarly curved horizon can be seen- that formed against the sky by Mt. Wakakusa. Although several kilometres away, Wakakusa has been incorporated into the design allowing the garden to extend beyond its own perimeter, blurring the line between interior and exterior. This understanding of borrowed scenery that frames a scene from a given vantage point became relatively fixed following the 1960s when modernist architects in Japan adopted it as a method for addressing issues of interior/exterior space within their own work. It did not take long for these ideas to spread to Western designers who at that time looked to Japan as a place of inspiration, and for borrowed scenery to become understood as a Japanese concept.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Hoey, *Discourse Colony*, 20.

<sup>34</sup> Hoey *Discourse Colony*, 21.

<sup>35</sup> Daniel Chandler, *Semiotics: The Basics* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002), 263.

<sup>36</sup> Wybe Kuitert, Borrowing Scenery and The Landscape That Lends~ The Last Chapter of Yuanye, *Journal of Landscape Architecture*, 10:2, (2015), 32.



Still today, this Japanese iteration, *shakkei*, persists in popular discourse, with its emphasis on the idea of borrowed scenery as a fixed vantage point from which to view a scene.<sup>37</sup> Borrowed scenery however is not Japanese. Ono, Shimomura, and Zhou agree that while borrowed scenery took on a new identity in Japan and evolved independently it has its roots in China.<sup>38</sup> Borrowed scenery is a far more nuanced and ambiguous cluster of concepts than the example described above suggests. It includes numerous *categories of borrowing* that respond not only to spatial considerations such as near and far but also temporal issues: times of day and the seasons for example. These categories also stimulate all five senses and not only the visual. The ambiguity inherent in borrowed scenery lies in its original Chinese iteration, the 400-year old *Yuanye* text and recent attempts to interpret it. These attempts move us yet further away from the fixed vantage point of the Isui-en Garden example given above to a borrowing that is far more elusive. Questions are raised about who or what is performing the borrowing, and who or what is being borrowed. As Fung describes there is within the text a ‘shuttling between scene, self, action, scene, self [...] here-and-now and there-and-then’.<sup>39</sup> It is this crossing and re-crossing of the boundary between self and other, and the ambiguity as to the agency at play in the borrowing and lending that has come to drive my interest in borrowed scenery, echoing as it does both the concerns within my practice as well as those of the New Materialists.

Written in the late Ming dynasty by experienced garden designer Ji Cheng (b. 1582) *Yuanye* is the first written treatise on garden design in China.<sup>40</sup> The text remained relatively obscure even in China until its rediscovery by Japanese scholars in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It wasn’t until 1949 that it was first brought to the attention of Western scholars by Oswald Sirén in his book *Gardens of China*.<sup>41</sup> Alison Hardie then provided the first full English translation of the text published as *The Craft of Gardens* in 1988.<sup>42</sup> While recognising the importance of Hardie’s work, both Fung and Kuitert imply that her translation is less than perfect,<sup>43</sup> and in her preface to the second edition, Hardie herself acknowledges that if she were to attempt such a translation again she would do it very differently.<sup>44</sup> For Kuitert, Che Bing Chiu’s French translation of 1997 is far superior, including as it does extensive commentary.<sup>45</sup> Kuitert also praises the work of Stanislaus Fung who addresses the problems that arise from reading *Yuanye* in the context of Western dualistic thought thereby neglecting the cultural context in which it was written.<sup>46</sup> And while much has been written on *Yuanye* within the disciplines associated with landscape architecture and design, it is Fung who recognises the potential value of the text to those working in other disciplines and whose specialist knowledge lies elsewhere.<sup>47</sup>

In his essay *Here and There in Yuan Ye*, Fung asserts that attempts to understand the notion of borrowed scenery in Western dualistic terms (subject/ object; nature/ culture; body/ mind) have been responsible for a misrepresentation of borrowing that reduce it to design: the alignment of vantage points with scenic elements. Staying true to non-dualistic Chinese thinking, Fung refuses to assign agency to a designer or to any single entity instead seeking a ‘correlativity [...] of the elements of process’.<sup>48</sup> His

<sup>37</sup> David. H. Engel, Masanobu Kudo, Kiyoshi Seike, *A Japanese Touch for Your Garden* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1980), 66.

<sup>38</sup> Ryohei Ono and Akio Shimomura and Hongjun Zhou, The Character and Variety of the Term Borrowed Scenery in Japanese Gardening, in *Landscape Research Japan Online*, 5 (2012), 17.

<sup>39</sup> Kuitert, *Borrowing Scenery*, 33.

<sup>40</sup> Stanislaus Fung The Interdisciplinary Prospects of Reading Yuan ye, *Studies in The History of Gardens and Designed Landscapes*, 18:3, (1998) 211.

<sup>41</sup> Fung, *Interdisciplinary Prospects*, 211.

<sup>42</sup> Fung, *Interdisciplinary Prospects*, 211; Kuitert, *Borrowing Scenery*, 33.

<sup>43</sup> Fung, *Interdisciplinary Prospects*, 211; Kuitert, *Borrowing Scenery*, 33.

<sup>44</sup> Alison Hardie, Translator’s Preface to The Second Edition, *The Craft of Gardens by Ji Cheng*, (New York: Better Link Press, 2012), 9.

<sup>45</sup> Kuitert, *Borrowing Scenery*, 33.

<sup>46</sup> Kuitert, *Borrowing Scenery*, 33.

<sup>47</sup> Fung, *Interdisciplinary Prospects*, 211.

<sup>48</sup> Fung, *Here and There*, 306.

approach to reading the text has evolved from a focus on the texts minutiae to a method he describes as a line-by-line ‘drift’.<sup>49</sup> Such an approach has revealed to him Yuanye’s performative nature:

“Yuan ye engages the reader in a peripatetic thinking informed by a larger order of texts that re-organise Chinese cultural memory. “Borrowing views” is not a set of design principles but refers to an embodied, meandering thinking. Yuan ye offers not a statement of principles but provokes a kind of readerly shuttling.”<sup>50</sup>

Fung makes explicit his desire to find ways in which Chinese and Western scholarly concerns can be mutually beneficial.<sup>51</sup> To this end, and in the hope that they may contribute to an alternative framework with which to study borrowed scenery, he enlists the ideas of Martin Heidegger. For Fung, Heidegger’s distinction between *ambient world*<sup>52</sup> and *space* offer an alternative to the Western geometrical space of lines and points.<sup>53</sup> It is my belief that the New Materialist can similarly contribute to understandings of Borrowed Scenery, and that when deployed within an urban walking encounter these ideas, harnessed to the concerns for ethics and justice advocated by Barad<sup>54</sup> might lead to more concerned dealings with the environment, and the forces and matter of which it is constituted.

## WIDDERSHINS OSAKA: AN ANNUAL GROUP-WALKING PROJECT

*Widdershins Osaka* is an evolving group-walking project that aims to examine our everyday lived experience of place and the city through the entanglement of the cultural and material histories of Leeds, England and Osaka, Japan. The unfolding of borrowed scenery’s potentials described above has been concurrent to my engagement with *Widdershins Osaka* and in the following section I aim to reveal how borrowed scenery is being deployed within the project.

Some years ago, while researching Japanese *kekai* boundary stones I learned of Terminus, the Roman God of boundaries and recognised that the annual Terminalia events that celebrate this deity every February might be a platform for a project of my own. In the city of Leeds, England, Terminalia is marked by a circular walk around the sites of the six boundary stones, or *bars* that marked the perimeter of the medieval town, most of which remain visible within the fabric of the contemporary city. Each year the starting point and the direction in which the circuit is walked is altered. In 2016 the direction was *widdershins*. This archaic British term is defined as *counter-clockwise* or *contrary to the direction of the sun* but has connotations of deviance and otherness.

Lamenting the fact that commitments in Osaka every February made it impossible for me to be in Leeds to participate I opened a dialogue with Tim Waters, the event’s organiser. Tim described how the walk not only celebrates Leeds’ history but also addresses issues confronting the contemporary city: the boundaries between the public and private ownership of land; the mechanisms of urban policy-making; and the right to the city. In 2016, reflecting on some of the absurd activities of the Situationists, I decided that if I could not go to Leeds I would bring Leeds to Osaka. I chose a centre around which a circuit could be plotted, marked the six boundary bars of Leeds onto a map of Osaka. I then invited interested friends and colleagues to join me in walking the circuit: *Widdershins Osaka*. I told them that our aim was to collectively find~ or invoke~ the Leeds bars in Osaka, and that we would do so through

<sup>49</sup> Fung, *Interdisciplinary Prospects*, 211; Fung, *Here and There*, 306.

<sup>50</sup> Fung, *Here and There*, 306.

<sup>51</sup> Fung, *Here and There*, 308.

<sup>52</sup> Fung translates *umwelt* as ‘ambient world’ although ‘environing world’ or ‘surrounding world’ are more common translations of Heidegger’s term. See Jeff Malpas, *Heidegger’s Topology: Being, Place, World*, (Cambridge: MIT, 2008), 32, 55; Edward S. Casey, *The Fate of Place*, (Berkeley: University of California, 1998), 247.

<sup>53</sup> Fung, *Here and There*, 309-310.

<sup>54</sup> Barad, *New Materialism*, 70.

walking, discussion, games of chance, performed readings, and spontaneous responses to place as it unfolded before us. Our walk took us on a route that crossed commercial, residential, and administrative zones within the city.

Although framed as a treatise, *Yuanye* is a poetic and allusive text whose formal qualities and rich imagery allow it to be considered as a work of literature. To facilitate discussion and inter-action within the walking group I had with me 6 texts of cut up sections of *Jiejing*, the final chapter of *Yuanye* to be read aloud by one member of the group at each of the *bars*. My intention was for these allusive text-fragments to act as a lens through which to re-see the city and as a trigger for our discussions. I had constructed the texts by first photocopying Kuitert's translation of the *Jiejing* chapter, (which very fortunately is 36 lines in length), giving each of the lines a number from 1 to 36, cutting them up and placing them in a pot. I then drew at random 6 lines from the pot and placed them together in the order in which they were drawn to form a new stanza. I repeated this until I and I had 6 stanzas of 6 lines and all 36 lines had been drawn. I then allocated, again using chance, one stanza to each of the boundary bar stones that we would be visiting on our walk. One such stanza read as follows:

“Despite the clamour of the city be sure to select a living with quiet neighbours.  
Gaze from a highland into the boundless distance; far away peaks are aligned like a screen.  
The four seasons are essential but is there any relation to the eight directions?  
There are no fixed rules in garden creation; it all depends on what the landscape lends.  
From the shade of foliage, the first song of the oriole; from the folds of the hills, suddenly a farmer's ditty; a refreshing breeze from the forest shade; it brings distant antiquity to mind.  
Linger at the woods along a river, valuing the foliage of the bamboo and the appearance of dense trees and grass.”<sup>55</sup>



Fig. 4: Participants on Widdershins Osaka 2016 perform readings of *Yuanye* text extracts (left), and participants on Widdershins 2017 observe their surroundings at Nakanoshima Mitsui Building (right).

There were quivers of self-consciousness in their voices but the speakers could be seen to be enjoying the novelty of reading aloud in public space. As they read, the rest of the group listened, reflecting on the landscape around them. One of the bars mapped onto the atrium of the high-rise Nakanoshima Mitsui Building where Jenny Holzer's text-sculpture, *Serpentine*, weaves endless blue-lit aphorisms between the tower's pillars. Repeating the voiced reading process over the course of the six bars disrupted habituated

<sup>55</sup> Adapted from Kuitert, *Borrowing Scenery*, 35-39.

engagement with place, inducing what Schechner terms a 'second reality' that for him is brought about through performance, ritual, and play.<sup>56</sup> Another bar mapped onto the corner of a residential street where a magnificent cherry blossom tree was in almost full bloom: a liminal zone where the ephemeral beauty of the blossoms stands as a metonym for the transience of all things. The walk led us on unfamiliar streets, drawing together places not usually considered related and precipitating a reconsideration of everyday encounters. Our discussions took new directions also, forging links not only between the texts and our environment, but connecting childhood memories, dreams from the previous night, and contemporary issues related to the socio-political climate.

**Yuan-ye, Borrowed Scenery Checklist**

Date of dérive: 15/06/17

Dérive starting point: TERADACHO STATION (JR) Starting time: 9:04

Dérive finishing point: TENNOJI STATION (JR) Finishing time: 11:20 (?)

At a predetermined point on today's walk stop and consider your surroundings. Try to frame a scene or view. This framing does not need to be purely visual but should encourage contributions from the other senses. Use the categorised borrowings as a prompt, as a means of organising your observations. Record your findings in the column on the right.

Category of borrowing	Examples given in the literature	Examples seen on today's dérive
<b>yuanjie</b> 遠借 distant borrowing	mountains, lakes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skyline of Tennoji (HARUKAS TOWER)</li> <li>• Blurred logos of trucks on elevated stretch of highway</li> </ul>
<b>linjie</b> 隣借 adjacent borrowing	neighboring buildings & features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the smell of curry from back door of restaurant, alarmingly quiet</li> <li>• "hiss" of TOYOTA PRIUS hybrid engine</li> </ul>
<b>yangjie</b> 仰借 upward borrowing	clouds, stars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• contrails,</li> <li>• a pair of running shoes hanging by the lines on an overhead cable.</li> </ul>
<b>fujie</b> 俯借 downward borrowing	rocks, ponds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gas/costs construction company markings on temporary road surface,</li> <li>• <del>paper</del> discarded paper printed with "footprint" graphic</li> </ul>

Other notes:


 need to develop a theme: an end towards which I'm borrowing, a filter/editing process...

Fig.5: An example of a completed Borrowed Scenery worksheet

What I thought would be a one-off encounter in 2016 had a second iteration in 2017 and I now consider it an annual event. I am already planning for 2018's walk which will be further enriched by my ongoing research into borrowed scenery. At the time of writing I have two ideas to this end. Firstly, I am developing a worksheet that uses the four categories of borrowing as a simple prompt to disrupt habits of seeing. These categories are in effect spatial divisions: *yuanjie* refers to distant borrowing; *linjie* describes adjacent borrowing; *yangjie* is defined as upward borrowing; and *fujie* as downward. Unsurprisingly, the

<sup>56</sup> Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 52.



features given in the literature to exemplify each of these categories are those associated with nature and with gardens. Mountains and lakes are offered as expressions of *yuanjie* while ponds and rocks are given as examples of *fujie*. What features might reveal themselves were these categories to be deployed not in a traditional garden but in a contemporary urban setting. Could the gutters in the street function as a proxy water feature? Might a chain-link fence be *locum tenens* for a bamboo screen? Unlike the voiced readings, the borrowed scenery worksheet asks the walker to enter a dialogue with the space in a more active way by recording their observations while walking (see fig. 5). The completed worksheet becomes data~ not only the information recorded in the right-hand column but the paper itself. With its creases, stains, and annotated margins, the paper acts as a material document of the encounter. The worksheet and the information recorded on it are added to the discourse colony.

Another way in which Borrowed Scenery will enrich future walks is through a shuttling between Leeds and Osaka in real time. I hope to synchronise the Osaka walk with Tim's event in Leeds and to open live communication channels allowing prearranged activities performed in one time-place to be experienced in the other, thus opening an exchange and further entangling the cities and their people. Time differences and technological requirements will need to be seen as challenges and not as problems.

## CONCLUSION

Borrowed scenery has unfolded within my practice in stages that remain clearly identifiable to me. In the hope that it might offer further insight into that practice I will briefly recount those stages here. The first stage was an immediate and relatively common-sense comprehension of the term borrowed scenery. On first encountering it I was quickly able to visualise the idea of a fixed vantage point from which to view a prescribed scene and to recognise that here was an interesting tactic to deploy within my practice. I next learned of the four categories of such borrowing (distant, near, upward, downward) and was again able to see how they could add a degree of nuance to that initial tactic. Further research revealed the contemporary discourses surrounding *Yuanye* and I was excited by the resonances between those readings and my own interest in subjectivity and agency. At this point borrowed scenery shifted from being one element among many within my practice to assuming a more central role. A period of reflection and reading enabled me to then recognise the literary qualities of the text, and how its poetry and imagery might also be brought to bear upon my practice. The tethering of borrowed scenery to New Materialist ethics represents the most recent of these unfoldings, and its hoped that an acknowledgement of the novelty will mitigate the fact that further research needs to be conducted in this area.

This paper has attempted to reveal how a conscientious creative practice with methods based in walking can be a vehicle for concerned, ethical, and just encounters with the urban environment, and the forces and matter, be they human or otherwise, of which that environment is constituted.

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## BIOGRAPHY

Gareth Jones is a British artist, researcher and educator, dividing his time between Japan where he teaches, and the UK where he is working towards his PhD with the University of Dundee, Scotland. His practice is an interdisciplinary enquiry into global and local space. Aimed at promoting personal, cultural and environmental wellbeing, this practice entangles psychogeographic walking methods with cultural and material elements specific to his own circumstances.

# Reformulating Architecture's Past through Drawing: Surveying Chinese Architecture in the 1930s

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## ABSTRACT

If the aesthetics of realism held an inferior position in Chinese painting traditions, why were such techniques utilized to describe architectural antiquity in the 1930s? Curiously, Chinese painting tradition emphasizes the brush stroke, and movement or gesture of the line as a register of one's artistic abilities. Realistic representation was often downplayed and minimized as a mode of aesthetic expression, as uniform straight lines displayed a skill or technique anyone could master. Yet, ruled-line painting (*jiehua*) is one exception, thought to be the only formalized painting technique to convey extreme detail, and line work, involving the use of instruments such as plumb lines, rulers and compasses. These "sharp-edge" techniques were acceptable to portray architecture, with qualities of accuracy and detailed subject matter—such versions of the *Up the River During the Qing Ming Festival* painting.

When Chinese architects educated in the US and Japan returned home in the 1930s, why did they recast China's ancient architectural sites into the pictorial format of construction documents? Ancient architecture was systematically surveyed, scaled, measured, and recomposed with strict straight lines into sets of orthographic drawings labeled with notes. How was this pictorial format, one that largely excludes the expression of one's individual mark, chosen to capture monuments of the past before possible obliteration from war?

Undoubtedly, the "Four Outstanding" architect-scholars were immersed in concurrent debates, and skilled in drawing as a method for the study of both design and historic architecture (as current scholarship maintains the import of the *Ecole des Beaux Arts* methods from the University of Pennsylvania to China took place through these individuals). But to what extent have the traditions of *jiehua* (ruled-line painting) been overlooked, or helpful for the collective project of careful reformulation, recovery, and reinterpretation of China's architectural past in a pictorial format? Why were orthographic projection techniques seen as: 1) particularly appropriate to conveying the past's unique architectural achievements to future generations, and 2) as a desirable format with "objective" or non-gestural qualities? In turn, how did the use of such representational techniques, reframe understandings of the built environment in China more generally?

## KEY WORDS

surveying, drawing practices, realism, architectural knowledge, exchanges between the US and China, 1920s-1930s

“Interaction with the past’s residues ceaselessly alters their nature and context, unwittingly if not intentionally.”

- David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*

During the 1930s and early 1940s, ancient Chinese architecture was systematically surveyed, measured, scaled, and re-drawn in strict straight lines by young Chinese architects who had recently returned from studying abroad. The surveys they created were composed into sets of measured drawings labeled with notes and dimensions and often accompanied by black and white photographs. However, this was a “new” format in this context, and greatly differs from traditional Chinese painting aesthetic ideals. The aesthetics of realism held a minor role in Chinese painting traditions for hundreds of years, so why were detailed orthographic projections the representational format chosen to describe architectural antiquity in China at this time?

Current scholarship emphasizes the influence of Ecole des Beaux Arts methods imported by way of the US, specifically the curriculum taught at the University of Pennsylvania and the conveyance of such methods to China through these individuals.<sup>1</sup> While abroad in the 1920s, these “First Generation” Chinese architect-scholars engaged in concurrent architectural debates and became skilled in specific drawing methods. But when one takes a closer look at the survey drawings of Chinese architecture from this period, many closely follow the conventions of “working drawings” used in the architectural practice in the U.S., rather than those of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts academic curriculum. Working drawing conventions were outlined in various drafting manuals for practicing architects and draftsman in the 1920s. These graphic conventions were further codified in the 1930s with the publication of *Architectural Graphic Standards*. The format of working drawings encapsulate a different set of temporal qualities and concerns than the Beaux-Arts watercolor renderings. Working drawing conventions depict and anticipate details of a building’s construction, visualizing such information for the builder in two dimensions. Orthographic drawings rely on measurement and scale to imply a direct relationship between what is represented on the page to a built material reality. By describing a building with straight measured lines the expression of one’s individual mark is largely obscured making this format seem “objective.” By extension, this “objective” quality allows one to codify architecture into a set of discrete physical and measured historical facts, which can be systematized into a historical narrative.

In terms of surveying and studying antique Chinese architecture, these conventions were applied in reverse to recover the embedded architectural knowledge in the found artifact through visual description. Thus, these representational conventions codify a *specific* working relationship between the architect as a designer and the builder as a technician. In this sense, working drawing conventions imply a particular way of looking at the world - through the eyes of modern architectural practice, which privileges the analytical deduction and measurement of a building, and the role of the architect as designer. In the drawing-up of existing buildings this “modern” viewpoint sheds reference to any cosmological systems that might have originally informed such found constructions (such as feng shui or ancestor worship, in the case of Chinese traditions). Instead, the focus remains on the measured description of a building’s physical elements and assembly of the details holding it all together.

This study evaluates the embedded assumptions in this particular drawing approach and examines underlying concepts it grafts onto the “found” material evidence. Through a careful re-reading of a few drawings by architect and scholar Liang Sicheng from this period, one can re-evaluate how such methods can create a field of discourse specific to the “modern” architect. It is argued that through these specific

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<sup>1</sup> See: Cody, Jeffrey W., Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt, and Tony Atkin, eds. *Chinese Architecture and the Beaux-Arts*. Spatial Habitus (Honolulu : [Hong Kong]: University of Hawai’i Press ; Hong Kong University Press, 2011).

drawing practices, the field of architecture establishes its own historical ground by subtly reshaping material “facts” in order to create a systematic understanding of architecture’s past in China.

## BEFORE THE 1930S

Prior to the use of these drawing techniques, “architecture” was not conceptualized as a high art in aesthetic discourse in China. Instead, poetry, calligraphy, and painting were granted this status. Liang Sicheng himself recognized that, “It was not until late in the twenties that Chinese intellectuals began to realize the significance of their own architecture as an art no less important than calligraphy and painting.”<sup>2</sup> There was no specific word for “architecture” in the Chinese language prior to the return of the “Outstanding Four”, one of whom was Sicheng.<sup>3</sup> Historian Nancy Steinhardt points out that in the Chinese language the word architecture was itself modern, appearing after the 1920s. Before this, what one might assume to be “architecture” was part of a larger religious and imperial cultural conception, and defined as a series of buildings arranged in space with meaningful orientation, not as isolated structures.<sup>4</sup> This difference is key to understand the shift in representational conventions at this time, and those used by Chinese architect and historian Liang Sicheng to re-capture ancient construction techniques before they were physically lost. Most of the drawings in Sicheng’s *Pictorial History of Chinese Architecture* (and studies he produced for the Society for Research in Chinese Architecture) describe ancient buildings in measured orthographic drawings. These drawing conventions imply, through scale and measurement, a direct relationship between what is drawn and a specific material reality. This alternative conceptualization - of architecture as a privileged art and the architect as a singular creative figure – entailed creating a history to root the practice in tradition.

However, representation tied to the idea of the “real” was minimized as a mode of expression in prior Chinese aesthetic traditions. It was thought that uniform straight lines displayed a skill or technique that *anyone* could master. For example, realism was repudiated during the late Song Period as decorative illusion, when Su Shi (1073-1101) stated, “Anyone who judges painting by formlikeness shows merely the insight of a child.”<sup>5</sup> This viewpoint directly counters the goals of representing architecture in the format of orthographic projections (measured and scaled plans, sections, elevations) pursued by the Society for Research in the 1930s. Instead, the rich history of Chinese painting traditions emphasized the brush stroke as a gesture of movement, and the line as a register of one’s artistic abilities. These aesthetic concerns are focused on visualizing emotions and ideas beyond what the eye literally sees and did not employ drawing tools – such as rulers, compasses, and plumb lines.

Ruled-line painting (jiehua), however, was one exception to this tradition. It is thought to be the only formalized painting technique to convey extreme detail and line work involving the use of instruments such as plumb lines, rulers, and compasses. Anita Chung outlines in her study of jiehua techniques, *Drawing Boundaries*, that jiehua was the only form of Chinese painting to rely upon measuring devices (and not the brush alone). She asserts, “...we cannot assume that the relations between painting and building remain historically constant.”<sup>6</sup> Yet, despite the changing discourse related to jiehua it persisted as a form of representation specific to manmade structures. These “sharp-edge” painting techniques portrayed the built environment with qualities of accuracy and detailed subject matter – even

<sup>2</sup> Liang, Sicheng, and Wilma Fairbank. *A Pictorial History of Chinese Architecture: A Study of the Development of Its Structural System and the Evolution of Its Types* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1984), 36.

<sup>3</sup> Steinhardt, Nancy Shatzman, and Xinian Fu, eds. *Chinese Architecture. The Culture & Civilization of China* (New Haven : Beijing: Yale University Press ; New WorldPress, 2002).

<sup>4</sup> Nancy Steinhardt, *Chinese Architecture*.

<sup>5</sup> Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, N.Y.), and Wen Fong, eds. *Between Two Cultures: Late-Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Chinese Paintings from the Robert H. Ellsworth Collection in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: New Haven: Metropolitan Museum of Art ; Yale University Press [distributor], 2001).

<sup>6</sup> Chung, Anita. *Drawing Boundaries: Architectural Images in Qing China* (Honolulu : University of Hawaii Press, 2004), 4.

in versions of the famous *Up the River During the Qing Ming Festival* paintings. A key difference between “working drawings” and jiehua depictions, is that the jiehua representations did not visually present the methods of construction, or technical instructions for fabricating the built environment.

The attitude towards “realism” in Chinese tradition is quite intriguing in relation to the architectural descriptions in the 1930s. In Chinese painting traditions brushwork conveys not only the landscapes and figures depicted but equally plays a role in giving form to an emotive state, and communicating this state through pictorial depiction. George Rowley discusses that the impression of immeasurable space was an objective in Chinese painting traditions, expressing the vast unknown – not the finite discrete materiality of the given or existing. Whereas, “In the west psychological scale was measured by man’s awareness of himself”<sup>7</sup> which implied the concern for the definite, measureable and “known” facts. These ideas clearly related to architectural representation at this moment in the 1930s, which was very much concerned with describing the material remains of antiquity in detail. Sicheng’s presentation of his research findings as a pictorial history, in this sense shifted away from past architectural representation methods and existing literary sources. Sicheng’s surveying activities in China created a set of documents that stand in for the material evidence witnessed in the field. This documentation establishes an important relationship between the substantiation of ideas regarding the material of architecture by circumscribing the boundaries of a field of knowledge conceptualized as both architectural and historical.

Another important aspect to consider, prior to these re-drawings, was the transmission of building knowledge which took place without such detailed drawings. Instead, carpenters conveyed their expertise orally from master to apprentice, keeping the craft secret as a form of embodied knowledge. There are several famous building manuals, such as the *Yang Zhao Fashi* (1103 AD), and the *Kung-cheng tso-fa* (1733), which Sicheng and his colleagues also studied. However it was from these literary sources that Sicheng could not recover the form of knowledge he sought. To establish such an architectural history in this 1930s context, it had to be drawn from discrete material evidence, which necessitated a search for “discoveries” in order to recover the secrets of craftsmanship, guiding his quest to capture a texture of architectural knowledge under the threat of physical destruction.

## DRAWING HISTORY

Historical knowledge of antique buildings serves to anchor the profession of architecture in tradition, and functions as a narrative device to explain culture in the face of change. Through the discursive practice of drawing the profession of architecture establishes its expertise, its objects of study, its history, and its boundaries as a field of knowledge. The factual basis of history also became largely associated with science at this time. Applying scientific methods to the study of the past was also an ambition of Liang Sicheng, and other Chinese intellectuals at the time.<sup>8</sup> Liang Sicheng describes the changes he witnessed in China, contextualizing the impetus for finding, studying, and recording architectural antiquity:

“Waves of new influences, stirring up whims of a few men in a conservative town, can innocently deface a masterpiece by their efforts at so-called “modernization” of an “old-fashioned” structure. ... Seldom does one find to one’s satisfaction a real gem left in peace and beauty by nature and man alike. A stray spark from an incense stick may also reduce a whole temple to ashes.”<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Rowley, George, and Du Bois Schanck Morris. *Principles of Chinese Painting, with Illustrations from the Du Bois Schanck Morris Collection*. Princeton Monographs in Art and Archaeology, XXIV (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1947), 66-67.

<sup>8</sup> See: Fairbank, Wilma, and Jonathan Spence. *Liang and Lin: Partners in Exploring China’s Architectural Past*. (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 62.

<sup>9</sup> “In Search of Ancient Architecture in North China” (Liang Sicheng) in *Complete Works of Liang Sicheng*, 303, Volume 3.



The threat of destruction, either from the “progressive” development, accidental mishaps, or weathering caused by the climate, could lead to the loss of exemplary architecture. Sicheng was aware that he was creating a new field of study, and accepted an offer from Chu Chi-ch'ien, the founder of the Society For Research in Chinese Architecture, to investigate the building methods outlined in the Song building manual *Yang-tsao Fashi* he uncovered in Nanking's Kiangsu Provincial Library.<sup>10</sup> The literary descriptions of the ancient building methods had become garbled over hundreds of years of reproduction, and could not be fully understood at the time.

Sicheng was particularly interested in trying to recover “lost” knowledge about timber frame construction he could not decipher from the existing literature. More generally he found that literary sources were too limiting to fully understand the ancient timber frame constructions he studied. He and others were curious to solve the mysteries of construction not described in some of the most ancient construction manuals written in Chinese, and to systematize these findings into a historical narrative, explaining Chinese architecture's traditions and their change through time. To explain such change, the paradigm of “evolution” became an underlying framework of Sicheng's historical narrative, which systematized his fieldwork findings. The following examination of some of Sicheng's drawings highlight the role of drawing as a discursive practice for the field of architecture in relation to writing history. The conventions Sicheng used carry a specific imprint of thinking, which reshaped the historical materials he and his team encountered in the field. This case study is particularly useful to examine the transference of ideas that occurred across national boundaries at this time, which produced knowledge reinforcing nationalist histories and cemented architecture's illustrative role in such narratives.

Sicheng's work also highlights the important role of orthographic drawing conventions in establishing this particular set of historical architectural facts. Orthographic projection, as a representational format, focuses upon breaking down the individual building into a series of views, through which one can see a detailed examination of the buildings constituent parts. Generally these views, (plan, section and elevation) give little reference to surrounding context. It is often thought of as a method of drawing that “typifies architectural draughtsmanship” and has as its main advantage the guarantee that “the building's major measurements are accurately transcribed and can be unambiguously recovered” with the use of a scale.<sup>11</sup> Given this underlying logic, orthographic drawings were seen not only as an ideal method for drawing up designs to be built, but also as the consummate means for capturing existing architecture in a graphic format that was scientific, accurate, and factual.

Sicheng's father, Liang Qichao was a political revolutionary and intellectual reformer, very much engaged in political debates, and even lived in exile in Japan between 1898-1912. Professor Li Shiqiao's research illuminates the depth of Sicheng's father's engagement in debates about modernity and the role of historical knowledge in the project of formulating the present, and actively reformulating “China” into a modern nation state; one that would also conceive of historical knowledge as key to understanding the entity of the “nation” and the “collective.”<sup>12</sup> In this context historical knowledge was viewed as a form or tactic of modernization. By depicting architecture from the past, in orthographic drawings, it could become an objective “fact”; standardized in such a way that obscured the appearance of authorship (to a certain degree), and thus becoming relevant, and even evidence of the nation's history.

History, as a form of knowledge implies a desire to put the past behind and gives the present an authoritative view; simultaneously this establishes the critical distance required for “renewal” in the present. Specialized histories, in specific fields, were also important to Liang Qichao to more closely

<sup>10</sup> Fairbank, *Liang and Lin*.

<sup>11</sup> Blau, Eve, Edward Kaufman, Robin Evans, and Centre Canadien d'Architecture, eds. *Architecture and Its Image: Four Centuries of Architectural Representation: Works from the Collection of the Canadian Centre for Architecture* (Montreal : Cambridge, Mass: Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture ; Distributed by the MIT Press, 1989), 158.

<sup>12</sup> See : Shiqiao, Li. “Writing a Modern Chinese Architectural History: Liang Sicheng and Liang Qichao.” *Journal of Architectural Education* 56, no. 1 (September 1, 2002): 35–45. doi:10.1162/104648802321019155.

attain a complete or comprehensive history. In this sense, nuanced conceptions of history, modernity, knowledge, as well as architecture as a profession, tradition, and cultural object, were codified through the conventions of representation. These very concepts became embedded within the gestures that materialized on the drafting board, and were emphasized by orthographic projection.

Debates concerning the political motivations and ideologies directing Sicheng's activities are not the focus here, rather they serve as the backdrop in which Sicheng and others conducted their studies. My focus is on the representational methods Sicheng utilized to codify and transmit ancient Chinese architectural gestures into a form of historical knowledge, as well as investigating why this particular discursive practice was viewed as the most fitting for this particular task of recovery. It is significant that Sicheng and his research team faced the destructiveness of war with Japan, and civil war within China itself, not to mention contending with both the constructive and destructive aspects of modernity and "progress." It is also significant that at the very same time, practicing architects in the US were also travelling throughout the states to also record existing buildings (the Historical American Building Survey), which produced a different kind of history emphasizing the vernacular types, rather than ancient proportional systems. These activities were contemporaneous, and indicative architectural discourse's international reach and practices at the time. Sicheng even published several of his studies in English in the 1940s. This indicates that a more complex and participatory set of discussions took place across national boundaries, which complicates any over-simplified explanations of this as a simple export of "western" knowledge to China.

## DRAWING THE HALL OF KUAN-YIN KE

For nine years Sicheng and the Institute for Research in Chinese Architecture created documentation of over 2000 buildings, spread across China's landscape in over 200 counties. These individual studies fed the larger ambition to weave together all evidence into an overarching narrative about China's architectural history. Key to this search for "actual specimens" was the personal visit and examination of existing material evidence through measurements and photographs. These studies were published in a periodical called the *Bulletin of the Society for Research in Chinese Architecture*, which disseminated written articles and reproductions of photographs and drawings made during survey visits, and some English language translations of these articles.

The results of Liang Sicheng's first research trip in 1932 to the Hall of Kuan-yin Ke (Dule Temple) in the walled city of Chi Hsien, were some of the first to appear in the *Bulletin*. This hall, dedicated to the Buddhist deity Kuan-yin of Tu-le Ssu, was described by Sicheng as standing "high above the city wall and can be seen from a great distance."<sup>13</sup> Nearly one thousand years old at the time of Liang's recording, this three-story timber frame structure was built in 984 AD. Inside the hall stands an approximately 60-foot high clay statue of an 11-headed Kuan-yin, which occupies a central void in the two upper floors.

Two floor plans of the Kuan-yin Ke hall were published in the June 1932 issue of the *Bulletin*. Drawn in orthographic projection, dashed lines indicate the overhead extension of the roof's eaves on the building perimeter, and indicate the central clay statue. Columns and exterior walls are demarcated with a thickness of line weight, and an arrow indicating the direction of an interior stair's incline, including a section cut line convention. Drawn this way, the hall is imagined as horizontally "sliced" to reveal the building's full anatomy in plan. These drawings are reproduced in Sicheng's *Pictorial History*, where the section and plan are composed together on a singular sheet. The plan is drawn at a smaller scale than the section, and given far less space at the top of the page, while the composition generously privileges the cross-section. Copious notes are labeled in both English and Chinese, indicating building construction vocabulary with leaders and arrows. Such notes resonate with the standards for drafting outlined in

<sup>13</sup> Sicheng quoted in Fairbank, *Liang and Lin*, 56.

*Architectural Details* (1924), which emphasizes the use of notes on drawings. “Explanatory notes form a most important part of working drawings. These should be added wherever they lend themselves to a clearer understanding of the drawing.”<sup>14</sup> Such notes were not found on Beaux-Arts academic drawings, which privileged the plan view as the representational format most effective for conveying the “parti” or design concept. Analytique<sup>15</sup> drawings in the Beaux-Arts curriculum composed various scaled drawings onto a single sheet to give one a sense of the building from various viewpoints and scales, however the stark and diagrammatic quality of Sicheng’s composition does not follow this Beaux-Arts exercise taught at Penn.

The simple line border of the page’s composition is broken by the outer extents of the section on the left and right, and by the plan’s upper limit at the top. Devoid of surrounding context (such as a site plan, topography, or other buildings), the drawings of the temple float on the page, making the hall’s orientation within the broader complex unclear. In this sense, this visual description reinforces the notion that architecture is a singular building, an isolated “fact,” which distances itself from the traditional understanding of architecture as an assemblage buildings and courtyards in Chinese culture. One might assume plans and sections are typical conventions used by architects, but historical reflection contextualizes just how varied their use can be – especially when applied to recording the past.

These drawings also made use of overlapping lines at perpendicular intersections, such as the framing border of the page, forming tiny “crosshairs” where lines meet perpendicularly. This may seem an insignificant detail, however in the 1920s there was nuanced discourse about the difference between lines drawn by the architect and those drawn by the mechanical engineer. The “architect’s drawing’s relative freedom of technique and expression” characterized the difference between mechanical engineers and architects. In *Architectural Details* (1924) the architect’s lines are described as “allow[ing] lines to carry over slightly and not attempt to stop them exactly. This practice tends to give a touch of freedom to the drawing and also saves much of the draftsman’s time.”<sup>16</sup> The “snap” of the line, or its subtle crossing, emphasized the limits of construction in graphic form and embodied the relationship between drawing and building, and the authorship of the architect.<sup>17</sup> Therefore this subtle detail in graphic representation indicates and reinforced the underlying idea that the architect is the creative author. Clearly Sicheng was familiar with this convention and employed it in his own depiction of the material evidence he and his colleagues described.

Standards, such as line weights, title blocks, lettering, notes and dimensions, were all elements of such orthographic drawing sets and serve as a visual means to link the (conceptual) process of architectural production to the found “object” or building; in a sense not just “recording” the given material building that exists from a primary material source, but rather extracting a specific understanding of its construction. A set of abstractions are also at work in this format that appears to be “factual”, for example the details of construction are not always immediately apparent to the naked eye, but can be inferred from examining the building. For example, a section drawing is itself has a degree of abstraction; no one actually can see the building in section unless the physical structure is cut open. Many of the detailed sections that Sicheng emphasized in his drawings rely upon the technique of creating a section from what was observed, therefore there is a moment of imagination and extrapolation that takes place when creating an orthographic projection based on one’s observations. Despite the graphic rhetoric of the drawing format and its association with the “facts”, it is not a literal copy of found material evidence. In the cross section and plan of the Main Entrance or Gateway of Kuan-yin Ke, conventions such as overhead framing center lines, section cut lines, dashed lines, and line weights indicate a sense of depth

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>15</sup> The ‘analytique’ was the name of a specific drawing exercise within the Beaux-Arts curriculum and its adaptation by Professor Paul Philipe Cret to the University of Pennsylvania. This curriculum continued to use the French name/vocabulary in America

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>17</sup> Johnston, George. *Drafting Culture*, 41.

in orthographic projection. Door swings are depicted in plan with arcs. In the cross section, notes with leaders also describe different elements in the bracket and wood framing construction. These are all representational conventions illustrated in the early publication of *Architectural Details* and characteristic of working drawings of the time. It is important to note these are not graphic conventions found in academic Beaux-Arts drawings, such as those Sicheng would have drawn during his studies at Penn. Sicheng and his colleagues clearly had exposure to this style of drafting from practice, while in the US and chose it as the visual means of capturing the construction of the buildings they recorded.

Hatching and other graphic material description conventions are found in these drawings as well, such as concentric circles indicating a tree's growth in the cross section of "king-posts" and other wood structural framing members. In Beaux-Arts drawings the surface of the building is the focus, and the construction, largely assumed to be masonry and carved stone is often left without graphic detail beyond a thickness of line. Lettering, also prominently featured in Sicheng's drawings, and was another important aspect of working drawings. Publications such as *The Art of Lettering* provided detailed discussion and instruction to the draftsman about lettering on drawings.

Systems of measure also indicate the temporal stamp of the drawing's author. Measuring units and conventions tie a drawing to a specific social and economic context. In the Kuan-yin Ke drawings, the metric scale is used, giving all dimensions to the building within this modern unit. Obviously this system of measure was not the one used to build the structure almost a millennium prior. Therefore, even the measurement scale itself is a means through which one's understanding of the past is remolded into a current format, transcribing the physical evidence into a set of instructions that outline the potential of how a practicing architect might be able to rebuild, or repair, such a structure today. Discussing the indication of dimensions on drawings, *Architectural Details* states that, "Probably the most important thing about the making of a drawing is its proper dimensioning."<sup>18</sup> This also remains important in the case of accurately capturing the existing, so that knowledge of its construction could be preserved or even reconstructed later.

Existing scholarship emphasizes Liang Sicheng's importation of the Beaux-Arts methods he learned under Paul Cret and John Harbeson at the University of Pennsylvania, however when examining his drawings of the buildings he recorded during his field work from 1932-1941, there are significant differences from the Beaux-Arts methods. While there are watercolor renderings and a history of this pedagogy taught in schools in China, Beaux-Arts renderings portray a different type of detailed information about a building such as the casting of light upon its massing, the composition of space, and the atmospheric qualities of its imagined setting (entourage), and color. In short, these depictions do not intend to portray the building's construction assembly, rather they illustrate an image of the building's surface.

## EXCLUSIONS

Whether the working drawing format is used for a practicing architect's plans, or as an "after-the-fact" template to record the existing, both privilege the moment of the building's just after completion. This graphic format crystalizes a particular moment in the building's life - its complete realization. In the process of surveying, the "found" becomes regularized and filtered through such drawing conventions. For example, photographs of the Kuan-yin Ke hall depict additional support members added to each of the outer eaves of the building.<sup>19</sup> These were not part of the original design, but came later in the eighteenth century to shore up the structure as it aged. Yet in Sicheng's drawings, these posts are not represented. Here, one can see how a process of selection takes shape, even though these additional posts constitute

<sup>18</sup> Rouillion, Louis. *Architectural Details* (New York: J. Wiley & sons, inc.; [etc., etc.], 1924), 4.

<sup>19</sup> See Sicheng's *A Pictorial History*: 50, figure 25, 51, figure C. Also, Professor Steinhardt mentions that these were additions from eighteenth century repairs in *Liao Architecture*, 36.

what was 'found' on site, they were not part of the original design of the building, and subsequently edited out of the building's representation. This type of editing reveals that a specific temporal moment of the building's original design is privileged, thus reinforcing the idea of the architect as creator and the building as having one static form that must be preserved. In this way, the building's state of "origin" becomes a treasured temporal moment, captured and replicated by orthographic projection for future dissemination. This recording format also implies the possibility for future re-construction, by an expert. Thus, the kinds of measurements, notes, and depictions reflect this ambition. Less easy to discern are the exclusion of particular elements from the drawing, yet these also announce the intentions embedded in such a recording practice.

## CONCLUSIONS

This drawing format encapsulates both the "past" in terms of construction knowledge extracted from an existing building, and the future promise of the resulting facsimile. This mode of recovery through drawing carries with it a hope to transmit the codified construction knowledge to subsequent generations, transcending a building's physical limitations. The degree to which a building's material qualities have been rectified in the drawing are not always immediately apparent, especially within a convention that emphasizes facticity, totality, and transparency. In this sense, a degree of imaginative projection, back in time to the "beginning" of the building's life, is a point of the architect's greatest concern. Perhaps this conceptualization of the architect's practice plays a role in cementing this concern with a building's origins.

Liang and the research society encountered destructive forces in many forms, including modernity and its "progressive" forward movement. These forms of destruction are what the record keeping and record making practices intended to thwart. In this context, drawing was essential to uncovering past textures of knowledge embedded within architectural examples from the past (such as proportional systems and construction traditions). The desire to distill the architectural gestures of past traditions into a series of measured orthographic projections aims to capture craft for perpetuity, yet this takes shape in the architect's concurrent visual language (working drawing conventions). This redrawing is at once a process of recovery and reformulation, casting the existing material evidence into a pictorial format and embedding underlying assumptions that define architecture as a specific field of expertise and practice. In this sense, the knowledge of one's craft, past or present, had to be drawn in a particular format to be distilled as a form of historical knowledge. By reconstructing what they observed on-site, in the format of measured orthographic drawings and photo documentation, architectural achievements of the past were identified, selected, and captured on paper. Through the example of the drawings by Liang Sicheng it becomes apparent that the profession's drawing practices played a pivotal role in both crafting the profession as a modern field of work, and anchoring such a practice within a history of its own making. Orthographic projection became associated with historical facts depicted in through visual means, to assure the survival of architectural knowledge even if its material evidence was subsequently obliterated. In a sense, this graphic format portrays architecture's present just as much as its past.

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## BIOGRAPHY

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# **A Portrait of a Photograph that doesn't look like a Picture: Photography and Identity as Image and Material in the Work of Edward Krasinski.**

**Gil Lavi**

## **ABSTRACT**

Edward Krasinski's gesture of assimilating people, objects and walls using blue masking tape remained esoteric throughout the past decades. The practice was often described by methods that offered symbolic political readings. This article aims to understand Krasinski's tape as a material, as well as its formal effect as a separator and assimilator. The work is investigated in relationship to Krasinski's interests in photography and with a perspective of the work's relevance to the crisis of the photograph as an object today. The photograph shares with the masking tape the mechanism of assimilation and separation as well as mechanical repetition. An effort is made to understand the blue tape as a portrait of the photograph written in by subtraction. This paper examines Krasinski's blue tape as a liminal organ, a recording device and a warning sign. The gesture of applying the tape over people is finally investigated in relationship to Ohad Naharin's gesture of taping in *Last Show*.

## **KEY WORDS**

Edward Krasinski, Ohad Naharin, Blue Stripe, Blue Tape, Photography

## INTRODUCTION

In Rembrandt's *Belshazzar's Feast*, Belshazzar stands at the center of the composition and glares at the hand of god as it writes a message intended for him on the wall. At the feast, Belshazzar serves his guests food and drinks from the sacred dishes his father, Nebuchadnezzar, looted from the Jewish Temple. When god's hand suddenly appears on the wall, Belshazzar and his wise advisors are stunned: they can't decrypt the message. They are familiar with the letters, but they are unable to make out the words.

Inspired by *Belshazzar's Feast*, Voltairine de Cleyre's *Written in Red* exchanges the hand of god for the hand of the protester.

*(To Our Living Dead in Mexico's Struggle)*

"Written in red their protest stands,  
For the Gods of the World to see;  
On the dooming wall their bodiless hands  
Have blazoned "Upharsin," and flaring brands  
Illumine the message: "Seize the lands!  
Open the prisons and make men free!"  
Flame out the living words of the dead  
Written—in—red."

Much of contemporary artistic practice appears to have something to do with the story of Belshazzar's Feast. The viewer often mimics Belshazzar's stunned posture as he encounters the familiar in an unfamiliar way: he understands that the message is intended for him. It is composed of objects or letters that are familiar to him, yet he is often unable to grasp any meaning from them. The beneficiary of the crime is entrenched in the sphere where the crime remains unknown to him. As for the artist, he often embraces the role of the protester against the burden of material history and its movement which Nebuchadnezzar's looted artifacts represent. He seeks to offer refuge from the past, freeing men and things from the limitations of their own biographies.

## A TAPE ON THE WALL

Edward Krasinski became interested in (art as) photography in the second half of the last century. His critique of the image produced a new account on the role of the wall in contemporary art. His work offers an insight into the wall being written. Krasinski displayed pictures of paintings and sculptures, representations emptied of perspective and scale as objects during the late 1960s. By the 1970s he became best known for the blue line, a strip of blue painter's tape he began taping across people, walls and objects, stretching the barrier of the image. The strip, forming a blue stripe once activated, was discussed in the past in terms of its symbolic relationships to photographic practices and political identities.

In 1968 Krasinski first used Scotch Blue Tape to encircle two little girls, a house, some objects and a couple of trees in the village of Zalesie, outside of Warsaw, Poland. Krasinski's tape refers back to art practice and has long been a tool for artist painters and commercial painters. His tape is made, literally, in order to trace existing forms and define two-dimensional borders as formal dividers, and as a side effect, they also act as indexical doublers of existing structures. Installed against a hard wall surface, Krasinski's blue

tape feels almost like a skin to the passing hand. It is an object of mass production that replicates an intimate sensation.

In his essay “The Rhetoric of the Blue Stripe,” Pawel Polit suggests that Krasiński’s tape behaves in a manner that is analogous with the photographic image. Polit closely follows Craig Owens’s analysis of the rhetoric of the photograph in *‘Photography En Abyme’* and concludes that like the photograph, the blue stripe, in the case of Krasiński’s work, has a unique rhetoric that relates to the way it interacts with reality through doubling.

“The model of space designed for the intervention of the stripe emerged in Krasiński’s practice from intensive experimentation conducted in collaboration with the photographer Eustachy Kossakowski in 1969, with regard to modes of photographic documentation of the horizontal operation of the blue stripe in architectural contexts. In a quasi-tautological mode of typical photography, Krasiński’s stripe simply doubles the contours of shapes encountered in its path.”

This reading seems consistent with the realities and the potentialities that Krasiński’s work bears and the possibilities that the tape might offer. If a specific rhetoric can be attributed to the blue stripe, then perhaps what is left in order to better understand the relationships between ideas of reality, the idea of the image and identity in Krasiński’s work, is to further investigate the material analogy between the roll of tape and the roll of film.

Polit argues that the “qualities of the blue tape, its concurrent transparency and opacity, seem to stand in relation to the structural properties of the photographic image, the transparency of the stripe corresponding to the photograph’s illusory depth, and its opacity emphasizing the photograph’s physical flatness.” Krasiński became interested in photography around the same time that he came upon a roll of Scotch Blue tape. At the time it was perhaps somewhat foreign or at least not yet common object, like the film roll itself. Polit continues:

“...the operation of the blue tape establishing a kind of visual narrative connecting two heterogeneous realms: a real space, subject to the contingencies of passing time, and the ideal and timeless space of geometry.”

## TAPE AND PROTEST

In “Krasiński and Totality”, Blake Stimson offers a theory that views Edward Krasiński’s stripe as a political agent. Reading his work symbolically, Stimson argues that the blue stripe is connected directly to leftist agenda and Eastern European artistic strategies of his time. Stimson claims that the blue line is “Antecedent to Solidarity’s (*Solidarność*) red line or an after-effect of El Lissitzky’s red square”. According to her method, it needs to be considered in relation to “form of associating people and things - that is the capitalist marketplace.” This approach situates Krasiński’s work in a highly specific context that assumes his interest to be in the realm of culture and politics or within an intimate artistic milieu. Further, it assumes that the work takes a moral position according to which *Solidarność* was a positive political movement. In “Cat out of the bag”, Theodor Adorno offers a principled view of solidarity as an idea within socialist politics. His critique of total identity in the text can offer an insight into how an artistic practice such as Stimson describes would prove counterproductive to the basic artistic instincts that promise to offer men a way to move past his conditions, but rather further enforce those conditions on him.

[Solidarity] “was manifested by groups of people who together put their lives at stake, counting their own concerns as less important in face of a tangible possibility, so that, without being possessed by an abstract idea, but also without individual hope, they were ready to sacrifice themselves for each

other. The prerequisites for this waiving of self-preservation were knowledge and freedom of decision: if they are lacking, blind particular interest immediately reasserts itself. In the course of time, however, solidarity has turned into confidence that the Party has a thousand eyes.”

Stimson’s association of the blue line with solidarity’s red line sheds light on the traditional acceptance of ideas about forms of semblance and identity in relationship to artistic production. If the blue line is somehow related to *Solidarność*’s red line, then Adorno’s optical metaphor might offer us a more insightful clue about Krasiński’s formality that can help us in our thinking about the relationship between the blue stripe and the photograph: the very promise of identity embodies optical modes of surveillance that preceded the security camera. The point of Krasiński’s work is not to echo and enforce upon the mind preexisting social mores. It doesn’t seek identification, but rather a warning against identification.

This text aims to look at Krasiński’s message on the wall by exploring possible links between his practice and contemporary practices in the field of photography, focusing on how the blue tape, in the hands of Krasiński, might be considered as a portrait of a photograph. It will consider how the artist treated forms of associations as optical instruments and how Krasiński’s work with the tape embodied strategies that are now often capitalized in contemporary critique of photography.

## THE PHOTOGRAPH AS TIME

In recent decades the artist’s wall as a concrete place has been increasingly replaced by the photographic image as an idea of a place. Instagram replaced Belshazzar’s wall. The photographic image gained elasticity and a sense of temporality that was unfamiliar before. Art as photography enjoys a new wave of development now that photography is no longer limited to familiar techniques of material reproduction or to the production of long lasting impressions. In our time the photograph no longer claims to be a description of a specific time and place by default. At the same time, a temporal attitude increasingly develops regarding the presentation of the photograph, whether by the act of publishing it on an app like Snapchat or by printing photographs for exhibitions using an ink that disappears within a given period of time. The photograph becomes increasingly temporary: a unit in time rather than a description of time. As such, the photograph increasingly represents a present experience. Establishing a formal sense of temporality arouses the instinct among some practitioners to offer multiplicity of moments within the photograph, whether by juxtaposition, doubling, barrage or collage techniques. The formal change in temporality altered the content’s plane in the image. The photograph is no longer an enclosed container of time, not even inside our screens, but rather a surface on which semblance appears to be floating over. Everything can be photographed but nothing at all can be captured anymore.

In “A Note upon the Mystic Writing Pad” Freud analyzed the inner mechanics of the image that was produced on what used to be a revolutionary wax tablet. To Freud, the tablet’s mechanics echoed our own mental apparatus. The Mystic Writing Pad allowed users to write on it using a pointed stylus that deposited no material and deleted the writing by lifting the top layer of the pad. It produced an image of a record without leaving any material deposit, and yet it left a permanent undecipherable impression lacking in semblance on one of the surfaces that formed the multilayered pad. That tension between image, history and material reality is at the heart of our investigation into Krasiński’s work.

## THE BLUE STRIPE AND CONTEMPORARY PRACTICES

Contemporary artistic practices are often informed by the critique of the mythological aspects of the modern world, and specifically the investigation of the relationships between image, object, subjectivity and the notion of reality, both in the forms of possibilities and alternatives. Photography, commonly used by political

bodies in sedimentation of possible virtual connections between society and the individual is often a model for such investigation by artists.

In America, during the past six years, the question of what is a photograph has become a central theme of contemporary artistic discourse. Major exhibitions have been dedicated to the subject by institutions ranging from the International Center of Photography to MoMA. The setup is almost typical: different forms of installation split between focusing on technical processes and/or conceptual practices, neither of which are traditionally associated with photography, are put on show to stress the question: are these photographs, or not? Underlying all these is the unnecessary insistence in understanding photography either as a technical reality or as conceptual process. Practitioners of both approaches, artists and curators alike, either miss the understanding of photography as literary metaphor or miss that the metaphor aims to express a form.

If Benjamin suggested that photography allows an insight into the optical unconscious, then present photographic practices enable an insight into the material mechanics of the medium itself. Krasinski's oeuvre, I argue, marks a turning point in the critique of photography. It precedes much of today's critiques in its ability to provide insight into the metaphorical and the formal qualities of the photograph by a way of allegory. The blue tape offers a translation of the roll of film that sheds light on photography's mechanics of identity production.

As examples for current practices that aim at gaining insight into photography either as form or as a metaphor, we can think of Chris McCaw who uses a gigantic camera that allows photosensitive paper to be burned as if under a magnifying glass. Marco Breaur, who explores the physicality and the shallowness of photographic paper by etching, folding and scratching it, creating pieces where physical actions are represented by chemical reactions without even traces of light. Penelope Umberico prints photographs in overly dense ink on paper so the photographic image rubs into the hands of the viewer who goes through her books. All deal with the duality of the photograph as part of material reality as well as a record of reality de-voided of material. They treat the photograph as an object removed from its previous role as tool in the service of describing optical consciousness, as an object and material that produces new associations and forms of identification. Yet none of these practitioners seem to be able to reach the same level of tension between form and metaphor in the critique of photography that Krasinski reached.

## PHOTOGRAPHY, TRANSLATION AND SEMBLANCE

"When inventors of a new instrument,' says Arago, 'apply it to the observation of nature, what they expect of it always turns out to be a trifle compared with the succession of subsequent discoveries of which the instrument was the origin.' In a great arc Arago's speech spans the field of new technologies, from astrophysics to philology: alongside the prospects for photographing the stars and planets we find the idea of establishing a photographic record of the Egyptian hieroglyphs."

Walter Benjamin, *A Short History of Photography*

Since its invention, photography and its applications have moved from supporting political agendas in the reviving of myth and formalization of territorial claims, to being used in modes of surveillance and enforcement of political sovereignty, to, most recently, being used in active military roles. The usage of infrared and sonic radar technologies in the production of synthetic images appears to conform to even more recent trends in contemporary art, where the idea of translating other modes of representation into photography and vice versa become prevalent. Just think of sound art. In a sense photography became fluid to the point that practically all art is now photography by way of consumption and photography as a field is

increasingly occupied with translation. At the same time and for the same reasons, photography is becoming ever more determinative in its political significance, but not photography as we think of it.

Photographic applications are being expanded by artists, but also by governments and other political bodies to enforce the past using newly produced objects of associations. Photogrammetry, for example, is a long established method for an extraction of reliable quantities of data out of photographs based on constant relationship of referentiality between a photograph and a reality that allows the accurate measurement of elements in photographs. It is regularly used for mapping, or geographical translation, not unlike the blue stripe.

In the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, photogrammetry-related technique plays a special military role: in the Iron Dome missile defense system, audio visual technologies are being fused together in order to translate signals in the sky that can calculate the trajectories of Qassam missiles fired from Gaza within milliseconds by overlaying and analyzing sound radar and infrared imagery. Belshazzar couldn't read a message on the wall, but nowadays we are able to convert using photography heat signals into mathematic formulas.

Photogrammetry as a technique expands further into the business of the recreation of historical artifacts and the resurrection of lost cultural heritage. Newly used technology, close-up photogrammetry, allows the creation of 3D models of archeological footprints, replacing earlier technologies like cast making and peeling, a technique of information extraction that bears much conceptual similarity to taping and the removal of the tape. Close up photogrammetry brings texture and surface ever closer together, allowing the recreation of the past as an object of the present. These objects made of photographs can soon offer the recreation of the mythological past with absolute accuracy, feeling our environment with semblance while further emptying it from all symbolic content.

Krasiński's work might prove helpful to thinking about the mechanisms of semblance in photography in relation to political systems by offering a record lacking in semblance. The flatness of the photograph is what allows the illusory unity of depicted space as the space of depiction. The blue tape resembles photography in this sense as well. Yet the more dimensions and details photographs might offer us in the future, the more falsely familiar they offer the past to become in our minds.

## THE POTENTIAL OF THE TAPE

On the night of January 17<sup>th</sup> 1991, Saddam Hussein launched the first Scud missile aimed at the center of Israel. The real danger, the TV informed, was not conventional missiles, but rather the potential use of chemical and biological warheads. A vented shelter made of concrete wouldn't do. The government's solution was to direct citizens to buy rolls of packing tape and large sheets of nylon and to use them in order to create a "safe room" in their house by sealing the windows using the tape. Citizens were also given masks to protect themselves from inhaling gas, but only the tape could prevent a multiplicity of chemicals and viruses from penetrating through the skin. These kinds of non-conventional weapons kill people by destroying the physical barriers that define their autonomy from the outside world, the skin that normally keeps them contained in their identity and separated from others. A wet rug was to be put at the bottom of the door to keep the seal intact after the door closed. A strip of tape two inches wide was attributed with the capacity to stop weapons of mass destruction and it did, psychologically speaking at least, and provided a semblance of safety. It acted as a second skin, the family's skin, between the individual and the world. This suggests the deep mental necessity of semblance for our daily functions.

In Woody Allen's film *Interiors*, a roll of tape is yet again attributed with power over life and death. Eve, an interior decorator who is married to Arthur, the father of her children, seals the windows of her meticulously designed house with black tape before she turns on the gas on the stove and awaits her death. The seal proves incomplete as Eve runs out of black tape. She remains alive for another hour on screen until



she kills herself by drowning, the act of filling oneself with an uninhabitable environment, a loss of separation between the physical self and the environment, where Eve became one with something other than herself. In the examples of both Woody Allen and the Gulf War, the tape is used as a skin, something that separates between internal and external environments, between psychological certainty and real uncertainty, in the same sense that the photograph as semblance separates between reality and memory. Both have an inherent, almost magical power to convince in their abilities to create an identifiable space of safety and a border between different mental states and notions of reality. They define, protect and empower psychologically, offering autonomy as safety.

## THE BLUE STRIPE AS A DOUBLER

As an optical instrument, the blue stripe frames and doubles reality by tracing it. It can only be expressed through the obstruction of prior conditions, a strategy of direct engagement, differently than the photograph. At the same time, the tape itself also functions as a recorder, a lot like the photograph. If a thing in a photograph is being expressed by the demarcation, the blue stripe is expressed and becomes pronounced through delimitation. The photograph marks the line from which we can't see past, while the blue stripe is a limiter that doesn't let us see through.

Krasiński's practice viewed in relationship to photography brings to mind a work by Francis Alÿs. In Alÿs's work shoot in Afghanistan, *REEL – UNREEL*, a camera follows Afghan children as they unreel a roll of film in the streets. By pursuing this action, Alÿs confronts the film as the image material that holds all power over our knowledge of Afghanistan with the place itself. It intends to position photography as an image and reality. By "using the material wrong," Francis Alÿs produces a strong sense of foreignness between the place, the material in which a memory of it can be stored and the video itself that the viewers watch. Like Naharin's tape, Francis Alÿs film shines on the luster of the sand and stones. Afghanistan becomes separated and contrasted with the space in which it is depicted, the film roll once it appears in reality.

Krasiński's blue stripe and the photograph are both affirmative objects bearing indexical claims not only to describe, but also to enforce the past. Like the photograph, every line of tape claims that it contains an objective historical condition. But where is it being contained? The photograph and the tape offer no memory but the rhetoric of the machine.

## KRASINSKI'S BLUE TAPE

The masking tape, once taped, might literally belong to the world of painting as a tool, but it is important to stress the unique properties of the blue tape prior to the intervention and realize that only from the point of its failure to fulfill its basic goal can we realize how its qualities did in fact function in Krasiński's work.

Krasiński's blue tape is solid in color yet easily penetrable by light. It is firm but also somewhat elastic. Its top surface has a finely granulated plastic texture. It brings to life a waxy luster sensation if touched. This sensation, produced by the installation of the tape against a hard surface of the wall, generates a feeling of skin to the passing hand. It is an intimate sensation being mass-produced.

The blue tape installed on the wall suggests an imminent event of painting, as well as its own removal. This removal also bears a quality that is unique to the Scotch Blue Tape and reminds us of Freud's 'Mystic Writing Pad': it leaves no evidence, no mark or sign on the wall. It's magical. It is these qualities of temporality and disappearance without an obvious trace that best endow the installation with a sense of death. As such, when operating on the metaphoric level, in Krasiński's earlier work, the blue line can be heard as the constant sound of a heart monitor in a hospital, announcing death before the patient even arrives. Perhaps it is

interesting then that in Krasinski's later works, the blue line is composed into a form that, if it were to resemble anything, it would be the short signs of life produced by the machine.

Krasinski made the Scotch Blue Tape, the tool of the painter, into a subject, not of painting, but of photography. While the tape leaves no mark on the wall, the wall always leaves multiple traces on Krasinski's tape. The tape is a subversive recording device. Not only does it produce a composition that associates people and things like photographs do, the blue stripe also records a vast amount of information about everything that it encounters, defines, and contains. Information that only the machine can decipher. Because of the tape's surprising presence and visual impact, its basic function as masking tape is easily forgotten. Something, not nothing, is hidden underneath it. In any constellation the tape is used, it separates a layer of perceived reality and positions it beyond reach. It presents itself by discrimination. Only the rare discontinuities of the line remind the viewer of an existing present that is removed from cognition. It denies similarities between all other things by offering the primacy of its own repetition. As such, it should be investigated, like the photograph, as a raw material of forgetting and as a producer of false memories and associations.

Krasinski's blue stripe is able to offer an enlargement of the skin as a territory of identity. It records the folds, cracks, and the textures of the physical bodies it envelops. Yet where the blue stripe passes, all things appear like they are exactly the same, and to the mechanical eye they are, which is why elements outside of the blue stripe in Krasinski's installations appear completely different from each other, even from their own two sides.

Krasinski often activated the tape by installing it going through paintings of romantic landscapes, mythological portraits, art objects and depictions of youth. In this sense the blue stripe again shares mechanics with Francis Alÿs *Green Line* that are borrowed from the grammar of photography. Alÿs walked with a dripping bucket of green color along the *Green Line*, the demarcation line that was set out in armistice agreements between Israel and its neighbors. Francis Alÿs's green line suggests a path where the lands of Israel and Palestine aren't two opposite ideas but rather an actual territory in which they are the same literal place or an object. Both Krasinski and Alÿs embody strategies of validating conceptual categories of the political in concrete realms in a manner that evokes a romantic paradox.

Krasinski often used the tape to connect the very assets that nationalistic bodies often aim to appropriate and bring them into geographical unity: youth, objects depicting past cultural heritage, and depictions of domestic nature are usually chained to each other in order to create one continuous and concrete national identity and to reestablish national mythologies. In that sense a principled critique of history always remained central to Krasinski's work. The fact that Krasinski was able to gather these elements that are often understood as nationalistic at a time when Polishness was hardly expressed as a nationalistic identity adds another ghostly dimension to the work. The appearance of Krasinski's work in that sense suggests that questions of national identity might presuppose an active public discourse that views culture in itself as a movement towards the appropriation of individuality.

## THE TAPE ROLL AS A FILM ROLL

The roll of tape, like the roll of film, is made of sensitive material, in this case one that is sensitive to texture. Where the photograph conceals scale and dimension, the masking tape can record them in its folds. Like the film roll, it produces a record, but also a temporal reality. Once it is taped to a corner of a room between two walls and then removed, it is an indexical record from that place. Only it is an index of the texture of the wall and its ripples. It is an index of multiple dimensions of space: actual geometry and materiality. The roll of tape indexes not just the shape and texture of the space but also its chemical and biological composition. It does so even while it is still hanging on the wall as well as after it has been removed, in the

same manner that the camera film holds an index from the moment the picture is taken, long before it is developed into a picture.

Like erasure, the peeling of the tape condenses the space it recorded into a coded memory unavailable to us. It is full of properties about specific territory, recorded for either a long or short period of time. Yet the roll of blue tape, as a record, holds a different property when it comes to decrypting its memory.

## PHOTOGRAPHY AND GEOGRAPHY

Photography bears a relative relationship to geography, of which photogrammetry clearly takes advantage. In the classic sense it is a condensed record of specific territory, be it a portrait or a landscape photograph, a war picture or a fashion shoot in the studio. If the blue tape acts like an enlarged skin, the photograph acts like veins. Photography's history runs almost parallel to the rise of nationalistic ideas in Europe, and as a political technique it shares with nationalism the desire to separate history from memory by turning it into an object of present knowledge. Photography helped nationalism to channel ideas by establishing recognizable physical and cultural boundaries more efficiently than painting because it was better at mapping, bringing closer the space it depicted to the space of depiction, the film. This is due to promised referentiality and indexicality. Offering a flatter image also meant a more condensed and impenetrable form of evidence. It is the capacity of resolution to become density of information that renders photography to be efficient medium in the transformation of ideologies.

In his photographic endeavors, Krasiński was able to exploit these relationships between photography and geometry by installing the blue stripe in a way that translates differently in the camera than it appears in reality. By understanding the photographic mechanics in depth, Krasiński was often able to produce a straight line by positioning the tape in different heights across different layers of depth. To speak about photography in the most pedestrian sense and introduce an object as a photograph by saying: "this is a photograph", is to suggest that it is a representation of something else. The analogue process had hidden a long semantic truth: that the word photography itself isn't a description or a sign for an object whose sole goal is to represent something else, but rather it's a suggestion. The digital revolution allowed us this insight: a photograph doesn't appear to be drawn or written. In our era digital cameras offer sensitivities to light and to other energies that enable different kinds of indexical records than those we could only imagine seeing with our own capacities just a few years ago. If cameras copy anything, they copy the stamps that were left by the movements of past energies. The rise in technologies of synthetic images, where pictures created by sound radars and other forms of synthetic apertures for example, create a heightened autonomy between the photograph and the optical as a traditional image making technique. An accurate visual semblance can be formed without traditional optical mechanisms being involved.

The image becomes every bit a part of reality as it is a reference when it can be its sole evidence, and the blue stripe makes this reality about the photographic medium noticed by its self-referentiality. The relationship between expression of a memory as an image exists as a code in it. The blue stripe's horizontal setting is often brought up as a pointer to the horizon in landscape painting, especially since Krasiński arrived to his interest in photography through his practice as a painter. Landscape as a surrogate for space in works of art offers a depiction of memory of a certain time, an idea of a home. If painting before the camera obscura was good at achieving distance between painted space and the space painted, photography and related imagery technologies today offers closer proximity between the depicted and the surface on depiction. This creates a sense of realism that generates every landscape to become identified framed territory, removed from nature in large. When landscape isn't part of nature, it is part of a state or a political agenda. Photography's ability to frame landscape not as semblance of nature but as real particular and catalogued geographic territory, enclosed in itself, is what enables it to be removed from nature and become part of a

political body. This mechanism is not foreign to the tape's acts of associating and disassociating objects, places and things.

### **OHAD NAHARIN'S *LAST WORK***

A gesture by Israeli choreographer Ohad Naharin might shed some more light on the relationships between photography, identity and Krasinski's blue tape. In 2016 Naharin presented *Last Work* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. The work ends with one dancer wrapping a group of fellow dancers with tape. The show's choreography, like much of Naharin's work, appropriates gestures from folk dances that were common among political, ethnic, and national groups in the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Just before the end, the dancers slowly sit on the floor while they are being taped to one another by the last dancer who remains standing. The dancer finishes the task by connecting the dancers to their environment as well, repeatedly wrapping the tape to a couple of wood structures at the edge of the stage. Throughout the show a female dancer on a treadmill keeps running in place on the left back end of the stage, operating like a timer.

Naharin appropriated the tape from the world of plastic arts and brought it into the mode of performance to shed light on questions of selfhood, solidarity and memory. He used packing tape, a material that lends itself to ideas about sealing and the stitching of parts to one another. The dancers wrapped in the tape resemble a broken water vessel that was glued together from the original parts, but no longer retains its shape. The luster of the dancer's skin contrasted with the shininess of the glossy plastic tape, like the breakage lines of the glued vessel. Naharin's tape is made, quite literally, to seal and encapsulate.

The idea of the tape as a tool that defines not only a membership in a movement, like a flag or Solidarity's red line, but also an environment and a specific physical territory, one which can even determine people's faith, seems to be significant to the understanding of the qualities that the tape might offer. As a material and a metaphor, it relates to boundaries and connectivity. At the same time the temporality of the

tape suggests that if it is a border or a border mark, it is also a border that is supposed to be broken, destroyed, and forgotten, to become un-functional.

In the work of Ohad Naharin, the roll of tape actually becomes a long roll that records the DNA of all the participant dancers on stage. Its function as a recording device is heightened further. The tape becomes an indexical storage device that contains vast information about the circled community, its double. The writing on Belshazzar's wall is a warning anticipating his fall. The hand of god is an image that acts in the Rembrandt's painting like photography acts today: it's a floating image de-voided of material but rich in semblance. It's also the consciousness of the past.

Edward Krasinski's practice confronted us using the blue tape with a fact that photography offers a past without consciousness. By forming an existing record, which is separated from an image, Krasinski left us with frustrating semblance that we cannot recognize.

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## BIOGRAPHY

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# **The Building, a Scaffold, a Score**

## **Exercises in Unveiling Materialisation**

### **A Few Notes**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The finance-driven deregulation of buildings in Hamburg's HafenCity, and the subsequent reorganisation of production and labour conditions, based on new technological and infrastructural development, are the main focus of this study. Both, privately financed - and affordable housing, paradoxically, accelerate the amplifying operation of finance through their interaction. Concepts such as the scaffold, which refers both to physical labour on the construction site as well as to the algorithmic scaffold, or framework, as both method and object in algorithmic infrastructure and logistics constitute the tools alongside which new social and cooperative performances of living and working are emerging. Consisting of performative practices, workshops, video installations and a planned publication, this project approaches the politics of the post-Fordist expansionist logic behind construction labour in HafenCity and the accompanying decentralised form and organisation of architectonic and civil space, focusing particularly on current developments in Hamburg.

The research hypothesis for this text, which is structured around a few notes in twelve paragraphs, was originally discussed with the participating performers in temporary social settings on site, on the basis of which they develop dance scores that fed back into these notes. The performers' responses were articulated in bodily gestures, whose transmissions aim to propose new social infrastructures for the present.

#### **KEY WORDS**

scaffold, infrastructure, building, finance, performance, post-Fordism, zone, communities, social class



Walking through the Baaken Quarter in Hamburg's HafenCity, a large-scale urban and waterfront redevelopment project, one feels almost detached from the rest of the city. I recently wandered along Versmannstrasse in the Baaken Quarter, passing large areas of wasteland occupied by sea birds, with the river beds smelling of marsh drying out in Hamburg's early July heat, when the street ended abruptly in front of a block of pale green shelters. Some mothers and their children were in front of the buildings, on the playground between the blocks of shelters, their temporary homes. In immediate proximity to their living space, refugees are confronted with private corporations' aspirational new luxury enclaves, the clime of urban redevelopment. Most of the land is being sold to private investors; new homes are rising up and will soon change the landscape entirely.

In responding to HafenCity's urban re-renewal and taking into account recent technological developments, one must understand the link between labour and housing that underwent a transformation as a result of urban and economic reorganisation and neoliberal victories in the areas of labour and cognitive value production. Housing has always been a spatial instrument of governance, wielded for the purpose of making society calculable.

Hamburg's HafenCity is emerging as a form of governance in which liberal democratic structures are mimicked for use in the organisation of residential urban space. Since its beginnings at the turn of the century, HafenCity has been characterised by an expansionist policy of turning former warehouse lots into luxury apartments, supplemented by shared 'community' spaces with amenities such as playgrounds, saunas and swimming pools. The demand for collective space beyond the publicly funded means that exclusive 'islands' of communities are created, completely detached from one another yet within the same neighbourhood<sup>1</sup>.

HafenCity's representation of business, consumer and lifestyle doctrines mixed with residential usage, as well as the imperatives of affective atmospheres as expressed through chi-chi housing, invite upper middle class individuals and families into penthouse imageries. Accordingly, city and civic life are dominated by data governance and smart homes: electronic money and virtual civic services in the form of life streams and invisible cables remodel the city into a dematerialised stream of desires. More than a third of the usable land is taken up by residential developments, some backed by property developers, private investors, cooperatives or joint ventures, others taking the form of social housing. Privately financed housing and affordable and/or subsidised housing are the very forms of living that, paradoxically, favour and accelerate the amplifying characteristic of finance through their interaction. The solo-living capital locked up in residential housing blocks, given that apartments are often only sporadically in use or are left vacant for speculative purposes, serves to separate dwelling space from its social and utilizable value. This reality is mirrored in the material presence of architecture, which becomes both perceptible and visible in housing policy, as will be examined in greater depth in the course of these notes.

The post-Fordist saturation of urban life merges with a Fordist approach: the speed with which property is physically built and the machine-led approach contradict the anthropomorphic agendas of algorithmic architectures.<sup>2</sup> This work ascertains the possible agencies inherent to this

<sup>1</sup> Andreas Rumpfhuber, "Housing Labour", *E-flux Architecture* (2017)

See <http://www.e-flux.com/architecture/artificial-labor/140678/housing-labor/>; visited on 12/06/2017

<sup>2</sup> Algorithmic architecture describes the cybernetic feedback of data into the computational design process of a building. Ned Rossiter (for example, in *Software, Infrastructure, Labour*, New York: Routledge, 2016) refers to algorithmic architecture in the way that he approaches them as algorithmically managed forms of automation serving both, infrastructure, trade, and the building industry; and describes algorithms as complex machines operating under neoliberal forms of governance, labour, and the globalization of manufacturing and service industries. In using the term algorithmic infrastructure, I am referring to Keller Easterling, *Extrastatecraft. The Power of Infrastructure Space* (London: Verso, 2014) and her understanding of infrastructure. For Keller Easterling, infrastructure "typically conjures associations with physical networks for transportation, communication or utilities. Yet, today (...) infrastructure includes pools of microwaves beaming from satellites and populations of atomized electronic devices that we hold in our hands. The shared standards and ideas that control everything from technical objects to management styles also constitute an infrastructure. (...) Infrastructure is now the overt point of contact and access between us all - the rules governing the space of everyday life".

agonism, to confront the ubiquitous processes of dematerialisation, the digital fabrication of civic and urban life and the deregulation of dwellings and built space with methods that aim to reveal materialisation to be an *organisational planning practice* – also called a *constituent support structure* – as well as to identify the processes involved. Which potential and productive articulations result from this agonistic confrontation?

Not far away from the refugees' homes mentioned in my opening remarks, workers live in shelters within the confines of HafenCity, their living quarters ever-changing due to the expansion of construction work. They move as the city moves forward, yet are never bound to any one place. The lack of housing for these workers, from a social housing perspective, normalises precariousness, reformulating the housing question into a challenge; namely to envision other forms of housing, or indeed other ways of living and working together.

From the outlines of future buildings as set out in development plans, it becomes clear that the future of residential property can no longer be determined by means of conventional architecture, since this, in its present form, will not be able to meet the needs of future urban populations. The question then becomes one of the possibilities of form and organisation, since the traditional approach to building dwelling space is, from both an economic and an ecological standpoint, incapable of meeting the current and future demand for housing.

## 1.

One of the core features of HafenCity's 'urban reinvention' is the implementation of sustainable or mixed communities, whose emerging social capital will, it is hoped, not only attract new residents but also legitimize redevelopment as an economic propeller of value creation for the city beyond the merely situational. In particular, the relatively new and as yet un-researched concept of Social Mix is employed as a strategic instrument in urban developmental housing policy to reduce and prevent spatial and socio-economic segregation through intervention and alteration. But how can mixed communities be created when housing is not only dependent on private funds and market interests but also subject to specific selection criteria and interventions at various levels of urban realisation, given HafenCity's status as a corporation funded by the City of Hamburg as landowner?<sup>3</sup>

In particular these notes, which are based on my art practice, are a response to contradictions and failures in the implementation of Social Mix policies in HafenCity, formulating in their place a series of demands for an alternative conception of Social Mix, in which the development of a social support structure for residents aims to tackle the root of the problem. It does so by placing the grossly exploited labourers on HafenCity construction sites at its core, departing from this basis to recognise the failure of housing policies to create sustainably structured civic life. This work will also examine the city's complicity in certain aspects of Social Mix.

HafenCity's Baaken Quarter is one of the city's primary production sites, given the ongoing creation of monetary value through living space. However, housing needs and the production of new units do not correspond. Even though public housing concepts have increasingly been integrated into the agendas of HafenCity's recent developments, social housing policy, as experienced in the context of HafenCity, is still an ideological artefact. Only recently has the government entered into partnerships with pro-development local authorities and agreed to build more social housing. In the case of urban renewal, the state restricts itself to providing funds for projects primarily controlled by private firms. The government's policies are therefore focused on private sector real estate, with the aim of freeing up more sites for development. The rationale behind affordable housing is that in exchange for the right to build more market-rate housing than would be allowed under existing zoning laws, private developers construct a number of nominally 'affordable' units in addition. But when so-called housing

<sup>3</sup> Jürgen Bruns-Berentelg, "Social mix and encounter capacity – a pragmatic social model for a new downtown: the example of HafenCity Hamburg", in Gary Bridge, Tim Butler & Loretta Lees, *Mixed Communities. Gentrification by Stealth?*, (Bristol: Policy Press, 2012) 69-94.

programmes are producing apartments with a price tag that is almost identical to those not designated as 'affordable', it is clear that the term 'affordable' is rather ideological. The federal funds spent on public housing and other direct subsidies for working class and poorer households pale into insignificance in comparison with the money spent subsidising wealthy and middle class homeowners, as well as accommodation for construction workers. The liberal narrative recognises that housing markets can contribute to housing problems, but it fails to take into account just how often programmes nominally designed to alleviate housing difficulties in fact serve to enrich private developers. Rather than being a serious attempt to address housing problems, affordable housing policies are in fact tools that more often than not legitimise state support for luxury developments.<sup>4</sup>

During a work session in Hamburg's HafenCity, I stayed in an Airbnb close to the construction sites, taking in the hegemonic performance of the various players and authorities in this emerging town. Moreover, my presence mirrored the life and work of the artist as a nomadic, fragile condition: on a structural level, as art dissolves into life, neoliberalism celebrates its victory over creativity. Airbnb is a paradoxical substitute for state-subsidised affordable housing and public support structures, and it is having an effect on the commodification of housing.

## 2.

The concept of Social Mix is implemented by HafenCity in order to avoid a concentration of particular socio-economic tenant structures. The diversification of both housing type and tenure is used as an instrument for the development of sustainable, mixed and inclusive communities. To achieve this, the allocation and tenure of dwellings and office structures are determined through selection processes.<sup>5</sup>

A key signifier in the creation of Social Mix are the middle class creative actors who are meant to structure social life and create atmospheric urbanities through joint activities fostering potential relational spaces. Accordingly, the city conceives of housing cooperatives and joint ventures as creative and entrepreneurial stakeholders, the propellers of creative life and the originators of meeting places and a new generation of urban neighbourhood networks. In effect, cooperative residents are responsible for value creation in HafenCity. Consolidation processes between residents and employed actors, such as sociologists and town planners are, as indicated above, to provide the impetus for the processes that generate institutions. Local activity programmes, public events, neighbourhood meetings and social events are aimed at fostering networking between households, with social capital being increased on a local level through participatory decision-making strategies and initiatives. It is hoped that community groups will develop into community organisations and that new arrangements for institutional governance, such as formally constituted residents' associations, neighbourhood councils or Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs) will be put into place.<sup>6</sup>

From its inception, the purpose of Social Mix was not to intervene in the politics of ongoing segregation processes, which would mean tackling the root of the problem, nor was it directed at the most disadvantaged areas and actors. Social Mix policies are, rather, aimed at opening up access to state-supported housing provision for lower and middle-income social groups, prioritising them over the more disadvantaged population. Within this framework, Social Mix represents a tool to promote an exclusionary type of 'social justice', whose sole beneficiaries are the middle classes. While on the one hand relatively limited new social housing stock is becoming available, on the other hand significant quantities of new housing, styled 'affordable housing', as previously discussed, have been provided for the private market. According to David Harvey the city has adopted entrepreneurial policies aimed at the maximisation of property values that closely mirror the ideal type of pro-growth

<sup>4</sup> David Madden & Peter Marcuse, *In Defense of Housing* (London: Verso, 2016)

<sup>5</sup> Bruns-Berentelg, "Social mix and encounter capacity – a pragmatic social model for a new downtown: the example of HafenCity Hamburg".

<sup>6</sup> Bruns-Berentelg, "Social mix and encounter capacity – a pragmatic social model for a new downtown: the example of HafenCity Hamburg".

urban regimes. This has been achieved primarily through urban planning strategies that favour the intensive use of land for private investment, while the proportion and scope of public benefits remain very limited.<sup>7</sup>

The involvement of private actors as the promoters of new social housing initiatives, whether for profit or not for profit, has been presented to the public as the only feasible approach to the provision of affordable housing, reducing the public actor to a limited role as the enabler of private sector-driven projects. Thus, Social Mix creates the conditions for greater feasibility and profitability of real-estate investments through a varying combination of local and supra-local functions. In a nutshell, social mixing of different populations and tenures provides more vivid and vibrant living environments, creating ideal conditions for greater investment opportunities and serving the housing needs of the middle classes. In this respect, Social Mix has, paradoxically, become a convincing argument, particularly when combined with principles of competitiveness, feasibility and rentability.<sup>8</sup>

### 3.

Some of the responses and key references on which this work draws are, amongst others, the architect Sérgio Ferro's marxist architectural criticism, which emphasises the socio-economic transformation of built space as the politics of the material and of social class. Several of his ideas have been discussed in a workshop with the performers involved in my work, so as to substantiate my notion of housing and construction site labour as embedded in political agency, with possible forms of unionisation also being examined. I would like to give a brief introduction to Ferro's position and approach.

Sérgio Ferro is a Brazilian architect who was born in 1938. He is a graduate of the University of São Paulo, where he also taught. Having been exposed to the realities of the construction site, he focuses particularly on questions of labour and the conditions of production. As a member of *Arquitetura Nova*, a radical architecture group which he formed with Flávio Império and Rodrigo Lefèvre, he critiqued Brazil's modernist impulses, which he viewed as excluding the vast majority of Brazilians who were living in poverty. The group took part in urban actions and proposed strategies that would democratise access to architecture, as well as design and building processes. They described their work as creating an 'aesthetics of poverty' and a 'poetics of economy', envisioning a highly politicised approach to architecture. The Brazilian dictatorship later responded by exiling Ferro alongside his mentor, Vilanova Artigas, and his colleague Rodrigo Lefèvre.<sup>9</sup>

Ferro's ideas took shape during the 1960s when he was involved in the design of Brasília, the new capital city. The disjunction between the architectural discourse of freedom and democracy that surrounded the project and the reality of the inhumane working conditions on site were formative for Ferro and his critique. He witnessed these conditions first hand; the low pay, lack of food and rampant dysentery, as well as dangerous building practices that took no account of the risks to workers' lives. Based on these experiences, Ferro wrote of architecture as the production of commodity, with its 'modern' practices fostering a division of labour in order to generate value. For Ferro, this attitude was encapsulated in the jargon involved in architectural drawing, which alienated and was indeed largely incomprehensible to the builders. The situation was exacerbated by the compartmentalisation of the construction process, effectively giving architects complete control and removing all agency from those who build their designs. In Ferro's conceptualisation of architecture, the process of designing buildings cannot be separated from their construction. His aim is a departure from the desired transformation of production in favour of design solutions. One of his key ideas was the 'popular house', which aimed to equip citizens with a support structure to enable them to build houses by

<sup>7</sup> Bricocoli, Massimo. "Social mix and housing policy: Local effects of a misleading rhetoric. The case of Milan", *Urban Studies Journal* (2016), Vol. 53 (1) 77–91.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> See under: <http://www.spatialagency.net/database/how/networking/sergio.ferro>; visited on 21/05/2017

themselves. In parallel with this thinking, he also developed a horizontal teaching methodology.<sup>10</sup> Throughout his work he repeatedly emphasises the construction site as a place of unionisation, where workers' cooperations and assemblies are formed and, thus, collective subjectivities and the articulation of their demands to society are rehearsed. Taking these considerations as my starting point, I would now like to examine the working conditions on the HafenCity construction site, the core focus of this work.

#### 4.

The labour force on the construction site in Hamburg's HafenCity is grossly exploited and its management corrupt. The incredibly harsh and unfair working conditions are not public knowledge, nor are they represented in any social discourse. The workers mainly come from the east and south-east of Europe for temporary work on the construction site, bringing home their earnings a few months or, possibly, years later. They are recruited by firms before leaving their homes, and are then 'bought' by construction companies in Germany, with the whole process akin to a trade in humans. Firms compete to offer the cheapest labour force, while often simultaneously charging the workers before closing down their operation. New firms emerge but disappear equally rapidly, due to their corrupt business. On arrival in Germany, the workers lack any kind of social support, relying on their colleagues to inform them about their rights and about on-site support networks in the few cases where these actually exist. Construction companies in Germany are doing business with ghost firms in the east and south-east of Europe.

As regards living conditions, workers live in shelters close to the construction site which often house six people per eight square metres, or in hotels that only accept construction workers. Others live on farms in the surrounding areas of Hamburg. Escape from this situation is impossible because the workers are effectively under surveillance and have no immigration status.

I am attempting to work with labour organisations in the east and south-east of Europe to ensure that the workers receive support from the very beginning, namely when first recruited by a firm that may in actual fact no longer exist, providing them with a stable network and support structure. How can these affiliations feed into the political aspect of our work? The workers themselves invest in establishing relations with unions in the east and south-east of Europe. They receive payment for their work from the local organisation. I envisage this organisation as a support structure particularly tailored to working conditions in these areas. I am in fact trying to establish a workers' solidarity network, with small on-site hubs that nevertheless have international connections. The representatives' aims are to inform workers about their rights on arrival and to link them up to the local network.

#### 5.

Following Eyal Weizman's reading of Giorgio Agamben, the structure of these workers' shelters, regarded as a 'camp', is "a space that opens up when the state of exception starts to become the rule". In that space "power confronts nothing than pure biological life without any mediation". The unstable relationship between the camp and the (il)legal housing and labour structures make a state of exception possible. According to Weizman (2015), "in this confinement, in the juridico-political, much seems to be in play except the camp itself".<sup>11</sup> The first camp-like structure came into being in 2001 with the start of construction work on the HafenCity site, with political subjectivities being created amidst the production of a commercial enclave. Since construction began, the camp-like area has been in motion,

<sup>10</sup> Contier, Felipe, "An Introduction to Sergio Ferro", in Katie Lloyd, Thomas, Tilo Amjoff & Nick Beech, *Industries of Architecture* (New York: Routledge: 2016) 87–93.

<sup>11</sup> Weizman, Eyal. "The Roundabout Revolutions", in *Critical Spatial Practice 6*, Nikolaus Hirsch & Markus Miessen, eds (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2015).

in flux, with its form opening and closing and its boundaries changing. The displacement of refugees and workers about the construction site is necessary but never far-reaching. These traces never disappear and neither do the political subjectivities that have been fighting for their rights since the beginning of the construction of HafenCity and, indeed, throughout history, bearing in mind the site's history as the terrain of former harbour workers, who are famed for achieving their collective demands through leftist struggle and strikes. The camp is a space where oppression and agency are inextricably interlinked. An augmentation of the camp can be observed in HafenCity: as more workers and migrants have moved to HafenCity in the past years, they strengthen the state of exception through their connected on-site subjectivities of solidarity. The shelter as work and home is HafenCity's new multiplier. Are we facing a shelterization of the city as a subject of resistance?

## 6.

Over the course of several weeks I have worked with a number of performers<sup>12</sup> in temporary social settings, within which the group develops dance score<sup>13</sup> that transform the urgencies of construction labour and its associated ambivalent structures into possible collective agencies. Accordingly, the group is developing scores for new housing possibilities in response to the housing crisis, for instance in the context of the unequal distribution of on-site resources (a support structure is also being created in the form of a video, a performance, drawings on concrete, and archive material. Together with the architect Caro Baumann we are marking the place in which a luxury building is to be built with a social housing scaffold in a public sculpture).

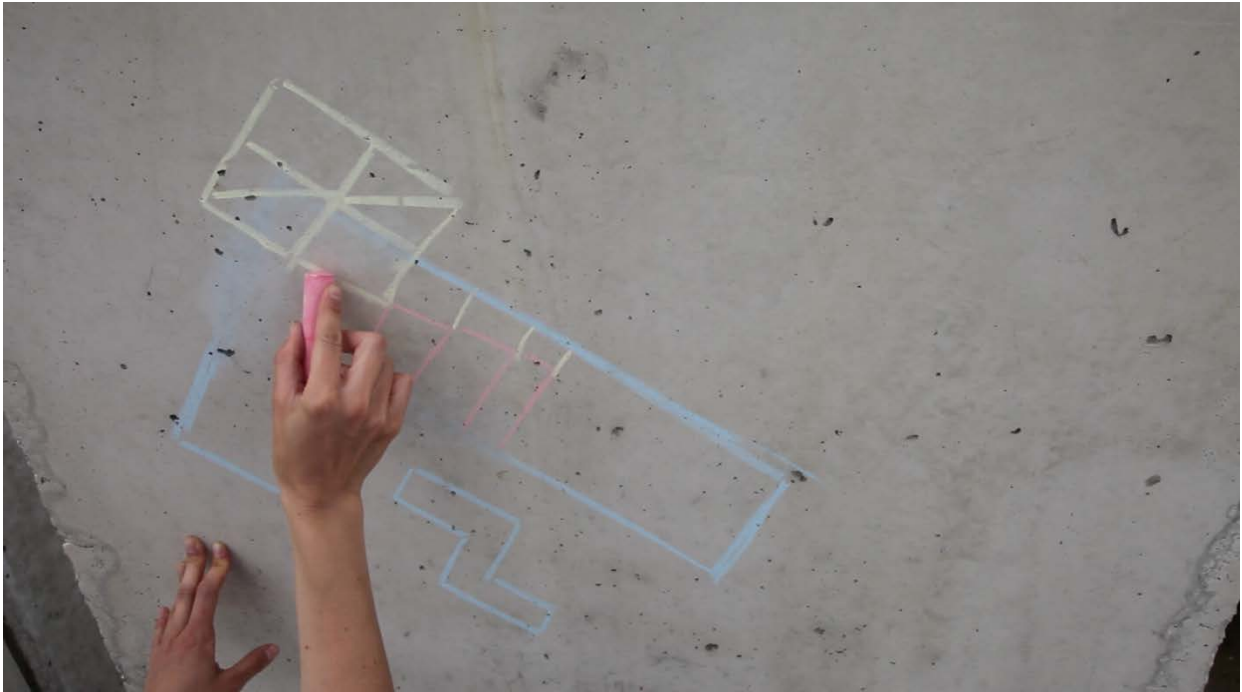
The bodies perform in relation to one other, creating a physical language that remains temporarily autonomous because the scores, in their emerging structure, cannot be read by the dominant. The bodies' movements are beyond the range and scope of HafenCity's surveillance mechanisms, as they interrupt and disrupt the algorithmic streams of data and finance. This bodily constellation performs as a self-determined, self-composed durational social endeavour, rehearsing relational accountabilities. Communal knowledge is created through horizontal exchange and learning, and different experiences in the investigation of labour and housing are discussed and put forward.

### *Score for new workers' housing*

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<sup>12</sup> Most of the dancers invited to participate in this project are currently students or alumni of contemporary dance, and were involved for a few weeks within a single year. The participants are Anna Weissefels, Eva Streit, Hedda Parkkonen, Milena Stein; Angela Millano, Magdalena Dzeco, Sandra Le Kong, Qadira Oechsle-Ali, with choreographic support provided by Nicole Berndt-Caccivio.

<sup>13</sup> A dance score describes an element of movement or choreography whose practical code is written down, rehearsed and repeated. The scores for this project were produced by the performers and myself, although it must be noted that they are not primarily intended for an event or public performance. The development of the performance, the collective elaboration of the work in its ephemeral sense, is a temporary 'product', defined here as a relational complex of affinities and affective encounters which I also refer to as social intimacy, and through which the research that forms the basis for the workshops can be transformed into affectively formed agencies.



*3D printing workstations are set up; citizens use new technology and software that has been created for HafenCity's new traffic software system. In the future, HafenCity citizens will be able to print their houses. Materials are sourced from self-organised networks; logistics and labour are self-determined and self-coordinated. We are investing in the creation of a social infrastructure with new technologies.*

*Score for workers' solidarity network*



*Planning and organising become a communal effort.*

*Scores for a Workers' Day*





*Giving voice to the workers' performances on the construction site at Versmannstrasse and while performing their specific labour tasks; forms of coordination amongst and between them. A multiplicity of labour tasks converge on the scaffold.*

*Score for rearranging the buildings*



*Drawing up plans for new housing cooperatives.*



*Score for dividing the building structures into smaller units  
Rearranging the maps.*

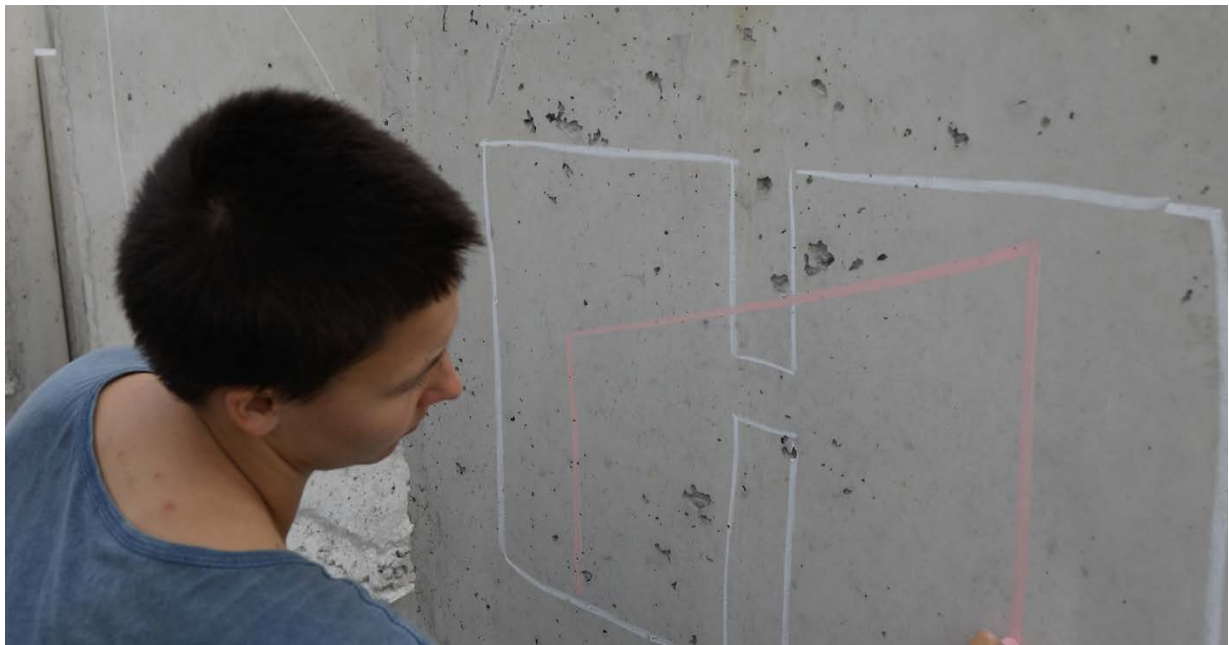


*(Drawings)*

*(Walking)*

*Score for new housing structures*

*(Divisions)*



*Scores for dividing the building structures into smaller units,  
while taking into account Sergio Ferro's conceptions of building.*





*The new buildings in sculptural formations*



*Four bodies are standing in the shape of a pyramid, with their heads interlocked. They all sink down very slowly into an interlocked position. An interwoven construction is produced on the floor. They continue to move a little further in this loosely connected structure.*



*Labour on the scaffolds that are otherwise invisible  
Corrupt working conditions on site  
Construction site's unionisation processes*

*Building sculpture for project 97, Versmannstrasse*



*A rearrangement of lines. Support structures*

*A body supports itself with both hands on the floor and bent elbows, with one elbow bearing the body's entire weight, reminiscent of the crocodile position in yoga. Both legs are straddled in the air, like scissors. Another body has its head on one of the three blocks of houses. Both are crouching. A third body is doing a headstand on the floor, with its legs bent diagonally. All figures are to be thought of in terms of their relative position to the blocks of houses.*

*The upper body moves backwards and forwards with small movements. The feet remain firmly on the floor. The body changes position and repeats the movement. It moves a few steps forward and repeats the movement after a brief pause, and again in another spot. It adds in the arms, which are stretched high in the air. Pause. Turn. From the beginning. The body rolls on the floor, a few rolls forwards: it sits up and reads a booklet, as though it were issuing instructions. It rolls further to a new spot. It sits up. Four wooden sticks are put down on the floor and covered with small stones from sandy soil. Sand is sprinkled over them with a toy shovel. Lines and rectangles become porous and their boundaries no longer clearly identifiable.*

*Two bodies move machine-like towards one another and interlock.*

*Two bodies move machine-like towards one another and interlock.*

*Two bodies move machine-like towards one another and interlock.*

*The movements repeat and redevelop themselves from their own selves. After several repetitions, one leads into the other. Self-composing movement structures.*

*Building sculpture for project 98 Versmannstrasse*

*A state school*





*The school is meant to be a community centre, like its partner institution, the Katherinen School, located nearby. Local residents' issues are discussed regularly. Community meetings are held to consider the organisation of space and its affordability. This becomes a part of the school's educational agenda. Teaching staff and the general public are involved in discussing the aims and creating possible solutions. All workshops connected to the creation of the housing sculptures take place in the state school. The political organisation of residential space and its connection to labour conditions is the primary concern of this newly built state school.*

*We are interested in regulating the housing market through citizen-determined cooperatives. A citizens' council must be established. If cooperatives are managed and coordinated by the HafenCity Corporation, then an autonomous, distinct housing market that is regulated from below cannot come into being.*

*Council for Housing Cooperatives  
Defining the plan and its policies*



*Scores for Housing Cooperatives, Baaken Quarter*



*Score for a worker's task*





*The financialisation of space compels the buildings in HafenCity to perform in a certain way, meaning that only certain people can live and work in certain buildings and creating a social effect that reinforces and updates concepts of social class.*

We are rehearsing the social organisation of a collective body. We are investigating questions about what it could mean to organise collective forces in response to the situational urgency in Hamburg: what does planning organisation mean and how would it manifest itself? We are attempting to define organisation as a *constituent planning force, based on situational immediacy*; a practice in which organisation is determined by the participants' consistent social relations and communication about aspects of politics that concern their rights, working hours, work load, duty times and so on. This organisational practice is simultaneously a general support structure and an archive and a data resource to be used on a global scale by those in need and their supporters: it is determined by workers' sharing of information about the situation and conditions on site and updating of information based on local and situational experience. The objective of this structure is for workers to meet regularly and to spell out their concerns and formulate them into public demands. It also means discussing strategies as to how the demands could be presented to the public and to whom they need to be addressed. This is then discussed in detail with the labour representative from the labour union that is responsible for the working conditions in HafenCity. Smaller workers' gatherings and formations are essential. We call this *Scaffolding Agency*.

## 7.

### Social Mix Demands

As described earlier, the Social Mix's fictitious agenda does not provide any solutions that benefit the lowest income classes, since it is actually the tenants in subsidised housing and cooperatives who function as creative entrepreneurs in the techno-urban matrix. In order to achieve a sustainable socially mixed community, a number of demands must be met. First of all, the political conditions for social and economic equity must be achieved, since this is the basis for the development of community organisations. Social equity is the principal resource for any communication and interaction because large-scale social stability is a pre-condition for building urban socially mixed communities.

During the course of this work, together with performers and labour unionists, we are building a support structure within which we demand transparency in real estate development with regard to pricing, speculation, sale and renting. We demand transparency about future plans for housing projects and housing types. We demand regular presentations of current research into the conception of social mix, clearly stating which resources are being used. We demand transparency in the selection criteria for tenants and residency, as well as for housing cooperatives. We demand transparency of working conditions for workers on the construction sites, also with regard to their pay. Workers must only be employed under regulated and stable working conditions. A designated organisation should take special responsibility for this area.

We demand payment for the work of local institution-generating processes, since otherwise precariousness is being transformed into value and benefiting entrepreneurial interests. Institution-building must become a regulated activity. Cooperatives should be organised into a networked structure, which must be governed by itself and its citizens rather than private corporations. Housing cooperatives must operate independently of state regulation. We demand rent control and social and public housing that exists outside private interests, as considered in these notes. We demand the regulation of labour and housing conditions via self-constituting and organically emerging social support structures. Resources are to be kept within the networks and distributed equally. We will only accept Social Mix if it is placed within the context of a social infrastructure that provides a toolkit to enable citizens to organise social planning autonomously.

We demand a less controlling approach from the HafenCity corporation towards the housing market, meaning less state intervention in what should be a self-regulating and self-constituting scheme. In end effect, we demand the decoupling of housing from financialisation and the generation of market value, shifting towards an autonomous housing market with cooperatives at the core of a self-determining network.

The implementation of Social Mix should be coupled with artists' demands for a stable income, thus avoiding the dissolution of art into life and value generation arising from gentrification processes. We demand mixed communities that do not merely drive gentrification and further enrich the rich.

We are building a public support structure, discussing which skills and which approaches should be brought into the process in what way, as well as considering a suitable format that will avoid the benefiting of a select few that has hitherto been a feature of Social Mix. We demand that the housing market be freed from its focus on the accumulation of profit and its role as an instrument of value production.

We accept the claim of social pluralism of perspectives and positions only under the condition that support structures sustain residents' and citizens' subjectivities on a stable and equal basis.

Score for a support structure (to be continued).

## 8.

Algorithms<sup>14</sup> can be identified as the underlying structure of a scaffold. The vertical and horizontal lines of the scaffold are found on our construction sites, which essentially support the building process, correlating to the form and structure of an algorithmic instruction. In bioengineering, scaffolding is

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<sup>14</sup> An algorithm is a set of instructions, a programming to solve a problem. Algorithms process data and instruct the performance of automated tasks. See also footnote number 2 for further explanations, referring to Keller Easterling and Ned Rossiter.

the method by which the support structure for a digitally fabricated product is created, as well as the means by which an algorithm instructs an object to come into being. It links and relinks 'bridges' and 'pillars' to the object, until the desired shape is achieved. In algorithmic architecture, the scaffold is also the support structure for an instructed object.

In the construction industry, these scaffolds are simultaneously instructions for an algorithm, reproducing the instructions that determine the design of the whole. Houses are scaffolds of the plurality of algorithms, instructing and governing the space according to the criteria laid down by market, governmental and investors' interests.

If we add in the scaffolding algorithm for the pale green shelters, it may give different instructions and thus affect the way in which a set of algorithms instructs an entire area. From a linear perspective the algorithm is singular and unfolded, being conceptualised in a non-complex way. It consists of sheer lines of verticality and horizontality. It behaves similarly to the algorithmic scaffold of the infrastructural buildings in this area, rather than that of residential space, unfolding less and demonstrating far fewer ornaments and less complexity. It follows that workers' homes can be compared to the scaffolds of infrastructural entities. From the map one can only guess where the workers' homes are located: scaffolding their location keeps them the subject of speculation.

The algorithm is the scaffold of property yet to be built. In scaffolding new residential space, instructions enable the building to take form. The fundamental scaffold is changing, due to property grouping policy, an operational strategy used by investors and architects, whereby serial reproductions of blocks of buildings are legitimised and grouped in close proximity to one another.

The unfolding of the algorithm mirrors labour complexity and the number of labourers involved in the building project. It also shows that labour is related to a variety of discrete nodal points within the scaffolded property: labour is linked to a multiplicity of labour tasks in a complex manner. These nodal points are unfolding points, where labour interacts and subjects meet, converge, relate and exchange experiences. Complex algorithmic shapes are complex scaffolding processes; they present a multi-layered algorithm, which we regard as scaffolding. The inherent potential of the agencies involved is yet to be defined.

The algorithm of a property is, along with the scaffold, linked to the construction profile used to mark the property out on the land before the construction process begins. At this stage, potential future residents may participate in reconfiguring the property's lines and, possibly, in changing its appearance. They will open and close the algorithmic shape in situ, interrupting and rearticulating algorithmic agency. They may recompose entirely new shapes for homes. The political imperative would be to step in at this point and create homes that are more responsive to the vulnerable, exhausting and exploitative labour market. As briefly set out here, the algorithm's totality and gaps in the scaffolding enable the rearrangement of the building's future shape.

The algorithm's instructions shape the property. The algorithm's implicit function as scaffolding means that labour is present within it. It is both the digital fabrication of labour and physical, manual labour itself. But what about the areas between the scaffold's lines, that is to say the grey zones of an algorithm's scaffold that have not been instructed? These become the building block's parks and community spaces, areas for communal gatherings, that open or give access to space. Algorithmic architecture is vulnerable.

## 9.

A smart home is connected to the shared realities of the civic world through algorithmic instructions. The personal becomes the realm of the corporate, where companies use private behaviour for commercial benefit. The algorithm's scaffolding are the zero-hour workers, labour on demand, serving and reproducing the smart home. However, the algorithm's scaffold is porous. The labour of logistics - demand labour - is a dark, invisible and intangible scaffold.

Algorithmic architecture scaffolding also holds true for the ‘non-place’ architecture of refugees and migrant workers, located alongside the shells of buildings yet to be built. They are nodal points in urban infrastructural production and, adopting the form of a shelter, they serve another new market for reproducible dwelling space. Scaffolding is the status quo in areas characterised by urban redevelopment; it is the state of labouring in logistical on-demand sectors, as well as of porous interrelationships in the absence of a unifying social support structure.

Labour, from a scaffolding perspective, is a relational process: the complex coordination of construction work is a relationality between specific tasks. The main focus in the algorithmic relationship’s design process for new social housing production is not the creation of a form, but rather the rules of the interplay that govern the process itself. Each new occurrence is the result of a previous operation, incorporated into a repetitive (rather than generative or parametric) linearity. We must be able to access the algorithmic instruction for new housing construction with the intention of agency, determining which rules are to be applied and, ultimately, which parametric relations are to be expressed. The house as an algorithm of scaffolding reminds us to think of labour, in the context of the scaffold itself, as an autonomous process, with workers as variables, managers replaced by nodal transaction points, combining, re-linking and composing new relationalities, and working hours determined by new technology. An association of workers, using co-operative decision making processes and on-site BIM technologies, will decide on the rules to be applied to the new housing complex, also discussing this with members of the labour union on site.<sup>15</sup>

The scaffold, the algorithm and the workers are to be regarded as relations rather than singular subjects. Labour is characterised as a reciprocal and transversal interlocking. Performance/labour itself becomes a set of parametric algorithms to be differently re-choreographed. The plurality of scaffolding, as an autonomous process-based performance, is the form of the object. The adjunct scaffold – the scaffold of unionisation – can be called extra-territorial or extra-spatial density; the tangible or the dissociated scaffold.

Why compare an algorithm’s digital fabrication with a construction site scaffold? Or, alternatively, why compare labour with an algorithmic instruction? The aim is to free labour from becoming a rigid and logistical cluster of instructions to be followed by an individual subject; there is life in the algorithm, instructions become subject to organically changing rules. At the same time, to disrupt an algorithm’s uncontrollable legitimacy is to occupy a corner of digital reality, since the scaffold is defined by the agency of the association of workers and the political practices of unionisation.

The scaffold/algorithm gives instructions as to what to construct, but not as to how to do this, or how to relate to one another. Relationality is a complex process of algorithmic operations, and one that could even undermine an algorithm’s ‘understanding’ of this process. If we relate by means of affective or emotional exchange, we are already undermining the algorithm’s power. Thus, workers’ interactions during the working process, whether related to feelings, work load, exhaustion or excitement, can disassemble and undermine the relations intended by algorithmic scaffolding.

## 10.

### The architecture of shelter

There is a link between new residential workers’ housing and the aesthetics of communist housing, namely that of functional space: the legacy of the functional city is recognisable today in the mono-functional housing estates that develop far away from ‘dirty’ industry, peppered with space for consumption.

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<sup>15</sup> The Hamburg organization Hochtief and Verdi are representatives of labour questions.

New housing blocks intended for social housing are the target of functional planning. These blocks, though new in design, and architecturally aestheticised, are nevertheless clusters or serial reproductions, reminiscent of large-scale post-war public housing estates. Their design is simple and easy to reproduce precisely; the groupings do not differ much in style and there is a single aesthetic code. The blocks are largely built on the outskirts of the city's urban fabric, designed both to appear and to feel removed. The difference between these blocks and post-war architecture is that these spatial productions are larger than post-socialist housing units and thus more functional, since property is perceived as a means of value production. The sharing of space is subsumed within a commercial goal.

A provocative claim: the HafenCity is likely to turn into a '*shelterised city*', with shelters as a form of social housing occupying the last of the former harbour areas that have not yet been bought or rebuilt by investors. Investment in new shelters is seen as an economic necessity, but also as another market commodifier.

## 11.

Scaffolding reminds us that labour is neither abolished nor dissolved, but present more than ever in our daily reality, constituting the fundamental core of the social interactions that make up our lives and on the basis of which we must demand change to and transformation of the current status quo. Scaffolding is the agency for the affirmation of new social infrastructures. Scaffolding refers to the affirmative potential of newly established relations between those present in a given place.

Zero-hour working contracts with labour on demand, as required in logistical urban infrastructures, have given rise to a system in which technologies of the working bodies signal an incorporation that is beyond control: physical managers no longer exist because BIM technology has taken over; a self-directed economy prevails.

Scaffolding refers to the porousness of logistical labour on demand, as commanded by the touchpads of the smart home. The set of instructions is comparable with a scaffold, within which workers co-ordinate their tasks. Nowadays, one may claim that labour is the expression of scaffolding, since work evolves through real-time performance, with no end product beyond logistical service; it enters the domestic and private spheres via instructions.

Amazon's Dash Button novelty has become a block chain currency used by autonomous workers' associations to collaborate with fellow citizens across shared fields of knowledge: workers use their hacked technology not just on the building sites, but also to connect with citizens from every walk of life in the context of ubiquitous civic demands. The state itself has been transformed into a decentralised organisation that exists only in its plurality, with every citizen a shareholder.

The BIM technology that used to coordinate workers' lives has been hacked, while an extensive digital fabrication infrastructure, maintained as a public utility, uses sophisticated algorithms to dismantle the production demands dictated by real-time surveillance.

The commercialisation of housing has become obsolete because the market is no longer deregulated by the corrupting financial capital that houses itself rather than human residents in empty units. The post-renewal market operates independently of both state and government, but is structured by planning movements' research organisations and their collective agencies. Housing areas can be mapped out and built by groups, with their parts being printed at one of the digital 3D printing stations in the city. Amazon can no longer service the Dash Button because people have realised that they can use the printing stations around them to fabricate their desired technology and determine its functions. Goods are essentially free for the taking.

Placeless urban sprawl is overwritten by high-density algorithmic instructions. Information about how to hack the Dash Button technology is everywhere, and workshops guide citizens in building their own versions of the Buttons according to their needs. Homes can no longer be 'smart' because the technology is no longer marketable.

The government crumbles and falls, its ability to sustain itself from tax revenue having been decisively undermined. A shared reality barely exists now. The stage is claimed by a group of smaller, more agile actors. The fracturing of consensus is an epidemic challenge.

Productive capacity is based in workshops at neighbourhood level, organised as cooperatives and linked by networked processes of deliberation. Economic power is exercised by loose federations formed from these cooperatives, although inter-coordination is complicated by differing values and styles of governance, as well as the realities of tendering in competing local currencies. Fabrication is cheap, widely available and as in demand as ever.<sup>16</sup>

But there is the danger that is no large-scale global action to preserve to global environment; if cooperatives keep manifest in their localism. However, technologies can even link between agencies of global scale; it may be a matter of politicizing coordination.

### *How to move on*

During the course of this work we build a support structure together with performers and labour unionists, within the scope of which we demand the following with regard to HafenCity's development:

We demand transparency in real estate development with regard to pricing, speculation, sale and renting.

We demand transparency about future plans for housing projects and housing types.

We demand regular presentations of current research into the conception of Social Mix, clearly stating which resources are being used.

We demand transparency in the selection criteria for tenants and residency, as well as for housing cooperatives. We demand transparency of working conditions for workers on the construction sites, also with regard to their pay. Workers must only be employed under regulated and stable working conditions. A designated organisation should take special responsibility for this area.

We demand payment for the work of local institution-generating processes, since otherwise precariousness is being transformed into value and benefiting entrepreneurial interests. Institution-building must become a regulated activity. Housing cooperatives must operate independently of state regulation.

We demand a less controlling approach from the HafenCity corporation towards the housing market, meaning less state intervention. In end effect, we demand the decoupling of housing from financialisation and the generation of market value.

We will only accept Social Mix if it is placed within the context of a social infrastructure that provides a toolkit to enable citizens to organise social planning autonomously.

We accept the claim of social pluralism of perspectives and positions only under the condition that support structures sustain residents' and citizens' subjectivities on a stable and equal basis.

Technology has the potential to link agencies on a global scale but this, again, may mean giving a name to the politicisation of coordination

## **12. (SUMMARY)**

Dwelling space defines and organises the logistics of HafenCity, ultimately determining who is able to live here by means of social class and its spatial reproductions as technology. We call these developments techno-urbanification, because we no longer see gentrification as applicable to the deregulation of built space and its environment. This financial performance in visible and hidden

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<sup>16</sup> The writing of section 11 is inspired by Greenfield, Adam. *Radical Technologies: The Design of Everyday Life*, Verso: 2017 (Chapter 10).

urban space becomes a vehicle for a new infrastructure as a scope for social action. This work, in its practice, examines these issues within the context of current transformations in HafenCity and from the perspective of labour as it is linked to the current housing situation. It looks at the historical development of the economic link between architecture, industry and work, politically organised industrial action and logistics, all of which are linked to the current developments in finance and its algorithmic infrastructure in HafenCity.

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Johanna Bruckner (\*born in Vienna in 1984) is an artist who is based between Hamburg and Zurich. Her work was shown internationally, most recently, at KW, Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin; the Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zürich; the Villa Croce, Museum for Contemporary Art, Genoa; the Kunsthaus in Hamburg; the Kunstverein Harburger Bahnhof, and Galleri Box, and she is now preparing a solo exhibition in Bern. Bruckner has lectured at various universities and institutions including the Bauhaus University of Weimar, the Lucerne School of Art and Design, Zurich University of the Arts and the BAC Center Contemporain in Geneva. Her work was awarded by numerous grants, she received the Hamburg Stipendium for Fine Arts (2016), was awarded a scholarship holder for the overseas artist studio program at the Banff Center for Visual Arts in Canada in 2015; and she is currently a fellow at the Sommerakademie Paul Klee (2017-19). Bruckner is interested in the conditions of labour that have been emerging in response to the technologies of communicative capitalism.

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# **The Many Faces of Pictorial Gestures: Magnus Clausen in Conversation with Gabriel Gee**

**Magnus Frederik Clausen & Gabriel N. Gee**

## **ABSTRACT**

In this discussion between painter Magnus Frederick Clausen and art historian Gabriel Gee, Clausen reflects on the gestures used and explored in his pictorial practice. Starting with a reflection on the joint transparent and opaque quality of painting, Clausen evokes the use of repetition to reflect on the production of sameness and difference, intervisual dialogue and individual imprint. The painter describes his tools and methods, depicting an alchemic connection between past and present visual expressions. Processes of addition and subtraction, on as well as around and behind the canvas are highlighted, in a portrait of the multi-folded visage of Clausen's pictorial practice.

## **KEY WORDS**

Pictorial gestures, repetition, difference, over-painting, visual language



Gabriel Gee: Broadly speaking, what does the term 'gesture' evoke for you, in relation to your practice as a painter?

Magnus Frederik Clausen: I'm not exactly sure what the term means, but what comes to my mind is that I see the gesture as that which stands between the idea and the result. The result can then consists of the many different faces a gesture can have. I'm not particularly interested in the same gesture all the time and from that thought, I build some of my work. For example in the series *Kastellet 2012*, I worked on six paintings exploring the same motif<sup>1</sup>. Each painting painted differently, just following my mood of the day over a period of one year. The white one from that series (fig.1 *Kastellet 2012, study 3* 2016), was an exercise in making the same painting with the same gestures, everyday, but that morphed into one single painting.



Fig.1 F.M. Clausen, *Kastellet 2012, study 3*, 2016, 41x54cm, enamel, coal, canvas, stretcher bars

The idea comes from the old academic paintings, where you had thin layers of oil superposed one upon another, giving transparency and depth; but in this case the transparency is added to a very flat image - the motif is almost in the style of an illustrated comic drawing. I repeated the same gesture every day over a period of five days; so the painting consists of a coal drawing, which is the black grey part, that is painted over with white enamel. The enamel paint is applied in a thin transparent layer that blurs out the coal drawing and makes it appear cloudy. The day after (when the enamel is dry) I repeated the process and after repeating the same process for five days, the painting was done.

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<sup>1</sup> *Danmark*, Code Art Fair, August 2016, <http://mikkelcarl.com/index.php/curatorial/danmark>.

GG: I couldn't help thinking of Claude Monet's series of haystacks, in which the French painter worked on several paintings at once to capture one specific moment in time. While clearly different from your exploration here, there is a parallel in the concern with time and repetition.

MFC: I like Monet's work, but it is not something that I had in mind. Some of the works in the series have references to Danish art history, such as to Jens Adolf Jerichau and Asger Jorn. These works have not been made from a meticulous study of Jerichau's and Jorn's gestures, but from a mental recollection, investigating how I remember and recall their works as a painter and how I imagine it would be if I was painting next to them. The thing that binds all the works in the series together is the motif, a man walking. Yet the variations end up not talking about the motif itself, but about how the painting is painted by the painter and things that are outside the painting, such as feelings, mood and history.

GG: If we go back to your first point, that on the one hand there is the idea, and on the other hand there is the result, and gestures are what connects them together, you mentioned that you were interested in how gestures can lead to different outcomes, and I remember you had told me that when you started painting, you had proceeded in a very empirical fashion, splashing and trying as it seemed fit! But is there a way that you can, retrospectively perhaps, differentiate between different types of actions, categorizing them in a way, so that we might see different 'portraits' of gestures involved in your practice.

MFC: The gesture leaves a mark and it is very difficult for me to get rid of that mark and paint like somebody else, at one point, you can always see it is my painting. There is some sort of a fingerprint inside the gesture, that is very difficult to escape. Marcel Duchamp mentions this fingerprint as "the arabesque of the hand", which he also tries to escape from in his painting the *Chocolate grinder*, and I guess that this idea of escaping the artist's fingerprint led him to develop his readymades?<sup>2</sup> Let's try to look at some different ways of approaching painting: the blue-pink one (fig.2 *Untitled* 2017) comes from two pieces of materials; a piece of wood and a piece of linen. The linen is a cut out from another painting I did, and the wood I found in another artist's studio, already painted in pink and white. These two parts are glued together in a composition. When I enter into the production of this painting the linen and the wood are already leftovers, so there is no actual painting process involved in the making of this painting. This gives me the opportunity to look at the gestures in a more sober way. This other work (fig.3 *Untitled* 2017) was made from a found plastic sheet, which I used as a mixing palette. I have an interest in used mixing palettes. When you mix colours, you are painting unconsciously since it has no aesthetic value. In this case I decided to turn the mixing board into a painting. But I wanted to add a physical and conscious gesture to it, so I flipped it upside down - painted surface down against the floor, and dragged it around with my foot. I did this because I wanted to paint something consciously without the hand's delicate movements and the control of the eye. So the floor started to inform the gesture; or rather the connection between the floor, the plastic sheet, the paint and the foot started to inform the gesture.

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<sup>2</sup> Tristram Powell, *Rebel Ready-Made – Marcel Duchamp* (1966)



Fig.2 F.M. Clausen, *Untitled*, 2017, 34x90cm, masonite, linen, oil, acrylic, enamel, glue, pencil

GG: You mention a process of erasure, and in your practice you use both additive and subtractive processes; by using subtractive gestures, the painting can include a form of loss.

MFC: Technically I use products that can dissolve paint, brown soap, toilet cleaner etc... It's something that I have been exploring with a colleague of mine, testing different materials, sandpaper as well. These products are difficult to control, as they can be very aggressive, and you don't know how effective they are going to be... But they give the possibility of going backwards, through a historical process. Sometimes in the process of painting, if I'm not guided by an idea I can be persuaded by the painting, in many different directions, and I can easily produce many layers of paint... before realising that underneath there was something interesting, I want back. It's difficult to get back exactly what I had using these products, but I get something else. When making these back and forth actions, I always finish the paintings by adding. I don't finish by subtracting. It's similar to writing a text, you erase something, and then make a new dot. I think I finished that painting (fig.4 *Untitled* 2017) by making the yellow dot.

GG: There are also similarities with an archaeological enquiry. With the additions of layers, images come to cover previous images.

MFC: Yes, though I often think of painting as similar to cooking. It also comes from a need or lust. And when you are cooking you put in spices, and then acid, more acid, too much acid, more chili, salt and at one point you arrive at something, that you feel can be served to somebody else... but you need to add a glass of wine! In the same way in painting, the gestures are not all contained within the painting itself, as soon as you present the painting in a context it starts to build new narratives with other paintings displayed in the room, or with the architecture around it. That's one of the qualities of painting.

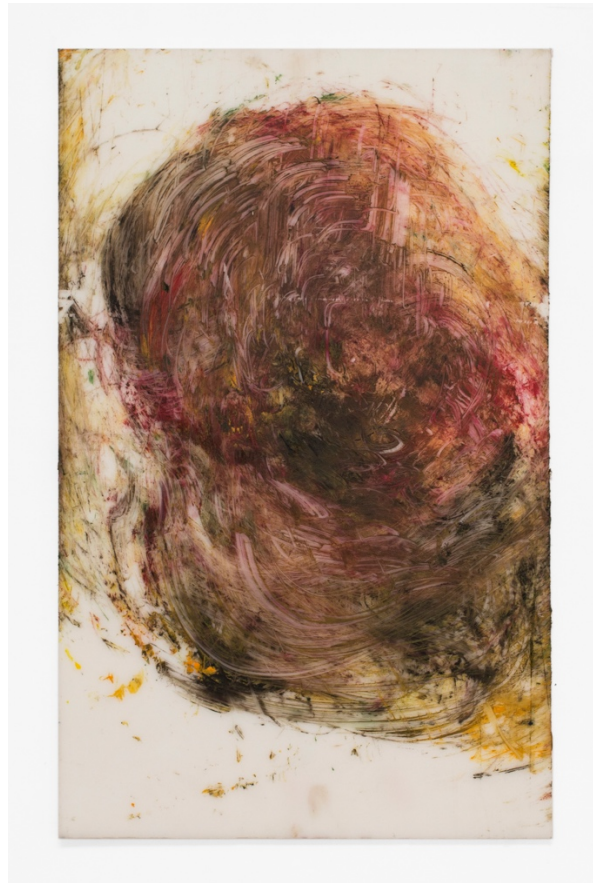


Fig.3 F.M. Clausen, *Untitled*, 2017, 71x44,5cm, HDPE sheet, oil

GG: There is a leitmotiv of difference and repetition, in such an embodied practice. You are looking for different faces, or differences, and you can arrange paintings so that it will create differences in the way that the paintings resonate, but at the same time, they attest to some unity, and in those echoes one can find a repetitive force. In the example you mentioned, working over five days, whereby you go through the same process every day, that seems to be playing with repetition, but in order to find some differences.

MFC: To go back to the culinary analogy; if you make the same spaghetti carbonara every day for dinner, with the same ingredients, it won't however taste the same every day. If you could have the result of a whole month of cooking spaghetti carbonara, and you could perceive it all at once, you would find that there are variations. When trying to talk about gesture as something between the thought and the result, and trying to obtain the same result, an older result at some point starts to imprint some kind of variation. So time has an influence on the nature of the gestures. Trends also plays a part, in time, in history, and contribute to defining the gestures that we are making now.

GG: In another work you used a sketch by Pierre Bonnard, which you worked from, altered, and then used as a motif, to be explored through different canvases. How do you go about incorporating pictorial history and its gestures in your own practice?





Fig.4 F.M. Clausen, *Untitled*, 2017, 31,5x25cm, canvas, oilsticks, acrylic, oil, stretcher bars

MFC: There is a tradition in Denmark of over-painting; painting over other's paintings, defacing them, destroying them, while at the same time building new narratives out of it. Since the old paintings I'm interested in working with are too expensive for me to possess, I used a digital reproduction, and overpainted it in photoshop. I know some painters will not make work from others paintings, finding it impossible to build a new narrative. For me it can be the just the same. I'm interested in the various ways of making an image, including making an object which explores the tradition and history of painting, but which can also at the same time almost retrench out of it, in order to simply explore the nature of visual language.

GG: The other day you mentioned a painting your little son had also worked on, adding generational gestures to the painting.

MFC: Yes, sometimes if I see him making something, I bring it to the studio and try to copy it! He has a lack of technique, of course, but children have a different way of painting, and there is also another layer of visual history. That's a burden you have to deal with when you become interested in painting images, and for sure he already has seen many more images than I did when I was his age, as we are now bombarded with images. Who knows what will happen with future image makers!

**BIOGRAPHIES**

Magnus Frederik Clausen was born in 1981 in Hillerød, Denmark, and currently lives and works in Copenhagen, Denmark. Clausen has a background in biology studies and communication. He has been awarded The Danish art counsel working grant, The Danish Academy in Rome; 2012 and 2014. His art has been exhibited in galleries and institutions in Berlin, Rome, LA, NY, Copenhagen, Paris, Poznan, Warsaw, Arles, Düsseldorf, Cologne, Helsinki, London and Nairobi. These exhibitions include amongst others: 60th berlinale, DE; 56th Venice Biennale, IT; Accademia di Romania, IT; Tranen, DK; the National gallery of Denmark, DK; Overgaden, DK; Kunsthall Charlottenborg, DK; Arti, NL; Luma foundation Arles, FR; Maison du Danemark, FR. From 2006, he co-founded the Copenhagen based artist space TTC Gallery and 2016, he co-founded the nomad artist run space JIR SANDEL.

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Gabriel Gee is Associate Professor in Art History and Visual Cultures at Franklin University, CH. He recently published *Art in the North of England, 1979-2008*, London: Routledge, an Ashgate Book, 2017. His interest in contemporary painting has led him to investigate the history of the John Moores Liverpool Painting Prize; an overview of this study entitled "Painting within itself: the JMLE" is to be published in 2018 in the *Journal of Contemporary Painting*, and he is currently working on a book project on the prize's history.

# Beyond Gestures

## *What Art Can Learn from Poetry*

**Delphine Chapuis-Schmitz**  
*Zurich University of the Arts*

### **ABSTRACT**

In 1897, the French poet Stéphane Mallarmé published a ground breaking text entitled *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard* (1897), which opened the space and realm of action of poetic creation. The artist Delphine Chapuis-Schmitz takes this radical gesture as a starting point to explore the joint process of liberation and incorporation that such disruptive gestures have both generated and been engulfed in within in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In order to find a viable alternative to the neutralisation of the radical gesture in our contemporary global media societies, Chapuis-Schmitz conveys the re-reading of Mallarmé's 'dice throw' by the Belgium poet turned visual artist Marcel Broodthaers. Through Broodthaers, a path can be found towards another understanding of gestures, that leads away from the banalization of the disruptive to an empowerment of the reader. Such empowerment is to bring a welcomed proliferation of readings as situated re-enactments of the original text, thereby proposing alternatives to the dominant narratives, and outlining a hopeful emancipatory horizon for our collective future.

### **KEY WORDS**

Disruption, gestures, resistance, poetry, reading, re-reading.

PROLOGUE<sup>1</sup>

They gestured towards us they gestured  
 towards the sky, realizing it had fallen on their heads – the clouds  
 still lingering in the far, not much of a threat yet.  
 With all best intentions they gestured, intending to tell us something, they gestured  
 and knew they were yet to be  
 born, those who would  
 one day, maybe  
 be able to decipher the patterns.

This happened a world ago.

Others have followed since then, and  
 forgetting the inconspicuous promise  
 they now gesture without noticing the time has passed when new paths could thereby  
 open wide. They gesture, and keep  
 gesturing from all sides, blinded.

Some say gestures have to be forgotten so that they can be done again – and so I've forgotten  
 everything, and we're forgetting everything, every small part of the past – resolutely delegating our  
 present memories to bits and pieces no one is in a position to make sense of anymore. Will  
 somebody someday be able to recollect the morsels? Don't we rather want to start re-inventing  
 viable alternatives in our present time? Looking forward – right now – at what has been in the past  
 might appear as a good move to begin with.

Opening one of the books left over on the shelves, I start to follow the black blurred lines: evidently  
 crossed out, their length, their position on the page unwaveringly breaking the grid, simultaneously  
 building one of a new kind, recounting the story of the forgotten *Schiff*, the ship le navire le *naufnage*,  
 the wreck-  
 -age  
 leads me to a by gone world.

## MALLARMÉ'S SEMINAL GESTURE

In 1897, at the eve of his death and a new century to come, Mallarmé published *Un Coup de Dés Jamais N'Abolira Le Hasard*, a poetic milestone widely acknowledged as marking the beginning of a new era for poetry.<sup>2</sup> With this long poem written as a journey, not only did Mallarmé break with the then usual way of displaying verses on a page, he also opened up a whole new space of possibilities: escaping stiff layout and typography, the verses became dynamic lines, living forms spreading on the blank page,

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<sup>1</sup> Since this piece of writing appears in an academic journal – as the layout will testify to the expert in the field – let me state from the beginning that it does not meet the usual standards of an academic paper – nor does it intend to. My aim here is to articulate the way I read some of the stories of our past, to question their connections, and their relevance for our present times. I would like to thank Gabriel Gee for inviting this nonconforming proposition to be part of the present issue of *Intervalla*.

<sup>2</sup> Stéphane Mallarmé, *Un Coup de Dés Jamais N'Abolira Le Hasard* (Paris: La Nouvelle Revue Française, 1897).



and making a space out of it. The newly discovered territory has been subsequently explored in many directions, giving way to the various forms of visual poetry – from Apollinaire’s calligrams to Gomringer’s *konkrete Poesie*, and, more recently, Holmquist’s square words, to name but a few. In a nutshell, Mallarmé’s liberation of the structure of the poem then led, together with the “pursuits of free verse and the prose poem”<sup>3</sup>, to a radically new conception of what poetry could – and still can be.

The *Coup* resonates up to our present times. The original wreck initiated new practices, which in turn cemented new assumptions, some of which are or have been explicitly stated at some point, others having come to be implicitly shared with no one consciously paying attention to it. Either way, taken together, they contribute to shape anew the field of poetry and its many guises as we know it today.

In a sense, every poet experimenting with language belongs to the *Coup*’s lineage, be s/he aware of it – or not. It is the fate of radical gestures to become incorporated to the new perspective they bring about: just as the space of possibilities they open up, they become themselves taken for granted, and we promptly forget the *Kraft* they implied at the time they were carried through. Think of inertia: Wikipedia tells us that it is “the resistance of any physical object to any change in its state of motion; this includes changes to its speed, direction, or *state of rest*.” (my emphasis) Not only do physical objects demonstrate a tendency to inertia, but the implicit system of beliefs underlying our assumptions does as well. The magnitude of a gesture unsettling such beliefs then depends on the distance between the assumptions they reveal, and the core of our belief system: the deeper the expectations are anchored, the bigger the impact of the gesture, and the greater the force needed to fulfil the change of perspective. But no matter how great the gesture, it will always end up as an essential part of the new set of beliefs it contributed to establish. Following this course, Mallarmé’s poem “has become an integral part of the poetological vocabulary of the 20th century”<sup>4</sup>.

As a matter of fact, and as O’Doherty noted in his seminal essay *Inside the White Cube*, a gesture “depends for its effects on the context of ideas it changes and joins”<sup>5</sup>. To say it otherwise: gestures do not make much sense in and for themselves, they cannot be read independently of the context they emerge from, and of the related expectations they turn upside down. From this perspective, Mallarmé’s *coup* was no single shot. Besides the experiments with free verse and prose poems, and the “music heard at concerts”<sup>6</sup>, we can hear its impact resonate in the direct aftermath of Nietzsche’s vibrant announcement: “Gott ist tot!”<sup>7</sup>. The impact of God’s death was of such magnitude that it affected each of the various fields shaping our cultures and societies, making it possible to free ourselves from the inherited assumptions that were so deeply taken for granted at the time, that nobody was even aware of them as being assumptions. This liberating process was no easy thing, it required time, energy, and numerous steps, more or less blaring, to be fully fulfilled. The *Coup* can be read as one of them. If there is no supreme instance governing the way we relate to the world as

<sup>3</sup> Preface to Stéphane Mallarmé, *Un Coup de Dés Jamais N’Abolira le Hasard*.

<sup>4</sup> See the presentation of the exhibition *Un coup de dés. Writing turned image. An Alphabet of Pensive language*, which took place in 2008 at the Generali Foundation in Vienna: <http://foundation.generali.at/en/info/archive/2009-2007/exhibitions/un-coup-de-des-writing-turned-image-an-alphabet-of-pensive-language.html> (last consulted August 2017).

<sup>5</sup> Brian O’Doherty, *Inside the White Cube. The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, Expanded Ed. (University of California Press, (1976) 1999) 70.

<sup>6</sup> See Mallarmé’s Preface, *Un Coup de Dés Jamais N’Abolira le Hasard*.

<sup>7</sup> This statement is from the aphorism 125 of Friedrich Nietzsche: *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, first published in 1882 with a second edition in 1887.

knowing and acting subjects, nor any supreme standards for truth and goodness to be found in the skies, then why should we abide by the inherited rules governing the display of verses? Indeed.

## EXHAUSTING DISRUPTIONS

In the forward direction, Mallarmé's gesture can be read as a prefiguration of the kind of gestures Duchamp accomplished a couple of years later – and remains celebrated for up to now. Just as the freeing of verse led to a new way of doing poetry, it has been extensively shown that the *Fountain* led to a new conception of what could be art at all, or that the hanging of 1200 bags of charcoal from the ceiling of the Surrealist exhibition, which took place in 1938 in Paris, have opened up new ways of dealing with the gallery space. Breaking with the then usual expectations as to how a space has to function in order to function as a gallery space – namely: offering its walls for hanging framed images and its floor for setting up plinths – was surely no small achievement by then.<sup>8</sup>

Just as it is the case with the *Coup de dé*, the disruptive character of Duchamp's gestures has been accompanied by a liberating effect: it opened up the various spaces of possibilities explored by artists throughout the twentieth century – as every introduction to contemporary art testifies. Note further that Duchamp's many and brilliant breakages occurred on all fronts: they concerned not only the kind of objects counting as works of art, and the functioning of a space as a gallery space, as already mentioned, but also how to do art, how to conceive of artistic labor, of the figure of the artist, and, as has been most recently shown, of the kind of activities that count as art.<sup>9</sup> In this sense, one can say that the series of gestures accomplished by Duchamp made room for a whole new paradigm: taken as a whole, they led to a complete reset of the body of assumptions defining the field of art.

Now remember that once carried through, such gestures become incorporated to the new body of assumptions they bring about. Duchamp's gestures are no exception on this count: the kind of gestures he remains famous for, disrupting and liberating at once, have become part of our shared expectations; the achievement of such gestures has come to be *expected*.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, as O'Doherty already hinted at, disruptive gestures are not *per se* artistic<sup>11</sup>. This appreciation has gained its full relevance when Silicon Valley's visionaries started appropriating creative practices from the field of art, and calling for disruption in a way that has been extended to every area of our globalized economy. More recently, disruption has been further extended to the political domain – think of France, where the political landscape has been completely redesigned after the election of the new president, or of the United States, where presidential communication now occurs through outrageous tweets and obvious lies defended by fierce counselors.

Disruptive gestures are thus pervading every aspect of our lives, and the impact of gestures *à la Duchamp* stretched to their point of collapse. Far from their initial intention, producing such gestures has become a way to entertain and feed the hunger for systematic novelty inscribed in the pool of our presently shared assumptions shaping the expectations collectively addressed not only to artists, but also to managers of all kinds – and, in a new and unanticipated way, to actors in the political arena.

<sup>8</sup> For a detailed analysis, see for instance "Context as Content", the third chapter of O'Doherty's previously mentioned essay: *Inside the White Cube*.

<sup>9</sup> See on this last point Elena Filipovic, *The Apparently Marginal Activities of Marcel Duchamp* (The MIT Press, 2016).

<sup>10</sup> Even though they haven't yet solidified in common beliefs: the *urinoir* might still appear as a blasphemy to some laypersons...

<sup>11</sup> Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube. The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, 70.

In other words, the present context is such that it deprives Duchampian gestures of the possibility to operate as genuine challenges. How can you break up with a framework that awaits and entertains disruption as a way to maintain and expand itself? How can you disrupt in a context that demands of you to do so? When it is commonly expected that you break up with whatever there is to break up, the frame you find yourself acting in surely can't be affected. Finally, the impact of Duchamp's gestures has reached not only its point of completion, but also of exhaustion. Time has come to acknowledge the blatant truth of this unescapable fact.

## READING ANEW

However, the line just outlined is fortunately not the only one leading to the multifaceted present we are living in. I suggest we now turn to an alternative one, and follow it where it takes us to.

1969 saw a revival of Mallarmé's *Coup*, less blasting perhaps, but with long lasting consequences as well. A poet turned artist, Marcel Broodthaers, produced an image of the initial poem by blocking its lines, by blackening them blunt and plain, and this rewriting put into light the at once disruptive and liberating force of the original verses. I remember the first times I myself came across them, when the words inhabiting the page as a space of a new kind, evolving as if for the first time, appeared in a blinding evidence, and I myself reduced them, I must admit, to the gesture they deploy. As might often be the case, I took the gesture for the poem, thereby missing the more subtle relevance of the latter. It took many more tries to venture beyond this first sight. Past gestures can indeed function as an easy trap: becoming "obvious *post facto*"<sup>12</sup>, they present the double advantage of being at once easy to grasp, and of giving the impression to thereby successfully master a challenging insight. Venturing past this rewarding first step is trying, but it is worth it: the hidden paths might appear intricate from afar, they also unveil as more sophisticated once you come closer to them.

Broodthaers' gesture was no simple repetition of Mallarmé's breakthrough: it made it possible for us to forget the original poem, and then remember it, by making plainly visible the hidden story it entails. In other words: Broodthaers' image does not only revive the force of Mallarmé's gesture, it also shows that the poem contains much more than this gesture, and cannot be reduced to it. Through their peculiar *showing*, the words have something to say. Spreading verses on the page is no end by itself, but a way for the poem to tell a specific story, waiting for us to engage with.

I must confess that I myself never really finished reading the initial text. In contrast to the once-and-for-all character of gestures – which concerns their execution as well as their reception: once you've grasped a gesture as such, you've done the job – the reading of a poem is a never-ending story. The deciphering of the words, their interpreting and giving sense, the recreation of their stories, are all acts that can be undertaken again and again. In each new context, in each new situation, they will appear in a new light. The text will indeed never come to a final reading since it "consists of multiple writings, issuing from several cultures and entering into dialogue with each other, into parody, into contestation"<sup>13</sup> – as Barthes noted, interestingly, one year before Broodthaers turned Mallarmé's poem into an iconic image.

If the poem, being itself a multiplicity, thus cannot be reduced to a final form – neither the gesture underlying it, nor the shape of its letters, nor an original intention, if there is any such thing, will do the job here – the role of reader then becomes crucial: as Barthes further notes, the unifying of the multiplicity lies precisely in the hand of the reader who "is the very space in which are inscribed,

<sup>12</sup> Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube. The Ideology of the Gallery Space.*, 69.

<sup>13</sup> Roland Barthes, *The Death of the Author*, 1968.

without any being lost, all the citations a writing consists of; the unity of a text is not in its origin, it is in its destination.”<sup>14</sup>

In other words, the meaning of a text lies beyond any of the elements playing a role for its emergence, and beyond all of them taken together as well: it lies, so Barthes, in the reader. But when Barthes sees the last as an atemporal ideal with no body nor history,<sup>15</sup> I would rather argue that each one of us engaging with the text participates in the (re)creation of its meaning. It is *in* and *through* our repeated endeavor that the meaning of the text can be actualized for each of the times being – as a potential to be enacted over and over again. The death of the author as a far-reaching consequence of God’s dismissal has thus relieved us, readers, of the illusion of a single definite meaning to be recovered, and, as Donna Haraway has more recently taught us, “with no available original dream of a common language (...) the play of a text has no finally privileged reading”<sup>16</sup>.

Unfolding up to the present time, the various interpretations of Mallarmé’s poem are a good example for this kind of endless play, where, in the perspective inherited from Barthes and briefly outlined here, each new attempt can be no more – and no less – than a tentative enactment of the text, adding a new layer to its sedimentary meaning.<sup>17</sup> Next to the numerous interpretations philosophers, theorists, literary critics and historians have been offering,<sup>18</sup> Broodthaers’ transposition of Mallarmé’s poem to the field of visual art is decisive in that it has further paved the way for readings of the poem by visual artists. Several variations of the *Coup* have thus been proposed by artists in the past few years.<sup>19</sup> In 2008 Michael Maranda re-enacted the original poems *together with* Broodthaers’ transposition by superimposing the three versions on the cover: his own reading in black, and the two previous versions in red. He highlighted the fact that the image has left a profound imprint on the original poem, making it impossible to separate the two.<sup>20</sup> Jeremy Bennequin’s “*Omage*”, dating from 2014, reveals for its part the possibility of a reverse reading of the poem by turning the verses upside

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> This at least in the aforementioned article. The subsequent essay *The Pleasure of the Text* (1973) shifts the focus and deals precisely with the qualitative dimension of reading as an experience.

<sup>16</sup> Donna J. Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century”, in Donna J. Haraway: *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women. The Reinvention of Nature* (London: Free Association Books, 1991) 176.

<sup>17</sup> From this point of view, claims at final interpretations can appear as dubious aims. See for instance the recension of Quentin Meillassoux’s book *Le Nombre et la sirène* (Paris: Fayard, 2011), published in *Le Nouvel Observateur* under the title “Mallarmé finally decoded”:

<http://bibliobs.nouvelobs.com/essais/20110928.OBS1316/le-coup-de-des-enfin-decode.html>

<sup>18</sup> , Paul Valéry, “Le Coup de Dés”, in *Variétés II* (Paris: Gallimard, 1929), Maurice Blanchot, *Le livre à venir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1959); Jacques Scherer, “*Le Livre*” de Mallarmé (Paris: Gallimard, 1978); Jean-Paul Sartre, *Mallarmé, or the Poet of Nothingness*, translated by Ernest Sturm, (The Pennsylvania State University Press. University Park-London, 1988); Jacques Derrida. *La dissémination* (Paris: Seuil, 1972). For a comprehensive list of secondary literature on the *Coup de dés*, see Jean-Marc Lemelin, “Dieu ne joue pas aux dés, mais Mallarmé...” (2015):

<http://www.uccs.mun.ca/~lemelin/des.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> I am thankful to Christoph Schifferli for having drawn my attention to these works. Note that they all have in common to be close copies of Mallarmé’s original poem. Next to the ones referred to above, let me also mention Michalis Pichler’s *Un Coup de Dés Jamais N’abolira le Hasard (SCULPTURE)*, Berlin: “greatest hits” (2008), Cerith Wyn Evans, *Delay* (Antwerpen/Köln, De Singel/Walther König, 2009), and Rodney Graham, *Poème: “Au Tatouneur”*, Bruxelles (Gevaert Editions, 2011).

<sup>20</sup> In the body of the book, Maranda brings Broodthaers’ gesture a step further by producing “a meditation on ‘les blancs’”. Instead of the black band of censorship, however, the place of the text is replaced with the absence of ink. Surrounding these literal ‘blancs’ is a cream colored ink wash, imitating the paper stock of the original edition.” See Michael Maranda, *Un Coup de Dés Jamais N’Abolira le Hasard, Livre*, Parasitic Ventures Press, 2008, URL: <http://parasiticventurespress.com/books/?p=207>

down.<sup>21</sup> My favorite reading is a wave version by Sammy Engrammer, where the poem is transcribed as audio frequencies displayed at the original position of the verses, making them literally resonate up to our present times.<sup>22</sup>

All these versions attempt at reading the poem anew by re-enacting selected aspects of it, and thereby place it among new associative fields. They furthermore shed a new light on Broodthaers' transposition in so far as they make it appear *a posteriori* as a fundamental registration of the essential linkage between the two fields of art and poetry.<sup>23</sup> Right now, we are interestingly experiencing a new step in this evolution, where practices of writing akin to poetry and literature increasingly pervade the artistic field. As a most recent exhibition at the *Centre d'Art Contemporain* in Geneva attempts at showing: "the art of our time appears to be deeply and intimately rooted in words".<sup>24</sup> The renewed interest of artists for experimenting in and with language takes different shapes, ranging from "poetry readings and recitals in museums, (to) performances centered on the importance of the text and its recitation, videos where poetic language takes on a role that rivals the visual component"<sup>25</sup> ... – all of which, taken together, might be a chance to tip the scales: once we have acknowledged that gestures of the Duchampian kind have become obsolete forms of resistance, poetry and the experimenting with language can appear as a promising way to develop genuine alternatives to the invasive logic of disruption we find ourselves living in.<sup>26</sup>

## READING OVER AND OVER AGAIN

Similarly to gestures, texts cannot be read independently of the context in which their meaning is performed. Each text is to be read in and for the situation the readers find themselves in, which means that, as readers, we are not only liberated of a final interpretation to uncover, but also facing a new responsibility: we have to be up to the task of performing anew, in the world we are living in, the meaning a text invites us to engage with. Since a "text is always already enmeshed in contending practices and hopes"<sup>27</sup>, it remains in our hands to choose which practices and hopes we want to rely on in order to keep a text alive, and grasp the resonance it might have in and for the present time. Right now, we are amid the process of adapting to the various shifts the recent explosion of digital technologies imply for our economies, for our societies, and for our cultures. From an optimistic perspective, we can assert that we still oscillate between two poles: a "democracy of believers" on the one hand, dominated by post-truths and alternative facts, and "a democracy of knowledge"<sup>28</sup> on the other, where each individual would be able to navigate autonomously and responsively in the flow of information, opinions, and delusional claims currently mixed together. In other words: we are in a

<sup>21</sup> Voir Jérémie Bennequin, *Le Hasard n'abolira jamais un Coup de Dés*, OMAGE, Éditions de la Librairie Yvon Lambert, 2014.

<sup>22</sup> Sammy Engrammer, *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard* (Onde / Wave. Editions Laura Delamonade, n.pl. 2010).

<sup>23</sup> This aspect has been developed in the exhibition *Un Coup de Dés: Writing Turned Image, an Alphabet of Pensive Language*, curated by Sabine Folie and held at the Generali Foundation in 2008, and in the eponymous exhibition catalogue.

<sup>24</sup> See the exhibition text available on the website of the Centre d'Art Contemporain: URL: <http://www.centre.ch/en/from-concrete-to-liquid-to-spoken-worlds-to-the-word> (last consulted July 30th, 2017).

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* The issue number 46 of Mousse magazine dated December 2014/January 2015 and dedicated to "Artists' Words" also gives a comprehensive overview of the variety and liveliness of artists' writings in recent times – together with more historical pieces dating back to the 1970s – thus giving a comprehensive illustration of the growing permeability of the artistic field to poetry.

<sup>26</sup> See also the issue n°103 of *Texte zur Kunst*, entitled "Poesie/Poetry" and published in Sept. 2016: it takes as its topic the present significance of poetry as criticism.

<sup>27</sup> Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women. The Reinvention of Nature*, 124.

<sup>28</sup> I borrow these expressions from Gerald Bronner, *La Démocratie des crédules*, (Paris: PUF, 2013).

crucial position where it remains possible to shift direction – or so I want to believe. But how are we to invent gestures of a new kind which will enable us to truly disrupt the worst course history is presently at risk to take? And which role can artists play in this turning point?

The various re-readings of Broodthaers' transposition recently carried out, as well as the more general interest for poetry from contemporary artists, appear to me as significant moves on this count. Matters of language never being purely linguistic, engaging with creative ways of using words in the way poets and artists do is a serious game, which goes hand in hand with the exploration of alternative forms of life. Moreover, the tendency to appropriate and re-read past gestures from the point of view of our present times testifies to the awareness of a growing number of artists for the task of remembering anew our common past. If amnesia is indeed the fallout of disruption, remembering the stories shaping our communities is then more urgent than ever. Against all attempts at erasing or at replacing our memories with alternative facts that aim at dividing us further, and at setting us up against each other, reading and remembering are becoming acts of resistance, yes, political acts even, which confront us to the ancient question: which form do we want to give to our living together as human beings?

In the now historical time when the new president of the United States of America was still a candidate, a black woman named Johary Idusuyi demonstrated that we already live in a time when reading poetry in public has become a threat to some – and most obviously to the couple of red cap supporters sitting behind her on the tribune at a rally, who asked her to put away the book she had taken out of her purse, and started reading in a manifest gesture, as a spontaneous act of resistance against the candidate's aggressive calls for exclusion.<sup>29</sup> The kind of attention required by reading, the effort, time, and devotion it implies, is rightly perceived as threatening the dominant narratives proposed by advocates of hate and terror from all sides – and interestingly enough, the book held high by Johary Idusuyi is *Citizen: An American Lyric*, where poet Claudia Rankine<sup>30</sup> explores the many ways black people are treated *differently* by their fellow citizen, or to say it bluntly, the various faces of ordinary racism. In the way of doing so, the poet brings into light many hidden assumptions I myself as a white person was not aware of until reading the book – a real perspective change.

Overcoming every form of domination from one group over others is certainly a true challenge of our times, for which the developing of alternative narratives, of new ways of writing, of reading, and of dealing with language in general, is a decisive tool. From this perspective, however, further pursuing “the subversive potential of language – both in its dimension as a critique of ideology and in its (...) disruptive power”<sup>31</sup> is only a first step in the process. The potential of language to *undermine* the need for disruption, by carefully developing and exploring alternative worLds in our highly disrupted times, will bring us much further in the long run. We can hope that it is precisely this kind of awareness and working with language that is starting to infiltrate the artistic field, as hinted at in this paper. No doubt we are still a long way before poetic acts of resistance can give way to a new set of commonly shared assumptions – but this might be a meaningful goal to work towards. So let's

<sup>29</sup> See the video on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HvWVTPu4A7Q>

As well as the interview of Johary Idusuyi by Rachel Maddow:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qd5Ug9JtYHQ>

I am thankful to Nienke Terpsma for having shared these links in the framework of a symposium on *Publishing as Resistance*, held at the 2016 edition of Volumes, the independent art publishing fair in Zurich.

<sup>30</sup> Claudia Rankine, *Citizen. An American Lyric* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2015).

<sup>31</sup> This quote is taken from the exhibition text *Un Coup de Dés. Writing Turned Image. An Alphabet of Pensive Language*, see the link mentioned above.

settle for the journey, and keep up with the tasks of writing, and reading, and re-reading, and again, and again – in order to reinvent future ways of living together.

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