

WHO TOUCHED ME?

FRED MOTEN AND WU TSANG

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INTRODUCTION

FRÉDÉRIQUE BERGHOLTZ AND SUSAN GIBB

We are very pleased to present *Who touched me?*, a publication compiling the research project of Fred Moten and Wu Tsang, which they have undertaken over the past two years as part of If I Can't Dance, I Don't Want To Be Part Of Your Revolution's Performance in Residence programme within Edition VI—Event and Duration (2015–2016).¹ The publication is one half of this project, and is complemented by the sculptural performance *Gravitational Feel*, which will be presented for the first time in Amsterdam in November 2016.

If I Can't Dance started the Performance in Residence programme in 2010, as we wanted to commit to the long-term research of performance works from the past, in collaboration with guest curators and artists. While reenactment and its methods were central to the inauguration of the Performance in Residence series, as befits such vital programmes, we have since opened up its boundaries allowing for an extended interpretation of what performance 'research' might be.

It is within this vein that Moten and Tsang have collaborated to produce the sculptural performance *Gravitational Feel* as the companion to this book. Within the Performance in Residence programme their project is marked by a meaningful particularity—at the time of this publication's submission to print, the performance it relates to is yet to be realized. The text and images that unfold across these pages trace the work in process, introducing the reader to it in its virtuality. This is in keeping with Moten and Tsang's movement across the commission, working carefully not to foreclose it, but continually maintaining a space that is open to chance events and speculation, and for others to enter and inhabit. This is also seen in the many voices that have come to meld with and be referred to in the text. It is equally represented in its design, and we hope will be similarly experienced by those who find themselves in the future sculptural performance. As Moten and Tsang write in the book, "The research will be held by the ones who enact it, then dispersed as they disperse. [...] The research/experiment is in how to sense entanglement."

(Right Channel)

0:00

I'm late, a little bit, palpitating. Un-ironed. Radical inability properly to present myself. Disrespectable because it purports to be all, you know, um. Well whatever, that's beside the point. Um, although it might appear to be that one would need to explain why. And I'm just thinking about... the detail. Well, if you look at 'em for a minute you see that they're moving. Dark underneath and light on top. One just kinda rolling over the mountain.

1. If I Can't Dance, I Don't Want To Be Part Of Your Revolution is dedicated to exploring the evolution and typology of performance and performativity in contemporary art, and does so through the production of artworks and thematic programmes across two-year editions. Since 2005, it has operated without a fixed presentation space, taking the model of collaborative working from the theatre to invest in elaborated programmes that develop through their enactment at each event and location over time. The title of the Performance in Residence pro-

gramme is a pun that points to our 'nomadic' institution and the elusive nature of performance. The 'in residence' also echoes our desire to have a work in our midst, and a researcher in our company: to care, play, exchange, learn, and sometimes struggle—all the things you do when living together. It also refers to our intention to let time be a medium instead of a commodity, allowing both the object of study and the researcher to breathe, grow, and move.

In *Gravitational Feel* this awareness takes shape in a multi-channel soundtrack and numerous strands of fabric rope, which draw inspiration from “quipu” or *talking knots*—a sophisticated form of Incan data and record collection using knotted string—and brings attention to the unique language of fabric.² Alternatively, one could see the sculpture’s form as a cat o’ nine tails changed from an instrument of domination and punishment to one of tactile touch and pleasure. It could otherwise be considered a node through which to make contact and bring what it finds into relation with a larger network. Suspended from moveable heads, these strands of fabric will hang shower-like, and move via contact with the bodies that come to brush between and beneath them. The accompanying multi-channel soundtrack, recorded by Moten and Tsang, will intensify the haptic environment with its directional sound waves. Within the work audiences will be invited to move through it at their own pace and according to their own interest, while at punctuated moments Moten and Tsang will be present, bringing together a greater density of audience and improvisational action.

As its published companion, *Who touched me?* takes the form of a missal—a liturgical book that contains all instructions and texts necessary for the celebration of mass throughout a year. The resulting text includes fragments of e-mail communications, notes, poetry, transcriptions of previous works, and essays—including, notably, parts of an essay by philosopher and artist Denise Ferreira da Silva with whom Moten and Tsang also frequently collaborate, in, for instance, their establishing of the Art Institute for Physical Sociology (a proposed interdisciplinary group of scholars and art practitioners interested in the sociological potential of quantum physics). In the book these elements are lined up so they can be traced together—or as they say “to feel and hear the thickness of the line”—moving from the earliest communication between Moten and Tsang, to the more recent bodies of text and talk that have congregated around the project, exemplifying the project’s movement from, and thinking towards, a lived experience of collaboration.

2. One needs only to look at the word “text” to see its intimate and etymological relationship to “texture” and to “textile,” and to think of the texture of a voice, and the weave of a story, for example.

Living Collaboratively

Moten and Tsang cohabit the roles of performance artist and poet, bringing together their respective practices: Moten is a poet and scholar who explores black studies, performance studies, poetry, and critical theory; and Tsang is an artist known for using performance, film, and installation to examine constructions of gender, sexuality, race, and class, and the impact of these constructions on communities. Given the many sympathies and cross-connections between their work, they have described their collaboration as something that seemed to commence long before they knew each other.

Moten and Tsang began collaborating in 2014 through a long-distance experiment in communication, which saw them leave voicemail messages to each other every day over a two-week period. And while they never connected lines, the messages they left each other often riff on the ones just heard, textured by the different intonations of each of their voices and their particular uses of language. Despite the distance from one another, their messages are also characterized by moments of unexpected synchronicity—ghostly near misses of shared thoughts. The result of this is *Miss Communication and Mr:Re* (2014), their first collaborative work in which their voicemail messages form the soundtrack of a two-channel video featuring images of Moten and Tsang on facing screens. A transcript of this early work runs down the edges of the pages throughout this publication.

In a second collaborative work, *Girl Talk* (2015),³ Moten appears in a sun-drenched backyard. Lightly costumed in a maroon-coloured cape decorated with crystal lapels, he moves in front of Tsang's iPhone camera, spinning slightly, dancing, and raising his hands as if he is mid-song. Accompanying the footage is experimental musician Josiah Wise's rendition of the jazz standard from which the work gets its name. The soundtrack plays throughout the performance on screen and elevates the humbleness of the scene, which is played back in slow motion, to something bordering on rapture. Within these earlier collaborative works, what intrigued us most was how the known disciplines of Moten and Tsang respectively took alternating precedence within the collaboration. Both had moments of vulnerability and of confidence, but mutually they were participating in an exchange and play enabling what may come.

3. *Girl Talk* was presented as the preface to Moten and Tsang's Performance in Residence research project as part of the If I Can't Dance Introductory Event at Cygnus Gymnasium on 24 January 2016. The programme was presented in an operational high school in Amsterdam, where *Girl Talk* was installed in the music room. Throughout the day the sound of Josiah Wise's voice could be heard and felt during the audience's movement through the school's corridors.

In a meeting about their project for *If I Can't Dance*, the conversation arrived at the idea of virtuosity, and the reference within the book's title to the scripture of Luke 8:45 that tells the story of a miracle in which a woman is healed by touching Jesus's coat, to which Jesus, who feels the virtue move from within him, responds "Who touched me?" This was followed by talk of the figure of the jazz virtuoso, and the question of how to become an instrument for the dispersal of virtue, which the collaboration of Moten and Tsang, and the works *Gravitational Feel* and *Who touched me?* reach out for.

As accompaniment to their forthcoming performance in Amsterdam in 2016, we invite you to touch and turn the pages of this book, to find your own path through its reading, and entanglements within its contents, and to mark the book's skin with notes if you wish, continuing the research that this project lays out and opens up.

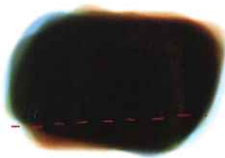
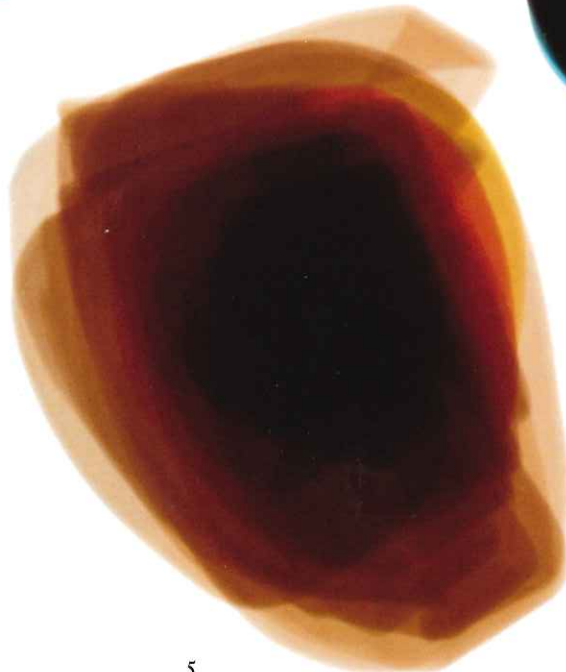
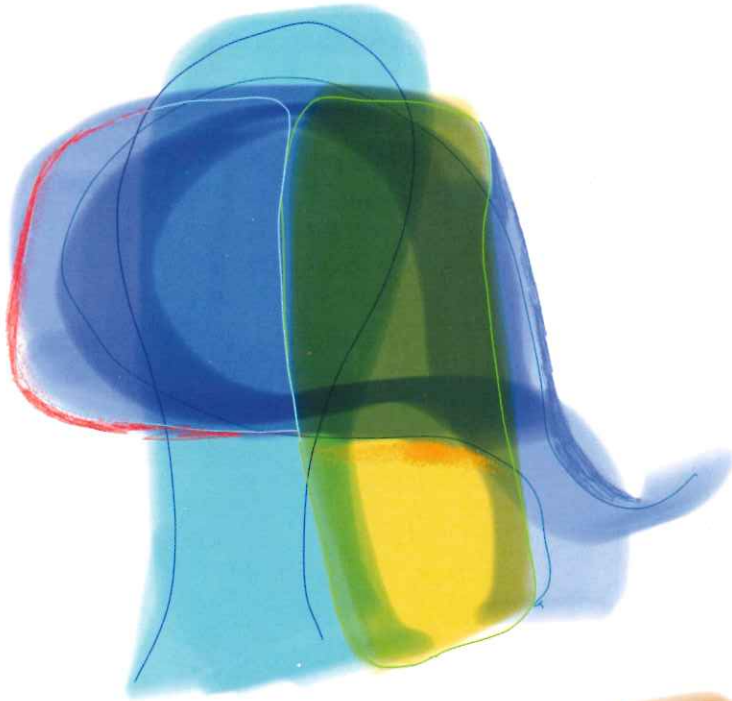
1:00

Beautiful green bushes, and rose bushes, and lilac bushes, and olive trees, and cypress trees... it's too complicated. A lot of different colours of green, though. And white, and red, and rust, and pink, and yellow, and then blue and white. Kind of put it down, put pins down in that way. And I didn't hear it fully, or I didn't hear it at all, until too late. And now I heard it, and it's late but the knight always moves... what does the knight do? Well, it doesn't really matter cause it basically goes: two forward and one to the side.

We would like to thank Fred Moten and Wu Tsang for the openness and experimentation with which they have approached their respective practices, collaborative work, and participation within the Performance and Residence programme. We would also like to thank them for so openly enfold-ing us in this collaboration, and for the inspiring conversations that have crossed art, life, politics, and the very material of matter, with both ease and curiosity.

WHO TOUCHED ME?

MISS COMMUNICATION AND MR:RE



1:00

It's kinda, where like right in the dirt in the tumbleweeds mean so much more to anyone who grew up there than the lights.

Well, hmmm. Off-communicability. Dragged talk. Drag town, drag down. Like, drag, like, every kinda drag that, drag like—somebody pulling my coat—right? Like I'm trying to raise up my arm and somebody's pulling my arm, or—you know just, constrain. But it's not really, ahhh, anyway, in't particularly interested in wielding that much power.



■ We chose a rule of staggered missives. We committed to the non-exclusion of birds. Our model for remote intimacy and ritual is missal. This is our near miss. Communication and mystery folded in the arms of our best regards, our beautifully imagined children, our lovers. Quickly we began to miss one another since we were meant for one another, cornered by one another in an off square, a failed cube and plaza, for circling inside. Our state of grace is a missive bouquet, a sound tree in every shade of green, which you are welcome to overhear and overshare.

■ We aim. We miss. We live in the gaps between our intentions and the shit that doesn't work out. So many emotions caught in my pipe. I pound my chest to putter it out. The machinations. Glittery enunciation. The first time I heard the sound of your voice it filled me with a sense of future perfect. The friendship I will have had. Getting to know you. Sounding without thinking. Walking. Just walking and heart beating. Out of synch, but in time.

So cool to discover what you're doing while you're doing it, to be attuned to your own activity.

I miss dialing, too. And I remember the old kind, before touchtone.

We've got a correspondence!!!! What is correspondence now? The fate of words in correspondence. Instagram cuts words.

No pauses no redos, description in lieu of picture.

Not gonna worry about the partial nature of yesterday's message.

"Because I'm in an Italian villa. Basil and lavender."

I've never described my room before, falling snow meteor lights, smalling snow a chandelier that was an encasement for my body. Dan Graham's cheap strip club, her name is Tosh, her performer name is boychild, is Honeychild, sugar, like Christy Love.

I'm taking notes, is that ok?

That's ok!

1) Voice is continually lost and found; we continually lose and find our voices. What if we think of this as a social phenomenon but what if, at the same time, the sociality is dispersed? But is this *a priori* to the practice we are developing? Already, we are at practice together, remote, in some kind of out syncopation, 6 here, 3 there. Lost and found, less and more. The voice is more and less than itself. Not present to itself, voice's time is off. A practice of talking to one another. When we are together we miss one another. Voice goes past itself and goes past one another. A script drawn from a series of missed conversations. A form derived from miscommunication. We deliberately, as a matter of daily practice, miss one another, but from within a conversation, a mutuality of lost and found, of more + less than voice. And then we stage that offness, together, from room to room, yoked, even in the record, the daily meditation, of this missed communication. Articulation implies a separation, a distance, but the normative model of conversation and communication implies seamless connection. What if we simply foreground the communicative ruptures and displacements that are the essence of conversation? And we can make this sound like something. Like a Beckett television play but stripped down to the phonic level. A protocol: a certain number of words or sentences or phrases from our miscommunication, our space-time separated conversation, our quantum entanglement or spooky actions at a distance. This should tend towards music and dance, the inarticulacies of a kind of articulate or articulated song and dance. To stage, in co-presence, a troubled duet. Suspend skype while maintaining the commitment. So: articulation: what if the spatio-temporal distance that makes articulation/

2:00

Or one forward and two to the side. It makes the same shape either way. To go towards something and at the last minute step to the side. The "knight's move," the swerve, or something. The swerve. Now that's making me think of something else. It's always like an approximation. Or I woke up this morning and I was dreaming about so many things. But um, there's not as much room for edit, or I guess the editing conveys so much more. It's like what you don't say is as much as what you do say. I kind of miss... dialing. Expanding the role... possibly like, unanswerable. If you're gonna call someone, you're gonna go through with it.

communication possible is stretched out, stressed out, made remote so that articulation fails by way of the very thing that makes it possible, distance? Then the phonic and choreographic materialities of missed communication become apparent. On the other hand, **what** if communication breaks down as a function not so much of proximity but rather of a kind of haptic blur, a kind of consent not to be a single being? **Too** close, too far. To take articulation out of its comfort zone, then cut and paste the missed communications. To make your words do a contact improv and then we do it, but remotely, in different rooms. The iPhone plays back and records but we could call each other for the purpose of overhearing. 2) Protocols: Voicemail: MWM 9am/TTH 9pm. Don't start listening until Wednesday then see what we have on Saturday, via skype: a kind of syncopation and overlap at the level of content and sound, or perhaps building a rhythm track or script for the live part!!!! Perhaps melded/blended into a crowded room, walking around amongst the audience, both present but never really come into contact, but speaking over part of what we recovered. Or sitting back to back. **See**, here's where I just get corny. No idea of how to stage a thing. And, then, the word that keeps coming to mind is **colour**!!!!

Possible Titles, all very bad:

Lapover
Lost Voice or, We Lost Our Voices
Intercessions
Articurate
Can You Hear Me Then?
Oversharing
Miss Communication and Mr. Re:

2:00

Um, but maybe you can't just help it. Bossing, all you are is a instrument. I just know I don't wanna run nothing. Trying to imagine something open. 'kay. Rubbing or brushing, right? I got-is it-that's gon' have to break down. Club in San Francisco called Slims. Man, I was sitting so close to one of the horn players that I could actually hear the percussive sounds of him hittin' the keys on the horn. Which is usually something that you never hear. Right? You know, if you just listen to a recording, or you just hear the sound coming out of the bell. Like its condition is out of synch. Th-the drag, th-the... drag or lag across the ocean.

We like to chat about the dresses we will wear tonight
We chew the fat about our hair and how the neighbors fight
Inconsequential things men really don't care to know
Become essential things that women find so apropos

I'm a dame
It's my game
All the same
They call it girl talk, talk, talk, talk
Girl talk

We all meow about the ups and downs of all our friends
The who, the why, the how, do we dish the dirt, it never ends
We're weaker sex, the speakin sex, you mortal males behold
Although we joke, we wouldn't trade you for a ton of gold

It's my plan
Take my hand
Please understand
This girl talk
Girl talk talks of you

We all meow about the ups and downs of all our friends
The who, the how, the why, do we dish the dirt, it never ends
We're weaker sex, the speakin sex, what males behold
Although we joke, we wouldn't trade you for a ton of gold

It's my plan
Please take my hand
Understand
This girl talk
Talks of you

*Adapted and performed by Josiah Wise, after Betty Carter's adaptation
and performance of lyrics by Bobby Troup and music by Neal Hefti*

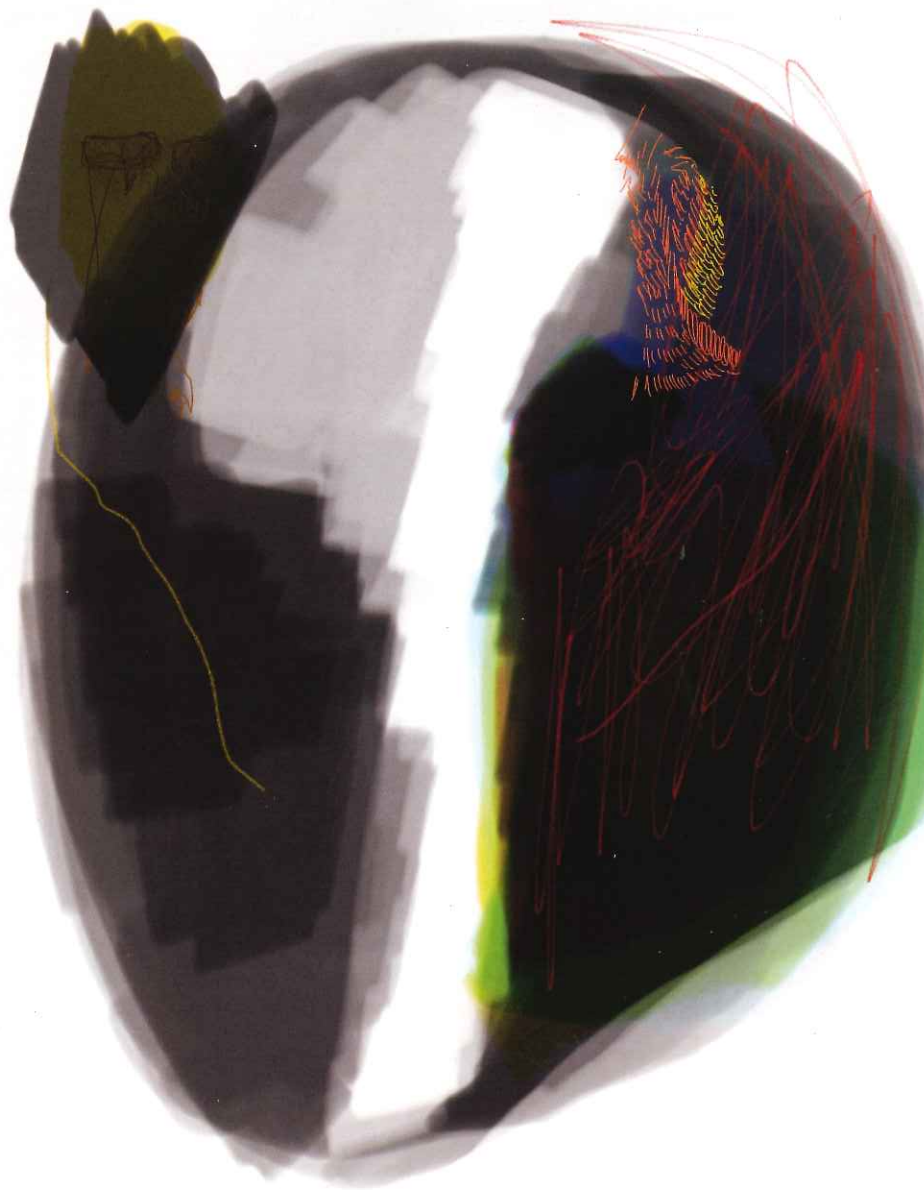
directed

direct me

3:00

Or the anticipation... there's so much (sighs), there's such a moment of pause and decision-making, with each number that you press. A question. There has to be a question that I don't know the answer to. He died, he was, um, murdered. In a... he was like, it was a hate crime. I'm like losing my... sense of clarity around how we could have a sense of knowing this person and their struggle and yet, and yet we have no idea. It's not enough, it's almost like an equation and I've solved it—for now. You know? It's a har—yeah, it's like hard, it's... I think that's probably still true.

made up



3:00

That somebody somewhere playing hambone, or rubbing their skin, or brushing up against the tree, or diggin' in the ground, uh-hh you know, chopping wood. Every time anybody touched anything, what they were also always doing was sending a message back somewhere. Back in time, back outta time, in some distant place. That what it means to, to walk, you know, through the air. To brush up against atoms, to brush up against molecules. That maybe it's all just sending a message. That we're walking through an atmosphere of messages, maybe. I dunno... Just, just blurring.

we talk we talk

we talk we talk we talk

4:00

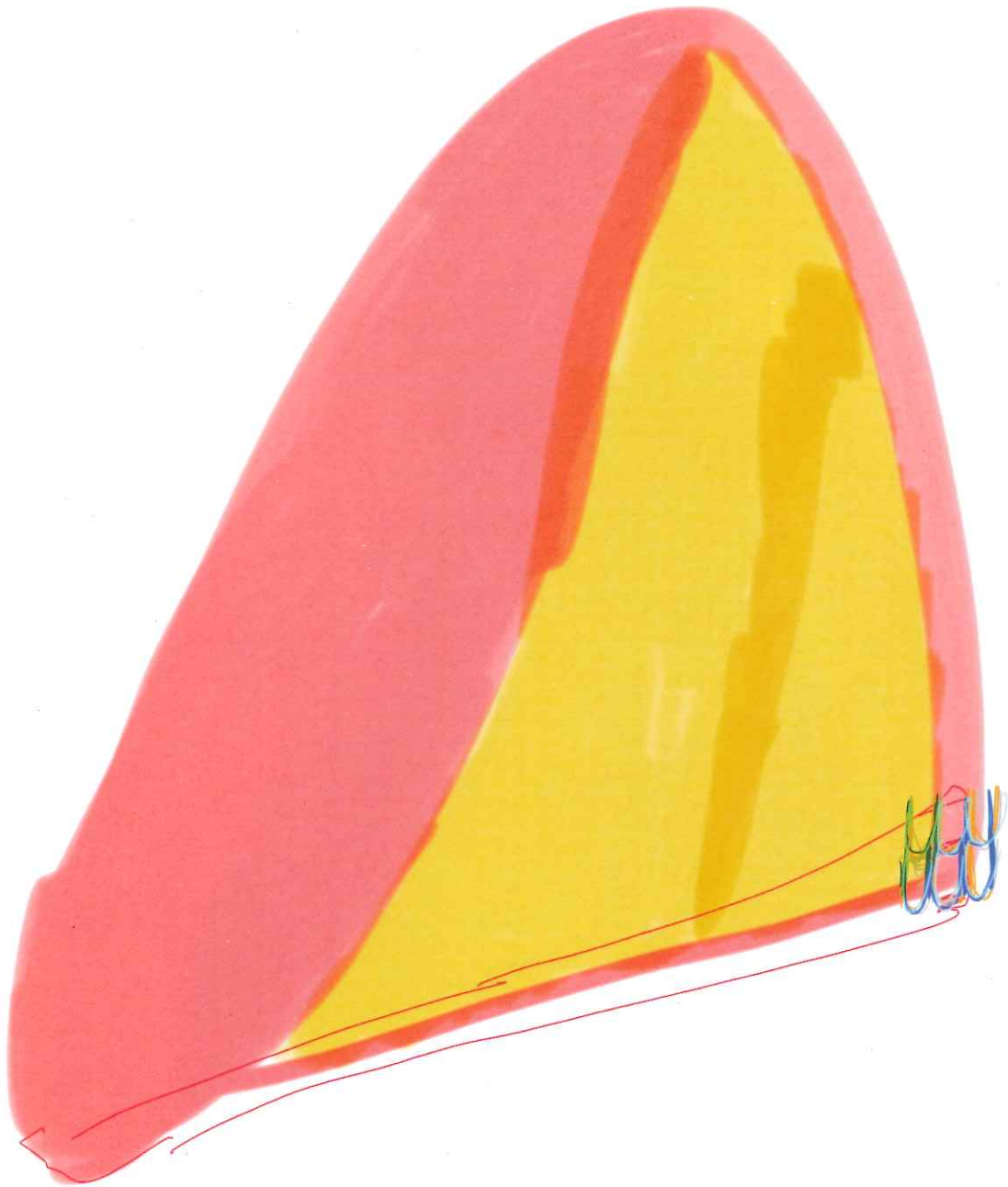
And I often feel really guilty about that because I think that I'm not, I like imagine if someone were to see me, uh-hh, would—oh maybe I didn't mention this to you. Basically, oh yeah, this is what I was going to say, is that—he made this beautiful stage, that was like a little tiny round like one-man-marching-band club environment. Strawberries and champagne. Especially when other people cut your hair off in a sort of like, semi-violent group activity. A voice that's clearly not my own. I still enjoy it. I do it occasionally (sighs), maybe I'll do it for you. Anyway I'm rambling but um, so I didn't do that, instead I cut all my hair off (laughs). Super dark black, like...



it is done, again, in occult angle, the run whose beginning and end disappear, or like some turn from
Ma Rainey through Betty Carter to Kim Burrell until, again, it is done

life and death is in my mouth





How to create a situation in which study can feel like something—the tactile sense of something going on.

To be conscious of an experience but without having read a bunch of books that prepare consciousness for the experience: the experience of the rematerialization of the artwork in its disappearance into the general field, the entanglement, the blur: to be conscious of entanglement which is to say, to feel it.

What happens at the gallery when the subjects leave? An insurgency of objects, a party. To take that experience and to make it something fun and beautiful for people to walk around in and walk around as. To bring it into tactile consciousness. This is about poetry, or food, and dance. Visual impairment as a condition of the gallery. We wanna make a gallery for the blind riding the blinds.

4:00

It got cloudy. It clouded up. I like it though. I'm glad to be here. It's a, it's a much better place. Brrr! Oh, okay. My backyard monastery, to shoes of the fisherman. Anyway there's a guy who plays in Shoes of the Fisherman who plays a guy named Cardinal Rinaldi, and he's a famous Itali-eh! Vittorio De Sica! Okay so I don't have to tell the whole fucking thing... Beautiful—a beautiful marsupial afternoon, I mean it's still cool to open up the book and read it but, anyway! I'm rambling now... And that's the point! And, okay, and here's the funniest part! That prefix ana- actually means to do over again, over and over again, over and over again...

Vestibule
Aperture
Incommunicado
Frederique
Ease
The exact rock where his inexactnesses

stranded métèques.
danced stances
dance medications

caress lecture
our faux-Beckett fo'square

mesh metallurgical metalecture on marilyn in the mirror

held in swirled draperies
grazes gazing
more like mail or chain than gauze
intensified gravity
always such a pleasure
Chuckie Pleasant

dap
dapo
fan
pose
pause
shawl
node
memo
lapsed
gagged

vile participation
vulnerable and automatic
virtue
estrangement
entanglement
the spaces in between bodies
not in between
cakes da killa

5:00

This rich, rich, rich, almost like velvety grey, black. And it was sinking down below the mountain, the mountain was like up in the air and the cloud was almost like eye-level. She was making these crazy faces and her lipstick was all like up over her lips like in this really exaggerated way and she just kept like puckering her lips and like squeezing her face and like squeezing her nose and like, just making these like crazy amazing... and like twisting from side to side and I had to do a monologue. The black drag queen. I guess that was like the closest thing she could think of! (laughs) How you're feeling becomes written on the surface of your body and your movements and your gestures. Realism. It just stopped raining again. What it meant...

++++

aperture

Hesitant

hiatus

blather

boundedness

lived experience

Arcades

unbound

disruptive

coalescence

lingering

blues

gazing

inexactnesses

recomposed

certain

seen

whispered

rooms

splinters and shards

caress

bruised

| unravelled gathering

festival

swirled draperies

gauze

chain

rose

organic spaceship

a problem of feel?

haptic

purity

inseparable from the blackness

bothandedness

weighty

event horizon

new clothes

bassline

As you add clothes to your body, your image changes

Garment dwelling

superpower

scripture

particle

particularity

singular existent

unhinge

Off the rails

refusal

Much love,

DAAAMMMNNNNNNN

gagged

unresolvable *estrangement*

elementary *entanglement*

boundedness

"from without"

problem of body?

somehow ... limited.

undoing sequentiality

time-lag

sustain

hacked

(body hacks mind)?

I'm geek that kid, who always daydreamed of a day when the others would finally

5:00

And to be strictly adherent to the rules that you keep breaking because you keep making new ones all the time. I actually think that's what the music, and when I say the music I mean black music, I think that's what the music does. But the other thing that it turns out to mean is what I think I wanted it to mean all along. It's sad. It's sad to make no sense. Uh-oh. (giggles) That's the life of a cat! Tuscany. I was talking with uhhh... I was talking wit... I was, I don't know. I don't know. I si-I consigned myself to a temporary doom. Found my doom? Met my doom? That I was about to meet my doom, with (laughs)... So... of course...

Many thanks for the email.

Frederique is in Brazil touring a film and will be back this Wednesday, so in the meantime I will reply on her behalf.

It would be great to arrange another time to Skype to get further details and discuss this new proposal. Anytime between your 8:00-12:00 works best for us. Would sometime on the 20th this week perhaps be good for you? Or otherwise any day from the 24-27 next week? Please just let us know what might work best.

...

Also the notes that I have from the last Skype, are as follows. Frederique might have some more which I will get her to send through as soon as she returns:

- Further develop ideas around "study," which particular questions being: how to mobilize study specific to particular sites? Can study feel like something—the tactile sense of something going on?
- In regards to this you mentioned the ideas of "blur" that you have been contemplating, alongside ideas of tactile consciousness, dance, movement, kinetic experience, entanglement and difference without separation
- With this you mentioned an idea about "visual impairment" but I unfortunately didn't note more details beyond that
- You used your experience of *Take It, Or Leave It* as a pivotal moment in thinking through this idea, and your reading of art exhibitions
- In relation to this you mentioned your interest in wondering how people would conceive an experience if they hadn't read a lot of books about art
- You posed that maybe the potential for multiple platforms offered by Corpus could be an interesting way of exploring or presenting this idea
- You also mentioned your interest in the idea of the sociability between objects in a museum—what happens in the museum when the subjects leave?

Hope this helps, and look very forward to talking further soon.

All the best,

6:00

...to have... to have my body fail me. It was kinda scary. No, it was very scary. It was actually so scary that it wasn't scary at all? Highly manicured um, some sort of like bushes and wild, and then something that almost looks like red corn that's growing, and like an olive tree, many olive trees actually. Olive trees that stretch into the distance... This steel grey to all these lightning fingers, and the tree, across the tree, or I could see rain like pounding on the pavement. But when I looked out into the sky, I just saw grey. So it was like this weird cutout thing. Of sky, and light, and grey.

We reply on our behalf.

Ply, pie(d).

We are pie(d) on our behalf.
On behalf of pie, we reply.

Pie,

our number remains irrational.
we love you, and await your reply.

bye

6:00

You know it's over with, you know,
umm... you know, (sigh) you
know, it's that Tristan kinda shit,
you know. Heh, Tristan, Tristan,
is that shit the same? I dunno. Eh-
the-it's... there's more! There they
go... (birds chirping) Anyway...
Obliterated. Who really wasn't a
friend, but who was a friend in this
deep way. I would have had, I will
have had a deep friendship, by the
time I die. Moved by. I should have
known him better. But I shoulda—
we shoulda had—I should've,
I should have.

Here is the link I promised along with an expanded version of the text I read on this occasion.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Su7iCumqLvo>

So what I was trying to blather about yesterday, while our connection was so bad, is that the book, for me is coming to an end. I feel that I have been involved in a kind of preparation, for which the writing of books, both poetical and critical, was a crucial element. But the binding/boundedness of the book, and the claims authorship makes upon the book even when the book is meant to challenge the very idea of authorship, constrains the sociopoetic project to which the books are supposed to contribute. What one wants is a continual rematerialization of study's essential and irreducible communicability. I think of this by way of and in the midst of long collaboration with Stefano and Laura Harris, both of whom, at different moments, introduced me to the work of C. L. R. James whose notion and lived experience of collaboration is what we've been thinking from and towards. Anyway, in terms of my own apprenticeship to and in the book, the final instalment, so to speak, is a thing whose subtitle is "blackness and poetry" and whose main title keeps changing (hesitant sociology or partial correspondence or communicable ease). Somehow, I would like the book to materialize the fade towards which it fades, to have this fading or phasing out be in the book as well as that towards which the book is directed. To have the book come into its own in/as disappearance. One possible model, not so much at the level of scale, is the Arcades Project/Passagen-werk, its simultaneous gathering and unravelling. And you have to understand that besides my family the thing(s) I most love in the world are books! I love the art of the book, desperately! So how to retain that artfulness in such a project? Perhaps, as a kind of projection; perhaps as a kind of unbound choro/choreograph, the disrupted and disruptive anamelodic arrangements of a band's book, the heads of whose tunes they transform every night. In all this I have submitted to a kind of necessity—the experience, which I am in but which is not mine—of something that comes together in order to refuse to come together. Maybe the technical term for that is paranoid schizophrenia—rampant association gathering to avoid coalescence.

This is what I was typing yesterday while we were talking:

Hesitant sociology is a pause, or the coming to a pause, a hiatus prefatory to lingering. *Let's say that lingering is another term for what professional sociologists and anthropologists don't quite call working in the field.* On the hard row, the book fades out into vibrating installation. A vestibule, an aperture. *Does the blues sound the topology of cotton, or tobacco? What if all that recursion is the sound of a long, hard row?* There it was, word for word, the book that took the place of a juke joint. The book that took place. The book that happened, and was gone, like a rocket stage, a kicked-away ladder. Let's make a book you can walk through, all the way to the end of the book, out into the other side of the book. Incommunicado, a general communicability.

And here's the poem I was trying to tell you about, "The Poem that Took the Place of a Mountain," by Wallace Stevens:

There it was, word for word,
The poem that took the place of a mountain.

He breathed its oxygen,
Even when the book lay turned in the dust of his table.

It reminded him how he had needed
A place to go to in his own direction,

How he had recomposed the pines,
Shifted the rocks and picked his way among clouds,

For the outlook that would be right,
Where he would be complete in an unexplained completion:

The exact rock where his inexactnesses
Would discover, at last, the view toward which they had edged,

Where he could lie and, gazing down at the sea,
Recognize his unique and solitary home.

So the book that would take the place of a juke joint and, in so doing, constitute the mirror image of what Stevens was working so hard to desire. No unique and solitary home; incomplete in an explained incompleteness, a place to stay in a kind of mobile and general indirection. The book that would take place. The event of the book? Not quite. Could the book trouble a certain metaphysics that haunts or remains in and of the event? Can a dis/appearance, a gathering dispersal, be held, literally, in hand? No. More precisely, can it be handed? Can it be continually given away?

Anyway, this is where I'm at right now, so to speak.

Take care,

Something interesting in terms of how it would be viewed, like *Hors-Champs*. Multiple channels that can't all be seen and/or heard at once; a room or gallery with angles, in which people can walk around and are, therefore, more or less enjoined to do so, as in a club or, better yet, a rent-party (which is some happenings in a certain number of parts). The disruption of any conventional sense of what it is to read a lecture. A book might emerge from or reflect this displacement, something that happens when a poem about expansiveness is whispered in a broom closet, by the sociologist who has been trapped there since before she was born. She studies the communicable festival by which she's held. A bunch of different displacements and enlargements of blur. An analytical analectic blur. A disbursed and blurred collection of short films, with accompanying book, suitable for improvised instalment and unravelled gathering. A bunch of little rooms. *Stanzas in Meditation. Stanzas in Mediation. A bunch of little mediated stands. A little bunch of stranded mètèquations. A whole buncha danced stances. A small sample of dance medications.*

7:00

I don't want to tell you a story. Well the word "explaining" comes to mind. It makes me tired. But I think what the real thing is, is that—I don't know. He was calling it the "knight's move"? You're going towards something, and then at the last minute you swerve to the side. Towards the bridge with no centre. Um... yeah. It reminds me not to work it out, like not choreograph it per se. All those things kind of synch so that the decisions you make in the moment are authentic. That's the word I was looking for: authentic. It's like, that's the goal and it's a really really hard job. I think that's why it makes me nauseous because everything, every fibre of my being does not want to be authentic. Does not wanna...

A partial lecture, to walk through a collage that your walking through completes by differentiating. A lecture of splinters and shards. A lecture of caress, to present research made in hearing, *a listening walk* for the "eyeminded." A contact improvisationally cubist lecture. To split up and multiply our faux-Beckett fo'square. Can there be inclines and curves? Any screens or none, just voices, that scene Delany describes, retelling what Marilyn saw in the mirror. A cruised lecture, a bruised lecture, to recover what was lost in the moment of libidinal saturation. Let's go back and feel it whole. Mesh metallurgical metalecture. Not absolute darkness, absolute dimness. The trucks, the baths, the fog—when what there is is in such thickness that you have to imagine, because it's absolutely nothing. That's how you feel it whole, that's all.

People enter into it from different directions, timed, intervallic, held in swirled draperies,

not a maze, light drapery, film and sound projected from outside. A swirl, not really a maze but more like a rose of black and white gauze, flexible but firm in the way it grazes gazing.

More like mail or chain than gauze but permeable, flexible, hung from the ceiling, then the sound and image projection from different angles and heights as people move through the field, brushing the flexible walls which are, in turn, being moved and shifted by the fleshly presence of the folks moving through it; and they move through it in a strict kind of timing, four people at a time coming from four apertures in four corners, not the shape but the feeling of a square, a square held in text/ile that curves and folds, because the movable walls have lectural/textual sound projected onto them, making a seen texture to add to this

ensemble of rubbing. The entrances are emphatic and definite but shifting and there are ushers who keep track of the apertures and guide the dancers/participants into the rose, the swirl, and what they bring to the performance, besides their fleshly presence, is a word, held on a scented/perfumed card, that they are asked to repeat, very softly, every few seconds:

hear, see, feel, smell. How can you share a flavour? Church, basically. Upper Room COGIC.

7:00

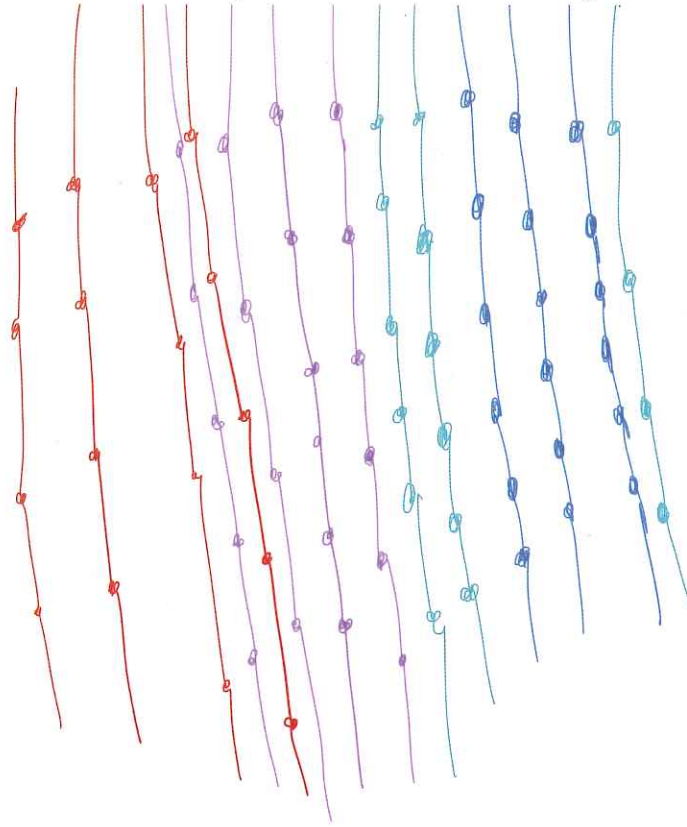
But still I'm thinkin'... Overwhelms. Which is really interesting, right? But independent, but even-bzz-but beyond that... Spectacle. I wanted to say underlay. You don't just walk to the piano any kind of way. You know? Uhm, like, right? Like a span that don't quite get to the other side. Like a kid colouring outside the line. Like a bridge without like, the final section, or something. Get wit' it, love it! Not even, you know, is that right? Not even, you know? But just to... a romance with it? Uhh... Ahh. And then! Anyway. Well, hmmm.

Some sharp angles, some softer and curved. How to manufacture four definite openings?

How to get a material for the screens that will both hold and disperse the images? A scrim or

screen that will be transparent even as an image is projected onto it. But the image blurs and is of blur. Dim, twilight, crepuscular. The research will be held by the ones who enact it, then dispersed as they disperse. The main thing is for it to feel really rich, sensually, and especially,

haptically, but *light*—an awareness of the general presence as an ensemble of breath, of air, of *anima*. The research/experiment is in how to sense entanglement.



Bisendorff
QUIRY "TEXT"ILE
TALKING KNOTS₃₀

| The organic spaceship. The silver platter is *battlestar galactica*. Sound is the way we feel space.

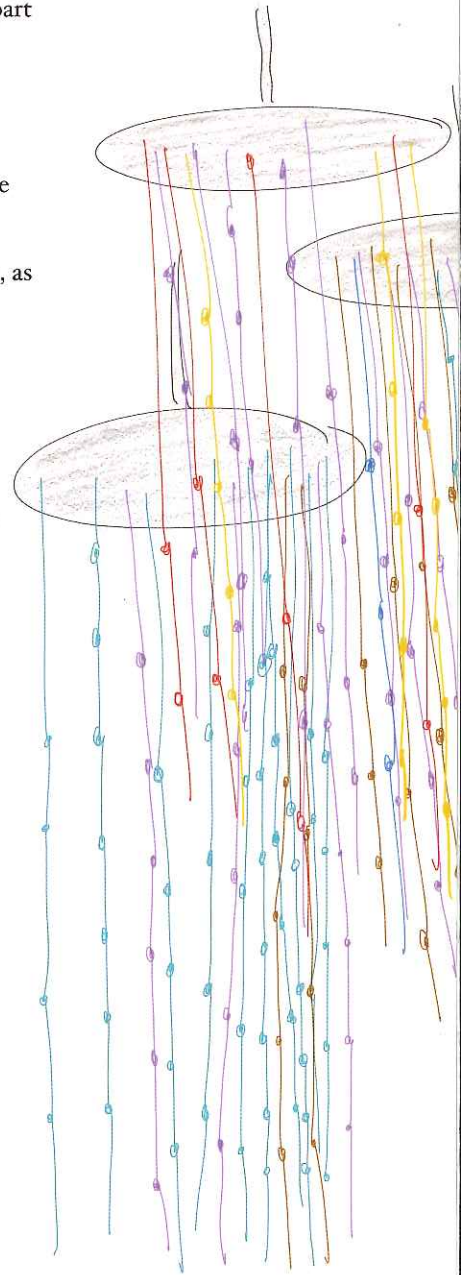
| Sonic turbulence. *House of Flying Daggers*. Félix Gonzáles-Torres's curtains. Cildo Meireles.

Mona Hatoum. Mira Schendel. Charles Gaines. The old-new history of the grid. Beaded, bladed curtains. To intensify the experience of gravity. The language part of the fabric. The ideal place to listen to a lecture or a poem is a contact improvisation in which touch is

| mediated by the fabric of before spacetime, which is infinite curve and infinite plain. To have intense vibrations but the speakers emit quietness. To feel the sound, make the language part of the fabric! Social physics: some combination of a physics experiment and a social experiment. Social gravity. Gravity and Fabric.

What if we reinitiate the problem of physics as a problem of feel? There's a reason why the Newton under the apple tree story is so compelling. It links physical law with experience.

But do we have a haptic experience of quantum mechanics/gravity? How could we get one, as an initiatory moment to a research/experimentation project?



denise's poetics of physical sociology

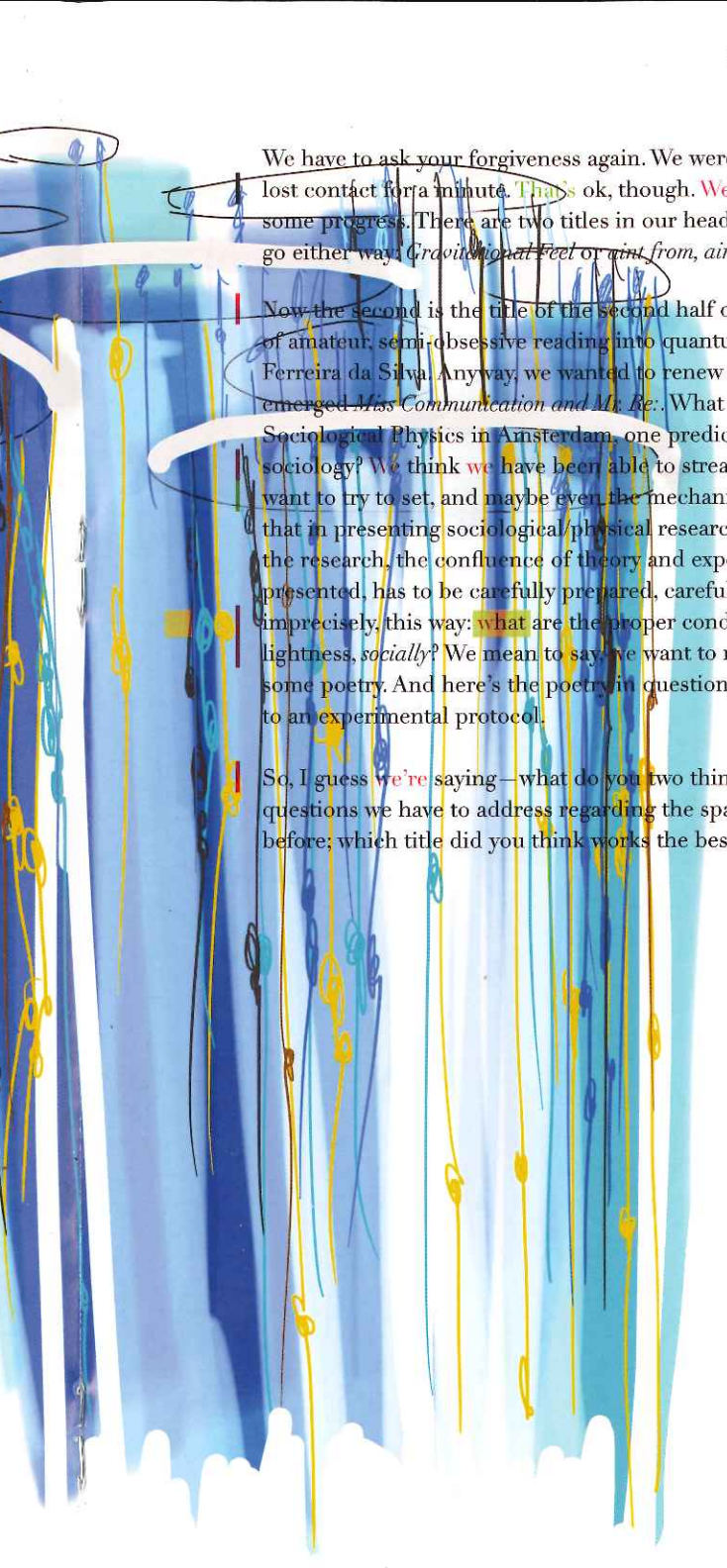
is another name for y'all's oceanic building—
dawn's black and blur mattering and gather,
brenda's russet mantle of scattered mothering
an.'s fly shaker mixology and modest fruit—
all y'all's low-pitched clavic gravity and grave
accentual bloom, graven, a velimiraculously
3 and 4d familiarity indented and abandoned
in itselfness. presence ruptures here and
now, folds it in its arms to vapour so we can
breathe the novelistic air we dance through.

all this barbecue, on the one hand, and the
burnt ends of all that beautiful burnt orange

wine, on the other hand, is the history of
radiance in pendergrass and toasted rosemary.

wind, since we all up in here, rub us down
in fire, cylinder, millinder, and salted bone.

8:00
...embody who I'm supposed to be.
Well the reason I thought of "croc"
actually was how you were talking
about the, the place where you're
sitting in your living room, I th-on
your TV room... Yeah... Um,
yoga, body, Zurich, heartbeat,
Tosh, oversharing, croc, kids.
Tosh was talking about being
a little kid and I felt like I could
imagine like...



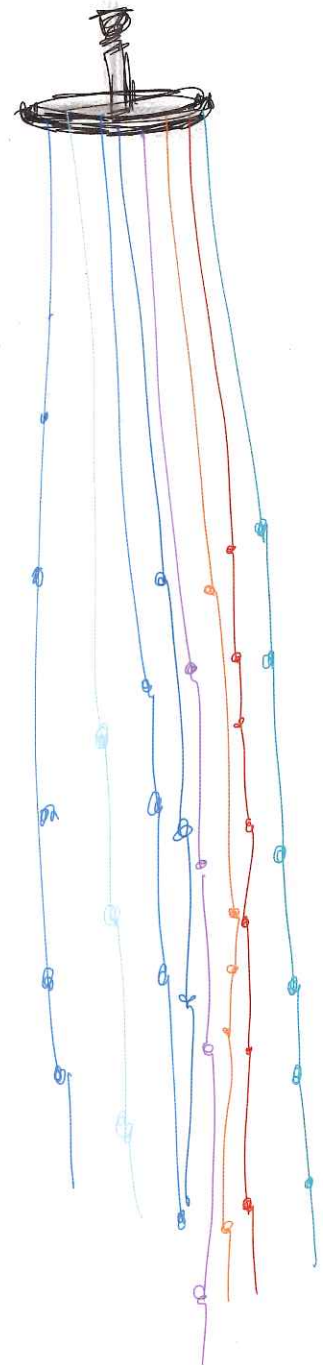
We have to ask your forgiveness again. We were waiting to hear from each other but we sort of lost contact for a minute. *That's* ok, though. *We* have been thinking more about things and made some progress. There are two titles in our head and so we share them both with you. We could go either way: *Gravitational Feel or aint from, ain't at*.

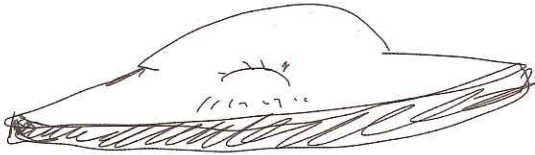
Now the second is the title of the second half of a poem. *Guess* you could say that it comes out of amateur, semi-obsessive reading into quantum physics, under the influence lately of Denise Ferreira da Silva. Anyway, we wanted to renew our experiment in Culver City, out of which emerged *Miss Communication and Mr. Re*. What if there were a temporary Institute for Sociological Physics in Amsterdam, one predicated, in part, on the notion that poetry is hesitant sociology? We think *we* have been able to streamline at least the way *we* talk about the scene we want to try to set, and maybe even the mechanics and design of the set, too. So the first thing is that in presenting sociological/physical research, one presents poetry, but with this proviso: that the research, the confluence of theory and experiment that is being, at once, conducted and presented, has to be carefully prepared, carefully staged. So the question might be put, imprecisely, this way: *what* are the proper conditions for feeling poetry, in all its gravity and lightness, *socially*? We mean to say, we want to make an environment for the social sensing of some poetry. And here's the poetry in question, which is meant to be a lyrical lecture on the way to an experimental protocol. 8:00

So, I guess *we're* saying—what do you two think and, if this seems promising, given the questions we have to address regarding the space, the materials, the stuff we skyped about before; which title did you think works the best?

(sighs) Ugh. I can't-stop-I guess. I dunno, I don't know. Well, perfectly legitimate—like directly! In a more or less tricky way. And so, now! Like, I'm sittin' in my chair, in the room in our house that we call the TV room, and the way the chair is set up is that it's at an angle. I'm, I'm kinda right, I'm not exactly in front of the door but the angle of the door, which is partially open, set-makes it so that there's kinda a corridor that goes from me, to my shoes and socks, to Lorenzo's green croc, the other one we don't know where it is, so we talk about "croc" in the singular. And then there's like the controls...

It is nice to be in touch with both of you.





"Gravitational Feel" has a physicality to it: something weighty combined with something ephemeral, and seems to fit so well with everything we talked about so far. Also "ain't from, ain't at"—maybe I like this even more! *It's* a little less obvious at first how it relates to physics, but the more I think about it, the more I like it. It also has an approximation feeling that seems to carry over from our miss communication and mr: re film...

| The presence of being not present; we will come to present but we will not be present. Corpus: the orgasm that we are; if we thought of the air as a garment; draping. Not so much an installation but an environment, an ecology against the spirit of system.

9:00

...that little, that person. And it made me feel this way. Like, I'm feeling it right now. Just like, so much tenderness, like just wanting to like squeeze that person and like, love them and make them feel safe. And um, yeah if-that was like the closest thing I ever felt to like being like, "Oh I want kids." Or like I could imagine what it feels like to like love a kid cuz that's how I feel when I imagine... something growing. Hmmmmmmmmm... hmmmmmmmmmm...

Collaborative and disruptive/dispersive of the book! Alternative delivery systems for poetry.

The new, spiritually anti-systemic livery for poetry. Some new clothes for poetry. A new garment. A new shawl. A new kinda living for poetry to make, out through the door that hip hop opens, out from scat's escape route, out of juke's joint. Poetry comes from a neighbourhood in which people be wearing one another, be wearing the houses they live in, the houses be wearing one another. Poetry is the dap!

9:00

...and then, outward into the hallway, and there's the linen closet, and there's a blue and brown... and it's lined up perfectly. And then, even to—to think, overlap and under (laughs). Anyway okay so I was thinking about... it's funny because uh, part of what it means is—and um... it—it I dunno it, it uh... well I should—let me put it this way: the earth cannot sustain the longevity of normative western bourgeois subjects. Right? Cause normative western bourgeois subjects use up too much shit. But not when you're thirty, maybe you just get to be seventy and then you have like a big party and then you got to go, you know?

1. *Fabric*: fabric-garment-sculpture, that we wear, that the “audience” enters and also wears, that both interacts with and also becomes the space: here’s where the matter becomes the space: draping and **f**ans: for air and volume. Sample fabrics: light and heavy. Our movements, in the garment that we are conducting, moves but without totally determining the fabric. The room should be pretty full of the fabric. People can find lightness and heaviness in the thickness. Inverse wave of the fans. Noise cancelling. Layer recordings of the fans on top of one another. Not incidental. We need to sample fans
2. *Sound*: a palimpsestic weave of phrases, where the feel of the hum is coming as much from the thickness in between the beat as the beat itself. **The** buzzboom, the buzzbomb, as Chuckie Pleasant used to say. Now what does this do to the time, when the beat becomes the buzz. The thickened bassline is where space, time and matter converge. Not just **the** lengthening of time but the transformation of time into environment. We can stack recorded voices and the bass. Find bass lines in the language of physics. **Sub**synchronize **till** we feel and hear the thickness of the line. The pulse has its own pulse. Planar rather than pointillist unison. Furtwängler. Thickness: brea(d)th. It’s like listening to **a Kiki DuRane record with Kiki DuRane**, her **turmeric** tea and gin in the afternoon: listen to the music from inside the music. We’re after the deeper synchronicity of out of synch synchronization—this goes back to *Girl Talk* and *Miss Communication*: how to complicate presence and **blow** up synchrony in the same room, at the same time, **like a heart murmur**. To read for a while and build up some phrases and figures. Thirty-second voice memos every day for two weeks after we finish reading **Nicolas** Gisin.
3. *Anarrangement*: **the** fans link the sound and the fabric. They make sound and turn the air into something that you wear. To do the recording; to do something on top of the recording; to have the audience do something on top of us doing something on top of the recording. Stack. Slide. Stack. To keep “participation” from being oppressive and corny. The poses. The pauses. That’s the texture. Trying for a texture that doesn’t emerge from what we want to think of as an organic community. The point is the meeting, the texture. The point is to be there and the point is that you’re there. If you’re there, the point is to be there.

Presence showing presence as it spreads and curves and runs and curls, remixing, lining out, folding, breaking. How do you establish that there is no requirement to participate and no bar from participating. Let the fabric and the fans mark our vile participation. Church is vile participation. Tarrying in air. Given whatever space we got, we're creating an environment for presencing. **The fabric. The speakers. The fans.**

4. For the book: **we** want to put stuff together as evidence of our having been together. A documentary record. Transcribe the voicemails, and the soundtrack from Miss & Mr. Maybe we can include the text of Denise's "no-bodies." So that the book becomes a document within the general framework of the Art Institute for Physical Sociology, or whatever we call it. It would be so great to work with Denise in Brazil, to all work together at CERN and in Liverpool, maybe even to work with NourbeSe in Liverpool!

All of this leads up to a performance that we haven't done yet. The recording of a process with no product. The performance is not a product but a node. Not a node or a point or maybe a node as gathering, but a gathering of nothing, a communicability of nothing, a meeting of dispersions: is this an ontology of disappearance? I don't want to say that because no-thing was ever there, just gravity and air. Naw, it's an anthology of noding (Autocorrect wants it to be nodding so bad!). A no(ma)dology

the way she be wearing Thailand in re(f)usal

Identity is the act of putting the self together each day, for a brief moment that is both vulnerable and automatic. As a metaphor, imagine you are getting dressed. As you add clothes to your body, your image changes. The clothing creates a thin, porous layer between your internal sensory apparatus and its outward presentation. Why do you dress? How do you decide—what is the feeling of having made a right or wrong choice? Do you have a choice? Do you protect yourself? Is there anything natural about it?

The identity is the blur, so it's not an identity at all; the shawl that is also a dwelling, the limit that spreads and sways, the clothes unmake the man and he disperses into gravity.

Garment dwelling gravity

A scrapbook; a line that blurs, fades into the image, cursive, recursive

A natural tendency to blur, like a superpower I couldn't control

A fabric instead of a lecture, a sound texture, garment is not an enclosure; clothes that do not enclose.

She has recused herself

This is (the material for) our music!

Identity is ritual practice.

10:00

...mmmmmmmm. Well, yoga and like movies like the Godfather are like the only things that I can—actually turn my brain off. Basically suspended and illuminated you know, like a light bulb, or like up and up and up like a zigzag, like a Y that splits, alignment but not strained, like no muscles are exerting hardly any effort. Making decisions about where images go and how to cut and when to cut, and what to put next to what and it's purely driven by sound. Looking through, like I'm, I'm seeing, I'm seeing something beyond the image it's like just whatever is beyond there. An encasement for my body. Like pushing and pulling air. Looking through the canvas.

IF at first we were approaching the project as two people, two bodies in space, or two voices in the ether—our approach is now more like entangled particles.

Ultimately the project of cultural difference has created an *irreconcilable moral* divide between human—the “Us” of the ordered world—and non-human—the so-called “dangerous and underserving Others” of a world that is feared. This is another reason why I think we might be in Monster years now, because this problem of the human and non-human seems to be more relevant than ever.

DFS:

Following European states’ responses to the ‘refugee crisis’ resulting from the latest wars of Global Capital—that is, local and regional conflicts *about* control of natural resources—it is evident how effectively the racial grammar and lexicon work as ethical descriptors. Without their citizens’ assertions of fear of the new, incoming wave of “strangers” it would have been more difficult for them to justify the building of walls and deportation programmes to contain the hundreds of thousands fleeing *armed conflicts in the Middle East and throughout the African continent*. For in the tale of the dangerous and undeserving “Other”—the ‘Muslim Terrorist’ disguised as (Syrian) refugee and the ‘starving African’ disguised as asylum seeker—cultural difference sustains statements of uncertainty that effectively undermine claims for protection under the human rights framework, thereby supporting the deployment of the EU security *apparatus*.

10:00

Because you used up—cause you used up all your shit! Do-do-doo-do-do-doo-doo-duh-duh. Doo-do-do-do-dih-dih-dih! Doo-doo-do-din-chh! Chh-chka-chika-chika-chikkh. Luckily I’m not the king of the world and couldn’t institute this kinda shit cause I imagine there would be protest, you know, which I would have to brutally put down. And it’s not an absolute—you know, it don’t have to be, it don’t require... it requires a kind of strictness, but not-not brutal. Not a brutal strictness. You know, how can I, how can I put my s—how can we? That, that at about nine minutes... but... I think maybe it’s something like what happens when a painter comes to the end of a brush stroke. No! But that’s not even right. Strictly repeatable. It’s just that...

“cultural difference” derives from a violent history of Modern thought, which is based on a social scientific imaging of the world as “an ordered whole composed of separate parts relating through the mediation of constant units of measurement and/or a limiting violent force.” In other words, humanity, as defined by nineteenth- and twentieth- century philosophy, is contingent upon classical physics’ understanding of the world as *a known thing* that can be measured and separated into parts. She writes, “this imaging renders sociality as being contingent upon the inhabiting of the same (juridical, spatial, or temporal) parts.”

But what if we could do away with the world as we “Know” it? Denise proposes that this will be necessary.

After breaking through the glassy, formal fixed walls of the Understanding, released from the grip of certainty, the imagination may wonder about reassembling the fundamental components of everything to refigure the World as a complex whole without order. Let me consider a possibility: What if, instead of *The Ordered World*, we could image The World as a Plenum, an infinite composition in which each existent’s singularity is contingent upon its becoming one possible expression of all the other existents, with which it is entangled beyond space and time. For decades now, experiments in particle physics astonish scientists and laypeople with findings that suggest that the fundamental components of everything, every thing, could be just such, namely the virtual’s (subatomic particles) becoming actual (in space-time), which is also a recomposition of everything else. For decades now, the counter-intuitive results of experiments in particle physics have been yielding descriptions of the World with features—*uncertainty* and *non-locality*—that violate the parameters of certainty. Experiments that, I propose, invite us to image the social without the Understanding’s deadly distinctions and lethal (re)ordering devices.

There is a fundamental limit to what we can *know* about the physical properties of a particle, i.e., the more precisely its position is determined, the less precisely its momentum can be known. And this is not a limit of our technological powers of observation, the uncertainty principle is inherent in all wave-like systems, such as quantum particles.

I see the uncertainty principle as very analogous to the problem with representation. To measure something, is to expose it; it changes reality. The act of image-making inherently distorts, destroys, or generates an entirely different picture than the one it intended to capture.

Non-locality: two measurements of a property of a particle (such as position) that instantaneously provide the measurement of a related property (such as momentum) of another particle regardless of the distance between the two.

DFS:

Towards reimagining sociality, the principle of nonlocality supports a kind of thinking that does not reproduce the methodological and ontological grounds of the modern subject, namely linear temporality and spatial separation. Because it violates these framings of time and space, nonlocality allows us to image sociality, in such a way that attending to difference does not presuppose *separability*, *determinacy*, and *sequentiality*, the three ontological pillars that sustain modern thought.

In the nonlocal universe, neither dislocation (movement in space) nor relation (connection between spatially separate things) describes what happens because entangled particles (that is, every existing particle) exist with each other, without space-time. Though Kant's comments on that which in The Thing is irrelevant to knowledge dismiss metaphysical concerns, they also suggest that the reality described in Newton's (and later Einstein's) physics consists in a limited picture of The World because it refers only to phenomena, *in other words*, things as they are accessible to the senses, that is, in space-time. What nonlocality exposes is a more complex reality in which everything has both actual (space-time) and virtual (nonlocal) existence. If so, then why not conceive of human existence in the same manner?

Why not assume that beyond their physical (bodily and geographic) conditions of existence, in their fundamental constitution, at the subatomic level, humans exist entangled with everything (animate and inanimate) else in the universe. Why not conceive of human differences—the ones *nineteenth-* and *twentieth-* century anthropologists and sociologists selected as fundamental human descriptors—as effects of *both* space-time conditions and a knowledge programme modelled after Newtonian (*nineteenth-* century anthropology) and Einsteinian (*twentieth-* century social-scientific knowledge) physics, in which separability is the privileged ontological principle.

Without *separability*, difference among human groups and between human and nonhuman entities, has a very limited explanatory purchase and ethical significance. *For*, as nonlocality assumes, beyond the surfaces onto which the prevailing notion of difference is inscribed, everything in the universe co-exists in the manner Leibniz describes, that is, as a singular expression of everything else in the universe.

Without *separability*, knowing and thinking can no longer be reduced to *determinacy* in the Cartesian distinction of mind/body (in which the latter has the power of determination) and the Kantian formal reduction of knowing to a kind of efficient causality.

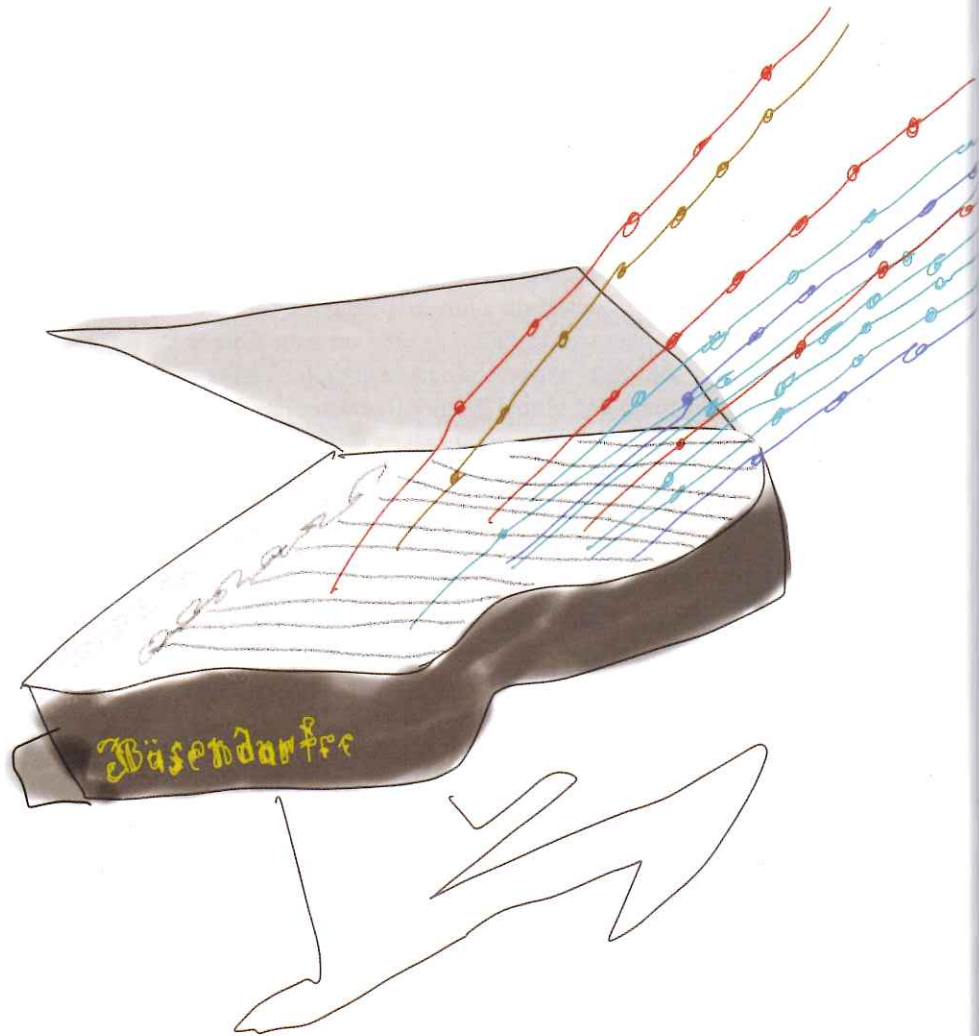
Without *separability*, *sequentiality* (Hegel's ontoepistemological pillar) can no longer account for the many ways in which humans exist in the world, because self-determination has a very limited region (space-time) for its operation.

When nonlocality guides our imaging of the universe, difference is not a manifestation of an unresolvable *estrangement*, but the expression of an *elementary entanglement*.

11:00

Whooshh, whoo. Whoo, hhoo.
Covered in mirrors, and then when
everything was like in perfect align-
ment and you like move the air
through, and then you're moving
your mouth to like create shapes.
Came down from the ceiling on
pullies. Completely en, en-en-gulf
me. It like swallowed me in this
way. I still really love the feeling of
that.

These like little phrases become
like little machinations of like mov-
ing, and an idea. Overlap, meant to
be together or are they-are there
certain people you're meant to find.
I'm so incredibly happy. Like I've
never felt so happy and blessed in
my entire life. I feel so peaceful.



Denise, just after a first quick read I would say that this is it, this is our scripture to the extent that we are the scriptural kind, in all our liberational lapsedness! Our ethics of virtu(e)ality. Here's the question I had been thinking about: does a notion of matter as *anoriginal* and inseparable difference render moot the very idea of the particle, the singular existent? But I think that question is already dealt with in what you might call the virtuality of individuation and relation. And then would the realms of the virtual and the actual (the actuality of anaparticulate, differential but inseparable matter) themselves be (virtually) related, in complementarity? Perhaps the virtual relation between the social and the political is also a kind of complementarity? And that between a kind of improvisational earth(liness and the "ordered world" as well. I mean, I think I'm understanding better now how complementarity and nonlocality go together. Maybe I completely don't understand! But in this misunderstanding this is where the problem of the particle still just won't go away. Or maybe not. Maybe it's possible and necessary to think both the virtuality and the inexistence of the particle, the (ordered) world, the self, truly politically while also engaging in *anoriginally*, differentially materialist practice and study. Denise, am I totally off the rails? I know I shouldn't even be trying to think about this without rereading several times.

(all of) yours,

11:00

Okay, flourish and panache!
My plume, you know. But there's a hand movement that I'm thinking of, that corresponds to... the end of a motion that produces a broken line. The end of a motion that... and now I can't even remember. What is it? Right, to caress the air. I don't know... Now, in a totally arbitrary manoeuvre, well, in the wake or whatever, under the influence... the swerve. You were meant for me. Since I been listening to your messages, of what you been saying so far, it's not going to get to me but it's over the edge of me, of where I am. So, just missed. Is that...

DFS: Yes! These are THE questions that can guide us beyond the (ontological and epistemological) limits of thinking imposed by modern philosophers.

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DFS: Yes!

Here's the question I had been thinking about: does a notion of matter as anoriginal and inseparable difference render moot the very idea of the particle, the singular existent? But I think that question is already dealt with in what you might call the virtuality of Individuation and relation?

DFS: Beautifully stated! I think that quantum physicists hold on to the particle because, letting go of it, would be a definitive break with the notion of reality that marked the break with the scholastic rendering of Aristotle's programme. Here I'm thinking about the notion of the body itself and its motions, which were central to Galileo's and Newton's mathematical translations of the "book of nature" and its "secondary causes" and which, for that reason, would sustain their claims to the ability to grasp (or uncover, know) its Truth without the need for Revelation. An example of the departure: the scholars privileged Aristotle's definition of motion as actuality of potentiality; when announcing his new science, Galileo redefined motion (as far as it interests physicists) as change of place (as fundamentally relational) and Newton (who laughed at Galileo's definition) would change it again by defining motion in regard to the two absolutes (space and time). In any event, it might be possible to retain the particle as a singular existent, but without having to keep the idea of particularity (and the related ontological separability), which keeps our thinking tied to the ordered (universal) world.

And then would the realms of the virtual and the actual (the actuality of anaparticulate, differential but inseparable matter) themselves be (virtually) related, in complementarity? Perhaps the virtual relation between the social and the political is also a kind of complementarity? And that between a kind of improvisational earth(l)iness and the "ordered world" as well.

DFS: This is one of the points I would love to pursue further in our conversations. More specifically, I would love to speculate together on whether Bohr's complementarity principle is limited by the fact that he developed it in the controversy with Einstein or it is indeed the only possible ontological descriptor. If the latter, complementary may help us to unhinge the political as the ethical work of sociality as "a kind of improvisational earth(l)iness." If the former, then, the task is to follow through uncertainty beyond the limits (of particle and particularity). We need to think about this together.

I mean, I think I'm understanding better now how complementarity and nonlocality go together. Maybe I completely don't understand! But in this misunderstanding this is where the problem of the particle still just won't go away. Or maybe not. Maybe it's possible and necessary to think both the virtuality and the inexistence of the particle, the (ordered) world, the self, truly politically while also engaging in anoriginally, differentially materialist practice and study. Denise, am I totally off the rails? I know I shouldn't even be trying to think about this without rereading several times.

DFS: Off the rails is where we want to be! Perhaps Bohr's complementarity principle, as I suggest above, does just that: it is an attempt to deal with the problem of the particle, with its refusal to go away. Or, as you say, we must think it all together, as we engage in anoriginal differentially materialist practice and study.

I'm so happy that we can do this together!

Much love,

Yes!!! So happy to be on this together and to be able move in the light that you are providing, D! And here's the cleaned up version of the questions I asked before. I got so excited I was trying to write on the iPhone, which kept autocorrecting me:

Denise, just after a first quick read I would say that this is it, this is our scripture to the extent that we are the scriptural kind, in all our liberational lapsedness! Our ethics of virtu(e)ality. Here's the question I had been thinking about: does a notion of matter as anoriginal and inseparable difference render moot the very idea of the particle, the singular existent? But I think that question is already dealt with in what you might call the virtuality of individuation and relation. And then would the realms of the virtual and the actual (the actuality of anaparticulate, differential but inseparable matter) themselves be (virtually) related, in complementarity? Perhaps the virtual relation between the social and the political is also a kind of complementarity? And that between a kind of improvisational earth(l)iness and the "ordered world" as well. I mean, I think I'm understanding better now how complementarity and nonlocality go together. Maybe I completely don't understand! But in this misunderstanding this is where the problem of the particle still just won't go away. Or maybe not. Maybe it's possible and necessary to think both the virtuality and the inexistence of the particle, the [ordered] world, the self, the political, while also engaging in anoriginally, differentially materialist practice and study. Denise, am I totally off the rails? I know I shouldn't even be trying to think about this without rereading several times.

Yes! The particle without particularity, which the notions of complementarity and virtuality help us to retain and which maybe we need to retain insofar as virtuality is at least part of how we live. Actually, it reminds me of a great distinction my old teacher, Ann Banfield, makes between the empirical and empiricism. It might even be the same distinction if you think about it—the way the empirical is or shows up for us particularly, but in a way that defies particularism, defies it in the rejection of what Russell, whom Banfield loves and invokes, calls "egocentric particularity," deixis, the subjectivist expression of here and now, the absolutes of space and time.

off the rails, with love,

I just read Denise's essay, DAAAMMMNNNNNNNN oh. my. god. being not yet able to formulate these sensations into questions just wanted say that this scripture feels like the script of a science fiction world, that people are almost ready to see that's why we need science fiction. I particularly gagged at this phrase: "difference is not a manifestation of an unresolvable *estrangement*, but the expression of an elementary *entanglement*" !!!!! THAT IS SO REAL. more soon, with words...

12:00

I feel really peaceful. What the absences are I guess, cause the pauses or the like, the redos are not, they're kind of not evidenced, that now are just so immediate when you just press the button that is their name. Sharing their most inner, private feelings and thoughts about things and details that I have absolutely zero interest in clogs the feed. It's just people like, oversharing. I had a dream last night, that (laughs)... In the story the character, the heroine, she, she was born with um two hearts, syncopated heartbeats, heartbeats, and your heartbeat. And what an annoying difficult thing that is.

Rereading, it also reminds me of the sad irony, with which an aljazeera journalist recently remarked that the EU needs to punish the UK "enough" but not "too much" because that would also mean they were punishing themselves... it makes me think of the muteness I feel around Orlando, because for every (gay, brown) body that was executed, Obama has deliberately mis-targeted countless more lives with his drones—and so even our mourning can be militarized...

I want to understand more about the role that desire plays in all of this. Is desire, too, a parallel process in the non-local universe? Are our individual desires singular expressions arising out of a shared one, one that is closer to a state of uncertainty or dissolution (the being "not me" that is the universe)? And what regard for life can we imagine without a sense of boundedness?

What does it mean to rethink sociality "from without" the modern text when we are temporally located within it (or are we)? Could that involve undoing the sequentiality that led to the development quantum physics (or did it ever)? In the sense that the workings of the universe simply "are," do we just have better critical tools now to observe them—?

Maybe it's obvious but still worth saying that I feel totally mind-blown to realize that the project of cultural difference is inherently limited, and that it even plays within a framework of so much 'justified' violence. It makes me wanna RETHINK my entire practice! It's liberating to realize that it's possible to rethink one's past work, which will lead to new conclusions, new possible readings, and ultimately new questions. This is not really a question but more of an observation. Let's focus on the spaces in between bodies!

Could there be an analogy with the "problem of the particle"—and the problem of body? The discrete, singular (but not particular) body that is caught in space-time. If the body is the actual (particle) then what might be its complementary (virtual) existence? Our bodies are anything but fixed—they are constantly morphing (some more than others) and exchanging matter and energy with the world... but still they do feel somehow... limited.

For some reason it makes me think of this song: <https://soundcloud.com/jayboogala/body-remix-ft-cakes-da-kill-shamz-le-roc-1>

Thank so much for creating this space, and opening up the conversation! Excited to think though this with you all—it's such an honour to partake in your processes.

12:00

...against the rules we made? I love the way you talk about your girlfriend. From boychild, to Honey-child to Christy Love. All the way to before touchtone (giggles). All the way to before touchtone. You're young so... pfff, pfff, pff, my heart keeps sending messages that nobody can understand. But because I'm totally enamoured of the extra information that it was giving, even though it ended up making me have to walk on a fuckin treadmill... You were meant for me. (Singing) You were meant for meee... Okay, so... what if fate is what occurs as a function of like everything coming between you, but you're still meant for each other. Absolutely perfect concord, right?

Rereading, it also reminds me of the sad irony, with which an aljazeera journalist recently remarked that the EU needs to punish the UK "enough" but not "too much" because that would also mean they were punishing themselves... it makes me think of the muteness I feel around Orlando, because for every (gay, brown) body that was executed, Obama has deliberately mis-targeted countless more lives with his drones—and so even our mourning can be militarized...

DFS: I feel what you say. This thing about counting and wondering what/who counts (what/who matters), which is so much about not acknowledging how the violence of the ordered world does not visit all in the same way.

I want to understand more about the role that desire plays in all of this. Is desire, too, a parallel process in the nonlocal universe? Are our individual desires singular expressions arising out of a shared one, one that is closer to a state of uncertainty or dissolution (the being "not me" that is the universe)?

And what regard for life can we imagine without a sense of boundedness?

DFS: These are huge, great questions! I say that because I think that we should be able to distinguish between desire at the personal level and the philosophical framing of desire, which writes as a separate entity. And, at the same time, I don't really think that our desire at the personal level is unaffected by the contractions of the individual, informed by the philosophical renderings of desire, which describe us as consumers—that is, as always already separated and approaching the world (everything in it, including other persons) as objects. In short, this is something I would love to have as part of our conversations.

What does it mean to rethink sociality "from without" the modern text when we are temporally located within it (or are we)? Could that involve undoing the sequentiality that led to the development quantum physics (or did it ever)? In the sense that the workings of the universe simply "are," do we just have better critical tools now to observe them—?

DFS: Wow! OK. One of my short answers to your questions is yes, the other is obviously no. But seriously, I agree with you in that we are located in the modern text. But I also like to think that we can think "from without"—from outside, that is—by which I mean that modernity does not have a monopoly on thinking. Its view and practice of thinking is very limited. So much so, that most of us do not rely on The Understanding alone when trying to figure out how to go about it. So, yes, I think that it does involve undoing sequentiality. But I don't think that sequentiality has led to the emergence of quantum physics. Of course there is a time-lag between classical physics and quantum physics, but the emergence of quantum physics does not have to be seen as an evolution, as progress in science. Well, you see it when reading quantum physics texts, for the most part they tried to deal with how much they depart from classical physics. And, some of them, especially the physicists theorizing relational quantum mechanics, are very aware of their violations and have moved to "go back in time" in order to delineate another genealogy, one that begins with Leibniz and not Newton—both of whom claim to have invented calculus, which is the mathematical tool that sustains modern physics.

Maybe it's obvious but still worth saying that I feel totally mind-blown to realize that the project of cultural difference is inherently limited, and that it even plays within a framework of so much 'justified' violence. It makes me wanna RETHINK my entire practice! It's liberating to realize that it's possible to rethink one's past work, which will lead to new conclusions, new possible readings, and ultimately new questions. This is not really a question but more of an observation.

DFS: I'm right there with **you**. For me, this realization has led me to question the whole of the 1980s when, as a black Brazilian activist, I was completely involved in and committed to cultural politics.

Let's focus on the spaces in between bodies!

DFS: Yes!!

Could there be an analogy with the "problem of the particle"—and the problem of body? **The** discrete, singular (but not particular) body that is caught in space-time. If the body is the actual (particle) **then** what might be its complementary (virtual) existence? **Our** bodies are anything but fixed—they are constantly morphing (some more than others) and exchanging matter and energy with the world... but still they do feel somehow... limited.
For some reason it makes me think of this **song**:

DFS: Yes! I would love to continue the conversation about how to liberate the body from spatiality, which I think is also all about dissolving the mind/body dichotomy and all the attributes said to capture the difference (which is one of separability as the **"p"** indicates) between them. What if we instead of attending to the trace (**"p"**) we hacked (**"v"**) the mind-body distinction, as in body\mind (body hacks mind)? As you say, the hacked body (\body) liberated from the mind would be always plural, constantly morphing and exchanging matter-energy, as the world.

I too am thankful for this conversation. I'm geek that kid, who always daydreamed of **a** day when the others would finally arrive (well, they usually came on a spaceship) and she would make sense after all ... I'm so glad to find that we've always been right here on earth ...

Much love,

Hey Wu,

I couldn't agree more! We need science fiction to liberate the imagination!

Dx

13:00

She can't listen to her heartbeat.
(Door opens... sound of rain...
thunder... wind blows... rain
continues to pour...)

To demonstrate nonlocality, or illustrate it, the fabric, which is space/gravitational full, the non-particulate field, should be structured so that one person can feel another person way across the room. The fabric should touch the floor. The hem of the garment must be touched. Denise was a liberation theologian so she could become a sociological physicist. To read our errant palms and cards and drapery.

13:00

Like, like, like, like a-absolute perfect fit, or some kind of melding. You know, but what if the way the doom thing works, it's always raggedy and rough and serrated, and and and and-and what it means to be with somebody is that you get cut all the time, and bruised, and you lose part of your foot you know, and, and your arm fades out. But there ain't nothing you can do about it, see. Or being meaning for one another it, it, it, it-it's always at a loss. I mean it always happens at a loss, it always leaves you at a loss. But, but, but you want it anyway, right? I mean, ain't nothin you can do about it and ain't nothin you can do about wanting it. It's rough-edged. Hard-edged. You know, um... Incomplete. Or incomplete you. You know, fuck Tom Cruise and that fucking... what was that movie?

Hey!

- it's maybe an entire written language but they aren't sure,
- the knots mean different things, depending on their position
- the colours = sounds
- the incas used BINARY CODE!!!!?
- probably the closest thing to understanding it is like a musical score

Beautiful linearity.

Saucers or spirals, dispersions, showers

On a plane now

ana sound like ani, being not then

one more time, continually
naughty, full in nothing and more, hurtfully

loving being different
in tangled detail.

like the upper room of bluiett's ebu, like bluets' unpayable
dues and all around her unplayable steeple, in blue
viewly, ani and ana almost always be ma, mu in a

mechanics, an ecology, of dispersed mama,
she my play mama, my kids'
grammar, my grandma's daughter,
exhausted, ain't quite
breathe
right in that heavy water.

anti
as the river antes, all that and and yas yas always
unfolding, exing, exiting in affirmative
hell naw, in stop killing my auntie,

my only chance,
unmissishly dancing offa ann's unmerciful unmerciful me.
in geeshie and l.v.'s geechie las vegas, that elk's club
wild goose way to stop in and out of step with
daphne 'nem and that

blew up out of one and two pine bluff duet they in and out of, the dust of its
explosion that be all up in all our kin, ana,

ani,
steady citing their sighting, it's so exciting, we so wrong, we gon' be
aiight?
feel we? fuck the flow.

the other half of the
half that ain't been told
can't be told till
no one tells it
nowhere

and everywhere
to
everyone.

14:00

I was just thinking that the only person that I talk to this early in the morning, when I just wake up, is my lover. And, it's weird to talk to someone that I don't know, without many words. I'm running out of, um. I'm running out of. Funny, I was thinking that um, trying to make sense of the rhythm of it. I wanted to say "doom" cause that sounded like fun, Dooom. DOOM. DOOOOM! So everything's out of focus. Oh, can you hear that? (Thunder rolls, rain...)

40 And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people *gladly* received him: for they were all waiting for him.

41 And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house:

42 For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him.

43 And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any,

44 Came behind *him*, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanch'd.

45 And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press *thee*, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

46 And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.

47 And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately.

48 And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.

14:00

"You complete me"—no! That's not, mehe. Fate! Being meant for somebody means that they incomplete you. They tear you up, they mess you up. And you mess them up. And it's all messed up. Your heart is a strong muscle. It squeezes very good. Ramin Tabibiazar. Ramiiin Tabibiazar. Ramiiin Tabibiazar. Alright, well. Doom? Fate? Shvarts. Leavy. And I was thinking, man...trying to find a replacement for the irreplaceable. Doom, Doom, Doom, you know? Doom, Doom, Doom, at this cafe on Pico called Bloom. Bloom and Doom. June gloom. So, boom doom gloom. Boom, boom, boom, boom, now I'm thinking about that old John Lee Hooker song. Doom. Doom. DOOM, like you say. Doom, Doom...

To simplify: there's a relationship we're performing that's trying to get out of the relationship. To try to get out of it by letting something else in. Relation split, like an atom, from transference to transversal, from communication to communicability: listening for life, like when there's a weird interference and you can be *open* to it!

Open to interference. Welcoming radiance. Come in, extra, so we can figure the materiality of entanglement. He felt the intention, the difference of a difference, "who touched me?" If there is an individual experience of entanglement it is the experience of becoming an instrument. To share in the experience of being an instrument. How to be cognizant of the transfer of energy, the diffusion of virtue?

The spectacle: I've been touched. To be touched. How to figure the continual awareness of being touched? Did Jesus experience that "anonymous" touch as an act violence? Was his healing violent? How to find the touch that is more and less than one? Who touched me when that one person touched me? Everybody touched you when she touched you! Everybody touched you when she touched you. Everybody touched you in her touch. Errbody touched in her touch. No-bodies, just touch.

Jesus was a celebrity! The celebrity is a conduit. The celebrity is an instrument for the transfer of energy. Is Jesus made whole in having been touched? What if Jesus is the one singing that song, that relay between Elvis Presley and Marie Jenkins: Something

Happened	and now,	
	I know	he touched me
and made, ma		
	aa	ade
		me

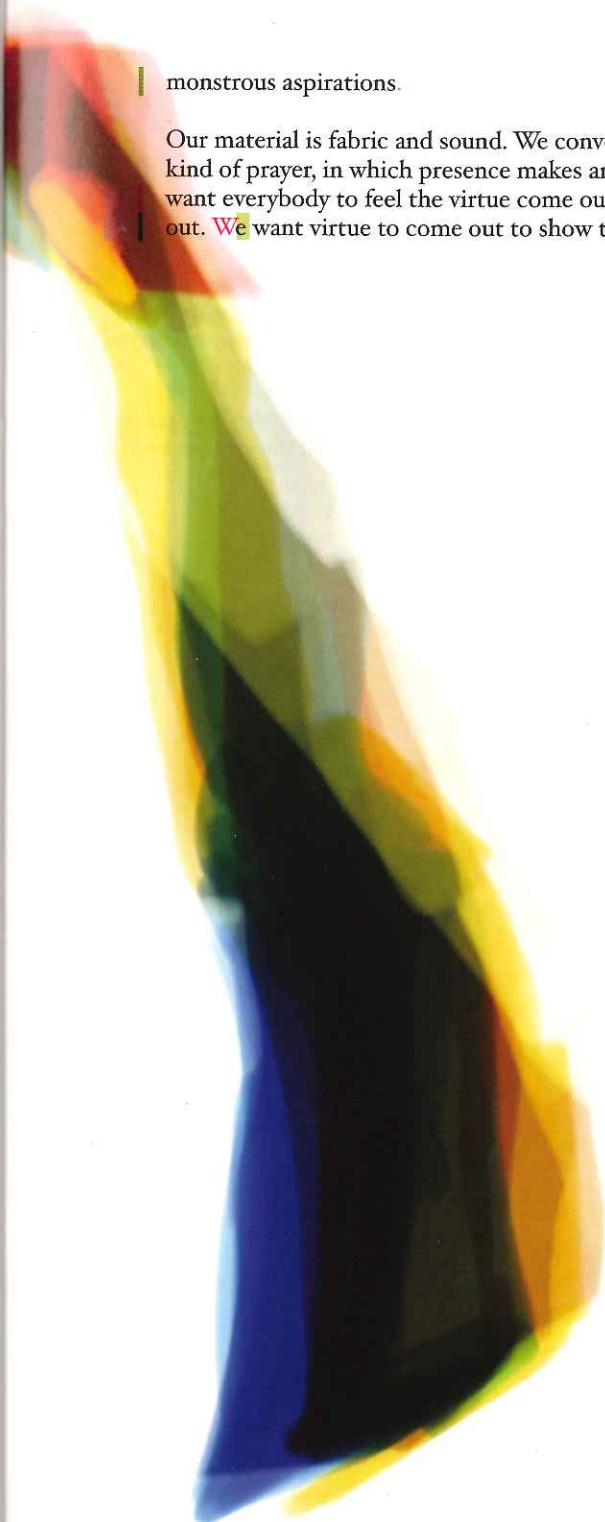
whole.

Monstrosity and entanglement. What if the reconciliation of quantum mechanics and general relativity is a matter of monstrosity, a matter of the obliteration of scale: where small scale and large scale blur, and the particles go so crazy they make you wanna not believe in particles. That's monstrous: that's a revelation, a divine showing of an absolute and divine violence. Fleshly life.

How do you make what you think is a whole lot of people touching you feel like what it feels like when you think there's such a thing as one person, and that one person is touching you? How do you make what you thought was one person touching you feel like what you think it feels like when what you think are a whole lot of people be touching you? Jesus notices a difference, not an individual: here is where materiality (the materiality of entanglement) and randomness converge.

Church, bathhouse, music hall, like any monastery: a site of rehearsal.

How, in the fullness of touch, to be aware of a difference in touch? Perhaps awareness comes from feeling the power leave you. It is done. The power of life and death is in your mouth. Virtue hasn't left me; it has gone out of me, like the absolute beauty of Kim Burrell's



monstrous aspirations.

Our material is fabric and sound. We convene (as) a conduit. A call to disorder, which is a kind of prayer, in which presence makes an opening. We have to feel the virtue come out. We want everybody to feel the virtue come out of them. We want you to feel the virtue coming out. We want virtue to come out to show them.

Imagine a big rectangular room as if it were a large stringed instrument you play by walking through, some quad protocol loose enough to be lyrical so we can give all our love away in the square's circular densities and rhythm messages.

The quipu is a medium for contact improvisation at the beginning and end of a long, cold lonely winter. Feel girl talk, lil darlin', in the heft of our chemise and messages, our counting in crystal and feather and the records we keep in filament.

In the ensemble of the large instrument, the very large array in which we feel ourselveslessness in the nearness of a distant song, you can't see the whole but you feel it in the hold and in the way it hold you in how it holds itself out to you, and there you go.

We just like a bunch of little speakers on wheels in the circumference of an embrace. Pie, our diameter keeps expanding and our beauties are stars! So light you can see through them but you can't get away from them. Airy throng, and plan, and silver rail—who touched me?

15:00

Whew, whew, wew, wew, whoooo
whewaahh whew, whaaa, whew,
wha, wha... Some sort of heart,
heart thing, and I hear the sound
of your voice, and I hear you
singing (laughs), conjuring
someone. Conjuring you there.
And you said, "I'm conscious of—"
and then it just cut out. You said,
"I'm conscious of—" ... Working
with that intention.

15:00

Doom is? Well okay so that the doom is like this double thing, right? And the doom is that you lose yourself. Which is the doom part, conventional doom part. Speaking of doom! Doom. Ana-benedictine, anabenedictine, ana-benedictine. Boom, boom, boom, boom. Doom doom doom doom. My heart is a strong muscle. It squeezes very well. Which I hope means a lot while longer. You know, your doom is there. It's for you, you know. Doom and fate and fit and rule. So what does it mean to carefully... but to carefully, in the moment, measure every step you take towards the unexpected. Carefully, every step you take, towards that which you can't control?

BIOGRAPHIES

Fred Moten is the author of *The Service Porch* (2016), *The Feel Trio* (2014), *The Little Edges* (2014), *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (with Stefano Harney, 2013), *B. Jenkins* (2009), *Hughson's Tavern* (2008), and *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (2003). He lives in Los Angeles and teaches at the University of California, Riverside.

Wu Tsang's films, installations, performances, and sculptures move fluidly between documentary, activism, and fiction. Her projects have been presented at museums including: Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), New York; Tate Modern, London; Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam; Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; and Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Her films have been screened at film festivals such as: Berlinale, Berlin; SANFIC, Santiago; Hot Docs Festival, Toronto; and South by Southwest Film Festival, Austin. Her first feature film *Wildness* (2012) premiered at MOMA's Doc Fortnight, Los Angeles, 2012. Her work was also featured in the following exhibitions: 9th Berlin Biennale, 2016; 2012 Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; *The Ungovernables*, New Museum Triennial, New York, 2012; and Gwangju Biennial, 2012. She has received grants from Creative Capital, the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, and the Rockefeller and Guggenheim Foundations.

Denise Ferreira da Silva's academic writings and artistic practice address the ethical questions of the global present and target the metaphysical and ontoepistemological dimensions of modern thought. Her recent academic publications include the book *Toward a Global Idea of Race* (2007), the edited volume *Race, Empire, and The Crisis of the Subprime* (with Paula Chakravartty, 2013), and the articles "Toward a Black Feminist Poethics: The Quest(ion) of Blackness Towards the End of the World" (*The Black Scholar*, 2014) and "Nobodies: Law, Raciality, and Violence" (*Griffith Law Review*, 2009). Her art-related work includes: texts for publications linked to the 2016 Liverpool and São Paulo biennials; advising Natasha Ginwala, curator for the Contour 8 Biennale, Mechelen, 2017; and events (performances, talks, and private sessions) and texts that form part of her own practice, *Poethical Readings* in collaboration with Valentina Desideri.