

SCORES N°5
intact bodies / under protest

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We, who are confident that
we are not out of options

We, who are hoping that it
will all somehow be ok

We, who feel that things
have a way of finally
working themselves out

T h e D e f e n d e r s
P a r t 3

We, who believe
that time will
mend everything.

We, who were certain
that some things just
can't be avoided

We, who were not
aware of the gravity
of the situation

We, who want to
let things run their
natural course

*

William Forsythe's choreographic object
The Defenders Part 3 was presented on 7 December 2011
as part of *SCORES No 4: under protest* at the Tanz-
quartier Wien. Its inaugural exhibition took place on
16 April 2009 at the Centraalmuseum Utrecht.

We, who don't
have the kind
of time it takes

We, who have
heard it all before

We, who
realize that we
didn't get it

We, who acknowledge
that we did not have
all the pertinent facts

We, who suppose
that truth is relative

We, who feel that we
are not ›solution‹ people

We, who don't know
who to trust anymore

We, who feel that
someone should have
properly informed us

We, who had no
reason not to believe
what we were told

We, who had
no reason to
imagine what
was happening

We, who probably
could have
guessed what
was happening

We, who did not
want to interfere

We, who could not
come to a conclusion

We, who did
not want to
get involved

We, who
would have
done the
right thing
had someone
told us

We, who are certain
that we lack a
comprehensive overview

We, who anticipated
something entirely
different

We, who in our wildest
dreams could not
have conceived of it

We, who had too many
things competing
for our attention

We, who cannot recall
having been made
sufficiently aware of
the consequences

We, who realize that we
must have overlooked
some important aspect

We, who under the
circumstances found it
exceptionally difficult to
form an educated opinion

We, who had trouble
weighing the alternatives

We, who feel that there
are always going to be
irresolvable issues

We, who were convinced
that they were on top of it

We, who thought that we
had actually done enough

We, who obviously
lack the strength to
take on something
of this dimension

We, who lack the
necessary expertise

We, who haven't really
thought about it

We, who presumed
these sorts of issues
would eventually
recede from view

We, who trust in the
virtue of good intentions

We, who are quite
simply overwhelmed
by the options

We, who were
not convinced
of the urgency
of the matter

We, who
assumed it
was all an
exaggeration

We, who still
can't make
sense of the
majority of it

We, who
have lost
confidence in
everything

We, who ask
what basis we
had for doubt

We, who ask
what basis we
had for belief

We, who are
convinced
that some
matters simply
cannot be
hurried

We, who are satisfied
that it is all part of
a natural cycle

We, who thought that
they would eventually
see it our way

We, who were certain
that common sense
would prevail

We, who maintain
that we are not
implicated

We, who know
that this is nothing new

We, who assume that we
cannot be responsible
for everything

We, who have the
impression that nothing
will change anyway

We, who have no excuses

We, who felt reassured
in spite of it all

We, who wish that
someone had sat us
down and filled us in

We, who were
told innumerable
times that it
would all be fine

We, who assumed that it
was being taken care of

We, who trusted
reliable sources

We, who are under the
impression that we cannot
have any significant
effect on events

We, who underestimated
the value of doubt

We, who thought we
had it all figured out

We, who regret having
been spared the details

We, who wish that
people would just
come to their senses

We, who really didn't
see it coming

We, who want to let
history run its course

We, who assume there are
people who know how
to handle these things

We, who
wouldn't
presume
to know

We, who have
enough to
worry about

We, who have
enough to
do already

We, who think
it's no worse
than it ever was

We, who need
to focus on
more positive
things

We, who didn't
think it would
get this bad

The Gezi Uprising and Corporeal Politics:

Towards the Reinvention of a Political Culture



(c) Reuters / Marko Djurica



(c) Reuters / Osman Orsal

In this paper I focus on the Gezi uprising as a particular example of social protest that offers ample examples to rethink the relation between the aesthetic, social, and bodily dimensions of politics. Here I interpret the events through the image of dance as the oscillation between ›fall and recovery‹ from multiple disciplinary orientations traversing performance studies, political theory, dance scholarship and sociology. To examine choreographies of protest, I focus on the ›still-act‹ of the ›standing man‹ as a counter-hegemonic political act. I conclude by reviewing how the Gezi uprising as a potent social moment contributed to the reinvention of a political culture.

The Gezi uprising, which was the largest civil uprising in modern Turkey and broke out at the end of May 2013,¹ powerfully manifested the corporeal dimension not only of social protests but the bodily precondition of politics in general. What paved the way for the Gezi Park events was the culmination of discontent with the appropriation and exploitation of urban public spaces for the interests of private gain, the increasing authoritarianism and paternalism of the ruling AKP, and the continual infringement of freedom of speech. Police brutality against environmentalists who had organized a sit-in at Gezi Park to protest the demolition of some six hundred trees to make way for a dubious, unlawful construction plan imposed by the government was the last drop that incited millions of people onto the streets.

Against the backdrop of the post-political neoliberal order governed by majoritarian rule, the Gezi uprising manifested the rebirth of the ›political.² In a way, it marked the reopening of what Hannah Arendt (1998 [1958], pp. 198–99) calls ›the space of appearance‹, as an arena where people speak to each other and develop capacities to act in concert. For Arendt, it is this coming together that precedes all formal constitution of the public realm. However, as Butler (2014; 2015) argues, ›who can appear in public‹ is already a political question and one cannot take for granted the public space itself – the streets, parks, squares, independent media, material and immaterial infrastructures of support – as a given condition for appearance. Often it is precisely the conditions of appearing as such that contemporary social movements struggle for.

¹ The protests were the largest in the sense not only of the scale but also of in terms of duration and scope. While the protests started at Gezi Park in Istanbul, the spread to about 70 other cities in Turkey (most notably Ankara, Antakya, Eskisehir and Izmir). The make-up of the protests was extremely diverse and encompassed Taksim Solidarity (the large network of NGOs ranging from environmental groups to neighbourhood associations, and the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects); students; LGBT movements; numerous (traditional) leftist organizations; Alevi (unlike the majority of Sunni Muslims in Turkey, Alevi are a complex religious/cultural group combining Anatolian folk religions with Sufi elements, and emphasise traditions of poetry, music and dance in their rituals); anti-capitalist Muslims (left-leaning Muslims who oppose the neoliberal politics of the government); Kemalists (secular, nationalist adherents of republican values as prescribed by the founder Ataturk); Kurds; football fans; artists. Some members of these groups overlap.

² See Chantal Mouffe's discussion of the ›post-political‹ condition in *On the Political* (2005). The post-political condition refers to the representative system of most European countries and the fact that there has been the establishment of what Mouffe calls ›consensus at the centre‹ between the centre-right and centre-left around the idea that there is no alternative to neoliberal globalisation.

As Butler contends (2014), first and foremost, our bodily existence depends on systems of support that are both human and non-human. We cannot speak of bodies without environments, and the destruction of the environment, understood as both natural and man-made (in the form of institutions for support) is the destruction of the human. In other words, the basic conditions for survival, that is, the corporeal dimension itself is the precondition of all possibility of assembling. Moreover, political action is not only in speech acts as Arendt noted but, as Butler stresses, it is also articulated through silence and stillness. The Gezi uprising can therefore be read as doubly political in both the Arendtian and Butlerian sense.

P e r f o r m a t i v e
d e m o c r a c y a n d t h e
c u l t u r e o f p r o t e s t

An extremely heterogeneous group of protesters reconstituted Gezi Park as a public space by reclaiming it as a dwelling place where bodies gathered in speech and action but also ate, slept and dreamt. They enacted the world they imagined, invoking an instance of »performative democracy«. In that sense, they affirmed their most immediate and obvious statement: that public space belongs to the people. The social form of the resistance at Gezi Park incorporated principles of equality and horizontality in the organisation and maintenance of the camp. These actions were all political by refusing the normalising of inequality produced by strict divisions between the public and private spheres and by incorporating into the very social form of resistance the principles for which they were struggling.

On 2 June 2013, protesters built barricades around Taksim Square and declared Gezi Park their habitat. Over the two weeks that followed, the barricades became transformative sites through which people were uplifted into another reality, into the wonderland of *communitas*, where an intense communal spirit, the feeling of a great social equality, solidarity and mutual care prevailed. According to the anthropologist Victor Turner (1967), *communitas* comes to being through a threshold experience, which he refers to as »liminality«. The word is derived from the architectural term »limen«, which means

a threshold, the thin strip that is neither inside nor outside a door. For Turner, it is the liminal phase where a ritual has the possibility to be creative and make way for new situations to emerge. Similarly, Lefebvre highlights the creative potential of revolts. He defines the revolutionary moment as »the spontaneous coming together in a moment irruption; when disparate heterotopic groups suddenly see, if only for a fleeting moment, the possibilities of collective action to create something radically different« (quoted in Harvey, 2012, p. xvii).

The Gezi uprising unleashed an explosion of creativity and humour. When Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan referred to the protesters as *çapulcu* (»looters«) in order to discredit their political claim at the onset of the revolt, the word was taken up by the protesters to be endowed with a new meaning. By changing their names to *çapulcu* – or a version of it – overnight on their social media profiles, protesters and their supporters marked their membership to an emergent community. It is notable that this »tribe« of *çapulcus* is depicted as dancing one as in the humorous video photoshopped over LFMAO's *Everyday I'm Shuffling* video clip (which became *Everyday I'm çapulling*) that circulated widely on social media in early June 2013.³

A broad spectrum of performances became intertwined during the protests.⁴ The body became the medium and the message. A Sufi dervish-inspired dancer in a gas mask whirled on and on as others formed circles to dance the regional folk dances of *balay* and the *boron*. Others took up yoga and held open sessions while others danced the tango. A b-boy moonwalked across a water cannon, and football fans sang »tear gas ole!« jumping up and down. The distinction between art and not art, actor and spectator not only became blurred, it became irrelevant. Viewed as Mikhael Bakhtin's (1984 [1965]) interpretation of carnival, the Gezi Park protests celebrated liberation from the prevailing order in a feast of becoming, change and renewal. Virtual and highly mediated spaces of appearance sprang alongside new forms of immediacy in real places and times. One did not even have to be out there on the street for a bodily engagement with the protests: the visceral effect of images of bodies such as the photograph taken by a Reuters reporter of »the lady in the red dress« as she turned her

3 For further discussion on the creative dimension and the functions of humour in Gezi uprising see *Creativity and Humour in Occupy Movements: Intellectual Disobedience and Beyond*, Altuğ Yalçıncaş (ed.), 2015.

4 Performance-studies scholar Richard Schechner claims that all human activity can be studied as performance because every action is made from »twice-behaved behaviours« (*Performance Studies: An Introduction*, 2002). Performances are restored bits of information, but they can be recombined in endless combinations. The uniqueness of an event does not depend only on its materiality, but on the interactivity and context. To treat any object, a work, or product »as« performance, it means to investigate what the object does, how it interacts with other beings or objects, and how it relates to them. In other words, there is nothing inherent in action that disqualifies it from being a performance from the start. What determines a performance is not intrinsic to the event, but to how it is placed and received.

cheek against a pepper spray attack on the first day of the protests attested to their performative power. As images of bodies subject to violence moved in virtual space, real bodies flooded to Taksim Square and Gezi Park.

Gezi's dances:
vulnerability and
resistance

On the morning of 31 May Lobna Al Lamii, a 35-year-old environmental activist, was shot in the head with a tear gas canister and remained in critical condition for 24 days, had multiple brain surgery, lost her voice and remained partially paralysed. I was struck when I heard from a mutual friend that she was a dancer. The moment when a dancer was stilled, an entire people mobilized against oppression and injustice.

Gezi Park protests and the events that followed can be grasped for me in the image of dance as a fall and a spring, oscillating between vulnerability and resilience. In the 1930s the American choreographer Doris Humphrey (1991 [1959]) developed an understanding of dance as ›fall and recovery‹. She was one of the first choreographers to abandon the traditional concepts of dance where the body has to create the illusion of not being influenced by gravity and that all movement should give the impression of being effortless. For her, dance encompassed the fall from the security of a perfect balance, yielding to gravity, as well as the slow recovery to restore balance. In between, an infinite number of physical and emotional movements could be experienced.

It is perhaps not so surprising that it was another dancer who ›stood up‹ after the violent police crackdown of the encampment at Gezi Park on 15 June. On 17 June the dancer and choreographer Erdem Gündüz engaged in a ›still-act‹ that raised the broken spirits, repotentialising and remobilising the protests to a different intensity. Out of a pre-discursive, unpremeditated, unchoreographed urge, relying on his bodily intelligence and perhaps drawing upon years of somatic training, at the perfectly right time and the right place, Gündüz⁵ stood silently in the middle of Taksim Square facing the deserted Atatürk Cultural Centre. In a matter of hours and thanks to the amplification and circulation of the

5 Although Erdem Gündüz never thought of conceiving his ›still-act‹ as an artistic performance – I believe one of the strengths of the act is actually the fact that it was not planned and executed as some kind of ›performance art‹ by an ›artist‹ – it is significant that he was trained as a dancer and choreographer. Gündüz was one of the performers of the Turkish cast version of Jérôme Bel's *The Show Must Go On*, co-produced and presented by iDANS Festival, Istanbul (2011). The staged work features a long section where all 25 performers do nothing but stand still and stare at audience. In another section of the piece where performers listen to the song of their choice through headphones (unheard by the audience) and sing along to it while standing, Erdem Gündüz was singing ›Ben bir ceviz ağacıym Gülhane Parkı'nda‹ (I am a walnut tree at Gülhane Park). In a way, confirming Schechner's theory of performance as ›twice-behaved‹ or ›restored behaviour‹, one can say that even though it is spontaneous, the act relies on an embodied knowledge. I would also like to note that it is important to distinguish the ›act‹ from the ›person‹: one should not conflate the analysis of the impact of Gündüz's still act with his problematic political views.

image on social media and the accessibility and power of the act itself, the standing protest went viral all over Turkey and beyond. Standing still and still standing was what was left to be done, as a form of ›social aikido‹⁶ when other possibilities and the right to assemble had been crushed by state violence.

I must note, however, that I do not see the fall and the rise here as binary oppositions, as one side more worthy than the other. The fall here is not a failure but an embrace, albeit a traumatic one. Lobna's fall and Erdem's rise form part of the continuum of the spirit of Gezi. It's worth remembering that modern dance struggled to fight against the vertical striving and linearity of ballet at the beginning of the 20th century and embraced the ground for the first time. Post-modern dance, physical theatre, live art performance, and somatic practices such as body-mind centring, all advocate awareness and transparency of falling as a necessary and inevitable actuality of living and being.⁷

The political force of the still-act of the ›standing man‹ is not so much in its verticality, but in its stillness, as well as in his exposed vulnerability and non-violence. His stillness here is not a form of passivity, but rather a thoughtful and strategic cultivation of forceful resistance that refuses to replicate the aggression it opposes. While contemplating this still gesture, one thinks of the dance scholar André Lepecki's (2001) elegant use of the anthropologist Nadia Seremetakis's insightful notion of the ›still-act‹ in his analyses of the incorporation of stillness in western theatrical dance, and how it moved from being dance's other to the role of dance's primal impulse as a sort of generative force. As Lepecki writes:

For Seremetakis, ›still acts‹ are those moments of pause and arrest in which the subject – by physically introducing a disruption in the flow of temporality – interpolates ›historical dust‹. Against the flow of the present – writes Seremetakis – there is a stillness in the material culture of historicity; those things, spaces, gestures, and tales that signify the perceptual capacity for elemental historical creation. Stillness is the moment when the buried, the discarded, and the forgotten escape to the social surface of awareness like life-supporting oxygen. It is the moment of exit from ›historical dust‹. (2001, p. 2)

6 Aikido is a Japanese martial art that does not have an attack form but is based on absorbing the energy of being attacked and transforming it.

7 See *Performance Research Journal* (Vol. 18 No: 4, 2013) is dedicated to a similar positive understanding of falling.

The historical dust on Taksim Square is very thick indeed. It has always been a contested space since the latter days of the Ottoman Empire. After the founding of the Republic of Turkey by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Taksim was built in the image of a pro-western modern nation state. In return, the AKP government is trying to rebuild Taksim after its own conservative, traditionalist, Neo-Ottomanist image, and this is one of the primary reasons that led to Gezi Park protests. Taksim Square has also been the site of workers' struggles and social protests, most memorably of the 1977 May Day massacre. Some protesters discovered for the first time during the Gezi occupation that the place where Gezi Park stands was once an Armenian cemetery.

Stillness is not only deployed as a tactic or technique in protest or dance. It is also a negation of the imperative to move in the hyper-mobile world of flows of cash, capital and people. Stillness is also an explicit refusal; a blatant »no« to being removed, no to being dispossessed, to insist on remaining public, to keep on laying claim to the public space in times of global neoliberal capitalism. It is also in this negative sense that the still gesture of standing has critical potential as a counter-hegemonic political act.

In her recent work, which directly addresses the concept of vulnerability, Judith Butler (2015) contends that our modes of resistance should be based on recognizing the chains of dependence that govern human existence and uniting in vulnerability. Here it becomes crucial to advance the conception of the body as not entirely distinct from other bodies. By theorising the human body as relational and dependent, we foreground the way in which we are vulnerable to disappearing or withdrawing infrastructures, networks of support and sustenance, and social relations. There is certainly an ontological, corporeal dimension to vulnerability. However, it is not merely an existential condition, but the result of the social, economic and political forces that impinge upon us. What is imperative, then, is to address the conditions that render some more vulnerable than others and to recognise vulnerability as a potential moment of resistance. In that regard, Butler contributes to our understanding of vulnerability as a position of strength rather than weakness.

Especially in moments of non-violent protest we see that bodily vulnerability is deployed for purposes of resistance. Instances such as the »still-act« of the »standing man« mobilise vulnerability to assert existence, claiming the right to public space, equality, as they simultaneously oppose violence, militarism and the police. Furthermore, such acts imply two senses of resistance and vulnerability. One is resistance *to* vulnerability, induced by certain modes of politics and power; and there is resistance *through* vulnerability, to injustice, and different distributions of vulnerability, which mobilizes vulnerability as its exercise of power.

T h e b o d y a s a w e a p o n ,
t h e b o d y a s p r o t e s t

Mohammed Bouzazi, the 26-year-old itinerant fruit vendor who immolated himself and triggered the mass protests and popular uprisings in Tunisia, is still fresh in our memory. On 17 December 2010, after local officials confiscated his fruit cart and humiliated and insulted him, Bouzazi set himself on fire in front of the government building in the city of Sidi Bouzid. As Bargu (2016) observes, although his self-immolation became a catalyst for the uprising that overthrew the authoritarian rule of Ben Ali, his act is at the same time a testament to the absence of an organised collective movement and the severity of helpless solitude (Bargu, 2016, p.28). Here the body becomes both the product of »necropower« and the agent of a »necropolitical« resistance. Let me elaborate briefly on the notion of necropolitics.

As Achille Mbembe (2003) argues, in spaces of coloniality, enslavement and occupations, as well as the spatial actualizations of a permanent *coup d'état* that he calls »terror formations«, entire populations are destined to death. For Mbembe, »necropower« is the form of power that renders some populations disposable, reducing them to »death-in-life«. One can also find the same tendency in Western democracies, revealed in the wake of exceptional events and natural disasters. For example, the way the state dealt with the contingency of Hurricane Katrina exposed how entire populations are considered as an unnecessary burden and left to fend for themselves (Giroux, 2006). Similarly, prison itself has

become a tool for governing the poor and disposable populations by assuming a »warehouse« function (Wacquant, 2009). That is, the disposability of populations is not limited to the new colonies or sites of military occupation, but rather has become a constant feature of neoliberal modes of governance (Bargu, 2016, pp. 32–33).

The unequal distribution of vulnerability, the differential assignment of disposability does not merely produce some populations as closer to death than the rest but also leads to new forms of resistance that emerge from them. We also find forms of necropolitical resistance such as hunger strikes or other forms of self-destruction. As Mbembe argues, under conditions of necropower, »the lines between resistance and suicide, sacrifice and redemption, martyrdom and freedom are blurred« (Mbembe, 2003, p.40). Perhaps, in the contexts of biopolitics and necropower, bodies are the only means left to individuals whose lives are systematically reduced to biology (Dabashi, 2012).

C o n c l u d i n g r e m a r k s

Although the limits of the Gezi uprising in creating a sustainable political alternative to bringing about wider social change is evident, it was a critical moment that made it possible to imagine alternative forms collective action and new understandings of democracy beyond the hegemonic form of politics and representation. It has not only left a memorable legacy for the repertory of protest actions but also significantly contributed to the redefinition of political culture.

The cultural sociologist Jeffrey Goldfarb (2012) highlights the importance of »reinventing political culture« to address the pressing problems of our times, namely, the widespread feeling of helplessness and the belief that there is no alternative. He contends that it is important that people change the stories they tell themselves about themselves inciting a »new definition of the situation« that intentionally distances from the official discourse and the given political rhetoric and institutions. Instead of taking sides predetermined by polarising populist politics, it is crucial to cultivate »grey spaces«, in other words, hybrid spaces of encounter

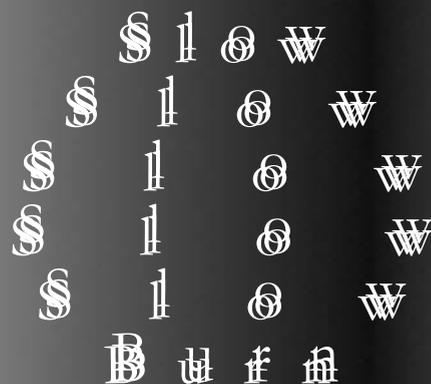
through which it becomes possible to surpass the descriptive power of dualism.

I think that one of the most significant strengths and potentials of Gezi was that it incited »a new definition of the situation« that went beyond »the political productivity« of dualistic definitions of collective identities that divides people into easily governable binaries (secular/religious; western/eastern). The challenge to existing definitions was revealed in situations, for instance, where socialist/atheists formed human chains around anti-capitalist Muslims, providing them with security during their daily prayers. I contend that with Gezi not only were existing definitions of collective identities challenged, but also the distinctions between the social, political and aesthetic were suspended. Perhaps one of the most important legacies of Gezi is that it illustrated creativity of micro-politics, or as Jeffrey Goldfarb (2007) would put it, the »politics of small things« and generated a new repertoire of protest culture some of which I have discussed in this paper.

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The lecture *Gezi Uprising as a Corporeal Political Challenge* by Gurur Ertem and Erdem Gündüz was presented on 25 September 2013 at the Tanzquartier Wien.

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Nat Muller's lecture *The Wet and the Virtual: Gestures of a Body in Revolt* was presented on 10 December 2011 at the Tanzquartier Wien as part of *SCORES No 4: under protest*.

In the beginning there were only a few of us. Three if I remember correctly. It started more as playful curiosity, an alternative to the coffee and cake break (always the same watered down coffee – always the same dry and oversweet cake) or the drink after work (always acrid red wine for H, locally brewed beer for S and generic gin and tonic for me). We would usually gossip about colleagues, our partners, the drudgery of work, other people's kids. Sometimes we would get nostalgic and reminisce (not too loud of course) about the time before Central Command took over. A time in which we would do all these aforementioned things, albeit with better coffee and cake and with imported alcohol. The big difference was, however, that in the past we could speak our minds (more or less) in public and on social media. This was before they shut down access to the Internet, closed down all foreign media channels and newspapers and those that did not toe the Central Command line. We had long ago given up on an independent press. I think that somehow in-between bad wine and crumbly cake we just stopped expecting it was a possibility.

It may sound terribly jaded, but in the beginning I think we were just bored. It must have been H who suggested we walk down to the beach to watch the new recruits of Central Command train. And so we, three women twice these young men's age, ended up watching them from the dunes. Not too close, we did not really want to be found out, but they could see us if they strained and we did not exactly make a big effort to hide. The physical ordeal their commanders put them through was gruelling: their uniformed bodies pushed to the limits, the pain, the sweat, the exhaustion, the vomiting three-quarters into the whole routine. It was repulsive yet strangely arousing to see these young bodies disciplined into rigid ideology and docility. Subordination always happens through the body. The mind follows afterwards. There's no such thing as innocence of movements. But Slow Slow I digress. We thought them quite beautiful somehow.

Did we feel guilt at our own desire and voyeurism? No we didn't. As I said, it started out as a joke, an innocent pastime. We shrugged it off. Perhaps it was the contrast with our own aging bodies, with their scars and

marks of life writ all over them. They looked so pristine and perfect. Examples of air-brushed masculinity that in a different time would've stirred the same passions but we would've repressed it probably. Dismissed it as politically incorrect and juvenile to be seduced by the youth and beauty of these »kids«. We would've blamed the media in cahoots with patriarchy for the pre-packaged easy-on-the-eye notions of masculinity and femininity it fed us, not realising that other ideologies made us suppress other desires just as much. Now nothing was politically correct or incorrect anymore. Politics had died.

We started to have our favourites and though these young agile bodies never became individuals for us really, they become familiar. H liked a muscular blond, S a tall dark boy and I kept my eye on a doe-eyed kid. Yes we called them boys, but of course they were men who would not hesitate to use their high-tech weaponry on us if only we dared step out of line and do something that would threaten the stability of Central Command. I suspect they never thought of our presence as a threat in the beginning. The rules were clear. The boys performed and we looked on from a distance.

We never asked why there weren't any girls. We stopped asking questions about gender, diversity and creed a long time ago. With Central Command all struggles of emancipation that had defined the 20th and the early 21st century were wiped out. So too were all the strategies of organised and individual dissent. Physical gatherings, grassroots organisation, online communities, sit-ins, demonstrations, noise protests, strikes, graffiti... all gone. It was not as if the current situation was presented as utopia; life pretty much went on as it did, it's just that no one seemed to care about anything really important anymore. It all became bland and colourless. Opinionated outbursts of petty discontent were tolerated: »Oh that smoked salmon was far too salty! Why is yellow the fashion colour this season? The bus schedule really is too infrequent! They should really do a better job at cleaning the streets!« In other words, we could complain about our consumption patterns and the quality of services. We had become the most splendid blasé perpetually picky embodiment of neo-liberal consumerism. Bland, dull and perfectly manicured.

Things changed after my accident. It was silly, really. I was riding my bike on the steepest hill on the island. I was going fast – very fast. With the wind in my hair and the sun out I felt careless and reckless. And then suddenly from out of nowhere this van was speeding up from behind the curve. I braked, I swerved, I screamed and ended up five metres further in the bushes. My bike was in tatters, and so was I. I don't quite remember what happened right afterwards. Only the muffled sounds of voices fussing over me, the blood and the pain and this terrible feeling that I was utterly alone and helpless, reduced to a sack of meat and bones. They took me into the van. Though their van looked pretty ordinary from the outside, you know the kind that would deliver parcels or baked goods, the inside was a very different story. It was filled with monitors, computers, consoles, receivers, cables, medical equipment and a bunch of tech I had never seen in my life. A constant whir, beep and buzz seemed to fill the air. In the meantime my limbs were bleeding profusely on their carpeted van floor. They didn't look panicked at the sight of me or gave much attention to my whimpering. They were very efficient in dealing with my condition and getting me to a clinic. They were three. I could not distinguish their age really. But everything that took place in that van seemed so timeless, so decelerated in temporal experience, but yet so disturbingly real. I thought it was the blood loss and shock that made me feel this sensation. I was to be proven wrong.

Forty-one stitches, a few shots of morphine, and a pair of torn pants later I was on my way back home. A few days later H and S visited, bringing me day-old cupcakes (it's the gesture that counts!), worried looks and gossip from work. They said they had been back to the beach watching the boys of Central Command, but that training seemed to have intensified. Something about the speed and the pace of the exercise routine seemed to have picked up. I didn't give it much thought but huffed that in my immobile state only thinking about physical movement made me feel exhausted. It was going to take another full three weeks before I would be able to leave my crutches at home and hobble back to work. My gait characterised by its sluggishness and limp. Something had changed and it was not only my impaired mobility

and the constant throbbing pain in my left knee. It had something to do with perception and feeling present in the world. It was as if reality was occasionally rendered in slow motion or freeze-framed; everything was so sharp and clear, as if I were seeing things literally for the first time.

What had happened in that van? Of course we had heard rumours of a resistance, but no one really believed it because nothing ever was challenged. At least not on the surface. As I said there was no opposition literature or media, no names or faces we could tie to a leadership, no outward signs of anything disrupting or challenging the status quo. Moreover, who were the people who had brought me to the clinic and had so expertly administered first aid? I had no names or anything to go on. I don't think I even thanked them. Perhaps the clinic would know. I went back to the clinic seeking answers. The two receptionists were tight-lipped and exchanged furtive glances. They asked me whether I had experienced any other »symptoms« since my fall. I started explaining my slowed but heightened sense of perception and asked whether this could be the result of a concussion or other trauma that was overlooked when I was brought in. More alarmed looks between the receptionists followed before they finally said that a doctor would see me for a check-up. It seemed like an eternity before I was ushered into the consulting room and the doctor finally saw me. She was professional and friendly, asking me exactly what had happened, but made few inquiries about my leg. »Come back in two weeks if there is any change«, she said. »And remember, healing comes from brokenness.« I threw her a quizzical look.

»The body is much more resilient than you think«, she offered back. At the time everything she said seemed like a platitude, something you would generically say to a patient to offer maximum comfort with minimum investment. It dawned on me later, much later, that she had actually given me the key to the conundrum messing with my head.

Friday afternoon after our habitual drinks we went back to watch our boys from Central Command. The pace in which they were performing their drills had picked up indeed. Fast furious, they were pushed relentlessly to breaking point. There was a palpable

nervousness in the air. It dawned on me that it was time and speed that controls the body, disciplines it, curtails it, restricts it. That over-mediated body, from the time we still had social media, reproduced endlessly on our screens and retina till we didn't see these people's bodies anymore. Till they ceased to exist for us because it was all more of the same. We did not see dissent, injustice, torture or death anymore because it had all become a collage of flitting de-individualised images, of bodies running, escaping and helplessly drowning and in the end it just did not mean anything at all. Some will make the argument that it is the stretching of time that manufactures docility and punishment. That it is the wait at a checkpoint or border, the squandering of time in a refugee camp or detainment facility. Deceleration means a calculated death. While there might be truth to that, there's also the counter argument in which it is exactly the power of holding your ground, of being present and not moving. Long ago, for a split second, we thought that the power of standing, sitting and being in town parks and town squares would bring change. We were convinced of the emancipatory power of presence and assembly. All that had waned with the violence that ensued and the gradual instalment of Central Command. Now, we always seemed on the move from point A to point B, marching like good little foot soldiers, a lighter version of our boys in training on the beach.

It became clear to me that perhaps it all had to do with my injury that had by necessity slowed me down. Would revolution come from an assembly of broken bones, would the crippled and wounded inherit the earth? My line of thought seemed too far-fetched and romantic, but could the ideology of the body perfect and the body politic break down at all? My head was spinning that exiting the diktat of speed could bring something new. I had no idea what, but change perhaps? For us then, resistance would not be found in manifestos and political slogans, but had to be located in and through the body. How simple, how magical and what an unbelievable oversight all these years!

I went back to the emergency ward the next day. My doctor asked me, as doctors do, how I was feeling; whether my limp was better. Did the swelling in my knee dissipate? Was I in pain? The truth was that

recovery took a long time and I was getting impatient. At the same time it was this slowness that had led me to having these insights, or at least so I thought. I cleared my throat and started hesitantly: »As a doctor you're a specialist in how the human body functions, right... ?« She encouraged me to continue with a curt smile. »So...«, I continued a little more confident, »could it be possible that physical trauma might cause a change in perception... I mean more like an awareness... it's just that everything seems so clear...« She nodded understandingly and asked me to specify. Of course I was on my guard, years under Central Command had taught us to never speak our minds freely and not to trust anyone. After a long silence she broke my unease and said: »You know, as a doctor I am bound to physician-patient confidentiality. Nothing said here can ever leave this room, no matter what. Everything you tell me here is confidential.« I have no idea what came over me, but I blurted out everything: my sensation of a growing dissatisfaction with the situation, how speed and pace seemed tied to control and this gnawing, almost nagging, feeling that change is possible. That something could be done. I was short of uttering the word »revolution« as it had become so hollow, an empty signifier used by the Central Command to assert their power. I just felt like every fibre in my body was tingling... I wanted to take action!

»You know... the people who picked you up after your accident were first responders. They're actually all fully trained and qualified nurses and ambulance crew...« »But... how...«, I sputtered. »Well, not necessary first responders in the medical sense«, she continued, »though as I said, they're all qualified, but in a more political sense. You caught them by surprise on your bike. When they took you in they ran a quick test and realised you could potentially experience what we call 'the turn'. Not everyone with an injury or illness »turns« of course. Otherwise our hospitals would be hotbeds of resistance. Our first task is to be caretakers of course. But, to be honest, many clinics do double as headquarters for the resistance. In short what happened to you is actually happens after a bodily trauma, in other words a type of corporeal reset. Think of your body as a system with an error that then is shut down and rebooted again. During this process some files

– let's call them your social conditioning – might be deleted, which makes you susceptible to new ideas, but moreover, it triggers your sense of agency. It's a survival mechanism. It is pure biology. It is pretty awesome«, she grinned.

My knees were buckling. It was all a little too much to process. The doctor fetched me a glass of water. »Don't worry«, she said sympathetically, »It's a good thing. You should feel elated. Your body reacted particularly strongly. They had a hunch when they brought you in, but my tests also confirmed this.« I swallowed hard. So Central Command must know this. How come they haven't put a stop to it? Are they just letting this happen? She raised an eyebrow and explained that in fact Central Command's hands were tied. They could not go raiding hospitals and clinics and it was impossible to prove who had experienced a newly discovered sense of agency. Many people did not even act on it. Furthermore, Central Command was not sure what was causing it: »They haven't put one and one together and realised that it is a combination of a bodily reboot and deceleration of pace. They seem to be obsessed with speed. The irony is that their strategies are backfiring with their acceleration and intensification of recruit trainings, the abolishing of speed limits and have you noticed all the public campaigns about not wasting time, increasing productivity of any kind and speeding up? Actually, we've seen casualties increase by 23 per cent just in the past month. The percentage of 'turns' has significantly gone up too.«

»Where do I go from here«, I asked. »You've already started before you knew it«, she replied. »Curiosity got the better of you. You'll figure it out. Remember that steadfastness literally means to be fixed in place.«

I went back to work realising that nothing would ever be the same again. Reality had changed forever. Procrastination had become a silent rebellion. Sitting idle was a gesture of defiance and my limp a marker of insubordination. That evening I returned to the beach with H and S. I looked on hopefully and imagined that now we were only three, but that we could easily become five, then ten, then legion, as long as we held our ground.



Rabih Mroué

Shooting Images

I was on the Internet navigating from one site to another, searching for facts that could tell me more about death in Syria.

I had been struck by one sentence:
»The Syrian protestors are recording their own deaths«.

I found a lot of material, but one group of videos grabbed me in particular, in which we witness a cameraman being shot by a sniper or member of the regime's forces.

These videos show the moments of *eye contact* between sniper and cameraman, when the gun's line of sight meets the camera's lens.

Double Shooting.

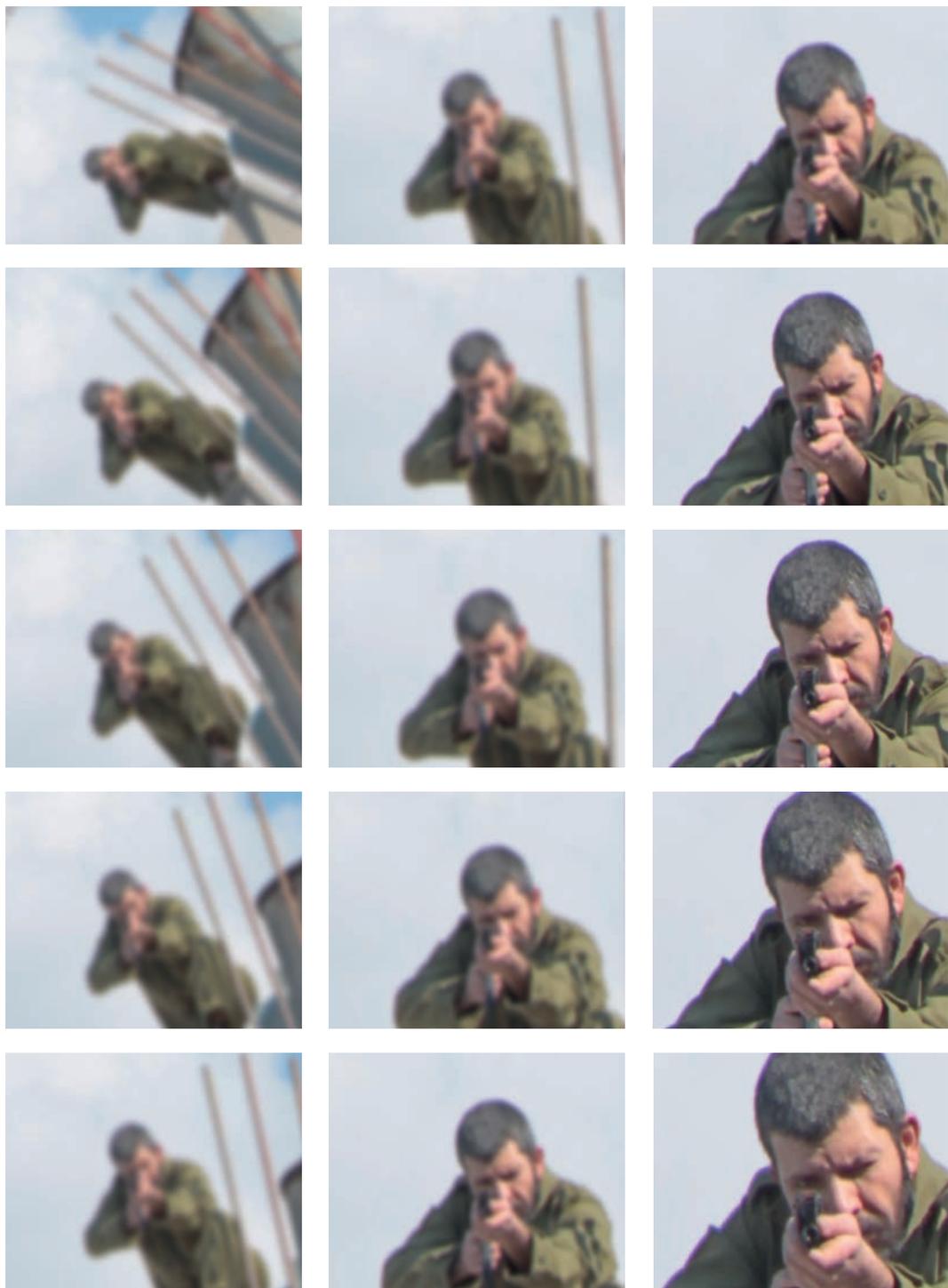
We see and hear the sniper shooting, and from the movement of the mobile phone we sense that the cameraman is falling to the ground.

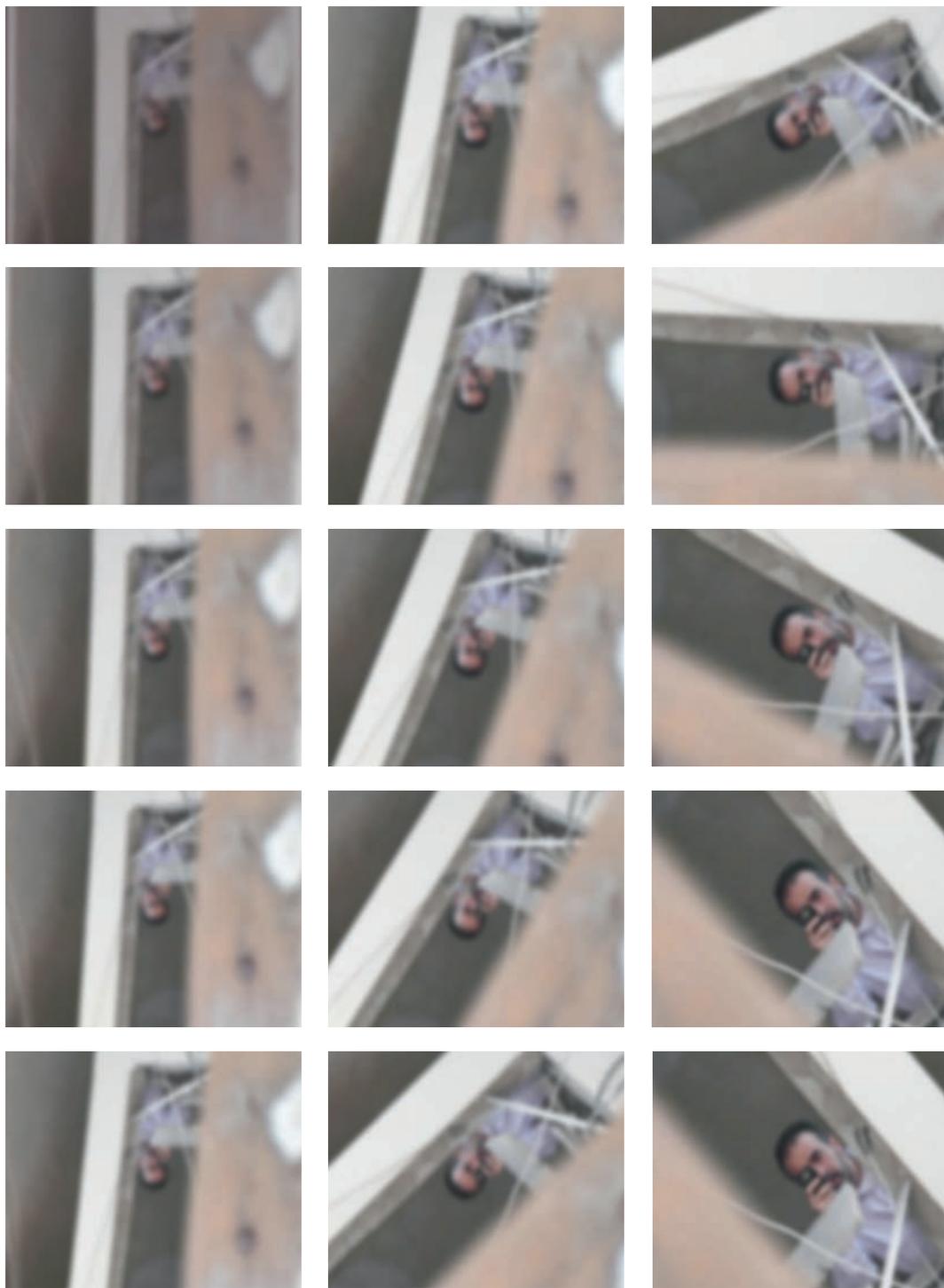
The cameraman is always *Hors champs* / off-camera.

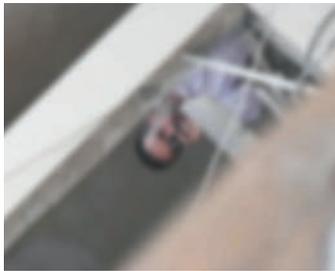
This sequence of photos is a re-enactment of one of the videos recorded by the Syrian protestors.

Now I am going to add sound to the images.

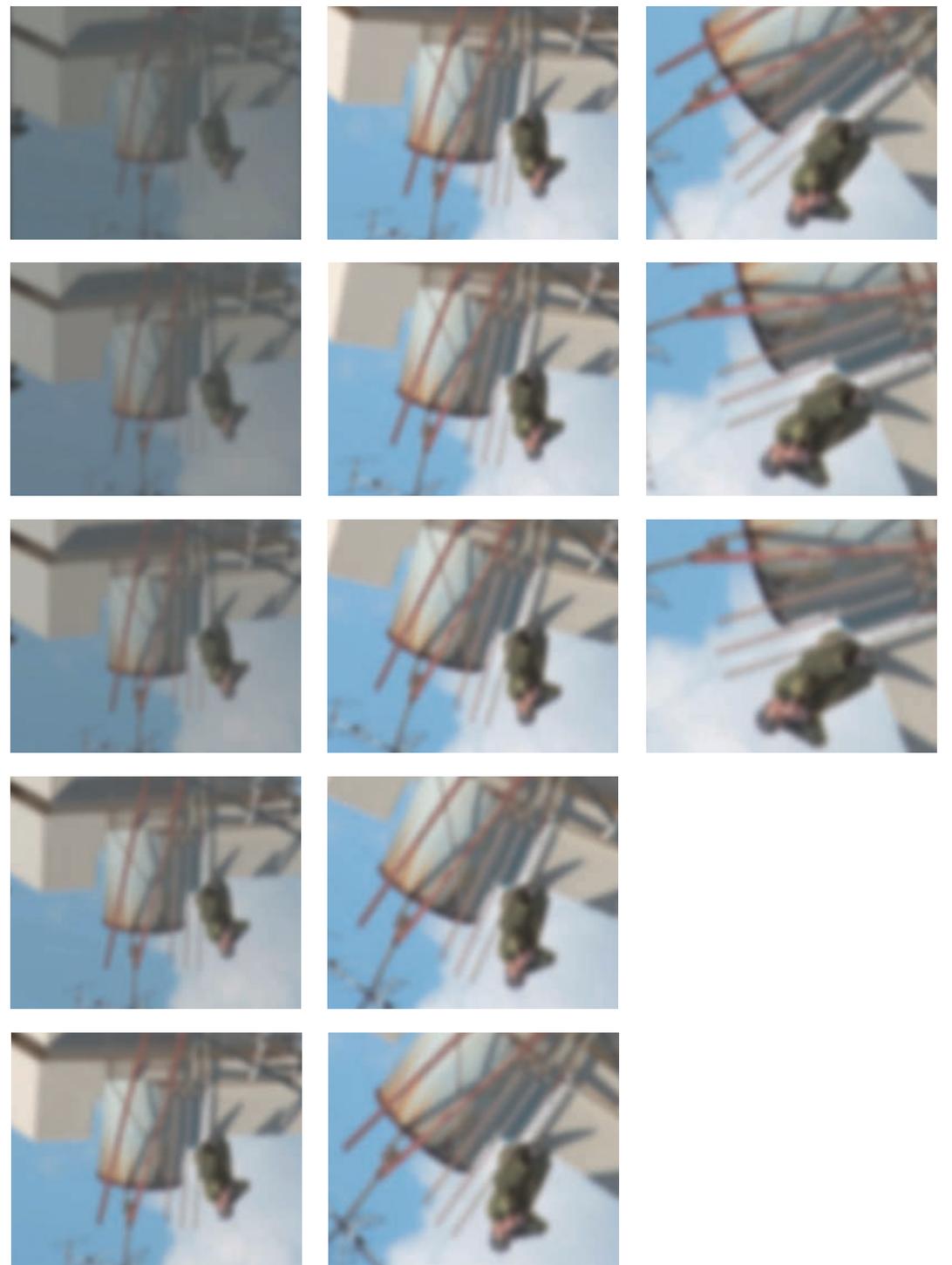
The victim is unknown to us because he always remains *bors-champs*.

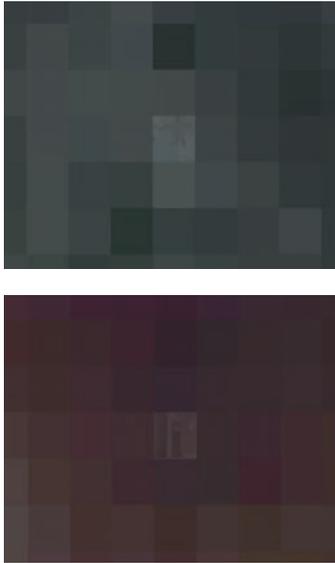






The camera is not mine.
It belongs to my friend Sarmad.
This is Sarmad.
He is a professional photographer.
He fixed the camera pointing towards the rooftop, and
then went there to play the role of the sniper.
I stayed behind his camera to shoot him
while shoots me.
I will be his target and he will be mine.
The rifle in his hands is mine.
I bought it especially for this scene.
It is a toy rifle. It is it a plastic one.
I added the sound of a shot to make it sounds real.
Sarmad added smoke effect at the top of the rifle to
make it appear more real.
He shoots. He hits his target.
The camera falls down. I fall as well.
Did he kill me?
Am I already dead?
Nobody knows because I am always **off-camera**.
But is there a way to bring the victim, the real Syrian
cameraman, into the field of view; inside the frame?
How can we make such victims visible?
Is it possible to see the face of the victim reflected on
the surface of the killer's eye?
This is me. You can see me inside Sarmad's eye.
This is Sarmad inside my left eye; the one that is
peeking through the lens.





*
Rabih Mroué's film *Shooting Images* was presented on 29 September 2012 at the Tanzquartier Wien as part of the season opening *IT IS NOT (A) FAIR*.

In pictures of people looking directly at the camera lens, there is always the possibility of seeing another, a hidden image; one that is miniscule, showing the reflection in the eyes of the subject (the cameraman) taking the picture.

There has always been complicity between war-making and picture-taking. When this complicity is broken, picture-taking becomes a weapon against war-making and vice-versa.

The only way to stop this loop is to cut the eye contact between them. And to cut this eye contact is to shoot in order to kill.

One way to put the »other« **hors-champs** is to kill him.

Sarmad is not a sniper.

I am not a victim.

We both work on videos and performances.

The real event took place in Syria in 2011.

The reenactment took place in Lebanon in 2012.

The distance between Syria and Lebanon could be equivalent to the distance between Sarmad and me. And between Sarmad and me there is much more than a war.

Sarmad and I, both live in the same country.

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P r o t e s t

Ivaylo Dichev

Before starting let me say a few words about the wave of indignation that has been spreading through the world we live in. There are a lot of reasons to be furious – the governments, the growing social differences, capital is no longer responsible to populations and countries, and so on.

But the paradox is that besides cases where there is a clear dictatorship which has to be fought, protests don't seem to be having clear results at the moment. There is no leadership, no centre, no ideology, no unity of movement and there is no project for the future. As a more general reflection one could ask whether this spreading general mistrust in politics and hence in the system is not actually part of the system. But my more particular topic here should be the way in which protests are staged and organised by civic actions, how the body is used in these activities, and whether in a way the form, the means, somehow affect the goals – the sense and the meaning of the thing itself. In a way I think – and that's my topic here – that aestheticising civic action, replacing ethical engagement by aesthetics,

is not innocent. It somehow changes the optics, the very way in which we fight for some goals.

First of all this new type of aestheticisation of politics and civic action is the result of a new media constellation that we are living in. The place of centralised and controlled state media has gradually been taken by an increasing number of consumer-oriented media which were subsequently doubled and amplified by digital networks. It is a passage from the media economy as an information shortage towards one of overproduction. Power itself no longer censors and diversifies information and therefore the strategy of rationing information by censorship is no longer effective. What power does instead is to submerge people with a torrent of details, expertise and other points of view. The first time this change became evident was probably in the first Gulf War when the American military was pouring out unnecessary details and explanations to a global audience. But the effect was that instead of having a public debate and clear positions, problems were blurred and remained unresolved.

This has started to affect strategies of citizens' protests alongside the break-up of ideologies and the fragmentation of causes. The ethical act of resistance like signing a petition or going on strike used to be a sufficient reason for public interest, which was even increased by censorship. In the world of overproduction and inflation of work and image, messages need aestheticising along with their ethical content. In this type of citizens' battle the social actor can no longer rely on the negative promotion of power, as it has become diffuse and polymorphous. The past wars' existence is the tragic, the comic the beautiful, the grotesque, the interesting and so on.

P r i v a t e
B o d i e s I n
P u b l i c S p a c e

The simplest form of public embodiment is stripping in public, as an act of literally making the body visible. The minimum act of transgression of public order combines sexual curiosity and civic courage. Curiously enough, before the 20th century it is much more linked with the biblical past, as it was

with the public nudity of biblically oriented sects like the Adamites, Bogomils or Doukhobors. During the 20th century nakedness was then usually used to fight for avant-garde causes. It is an interesting fact that the western European post-war period has known a large number of male strippers, whereas in eastern Europe it is usually sexy girls who strip, such as the Femen group in Ukraine who campaign for equal rights and against sexual exploitation. There is a culturally determined difference between male and female nudity; they have a different form of transgressive power. In Egypt even posting photos on one's blog can produce a serious public scandal, as did the photos of Aliaa Magda Elmahdy (picture 1) who fights against what she calls »social violence«: racism, sexism, sexual harassment and hypocrisy.

Exposing the private body in public seems to be another kind of protest. Such a body is taken out of its place, which is private space, and put in the public square. There it becomes an encum-

brance: it obstructs the traffic, it spoils the urban scene and disturbs the social order. Sitting or lying in public squares transforms human flesh into a medium you can sculpt or write on. Another type of exposing private bodies in public as a form of protest is camping in public space, staying and living there. This is a phenomenon that started in Boston in the early 70s but is now very globalised, because it is a type of civic action that is very easy to imitate and circulate. The tents one sees at various points in the world have this function: private activities like sleeping or eating become public. The militant then simply lives under the eyes of his or her fellow



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country-people who stop to ask questions and read posters on the tent, bring drinks or food, and sign petitions. Every tent becomes a sort of medium, a television or a theatre, so filling the public space with private bodies. An example of the public space represented through television is the squeezing of bodies into the TV frame that one saw during the televised Romanian revolution in December 1999. One person is reading a message, but many other people without any function are around them trying to get into the frame, try to be there. As Samuel Beckett wrote, »existing is being seen« – and somehow television conveys this idea. (pictures 2–7)

The new citizens' occupations as we see them in the US no longer have such problems: they do not want to act, but to be. The private body made visible, produces media events that enhance discussions and a redesigning of power lines within the public space. This may explain the rationale of such aestheticised civic actions, where the number of participants is often ridiculous but the wave created in traditional and new media is considerable. So you have a couple of people who are in the public space. They are not very numerous, it's not the masses of the late 19th or early 20th century where the



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masses shout and the leaders speak to them. (Imagine a meeting where Lenin spoke, or something like this: thousands and thousands of people.) Here you have just a couple of them, but they produce a considerable media effect. Why do they do this? How do they do it? Because they have found a very creative, a very interesting new strategy, a way to attract public attention. And I think on the one hand it's working, it is effective, but on the other hand it presents a problem, because instead of having many people mobilised, you have a couple

of people who somehow create images rather than real organisations.

Bodies carry stronger messages than words. Possibly because a word can be learned and imitated, whereas the body is seen as referent. You are at risk writing dangerous words on the wall, but the risk is doubled when you use your body to write on. In a patriarchy or a dictatorship this danger often proves to be very real. Stripping, camping, freezing in public seems to play with this old pattern of lending oneself to blows and humiliation. Foucault famously said that the question of authorship appears in antiquity when the question »who should be punished for these words« is asked. In the same way the protesters exposing a vulnerable body to violence or sneering it becomes a subject of social action.



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Protest as Merry-Making

Another set of public mobilisations follow the line of carnival and merry-making. For example Santa Cruz in California – the children are hitting a puppet of George Bush. (picture 8) It was election time and some people in the mall created this amusement for children. So it's carnivalesque, a very nice way of making politics. They follow the logic of the ritual of intensification where the outburst of emotions is managed and targeted by ritual specialists. Besides the traditional acting out of indignation, the new protest festivities rely on pleasure, drinking, music, artistic action, even lovemaking. How do



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we explain such a change? The ostentatious joy concentrated in the time and space of protest may have a consolidating effect: »It is better to be with us than on the other side« seems to be the message. »The party is here! There, on the other side you have but doll bureaucracy and selfish capitalists. The party is here, come with us!«

There seems to be a more media-oriented explanation: the visual culture imposed by television, nowadays intensified by digital media, does not support stern-faced politicians. On the screen you need to smile, to be cool, to act as a tranquilliser rather than an exciter. The TV or computer screens are objects in your home you live with, and unconsciously want them to produce positive emotions, not anxiety. Carnavalesque protests by a group that is called *Billionaires for bush* »leave no billionaire behind«. (picture 9) You know the slogan of an American politician »we'll leave nobody



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behind, no poor person behind«. »Leave no billionaire behind« is of course a *detournement* [diversion], the sort of turning around the sign of power. So the carnivalesque reversal is a favourite resource of this kind of protest. Zombie marches »I smell the money«, again a global thing. (picture 10) With some



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Halloween resources of course. But more generally it is a very common thing to transform, to theatricalise, to carnalise protest.

»Tahrir square«, says a journalist, »was essentially a comedy explosion«. And Robin Wright called her book on the Arab Spring *Rock the Casbah*. The whole spectrum of cultural jamming tactics and *detournement*, turning around of meaning to subvert the monologue of the ruling order (according to Guy

Debord) results in a sort of uninterrupted continuum ranging from politics to youth culture and back. A specific type of resistance group emerged in Milosevic's Serbia under the name of *Otpor!* This led to various imitations of resistance in Serbia and was soon imitated in other dubious democracies in eastern Europe such as *Pora!* (»it's time«) in Ukraine, and *MJAFT!* which means »enough« in Albanian. They were all small groups of western-educated youth in their 20s (they were actually, because most of them dissolved) who nevertheless produced a rapid media effect by using humour and theaterisation of their action which attracted a vast media coverage far beyond the real social impact these groups had.

In the regimes of semi-democracies (as it was in Serbia), which those countries could be called, the images of merrymaking protest first attracted the western media and then came back home reinforced by the interest of the foreign audiences. A special accent in those groups' programmes, or shall I say of most contemporary protest alliances (not only them, everybody

is like that I would say) was on the fact that they did not have a formal leader, instructor. Ideas are vague, identity was based not so much on structure of any kind, but on creativity and originality. There was an action by *Otpor!* where passers-by were allowed to hit a picture of Milosevic if they paid a dinar (»A Dinar for Change«, late 90s). (picture 11)



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The *MJAFT!* group in Albania imitated this later by staging protests like washing T-shirts with Albanian emblems on them. (picture 12) Of course



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washing means purifying and so on, because it was dirty, it needs to be cleaned. Or because there is an electricity shortage in Tirana, they asked people to bring generators to the

public space to power a light bulb they were holding in their hands. This was in protest against electricity price rises and it produced an enormous noise of course. In another action they threw toilet paper at the minister of the interior who had imprisoned a journalist. These were theatrical actions, where images are very important..

A journalist wrote: »Who were the *Otpor!* heroes? In an interview a list of names we might not expect appears: Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and unexpectedly *Monty Python's Flying Circus*.« So they were inspired by the peaceful protest of Gandhi but also by the *Flying Circus* and the gags of this well-known British group. And the style of this protest is very much similar to their comedy. The media, especially the visual media, has an insatiable appetite for these events. And this explains the unexpected success of such creative protests.

On the other hand, it also explains why they are short-lived. As one of the founders of *MJAFT!* told me: »At the 30th protest all of a sudden we looked at each other and thought yes, everyone knows where to stay, what to say, how

to act. We had done it so many times. It somehow no longer made sense.« And they sort of dissolved. Now some of them are involved in politics, or in business, but it is no longer an active group. Creative protest seemed to be like art: you cannot go on the same way forever. The problem is that the social and political reasons, that gave rise to groups are far from aesthetics and unfortunately have outlived most of them. In another action for a couple of days a Soviet monument in Sofia was painted like various American popular culture heroes by an unknown



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graffiti artist and entitled »up to date«. (picture 13)

D e e p
S y m b o l i s m

I call the last passage of types of aestheticisation »deep symbolism«. In fact this sort of thing presents itself as a symbolic ethical gesture (and the former two types of aesthetic protest draw on plastic arts and performance).

This one is definitely based on the word, actualising heavily charged cultural narratives and metaphors: religious and national symbolisms, sacrifice and hunger or fire, human chains of even drenching the prime minister's office in blood collected by militants. This human chain in August 1989 was called »The Baltic Way« just before the fall of communism, demonstrating that the Baltic countries wanted to separate from the Soviet Union. All three countries formed this human chain of some 600 kilometres, commemorating the sad event of the 1939 Ribbentrop-Molotov pact.

Another example is the hunger strike by Anna Hazare in India, making the link with the example of Gandhi, so again a type of action very deeply entrenched in the culture, produced by an artist and public positions. This man was on hunger strike not for independence but against corruption. The most curious example I found was a lot of people in Taiwan protesting against the election of the prime minister by collecting blood and then spilling it over his office. (pictures 14–15) Blood is of course a very potent symbol, charged



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with fraternity, sacrifice, with whatever you want, you can produce many interpretations. That's why I call it »deep symbolism«, because it goes deep into a culture, or is supposed at least to be very fundamental to this culture.

But why should this be another type of aesthetisation rather than a deep moral reaction to injustice? Because these deeply rooted symbols are not used in traditional way but creatively selected, arranged and staged. Buddhist monks are not supposed to be involved in politics, Christianity is universal and should oppose nationalism, not support it. And even when somebody really makes a sacrifice, like Mohamed Bouazizi in Tunisia, this circulation of image and story via digital communications,

the commands, the interpretations, the conflicting usages create a strong field of aesthetics.

Deep symbolism also confronts us with the question on the universal and the culturally specific in protest. Universal imitative aspects of citizenship, naked or painted bodies, tents or occupations, ridiculing and theatricalisations help us understand that this is not about some particular interest, but about visions of the common good. Traditional and contextual elements, religion, sacrifice, nation and history, touch the deepest emotional foundations of culture. These two aspects combined create the mediagenic potential of contemporary protest. However, there is a problem in passing sacrifice into the media, into live media. In tradition sacrifice was a narrative, distanced from us by mythical time and thus subject to interpretations but not of instrumentalisation. The modern media world transforms the gesture, makes it contagious but also short-lived. So Bouazizi's predecessor in Europe was Goethe's *Werther*, whose love suicide was imitated by scores of youths throughout the

Continent. And like the mythic figure again, this dissemination was possible because of this emerging media world, the transparency of the world through the media. Whereas when you go back in time and think about classical, traditional mythology, traditional sacrifice, you see that those figures were distanced in time and they couldn't easily be used for political reasons. So unlike the mythical figures, like Jesus for instance, Bouazizi's message was soon used up, the media again soon found that his story was not what it seemed. The story became too complex to follow. Because the media produce one event but they look for something else to show, so again it was this second event after the sacrifice of Bouazizi, they found out that in fact the story was slightly different, people started to talk about it, it was used up. So the immolation by fire had an immediate effect and shattered social foundations.

Summing up a couple of problems here, in all these stories aesthetisation follows the logic of the media market even if it criticises, even if the citizens try to hijack and try to turn around messages.

Every action needs to be new, interesting, previously unseen. This competition for attention replaces the mobilization of what used to be the masses. Creative freedom is very important, we do not want to comply with discipline from any organisation or party. The media then replaces mass movements, and the political horizon is reduced to the irrational act of indignation. Causes are rapidly fragmented as individualisation is the central effect of this process. The authorship of civil action is a paradoxical concept: you have the protest, which is very creative, very interesting, then you have this automatically producing the idea of some author, of somebody who did this, some creative person. And that's a contradiction. Creativity, protest, author, civic movements – isn't that a little bit of a problem, where strange alliances are produced momentarily, not based on ideas but on indignation, merrymaking or curiosity? Small groups equipped with cameras, telephones, social networks, produce big effects on passive audiences – passive audiences, unfortunately, watching all this on television. (For example the Indignados

in Spain all say we are not right, we are not left. What does that mean? They don't want to join the political system, they don't want politics, they don't want political power. And I think, that the main problem today is the disappearance of political power and will. So in this way, saying I don't want politics, I don't want power, I don't want government and so on, just somehow you make the problem even worse. Because that's what capital wants.) So, as I said at the beginning, the protest produced in this way turns out to be an important part of the system itself.

There was a joke in socialist Czechoslovakia: Somebody goes into a public square and starts throwing out leaflets. The militia immediately comes and arrests him. They take him to the headquarters and the chief looks at the leaflet and says: »But you haven't written anything on these leaflets.« And he says: »Well everybody knows everything anyway.«

*

This text is an edited version of Ivaylo Dichev's lecture *Aesthetizing protest. New scenographies for revolution*, which took place on 9 December 2011 at the Tanzquartier Wien as part of *SCORES No 4: under protest*.

*T h e I n c i d e n t a l
I n s u r g e n t s*

Basel Abbas & Ruanne Abou-Rahme

an extract



We are here where we *can not*
but be



at the tipping point
or point of foreclosure
Performing the *gestures* of the post-
in the heart of the colonial
Burying the liberation
in the *never was* of the *almost happened*

We are on the fault lines of a shifting terrain
using a *dead* language
Unable to imagine a different
letter, sentence, lexicon

To think of the *origin* of this power and its *mutability*



We are *believing* and *dis-believing*
We are in the midst of the *not yet material*
or perhaps the *already* determined
inhabiting a time of radical potentiality and its collapse
We are in search of a new language
in need of this
always on the verge
always becoming and yet...
we hold on to *dead language*

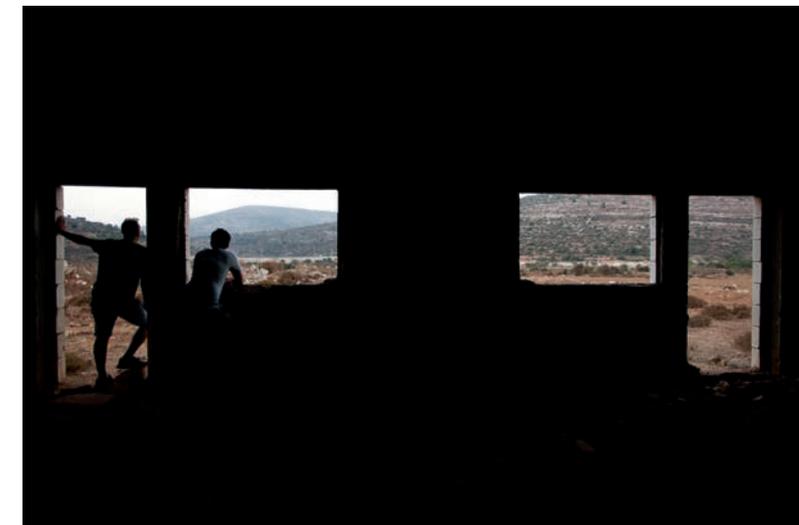


We feel the *density* of the ongoing moment
See time as density that is breathing, folding, moving
See the archaic in the contemporary
And yet the *perpetual present* expands
swallowing all other moments
propelling our imaginary back into *crisis*



Still we are in search of ways to see
what we are not yet able to see

We are here, where we can not but be
seeking other ways of *being* and *becoming*-
always a question of position



of the need to be full of desire

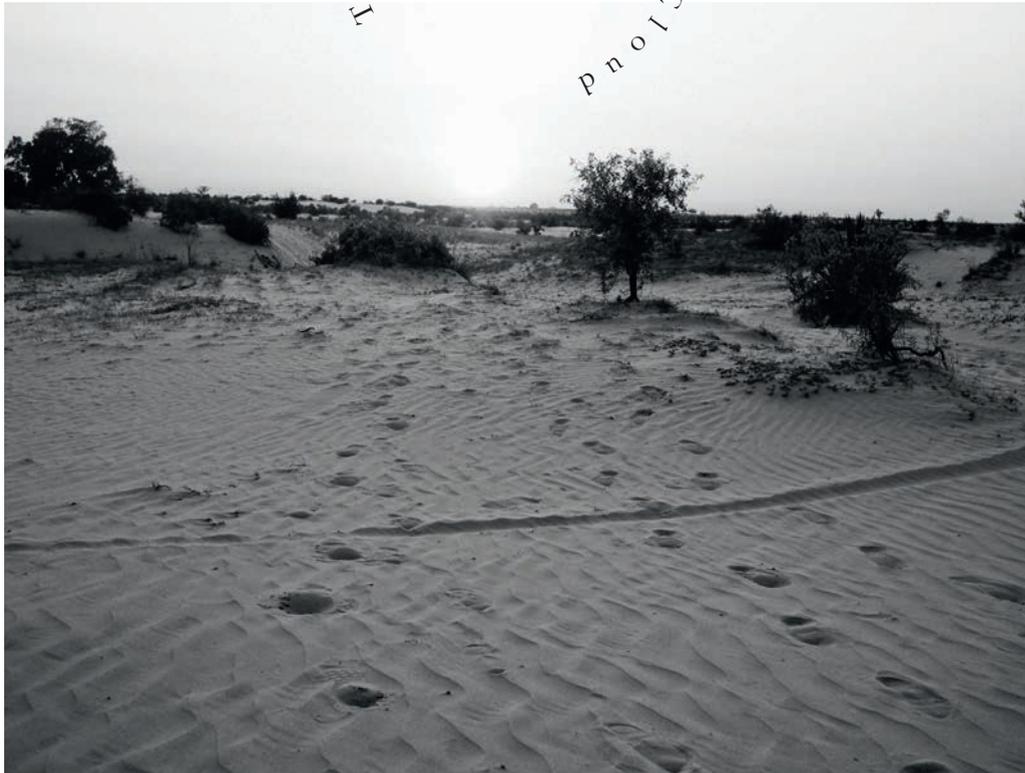
To Be Anonymous
To Reappear As Another Figure
To Have Many Returns
The Tribe
The Beach Beneath The Street
The Invisible Committee
The Inoperative Committee
The Coming Insurrection
The Incidental Insurgents
The Call
The Year Of Dreaming Dangerously
The Situationist
The Letterists
The Bonnot Gang
The Gang Of Abu Jildah And Armeet
The 1936 Revolt
The Paris Commune
The Infarealists
The Visceral Realists
The Incidental Artists
The Illegalists
The Band Of Outsiders
The Hour Of The Furnaces
The Communist Manifesto
The Memoirs Of A Revolutionary
The Savage Detectives
The Missing Vinyls
The Stolen Records
The Untimely
The Artist As Bandit
The Bandit
The Beat Generation
The Feda'ee
The Prisoner Of Love
The Punks
The Lost Manuscripts
The Situation



*

Basel Abbas' and Ruanne Abou-Rahme's lecture performance *The Incidental Insurgents* was presented on 20 June 2013 at the Tanzquartier Wien as part of *SCORES No 7: intact bodies*.

The Geopolitics of the
Crisis in the
Crisis



Photos (c) Moises Saman / Magnum Photos

Every year hundreds of refugees and undocumented migrants are kidnapped in Ethiopia, Sudan and the surrounding areas. Once captured they are sold to organised gangs in the Sinai desert, who trade their bodies in exchange for ransom from relatives and friends. Ninety-five per cent of the hostages are Eritreans desperate to escape the repressive and poor living conditions in their country. They include men, women, children and accompanying infants, in search for a better life in Europe or Israel. Their vulnerability makes them a particularly inviting target. Leaving Eritrea requires hard-to-obtain travel visas, leading many to pay traffickers to smuggle them out. Once across the border they often deliberately burn their passports so as to avoid repatriation. Others are forcefully dispossessed of their IDs once they have been sold off to criminal gangs.

Relatives and friends rarely seek help from security forces for fear that the hostages will be arrested or killed in release operations. Human-rights activists have reported numerous occasions where captives have been shot by Egyptian or Israeli border police soon after they were freed (van Reisen, Estefanos, & Rijken, 2012). This pervasive fear enables the kidnapers to operate by and large untroubled by unwanted attention. Demands for ransom can reach up to \$50,000 for each hostage held.

All this is well documented by human-rights activists, researchers and the news media, yet their reports have so far not produced any effective response. The Egyptian authorities reject any responsibility for the hostages, based on the fact that they have entered the country illegally. Going after the kidnapers themselves, on the other hand, has proven difficult, because of the ongoing conflict between the Egyptian military and the armed insurgency in Sinai.

The ineffectiveness of testimonial evidence in preventing crimes against humanity is of course nothing new in the history

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of human-rights violations. The lack of political intervention against the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, Rwanda or Darfur comes as powerful reminder that visual or oral evidence is by no means a guarantee for mobilising political action or support. Yet the fateful trap of the Eritrean hostages points to a constitutive shift in the political economy of suffering and testimony, whose ethical implications have yet to be fully understood. In what follows I am reading this shift in the context of the wider neo-liberal restructuring of political and moral publics and their articulation with new communicative domains. The current juncture of personalised mass communication and human mobility, I will suggest, introduced a whole new layer of sovereign authority upon the contemporary order, in which new states of exception can flourish and traditional domains of power over life are fundamentally transformed.

Visual or oral testimony is never self-evident or self-explanatory. They require purposeful interpretation to produce cultural sensibilities for action or change. As Keenan (2002, p. 115) writes, left to itself the image compels nothing, nor does it dictate any particular response. It remains a cultural form without guarantees, just like the testimony; always available for reinterpretation, »where everything is open to abuse and appropriation... shaking ground indeed« (ibid.).¹

And yet the testimony persists as a primary medium through which ethical claims are negotiated. Human-rights activists heavily depend on the circulation of images, symbols and personal accounts of suffering to connect audiences to political projects and to evoke sympathy and compassion in support of bodies in need (McLagan, 2007, p.309). For most of the post-WWII era, this mobilisation of conscience has relied on the highly regulated networks of television. They have enabled groups such as *Amnesty International*, *Médecins Sans Frontières* and others to create political momentum for a humanitarian or

1 The images of ethnic cleansing in Srebrenica, Bosnia, here are a powerful case in point. They eventually convinced the international community to intervene, yet only through peace-keeping forces, without a legal mandate to stop or confront the warring groups. This allowed genocidal killings to persist right in front of the eyes of international peace keepers, leading to widespread condemnation of the UN's response.

moral cause. As McLagan (2007, pp. 309 – 310) suggests, the corporeality of the body has provided a critical vehicle for the strategic conscription of human empathy into political action. Confronting audiences with testimonial evidence of bodies in pain created a sensuous link between the bodies represented on screen and the bodies in the audience, enabling viewers to recognise themselves in the vulnerability of distant others on display. The shared human condition of embodied existence, in other words, provided the interpretative foil necessary to create an intersubjective space of exchange and identification. It made room for the account of individual suffering to reappear as a recognisable part of the shared human condition from which ethical responsibilities and obligations could be inferred.

The highly individualised landscape of contemporary mass self-communication has radically changed the conditions of possibility for the cultivation of ethical sensibilities through such crafted choreographies of affect. It invited a whole new range of actors to participate in the moral economy of mediated suffering, using far more flexible and targeted modes of assembly to create private publics that do not necessarily share common causes with the public domain. The propaganda machine of ISIS and the communication strategy of the Sinai kidnappers are just two examples here. They come as a harsh reminder of the fact that the persuasive power of testimony is no longer solely in the hands of the victims but rather has become an active instrument of war.

The Sinai kidnappers have proven extremely resourceful in exploiting the affective resonance of mediated suffering. They do not contact the family and relatives of their prisoners directly, but rather force the hostages themselves to call and beg for money in exchange for their release. The hostages are often tortured while still on the phone to increase the emotional pressure and to push for rapid payment. Those who cannot

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or do not pay risk being killed or harvested for organs that can be traded to make up for the outstanding sum. Emotional blackmail by phone is of course a tactic used in most hostage situations. Yet the key difference here is that these calls do not come from secret or untraceable locations. They are made on regular phone lines registered with mobile service providers which, at least in theory, would allow anyone interested in freeing the hostages to locate and identify the kidnappers. What prevents their arrest is the legal and political impasse and complacency surrounding refugee and migrant populations. This impasse cannot be explained with the ineffectiveness of state and humanitarian actors alone. It requires taking a closer look at how long standing political and moral deficits articulate to the emergence of new forms of sovereign power as a direct result of global communication networks on a planetary scale. The universal addressing scheme of cloud computing and mobile phone companies, as Benjamin Bratton (2012) suggests, has linked bodies, objects and events into an abyss-like field of information exchange in which the old Westphalian order of territorial jurisdiction is increasingly overwritten by new biopolitical regimes. The flexible system of IP addresses and geo locators, in this view, confronts us with a new type of sovereign, that shifts the ability to regulate movement, transactions and the well-being of populations away from inter-governmental organisations and the state.

Bratton's observation rests on the following assumption: for a thing or event to participate in the world it needs to have an address, a unique identity that makes it available for connections with other things. On its own, it is not present. It needs to be made into an »it«, with a discrete location, to become recognisable, addressable and marked. This has traditionally been achieved by formal addressing tables, such as post codes, street addresses, or unique citizen ID numbers. Together they





have provided the key political technologies for the organisation of political space in the modern era that has both demarcated and legitimated the sovereign authority of the state (Bratton, 2016, p. 193; Bratton, 2012). The global addressing scheme of mobile phone and internet providers no longer corresponds with the political geography inherited from this Westphalian order. It has superimposed a whole new layer of sovereign actors onto the territorial grid capable of transcending national borders and jurisdictions, leading incommensurate logics of governance and geography to overlap and collide.

Social media such as Facebook, Google Maps, or mobile phone apps do not distinguish between citizens, migrants, kidnappers or refugee populations. They are just as likely to provide their services irrespective of the user's legal or political status or circumstance. This is not to suggest that there are no authentication mechanisms and security checks built into the global communication infrastructure or to ignore the increasing encroachment on personal data by national and international security agencies. The paradoxical coexistence of ever tighter mechanisms of electronic surveillance and biometric regimes and the acceleration of unregulated population movements rather points to the asymmetrical mix of formal and informal jurisdictions that defines our current moment, and that lead public and private laws to feed off of each other in ways that render the nature and scope of sovereign jurisdictions ever more uncertain and unclear. As Bratton (2012) remarks, states are increasingly taking on the form of cloud-based platforms by extending their reach to far-flung data centres that are formally not part of their political control. Data and communication service providers, on the other hand, increasingly overrule the state's capacity to regulate and track social connectivity and participation, re-scripting the public sphere alongside the competitive market principles of corporate law. The result is

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Monika Halkort's lecture *The geopolitics of the cloud* was presented on 20 June 2013 as part of *SCORES No 7: intact bodies* at the Tanzquartier Wien.

an explosive mix of »productive accidents«, Bratton (ibid.) concludes, in which new states of exception can flourish and new boundaries can be drawn.

Bearing this in mind it becomes possible to see how the tragic fate of the Eritrean refugees, stacked away in secretive desert prisons, stands for a far wider shift in the troubled history of publicity, indifference and mediated suffering. The fact that their testimony has so far not succeeded in attracting sufficient attention is not simply the effect of the political and moral deficits or the over-saturation of pain in human-rights discourse. It shows how the privatisation of political and moral publics through new addressing schemes articulates with the wider neoliberal restructuring of common interests, and recalibrates social and ethical imperatives alongside individual interests and capital gains. The result is a radical transformation of the public sphere into an infinitely scalable entity that enabled the kidnappers to cynically exploit the strategic purchase of human testimony and to perform the most inhuman acts of violence »live« in front of carefully crafted audiences, whose compassion has effectively fenced off unwanted public attention and drastically reduced the ability to mobilise action in support of the refugees. Being able to contain the persuasive power of testimony within the private networks of family and friends has left the decision to let live or let die safely in the hands of the kidnappers, conjuring up a system of affective capture in which the distinction between lives to be saved and lives to be abandoned is made contingent on the availability of capital and private funds.

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(P O L I T I C A L)
C O N S T E L L A T I O N S

if becoming public is the condition of the political (according to Judith Butler), then publicly acting and negotiating one's own body to other bodies, to other lives, to other convictions is an essential precondition of the political, as the risk of isolation, as a stance and standpoint (also in the spatial sense).

constellations are assemblages of people and incorporate the specific way in which they relate to one another, are dependent on one another, determine one another, according to which rules they situate themselves or interrelate to each other, distance or differentiate themselves. a constellation is determined by the mutual understanding of those involved, their differences, their conflicts, as well as by the margins or their surroundings, their perforations, their impossibility, their limit.

in constellations it is thus about the location of one's own body to or with others. in constellations one gains an awareness of the structure of which one is part, that co-determines the location of every body, every emotional percipient and thinking or affected subject.

in their meeting or comparison, the experience of various constellations in succession or to one another can provide information on their differing nature. a situative succession of different constellations can produce completely different attitudes in individual bodies, attitudes to oneself and to others that change, that emerge from differing references to the respective surrounding situation of which one is part (whether one wishes to be or not).

a constellation is always a social event that takes place.

because they cannot recognize freer constellations
because they are not used to them
because then they have to observe
what they are rooted in
what they are stuck in
what they were inserted into
and not only what is taking place in front of them

no image in front of them
that has already been signified
but it is in them and around them
constellations are not stories
that take place in front of them
but situations of which one is part

evacuating the present

time
a remnant
threatened

who do I want to be
who can I be
who is me
now in this chair
looking at this greenery
I alien to myself
a concept for oneself and
others
close to collapse
gentle movement this time
no violence
that would be something
new

thus
what right do I assume
with this look at or into
myself
while everything is really
collapsing around me
now after the struggle
orienting oneself
in the changes ideologies politics
capitulation
I capitulate for this moment
give up being able
to understand something or
all of it
I
collapse outside and inside
myself

time
being able to feel again
in the moment that is
not me an idea
of the productive future
that hastily burns every present
always still in this chair
looking at the wind-blown
greenery
I love that

territories
guarded borders
everywhere
my body my territory
that escapes me

thus
this life having started
with exploitation
everywhere
where
does something work
differently or
can I also do differently?
exploited exploiters
these hunters of ideas
these cheap victims of the
system

but now I am here
deformed
but here

a selection of different modules which in the context of urban laboratory IDEAL PARADISE are applied, tested and extended in urban space. these modules are a basic practice in the public space, in informed rooms and will be combined and composed in spatial and temporal scores. these modules build the foundation of diverse basic techniques. performative experts or possible other users of the city should be able to practice every module. the numbering of the modules ensues the chronology of their annotation.

claudia bosse
12 october 2015

module 1
SUBVERSIVE
DIALOGUES
2 persons in a dialogue outdoors or in big inside space used by many people; shouting as a „conversation in distance» (at least 15 meters) the dialogue can start close-by, but it would continuously span or directly emerge in distance. at high frequented places, where the positioning spatially includes the other visitors.

following a topic and a basic script content and define the different rhythms of the each speechact of the dialogue partner

topics:
- organisation of knowledge, collections, cultural projections - territory and appropriation
- ideology and terror
- anthropology and erotic racisms
- perceiving objects
- ritual, fetish und other social systems

module 2
STANDING
standing lonely
long lasting and alone – at exposed spots
a solitary immobilisation or confrontation of a person with the public space.

module 3
EMOTION
alone at a public space
spreading an emotion
an ongoing infection of the other users of the space
generating and initiating actions through duration and occupation of that space. therefore diverse strategies exist.

module 4
CHOREOGRAPHY
in a countermovement
an artificial sequence of movements in a clearly different informed space that doesn't allow that choreography in the first-hand. those choreographies could be developed through different relations according the respective spaces, and they also could be compiled or implanted from one to another room. Probably alone or together as a synchronous chorus (addressing a distinct direction) or several people simultaneously with different perspectives

module 7
POSITIONING with
MEASUREMENTS
be where you are - conscious and with your muscles and mind.
choose and take a position in space as an attitude, a perspective. be activated with your mind, your concentration, and your muscles. receive informations from this spot. stay for the entire duration of the module on the chosen spot . you can turn, move around or shift the body to different levels on this position. from there, measure or relate with different parts or articulations of the body towards concrete buildings, constructions, elements, objects, vehicles or plants in the space. you measure or relate with your body towards different consistency of appearances in the space. do not become a sign, but stay liquid and active in any relation.

module 8
PERMANENT
RELATIONS
take a position in space, anchor your presence (have a look at module 7) and shift permanently the relations to which you organize your body. It's a high speed relational choreography searching for movements which are related to things outside of your body but which resonate in your body. It is a state of movement.

module 9
ACOUSTICALLY
INFORMED
MOVEMENTS
a dynamic movement of the body in space. starting by positioning on a spot in space. Let the body be moved by all acoustic informations and let your body follow the dynamic of the sound, or produce sounds by yourselves and let the body move by this. the movement is in both cases the reaction to the sound.

module 11
MARKING/
CONSTRUCTING A
TERRITORY
marking space, fragment space, establish constructions, shelters, taboo signs (a marked no-go- area) with objects or with the body
and use the body inhabiting your constructions. marking the space is not about the result, but about the rhythm and act of constructing a territory. the time, the interaction and the trace of your acts in objects are interesting

module 13
INSERTING your body
AND producing
DIFFERENCE (or disappear and reappear) insert your body into the functionalities and accepted practices and habits of a space. become „invisible» or normal in this space. from being with the others start to create differences. allow the difference stand for the difference and transform your appearance and behaviour back into the „normal» registers of madness that is inscribed in each space and its functions.

module 14
INTERCHANGE
bodies/ movements and
spaces
work with material you
have created and you have
experienced in a particular
informed space and trans-
pose these movements,
rhythms, relations into an
other informed space
which would not offer this
qualities from space rela-
tion developed
movements.

the series *IDEAL PARADISE* is a multi-format project
and the last part of the research series (*katastrophen 11/15*)
by claudia bosse / theatercombinat, which started in 2013

(april / mai 2015) installation and performance
a first step to IDEAL PARADISE
donaufestival krems 2015

(mai / august 2015) a six-room-installation
a second step to IDEAL PARADISE
weltemuseum wien / impulstanz vienna

(august 2015) performance as part of the installation
a third step to IDEAL PARADISE
weltemuseum wien / impulstanz vienna

(october – december 2015)
urban laboratory IDEAL PARADISE
on various locations in vienna

(march 2016) *IDEAL PARADISE clash*
performance, tanzquartier wien, halle G

(june 2016) *IDEAL PARADISE* as a nomadic city
composition on three different locations in vienna

(october 2016) *IDEAL PARADISE*
shifting space installation
performance lectures WSAP bucharest

(november 2016) *the last IDEAL PARADISE*
fft düsseldorf

IDEAL PARADISE is a production by theatercom-
binat, financed by the city of vienna and other project-
specific partners



Amund Sjølie Sveen

S o u n d o f F r e e d o m

S o u n d
S 8 U H D

We humans understand the world through sound. Together with vision, hearing is our most important sense. Sound is our bridge to reality.

As Wikipedia puts it: »Sound is used by many species for detecting danger, navigation, hunting, and communication. The atmosphere of the earth, water, and virtually any physical phenomenon... produces and is characterized by its unique sound, such as fire rain wind and surf.«

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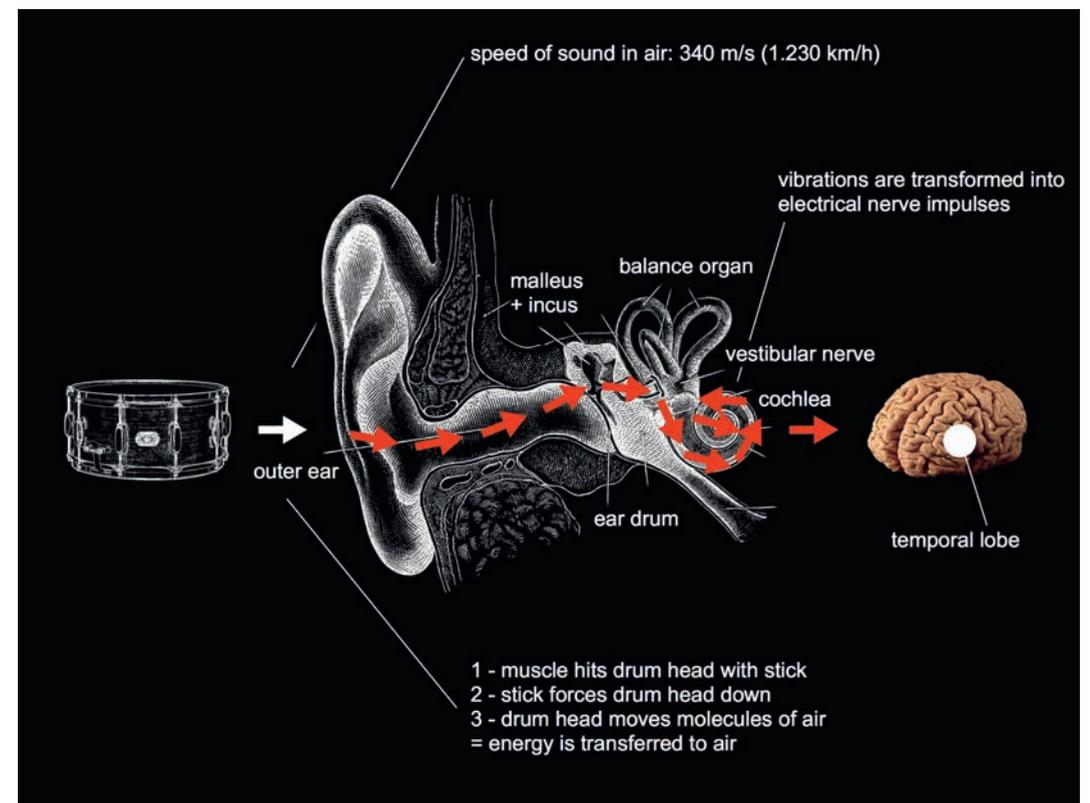
S o u n d
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S 8 U H D

Sound is also the basis of human communication. The first thing a baby does when it enters the world is to make sound. Later comes language, and before language is music. According to modern brain research, our brains behave in much the same way when we hear music as when we eat, when we have sex or when we take drugs. As Friedrich Nietzsche put it: »Without music, life would be an error.«

So we are talking about the very essence of life; we are talking food, sex, drugs and rock'n'roll. Or, of course, food, sex drugs and Mozart.



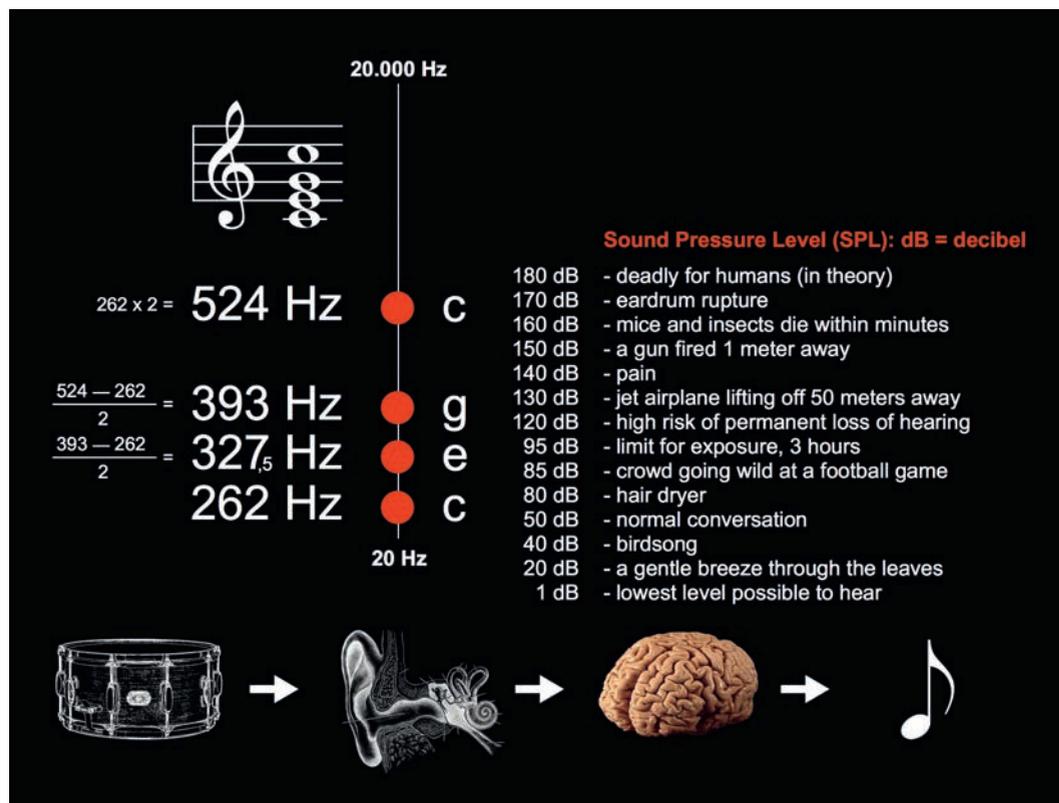
A i r
p r e s s u r e

Sound is a phenomena entirely created inside the brain. If somebody hits a drum, what happens is this: the muscle power of the drummer's arm hits the drumhead with the stick. The power of the stick forces the drum head down for a moment, and the drumhead moves the air in front of it and creates a sound wave. The sound waves move

through the air at about 340 metres per second, then they reach the ear. The outer ear collects the sound waves. The eardrum transmits the vibrations to the inner ear. The vibrations are transformed into electrical nerve impulses. The nerve impulses travel through the eighth cranial nerve up to the brain. And finally, in the temporal lobe of the cerebral cortex

of the brain, the energy from the arm hitting the drum is turned into what we humans experience as the concept of »sound«.

A sound wave is a variation in the air pressure. The waves can be large or small, and the size – the volume – of the sound wave is measured in decibels (dB):



- 1 dB is the lowest level it is possible to hear.
- A gentle breeze through the leaves is about 20 dB.
- Birdsong is around 40 dB
- A normal conversation is 50 dB
- A hair dryer is around 80 dB
- The crowd going wild at a football game is 85 dB
- 95 dB is the Norwegian health authorities' limit for 3 hours' exposure
- At 120 dB there is a high risk of permanent loss of hearing
- A jet plane lifting off 50 metres away is 130 dB



- At 140 dB, you will feel pain in you ears.
- A gun fired 1 metre away is 150 dB
- At 160 dB, mice and insects will die within minutes
- At 170 dB, your eardrum will rupture
- 180 dB is deadly for humans (at least in theory)

A sound wave is a periodic variation in the air pressure. The waves – large or small – can come close together or far apart. If they come far apart the tone is low. If they come close together the tone is high. The distance between the waves – the frequency – is measured in hertz (Hz).

Emotional pressure

Music is a direct line into the human emotions and the subconscious. As the Muzak company puts it: »Audio Architecture is emotion by design.... It bypasses the resistance of the mind and targets the receptiveness of the heart.«

According to Charles Darwin, music is »firmly associated with some of the strongest passions an animal (human) – is capable of feeling«. As early as 1621, the Oxford scholar Robert Burton was already onto the same thing, and wrote that »music is a sovereign remedy against despair and melancholy, and will drive away the devil himself.«

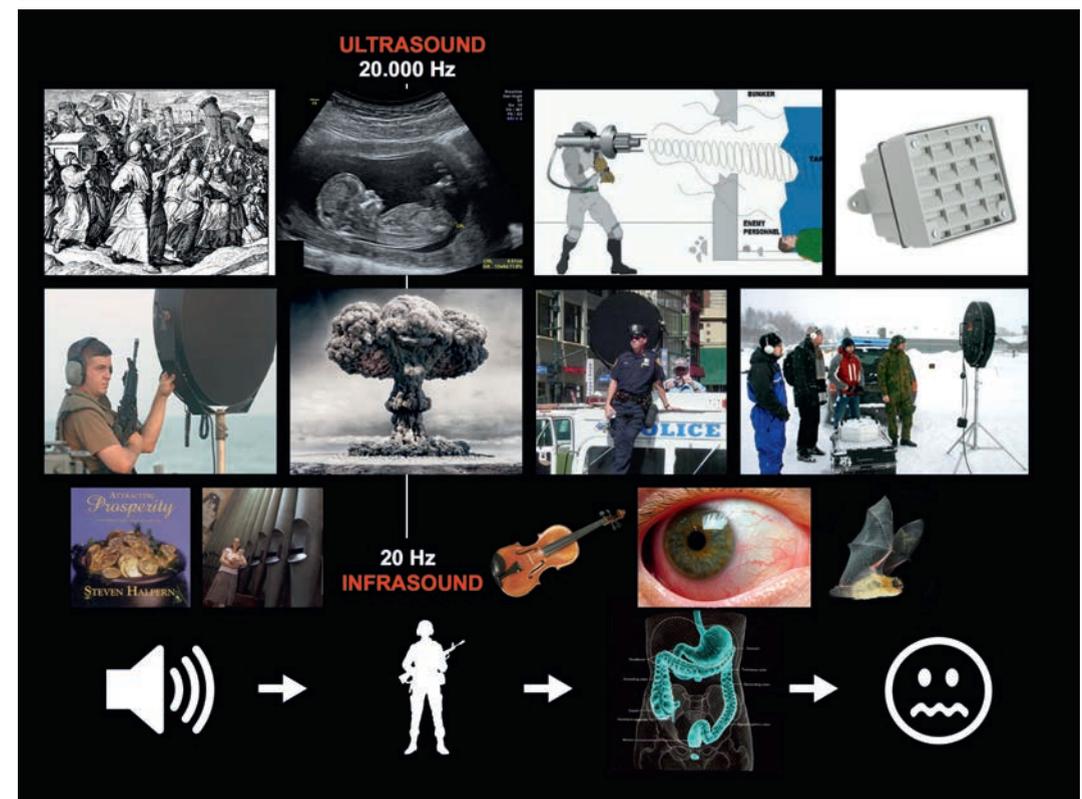
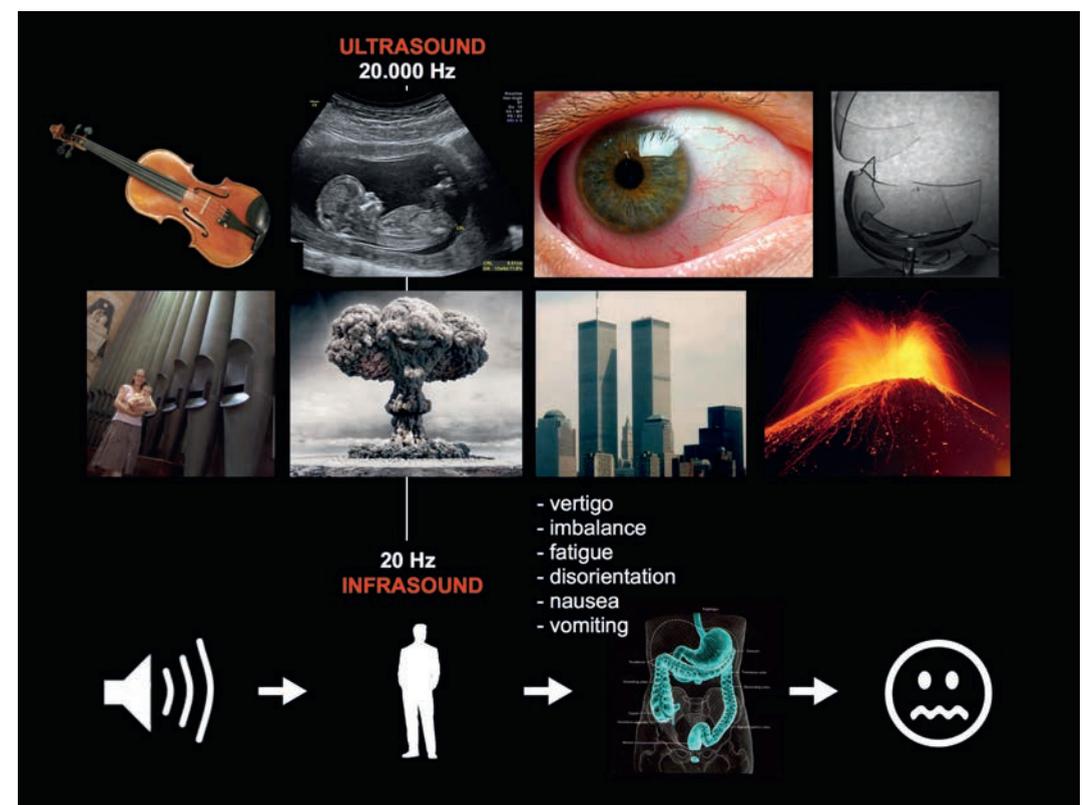
And if music can be used to make unhappy people happy, it can certainly be used to make not so smart people smarter. In 1994, the *New York Times* reported that »Listening to Mozart actually makes you smarter«. Research showed that people who first listened to music by Mozart – the K.448, *Sonata for Two Pianos in D Major* to be precise – performed better on a spatial-temporal test, part of a standard IQ-test.

Later the test was repeated on rats, and the scientists concluded that rats listening to Mozart found their way out of a maze faster than rats sitting in silence, rats listening to white noise or rats listening to the music of Philip Glass.

But we do not need to use Mozart to affect the brain. What we popularly call brainwaves are electromagnetic activity in the brain. Brainwaves vary according to what we are doing, they vary according to what the brain is doing. When we are awake brainwaves move fast. When we are sleeping they move very slowly. When the brain is in the half-conscious state between sleep and wakefulness – or during meditation – we have 4–7 brainwaves every second, so they have a frequency of 4–7 Hz. These specific brainwaves are called theta waves.

There is a physical phenomena called entrainment, which describes the fact that systems in nature that are close to each other and running at different frequencies – in different tempo – will synchronise over time.

That also goes for the human brain. The brain will synchronise with frequencies it is stimulated by. If we listen to pulsating sounds, our brainwaves tend to end up in the same tempo as the beats. And this is of course exactly what humans have been doing for thousands of years – from shamans to rave parties – entering a state of trance through beating of the drum. Trance music typically has 4–7 beats per second.



P a i n
p r e s s u r e

The ability of sound waves to start vibrations in human internal organs, make people defecate and vomit, has of course made acoustics an interesting field for military research:

There is the American *Gayle Device*; a portable one-man sound weapon that ‘confuses and irritates’, presented in a research report on acoustic weapons by the Norwegian Military Research Institute in 2003.

There is the *Directed Stick Radiator*, popularly called the acoustic bazooka; a prototype made by the American company ATC in 2008.

There is the *Mosquito*, produced by the British company Compound Security Systems. It is designed to keep children and teenagers away from particular buildings, and produces sound at around 17.000 Hz, frequencies that only young people can hear.

And there is the *Long Range Acoustic Device (LRAD)*, a powerful disc-shaped loudspeaker that can stop people at a distance of about 50 metres. The LRAD is today frequently used by the military and by the police, and it has been tested by the Norwegian Military Research Institute.

But of course, the use of sound and music in the military did not come with loudspeakers and acoustic bazookas. Joshua 6:20-21 of the Old Testament says: »So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat... And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword.«

Sound and music has accompanied war and death since the dawn of man. It still does. But the trumpets are gone. Journalist Dexter Filkins describes a scene from Iraq in his book *The Forever War* (2009):

»And then... came a new sound: violent, menacing and dire... I looked back over my shoulder to where we had come from, into the vacant field at Faluja’s northern edge. A group of marines were standing at the foot of a gigantic loudspeaker, the kind used at rock concerts. It was AC/DC, the Australian heavy metal band, pouring out its unbridled sounds. I recognized the song immediately; the band’s celebration of satanic power had come to us in the battlefield.«

I’m a rolling thunder, I’m
pourin’ rain
I’m comin’ down like a
hurricane
My lightning’s flashing
across the sky
You’re only young but
you’re gonna die
I won’t take no prisoners,
won’t spare no lives
Nobody’s putting up a
fight
I got my bell, I’m gonna
take you to hell
I’m gonna get you, Satan
get you
Hell’s Bells

B r a i n
p r e s s u r e

Music has proven an efficient soundtrack to war – not only to boost your own adrenaline on the battlefield. In military interrogation rooms across the world – from Northern Ireland to the Balkans, from Iraq and Afghanistan to Guantanamo – sound seems to be the perfect weapon to break people’s will. It is efficient, and it leaves no scars.

The strategy has two elements that work excellently by themselves and together they work even better: sensory overload and sensory deprivation. According to writer Alfred McCoy, this is »the first real revolution in the science of pain in over 300 years«.

First, the subject, the prisoner, is deprived of all sensory input; he or she is placed in a dark, sound-proof cell, or made to wear dark goggles and hearing protection. No audio or visual input means no sense of time or place. You don’t know where you are, you don’t know if it is day or night. You lose control of reality.

As the *KUBARK CIA* interrogation manual states: »Sensory deprivation develops regression in that the mind of the subject is deprived all contact with the outside world, and thus forced into itself.«

Then you can also expose the subject to too much sensory input. In al-Qaim in Iraq, American soldiers chained prisoners inside shipping containers and bombarded them with music and flashing lights. They called it »The Disco«.

As Sgt. Mark Hadsell told *Newsweek* magazine: »If you play heavy metal for 24 hours, your brain and body functions start to slide, your train of thought slows down and your will is broken. That’s when we come in and talk to you.«

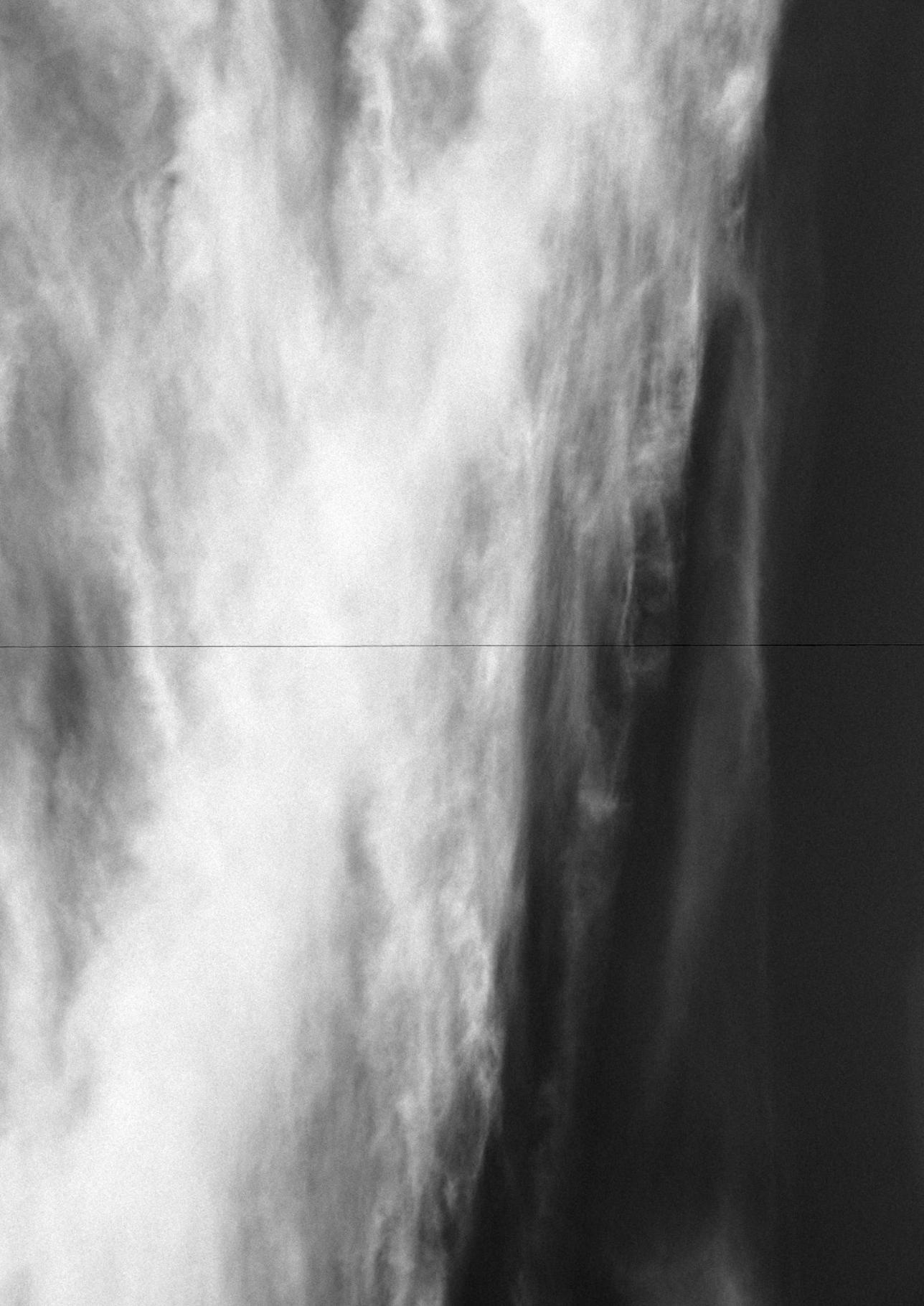
Donald Vance, an American who by mistake experienced sound treatment for 76 days in Camp Cooper in Baghdad, says: »The music sort of removes you from you. You can no longer formulate your own thoughts.«

Or as professor of musicology Suzanne Cusick put it: »Sound at a certain level... simply prevents people from thinking. Sound can damage human beings.«

A popular music selection in the torture shipping containers in Iraq, were children’s songs. As one soldier said: »Trust me, it works. In training, they forced me to listen to the *Barney I Love You* song... I never want to go through that again.«

This is the *Barney I Love You* song at 40 dB.
This is the *Barney I Love You* song at 80 dB.
This is *Barney* inside a shipping container somewhere...

*
This text is an edited version of the performance *The Sound of Freedom*, which was presented on 22 June 2013 at the Tanzquartier Wien in the context of *SCORES No 7: intact bodies*.



Peter Bo Rappmund

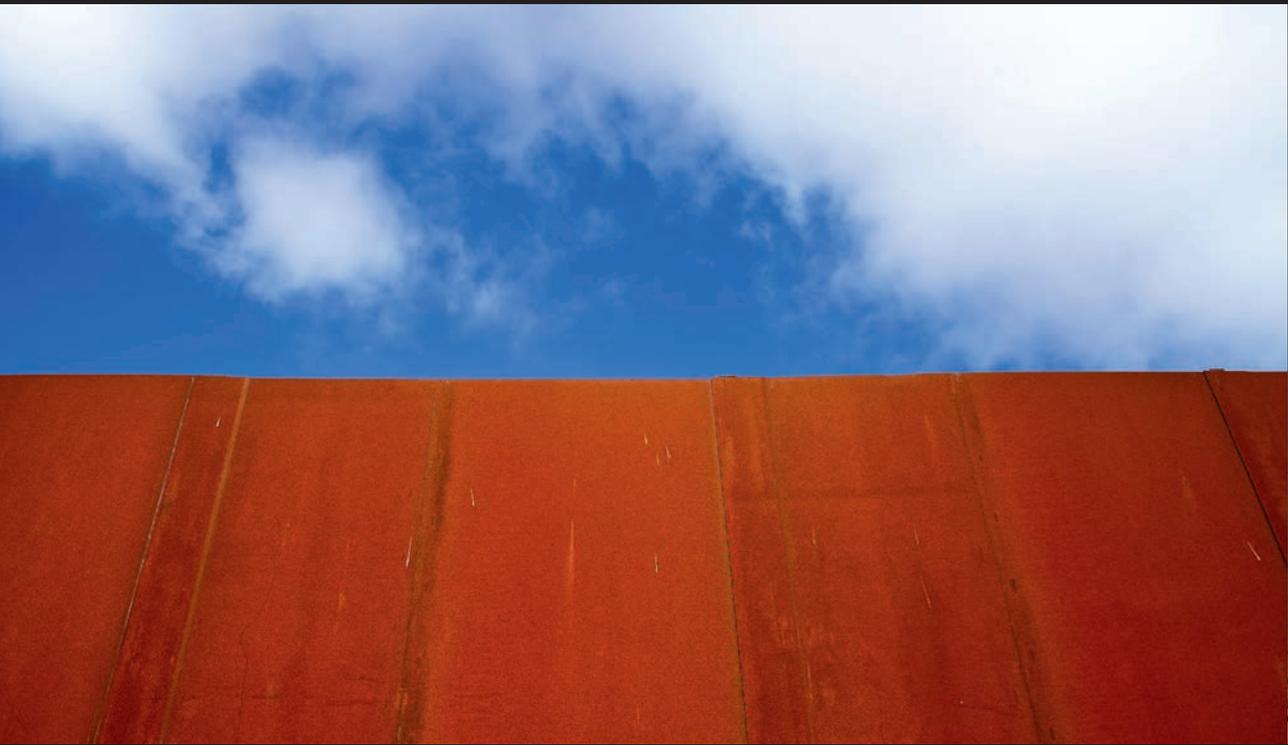
T e c t o n i c s

With *Tectonics* Peter Bo Rappmund has created a landscape film that experimentally addresses the phenomenon of the border. In his personal and simultaneously political study of the border between the United States and Mexico, with spectacular impressions the photographer and filmmaker documents this much described and analysed line of hope and violence. Images of barriers, invisible crossing points, of monuments of past events, empty plains and walls and fences between the two countries stretch from the Gulf of Mexico, along the Rio Grande to the Pacific Ocean. In the process Peter Bo Rappmund completely dispenses with language and the portrayal of people and as a result emphasises the importance of what is only alluded to in the pictures: with numerous visible and hidden cameras and the armed patrols, the area is not only the most frequented but at the same time also a highly militarised and the most highly guarded national border in the world.

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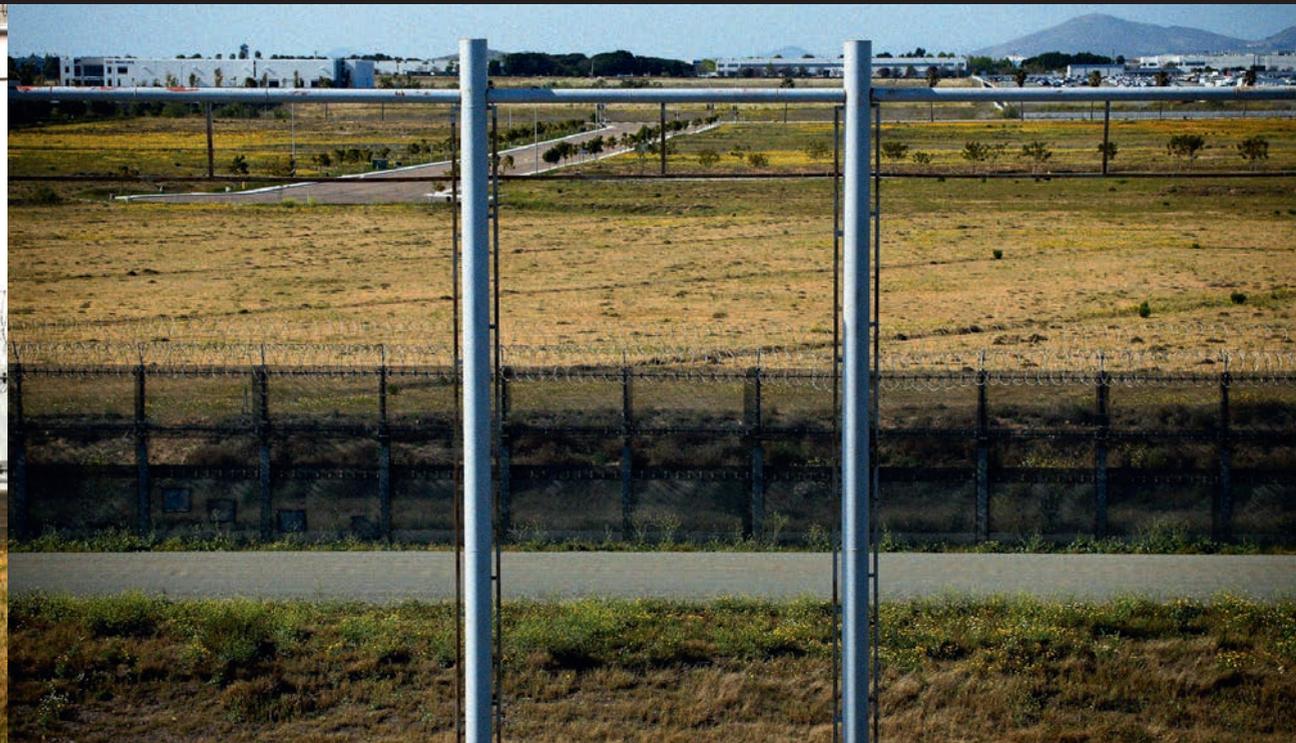
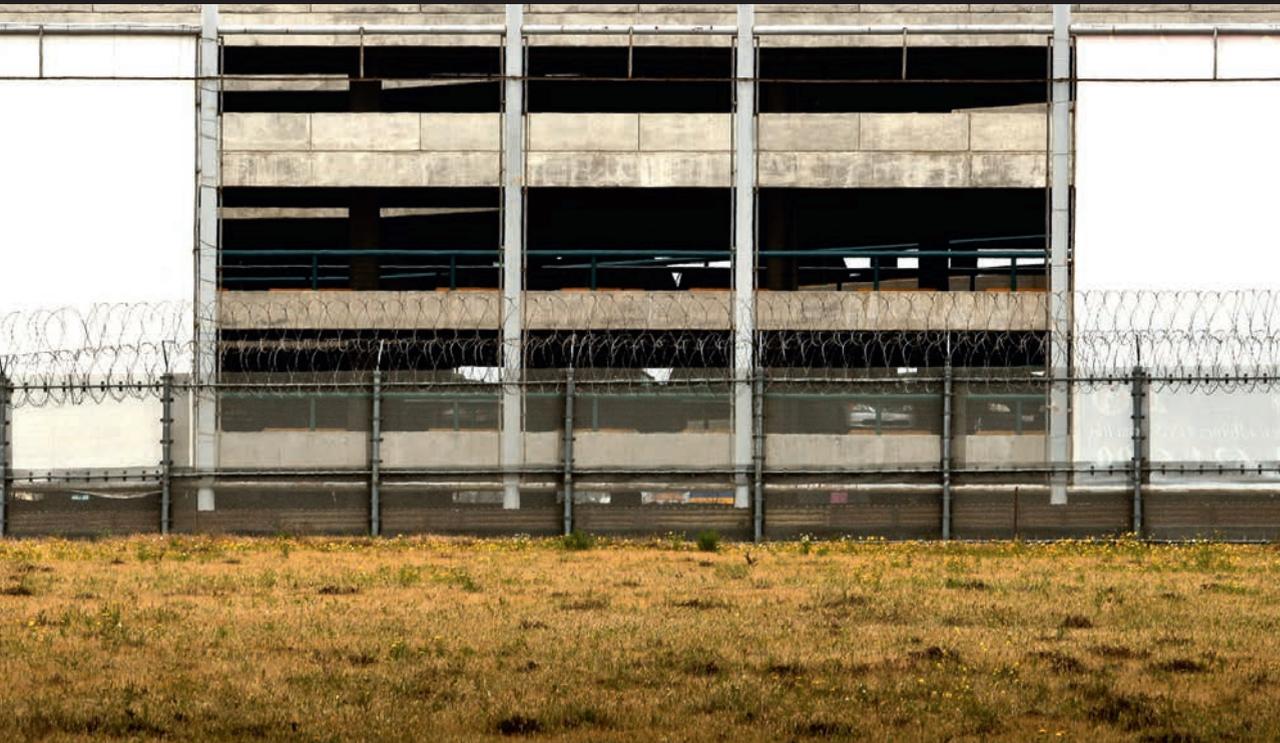
Peter Bo Rappmund's film *Tectonics* was screened from 20 June to 22 June 2013 at the Tanzquartier Wien as part of *SCORES No 7: intact bodies*.

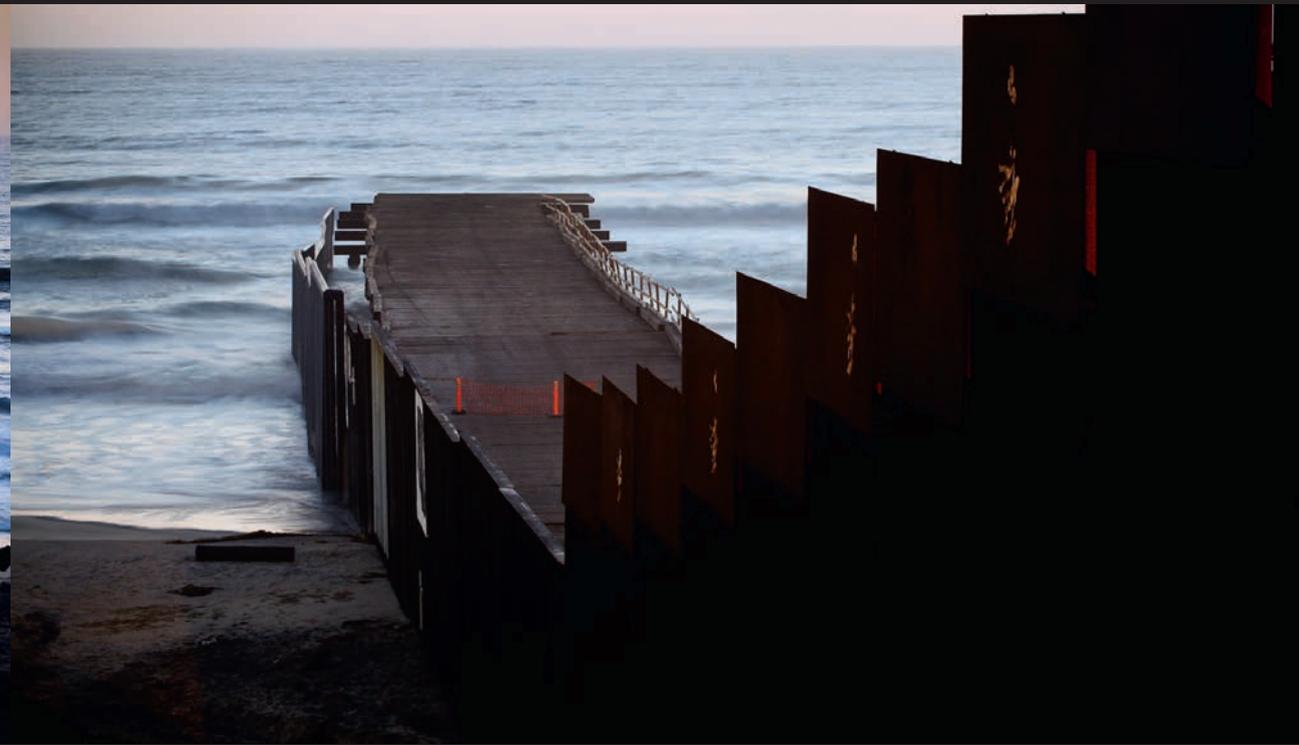












Sandra Noeth

B o d i e s o f E v i d e n c e , o r :
T h e B o r d e r i n U s

C h o r e o g r a p h i e s o f
t h e E v e r y d a y

I actually remember crossing the border for the first time – like any other time afterwards. After a while one recognises its movements, its procedures and formalities, the preliminary establishment of a network of conditional hospitality, its manifest and immaterial infrastructure, the rhetoric, the passiveness, the waiting as well.

Sometimes the movement of the border catches you by surprise, and you don't see it coming. Usually when leaving the house to set off for another trip, but sometimes already long before, in the middle of a conversation, when lingering at the supermarket check out, or while daydreaming.

*And still: it always starts in the body.
There is this familiar feeling of excitement and tension,
marked by contradiction.*

I remember revisiting and rehearsing the physical and mental movements of the border, trying to welcome them: firmly yet cautiously navigating through space, placing the gaze, controlling the breath, listening to the sound of the body, lowering the voice, detaching, uncoupling from any direct experience.

*Projecting, letting go.
Not too daring, not afraid either.
Disciplined, concentrated and insecure.
Ready to improvise at all times.*

The movement of the border is restless, disquieting. Oftentimes it is creeping, gradual, accumulating, delayed, anonymous, often perceived much later – or long before, like an echo in the rhythm of life.

Like a continuous state of displacement, unfolding slowly.

Caught in a meticulously crafted texture of narratives and emotions, it feels that – when encountering the border – my body doesn't belong to me any more, as if I had lost autonomy about it.

It is like entering an illogical reality. Like moving back and forth between contested spaces: between countries and places, memories and expectations, between the unseen, the unsaid, such, that I can't find words for. It feels like travelling through interwoven, competing thoughts and feelings while remaining unrecognised – like a kind of visitor in another person's, in my own story.

Mostly, border zones are populated and inhabited by different kind of bodies: waiting, everyday bodies, disciplined and trained, absent and invisible ones, bodies in fear, broken bodies, bodies in limbo – joyful ones as well. Bodies that witness experiences of fracturing and disorientation, in which space and material, authority, order and meaning are redistributed.

They all appear as representatives of and inscribe in an uncountable number of unnamed, silenced or silent voices and cases.

They are suspicious, hesitating bodies, suspended between action and reaction, response and responsibility: they draw us into a dispositive of concurrent and concurring, unsettling readings of what we call reality. They put us in touch with a more brittle, preliminary, instable and incomplete idea of the border.

B o r d e r s a r e m a n y
t h i n g s

Material, architectural, constructed, symbolic, felt, fictional and memorised, embodied, lived, always already there – always yet to come. In a »world in search of«, the idea and reality of the border is challenged continuously. In a world that faces massive changes in its order: crisis and collapses, environmental calamities, the aftermath of wars, migration, but also, on a much smaller scale, everyday experiences of exclusion, of non-recognition, of indifference, which inherently alter the way we conceive of structures and systems, of centres and peripheries, of the local and the international.

Borders influence and structure our personal but also our artistic, intellectual lives and processes on a daily level. Travelling, residencies, nomadism, flexibility, trans-cultural, trans-media, transnational experiences and profiles – here are just some of the buzzwords of our globalised, artistic-economic vocabulary. Tightened visa procedures, however, changing legal frameworks for permits and an observably rising number of travel bans and deportations and the simple impossibility of choosing, of being »at home«, are paradoxical proof of these dynamics. They seem in staggering contradiction with an economically fostered and internationally acclaimed rhetoric of »cultural exchange«.

These concretely observable phenomena of the border resonate on a more symbolic, intangible level. While mobility is restricted we can observe how nationalist and other identitarian boundaries are operating and how (self-) censorship is reintroduced into artistic practice and exchange. How disciplinary boundaries come into play in a circulating arts market and its narratives, envisioning artworks, that must be unique and universal, able to communicate a sense of place and reveal specific contexts while being largely understood by an international audience.

The human body bears witness to a moment in time where maps are re-drafted and relationality teaches us that every detail is part of a network. In this environment, freedom of speech and expression seem to enter a state of regression again. These developments concern art as well and the role that art can and seeks to play in this myriad textures of measuring out, negotiating, legitimising and claiming material and immaterial space: can and should art develop tools and attention, offer space and initiatives to rehearse protest and to develop cultures of resistance to these bordering processes?

Following the experience of the border has been one of the focal points of my work as a dramaturge and researcher in recent years. Moving physically and mentally through contested space. Negotiating preconceived ideas, emotional paralysis, emptied-out images and soft humanism with own experience, academic research, found footage as well as collected evidence and verifiable facts. Working out ways to handle trust and mistrust and exploring the methodological potential and shortcomings of an encounter and of intimacy in order to denormalise what often has become familiar.

While crossing national borders, walls, checkpoints from the privileged position of a Western passport, facing interrogations and intrusive border practices and navigating more intangible boundaries, bureaucracies, symbolisms, protocols and embedded logics of power, the dominant experience of the border – in all its specificity and repetitiveness – remains Janus-faced, ambivalent and contradictory. This concerns above all the performativity of the body: a body that produces and aestheticises images and fictions of mobility and immobility, that is subject to law and other normative orders, conditioned in its physicality – its tone, smell, attitude and gestures. A body that, at the same time, incorporates, practices, executes, mimics, memorizes and repeats borders and boundaries, thus actualising and mobilising borders and boundaries, keeping them alive and in power.

When introducing the body, choreography, in the discussion on the experience of the border, I don't propose to downplay the impact, the harm and the violence linked to its realities. Rather, it is a precise yet blurred feeling of urgency, paired with helplessness and a very clear belief in the potential of working, of thinking, of moving together that guides my address.

The human body has been a long-standing subject of research on borders. Turning to the interdisciplinary field of border studies, the examination of the human body focuses for instance the body's capacity of concretely restricting or allowing for mobility, mostly in the context of migration and physical movement or, in political and juridical terms, the question of the integrity and inviolability of the body as a human right. Here it is mostly the materiality of the body as one amongst different elements of strategic mass mobilisation that is valued, when analysing, for example, how the human body is used as a weapon or fighter in military contexts. Alongside these perspectives, it is the symbolic potential of the body in bordering processes that has been central to present discussions. Here research has been undertaken that investigates how the body enables and informs a legal, religious, political, national, ethnic, gendered understanding and legitimisation of borders, logics of

belonging and of identity. The reflections at hand react on and inscribe themselves in the above-mentioned debates, while proposing to re-value and re-imagine the role of the body in bordering processes by drawing on artistic, physical, and theoretical knowledge developed in the field of choreography and dance.

On a discursive level, studies on »social choreography« and practices related to that conceptual framework have given important insights as they explore the connections and interdependency between artistic and political, civic and everyday movements. Choreography here is introduced as an emergent order, as a practice and a concept that has historically been engaged in composing, organising, structuring and documenting artistic as well as non-artistic territories. In line with its etymological dimension, choreography provides a tool for generating, administrating, for inviting and hindering participation and intervention as an individual and as a citizen: a practice of writing in and into space, which confronts us with the consequences and ultimately the violence of its inscriptions. Thus choreography is not about fixing or cementing the movements of the border, but about perspectivating and tracing them.

These reflections resonate with and are exemplified in various practices and strategies that dancers and choreographers explore, nourish and challenge, and are shared by all of us on a quotidian level: the work on presence, empathy or embodiment, on affect and sensing, on composition and improvisation, to name but a few. How do these movement-based and choreographic experiences inform us about theoretical concepts of territoriality, sovereignty and agency? How do they help us to understand us »becoming border«?

Following the body and its movements suggests revisiting readings of the border, which concentrate on its demarcating qualities: experiences that – in the very moment of transgressing the boundary – always already expose our idealistic and ideological fantasies of unity and universalism. It suggests conceiving of borders as non-abstract spaces, as constructed, complex and shifting networks and places of encounter rather than rigid and immobile lines of separation. Strengthening the aspect of »becoming-border« thereby indicates a dynamic relationship between arts, society and the public. Most importantly, however, it demonstrates to us the impossibility of being outside of border dynamics and the impossibility of thinking or moving from a safe point or a non-situated position. It confronts us with the obligation to reflect on our own involvement and participation in the construction, representation and legitimisation of borders. Hence the human body introduces an ethical dimension in the debate. As a witness and an agent, the *experience* of bordering confronts us with the effects of fracturing that borders introduce on many levels and stirs up questions of responsibility, of involvement and participation in constructing and maintaining borders. It addresses the limits of our representational power and our social imaginary, of what we can express and speak about, of what we can find words and dances for.

Becoming-Border: To feel it, to carry it in your body before it becomes visible. Smelling, sensing the border under your skin before it finds its way into an imitable and exterior form. This takes place, shapes your body. It is a physical, a visceral experience.

Hidden memories that emerge, bodies that seem to be frozen, to have fallen out of time. Untimely encounters.

In light of the catastrophe, the bodies pull back from history and tradition. They escape subjectivity and the promise of presence. They are caught in between fiction and memory. They move through contested space, expand their physicality and blur chronologies, affiliations and temporality.

Facing intrusion and menace, our movements, images and words seem fall apart in order to – maybe – resurrect and gain agency at some later moment in time. And yet:

*Every movement leaves a trace
It puts us in touch with – it welcomes the wounded places in our lives.*

It is like visiting any catastrophic place: damaged, harmed, left over, destroyed, littered with bodies in contradiction, in tension, torn in responsive dynamics. And yet, in its physical sense, a wound entails a double movement. It marks an intrusion into the body, an illness, harm, a traumatic experience, negligence, not taking care. At the same time it demonstrates the ability of the body to heal, to re-establish itself and its environment. Wounds are both: signs, locations of weakness and signs, locations of empowerment and care. They reorient our perception and allow us to feel our individual and collective body again. Facing pain and violence, they focus our attention, create a bond between ourselves and the wounded places and bodies of our society. Pointing us to the wounded places of our lives, the event of the border complicates the logics of cause and event, of responsibilities and obligations.

It draws us to the borders and boundaries in us, the border that *is* us; it re-address the question of agency.

It introduces an ethical stance in the discussion, it invites us to silence, listening:

»To listen. To interrupt your Self and go towards the Other. To open your Self to all the possibilities that arise in you by the words of the Other, the logic of the Other, the breath of the Other.

To accept and to surrender to that which enters you, so that it settles in you and remains in you. This is what we have lost... for our words now fall to the ground, in front of us, before they reach their target – and if they succeed, they arrive at a barren, destroyed land, like our language.«¹

¹
Tony Chakar: *The Dialogue That Is Us*,
Sharjah Art Foundation 2013, without page.

These words of a friend stay with me – a soft warning, and unbearable call: a call to go to a place where the poetic hurts, and to stand it.

The movement of becoming-border puts us in relation to the Other, to the Other in us. It confronts us reminds us of all the absent bodies that we carry with, that we carry in us and that are mobilised in the experience of the border.

On est devenu trop nombreux à l'intérieur de nous-mêmes.

In the absence of the body – in the absence of the body of the Other – collectivity is evoked, and the singular, individual body becomes representative, becomes part, is part of a collective one. Of other bodies, of the body of the Other, when in times of catastrophe and crisis real and imagined communities enter the scene and a third body emerges: the neutralised, politicised, generalised, mimetic, expanded, forgotten, and fleshless body of the collective, the body of the Occupier, the Refugee, the Religious, the Exiled – which is the body of the Lover, of the Friend, the Carer and the Lost-One. It is exactly in becoming-border that we are always already many bodies at a time.

The absent body introduces a mode of resistance, as well: a hesitation, a doubt, it marks something that has been left out, pierces through dominant narratives of distinction and causality, and points us to the blind spots that we need in order to see.

Being hand in glove with these absent bodies is to consent to not be a single being. It is about a desire, about a body yet to come. About inscribing in a dream.

However, this absence of the body is not about vanishing or about withdrawing into closed and well-contoured departments of identity, entering epistemological exclusion. It is not the opposite of presence. Rather, the absence of the bordering body introduces disturbance in a society of the spectacular, in a often heated politicised debate, which is with mediatizing and making accessible everything as long as all singularities find themselves well-arranged in comprehensive stories of difference – forgotten and ignored. Only radically thinking the agency of the absent can close down the spectacular and open up to the very possibility of a movement, of an image, or a body that comprises the headless of life and exceeds its own reformulation.

A g e n c y , o r : w h a t I a m m o s t
a f r a i d o f i s i n d i f f e r e n c e a n d
c a r e l e s s n e s s .

When I follow the movements of the bordering body, when I return to the streets of Beirut or Ramallah, to Istanbul, Paris or Berlin, when I travel in my imagination again to all the uncountable, unnamed, silent and silenced places, the border is already here, it is a part of me. And there are all these loud and over-exposed images – bodily, physical, choreographed images – that we invented to be in touch with the borders and boundaries in our lives, with their disquieting movements. I suppose we all recognise them, we have seen them before, stored them, somewhere, maybe in a safe distance, we have given them a form and a place, carefully, in a way that even when they appear right in front of our eyes these last weeks and months, we may need to look twice in order to understand that this is not old memories or bad dreams. That this is not far away. It is not in another, an Other's country but pretty much part of our everyday life. This is now: the disquieting movement of the border, sneaking into our daily life.

These pictures and scenes and the realities that they refer to and the presence of death in my life, they make me shiver, and leave me with grief and rage, with vulnerability, and it is a physical reaction first, a tension, a presence, a change in the very texture of my skin, a changing rhythm of my breath, an intuitive and yet, I suppose, choreographed and embodied reaction.

*These bodies mean nothing, and they mean everything at a time.
We are all equally far from love.*

They make us understand that conflict and borders are not just given, unshakeable, and pre-set, porous and mutable, something that we continue weaving, that we contribute to maintaining day by day. It makes us carry the real question of how we treat other human beings and the world in our the world in our body – and I wonder how to act, how to move and write and how to talk from there.

This is not about advocating a materialistic or an idealistic interpretation of reality. Rather it points us to the gap between awareness and action. It carries an obligation to re-address our means and modes of agency and it welcomes us to be even more precise in dealing with people, with images and words.

It engages in an agency that is not about consenting, assimilating, or being similar; an agency that lies not in having the same dream but about being able to dance in the dream of the Other.

*The border in us, the border that is us might then be exactly a way to face
and to encounter these disquieting, contradictory and responsive dynamics, and
to follow the movement of what seemed to be motionless.*

This is disquieting, yes.

Uneasy, and asks us to leave a safe position – and yet:

There is nothing to claim, nothing to wait for.

The ghosts have already been in the house for long.

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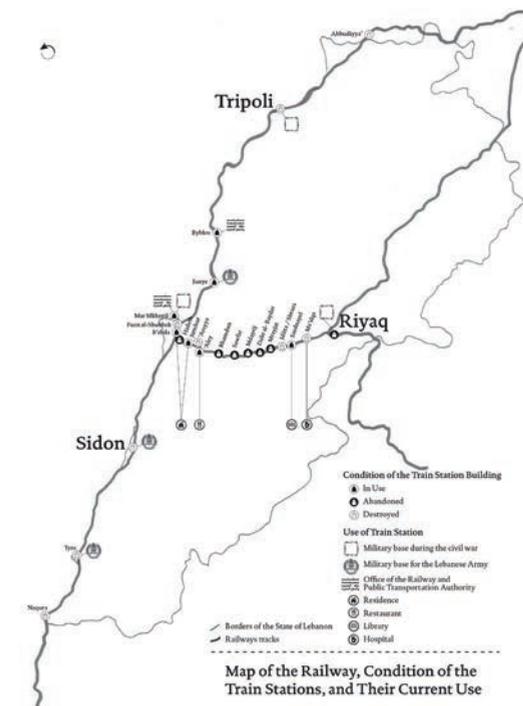
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The lecture performance *Disquieting Movements: Über die Unruhe der Körper und der Bilder* with Sandra Noeth, Kamal Aljafari, and Susanne Valerie Granzer was presented on 25 November 2015 at the Tanzquartier Wien as a part of SCORES N°10 / *Philosophy On Stage #4: Artist Philosophers – Nietzsche et cetera*, which was directed by Arno Böhler (a cooperation of PEEK-Projekt* »Artist Philosophers. Philosophy AS Arts-Based-Research« and Tanzquartier Wien)

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»Military Zone? Parking Not Allowed«





Names of Syrian soldiers, their towns of origin, and dates, carved on the walls of the train wagons in Riyaq train station.

Looking back at our research and performance project *Nothing to Declare*, which started back in 2013, we reflect on the role of live art as a way to revive the stories of our dysfunctional national train system. The ruins and the border areas are performed. The lecture performance and the research booklet published were based on several field trips, collected visual material, oral history and maps. But we wonder when did the performance exactly happen? Was it during the lecture performance in which we shared our findings with an audience? Or did it start during the three journeys that we each took along the railway towards the borders. Were the various army checkpoints and communities whose paths we crossed our collaborators in that performance?

Nothing to Declare is a research-based lecture performance that started as an exploration of borders within Lebanon, those between Lebanon and its neighbouring countries, and across the Arab world. We followed the railway tracks in Lebanon with the aim of starting a road trip around the Arab world by documenting our border crossings and exposing visa procedures. Our first journey, starting from Beirut, was to get to the Lebanese border. This is when we experienced the frustration of Lebanon's internal borders. Our journeys were often interrupted by the Lebanese army, railway-station guards, and locals in various regions. The project turned into a journey that traces the train routes through Lebanon to tell a story – or rather stories – of control,

displacement, housing, and sometimes hope. Throughout our journeys we documented the multiple uses of the railway after years of abandonment. We also collected stories that seek to question the internal borders that have been imposed upon us. We realised that our journey touches upon a much-needed conversation in Lebanon around the history of the trains and their different uses after years of abandonment.

The project was inspired by the cross-border solidarity and openness that was created in the Arab world after the uprising. Sadly, border regimes were not only stopping us from reaching each other physically but were being intensified in the name of security. *Nothing to Declare* sought to explore the continuing existence and complications of borders between Arab countries. In and along these borders a memory of a colonial past is maintained and nurtured through a bureaucratic visa system, replicating the idea that the ruling elites within nation states should dictate *who* can travel and *where* they can travel to.

Set against the current context of state-encouraged islamophobia and the growing »threat« of Arab people, where passport control zones become places of state-sanctioned discrimination, this history reveals the internal contradictions of the border document, the passport, an object we are often told should facilitate our travels is also often one that limits or hinders our movements. Taking us from a period in the Ottoman empire when the internal passport was used

as a means of containing people who might otherwise flee military service (resonating heavily with the number of Syrian refugees fleeing military service today) through to a period when we find oral histories describing a freedom of mobility across borders, until today, when passports rule over movement.

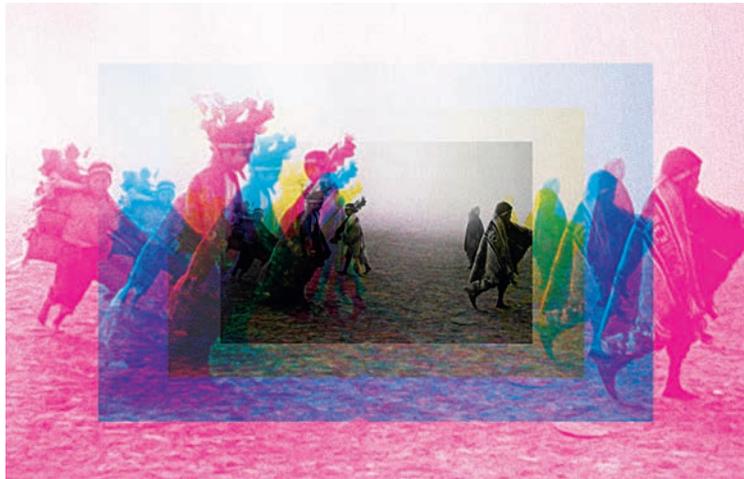
But while the passport as a document is interesting, what it reveals is nothing to do with a document in and of itself. The passport is a visual indicator of borders and limits. It is an index of who we are expected to be and what part of the relevant nation's imaginary we are expected to perform to.

Our journeys along the railway tracks in Lebanon ended in 2013. Since then, we found ourselves engaged in various discussions on mobility, access and borders. While borders are increasingly becoming spaces of racial discrimination and death traps, we found ourselves back on those railway tracks hoping that one day we will be able to retire this project.

*

Dictaphone Group's lecture performance *Nothing to Declare* was presented on 21 June 2013 as part of *SCORES No 7: intact bodies* at Tanzquartier Wien.

ENDANGERED HUMAN MOVEMENTS



(c) nadaproductions

Mapuche-Tehuelche children learning the Choique
Purrún, Nandu dance
processing by Thomas Rhyner

Endangered Human Movements – a long-term project started in 2014 – is focusing on human movement practices which have been cultivated for centuries all over the world. Within this context a series of performances, workshops, films, installations, publications, and a comprehensive online archive were developed in order to reconstruct, recontextualize and resignify human movements in danger of disappearing as well as to unleash their future potential.

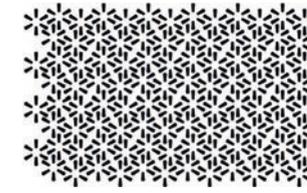
*

The performance *Dance and Resistance. Endangered Human Movements Vol. 2* was presented on 18 March 2016 at the Tanzquartier Wien.

Four remarks on the history of dance
ENDANGERED HUMAN
MOVEMENTS VOL.1

»It is impossible to dance away the crisis. But it hasn't been brought about by dance either.«
(Meinhard Rauchensteiner)

Four remarks on the history of dance is the first in a series of diverse performative approaches in the project *Endangered Human Movements*.



Dancers
Jana Jevrovic, Yusimi Moya Rodriguez, Alexandra Mabes, Amanda Piña

Photo by
Kar Reynolds

Costumes and logo pattern by Francesca Aldegani
(c) nadaproductions

The performance *Four remarks on the history of dance* focuses on old movement practices that were considered as »traditional dances of cultural minorities«. The notion of »cultural minority« often implies politics of oppression, economic expansion, the exploitation of people and their labour, and the depletion of natural resources. These dances were historically not conceived as spectacle, but were practiced in commonality, artic-

ulating reciprocal relations with the environment, with other life forms and the unknown. Most of the dances re-embodied in the performance were banned, persecuted or even distorted beyond recognition in order to accommodate and serve the goals and purposes of colonization and Christianization.

It remarks on the history of dance by celebrating the obliterated side of history. Its earnest, succinct and timeless appear-

ance creates a sober showcase compiling dances from the five continents, which were originally related to the harvest, the rain, the sea, the fire or the wind, into four new dances for the Water, the Air, the Fire and the Earth. The resulting new dances dedicated to the four elements are also meant as a token against the rapidly advancing privatization and depletion of natural resources.

Multi-use space for movement, exhibitions and performance, with kitchen and office. Professional performers in the process of understanding and re-creating ritual dances. Production manager at the computer working on bookkeeping. Vienna, Austria, 2015



Dioramas made by Gianna Prein, Marie Schmanboeck, Benedikt Steiner
Photos by Daniel Zimmermann (c) nadaproductions



DIORAMAS

Room with the purpose of hosting entertainment and shows pertaining to European cultural tradition. Here the beginning of a dance celebrating water, one of the sixteen dances of the performance *Four remarks on the history of dance*, during the annual Viennese summer dance festival. Austria 2015



Middle-Europeans at their *working stations* researching for the publication *Endangered Human Movements. Vol.1*, measuring space and working on dioramas and costumes. Vienna, Austria, 2015

Medium of transport for long distance travelling, powered by kerosene. Groundspeed 544 mph. Altitude 31000 ft and Outside Air Temperature -40 F. In growing demand in 2015



Yusimi Moya Rodriguez, Jana Jevrovic,
Alexandra Mabes, Amanda Piña



Costumes and logo pattern by Francesca Aldegani
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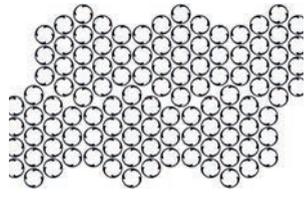


Photo by
Kat Reynolds

a dance for the Water
movements of the rising sea levels
movements of a whale hunt
movements for the spirit of the river



a dance for the Earth
movements for the growth of
vegetal currencies

dance for the Air
movements for cooling down glaciers
movements of a bird hunt
movements of a butterfly
movements for the coming storms



Danza del rez Colorado – Tenek of Huasteca Potosina, Mexico
Batere dance – Tabiteuea, Gilbert Islands, republic of Kiribati
Yurupari dance – Tulkano Amazonian rain forest, Brasil & Colombia



Danza de la Pluma – Mixtecos of Oaxaca
Yup'ik whale dance – Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, Alaska



Bino dance – Tabiteuea, Gilbert Islands, republic of Kiribati



»I think the dances can be regarded as part of a human reservoir of movement and relation beyond spoken or written language.« (Amanda Piña)

Filmstill: filmed by Lutz Baumann
 Processing by Daniel Zimmermann
 (c) nadaproductions



Costumes by Anke Philippe

Sun Dance
 Linda Samaraweerová, Amanda Piña, Yusimi Moya Rodriguez &
 Alma Quintana in Dance & Resistance

The second volume of the *Endangered Human Movements* series is pursuing the examination of dances that were considered »ritual« by the anthropologists of the last century. Amanda Piña and Daniel Zimmermann found them in the archives of ethnological museums, in collections and libraries in Europe. The »Battere Dance« from Tabituea, Kiribati, the Navajo »Butterfly Dance« from Arizona, the Sakudei »Fire Dance« from Indonesia – to name a few. In the piece, the dances are brought into the here and now through a »download« process to the bodies of four dancers.

As for the performance, it happens in a space in constant transformation created through an interlaced video, light and sound collage – which together create an intimate performance experience.

The piece explores the potential resistance of the body in the current context of neoliberal market economy and the increased privatisation and depletion of natural resources. The resistance that is to be experienced is based on dance understood as a means and aim of togetherness. The piece evolves along with the different places it travels to, involving local participants in the process of learning old movements.

Milamala – Trobriande Archipelago, Papua New Guinea: Yusimi Moya Rodriguez & Amanda Piña



Danza de la Pluma – Mixtecs of Oaxaca, Mexico: Amanda Piña, Linda Samaraweerová, Yusimi Moya Rodriguez & Alma Quintana



Costumes by Anke Philippe

Stills from a film by Lutz Baumann
 Processing by Daniel Zimmermann
 (c) nadaproductions



Shayna Dunkelmann, Daniel Zimmermann & Victor Durán

BP Logo
 wallpaper projection
 by Daniel Zimmermann
 (c) nadaproductions

Amateurs rehearsing the dance Rey Colorado for Dance & Resistance



Sakkudei fire dance – Siberut, mentawai Islands, Indonesia: Alma Quintana, Yusimi Moya Rodriguez, Amanda Piña & Linda Samarawecrova



Rey Colorado dance – Tenek of the Huasteca Potosina, Mexico: Amateurs with Amanda Piña, Linda Samarawecrova, Yusimi Moya Rodriguez & Alma Quintana



Dragon dance: Linda Samarawecrova

Costumes by Anke Philippe

Stills from a film by Lutz Baumann
processing by Daniel Zimmermann
(c) nadaproductions

BAYER Research Logo
wallpaper projection
by Daniel Zimmermann
(c) nadaproductions

Interview:

Karlien Meganck, programmer at deSingel & Amanda Piña, choreographer

1. The *Endangered Human Movements* you will bring on stage are old so called »traditional«, or »ritual« dances. What period are they from? What is their background?

They come from varied backgrounds and periods. Most of them were filmed between 1930 and 2014 but some of them were already danced before the conquest in the area of Oaxaca, Mexico, or in Nigeria before the slave raids that brought an African workforce to America

For this second volume we decided to work with the following cultures and dances :

- The dance around the fire from the Sakkudei, from the Rain forest of Siberut in the Mentawai Islands, Indonesia
- La danza de la Pluma, from the Huasteca, Mexico
- The dance of the new Fire for Huehuetotl, from the Huasteca, Mexico
- La danza del Rey Colorado from the Tenek from the Potosi Huasteca in Mexico
- The Bino and the Batere dance from the Kiribati Republic on the Tabiteuea and Onotoa Islands (Gilbert Islands)
- The Butterfly dance from the Hopi and the Navajo intertribal context in the USA
- The Milamala dance from the Trobriand Archipelago in Papua New-Guinea
- Yuruba, Nigeria, Escuela nacional de arte de Cuba
- *Die Unbekannte aus der Seine* by Hanna Berger reenacted by Estzer Koller, Vienna, Austria
- *Sonnenuntergang*, Gertrud Bodenwieser, Vienna, Austria
- Mapuche dance, Choike Purrún, Temuco, Chile.

2. Where did you find these dances? How were you able to reconstruct them?

We found them in archives in important ethnological museums and libraries in Europe, we looked into old ethnographic films, books and recordings.

We understood the reconstruction as a »download« process to the body, which happened through the analysis and reproduction of movements and the incorporation of states through imitation and also through a parallel research on the cultural, historical, political and geographical background of the dances.

3. These dances are alien to our own culture. How do you avoid falling into exoticism when staging them?

I am not so sure they are alien to our own culture... What is our own culture?

I read that Antwerp is one of the most multicultural cities in Europe, I come from a Chilean-Mexican-Lebanese background, I think the dances can be regarded as part of a human reservoir of movement and relation beyond spoken or written language.

Concerning the notion of exoticism I think that it is a problem and also a possibility of the west, made and projected onto the piece by the west. Exoticism can be regarded as the other side of the coin of eurocentrism, I also use the word »possibility«, because for the western imagination, exoticism also provided a way of escaping from the realities lived in the west, imagining other possible ways of living and being. When we understand that the world is rich in multiplicity of cultural approaches and narratives, and that there is no culture which is above others, or have more rights than others, the question of exoticism vanishes in the encounter with the difference. Exoticism is a projection of a desired or feared state, towards cultures considered »foreign«, and this is not necessary a bad thing. The exotic always exist in context with a supposed »non exotic« point of view, so in this sense exoticism can also exert criticism towards the context from which it emerges.

When working with indigenous dances, with everything that implies, the lack of understanding, the impossibility of translation, the history of disregard and oppression inflicted on them and the cultures from where they arise, the unusual logics of being and moving that constitute them; it is not possible to escape the possibility of

some people seeing them as »exotic«, but as I say, that is the problem issue of the lens through which you see something differently, and I think this is not necessarily a problem, it can also be an opportunity.

In Latin America a lot of very important art was developed under the frame of »exotica«. I think we haven't valued that influence yet, because the truth of exoticism is that it separates and creates an order, where what is not exotic has more value than the rest. In your question for example you use the expression »falling« into exoticism, which already express that the exotic is something to be found somewhere »lower,« one »falls« into, as if exotic was below. I think language is used that way because of this strange relationship we have with what appears »Other«, and the Exotic is a constructed fiction of that Other, a highlighted or simplified fiction.

Nevertheless, the intention is not to exoticise them, but to regard them as possibilities of being together, of spending time together, doing something that escapes the notion of productivity, as forms of collective resistance. As ways of embodying something that does not belong only to a certain culture, but it is part of a human reservoir, the possibility of embodying something we could call »Planetary Knowledge«.

4. In deSingel you are bringing out volume 2 of *Endangered Human Movements*, volume 1 was created last summer in Vienna. How do they relate to each other?

The first volume, called *Four Remarks on the History of Dance* was created with the intention of expanding the narrative of western dance history, and presented the dances as an alternate movement material. The idea of dance as a form of communication with the world, weather, elements, non-human life forms, was at its core.

It emerged from a personal frustration with written history and with the dynamics and perspectives of doing that. In my dance education, dance history was mainly the history of dance as an art form that took place mainly in Europe and the United States. It was unsettling for me to accept that history and I guess history in

general, since I did not come from Europe or the States, and in my context there was also a lot of dance going on since many years. In my school years history books ended in the moment before the government of Salvador Allende, a whole part of the history of the country I grew up was neglected on purpose, in order to make it disappear.

In the case of dances that disappear they entered the category of »ritual«, which is quite weird if you think of it. Why dance as an art form is understood as »dance« and indigenous dances of reciprocity are »ritual dances«? And isn't dance always ritual anyway?

The second volume is centred on the question of dance as a mean and aim for togetherness, dance as a way to practise expanded forms of existence, states of being that don't necessarily have a place in the societies we live in, thinking of that as a form of resistance. A sort of existential resistance.

We live in the west in the context of extreme individuality, I think that togetherness is an exercise we need to start practising on a daily basis. The changes we need to make, when facing climate change, inequality and the wars that are created because of the framework of economic growth are not going to happen from above. It is clear and proven that it is people that create these changes, and for this we need to be able to act together. When a third of the capital in the world is already in the hands of the few CEOs of big transnational corporations, when the lobbies that these powers inflict on governments are already on display, the situation is only going to get worse for the majority, we need to develop other frameworks, other values, other ways of understanding progress and of understanding our relation with the living, with the earth as a being, not as a machine of which we are the engineers any longer. It will not work like that. I believe that mythology, fiction and metaphors can activate our imaginations and allow us to recover a sense of agency. Being cynical does not help much.

5. One of your previous projects was founding a Ministry of Movement Affairs in Austria. What led you to do this? Can you say something about the political aspect of your work?

I have been always interested in an art that dares to propose possibilities rather than one that criticises what there is, I find it much harder to engage in the activity of proposing a non violent environment, than in the recreation of the violence we see in the world. In this way, for me it is political to decide not to recreate oppression, violence, shock and power structures in the work we do.

I think the problem with political art is that it often reproduces what it criticises. If in my performance I criticise patriarchy by saying »patriarchy is violent«, I am also recreating the idea of patriarchy and the violence it conveys, it is a very tricky thing, and it has to do with ethics, and with regarding language as one of the main makers of reality.

In the Ministry of Movement Affairs we propose an institution that understands the body and its perceptual skills as an agency that shapes reality, instead of waiting for this to happen, we create it and let it resonate with the frameworks proposed by other institutions. It is a kind of institutional lobby.

What is very exceptional about the work with the ministry is that many times what we do is not perceived as art at all, and in this way can be much more effective. If art could act outside of its frame I guess it would be more effective in rubbing with reality.

The situation of the earth, the situation of the world, it creates pain in people, and this pain is what makes me engage with dance on a daily basis, or the other way around, dance helps me cope with the pain and violence I see in the world. For me dance is a form of resistance. I don't understand dance as movement or as the production of shapes. Movements are fractions of existence, a certain quality of being in time, an activity that celebrates existence, that focuses on the experience of life itself.



*A p p r o a c h i n g
a s a*

*M y s e l f
S t r a n g e r*

*

A n a t t e m p t a t a l i e n k n o w l e d g e

* *

*S u r r o u n d i n g s
o f t h e
a p p r o a c h i n g
a s a*

*a n d t r a c e s
p e r f o r m a n c e
m y s e l f
s t r a n g e r*

* * *

»The simplest truth about man is that he is a very strange being; almost in the sense of being a stranger on the earth. In all sobriety, he has much more of the external appearance of one bringing alien habits from another land than of a mere growth of this one. . . . He is at once a creator moving miraculous hands and fingers and a kind of cripple. He is wrapped in artificial bandages called clothes; he is propped on artificial crutches called furniture.«

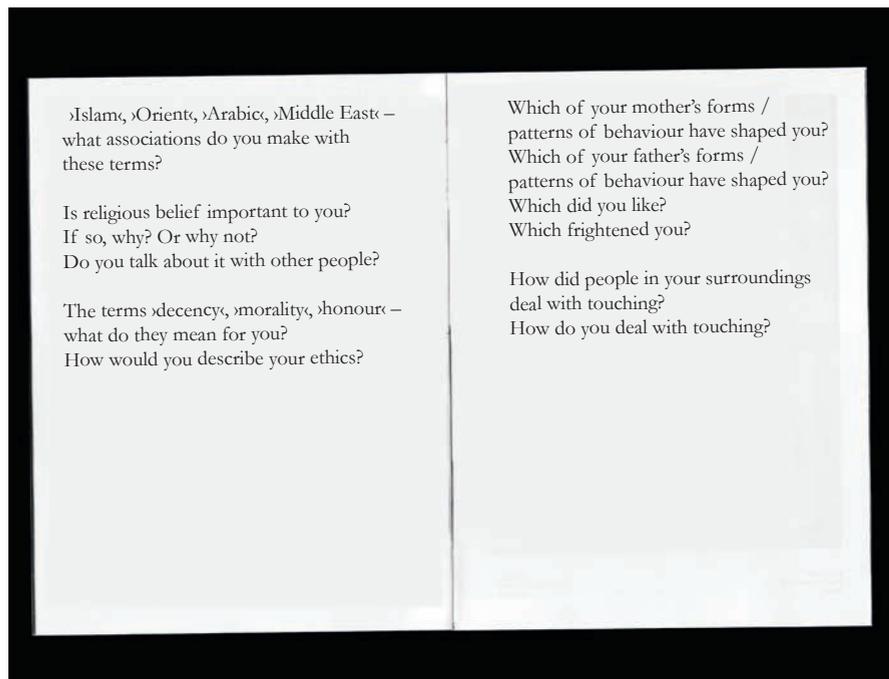
Thus Slavoj Žižek, writing in *The New Statesman* February 2016 and *Die Zeit* April 2016, quotes G. K. Chesterton from *The Everlasting Man*. And he goes on to ask:

»Is a »way of life« not precisely such a way of being a stranger on the earth? A specific »way of life« is not just composed of a set of abstract – Christian, Muslim – »values«; it is something embodied in a thick network of everyday practices: how we eat and drink, sing, make love, how we relate to authorities. [Islam (like every major religion) is a name for a whole way of life, which – in its Middle Eastern version – is based on a big family with pronounced authority of parents and brothers (which is not specifically Muslim but rather Mediterranean) . . .] We are« our way of life: it is our second nature, which is why direct »education« is not able to change it. Something much more radical is needed, a kind of Brechtian »extraneation«, a deep existential experience by means of which it all of a sudden strikes us how stupidly meaningless and arbitrary our customs and rituals are«.

1

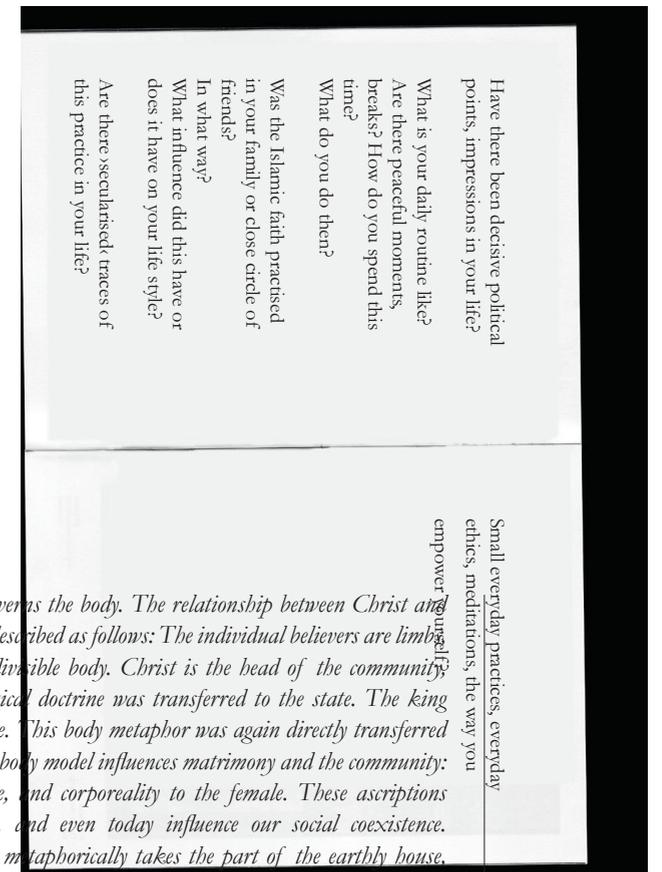
Žižek, Slavoj; *What Our Fear of Refugees Says About Europe*, *New Statesman*, 29 February 2016; *Wir sind alle sonderbare Irre*, *Die Zeit*, No. 16, April 2016

In the performance *approaching myself as a stranger* I wanted to make contact and get in touch with women from the Arab world in order to explore what I can change in my own thinking by attempting to work with a knowledge that is strange to me. I wanted to approach Middle Eastern women's understanding of being subjects and their relation to the body, their relationship to their female bodies and to find out what spaces of action and thought arise from it. What does it have to do with the contradictory roles and fantasies that the Occident ascribes to the female body of the ›Oriental woman‹; the orality, sensuality and eroticism on the one hand, exclusion, subservience, victimhood on the other? Here it was essential for me to keep the encounter as open as possible and to give room for the various nuancings of secularisation, politicisation and religiosity.



Bodies. Nothing full, no filled space. (Space is filled everywhere.) Bodies. Open space, spatial space in a sense, much more than just spacious space. Not only sites. Bodies are sites of existence. There is no existence without a site, without a ›here‹, without a ›here‹, without a ›see-here‹ for the ›this‹. The body sites are neither full nor empty. They have no outside and no inside, no parts and no totality, nor do they have functions and finitude at their command. They are all together. Aphallic and acephalic. If you can say so. Skin, folded manifold, folded again, unfolded, replicated, invaginated, equipped with orifices, volatile, permeated, strained, released, excited, amazed, bonded, bandaged, wonderful skin. In this and thousands of other ways the body grants existence. Body existences. Corpus fictum, corpus imaginatum.

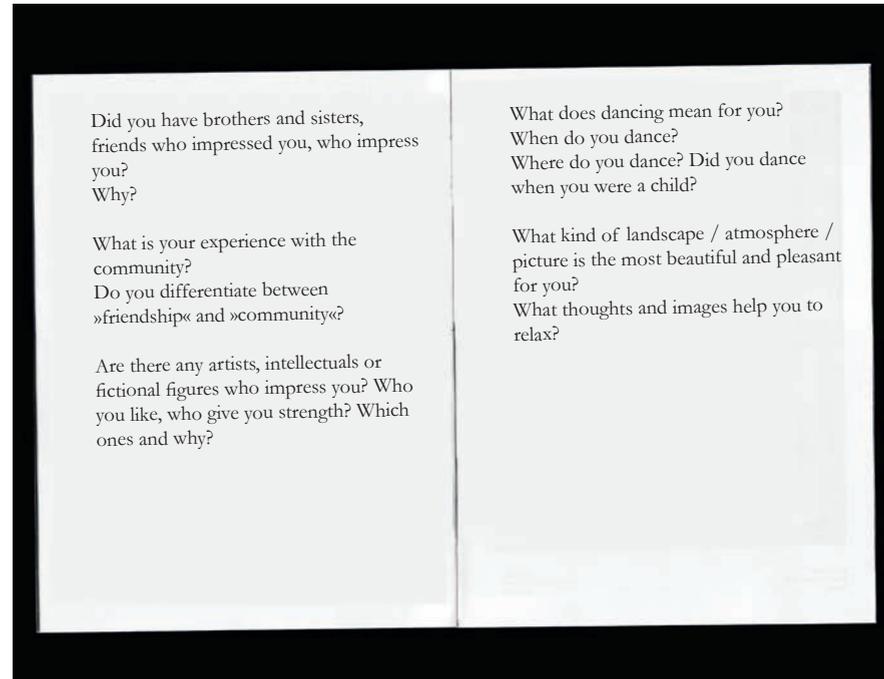
I compiled a questionnaire in order to get into conversation with women who live in Vienna and come from the Arab world, or who are from an Islamic background. I wanted to know what the inscriptions, rules and imaginations are with which they encounter the world. What is their way of life and how does it differ from mine? When and where are we different? What are my prejudices and trivialities? What are they composed of? What do women tell with, by and through their female bodies? What subserviences and confirmations do they experience and how do they deal with them?



In Christianity, the head governs the body. The relationship between Christ and the religious community was described as follows: The individual believers are limbs which in Christ form an indivisible body. Christ is the head of the community, which is a body. The theological doctrine was transferred to the state. The king became the head of the people. This body metaphor was again directly transferred to gender relations. The head-body model influences matrimony and the community: mind is ascribed to the male, and corporeality to the female. These ascriptions are reflected in the sciences, and even today influence our social coexistence. In Judaism, the female body metaphorically takes the part of the earthly house, which at the same time forms an integral part of the community. It does not represent an anomaly or something which is excluded. Naturally, such a community-forming function also implies control of the female body. But in the Diaspora, this control rather implies great presence in the world outside the house. The ›house‹ goes wandering, and the female body becomes the mundane correlate of the ›portative fatherland‹. Contrarily, the house in Islam is a permanent domicile. This can still be seen in the architecture of the cities. Living and business quarters are separated, the ›openness‹ is directed inside, the buildings are closed towards the outside. In Islam, the symbolic house is the veil. Hijab, literally ›curtain‹. Arabic does not differentiate between partition and veiling. The Qur'an represents the ›portative fatherland‹ of the Islamic Diaspora, the veil the ›portative mother country‹.

I concerned myself with feminist Arabic literature, among others with texts by Fatima Mernissi, Mira al Tahawi and Assia Djebar and with texts on Islam and the written religions (as they are analysed, for example, in *Verschleierte Wirklichkeit* [Veiled Reality] by Christina van Braun and Bettina Mathes). The writing of H el ene Cixous was and is essential to my analysis of writing and language. Because, as she says, a political analysis cannot take place without an analysis of the language. I find that the transition from sound / song to language and the relationship of writing to the spoken word is essential. For me it reflects an approach to language in which writing is rather considered as a *score* that is to be interpreted, a trace, an impression of life. Language and writing thus become a poetical instrument to explore the world. In this way, the written word is not the general law and thus the truth, and thus does not have the power to rule and establish identity. To approach the spoken form through movement opens up possibilities to play with words and sounds and to arrive somewhere where one's own language is still ignorant. Words that compose themselves in this way create trans-personal meaning contexts that simultaneously express social reality and individual awareness. By means of such transitions and interstices I have attempted to indicate the difference between Arabic and Greek script; because while in one the letters are only realised by speaking, in the other the script stands on its own. Thus hearing becomes an essential part of speaking (as well as reading as an essential aspect of writing). Listening to the others, listening to oneself. Dialogue and conversation.

While working on the text for *approaching myself as a stranger* I walked from my house to the various mosques in Vienna and while doing so I wrote in coffee houses and on park benches. On these walks, roaming around, my (home) town unfolded itself afresh. It was amazing how many mosques were to be found in quite normal residential buildings, or as places of encounter and community, completely non-prestigious. I sought out these places always unannounced. Sometimes there were conversations, sometimes uncertain, angry looks, sometimes surprised amazement. It always felt like a risk, setting out alone for a strange place, even if it was in my own city. That is said, and thereby how quickly we become strangers. How sensitive and immediate the perception of a belonging manifests itself. And in this, *one of these multiple affiliations* there are innumerable possibilities of distances and closeness. There is not just one allegiance. And non-allegiance does not also mean automatic exclusion. Politics drives us in front of it with these opposites and manoeuvres us into the corrals of neoliberal right-wing populism. These opposites are unfortunately repeatedly redefined through thinking spaces, written down and described. These are precisely the spaces that we must repeatedly differentiate and appropriate with our thoughts, bodies, language and action, to set them in motion.



House.
Habitat.
Home.
Homeless.
No home.
Nomad.
Gypsy.

Wandering. Meandering. Rendering. Space. Place. Spacing. Placing. Positioning. Rendering positions. Entering positions. Centring Positions. Changing Positions. Cherishing positions. Devouring positions. Distorting positions. Positioning. Posing. Lasing. Choosing. Wandering. Roaming. Above all stay in motion. House in motion. How's emotion? Even if the motion is merely your breath's oscillation. Just do what I'm doing: for earth, breathe in and out through the nose. For fire, breathe in through the mouth and out through the nose. For water, breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth. For air, breathe in and out through the mouth. For everything that's invisible, breathe in and out through the nose. Very softly this time. Like smelling a flower.

—Because the place where she was born is her home. Although she tried to run away again and again. She wanted to leave the house. Away. Out of the house. Away from the house. Run. Away. Far. Nothing too close to home. Because it is closed. Too closed. Being closed away. Anyway. This house, surrounded by a city of passion, is – she has to admit – what she's most familiar with. Family. Even if other places often excited a sensation of being there which made her feel more inspired, this house is her house. The house in which she grew up and is still growing. Of course she has lived in other places, other cities, other houses, but this is the most familiar one. The most familiar one. The one that holds the largest amount of time. A place that carries childhood within it. That is, time without limits. Fairy tales and patterns. Memories. Dreams.

During the rehearsal period a wave of information about the so-called »Arab Spring« flooded over Western Europe and with it all the hopes of civil courage, civil society, solidarity, as a manifestation of humanity and transcontinental coexistence. All the values that here have increasingly fallen prey to neocapitalism – as is often the case with shortcomings – were projected outwards once again. And at first I thought I have to go to Egypt. But then I thought I don't have to go to Egypt. I have to go to a place that is as far away from it as possible; an island somewhere, perhaps in the Pacific Ocean. And make a gesture of allegiance there, a kind of imaginary country in which forms of relationship might develop that are not permeated by the striving for power. This island as an assemblage of Egypt and other countries. I could call this island 'This Island Is Not for Sale', or leave it nameless, as a place of encounter, of potentiality. As resistance, upheaval, insisting that this is an essential part of reality.



TRAUM

BRAUT

TIER

MÖGLICH

SINN

If you think about it now, what three films were / are important for you? Why?
 If you think about it now, what three books were / are important for you? Why?

What do you think about the current changes in the Arab world? Are you in touch with anyone directly affected?
 Can you remember a dream? Do you have a dream?

The slave woman recounts: but the greatest pain of all for the slaves was to learn that the greatest slave traders were the slaves themselves. This is why slavery could last all those centuries and millennia. You are betrayed by your own people, they brand you, force you, denounce you whenever their master, the monarch, an anonymous corporation or the market demands it. There always is a demand with regard to the snakes, who then snake and wriggle and wiggle and vanquish you and then apparently disappear. Of course nothing disappears. Not even dependency, which after all concerns both sides. And changing sides is not so easy. It is hardly possible. Dependency does not have to equal submission. Dependency in fact is the most beautiful element of friendship. And at the same time dependency is the war zone of responsibility and individual responsibility. She doesn't have any romantic illusions about that. And sometimes she misbehaves. Behave. Haven. Having. Hanging. Falling. Falling for. I for you, you for me. My friend. Friendship. Now shipping. How are we going to do this with the words and the responses, the responsibilities, what can we give when it comes down to forgiveness, if this becomes us, regarding the past, will we take the word into our hands to be able to give it, so that it may become a gift and an action. Into the open. That's still open. We may hope. Once, twice, thrice do something other than the habitual. Here where we live...

Sabina Holzer, May 2016

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With thanks for all the conversations, input and support! In particular Sandra Noeth, Sabile Rasiti, Roswitha Irran, Denis Aygün, Rachid Boutayeb, Franziska Tillmann, Frédéric Gies.

*

Sabina Holzer's performances *approaching myself as a stranger* was presented on 10 December 2011 at the Tanzquartier Wien as part of *SCORES No 4: under protest*.



II.
GUIDELINES FOR A CONSTRUCTION GAME
(CERTIFICATION
OF THE FABRICATIONS)

— The starting point, the trigger of your speech is a lie:
you went to Lebanon, and in Lebanon you saw this, you saw that.

— Reread *The Storyteller* by Walter Benjamin time and again.

— Think of the Orientalist scholars of the nineteenth century once in a while. Put their clothes on. Play with them.

— Orientalism reduces, overlooks – but it can also,
as Renaud has it, »give access to something«.

— Orientalism: became a term for any form of exotic reduction of any Other, whether from the East or the North of France. Work on clichés / your clichés. Situate yourself inside, do not denounce them. Look for your Other, search for »where / what do I exoticize / angelize / desire / freeze?«: high colonial society, landscapes, geographies, a city without names, without functions, the wonder of losing spatial and temporal references, the Arab, the Palestinian militant, the American, the women, the cuisine, the fight, Lebanon as a bridge / connection between Europe and the East, a bridge that would enable adventure, the known in the unknown, the tip of the iceberg, a Lebanon that comforts... Or anything else. The rediscovery, in that unknown, of a forgotten dormant known.

— Do not neglect the most common fantasies about the East: eroticism, lasciviousness, the labyrinth, the maze, swarm, mystery, the irrational, mashrabiyya, ...

— Your speech should be stuffed with elements that make it plausible and elements (of narrative, body, play, accessories, external complications, etc.) that emphasize its very fabrication, its artifice. Provide evidence for your statements. Favour lived experience, description, details, an unusual word, a precious stone, the model of an architect, a first name, etc.

— Do not neglect what a silence is capable of, acceleration, a shift of articulation, to stand with your back, face or profile to the audience, stand slightly tilted, with your eyes more or less open, more or less wrinkled. Your body in the space, or your body in the image, shapes and rhythms the space. That is where the spectator could track down, detect or not, the lie.

— Create picturesque and total worlds.
So huge that it's hardly believable.

— Remember what you saw, or thought you saw there.

— Have the soul of a Douanier Rousseau.

— Define the contract that binds you to the spectator: not that of classical theatrical performance where the actor arrives disguised as Hamlet, plays Hamlet and where the convention is that the spectator does not question the fact that the man on stage is Hamlet. Here, the one who goes on stage is not a character, but a woman or a man who lies.

— If you are the puppeteer, become the puppet as well. This is how you mess up the protocols of representation and theatre.

— The one on stage is not someone who has »good« ideas about Lebanon and to whom the common knowledge that we have of that country inspired puns, jokes or morals; the one on stage is someone who lies. He lies for the fun of trapping the beholder. He lies for the beholder to falter, lose foot, no longer quite sure of what he knows, of what he thought he knew or didn't know. He lies for the beholder to keep questioning himself about the regime of truth of what he hears/sees. And for that doubt to spread across other certainties.

— He lies in order to practice – with the delighted complicity of the beholder – falsification procedures. To make them readable.

— He lies in order to crack the icy cover of a so-called truth of the real.

— You can sing and/or dance and/or show images and/or be on stage and/or be absent and/or play music and/or write a letter and/or read a letter and/or read a poem and/or cook and/or interrupt yourself.

— Activate the analogue tools of language (and/or the image?), to create some kind of »ice palace« vertigo.

— Brush with madness. Or master yourself (was Pierre Loti mad?)!

— Think about role-play, and sometimes let the spectator think you've passed over to the »other side«. Like a teenager who would be unable to turn back. But you, no, surprise, you are indeed still there, sane!... although?

— Turn »although« into an ally. A diffracting tool. Amplification tool. Infinity tool. »Although« makes the candid happen, with its irreverent questions. It can help you outsmart your vulgarities.

— Get help in *Impressions of Africa* and *How I Wrote Certain of My Books* by Raymond Roussel.

— Do Orient and orientation have the same origin?

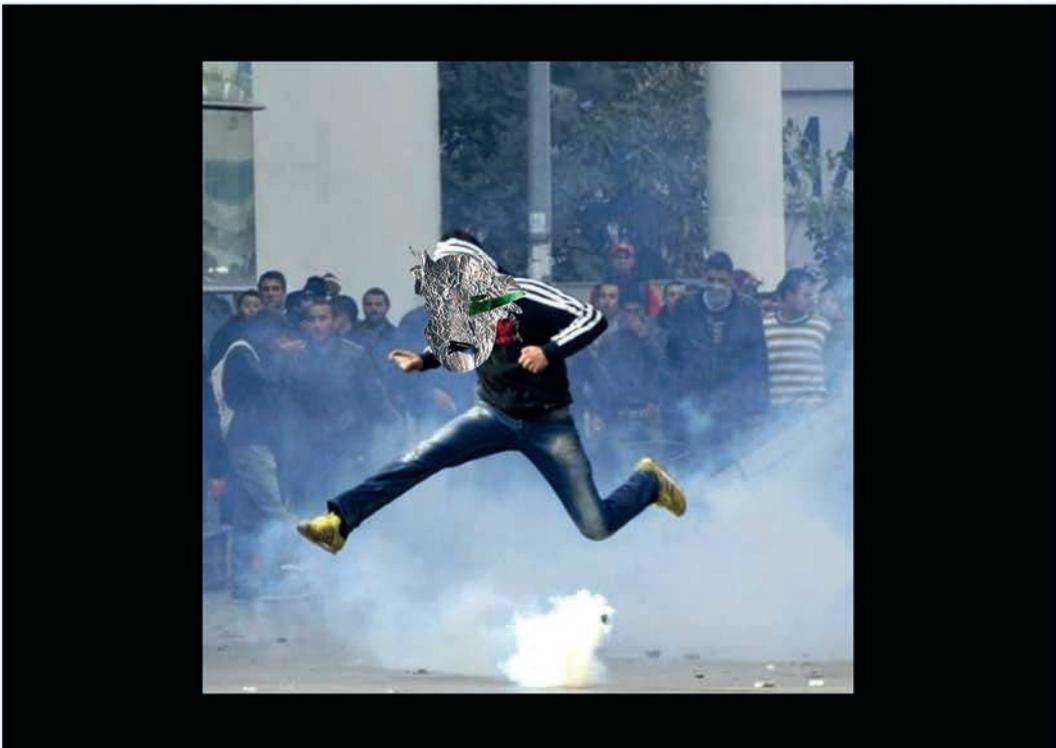
— You can produce, as transmission platforms: a personal anecdote, a family story, a holiday story, a joke, a fable, a myth, a confidence somebody would have revealed to you, the testimony of a third, a story with drawers, an endless story, a story that goes from one subject to another, a montage of images that proceeds by association or drifting.



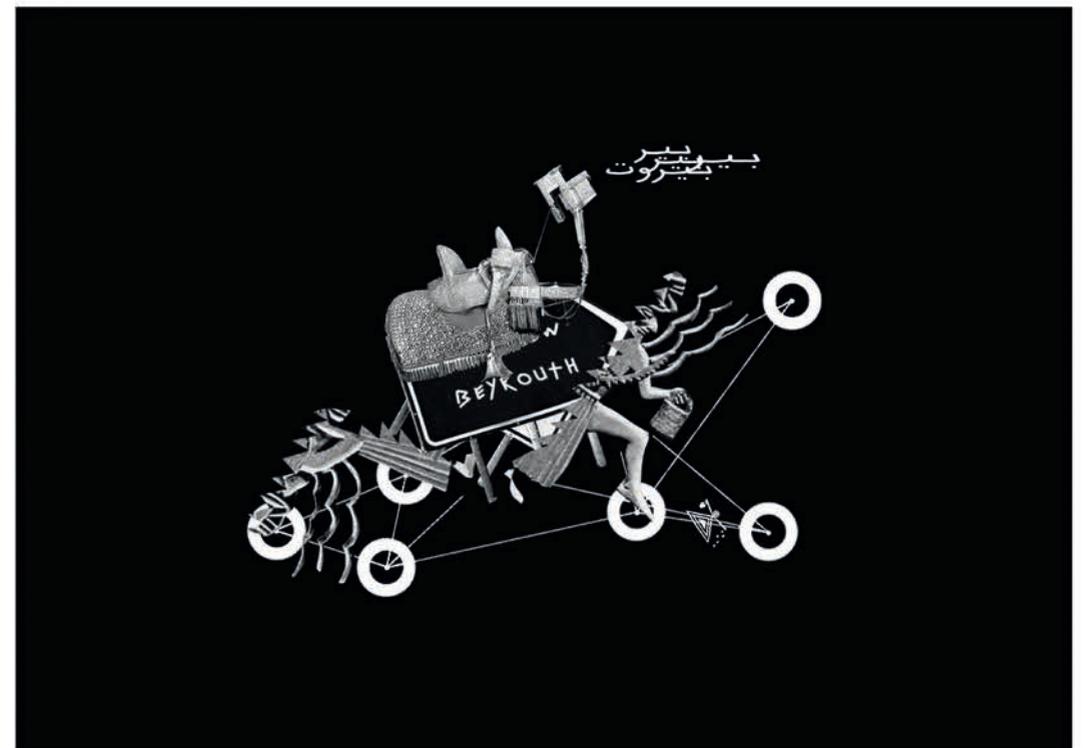
Oriental melancholia © De quel côté pour Variations Orientalistes_mchebbah



The arabized arabists / the arabophobic arabized / the arabic arabists / the arabistic arabics / the arabophilic arabists / the arabized arabophiles © De quel côté pour Variations Orientalistes_mchebbah



Oriental dauntless © De quel côté pour Variations Orientalistes_mchebbah



Beirut wells © De quel côté pour Variations Orientalistes_mchebbah

— Master the reasons for you to lie: to dress with a thousand beauties, a thousand advantages, that foreign country that you like but will not succeed unless fiction forces its destiny? To regain a lost childhood? To invent paradise? To mask your life with fortune, your drifting, your inability to achieve things down here? Because you feel cramped in the real world? To feel the thrill of lying? To enchant a disenchanting reality?

— There is the apparatus of lying.

There are the »motifs and/or ornaments« that you alternate.

There is the intimate and/or political and/or theatrical »problem« that you are concerned with.

There is Europe facing Lebanon, the present facing the future.

There is the history of the Middle East, the history of critical thinking, the history of the joy of learning, the history of sensuality. There is the tension between hope and despair, fraternity and unbridgeable gap, nostalgia and dreams, critique and rebellion, division and union.

III.

MOTIFS (FRAMEWORKS)

AND/OR ORNAMENTS (INCIDENCES) AND/OR STEREOTYPES

OF CATALOGUE PAGES

Childhood — The mother — The despot — The airplanes —

The Arabs — Arabesques — Pinocchio — Rafic Hariri — Fascination — Oscillation — Scarves —

Marseille — Spacesuit — Port — The promenade — The Mediterranean —

Beirut — In real life — The East — Sabres — Carpet — Arabian nights — Ancestors —

Clichés — Although — Dance — The dancers — The dancing body —

A country that doesn't exist — A people that doesn't exist — The Pied-Noir cousins that bring

dates — Gardens — Turbans — Replicas — Photography — Damascus —

Languages — Decor — Fountains — The Alhambra in Granada — Maps — Survey — Masks —

Faces — Departures — Arrivals — Jerusalem — Ghosts — The 1970s — Lebanon —

Duplication — Searches — Journeys — Me — The real — Camouflage — Folklore — Dive — Words

— Feel — Walk — Cedars — Lights — Cities — Alone — Game — Theatre —

Paint one's face

IV.

BEFORE DEPARTURE: PREPARATIONS

RENAUD, 13TH OCTOBER 2012, SOLAR VECTOR

Hello, from the window overlooking the courtyard in LIEUES, on the 22nd October, before leaving to Vienna, I will look at the path of the sun until its disappearance that I will imagine, in order not to let the day end, as a dawn in New Caledonia.

On Thursday I embarked on the idea of a conference about objectivity and subjectivity, using two objects (a sausage and a hookah) between which I wanted to try to define causal links, with the sausage necessarily and scientifically appearing as one of the main origins of the hookah, of its invention and use. I quickly dropped that nonsense. Yet not letting go of »objectivity and subjectivity«, which the work in the projection machine could circumscribe with still hazy boundaries that would probably benefit from remaining so.

Later in the afternoon, the light was fading, I thought of my machine, which I didn't have with me. I then started to think about the very term »projection«, about »projection surface«, about what the word »screen« means, about the obstacle that interposes itself and, breaking in the light field of the projector, makes an image appear and an image disappear at once. In short, I thought of the »Project«.

Luca comes in. He comes to work here in emergency, before leaving to Paris next week, where he will play with a big orchestra. He tells me, Vincent, that you're going to have a ticket to attend *Le Sacre du Printemps* by the Berlin Philharmonic conducted by Simon Rattle.

We talk a little bit, Luca and I, about Gustavo Dudamel, a young prodigy conductor from Venezuela, who at thirty has already conducted the legendary orchestra of Berlin, of which Karajan, former member of the Nazi party, was the all-mighty charismatic leader. Later, after Luca was gone, I rethink about the version of the Mexican Danzón by Márquez that this young conductor gave in London with Simon Bolivar Orchestra, which he has founded and comprises very young Venezuelan instrumentalists.

To you Sandra and Mary, who won't have the opportunity to attend the concert with Vincent, a version of Mambo from the West Side Story by Leonard Bernstein, still with Simon Bolivar orchestra and Gustavo Dudamel.

I don't think that Bernstein, who was Jewish, had never shaken hands with Karajan¹, who would rather turn to photographers whatever their ethnic or national origins. Dudamel is proud of his nation to the point that the orchestra is dressed in the colours of its national flag.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yEuYGVAn4Jw&feature=related>

Kisses to all of you

Renaud

/

¹
Bernstein first met Karajan in 1954, in Milan, in the secrecy of a lodge, where they probably shook hands.

MARY, 15TH OCTOBER 2012,

The Orient in the hands
in correspondence to all,
the size of the letters is not large enough to say thank you renaud
small suspension:

is it the »national« costume or the »conven-traditional« costume of
the orchestra that is objective or subjective!?

is it the sensual delight of the movements of those hands or the
excess that is oriental?

entr'act

yesterday, as I arrived in brussels, I met members of K street,
in that city on flemish territory, where the local holy sepulchre takes
the mask of language – even sticking its tongue out (to whom?
remains to be seen)

they organize a guest table once a month

next Saturday there will be a reading of poems about beirut, written
by a filmmaker who is just back (not from film but from beirut)

his name is b.b. rosenzweig

but the more surprising is that last night, while marion r. made me
meet some of the k-street-ardiens

I found myself sitting next to a (french)-lebanese-belgian claiming
to have a relationship (distant, indeed, but no less real)

with the family of B. Spinoza! you imagine my surprise!

he told me the story of dutch jewish immigration into
palestinian land and their installation in beirut by the end
of the nineteenth century.

as I read samir's book on the history of beirut, I had doubts about
his claims, but as the conversation unfolded
some points began to converge.

and then this morning I could take time to
read my e-mails — - joy — -
and spinoza resurfaces!

tomorrow or rather thursday

I will start an inquiry.

does spinoza have lebanese cousins?

or rather

how could spinoza grow a beard?

or rather in other words

is it possible that spinoza had already said that we would
never be modern?

and now how to replace s by b

is it possible that beirut had already shouted that we have
never been modern?

hoping not to become this mixture – see picture

pascale, if you are in brussels this WE, you're welcome in K. street
here's the announcement of the evening:

[http://www.harryvachercherlavoiture.com/
RueK/ruek_20_10_12.html](http://www.harryvachercherlavoiture.com/RueK/ruek_20_10_12.html)

ANNICK/BENOÎT/CLAIRE/EVE/FRÉ/
FRED/MARION/RONAN

K. STREET INVITES YOU TO ITS GUEST TABLE

THE 20th OCTOBER 2012

Keyenveld Street, 125 – 1050 Brussels

7:30pm Aperitif

*

8:00pm Poetry

Basile Bor Rosenzweig

Chronicles of a journey to Lebanon

Because there, we had to find a language matching an unprece-
dented situation, poetry has imposed itself as the safest means not
to judge and to love this country of honey,
milk and wars...

Off the tracks, Basile walks his words as others walk their cameras.

Half report half poetry, he just read his »chronicles« and traced the
bridge, which shouldn't be broken, between the pleasure
of the story and the time, so precious, of the formulation.

Between Ryazan and Brussels, France,

Yes, you were just passing

And it was

In Beirut

Another stop in your wanderings...

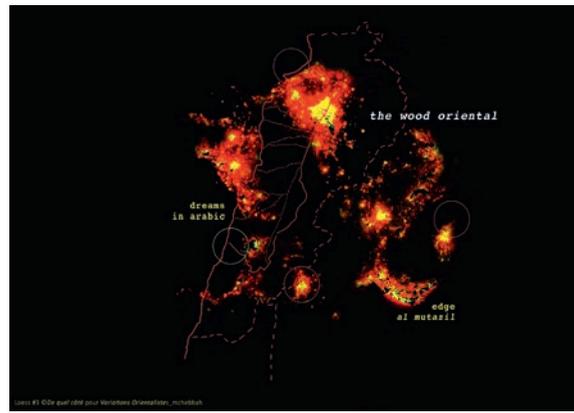
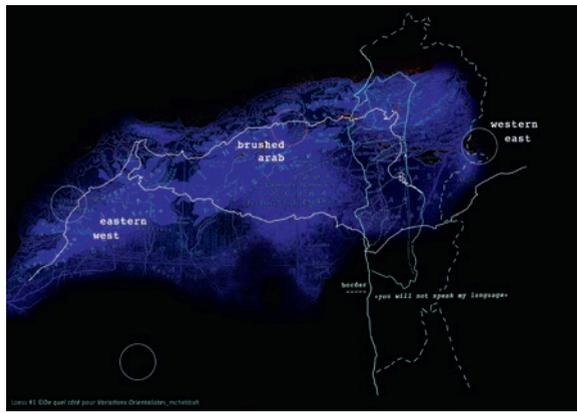
kisses to all of you

mary

/



Espion ©pour Variations Orientalistes_m.chebbah



RENAUD, WEDNESDAY 28TH,
THURSDAY 29TH NOVEMBER 2012,
Project / Interpret / Give different versions of the same story /
Objectivity & subjectivity

I now want to choose one or more tools, for their literalness.
THIS IS, TO SOME EXTENT, A MATTER OF PROJECTING.
that is to say, use a projection machine. Then select the surface of
projection: what can be used as a screen? Family, school, hierarchy,
a drunken guy, a song, a woman I love, an exotic fantasy.

INTERPRET, AS WELL.

to do so choose different interpretations of the same work (SOU-
VENIR DE MNASIDIKA, 11ÈME CHANSON DE BILITIS/
Debussy/Delphine Seyrig; Catherine Deneuve – LA DAMOI-
SELLE ÉLUE/ Debussy – La cathédrale engloutie/Debussy;
Naked city – BACHIANA BRASILEIRA N°9/Villa-Lobos –
COME AS YOU ARE/Nirvana; Caetano Veloso; Vincent Malone
– CONSTRUÇÃO/Chico Buarque; Mônica Salmaso – NAQUELE
TEMPO/Pixinguinha; etc... Pierre et le Loup/Prokofiev/ Gérard
Philippe; etc... INÚTIL PAISAGEM/Jobim; Vinicius cantuaria etc.
TELL THE STORY THEN.

Connect the word to the souvenir. Captivate quickly.
SITUATE, WITH OBJECTS IN CONSTELLATION.

Map a subjective Lebanon, of all the Lebanese restaurants in the
same city (Lyon, Paris, Belfort, cities where we could show *Vari-
ations Orientalistes*).

/

VINCENT, 18TH DECEMBER 2012,

I imagine working at the crossroads of voice, image, transvestisme.
Maybe a report in Switzerland. Maybe an open letter to the instiga-
tor of the project. Maybe a belly dance. I try to be the most brutal
and the most uneducated I can with this story. Making a world of
one of my clichés. The character that appeals to me in your pro-
posal: rather Douanier Rousseau. Maybe conceptual populism? Or
emotional concepts? I would like to show that the stage is even
more foreign to me than Lebanon.

/

MARY, 19TH DECEMBER 2012,

Here the tentacles of orientalism and their renewal are still abun-
dant. They always have been and still are synonymous with struggle
in my family, and indeed in my affective and mental structure.
So I could probably say that the posture that starts to take shape in
the fabrication is to turn around ways of evoking very broadly the
notion and sensation and/or the experience of »border« (thin or
rather so obvious and intertwined, that we wouldn't be able to say
on which sides we are, and this without the fiction of 2030).

The border between real/fake by means of tandems: fiction/reality
– prejudice/real idea – clairvoyance/superstition – stereotyped/sin-
gular – real traces/fake archives – masks/declared claims – poems/
theories

The geographical border (territorial but not national): orientation/
disorientation – stop/empty – visible/hidden

In other words,

How to talk about beirut will re-teach me to lie, and yet
How to talk about beirut will reconcile me with the unfinished,
and yet

How to talk about beirut will divide me, and yet

medium (started tracks and desires)

video edition of images/texts and drawings/texts

video edition of shot images

projection or printing of large pictures with subtitles

projection of images with a (live) present body at the forefront
voices at the microphone, 4 or 5 at once

I might add that I'm going to play with pictures of family archives,
but also with beirut as bérouth, my double »nationality«, real fake
postcards received from the very actors of *variations orientalistes*, real
fake and real issues that upset me regarding the history of the Arab
world (and not only), real fake identities...

And when vincent evokes dance, of course it tickles me! (I still
don't know how and what, with or in the shadow)

(I have seen *le gai savoir* by JL Godard and reviewed films by
Moghrabi A – I guess they are present in the traffic)

good pick

kisses to all of you

mary

/

RENAUD, 11TH JANUARY 2013, BEIRUT

Nameless streets.

In the past concrete lace – fulfilled by another war, now interior – whose killer motivations were names for an illiterate people.

Wandering dog-people sully their territory, since not knowing how to write it down.

Nothing contains despair.

(The next building won't be enough)

Despair faces you. Projects. Like buildings. Screens, landscape

masks. Despair with a mask of plenty.

Off the field of the deadly forces that nourish it, beyond its inexorable

borough, the clearest, the bluest,

it takes its place

in sarcasm, then irony.

Having reached the top of the three steps of the temple of spirit,

whose roof the gods have pierced, disallowing its sheltering name,

derision,

at last,

re-establishes the elegance of the most indisputable fatalism.

And puts on a show of itself. Hoping an eye that tells it:

you are there, for I see us there.

V.

APPROPRIATIONS OF THE MANUAL BY 4 PILOT-PLAYERS

APPROPRIATION 1,

proposed by Mary Chebbah: THE OTHER AS ONESELF

In ancient times, the cultural divide inherent to the Near East is inconceivable: the region is the cradle of Mediterranean civilization. Later on, Delacroix will even see the Maghreb as his own cradle. Of course there was history, and with it the fire, all the colonisations and occupations, the French, the Italian, the English, the Dutch, the Israeli. But not more than in Africa. The mystery is the mystery of childhood that begins in Afghanistan, from the heat of Arabia to the cold of Siberia.

Mary Chebbah's travelogue takes the form of a videographed story where the departure narrative of the arrival to Beirut, then the entry in Beirut, is based upon unreferenced, found or fabricated images: a postcard received from Mexico, forged into Beirut provenance and signed by one of the team-mates present on stage; characters of modern and contemporary Lebanese history crossing one another in anachronistic montages; »real« family archives of the narrator-author reflecting an Arab attachment; »fake« interviews in search of the »real« Lebanese; web images of dancers Mary Wigman and Tahia Carioca, etc. The sound quotes are also very eclectic, extracted from *Harlem* (Suicide), *Safini Marra* (Abdel Halim Hafez), *Rose* (Mazalda, Turbo Clap) *Mrabba* (Rbaibiya, Tunisia), *La Demoiselle*

élué (C. Debussy: #1 London symphony orchestra Claudio Abbado, #2 Nathalie Dessay and Philippe Cassard, #3 Véronique Diestschy and Philippe Cassard), *Ya habibi Tâala* (Asmahan). The approach was to compose a travelogue from a single source location: the computer of the author, a resource that is both very circumscribed (documents accumulated in the hard disk over the narrator-author's life and work) and almost infinite (web access). The story explores the possibilities of an experience of otherness without having to set necessarily separate identity poles beforehand.

APPROPRIATION 2,

proposed by Pascale Schaer: TOURISTIC CANDOUR

A journey with no other purpose than losing oneself in the discovery, sometimes amazed and sometimes stunned, of the Unknown. A journey stitched out of partial information, picked from travel guides: the name of a minister, the realization of a famous architect, a garden name, a date of History, the approximate description of a habit, the recommended neighbourhoods, the ones to avoid, the fauna, the flora, the cleanliness of hotels, the fate of women, the holy places confiscated by contemporary turmoil, etc.

Pascale Schaer brought sounds from her journey to Beirut, actually recorded during other journeys (Portugal, Colombia, Thailand, Switzerland, France). They are played to the audience and the four team mates at once, as they are sitting on the border of the stage facing a micro, and looking at an imaginary screen located right where the audience is. The movement of their eyes attentively follows the projected images of which we only hear the sound tracks. Overly choreographed, this game of gazes denounces the construction of an artificial device pretending to be a familiar and spontaneous situation: a projection of holiday films among friends. Everybody comments the images, nonexistent, which may at times confirm what they have heard or read in the media or elsewhere about that country (»oh yes, I've heard that it was Buren who had rebuilt the big mosque«), at times awaken memories of other journeys in other parts of the world (»it reminds me of that time I had been forced to dance during a cruise on the Nile«), at times suspend any possibility of recognition or identification (»But where were you there?«), at times contain a specific element to which they respond by the candour of wonder (»oh your hat that flies away«) or by the ambiguity of fear facing the unknown (»you see the guys there, behind the trees?!«), at times induce the formulation of a stereotyped image, exaggeratedly »orientalist« (»it's rare to be able to film snake charmers as closely«).

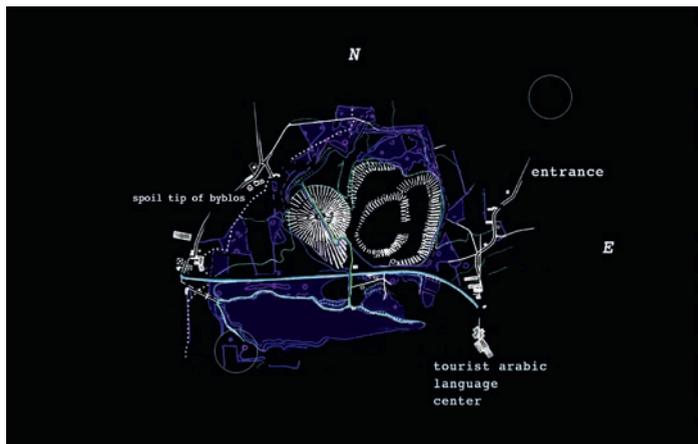
APPROPRIATION 3, proposed by Vincent Weber:
THE OTHER AS DOUBLE
(PRECISO ME ENCONTRAR*)

Invent a city of the East to situate another in there, make its double and go search for it. As Artaud seeks the truth of theatre in Bali.

Orchestrate its own absence: deserted villas, disappeared gardens, ghost characters.

Redouble the impossible (Lebanon) by the impossible (find oneself), betting that it can produce the possible, as – and – make +.

Vincent Weber's travelogue is a quest, a vain one, of a Lebanese playwright, Vincent Weber, particularly known for his book «The Rise and Fall of Balinese Theatre». The story, conveyed by Vincent Weber onstage, is redoubled by referenced quotations from various sources, appearing on a screen at the bottom of the stage, behind the narrator-author: some are from so called «orientalist» texts from the French literature of the nineteenth century (Lamartine, Nerval, Hugo), others from tourist guides (*Le Routard*, *Le Petit futé*), others from mediatic contemporary authors (Houellebecq), etc. The story, told in the first person as the result of the personal experience of the narrator, is thus revealed as a forgery. Packed with approximate delusions about the history and geography of the city of Beirut, it is often interrupted by the instigator of the project, who seeks to confront these approximations to the information she is supposed to know, as the only person in the team having effectively been to Beirut. A game is maintained between the legitimacy of the experience of the eyewitness testimony and that of the writing of the imaginary testimony. A projection of pictures closes the story. Pictures taken by the fictional Vincent Weber, the only tangible evidence that the Vincent Weber onstage could find of this double. The latter comments them in several ways: either pretending to be able to identify them: »here's a school in the borough of Ashrafieh«, or naming them as allegories: »here a door«, »here a dead end«, or abandoning his capacity to identify them: »here I don't recognize, I don't recognize«.



APPROPRIATION 4,
proposed by Renaud Golo:
FEAR (TERROR AND FASCINATION)

Go through the terrifying representation of the other to make the submerged part reappear, the one held in silence. That erotic part, turned fascinating – origin of terror – and upon which imagination can, however, construct a solid reality.

And track down, unfolding this intimate mechanics of the construction of terror, what a denial of State (the French officially kept silence on the Algerian war) can produce in individual and social reality. Orientalism and possession, going through some figures (Pinocchio, the Yeti, King Kong, the monster of Dr. Frankenstein, etc.) of intimate denial and social rejection. Orientalism as an unveiling force. Like a projection, paradoxically, since it also needs a screen.

Renaud Golo's story is a score for still images, which he diffuses on the screen with a projection machine (an episcopo), enabling panoramic views, travellings and fake zooms, all produced by games of optical and mechanical adjustments, and eleven interpretations or variations of the prelude for piano *La puerta del vino* by Claude Debussy. It opens and closes with two excerpts from a piece of D.A.F (Deutsch-Amerikanische Freundschaft – German group of the 1980s) entitled *Ich und die Wirklichkeit* (I and reality). The images expose fragments of materials and colours, landscapes and unidentified persons, which we imagine to be the traces of that journey to Beirut, undertaken to solve an old fear knotted in childhood, and entrusted to the audience at the beginning of the story: the fear of Arabs. An elliptical dialogue between the manipulator-author and the instigator of the project weaves a common attempt to reconstruct the biographical and political, intimate and collective fragmentary trajectory, which comes from that childish fear and results in this therapeutic treatment, in the port of Beirut, which amounts to temporarily putting one's life, equipped with a spacesuit, in the hands of Nasser and Walid, for as long as the fear, along with the discrimination it entails, makes way to distinction, the time it takes for »new connections«, for a bright porosity, to sweep a disturbing porosity away.



VI.
RETURN TO THE POINT OF DEPARTURE

PARIS, JULY 14TH 20..

My very dear Ahmad,

I am still awaiting a letter from you. Have you finally decided to leave Beirut ? Do not stubbornly brave danger, and settle down in the mountains. Know that Bikfaya's house is wide open to you. And should there be a lull, and I can at last come home, we'll huddle. Every day I read the newspapers with dismay. Is it true that the southern road is closed to traffic ? How do you manage to go to Bint Jbeil ? Please write.

You cannot imagine all that I have been hearing over the last few weeks. If I, in my heart of hearts, cannot make up my mind regarding the opportunity of a French intervention, I can assure you that none of the arguments that can be heard here, neither those in favor, nor those that condemn it, do help me to see my way through it. On one hand, a set philosophers want to save their Lebanese »brothers«, or even more their Lebanese »sisters« from the islamic threat, who, and I quote »much like western women, fought for their emancipation and imposed a feminine style of business, without sacrificing, even far from it, their oriental charms«. End of quote. On the other hand, there is no question of involving France and its Judeo-Christian heritage in a conflict that has Muslims slaughtering each other and that therefore isn't any of its concern.

And Imagine that wherever I may be, at a dinner, in a meeting or at the theater, I am expected to express an opinion, me, a Lebanese whose perfect mastery of French wouldn't let anyone imagine, not even for a second, that I am a Muslim, and would rather suggest that I cultivate, like some of my fellow christian compatriots, an unflinching attachment to »mother France«. It is absurd: each one, in order to chose a side, wants to know who, of the Shi'ite and the Sunni, wear the longest beards and holds the sharpest swords, and no one ever talks about the beginnings of the revolution.

I send you my kindest regards, dear Ahmad, and I feverishly await your letter.

Omar

PARIS, AUGUST 15TH 20..

Dear Ahmad,

Your last letter gave me confort for a few hours, but I only had to dive back into the local press for me to feel desperate with worry again. This bears on my mood, which, as you know, is usually rather even-tempered. Well, yesterday night I didn't recognize myself. I was invited for dinner at Rania and Nizar's. Maha was there as well with her friend Bernard. Have you already met him ?

He first seemed intimidated, perhaps by the tragedy we are going through. We were inquiring news from each others friends and family that have stayed back home, and as he was probably feeling left out and perhaps seeking our sympathy, he interferred in the conversation, expressing the usual considerations on that oh so beautiful country that is Lebanon, that democratic and civilized island surrounded by brutality and obscurantism and, again, slipping into violence. My anger raised at once. I could not control it. I asked him what Island he was speaking of. What democracy, what civilization he was talking about. And I drew, in spite of myself, irritated by his silliness, a detestable picture of our little country, disfigured, now playground to God's mercenaries, after having been entirely sold out to bankers, from the sea's meerschaum to the cedars' peaks. I told him that no, Beirut's beaches weren't idyllic, that they were privatized and often dirty. I told him that Beirut's river is walled up, dry and inaccessible, and that the gardens, so famous for their shadow offering pine trees, and their fragrances of amber and musk, now belong to a mythical world.

And the more disbelief I could see in his eyes, the power of the myth, the more I elaborated. I talked about a schizophrenic country, even more charming to the passing-by western traveller, that he feels in the chills running through his spine that behind the glitter, there is an oriental game of traffic and murder going on.

In short, this Bernard made me become obnoxious and it does me good to write to you. Do you think that we could now maintain a regular pace ? This correspondance remains pretty much the only thing that connects me with what is going on back home, I who has to stay away when I desire only one thing: to come home and be among you.

Your devoted Omar.

*
Variations orientalistes by Mary Chebbah, Renaud Golo,
Sandra Iché, Pascale Schaer and Vicent Weber was presented on
19 June 2014 at the Tanzquartier Wien.

ALL INVOLVED

BASEL ABBAS AND RUANNE ABOU-RAHME work together across a range of sound, image, text, installation and performance practices. They have been developing a body of work that questions this suspension of the present and searches for ways in which an altogether different imaginary can emerge. Their practice, largely research based, frequently investigates the spatio-temporal resonances of seemingly disparate moments. Their approach has been one of sampling materials in the form of sound, image, text, objects and recasting them into altogether new »scripts«. They have exhibited and performed internationally.

CLAUDIA BOSSE is a choreographer, artist and the artistic director of theatercombinat. After studying theatre directing at the Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Arts in Berlin, she worked in the field of experimental theatre between (spatial) choreography, (choral) theatre and urban intervention. She generates »political hybrids« as site-specific settings and different media. Claudia Bosse develops international installations and works for museums, architectures, theatres and urban spaces. She teaches, lectures, publishes, initiates and participates in research projects and continuously collaborates with artists and theorists from different genres.
www.theatercombinat.com
http://claudiabosse.blogspot.com

MARY CHEBBAH studied contemporary dance, history, sociology and anthropology of art in Lyon. Since 2006 she has produced several »philosophical and graphical objects«, published on paper or edited on video. She has been collaborating with Maguy Marin (CCN Rillieux-la-Pape) and the RAMDAM space for artistic creation for 12 years. She is a co-founder of LIEUES, an experimental art space and residency based in Lyon, and of *rodéo*, a magazine for drawing, literature, photography and philosophy.

DICTAPHONE GROUP is a research and performance collective that creates live art events based on a multidisciplinary study of space. It is a collaborative project initiated by live artist Tania El Khoury and architect/urbanist Abir Saksouk. Together with various collaborators such as the performer and producer Petra Serhal, they have been creating site-specific performances informed by research in a variety of places such as a cable car, a fishing boat and an abandoned bus. The aim of these projects is to question our relationship to the city and redefine its public space.

IVAYLO DITCHEV is Professor of Cultural Anthropology at the St Kliment Ohridsky University in Sofia. His current research is on cities and practices of citizenship.

His most recent book is *Desire of Spaces, Spaces of Desire: Studies in Urban Anthropology* (Sofia: LIK, 2005). Ivaylo Ditchchev regularly contributes to the German edition of *Lettre Internationale* and in Bulgaria to the daily *Sega* and the weekly *Capital*.

GURUR ERTEM is an Istanbul-based cultural sociologist and the artistic co-director of iDANS (Istanbul) where she is responsible for curatorial research, theory and publications. Ertem is a specialist in contemporary dance culture and assumes multiple roles as academic, critic, dancer, curator, dramaturge and editor. She recently completed her sociology PhD at the New School for Social Research (New York) with the thesis »European Dance: The Emergence and Transformation of a Contemporary Dance Art World« (1989). She is the editor of *Solo? in Contemporary Dance* (2008) and *Dance on Time* (2010) as well as other Turkish language publications on dance. She coordinates the iDANSblog, an online platform of dance scholarship and criticism.

WILLIAM FORSYTHE has been active in the field of choreography for over 45 years. His work is acknowledged for reorienting the practice of ballet from its identification with classical repertoire to a dynamic 21st century art form. Forsythe's deep interest in the fundamental principles of organization has led him

to produce a wide range of projects including installations, films, and web based knowledge creation.

RENAUD GOLO is a former competitive boxer, practising until the 1981 French boxing championship, and later with kickboxing. Before fighting, he had focused on drawing and writing. As an autodidact, he encounters aesthetic questions through the open experimentation of singing, improvised and written music, acting, performing, designing and dancing. He has also designed sets for dance and theatre pieces. As an author and/or interpret he created and/or performed with Denis Mariotte, Maguy Marin, Joan Jonas, Sandra Iché, François Tizon, Jude Anderson, the band CONTRE, the band uN mEC, uNE pORTE, the orchestra and choir conductor Eduardo Lopez, the composer Alain Aubin, Konrad Kaniuk ... He is currently working on a stage research starting from a Maurice Blanchot's book. He is a co-founder of *rodéo* magazine and the RAMDAM space for artistic creation.

MONIKA HALKORT is assistant professor of digital journalism and social media at the Lebanese American University in Beirut. Her research focuses on the social and political affordances of data emphasising the relationship between data, copyright and self-determination in humanitarian governance. Key questions here include how closed data architectures undermine struggles for political autonomy and

liberation and the critical significance of information rights for stateless populations such as Palestinian refugees. The main geographic focus of her work is the Arab world. Prior to her academic career she worked as a broadcast journalist in Austria and Germany producing radio and television features and documentaries for public and private broadcasters for more than 15 years.

WALTER HEUN After having directed Tanztage München, Dance Energy and Tanztendenz München Walter Heun founded Joint Adventures. He initiated the festival BRDance, is director of Tanzwerkstatt Europa and Access to Dance as well as founder of Tanzplattform Deutschland and Nationales Performance Netz (NPN) in Germany. Furthermore he conceived and directed luzerntanz – choreographic centre at the luzernertheater in Lucerne, where he a.o. organized the Schweizer Tanztage. He curated a.o. the International Dance Festival NRW, the dance program at the festival Ideen des März, the performance series Dance at Judson and on and on, and the exhibition Moving Movies. Since 2009 Walter Heun is artistic director of Tanzquartier Wien, where he established various new formats and developed new support structures for dance and performance from Austria. Since 2015 he is president of EDN – European Dancehouse Network.

SABINA HOLZER studied contemporary dance at the Amsterdam University of Performing Arts – School for

New Dance Development. She collaborates in and organises interdisciplinary gatherings at the intersection of theory and practice and teaches exploration and composition in various institutions and groups. Since 2007 she has been writing, performing and publishing texts in relation to contemporary dance and performance and is an editorial board member of *Corpus*, an internet magazine for dance, choreography and performance. In 2005 she began cooperating closely with the fine artist Jack Hauser. Together they create performances, interventions in public space and galleries as well as in theatres and museums.

SANDRA ICHÉ studied History, Political science and Arabic in Paris. In 2004, she entered P.A.R.T.S. and began performing on a regular basis (collaborating with choreographers Andros Zinsbrown, Maguy Marin, Rémy Hérítier). Since 2010, she pursues her artistic research on the logic of naturalization of constructed social realities and the fabrication and writing of history, through performances (*Wagons libres*, 2012; *Variations orientalistes*, 2014), movies (*Reims 2034*, 2015; *Ellispe, a conversation with Omar Amiralay*, 2015), publications (*L'Orient-Express: Chronique d'un magazine libanais des années 1990*, 2009). She is currently living between Beirut, where she manages *Mansion*, a cultural space co-founded with artist and architect Ghassan Maasri, and Lyon, where she is a founding member of LIEUES, an experimental art space and residency and of *rodéo* magazine.

KRASSIMIRA KRUSCHKOVA is dance and performance theorist and curator. Since 2003 she has been head of the theory centre at the Tanzquartier Wien. She teaches at the University of Applied Arts, the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, and was visiting professor at the FU Berlin and the University of Vienna, where she did her doctorate and habilitation. Selected publications: *Ob?scene. Zur Präsenz der Absenz im zeitgenössischen Theater, Tanz und Film* (2005), *It takes place when it doesn't. On dance and performance since 1989* (ed. with M. Hochmuth/G. Schöllhammer) (2006), *Uncalled. Dance and performance of the future* (ed. with S. Gareis) (2009), *Wissen wir, was ein Körper vermag* (ed. with A. Böhler/S. Valerie), (2014).

LEJLA MEHANOVIĆ studied German philology, theatre, film and media science in Vienna. Since 2009 she has been dramaturgy and artistic direction assistant at the Tanzquartier Wien and has been entrusted with the realization of Tanzquartier Wien's Online Media Library in 2014. Besides her engagement with Tanzquartier Wien she has been editing assistant for *Emerging Bodies* (ed. G. Klein / S. Noeth) and co-organized the research project *dé-position* together with Sandra Noeth in the context of Tanzkongress 2013.

RABIH MROUÉ is an actor, director, author and ranks among the most important Lebanese contemporary artists. He is also editor of the Lebanese magazine Kalamon

and The Drama Review, as well as co-founder and board member of the Beirut Art Center Association. Rabih Mroué works at the interface of performance and visual arts. His productions deal with the political situation in Lebanon and frequently combine everyday real material with self-created fictive narration. Rabih Mroué frequently works with Lina Majdalanie. His performances, such as *The Inhabitants of Images* (2008), *Photo-Romance* (2009), *33 Rounds and a few seconds* (2012) as well as most recently *Riding on a cloud* (2014), have been represented at theaters and festivals around the world. His work *The Pixelated Revolution* (2012) was displayed at Documenta 13. 2016 he opens the Wiesbaden Biennale with his new piece *So little time*.

NAT MULLER is an independent curator and critic. Her main interests are the politics of representation, contemporary art from the Middle East, and food. She is contributing editor for *Ibraaz* and regularly contributes to magazines like *Springerin*, *MetropolisM*, *ArtAsiaPacific* and others. She has also written numerous catalogue and monographic essays on artists from the Middle East. She has taught at universities and academies in the Netherlands and the Middle East and has curated exhibitions and screening programs internationally. www.natmuller.com

NADAPRODUCTIONS The choreographer Amanda Piña and the visual artist and film-maker Daniel Zimmermann

have been collaborating since 2005. They work within the realms of performance, contemporary dance, theatre, politics, installation and film. Their interdisciplinary work focuses on perception, investigating the mechanics of othering while introducing non-western referents into contemporary art, bringing structures of exclusion and inclusion into light. Together they have contributed to the creation of institutions such as the BMfB (Austrian Ministry of Movement Affairs 2009–), the Viennese off-space for performing arts, nadaLokal (2009–) and the program *Endangered Human Movements* (2015–).

SANDRA NOETH is a curator, researcher and writer. Since 2015 she has been a fellow of the research group *Loose Connections* at the University of Hamburg; since 2012 senior lecturer in the choreography MA course at DOCH-Stockholm University of the Arts; 2015–16 resident professor at the HWP study programme at Ashkal Alwan, Beirut. From 2009 to 2014, Sandra was head of dramaturgy and research at the Tanzquartier Wien. Her current artistic and theoretical research interests and publication projects include the role, status and agency of the body in bordering processes and structural violence, ethical and political perspectives on the body, non-Western movement practices, dramaturgy in choreography and dance.

PETER BO RAPPMUND was born in Wyoming in 1979 and has undergraduate and graduate degrees in film studies, film/video and music composition

from the University of Colorado, Mills College (CA) and the California Institute of the Arts. Today he lives and works in Dallas, Texas, as an artist and educator. Many of his films – such as *Psychohydrography* (2010) or *Topophilia* (2015) – have been shown at international film festivals and in various art museums. *Tectonics* was awarded a *Special Mention at the Swiss Festival del Film Locarno 2012*.

PASCAL SCHAEER is a sound designer and field recording artist for movies and the performing arts. She took her first steps in the sound studios by assisting the Polish sound engineer Malgorzata Albinska. In 2000 she moved to Belgium to study sound engineering at the IAD in Louvain-La-Neuve, Belgium and worked for the sound studio Cineberti in Brussels. In 2008 she was awarded a »bourse sonore« in Jura, Switzerland.

AMUND SJØLIE SVEEN, born 1973 in Vadsø, above the arctic circle, living in Svartskog outside of Oslo, is a Norwegian artist and percussionist. He has a master's in solo percussion from the Göteborg College of Music, Sweden. Amund Sjolie Sveen works with a wide range of expressions and media whose common ground is mainly the use of sound and the investigation of current political issues in the globalised world of the market economy.

VINCENT WEBER studied dance at the National Conservatory of Dance in Lyon, and modern and ancient literature at Lyon 2 University. As a performer he collaborated with

Maguy Marin, *Wagons Libres* association, Dominique Brun, Sylvain Prunec, Clément Layes and Yoann Bourgeois. He is a co-founder of *rodéo* magazine and *Trente-trois morceaux* (literature publishing house). He is developing his own writing practice (*Faire la carte*, 2014) and projects for stage (*La Réserve*, 2015; *D'après nature*, 2016).

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