

CYCLE I:
Research Center
2018/2019, *Publishing*
Artistic Research
The Annex

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Publishing Artistic Research, The Annex

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Documenting, archiving, and publishing are intrinsic to the ongoing practices of a.pass, a platform for artistic research practices. They are seen as research tools that enable critical reflections through their exposure of artistic research processes. These methods of communication are practices of making-public by engaging with the performative potentials of these concepts. The program seeks to find public formats or outlets for research in the course of its ongoing development, and facilitates an understanding of the politics of such processes.

a.pass searches for a publishing practice that does not regard knowledge production, art making, aesthetics, context, and politics as separate communication channels, but as a witnessing process of simultaneous artistic creation, contextualization and doubt.

Publication is addressed under the hybrid transdisciplinary term of performative publishing, a concept used to contain the multiplicity of forms of publishing practices present at a.pass, and to question the publication's purpose within the sphere of artistic knowledge processing. We are interested in "performative publishing" to open other forms of doing that reflect the speculative attitudes of artistic research.

With these concepts in mind, the a.pass Research Centre (RC) began a new program in 2018 that hosts six Associate Researchers in one year cycles as a platform for exchange in artistic research. Cycle I hosted Isabel Burr Raty, Adrijana Gvozdenović, Antye Guenter, Sara Manente, Rob Ritzen and Sina Seifee. They contributed to the platform through concerns, concepts and "ways of doing" inherent to their practices.

Ideas such as fermentation, critical visualizations of brain research, shared curatorial practices, "exhibiting otherwise" and artistic anxieties, the alternative use of female body fluids and speculative narration were introduced and shared. At the end of Cycle I, the Associate Researchers were invited to transpose their research into some form of printed publication. They were supported during the year by Alex Arteaga, Nicolas Y Galeazzi, Vladimir Miller and Pierre Rubio as curators of the Research Center, and Lilia Mestre as current artistic coordinator.

CYCLE I: List of publications

The Annex is a booklet that collectively weaves a context around the following 6 research publications:

ROT issue Zero 2020 SKIN

A magazine by Sara Manente with 34 contributions by artists, chefs, researchers and designers.

ROT is a publication reflecting the research “Wicked technology/Wild fermentation,” by Sara Manente that focuses on forms and practice of fermentation as ways to rethink bodies and their making. This glossy magazine performs research, aiming to infect the reader, and questioning how to spread, publish, and help the work survive.

FORMS OF LIFE OF FORMS

5 posters designed into a booklet, by Rob Ritzen in collaboration with D-E-A-L.

Forms of life of Forms brings artistic research into form - not merely as an aesthetic question but as a social and political one. Indeed, there are no politics without form! With *Forms of Life*, Rob Ritzen curated several “*Moments*” that assembled works, collective readings, and other references into a single installation. This publication reshuffles documentation of these “*Moments*” as a visual reflection of the trajectory of this research.

archivingartistic anxieties.me

A website by Adrijana Gvozdenović in collaboration with Sina Seifee, Pia Louwerens, Kristina Gvozdenović and Goda Palekaite.

www.archivingartistic anxieties.me is a noisy visual archive and online publication that takes the form of an essay. This platform is a way to reflect and diffract from the different activities and events realized in the past year. The writing and editing processes are exposed and show the different steps of the collaboration and their constructive agencies.

CRITICAL BESTIARIES - zine #1: ZoologicalVandalism

Sina Seifee in collaboration with editor Renan Luran and designer Foad Farahani

Zoological Vandalism is immersion in the compiling and composing of Seifee's notes on medieval bestiaries, and placing them in sequential order. It is the first chapter of a series that creates context and opens small descriptive steps towards (what Latour might call) "knowing interestingly" about bestiaries. It is a speculative adventure in bio-techno tales and old styles of knowing. As an "ecology of obligation" with Iranian sensuality and its ardent materiality, somewhere in the menagerie of found and feral animal videos on *Whatsapp* and *Telegram*, is Seifee's undisciplined grounding in visual crafts.

NEOCORTEX

A research poster and scarf by Antye Guenther

NEOCORTEX is a textile poster publication. It can be used as a head or neck scarf, a hairband, a veil, a belt, a table cloth, an arm sling, a disguise in political demonstrations, a laboratory sieve, or a tool for receiving and transmitting alien thoughts. This scarf is the second materialization of ongoing research on neuroscientific visualization practices and questionable conceptualizations of our brains. Referring to the current trend in the scientific community to print posters on textiles rather than on paper, it combines reconstructed MRI data of the artist's brain with various text fragments from science and science fiction.

BEAUTY KIT - AN ECO-EROGENOUS ART PROJECT

A catalog by Isabel Burr Raty with contributions by Kristin Rogghe, Elke Van Campenhout, Gosie Vervloessem, Pablo Diartinez and Tim Vets.

Beauty Kit - An Eco-Erogenous Art Project is an experimental catalog summarizing Isabel Burr Raty's research on conceptualizing and manufacturing eco-erogenous para-pharmaceutical products. It tells the story of the *BKFF*, a mobile farm where she and other females harvest their orgasmic juices to produce

beauty bio-products, used for treatments in the *BK Spa*, critically discussed in the *BK Focus Group* and moving forward into becoming a village, where every-body harvests each other. The catalog comes with contributing text, "Harvesting bodies - The Farm as Paradox" by Elle/Elke Van Campenhout, and other reflections on the project.

The Annex

Writing Score

Instructions

The Annex was realized through a Q&A writing score inspired by *Scorescapes*¹ in close dialogues between the Associate Researchers and Research Centre Curators.

There were two rounds of questions with two week intervals to respond.

Each researcher asked a question to another's research in an epistolary format. The first round, "Questions on Research," addressed the content of the research and its perspective in the context of artistic research. The second round, "Questions on Publishing," addressed the relation of each researcher's work to publishing.

The distribution of the roles (who asks a question to whom), was done through chance procedure.

For the writing process of this annex, we tested a beta version of our new online platform specifically designed for a.pass by the collective OSP (Open Source Publishing). This a.pass *Kitchen*², as it is called, was used as an open source storage. To end the process we met in PAF (Performing Arts Platform) for a week of feedback and editing.

For the finalization of *The Annex* into the format in your hands we approached our long time design collaborator Miriam Hempel (daretoknow.co.uk) as a dialogue partner.

1 *Scorescapes* is ongoing research on scores as a pedagogical tool conducted by Lilia Mestre in the context of a.pass. There are several iterations of the practice: "Writing Score," "Perform Back Score," "Bubble Score," "Medium Score" and "Fragile Community Score." More information about Scorescapes and the different iterations can be found at www.apass.be.

2 <http://kitchen.apass.be>

Questions on Research

HORROR

SARA ASKS SINA

Looking for a fish but finding a mermaid or Godzilla! Last time we saw each other, we talked about the effect of chimera as being horrific because it exceeds boundaries and definitions. You recognize parts, but you cannot completely understand it or its origin. You and Adrijana were working on a workshop about horror in someone's artistic practice. Is there a horrific side in artistic research too? Is it related to making-public? If chimera is something produced by the lens we use, what about the epistemology of artistic research? Is it about making order or complexity? Can we really choose the lens from any lens available? If we see chimeric symbiosis as generating life, what about this research spilling into the practice?

RESPONSE

The idea of horror for artist-researchers came from Adrijana's relation and mine to play and rework metaphors of knowledge. It was an invitation to a workshop to think about what one is making, not as something correct and awesome, but horrible. What could be the horrific results of one's practice – to tell a story about it, with mood and atmosphere and affect, starting with the cliché elements of the genre. I believe it was more directed to the way people orient themselves in their field, and less addressed to public-making.

I agree with you that chimeric could be an effect or side-effect of one's artistic research. I see that art-related practice sometimes involves mutating old categories, originating new ones. In the process of genetic experimentation, monsters can show up, figuratively speaking. But it is not the case for everyone. If you accept my proposal, that the chimeric effect is produced in the eyes of an observer, that is to say by a *lens*, then I don't think this is something one can choose or select. This lens is like something that one *inherits*. Depending on your particular history and situation you might find yourself equipped with a series of *lenses*, let's say, and you start from them. You travel, you change your context, you go to the *foreign* to figure it out, with the people who don't have your lenses, and have other things.

MIRROR

They help you understand what you are inheriting. You can't do it while you are at home.

The category of chimera, as we are using it or importing it from biotechnological discourses, tells a story of genesis in nature. It is a story of how contemporary symbiogenetic biology thinks of nature in the scale of the cells: chimeric through and through. I am not yet sure how to apply that notion to artistic research yet (of those that I have been exposed to in the last few years). Because many times they are rooted in individual people's selves, and that exceeds all categories. Also, because it is very hard to track down how concepts and precepts mutate in individual artistic trajectories. But yes yes, research "spilling" as you say, into practices, happens a lot. *Spill* is a nice metaphor for mild and minor and uncontrollable – maybe accidental influences – something you didn't plan, or didn't even want to leave its container, but did. If something spills that means we are dealing with an effect that is not the result of our deliberations. Come to the horror workshop! For me, research didn't spill into my artistic practice, it just took over.

I was wondering about your question of "complexity," and I wanted to think instead of "adding branches." Then adding branches could be something chimeric. It is not exactly growing branches, as in, extending one's body. In this case, the branch is not the same species as the trunk, it is a chimerical appendix-like organ. After a while, it becomes part of one's cognitive body, no longer remembering how it was before.

NICOLAS ASKS ANTYE

Dear Antye,

You are working with the brain. Of course you do. Your brain is busy while it's working on its own subject. You a subject as well – looking at your brain as a subject. Isn't your research a look into an endless mirror cabinet? The Brain! Our brains – mediated through your imagination, your documentation, memory and

artwork, then looked at by us – might let us fall into the same mise-en-abyme.

How much is the documentation of the brain a collective mirror? What kind of "reality" are these collective mirrors talking about?

RESPONSE

"Thinking *with* the brain about thinking *and* the brain offers up exciting, self-referential loops that can create highly productive short circuits and fascinating paradoxes." I have often used this sentence to write this about my art practice – also a bit cheeky – in reference to Kurt Gödel's 2nd incompleteness theorems of mathematical logic that demonstrate the inherent limitations of every formal (axiomatic) system. However, I enjoy until this day when rational and objective thinking keeps on disproving itself – which it does all the time. Self-referential looping of looping, of not being able to grasp with our minds what is going on with our minds, is an important trigger for my fascination with human and nonhuman cognition, for our brains as one form of cognitive matter among so many potential others, for various ways of brain manipulation.

Insert: "I have a thing for cognitive biases, I would even go as far as calling myself an emergent cognitive bias collector."³ There are so many of them, it is phenomenal anyone actually believes in so-called "objective," unbiased thinking at all. One of my favorite cognitive biases is called the "Bias Blind Spot": one easily fails to see the influence of a cognitive bias on one's own judgment, while having far less trouble in seeing this influence on the judgment of others.

You compare these loops with mise-en-abyme phenomena. You wonder how much the documentation of the brain might be a collective mirror, and I have the feeling the "mirror" might be a rather misleading metaphor here. A mirror seems to be this tool

3 What does it mean to quote myself here once again? Is this incongruent with the undeniable narcissistic topic of dealing with your brain about your brain?

of self-reassurance with rather close ties to whatever one might perceive as reality, almost directly reflecting everything back at what is in front of it. Even if we look into a distorted mirror, we still know and see that it is us looking back at *us*. Dealing with the brain about the brain somehow does not offer these loops of recognition. Something is looking back at us that should feel familiar, relatable and coherent, but instead creates uncanny feelings of an “us,” that doesn’t look and feel like us at all.

We have no clear view into and onto our brains,⁴ we do not feel it – headache is just the pain radiating from the cerebral membranes the brain is wrapped into – the brain cannot feel itself. We cannot escape the brain while dealing with our brain; we have neither direct grasp in terms of touch or feel, nor any means of direct “reflective” knowledge that reveals itself to us. “A system cannot demonstrate its own consistency.”⁵

I had to look up the term “mise-en-abyme” again. It describes this formal technique of placing a copy of an image within itself, often in a way that suggests an infinitely recurring sequence. A common sense of the phrase is the visual experience of standing between two mirrors. Things start looping again... I am also not sure what to do with the term “collective” in “collective mirror.” I am blaming my East German origins notoriously for my suspicion towards organized groups, and my great appreciation for individualism (and privacy). I could add that I do not resonate with the idea of “documentation of the brain” as well, as it sounds like meticulously collecting facts and documents to establish some kind of truth. But then I wonder why I am picky about your question, which I consider very crucial and meaningful with regards to my practice, into (linguistic) pieces.

Rewinding...

4 During specific neurosurgical procedures the patient’s brain membranes are anaesthetized, but the patient stays awake. The brain itself has no receptors for touch or pain. I always wondered how it might feel knowing that your brain is touched at this very moment unable to perceive a thing, and what kind of eerie feedback loops could be created through a reflective mirror construction. Imagine to see...

5 Kurt Gödel’s 2nd incompleteness theorem

I am using my own brain and brain data to create images and imaginaries that hopefully spin the audience into these stirring thinking loops of science and science fiction. But not, or not only, to enchant the audience with mesmerizing visualizations and fascinating story telling. Keeping in mind that the knowledge we gain about the brain – along with the tools subsequently developed to interfere with it – will fundamentally change our ways of thinking, both functionally and ultimately on the structural level of brain tissue as well; I feel this urgency to expose these specific “brain” topics back to us all. Perhaps that is what you were referring to? “The brain is at work, and we do not know it. We are its subjects – authors and products at once – and we do not know it. (...) Humans make their own brain, but they do not know that they make it.”⁶

ANTYE ASKS ROB

Dear Rob,

Based on your background in political philosophy, you developed a very interesting curatorial practice that seems to facilitate most of all, possibilities to re-think and to re-act to socio-political urgencies of our time. To change the way we think and act socio-politically on a local level. This is in your “sphere of influence.” I sense now that you become more and more interested in “materializing” this facilitation, which began with mobile architecture for the assemblies series. So I wonder, what does it mean for you working with matter and material, with all of its “own will, stubbornness and demands”? What are your experiences taking this step from “thinking space of writing” to physical materialization? How does it feel? What does it do to you?

6 Catherine Malabou *What Should We Do with Our Brain?*, New York, Fordham University Press, 2008

RESPONSE

In your question, you point at something I am encountering in my work lately. When I studied in philosophy, my interest was directed towards the effect certain worldviews had on the social form of their time. Struck by the work of several thinkers, I tried to understand how their writing is related to the time they were living, and how they put their ideas into concrete political practice. In my current curatorial work I'm pursuing this interest by employing methods that are informed by political formats into the arts. This way, I try to introduce a certain politicization of the way we think, make and share art. By initiating Level Five - a space for artist studios and cultural presentations together with 80 other artists - my background in philosophy is getting increasingly immersed into artistic practices. This is a concrete example of applying the reciprocity between theory and practice to my everyday work environment. I want to assert that social formations also have their own will, stubbornness and demands. I think in social forms we see as much matter and movement, as in atoms and molecules, without falling into the trap of naturalizing them.

I think your question points to the fact I began to make structures to support assemblies; it has been a difficult process. It is interesting for me that these parameters inform the design beforehand - budget, workshop facilities, transport, etc. - the initial idea from the beginning is molded by these considerations regardless. I have little knowledge of construction so I make the jump and try it. Once you start, you find a way to make it work. In making the *Forms of Life* structure I underestimated the effect wind would have and I was forced back into the gallery space, whereas, the plan was to have all *assemblies*, which I refer to as "*Moments*," outside the gallery. At one point, the structure was standing upright. It really felt like this is exactly what I had intended, but then it fell over due to wind. The *Moments* where it works are what you seek when you make something, but you come to realize there is know-how involved, knowledge in controlling the contingency of all the material circumstances working together. Momentarily you introduce a combination that stands out, but it does not last. It is an interesting exercise for me to know what it means to translate thought into form, and to

know that there is a whole play of contingency and effects that are part of the process.

One part of *Forms of Life* involved making feet of rammed earth for the installation. Rammed earth is a clay building technique that involves stamping layers of earth to build up a compact whole when it dries. I imagined this process would familiarize me with the material. The process of making the feet was labor intensive which became meditative in the repetitive process. This was a different kind of getting in touch with the material than the one experienced with the construction of the upper part of the installation. Molding the material and maintaining the right humidity was a direct relationship with the character of the material. I feel this contingency is necessary for my projects to remain open and, at the same time, introduce forms that bring structure to the space, experience and interpretation by the audience.

LILIA ASKS NICOLAS

Your interest in ecology, the commons and institutional critique proposes a way to relate, make connections, learn from, or with, environments (local and global). If I understand well, this way of making sense of the world hopes to enable positive critique to a fragile world in need of care. Could you elaborate on how you think artistic research contributes to thinking alternative paradigms for change?

RESPONSE

Three aliens in discussion:

- A: What does she mean?
 C: ... em?...
 B: Is she asking for the role of Art in broader society?
 A: That's huge!
 C: That's ridiculous!

B: At least the role of artistic research...

A: What's the difference anyway!?

C: You don't get the difference between Art and artistic research!?

B: Shut up!

C: Come on, she talks about making sense of the world - through "artistic research."

A: True! Art doesn't need to make sense. That's nice!

B: (ignoring A) Yes - and with "research" she relates to a "critical" approach.

C: ... a "positive critical" approach. No idea how that could be possible - looking at that world! ...

A: Sorry!?! - there must be a misunderstanding! "fragile world," "need of care"? If she means "world" = "ecosystem" - that "world" actually shows amazing resilience, no? It will survive humanity by far, and doesn't need anyone's care.

B: But if she simply means the "world" of humans and maybe some other species, it looks different!

A: Why?

B: For humanity it might be a good idea to take care, otherwise it can get scar'e'y.... Life on earth is horror, if no measurements against short-sightedness and selfishness are taken!

C: That was always the case and it always will be.

B: But the massive destruction by today's technical and economic means are unprecedented! Something has to change immediately through every move, no matter how small. artistic research can try to open other perspectives.

C: A bit of "positive critique" will not save any world! (pause)

A: She is asking for our interest in ecology, the commons and institutional critique.

C: That's a heavy line!

A: Sure, but these concepts are more concrete. Let's take the "commons," an economic structure with an idea of sharing instead of ownership. However critical the capitalist economy might be seen, we don't know whether the commons would be a "better" alternative, but at least it is a tool to rethink the position of the individual in our society.

C: What does that have to do with Art?

A: Artistic research! - Commons as a socio-scenographic performance tool for artistic research practices!

B: That definitively doesn't help anyone!

A: No, but it's fun! - and it might create some weird knowledge!

C: Who knows whom that helps!

A: With "institutions" it's the same. They are fantastic! How are they constantly fooling and establishing themselves as one and the same time? How do they enable AND complicate life in one and the same action? How come there are so many possible perspectives on institutions but we often see them as just one single enemy? I love institutions! They are exciting social experiments...

C: ... of which most fail, how fun is that!

B: ... and they are mainly tools for the application of power.

A: For sure, institutions are tools to handle power relations. But those are there anyhow. The question is, how to handle power differently - just play with them! We need new forms, new distributions, new aesthetics of organization for a blocked society.

B: Never heard anything more cynical than that! Power remains power, and accumulates always to one point. You really mean institutions are just a toy for the arts?

A: They have to be! Arts are a corrupted accomplice to any kind of power - consciously, or not. Building and transforming institutions from within should become part of the artistic practice - art always exists within systems.

C: ...that's a game with a real effect, for which the arts will never be held responsible. You think the arts should just fool around with their often uninformed ideas of "de"-organization, playing the hipster-anarcho, undermining institutions that were established for greater solidarity in society, or becoming non-profit entrepreneurs that just open gates to "new" economies. The creative sector will always be sucked by the hard facts dictated by big finance. (pause)

B: Let's talk about "ecology." The arts have the capacity to relate between different social, environmental and mental ecologies and make the relations experienceable. That's

ANXIETY

not a game! That's a real contribution.

- C: What does it change?
- A: What is that question about "change"! Does the world really need more change? The world changes constantly, and at a speed that just drives us mad!!
- C: Sure, and there are quite some more powerful forces at stake that push for "change." The arts can just watch the changes with big eyes and probably decorate the cake with a bit of a critical hue.
- B: I agree. It's not about "change." A totally different perspective on Performance is needed! The Arts have to teach the world its vital approach to Performance and oppose ideas of growth, efficiency and productivity. Instead, art lets the components of diverse human needs and desires be in constant transformation. Performance is a question here of pulling the balance. Arts can destabilize and re-open perspectives to other sustainable balances of the future.
- C: Ok. So Art, in order to keep the established balance "sustainably" in order and to enable transformation, it turns in circles! Fuck off!
- A: Come on, keep it realistic. Transformation goes wherever it wants to go! Life is just more fun with a bit of artistic research. Anything else is pretentious.

Barkeeper: until now just cleaning glasses, turns to the reader and says:) Fact is, Art has an influence – way beyond the artist's intention.

PIERRE ASKS ADRIJANA

Dear Adrijana,
One can say that you and your concept of "exhibiting otherwise" are busy deconstructing and rearticulating the medial processes of visual art practice, the narrative logics that structure exhibition making, and ultimately the nature of vision itself through a reconsidered structure of time. Through multipolar protocols you construct technological ensembles as apparatuses of/for vision.

In other words, "exhibiting otherwise" produces "seeing otherwise": creating some conditions for *another relation* with the real and its multiple actors. When an artwork is expected from you in general, you propose strategically an ethics of vision. Do you consider your strategy as being structured by ethical concerns? Do you agree? Or how could you qualify the nature of your positioning today? This was my first question – or interest in your work. Now, as I promised you, an alternative one.

A radical resistance to the determinations of contemporary exhibition formats and an attempt to reinvent the nature, form and function of works of art are the foundations of your research. The consequence, on the surface, is that you "close" the exhibition and "show" nothing. Apparently the gallery is sealed and the artwork is missing. I could not disagree more with this perception of your art and research. Your work enables a state of permanent viewing and presents a large number of encased objects to interact with and think through. Far from being destructive to the notion and practice of exhibition, your criticism of contemporary modes of exhibition is constructive in that it generates a "hyper-exhibition," widening physical, spatial and temporal boundaries to a point of infinity, and in return, nurturing new possibilities to see and understand what is *really* going on in an art space.

What do you think of these words I put on your work? What do you look for and expect from your ideas of mise-en-abyme of the object and its documentation bound together in an ultra-stretched temporality?

RESPONSE

Dear Pierre,
Thank you for the two questions. As always, your comments/questions are generous efforts that can guide me to understand and imagine the intensity and the potential of what I (can) do. You told me that you will make an alternative question for me to have more choice, but I ended up writing in response to both of them. I believe these questions define my research interest in a precise and different way than I would do it, so I chose to keep them both. Or maybe: I need to keep them both.

I have never used the word “ethical” to position my work, but I can say that I work with what “bothers me.” If we think that exhibitions are active agents in the construction of knowledge and the dominant form of making-public in the visual arts – in that way yes, working with this format is about value criteria and cultural sensitivity, maybe also social responsiveness, which are ethical concerns. Because of this question, I noticed other understandings of “ethical”: in Karen Barad’s writings, there is “ethical call embodied in the very worlding of the world,”⁷ where ethics is not simply thought of as responsible actions in relation to human experiences, but as a question of material entanglements and intra-actions reconfiguring these entanglements. Thinking in this direction, I would say that what I do is structured by ethical concerns.

But my research and art-doings were perhaps driven with more selfish character: exhibition was simply the only place, already granted to me as an artist to work with. In a stressful eagerness (anxiety) I wanted to work (or I found myself working) with this super-established structure of the exhibition: the construct of the white cube with its protocols organized in time – to fail the expectations, to perturb the habits.

Additionally, I wanted to explore the different moments of direct encounter with the audience, to get a response or feedback, or some such resonance, so that not everything vanishes into the white cube void of commodity fetishism. In this way, it is more a need than a choice, and also thinking on the causal link between those two. For me, exhibiting was never about relations between objects and viewers, but about what moves between us. As my friend Aurore Zachayus once described, what we are doing at the “opening of the exhibition” is “we are there, looking at each other, looking at things.” Amazing. Everybody knows it’s a trick, but we still look for the magic.

To come back to your second question, it is not a radical refusal of classical exhibition formats. On the contrary, it is to work

exactly with this spatial and temporal arrangement that over determine the works and the statements and gestures – it turns the context into content. To perform its operations and re-stage its space is to reflect and probe how exhibitions can host practices instead of artworks.

This “otherwise exhibiting” is strongly related to where I think artistic anxieties resolve: in different forms of mutualities and artistic “know-how” in living, working and learning in relation to others. Maybe it is a proposal to work (as an artist, institution or public) with the inevitable paradoxes of exhibiting. To work from anxiety is to constantly work for reassurance but paradoxically towards producing more anxieties. Could this be the nature of my positioning?

SINA ASKS LILIA

A question of *division* with regards to *scores*: coming from the boredom of third-rate military music bands after 1850 in Europe and aligned with the rationalizing imperatives of industrial production (i.e. partitioned states executing an external algorithm, and the succession of acts of which a single act is composed). *Score* is the *image of programmed labor* in our society. In your work, a *logic of combination*. With this definition in mind, one could suggest, instead of a *cognitive schema* (which was the paradigm of performance until the mid 20th century theater, *the becoming of the total actor*), you rather propose **norms of action** (in which structure, intention, meaning, and body are separated and discontinuous, i.e. *division of labor*, which is the paradigm of composition in contemporary dance and performance in our time and also the triumph of industrial society). How is the technical mentality of the score different than the mode of regularization of time and the distribution of tasks in the industrial societies that you are living in? If your *score-escapes* are proposing other divisions of labor, what kind of ordering do they imply and opposed to what?

⁷ Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway, Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*, London, Duke University Press, 2007

RESPONSE

Dear Sina,

Thanks for the question. I will try to lay out, spill and digest what rumbles around my head in terms of labor and value within *Scorescapes* – a working structure in and for pedagogical contexts. I took the two questions you asked at the end of your text to construct my response.

Concepts: Invitation for sharing artwork processes – weekly meetings for mundane ritual (calendar) – appointed thinking doing practices in art and theory – logics and intuition of rigorous assemblage of art research – co-cognitive experience through performance – score as instructions for use – rhythmic anarchy – support structure for trans-disciplined and curious people.

To begin, I would like to give some information about the *Scorescapes* so that the reader can follow the discussion.

A group of artist researchers meet once a week in a studio to share their work. They follow a five minute time-frame to present where they are in their process of investigation. Afterwards, they assign by chance who is addressing a question to whom. The question regards what they have witnessed and is a contribution to the problems the work exposes. Everyone has two days to articulate questions and send it back by email. The week after, the participants meet again and present a response (i.e. performance, essay, lecture, poem...) to the question they received. This continues for the duration of one block (3 months) in a pass.

Scorescapes proposes a structure for encounter as a pedagogical tool – as a mode of learning together and as a socio-political operation. The score as a collective research practice creates links, alliances, friction and paradoxes. The parts that constitute the “whole” are not separated but entangled with everyone’s histories, practices, classes, genders. There is no alienation from the contexts that accompany the researchers. This co-mingling produces the collective simultaneously and weaves the ethical, while feeding back to the individual practices. This system is in

opposition to what occurs in a factory context where workers are alienated from what they are doing through the division of labor, the work chain and surplus value. Could *Scorescapes*, rather, be compared with a neo-liberal economy? All resources come from the participants, they are profitable, the artist is entrepreneur and embodies all parts of the work (i.e. production, concept, critique).

In radical difference to neoliberalism, however, *Scorescapes* is not pointing towards achievement, but rather towards a constant process of collaboration. Through the regular questioning of each other’s practice, a constant falling back on one’s own practice occurs, and criticality is enabled. The open source of the practices and their entanglement constitutes the collective as a transindividual body, both individual and multiple. This structure facilitates permeating one’s own work through the gaze, tools, thoughts and aesthetics of others. Exposing one another to one another, flirting, teasing, engaging in elaborate discussions... A form of eroticism? Maybe.

It is potentially a distorted version of a system of production which inclines/orients rather than directs. Which affects rather than effects. A structure for artificial friendships. Is this naughty? Maybe.

I see the world as a plurality of constructs which can be well-sensed, neglected and abused through the manipulation of the conditions inherent to each of them and their contexts – the political is situated within these modes of doing.

Modulated systems, yes. Politics, yes. Encounter, yes. Consent, yes. Learning, yes. Educating, yes. *Scorescapes* creates a system of reciprocal dependencies that can dissolve at any point. A homeopathic or placebo approach to societal interaction so we can rehearse it. Can this be love?

Compositional models have changed in terms of author – and audienceship, open source, knowledge processing, co-working, participation – this since the ‘70s with Fluxus, Cage, and in dance with the Judson Church movement – just to mention a

COGNITIVE POWERS

few. Scoring in this context was a very much used tool to question the paradigm of the artist/God and to bring art to “real” life. The idea of belonging to a world in crisis, that interferes directly with the “œuvre,” makes a paradigm shift in art making, and in this way the score is a very valuable critical tool.

I use the term “score” to name a regular collective learning together, practice based on the participant’s research, and through repetition, proposing iteration as a basis of research and creation. It is a process that keeps the practitioners in a constant questioning through materializing and digesting criticality.

Score – there is always one – but which?

ALEX ASKS VLADIMIR

How can artistic research contribute in clarifying the genuine and intrinsic epistemic/cognitive power of artistic practices (assuming you consider they have genuine and intrinsic epistemic/cognitive power...)?

RESPONSE

There are two things I always resort to when thinking about art making: drawing and my mother. Drawing is such a basic activity, it is a foundational practice of art making. I follow a mathematical principle: if a question about art can be answered when looking at drawing as a practice, it must be applicable across other practices as well. Plus, I like to draw.

My mother is a kind of every-woman. She is someone I check my thoughts against (although usually with her voice inside my head). Can I explain this or that idea or project to my mother, and if not, have I strayed too far into artistic solipsism?

So with this in mind, I want to test this question. But thinking it simple first, thinking about drawing...

I have two drawing practices that I would vaguely differentiate as a sketching of ideas and composition. With the question in mind, I think sketching is a form of visual thinking: a repository of thoughts outside my head, a way to look at something, to slow down the freewheeling eye of imagination. I look at a drawing in order to think details through, as if to magnify a thought, to hesitate on it. This thinking is in itself a conversation between a vague but perfect imagination and its sketch. What I’m looking for here is refined imagination of an object or a space and not a refined drawing.

But the core of this question is not just thinking, but cognition. Cognition comes up in google as the “mental process of acquiring knowledge.” The question proposes a priori that cognition is intrinsic to art making – but if art making is already intrinsically cognitive, what is the point of artistic research? It seems to also be asking this.

I feel like I’m left with two choices: I can either deny that artistic processes have cognitive power, and then advocate for artistic research as this missing next step, or argue for (agree with) the cognitive power of art making, and undermine the necessity for artistic research as a separate locus of cognition in the arts.

What about composition, art making as embodied thought, as presence, as process within reality – which is thought in itself? This feeling vis-a-vie an artwork of being together with a conversation partner, with someone who thinks differently, but compellingly, urging your own thoughts to new pathways. Art as its own knot of complex thought pathways, its own ways of being coherent.

What is artistic research then? I think artistic research is the conversation with this other cognition. Independent from you being or not being the artist, what do you learn from this artwork, how does it think? The difference between artist and artistic researcher amounts for me as the difference between just putting the artwork out there (which... is completely fine) and being there as a translator, an interviewer, as a friend, enemy, interlocutor etc.

SLIME MOLDS and METAPHORS

So, I guess the answer to the question is about a kind of a triangulation: yes, there is cognitive power in making art (as it is a dialogue with an emergent cognition), in being art (as it is this embodied cognition), but artistic research is keeping that dialogue alive and making it public.

VLADIMIR ASKS SARA

Hallo Sara!

You know, it's kind of seductive to take the talk of flexi-gendered bacteria and slime molds as analogies for togetherness. But I kind of hesitate, because in my experience, when working together, these states are so hard to achieve, right? So I think my question would be: **how do you apply, or more precisely, where do you apply these imaginary (politics) in your practice?** Who and what are the agents that come together and interact using these analogies and metaphors? Is it about the materials themselves, or is it between you and the material, or...?

Have you read the novel *Annihilation*,⁸ or seen the film made of it? In that story, a group of female researchers enter a zone in a marsh landscape that has been transformed by an unknown presence. The researchers undergo a process of slow biological takeover and transformation: the longer they are exposed to the landscape, the more it enters them and blends with their biology. The film chooses to find a different ending to this process than the novel. In one of its last scenes, the last surviving researcher meets an alien organism, and this organism produces a copy of the researcher made from alien tissue. What follows is a dance: a choreography where the alien copy carefully mimics every move the terrified researcher makes. It is beautiful and uncanny and almost like a mating dance... I'm not sure exactly why I think of this scene. Probably because the choice here is not to become something less than human, not something to be fermented and part of the slime, but to dance with the uncanny. Is this a different perspective on your work?

RESPONSE

Dear Vladimir,

I am taking the time to ferment – being in a mode of hypersensitivity to what is around me, like a color changing strip measuring PH. I try to consider different agents – coming together or already being together – different timelines, degrees of visibility, measures of value and heterogeneous aesthetics. I started from home, from the kitchen, wanting to bring some questions and know-how to the studio: questioning the possibility of dissecting the body (skin, mechanics, heat, weight, fluids, voice) without losing its completeness. Or, accumulating different layers of sound, changing the speed of it, until the nature of listening itself is transformed. My body, my interests and experiences are a reference to come back to, but are not still or sealed. I started with the idea of the recipe book as an alternative map of what is around me, of what affects my work and puts my research in question.

You asked me previously about the difference between cooking and fermenting. I understand fermenting like cooking but without fire, and it takes longer. Because of existing bacteria (the wild), and one added ingredient (salt or sugar) there is a change in pace: speeding up or slowing down a process, changing rhythm, and therefore temperature. To ferment means to boil. We are dealing with control and no control, or trying to take care of ungovernability without killing it. It's about “doing and letting it do her thing.” The idea of a recipe here is paradoxical because you have to “know your ferment” and the situation where you ferment: in each place bacteria is different, so is the temperature and humidity... and there is a physical know-how to learn (sensorial, experiential): you know when the dough is ready by touching it... There is knowledge passing throughout the body and this is of course, interesting for my work with dance.

With “Wicked technology/Wild fermentation,” I am not trying to make simplistic analogies for togetherness. Instead I am looking for other narratives that imply different ways to look at the body and bodies in relation. I am deconstructing habits of thinking (mine first) to re-dynamize cluttered connections.

⁸ *Annihilation*, dir. Alex Garland, Canada and USA, Paramount Pictures, 2018

I started working with triads as a way to break binary logics. This is one of the techniques that constitutes “Wicked technology.”

healthy/junk/gourmet
 cooked/raw/rotten
 mind/body/gut
 good/bad/ugly
 self/other/it
 he/she/they
 wicked/wit/wild
 concave/convex/spiral
 surface/depth/pocket
 agents/agencies/agendas
 opaque/transparent/mirror
 figure/background/foreground
 production/reproduction/remix

For example, I am thinking like a choreographer and editing a magazine like a curator (in the original sense of the term “taking good care of”). I need “to do and let it do her thing” in order not to kill the wild but get along with it. The difficulty lies in how to claim my position in a process of transformation? Embodying what is there, bringing it to the surface. How can I take care of the unknown (an idea of the future?) without killing it (by anticipation of what I already know)? This is maybe what you mean by dancing with the uncanny, and this is probably where I would like the research to affect my work. I realized as well that I am also looking for what my body is, as a dancer. I like to think of the body as a slice of a thousand-leaves-cake or a cut in Roger Caillois stones: past (enfleshed memory), present and future (DNA prescription or clairvoyance) – layers at the same point in time. Next to the multiplicity of time, there is a multiplicity of bacteria that colonize us (in different parts of the body). On top, biological, pharmaceutical and psychoanalytical factors are tuning different frequencies of one body and therefore modulating what the body is.⁹ The agents are therefore different and disparate/heterogeneous.

⁹ See Paul B. Preciado, *Texto Junkie*, 2008 and Elizabeth Wilson, *Gut Feminism*, 2015

There are double binds that create conflicting messages. Auto-immunity must happen that way. The body doesn’t recognize its own boundaries: the immune system is attacking instead of defending. I think of desire and capitalism or how capitalism colonizes our mindset and our desires. Virginia Woolf defined “heroism” as “botulism”, a form of food poisoning most commonly associated with canning. The tin can is an iconic invention of modernity, it can preserve and transport food but it can also create botulism, an iconic monstrosity of modernity. I am interested in non-linear narratives and chimeric characters: “monsters are bodies tumbled into bodies,” – I think this is Anna Tsing.

ISABEL ASKS ALEX

Hey Alex!

If you were to make a stream of consciousness salad in a, or in the, liminal space between embodiment, performance and knowledge production in the arts, what ingredients would it contain?

RESPONSE

Well, you are proposing a very interesting “kitchen”... If I try to answer your question taking the term “stream of consciousness salad” not “caesar salad,” which basically could have been anything. But rather trying to make a very site-specific dish, that is, choosing ingredients that directly refer to the aspects of the place in which the salad will be made (embodiment, performance and knowledge production in the arts), I will suggest the following:

The main ingredient is the body. We could take one single body or more than one – in any case, living bodies! The decision regarding the quantity has consequences, not only in relation to the final size, but to the quality of the salad. I’m sure it works with human bodies but there are good reasons to think it

THE EARTH, A MOTHER

ADRIJANA ASKS ISABEL

could also work with any kind of organisms or living systems. The decision of taking one or the others will have consequences not only for the quality but in the complexity of making the salad. Whatever number and type of living systems you take, be aware that on the one hand, they have space to act and, on the other hand, they are in touch with one another and with other ingredients – (I know that “space” is not an ingredient but I allow myself to give some advice about the preparation, if you don’t mind... In this sense, be aware the body or bodies are organized, or at least have a good frame: do not throw them on the salad bowl “somehow”).

Actually, if the bodies are of good quality (difficult to say what this means but nevertheless it is possible to enumerate some features: fresh, porous, that is, with fine skin or external membrane, flexible, recycled and recyclable...) no other ingredients would be needed. One of the amazing aspects of this salad is that it organizes itself by virtue of transferring the main ingredients’ constitutive quality – autopoiesis or autonomy – to the whole. But if this is frustrating for the cook – normally this is the case because cooks are trained as semi-gods that tend to control and fix everything that happens on each plate and in the whole kitchen – if you want to reinforce the aspect of so-called “knowledge production,” which together with “performance” can cause a certain indigestion (that’s why I prefer to substitute “knowledge production” with something like “cognitive or epistemic transformation”...). You could dress the whole with a good institutional sauce made out of thin walls (better if they are movable and removable), big windows and doors, the best parts of very good but not so many living systems (in this case mainly humans but not exclusively; please be aware of cutting off egocentrism, own hidden agendas, mediocrity and any kind of lack of communication skills), sufficient economic resources and embeddedness in good networks.

Actually, this salad is very simple. The problems begin if you try to make it as if it would be of another kind!

Bon appetit!!!

I am sorry, I am late. I had some other deadline in my mind. I am in between two performances here in Zagreb, and I just wanted to share with you a photo from the book of questions from Fischli & Weiss that I was looking at a week ago and thought about this questioning practice and you... maybe it inspires some thoughts?

Actually, I don’t know how to share a photo here. Will do it with telegram, but I can also describe it: It’s an A5 book, with only and many questions. Black shiny paper with white handwritten capital letters. Two (three) questions on the left page: who is nibbling on my (little) house? Am I too good to work? Where are my keys? (this one was crossed out). Two (three) on the right page: how long is the Nile? (crossed out also). Is the earth a mother? (this one made me think of your work) and the simple drawing of a chicken instead, and as a question.

Because of “Is the earth a mother?” I went through the whole book, wondering if the other questions could also be useful to you?

RESPONSE

Dear Adrijana,
I will use the book metaphors that you propose to go through some aspects of my research.

Some time ago my house became my lab where I excavate the geology of the erogenous cavities that make up the territories of my sexual organs. The mobile farm I manage is a communal extension of my home where I’m researching 23 different female juices cooperatively found harvested from female bodies.

The origin of this exploration began with my activist involvement as a theatre director and filmmaker documenting the struggles of autonomy in the Rapa Nui, the native peoples of Easter Island, and in several native nations of South America, such as the Mapuche and the Aymara People. In trying to explore and experience “the Earth as a mother’s womb,” a common spiritual

belief amid these cultures (also comprised in other notions such as “Gaia”), I underwent practices of DNA exchange with volcanic landscapes, among others. Reaching beyond my artistic disciplines and surpassing margins of representation, I embodied the challenges one encounters in shamanic scores and ancestral body practices to find a new key. This expanded my committed involvement with indigenous decolonization into research on some of the “actors” that are colonizing human life and beyond with synthetic processes to change the course of existence. Navigating between the supra-sensitive realms of elementary dynamisms and sidereal body/land codes, into the logics of bioengineering, gynecological and genetic technologies, utopian chapters started unfolding that I write with the agro-culture of bodies.

How long is the Nile?

I don’t know. What I know is what used to be a sacred source for an ancient civilization is now polluted with industrial wastewater, oil, agricultural drainage, affecting the diversity of fish, microorganisms and the health of a large population that still depends on it. The creation of utopian narratives in my work is not escapism but a strategy to destabilize the present. The word FARM is problematic because it can cause morbid illusions, but not if it anchors in reality. There is a paradox here. What are the ethics of exploiting, fabricating, designing, up-scaling, packaging, distributing in any production location? What if on this farm we replace the chicken, the cow and the vegetables with humans? Then this FARM becomes an unsteady ground that breaks the social norms in terms of designated roles in any industrial setting. How much of an animal are you? How much of a plant are you? How much of a mineral are you? How much of an electrical source are you? Can your body be a place for agricultural development where you can be harvested? If so, what kind of “person” are you? Or what kind of being are we speculating about? Who would then be nibbling at my FARM?

Feminists associated with *L’écriture Féminine*, such as Luce Irigaray, emphasize “writing from the body” as an activist exercise. Because it implies incorporating emotions and other kinds of experiences that are difficult to capture in words, it

eludes a male-signified economy. My practice spreads an autonomous-making system I invented to repair the relationship we have with our body, a body that is populated with living materials. These are central figures on the farm. I literally transcribe the contents of their experience in a hacked labor setting to reclaim them from a white male anthropocentric engineering perspective.

The juices we harvest on the farm pertain to the menstruating, fertile, orgasmic, pregnancy specific, menopausal and post-menopausal ecosystems. As a result of a dedicated inquiry into allopathic and alternative medicines (e.g. Chinese medicine) I pose the question: can the nature of our sexual organs be more than human since these juices have a hybrid mix between animal/plant-like nutrients and healing properties? Nobody taught me in school that, besides the possibility of producing milk and of course sperm, other bodily fluids are also nourishing. Most of these fluids’ components can be used to replace ingredients of market products. Even more, from a sustainable perspective in the farm we recycle, not only what’s considered waste, but also the traumas that are stored in the areas of orgasmic pleasure. With the guidance of specialized artists that make up the farm team, we unlock the voice of historical pain accumulated in the *female abyss* (sexual organs) of participants to transform it with care and pleasure into a wild kind of beauty.

ROB ASKS PIERRE

Hi Pierre,

In the time we spent together, I got to know you as an artist and a mentor. More and more, I have the feeling these two roles overlap in your cultural practice.

From what I know of your practice, it is prolific. Many books, references, lots of collaboration, hours of time spent with other people, together. In this context, I was wondering: to what extent does therapy play a role in your practice? Not the kind of therapy of

laying down on the couch, but of self-analysis, or giving birth to new insights together in conversation. Here is a more reflective question: how much can we keep the imaginative being alive beyond childhood with all the pressures and demands human beings have to endure – which leave, most if not all of us, disillusioned and conflicted?

RESPONSE

Rob,

...In the time we spent together, I got to know you as curator *and* cultural worker. More and more I observed that these two roles actually *overlap* in your *cultural practice*.

From what I know of your work, it is prolific. You refer to *many philosophical texts*, you set up many more reading groups, lots of *collaborations* and time spent with cultural workers and artists together in communal environments that you curate or participate in. In this context, I wonder to what extent collective *self-analysis* plays a role in your practice? Or something like... *together giving birth to new insights*? Can I ask you a question? How do you keep the *imaginative being alive* with all the *pressures and demands* that *cultural workers* have to *endure* – which leave, I observe, most of us if not all, *disillusioned and conflicted*...?

...*Human beings* endure multiple pressures and demands. This nefarious process leaves them disillusioned and conflicted. One conceivable antidote is to keep the imaginative alive as much as possible by giving birth to new insights together in conversations. Not a classical therapy but a practice of mutual self-analysis. Taking time is necessary, as well as reading a lot of books, exchanging references and collaborating. The binary principle analyzing/analyzed, then, can actually overlap more and more... into a cultural practice of knowing together...

...*Workers* endure a series of unnecessary pressures and unjustified demands. This repetition leaves them alienated and overwhelmed. One possible remedy is to stop dreaming that it will end and start imagining other working conditions together with colleagues and unionists. A practice of mutual support and care

within a concrete and actual context. It takes time... and sharing resources is a must as well as constituting common objectives. Some revolutionary and creative methods can be used in addition... as a social practice of reclaiming one's own conditions...

...*Artists* self-inflict unnecessary pressures and unrealistic demands. A self-destructing process that can drive them transfixed and/or nuts. An urgent reality check is necessary through reading, for instance, Donna Haraway's following quote:

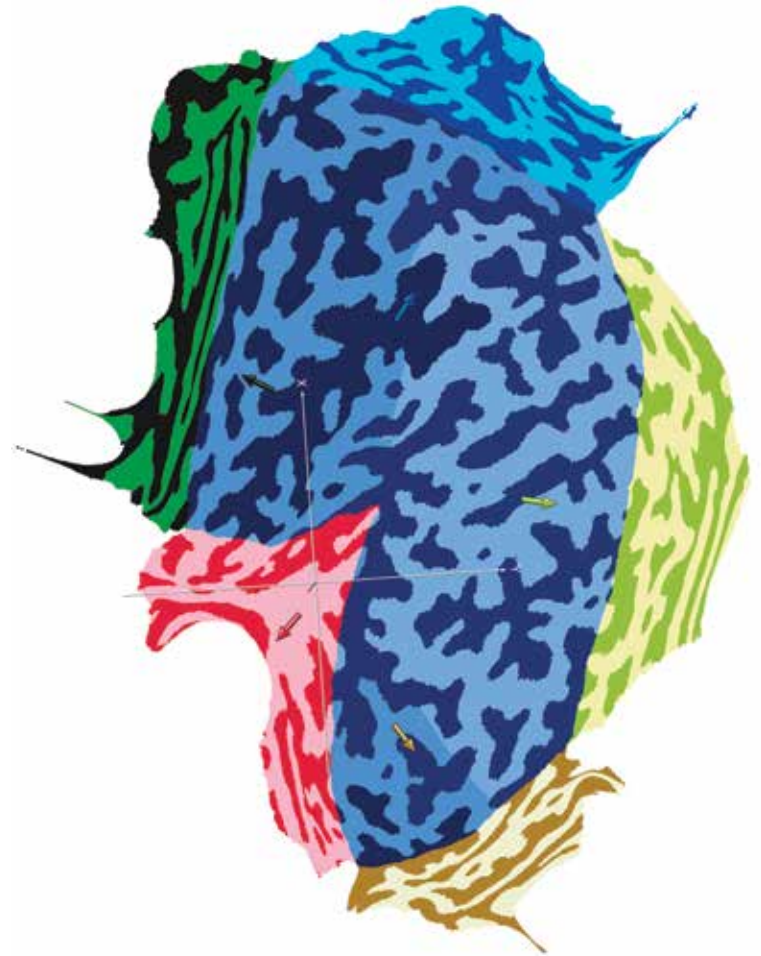
"So, I think 'my' problem, and 'our' problem, is how to have simultaneously an account of radical historical contingency for all knowledge claims and knowing subjects, a critical practice for recognizing our own 'semiotic technologies' for making meanings, and a no-nonsense commitment to faithful accounts of a 'real' world, one that can be partially shared and that is friendly to earthwide projects of finite freedom, adequate material abundance, modest meaning in suffering, and limited happiness."

After that, a step towards radical change would be to get rid of the "weak art/strong organization" model and move to the opposite, which should cause a chain reaction. Many more possibilities of resistance would be available to all... as a true and emancipatory artistic practice...

...*Curators* inflict...
...*Women* endure...
...*Citizens of color*...
...*Spectators*...
...*Animals*...
...*Neighbors*...
...*Educators*...
...*Students*...
...*Nurses*...
...*Cleaners*...

I have turned your question into a generative score and drafted the beginning of a series of short, tentative portraits. We could go on together, if you like? By the way, thank you for your question even though it seems to draw a parallel between one

aspect of my practice – the long semi-open conversation – and the question of creating conditions of possibility for a human “emancipated” imagination... After having startled me at first, this – ultra – disproportionate analogy can also be interesting as a rhetorical object since it compels me to affirm that, yes, I believe in extended conversations as a practice that can sometimes transform space into one of mutual and reciprocal (re)invention and create some conditions for re-imagining “ourselves” and “our” practices otherwise, but the work of thinking together only succeeds when positioning is possible and situatedness a prerequisite. So who are “we” and from where are “we” discussing today? I can only guess. Between your lines, I hear you whispering about *Desire* and affects of *Joy* and *Sadness*. Am I mistaken? You make me project Spinoza’s ghostly presence in these difficult times in which, for me, “everything” seems to compete to draw the best picture of the “sad passions”... Can “we” associate the current proliferation of “sad passions” with the outcomes of the all-encompassing capitalist system? In this context, which kind of conditions could “we” create for “Joy” to be possible again? and what could, today, a “joyful passion” be? So we might have to redefine and reallocate “Desire”? Could a process of redefining Desire produce OTHER KINDS of “Joy”? If yes, then, what could be the consequences? Could “our” artistic research and curatorial practices be potential “sites” to produce a “joyful” atmospheric shift in culture? or not? Who are “we” and what do “we” REALLY want to achieve?









Questions on Publishing



LILIA ASKS ROB

Dear Rob,

In your answer to Antye (see page 20) you explain why the materialization of practices are important to trigger forms of political gathering and how the singularities of the practices implicate specific knowledge, responsibility. I'm very interested in the process of contribution that art practices propose as intrinsic conditioners for ways of coming together. In your response, you don't mention the poster publication as materializations. To me, they seem to be in between a document, an information board and a propaganda tool. I would like to ask you to elaborate on the strategy implied in the making of the posters as domino trigger to further gatherings and how you consider performative publishing as a concept that might contribute to your research on *Forms of Life of Forms* as a political tool.

RESPONSE

During the instantiation of *Forms of Life of Forms* at the Zsenne art laboratory, I felt it was necessary to have something that could overflow. *Forms of Life* consisted of an installation that assembled works of artists, collective readings of texts, and other references that came together through several public events in the course of three weeks. I simply called these events "*Moments*." As said before, the whole process came with experience of success and emergency. This made it an experiment in fluidity, like an exhibition. In the run-up to Zsenne I was thinking about how the different elements would come together, and I realized there needed to be something that could transmit the previous *Moment* into each following *Moment*. In the end, for a better overview of the *Moments*, the works, texts, and thoughts had to be shared. I did not want it to be mere documentation because I knew this instantiation was only one instant within the research trajectory.

Next to that, *Forms of Life*¹⁰ was not going to conclude in the assembled installation. It was more of an attempt to have some shared insights for a better understanding of the expressions and workings of particular contemporary forms. I feel this is the research not only for artists but many more people as well. It should continue in order not only to understand the form-of-life they live in but also to introduce forms that can create other constellations of life. I asked the graphic design collective D-E-A-L to be present at the *Moments*, to translate them into a series of posters. With this input – text excerpts, pictures, photographs, notes – the poster design was not only a document, i.e. a representation of what happened, but the posters were also a starting point for conversation – like an information board. The series of posters gained traction and functioned as a visual identity of the project, but also evolved as a work in itself as part of the final assemblage.

For the publication, the posters are the starting point and flow over to another instantiation of *Forms of Life*. I think D-E-A-L took this idea further. They did not consider the posters as a completed design, but they disassembled their content and brought it into conversation with the disparate parts of the whole installation at the Zsenne art lab. The way they folded the booklet made it possible to put fragments next to each other in different ways. They reopened the distribution of the assembly enabled by the potential conversations that were not previously considered.

This informs my definition of performative publishing. Publishing is traditionally the endpoint of a trajectory, but I would like to think of publishing as public moments in the middle of the process. This could inform the research trajectory in different ways: confrontation with material articulations of some ideas and encounters with different perspectives. Additionally, incorporating this process in the form of a printed publication

10 I understand "Form" not only aesthetically, but also socially and politically. Indeed, there are no politics without form. Those concerned with "forms" everyday – artists, for example – can bring forth forms that generate (un)foreseen effects into being – and disrupt other forms that dictate our everyday life and shape our world.

PERFORMING as PUBLISHING

that can make people do or think about things beyond the boundaries of the printed pages. This means not focusing only on the object or content of the book, but more on what it can do. I think performative publishing is related to *Forms of Life* in a sense that forms can affect stable structures and practices so that a space for creative alternative proposals is opened up in the collision of various perspectives. This is a political tool that *Forms of Life of Forms* proposes. Rather than the binary right/wrong position, it introduces something that can problematize the structure and demonstrate other options.

VLADIMIR ASKS LILIA

Hello Lilia!

For my question I'm thinking about the potential of scores as "insta"-publications. I'm intrigued how your scores create communities of artists, peers, stakeholders, and how everyone is involved in being audience, collaborator and artist for each other. This is more of a brainstorm than a question, but is there a way to expand this? Can it be a format for an evening with an audience? How would that work, what would be the potentials and problems?

RESPONSE

Dear Vladimir,

The question to make public *Scorescapes* is always latent. The paper publications we have been making after each iteration are attempts to address what is available to make-public, to whom and why. These publications function as a tool to collect and consider research strategies, methods (or ways of doing what we do) and the relation between practice and reflection upon practice. How does one think about what one does?

What made me begin thinking about scores as a tool for artistic research is the following: can a practice contain its own

documentation so that it is not so much a matter of thinking retroactively but rather a constant address of thinking/doing in the present? How to engage the gaze of the onlookers in artistic research practice? How to make research part of the commons?

Scorescapes can be seen as a sort of structured improvisation – because it asks to engage in dwelling with the interests, inputs, actions, ideas of each participant. It addresses forms of collective research as a generative practice and starts from the viewpoint that one is never alone, isolated or unrelated with context(s). It wants to assert the performativity inherent to each research and the agency inherent to that performativity. As a “something” never completely nailed down, but always having the potential of the speculative.

I think the format of an evening with an audience is too short a time frame to make-public the *Scorescapes* practice. Normally it is a regular series of encounters during several months with several days in between the questions and the responses, but I came up with this one possible way to have a working session with an audience.

What if...

**Fragile Community Score for one day
with audience as publishing practice**

10:30 to 11:30

Materialization I (Exposure I)

Six artistic researchers (the actants) come together with their research in their backpacks. They come prepared to engage in a 30 minute exploration of their research collectively.

Their research is presented in materialized form and through the medium or mixed-medium they work with. They don't speak about it but expose an experiential object that tells, problematizes or opens up its potential and agency.

Before starting it will be decided by chance to whom each researcher will pay attention to. Everyone will have someone/ something to pay attention to and will have someone paying attention to them.

The audience (people not presenting materializations) is there. They are assisting. They are asked to take notes from which they can select keywords to later contribute to the conversation. They can take pictures.

pause

11:45 - 13:00

Keyword discussion

Everyone looks at their notes (max. 30 minutes) and selects keywords that reflect topics and concepts that have been addressed. An open discussion takes place by saying the keywords out loud and why they are relevant. Collective notes are taken in an online document. The notes are projected on a wall or screen.

The discussion starts with the keywords of the researchers.

Lunch break

14:00 - 14:30

Formulating questions

Everyone, including the audience, has 30 minutes to formulate a question in written form that problematizes what they have seen.

-The six researchers will address their questions to the person they were assigned to pay attention to. Each formulates a question. Each researcher will receive a question.

-The audience formulates questions that bring two or more propositions in relation.

14:30 - 15:30

Sharing of the questions

All formulated questions are read out loud and collected on a public pad.

16:00 -16:30

Researchers prepare the following materializations.

Audience prepares to be an audience by engaging in a discussion about spectatorship.

17:00 - 17:45

Materializations II (Exposure II)

Before starting, it will be decided by chance to whom each researcher has to pay attention to. Everyone will have a researcher to pay attention to and will have someone paying attention to them. The audience pays attention to the new situation and what is happening in the process.

Pause

18:00 - 19:00

General discussion.

SPECULATIVE ARCHITECTURES

SARA ASKS VLADIMIR

In one of our first meetings we talked about books that are/were important for our project and us. I went back to my stuttering and incomplete notes because I didn't want to begin with a misleading idea from a white page: "there is no such thing as a beginning, there is always a continuation." You were talking about speculative architecture and the architecture of law: "architecture embodies a precondition for law to be actualized." You talk about regulation, design, agreement as figures, arising from this idea of architecture of law, or so it seems in my notes. But I don't know anymore who's saying what and that's interesting in terms of territories, and the unclear zone that remains from a lot of our meeting – diligently resumed in files, then organized in folders and most of the time forgotten in my full startup disk. I understand that in your practice you work with ideas of negotiation and negotiability, you propose structures with an empty center: the position is not stable and the center is always re-negotiated. "The non-base is the base." Can we understand the architecture-non-architecture that you propose as an arena – as the place of making-public? Is artistic research and making-public in your project the same? Could you talk about the experience of a.pass' *Unsettled Study* at Kanal Centre Pompidou in Brussels?¹¹ Are there different degrees of publicness in different stages of the *Settlement*?

RESPONSE

Dear Sara,
This is really aiming at the core. In a way, my work with *Settlement* is based around these questions as an unresolved field. As we are enveloped by law and architecture, made, cultured and sustained by them, this work is akin to meditation: a subjectivity becoming aware of itself, without having the luxury of

11 During Performatik 2019, *Unsettled Study* attempted to develop the idea of the *Settlement* into a performative installation at KANAL Centre Pompidou that invited the audience into the multitude of research and work processes currently hosted by a.pass. Starting from the *Settlement* project at a.pass, the researchers, curators and facilitators embarked on a process of developing architectural structures to support, represent and host their research processes.

an outside view. The subjectivity, in this case, is the embodied institution, a semi-stable gathering and assemblage of minds, structures, processes, potentials and limitations.

Can we understand the architecture-non-architecture that you propose as an arena, as the making-public?

Yes, it is the public sphere of the institution: the institution becoming visible to itself. First of all, in a very simple way, by leaving our homes, our offices, we come together to be visible to each other and make our processes visible to one another. Then it is immediately political because visibility produces difference.

Is artistic research and making-public in your project the same?

It is funny that you ask it like this, I just finished answering Alex's question where I came to this exact conclusion when thinking about artistic research in general. I would say that it is only by artistic means that this publicness can be manifested, "artistic" is a trojan horse here. This kind of gathering is too much outside the institutional processes, it can only be organized as an art work.

Could you talk about the experience of Unsettled Study at Kanal Centre Pompidou?

I'm not sure if this can be answered fully in this context. But if I concentrate on the aspects this question shares with your other questions: moving to Kanal for a week was motivated by being public, not necessarily by making something public. We thought that it would be important to bring research to the institution that customarily limits its output to products (artistic research being a process here). My experience is that it is very difficult to change that custom just for a week, and towards an audience that does not expect to encounter a process. There is something about *Settlement* that requires a specific "being together," letting the shared public/publicness/publication grow and evolve that was always to be conflicting and impossible at a place like Kanal. But we tried it anyway.

DANCING PRINTED MATTER

Are there different degrees of publicness in different stages of the Settlement?

It's great that you say that, I really like the idea of "public" not being a single on or off state but a continuum. Yes, I think that is exactly what is possible in *Settlement* and impossible in a museum (or on stage). On the two ends of the spectrum there is the publicness of a shared environment and of a visibility to others. On the other end, there is the publicness of presentation, of address, of formal gathering. Maybe they can also be described in terms of forest and clearing, or {...} and circle (trying to find the opposite of circle as the primal form of gathering and shared attention, I realize this lack of terminology might point to a lack of conceptualization of the shared state of being together, that is unstructured. We don't appreciate and use it enough to have a good word for it?).

I like to think that publication can describe the whole continuum and not just the formalized part.

ROB ASKS SARA

You are quite experienced with publishing your work in print. What I find interesting is that it seems you use printed matter to distribute and activate your work. Similarly, it is quite rare that people with a background in choreography and dance work with printed matter. Can you give us an insight into how you use the medium of print and how this relates to the performative aspect of your practice?

RESPONSE

Dear Rob,
Indeed, in the last few years I have been printing 3 *Spectacles* and I am now busy editing a magazine to make-public my work as an associate researcher. *Spectacles 1, 2 and 3* are dance pieces to read. It's an edition with 3 books, a bookmark and a

poster, all stamped with a tattoo designed for the project. The stamp represents the dancers' tattoo described in the text. The poster is a 3D image from the movie *Spectacle 4*. This is to say that the work is multiplying in derivative forms like bubbling from one to another. The books are not descriptions of existing pieces nor do they want to be notation for a future piece on stage. I am interested in how dance exists outside of the black box, the white space and the studio - and even before and after the time of the performance. When a piece keeps working on me I have the feeling that it becomes something else: it grows with me - maybe it transforms me - as I transform her. *Spectacles 1, 2 and 3* are performances constituted by a reader and a book: someone reading a book and interpreting the dances I imagined with her own desire and experience. I try to be as specific as possible, also taking into account heterogeneous levels of reading: the visual, graphic and poetic aspects, the philosophical insight that is often the motor for movement, possible historical references, personal experiences and details that remind of other works, other archives.

I work on *ekphrasis*: the Greeks used it as a rhetorical exercise to describe an artwork, no matter if the work exists or not. As for the work the reader-spectator does with the books, I am not sure which term to use: reconstruction, recreation, translation, co-authorship, spiral of interpretation, imagination, realization, visualization, representation... As you can see there is a broad idea of dance: in the last few years there's been a number of people talking about "expanded choreography" probably in relation to these kinds of practices. I start thinking from dance and choreography and then I use different supports: film, tattoo, website during the creation process, workshop, a dvd and print.

Printed matter tends to have a longer life than art performed in front of an audience. It is more agile in passing from hand to hand and can reach someone by surprise. I would love if they could spread as rumors of a piece that not a lot of people actually had the chance to see. I am also interested in the economic aspect of it as it is very difficult to make a performance with several dancers and it involves a long and more than often frustrating labor of asking for money, organizing the production and selling it.

ANTYE ASKS SINA

I wanted to produce differently. I was responding critically to the economical conditions I was dealing with and at the moment seem to get even worse. But the problem I am facing is distribution because I don't have a publisher or a distributor.

With *ROT*, the magazine around my research project, I am more and more interested in the performative aspect of publishing. I am using the fiction of the glossy magazine to exploit its potential narratives. I'm inspired, as well, by the way recipe books are put together and used: like an alternative map or genealogy of what is affecting me because of proximity and interest. My research is called "Wicked technology/Wild fermentation" and it pivots around 3 points: fermentation techniques, artistic research, feminist authors reconsidering the body and the social via a new take on biology.¹² During this year I met by chance or choice practitioners (from art to food) and I collected their techniques with the aim of making a "technology" to work with the wild without killing it. It is a wicked technology because it's working on twisted performativity and on a radical idea of the self: the body and the bodies in relation. A recipe for compost tea, next to a recipe of a cocktail called "mother's milk," next to a skin exploration body practice, next to a chimera, next to an advertisement for brain enhancing food, next to a perfume designed especially for the publication. I am interested in how a magazine addresses the reader in a casual but direct way: the recipe/practice is both sharing knowledge and making an invitation to try out by yourself and maybe making it better. I wanted it to be different from a participatory performance and different from a theoretical text. The visual design of the glossy magazine holds together disparate contents that might react next to each other and add a haptic feeling. I am interested in how it can affect the reader – like a virus? For example, what if I would put some copies in an everyday kiosk around the corner? Will it spread like a seed and a bacteria? Will the work survive?

12 For instance: Donna J. Haraway, *Staying with the trouble*, 2017; Anna Tsing, *The mushroom at the end of the world*, 2015; Paul B. Preciado, *Texto Junkie*, 2008; Elizabeth Wilson, *Gut Feminism*, 2015; Aimee Bahng, *Plasmoidal improprieties: Octavia Butler, Slime molds and imagining a femi-queer commons*, 2017; Mira J. Hird, "Microtologies of sex" in *The origins of sociable life: evolution after science studies*, 2010; Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, Nils Bubandt, Elaine Gan, Heather Anne Swanson, *Arts of living on a damage planet*, 2017; et al.

Dear Sina,

I hope I am not too straightforward, but I would love to talk about practicalities, or more precisely, about finances. If I remember right, you have been planning to publish a magazine for a while now. You were applying for funding, but that is obviously tricky. So, I am curious: how do you deal with the financial side of publishing? Is there a way to tackle this real and pressing struggle with your current research topic of the surreal and fantastic chimera, which seem to be clashing? I guess what I am curious about is if there are porosities where your surreal research topic is punching, influencing or counteracting these annoying practicalities we all have to deal with as well?

RESPONSE

Well... the idea of the magazine or zine was a way to use conventions and standards of publishing to produce, in myself, a particular mode of responsibility that I thought is interesting for my growth as an artist. Namely, to embody the anxiety of writing something that has a chance of being considered by others (a larger community) in an art world that is saturated by artist publications. To feel that anxiety I needed to engage with the protocols and apparatus of distributing and attention-making that are installed in civil society. I say civil society loosely just to exclude, (not judging) other kinds of public-making, such as propaganda, rumor, terrorism, authority, or revolution. I use the word "anxiety," also loosely, to indicate the productive embodiment of an imperative. As a visual artist, I have a tendency to "textualize," but this time I wanted to *write*. I know that these things are complicated, *capital* and *attention* are not always directed to you. I hoped for it, but I didn't expect it.

Regarding my research, the topic of which you formulated: delving in surreal fantastical chimera of the past in the backdrop of the real banal concrete economy of the present. I think of them more as realities that I need to negotiate. My research has been useful for me to understand how individual artists, other than myself, create and cultivate modes of signification.

DISCLOSURE

It has helped to throw myself in the space of somebody else's enunciation, how to work with that, and when to risk fighting against it. This is very small scale, a tiny thing that happens sometimes on the one-to-one scale. The financial side of publishing is something that I didn't have a confrontational relation to. It is so massive and larger than me that I can only swim with it. Sometimes I have been pushed to shore, but I haven't drowned yet. I haven't really thought about money in the last years, other than its banal definition, which, you are right – is against my research. What is liquidated as money, and the whole cultural and industrial system that works with it, is now what is understood as capital. Capitalism, a system that operates with that construction, has nothing to do with older ideas of money. I honestly don't know how modern capitalist economies function. Nevertheless, I depend on it, I am a part of it, and I feel its effects and its wide range of side-effects, especially here in this part of Europe. I also don't know how to think about the intellectual capital of which we, in a pass, are part of. Perhaps I am producing a cultural capital through my mere labor of working on old Middle Eastern zoologies, while sitting in Brussels. How does it enter a circulation of values in this system (is that publishing?), how does it liquidate – to which material or abstract properties, for whom, I don't know.

ADRIJANA ASKS ALEX

Hi Alex,

Maybe I should wait for your first answer but I have something on my mind already. It is related to your intervention in the *"Unsettled Study"*¹³ this year – reading an essay, an essay written as research, as explorative intervention? Is it also a proposal for publishing artistic research?

13 See Response to Sara asks Vladimir page 58

You wrote/read about a closed object, an object of stable meaning and form present for someone, or for itself, in itself. Apparently so, since there are processes and relationships that enable its presence. The disclosure of such an object would be an intervention in the temporality from perceptive to operative – enabling transformation or even deformation to happen.

But then, if the object to be disclosed is not clearly an object, you read/wrote about disclosing the moments of stabilization within the processes. By letting matter lead to materialize what is there, before it's there. By or better through taking care of what is forming through need or desire.

Correct me where I didn't paraphrase well, but this is what I understand and go with, interested in (your) ways/methods/tools to take care, to hold on, to stay with, to recognize, observe and grasp? (while publishing?).

RESPONSE

Dear Adrijana,
You paraphrase perfectly! Thank you for that!

I read two questions in your text: the first about the possibility of considering my reading in the (framework of) *Unsettled Study* as a form of publishing, and the second about different operations as being components of my/this way of publishing.

Referring to the first I would say: yes, I think that intervening in a collective and public process is a form of publishing artistic research. Defining "publishing" minimally as the action of making-public, and understanding generically this action as a move that allows for transcending the, let's call it, "intimacy of the researcher(s) and her (their) research processes" towards a more extensive field which includes other people that have not been participating in these processes, it's clear that this happened with my reading in the (framework of) *Unsettled Study*. I think that this reading provided conditions for "others" (meaning "not me") to get in touch, and furthermore, participate in my research.

PUBLISHING PROCESSES

It generated a kind of exteriority as a medium of access to a kind of interiority.

Referring to the second, more complex and extensive question, the first thing I would say is that one of the operations you mention is the one I use to encompass all others: to observe. By observing I mean an intimate, adaptive and highly receptive form of getting and being in touch with the object of research. Observation refers etymologically to “watching” (I take this as a partial expression of all kinds of perceptual actions) but also to “paying attention” to and “keeping safe” (and I would therefore also say “taking care” of) what the observer has “in front.” All these meanings reveal, or simply make clearer that observation is, on the one hand, a very active procedure and, on the other hand, that it is an activity that has an influence in the observed phenomenon. My practices of observation which I denominate generically “practices of very slow aesthetic observation” are more or less systematized forms of action that mobilize an aesthetic relationship with my environment and more specifically, with my object of research (a relation based fundamentally on the performance of my sensorimotor and emotional skills). This kind of relation, this “conduct” as I like to say, allows me to interact with the actualization of the agencies, both of the object of research and the media in which I practice (in the case you mentioned – language, or more specifically written language) in order to disclose the object of research.

There would be much more to say but I guess (and I hope!) we can continue the dialogue by this and other means!

NICOLAS ASKS ADRIJANA

You aim to make the process of writing and editing visible in the end “product” of your research. What is the actual value of the publishing process for you? How do you perform your overall research practice on artistic anxieties making the process of publishing visible? Or, would it be better to ask: how does anxiety perform within this way of publishing?

RESPONSE

What is visible is the editing process. Which challenges the editing and the writing. I wrote the text about the last two years of my research/art/doings, and then I invited three researchers to be the editors: to comment, question, to propose a change or an exercise that I will work with, and this will give three different texts, or one completely different than the first text we started from. It is not so much about making the process visible, but changing the focus: from the product (which is the text), an essay that is shaped and edited for the reader to be understandable and to communicate concepts effective to the collaboration, to the gestures and decisions that create a structure for writing – where the text is more of a tool.

The proposition is: an online publication that comes in the form of an essay. The editorial team is composed, based on trust and shared interest, through professional and personal relationships: Sina Seifee, shaping the material through design and coding, Goda Palakaite, Pia Louwerens and Kristina Gvozdenović through their comments, suggestions and questions. These will be authored and visible. They are invited to explore the double role, helping the essay and making this process relevant for their own research/practice.

For me, it is a reason (or an excuse) to write/to make in the first place. The publishing is exhibiting, or making-public. (See response Pierre asks Adrijana, page 24). I approached it by making some kind of repository of traces. The traces of events and activities I have done, references I collected, practices of other artists that moved the thinking or moved the conditions. Writing as a mode of activating these traces. As any essay does, you could say, but taking the conditions for essay writing as content as well.

The publication is about making-public what I have done and where I am now in my research, and as it is a website, it can host the future thinking and events of the same project. It will also be used to perform the research – as any artist’s website does, you might say – but here it is explored as a tool for thinking, still researching, while making the research public.

PUBLISHING OBJECTS

The parts developed throughout the collaboration will become the structure for working. The writing process is, in a way, outsourced to Sina, Pia, Tina and Goda. I prepare, arrange, assemble, organize, put together the material for a publication; they decide to follow by correcting, approving, condensing, proposing shifts or otherwise modify. So I can then improve, revise, rescript, adapt, rewrite. As any editing does, you could say. Here, the reader will be able to see where exactly they intervened and how. What's the value of this?

Not to make a coherent whole, not to embody artistic anxiety of making a solid, finished work, put out there for someone. But instead, to work with artistic anxieties here is to expose a relation with the material, a collaboration coherent with each of our practices and to follow many paths where this can lead us, to put it out there for someone who also has to arrange, assemble, organize and put together. I imagine a reader, meandering through this website, hoping she will recognize something vigorous in it's redundancy.

ISABEL ASKS ANTYE

Dear Antye,
When you were in residency in Japan – while you were temporarily inhabiting landscapes that affected you in unknown ways – we had a skype conversation. You were fascinated with the idea that the thinking faculty doesn't necessarily need to be located in the brain, as other cultures in the world believe and practice. You also remarked that for these cultures, a more animistic principle of life could potentially be at stake. I then wonder what happened in Japan with you in relation to the spirits of the ancestral form of porcelain handcraft you were occupied with, as what we spoke of you were opening to the possibility of relating to them somehow.

As far as I understand, the choice you have made for publishing is based on an object that acquires a daily use but that contains some historical information about western perspectives on the

brain. I would be curious to know how the experience in Japan and your animistic question have influenced your publishing choice, and in what ways do you expect to affect the “user” of your publishing object.

RESPONSE

Dear Isabel,
I came to Japan with this vague feeling that one way of opposing problematic Western dualistic thinking could be through diving into the monistic properties of animistic traditions and concepts. I had a loose sense about Shinto practices that are apparently, up until now, deeply embedded in everyday lives in Japan. During the residency I realized how much more ground-shaking this “animistic thinking” could potentially be, leaving me, up until now, somehow in this state of emergency. And yes, one astonishing finding relates hereby to the different concepts of spatialization of personhood in other cultures, meaning where personhood is placed in the body, as well as to the non-separation of emotion, intuition, the unconscious and nature on the one hand, and rational thinking, decision making and culture on the other.¹⁴ During my stay in Japan, I started to learn *Ikebana*, the Japanese form of meditative flower arranging. Fascinated by its intriguing beauty, I nevertheless had objections towards these corrective operations of cutting away all leaves or bending the stems to fit the arrangement. I felt I was disciplining nature, superimposing a (cultural) system of control onto flowers and branches, and addressed my concerns, in the form of questions, more than once, to my *Ikebana* sensei. Somehow her answers never satisfied me, and it took me a while to realize that this has not to do with her evading or avoiding the question, but with me imposing this clear division

14 For us “westerners” it is so self-evident that our personhood and our mind is situated in the brain. We dismiss every other way of thinking as unscientific or folkloric superstitions. For us “westerners,” the separation of mind and body, thought and feeling, the conscious and the unconscious, culture and nature (always with the implied hierarchy, that the latter is somehow less valuable) is so deeply ingrained into our cognitive modes, we have trouble even recognizing the cultural constructedness of these dualisms. In Japan, I encountered this non-dualistic thinking that puts, for example, the mind into the belly ...

ABOUT THE PUBLIC

between culture and nature that seems not only of no relevance to her, but most of all, of no means of understanding from her perspective of thinking.

With regards to your second and third question: I am thinking about textile and its fluidity between 2D & 3D - in relation to brain imagery and (brain) patterns as systems of information¹⁵ - for quite some time now, and I encountered scientific posters printed on textile, as one important reference for this textile publication, way before my experiences in Japan. I am sure I would have developed a different publication if I had not been in Japan last summer. But the only answer I can give to your question of HOW my experience in Japan informed my decisions to make a textile poster publication is: I don't know. I do know, however, that I like the idea very much of people using the textile in very different ways, and that I love to imagine my brain structures around the brains of so many others. It gives me this mischievous pleasure to develop a very attractive scarf, that people truly want to wear, and thus almost trick them into also wearing my brain structure, printed onto the scarf, around their heads. I create hereby first of all, an imaginative realm for myself, a realm that connects me, in a puzzling way, with other people. Does this also have to do with porosity? For sure...

PIERRE ASKS ISABEL

Hello Isabel,
As far as I know, your work encompasses different iterations of hybrid narratives embodied in different designs, but all directed to a public invited to imagine and speculate with your forms of resistance and solutions to address and overcome the environmental, cultural and political crises of our times. Your

15 MRI data, for example, is generated in the scanner in slices, and then 3D-reconstructed within particular visualization software. One particular visualization inflates and flattens this 3D-reconstructed MRI brain data afterwards again for specific purposes. What happens if this flattened brain visualization gets printed onto a piece of textile?

method is to intentionally blur the boundaries between future and fiction - you call it "SF in real-time," and your general attitude is one of recruitment of your collaborators and audience in a sort of *gesamtkunstwerk* in which everything and everyone is both real and fictional. Therefore, I perceive your work as an ongoing publishing process as you situate all your practices in a *public theatre* that performs itself in addition to operating as a container. Your use of "fictioning" is a tool and a weapon to infiltrate and actively pursue alternatives. You generate "what ifs" to deconstruct the present, repurpose the past and create a plural future *publicly*.

But if one considers that our time compels us to live in a daydream of imperialist, capitalist state-produced fictions producing a constant state of befuddlement, I wonder why then, do you use a somewhat similar strategy? And secondly, what is *your* definition of the nature and function of fantasy in relation to the possible modification of the public sphere?

RESPONSE

Thank you Pierre for your reflection on my research. By answering your first question I hope to answer your second one and also explain my publishing process.

I believe that my research can be regarded more as a mirror than as a clone to the system that we critique. A mirror, as my practice dwells on the borders of commerce to reflect on our consumerist identities, but not a clone, as it proposes new possible habits for living by means of alternative cultural arrangements. I'm interested in re-populating the zones of experience of a devastated world, creating semantics and semiotics of fictions that can be woven into the fibers of the future.

My use of "SF" has two distinct meanings. Firstly, it's inspired by *Speculative Fabulations* and the idea of "worlding practices" behind it. As Donna Haraway explains through the game of string figures in her book *Staying with the Trouble*, it is not about being *in* the world but about being *of* the world and the

response-ability this entails in the patterning, co-makings or in kinship-making beyond biological human lineage. Secondly, *SF* implies a statement that situates Science as fiction from a Technofeminist perspective. Science Fiction then, in my work, is a critique of the modern definition of technology that is rooted in applied sciences, and questions the techno-scientific engineering methods of objects and commodity production. It brings the ideology of useful arts to the front, where anyone can be a technologist beyond sexual, social or ethnical stereotyping. To add praxis time to my proposition of SF means an invitation to embody the living and nonliving organisms at the hand of performativity systems that can provoke transindividual knowledge exchanges.

In one of your mentoring sessions we discussed the hyper- or over-identification premise underlying my work. I use this concept to work with archetypes embedded in the neo-liberal subconscious, e.g. farm and product, that I recontextualize to redirect in a virtual present. I create intimate and public experiments that incite a negotiation between mind and matter, aiming at reconfiguring our relationship with materiality and de-formatting our trapped imagination. Here I propose performative scores and DIY technology systems that queer or *de-square* the logic of techno-scientific make-ability. I design subversive repetitive gestures of labor that emphasize the transformative powers of process and matter, and that can bring subject and object into crises, just like a ritual. Thus, I provide spaces that offer the possibility to experience states of confusion, by which the irrational, the wild, the obscured, the monstrous, the uncanny, the abject, the banned, the forbidden are allowed to emerge, freeing memories and images that can potentially reconfigure feelings on how and what we possess. It is where the Ecology of Imagination can be creative with no guilt, fantasizing, speculating on, and/or eventually having a real impact in the public sphere.

Yes! Publishing can be considered a constant in my work, but from a *camouflaged activism* point of view. My eco-erogenous Para-pharmaceutical bio-products contain the memory of a transformative process that the public intakes to become part of

a larger alchemical practice and be informed about erogenous potencies that remain in the shadow. But, what does the act of publishing mean in the context of a pass research center? To solve this quest I had to revise the different archive levels of my work. Sensing again and again an unbreakable real/fictional pulse, I consulted designer Miriam Hempel. Her guidance gave me the clarity to orient the purpose of this opportunity to explore a medium that I haven't used before.

This publication is an experimental catalogue. It presents the research status and outcomes of the Beauty Kit project guided by the voice of the artist-researcher and "BK farm patrona's" management perspective. A selection of images and texts about the work carried out in the female farms, the Spa and the Focus Group was compiled in collaboration with dramaturge Kristin Rogghe, performance artist Gosie Vervloessem, graphic designer Pablo Diartinez and software designer Tim Vets. It also includes future project perspectives hinting to the Male Farm, the Trans Farm and the Village. Experimental artist, tantric pedagogue and "BK farm fertilizer" Elke Van Campenhout was invited to write an artistic, political and economic reflection on the project from a wild witch and philosophical perspective, focusing mainly on the Female Farm.

SINA ASKS PIERRE

Around six or seven years ago, I began to experience a shift in the way I think about my audience. This shift consequently influenced the way I think about, and relate to, the notion of "public." I used to think of the public as a general mass of unidentified strangers who are, by accident or deliberation, confronted by my work (a painting on a wall, a performance, etc.). To be blunt, this public was for me, uninformed, somnambulant, stupefied and stoned (or instrumentalized by) religion, ideology, consumerism (or other monolithic machinery of social production), whom by the virtue of my enlightened and genius intuition about how the "true" world works,

would awaken from misrecognition to a true recognition. I was trained to think like that because of a (maybe not so good) education in a Marxist mentality or tradition (for whom the idea of “homogenized mass” is crucial in thinking about the social order) interpreted by artists (the invention of a popular mass audience goes back in Italian Futurism in 1910 onward), from which I learnt to embody (not conceptualize) the idea that the only way left to make meaning is to make revolt. “Fuck em!!” This idea of public made me physically active, erotic, hot, fueled by a righteous anger, and entitled to provoke...

The shift I made was that, just for the sake of experience, I changed that mind set (not in an instance of course). I began to think about the public, not as silent victims of mass subjectivity, but as experts in my topics, informed and responsible people, who are here because they are interested and have stakes in what I am talking about. They are smart, individual, and have their own questions and problems, and most importantly, “I don’t know more than them.” One might say, this is of course a lie (a construction you make), but I think it is a better lie. It changed the way I respond and enact responsibility as an artist in civil society. My work became the expressive consequences of a responsible gaze, their responsible gaze. Because of that I started to learn more and reconsider my own roots of knowledge, believing that there is helpful knowledge out there. “Learning more” was the direct effect of that gaze.

My question is, how do you conceive the public? Who are they for you? How do you think about them, (if there is indeed a “them” as actual people) a collective and additive thing? Or, am I making a mistake, the public is never a “who,” but it is the locus of an “other-less responsibility”?

RESPONSE

“When the two survivors were found Sunday morning, a crowd of onlookers burst into applause.”¹⁶

In the introductory note to the questions you pose, you almost always use the term “the public,” only once “my audience,” but never “beholders,” “spectators,” “observers,” “listeners,” “clients,” “witnesses,” “participants,” “crowd,” “market,” “assembly,” and so on and on... The list could stretch to a much longer one, qualifying in each iteration one facet of the problem you raise. The fact that you only use the term “public” veils (and unveils) the heterogeneous and plastic definition of the word/concept. Through this semi-opaque semantic surface, I try to answer your questions from my point of view, accepting that there may be others, but also stressing the importance for “us” artists/researchers to consider “the public” as a primary constitutive element of our work.

First of all, the public has no identity of its own – it does not exist. The public is made; it is constituted, and is always in the process of being constructed. Secondly, any public proposal “I” make is not mine, as “I” am part of the public; “my” proposal, which “I” make public, is already known to “the public” it meets because “my” proposal is already a production of “the public.” Thirdly, I can never know “the public” to which “my” public proposal is addressed, I can only relay “my” proposal as a message to a kind of void, hoping only to give it another dynamism, another life. These three points summarize my position concerning a first level that I could name the social/cultural.

But there is, for “me,” another level of entanglement and co-responsibility: one that includes nonhumans and information as such. Each of “our” public is an ecosystem that is “irritated” by “our” own ecosystemic performances. By “irritated ecosystems” I refer to a complex set of entangled information that is more or less activated. In other words, we have to deal with an “ecology” and a “meteorology” implemented between addressors and

16 *San Francisco Chronicle, News of the day from around the world, Dec 8, 2019*

RESEARCHING or MAKING ART

addresses that are interchangeable, interchanging and, in addition, not always human. This challenges our epistemological certainties (and our dreams of control and authorship). Yet it is at this price that we can bifurcate the epistemological structures that otherwise persist in dictating the topologies of being in art and research. While knowing that the link between command and communication technologies are inseparable in “our” public performative proposals, we activate and are activated by elements and forces that are constantly redefining and reconfiguring the nature and operativeness of the information we *think* we deliver and possess.

Finally, I would like to ask “us” another question related to your last word. What could the notion of “responsibility” mean in this context?

ALEX ASKS NICOLAS

Dear Nicolas,

Here’s my question: does publishing artistic research at a.pass need specific formats (like the research catalogue) or are the means for publishing art and/or established forms of research adequate?

RESPONSE

Hey Alex,

Let’s talk about the public qualities of artistic research. At a.pass, we practice a multiplicity of approaches to this question. I personally see research as a form of art – a form that is inherent to the arts. This understanding is based on a view of the history of art that draws a close relation between the creation of narratives and knowledge, visions and wisdom, poesis, facts and findings. Whether in the middle-aged monasteries,¹⁷ or in

17 Hildegard von Bingen is just one obvious example of someone who connected pharmaceutical, spiritual, artistic and musical studies in one context. Art and science were connected in the middle-ages in ways beyond alchemist circles and monasteries.

the Renaissance artist’s studios, whether in Tesla’s labs,¹⁸ or in the critical salons of the surrealists,¹⁹ the Berliner Ensemble,²⁰ or Warhol’s Factory – research is nothing that adds to art, but is part of art making and result of artistic practice – as much, as it is for other fields of knowledge. The ways of expressing and communicating this research found many formats. Some of which are communicating directly from within and through the artwork. Others are reflective accompanying products.

Yves Klein’s *Rocket Pneumatique* added to the discourses of art as much as to discourse of speed and philosophy. Duchamp’s *Texticels* are artwork and research paper in one. If Hito Steyerl performs her lectures, we assist the intertwined process of research making and publishing live.

Now since some years, additional academic requirements and possibilities merge with the field of arts in a new way. A general wave of inter- and cross-disciplinary fields opened a gate that provokes many artists to take diverse scientific approaches as aesthetic forms.

At the same time – more precisely, since the European Commission introduced the Bologna Process that demands from all higher education, including art schools, to provide research – academic institutions offered artists to either compile or rethink their standards of conducting and publishing research.

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- 18 In the *New York Times* of 25th November 1907, Nikola Tesla wrote an address to the editor titled: “*Artistic Research*”; in which he doubts the artistry of science, but he attests the two fields’ one and the same goal is strived for through opposing means: “[...] I would prefer to qualify original investigation of research, discovery and invention as “creative” scientific effort, which is equivalent to that of the artist, though it springs from a different, if not opposite, motive. Both artist and man of science are striving for independence from the material world in the only two ways possible: one by its casting off, the other by its complete mastery.”
- 19 I would like to mention “Pataphysics,” an imaginary science mockingly invented by Alfred Jarry in “*Exploits and Opinions of Dr. Faustroll, Pataphysician*,” (1898), and the subsequently launched “Collège de ‘Pataphysique” (1948) around Boris Vian, Eugène Ionoso, Man Ray etc., a “society committed to learned and inutilious (useless) research.”
- 20 Rehearsal periods of many months including and interrelating voice-, acting-, political-, historical- etc. studies were an intrinsic part of theater practice at the Berliner Ensemble beyond the time and work of B. Brecht.

To me, these forms of publishing that flirt, reflect, compile “adequately” to academic research are a welcome – no-less tricky – expansion of artistic practices. The knowledge generated in all the crossovers of artistic and non-artistic disciplines that are inherent to contemporary art practice, might require specific and new forms of expression and publishing. But as in all times – this form must be considered “adequately” to the research case.

a.pass, with its multiple layers and perspectives of individual and collective research situations, needs a constant critical creation of new forms and attitudes of giving access to artistic research processes. Meta-reflection, documentation of process, thinking from within, thinking alongside, walking-the-talk, experimental practice, etc. – all these approaches need to find specific ways of materialization which go beyond the overcoming of the dichotomy of theory and practice.

Therefore, YES, to specific formats of publication – but NO to a general specificity for research publication in the arts.

If we need to write collectively, we might need to code internet tools for it.²¹ If we feel the need to expand the time based notion of performance into “paperwork” we might need to think about print processes. If we need to communicate the non-linearity of a complex research context, we still might accept a 2D space, a poster, a banner, a canvas, as a means of communication.

The actual shape a research grows into at a.pass is often a mixture of aims, vision, circumstance, situation, contrast and comparison to other fields. I therefore see the task of a.pass more in the creation of an environment wherein formats can appear and emerge, than in the provision of formats.

21 e.g. the Kitchen.apass.be platform. A writing-pad based platform, designed and coded by OSP, enables writing with multiple people in one and the same document simultaneously.

Biographies

ALEX ARTEAGA's research integrates aesthetic and philosophical practices relating to aesthetics, the emergence of sense and meaning and the relationships between aurality, architecture and the environment through phenomenological and enactivist approaches. He studied composition, music theory, piano, electroacoustic music, and architecture in Berlin and Barcelona and received a PhD in philosophy from the Humboldt University. Currently he is key researcher in the artistic research project Contingent Agencies (funded by the Program for Arts-based Research of the Austria Science Fund), heads the Auditory Architecture Research Unit and lectures in the MA Sound Studies and Sonic Arts (Berlin University of the Arts) and is professor of artistic research at the Research Master in Art and Design (EINA/Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona).

ISABEL BURR RATY is a Chilean-Belgian artist and filmmaker, exploring the cracks between the organic and the artificial, between the unlicensed knowledge of minority groups and dominant narratives. She teaches Media Art History in ERG (École de Recherche Graphique) and is an associate researcher at a.pass (Advanced Performance and Scenography Studies) in Brussels. She is currently developing her second feature film exposing the impact of colonialism on Easter Island. Tapping into an extensive research on sexuality, Isabel Burr Raty creates live art and new media installations that invite the audiences to queer fixed categories of production and experience the benefits of embodying SF, such as the *Beauty Kit* project. Her works and collaborations have been shown internationally including: KVS Brussels, Palais de Tokyo Paris, ISEA Hong Kong and in festivals like: Eco-futures London, TTT Corfu, Jerk Off Paris and Enter Through The Void, Exit Through The Gift Shop Campo Ghent.

NICOLAS Y GALEAZZI studies performance as an act of research. With a background in theater making and performance art, he uses his interest in processing visions as a coach and dramaturge for productive misunderstandings. Connected to a.pass since 2009 in different functions, he focusses on socio-economic and ecological discourses as a core-curator. This

is articulated in workshops, performances and printed matter in forms of performative coaching, experimental commoning, artistic-political activism and a love for copying. Studying conditions of (artistic) labor and of other vital ecosystem made him an activist of the artistic-political platform State Of the Arts (SOTA). In 2019 he lead the collective editing of its Fair Art Almanac. He is part of the performance group GAST-STUBE° and resident Voice at WPZimmer in Antwerp.

ANTYE GUENTHER is a visual artist and artist researcher, born and raised in Eastern Germany. Drawing from her background in medicine, photography, and in the military, her artistic practice addresses themes such as (non)biological intelligence and supercomputing, scientific representations of cognitive processes and mind control, body perception in techno-capitalist societies and science fiction. Guenther studied at the art academies of Leipzig and Karlsruhe (DE), and at the Jan van Eyck Academie in Maastricht (NL). She received the first Mingler Scholarship for Art and Science last year to conduct, together with neuroscientist Alexander Sack and his research team, a collaborative project that deals with problematic neuroscientific visualization practices and questionable conceptualizations of brains and minds. Guenther's work has been supported by the Mondriaan Fonds (NL), the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (NL), the Federal Cultural Foundations of Saxony and Rhineland-Palatinate (both DE), CBK Rotterdam (NL), among others.

ADRIJANA GVOZDENOVIĆ, has been a researcher at a.pass for the last two years, proposing activities and examining formats of publicness that push the border between research, mediation and production, naming these activities "Otherwise Exhibiting" in an attempt to shift the focus from the object to relations. During the last year, her research project "Archiving Artistic Anxieties" was developed with the support of the Royal Academy of Antwerp. She is part of the Institute of Contemporary Art in Montenegro, an artists' association which was launched during the public program of "The Silver Lining," a Collateral Event of the 56th Venice Biennial. Since 2013, she

has been investigating "Who is Adrian Lister?" which resulted in three editions of artist publications and performances, with different contributions. Parallel to this, she is working as a technical support in museums for the production of artworks and exhibitions, which informs her own practice and artistic position.

SARA MANENTE, choreographer, dancer and researcher, lives and works in Brussels. After graduating in Communication Sciences at the University of Bologna with a dissertation on Semiotics and Dance in 2003, she attended UIA in Antwerp as an independent researcher. She finished a.pass in 2008 and ten years later she was part of the RC. In the meantime, she has been working as performer, assistant, mentor and collaborator for other artists and art institutions. In her artistic work, dance is a tool to think through body questions in relation to language, opacity, perception, performativity and relations. From 2012 to 2016, she worked with Marcos Simoes questioning notions of collaboration and spectatorship. Her two major dance pieces are *Lawaai means Hawaai* (2009) and *Faire un four* (2011), followed by two longer research projects granted by the Flemish Authorities: *Spectacles* (2016-18) and *Wicked technology/Wild fermentation* (2019).

LILIA MESTRE is a performing artist and researcher based in Brussels working mainly in collaboration. Co-founder and later artistic coordinator of the artist run laboratory Bains Connective (1997/2017), she is interested in art practice as a medial tool between several domains of semiotical existence. Mestre works with generative formats such as assemblages, scores and inter-subjective configurations as an artist, curator, dramaturge and teacher. She's currently core-curator and artistic coordinator of a.pass where she develops a research on scores - *Scorescapes* - as a potentially radical pedagogical tool. From 2019-2021 she collaborates with Prof. Jill Halstead and Prof. Brandon LaBelle in *Social Acoustic* - a research project supported by the University of Bergen, Norway and with Nikolaus Gansterer and Alex Arteaga in *Contingent Agencies* - a research project supported by PEEK - Vienna, Austria.

VLADIMIR MILLER is an artist researcher, scenographer and dramaturge. His practice aims at re-negotiating habitual modes of spatial production by using fragility as a building principle. He uses collective construction and building processes to investigate the relationship between practice and space within ad-hoc groups and institutional environments. His work questions the paradigms of stability embedded within spaces of cultural production in order to produce self-organized and open environments of artistic practice. Miller has been a frequent collaborator with the choreographers Philipp Gehmacher and Meg Stuart. As scenographer, co-author, dramaturge and performer he contributed to and co-created a number of performances and video installations which toured extensively in Europe and abroad. In 2018-19 he was Dramaturge in Residence at Decoratelier/Josef Wouters. Vladimir Miller is part of the a.pass core curatorial team. He was Visiting Professor at University of Gießen and Lecturer at KASK and University of Hamburg.

ROB RITZEN works as a curator with a background in philosophy. His curatorial practice is focused on self-organized and cooperative formats in close association with cultural practitioners – consciously positioned on the margin of established institutions and outside of market-oriented spaces, but in the middle of communities of cultural practitioners. He co-initiated *That Might Be Right*, an attempt to reconfigure the politics of making art and alternative forms of production and presentation. He is a founding member of *Level Five*, an artistic ecology and cooperative studio floor in Brussels, and helped shape its organizational, social and political form. Most recently he is collaborating with several other Brussels-based initiatives and Community Land Trust Brussels as *Permanent*, a project that proposes an alternative infrastructure for the production and presentation of arts and culture together with housing and facilities for other precarious groups by way of collective ownership and cooperation.

PIERRE RUBIO works as an artist and independent researcher. In a broad sense and through different forms, his work questions the principle of individuation to explore contemporary productions of subjectivity in/through the arts and aims to articulate performatively the production of an exposed subject as a common emancipatory space for rewriting history. What is real for an artist? What performative space should be made available to allow a collective exchange of/on the production of subjectivity? What kind of production of subjectivity takes place today and how does it affect the past and the future? are his main questions. Pierre has been a dancer and choreographer for a long time, holds a master's degree in arts combining theatre & communication and dance & choreography and has been working with a large number of artists as collaborator, co-author or dramaturge. Pierre is currently a core member, co-curator and mentor in a.pass – platform for artistic research practices.

SINA SEIFEE is a visual artist, researcher, storyteller, and computer programmer living and working between Brussels, Cologne and Tehran. His research on “poetics of animal description” (i.e. ecological cosmologies of nonhumans-with-history) are realized in different forms of lecture-performances, reading group, workshops, image assemblage, video and writing. His work can be characterized as an intersection of research trajectories about technology, storytelling, globalism and intercultural mythologies in the heterogeneous knowledge-worlds of art-science. He studied Applied Mathematics in Tehran, received his master in Media Arts in KHM Cologne and finished an advanced research program in performance studies in a.pass in 2017.

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The a.pass Research Centre began a new program in 2018 that hosts Associate Researchers in cycles of one year. *Publishing Artistic Research - The Annex* is a booklet aiming to weave a context around the six research publications resulting from the collective work during CYCLE I (2018-19).

FORMS OF LIFE OF FORMS: 5 posters designed into a booklet, by Rob Ritzen in collaboration with D-E-A-L.

archivingartisticanxieties.me: a website by Adrijana Gvozdenović in collaboration with Sina Seifee, Pia Louwerens, Kristina Gvozdenović and Goda Palekaite.

CRITICAL BESTIARIES - zine #1: Zoological Vandalism
Sina Seifee in collaboration with editor Renan Laurant and designer Foad Farahani.

BEAUTY KIT - An Eco-Erogenous Art Project: a catalogue by Isabel Burr Raty with contributions by Kristin Rogghe, Elke Van Campenhout, Gosie Vervloessem, Pablo Diartinez and Tim Vets.

NEOCORTEX: a research poster and scarf by Antye Guenther.

ROT issue Zero 2020 SKIN: a magazine by Sara Manente with 34 contributions by artists, chefs, researchers, designers.

a.pass (advanced performance and scenography studies) is an international platform, for artists and theorists who are interested and engaged in artistic research practices, based on principals of self-organisation, collaboration and trans-discipline.

Out of the concepts of performativity and performative space, a.pass offers the re-

searchers the possibility to critically develop their independent artistic research projects in a collaborative learning environment.

The institute includes two complementary segments that operate in parallel and in dialogue: a Post-graduate Program and a Research Centre. For more information consult our website www.apass.be.
