

WE CHANGE EVERYTHING WE TOUCH AND EVERYTHING WE TOUCH CHANGES

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~ ABSTRACT ~

We Change Everything We Touch and Everything We Touch Changes draws upon the vast, expressive potential of beds in their many forms, human and otherwise (i.e., coral-beds, death-beds, flower-beds, fossil-beds, river-beds, sedimentary-rock-beds, sleeping-beds, and so on). Qualities of horizontality and support draw this research together, but also a certain nondistinction between surface and depth, exterior and interior, which reminds us that when we are *in*-the-bed we lie *on*-the-bed. Applying the logic of assemblage, the formal structure of this work grasps several genres and a broad selection of subject matter via storied descriptions and visual material to form a recursive sense of textuality. Throughout, extimate aesthetics offers a conceptual foundation to register the indivisibility of exterior-objective forces within interior-subjective experience.

This text may be of interest to those seeking material on Aesthetics, Anecdotes, Ants, Assembling, Beds, Blankets, Breath, Butterflies, Care, Casting, Cats, Change, Cocoons, Collaboration, Collectivity, Colour, Conmen, Containers, Coral, Creation, Death, Dough, Dreams, Ephemera, Endometriosis, Enchantments, Exhaustion, Extimacy, Fabric, Fantasy, Floods, Floors, Flowers, Form, Formlessness, Friends, Grammar, Illness, Imagination, Inheritance, Introductions, Life writing, Medusa, Mermaids, Moths, Mothers, Mutualisms, Myth, Obligations, Pain, Perception, Pillows, Precarity, Rest, Ritual, Rivers, Sleep, Smoke, Speculating, Support structures, Time, Touch, Visual art, Vocables, Voices, Volcanoes, Wax, Witches.

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Fig. 1, *Changelings Exhibition Poster*, 2023.

~ PREFACE ~

BEDFORMS

Forms, by their nature, are both formative and informative. They make *some* things visible and render *some* things possible.

In the introduction to Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*, Brian Massumi considers the effects of rhizomatic form. Asking, "What new thoughts does it make possible to think? What new emotions does it make possible to feel? What new sensations and perceptions does it open in the body?"¹

Beds are gathering places for many subjects, elements, forces, purposes, and dimensions. We are conceived in bed. We hear our first stories in bed. We cuddle cats in bed. We suffer debilitating pain in bed. We dream ourselves plankton floating through seaweed in bed. We scroll endlessly in bed. We eat chips in bed. We answer work emails in bed. We give and receive pleasure in bed. We find comfort in bed. We suffer isolation in bed. We feel snug as a bug in bed. We are not always safe in bed.

The multidimensional nature of "We Change Everything We Touch and Everything We Touch Changes" assembles interconnected texts, quotations, graphic content, and an exhibition of sculptural artworks titled *Changelings*, to ask: what forms (in their many forms) do beds make it possible to imagine? What grows from their fertile soil? What weird wanderings does a drowsy mind follow? What does a tired and/or sick body deem important or irrelevant? What conventions undo themselves when lying prone, released from the vertical "I"—the upright standing I, the individual I, the restless I, the I who scans the horizon in search of somewhere else; when we are in a hammock, a burrow, a mat in the corner, some warm patch of grass, or soft sand, where we cannot be blown

down by the storms of history because we are already hugging the earth, settled by gravity's pull, dreaming the world into existence. What then? What thoughts? What emotions? What sensations and perceptions? What possibilities? What strange affinities nestle into and around us?

With these questions, I hope to negotiate sticky sites of affection and infection, obligation and inheritance, encounter and entanglement, dreaming and waking, inside and outside, you and me, us and we.

Beds are a big topic, an area of study made even larger by the more-than-human scope of my research interests. An exhaustive study was never the intention and I have actively tried to pull apart my preconceived notions of the disciplinary structures of a doctoral dissertation.

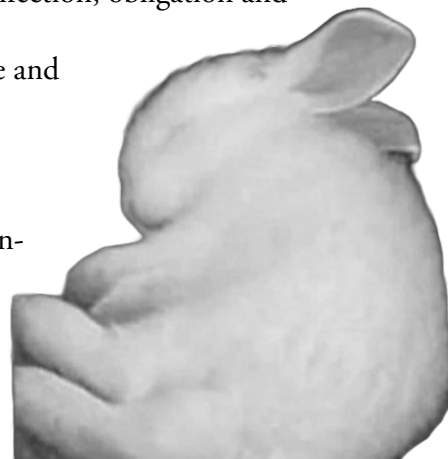


Fig. 2, found image of a sleepy bunny.

Within the realm of research creation, the intent of the dissertation's written component often builds a theoretical or conceptual framework. I love theory, to read the work of those trying to untangle the mess of existence through words and ideas.² But, in keeping with the capaciousness of beds, I wanted this text to be something else, something other. Since, without the body's scruffy materiality, without *touch*, we cannot change, we will not change.

Turning this text into a receptacle for something not easily contained has required a capacity to yield, expand, and adapt to voluminous matters. I approached this project as I would any interdisciplinary artwork, ranging restlessly across tangential motifs—in this case, those both familiarly associated with beds (pillows, sleep, desire) and others less obvious (volcanoes, linguistics, underground art spaces)—then building situated bridges between them.³ Certain subjects loom large: death, illness, and the comfort of friendship, while others are touched upon only briefly, or find their way into endnotes and image captions. Of the illustrations, which span internet memes, documentation of my

own artwork, and historical artworks amongst other visual ephemera, I have chosen examples more from a sense of affinity than to display a thesis-as-argument. The digital alterations I apply attempt to position the visual material more like found objects than reference material. While I note their original source whenever possible, they take on the fragmented nature of pictures remembered from

You told me you were interesting

a dream—a dream made strange by some loss of context, open

to new associations.

Despite my aim to push an understanding of beds beyond human-

essentialism, my focus has remained deeply human—

although with an expanded definition of what it means to

be human in all our multispecies floridity. However expressed, my hope

is for the reader/viewer to gain the feeling of crawling into the flux and

fluff of my artistic practice. As such, I eschew lengthy explanation of

artworks or material methodologies favouring conditional descriptions of a life lived, thoughts had, relations kept.

WE CHANGE / WE TOUCH

With *Re-enchanting the World: Feminism and the Politics of the Commons* (2018), feminist activist Silvia Federici draws together a collection of work spanning over twenty years that position ‘the commons’ in direct opposition to our current capitalist system organizing life and labor. Nestled within “re-enchanting” is the verb “to chant.” To chant is to sing a song with a structure of rhythmic repetition whose recitation can be both “rhapsodic and prophetic.”⁴ To Federici, the act of re-enchantment is inextricably linked to the revolutionary project—the repetition of it, the collective organizing of it. As a choral form of imagining, it reclaims and recuperates collective practices to

Fig. 3, meme of *The Proposal* by Frédéric Soulacroix (n.d.) by @punk_history, 2021.



restructure a future in co-relational terms—a worlding project expansive enough to include “animals, waters, plants, and mountains.”⁵

Kore Chant

*She changes everything She touches,
And everything She touches changes.
She changes everything She touches,
And everything She touches changes.*

*Her name cannot be spoken,
Her face was not forgotten;
Her power is to open,
Her promise can never be broken.*

*She changes everything She touches,
And everything She touches changes.
She changes everything She touches,
And everything She touches changes.*

*All seeds She deeply buries,
She weaves the thread of seasons;
Her secret, darkness carries,
She loves beyond all reason.*

*She changes everything She touches,
And everything She touches changes.
She changes everything She touches,
And everything She touches changes.*

*All sleeping seeds She awakens,
The rainbow is Her token;
Now Winter's power is taken,
In love all chains are broken.*

*Everything lost is found again,
In a new form, in a new way;
Everything hurt is healed again,
In a new time, in a new day.*

*She changes everything She touches,
And everything She touches changes.
She changes everything She touches,
And everything She touches changes.*

*Bright as a flower and strong as a tree,
With our love and with our rage;
Breaking our chains so we can be free,
With our love and with our rage.*

*She changes everything She touches,
And everything She touches changes.
She changes everything She touches,
And everything She touches changes.*

*We are changers,
Everything we touch can change.
We are changers,
Everything we touch can change.*

*She changes everything She touches,
And everything She touches changes.
She changes everything She touches,
And everything She touches changes.*

*Change is, touch is,
Touch is, change is.
Change us, touch us,
Touch us, change us.⁶*

We Change Everything We Touch and Everything We Touch Changes picks up Federici’s proposal by combining science fiction author Octavia Butler’s transformational decree: “All that you touch you change. All that you change changes you. The only lasting truth is change,” with the recursive logic of the *Kore Chant*, sung by neopagan witch Starhawk, celebrating the dualistic nature of Persephone, goddess of spring and queen of the underworld—who carries the alternate name “Kora” or “Coré” (meaning maiden), which names both a style of archaic Greek sculpture and forms the etymological root of coral.⁷

Coral exists as multi-species beds of mutual flourishing, hybrid creatures who occupy contact zones where the kind of binary thinking that separates nature from culture, human from animal, subject from object, life from non-life, and individual from collective make no sense. And, of course, they currently suffer great risk due to anthropogenic climate change and related environmental stressors.

In the essay, *More-than-Human Cosmopolitics*, artist Sheila Sheikh asks, “How can artistic practice help us to imagine such forms of sociality and composition and to build a non-fascist, more-than-human cosmopolitical world, rather than simply representing it?” A call to rethink who is included in the pronouns “us” and “we.” A more expansive understanding that makes room for both future generations and other-than-human species on ethical, moral, and legal grounds.⁸ Taking coral’s pluralistic (choral) ontology as cue, this text intentionally stretches positions of authorship, shifting back, forth, and between the aggregate *we*, the singular *I*, and the occasional *she*, *they*, or *you*. Like Sheikh, I believe it is necessary to enlarge our sense of the collective *we*; however, it seems equally important to think carefully about such implications. Within this slippery use of pronouns and perspective lies challenging, possibly destabilizing, questions.

Namely, who is our *we*?

Imagine the complex topology of two clasped hands, fingers interlocking one another. *We*, as both concept and lived reality, is situated here—in the space that folds the internal and external, subject and object, affect and reason.⁹ Questions of *you* and *me*, *us* and *we* initiate a discussion of obligation and responsibility. The plurality of the pronoun *we* indicates those I feel obliged to speak with, and stand in solidarity against. Yet, what inclusions and exclusions does my *we* also pronounce? What multiplications and contradictions? What innocences lie hidden? What privileges remain obscured? How elastic or inflexible are the parameters contained within?¹⁰

Sometimes *we* or *us* signals personal designations—those

with whom we share intimate relations—partners, friends, family, and other-than-human familiars.

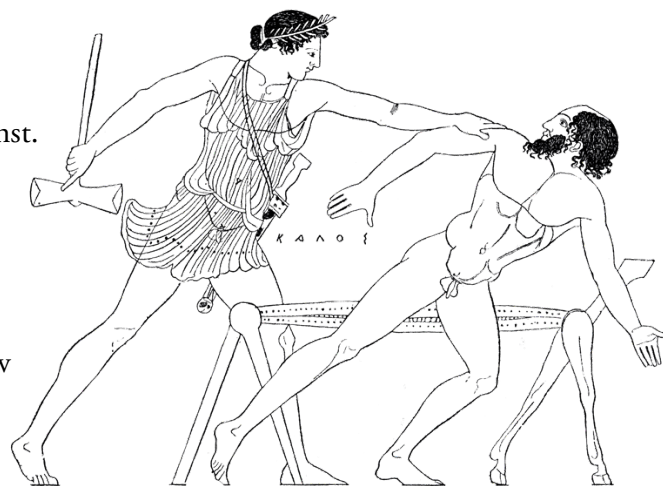


Fig. 4, found image of an 19th century engraving of a Procrustean bed.

(In my case, two cats we call miwwi and mooni.) When then does *we* indicate broader cultural and geopolitical associations, race and class, ability and profession, language and environment? Who are the strange, and perhaps unintended, bedfellows that populate our projects? Who do we speak *for*? Who are we speaking *with*? And do we have *their* consent?¹¹

Take the COVID-19 slogan, “We are all in this together,” a phrase still visible in the windows of some especially nice houses in my neighbourhood. At this point, it seems relatively clear that signs such as these mark an ironical lack of a unification. And while *we* may comprehend the speaker’s ideological intention, many of *us* fail to share its sentiment because we understand the line marking *us* from *them* and *ours* from *theirs* is both too real and evidently false.

On the political left, a word like “change” often implies a sense of positive progression. And again, just like “we,” it is important to remember that the effects of change are experienced asymmetrically. The most vulnerable usually bear the weight of change’s indifference and, significantly, the qualitative properties of the changes we endure are unevenly distributed. Some spots are hotter, some clouds more toxic. Some emergencies will be addressed and resolved, others ignored and exacerbated.

Similarly, do we speak of change for

the generalizing present, the *we* of now? Of the fantastical future, the *we* of tomorrow? Or some



Fig. 5, *Constantine's Dream* by Piero della Francesca from the fresco cycle, the *History of the True Cross*, 1459–66 – digitally altered to imagine a future scraping away of those figures of historical importance until all that remains are the bored attendant and strange winged-limb-finger in the upper left corner, which arrives to mark neither would-be emperor nor authorial triumph but the bed's own coziness.

fictional past, the *we* of yesterday? In what *nowishness* have we found ourselves? What *hereishness*? Because, certainly, *our* present is not *their* present and *their* future is not *our* future. The changes we face today and those we see rolling on the horizon of tomorrow are not and never will be experienced evenly. Consequentially, as we contaminate the world, the world contaminates us—more or less depending on the position we hold relative to systems of privilege and precarity. And so we ask ourselves, individually and collectively, will our touch be gentle or rough, heavy or light?

BEDFELLOWS

In *Cosmopolitics*, philosopher Isabelle Stengers' sweeping work of philosophical inquiry, she portrays an introduction as the invitational conditions of encounter between distinct entities, whether living subjects or epistemological disciplines. Encounters rely on introductions; if the introduction is to bear the fruits of shared understanding, each entity must find the other interesting. To become "interested," we must begin to recognize and understand what "obligates" our companion. If successful, a relay of obligations, both shared and unshared, forms a bridge upon which an encounter unfolds, an outstretched hand.¹²

My dear friend, the artist Helen Song Cho, likes to say, "All our work is about our mothers." Responding to this statement, our mutual friend, the writer Daniella Sanader, comments on Helen's plurality of mothers. Within this back and forth, I remember how I was not raised by one caregiver but many. Alongside my biological mother stood a community for whom magic was not a metaphor, nor adjective, but action, a way of life in which material reality could be transformed, regularly, through the arts of sustained attention. Women who crafted practices of existence (ontology) and systems of knowledge (epistemology) through sheer physical labour, material ingenuity, and consistent binding of community obligations with acts of giving and receiving care.

I work because they taught my hands to work. I write because they wrote with ease and audacity. My thought processes are shaped by their commitment to reading, discussion, and hot debate—but also the permission they gave me to dream wild and free, with focused attention. Like theirs, much of my practice is found in the domestic research of sociality via cooking, cleaning, dyeing, gardening, kneading, knotting, making, painting, polishing, repairing, scrubbing, and pouring some viscous material from one container into the next. Their tools are my tools. Their craft, my craft. Their art, my art.



Fig. 6, mom and me in her studio, circa 1986.

Nevertheless, I did have a singular mother, one who had many

names—cycling through variations and combinations of Alexander Elsie Mary Alasha Bartzak McGeough Poliquin. She was born to Polish and Ukrainian settlers in Nordegg, a hamlet nestled on the eastern edge of Alberta's Rocky Mountains, two hours north of Banff and west of Red Deer in Treaty Six Territory. The Rockies are a spine-like range largely consisting of

Precambrian metamorphic rock pushed upward

by tectonic forces through layers of limestone previously laid down in a shallow sea. In the late Paleozoic and early Mesozoic ages the mountains were slowly eroded by time and weather, gathering extensive accumulations of sedimentary rock, some of which continues to be carved away by Pleistocene-age glaciers swiftly melting in our time of rapid climate change. These layers ripple with significant mineral deposits: copper, gold, lead, molybdenum, silver, tungsten, zinc, and energy reserves such as natural gas, oil shale, petroleum, coal.

For the first half of the twentieth century, Nordegg was a coal town. On 31 October 1941 an explosion occurred, and the primary mine shaft collapsed. Thirty-one miners died. Approximately nine months later, under the full moon of 25 August 1942, came my mother. Within a few short years, my grandfather was institutionalized with a post-traumatic-stress disorder. Whether his health deteriorated due to the mining accident is unclear. We can never know the whole story, but I have spent many late nights worming my way into research on the avalanche of traumatic events that piled up around him, one on top of the next. The war of his youth, the 1918 pandemic which followed, a solo immigration to another world into whose language he could not speak, \$27.00 in his purse, and news of yet another war, which would decimate more than fifty percent of his hometown's population. For her part, my grandmother (Anna, Baba) soon moved east, into Saskatchewan, to raise my mother and her sister (Ella, my namesake) closer to family.

Forty years later, as the early 1980s a worldwide economic recession collapsed into the southern British Columbia housing market, I also arrived into a time of crisis. During this period, my father—who changed jobs as often as my mother changed names—was a real estate agent. Properties that had recently sold for a quarter-million dollars plummeted to around sixty thousand.¹³ Our family's financial equity stretched across several rental units and a two-bedroom family home on a small acreage in southern Langley, a previously rural township which butts up against the United States border—founded on the unceded overlapping territories of the *Á,LENENEŁ ŁTE* (*WŚÁNEĆ*), Kwantlen, *S'ólh Téméxw* (*Stó:lō*), Cayuse, Umatilla, Walla Walla, and Semiahmoo Nations. After what had been a brief and illusory period of economic prosperity, the market crash returned my family to desperate poverty. My father's mental health disintegrated, and like my maternal grandfather, remained lodged in various systems of care until his death in 2018. Thus, at

age forty, with a disabled spouse, five children spanning infant to a twenty-one-year-old college student, and a rotating cast of visiting relatives, my mother assumed sole financial responsibility for our family.¹⁴

She turned towards what seems like implausible means: flour, water, and salt. Stuff of the kitchen. And yet, it was here, in the combination of modest materials and off-kilter imagination, where she found resilience. Turning balls of colourful dough into small figurines—clowns, animals, characters from fairy tales—which she began wholesaling her dough-art crafts to giftshops across North America and as far afield as Japan. At its height, her business garnered around twelve thousand dollars per year (\$32,696.86 in today's terms).¹⁵ A scant income for a family of seven, but it kept us fed and usually housed.



Fig. 7, *My Arms are Ready to Embrace the Universe with Love (Four pulled out hide-a-beds)* by Ken Lum, 1983.

The nature of these personal stories may potentially elicit feelings of exception or sympathy and I cringe at the possibility of appearing self-indulgent when sharing the contents of my family's history, of using it as intellectual fodder or as a kind of ruler to judge hardship. I have little interest in stories

of creativity triumphing over tragedy; I recognize that these are hard stories of hard times made worse by systemic underlying causes. There is no romance in having twenty dollars to buy a week of groceries, no poetic justice in a daughter grounding her doctoral dissertation in these precarious circumstances. Still, I am compelled by the commonalities these accounts contain. The potential usefulness of their usualness. Walter Benjamin, writing in the context of resistance to twentieth century fascism explains, “The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the ‘state of emergency’ in which we live is not the exception but the rule.”¹⁶ With this I wonder, what if our vulnerabilities towards precarity could be galvanized as a mobilizing force? A chant of solidarity within which many different voices sing?

I find this idea expressed by philosopher Judith Butler in *Notes toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*,

Precarity is the rubric that brings together women, queers, transgender people, the poor, the differently abled, and the stateless, but also religious and racial minorities: it is a social and economic condition, but not an identity (indeed, it cuts across these categories and produces potential alliances among those who do not recognize that they belong to one another).¹⁷

And echoed in anthropologist Anna Tsing’s *Mushroom at the End of the World*,

We hear about precarity in the news every day. People lose their jobs or get angry because they never had them.... But most of the time we imagine such precarity to be an exception to how the world works.... What if, as I’m suggesting, precarity is the condition of our time—or, to put in another way, what if our time is ripe for sensing precarity? What if precarity, indeterminacy, and what we imagine as trivial are the center of the systematicity we seek?¹⁸

And underlined by philosopher Olúfémi O. Táíwò in *Elite Capture* as a personalized explanation,

That I have experienced my share of traumatic experiences, have survived abuse of various kinds, have faced near death from accidental circumstance and from violence (different as the particulars of these may be from those around me) is not a card to play in gamified social interaction or a weapon to wield in battles over prestige. It is not what gives me a special right to speak, to evaluate, or to decide for a group. It is a concrete, experiential manifestation of the vulnerability that connects me to most of the people on this earth. It comes between me and other people not as a wall, but as a bridge.¹⁹

Bracketed by the years 2018–2023, the making of this project is marked by upheaval and emergency—caused by instabilities that stretch generationally in every direction. Considering this context, I cannot help but wonder, could my emphasis on beds be a study of retreat? A withdrawal between the sheets and into quiet comforts of domestic and scholastic space; into conditions of soft soil; some of the beauty found in flowers, butterflies, and streams; slugs licking the earth; burrowing dreams? A lying down against the urgent winds of species destruction, racialized capitalism, and unthinkable futures? Perhaps. Yet I find imaginative solidarity in Federici’s belief that “the very sense we are living at the edge of a volcano makes it even more crucial to recognize that in the midst of much destruction, another world is growing, like the grass in the cracks of urban pavement, challenging the hegemony of capital and the state and affirming our interdependence and capacity for cooperation.”²⁰

My interests travel on the common wind, a breeze that includes Karen Barad’s “entanglements,” Denise Ferreira da Silva’s “difference without separability,”



Fig. 8, found image of a sheep escaped to the mountains, after six years and sixty pounds of excess wool, which offered a protective fluff that wolves couldn’t penetrate.

Donna Haraway’s “symploosis,” Elizabeth Povinelli’s “extimacy of existence,” Isabelle Stengers’ “cosmopolitics,” Jane Bennett’s “vibrant matter,” Federici’s “commonism,” ruangrupa’s “lumbung,” and Ursula K. Le Guin’s “carrier bag.”²¹ While I do not necessarily discuss each of these concepts explicitly within this text, they have provided necessary relational frameworks within which we might “consent à n’être plus un seul” [consent not to be a single being], as expressed by Édouard Glissant via Fred Moten.²² With varying cadence, these thinkers search to describe the conditions of collective ontology while acknowledging differential personal obligation. In response to this

polyvocal chorus, we have reached a time when the vibrant entangled symbiotic cosmopolitical assemblages that entail the different but inseparable conditions of our extimate existence sound obvious, and they are. As da Silva explains, profound change requires, “[n]othing short of a radical shift in how we approach matter and form,” in other words, an “end of the world as we know it.”²³ Luckily, these thoughts express what Moten and Harney call, “the good news people already have....”²⁴ And, *obviously*, this good news has been circulating across a lengthier timeline and wider arc than *we* can ever imagine.

Fig. 9, detail view, *Between sky and earth* by Tatiana Trouvé, ongoing since 2012 – Trouvé’s outdoor installation in Dutchess County located in upstate New York includes bronze casts of used mattresses, shoes, blankets, and boxes. Together, these objects interact with the dynamic ecosystem surrounding them and develop an ever-changing memory-scape of past works. In this image, mattresses and moving blankets nestle within a grove of trees, waiting. The work brings to mind Spinoza’s line about how “a body is at rest until it is determined to motion by another.”





Fig. 10, *mooni and me*, 2021.

On a more personal note, in recognition of collaborators and conversationalists Helen Song Cho, Derek Coulombe, Patrick Cruz, Alana Duggan, Clare Elson, Jessica Price

Eisner, Liza Eurich, FASTWÜRMS (Kim Kozzi and Dai Skuse),

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Jacqueline Mabey, Tegan Moore, Manden Murphy, Sarah

Nasby, Lillian O'Brien Davis, Danny O'Quinn, Claudia Rick,

Daniella Sanader, Jonathan Scott, karen elaine spencer, Erica

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skills, curiosities, and care have given my practice shape; the accommodating administrators,

phenomenal students, and carpool comrades from the Arts, Media, Performance and Design at York

University and the School of Fine Art and Music at the University of Guelph, who have kept my feet

on the ground moving forward; thoughtful editor Amy van der Merwe, for their ability to see what

my eyes no longer could; an ever expanding family, especially Dean, Angela, Maureen, and Frank,

whose survivability has made a refuge of sibling companionship; my unconventional parents Elsie

and Pat, who taught me a grammar of dreams; an excellent doctoral committee encompassing

Yvonne Singer, Dan Adler, and Allyson Mitchell, who offered attentive reading, enthusiastic studio

visits, and unwavering support from the jump; the fluffiest familiars miwwi and mooni, whose



Fig. 11, *miwwi and sandal*, 2022.

mischief and mayhem kept me happy; and my partner Colin Miner, whose strength and compassion has made our life an adventure—thank you!

With respect, I acknowledge my work and research is formed and imagined by living and working in territories that many Indigenous nations have longstanding relationships with. I currently live in Toronto/Tkarón:to (Kanien'kéha/Mohawk for 'tree in the water there' or 'trees standing in water') on land long cared for by Anishinnabek Nation, Hodinöhsö:ni' Confederacy, The Chippewa and Wendat Peoples. While the city is currently covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit it is also "a web of interconnected and sometimes conflicting historical treaties" and has become home to diverse First Nation, Inuit, and Métis communities.²⁵ Crucially, this territory is subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an Indigenous citizenship law made between Anishinnabek and Hodinöhsö:ni' Nations in 1701 that extends from Montreal/Tiohtià:ke to Fort Erie. The agreement is marked by reciprocal responsibilities, foregrounding the land as a dish to be shared and cared for to ensure the ongoing, mutual survival of both human and more-than-human life.²⁶

Acknowledging Indigenous relations offers an opportunity to consider and reflect on one's actions, inclusions, exclusions, and personal responsibilities. Within these words, I recognize the refuge my Slavic ancestors found in North America and that my family's current presence on these lands is made possible through enduring systems of colonial violence.

I also recognize BIPOC friends and colleagues who have generously provided guidance, conversation, and critical feedback on how to effectively resist systemic racism, a complex system which I have inequitably benefited from. I hope to appreciate the considerable toll their labour represents. These statements are not enough.

~ SECTIONS ~

BEDFRAMES

We are discussing beds. Memory foam versus wool, innerspring or classic futon. A bed's ability to

comfort and contour to hold
and provide rest hinges on a
combination of materials and
characteristics. Like the
bodies it supports, a
bed is an organized
whole, more than the
sum of its parts.²⁷

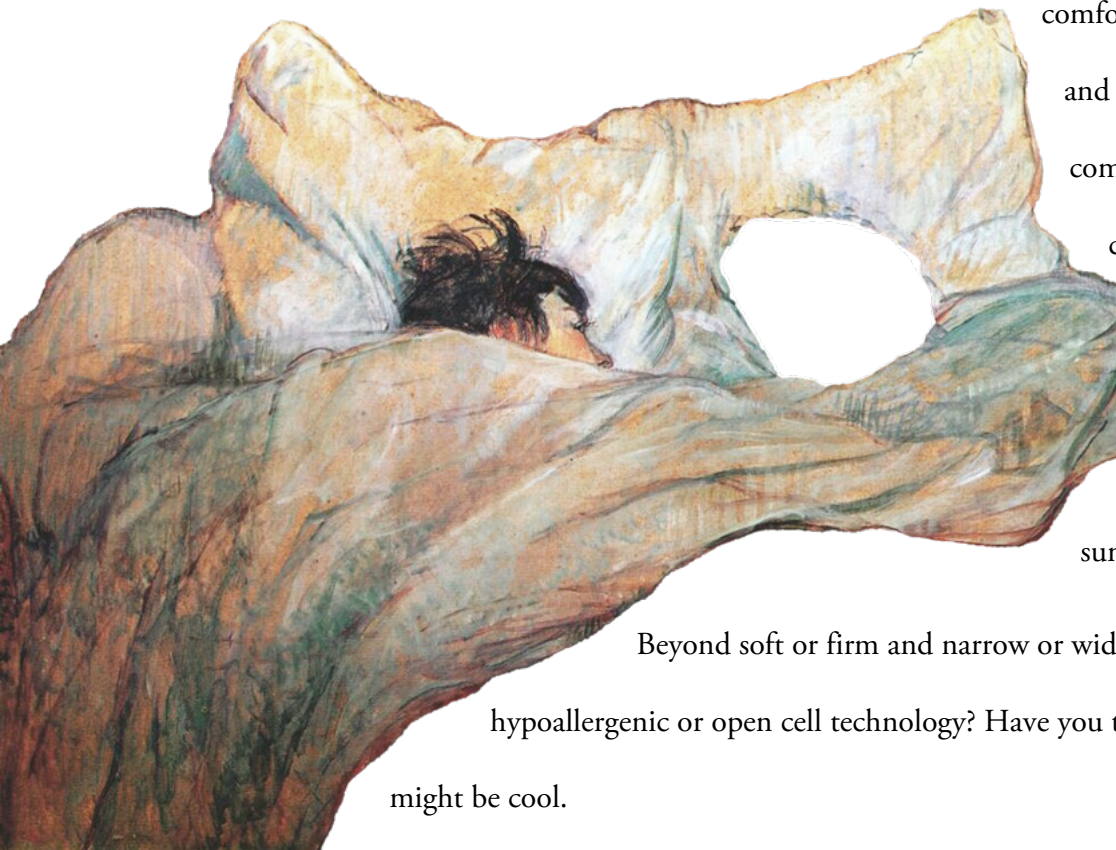


Fig. 10, *Le Lit*
[The Bed] or *Dans*
le lit [In the Bed]
by Henri de
Toulouse-Lautrec,
1892.

Beyond soft or firm and narrow or wide, what about
hypoallergenic or open cell technology? Have you tried horsehair? Straw
might be cool.

We have slept in many beds. Air mattresses, quickly deflated. Hammocks,
surprisingly comfortable. Creaky brass, far too noisy. Hide-a-ways, equal

parts lumpy and stiff. Latex hospital, sweaty and bright. Waterbeds *seem* fun... Do tanning beds
count? Only if we fall asleep. The narrow luxury of a sleeper car from Beijing to Shanghai. Our
grandmother's bedspread, a chenille blanket, the colour of cut carnations. Those periwinkle sheets
we saw swaying in the wind.

Remember the night we tried to sleep on the stinking hot double in a cheap hotel room with the busted fan? How we dreamed of laying down in a shallow creek to let the rush of cool water slip between us? And the release we found later—floating downstream on inner-tubes, our bodies baking on black rubber, hands clasped?

With their supple capacity to yield and expand, beds become gathering places for many subjects, elements, forces, purposes, and dimensions, both human and otherwise. Flowers and ashes, fossils and rocks, corals and oysters, all these and more figure spatially and temporally to the organizing



Fig. 11, *Four Women Asleep* by Roland Penrose, 1937 — clockwise from top left, the surrealist artists: Lee Miller, Ady Fidelin, Nusch Eluard, and Leonora Carrington.

principle of beds. While qualities of horizontality and the foundational draw these examples

together, they also exhibit a certain negotiation between surface and depth, exterior and interior.

Offering a kind of welcoming framework, caught between thing and concept, beds are *embedded* with the logic of potential—reminding us that existence is built upon productively receptive ground. We are *in-the-bed* when we lie *on-the-bed*.

Rolling over, we feel insulated, cushioned by friendship and radical affinities. Thoughts move

gently into sensation and speculation, simile and free association. We talk about Jeanne Randolph's *The Amenable Object* (1991), how she refers to art objects as a "soft, floppy thing." We picture *Olympia* with long velveteen ears and Stonehenge as a fort of pillows. We dig how Randolph suggests

that art occupies an ambiguous position between “exterior objective reality” and “interior subjective experience.” Within this space of perceptual plasticity, a viewer’s experience becomes an adventure, both playful and undetermined.²⁸

Our chatter turns to “extimacy,” a new favourite word, which Jacques Lacan coined to problematize the opposition between inside and outside. Like Randolph’s definition of an artwork, the term touches upon an internalization of exterior circumstances and an externalization of intimate conditions.²⁹

It is particularly good as an adjective— “extimate.” Together, the collection of clicks and breath that form *ex-ti-mate* turn language inside-out, performing something close to an onomatopoeia. Over and over we feel its consonant-heavy syllables trip across our tongues. The metallic first click of /'ɛks/ pronounced deep in the mouth where the back of our taste-buds rub against the soft palate followed by the sound /'tɪ/ with its hard moist flick against the alveolar ridge then a lippy /mæt/ that ends with a somewhat smoother flick and quick exhale.

Like beds, breath is a familiar found object. Pronouncing extimacy reminds us how the air we breathe comes from the world around us, and that to breathe-*in* is to breathe-in *this* world. A world which, after spending time deep inside our lungs and blood and bowels, emerges as some new thing. How, with each exhalation, a mixture of body-with-world becomes a world-with-bodies—a world we inhale again and again. The external internal, an intimate exterior.³⁰

We let this idea of world-with-body and body-with-world settle into us through a series of deep collective breaths: inhale—*A-a-a-a-a-h*, pause, exhale—*O-o-o-o-o-o*, pause, inhale—*A-a-a-a-a-h*, pause, *O-o-o-o-o-o*, pause, *A-a-a-a-a-h*, pause, *O-o-o-o-o-o*, pause.

Our O-o-o's and A-a-ah's remind us of a toddler who throws a red ball outside the crib with an expression of O-o-o-o-ing delight. When the mother retrieves and returns the toy, the child responds with an appreciative A-a-a-h. For hours the child tosses and the mother catches. This articulation of call and response unfolds over a lifetime.

The baby's babble is translated by Freud as *fort / da* (gone / there) as an analogy for the compulsion to repeatedly test the effective relationship between a body and whatever is outside a body. Many theories have proposed the nuanced possibilities contained within this exchange but, most likely, the repeated action helps the child understand they exist

independently from the world while

still being bound inextricably

and consequentially within a

complex set of relations.

Each breath-out, a question;

each breath-in, an answer.



Fig. 12, found image of person floating over foam indentation.

*O-o-o-o-o-o, pause, A-a-a-a-a-h....*³¹

RIVERBEDS

Most of us believe we evolved from a world without us, though I sometimes wonder. There are those who understand that at first there was only *Us*—an undifferentiated *Us*. An *Us* without a world. An *Us* without specific form. This *Us* existed before we began to bifurcate, before we became the jaguars and the ants, the mud and bamboo, the sky and bananas, plus everything else that heals or hurts or trips. In this framework, everything and everybody becomes through a flexible and transformative

modelling of polymorphous, promiscuous thought, or dream, or some such site that holds onto energy and gives it shape.³²

From January to March 2016, I was fortunate to be artist-in-residence at the Tampbolata Research Centre in Tambopata National Reserve, located in Peru's southeastern corner of the Amazon rainforest. Members of the Ese'Eja People, who are indigenous to the region, work as guides for the centre generously sharing their language and histories. They drew my attention to several interspecies relationships and described the complex social, political, and environmental issues that their communities face within ongoing efforts for emancipation and decolonization.

The experience irrevocably changed how I recognize myself. And yet, like most world-altering events, time seemed to flow along an ordinary course. Days oriented themselves towards a schedule of mandatory mealtimes. To ensure the location of each resident (whether artist, guide, scientist, staff-member, or tourist), meals offered an opportunity for rollcall. An ever-present reminder of the many risks the forest held. We were twelve-hours hard travel from the closest hospital and the dangers of isolation were real. Otherwise, I walked, chatted, gave natural-ink tattoos to bored wealthy children of tourists, and tried to figure out how to shape my practice in a place so intricate. During the lazy long stretches after lunch, I read excerpts from Isabelle Stengers, *Thinking with Whitehead: A Free and Wild Creation of Concepts* (2011) included in *Public Journal's* thematic issue, "Colour" (2015), edited by artists Scott Lyall and Christine Davis, plus Elaine Scarry's *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (1987). These texts made for strange travel companions. Each pursued an analysis of complex systems, with a focus on the role of object-subject relations. I often found their ideas inexplicable, a situation exasperated by heat and humidity, though there was a persistent

impression that the densely entangled rainforest was guiding me to a place of *affectual*, if not intellectual, understanding.

With Stengers, I explored an ontology of colour, particularly the colour orange as an “eternal object.” Eternal because, as with shapes and textures, colour is not contained by a specific body and therefore can neither be destroyed, nor preserved. With this understanding of colour, colour assumes a spectral agency to call upon, conjure, or summon.³³

As the editors of the popular anthology, *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene* (2017) portray, every landscape is haunted by multiple pasts, knotted presents, and many different futures. So too, certain colours carry with them the spirits of history, of the here and now of possibility. And yet, unlike ghosts, colour *matters*. In the dense green of the forest, analogous colour catches our attention. There: some flash of snaking blue iridescence or burst of fuchsia in the waxy petals of a flower. Quickly, the eye/mind grasps colour, holding tight to perceptual difference. In this hold, so too we are held, colour and body forming a sensuous embrace while we stare with astonishment at the acid yellow of a spider’s vulnerable underbelly.³⁴

Tambopata is home to seventeen distinct ethnolinguistic groups of Indigenous peoples and considered to have some of the planet’s highest levels of terrestrial biodiversity. Like all forests, it is heavy with the weight of their lightest entities: bacteria, fungi, insects. During the rainy seasons, bright yellow-orange fungal polyps appear on the bark of certain trees. Caterpillars arriving to feast on this bounty are accompanied by a mass of ants who offer protection against predation in return for a sweet syrup drummed from a gland on their backs. This affiliation can be called myrmecophily (love of ants), a common mutualism. As a result of this reciprocity, the processes of eating and loving encloses each of these entities within a densely woven pattern of encounter. During the chrysalis

stage, when the caterpillar dissolves into an amorphous mass, the former relays between fungus/caterpillar/ant are digested and assimilated. Following metamorphoses, a butterfly emerges—wings ablaze with sun-bright-orange-orbs, which resemble those of the parasitic fungus it formerly consumed.³⁵ An image of sustenance, an image of home—in which interior experience is externalized, emblematically through closely knit interspecies relationality.³⁶

In 1894, Carlos Fermin Fitzcarrald moved into the region to extract rubber, exploiting many of these groups. Determined to find methods to transport rubber out of the Madre de Dios region, he forced his workers to dismantle and transport a ship over a mountain, an ill-fated undertaking made infamous by Werner Herzog's 1982 film *Fitzcarraldo* and the making-of documentary *Burden of Dreams* directed by Les Blank in the same year.³⁷ When natural resources are extracted, the abundant and complex endemic diversity across all species degrades.

I have told the story of “the butterfly and the yellow polyps” any number of times. On each occasion, I have an itching awareness of the violent exploitative and extractive histories that travel-writing, or, for that matter, institutional field-research often enacts. Some hundred and thirty years after Fitzcarrald, foreigners continue to come to the rainforest to capture and extract both natural resources and other precious capital: medicinal knowledge, psychotropic drugs, photos, spiritual connection, adventure. As I try to navigate the apparent wonder I felt, the many lessons I learned, and the exoticizing gaze I hope to avoid, it is important to count myself among this number. Which is a start, but what then? What follows?

The research centre is located next to the world's largest saltlick, locally called the “collpa”—an exposed clay cliff along the river's bank, whose sodium-rich clay offers numerous species of fauna a space to gather, to eat, and to gossip, which in-turn attracts an international set of tourists, expensive

cameras in-hand. We are there to perceive the spectacularly coloured plumage of the macaws.

Primary colours of blue, yellow, red barking the arrival of each day's morning sun. Dense, tenacious foliage tries to reclaim the cliffs' face, but each year a handful of volunteer researchers and center staff remove the encroaching vines and palm trees. An effort of cross-species co-habitation for mutual benefit.

I read somewhere that people who live in tropical rainforests have different sleep patterns to those who live in colder climates and that, for a variety of reasons, the night seeps into their dreams...whether by way of the deep baying of howler monkeys, the crash of trees struck down by thunderstorms, or the gossip of friends and family living in close proximity. Whatever the reason, the space between sleep and wakefulness, particularly at night, remains thin and so if you want to rest soundly, you do so during the day, when the forest is asleep with heat. I cannot verify if this is true. As someone who has never been a good sleeper; as the weeks passed, I was surprised to find myself able to sleep both at night and during most afternoons. Falling asleep lost its familiar resident anxieties and my dreams attained spectacular intensity.

While my days were spent training my senses to perceive camouflaged wildlife, my field-notes show drawings of the creatures I encountered while sleeping. About a month into our stay, I awoke in the night to the feeling of flying low over a digitized, videogame-like rendering of a riverbed. The landscape was marked with sculptures of mermaids that rested between the formlessness of cybernetic shapes and heaviness of a material like cement or dough. Immediately, Pierre Huyghe's *Untilled (Liegender Frauenakt)* [Reclining Female Nude] (2012) came to mind.³⁸ But more than the forms themselves, I was struck by a sense of identification. I recognized the location.

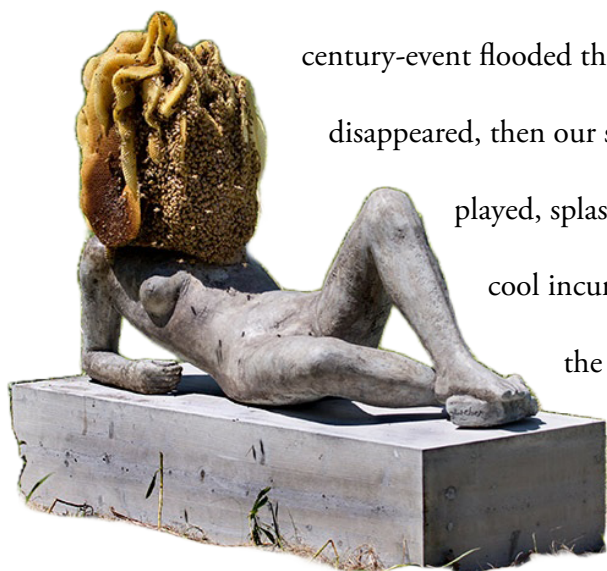
To escape the forest's certain density, I returned each day to the same dried riverbed, which cut through the forest and was covered in a green carpet of what appeared to be marijuana seedlings (which, unfortunately, they were not). Without much



Fig. 15, documentation, *dream-form_mermaid*, 2016.

meaning, other than to feel like I was working towards something, I spent the first month of the residency bringing whatever rocks I could find to the clearing. Hauling turned to sweating and, like the collpa, it became a favourite meeting place for those in search of sweet salty nutrients, namely bees, butterflies, and other insects for whom I knew no proper designation.³⁹ Following the dream, I began assembling the rocks into mermaidish forms, covering their surface in a salt-dough clay made from whatever was at hand, stuff like Gatorade, chewed coca leaves, salt, flour, urine, and the light-sensitive blueish ink of a fruit called “huito,” which I used for those natural-ink tattoos.

By mid-March, the rains came harder and lasted longer. The river overflowed its banks. A once-in-a century-event flooded the forest with an indescribable amount of water. The trails disappeared, then our shoes, our ankles, our knees. At first, as the waters rose, we played, splashing and cajoling each other, delighted by the river's sudden cool incursion. I saw a tarantula, twice the size of my hand, clinging to the research station's stilted foundation and when a colony of ants



floated past, suspended on a plank of wood, protecting their

Fig. 16, *Untilled (Liegender Frauenakt)* [Reclining Female Nude] by Pierre Huyghe, 2012.

gigantic queen and her

eggs in a jumbled mass at its the center, the experience became something else. We hurried to move mattresses and foodstuffs up into the rafters.

The waters slowly subsided. Digging into metres-thick silt and sand, I unearthed my rocks and reassembled the doughy mermaids whose nutrient rich dough soon provided extra sustenance for those insects whose normal food supplies remained buried. Not long after, I left the forest—and the strange sculptures melting back into their surroundings.



Fig. 17, dream-form_mermaid, 2016.

BEDSORES

Nearly a century ago, Virginia Woolf wrote *On Being Ill* (1929), an essay that contends with the question of why, “Considering how common illness is... [it] has not taken its place with love and battle and jealousy among the prime themes of literature.”⁴⁰ Much has changed since 1929. Whole genres of writing have opened critical discourse on disability, disease, and chronic illness. A lineage I find myself within because I too have spent much of my life in bed, on my back, struggling with extended symptoms of endometriosis, a relatively common disease that flares with new medication, changes in diet, stress, who knows.⁴¹

On my worst days, I am caught by pain’s annihilating force. Annihilation is a strong word and I use it literally. In a state of acute pain, I am clutched in an unendurable grasp of abstraction. Every thought vanquished. Only sensation remains.

To describe pain is to offer false comparisons: pain as a wave, pain as an earthquake, pain as an alien entity trying to escape. With pain, both world and words fail.

Elaine Scarry's *The Body in Pain* (1985) describes pain as language-destroying: when "the content of one's world disintegrates, so the content of one's language disintegrates; as the self disintegrates, so that which would express and project the self is robbed of its source and its subject."⁴² Verbal articulations revert to the pre-language of cries and groans. Similarly, Woolf portrays the sufferer who takes "pain in one hand, and a lump of pure sound in the other" *ACK... UGH... OWEY* "so to crush them together that a brand new word in the end drops out...." I hear myself gasping, *AIEEEFUCKINGSHITBALLSMOTHERFUCKER*.⁴³

Weak, tired, and struggling to form thoughts—I tether myself to time through simple mathematical calculations. On average: two or three days of bedrest per month x twelve months x twenty-eight years (my age: forty less twelve and counting). Which comes to more than seventeen thousand hours, more than seven hundred days. Something like two years of my life, gutted. (No wonder my father's madness toppled over the edge of opioid addiction with a pinched nerve.)

Scarry notes, "pain is not "of" or "for" anything—it is itself alone. This objectlessness, the complete absence of referential content, almost prevents it from being rendered in language: objectless, it cannot easily be objectified in any form, material or verbal."⁴⁴ Still, in my longing to return to the world, I picture object-oriented comparisons, however insufficient: nails poking kidneys; flames licking thighs; and knives stabbing organs unknown. If these analogies feel utterly insufficient, why am I so preoccupied by them?

When pain begins to subside, we inhabit a world made physically smaller, more intimate—the earth's crust a mattress, pillows its mountains, woolen plaid blankets some farmers' fields, and sheets a meadow of spring flowers, possibly daisies. The hot pad, a sun.

For Scarry,

The only state that is as anomalous as pain is the imagination. While pain is a state remarkable for being wholly without objects, the imagination is remarkable for being the only state that is wholly its objects. There is in imagining no activity, no “state,” no experienceable condition or felt-occurrence separate from the objects: the only evidence that one is “imagining” is that imaginary objects appear in the mind.⁴⁵

To sum: while pain destroys the world, the imagination remarkably (re)confirms it.

Metaphors do not make pain more comprehensible, or even bearable. Yet, when imagined in relation to an object (like nail, flame, knife), pain’s sensation is *somewhat* substantiated by the world of objects and therefore *almost* disciplined. It takes the shape of something we can *imagine* holding—or nearly so. During this virtual grasping “hold,” a brief reprieve is expressed, and I become aware of my body and its relationship to the world. Pain and the pressure to grapple with it, via both physical and imaginative means, initiates a contact zone between the forces of making and unmaking. (In “Riverbed,” I write of a similar kind of grasping when colour is used to hold onto experiential reality.)

While I find it complicated to express, within this rubric, my relationship to pain has trained my imagination as a sculptor and writer, and this training has allowed me to grapple with the problems of representing that which is difficult to articulate. Like the action of mashing pain with pure sound to make some new word, my artistic practice is an effort of seizing certain obscurities (an abstract thought, a kind of feeling, half-remembered dreams, some elusive site, the transience of social space, the heat of friendship, my mother’s love) then combining them with lumps of easily accessible materials (paper clay, dough, wax, and cloth). Until, like sounds being pushed through stomach and throat across tongue and teeth, the chosen material finds form via efficient sculptural gestures

(pouring, covering, hanging, casting) in relation to supportive structures (chicken-wire, architectural features, found objects, a flower's stem).

Generally, my work follows a consistent naming formula, [*abstract-noun*]-*form*_[*specific-noun*] and

the objects range widely in both form and content. Some are nebulous or

amorphous while others resemble recognizable shapes: buckets,

chairs, t-shirts, slabs of floor, single socks, pairs of shoes,

assorted pillows, varieties of botanicals, even a drawing or

painting. Though, whatever their form, they seem to me caught

between object and experience, barely articulate, only somewhat

comprehensible—lacking possessive claims on individuality.



Fig. 18,
dream-form_cloud,
2020.

As one body of work makes way for another,

those made previously usually melt back into either

their environment or my studio only to reform

again at another time and place, as *something* similar

but *somewhat* different.

Fig. 19,
dream-form_slug, 2020.



In this way, preceding works are both absent from, and present

within, current production. They endure, not in physical form, but

as a way forward. This methodology allows for a sense of growth but also recognition of loss. I can

never return to the feeling of being licked by a butterfly for the first time and was unable to take the

mermaids that found form in Tambopata with me. They would have made no sense outside that

place. Yet, while there is no going back to those weeks of production on the riverbed, there is also no

going back to the time *before* the riverbed. Meaning, I was touched by the change of experience and

so my touch—the ways in which I work with materials—changed as well. To borrow the truism—all bodies, even bodies of artwork, “keep the score.”⁴⁶

CORALBEDS

In Ovid’s *Metamorphosis*, coral is created, quite accidentally, when Perseus (half-mortal, adolescent, proxy-assassin) cradles the freshly shorn head of Medusa in a bed of tender seaweed on a beach somewhere near the Red Sea.

Medusa’s head contains all she is
and ever will be: youthful Medusa,
victim of Poseidon’s desire;
captivating Medusa, target of
Athena’s erroneous wrath; mortal
Medusa, sister of gorgons; hybrid
Medusa, snaky-haired and stone-eyed monster;

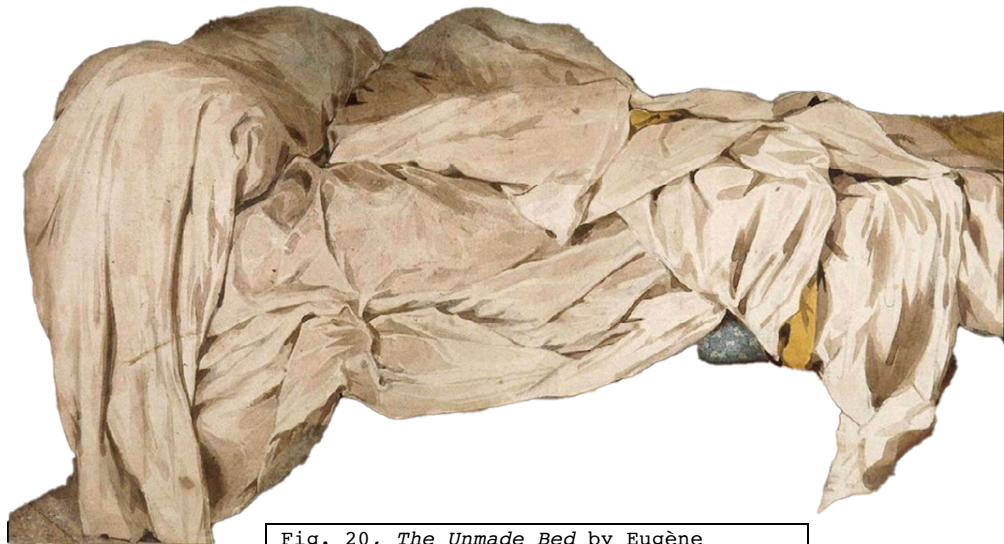


Fig. 20, *The Unmade Bed* by Eugène Delacroix, 1827 — who some say hides the head of Medusa, wrapped in its sheets. I cannot see her.

glamorous Medusa, apotropaic emblem of a gaudy Italian fashion house; mythical Medusa, infantile foil of early twentieth century psychoanalysts; laughing Medusa, icon of feminist revisionism; tentacular Medusa, heroine of earthy retribution.

As blood seeps from the neck of Medusa’s still-open wound, the head’s vital powers of petrification are transferred into soft vegetation, hardening them into stone. Ovid describes the scene, “Touch’d by the head, that softness soon decay’d. / The wonted flexibility quite gone, / The tender scyons harden’d into stone.”⁴⁷ Delighted, nereids playfully throw these newly-made subject-objects to sea establishing the first coral reefs. Brilliant beds of fragile coordination. Like Medusa, coral is contentiously unfixed from genre—is it plant, stone, or animal? As author and artist Celeste

Olalquiaga explains, “The classification of this underwater life-form as an animal was not settled until the eighteenth century, when the accumulated myths around the organism were dispelled, slowly but not always surely.”⁴⁸

Amongst the details of Perseus’ narrative, Ovid’s passage displays rare tenderness. When he “Compos'd Medusa's execrable head,” on a bed of soft seaweed “full of sap,” the young hero exhibits a feeling of care, which contrasts against the epic’s events that trail horrifically behind and loom terribly ahead. With this gentleness, a categorical loosening occurs.

The world—as it is known—turns over. Atoms shift, rearrange, coalesce, ossify; human and non-human assemble; interiority encounters exteriority; destruction collides with construction. In this intimate, haptic exchange, each entity—gorgonic subject and organic object—recognize their role in relation to the other. Momentously, subjecthood and objecthood *hold* tight to each other. Through presence, praxis, and description each entity finds itself *held* within the other’s awareness.⁴⁹

Shimmering coral chimeras materialise, until fugitive creatures inhabiting three categories—flora, fauna, and mineral emerge.

*This infectious holding-together is not a fusion but a valorization, a determinate shaping, conferring a value—that is, a role....there is nothing neutral about “attributing a role to something.” The role you attribute to me drives me crazy.*⁵⁰

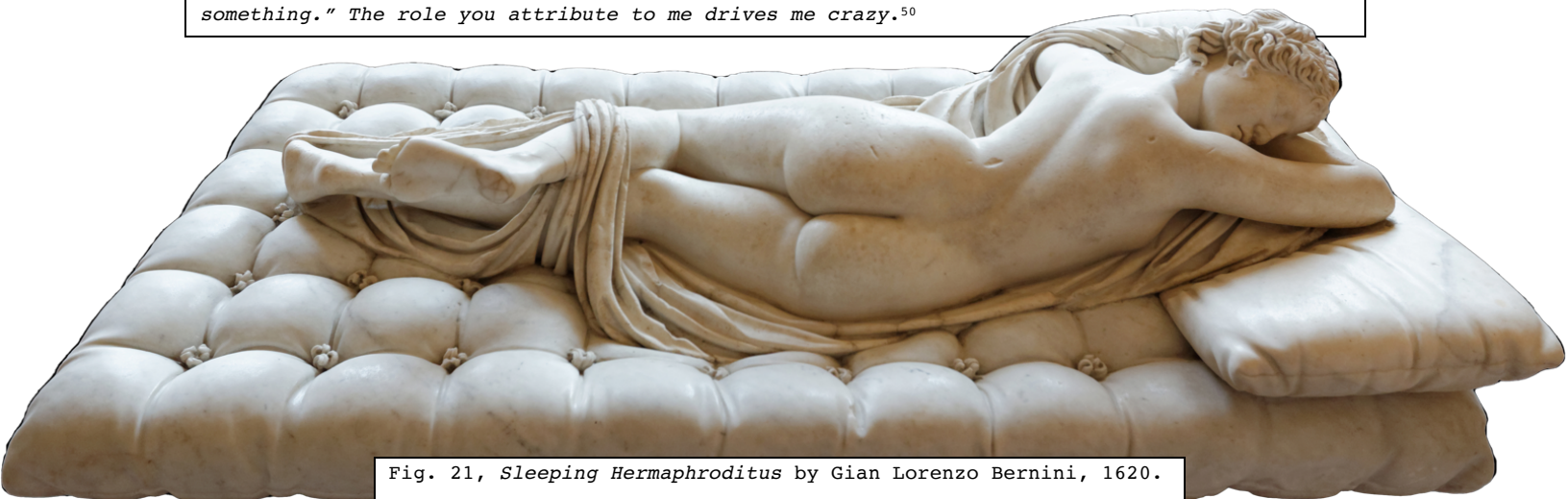


Fig. 21, *Sleeping Hermaphroditus* by Gian Lorenzo Bernini, 1620.

While I continually return to “holding” as a concept, to hold something or someone does not necessarily confer a sense of reassuring touch. The poetic works of Christina Sharpe and Dionne Brand, as well as the collaborative writings of Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, have taught me to keep in mind the awful weight of the Middle Passage, where the act of holding is inescapably tied to

the hold of a slave-ship. As Harney explains, his work with Moten is concerned with the uncertainty that surrounds the holdings of things, the way “hapticality [can be] a kind of touch without surface, that undoes, that saps the fever out of individuation, in a sometimes violent and profane exorcism.”⁵¹ Which is to say, while we may hope to hold each other up and together in forms of comfort and security, we also hold each other back and down in forms of torment and peril.

With this dualistic understanding of holding, I return

Fig. 22, *Das Bett* [The Bed] by Katharina Grosse, 2004.

to coral’s Latin name “*coralium*” and its linkage to “core” or

“kora,” meaning maiden. Tying coral’s origin to the myth of Medusa makes a kind of awful logic because before she becomes a fearsome hybrid entity, she is a girl. A girl who is held (read: overwhelmed/ ravished/ violated/ *raped*) by sea god Poseidon in a temple devoted to goddess Athena. As a result, the powerfully vengeful goddess curses Medusa with serpent hair and a petrifying glare in revenge for the youth’s role in the desecration.⁵³

*Myths are stories about people who become too big for their lives temporarily, so that they crash into other lives or brush against gods. In crisis their souls are visible.*⁵²

When we read Ovid, when we speak to our friends, our nieces, our mothers, our aunts, our femme-kin, we feel our feet press into the fossilized strata of those who came before. Those, who for generations, found themselves petrified, bound and held, within a hybridized three-way. Mineral: to be kept, carried, and traded. Flora: to be preserved, consumed, and prized. Fauna: to be idolized, grieved, acted upon.

Each generation reclaims Medusa to fulfill its particular needs and desires.

Radicals of the French Revolution adopted her as an apotropaic symbol

for their cause (an ironic twist of fate when we consider how they became the decapitator, not the decapitated).

Freud used the myth to articulate women's supposed

castration complex, a theory to which Hélène Cixous laughed away as so-much phallogentric

nonsense. In the 1980s, she became muse for all things wealth, power, elegance, and seduction in the gold-ringed hands of fashion designer Gianni Versace.⁵⁴ More recently, Feminist scholar Donna

Haraway casts the gorgons ("powerful winged chthonic entities without a proper genealogy; their reach is lateral and tentacular; they have no settled lineage and no reliable kind (genre, gender)...")

in a new-networked epic called the Chthulucene.⁵⁵ In this much-needed story, Medusa is both maker

and destroyer, not like a god in the sky but rather as an intrusive, infective event—as a system made

of complex lateral relays in which all her stories enmesh. Medusa the glamorous. Medusa the victim.

Medusa the monster. Medusa the petrifying. And, my favourite, Medusa the order of soft coral



Fig. 23, *Mattress Performance (Carry That Weight)* by Emma Sulkowicz, 2014–2015 – While a senior visual arts student at Columbia University, Sulkowicz carried a fifty-pound mattress in protest of the university's decision not to expel her alleged rapist.

known as Gorgonacea (Gorgon-Ah-Sec-Ah). Imagine: violet sea whips, fans of pale yellow, bushes of mineralized blueberry polyps....

EMBEDDED

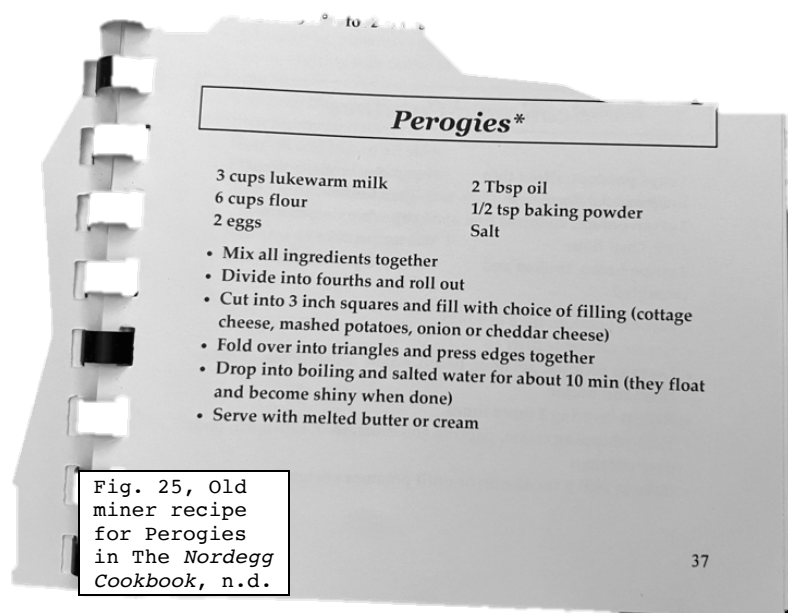
In the spring of 2020, I made pillows. Pillows made from the oils of orange, soybean, coconut, honeycomb, and lavender. Blue vervain, silk, mica, and quite a lot of dirt. Into these forms, I slipped all the stuff that floats in jars, small trays, and the back of drawers: rose petals and broken hair clips, obsolete electronics, safety glass from windows shattered by riots, keys to our first apartment, a few pawprints. We have so much love for these sorts of things and so some special consequence trails behind them, clattering unnecessarily, anachronistically. The emblematic trace of whatever—made more precious by the glint of our attention. The last of their service value held by our interest, still. Attention can feel like obligation, but I was happy to place them cushioned, caught, and protected between soft layers, suspended, out of sight where they will exist separate from the normal run of events. Protected against unforeseen forces.

Fig. 24, *miwwi asleep*, 2021.



Within these forms I recognized the worries of living and working within a world locked in perpetual crisis. When, to write in the present tense, was to wrap one's thoughts in wax, to play waiting games with the future. Will anyone want an art of that time? Actively, silently, collectively, I'm not sure.

To comfort ourselves, we dream the way of objects. Surviving the most mundane of these years by living a twisted definition of change: the rhythm of throwing away old stuff to make room for anything new. Today we bought a new bug screen, tomorrow some yogurt and berries. Metaphors are inescapable; hands analogize the world without consent. I highlight a passage from Édouard Glissant's *Poetics of Relation* (1990), "Internal exile tends towards material comfort, which cannot really distract from anguish."⁵⁶ It is disingenuous to compare my life to the conditions Glissant experienced living within colonized Martinique but nevertheless I copy-paste the line into my quotes folder sensing possible correspondence, waiting for application, a protection against forgetting.



Every few months, I exchange postcards with my cousin Yves. Mine are scribbled; all available space filled densely, chaotically. His are neatly written in a former engineering student's sans-serif print. Occasionally they contain recipes for peach coffecake, family recollections, holiday greetings. More frequently, they

extend a thought carried over from our lengthy, seasonal telephone conversations.

Following a discussion on synchronicities, I send: "nothing fits inside a snake quite so snugly as another snake" from my copy of Mark O'Shea's, *The Book of Snakes* (2018).⁵⁷ He responds with Henri Bergson's, "The present contains nothing more than the past and what is found in the effect was already in the cause"—a passage marking a plaque outside Calgary's City Hall.⁵⁸

Weeks pass and I reply with a line pulled from anthropologist David Graeber and archeologist David Wengrow's *The Dawn of Everything* (2021), "Marx put it best: we make our own history, but not under conditions of our own choosing."⁵⁹

FLOWERBEDS

My mother refused to be sick. Throughout my adolescence I believed this negation to be rooted in her commitment to the labours of caretaking. Whenever she felt on the verge of a cold or flu, a very hot Epson-salt bath was followed by a tight wrap of flannel sheets and an early bedtime. She called it sweating out the diss-ease. I thought of it as her cocoon. A cocoon from which she would invariably emerge healthy and unconcerned. Often singing. (To my perpetual annoyance.)

In summer 2022 I visited the exhibition *Powerful Glow* at the Kitchener Waterloo Art Gallery (KWAG) organized by Lisa Myers, an Anishinaabe artist, curator, and educator. I was there to see *Touched by the Tears of a Butterfly* (1995), a video installation by the

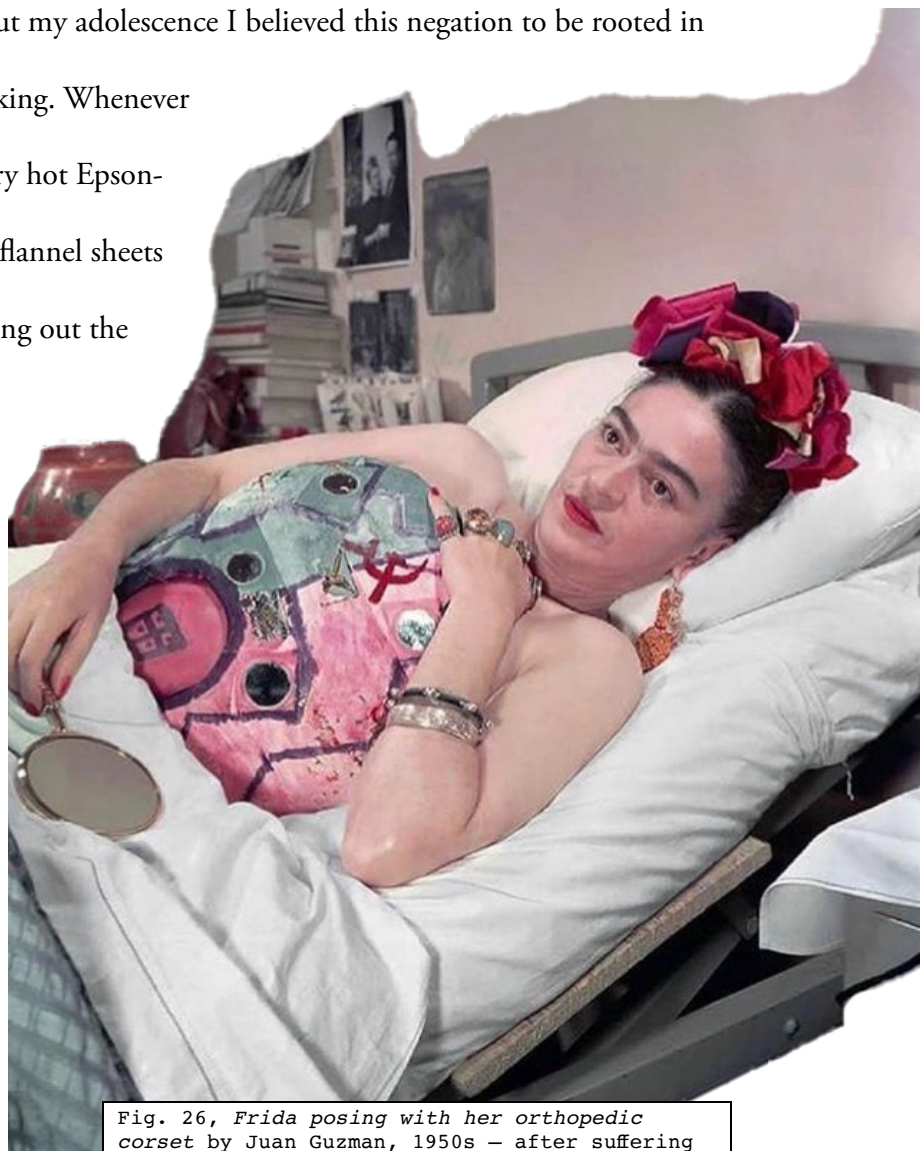


Fig. 26, Frida posing with her orthopedic corset by Juan Guzman, 1950s – after suffering a debilitating injury from a streetcar accident when she was eighteen years old, Frida Kahlo wore plaster corsets to support her spine for most of her life. She covered them with drawings of tigers and monkeys, birds and communist symbols. Kahlo once remarked that “they thought I was a surrealist, but I wasn't. I never painted dreams. I painted my own reality.”

late Mi'kmaw/Beothuk artist, Mike MacDonald (1941-2006).

The silent, 14-minute video was projected onto a silk scrim fluttering in the breeze of an air ionizer

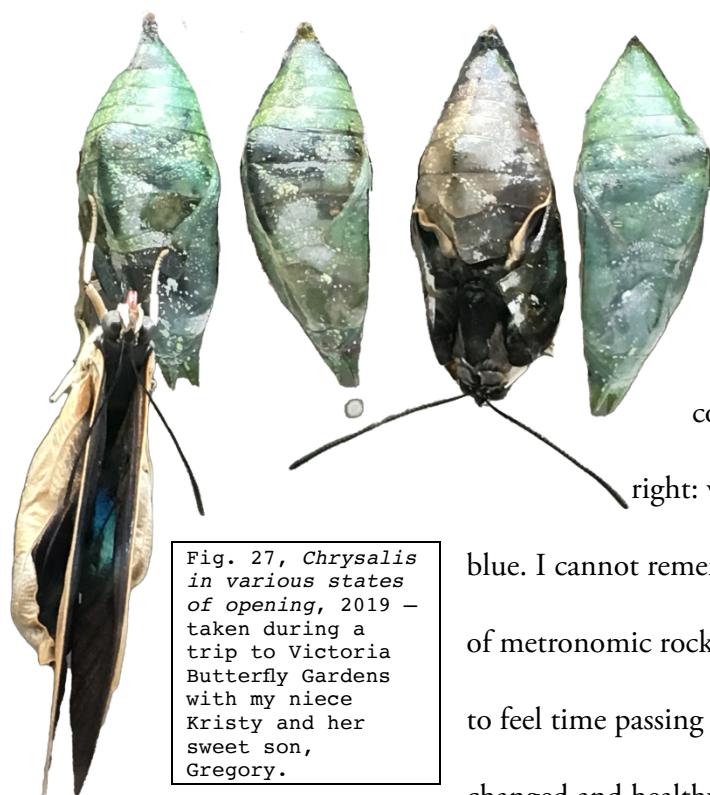


Fig. 27, *Chrysalis in various states of opening*, 2019 – taken during a trip to Victoria Butterfly Gardens with my niece Kristy and her sweet son, Gregory.

and featured a Monarch butterfly emerging from a chrysalis among other scenes from its life cycle. Seven rocking chairs surrounded the projection, each painted a colour

corresponding to the SMPTE colour bar, from left to

right: white or gray, yellow, cyan, green, magenta, red, and

blue. I cannot remember the chair I chose, but I do recall the sensation of metronomic rocking. A durative back and forth rhythm from which to feel time passing while watching a body become something other; changed and healthy, life as a site of transformation.

MacDonald spent much of the late 1980s and early 1990s recording testimony and creating visual documents for the Gitksan and Wetsuwet'en Nations during their land claim challenges.

While documenting the threat of clear-cut logging in Kitwanga, British Columbia, he was deeply touched by his conversations with Indigenous elders linking butterflies to healing practices. His 1996 artist statement for Grunt Gallery in Vancouver describes learning that butterflies are the spirits of medicine people who have passed on.⁶⁰ During this period, he came to understand that when we pay close attention, butterflies can lead us to the medicinal plants we need—a transfer of knowledge later corroborated by his library of ethnobotany texts and close field study. Following this experience, MacDonald spent the years between 1995 and 2003 travelling back

and forth across Canada planting and tending a series of artworks called *Medicine and Butterfly Gardens*.

In advance of *Powerful Glow*, Myers initiated *Planting one Another*, a twin re-planting of MacDonald's two *Gardens* cared for by organizations situated within the Haldimand Tract, the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery and the Woodland Cultural Centre—the latter being one of MacDonald's original garden sites. Each work was composed with regionally specific native plants, alongside at least one non-native species, a plant which had become incorporated into the local ecology for its multiple use values. In the garden outside the KWAG, this meant that goldenrods, asters, milkweeds, and wild strawberries were planted alongside common hops. Hops, with their tenacious spiky rhizomatic vines, requires a strong supportive trellis on which to grow, a quality which added an architectural element to the project. As an invasive plant, it steals light from the other plants and can therefore easily be analogized with the English settlers who introduced it. And yet, since butterflies have chosen to lay their eggs on it, it was included—for as the learning material produced by the gallery suggests, the plants of the garden seemed to be “coexisting peacefully just as we do most of the time.”⁶¹

Like many artists, I first encountered one of MacDonald's *Medicine and Butterfly Gardens* while on residency at the Banff Centre where it is cared for by curatorial staff of the Walter Phillips Gallery as an important component of their permanent collection.⁶² Myers, who has written and spoken extensively on MacDonald's gardens, discusses the complex positions they activate—first, as remediation projects, instigated by the reintroduction of native plants and insects, and, further, as spaces for contemplation that re-inscribe the “symbolic and material tensions and pressures that collide between Indigenous knowledge systems and extractive industries.” In her 2021 talk at

McMaster University, *Collective Remembering Mike MacDonald's Medicine and Butterfly Gardens*,

Myers emphasises that “for museums, having a garden as an artwork, demands care of the land outside the gallery and deeper acknowledgement by the gallery of the land on which it stands.”⁶³

Many cultures position butterflies as powerful signs of transformation and vitality of spirit. I find it touching that we have chosen a creature whose fragile symmetry mirrors the movement of our own two-lungs, inhaling and exhaling, fluttering against invisible currents.

Death took my mother's body slowly. Symptoms began as a numbness in her toes, which turned the spring of her step into a shuffle. Tripping became frequent and she experienced both a new weakness and unfamiliar awkwardness. Recounting this process, I find myself groping for a description that provokes an image of the grounded, leggy caterpillar slowly shedding its earth-bound form. Though, actually, the deterioration was an unbearable embarrassment to her sense of self. She who had rarely experienced sickness could no longer recognize this body transformed by an illness she could not see. Some eighteen months after being diagnosis with ALS, the disease reached her chest.

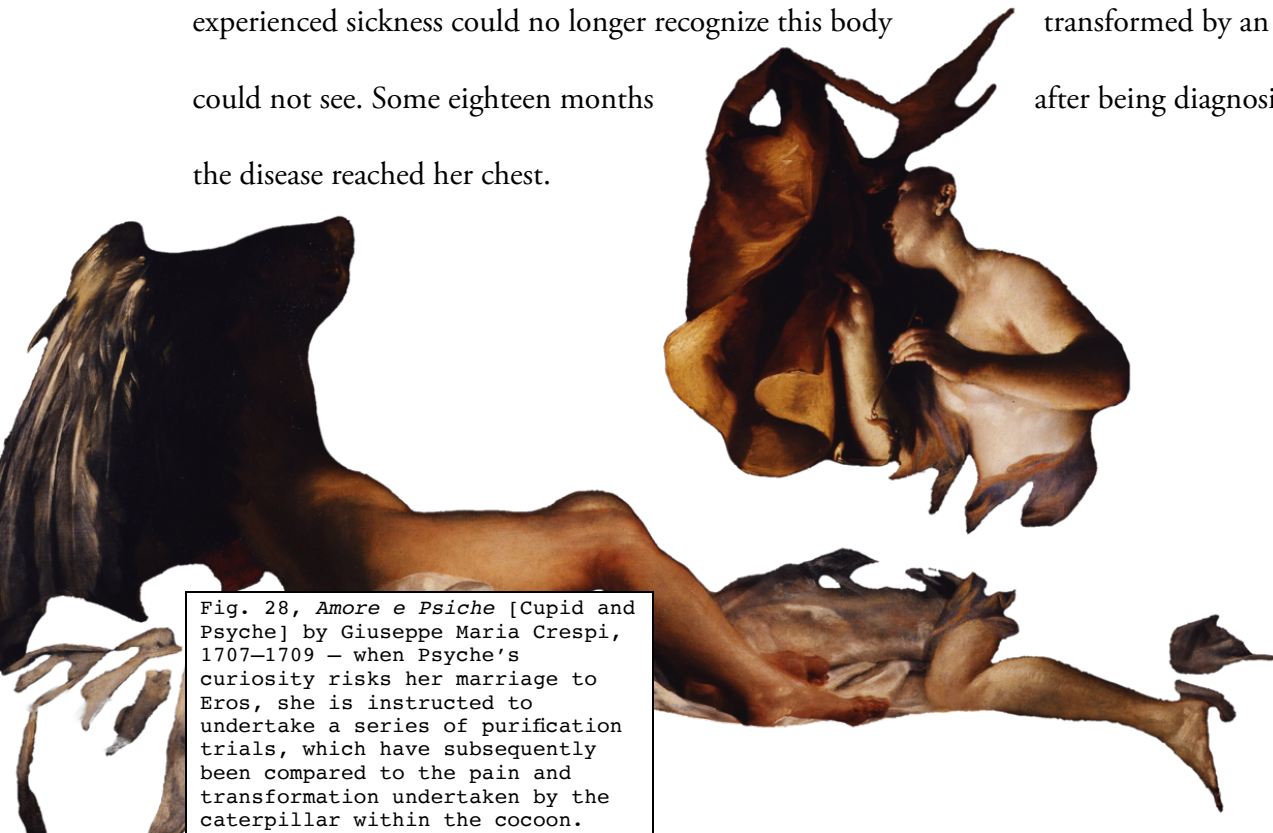


Fig. 28, *Amore e Psiche* [Cupid and Psyche] by Giuseppe Maria Crespi, 1707–1709 – when Psyche's curiosity risks her marriage to Eros, she is instructed to undertake a series of purification trials, which have subsequently been compared to the pain and transformation undertaken by the caterpillar within the cocoon.

It was her breath that failed.

On a warm Tuesday afternoon, I accompanied her to Royal Jubilee hospital to be fitted for a BiPap-like machine to increase her oxygen supply. The walls of her lungs proved too weak for the device and the shock of initial use caused something like cardiac arrest and temporary loss of consciousness.

After revitalization by the nursing staff, I spent the hours between eight pm and five am persuading her to breathe—singing variations of *You are my sunshine, my only*

sunshine... The other night dear as I lay sleeping,

I dreamed the angels called your name... and

Aba daba daba daba daba daba daba said

the monkey to the chimp, All night long,

they'd chatter away, All day long they

were happy and gay... each a special

soundtrack to my childhood.

She came back to us for three days.

Until, when, on Friday evening, after long hours spent admiring the flowers of mid-June, eating waffles, with fresh strawberries, and maple syrup with her many several grandchildren, she died. Surrounded by three of her children and two of our partners, all of us wrapped tight in the warmed flannel blankets these wings provide.

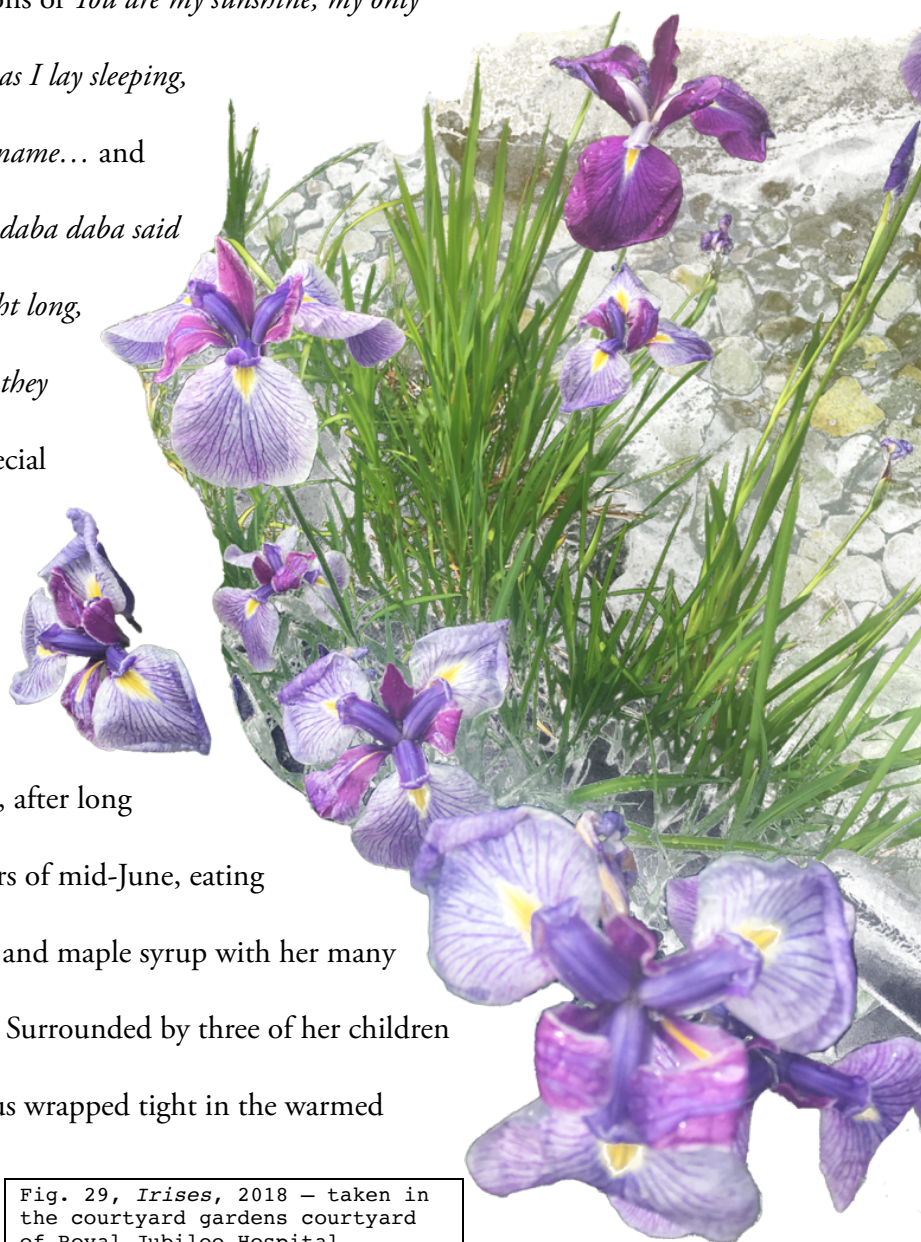


Fig. 29, *Irises*, 2018 — taken in the courtyard gardens courtyard of Royal Jubilee Hospital, Victoria.

DREAMBEDS

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic shocked the world into taking a collective pause, a breath. Suddenly, it seemed everything had been touched by change. I didn't take much notice until shelves normally stocked with rice and pasta were laid bare. The ensuing upheavals seemed—*seem*—inevitable. We were surprised that we were not surprised. Some disasters rose to the surface of attention, calling us out and onto the street. Others remained concealed, harder to identify and acknowledge. These crises bubbled under-skin, underground, absorbed by our unconscious, collective and otherwise in the folds of our mind where the interior and private muddles with the exterior and public.



Fig. 30, A Tlingit shaman's dance apron, which according to its original collector, depicts a mosquito from the shaman's dream, made sometime before 1908.

For those of us whose privileges tucked us safely inside, prior patterns of activity were gratefully undone. Within this break/down we experienced relief from cycles of overwork and lives defined by

toxic consumption. Without the hustle and bustle, we felt a soggy sense of gratitude for the ones we love and ached for those lost or faraway. We felt lonely. We paid attention to our dreams.

On 11 March 2021, marking one-year from the start of the pandemic, poet Dionne Brand presented York University's Kitty Lundy Memorial Lecture, "What we saw. What we made. When we emerge." Reflecting on the year's events, Brand notes that for a time, "We had a glimpse of a possible world with brilliant thinking, about redistribution of wealth—but then it retreated. [Those in charge] offered us ways of going backward to our old lives and they scaled our desires for that going backwards." Arguing how, glossed with nostalgia, a turn towards the past imposes limitations on the individual-urge for collective-change. Nevertheless, in this year of unknowns, Brand stresses: "We *made* new thoughts. We *dreamed* ourselves into different relations. We *acted* as if in different relations." With lives altered, we had to take care—of ourselves, of one another. Communities of mutual aid rapidly developed. We perceived, we understood, that on a profound level, "We won't go back. We can't go back."

Fig. 31, *Talking Pillow* by Laurie Anderson, 1977–1997 – a pillow with a speaker plays a recording of Anderson's voice. One listener heard song lyrics to Anderson's 1993 song "Tightrope."

"I am walking on a tight rope.
Backwards and Forwards.
Backwards and Forwards.
All my family is around me.
If I fall I will crush them
...
A very thin line.
A line that is made by my
blood."



Where the personal meets the political, we dreamed that change was necessary, even possible.⁶⁴

Dreaming, as a psychic phenomenon, has spawned so many theories. In an appendix to multimedia artist Laurie Anderson's *Nightlife* (2006)—a bookwork composed of digital drawings created directly upon waking—she asks,

Do we dream to remember? To forget? To rehearse?... Maybe dreams are the secret language of the body. The body which has been silent all day talks to us all night in its private language of images, puns, gossip, memories, dire predictions, fables, and stories. Where do these come from? What are they really? Some deep well of endlessly firing circuits? Random information? Noise? The body talking to the mind?⁶⁵

As I discuss in “Riverbeds” and “Bedhead,” sleep has long been a source of personal anxiety—but as 2020 turned to 2021 and Toronto remained in lockdown, I stayed in bed suffering from a shift in medication for a chronic health condition. Pain has the capacity to enclose one's physical world into a space made very small: the size of a heating pad, a throbbing organ, the needle's point (see: “Bedsore.”) By dipping in and out of consciousness, my dreamworld expanded in ultra-vivid directions and I found an existence less bounded by singular form, less constrained by a body's agonies and tedium.

Fig. 32, found image of three cats tucked into bed.



All night everyone in my dreams, no matter what they looked like, spoke with the voice and cadence of Barack Obama.

In a communal bid for escape, I initiated *The Milk of Dreams Club* for a handful of close friends on the ultra-

encrypted messaging service Telegram, an app we used alongside insurgent revolutionaries on both extremes of the political spectrum. We shared voice memos, daily tarot cards, and short written descriptions. Waking up gained new emphasis, both to reveal the night's adventures but also to listen, rapt with interest, to each other's intimate meanderings. For the next few months, crawling into each other's dreamlives resembled a stand-in for physical presence, a proxy-feeling for the embodied

After waking up yesterday from my hovering dream found that a decidua cast of my uterus had fallen out during the night and i think those two events are related

closeness we
dearly missed.⁶⁶

Coincidentally, the Spring 2019–Winter 2020 issue of *Cabinet Magazine* arrived, guest edited by dream-scholar Matthew Spellberg whose feature essay, *On Dream Sharing and Its Purpose*, examines practices of dreaming outside modern Western cultures. Within the societies Spellberg looks towards—including Aboriginal Peoples of Australia,

Met up with Close friend who turned away from art 10 years ago and they had picked up their practice like no time had elapsed. We walked down the street arm in arm so happy, went to a bar, bought and smoked joints. Had a great youthful time like all of a sudden we'd just arrived back in our twenties living it up. Later on went back to the bar and the manager/owner was like oh you forgot these here the other day and it was a stack of essays i had been marking and i was altogether relieved, mortified, and 38 again.

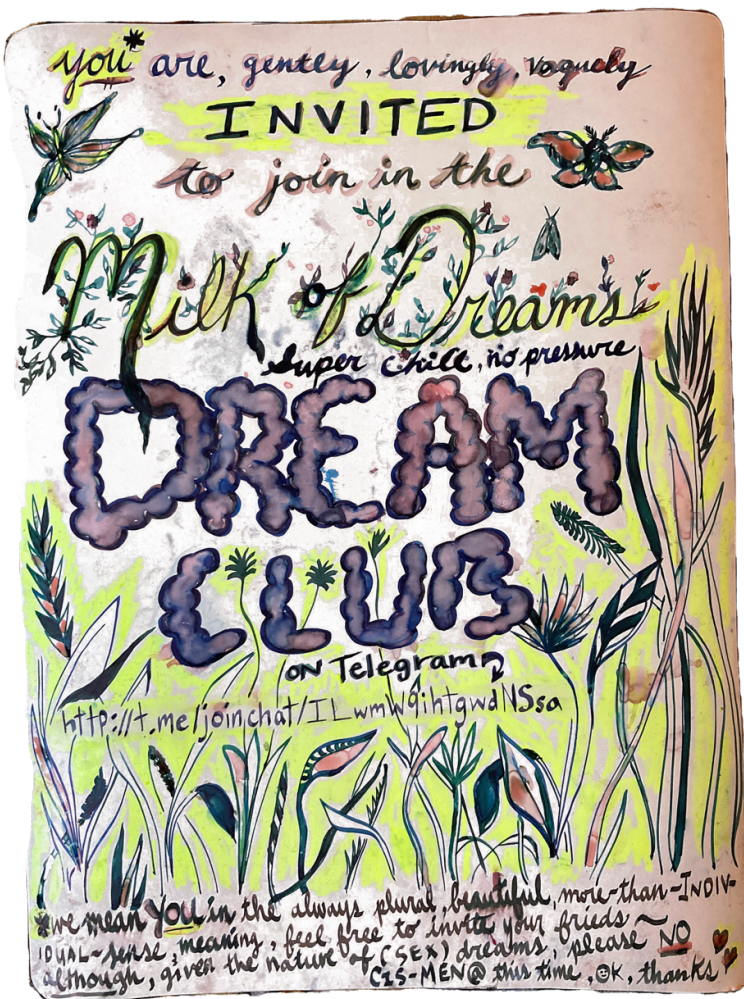


Fig. 33, Milk of Dreams Club Poster, 2021.

Dené People, Pintupi of the Western Desert, and Ongees of the Andaman Islands, among others—

diverse practices of dream sharing offer regular renegotiation of “the social contract of sensuous imagining, the set of images and emotions and unseen realities that govern, even more than abstract ideas, an individual’s relationship to society and to the cosmos.” Within these knowledge-systems, dream-life and waking-life are relational planes of existence, both “interpenetratable and complementary.”⁶⁷ By repositioning dreams as sensuously social activity, they function more as subtle and sophisticated artistic practices than involuntary, private experience.

Trying to soak in as much information as possible, my bed became littered with dozens of books on dreams and sleep. Roaming through the material without linear or disciplinary frame, I read for pleasure and casual curiosity. The next several paragraphs provide a selective historiography for the bibliography which slowly accrued around me.

In my well-thumbed copy of classicist Anne Carson’s *Decreation* (2006), her essay “Every Exit is an Entrance (A Praise of Sleep)” weaves personal memory with a comparative study of sleep across Western literature including works by Aristotle and Kant; Keats and Bishop; Asklepios and Lacan; Woolf and Homer; Shepard and Plato. As her title suggests, Carson honours sleep, both the place it holds in daily life and in the aesthetic imaginary.⁶⁸

Science fiction author Ursula K. Le Guin’s *The Lathe of Heaven* (1971), a fictional record of a man who can “dream effectively.” This ability allows him to change both past and present waking reality, alterations which include death of a predatory aunt; remodelling of his physical environment (paintings, offices, buildings); elimination of skin-tone differentiation; eradication of the world’s overpopulation problems through the advent of plagues; and fantastically, commencement of extra-planetary war as an alternative to intra-planetary war.⁶⁹

Philosopher Henri Bergson's *Dreams* (1914), an outline of the psychological function of dreamlife within a theoretical framework that understands the unconscious as a storehouse of memories, which have a life and purpose of their own.⁷⁰ Unlike Sigmund Freud, whose theories on the interpretative potential of dreams are well known, Bergson describes dreams as a "bizarre assemblage of images which present no plausible significance," for which our intelligence, trying to fill the lacunæ, seeks an explanation.⁷¹ (I expand upon Bergson's theories in "Bedhead.")

Professor of Information & Media Studies Sharon Sliwinski's *Dreaming in Dark Times: Six Exercises in Political Thought* (2017), a provocative portrayal of historically significant case studies (Nelson Mandela, Wilfred Owen, Lee Miller, Franz Fanon, and others), which argues for the social and political importance of dreams through their capacity to articulate the stuff of human experience that would otherwise remain illegible, unspeakable, and indescribable.⁷²

Artemidorus' *Oneirocritica* [The Interpretation of Dreams], a second-century AD account of dream interpretation incorporating an exhaustive study of oneirological literature; ethnographic testimonials of dream-fulfillments; and consultations with oral dream interpreters across cities in what have become present day Greece, Italy, and Anatolia (Turkey). Artemidorus distinguishes between "enhyption" as dream material related to a present state of affairs and "oneiros" as future oriented revelations, which are then split between "theorematic" (direct) and "allegorical" (indirect) dreams.⁷³

Sleep Scientist Rosalind D. Cartwright's *The Twenty-Four Hour Mind* (2010), a dramatic



Fig. 34, found image of young woman and cat with an impressive bed/work set-up.

account of neurological conditions like somnambulism, which generally inhibit restful sleep and occasionally result in events much worse—like the terrifying story of a woman being murdered by her sleepwalking husband. Through several case studies, Cartwright develops a well-researched theory that the mind never fully “turns-off.”⁷⁴ A statement that seems intuitively evident, but which has proven difficult to assess through lab-tests

Artist Jenny Odell’s *How to Do Nothing* (2019), a descriptive critique of the “attention economy” and toxicities associated with twenty-four/seven data productivity. While Odell’s aim is to dismantle capitalist narratives of efficiency and techno-determinism, hers is not a directive to “do nothing” in a literal sense. Rather, the text offers a field guide for redefining and reimagining our relationship to production and consumption, which, hand-in-hand, has the potential to change our position to the world and fellow-inhabitants.⁷⁵

Art critic Jonathan Crary’s *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep* (2013), an analysis of the consequences of unrelenting global capitalist extractivism against a backdrop of strategic state-led control and surveillance. By drawing attention to how terms and phrases (i.e., illumination, enlightenment, wokeness, social awakenings) rely on light/dark binaries and why they become either invoked or assimilated, Crary exposes how the logic of capitalism requires constant growth and change—requirements at odds with the “scandalous reminder that we live according to diurnal, earthly cycles,” which call for periods of rest, sleep, dormancy, and regeneration. As a result, erosion of sleep and the homogenizing effects of a twenty-four-hour schedule result in extreme methods of dispossession of self by external forces, turning the individual into a site of non-stop consumption and scrutiny. Beyond individual ramifications, Crary contends that further emphasis on sleep could

help reinscribe social bonds, for, in the vulnerable state of sleep, “the sleeper inhabits a world in common, a shared enactment of withdrawal from the calamitous nullity and waste of 24/7 praxis.”⁷⁶

Activist, writer, and artist Tricia Hersey’s *Rest is Resistance: A Manifesto* (2022), a framework for resistance and disruption that centers rest as a social and racial justice imperative.⁷⁷ Applying a combination of political, spiritual, and physiological perspectives, Hersey provides a comprehensive systems-based understanding of the social ramifications of grind culture, capitalism, and white supremacy within the long durée of slavery and colonization. Rooted in radical onto-epistemologies of Black and Indigenous futurities/traditions, Hersey outlines how the movement’s motivating forces counteract deep grief, fatigue, and trauma within bodies racialized and dehumanized by the violent spectrum of white supremacy. The text locates the cause of these concerns as a multi-spectral accumulation, which include: many public health crises inequitably affecting BIPOC communities; unique forms of stress which have arisen from accelerated archaeologies of social media with its incumbent, participatory pressures to create

consistent personal
brands; and an

Fig. 35, *Black Power Naps: La Biblioteca is Open* by Navild Acosta and Sosa, 2023 – an interactive project presented at MoMA in New York in which visitors were invited to rest on plush polychrome pillows and communal beds to take some downtime from the fatigues of looking at art, while considering that “Black people in the United States are twice as likely to get insufficient sleep compared with white people.” A sleep-gap worsened for “those who are undocumented, disabled, or at lower income levels.” Responding to these concerns, the artists ask, “How can we dream when we don’t sleep?”



understanding of late stage capitalism that relies upon extractive economies of labour and attention, which disproportionately affect the health and wellbeing of Black people, leading to burn out, weakening of community ties, and even premature or early death.⁷⁸

Writer Maurice Blanchot's essay, *Dreaming, Writing* (1971), published as an introduction to Michel Leiris' autobiographical dream collection, *Nights as Day, Days as Night* (*Nuits sans nuit et quelques jours sans jour*) uses Leiris' writing as backdrop to explore the creatively intimate relationship between acts of dreaming and processes of written recollection, explaining: "These were once dreams, they are now signs of poetry."⁷⁹

Psychoanalyst Salomon Resnik's *The Theatre of the Dream* (1987), a theory of dreaming that combines the work of Sigmund Freud, Melanie Klein, and Matte Blanco, with linguistics and art history to consider dreams as theatrical re-creations of unconscious activities. Describing the world of dreams as a multidimensional "living forest in which fantasy dwells in a state of riddle," Resnik suggests "actors of a dream" move in theatrical

space-time where the landscape

resembles something like a

Greek chorus.⁸⁰ Upon

waking, the person who

recounts the dream functions as a

theatrical director, rearranging the dream into a (nearly)

comprehensible narrative. In turn, this narrative draws upon the entire day's

perceptual and imaginative experiences as preparatory

material for the dreamer, who, upon sleeping, rearranges it

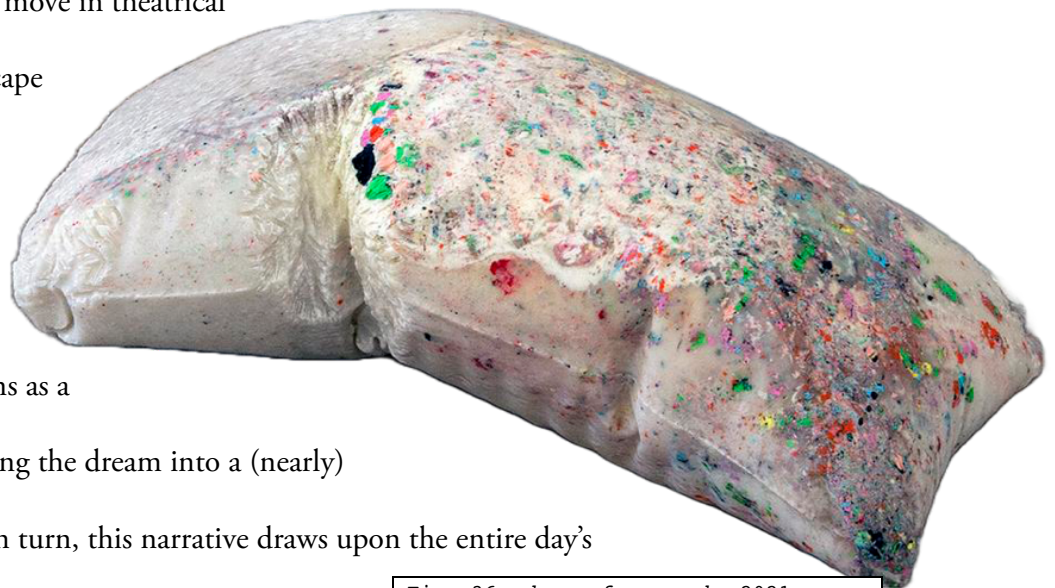


Fig. 36, *dream-form_mask*, 2021 – an eye-pillow sized cast, made from soy wax, coconut wax, and oil pastels. Mice nibbled the work during my absence from the studio for several weeks.

into a (seemingly, less) comprehensible narrative. Here, both dreaming and waking-states become permeable spheres of existence.⁸¹

Feminist writer and literary theorist Hélène Cixous' "The School of Dreams" in *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing* (1993), a detailed set of observations on the fundamental role dreams play in literary inspiration and output—with the other steps being "The School of the Dead" and "The School of Roots." The text is grounded in Cixous' establishment of *Écriture féminine*—a feminist theoretical and literary approach to writing which challenges patriarchal structures in language and text by offering a counter-discourse that gives expression to women's possibly unique perspectives and experiences. Across several distinct passages describing scenes of literary dreaming, Cixous positions dreaming as acts of wandering or travelling—opportunities to explore interior depths of meaning, explaining, "Dreams remind us that there is a treasure locked away somewhere, and writing is the means to try and approach the treasure. And as we know, the treasure is in the searching, not the finding."⁸²

Sei Shōnagon's *The Pillow Book* [枕草子, Makura no Sōshi], a collection of poems, short descriptive passages, lists, and anecdotes that span a wide range of themes. Written at the height of Heian culture in eleventh-century Japan while Shōnagon was lady in waiting to Empress Consort Teishi, the multifaceted text forms a detailed and intimate view into the daily practices of court life, particularly the cloistered lives of women. The book's title can be traced to two encounters—first, after receiving several notebooks for which she has no need, the Empress gives them to Shōnagon, so that she might make a "pillow of them" and later, after accidentally leaving the text on a cushion, it is stolen by a visiting male guest despite her pleas for its return.⁸³

May 1975

~~You~~ dreamt you could walk again.
We were in bed, as usual. ~~I dreamt you could walk again.~~
~~It was difficult. I was here on our bed on the floor.~~
You dragged yourself onto the rug... stretched out both legs.
Spasms began, your paws twitched, you opened your mouth --
gripping the rug with your front claws, pushing with your
back legs... your body shook.

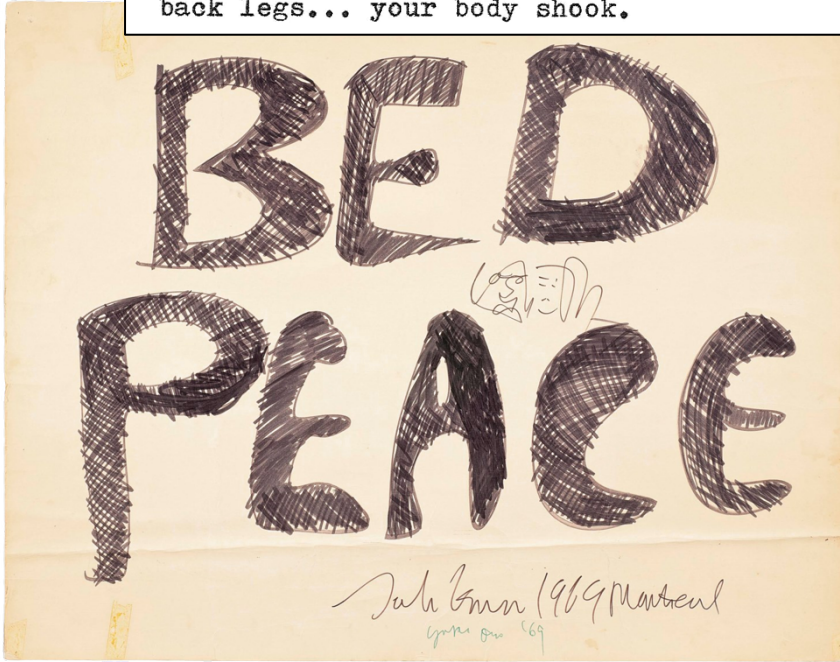
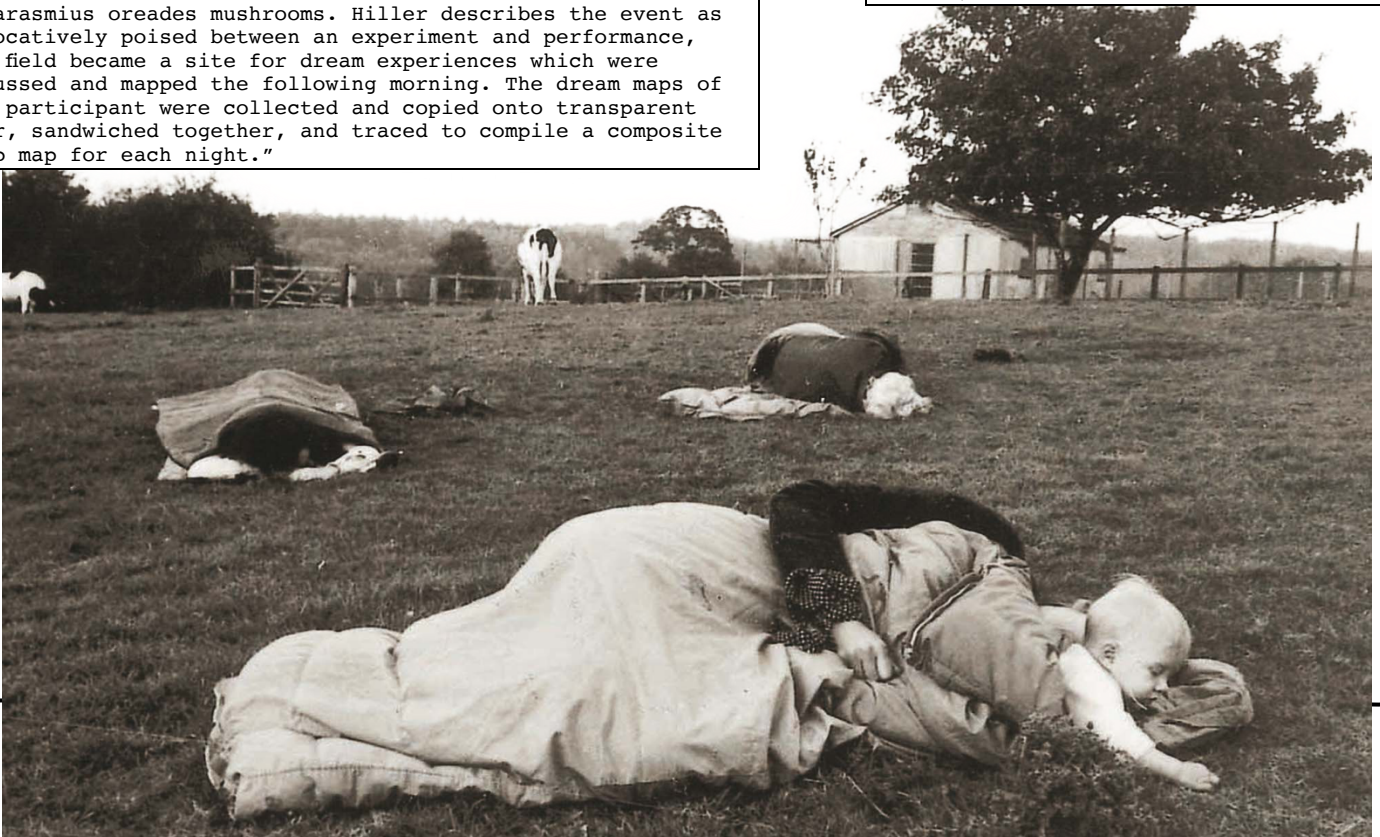


Fig. 37, *You dreamt you could walk again* by Carolee Schneemann, 1975 – fragment from “The Kitch Portfolio,” 2015. In a journal entry Schneemann recounts a dream about her life-long collaborator, Kitch, an eighteen-year-old cat. After writing “I dreamt you could walk again,” she crosses out “I,” replacing it with “You”– “You dreamt you could walk again.” Blurring human/cat boundaries, Schneeman offers a tender and beautiful insight into the other beings who permeate our unconscious.

Fig. 39, *Dream Mapping* by Susan Hiller, 1973 – an art event in an English meadow composed of seven dreamers who slept for three nights inside naturally occurring “fairy rings” formed by *Marasmius oreades* mushrooms. Hiller describes the event as provocatively poised between an experiment and performance, “The field became a site for dream experiences which were discussed and mapped the following morning. The dream maps of each participant were collected and copied onto transparent paper, sandwiched together, and traced to compile a composite group map for each night.”

Fig. 38, *Bed Peace* by John Lennon and Yoko Ono, 1969 – sign made during their 1969 event “Bed-in for Peace” at Montreal’s Queen Elizabeth Hotel, a week-long non-violent protest, May 26–June 1, 1969.



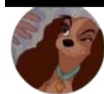
As all this reference material accumulated, the subject of dreams, what I had originally believed a peripheral distraction, began to migrate to the center of my attention. And, when, overnight, we all started using the term “sleep hygiene” and sharing anti grind-culture memes, it became clear

that I was riding a wave of collective interest in rest, sleep, and

dreams that marked the first two years of the pandemic.⁸⁴ Across 2020 to 2022 thousands of think pieces and scholarly journals attest to increased interest in dream activity. According to a Google

Scholar search conducted on May 19, 2023, there are approximately 17,100 articles available on “Covid Dreaming.” High profile articles in *The New York Times* ask, “Why Am I Having Weird Dreams Lately?” (13 April 2020) and “Did Covid Change How We Dream?” (4 November 2021).⁸⁵ With this glut of ever-accumulating material, I wondered, what are the conditions of our curiosity? Why this impulse to theorize those parts of our existence which are so deliciously wild and private?

*...from dream to dream you wake up more and more conscious, more and more woman. The more you let yourself dream, the more you let yourself be worked through, the more you let yourself be disturbed, pursued, threatened, loved, the more you write, the more you escape the censor, the more the woman in you is affirmed, discovered, and invented.*⁸⁶



Charlotte Shane
@CharoShane

Anti work icon, Comrade Sugar



jim rose circus · @jimrosecircus1 · 10h

Meet Sugar, she doesn't like to be ridden. If Sugar is approached with a saddle she lyes down and pretends to be asleep. Sugar refuses to open her eyes until the riders leave.



Fig. 40, Screenshot of “Comrade Sugar” meme by @jimrosecircus1, reposted by @CharoShane, reposted by @syrusmarcus, 2021.

Could it be a kind of hubris—this desire to take knowledge from the unconscious and expose it to the cold light of interpretation and technique?⁸⁷ Isn't the spooky weirdness of dreams what gives them

form, function, and interest? A relief from the labour of common sense? Where logic is an obstacle?

A land where time slips, the laws of physics unmade, and everything a version of our stranger-selves?

When we attempt to mediate and grasp the sensibilities of our dreams, are we engaged in an insolent pursuit of unspeakable thoughts better left unspoken?

By applying reason's propensity for dissection to material that is either emotionally undigested or actively barred from consciousness, what is our

The person who dreams turns away from the person who sleeps; the dreamer is not the sleeper: at times dreaming that he is not dreaming and therefore that he is not sleeping; at times dreaming that he is dreaming...flight into inner dream...⁸⁸

aim? What do we hope to gain? With these questions buzzing around my perpetually tired mind, I returned to advice given by Le Guin's character Estraven in *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1987), "To learn which questions are unanswerable and not to answer them. This skill is most needful in times of stress and darkness."⁸⁹

To depict a dream with words hardly brings a reader close to its mysterious reality, however, as the intense intimacy cultivated by my dream club attests, a search for shared meaning as to the act of dreaming, particularly when coupled with a desire to communicate one's strange encounters in the

unconscious, seems unavoidably potent. Perhaps this urge stems from a curiosity into a dream's elusive *beingness*. Like Bergson, I have little interest in dream interpretation that applies a symbolic or universalist model of analysis, however as Blanchot

reasons, "We recount our dreams...to render them more real..." to take some possession of the "eccentric being" who was us over the course of the

night.⁹⁰ A being with whom we

are wholly intimate—for who else but our own self occupies the dreams we dream—and yet remains uncannily estranged.

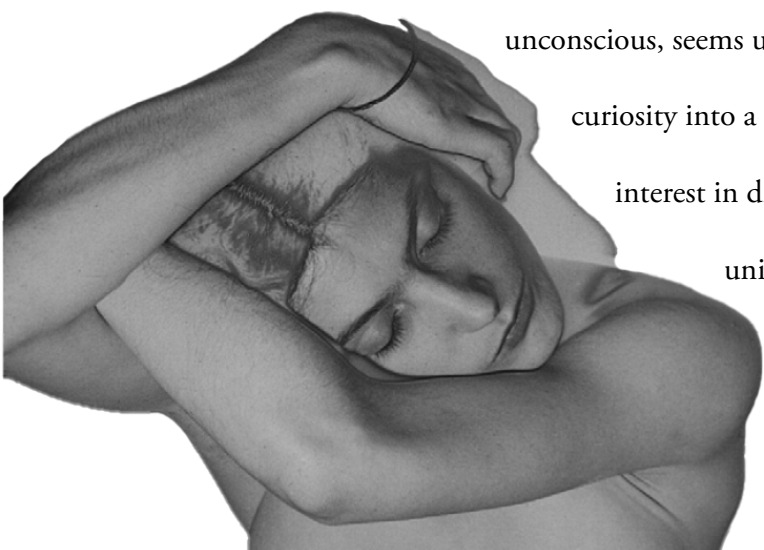


Fig. 41, *Sleeping Woman* by Man Ray (Emmanuel Radnitzky), 1929.

*I am lying in bed exactly as I would in reality, except that my forehead is pressed against the white powdery wall of a large cylinder made of lime, a cistern of sorts, exactly my height, and which is nothing other than myself, actualized and exteriorized. I feel this other exterior forehead pressing against my own, and thus I imagine my head is pressing against the very substance of my mind.*⁹¹

Whatever uncertainties we may feel towards this being (a being with uncomfortable desires and low-impulse control, who is wholly incapable of writing legibly and exhibits a weak grasp of colour), the urge to recount our/their unconscious activities draws upon a yearning to exteriorize our innermost privacies, even if just to ourselves. Whoever this may be. Since, as Blanchot simply reveals, “we are proud of them”—both the weirdness of the dreams, and the audacity of our dreaming-self—such that we are “filled with the naïve pride that might befit authors.”⁹² Thus, by refusing responsibility for the decisions of our dreaming-self, we convince ourselves that dreams are an act of original creation, like an imaginative novella, or surrealist theatrical production. So that, into our diaries, we pour all the juicy and outlandish dramas of the night before, when as outsider, spectator, or gentle intruder, we walked around our own private dreamlands: directing, inventing, touching—at a distance—the stranger within.⁹³

Lately, I’ve become interested in a different way of thinking about the uneasiness of dream-space, or of associating our waking-self with our dreaming-self. What if the extra-dimensionality of dream space and the constantly shifting point-of-view is the real issue? A point of view that, in dreams, is whipped back and forth between a complex condition of first-person, second-person, and omniscient perspectives. Despite knowing that human cells make up only forty-three percent of our body’s total cell count (the rest being microscopic companion species), considering ourselves more-than-human beings is not an easy thought.⁹⁴ We tend to understand reality from a first-person perspective.

Currently, I am sitting in my favourite chair, drinking coffee, eating cookies. To enjoy the cookie, it is better to forget both the various bacteria residing upon it and the legion of yeast living deep within

my organs who will also feast upon the sudden influx of refined sugar. Meaning that we, who are normally accustomed to the limitations of three-dimensions, have a difficult time accepting an existence whose world is not symbolic, not sign-based, perhaps not even exterior, but a manifestation of our own interior forces. In a dream-body we experience what could be called a kind of simultaneous existence, an expanded sense-of-self in which we become the lake we swim in, the grove of trees we gather shade under, and the sky-filled with clouds we look towards. Living as not only a being who can occasionally fly or bend time but morph into the makeup counter at the mall; a large meeting of cats; a balcony filled with flamingos; a hill where you sit listening to music with dead ancestors; some soft residue from the touch of what-was-their-name-again lover? Andrew?⁹⁵

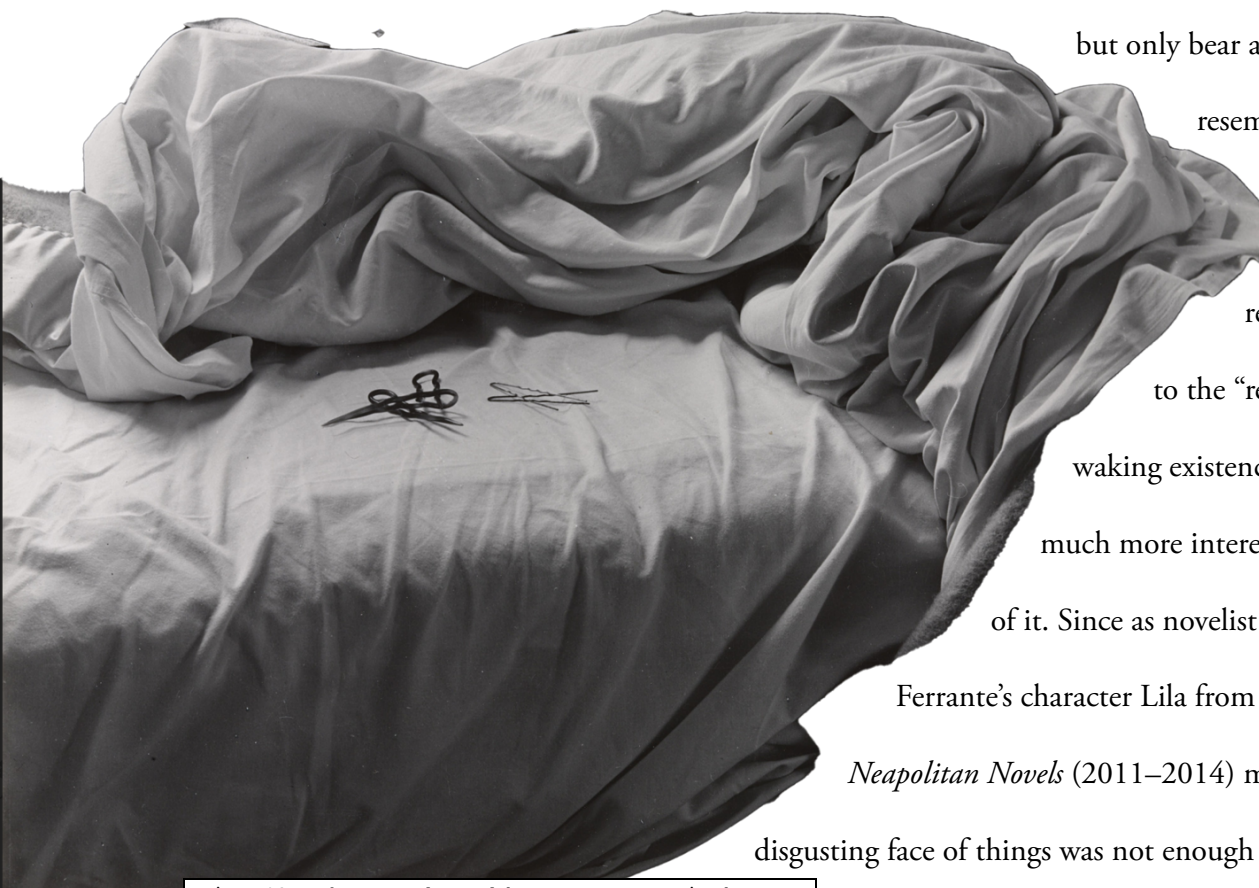
*The truth is we are not separate from one another. We are, actually, one thing. We are one thing; but your perception and your ego makes you think that we are two different things—that you are over there and I’m over here. The truth is we are, actually, one thing, together.*⁹⁶

These entities and sensations may be neurological fictions, but as we compose them, they compose us. When we assert authorship over our dreamlife, we open ourselves up to a triangulated relationship similar to the bonds occupied within creative practice. The being who dreams is a being who straddles *creator* (artist, writer, musician, whatever), *inspiration* (muse, idea), and *material* (the apparatus, the thing, the stuff of everyday life), to become as Blanchot explains, “a strange self, no more a subject than an object,” multiplied and flattened whose “existence enters the inaccessible



Fig. 42, Sleeping in the order of the slowing of time. A pillow that has only been slept on by the botanist Dr. Doris Vāth, a pillow that only the archaeologist Dr. Britta Rabe has slept on, and a pillow that has only been slept on by Dr. Greta Alteby, a tectonic geophysicist by Jason Dodge, n.d. — The three blue pillows signify three sleeping scientists. We imagine the women who sleep on these pillows: the geophysicist digging deep into the earth to study its development over millions of years; the archaeologist excavating past civilizations, uncovering artifacts of human belief and behavior; and the botanist, working close to the earth’s surface, who focuses on seasonal, cyclical time that spirals forth into the future.

proximity of the image,” and in so doing, mirrors the similitude of the written word, painted picture, or sculpted form. The dream or dreamer, like the art object, does not, and cannot, represent reality,



but only bear a passing
resemblance (rather
than
representation)
to the “reality” of
waking existence.⁹⁷ And, how
much more interesting because
of it. Since as novelist Elena
Ferrante’s character Lila from her
Neapolitan Novels (2011–2014) maintains, “the
disgusting face of things was not enough for writing a
novel; without imagination it would seem not a
true face but a mask.”⁹⁸

Fig. 43, *The Unmade Bed* by Imogen Cunningham, 1958 – discussing her book-length poem, *The Blue Clerk* (2018), poet Dionne Brand remarks how lists and inventories find order in dishevelment, to smooth unsettled times, a sentiment reminiscent of the organizational list in the following section, “Bedlam.”

BEDLAM

Toni my landlord rambles up the sidewalk calling, “Ella, Ella....” Hot and humid, a mid-August day in 2020. Sitting down heavily outside our door, blocking my entrance, he says, “I’d like to speak to you. You and Colin.”

Flustered and sweaty, I’m arriving home from the studio. My first time returning after campuses closed across the country in mid-March—the sort of day that feels like a real event.

He continues: “I was thinking, what about converting your basement into another apartment? You don’t really use it do you?”

Staggered, I respond in *huhs*, *whats*, and *umms* while my thoughts fill with a chaos of images: carefully stacked pantry shelves of tinned tuna and tomatoes; extra bags of rice, sugar, and flour; piles of toilet paper; bottles of wine and beer. Next to that our set of winter tires; a new chop saw; accumulated holiday decorations; old ceiling fixtures; heavy cardboard boxes of assorted golden chain from a 2013 artwork and the antique crystal-bronze doorknobs I cart from rental to rental, waiting for the future home where we will finally unpack; three magnum photo-studio lights, their use unresolved. The far corner is stuffed with random lengths of wood; dehumidifier; assorted fans; gardening supplies; rolls of chicken-wire; bags of de-icing salt; shop-vac; and photo enlarger for the darkroom we do not have. Also, sheets of silvery insulation; copious cans of spray paint; a few pairs of winter boots; various cleaning supplies; buckets and brooms; large washer/dryer; and several families of spiders. Then there is the temporary workspace I have eked out: crockpots filled with beeswax surrounded by makeshift mold-making supplies. More cardboard, two-by-fours, and plasticine all in service of casting scattered sets of forty-year-old paw prints, permanently fixed in concrete by a cat named Charlie. I am touched by this remnant of movement. I wonder if Charlie is short for Charles Prince of Wales, a sweet match for Diane, Toni’s daughter, our neighbour.

I leap upstairs to discuss the situation with C. I find him lying in bed, dizzy, nauseous, and suffering from extreme vertigo. The last six months have been unrelenting for everyone, and our special version has been exasperated by his series of sports-injuries: the knee blown-out playing basketball in early March followed by a busted shoulder from cycling a few months later, sometime in July.

We have a strange apartment. Many small rooms, none big enough to hold functional furniture. Everything has a double and triple function. Everything is a shelf. Everything is always on the verge of falling apart. We try to ignore the mildew, the leaks, the fridge which either freezes or melts and the oven that smells perpetually of gas.

As I rush back downstairs, the floor slips underfoot. Like layers of unsteady geological strata exposed to the human equivalent of minor seismic activity—poor credit and shitty property managers, nervous breakdowns and family secrets—I encounter a lifetime of other grounds, surfaces, and stories that similarly wobble, tilt, crack, and sink. Something Beth Povinelli said in a seminar a few years earlier rings in my ears: “Those who have been allowed to have hope are allowed to feel shock.”⁹⁹ The comfort I had found is once again revealed as short-term promise, some hopeful fantasy—easily unmade.

Colin is sick, I say.

Toni, “No rush. We’ll work it out. I can take fifty dollars off your rent for the next year. We can put your washer/dryer in the upstairs closet.”

I remind him that we only have one closet.

“No problem.”

All-in-all, Toni is not a bad guy. In a city as expensive as Toronto, we feel lucky to know him and occupy an apartment well below market value with enough space to hold artistic practices sustained, like bricolage, by a random array of income sources. We drink his homemade wine on summer evenings under vines of grape and summer squash. We listen to his stories of growing up on a small island off the coast of Portugal. We try to understand when he explains how nice it used to be when

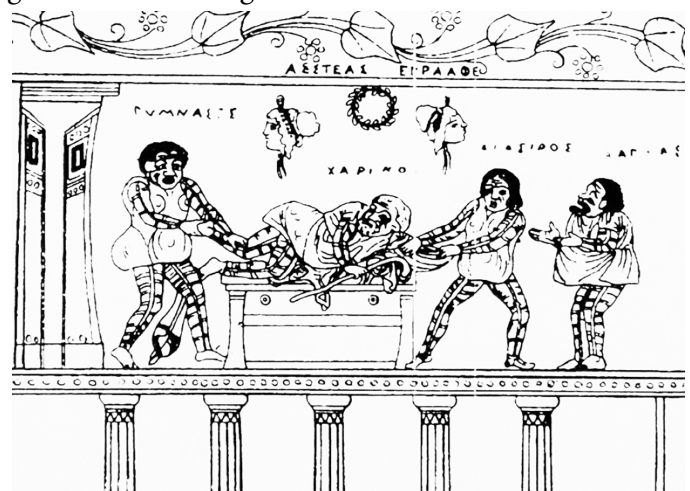
everyone watched out for everyone else and we believe him. I share my baking with him, and he tells his friends with a sense of obvious pride that we are teachers. He is happy we garden and how, in happier times, we turn our place over to friends who read tarot, screen films, show paintings, host dinners, and listen to the moon.

For the past few months of lock-down, I have taken advantage of the cooler underground basement climate and move much of my studio production downstairs. The basement floor has been a long-time feature of fascination, a mystery of poorly poured layers of uneven concrete that buckle, chunk, and fragment into areas of exposed dirt. From June onwards, I alternate between two seemingly Sisyphean tasks—casting sections of the ground in wax, trying to capture those paw-prints, while attempting to find an apartment for a brother who is disabled, houseless, and three-thousand three-hundred and eighty-four kilometers away. The casting is an arduous process, with a five-to-one success rate. Securing housing proves impossible; but I am unrelenting and apply painfully long hours performing web-searches, writing emails, leaving messages, and engaging in several compassionate conversations with those who wish they could help, or offer anything at all.

After our initial encounter, time passes until, weeks later, Toni gestures me over to say that he has changed his mind. He is too old and too tired to go about renovating basements.

“Forget I even asked,” he explains, “It was a passing idea.”

Fig. 44, found image of ekkyklêma being used in a comedy – ekkyklêma were wheeled platforms in Greek stage craft that revealed interior scenes to the audience, particularly the consequences of gruesome acts.



PLUMBED

For the ancient Greeks, the division of time was represented by a separation of “chronos” from “kairos.” To symbolize durational or cyclical time, Greco-Roman mosaics personified chronos as a god turning the zodiac wheel. In contradiction, Kairos (from “keirein,” to cut)—signaled change, crisis, and compression, the moment a shuttle passes through thread on a loom.¹⁰⁰

While we might prefer to measure time sequentially, x before y and summer after spring, our experience of time is quite different. With the fraught anxiety of living against a ticking clock, we write toward deadlines, find history in revolution, and make space for apologies on deathbeds.

Quantity versus quality.

From October to November 2022, John Goodwin installed *goodtime*, a group exhibition in which I participated at the Plumb—a plucky noncommercial gallery “administered by an ad hoc collective of artists, writers, and curators” and located in the labyrinthine basement of an office building accessible through an alleyway near the intersection of Toronto’s Dufferin Street and St. Clair Avenue West.¹⁰¹

With low ceilings, exposed wiring, and beige ceramic tiles, the gallery invokes a liminal non-place, never intended for public visitation. It has quickly become one of the most vital spaces in the city, running critically against the conservatism of Toronto’s artistic ecosystem that too often positions art as little more than an accruable commodity, instead of a relational node of affiliation, friendship, and community.

goodtime offered a spatial extension of Goodwin’s ongoing curatorial project, goodwater, which he originally established in 2001 with Roger Bywater as a storefront gallery. Since then, the project has shifted shape several times and in 2018 was reconceptualized in Goodwin’s modest home at 10

Bright Street. Between Goodwin and the Plumb, a strong sense of ethical commitment to community runs deep.¹⁰²

Flipping through books laid out in the *goodtime resource area*, I encountered an image of Felix Gonzalez-Torres's *Untitled (Go-Go Dancing Platform)* (1991)—a silvery-Speedoed muscular body, singular and beautiful, wearing headphones and grooving to music only they can hear. Goodwin came over and explained: “Oh yah, I was there. At Andrea Rosen, May ’91, the height of AIDS. People would visit the gallery and fall down weeping, it was so beautiful. That’s the world I come from. Those are the stakes.”

I think kairos is what Roland Barthes meant when he describes punctum as a “sting, speck, cut, little hole” that traumatizes the unity of chronological universalism to sting the personal, the me.¹⁰³

Kairological time catches us off guard. While our friends and lovers disappear, the dancer dances eternal. In silent dedication.

I was drawn into goodwater’s fold in the fall of 2018, on the promise of writing for a two-part exhibition of works by artists Moyra Davey and Sally Späth. My parents had both died some few months earlier, my father in March, my mother in June. I felt a deep sympathy for both Davey and Späth’s works and hoped the text would retether me to my professional world.

Visitors to goodwater are received with the *tour*. A full afternoon of forgotten histories and claimed injustices narrated by Goodwin— “Why does no one remember the Dorothy Cameron Gallery!” Sprawling gossip and anecdotes, like the time he received a tour of the National Gallery of Canada from the late curator Brydon Smith, made famous for acquiring Barnett Newman’s *Voice of Fire* (1967), which caused a subsequent media uproar over what art even is—“After we walked through

the gallery and he told me stories (people were following us and listening in) we walk over to get lunch, which he insisted on buying, and at the end of lunch I told him how much he influenced me, he started crying a bit, so I stopped talking, silence, but beautiful silence, which I'll never forget...." Conversation is buffered by choice refreshments (beer, coffee, or apple juice, maybe an occasional joint) and woven with detailed observations of the building's idiosyncrasies, its wonky angles and custom renovations. The floors painted Benjamin Moore's Dorian Gray, warm and inviting. But most importantly, you experience a behind-the-scenes view into Goodwin's longstanding working

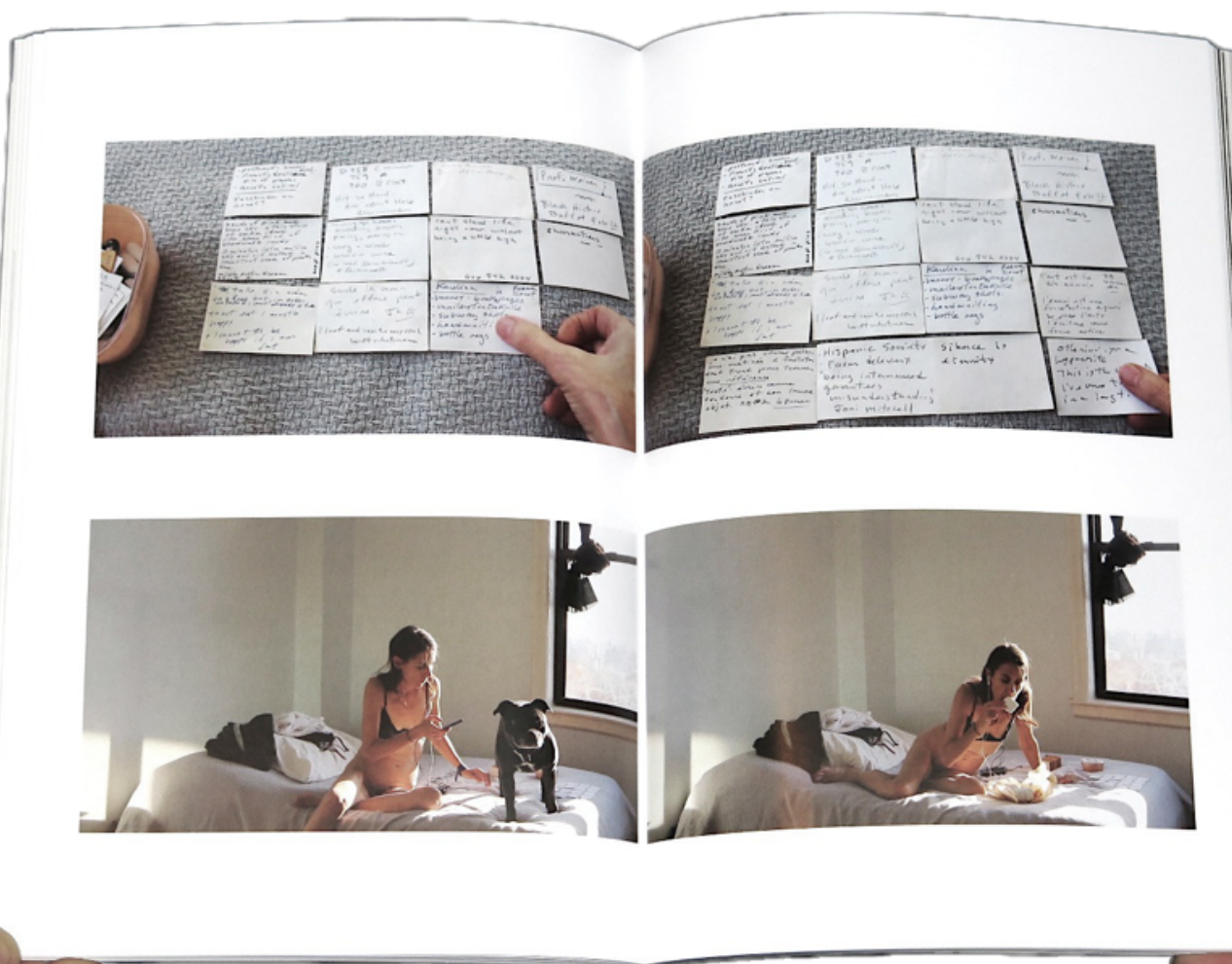


Fig. 45, Images of film stills from *Hemlock Forest* by Moyra Davey, 2016 – in the lower right image, Davey eats marshmallows covered in powdered sugar as homage to Chantal Akerman, who films herself eating sugar in the 1974 film, *Je, tu, il, elle* [I, You, He, She], 1974. Davey expresses how following the filmmaker's death in 2015, she was engulfed by thoughts of Akerman.

relationships with artists. Davey famously credits him with sparking her longstanding project of folded *Mailers*, and Nestor Krüger maintains an ongoing text thread in which he and Goodwin explore a potential project to its extreme logical ends until the exchange becomes so absurd it devolves into hilarity.

There are two *very* large ferns.

If a philosophical through line to goodwater's programming exists, it is an emphasis on *the new*—a desperate belief in pushing artists to work against the grain of their usual habits. To work outside the high-gloss conditions of big-money production. To recapture some feeling of the underground, the weirdos, the Beats. To make visible the line connecting Frank O'Hara and Allen Ginsberg to Lawrence Weiner and Laurie Anderson. The anti-establishment anarchy of jazz, punk, rock 'n' roll. According to Goodwin's stories, artists like Richard Prince and Rodney Graham were happy to play around in goodwater's world. Relieved to escape the boredom of bankers, bureaucrats, and blue chips. To remember what's possible with low tech, low budget, and low radar. To risk failure because nothing is riding on the exhibition, save quality of the art and respect of your friends.

(Texting back and forth about the histrionics coming out of those affected by Canada's recent art institutional staff shakeup, we wonder, "How did the art scene end up like this? Geezus.")¹⁰⁴

goodtime came together quickly after an unexpected opening in programming.¹⁰⁵ Many of the artworks drew from previous collaborations, but within the new conditions of their exhibition, they were transformed. Some changes were subtle, others logistical. A few previewed future productions. Then there was Späth's *Five Acts* (2022), an altogether special experience. Except for one strikingly vertical black slit sketched directly onto the wall (*Act Two*), the work spread horizontally across the

gallery's two long rooms with swaths of confident gestural marks in paint and graphite applied to extended sections of Mylar. When I try to separate the work from its surroundings, the word "operatic" springs to mind, but held within the cavernous space of the Plumb, the installation was visceral, less fancy, earthier. As I walked the length of the work, its colours, lines, and shapes shifted as well, like bodies moving together in luminous choreography—a kind of visual call and response that exposed how experience rearranges itself in barely recognizable form.

Whenever I returned to *goodtime*, the exhibition was somehow changed, better and weirder. More stuff. And, on a particularly dark November night, when a group of us gathered to drink cocktails and homemade red wine as Robert Frank and Alfred Leslie's improvisational classic film *Pull My Daisy* (1959) looped in the background, time seemed to fold and split.

Kairos at work.

All to say, Goodwin has a capacity to reconfigure the gallery as an (intra-)active process. This process is difficult to pin down. It involves trust, on both sides. goodwater's improvisational, "Yes, and," curatorial methodology fulfills Sol LeWitt's maxim that "Conceptual Artists are mystics rather than rationalists. They leap to conclusions that logic cannot reach."¹⁰⁶

During my initial visits to goodwater in 2018, Goodwin shared with me daily charcoal drawings he developed following the death of his mother. I had recently learned how to make charcoal from grapevine and brought him a few sticks to try out. Immediately, he was all in, exclaiming, "Make as

Fig. 46, collecting grapevine, 2019.

much as you can. Fill a trunk with the stuff!" I had been



knocking my head against the writing for Davey and Späth for what became months, and he seemed to know I needed a task. A way to keep my hands busy. We decided that I should make enough charcoal to last forty years, each stick measuring one day, until I reached my mother's age when she died, just shy of seventy-six—approximately fourteen thousand six hundred pieces. I got to work, cutting vine from my front porch, alleyways, and friends' backyards. Over the next two winters, I fired them in small batches using metal cookie tins in goodwater's fireplace. We piled the fragile black sticks on the mantle where they slowly amassed both weight and time.

As I worked, grief slipped naturally into our conversations. Goodwin recounted stories of friends lost too soon to cancer, drinking, and of course AIDS. He moved to New York in 1988 to take up the executive-director position at Printed Matter, Inc., landing in the epicenter of the crisis fueled by the cruel and violent public-health policies marshalled by the city's then mayor, Ed Koch, which forced a level of devastation not bracketed by history. As an HIV-negative gay man on the other side of retirement, Goodwin survives within a generation gutted and hollowed. While life-saving antiretroviral therapies have since utterly changed the survival rate, the crisis' effects remain a living reality, destabilizing communities and systems of intergenerational kin.

When Goodwin returned to Toronto in the early 1990s, he began working as an administrator for various AIDS-related organizations. Recalling this period, he is quick to describe Ontario's response as comparatively supportive. Whereas New York's Department of Health closed bathhouses and porn theaters, referring to them, Goodwin recalled, as "AIDS breeding grounds," Toronto's AIDS service organizations (ASOs) provided funding for outreach workers who visited these spaces informally, offering assistance, information, and counselling, thus working to reduce stigma while reaching closeted men as well. The marked difference is thanks in large part to early activism from groups like

AIDS ACTION NOW! whose lobbying instigated the creation of the Ontario AIDS Bureau in 1991—an arm of the government that funds all the provincial HIV/AIDS programs for Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. The Bureau’s priority funding status provides stable year-to-year financial support to ASOs, regardless of who holds government office.¹⁰⁷

Goodwin describes his work in AIDS outreach as “relatively low-pressure jobs with regular paycheques” that supported his financial commitments to goodwater. While he maintained a formal separation between the gallery and his administration work, living through the urgency of the AIDS crisis is deeply enmeshed within his curatorial ethos. Even when an artwork has absolutely nothing to do with the virus, or even obvious societal issues, the work is pushed until it embodied a critical sense of immanence. As Davey explained to me over email, Goodwin “is an idea person who loves nothing more than to see an idea take an object form. He loves to produce, to see something through.”¹⁰⁸

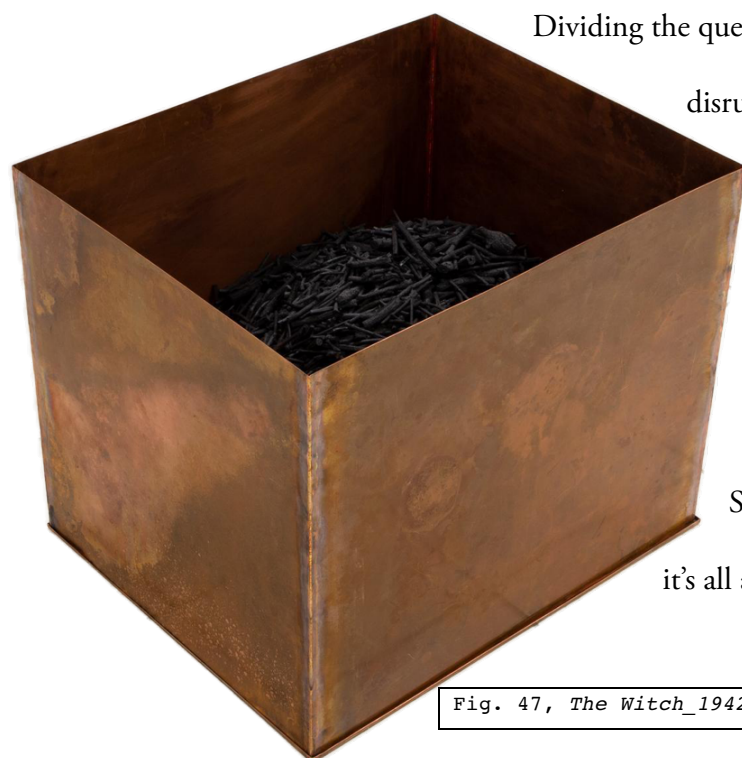
Whenever I feel exhausted by the art world and its bureaucratic or commercial machinations, a visit to goodwater—or for that matter, the Plumb—restores my commitment through an opportunity to communally trip out on how certain artworks approach a state of strange liveliness. That special radiance when a work (or exhibition) seems as though it is being made and unmade at the same time. What Paul Chan describes in his 2010 essay “A Time Apart” as “kairological art”—art that embodies the feeling that “what is given is not good enough but will have to do.” Art that “seize[s] time the way a beat holds a song.”¹⁰⁹

In *goodtime*, my pile of charcoal, *The Witch_1942* (2019–2022), moved restlessly around the gallery in an open copper box, each day repositioned in a different location following cryptic instructions I

sent to the Plumb's members via text message: "Put The Witch on top of something." "Put The Witch behind the corner." "Put The Witch over there." "Put The Witch in the wall."

At the opening, two drawings by Euan Macdonald hung above my work—twin circular forms glinting hazy white and empty. Like stars reflected in a wine-dark sea, hollow negative shapes sitting within backgrounds filled-in black with twenty-four pieces of my charcoal. (Ostensibly taking nearly a month from my own productive life.)

A question scrawled in red pencil crayon underneath the drawings, split them into two segments. On the left, "does the." On the right, "time bother you?" The line was lifted from a 1978 George Carlin routine where the comic grasps at the imprecise language by which we try to tell time. In classic wisecracking style, he draws attention to the idioms "lickety split, drop of a hat, nothing flat, in a jiffy" and "two shakes of lamb's tail," but more compellingly, to the vagueness implied by "now," "moment," and the baffling "present" . . . "Welcome to the present, whoosh, gone again."¹¹⁰



Dividing the question into two nonsensical halves, Macdonald

disrupts the sequential logic of the sentence's structure and, as a result, the subject/predicate relationship falls apart, reiterating the drawings' inversion of figure/ground.

Such a simple gesture, but, like comedy, or art, it's all about good timing.

Fig. 47, *The Witch_1942*, 2019–2022.

BED-2-BED

For centuries, much of the history of Western art has been performed upon the structurally pervasive relationship between woman-as-figure laid out on a restive surface-as-ground. Across daybed,



chair, divan, chaise longue, or La-Z Boy, the vulnerable, passive, and objectified female figure lays stretched, prone for immortalization by the Titians, Manets, Kirchners, and more. We know this story well. The women in these pictures depict something more and somewhat less than themselves. When

portrayed as a symbol of supple sexuality (*Venus of Urbino*, *Olympia*, or *Reclining Nude*), hers is a lust safely contained within the rigid confines of domestic space. As sleeping beauty, her chore is to wait, “Intact, eternal, and absolutely powerless” writes Hélène Cixous

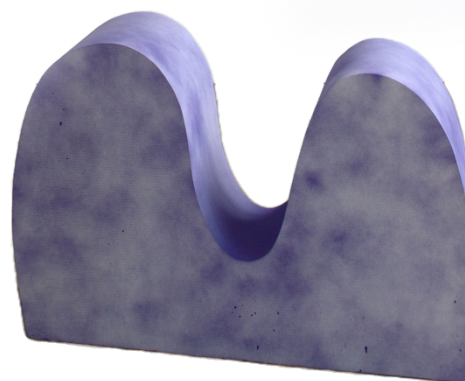
in *Sorties: Out and Out: Attacks/Ways Out/Forays* (1986)—explaining how for much of literature a

woman’s “trajectory is traced” from bride bed to child bed to bed of death.¹¹¹



Fig. 49, *The Sofa* by Henri de Toulouse Lautrec, ca. 1894–1896 — of the painting, artist Lizzy De Vita comments, “Rest is frequently shown as something extra. Laziness or luxury. In the world of this painting, rest is both ordinary and necessary: like breathing, like love. Ordinary and also brimming with potential for new worlds.”

Fig. 48, installation image of *Recliner*, an exhibition by Julie Beugin and Jessica Groome at Ackerstr. 81, Berlin, April 2021. Beugin’s paintings, *Interlude* and *Fastener*, both 2021, hang in the background and one of three sculptural works within Groome’s *Three Nudes (recliner)*, 2021 rests in the foreground.



In April 2021 artists Jessica Groome and Julie Beugin presented *Recliner*, an exhibition in a small Berlin studio. Groome’s biomorphic paper sculptures directly referenced the curving

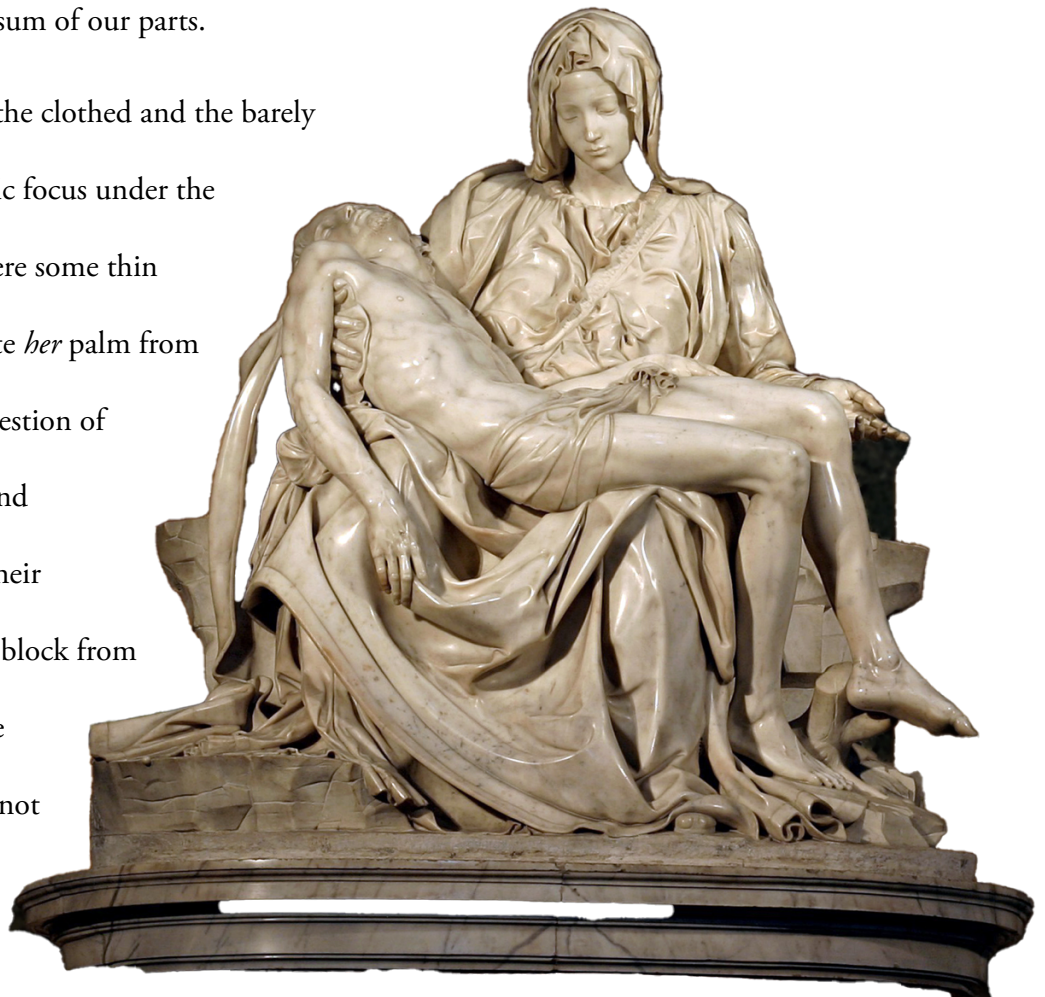
contours found within Kirchner's *Three Nudes in the Forest* [Drei Akte im Walde] (1933). While Beugin's abstract painted collages translated the shapely light of the city in vibrant hues. Both series nodded towards what art historian Griselda Pollock describes as "avant-garde gambits" and the ways in which soft bodies provide compositional counterpoints to the dynamic vertical lines of architectural space, as well as the painting's own frame.¹¹² Interestingly though, instead of reenforcing the reclining nude as passive subject, the exhibition wondered, "what is it like to be the recliner?" Not just "comfy chair" but "an assertive being with a thinking mind."¹¹³

With a sleeping kitten on my lap, I imagine myself both the recliner reclining and the recliner itself. My figure becoming ground, and the ground turning figure. This quick, subjective, identification with Groome and Beugin's line of questioning initiates a semantic collision wherein the double meaning of recliner falls into itself and the distinction between object and subject dissolves.

Likewise, for my nieces and nephews, I am both something to cuddle up into and lay upon, a warm and cushioned supportive surface. Draped over me, (and with all their love I cannot move) I picture myself Michelangelo's *Pietà* and, without much success, try to recall the second-year essay I wrote analyzing the sculpture. I must have considered the strong pyramidal structure alluding to the holy trinity and surely commented on the artist's infamous signature awkwardly cutting between the Madonna's chest like a handbag strap. What else remains? What else do I remember? Very little. Certainly, none of the canonical information I must have dutifully recited. But a certain feeling remains. The reason I wrote the paper then and why I am mentioning it now: the sculpture's enduring sensuality—beyond its humanist or spiritual subject matter, I continue to be drawn into the vastness of that great marble lap, generously positioned as a capaciously receptive surface.

More than a lap, it's the lapping of the lap; the lap as an ocean; creamy olive: the colour of seafoam and my mother's skin, swelling and crashing in waves over and around Christ's reclining figure to fall, draping downwards in voluminous sloping arcs that settle crumpled on the platform's base in perfectly rendered rivulets. Too much fabric! Its abundance, its excess in visual contradiction to the nakedness of the other body's frame. Roaming this lap, I too feel some imaginal desire to hold and support the weight of another's body. Similarly, how wonderful to curl up on there, safe and protected. In either position, sensing the kinetic energy of heat transference wherein we become something more than the sum of our parts.

This distinction, between the clothed and the barely clothed, comes into specific focus under the Madonna's right hand where some thin sheeting appears to separate *her* palm from *his* rib. However, this suggestion of difference seems literally and ultimately to underscore their inseparability. The marble block from which the two figures were carved is singular and—if not for occasional incidents of damage, whole.¹¹⁴ It is



this wholeness which serves to physically fuse its two subjects, *both* recliners. Both would be assertive beings with thinking minds, intrinsically linked.

Fig. 50, *Madonna della Pietà* by Michelangelo Buonarroti, 1498-1499.

BEDHEAD

There are those who can sleep and those who cannot sleep; those for whom sleep is a question, a crisis, not a guarantee. As a child, I could sleep. As an adult, I cannot. In July 2019 while reading Anne Carson's *Ode to Sleep* (2006), a poem that asks us to think of our lives without sleep: "Without that slab of outlaw time punctuating every pillow," it dawned on me that I had lived half my life with sleep, half with doubt, half with rest, half distress.¹¹⁵

It was the summer of 2001
when sleep first escaped me.

Ode to Sleep

*Think of your life without it.
Without that slab of outlaw time punctuating every
pillow—without pillows.
Without the big black kitchen and the boiling stove where
you*

*snatch morsels
of your own father's legs and arms
only to see them form into a sentence
which—you weep with sudden joy—will save
you*

*if you can remember it
later!*

Living alone in my first apartment, aged nineteen or twenty, I begged the on-and-off-again boyfriend to come over in the hope his presence might help. I was desperate; weeks stretched by with only a few hard-won hours a night. Months of that stuff. He would come and I would sleep. Curled away from this person who held my capacity to rest in their body.

**WOULD A CENTAUR BIG SPOON
LIKE THIS?**



...OR LIKE THIS?



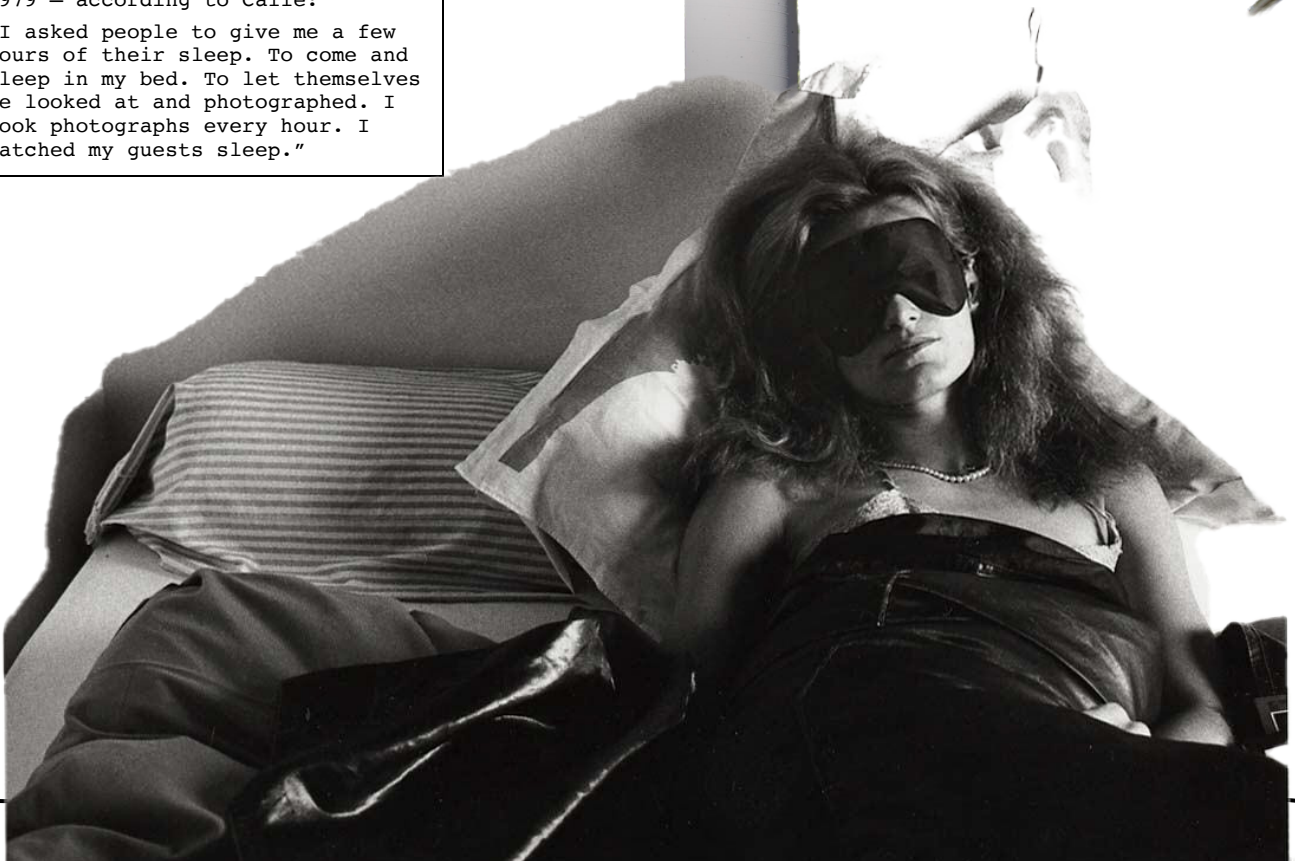
Fig. 51, found image that expresses curiosity into centaur sleep positions.



Fig. 53, AI-generated image constructed using web-based platform DALL-E 2 with the prompt: "a top-down image of a messy bed with blue sheets and several animals."

Fig. 54, a fragment of *The Sleepers* [les dormeurs] (*Gloria K. First Sleeper*) by Sophie Calle, 1979 – according to Calle:

"I asked people to give me a few hours of their sleep. To come and sleep in my bed. To let themselves be looked at and photographed. I took photographs every hour. I watched my guests sleep."



Gloria K. 1st sleeper. Sunday April 1st 1979. 5.30 P.M. Anne B., who must share the bed, is late –

Fig. 52, *Night is for Sleeping, Day is for Resting* by Mowry Baden, 1997 – while waiting for the bus to take me to the Swartz Bay Ferry Terminal, I often sit on its concrete mattress components at the corner of Douglas and Blanshard Streets in Victoria. The work's title arrives via John Philip Sousa, the American composer and conductor primarily known for American military marches, recalling his parents' differing views on time and productivity. In reply to his mother's complaints about her husband's afternoon nap, Sousa's father would reply, "Elise, the night is for sleep, and the day is for rest." According to Baden, the phrase "epitomizes the rest and relaxation that Victoria and her guests seek."



The irony of insomnia is that within its wakefulness, a kind of unasked for presentness is contiguous with a “generalized condition of world-lessness.”¹¹⁶ Lying in bed, unable to sleep, we are confronted with the impossibility of living humanely. A situation illustrated by every my-brain-at-3am-meme, in which private anxieties, embarrassing memories, generalized worries, and sheer boredom ripple under skin like an embodied Venn diagram. Although, even this description

of sleeplessness makes it sound more reasonable than its awful mix of bored frustration.

Melatonin, therapy, and age may have worked wonders, but I continue to sleep lightly, and insomnia will forever haunt the perimeters of my life—turning what should be a routine bodily function into a crisis of uncertainty. Always waiting to return, however briefly, especially near the start of school

term when my brain rattles with prepared lecture notes and semi-complete lesson plans.



Sleep Remedy Steam Compress

- Boiling water
- 1 cloth, large enough to wrap around a torso one and one-half times
- 1 bath towel, for wringing out compress
- 1 protective cloth, same size as wrap cloth
- 1 bath towel, slightly larger than wrap cloth
- 1 wool blanket
- 2 hot water bottles

Preparation

- Spread bath towel on bed
- Soak wrap cloth in boiling water
- Wring out cloth in other bath towel, twisting ends in opposite directions

Application

- Wrap damp cloth tightly around patient's torso, check for temperature beforehand
- Repeat with protective cloth
- Repeat with large bath towel
- Lay patient on bed
- Place two hot water bottles on either side of patient
- Cover with wool blanket

Duration

- One to two hours

Repeat nightly, as necessary.

Fig. 55, found image of a stromatolite, stratified fossilized algae, which preserves the first life on the planet. I first came across these objects in Margaret Atwood's short story, "The Stone Mattress" (2011), learning how: "The word comes from the Greek stroma, a mattress, coupled with the root word for "stone." Stone mattress: a fossilized cushion...."

As a mirrored opposite of my own private struggles, I am fascinated by those who can sleep easily. You see them on planes: necks at strange angles with mouths agape or head on crossed arms resting gently atop folding trays. My partner is one of these people. And then there are the eternal sleepers, those suffering serious conditions, whose bodies become trapped in somnolence and coma.

To fall asleep and wake up forty years into the future is the stuff of fairy tales and science fiction, the life of objects and archives. And yet this was the case for many people who suffered from post-encephalitis lethargica, a form of narcolepsy more commonly described as “sleeping sickness,” an epidemic which coincided with the 1918 influenza pandemic. Also known as the Spanish Flu, the pandemic spread in four successive waves across the world between 1918 and 1920, infecting some five-hundred million people, one-third of the world’s then population. Between seventeen and one-hundred million people died. A baffling numerical range.

While this incident represents the worst instance of the disease, isolated cases continued to appear. Viruses that result in massive immune system dysregulation like COVID-19 and 2009’s Swine Flu can trigger a similar response when high fever causes a break in the blood brain barrier. When this



Fig. 56, film still, *My Own Private Idaho* by Gus Van Sant, 1991 – starring Keanu Reeves as Scott FAVOR and River Phoenix as Mikey Waters, who suffers from narcolepsy.

occurs, the body’s innate (inflammation causing) or adaptive (antibody producing) immune response systems gain access to the brain and spinal cord. The barrier does not recognize either the

inflammation or your antibodies as *itself* and begins to attack the brain causing encephalitis.

Meaning, that in rare cases, a previously healthy person suffers an assault from their own, very strong immune response. This process is described as a “cytokine storm”—a terrible situation where either the virus or the immune system fighting it can both kill you. Something

THE PANTHER

*In the Jardin des Plantes, Paris
His gaze has been so worn by the procession
Of bars that it no longer makes a bond.
Around, a thousand bars seem to be flashing,
And in their flashing show no world beyond.*

*The lissom steps which round out and re-enter
That tightest circuit of their turning drill
Are like a dance of strength about a center
Wherein there stands benumbed a mighty will.*

*Only from time to time the pupil's shutter
Will draw apart: an image enters then,
To travel though the taughened body's utter
Stillness – and in the heart end.¹¹⁷*

like a war burning down its country of residence as an act of defense. What links these events to a pandemic is our immune system's unfamiliarity or lack of prior immunological memory of a related virus from previous exposure.¹¹⁸

Remarkably, the primary casualties are young adults with formerly strong immune systems, who, after a sustained-period of high-fever enter a trance-like existence somewhere between sleep and wakefulness. Most die of the illness, a select few do not. In *Awakenings* (1973), polymath writer and neuroscientist Oliver Sacks chronicles his experience of caring for long-term patients suffering from the condition while on residency at New York's Beth Abraham Hospital, where upon his arrival in the late 1960s, he initiated close observational study alongside renewed physical therapy.¹¹⁹

After years of apparent torpor, Sacks finds that the patients have retained a rare sense of youthfulness. Noting, for example, how Leonard L., age forty-six has the unlined face of a man in his twenties. Mr. L., who is described as “a man of most unusual intelligence, cultivation, and sophistication, a man who seems to have an almost total recall for whatever he has read, thought, or experienced,” becomes uncommonly close to Sacks, more like research collaborators or co-conspirators. Throughout his time as patient, Mr. L. continues to read voraciously, often quoting from literary references as means

to describe his condition. For example, when asked “What's it like being the way you are? What would you compare it to?” he responds, “Caged. Deprived. Like Rilke’s “Panther.””¹²⁰ The image comes from a poem portraying a being who has lost all sense of themselves, all sense of the world within which they were once defined.

Some years back I wrote a text comparing Rilke’s “Panther” to Franz Kafka’s ape in his 1917 short story, “A Report to An Academy,” in a discussion on the work of Jakob von Uexküll, an innovative animal behaviorist working in the first half of the twentieth century. By radically abandoning pervasive anthropocentric perspectives, Uexküll proposes an essential unknowability of other-than-human species, thus dehumanizing the image of nature.¹²¹ Key to his analysis is a description of “*umwelt*,” a somewhat difficult to translate German concept. Environment-world comes close, but that description seems to denote a sense of exteriority—a world surrounding a being, like a bubble. Whereas I understand *umwelt* to be much closer to the bone of existence. Determined by intensely subjective, species-specific perceptual relationships to what Uexküll terms, “carriers of significance.” Carrier of significance is another way of saying whatever necessarily holds a being’s interest. Or all that relational stuff that binds us to the world. A dog apprehends the food bowl but fails to register the contents of a bookshelf. The slug chews the leaf but cannot comprehend the hand that pours the salt. For Uexküll, every being is enclosed within a unique *umwelt*, sharing neither the same time nor space as any other being.¹²² I pay attention to the song of an ice-cream truck but cannot differentiate one bird’s call from another. More than an enclosure, *umwelt* is a definition: *we are umwelt*.

Consequentially, it is the idea that we (and everyone else) are beings determined by a complex interaction of species-specific perceptual relationships with our particular interests. Interests that are developed by a constant state of influential indicators.¹²³ In other words, and to repeat a common

refrain throughout this text—when we breathe-in the world and breathe-out our bodies, we become the world and the world becomes us; and, of course, we change everything we touch and everything we touch changes.

Without a relationship to our sensory surroundings, we are unable to form an interest in these surroundings, and without a sense of interest, we cease to be/become ourselves. Therefore, given the special circumstances of Rilke's "Panther"—as well as Mr. L. and the other prolonged post-encephalitis lethargica patients—they occupy what 18th century scholar Geoffrey Winthrop-Young, in his afterword to a recent printing of Uexküll's work, calls an "*ex negativo* depiction" of *umwelt*, a world in which all necessary and natural perceptual markers or carriers of significance are vanquished by a "thousand bars" of entrapment.¹²⁴ The being's "mighty will" (their interest in existence) is "benumbed" and they are left "with no world beyond."¹²⁵ In conversation with Sacks, Mr L. eloquently expresses the paradox of this scenario, that strange experience of being both alive and without a world (*umwelt*) in which to be alive :

This is a human zoo.... There's an awful presence and an awful absence. The presence is a mixture of nagging and pushing and pressure, with being held back and constrained and stopped - I often call it "the goad and halter." The absence is a terrible isolation and coldness and shrinking - more than you can imagine, Dr Sacks, much more than anybody who isn't this way can possibly imagine - a bottomless darkness and unreality.¹²⁶

With this description, Mr. L. reveals both loss of world and negation of self. And while I cannot grasp a true understanding of his specific horror, there is something familiar about the totalizing effects of disinterestedness anguish.

In “Dreambeds,” I introduce Henri Bergson’s approach to the psychological function of dreamlife. Mid-way through his 1914 text, *Dreams*, he locates the capacity to be interested as a primary marker of difference between a state of wakefulness and a state of sleepiness, calling sleep a relief from the interested-ness of waking life.¹²⁷ For Bergson, sleep and dreams offer respite from the labour of logic, common-sense, and the endless choices negotiated during waking existence. As our ego relaxes during sleep, we are relieved from the constant interestedness of daily life. And yet,

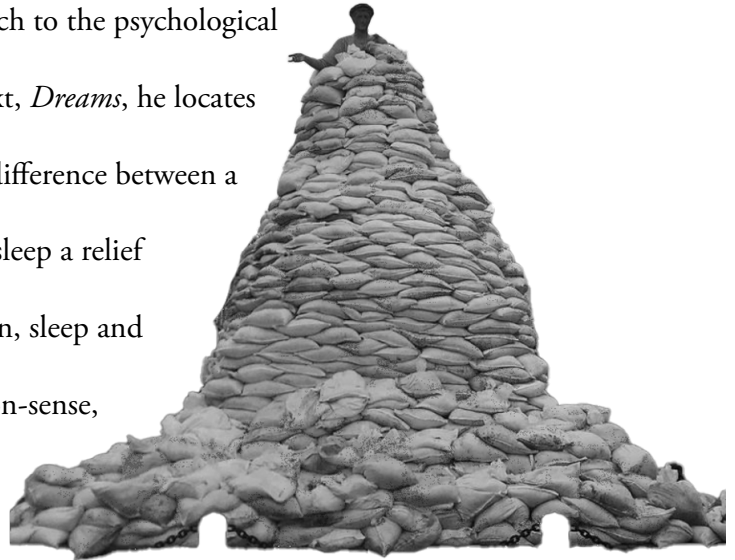


Fig. 57, monument in central Odessa, Ukraine March 9, 2022.

remarkably, “We do not sleep in regard to what continues to interest us,” meaning, that even in an unconscious state, we still perceive necessary signals—whether a baby’s cry or the smell of smoke.¹²⁸ Hence, while asleep, the tense alertness we experience while awake relaxes, and a state of disinterestedness renders a sensory extension. In this condition, our minds open to sensory information formerly filtered from our waking, conscious lives. This allows us to remember (while dreaming) certain perceptual sense impressions that went unnoticed while awake—all those details encompassing the periphery of our awareness. In the spring of 1969, Sacks administers a new drug therapy to his post-encephalitic patients called L-DOPA (a precursor to the neurotransmitter dopamine). In short order, some eighty people experience what appears at first to be a miraculous awakening. And while the effects of the drug are short-lived, lasting only a season, looking back, Sacks describes the event as a cataclysm of “geological proportions”—in which “sleeping” or “extinct” volcanoes suddenly awaken for the first time in years, ready to dance, to love, to erupt into life.¹²⁹

LAVABEDS

It began a long time ago with a creak that became a crackle then a craze. Something snapped. Thick skin rubbed against thicker skin; certain nerves were exposed. Folds formed. Limbs stretched out glad for the space and the space made way. Joints ached under the friction. Things got warmer, even hot. Pressure built. Sensor points shuddered. Soon bowels started rumbling while bellies churned. It took forever and ever.¹³⁰

Until, finally, the face split. Lips weathered and cracked, black opened its mouth. There was a lot of smoke. The tongue licked and spat gas. It was a thrilling sight because that gas was stuff. Radical stuff: hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, carbon dioxide, mercury, argon, helium, neon, methane, and sulphur. States shifted and stabilized: gas became liquid became solid. Matter happened. A flame flashed against the night sky—it was called colour!

And with that, suddenly, a world was born. What was once interior and private became exterior and public. It was catastrophic—not tragic, but ecstatic—from κατά (“kata,” down, against) and στρέφω (“stréphō,” I turn). The earth turned upside down, its insides tumbled inside out. It gave us ground to walk on. It offered faith.

Like all affairs, it didn’t happen overnight, and it wasn’t a onetime occurrence. Over and over destruction collided with construction. Together we made mountains and together we scraped them away. Accidents happened. The weight of the world rested on our shoulders. Some material was lost, forgotten, dismissed, washed downstream. Fragments of objectivity mingled with the remains of subjectivity. There were anomalies.

Thus, to determine a kind of predictive methodology, we sought chronology as a structure of understanding. But events kept amassing, and like Klee’s Angel, we could only register shock.

Shock is an afterimage. Its presence made visible in waves of blinding recognition that this moment of annihilation is simultaneously an act of creation.

Fig. 58, *The Dreamer*, 2023 – AI-generated image constructed using the web-based platform DALL-E 2.



BEDTIME

Methods of speech that

account for hypothetical or

uncertain situations such as dreams, wishes, suggestions, demands, desires, possibilities, opinions, doubts, and emotions depend grammatically on the subjunctive mood. In English, as is the case for many languages, the subjunctive mood is not marked by a distinct set of verb endings, but rather by changes in verb form. For example, in the phrase: *We suggest that she leave*, the base form of the verb is used instead of the third person singular present tense form: *We suggest that she leaves*. These changes in verb form are not intentionally tied to a particular tense but rather signal the subjunctive mood in the sentence, possibly transcending the constraints of tense altogether to become a grammatical time traveller.

Oftentimes, the subjunctive mood expresses an irrealis mood, a subsection of grammar used to specify various states of unreality, particularly when an event is deemed unlikely.¹³¹ We often bifurcate language of the imagination into remembering and dreaming. Seemingly separate spheres defined by a distinct relationship to time, past and future. We remember (in the past tense) when we went to the ocean and the sun melted the chill off our cold arms, legs, and belly, saying: “Our beach vacation *was* wonderful!” Or we dream (in the future tense) of baking our bodies under clear skies in sand warm and fluffy, exclaiming: “Our beach vacation *will be* wonderful!” What happens though

when we try to voice our present-tense desires? When, with lament, we cry: “We *wish* we *were* at the beach, *now!*” Then, with dizzying confusion, past and future collide, cancelling each other in their route to the present.

I have always found the rules and definitions of grammar confusing. All the explanations I consult explain how the subjunctive functions independent of time. But, at least in English, language is tied so closely to time that this sounds like wishful thinking—our verbs are defined by their temporal arrangement. Therefore, it seems that a muddling of tenses does not suggest non-time, but time’s entanglement. Perhaps this complexity even creates an excess of time. Time with which we might dream, wish, imagine. A Mobius Strip that appears as a Gordian Knot.¹³²

To say: “We wish we were at the beach, now!” implies that we are absolutely not at the beach currently but that we have likely been to the beach in the past and will at least try to go to the beach in the future. When we try to linger in our dream beach holiday, the real and ever-present details of living in a body with pain and habitual needs cleave open the edges of fantasy. And, being suddenly thrust into memory, it is difficult to maintain the cheery glaze of youthful remembrance. If we peer too long over the cheap sunglasses of imagination, the sun’s glare reminds us that the crotch of our new bathing suit (a pretty black two-piece with lush red roses) felt slightly itchy; the warm sand was composed of itsy-bitsy shells, which though lovely to look at, were also kind of sharp; and while our companion existed for a time in that breathtakingly beautiful gap that follows adolescence, knowledge of the complicated person they will soon become casts a strong shadow, trapping us in dissolution and regret.¹³³

Feelings that conjure another common desire are often expressed as, “We wish we were young.” The statement implies that we are, in the present tense, *not* so young, or at least not as young as we once

were, or at least we don't feel very young—and the sheer obviousness of this fact snaps back the dull ache of sitting in an office chair with a heating pad, feeling thirsty and snacky. And even though applying the unrealis mood risks returning us to an inevitably thick and messy present, all this looping back and forth is a reminder that there is no absolute present tense. Rather, time can only be understood as bracketed, dependent on the complex and uneven conditions of our existence. There's always an iffyness to time: a nowishness within this hereishness.

Stepping outside these thoughts, we come up against how seductive the irreality of language is for the amateur linguist (we as in *me*—lol, a keener who received a “C” in my first-year's intro to linguistics course). We break rules and do not even clock their existence. Tracing ephemeral etymologies like a clumsy kitten tracking a fly.

As an artist, do I turn towards the lightness of language (and dreams) to escape the weight of daily existence, the burden of making? A relief from the objects destined to fill museums, cupboards, and landfills, so heavy and cumbersome—which moor me to my own meaty materiality. Will I be able to lift this mass? Can I bear that load?

“Ephemera”: late fourteenth century; originally of diseases and lifespans; a medical term from Medieval Latin's “febris” meaning, “a fever lasting a day”; from the Greek “ephemeros”: “daily,” “for the day.” Compare Greek “ephemeroi” whose literal translation means creatures of a day. Extended in 1630 to “short-lived insects.” Also related to the Modern Latin: “Ephemera musca,” such as “Musca domestica” – a common housefly, flowers, and a general sense for things of transitory existence, whose use is first attested in 1751.¹³⁴

Today's text from Helen reads, “Wonder if those who made Neolithic goddess figurines were satisfied. Technology for the immateriality of the video advances, but our hands are still the hands that made those figurines.”¹³⁵



Fig. 59, *Versailles* by Eugène Atget, 1924–1925 – statue of mythical Cretan princess Ariadne, known for assisting Theseus escape the Minotaur. After being abandoned by the hero on the island of Naxos, Dionysus finds her sleeping, falls in love, and casts her jewelled crown skyward to create the Corona Borealis constellation.

ENWOMBED

It started with a few pebbles rattling around the fatty sections behind their knees. Hardly noticeable really, except for a slight grinding noise which could have been confused for joint pain. Soon, though, mineral deposits could be felt in all those places with skin and flesh to spare. The softness under arms and chins. Supple spots where the back folds over bra or love handles cover tight waistbands. Areas unkindly referred to as saddlebags. Naturally, they ignored the problem for as long as possible and when they did pay attention found the new additions annoying, even disturbing. Then, as wide-spread familiarity increased, the unwelcome intrusions shifted into fond additions. They admitted how the tiny marbles protruding next to their left nipple or atop their ring finger looked kind of cute and that the flat rocks lining the underside of their finger pads made typing a breeze. Though the ones they loved most nestled privately in their stomachs, like a pit in a peach. Lying in bed, with their hands cupping round spherical shapes about the size of a fist, they felt less alone. And so, of this nugget, they became obsessed with its composition. Message boards buzzed with possibility—was theirs a granite conglomerate speckled with pink feldspar, or a dark blue-grey basalt river stone grown smooth by the churnings of digestion? And although they spent hours imagining what theirs might look like, some other part of them understood. Particularly as complexions changed and nails turned brittle. When they asked each other, “Have we always been this tired?” The answer was clear: the masses had begun to swell.

Cravings for red meat increased. A run on oysters occurred in late September. Spinach prices soared. Think-pieces on the utility of beans and whole grains flooded their feeds. Eggs were a luxury. It was suddenly common knowledge that a certain mineral played a role in the body’s use of folic acid and vitamin B12 to help maintain desirable levels of homocysteine, a toxic amino acid associated with an

increased risk of heart disease and stroke. Legs kicked restlessly at covers. Concentration grew limited.

Whatever attention was left turned towards space tourism. Was it better to trust this billionaire or the other one? Watching rocket after rocket explode left them concerned. It was becoming difficult to breathe.

The day was fast approaching when they would have to escape, to leave this earth behind. New worlds were coming, and they would not wait.¹³⁶

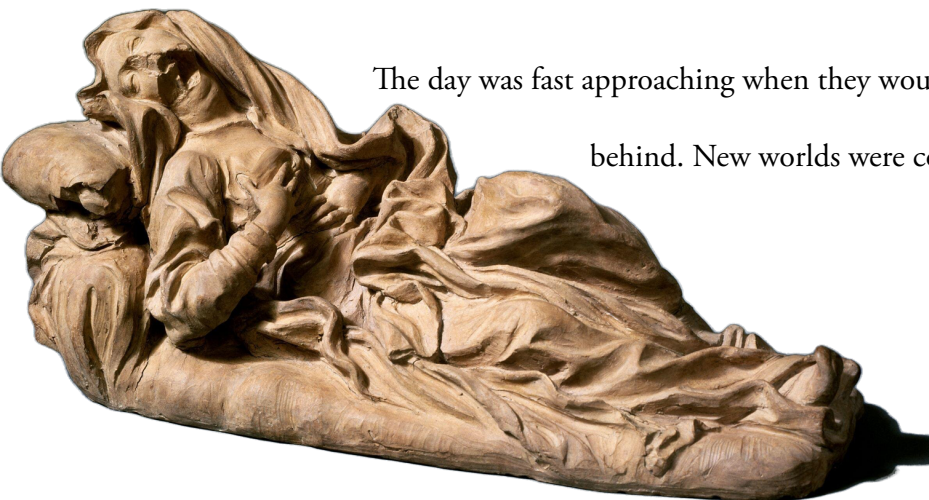


Fig. 60, terracotta study of *Blessed Ludovica Albertoni* by Gian Lorenzo Bernini, 1671 – the figure of Albertini, a pious noblewoman lays on a mattress, her head thrown back on an embroidered pillow in mystical communion, the deep, rippling folds of her habit reflect the tension of her inner turmoil.

HOSPITAL BEDS

The bees buzzing in my pocket bring an image of pale green hair, the colour of Luna moths or ectoplasm, pulled and fallen streaming from your wooden brush.

Like a spray of ocean foam or tendrils of jellyfish, you too come from the sea, my dear friend.

Searching Ursula K. Le Guin's line, "What cannot be mended must be transcended."¹³⁷ I press copy, paste, send. The text floats in a blue bubble soon marked read. I try to await your reply. Fishing for emotional relief from thoughts of a world made empty by your possible absence, I fill more bubbles, hoping something will catch your attention.



Fig. 61, a brush with beautiful green hair.

My texts spin thoughts around cocoons and chrysalis. How they hold the time of waiting and melting and becoming-someone-changed, different, but nevertheless whole. How they contain the stuff of metaphors and metamorphosis, words which bear the story of Morpheus, son of Hypnos and the god of dreams. Still waiting, I describe Morpheus as a mammoth man-moth—clinging to the bark of a tree, drying his massive corpus as the sun sets. Taking off over fences, walls, and buildings. Fully formed with wings pounding like the beat of a hummingbird. Sensing the density of objects with an inner radar, he glides between branches that overflow into the night sky. Pulled ever upwards toward the blaze of a cold-white moon. Drawing nearer, he bumps into false fiery globes, their heat singeing his tails. Tasting dust through the coils of his proboscis, he moves on—flying through an open window, landing on a glowing-lavender painting. In this spiral, he vibrates! Consumed by colour!¹³⁸

Morpheus—the fashioner, the shaper, the changer, the former—namesake of morphine, a risky release from pain; morphallaxis, the regeneration of a destroyed body part by the reorganization of its remaining cells; and biomorphic, a descriptor for all those sculptures by Henry Moore, Jean Arp, and Louise Bourgeois we adore.

Have you seen Bourgeois' 1986 sculpture, *Nature Study* at the Tate? A freestanding patinated bronze hand grasping a small recumbent figure whose snaky locks flow under and around the bearer's wrist in tight intestinal knots. What might have appeared as a smothering or even violent gesture is made soft and supportive under the hand's supportive touch. A cyclical expression of relation and rebirth.

Also, do you remember Lisa Robertson's essay where she explains how "Etruscan was a secret ceremonial language constructed on inversions" and how their word "form" might just be Greek's

“morphe” spoken backwards? A vital tautology in which form carries inside itself an inherent capacity for change.¹³⁹

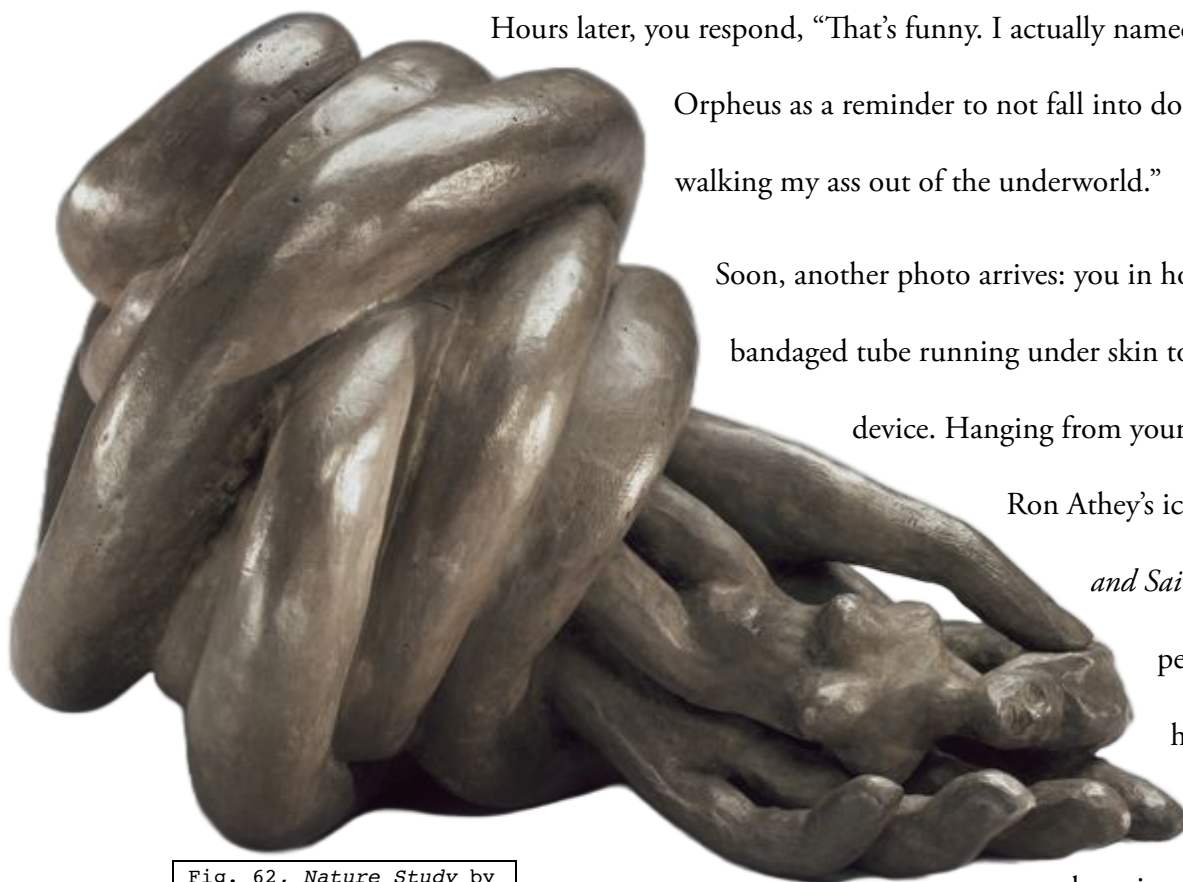


Fig. 62, *Nature Study* by Louise Bourgeois, 1986.

Hours later, you respond, “That’s funny. I actually named my chemo port Orpheus as a reminder to not fall into doubt and just keep walking my ass out of the underworld.”

Soon, another photo arrives: you in hospital with bandaged tube running under skin to some unseen device. Hanging from your neck, a relic from

Ron Athey’s iconoclastic *Martyrs and Saints* (1992)

performance where he uses BDSM

techniques to

explore rituals of passage as an

escape valve from persecution—a charm appropriate for times in need of resilience and transformation.

I text back, “you’ve become a legit cyber-feminist.” You respond, “I thought being a cyborg would be sexier.” Me, “I know there’s a joke about holes in there somewhere.” You, “Hahaha.”

Weeks afterwards the punchline arrives when I, too, am lying in hospital. As the nurse performs a trans-vaginal ultrasound, lubed-up wand in hand, Marvin Gaye’s “Sexual Healing” (1982) plays unironically on the radio ... singing, *heal me my darling, heal me my darling*.¹⁴⁰



Fig. 61, *Kratz* by Urs Fischer, 2011.

DEATHBEDS

What do you do the day before your father dies? You order your coffee black, in his honour. You like the way that sounds. Just black. Thanks. You fly home. You make difficult decisions about your career that cannot wait. You feel relief. You think that maybe you will never put cream in your coffee again.¹⁴¹

You could never look him in the eye. Does he have the same colour eyes as you? You have no idea. You wonder what he sees in you. Does he see himself? He definitely knows your stubbornness that leans towards selfishness. Your curled fists and flights of anger. The hatred that he finds both ridiculous and sad. His fault. But does he wonder who you are? Your motivations. Maybe. When you are fifteen, he tells you that your skin has cleared up. You are so surprised that he can see you at all. In stark relief to the heavy fog of psychiatric drugs that settles around him, you feel like a body blurred, constantly moving.

Easily, you call him a conman. “The Conman” and “The Witch.” Your parents as a myth. A story you find easy to tell. You like the way the words roll off your tongue, off your fingertips always tapping, always typing.

He is sick the whole of your life. Your life starts with his sickness. Well, not exactly. Likely, the sickness is older. This illness that changes names. Nervous breakdown. Depression. Bipolar One or Two? You can never remember. Whichever one is more serious. The bad kind. The kind that needs a daily cocktail, three pages deep, of sedatives and uppers. The young doctor tells your sister it is the longest list he's seen. The drugs stop up the violence you never saw. They stop up the guilt. They bind his capacity to cause harm, to himself, his family. But he still hurts.

You hold onto each memory like Jung's stones in your pocket. Feeling their weight, their significance, stones worn with age and attention. An early memory: he is a ghost before he is a person. Sitting in a chair watching you sleep while physically strapped to a bed thirty miles away. When astral travelling was a thing. All this after crashing his car in a ditch and telling some people at a pub that he is thinking of killing his family. A fine beginning for a myth but there is also the sweet smell of pipe tobacco, the chin of whiskers, a pink duffle bag as a present. Out of hospital, he occasionally drifts home in a car with plush burgundy seats, probably from somewhere up north. There are drives through the desert and a week with the Harikrishnans. He likes living with them. They are all former intellectuals, architects, and businessmen, who, like him, feel suffocated by their own ambitions. He likes their manual labour. You are six or seven years old. You pitch hay and stare at their geodesic domes. These are trips to find a different life. A life he might live.

Your school has a note that prohibits you leaving with anyone who claims to be your father. You are paralyzed by the yearly trauma of writing father's-day cards. Their cheeriness gives you stomach-aches. Occasionally, he passes you some bills. They make you feel guilty, to think you are taking money from someone who lives in the only kind of poverty you can imagine. You never get over it, but you keep taking the money.

But then, of course, soon come those sad visits to the furnished one-bedroom apartments. Their low ceilings. You hold your breath against that dank hallway smell. The cartons of cigarettes or a pack of rolling papers and a box of tobacco. He tells you about his father, who could roll a cig with one hand. The counter is a mess of chocolate milk and puffed wheat. The fridge full of Pepsi.

Around age twelve, he begins spending his evenings with you while your mother is out. You object to these visits. Who is taking care of who, you cry. You cannot understand why you are making food for a grownup man, a man who should be capable of more. Your first taste of resentment. But he tells you stories as you play cards. Almost everything you know about him comes from these stories. Driving around small towns with his friends. Stealing gasoline from airplanes. Selling encyclopedias. Finding massive pyramids in the forest. A few bar fights. Shady trips to the Caribbean. You begin to feel proud. You feel sure that your friends' fathers do not have stories like these. They, with their reliable jobs and easy authority. He sets you up for a life where stories are golden, where "all is to be dared, because even a person of poverty..."¹⁴²

You have been imagining this moment for a long time. You remember a recurring dream with a stadium full of people attending his funeral, twenty years ago at least. You wake up with a wet face. For a father like him you mourn in chunks. The grief falls off a bit at a time.

When you are a teenager, he comes to live in your basement. A bad idea, your bad idea. To keep living with your mother you need his help to pay the rent. Immediately, you cannot stand this arrangement. He disgusts you. His dirty nails, his sloppy hygiene, his seat at your mother's table.

You have zero generosity towards this man who is unable to fend for himself. He is the first person you ever raise your voice to. You yell at him with impunity, and an anger unleashes itself that

continues to ripple even today. He laughs at your rage, and you see flames. The dinners stop. You put your foot down. A precious child with too much power.

He starts eating puffed wheat again. His presence terrorizes your adolescence, like when he proudly contributes potato chips taken from Safeway's foodbank box. Like when he collects bottles from the high-school baseball diamond. In front of all your middle-class friends he exposes your very real desperation. The reality that hides under your quick intelligence, your blonde hair, and your designer jeans purchased with the government-paid child support you receive until you are twenty-five. Money that provides a lifeline to a different life. A life that looks different.

During a holiday dinner mid-crisis-breakdown-screaming-match between you and your sister he patiently acknowledges your position. You hold onto that moment as a form of hope. A possible alliance.

A few months later, he slips a disk in his back, becomes addicted to morphine, and your new boyfriend, C, drives you to the hospital to visit him. He is impressed that your C's great great uncle was a famous train robber. He thinks you have made a good choice. You clean his apartment, rooting through drawers to find his stash. You take away his ability to drive a car. He had recently dragged his puppy two blocks by her leash, and you are unflinching. You sit coldly in his doctor's office and make your case. Outside, in the sun, he tells you about how nice it would be to sit in a sauna, warm and relaxed.

You visit him once in his last rundown subsidized apartment, the one before the assisted living facilities. You eat pizza as an assortment of characters filter through to bum cigarettes and coffee. You realize that in the land of disorders your father has power.

Years pass and unfortunate events lead to a series of half-hearted breaks. Stories of intrigue to rattle some attention. Like the time he tries to have you arrested.

You see him over the holidays, and he cannot believe how much energy you have. You are brimming with happiness, alternating between wrestling with your great-nephews and filtering through his old photos, handwritten notes, and postcards with your brother. Messages he sent to his mother when he was much younger than you. Messages of hope and the weather on the road. Messages from a boy desperately becoming a man.

He is unresponsive. You hold his hand. You tell him you are sorry. You mean it but it is too late.

You are composed. Surprisingly so. Everyone comments on how calm, how measured, how strong.

He is taking his time. But his throat rattles with the death that is coming. Simultaneously, his body is drowning while it dehydrates. You read about how during a natural death the body no longer desires water. You cannot comprehend this dry world. You feel water rolling around in your body.

Its body. You are water standing up. Water stretching. Water waiting. Water letting go. Months later, you recall this feeling of otherness as you wait for the bus and drink hot soup under cool rain.

You sit. You try to be there, to be here. You hold the phone to his ear so family can say goodbye.

You and your sister rub his hands with frankincense, jasmine, and rose.

When you are alone, you tell him about your life. Your home, your friends, your garden. You tell him that you grow waxy green beans and tomatoes and lavender in summer. You tell him that you are hoping for bats. You tell him you try to take care of butterflies and bees. You tell him that you get paid to write. He would like that.

Your sister enters the room; you talk about the feeling of being a girl with a father like him. About your uncharacteristic lack of compassion. About being afraid of what people will say about him or about you, your father's daughter. But also, about how thankful you are for the anger he gave you, which lets you burn those people to the ground.

You leave the room so that the nurses can adjust him. You give his body privacy.

When you return, his breathing is changed. He is leaving. He convulses with some kind of lightning shot through veins. Your sister, on one side, and you, on the other, hold his hands, his arms. You hold him down. He opens his eyes. You see flashes of blue. For the first time, you meet his gaze. His exhale is like nothing you will ever hear again. You realize that a soul does not slip from its body, it gets the hell out. "To realize" is not the correct verb.

You hear the soul force itself out and out and out. Mouth wide, tongue out aahhhhhhgggggack. You laugh and your sister laughs. It is the funniest thing you have ever heard. And then, suddenly, he's gone. Done and gone. The room is noticeably colder, lighter. You open the window as wide as it will go. You let the smoke out.

Back home, you find an apology letter.

In it, he tells you that he is trying to

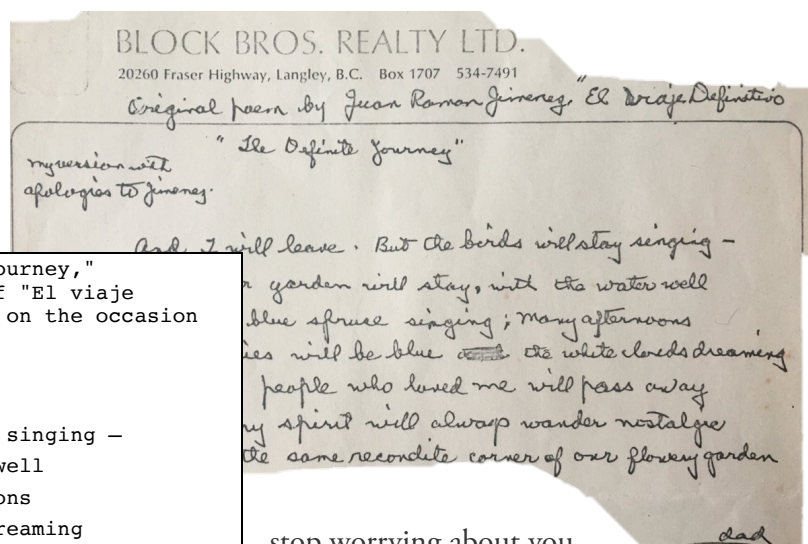


Fig. 64, handwritten note, "The Definite Journey," translation by Francis Patrick McGeough of "El viaje definitivo," by Juan Ramon Jimenez written on the occasion of his father's death in March 1974.

The text reads:

my version with apologies to Jimenez.
 And I will leave. But the birds will stay singing –
 And our garden will stay, with the water well
 And the blue spruce singing; many afternoons
 The skies will be blue its white clouds dreaming
 And the people who loved me will pass away
 But my spirit will always wander nostalgic
 In the same recondite corner of our flowery garden.
 – dad

stop worrying about you. *dad*

BEDROOMS

A container is a dialectical object. It has both an exterior and an interior.

In her essay “Container Technologies,” interdisciplinary scholar Zoë Sofia (now Sofoulis) describes how containers gather “many elements, forces, purposes, and dimensions, both human and extra-human,” to make themselves felt but not necessarily noticed. Bringing into the foreground that which has been designed to blend into the background, Sofia proposes three categorical containers: *the utensil*—“a container into which we dump our excess stuff,” like baskets and bowls; *the apparatus*—“a specialized container...in which something may be created or transformed...places in which inner and outer worlds are negotiated in the course of discovery/invention,” like ovens and washing machines; and *the utility*—an environmental container that “works unobtrusively to ensure “smooth functioning” and continued supply,” like airports, sewer systems, and, on a smaller scale, bedrooms. Within Sofia’s expanded definition, almost everything becomes a container of one sort or another.¹⁴³

Applying a similar rubric, poet Christina Sharpe’s keynote address at the 2022 Venice Biennale of Art asks, “What Could a Vessel Be?” In turn, she describes vessels as shapes and ships, bodies and bags, exhibitions and artworks, each one “narrative networks capable of transporting us across time and space.” Of bodies, she wonders—are we just vessels containing vessels? “Veins, arteries, tributaries, blood, urine, saliva, and mucus.”¹⁴⁴ Sharpe’s observations are (of course) timely. Containers and vessels, as both concept and device, have become a significant topic of discussion in the artworld, a discussion often animated by Ursula K. Le Guin’s 1986 essay, “The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction.”¹⁴⁵ Le Guin hypothesizes that the first cultural device was probably not a thing for whacking like a stick, rock, or bone, but a travelling device of some kind, a thing to carry other things in: “A leaf a gourd a

shell a net a bag a sling a sack a bottle a pot a box a container. A holder. A recipient.” Something handy. A thing to gather an excess of things that could not fit within the belly, what Le Guin calls the original container.¹⁴⁶

Thinking of my belly as a container, full of tea and toast, reminds me of how political theorist and philosopher Jane Bennett describes flesh as a living container “populated and constituted by different swarms of foreigners.” Home to multitudinous yeasts, viruses, and bacterium—the latter of which within our biome “collectively possess at least 100 times as many genes as the mere

20,000 or so in the human genome....”¹⁴⁷ For them, and others, my figure is a

shaped receptive space, a vessel, a host, *their* world.

Looking around the room, I see boxes on boxes, bags in bags, a large assortment of water glasses and cups of coffee. These are containers easy to spot; looking closer though, I see books holding information and images, a fleece sweater holding my torso, the

phone holding my life. Doing so, I am reminded of a conversation with Liz Magor

I had in 2015 when tasked to write about the artist’s new series of cast polymerized

gypsum boxes for an exhibition at Susan Hobbs Gallery in Toronto. Magor spoke about her interest in surfaces as another kind of container, how everything in the studio had become a surface for something else.

In past work, Liz Magor has investigated the capacity for found objects (beer, sleeping bags, cigarettes) to burrow within the open, interior spaces of sculptural objects. In this new body of work, she examines how the function of an object, when layered with other objects, is transformed into a surface. This is not a process of simulation. It is a question of display.

Unique casts of boxes form the sculptures’ primary component. Beaten and battered, they have nearly lost their characteristic cubic form. Closed, they are no longer able to provide



Fig. 65,
Pearl Pet by
Liz Magor,
2015.

storage. Produced by coating the boxes' insides with polymerized gypsum, the result is photographic; the positive surface exposes the unseen negative space of their interior. On top of each a would-be hand, a solid cast of an individual glove, cradles a colourful preserved bird enclosed in plastic. Stiff, it lies there. A skin of feathers, stuffed. Also like a photograph: it is the record of a subject that once moved, swiftly. Now stilled, it has become an image of its former wildness. This thing has undergone an ontological shift, quite literally, a shift in being, from *being* alive. Now dead and hermetically sealed—against air, deterioration, empathy—its exteriority exceeds its internal potential.

What do single gloves, beaten up boxes, and dead birds have in common? In their past lives these objects were containers: a box for papers, utensils, or mementos; a glove for a hand; a bird for kinetic energy, life. In Magor's studio, they collect dust. They begin to form stacks, becoming inadvertent shelves for one another. While she actively collects them, in reality they are all around us, these types of things. Things, that for poet Lisa Robertson, "don't function like signs", but rather, as "image[s] thick with latent time". We call them dust collectors. Things too dear to throw away but fundamentally lacking in use value. They stick around, obstinately waiting.¹⁴⁸

Across her oeuvre, Magor has focused on storage, shelter, domestic space, and the quotidian, to bring into view that which is often obscured.

I first encountered her work in 2002 as a mid-career retrospective at the Vancouver Art Gallery. As I rounded the corner of the first gallery, a knapsack spilled the dayglow orange of mac and cheese powder, a stiff blue towel hid cans of cheap beer, and a hulking accumulation of furniture held a small white dog. If I saw the dog, I don't remember it, but I recall being impressed by the size

<u>One Bedroom Apartment</u>	
<u>Accessories List</u>	
to be acquired through furniture rental - contemporary style	
-bed frame, mattress	
-dining room table, 4 chairs	
-sofa	
-armoire	
-hutch	
-dresser	
-kitchen package (to include 4 piece table setting, glass ware, tableware, coffeemaker, iron, alarm clock, etc.)	
-bedding package	
-2-4 carpets	
-2 table lamps	
-1 floor lamp	
-coffee table	
-armchair or love seat	
-2 occasional chairs	
-sofa table	
-2 night tables	
-mirror (minimum 4'x5')	
-boxes - double wall	
- single wall	
<u>Accents</u>	
-books (minimum 12 cubic feet)	
-clothing	
-6 sundry boxes (fax, tv, appliances, etc.)	
-decorator objects (clay pots, copper tubs, etc.)	
-shutters, blinds or curtains	

Fig. 66, recreation of object checklist for *One Bedroom Apartment* by Liz Magor, 1996.

and scale of the installation. I learned the work's title was *One-Bedroom Apartment* and contained

everything the artist considered necessary furnishings. I was nineteen years old and a first-year undergraduate student living alone for the first time. In contrast to my own lightly furnished home, Magor's apartment was filled with so much heavy stuff, grown-up stuff, stuff I did not yet know I needed. Four carpets? A hutch!

Mine appeared like a sketch or an exercise in improvisation by comparison. Cheap kitchen utensils, two chairs, a few towels, a second-hand futon, a kitchen table-on-loan. As someone still playing the role of an adult, I lacked the weight of things that hold us in place, to a place. Never mind. Due to the nature of my childhood, I had already moved close to a dozen times and understood the pitfalls of heavy wood.

In the twenty-plus years that have passed, I have wondered several times what it would have felt like to encounter the first iteration of the work's installation



Fig. 67, *One Bedroom Apartment* by Liz Magor, 1996 – documentation of the work's first installation at Susan Hobbs Gallery, Toronto.

at Susan Hobbs in 1996. Opening the door, I imagine my body squeezing past the piled-high boxes, a plush striped couch, and leaning bedframe. To be alone with all of it, not yet thinking the objects old or anachronistic. To recognize the familiar scent of transience.

Despite my initial impressions of abundance, the work's original object checklist (Fig. 62) clearly designates furnishings for one, or possibly two human occupants, living without much excess possessions. No adjacent art studio or home-office for instance. While the bulk of the installation is made up of boxes, it is unclear if the resident is moving-in or moving-out. And, of course, if one

looks closely, there is the dog—a small sculpture of a thin, white whippet cast from plaster, seeming to seek refuge under a table.

One Bedroom Apartment blurs the boundary of artistic, curatorial, and administrative labour.

Arranged with direct assistance from gallery or museum staff, each iteration gathers a unique assortment of contemporary furnishings, household sundry, and personal decorative accents to form a domestic tableau of a one-bedroom apartment within its current city of exhibition. The materials gathered for the installation reflect highly specified socio-economic conditions, regional tastes, and assumed lifestyle for the apartment's imaginary residents. Each respective version generates a

concentrated portrait of a time and place, ensuring its continued variability.

Compare, for example, the eclectic piles of faux antiques, camping supplies, workout equipment, unpacked books, and particle board shelving of the 2009 exhibition at the Doris McCarthy Gallery in Scarborough, Ontario, against 2013's clean, crisp, light-grey cabinets and uniform boxes when it was exhibited at Triangle France in Marseilles. Far more than four years seem to separate these distinct installations.

Fig. 68, crate containing ceramic dog for *One Bedroom Apartment*.

Moving art across international borders is difficult work. Effort is

spent building specialized crates, filling copious forms, negotiating transportation, paying duties, and clearing customs. A logistical nightmare. With the rise of a globalized art market and constant pressure to exhibit abroad, artists with dematerialized practices (the readymade, the ephemeral, the conceptual, the video) have developed ways to skirt, skip, or subvert these problems. While cumbersome, *One Bedroom Apartment* has circulated widely. It is a large artwork that travels light.



The world is full of objects. (Almost) everywhere has more than enough stuff to adequately furnish a life. As the work's sole inhabitant and singular consistent presence, only the dog remains irreplaceable and indispensable. Travelling to thirteen venues across six countries (Canada, Australia, France, Switzerland, Germany, and the USA) over the span of twenty-six years and counting, the dog leads the transitory life of a globalized, stateless citizen who relocates frequently in search of shelter and opportunity—travelling alongside everything and everyone who finds themselves marooned between object and subject, lingering in “stateless emergency.”¹⁴⁹

After leaving Susan Hobbs, the work moved to Sydney's Museum of Contemporary Art and was accompanied by text written by Magor titled, “White House Paint” (1996). In it, the artist remarks how a house (or apartment) is a container, not the contained, and because so much of what is contained by a house (or apartment) is itself a container, she asks the reader to consider containment in relation to both found objects and found subjects as things emptied and waiting to be filled.¹⁵⁰ In relation to Magor's oeuvre, the work has proved particularly predictive, both in terms of the sculptural content (boxes, bags, clothing, found furniture, sentimental ornaments) and method of composition (stacking, leaning, arranging).¹⁵¹

It has been several years since I began assembling my thoughts on *One Bedroom Apartment* into folders. Saving articles and installation images when they appeared, finding correlations, jotting notes—like the anecdote of when Magor (in her early twenties) met Agnes Martin (age fifty-eight) in 1970.

Apparently, during an artist talk Martin declares something to the effect of, “A serious artist should have no companions.” To which Magor asks, “But, what about dogs?” and Martin responds “No, not



Fig. 69, detail, *One Bedroom Apartment* when exhibited at Triangle France, Marseilles, 2015

even pets!”¹⁵² A snippet which passes down, hand-to-hand, mouth-to-ear, between female artists when we compare what has changed, and what has not. I began working on a draft in early April 2020.

In those early days of the public health crisis, we baked the bread and made the stew; we sorted through old documents, letters, photographs; we pieced together jigsaw puzzles of kittens in baskets and Machu Picchu; we reread favourite books; we did the laundry. We practiced routine tasks and conjured hobbies with an understanding that they were being done *instead*. Actions occupying empty boxes of time that curbed feelings of loss and fear. They filled the absence of meeting friends for dinner, of going to the studio or office, of feeling secure. In lieu of stability, we turned towards our collected possessions for reassurance. Shells for our sheltering.

It seemed inevitable that under those restricted domestic conditions I found myself sifting through this material, which like all materials includes research, memories, and a scattering of new connective thoughts. Materialism, while often used derogatively, can also offer a sense of solidity if not solidarity; *things* function on non-human schedules of events. A sensibility expressed in one of Magor’s artist statements, which confirms, “I am always looking for comfort in a world disturbingly subject to change. Sometimes I find it in work, as a recording of my activity. Sometimes I find it in objects, things that sit still for a while and slowly gather, then release, their history.”¹⁵³

Fig. 70, *Sleeper #7*
by Liz Magor, 1999.



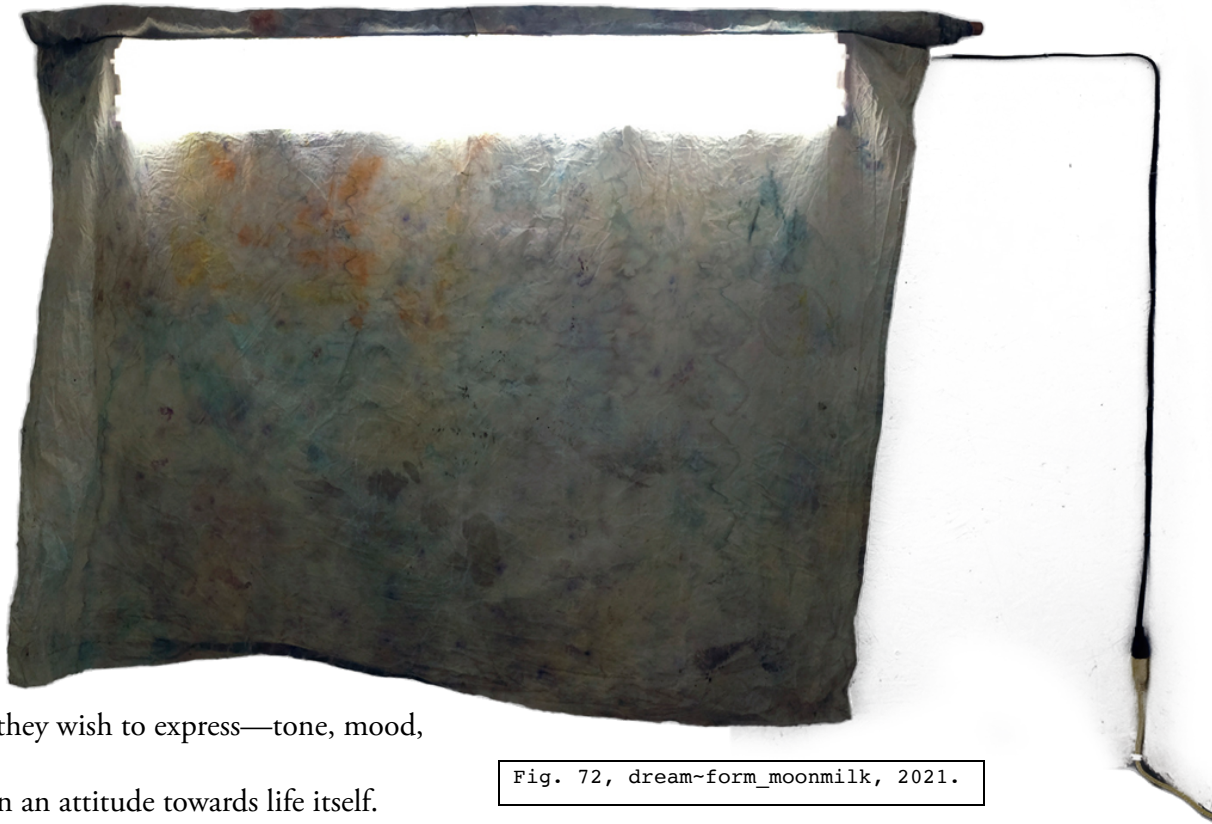
BEDDINGS & BEDCLOTHES

In mescaline-heightened rhetoric, midstream though a consideration of the miraculous nature of “four bamboo chair legs in the middle of a room” amongst the intricacies of human relations, Aldous Huxley’s *The Doors of Perception* (1954) curls tangential prose around depictions of drapery in classical paintings and sculptures. Huxley zooms between micro and macro scales of importance—in the folding fabric of his trousers’ lap he finds a “labyrinth of endlessly significant complexity!” and across broad areas of flowing curtains and voluminous skirts, drapery unfolds as a “major theme of all the plastic arts.”¹⁵⁴

By way of quick successive descriptions of artwork by Botticelli, Bernini, Piero, El Greco, and Cosimo Tura, Huxley suggests the ways in which artists utilize drapery to introduce non-representational or abstract forms into naturalistic artworks. Observing how, the strictly human, fully representational elements actually account for only ten percent of the compositional whole, while the other nine-tenths are given over to primarily non-representational elements. Within this space of depiction, artists portray the



Fig. 71, dream~form_fantasy, 2021.



affective qualities they wish to express—tone, mood, temperament, even an attitude towards life itself.

Fig. 72, dream~form_moonmilk, 2021.

In “Bed-2-Bed,” I consider the lap of Michelangelo’s *La Pietà* as something oceanic, its marbled form a site of roiling waves and seafoam; to similar effect, Huxley describes Watteau’s scenes as “a silken wilderness of countless tiny pleats and wrinkles, with an incessant modulation—inner uncertainty rendered with the perfect assurance of a master hand—of tone into tone, of one indeterminate color into another.”¹⁵⁵ While reading this passage, the temperate rainforests of my childhood appear, thick with moss turning stones into cushions and the tallest trees laced in grey-green lichen. Pushing his point further, Huxley imagines drapery as an expression of the peculiar and “unfathomable mystery of pure being...charged with is—ness,” which causes my brief study into Heidegger’s use of “da-sein” (German for being-there or existence) to flash into consciousness.¹⁵⁶

Spinning within a sense of radical interconnectedness between self, world, and object, I retether myself to the real by recalling the long hours my mother tried to teach me to sew. I know enough to hem a curtain or make a pillowcase, but patterns remain beyond me, and my corners could use some work. Lacking the capacity for sustained attention, I am a poor study of anything requiring machinic technique. A disadvantage for a sculptor. When I use fabric as a sculptural material, which is relatively frequently, a method of display or support is always easy to find—some chair, a coat hook, an edge of temporary wall, the long pole hanging above a bright window.

Inherently functional, supple, and divisible, fabric (or cloth, textile, drapery, whatever we want to call it), offers an active ontological amenability, capable of holding nearly any shape imaginable from the grandeur of Christo and Jean-Claude's *Wrapped Reichstag* (1995) to the humble dishrag, laying damp in the sink. Flexible—it folds, lays flat, bunches, crumples, hangs, covers, conceals, and slips off. Protective—it lends warmth, provides shade, and outfits us in any number of costumed guises. Absorbent—it soaks up blood and snot, spilled milk and bath water, affording a ready container for the body's excesses.

For all these reasons and more, I love fabric. More, the textures that fabric affords and the worlds these textures make visible. Some spectacular: a future draped in thermal reflective laser holographic rainbows, others ancient and unchanging: the stuff of wool, linen, burlap, and tanned leather.

In *The Golden Thread: How fabric changed history* (2018), Kasia St Clair writes how, in November 1922, when the archeologist Howard Carter discovered and soon began dismantling Tutankhamun's tomb he was “naturally disappointed” to find the casket filled with linen instead of rolls of papyrus. More than the familiar use-value in the protection of mummies, linen was used throughout the tombs to meticulously wrap statues and numerous other items within protective cocoons. However,

as with other such burials, St Clair explains how Carter's team discarded much of this fabric, brushing it away like dusty cobwebs, a practice which, like other smash-and-grab activities of Westerners, "would have been anathema to the ancient Egyptians themselves. [Since for them,] linen was imbued with powerful, even magical meaning: linen was what made mummies sacred."¹⁵⁷

To use today's materialist way of thinking, within Ancient Egyptian society, linen was an extremely valuable commodity. Derived from flax, a beautiful plant with tiny blue flowers (that grows surprisingly well on my Toronto rooftop garden), linen was "used by ordinary people to store wealth because it kept its value and could be exchanged for money in return for goods or services" due, at least in part, for its portable durability.¹⁵⁸ On a recent trip to London, I attended a tour of University College London's Petrie Museum which holds an extensive Egyptian collection, including the world's oldest known woven garment—the *Tarkhan dress*, a delicate linen shirt with a V-shaped neckline and prettily ruched sleeves, perhaps made for a child or small adult. After having been "rediscovered" in 1977 as a bundle amongst other pillaged textiles, researchers used radiocarbon testing to date the object as originating between 3482 and 3102 BCE. Over five-thousand years old!¹⁵⁹

Gazing at the garment recalled the experience of touching a butterfly delicately exposed as a trace fossil in a section of several hundred-thousand-year-old shale. Or, the time I looked through a telescope into North Korea from China's eastern-most section of the Great Wall—how it felt as though I was reaching across centuries of time versus a few hundred metres in the distance, an eery vastness made farther by the contrast between the polychrome clothing of my companions against the faded greens, blues, and greys of those I anxiously spied upon. In each of these instances, I experienced the uncanny closeness of time being folded into itself.

Fig. 73, Look 6 by
Pierpaolo Piccioli
for Moncler, 2019.



Fig. 74, Look 9 by
Maison Margiela, Fall-
Winter 1999-2000 –
made in collaboration
with Italian bedding
manufacturer
Featherlite, the duvet
coat was filled with
down feathers and
featured detachable
zipper sleeves.



Fig. 75, *Abito Letto* [Bed Dress]
by Cinzia Ruggeri, 1986 – when
asked if other designers
referencing her work made her
angry, Ruggeri responds that she
didn't really care, "You know
what? I don't give a damn, it
means that not everything was
lost."

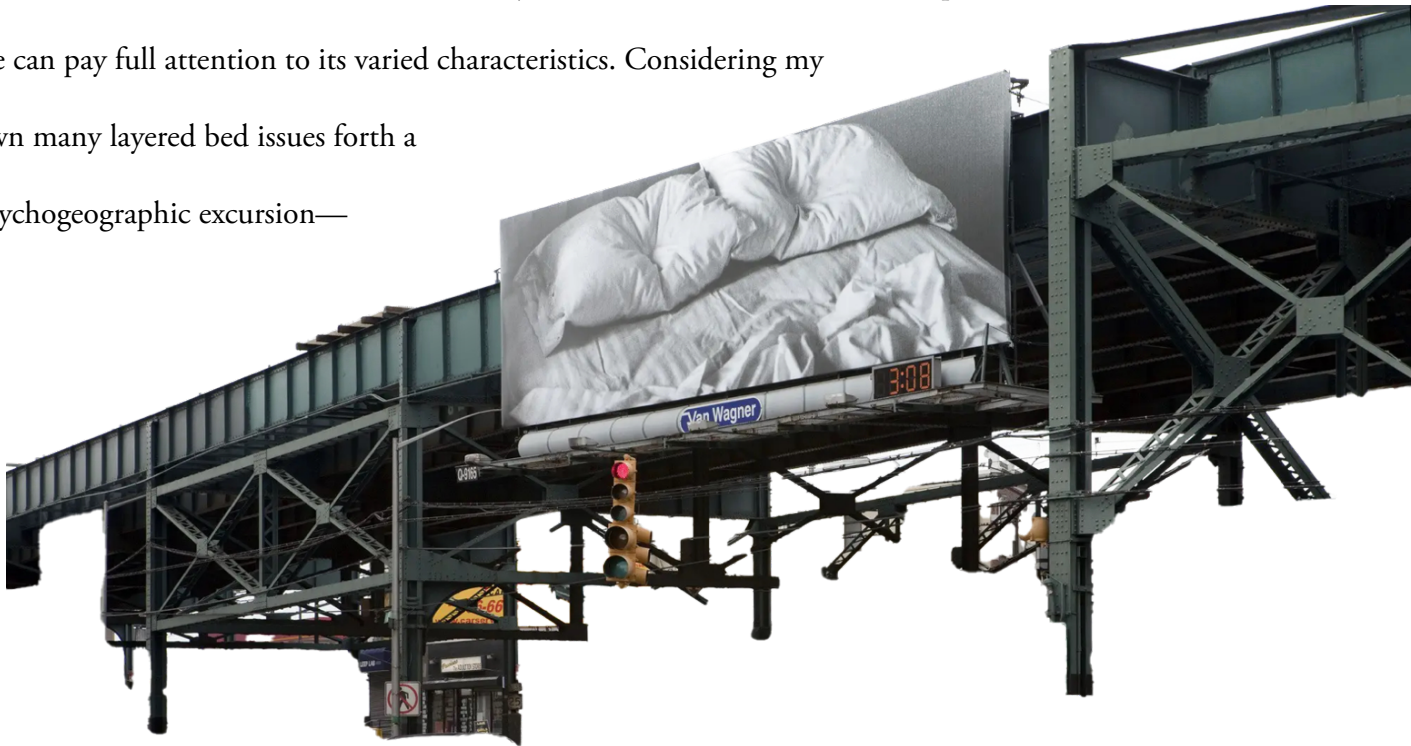


Fig. 76, design
from Viktor &
Rolf's
Autumn/Winter
2005-06 from the
Bedtime Story
collection.



Kind of like the warmth of sitting on a subway seat recently vacated, or finding a gigantic image of the rumpled empty sheets of Felix Gonzales-Torres and his lover Ross spread across a New York City billboard.¹⁶⁰ Moments in which a sense of intimacy out of step with reality is accompanied by the sudden blush of having witnessed some private grace.

In northern climates, the bed is where we enjoy many of our closest relationships with fabric, where we can pay full attention to its varied characteristics. Considering my own many layered bed issues forth a psychogeographic excursion—



- 1) Closest to the skin, dark blue sheets the colour of raw denim woven from Belgian flax spun into

Fig. 77, installation view, *Untitled* by Felix Gonzalez-Torres, 1991 – Van Dam Street near Queens Boulevard, Queens, New York City, February 20 to March 18, 2012.

linen by the Marinho family who own and operate a Portuguese textile company in Santo Tirso, which are later cut and sewed by the Costa family in Guimarães. Acquired on an indulgent whim, they will supposedly last ten-times longer than cotton.

- 2) Over this, an entirely too large linen duvet-cover (with a similar bespoke Portuguese provenance) containing a raw silk-fibre filled pink comforter purchased during a pop-up

display that appeared out of the blue next to our very rural 1960s concrete housing complex on the outskirts of Beijing circa 2009. It cannot be washed.

- 3) On top, one of the heavy tufted blankets found in an artisan market in Cusco, Peru, picturing either jaguars or alpacas.
- 4) For the cats, cheap fleece cheetah-print throws picked up in Quezon City (a suburb of Manila in The Philippines) while attending the Kamias Triennial in 2017, a cross-cultural exhibition initiated by our good friend, artist Patrick Cruz.
- 5) Propped against the wall, all the necessary pillows: neck-bracing Temper-Pedic foam, leg-supporting wool, cuddle-comforting down.
- 6) All this resting upon a double-sized mattress made in a small Quebec City atelier stuffed with wool, eucalyptus fibres, and natural latex. Heavy and hard as a rock.
- 7) Yet, because of this hardness, a necessary mattress softener, a sheep wool pile cover produced by “Soul Comfort”—a company owned by a friend of my mother’s, Anyes. Their website describes how she started making wool products many years ago when, as a young mother, she “needed slippers for her newborn daughter’s tiny feet.” As the daughter of two Dutch parents who survived the second World War, she remembers listening to them explain how “if it were not for wool, the soldiers in WW2 would not have



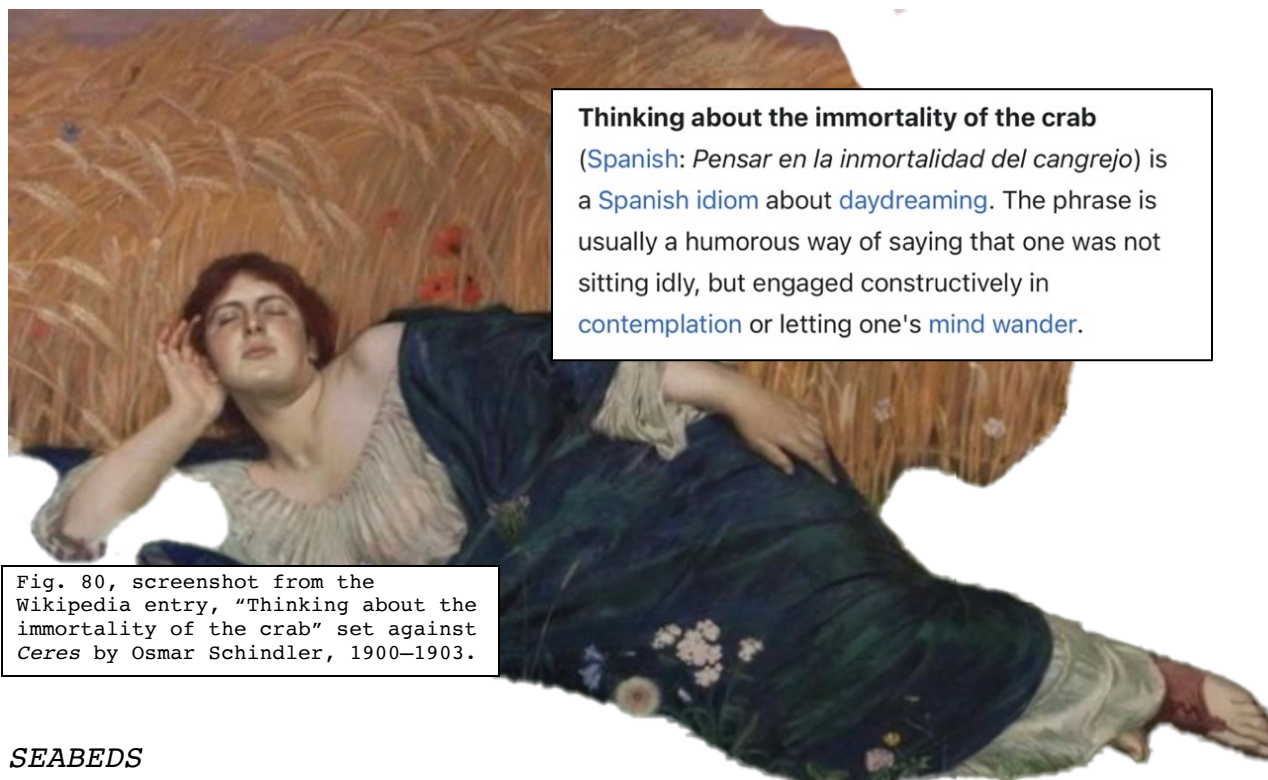
Fig. 78, studio view,
Sleep Country by
Patrick Cruz, 2022.

made it. The wool socks combated foot rot, and the underwear, sheepskin jackets and overalls for the aviators helped them survive in planes with no heat.”¹⁶¹

- 8) Everything is supported by a metal bedframe fabricated somewhere in China and bought on Amazon.ca. It is surprisingly sturdy and tall enough to hide soft storage bins of seasonal clothing, which have become miwwi’s preferred bed. (moonie sleeps between us.)

Fig. 79, *Partially buried sofa*
by Ken Lum, 1984/2018.





SEABEDS

There she stretches, spreading across fresh cotton sheets printed with crimson flowers, faded by age and sun. After pulling down a corner, she thinks better and rolls herself up burrito-style, turns her head and listens to the wind,

WOOOOOWWWWOOOOOOOEEEEEEEEWWWWWOOONNNN

WOOOOAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHOOOOOOOOAAAAAAAAAAAAWOOOOOOOOOO
 EEEHHHHWAAAAAAAAHHHH

A tall birch tree with nearly bare branches waves to her through the window and a scattering of husky leaves flutter in manic applause. There have been warnings of ninety kilometer an hour gusts, but she isn't worried—if the electricity goes out, there is a large fireplace and plenty of wood. She is as cozy as the chickens huddled next door in their roost of soft straw.

She arrived last night after a feverish three-hour drive compounded by a mixture of hail, wet-snow, and larger-than-life eighteen-wheelers bearing down on her, headlights on high. What can it mean if

winds are the same speed as a driving car? If thrust with near equal force in two directions simultaneously, driven east by the engine and north by the lake, where could she have ended up?

One of those new LED floor lamps occupies the room's corner, an inverse and flattened capital λ , held upright by arms that spread across the floor. Even though only early afternoon, it has been turned on, casting a hazy strip of key lime green glow against the wall.

Her limbs feel heavy, pushed down by gravity and lethargy. A combination of end of term exhaustion and ruby-coloured pills.

The light is sooo pretty. During an online workshop the poet explains that luminescence is the world's primary method of communication. On Wikipedia she learns how several fish and cephalopods communicate with polarized light patterns. The strobing zebra stripes of male cuttle fish turn florid when encountering a sexual rival and the Caribbean reef squid hunts zoo plankton with disco-light chromatophores glowing under their skin. Certain shrimp (Pistol, Mantis) even create light-filled micro bubbles with the sound shock of striking or snapping. This process is properly called "sonoluminescence" but has whimsically been re-dubbed, "shrimpoluminescence."¹⁶²

Claudia Eberlein of the University of Sussex "suggests that the light in sonoluminescence is generated by the vacuum within the bubble in a process similar to Hawking radiation, the radiation generated at the event horizon of black holes."¹⁶³

She tries to move luminescence slowly across her tongue...loo-ma-nes-scents,
loooooomaaaaaneeeesenssssssss, loomanaissance and finds herself swimming in glistening phosphorescent oceans off Keats' pier, the water cold as sweat in the midsummers heat. Night turns

to afternoon and she is laying face-down on a bed of damp seaweed. Occasionally light catches around its edges turning the dark forest vibrant, an underwater emerald city.

The weather app says there will be blue skies around three and she can already see a change. Bright streaks illuminate the room while strange shadows follow, elongated houseplants turn into rabbit ears, donkey tails, and the strings of jellyfish. Funny to think about the expression, “blue skies,” as if the sky could be plural—although with atmospheric layers, pressure systems, and the jet stream, what *is* the sky if not a multifaceted system of circulation? Annie Dillard’s *Pilgrim at Tinker’s Creek* instructs the reader to follow Stewart Edward White’s suggestion: “if you look closely enough you *see* the wind—the dim hardly-made-out, fine débris fleeing high in the air.”¹⁶⁴

Someone on twitter says only fifty percent of the population experiences an inner dialogue.

She is twenty-two and spending a few days at a guesthouse owned by an American astrologer on his blueberry farm in the highlands of Central Guatemala. He tells her that fourteen spirit guides watch over her, although she doesn’t remember asking why.

Lazing in a hammock next to the river she tests his hypothesis—politely introducing herself. A Voice in a remarkably good mood responds, both singular and somehow plural. It is happy to chit chat about the weather and whatever else, like if she should continue dating the current boy or some other one.

A few days later, when she leaves and begins bussing from town to town, the Voice speaks to her only occasionally, but when it does, there is a special quality of insistence. Advice, warnings, permissions, nudges in particular directions. Once, the Voice tells her to abandon a popular tourist destination immediately. Taking the first ride out of there feels amazing. She is elated, wonderfully

free of expectation and responsibility. Before cellphones and social media, the Voice makes her feel less alone. The Voice tells her she is someone special.

The astrologer's website expired last March, and she is saddened to realize his final e-newsletter arrived years earlier. Its topic, *Living the Dream*, closes with a passage from the twelfth century mystical polymath, Hildegard von Bingen:

The visions which I see, I don't receive in a dream, in sleep, nor by a disturbed mind, not with physical eyes nor with the ears of the outer man, but in wakefulness and by a clear mind, with the eyes and ears of the inner man. What I see or learn, I bear in mind for a long time, so that when I see that light and hear, I remember, and at the same time I see, hear and know, as it were, instantly learning what I know.¹⁶⁵

A response to the previous paragraph, in which the astrologer writes:

We are closest to dream body awareness in our quotidian lives when we are operating on intuition rather than thought.... [Recognizing] opportunities, or avoiding danger and evil people—are actually messages from our dream bodies.... Similarly, the spontaneous acts of audacity and daring which we occasionally rise to in response to extraordinary circumstances (which surprise us as much as the people around us) are dream body responses.... It is our dream bodies which are the source of all our creativity; and our estrangement from our dream bodies is what makes life in modern day society so empty and meaningless.¹⁶⁶

Variants

The idiom is about daydreaming.^[8] Similar phrases are used in various languages.

- **Czech:** *přemýšlet o nesmrtnosti chrousta* – thinking about the immortality of the [maybug](#) (*chroust*)
- **Finnish:** *istun ja mietin syntyjä syviä* – sitting and wondering about [the world's early origins](#)
- **Polish:** *myśleć o niebieskich migdałach* – literally, "thinking about blue almonds"; sometimes *myśleć* is replaced with *śnić* or *marzyć*, changing the meaning to "dreaming about blue almonds".^[9]
- **Portuguese:** *pensando na morte da bezerra* – "thinking about the death of the calf"
- **Romanian:** *a se gândi la nemurirea sufletului* – "thinking about the immortality of the soul"

Fig. 81, Screenshot from the Wikipedia entry, "Thinking about the immortality of the crab."

Watching sun sparkle off the wild late autumn fields after a hard rain, she remembers a joke:

A whale walks into a bar and sits down next to a guy.

The guy turns to him and wails,

“WOOOOOWWWOOOOOOOEEEEEEEEWWOONNNNWOAAAAAHHH
HHHHOOOOOOAAAAAAWOOOOOOEEEEEEAAAAH...”

Whale looks at the guy and says, “Man, you are tanked!”

Man says, “True.”

“But do you know why crabs never tip?”

“They’re shellfish.”

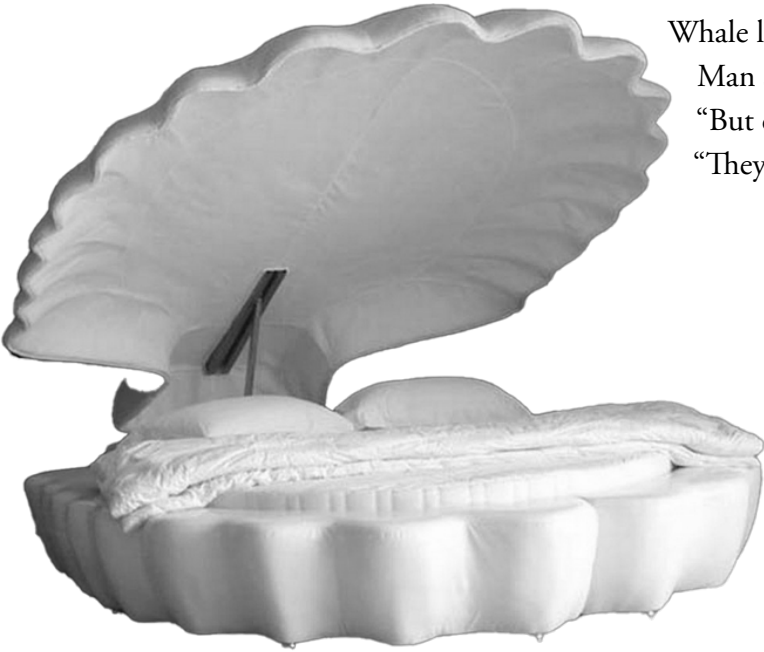


Fig. 82, found image of a shell bed.

~ APPENDICES ~



Fig. 83, detail, *Look 9* by Maison Margiela, Fall-Winter, 1999–2000.

Fig. 84, *Au Natural* by Sarah Lucas, 1994.

EXTIMATE AESTHETICS

From Baumgarten through Kant or Hegel and Adorno through Bourriaud, the field of thought called aesthetics is planted thick with ideas. In the tradition of Western granularity, these ideas have been thoroughly discussed and debated by philosophers, and generally ignored by art students.

With mockery we say, an artwork is *too* aesthetic. By which we imply the work is shallow, without intellectual substance. Or, with admiration we say, wow—they have a *terrific* sense of aesthetics!

Meaning, they have *really* good taste. Taste as a shorthand for any number of predictable things.

Usually wealth or something that was once, grossly, called “breeding.”

My attitude aligns with ethnographer Stephen Muecke's definition: "The aesthetic, in its original meaning, is about sensitivities discovering their form...."¹⁶⁷ This description doesn't throw away taste but rather reorients it toward the sensual mouthy feel of taste on the tongue. When I hesitate on the second half of the phrase, "sensitivities discovering their form," I recall the restraint of hovering

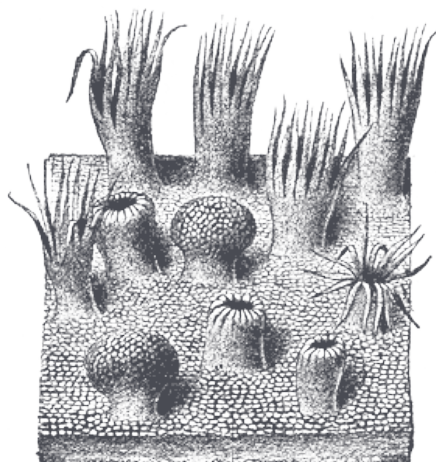


Fig. 85, Found semi-diagrammatic image of the tongue's mucus membrane featuring filiform and fungiform papillae, which contain tastebuds on their upper surface. Generally red in colour, the accumulation of the tongue's papillae resembles a microscopic coral reef.

fingertips over a loved one's skin, the rushing awkwardness of toddlers scrambling over beach stones, and the pickiness of palates, so absurd in their enjoyments and dislikes (cayenne covered lollipops, stinky anchovies, blood and milk). The ways in which, with ease, we find the slightest visible variations. How just yesterday, when scanning my lavender bed, I noticed the first bud of the season, still unopened. This distinction

could have been no more than five-millimeters across, and yet how easily I caught it from a distance of some twenty-feet. (My friend Sarah likes to say artists would make great crime scene investigators, but we are focused on other things.)

And yet, with its evocation of terra nullius, I find Muecke's use of "discover" difficult to swallow. But here, sandwiched between "sensitivities" and "form," discovery seems close to describing the adventure of creation. And by adventure, I mean curiosity. And by curiosity, I mean the task of asking questions, whether they be simple or complex. By drawing attention to the wild unknown sensuousness of aesthetics, Muecke gets to the center of *why*—

Why mix flour and salt with Gatorade, urine, and chewed cacao leaves to form dough that will feed ants and other critters? Why collect the green waste of lawnmowers and the charcoal of forest fires then add these to wheat paste and soak the whole mixture into the supple cotton of used clothing?

Why dissolve the subtle face of copper with wine and the oils of fingertips or toes? Why melt and pour and cast and break everything and start the process all over again?

So that sensitivities might discover their form. And with a straight face, I ask—what could be more important?

To this understanding of aesthetics, I add the modifying agential adjective, “extimate.”

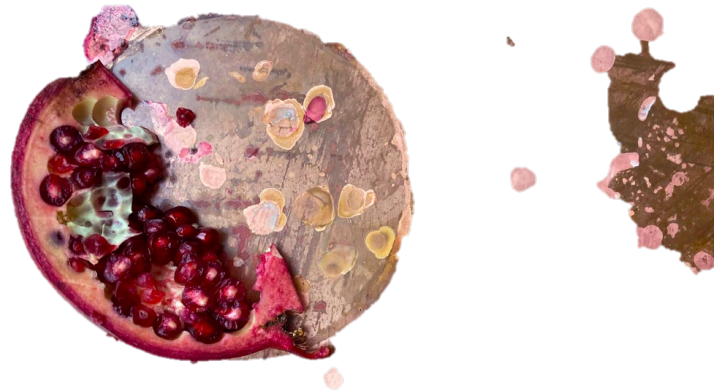


Fig. 86, studio view, *space-form_fruit salad*, 2021.

In the first pages of *Autobiography of Red* (1998), Anne Carson

explains how, unlike nouns, which name the world, or verbs, which activate the names, adjective are inherently exterior—

...adjectives come from somewhere else. The word adjective (‘epitheton’ in Greek) is itself an adjective meaning “placed on top,” “added,” “appended,” “imported,” “foreign.” Adjectives seem fairly innocent additions but look again. These small imported mechanisms are in charge of attaching everything in the world to its place in particularity. They are the latches of being.¹⁶⁸

Simply put, adjectives are called upon to add emphasis. To produce change. A shirt is just a shirt, but an *orange* shirt is something special. To decide, “I will wear an orange shirt today” is to summon a specific object, an object that designates an *objective*—whether that be to sponsor a certain political party or recognize the generational trauma inflicted by Canada’s residential school system. Whatever the reason, an orange shirt is a choice.

What latches does extimate form? How does *this* adjective change an understanding of aesthetics?

Returning to the prefacing questions that Brian Massumi poses, “What new thoughts does it make

possible to think? What new emotions does it make possible to feel? What new sensations and perceptions does it open in the body?”¹⁶⁹

As briefly mentioned in “Bedframes,” *extimité* is a linguistic knot linking “exteriority” with “intimacy.” Coined by psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, the term describes a process of intimate exteriorization, wherein shared context is inhaled, and personal conditions exhaled, over and over, literally and metaphorically.¹⁷⁰ And later summarized by scholar Jamil Khader as a means of designating “a paradoxical mode of subjectivity in which binary oppositions such as inside and outside, intimate and external or foreign, are spliced and conjoined to engender a radical zone of indistinction that can be referred to as *interiorexteriority*.”¹⁷¹ The porosity of existence.

I was introduced to the term by anthropologist Elizabeth Povinelli during a seminar hosted by the Banff Research in Culture (BRiC) residency at the Banff Center in summer 2017. The program brought together a selection of twenty early career scholars and artists to consider, “What might the world look like in fifty years and what can we do to shape its future?” While the nation-state we found ourselves in (so-called Canada) celebrated its sesquicentennial, our lungs filled with the dirty air of anthropogenic climate change ravaging forests and communities across the western region of Turtle Island (North America), a crisis that could only be understood within the long *durée* of racial settler colonial capitalist extraction.

Upon arrival, my cohort was reminded that we had been assembled to employ our youthful enthusiasms to look forward, tasked, as one organizer put it, “to determine a new lexicon for the Left.” But on most days, we couldn’t see more than a couple dozen feet in front of us. Within these conditions, as we breathed in that smoke-filled world and breathed out our smoke-filled bodies, the

fraught extimate conditions of the situation was obvious: as we change the world, we are changed by the world.

Throughout *We Change Everything We Touch and Everything We Touch Changes*, my intention has been to convey stories of extimate objects. I have reached for extimacy as a conceptual foundation to place inside and outside within a state of visible tension. By foundation, I mean not the unshakable stuff of bedrock, but a leaky sublayer that registers the indivisibility of exterior-objective forces within interior-subjective experience. These objects have included Peruvian butterflies and my father's death rattle, Möbius strips and volcanic eruptions, the Voice and waking dreams, pain's enunciation and creative acts of all sorts.

To sum, I will state my conclusions in the form of a dream.¹⁷²

There was a picnic on its surface,
 this pearl,
 a magic skin,
 this mystical shell,
 a gleaming amber moon.

Day poured into night,
 light into darkness,
 labour into pleasure.

 Wine glasses left rings.
 Salad dressing splashed.
 Someone spilled the salt.

They had worked too hard.
 Walked too far, too fast.

Feeling spacey,
 bodies shifted position and for an hour, an age—
 everything changed.

They moved from beings to becomings and good vibrations overflowed.
 Carefully,
 they took off habits,
 put down jobs,

Of all these examples, I will pause on the image. Because after encountering it

in the short essay, “These Were Once Kings and Queens in Wax” (2014), by David Serlin in *Cabinet Magazine*, my practice changed.¹⁷⁴

The photograph was taken in the early morning hours of 20 March 1925, following a fire that overwhelmed the museum on London’s Marylebone Road. News of the fire similarly swept national and international



outlets. In one descriptive passage printed in *The Manchester*

Fig. 88, survivors of the 1925 fire.

Guardian (precursor to today’s *Guardian*), a reporter explains how “the wax models could be distinctly heard sizzling.” But what of the smell? A cloud hung thick and dripping with old wool and beeswax, lacquered teak and human hair, such ghastly smoke of history and celebrity mingling together, huge and airborne.

As a symbol of catastrophe, revolution, and human survival, fire inhabits the interstice between destruction and continuance. Fire is causal. Fire is symptomatic. Fire is viral. Fire indiscriminately engulfs common spaces and common worlds. With a hypnotic flickering surface, fire is our first subtle screen.

Primary documentation of the event exists today as silent newsreels surveying the destruction, which, as Serlin suggests, seem to presage “the images of firebombed neighborhoods that Londoners would come to know fifteen years later.”¹⁷⁵

First published in the premier Dutch weekly magazine, *Het Leven* [Life], the sepia-toned photograph portrays a strange scene: a small group of life-sized wax figures gather amidst ruins, uncanny in posture and appearance, sitting in states of semi-undress. Without their accompanying clothing and

sets, the figures become apparently interchangeable. As Serlin claims, “One does not know if what one is looking at was once a king or a servant, a revolutionary or a rogue, a statesman or a thief, a torturer or the tortured.”¹⁷⁶

The figures have experienced an ecstatic change, both literally and metaphorically. On the left, a female form stretches both arms towards some purpose that is not altogether clear. To embrace her lover? To weave a web? To climb the wall and escape this fate? The man posed to her right is pensive, in a state of active listening, but to whom, and for what reason? My favourite is the only standing figure, legs apart, arms bent at hip-height, expression both bored and formidable. I imagine him a pirate who has seen too much and cares little, as evidenced by the decapitated heads lolling about his feet. Then there is the figure sitting on the ground; while focusing attention solely on her, my belief in their animism is nearly confirmed. With knees to chest, head leaning sympathetically skyward, and eyes closed, she experiences either a moment of rest or spiritual communion, likely both. And yet, despite these wild variations in form and stance (to use the same language with which I describe my sculptural work in “Bedsore”), the wax figures lack possessive claims on individuality and authenticity. They appear uncertain, their hold on material reality tentative, contingent, amenable, poised between object and concept.

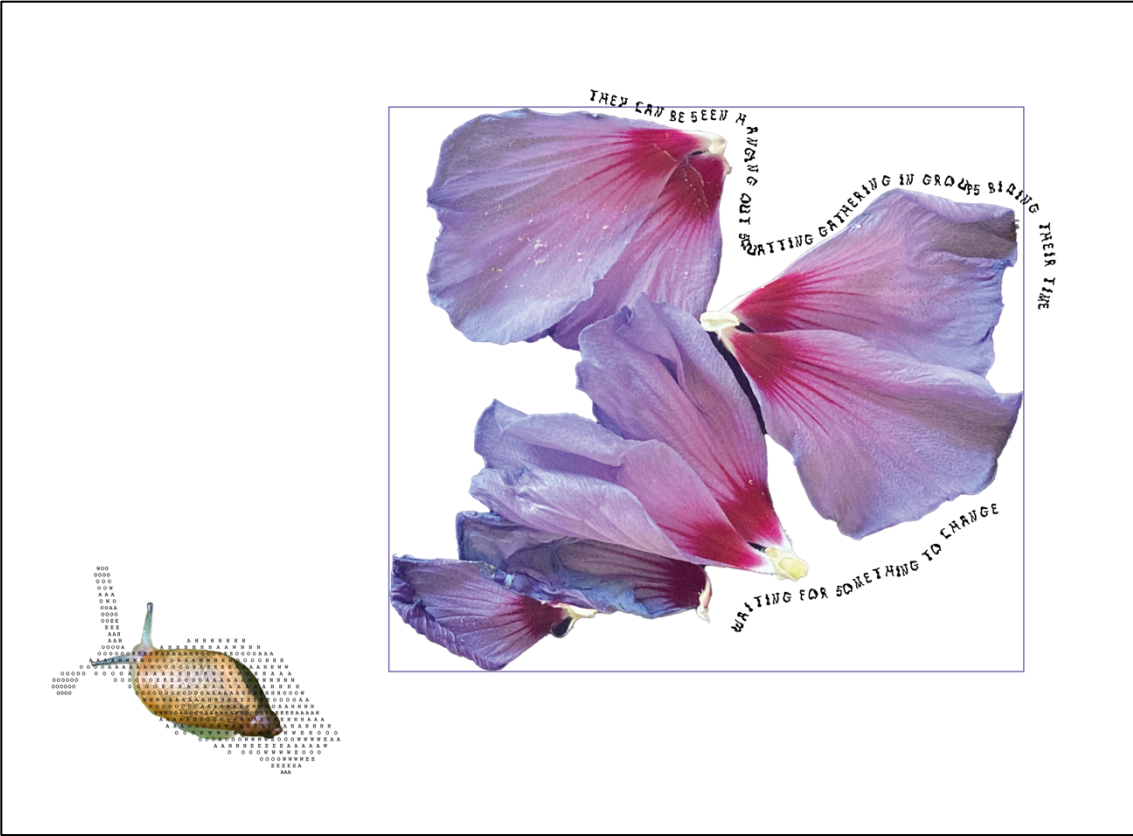
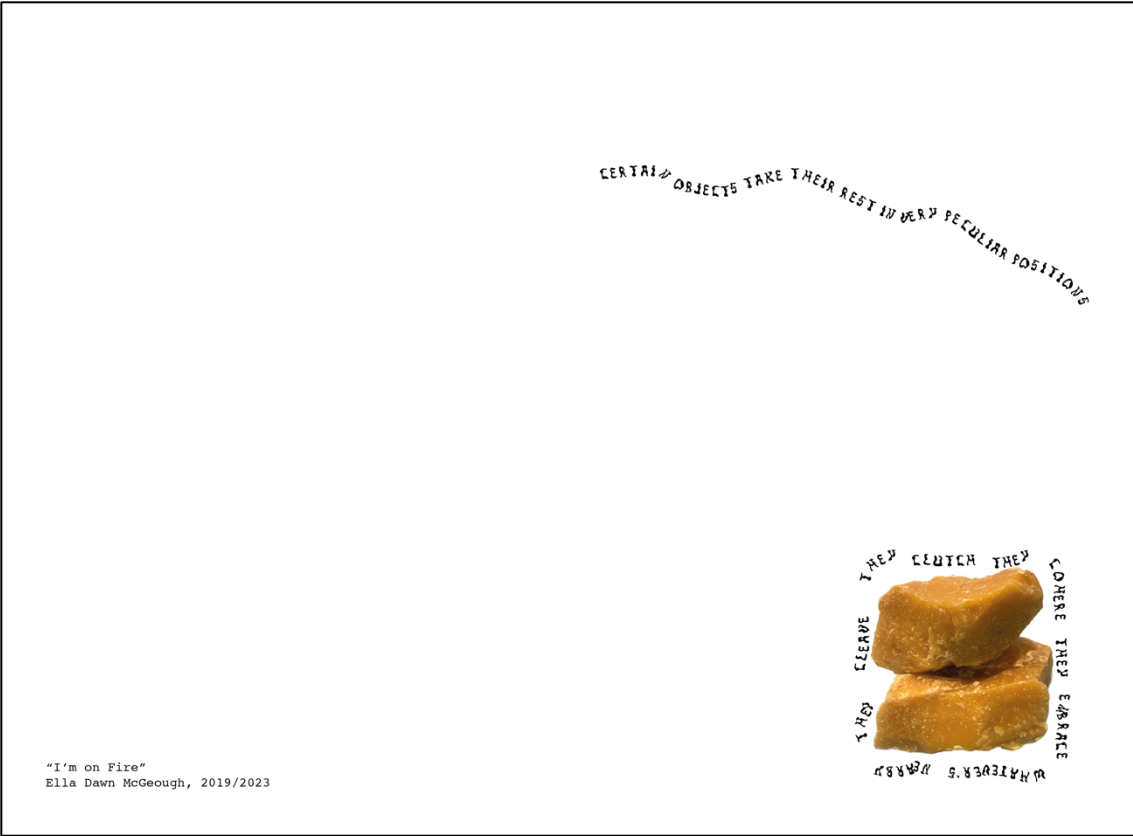
Returning to *Changelings*, like Tussaud’s figures and my sculptural work in general, each form is caught mid-pose, an internal state of animation evident and yet temporally paused. This pause—this pose—is an essential act of fiction. (By fiction, I mean what Martha Kenney describes as a fable, a story “that teaches us to pay attention to our world in new ways.”)¹⁷⁷ The verb to pose comes from “poiesis,” a word standing between “to make” and “to be made.” While often applied pejoratively (he is *such* a poser), it also refers to a brief sphere of uncertainty in which we do not yet know what

will happen. Strike a pose. Pose a question. Or, a threat. Whatever the case, posing is a potent state within the process of creation.

And yet, for their part, I find that *Changelings* silently, persistently escapes all these definitions, preferring the *clicketyclacking clicketyclacking* of pebbles kicked down the streets of our childhood, the thumbing *ziiiiitherrrrrrrr* of cicadas in late July, the *aba daba daba dooing* of my mother, the *wooooooowoooowhooshing* of the world spinning, while we cling to our bed as a warm planet.

*I'M ON FIRE*¹⁷⁸

A BODY IN MOTION
KEEPS IN MOTION
UNTIL IT IS
DETERMINED TO REST
BY ANOTHER BODY
AND A BODY AT REST
REMAINS SO UNTIL
IT IS DETERMINED TO
MOTION BY ANOTHER



AFTER A FEW DAYS
OR WEEKS
EVEN YEARS

THEY WILL BE MOVED ALONG



THEIR IS NOT A
PERFECT REST
BUT A BRIEF SUSPENSION
OF ACTIVITY



WE COULD JUST AS EASILY
EXCLAIM:
IT COULD HAPPEN AGAIN
ANY TIME!

THE CHOREOGRAPHY OF THINGS AND THEIR GESTURES MAY SUGGEST A FORM OF COLLECTIVE MOVEMENT



SOME MEMORY OF THEIR OCCUPATION OF SPACE AND RELATION TO EACH OTHER WILL PERSIST LIKE A WEIRD DREAM AS JIGS AND SIMILAR LINES ON SIMILAR PAGES

WHILE WE MIGHT SAY ~
IT WAS OVER BEFORE WE KNEW IT!
OR
IT SURE DIDN'T LAST VERY LONG!



THOUGH

SOMETIMES

IT'S MORE LIKE A GROUP OF MOTHS TO THE FLAME



"CHANGELINGS" Exhibition Documentation, Gales Gallery, York University, 15–20 October 2023



Fig. 89, *dream-form_seasons*, 2023.



Fig. 90, installation view, "Changelings" 2023.



Fig. 91, *change-form_Kore*, 2023.



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Fig. 93, *change-form_yard*, 2023.



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After suffering a debilitating injury from a streetcar accident when she was eighteen years old, Frida Kahlo wore plaster corsets to support her spine for most of her life. She covered them with drawings of tigers and monkeys, birds and communist symbols.

Kahlo once remarked that “they thought I was a surrealist, but I wasn't. I never painted dreams. I painted my own reality.”¹⁸²

Figure 27. *Chrysalis in various states of opening*, 2019. Digital image. 37

Photograph taken during a trip to Victoria Butterfly Gardens with my niece Kristy and her sweet son, Gregory.

Figure 28. *Amore e Psiche* [Cupid and Psyche] by Giuseppe Maria Crespi, 1707–1709. Oil on canvas, 130 x 215 cm. 39

When Psyche's curiosity risks her marriage to Eros, she is instructed to undertake a series of purification trials, which has subsequently been compared to the pain and transformation undertaken by the caterpillar within the cocoon.¹⁸³

Figure 29. *Irises*, 2018. Digital image. 40

Photograph taken in the courtyard gardens courtyard of Royal Jubilee Hospital, Victoria, June 15, 2018.

Figure 30. A Tlingit shaman's dance apron that, according to its original collector, depicts a mosquito from the shaman's dream, ca. 1908.¹⁸⁴ 41

Figure 31. *Talking Pillow* by Laurie Anderson, 1977–1997. Pillow, speakers, and media player; 25.4 x 25.4 x 15.24 cm. 42

When a viewer puts their head to the work's pillow, they hear a recording of Anderson's voice. One listener, named Anna K., heard lyrics from her 1993 song, “Tightrope.”

“I am walking on a tight rope.

Backwards and Forwards.

Backwards and Forwards.

All my family is around me.

If I fall I will crush them [...]

A very thin line.

A line that is made by my blood.”¹⁸⁵

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For this interactive project presented at MoMA in New York visitors were invited to rest on plush polychrome pillows and communal beds to take some downtime from the fatigues of looking at art, while considering how “Black people in the United States are twice as likely to get insufficient sleep compared with white people.” A sleep-gap worsened for “those who are undocumented, disabled, or at lower income levels.” Responding to these

concerns, the artists ask, "How can we dream when we don't sleep?"¹⁸⁶

Figure 36. *dream-form_mask*, 2021. Soy wax, coconut wax, and oil pastels, 12.7 x 12.7 x 25.4 cm. 49

Mice nibbled the work during the author's absence.

Figure 37. *You dreamt you could walk again* by Carolee Schneemann, 1975. Excerpt from "The Kitch Portfolio," 2015. 51

In a journal entry Schneemann recounts a dream about her life-long collaborator, Kitch, an eighteen-year-old cat. After writing "I dreamt you could walk again," she crosses out "I," replacing it with "You" – "You dreamt you could walk again." Blurring human/cat boundaries, Schneeman offers a tender and beautiful insight into the other beings that permeate our unconscious.¹⁸⁷

Figure 38. *Bed Peace* by John Lennon and Yoko Ono, 1969. Black marker pen on white card; 71x 56cm. 51

This sign was made during their 1969 event "Bed-in for Peace" at Montreal's Queen Elizabeth Hotel, a week-long non-violent protest from May 26 to June 1, 1969.¹⁸⁸

Figure 39. *Dream Mapping* by Susan Hiller, 1973. 51

Produced as an art event in an English meadow, the work was composed of seven dreamers who slept for three nights inside naturally occurring "fairy rings" formed by *Marasmius oreades* mushrooms. Hiller describes the event as provocatively poised between an experiment and performance, "The field became a site for dream experiences which were discussed and mapped the following morning. The dream maps of each participant were collected and copied onto transparent paper, sandwiched together, and traced to compile a composite group map for each night."¹⁸⁹

Figure 40. Screenshot of "Comrade Sugar" meme by @jimrosecircus1, reposted by @CharoShane, reposted by @syrusmarcus, 2021. 52

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Figure 42. *Sleeping in the order of the slowing of time. A pillow that has only been slept on by the botanist Dr. Doris Vāth, a pillow that only the archaeologist Dr. Britta Rabe has slept on, and a pillow that has only been slept on by Dr. Gretta Alteby, a tectonic geophysicist* by Jason Dodge, n.d. 55

The three blue pillows signify three sleeping scientists. We imagine the women who sleep on these pillows: the geophysicist digging deep into the earth to study its development over millions of years; the archaeologist excavating past civilizations, uncovering artifacts of human belief and behavior; and the botanist, working close to the earth's surface, who focuses on seasonal, cyclical time that spirals forth into the future.¹⁹⁰

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Of the painting, artist Lizzy De Vita comments, "Rest is frequently shown as something extra. Laziness or luxury. In the world of this painting, rest is both ordinary and necessary: like breathing, like love. Ordinary and also brimming with potential for new worlds." ¹⁹⁴	
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While waiting for the bus to take me to the Swartz Bay Ferry Terminal, I often sit on its concrete mattress components at the corner of Douglas and Blanshard Streets in Victoria. The work's title arrives via John Philip Sousa, the American composer and conductor primarily known for American military marches, recalling his parents' differing views on time and productivity. In reply to his mother's complaints about her husband's afternoon nap, Sousa's father would reply, "Elise, the night is for sleep, and the day is for rest." According to Baden, the phrase "epitomizes the rest and relaxation that Victoria and her guests seek."¹⁹⁵

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Figure 54. Fragment of *The Sleepers* [les dormeurs] (Gloria K. First Sleeper) by Sophie Calle, 1979. Gelatin silver prints; 12.6 x 18.4 cm. 72

Of her process Calle remarks:

"I asked people to give me a few hours of their sleep. To come and sleep in my bed. To let themselves be looked at and photographed. I took photographs every hour. I watched my guests sleep."¹⁹⁶

Figure 55. Found image of a stromatolite, stratified fossilized algae which preserves the first life on the planet. 73

I first came across these objects in Margaret Atwood's short story, "The Stone Mattress" (2011), learning how: "The word comes from the Greek stroma, a mattress, coupled with the root word for "stone." Stone mattress: a fossilized cushion..."¹⁹⁷

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<i>And I will leave. But the birds will stay singing –</i>	
<i>And our garden will stay, with the water well</i>	
<i>And the blue spruce singing; many afternoons</i>	
<i>The skies will be blue its white clouds dreaming</i>	
<i>And the people who loved me will pass away</i>	
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<i>In the same recondite corner of our flowery garden.</i>	
– dad	
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~ END NOTES ~

1. Brian Massumi, "Translator's Foreword," in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), xv.

2. Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, translated by Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993); My metaphor of the messy bed draws upon Deleuze's concept of "the fold" in which he describes matter and space as intertwined in continuous folds, creating complex and dynamic multiplicities. These folds represent a way to understand the interconnectedness and fluidity of reality, blurring the boundaries between different forms and dimensions; Elizabeth Grosz, "The Future of Feminist Theory: Dreams for New Knowledges," in *Undutiful Daughters: New Directions in Feminist Thought and Practice* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 15. Further, my understanding of a concept's utility draws from Grosz who, as demonstrated in the quote below, applies a sculptural efficacy to their potential:

We need concepts in order to think our way in a world of forces we do not control. Concepts are not a means of control, but forms of address that carve out for us a space and time in which we may become capable of responding to the indeterminate particularity of events. Concepts are thus a way of addressing the future, and in this sense are the conditions under which a future different from the present—the very goal of every radical politics—becomes possible. Concepts are not premonitions, ways of predicting what will be; on the contrary, they are modes of enactment of new forces; they are themselves the making of the new.

3. Isabelle Stengers, "Reclaiming Animism," *e-flux* 36 (July 2012), <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/36/61245/reclaiming-animism/>. Throughout my practice, I apply Stengers' reasoning that "Some people love to divide and classify, while others are bridge-makers—weaving relations that turn a divide into a living contrast, one whose power is to affect, to produce thinking and feeling."

4. Peter Linebaugh, "Introduction," in *Re-Enchanting the World: Feminism and the Politics of the Commons* (Toronto, ON: Between the Lines, 2018), xvii.

5. Silvia Federici, *Re-Enchanting the World: Feminism and the Politics of the Commons* (Binghamton NY: PM Press), 8.

6. Reclaiming, "Kore Chant (Reclaiming - Chants: Ritual Music)," YouTube video, 3:57, December 20, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nVwF34LcZCg>.

7. Laura Sammartino, "Archaeologies of the Greek Past: Kore," Jounkowsky Institute for Archaeology & the Ancient World, Brown

University, accessed July 9, 2023, https://www.brown.edu/Departments/Joukowsky_Institute/courses/greekpast/4794.html. Kore or Cora (/ˈkɔːriː/ KOR-ee; Greek: Κόρη, romanized: Kórē, lit. the maiden) also refers to “kore,” plural “korai” – a style of freestanding archaic Greek stone sculpture related to caryatids, often depicted wearing heavy elaborate drapery; Octavia Butler, *Parable of the Sower* (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1993), 19; Isabelle Stengers, “Reclaiming Animism”; I first learned of the *Kore Chant* by way of philosopher Isabelle Stengers, whose article introduces the radical work of Starhawk – an ecofeminist neopagan witch who calls upon intersectional politics to fight systemic oppression. Emphatically, Stengers applies Starhawk’s warning that “The smoke of the burned witches still hangs in our nostrils” when we, as academics, dismiss methods which serve to destabilize Western hegemonic conventions as so-called “magical thinking.” A reminder to those of us who work within the institution “are the heirs of an operation of cultural and social eradication,” despite many of our best endeavors to tear down the walls from the inside.

8. Sheila Sheikh, “More-than-Human Cosmopolitics,” in *Propositions for Non-Fascist Living: Tentative and Urgent* (Cambridge, MA: BAK and MIT Press, 2019), 127–128.

9. My understanding of the complexity of we’s plurality is influenced by a seminar with Elizabeth Povinelli at the Banff Centre for Creativity in the summer of 2017. Further reading: Elizabeth A. Povinelli, *Geontologies: A Requiem to Late Liberalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016).

10. By paying attention to how “we” is applied conversationally, I have come to understand that the speaker’s individual subject position is often used to encompass everyone else in the room, as a default – particularly when the speaker is white, able-bodied, middle-class, university educated, with a political sensibility falling somewhat left of middle. The act of embracing those around you in solidarity may have the unintended (and violent) consequence of alienating/othering those who do not share your subject position. This was made evident after a fellow graduate student directed me to check my use of “we” after unintentionally performing this presumption.

11. The decision to lean into a pluralized pronoun recalls Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus*, which begins with a discussion of their collaborative writing process in their previous work, *Anti-Oedipus* (1972); Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, “Introduction: Rhizome,” in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 1. They write:

Since each of us was several, there was already quite a crowd. Here we have made use of everything came within range, what was closest as well as farthest away. We assigned clever pseudonyms to prevent recognition. Why have we kept own names? Out of habit, purely out of habit. To make ourselves unrecognizable in turn. To render imperceptible, not ourselves, but what makes us act, feel, and think. Also because it’s nice to talk like everybody else, to

say the sun rises, when everybody knows it's only a manner of speaking. To reach, not the point where one no longer says I, but the point where it is no longer of any importance whether one says I. We are no longer ourselves. Each will know his own. We have been aided, inspired, multiplied.

12. Isabelle Stengers, *Cosmopolitics I* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 56-70.

13. CBC Archives, "When Vancouver Real Estate Prices Were Falling in 1982," *CBC/Radio-Canada*, August 18, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/archives/when-vancouver-real-estateprices-were-falling-in-1982-1.5680987>.

14. I hardly remember a time when extended family members were not staying with us. Cousins mainly. Men in their early twenties, from families far more prosperous than ours, would arrive unbidden and spend several months on pull-out couches. Generally lethargic, expecting dinner without chores or contribution. Killing time and enjoying the warmer weather of the west coast's climate.

15. "Inflation Calculator," Statistics: Tools and resources, Bank of Canada, accessed July 9, 2023. <https://www.bankofcanada.ca/rates/related/inflation-calculator/>.

16. Walter Benjamin, "On the Concept of History," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 257.

17. Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 58; Jonas Staal, "Assemblism," *e-flux* 80 (March 2017), 5. Responding to Butler, artist Jonas Staal suggests that the term "precariat" could stand in for "the proletariat" of the twenty-first century.

18. Anna L. Tsing, *Mushroom at the End of World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), 20.

19. Olúfemi O. Táíwò, *Elite Capture: How the Powerful Took Over Identity Politics (And Everything Else)* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2022), 71. This is a response to the realization experienced by writer James Baldwin "that the things that most tormented him 'were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive, or who had ever been alive.'" Quoted in Jane Howard, "Doom and glory of knowing who you are," *LIFE Magazine*, May 24, 1963, 89.

20. Silvia Federici, *Re-Enchanting the World*, 1.

21. Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), ix. As Barad emphasizes in the preface, "This book is about entanglements. To be entangled is not simply to be intertwined with another, as in the joining of separate entities, but to lack an independent, self-contained existence. Existence is not an individual affair."; Denise Ferreira da Silva, "On Difference Without Separability," *Incerteza viva (Live Uncertainty)*, 32a São Paulo Art

Biennial, 2016, 57–65. da Silva applies the phrase, “difference without separability” to critique the binary thinking that permeates Western thought, where differences are often used to isolate specific peoples, usually those disenfranchised by settler-colonialism. Instead, she proposes an alternative framework that recognizes difference as inseparable and intertwined, arguing that it cannot be understood in isolation but should be comprehended within a complex web of relations, entanglements, and interactions; Donna Haraway, “The Camille Stories: Children of Compost,” in *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 134–168. Through fabled telling’s of “children of compost” Haraway defines symbiogenesis as the “curious practice of becoming-with others for a habitable, flourishing world.”; Elizabeth A. Povinelli, *Between Gaia and Ground: Four Axioms of Existence and the Ancestral Catastrophe of Late Liberalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021); Elizabeth A. Povinelli, “Acts of Life: Ecology and Power,” *Artforum*, June 2017, accessed May 17, 2023, <https://www.artforum.com/print/201706/acts-of-life-ecology-and-power-68689>; Elizabeth A. Povinelli, “The Four Axioms of Existence,” *Department of Rhetoric’s Fall Colloquium*, University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, October 25, 2018. Povinelli locates the “extimacy of existence” (defined as “the internal exteriority and external interiority of all existents relative to one another”) as the first of four axioms of existence; the remaining include: 2) “the collapse of western distinctions and hierarchies of existence, most significantly that between Life and Nonlife, the biological and geological;” 3) “the distribution of the effects of power and the power to affect a given terrain of existence; and 4) “the multiplicity and collapse of forms of the event.” While Povinelli uses the phrase “extimacy of existence” repeatedly during several lectures and articles, for *Between Gaia and Ground* she follows Barad’s more familiar use of “entanglement” in lieu of “extimacy”; Isabelle Stengers, *Cosmopolitics I* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010); *Cosmopolitics II*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011). For Stengers, cosmopolitics is a theoretical approach that emphasizes the need to rethink and redefine politics beyond the confines of human-centric perspectives. It seeks to acknowledge and include non-human entities, such as nature, animals, and the environment, as active participants in the political realm; Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: a Political Ecology of Things*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010). *Vibrant Matter* explores the agency and vitality of non-human entities, from minerals to plants and even inanimate objects, challenging conventional notions of matter as passive and lifeless. In her work, Bennett contends that acknowledging the vibrancy and vitality of these entities can lead to more ethical and inclusive understandings of the world, blurring the boundaries between human and non-human, while encouraging a deeper sense of interconnectedness with the more-than-human world; Federici, *Re-enchanting the World*. Federici uses the term “commonism” to advocate for collective ownership and control of resources, challenging capitalist and patriarchal systems while promoting solidarity and care for marginalized communities; ruangrupa, curator, *documenta 15*, Kassel, Germany from June 17 to

September 25, 2022; "About," *documenta fifteen*, accessed August 15, 2022, <https://documenta-fifteen.de/en/about/>. As an Indonesian collective, ruangrupa hinges their curatorial methodology on the receptive concept of "lumbung," as a kind of expanded-architectural container for ideas, people, and the things we produce. Lumbung can be translated as a communal building used to store rice in rural Indonesia "where a community's harvest is gathered, stored and distributed according to jointly determined criteria as a pooled resource for the future."; Ursula K. Le Guin, "The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction," *Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 149–154.

22. Nehal El-Hadi and Fred Moten, "Ensemble: An Interview with Dr. Fred Moten," *MICE Magazine*, Issue Four, accessed June 10, 2021, <https://micemagazine.ca/issue-four/ensemble-interview-dr-fred-moten>; Fred Moten, "To Consent Not to Be a Single Being," *Poetry Foundation*, February 15, 2010, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet-books/2010/02/to-consent-not-to-be-a-single-being>; Fred Moten, "Acknowledgements," in *Black and Blur* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), xv. In the first lines of his "Acknowledgement" section in *Black and Blur*, Moten credits his colleague Christopher Winks with the translation of Édouard Glissant's "consent à n'être plus un seul" as "consent not to be a single being." Moten explains how, for Glissant, consent "is not so much an act but a nonperformative condition or ecological disposition" but a way to approach "what he calls the "poetics of relation."

23. da Silva, "On Difference Without Separability," 58–59.

24. Fred Moten, Stefano Harney, and Stevphen Shukaitis, "Refusing Completion: A Conversation," *e-flux* 116 (March 2021), <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/116/379446/refusing-completion-a-conversation/>.

25. "Treaties for Torontonians," *Talking Treaties*, accessed May 8, 2023, <https://talkingtreaties.ca/treaties-for-torontonians>. *Talking Treaties* is a book and website project that artfully examines "the complex intercultural roots of treaty relationships in the place we now call Toronto."

26. Further reading: Leanne Simpson, "Looking after Gdoo-naaganinaa: Precolonial Nishnaabeg Diplomatic and Treaty Relationships," *Wicazo Sa Review* 23, no. 2 (Fall 2008), 29–42.

27. This section expands upon the structure and key ideas presented in an exhibition text: Ella Dawn McGeough, "Soft Glove," for Jessica Groome, *Soft Glove*, Erin Stump Projects, Toronto, September 13 to December 2, 2017. It begins, "She is describing gloves. Latex versus vinyl, polyethylene versus nitrile. She tells me about their specific qualities. Like grit or fit, elasticity or durability. Some are powdered; others are not. A glove's ability to touch and to rub, to sense and to shield, hinges on a combination of these characteristics. Like the hand it holds, a glove is an organized whole, more than the sum of its parts."

28. Jeanne Randolph, "The Amenable Object," in *Psychoanalysis and Synchronized Swimming & Other Writings on Art* (Toronto, ON: YYY Books, 1991), 30.

29. Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959–1960*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Dennis Porter (London: Routledge, 1992), 139; David Pavón-Cuellar, "Extimacy," in *Encyclopedia of Critical Psychology*, edited by Thomas Teo (New York: Springer, 2014), 661–664.

30. To breath, I add further extimate objects:

- A sweaty jar of lemonade
- Invasive earthworms of North America
- Watching an unrestored version of an old film, such as Stanley Kubrik's 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968)
- Perfume related birth defects
- Conjunctivitis
- Halitosis
- Hoarfrost
- The moment a pimple pops
- HaeAhn Woo Kwon's collaborative exhibition, *Bathroom Classroom* (2021) at Franz Kaka, Toronto
- Incarceration rates of people exposed to lead poisoning
- Dmitri Mendeleev's dream of the periodic table of elements
- Allergies
- Slug slime antiaging treatments
- Gossip columns
- Photos of feet being used to fund Black Liberation movements
- Stengers' use of "Infection"
- Barad's use of "Entanglement"
- Flint, Michigan
- Anxiety memes
- Heat rash
- Freezer burn
- Goosebumps
- Mirrors
- The Gaze
- The Virus
- Cigarette warning labels
- "Support our Troops" bumper stickers
- "Baby on Board" bumper stickers
- "Baby, I'm bored" bumper stickers
- Organ donation, particularly mid-transit
- Leg swell after eating a bag of Miss Vickis' Salt n' Vinegar chips
- Blogging in the early aughts
- The feeling of stepping outside oneself

- Chemical warfare
- Sex sheets
- Decidual casts
- Memories
- Stories
- The smoke of burned witches that hangs in our nostrils when we disparage people who live with many cats
- Onomatopoeia

31. Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans. James Strachey, vol. 18, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, eds. James Strachey et al. (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1955), 14–15. Freud develops his “Fort/Da” theory in his work “Beyond the Pleasure Principle” (1920). Freud explores the concept of repetition compulsion and introduces the case of a young child known as Little Hans, whose play with a reel and string leads to the formulation of the “Fort/Da” theory. The theory discusses the child's way of dealing with the absence and return of his mother, using the German words “fort” (away) and “da” (there/here) to signify the mother's presence and absence.

32. This description of a radically non-anthropomorphic epistemology is influenced by conversations with Cesar Carrasco Moroco, a leader within Comunidad Nativa Ese Eja de Infierno.

33. I am also grateful to the work of anthropologist Micheal Taussig for his complex writing on the phenomenology of colour, and even name an assignment after his description of colour as a “polymorphous magical substance.” Michael Taussig, *What Color Is the Sacred?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

34. My understanding of the relationship between holding and colour is indebted to Christine Davis and Scott Lyall's for their introduction to Isabelle Stengers' reading of mathematician-philosopher Alfred North Whitehead. See: *Public: Colour* 26, no. 51 (2015) eds. Christine Davis and Scott Lyall.

35. Sidonie Bellot and Susanne S. Renner, “The systematics of the worldwide endoparasite family Apodanthaceae (Cucurbitales), with a key, a map, and color photos of most species,” *PhytoKeys* 36 (2014): 41–57; Aaron Pomerantz, “Mystery of the Yellow Bulbs: Discovery in the Amazon of a New Caterpillar-Ant Parasitic Plant Relationship,” Rainforest Expeditions, accessed June 8, 2019, <https://www.rainforestexpeditions.com/mystery-of-the-yellow-bulbs-discovery-in-the-amazon-of-a-new-caterpillar-ant-parasitic-plant-relationship/>; I was introduced to this mutualistic relationship while conducting field-research at Tambopata Research Centre from January–March 2016. The caterpillar, *Terenthina terentia*, belongs to the family Lycaenidae. They were likely feeding on *Apodanthes caseariae*, a kind of parasitic plant that becomes visible when its flowers burst through bark.

36. Ella Dawn McGeough, curator, *And, Something Like Fire Dancing*, Susan Hobbs Gallery, Toronto, ON, September 8 to October 15, 2016.

Echoing the four-part relationship between tree, fungus, caterpillar/butterfly, and ant that is endemic to Tambopata's forests, I presented the curatorial project with artwork by Amy Brener, Barbara Kasten, Patrick Cruz, and Scott Lyall. In the accompanying exhibition texts, I posited that the endurance of a work of art is either confirmed or denied by its power to infect and be infected by other artworks in both the space of exhibition and the space of history.

37. Lester Caltvedt, "Herzog's 'Fitzcarraldo' and the Rubber Era," *Film & History* 18, no. 4 (1988): 74.

38. Karl Leif Bates, "Gold Mining with Mercury Poses Health Threats for Miles Downstream," *Duke Today*, May 28, 2020, <https://today.duke.edu/2020/05/gold-mining-mercury-poses-health-threats-miles-downstream>. Apart from tourism, the primary industry of Tambopata is goldmining. Much of this mining is realized illegally by what Bates calls, "Artisanal and small-scale gold miners...who use liquid elemental mercury to extract gold from soils and sediments." These processes have devastating ecological effects across all life-forms who call this region home. However, while it is easy to condemn these ruinous practices, it is important to keep in mind that many small-scale mines are operated by those whose access to modern, more ecologically sensitive equipment and official mining rights are blocked by the largest structures of extractive global capitalism. As example, stories of government-sanctioned helicopters bombing these mining camps are common. Less common, are stories told in whispers and innuendo, of women who may have disappeared from these and larger mining sites. Some of these women are said to become river dolphins who, in turn, occasionally cross back into human form to enact revenge on those who deserve it.

39. Haraway, "The Camille Stories," 227. Haraway draws attention to the cross-species intimacies of butterflies of the Tambopata forests via information provided to her by Marisol de la Cadena:

Phil Torres, un científico del Centro de Investigación de la Reserva Natural de Tambopata, en Perú, explicó recientemente en la revista LiveScience que estos bonitos insectos alados absorben sodio y otros nutrientes que necesitan de las saladas lágrimas de las tortugas que viven en el Amazonas. [Phil Torres, a scientist from the Centre for Research in Tambopata Natural Reserve, in Peru, explained in a recent LiveScience Magazine that these pretty winged insects absorb sodium and other nutrients they need from the salty tears of turtles that live in the Amazon.]

40. Virginia Woolf, et al., *On Being Ill* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Menard Press, 2022), 26.

41. "On Being Ill," Menard Press, accessed April 29, 2023, <https://inpressbooks.co.uk/collections/menard-press-1/products/on-being-ill>. Having given my hard copy of Woolf's essay to a friend, I was lucky to find a special edition published by Menard Press, which contextualizes Woolf's text in relation to subsequent writing "on sickness and all that accompanies it: isolation, immunity, loss of control, and recovery" by Audre Lorde, Deryn Rees-Jones, Jameisha

Prescod, Lieke Marsman, Lucia Osborne-Crowley, Mieke van Zonneveld, Nadia de Vries, Nafissa Thompson-Spires, Sinéad Gleeson, and Sophie Collins.

42. Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 35.

43. Woolf, *On Being Ill*, 29.

44. Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, 162.

45. Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, 162.

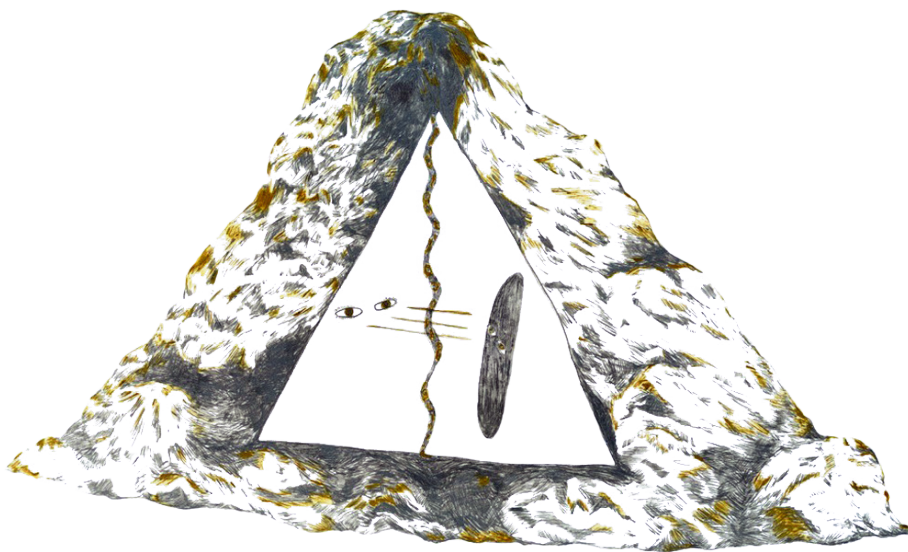
46. Bessel van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* (New York: Viking, 2014).

47. Ovid, *Ovid's Metamorphoses in fifteen books. Translated by the most eminent hands. Adorn'd with sculptures* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1717; Ann Arbor: Text Creation Partnership, 2011), 136, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/ecco/004871123.0001.000/1:6.4.12?rgn=div3;view=fulltext>.

48. Celeste Olalquiaga, "Object Lesson / Object of Contention," *Cabinet Magazine* 30, Summer 2008, <https://www.cabinetmagazine.org/issues/30/olalquiaga.php>.

49 Much has been written on the optical significance of Medusa's myth in relation to photography. Many authors describe a striking resemblance between the medium and the Gorgon's gaze. In both, a caesura occurs, and the ecstatic becomes static: all movement is stilled, caught midpose. Nevertheless, there seems to be a crucial error in this analogy. Medusa does not turn her victims into images through either replication or duplication; rather, her gaze turns beings into things. Unlike photography, it does not produce an index of reality, it is a process of thingification, whereby subjective experience (being) becomes objectified by an act of perception. Another way of understanding this process is as an act of attentive reification, whereby a subject appears to mineralize through an excessive weight of significance, like when a person becomes a star or a soldier turns into a statue, different operations to be sure, but both are the result of an ontological transformation. This process can be called the "Medusa Effect." My research into this phrase often centres the work of Walter Benjamin. Theodor W. Adorno, "Portrait of Walter Benjamin," in *Prisms* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983), 227–240; Theodor Adorno states that through an intensity of attention, Benjamin had a "medusan glance" through his ability to reify living objects (such as, literature, events, even people), and in doing so, turn them ancient. Eduardo Cadava, "Caesura," in *Words of Light: Theses on the Photography of History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 59–63; Elaborating on Adorno's sentiment, Eduardo Cadava writes that for Benjamin "there [could] be no history without the Medusa Effect—without the capacity to arrest or immobilize historical movement, to isolate the detail of an event from the continuum of history" so that the Effect often occurs within periods of social and political upheaval, which Benjamin describes as "arrested time." Contra to Marx, who describes revolutions as the "locomotives of

history," Benjamin described them as an "emergency brake...on the train of traveling generations." In this vein, he compares the Effect to catastrophe, wherein "history comes to a head...and is stalled within the sphere of speculation, [suspending] the temporal continuity between a past and a present." Whether caused by the gaze of a gorgon, the attention of a reader like Benjamin, or the tumult of a revolution itself, the Medusa Effect performs an interruption within the dialectic states of destination and transition to capture the detail of an event. Slippery subjectivity coalesces to form something graspable. Further, while the story of Perseus and Medusa often centres responsibility for the killing on a swipe of the hero's scythe, alternate versions tell of Medusa catching a glimpse of herself in his mirrored shield (on loan from tricky Athena) thus turning her petrifying gaze inwards, onto herself. This version explains how Medusa's face becomes an apotropaic object often pictured on Athena's aegis and its function as a defence against the evil eye; See: Françoise Frontisi-Ducroux, "The Gorgon, Paradigm of Image Creation," in *The Medusa Reader*, eds. Marjorie B. Garber and Nancy J. Vickers (New York: Routledge, 2003), 262–266; Craig Owens and Scott Bryson, "The Medusa Effect, Or, The Spectacular Ruse," in *Beyond Recognition: Representation, Power, and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 191–199; I illustrate the Medusa Effect in, *Drawing for Lacan with Mountain*, 2013. Gold and silver ink on miner paper; 28 x 35.5 cm.



50. Isabelle Stengers, "Value" *Public: Colour* 26, no. 51 (June 2015): 19.

51. Stephen Matthias Harney, Mattia Frapporti, and Niccolo Cupini, "Logistics Genealogies: A Dialogue with Stefano Harney," *Social Text* (2018): 98.

52. Anne Carson, "Chapter One," *Globe and Mail*, August 3, 2006, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/chapter-one/article20412617/>.

53. Several comments on internet forums argue for a revisionist explanation for Athena's actions, namely that she may have been arming Medusa with weapons of "ugliness" and petrification to withstand future attacks. However, it is difficult to overlook the myriad stories in which Athena rarely favours other female subjects. See: "Did Athena Curse Medusa to Protect Her or Did She Do It out of Spite?," Quora, June 19, 2019, <https://www.quora.com/Did-Athena-curse-Medusa-to-protect-her-or-did-she-do-it-out-of-spite>. I particularly appreciate Natalie Haynes, *Pandora's Jar* (London: Picador, 2021), for her in-depth analysis of the female characters featured in Greek and Roman myth.

54. Sigmund Freud, "Medusa's Head," in *The Medusa Reader*, eds. Marjorie Garber and Nancy J. Vickers (New York: Routledge, 2003), 33–34. In the posthumously published, "Medusa's Head [Das Medusenhaupt]" (1922), Freud interprets Medusa's decapitation as a representation of castration anxiety, a concept from psychoanalytic theory wherein males fear the loss of their phallic power and masculinity. Within this model, the erect penis functions as an apotropaic object since its stiffness wards away the petrifying effects of the woman's stare as if to claim, "I am not afraid of you. I defy you. I have a penis." As a response to this theory, Hélène Cixous challenges Freud's phallocentric view of language and sexuality, arguing that his theories reinforce patriarchal structures working to marginalize womens' voices. In contradiction to the anxiety Freud expresses, Cixous writes, "You only have to look at the Medusa straight on to see her. And she's not deadly. She's beautiful and she's laughing." Hélène Cixous, Keith Cohen, and Paula Cohen, "The Laugh of the Medusa," *Signs* 1, no. 4 (1976): 885. To grasp a wide range of Medusa's influence from classical times through the birth of psychoanalysis to pop culture, see: Marjorie Garber and Nancy J. Vickers, eds., *The Medusa Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

55. Donna Haraway. "Tentacular Thinking: Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chthulucene," *e-flux* 75 (September 2016), <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/75/67125/tentacular-thinking-anthropocene-capitalocene-chthulucene/>. For Haraway, the Chthulucene offers a potential resistance to the stories of the Anthropocene or the Capitalocene – those death-drive stories, which draw their energy from human techno-exceptionalism. Chthulu from the Greek, "khthonios" (of the earth), adopted from Pimioa cthulhu, the name of a spider who lives under stumps in the redwood forests near in North-Central California.

56. Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wing (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 20.

57. Mark O'Shea, *The Book of Snakes: A Life-Size Guide to Six Hundred Species from Around the World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 18.

58. "City of Calgary Time Capsule 2010 – Calgary, Alberta, January 3, 2013," *Waymarking.com*, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://www.waymarking.com/gallery/image.aspx?f=1&guid=b5696b8b-1a01-4381-8887-d7ff18745dab>. The quote is located on a plaque marking

the location of a time capsule initiated by the City of Calgary in 2010.

59. David Graeber and David Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2021), 206.

60. Mike MacDonald, *Touched by the Tears of a Butterfly*, Grunt Gallery, March 12, 1996 to March 31, 1996, <https://gruntarchives.org/ata/programs/touched-by-the-tears-of-a-butterfly/>.

61. "Mike MacDonald: Planting one Another (Primary/Junior/Intermediate)," Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery, accessed April 29, 2023, <https://kwag.ca/civicism/event/info?reset=1&id=353>.

62. Mike MacDonald, *Butterfly and Medicine Garden*, installation of native plants, Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Banff, AB, 1999.

63. Lisa Myers, "Hooker Distinguished Visiting Scholar Lecture: Collective Remembering Mike MacDonald's Medicine and Butterfly Gardens with Lisa Myers," YouTube video, 1:20:15, October 21, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vr2QZUNUn6E>.

64. Dionne Brand, "What we saw. What we made. When we emerged," Kitty Lundy Memorial Lecture, York University, Toronto, ON, March 11, 2021; Within her talk, Brand is careful to define "we" – stating how, while she generally uses the pronoun to designate an extended community of Black folk, now, she is using it to encompass a larger reach; adrienne maree brown, *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds* (Chico, CA: AK Press, 2017), 58; With similar feeling, adrienne maree brown asks, "How do we cultivate the muscle of radical imagination needed to dream together beyond fear?" As an activist and facilitator, brown suggests moving beyond deconstruction into a space of reconstruction.

65. Laurie Anderson, *Nightlife* (Göttingen, Germany: Steidl, 2006), np.

66. Leonora Carrington, *The Milk of Dreams* (New York: New York Review Books, 2013). Named after Leonora Carrington's children's book, our club was founded prior to learning that curator Cecilia Alemani would use the title for her exhibition at the Venice Biennale in 2022. Further discussion of the Biennale can be found in the section "Bedrooms."; Ella Tetrault and Ella Dawn McGeough, "Can you swim to the bottom of the ocean~ Have you died~ Killed someone~ Morphed into someone else~ Been an inanimate object~ Do you know who your loved ones are~ Are they just a feeling~ Are you just a feeling~ Can you orgasm~ See ghosts~ Cross paths with imposter cats~ Find closure?" *Peripheral Review*, print ed. (2021). The club's activities developed into a co-authored publication on Covid-dreaming with artist Ella Tetrault. Our lengthy title was gleaned from a series of interviews conducted with artists and artworkers exploring both changes in their dream/sleep life and the correlative urge to share these intimate

experiences. Some of the wording for this section appears in that article.

67. Matthew Spellberg, "On Dream Sharing and Its Purpose: The Social Contract of Sensuous Imagining," *Cabinet Magazine* 67 (Spring 2019–Winter 2020): 69–76.

68. Anne Carson, "Every Exit is an Entrance (A Praise of Sleep)," in *Decreation: Poetry, Essays, Opera* (New York: Vintage Contemporaries, 2006), 17–41. I am especially interested in Carson's description of Homer's *Odyssey* with the role of Penelope's oak bed, the insomnia of Telemachus, and the centrality of rest in so many of Odysseus' ruses.

69. Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Lathe of Heaven* (New York: Scribner, 1971).

70. Henri Bergson and Edwin E. Slosson, *Dreams* (London: T Fisher Unwin, 1914). First presented as a lecture before the Institut psychologique on 26 March 1901, Bergson's text was later revised and published in *The Independent* in 1913, then compiled into book form in 1914. I preface these dates to draw attention to their proximity with Sigmund Freud's text, *Die Traumdeutung/The Interpretation of Dreams*, published as a limited edition of six hundred copies in 1899. Freud's theories were slow to gain wider readership: only three-hundred fifty-one copies sold in its first six years of publication and it took eight years for the initial edition to sell out. A position much changed by 1913/14. Therefore, when viewed in correlation, these two texts mark an interest in the expressive psychological potential of dreams during the first decade of the twentieth century – even while psychoanalysis and its popular influence remained under formal development; Bergson sees memories as agents, or 'forms of existence,' that endeavour to rise to semi-consciousness in the form of dreams. For further context, see: "Editor's Introduction," in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Basic Books, 2010).

71. Bergson, *Dreams*, 31.

72. Sharon Sliwinski, *Dreaming in Dark Times* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017); "About – Museum of Dreams," Museum of Dreams, accessed May 17, 2023, <https://www.museumofdreams.org/about>. Sliwinski is founder of the collective research project, *The Museum of Dreams*, a digital publishing platform that explores "the social and political significance of dream-life." Focusing on collaborative storytelling projects, contributors collect and creatively work with dreams from the historical record across broad research interests. Acknowledging the many theories and significations of dreams, the project eschews definitive explanations in favour of the "generative and performative nature of dream-life." In practical terms, the Museum is interested in what dreamers ask of their dreams and the service dreams perform within social and political life, particularly in times of difficulty. In January 2021 Sliwinski and The Museum of Dreams partnered with Museum of London (UK) to acquire full video testimonies as part of

their *Collecting COVID* project, oral histories that are now part of their permanent collection. Intended to explore how dreams offer insight into mental health during times of crisis, these interviews were incorporated into *The Guardians of Sleep*—a podcast series that investigates how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the dreamlife of people living in London.

73. Artemidorus, *Artemidorus' Oneirocritica: Text, Translation, and Commentary*, trans. Daniel E. Harris-McCoy (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), 44–51.

74. Rosalind Dymond Cartwright, *The Twenty-Four Hour Mind: The Role of Sleep and Dreaming in Our Emotional Lives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

75. Jenny Odell, *How to Do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy* (Brooklyn: Melville House, 2019).

76. Jonathan Crary, *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep* (London, Verso, 2013), 11.

77. Tricia Hersey, *Rest Is Resistance: A Manifesto* (New York: Little, Brown Spark, 2022). Hersey's text was published in 2022, after my bed-bound months of early 2021. However, many of the ideas were developed previously on her website, *The Nap Ministry* – a long term project within which she has built the "Rest is Resistance" movement through live-event series, social media account, a website, and speaking engagements. Hersey, under the moniker "The Nap Minister," lends a persuasive voice to a growing chorus of Black and Indigenous thinkers, artists, and organizers who are redefining and reimagining practices of social activism as systems of community care. Tricia Hersey, "About," *The Nap Ministry*, March 25, 2021, <https://thenapministry.wordpress.com/about/>.

78. A selection of further resources which center radical tenderness and community care through rest and dreaming include: Annika Hansteen-Izora, "Communal Dreaming," *Annika is Dreaming*, Substack, January 14, 2021, <https://annikahansteenizora.substack.com/p/communal-dreaming>; Terry Marshall and Aisha Shillingford, "Contending for Dream Space" *Thoughts and Ideas*, Medium.com, <https://medium.com/indian-thoughts/culture-and-our-salvation-b152b04626c8>; "Rest for Resistance," accessed July 20, 2022, <https://restforresistance.com/>; Reading the interdisciplinary work of Christina Sharpe, Fred Moten, Tina Campt, and Nataleah Hunter-Young has allowed me to understand the imperative need of finding a new grammar for Black resilience to refuse the pervasiveness of representations that picture premature or early death, representations rooted in the dehumanizing practices of white culture.

79. Maurice Blanchot, "Dreaming, Writing," in Michel Leiris, *Nights as Day, Days as Night*, ed. Maurice Blanchot, trans. Richard Sieburth (Brooklyn: Spurl Editions, 2017), 16–17.

80. Salomon Resnik, *Theatre of the Dream* (London: Routledge, 1987), 2.

81. As a sculptor, I am particularly struck with the imaginative space Resnik's offers "internal objects" (after Klein) and the possibility that when dreaming, we take on a multidimensional existence that includes the objects that populate our dreams (i.e., table, sky, pieces of fruit).

82. Hélène Cixous, "School of Dreams," in *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 65.

83. Ivan Morris, "Introduction," in *The Pillow Book of Sei Shōnagon* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1970), 9–19.

84. A context thickened by celebrities competing against each other in #pillowchallenge, a proliferation of boxed-mattress adverts, and a rise in sleep wearable technologies – as described by Sierra Komar in "Insomniac Technologies," *Real Life Magazine*, April 21, 2022, accessed November 4, 2023, <https://reallifemag.com/insomniac-technologies/>.

85. Google Scholar search conducted on May 19, 2023 for "Covid Dreaming," https://scholar.google.com/scholar?as_vis=1&q=covid+dreaming&hl=en&as_sdt=0,5&as_ylo=202; Caity Weaver, "Why Are We Having Weird Dreams During the Coronavirus Pandemic?," *The New York Times*, April 13, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/13/style/why-weird-dreams-coronavirus.html>; Brooke Jarvis, "Did Covid Change How We Dream?," *The New York Times*, November 3, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/03/magazine/pandemic-dreams.html>.

86. Hélène Cixous, *Coming to Writing* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 55.

87. Resnik, *Theatre of The Dream*, 43. Resnik writes that the term "hubris" calls to us from ancient Greece, describing both the character flaw of overconfidence and certain birds of prey that hunt at night, like screech or eagle owls.

88. Blanchot, "Dreaming, Writing," 15.

89. Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness* (New York: Ace, 1987), 235.

90. As the reader may note, canonical texts on dream analysis by Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung were not present in my initial reading list. Since my survey began as a fancy, I did not feel obliged to learn what I had either already learned via introductory university courses or naturalized by way of the West's cultural canon. Later, as I reapproached their work, I was able to appreciate the considerable influence their writings have had on our cultural understanding of dreams yet remain appreciative of my original decision to look away from the center; Blanchot, "Dreaming, Writing," 18.

91. Michel Leiris, *Nights as Day, Days as Night*, ed. Maurice Blanchot, trans. Richard Sieburth (Brooklyn: Spurl Editions, 2017), quoted in Joseph Schreiber, "Dream on: Nights as Days, Days as Nights by Michel Leiris," *roughghosts*, March 22, 2020,

<https://roughghosts.com/2017/04/13/dream-on-nights-as-days-days-as-nights-by-michel-leiris/>.

92. Blanchot, "Dreaming, Writing," 16–17.

93. Lillian O'Brien Davis, "Stranger Within," *Greener than Grass*, curated by Lillian O'Brien Davis, Susan Hobbs Gallery, Toronto, ON:, October 22 to November 21, 2020. I borrow the phrase "stranger within" from Lillian O'Brien Davis' text of the same name for the *Greener than Grass* exhibition. Paraphrasing Karen Barad's essay, "On Touching – The Inhuman That Therefore I Am," Davis asks, "When two hands touch, how close are they? What is the measure of closeness?" Our lengthy conversations on this subject influenced my thinking about the paradoxical closeness/farness between our dreaming-self and waking-self. For further context, see Karen Barad, "On Touching – The Inhuman That Therefore I Am," *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 23, no. 3 (2012): 206–223.

94. Ron Sender, Shai Fuchs, and Ron Milo, "Revised Estimates for the Number of Human and Bacteria Cells in the Body," *PLOS Biology* 14 (2016), 2–5.

95. The extradimensionality of the dream-universe I describe is influenced by the research of both Resnik and Spellberg, not to mention my own dreams.

96. Ru Paul Charles, "RuPaul Answers Increasingly Personal Questions," *Vanity Fair*, November 20, 2019, <https://www.vanityfair.com/video/watch/rupaul-answers-increasingly-personal-questions>.

97. Blanchot, "Dreaming, Writing," 21.

98. Elena Ferrante, *Those Who Leave and Those Who Stay*, trans. Ann Goldstein (New York: Europa Editions, 2014), 274.

99. Elizabeth A. Povinelli, "Discussion/Workshop at the Banff Research in Culture 2067," Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Banff, AB (Treaty 7 Territory), July 26, 2017.

100. A version of this text was previously published: Ella Dawn McGeough, "It's All About Good Timing: Goodwater at the Plumb," *Momus*, February 7, 2023, <https://momus.ca/its-all-about-good-timing-goodwater-at-the-plumb/>. *goodtime*, curated by John Goodwin, exhibition held at The Plumb, Toronto, ON, October 21 to November 20, 2022.

101. "About," *The Plumb*, accessed May 17, 2023, <https://theplumb.ca/About>.

102. Importantly, both goodwater and The Plumb share an affiliation with the University of Guelph's School of Fine Art and Music. In 2009, the university partnered with Goodwin to create G: Guelph Goodwater, an art space on Queen Street East, and several of the Plumb's members are former students of the program.

103. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 27.

104. Jasmine Liu, "Layoffs of Senior Staff Throw Canada's National Gallery into Turmoil," *Hyperallergic*, November 21, 2022, <https://hyperallergic.com/782189/national-gallery-of-canada-lays-off-four-staff-including-indigenous-art-curator/>.

105. goodtime was organized with assistance from artist Anthony Cooper, a member of the Plumb collective and longtime friend of Goodwin.

106. Sol Lewitt, "Sentences on Conceptual Art," *Art-Language* 1, no. 1 (May 1969): 11-13. With Lewitt's maxim in mind, I imagine how a wooden pipe Dustin Wilson included in goodwater's previous exhibition *Tools 'n' Shit (Round Three)* (2020), which was quickly broken in with some high-quality indica, might have become the five-foot-tall drawing of a Manitoba maple, titled *Local Tree Study (tree no longer there)* (2022), that Wilson included in goodtime as if by the magic of transmutation.

107. John Goodwin in discussion with the author, January 15, 2023.

108. Moyra Davey. "Question John G_feature writing for Momus," Email to Author. December 12, 2022.

109. Paul Chan, "A Time Apart," in *Time* (London: Whitechapel Gallery, 2013), 53-55.

110. George Carlin, "George Carlin: Again! 1978 – Full Transcript," *Scraps from the Loft*, July 11, 2017, <https://scrapsfromtheloft.com/comedy/george-carlin-1978-full-transcript/>.

111. Hélène Cixous, "Sorties: Out and Out: Attacks/Ways Out/Forays," in *The Newly Born Woman*, trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 66.

112. For further information on this history, see: Griselda Pollock, *Avant-Garde Gambits 1888-1893: Gender and the Color of Art History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1992).

113. Jessica Groome and Julie Beugin, *Recliner*, Atelierhaus Ackerstraße 81, Berlin, April 2021, <https://www.jessicagroome.com/recliner>.

114. Paul Hofmann, "Pieta Damaged in Hammer Attack; Assailant With Hammer Damages the Pieta in St.Peter's," *The New York Times*, May 22, 1972, <https://www.nytimes.com/1972/05/22/archives/pieta-damaged-in-hammer-attack-assailant-with-hammer-damages-the.html>.

115. Carson, "Ode to Sleep," 41.

116. Crary, 24/7, 18.

117. Rainer Maria Rilke, "The Panther," in *The Best of Rilke*, ed. Walter Arndt (Hanover, NH: University of New England for Dartmouth College, 1989), 69.

118. S. McCall et al., "The relationship between encephalitis lethargica and influenza: A critical analysis," *Journal of NeuroVirology* 14 (2008): 2-4; Thank you to my friend Kathryn

Westendorf—a senior research scientist working on antibody treatments with a background in neuroscience, for answering my technical questions about encephalitis lethargica. Researchers have been unable to find direct links between the 1918 influenza pandemic and encephalitis lethargica, nevertheless clinical debates continue due to technical issues encountered by recent experimental studies. According to the McCall article, primary limitations include, “the appropriateness of antibodies, polymerase chain reaction (PCR) primers and controls, and the extreme paucity and age of available material.”

119. Oliver Sacks, *Awakenings* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999); Bill Hayes, *Insomniac City: New York, Oliver, and Me* (New York: Bloomsbury USA, 2017). Sacks is also a lifelong insomniac, a condition described by his partner Bill Hayes in *Insomniac City* (2017), which he wrote following the author’s death in 2015.

120. Sacks, *Awakenings*, 203–205; *Awakenings*, performance by Robert DeNiro, Columbia Pictures, 1990, 2hrs., 1 min. Robert DeNiro unfaithfully characterizes Leonard L. in the Oscar nominated 1990 film adaptation, grossly exaggerating both his physical and cognitive symptoms. During the film, Leonard is almost un-communicative save an evocative scene with a Ouiji board – a portrayal contrasting starkly with Sacks’ text, which records several exchanges wherein L. expresses the realities of his condition:

Again and again, with his penetrating descriptions, his imaginative metaphors, or his great stock of poetic images, Mr L. would try to evoke the nature of his own being and experience. ‘There’s an awful presence,’ he once tapped out, ‘and an awful absence. The presence is a mixture of nagging and pushing and pressure, with being held back and constrained and stopped – I often call it the goad and halter. The absence is a terrible isolation and coldness and shrinking more than you can imagine, Dr Sacks, much more than anybody who isn’t this way can possibly imagine – a bottomless darkness and unreality.’

121. Jakob von Uexküll, *A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans: with A Theory of Meaning* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010); Giorgio Agamben, “Umwelt” and “The Tick,” in *The Open: Man and Animal* (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 2012). Giorgio Agamben’s text provides an important analysis of Uexküll’s work.

122. Uexküll, *A Foray into the Worlds*, 188–189. For Uexküll, this perceptual exclusion extends even to beings existing within symbiotic or mutualistic relation. While this concept at first appears to run contrary to the deep ethos of relationality that animates contemporary theory, he describes each being as belonging to a common musical score, a kind of multi-species choral assemblage. Thanks to my friend karen elaine spencer for drawing attention to the contained similarities between Uexküll’s umwelt and Elaine Scarry’s description of pain, as I discuss it in “Bedsores.”

123. Uexküll famously uses the case study of a tick, a creature whose relationship with its world is very distant from that of our own, to portray how perceptual marks define a particular umwelt. He

describes the tick's world as distilled to an intense relationship with only three carriers of significance: 1) odor of butyric acid, which emanates from mammals' sebaceous follicles; 2) temperature of 37 degrees Celsius (corresponding to the blood of all mammals; and 3) condition of mammals' hairiness. Philosopher Giorgio Agamben, who applies Uexküll's theory of *umwelt* in *The Open*, concludes that "the tick is this relationship; she lives only in it and for it" (Agamben, 47). In other words, the tick – and therefore all the other orders of animalitas are nothing more or less than their sensory relation to their very particular environment. For Uexküll, humans' existence is similarly defined by our own perceptual markers, which he does not "attribute any particular privilege and can vary from the point of view from which we observe it" (Agamben, 41); Uexküll, *A Foray into the Worlds*, 67; Agamben, *The Open*, 41–47. To illustrate this point, in Fig. 12 of Uexküll's text, the visual space of a child is contrasted with that of his mother's. The image demonstrates how the two people literally live in different worlds, albeit interconnected, which are defined by a visual relationship to their environment. The caption for the image reads, "The farthest plane of an adult (below) and a child (above)."



As an aside, I was recently asked, "Would I rather have a conversation with a good friend or spend the day in the studio?" My initial response was one of frustration: why should I feel the need to choose? I have spent years developing deeply collaborative work that negotiates shared authorship and material reciprocity. And yet, after a pause, I understood that those other hours – the hours spent alone, moving intuitively around and inside malleable, often natural, materials – are an attempt to engage a world outside human interests and perceptual markers.

124. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young, "Afterword Bubbles and Webs: A Backdoor Stroll through the Readings of Uexküll," in *A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans: with A Theory of Meaning* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 232.

125. Sacks, *Awakenings*, 93.

126. Sacks, *Awakenings*, 93.

127. Bergson, *Dreams*, 52–53. Bergson writes, “Your life in a waking state is a life of labour, even when you think you are doing nothing, for at every minute you have to choose and every minute exclude.” Therefore, “to sleep then is a relief from ‘interestedness.’ In sleep, everything has become indifferent to me... To sleep is to become disinterested.”

128. Bergson, *Dreams*, 34.

129. Sacks, *Awakenings*, 14.

130. A variation of “Lavabeds” was originally published by Arsenal Contemporary, Toronto/Montreal for Laura Findlay’s 2019 exhibition, *Tuff*, under the title “The Shortsighted Can’t See Mountains.” Current thinking, however, positions this text as a contribution towards the Fastwürms’ fictional academic book, *The Field Guide to Seismic Sex*. This project was displayed as a speculative book cover on a billboard outside the Museum of Contemporary Art Toronto from June 2 to July 23, 2023, inviting viewers “to engage with the book not merely as passive consumers, but to actively write the book...” See: “FASTWÜRMS: The Field Guide to Seismic Sex,” *Museum of Contemporary Art Toronto*, accessed July 10, 2023, <https://moca.ca/programmes/fastwurms-2023/>.



131. Jean-Paul Sartre, “PART IV: The Imaginary Life,” in *Imaginary: A Phenomenological Psychology of the Imagination* (London: Routledge, 2015), 125–127. Sartre describes the irrealis object or action as “neither heavy, nor pressing, nor demanding: they are pure passivity, they wait. The feeble life that we breathe into them comes from us, from our spontaneity” and that irrealis scenes lack “topographical determinations.”

132. The Gordian knot is a legend from Greek mythology in which King Gordius ties an intricate knot, which no one can untie except for Alexander the Great, who simply cuts it with his sword. The term “Gordian knot” now refers to an intractable problem that requires a bold and unconventional approach to resolution. A Möbius strip is a non-orientable surface with only one side and one boundary. It is

created by twisting a strip of paper or other material and then joining the ends together to form a loop. This unique structure results in fascinating properties, such as having only one surface and an infinite loop when traced with a finger. Both Gordian knots and Möbius strips have become concepts related to mathematics and philosophy, embodying complexity with the potential for new perspectives and solutions.

133. Kirsty Robertson, "Plastiglomerate," *e-flux* 78 (2016), <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/78/82878/plastiglomerate/>. Art historian Kirsty Robertson writes:

...what is a beach actually? It is marginalia, a footnote to the essay that is the ocean. Beaches are many things... But the sandy beach of popular imagination is made up of sediment, of particles coming from eroded coral reefs in the ocean, sediment from the sea floor, eroded sections of the continental shelf, or weathered and eroded rocks from nearby cliffs... an archive of pure sand is an impossibility. No wonder that sand is often seen to flow through time, through the glass timer, to ebb and flow, to move liquidly across the face of the Earth.

134. "Ephemeral," *Etymology Online*, accessed April 21, 2023, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/ephemeral>.

135. Helen Song Cho, text message to author, May 30, 2023.

136. Stefana Fratila, "I Want to Leave This Earth Behind," *Sononaut*, accessed May 17, 2023, <https://www.sononaut.space/i-want-to-leave-this-earth-behind>. My text, "Enwombed," was inspired by listening to my dear friend Stefana Fratila's concept album, *I want to leave this Earth behind*, released April 21, 2023 with 8 open-source VST plug-ins that emulate the atmospheric conditions of the planets in our solar system. In Fratila's words:

The album is conceptual, in that it centers on outer space exploration and my understanding of 'Crip futurity'. My vision is for the album to engage listeners in an exercise of imagining the sounds of interplanetary atmospheres— conditions which are inherently unlivable, unbreathable, converting all human body-minds into disabled-bodied-ness. Since I identify as Crip, or disabled, this idea deeply resonates with me. I am the first artist (a disabled producer/musician, no less) to have worked with NASA researchers on a sonic imagining of the solar system's atmospheres that incorporates real scientific data. If we are all 'disabled' in (or by) outer space, my music is concerned with propelling all listeners into space, leaving Earth behind them, through my music.

137. Ursula K. Le Guin, *Tehanu: The Last Book of Earthsea* (New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 1990), 273.

138. Elizabeth Bishop, "Man-Moth," in *The Complete Poems 1926-1979* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1983), ed. Alice H. Methfessel, quoted in Elizabeth Bishop, "Man-Moth," *Poetry Foundation*, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47537/the-man-moth>. This

section owes thanks to Bishop's poem "Man-Moth"—inspired by a newspaper misprint for "mammoth."

139. Lisa Robertson, "Garments/Etruscans," in *The Blue One Comes in Black: Liz Magor* (Milan: Mousse Publishing, 2015), 58.

140. Marvin Gaye, "Sexual Healing," track 2 on *Midnight Love*, recorded 1982, Columbia, Spotify.

141. Originally published as: Ella Dawn McGeough, "The Smoker," *Public: Smoke* 29, no. 58 (2018): 62–67; On an emergency flight west to visit my father's deathbed I tried to recall each and every memory of our troubled relationship. The text spilled out as a second-person narrative. Upon reflection, this choice seems to mirror the efforts of distancing which marked my feelings towards him and his accompanying illness in combination with a distinct hope of projecting our difficulties outwards, onto the reader. It was included in an issue of *Public* edited by colleagues Nataleah Hunter-Young, Michael Litwack, and Rosa Aiello with whom I attended the 2017 Banff Research in Culture (BRiC) residency program at The Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity nestled in Treaty 7's Rocky Mountains.

142. Anne Carson, "Decreation: How Women Like Sappho, Marguerite Porete and Simone Weil Tell God," in *Decreation: Poetry, Essays, Opera* (New York: Vintage Contemporaries, 2006), 162.

143. Zoë Sophia, "Container Technologies," *Hypatia* 15, no. 2 (2000): 193.

144. Christina Sharpe, "Biennale Arte 2022 – Meetings on Art: What Could a Vessel Be?," YouTube video, 2:08:00, June 11, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4BYPvgRJGQg>.

145. See, for example, ruangrupa's application of lumbung in 2022's *documenta 15*.

146. Le Guin, "The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction," 150.

147. Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 112–13.

148. Originally published as exhibition text: *Liz Magor*, Susan Hobbs Gallery, Toronto, October 29 to December 5, 2015, <http://www.susanhobbs.com/exhibits/1318-liz-magor>. From 2013 to 2018, I was employed as the Assistant Director at Susan Hobbs Gallery, an opportunity that allowed special access to the artist and her archive. Reading over the text, seven years hence, I feel a real sense of self-critical tension. Nervous to ensure the writing would meet Magor's expectations, I spent several weeks in studious thought, crafting sentences that now appear, to my eye, overly cautious.

149. Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, *Fantasy in the Hold* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2020), 94. Moten and Harney consider the complex interplay between history, power, and desire, to discuss the ways in which fantasy functions within systems of oppression and resistance.

150. Liz Magor, "White House Paint," in *Real Fictions: Four Canadian Artists*, Museum of Contemporary Art, 1996.

151. Boxes have remained a consistent motif in Magor's practice for several years. An important example of this tendency is *Being This* (2012), a large installation of forty-eight boxes displaying carefully altered, used clothing. Variations of the cast boxes I describe in the next paragraph have been included in most of Liz Magor's exhibitions from 2015 forward. See, for example: Liz Magor, *Untitled*, Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver, March 5 to April 23, 2016; Liz Magor, *I Have Wasted My Life*, Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York City, May 21 to June 25, 2021; and Liz Magor, *The Rise and The Fall*, Focal Point Gallery, Southend-on-Sea, UK, March 7 to June 9, 2023. I sometimes wonder if the uptick of packing materials in Magor's work references her increasing international exhibition schedule which has followed her retirement from teaching at Emily Carr University in 2013.

152. Jens Hoffmann, "The Importance of Being an Influence," *Mousse Magazine* 52 (February 2016): 114. While the exact phrasing is unknown, this anecdote is corroborated by a contribution to a 2016 panel initiated by curator Jens Hoffmann. In a list of key influences, Magor includes, "Advice for one's personal life delivered by Agnes Martin at the Vancouver Art Gallery in the early 1970's. She instructed that a serious artist should have no companions, not even pets!"

153. "About," Liz Magor, *Susan Hobbs Gallery*, accessed May 10, 2020, <http://www.susanhobbs.com/artist/30059248-liz-magor>.

154. Aldous Huxley, *The Doors of Perception* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954), 28–31.

155. Huxley, *The Doors of Perception*, 32.

156. Huxley, *The Doors of Perception*, 33; Martin Heidegger develops his theory of "dasein" in *Being and Time* [*Sein und Zeit*], trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962).

157. Kasia St Clair, *The Golden Thread: How Fabric Changed History* (London: John Murray, 2018), 37–39.

158. St Clair, *The Golden Thread*, 43–44.

159. "UCL Petrie Museum's Tarkhan Dress: World's Oldest Woven Garment," *UCL News*, February 15, 2016, <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2016/feb/ucl-petrie-museums-tarkhan-dress-worlds-oldest-woven-garment>.

160. Kenneth Goldsmith, "Afterword," in *1000 Infrathins* (Philadelphia, PA: The Center for Programs in Contemporary Writing, 2018), 115. Marcel Duchamp calls this difficult to pin-point sensation, inframince (infrathin). In the compilation *1000 Infrathins*, artist and educator Kenneth Goldsmith attempts a description, "the space between spaces, the sound between sounds, the sensation between sensations; neither here nor there, this nor that, but both—all at the same time."

161. "About Us," *Soul Comfort Sheepskin*, accessed May 17, 2023, <https://www.soulcomfortsheepskin.com/pages/about-us>.

162. Wikipedia, "Sonoluminescence," last modified July 27, 2023, <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Sonoluminescence&oldid=1167445864>.

163. Xin Tang and David Staack, "Bioinspired mechanical device generates plasma in water via cavitation," *Science Advances* 5, no. 3 (March 15, 2019): 7765, <https://doi:10.1126/sciadv.aau7765>; Claudia Eberlein, "Theory of quantum radiation observed as sonoluminescence," *Phys. Rev. A* 53, no. 4 (April 1996): 2772-2787, <https://doi:10.1103/PhysRevA.53.2772>.

164. Stewart Edward White, quoted in Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker's Creek* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2013), 20.

165. Bob Makransky, "Living the Dream," *Magical Almanac* (email newsletter), July 28, 2019.

166. Makransky, "Living the Dream."

167. Stephen Muecke, "Untitled," in *The Hundreds* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019), 153; I found Muecke's description of aesthetics in an indexical response following Lauren Berlant and Kathleen Stewart's *The Hundreds* (2019)—an experimental text that combines one-hundred segments, each 100 to 500 words in length, a structure which influenced early drafts of my project.

168. Anne Carson, *Autobiography of Red: A Novel in Verse* (New York: Vintage Contemporaries, 1998), 4.

169. Massumi, "Translator's Foreword," xv.

170. Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, 139. In his seventh seminar, Lacan coins "extimité" to characterize the relationship between object and subject as one of "intimate exteriority."

171. Jamil Khader, "Concrete Universality and the End of Revolutionary Politics: A Žižekian Approach to Postcolonial Women's Writings," in *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Literature but Were Afraid to Ask Žižek*, ed. Russell Sbriglia (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 145.

172. Text written to describe the aleatory, collaborative production of *space-form* (2019–), an ongoing series of works on thin copper sheets, which rely on social gatherings to initiate their material transformation. The series was conceived and developed in tight conversation with curator Katarina Veljovic for her exhibition *On Pause*, where I presented *space-form turn around*. The work encompasses three copper sheets and audiowork co-produced by Stefana Fratila and Kiko Sounds, which filled a breezeway outside of the Art Gallery of York University from May to August 2019 with the ambient sounds of crystal bowl tuning across three, non-synced tactile transducer speakers (sound exciters) attached directly to the glass windows of three gallery-vitrines.

173. Wax is a sympathetic medium. It draws together a diverse class of organic compounds spanning animal, vegetable, and mineral origins. Colourless paraffin: a derivative of petroleum with a thousand uses from lava lamps to the shiny coating found on apples or candy

because, although edible, it is nondigestible and will pass through the body without being broken down. Milky spermaceti: held within the head cavities and blubber of sperm whales to control buoyancy and as a focusing apparatus for echolocation. Earthy ozocerite: found in beds of lignite coal, whose name comes from the 'Oζω ("ozo," to stink). And everyone's favourite, golden beeswax: produced through a twelve-step process:

1. **Nectar Collection:** Worker bees collect nectar from flowers using their proboscis and store it in their honey stomach.
2. **Enzyme Addition:** Enzymes from bee saliva are mixed with the nectar, breaking down complex sugars.
3. **Evaporation:** Bees regurgitate nectar into each other's mouths, helping to evaporate excess water and thicken the nectar into honey.
4. **Cell Sealing:** Thickened honey is stored in wax cells, which are sealed to protect the honey from moisture and contaminants.
5. **Ripening:** The enzymatic breakdown of sugars continues, creating changes that contribute to honey's flavor and shelf life.
6. **Storage and Use:** Sealed honeycomb cells are stored as food for the colony, serving as an energy source and nutrient supply.
7. **Gland Activation:** Specialized wax-producing glands, located on the abdomen of worker honeybees, are activated.
8. **Honey Consumption:** Worker bees consume honey, which triggers the activation of wax glands.
9. **Wax Secretion:** Bees secrete tiny flakes of wax from the glands. These flakes are initially translucent.
10. **Mouth Processing:** Bees chew and soften the wax, mixing it with saliva and enzymes to make it pliable.
11. **Comb Building:** Bees use the softened wax to construct hexagonal cells of the comb for storage and brood rearing.
12. **Hardening and Pigmentation:** As bees apply wax scales to the comb, the wax hardens and gains its opaque color.

Thanks to the University of Guelph Honey Bee Research Centre for the tour of their facilities and helpful website, with its abundance of learning materials. *University of Guelph Honey Bee Research Centre*, <https://hbrc.ca/>.

174. David Serlin, "These Were Once Kings and Queens in Wax," *Cabinet Magazine* 54 (Summer 2014), <https://www.cabinetmagazine.org/issues/54/serlin.php>.

175. Serlin, *Cabinet*.

176. Serlin, *Cabinet*.

177. Martha Kenney, "Fables of Response-Ability: Feminist Science Studies as Didactic Literature," *Catalyst: Feminism, Theory, Technoscience* 5, no. 1 (2019): 2.

178. Originally published as the exhibition text: Ella Dawn McGeough, "I'm on Fire," for *I'm on Fire*, Spoiler Zone, Berlin, Germany, January 2020. It will be reproduced as a print publication

for the exhibition, "Changelings," Gales Gallery, York University, Toronto, ON, Fall 2023. The text reads:

A BODY IN MOTION KEEPS IN MOTION UNTIL IT IS DETERMINED TO REST BY
ANOTHER BODY AND A BODY AT REST REMAINS SO UNTIL IT IS DETERMINED
TO MOTION BY ANOTHER

CERTAIN OBJECTS TAKE THEIR REST IN VERY PECULIAR POSITIONS
THEY CLEAVE THEY CLUTCH THEY COHERE THEY EMBRACE WHATEVER'S NEARBY
THEIRS IS NOT A PERFECT REST BUT A BRIEF SUSPENSION OF ACTIVITY
AFTER A FEW DAYS

OR WEEKS

EVEN YEARS

THEY WILL BE MOVED ALONG

ONCE AGAIN THEY WILL EXIST APART AS SEPARATE BODIES MOVING ALONG
INDEPENDENTLY DESIGNATED PATHS IN THE LONG COURSE OF THEIR
JOURNEYS FROM CREATION TO TRANSPORT

SOME MEMORY OF THEIR OCCUPATION OF SPACE AND RELATION TO EACH
OTHER WILL PERSIST LIKE A WEIRD DREAM AS JPEGs AND SIMILAR LINES
ON SIMILAR PAGES

WHILE WE MIGHT CRY ~

IT WAS OVER BEFORE WE KNEW IT!

OR

IT SURE DIDN'T LAST VERY LONG!

WE COULD JUST AS EASILY EXCLAIM

IT COULD HAPPEN AGAIN ANY TIME!

THE CHOREOGRAPHY OF THINGS AND THEIR GESTURES MAY SUGGEST A FORM
OF COLLECTIVE NON-ACTION

STRIKE A POSE / POSE A THREAT

THOUGH SOMETIMES

IT'S MORE LIKE A GROUP OF MOTHS TO THE FLAME

DRAWN INDOORS BY THE PROMISE OF WARMTH ON A WINTER'S NIGHT

HUMMING WOO OOH OOH WOO OOH OOH OOH OOH OOH WOO OOH OOH WOO OOH
OOH OH OH OH

I'M ON FIRE.

179. Jenny Jaskey, "Tatiana Trouvé: In Time," *Gagosian Quarterly*, January 2, 2020, <https://gagosian.com/quarterly/2020/01/02/essay-tatiana-trouve-in-time/>; R. F. Hassing, "The Use and Non-Use of Physics in Spinoza's Ethics," *The Southwestern Journal of Philosophy* 11, no. 2 (Summer 1980): 47.

180. gésbi, "Perils of the Unmade Bed," *Le Style et la Matiere*, December 16, 2010, <http://le-style-et-la-matiere.blogspot.com/2010/12/perils-of-unmade-bed.html>.

181. "Carry That Weight," YouTube video, 1:35:31, Brooklyn Museum, December 17, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMXp3RLOVNg>.

182. Leslie Jamison, "Frida's Corsets," *The Paris Review*, December 4, 2018, <https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2011/08/22/frida%E2%80%99s-corsets/>; Charlotte Barat, "Frida Kahlo, Mexican, 1907–1954," *The Museum of Modern Art*, 2016, <https://www.moma.org/artists/2963>.

183. Costas Panayotakis, "Vision and Light in Apuleius' Tale of Psyche and Her Mysterious Husband," *The Classical Quarterly* 51, no. 2 (2001): 576–583.

184. Matthew Spellberg, "On Dream Sharing and Its Purpose," 69.

185. Anna K., "I Wanna Take Laurie Anderson's 'Talking Pillow' Home: 'Laurie Anderson, Trisha Brown, Gordon Matta-Clark: Pioneers of the Downtown Scene, New York 1970s', at the Barbican, on until 22 May 2011," *Poly-Phony*, May 16, 2011, <http://poly-phony.blogspot.com/2011/05/i-wanna-take-laurie-andersons-talking.html>.

186. Navild Acosta, Sosa, and Naeem Douglas, "Black Power Naps Asks, 'How Can We Dream If We Don't Sleep?'" *MoMA Magazine*, February 2, 2023, <https://www.moma.org/magazine/articles/842>; Charlene K. Lau, "One Work: Black Power Naps's 'Chill Pill (Rockabye Baby),' " *Art in America*, December 6, 2022, <https://www.artnews.com/art-in-america/aia-reviews/black-power-naps-chill-pill-rockabye-baby-1234649208/>.

187. Carolee Schneemann, "The Kitch Portfolio." *Art Journal* 74, no. 1 (2015): 38.

188. John Lennon and Yoko Ono, *Bed Peace*, 1969, in "John Lennon," *Christie's*, November 15, 2011, <https://www.christies.com/lot/lot-5497222>.

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192. Carson, "Chapter One."

193. Moyra Davey, *Moyra Davey: Les Goddesses/Hemlock Forest* (Bergen, Norway: Bergen Kunsthall, 2017).

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196. Sophie Calle, "The Sleepers (Les Dormeurs)," *Christie's*, November 2011, <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-5496990>.

197. Margaret Atwood, "Stone Mattress," *The New Yorker*, December 12, 2011, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/12/19/stone-mattress>.

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201. Juan Ramón Jiménez, "El Viaje Definitivo," poem, in *Nuestra Poesía En El Tiempo (Una Antología)* (Madrid: Siruela, 2009), 390.

202. Luke Leitch, "Moncler 1 Pierpaolo Piccioli Fall 2019: Ready-to-Wear Collection," *Vogue*, February 21, 2019, <https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/fall-2019-ready-to-wear/moncler-1-pierpaolo-piccioli>.

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205. The bed as dress trend has gone through several manifestations. With Cinzia Ruggeri, Maison Margiela, and Viktor & Rolf being the most well-known examples. For further information on the trend see: Anna Battista, "Postmodernist Plagiarisms,"

Irenebrination, December 13, 2011,
<https://irenebrination.typepad.com/irenebrination/notes/2011/12/cinzia-ruggeri-viktor-rolf.html>; Kettj Talon, "Tutte Le Volte Che Il Bedding è Apparso Sulle Passerelle," *nss magazine*, November 15, 2022,
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SLEEPING PIECE I

Write all the things you want to do.
 Ask others to do them and sleep
 until they finish doing them.
 Sleep as long as you can.

SLEEPING PIECE II

Write all the things you intend to do.
 Show that to somebody.
 Let him sleep for you until you
 finish doing them.
 Do for as long as you can.

1960 winter

Fig. 96, *SLEEPING
 PIECE I SLEEPING PIECE
 II* by Yoko Ono, 1960.

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Fig. 97, *My Bed* by Tracy Emin, 1999–2000.

Every assembly resists logic. It contains entities and elements that fail to add up. This resistance to essentialism is a resistance to containment, to comprehension, and provides the key to its endurance. What cannot be understood cannot be defeated.