

Exercises in Togetherness



Contributions by

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Slower and softer

Elina Suoyrjö

In early 2021, ideas related to the Finnish Cultural Institute in New York (FCINY)'s collaboration-based program Exercises in Togetherness began sprouting. They were prompted by the need to 'gather, as much as by recognizing that actually, social gathering after cycles of Covid restrictions felt awkward as heck. Time and again, I had bewildering experiences of oversharing with people I didn't know so well, giving awkward hugs, and feeling remorse after social gatherings for no identifiable reason. Friends shared similar experiences, and acquaintances overshared about related incidents and feelings.

It felt like there was a need to learn how to be together again: how to look another person in the eye instead of looking at them on a screen, how to be together within a space, how to start unraveling the ramifications of abrupt halts in gathering, alongside other burning topics that felt urgently in need of untangling. Like many other organizations at that (and this) time, the FCINY also felt it was important to start working on these questions through the notion of care.

The program consists of events that were realized in collaboration with other art organizations in Helsinki and New York. Each event has been intimate, with Covid-related restrictions framing the practicalities of arranging them.

The first two events took place in 2021 in Helsinki—the first in collaboration with contemporary art advocacy body and information center Frame Contemporary Art Finland, in conjunction with their Rehearsing Hospitalities program. This one-day event took its form as a sequence of artworks, exercises, and encounters considering different forms of togetherness, and featured commissioned works by artists Chloë Bass, Mari Keski-Korsu, and Eero Yli-Vakkuri.

The second event was organized in collaboration with Helsinki-based curatorial agency PUBLICS, in conjunction with their The Month of Books program. The event featured a commissioned work from poet and artist Asiya Wadud, and an audio walk by artist James Hoff and musician DeForrest Brown Jr. We also hosted a discussion with Zelda webzine on fantasizing and dreaming together, featuring participating speakers Eveliina Lempiäinen and Santtu Räisänen from Zelda, musician Sophia Mitiku, and writer Autuas Ukkonen.

In 2022, Exercises in Togetherness continued in New York. Its third event was organized in collaboration with non-profit residency organization Residency Unlimited at their Brooklyn venue. Artist Laura Cemin created a unique printed matter for the event, proposing playful instructions on how to get in touch with each other. The event also featured a reading by artist Gordon Hall, and a discussion between Hall, Asiya Wadud, and artist and musician E. Jane on the significance of communities.

The fourth event was organized in collaboration with cultural center Scandinavia House in New York, and it focused on the current demand to "get back to normal" while the intense waves of Covid have quieted and the restrictions have eased. This one-night event presented an installation with works by artists Jaakko Pallasvuo and Inari Sandell,

and a lecture on the notion of fatigue in relation to contemporary understandings of leisure and labor by artist Danilo Correale.

The fifth event was housed on the FCINY's Withstanding podcast platform, in collaboration with the Mishkin Gallery. The featured guests were curator and Director of the Mishkin Gallery Alaina Claire Feldman, musician and artist Miho Hatori, and artist Josefina Nelimarkka, and I took part in the discussion as the host. The online listening session focused on listening to the nonhuman, and brought forth different approaches to the topic through the speakers' practices and recent research. You can find this episode under the Withstanding podcast on the FCINY's website and major podcasting platforms.

In February 2023, *Exercises in Togetherness* culminates in a small-scale exhibition exploring care and togetherness at FCINY's office space in New York, and a performative contribution relating to acts and notions of touching by artists Nina Sarnelle and Selwa Sweidan. This is also the occasion in which we launch this volume.

This publication presents contributions by artists and writers stemming from the topics of care and togetherness. Some contributions relate directly to previous iterations of the *Exercises in Togetherness* program, while others are re-published and re-contextualized here in relation to the program, alongside specific newly commissioned works.

With her playful contribution, Laura Cemin offers the reader tools for connecting with others through instructions for encounters and actions, from smiles to embraces. Nina Sarnelle and Selwa Sweidan have also focused on touching in their collaborative practice, both in the sense of embodied physical touch, as well as its cultural and theoretical significances. Through their imagined chat with artists, theorists, and writers, we get to witness and think further about some of these notions.

Artists Jessie Bullivant and Minna Miettälä's contribution offers us entrances into thinking about support structures and the acts of supporting. In the support letter written for Bullivant's art project, Miettälä considers very material structures beside those of friendship, community, and professional networks. Likewise, curator Nella Aarne ponders patterns of professional support and care in her text, focusing on the presumed role of the curator as a caretaker and caregiver. The notions of support and care in curatorial work also gain different weights when thinking about work in relation to small independent platforms and established art institutions.

The recognition of the other and togetherness across species is discussed further in texts from musician and artist Miho Hatori, and artist Mari Keski-Korsu. Miho Hatori's contribution consists of lyrics related to a recent performance she did at Mishkin Gallery's *Who Speaks for the Oceans?* exhibition. In the performance, Hatori poetically approaches the question of what it is to be a whale. Similarly speculative thinking is proposed by Mari Keski-Korsu in an exercise for herding with others, informed by long periods of time spent with horses on a farm in Central Finland. Relating to the attunement and knowledge horses have of their environments and their place within a herd, the contribution is almost like a mediation for sensing oneself as part of a bigger whole.

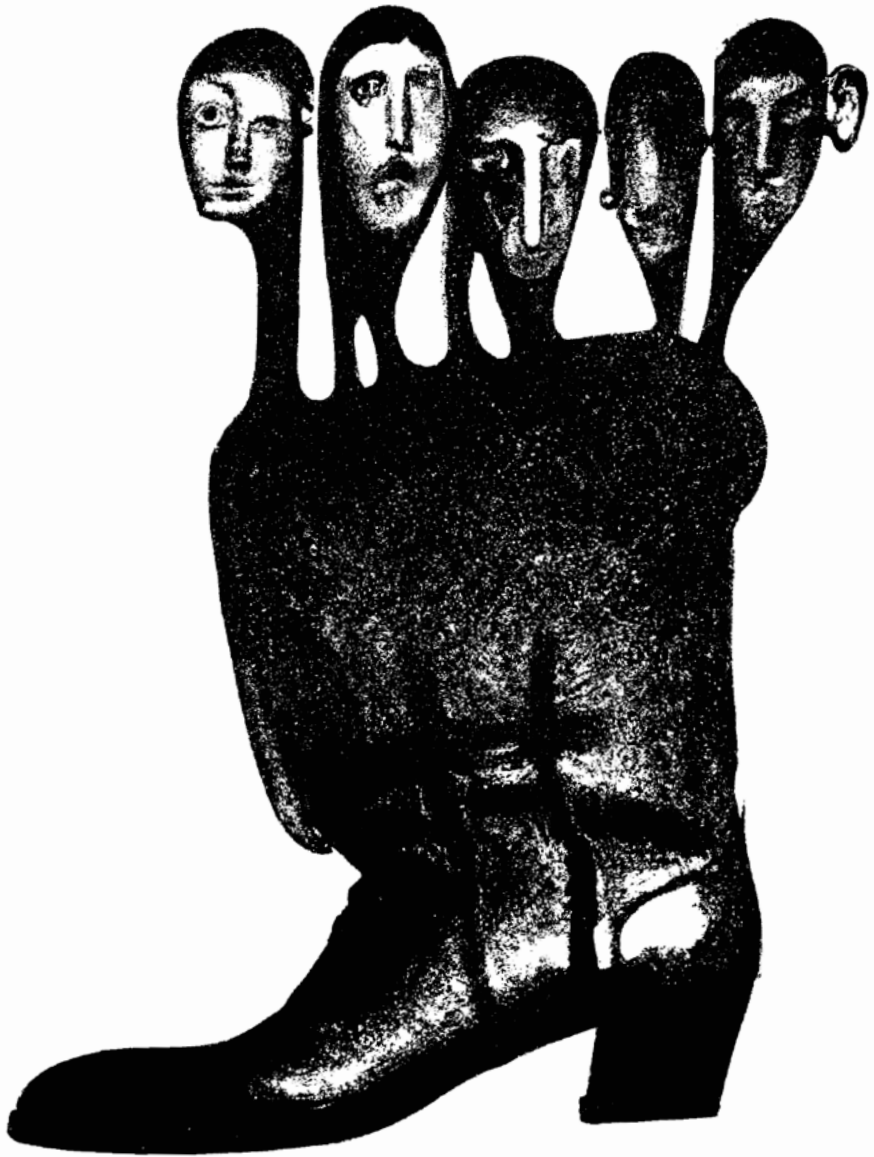
Artist Jaakko Pallasvuo's contribution presents scenes for thinking about both structures of care and rest. Pallasvuo's illustrations offer collages of AI produced imagery, charts, and

Pallasvuo's signature drawing style, to further think about the notions of productivity and demand in relation to actual resources and desires. In her text, curator and writer Taraneh Fazeli discusses waiting in relation to ableism. Based on her large-scale project *Sick, Time, Sleepy Time, Crip Time: Against Capitalism's Temporal Bullying* (2017-2020), Fazeli writes about the significance of communities in sharing forms of interdependence, and thinking about waiting and presumed idleness as a form of resistance to the pace and "normalcy" defined by contemporary capitalism for able-bodied people. In a similar spirit, artist Danilo Correale's script-like contribution presents a character negotiating his place and possible futures amidst demands towards his productivity, social usefulness, and accustomed looks. Society needs all players to play their assigned role to maintain the status quo, but could there actually be some other alternatives?

This publication aims to offer the reader some tools and food for thought about the processes we have ahead of us when thinking about what social gathering means, and what has shifted (and continues to shift) since the pandemic began. I want to thank all the wonderful artists and writers that have taken part in the Exercises in Togetherness program, and put their time and energy in presenting and/or creating new works this occasion, as well as our institutional partners in Helsinki and New York for making this intimate and precious program happen.

Elina Suoyrjö

Director of Programs at the Finnish Cultural Institute
January 2023, Brooklyn



Jaakko Pallasvuo

Instructions on How To Retrieve an Action

Laura Cemin

Actions are performed and learned in repetition until, one day without notice, they stop being a novelty and become habitual. During this invisible process, the mechanics of such actions are apparently “forgotten”, or rather stored, in a big pile called mundanity.

When habitual actions cease to be performed for a defined period of time, however, they slowly shift their position until they reach a state of foreignness. It has been found that encountering seemingly forgotten actions can trigger primordial bodily reactions, still difficult to understand and be explained by science. Some researchers stress that small particles of sensations tend to remain anchored to muscle cells, as sea limpets do on rocks, and can stimulate an intense interest, toward the point of fascination, even obsession, with such actions. Those who experience these encounters often describe them as calls from an ancient past.

Instructional guides can be useful tools to learn how to slow down, and even reverse the process of actions forgetting. In this regard, if you are starting to forget how to show affection and you wish to retrieve such memories, here are few concise guidelines for you.

INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO EMBRACE

From entries under the letter E, to *embrace*

from Old French *embracier* “clasp in the arms, enclose; covet, handle, cope with,” from assimilated form of *en-* “in” + brace, *braz* “the arms,” from Latin *bracchium* “an arm, a forearm,” from Greek *brakhion* “an arm”.

Leaving aside the reasons to embrace in this guide, let’s focus on the pure mechanics of the action.

It is clear that, in order to fully experience an embrace, something or someone other-than-yourself must participate in the action.

Start by choosing a co-embracer, either human or non-human, and ask for their consent. Wrap your arms around the selected body and bring it towards your chest. The position of the limbs may vary from embracer to embracer; to avoid initial awkwardness, it is advisable to place the right upper arm under the co-embracer’s armpit and the right hand on their left shoulder. The left arm can envelop the other body at chest level creating a half oval shape. The left hand

should conclude the line and gently grip the ribcage. Find a comfortable position for your head to rest in.

Slowly tighten the grip, paying attention to the response of the co-embracer. The motion should be paused when feeling a light resistance against your limbs. Remain in the position while breathing naturally; holding the shape should feel effortless but full of intention.

While in it, listen carefully.

Feel vividly.

The reduced space between the co-embracers can initially cause discomfort. The high level of oxytocin released can also at first trigger intense unexpected reactions. Do not be scared. To get used to the action again, it is recommended to initially remain in the final position for about 3-6 seconds.

After several repetitions and when feeling more at ease, the embrace can safely last as long as desired. Repeat at will.

Notice that feelings might arise.

INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO SMILE AT SOMEONE IN PUBLIC

From entries under the letter S, to smile at someone

perhaps from Middle Low German **smilen* or a Scandinavian source (such as Danish *smile* “smile,” Swedish *smila* “smile, smirk, simper, fawn”), from Proto-Germanic **smil-*, extended form of **smei-* “to laugh, smile”.

It is fairly common to stop performing an action when its effects can not be perceived or communicated to others.

To maintain the mimetic and cutaneous muscles trained and ready for future demands, however, it is recommended to continue practicing the action of smiling at someone even if only in private, under a mask, or if this someone is no one but yourself.

A mirror can be helpful to exercise the action, however not necessary (*avoid finding excuses*).

Start by pulling the corners of your lips towards the side and slightly upwards. As a reaction, the ears' inner cavities will expand sideways and possibly produce a squeak. Notice how the vertical movement of the facial muscles shapes the cheekbones.

If desired, teeth can be shown by continuing to pull the mouth's corner sideways and separating the upper lip from the lower.

At times, small cavities appear on people's cheeks, either on one or on both. This phenomenon is however due to physiognomy and therefore not instructable. The same applies to the physiological coloring of the cheeks, known as *blushing*, and the appearance of sparkles in the eyes.

INSTRUCTIONS *or rather modes of* HOLDING HANDS

From entries under the letter H,
to *hold* (hands)

There are two main modes of holding hands.

THE OYSTER GRIP

Some holders prefer to keep the thumb separated from the other fingers, while the remaining four glue together creating a plateau. The surface created is then wrapped around the extraneous hand. The contours of the two palms are sealed together and create a suction effect that leaves a small breathing space in the center of the hands.

This position is commonly chosen when the discrepancy of the size of the two body parts involved is large (see parent and child holding hands, for instance) or when wearing mittens

THE POETICAL GRIP

This mode expects the fingers of each hand to be separated from the others and interlaced with those of the extraneous hand. The bind of the fingers follows the alternate rhyme structure of AB—AB—AB—AB—AB.

This grip is typically chosen by lovers.

If kept for a long period of time in hot climates, both positions can become uncomfortable. Excessive sweating might be experienced.

The slow dissolution of such positions is often read as reluctance towards an imminent separation. Metaphorical reading of such actions may require emotional work, as well as time commitment, and therefore are intentionally excluded from these instructions.

INSTRUCTIONS or rather examples OF KISSES

According to outfittrends.com,
there are 50 types of kisses:

cheek *kiss*

eye *kiss*

forehead *kiss*

hand *kiss*

wrist *kiss*

jaw *kiss*

nose *kiss*

back and/or back of the neck *kiss*

finger *kiss*

french *kiss*

keep away *kiss*

single lip *kiss*

melt *kiss*

hot and cold *kiss*

lower lip sucking *kiss*

licking *kiss*

tongue sucking *kiss*

butterfly *kiss*

bunny *kiss*

hickey *kiss*

spiderman *kiss*

fruity *kiss*

vacuum *kiss*

sip *kiss*

foot *kiss*

lizard *kiss*

nibble *kiss*

back of the knees *kiss*

trace a shape *kiss*

collarbone *kiss*

belly button *kiss*

palm of the hand *kiss*

elbow *kiss*

shoulder *kiss*

gum *kiss*

the *peck*
the *smooch*
the muah *kiss*
the text *kiss*
shoulder blade *kiss*
superman *kiss*
adventure *kiss*
spotlight *kiss*
twister *kiss*
sweet *kiss*
sprinkle *kiss*
lipstick *kiss*
buzz *kiss*
mail *kiss*
french roll *kiss*
good bye *k*

Dream Zoom

Nina Sarnelle & Selwa Sweidan

Touch Praxis is a collaborative research project exploring touch as a time-based medium and a method for co-creating knowledge. In the text below, we've taken a critical fictioning approach to sharing our core conversations, questions and influences, many of which have emerged during zoom workshops held in the last few years. Dream Zoom is a "fabulation" (see Saidiya Hartman, Donna Haraway) that maps a constellation of chosen ancestors, inspirations, and collaborators close and far, present and past. We've paraphrased "participants" words to create a fantasy conversation, casually placing these thinkers into intellectual space together. See the list of sources we're pulling from at the end, but note that Dream Zoom is a fiction and should not be read as verbatim quotations.

PARTICIPANTS

Karen Barad

philosopher and feminist theorist with a background in quantum physics. Our work is indebted to Barad's writing on relationality and alterity as well as their assertion that being and knowing cannot be split.

Octavia Butler

monumental science fiction writer whose (often prophetic) work has influenced so many artists and thinkers of our time. She died on Feb 24, 2006.

Sophie Cloherty

journalist, curator and arts writer. She participated in our 4-part workshop series called Touching Theory (at a distance) hosted by The School of Making Thinking and Abrons Art Center.

Gabrielle Civil

performance artist, poet, writer and teacher. We attended Gabrielle's online DIS/COURSE hosted by The Poetry Project called Touch / Don't Touch, and scribbled down some of the inspiring things she said.

Saidiya Hartman

important scholar of African American literature, law and cultural history whose writing explores the power dynamics of historical archives, transatlantic slavery and its afterlife(s).

Donna Haraway

prominent scholar in the field of science and technology studies and contemporary ecofeminism.

Petra Kuppers

disability culture activist and community performance artist known for her lush poetics and experimental pedagogy. We attended her virtual Starship Somatics workshops hosted by Movement Research and have been deeply influenced by her ecocritical writing.

Erin Manning

philosopher, artist and political theorist concerned with the sensing body in movement; her research includes neurodiversity, DeafBlind/ProTactile communication, Black studies and radical pedagogy. Founder of the SenseLab at Concordia University.

Kristin McWharter

artist who uses performance and play to interrogate the relationship between competition and intimacy. Kristin also participated in Touching Theory (at a distance).

Marisol Rosa-Shapiro

theater artist, educator, and group facilitator who cultivates empathy, thoughtfulness, playfulness, awareness, listening, agency, and community. Marisol also participated in Touching Theory (at a distance).

Hortense Spillers

feminist literary scholar renowned for her discourse on African-American female gender construction. Our work is particularly influenced by her critical distinction between “body” and “flesh,” and her articulation of touch under systems of racial oppression.

Yi-Fu Tuan

influential geographer and educator credited with developing a human-centered branch of critical geography. He died on August 10, 2022.

Megan Young

interdisciplinary artist, curator, and administrator who participated in an online Touch Praxis workshop presented by SLOMOCO (Slow Movement Computing Conference) in 2021.

Bessel van der Kolk

psychiatrist known for his somatic approach to trauma research.

EXERCISE 1.

Touch two parts of your body together.

What does it feel like on
either side of the skin?

Selwa Sweidan to Everyone [5:03pm]

SS—It's a little sweaty.

Nina Sarnelle to Everyone [5:04pm]

NS—Sort of stuck together.

Hold that point of contact for
as long as you possibly can.

Yi-Fu Tuan to Everyone [5:11pm]

YT—Touch, unlike the other senses, modifies
its object. It reminds us that we are not only
observers of the world but actors in it. We are
both destroyers and creators.

Then release it.

Notice the imprint, the afterfeel.

Octavia Butler to Everyone [5:17pm]

OB—All that you touch you change.

Erin Manning to Everyone [5:17pm]

EM—There is no such thing as touch without
consequence.

Octavia Butler to Everyone [5:18pm]

OB—All that you change changes you.

EXERCISE 2.

Where do you locate the threshold
between 'you' and 'me'?

Petra Kuppers to Everyone [5:24pm]

PK—I use the term "eco soma" to explore the
openings and gaps between self and world. It's an
invitation to stay open in the encounter zone, in the
physical meeting of the human/nonhuman/world.

Gabrielle Civil to Everyone [5:26pm]

GC—I'm touching something that, in this
moment, I don't think is me. What might it feel
like if it was me? An extension of me?

Explore that boundary.

Petra Kuppers to Everyone [5:33pm]

PK—Environmentalist Paul Shepard wrote that the epidermis of the skin is “ecologically like a pond surface or a forest soil, not a shell so much as a delicate interpenetration”.

Nina Sarnelle to Everyone [5:35pm]

NS—What about touch inside the esophagus, the stomach, the intestines? The absorption of nutrients, expulsion of waste?

Erin Manning to Everyone [5:36pm]

EM—Touch is not simply an addendum to an already-stable body. Touch is that which forces us to think bodies alongside notions such as repetition, prosthesis, extension.

What does it feel like?

What is it made of?

Kristin McWharter to Everyone [5:42pm]

KM—It’s kinda squishy.

Sophie Cloherty to Everyone [5:42pm]

SC—It’s still unformed.

Gabrielle Civil to Everyone [5:43pm]

GC—If we’re touching one thing are we not touching another? Or is touch always an expansive possibility?

Selwa Sweidan to Everyone [5:44pm]

SS—What about finitude? Boundedness?

Gabrielle Civil to Everyone [5:44pm]

GC—Yes, there’s possibility there, but also the necessity of limits...

Can it be crossed?

Selwa Sweidan to Everyone [5:50pm]

SS—Touch can both articulate and obliterate boundaries.

Karen Barad to Everyone [5:50pm]

KB—How does it feel to have the other in one’s skin?

Nina Sarnelle to Everyone [5:51pm]

NS—I have sensitive gums.

Erin Manning to Everyone [5:52pm]

EM—Is it possible to touch without violence?

Hortense Spillers to Everyone [5:53pm]

HS—Touch might be considered the gateway to the most intimate experience of exchange between subjects.. But it also comprises a defining element of the absence of self-ownership.

Nina Sarnelle to Everyone [5:55pm]

NS—What is the relationship between touch and consent?

Hortense Spillers to Everyone [5:56pm]

HS—For enslaved Black women in the Americas, the single most powerful evidence of the loss of freedom is the fact that bodies lose their integrity, and may be invaded or entered or penetrated by coercive power. This touch that we associate with intimacy can also engender invasion and harm.

EXERCISE 3.

Invent a new way to touch at a distance.

Megan Young to Everyone [6:03pm]

MY—Touch is just a shortening of the space between us.

Nina Sarnelle to Everyone [6:04pm]

NS—Then do we ever really touch?

Karen Barad to Everyone [6:05pm]

KB—Touching entails an infinite alterity, so that touching the Other is touching all Others, including the “self,” and touching the “self” entails touching the strangers within.

Petra Kuppers to Everyone [6:06pm]

PK—Affect transmits and plays on the openings of bodies. Humans (and nonhumans) live among hormone whiffs, alignments between sweat glands and nasal passages, the spray of words layering like a veil on someone else’s skin.

Now try it.

Nina Sarnelle to Everyone [6:11pm]

NS—Ouch!

Marisol Rosa-Shapiro to Everyone [6:11pm]

MR—I can vibrate this tinfoil by humming.

Selwa Sweidan to Everyone [6:11pm]

SS—Is all sound touch at a distance?

Kristin McWharter to Everyone [6:12pm]

KM—Do satellites touch planets?

Touch yourself at a distance.

Touch someone else at a distance.

Nina Sarnelle to Everyone [6:18pm]

NS—Aren't weapons touch at a distance?

Selwa Sweidan to Everyone [6:18pm]

SS—How does power touch at a distance?

EXERCISE 4.

Can you touch the past?

Try it.

Gabrielle Civil to Everyone [6:23pm]

GC—I am drawn to physical, energetic and ancestral touch: ways to integrate body, intention, and spiritual awareness of space, place, time, purpose, inheritance and belonging.

Kristin McWharter to Everyone [6:24pm]

KM—Do we inherit touch? What is a second-hand touch?

Marisol Rosa-Shapiro to Everyone [6:25pm]

MR—Graves, memorials & rituals are sites of ancestral touch.

Petra Kuppers to Everyone [6:25pm]

PK—By re-enacting moments from the crip/mad dance archive (a chosen ancestry) we are reaching, using our embodied energies to try, to try, to try.

Saidiya Hartman to Everyone [6:26pm]

SH—What about memories, histories, kin that have been violently severed or stolen? How can we

destabilize the colonial archive and imagine what might have happened, or might have been said, or might have been done?

Can you touch the future?
Try it.

Nina Sarnelle to Everyone [6:32pm]

NS—Every day that we don't drastically reduce CO2 emissions, we are effectively touching the future.

Sophie Cloherty to Everyone [6:33pm]

SC—I'm obsessed with erosion..and the irreversibility of touch.

Selwa Sweidan to Everyone [6:34pm]

SS—What might it feel like to speculate together, physically, in our bodies?

Donna Haraway to Everyone [6:35pm]

DH—Can we untangle and re-tie the knots that knot knots?

Saidiya Hartman to Everyone [6:36pm]

SH—How can subjects deemed “unfit for history” become empowered in the present to demand an abolitionist future?

Donna Haraway to Everyone [6:36pm]

DH—It matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories.

EXERCISE 5.

Can you remember a healing touch?
Who touched whom, when, where, how?
How did it feel?

Hortense Spillers to Everyone [6:42pm]

HS—The power of touch to heal, to bind, to cure, also paradoxically contains the power to wound and violate. Indeed, one of these valences of touch is not walled off from the other, but haunts it, shadows it, as its own twin possibility.

Nina Sarnelle to Everyone [6:44pm]

NS—In what context does a “hold” become a tactic of force, restraint, harm?

Selwa Sweidan to Everyone [6:45pm]

SS—When is touch worth the risk, and for whom?

Is it possible to reproduce this touch?

Try it. Why or why not?

Bessel van der Kolk to Everyone [6:50pm]

BV—Many people with histories of trauma & neglect experience extreme disconnection from their physical bodies, a lack of sensation. These adaptations, in an effort to shut off terrifying sensations, also deadened our capacity to feel fully alive.

Sophie Cloherty to Everyone [6:51pm]

SC—It feels like acts of reparation attempt to undo past touches... but is that even possible?

Hortense Spillers to Everyone [6:52pm]

HS—In Morrison's *Beloved*, a curative touch might restore feeling to damaged nerve endings, but it is going to take a while...

END

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Letter of support: The Tower (2nd ed.) *Minna Miettälä & Jessie Bullivant*

Text by Minna Miettälä, written in 2021 about an artwork made by Jessie Bullivant in 2020. Originally published on Jessie Bullivant's website (www.jessiebullivant.com) in 2021, and republished as part of Attached, Rooftop Press, 2022.

20 May 2021, Helsinki
Minna Miettälä
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To whom it may concern,

This is a letter of support for Jessie Bullivant. It's based on a commissioned work I produced for them, as well as friendship that extends beyond this period of cooperation.

Jessie and I first got to know each other in 2018, through studying in the MFA program of the University of the Arts' Academy of Fine Arts in Helsinki. There, I once said in a seminar that there are carpenters in my family. A bit after that, while the seminar continued, I developed a minor anxiety attack, thinking I had accidentally used the wrong word. I thought carpenters actually meant craftspeople who make furniture or decorations out of wood. The relatives I referred to built houses, the skeletons of them, not the decorations for their interiors (or exteriors). In Finnish, there are two distinct words for those occupations. Now I know that the English word encompasses pretty much everybody who makes something out of wood. There's no differentiation between structure and ornament, nor skilled craftsman and 'physical' worker.

Since I felt it was too late to go back to the subject, I kept regretting that I had unintentionally shared misinformation about

my family history to the seminar group. I knew it didn't really matter, though it intrigued me that it still felt like such an important issue.

I can't remember if Jessie was in this seminar, but it's probable they were. Much later, in 2020, they suggested that I make newspaper sticks to support their text "The Tower" that was reprinted in newspaper format for the HIAP Open Studios in November 2020. I gladly agreed, since I was excited to collaborate with Jessie. I had also read and commented on early versions of the text, and acquired a copy of the first edition that was distributed in the group exhibition big wet in Haukilahti water tower in August 2020.

Jessie wanted to present the newspapers in the space so that they were supported by newspaper sticks. They sent me some reference images, asking if I would be interested in making something similar. It was a challenge, since even if I work with my hands in my own practice, I rarely make things that are supposed to fulfil a specific function, or even turn out the way originally planned—if there is a plan in the first place. Also, I'd never done anything commissioned before. The status of my contribution was hybrid-like, since I was working as an artist, making objects that weren't exactly artworks, but rather a support structure for one.

I had ambivalent feelings about making a sort of utensil, but at the same time, curious and pleased to work in the context of somebody else's praxis.

Now that I think of it, we never talked about why Jessie wanted to have newspaper sticks. They're not very widely used anymore, and their functionality feels a bit questionable. You can definitely read a newspaper without it being attached to a stick, which most of us do, if we still happen to read printed newspapers. The stick is mostly used in public spaces though, or cafés, and one thing it does is make it more difficult to take the newspaper with you. Another thing is it keeps the pages together. So it keeps the parts together and the whole in place. It's a device for attachments. During the Open Studios, Jessie made a few different installations, in which four of the newspapers, along with their sticks, were hanging on the wall, and one of them was either lying on a table or hanging from a string attached to the ceiling—a double attachment. Attaching the newspaper to a hard wooden stick is a bit like framing a drawing. It makes a thing that can be crumpled or torn, which can easily become invisible or trash, into a more solid object: harder, more serious. It's a gesture of elevation and control.

Jessie was a very supportive and patient ‘employer’, and throughout the process I felt I was trusted in every way. It made it easier for me to relax in the face of this new type of project. When I think of the collaboration, it feels like the gesture of invitation was the crucial part. I was invited by Jessie to make a series of objects, and then to write this letter. An invitation suggests an attachment, a commitment. By taking up the invitation, the suggested task, I agreed to become attached to the project and Jessie as the conductor of the project. The invitation, of course, is also a gesture of support: morally, as a way of acknowledging my praxis, and financially, as the work was compensated with money.

I noticed, working as a ‘free’ artist, it was nice to be given a task for a change. And at the same time, there is quite an interesting dynamic between the one giving and receiving the task. I can’t quite put my finger on it, but it connects to finding and relating to the different types of resources that to me seem central in Jessie’s praxis. It also produces a heightened awareness of the exchange nature of relating in the context of art fields, as nets of entanglement of overlapping professional and personal relations. I have great admiration for the clarity, accuracy, and integrity of Jessie’s work. Also, I’ve always felt supported by Jessie, and from that perspective, it was great to be able to craft a support structure for their work (and now this letter as a follow-up).

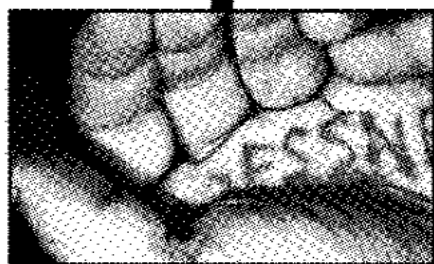
Later on Jessie sent me a screenshot of a message from their father commenting on the final installation. He was, without having further information, referring to me as a “local craftsperson”. I imagine myself as a skilled craftswoman, carrying on the centuries old family tradition of carpentry, in my cosy little wood workshop in the close-knit little community of the remote island of Suomenlinna. I fantasise about having my fixed position in the community; my skills are highly valued, and I’m trusted and cherished both as a professional and community member.

My father isn’t a professional carpenter (of either kind), but he is a DIY man, who always has one or several house renovations, tinkering, or repair projects going on. He’s always lived in the town he was born in. Sometimes when I’m making something I consider ‘crafty’, I send my father some pictures. It feels pretty much like the only way I can invite him to take part in what I’m doing. His comments are scarce and cautiously supportive at best. If I was more of a ‘maker’, maybe we’d have more to talk about. But I’m just a slightly dislocated university-educated contemporary artist.

Trying to finish this letter of support, I'm thinking of our families in two different parts of the world. I'm thinking of support, attachments, ways to establish and manage them, and how complicated that can be. On that note, I warmly recommend anyone to engage in any type of collaboration with Jessie. I look forward to sharing more time and work with them soon.

With warm regards,
Minna Miettälä

**WORK BEHIND
A MASK OF REST**



**CARE BEHIND
A MASK OF NEED**





**REST BEHIND
A MASK OF WORK**



**NEED BEHIND
A MASK OF CARE**

At the Service of One Another

Nella Aarne

Given that approaches to the aesthetics and praxes of care continue to find forms in discourses circling the production and presentation of contemporary art, I consider the question of reciprocal care within small independent curatorial platforms, collectives, and other non-profit organisations that are maintained by low-paid and volunteer cultural workers. Articulations of care connected to curatorial work frequently portray a severe power imbalance between established institutions with financial security and vast resources, and precarious individuals who pass through these institutions' outskirts as freelance workers. In order to be considered a caring institution, its representatives must accept a duty of care and hospitality towards the freelancer, offering them a safe space to advocate for their needs (to which the institution should adequately respond). In the context of chronically underfunded and volunteer-run independent projects, however, this pronounced hierarchy between those with security and resources, and those without, is rarely the lived reality.

Many who do curatorial work as part of small, precariously funded organisations approach their underpaid or unpaid labour as emotionally charged, high affect work. It is often conducted alongside mandatory professional commitments that constitute one's primary livelihood, and has to be balanced with personal needs and care responsibilities. More often than not, this curatorial labour entails different types of care and support work for collaborators, which can comprise anything from straightforward production assistance and problem-solving, to conflict-resolution as a third-party mediator, to acknowledging individual arts workers' financial, social, or health challenges that may affect their professional capacity.

It does not escape me, of course, that the term 'curate' is derived from the Latin word 'cura', which literally means 'care'. For a curator committed to the constantly evolving politics of

practising with care, assuming a role akin to that of an established institution—even if one did not occupy the position of one—can appear like the sole universal recipe for properly carrying out one’s professional responsibilities.¹ The pressure to ‘do the right thing’ may be exceptionally acute when the image of the organisation or collective that one represents is more immediately interwoven with one’s personal reputation, compared to the image of a large-scale institution whose individual team members become absorbed into the organisational structure as its somewhat inconspicuous nuts and bolts.

To convince artist peers of their organisational ability to offer valuable contexts to develop and present work, independent curatorial platforms regularly utilise coded signifiers, mimicking institutional aesthetics to establish an appropriate appearance of professionalism. While this may provide a means to accumulate social and cultural capital (which by no means necessarily transforms into its much longed-for financial cousin), a polished facade also blurs the visible difference between steadily resourced institutions, and precariously funded independent spaces. Institutional standards in public appearance can prompt expectations of matching institutional capacity within, for example, budgetary flexibility and team availability. These expectations are challenging to manage once the direct demand—to unexpectedly cover additional expenditure, take on work that was meant to be outsourced, manage external social conflicts, or support a collaborator in crisis—is already there, waiting for the responsible curator to unflinchingly demonstrate their commitment to the unwavering provision of care. The risk of being perceived as careless and exploitative is daunting to any worker who is genuinely invested in care praxes, and tragically understands that their own state of precarity and powerlessness is disguised through professional composure and institutional optics.

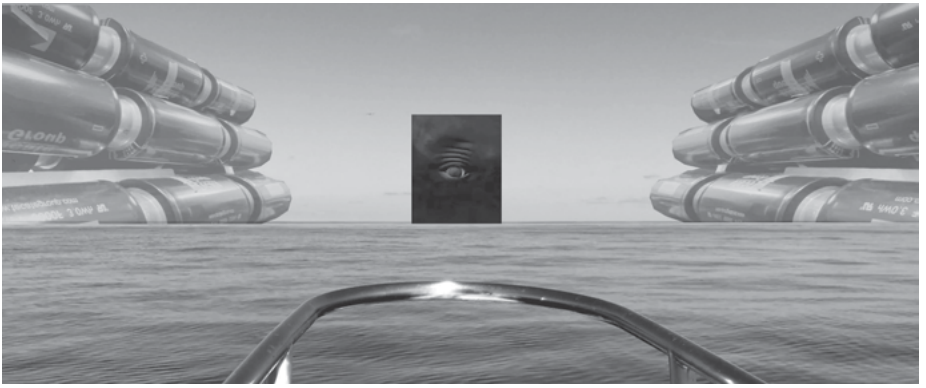
Living up to the idealised image of a curator who always shows up at the service of others thus becomes a core priority, even when it unsustainably exceeds personal capacities that are temporal, mental, emotional, and even financial. As such, the precarious, underpaid, or volunteering curator who is framed first and foremost as a caregiver is rarely in a position to voice their own needs for care, or set personal boundaries. At the same time, there are little or no resources for the curator within

their own working context to receive the care they need while continuing to develop projects. In the absence of appropriate resources or care for the self, the expectation of inexhaustible sensitivity, tenderness, and generosity for the other often comes with exhaustion and conflict.

Relationships embroiled in the politics of care are inevitably charged with the possibility of conflict, and maintaining any relationship—even strictly professional ones—can be anxious, frustrating, tiring, and turbulent. Everyone is at risk of forming working relationships within which they are suddenly confronted with higher expectations of care than they are prepared or able to give. Each conflict requires nuanced and reciprocal considerations of what might be required to overcome it—if it is, indeed, possible to do so. Explicitly refusing an element of care for the other due to one's own exhaustion can mean that the conditions determined by the care available are simply no longer hospitable enough for the other. Can we understand and accept each other's limitations without judgement, or find a way to meet one another halfway?

When a precarious group of cultural workers gathers to work together, care relations could also be articulated differently from the established model of the curator as the sole de facto caregiver. Even though we might consider ourselves especially vulnerable and primarily identify as recipients of care, if we are to make care the norm—and not only an anomaly—the collective duty of care can still also concern us, not only others in relation to our own needs. In other words, perhaps the fact that we occupy the position of someone who needs care in one context should not necessarily prevent us from providing forms of caregiving to others. Often care manifests simply in understanding the extent of someone's capacity, and what constitutes a reasonable request. If working relationships—and each party's personal boundaries within them—could be formulated in more nuanced terms, this could not only better protect everyone's equal rights to a sufficient level of care, but also limit the other's expectations of the amount and kinds of care that we have the readiness and stamina to provide. After all, we aren't always our best fucking tender selves.

•1• The intention here is not to argue that institutions are caring—too many institutions are actively hostile spaces that systematically disregard crucial practices of care—but to refer to the level of care that is reasonable to expect and demand from institutions.



Miho Hatori

Do Whales Dream of Electric Human

Miho Hatori

*Every Breath
Evidence
Glitches in my brain
CPU overloaded
No password to verify*

*A big creature you meet might change your script
Every time I recognize it
I feel pain
I'm terrified*

*The water is clear
Catch me later
Odd behavior
Neuromancer?*

*Technophilia
Where is nature?
Ain't no phobia
In the water*

*Mind is messy
Tangled data
A can of Pepsi
Floating*

*75 miles away from the shore
Half asleep, half awake
Do Whales Dream of Electric Human?*

*Half asleep, half awake
Do Whales Dream of Electric Human?
Make me float between water and air
in your dream*

The dark blue abyss underneath
A formation of wonders
The consciousness had looped the same phase
for centuries by 10 feet deep
We need a new melody over the chord

Half asleep, half awake
Do Whales Dream of Electric Human?

Half asleep, half awake
Do Whales Dream of Electric Human?

Garden of Agency

Mari Keski-Korsu

Garden of Agency is a participatory artwork, an invitation to imagine a relationship between participants and plants. It is inspired by horses' knowledge of their environment, themselves, and their place within the herd that often transcends individual agency. Perhaps the human herd species could learn from them. Garden of Agency originally took place in Ruskeasuo stables in Helsinki as part of a collaborative event organised by Frame Contemporary Art Finland and the Finnish Cultural Institute in New York. The participatory performance facilitated a herding of relations of faunal and floral bodies in the sandy paddock of Ruskeasuo, proposing a rhizome of support that stretched between humans, horses, and plants—and other indiscernible beings.

Garden of Agency was created in collaboration with the horse herd from Toiska farm in Ilmajoki, Finland, a place in which horse therapy is practised. This text is modified from the artwork's score. It can be read as a collective exercise with a group that consists of at least four people. The preferred location for this exercise is outdoors, such as a park or wasteland with open space which enables moving around as a herd. One group member reads the text for the others, while the others accept this guidance. The headlines and time proposals are not meant to be read out loud, but to help the reader (marked in the text). Overall it takes around 20 minutes to do the exercise. Please keep within earshot of the reader and the other participants.

WALKING

You're welcome to enter this space. Take a couple of deep breaths to calm yourself and to focus on the moment. Leave all the busy thoughts and the errands of the day outside of this space.

Please, acknowledge the safeness and care for you, and from you.

Let your feet move, and everything in you to move with them. Feel free to wander around, while respecting the others and their spaces around you. Sense the others, but concentrate on your steps. How are your muscles tensing and releasing? How do the forms of ground feel under your soles? How is your physical body present in this space, and existing together?

Walk around for a moment at your own pace.

(wait 5 minutes and continue reading)

LOOKING

Cherish the thought and the experience of your own movement. At the same time, start focusing more on who moves with you. Who are these beautiful creatures around you? Keep moving and look at them, the beauty of you all.

Look without judgement. Look without values. Look at how you really are. How is your energy melting together with the others?

Occasionally, if you feel the need to stop your movement and look into the eyes of the other, feel free to do so. It is possible to forget the social rules about time and gaze. Instead, in this pure gazing, send a warm, polite, yet fierce energetic greeting:

I am here for you.

Let's take a moment for our gazes to happen.

(wait 3 minutes and continue reading)

This is your herd for this moment. It doesn't matter if you know some of your herd members from before, or if they are all unknown to you. At this moment, all of them are important to you. You can imagine it. You're for them, and they are for you. Respect each other's spaces, but always keep an eye on where the members of your herd are, and ensure that they are safe.

FINDING A PLACE

You have probably started to move and pause together in kind of synchrony with your herd. Keep this experience with you, as it is time to sense who else might be here. You can stop walking for now, and sit down if you wish. Find a place that feels good to stay.

*(wait for the participants to sit down
or find their place, then continue reading)*

WILLOW

Sit comfortably. Close your eyes, take a couple of deep breaths, and remember the calmness you have felt since the start of this session.

Imagine water. It can be a sea, pond, river, waterfall, whichever water entity comes to your mind.

Picture the plants that grow by the water. How are the twigs, reaching high with narrow dark green leaves. Maybe they move with the wind. Imagine the fresh smell of the leaves.

Maybe this is a plant that takes away your pain and sorrows—nourishes you and makes everything flow. Maybe this plant is your backup.

Let the associations, words, scents, and images of this plant flow freely and easily through your mind. Concentrate also on your body, if there are some physical sensations appearing. Let them pass through you effortlessly, but remember them.

Let's take a moment for this to happen.

(wait for 3 minutes and continue reading)

YARROW

Come back from the water to the land, to the soil. Imagine a meadow with so many plants, some flowering. Maybe this is a field you saw when you were a child. Or it can be a field with flowers that you passed by when coming here.

Picture a plant with white, small flowers. A thousand tops. The one with a sturdy body and many dark green leaves.

Maybe this plant can make you strong, boost your whole ecosystem against all that is not needed, ease your breathing, and make your skin resistant. Maybe this plant could be your revolution.

Let the associations, words, scents, and images of this plant flow freely and easily through your mind. Concentrate also on your body if there are some physical sensations appearing. Let them pass through you effortlessly, but remember them.

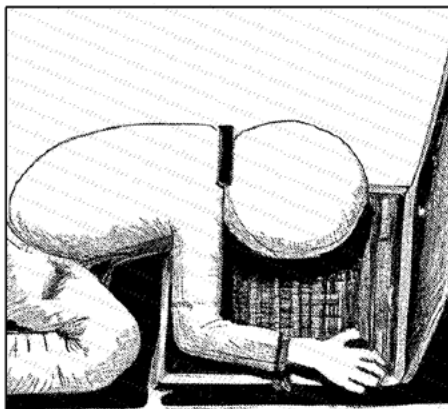
Let's take a moment for this to happen.

(wait for 3 minutes and continue reading)

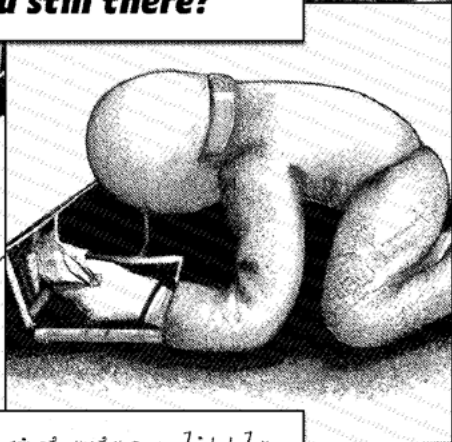
THANK YOU

Take a couple of deep breaths. You can open your eyes now. Look around with kindness to say

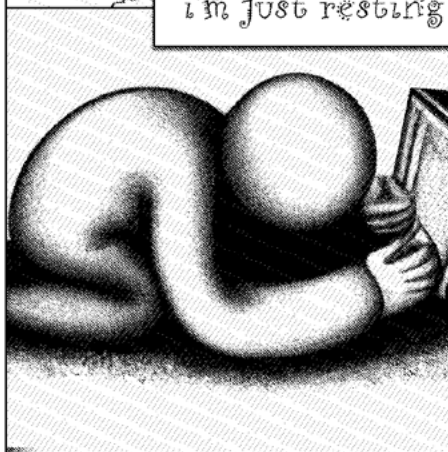
Thank you.



hey... are you still there?



i'm just resting my eyes a little



Time After Time

Taraneh Fazeli

Time After Time was first published in *Shifter 25: Waiting* (edited by Avram Alpert and Sreshta Rit Premnath, supported by MIT List Visual Arts Center and Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, 2021). It is a reflection on waiting as a key part of sick and crip times, and how these temporalities tie to queer and decolonial times. This is examined through the lens of lived experience with chronic illness, theory, and artworks from the “Sick Time, Sleepy Time, Crip Time” exhibition series (2016-20). It offers a practice of JOMO (Joy of Missing Out) with others for whom crip rhythms are life as an exercise in togetherness.

Fazeli is currently working on an updated version of this essay with a new section on curatorial practice for her forthcoming book *Sick Time, Sleepy Time, Crip Time—a field guide*. This field guide will share knowledge generated through the originating exhibition and work that has since emerged from its network of artists, organizers, and community partners in Lenapehoking/New York and Waawiiyaatanong/Detroit by offering tools, essays, and case studies on the depth and complexity of doing access with multiple different sets of lived experiences at the center. True to the staggering time of waiting this essay is being written, published, and revised in stops and starts during phases of the ongoing COVID pandemic.

the army of the upright

I begin to write this amidst an auto-immune flare-up triggered by a (“the”) vaccination. I’m having flashbacks to when I was sick with COVID last year. I say last year, but the vicissitudes of relapse and rebound that characterize chronic illness demarcate time for me just as much as the temporal units of year or day do. So, March 2020, March 2021, who really knows?

This paragraph is stuck on repeat—it is nearly verbatim to one I’ve recycled in recent years... Amidst the pandemic’s early days, I wrote several essays from a familiar place: my bed. That experience was nothing new. Most people spend a good chunk of their life there. However, due to chronic illnesses that I’ve experienced since childhood, for me—like many disabled people—it is not just a private site for sleep, rest, reading, television watching, sex, care, and occasional recuperation, but necessarily a primary site of life’s myriad activities. I often can’t help but experience FOMO as I imagine the world outside marching on to a different beat without me.

I notice how this feels the same, suspended.

I notice how this feels new.

Maybe you've been there too... Unable to move from your bed, much less have the energy to deal with the noise and stress and chemicals and bullshit out in the world. Fearing the emails and dishes piling up. Stuck numbing the pain and boredom with back-to-back episodes of a streaming television series.

But this is not commonplace convalescing. The time of chronic illness often feels stuck on a loop. There's no "getting better." A part of many chronic illnesses is the ebb and flow of symptoms, which manifests in cycles: anticipation of relapse and subsequent living-through of the dreaded flare state. It can start with a few sleepless nights spent laser-focused on what a new ache may be. Is it a weird bruise or the sign of something terrible building underneath? Then, bam, it's too late... you are staring at the ceiling fan cutting the light from the hall, blinking, measuring the collapse of time. Lying in bed, just waiting for pain to pass, the bodymind to repair. It's hard not to agonize over the minutes, hours, days missed at work, with friends, with family, with lovers.

In the early collective yet unequal moments of pandemic, care is a hot topic, invoked and weaponized to different ends. Who has access to it and who must wait becomes even more evident. With shelter-in-place and distancing mandates, so many others are staying inside and the world ceases to march on at its normal tempo. There's a new division, this one largely class-based: those who are deemed non-essential workers and can afford to be staying home with a potential excess of "free time"; those who help supply basic human needs or can't afford to not work are out on streets, in buses, in care homes, and in vehicles making deliveries.

I remind myself to breathe.

Deep amidst overlapping crises of COVID, anti-Black and anti-Asian racism, ableism, climate injustice, and fascism, I reflect on how breathing itself is increasingly difficult for so many.

I recall ruminating on an excerpt from Virginia Woolf's *On Being Ill* as a sick brown kid.¹ In her satire of conformity, there are two groups: the "army of the upright" and the "invalid." While the army mills about with the heroism of the ant or the bee and become titans of industry, the invalid has time. Time to observe, to day-dream, to be difficult and uncooperative.² Of course, Woolf's class and racial status permitted staying in bed. As a child, my immigrant father, internalizing American bootstraps ideals, never once took a

sick day and rarely slept so couldn't fathom the time I "wasted" in bed or in the art studio.

As I alternately stare at masked passersby greeting each other out my window and Facebook posts about home-made bread and lives lived otherwise during quarantine, I think of how Woolf wrote about looking out her bedroom window before the computer screen became a prevailing portal onto the world. I am also reminded of how artist Johanna Hedva sketches the various ways systems debilitate people and limit (BLM) protest participation – illness, threat of incarceration, police brutality, need to work – before rhetorically asking, "How do you throw a brick through the window of a bank when you can't get out of bed?"³

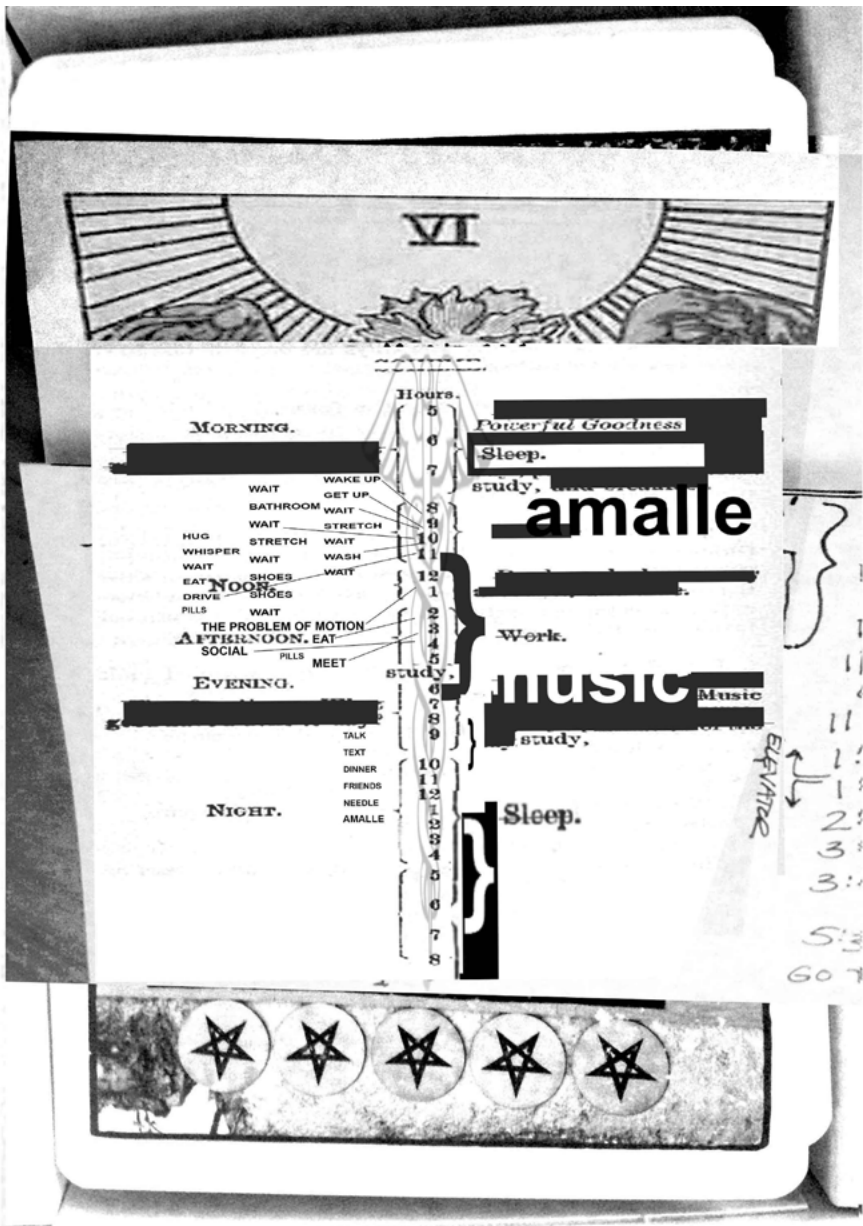
it's about time

Dragging on, circling back, with no regard for the stricture of the work week or compulsory ablebodiedness, sick time is non-compliant. It refuses a fantasy of normalcy measured by either-in-or-out thresholds and demands care that exceeds what the nuclear family or current care systems can provide.

"Crip," a political reclaiming of the derogatory label "cripple," is a term that gained wide usage in the early 1970s. While crip time is not the same as sick time, one thing that unites disabled people with those in other fluctuating states of debility is that their lives, while a site of extraction by the bio-medical industrial complex, are not deemed as valuable under racial capitalism's temporal regimes.

Regulation of the disabled bodymind is entangled with race, ethnicity, class, religion, gender, and sexuality. One way these factors are connected is through ableism, which community lawyer Talila A. Lewis defines as

"a system that places values on people's bodies and minds based on societally constructed ideas of normalcy, intelligence, excellence, and productivity. These constructed ideas are deeply rooted in anti-Blackness, eugenics, colonialism, and capitalism."⁴



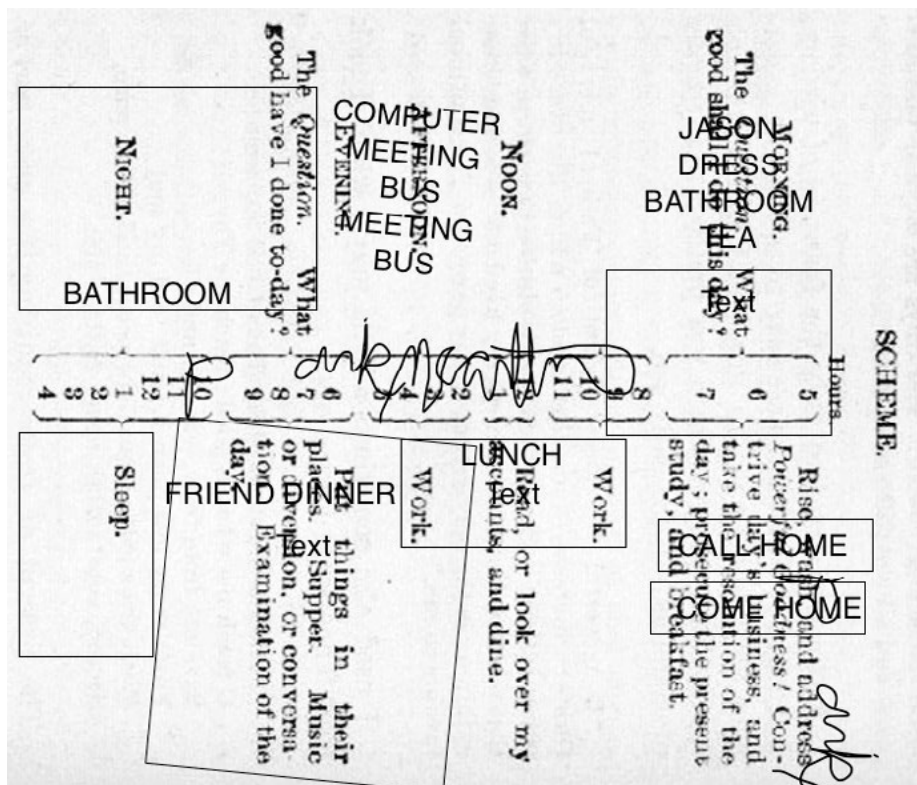
Amelle Dublon and Constantina Zavitsanos, *Caduceus*, 2016. From the series, "Crip Time," 2016–, which a timetable from "The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin" as source material. Published in *Notes for the Waiting Room*, 2016.

In *Feminist, Queer, Crip*, Alison Kafer uses the concept of “crip time” to examine how concepts of futurity and time have been deployed in the service of compulsory able-bodiedness and able-mindedness.⁵ Crip time refers to the temporality of disabled embodiments, from the day-to-day negotiations of moving from one space to another, to the long view of Western progressivist linear time that has historically written people with disabilities out of the future (for example, via sterilization campaigns and institutionalization). While being written out of historical time limits access to communal imaginaries of the future by those who do not march to the drum of able-bodiedness, chronopolitics must also be contested in daily temporal regimes. Kafer defines crip time as a way of recognizing that expectations of “‘how long things take’ should be based on the needs of particular minds and bodies,”⁶ This, in turn, would allow us to re-imagine “our notions of what can and should happen in time.”⁷ Her aim is to consider how temporal logics might shift within a more just political framework.

Crip time is shaped by dependency. Waiting for care is too often a part of crip time. Waiting can be care itself.

Lisa Baraitser’s *Enduring Time* argues that, considering fraying infrastructures, climate change, debt, and widening social inequities that characterize the present, the temporal imaginaries of the post-war period grounded in a progressivist future and flourishing present *for some* have failed. Of course, necropolitical logics meant only very specific populations ever had access to this future imaginary. Rather than time flowing, time is stuck.

Baraitser offers care based in feminist reproduction as a mode that pulls back from the epochal rupture, inertia, or urgency of modern Western philosophical time formations. For her, care is often about an orientation to another in asynchronic time. For example, with chronic disorders that are characterized by flares or relapses, be it schizophrenia, Lupus, or PTSD, time does not charge on; it repeats, expands, and lags. Here, good care does not charge forward to an imagined better future. Rather, it often involves a being-with in a radically suspended time that may be shaped by affective dullness or pain.



Park McArthur, *untitled*, 2016. From the series, "Crip Time," 2016-. Published in *Notes for the Waiting Room*, 2016.

waiting together as JOMO

Alongside the buzzy stream of images depicting lives suddenly rerouted, a collection of familiar faces streamed into my bedroom. Shortly before the pandemic, Crip Fund, a group of disabled artists and activists came together to practice mutual aid. Two members, Constantina Zavitsanos and Park MacArthur, had previously introduced me to the articulation of the community of access and love that we were practicing as JOMO (joy of missing out).⁸

Their call to be with others for whom crip rhythms are life helped prompt me to curate *Sick Time, Sleepy Time, Crip Time: Against Capitalism's Temporal Bullying*, a peripatetic series of exhibitions, public programs, and community projects addressing the politics of health, disability, and care. Between 2017–2020, arts, social service, and community-based organizations across the United

States hosted iterations of the project. All works used time, disability, or care as material.

Beyond waiting for relief, there's another kind of waiting associated with illness—that of the bureaucratic waiting room. Here, before the clinic, as you wait for the expert, time becomes static. The space is not quite domestic, not quite institutional. You feel the clipboard with the impossible checklist on your lap elevating your blood pressure as the process of becoming a dataset begins. You try to leaf through a fashion magazine unable to focus, wondering whether this specialist is going to be covered by your insurance (if you even have any). You wonder if the person seated across from you is feeling the same way, but the chairs are laid out so you can barely catch their gaze. You wonder if, once the doctor sees your race or gender, they will believe your symptoms...

Two installations in the *Sick Time...* exhibition in Detroit used waiting as material: *The Waiting Room* rerouted this site that symbolizes the inequities of care in the bio-medical complex towards mutual aid, while *Black Power Naps* refused to wait for an end to harms caused by structural racism, instead reclaiming stolen time via collective rest.

Rather than act as the liminal space before the expertise of the doctor, *The Waiting Room* hosted peer-to-peer support. In the initial *Sick Time...* exhibition, there was an installation resembling a doctor's waiting room by Jesse Cohen and Carolyn Lazard with Canaries (a support group, Listserv, and, formerly, art collective of women, non-binary and trans people with auto-immune diseases and other chronic illnesses of which I am also a member). The group name references to the phrase “canaries in the coal mine”— and is shorthand for those whose sensitivities are litmus test of the environment's wellbeing. An accompanying newspaper by Canaries, *Notes for the Waiting Room*, shared poetic ruminations on surviving in and outside of medical institutions, thereby extending the commons of the group outwards. This publication was available alongside an unfolding grid of photos that Canaries members sent to the gallery whenever they left the newspaper in actual doctor's waiting rooms while seeking care. In subsequent exhibitions, the installation became a broader reading room, housing site-specific commissions and numerous historic and contemporary publications on health autonomy and mutual aid from art collectives, radical health collectives, and local healing justice or health organizations for oppressed populations.

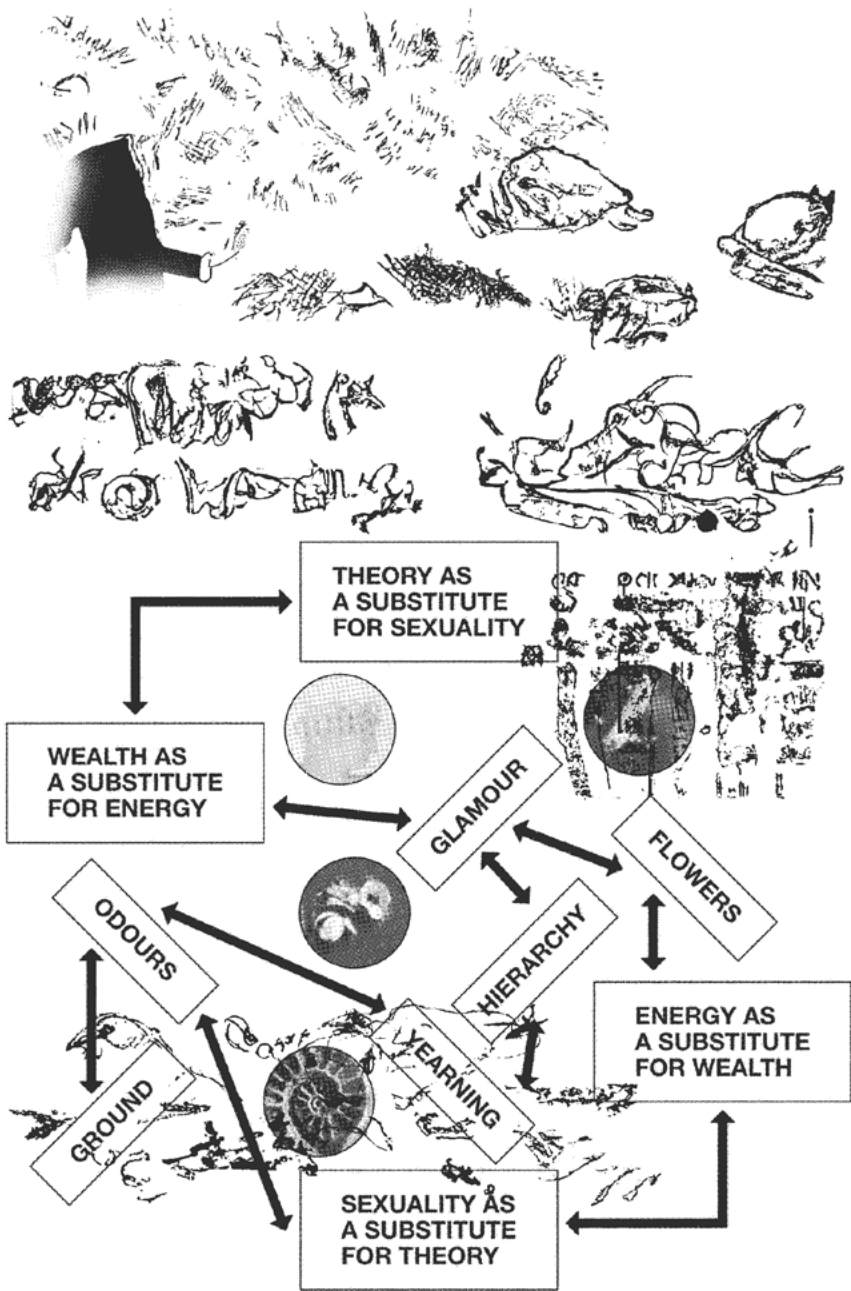
Installed directly across from *The Waiting Room* as a curatorial counterpoint was *Black Power Naps*, a glittering immersive series of Afro-futurist collective napping environments by Navild Acosta and Fannie Sosa for Black, Brown, Indigenous, migrant, queer, and trans people to cultivate laziness and idleness together. Rather than wait for reparations, the artists reclaim resources from white-led art institutions to give back stolen time in the form of rest. From the Middle Passage to the plantation, there's a long history of strategic disruption of Black people's restorative sleep patterns so as to better subjugate and extract labor from them. The arc of this racially-configured violence extends into present day inequities in access to education, housing, labor conditions, healthcare, food, and rest, and in the uneven effects of COVID.

While the galleries where *Black Power Naps* was installed was open to the general public, intentions installed alongside an altar highlighted that the installation is dedicated to the needs of Black and other people of color and asked that white visitors bear respectful witness and recognize the need for such a space.

Sleep studies have demonstrated a racialized "Sleep Gap," with Black people regularly getting less and worse-quality sleep than white counterparts. For the artists, the sleep gap: "shows that there are front lines in our bedrooms as well as the streets: deficit of sleep and lack of free time for some is the building block of the 'free world.'" Here they point out who is afforded the pretense of autonomy and the limits of Western conceptions of freedom. As such, they have created a sacred space where people of color aren't asked to be exemplary citizens, or workers, or athletes, or performers, or woke 24/7. Instead, *Black Power Naps'* calming environments refuse institutionalized exhaust on by reclaiming the right to idleness, down time, quality sleep, play, and collective dreams. In highlighting the racial sleep gap in the US, the artists demonstrate that collective resting is resistive. Here, not getting out of bed is akin to throwing a brick through a bank window.

Throughout COVID shutdowns, a substantial portion of the US populace who could afford to wait on behalf of the collective good refused to. As vaccinations increase, the demand to charge forward gets stronger by the day. For some, the pause button's off, the wait is over. This last year taught many about mutual aid, accessibility, and other forms of interdependence from those for whom the rhythm of waiting together is life. It is yet to be seen if and how all these lessons have affected dominant temporal regimes.

- 1• Virginia Woolf, *On Being Ill* (Ashfield, MA: Paris Press, 2002).
- 2• Ibid, 12.
- 3• Johanna Hedva, *This Earth, Our Hospital (Sick Woman Theory, and Other Writings)*, 2016, accessed April 24, 2021, <http://johannahedva.com/hospital.html>.
- 4• Talia A. Lewis, "Ableism 2020: An updated definition," January 21, 2020, accessed April 24, 2021, <https://www.talilalewis.com/blog/ableism-2020-an-updated-definition>.
- 5• Alison Kafer, *Feminist, Queer, Crip* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013).
- 6• Ibid, 27.
- 7• Ibid, 27.
- 8• Park MacArthur and Constantina Zavitsanos, "The Guild of the Brave Poor Things," in *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility*, edited by Tourmaline, Eric A. Stanley, and Johanna Burton (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017), 236.



DWYL

Danilo Correale

Working Script

REEL 1

Characters:

<i>S</i>	<i>Sebastian</i>
<i>MS</i>	<i>Molly Singer</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>Doorman</i>
<i>L</i>	<i>Lucy (only as audio recording)</i>

*Int. Unfurnished bourgeois apartment in the city center—
early summer afternoon*

Fade in from black as if eyes are just opening after a night of sleep

Distant sound of a crowded street. The camera is slowly panning the interior of the apartment: low-angle

Director's Notes:

The interior in this scene is to be treated as a metaphysical space where all knowledge about the characters is formed; it is a portal through which the audience will identify themselves with each of the characters. The rooms are sparse and empty, yet not suited for meditation. The warm-tone hardwood flooring imbues the space with a sense of stillness.

(Internal Dialogue)

Voice over—Sebastian:

I'm still lying to Lucy about where I go when I say I'm jogging. It's not a big deal, but I won't tell her that every time I tell her I'm jogging, I'm actually staying home. I'm still lying about almost everything. This is how I spend my time. I don't have any magic wand. I don't think I do.

The camera begins zooming out. To the left of the frame, we see Sebastian's body slowly revealed. A large architectural element cuts the frame in half. A slow pan right reveals an open balcony door and catches the outline of someone walking past. The doorman is walking through the long balcony that runs the perimeter of the internal courtyard.

SCENE 1

(with a surprised yet concerned voice)

D: Hey Sebastian, everything alright there?
(his voice muffled as he's talking with his face pushed into a pillow)

S: I am alright, thanks! I've been into murders and executions lately.

D: Always in the mood for jokes. *Risus Abundat in ore stultorum!* Excessive laughter is for the fools.

S: I don't laugh and it's not comedy; it's Instagram reels I'm into. They make you feel like you can access an entire life's span in three seconds. Makes me wonder: if there is life before death, is this how it's played?

D: So complicated! Reminds me of the man who used to live on the 3rd floor.

He was so much in his deep thinking he kept forgetting the basics of living.

I haven't seen him in a while.

S: You mean the professor?

The camera is now still, framing the two rooms, perfectly split in two halves, separated in the middle by the doorframe, with neither character fully visible.

Noises and the voice of a molly singer coming from a third room.

SCENE 2

(in a bummed but light tone)

MS Sebastian stop annoying everyone with your depression. You are OK! Just get your shit together, and schedule your day! Tomorrow is your big day, isn't it?
(now enunciating these words as in a monologue)

S: I am a man who, from his youth upwards, has been filled with a profound conviction that the easiest way of life is the best.
(in a severe tone)

MS: I mean it, stop with this attitude! You know how talented you are.

S: I feel I'm hallucinating.

MS: No, you are not. If anything, you're just panicking.

S: I feel completely burned out from these past two weeks in this damn apartment.

MS: Let go of this idea for one second! Breathe! Why don't you jump in cold water? Do you remember the Wim Hof method? the second chapter of his bestseller?

(the latter questions are posed in the voice and tone of radio advertisement)

S: I know. I used to like it. It just doesn't apply now. On top of that, I'm lacking a barrel to dive into.

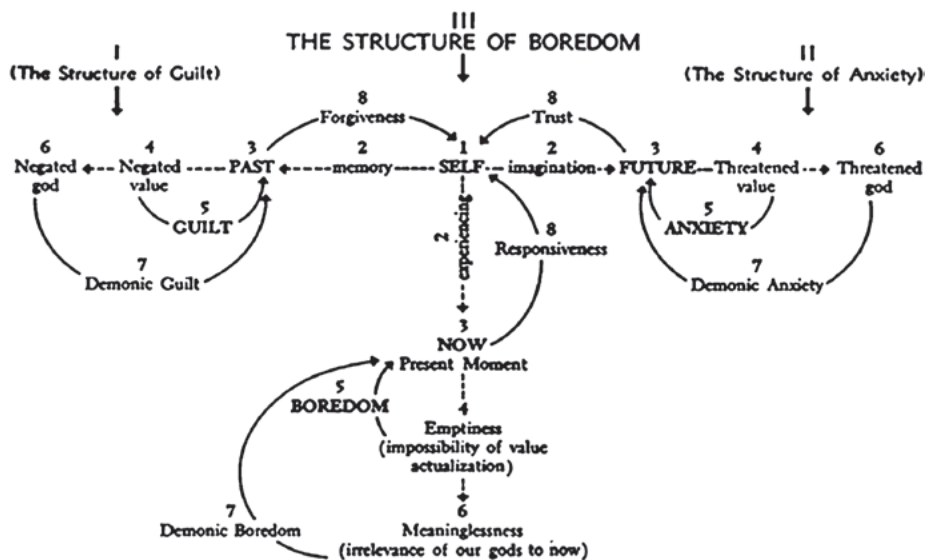
Also, the carbon footprint of filling a bucket with ice? These days?

No thanks, I'm going into safe mode.

MS: Look, this probably won't change how you feel, but instead of stressing about the environment and climate change now, you should see the big picture of your life. It's been 20 years! You should be proud of yourself for the little waste you have produced.

Camera stays very low to the floor, sliding in the room without ever exposing it as whole. Shoes and other clothes distractedly left on the floor enter the frame at different focal points.

S: Fair enough! Still it's so irritating. I always think this lethargy is somehow demonic, it's not the torpor I was aiming at before releasing "all my potential", as you people keep saying. I can't remember anything. I feel utterly immobilized.



Molly's right hand enters into contact with sebastian's body and passes right through it. The entire figure flickers a little, making visible the slight transparency of her body.

Sebastian reaches for his phone and opens an app to play a recorded audio message from an old chat. He lets the phone drop to the floor along with his heavy head.

Lucy's recorded voice:

Hi love. Remember, stop asking yourself questions! It is all paradoxical any way we approach it. The reason we still have to work is that those who were supposed to quit the scene have been deprived of their own life. You shouldn't be mad at them, you should pity them. They need you only as a reminder that what they did has meaning, even if it's a lie.

You are something new. You're not supposed to produce anything, just consume the crap they put out there and stock piled onto infinity. But remember that in the larger scheme of things, this shit you're going through is insignificant. Toiling in obscurity, remember?

A few seconds of silence.

The camera begins to pan and slowly rises from the floor

SCENE 3

MS: I believe you need to eat something. Did you take your gut detox pills?

(the second line delivered in her advertisement voice)

Have I ever told you what my grandpa used to say: healthy food for a healthy mind!

S: Shut up, you did not have a grandpa. What are you doing turning quotes from the web into family heirlooms?

(sad and detached tone)

MS: I thought it would help you.

S: Let me tell you something: I have memories, real ones! You can learn from me if you care.

There is this man, he lives his life, and pretty nicely I might add. He dances over things. He asks nothing in particular. People don't really speak about him. He has no specific rules to live by, except for one: he must avoid mirrors at all times. At home, he keeps no mirrors. In the street, he turns his face any time he walks toward a reflective surface; he blinds himself anytime he's assaulted by a shop window. He is committed to never allowing his eyes to encounter his own image.

(voice from the outside, where he has remained spying on the scene)

D: I guess I know that guy.

S: No you don't! And by the way, stop spying on me!

D: I was just walking past and overheard your voice. I thought you were looking for someone.

(again slipping into the voice of radio adverts)

MS: I am not sure I understand the moral of your story. Meanwhile, have you already thought about your outfit for tomorrow? Allow me to present you some ideas I had....

S: I'm going to wear exactly what I'm wearing now.

MS: I'd like to discourage you away from that. You look rather sluggish. The image of yourself you project in the first meeting is very important. The golden rule is...

S: Stop stooop!!!

You are stressing me out with this constant projection of me. Just let me be!

MS: That's what you've been doing all this time.

I'm here to help you become....

(rather irritated)

S: Again, don't make me repeat myself! I know you won't get it. You know the story!

There is this man who thinks his life is good enough, just as long as he avoids mirrors. That's all! End of story. You get it?

Not all tales need to have a moral "Doctor Molly". Not all lives have an epic purpose.

You people are blinded by self-enhancement. Why can't you see that a life can be good enough, and still lead to happiness. I know it's a revolutionary philosophy for you because it implies a shift in your material values, but brings with it liberation, true

independence. What did the professor used to say: to detach is to live in the presence of death instead of the desire for life.

(addressing MS)

D: That's what talentless people preach nowadays, eh?

S: Hey, listen, I'm the kind of person who can find fulfillment anywhere. Not because I lack taste, but because I adapt.

CUT

The camera is now about 1 meter above the floor, looking down on Sebastian reaching for his phone, his finger scrolling through his chat with Lucy.

Lucy's recorded voice:

How are you doing love? You know, I was thinking through what you were saying about stress and fatigue the other day. It is remarkable and true. It's only through stress that society is willing to recognize you as a citizen. It's like wanting to be the hinge for a kitchen drawer: they have to first bang you a million times, put you through a stress test, then decide you are worthy of going into production. So the only way to exist in this world is to not fail under stress. So yeah! Fatigue is the Hamletian dilemma of our times. Anyhow... more soon. And hey, it's been a month since you posted anything. Come on!

The doorman, makes some sounds of disappointment as he exits the scene. The camera continues panning, the sound of coins rolling around the floor

SCENE 4

(addressing MS directly, with a new more calm tone—
as if fidgeting with something)

- S: Didn't you say that life only exists when it's shared?
- MS: Yes I did. Would you like to continue this conversation? (in the tone and rhythm of a self-help video)
- S: And love only exists when it is shared?
(increasingly sounding like an AI)
- MS: I guess so, but I was referring to work....In episode 5 of the podcast How to Start Over, Olga Khazan, writer and dir....
- S: I don't care about starting over. I don't want to go through a 12-step program or the chipping away method or the who-knows-what technique to reduce discomfort. I actually want to feel the pain of loving work and work not loving me back.
- MS: I don't think these words are coming from a place of confidence, but rather anger. I must have misunderstood your mood. Why are you angry then?
- D: The landlord raised the rent again.
- MS: Is that true? Is that a financial concern? Haven't we been here already, Sebastian?
- S: Well that's part of it, but definitely not the point.
- MS: I understand that's triggering. Well, let's go back to the basics: did you project this year's revenue?
- S: I did, but then I ended up in this loop.
- MS: That's ok! You must help me understand. You can't constantly manifest your financial insecurity into psychological drama.

SCENE 5

(concerned - monologue)

S: Since the professor left I have no one who can truly give me advice, except for those conversations I've still saved on my phone. But then I always think I haven't backed up the data on the phone. What would happen if I...

MS: Well, one thing at a time: let's back up your very important conversations with Lucy then, let's go back to... October 2019?

S: No, it was back in August. Yes, that was when the life-lesson chit chat started: "if you want to stand out, you must select a defined niche that you can conquer"; or this obsession with online presence; or even all that bullshit about turning opportunities into hard results and making them visible.

MS: She loves you!

(interrupting MS's sentence)

S: She loves her idea of me.

MS: That wasn't her point, but it is true: image is money. If you care about your finances, you should listen to her. You know how it works. You have to feed your personal brand. Especially after all the effort we have put into building your online presence. "You must maintain your personal brand throughout the course of your entire life, before someone else does it for you". Your responsibility is to protect and manage your reputation like it's the most sacred thing in the world to you. Like I do.

S: She googles her name and mine, every day. It's like for her, it's right to be paranoid because what's said about you actually forms what you are. Lucy thinks we should spend our lives embedded in a master plan, pressing a button for a first-person high def. view, submitting everything we think to a relentless dictator: the self.

- MS: Your image is important if you want an audience.
- S: I won't ever be able to have an audience and don't want one. It's preferable to lurk, ideal to be invisible.
- MS: Why does it make you feel so exposed? I simply ask you to approach work the way most people do, as a trade of your time and labor for money? Wear the casual work suit that fits your position, smile, and just pretend it's all fun.
- S: I remember the world used to be a place where we had multiple choices, many possibilities; maybe too many, but still we could jump between passions and mix things up. Now we all have to choose a field and we have to stay in the lines. Even the most free open pasture becomes a tunnel with no side exits. So what's the point? Why would I choose any field? Everything has to be part of some pattern or it can't exist. All this self-objectification, identity, Millennial Whoop... it's all driving me crazy.

END REEL 1

A few seconds of awkward silence pass

EXTRA RECORDING

New message from Lucy plays:

- L: Hey, what's going on? Why don't you reply to my messages? I know you are stressed. Consider that progress is so unusual and so rare, we're all out there hunting, trying to find our place in the sun. This is a personal battle. Almost everyone's going to return empty-handed, everyone but you. You are one of the talented ones.

SEBASTIAN SOLO 2

(Internal dialogue)

S: Once a day, a voice tortures me, asking me what I want to be as I grow up. I don't want to be anything. At least not in the way they think I should be.

I don't know how normal people play this game: they quit what they are and start to build a lifestyle borrowed from some random ideal? How do you do that? How is that worth anything? I know I don't want to be nothing, nor reduced to some kind of....

END

DWYL

© Danilo Correale

Biographies

Nella Aarne

(she/her) is a Finnish curator living and working in the UK. She convenes the Of Animacy Reading Group and co-directs Obsidian Coast, an independent curatorial platform committed to artist moving image and feminist, environmentally sustainable practices. Her work considers ethical encounters, collaborative learning and redefined notions of productivity. Nella has worked with and contributed to projects at UmArts, Umeå University; Kim? Contemporary Art Center, Riga; Somerset House, London; ICA, London; Abandon Normal Devices; Spike Island, Bristol; Arnolfini, Bristol; and Glasgow International. In 2021, she was an Associate Lecturer on the MA Curating programme at the University of the West of England. Nella earned her MFA in Curating from Goldsmiths (University of London) in 2015, and was the recipient of the Curatorial Junior Fellowship at Goldsmiths in 2015–16.

Jessie Bullivant

(they/them) is a Helsinki-based artist, writer and cultural worker originally from so-called Australia. They make work with and about institutions and relationships. While their work primarily takes place within the context of the visual arts, Jessie recently published their first book (*Attached*, 2022, Rooftop Press). *Attached* documents a selection of their artworks from the past decade. In the place of photographic documentation, *Letters of Support* by a range of individuals represent and contextualize the artworks.

Laura Cemin

is an Italian performer and visual artist currently based in Helsinki, Finland. She is interested in performative gestures, which can appear in different forms such as live performances, installations and writings. In her current work, she explores how language shapes and influences the way we move and physically interact. After having performed as a ballet dancer in the US, she studied photography in Italy and recently obtained an MFA from Umeå Art Academy in Sweden. She has performed live at international festivals and her work as a visual artist has been presented internationally at galleries, theaters and museums, such as Norrlandsoperan (SE), Bildmuseet (SE) and Kiasma (FI).

Danilo Correale

is an artist and researcher born in Naples, Italy and based in Brooklyn, New York. His research is rooted in histories and speculative narratives of work—labor, free-time and sleep—and post-work futures. His multidisciplinary practice spans from drawing and painting to video, sound, and immersive environments. Correale's projects have been presented numerous institutions and biennials, including Manifesta 8 Murcia/Cartagena, Wien Biennale, Istanbul Biennial, Riga Biennial, the BAK in Utrecht, Museion in Bolzano, Maxxi in Rome, Kiev Biennial, Steirischer Herbst in Graz, Hessel Museum of Art at Bard College, The 8th Floor, Rubin Museum in NY, Milano Design Triennale, Villa Arson in France, Ural Biennial, Moscow Biennial, Triennale Milano, Istanbul Design Biennial, 16th Rome Quadriennale, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Turin and Madre Museum in Naples.

Taraneh Fazeli

is an Iranian-American curator and cultural organizer. For the first half of her career, she worked at NYC-based arts institutions such as Artforum, e-flux, Triple Canopy, and The New Museum before becoming an independent curator in 2016. Her current projects are rooted at the intersection of the disability, diasporic, queer, organizing, and creative communities she calls home. She recently received a Spring 2022 Andy Warhol Foundation Curatorial Fellowship; teaches at the City College of New York; lectures widely on ableism, time, accessibility, racial equity, and care; and has written for art publications such as Artforum, Art in America, Hyperallergic, and Flash Art.

The Finnish Cultural Institute in New York,

founded in 1990, is a non-profit organization. The FCINY works across the fields of contemporary art, design and architecture, creating dialogue between Finnish and American professionals and audiences. Over the years, the institute has grown from a residency program to commissioning large-scale projects and events that foster critical dialogue.

Miho Hatori

is an artist/music producer/vocalist/improviser, formerly of the legendary NYC group Cibo Matto. Her latest album was “Between Isekai and Slice of Life.” She has other projects under New Optimism, Miss Information, Salon Mondialité (Inspired by Édouard Glissant), Smokey and Miho (Brazilian music inspired). In addition, she has contributed to the first Gorillaz album and songs with the Beastie Boys. Her creation style is borderless. She does art performances with video art and music. She has performed at The Kitchen NYC, AGO museum, The Broad, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Cleveland Museum of Art, Pioneer Works, Canal 47, etc. Additionally, she produces music for soundtracks, films, commercials. Miho is originally from Tokyo but has been working and living in NYC for too many years.

Mari Keski-Korsu

is a post-disciplinary artist who explores macro-level manifestations of the eco-side. Her practice is focused on inter-species communication and complexities of care to possibly enable empathy towards whole ecosystems. She is a doctoral candidate to study for a Doctor of Arts degree in the research field of Contemporary Art in Aalto University. Her research focuses on emphatic interspecies rituals in change.

Minna Miettälä

(she/her, b. 1987 in Oulu) is an artist working with sculpture, installation and drawing among other media. She holds an MFA from the University of the Arts' Academy of Fine Arts in Helsinki where she currently lives and works. Her practice is based on intuitive processes in interaction with space and different physical materials. Minna's works have recently been exhibited in group exhibitions Kirjasto / Library at Forum Box, Helsinki (2021) and Weathering at SIC, Helsinki and Titanik, Turku (2021). Her text Light lines folding was published in the book Paste of Time (Rooftop press, 2020) by Dylan Ray Arnold and Océane Bruël.

Jaakko Pallasvuo

(b. 1333) is an artist living and working in Helsinki. Pallasvuo's work has been exhibited at Documenta 15, CCA Derry-Londonderry, American Medium, Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw and New York Film Festival, among other places. Pallasvuo's comics for the instagram account avocado_ibuprofen were recently collected into a book by Chicago-based publisher Perfectly Acceptable Press.

Nina Sarnelle & Selwa Sweidan

are artists based on Tongva/Kizh land often referred to as Los Angeles. Their independent practices have circulated around touch and haptics for a long time. They began working together on this collaborative touch praxis at the beginning of the pandemic in Spring 2020. Together they've developed a research methodology consisting of workshops, prompts, interviews, reading, discussion and collaborative writing. They are deeply engaged in the performance scene in LA, having worked with NAVEL, Pieter, Culture Hub, Human Resources, FCCW, HomeLA, the Getty Center, Virtual Care Lab and other local organizations as performers, workshop leaders and/or curators.

Nina Sarnelle

is a founding member of the Institute for New Feeling, with degrees from Oberlin College and Carnegie Mellon University. Her work has been shown at New Museum (NY), Whitechapel Gallery (London), Hammer Museum (LA), Getty Center (LA), Ballroom Marfa (TX), MoMA (NY), Black Cube (Denver), Neuer Berliner Kunstverein (Berlin), Fundacion PROA (Buenos Aires), Southern Exposure (San Francisco), Mwoods (Beijing) and many others.

Selwa Sweidan

is an artist and researcher of emerging technologies. She has co-curated exhibitions and symposia including Beyond Embodiment, Performative Computation, STACKED Expo, Super Radiance and Clustering. She's been published in the Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence Journal and the Design Research Society; and exhibited at Bevilacqua Gallery, Center Du Pompidou, HomeLA, Spring/Break LA and UC Irvine. She holds degrees from Smith College and ArtCenter College of Design, and is currently an Annenberg PhD Fellow at the University of Southern California.

Elina Suoyrjö

is a curator and writer. She works as the Director of Programs at the Finnish Cultural Institute in New York.

Colophon

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EXERCISES IN TOGETHERNESS—
HERDING IN HELSINKI
CENTRAL PARK

10 SEPTEMBER 2021 at Helsinki Central Park

FCINY hosted the event in collaboration and as part of Frame Contemporary Art's Rehearsing Hospitalities program. The event took place at Ruskeasuon stables area in Helsinki, with contributions from artists Chloë Bass, Mari Keski-Korsu and Eero Yli-Vakkuri. The artists invited us into encounters with those around us through listening exercises, readings, performative presentations and guided actions. The event brought different artistic practices together to consider various dimensions of security, safety and care within interspecies relations. The event also offered a place to consider ways of being together and how to care for forms of social interaction and togetherness in times of pandemic.

EXERCISES IN TOGETHERNESS
AT THE MONTH OF BOOKS
22 OCTOBER 2021 at PUBLICS, Helsinki

As part of Publics' The Month of Books program, Publics and the FCIN hosted commissioned contributions by DeForrest Brown, Jr., James Hoff and Asiya Wadud. In addition, the event included a discussion with the webzine Zelda on their issue focused on the notion of fantasy. At the moment of the society slowly opening up in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the event brought forth notions of connection, collaboration, togetherness and friendship.

EXERCISES IN TOGETHERNESS
AT RESIDENCY UNLIMITED
5 MAY 2022 at Residency Unlimited, Brooklyn

The event presented a newly commissioned work by Helsinki-based artist Laura Cemin and a reading by Brooklyn-based artist and writer Gordon Hall. Hall's reading was followed by a panel discussion in the company of Gordon Hall, artist and musician E. Jane and poet and artist Asiya Wadud on the significance of gathering and communities. The contexts for the discussion varied from nightlife and artistic practices to the pandemic era more generally, essentially marked by lack of physical proximity and presence.

EXERCISES IN TOGETHERNESS
AT SCANDINAVIA HOUSE
4 OCTOBER 2022 at Scandinavia House, New York

The Exercises in Togetherness event at Scandinavia House's Park Avenue venue presented installations by Helsinki-based artists Inari Sandell and Jaakko Pallasvuo, as well as a performative reading and artist talk by New York-based artist Danilo Correale. The event focused on unraveling and discussing relations between rest and labor, sleep and artistic work in the current social climate, where societies are aiming to "return back to normal".

EXERCISES IN TOGETHERNESS
X WITHSTANDING:
LISTENING TO THE NONHUMAN
DECEMBER 2022

The event took the form of an online listening session on the FCINY's Withstanding podcast platform. Aligning with recent and on-going work of the speakers - curator Alaina Claire Feldman, artist and musician Miho Hatori, artist Josefina Nelimarkka and host Elina Suoyrjö—the session focused on the practices of listening to nonhuman entities below and above sea levels. The episode can be listened to on the FCINY website, Spotify, Apple podcasts, or anywhere you get your podcasts.

EXERCISES IN TOGETHERNESS
15 FEBRUARY 2023 at the
Finnish Cultural Institute in New York

The concluding event for the Exercises in Togetherness program presents a participatory contribution by artists Nina Sarnelle and Selwa Sweidan, a pop-up exhibition on care and togetherness, and a launch for this publication.