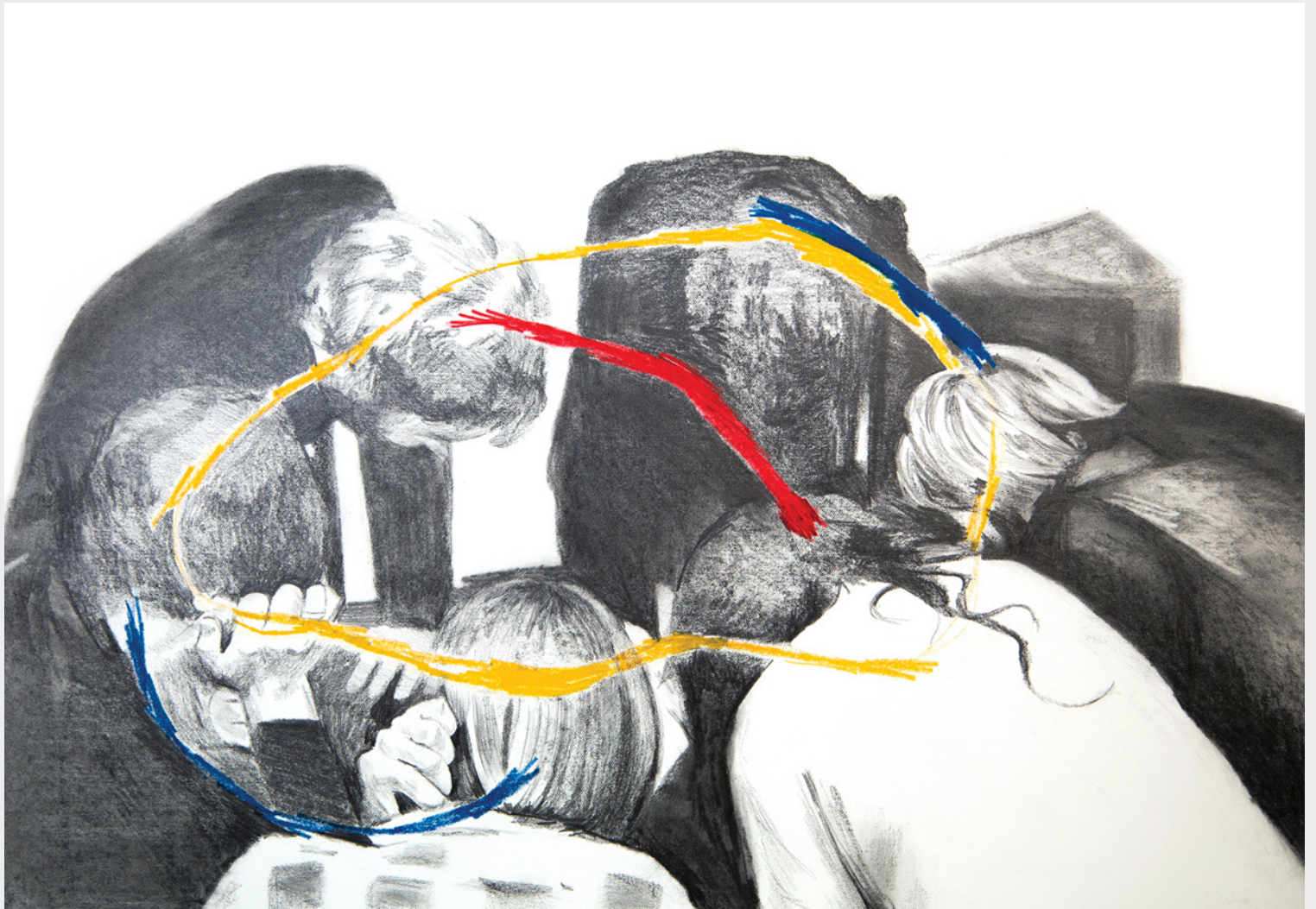


CONFIDING

Issue 15

The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge

May 2023



Heather Kai Smith, *Variations on Idiorrhymy: Grief*, 2023. Graphite and coloured pencil on paper. COURTESY THE ARTIST.

confide (v.)

mid-15c., "**to place trust or have faith**," from Latin *confidere* "to trust in, **rely firmly upon**, believe," from assimilated form of *com*, here perhaps an intensive prefix (see *com-*), + *fidere* "to trust" (from PIE root **bheidh-* "to trust, confide, persuade"). Meaning "to **share a secret** with, take into one's confidence" is from 1735; phrase *confide in* (someone) is from 1888. Related: *Confided*; *confiding*.

confidence (n.)

c. 1400, "**assurance or belief** in the good will, veracity, etc. of another," from Old French *confidence* or directly from Latin *confidentia*, from *confidentem* (nominative *confidens*) "**firmly trusting, bold**."

From mid-15c. as "reliance on one's own powers, resources, or circumstances, self-assurance." Meaning "certainty of a proposition or assertion, sureness with regard to a fact" is from 1550s. Meaning "a secret, a private communication" is from 1590s. The connection with swindling (see *con* (adj.)) dates to mid-19c. and comes from the notion of the false "trustworthiness" which is the key to the game.

The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge is a serial broadsheet publication produced by the Blackwood, University of Toronto Mississauga. Initiated in conjunction with *The Work of Wind: Air, Land, Sea* in 2018–19 to expand perspectives on environmental violence through artistic practices, cultural inquiry, and political mobilization, the SDUK continues as a signature triannual Blackwood publishing initiative in 2023.

Reflecting the Blackwood’s ongoing commitment to activating open-ended conversations with diverse publics beyond the gallery space, the SDUK serves as a platform for varied forms of circulation, dispersal, and diffusion. The series shares interdisciplinary knowledges; terminologies; modes of visual, cultural, and scientific literacy; strategies for thought and action; resources; and points of connection between local and international practices—artistic, activist, scholarly, and otherwise—during a time increasingly marked by alienation and isolation. Distributed free-of-charge as a print publication, and available through a dedicated reading platform on the Blackwood website and as a downloadable PDF, the SDUK engages a diffuse network of readers and contributors.

THE SOCIETY FOR THE DIFFUSION OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE (SDUK)

The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge (SDUK) composes and circulates an ecology of knowledge based on the relationship and antagonism of “useful” ideas. The name of this innovative platform is borrowed from a non-profit society founded in London in 1826, focused on publishing inexpensive texts such as the widely read *Penny Magazine* and *The Library of Useful Knowledge*, and aimed at spreading important world knowledge to anyone seeking to self-educate. Both continuing and troubling the origins of the society, the Blackwood’s SDUK platform asks: what constitutes useful knowledge? For whom? And who decides?

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Variations on Idiorrhymy

Heather Kai Smith

A small group of people huddles together, leaning toward one another. The faceless crowd, rendered by the stark application of graphite on paper, forms a circle punctuated by threads in yellow, blue, and red. Emerging from their heads and backs, the ribbons of primary colours visually echo the participants’ formation, uniting each member in an intimate moment of camaraderie. Part of *Variations on Idiorrhymy*—a series by Heather Kai Smith that reconceives archival photographs of collective activity through drawing—*Grief* (cover) acknowledges the power of mutual support and strength in numbers for healing.

For *Variations on Idiorrhymy*, Smith recalls Roland Barthes, who in *How to Live*

Together posits an interdependent world where the self and collective are deeply entwined.¹ Drawing from the communal-ity of monastic life, Barthes employs the term *idiorrhymie* to describe a form of living together that does not preclude individual freedom in spite of the homogenizing tendencies of monasticism. In her drawings, Smith considers idiorrhymy through iterative depictions of people engaged in communal and embodied practices, including *Energy Work* (p. 11) and *Meditation* (p. 12). The coloured threads reappear here, behaving differently than in *Grief*. Outside the frame or hovering on top of the figures, each stroke seemingly evokes what is beyond perception: the connective energies of bodies in relation.

Through a visual language that both delineates and blends its subjects, Smith’s group portraits swiftly oscillate between the details and contours, presence, and erasure. At a distance and looking down, the viewer is only peripherally welcomed in, further complicating Smith’s play with inclusion and omission in group dynamics. The crowded rooms of *Energy Work* and *Meditation* invite us to feel the chorus of breath and warmth that ripples through them, offering a glimpse into the independent yet shared experience of being in community.

¹ Roland Barthes, *How to Live Together: Novelistic Simulations of Some Everyday Spaces; Notes for a Lecture Course and Seminar at the Collège de France*, trans. Kate Briggs (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 171.

How to Read this Broadsheet

What brings you here? Tucked in this broadsheet, you’ll find a postcard with a link to our first readership survey. With this milestone fifteenth issue, *CONFIDING*, we’re hoping to learn more from *SDUK* readers—what resonates with you, what draws you in to each issue (or doesn’t), and what might inform our future issues. Appropriately, this issue addresses trust and collaboration: the tools, methods, and strategies collaborators use to build mutual confidence while working together. With an international slate of largely co-authored contributions, this issue models forms of experimental and collaborative authorship through letters, exercises, interviews, oral histories, and more.

Our survey asks: **Where are you located?** Contributors to this issue pose this question—in its most expansive sense—to consider how individuals’ positionality affects their working methods. The Post-Film Collective, whose members include “refugees, asylum seekers, sans-papiers, documented citizens,” shares a letter exchange that sheds light on how they work together across difference (p. 14). For quori theodor (p. 23), similar considerations are taken up at the dinner table, where new shared experiences are occasioned by dining together.

If *confiding* hinges on trust and vulnerability, readers with an interest in the per-

forming arts might wonder: **How to build trust and consent in performance?** For Jess Watkin, disability dramaturgy serves as a welcome intervention to rethink the relationships between performer, stage, and audience in the theatre (p. 10). Describing his work with Partnering Lab, Ilya Vidrin theorizes the “thresholds of resistance” that mediate physical contact by dancers and movement artists—and how these negotiations shape interactions beyond the stage (p. 4).

Questions of trust extend to public spaces as well, particularly those marked by racism and violence. Through process and practice, contributors to this issue ask, **how can we feel more at home?** Chronicling his practice with Ecatepec Museum of Contemporary Art, Tonatiuh López shares the group’s artistic responses to femicide in Mexico through public art and placemaking (p. 28). In conversation with Tasha Beeds, Quill Christie-Peters discusses the artist residency program she runs in Thunder Bay, which offers Indigenous youth spaces to meet, relate, and make art (p. 22).

In their essay, Indonesian art collective Performance RAR reconnects to deeper senses of home and place by drawing on local folklore. Their practice begs the question: **What role can traditional knowledges serve in political struggles?** For Perfor-

mance RAR, myth serves as a “promise of the present” to mobilize for environmental protection (p. 20). In Michelle Sylliboy’s poetry (p. 17), Mi’kmaq language revitalization is a pillar of Indigenous resurgence, and land and water protection in her territories.

Trust, confidence, and collaboration are often thought of as cognitive practices, but throughout this issue, contributors highlight the role of embodiment. **What can our senses attune us to?** Elspeth Brown and Alisha Stranges describe methods for engaging all the senses in creating an oral history of a key moment in Canadian LGBTQ2S+ history, the Pussy Palace raid (p. 26). In Heather Kai Smith’s drawings, the mind-body connection is visualized across diverse group dynamics (cover, p. 11, 12). For London-based collective mother tongues, embodiment, craft, and movement practices all inform their ways of doing linguistic translation (p. 7).

In this issue, the Local Useful Knowledge section returns in its original format, albeit in an expanded format to bridge connections to contributors’ localities (p. 30). As usual, visit the Blackwood website for additional content from this issue, including the original Spanish version of Tonatiuh López’s essay, videos from Performance RAR and the Pussy Palace Oral History Project, and a direct link to complete our readership survey.

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Thresholds of Resistance

Ilya Vidrin

As the light slowly comes up in the New Museum's white box theatre, I am keenly aware of the invisible boundaries that separate me from my partner. I move toward her, my feet tracing circular patterns on the floor as I swivel left and right. Planting my feet in a stable stance and settling my shoulders down, I fix my position to establish the conditions of *Anchoring Study*—firm enough to offer support yet soft enough to receive. I feel her reach out to touch my shoulder—the contact is light and tentative, a soft caress that seeks the boundaries of what is physically possible to achieve together.

In this moment, I am acutely aware of the complex interplay of power, care, and consent that underlies our interactions. We seek to maintain our connection, to create a space of intimacy and care that is grounded in mutual respect. I am also aware of the challenges that come with such precarious interactions. The power dynamics of the dance floor can be fraught, and any miscommunication or misunderstanding can complicate those dynamics and cause harm—from casual, accidental missteps to gross bodily injury, from fear

of manipulation to betrayal of trust—depending on the scale of the movement. And yet, in this moment, I am filled with a sense of possibility and hope. I am reminded that the boundaries that separate us are not insurmountable barriers, but rather opportunities for sensitivity and care.

This is the opening scene of *More or Less*, an evening-length meditation created as part of the New Museum Residency “Everything You Do Matters, No Matter What You Do.” As we partner, I am reminded of the beauty and complexity of human interactions, of the infinite potential that exists within each of us to build relationships grounded in trust and compassion. With each step, with each touch, we seek to navigate invisible boundaries. These boundaries involve *thresholds of resistance*: fluid inflection points where a dancer has to make a choice between softening and toning muscles of support.

These invisible boundaries are present within every interaction. They shape the contours of our social lives, defining what is acceptable or tolerable within social and interpersonal relationships. The part-

nering studies that form and inform *More or Less* involve the physical manifestation of thresholds of resistance, as encoded through shared movement.

Anchoring Study, a partnering exercise that directly investigates thresholds of resistance, builds on four factors important in all of the partnering studies—direction, duration, intensity, and point of contact. As the anchoring partner assumes a fixed position, the moving partner creates a point of contact to negotiate movement around, toward, and away from the anchor. While fixed, the anchor makes choices to either soften or resist as the mover pours their weight into them. The mover must respond to the changing threshold without knocking over the anchor. One of the main challenges in entering into the work is the way in which these factors are not always visible from the outside. A position that looks quite static may actually be the result of dynamic, bounded tension in multiple directions. To render these factors salient beyond the kinesthetic experience of the dancers often requires some kind of annotation, to guide spectators where to look.

Jessi Stegall and Ilya Vidrin in *More or Less*, 2022. PHOTO: GRANT HAO-WEI LIN.



Niki Farahani and Cameron Surh in *Anchoring Study*, 2022. PHOTO: LO KUEHMEIER.

To feel this for yourself, I invite you to try a simple exercise. If it is available to you, rub both hands together vigorously for twenty to thirty seconds, then separate the hands a few inches apart. The resulting tingling sensation is an important primer for recognizing that the robust kinesthetic experience is not visible from the outside. This is an important starting point for entering into and recognizing invisible physical boundaries.

The idea of invisible boundaries isn't just a physical thing in dance—it applies to broader forms of social interaction. Thresholds of resistance can be understood as the physical, psychological, or social boundaries that individuals establish to protect themselves from harm or discomfort in their interactions with others. These boundaries can vary depending on a range of factors, including personal preferences, cultural norms, power dynamics, and past experiences.

As such, thresholds are not static. They shift and evolve depending on context, culture, and personal preference. For some,

a hug may be a welcome gesture of affection, while for others it may be an intrusion. Understanding these thresholds requires a deep sense of empathy and compassion, a willingness to listen to the signals that others give us and to respond with care and respect.

Sometimes these thresholds take physical form. We give each other space, we shake hands, we embrace. We hold these acts in common, a shared language of respect and intimacy that transcends cultural and linguistic boundaries. In mundane physical interactions, such as handshakes, thresholds of resistance can play a critical role in shaping the nature of these interactions. The intensity, direction, and duration of the handshake can vary widely depending on the context and the individuals involved. For some people, a firm handshake may be seen as a sign of confidence and respect, while for others, it may be perceived as aggressive or intimidating. Like handshakes, hugs can be a common way of greeting, or further expressing affection. However, the level of physical contact involved can vary widely

depending on the individuals and their relationship. Some people may be comfortable with a brief and light hug, while others may prefer a more prolonged and intimate embrace. The distance that individuals prefer between themselves and others—that is, personal space—can vary depending on the situation and the cultural norms involved. In some cultures, it may be common for people to stand close together during conversations, while in others, a greater amount of personal space may be preferred.

Thresholds may reflect psychological and social ease (or lack thereof), indicating what one is willing to accept in an interaction. Sensing thresholds of physical resistance involves negotiating thresholds of psychological acceptability and tolerance. Given that our thresholds change from day to day and from person to person, attuning to invisible thresholds takes practice. This is especially important considering that sensing thresholds may be quite subtle, given how certain behaviours, conditions, or circumstances affect physical and psycho-



Foreground: Jessi Stegall pushing an object on a long diagonal. Background: Ilya Vidrin and Cameron Surh, *Levering Study*, 2022. Part of *More or Less*, The New Museum, New York. PHOTO: GRANT HAO-WEI LIN.

logical legibility. We look away, we avoid certain topics of conversation, we lower our voices. These acts are no less significant, for they too help define the boundaries of our interactions and the limits of our trust.

In addition to physical and social factors, thresholds of resistance are also shaped by moral considerations, which play a critical role in determining what individuals are willing to tolerate or resist in their interactions. The ethics of care, a moral framework that emphasizes the importance of relationships and compassion, provides a useful lens through which to examine the role of moral factors in thresholds of resistance.

Theorists like Nel Noddings,¹ Miranda Fricker,² and Kristie Dotson³ teach us that social boundaries are shaped by issues of power, trust, and respect. In order for interactions to be truly equitable and respectful, individuals must be able to give their informed consent and feel comfortable confiding in others. These are not just personal preferences, but essential components of ethical interactions that respect individuals' autonomy and dignity. Consent requires individuals to have access to accurate and relevant information, while confiding requires a high degree of trust and confidence in others. These considerations are especially important given the power dynamics in asymmetrical interactions, where some individuals may be more

vulnerable to manipulation or coercion.

To prepare for *Anchoring Study*, we often ground ourselves by moving in relation to architecture or furniture—walls, chairs, tables, railings. Though inanimate, the attunement to small movements—friction, inertia, momentum—can provide opportunities to practice sensing and, furthermore, responding to what we sense. Thresholds of resistance require sensitivity to invisible boundaries. They call us to attend to the moral and epistemic dimensions of consent and confiding. Successfully negotiating subtle thresholds of resistance seems to require a certain degree of care, compassion, and mutual respect. Yet an important question remains about how we practice shared attention—when and where can we rehearse how we interact? How can we make visible or attune to what is invisible?

More or Less is a meditative call to action, a reminder that the world we inhabit is shaped not only by the physical spaces we occupy, but by the emotional and moral boundaries we create with each other. Partnering practices, like the kind in *Anchoring Study*, provide a robust foundation from which to play and experiment in and out of contact. How we attend to each other matters—dancing together does not guarantee care and compassion, but it does provide a site where the subtle dynamics of interaction can serve as a fertile social soil for the cultivation of collective agency.

¹ Nel Noddings, *Caring: A Relational Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2013).

² Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

³ Kristie Dotson, "Conceptualizing Epistemic Oppression," *Social Epistemology* 28, no. 2 (2014): 115-138.

The Archive and Us: Permanently Under Construction

Vania Gonzalez Rodriguez
on behalf of mother tongues



Translation party at The Mosaic Rooms, London, 2021. ALL IMAGES COURTESY MOTHER TONGUES.

I wish I had a better story about how the three of us who make up mother tongues first met. I remember meeting Marina Georgiou in the kitchen corridor at work. I love her honesty. Marina can talk about very academic themes in a way that is real and accessible without being patronizing. I remember I was very impressed, and our friendship grew organically out of our desire to do something that gave us more agency than our day jobs in an institution. I felt similarly when I met Kaya Birch-Skerritt, an eloquent and in-tune person who perfectly balanced the collective.

It was Marina who had the initial idea. We wanted to do something together at the Antiuniversity Festival (London, UK), so we proposed a translation party with the Feminist Library. This was about five years ago. For that first event (Talking in Languages Translation Party, 2018), we wrote:

Collectively we will translate selections from zines, pamphlets, and periodicals from the Feminist Library's special collection. Everybody is wel-

come! If you have an interest in translation, want to break language canons, help with opening access to a history of feminist DIY distribution, even if you don't speak more than one language, you can still help! We will discuss issues around translation, about being part of a polyphonous community, ways of decolonizing and queering our speech and writing, etc.

During the party participants will be encouraged to select and translate extracts they find interesting and as a result the work produced collectively will be used as a resource for the Feminist Library. We will also use the library's photocopier to make a zine out of our translations.

What Are Translation Parties?

Our first event was very popular; inevitably, we had a mix of friends and a general audience. Many of the participants were interested in translation as a formal discipline and were happy to find a space to

practice their skills in a more creative way. For a majority, this was their first experience interacting with a collection. Few had the opportunity to be in a "real" archive before. As part of the workshop, we discussed these issues, the inaccessibility of certain spaces, the infrastructures, and the gatekeepers. Together with participants, we created a good atmosphere. I believe that the main element for the success of this event was the friendly approach: we hosted a party, and people were open to collaborating with us, independent of their knowledge of the collection and translation.

We've carried this approach forward to all our translation parties since. The workshops critically explore translation, archival, and knowledge production practices to explore how colonization and other forms of domination affect and influence our relationship to language, identity, and community.

We invite participants to translate archival materials that were selected previously

for the workshop, but they are also welcome to find their own material in the archive. Participants can choose texts in one language and translate them in different ways. While translating (even using Google Translate), there are many conversations and much camaraderie. I like when people challenge the material by adding their knowledge or contextualizing certain cultural information that the original author did not. We encourage participants to be creative so that they can translate not only from text to text, but create something more abstract, some sort of illustration; people have even made small paper sculptures. Once you give them the freedom to express themselves, participants can be very imaginative. We want to make the archive alive through interaction. The result is a subverted and pluralistic archive, which is mutable rather than static.

At the end, we invite people to share their research. Together we co-produce knowledge and build a community. We believe that collective listening and dialogue are potent tools for building stronger communities, although we acknowledge that language acts in favour of certain groups. Languages have hierarchies; speaking certain languages gives us privileges, and having an accent places us in a particular position.

The workshops aim to explore and discuss how power runs throughout languages, record-keeping, and the broader landscape of the archive—and how we can intervene to reflect our way of knowing.

We are not interested in perfect translation, but in creating space for people to be playful and joyful with their languages and knowledges; in this way, we believe we are decolonizing and queering¹ our speech and writing.

Where Do We Go From Here?

In these five years, we have collaborated with many people, in different capacities, giving us opportunities to rethink our work. Last year we did our first residency, working with the Aarhus Feminist Collective and rum46 artist-run centre (also in Aarhus, Denmark). We had time to think about how we work as a collective. From practicalities like admin to well-being issues, how do we balance full-time employment, care responsibilities, and different interests with our practice as a collective, in ways that feel genuine? How do we grapple with theoretical issues around language and translation in ways that are relevant to our communities?

During our summer residency, we met other artists and collectives, and we explored ideas of change and adaptability, the natural and living archive. When we went back in autumn for the second part of the residency, we decided to do a walk in the woods. On a rainy day, we walked together to forage for mushrooms; we had conversations with participants about our bodies and our surroundings as containers of knowledges. We shared tea and biscuits while making a hanging macramé piece. Our journey took us to the sea and back through the woods. During the sharing moment, all the participants confessed to having been in the woods many times before, but acknowledged this was their first time feeling embodied there.

The residency gave us the space and time to realize that we were never just DIY—we have always worked in a Do-It-Together way. Our practice is evolving and has become more ambitious regarding relationships and collaborations. Our conversations were mainly about the possibilities

of our practice. What can we do around collection/archives/language? How? Why? We want to collaborate with people who feel like home, challenge us in a pedagogical way, and are open to learning from each other. Some people who have participated in our events have become dear collaborators and friends.

We want a playful practice that brings joy—and, to some degree, hope—to the people we work with, and us too.

This year we have already been back in Aarhus to work on a new art project with platform Sigrids Stue in the neighbourhood of Gellerup. We met the artists running the space last year during our residency. This interaction introduced many new questions into our practice. How can we bring sustainability to our relationships? What can we offer as visitors?

We hope to continue to build and deepen our network in order to create a more intentional art ecosystem, one that does not replicate hierarchies of power. I envision Rayuela (hopscotch) as an exercise for doing this.

Rayuela

I want to invite our readers to play Rayuela to recall some past reflections about our practice. You don't need to read this in the usual way; you are allowed to move around, and jump in and out through words.

8. Understand one another
7. Search for healing
6. Build solidarity
5. Radicalize the archive
4. Fail to translate
3. Help us fill the gaps in our memory
2. Decentralize your approach
1. Challenge homogenization



Written by Vania Gonzalez Rodriguez in conversation with Kaya Birch-Skerritt and Marina Georgiou.

¹ See Mama Alto and Sue McKemmish, "Is Life a Cabaret? A Living Archive of the 'Other,'" *Curator: The Museum Journal* 63, no. 4 (2020): 531–545; Yula Burin and Ego Ahaïwe Sowinski, "Sister to Sister: Developing a Black British Feminist Archival Consciousness," *Feminist Review* 108, no. 1 (2014): 112–119; Kathy

Carbone, "Archival Art: Memory Practices, Interventions, and Productions," *Curator: The Museum Journal* 63, no. 2 (2020), 257–263; Michelle Caswell, "Inventing New Archival Imaginaries," in *Identity Palimpsests: Archiving Ethnicity in the U.S. and Canada*, eds. Dominique Daniel and Amalia Levi (Sacramento, CA: Litwin Books, 2014), 35–58; and Hannah Ishmael et. al., "Locating the Black Archive," in *Communities, Archives and New Collaborative*

Practices, eds. Simon Popple, Andrew Prescott, and Daniel Mutibwa (Bristol: Policy Press, 2020), 207–218.

² Conversation with Marina Georgiou, 2023.

³ Emily Beswick, "Cartographies of Queer Diaspora: Jin Meiling and Mary Jean Chan," 2020, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bn7HQtdp6CZ0-zFHV-kqrq0r4e0hsL/view?usp=sharing>.

⁴ Kaya Birch-Skerritt, "How Can an Archive be Creative?," 2021, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ic6-H_BAEXqynuEIVw4GdcHgZ-NV_ja5/view.

⁵ Beswick, "Cartographies of Queer Diaspora," 2020.

⁶ Birch-Skerritt, "How Can An Archive be Creative?," 2021.



Coral Vision

Jess Watkin

A note on format: this piece holds fragments of thoughts and reflections from my experience moving through Blindness and Disability. The first two sections ground us in the context of my Blindness, and the latter two sections speak closer to my process and approach to art.

1.

I was the only person I knew who was making life-changing decisions at sixteen years old, decisions that would impact my health and life moving forward, forever. My surgeon told me that he could not recover vision in my left eye, and that if it was painful and if I wished, I could have it replaced. With what? I wasn't sure at the time, but at sixteen I was very aware that my eyes did not match. My left "bad" eye was sunken back in my head, small, and looked hurt. I met the surgeon who was to take out my eye and replace it with what I now understood to be coral from the sea. "From where??" How? Where does MY eye go?" My questions remain unanswered to this day more than fifteen years later.

As a young person, my time at high school was periodically disrupted by invasive eye surgeries. It was normal for me to miss two weeks of school to lay face down to try to save the vision that was deteriorating due to a degenerative eye condition that was extremely rare. My doctors did not know if I would lose all of my vision or what would happen in my future; we were trying to problem-solve on the fly. These disruptions remind me of the Disability dramaturgical practices of valuing, inviting, and celebrating disruptions in all aspects of the art and process.

In theatre work and what I do now, Disability dramaturgy means carving a specific path to care informed by the iterative environments and capacities of our world and our selves. It considers the composition of an event or piece of art and identifies and advocates for Disability-related shifts that benefit both the organizers/creators and the people who experience the piece. It doesn't matter if it's disruptive, if it anchors us to care and support then it is in line with Disability politics. Sometimes there is not a clear path to meaningful care, but there is an intentional moving through of discomfort to acknowledge the complexity of being in relationship with one another.

Thinking back over the aftermath of replacing my real eye with coral, the pain, the bright orange eye replacement that now sits inside of my head, disrupts my idea of what it means to be human at all. Can someone still be human if they've giv-

en part of their human body away? The coral that now lives in my head has no possibility of developing vision for me or it, but what I know for sure is that it keeps the shape of an eye and moves, somehow beautifully and intricately embedded into my blood supply and other vascular organs that have welcomed the foreign piece of the sea into my biological environment. This is its own dramaturgy.

The coral isn't perfect; it keeps breaking and hurting parts of my actual body, it is hostile, it is not smoothly transitioning into its new, human environment. Is the sea meant to sit interdependently with a human body? What does my blood supply provide that coral did not get under the salt water? Does it know where it is? Does it know anything at all?

Now I'm not sure who I even am without the bright orange, rough-to-the-touch coral nestled into my eye cavity and behind the brightly and beautifully painted prosthetic eye that covers it every day. Who am I with it? What has this coral even offered me, and why have I not thought about this before?

I woke up and everything was half. I felt half empty, half-full of energy, half-hungry, half-motivated to get up. And I opened my eyes, and they were half too. The right side of my room was glowing, gorgeous with summer sunlight but on the right... a milky, dark, severe, nothing. Looking down at my hands, there was half-a-lifeline, my thumb and front fingers were bare, staring back at me with a cold accusation and the rest was... gone. Disappeared. It didn't matter how hard I rubbed, I washed them out with soap, I used tweezers to pull Q-tips to push, but nothing changed. Half of the world was gone. Overnight my sight escaped me, whispered its goodbyes in the twilight and snuck out the back door, leaving me with only half. Who gave it permission to slip away on me? I need it, I need it to... see, to make coffee to talk to drive, it never asked if I was okay with this, we didn't negotiate on the terms over a cup of tea, it just got up and left me. (pause) At least half of it stayed, the little eye that could, remained.

2.

He looked at me and asked "but why, why the coral? What does the coral do that makes it good to be an eye replacement?" and I didn't know. At sixteen, I had just trusted the doctors, my parents, myself, that this was the right path forward, but I wasn't really thinking about the *why*, I was just focused on the getting through it all, the massive changes in my life.

So he looked it up for me and came back the next day and said "it's because of their ability to blend into the blood supply, it embeds itself, it survives off of you." I am in an exchange, apparently, with this coral. I read a lot about coral around the world dying; am I offering this piece of coral a thriving environment to live? Does it know it's not in the sea? If it's using my blood supply to vascularize and move the muscles around my eye, is it really alive?

Practicing art while in good relationship to Disability requires an honouring of our own needs. When I am supporting artists I toggle the line between support and *person*. When we create art, sometimes we forget ourselves, our needs, and we compromise (rest, for example, is big for me). What might create access for one person could also disable another, and so identifying and understanding the conflicts, frictions, and intersections between our experiences allows the art we work on to reflect the needs we bring to it. I want to make a beautiful *something* no matter what it takes. When it comes to being in good relationship to Disabled artists and people that you work with, what it takes is not compromising our needs to make the piece beautiful.

Disability dramaturgy fosters care for and by Disabled people where that care is present onstage, backstage, and in the audience. Dramaturgy here refers not only to the content and narrative of the story, but also *how* care is working in the space to support the work and how care might need to be shifted based on the specific intersectional needs of those present. Access and care ultimately blend into the artistic aesthetic of a piece.

At least there's that, we still share the same ocean, the same water.

I use my hands.

I recognize every piece of my garden with my fingers, the ocean floor is cool and quiet, and the leaves of my plants float around me, Francine, Bernice, Francesca, Madam Burgundy. My aunts named these flowers based on old names they'd heard of, I can name each one with one swoosh of my finger. Madam Burgundy, for example, has a long, flat leafy base with rough craters.

I feel restless but also rooted, you know? My aunts warned that if I didn't move, if I didn't pry myself up from this ocean floor that my back would eventually fuse, they'd seen it before, sisters resting for eternity tangled with the sand and coral and plant life. They... became the ocean. They are around us now.

3.

"Everything you touch you change, everything you change changes you."—Octavia Butler, *Parable of the Sower*

My art practice is tactile, which invites anyone to touch my pieces and ultimately interact with the art to build a relationship with it, to develop meaning through touch. As a Blind woman, touch is an important part of how I understand everything: through my hands. In 2023, I am aware of human impact on the earth, humanity's desire to *touch* and *know* our world, but what is the cost? There's an Instagram account depicting natural wonders of our world being destroyed by tourism, by people travelling to beautiful places "for the 'gram," to get a picture, to gain cultural clout for "being there," without thinking about the colonial, extractive touch that this kind of travel has on the wonders being visited. I am aware that visiting the coral reefs contributes to their sickness,

their disappearance, their erasure. I want to create art with sustainability in mind, with impact on the environment in mind, with accessibility in mind, and with the desire to invite people into thinking differently about parts of our worlds and lives that we sometimes take for granted.

I dream of walking into an installation inside of a gallery or performing space, and the soft sound of underwater envelops me. The light is blue and dark. The air is warm, and I reach out my hand to feel a soft rug hanging from the wall, running along the walls of the entire room. The rug is intricate, it stretches from the walls to the floor, and my shoes step on a seabed made of upcycled yarn and found materials. Touching this coral will not hurt it, but continue to develop a relationship between me, the art, the real coral under the real sea, and ultimately the coral that's using my blood supply in my head.

4.

This piece doesn't need to look or feel like the real coral underwater, but can and will be the manifestation of what I think it would feel and look like, woven and hooked and displayed so others can develop a relationship with frictions—but softly.

As an experiential, immersive, and accessible piece of art, I am inspired by other Disabled artists: Syrus Marcus Ware's *Antarctica* (2019), Brian Solomon and Justin Many Fingers's *What's Left Of Us* (2017), and The Critical Design Lab/Tangled Art + Disability exhibition *#CripRitual* (2022), for example. I believe that working toward and moving with intention is the right way forward to continue to create work that is vibrant and honours Disability.

Coral Vision is a growing work-in-progress that endeavours to incorporate the principles of both Disability dramaturgy and, more broadly, of being in good relationship with Disability through its creation. Having an interactive, tactile performance piece inside the frame of an artistic installation invites in and values multiple ways to engage, understand, touch, and receive this piece of art; and validates that art, life, Disability, and how those themes interact with the larger world around us (climate crisis in this case) are all entangled, and require care and softness to unravel, or begin to unravel.

It's harder for us to breathe, it's hard for us to move...

Auntie said something above is burning, Somewhere, a place, I'm not sure what burning is.

(beat)

*Reach out your arm, feel the air touching your skin
how does that feeling change as you move your arm fast
Or slow
How would that change if you were underwater?
welcome, you're on the ocean floor, you can magically breathe, and you begin to move your arms...*



Heather Kai Smith, *Variations on Idiorrhymy: Energy Work*, 2023. Graphite and coloured pencil on paper. COURTESY THE ARTIST.

Following spread: Heather Kai Smith, *Variations on Idiorrhymy: Meditation*, 2023. Graphite and coloured pencil on paper. COURTESY THE ARTIST.





Elli Vassalou, *Breadmakers-Filmmakers* (film still from NetwerkAalst residency), 2021. COURTESY THE ARTIST.

Casting Our Kino-Eyes Over the Collective Horizon

The Post Film Collective

The Post Collective is an autonomous platform of co-creation, co-learning, and cultural activism, located between Ghent and Brussels in Belgium. It is created by Mahammed Alimu, Marcus Bergner, Hooman Jalidi, Sawsan Maher, Mirra Markhaëva, and Elli Vassalou: artists with different means and access to artistic production due to their legal status (refugees, asylum seekers, sans-papiers, documented citizens). Generative modes of kinship, solidarity, dialogue, and storytelling form the basis of their speculative and experiential approaches to art and design. Since 2020, in collaboration with Robin Vanbesien, **The Post Film Collective** elaborates on the work and experiences of The Post Collective in the realm of cinema.

Soon after, we started to produce various ciné-pieces, always with a horizontal collectivist approach: seven directors, seven scenarists, seven camera operators, and seven performers. In these last months, Mahammed Alimu and Hooman Jalidi couldn't commit to the collective any longer. The rest of us found ourselves geographically apart, and we had to find other ways of co-creation while in long-distance kinship. It reminded us how, in the very first place, cinema is a work of imagination (without a need for a lens or a screen). And it inspired us to see our correspondence with ourselves as a process of filmmaking: a series of thoughts, calls, and responses that slowly and visually structure our collective imagination. Our methodology for this piece was simultaneously sending emails to each other, using each letter as a possible beginning. We posed questions such as: How do you stay a collective while being physically apart? What makes a collective? And how does the notion of trust play into all of this? After reading, we replied to one another, creating an archive that spirals an abundance of relations, feelings, and desires.

From: sawsan sam [redacted]
Subject: Letter to us
Date: 1 March 2023 at 22:23:42 CET
To: marcus bergner [redacted], Elli Vassalou [redacted], Mirra Markhaëva [redacted], Robin Vanbesien [redacted]

Trust

From the very beginning of our creation process, we understood that we had to start defining our own conditions and working methods. Each of us is completely autonomous in what we create for each other. Our process is a mature dialogue based on trust in each other's expertise, judgment, and creativity. From this perspective, I share with you all this practical survival recipe for forming a collective in war/crisis/uncertain times:

1. First of all, I'm taking for granted that I already have my friends. This recipe will not teach you how to bring people together or how to start a collective.
2. So this recipe is for those who are already in a collective and want to keep it alive.

Trust is central to this recipe. I will give a brief description of each of the ingredients here.

Trust

T = Treat your peers as you like to be treated; train yourself to see the beauty and uniqueness of your collectiveness.

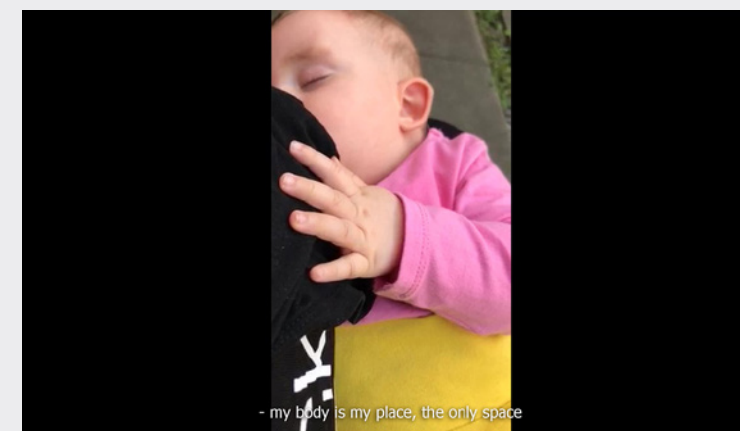
R = Readiness to share your story and care for your friends' stories, with an active sense of responsibility towards all the wounds you will come across. Reduce egotism, "negativity," and fear.

U = Use your resources, connections, survival techniques, and creativity to provide and maintain your togetherness.

S = Security from one's traumas and keeping triggers far away, provided by the care of the collective.

T = Time together: each meeting is a miracle, and you need to consciously appreciate that miracle.

I trust those who care to check in with the pain they have.



Sawsan Maher, *Space is the Place* (film still), 2021. COURTESY THE ARTIST.

From: marcus bergner [redacted]
Subject: Re: letter to pofco
Date: 1 March 2023 at 23:28:31 CET
To: sawsan sam [redacted], Mirra Markhaëva [redacted], Robin Vanbesien [redacted], Elli Vassalou [redacted], marcus bergner [redacted]

"Be plural like the universe." —Fernando Pessoa

Dear POFCO,

Over the last few years, we have done lots of things together, but we have not as yet, as I see it, made a truly collective film. This is where we are all equally the director, performer, and editor, and share all the other aspects of making the film. The closest we have come to this was when six of us decided to set out into the streets of Aalst with one Super-8 film camera and one roll of film to make a film together. We had an hour, which meant editing in-camera and dividing the three minutes of the film reel six ways as we filmed. Like a strange twelve-legged and twelve-armed insect, we meandered along the street in close proximity to each other, handing the camera back and forth, so each could film in relation to what we saw and how we imagined constructing the film on the spot. Dividing the time equally was the most difficult aspect to figure out, as we had to measure time while filming. We were joined together through the one kino-eye in the same moment and the same place. As an experiment, it was valuable in terms of indicating ways to approach collective filmmaking and something that we could build upon. It was as if we were making improvised music together. There was palpable solidarity in terms of recognizing and drawing from instants of individual and collective spontaneity, as well as curiosity, that became cinematic elements well beyond anything we had previously discussed or thought about in terms of what a film might be.



The Post Film Collective, *Aalst* (still from Super-8 film), 2021. COURTESY THE ARTISTS.

After all that we have experienced together, we know each other quite well and have built a good sense of trust. But there are things I think we should investigate much further. For instance, we should continue to rethink the whole idea of film production, so that it becomes a more inclusive and open-ended artistic/social event—both for the film viewer and filmmaker, which is linked to the big question of how might film become a force for societal change. We also might continue investigating the role that "the inner voice" has in film (as opposed to voiceover) with all its qualities of cacophony and poetry in terms of building polyphonic film moments. Also, I feel strongly about recognizing and celebrating the implicit as well as explicit role that anarchy holds within the making of our film and within the collective generally (Germaine Dulac and Jean Vigo are early cinematic precursors in this). This means radically breaking from all the usual hierarchies and constraints that accompany or shape most film productions.

Presently I am a long way away from each of you. Every day I stand in the ocean up to my chin and observe in a concentrated, and cinematic way, the surface of the water with all its different gelatinous and dancelike patterns. Soon I will be back in Belgium and look forward to us combining our imaginations and aspirations by casting our kino-eyes over the collective horizon.

In solidarity,
 Marcus

From: Elli Vassalou [redacted]
Subject: Letter to pofco, 12 h late
Date: 2 March 2023 at 10:29:46 CET
To: Mirra Markhaëva [redacted], marcus bergner [redacted], Robin Vanbesien [redacted], sawsan sam [redacted]

Dear oh dear PoFCos,

The sun is shining today over the Flemish landscape and my internal plant is harvesting as much sunlight as it can get to grow stronger. Our film *ReRooting* is an experiment that is also a collective endeavour.

After our experience in filmmaking in Aalst and Ghent, we wanted to experiment with the idea of what it would mean to film together outside of a city and a structured artistic residency. What different imaginary and memories would rise to the surface, by situating ourselves in a rural space? What new form of imagery would be brought by finding our joy in nature, which is different than staying in a white cube structure and having a production-oriented day plan?

We brought with us the tool of rerooting, borrowed by another collective in kinship: *Conciencia Afro*.¹ This tool, or rather, this intention, is an invitation on building community, based on the relationship with our ancestors, with the "self," the earth, and with other beings surrounding us.

Michelle Sylliboy

"Just as fungi taught plants how to root into the soil, so do myths teach us how to root into our ecological and social ecosystems. Mycorrhizal fungi map the relationships in a forest just as myths map the specific relationships of a community rooted in place" (Sophie Strand, 2022). We plant ourselves in this new land, we grow films between us, and we build networks of trust, of resources, of safety. The films we share and create together are our own private universe of myths and kinship.

The collective is here to witness, empower, and support each person's situation. With our cine-gaze, our liminal financial resources, with our love and sisterhood. Sometimes I wonder if this is contributing to creating a more inclusive world for all, or is it just a self-made extraction? We fight every day to be together, to not leave anyone behind, but so often we fail... so often we fall into despair. But film, the "best" edited versions of our joyous, meaningful, collective worldmaking, brings back this mythical memory of being, growing, playing, loving, and rooting together.

♥ I love you all so very much ♥
Elli

From: Mirra Markhaëva
Subject: Letter to you
Date: 2 March 2023 at 02:48:24 CET
To: marcus bergner, Elli Vassalou, Robin Vanbesien, sawsan sam



From: Robin Vanbesien
Subject: Re: letter to pofco
Date: 3 March 2023 at 22:59:16 CET
To: Mirra Markhaëva, sawsan sam
Cc: marcus bergner, Elli Vassalou

My answer. (Not a direct answer, but an answer)

Our films are a deep emotional need. The making of our films unfolds in the creation of a social space where having fun, experiencing joy, paying attention, caring for each other is really important. The making of a film cannot be separated from these circumstances and conditions, and the message of the work is therefore inseparable from its making. In practice, this means that the films show and explore their own process of making.

Our films begin with a claim to the right to make a film, a claim to worldmaking. In cinema, the notion of worldmaking is sometimes used to refer to the way in which the medium can create an immersive, fictional universe. Here, in our practice, we understand worldmaking as the transformation of the world through a transformation of our representational practices. The making of our films helps us to rethink the ways, modes, grounds and soils with which we do things. It is a speculative activity. It's a rehearsal. We are rehearsing the capacity to hold space for each other. To use Trinh T. Minh-ha's words, we "speak nearby" to each other, leaving possible gaps between us, leaving the space of representation open, for us, and for the spectator (just as it is performed in this email thread). During the making of a film, we rehearse different forms/methods that rethink our relationships to time and space, as well as the bodies that inhabit these spaces. What we film is not this or that, but what surrounds it, what it does, how it speaks to what we don't know, and how it rethinks/reframes what we think we know.

From: Elli Vassalou
Subject: Re: letter to pofco
Date: 4 Mar 2023 at 11:23:10 CET
To: Mirra Markhaëva, marcus bergner, Robin Vanbesien, sawsan sam

"Casting our kino-eyes over the collective horizon," you used this phrase in your first letter Marcus. It created an image in my head: all of us being in the sea with you, our Aussie brother. Our kino-eyes and bodies are present for each other, caring, and loving—in solidarity. But where do they look?

Do they look at the same horizon? Some of them look at the seashore, worrying about border controls, some of them are diving deep, looking for ways to keep us safe(r), and some of them are just struggling to float.

Is it where we look that makes us a collective or is it the fact that our eyes are witnessing + confiding each other's gaze, composing and transforming it, celebrating it into a transindividual manifestation of, as Sawsan said, the miracle of being together?

Waiting for the miracle to happen again soon,
Elli

From: marcus bergner
Subject: Re: letter to pofco
Date: 6 March 2023 at 02:02:02 CET
To: sawsan sam, Mirra Markhaëva, Elli Vassalou, Robin Vanbesien, marcus bergner

Dear All,

The casting of kino-eyes towards the collective horizon might be seen in terms of what Gadamer calls the fusion of horizons.² With each of us from such different backgrounds, it is not possible to remove ourselves from our background, as we look for ways to understand each other in dialogue and via our different perspectives, stories, and inner visions. And then there is a fusion of "horizons" that first takes place between speaker and listeners and maybe between filmmaker and viewer. But braiding, instead of a fusion of horizons; this cinematically could be our way forward.



Hooman Jalidi, *ReRooting* (still from Super-8 film at Grimonster Residency), 2023. COURTESY THE ARTIST.

Braiding: assembling and disassembling stories that go in circles, that leak and fuse in unexpected ways, spiralling out of control into chaotic and poetic entanglements.

Hugs and solidarity,
Marcus



Mirra Markhaëva, *Casting Our Eyes Over the Collective Horizon*, drawing produced during letter exchange, 2023. COURTESY THE ARTIST.

1 In the seminar "(Un)SCREWING CARE." The Post Collective was given the tool of ReRooting by the Spanish collective Conciencia Afro. "(Un)SCREWING CARE" was part of Catalizadoras [Catalysts] initiated by Te(n) cuidado, a collective action research group, which promoted collaboration between six organizations and cultural collectives based in Spain and Belgium with the objective of sharing tools for care both as principle and as method of resilience and resistance in the current cultural and socio-political context. <https://tencuidado.org/en/actividades/unscrewing-care-seminar>

2 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013).

KOMQWEJWI'KASIKL 2 is an excerpt from *Kiskajeyi – I AM READY*, a book of poetry written by artist Michelle Sylliboy in her ancestral Mi'kmaq language. Taking its name from the sucker fish (komqwej) who create ornate tracks in the mud as they move along the bottom of lakes and rivers¹, Komqwejwi'kasikl was a hieroglyphic writing system used widely throughout the Mi'kmaq Nation prior to colonization, and is presently being preserved by its people.

In her author's note to the book, Sylliboy underscores that there is no Mi'kmaq equivalent for the English word "goodbye" and instead, Numultes ("I'll see you") is used. Numultes is an important concept that informs how Mi'kmaq knowledge represents ongoing dialogue, eternal exchange of stories, and continuous learning as core values within the Mi'kmaq worldview; she explains:

"For me, Numultes expresses a better understanding of the collective consciousness that has motivated me to keep learning and to decolonize and reclaim my Indigenous voice.

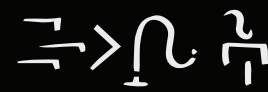
From an existential viewpoint, writing a Komqwejwi'kasikl poem connects me to ancestral space-time through its embedding of my personal reflection in my ancestral language. [...] In my ancestral worldview, nothing happens without a dialogue, and Numultes is an active, dialogue-generating force shaping the way I interpret the Mi'kmaq way of life and how it transforms my life today."

1 Murdena Marshall and David L. Schmidt, *Mi'kmaq Hieroglyphic Prayers: Readings in North America's First Indigenous Script* (Halifax, NS: Nimbus Pub., 1995), 2.

Pa'qualayuti -
The mystery



kisiwskwijinuin -
after you were born



apujepetal -
will return



wskitqamu'k -
on earth



telkitasik -
it is written



natawitu'ni -
you were created perfectly



kaqi'sk -
many times



wjit -
because



ntininaq -
our bodies



kjijaqamijinaq -
our souls



kewaska'tikl -
they are transformed



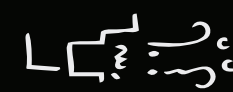
ta'n -
by



sesetatikek -
they had gone in many directions



kjipa'qalayuti -
the great mystery



me'su'tuk -
it's easy to see



mikwite'tmu -
I cannot remember



etuk -
maybe



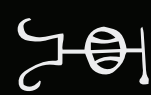
istaqej -
if



ne'sipuna'nek -
three years



ne'wiskekna'qek -
forty days



wi'temsaiw -
you say to yourself



welitelta'msetasi -
I firmly believe



ji'nm -
man



aqq -
and



epit -
woman



ni'n -
in me



teliapkuat'asital -
they will be released



Animating Myths to Protect Ecology

Performance RAR



A former resident walks through settlements in Jatigede District in Sumedang Regency, West Java, Indonesia, an area devastated by Jatigede reservoir. Still from research video by Performance RAR. COURTESY THE ARTISTS.

A Brief History of Jatigede Reservoir

From 2008 to 2015, the Indonesian government began construction to transform the Jatigede area in Sumedang Regency, West Java province, into a reservoir, claiming that the development would increase the country's electricity needs and facilitate a new hydroelectric power plant.

Today, the reservoir has displaced 45,000 residents who have lost their houses and livelihoods, eradicated 1,389 hectares of forest land, which has irrevocably impacted local flora and fauna, and decimated 33 cultural reserves. Many residents also continue to demand clarity around the unpaid compensation from evictions.

Seven years after the sinking of the Jatigede area, former residents still often visit during low tide when traces of their previous homes emerge. They reminisce about their hometown or attend to the graves of their family members who could not be relocated upon eviction.

Since the Dutch colonization of Indonesia, the construction of reservoirs along Cimanuk River has been eagerly sought after by each consecutive government, and equally eagerly contested by local communities. Even during the years of Dutch

colonization in 1812, Jatigede was targeted to be the largest reservoir instalment in the area. During this time, the Sundanese traditional belief of *Uga*¹ foretold the myth of *Keuyeup Bodas* ("white crab" in Bahasa). The story tells of the white crocodile who wanted to build a reservoir in Jatigede as a gift to the woman he loved, but was stopped by the white crab, who anticipated the ecological destruction the reservoir would bring. The two creatures fought; the white crab emerged victorious and the crocodile vowed that his descendants would continue to pursue the endeavour. As such, the white crab also promised to return and destroy any reservoir that was built. In contemporary times, many of the local community believe that if the Jatigede area is waterlogged, it will awaken the angry *Keuyeup Bodas*.

Uga's *Keuyeup Bodas* prophecy of ecological destruction has not only materialized, but also aligns with current geological research; geologists have raised concerns about the activation of tectonic plates caused by an infrastructure as large as a reservoir in the Jatigede area, which would result in a catastrophic earthquake. When the planar fractures of the villages of Baribis, Lembang, and Cimandiri are traced and joined on a map, the drawing forms arches resembling a

crab—further supporting the predictions of *Uga*.

Myths: A Promise of the Present

Myths have long existed as part of traditional belief systems across Indonesia, offering local wisdom. Passed down from generation to generation, myths can change and evolve with time. They are able to express, uplift, instill trust, protect, strengthen morality, ensure the efficiency of rites, as well as provide practical and philosophical guidance. Western colonial systems of power and knowledge have diminished the understanding of and faith in myths within Indonesian communities.² Through myths, we can better engage in surrounding events and respond to the forces of nature. There are several myths that work to sustain the environment and human life, as well as foster harmony between us and nature.

Collaboration with Citizens

For four months, we lived in Jatigede and collaborated with former residents to gather materials related to hometown memories and local traditions submerged by the reservoir. The collection resulted in *The Myth of Tomorrow*, a research-driven art project that animates



3D renderings of *Keuyeup Bodas* Kingdom located in Jatigede area, as interpreted by Performance RAR. Stills from interactive website. COURTESY THE ARTISTS.

Uga's myth of *Keuyeup Bodas* to protect local ecologies.

During our residency we met with a local shaman, another displaced Jatigede resident, to learn more about *Uga's* prophecy and how the kingdom of *Keuyeup Bodas* was formed. In Jatigede, shamans are known as trusted heads of the community who lead rituals and traditional events. They are often believed to be people who can bridge the human world with the spirit world. In our meeting, the shaman was able to communicate with King *Keuyeup Bodas* who expressed his anger toward the reservoir and plans to destroy it with his army.

Informed by this encounter, we staged a press conference, declaring the return of the *Keuyeup Bodas* Kingdom. Our "action" intentionally mirrored a speech given by the Indonesian president at the opening ceremony for the reservoir in 2015.

Additionally, we made an installation of a gate symbolizing the entryway into the *Keuyeup Bodas* Kingdom. By scanning a QR code, members of the public could access a website to explore a three-dimensional digital rendering of the mystical kingdom and the ruins of contemporary Jatigede. Our intentions for *The Myth of*

Tomorrow were to strengthen the memory of *Uga* and elevate the archives of citizens as collective monuments, and invite community members to reflect on the destruction of the Jatigede area.

By reconstructing memories from the residents' archives and *Uga* to form a website, we re-imagine how the local Jatigede community used traditions, namely myths to protect the environment from damaging developments starting from the Dutch East Indies era until their eventual displacement.

Amid the issue of evictions being covered up by the government, the website also provided a voice and memory space for the local people to voice their resistance through *Uga*, as well as open wider access for the public to know that developments that destroy the ecology continue to grow and that these evictions can happen to anyone.

Western colonial power structures continue to undermine other modes of knowledge and practices. By animating and elevating the truths and wisdom of local myths and amplifying the voices of our community members through personal and collective archives, we can better protect and defend our ecologies.

¹ *Uga* is an oral tradition of prophecy that has been passed down from ancestors to future generations as a guiding tool.

² See anthropologist Anna Tsing's book *Friction*, which studies the productive interactions of global connections. As a case study, Tsing describes the community-based conservation and protection of the rainforest in Indonesia in the 1980s and 1990s. She writes: "Corporate growth seemed unaccountably chaotic, inefficient, and violent in destroying its own resources. Stranger yet, it seemed that ordinary people—even those dependent on the forest for their livelihood—were joining distant corporations in creating uninhabitable landscape." Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), 2.

Embodying Ancestral Love: The Indigenous Youth Residency Program

Tasha Beeds and Quill Christie-Peters

Indigenous youth are the windows into our collective Indigenous future, inheritors of a brilliant legacy that has survived colonialism. They need to be empowered as future leaders by unconditional love. An Anishinaabe artist is doing just that, utilizing her own lived experiences to generate an Anishinaabe-centred art space for Indigenous youth to come home to themselves through the lens of their Ancestors. I sat with her to learn about the Indigenous Youth Residency Program she founded.

Quill Christie-Peters: My name is Quill Christie-Peters. I'm Anishinaabeg on my dad's side and Scottish and Irish on my mom's side. I'm from Treaty 3 territory, specifically Lac des Mille Lacs First Nation. I am an artist and an educator. I do some writing. I also do some cultural tattoo work. I am currently living in Thunder Bay.

Tasha Beeds: How did you come to art?

QC-P: Art has always been a part of my life. When I was young, I would always paint and write. My dad is also an artist, but he was an ebbing, flowing presence in my life, so he didn't necessarily sit me down and say, "I'm going to teach you how to paint." It was a very innate thing within me, how I wanted to process and contribute to the world. As I have moved deeper into being an artist, I've realized creative practice is the foundation of Anishinaabeg culture and community. Everyone is an artist and contributes to creative practice, especially from an Anishinaabeg perspective; art is a language, something innately in us.

TB: I love the way you frame art as an inherent part of who we are. Can you share more about the Indigenous Youth Residency Program?

QC-P: During my master's, I translated my worldview into a set of artistic methodologies that could be used within the context of urban Indigenous artistic programming in a gallery. The Program is an artist residency for Indigenous youth aged twelve to twenty-four. We hire six youth and they are paid well. It's premised on Anishinaabeg artistic methodologies, so it's more about relationship building as part of an artistic practice and less about learning how to paint or bead. The Program also focuses heavily on settler co-

lonialism and giving youth the tools to articulate how those structures impact our lives and relationships. At the end, the youth create beautiful artwork that is shown at different galleries. It's special. There are lots of great arts programs for Indigenous youth, but I don't know of many that implement our ways of relating to one another within the program's structure itself.

TB: How do you find the youth?

QC-P: We do a call out and have an interview process, but it isn't based on credentials or even artistic inclinations; it's finding youth who will work well together, who need the Program, access to connections, and access to learning about colonialism.

TB: What is the structure of the Program?

QC-P: It has existed in different iterations. When I first ran the Program, it was in Toronto at the Art Gallery of Ontario. Now that I live here in Thunder Bay, it is run here. We always work with youth who are living in the place, to build community. There are two versions: one is a five-week full-time intensive and the other is an after-school eight-to-ten-week version. Mostly, we do the intensive one and it is intense.

TB: Can you speak to some of the challenges of the Program being situated in Thunder Bay?

QC-P: Everywhere has racism and white supremacy, but it is overt here and out in the open in ways that are scary, which makes this Program important—to have the opportunities to talk about white supremacy, racism, and colonialism. People in Thunder Bay don't like you to talk about these things. I've run the Program in Thunder Bay for four years now, but I do it almost in secret. We get the application out and we have our network of people, but in terms of interacting with the city or having visibility, I don't. I am just focused on letting Indigenous youth know who we are, what we do, and bringing them in. In a place like Thunder Bay, this type of work gets targeted and taken down, so it is kind of bittersweet—it's so necessary and powerful to do it here, but it is also kind of scary and lonely.

TB: How long have you run this program?

QC-P: It has been seven years now.

TB: Do you still connect with former youth as part of the larger circle you have created?

QC-P: Definitely. I have remained close with youth who attended seven years ago. The core of the Program is about a relational methodology. We are talking about colonialism; it gets vulnerable and the relationships get strong, really quickly. We're learning so much together and those relationships are meant to last. I do feel like I am going to close my chapter on this work soon. I have been mentoring two youths to take over. There are many relationships to maintain, and I have limited capacity. It is why the Program only takes on six youth. Those relationships are meant to travel into the future.

TB: Colonialism works to keep us isolated. Once we are isolated, despair and depression, all the feelings, are more intense. The fact you are helping to create and build relationships for Indigenous youth is about survival and will carry them into the future.

QC-P: The Program is rooted in Anishinaabe methodology, but it also reflects my worldview and methodology. It is not so much about passing the Program down, but instead about passing the understanding of how to approach the work that honours who these young people are and what gifts they have. It's always going to talk about colonialism and the specific program methodologies are successful in terms of structure, so those will stay the same, but it is more about connecting the young people to their own gifts. They are going to do it way better than me, so it is also giving them permission to change things and to say, "You got this!"

TB: Can you talk about what a day inside an Anishinaabe art methodology might look like?

QC-P: We always do an opening circle because the idea is to bring our whole personhood to the space. Then, we shift into a lesson. We do a deep dive into some element of colonialism. I give them the language to talk about what they already know. All these young people know colonialism; they just need some language

to name and understand it better. The lesson is based on dialogue so while I am teaching, people are sharing. It is very interactive. After each lesson, we have another more intentional circle. I share from my own life, so it is all very vulnerable and opens up the space. These young people are so thirsty for a safe space of connection. In the afternoon we work with different guest artists, Elders, or knowledge keepers. We shift the energy and then we do a closing circle.

TB: At the end, do they create an exhibit? Collectively or individually?

QC-P: It has been both collaborative and individual. A big part of the Program is the witnessing and celebration part. We have a huge art opening. I make a speech and honour every person. There's tears. Their families are also witnessing their work; it is my responsibility to really tell about the gifts they have shared during the Program. The opening is a part of the methodology because they need to be witnessed and experience what it is like to be held up.

TB: I can see how empowering this program has been and will continue to be for Indigenous youth. Is there a way for people to support the Indigenous Youth Residency Program?

QC-P: We were lucky enough to get multi-year funding. I think we would take donations in the future, once that runs out. People can follow us on social media and take the time to learn about this way of doing things: it is not just what we do, it's how we do it. This program is all about the how. The very first time I ran it, I realized all I have to do is hold space for these young people and tell them I love them; it's life changing. They bring so much knowledge and teach me so much, but it is also heartbreaking because it's rare that young people just to get to come into a space and actually see each other and be told they are loved and worthy. We need to push for more of the work that honours who we are as Indigenous people. I think where the real power happens is when we are doing it in alignment with who we are.

TB: Beautiful! Miigwech for sharing your time and energy.

Meal of choices

quori theodor

Green spiralling fiddleheads line the edge of a molasses-filled bowl with a porcelain rabbit figurine at its centre. Surrounded by an arc of seashells, the dish is placed across the table from a wholly different meal: a snakelike plate presents a cinnamon roll, itself coiled. Nearby, a blue egg cup holds its charge, emblazoned with the word "shell," with truffles, and a spoon within reach. Rice-paper wrappers act as placemats for each place setting while eggshell-coloured tubing winds a meandering path around, over, and under other edible and inedible things on the green satin-clad table, among which include: a bundle of grapes, flowers, candles, and a Baked Alaska, in various stages of assembly and consumption. Forming a disparate yet alluring assemblage to behold and ingest, this table-scape represents an iteration of artist quori theodor's *Meal of Choices*, an invitation to collectively gather at a dining table that is designed to empower decision-making and embrace plurality.

Part of theodor's ongoing practice of creating queer, somatic, relational, and sculptural interventions around food, *Meal of Choices* is a meditation on the ways sharing a meal can cultivate cooperation amid contrasting needs. Or what some call commensality: the building of community through eating together. Through a poetic text that draws on histories of consumerism, a psychological study for advertisers, and a set of instructions to make your own "meal of choices," theodor challenges the notion that the recipe for friendship is similarity. *Meal of Choices* in turn gives space for negotiating difference and exploring possibility, offering a vision of a differential world informed by divergent and defiant experiences.



PHOTO: LOGAN JACKSON

**A recipe for friendship:
Similar food consumption promotes trust and cooperation**

(a psychological study geared to advertisers)

“This study examines the consequences of incidental food consumption for trust and cooperation. We find that strangers who are assigned to eat similar (vs. dissimilar) foods are more trusting of each other in a trust game (Study 1). Food consumption further influences conflict resolution, with strangers who are assigned to eat similar foods cooperating more in a labor negotiation, and therefore earning more money (Study 2). The role of incidental food similarity on increased trust extends to the product domain. Consumers are more trusting of information about non-food products (e.g., a software product) when the advertiser in the product testimonial eats similar food to them (Study 3). Lastly, we find evidence that food serves as a particularly strong cue of trust compared with other incidental similarity. People perceive that pairs eating similar foods, but not pairs wearing similar colored shirts, are more trusting of one another (Study 4). We discuss theoretical and practical implications of this work for improving interactions between strangers, and for marketing products.”³

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The instructions that follow are an invitation to complicate the data, a data sample that begins with sameness at the heart of the question.

They are an invitation to use what is beyond the imperfect relational world to strengthen a sense of personal safety amidst the reality of difference.

Arrange 6 edible and non-edible objects on a plate

Ask diners to make arrangements for each other and negotiate how it should be eaten, if at all

Arrangements can prioritize one or any combination of: shape, flavour, free association, colour, texture, association, visual poetics

Eat a meal of your choice after your meal of choices

Then shock your guests with a flaming dessert

and burn



PHOTO: LOGAN JACKSON

I sat next to you at dinner.

In front of me was one carrot, julienned. molasses, a shell, silk, oatmeal, and clotted cream.

There was, on your plate, which was an INVISIBLE plate: a raisin (from California) a message you wrote to me before we sat down, water, a mini muffin (alone, set apart), a spoon, vinegar.

Do you trust me? Do I trust you?

Sounds like idolatry. What of moments, experience, play, trial, flow. A forgiving reality.

I ask for what I need: some combination of what is on your and my plate, using what is there on both our plates, if you will share.

479,001,600 combination possibilities, more if you count everything else around and feelings as components.

I eat your dipped cream silk with a raisin quietly.

I wonder if you wonder.

Redirection, your turn. I am performing (chef) but also listening.

Shell! muffin shell. with a vinegar molasses drip. I can stand by that, and make it.

We didn't want the same thing but that was okay and also fun.

The invisible plate is too small. I'm hungry!

We get pizza. And then there's also dessert.

Dessert is a whisper.

A whisper of flavour but also the note. The note you wrote earlier.

A note is a whiff. a sound. a letter. and a thought.

The baked Alaska comes out flaming.

Baked Alaska was invented by the restaurant Delmonico in NYC as PR for the US acquisition of Alaska from Russia in 1867.¹

We read the note you wrote earlier and burn it in the cold flames. It wasn't so much a secret or gossip but an offering just to make an offering.

Winnicott refers to rupture and repair as the model for building trust.²

A toast! to you. I express my loyalty by testing the cup for poison. The cup is a mix of cordyceps and pepto. I am saved in carbonation, service, and humility.



PHOTO: LOGAN JACKSON

¹ “Baked Alaska,” Wikipedia, last modified January 18, 2023, https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baked_Alaska.

² D.W. Winnicott, *The Child, the Family, and the Outside World* (Pennsylvania: Penguin Books, 1973), 173.

³ Kaitlin Woolley and Ayelet Fishbach, “A recipe for friendship: Similar food consumption promotes trust and

cooperation,” *Journal of Consumer Psychology* 27, no. 1 (January 2017): 1–10.

In Search of Lost Confidence

Tonatiuh López

In certain places, confiding won't come easy. Insecurity, violence, and impunity make you feel afraid of faces that seem familiar. You never know where harm may come from. By the time we were orphaned, my sister was eighteen years old. I was living in Barcelona; she in Ecatepec de Morelos, Mexico, the place where we both grew up. Ecatepec is one of the most precarious and overpopulated municipalities in all of Latin America, and is considered to have the highest rate of violence toward women in Mexico.¹ 9000 km away from my sister, one thing worried me above all others: her being alone in such a city.

Back then, I remember waking up one night feeling troubled after a weird dream. I was trapped inside a car during rush hour. I knew from the noise and lights around me that I was on the road from Indios Verdes² to Ecatepec. Suddenly, a strident chorus of horns from the neighbouring cars sounded in unison: TOOOOOOOOT! TOOOOOOOOT!, as if summoning everyone to a ritual. A white unicorn then emerged. Neighing furiously, "HEEEEE!" "HEEEEE!" it galloped at full speed through the cars. "Clomp, clippity, clomp, clomp!"—its eyes laden with blood. I was transported to a wasteland where a crowd of people stood motionless. Flanked by patrol cars that cast a red-and-blue glow over the scene, the unicorn remained white and luminous, standing above a pile of dead

plants and rubbish. Its hooves were nestled inside a black garbage bag, in which laid what we all knew was the body of yet another dismembered young woman.³

I woke up agitated and sweaty from the dream. A couple of nights before, I had a call with my sister where she told me the story of a friend who went missing. I felt guilty for not being near my sister to look after her. Instinctively, I grabbed my cellphone and googled "mujeres Ecatepec" ("women Ecatepec"), as if expecting to find something that offered hope and peace. Quite the opposite happened. The first article to appear in the news had this fatalistic headline: "What is it like to live in the worst place to be a woman in Mexico."⁴ I clicked. The article, written by two men, told the harsh realities that relatives of femicide victims face: "It is a place where the horror of an easy death, contempt for women, general insecurity and impunity are combined."⁵ I couldn't go back to sleep. I remember closing my eyes and praying to my version of god to look after my sister, to keep her always safe. I didn't have—and I still don't have—any choice but to trust him.

It has been a long time since the physical distance between my sister and I shortened. Shortly after that dream, I came back to Mexico and joined the Museo

Arte Contemporáneo Ecatepec (MARCE), a collective formed by artists Federico Martínez, Antonio Barrientos, Iván Massé, and the activists Mariana García and Salvador Vásquez. Originally, MARCE was born as an ironic institution that aimed to fill the lack of cultural spaces and institutions for both the artists and public in the region. MARCE is dedicated to creating community art interventions with and for the people of Ecatepec. Since our formation in 2015, we have been concerned with the situation of women and feminized bodies in this and other similar places.

Generally, when media and authorities talk about gender-based violence and femicide in Ecatepec, the immediate solution is to retire feminized bodies from the public sphere and confine them to domestic spaces under the subjugation of men. We knew we needed to do something to help them reclaim their space and agency. It was clear that we could not rely on the government, the police, or other institutions—and that there were ways in which the community could recover their lost confidence. It has been a part of our work to help them rebuild it through actions that reassemble our social bonds and a sense of care for each other.

MARCE's programs reinforce the participation and visibility of feminized bodies.

As Ecatepec holds the highest insecurity perception index in the whole country, our projects also endeavour to create safe and empowering environments for the community. These include movie projections that light up the night, interactive neighbourhood walks, and interventions like *Toco Madera*,⁶ a collective and monumental ex-voto of coloured sawdust for the celebrations of the Virgin of Santa Clara. Painting the streets with representations of what the community considered to be the main issues of the town, the project was conducted in three stages. First, we collected letters from the community in exchange for bread from a local panadería through an action called *Las penas con pan son menos* (*Troubled Times with Bread Are Lesser*) with support from Adriana Valdéz's project, *El Carrito*. We then held a drawing marathon where people, especially children, helped us translate the testimonials into graphic forms, which were then recreated as stencils for the ex-voto rug. As the Virgin passed over the sawdust-clad streets during the traditional procession, the community's problems were symbolically erased. *Toco Madera* gave the community agency to vocalize their concerns, while showing that self-determined organizing can lead to change.

In line with these actions, MARCE hosted the *Laboratory of Intersectional Journalism for Women and Feminized Bodies from Ecatepec* in 2021. This public program of workshops on writing, journalism, photography, and graphic arts provided tools for individuals to tell their own stories, reaffirm their positionality, and challenge the media's editorializing of their perspectives. As a result of this program, *La Vigilante*, a print periodical that collects the work of over twenty women and sexually dissident bodies from Ecatepec and other places understood as peripheral, will launch in the summer of 2023. A public installation that involves placing lit candles in the darkest streets will support the mourning relatives of murdered and missing women, while lighting the way for vulnerable bodies who move through those spaces.

It is true; in certain places, confidence seems lost. During precarious times, we might appeal to our version of god to feel safe; but, we can also appeal to each other, spend time together, share our concerns, and work to create new discourses and ways to defend our loved ones. Although rewriting the statistics seems impossible, holding space for discussion and relationship building with community members becomes very important when safe, public spaces are in short supply. For those bodies whose lives seem denied, confidence is hard to find. But, the worst place to be a woman is also the best scenario to start a fight. We are sure of one thing, our search for freedom and respect will not stop and, for now, this reborn sense of confidence is enough to guide us along the way. "HEEEEEEEEE!" Clomp, clippity, clomp, clomp. "HEEEEEEEEE!"



A group of women and children from Ecatepec submit written letters expressing their problems in exchange for bread, part of *Las penas con pan son menos* with support from Adriana Valdéz's *El Carrito* project. Part of *Toco Madera (Touching Wood)*, 2017. COURTESY MARCE.



Santa Clara Coatitla Drawing Marathon, a workshop with youth community members to translate the testimonials from *Las penas con pan son menos* into graphic forms. Part of *Toco Madera (Touching Wood)*, 2017. COURTESY MARCE.



Left: Community members carry a large wooden stencil to create the coloured sawdust ex-voto rug for La Noche que Nadie Duerme (The Night When No One Sleeps), a festival in honour of the Virgin of Santa Clara. The stencil shows a heart with text that reads: "dolor de corazón" ("heartache"). Part of *Toco Madera (Touching Wood)*, 2017. COURTESY MARCE. Right: The coloured sawdust ex-voto rug for La Noche que Nadie Duerme (The Night When No One Sleeps), a festival in honour of the Virgin of Santa Clara. Part of *Toco Madera (Touching Wood)*, 2017. COURTESY MARCE.

Spanish version available online with translation by Miguel Ángel García Covarrubias.

- 1 Bautista, Nidia. *Surviving One of Mexico's Deadliest Places for Women*. Nacla, February, 4 2019, <https://nacla.org/news/2019/02/04/surviving-one-mexico%E2%80%99s-deadliest-places-women>.
- 2 A multi-modal, public transit station in Mexico City with the majority of routes that head for the city's northern municipalities.
- 3 I say "yet another" because even though the vision is from a dream, it's common that such findings occur in Ecatepec on a daily basis.
- 4 Alberto Nájjar and Juan Paullier, "Ecatepec: cómo es vivir en el peor lugar para ser mujer de todo México," *BBC News Mundo*, 21 September, 2015, recovered on 02/28/2023 from: https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias/2015/09/150831_mexico_femicidios_ecatepec_violencia_mujeres_ip.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Toco madera ("touching wood") is a popular Mexican saying used when invoking a problem you want to move away from.

Local Useful Knowledge: Resources, Research, Initiatives

For this fifteenth *SDUK* issue, we return to an adapted version of the Local Useful Knowledge section first shared in issues 1–6. These profiles connect select contributions within this issue with their local contexts. Here, the local format expands beyond the GTHA to share compelling organizations and initiatives internationally.

An earlier initiative of the LGBTQ Oral History Digital Collaboratory led by Dr. Elspeth Brown (see p. 26), the **Queer Peel Oral History Project** gathers queer and trans experiences growing up, living, and building community in the suburbs. Noting the lack of local LGBTQ2S+ representation beyond Toronto’s Gay Village, Dr. Brown and her undergraduate students at the University of Toronto Mississauga interviewed twenty-five queer and/or trans community members in Peel Region. Launched in 2020, the project focuses on queer organizations including Gay-Straight Alliances in secondary schools, Pride and Positive Space committees, and UTM student organizing. The project can be found online (<https://omeka.utm.utoronto.ca/s/queerpeel/>); the website includes archival images, articles, and video and audio interviews. Like Brown’s current history of Toronto’s Pussy Palace, she outlines the importance of methodology and format in sharing under-represented perspectives: “Oral histories are critical for something that has been relatively undocumented until now. [...] Telling these stories helps to add voices to our collective history, and puts the experiences of queer folk in suburbia on the record.”

Michelle Sylliboy asserts her voice and connects with her ancestral worldview through learning Mi’kmaq language (see p. 17). The **Bear River Language Retreat** is engaged in similar efforts, an all-ages language revitalization initiative administered by Mi’kmaq Kina’matnewey (MK; the Mi’kmaq Education Authority). Facilitated by Beverly Jeddore, a Mi’kmaq Language Technician with the support of two Elders, the annual retreat takes place near Bear River First Nation and approaches language pedagogy through land-based learning and participatory cultural activities. The day opens with ceremony, followed by music and dance lessons, which include teachings about significant percussion instruments in Mi’kmaq culture. Later, participants learn about medicinal plants, and are taught how to use animate and inanimate words—Nemi’k, Nemitu, Nutaq, Nutm—to express “I see” and “I hear,” and describe their encounters and surroundings. Throughout the program, contemporary and traditional games are played including waltes, a pre-Columbian Mi’kmaq

dice game. This retreat engages in an integrated cultural approach to language learning and is one of the many community-based projects that contribute to the strengthening of Indigenous cultural identity as well as the preservation of the Mi’kmaq language.

While Indonesian state authorities tightly control political activism and resist political dissent, artists like Performance RAR (see p. 20) and youth-led environmental actions continue to surface. Since 2022, **The Pandawara Group** has been working to reduce garbage from the waterways in their hometown of Bandung. The five members (who are also roommates) were compelled to respond to water pollution when their house became flooded by urban waste clogging a nearby river. Every day, the group spends five hours picking up trash while documenting their excursions on TikTok. Without the intention of doing so, the group’s social media account (@pandawaragroup) has garnered mass public praise from 6 million followers, earning them the name “Garbage Warriors.” Through their influence, The Pandawara Group has recruited several hundreds of volunteers to join them in cleaning local bodies of water, and has inspired others to conduct local clean-ups.

In line with quori theodor’s experimental practice with cuisine and cultures of dining (see p. 23), **FIG** is a group of food workers in New York City committed to transforming the food system. Founded in 2014 as “Food Issues Group,” FIG works in partnership with community organizations and food businesses to stage programs including farm visits, workshops, catering, and meal deliveries. In 2020, FIG’s emergency relief food program delivered over 70,000 meals. Since then, they have deepened relationships with trans- and sex worker-led organizations with the broader ethos to progress from food access, to security, to sovereignty. To do so, FIG aims to move from meeting community members’ immediate needs to fostering long-term food security by growing the local food economy, and building infrastructure for sustained food distribution. Their ultimate goal—food sovereignty—envisions a thriving environment for marginalized groups centred in culturally relevant, healthful, and ecologically restorative foods. FIG’s conception of food sovereignty also includes equitable distribution of profits from their food businesses, and broad access to healthcare—tying food to an expansive vision of social change.

Amid widespread gender-motivated killings in Mexico, organizers and activists are

publicly visualizing the feminicide crisis. While the Museo Arte Contemporáneo Ecatepec empowers community members to reflect on their grief through public art projects (see p. 28), **Yo te nombro: El Mapa de los Femicidios en México** tracks deaths nationwide to address the gaps in official data. Spearheaded by human rights activist and geographer María Salguero since 2016, this digital map has become “the largest publicly accessible dataset of feminicide in Mexico.”¹ Rooted in feminist data practices, it records information based on findings from news reports, government websites, and crowdsourced tips, such as the victims’ names, ages, relationships to the offender, mode and location of death, judicial case status, as well as connections to organized crime. Used by academics, journalists, and non-profits, Salguero’s interactive map is hosted on Google Maps and available on a dedicated website (femicidiosmx.crowdmap.com) where the public may also submit a case or receive alerts. As bias and underreporting impairs government data on gender violence and feminicide in Mexico, Salguero’s “I name you” project challenges the data by documenting stories that would otherwise go untold.²

“As we partner, I am reminded of the beauty and complexity of human interactions, of the infinite potential that exists within each of us to build relationships grounded in trust and compassion,” writes Ilya Vidrin (see p. 4). As director of the Boston-based applied research platform **Partnering Lab**, Vidrin and his team forefront how being in partnership is fertile ground to advance an embodied ethics of interaction. Combining technology, public health, design, and dance, the Lab’s projects investigate movement and sensory-based methods designed for professional development of empathy, social responsibility, and cultural competence across disciplines. Vidrin also applies these strategies as lead on the **Reciprocity Collaborative**, an interdisciplinary network of creators invested in practice-based research, performance, and community engagement. Through workshops, seminars, and private coaching, as well as site-specific choreographic interventions, the Reciprocity Collaborative supports the wide implementation of embodied processes for collaboration.

¹ Catherine D’Ignazio, ed., *Counting Feminicide: Data Feminism in Action* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2022), Introduction, <https://mitpressonpubpub.mitpress.mit.edu/pub/cf-intro>.

² Ibid. “In 2019, [Salguero] logged 2,900 feminicides, an average of eight killings per day. Meanwhile, the Mexican government logged 1,006.”

Biographies

Dr. **Tasha Beeds** is an Indigenous scholar of nêhiyaw, Scottish-Metis, and Caribbean ancestry. She activates from connected roles: as a mother, kôhkom, creative artist, poet, Water Walker, and a Midewiwin woman from Minweyweywigaaan Lodge out of Roseau River First Nation and Wiikwemkoong Unceded Reserve. Her creative, academic, and grassroots work highlights and celebrates Indigeneity while promoting Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty, as well as care and protection of the Land and Waters based on carrying Indigenous Ancestral legacies forward for the generations to come.

Elsbeth H. Brown is Professor of History at the University of Toronto and Associate Vice-Principal Research at the University of Toronto Mississauga. Her research focuses on queer and trans history, theory of photography, and US capitalism. She is the author of *Work! A Queer History of Modeling* (Duke University, 2019); co-editor of “Queering Photography,” a special issue of *Photography and Culture* (2014); and *Feeling Photography* (Duke, 2014), among other books. She has published in *GLQ*, *TSQ*; *Gender and History*; *American Quarterly*; *Racial History Review*; *Photography and Culture*; *Feminist Studies*; *Aper-ture*; *No More Potlucks*, and others. She is Director of the LGBTQ Oral History Digital Collaboratory, a public digital humanities research initiative focusing on gay, queer, and trans life stories, using new methodologies in digital history, collaborative research, and archival practice. She is Faculty Lead for the Critical Digital Humanities Initiative at the University of Toronto and former President of the Board for The ArQuives.

Quill Christie-Peters is an Anishinaabe visual artist and arts programmer from Treaty 3 currently residing in Thunder Bay. She creates paintings that visualize the love our ancestors have for our bodies, our communities, and our homelands.

Tonatiuh López (born Ecatepec, 1989) is an independent curator, writer, and editor. His practice intends to sum up art and life through poetic gestures and socially engaged art projects. Since 2016, he has been a member of MArCE. Tonatiuh is also an activist for the love and sexual freedom of men who have sex with other men and people who use drugs. He lives and works in Mexico City and Ecatepec.

Performance RAR (Agung Eko Sutrisno, Muhammad Gerly, Agesna Johdan, and Bagong Julianto) is a performance art collective based in Bandung, West Java, Indonesia. Their practice focuses on high-lighting community archives and collective memory in order to complicate a single official history, particularly Dutch colonial artifacts and narratives. They also try to collect historical traces of the development of performance art in Indonesia, and study its current development.

The Post Collective is an autonomous platform founded in 2018 in Belgium by Marcus Bergner, Sawsan Maher, Mirra Markhaeva, and Elli Vassalou: artists, activists, and researchers with diverse legal statuses. The collective provides employment and a community for its members, with generative modes of dialogue and storytelling, informing their experiential approach to art and design. The Post Collective develops creative alternatives to the dominant systems of control and exclusion, facilitating a position to critically rethink and re-conceptualize a shared future. **The Post Film Collective**, in collaboration with Robin Vanbesien, explores a plurivocal film practice guided by collective auto-ethnography. Their ciné-assemblies practice cinema as a form of communal assembly, involving collective knowledge production, mutual exchange, and an ethics of connectedness.

Vania Gonzalez Rodriguez is a Bolivian artist and cultural producer based in London, UK. Vania’s practice explores languages, memory, grief, archives, and how ritual and embodied knowledges can be tools for healing. Vania is a learning curator at the Barbican Centre. **mother tongues** is a UK-based transdisciplinary research-led project applying decolonial, feminist, and queer pedagogies to explore language and identity. Their practice responds to language’s impact on personal and collective empowerment and aims to democratize archival collections. *mother tongues* is formed by Vania, Kaya Birch-Skerritt, and Marina Georgiou; they collaborate with artists, curators, and researchers.

Heather Kai Smith (she/her) is a visual artist and educator from Calgary, Alberta. Drawing and working through its communicative potential is at the root of her practice. Her work references and activates images of collective engagement, histories of communal living strategies, and organized dissent. Smith is currently a Collegiate Assistant Professor at The University of Chicago. Recent independent and collaborative exhibitions include Logan Center Exhibitions (Chicago), Vancouver Art Gallery, Tallinn Art Hall (Estonia), Walter Phillips Gallery (Banff), studio e gallery (Seattle), and Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery (Vancouver).

Alisha Stranges is a queer, community-based, and public humanities scholar, theatre creator, and performer. Stranges is the Research Manager for the Pussy Palace Oral History Project, LGBTQ Oral History Digital Collaboratory. Stranges holds an MA in Women and Gender Studies from the University of Toronto (2020). Her master’s research examined the therapeutic resonances of improvised rhythm tap dance for survivors of psychological trauma. Stranges received a diploma in Theatre Performance from Humber College (2006) and spent a decade devising original plays within Toronto’s queer, independent theatre community. From 2010–15, she was a teaching-artist and co-facilitator for PrideCab at Buddies in

Bad Times Theatre, a training program in collective creation and performance for queer, trans, and gender variant youth. In 2019, she launched the Qu(e)rying Religion anti-Archive Project, which documents over 100 years of programming for life-giving queer spirituality at the University of Toronto.

Three-time award-winning author and interdisciplinary artist **Michelle Sylliboy** (Mi’kmaq/L’nu) was born in Boston, Massachusetts, and raised on her traditional L’nuk territory in We’koqmaq, Cape Breton. Her published collection of photographs and L’nuk hieroglyphic poetry *Kiskajeyi—/Am Ready* won the 2020 Indigenous Voices Award. In 2021, she received the Indigenous Artist Recognition Award from Arts Nova Scotia. In 2022, she was long-listed for the Sobey Art Award. As a PhD candidate in Simon Fraser University’s Philosophy of Education program, she focused on the artistic promotion of her original written komqwej’wikasikl language.

quori theodor / adore is an invitation to self, unlearning as insubordination. their work addresses questions of capital disobedience through the media of food. they are a founding member of Spiral Theory Test Kitchen (along with Precious Okoyomon and Bobbi Menuetz) and Circle Time School (in partnership with Telfar Global and *DIS Magazine*). they have shown work internationally, most recently with the Aspen Art Museum, Performance Space, New York, and Puppets and Puppets Fall 2023 collection. they are the current guest editor of *Mishou Magazine*. they are based in New York City on unceded Lenape territory.

Ilya Vidrin is a multi-disciplinary artist, educator, and researcher at the intersection of performing arts, philosophy, and interactive media. Born into a refugee family, Vidrin’s work considers the complex ethics of human interaction, including the embodiment of empathy, cultural competence, and social responsibility. He completed graduate work in Human Development and Psychology at Harvard University, and a doctorate in Performing Arts at Coventry University. He has been artist-in-residence at Jacob’s Pillow, the National Parks Service, Harvard ArtLab, MIT Media Lab, AREA Gallery, New Museum (NYC), and the Museum of Fine Arts (Boston). Vidrin is Assistant Professor of Creative Practice Research, Core Faculty in the Institute for Experience Robotics, and director of the Partnering Lab, an applied research initiative for investigating embodied ethics at Northeastern University.

Dr. **Jess Watkin** finished her PhD at the University of Toronto’s Centre for Drama, Theatre & Performance Studies. Her research focuses on Disability dramaturgy, care-full approaches to performance creation/production, and Disability-related activism. She is a Blind artist-scholar living in Toronto, who loves making tactile art and showing up as the Disabled artist in many creative spaces to ensure care is prioritized for all.

GLOSSARY

An entangled lexicon for a rapidly changing world

Circle: A round shape with no corners or sides. With this issue's focus on *CONFIDING*, it's a favoured shape used by collaborators to meet and relate—consider opening circles or sharing circles as common forms of getting together (see Beeds and Christie-Peters, p. 22). With their form implying evenness and equality, circles are used in many forms of collaboration to model non-hierarchical working methods (see Post-Film Collective, p. 14; Smith, cover; mother tongues, p. 7).

Confidence: Being assured and trusting, or trustworthy. Like the issue's title, *CONFIDING*, confidence is a trait forged among individuals and groups, requiring maintenance and renewal (see also **trust**; **risk**). It might be expressed interpersonally as a set of social cues (see Vidrin, p. 4, which highlights the cultural specificity of actions and gestures), or across a community as a shared sentiment (see López, p. 28, on restoring confidence through public art practice). At a larger scale, confidence is quantified to underpin market transactions and probability models (Cochrane, *SDUK01*).

Dramaturgy is the study of composition and representation of drama on the theatrical stage; can also refer to the practice of adapting a text for the stage. Usually distinct from playwriting, dramaturgy encompasses all the onstage elements that make up a play, including script, choreography, and scenography. Departing from conventional theatre production, Jess Watkin (p. 10) outlines how disability dramaturgy further broadens the bounds of theatre, considering how care practices can be extended “onstage, backstage, and in the audience.”

Dream: A series of images, ideas, emotions, and sensations that occur in the mind. Whether asleep or awake, dreaming can be conceived as a way of pushing the boundaries of feeling, thinking, and being. Dreaming is an important practice across many social, cultural, spiritual, and political contexts; and it often serves as a vision to spur action. For *SDUK* contributors, dreams demonstrate the power of the imagination to transform and liberate (Watkin, p. 10; López, p. 28; Kelley, *SDUK14*).

Intimacy: A description for close connection; or a euphemism for sex. Can be experienced in private or public, as described by López (p. 28), who asked participants to share and visualize problems faced by their community. For Vidrin (p. 4), intimacy is fostered on the stage and in social interactions through mutual respect, transcending cultural and linguistic boundaries. See *SDUK06* for a definition of intimacy as a way of being grounded in meaningful exchanges (Ricco, p. 15); or McArthur and Zavitsanos in *Take Care* whose exchange considers intimacy in disability care.

Kino is a prefix usually appended to allude to cinema or filmmaking, which derives from the Kinetoscope, an early motion picture viewing device. The Greek words *kineto* (“movement”) and *scopos* (“viewing”) gave this device its name, which has since been abridged to *kino*, and expanded to include cinema of all kinds. The Post-Film Collective (p. 14) refers to “kino-eyes” as a way of viewing the world through cinema; for them, the kino-eye metaphorizes collaboration in filmmaking, where multiple viewpoints must converge to create a whole, or diverge to create fragmented perspectives.

Used to convey rumination on a topic, **meditation** commonly refers to exercise(s) to attain mental clarity and a state of calm. Guided or self-directed, alone or in groups (see Smith, cover and p. 11), meditation may comprise one or more techniques, including: breathwork, stillness, silence, or repetition. Part of a long cultural history particularly rooted in Buddhism and Hinduism, meditation has spread from its spiritual roots to many everyday uses often untethered from its origins, such as app-driven mindfulness or as a corporate tool. As an oral history methodology, Stranges (p. 26) offers guided meditation as a tool for participants to access memories (see **somatic**). Meditation or mindfulness scores are shared across the *SDUK*, including Crawley in *13*, and Su-Feh in *11*.

Morality: A set of beliefs about how individuals in a society should behave, typically rooted in notions of right and wrong. Morals might be firm or malleable, unstated or codified, but their implementation affects legal and carceral systems, as well as everyday norms. In the past and present, morals shape public reactions to norms of gender, sexuality, race, class, and disability. In the Global North, the dominant forms of morality are deeply tied to Christianity and Enlightenment-era belief systems, which are reflected in law and policy. This issue shares responsive and alternative bases for morality, such as those developed from performing arts (Vidrin, p. 4) or Indonesian oral traditions (Performance RAR, p. 20).

Myth: A narrative that suggests or explains a cultural concept, such as an origin story, spiritual belief, or natural phenomenon. *SDUK* contributors discuss myths as methods of individual or collective world building; developing and strengthening kinship (see Post-Film Collective, p. 14); preserving and revitalizing language, rituals, and traditions (see Chiang, *SDUK08*); and protecting all life and our ecologies (see Performance RAR, p. 20). It can also mean a widespread but untrue or erroneous story or belief (Cochrane, *SDUK02*; Emmelhainz, *SDUK09*); in some cases, charges of “myth” have been used to deride or delegitimize cultural beliefs.

Negotiation: Conferring with others to come to an agreement or resolution, often involving a difference in opinion. Its Latin etymology gives the meaning “to carry on business”; it also suggests navigating in-

terpersonal conflict, or in Jess Watkin's case (p. 10), the non-negotiable terms over losing her eyesight. On negotiating as an embodied practice, see Vidrin (p. 4) whose choreography invites dancers to respond to their partners' movements, and theodor (p. 23) who reframes sharing a meal as an experience of negotiation.

Reservoir: A large body of water, often caused by human intervention such as damming (see **hydroelectric power**). Dams often pose social, public health, and environmental issues: disruption of animal migration, natural habitat loss, creation of breeding grounds for disease vectors, as well as resettlement and community displacement (see Performance RAR, p. 20; *Take Care*; Robertson, *SDUK04*). See Chuang, *SDUK13* on the parallels between damming and the creation of the Indian Reserve system as spaces characterized by barriers, restrictions, and enforcement.

From Greek meaning “of the body,” **somatic** describes practices that support self-reflection and healing through embodiment. Working from therapeutic or educational frameworks, somatic practitioners often use movement-based techniques, including breath, dance, or exercises that foster mind-body connection (see Smith, p. 11; **meditation**; **bodymind**). While Brown and Stranges employ somatic attunement techniques (p. 26), Vidrin's partnering studies ask dancers to explore their somatic boundaries (p. 4). See also Doty in *SDUK12* who foregrounds decolonization and gender-diversity in somatic sex education.

Tactility: the physical and sensorial response to stimuli, which turns external forces into sensations. Originating at the surface of the body and not necessarily visible from the outside (see Vidrin, p. 4), tactile encounters can also evoke emotional responses, such as empathy from a warm embrace (see also **intimacy**; **somatic**). For Jess Watkin (p. 10), artworks made available to touch are a tenet of disability-minded art practice (see Neurocultures Collective, *SDUK09*, on tactility in filmmaking).

Translation shifts words or text from one language to another. Often combining linguistic expertise, interpretation, and creativity, translation is an expansive field of study and practice (see mother tongues, p. 7). Translators navigate each language in use with the author's voice(s), style, and intentions, anticipated reader(s), and broader context. Throughout the *SDUK*, translation resurfaces as an important bridge for communicating interculturally, as when texts have been offered in two languages (López, p. 28; Sylliboy, p. 17; Oyola-Santiago, *SDUK14*); or when non-translatable words have been included, with approximated definitions (see **Aabawe**; **Matria**; **Nibi**; **Ode**).

Wi'temsaïw is the Mi'kmaq text (Eskasoni dialect, Smith-Francis orthography) for “you say to yourself.” Used in Sylliboy's poetry (p. 17), alongside Mi'kmaq hieroglyphs, to describe the interrelation of self, world, and creation.