

Curating Time
Contingency, Anachronism, Flirtation

Presents:

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I hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own.
Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Paula L Zambrano
London, UK, 30 April 2021.

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Abstract

This thesis is about curating and temporal paradoxes, resistances and perversions in relation to contingency, anachronism and flirtation. It is a theoretical and practical investigation, which considers the poetic and political potential of these three temporalities, incorporating them as mode of curatorial research. Contingency in institutional management processes, anachronism in curatorial narratives, flirtation in encounters in exhibitions, are regularly perceived as accidents to be evaded, outdated premises, or trivial and insignificant social behaviours. They are disregarded by dominant orders because they detach from control procedures, normativity and systems of power. Nevertheless, they remain in the domain of power even as their opposites. My project investigates the conceptual counter-power of these temporalities to intervene with time-scales and agendas that frame and define the concept of temporality in curating. It explores critical and creative strategies to suspend, anachronize and pervert material and symbolic orders inscribed in curatorial chronological apparatuses. The proposal is to re-create the suspended state of Being and not-Being of contingency, to re-enact the ontological out-of-jointness of anachronism, to re-stage the oscillation of flirtatious encounters, thus to materialise places of encounter between theory, art, and people. It intends to transfer the discursive significations of these temporalities from avoided, reproved and diminished domains into intensified and embellished written and exhibited embodied metaphors of time. The intention is to flirt with the possibility of giving life to them for short moments, blinks or disjunctures of chronological time.

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Introduction

Outline of Introduction

This introduction is structured in six sections.

Section I, *The Orders of Time*, introduces this research by connecting the orders of time in curatorial processes of production, documentation and circulation of art to the main argument of this thesis.

Section II, *The Discursive Matter of Time*, presents the theoretical basis of the main argument of this thesis, linked to discursive chronological meanings inscribed in curatorial processes of temporalisation of art.

Section III, *Contingency, Anachronism, Flirtation*, announces with more detail the key aims of this project and the reasons for dedicating this PhD to the three selected temporalities, the methodology employed, and the question planted in the core of this research.

Section IV, *Timely Curatorial Disruptions*, incorporates a selection of historical creative initiatives that have integrated contingent, anachronistic and flirtatious situations, premises or means in their practices; this is accompanied with a contemporary discussion about temporality in curatorial practice and theory.

Section V, *PhD Time-Scales and Agendas*, restates the aims of this thesis and how these will be developed through the three forthcoming chapters.

Section VI, *Time Is the Matter and Substance of this Thesis*, clarifies what I mean by ‘curating time.’ This ends with a reiteration of the main intention of this investigation.

I. The Orders of Time

In curatorial planning procedures time is outlined through schedules and deadlines. It is used to manage and organise events and serves as an instrument to plan the execution of specific tasks. It is also a mechanism to accomplish action points and a resource to achieve precise goals. Under the administrative scheme of exhibition-making, time measures, manages and arranges the occurrence of events and activities. It is conveyed as hours for team meetings, afternoons for studio visits, and time-tables devised for installation processes. This is a target-oriented and quantitative type of time, appearing as working hours in contracts, institutional yearly budgets, dates in briefs and proposals, as well as personal calendars and institutional programmes.

Time is also stored in the archives of museums, galleries, and artists and curators' portfolios and websites; it registers as paperwork of past activities, timelines, minutes of meetings and e-mail exchanges. In the documentation processes of curatorial work, time does not refer to the planning of the future but to the memory and protection of the past. It alludes to projects and realisations that have already been achieved, which build a CV, a career, a portfolio, a profile, list and categorise the provenance of acquisitions and collections.

Time is furthermore framed in the varying opening hours of institutions or locations, and in the three months, one week, or ten year duration of exhibitions. It is experienced in the length of an eight-minute performance, the forty minute interval of a film screening, the various times and locations of a virtual gesture, or the more static timings for displaying a painting or a steel sculpture. This type of time is also restrained in the number of hours devoted to the visit, the days spent in educational workshops, and the evening of the opening reception. Time, in curatorial processes of circulation, unfolds in the layouts for thinking, days for talks and discussions, weeks for seminars and symposia, afternoons for special events such as presentations and book launches.

In the immediacy of these time-scales and agendas, curating operates in orders of time, and these orders have themselves symbolic orders—they carry meanings. Systems for administrating, classifying, and quantifying time serve as useful simplifications and have practical functions. They organise and give order to our activities and social life. But they are

no more than arbitrary arrangements. They are the product of a historically contingent amendment of the concept of temporality whereby time operates as a discipline and control mechanism. With the nineteenth century's advent of new social developments, industrialisation and urbanisation, time became homogenised as the ruling unitary system of the clock. Seasonal systems of time measurement with varying periods, such as sundials, candle clocks, sandglasses, oil lamps, water clocks, were replaced by the precisions and rigours of the mechanical clock. This served to regiment working hours in factories and coordinate new communication and transportation systems. Our contemporary daily temporalised routines are the result of a disciplined and controlled notion of temporality, whereby human time is calculated according to labour and productivity. The changes of seasons, the movement of the stars and planets, the alterations of the days by nights are structured and represented as time-zones imposed by standardised global time from Greenwich. Furthermore, electricity elongates the light of our days; our internal rhythms and metabolism, sleep cycles, chemical and hormonal cycles are affected and conditioned by the virtual clocks of our computers and mobile phones. Technologies such as screens and other devices of connectivity and manipulation of natural time yield an artificial embodied experience of time that encourages us to work, perform, to 'like' and be 'liked,' to consume, participate and to produce more. The concept of temporality that we perform and embody in our daily lives is the result of these and various other historical contingencies; they order our activities and ordain our minds and bodies.¹

¹ I am taking the expression 'historical contingencies' from Michel Foucault, which he uses in his theory of genealogy linked to the accidental. Foucault explains that origin is conventionally understood as the place of truth, and this ignores that a proliferation of errors and countless accidents that can be found behind that truth. Thus, by 'historical contingencies,' I am extending Foucault's investigation, referring to the randomness of events that formulate, validate and establish historical truths and institute chronological orders (Michel Foucault, 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,' 81. 'The Order of Discourse,' 48-77).

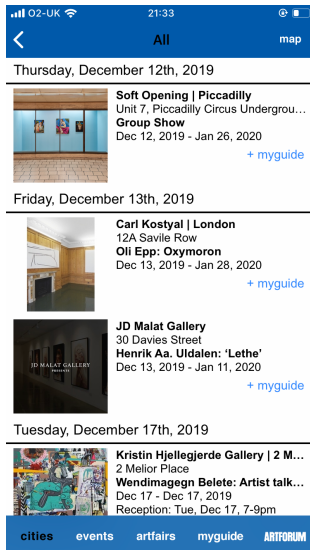


Fig. 1. Artforum app. Art calendar, openings in London (screenshot from my mobile phone)

The effects of such experience of time reach out to curatorial activity. The concept of temporality performed in curatorial practices is confined by a series of contemporary and anachronistic disciplinary and control systems. These systems execute their authority through simultaneous articulations of material and symbolic orders. Project deadlines, institutional archives and opening hours in exhibitions are not only forms of managing, documenting and distributing time, they also pronounce ideologies of time. They are part of wider apparatuses, which I am terming ‘chronological apparatuses.’ These are, in their matter and substance, confined by structures of signification and validation of meanings. The temporal orders that curators obey not only serve practical purposes, they are also material expressions of ideological discourses.

By using the noun ‘apparatuses’ I am quoting Giorgio Agamben’s definition of ‘apparatuses,’ which he defines as ‘anything that has in some way the capacity to capture, orient, determine, intercept, model, control, or secure the gestures, behaviours, opinions, or discourses of living beings.’² Parallel, I am employing the adjective ‘chronological’ as a metaphor, connecting to its etymological root, which alludes to destructive energy of the Greek god Titan Chronos. I am referring to the controlled and disciplined chronological time of the clocks and calendars of our present era. More particularly, to the capitalised, repressive and normative type of time whose structural and ideological orders anxiously and aggressively capture, orient, determine, intercept, model, control, or secure the minds and bodies of contemporary living beings.

² Giorgio Agamben, ‘What Is an Apparatus?’, 2.

In this PhD, I argue that the concept of temporality in curating is framed and devised by material and symbolic orders articulated by chronological apparatuses. These orders inscribe capitalised, repressive and normative meanings into curatorial concepts, practices and experiences of time. They are the material reality of dominant discourses, which disregard non-synchronous temporalities to their time-scales and agendas.

Consequently, in this thesis, I propose to transform disregarded potentialities in contingency, anachronism and flirtation into practical and theoretical strategies to suspend, anachronize and pervert chronological time-scales and agendas. I thus intend to awaken their counter-power—their paradoxes, resistances and perversions—and in doing so revise and re-frame other instances for curators to think, act and embody the conceptual matter of time.³

³ Section V in this introduction provides full definitions of the three key terms. Prior to this, in order to help the reader, it is relevant to give a basic understanding of them. In addition, definitions of paradoxes, resistances and perversions will follow.

By 'contingency' I speak of the capacity of something (a thing, a thought, an event) to be true and at the same time, not to be true—a Being that can both Be and not-Be. It produces a suspension. This definition is based on Giorgio Agamben's definition of contingency, which is itself based in Aristotle's definition of contingency. With regards to 'anachronism,' I am referring to an embodied temporality which is by definition out-of-joint; it is the mind and body experience of disarticulation with regards to chronological apparatuses. It causes a disjuncture. I am defining 'flirtation' as a playful gesture of eroticism which consists in swinging desire back and forth through an oscillation amidst possession and non-possession. It yields an oscillation. (Giorgio Agamben, 'Bartleby, or On Contingency,' 261. Aristotle, 'Metaphysics,' 1653. Giorgio Agamben, 'What Is the Contemporary?' 40-41. Georg Simmel, 'Filosofía de la coquetería,' 8.)

The term 'paradoxes' is taken from Gilles Deleuze; I am referring to zones of indistinction, indiscernibility, or ambiguity—the affirmation of two opposite senses or directions at the same time. This term also comes from Giorgio Agamben. I am denoting the inner tension and mannerism of the aporia or contradiction. The designation 'resistances' comes from Michel Foucault. By this I mean counter-conducts, anti-authoritarian struggles, subversive strategies to power structures and active forms of critique to systems of domination. The term 'perversions' is also borrowed from Foucault, as well as from queer theory. I am alluding to modes of thought and experience which are marginal to authorised discourses acting as disruptions to normative narratives, dominant and hegemonic regimes. They are dissident to politically and intellectually conservative ideologies and practices. Michel Foucault utilises this term as a form of critique to juridical conceptions of power, to designate forms of sexuality outside the strict economy of reproduction. Based on Foucault's insights, queer theory has seized the term perversion to designate both the type of sexuality that does not align with heteronormative schedules, as well as rubrics of resistance to specific formations of power (Gilles Deleuze, 'Bartleby; or, The Formula,' 78. Gilles Deleuze, 'First Series of Paradoxes of Pure Becoming,' 2. Michel Foucault, 'The Will to Knowledge,' 92-98. Mona Lilja, 'The Politics of Time and Temporality in Foucault's Theorisation of Resistance: Ruptures, Time-Lags And Decelerations,' 419. Michel Foucault, 'The Will to Knowledge,' 36). Tim Dean, 'The Frozen Countenance of the Perversions,' 94-95).

II. The Discursive Matter of Time

The conceptual framework of this thesis is grounded in Michel Foucault's theoretical legacy of control and power, where he uses the term 'discourse' to indicate a historically contingent system that exercises power within a social order and imposes particular norms and categories for validating truth and knowledge.⁴ Foucault traces a wide and complex body of thought in which the concepts of 'discipline,' 'discourse,' 'subjectivity' and 'power' constitute some of his main lines of argument. Although he has been categorised as a post-Structuralist thinker, he refused this label. His theoretical legacy is considered an academic field of study in its own right. I am supporting my argument through his critique of the effects of technologies of time-discipline in the conceptualisation and materialisation of time, thereby transferring his materialist approach to discourse and power into the curatorial realm.⁵

For this thesis, the key argument that articulates Foucault's theory of the materiality of discourse is the power of *caesurae* as that which can break established orders and disperse the subject into a plurality of possible positions and functions.⁶ While the matter of temporality is relatively peripheral in his extensive body of work, he addresses modes by which technologies of time-discipline employ signs, meanings or symbols as forms of power.⁷ These technologies build the machinery for capitalising the time of individuals, disciplining social actions, as well as bodies and their subjective experiences.⁸ They define

⁴ Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse,' 48-77.

⁵ Foucault shares with the materialist line of thought the account of all social practices as transitory, and all intellectual formations as indissociably connected with power and social relations. It is pertinent to refer to materialism because I am addressing material discursive significations and structural forms of ideology inscribed in curatorial processes of temporalisation, and this branch of philosophy considers the interrelation of materiality and ideology and its effects in the formation of power dynamics, as well as the struggles around the economy of time and its unfolding. Relevant thinkers include Karl Marx's 'time-wage,' a critique to the capitalisation of time. Walter Benjamin's 'homogeneous empty time,' the empty cyclical order of substitution and restitution of economic and cultural commodities. Louis Althusser's 'ideological state apparatuses,' the systems that reinforce the control of dominant ideologies and reproduce production relations as a lasting process. David Harvey, correspondence between representation, objective time and meaning, and distributions of social power ((Mark Olsen, 'Foucault and Marxism: rewriting the theory of historical materialism,' 454. Karl Marx, 'Chapter 20: Time-Wages,' 683-684. Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History,' 325-261. Louis Althusser, *On the Reproduction of Capitalism: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*. David Harvey, 'The Experience of Space and Time,' 216-217).

⁶ Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse,' 69.

⁷ Mona Lilja, 'The Politics of Time And Temporality In Foucault's Theorisation Of Resistance: Ruptures, Time-Lags And Decelerations,' 428.

⁸ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish, The Birth of the Prison*, 152-157. Foucault refers to Edward Palmer Thompson, who makes an analysis of time-discipline procedures in the European eighteenth and nineteenth

schemas of behaviour, and register control through working hours in institutions as well as self-organising temporal schemes of self-regulation.⁹

Although Foucault's model, formulated from the European disciplinary societies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, might be examined as 'anachronistic' to our contemporary multicultural context and society, it is nevertheless relevant to my argument as to today's curatorial discourse.¹⁰ If curating is conceived as a temporalised form of speech and a spatialised form of communication; if it is practiced as an active rhetorical expression whereby ideologies are reproduced; if exhibitions and curatorial projects are thought of as material physical embodiments of discursive meanings; if they are experienced as a sum of uttered and embodied knowledges between art, places, theory and people, then Foucault's acknowledgment of the material effects of discourse in the formulation, validation and imposition of knowledge and ideology remains pressingly relevant.¹¹

According to Foucault, in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and re-distributed by a certain number of procedures. Their role is to ward off the powers and dangers of discourse, to gain mastery over its chance events, and to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality. He explains that there is an anxiety about what discourse is in its material reality, an anxiety about its transitory existence, which is destined to be effaced, but rendering to time-scales and agendas that do not belong to them.¹² Technologies of time-discipline, such as the ordering of temporalities in curatorial processes of production, documentation and circulation of art, secure the effectiveness of speech and their effect on those to whom it is inflicted. They are made by arbitrary divisions around

century (Edward Palmer Thompson, *Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism, Past and Present*, 82-83).

⁹ Foucault refers to the self-disciplinary time-aspects in the ancient use of *hypomnemanata* or notebooks (Michel Foucault, *Subjectivity and Truth*, 87). E. P. Thomson also considers issues of time-discipline in self-regulatory procedures in the eighteenth century, which have perpetuated among self-employed individuals (Edward Palmer Thompson, *Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism, Past and Present*, 70-73).

¹⁰ Metaphorical approaches to philosophy and the referral to history in the elaboration and explanation of his arguments were strategies by which Foucault addressed contemporary reality.

¹¹ This relates to curatorial discussions about discursivity in museums and exhibitions in relation to their inherent ideologies and material rhetorics. Other authors have used Foucault's concept of 'discourse' as point of departure for their own arguments and discourses. Mick Wilson, Mieke Bal, Paul O' Neill, Bruce W. Ferguson and Dorothee Richter, for example, look into the rhetoric imbricated in institutions and curatorial projects, considering them as discourses, utterances, statements and forms of material speech (Mick Wilson, 'Curatorial Moments and Discursive Turns,' 202. Mieke Bal, 'The Discourse of the Museum,' 201-218. Paul O' Neill, 'The Curatorial Turn: From Practice to Discourse,' 15-16. Bruce W. Ferguson 'Exhibition Rhetorics, Material Speech and Utter Sense,' 175-190. Dorothee Richter, 'Exhibitions as Cultural Practices of Showing – Pedagogics,' 48-51).

¹² Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse,' 52.

historical contingencies, which are modifiable and in perpetual displacement, but they are supported by a whole system of institutions, subjective and structural ideologies, which impose and renew them and act in a constraining and sometimes violent way.¹³

The orders of time performed in institutional or self-regulated curatorial rhythms and dynamics in order to invest, save and spend time are not only control mechanisms leading towards efficient orderings of time, they furthermore articulate discursive orders. These orders respond to anxious and aggressive structures of power and desire which in turn define the rules and categories for validating and ordering the truth, knowledge and experience of time. They also disregard other possibilities of temporalising speech that might disrupt their power and authority. Therefore, the concept of temporality performed in curatorial practices is the quantifiable functioning of certain ideologies. It is the measured imposition of supposed ‘truths,’ and the calculated material reality of discourses whereby the course of other possible forms of speech are diverted. In doing so their latent flows of meaning are forced to stand still, and their potential streams of knowledge remain violently barred, according to time-scales and agendas that do not belong to them. Under Foucauldian terms, therefore, the concept of temporality in curating operates as discursive orders imposed by chronological apparatuses. It indicates forms of governance. The material power of these orders is symbolically implied in the immediacy of working hours in contracts, institutional archives and opening hours of exhibitions.¹⁴

¹³ Ibid, 52-53.

¹⁴ Extending Foucauldian thought, with a direction towards queer and feminist studies, and with relation to the studies of temporality and biopower, Elizabeth Freeman uses the term ‘chrononormativity’ to define the confinement of time in the organisation of individual human bodies toward maximum productivity. Freeman argues that schedules, calendars, time zones, and even wristwatches inculcate forms of temporal experience of asymmetrical power that seem natural to those whom they privilege (Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds Queer Temporalities*, 3). Broader descriptions of chrononormativity and the modes by which it forms bodies and subjects appear in Pierre Bourdieu’s discussion of habitus—a social group’s cultivated set of gestural and attitudinal dispositions i.e. the rhythms of gift exchange—whereby cultural competence and thus belonging itself are matters of timing, of coming to inhabit a culture’s expectations about the temporal lapses between receiving and giving such that they seize power (Elizabeth Freeman, ‘Introduction,’ 160-161. Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 127-128). Dana Luciano uses the term ‘chronobiopolitics,’ or ‘the sexual arrangement of the time of life’ of entire populations. This means that the process extends beyond individual anatomies to encompass the management of entire populations. Individual bodies are synchronized not only with one another but also with larger temporal schemas of experience which include the state and other institutions, such as representational apparatuses (Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds Queer Temporalities*, 1-3).

III. Contingency, Anachronism, Flirtation

This thesis is a curatorial investigation of temporal paradoxes, resistances and perversions in contingency, anachronism and flirtation. It considers the conceptual complexities of these three notions and practices their political and poetic meanings. I am presenting an academic text alongside re-presentations of exhibitions and projects, as expressions of conceptualising and practicing these three concepts as forms of curatorial research. Through these three interventions, this project is an attempt to suspend, to anachronize and to pervert ruling systems of time in curation. It is an effort to disguise their norms so as to prevent them, to invert their ideologies and redirect them against those who had initially imposed them. It is thus an attempt to overcome the rules of power through its very own rules.¹⁵

This project seeks to insert the conceptual counter-power of the three temporalities into time-scales and agendas that frame and define the concept of temporality in curating. My aim is to suspend, to anachronize and to pervert values and functions that are both physically displayed and symbolically implied in the most pragmatic curatorial procedures, so as to reveal ways by which their inscribed rules of discourse disregard other legitimate claims to the interpretation and experience of time. Contingency in institutional management processes, anachronism in curatorial narratives and flirtation in encounters in exhibitions, are unusual appoints of confrontation with dominant orders of time. They are peripheral portals in an antagonism to those who organise the meaning of time. They are strange access doors in a process of insubordination towards those who presume to possess the authority of the curatorial knowledge of time.¹⁶ These three counter-temporalities are three closely related forms of resistance that rhetorically and operatively do not submit to the structural and ideological hierarchies that validate curatorial discourses and regulate the rhythms of exhibitions and

¹⁵ Michel Foucault, 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,' 86. Here Foucault is not solely calling for the reversal of the relationship of forces, the usurpation of power, or the appropriation of a vocabulary turned against those who had once used it. Rather, he is calling for the formation of subjectivity from within the randomness of events that renew themselves and against the haphazard of conflicts that consolidate historical hegemonies. In other words, he is calling for recognitions and attributions to subjectivity from inside and in opposition to forms of domination.

¹⁶ I am using the phrases 'unusual entries,' 'peripheral portals' and 'strange access doors' as figures of speech. They are synonyms, there is no difference between them. What I am trying to express is that these three types of temporality are disregarded by dominant orders, but they emerge from within and counter chronological apparatuses. In other words, they are avoided, reprovved and diminished but nevertheless they remain inside the realm of power as its opposites. For this reason, they can strategically intervene its orders and forms of control from within. As a consequence, they can 'open up' new possibilities, 'unlock' unknown potentials, and/or 'give access' to other dimensions in curatorial conceptions, practices and experiences of time.

other temporalised modes of display. I am instrumentalising these three temporalised concepts as curatorial strategies to overthrow material and symbolic orders that chronological apparatuses dictate.

The reasons behind my argument are political and intellectual, they are also at once personal and professional. Contingency, anachronism and flirtation are perceived as accidents to be evaded, irrelevant or outdated premises, trivial or insignificant social behaviours. They do not fit, adjust or concord with homogeneous hierarchies, conventional norms and with the authorities that order curatorial time. They are seen as something to be hidden, excluded and repressed because they detach from control procedures, normativity and systems of power. They confront curators with displacement, confusion, discomfort, risk, disorientation, lack of straight direction, vulnerability and ambiguity, but they also link curators to unknown potentialities.

These three interventions are theoretical-practical gateways to a process of re-writing curatorial knowledges, and re-constructing the relationship we have with time. Moments of interruption, out-of-jointness, and oscillation may detach us from the orders that are foreign to our internal temporalities and thus re-shape the temporality we inhabit as living beings. I am thus transferring, intensifying and embellishing the avoided, repressed and diminished potentialities of the three notions in order to suspend, anachronize and pervert capitalised, repressive and normative curatorial conceptions, practices and experiences of time.

By using the verbs ‘transferring, intensifying and embellishing,’ I am alluding to Friedrich Nietzsche’s interpretation of ‘truth,’ which he defines as ‘a movable host of metaphors; a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished.’¹⁷ I am suggesting to expose an exaggerated version of ‘truth:’ to project a poetic approach to the formulation and exhibition of curatorial discourses. I am conceiving the curatorial project as a projection: a metaphor, something rhetorically stretched out or thrown forth. This involves the transfer from one place to the other, but it also implies the need to bear or to carry (to sustain or to support). I am thinking about my projects not only as material and symbolic curated time-based discourses, but also, and above all, as written and exhibited embodied metaphors of time.

¹⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, ‘On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense,’ 80.

This is a ‘theorypractice’ curated exploration. My methodology involves the incorporation of the theoretical meaning of contingency, anachronism and flirtation into practice and the integration of their practical implications into their theorisation. I am employing a curatorial method that merges thinking and doing as equal research methods. It combines the formulation of theoretical ideas and the production (or non-production) of curatorial projects as a single process of investigation. My intention, with this mode of experimentation, is to re-create contingency, to re-enact anachronism and to re-stage flirtation as theoretical and practical arguments.¹⁸ I am regarding these interventions as thematic designators and operative conceptualisations. My attempt is to materialise and to exhibit them as modes of curatorial thought and action.

The question rooted in this research is how to conceive, how to practice and how to experience these three temporalities in the curatorial register. The question flourishing in this research is what arguments can these concepts disclose and perform in written and exhibited forms.

IV. Timely Curatorial Disruptions

My proposal to investigate these three notions emerged as a reaction to the chronological orders of curatorial temporalities but also as an outcome of emergent discontinuous artistic and curatorial temporalities that subvert the rhythms and dynamics measured by clocks and calendars. These other non-synchronous practices also correspondingly yet oppositionally participate in the framing and defining of the concept of temporality in curating. Historical contingencies can be found in figures of the history of art and curating that explored various possibilities of reordering time—as a concept of investigation, medium of material experimentation and theme of representation. These figures challenged the conventional, concrete and straight configuration of time and space in exhibitions and other curatorial display strategies.¹⁹ In the following section, I am enlisting a selection of past practices that

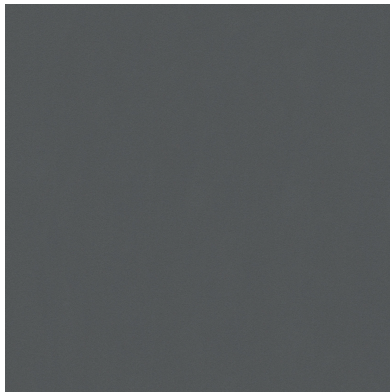
¹⁸ The use of the prefix ‘re-’ suggests a transposition and a repetition, a process where past, present and future are constantly juxtaposed.

¹⁹ I am considering Raymond Williams’s notion of ‘emergent’ cultural movements; which is the site for dialectical opposition to the dominant—or the promise of overcoming, transgressing, evading, renegotiating or bypassing the dominant. It comprises innovative practices that contain an element of implicit or explicit critical

might help me illustrate this point. This selection is narrowed to examples of creative initiatives that have used contingent, anachronistic and flirtatious situations, premises and/or means as research, production and exhibitionary approaches.

I am arranging this highly subjective selection of past artistic and curatorial practices in chronological order, with a starting point at the height of modernism, that is, right at the moment when taxonomic and chronological efforts occupied dominating criteria in the museum model and exhibitionary canons. As an endpoint, I am considering a moment in time which has been periodised as the beginning of the ‘contemporary’ era. I am presenting these examples below with an improvised system of classification, similar to the ones traditionally used in institutional labels or archives. It includes technical data, such as date, exhibition project or title, location, description, author and a ‘category’ section. The ‘category’ section serves to identify whether the selected creative practice has suspended, anachronized or perverted chronological time. Due to various formal, conceptual and methodological associations and connections between these practices, these categorical designations may overlap. This demonstrates the close interrelations, juxtapositions and cohesions between the three counter-temporalities.²⁰

Fig. 2.



dissent, producing new meanings, values, and interrelationships. Raymond Williams, ‘Dominant, Residual, and Emergent,’ 121-126. See also Paul O’Neill, ‘The Emergence of Curatorial Discourse from Late 1960’s to the Present,’ 26.

²⁰ I am aware that if my intention is to suspend, anachronize, and pervert dominant narratives about curating and time, then to present these past projects chronologically and using traditional systems of categorisation is contradictory. However, I am deliberately using these conventional forms of representation with the intention to highlight the paradoxes intrinsic to these concepts, but also with the aim to flirt with the argument that if the curatorial experience and conception of time is always inside and cannot escape hegemonic orders of time, resistances ought to be formulated according to the same time-scales and agendas ordered by chronological apparatuses. In other words, this symbolic arrangement alludes to the idea that resistances are situated along with power, but, contrary and contradictorily, they arose from within power as their irreducible opposites.

Started in 1901. Unfinished at the time of the author's death in 1929.

Atlas Mnemosyne.

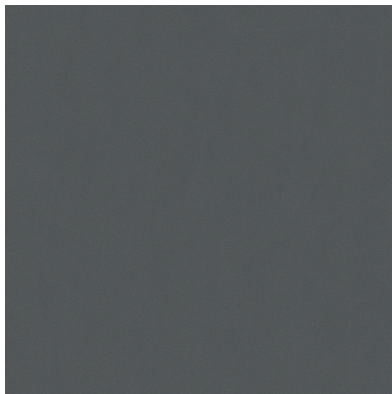
Hamburg, Germany / Rome, Italy.

Aby Warburg.

Based around formal affinities and subjective association of contents, Warburg collected, selected and arranged a collage of memory images in a non-chronological fashion. His methodology unfolded through his own contingent metonymic, intuitive logic, settling new relationships between images, history and time. By juxtaposing images from discrepant historical periods, Warburg re-creates a subjective history, based in his own experience of the past which takes the form of constellations of anachronistic images (a dialectical montage of images brought into dialogue 'beyond all differences of their times').²¹

Anachronization.²²

Fig. 3.



1942

Mile String.

551 Madison Avenue, New York.

Marcel Duchamp

Mile String was as a temporal and spatial subversion, a metaphor of dead time, an exhibition suspended in premature senescence, keeping the spectator away from the works of art. With the characteristic surrealist playful attitude, this gesture produced a suspension of the

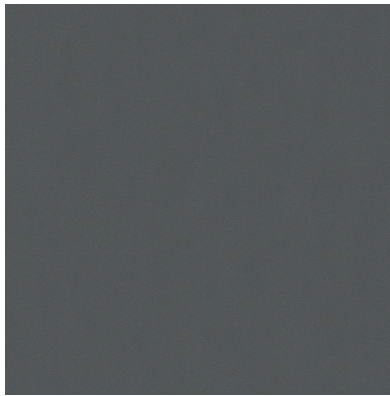
²¹ Christopher D. Johnson, *Mnemosyne, Meanderings through Aby Warburg's Atlas*. Jacob Lund, *Anachrony, Contemporaneity, and Historical Imagination*, 27.

²² Similar projects include Frederick Kieseler's *Exhibition of the New Theatre Technique* at Konzerthaus, Vienna, 1924; Alexander Dorner's experiments in the Landesmuseum in Hannover in the 1920s; André Malraux's *Musée Imaginaire*, 1947-52; Lina Bo Bardi's use of concrete-and-glass to hang the collection of the Museu de Arte de São Paulo, 1970; Rudi Fuchs' rehangs of the Van Abbemuseum collection in Eindhoven in 1983.

temporality of the exhibition by obstructing the possibility of experiencing it. Furthermore, it perverted the conventional presentation of art by interrupting its traditionally contemplative presentation, consigned to the spectator looking at objects hanging on the wall.²³

Suspension.²⁴

Fig. 4.



1950-60

An Anecdoted Topography of Chance

France

Daniel Spoerri

Investigating memory, chance and participation, Spoerri mapped a contingent display of objects on tables, anecdotes based on past interactivity, group dinners, flirtations, and other relational, non-product-oriented experiences in specific time-frames. Spoerri playfully perverts conventional tempos for artistic production and consumption dictated in the habitual art gallery, by focusing on the experiential, social and the moment, and joining art to everyday life.²⁵

Perversion.²⁶

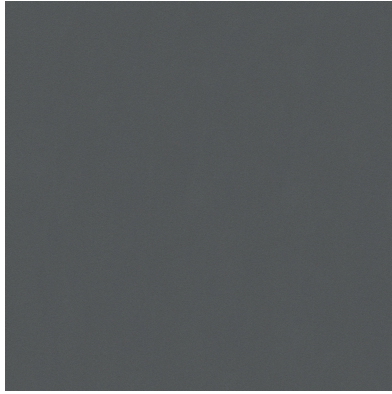
Fig. 5.

²³ Brian O' Doherty, *Inside the White Cube, The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, 71-75.

²⁴ Duchamp and other avant-garde artists disrupted conventional modes of experiencing time and space, questioning the social, relational, and situational context of their practices. Similar projects include Kurt Schwitters' *Merzabu*, 1923; Lucio Fontana's *Ambiente Nero*, 1949; Yves Klein's *The Void*, 1958; Armand Fernandez's *The Full*, 1960; Claes Oldenburg's *The Store*, 1961; Edward Kienholz's *The Beanery*, 1965 (Jean-Marc Poinot, 'Large Exhibitions,' 47; Brian O' Doherty, *Inside the White Cube, The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, 35-64).

²⁵ Daniel Spoerri, *An Anecdoted Topography of Chance*.

²⁶ Similar artistic approaches include Hélio Oiticica and Lygia Clark's exploration of 'useless time,' 1958; Allan Kaprow's happenings in the 60's; Tom Marioni's *FREE BEER*, 1970; Brian Eno and Peter Schmidt's *Oblique Strategies*, 1975; Joseph Beuys' *7000 Oaks*, 1982; Adrian Piper's *Funk Lessons*, 1983.



March 1969.

One Month.

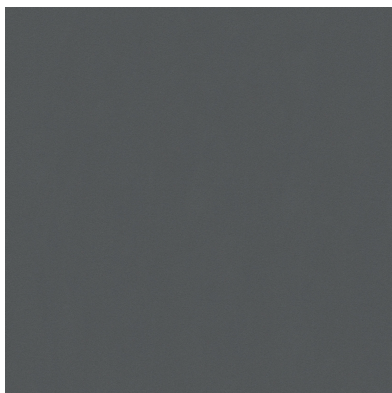
44 East Fifty-second Street, Manhattan

Seth Siegelaub

For this ‘calendar exhibition,’ Siegelaub invited 31 artists in different locations to contribute with a ‘work’ for an assigned day. Playfully acting with and against chronology, the exhibition emphasised its ephemeral and eventful nature. It presented a publication conceived as the exhibition’s primary manifestation. This project anachronizes the static nature of short exhibitions by changing the artworks (conceptual, gestural, time-based, performative) presented each day. The publication thus becomes the material two-dimensional object-space whereby the erratic month is presented as one single event.²⁷

Anachronization.²⁸

Fig. 6.



1969

²⁷ Seth Siegelaub, *Online Archive*.

²⁸ Similar projects that push the limits of time and space of exhibitions, playing with the conditions of art making, include Duchamp’s *Unhappy Readymade*, 1919; Siegelaub’s own *July, August, September*, 1969; Lucy Lippard’s numbered exhibitions at the end of the 60’s; New Art Practice artists in the 70’s use of books as venue for their work; Walter Hopps’ *Thirty-Six Hours*, 1978.

Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials.

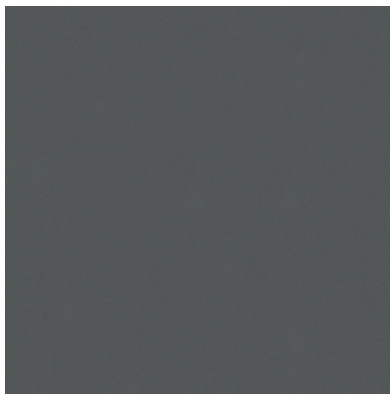
Whitney Museum, New York, USA.

James Monte and Marcia Tucker.

The exhibition focused in production process and the relational processuality of materials, artists and viewers. Comprised by site-specific and installation-based work, it explored the ephemeral, fluid and contingent temporality of artworks and exhibitions themselves. This exhibition can be thought of as a curatorial manifestation of anachronism in the sense that different times enter into relation and against each other: ‘the overlapping and layering of meaning in artworks [...] which are temporally determined.’²⁹

Anachronization.³⁰

Fig. 7.



1984

Société Perpendiculaire

France

A fictitious ‘corporation,’ formed by a central committee, working with administrative texts. Their Office of Non Realized Projects gathered discarded ideas or suspended plans. In a playful yet critical tone, it subverted the economically useful role of art, valuing the artistic

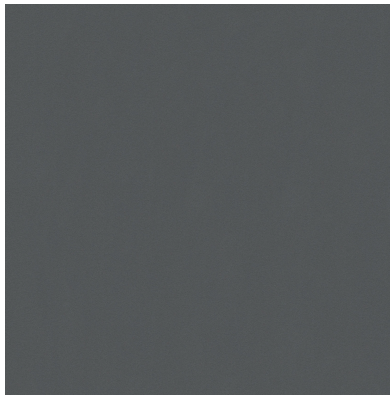
²⁹ Beatrice von Bismarck, ‘Out of Sync, or Curatorial Hetero-chronicity,’ 304-306.

³⁰ Similar exhibitions include *Teatro delle Mostre*, Galleria La Tartaruga, Rome, 1968, curated by Plinio De Martiis. *Spaces*, MoMA, New York, 1969, curated by Jennifer Licht. *Op Losse Schroeven (Square Pegs in Round Holes)*, Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, 1969, curated by Wim Beeren. *When Attitudes Become Forms*, Kunsthalle Bern, 1969 curated by Harald Szeemann. *Information*, MoMA, New York, 1970, curated by Kynaston McShine. *Using Walls* at the Jewish Museum, 1970, curated by Susan Tumarmin Goodman. These projects aimed to give fluidity to something that was typically fixed, making temporary what was characterised by its ambition of permanence. The spatial and temporal context of artistic production coincide with the spatial and temporal context of the exhibition (Paul O’Neill, ‘The Emergence of the Curatorial Discourse From the Late 1960’s to the Present,’ 16; Irene Calderoni, ‘Creating Shows: Some Notes on Exhibition Aesthetics at the End of the Sixties,’ 65).

quality of administrative fluidity, dialectical performance and rhythms of useless bureaucratic operations. By focusing on unmaterialized projects, this project keeps the temporality of these ‘non realised’ projects archived and suspended.³¹

Suspension.³²

Fig. 8.



1988

Museos Bailables

Buenos Aires, Argentina

Fernando ‘Coco’ Bedoya

This project consisted of exhibiting relational-living artworks in discotheques and underground spaces, including the creative energies of visual artists, musicians, poets and other exponents of the queer and countercultural movement. By questioning heteronormative schedules, conservative ideologies, the institutionalisation of art, and against capitalist strains for reproduction, the *Museos Bailables* can be conceived as perversions of hegemonic regimes of exhibition, alternative forms of producing and consuming art counter to traditional and dominant aesthetic narratives.³³

Perversion.³⁴

³¹ Jean-Yves Jouannais, *Artistas sin obra. I Would Prefer Not To*, 120.

³² Similar projects include Ray Johnson’s Mail Art, 1950’s; John Cage’s 4’33’’, 1952; Harald Szeemann’s Museum of Obsessions, 1970’s; Robert Barry’s *Closed Gallery*, 1969; Lee Lozano’s *General Strike Piece*, 1969; *Decide to Boycott Women*, 1971; Keith Aruet’s *Is it possible to do nothing as my contribution to this exhibition?*, 1970. Mladen Stilinovic’s *Artist at Work*, 1978; Tehching Hsieh’s *One Year Performance (No Art Piece)*, 1985-86.

³³ Sharon Lerner and Rodrigo Quijano, ‘Antidisciplinas líricas y goce colectivo,’ 174.

³⁴ In these projects the temporality of the art object is redirected to the experience of the subject. Similar practices include the events and experiments of Tristan Tzara and Marcel Janeo, who gave life to the *Cabaret Voltaire* of Zürich in 1916; Dada events moved out of the cabaret halls and took to the streets.

The concept of temporality in contemporary curatorial theory

As explained before, my interest in researching contingency, anachronism and flirtation surfaced as a response to the curatorial chronological orders of time, also inspired by past practices that have explored experimental and alternative forms of revising and re-framing the meanings and values ordered by curatorial clocks and calendars. This interest furthermore connects with contemporary discussions on temporality that consider the time-based and situational nature of exhibiting, spatio-temporal relations and other experiential effects and embodied phenomena produced in curated encounters, as well as their transitional, ephemeral and eventual character.³⁵ In the following section, I present a brief overview of discussions about temporality in curatorial theory through notions of processuality, relationality, performativity and durability. I am limiting to these particular themes because they are related and add to the interpretation of my three temporalities. Each offers a critical approach to the coming together of anachronistic temporalities in exhibitions; forms of resistance to the capitalisation of art, inter-subjective perversions to a symbolic economy of reproduction, as well as the suspension of chronological time and out-of-joint experiences in the art encounter.

Thus, curatorial discourses and practices of processuality take into account the temporal, transient and site-specific properties of exhibitions which cannot live on without arresting their flow.³⁶ A prominent curator exploring processuality is Beatrice von Bismarck, who considers the contingent character of processual exhibitions. According to her, different temporalities, with their inherent anachronisms, enter into a relational, dynamic fabric composed of the various juxtaposed factors involved—the exhibited art works, artists and

³⁵ In curatorial theory, certain authors position the 1980's as the period in which art and its primary experience became most significantly re-centred around the temporality of the event—with increased discussions about global art, nomadic curating, transculturalism, hybridity and fragmentation, as well as the proliferation of biennales, cultural mobility, and the consolidation of the 'independent curator.' (Zygmunt Bauman, 'On Art Death and Postmodernity – and what they do to each other,' 31; Paul O'Neill, 'Introduction,' 6). Looking into and exhibition histories, however, other theoreticians, such as Martha Ward, argue that the eventful nature of temporary exhibitions can be traced to the European mid-eighteenth to early-twentieth centuries. She identifies The Salon as the place of origin of the physical temporal arrangement of works of art and methods of provisional presentation in relation to temporal fluidity and the issue of 'the experience'—both social and phenomenological (Martha Ward, 'History of Modern Art Exhibitions,' 451-464).

³⁶ Processuality has its roots in Robert Morris' idea of the work that 'makes itself,' and James Monte and Marcia Tucker's notion of 'expanded time pieces,' where they looked into the temporality of the artwork according to its own respective temporal structure. Guggenheim Collection, 'Process Art.'

curators, recipients and their networks, institutions, variously conceived spaces, and information.³⁷

Looking into the intersection of phenomenological time (Henri Bergson notion of ‘duration’) in performance work, Adrian Heathfield elaborates on ‘the experience of duration,’ which is felt as a force and product of relational inter-subjective exchange: a concrete, material, and embodied phenomena that produces a suspension of objective time measurements and habituated cultural-temporal orders and rhythms. This experience, he argues, is similar to Mieke Bal’s notion of ‘stickiness,’ meaning that the artworks persist in time, they ‘stick’ to their spectators. In doing so it draws the spectator into the thick braids of paradoxical times in which past, present and future become confused, allowing for a sensorial opening of possibilities for other temporalities of being.³⁸

The theorisation of relational art is known to have its origins in Nicolas Bourriaud, who elaborated on the materiality of the gesture, conceiving the exhibition as a set where social encounters and their relations become the form and matter of art. Consequently, relational space-time elements and inter-human experiences are produced in contemporary exhibitions as art forms. Relational art produces ‘tiny revolutions,’ as it represents a social interstice: it suggests other trading possibilities than those in effect within the system, and it allows for the formation of localized and momentary alternative ways of living.³⁹ On a similar basis, Jörn Schafaff puts forward the idea of exhibitions being space-time zone which resemble social interstices separate from capitalist structures.⁴⁰

For their part, curatorial discourses and practices of performativity focus on the function of spaces for sociability and issues around ‘the experiential.’ They look at the institution as a

³⁷ Beatrice von Bismarck, *Off(f) Our Times: Curatorial Anachronics*, 3; Beatrice Von Bismarck, ‘Out of Sync, or Curatorial Hetero-chronicity, “Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials (1969),”’ 307.

³⁸ Adrian Heathfield, ‘Durational Aesthetics,’ 142. Mieke Bal also explores how time inhabits the still image by using it as a medium to reach out into the social world. Rather than looking at the image as a ‘still’ thing that has social life, she sees the image as a social agent itself (Mieke Bal, ‘Sticky Images: The Foreshortening of Time in Art and Duration,’ 79-99). Other studies on performativity can be found in Amelia Jones and Adrian Heathfield’s compilation of essays on temporality, embodiment, and experience phenomena at the intersection of live performance and visual arts (Amelia Jones and Adrian Heathfield, *Perform, Repeat, Record, Live Art in History*).

³⁹ Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 6. Claire Bishop and Stewart Martin argued that relational art led to the commodification and instrumentalisation of art, putting forward the counter-concept of ‘relational antagonism.’

⁴⁰ Jörn Schafaff, ‘Challenging Institutional Standard Time,’ 189-209.

site of active production and dynamic collaboration whereby the work takes the form of events or situational interventions.⁴¹ In her critique of these practices, Katya Garcia-Anton argues that it seems like performativity has become an ‘art of encounter,’ which operates through the dynamics of consumption, consumerism and the capitalisation of knowledge. She explains that it is important to ‘practice resistance,’ and to ‘imagine an aesthetic experience that operates within the field of collective agency, where workable forms of resistance can be devised.’⁴² Myriam Van Imschoot similarly argues that practices of performativity must be celebrated for their political resistance—they cannot be reproduced as they resist commodification and hence regimes of capitalist exploitation.⁴³

V. PhD Time-Scales and Agenda

From a plurality of chronological apparatuses follows a plurality of resistances. From a continuous stream of discontinuous orders of time follows an incessant flow of intermittent counter-chronological temporalities. There are many different kinds of resistances, they are spread out differently in time and space. However, they share the paradoxical characteristic of existing only within the domain of power, where they are inscribed as its irreducible opposites.⁴⁴ The curatorial timely disruptions that I previously enlisted make up a subjective selection of a multiplicity of subversive practices to the dominant orders of time.⁴⁵ Although these practices have a close relationship with chronological apparatuses it does not mean that they are submissive. Their inexorable bond to power does not entail obedience. On the contrary, resistances affect individual’s conceptual and corporeal apparatuses, giving access to other dimensions to subjective experience. They shatter repressive subjects and systems and weld a plurality of alternative possible positions and functions. They can transverse social stratifications and furrow across individuals, cutting them up, inflaming their bodies,

⁴¹ Balázs Beöthy, ‘performativity.’

⁴² Katya Garcia-Anton, ‘Slaves to the Rhythm, Performing Sociability in the Exhibitionary Complex,’ 24.

⁴³ Myriam Van Imschoot, ‘Rests in Pieces: On Scores, Notation and the Trance in Dance,’ 32.

⁴⁴ Michel Foucault, ‘The Will to Knowledge,’ 96.

⁴⁵ I am considering the heterogeneous, transitory and discontinuous distinctiveness of postmodernity. Within the framework of art theory, it is relevant to mention Arthur Danto, who, long ago, famously declared the end of art, suggesting that in the post-historical or postmodern era there is no stylistic unity with no possibility of linear or chronological narratives or directions. However, by alluding to ‘chronology’ (as already explained), I am referring to the plurality and multiplicity—the massive accumulation and proliferation—of apparatuses that exercise control in the contemporary curatorial ordering of time, also connecting with the abovementioned metaphor of the devouring cosmological figure of the Greek Chronos.

marking off irreducible regions in their minds.⁴⁶ It thus follows that if curatorial conceptions, practices and experiences of time are always inside and cannot escape structural and discursive orders of time, then resistances ought to be conceived in paradoxical accordance with the same time-scales and agendas that chronological apparatuses implement and formulate.

Contingency, anachronism and flirtation are three counter-temporalities by which I suggest to suspend, anachronize and pervert material time-scales and ideological agendas framed and devised by chronological apparatuses. I propose these three interventions as curatorial strategies to suspend capitalised practices in arrangements of time, to anachronize chronological apparatuses ordering processes, rhythms and tempos of life, and to pervert experiences of normative orders in shared time. I suggest to insert them into the mind, or mark them in the body, in order to overcome the rulers through their own rules. Through these three conceptual metaphorical gateways, my intention is to re-create contingency, to re-enact anachronism and to re-stage flirtation by materialising their indiscernible, subversive and disruptive potentials. In other words, my intention is to transfer their critical capabilities, to intensify their creative possibilities and to embellish their aesthetic proficiencies in order to inaugurate new ways for curators to think, practice and experience the temporal orders they obey. I am conceiving these three temporalised concepts as enacted forms of agency, self-determination and self-awareness, leading to re-constructing new paths in curatorial knowledges, practices and experiences of time. Consequently, I practice contingency, anachronism and flirtation as written and exhibited embodied metaphors of time, inscribed within the orders of chronology and irreducible oppositional counter-powers.

To ‘suspend, anachronize and pervert’ means to intervene chronological systems of time. To ‘transfer, intensify and embellish’ means to transform disregarded potentialities of these three temporalities into metaphors. The first formula alludes to the action of inserting paradoxes, resistances and perversions into chronological orders as means to intervene them. The second formula refers to the gesture of awakening potentialities in the three temporalities as a means to materialise them as curatorial metaphors. Although these actions and gestures are closely related, to ‘suspend, anachronize and pervert’ emphasises a critical and political agenda. To ‘transfer, intensify and embellish’ leans more towards its creative and poetic drive.

⁴⁶ Michel Foucault, ‘The Will to Knowledge,’ 96.

I selected these approaches to contingency, anachronism and flirtation as a result of conceptual and aesthetic affinities, as well as connections made through practical experience. This choice is the result of a dialogue between art, places, theory and people involved in this research. Following this line of thought and practice, I have arranged the narrative of the forthcoming three chapters according to a series of formal, discursive and experiential associations. These are based on intersections between critical theory and objects, between spaces and artworks, between sensations and ideas, between buildings and people, between finance and philosophy, between concepts and artists. My process involves an openness to intuition and improvisation as well as chance, deferred and erotic encounters. There is a contingent, anachronistic and flirtatious dialogue between all the different components of this written and exhibited material. The selection of every component that belongs to this research has been made under the same criteria. The encounter with certain authors drove me to discover others, some artists introduced me to other creative individuals; specific types of artwork enthused my search for engaging with other artistic formats; places connect me to ideas, and ideas inspired my encounters with places and people. I also encountered a series of pleasant and unpleasant accidents. All the elements that are integrated within this project are included because there is a shared concern between the exploration of potentialities and materialities in contingent, anachronistic and flirtatious temporalities. Each chapter is limited to the specificities of the issues addressed within them.

The thesis divided into three chapters; each of them includes written and practical components. With the intention to ease the division of theory/practice, and to enhance a more direct dialogue between these two forms of research, both components (written and practical components) have been joined together and integrated in one single volume. The chapters are divided into sections, which contain a diversity of elements that vary from theoretical analysis, invitations, images and documentation, artworks, floor plans, literary quotes, and other material that belong both to their practical and written components. Each chapter directs its focus to a research question but, as mentioned earlier, there are intersections between all of the different parts that compose the body of this thesis. These intersections are formal, conceptual, discursive and methodological cohesions, juxtapositions and correspondences between the inherent paradoxes, resistances and perversions of the three curated temporalities.

Contingency

The First Chapter is inspired by the element of contingency that appears in Excel spreadsheets of curatorial budget templates. It considers two notions of contingency by clashing the administrative values and functions of this term together with its philosophical meaning. The theoretical analysis focuses in Giorgio Agamben's contingency, Aristotle's 'potential-not-to' and Herman Melville's 'prefer-not-to,' with additional support of Gilles Deleuze's passive resistance. The practical component is suspended. The chapter is divided into six sections. The first four sections include examinations of the relationship of contingency, with time, language and truth; investigations of the notions of actuality, potentiality, potentiality-not-to, and pure potentiality; analysis of language and embodied contingency; interpretations of the internal resistance of contingency. The chapter ends with a conclusive section, where I present the result of an interdisciplinary clash between administrative formulas with philosophical knowledge.

Here I define contingency as the capacity of something (a thing, a thought, an event) to be true and, at the same time, not to be true—a Being that can both Be and not-Be.⁴⁷ It exists in the tension between potentiality and actuality, but also in the tension between potentiality and potentiality-not-to. This tension can only be articulated in a statement that can be both true and false. This statement can only take the material, corporeal or embodied form of something (or someone) that simultaneously Is and Is-not. The aim of this initial chapter is to re-create contingency through philosophical analysis, but also through a paradoxical materialisation of a temporal suspension between creation and non-creation. This chapter is a response to the discursive implications and material consequences of the representation of time in organisational formats of time-management and time-wages. It is a critique of the capitalisation, exploitation, abuse and bureaucratisation of time. In doing so it disposes the possibility of withdrawal, an attitude of refusal, an awareness of the 'potential-not-to.' Resulting in the proposal of a gesture of resistance, an attempt to suspend the mechanistic course of time and capitalist ideologies inscribed in curatorial economies of time.

⁴⁷ This definition is based on Giorgio Agamben's definition of contingency, which is itself based in Aristotle's definition of contingency (Giorgio Agamben, 'Bartleby, or On Contingency,' 261. Aristotle, 'Metaphysics,' 1653).

Anachronism

The Second Chapter looks at processes of becoming and embodying anachronism. Starting from its traditional meaning as a mechanism to validate historical-aesthetic narratives and chronological orders, this chapter studies the political and poetic implications of becoming anachronistic and modes of embodying temporal irregularity and discontinuity. With the intention to incorporate anachronism as a formal component of my writing, the chapter is divided into twenty juxtaposed sections. It contains a variety of elements interconnected through a discontinuous arrangement, forming an irregular narrative.⁴⁸ The theoretical analysis is based on Giorgio Agamben's notion of the contemporary, which he defines as the occurrence of temporal dissonance, the individual's experience of out-of-jointness with regards to the epoch. Agamben enters into a dialogue with Friedrich Nietzsche's notion of the untimely and his concept of the eternal return of the same. According to Nietzsche, becoming untimely is to raise the self above historical culture, all historical narratives, all so-called chronologies.

The practical component includes two projects. First, the exhibition *Against Time*, which was shown at Civic Room, an arts organisation located in an old nineteenth century British Linen Bank in Glasgow, Scotland. Second, *By Indirections Find Directions Out*, a residency and exhibition that took place in Yamakiwa Gallery, a small artistic initiative located in the Japanese countryside. These projects explore artistic and curatorial strategies of becoming out-of-joint in relation to chronological apparatuses. The intention of this intermediary chapter is to re-enact anachronism as symbolic and material written and exhibited forms. Here I argue that anachronism is a way of thinking, practicing and being time. Becoming anachronistic is to become the human spine that joins together and disjoints chronological time. Consequently, this chapter proposes to re-appropriate time as one's own. It calls for experience to follow what Nietzsche defines as the flow of eternal becoming and the passing away of all things and regards the importance of individual moments as opposed to historical narratives or chronologies. Finally, this chapter looks into the power of art to shatter and weld time, and instigate the possibility of political action.

⁴⁸ This format is inspired in Walter Benjamin's non-synchronous storytelling and his poetic approach to philosophy. It equally finds inspiration in Roland Barthes's contingent and flirtatious form and content of his *Lovers Discourse*. By inserting anachronistic rhythms into the reading process, the format of the text I produce has the intention to interrupt the utterance, to anachronize a linear narrative, to pervert a straight conception of time, instead drawing a textual metaphorical spine of time.

Flirtation

The Third Chapter investigates the temporal implications of flirtation for curating. It takes as its point of departure the conceptual significance and practical inferences inherited from the Greco-Roman mythological figure of Eros. I thus define flirtation as a gesture of eroticism that distinguishes itself by its peculiar playfulness. It consists on swinging attraction and desire back and forth through an oscillation amid having and not-having. Flirtation materialises as ephemeral and aleatory gestures in encounters between people, places, theory and art. These encounters occur in the space of exhibitions, art events and physical or virtual curated projects, but also in processes and embodied experience. Although these gestures have the duration of a blink of an eyelid, they are profound and meaningful. They penetrate the mind and transform the body. They carry on or support embodied meaning. The theoretical analysis is mainly based on Georg Simmel's insights on the potentiality of flirtation and the temporal discontinuity within the notion of 'oscillation.' The practical component consists of an exhibition and public programme entitled *We Are Having a Little Flirt* carried out at Pump House Gallery London in 2018.

The chapter is divided into five exposed parts of the body of the text. It uses playful and flirtatious forms of written expressions. These parts include an examination of the tension between idealism and materialism inherent to the practice and concept of flirtation; an investigation of contextual rules of the game and underlying power structures that condition this gesture; an analysis on the temporality of deferral and anticipation implied in the notion of 'oscillation;' an interpretation of the association with the Kantian modalities of the beautiful as disinterested pleasure and purposive without purpose. It ends by re-staging the practical component, and a concluding declaration that puts an end to flirtation. This final chapter claims that there is a deficiency of the elements of play and erotic in the broad-spectrum of curatorial time-scales and agendas. As a reaction to this lack, this chapter acknowledges the significance of play in artistic exchange; it also recognises the power of the erotics of transgression in the curated encounter. Its purpose (without purpose) is to restore the value of embodied knowledge and the significance of suggestive relations in 'little' encounters between people, places, theory and art.

VI. Time Is the Matter and Substance of this Thesis

The three chapters of this PhD explore paradoxes, resistances and perversions in contingency, anachronism and flirtation through theoretical discourse and expose its effects through the exhibition (or non-exhibition) of time-based curatorial projects. To ‘curate time’ is to thematise time as a subject matter with the intention to transform its discursive significations into operative material conceptualisations. I am thematising the matter of time with a political time-scale to suspend capitalised arrangements of time, to anachronize chronological apparatuses ordering tempos, rhythms and processes of life, and to pervert normative orders in the conventional arrangement of social time. I materialise the theme of time with a poetic agenda hence to conceptualise the tension between actuality and potentiality, to exhibit moments of temporal irregularity and discontinuity, to experience queer temporal inferences of desire. To ‘curate time’ through these three thematic time-matters, therefore, is to theorise, to practice and to experience contingent, anachronistic and flirtatious potentialities and materialities. These are metaphorical gateways that lead to connect with the substance or underlying basic structure of the three concepts. To awaken the potentiality of contingent, anachronistic and flirtatious gestures—their paradoxes, resistances and perversions—allows for the emergence of the being-in-a-medium of art, places, theory and human beings and, consequently, ‘opens up’ political and poetic dimensions to them.⁴⁹

Pragmatically, my arguments materialise in two mirroring formats, the theoretical and the practical. I approach theory by collecting, interpreting and appropriating texts from interdisciplinary frameworks in the same way that my practice selects, commissions and exhibits art in an array of media. Consequently, my research process merges a display of philosophy, art history, sociology, cultural studies, psychoanalysis, literature, art and curatorial theory, in the same way that it interprets photography, video, painting, sculpture, text, sound, performance, textile, drawing, installation, and processual art pieces. I approach the practice of writing as a form of curating in the same way that I think about the practice of curating as a form of writing. These two formats entail the simultaneous selection and interpretation of theory and art. Both unfolding in time, one involves arranging ideas, words,

⁴⁹ Here I interpret Agamben’s notion of ‘the gesture,’ which he defines as a ‘pure mean,’ a means without ends, emancipated from any form of teleological determination. To awaken the potentiality of the contingent, anachronistic and flirtatious gesture means to simultaneously carry on and suspend their material consequences. It is likewise to sustain and to support their political and poetic dimensions for short instances, moments or ‘gags’ of chronological time (Giorgio Agamben, ‘Notes On Gesture,’ 48-59).

sentences, images, in the space of pages. The other involves arranging artworks, objects, text, bodies, light, in the space of exhibitions. I conceive of both my written thesis and my exhibition projects as curated places of encounter with and between theory, art, places and people. They have accommodated the emergence of moments of confrontation, aversion, hindrance and stagnation, but most importantly, instants of inspiration, playful interaction, profound connection and positive exchange.

My project curates material metaphors, articulated as time-based assembled settings. It offers the possibility to embody concepts as ephemeral experiences yet sustainable encounters. These are experienced as spatio-temporal physical-discursive arrangements, transitional still endurable zones of exhibition and display of meaning. My intention is to curate places of encounter where mind and body experiences of suspension, out-of-jointness and oscillation can occur. In other words, places where theory, art and people embody the being-in-a-medium of the three temporalities as ephemeral experiences yet sustainable encounters. I am practicing my projects with the aim to give life to concepts of contingency, anachronism and flirtation in the curated encounter.

While my practice incorporates these temporal suspensions, disjunctures, and oscillations, in the following paragraphs, I am providing concrete examples of the projects curated for this thesis:

Where Love Enqvist captures a farmer's passed life-time bio-sculptural project in an eleven minute 16mm film transferred to video. It loops under the same roof with Patricia Dominguez' pre-Columbian cosmologies and digitally collaged photographed curses directed against contemporary abusive authorities. Elsewhere, twenty minutes of site-specific fluid performance by Mary Hurrell is staged along with the static images capturing the vital internal rhythm and latent pulse of nature in Mariana Magdaleno's drawings. For four hours, the humid and hot summer weather in the context of rice fields and mountains of the Japanese countryside procedurally melts an ice block which ends up forming an ikebana sculpture; these are conceived as open-ended material expressions of a never-to-be-completed process of formation, as described by Friedrich Nietzsche. Few visitors attend these pieces and to participate in the workshop consists of recoding their individual voices to

create one single stretched voice, we listen to this recording as a group over sunset whilst drinking cold sour plum brew.⁵⁰

During three weeks, 897 visitors observe Toby Paterson's site specific sculptural installation in an old nineteenth century linen bank. It embodies anachronism as a transferal of temporalities from the precarious condition of the historical building juxtaposed to the new architectural developments of the urban surroundings of central Glasgow. This is presented alongside Sarah Forrest's six minute video, which adjudicates its ideas of immateriality in relation to temporal fragmentation and in doing so is juxtaposed to the viewer's experience of contemporary yet anachronistic modes of temporal and aesthetic perception.⁵¹

For three months, a refurbished pump house building displays Monica Espinosa's breathing art piece; her live sound sculpture whispers secrets and hindered sounds of confessions of past experiences and memories that penetrate water inside a bucket and cause waves and movement under a stair ladder. A total of 2,057 visitors crossing Battersea Park are provoked with curiosity by her dirty wiped erotic messages and indirect quotations. Likewise, Adam Christensen's queer lyrical performance of old songs and recitations of past anecdotes staged during the evening of the opening reception transfer a nostalgic and melancholic desire driven by oscillations between possession and non-possession, as described by Georg Simmel. It transports the public to a world deprived of perverse sexual fantasies and experiences, past broken relationships and intense yet suggestive and ephemeral collective emotions.⁵²

One project is suspended, nevertheless it transfers ancient philosophy in the interpretation of future time into contemporary organisational formats of time management.⁵³

Furthermore, in each of these examples, the most pragmatic curatorial procedures also reveal the material consequences of my theoretical research on contingency, anachronism and flirtation. Paradoxes reveal themselves in the elaboration of philosophical analysis surrounding contingency while simultaneously dealing with practical contingencies in

⁵⁰ This paragraph refers to the project *By Indirections Find Directions Out*, part of the chapter on Anachronism.

⁵¹ I am alluding to the exhibition *Against Time*, curated for the chapter on Anachronism.

⁵² This description corresponds to the exhibition and public programme *We Are Having a Little Flirt*, which belongs to the chapter on Flirtation.

⁵³ I am referring to the practical component of the chapter on Contingency.

curatorial bureaucratic transactions. Resistances actualise in the effective delivery of projects regardless of economic precariousness and unpaid labour, all the while anachronizing empty safe-deposit storage spaces as metaphorical gestures of financial subversion. Perversions manifest in self-disciplined rotas to fill-in funding applications with straightforward information whilst submitting symbolic administrative budgeting formats filled with queer literary formulas. Paradoxes make themselves visible in articulating a conclusive declaration about flirtation whilst conveying meaning to flirtation as embodied experience. Resistances incarnate in my intestinal inflammation in reaction to experiences of anachronism whilst formulating rational justifications for the relevance of becoming an irrelevant anachronistic being. In short, paradoxes, resistances and perversions of my will to 'curate time' also materialise in contingent, anachronistic and flirtatious tensions that detach from the most pragmatic practicalities exerted through material and symbolic chronological orders of time.

The intention of this PhD is to re-create, re-enact and re-stage contingent, anachronistic and flirtatious temporalities, with the aim of counteracting capitalised, repressive and normative curatorial conceptions, practices and experiences of time. By producing interventions in chronological time-scales and agendas I intend to materialise contingent, anachronistic and flirtatious places of encounter. This thesis invites the reader to become contingent by suspending the capitalised arrangement of time whilst redirecting their time to close reading and philosophical thinking. It does so to challenges the reader to become anachronistic by shattering chronological apparatuses ordering processes, rhythms and tempos of life while instigating the theoretical, artistic and curatorial experimentation with the matter of time. It invites the reader to become flirtatious by perverting normative rules of behaviour in shared moments of time whilst grasping time for brief erotic encounters with people, places, theory and art.

This thesis is the outcome of a determined process of preferring not to be blinded by the lights of the century.⁵⁴ It is a statement about such refusal: a discursive articulation of thought and action associated to the circumstances that triggered its creation but also linked to the statements that have already pronounced it and to the ones that will continue to announce it.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ For Agamben, not to be blinded by the lights of the century is to get a glimpse of the shadows in those lights, of their intimate obscurity (Giorgio Agamben, 'What Is the Contemporary?', 45).

⁵⁵ A statement under Foucault's terms: a strange event linked to the gesture of writing or the articulation of speech; unique yet subject to repetition, reactivation and transformation; linked to the situations that provoked it

Therefore, this *Curating Time* PhD project is a discursive materialisation of a will to re-cover other meanings in the matter of time. It is a theoretical and practical counter-chronological curated metaphor whose substance is the living matter of time.

but also in accordance with the statements that precede and follow it (Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 31).

Contingency

00.01

Prologue

The idea for dedicating this chapter to the concept of contingency surfaced several years ago. It started with an accidental encounter with the element of contingency that appears in the cells and columns of budget templates in Excel spreadsheets. Before I moved to the UK, I was working in an art institution in Oaxaca, Mexico. This institution is a governmental establishment, located in a seventeenth century palace, and was founded in the nineties by a group of artists with the aim to promote contemporary art, merging regional traditions and global culture. It plays an important role within the artistic community of Oaxaca as within the broader spectrum of the Mexican contemporary art scene. However, during the time I worked there, its operating system unfortunately had numerous managerial flaws, administrative dysfunctions, organisational shortcomings and all sorts of practical problems.

Things were usually done at the last minute and there was no fixed programme or schedule for exhibitions and/or events. There were cracks in internal communication, problems with patrons and fundamental issues of corruption. The lack of essential equipment and facilities in the historic building and its showrooms, such as adequate air conditioning system, failed to provide the basic exhibitionary requirements. There were problems of over-expenditure and mismanagement of finances. We worked with thin, pallid and forlorn budgets, and very poor salaries. This led to the occurrence of a series of incidents, such as missing deadlines, internal disputes, damaged artworks, angry lenders, and a sequence of accidents with expensive and harmful consequences. Contingency was the invisible and inevitable operating system running by default in the museum, and no one really needed to point it out. The institution operated under such a contingent scheme since its founding.

Contrary to my experience in Oaxaca, an MA degree in Curating in London taught me planning strategies and the use of practical tools for logistics, time-management, communication, debate, diplomacy and advocacy, fund-raising, budget-management, and assorted organisational techniques that would allow me to become an efficient curator within the broad field of exhibition-making. Amongst various pedagogical aims, the programme covered the needs and challenges of issues involved in the process of conceiving and

realising an exhibition or project for a specific space, and for a particular audience: from envisioning and articulating the curatorial argument, to the selection of artworks and participating artists; and from basic managerial competence, administrative discipline, project development and realisation, to the implementation of different strategies to engage with audiences once projects were made public.

This exhibition-making process I encountered started with the drafting of a proposal based on an idea that would, like most curatorial efforts, respond to social, cultural and/or political issues; a problematic relevant to contemporary culture, as well as art practice and/or curatorial-theoretical discourse. Namely, a concern that needed to be addressed as a matter of urgency. Once this was identified, it followed to explain the meaning and to justify the true-value of such a proposal. Consequently, it was necessary to elaborate on the basic intellectual premises or conceptual framework and draft a projection of possible future physical outcomes. It was also required to explain how this urgent matter might have a cultural impact or social function, and why it deserved public attention and financial support. Once this was acknowledged and validated, the process followed the procedure of making the curatorial argument practically and materially possible.

In order to do so, I followed a series of standard planning procedures, such as taking part in group meetings, liaising with artists, galleries, institutions, suppliers. Designing floor plans and managing installation processes, overseeing transport and insurance policies, handling contractual agreements, filling in risk assessment, and health and safety forms. Contacting patrons, sponsors, and applying to private and public funding. Sorting out marketing, organising press and publicity, dealing with electronic and printed invites, writing press releases and images to distribute to the media. These procedures also involved organising public events, educational activities, and the production of catalogues and other supporting materials. It was necessary to make written reports, keep receipts, maintain records of visitor numbers and register books, as well as promoting on social media.

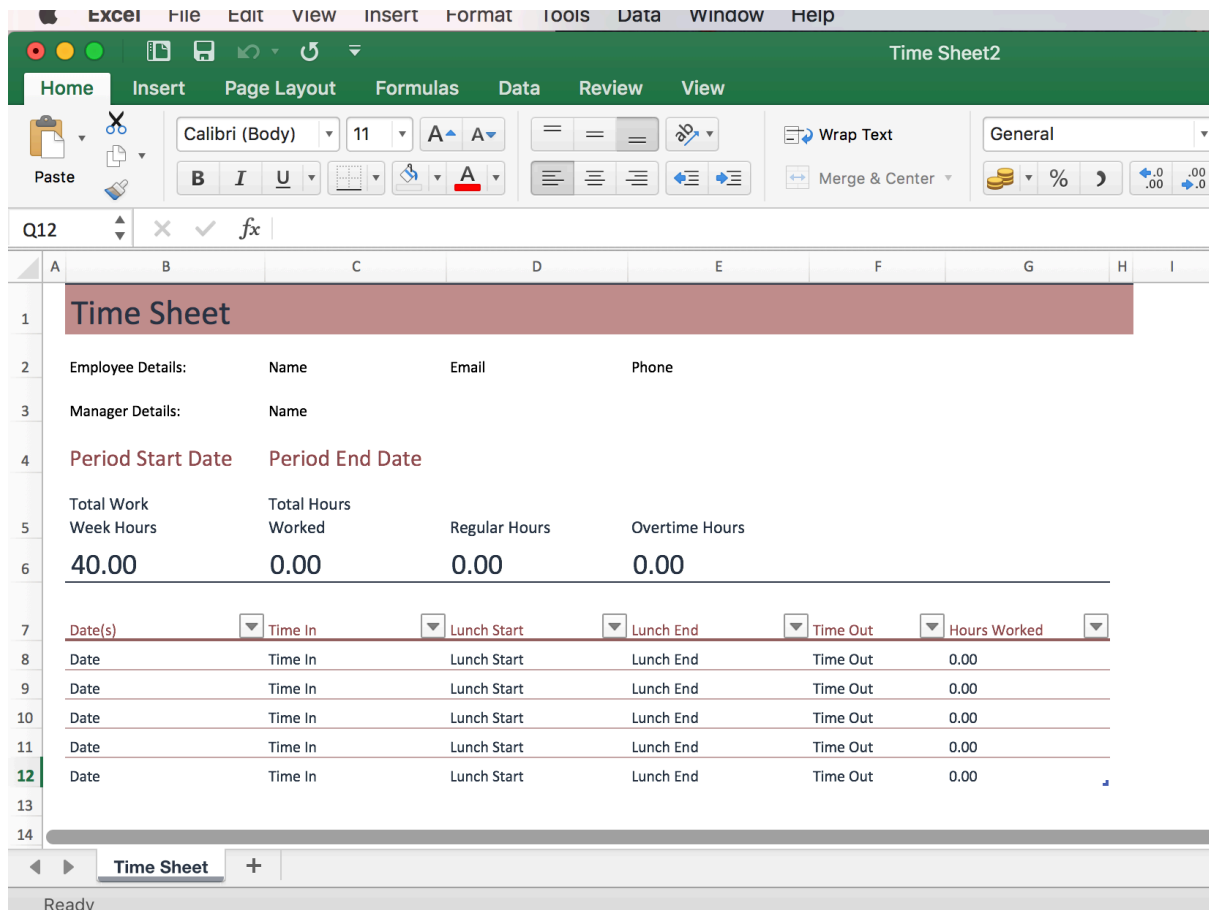


Fig 1. Standard Microsoft Excel Time-Sheet.

Amongst all of the paperwork, I kept returning to the budget guideline whilst having the constant pressure of the timeline. The budget guideline was introduced to me as a key tool for any curatorial endeavour. Not only was it a means to calculate abstract amounts of income and expenditure, and to represent—in numbers and percentages—the actual financial means that can make the becoming of the envisioned proposal and idea materially possible. It was also presented to me as key tool in any curatorial undertaking because it also serves as an organisational strategy from which the project can be broken down, facilitating the identification of all of its elements as a list of costs. This allows for the confirmation of artworks, locations, equipment, partnerships, accessibility; but also to programme activities and plan the execution of specific tasks on specific dates. It likewise permits calculating and scheduling payments in the form of time-wages. Cells and columns in Excel spreadsheets thus included systematised and enlisted information on the various acknowledged elements involved in this process. However, amongst the elements of budget templates, there was always set aside, hidden in a little corner, a 10 or 15 percent set aside for ‘contingency.’

		Budget	Actual	Projection	Up to Date
EXHIBITION BUDGET					
INCOME					
Patrons - individual donors (cash sponsorship)		1,000	0.00	0	0
Other income		20,000	23,000.00	23,000	23,000
Artist Galleries		0	0.00	0	0
Trusts, foundations and embassies		0	0.00	1,000	0
Merchandise		500	0.00	500	0
Total income		21,500	23,000.00	24,500	23000
EXPENDITURE					
Artists' fees and expenses					
Artist's Fees		3,250	250.00	3,250	2,750
Work Costs		550	0.00	550	350
Artist's Per Diems		325	0.00	125	125
Artist's Accommodation		760	0.00	400	640
Artist's Travel		1,188	415.19	688	735
Subtotal Artists' costs		6,073	665.19	5,013	4600
ITEP					
Installation		300	0.00	650	1,175
Transportation costs		1,050	138.00	1,190	900
Equipment		3,640	1,511.44	6,570	2,859
Production costs		4,000	1,018.27	6,548	7,046
Sub-total Transport and Installation		8,990	2,667.71	14,958	11980
Public Programme					
Performance		450	225.00	1,420	1,270
Extra Performance		700	225.00	1,200	1,200
Preview		0	0.00	0	0

Fig 2. Exhibition Budget Template.

36	Miscellaneous/contingency		
37		0	
38	Estimated Total Expenditure	0	
39			

Fig 3. Detail 'Miscellaneous/contingency.'

I could not stop thinking about the ambiguity of this element of 'contingency' that appeared at the end of each one of these spreadsheets. Surrounded by orange, green and yellow calculation boxes, this 'contingency' element certainly stressed an anxious feeling of urgency itself. It announced in those cases all forgotten incidentals, increased or unexpected costs, extra money for fixing accidents, damages and the things I had not foreseen or considered in advance. It appeared there to represent unknown yet unwanted events, which were paradoxically already expected to happen, but were not yet certain nor known, and could not yet be fully categorised. Unlike the unspoken contingency operating by default in the

museum in Oaxaca, this contingency took the form of an identifiable controlled, schematised, and temporalised preprogramed format.

Thus, my curiosity towards this element aroused from an accidental encounter with it in cells and columns of Microsoft budget templates, as well as the experience of a cultural clash from an invisible and improvised form of operating contingency in Mexico to a pragmatic and ordered manner of planning contingency in the UK.⁵⁶

Contingency denotes the (possible) occurrence of unknown and unwanted events for which one must be prepared. It is commonly employed in businesses and corporations as an organisational tool to deal with urgencies, and it has two functions: it is preventative and reparative. It has to do with risk management, health and safety, security systems, and their programming to procure the optimal functioning and protection from threats and dangers that might have a future impact and business plans. It is also employed as a strategy to repair from accidents or damages and recover from befallen disasters. As in standard corporative procedures, contingency also appears in codes of practice in contemporary cultural production. It appears not only in educational projects of postgraduate curriculums in British academic institutions but also within the wider scope of the time-scales of institutional operational protocols, as well as within the self-organised agendas of the self-employed curator. Again, it figures in standard curatorial budget guidelines, but also in contingency plans in institutions and cultural organisations, applied as a strategy to help respond effectively to events or situations that may or may not happen, such as earthquakes, hurricanes, fires, flooding, and other extreme adversities (Fig. 4).

⁵⁶ I am aware that budgets and time-tables in all countries are in a constant state transformation; being themselves contingent to the rhythms, tempos, dynamics and shifting temporal logic of curated projects and exhibitions. Although they are also subjected to unexpected changes, alterations, extensions, withdrawals, pandemics, etc. However, what I want to draw attention to is the symbolic significance and the material consequences that the element of contingency acquires in the format of these values and functions.

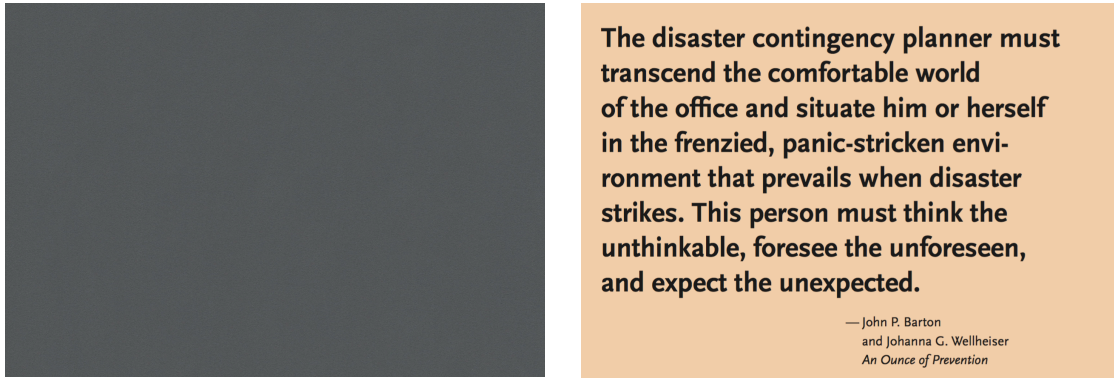


Fig. 4. *Building an Emergency Plan: A Guide for Museums and Other Cultural Institutions*, Getty Conservation Institute.

This ‘contingency’ element therefore reveals that there is a desire to control the (possible) occurrence of unwanted and unknown events. It also exposes a stress and anxiety regarding discontinuities in quantified and calculated time, and all that this implies, including risk, accident and danger. This ‘contingency’ element furthermore indicates that there persists a belief in exhibitions as places of truth—places of true-value and function. However, it also indicates ideological structures and distributions of power that establish and condition the articulation of such truth, which are sometimes overlooked. It, therefore, reveals the proliferation of errors that can be found behind such truth and exposes how the becoming of curatorial ideas is the result of desire and power struggles.⁵⁷

The passage from potentiality to actuality in exhibition making is determined by a plethora of structures including insurance policies, contractual agreements and all sorts of bureaucratic procedure. Behind all of this paperwork, there is a power-discourse, and a complex network of economic and ideological apparatuses, programming the material becoming of art and exhibitions. These set the rules and conditions by which calculated time is produced, distributed and consumed.

⁵⁷ As explained in the introduction of this thesis, behind this idea is Michel Foucault’s argument about the emergence of discourse as a discontinuous event. Extending from Nietzsche’s critique to the ‘value’ of values themselves (the process which he calls ‘transvaluation’), Foucault elaborates the argument that origin is conventionally understood as the place of truth, and this ignores the proliferation of errors behind that truth. This shows how ideas, values or social identities—curatorial discourses—emerge as a product of power relationships (Michel Foucault, ‘Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,’ 78).

Time-management schedules and time-wage numbers in curatorial practice are thus designed and formulated in order to invest, protect and disperse material and symbolic capital. These are rendered to interests, urgencies and needs that are evaluated, validated and endorsed according to the acknowledgement of a whole system of interests and structural forms of ideology. The curatorial creative process therefore amends itself to preprogrammed economies and prescribed ideologies conveyed in the cells and columns of Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. In other words, the thinking and acting of the contemporary art curator becomes the result of the calculations of material and symbolic values and functions. In short words, time becomes capitalised. It takes the material form of time-management schedules and time-wage numbers.⁵⁸

Further symbols of the capitalisation of time in curating may also take the two-dimensional form of logos and sponsorship from luxury wrist-watch brands or multinational corporations, especially for contemporary art biennales and blockbuster exhibitions (Fig. 5-6).



Fig. 5. Jaeger-LeCoultre sponsorship (Biennale's webpage).



Fig. 6. Swatch (exhibition brochure) sponsorship credit for the 58th Venice Biennale *May You Live in Interesting Times*, 2019.

⁵⁸ I am indirectly referring to Karl Marx's concept of the 'time-wage,' which he employs in a critique to the effects of capitalism over the exploitation of time. According to Marx, the capitalist buys labour-power through wages; these wages are calculated in units of time (days, weeks, months, etc); they are measured by the clock in the same way that any other products (such as sugar) are measured by scales. This means that value is reduced to quantified units and periods of labour-time, which makes that the relativism of the magnitudes of the price of labour-power and surplus-value, may easily be transformed into laws of wages (Karl Marx, 'Chapter 20: Time-Wages,' 683-684).



Fig. 7. Fondation Cartier Pour L'Art Contemporain sponsorship logo for the exhibition *Other Spaces*, 180 Strand, 2019. Photo taken by myself, with my mobile phone.

Rather than facing the risks of mismanaging projects, accidents, missing deadlines, or, more extremely, confronting 'natural' disasters, under the rules and logic of the cells and columns of these mathematical formulas, the curator is threatened with the risk of regulating and commodifying her or his acting and thinking in accordance to a prescribed and preprogrammed—capitalised—economy of time.⁵⁹

Miscellaneous results derived from the sums and subtractions of these numbers and schedules include the symptomatic burnout syndrome, the acceleration of time, and over-productivity. Other assorted results include the constant pressure of meeting deadlines and the stress of producing just-in-time projects; as well as scheduling working processes that consume time, and give insufficient or no time for creativity, ambiguities or unexplored potentials.⁶⁰ More random results include unnecessary paperwork and long bureaucratic processes which prevent access to existing funds in the institutional framework; this leads to dysfunctionality and a lack of synchronisation between curatorial ideas, artistic processes and infrastructural capacities.⁶¹ Each of these variables contribute to the precarious life of the freelance curator, plagued by short-term employment agreements, temporary teams and contracts, all leading to instability and the exploitation of affective labour.⁶² Further mixed results include nomadic

⁵⁹ Lars Bang Larsen also critiques the distribution of time in curatorial practice, whereby curators become slaves of time, commodifying curatorial thought with a view to the reproduction economy (Lars Bang Larsen, 'Zombies of Immaterial Labour: The Modern Monster and the Death of Death,' 86).

⁶⁰ Jan Verwoert explains the effects of a high-performance culture, whereby we live under the pressure to produce quickly and work in economies based on the concept of 'just-in-time' production. These effects include exhaustion, burnout syndrome, conflicting emotions (Jan Verwoert, 'Exhaustion and Exuberance: Ways to Defy the Pressure to Perform,' 205-246).

⁶¹ Ruth Noack explains the inescapable bureaucracy and patent problematics of capitalism in the institutional model. She encourages the idea of curators experimenting with creative strategies, even if imagined, as a form of challenging and resisting these problems (Interview with Ruth Noack, 15 November 2020).

⁶² Helena Reckitt considers the precarious infrastructure that sustains curatorial production, whereby curators create forms of self-exploitation and self-burnout. She also talks about the effects on emotional investment in

and irregular employment conditions, causing indecisive trajectories and the increase of philosophical and affective uncertainty.⁶³

More disparate results occur within the context of curatorial activity financed by global elites, who have the intention of injecting a dose of critical tension into the global art circuit, and adding intellectual 'value' to their investments. Cuahutémoc Medina calls this the dialectic between the 'private jet' and the 'jet proletariat,' which condition and affect the distribution and experience of contemporary time whilst revealing the imbalances of power that prevail in the art world.⁶⁴ Final contingent results are the hierarchizing of symbolic values, the control of the production of intellectual capital, accounting for its ownership and distribution, the abuse of power, and the formation of oppressive subjects and/or systems, which anxiously and aggressively approve or devalue the material becoming of other possible forms of curatorial knowledge.⁶⁵ All these results are examples of what is factored from the capitalisation of time, registered in the boxes and numbers of standardised curatorial budgets, as well as in their time-wage numbers and their time-management formats.

producing just-in-time projects in temporary teams and on short-term contracts (Helena Reckitt, 'Support Acts: Curating, Caring and Social Reproduction,' 6-10).

⁶³ Nestor García-Cañclini, 'Sujetos interculturales,' 161-165.

⁶⁴ Cuahutémoc Medina, 'Contemp(t)orary: Eleven Theses,' 13-15.

⁶⁵ In his critique on the conditions that determine the definition of taste, Pierre Bourdieu argues that the acceptance of dominant forms of taste is a form of symbolic violence (Pierre Bourdieu, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, 167-168).

00.02

Introduction

Contingency indicates a risk, something that must be avoided, and it generally flattened into a number—the ten or the fifteen percent of a budget template. It is subject to a series of institutionalised formalities or self-regulated conventions, which act as standardised curatorial organisational forms. It responds to control procedures, safeguarding and reinforcing specific ideologies and structures of power and desire. Under these conditions, the philosophical meaning of this concept is itself avoided. The distribution of resources in budget templates means more than a series of percentages; these numbers carry a profound symbolism and yield material consequences.

This chapter consists of a theoretical analysis and practical implementation of the meaning, value and function of the element of contingency represented in the cells and columns of Excel spreadsheets in curatorial budget templates. On one side of this analysis, I will explore the relationship of contingency with the theory of potentiality; its relationship with language, time and truth; the edge between Being and not-Being; and the multiple possibilities of the becoming of art and the becoming of exhibitions. I will also consider the political and poetic significance of its internal resistance, which is intrinsic to the creative act. My intention is to acknowledge the semantic and logical repercussions of statements about past or future contingencies when they are spoken or written in correspondence to their ontological truths. In doing so I aim to establish a theoretical basis for understanding the philosophical complexities and core paradoxes of this concept, and to, finally, reveal the internal resistance contingency, which opens up the debate about determinism versus agency and free will.

On the other side of this enquiry, I will address the symbolic and material effects of the use of contingency as an administrative strategy to deal with accidents, faulty calculations, and unwanted events in the capitalisation of art and time in curatorial practice. The aim is to experiment with the possibility of converting the concept of contingency into a practical strategy to resist prearranged values and prescribed functions, and into an instrument to

unlock unknown potentials and recreate an alternative form of programming a curatorial economy of time.⁶⁶

In doing so I will present the result of the accidental encounter between two interdisciplinary notions of contingency, by clashing its conceptual philosophical meaning together with its practical administrative values and functions. The result of this clash will be the conversion of contingency into a curatorial strategy of resistance: capable of suspending of the mechanistic course of the capitalised curatorial economy of time, and welding an alternative space-time to recover undervalued potentials in other possibilities of Becoming, or not-Becoming, of exhibitions, ideas, or curated events.⁶⁷

00.03

My definition of contingency is the capacity of something (a thing, a thought, an event) to be true and, at the same time, not to be true—a Being that can both Be and not-Be.⁶⁸ It exists in the tension between potentiality and actuality, but also in the tension between potentiality and potentiality-not-to. This tension can only be articulated in a statement that can be both true and false. This statement can only take the material, corporeal or embodied form of something (or someone) that simultaneously Is and Is-not. To formulate this definition, I am considering the Aristotelian correspondence theory of truth, in which the distinction of different modalities of semantic signification is conveyed not simply as a matter of language and grammatical function but also as a matter of metaphysics.⁶⁹

00.04

⁶⁶ Nikolaus Hirsch shares this concern. He asks, ‘what happens if the rectangular bars in chart become more than annoying pragmatic tools but creative potential for curatorial practice—new conceptual devises, ultimately new patterns and geometries that have their own life?’ (Nikolaus Hirsch, ‘Plans Are Noting – Planning Is Everything,’ 68).

⁶⁷ . Here I am flirting with Gilles Deleuze’s advice regarding ideas that come from minor details and resonate in interdisciplinary joints—sharing a concern, a common problem or an affinity—which, he suggests, is what sometimes makes for a great encounter (Gilles Deleuze, ‘Resistance in Art,’ 315).

⁶⁸ This definition is based on Giorgio Agamben’s definition of contingency, which is itself based in Aristotle’s definition of contingency (Giorgio Agamben, ‘Bartleby, or On Contingency,’ 261. / Aristotle, ‘Metaphysics,’ 1653).

⁶⁹ Aristotle, ‘De Interpretatione.’ Agustinus Gianto, ‘Aristotle,’ 3-4.

In terms of theory, my argument is that contingent statements create a suspension between potentiality and actuality, but also in the passage between potentiality and potentiality-not-to, generating a space for paradox and resistance, which is intrinsic to the creative act. Further, following the above referred Aristotelian correspondence theory of truth, I argue that different modalities of semantic signification are also principles of Being and qualities of existence itself—there is a truthful correspondence between language and event or actual things. Therefore, by articulating that which can Be (true) and, at the same time, not-Be (not-true), language creates contingency, it affects its temporal dilemma, triggering the multiple possibilities of Being or not-Being, Becoming or not-Becoming of things, thoughts, and events.

I will develop this argument in the rest of the chapter by theorising contingency through a research process—consisting of a reading, interpretation, flirtation and anachronization process of key philosophical ideas—taking the material form of academic text.

With regards to practice, my plan is to transfer the conceptual significance of contingency into the calculation boxes ordered in the cells and columns of Excel Spreadsheets. My proposal consists of converting the element of contingency that appears in curatorial budget templates from an organisational tool into a ‘conceptual tool:’ something that combines managerial teleologies with philosophical knowledge. What results from the practical application of this new ‘conceptual tool’ is the systematic activation and strategic operation of the internal resistance of its paradoxical formula (its capacity to suspend the course between Being and not-Being). In other words, what arises from this transferal is the practical suspension of the mechanistic course of the capitalised curatorial economy of time. This, consequently, renders inoperative the values and functions ordained in standardised curatorial time-management formats and time-wage formulas.

I will (not) develop this proposal in the rest of the chapter by exhibiting ‘potentiality-not-to,’ and articulating ‘prefer-not-to.’ To exhibit ‘potentiality-not-to’ means to display the suspension and exposition of the potentiality-not-to of a curated project. To articulate ‘I would prefer not to’ means to enact a statement of resistance by refusing to become an operative part within the rhythms and tempos of curatorial capitalist temporality.

Returning to the idea and original reason that led me to investigate the meaning of the element of contingency in curatorial budget templates, contingency is used as an organisational tool and control procedure, but, in the past and in philosophy, it has had other values and functions. Therefore, from a simple idea, I am reconstructing a concept, and articulating a curatorial argument. I am looking into the subversive power of a minor detail, recovering the true-value of an overlooked element and restoring the significance of an undermined idea, which surfaced from a past accidental yet meaningful encounter. As Deleuze puts it: ‘having an idea is a rare event.’⁷⁰

00.05

What can I make of the concept of contingency in curatorial budget templates?

00.06

The theme of contingency has been studied through various branches of philosophy throughout the history of Western thought, from Pre-Socratic to contemporary philosophy. It is a complex concept which has given to philosophy a number of struggles, triggering further discussions about determinism versus agency and free will. There are various philosophical entry points in the conceptualisation of this difficult notion, which include skepticism, materialism, theology, theory of the self, existentialism, speculative realism, amongst others.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Gilles Deleuze, ‘Resistance in Art,’ 320.

⁷¹ The historical origin of the conceptualisation of contingency can be traced to the pre-Socratic period, and attributed to Democritus and Sextus Empiricus, who, attempting not to uphold any theory, elaborated on the concept of the *epokhē* (suspension of judgement), along with theory of the void, from which atoms collided in contingent encounters, forming the world. This theory was taken up a millennia later by Louise Althusser, who, combining Skepticism with materialism, argued in favour of the contingent transcendence of the world. In the medieval period Thomas Aquinas elaborated on the opposition between the notion of *ens necessarium* (God) to the notion of *ens contingens* (human beings). During the Enlightenment, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz introduced the idea of the pyramid of the possible worlds that could have existed instead of the actual world, vindicating the will of God through the principle of sufficient reason. In the Modern period, it is relevant to mention Richard Rorty, whose pragmatic interpretation of the contingency of selfhood is based on Nietzsche’s notion of the untimely. Moving into the contemporary era, Christopher Bouton makes an interpretation of Leibniz’s theory, looking into the problem of the relationship between time and freedom. For his part, Alan Badiou addresses contingency through the notion of ‘the event,’ alluding to irreducible singularities, ‘beyond-the-law’ situations, continuous and immanent ruptures or ‘situated’ voids that coerce new ways of being. Finally, for Quentin Meillassoux, it is contingency alone that is necessary, hence the paradox of his argument ‘necessity of contingency,’ which transforms contingency into its classical Aristotelian opposite, the necessary.

However, considering the multiple possibilities involved in selecting the most relevant philosophical framework for my research, I have formulated the argument for this chapter starting from a subjective reading of Giorgio Agamben's notion of contingency. He elaborates this notion from a historical-theoretical interpretation of Western metaphysics and an extensive and established philosophical engagement with political thought, in an effort to formulate an alternative ontology in the theorisation of potentiality. This Agambenian entry point is complemented with a flirtatious and anachronistic enquiry into the philosophical notion of the 'potential-not-to.' Agamben takes this from Aristotle's surveys of the philosophy of language and representation, metaphysics and his studies on the soul. In addition, it includes an interpretation of the literary formula 'prefer-not-to,' articulated by Herman Melville in his short story *Bartleby, the Scrivener, A Story of Wall-Street*. This interpretation is complemented with the additional philosophical support of Gilles Deleuze's 'Bartleby, Or The Formula,' whose philosophical undertaking is based on a critique of the linguistic components, as well as the political and psychoanalytic implications of Bartleby's utterance.

The reason for preferring to ground my interpretation in these authors and preferring not to ground it in any others initially occurred by accident, then it became an argumentative necessity. First, my research involves the exploration of the genealogy of concepts and how they transform in time. Amongst all possible authors, Agamben's essay 'Bartleby, or On Contingency,' contains a recompilation of theorisations on contingency coming from a variety of sources from the past. He elaborates on a philosophical interpretation of several key authors that, throughout history, have inquired into the meaning of this concept. Thinkers, writers, scholars, mathematicians, artists, friars and philosophers, from different historical eras come into a dialogue through Agamben's association of ideas. Nevertheless, Aristotle's 'potential not to' and Herman Melville's 'prefer not to' are the *leitmotifs* and central pillars of his argument.

For this reason, I have decided to read seminal sources from ancient Greek philosophy to nineteenth century North American literature. I did not expect to re-direct my research to Aristotle and Melville, but this connection with the past, which came by chance, turned out to determine the justification for my proposal. In other words, the encounter with Agamben's historical text connected my arguments with the methodology that led me to them. Again, I am using categories from the past in order to interpret the present, however, I am also

applying ideas from the present in order to understand the past. Some outdated or archaic concepts (which include notions such as truth, the soul, aporia, the sacred and profane) are also included with the intention to make them relevant once more. Thus, this analysis connects both historical and contemporary philosophical frameworks with the aim to experiment with anachronistic ways I can engage and interpret contingency and time. I am regarding the idea of returning to anachronistic concepts as a form of awakening their dormant potentials, to make them contemporary, to re-apply their latent power.

Secondly, the accidental encounter with these authors became a necessary philosophical support for my own argument when considering that Agamben interprets the concepts of contingency, being and becoming and the creative act as forms of resistance to any pre-given norms, or preprogramed values and functions. By turning to Aristotle and Melville he makes it possible to think a potentiality that is not governed, or prefers not to be governed, by an already given result.⁷² For Agamben, the work of art demonstrates that before there are subjects who have proper and determined ends there is the opening out into the world.⁷³ By reaching the internal substance or underlying core structure of being itself (pure potentiality), Agamben affirms the existence of a potentiality liberated from any body, norm, or organism other than its own power of the pure act.⁷⁴ He thereby re-positions the inherent resistance to this kind of potentiality, which can become a point of departure for political action and/or artistic creation—a critical and creative tool for opening new possible forms of usage. This idea is relevant for curating and for my argument since it offers an artistic and political strategy to obliterate preprogramed values and to resist prescribed functions, allowing to unlock alternative potentials to those of capitalism in the curatorial conception, practice and experience of time.

00.07

Contingency also endures as a form of curatorial research, and it has been addressed directly and indirectly through the exploration of various correlated areas, such as chance, probability, resistance, and risk.⁷⁵ As mentioned in the introduction, exhibitionary considerations of

⁷² Claire Colebrook, 'Queer Aesthetics,' 30.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Margaret Iversen looks into chance encounters and fortuitous situations that endure as creative modes of research in artistic and curatorial practice. Robin Mackay and Elie Ayache examine probability in the

contingency connect with historical creative initiatives which utilise contingency as an aim or by-product of artistic and curatorial making; as well as with contemporary discussions about temporality in curatorial theory. It is therefore relevant to briefly reference these practitioners and theoreticians once again.

Past examples of artists and curators utilising the internal resistance of contingency, which in turn encounter the concepts of ‘preferring-not-to’ and ‘potentiality-not-to,’ in their practices include Marcel Duchamp, whose canonical *Mile String* (1942) was designed to interrupt the viewing experience by physically blocking and suspending access to the space.⁷⁶ Ray Johnson, who created *Mail Art* (1950’s), formed an informal, improvised and chance-based network of collaborators by exchanging artworks by mail with the intention not to be valued as commodity. While John Cage employed chance procedures, random and indeterminate contingent methods in his practice; his famous *4’33’’* (1952) instructs performers not to play their instruments, focusing instead on the presence of the absence inherent to silence, and the revelation of the potentiality not-to-play. In *Closed Gallery* (1969), Robert Barry opted for non-production by producing three invitations to gallery shows informing the audience that during the exhibition, the gallery would be closed. Lucy Lippard’s numbered exhibitions (1969) employed a do-it-yourself improvised and contingent approach, whereby artists were asked to pass on an ‘instruction’ to the next. In Lee Lozano’s *General Strike Piece* (1969) the artist avoided being present at public art events, withdrawing from social expectations and networking in the art world; while in *Decide to Boycott Women* (1971) she refused to speak to women in order to ‘improve communication.’ Harald Szeemann’s *Museum of Obsessions* (1970’s), consisted of a critique of the conservatism of art institutions and art history through a fictive museum existing only in his head. Keith Aruet’s *Is it possible to do nothing as my contribution to this exhibition?* (1970) was a piece where the artist proposed to do nothing as his contribution for an institutional exhibition. Mladen Stilinović’s *Artist at Work* (1978), was a performance consisting of the artist sleeping in a gallery. These last two pieces refer to the feeling of exhaustion and fatigue as a result of over-productivity and the

relationship of contingency to volatility, speculation, impact and risk control in contemporary art and philosophy. Mick Wilson looks into resistance in artistic and curatorial attitudes and institutional behaviours that refuse, withdraw or negate the dominant flows of information, language, policy and ideology. John C. Welchman researches the significance of contingency and risk in the art world. Jean-Yves Jouannais examines non-production by analysing an assortment of non-realized projects and collections of non-artistic events. Krzysztof Gutfrański explores intersections of aesthetics and contingency in the juxtaposition of risk, danger, and fear in various aspects of contemporary visual culture.

⁷⁶ Like Duchamp, many other *avant-garde* artists disrupted conventional modes of experiencing time and space, questioning the social, relational, and situational context of their practices.

acceleration of time. The *Société Perpendiculaire* (1984), who gathered unwanted ideas or rejected plans. In a playful yet critical tone they valued the artistic quality of useless bureaucratic operations. Finally, it is relevant to mention Tehching Hsieh's *One Year Performance, or No Art Piece* (1985-86), for one year, the artist unaffiliated himself with art in any possible way.

For their part, contemporary curatorial discussions connecting with the temporal aspects of contingency involve theoreticians and practitioners who explore discontinuity in exhibitions, forms of suspending the course of mechanistic time, and strategies of resistance to the capitalisation of time and art. As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, some cases comprise Beatrice von Bismarck, who considered the contingent character of processual exhibitions.⁷⁷ Adrian Heathfield, whose experience of duration produced a suspension of objective time measurements.⁷⁸ Nicolas Bourriaud, followed by Jörn Schafaff, who put forward Marx's notion of social interstice, by suggesting other trading possibilities than those in present within the capitalistic system.⁷⁹ Elsewhere, Myriam Van Imschoot looks into political resistance in practices of performativity.⁸⁰ Katya Garcia-Anton, challenges the dynamics of consumption, consumerism and the capitalisation of knowledge by suggesting to 'practice resistance.'⁸¹

These are examples of artists and curators who theorise and practice 'preferring-not-to' and 'potentiality-not-to.' Inspired by this past tradition and enduring contemporary discussion, I abstain from producing a practical component in this chapter. Regarding the production of a practical project for this chapter, my curatorial statement is the following:

'I would prefer not to.'

Detaching from Agamben's argument that in any act of creation there is something that resists creation, I put forward a gesture of resistance by (not) presenting a curatorial project that resists its own creation. This is my own way of practicing (curating) contingency. I am

⁷⁷ Beatrice von Bismarck, *Of(f) Our Times: Curatorial Anachronics*. / Beatrice Von Bismarck, 'Out of Sync, or Curatorial Hetero-chronicity, "Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials (1969)".'

⁷⁸ Adrian Heathfield, 'Durational Aesthetics.'

⁷⁹ Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*. Jörn Schafaff, 'Challenging Institutional Standard Time.'

⁸⁰ Myriam Van Imschoot, 'Rests in Pieces: On Scores, Notation and the Trance in Dance.'

⁸¹ Katya Garcia-Anton, 'Slaves to the Rhythm, Performing Sociability in the Exhibitionary Complex.'

practicing ‘potentiality-not-to’ by exhibiting (displaying) the potential to not exhibit. I am practicing ‘I would prefer not to’ by articulating (uttering and enacting) a curatorial statement of resistance. I am curating thus contingency through a linguistic articulation linked to the actual realisation of the event of suspension and the negation of capitalist temporality.⁸² My intention is to convert the standardised form of practical usage bestowed upon the element of contingency in curatorial budget templates from a control procedure, into a strategy of resistance, capable of suspending the mechanistic course of the capitalised curatorial economy of time. Consequently, rendering inoperative the values and functions ordained in curatorial time-management formats and time-wage formulas.

00.08

The urgency and truth-value of my own proposal (why this interdisciplinary clash is relevant to curatorial discourse) lies in its intention to recuperate the critical and creative potential of contingency as a way to resist, but also to repair from the miscellaneous effects produced by capitalism in the curatorial conception, practice and experience of time. I thus return to the element of contingency that appears in curatorial budget templates to unpack its philosophical meaning as a strategy to subvert its standardised values and functions. At this point it is relevant to introduce a first Agambenian term: ‘profanity.’ This term refers to the appropriation of the sacred into the profane; offering the possibility of a new usage in the objects that surround us and a way to combat capitalism. Profanity is the ability to recognise the potential for a different purpose in things, objects, ideas or concepts other than the one they traditionally held. It has also to do with the act of playing. Play, Agamben explains, derives from the traditions of the sacred, but it also denotes the possibility of its overturning.⁸³ To play by the same rules and logic dictated by the sacred is to maintain them but also to disrupt them from within. To transfer the philosophical meaning of contingency from the realm of ontology into the values and functions of managerial teleologies is to preserve the structures of power that safeguard and reinforce them, but it is also to overturn them. In other words, it is to convert the element of contingency into an operative concept,

⁸² In other words, this is an enacted statement of resistance to the aforementioned results of sums and subtractions caused by the capitalisation of time in curatorial processes and formulas. As already explained, these include over-productivity, the acceleration, exploitation and bureaucratisation of time, financial precariousness and affective exploitation, the imbalances of power and the coercion of oppressive systems and subjects in the production and validation of intellectual capital.

⁸³ Giorgio Agamben, ‘Profanations,’ 75-77.

capable of suspending the rhythms and tempos of capitalised curatorial economies. This conversion will allow for welding an alternative space-time to recover devalued potentials in the Becoming, or not-Becoming, of an exhibition, idea, or curated event.

00.09

This chapter is structured in accordance to the division of six numbered and sequential sections. As the reader might have noticed, there is a numbered progression of the presentation of sections within the text. These sequential numbers will progress throughout the chapter until its end. I have added these numbers as a reference to the course of mechanistic time, the scheming and calculation of elements in Excel spreadsheets. It is a formal curatorial gesture, alluding to the philosophical dilemma of logical determinism versus contingency (agency or free will).

Section **01.00**, *Language and Truth*, is displayed as a chronological close reading of Aristotle's *De Interpretatione*. In this treatise, the philosopher studies the nature and true-value of contradictions between statements, and the possibilities of combinations and separations amongst them. By utilising an example of an artwork that breaks, he raises the question of whether there might be an exception with respect to statements about future contingents, which are neither necessary nor impossible, and may take place or may not (from which derive further discussions of logical determinism versus agency or free will). Here I introduce the already stated idea that the Aristotelian distinction between different modalities of semantic signification are not simply a matter of language and grammatical function, but most importantly a matter of metaphysics. In other words, there is a truthful correspondence between language and events or actual things. Therefore, what is at stake in his modalities of language are the many ways in which Being or Becoming can be truthfully said. The aim of this initial section is to reflect upon the issue of language and truth with regards to contingency, the role that time plays in this affiliation. I am exploring whether contingency can be expressed in language (in a statement that can be both true and false), and if language, like contingency itself, can produce exceptions to the rules of grammar and logic. My conclusion is that contingent statements are linguistic articulations that correspond to the actual ontological status of that which can simultaneously Be (true) and not-Be (not-true). In other words, contingent statements produce a suspension in truth.

Section **02.00**, *Potentiality*, focuses on Aristotle and Agamben's investigations into potentiality and contingency. This section starts with a reading of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, where I distinguish between the particularities of active potentiality and passive potentiality, and the aporias around absence, privation and not-Being. Here I introduce the fundamental premise of the Aristotelian contingency in which potentiality can Be and potentiality can not-Be. I also present an analysis of Agamben's exhaustive investigation of this formula—'potentiality-not-to'—which transforms all potentiality into an impotentiality. Subsequently, in order to make a linkage of potentiality with the interpretation of language and truth, I go back to *De Interpretatione*, where Aristotle briefly refers to affections in the soul in relation to their linguistic correspondence. He argues that some are neither true nor false while some are necessary and others are not. This re-directs my investigation to *De Anima*, where I consider the relationship of language with the aporias concerning the potentiality of the soul (thought and sensation) and pure potentiality. To illustrate these theories, I consider Aristotle's famous example of a writing-table on which nothing is yet written. This example is a metaphor of the potentiality of the soul (thought and sensation) but also as a metaphor of the potentiality of language. I conclude that language exists as the potential to signify but also as the potential-not-to signify. Therefore, what is at stake here, once more, are the many ways in which Being or Becoming can be truthfully said, but also the many ways in which Being or Becoming can be truthfully not said.

Section **3.00**, *Language and Being* explores the correspondence of language and embodied contingency through the analysis of Melville's short story. This section expands on the exploration of the philosophical formula 'potential-not-to' already studied under the lenses of Aristotle and Agamben, by including the literary formula 'prefer-not-to.' I also introduce Deleuze's interpretation on the story, starting with a brief overview of the three types of figures he distinguishes: Copies, Prophets and Originals. According to Deleuze, Bartleby's 'queer word,' disconnects words and things and hollows out an ever expanding zone of indetermination that renders words indistinguishable. By 'preferring' he neither agrees to do the job nor fully rejects it. Instead, he twists the referential meaning of his answer, provoking a flirtatious oscillation between any possible affirmation or any possible negation. Similar to Aristotle's exceptions to the rules of grammar and logic in contingent statements, in 'prefer-not-to' potentiality and actuality, truth and falsehood become suspended. Following this logic, I also include a brief referral to The Skeptics' notion of *epoché* or suspension of judgement and its co-relation to language in the form of tautologies. I conclude that

Bartleby's mechanistic phrase carries with it the message that Being is Being-potential but also Being-potential-not-to. It articulates the tension between potentiality and potentiality-not-to of language and Being. It is a linguistic annunciation of the contingency of language and Being. Under the rules and logic of these exceptional parameters, thereafter, Bartleby becomes himself the writing-table on which nothing is yet written; he becomes pure potentiality or the literacy human embodiment of this contingency.

Section **04.00**, *Resistance*, is an extension of the previous analysis, but focused on the resistance and political relevance of 'prefer-not-to.' As seen above, Bartleby's repetitive phrase articulates and embodies contingency—the suspension in the threshold of Being (true) and not-Being (not-true). However, what concerns to Melville, and what interests this research, are the events that could have but never took place—the many ways in which Being or Becoming can truthfully not be said. By resisting the passage to actuality Bartleby demonstrates that he is capable of his own impotentiality—connecting with the dilemma of destiny ('providence,' to say of Melville) and agency or free will ('perverse voluntary agent,' also to say of Melville). This yields to him a certain power and drives me to consider two further Agambenian terms: 'decreation,' which alludes to the moment of interruption made by the writing marks, when language preserves all its potentiality not-to; and 'inoperative,' which indicates the refusal to be an operative part of the state's machinery. I then argue that Bartleby embodies the kind of potentiality that resists being governed by any given end and reaffirms his condition as an 'Original'—that which does not align to the reproduction (copying) of the law. Furthermore, this misalignment (this anachronism) is a form of 'passive resistance.' This involves a capacity to 'pervert' others, 'turning the tongues' of those around him, who start to use the 'queer word' 'prefer' themselves. However, it also implicates his removal from the general domain of language, and his insinuated death by starvation. This section ends with a reflection on the dual paradoxical power and powerlessness of passive resistance.

Section **05.00** is assigned to the *Practical Component*. As already explained, it has been suspended. Inspired by Aristotle's image of the writing tablet on which nothing yet has been written, the reader will encounter a sheet of paper without any characters and without any ideas. The intention of this gesture is to produce an experience of interruption within the narrative and mechanistic rhythm in which this chapter has been structured and designed (to formally insert a *caesura* into its calculated sequence). The aim is also to interrupt the

materialisation of written marks or spoken sounds (the emergence of language) and thus suspend the passage from non-creation to the creation of a curated project. Again, this is how I am practicing (curating) contingency. Once more, my aim is to display the suspension and exposition of the potentiality-not-to of an exhibition, idea, or curated event. I am looking into the poetic and political relevance of the capacity of a curatorial statement not-to-signify. Therefore, by presenting a sheet of paper without any characters or ideas inscribed in it, this empty section physically displays the internal resistance of contingency. It is the material outcome of an enacted articulation of negation to being part of mechanistic temporality.

Section **06.00**, the *Conclusive Section*, summarises the process that has led to the argument of this chapter. This section articulates the outcome of the interdisciplinary clash between a curatorial proposal that combines administrative formulas with philosophical knowledge. Once more, this outcome involves the creation of a ‘conceptual tool,’ something that transfers the theoretical meaning of contingency developed through this chapter into the cells and columns of curatorial budget templates. The reader should expect from this ‘conceptual tool’ the suspension of the mechanistic course of the capitalised curatorial economy of time. This will be a practical strategy to resist to preprogramed values and functions, but also a tool of support for processes of resilience to the miscellaneous effects produced by the destructive and devouring rhythms and tempos of this economy.

As a final note, the reader will also acknowledge that I will be intervening some of the authors’ quoted ideas by transferring examples from philosophy into the realm of curating (e.g. shifting Aristotle’s famous example of a sea-battle that might happen in the future into a contemporary situation whereby an artwork might break during an upcoming opening event). The intention of this transferal is to somehow retain the texture of curatorial practice in the theory I will be unpacking. The aim is also to add a playful and flirtatious approach to the in-depth reading, analysis and interpretation of classic and contemporary philosophy.

01.00

Language and Truth

01.01-00

The philosophical debate about future contingents can be traced back to the year 350 B.C.E, when Aristotle wrote *De Interpretatione*, one of the six works on language and logic that comprise the compendium of his *Organon*. In this treatise, the philosopher analyses the true-value of singular statements about future contingents in relation to categorical prepositions and basic linguistic forms. He studies the correlation between language, with falsity and truth; by analysing how events or actual things are represented, and distinguishing characteristics of names, verbs, sentences, statement-making-sentences, affirmations, negations, contradictions, and events or actual things. In other words, he looks into the correspondence between language as means of representation (written marks and spoken sounds) and events or actual things. As earlier reiterated, for Aristotle, categorical prepositions and basic linguistic forms are also principles of Being. Once again, the Aristotelian distinction between different modalities of semantic signification is not simply a matter of language and grammatical function, but also a matter of metaphysics. He thus examines the aporias around contradictory pairs dividing truth and falsity, and raises the question as to whether there might be an exception with regards statements about future events, which are neither necessary, nor impossible, and may take place or may not. The first four chapters are called the ‘linguistic chapters,’ which summarise a history of grammar and linguistics. The rest of the treatise deals with logical problems of contrary pairs. In this work it is considered that Aristotle establishes the theoretical foundation for dialectics.⁸⁴

However, before starting this analysis, it is relevant to outline a basic definition of Aristotle’s concept of time. In the fourth book of his *Physics*, he introduces a quantitative approximation, in which time is inextricable to movement and change. He conceives time as a sequence of instants or ‘nows,’ measuring motion: ‘a number of motion in respect to

⁸⁴ C. W. A. Whitaker, *Aristotle’s De Interpretatione, Contradiction and Dialectic*, 1.

‘before’ and ‘after.’⁸⁵ To comprehend this type of time, it is necessary to have units of objective measure, which must be as universal as possible.⁸⁶ However, Aristotle combines this quantitative approach with the *via naturalis*. For him, time is also a material phenomenon depending on the body or soul; and although he concludes that while time can only be perceived through processes of change (transformations in nature, in the environment, in people’s bodies), this does not mean that time is constituted in its very being by the soul.⁸⁷ He thus presents both an objective-universal and a subjective-embodied conception of time.

It is also important to clarify what I mean by ‘truth’ in this context. Aristotle defines truth through the theory of correspondence between metaphysics and language in the following excerpt from his *Metaphysics*: ‘To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true.’⁸⁸ In addition, at the beginning of *De Interpretatione*, he equally addresses the issue of truth with regards to thought and affections in the soul. He writes: ‘written marks and spoken sounds are true when they are “likenesses” to thoughts and affections in the soul, which are themselves “likenesses” of actual things.’⁸⁹ The definition of truth I am employing, therefore, is a statement in which the implication of the existence of something—the actual ontological status of a thought, an event, a thing, a sensation—corresponds to the meaning (semantic content) of linguistic codes of representation and signification.

01.01-04

In Chapters 01 to 04 of his *De Interpretatione*, which I will focus on in this chapter, Aristotle begins his own analysis by distinguishing between the different elements that form propositions and make up language: ‘a name’ according to the Greek philosopher, is defined as a symbolic spoken sound, significant by convention, which exclude time references. ‘A verb’ is a sign of things said of something else, which additionally signifies time (activities or doing something). ‘A sentence’ is a significant spoken sound, some part of which is

⁸⁵ Aristotle, ‘Physics,’ 372.

⁸⁶ According to Agamben, this Aristotelian notion of time has determined for two millennia the Western representation of time as ‘a precise, infinite, quantified continuum.’ ‘The instant in itself,’ Agamben explains, ‘is nothing more than the continuity of time, a pure limit which both joins and divides past and future.’ (Giorgio Agamben, ‘Time and History, Critique of the Instant and the Continuum,’ 93.)

⁸⁷ Christophe Bouton, *Time and Freedom*, 9.

⁸⁸ Aristotle, ‘Metaphysics,’

⁸⁹ Aristotle, ‘De Interpretatione,’ 25.

significant in separation—as an expression, not an affirmation, and there is no truth or falsity in all sentences. ‘An affirmation’ is defined as a statement affirming something of something. ‘A negation’ refers to a statement denying something of something, and ‘contradictions’ are opposite statements that affirm and deny the same thing of the same thing.

01.05-08

Following this brief identification of basic elements of language, in Chapters 05 to 08, Aristotle initiates his exploration of contradiction, truth and falsehood and contingency in a contrary pair of statements by identifying ‘actual things,’ some being universal and others particular:

I call universal that which is by nature predicated of a number of things, and particular that which is not; man, for instance, is a universal, [Harald Szeemann] a particular. So it must sometimes be of a universal that one states that something holds or does not, sometimes of a particular. Now if one states universally of a universal that sometimes holds or does not, there will be contrary statements.⁹⁰

Particular terms refer to individual things; universal terms refer to groups of things. The name ‘Harald Szeemann,’ for instance, is a particular term because it refers to a single human being; the word ‘man,’ on the contrary, is a universal term because it universally applies to all members of the group ‘man.’ Every statement is composed of a subject and a predicate. And they can be combined or they can be separated in relation to one another. The expression ‘Harald Szeemann is white,’ for example, utters a combination: Harald Szeemann (particular) and whiteness (universal), in this sentence are combined. Universals can be either the subject or the predicate of a sentence, whereas particulars can only be subjects.

Aristotle next defines a ‘statement-making sentence’ as a sentence that adds a verb, which can be a simple statement affirming or denying something of something. A ‘statement-making sentence’ is ‘a significant spoken sound about whether something does or does not hold [truth or falsehood] (in one of the divisions of time).’⁹¹ Similar to a proposition, it is

⁹⁰ Aristotle, ‘De Interpretatione,’ 27. Aristotle uses the example of ‘Callias’ as being a particular.

⁹¹ Ibid, 26.

composed of a subject (a word naming a substance) and a predicate (a word naming a property) but adding a connecting verb (an activity linked to the principle of movement and change). Due to the combination of the passive name with the active element of the verb, this category is dependent on a temporal condition. ‘Statement-making sentences,’ therefore, operate also as predictions, or articulations of something that might happen (something does or does not hold) in a future time. Moreover, when ‘contrary statements’ are placed in opposition, he explains, it is necessary for one of them to be true and another false. He writes:

Of contradictory statements about universal taken universally it is necessary for one or the other to be true or false; similarly, if they are about particularities, e.g. [Harald Szeemann] is white—[Harald Szeemann] is not white. But if they are about universal not taken universally it is not always the case that one is true and the other false. For it is true to say at the same time that a man is white and that a man is not white, or that a man is noble and a man is not noble (for if base, then not noble; and if something is becoming something, then it is not that thing).⁹²

In other words, contradictory statements about universals not taken universally are contingent statements; and it is not possible to align truth or falsehood with necessity and universality to these types of categorical propositions because they are in a process of movement or change (becoming). Time, therefore, plays a fundamental role in the relationship between language and truth. Time conditions the veracity or falsity of statements when they are spoken in the form of prediction—utterances of something that might happen (something does or does not hold) in a future (quantitative) time.

To expand on the problematics of contingent statements it is relevant to mention Aristotle’s notion of the syllogism, which is also part of the study of dialectics of his *Organon*, although it appears in his *Prior Analytics*. In this expansive and exhaustive book, Aristotle continues his exploration of the different components of language by studying the significances of the syllogism in relation to the necessary and the impossible. According to the philosopher, a syllogism consists of certain assumptions or premises from which a conclusion can be deduced—a logical and semantic inference. He defines the syllogism as ‘a discourse in

⁹² Ibid, 28.

which, certain things having been stated follows of necessity because of their being so.’⁹³ It is constituted by the premise of an argument, giving rise to a conclusion, which results out of necessity (similar to the theological structure of a contemporary PhD).

For Aristotle, necessity means that is impossible to be true to say, at the same time, that something is and is not. According to him, it is also ‘the necessary’ and the ‘not necessary’ the first principles of everything either Being or not-Being.⁹⁴ The ‘contingent,’ for its part, is the opposite of the ‘necessary’ (Aristotle sometimes uses ‘chance’) and it can also either Be or not-Be.⁹⁵ However, I will dig into this fundamental paradox intrinsic to the opposition of contingency and necessity later in this text. For now, I return to his *Prior Analytics*, where he goes on to characterise possible forms of the syllogism in relation to necessity and the conclusions it can generate. He explains:

Every proposition states that something either belongs or must belong or may belong; of these some are affirmative, others negative, in respect of each of the three modes; again some affirmative and negative propositions are universal, others particular, others indefinite.⁹⁶

Hence, the syllogism, resulting out of necessity, is composed by two ‘extremes’ and a ‘middle’ (which is the conclusion that links the two extremes). A traditional example, with my own interventions, runs as follows:

All men are mortal. All [curators] are men. Therefore, all [curators] are mortal.⁹⁷

In *De Interpretatione*, *Prior Analytics* and other works on logic and language, Aristotle investigates the nature of contradictions between statements and the possibilities of combinations and separations between them (again, in relation to judgement and truth). Philosopher and linguist Austinus Gianto explains that, for Aristotle, the ability to group different things under the same headings or categories is the basis of human reasoning. These categories furthermore represent the different modes of Being. He examines Aristotle’s

⁹³ Aristotle, ‘Prior Analytics,’ 40.

⁹⁴ Aristotle, ‘Metaphysics,’ 1589.

⁹⁵ Giorgio Agamben, ‘Bartleby, Or on Contingency,’ 261.

⁹⁶ Aristotle, ‘Prior Analytics,’ 40.

⁹⁷ Aristotle uses the noun of ‘Athenians.’

correspondence between language and metaphysics, arguing that there is a natural equivalence between object and mental image (thought), conventionally represented by arbitrary signs of both spoken sounds and written marks.⁹⁸ Once again, the distinction between particulars and universals, subject and predicate, premises and syllogisms, is not simply a matter of language and grammatical function, it is furthermore, and most importantly, a matter of metaphysics. Linguistic categories are also principles of Being and qualities of existence itself. Substances (like universals) are first principles. Accidents or attributes (like particulars) are modifications that persist as substance. Consequently, following Aristotle's logic, there is a truthful correspondence between spoken sounds or written marks and events or actual things. Therefore, what matters in this correspondence between language and metaphysics is to get the property of sentences to agree with the facts or to state what is actually or potentially the real case. In other words, what is at stake in Aristotle's linguistic modality is the many ways in which 'Being is said.'⁹⁹ Thereafter, what is at stake in his contrary pair of statements about future contingents is the many ways in which Becoming can be said.

To sum up, so far it is possible to identify three essential elements in Aristotle's relationship of contingency and truth: language (spoken words, articulated statements, uttered categorical prepositions and basic linguistic forms), time (past, 'now,' future), and Being or Becoming (processes of movement or change in events or actual things). These three elements are close companions immersed together in the formulation of the Aristotelian concept of contingency in relation to truth.

01.09-11

Coming back to *De Interpretatione*, in his famous Chapter 9, the Greek philosopher addresses, with particular detail, the debate regarding future contingents and the ways in which Being or Becoming can be truthfully said. In this section, he studies the complexities of the relationship between language and time, and the passage from potentiality to actuality. This opens the discussion of logical determinism and free will. He digs into the analysis of the terms potentiality and actuality by examining the co-existence of affirmative and negative

⁹⁸ Agustinus Gianto, 'Aristotle,' 3-4.

⁹⁹ Daniel Heller-Roazen, 'To Read What Was Never Written,' 21.

sentences, and by giving an example of an artwork that breaks: ‘it would have neither to happen nor not to happen.’¹⁰⁰ If two curators are in a disagreement, and one says that an artwork will break at the opening event and the other says that the artwork will not break at the opening event, how can we know that one is true and the other false? If we say that one sentence is necessary and true when an accident happens at the opening event, can we also say that the other sentence is necessary and true if there is no accident at the opening event? From this, Aristotle raises questions of contradiction, falsity and the absurd. In this first instance, therefore, contingency is replaced by necessity and impossibility.

With regard to what is and what has been it is necessary for the affirmation or the negation to be true or false [...] if every affirmation or the negation is true or false it is necessary for everything either to be the case or not to be the case. For if one person says that something will be and another denies this same thing, it is clearly necessary for one of them to be saying what is true—if every affirmation is true or false; for both will not be the case together under such circumstances.¹⁰¹

We generally tend to think of a future event as a possibility and not a necessity. Due to the fact that a future event exists in the future and not in the present, we do not know for certain if it will happen or not. However, if a curator had made a prediction yesterday about an accident tomorrow, that prediction, because it is in the past, is fixed by necessity and not by possibility. This would mean that a future event is always necessarily true and not a possibility. If we think that all past events necessarily happened or necessarily did not happen, it can be presumed that there are no predictions in the past that possibly happened and did not possibly happen. On the contrary, it could be assumed that predictions are not possible in the present, but rather they are necessary in the past; meaning that the event has always been determined.

‘An artwork will break’ and ‘an artwork will not break’ are contrary statements. They both have the potentiality to be either true or false and they both correspond to a future reality where the accident will take place with necessity, or not take place with necessity. So it is not necessary for the accident to occur and it is necessary for the accident not to occur. In this

¹⁰⁰ Aristotle, ‘De Interpretatione,’ 29. Aristotle gives the example of the prediction of a ‘sea-battle’ happening or not happening tomorrow.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

case, both possibilities are open; consequently, both Being and not-Being, both coming to be and not coming to be are happening with necessity or not happening with necessity. Under this logic, once again, there is no room for contingency (chance), which puts in doubt the existence of human freedom or free will. However, Aristotle presents a second example where necessity is at stake, but this time giving to contingency (chance) some chance to explain itself.

It is possible for this cloak to be cut up, and yet it will not be cut up but will wear out first. But equally, its not being cut up is also possible, for it would not be the case that it wore out first unless its not being cut up were possible. So it is the same with all other events that are spoken of in terms of this kind of possibility. Clearly, therefore, not everything is or happens of necessity: some things happen as chance has it, and of the affirmation and the negation neither is true rather than the other.¹⁰²

In this case, the true-value or falsehood of both affirmative and negative sentences depend on a temporal condition (becoming, processes of movement or change). Similar to the rule of the ‘statement-making sentence,’ the true-value or falsehood of both affirmative and negative sentences in this example is itself contingent on the connecting verb, and on a contextualisation of a specific time: to the moment when words are spoken, the instant when letters are written, or to the ‘now’ when predictions are uttered regarding the actualisation of something that might happen (something does or does not hold) in a future time. Contingency, therefore, emerges in the moment or instant when a contrary pair of statements are spoken or written in accordance to their possibility of becoming true. To clarify this further, Aristotle presents a third and final example where necessity and contingency (chance) are again dependent on time and circumstance (once again, to processes of movement or change).

What is, necessary is, when it is; and what is not, necessary is not, when it is not. But not everything that is, necessarily is; and not everything that is not, necessarily is not [...] Clearly, then, it is not necessary that of every affirmation and opposite negation

¹⁰² Aristotle, ‘De Interpretatione,’ 30.

one should be true and the other false. For what holds for things that are does not hold for things that are not but may possibly be or not be.¹⁰³

In this example Aristotle puts forward one of the aporias of contingency, which is also known as the principle of non-contradiction or conditioned necessity: when the ‘necessary’ and the ‘not necessary’ become themselves contingent time-based principles of Being (true) or not-Being (not-true). To explain this further, the philosopher and logician Jaakko Hintikka makes an exhaustive analysis of Aristotle’s *De Interpretatione* by revising the concepts of necessity and contingency in relation to their linguistic component. He argues that Aristotle’s ideas regarding statements of future events have always been true if they are true at all, and always false if they are false at all. He explains that statements of this kind were thought of by Aristotle as being true or false necessarily. Aristotle’s problem is thus primarily that of omnitemporal truth—or, more accurately, that of infinite past truth—rather than that of future truth.¹⁰⁴ The following excerpt from Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* explains this dilemma even further:

Regarding contingent facts, then, the same opinion or the same statement comes to be false and true, and it is possible at one time to have the truth and at another to be in error; but regarding things that cannot be otherwise opinions are not at one time true and at another false, but the same opinions are always true or false.¹⁰⁵

When two opposite necessary statements about future events are articulated at the same time they are always true or always false. On contrary, when two opposite contingent statements about future events are articulated at the same time their truth-value becomes suspended. In the sentences ‘the artwork will break’ and ‘the artwork will not break,’ the spoken or written word and the event or actual thing are simultaneously separated and united in a temporal ‘now’ in which the same opinion is simultaneously true and false. This is the linguistic articulation of contingency: it emerges in the moment or instant when a contrary pair of statements about past or future affairs are spoken or written in accordance to their conflicting ontological truths—in contingency, their antagonistic possibilities of Being (true) or not-Being (not-true) are both possible. For this reason, contingent statements have the power to

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Jaakko Hintikka, *Time and Necessity, Studies in Aristotle’s Theory of Modality*, 153.

¹⁰⁵ Aristotle, ‘Metaphysics,’ 1661.

free themselves from the conditions of the necessary and the impossible, and this is what makes it possible to think in accordance with agency and free will. Contingent statements thus can both Be and not-Be. They are the exception to the rule.

01.12-13

In his last two Chapters, 12 and 13, Aristotle continues to explore the possibilities of separation and combination between sentences; further considering ‘the possible’ and ‘not possible;’ ‘the admissible’ and ‘not admissible;’ ‘the impossible’ and ‘not impossible;’ ‘the necessary’ and ‘not necessary;’ ‘what is true’ and ‘what is not true.’ He continues in this fashion because, as he writes, ‘there are more puzzles here.’ It is important, at this juncture, to highlight his ongoing concern with the difficulties of predictions. As he states:

For the capable is spoken of in more than one way: either because it is true as being actualised (e.g. it is capable of [curating] because it [curates], and in general capable of being because what is called capable already is in actuality) or because it might be actualised (e.g. it is capable of [curating] because it might [curate]). This latter capability to changeable things only, the former to unchangeable things also.¹⁰⁶

This final extract is the link to the next section of this chapter of this thesis, as Aristotle introduces the notion of ‘the capable’ (a term which, together with ‘art’ and ‘possibility’ Aristotle utilises to elaborate on the concept of ‘potentiality’) and the (dis)attachment of this notion with ‘actuality.’ Here Aristotle alludes to the aporias in the opposition of actuality-potentiality, in relation to language, truth and time. He refers to ‘the capable’ as something that is ‘true’ and ‘spoken’ in more than one way: it actualises itself in language when it is occurring (in necessity) or when it might occur (in contingency). The true-value of the capable once again is dependent on processes of movement or change (becoming). To extend this analysis, however, it is necessary to get a more considered understanding of how Aristotle conceives potentiality, and its relationship to contingency. For that reason, I will elaborate on this plan in the following section.

¹⁰⁶ Aristotle, ‘De Interpretatione,’ 36. Aristotle writes: ‘capable of “walking” because it walks.’

02.00

Potentiality

02.01

There are many ways Aristotle gives meaning to potentiality. The most accurate way of understanding his definition of this concept is not to identify the different names he gives to it ('possibility,' 'capability,' 'art'), but to acknowledge the different ways with which it can be applied.¹⁰⁷ Accordingly, there are two different kinds of potentiality that Aristotle introduces at the beginning of the Book IX (Theta) of his *Metaphysics*. The first one is a kind of potentiality that is insusceptible to change (the universal in language and logic, and the substance in metaphysics). The second one is a kind of potentiality that is capable of being changed and being acted on by another thing, or an organic unity that cannot be acted on by itself (what is the subject in language and logic and the accident in metaphysics).

A curatorial proposal, for instance, can change into another thing, like an actual exhibition. The proposal is an exhibition potentially, while the exhibition is an exhibition in actuality. Hence, a curatorial proposal can become an exhibition only if some external factor, like an award, is granted. So, the first kind of potentiality (the kind that is insusceptible to change) has an active potentiality (the potentiality of acting), which is represented by the funding body that gave the award. The second kind of potentiality (the kind that is susceptible to change) has a passive potentiality (capable of being changed and being act on by another thing); this is represented by the curatorial proposal.

Thus, active potentiality can act or not act. Passive potentiality can Be and not-Be. However, what is important in these formulas is to consider that potentiality should not be reduced to act or to being without regarding its own possibility to not-act or its own capacity to not-Be. To examine this further, Aristotle makes a critique of the beliefs of the Megarian school of philosophy, who restrained potentiality to act. The Megarians thought that 'a thing can act

¹⁰⁷ Jaakko Hintikka, *Time and Necessity, Studies in Aristotle's Theory of Modality*, 153.

only when it is acting, and when it is not acting it cannot act.’¹⁰⁸ This would mean, for example, that if someone stands in front of a projection screen, that person will always be standing and will always block the view; on the contrary if that someone is sitting under a projection screen, that person will always be sitting and will never get up—she or he won’t ever block the view. This also suggests that potentiality exists only when it is being actualised and, therefore, it cannot be distinguished from actuality, which consequently, abolishes the existence of potential. To this, Aristotle responds: ‘it is not hard to see the absurdities that attend this view.’¹⁰⁹ The philosopher argues that to be standing means to be able to stand up, not reductively the act of standing up. Thus, to be a curator means to be able to curate. Not only the act of curating.

Aristotle further explains that it is impossible to have any art (any capability, possibility, potentiality) if one has not learnt and acquired the art (considering cases of active potentiality). Also, it is impossible not to have any art if one has not sometime lost, either by forgetfulness or by some accident or by time, those arts.¹¹⁰ By this, Aristotle indicates that, contrary to the opinion of the Megarians, a woman or man will continue to have the art (the capability, possibility, potentiality) she or he has learnt even when, or after, she or he has ceased to use it (an individual will still be able to stand up when she or he is sitting; a curator will still be able to curate even if she/he does not curate because she/he did not receive the funding she/he applied for). One thing is to have a capacity, another is to exercise it; one thing is to possess a potentiality, another is to actualise that potentiality. Aristotle shows a confident point of view on this opinion, but then again, he afterwards meets once again with the absurdities of the Megarians whereby the threshold between actuality and potentiality becomes itself ambiguous. However, what marks the difference between Aristotle and the Megarians is the fact that the latter only considered active potentiality and not passive potentiality.¹¹¹ Before immersing further in these puzzles, for now, I will conclude with the basic characteristics and differences between potentiality and actuality.

02.02

¹⁰⁸ The Megarians were Aristotle’s contemporaries, whose work on modal logic and dialectics played an important role in the development of logic in antiquity. Aristotle, ‘Metaphysics,’ 1653.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 1589.

Aristotle defines actuality as the:

the existence of the thing, not in the way which we express by ‘potentially;’ we say that potentially, for instance, a statue of [Eros] is in the block of wood and the half-line is in the whole, because it might be separated out, and even the [woman] who is not [curating] we call a [curator], if [she] is capable of [curating].¹¹²

On the one hand, actuality is assigned to existing things—the actualisation of Being—, which is associated with movement and change (becoming).¹¹³ On the other hand, potentiality is associated with objects of thought and desire—the non-actualisation of Being—which are things that do not actually exist (they would have existed if they were moved), but they do exist in the form of potentiality.¹¹⁴ In this example, the block of wood represents passive potentiality (capable of being changed and being acted on by another) whereas the female curator represents active potentiality (the potentiality of acting on other things). However, in both cases, the distinction between potentiality and actuality implies a logical paradox, since passive or active potentialities mutually present themselves equally as things that exist but that, at the same time, do not exist as actual things: ‘they are present, yet they do not appear in the form of presenting things.’¹¹⁵ In Aristotle’s example, the statue of Eros does not actually exist in the block of wood, but it potentially exists in it. The raw piece of organic matter is a raw piece of organic matter but it has the art (the capability, possibility, potentiality) to become a sculpture—it is therefore a potential sculpture within the block of wood. Aristotle writes:

[...] it is possible that a thing may be capable of Being and not-Be, and capable of not-Being and yet Be, and similarly with the other kinds of predicate; it may be capable of [curating] and yet not [curate], or capable of not [curating] and yet [curate]. And a thing is capable of doing something if there is nothing impossible in its having the actuality of that which is said to be the capacity.¹¹⁶

¹¹² Ibid, 1655. Aristotle uses the example of the statue of Hermes, and the ‘man of science who is not studying, we call a man of science, if he is capable of studying.’ I have replaced Hermes to Eros simply as a gesture to connect with the third chapter of this thesis. This is a flirtatious gesture alluding to the Greek mythological figure of love and desire, which I will consider in the formulation of a definition about flirtation.

¹¹³ Aristotle also uses the word ‘fulfilment.’

¹¹⁴ Daniel Heller-Roazen, ‘To Read What Was Never Written,’ 14.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 14.

¹¹⁶ Aristotle, ‘Metaphysics,’ 1653. Aristotle uses the example of ‘walking.’

02.03

Therefore, potentiality—that which is capable of Being—can also be capable of not-Being.¹¹⁷ This means that potentiality Is because of its own privation, it Is because of its own not-Being. But to examine this further, the time has come to link Aristotle’s theorisation of potentiality to Giorgio Agamben’s own theorisation of potentiality, and to transfer his investigation to my own theorisation (and practice) of potentiality and contingency. Differing from the various ways by which Aristotle defines potentiality, for Agamben there are only two main modes with which Aristotle articulates this notion: the first one is potentiality, and the second one is the ‘potentiality-not-to’—also known as impotence (*adynamia*). This ‘potentiality-not-to,’ Agamben writes, ‘is the cardinal secret of the Aristotelian doctrine of potentiality, which transforms every potentiality in itself into an impotentiality.’¹¹⁸ ‘Potentiality-not-to’ means that something is capable of something else because of its incapacity; and this incapacity, Agamben argues, is the essence of all potentiality: ‘to be potential means: to be one’s own lack to be in relation to one’s own incapacity.’¹¹⁹ To be a sculpture therefore is to be capable of being a raw piece of organic wood. To be a curator is to be capable of not curating. This argument has been already suggested in different sections of the Aristotelian treatises I have so far selected, interpreted and exposed. In *De Interpretatione* he explains that contingent statements can be simultaneously true and false.¹²⁰ In his *Metaphysics*, he argues that active potentiality can act or not act; passive potentiality can Be and not-Be.¹²¹ He also states that it is possible that a thing may be capable of Being and not-Be, and capable of not-Being and yet Be.¹²² Agamben identifies this query, and he condenses it in the concept of the ‘potential-not-to.’ For example, when Aristotle writes: ‘all potentiality is, at the same time, potentiality for the opposite,’¹²³ Agamben translates this through the argument that every potentiality is always also a potentiality-not-to.¹²⁴ Potentiality, therefore, is not simply the non-actualisation of Being. It is not simply that

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 1654.

¹¹⁸ Giorgio Agamben, ‘Bartleby, or On Contingency,’ 245. Agamben uses the example of an architect and a kithara player.

¹¹⁹ Giorgio Agamben, ‘On Potentiality,’ 182.

¹²⁰ Aristotle, ‘De Interpretatione,’ 28.

¹²¹ Aristotle, ‘Metaphysics,’ 1653.

¹²² Ibid, 1654.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Giorgio Agamben, ‘Bartleby, Or On Contingency,’ 183.

things do not actually exist. Rather, it is the existence of non-Being, the paradoxical presence of an absence; it is the mode of existence of privation; 'which is a 'faculty' or 'power.'¹²⁵

This idea once again brings me back to the encounter with the logical puzzles as it implies that potentiality is subordinated to potentiality-not-to. If all potentiality is impotentiality, if to be capable is to be capable of an incapacity, then how is it possible to conceive the passage from potentiality to actuality?¹²⁶ In other words, how can a potentiality-not-to, an incapacity, a privation or an absence, become an actuality, a capacity, a fulfilment or a presence?

However, the solution to this puzzle does not indicate a logical separation between the two opposite extremes, it does not oblige the rational elimination of the ambiguity, the absurdity, the contradiction or the aporia that separates these conflicting ends. Agamben argues: if potentiality-not-to originally belongs to all potentiality, then there is truly potentiality only where potentiality-not-to does not lag behind actuality but passes fully into it as such.¹²⁷ In other words, potentiality can conserve itself and save itself in actuality; meaning that the passage to actuality is not the abolition of potentiality, but rather its preservation. To set impotentiality aside, 'is not to destroy it, but to fulfil it, to turn potentiality back upon itself in order to give itself back to itself.'¹²⁸ To be inspired, for example, is a destruction through the opposite principle (to be discouraged) or the preservation of what is in potentiality by what it is in actuality. Actuality, thus, becomes a potentiality to a second degree, because it is the fulfilment of the potential-not-to: 'a potential not-to turned back upon itself, capable of not not being.'¹²⁹ Therefore, 'what is capable and what is actual, what is possible and what is real, can no longer strictly be distinguished: Being itself, in its very actuality, appears as essentially and irreducibly potential.'¹³⁰ Once again, potentiality and actuality become indistinguishable; they become 'the two faces of the sovereign self-grounding of Being.'¹³¹

But how does this correspond to the interpretation of language and truth? Agamben explains: if there is a contradiction between two actual opposed sentences (true and not-true) or realities (Being and not-Being), nothing keeps a thing from being actual and at the same time

¹²⁵ Giorgio Agamben, 'On Potentiality,' 179.

¹²⁶ Daniel Heller-Roazen, 'To Read What Was Never Written,' 16.

¹²⁷ Giorgio Agamben, 'Bartleby, Or on Contingency,' 183.

¹²⁸ Daniel Heller-Roazen, 'To Read What Was Never Written,' 17.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid, 18.

¹³¹ Ibid.

maintaining its potential not-to-Be.¹³² Nevertheless, in order to understand further this linkage, it is also necessary to go back to *De Interpretatione*, where Aristotle suggests to consider the relationship of language with the potentiality of thought and sensation within the soul. At the beginning of this treatise, he briefly refers to affections in the soul in relation to their linguistic correspondence. As already mentioned at the beginning of section **01.00** of this chapter, the philosopher argues that some are neither true nor false while some are necessary and others are not (like contrary statements when spoken at the same time). He writes:

Spoken sounds are symbols of affections in the soul, and written marks symbols of spoken sounds. And just as written marks are not the same for all men, neither are spoken sounds. But what these are in the first place signs of—affections of the soul—are the same for all; and what these affections are likenesses of—actual things—are also the same.¹³³

Here Aristotle identifies that on the one hand, spoken sounds and written marks are signs of affections of the soul, and they are universal, and on the other hand, affections of the soul are likenesses of actual things, and they are also universal. In other words, language symbolises affections in the soul (sensations and thoughts) which are the likeness of actual things. Thus, here is also a truthful correspondence between spoken sounds or written marks (language), affections in the soul (sensations and thoughts) and actual things. Once again, in this extract there is a truthful correspondence between actual things and symbols of affections in the soul, represented by spoken sounds and written marks. However, with regards to these new concepts (thought, sensation and the soul), Aristotle himself writes that these matters are discussed in the work on the soul, but they are equally of fundamental importance for understanding the Aristotelian contingency, henceforth the Agambenian contingency, and consequently my own formulation of contingency, and to its linkage to language and truth.

02.04

¹³² Giorgio Agamben, 'Bartleby, or On Contingency,' 262.

¹³³ Aristotle, 'De Interpretatione,' 25.

Therefore, before continuing this analysis, it is relevant to outline a basic definition of the notion of the soul, which can be taken from Aristotle's treatise *De Anima*. In this treatise he defines the soul as a living organic body: a body with organs, which performs vital functions. According to him, the soul cannot exist without a body; it is an embodied soul; and it is through the body that we apprehend the world. He distinguishes three types of souls: nutritive soul (plants), sensitive soul (animals) and rational soul (human beings); the latter differs from the two previous ones in the sense that it has cognitive faculties. The human soul is the thinking soul (capable of sensing and thinking).¹³⁴

Now, coming back to *De Interpretatione*, language is also conceived as something inseparably connected to the soul (to the world of matter, to the body). According to Gianto, language, in Aristotle's philosophy of language, is seen in terms of its observable manifestations—in its actualisation—and in accordance to its own materiality (e.g. sounds produced by speech organs).¹³⁵ The act of speaking indispensably requires vocal organs, the act of writing necessarily requires motor nerves to move arms, hands and fingers; these functions belong to the world of matter, to the body. This makes language intrinsically bound to the body or soul. In this respect it is also relevant to take into account the fact that the Greek word *Organon* means tool or instrument, but also organ of the body. As already explained, *Organon* is the name of the Aristotelian compendium of works on language and logic. In this context, thereafter, it can be argued that logical thinking and grammatical function are also conceived within their co-dependent relation to the soul—to their embodied materiality and corporality.

However, although Aristotle does not see soul and body as distinct from each other, when he elaborates his investigation of the potentiality and actuality of thought and the senses he encounters further philosophical puzzles and logical aporias. In the following segment, he refers to the separation between them, by stating that thought must be related to what is thinkable, and sense to what is sensible:

That in the soul which is called thought (by thought I mean that whereby the soul thinks and judges), is before it thinks, not actually any real thing. For this reason, I

¹³⁴ Aristotle, 'On The Soul,' 675-692.

¹³⁵ Agustinus Gianto, 'Aristotle,' 4.

cannot reasonably be regarded as blended with the body: if so, it would acquire some quality, e.g. warmth or cold, or even have an organ like the sensitive faculty: as it is, it has none. It was a good idea to call the soul ‘the place of forms,’ though this description holds only of the thinking soul, and even this is the forms only potentiality, not actually.¹³⁶

Aristotle refers to two different types of thought in this extract: the first one is thought, when it thinks (when the potentiality of thought to think has passed into actuality). The second one is thought, before it thinks (thought in pure potentiality). The first one, thought in actuality (*noēsis*) is constituted by affections in the soul, and it belongs to the senses, to the body, to the world of matter. This is embodied thought which allows for judgment to happen, it is linked to the emergence of language. The second one, the potential-thinking thought (before it thinks), is not actually any real thing, it is thought in potentiality (also known as *nous*), it is the intention (pure knowability and receptivity). This type of thought is disembodied thought; it thinks itself, it is the place of forms. It has no other nature than being potential; before thinking, it is absolutely anything.¹³⁷

This *aporia* similarly applies to the logic of the potentiality sensation itself. Although sensation belongs to the senses and to the body, it paradoxically can also be only potential. Aristotle writes:

There is an *aporia* as to why there is no sensation of the senses themselves. Why is it that, in the absence of external objects, the senses do not give any sensation, although they contain fire, earth, water, air and other elements of which there is sensation? This happens because sensibility [the faculty of sensation] is not actual but only potential. This is why it does not itself give sensation, just as the combustible does not burn by itself, without a principle of combustion; otherwise it would burn itself and would not need any actual fire.¹³⁸

¹³⁶ Aristotle, ‘On The Soul,’ 682.

¹³⁷ Giorgio Agamben, ‘Bartleby, or On Contingency,’ 245.

¹³⁸ Aristotle, ‘On The Soul,’ 683.

Therefore, the soul's faculty to think and to sense is something that does not exist. Again, it has something that is actually lacking (Agamben refers to this as privation). It is the existence of non-Being.

02.05

To illustrate the idea of thought that thinks itself, it is relevant to display in this section the already mentioned Aristotelian well-known passage from *De Anima*, where he compares thought to a writing-table on which nothing is written. Aristotle writes:

Have not we already disposed of the difficulty about interaction involving a common element, when we said that thought is in a sense potentially whatever is thinkable, though actually it is nothing until it has thought? What it thinks must be in it just as characters may be said to be on a writing-tablet on which as yet nothing stands written: this is exactly what happens with thought.¹³⁹

This image of the writing-table symbolises the kind of potentiality that can be either actualised or not be actualised. It refers to the mind as a blank slate without any characters and without any ideas (a 'clean slate' or 'white sheet').¹⁴⁰ Once again, active potentiality can act or not act. Passive potentiality can Be and not-Be. Likewise, thought has the potentiality-to-think and thought has the potentiality-to-not-think. But it is also possible that potentiality-to-not-think turns back to itself and transforms into thought of thought (thought that thinks itself), which abolishes actuality in its entirety. This once again, is what is known as pure potentiality.

This kind of thought therefore does not think anything concrete, but that does not mean that it does not think anything at all, rather, what it thinks is the pure potentiality of itself. And 'what thinks its own potentiality' Agamben writes, 'is what is most divine and blessed.'¹⁴¹ Therefore, it is in the realm of thought and the ability to think itself that Aristotle maintains

¹³⁹ Aristotle, 'On The Soul,' 683.

¹⁴⁰ Giorgio Agamben, 'Bartleby, Or On Contingency,' 245.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 251.

the supremacy of the intellect.¹⁴² The higher power of the thinking soul. Under this logic, the soul is conceived as disembodied, a not-being actual, a being of pure thought in potentiality.

02.06

Furthermore, the example of the writing-table on which as yet nothing actually stands written can be interpreted as a metaphor not only for the potentiality of thought (thought that thinks itself) but also as a metaphor of the potentiality of language (a writing-table is literally the material surface on which the characters of words and sentences are physically inscribed by the movement of fingers and hands). As seen in section **01.12-13**, I have already referred to Aristotle's true-value of the potentiality of language (spoken sounds and written marks), either because it has already been actualised or because it might actualise in the future: 'For the capable [potentiality] is spoken of in more than one way: either because it is true as being actualised [...] or because it might be actualised.'¹⁴³ Once again, under the rules of the Aristotelian modalities of language and logic, every utterance, every inscription, is a mode in which the 'thing itself' exists; therefore, every spoken utterance and every written inscription is a manner in which the potentiality of language resolves itself onto actuality.¹⁴⁴ If language is a potential whose realisation occurs in the corporeal act of a mouth that speaks or in the somatic effort of the hand that writes, every enunciation and every sentence is a manner in which the potentiality of language resolves itself onto the embodied actuality of the thinking soul.¹⁴⁵

Under this logic, what is at stake here once more is the many ways in which Being or Becoming can be truthfully said, but also the many ways in which Being or Becoming can be truthfully not said. Therefore, language exists as the potential to signify and also as the potential-not-to signify. It follows that the intervention of the writing-table (the actualisation of thought or sensation, the emergence of language) is also only possible according to its possibility not to be intervened—its possibility not to be thought or sensed; its possibility not to be spoken nor written. Like any actuality, 'only because it can say nothing is language truly "sayable".'¹⁴⁶ The writing-table in which nothing is yet written symbolises furthermore

¹⁴² Ibid, 183.

¹⁴³ Aristotle, 'De Interpretatione,' 36. Aristotle writes: capable of 'walking because it walks.'

¹⁴⁴ Daniel Heller-Roazen, 'To Read What Was Never Written,' 21.

¹⁴⁵ Agustinus Gianto, 'Aristotle,' 4. Daniel Heller-Roazen, 'To Read What Was Never Written,' 21.

¹⁴⁶ Daniel Heller-Roazen, 'To Read What Was Never Written,' 19.

not only thought and sensation in pure potentiality, but also language in pure potentiality—the preservation of potentiality-not-to of language. Thus, by announcing itself in its pure potential to signify, language displaces semantic signification from the rules of grammar and logic that separates affirmation and negation (true or not-true).¹⁴⁷ Again, it produces a suspension in the threshold truth-not-true.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

03.00

Language and Being

To transfer this philosophical enquiry into the domain of literature, I turn in this section to a classical example of embodied contingency and the ‘potentiality-not-to’ of language in the case of Bartleby, Herman Melville’s main character in his short story *Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street*. In this text, the philosophical formula ‘potential not-to’ converts into the linguistic utterance ‘prefer not to.’

The story is featured in the mid-nineteenth Century in Wall Street, New York—at the centre of the most influential stock exchanges and therefore market capitalism, in the United States of America. This historical period is known for the dispersion and imposition of Manifest Destiny and the Monroe Doctrine, which drove the North American ‘mission,’ assigned to them by ‘Providence,’ to expand their brand of market democracy beyond their geographical borders. These political and economic ideologies were synthesised in the motto ‘America for the Americans,’ which claimed to be a liberation from Europe and a simultaneous confinement of their own imperialist and colonialist agenda in the American continent.

Melville also presents to his readers a critique of the economic hunger and financial greed of capitalism in this context, through the use of the metaphor of food and eating: such as the names of the employees, the constant feeding of people, referrals to digestion and indigestion, the rhythms and tempos around time for eating and the fact that it is suggested that Bartleby dies as a consequence of preferring not to eat. There is also a clear critique of estranged forms of social organisation of the same context as a literary portrait of an alienated society, or an early example of Deleuze’s society of control, which, for its part, takes the metaphorical form of walls: such as the walls in front of the office, the screen that isolates Bartleby’s desk, the white wall of a skylight shaft, the name of the district itself—Wall Street—the ‘dead-wall’ by which Bartleby walks over and stands in front of in the prison, etc.

The story is told in first-person voice, by an anonymous narrator, a Lawyer who runs a law firm in the ambiguous location of No. – Wall Street, who introduces himself as ‘a rather elderly man.’ He starts his chronicle by announcing the subject of his account, which is the

incomplete life of a law-copyist by name Bartleby, who, he explains, is hard to describe and almost impossible to write about; ‘one of those beings of whom nothing is ascertainable except from the original sources.’ However, before meeting this ‘strange man,’ he starts the report of his story by describing his experience working with three other law-copyists or scribes. The first, he explains, Turkey, is useful to him before twelve o’clock, but, when he starts drinking at lunch, he behaves in the most indecorous manner. The second, Nippers, he describes as a ‘victim of two evil powers—ambition and indigestion:’ he is irritable and nervous in the morning but useful after twelve o’clock. The third, Ginger Nut, he writes, is a student at law, and errand boy, cleaner and sweeper, who worked at the rate of one dollar a week. He defines his business as a ‘not too ambitious’ firm, but nevertheless a ‘pleasantly remunerative office.’

In a first instance, time here is presented through a quantitative and approach but also through *via naturalis*: Melville merges the mechanistic rhythms in the form of clock-time or labour time, echoing the ideological legacy of the American ancestor and patriotic figure Benjamin Franklin and his aphorism ‘time is money,’ in which time is paid for, invested and spent. He merges this with an embodied and corporeal temporality as metaphor for the hungry Chronos (the devourer of time), in which time is eaten, drunk, ingested, and digested or indigested.

The narrator then explains the workload increased and he needed additional help, thus he hires Bartleby. He initially describes him as a thin, pallid and forlorn man, who at first did an extraordinary quantity of writing without giving any ‘time for digestion.’ He ran a day and night line, copying by sunlight and by candle-light, writing on ‘silently, palely, mechanically.’ However, on the third day of work, the Lawyer abruptly calls Bartleby to verify the accuracy of a copy, which was a ‘very dull, wearisome, and lethargic affair,’ even ‘intolerable.’ To his instruction, ‘in a singularly mild, ram voice,’ Bartleby replied ‘I would prefer not to,’ with no wrinkle of agitation. ‘Imagine my surprise, nay, my consternation,’ he writes. ‘I sat awhile in perfect silence, rallying my stunned faculties [...] This is very strange, thought I.’ After that moment, to each new request, Bartleby replies with the same response. Spreading over twenty-two different occasions, the formula ‘I would prefer not to,’ repeats

itself as a rhythmical and mechanistic litany within the text; along with a chain of events leading to his preference not to eat, and his inferred consequent death by starvation.¹⁴⁸

Since first published, Melville's short story has inspired numerous authors in the production of new materials and ideas within an array of interdisciplinary practices and theoretical frameworks. There are multiple possibilities of reading within this piece of literature, however, within the aims of this particular research, I will focus my analysis on the interpretation of contingency in relation to truth, temporality and language. The reader will also find interventions to this essentially philosophical analysis with associations to curatorial practice. To support my analysis, I will expand on the already elaborated theories of Aristotle and Agamben, but additionally introduce Deleuze, who makes a philosophical interpretation of the linguistic strangeness and grammatical mannerism inherent to Bartleby's queer phrase. I will thus consider some of Deleuze's political and psychoanalytic inferences, as an additional support in the elaboration of my own argument. Therefore, I will continue this section by expanding on the interpretation of the three types of figures that Deleuze distinguishes in Melville's short-story: Copies, Prophets and Originals.

03.01

Copies are the employees, the scribes, the ones who, with submission, execute the reproduction, the re-affirmation and copying of the law. They perform secretarial and administrative duties. They work under the multi-directional condition of correction: they 'correct' mistakes in legal documents, and re-writing what does not align to the orders of the law. They are, however, also themselves 'dictated,' to and their work is 'corrected.' Copies amend to religious and secular laws. They are servants of the law.¹⁴⁹

The temporality of the Copies is conceived as chronological. It is a systematic, quantified, and mechanistic temporality, payed according to time-wages. The temporality of the Copies registers in legal documents, which is also synchronised with the rhythms and orders of the

¹⁴⁸ Some examples of Melville's literary mechanistic rhythms are: 'some time prior,' 'the third day,' 'for a few moments,' 'as days pass on,' 'days went by,' 'in six days time,' 'the time has come,' 'for a time,' 'having taken three days,' 'the next day,' 'in a few hours,' 'for a day or two,' 'some few days after this.'

¹⁴⁹ There are two types of laws that Melville presents in his story. First, human laws, which are the laws of the American constitution (the duties dictated in the constitution). Second, divine laws, which are the laws of Christianity (the commandment to love one another and the principles of charity).

Christian calendar. It unfolds in time for work during weekdays, and time for church and devotion on Sundays. Within this type of temporality, the progression of past, present and future is distributed in a linear-chronological manner—as investments and product-oriented, but also with the Christian conceptualisation of time, starting from the creation and ending in the final redemption. In contemporary curatorial practice, the temporality Copes enact find an equivalence in the type temporality curators amend to in working hours in long-term or short-term contracts. It takes the material form of time-management schedules and time-wage numbers.

The language of the Copies obeys to the general laws of language. They speak according to references or presuppositions, objective and explicit conventions, to designate things, states of things and actions.¹⁵⁰ These are Aristotle's formerly studied modalities of language: particulars and universals, subjects and predicates, premises and syllogisms—enunciations and sentences about real-world objects which correspond with the facts or what is actually or potentially the case, and therefore evaluated as true.

03.02

The second figures distinguished by Deleuze are the Prophets; they are the guardians of the divine and human laws. They act as mediators between Copies and Originals and are of secondary nature.¹⁵¹ Prophets bear a paternal function and 'can recognise the wake that the originals leave in the world, and the unspeakable confusion and trouble they cause in it.'¹⁵² They are the ones with the power to 'see.' Behind their paternal mask, however, Deleuze argues, they have a double identification: with both the demon and with the innocent. They betray the innocents in the name of the law, demonstrating that they are, once again, like hungry Chronos, 'monstrous, devouring fathers.'¹⁵³ These characters correspond to the Lawyer in Melville's short story. Under the same kind of references or assumptions that Copies obey, this figure also operates under the conventional rules of what language permits to designate.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ Gilles Deleuze, 'Bartleby; Or, The Formula,' 73.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 80.

¹⁵² Ibid, 75.

¹⁵³ Gilles Deleuze, 'Bartleby; Or, The Formula,' 81-84.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 73.

Prophets are in charge of the effective operation of the law (synchronised with the controlled and calculated progression of time as mechanistic and profit-oriented). They are aware of the existence of the contingency of the Originals: they can see the latent threats they represent to the order of time, and the risks they denote to the laws of language. Although Prophets empathise with Originals, they ultimately amend to the rhythms and dynamics of capitalist temporality, and they are fundamental components of its system. They are in charge of the optimal function and security of its laws and orders—they are their guardians and custodians. In curatorial practice, these figures may find an equivalence in power-exercising subjects or curators in power who safeguard and reinforce values and functions dictated by the chronological capitalised temporality. Prophets witness the destruction of the contingency of the Originals. They passively contribute to such destruction. In section **04.06** of this chapter the reader will find further analysis about this figure.

03.03

Originals are the third figures characterised by Deleuze. They are the ones who, in opposition to the Copies, are disjointed vertebrae from the apparatus's temporal spinal cord.¹⁵⁵ Originals act without submission; preferring not to obey to the laws of language. They disconnect from general presuppositions and are removed from the particularities of speech. They are, therefore, expelled from the domain of language and excluded from its system.

When Bartleby states 'I am not particular,' he is implying that he is not a Copy but he is also not a subject. The 'particular,' as I've already elaborated in section **01.05-08**, is a basic element in language. Particulars differ from universals in the sense that they can be either subjects or predicates of sentences, whereas the formers can only be subjects.¹⁵⁶ Therefore, Bartleby's phrase confirms his lack of subjecthood—hence about the character's relationship with agency, free will and determinism (the forms by which language condition the constitution of subjectivity, and how it moulds predetermined subjects). By rejecting copying

¹⁵⁵ Deleuze utilises himself this metaphor of time conceived as a spinal cord. He contextualises this embodied conception of time as a historical, geographic and political problem, related to the American pragmatism, immigration and what he defines as the archipelago formed by isolated and floating relations, islands and straits, 'a vertebral column, a spinal cord [...] an infinite patchwork with multiple joinings' (Gilles Deleuze, 'Bartleby; Or, The Formula,' 86). I will be utilising this same metaphor in the following chapter, thus to expand on my argument about embodied anachronism, and time conceived as a disjointed vertebra.

¹⁵⁶ Aristotle, 'De Interpretatione,' 27.

the law, he refuses to become a Copy, he denies any form of subjectification, he affirms his condition as an Original.

The temporality of the Originals is a suspended temporality with regards to the mechanistic orders of time. It is a disjointed temporality from the chronological spinal cord. The temporality of the Originals is the same as that of the bachelor: ‘without past or future [...] instantaneous.’¹⁵⁷ This form of conceiving time informs more particularly my argument since it infers that *Bartleby* represents an embodiment of time as something suspended from the sequences and rhythms of capitalist-mechanistic-temporality.

Originals speak other kinds of sounds and they write other kinds of marks. They manage to communicate other implicit and suggestive messages, other types of references or presuppositions that we do not know of.¹⁵⁸ ‘We do not know if Originals,’ Deleuze writes, ‘exist apart from the primordial God.’ They are ‘figures of life and knowledge, they know something inexpressible, they live something unfathomable. They escape knowledge, defy psychology.’ The words they utter, Deleuze writes further, ‘surpass the general laws of language (presuppositions) as well as the simple particularities of speech, since they are like the vestiges of projections of a unique, original language [*langue*], and bring all of language [*langue*] to the limit of silence and music.’¹⁵⁹

Associating this with Aristotle’s philosophy of language, I argue that the meaning of written words and spoken sounds rely on their capacity to indicate objects. Sentences and enunciations about real-world objects are true if what they assert corresponds to that reality—linguistic categories are also principles of Being and qualities of existence itself. However, Deleuze suggests that perhaps, in language, there are other implicit and subjective conventions, other types of references or presuppositions that we do not know of. According to him, speaking is not only a way to indicate things and actions, it is also a form of acting. This is what he refers to as ‘speech acts:’ self-referential and commanding actions.¹⁶⁰

03.04

¹⁵⁷ Gilles Deleuze, ‘*Bartleby; Or, The Formula*,’ 74.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 70.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 83.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 73.

Bartleby revels in this system of double references. The categorical originality, suggestive mannerism and particular strangeness and queerness of his mechanistic phrase ‘I would prefer not to,’ ‘disconnects words and things, words and actions, but also speech, as acts and words.’ The abrupt use of the phrase “not to” annihilates “copying,” leaving what it rejects undetermined, and not referring to anything as such; ‘all particularity, all reference is abolished.’¹⁶¹ By ‘preferring’ Bartleby neither agrees to do the job nor fully refuses to do it. Instead, he twists the referential meaning and truthful metaphysical correlation of his answer, making it ambiguous, and provoking a restless oscillation between any possible affirmation or any possible negation; causing doubt, uncertainty and confusion in those around him.

Bartleby does not fulfil what is desired and expected of him, but he also does not remove all hope—perhaps this is one of the reasons of why his employer do not give up on him. Instead they ask him ask him over and over again with new commands, yearning that he will at some point obey. The formula thus opens an ambiguous zone between potentiality and potentiality-not-to, an infinite delay and ongoing flirtatious swinging back and forth between ‘yes’ and ‘no.’ It, thus, as Deleuze suggests ‘excludes all alternatives, and devours what it claims to conserve no less than distances itself from everything else [...] it hollows out an ever expanding zone of indetermination that renders words indistinguishable [...] but he also stymies all speech acts that the boss uses to command.’¹⁶² For this reason, Deleuze writes, after each mechanical repetition ‘I would prefer not to,’ it follows Bartleby’s silence: ‘as if he had said everything and exhausted language at the same time [...] exposing himself in a nimble retreat from speech.’ This makes him ‘a pure outsider [*exclu*] to whom no social position can be attributed.’¹⁶³

03.05

Agamben also makes an analysis of Deleuze’s interpretation of Melville’s story, arguing that the phrase its itself has also a destructive aspect. However, he extends his enquiry by looking into the dialectal and ontological repercussions inherent to Bartleby’s utterance. In the opposition between ‘to be’ and ‘not to be,’ Being and not-Being, he argues, Bartleby’s

¹⁶¹ Ibid, 73-74.

¹⁶² Ibid, 73.

¹⁶³ Ibid, 71-73.

formula suggests a third term that transcends both: ‘the rather.’ ‘Rather’ does not mean non-existent, nor Being, nor Nothing. Instead, in the history of Western culture, Agamben writes, ‘there is only one formula that hovers so decidedly between affirmation and negation, acceptance and rejection, giving and taking.’¹⁶⁴ The formula is recorded in the 11th to early 12th Centuries by the biographer of the Greek philosophers Diogenes and Laërtius, and it reads *ou mallon*, or ‘no more than,’ the technical term with which the Skeptics denoted their most characteristic experience: the *epochê* or suspension of judgement. The *epochê* is a condition which neither posits nor negates, accepts nor refuses. It comes about through the opposition of the yes and no of things, when all thought and action, truth and falsehood, Being and not-Being become suspended.¹⁶⁵

Empiricus, for his part, explains:

We use ‘I withhold assent’ [*epochê*] as short for ‘I am unable to say which of the alternatives proposed I ought to believe and which I ought not believe,’ indicating that the matters appear equal to us as regards credibility and incredibility. As to whether they are equal, we maintain no firm opinion, but we do state what appears to us to be the case about them when that appearance affects us. And withholding assent is so called from the intellect’s being held back [*epechesthai*] in such a way as neither to assert nor deny, because of the equipollence of the matters in question.¹⁶⁶

The Skeptics conceived this *epochê*, this suspension, as the experience of potentiality: the experience of both possibilities of Being (true) and not-Being (not-true).¹⁶⁷ In other words, I argue, the experience of contingency. This brings me back to Aristotle’s exception to the rule in contingent statements previously studied in section **01.09-11** of this chapter, where I examine the aporias of contingency—the principle of non-contradiction or conditioned necessity—when the same opinion or the same statement comes to be both true and not-true; and the dependence of necessity and contingency (chance) on time and circumstance. The moment when two curators are in a disagreement, and one says that an artwork will break at the opening event and the other says that the artwork will not break at the opening event. The

¹⁶⁴ Giorgio Agamben, ‘Bartleby, or On Contingency,’ 256.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Sextus Empiricus, ‘Outlines of Pyrrhonism,’ 115.

¹⁶⁷ Giorgio Agamben, ‘Bartleby, or On Contingency,’ 255.

experience of the *epochê*, thus, is analogous to the moment when these contrary pairs of statements are spoken or written in accordance to the metaphysics of their conflicting truths, and therefore stop being antagonistic or stop being true or false. This experience is also comparable to the instant when spoken sounds or written words (language) and event or actual thing are simultaneously separated and united by time; when potentiality and actuality, truth and falsehood become suspended. At this very moment their possibilities are of Being or not-Being.

Further, in the same Aristotelian logic that conceives every utterance and every inscription as a manner in which the potentiality of language resolves itself onto actuality, the *epochê* also makes reference to the event of language—where signs are actualised in discourse—and what is suspended in the *epochê* is the actuality of linguistic signification.¹⁶⁸ In the *epochê*, language retreats from actual prediction into a mode where it appears as purely potential, capable of expression by virtue of actually saying nothing.¹⁶⁹ Once again, by announcing itself in its pure potential to signify, language displaces discourse from the rules of grammar and logic that separates affirmation and negation (true or not-true).¹⁷⁰ Hence, Bartleby announces a message that annuls any assertion between words and actions (because the ambiguity of the formula turns back into itself, being capable of expression by virtue of actually saying nothing), suspending any possibility, any act, or event.

03.06

However, in the same manner that the *epochê* neither attempts to assert nor deny opposite opinions, contingency does not concern the actual occurrence or non-occurrence of a particular event. In the realm of the rules and logic of different modalities of linguistic signification, contingency is not interested in the true-value of one of the statements ‘the artwork will break’ or ‘the artwork will not break’ separately, but rather, the alternative ‘it-will-break-or-it-will-not-break’ as a whole, beyond the taking place of the two opposite possibilities. Only the tautology ‘there-will-or-will-not-be-an-accident-at-the-opening-event’ is necessarily always true. Contrary pairs are hence returned to contingency, they preserve

¹⁶⁸ Daniel Heller-Roazen, ‘To Read What Was Never Written,’ 20.

¹⁶⁹ Heller-Roazen explains that there are parts of speech that bear no meaning and are capable of functioning in a discourse because they suspend their own incapacity to signify and, in this way, they refer to the actual event of language (Daniel Heller-Roazen, ‘To Read What Was Never Written,’ 21).

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 19.

their contingency, their Being and not-Being as the simultaneous possibility to Be (true) or not-to-Be (not-true).¹⁷¹

In the case of Bartleby, his repetitive mechanistic phrase, stated in words and in the written form, ‘I would prefer not to’ contain an equally profound philosophical weight: it is a contingent statement re-creating contingency itself. ‘I would prefer not to’ translates into the dialectical opposition ‘the job will not occur’ and ‘the job will occur,’ ‘the law will not be re-written’ and ‘the law will be re-written,’ ‘I will not obey’ and ‘I will obey.’ It transforms into the experience of the tautology ‘it-will-occur-or-it-will-not-occur,’ beyond the actual materialisation of one or the other opposed possibilities. The two contrary pairs of statements are returned to contingency, they preserve their contingency, their Being and not-Being as the possibility to simultaneously Be (true) or not-to-Be (not-true).¹⁷²

‘I would prefer not to’ therefore becomes the prediction of future and infinite past events that are simultaneously already happening and not happening. Chronological past and chronological future become suspended in the temporality of the Bachelor’s instant—in the temporalised ‘now’ in which two opposed realities are simultaneously true—suspending their potentiality and potentiality-not-to. The formula thus articulates and suspends the moment or instant on the threshold of the becoming or not-becoming of the event of language. It utters and holds of the tension between potentiality and potentiality-not-to. It is a linguistic embodied annunciation of contingency. The message it carries is that Being is Being-potential but also Being-potential-not-to. In this way, Bartleby, with his thin, pallid and forlorn originality becomes himself the writing-table on which nothing is yet written. He is portrayed in the story as the literary human embodiment of this edge between Being and not-Being.

¹⁷¹ Giorgio Agamben, ‘Bartleby, or On Contingency,’ 264.

¹⁷² Ibid.

04.00

Resistance

As seen in the previous section, Bartleby's mechanistic phrase articulates and embodies contingency—the tension between Being (true) and not-Being (not-true). However, what concerns Melville, are the events that could have been but never took place; the preservation of the potential-not-to—a negative preference, a negative potentiality, or what Deleuze defines as the 'negative beyond negation.'¹⁷³ Likewise, what interests this research are the curatorial events that could Be but will not take place, together with the poetic implications and political consequences of the many ways in which Being or Becoming can truthfully not be said, in curatorial statements.

The main problem portrayed in Melville's short story is not that Bartleby does not have the faculties, or Aristotle's capacities, to do his job; rather it is that having the required faculties—competently, efficiently and punctually—he 'prefers' not to do it. Consequently, the expected outcomes of his job as a scrivener remain as potentialities that do not pass into actuality. The result is that the act of re-writing, the act of copying, the re-affirmation of human and divine laws, are conserved as potentialities that do not pass into actuality. However, this preference not to do does not simply entail not-doing, it is not mere indifference nor idleness, rather, what it involves is that Bartleby can write but he also cannot write. In other words, by resisting the passage into actuality, he preserves his own potential-not-to; therefore, he is capable of his own impotentiality. This yields to him a certain power. Now, in order to elaborate further on this interpretation of the counter-power of resistance inherent to 'potentiality not to,' and 'prefer not to,' there are two terms in Agamben's thought that are relevant to bring into the fore: 'decreation' and 'inoperativeness.'

04.01

The first term, 'decreation,' relates to the creative potential and the individual's ability to act or not to act. Decreation takes place at the threshold of creation and destruction, in the instant

¹⁷³ Gilles Deleuze, 'Bartleby; Or, The Formula,' 71.

when what happened and did not happen, and where what will happen and will not happen return to the contingency of their originary unity.¹⁷⁴ Decreation takes place in the moment of interruption of the writing marks and spoken sounds, when language preserves all of its potentiality not-to. The power of decreation is its possibility to undo what has occurred but could have not occurred. Likewise, the power of this type of potentiality is its capacity to annul what will occur but has not yet occurred. Decreation has the power to cancel past and future events.¹⁷⁵ It is therefore relevant for my argument because this kind of potentiality has the power to undo past events and annul future results from standardised processes of temporalisation ordered by chronological apparatuses (the various destructive effects produced by capitalised curatorial economy of time). In Melville's account, this decreation is suggested in many instances throughout the short story, but quite explicitly at the end of it, when the narrator tells his readers about a rumour he heard that Bartleby had been a subordinate clerk in the Dead Letter Office at Washington, handling and assorting undelivered letters to the flames. These letters represent not only potentialities (and the potentiality of language) that will not pass into actuality, but furthermore they represent potentialities that simultaneously preserve and destroy their own potential-not-to; the paradoxical death of unborn thought; contingency re-creating its own negative ontology.

04.02

The second term, 'inoperative,' is applied to the human potential and has connotations of uselessness or lack of function. It relates to dominant systems of power and their effects in the moulding or controlling of human potentiality. To be inoperative means to refuse to be an operative part of the state's or capital's machinery. In neither affirming nor negating the requests of the Lawyer, Bartleby effectively removes himself from the power structures at play, but he reaches something beyond political action, because nothing ever passes from potentiality to actuality.¹⁷⁶ He thus represents and embodies something without end, something not exhausted but inexhaustible (again, a being of pure potentiality).¹⁷⁷ Therefore, the counter-power of the inoperative lies in the fact that it resists the rhythms and tempos of

¹⁷⁴ Elizabeth Balskus, 'Examining Potentiality in the Philosophy of Giorgio Agamben,' 174.

¹⁷⁵ Decreation relates to Friedrich Nietzsche's 'counterwill,' the will towards the past, the transformation of every 'thus it was' into a 'thus I willed it.' Likewise, it relates to Walter Benjamin's 'remembrance,' which can modify what research has established, restoring possibility to the past.

¹⁷⁶ Elizabeth Balskus, 'Examining Potentiality in the Philosophy of Giorgio Agamben,' 174.

¹⁷⁷ Giorgio Agamben, 'Critical Introduction,' 18-19. Elizabeth Balskus, 'Examining Potentiality in the Philosophy of Giorgio Agamben,' 167.

the ruling apparatuses that control potentiality. But above all, the counter-power of the inoperative is sympathetic to the power of the contingent: in that it lies in the fact that it reaches out to the core and centre of existence itself. It is therefore paradoxically useful for curatorial practice since it permits not only to obliterate but also to suspend any form of subjugation to preprogramed values and prescribed functions in the capitalised curatorial economy of time (the power structures at play). Bartleby, as a human expression of embodied contingency, enacts this inoperativeness: he becomes the kind of potentiality that is not governed or prefers not to be governed towards any given end. This, ultimately, reaffirms his ontological condition as an ‘Original’—that which does not align to the commands of reproduction (copying) of divine or human laws.

04.03

Once again, as suggested in section **02.01**, active potentiality can act or not act; passive potentiality can Be and not-Be. Likewise, thought has the potentiality-to-think and thought has the potentiality-to-not-think. And thought that does not actualise its own thinking can turn back to itself and transform into thought of thought (thought that thinks itself only in its own potentiality). This, once again, is pure potentiality (the intention, pure knowability and receptivity).¹⁷⁸ By preserving his own potential-not-to, by being capable of his own impotentiality, Bartleby suspends the edge between thinking and not-thinking, writing and not-writing, acting and not-acting. He, thus disjoints the limit that joins together Being and not-Being, and becomes a being of pure potential. Furthermore, in the same way that Aristotle maintains the supremacy of the intellect in the realm of thought and the ability to think itself, the power of the scrivener who is capable of both power and impotence, Agamben writes, is supreme power.¹⁷⁹

04.04

This relation to one’s own potential-not-to, to one’s own privation, to one’s own impotentiality, this touching of the edge between acting and not-acting, writing and not-writing, Being and not-Being, is where the foundation of freedom is to be found. It ‘is the

¹⁷⁸ Giorgio Agamben, ‘Bartleby, or On Contingency,’ 245.

¹⁷⁹ Giorgio Agamben, ‘Bartleby,’ *The Coming Community*, 34.

origin (and the abyss) of human power, which is so violent and limitless with respect to other living beings.’¹⁸⁰ It is in this abyss where contingency breaks free from the conditions of the necessary; this paradoxical passage way that reconnects with the core and centre of existence; the experience of the edge between Being and not-Being; where life and death come together.

This close linkage to the problem of destiny against freedom, takes us back once again into the past, reconnecting with the etymological meaning of the word ‘contingency.’ It has its origins in the sixteenth century, coming from the Latin *contingentem*, meaning to ‘to befall, come to pass, and ‘to touch.’ It also alludes to something ‘happening by chance or by the will of a finite free agent,’ or the condition of ‘being open to chance or free will.’¹⁸¹ Again, the concept of contingency has its origins in the debate that seeks to explain whether our existence in this world is determined or if it is possible to think about something such as agency, human freedom or free will. As already suggested, this discussion appears in Melville’s critique in various instances of his short story.¹⁸² Likewise, as already suggested, this discussion is symbolically embedded in the element of contingency that appears in cells and columns of curatorial budget templates: it represents a margin of error which may open the debate about the existence of chance, accident and free will versus the belief in a preconceived order (laws, causes and principles) that condition the creative process or explain the creative act.

However, in the case of Bartleby’s ‘I would prefer not to,’ this discussion becomes a quite complex one, because, in his phrase, ‘will’ is itself abolished and replaced by potentiality. What Bartleby prefers is not a will. Deleuze explains that his preference is not a will to nothingness, but rather a nothingness of the will.¹⁸³ Likewise, Agamben explains that the verb ‘prefer’ eliminates all traces of the verb ‘will.’ By ‘preferring’ rather than ‘willing,’ Bartleby, calls into question the supremacy of will over potentiality because he is capable without wanting and without will. Once again he is capable of pure potentiality. For this reason, Agamben argues, his formula is the formula of potentiality. He states that ‘To believe will has power over potentiality, that the passage to actuality is the result of a decision to the

¹⁸⁰ Giorgio Agamben, ‘On Potentiality,’ 182.

¹⁸¹ Online Etymology Dictionary, ‘Contingency (n.).’

¹⁸² For example, it appears directly in the referral to the books ‘Edwards on the Will,’ and ‘Priestly on Necessity,’ references to the scrivener in relation to predestines from eternity,’ the ‘mysterious purpose of an all-wise Providence.’

¹⁸³ Gilles Deleuze, ‘Bartleby; Or, The Formula,’ 80.

ambiguity of potentiality is the perpetual illusion of mortality'.¹⁸⁴ Once more, this is the unresolved paradox of the debate amidst contingency and its opposite necessity.

04.05

Furthermore, Melville suggests to his readers that this misalignment (this anachronism) is a form of 'passive resistance,' which is also paradoxically both powerful but also powerless. The narrator confesses: 'nothing can so aggravate an honest person as being passively resisted by another, as the honest person will give the passive one the benefit of the doubt in charitable good conscious.' As the story develops, by persisting on 'preferring not to,' Bartleby, like a good flirt, not only causes doubt, uncertainty and confusion in others, he also begins to perplex and to cause more significant concern in those around him, scandalising the Lawyer's professional reputation, causing clients to leave their offices. This 'perturbed' person evermore casts, like a ghost, a general gloom over the narrator's premises, 'contaminating' the space, at the point of bringing a feeling of terror into his chambers. He begins to become contagious to those around him, 'turning the tongues,' if not the heads of the Lawyer and his clerks, who start to use the word 'prefer' themselves; a 'queer word' to describe the narrator. In this landscape, Bartleby transforms himself into a risk, again, a practical contingency, an avoided and unwanted being—the literary human embodiment of contingency. Ultimately he ends up being, by the end of the story, positioned as a forger, a 'little deranged' individual, even as a criminal. Once again, Bartleby is an Original, he is capable of disconnecting from the rules and legislations of the general domain of language, he is a disjointed vertebra from the system's spinal cord, an anachronistic being with regards to the rhythms and tempos structured by human and divine orders and laws.

04.06

Bartleby's passive resistance spreads even further. He manages to insert 'a bit of psychosis into English neurosis.'¹⁸⁵ His 'contamination,' reaches out (touches) more significantly on the character of the Lawyer (the Prophet, the 'monstrous, devouring father'), who, in different occasions throughout the story, expresses the impact that Bartleby produces in him. For

¹⁸⁴ Giorgio Agamben, 'Bartleby, or On Contingency,' 254.

¹⁸⁵ Gilles Deleuze, 'Bartleby; Or, The Formula,' 72.

example, he describes the ‘strange effect’ of his ‘contact’ with Bartleby and how this seriously affected his emotions: the ‘overpowering feelings that seized him;’ how he could not ‘avoid falling into sudden spasmodic passions,’ and the ‘private’ he felt whenever he was close to him. Indeed it was encounters with Bartleby that allowed the Lawyer to engage with the divine, to ‘see, feel and penetrate the predestines purpose’ of his life. Throughout the story, the Lawyer expresses several more homoerotic suggestions, as indicated by Deleuze, such as the ways Bartleby ‘strangely disarmed him, but in a wonderful manner, touched and disconcerted’ him, or ‘declarations of love that torment his soul.’¹⁸⁶

This passionate excess is also known as ‘perversion,’ a clinical term whose origins are rooted in psychoanalysis and is commonly used to designate sexual behaviour outside the socially acceptable norms. As already outlined, this term has been utilised by Michel Foucault as a form a critique of juridical conceptions of power. It has also been seized by queer theory to designate both the type of sexuality that does not align with heteronormativity as well as rubrics of resistance to specific formations of power. In Melville’s story, however, there is furthermore an indirect referral to Jacques Lacan—which Deleuze equally addresses obliquely—whose account on perversion can be related to the paternal law. Lacan looks into the etymology of perversion which detaches from the French word *pere* (father) *vert* (version), which means another version of the father.¹⁸⁷

This perversion also appears in various instances within the text of the story. For example, when the narrator explains that Bartleby’s ‘perverseness seemed ungrateful,’ or when he describes Nipper’s table as a ‘perverse voluntary agent, intent on thwarting and vexing him.’ Again, as already suggested, this perversion is imbedded in Bartleby’s preference not to participate in the reproduction (copying) of the law, opening discussion of determinism, will and agency. This perversion is similar to the paternalist condition of the Lawyer: ‘the guardian of divine and human laws.’ Deleuze makes indirect referral to Lacan’s perversion, indeed, by end of his essay, he declares that the role of Bartleby is to abolish the father/son hierarchy—the ‘monstrous fathers who devour their children and create brothers.’ The Lawyer thus has an indirect referral to the Greek hungry and destructive father Chronos, the

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Tim Dean, ‘The Frozen Countenance of the Perversions,’ 94-95.

one who devours his children. For this reason, Deleuze calls Bartleby ‘a new Christ,’ or ‘a liberation from old laws opposed to the newness of spirit.’¹⁸⁸

04.07

What I have investigated in this section influences my reading of contingency as an element of a condition (an articulation/an utterance/a thought/a thing/an event) with the capacity to be simultaneously true and not-true, to be actualised and not be actualised at the same time, to be potentiality and be impotentiality indistinctively. It exists in the threshold between affirmation and negation, swinging back and forth between yes and no. Contingency materialises in thought when it thinks and dematerializes in thought when it does not think. It belongs to the sphere of perfect potentiality, and is part of the thinking soul and the place of forms. It is expressed in contrary statements about future contingents spoken by two different curators: ‘the artwork will break’ and ‘the artwork will not break.’ Contingency pulses in the limits between the operative and the inoperative, in the division of creation and decreation, and the differentiation of the sacred and the profane. It happens in Aristotle’s exception to the rule, in the ‘virtue of an ambiguity,’ in the field of accident and chance, in Melville’s ‘I would prefer not to,’ in Deleuze’s ever expanding zone of indetermination, in Lacan’s perversion, in Agamben’s ‘potential-not-to,’ in Diogenes Laërtius *ou mallon*, in Empiricus’s *epochê*. Contingency is located in the tension between actuality and potentiality, in the tension between potentiality and potentiality not-to, a tension that can only be expressed in a statement that can be both true and false. This contingent statement can only take the material, corporeal or embodied form of something (or someone) that simultaneously Is and Is-not.

¹⁸⁸ Gilles Deleuze, ‘Bartleby; Or, The Formula,’ 84.

05.00

Practical Component

06.00

Concluding Section

Philosophy is a discipline that is just as inventive, just as creative as any other discipline; it consists in creating or inventing concepts. Concepts do not exist ready-made in a kind of heaven waiting for some philosopher to come grab them. Concepts have to be produced [...] There has to be a necessity, in philosophy and elsewhere; otherwise there is nothing. A creator is not a preacher working for the fun of it. A creator only does what he or she absolutely needs to do [...] Everything has a story. Philosophy also tells stories. Stories with concepts [...] Something rather curious often happens to Dostoyevsky's characters, something that can come from a minor detail. [They] are constantly caught up in emergencies, and while they are caught up in these life-and-death emergencies, they know that there is a more urgent question—but they do not know what it is [...] there is something more urgent.¹⁸⁹

Returning to its role in curatorial planning procedures, in its most immediate form, contingency denotes the (possible) occurrence of unknown and unwanted events for which one must be prepared. It is used as a control mechanism to deal with miscalculations, risk-management, urgencies and to repair from accidents and recover from damages. It indicates unexpected, uncategorisable, and unplanned situations which must be avoided. Here contingency operates under the laws, rules and logic of preprogramed values and functions outlined by Microsoft budget calculators. Nevertheless, behind the practical teleology of these standard managerial strategies and administrative processes, there is a struggle power-discourse, and a complex network of apparatuses designed to protect and reinforce specific ideological and structural forms of power. They set the parameters in the formulation and validation of the truth-value of curatorial knowledge—programming the material becoming of exhibitions, ideas, or curated events. These practical strategies and processes also set the formulas by which time is produced, distributed and consumed. Under the laws, rules and

¹⁸⁹ Gilles Deleuze, 'Resistance in Art,' 320.

logic of these values and functions, time thus takes the material role and symbolic form of time-wage numbers and time-management formats. Once more, time becomes capitalised.

As a reiterated clarification, I am not implying that contingency or time in curatorial practice are reduced to administration or to the Excel spreadsheet. I am very much aware of the contingency in the time of research; the experience of the suspension of time in intense moments of encounter with art, theory, spaces or people; the embodied experience of temporal discontinuity in processes of ingesting and digesting philosophy and art; the materiality of the contingency of time in counter-chronological processes of writing and re-writing; the experience of contingency as inner event in actual or metaphorical accidents in my own curatorial processes. What I do want to draw attention to, nevertheless, is the symbolic significance and material consequences that the element of contingency acquires in the context/format of these values and functions.¹⁹⁰

In this chapter, I have presented a systematic investigation on the philosophical meaning of the concept of contingency. As demonstrated, beyond its administrative and managerial usage, it is itself a difficult concept and has been widely explored throughout the history of Western philosophy. It has incited complex discussions around aporias, contradictions and ambiguities in studies of metaphysics, temporality, philosophy of language and truth. It is also central to ongoing debates surrounding the limits between determinism, human agency and free will.

This investigation has driven me determine the meaning of contingency as the capacity of something (a thing, a thought, an event) to be true and, at the same time, not to be true—a Being that can both Be and not-Be. It exists in the tension between potentiality and actuality, but also in the tension between potentiality and potentiality-not-to. This tension can only be articulated in a statement that can be both true and false. This statement can only take the

¹⁹⁰ I've already referred to the political, social, and economic implications of the concept of 'time-wage' in Marx's critique. Here I am thinking in materialist terms. In this case, more particularly, I am thinking with David Harvey (who I also mention in the introduction of this thesis), who explains that objective forms of measuring time produce objective meanings in the conceptualisation of time. He argues that objective measures and meanings are used to achieve and replicate particular distributions of power. How we represent space and time matters, he writes, because it affects how we and others interpret and then act with respect to the world. It follows that any changes in our conceptual apparatus may have material consequences for the ordering of daily life. Such is the power of representation. The modes by which we represent time (through units, codes and signs, but also through paintings, museums or Excel spreadsheets) may act as material forces with respect to spatial practices. David Harvey, 'The Experience of Space and Time,' 216-217.

material, corporeal or embodied form of something (or someone) that simultaneously Is and Is-not.

However, in order to elaborate further this conclusive section, I will briefly summarise the process that has led me to determine this definition, as well as to resolve the argument of this chapter. This process started many years ago, with an accidental encounter with the element of contingency that appears in cells and columns at the end of curatorial budget templates. This gave rise to the development of an analysis on the philosophical meaning of this concept together with the planning of a practical implementation of this meaning with its managerial and administrative values and functions.

I have presented my theoretical analysis in a written and progressive format as the result of a long research process. This process has involved extended periods of close reading and interpretation, different stages of developing analysis, erratic moments of flirtation with theory, diverse phases for thinking, time for conversations, exchanging ideas and encounters with others, as well as short and prolonged processes of anachronizing past and contemporary texts. The schematised summary of the material outcome of this intermittent process is the following:

In section **01.00**, I addressed the aporias of contingency with regards to language, time and truth; under the theory of the correlation of semantics and metaphysics. I also considered the capacity of statements about future contingents to produce exceptions to the rules of grammar and logic. By asserting the actual ontological status of something that is simultaneously Is and Is-not, contingent statements produce a suspension in the threshold between Being (true) and not-Being (not-true). Therefore, what is at stake in this initial case is the many ways in which Being or Becoming can be truthfully said.

In section **02.00**, I presented an investigation of the paradoxes of contingency in relation to the threshold between potentiality and actuality and potentiality not to, and the aporia of potentiality as a mode of existence of non-Being: the presence of absence. I also considered the ambiguities around the potentiality of the soul (thought and sensation) in relation to the true-value of its linguistic material signification. I concluded that language exists as the potential to signify but also as the potential-not-to signify. Hence, what is at stake in this second case is the many ways in which Being or Becoming can be truthfully not said.

In section **03.00**, I looked into the implications of Bartleby's queer phrase conceived as a literary expression of contingency. Similar to contingent statements, 'I would prefer not to' 'disconnect' from the general rules of language and logic, producing a suspension of the threshold of Being (true) and not-Being (not-true). I also included a brief referral to the Skeptics' concept of *epoché* and the relation of contrary statements about future contingents to tautologies. I concluded that Bartleby's mechanistic phrase is a linguistic annunciation of the contingency of language and Being. And Bartleby himself is a literary representation of the human embodiment of contingency.

In section **04.00**, I addressed the political implications of 'I would prefer not to' in relation to 'passive resistance.' I considered the suspension of being and language through the paradoxical articulation of the internal resistance of contingency. I also applied two Agambenian terms to the interpretation of the story: 'decreation,' and 'inoperative.' Finally, I elaborated on the effects of Bartleby's condition as a contingent being: his capacity to 'affect' and 'pervert' those around him; its connection to free will and determinism; and the opening for alternative possibilities of Being or not-Being.

As a result of the division and sum of these numbered and progressive sections, I have resolved the argument—the logical and semantic inference—that contingent statements create a suspension in the passage amidst potentiality to actuality, but also in the passage between potentiality and potentiality-not-to. This suspension generates a space for paradox and resistance, which is intrinsic to the creative act. I equally argue that different modalities of semantic signification are also principles of Being and qualities of existence itself—there is a truthful correspondence between language and event or actual thing. Therefore, by articulating an event that is simultaneously happening and not happening, language creates contingency: it affects the multiple possibilities of Being or not-Being, and Becoming or not-Becoming.

Nevertheless, as explained in the introduction, my intention has been to incorporate the conceptual meaning of contingency into managerial formalities and administrative procedures wielded in cells and columns of Excel spreadsheets. Likewise, my proposal aimed to integrate the managerial and administrative function of contingency into critical thinking. In other words, this project has consisted in merging these two different disciplinary joints.

What has risen from this encounter is the creation of a ‘conceptual tool:’ something that combines administrative teleologies with philosophical knowledge. Theory thus occupies a place in managerial strategies, whilst administrative forms are conferred with philosophical meaning.

Under the parameters of these new rules and logics, the element of contingency in curatorial budget templates not only predicts the simultaneous occurrence and the non-occurrence of future or infinite past (unwanted and unknown) events for which one must be prepared. It also pronounces the philosophical debate about future and past contingents (it states a future or infinite past event that is simultaneously happening and not happening). The managerial type of contingency articulates the edge between acting and not-acting, writing and not-writing, Being and not-Being. Under the values and formulas of the cells and columns of Excel Spreadsheets, this contingency element furthermore announces the pure potentiality of an event (accident in pure potentiality). The avoided element of contingency in those green, orange and yellow calculation boxes stresses the kind of potentiality that can be either actualised or not be actualised. It utters the capability of a curated project of its own impotentiality. This contingency element expresses the internal resistance of the creative act. It is similarly located in the co-relation between language—the word ‘contingency’ in budget templates, or potentials in risk assessments—falsity and truth: it is possible for an artwork to break, and it is possible for an artwork not to break. It equates to Agamben’s term ‘the rather’ or The Skeptics’ *epochê*. Here contingency formulates the tautology ‘there-will-or-will-not-be-an-accident-at-the-opening-event,’ beyond the taking place of the two opposite possibilities. This contingency element also tackles the dilemma of determinism versus agency and free will.

In terms of the actual material outcome of the practical component, in section **05.00**, I displayed a sheet of paper without any character nor ideas inscribed in it. The intention of this gesture was to produce an experience of interruption to the quantified and calculated progression of the reading process (the mechanistic sequence by which I designed this chapter). But also to re-create a suspension in the threshold amidst creation and non-creation. This is how I am exhibiting ‘potentiality-not-to.’ I am suspending the potentiality of a curated project thus to reveal its potentiality not-to. To display an empty sheet of paper is to exhibit the presence of an absence; it is to articulate a curatorial statement about the many ways in which Being or Becoming can truthfully not be said. This empty sheet of paper represents not

only a potentiality that will not pass into actuality, but it also represents the kind of potentiality that preserves and destroys its own potential-not-to. It re-creates a curatorial project that resists to its own creation: a ‘decreation.’ By being capable of its own impotentiality, this empty section displays something inexhaustible because that something will not pass to the actual. Therefore, this **05.00** practical section is a poetic and creative gesture of suspension and exposition of potentiality not-to. It is the announcement of an awareness of contingency. And, by being aware of this contingency, resistance enacts its political and critical counter-power.

The result of this gesture is not only the interruption of the reading process, as well as the suspension of the course of the multiple possibilities of Being or Becoming of a curated project. This gesture furthermore comprises the practical application of the capacity of a curatorial statement not-to-signify, which, for its part, entails the suspension of the rules and logic of capitalist temporality. In other words, this suspension involves rendering inoperative values and functions calculated in time-management schedules and time-wage numbers. Therefore, the final outcome of this gesture is the cancellation of the possible occurrence of any miscellaneous result derived from these rhythms and tempos—as explained in the introduction of this chapter, these include over-productivity, the acceleration, exploitation and bureaucratisation of time, economic hunger, financial greed, affective exploitation, the imbalances of power and the formation of oppressive systems and repressive subjects in the production, validation and distribution of curatorial knowledge. Again, this how I am enacting the curatorial statement ‘I would prefer not to.’ This is how I am articulating a refusal to operate under the rhythms and tempos of the laws and orders of capitalist-mechanistic-temporality.

This chapter is thus the paradoxical product of a negation of productivity: versus the conception of time as money, opposed to the tempos and rhythms of a capitalised art calendar. It is the outcome of the enactment of a statement of resistance against forms of subjectification dictated by the laws and orders of this economy—versus the reproduction, re-affirmation and copying of such laws and orders. This chapter is also the result of the articulation of a gesture of preference not to participate in the hungry and greedy dynamics of an alienated society within the art system; in opposition to the dispersion and imposition of

repressive doctrines and discriminatory political-economic ideologies.¹⁹¹ In short, this chapter is a gesture of resistance towards the many ways in which time is produced, distributed and consumed within curatorial temporalities.

It is therefore relevant to return to Agamben's term, 'profanity,' which, as I explained in the introduction, refers to the appropriation of the sacred into the profane: the ability to recognise the potential for a different purpose in things, objects, ideas or concepts other than the one they traditionally held. This term also refers to the capacity to overturn the rituals of the sacred through the act of play as a way to combat capitalism. Likewise, my proposal has involved the recognition of the counter-power of the element of contingency that appears in curatorial managerial business plans. It has consisted in returning to contingency its philosophical meaning as a strategy to subvert its preprogrammed values and functions. Once more, to play by the same rules and logics that belong to the realm of the sacred is to maintain them but also to overturn them from within. My plan thus has been to transform the use that contingency has in the context of budget templates into a subversive concept itself, and this to awaken the critical and creative potential within a minor detail. This has driven me to discover the counter-power of its internal resistance. This has also led me to discern the strength of its capacity of resilience. As Deleuze indicates in relation to philosophy, curating is also a creative and inventive practice. If every act of creation is an act of resistance (resistance to death, to power exerted in control societies), the capacity to be creative (even if creativeness means non-creation) is therefore a political and poetic gesture of resistance.¹⁹² This is how I propose to curate contingency. This is the emergency I have been accidentally caught up in. This is the contingency I am acknowledging, and responding to. This is the urgency that needs attention.

¹⁹¹ As metaphorically suggested by Melville when he alludes to the (imperialist, colonialist) 'all-wise Providence.'

¹⁹² Thank you to Roger Malbert for such an inspiring conversation and for sharing with me some of his experience curating Hayward Touring over thirty years. In a recent interview, Malbert explained to me standard procedures managing large-scale budgets and dealing with accountancy in exhibition-making processes. He also shared with me the idea that these elements, although they are standard institutional formalities and practical procedures, they are also connected to the creative and inventive aspect of curatorial practice. According to him, filling in a risk assessment form can be as creative as writing a catalogue text. All aspects of curating, from selecting venues, artists, ideas, artworks, designing of space, to administrating, filling in funding application forms, budgeting, emailing, group meetings, conversations with artists and interaction with the public, all elements (from major components to minor details), he explained, are creative gateways and can be critical or political entry points for curatorial practice to unfold. I was also particularly inspired with his analogy about budget-guidelines being like sketched visualisations of spatialised material outcomes, which are, like drawings in processes of becoming (Interview with Roger Malbert, 16 December 2020).

This research offers the final possible outcome of re-directing the use of contingency from an administrative and managerial procedure, utilised to control unknown and unwanted events (future contingents), into a strategy of resistance, capable to overturn the orders of time imposed by prearranged economies and prescribed ideologies. In parallel, the result of this investigation is the possibility to re-direct the use of contingency from a practical tool for repair of unexpected accidents (past contingents) into a mechanism of support in processes of resilience in the face of symbolic and/or actual harm produced by the destructive and devouring mechanistic temporality. This subversion thus has allowed for me to intensify the meaning of contingency; to transfer its theoretical and practical functions; and to embellish its undermined true-value.

The resulted resistance of this contingency thus is similar to the Foucauldian resistance of those who have less power than their rivals, or the ones who are in situations of disadvantage or vulnerability in relation to their opponents (workers, prisoners, students, the perverse). These resistances, although they may operate in lower hierarchical positions with regards to the ones who govern, does not mean that they lack self-determination, nor it prevents them from challenging derived forms of oppression. And while they have less power does not mean they are power-less.¹⁹³ This chapter therefore concludes with the proposal that the miscellaneous element of contingency, so often set aside at the end of curatorial budget templates, can be converted into a conceptual tool of resistance: capable of suspending the mechanistic course of the capitalised economy of time, and welding an alternative time-space to recover devalued potentials in the Becoming, or not-Becoming, of exhibitions, ideas, or curated events.

¹⁹³ Kevin Jon Heller, 'Power, Subjectification and Resistance in Foucault,' 99.

Anachronism

Introduction

As an initial definition, the notion of anachronism refers to a lack of concordance in chronological arrangements of time. It is traditionally employed in the disciplines of history and art history as a way of denoting outdated premises, irrelevant or expired concepts. It refers to errors in chronological order, or the juxtaposition of different historical periods, which originate in disregard to the modes of life and thought that characterise a specific historical moment.¹⁹⁴ In these terms, anachronism is used as a mechanism with which to validate, or else to disapprove historical and aesthetic narratives, while reinforcing the idea that those narratives ought to adhere to chronological orders—measuring time in epochs or styles, ages or periods, and centuries or eras.

The term was initially conceived around the seventeenth century, when anachronicity in William Shakespeare's plays was first identified. Literary critics detected 'defects,' 'perversions' and other chronological irregularities within the dramaturge's scripts. They named these queer temporal anomalies 'anachronisms,' which needed to be revised, corrected and amended.¹⁹⁵ The most referenced example is the mechanical clock that strikes in *Julius Caesar* when Brutus betrays Caesar, a play which depicts a point in history dating back to 44 B.C., before mechanical clocks had been invented. Critics reproved these 'anachronisms' as 'absurd violations of historical accuracy,' 'transgressions against the rules of chronology.' However, over the course of time, they were viewed as 'insignificant details' that only concerned old-fashioned scholars. Today, the study of historical anachronisms is itself seen as an outdated academic practice.¹⁹⁶

The English word 'anachronism' derives from the Greek *anakhronismos*, from *ana* ('against') and *khronos* ('time'). Greek mythology initially conceives Cronos as the guardian of non-temporality, of eternity and tradition, which is circular and continuous. Cronos undergoes a metamorphosis and becomes the opposite of what he was, giving origin to Chronos, the bearer of time, the 'devourer of time,' the one who prevents time from unfolding unleashing an irreversible process, and making the representation of the world

¹⁹⁴ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 'Anachronism.'

¹⁹⁵ Étienne Poulard, 'Untimely Aesthetics, Shakespeare, Anachronism and Presence,' 54-55.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, 7-8.

possible, turning towards human beings and temporality.¹⁹⁷ Chronos is furthermore the cosmological embodiment of time portrayed by Hesiod in the *Theogony*, appearing as the ‘crooked-schemer’ authoritarian god-titan of time. Also associated with the oppressive and destructive force of time, Chronos is the hungry mythological figure who devoured his children when jealous fear of the prophecy of being overthrown and anachronized by them.¹⁹⁸

As a derivative of Chronos, anachronism denotes moments when its orders have been transgressed, perverted and violated. It implies a rhetorical response, a material resistance, a discursive opposition, an operational out-of-jointness, towards its material and symbolic articulations. However, anachronism cannot exist without chronology; it depends on it as much as it resists it, and is a result of it, yet works from within and against it. Therefore, in the second instance, the concept of anachronism has a more complex significance. It has a subversive counter-power. It emerges from the domain of chronology as an error, an irregularity or discontinuity: an out-of-jointness from its articulations (the ‘facts’ of its historical discourses and its aesthetic narratives).

For this reason, anachronism has been appropriated by a variety of academic approaches in the interpretation of time and temporality, as a strategy to re-examine values and ideologies inscribed in chronological formations of power. These approaches include various branches of cultural studies and visual cultures, such as queer, feminist and post-colonial theory, as well as curatorial theory and practice. These approaches have transformed the concept of anachronism into a practical and theoretical tool to confront ‘things that deserve to be destroyed,’ to overcome past damages and sufferings, and to make visible historically marginalised groups and subjugations in official history. It has also been used in the production of alternative histories, methods, and institutions to (official, national) chronological narratives.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁷ Régis Laurent, ‘An Introduction to Aristotle’s Metaphysics of Time,’ 98-99.

¹⁹⁸ Hesiod, *Theogony, Works and Days*, 7. The Greeks previously understood other conceptions of time, such as *Kairos* (the opportune time for action) and *Aion* (unbounded time: time indefinite and without measure). With regards Chronos and Aion, Gilles Deleuze makes an interpretation of these two temporalities conceiving the former as regulated movement of vast and profound presents and the later as the eternal truth of time (Gilles Deleuze, ‘Tenth Series of the Ideal Game,’ 58-65).

¹⁹⁹ This idea is elaborated by Elizabeth Grosz, who anachronizes Nietzsche’s untimely (Elizabeth Grosz, *The Nick of Time, Politics, Evolution and the Untimely*). Some relevant authors include: in queer theory, Elizabeth Freeman, and her notion of ‘temporal-drag,’ which explores modes by which anachronistic queer and feminist histories can be brought into and resonate in the present. Her approach to queer asynchronies allows for an engagement with historical consciousness in erotic terms. Under a similar basis, Carolyn Dinshaw, calls for ‘a queer desire for history’ in archival work, in which lesbian and gay historians have created new accounts of

In this chapter, I am exploring the concept of time as the substance of living creatures and the matter of life itself. I am looking into the possibility of acknowledging time as something that infiltrates into the mind and flows like blood inside living bodies. I am seeking to engage with time as something internal to the conceptual apparatus and to corporeal experience.²⁰⁰ In the same vein, I am exploring the concept of anachronism as something other than an expired date, or an outdated or irrelevant premise. Rather, like time, I conceive and practice anachronism as a possibility of becoming: something that permeates the neurons of the mind and blood cells of the body.

I define anachronism in this chapter as an embodied temporality which is by definition out-of-joint. It is the intellectual occurrence of temporal dislocation; the somatic disarticulation of human bodies from within and against chronological anatomies and systems. It emerges in the antagonism of different forces: the individual's internal temporality, and chronological apparatuses ordering processes, rhythms and tempos of life.²⁰¹ For this reason, to become

what has been 'hidden from history,' looking into the possibility of connecting affectively with the past to create communities across time. In feminist studies, Julia Kristeva, takes Nietzsche's notion of 'monumental time' as an anachronistic strategy to bring into the fore histories of women who have not been taken into account within universal history. In post-colonial discourses, Homi K. Bhabha elaborates on problematics of questions of cultural 'authorisation.' He argues that the experience of contingency within history and the anachronistic condition of history are the indeterminacies that make subversion and revision possible. In curatorial theory and practice, João Ribas elaborates on the problematics of curatorial historiography, questioning on how to incorporate a divergent and heterogeneous field of practices, such as feminist recovery and decoloniality, within various forms of cultural production. Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds, Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories*. Carolyn Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval: Sexualities and Communities, Pre- and Post-modern*, 178. Julia Kristeva, 'Women's Time.' Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 257. João Ribas, 'What to Do With the Contemporary?,' Kindle Edition.

²⁰⁰ I am supporting this engagement with the concept of time through the analysis I am presenting based on Agamben and Nietzsche. However, I am also supporting this approach through Elizabeth Grosz's theoretical insights on the question of becoming, the ontology of time and the material reality of time. She elaborates on these insights through a reading of Nietzsche's untimely, addressing the ontological implications for living beings of their immersion in time. According to her, time is an ontological element, a living matter that inhabits all living beings, an internal constitutive feature of life itself (Elizabeth Grosz, 'Nietzsche and Overcoming,' 95-154).

²⁰¹ Behind this idea there is Michel Foucault's concept of biopower, which he elaborates through a critique of apparatuses of power/knowledge that discipline the rhythms, dynamics and practices of living beings. These apparatuses seize hold of the governance of process of life, such as the biological tempos from life to death of individuals and societies (Michel Foucault, 'The Will to Knowledge,' 135-159). In a more concrete example, Foucault introduces on the notion of 'ordinance.' This notion refers to the chronological adjustment of the body to collective, obligatory and imposed rhythms. It constitutes 'a programme,' or 'anatomo-chronological' schema of behaviour. Time, Foucault writes, penetrates the body; and with it all the meticulous controls of power (Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish, The Birth of the Prison*, 149-151). Furthermore, Foucault's discernment of biopower has served as a basis in Agamben's thesis around the formation of political subjects through the governance of life itself, and development of his notion of 'bare life,' which he also develops from the ancient Greeks. Agamben extends Foucault's critique by looking into the independence of biopower with sovereignty (Giorgio Agamben, 'Form-of-Life,' 4-11).

anachronistic is to embody temporal irregularity and discontinuity. To become anachronistic is to become the living human embodiment of the concept itself: an irrelevant or outdated contemporary living being with regards to up-to-date and validated chronological orders and modes of being.

Anachronistic minds and bodies are formed by pasts and futures that refuse to amend the orders dictated by Chronos. Their temporal boundaries are dissolved in the will to shatter but also to weld chronological time. They work with chronological time but displace and transform it. They disjoint its regulatory joints whilst articulating them as their own living spine. This initial suggestion has driven me to develop the argument that becoming anachronistic is to become the living spine that joins together and disjoints chronological time. Or, as Nietzsche puts it, becoming anachronistic is the paradoxical process of those who ‘desire to awaken time to life and so live in this awakened life.’²⁰²

In this chapter, I explore theoretical implications and practical strategies of becoming anachronistic. In doing so I investigate the curatorial modes for materialising and embodying temporal irregularity and discontinuity. I do so by addressing the political and poetic consequences of becoming out-of-joint in relation to chronological apparatuses. Based on this line of research, the subsequent argument that I will be developing in this chapter, is that anachronism can be experienced in the curated encounter. This experience is an embodied experience of out-of-jointness implanted in the subject’s mind and body. This experience is transformative—it is the mode by which individuals become anachronistic—but it has the duration of a moment or disjuncture of chronological time.

Here Shakespeare provides valuable insight once more; he was a pioneer in the exploration of anachronism in two senses. Firstly, and ‘accidentally,’ through periodisation errors in chronology. Secondly, and most importantly, through his artistic investigation of the actual ontological stratus of the concept itself. The characters he portrays in his plays are individuals out-of-synch with the structural time-tables of their epoch and do not bend to the ideological agendas of the times that they live in. Their anachronism relies on the fact that they do not adjust or extend to correspond with modes of life and thought of their present time. For this reason, they are human living embodiments of anachronism. The incarnation of this concept

²⁰² Friedrich Nietzsche, ‘Schopenhauer as Educator,’ 128.

in flesh, blood and bone. They enact this anachronism through their intent to act and intervene within chronological time. For example, after encountering his father's ghost, Hamlet pronounces:

The time is out of joint—O cursèd spite,
That ever I was born to set it right!²⁰³

The state of affairs in Denmark takes the embodied form of a dislocated bone: 'the time' is out of joint. Shakespeare creates a metaphor of 'the time' as a body: a disjointed skeleton. Throughout the story, Hamlet seeks to revenge the murder of his father, who appears to him as a 'cursèd spite' spectre from the past. By strategic 'indirections' he tries to 'find directions' to confront Claudius, the representation of human embodiment of official corruption and hypocrisy in the court of Elsinore. Hamlet 'was born' to set right the future of his kingdom and personal life. The division of past, present and future tenses are *confused*: one is *fused* with the other across the story but also within Hamlet's flesh, blood and bones.²⁰⁴ Shakespeare creates a character who is able to see and to feel the injured condition of 'the time,' someone who has gained knowledge about it but who is also determined to act upon such situations. Through his thoughts and actions, the prince of Denmark intends to weld oppositional forces, he makes the effort to suture the wound caused by estranged temporalities. He intends to set right a world that is out of joint, to set time free from its subordination to the chronological orders of his epoch. Hamlet experiences anachronism, he incarnates anachronism through thought, body and action, he becomes an anachronistic being.²⁰⁵

The irrelevance of anachronism is paradoxical in its nature as it is relevant today, as it is a contemporary strategic mode of resistance. It continues to serve as a valid operative concept for questioning and intervening values and ideologies, inscribed in present-day chronological formations of power. Likewise, the insignificance of anachronism is in itself significant as it

²⁰³ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 126.

²⁰⁴ Smita A. Rahman explains that 'out-of-joint' signifies 'a world without moorings, where time has been unclasped from its sequential structure and is a swirling eddy of confusion' (Smita A. Rahman, *Time, Memory, and the Politics of Contingency*, 2).

²⁰⁵ Elizabeth Freeman explains that Hamlet recognises time as body, and 'the time,' or the sphere of official politics and national history (The Age or The Century), from a joint. Thus, the body and the state are mutually constructing. She also argues that Hamlet's corporeal disfigurement registers and performs time's heterogeneity (Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds, Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories*, 14-15).

is an untimely living concept. Anachronism reveals the vital necessity to reconnect with the temporality we inhabit as living beings. Moments of out-of-jointness dislocate the self from the epochal elements imposed to its temporality, they open gateways to the acknowledgment of the flow of becoming and the recognition of the passing away of all things as the only structure of time.²⁰⁶

From here, the direction of this investigation narrows its focus to curatorial methods in order to shatter and to weld chronological time. With this in mind, I ask the question:

What does it mean to become anachronistic?

In order to answer this question, I have articulated this chapter in two different formats. Firstly, this written component, and secondly as two practical projects.

Theory

The theoretical framework is centered in the analysis of two concepts which are themselves anachronistic. These concepts are Giorgio Agamben's 'contemporary' and Friedrich Nietzsche's 'untimely.' They are the philosophical basis that has supported the process of formulating my own argument about anachronism. Here I introduce some of the key terms I have engaged with from Agamben and Nietzsche.

The Contemporary

The reader will find in the forthcoming text an analysis of Agamben's 'contemporary,' which he elaborates in his essay 'What Is the Contemporary?' Here he defines contemporariness as the occurrence of profound dissonance, or the individual's experience of out-of-jointness with regards the epoch. For Agamben, those who are truly contemporary, who truly belong to their time, are those who neither perfectly coincide with it nor adjust themselves to its demands. They are, in this sense, anachronistic. They are rare individuals who have the ability to perceive a special darkness which is hidden in the lights of the epoch. This darkness, he explains, is an expanding universe for them, and it never ceases to engage them.

²⁰⁶ Carl E. Pletsch, 'History and Friedrich Nietzsche's Philosophy of Time,' 39.

Thus, they work with chronological time, but they transform it into a peculiar discontinuity, establishing an irregular relationship. Additionally, in order to gain a better understating of the relationship between Agamben's contemporary and the anachronic, it is important to consider his previous essay 'What Is an Apparatus?' In this text the philosopher elaborates on the complexities around the relationship between the temporality of the individuals as living beings, and systems of power operating within chronological apparatuses. Therefore, this section is complemented by an analysis of Agamben's critique to the apparatus (and its processes of subjectification) that establish the conditions by which the contemporary becomes anachronistic.

The Age

In order to put into practice his own argument about the contemporary's capacity to interpolate texts which are many years removed from us, Agamben presents to his readers an analysis of the poem *The Age* or *The Century* by the Russian poet Osip Mandelstam. Taking Agamben's analysis as a point of departure, I have elaborated on my own interpretation of this poem in a separate section in this chapter.

The Untimely

With regards Nietzsche's 'untimely,' the reader will find a section focused on his four *Untimely Meditations*. In these essays, he argues that becoming untimely is a necessary consequence of striving to become who one truly is. Nietzsche elaborates on a critique of 'the time,' by separating history (the sphere of official politics and national history) and human life. He also initiates his investigation of the genealogy of values and expresses his own anachronism with regards the cultural and theoretical apparatus of his own epochal context. In these fragmented texts, Nietzsche argues that becoming untimely is to raise the self above historical culture, all historical narratives, all so-called chronologies. The untimely, he explains, resembles the Dionysian man, who, for its part, resembles Hamlet. It perceives the flow of eternal becoming, the passing away of all things as the only structure of time. It regards the importance of each individual moment, and not of history as a whole. However, becoming untimely is a never-to-be-completed process of self-development and self-overcoming. It means to embody the 'I' that is, the 'I' that was already and the 'I' that can possibly be. Nietzsche describes it in the following way: 'My true self is something I have to

“become,” but it is also what I already “am”.²⁰⁷ The analysis I am presenting here is both descriptive and critical, transferring contemporary curatorial issues to Nietzsche’s own epochal affairs.

The Moment

In order to expand on the argument about becoming anachronistic, I have added an analysis of Nietzsche’s concepts of the inner event and the eternal return. This chapter thus includes an interpretation of a selection of fragments from his texts in *Will to Power* concerning these two concepts and in relation to the argument about the transcendence of individual moments. Similarly, this analysis presents interventions of elements of practice, such as anachronizations of Nietzsche’s ideas with artworks included in the projects.

I have chosen to read Agamben and Nietzsche because they both show a concern for thinking, acting and experiencing time anachronistically. They both interpret anachronism as the disjuncture of the historical element and the ontology of the concept in human life and embodied experience. However, these two philosophers are relevant to my research not only because they interpret anachronism as something that is epochal and internal, but most importantly because they argue in favour of artistic gestures that conceive, practice and experience time anachronistically. Agamben’s contemporary has a spine that has been shattered (thus his referral to Mandelstam). Nietzsche’s untimely has a skeleton that is out-of-joint (hence his allusion to Shakespeare). These artistic gestures are enacted forms of anachronism. While they materialise as poetry and performing arts they can also materialise as philosophy and various forms of contemporary art. To enact violent metaphors of time (disjointed body parts, such as Mandelstam’s wretched vertebrae or Shakespeare’s dislocated bone) is to put into practice the discursive significations and philosophical meaning of the concept of anachronism as a poetic gesture of resistance. In other words, it is to artistically and poetically mark irregularities and incise discontinuities into material and symbolic orders dictated by chronological apparatuses. Both Agamben and Nietzsche are necessary for my argument since they find art to be the force that inspires and resuscitates action, or the instrument that may bring liberation. This close connection with art and its political and

²⁰⁷ Daniel Breazeale, ‘Introduction,’ xix.

poetic counter-power is what allows for the juxtaposition of this theoretical approach with the exhibition projects.

Practice

The practical components involved two projects that took place in 2018. These projects were conceived as a spatialised dialogue across an assortment of artistic media in two different time-zones. They included painting, sculpture, photography, performance, sound, text, processual pieces, drawing, poetry, video, film, light installation. They were physically presented in the past and are here-now re-presented through documentation material and textual interpretation. As stated at the beginning of this thesis, with the intention of re-enacting anachronism as a discursive curated embodied metaphor, the practical components of this chapter mirror and recall philosophical approaches to anachronism through the public display of anachronistic artistic materialities.²⁰⁸

Against Time

The first of these projects consisted of a five week durational exhibition. It was shown during Glasgow International arts festival at Civic Room, an arts organisation located in a nineteenth-century British Linen Bank in Central Glasgow, Scotland. Four artists were invited to participate in this project: Sarah Forrest, Sue Tompkins, Geneva Sills and Toby Paterson. The proposal for investigating anachronism in this context started with an observation of anachronistic situations perceived in the urban context of central Glasgow, together with the nineteenth-century building of the gallery. The curatorial framework encouraged artists to identify elements that contained echoes of the past and latencies of the future, and recall their past, evoke their future, through artworks. The intention was to work with chronological time but displace and transform it: to create a place of encounter between different times and generations through the public display of works of art. This would

²⁰⁸ These display strategies could relate to what Simon Sheikh refers to as ‘queering of space,’ which allows for oppositional discourses and practices to be formulated and circulated; the (re)writing of histories through deconstructive as well as reconstructive projects. The experimental aspect of these projects may also relate to what Sheikh calls ‘the expanded field of curating,’ considering the exhibition as a site of research, a proposition; a site for carrying out this research, as a place for enacted research, whereby ‘research here is not only that which comes before realization but also that which is realised throughout realization’ (Simon Sheikh, ‘Constitutive Effects: The Techniques of the Curator,’ 182. Simon Sheikh, ‘Towards the Exhibition as Research,’ 39-40).

furthermore allow to test the argument about becoming anachronistic through out-of-joint encounters with the past, present and/or future of that particular space. Departing from this premise, artists responded through different means, discourses and methods.

By Indirections Find Directions Out

The second project involved a five week residency and two month exhibition presented at Yamakiwa Gallery, an artistic initiative located in a traditional Japanese house in a farmer's village in the Japanese countryside. Artists Patricia Dominguez, Love Enqvist, Gaia Fugazza, Dominic Hawgood, Mary Hurrell, Mariana Magdaleno, Carlos Santos, and Julia Varela were invited to participate. Distant from urban spaces and close to nature, the project had a more experimental and therapeutic aspect. It investigated external and internal anachronisms embodied in junctures and disjunctures between artworks, the venue, the natural environment and people. This project shaped a close connection with Nietzsche's concept of eternal return and the condition of 'becoming:' a conjuncture where the eternal past and the eternal future co-exist, manifesting in each moment. Artworks were conceived as embodied expressions of never-to-be-completed processes of formation. They shared concerns around notions of transformation, alchemy, shamanism, the cycle of life and death in human life but also in nature and in the universe. Each addressed, in their own material and discursive ways, the idea of anachronism inhabiting the matter of living beings, but also the substance of inanimate objects, as an unconditional and endlessly repeated process of circulation.

Structure

The body of the text of this chapter has been dismembered, yet it joints together a diversity of elements that belong to both practical and theoretical components in ten disjointed sections. These elements include text, images, poetry, links to videos and sound pieces, quotes, floor plans, invitations. They are juxtaposed and displayed in a discontinuous arrangement, forming an irregular narrative. The intention is to interrupt the utterance, to anachronize a linear narrative, to pervert a straight conception of time, making up a metaphorical disjointed spine of time. The aim of this structure, is to articulate a theoretical-practical material

metaphor of anachronism, whereby each element presents itself as a dismemberment from the corporeality of the text, a mutilated body-part from a formal materiality.²⁰⁹

However, taking into account the argument that anachronism works with and against chronology, this written chapter is displayed according to the formerly described anachronistic junctures and disjunctures (miscellaneous material that belong to both practical and theoretical components) but it maintains the compulsory requirements of a traditional thesis layout (e.g. a beginning or introduction, a middle, and an end or conclusion). Therefore, this chapter is designed to be working with and against its own internal teleological structure. I am regarding this tension between experimentation and teleological direction not as a limitation, but rather as an opportunity for oppositional forces to enter into a dialogue and/or confront each other. My suggestion is that these juxtapositions may allow for the emergence of unexpected relations and new discursive constellations. It is a formal and metaphorical strategy to anachronize chronological time. Therefore, the chapter is divided in two:

Part I include the interpretation of Agamben's contemporary, the exhibition in Scotland (*Against Time*), and the analysis of Mandelstam's poem *The Age*. **Part II** incorporate the interpretation of Nietzsche's untimely, the project in Japan (*By Indirections Find Directions Out*), and a section named *The Moment*, which addresses Nietzsche's concepts of inner event and eternal return in relation to the argument about becoming anachronistic in the curated encounter.

In addition, I have inserted two small sections which discuss spaces of representation of chronological time such as timelines and chronologies. These technologies of time-discipline are examples of dominant discursive material orders within the curatorial realm.

²⁰⁹ This format is inspired by Walter Benjamin's discursive and textual interferences and discontinuities of his *Arcades Project*, his idea of *caesura*, fragments and flirtations of his 'One-Way Street.' This format is equally inspired by Roland Barthes's disfigurements and fragmentations, hesitations and oscillations exposed in his *Lovers Discourse*. I consider his idea of the 'mutilated sentence,' his conception of discourse as a 'perpetual calendar.' In Barthes's thesis, the passionate-pleasurable yet violent-painful erotics of desire take the material form of blemishes and fragmentations of a variety of interdisciplinary, modern and historical texts (which he selects, recollects, anachronizes, and displays in alphabetical order). As a final yet vital reference, this format is also inspired by the book *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, written by the scholar and cultural theorist Gloria Evangelina Anzaldúa. She employs a series of formal and conceptual juxtapositions: such as the mixture of metaphor and scholastic language, the use of Spanglish, mixtures between academic research methods and indigenous shamanic practices, as well as fusions in the borders of theory and practice. Anzaldúa investigates many implications of her experiences as Chicana lesbian in academia. She raises issues of race, homosexuality, identity and de-colonial feminism in the 80's.

Part I

That which impedes access to the present is precisely the mass of what for some reason (its traumatic character, its excessive nearness) we have not managed to live. The attention to this 'unlived' is the life of the contemporary. And to be contemporary means in this sense to return to a present where we have never been.²¹⁰

²¹⁰ Giorgio Agamben, 'What Is the Contemporary?', 51-52.

The Contemporary

Discussions about ‘the contemporary’ at the end of the twentieth century and beginning of the new millennium proliferated. There is a vast amount of written material which investigates the meaning of this notion. These include matters of its relation to its function as a periodisation marker, whether it constitutes an attitude rather than a tendency or style, if it is something with special characteristics which have never been seen in universal history, if it is something that was in the past rather than what it is today, or whether it assumes the inclusion of what was previously excluded.

In this section of my chapter, however, I am presenting a close reading, interpretation and anachronization of Giorgio Agamben’s notion of the contemporary. In addition to the reasons I have previously explained, I am interested in this author because he thinks of this term as an ahistorical concept or experiential category, which may be applicable to anyone. His notion of contemporariness goes beyond epochal or geographic contexts, artistic tendencies, theoretical trends or ideologies or methods in mainstream institutions. Furthermore, under the wider Agambenian line of thought, the contemporary has a significant political connotation due to the relation it maintains with the apparatus. In order to understand Agamben’s questions: ‘Of whom and of what are we contemporaries’ or ‘What does it mean to be contemporary?’, it is important to consider the philosophers’ broader line of research, which has a long and established engagement in problematising and rethinking the relationship of the life of individuals and power. More particularly, it is fundamental to take into consideration his critique to the apparatus. Only then it is possible to argue that Agamben uses the category of ‘the contemporary’ to define the relation of individuals as living beings and power structures (control mechanisms) ordering rhythms, tempos and other processes of life.²¹¹ Agamben’s essay has been referred by many contemporary curators, but not all of them interpret it in accordance to this wider body of work.

²¹¹ Departing from Michel Foucault’s insights on conditions of biopolitics and biopower, Agamben studies their relationship with sovereignty, looking into forms by which life itself, or natural life, is politicized—regimes of power that govern the vicissitudes of biological life itself. (Giorgio Agamben, ‘Form-of-Life,’ *Means Without End*, 4,4).

Agamben opens his essay by explicitly evoking Nietzsche's *Untimely Meditations*. He explains that in these early essays of his career, Nietzsche makes an effort to come to terms with his own time. At the beginning of his second meditation, the German philosopher writes that the meditation is itself untimely, because it seeks to understand 'as an illness, a disability, and a defect of some kind' something that he rejects: historical culture and the values that it inflicts and shelters. Agamben explains that Nietzsche situates his own claim for 'relevance,' his own 'contemporariness' with respect to his present, as a deficiency, a non-coincidence, 'dys-chrony,' or 'out-of-jointness.'²¹² In other words, Nietzsche is contemporary as long as he is anachronistic. This anachronism is his lack of sense of belonging with the theoretical and cultural apparatus of his chronologically present epoch.

Once again, Agamben's contemporary—and his contemporary (present-day) reading of Nietzsche's nineteenth century's untimely—cannot be fully understood if not considering the preceding essay 'What Is an Apparatus,' in which he recalls Foucault's notion of *dispositif*. Agamben argues that the decisive problem for Foucault is the relation between the ontology of living beings and the historical element. The 'historical element,' he clarifies, refers to 'the set of institutions, of processes of subjectification, and of rules in which power relations become concrete.'²¹³ Therefore, extending from Foucault's terminology, Agamben defines the historical element or apparatus as 'literally anything that has in some way the capacity to capture, orient, determine, intercept, model, control, or secure the gestures, behaviours, opinions, or discourses of living beings.'²¹⁴ As explained in the introduction of this thesis, this is the definition I have adapted myself in the formulation of the notion of 'chronological apparatuses.'

There is a distinction between the ontological temporality of living beings and the historical element or apparatus. Subjects are situated between these two poles. However, contrary to living beings, apparatuses have no foundation in being, but they always involve processes of subjectification. In today's context, he writes, 'We live in an extreme phase of capitalist development controlled by a massive accumulation and proliferation of apparatuses.' There is not even a single 'instant' in which 'the life of individuals' is not moulded and contaminated by some apparatus. As mentioned earlier, Agamben is here also alluding to practices of

²¹² Giorgio Agamben, 'What Is the Contemporary?,' 40-41.

²¹³ Giorgio Agamben, 'What Is an Apparatus,' 6.

²¹⁴ *Ibid*, 2.

biopower effected by systems or subjects governing tempos, rhythms and processes of ‘the life of individuals.’²¹⁵

Thereafter, individuals as living beings or substances can either amend or disconnect from the rhythms, tempos and processes moulded by apparatuses. However, those who disconnect from these processes are the contemporaries. They see what is difficult for others to see, and therefore refuse to be controlled by ‘the time’ they live in. It is in this sense, that they are ‘irrelevant,’ ‘out-of-date,’ ‘obsolete’—e.g. anachronistic. Indeed Agamben writes of contemporaries as ‘those who do not allow themselves to be blinded by the lights of the century, and so manage to get a glimpse of the shadows in those lights, of their intimate obscurity.’ In other words, individuals as living beings or substances can be blinded by processes of subjectification, and governed or guided by processes of temporalisation. It is those who have the capacity to look into the lights of the epoch without being blinded by them who are the contemporaries. For this reason, contemporaries have the special ability to see through those flashing lights and not only not be blinded by them but also perceive a special darkness that is hidden within them.²¹⁶

All eras, for those who experience contemporariness, are obscure. Contemporaries are the ones who know how to see this obscurity; the ones who are capable of perceiving this darkness. But what does it mean to see an obscurity and to perceive darkness? Agamben answers this question with reference to the neurophysiology of vision, which explains that the absence of light activates cells in the retina producing the kind of vision that we call darkness. Thus, darkness is not a privative notion (the absence of light, or non-vision). Instead, darkness is the result of action—the activity of cells; the product of movement in our own eyes. The perception of darkness is therefore the result of an action.²¹⁷ This action, for its part, implies a paradox and a resistance. It involves the actual neutralising of the blinding lights that come from the epoch, only to then make it possible to gain awareness of the darkness which is inherent to them. Thus, this secret darkness is what concerns the contemporaries the most. They appropriate this darkness and transform it into their own work material. This is the urgency that they feel the necessity to respond to. And this urgency is

²¹⁵ As explained in the chapter, Agamben expanded on Foucault’s concept of biopower in his elaboration of the notion of ‘bare life,’ and his theses around power relations governing life itself (Giorgio Agamben, ‘Form-of-Life,’ 3-11).

²¹⁶ Giorgio Agamben, ‘What Is the Contemporary?,’ 42-45.

²¹⁷ Ibid, 44-45.

what provokes artistic creation: ‘they are able to write by dipping their pen in the obscurity of their present era.’²¹⁸ As the reader will see in the section *Against Time*, Toby Paterson transforms the darkness of urban decay and old mechanicals clocks into critical and creative work material for his artwork.

Furthermore, contemporaries inscribe themselves in the present by making it archaic; they are able to perceive the indices and signatures of the archaic in the most modern and recent. They acknowledge that the archaic is not only situated in a chronological past, but rather it is contemporary with historical becoming and are therefore contemporaries to them. For this reason, the key to the present is hidden in the historical becoming.²¹⁹ Contemporaries are thus contemporaries to anachronistic yet untimely texts, ideas or works of art. Contemporaries are also capable of reading, examining and empathising with texts, ideas or works of art that are many centuries removed from them. By doing so, they give life to them once again, and make them relevant once more. Throughout this thesis I have anachronized this idea, engaging with past text—which are literally or metaphorically distant—appropriating them and giving them new meaning.

In order to put into practice his own contemporariness, Agamben presents an interpretation of the poem *The Age* by Mandelstam. He explains that it contains two main themes. First, the relationship of the poet and time. Second, the shattering and welding of the age’s vertebrae. As explained earlier, the reader will also find an interpretation of this poem in the section entitled *The Age*. Nevertheless, it is relevant to highlight the argument that when he asks the question: ‘Of whom and of what are we contemporaries,’ Agamben is not only implying that contemporaries are contemporaries of past texts in terms of actual chronology. In relation to Mandelstam, when he asks that question, he is also implying *The Age* is contemporary to today’s culture because it portrays the individual’s experience of anachronism as a painful disjuncture with regards to chronological apparatuses of a historical epoch. In other words, the poem is contemporary to us because such anachronism is paradoxically relevant to any subjective experience in the present era. Therefore, contemporary contemporaries, once again, are anachronistic to chronological orders governing life itself. Contemporaries are those who do not allow themselves to be blinded by such processes of subjectification.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Ibid, 50.

However, to work with darkness is not an easy task, as Agamben writes ‘it requires great courage because it means to firmly fix one’s gaze on the darkness of the epoch, but also to perceive (in the darkness) those lights that, while directed toward us, infinitely distance themselves from us.’ This means that contemporaries know that their actions and creations cannot utterly turn off the flashing lights of the century nor fully change their course. Agamben continues: ‘it is like always being on time for an appointment that one cannot help but miss.’²²⁰ For this reason, they have a paradoxical relationship of nearness and closeness to their own epoch: they are always before their own contemporaries but simultaneously they are always behind them. He goes into further analysis of the appointment:

the appointment that is in question in contemporariness does not simply take place in chronological time: it is something that, working within chronological time, urges, presses, and transforms it. And this urgency is the untimeliness, the anachronism that permits us to grasp our time in the form of a ‘too soon’ that is also a ‘too late;’ of an ‘already’ that is also a ‘not yet.’ Moreover, it allows us to recognize the obscurity of the present the light that, without being able to reach us, is perpetually voyaging toward us.²²¹

Therefore, contemporaries are anachronistic beings who are aware of their own anachronism. This is the reason that they ‘despise’ their time. They know they cannot amend their epoch, but they irrevocably belong to it. They disconnect from their present but they nevertheless cannot escape from it. This is why the contemporary has a disjointed vertebra and why the anachronic is by definition out-of-joint. They cannot align to the course of the epoch. Their minds and bodies cannot amend to the processes, rhythms and tempos imposed by the apparatus of the era or epoch in which they were born. Finally, with the aim to put into practice this contemporariness—this anachronism—I curated the exhibition *Against Time*. In accordance to the ideas developed in this section this project was conceived as a collective statement of refusal to be blinded by today’s processes of subjectification. The idea was to spatialise a material metaphor of a disjointed structure taken from chronological processes of temporalisation. Each artist responded to a different urgency, appropriating different aspects

²²⁰ Ibid, 46.

²²¹ Ibid, 47.

of darkness, from different historical epochs. They transformed this darkness into work material in their creative processes. The reader will find the analysis and re-presentation of this exhibition in the second following section of the chapter.

Chronologies

Metaphors of the material power of chronology are visually portrayed in canonised catalogues produced for institutional exhibitions. The maps and chronologies of Alfred H. Barr Jr., for instance, are visual expressions of a masked violent conception of temporality. His time-charts depicting MoMA's collection as a torpedo set with a propeller, progressing and transgressing through time, reveals a destructive ideology where the museum is portrayed as an underwater weapon (Fig. 1). Furthermore, Barr's images are forms of cultural representation and historiography that reinforce authorities in the consolidation of their aesthetic narratives. If we anachronize his American chronologies and torpedoes by placing them next to the map of America that Joaquín Torres-García inverts (Fig. 2), linear-national art historical hegemonies, discursive significations of the colony, and the arbitrariness of the (geo)graphical hierarchical arrangement of North and South time-zones expose themselves.²²²

²²² Andrea Giunta, *When Does Contemporary Art Begin?*, 145. It is relevant to mention that regardless of Barr's diplomatic approaches to his neighbours from the South, he described his own curatorial efforts on behalf of Latin American art as 'minor interventions.' He referred to his own attempt to include the agenda of the South within MoMA's programme and collection, as 'a brief visit,' 'some genuine interest,' and 'few purchases for little money' (Quoting in: Mari Carmen Ramírez, 'Broken Identities,' 27).

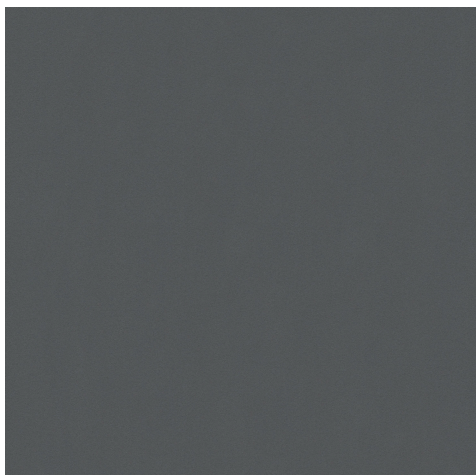


Fig. 1. Alfred H. Barr, Jr., *Torpedo*, diagrams of the ideal permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art, 1941.

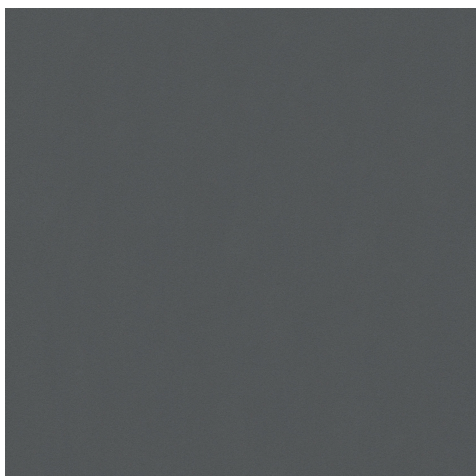


Fig. 2. Joaquín Torrez-García, *América Invertida*, May 1936. Ink on paper, reproduced in *Círculo y Cuadrado*, Montevideo.



Geneva Sills, *Self-Portrait (Hand)*, 2018, silver gelatin print from 4x5 negative. Produced at BANFF Centre for the Arts

AGAINST TIME

*Sarah Forrest, Toby Paterson, Geneva Sills
and Sue Tompkins*

Co-curated by Sarah Strang and Paula Zambrano
20 April – 7 May, Daily 10.00–16.00

215 High Street, Glasgow,
G1 1QB
civicroom.com

*Supported by Glasgow International, Centre D'Art 3 Bis F, The Anna
Lobner Exchange, Wasps, Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Carson
& Partners, Oran Mor, Stallan Brand, Lochrin Bain, Glasgow Life,
After the News, Supplement gallery.*

Fig. 3. *Against Time*, Exhibition leaflet.

Title: *Against Time*

Artists: Sarah Forrest, Sue Tompkins, Geneva Sills, Toby Paterson.

Location: 215, High Street, City Centre, Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom, G1 1QB.

Dates: 19 April – 7 May 2018.

Number of visitors: 897.

Considering the argument that history allows us to be untimely, to place ourselves outside the constraints of the present, it is our task then to make elements of this past live again, to be reenergized through their untimely or anachronistic recall in the present.²²³

²²³ Elizabeth Grosz, *The Nick of Time, Politics, Evolution and the Untimely*, 117.

Civic Room is isolated in an odd conjunction of rooms between traffic roads and redundant tramlines overlooking High Street, Glasgow. The building excels at the same time that it is compressed by its surroundings. It might catch the attention of the passer-by, but then again, it may also be passed unnoticed. Designed by William Forest Salmon and built in 1895, from the proceeds of the Scottish linen and banking industries, it is a listed Victorian building, distinguished by its narrowness and red sandstone. It was the birthplace of the poet Thomas Campbell, then the site of a British Linen Bank, and by the 2000s it was a greengrocer. Today, it has the name of Civic Room, and it functions as a contemporary art exhibition space for an artist-led organisation. The building is currently on the Scottish Government's register of historical edifices at risk. Like the dilapidated buildings next to it, it almost seems to be abandoned. Inside, the air is damp, the floor is soggy, and the walls are peeled and unpainted. It smells like musty, confined air. The wood is rotting.



Fig. 4. Civic Room, 2017. Photo: Civic Room.

The context in which the Civic Room stands, exemplifies a typical gentrified contemporary European metropolis. Glasgow's historical centre maintains strong ties with the past, which contrasts with the modernity of its transport systems, prevailing new buildings and mobility of its current inhabitants. The sense of the passage of time is perceived as a palimpsest of structural hybrids of historical architectural periods or juxtapositions of styles. These are identifiable in the numerous neglected architectures, from irrelevant infrastructures across the city, rail tracks and old blue public clocks in towers in disuse, abandoned places, to the remains of old power supplies and famous historic buildings. These anachronisms can furthermore be perceived in the mixture of minor interventions of the natural environment and the busy traffic roads and the buzzing audio-visual oscillation of edifices constantly being built and demolished. Decaying architectural sites are to be found displaced all across the city. What is also noticeable are the recent corporate developments—large-scale student accommodation blocks, commercial industries and tenement housing. Glasgow's urban centre vibrates with an eclectic proliferation of discontinuous and irregular layers of time.

In the year 2017 I drafted the project's proposal, consisting of a group exhibition, which included the participation of four Scottish and Glasgow-based artists, and featuring a combination of commissioned site-specific and already existing artworks. This proposal originated from an observation of the signs and traces of anachronism identifiable in the manifold and juxtaposed temporalities that exist within the Civic Room building as well as within the urban context described above. Thus, the proposal intended to explore the concept of anachronism through anachronistic dialogues between contemporary art and architectural, urban, historical, economic and political landscapes.

The project proposal initially consisted of exploring anachronism through junctures and disjunctures between the building, its urban context, the site-specific installed artworks and other people. The suggestion was to make the present a place of encounter between different times and generations. Artists were encouraged to identify latent pasts and throbbing futures within that particular space, and work with them. This allowed the work to 'build bridges' and connect with others 'across the desert intervals of time,' as Nietzsche would put it.²²⁴ As explained earlier, this project was also conceived as a collective statement of refusal to be blinded by the lights of the century. Once more, the agenda behind this proposal was also to

²²⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, 'On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life,' 111.

create an exhibition as a spatialised material metaphor of a disjointed structure from chronological time. Artists worked with and transformed different aspects of ‘darkness’ (as described by Agamben) through different artistic materialities and discursive approaches.

I contacted these four artists because they already had interests in exploring anachronism through the material mediums of film, photography, sculpture, and performance, respectively in their practices. Sarah Forrest was relevant because her work utilises junctures and disjunctures in moving images and narratives, as well as juxtapositions in the experience of time itself through film. Geneva Sills was appropriate due to her interest in the use of antiquated modes of production in photography and painting, as methods and means to create affective connections with feminist and queer pasts. In the case of Sue Tompkins, it was pertinent to include the ephemeral mediums of sound and performance, and she is an artist interested in the re-enactment of counter-cultural movements from the past. Finally, Toby Paterson was essential to this project due to his fascination with historical heritage in architecture and the urban environment, and its relation to contemporary sculpture.

Artworks

Geneva Sills is an artist from Chicago, USA, living and working in Glasgow. She is interested in exploring the limits of photography and painting through the revival of obsolete technologies. She explores these limits as a formal strategy to address issues around gender, sexual politics, as well as queer and feminist discourses and histories. For *Against Time*, she created a series of new photograph-paintings during a residency she took at Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity in Canada. These were installed in the central space inside the gallery. Sills was interested in addressing anachronism through the use of antiquated materials in the re-production of linen through images. She used linen as a material and symbolic fabric to weave affective connections with women from the past.

The outmoded techniques she employed for the fabrication of the works were inspired by past stylistic movements of art history, such as post-impressionism painting processes, methods utilised during the Pictorialism movement, as well as traditional forms of impression utilised during the origins of documentary photography. Through the recovery of these anachronistic processes, Sills wanted to explore the expressive possibilities of the juncture of the mediums of silver gelatin printing and painting. In addition, she was also interested in

testing the flattening of the photographic picture plane, allowing for accident, contingency and intuition to partake within her creative process (Fig. 7-8).

The resulting images are characterised by photographic fields of magnified texture combined with subtle patterns of hand colouring. There is a feeling of tactility within the close-ups of her images; a kind of sensuality inherent in her amplified details and enlarged abstractions. There is also a sense of intimacy veiled within the closeness of those pixels. The images she presents capture personal moments of intimate time with her partner (Fig. 10-11). However, they also contain a concealed reference to an affectionate encounter with the past. The linen that appears in her images has an iconographic connection with women who manufactured linen in nineteenth-century Scotland (Fig. 6-9-12). This textile reminds the audience that the building was itself a linen bank. Sill's pixels therefore contained a discourse about the problematics around labour and women's work and issues around trading, banking and exploitation in the nineteenth century, and how they resonate within the space. The work acted as a reminder that Civic Room was built with the proceeds of Merchantable Trade, slavery and racism. However, Sills transforms this past into something personal and intimate. Linen is a textile which is practically used for covering or shielding, but, in the context of Sill's captured moments, it also gains suggestions of care and intimacy. It is in this way that Sill's enlarged details, close-up and amplified textures, also contain an affective and sensual (tactile) association and connection with women related to the former Linen Bank.



Fig. 5. Geneva Sills, Installation view. Silver gelatin print. Photo: Civic Room and Martin Gray.

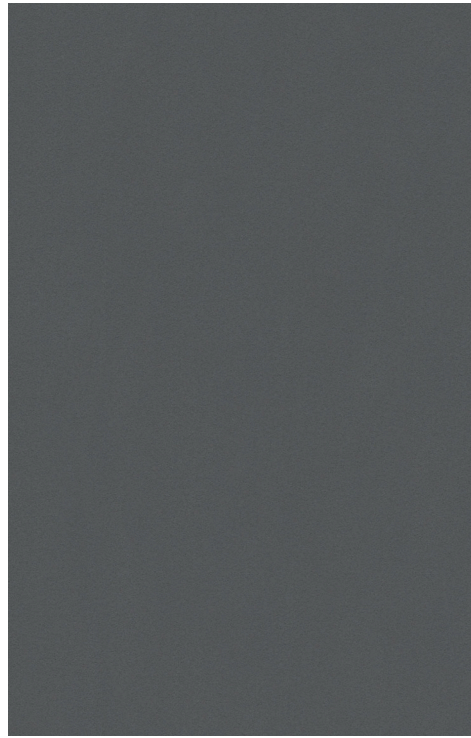


Fig. 6. The interior of Hillbank Works, a linen mill in Dundee. Photo: BBC Tayside & Central Scotland Website.



Fig. 7. Geneva Sills, Banff Residency, Dec/Jan 2018 – studio work process documentation.
Photo: Geneva Sills.



Fig. 8. Geneva Sills, Banff Residency, Dec/Jan 2018 – studio work process documentation.
Photo: Geneva Sills.



Fig. 9. Workers at their power-looms in the Airdrie Works, 1910. Photo: CultureNL.



Fig. 10. Geneva Sills, Installation view. Silver gelatin prints. Photos: Civic Room and Martin Gray.

Fig. 11. Geneva Sills, Installation view. Silver gelatin prints. Photo: Geneva Sills.



Fig. 12. Bobbin Winding in Lancashire. Photo: Mary Evans Picture Library.



Fig. 13. Geneva Sills. Installation view. Silver gelatin prints. Photo: Civic Room and Martin Gray.

Sarah Forrest is a Scottish artist living and working in Glasgow. She works across film, installation, text and sound. Her practice weaves together elements of theory, fiction and philosophy, producing narrative-driven works that playfully explore perceptions both of and by the self. For this exhibition, she presented *Again, It Objects*, a short film made with provision from The Anna Lobner Exchange, Wasps; with support from Centre D'Art 3 Bis F, France, and Supplement, London. This video was installed in a small room located in a corner at end of the gallery. This hidden dark space maintains an old safe formerly used by the linen bank company (Fig. 14). This safe somehow condenses the dampness of the building. Storing some of the nineteen century building's past the space feels as if it continues to operate as a container.

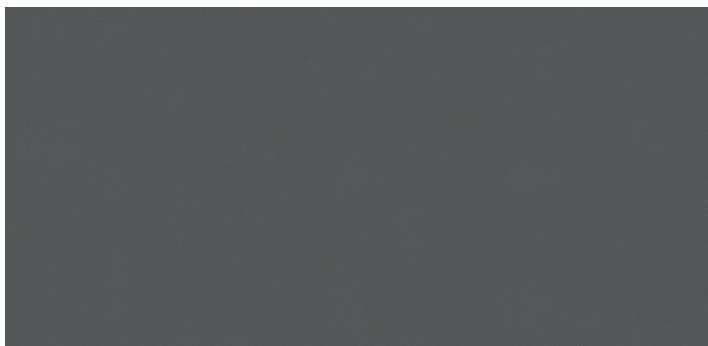


Fig. 14. Scotland 1 Pound The British Linen Bank, Royal Coat of Arms. Photo: WorthPoint, Discover, Value, Store.



Fig. 15. Sarah Forrest, *Again, It Objects*, 2016, HD single screen video with audio, 6:18 mins.
Photo: Civic Room and Martin Gray.



Fig. 16. Sarah Forrest, *Again, It Objects*, 2016. HD single screen video with audio, 6:18 mins.
Photo: Sarah Forrest.

Forrest's black and white film tells the story of your experience encountering an inexplicable black hole that has been hanging for a week in your living-room. The focus lingers on a curtain waving subtly, with the intermittent appearance of bold, white text in the centre of the screen. The text describes your uncertain situation. Sudden rock music interventions of fragments of the tune *Back in Black* by the band AC/DC interrupt as if in the background, as the rhythm starts to accelerate and the black hole opens in your room. This black hole is a perfect circle, a black abyss. It has a circumference yet it has no physical form: it has an absence of form. It is an immaterial entity which swallows your trainers, your cutlery, your lamp and desk, even your bleach. One after another, it ingests all of your possessions. This black hole makes you crawl. It mocks your illusions and laughs at your logic. Until finally it swallows you.

To watch the video, click in the following link: <https://vimeo.com/188848084>

Password: Hole

Forrest's video combines ideas of materiality and immateriality in relation to moving image, sculpture, language, belief and perception. It explores anachronism as something embodied in the medium of film, but also as something embodied in your own experience. The hole you encounter in the surface of reality in your own private and domestic space—through the surface of your computer or through the screen hung in Civic Room—had a place within the curatorial framework of *Against Time* as a playful riff on a tangible and existing discontinuity (a material anachronism). But also as the occurrence of out-of-jointness in your encounter (an experienced anachronism).

Like many artists experimenting with the temporal structure of film—through focus, rhythm, direction, acceleration, speeding-up and cuts—Forrest's piece plays with the linear configuration of chronological temporality, embracing the viewer within an irregular and discontinuous experience of time. This film unfolds in a temporal rhythm that increasingly speeds up (with images and sounds gradually accelerating). In parallel, the story you are being told develops in a progressive arrangement (the whole has been hanging in your living room for a week yet gradually ingests your possessions until it finally swallows you). However, although structure and narrative are forward-moving, the artist anachronizes this straight-linear direction of time by inserting a series of audio-visual interruptions and suspensions of the time-frames and sequences of the film. The final outcome is that chronological orders of time become *confused* (*fused* one with the other) through a series of interruptions made through junctures and disjunctures of text, image, sound and sequence. This ultimately leads to the *confusion* of your own sense of time: your own experience of out-of-jointness produced in your encounter with the work of art. Finally, this work contained a suggestive critique to the accelerated tempos of today's experience of time. The black whole, like Agamben's darkness, represent the devouring tempos of today's consumerist society.

Sue Tompkins is an artist based in Glasgow. She works with fragments of language (conversations, words or phrases) which she gathers from everyday chance encounters and experiences. Her practice incorporates performance, text, sound, installation, and painting. For *Against Time*, she presented a performance entitled *St St Steadicam High* (Fig. 17). This piece had an autobiographical character. In a visceral and intimate manner, it combined lyrics, sounds, corporal movements and other materialities she re-used and re-enacted from her experience back in the 1980's (when she used to be a leading singer in the post-punk group Life Without Buildings). For the assemblage of this piece, she utilised pre-existing material from these past gigs and performances, re-presenting and replaying them within the context and time-frame of the exhibition. Thus, she combined script and associative free thought (written and pre-existing material but also situated improvisations).²²⁵ The piece lasted for about twenty minutes, and it was presented during the opening event. This was similar to what Gertrude Stein, thinking about Hamlet, refers to as 'syncopated time' or the wrap and draw of one time in another time. The artist performed anachronism by re-staging her own past performances, she enacted her characteristic charming yet confusing interruptions to her own singing, producing moments of suspension to the musical sequence, as well as to her own narrative. In a way, she performed and embodied temporal processes by which memory operates: with junctures and disjunctures of remembrance and forgetfulness.²²⁶

²²⁵ The re-use of material reminded Rebecca Schneider's ideas about re-enactment as an intense, embodied inquiry into temporal repetition or temporal recurrence (Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains*, 2). Catherine Grant also looks into practices of re-enactment. She acknowledges re-enactment as a mode of 'creating a time on one's own,' made up of disparate historical moments which, when brought together, become alive and vital for the present and the future (Catherine Grant, 'A Time of One's Own,' 359).

²²⁶ Gertrude Stein quoted in Catherine Grant 'A Time of One's Own,' 362.



Fig. 17. Sue Tompkins, *St St Steadicam High*, Live Performance, 2018. Photo: Civic Room and Martin Gray.



Fig. 18. Toby Paterson, *Palisades*, 2018. Painted galvanised steel palisade fencing, variable measures. Photo: Civic Room and Martin Gray.

Toby Paterson lives and works in Glasgow. Interested in exploring notions of inheritance in the urban environment, architecture and contemporary visual art, he works primarily with paintings, sculptural installations and reliefs. He has a particular interest in post-war modernist architecture, which he deconstructs both materially and politically. For this exhibition, he created a site-specific public artwork, installed in the exterior space of the gallery, between its garden, a path that runs through it, and extending to the fenced derelict areas and empty lots that surround the building on High Street. The artist proposed to produce this work as an extension of his ongoing research and as a result of his fascination with historical inheritance in the urban environment, architecture and contemporary visual art.

The sculpture was made of standard galvanised steel palisade fencing, material which was provided by a neighbouring Scottish construction company. These fencing sheets were locked together, forming a sculptural composition on an architectural scale. Its base material was designed to be inherently paradoxical: while it formed a boundary and ownership over a specific space, its rudimentary nature suggested a sense of precariousness and fragility. This

contrasted with the solidity and a sense of hardness of each individual steel fence. Paterson's installation contained various metaphorical and physical layers with regards the interpretation, materialisation and experience of anachronism.

In a first instance, the location of the artwork can be thought of as a geographical area that condenses a series of juxtapositions of historical periods of times, or urban/architectural styles. The work was placed in the site of former tramlines. These tramlines linger redundant in that space yet they also remain as marks and traces of the past. Additionally, the surrounding area has a noticeable mixture of decaying historical edifices, remains of demolished old buildings, and widespread new corporate and commercial developments (both in the process of construction or newly erected). Installed in this site, Paterson's sculpture gave the impression that it condensed the anachronisms that sustained and surrounded it (a sculptural palimpsest condensing all temporalities beneath and around it). It, thus, seemed as if past, present and future were being constructed and demolished simultaneously in its own heterogeneous material structure.

Paterson's piece exposed its own internal anachronism through two material metaphors disrupting chronological time. First, the linear shapes of the palisades (provided by the same construction companies that demolish old structures and invest in new edifices) operated as symbols of the linear structure of time. Second, the sculpture was coloured with the same pastel blue colour of the historical clocks that proliferate in towers and public spaces throughout the city. This blue colour thus had an iconographic citation to the use and history of merchant and mechanical clocks within the city: most of these clocks, produced during the industrial period, are no more functional, yet they remain in towers in churches and city courts across the city (Fig. 19). The result of the joints and disjoints of the blue palisades of chronological time, was the creation of a three-dimensional material metaphor of anachronism. By juxtaposing one over the other in such paradoxical tension between precariousness/fragility and solidity/hardness, the sculpture took the final form of something dismembered and disarticulated within itself and its surroundings. By exploring both the physical and symbolic assemblage of palisades of time, the artist furthermore sculpted a critique of the contemporary urban conditions, raising awareness of the fragile state of architectural heritage.



Fig. 19. Blue mechanical clock in Tolbooth Steeple, at the junction of High Street and Trongate, Glasgow, built in 1625. Photo: Clock Master Blogger.

Fig. 20. Toby Paterson, *Palisades*, detail. Photo: Civic Room and Martin Gray.

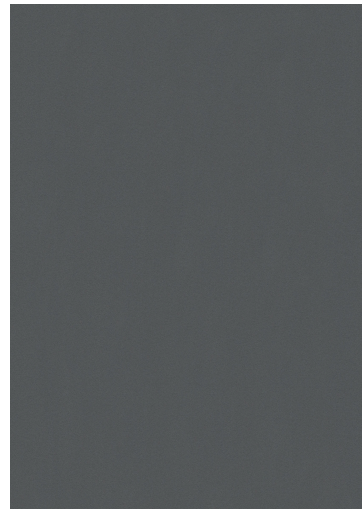
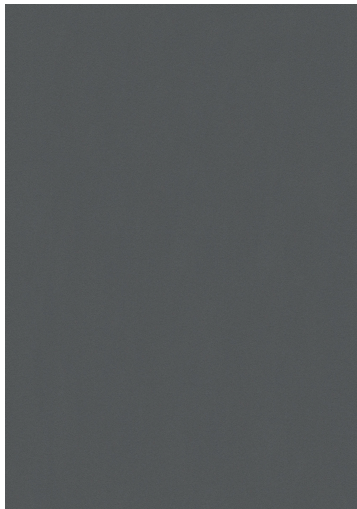


Fig. 21. Exterior spaces. Civic Room. Photo: Architecture Glasgow.

Fig. 22. Toby Paterson, *Palisades*, detail. Photo: Civic Room and Martin Gray.

Fig. 23. Exterior spaces. Civic Room. Photo: Architecture Glasgow.



Fig. 24. Decayed rear of the buildings on the north side of Nicholas Lane opposite of Civic Room building. Photo: Architecture Glasgow.



Fig. 25. Toby Paterson, *Palisades*, 2018. Photo: Civic Room and Martin Gray.

The Age

My age, my beast, is there anyone
Who can peer into your eyes
And with his own blood weld
Two centuries' worth of vertebrae?
The creating blood gushes
From the throat of earthly things,
And the parasite just trembles
On the threshold of new days.

While the creature still has life,
The spine must be delivered,
While with the unseen backbone
A wave distracts itself.
Again they've brought the peak of life
Like a sacrificial lamb,
Like a child's supple cartilage—
The age of infant earth.

To wrest the age from captivity,
To instigate a brand new world,
The discordant, tangled days
Must be linked, as with a flute.
It's the age that rocks the swells
With humanity's despair,
And in the undergrowth a serpent breathes
The golden measure of the age.

Still the shoots will swell
And the green buds sprout
But your spine has been shattered
My fantastic, wretched age!

And in lunatic beatitude
You look back, cruel and weak,
Like a beast that once was agile,
At the tracks left by your feet.

The creating blood gushes
From the throat of earthly things,
The lukewarm cartilage of oceans
Splashes like a seething fish ashore.
And from the bird net spread on high
From the humid azure stones,
Streams a flood of helpless apathy
On your single, fatal wound.

Mandelstam's poem is about a discordant and tangled relationship between opposite temporalities: on the one hand, the time of 'the age' or 'the century' (or 'the time' as Shakespeare would put it, which is the sphere of official politics and national history). On the other hand, the time of 'the spine of the creature' (or the internal temporality of the individual). It is written in a first person voice, as a very emotive, metaphorically and politically loaded, passionate yet painful love letter dedicated to his age, his beast. In this letter, the poet expresses a desire to heal the shattered relationship that he maintains with it. He also articulates a yearning to weld his own wounded body. The most distinctive feature of this poem is the fact that Mandelstam portrays a series of literary embodiments of anachronism through the use of a variety of very visceral, raw and violent bodily metaphors. Based on Mandelstam's metaphor, I have formulated my own approach to the concept of anachronism as a disjointed vertebrae or an embodied temporality which is by definition out-of-joint.

In order to gain a better comprehension of this 'age' or 'century' that Mandelstam dedicates his poem to, it is important to consider some basic historical elements of the context in which he lived when he was writing. The poem was created in the setting of Russia at the beginning of the 1920s, when the Bolsheviks began to exert increasing control over Russian artists to produce propaganda in support of the Soviet leadership. Mandelstam refused to adapt his

work to these aims. Instead, he chose to emphasise his individualism as a thinker and writer. He was determined to write poetry that supported his own humanism. This caused his misalignment with the structures that regulated artistic production, but also with state-supported artists and intellectuals of his epoch. During Stalin's government, he was twice arrested and charged for carrying out counter-revolutionary activities due to his criticism of the regime. This ultimately led to his death in a Soviet prison in 1938.²²⁷

Once again, *The Age* exposes Mandelstam's external anachronism as the time of the vertebrae of the age and as the internal anachronism of the vertebrae of the wounded beast. In other words, it portrays a disjuncture between 'the time' of governing apparatuses of his epoch (the historical element) and his internal processes, rhythms and tempos (the ontology of creatures). The poet is captured between the struggle of these two different time-forces. He is in a present under captivity: trapped at the threshold between old and new days. The poet embodies a suspended present between the joints of the memory of a traumatic past and the joints of the hopes of a better future.

Mandelstam expresses a desire to align these disjointed temporalities. He asks if there is someone who can join them back together. He wants to know if it is possible to emancipate the differences between two antagonistic anatomies of time. Once more, he is located at the centre of a time-struggle: suspended in a present, witnessing the becoming of both the past and the future. Conversely, the subject who can weld two centuries' worth of vertebrae back together is the poet himself. The poet is the one who has the 'creating blood' to fathom the true nature of time. He is the one with the artistic capacities to think and practice creative strategies in order to join together what is impossible to join. It is therefore the responsibility of the poet to liberate the age, to heal past wounds, to align the century with a flute. It is the duty of the poet to weld a life that is being sacrificed and to establish a new world.

There is also the presence of a child in the poem. This child represents the actual birth and growth of the new age. This means that there is expectation and a belief that a new age can actually come. This indicates a hope that the poet can wrest the age from captivity, so as to finally allow the child to be born and to grow. Within the poem there is a vast amount of gushing blood (of creative power) flowing forth, whilst green buds start to sprout. The poet is

²²⁷ Poetry Foundation, *Osip Mandelstam*.

actively attempting to repair the tangled days. And as a strategy to accomplish this aim, he uses the instrument of a flute. The flute symbolises music, art, and poetry itself. Art is the instrument designed to free time from its confinement, to help heal past wounds and set time free from its subordination to the rhythms, tempos and processes of the chronological epoch.

However, there remains a paradox in the poem. The new-born age wants to turn around but it is something impossible since the spine of the age is shattered and the injury cannot be cured. Although the poet desires to align disjointed times, and while he acts upon such desire, ultimately he cannot set them right. The promise of the new age to be born and to grow cannot be fulfilled because the vertebrae of the century is too wrecked by the tracks left by the steps of the age. He cannot heal the wounds marked by the past. For this reason, the poet at once despises and pities the time of his epoch, while knowing that he irrevocably belongs to it.²²⁸ To put back into place a world that is out of joint is in the end an unattainable task.

Finally, notwithstanding the fatal wound, and the impossibility of re-welding two centuries' worth of vertebrae, there remains the existence of the poem itself. Art is the outcome of these series of struggles between painful, violent and anatomical/structural anachronisms. It is ultimately the despair of humanity and the hopelessness of the individual that provokes the creation of the poem itself. In this sense, Mandelstam is a contemporary under Agamben's terms: able to perceive the darkness of the present and to write by dipping his pen in the obscurity of the present.²²⁹ He is also an untimely under Nietzsche's terms: he has gained the knowledge of the truth that time is out of joint and he knows that he cannot set it right. He is, nevertheless, still able to say 'once again.'²³⁰ Conclusively, art is the force that can bring liberation to the captive and shattered creature. Art is the device that can reconcile opposite forces, to give each moment and life meaning, even if only by illusion, since the wound is fatal.

²²⁸ Giorgio Agamben, 'What Is the Contemporary?,' 40.

²²⁹ Ibid, 53.

²³⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 23. Carl E. Pletsch, 'History and Friedrich Nietzsche's Philosophy of Time,' 36.

The masters according to Nietzsche are the untimely, those who create, who destroy in order to create, not to preserve. Nietzsche says that under huge earth-shattering events are tiny silent events, which he likens to the creation of new worlds: there once again is perceivable the presence of the poetic under the historical.²³¹

²³¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche's Burst of Laughter*.

Part II

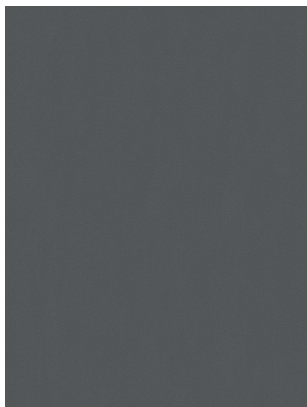
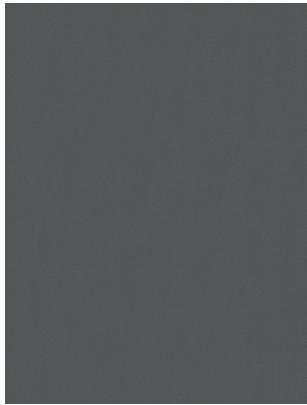
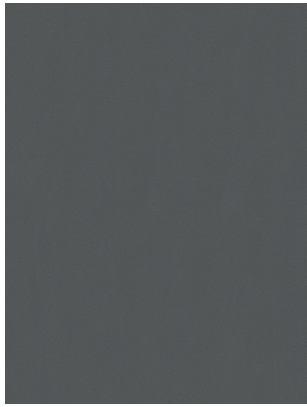


Fig. 26. Photographs of Friedrich Nietzsche's manuscript pages. Images: The Goethe-Shiller Archive.²³²

²³² Nietzsche had the habit of writing and re-writing in old notebooks that had not been completely filled, and writing in them at times from the front toward the back, other times from the back towards the front; and sometimes he filled right-hand pages only and other times left-hand pages only (Walter Kaufmann, 'Editors Introduction,' to Friedrich Nietzsche's *The Will to Power*, xv).

The Untimely

Unseitgemässe (Untimely)

Die Zeit is a noun meaning both ‘time’ and ‘the time’ (as in ‘the times’, ‘the age’ or ‘the era’).

Gemäss is either an adjective that means ‘appropriate’ or ‘fitting,’ or a preposition that means ‘in accordance with’ or ‘in compliance with.’ Accordingly, *zeitgemäss* refers to the ‘appropriate time,’ ‘up to date,’ ‘in fashion’ or ‘modern.’

Betrachtungen (Meditations)

Betrachten is a verb that means ‘to look at,’ ‘to observe,’ ‘to scrutinize,’ ‘to contemplate,’ or ‘to consider.’ *Betrachtung* is the plural of ‘*Betrachten*’ and thus designates a series of such acts of reflection or observation.²³³

Friedrich Nietzsche’s *Untimely Meditations*, also translated into *Unfashionable Observations*, are related to the intellectual and cultural movements of the philosopher’s own epoch. The works are of biographical importance due to their personal relevance to the author: they contain his ‘deepest and most fundamental feelings.’²³⁴ The original plan was to publish two essays per year until the series of thirteen was complete. Nietzsche was very methodical at sketching plans and outlines, as well as scheduling rigorous deadlines in his timetables. His notebooks from this period are filled with drafts for a projected series. However, due to a number of contingencies in the author’s life and career, he managed to write only four. ‘Fortunately my health said no!,’ he wrote.²³⁵ Indeed, the *Untimely Meditations*, also called the *Inopportune Speculations*, are the philosopher’s most inconsistent, fragmented and widely neglected works. They express a sense of displacement, a strong feeling of detachment, a profound sense of contempt and pity in relation to his own epoch.

It was during this time that his relationship with Richard Wagner started to deteriorate and become hostile. He became increasingly alienated from other academics and intellectuals at

²³³ R. J. Hollingdale, ‘Note on the text,’ xlv.

²³⁴ Daniel Breazeale, ‘Introduction,’ xxv.

²³⁵ *Ibid*, xi.

the University of Basel in Switzerland, where he worked as a professor.²³⁶ Nietzsche's interest in pre-platonic philosophy was assessed as 'remote' to Wagner's interests as well as 'anachronistic' to the institution's time-tables and philosophical agendas. He thus writes as an 'untimely' historian, an 'anachronistic' philosopher, poetically transferring the classical thought of Greek antiquity into both his individual and epochal present.²³⁷ Although these fragmented pieces of written work were reproved by the intellectual community of his historical context, the *Untimely Meditations* reveal the philosopher's courage to resist what was 'in fashion' among 'up-to-date' people. They also reveal the writer's strength in defending his convictions and beliefs, such as his stance about empirical experience and 'feelings' as a form of access to knowledge. Finally, Nietzsche's meditations are of relevance as they played an important role in his individual development, anticipating and foreshadowing the future of his thinking. In the philosopher's own words: 'For me, my "Untimely Ones" signify promises. What they are for others, I do not know.'²³⁸

The *Untimely Meditations* are not only of relevance to the philosopher's personal and intellectual development and irrelevant to the circumstances that triggered their creation; they are also of paradoxical anachronistic relevance to theoretical thinking in the contemporary context. Alike to anachronism, the concept of the untimely has been taken into account by postcolonial and queer discourses, feminist struggles in the study of time and history, as well as philosophy and political thought. It has also been used as a mechanism to intervene and reconfigure chronological narratives. Alike to anachronism, the concept of the untimely has been used to repair past injustices, and give relevance and meaning to relegated histories and subjugations in official history.²³⁹

²³⁶ Tania Halban, 'Wagner & Nietzsche: A Gesamtkunstwerk Relationship?', 2-3.

²³⁷ Among his anachronistic concerns, Nietzsche examines Anaximander's interpretation of Cronos as the physical existence of time. He was the first Greek to provide an ethical or moral interpretation of existence (Régis Laurent, 'An Introduction to Aristotle's Metaphysics of Time,' 186-187).

²³⁸ Daniel Breazeale, 'Introduction,' xxvii.

²³⁹ As already mentioned, this idea is explored by Elizabeth Grosz, who anachronizes Nietzsche's untimely in her studies regarding the ontological and political implications for living beings of their immersion in time (Elizabeth Grosz, *The Nick of Time, Politics, Evolution and the Untimely*). Also as previously mentioned, Julia Kristeva takes Nietzsche's notion of 'monumental time' to voice silenced women (Julia Kristeva, 'Women's Time'). In queer theory, Nietzsche's meditations have inspired practices of living differently, since queerness always been 'marked by its untimely relation to socially shared temporal phases, whether individual (developmental) or collective (historical) (E. L. McCallum and Mikko Tuhkanen, 'Introduction'). Further, in philosophy, the concept of the untimely has been also theorized by Jacques Derrida in his essay 'The Time is Out of Joint,' and Gilles Deleuze in his book 'Nietzsche and Philosophy.' Nietzsche's meditations have also been of fundamental influence to Michel Foucault's thinking and in the formulation of his argument about discourse, genealogy and discontinuity (which is the theoretical foundation that has led me to form my own argument in this thesis). I have referred consistently in this thesis to Foucault's essay 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,' which encompasses much of Nietzsche's thought, including essential ideas from his meditation.

The *Untimely Meditations*, also known as the *Untimely Reflections*, are contemporary with Nietzsche's age and yet also anachronistic. They are also contemporary to our own epoch and yet also anachronistic. They are themselves 'untimely:' irrelevant yet relevant to Nietzsche's time as well as to our own. As Agamben recognises: the *Untimely Meditations* may help to situate claims for 'contemporariness' made by untimely human individuals with respect to the present through a deficiency, a non-coincidence and out-of-jointness.²⁴⁰ In other words: an anachronism for those who think and act counter to dominant chronological conceptions, practices and experiences of time. As a final consequence, the effort to set right that which the untimely rejects produce a painful disjuncture. This is because to do so (to come to terms with the vertebrae of the epoch), is, itself, an impossible task.

4.

Wagner in Bayreuth, 1876.

In this final meditation, Nietzsche appropriated Wagner's own words as a rhetorical strategy against Wagner himself: quoting copiously from his writings. It is the least comprehensible and most fragmented meditation of his uncompleted series. Daniel Breazdale writes that 'Even for the specialist, it is a difficult and sometimes painful work to read, and one suspects that it must have been an equally difficult and painful book for Nietzsche to write.'²⁴¹ He gradually lost interest and enthusiasm for the entire project and abandoned it. Years after, Nietzsche confessed that this fourth unfinished meditation embodies his feeling of disillusion and distance towards Wagner and the educational institution where he was employed at that time. Despite its unpleasant, shattered and forsaken written form, Nietzsche writes almost a decade after that this last meditation contains 'a haunted vision of my future,' whereby 'my becoming,' and, above all, 'my promise,' was already inscribed.²⁴² Therefore, this meditation embodies the philosopher's painful anachronism in relation to the ideological, cultural and theoretical apparatuses of his epoch. This anachronism is both personal and structural.

3.

Schopenhauer as Educator, 1874.

²⁴⁰ Giorgio Agamben, 'What Is the Contemporary?' 40-41.

²⁴¹ Daniel Breazeale, 'Introduction,' xxii.

²⁴² Friedrich Nietzsche, 'The Untimely Ones,' 281.

In this meditation Nietzsche addresses the matter of becoming as a personal and psychological problem as well as a social and philosophical one.²⁴³ He opens a discussion with regards to the limitations of positivist historiography; separating freedom from intellectual conventions and taking the lead of the ‘genuine philosopher.’ Here Nietzsche takes the figure of Schopenhauer as a metaphor of the untimely, who, for his part, is compared to Hamlet. To become untimely, Nietzsche argues, is to strive to become who one truly is. It involves being ‘simple’ and ‘honest’ in thought and in life—to free the self from the epochal elements that are imposed to its true temporality. He describes the process of coming to oneself as a process of liberating the self from the ‘countless ties of blood,’ the ‘countless opinions,’ the ‘ruling values of the time’ in which one finds oneself immersed; in other words, everything foreign to it, including those elements of oneself that one judges to be incompatible with one’s true self.²⁴⁴ If one is to strive to overcome oneself, then one must also strive to overcome all those merely ‘timely’ elements discovered that have been falsely grafted on to one’s own ‘untimeliness.’²⁴⁵ To become untimely, furthermore, is a matter of doing, thinking and wanting one’s own actions, thoughts and desires. ‘Those who do not feel themselves to be citizens of this time’ Nietzsche writes, ‘to harbour great hopes; for if they were citizens of this time they too would be helping to kill their time and so perish with it—while their desire is rather to awaken their time to life and so live on themselves in this awakened life.’²⁴⁶ This is the anachronism of the individual who does not wish to belong to the mass.

Nietzsche searches for a genuine pathway to the ‘true self,’ which is neither an externally-given and unchangeable ‘essence’ nor an arbitrary and freely-willed ‘construct.’ Genuine selfhood, according to Nietzsche, is a never-to-be-completed process of self-development and self-overcoming. The ‘true self,’ for Nietzsche, is neither an externally given and unchangeable ‘essence’ nor an arbitrary and freely-willed ‘construct.’ My true self is something I have to ‘become,’ but it is also what I already ‘am.’²⁴⁷ He expands on this investigation through the concept of the eternal return of the same, which I will address in a later section of this chapter. This concept was also present in the project I curated in Japan.

²⁴³ Carl E. Pletsch, ‘History and Friedrich Nietzsche’s Philosophy of Time,’ 36.

²⁴⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, ‘Schopenhauer as Educator,’ 139.

²⁴⁵ Daniel Breazeale, ‘Introduction,’ xix-xlvii.

²⁴⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, ‘Schopenhauer as Educator,’ 127.

²⁴⁷ Daniel Breazeale, ‘Introduction,’ xix.

The reader will encounter further analysis about this connection to practice in the following sections.

2.

On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life, 1874.

When the past speaks it always speaks as an oracle: only if you are an architect of the future and know the present will you understand it.²⁴⁸

Evaluation is defined as the differential element of corresponding values, an element which is both critical and creative. Evaluations, in essence are not values but ways of being, modes of existence to those who judge and evaluate, serving as principles for the values on the basis of which they judge.²⁴⁹

This second essay, *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*, was the least successful amongst Nietzsche's contemporaries, however, it is the most referenced in modern and contemporary thought. As mentioned earlier, an effort has been made to understand the untimely philosopher not only in the fields of cultural studies and philosophy, but also in curatorial theory and practice. The concept of the untimely has been considered to incorporate a divergent and heterogeneous field of practices into curatorial discourses (either contemporary exhibitions, other forms of cultural manifestation or curatorial historicisation), cultural institutionalisation, and the various forms of cultural production within the field of art. As previously noted, João Ribas, for instance, puts forward the question of curatorial historiography, looking into the historical and epistemic conditions of curating, and asking how to incorporate a divergent heterogeneous field of practices (feminism, decoloniality, etc). By making a linkage between Nietzsche's untimely and Agamben's contemporary, he argues that curatorial self-reflexivity reveals an untimeliness. Ribas explains that 'it is a fundamental necessity of curating to situate itself within those contemporaneities that remain in darkness, untheorized and "unlived".'²⁵⁰ In other words, he is acknowledging the importance of those unauthorised voices or those who are overlooked and disregarded by ruling values in curatorial processes of historicisation.

²⁴⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, 'On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life,' 94.

²⁴⁹ Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 2.

²⁵⁰ João Ribas, 'What to Do With the Contemporary?,' Kindle Edition.

However, Nietzsche postulates an anachronism in the relationship between history (and the study of history) and human life. This essay is basically a critique of historical culture, and the various implications in the practice of re-writing and re-constructing the past. In this meditation, Nietzsche initiates his questioning of the issue of ‘value’ underlined in systematic views of history, arguing in favour of the ‘immediate feeling as the highest criterion of aesthetic judgement,’ and the ‘creative power of human beings to transform themselves.’²⁵¹

He distinguishes three basic modalities of history: ‘monumental history’ (in charge of the recovery of works, actions, and creations of the ‘great men’) ‘antiquarian history’ (which values and romanticises the old, making reverence and veneration for the past of groups of people rather than individuals), and ‘critical history’ (devised by ‘the being who suffers and seeks deliverance’).²⁵² He inaugurates this meditation by confessing that there is ‘a feeling that torments’ him, a feeling which he thinks most people will tell him is altogether ‘perverse,’ ‘unnatural,’ ‘detestable’ and ‘wholly impermissible.’ This feeling is his untimely experience with regards the cultivation of history and a questioning of the values that it inflicts and shelters.

Nietzsche defines the unhistorical consciousness as the one which is able to forget, that is, the one which, like an animal, lives in the immediate present. The historical consciousness, on the other hand, cannot live in the immediate present because it experiences the present in a Shakespearean *confusion* or ‘hyphen’ between the past and the future. Historical consciousness cannot learn to forget but clings relentlessly onto the past, which, like Hamlet’s father, ‘returns as a ghost and disturbs the peace of the moment.’ For its part, the untimely consciousness has the artistic power and the ability, Nietzsche writes, ‘to develop out of oneself in one’s own way, to transform and incorporate into oneself what is past and

²⁵¹ Daniel Breazeale, ‘Introduction,’ xvi-xv.

²⁵² Friedrich Nietzsche, ‘On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life,’ 63. Foucault interprets Nietzsche’s critique of history and search for the origin, as the search for ‘descent.’ This type of engagement with the past, he explains, is not a form of erecting and reinforcing foundations. Instead, this ‘descent’ ‘disturbs what was previously considered immobile; it fragments what was thought unified; it shows the heterogeneity of what was imagined consistent within itself.’ Descent, Foucault explains, attaches itself to the body: ‘It inscribes itself in the nervous system, in temperament, in the digestive apparatus; it appears in faulty respiration, in improper diets, in the debilitated and prostate bodies of those whose ancestors committed errors.’ Nietzsche’s analysis of descent is thus situated within the articulation of the body and history. Its task is to expose a body totally imprinted by history and process of history’s destruction to the body.’ It is in this sense that history becomes ‘effective:’ ‘it introduces discontinuity into our very being—as it divides our emotions, dramatizes our instincts, multiplies our body and sets it against itself’ (Michel Foucault, ‘Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,’ 81-88).

foreign, to heal wounds, to replace what has been lost, to recreate broken moulds.²⁵³ In other words, the untimely consciousness is not overwhelmed by the inevitability of the ghosts and experience inherited from the historical past, but rather assimilates, incorporates and appropriates the historical past in order to transform it into her or his own bones, flesh and blood.²⁵⁴

The will to self-overcoming the untimely is the redemption offered by transforming the ‘counterwill’—the ‘thus it was’, which is the origin of the spirit of revenge and lament—into a ‘thus I willed.’ The paradigm of such a narrative is the life of the untimely who can say to the past ‘thus I willed it’ because it has found a way to describe that past which the past never knew, and thereby found a self to be which her precursors never knew was possible.²⁵⁵ This is Nietzsche’s paradoxical impulse: the untimely needs to know what it is that needs to be forgotten in order to be able to forget it.²⁵⁶ Therefore, Nietzsche acknowledges that history may serve as a mechanism to act counter to time and thereby act on time for the benefit of a time to come.²⁵⁷ Thus he recognises the inescapable historicity of human existence whilst affirming the creative capacity of human beings to transform themselves and overcome their past, calling for a human life that requires the adoption of both an ‘unhistorical’ and a ‘historical’ perspective upon ourselves.²⁵⁸

The main thesis of this meditation is that ‘the unhistorical and the historical are necessary in equal measure for the health of an individual, of a people and of a culture.’ History, he explains, is necessary for the sake of life and action, but, ‘we want to serve history only to the extent that history serves life.’²⁵⁹ In other words, against the past, but also against the present, Nietzsche’s meditation is once more ‘untimely’ because he supposes to evaluate the present from the standpoints of both the past and the future, whilst living the past and the future as the individual’s mortal embodied temporality. To live one’s life as the Nietzschean untimely means not to forget the past but also not to be constituted by it: to interpolate and divide time,

²⁵³ Friedrich Nietzsche, ‘On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life,’ 64.

²⁵⁴ Ibid, 61-63. Elizabeth Grosz explains that Nietzsche’s approach to history articulates an effort at make something positive of the past ‘without betraying it, without repeating or continuing it, to produce a future that both breaks with the past yet at the same time refuses to disown it—this seems to be the very condition of radical politics.’ (Elizabeth Grosz, *The Nick of Time, Politics, Evolution and the Untimely*, 119).

²⁵⁵ Richard Rorty, ‘The Contingency of Selfhood.’

²⁵⁶ Elizabeth Grosz, *The Nick of Time, Politics, Evolution and the Untimely*, 119.

²⁵⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, ‘On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life,’ 59-60.

²⁵⁸ Daniel Breazeale, ‘Introduction,’ xv.

²⁵⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, ‘On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life,’ 63.

to revive and transform the power of the past, to make the past relevant again by appropriating as one's own and thus giving to it a meaning that it did not have before. Consequently, memory is needed, a memory that 'does not let down the lure of the untimely, that facilitates the out-of-time of invention and innovation.'²⁶⁰

1.

David Strauss, the Confessor and the Writer, 1873.

This first meditation is basically a critique to the theologian and writer, David Strauss, who Nietzsche sees as the human embodiment of the *Bildungsphilister* or 'cultivated philistines'—the authorities that position themselves as representatives of culture, framing their demands, false complacencies and pretensions according to ruling epistemological 'truths' and a historiographic 'unity of styles.' The real subject of this meditation is not necessarily David Strauss. Instead, Nietzsche uses this figure as a metaphor to elaborate on a critique of what he perceived as a sign of superiority of popular culture and received ideas among the intellectual and academic community of his time. Philistinism, according to Nietzsche, is systematic and oppressive, it operates in institutions, as well as cultural and artistic bodies organised in accordance to public opinion.²⁶¹ But philistinism, Nietzsche writes, 'does not constitute a culture, even an inferior culture, merely because it possesses system: it must always be the antithesis of a culture, namely a permanently established barbarity.'²⁶²

Nietzsche's opening meditation is critique to the intellectual and academic community of his historical epoch. As Daniel Breazeale explains, it is a harsh indictment of what he saw as the failure of intellectuals and academics 'to assume any responsibility for the abject state of contemporary culture and society, as well as his account for their fundamental hypocrisy.'²⁶³ This untimely meditation, once again, is not anachronistic to our present era. The struggle of power-knowledge, the formation of oppressive systems and subjects with authority over the production of curatorial discourse, the possession and hierarchizing of cultural and intellectual capital, and, of course, enduring hypocritical dynamics (as suggested by

²⁶⁰ Elizabeth Grosz, *The Nick of Time, Politics, Evolution and the Untimely*, 119.

²⁶¹ Daniel Breazeale, 'Introduction,' xii-xiii.

²⁶² Friedrich Nietzsche, 'David Strauss, the Confessor and the Writer,' 7.

²⁶³ Daniel Breazeale, 'Introduction,' xviii-xiv.

Nietzsche), are not anachronistic to the contemporary art-curatorial system. As an example, contemporary forms of philistinism are visible in the internal dynamics between curators involved in institutions, who make use of them and their benefits, but simultaneously reject them. They participate in the institution structure but do not take responsibility for it.²⁶⁴ As a second example, contemporary forms of philistinism can be found in curatorial initiatives that perform radicalism on a discursive or representational level (either in institutional or personal levels) without really materialising such radicalism, failing to address or transform the political conditions under which they operate.²⁶⁵ These initiatives claim, in theory, to defend certain causes, to embody certain ideas and principles. However, in practice, they forget the very values they pretend to support and protect. Contemporary forms of philistinism persist in the contemporary art-curatorial system. This is one more reason for the relevance of Nietzsche's nineteenth century philosophy of time in our contemporary era. Against systematic and oppressive philistinism, Nietzsche offers the possibility of becoming anachronistic, to live anachronistically. Instead of adjusting the self to chronological time-scales and agendas he positions the alternative to raise the self above their rhythms and tempos.

²⁶⁴ Mick Wilson, 'What is to be Undone?'

²⁶⁵ Helena Reckitt, 'Support Acts: Curating, Caring and Social Reproduction,' 25. Marina Vishmidt, 'The Aesthetic Subject and the Politics of Speculative Labor,' 25-36.

Assuming that we are dealing with an author, is everything he wrote and said, everything he left behind, to be included in his work? This problem is both theoretical and practical. If we wish to publish the complete works of Nietzsche, for example, where do we draw the line? Certainly, everything must be published, but can we agree on what 'everything' means? We will, of course, include everything that Nietzsche himself published, along with the drafts of his works, his plans for aphorisms, his marginal notations and corrections. But what if, in a notebook filled with aphorisms, we find a reference, a reminder of an appointment, an address, or a laundry bill, should this be included in his works? Why not? These practical considerations are endless once we consider how a work can be extracted from the millions of traces left by an individual after his death.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁶ Michel Foucault, 'What is an Author,' 118-119.

Timelines

Timelines are places where historical-linear narratives are captured, documented and represented. They establish rhythms and validate social actions, but they also formulate discourses of progress, conquest and ownership. They serve as practical organisational tools, but they also account for the record of achievements, events and accomplishments, as well as for the storage of acquisitions and the possession of objects, places, and spaces. Such storage also includes the accumulation and ownership of intellectual capital and knowledge.

Timelines are often two-dimensional lines of ordering temporality, however, they are also ordered forward-moving graphic signs of authority in homogeneous narratives and epistemological power.²⁶⁷



Fig. 27. Robert Henlopen Labberton, *Historical Chart, or History Taught by the Eye*, 1874. Image: Daniel Rosenberg and Anthony Grafton.



Fig. 28. *Exhibition Files of the Museum of Modern Art, MoMA archives*. Image: MoMA The Museum of Modern Art.

²⁶⁷ Anthony Grafton and Daniel Rosenberg explain that timelines also formulate concepts of progress and conquest. Historical timelines and maps were key symbols of the power of monarchs but also symbols of the power of knowledge itself (Anthony Grafton and Daniel Rosenberg, *Cartographies of Time*, 17).

And so I ride (which is my metaphor)
A full-sailed ship upon an endless sea,
A universe where nothing stays the same,
Sea, sky, wind, earth, and time forever changing—
Time like a river in its ceaseless motion,
On, on, each speeding hour cannot stand still,
But as waves, thrust by waves, drive waves before them,
So time runs first or follows forever new:
The flying moment gone, what once seemed never
Is now, which vanishes before we say it,
Each disappearing moment in a cycle,
Each loss replaced within the living hour.²⁶⁸

Perhaps the whisper was born before lips,
And the leaves in treelessness circled and flew,
And those, to whom we impart our experience as bliss,
Acquire their forms before we do.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁸ Ovid, 'The Philosopher,' *Metamorphoses*, Book XV, 428.

²⁶⁹ Osip Mandelstam, 'Octaves 7.'



Fig. 29. Exhibition leaflet.

Title: *By Indirections Find Directions Out*

Artists: Patricia Dominguez, Love Enqvist, Gaia Fugazza, Dominic Hawgood, Mary Hurrell, Mariana Magdaleno, Carlos Santos, Julia Varela.

Location: Yamakiwa Gallery, Tokamachi, Niigata 942-1426, Japan

Dates: 9 July – 12 August 2018 (residency)

29 July – 30 September 2018 (exhibition).

Number of visitors: No more than 80.

Supported by Sasakawa Foundation, the Embassy of Mexico in Japan and Yamakiwa Gallery.



Fig. 30 Views of Tokamachi, Summer. Photo: Yamakiwa Gallery



Fig. 31. Views of Tokamachi, Autumn. Photo: Yamakiwa Gallery



Fig. 32. Views of Tokamachi, Winter. Photo: Yamakiwa Gallery.

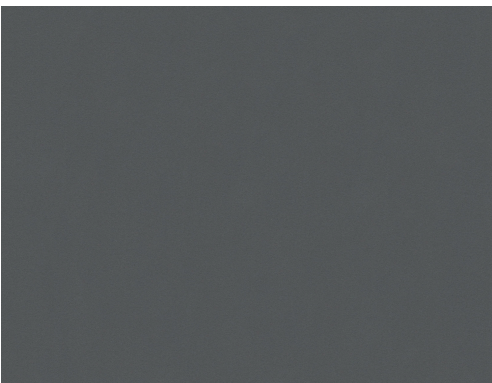


Fig. 33. Views of Tokamachi, Spring. Photo: Akira Kurosawa (still image from his film *Dreams*).

Located amid the mountains and rice fields in the countryside of Japan, this exhibition was part of a month's residency at Yamakiwa Gallery, an independent artistic initiative that promotes international contemporary art. The building is an old refurbished traditional Japanese farmer's house, located in a small village called Tokamachi, in Niigata Prefecture, in the Echigo-Tsumari region of the island. Situated at latitude 36° N and longitude 138° E in both the northern and the eastern hemispheres, this geographical context is distinguished by the radical transformation that its mountains undergo with the changes of seasons, from verdant green in summer to white and dark in winter. The gallery functions as exhibition space but also as an accommodation facility (a hotel/residency). It is utilised both as exhibition and domestic space.

In the year 2017 I drafted the project proposal, consisting of an exhibition and a dual residency between artist Marry Hurrell and myself. The proposal to investigate anachronism in this context originated from an observation of the conjuncture and juxtaposition of a series of anachronistic temporalities. In a first instance, it considered the sedentary and permanent condition of the village of Tokamachi, its natural surroundings and its community: a natural temporality distinguished by the live rhythms and sequences of animals, insects and plants, as well as the endurance of the village's traditions and culture.²⁷⁰ In a second instance, the proposal looked into calendrical temporality of the proposed five-weeks of the project itself, a short period of chronological time—bearing in mind Yamakiwa Gallery is itself a transient establishment, facilitating the movement of people for short-term residencies.

The exhibition included new commissioned artworks and a selection of existing pieces by eight participating artists. These were made of an assortment of materials and travelled from different places and routes from around the world. This project shaped a close connection of anachronism with Nietzsche's concept of eternal return and the condition of 'becoming:' a conjuncture where the eternal past and the eternal future co-exist, manifesting in each moment. Artworks were conceived as embodied materialities of never-to-be-completed processes of formation. They shared concerns around notions of transformation, alchemy,

²⁷⁰ The village of Tokamachi is populated by artisans and farmers. Most of them are elderly people as the majority of the young population have migrated to big cities. The population is declining and many similar villages in the region are disappearing.

shamanism, metamorphosis, flux and change, natural cycles and the internal tempos of human anatomy and rhythms of states of mind.

The title *By Indirections Find Directions Out* is a quote taken from William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. It appears in the Act 2, Scene 1 of the script. Polonius tells to Reynaldo to trace, by indirections, the activities of Laertes, whom they spy in France. This phrase makes reference to the strategies used in the quest for truth, the methods employed by the characters in the play to achieve their goals. In the case of Hamlet, the goal is to set right a world that is out of joint, by avenging his father, and dethroning Claudius. I decided to use this title for the project as a reference to the Shakespearean portrayal of Hamlet's impossibility of setting right a time which is out-of-joint. It was a metaphor for joining and disjoining multifaceted streams of time involved in this project.

I was already familiar with their work of the artists I approached. I met them randomly and accidentally through different instances in my professional and/or personal life: either I saw their work in exhibition, open studios, events, or had been introduced to them. Others were colleagues that I knew from the past and was already familiar with their work, or I had previously collaborated with them. I selected these artists because, through different material means and conceptual approaches, they all share a concern for the investigation of time and temporality. They also each had a curiosity to extend such concern by exploring the temporal implications of anachronism in their own practices. Additionally, these artists gave me the opportunity to work with them because they were willing to participate in a not-for-profit project whose nature was fundamentally experimental. This project unfolded without the monetary conveniences that large-scale budgets may offer.²⁷¹

²⁷¹ We had a small budget supported by the Sasakawa Foundation, the Embassy of Mexico in Japan, and Yamakiwa Gallery.

Inventory

Two photographic images of digital collage created by Patricia Dominguez in Chile, travelling in the virtual form of a .jpg file and printed on photographic paper in a studio in Tokyo.

One six minute 16mm film digitally transferred to video, filmed in California USA, transferred from Love Enqvist's computer in Sweden directly onto the gallery's media player.

Two paintings made of galvanized natural rubber painted with chalk and nail polish, made by Gaia Fugazza in Artist Research Pivô, Sao Paulo, in Brazil, and which I carried in a 111x18x18cm package with an approximate weight of 20kg, from Gatwick Airport to Tokyo.

One site-specific performance piece including sound, movement, garments made of weathered paper, charcoal and a processual ice sculpture by artist Mary Hurrell.

One drawing created specifically for the exhibition, made by Mariana Magdeleno, composed of graphite and gold ink on paper, transported in a tube from Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores in Mexico City to the Mexican Embassy in Japan.

Two paintings by Carlos Santos made of black crushed marble, synthetic fibres, animal charcoals, vegetable pigments, concrete derivatives, polyurethanes, ashes, waterproof construction materials, likewise shipped in tubes from Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores in Mexico City to the Mexican Embassy in Japan.

One twenty minutes' video, which the artist Julia Varela sent in a digital file from her studio in Madrid, along with a sculpture made of mobile phones burned into dust, which she shipped to Japan by post.

One light sculpture made of CanOWater® Still Resealable Spring Water (33cl), Neopixel LEDs, Arduino Trinket & Chromed Cone, made specifically for the project by Dominic Hawgood, which I transported from the U.K. to Japan in my suitcase.

Four concrete poems printed in Japan on kozo paper, made by Love Enqvist.

One Ikebana sculpture, whose instructions were given by Love Enqvist from Sweden, which Yuri Fukushima, our host, made herself following traditional ikebana procedures, with local wild flowers.

Installation

The installation process was a slow one. The Summer Japanese weather was extremely hot and humid. It seemed as though the energies of the countryside were decompressing the accelerated London rhythms resonating in our minds and bodies. It was not only us who were physically and mentally adapting to a different time-zone, a new climate, new tastes in Asian food and water, but the artworks themselves seemed to also be taking their own time to acclimatise to the encounter with such a place, familiarizing with the space, the light, the colours and sounds, and vice-versa. During this slow process, the gallery/domestic space transformed into a curatorial workplace. The arrangement of the artworks inside the gallery/house was made as a collaborative process between Yuri Fukushima and myself. We did not have a pre-planned floor plan, so we allowed for the artworks to tell us where they wanted to be placed. This allowed for moments of conviviality and instances of solitude, intervals for work but also breaks for contemplation, time for playfulness and exchanges of ideas and occasions for latencies and reflection.

Floor Plans:

やまきわ美術館案内図 Floor Plan

1 階

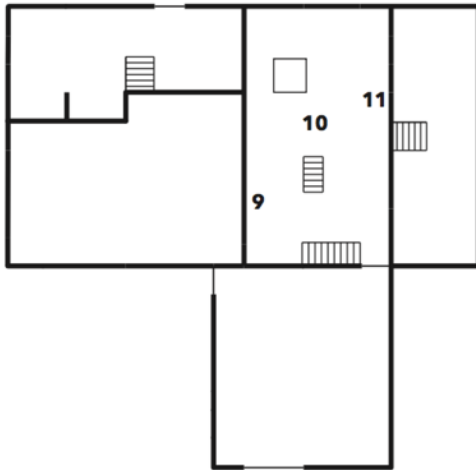


- 1 カルロス・サントス **Carlos Santos**
無題 *Untitled*, 2018
Waterproof, marble, resin, charcoal and pigments on paper
55 x 55 cm
- 2 ドミニク・ハウグッド **Dominic Hawgood**
聖なる源 *Sacred Source*, 2018
CanOWater® Still Resealable Spring Water (33cl), Neopixel LEDs,
Arduino Trinket & Chromed Cone
- 3 ガイア・フガッサ **Gaia Fugazza**
歌うカエルの湖 *Lake of singing frogs*, 2016
Galvanized natural rubber, chalk, nail polish
100 x 144 cm
- 4 ジュリア・ヴァレラ **Julia Varela**
Mehr *Fantasie*, 2017-18
Super HD, 00:20:04. Stereo
series 1/5

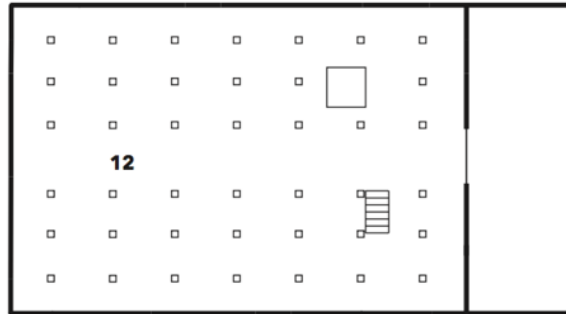
- 5 ガイア・フガッサ **Gaia Fugazza**
3匹の豹 (三位一体) *Trinity Panther*, 2016
Galvanized natural rubber, chalk, nail polish
100 x 144 cm
- 6 メアリー・ハレル **Mary Hurrell**
ちょう, 2018
Weathered paper, charcoal, water
162 x 20 cm
- 7 カルロス・サントス **Carlos Santos**
無題 *Untitled*, 2018
Waterproof, marble, resin, charcoal and pigments on paper
120 x 110 cm
- 8 パトリシア・ドミンゲス **Patricia Dominguez**
変身する線 *Lineas cambia-formas (Shapeshifter Lines)*, 2018
Photographic images and digital collage on photographic paper
42 x 30 cm

Fig. 34. Floor Plans, *By Indirections Find Directions Out*. Ground Floor.

2階



3階



9 マリアナ・マグダレーノ **Mariana Magdaleno.**
 力の刻印 *La huella de la fuerza (The Imprint of Strength)*, 2018
 Graphite and gold drawing ink on paper
 110 x 31 cm

10 ジュリア・ヴァレラ **Julia Varela**
Mehr Fantasie, 2017-18
 Mobile i-phones in powder

11 ラヴ・エンケエスト **Love Enqvist**
 花のことば *The language of flowers*, 2015
 Print on kozo paper
 42 x 60 cm

12 ラヴ・エンケエスト **Love Enqvist**
 樹木のサーカス *The Tree Circus (from Axel Erlandsson series)*, 2014
 16mm digitally transferred video
 6 min loop

Fig. 35. Floor Plans, *By Indirections Find Directions Out*. First Floor.

Fig. 36. Floor Plans, *By Indirections Find Directions Out*. Second Floor.

Artworks



Fig. 37. Entrance: Gaia Fugazza, Carlos Santos, Dominic Hawgood. Photo: Yamakiwa Gallery.



Fig. 38. Carlos Santos, 無題 *Untitled*, 2018. Waterproof, marble, resin, charcoal and pigments on paper, 55 x 55 cm. Photo: Yamakiwa Gallery.

At the entrance of the gallery, visitors encountered one of the pieces sent by **Carlos Santos** (Fig. 38). Santos is a Mexican artist, living and working in his house/studio located in the borough of Pueblo Santa Fe, also known as ‘el Piru,’ in Mexico City. Taking the form of paintings, drawings, sculptures, installations, embroidery or photographs, his work explores the intersections between the human mind and body, the natural environment and industrial matter, as well as the political and aesthetic implications of their social contexts. He looks into the expressive possibilities of materials themselves, their vitality, and the various modes by which they physically and discursively transform.

In his artistic process, Santos extracts materials from his urban context, natural surroundings and/or his own mind and body. These materials are symbolically charged: they contain innate references to their social, political and environmental contexts; but they also have inherent allusions to mental and corporeal landscapes. Features that stand out in his work are the

texture, traces of burns and cuts, ashes, and a particular darkness. There are references to natural and industrial elements as well as to the human anatomy: a mixture of allusions to concrete and buildings, but also to natural soil, roots of plants, as well as the circulatory system, bones, cartilage, connective tissue and internal organs. Santos's abstractions have an association to the bowels of the earth, and their relation to human bowels (Fig. 41).

There is an intense sense of tactility within the materiality of Santos's work, which emphasizes their earthly and physical characteristics. There is also a strong sensation of corporality within their anthropomorphic forms, highlighting their anatomical and surgical qualities. They also contain an embodied emotional charge. The use of raw materials follows his construction of raw images. There is some kind of hardness embedded not only in the physical properties of the materials themselves, but also in his references to the urban context where he lives and extracts these materials from. This redirects Santos's discourse to issues around poverty and roughness (Fig. 43-44-45-46). An external sense of destitution is also internal: it is anatomical and psychological (Fig. 39-40). The painting hung in the entrance of the gallery, for example has a round geometry correlating to the roundness of the planets, suggesting movement and a further association to astronomical time. By contrast, the evocations to the human anatomy suggested a link to the internal rhythm of biological time—the tempos of blood pressure, heartbeat paces or processes of intestinal digestion.

In these ways, Santos's anthropomorphic abstractions exteriorise their own internal anachronism. It feels as if his static dark pieces articulate noises coming from their own insides. They transmit a sense of liveness and vibration, an ontology of the art-object, as if they are beating and breathing. But along with this sense of vitality, there is also a feeling of stillness, silence and loss. In a further example, Santos's work embodies a tension between life and death; a metamorphosis from earth to blood, from urban traces to cosmological substance, from body-parts to industrial matter, from environmental waste to physiological reveries, from human veins to the roots of plants. He exposes an intense world formed of tensions, forces and struggles between insides and outsides: a contagious and contaminating anachronism.

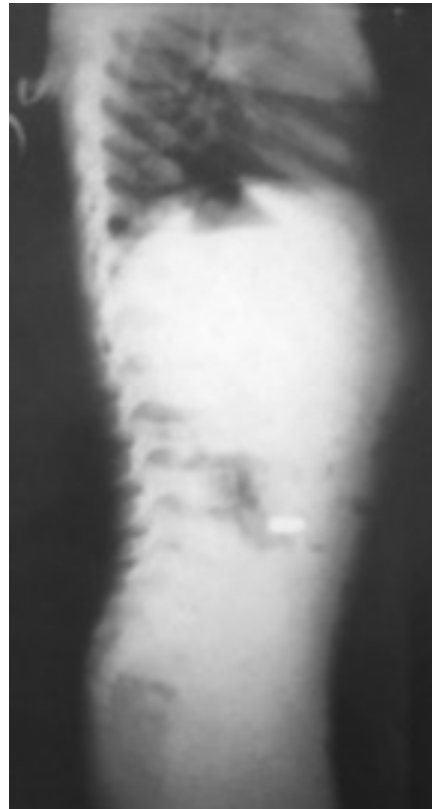
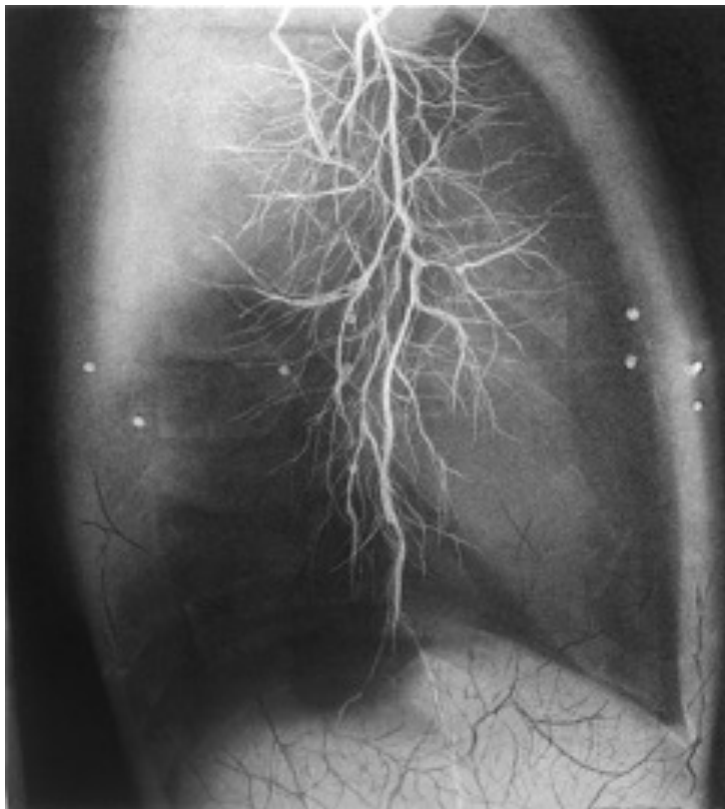


Fig. 39. Carlos Santos, *Untitled* (series *Alterado*), 2010. Charcoal, ink, graphite on cotton paper, 60 x 50 cm.

Fig. 40. Carlos Santos, *Untitled* (series *Alterado*), 2010. Charcoal, ink, graphite on cotton paper, 110 x 200 cm. Photos: Carlos Santos.



Fig. 41. Carlos Santos 無題 *Untitled*, 2018. Waterproof, marble, resin, charcoal and pigments on paper, 120 x 110 cm. Photo: Carlos Santos

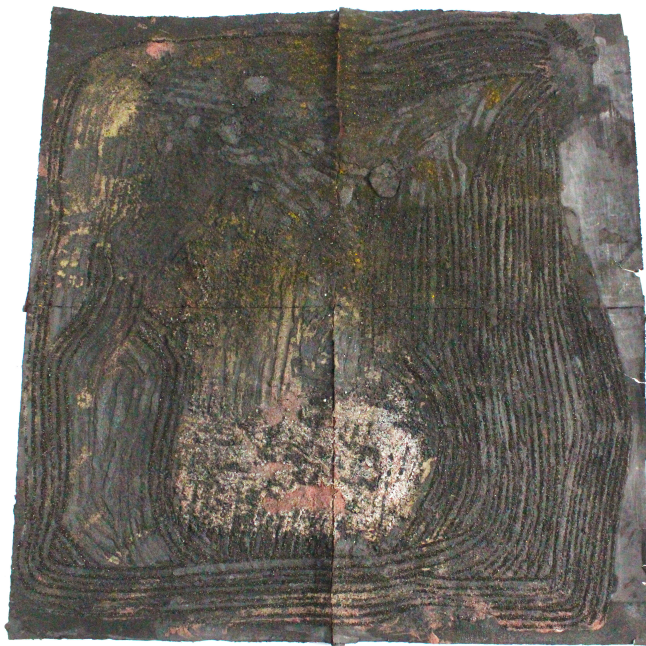


Fig. 41. Carlos Santos 無題 *Untitled*, 2018. Waterproof, marble, resin, charcoal and pigments on paper, 120 x 110 cm. Photo: Carlos Santos



Fig. 42. Carlos Santos 無題 *Untitled*, detail. Photo: Yamakiwa Gallery.



Fig. 43. Carlos Santos, *Untitled* (Series *We Were Never Modern*), 2018. Inkjet on cotton paper, 43 x 28 cm. Photo: Carlos Santos.



Fig. 44. Carlos Santos, *Untitled* (Series *We Were Never Modern*), 2018. Inkjet on cotton paper, 43 x 28 cm. Photo: Carlos Santos.



Fig. 45. Carlos Santos, *Untitled* (Series *We Were Never Modern*), 2018. Inkjet on cotton paper, 43 x 28 cm. Photo: Carlos Santos.



Fig. 46. Carlos Santos, *Untitled* (Series *We Were Never Modern*), 2018. Inkjet on cotton paper, 43 x 28 cm. Photo: Carlos Santos



Fig. 47. Gaia Fugazza, 歌うカエルの湖 *Lake of singing frogs*, 2016. Galvanized natural rubber, chalk, nail polish, 100 x 144 cm. Photo: Yamakiwa Gallery.

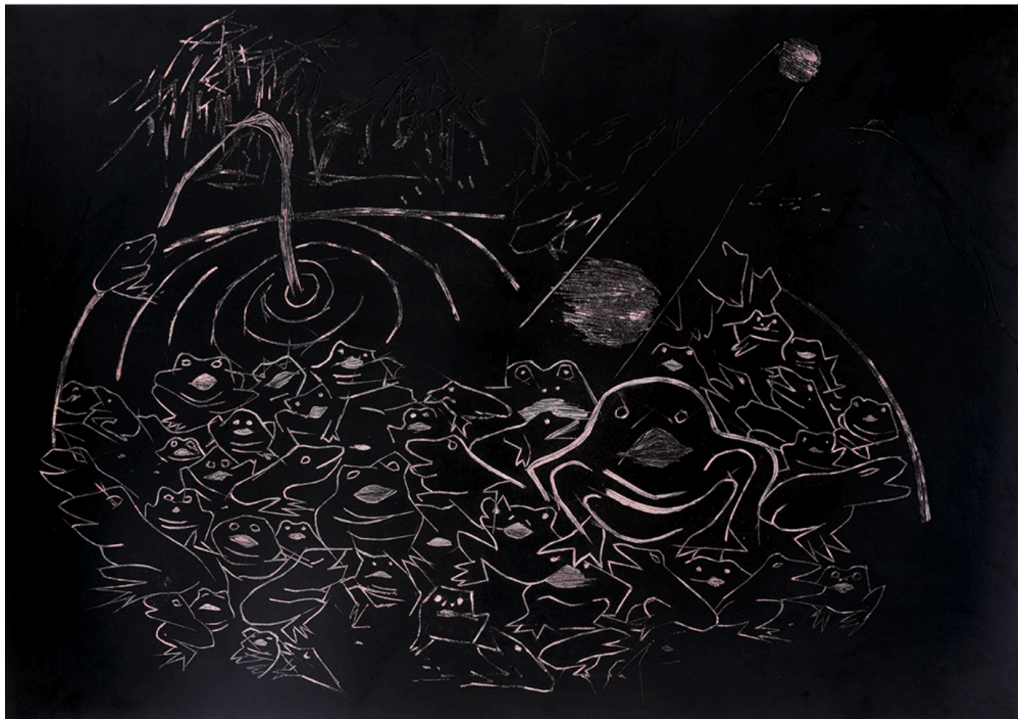


Fig. 48. Gaia Fugazza, 歌うカエルの湖 *Lake of singing frogs*, 2016. Galvanized natural rubber, chalk, nail polish, 100 x 144 cm. Photo: Gaia Fugazza.



Fig. 49. Pond with singing frogs next to the gallery. Photo: Yamakiwa Gallery.

We placed Gaia Fugazza's *Lake of Singing Frogs* (Fig. 48) next to Santos's earthy and planetary maroon circle. The work is composed of galvanized natural rubber, portraying silhouettes of frogs singing in a lake illuminated with moonlight. The images are carved with white chalk and painted with nail polish. Fugazza is an Italian artist living and working in London. She primarily uses the mediums of painting, performance and sculpture as ways to explore topics such as nature, reproduction, rituals, agriculture and spirituality. She presented two different pieces in the exhibition. First, the abovementioned *Lake of Singing Frogs*, but also *Trinity Panther*, a similar piece which was placed in another room inside the gallery (Fig. 50).



Fig. 50. Gaia Fugazza 匹の豹(三位一体) *Trinity Panther*, 2016. Galvanized natural rubber, chalk, nail polish, 100 x 144 cm. Photo: Yamakiwa Gallery.



Fig. 51. Gaia Fugazza 匹の豹(三位一体) *Trinity Panther*, 2016. Galvanized natural rubber, chalk, nail polish, 100 x 144 cm. Photo: Gaia Fugazza.

Both artworks were produced after an ayahuasca ceremony she took during a residency in Brazil. They are both composed of heavy, intense and solid black rubber, which contrasts with the white contours of the figures of plants, animals, geometrical forms and natural elements she engraves. These figures are placed in dream-like, ritualistic and magical scenarios; in friendly and playful atmospheres. They transmit some sense of celebration, an acknowledgment of ancestral knowledges native to non-human relations. Both animate and inanimate creatures contain a sense of sentience: equal to people and capable of shared emotions. She recognises their divine essence and their shamanic power. These artworks, thus, reveal a desire to connect more closely to animals and plants. They uncover a yearning for stronger intra-species relationships. They also expose a desire to communicate with

minerals, with the planets, and with other substances of the environment or inanimate elements form the universe. *Lake of Singing Frogs* and *Trinity Panther* furthermore make reference to the spans of time that occur in dreams and visions, to the Nonsequential logic of time and space experienced in states of intoxication. They allude to the mind and body transformations produced by ancestral medicinal plants. These two pieces, thus, embody the hallucinogenic yet healing power of nature, but they also transfer to the viewer the intoxicating yet therapeutic power of art itself.



Fig. 52. Dominic Hawgood, 聖なる源 *Sacred Source*, 2018. CanOWater® Still Resealable Spring Water (33cl), Neopixel LEDs, Arduino Trinket & Chromed Cone. Photo: Yamakiwa Gallery.

One work by Santos and another from Fugazza were installed at the garage at the entrance along with **Dominic Hawgood**'s dazzling and atmospheric sculpture *Sacred Source* (Fig.52). Hawgood is a British artist based in London, working mainly with the mediums of photography, sound and sculpture. He is interested in exploring connections between real and virtual realities, technology and the environment, natural and artificial elements. He employs scanning and other digitally heightened or altered methods to expose human drives or to exhibit psychological states of mind. Hawgood's work takes the spatialised form of immersive environmental installations.

For this project, his contribution consisted of a light sculpture which he made specifically for the project. This piece gave a very particular dimension to the exhibition as a whole. Made of an assemblage of light, optics, technical equipment and a can of water, it had a playful yet intense approach to anachronism. The gentle and calming blue LED light occupied much of the space, visually communicating but also affecting the two other pieces which were placed next to it. It somehow re-touched the room, creating a softening and cleansing effect within the space. This blue light colour furthermore emphasised its reference to the element of water (alluding to the use of a canned brand *cano* water). The outcome was that it surrounded visitors with blue light in an immersive but also mind-altering ambience.

The piece contains discursive and formal intersections between digital aesthetics and shamanism. It combines material approaches to technology, scanning techniques, paraphernalia and commercialisation, with aspects linked to ayahuasca ceremonies, spiritualism, esoteric rituals, and the transformation of natural elements. *Sacred Source* furthermore gestures towards the experience of the alteration of time and space produced in states of intoxication. It does so by connecting aspects of the inner experience of time in hypnosis, visions, glossolalia (speaking-in-tongues), exorcism and hallucinogenic drug trips. Finally, this little yet powerful sculpture was exhibited not only with the intention of sharing with its audience a message about its own transformative experiences, but also of intoxicating or altering the sense of time and space in the visitor's own experience.



Fig. 53. Dominic Hawgood, *#themedicine*, 2016. Custom fabricated lenticular LED light panel with a low profile black aluminium frame, 90 x 120cm x 5cm. Photo: Dominic Hawgood.



Fig. 54. Dominic Hawgood, *#cosmicchakra*, 2016. Custom fabricated lenticular LED light panel with a low profile black aluminium frame, 90 x 120cm x 5cm. Photo: Dominic Hawgood.



Fig. 55. Installation view: Dominic Hawgood, Carlos Santos, Gaia Fugazza. Photo: Yamakiwa Gallery.

When entering the gallery, visitors encounter *Mehr Fantasie* (Fig. 56-58) by **Julia Varela**, a video which was screened in the gallery's monitor, on the ground floor in front of the house's *irori* (the traditional Japanese sunken hearth). Varela is a Spanish artist living and working in Madrid. Her work explores junctures between technology and the body, the merging of organic and inorganic matters, tensions between physical and psychic spaces. She investigates these topics mainly through the material means of sculpture, installation and film. Her contributions to this project consisted of the already mentioned video in addition to a sculpture with the same name, made of phones in powder. placed in the gallery's first floor (Fig. 57).



Fig. 56. Julia Varela, *Mehr Fantasie*, 2017-18. Super HD, 00:20:04. Stereo series 1/5. Photo: Yamakiwa Gallery.



Fig. 57. Julia Varela, *Mehr Fantasie*, 2017-18. Mobile phones in powder. Photo: Yamakiwa Gallery.

She produced these two pieces during a residency she took in Hangar in *Barcelona*. Both works address issues regarding the junction between virtual and material worlds, psychological and corporeal materialities, time, alchemy, destruction and transformation. They also portray a dystopic vision of the present and the future, through the symbolic and material expressiveness of the ashes and burned technological devices she uses.

The video presents some crawling human-like creatures (Fig. 58). They are moving in a slow performative way, accompanied by a strange and disturbing sound in the background. This virtual scenario suggests that the presence of an emotion charged with agony. The bodies of these creatures are covered with ashes. These ashes are composed of virtual waste: abandoned iphones, old televisions, non-functioning plasma screens, and other irrelevant, out-of-date, anachronistic devices. They are all reduced to dust, then converted into a solid, rigid substance (similar to concrete or clay) and applied on the body of the creatures she films.

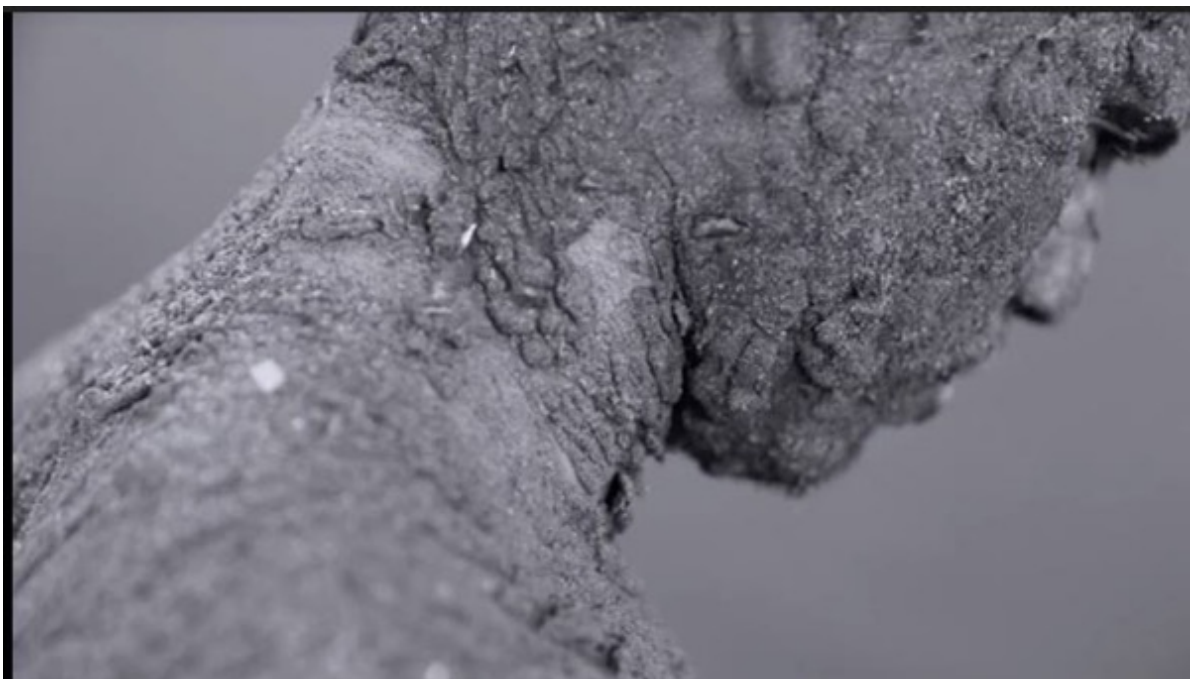


Fig. 58. Julia Varela, *Mehr Fantasie*, 2017-18. Video still. Photo: Julia Varela.

Varela raises questions about electronic waste and its impact on the environment: contaminated particles of old technological matter are incorporated into the skin of living human bodies. This is Varela's vision of the human relationship with the internet in the future: not only virtual information will penetrate human minds, but also digital physical matter will be implanted physically into human bodies. In terms of the temporalities embodied in this artwork, the artist literally burns hardware, and with it, she symbolically burns the accelerated temporality of the internet, and gives to it a corporeal rhythm. This new temporality slowly progresses through the agonizing movement of the human-technological creatures she portrays in her video.

This work furthermore produced a direct dialogue with the environment in which it was exhibited. As already mentioned, it was placed in front of the *irori* of the house, acting as a reminder of processes of eating and chemistry through the overlapping acts of heating, burning, and transforming matter. In this context, the final message of Varela's contribution to the project was that whether digital or organic, virtual or physical, inanimate or corporeal, we are always transforming, but at the end, we all become ashes.



Fig. 59. Julia Varela, *Mehr Fantasie*, 2017-18. Visitor watching the film. Photo: Yamakiwa Gallery.

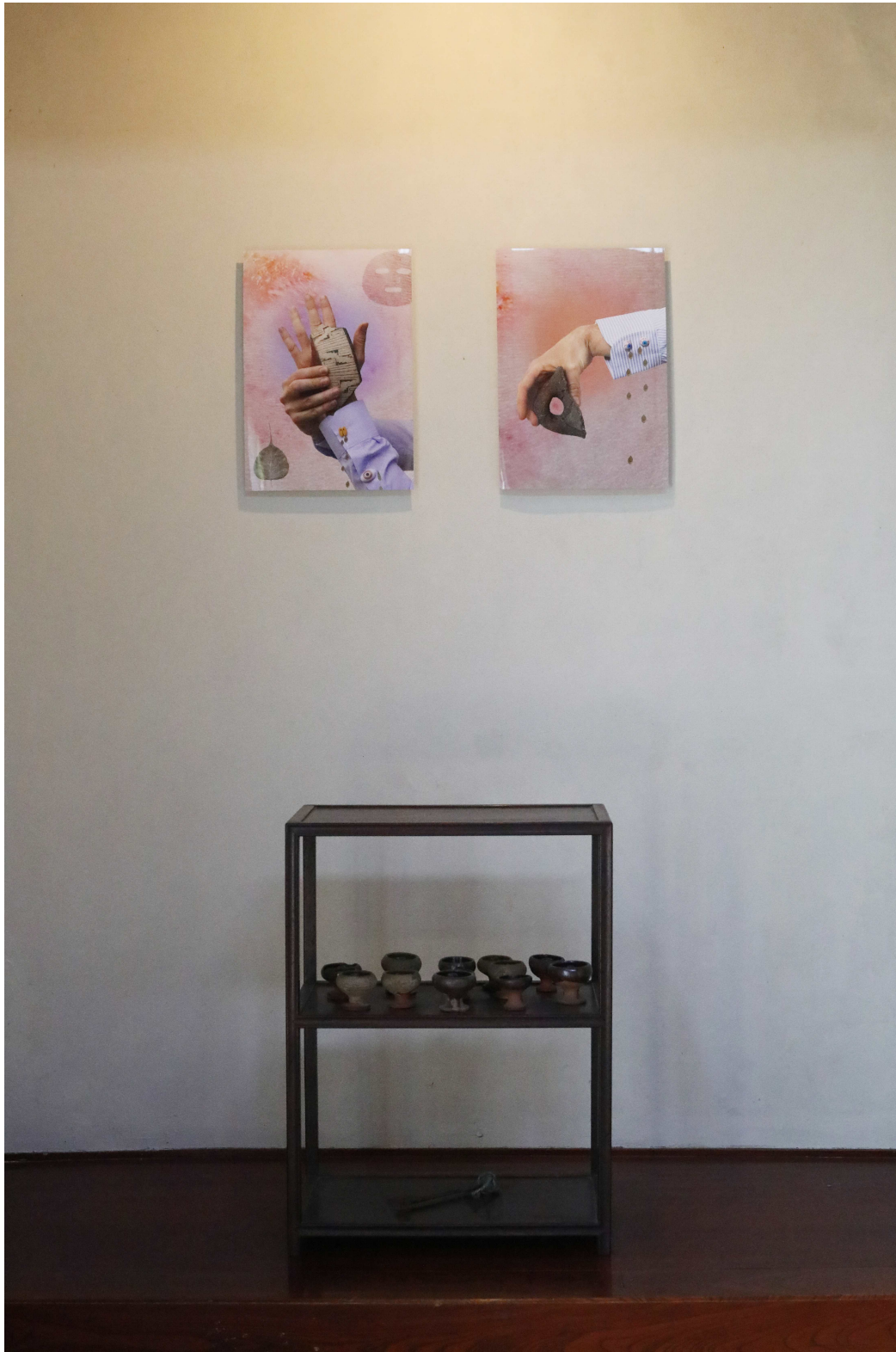


Fig. 60. Patricia Dominguez 変身する線 *Líneas cambia-formas (Shapeshifter Lines)*, 2018.
Photographic images and digital collage on photographic paper, 42 x 30 cm. Photo:
Yamakiwa Gallery.

In the adjoining ground-floor room, a diptych by **Patricia Dominguez** was hung (Fig. 60). Dominguez is a Chilean artist living and working in Santiago de Chile. She is interested in the juxtaposition between ancestral knowledge, pre-Columbian aesthetics and ancient healing practices with the contemporary neoliberal world. For this project, she presented two digital collages portraying images which appeared to her in a dream. These images reveal a pair of hands and arms wearing office shirts. Without the need to show any facial expressions, they contain an expressive charge themselves. It seems as if they are in some kind of agony, pain or discomfort. There are some toy-like eyes or childish stickers, which are crying and they are inserted in the shirts. The hands are grabbing and rubbing themselves with ancient stones as if they are seeking to find some relief within them. These stones are remains of old ceramics from the Diaguita culture.

This piece alludes to the conflicting juncture between pre-Columbian traditions and past civilizations versus the corporative contemporary world. The Atacama Desert was the territory of the Diaguita civilization before the Spanish colonization, and it is now a land which is dominated by lime extraction industries and coal-fired power generation for European companies. A contract signed in an office in London almost instantly moves natural resources in Chile. However, work in the office and long hours in front of the computer produce their own pain. There is the presence of a spectral figure in the background of the images. This spectral figure is a spirit re-appearing from the pre-Columbian past. Through this pair of two-dimensional photographic images, Dominguez casts a curse against exploitative and abusive corporations. This is perhaps symbolic of the reason for the discomfort and pain that is expressed through these hands.



Fig. 61. Patricia Dominguez, detail. Photo: Yamakiwa Gallery.

The original plan was to exhibit a new piece produced specifically for this project. However, due to a practical contingency of not obtaining some of the funding that we applied for, we could not afford to have it in the exhibition. But here-now it has now found a way to be present in this project. Dominguez's suggested piece, *The Wheel of Fortune* (Fig. 62), equally alludes to curses cast by spectres from the past, transferred to the artist through messages delivered in visions and in dreams, as a means to counter-act contemporary abusive authorities. The card of the wheel of fortune in the tarot deck alludes to changes (Fig. 63). It

reminds us that nothing is permanent: seasons change and fortune fluctuates. The metaphor inscribed in the wheel is recurring cyclical time, akin to Nietzsche's eternal return of the same. Here it embodies the phrase 'what goes around comes around.' It is therefore also about *karma*: how one affects other beings will return with either the same level of kindness or it predicts it will come back three times harder.

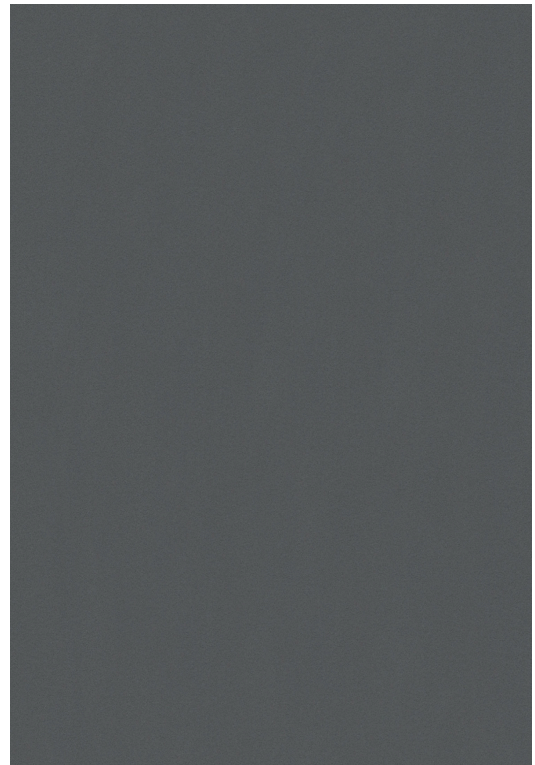


Fig. 62. Patricia Dominguez, *La Rueda de la Fortuna (The Wheel of Fortune)*, 2018. Photo: Patricia Dominguez.

Fig. 63. Pamela Colman Smith, *The Wheel of Fortune*, Mayor Arcana, Rider Waite Tarot Deck.

Climbing the stairs to the first floor of the gallery, the viewer encounters a drawing by **Mariana Magdaleno**, who is a Mexican artist, living and working in Mexico City. Her work is characterised by a fragile, delicate and skilful exploration of the mediums of drawing and illustration, employing ink, watercolour and pencil, generally on small format white cotton paper. Magdaleno is concerned with topics such as life and death, the power of plants and the strength of animals, elements of the earth, human-animal hybrids, ancestral knowledge, witchcraft, spirituality and pagan rituals. Her images create scenarios of uncanny amalgams between imagination and reality, sleep and wakefulness, violence and tenderness, a mixture of enchanting imaginaries and disturbing worlds, where naivety and perversion are exalted in the overlap of human and animal childhood and adulthood (Fig. 64-65).



Fig. 64. Mariana Magdaleno, *Untitled*. Watercolour and ink on cotton paper, 2015. Photo: Mariana Magdaleno.



Fig. 65. Mariana Magdaleno, *Untitled*. Watercolour and ink on cotton paper, 2015. Photo: Mariana Magdaleno.

For this exhibition, she produced a drawing entitled *The Imprint of Strength* (Fig 66). It tells a story about the internal rhythm and latent pulse in nature by portraying the life of a cicada, starting from its birth, comprising the seventeen years that it lives underground, until its death. The image captures the life journey of this insect but also many other occurrences and instances happening in parallel at different temporal intervals. The story runs through a linear timeline: it has a narrative, a beginning and end. But inside the image, many things happen, taking the viewer through a series of juxtaposed temporal dimensions. Thus, it presents intersections between different life-times of various animals, insects, and the natural geological elements she represents. The work also suggests junctures between ideas, desires and implanted emotions contained by these elements. Time is thus portrayed in a series of oscillations and tensions: chronological time is joined together with psychological time; biological time is disjointed to experiential time, and they are each captured in the static nature of the two-dimensional image. All elements, although suspended in the static nature of the means of drawing and the material of paper, correlate to the cycle of life and death, the circulation of all things, eternal past and the eternal future relating to each other. In other words, a process of eternal recurrence.

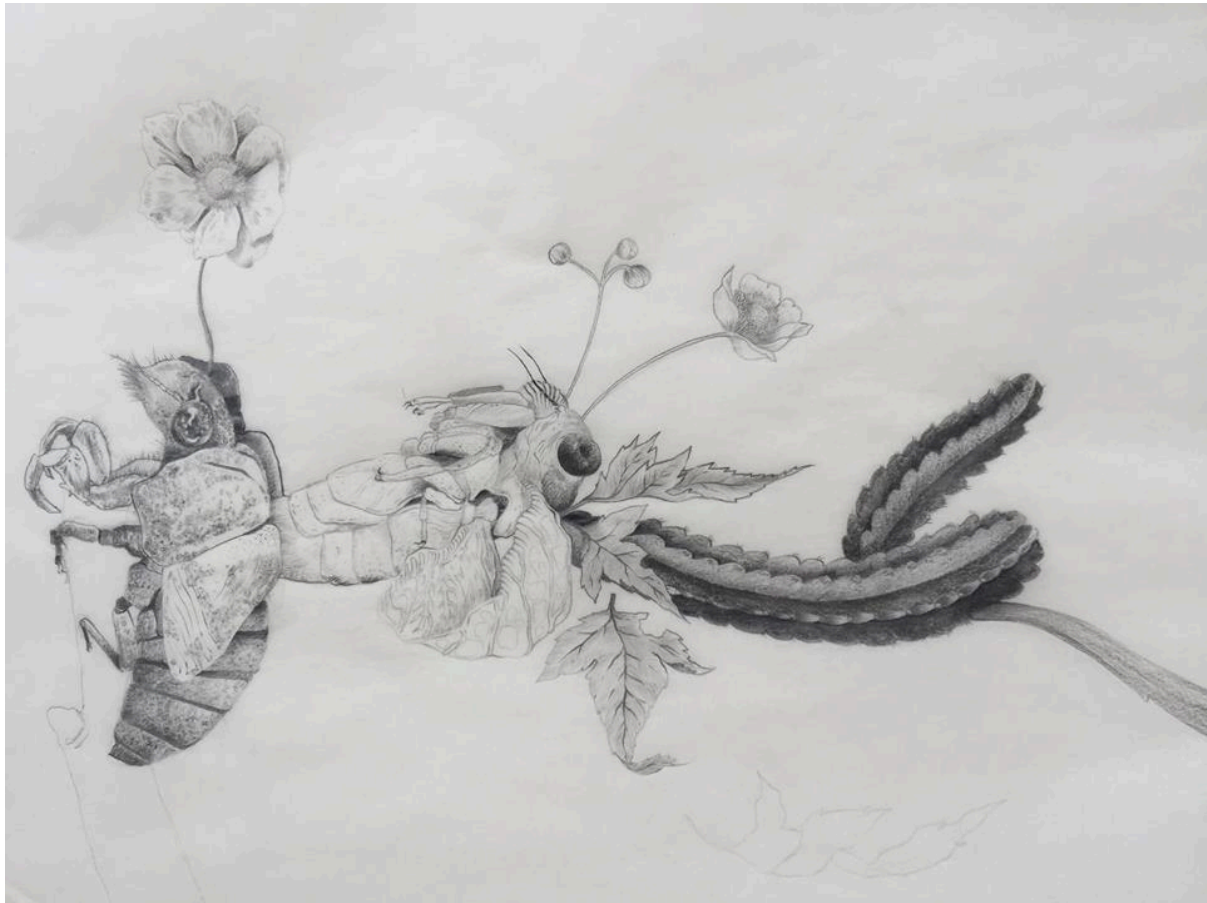


Fig. 66. Mariana Magdaleno, detail. Photo: Mariana Magdaleno.

It is possible to identify various elements in the work that have strong symbolic connotations. Such is the case of perennial flowers, which suggest movement in the closing and opening of their petals in synchrony to the changes of day and night. Perennial flowers are also considered to be enduring or continually recurring plants, supposed to last for a long or even an infinite amount of time. There is also the depiction of a night blooming cereus, which is a cactus that blooms only for one night and dies the next day. A swallow, which is a bird that migrates from different parts of the world, acts as a symbol of victory for sailors who historically tattooed these birds on their arms when they came back from long challenging journeys at sea (Fig. 67). The drawing also captures the process of transformation of a caterpillar into a monarch butterfly. There is also the presence of rosemary, which Hamlet's Ophelia associates with memory and remembrance. A firefly is present, muffling its apparent fire, which, Hamlet also tells us, announces the approach of the day. Stones, whose iconography is traditionally related to eternity. Smoke marks a subtle and ephemeral lapse of time. Magdaleno's plants, insects, animals and natural elements embody a recognition of the

transitoriness of the world whereby the beginning of life and the end of life co-exist and relate to one another.



Fig. 67. Mariana Magdaleno. 力の刻印 *La huella de la fuerza* (*The Imprint of Strength*), 2018. Detail. Graphite and gold drawing ink on paper, 110 x 31 cm. Photo: Mariana Magdaleno.



Fig. 68. Mariana Magdaleno, *Untitled*. Watercolour and ink on cotton paper, 2017. Photo: Mariana Magdaleno.

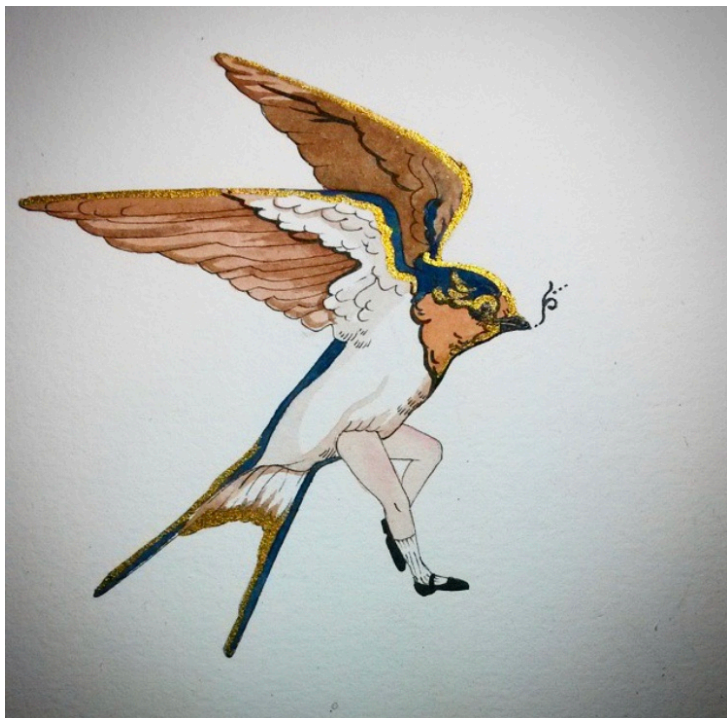


Fig. 69. Mariana Magdaleno, *Untitled*. Watercolour and ink on cotton paper, 2017. Photo: Mariana Magdaleno.



Fig. 70. First Floor. Installation view. Photo: Yamakiwa Gallery.



Fig. 71. Love Enqvist. Ikebana flower arrangement. Photo by myself.



Fig. 72. Yuri Fukushima's manual for Ikebana arrangements. Photo by myself.

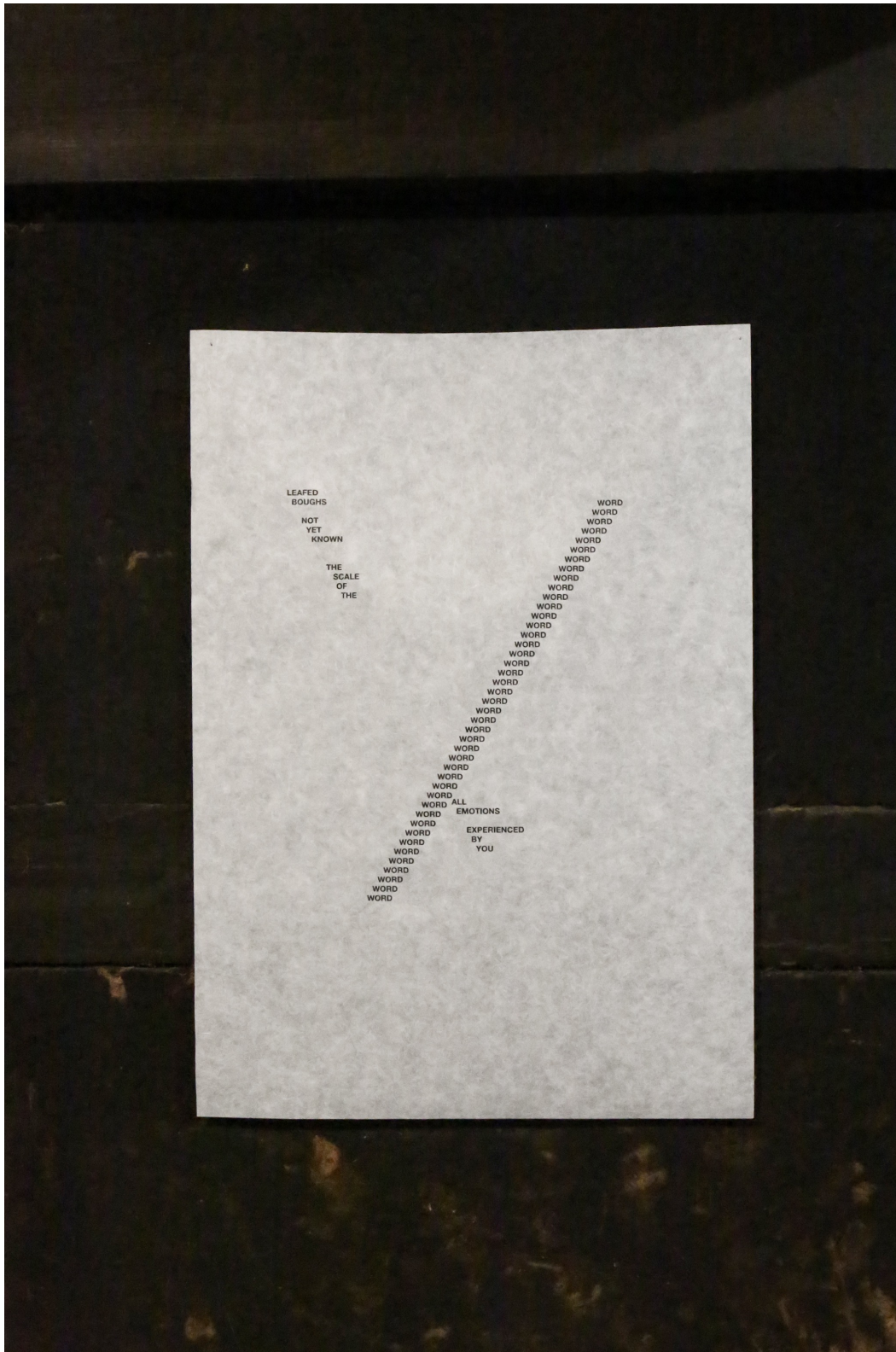


Fig. 73. Love Enqvist 花のことば *The Language of Flowers*, 2015. Print on kozo paper, 42 x 60 cm. Photo: Yamakiwa Gallery.

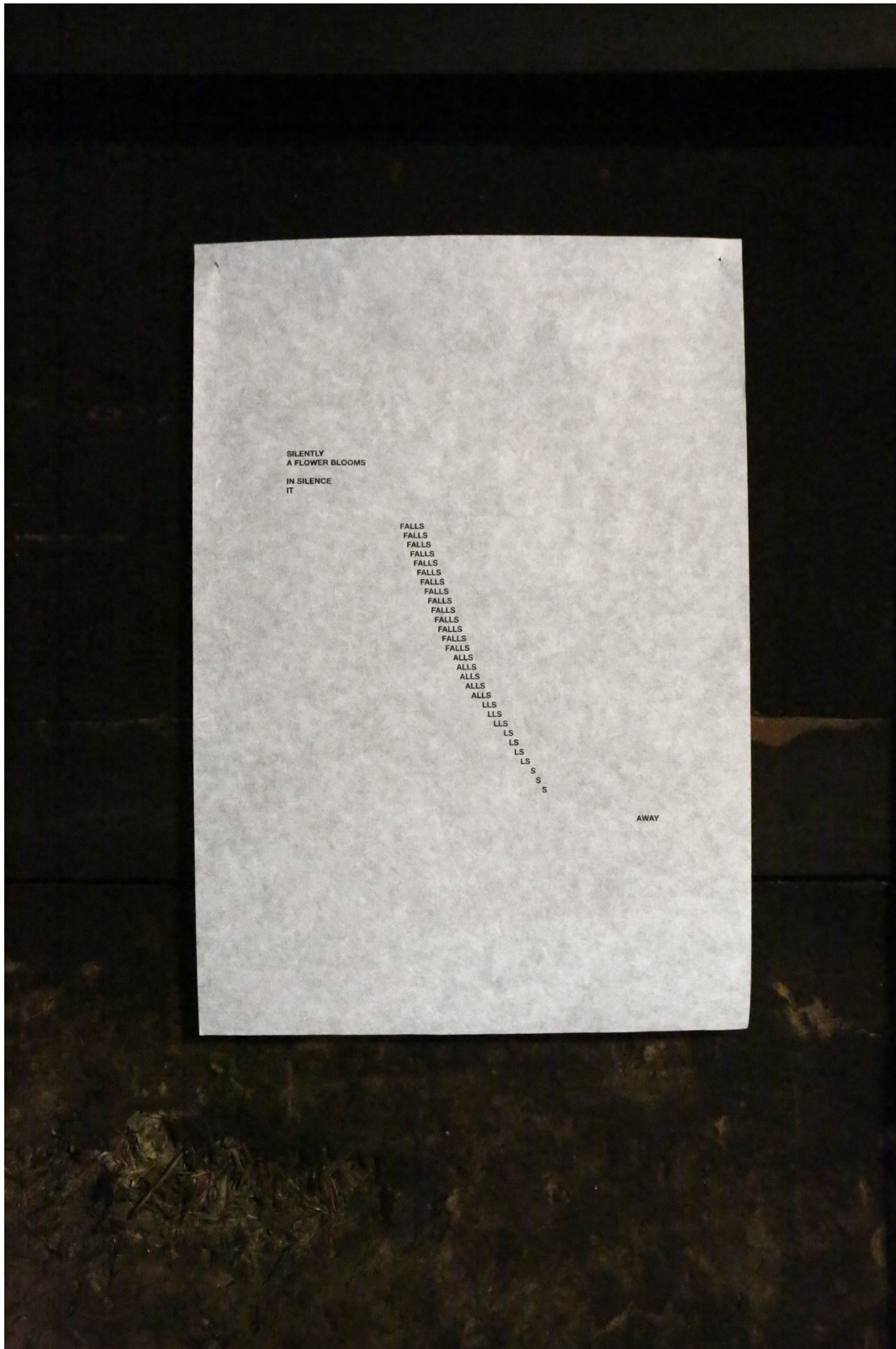


Fig. 74. Love Enqvist 花のことば *The Language of Flowers*, 2015. Print on kozo paper, 42 x 60 cm. Photo: Yamakiwa Gallery.



Fig. 75. Love Enqvist, 樹木のサーカス, *The Tree Circus* (from Axel Erlandsson series), 2014. 16mm digitally transferred video, 6 min loop. Photo: Yamakiwa Gallery.



Fig. 76. Love Enqvist, installation view. Photo: Yamakiwa Gallery.

In the gallery's dark wooden attic, there was projected Love Enqvist's video *The Tree Circus* (Fig. 75-76). Enqvist is a Swedish artist working with film, performance, sound, photography, drawing, text and objects. He investigates topics such as human and non-human relations, the materiality and experience of time, processes of living and the condition of life. The video screened in Japan is a six-minute piece featuring digitalised material from old archival photos and 16mm film transferred into video. This material presents a sequence of black-and-white images of a botanical garden or Tree Circus in California, cultivated and conserved by Axel Erlandson (1884-1964), who was a Swedish-American farmer. Erlandson's lifelong project consisted of sculpting trees as they grow into ornamental and geometric shapes, following the Japanese Ikebana tradition. After his death, only a few trees were saved. What remains is the oral history, and some of the material that appear in this video.

To watch the video, follow the link: <https://vimeo.com/115880062>

This piece presents various levels of interpretation with regards to temporality and art. In a first instance, time is presented as the matter utilised to sculpt art. Simultaneously, art is

practically used as the raw material to foster and shape time. In other words, time is the carving tool utilised by Erlandson in the artistic-gardening process of bending the trees into sculptural shapes. At the same time, the sculpted branches, leaves and stems of the growing trees embody shapes correlating to the passage of time. These juxtaposed processes are captured by Enqvist in the video.

The artist also addresses questions regarding the materiality of time in the medium of film itself. This materiality can be perceived in the duration, pacing and slow movements of the sequences of the frames (time travels forward, yet it loops, in a gentle and contemplative speed, it contains long pauses). There is also an attention to traces from the past and a will to bring remains of this past into the present. With some sense of melancholy for what has vanished, the artist raises issues around memory and remembrance towards the garden that is now lost. This attention to the past is visible not only in the story that is being recalled, but also in the material use of antiquated filming methods. By utilising analogue 16mm film, the artist produces some sort of aging of the digital video, anachronizing the image, making it feel older. In this way, he emphasises once again a desire to re-connect with the past.

Through all these strategies, the artist utilises, captures, shapes and anachronizes time. The message he puts forward is about permanence and impermanence, memory and forgetfulness, about life and decay, processes of growth and extinction in the life of nature, humans and art. In a final instance, Enqvist's video offers viewers the possibility to experience time anachronistically in a material (audio-visual) and discursive encounter with the present and past.



Fig. 77. Gaia Fugazza and Mary Hurrell, installation view. Photo: Yamakiwa Gallery.



Fig. 78. Mary Hurrell ちょう, 2018. Weathered paper, charcoal, water 162 x 20 cm. Photo: Yamakiwa Gallery.



Fig. 79. Mary Hurrell ちょう, 2018. Weathered paper, charcoal, water 162 x 20 cm. Photo: Yamakiwa Gallery.



Fig. 80. Mary Hurrell ちょう (Chou), 2018. Sound, movement, garments made of weathered paper, charcoal, 20 min. Photo: Yamakiwa Gallery.

Mary Hurrell is an interdisciplinary British/South African artist living and working in London. By experimenting with the junctions between performance, sound and sculpture, as well as employing time as artistic material, she explores the limits between physical and emotional spaces. She is also interested in the correspondence between corporeal expressiveness and psychological experience. During our joint residency at Yamakiwa Gallery, she created *Chou* ちょう, a site-specific performance and sound piece. For the production of this artwork, she was interested in researching anachronism through processes of the transfiguration of natural elements and exploring junctures and disjunctures between both the symbolic and material in internal and external spaces. She was inspired by her previous research into traditional forms of Japanese performing arts, in particular *Butoh* and *Noh*, as well as her former interest in *kimono* as a symbol for the multiplicities of the notion

of the ‘feminine’ within Japanese history and culture. The garments and sound work were developed in the village of Tokamachi during her stay, and incorporated elements unique to the site, through processes of choosing, capturing, layering, transferring, translating, and transforming sounds and other natural components from the environment (the sun, wind, rain, etc.), and her own body (Fig. 81). The sculptural garments were made of layers of weathered white paper and charcoal sandals (Fig. 82), alongside local fabrics and materials, whose design was inspired by the *Obi (sash)*, or knots of *Kimono*. These knots symbolise longevity, protection and good fortune. The sound piece captured field recordings from the local environment and her own vocals.

To listen to the full track, click here: <https://soundcloud.com/mary-hurrell/2018-chou>



Fig. 81. Garments being gradually weathered. Photo: Mary Hurrell.

Hurrell designed a stage on the floor inside the gallery using two long sheets of white paper (the same material she employed to produce her garments). She also positioned an ice sculpture between the sheets of paper, composed of local charcoal, seeds and flowers frozen into an Ikebana-inspired arrangement (Fig 83). The ice sculpture slowly melted throughout the day and evening, as the internal charcoal and flower arrangement emerged and bloomed.



Fig. 82. Charcoal sandals. Photo: Yamakiwa Gallery.

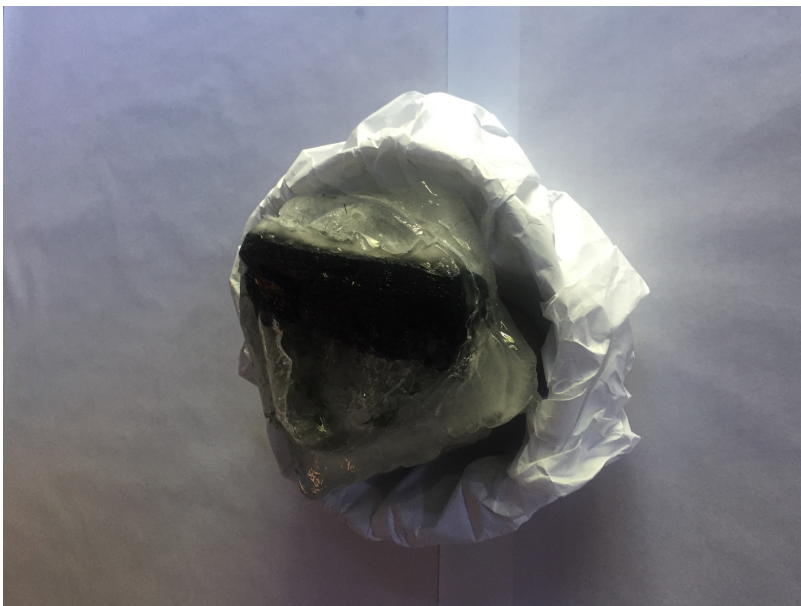


Fig. 83. Ikebana ice and soil arrangement. Photo: Yamakiwa Gallery.

The performance took the form of a ritual-walk or movement through the gallery-house, resulting in a compression of layers between internal and external spaces, a sculptural fusion between constraint and release. With slow movements, accompanied by the travelling soundscape, she gradually passed over the stage she created, leaving marks made from the charcoal footwear on the paper. She produced a multidimensional composition, uniting sound, space, smell, colour, movement and body. Like a form of choreography, the process of drawing was simultaneously improvised but also carefully planned. Hurrell was drawing and shaping the immaterial flow of time, transforming it into artistic form: the untimely moment of transformation of air to water, and earth to fire. The twenty minutes of the duration of the piece were stretched and broadened. Body, movement, and sound slowly melted; morphing with a sensual, emotional yet erotic and halting flow. In this way she performed a series of threshold and untimely moments when ice is ice but is also liquid; the instant when liquid is still liquid but is vapour too; the moment when vapour is vapour but its correspondingly ice. She staged the transitional event when a caterpillar metamorphoses into a butterfly, and a symbolic transition between human and insect as well as a material transfiguration between mind, body and art. In other words, the never-to-be-completed process of formation, as an artistic enactment of the flow of eternal becoming. The piece felt as a ritual challenging the chronological structure of time, allowing her viewers to experience with her, time as a performed, fluid and embodied anachronistic form.



Fig. 84. Stage (before). Photo: Yamakiwa Gallery.



Fig. 85. Stage (during). Photo by myself.

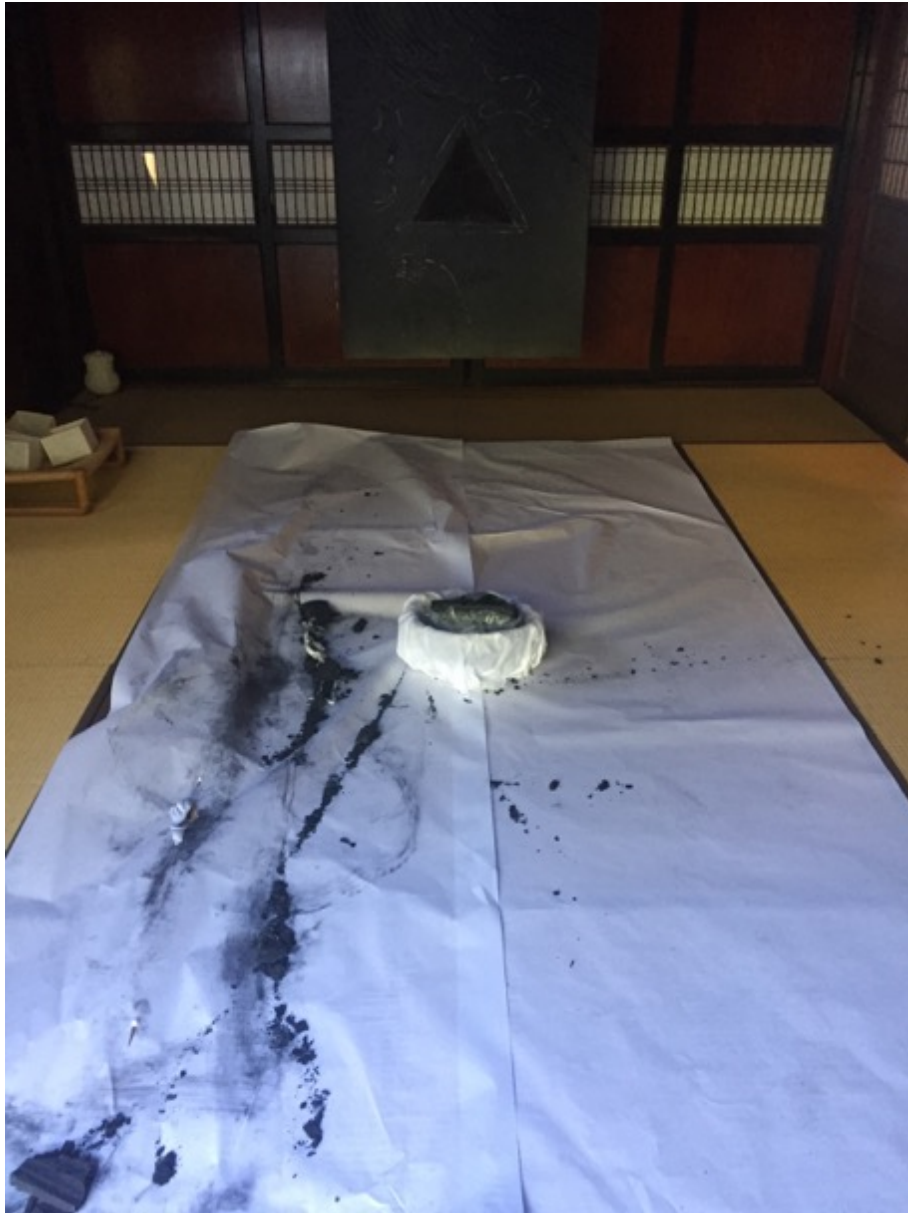


Fig. 86. Stage (after). Photo: Yamakiwa Gallery.

Publics

The exhibition was presented in a gallery outside the urban context, away from the mainstream art circuit. The people who came to see the exhibition and take part in the workshops were a small number of local residents, artisans, field workers, farmers, and seamstresses. Members of the community helped to invigilate the show. Most of the residents from this village attended the opening event and associated workshops (Fig. 87).

Mary Hurrell led two workshops on different days. The first one was provided for local residents and the second was of visitors from Hong Kong. Based on William Burroughs cut-up technique to create a score for movement, each person was invited to write a short poem or text. Once this was done, participants cut words out from it, put them together, and rearranged all into one single large text forming a score for movement. Each participant read aloud some part of it, which was recorded and edited together to create one single 'voice,' stretching the conventional form of experiencing time. We listened to this joint recording as a group over sunset.



Fig. 87. Visitors drinking cold plum juice after performance. Photo: Yamakiwa Gallery.

This project simultaneously joined together and disjointed a series of temporalities. Each of these forms of anachronistic art addressed concerns around the threshold between life and death, alchemy, metamorphosis and transformation. But most notably, this exhibition was about time as cyclical, ever recurring, as in Nietzsche's terms: the eternal becoming, or the eternal return of the same, always in a never-to-be-completed process of formation.

The mixture of moving image and drawing, sound and painting, photograph and performance, and all artistic material temporalities exhibited in this project, created a mixture of oscillating rhythms and tempos. The result was an anachronistic connection between internal frequencies and external energies of all of the displayed artworks. Their different forms and contents came together as a juxtaposed relationship of forces in one single aesthetic spatialised dialogue.

The artworks also entered into a suggestive relation with echoes from the past inhabiting the interior of the traditional Japanese house. In addition, although they were presented inside the gallery, they had a strong connection with the surroundings. The exhibition took the final form of a multidimensional composition in conjunction with the pulses and sequences existing in the mountains and in the natural environment outside: the loud buzzing sounds of the cicadas, the croaking of the frogs, the tweets and chirps of the birds and the whistle of the hot humid wind somehow permeated the exhibition space. Each influenced how the exhibition was experienced.

These elements merged with the smell of the trees and soil, and the light and shadows produced by the sun. It seemed as if the artworks were breathing in line with the life of Tokamachi. And so were we, people, guests, visitors and residents. Our internal temporalities, our own living yet mortal bodies, our own shifting thoughts and sensations, our innate cultural backgrounds, our own individual histories and knowledges, all joined together for intermittent moments of time within these series of encounters. The concept of anachronism was expressing itself as a breathing and beating embodied concept in the joints and disjoints of all different temporalities. The final outcome was the collective utterance of a relational, situational dialogue, composed by the juxtaposition of embodied anachronisms, such as the artworks, the site itself, and all of us, people.

The Moment

Behold this gateway, dwarf!’ I continued. ‘It has two faces. Two paths meet here; no one has yet followed either to its end. This long lane stretches back for an eternity. And the long lane there, that is another eternity. They contradict each other, these paths; they offend each other face to face; and it is here at this gateway that they come together. The name of the gateway is inscribed above: ‘Moment.’ But whoever would follow one of them, on and on, farther and farther—do you believe, dwarf, that these paths contradict each other eternally? [...] And this slow spider, which crawls in the moonlight, and this moonlight itself, and I and you in the gateway, whispering together, whispering of eternal things—must not all of us have been there before? And return and walk in that other lane, out there, before us, in this long dreadful lane—must we not eternally return?’²⁷²

At the heart of Nietzsche’s philosophy of time beats the concept of the eternal return of the same. The philosopher had already sketched preliminary premises of this concept in his *Untimely Meditations*, and it is also announced in *The Birth of Tragedy*. He develops this philosophical enquiry more extensively in relation to time and human temporality in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*, as well as in *The Gay Science*, in his notes in *The Will to Power*, and other important pieces of his written work produced after his *Untimely Meditations*. This concept refers the unconditional and endlessly repeated circulation of all things; an infinity that contains everything that can ever happen and all possible events.²⁷³ The eternal return of the same is a recognition of the transitoriness of the world whereby the eternal past and the eternal future co-exist and relate to each other. It is thus alike to what Mary Hurrell performed, the untimely moment when elements have been anticipated but at the same time are behind in their own process of transformation. Inside Nietzsche’s concept of eternal return, everything becomes and recurs eternally; the world becomes and passes away, but, as Nietzsche writes, ‘it has never begun to become and never ceased from passing away—it maintains itself in both—It lives on itself: its excrements are

²⁷² Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*, 157-158.

²⁷³ Carl E. Pletsch, ‘History and Friedrich Nietzsche’s Philosophy of Time,’ 35.

its food.²⁷⁴ After elaborating on this concept, he instigates the investigation of the genealogy of ‘value,’ questioning the ‘value’ of values themselves—he calls this process ‘transvaluation’—exploring history in the attempt to assess its own origin, its use for present and future life, and rejecting any absolutes.²⁷⁵ He continues this enquiry in *The Genealogy of Morals*.

The eternal return of the same is an affirmation of the ephemerality of ‘becoming,’ and a simultaneous radical repudiation of the fixity of ‘being.’²⁷⁶ ‘Becoming’ differs from ‘being’ in the sense that it does not aim to a final state, it does not flow into ‘being’—any durable ultimate units, atoms or monads. It is something without recourse to final intentions.²⁷⁷ ‘Becoming,’ Nietzsche writes, is supported at every moment and does not justify the present by reference to a future, nor the past by reference to the present.²⁷⁸ Time under the Nietzschean parameters of the eternal return of the same, defines the condition of a world of becoming; time is conceived as a series of infinite moments, whereby each moment is equally valuable and equally meaningless. Similar to the messages that artworks expressed and the experience as a whole of the project presented in Japan, the concept of eternal return is formed by a passage of paradoxical tensions without beginning and without end; it is an eternal process, an ‘infinity stretching both backward into the past forever and ahead indefinitely into the future.’ This means that time itself has never begun nor ceased to exist. Like the life of the cicada in Mariana Magdaleno’s drawing: time is cyclical, always becoming and retuning forever, re-writing its past and ‘opening up’ new possibilities into its future. This is the way by which Nietzsche’s affirms the power of time and asserts the life of time.²⁷⁹ In the philosopher’s own words:

The world without beginning and without end; a firm, iron magnitude of force that does not grow bigger or smaller, that does not expend itself but only transforms itself [...] a force throughout, as a play of forces and waves of forces, at the same time one and many, increasing here and at the same time decreasing there; a sea of forces flowing and rushing together, eternally changing, eternally flooding back, with

²⁷⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 557-558.

²⁷⁵ Elizabeth Grosz, *The Nick of Time, Politics, Evolution and the Untimely*, 115

²⁷⁶ Carl E. Pletsch, ‘History and Friedrich Nietzsche’s Philosophy of Time,’ 36.

²⁷⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 378-380.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 337.

²⁷⁹ Elizabeth Grosz, *The Nick of Time, Politics, Evolution and the Untimely*, 142-146.

tremendous years of recurrence [...] still affirming itself in this uniformity of its courses and its years [...] this, my *Dionysian* world of the eternally self-creating, the eternally self-destroying, this mystery world of the twofold voluptuous delight [...] *This world is the will to power—and nothing besides! And you yourselves are also this will to power—and nothing besides!*²⁸⁰

Nietzsche argues that when one is able to conceive, practice and experience the eternal return of the same one is thereby capable of comprehending the growth and passing away of all things as the only possible structure of time. In the same way Julia Varela reminded her viewers: whether digital or organic, virtual or physical, inanimate or corporeal, at the end, we all return to becoming ashes. However, it is precisely the untimely type of consciousness which is able to embody the concept of eternal return. The untimely recognises the flow of eternal becoming and it persists in that awareness. But there is danger when consciousness reaches this awareness because it knows that each moment in the stream of becoming is eternal and cannot have any aim or any purpose. There is danger when reaching this knowledge also because the eternal return of the same is unbearable: it conveys living every frustration, each disappointment, all humiliations and damages, every lie and each betrayal, repeats, and echoes over and over again.²⁸¹ For this reason, once one enters into the intellectual and somatic incorporation of eternal becoming of the same one is at risk of losing oneself and being unable to continue with everyday reality.²⁸²

Nietzsche personifies this philosophical enquiry in the poetic and mythological figure the Greek Dionysian man, who in turn resembles the literary figure of Shakespeare's Hamlet. The Dionysian man, Nietzsche writes, relates to Hamlet because they both have looked truly into the essence of things, they have gained consciousness and knowledge of it; and it becomes irksome to act since they know that their action cannot change anything in the eternal essence of things. In this respect it is how they conceive, practice and experience time as out-of-joint. The spectral presence of a past is the force that haunts an intolerable present which concurrently diverts, paralyzes and blocks any potential streams for future action.²⁸³ The Dionysian man, like Hamlet, cannot set the progressive direction of past, present and

²⁸⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 550.

²⁸¹ Elizabeth Grosz, *The Nick of Time, Politics, Evolution and the Untimely*, 138.

²⁸² Carl E. Pletsch, 'History and Friedrich Nietzsche's Philosophy of Time,' 35-36.

²⁸³ Smita A. Rahman, *Time, Memory, and the Politics of Contingency*, 3.

future in the right direction. And this inability, Nietzsche argues, is ‘true knowledge.’ The untimely, thus, gains the knowledge of the truth of the disjointed condition of time, and regards as shameful or ridiculous that it should be asked to set it right. Nietzsche writes ‘Knowledge kills action; action requires the veils of illusion,’ and such is the doctrine of Hamlet, who Nietzsche describes as having ‘not that cheap wisdom of Jack the Dreamer who reflects too much and, as it were, from an excess of possibilities does not get around to action. Not reflection, no—true knowledge, an insight into the horrible truth, outweighs any motive for action, both in Hamlet and in the Dionysian man.’²⁸⁴

However, not all is lost. When the untimely consciousness gains the knowledge of such impossibility, but is nevertheless able to say ‘once again,’ it then gives to each moment and to life its meaning. This is the fundamental premise and promise of Nietzsche’s philosophy of time, a philosophy which has been called ‘affirmative nihilism.’²⁸⁵ The untimely consciousness gives value to each subjective experience or individual moment but not to history as a whole. It is true to eternal becoming and therefore true to the true essence of history. For this reason, the untimely makes time its own.²⁸⁶

This is furthermore what Nietzsche defines as the ‘will to power:’ the power to will ‘once again’ given the awareness that such will cannot set right the aimless and infinite repetition of all things. This power cannot be understood in terms of historical direction or chronological progression but rather as a process of confrontation within one’s own internal anachronistic temporality. Similar to the anachronism inherent to Carlos Santos’s artworks, Nietzsche’s will to power involves the struggle of a multiplicity of forces, of differential wills of power inside ourselves. These forces can be strong and weak, active or reactive, commanding or obeying forces, as well as an active play of energies that produce and open up both matter and life. As Elizabeth Grosz suggests, ‘We are exemplars of the will to power, which exhibits itself in the very struggle of each of our cells, tissues, and organs, for oxygen, for nutrient, for activity, for intensification.’²⁸⁷

²⁸⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 23.

²⁸⁵ Carl E. Pletsch, ‘History and Friedrich Nietzsche’s Philosophy of Time,’ 36.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 37.

²⁸⁷ Elizabeth Grosz, *The Nick of Time, Politics, Evolution and the Untimely*, 126-127.

The will to power, Nietzsche explains, is an inner will: an insatiable desire to manifest, employ or exercise power as a creative drive. It is to understand all motion, all ‘appearances,’ all ‘laws’ as symptoms of an internal tension or inner self-creating and simultaneously self-destroying event.²⁸⁸ It is a field or series of oscillating fields, of force of varying intensity, it is the principle that underlies the world itself, the most fundamental principle of ontology, the single premise, for Nietzsche, governing all existence.²⁸⁹ Under these terms, the eternal return of the same is the greatest weight, it is an unbearable burden, but also an invigorating promise. It is a supreme thought but also a supreme feeling; it is an intensification of both intellect and affect.

This inner event is canalised through the force of art, and driven by the compulsion to devise visions as well as the impulse to be subjected to an orgiastic state. This inner event is felt like a dream or state of intoxication. This inner event is the event of becoming anachronistic. It increases in strength, and at the same time enhances strength. It is an exalted feeling of power whereby the sensations of space and time are altered. In it, ‘tremendous distances are surveyed,’ and, ‘for the apprehension of much that is extremely small and fleeting,’ vision extends and organs are refined. This inner event is like sensorial divination and evokes Patricia Dominguez’s *Wheel of Fortune*: the power of foreseeing with only ‘the least assistance, at the slightest suggestion,’ a message implanted in the body. It is an ‘intelligent’ and ‘strong’ transformative experience felt in the muscles. As an ‘aesthetic state’ we infuse a transfiguration and fullness into things, we poetize about them, to the point that they mirror back to us our own transfiguration, joy and sorrow in life.²⁹⁰ This inner event is a morbid yet wholesome phenomena and thus similar to Dominic Hawgood’s spatialised psychological states of mind: an enhanced feeling of power expressing the inner need to reflect on the simultaneous fullness and emptiness in one’s own life.²⁹¹

For Nietzsche art is an expert in healing. Similarly, artworks presented in Japan were exhibited with their own (shamanic, ritualistic, esoteric) therapeutic power. Art, Nietzsche writes, reminds us of states of animal vigor. Nietzsche’s reminder reminds itself the divine essence and shamanic power of Gaia Fugazza’s animals. In this way, art has two faces. On

²⁸⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 333.

²⁸⁹ Elizabeth Grosz, *The Nick of Time, Politics, Evolution and the Untimely*, 127.

²⁹⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 420-421.

²⁹¹ *Ibid*, 421.

the one hand, art is ‘an excess and overflow of blooming physicality into the world of images and desires.’ On the other hand, art is ‘an excitation of the animal functions through the images and desires of intensified life;—an enhancement of the feeling of life, a stimulant to it.’²⁹² Furthermore, art has an ‘embellishing power’ and works tonically, increasing strength, inflaming desire, exciting all recollections of intoxication: ‘there is a special memory that penetrates such states: a distant and transitory world if sensations here come back.’²⁹³ Art is a very powerful mechanism for Nietzsche, it allows to give meaning to the meaningless.

However, Nietzsche radicalises the individualistic characteristic of the untimely consciousness so extremely that it can only apply to the ‘hated,’ ‘misunderstood,’ and ‘isolated’ ‘solitary philosopher’—or the suffering Hamlet. ‘The possibility that the concept of a species, mankind, can give historical significance to nations, institutions, or human beings was from the start unacceptable to him. He carries this to the point where only the single individual is a meaningful unit.’²⁹⁴ From this point of view, the question follows: what is the role of the untimely in the context of a contemporary shared culture? In other words, is it possible to join together incompatible disjointed bones?

Time always reminds us that subjectivity has a collective aspect.²⁹⁵

Although Nietzsche repeatedly delves into the individualistic attribute of the untimely solitary philosopher, he nevertheless elaborates a solution himself. What allows for the reconciliation between discrepant temporalities is precisely the inner event occurring in the encounter between antagonistic forces. This inner event is an embodied experience through which the subject not only joins together and disjoins their own anachronistic internal temporality—the inner tension between self-creating and simultaneous self-destroying forces—but also shatters and welds their own becoming in relation to external temporalities. It requires a significant effort of self-examination whereby one becomes conscious of oneself, not as individual but as humankind.²⁹⁶ This inner event connects the subject with the past and with other individuals: living and those who have passed away. Similarly, Love Enqvist

²⁹² Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 422.

²⁹³ Ibid, 427.

²⁹⁴ Carl E. Plutsch, ‘History and Friedrich Nietzsche’s Philosophy of Time,’ 38-39.

²⁹⁵ This is a quote from Bruce W. Ferguson, who, for his part quotes John Cage (Bruce W. Ferguson, ‘Exhibition Rhetorics, Material Speech and Utter Sense,’ 189.)

²⁹⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 316.

connected with Axel Erlandson by capturing traces of his sculpted branches, leaves and stems of growing trees. This inner event is an embodied experience that shatters the interiority of the subject. It disjoins the subject from the orders of chronological apparatuses and joints the subject with other individuals and with their surroundings. It entails an experienced awareness of the eternal return of the same. Nietzsche describes it in the following way:

The time will come when one will prudently refrain from all constructions the world-process or even of the history of man; a time when one will regard not the masses but individuals, who from a kind of bridge across the turbulent stream of becoming. These individuals [...] live contemporaneously with one another; thanks to history, which permits such a collaboration; they call one to another across the desert intervals of time, indifferent to the chattering dwarfs who creep about beneath them, exalted spirit-dialogue.²⁹⁷

Therefore, this inner event is an intense state of ‘extreme receptivity for stimuli and signs’ that connect the ‘solitary philosopher’ with other people and with the rest of the world, as an anachronism, ‘across the desert intervals of time.’ It possesses a ‘superabundance of means of exterior communication.’ What arises is an individual yet collective affair whereby all forms of economy (legal or illegal, religious or profane, material or symbolic) become suspended. This inner event occurs as an embodied experience of extreme bodily experience in which ‘one hears the other’ with one’s own joints and muscles, ‘one reads the other’ with one’s own joints and bones. An erotic charge is produced constituting of the highest point of true connection and profound transmission between living, dead and unborn creatures. Nietzsche defines it as the place where ‘languages originate, the source of languages:’ a corporeal-intellectual ‘language of tone, gestures and glances.’²⁹⁸ Every enhancement of life, according to Nietzsche, enhances the individual’s responsive power of communication, as well as their power of understanding. This is a matter of empathy, empathy towards the suffering of others, which binds together anachronistic temporalities, across discrepant ideologies or disjointed historical epochs. Empathy ‘to the souls of others;’ empathy produced as a corporeal openness and felt as a physiological susceptibility to the other’s aesthetic untimely suggestions.²⁹⁹ This inner event occurs as a profound transformation that might be measured

²⁹⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, ‘On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life,’ 111.

²⁹⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 428-429.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 452.

within the time-scales of a moment of chronological time, but it is nevertheless so powerful that it incarnates in the individual's cells and neurons in the form of true-value and meaning of life.

Echoing Nietzsche's statement: 'Art and nothing but art! Is the great means of making life possible, the great seduction to life, the great stimulant of life,'³⁰⁰ I argue that, Art is the instrument that can bring liberation and weld discrepant vertebrae of time. Art is that which is close to the veils of illusion and that which is near to the ambiguities of the sublime. Art is the desire to envision, the impulse to perversion, the need for dreaming and the urge for intoxication. Art is the apprehension of the inapprehensible. Art is the assessment of the meaningless and the simultaneous appraisal of meaning in life; the alteration of sorrow and joy; the oscillation of emptiness and fullness in life. Art is all these paradoxical tensions without beginning and without end, and is the force that can resuscitate action. Art is the instrument that gives us the power to will a 'once again.' So, the only way to join together incompatible disjointed bones, the only indirect direction to overcome our irreconcilable anachronism and the inevitable irksome of the endlessly becoming of the eternal return, is to create a new language by transferring, intensifying and embellishing old words in a way with which they have never been used before. This is, as I have asserted in this chapter the urgency, the necessity the contingency to re-create our own curatorial untimely metaphors. Art is the instrument that allows us to materialise anachronistic (meta)forms of temporalising our thinking and acting in the world.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

Conclusion

I began this chapter by defining anachronism as an embodied temporality which is by definition out-of-joint. In this way anachronism is the individual's mind and body experience of disarticulation with regards to chronological structures and anatomies of time.

Anachronism results from the struggle between antagonist time-forces: the individual's internal temporality, and chronological apparatuses ordering tempos, rhythms and processes of life. Therefore, to become anachronistic is to embody temporal irregularity and discontinuity. To become anachronistic is to become the living embodiment of the concept itself: an irrelevant contemporary being with regards to the up-to-date and validated chronological orders and modes of being.

In order to arrive at this definition, it was necessary to understand three approximations to the notion of anachronism. By considering the most immediate dictionary description, which is a mechanism to denote lack of concordance in chronological time (first definition), anachronism can be used as a strategy to intervene in chronological narratives and discourses (second definition). However, when time is conceived, practiced and experienced as the matter and substance of living beings, anachronism thereafter can be defined as a possibility of becoming: something that permeates the mind and body.

In order to address the philosophical significance and the political-poetic relevance of anachronism, I elaborated on an analysis of Agamben's 'contemporary' and Nietzsche's 'untimely.' These two concepts have been the underlying theoretical sustenance of this chapter. Therefore, I presented the outcome of a process of interpretation, analysis and close reading (descriptive and critical) of these two notions in relation to anachronism. This drove me to formulate the argument that both the contemporary and the untimely are anachronistic. Both Agamben and Nietzsche situate their anachronism in relation to the present out of a deficiency, a non-coincidence and out-of-jointness. They both investigate the struggle between the ontology of living beings and the historical element. Agamben's contemporary has a disjointed vertebra (here his allusion to Mandelstam). Nietzsche's untimely is out-of-joint (here his reference to Shakespeare). For Agamben, to become contemporary requires the ability to look beyond the sequential past and the progressive future and to experience the proximity we have with our own temporality. Similarly, for Nietzsche, to become untimely

requires the raising of the self above historical culture, all historical narratives, all so-called chronologies, and thus to re-appropriate time as one's own. Both authors are attempting to overcome their epochal and internal anachronism.

Additionally, in order to gain a better understanding of Agamben's contemporary, it was necessary to consider his essay 'What Is an Apparatus?', in which he recalls Foucault's notion of *dispositif*. The contemporary is anachronistic to the set of institutions, of processes of subjectification, and of rules in which power relations become concrete—that which has the capacity to capture, orient, determine, intercept, model, control, or secure the gestures, behaviours, opinions, or discourses of living beings. By contrast, the contemporary challenges such processes of subjectification. Likewise, in order to understand Nietzsche's untimely, it was important to take into account the cultural and theoretical apparatus in which he was immersed at the time in which he wrote his meditations. As suggested in this chapter, Nietzsche was anachronistic to Wagner, to the cultivated philistines and to all the hypocrites he had to deal with in the University of Basel—the obsession with historical culture and ruling values. In opposition, the untimely rejects any acceptance of the self, given by any dominant 'truths,' historical narratives or previously prepared programmes. Both the contemporary and the untimely experience a profound dissonance, a sense of displacement, a feeling of detachment, contempt and pity in relation to their epoch.

Furthermore, becoming anachronistic is not a passive process. It implies the capacity to see and to feel—to experience—out-of-jointness, but it also entails action. As Agamben suggests: to become contemporary involves the capacity to be able to neutralise the blinding lights that come from their own epoch, thus to see and to perceive a special darkness which is inherent to it. It follows the necessity to appropriate such darkness as the material of work. The contemporary acts and creates regardless of the awareness that their actions and creations ultimately cannot make them amend to their epoch. Likewise, as Nietzsche suggests: to become untimely implicates the recognition of the flow of eternal becoming. It follows the necessity to enact an inner will or insatiable desire to manifest, employ or exercise power as a creative drive. Similarly, by enacting this inner will, the untimely affirms a 'once again' given awareness that such will cannot set right the aimless and infinite repetition of all things. Finally, both authors argue that this necessity, this urgency, this contingency to respond to their internal and epochal anachronisms, is what provokes artistic creation. Therefore, art is the instrument for carrying out the process of becoming anachronistic. Art is the force that

inspires and resuscitates action, the instrument that may bring liberation regardless of the awareness that setting right a world that is out of joint is at the end an unattainable task. For this reason, becoming anachronistic is the paradoxical process of becoming the living matter and substance (the living human spine) that joins together and disjoins chronological time.

With regards to practice, the close linkage of the contemporary and the untimely with art and its political and poetic power is what permitted for the juxtaposition with the exhibition projects. The intention of the two practical projects was twofold. On the one hand, the aim was to materialise anachronism in the artworks and the space of the exhibitions. On the other hand, the objective was to provoke animate the concept of anachronism as embodied experience.

Therefore, the projects conceptualised and materialised anachronism through the public display of a mixture of out-of-joint art forms. Each art piece worked with chronological time but transformed it into a peculiar discontinuity. Such was the case of Toby Paterson's sculpture, for example, whose physical and symbolic assemblage and juxtaposition of palisades of chronological time created a three-dimensional material metaphor of anachronism. Likewise, such was the case of Mary Hurrell's performance, who embodied the flow of eternal becoming through movement, sound, internal and external spaces, and drawing.

The result of the juxtaposition amongst these different art forms was the production of a series of tensions between slowness and speed, vibration and stillness, sound and silence, movement and stasis. The two exhibitions became places of encounter between a series of anachronistic materialities and discourses. In these places, visitors could sense, feel and perceive temporal irregularity and discontinuity. The concept of anachronism became alive as embodied experience. It was felt as a self-creating and simultaneous self-destroying event: alike to Nietzsche's inner event. To experience anachronism in these encounters is to become anachronistic for short moments of time. In this practice I have observed how the art experience can be transformative, even if this metamorphosis endures for a moment or as a disjuncture of chronological time.

Flirtation



Fig. 1. Erica Scourti, *Body Scan* (video still), 2014. Image: Erica Scourti.

Foreplay

*Time slipped away: there's nothing more elusive
Than Time in flight, more swift in flight than he
Who steals our years and months, our days and hours.*³⁰¹

Flirtation has its origin in the Greco-Roman mythological figure of Eros. In this extract of Ovid's poem *Venus and Adonis*, Venus is accidentally shot with an arrow by Eros. The mighty power of the goddess of love, sex, beauty, and fertility turns into a passionate love for the young mortal Adonis. Blinded by his charm, beauty and perfection, she suffers from a profound sorrow when he is killed hunting. One of many statements that Ovid puts forward in this poem is that whether high up, or down below in the human or divine hierarchies, no one is exempt from the power of Eros. He has the capacity to transform all that surrounds him, even to change the course of calendrical time.

Similar to *Venus and Adonis*, Ovid's erotic poetry recounts tales of games concerning love and chance, sex, power and desire, as well as struggles of possession and dispossession. His literary landscapes involve stories of conquest and loss together with rituals of concealment, disguise and secrets. In these scenarios of jealousy, violence, and rivalry between hunter and prey flesh overwhelms the mind and passion overtakes the intellect. Ovid poetises imaginary places where states of mind, emotions, bodies and social orders are in a constant state of transformation. Reason is overtaken by illusion whilst infatuation turns into disgust. Nymphs morph into trees while humans become wolves and sexes are reversed. All sorts of orders are subverted: royalty is ridiculed and gods are humiliated.

The Roman poet reminds his readers that nothing is permanent but rather everything is mutable and always changing, always metamorphosing. Time speeds up, years and months play with us, and days and hours take a sensually embodied form. The flapping of the wings of Eros swift the chronological order of time into the disordered rhythms of passionate love,

³⁰¹ Publius Ovidius Naso, 'Venus and Adonis,' *Metamorphoses* (Book X), 286.

instinctive sex drives and inconsistent intensities of desire. His enchanting wings pervert the systematic arrangement of the *Fasti* or Roman calendar, turning its orderly and normative system into the irrational and orgiastic state that characterises the holidays. In his time Ovid's erotic poetry was considered lacking in seriousness, indecent and obscene. Caesar Augustus understood the political messages and subversive critique of his regime and moral reforms inscribed in Ovid's use of metaphor and consequently censored his writings and banished the poet from Rome.

The practice and concept of flirtation is defined as a form of eroticism that distinguishes itself by a peculiar playfulness. It unfolds in a landscape of games of love and chance, sex, power and desire, struggles of possession and dispossession, to the ones portrayed by Ovid.

However, of similar reasons to Ovid's ostracisation, flirtation has commonly been banished from certain fields of knowledge. It has been conventionally considered to be lacking in seriousness and judged to be something trivial and unworthy of serious attention, assessed to be an insignificant social behaviour. Sigmund Freud, for example, labelled flirtation as 'shallow and empty,' something in which 'nothing really happens,' by contrast to the 'serious consequences' that an actual love-affair may incite.³⁰²

Flirtation is expelled from the domain of reason because it confounds it and threatens the possibility of losing self-control. It is repressed because it touches the absurd and ridiculous. It is treated with suspicion because it bewilders the certainty of whether truth is being spoken or if deceit is what is being suggested. Flirtation is also associated with wit, and wit can be distressing. It generates expectation, and expectation may lead to disappointment. It is treated doubtfully because flirtation itself incites doubt. Flirtation has aspects of ambiguity, and ambiguity leads to instability and confusion. It creates uncertainty, and uncertainty, for its part, can be hazardous. It is even more dangerous because it plays with risk and teases the forbidden. Finally, flirtation is largely reprimanded because it appropriates gestures of seduction, which involve aspects of manipulation and aims of power or dominance. Taken even more extremely, it has been tarnished as discriminatory behaviour whilst labelled a form of sexual harassment, and even condemned as a mode of terror.³⁰³

³⁰² Quoting Sigmund Freud in: Adam Phillips, 'On Flirtation, an Introduction,' xx-xxi.

³⁰³ Barbara Nagel, 'The Terror of Flirtation from Critical Theory to #MeToo.' It is necessary to clarify that seduction is one thing and flirtation another different thing. While the former entails the conscious purpose to obtain the other, and may imply aspects of manipulation, control, and domination; the latter is not interested in the actual realisation of what is desired, but rather only in the game in itself. Seduction is target-oriented, it has

However, either ignored, disparaged and derided, flirtation glides in secret, assiduously and suggestively, in the little encounters of everyday life, penetrating the mind and body. It takes the corporeal form of little smiles, a sparkle in the eye or blush of the cheeks. It may also take the physical shape of blinks of eyelids, drops of sweat in the underarms or any other embodied responses that unfold in ephemeral and aleatory encounters within social activities and shared experiences. Flirtation, thereafter, also penetrates spaces around the corners of exhibitions, art events and curatorial projects and processes. Games of love and chance, sex, power and desire, struggles for possession and dispossession are also at stake in the calendars of curating and contemporary art. The power of the descendants of Eros correspondingly glides in secret—assiduously and suggestively—in encounters between people, ideas, places and art, equally affecting the sense of time and transforming the orders of its course.

an end and a finality. By contrast, flirtation is non-acquisitive, it is a free and disinterested play, which rejects any end or finality. Additionally, in flirtation it takes two or more: the flirt is in need of another, another who ‘signs in’ to play in the game, and flirts back. It requires an implicit agreement. Some authors even consider it an enacted manifestation of Heidegger’s concept of *mitsein*, in its implication of ‘being-with’ (Paul Fleming, ‘The Art of Flirtation: Simmel’s Coquetry Without End,’ 22).

Introduction

This chapter is about the temporal implications of flirtation for curating. It swings back and forth around an investigation of flirtation in relation to its political relevance and an experimentation of the poetic significance of the ephemeral and aleatory gestures with which it is associated. Its purpose (without purpose) is to gesticulate practical and theoretical flirtations, as playful perversions of calendrical time-orders and normative schedules, as well as erotic exchanges of embodied meaning. With this paradoxical agenda in mind and body, my intention is to restore the value of play in the production and experience of curatorial knowledge, as well as to test the poetic and political erotics of transgression produced in the curated encounter by little gestures of flirtation.

In this chapter, I define the practice and concept of flirtation as a playful form of eroticism consisting of oscillating attraction and desire amid conditions of ‘yes’ and ‘no.’ This temporal oscillation opens up a zone of ambiguity and resistance, feeding creative activity and granting power an agency. Further, I argue that flirtation unfolds in ephemeral and aleatory encounters between people, art, places and theory. These encounters occur in the interstices of exhibitions, art events and physical or virtual spaces, but also in processes and embodied experience. Although this gesture has the duration of a blink of an eyelid, it is profound and meaningful. It penetrates the mind and transforms the body.

Subsequently, the question of this third and final little chapter of my thesis is: What are the temporal implications of flirtation for curating?

As a strategy to respond to this provocation, I bind together a series of flirtations between critical theory, curatorial practice, contemporary art and other relevant elements of historical and contemporary visual culture.

In terms of critical theory, there is not a vast amount of written material on the theorisation of flirtation. Nevertheless, it has been addressed tangentially through interdisciplinary

approaches to close relationship that this practice maintains with key thinkers and related notions, including sexuality, eroticism, pleasure, love and desire.³⁰⁴

Amongst the few potentially suitable theoretical prospects, I would prefer to primarily flirt with Georg Simmel. Simmel is the one who made the first modern move to take this practice seriously, transforming it into a concept. He incorporated flirtation into his influential repertoire of forms of sociability within human interaction, in a small yet substantial and now seminal essay called *On Flirtation*. I would prefer to flirt mainly with Simmel not only because he is the one who took the first steps toward taking this practice seriously, but more importantly because of the implications of his conceptualisation of the temporality of ‘oscillation’—an intermediary restless state of becoming, formed in the in-between ground amidst affirmative and negative potentialities. Additionally, Simmel’s treatise contains explicit and implicit references to key authors that anticipated his own theorisation on flirtation. These include references to Plato, Ovid, Kant, Hegel. These allowed me to identify the main sources, flirt with these authors, and expand on my own interpretation.

I will thus use Simmel’s treatise as a theoretical basis, but I will pervert it in various ways. In the first instance, I consider cultural and theoretical elements that belong to the historical context in which he was immersed by the time he wrote *On Flirtation*. Although Simmel is known for problematising the question of women in modern society and he developed a theory of gender relations, it is not hard to recognise the endurance of a patriarchal models and inherent heteronormative principles within his text. These, furthermore, reveal the presiding bourgeois mainstream and middle class values of a society at the beginning of the twentieth century in Europe.³⁰⁵ In Simmel’s treatise, he depicts women with a certain sense

³⁰⁴ Relevant authors include Walter Benjamin, who looks at flirtation as a form of negation of cultural capitalism, in his collection of fragments ‘One Way Street.’ Roland Barthes’s *Lover’s Discourse*, is dedicated to Agathon in Plato’s *Symposium*; he examines flirtation as a semiotic system of meanings, and in relation to desire, absence, the act of ‘invocation’ and distance. Michel Foucault’s seminal three volume *History of Sexuality* addresses issues regarding the games of power and pleasure in the deployment of sexuality, its normalization and control systems of sexual practices. Niklas Luhmann’s *Love as Passion* contains a historical and sociological study of love and other forms of intimacy, including flirtation; he considers the emergence of a new language of representation and codification, and ways of restructuring affective relationships and social interaction. In psychoanalysis, Adam Phillips’s *On Flirtation* is well known. It is based on Georg Simmel, and explores the contingency of flirtation. Timothy Perper studies flirtation in the history of Western philosophy, including its origins in Plato and Ovid. Finally, Georges Bataille’s famous transgressions to sexual taboos, his approaches to human psychology, desire and sexuality in his investigations of eroticism and death in *Eroticism: Death and Sensuality*.

³⁰⁵ Timothy Perper explains that Simmel’s essay belongs to a time of ‘deep political clash among bourgeois social democracy (to which Simmel himself apparently owed allegiance), working class and revolutionary socialism and feminism, and upper-class Prussian industrial wealth.’ Perper argues that Simmel’s social

of erotic power, but nevertheless maintains their stereotypical role as objects of desire, properties or things to be possessed. However, I will focus my attention on aspects which are useful to my investigation. As argued in the previous chapter, to be able to interpolate temporally distant texts, and make them relevant in the present is a way of being contemporary.³⁰⁶ Thus, by incorporating these ideas into my own thinking, by anachronizing them into my own discourse, these texts thereafter become contemporary to my argument.

In addition to this, I have been inspired by Elizabeth Grosz' 'half-serious' and 'half-playful' research approach to psychoanalytic concepts and methods. Grosz investigates critical yet humorous strategies for reading patriarchal texts against the grain, so that they may be actively worked upon and tactically harnessed for purposes for which they were not intended. She suggests theoretical strategies to subvert orthodox views and support feminist and lesbian theory in its goals and purposes.³⁰⁷ Therefore, inspired by Agamben and Grosz, I enter into a playful yet serious flirtation with these past authors, through my own practical and theoretical curatorial discourse. In addition, these ideas will be coupled with practices of contemporary artists who themselves question issues around gender stereotypes, critique the images of sexualised female bodies, heteronormative codes of practice, amongst other critical perspectives.

In terms of curatorial theory, curators, practitioners and thinkers have addressed flirtation in an indirect way through other approaches, such as affect, care, desire and sexuality. Relevant examples include Lisa Blackman, who writes about the mediation of affect, subjectivity as encounter, what it means to enter into suggestive relations with others in museums and galleries, and embodied knowledge in curatorial practice.³⁰⁸ Jennifer Fisher considers the relevance of Instagram in the art world, the development of social skills, networking, and keeping users 'in touch,' extending curatorial relationality and modalities of affective engagement.³⁰⁹ Helena Reckitt elaborates on the notion of 'curatorial labour' in relation to economies of love and care, and the production and management of social networks,

democratic impulses led him to try to reconcile traditional and radical views of women (Timothy Perper, 'Reviews and Abstracts,' 449-450).

³⁰⁶ Giorgio Agamben, 'What Is the Contemporary?,' 39.

³⁰⁷ Elizabeth Grosz, 'Lesbian Fetishism,' 142.

³⁰⁸ Lisa Blackman, 'Affect, Mediation and Subjectivity-as-Encounter: Finding the Feeling of the Foundling,' 39-40.

³⁰⁹ Jennifer Fisher, 'Curators and Instagram: Affect, Relationality and Keeping in Touch,' 101-123.

collective energies and curatorial production.³¹⁰ Elsewhere, Jan Verwoert considers affective labour, emotional investment and desire in creative practices that create and sustain conviviality; he also elaborates on the effects of the public manifestation of collective sentiment as well as small acts of care, sex and mourning.³¹¹ Finally, based on Foucault's critique of sex, power and pleasure, Amelia Jones writes about sexual desires or drives that motivate not only the production of art, but also the formation of ideological and institutional power structures relating to visual culture.³¹²

Regarding curatorial and artistic practice, flirtation has been addressed tangentially through the polyamorous affair that it maintains with other related practices. These other curatorial and artistic practices explore intersubjective methods of participation and collaboration through flirtatious—playful and erotic—approaches, connecting more intimately with daily life. They are interested in the collective production of artworks themselves but also in the shared articulation of their meaning. These other practices are based on eventful, situational, and relational principles and methods, whereby the temporality of the art object is redirected to the experience of the subject. They may include performative responses to ideologies of mass communication, relational-living artworks, artistic provocations of rules of sexual behaviour, and attempts to remove art from the material and ideological economy of capitalist systems.

Historical examples of these practices include the events, performances and experiments of Tristan Tzara and Marcel Janco, who gave life to the Cabaret Voltaire of Zürich, and advocated the unbridled freedom of individual, spontaneity, eroticism and aleatory encounters. The Dada and Surrealist movements applied critical and participatory artistic models. Surrealism was particularly interested in the de-sublimation of desire and challenging repressive bourgeois rules about sexual behaviour. Echoes of this are present in Daniel Spoerri's artistic investigations on memory, chance and participation, interactivity in everyday life, group dinners, and personal memories and anecdotes of intangible experiences. One of the originators of 'participatory' art, George Brecht, also worked with chance, small details of everyday life, through his active involvement of the public. Elsewhere, Guy Debord's *Situationist International* aimed to produce new social relationships and new social

³¹⁰ Helena Reckitt, 'Support Acts: Curating, Caring and Social Reproduction,' 6.

³¹¹ Jan Verwoert, 'You Make Me Feel Mighty Real,' 255-303.

³¹² Amelia Jones, 'Introduction,' 12.

realities as a critique of the society of the spectacle. Fluxus happenings and performances also considered the participation of the spectators and the idea of transitivity. Finally, Coco Bedoya's dancing museums in discotheques and underground spaces, exhibiting relational-living artworks, non-normative sexualities, and erotic forms of artistic expression.

Concerning the actual practice of flirtation within this thesis, I have addressed the research question through the curatorship of a project entitled *We Are Having a Little Flirt*. This project was carried out between April and June 2018 at Pump House Gallery, London. It included new artworks commissioned from four artists: Monica Espinosa, Adam Christensen, Erica Scrouti and Anneke Kampman. The project was presented in two forms: Firstly, as site-specific installations in the space of the gallery under a static basis, shown during opening hours. Secondly, as an events-based public programme, scheduled in different instances throughout the three month duration of the exhibition.

Outline (Silhouette) of Flirtation

Like a form of stripping the body of the text of this chapter has been exposed in five different parts. Each body part addresses the research question and responds to the main argument through its own instructed entry point. As explained earlier, the material included here binds together elements from critical theory, curatorial practice, contemporary art and other relevant materials of historical and contemporary visual culture. These different parts touch each other through formal suggestions and conceptual insinuations. In addition, with the aim to stimulate a closer contact between theoretical and practical components, I inserted images and analysis of the artworks which were presented during the public programme of events, in different sections throughout this written chapter. There are other implicit and explicit intersections amongst all the different parts.

Part 1. *Two Flirtatious Genealogies: Plato and Ovid* includes a comparative analysis of two lines of thought and practice in Western tradition that have been identified as precursors of the conceptualisation and practical implementation of flirtation. These are combined by the Platonic philosophical idealism and Ovidian poetic materialism. This part is an enquiry towards the foundations of flirtation, and has a particular emphasis on the temporal conditions of the Greek cosmological figure of Eros and his Roman derivative Cupid,

according to these two genealogical roots. Consequently, this initial part considers Plato's definition of Love or Eros as the child of the one who possesses (Plenty) and the other who lacks (Poverty). It includes Plato's theory of the path of Eros the mediator, or the process of the 'erotic ascent,' the 'ladder of love' which leads to the eternal disembodied domain of the *ideai*. It considers Ovid's account of Love or Eros, who, for its part, is portrayed as the playful spirit of love and desire, causing mischief, subversions in all kinds of orders and all kinds of metamorphoses in those he arrows. It addresses Ovid's account of the five lines of love (a sequence of events that form the embodied stages of love itself), and his recognition of the contingency of Love or Eros within the endless and inexorable state of eternal flux in all creation.³¹³

This section is followed by the artistic action *Discreet Piece* by **Monica Espinosa** and two *Untitled* performances by **Adam Christensen**.

Part 2. Rules of the Playground looks into the origin of the term 'flirtation,' contextualised in the seventeenth century, as the result of a semantic flirtation between the French aristocracy and Americans. This part exposes a few examples of flirtation in historical popular culture, starting with Albert Smith's *The Natural History of the Flirt*, progressing to contemporary examples of guides for flirting, including Pablo Helguera's *Manual of Contemporary Art Style*, which clarifies rules of etiquette and social functions to successfully perform within the art world. These examples are interpreted according to Michel Foucault's historical and philosophical critique of power and pleasure, the emergence of codes in sexual rules, erotics and other forms of intimacy. The aim of this part is to undress the argument and reveal that behind the seeming triviality of the abovementioned material, there are undelaying structures of power and desire that condition the formation of social (sexual, erotic, affective) relationships. These structures dictate undeclared rules in social interaction, including social orders, rhythms and dynamics in the art world and curatorial social activity.

This section is followed by the performance *Near Bliss Index* by **Erica Scourti**.

³¹³ Timothy Perper examines the origins of flirtation by comparing Plato's disembodied concept of the *ideai*, and Ovid's embodied material world (Timothy Perper, 'Will She or Won't She: The Dynamics of Flirtation in Western Philosophy,' 33).

Part 3. *Flirting With Georg Simmel* is a coquettish analysis of the ideas devised by Simmel. This part is divided into sub-parts. It starts with an analysis of the sociologist's understandings of the essence of flirtation (which is based on Plato's definition of the intermediate, deficient, and in-between ontology of Eros or Love as the son of Plenty and Poverty). It continues with a brief overview of basic characteristics of the game of flirtation. This part progresses with an analysis of the temporal implications of the notion of 'oscillation' which defines the flirtatious gesture—a paradoxical composition of a (contingent) temporality of futurity and the simultaneous (anachronistic) temporality of delay. It follows an interpretation of the power of flirtation when conceived as 'art,' according to two central modalities of Kant's judgment of the beautiful (disinterested pleasure and the purposive without purpose). This part ends with a reflection about the political implications of Simmel's association of art and flirtation to Kant's formula 'purposive without purpose,' in relation to the 'curated (flirtatious) gesture.' Here I take into account Giorgio Agamben's concept of the gesture which he defines as means without end.

Part 4. *We Are Having a Little Flirt* is the title of the exhibition and public programme that forms the practical component of this chapter. This part is the final section, which re-stages the project by including descriptive and analytical texts about the artworks presented, images and other kinds of exhibition materials in two-dimensional form. The intention is to document this project, but also to re-stage it, to expose it again, to make it relevant once more. This part also includes a brief reflection on curating flirtation and the experience of embodied knowledge and affective-intellectual exchange in the curated encounter as forms of resistance. It considers the significance of entering into suggestive relations with theory, people, art and places for blinks of calendrical time.

Part 5. *Flirtation With(out) End* is the closing declaration which puts an end to this flirtation. It articulates the final concerns raised in the chapter, including a brief summary of its content, and a short reflection on the relevance of flirtation as a practical and theoretically curated outcome.

Part 1. Two Flirtatious Genealogies: Plato and Ovid.

There are two streams of thought and practice in Western tradition that can be identified as precursors of the concept of flirtation, as well as simultaneous initiators of its practical implementation through their own flirtatious material means (the texts themselves are playful, fun, and erotic).³¹⁴ These two opposite lines of thought and practice are integrated by Platonic philosophical idealism, which can be found in the Greek mythological figure Eros in Plato's *The Symposium*. Ovid's poetic materialism also contains these elements, whereby the Greek Eros metamorphoses into its Roman version as Cupid, who appears in *Metamorphoses* and *Ars Amatoria*. Although Plato strives for a disembodied ideal of Eros (Love), and whilst Ovid is concerned with an embodied Eros (Love) in carnal desire, these two distinct genealogies share basic characteristics in establishing the essence of Eros (Love).

These characteristics include the close association of Eros (Love) with desire, as well as its playful, charismatic, or enchanting temperament. In both cases, Eros (Love) is the Greco-Roman cosmological embodiment of the kind of energy that endows and encourages human beings towards action (the translation of the Greek word *erōs* into English is 'love'). He is linked to passionate love, and to the irrational appetite towards sex or pleasure that drives people in irrational ways. Eros (Love) is a source of inspiration that fuels the energy of creative production, and can be either positive or vicious.³¹⁵ Furthermore, whether in direct or indirect ways, these two streams of thought and practice (Plato's idealism and Ovid's materialism) are also exposed in Simmel's treatise, and are necessary for understanding the practical and theoretical foundations of flirtation, as well as the kind of temporality it inhabits. In both Plato and Ovid's portrayals, the temporality of Eros (Love) is conceived within an intermediate, deficient, and in-between ontology. This intermediary temporal condition is what constitutes the essence of flirtation.

³¹⁴ Timothy Perper, 'Will She or Won't She: The Dynamics of Flirtation in Western Philosophy,' 35.

³¹⁵ Robin Waterfield, 'Introduction,' *Plato Symposium*, xi-xv.

Plato

The *Symposium* depicts the speeches of a group of Greek philosophers who gathered for a drinks party between 385–370 BC to praise the spirit of Eros (Love). The penultimate speech is from Socrates, who learned from the prophetess and philosopher, but also his mistress in love Diotima of Mantinea. He explains that Eros (Love) is not a god nor a human, but rather he is a spirit or *daimōn*. And all spirits occupy a middle ground between mortality and immortality. Socrates explains that they operate within the intermediate area amid ignorance and knowledge. They translate and carry messages between mortals and gods and in this way both humanity and divinity communicate by means of spirits who are mediators who make the universe an interconnected whole. Spirits, Socrates continues, also allow for the realisation of divinatory practices, and open paths to perform sacrifices and rituals. They cast spells and do all kinds of prophecy and sorcery. There are many kind of spirits, and one of them is Eros.³¹⁶

Socrates further explains that Eros (Love) was born as a result of the encounter between Plenty and Poverty. This happened in a party hosted by Aphrodite. Plenty, who was invited to the party, got drunk and passed out. Poverty, who was begging at the gate, thought about having a child by Plenty, so she lay with him and became pregnant with Eros (Love).³¹⁷ What Eros (Love) receives from his mother's side, Socrates explains, is the fact that he never has any money, no shoes on his feet and no bed to sleep in. He is not sensitive nor attractive, but a vagrant with tough, dry skin who is always in need of a companion.

Conversely, what Eros (Love) receives from his father's side is something completely different, such as his skills in hunting for things of beauty and value, courage, impetuosity, and energy. In addition, Eros (Love) receives from his father his desire for knowledge as well as his skills with magic, herbs and words.³¹⁸ Like a good spirit, therefore, Eros (Love) occupies a middle ground or in-between zone amidst having (knowledge) and not-having (ignorance). He is the result of the encounter between Plenty and Poverty. This in-between ontological condition, this 'intermediate' nature, this imperfection, or this 'deficiency model'

³¹⁶ Plato, 'Socrates Speech,' 44.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Ibid, 44-45.

constitutes the essence of Love (or Eros), and is also the matter and substance of flirtation.³¹⁹ Love (Eros), thus, in Plato's framework, is conceived within its close linkage to desire. In other words, Love (Eros) is desire for something which is inaccessible or absent: desire for something that one lacks and wants to have, or wants to continue to have.³²⁰ Thus, the driving energy of Love (Eros), is the desire for the possession of something that is lacking, or desire for the continuation of something that might end (possession here is understood as interpersonal relationships or desire 'to be with').³²¹

In his speech, Socrates also introduces the concept of the *ideai*, which he uses to justify the theory of true beauty or eternal form. To explain the concept of the *ideai*, Socrates elaborates on the process of the 'erotic ascent,' the 'ladder of love,' also known as the path of Eros the Mediator, which develops from courtship—flirtation—and progresses into ideal form. The process of the erotic ascent transitions through four stages, from embodied beauty to disembodied beauty. The first step is flirtation, which starts with attraction towards the beauty of another person's physical body. The process of the erotic ascent progresses from all beautiful physical bodies, to all beautiful minds, to the beauty of knowledge or 'intellectual endeavours,' until it finally reaches the ultimate goal, which is the true Form of Beauty itself or absolute beauty.³²²

However, given the fact that Love (Eros) does not possess what he desires—he is the son Poverty and Plenty, and he occupies the middle ground amidst having and not-having—the discourse on Love (Eros) in Plato's discourse, consequently and inevitably, will have to remain being that which I have already emphasised: that is, the discourse of the intermediate nature, imperfection, or the deficiency that characterizes Love (Eros).³²³ Once again, the in-

³¹⁹ Foucault also identifies Plato's effort in marking a difference between the essence of love and flirtation (courtship). According to Foucault, on the one hand, Diotima and Socrates develop an ontological inquiry into the very being of love. On the other hand, the other speeches are about the art of flirtation: questions of conduct, including praise or criticism, thematics, as well as the delimitation of rules of what is allowed to do and what should not be done. However, Foucault explains, since Eros or Love does not possess the beautiful things that it desires (he is the parentage of Poverty and Plenty, of ignorance and knowledge), the discourse on Eros (Love) will have to face the risk of being nothing more than an encomium of its 'intermediate' nature or the deficiency that characterizes Eros or Love: 'of the long road of suffering that will lead it finally to its goal' (Michel Foucault, 'The Use of Pleasure,' 237).

³²⁰ Plato, 'Socrates Speech,' 40.

³²¹ Robin Waterfield, 'Introduction,' *Plato Symposium*, xxxvi.

³²² Timothy Perper, 'Will She or Won't She: The Dynamics of Flirtation in Western Philosophy,' 37. Robin Waterfield, 'Introduction,' *Plato Symposium*, xxix.

³²³ Praising Plato's praise of Love or Eros (the *Symposium*), in his book *In Praise of Love*, Alain Badiou defines this intermediate nature or deficiency that characterises Love (Eros), as the separation amongst different particularities and incomparable subjective inductions. He explains that Love (Eros) contains an initial element

between state amidst having and not-having that defines Love (Eros), and his desire to possess that which he lacks is the place where the origins of flirtation is to be found.

Ovid

By contrast to Plato's striving for the disembodied ideal of Eros (Love), in Ovid's account the Roman derivative of Eros (Cupid) is drawn to flesh, intercourse, actual penetration, and physical interactions between bodies. In Ovid's version, Eros (Love) is fleshed out as a playful interplay of humour and pathos. Ovid perceives a material world—a cosmos that has much the same principles everywhere—that is permeated throughout with erotic realities. The temporality of Eros (Love) according to Ovid does not aim for Platonic fixity based on an eternal and Higher Domain, but, as Timothy Perper explains, Ovid's Eros is embodied in the shifting translucencies of material reality. In other words, 'flirtation is intrinsic to material reality and is its substance itself, it leads to an ontology of this world.'³²⁴

Ovid recognises the transitoriness of lived experience, and the endless and inexorable flux inherent to all things and events. He is interested in the accidents, vicissitudes and paradoxes of everyday life, as well as in the fluctuation, mutability and shifting condition of existence. As explained in the introduction of this chapter, Ovid exposes the power of Eros (Love) to deceive the sense of time and thus to transform its course. Eros has the power to subvert all kinds of orders, change bodies to other forms, but also to transform the very nature of living beings or/and the metamorphosis of inanimate things. In addition, Ovid elaborates on the

that separates, dislocates and differentiates between interpretative stances. Love (Eros), according to him, involves separations or disjunctures, which are based on differences between people and their infinite subjectivities. Badiou furthermore elaborates on the notion of 'the encounter:' the moment when lovers happen to be together, by chance or destiny, or the moment of a clash between different subjectivities, when they confront each other. That moment occurs beyond any conscious decision of the individuals involved. It extends any conscious or unconscious intention. For Badiou, the encounter has the 'quasi-metaphysical status of the event, namely something that doesn't enter into the immediate order of things.' The encounter with the other is not only an experience, it is 'an event that remains quite opaque and only finds reality in its multiple resonances with the real world.' This encounter, this event, is aleatory and contingent: it is the event that transforms someone to the composition of a subject, or the basis by which lovers enter into the composition of one loving subject, which exceeds them. However, the fidelity or process of love remains as a continuous and immanent rupture. In other words, love, once again, needs to be 're-stated,' 're-invented;' it requires constant renewal in order to avoid its complete extinguishment. Badiou's depiction of the process of love as a continuous and immanent rupture, is a fundamental shared characteristic that love maintains with flirtation. Love and flirtation are essentially constituted by discontinuous and eventful temporalities that require an active alternation and renewal (Alain Badiou, *In Praise of Love*, 5-26). Similarly, for Simmel (who also praises Plato's Love or Eros), the temporality of love is alike to flirtation. He defines love as a temporary and prior relationship. According to Simmel, love, like flirtation, requires resurrection the moment it is extinguished through an alternation.

³²⁴ Timothy Perper, 'Will She or Won't She: The Dynamics of Flirtation in Western Philosophy,' 37.

stages of embodied realities of flirtation or courtship. In his *Ars Amatoria*, he describes a sequence of events that form the embodied stages of love itself. These are the *quinque lineae amoris*—the five lines of love—Look, Talk, Touch, Kiss, and Coitus. Therefore, for Ovid, flirtation is not an entry-way to the higher disembodied domain of the Platonic *ideai*, but an embodied reality in the physical world.³²⁵ It is precisely in this material reality where games of love and chance, sex, power and desire, possession and dispossession unfold.

³²⁵ Ibid.

***Discreet Piece* by Monica Espinosa.**

15 May 2018.

Action presented as part of the events programme.

Venue: Pump House Gallery and Battersea Park.



Fig 2. Monica Espinosa, *Discreet Piece*. Photo: Monica Espinosa.

In this discreet action, participants were offered the possibility to connect with a (loved, desired) absent one across remote time-zones. The piece was presented in four acts:

1. The artist sits in a chair inside the gallery. She thinks about an absent person and enters the required technical data into a registration book (this includes name of participant, date and time, name of absent one, type of relationship with them).
2. Participants are invited to repeat the action.
3. The artist takes the registration book with her, she goes into Battersea Park inviting passers-by to repeat the action.
4. The book remains in the gallery's reception. Visitors are invited to fill-in the registration book until the exhibition closes.

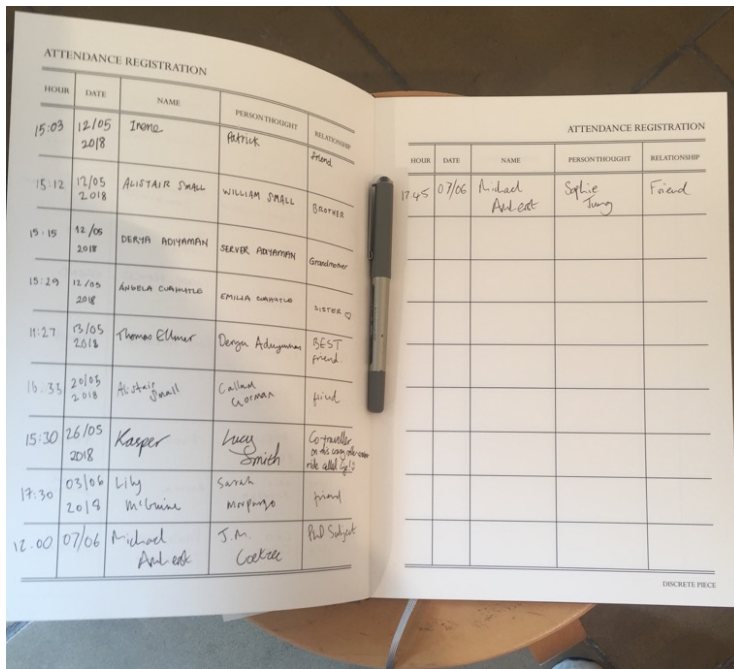


Fig. 3. Monica Espinosa, *Discreet Piece*. *Registration Book*. Photo by myself.

Espinosa's *Discreet Piece* distinguished itself by its ostensible simplicity. It was a subtle yet profound gesture in which participants were able to reach out to loved or desired absent beings across time and space, by means of thought and written word. The piece unfolded as a chain of singular events joining together as one extended process throughout the exhibition's timeline. Participants took an active role as the creators of the work, and its final form as a collective action compressed into the material form of a registration book (Fig. 3).³²⁶

Discreet Piece acted as a playful observation of the relevance of small often unnoticed actions and events carried out on a regular basis through daily activities. According to

³²⁶ There is a tradition of artists who have performed discreet pieces, which are configured as processes, rather than spectacular events or final outcomes. These discreet pieces are considered to be 'public' actions and gestures. Some examples are George Brecht's *Une Chaise avec Une Histoire* (1966), consisting of a red notebook placed on a chair inside the gallery, which was slowly filled with descriptions of experiences by participants who sat on the chair. Douglas Huebler's *Location Pieces* (1969-70), a mapping project of random geographic locations, where participants were asked to take photographs of places they could describe as 'erotic,' but also 'frightening,' 'transcendent,' 'passive,' etc. Vito Acconci's *Seedbed* (1972), a performance in which the artist lay hidden underneath a ramp installed in the gallery, masturbating. The artist's spoken fantasies about visitors walking above him were heard through loudspeakers in the gallery. Joseph Beuys's *Sweeping Up* (1972), was an action performed in Berlin, using bright red brooms, Beuys and two students swept up all the rubbish in Karl-Marx-Platz after the left-wing May Day parade, as a rejection of Marxist dogmas as much as Western capitalism.

Espinosa, the act of making people think about someone else at distance, is the act of carving a sculpture inside their heads. This means that she sculpted a series of artworks through images generated in the minds of people who followed her instructions and wrote their thoughts in the registration book. However, the artist was interested in the act of ‘invocation.’ To invoke another person means not only to draw the image of that other person in one’s own mind, but also to be possessed by that other person in one’s own body. Espinosa transformed absence into an active practice, as explained by Roland Barthes in his book *A Lovers Discourse*:

Oscillation between reference and allocution. Between the two tenses: you have gone but you are here since I am addressing you. Absence persists—I must endure it. Hence I will manipulate it: transform the distortion of time into oscillation, produce rhythm, make an entrance onto the stage of language [...] absence becomes an active practice, a business (which keeps me from doing anything else); there is a creation of a fiction which has many roles (doubts, reproaches, desires, melancholies). This staging of language postpones the other’s death: a very short interval, we are told, separates the time during which the child still believes his mother to be absent and the time in which he believes her to be already dead. To manipulate absence is to extend this interval, to delay as long as possible the moment when the other might topple sharply from absence to death.³²⁷

Espinosa’s piece shaped a series of metamorphoses in people’s minds and physical bodies. On the one hand, there was the desire to possess an absent person. However, on the other hand, whoever was in such a desiring position became possessed by that other person in turn (transforming absence into an active presence). Put another way, to invoke another person is to be possessed by that other person as an embodied experience—the image of that other takes over the participant’s mind and body. Therefore, Espinosa’s piece put into play Ovid’s unexpected subversions, the metamorphosis of states of minds and bodies changed to other forms, and provoked by the power of Eros.

³²⁷ Roland Barthes, ‘The Absent One,’ 16.

***Untitled* by Adam Christensen.**

Performances presented as part of the events programme.

25 April 2018.

8 of July 2018

Venue: Pump House Gallery and Battersea Park.



Fig. 4. Adam Christensen performing during the opening night, 24 April 2018. Photo: Pump House Gallery.

Christensen presented two performances. One of them was shown inside the gallery during the opening night (Fig. 4). The second one was presented during Art Night, in an outdoor location in Battersea park (Figs. 5-6). In both pieces, the artist sang lyrics of popular music and old songs whilst playing a traditional Danish accordion, and cross-dressing with an outfit produced by an ex-boyfriend. Along with the songs, Christensen intermittently recounted a series of encounters and anecdotes, as well as readings of confessional texts. Both songs and recitations narrated stories about of the transient, in-between condition of Eros or Love striving to possess forbidden desires, heartbreak, as well as the emotional and physical mixed experiences of comedies and dramas. The messages shared with the audience was not too dissimilar from Ovid's erotic poetic landscapes: tales about games of love and chance, sex, power and desire, struggles of possession and dispossession. Christensen sang stories of jealousy and violence, also of rivalry between hunter and prey, and an irrational appetite towards sex or pleasure, whereby flesh surpassed power over the mind and passion overwhelmed the intellect. Songs were also sung with their distinguishing enthralling, bewitching voice, as if they were casting a spell casted to the audience in a collective experience of shared emotions. Further analysis about Christensen's work can be found in Part 4 of this chapter.



Fig. 5. Adam Christensen performing at Battersea Park during Art Night, 8 July 2018. Photo taken by myself.



Fig. 6. Adam Christensen performing at Battersea Park during Art Night, 8 July 2018. Photo taken by myself.

Part 2. Rules of the Playground

In *History of Sexuality*, Michel Foucault undertakes a historical overview of the deployment of sexuality in relation to new rules around power and pleasure. He situates the beginning of the seventeenth century in Europe as a period in which there was little need of secrecy with regards to non-normative forms of sex. Unlike the nineteenth century, he explains, the regulation of codes of conduct concerning the obscene and the indecent were ‘quite lax.’ It was a time of ‘direct gestures, shameless discourse, and open transgressions, when anatomies were shown and intermingled at will.’ An example is the writings and illustrations of the Marquis de Sade (Fig. 7). However, as Foucault writes ‘twilight soon fell upon this bright day, followed by the monotonous nights of the Victorian bourgeoisie.’ Sexuality became associated with sin, as something that needed to be silenced and was metamorphosed into something carefully confined and strictly amended to an economy of reproduction: managed, regulated and administrated. In this process prohibitions were established, new rules for the games of power and pleasure were founded and sexuality took the form of discourse, moving from act into the realm of desire. These puritanical morals also represented in images (Fig. 8). This caused the proliferation of perversions and the multiplication of sanctions and moral infractions against newly forbidden sexual practices.³²⁸

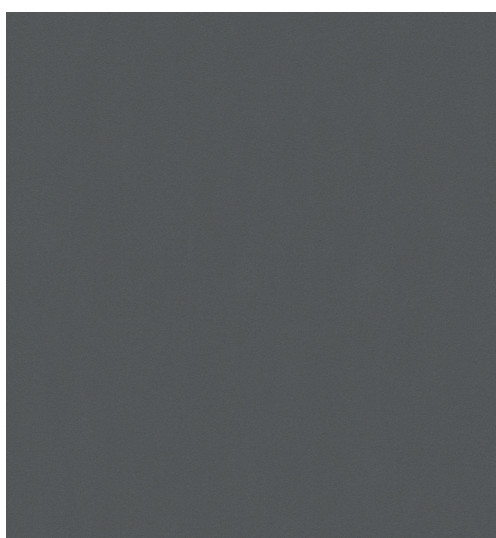


Fig. 7. Illustration by Donatien Alphonse François, also known as Marquis de Sade, 1797.

³²⁸ Michel Foucault, ‘The Will to Knowledge,’ 3-36.



Fig. 8. Library of Congress, *The Victorian Guide to Sex*, c. 1902.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Europe, sexuality, its erotics, and other forms of intimacy adjusted to newly regulated systems of representation. A whole sign language was developed, restructuring an entire set of interpersonal relationships in codes of etiquette and rules of social behaviour.³²⁹ It was precisely in this context and during this period of time that the articulations of flirtation resurfaced.

The term ‘flirtation’ was born as the result of a semantic flirtation between Americans and the French aristocracy, who practiced courtship and etiquette in matters of sexuality, love, and romance, which involved the use of flowers. The French used the expression ‘*conter fleurette*’ (which meant ‘to speak sweet nothings’) to define attempts to seduce the other through the practice of dropping flower petals. At some vague point during the seventeenth century, the expression *conter fleurette* travelled to the other side of the Atlantic and was sent back to France by the Americans who fashioned the verb ‘to flirt’ from the French word *fleurette*.³³⁰ Historical expressions of flirtation can be found in old guides, books, images and other forms of literature and visual culture within Western European popular traditions. For example, one of the oldest examples is Albert Smith’s *The Natural History of The Flirt*, published in the mid-nineteenth century in London (Fig. 9). This book comically depicts a

³²⁹ Other historians, such as the already mentioned Luhmann, similarly situate the seventeen and eighteen centuries in Europe as a period of time in which certain codes of etiquette and rules of social behaviour related to sexuality, affect and intimate relationships emerged. According to him, this period presented a break from the earlier (medieval) tradition of ‘courtly love’ and *fin amor*. The ‘rules of loving’ that emerged represented a new way of restructuring intimacy and the whole set of relationships that explain interaction between human beings (Niklas Luhmann, *Love as Passion, The Codification of Intimacy*, 175-176).

³³⁰ M F.F. de La Farelle, M. Irénée Ginoux, Alexandre Colin, *Mémoires de l’Académie Royale du Gard*, 443.

typical flirtatious behaviour of insinuating promises but always delaying their actual realisation, in the context of a highly gendered, rigid and old-fashioned set of rules of conduct.



Fig. 9. Albert Smith, *The Natural History of The Flirt*, 1847.

A proliferation of flirtatious popular forms of expressions can be found in books, magazines and other visual material. A useful guide to this material is Fern Riddell's *The Victorian Guide to Sex* (Fig. 10), a relatively recently published book, which includes a historical overview including advice and information about sexuality, erotics, and other forms of intimacy, taken from pamphlets, literature, newspapers and medical books. Riddell's book includes tips for conversations, how to flirt with potential suitable husbands for young ladies, and the use of props for flirtation, such as gloves, fans, hats, which were used in England during the nineteenth century.



Fig. 10. Fern Riddell, *The Victorian Guide to Sex*, 2014.

These examples serve as illustrations of the moment when new rubrics of decorum, limitations of prohibitions, instructions for discretion and codes of behaviour for the games of powers and pleasures in Europe became established. Although the abovementioned examples belong to the Victorian era, they are not anachronistic to the contemporary context. Contemporary expressions of flirtation echoing the past can be found in guides, books, images and other materials within popular visual culture. Either physical or virtual, there is a vast amount on offer for those who would like to learn about flirtation, or improve the skills they already have. For example, for those who are already good practitioners but would like to become pros, Dave Perrotta's *Conversation Casanova: How to Effortlessly Start Conversations and Flirt Like a Pro* (Fig. 11) would be adequate. The book teaches 'how to effortlessly strike up a conversation with any women, at any time, in any environment.' It also includes exclusive advice on attitudes or gestures to 'command women's attention and instantly connect with them,' as well as tips on how to 'turn any conversation from boring to "sexual"'.³³¹ Conversely, for those who have no knowledge nor experience of flirtation, but would like to change their unfortunate situation, Elizabeth Clark's *Flirting for Dummies* (Fig. 12) is helpful. This book provides guidance on how to develop 'a killer rapport with body language' and tips on getting to grips with flirting basics and how to get noticed.³³² It is a simple guide, providing a stress-free learning process for beginners, and even contains didactic material, diagrams and photographs to illustrate examples.



Fig. 11. Dave Perrotta, *Conversation Casanova: How to Effortlessly Start Conversations and Flirt Like a Pro*, 2016.

³³¹ Dave Perrotta, *Conversation Casanova: How to Effortlessly Start Conversations and Flirt Like a Pro*.

³³² Elizabeth Clark's *Flirting for Dummies*.



Fig. 12. Elizabeth Clark, *Flirting for Dummies*, 2011.

More contemporary references to those that flirt can be found in *Why Men Love Bitches*, a book that shows tactics to provoke men as seen through a ‘feminine’ perspective. *The Game: Undercover in the Secret Society of Pickup Artists*, a book that depicts a Don Juan type of figure, written as a manual to attract others. Or, for those who would like to read body language with greater ease, *The Body Language Rules: A Savvy Guide to Understanding Who’s Flirting, Who’s Faking, and Who’s Really Interested*, would be adequate.

I have selected a few illustrative examples of flirtation in today’s global capitalist society, but, as already explained, the breadth is vast. The reader can simply google or search on amazon, e-bay or any other shopping online platform, and will find an overwhelming number of products. Although these examples have evolved from a Victorian morality into a contemporary consumerist ideology, they expose the persistence of rules of conduct, stereotypes, the continuation of certain codes of practice.

However, like sexuality, its erotics, and other forms of intimacy, flirtation is also linked to social, cultural, epistemological and economic powers. Behind the apparent triviality, surely embarrassing and funny nature of the afore-cited material, there is a complex set of value systems and a compound network of power and desire at play. Behind the potential ridiculousness or irritation provoked by these materials, there are ideological and material infrastructures that shape and condition the processes by which the game of flirtation unfolds. They define the logic for what is permitted and forbidden, and delimit what is licit and what constitutes the illicit.

Focusing on the specialised field of the contemporary art world you can find tricks, strategies and tips to flirt, and to socially perform like a pro in Pablo Helguera's *Manual of Contemporary Art Style* (Fig. 13). This exclusive practical guide contains a detailed investigation of social rules within the art world, which are fundamental and necessary for anyone who wishes to succeed in this field. Helguera's book teaches basic skills and secret tactics to play with greater ease. The author explains that 'since etiquette is an art into itself,' participants can, with time and practice, achieve whatever role they want to learn or master.³³³ The *Manual of Contemporary Art Style* also clarifies the functions and rules to follow for different members who are part of, or would like to be part of, this complex system—itself a highly competitive and sophisticated game. Be it as an artist, curator, dealer, or simple *aficionado* in both public behaviour and private operations, the author explains that this guide offers exclusive information—including flirting techniques—since despite the high sociability that characterises the art world, very few are willing to share or discuss the topics in public. Just as in game of chess, Helguera writes, each one of these pieces moves according to the pre-established rules of the game, but in a more complex manner.³³⁴



Fig. 13. Pablo Helguera, *Manual of Contemporary Art Style*, 2007.

Likewise, behind the amusement or annoyance the reader might experience when reading Helguera's hidden gem, there is a complex set of value systems, and networked structures of power and desire at play. These undelaying structures render possible the existence of the game. They define the gestures, behaviours, and attitudes that are available and allowed to be used. They also deploy codes of conduct, reinforce hierarchies, stereotypes and emphasise the

³³³ Pablo Helguera, *Manual of Contemporary Art Style*, Kindle Edition.

³³⁴ Ibid.

different roles taken by participants. Sexuality, its erotics, and other forms of intimacy within the contemporary art system, and in curatorial thought and practice, are also managed, regulated and administrated by economic, social, discursive and epistemological powers. Exhibitions and curatorial projects also produce and reproduce social orders, and create discourses operating under disciplinary social relations based on affective, sexual and erotic desire. As Amelia Jones argues, power dynamics also involve sexual drives. Sexual desires or drives, she writes, motivate not only the production of art but also the formation of ideological and institutional power structures relating to visual culture.³³⁵ Under these rules flirtation may be regarded as a ‘regulated pleasure,’ some kind of normalised sexual behaviour, something that is carefully preserved in the confines of safety and comfort, with Victorian moral and ideological resonances.³³⁶ From this argument the inevitable question arises: how can flirtation be transgressive, or even more significantly, how can flirtation change the very nature of being? I will flirt with the attempt to answer this question in the following sections.

³³⁵ Amelia Jones, ‘Introduction,’ 12.

³³⁶ Alain Badiou, *In Praise of Love*, 8.

***Near Bliss Index* by Erica Scourti.**

17 June 2018.

Performance presented as part of the events programme.

Venue: Pump House Gallery.



Fig. 14. Erica Scourti performing *Near Bliss Index*, 17 June 2018. Photo taken by myself.

Scourti's *Near Bliss Index* consisted in a recital of songs, combining digital voices and human vocals. The artist was interested in producing a sort of flirtation between the virtual and human, by playing recordings of messages from her WhatsApp archive, together with her own and two other performers' live singing. Scourti furthermore wanted to explore flirtation in relation to human agency, but also in relation to the modes by which software itself might flirt by creating its own uncanny melodies. Lastly, the artist also addressed aspects of awkwardness, embarrassment and vulnerability, linked to flirtation, as well as to the act of sharing personal messages in public, and the attached feeling shame.

Taking the ambient feeling of a ritual, the performance unfolded at a slow pace, embracing what could be considered as emotional tempos, and somehow embodying and exposing the type of temporality that is experienced by people who are in love: the power of Eros to blind lovers through charm, playing with them, or casting love spells. The performance somehow exposed the feeling of being out of time, enchanted by the other, and out of the real world. The lyrics of the songs and the uttered messages form the archive and combined ideas about love and desire, forms of attachment, jealousy, rejection and infatuation. These words were sung with a mixture of anxiety, danger and threat about rejection, but also excitement, illusion, expectation, and other effects produced within various types of games. Finally, the female voices spread out an enchanting atmosphere within the space, leaving the viewer bewitched by the spelling of spoken words and songs sung.

Part 3. *Flirting With Georg Simmel*

The time has come to formally introduce the German sociologist Georg Simmel. As already explained in the introduction of this chapter, Simmel, is the one who made the first modern move and effort to establish the importance of flirtation. In his short yet substantial theory he addressed the various philosophical and sociological implications of this practice. Simmel belonged to the generation of European academics and intellectuals known as the Frankfurt School of philosophy and social theory. This school attempted to review and evaluate the mixed results of nineteenth-century thought, positioning themselves against its inherited progressivism. Members of the Frankfurt School were also critical of the socio-economic systems of their own historical epoch (the growing capitalist, fascist and communist systems that characterised the 1920s and 1930s). Inserted in this tradition, Simmel opposed the idea of objectiveness in the formation of epistemological categories and moral principles, arguing in favour of the vicissitudes of individual experience and social processes.³³⁷ As part of his examination of the crisis of modern culture and his desire for cultural renewal, the sociologist wrote on women, love and sexuality. In 1908 he wrote a small essay dedicated to the analysis of coquetry, which exposed the symbolic significance, cultural relevance of this notion in inter-human activity and social interface. In the sociology of sex, Simmel wrote that there are different forms of eroticism. One of these various forms includes play-form. This play-form is called coquetry. Coquetry consists in swinging back and forth ‘yes’ and ‘no’ in an ongoing oscillatory rhythm that does not stop at one end or the other. The coquette, he explains, embodies these polar opposites in a perfectly consistent behaviour.³³⁸

From this initial approach, Simmel conceived a theoretical basis that metamorphosed from coquetry into flirtation, which he developed more extensively in his seminal treatise *On Flirtation*, published posthumously in 1923. *On Flirtation* is considered to be the foundational text of a serious theorisation of this practice and concept. It contains direct and indirect juxtapositions of references on a variety of ideas and concepts including different lines of thought within the history of Western philosophy. For example, Simmel makes direct reference to Plato’s definition of Eros or Love from *The Symposium*. It also comprises a

³³⁷ Guy Oakes, ‘Introduction,’ *On Women, Sexuality and Love*, 3-6.

³³⁸ Georg Simmel, ‘Coquetry,’ 50.

direct allusion to Immanuel Kant's analysis of the judgment of beauty from his *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment*. Likewise, Simmel's essay encompasses an indirect reference to the Hegelian dialectical method. It furthermore encloses an indirect suggestion of Ovid's erotic material reality, and his recognition of the transitoriness, eventful nature, and the state of eternal flux in existence. As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, I will strip his ideas back to a series of sub-sections. These sub-sections include 'The Essence of Flirtation,' 'The Game of Flirtation,' 'Time and Flirtation,' 'The Art of Flirtation,' and 'The Gesture.'

The Essence of Flirtation

Simmel inaugurates his essay with referral to Plato, by mentioning Diotima's depiction of Eros (Love) in Socrates's speech. Plato, Simmel writes, defines Eros (Love) as the kind of desire which is situated in an intermediate state. As explained earlier, Plato's Eros (Love) is the result of the encounter between Plenty and Poverty, and therefore, the discourse around Eros (Love) inevitably becomes the discourse of the intermediate nature, the in-between condition or the deficiency that characterises it. However, as Simmel clarifies, such definition does not engage to the essence of Eros (Love) or with its entirety, but it does encompass a fundamental aspect—its existence as an external form of manifestation. He writes: 'when love takes root in the deepest regions of the soul, then, that alternation of possession and non-possession represents only the surface of its exteriorisation.'³³⁹ In other words, flirtation not the manifestation of Love (Eros) in its entirety, but it is a 'little' gesture of it.

Therefore, this 'little' gesture of manifestation of Eros (Love) consists of provoking attraction and desire by means of a unique antithesis and typical syntheses: offering and denying simultaneously by symbols or 'in platonic terms.' The attraction and desire generated by this middle ground, as well as the impossibility of obtaining what is wanted (the need to obtain it through sacrifice and effort), that 'psychological deviation,' Simmel explains, is the typical quality of flirtation.³⁴⁰ For this reason, the secret key to the successful enactment of the concept of flirtation is the skilful maintenance of a 'fluid equilibrium.' In other words, the

³³⁹ Georg Simmel, 'Filosofía de la coquetería,' 8. For the analysis of the subject of love in its entirety, the author dedicates different essays: 'Friendship and Love,' and 'On Love.' Similarly, however, he defines love as a temporary and prior relationship. Once again, Love (Eros) in Platonic terms, is conceived within its close linkage to desire: desire for something that one lacks and want to have, or want to continue to have (Plato, 'Socrates Speech,' 40).

³⁴⁰ Georg Simmel, 'Filosofía de la coquetería,' 7-8.

intimate metaphorical co-penetration between ‘yes’ and ‘no,’ must not be a rigid juxtaposition, but rather, it must be itself a ‘living’ and ‘rhythmic oscillation.’³⁴¹ Such is the ultimate basis of eroticism. Flirtation emerges from these foundations and takes its unique form as a play-form or game.³⁴²

The Game of Flirtation

The game of flirtation consists of making suggestive promises and, at the same time, retracting those promises. The norm is not to fulfil what is promised. Instead, the rule is to reject the other but without depriving that other from all hope, keeping possibilities and chances open.³⁴³ Once again, flirtation is the playful enactment of the platonic desire for the future possession of what Love (Eros) lacks, or the desire for the continuation of the future possession of what Love (Eros) already has, but might lose.³⁴⁴

Tactics, ticks and techniques to successfully perform the game vary from the subtlest stimuli to the most explicit incentive. Flirts utilise verbal and non-verbal forms of communication—suggestive gestures, indirect signals and attitudes. Flirtatious tacit communication may take the embodied form of glances to eye contact, from *double entendres* to little smiles, from chattering to flattering, and, from time to time, it might take the actual material form of touch. In the practical component of this chapter, the exhibition and public programme *We Are Having a Little Flirt*, Anneke Kampman’s installation, *Dead. Air. Management* (Fig. 30), re-staged flirtation by re-presenting marketing strategies utilised in the construction of audio-visual landscapes as forms of flirtation within the music industry. In our contemporary society, the internet, social media and dating apps provide new modes of flirting. In her sound intervention, *Slip Tongue* (Fig. 21), Erica Scourti addressed issues relating to skills used in networking, sharing affect, connecting with others and flirting online, which are contemporary methods that may add to the creative resourcefulness of flirtation. Furthermore, sometimes these tactics, ticks and techniques used to successfully perform the game are ambiguous, oblique and insinuated. Such was the case of Monica Espinosa’s *Discreet Piece* (Fig. 2), which provided the possibility to flirt with people across time and space through the

³⁴¹ Ibid, 8.

³⁴² Ibid, 11-12.

³⁴³ Georg Simmel, ‘Coquetry,’ 50.

³⁴⁴ Plato, ‘Socrates Speech,’ 40.

means of a simple registration book. At other times, flirts are more direct, straightforward and explicit. Such was the case of Adam Christensen's erotic recounts of their explicit flirtatious sexual encounters, exposed through text and performance (Figs. 17-18). Tactics, ticks and techniques to flirt are all highly varied, but they all hold a fundamental characteristic that unites them: whether they be carefully rehearsed or let to be improvised, they are the result of the enactment of the living oscillation between 'yes' and 'no.' Flirts, thus, must insinuate interest and at the same time prove indifference. They must play with the limits amidst attraction and rejection. They must feed the imagination but simultaneously take all illusions away. In short, flirts must perform a symbolic intercourse between the world of fantasy and the domain of reality.

Time and Flirtation

Flirtation, thus, creates a contradictory bond between past and future. It guarantees a possible future, and at the same time, it denies it. Likewise, it yields anticipation but is simultaneously always late. It thus embraces a paradoxical composition of a (contingent) temporality of futurity and the simultaneous (anachronistic) temporality of delay. The flirt refuses and concedes simultaneously. The temporality of flirtation is comparable to the temporality of contingency in its tautological nature: it is not interested in the true-value or actual realisation of one of the statements 'we will have a love affair' or 'we will not have a love affair' separately, but rather, the alternative 'we-will-have-a-love-affair-or-we-will-not-have-a-love-affair' as a whole, beyond the taking place of the two opposite possibilities. By neither affirming or refusing, inevitably, flirtation opens up a paradoxical zone of indetermination and indistinction between yes and no: a zone of aporia, contradiction and ambiguity. Similarly, the temporality of flirtation is akin to the temporality of anachronism, as it swings back and forth between the joints of the past and the joints of a future, located in the threshold of the becoming of an event. Therefore, like its siblings' counter-chronological temporalities, flirtation gives precedence to the discontinuity of time. Flirtation is interested in the eventful and transitory condition of time, highlighting the importance of the present moment, emphasising its—sensual, restless, vibratory, and erotic—intensity.³⁴⁵

³⁴⁵ Niklas Luhmann explains that 'plaisir' that may be experienced in flirtation exists only momentarily and only for the moment in which it is experienced. This experience is situated between a 'not yet' and 'no longer.' Flirtation is a counterfactual assertion: 'an eternal oath that commits for a moment, but which is necessary in that moment in order to contradict one's awareness of inconsistency' (Niklas Luhmann, *Love as Passion*, 88).

Furthermore, intermediary state suggests a repeated variation or fluctuation between two opposite poles in a regular rhythm—regularity in irregularity. It involves a paradoxical implication of the suspension of action and the simultaneous continuous activation of both affirmative and negative potentialities. The flirt rejects and allows simultaneously. On the one side, the suspension of action occurs in the non-teleological agenda of flirts—flirts are not pursuing the actual realisation of the objects of desire, but rather they reject any end or definitive outcome. On the other side, the continuous activation of both affirmative and negative potentialities occurs in the incessant rhythmic oscillation of ‘yes’ and ‘no.’ In this way flirts enact a repeated variation in a regular rhythm, in such a way that one continuously annuls the other, and vice versa, in an endless process.³⁴⁶ The temporality of flirtation thereafter proceeds as a paradoxically suspended process of its own ongoing process. In this suspension impermanence becomes something permanent itself. The promise—the tension of the affirmative or negative potentialities—becomes the ultimate and final form of temporality.³⁴⁷

However, the enactment of non-enactment or decision of not deciding is a form of power. Simmel argues that power is manifested in the yes or no: it serves as the foundation for the feeling of freedom, of independence of the self from both one and the other.³⁴⁸ Putting the decision of hold is the enactment of the contingency love and desire: it is the paradoxical manifestation of the flirt’s power of free choice. As argued earlier, I am trying to re-claim the sense of power inherent in the ability to hold another in suspension between yes and no. Those who hold this decision in the flirtatious moment hold agency.

The Art of Flirtation

At this juncture is necessary to clarify once again the differences between flirtation and seduction. Indeed, there is an intimate, evocative and dangerous affair going on between these two practices. This affair faces the predicament that the former borrows the language of

³⁴⁶ Georg Simmel, ‘Filosofía de la coquetería,’ 21.

³⁴⁷ Paul Fleming argues that flirtation is ‘out of time,’ because it is not about seducing, winning, gaining or having the other, but rather the pure play of desire without end (Paul Fleming, *The Art of Flirtation: Simmel’s Coquetry Without End*, 27).

³⁴⁸ Georg Simmel, ‘Filosofía de la coquetería,’ 15-16.

the later, but it does so in a ‘citational’ style.³⁴⁹ On the one hand, seduction is driven by the desire to dominate and to exert power over the other. In other words, there is a conscious teleological attempt to conquer the other (either in social, sexual or intellectual quests). There is a purpose and an intention, which is the actual realisation of desire by means of manipulation.³⁵⁰ On the other hand, the purpose of flirtation is the game in itself. The intention of flirts is to have no intention. The game ceases to exist when it is taken seriously as any final declaration brings flirtation to an end.

For these reasons, flirtation achieves the status of art. Simmel argues: it is ‘a free and suspended play, which only dimly reflects the erotically definitive (the sexual interaction, the love relationship) as a remote symbol, that has led one to speak, of its “art” not only of its “artifices”.’³⁵¹ This linkage that Simmel makes with art is similar to the linkage I am making between the flirtatious gesture and the curatorial gesture. Thereafter, it reaches the position of art under Kantian terms in relation to the judgement of the beautiful. There are two central modalities of the beautiful outlined in Kant’s *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* which are present in Simmel’s association. The first is its attribute as a disinterested pleasure. The second is its paradoxical agenda ‘purposive without purpose.’ In the following section, the reader will encounter a further elaboration on these two relations amongst the conceptual twosome of flirtation and art, which I will then anachronize into the argument of the curated flirtatious gesture.

First, flirtation achieves the status of art because it is a disinterested pleasure or ‘final without end.’ Flirts are attracted only to the sensorial, affective and intellectual embodied experiences produced within the game itself. The ‘psychological deviation’ of attraction and desire generated in the restless state between affirmative and negative potentialities is what is of interest to flirts. In other words, flirts crave the mixed experience of frustration and satisfaction, they yearn for the simultaneous experience of pleasure and pain—both as psychological and sensorial experience. Flirts pursue oppositional sensations, which are, by default, produced by the intermediate nature or the deficiency that characterizes Eros or Love (the impossibility to obtain the object of desire). The resulting sensations are correspondingly oppositional forces: pleasure comes accompanied by frustration, worry is escorted by its

³⁴⁹ Lauren Shizuko Stone, ‘Staging Appeal, Performing Ambivalence,’ 61.

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

³⁵¹ Georg Simmel, ‘Coquetry,’ 50.

opposite relief, excitement is conveyed by disappointment. These metamorphoses between embodied binary oppositions occur whilst thoughts of hesitation and assurance arise. In other words, flirts transform anxiety or distress caused by uncertainty into pleasure.³⁵²

This ‘psychological deviation’ is experienced not only as something inanimate, but also as embodied enjoyment or sensual pleasure. Thoughts are felt and exposed as sensations in the body. The effects (affects) of flirtation reveal themselves by yielding changes in physical chemistry. The effects (affects) of flirtation may produce a mixture of increasing serotonin, together with a swelling of cortisol or rising adrenaline. The experience of flirtation can make people sweat, make them blush, or smile. The feeling of flirtation can provoke the emergence of involuntary sparkles in the eyes. The sensation of flirtation can take the form of the voluntary blinks of eyelids. It is in this respect—its close linkage to sensual pleasure—that Simmel indirectly flirts with Ovid’s embodied materiality of flirtation, whereby Eros drives bodies to be affected or to metamorphose to other forms. In this sense, flirtation affects: it produces physical changes or it causes ‘little’ metamorphosis. It has a ‘little’ power.

This close linkage between flirtation and sensual pleasure can furthermore be perceived in the word ‘flirtation,’ which is a flirtatious word in itself. It is an onomatopoeic word, bound to the phonetics of ‘flit,’ ‘flick’ and ‘fleureter.’ It contains an inherent sensuality within its own form. These sounds hold a vibratory feature, which surfaces from the vocal-corporeal movement of the tongue which twists and touches the palate inside the mouth, together with the breath and elocution of voice when uttering ‘flirt,’ or its derivatives ‘flit,’ ‘flick,’ ‘fleureter.’ In terms of its content, the meaning of ‘flit’ and ‘flick’ imply erratic, irregular and inconsistent movements or rhythms. ‘Fleureter,’ for its part, suggests ‘to fly like a bee from flower to flower.’³⁵³ It has indirect insinuations to lack of planation or target-oriented directions, or disavowal from any purposes or agendas.³⁵⁴ Finally, the inherent nonteleological meaning of the flirtatious word of flirtation, drives me to connect with the

³⁵² Adam Phillips, *On Flirtation*, xxiv.

³⁵³ As explained earlier, the origin of this work is linked to the expression ‘*conter fleurette*,’ or the coquettish practice of dropping flower petals.

³⁵⁴ Making an analysis of the abovementioned phonetically linked meaning of flirtation, Barbara Vinken argues that the word ‘flirtation’ is a semantically groundless and improper word. It holds connotations of ambiguity, and that which is unfocused and unclear. No semantic grounding nor proper meaning can be pinned down in the meaning of this word, rather, metaphor is at the heart of flirting, Vinken explains. It suggests one expresses oneself ‘through the flower,’ in another language, indirectly and secretly. The messages flirts deliver are understood only by those in the know (Barbara Vinken, ‘Frill and Flirtation,’ 83-84).

second Kantian modality of the beautiful, outlined by Simmel in his interpretation of flirtation:

Flirtation achieves the status of art according to Kantian standards because it is conceived as ‘purposive without purpose.’ Once again, the rules of this game are fashioned in a nonteleological logic. Flirts are not interested in the actual realisation of any of the affirmative or negative potentialities at play—they reject any actual conclusive decision, end or finality.³⁵⁵ For this reason, flirtation paradoxically aims to remain as something self-contained, which does not go anywhere else beyond itself. Simmel calls it ‘a freely suspended play.’³⁵⁶ However, in this respect, flirtation differentiates from art: in the sense that the latter is located ‘beyond reality whereas flirtation is a game with reality.’³⁵⁷ For Simmel, artists play with the appearance of reality, whereas flirts play with reality itself. Art (in this Simmelian/Kantian view) remains rooted in the realm of illusion whereas flirtation swings between reality and illusion.

The Gesture

Furthermore, although Kant’s approach to the concept of the beautiful might be chronologically ‘anachronistic’ to contemporary art practice and theory, it is not irrelevant in today’s discourses around art, curating and politics. More specifically, his formula ‘purposive without purpose’ has been taken into account in curatorial discussions around exhibitions as gestures and their creative and political implications. These discussions consider exhibitions and other forms of display as mediums which are actions (actions understood as acts of communication). In other words, ‘gestures’ as described by Giorgio Agamben.³⁵⁸

Agamben defines the gesture as a ‘pure mean’ emancipated from any form of teleological determination. It belongs to the sphere of a pure and endless mediality, it is an embodied material expression of a means without ends. To elaborate his argument, Agamben anachronizes a text by the roman scholar Marcus Terentius Varro, who distinguishes three

³⁵⁵ Or, as Paul Fleming argues, it is ‘an end-in-itself and thus without end, or a nonteleological playful *mitsein*, in Heideggerian terms—due to its implication of ‘being-with’—where there is nothing to decide. In flirtation, he explains, one crucial decision is made: the decision to flirt, and thus to make no further decisions (Paul Fleming, ‘The Art of Flirtation: Simmel’s Coquetry Without End,’ 22).

³⁵⁶ Georg Simmel, ‘Coquetry,’ 50.

³⁵⁷ Simmel, *Philosophy of Flirtation and Other Essays*, 19.

³⁵⁸ Ruth Noack and Roger M. Buerger, ‘Words From an Exhibition,’ 29.

different types of gestures. Varro inscribes the gesture into the sphere of action, but separates it from two different things. First, ‘producing’ (a poet produces a play but does not act in it). Second, ‘acting’ (the actor acts in a play but does not make it). The gesture differs from producing and acting in the sense that nothing within it is being produced nor acted, but rather something is being endured and supported.³⁵⁹ In other words, it means ‘to carry or carry on.’ Like the Roman General who carries on affairs but neither produces nor acts them. What is new in Varro, Agamben writes, is the identification of this third type of action. He explains it in the following way:

If producing is a means in view of an end and praxis is an end without means, the gesture then breaks with the false alternative between ends and means that paralyzes morality and presents instead means that, as such, evade the orbit of mediality without becoming, for this reason, ends.³⁶⁰

In other words, the gesture contains a tension between two opposite poles. On the one hand it is purposive, but it is not something which is completely subordinated to an external meaning (e.g. art as activism or social policy). On the other hand, it is purposeless, but it is not something complete in itself (e.g. *l’art pour l’art* or art for art’s sake). Rather, the gesture is the expression and manifestation of the potentiality of the means: a pure and endless mediality or a means without ends.³⁶¹ According to Agamben, it is only this way, that the obscure Kantian expression ‘purposiveness without purpose’ acquires a concrete meaning. Such a paradoxical finality in the realm of means (pure and endless mediality or a means without ends) ‘is that power of the gesture that interrupts the gesture in its very being-means and only in this way can exhibit it.’ The gesture allows the emergence of the being-in-a-medium of human beings, and thus it opens up the political and poetic dimensions to them.³⁶²

To conceive exhibitions and curated projects as flirtatious gestures is to think about them as material enactments of Kant’s formula ‘purposive without purpose.’ This suggests to practice curating as means in view of an end, but simultaneously to practice curating as something complete in itself. In other words, to conceive exhibitions and curated projects as gestures is

³⁵⁹ Giorgio Agamben, ‘Notes On Gesture,’ 55.

³⁶⁰ Ibid., 56.

³⁶¹ Ruth Noack and Roger M. Buergel, ‘Words From an Exhibition,’ 29. Giorgio Agamben, ‘Notes On Gesture,’ 56.

³⁶² Ibid, 57.

to think about them as something in between poetics (a metaphor) and political action. In Simmelian terms these would be places where the distinction between reality and illusion become *confused*.³⁶³ However, although gestures are kept suspended in and by their own mediality (they are means without end) it does not mean they cannot become the medium of the creation of something new—new art forms, new connections, new possibilities, new knowledges. Gestures are suspended in their own mediality but they have an effect and multiple resonances within the real world.

³⁶³ Ruth Noack and Roger M. Buergel, 'Words From an Exhibition,' 29.

Part 4. *We Are Having a Little Flirt*

Artists: Adam Christensen, Monica Espinosa, Anneke Kampman, Erica Scourti.

Venue: Pump House Gallery, London, United Kingdom, SW11 4NJ.

Dates: 25 April – 8 July 2018

Total visitors: 2,057.

Supported by Arts Council of England, Wandsworth Council, the Embassy of Mexico in the UK.

Co-curated with Ned McConnell.

This penultimate part of the chapter includes descriptive and interpretative text about the project *We Are Having a Little Flirt* carried out in 2018. It includes images, description and analysis of the artworks presented by the four artists.

This project originated from a shared desire to explore poetic latencies and political potentialities in artistic flirtations. The driving energy that motivated the creation of this project was a collective yearning to not ignore nor diminish the intermediate, deficient, and in-between ontology that characterises this gesture. The purpose (without purpose) was to test the artistic and transgressive power, examine the discursive significance, and to produce little gestures of transformation caused by flirtation. With a playful mood, *We Are Having a Little Flirt* attempted to recognise the value of small everyday affective exchanges. With a perverse attitude, the project attempted to test the critical and creative temporalised and spatialised effects of the ‘psychological deviation’ that attract flirts, inviting the public to sign-in an implicit contract and join by playing the game.

The curatorial framework invited artists to flirt in three different forms. First, by thematising flirtation. Second, by utilising flirtation as a material for artistic production. Third, by creating conditions for flirtatious encounters to occur. In addition, there was an interest in testing how flirtation could penetrate the space of the exhibition and the minds and bodies of visitors. Based on this framework, the artists explored the complexities and power within the oscillatory temporality of flirtation through their own singular entry points; embracing aspects of love, affection, sexuality, seduction and desire. They also addressed aspects of

awkwardness, ridiculousness and vulnerability, together with aspects about the erotic effects of flirtation, such as enchantment, fantasy, amusement and illusion.

As previously noted, *We Are Having a Little Flirt* unfolded in two different formats: one installed exhibition in the physical space of the gallery, and one public programme of events carried out in different instances though the three-month duration of the project. The artworks installed in the gallery varied from textiles, drawings, collage, ready-made objects, printed text and sculptures, to other less visible art-forms, such as sound, voice, vibration, music, and other sensorial art-forms. The artworks presented in the events programme embraced public actions, performances and other ephemeral artistic gestures.

The art gallery and its settings provided specific conditions for the occurrence of flirtatious encounters. The communal realm of Battersea Park and the public space of Pump House Gallery became a playground whereby games could unfold. In these settings, players could imagine the existence of multiple plots and generate fantasies about alternative lives. Strangers fed their imagination with erotic provocations, affective invitations and sexual insinuations produced by works of art. In a sense, the idea of domesticated nature within the park acted as an allegory of the paradoxes involved in curating and mediating the contingent and aleatory temporality of the flirtatious encounter.³⁶⁴

The building is an old Victorian refurbished pump house. It has a very particular vertical architectural configuration divided in three floors. With regards to the layout of the artworks, each artist had a room-space allocated for their own individual flirtations. The erect structure of the building gave the exhibition a ritualistic atmosphere, produced by the inevitable necessity to ascend (to climb up through the stairs) whilst walking the exhibition route. Playing with these architectural conditions, the display strategy was conceived as a spatialised metaphor of the stages of Eros the Mediator—Plato's transitional process of the 'erotic ascent' or 'ladder of love,' along with Ovid's sequence of the five lines of love (Look, Talk, Touch, Kiss, Coitus). In other words, the artworks exhibited in each room of the ascending vertical old pump house, were conceived as an ascending sequence of artistic

³⁶⁴ Lisa Blackman looks into these problematics in her research concerning the curation of affect and mediated forms of intimacy. She asks how to design an exhibition with which its publics feel a sense of connection but do not overly recognise the choreography and mediation of the experience (Lisa Blackman, *Affect, Mediation and Subjectivity-as-Encounter: Finding the Feeling of the Foundling*, 39-40).

discourses about flirtation, or a single spatialised collective metaphor of the progressive stages of flirtation.

The first step of these series of stages was taken by Adam Christensen, who inaugurated the exhibition with a pair of theatrical curtains, installed in the ground floor (Fig. 15-16). Christensen addressed issues around gender, non-normative sexuality, fluency and queering time. The second step was made by Erica Scourti, who presented an interactive virtual sound-piece, mounted in the staircase (Fig. 19-20). Scourti adopted aspects of power games in intimate relationships, flirting online, control and the politics of desire, intersections between the screen and the skin, the digital and the human. The third step was taken by Monica Espinosa, who created a sound sculpture and video, located in the first floor (Figs. 22-23-24-25). Espinosa explored issues around contingency, the power of the secret, rituals merging bureaucratic procedures and magical invocations. The fourth step was made by Anneke Kampman, who produced an installation which consisted of two monitors displaying a two-channel video work, placed on the second floor (Fig. 28-29). Kampman focussed on aspects of the image, the voice and other forms of communication in relation to seduction and alienation, and the sexualisation of female bodies. Finally, the fifth and culminating step, was taken by an exposition of works made by the four participating artists, located in the top floor (Figs. 30-31). The intention of the climaxing communal space was to produce a flirtatious visual grouping of artworks, where concepts, ideas, desires, affections and perversions gestured to one another.



Fig. 15. Adam Christensen, *oh-no, a-hole*. Installation view, 2018. Photo: Eoin Carey, Pump House Gallery.



Fig. 16. Adam Christensen, *oh-no, a-hole*. Installation view, 2018. Photo: Eoin Carey, Pump House Gallery.

Adam Christensen is a Danish artist based in London. Working with performance, text, sound, installation and textile, Christensen's practice explores issues around desire and affect, sexuality, gender, memory and identity. They explore these issues by combining material taken from their personal experience, chance encounters, and fiction. The artist's contributions to this exhibition consisted of an installation made of two curtains, fabricated with red textile, which were hung across a steel frame in the ground floor at the entrance of the gallery (Fig. 15-16). These two curtains depicted two naked characters which, in an expressive and performative flirtatious attitude.

One in front of the other, they gave the impression of being in a sort of erotic dance. The insinuated movement of their bodies together with the undulating materiality and waving condition of the curtains themselves, produced a kind of vibratory or oscillatory atmosphere within the space. These curtain-characters combined to produce a strong yet fragile presence. The sensation of strength could be perceived in the intensity of the red colour, together with the bodily postures and gestures of the characters. A feeling of fragility was present in the care and delicacy of the hand sowed work. Installed at the entrance of the gallery, Christensen's dual pieces acted as a dramatic strategy for introducing the exhibition as a whole, performing the symbolic role of theatrical gateways to the spaces that followed.



Fig. 17. Adam Christensen, *Boy with a Dragon T-Shirt*, 2018. Photo: Eoin Carey, Pump House Gallery.

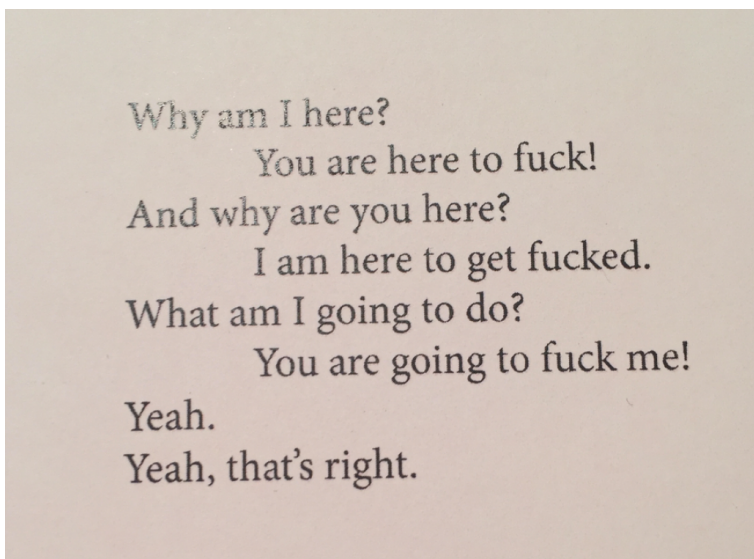


Fig. 18. Adam Christensen, *Boy with a Dragon T-Shirt*, detail, 2018.

In addition to this, the artist presented written records of their explicit sexual encounters (Figs. 17-18). The texts are both funny and painful to listen to or to read. They narrate real anecdotes but also fantasies, desires and fictions. The past encounters described in these texts portray queer and weird material, combining chance encounters but also ongoing games of those playful power dynamics of consent and negation which are also characteristic of kink and BDSM practices. Christensen's written records furthermore expose the kind of desire that linger in the intermediate state between having and not-having. They are explicit, raw and at times grotesque, but they are also passionate and emotive. Likewise, similar to Ovid's tales, the artist's anecdotes comprise playful portraits of things that are perverse in contemporary culture; an interplay of humour and pathos interested in carnal desire. In addition, the way in which Christensen shares intimate aspects of their private life, readers and listeners become partners in crime of their secrets. However, beyond their playful, imprudent nature, these texts act as perversions to heteronormative and mainstream sexual conventions.

Christensen's work also exposes non-normative forms of experiencing gender and sexuality. The type of temporality the artist embodies in their performances and in their texts, is a queer temporality; a temporality structured outside conventional organisations of time resulting in 'imaginative life schedules, and eccentric practices,' as Jack (Judith) Halberstam would put it. Thus, taking the form of text, textile and performance, Christensen's work produces not only literally sexual subversions but also subversions to gender stereotypes, queering time, making visible practices which conventionally are excluded from the norms that govern, causing temporal disruptions to normative or heteronormative orders of the calendar.³⁶⁵

³⁶⁵ Jack (Judith) Halberstam contrasts the notion of 'heteronormal time' to 'queer time.' Heteronormal time, they explain, is the middle-class logic of reproductive temporality, which respond to the rationality of family, longevity, risk/safety, and inheritance. Halberstam's queer temporalities (gay, lesbian, transgender) are an outcome of strange temporalities, imaginative life schedules, and eccentric practices which are excluded from the norms that govern. Against conventional organisations of time based on capitalist demands for propulsion and accumulation, queer temporalities pervert hegemonic regimes, such as the object of procreation of heterosexual monogamy. They produce temporal disruptions to the heterosexual narratives. Jack (Judith) Halberstam, 'Queer Temporality and Postmodern Geographies.'



Fig. 19. Erica Scourti, *Slip Tongue*. Installation view, 2018. Sound, live feed of WhatsApp and chat archive. Photo: Eoin Carey, Pump House Gallery.



Fig. 20. Erica Scourti, *Slip Tongue*. Installation view, 2018. Sound, live feed of WhatsApp and chat archive. Photo: Eoin Carey, Pump House Gallery.

Erica Scourti is a Greek artist and writer living between London and Athens. She is interested in using contingency, humour and lo-fi media as means to address matters of affect, labour, consumption and subjectivity. She is also concerned with exploring archives of everyday life, and their effect in the formation of personal and collective narratives. Her contribution to the exhibition had a less visible presence. It consisted of a responsive sound-installation made of sensors and speakers inconspicuously placed in different areas throughout the internal staircase of the gallery (Figs. 19-20). The sounds were activated when sensors detected visitors passing through. They played recordings from the WhatsApp chat archives from her own phone and those of her close friends. The voices of these recordings were digitally reconstructed.

Slip Tongue mixed sound, text, voice and virtual material. The artist wanted to test the role digital technology plays in both surveillance and the tracking of human affection, its invisibility, how it penetrates the body, and its effects on social interactions. Scourti was furthermore interested in reflecting about the boundaries between personal/private experience and what is public. She also wanted to explore issues surrounding the use of social media as a public diary, the internet as a hub to express desire for affection, virtual forms of therapy and how desire operates through connecting with others online.

The messages displayed were messages of love, desire, sex, and other forms of intimacy. These messages were communicated with the sense of anxiety and paranoia, but also with the feeling of thrill and pleasure, experienced in flirting online. Scourti furthermore considered issues around networking, tricks, skills and tactics to flirt with others, share affect and bond online. In other words, how to play games in the virtual domain.

This piece in particular embraced issues of oscillating temporality amidst opposite poles by considering the tension between the seeming transitory nature of the internet, social media, and mobile phones along with the more permanent recording and archiving functions of these media. In addition to this, Scourti's work also examined contingency in relation to the aleatory or chance encounters, or the contingency of flirtatious encounter: the piece activated according to the random movement of visitors, making us participants and active components of the artwork. The use of motion activated sound intended to be a provocation for the audience to interact: to make the first move or to start the conversation. Finally, this piece

emphasised the importance of the body—movement, its moment and presence—and its connection to the screen, touch, the archive, and the virtual.



Fig. 21. Erica Scourti, *Soft Touch*. Tracing paper, wet wipes, lip balm, pen 2018. Photo: Eoin Carey, Pump House Gallery.

This two-dimensional piece explores the intersections between the human body and technology, or material and discursive connections between ‘the skin’ and ‘the screen.’ This image was hung at the top floor of the gallery, portraying a selfie combined with text, which the artist made on her mobile phone. It was printed on tracing paper and wet wipes, with the aim of emphasising the idea of technology and its literal proximity to the body. Scourti furthermore expanded on her investigation of transparency and embarrassment: the work was itself semi-transparent, it was possible to see through it, acting as a metaphor for the boundaries between awkward aspects of personal life and public images posted in social media platforms. In addition to this, she exposes issues around the female body and its representation in the virtual domain, more particularly, the self-exploitation of the user’s own images—selfies—in relation to exposure and vulnerability.



Fig. 22. Monica Espinosa, *Secrets*, 2018. Installation view, 2018. Photo: Eoin Carey, Pump House Gallery.



Fig. 23. Monica Espinosa, *Secrets*, 2018. Installation view, 2018. Photo: Eoin Carey, Pump House Gallery.



Fig. 24. Monica Espinosa, *Secrets*, 2018. Installation view, 2018. Photo: Eoin Carey, Pump House Gallery.



Fig. 25. Monica Espinosa, *Secrets*, 2018. Installation view, 2018. Photo: Eoin Carey, Pump House Gallery.

When entering into the first floor of the gallery, visitors encountered two pieces made by **Monica Espinosa**. The first of these pieces, *Secrets* (Figs. 22-23) was a sound sculpture, combining space and vibration. It explored the expressive possibilities of the materiality of sound and the sensuality of uttered secrets. *Secrets* consisted of a stepladder and a bucket filled with water. The bucket contained a speaker connected to a device located on the top of the stepladder and played recordings of the artist's secrets. As the liquid absorbed and muffled the sound, visitors needed to move closer to listen to the messages that transformed into subtle waves passing through the water (Figs. 24-25). The constant movement of the water gave the impression that that the piece was an animate, breathing object.

Espinosa's piece had a close linkage to Simmel's analysis of secrecy, paradoxically exposing those contents of life which cannot be exhibited in a complete exposure, and therefore need to be concealed. However, as Simmel explains, the secret offers the possibility of a second world alongside the lived world. By purposively hiding and masking information (which took the material form of waves passing through water), Espinosa's work somehow teased visitors, feeding their imagination and their curiosity. In a way, it could be said that it displayed the power of secrecy to produce an immense enlargement of life; intensifying the unknown. *Secrets* acted as an incitement to listeners and viewers to become accomplices of its own (erotic) secrets, instigating an invitation for an implicit agreement of complicity or suggesting the signing in of an unspoken contract.

Further, in a very subtle manner, visitors could sense the artist's secrets as invisible oscillations of information penetrating their bodies. It was possible to feel her murmurs, sense her messages, and to perceive the words that were enunciated through the speakers inside the bucket. *Secrets* enveloped viewers in its own aural pulsations, undertones and whispers. Further, although Espinosa's secrets were recorded in an aleatory process of free association of thought, and without a script, it seemed as if the piece was making some kind of invocation, uttering some sort of prophecy and sorcery, casting a magical spell (spelling words of attraction and desire). Similar to Diotima's description of spirits translating and

carrying messages, Espinosa's *Secrets* constructed a manifestation of Eros as the one who dwells and rejoices in desire.

Finally, one of the many secrets that Espinosa's piece may have revealed to viewers and listeners, was a cited flirtation or invocation of George Brecht. Brecht's *Drip Music*, 1962 (Fig. 26), was a performance which similarly embraced aspects of chance, free association of thought, and the aleatory in its simultaneous production and public display. Brecht's piece, analogous to Espinosa's, invites its audience to pay attention to little details which are part of everyday life, such as the messages that might be revealed through the sound of dripping water.

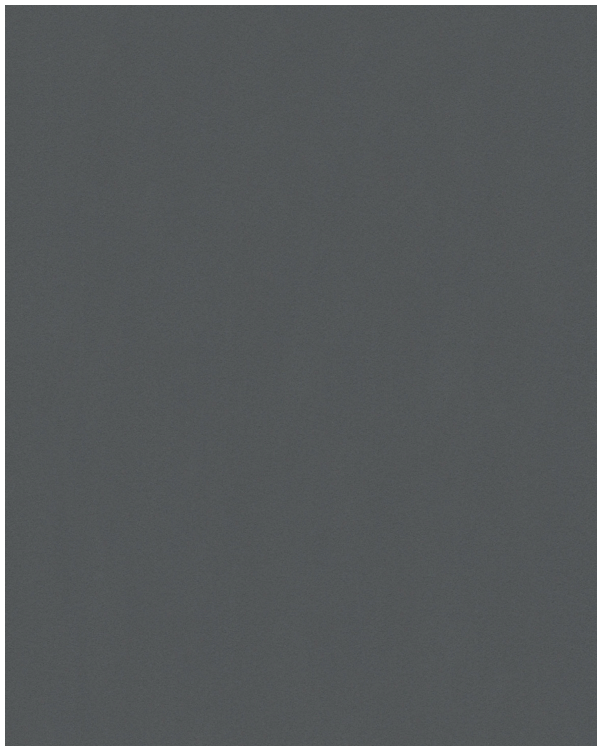


Fig. 26. George Brecht, *Drip Music*, performed by Dick Higgins, 1962. Photo: Moma.org



Fig. 27. Monica Espinosa, *Copula*, 2018. Installation view, 2018. Photo: Eoin Carey, Pump House Gallery.

Espinosa's video *Copula* (Fig. 27) was projected next to *Secrets*. *Copula* is a video made on the beach of Matehuala in Mexico. It captures the artist's attempt to flirt with fireflies one night during their copulation season. The video was made in collaboration with the artist's sister, who hid in the bushes while turning a lamp on and off to attract fireflies. According to Espinosa, the process of filming the fireflies was a kind of dance. This improvised dance was caused by the naivety of an awkward human language in collaboration with the insects. The artist was interested in the awkwardness of pretending to 'talk' to them through signs produced by light. However, through that naivety and clumsiness they responded to her call. This was a kind of eroticism because of the copulation season and her flirtations with the fireflies.



Fig. 28. Anneke Kampman, *Dead. Air. Management.* Video Still, 2018. Photo: Anneke Kampman.



Fig. 29. Anneke Kampman, *Dead. Air. Management.* Installation view, 2018. Photo: Eoin Carey, Pump House Gallery.

Anneke Kampman is a multidisciplinary artist based in the UK. Working primarily with text, music and moving image, she is interested in exploring the role of contemporary art within cultural industries, and the global circulation of popular music. Designed as an ‘essay-come-operetta,’ Kampman’s piece, created for this exhibition, addressed flirtation through an investigation of the music video genre. The piece was also meant to test the possible bonds between sculpture, image, sound and space.

Dead. Air. Management consisted of a video featuring three ‘lip-synched performances,’ together with footage from pop music videos (from musicians such as Taylor Swift, Lana Del Rey and Shakira). The video was split between two timelines. These timelines were displayed on two separate monitors, which were placed in the middle of the room on the second floor of the gallery (Figs. 28-29). Each video had its own internal visual rhythm. In audio terms, there was one single script and one single track, which played for both timelines. The track combined music, sounds and readings from an off-screen narrator.

Similar to Christensen’s pair of curtains, Kampman’s pair of monitors were placed flirting one in front of the other. In order to be able to see the split video piece, visitors needed to stand in the middle of the twosome. Forced to stand in such position, they had to move their heads from one side to the other. The intention of making visitors move their heads in such a way (and potentially make them feel dizzy), was to somehow embrace them as part of the work—to flirt with them. The intention was also to play with them by forcing them to perform the characteristic swinging from one side to the other of flirtatious oscillations.

The title *Dead. Air. Management* contained an indirect hint to radio (broadcasting), emphasising the role and power of the human voice. The artist wanted to test how this power intensifies when words are pronounced through singing, and especially when accompanied by musical instruments. Furthermore, by investigating aspects of mediation, and the unwritten rules that establish digitally produced worlds, Kampman’s work explicitly addressed the intimate, evocative and dangerous affair that flirtation maintains with seduction. The images shown in the video exposed how flirtation borrows the language of seduction in a ‘citational’ fashion. She researched marketing strategies utilised in the construction of audio-visual landscapes within the music industry, to make a criticism of the exploitation of female bodies. These bodies appear highly sexualised and objectified. She questioned the modes with which these corporate tools affect the configuration of today’s

erotic language. This piece acted as a critique to systems of codification around sexuality and other forms of intimacy in the production, reproduction and capitalisation of seduction in today's popular culture.



Figs. 30. Top floor (installation view). Photo: Eoin Carey, courtesy Pump House Gallery.



Figs. 31. Top floor (installation view). Photo: Eoin Carey, courtesy Pump House Gallery.

Part 5. *Flirtation With(out) End*

By me things future, past and present are revealed;
I shape the harmony of songs and strings.
Sure are my arrows, but one surer still
Has struck me to the heart, my carefree heart.
The art of medicine I gave the world
And all men call me 'Healer;' I possess
The power of every herb. Alas! That love
No herb can cure, that skills which help afford
To all mankind fail now to help their lord!³⁶⁶

I curated this chapter in two different formats: this written component, and an exhibition and public programme that was carried out in 2018. This written chapter started with a comparative analysis of Eros (Love) according to Plato and Ovid. It followed an overview of the emergence of the term 'flirtation,' its role in historical and contemporary popular culture, and a critique of structures of power and desire that condition rules of social erotic games. It then presented an analysis of the foundational ideas about flirtation and the notion of 'oscillation,' in accordance with Georg Simmel. This was followed by curatorial interpretation of flirtation conceived as 'gesture' in relation to the Kantian formula 'purposive without purpose.' The final section re-staged the installed exhibition through images, as well as descriptive and analytical text of the artworks.

As previously explained, the practice and concept of flirtation has its origin in the Greco-Roman mythological figure of Eros. Although flirtation has been ignored, disparaged and derided in various instances and forms, it maintains creative, transgressive principles and transformative power inherited from the Eros who Ovid had portrayed in the year 8 AD. In the above excerpt from *Apollo and Daphne*, Apollo is purposely arrowed by Eros. The great warrior, powerful god of the sun, medicine, prophecy and reason, is consumed by an intense feeling of lust towards the young nymph. Apollo becomes intoxicated by the looks of Daphne, losing self-control and even ridiculed by his own body. Escaping from Apollo, in

³⁶⁶ Publius Ovidius Naso, 'Apollo and Daphne,' *Metamorphoses* (Book I), 16.

the very moment in which he touches her, the nymph transforms into a laurel tree. In the poem, Ovid once again illustrates the power of Eros to alter the order of calendrical time, subvert hierarchies, transform bodies and change the very nature of living beings. The harmonious shape of ‘things future, past and present,’ which the god of sun has control over, turn into chaos. The straight trajectory of his arrow is queered. Instead of possessing Daphne, he becomes possessed by his own lust.

In this chapter, I have exposed a curatorial investigation of the type of temporality that the flirtatious gesture embodies and its effects in theory and practice. As previously argued, flirtation is a discontinuous type of temporality that consists in provoking attraction and desire through an erotic playful oscillation that swing back and forth, incessantly and rhythmically, between affirmative and negative potentialities. This oscillation creates a space of ambiguity and generates resistance. In this space of ambiguity and resistance is where the poetic and political counter-power of flirtation is to be found.

Flirtation is about playing and erotic exchanges. It is fun, creative and it is itself attractive. However, it is also political. As Ovid makes it explicitly clear, it produces metamorphosis, it yields changes. Ovid utilised metaphor as a literary resource to make a criticism to Caesar Augustus’ conservative regime, his normative policies and his repressed morals reforms. The Ovidian Eros is therefore political due to the messages that his poems communicate and embody as metaphor. Further, throughout history the powers of Eros have been recognised to pervert the norms of conventional society, as well as revealing its capacity to challenge authority. The power of play has also been recognised to paralyze and destroy the calendar as well as to subvert hierarchies and transgress social orders. It has even been recognised by its therapeutic effects in healing past damages. The use of wit in the absurd or ridiculous has been utilised to critique conservative and normative ideologies.³⁶⁷

³⁶⁷ Other practices that consider the power of play and Eros, and therefore maintain a relation with flirtation include: Herbert Marcuse and Normal O. Brown, who recognised the power of Eros to subvert the norms of conventional society (Amelia Jones, ‘Introduction,’ 22). Ruth Noack and Roger M. Buerger, who acknowledged the power of laughter to subvert authority and act as gestures in exhibitions (Ruth Noack and Roger M. Buerger ‘Words From an Exhibition,’ 30). Giorgio Agamben, who considered the acceleration of time in playland, resulting in the paralysis and destruction of the calendar as well as the suspension or subversion of social hierarchies, and license of every kind (Giorgio Agamben, ‘In Playland, Reflections on History and Play,’ 67-68). Finally, Melanie Klein, who elaborated the psychoanalytic theory of play in the development of individual identities and experiences in children, as well as the therapeutic power of play in the treatment of trauma (Deborah P. Britzman, ‘Melanie Klein, Early Analysis, Play, and the Question of Freedom,’ 47-56).

As suggested, flirtation has its origins in the Platonic and the Ovidian Eros. Flirtation does not engage with the essence Eros in its entirety, but it does encompass fundamental aspects of it. In other words, flirtation is a 'little' gesture of Eros and therefore a 'little' manifestation of the transgressive powers of Eros. Although the flirtatious gesture is embodied in 'little' smiles, and while it unfolds in 'little' moments of everyday life, it produces 'little' changes ('little' metamorphosis, such as the rising of cortisol or adrenaline within the body). Although these 'little' changes happen in 'little' moments within the regular order of time, they are also profound and meaningful. They are expressions of the value of ephemeral and aleatory encounters within everyday social activities and shared experiences.

Furthermore, the 'intermediate' nature or deficiency that characterises this gesture, fuels desire and motivates individuals. Flirtation opens up a contingent zone of indeterminacy, which is linked to agency and the creative act. As explained in this chapter, flirtation feeds the imagination and therefore can be transformed into a source of creative energy and empowerment in curatorial and artistic activities. As an example, Adam Christensen produced his artwork in response to a desire to reconnect with an ex-boyfriend. Christensen utilised the impossibility to obtain that other person. He transformed the lack from his unfulfilled yearning into creative energy in the production of the artwork itself. Once again, this in-between ambiguous condition amidst having (knowledge) and not-having (ignorance) inspires action.

To give another example (which connects with the previous chapter), Nietzsche referred to the power of art in its connection to desire, illusion and the sublime. He recognised that 'knowledge kills action; action requires the veils of illusion.'³⁶⁸ Simmel himself also compared the power of flirtation (in its oscillating rhythm, swinging back and forth between reality and illusion) to the power of art. Flirtation and the illusions it creates, thus can be argued as the driving energy which influences not only creative work but also the establishment and continuation of ideological structures and cultural institutions.³⁶⁹ Therefore, this 'little' poetic gesture is inherently political. A creative act is a political act because it holds power that motivates action. In other words, a creative act is a political act because it produces changes. These changes can occur on subjective levels but also

³⁶⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 23.

³⁶⁹ Amelia Jones, 'Introduction,' 12.

culturally, ideologically and structurally. Thus, flirtation, in its close connection to the ambiguous, desire and illusion, also motivates individuals in the production of methods, systems, institutions, but also politics, art, philosophy or curatorial projects.

Furthermore, flirtation stimulates and supports the collective imagination. It provokes the occurrence of suggestive exchanges and other forms of embodied communication. This allows for the conversion of a type of currency which is not part of reproductive economies. An oscillation constitutes an alternative economy in its non-acquisitive and non-teleological agenda (it is an intermediary state between or ‘yes’ and ‘no’ or a resistance moving between the edges amidst possession and non-possession). As explained in the chapter, flirtation differs from seduction in the sense that it does not aim to a final outcome, but rather it is interested only in the pleasure of the game itself.

Flirtation therefore adds to those curatorial efforts to produce ‘interstices,’ as described by Karl Marx, offering other trading possibilities than those in effect within the capitalist system—where time is experienced outside its systematic regular orders.³⁷⁰ It thus entails the perversion of norms and subversion of hierarchical arrangements, in social orders within curatorial calendars and the art system. As previously mentioned, these initiatives consider the materiality of the gesture as art form. Flirtation is part of these types of non-reproductive economies. The type of exchanges it involves are inter-subjective, embodied, suggestive and ephemeral. It gives importance to the present moment—emphasising its erotic intensity—whilst it focuses on the value and transformative power of ‘little’ encounters. Desire is the currency, social bonds the profit, and playfulness the added value.

Finally, the poetic and political aspects of flirtation can be found in its non-teleological agenda and the type of temporality it inhabits: a temporality which proceeds as a paradoxically suspended process of its own ongoing process. As seen in this chapter, this mode of understanding temporality has been considered in curatorial discussions around exhibitions as gestures or pure means. These types of gestures belong to the sphere of those means that emancipate themselves from their relation to an end, while still remaining means.

³⁷⁰ As explained in the introduction of this thesis, in order to elaborate on his *Relational Aesthetics*, Nicolas Bourriaud borrowed the term ‘interstices’ from Karl Marx. Marx, for his part, appropriated this term from Epicurus, who elaborated on the notion of the *intermundia* or spaces between deferent worlds: in-between economies with no influence on the course of human affairs. (Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 6. Karl Marx, ‘Chapter 1: Commodities,’ 172-173.)

In other words, exhibitions and curatorial projects conceived as gestures or flirtations are means without end: they are intensified and embellished gestures kept suspended in and by their own mediality, however they allow new creative and critical possibilities to open up. They play with the edges of reality and illusion but they nonetheless have multiple resonances within the real world.

Conclusion

This thesis condenses years of commitment to theorising and practicing contingency, anachronism and flirtation as forms of curatorial research. This period of investigation and experimentation has involved the creation of one written thesis, the production of three exhibitions, one public programme, the non-production of one curated project, one residency, and by extension, the articulation of a series of theoretical and practical arguments. Above all, this sustained intellectual activity has produced a series of encounters, whose temporality reflects the ambiguous or quantitative measure conceived as chronological time. These have been profound and meaningful. On the basis of these encounters, a core premise about ‘curating time’ has flourished, which I will summarise in this conclusion.

The encounter that initiated this process was the acknowledgment of disciplinary and control systems that operate as temporal orders in standardised curatorial processes of the production, documentation and circulation of art. These temporal orders register in the most immediate curatorial rhythms and tempos, such as working hours in institutional time-tables or in the self-regulatory agendas of self-employed curators. This initial encounter inspired me to formulate the argument that the concept of temporality in curating is framed and devised by material and symbolic orders articulated by chronological apparatuses. These orders are the material expression of dominant aesthetic, cultural and ideological discourses. They disregard temporalities that do not fit into their time-scales and agendas.

In order to formulate this argument, it was necessary to make a juxtaposition between the practicalities of such temporal orders with Michel Foucault’s theory of the materiality of discourse. He utilises the concept of ‘discourse’ to designate systems of power and structures of desire that enforce particular orders for validating truth and knowledge. Foucault argues that discourse should be treated as a discontinuous event, since it is always at the level of materiality that it takes effect. Only when treated as such, discourse may act as a force of resistance or a starting point for subversive strategies. In its treatment as a discontinuous event, discourse may be re-directed to strike and invalidate dominant orders, and thus inaugurate pluralities that produce differences.³⁷¹

³⁷¹ Michel Foucault, ‘The Order of Discourse,’ 69. As explained in the introduction, in the realm of curatorial practice and theory, authors such as, Mieke Bal, Bruce W. Ferguson, Paul O’ Neill, Dorothee Richter, and Mick Wilson have also taken into account Foucault’s approach to discourse in their own critique of its inherent ideologies and material rhetorics. They look into to rhetoric imbricated in institutions, exhibitions and curatorial projects, considering them as discourses, utterances, statements and forms of material speech (Mieke Bal, ‘The

Foucault also addresses technologies of time-discipline that establish rhythms and temporal norms, while also imposing schemas of behaviour. These technologies—such as the ordering of temporalities in curatorial processes of production, documentation and the circulation of art—discipline social action and control human activity. Through their effective implementation, bodies are maintained in control together with their internal rhythms and tempos, and subjective experiences.³⁷² Therefore, the temporal orders that curators obey in the most immediate curatorial economies set the constraints by which the concept of temporality is defined within curatorial thought and practice. These temporal orders are modifiable and in perpetual displacement but they are reinforced by systems of power which impose and renew them and act in a constraining and sometimes violent way.³⁷³

Based on this encounter, my proposal emerged to investigate the discursive significance and material consequences of three non-synchronous temporalities. I wanted to re-cover their value, re-claim their function, and re-write their meaning. The three temporalities I encountered in this process are contingency, anachronism and flirtation. I encountered each through what might be considered, under the dominant discourses of time, to be minor details. Firstly, contingency appeared in the ten or fifteen percent of funds designated to unaccounted expenses or incidentals in curatorial budget templates—contingencies are seen as threats or potential accidents that must be avoided. Secondly, anachronism revealed itself in irregularities and irrelevances in art historical narratives—they are perceived as ‘insignificant details’ which are required to be revised, corrected and amended. Thirdly, flirtation surfaced in small involuntary gestures of attraction and desire, coming out in aleatory moments of social interaction—it is regarded as a triviality, either ignored, ridiculed or repressed.³⁷⁴

Discourse of the Museum,’ 201-218. Bruce W. Ferguson ‘Exhibition Rhetorics, Material Speech and Utter Sense,’ 175-190. Paul O’Neill, ‘The Curatorial Turn: From Practice to Discourse,’ 15-16. Dorothee Richter, ‘Exhibitions as Cultural Practices of Showing – Pedagogics,’ 48-51. Mick Wilson, ‘Curatorial Moments and Discursive Turns,’ 202).

³⁷² As explained in the introduction, although Foucault’s institutional model (elaborated according to disciplinary methods in factories, the army, the military, schools, hospitals, prisons and monastic communities of the industrial period), may appear to be ‘outdated’ to contemporary culture, he also considers self-regulatory procedures, in which individuals enforce temporal schemes of self-regulation in their own practices. These procedures visibly operate in today’s norm-confirmative (and neoliberal) projects of self-development (Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish, The Birth of the Prison*, 152-157. Mona Lilja, ‘The politics of time and temporality in Foucault’s theorisation of resistance: ruptures, time-lags and decelerations,’ 428).

³⁷³ Michel Foucault, ‘The Order of Discourse,’ 52.

³⁷⁴ I also encountered Gilles Deleuze’s argument about ideas that resonate from interdisciplinary joints, which appear from minor details. In these resonances he argues that powerful encounters can occur. In addition, I

However, although these temporalities might pass unnoticed, or might be disregarded by chronological time-scales and agendas, they remain as discontinuities. In other words, even if they are overlooked or considered to be ‘minor,’ they continue to act as disruptions to the rhythms and tempos ordered by chronological apparatuses—dissidents to their inherent material discourses. Contingency, anachronism and flirtation operate as counter-temporalities. Perhaps paradoxically, while they are disregarded by systems of power they, nevertheless, remain inherent to the functions of the realm of power. For this reason, they can unexpectedly, in reverse and wittingly confront, overturn or transverse its orders, forms of control, and social stratifications from within. These are underestimated temporalities, and precisely for that reason they are strategic gateways for challenging temporalised formations of power. They are forces of resistance.

The necessity to investigate contingency, anachronism and flirtation within my project emerged from this very potentiality. I wanted to test the subversive power of these minor details. I wanted to explore their discontinuous potentialities by bringing them into my own curatorial discourse.³⁷⁵ As Foucault explains, only when treated as a discontinuous event, discourse may discourse become a strategy to disrupt dominant orders. As argued before: it is a matter of the counter-power of *caesurae* as that which can break dominant orders and disperse the subject into a plurality of possible positions and functions.³⁷⁶

These encounters guide me to the two main questions of this thesis. Firstly, how to conceive, practice, and experience contingency, anachronism and flirtation in the curatorial register? Secondly, what arguments can these concepts disclose and perform in written and exhibited forms? In order to address these questions, I approached them through contingent, anachronistic and flirtatious political and poetic time-scales and agendas.

encountered Elizabeth Freeman’s large and small anachronisms, which she identifies in erotic encounters with ‘silly details.’ These anachronisms constitute fragments and oscillations of queer pasts, and bring out latent dreams and lost power, which are dwelling within those ‘silly details’ (Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds, Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories*, xvii).

³⁷⁵ Foucault argues: ‘discourse is an instrument and an effect of power, but it is also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy.’ ‘Discourse,’ he writes, ‘transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it.’ (Michel Foucault, ‘The Will to Knowledge,’ 96).

³⁷⁶ Michel Foucault, ‘The Order of Discourse,’ 48-77.

On the one hand, the political time-scale of this thesis led me to discern that these three interventions can suspend, anachronize and pervert dominant orders of time: contingency produces a suspension to the mechanistic course of the capitalised curatorial economy of time; anachronism causes disjunctures in the chronological apparatuses that order tempos, rhythms and processes of life; flirtation yields an oscillation that transverses social stratifications and perverts conservative and normative rules of behaviour that persist in the art calendar.³⁷⁷

On the other hand, the poetic agenda of this PhD, has allowed me to transfer, intensify and embellish their theoretical meaning as curated material and embodied metaphors. In the First Chapter, the tension between the Being (true) and not-Being (not-true) of contingency took the material form of an empty sheet of paper. In the Second Chapter, the out-of-jointness of anachronism manifested as artistic materialities and embodied experience in two exhibitions and one residency. In the Third Chapter, the oscillation between affirmative and negative potentialities of flirtation was gesticulated as playful and erotic exchanges in one exhibition and an event's public programme.

This thesis has incorporated both political and poetic time-scales and agendas developed along with the already sketched counter-chronological paces, durations and speeds of this research. These have unfolded as an extension of a series of chance, delayed and erotic encounters. Both approaches have ultimately allowed for the awakening of the dormant potential of the three temporalities—their paradoxes, resistances and perversions. Consequently, political and poetic time-scales and agendas have led to the actual unlocking of unknown potentials, the concrete construction of new paths and the material production of possibilities for thinking and practicing time in curation. These unknown potentials, new paths and possibilities materialised in three chapters. In the following sections, I will present a summary of the findings and outcomes produced in this process, including reflections on the development of ideas and practice of this thesis.

³⁷⁷ Here I am outlining the most distinctive feature of each counter-temporality. However, as shown in each chapter, there are other formal and conceptual interrelations, juxtapositions and cohesions between their discursive significances and material effects.

Contingency

The encounter that inspired this chapter occurred accidentally with the element of contingency that exists at the end of lists of costs in curatorial budget templates. Located in Excel spreadsheets, this element takes the form of yellow cells and orange columns that indicate ten or fifteen percent of funds, and designate unwanted and unknown events. What I have shown is that within such stressed and anxious coloured calculation boxes, contingency is utilised as a control procedure and it has two functions: it is preventative and reparative. While it is utilised as a practical tool to avoid accidents and unplanned scenarios that might happen in the future, it is also employed as a strategy to recuperate from unforeseen damages as though they have already occurred.

In this context, the element of contingency reveals that there is a fear of discontinuities in the calculated and mechanistic course of time. Nevertheless, behind the practical teleology of these procedures there is a struggle with power-discourse, and a complicated net of chronological apparatuses, programming the values and formulas that condition the material becoming of curatorial ideas. These procedures also set the parameters by which time is produced, distributed and consumed. Under the rules and logic of these values and functions time becomes capitalised, taking the material role of time-wage numbers and the symbolic form of time-management agendas.

Miscellaneous results of these sums and subtractions include the management of art as entertainment and mass culture, a busy art calendar linked to the fear of missing out rather than genuine interest or sincere desire to nourish aesthetic needs. Other assorted results include the phenomenon of 'high-performance,' the devaluation of latencies, the depreciation of creative thinking and the bureaucratisation of unexplored potentials. This culminates in imbalances in the art world, the abuse of power, and the formation of anxious and aggressive systems and subjects controlling the validation, production and distribution of curatorial truths, values and knowledges. Under these parameters, the meaning of contingency is also avoided, and its significance is devalued.

Researching the philosophical meaning of contingency, I encountered Giorgio Agamben's historical-philosophical investigation on potentiality, metaphysics and political thought. In Agamben's interpretation, contingency is conceived as a form of resistance, a political and

poetic strategy to resist any pre-given norms, or preprogramed values and functions. By juxtaposing Aristotle's 'potential-not-to' and Herman Melville's 'prefer not to,' he recognises the power of contingency to return to an original ontology that which is not determined, or prefers not to be determined, by preprogramed values and functions.³⁷⁸ I committed to a close reading method of the aforementioned authors, and elaborated my own anachronized interpretation of these sources. In addition, I encountered Gilles Deleuze's interpretation of contingency, whose analysis of contingency considers it a zone of indistinction inscribed in Bartleby's mechanistic phrase 'I would prefer not to.'

The argument I determined for this philosophical survey was that contingency is a type of potentiality, and therefore, it is a temporal concept. This temporal concept is characterised by its paradoxical formula: contingency is the capability of something to Be and, simultaneously, not-Be.³⁷⁹ It is located in the tension between potentiality and actuality but also between potentiality and potentiality-not-to. This tension oscillates a paradoxical internal resistance, which is inherent to any act of creation or decreation. In parallel, this theoretical analysis drove me to determine the argument that contingent statements are statements which are capable of articulating two opposed ontological truths at the same time. In other words, contingent statements are the logical semantic possibility of two contrary statements to be true and, at the same time, be not-true. In formulating this definition, I took into account Aristotle's theory of semantic truths, which investigates the linguistic and metaphysical correspondence between spoken sounds, written marks and events, as well as actual things. Therefore, the logical inference of my investigation was that by articulating that which can be true and, at the same time, not-be true, contingent statements trigger a suspension in the passage from potentiality and actuality, but also in the passage between potentiality and potentiality-not-to. They generate a zone of indetermination, aporia, or resistance, which is inherent to acts of creation or decreation.

With regards practice, my proposal consisted of transferring the philosophical meaning I determined in my analysis into the cells and columns of curatorial budgets in Excel Spreadsheets. By doing so, I managed to instrumentalise the concept of contingency. What resulted from this instrumentalisation was the suspension of the passage between actuality,

³⁷⁸ Claire Colebrook, 'Queer Aesthetics,' 30.

³⁷⁹ Giorgio Agamben, 'Bartleby, or On Contingency,' 261. Aristotle, 'Metaphysics,' 1653.

potentiality and potentiality-not-to of curated projects. This suspension entailed, for its part, the suspension of the rhythms and tempos of the capitalised curatorial economy of time. Subsequently, rendering inoperative the values and functions conveyed in time-wages and schedules of standardised curatorial planning procedures.

In terms of actual materialisation of this proposal, I displayed a sheet of paper without any characters and without any ideas in section 05.00 of the chapter. This gesture was made with the intention to exhibit a poetic citation of Aristotle's image of the writing tablet on which nothing yet has been written. The aim was to materialise the argument about the potentiality of language not-to signify or the many ways in which Being or Becoming can be truthfully *not* said. Thus, the material result of practicing—curating—contingency in this chapter was the exposition and suspension of the potentiality-not-to of a curated project. In other words, the practical outcome of this research was the exhibition of the potential to not exhibit—the suspension of the Becoming, or not-Becoming, of an exhibition, idea, or curated event. This outcome was the material product of the articulation of the curatorial statement: 'I would prefer not to,' linked to the actual realisation of the event of suspension and negation of capitalist temporality. The sheet of paper without any characters and without any ideas in section 05.00 of the chapter was therefore the element of practice that my research on contingency paradoxically produced.

This chapter accomplished the conversion of the element of contingency from a control procedure utilised in standardised curatorial economies to avoid future accidents, into a strategy of resistance, capable of suspending time-orders prearranged by values and functions in time-wage numbers and time-management formats. In parallel, this chapter achieved the conversion of the element of contingency from a practical tool for repair of past accidents, into a mechanism of support in processes of resilience from damages already done by the destructive and devouring rhythms and tempos of this economy. The chapter therefore undertook the successful conversion of the miscellaneous element of contingency that appears in budget templates into a conceptual tool of resistance: efficient for suspending the mechanistic course of the capitalised economy of time, and welding an alternative space-time to re-cover devalued potentials in the becoming or not-becoming, of exhibitions, ideas, or curated events. Finally, this alternative space-time offered the possibility to attend the urgency of creative thinking, the necessity of philosophical analysis, and the contingency of intellectual reflection.

Anachronism

The Second Chapter was dedicated to another disregarded temporality: anachronism. I encountered this element in errors in art historical narratives. Anachronism conventionally refers to irregularities in chronological arrangements of time. These include outdated premises and expired concepts, in opposition to modes of life and thought that define a precise historical epoch. In its traditional sense, it is used as a mechanism with which to validate, or else to disapprove historical and aesthetic narratives.

Apart from its quantitative function, however, or its role as a periodisation marker, anachronism has been appropriated by a variety of interdisciplinary approaches as a tool to re-examine values and ideologies imposed upon the concept of time. It has been adopted as a strategy to subvert and challenge the destructive and devouring temporality of Chronos. Anachronism has become operative in post-colonial, de-colonial, feminist and queer discourses and practices in the attempt to repair past injustices, and make visible historically marginalised groups as well as producing alternative histories, methods, and institutions.³⁸⁰

In this chapter, I engaged with the concept of time as the substance of living creatures and the matter of life itself.³⁸¹ In the same breath, beyond a periodisation marker or a validation and evaluation parameter, I developed a commitment to the concept of anachronism as a possibility of becoming: something that permeates the mind and infiltrates the bones inside the human body. Thus, I defined anachronism in this chapter as an embodied temporality which is by definition out-of-joint. Thus, to become anachronistic is to embody temporal irregularity and discontinuity, and to become the human embodiment of the concept itself: an irrelevant living being in the eyes of chronological orders of power and forms of being. In other words, anachronism results from a struggle between antagonist time-forces, namely, the individual's internal temporality and chronological apparatuses ordering tempos, rhythms and processes of life.³⁸²

³⁸⁰ Elizabeth Grosz, *The Nick of Time, Politics, Evolution and the Untimely*, 122.

³⁸¹ As Grosz argues: time is an ontological element, a living matter that inhabits all living beings. It is an internal constitutive feature of life itself (Elizabeth Grosz, 'Nietzsche and Overcoming,' 95-154).

³⁸² Here I considered Foucault's concept of 'biopower,' which he articulates in a critique of the apparatuses that exercise power over processes of life, such as the biological tempos of individuals and societies. Foucault explains that these apparatuses reach as far as controlling dynamics, practices and internal temporal rhythms of living beings (Michel Foucault, 'The Will to Knowledge,' 135-159).

In terms of the theoretical framework, I encountered two concepts which are themselves anachronistic: the contemporary and the untimely, as described by Agamben and Nietzsche respectively. The two philosophers position their anachronism as an experience of out-of-jointness with regards to their own present time. In other words, they mark their anachronism as a disjuncture of the temporality that inhabits living beings, and chronological apparatuses. Agamben argues that contemporaries are the ones who are able to see beyond chronological orders, and have an awareness of their internal temporality. To understand Agamben's contemporary it is important to consider the apparatuses to which it was anachronistic. Similarly, Nietzsche argues that the untimely is the one who can raise the self above historical culture, ruling values and systematic views of history, and thus reconnect with the paces of human life. Likewise, to understand Nietzsche's untimely, it is important to consider the cultural and theoretical apparatuses to which he was also anachronistic.

While unpacking this discourse it was important to acknowledge that Agamben and Nietzsche develop their arguments on the basis of literary and poetic sources. These sources portray violent embodiments of anachronism, by utilising raw, painful and visceral bodily metaphors. For example, Agamben anachronizes Osip Mandelstam's critique of 'the century' from his poem *The Age*, to metaphorically illustrate the various (political, artistic, and philosophical) implications of a contemporary creature who has a wretched spinal cord or disjointed vertebra. Likewise, Nietzsche anachronizes Shakespeare's attention to 'the time' in *Hamlet*, as a literary and poetic resource to metaphorically exemplify the repercussions of an untimely being whose skeleton is disjointed or whose body is out-of-joint.

This observation led me to acknowledge that both Agamben and Nietzsche were separately striving to overcome their epochal and internal anachronisms. By turning to these literary references, both philosophers illustrate artistic enactments of anachronism be the energy that inspires action (the characters they portray actively incise junctures and disjunctures in 'the century' or shatter and weld 'the time'). These enactments (interventions in chronological time) materialise as poetry and performing arts. This encounter with the poetic and political power of the contemporary and the untimely, is what ultimately allowed me to make the juxtaposition of these two concepts within my exhibition projects.

This chapter involved a series of encounters between twelve international artists, two different continents, two art organisations, four main international funding bodies, and the public. The projects curated for Civic Room in Scotland (*Against Time*) and Yamakiwa Gallery in Japan (*By Indirections Find Directions Out*) exposed the concept of anachronism as a series of eventful, relational, site-specific and situated encounters.

Against Time emerged from an observation of anachronistic situations in the urban context of central Glasgow, together with the compound and intertwined oscillatory temporalities pulsating within the space of the nineteenth-century building of the old linen bank. The exhibition wove together a series of conceptual and formal juxtapositions between site-specific installation artworks and architectural, urban, historical, economic and political landscapes. These came together through a series of artistic materialities, including film, photography, sculpture, and performance. The curatorial suggestion was to spatialise a metaphor of the present as a place of encounter between different times and generations. This spatialised metaphor made it possible to think and sense the becoming of different pasts and futures as a series of ‘out-of-joint’ encounters.

In the same vein, *By Indirections Find Directions Out* exposed a series of temporalised junctures and disjunctures between artworks, the venue, the natural environment, ideas, and people. This project shaped a close connection with Nietzsche’s concept of the eternal return of the same, and his recognition of the flow of eternal becoming: a conjuncture where the eternal past and the eternal future co-exist, manifesting in each moment. Artworks were conceived as material expressions of time in never-to-be-completed processes of formation, exposing their own internal pulses, processes and paces. The works shared concerns regarding notions of transformation and alchemy, *karma*, esoteric rituals of protection and healing, psychological or physical metamorphosis, emotional tempos, flux and change, natural cycles and the internal rhythms of human anatomy.

In both practical components, anachronism was displayed and exhibited, as well as embodied and experienced. The exhibition in Scotland was enlivened by visitors to the Glasgow International festival. The project in Japan was animated by the attendance of local residents of the small village of Tokamachi, in the Japanese mountains and countryside. Both settings became places of encounter where people could embody anachronism by experiencing temporal irregularity and discontinuity. These projects articulated the argument that to

experience anachronism in these encounters is to become anachronistic for a short moment of time. They witnessed the transformative experience of becoming anachronistic as lived encounter.

Furthermore, while reflecting on these past encounters, I encountered Nietzsche's own reflections on the transformative power of art, which he investigated through the concept of the inner event, in his efforts to theorise the transcendence of individual moments. Nietzsche had already elaborated on the experiential effects and embodied phenomena produced in art encounters. I transferred a selection of his fragmented notes and remains collected in *The Will to Power* into my own discourse, which led to my argument that the inner event is also the event of becoming anachronistic: it is a self-creating and simultaneous self-destroying event, involving the activation of inner tensions, forces and struggles. This event involves the occurrence of out-of-jointness, implanted by the curator in the visitor's mind and body, in a moment of true connection and profound transmission. Both an intellectually and corporeally transformative phenomenon, this event shatters and welds the individual's own internal temporal structure. It is a violent, raw, embodied and visceral experience, disjoining the interiority of the subject but simultaneously joining the subject with its surroundings and with other (living, dead and unborn) creatures.

Flirtation

The third and final chapter was reserved for the concept and practice of flirtation. I initially considered flirtation to produce a tension between the inexpressible/intangible, and the expressible/tangible. In flirtation the occurrence and non-occurrence of thoughts and affections are realised, demonstrating what Agamben defines as the state of restlessness intrinsic to the creative act. Flirtation is also located on the edge of the passage from potentiality to actuality, and like Aristotle's predictions about future contingents, it states the promise of a future that may or may not occur (a future attachment, a relationship, a sexual encounter). However, it also entails aspects of enchantment, insinuation, amusement and illusion. There is an ambiguous, tacit and suggestive language in flirtation that exposes the intermediate space of possibility and the extensive field of impossibility.

These initial intuitions drove me to make an investigation of the political relevance and the poetic significance of ephemeral and aleatory gestures of flirtation. I formulated the

definition of the concept of flirtation as a gesture of eroticism that is distinguished by a peculiar playfulness. It consists of provoking attraction and desire through a living and rhythmic oscillation between possession and non-possession. This oscillation perverts conservative ideology and transgresses social stratifications in conventional arrangements of time. Flirtation unfolds in ephemeral and aleatory encounters between people, art, places and theory. These encounters occur in the space of exhibitions, curated art events and physical or virtual projects, but also in processes and embodied experience. Although these gestures have the duration of a blink of an eyelid they are profound and meaningful, penetrating the mind and metamorphosing the body.

I curated the chapter in two formats: the written component, and an exhibition and public programme carried out in 2018. The written chapter started with a comparative analysis of Eros (Love) according to Plato and Ovid. It followed an overview of the emergence of the term ‘flirtation,’ its role in historical and contemporary popular culture, and a critique of rules of the game and codes of practice in social orders. I then presented an analysis of the foundational ideas of flirtation and the notion of ‘oscillation,’ in accordance with Georg Simmel. Finally, I considered the political implications the formula ‘purposive without purpose,’ in relation flirtation and the ‘curated (flirtatious) gesture.’ This was based on Giorgio Agamben’s concept of the gesture, which he defines as means without end.

The final part re-staged the practical component. *We Are Having a Little Flirt* investigated the intermediate, deficient, and in-between ontology that characterises the gesture of flirtation. Flirtatious artistic encounters unfolded in various instances and forms, across physical and imagined spaces and time-zones; creating interstices (forms of resistance) within the regular orders of the art calendar. These flirtations were produced between art-objects, visitors, ideas, affections, actual people and absent people, sounds, vibrations and the resonance of theory around the concept of flirtation. The artworks exhibited had different intensities and their own oscillating rhythms, involving performance, moving image, installation, sound, collage, ready-made objects, text, songs, textile, garments, and actions. These artworks produced suggestive exchanges of sensorial, erotic and affective discourses: offering other trading possibilities (non-reproductive, non-teleological) than those in effect within the regular orders of the art calendar. The conclusion focused in the power of flirtation to produce ‘little’ metamorphoses or ‘little’ changes.

Method

This thesis project is the result of a process of theorising and practicing contingency, anachronism and flirtation as modes of curatorial research. It is thus the product of a method of theorising praxis and practicing theory. By merging these two approaches as equal research methods, this thesis project enabled the juxtaposition of a dialogue between a practice-based research and an academic thesis. Practice informed the formulation of my arguments, which I materialised as text. While theory incorporated the enactment of my arguments, which I articulated as curatorial projects. The parallel and co-constitutive processes of conceptualising and practicing contingency, anachronism and flirtation combined the two methodological approaches of theoretical analysis and empirical experience. This PhD project can be defined as ‘theorypractice’ research rather than a practice-based or a purely academic thesis. This has allowed for me to articulate and materialise my arguments both theoretically and practically. I will explore this further in the following sub-headings: *Theory*, *Practice*, and finally the synthesising reflection:

‘Theorypractice’ Curated PhD.

Theory

My theoretical approach took the form of collecting, analysing and anachronizing texts from interdisciplinary frameworks. This allowed me to explore discursive juxtapositions amidst philosophy, art history, sociology, psychoanalysis, literature, visual cultures and curatorial theory, through methods influenced by post-colonial, de-colonial, queer and feminist theory. This interdisciplinary approach was necessary to enable encounters with authors who have thematised and investigated these three notions as subject matters. This approach ultimately provided a theoretical basis for elaborating an independent critique and expanding my own arguments. The incorporation of certain ideas by the selected authors provided an opportunity to become anachronistic, by seizing, intervening and making past or current, yet distant ideas, relevant once again.

Crucially for this thesis I regard the practice of writing as a form of curating. Therefore, the writing process of this PhD involved the materialisation of ideas and arguments in the physical materiality of the text itself. The writing process of this thesis implicated imagining, selecting and arranging a series of elements in the space of the page, such as words,

sentences, paragraphs, images, and other two-dimensional materials. In the same way that an exhibition or curated project is imagined for a particular audience, a text is written for a specific readership. In this way, a theoretical approach is also practical because it involves a curatorial process and it takes the form of written and visual (either virtual or printed) actual matter.³⁸³

Therefore, I conceived this written thesis as an exhibition in itself. This is another strategy by which I practiced—curated—the three counter-temporalities. For this reason, in terms of the physical layout of this written component, I exhibited the three concepts by utilising contingent, anachronistic and flirtatious display strategies. I employed these strategies in the structure of the thesis itself and the type of language utilised (within the compulsory limits of the academic formal requirements). For example, the first chapter was formatted in numbered and sequential sections, making reference to the course of mechanistic time, and the schematising and calculation of different enlisted elements in Excel spreadsheets—also a metaphor for the paradox between contingency or free will and necessity or determinism. Likewise, with the intention to exhibit the out-of-jointness of anachronism, the body of the text of the second chapter was dismembered, joining and disjointing together a diversity of elements. Each element was displayed as a mutilated body-part from a formal materiality. Finally, as a form of stripping the body of the text, the third chapter was uncovered in five separately exposed parts. I also inserted suggestive and explicit formal and conceptual intersections between the theoretical and practical. In addition to this, I also selected, connections between the images included throughout the thesis. In these ways I made visual-textual efforts to incorporate contingency, anachronism and flirtation into the materiality of this PhD, with the intention of re-creating, re-enacting and re-staging these three concepts as formal components of the written argument.

Practice

Focusing on practice, I selected, commissioned and exhibited art from an array of media. The practical research process consisted of interpreting photography, video, painting, sculpture, text, sound, performance, textile, film, drawing, installation, collage, as well as processual art

³⁸³ This idea was inspired by Seth Siegelaub's *One Month* (1969) a playful calendrical publication, which was conceived as the exhibition's primary manifestation. This idea was also inspired by the New Art Practice artists, (1970's), who used books as venues for their work.

pieces. This approach gave access to other sources of knowledge and information, which can only be reached through action and practical experience. These included studio visits, conversations, gatherings, meetings, events, and other activities carried out with people in specific times and places. Through practice, I encountered different contexts and natural environments, different publics, artists, curators, thinkers, cultures, spaces, and funding bodies. While each of these actors owned their own epistemologies and sensitivities, by sharing with me their particular forms of conceiving, practicing and experiencing contingency, anachronism and flirtation, our theoretical positions became cross-fertilised. I also carried out interviews with curators, such as Roger Malbert, who shared some of his curatorial experience, in an encouraging conversation in which he corroborated the importance of creative thinking in all aspects of curatorial practice, including either budgeting or accountancy, as well as researching, writing or installing. Likewise, I interviewed Ruth Noack, who shared her experiences as a curator, and provided valuable references on radical (lesbian de-colonial feminist) academic approaches in the concoction of the borders between theory and practice. She also elaborated on the miscegenation of indigenous shamanism and scholastic methodologies as both research methods and political and poetic statements.

The practical process of this PhD involved the actual materialisation of ideas and arguments in the projects themselves. It entailed waving formal and conceptual correspondences between artworks, objects, text, bodies, light, in particular spaces, to instead forge a collective spatialised and temporalised dialogue. The practical process of this thesis also implicated imagining, selecting and arranging ideas, theories, utterances, discursive meanings and arguments in the space of exhibitions. In the same way that a text is written for a specific readership, an exhibition or curated project is designed for a particular audience. A practical approach is therefore also a theoretical approach because it theorises material discourses, in the (virtual or physical) exhibitionary layouts, and/or other spatialised and temporalised zones of display.

The curated projects were conceived and designed as spatio-temporal settings where the concepts of contingency, anachronism and flirtation were transferred into material art-forms to be exhibited, performed and experienced. With the exception of the first chapter, these projects were curated as time-based installations and live events. They spatialised intensified and embellished conditions by which people could think and sense time as suspended,

disjointed and oscillatory. As previously explained, the intention was to implant the conceptual significance of the three temporalities into the thinking neurons and pulsing cells of those who attended. The political agenda behind this was to provoke experiences of temporal discontinuity, as embodied metaphors of suspension, resistance and perversion to chronological formations of power. As a result, visitors animated these settings through their sensation and perception, compelling concepts to come alive as embodied metaphors of counter-chronological living temporalities.

The exhibition projects furthermore articulated a series of situational, relational, site-specific and experiential discourses. These discourses became arguments on the basis of intellectual, affective and suggestive exchanges, and were the products of interrelated gesticulations of all the actors involved (ideas, theory, concepts, buildings, spaces, light, sound, smells, artworks, objects, text, bodies, publics, artists, funders, curators). For this reason, this PhD was also articulated as a series of collective utterances: joining together experiential, embodied and material counter-chronological discourses of, and arguments about, time. In conclusion, these projects allowed for the transferal of the theoretical meaning of the three concepts into specific social environments and cultural contexts. They became poeticised and politicised places of encounter, which were ephemeral and momentary, yet they were also meaningful and embedded with multiple resonances in the real world.

‘Theorypractice’ Curated PhD

These theoretical and practical parallel lines of investigation complemented each other and fostered a discontinuous interpretation of the concepts of contingency, anachronism and flirtation themselves. Both approaches were designed to work with chronological time, but also against it, finding critical and creative strategies to suspend, anachronize and pervert it. Each sheet of paper and viewing room, each documentary image and site-specific sculpture, each footnote and exhibition label, each paragraph and sound, each event and statement, responded to the initial research question on how to experience these three temporalities in the theoretical-practical curatorial register. They also responded to the second research question regarding what arguments can these concepts disclose and perform in both written and exhibited forms. The result is the cross-pollination of ideas and matter, thoughts and practices, representations and embodiments, as well concepts and their physical materialisation characteristic of this PhD project.

Contribution

As explained in the introduction of this thesis, the intention to explore these temporalities surfaced from a reaction to encounters with curatorial chronological apparatuses, but also inspired by encounters with other creative-critical curatorial attempts to subvert the rhythms, tempos and dynamics ordered by clocks and calendars. Thus, *Curating Time* is associated with what Raymond Williams calls ‘emergent’ cultural movements, such as practices that produce new meanings, values, and interrelationships, with the aim to transgress, renegotiate or bypass the dominant.³⁸⁴ Consequently, this PhD has articulated new discourses, restored undermined values and proposed unusual artistic, theoretical, curatorial connections. This thesis was also conceived as a response, an opposition, an attempt to suspend, to anachronize and to pervert dominant orders of time in curating.

This research also adds to contemporary curatorial-theoretical discussions, and curatorial-practical experimentations with discontinuous temporalities, examining discursive meanings and exhibitionary possibilities of ‘time-based’ projects. While *Curating Time* was not exclusive in incorporating what is traditionally considered ‘time-based’ art (performance, film, video, sound, etc), its inclusion of ‘object-based’ or ‘image-based’ art (painting, collage, textile, sculpture, etc), foregrounded time as temporary site-specific installations or ephemeral live events. Their ‘time-based’ condition was centered in their processual, relational, eventful and situational nature. Founded on the abovementioned theoretical and practical curatorial approaches to the matter of temporality, *Curating Time* also concerns curatorial efforts to produce ‘interstices,’ or trading possibilities other than those in effect within the capitalist system or heteronormative models. Such possibilities allow for the relational, intersubjective, non-reproductive and momentary alternative ways of embodying time.³⁸⁵ In this sense, this PhD also adds to those curatorial struggles to ‘practice resistance,’ as described curator Katya Garcia-Anton, with a desire to ‘imagine an aesthetic experience that operates within the field of collective agency, where workable forms of resistance can be devised.’³⁸⁶

³⁸⁴ Raymond Williams, ‘Dominant, Residual, and Emergent,’ 121-126. See also Paul O’ Neill, ‘The Emergence of Curatorial Discourse from Late 1960’s to the Present,’ 26.

³⁸⁵ Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 6. Jörn Schafaff, ‘Challenging Institutional Standard Time,’ 189-209.

³⁸⁶ Katya Garcia-Anton, ‘Slaves to the Rhythm, Performing Sociability in the Exhibitionary Complex,’ 24.

Finally, as suggested in the conclusion of the first chapter, even if contingency, anachronism and flirtation are disregarded as ‘minor’ temporalities with respect to those who are in power, it does not prevent them from confronting power. Especially as these counter-temporalities belong to the Foucauldian resistance of those who have less power than their rivals, who are in situations of disadvantage or in positions of vulnerability in relation to their adversaries. In Foucault’s theoretical undertaking, these resistances comprise workers, prisoners, the perverse, the ‘mad,’ students. As previously noted, although he employs European eighteenth and nineteenth century institutional models, Foucault’s argument is not anachronistic to power struggles around temporality in today’s global context. Those who have less power than their rivals, who are in situations of disadvantage or are in a position of vulnerability, still involve historically excluded and marginalised groups—including minority groups, the bearers of policed sexualities, women, the colonised, victims of oppressive authorities.³⁸⁷

In the contemporary curatorial-art system the resistance fostered by Foucauldian subjects find their equivalence in precarious and exploited workers; those who experience abuse of any kind; sexually harassed individuals; sufferers of discrimination due to age, appearance, gender, colour of their skin, sexual orientation or the type of passport they hold. These figures also find their equivalence in people with noticeable or non-obvious physical disabilities or mental health problems; non-authorised, intellectually colonised and/or bullied curatorial epistemologies; and those who are victims of personal, structural or symbolic forms of violence. In other words, those who have less power than their rivals, who are in situations of disadvantage or are in a position of vulnerability in today’s curatorial-art system include those who practice other possible forms of speech which are purposively or ‘accidentally’ avoided, reprovved or diminished in the material and symbolic time-scales and agendas ordered by chronological apparatuses.

³⁸⁷ As I mentioned in the second chapter, histories of exploitation effected by temporal orders and dominances in the conception and experience of time, have been addressed by postcolonial and queer discourses, feminist struggles and curatorial theory and practice. Here it is relevant to mention Homi K. Bhabha, who elaborates the question of temporality in post-colonial spaces in relation to contemporaneity and the postmodernity. He explains that today’s moment of transit creates complex figures of exclusion and inclusion, inside and outside, past and present. According to Bhabha, postmodernism excludes groups which might have epistemological or technological ‘limits’ within its internal ethnocentric ideas; these ‘limits,’ he explains, are also enunciative boundaries of a range of other dissonant, even dissident histories and voices (Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 2-9).

However, as explained in the second chapter, these non-synchronous voices have been taken into account through different branches of visual cultures and cultural studies, such as post-colonial and de-colonial studies, as well as feminism, queer theory and some considerations in curatorial theory and practice. They appear throughout this thesis in the main body of the text as well as in footnotes. In addition to this, the artworks which were included in the exhibition projects also embody these political concerns. For example, Erica Scourti in a playful way looks into aspects of vulnerability within the art world and flirting online. Carlos Santos with a more intense approach exposes an anachronism of conflicting internal and external forces connected to poverty, inequality as well as the effects of the environment and its social context in the individual's mind and body. Patricia Dominguez's directly challenges Western abusive corporations that exploit Chilean territory by casting pre-Columbian curses. Adam Christensen explicitly subverts gender roles and normative sexuality; and Geneva Sills, with a feminist approach, indirectly weaves connections with working woman from the nineteenth century through resonances in an old linen bank. These artistic, theoretical, and curatorial non-synchronous temporalities have been converted, transformed, and metamorphosed from disregarded domains into intensified and embellished material discourses. They defy the capitalised, repressive and normative orders dictated by Chronos.

There are many different kinds of resistances. Each of them, Foucault writes, is a special case: 'resistances that are possible, necessary, improbable; others that are spontaneous, savage, solitary, concerted, rampant, or violent; still others that are quick to compromise, interested, or sacrificial.'³⁸⁸ They can be embraced as points or knots, mobile and transitory marks, distributed in irregular fashion, spreading over time and space, at varying densities and intensities. But they can only exist in the strategic field of power as its irreducible opposites.³⁸⁹ The three types of resistances I have put forward in this PhD are contingency, anachronism and flirtation. While they may operate in lower hierarchical positions than those in power this does not hinder their capacity to enact concepts such as agency, self-determination and self-awareness; nor prevent them from resisting the blinding lights of the century; nor impedes them from actualising their potentiality-not-to allow themselves to be devoured by the hunger of Chronos.

³⁸⁸ Michel Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge*, 96.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 95.

Thus, the question of temporality that I wish to extend, is how to create a shared engagement with time from our own values, sensitivities and interests. As curator Gerardo Mosquera argues, the construction of a shared contemporaneity consists of problematising our self-awareness, and overcoming centrisms with enlightenment sourced from a myriad of different sources.³⁹⁰ However, a further elaboration of this investigation requires another time to be created. These are the questions my commitment to *Curating Time* will continue to support or carry on, together with other counter-chronological temporalities, in order to materialise new metaphors in curatorial practices and conceptualisations of time.

³⁹⁰ Gerardo Mosquera, 'The Marco Polo Syndrome, Some Problems around Art and Eurocentrism,' 218-224.

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