

Edges of Bodies: Camouflage, Correspondence and the Choreography of Alterity

Goldsmiths, University of London

Practice component of the thesis

PhD in Art

Correspondance Works

Murat Agdas

Artist Name: Murat Adash

Correspondance (Surface)

2022-23

2023 | Multimedia Installation | Textile Architecture, moving images, sound and performances | Commissioned by Max Planck Institute for Empirical Aesthetics and MAK | p.3: Description & links to video | pp.4-24: Photographs & Stills

Correspondance (Belonging)

2021

2021 | One-to-One Performance | 30 min each (11x a day) | Mosaic Rooms, London
p.25: Description & links to video | pp.26-35: Stills

Correspondance (Morphology)

2020

2020 | Long-Durational Performance | 6 hours daily across 24 consecutive days (144 hrs) | Commissioned by Marina Abramovic Institute & Sakip Sabanci Museum
p.36: Description & links to video | pp.37-58: Photographs

Correspondance (Contact)

2019

2019 | Moving Image | 9 min | Single channel 4K video | Looped video projection | Produced by Utopiana for *1000 Ecologies* at Le Commun in Geneva
p.59: Description & links to video | pp.60-67: Stills

Correspondance (Touch)

2019

2019 | Live Performance | 20 min | DMX programmed ellipsoidal light with super slow-fade | Produced by Utopiana for *1000 Ecologies* at Le Commun in Geneva
p.68: Description & links to video | pp.69-77: Photographs

Correspondance works

As part of the practice component of this thesis, I developed a series of five choreographic works under the title of *Correspondance*. The wordplay is a portmanteau conjoining “correspondence” (in the sense of resemblance; resonance) and “dance”. Across a range of media including live performance, moving image, sound and installation, each choreography explores the multifaceted phenomenon of camouflage as it blends with my choreographic practice. Beyond the idea of animal mimicry, the series aims to develop camouflage as a performance strategy in varying ways and media to explore the provisional nature of boundaries – particularly regarding the dynamic edges between bodies, and the spaces in which they come together.

Each of the *Correspondance* works bracket a specific phenomenon that feature as some of the lively and vibrant forces that animate the research as a whole, both in practice and in writing. These forces become the phenomenal frameworks towards which the works are organized and oriented. To that end, each work in the series frames a unique coming together of fellow correspondents, both human and non-human collaborators, in shared, mutual spacetimes. Mobilized together with fellow dancers, as well as

other lively materials, both tangible and intangible, whether choreo/graphed in space closely with an audience and/or in time through moving image, each *Correspondance* work attempts to open up spaces of intra-action, shifting the focus on the mutual constitution of entangled agencies and intra-subjectivities.

In these ecologies of exchange, assemblages of bodies and materials coalesce in both live and mediated situations to allow for new relations to come in resonance with one another in order to provoke specific sensuous correspondences with the environments within which each work takes place. The *Correspondance* series as a whole is guided by the question of how correspondence as both a concept and methodology can engage with the relationality of bodies in presence with one another – their affective potentials, i.e. the potential of bodies to affect and to be affected, to move and to be moved. It seeks to investigate the dynamic and animate relationalities between human and non-human subjectivities, materialities, and spatial contexts in order to interrogate new possibilities for configuring our bodies otherwise.

Correspondance (Surface)

2022-23

Multimedia Installation

Links to videos:

Excerpt of live performance & all four moving images (2min each; 10min total):

<https://vimeo.com/850082524>

Excerpt of one of three durational live performances (10min):

<https://vimeo.com/790763551>

Full video of video channel 1 (12min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uu5158xkwnY>

Full video of video channel 2 (12min):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_tuHIkWIIPi

Full video of video channel 3 (12min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zm0aI84YI3Y>

Full video of video channel 4 (12min):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E0M_HmjAf3U

Correspondance (Surface) is a multimedia installation convening a textile architectural scenography, four visual-effects processed moving images played back on life-size (75 inch) upright monitors, sound and a series of activating live performances—interweaving embodied and digital choreographies to explore the phenomenon of camouflage as a dynamic process to call into question notions of boundaries and thresholds.

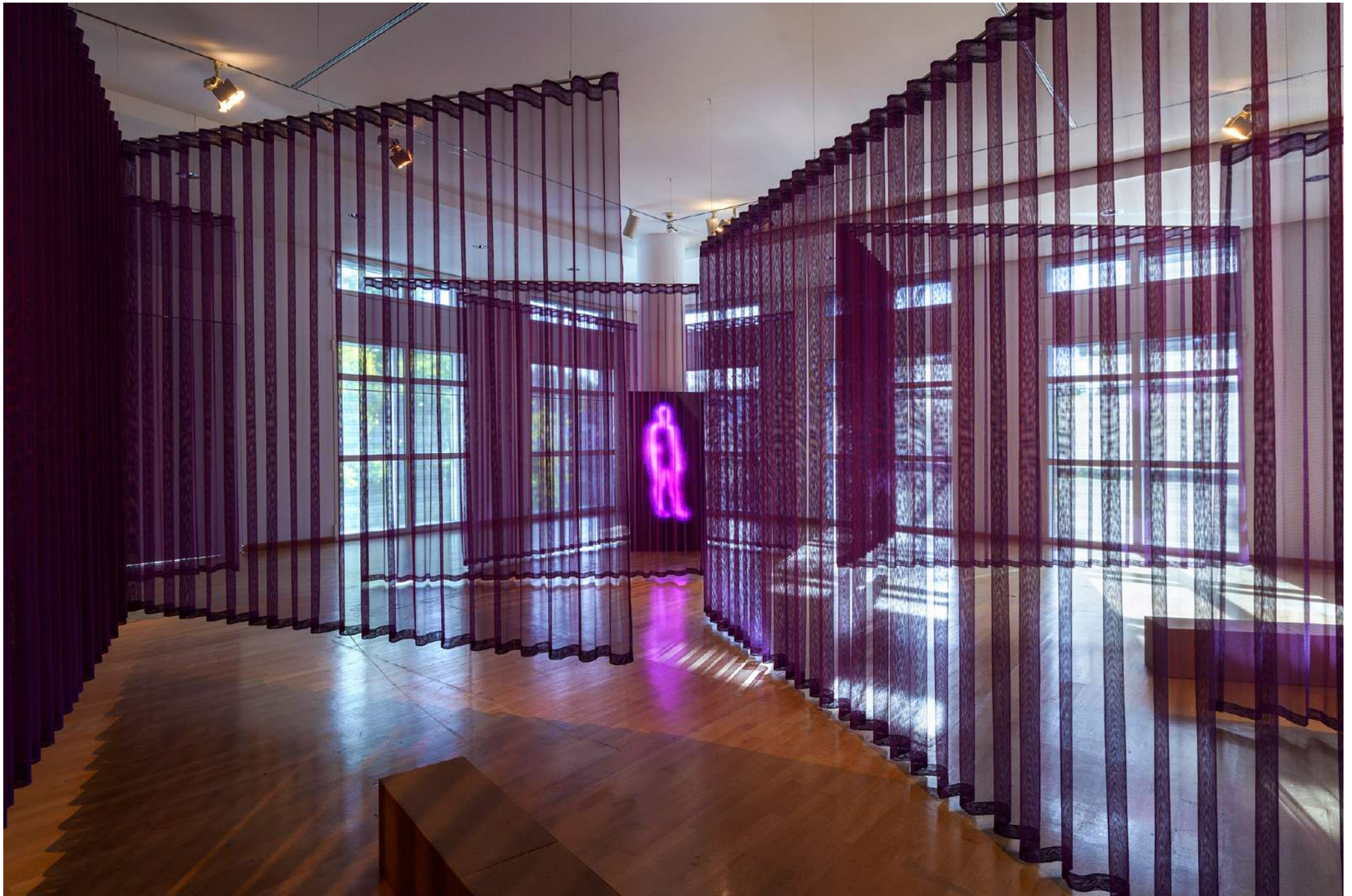
Each of the four monitors display one moving figure in portrait-format as a series of video sculptures: by depicting “cinematic” figures, these video-sculptures reconfigure the moving images as corporeal agencies operating in the exhibition space. The life-size silhouettes of dancers appear as intangible cinematic figures, whose fugitive movements both resist and elude the demand for recognition, detection, and identification.

Surrounding the video-sculptures, a textile installation based on the spatial design of “dazzle

camouflage” uses a variety of fabric panels to intervene into the given spatial structure of the exhibition space. The iridescent, shimmering quality of the fabric invites viewers to experience the space through the interplay of (dis)appearances and reflections—creating a choreography of (in)visibility by dazzling the correspondences between the four video-sculptures, which occupy the four pillars in the four corners of the exhibition space.

Throughout the duration of the exhibition, a series of durational live performances conduct site-specific, choreographic inquiries in and beyond the installation calling into question notions of edges and boundaries. Through dazzling gestures of shimmer and camouflage, movements of ever-changing co-presences unfold throughout the museum spaces that evoke the slippery nature of “here-ness.”

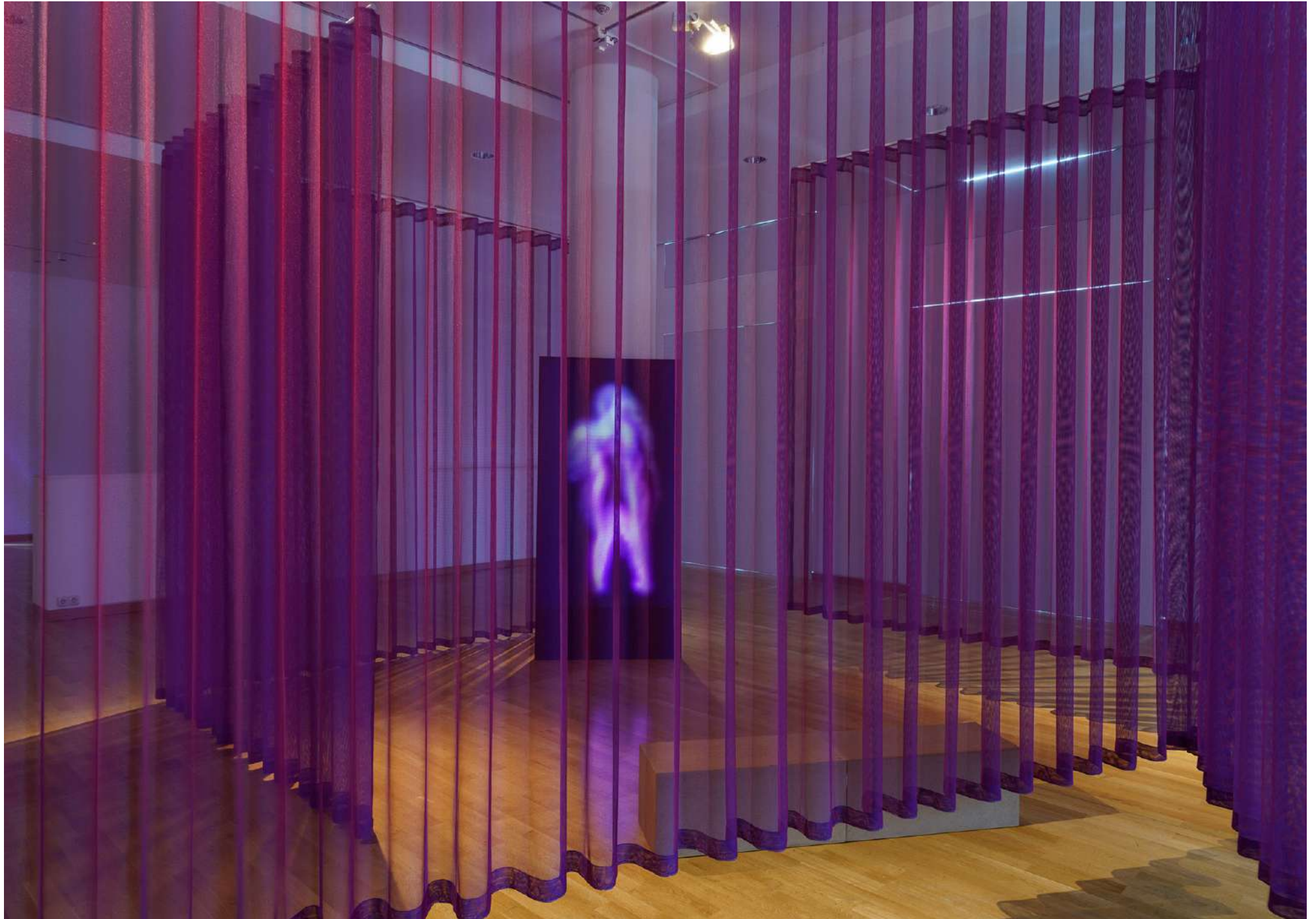


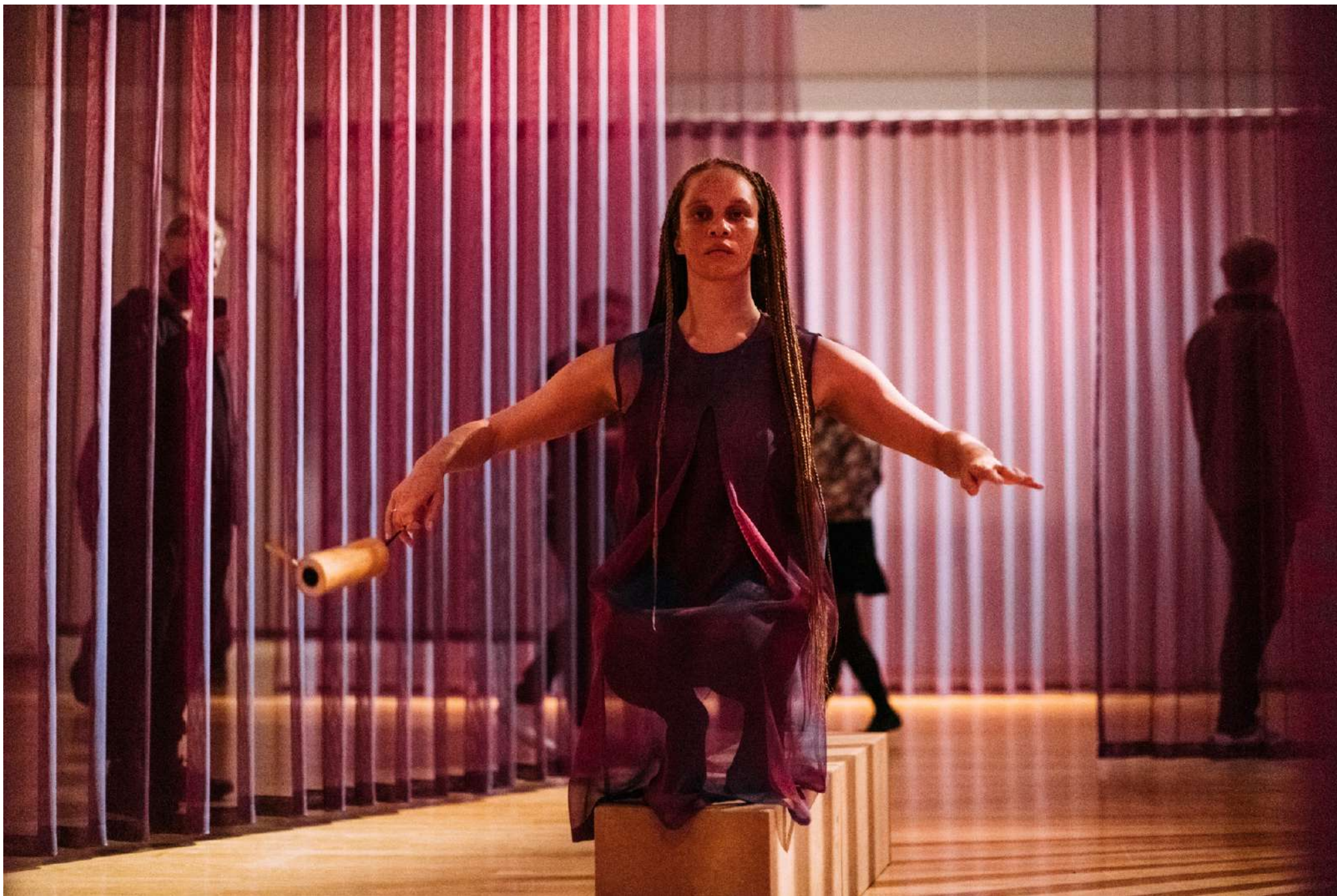


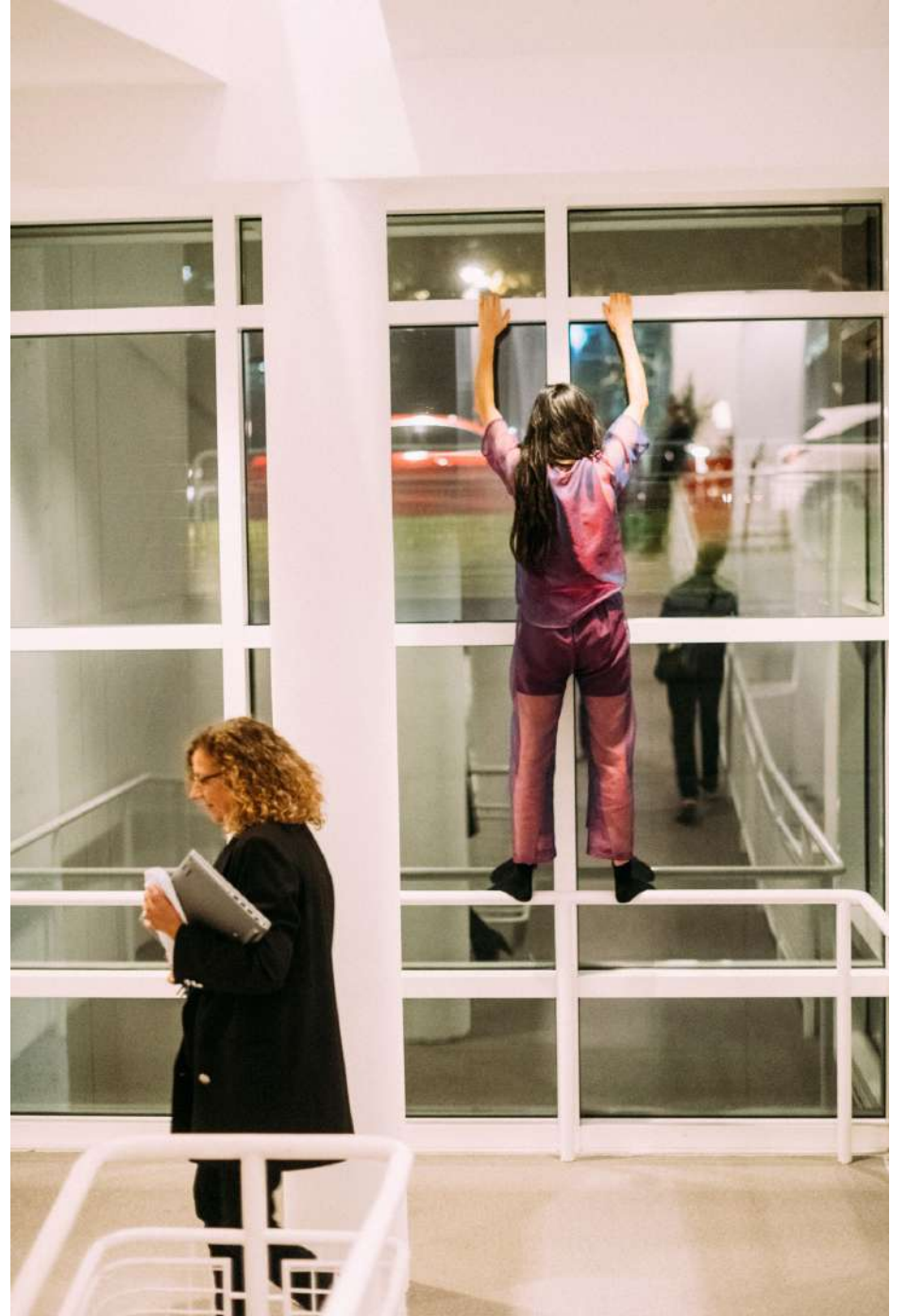


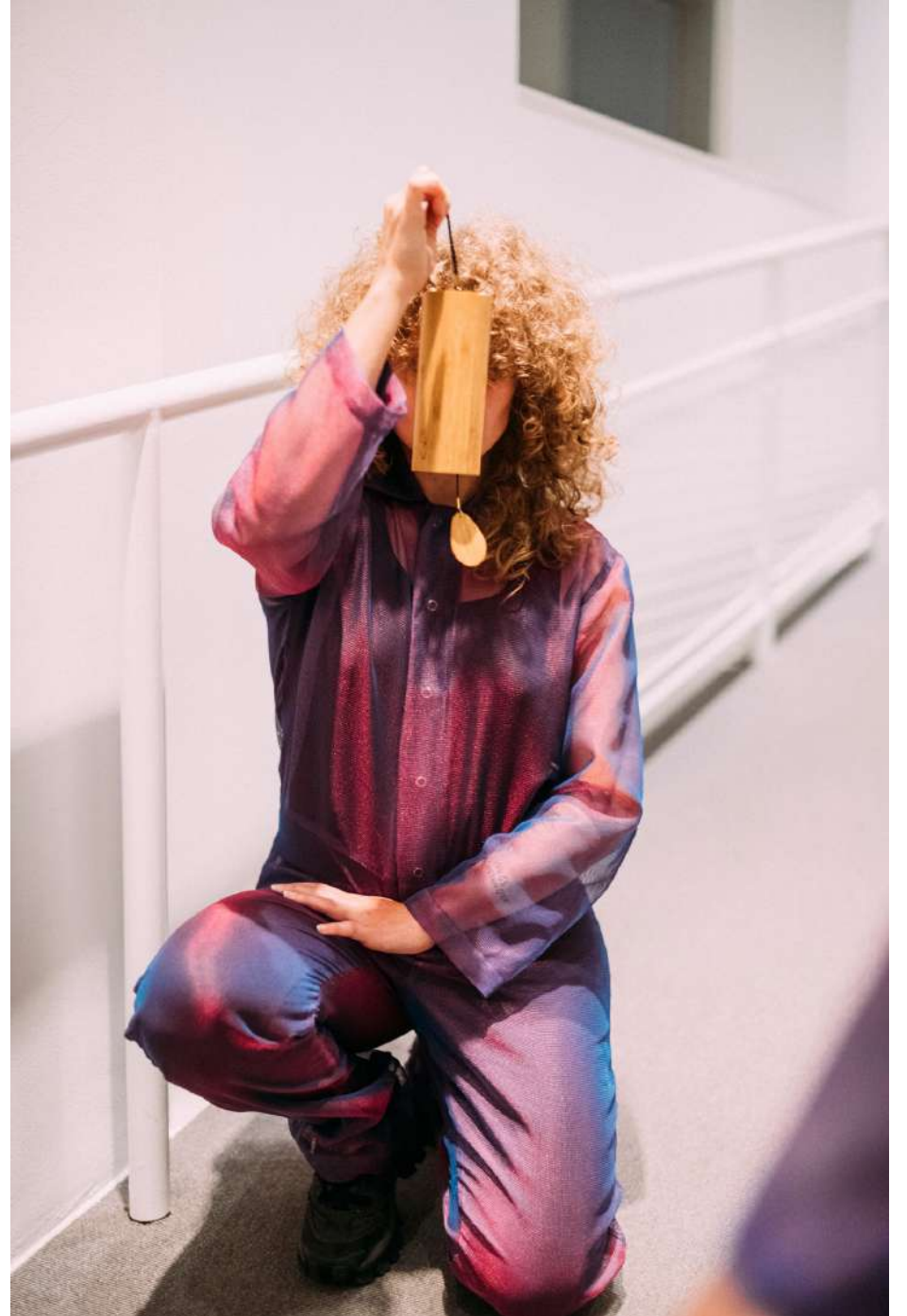


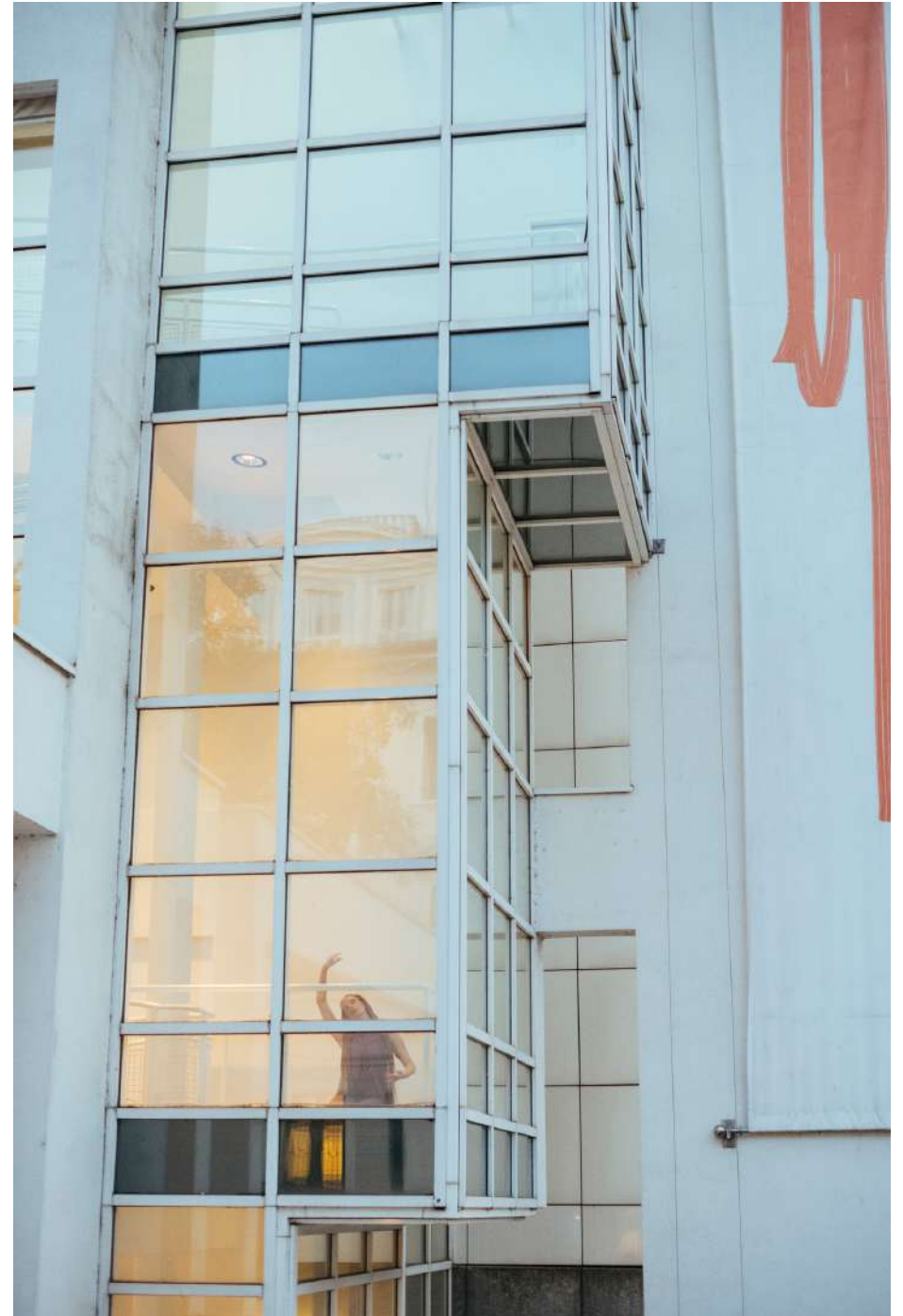


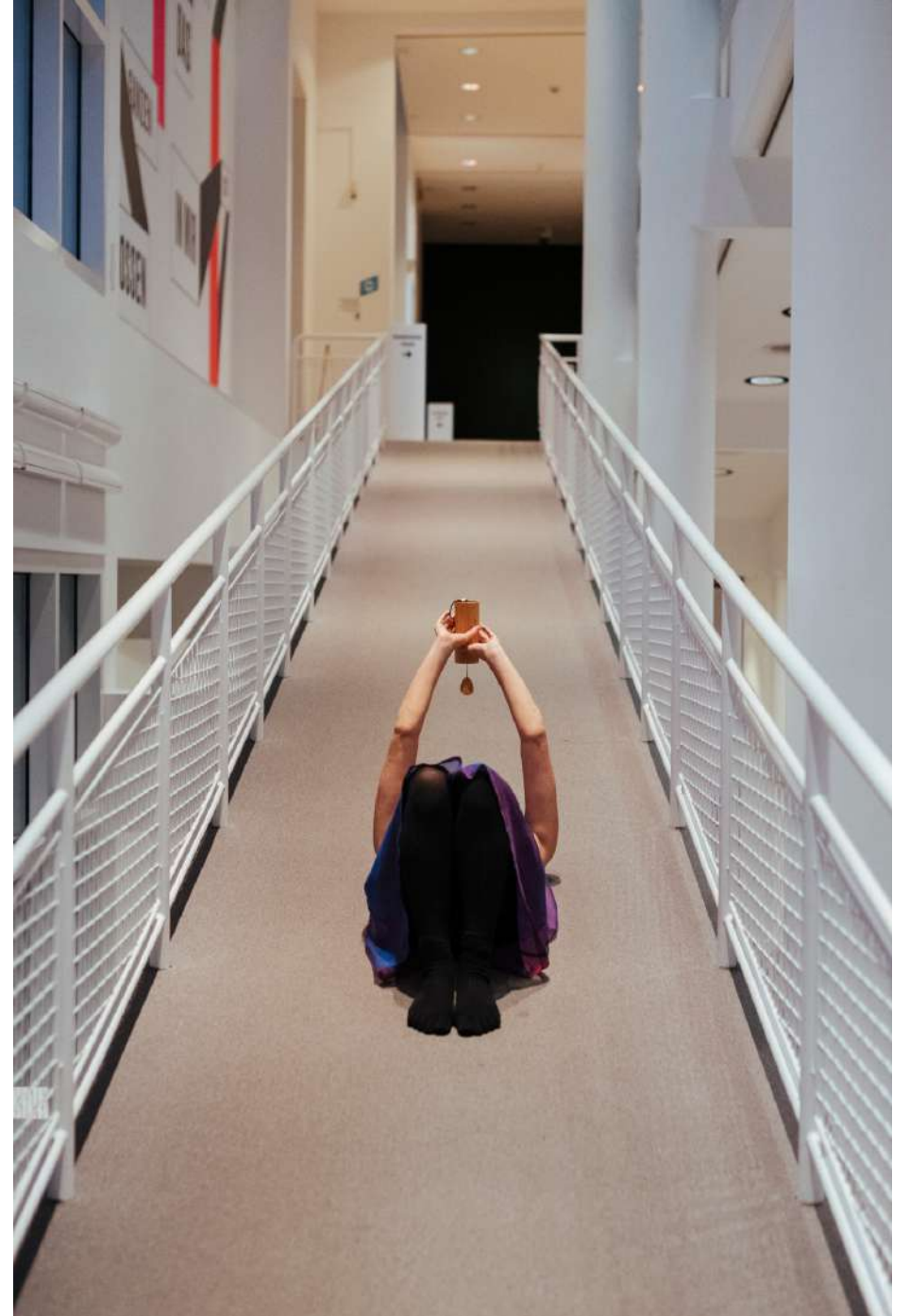


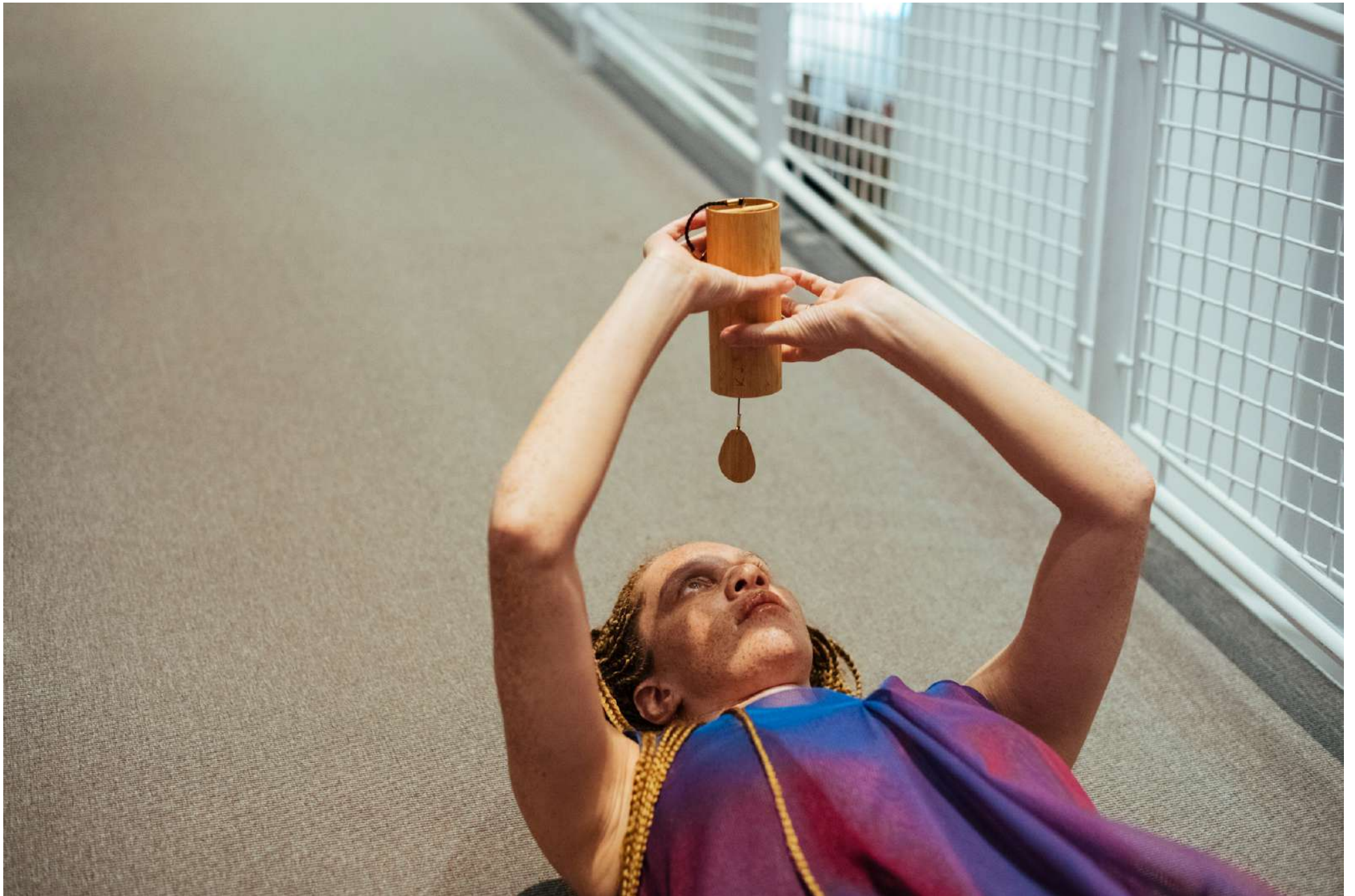








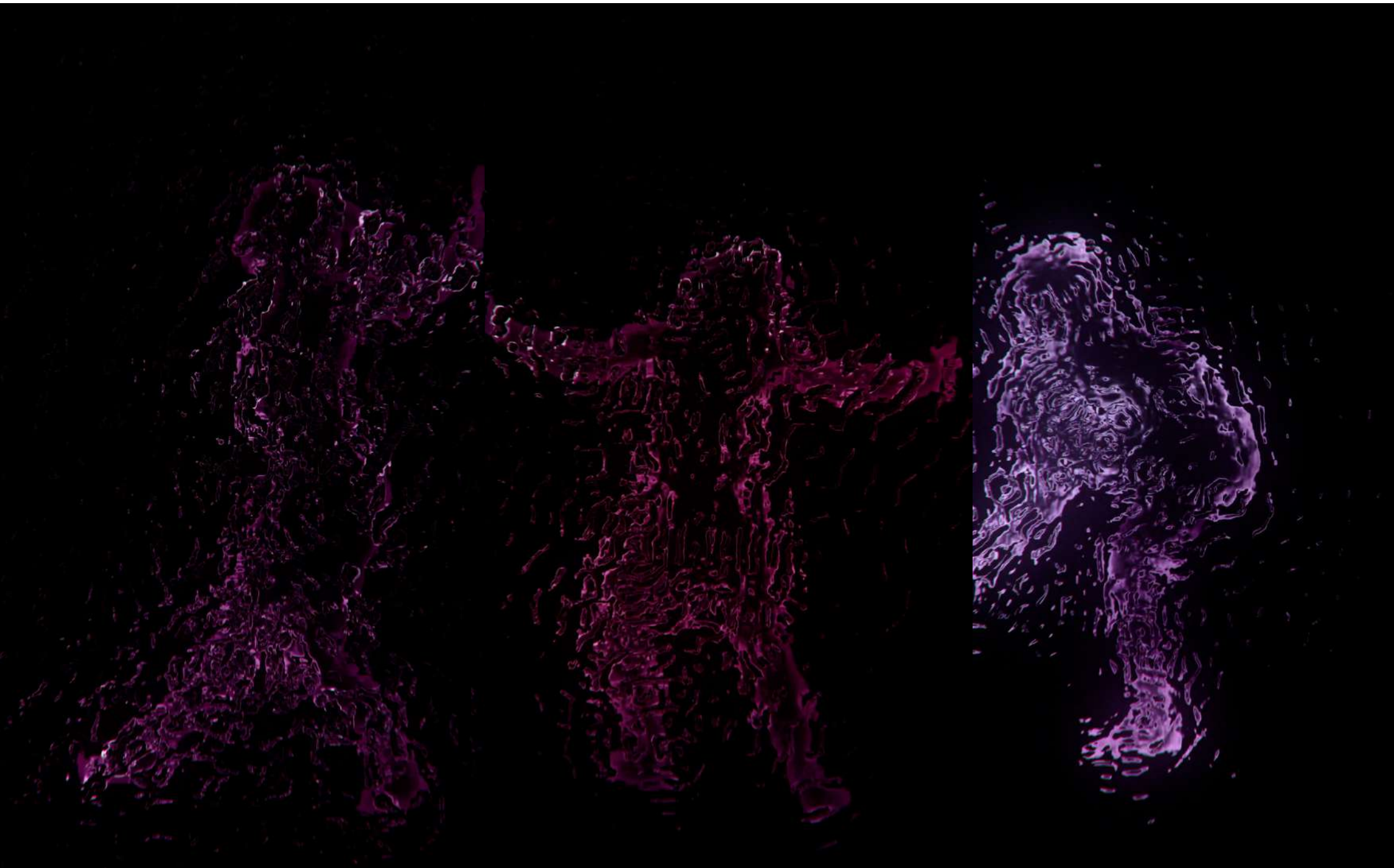


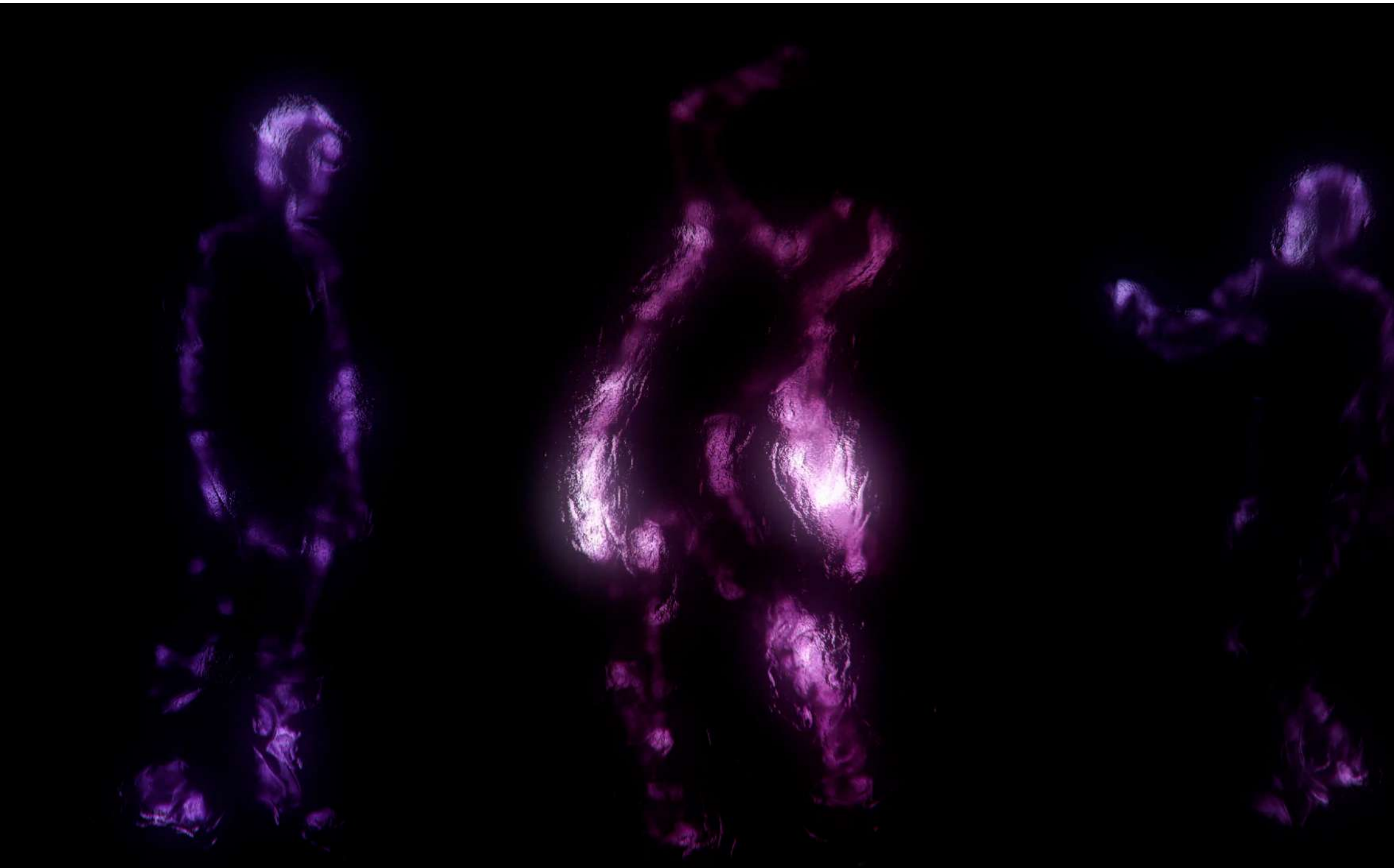


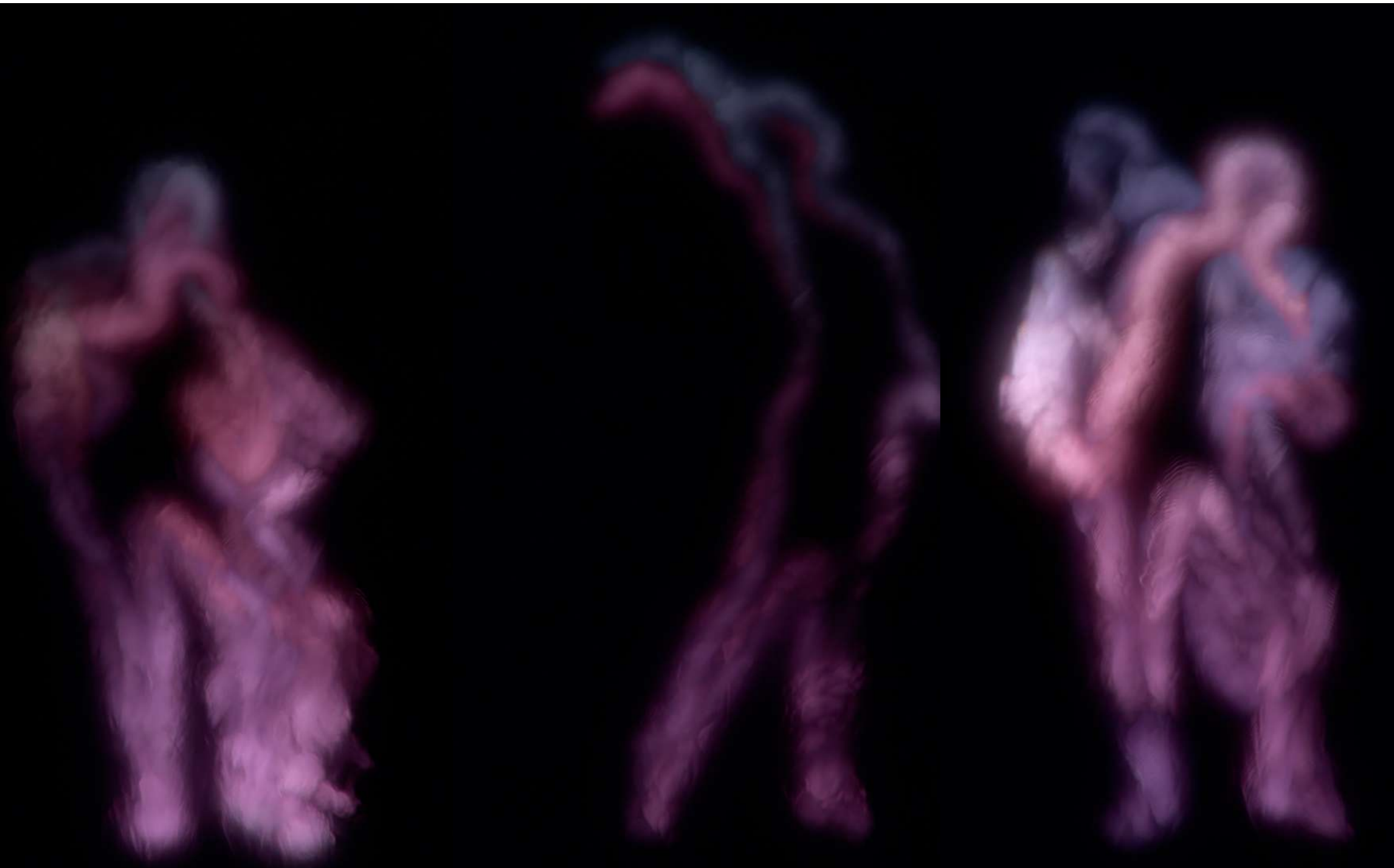




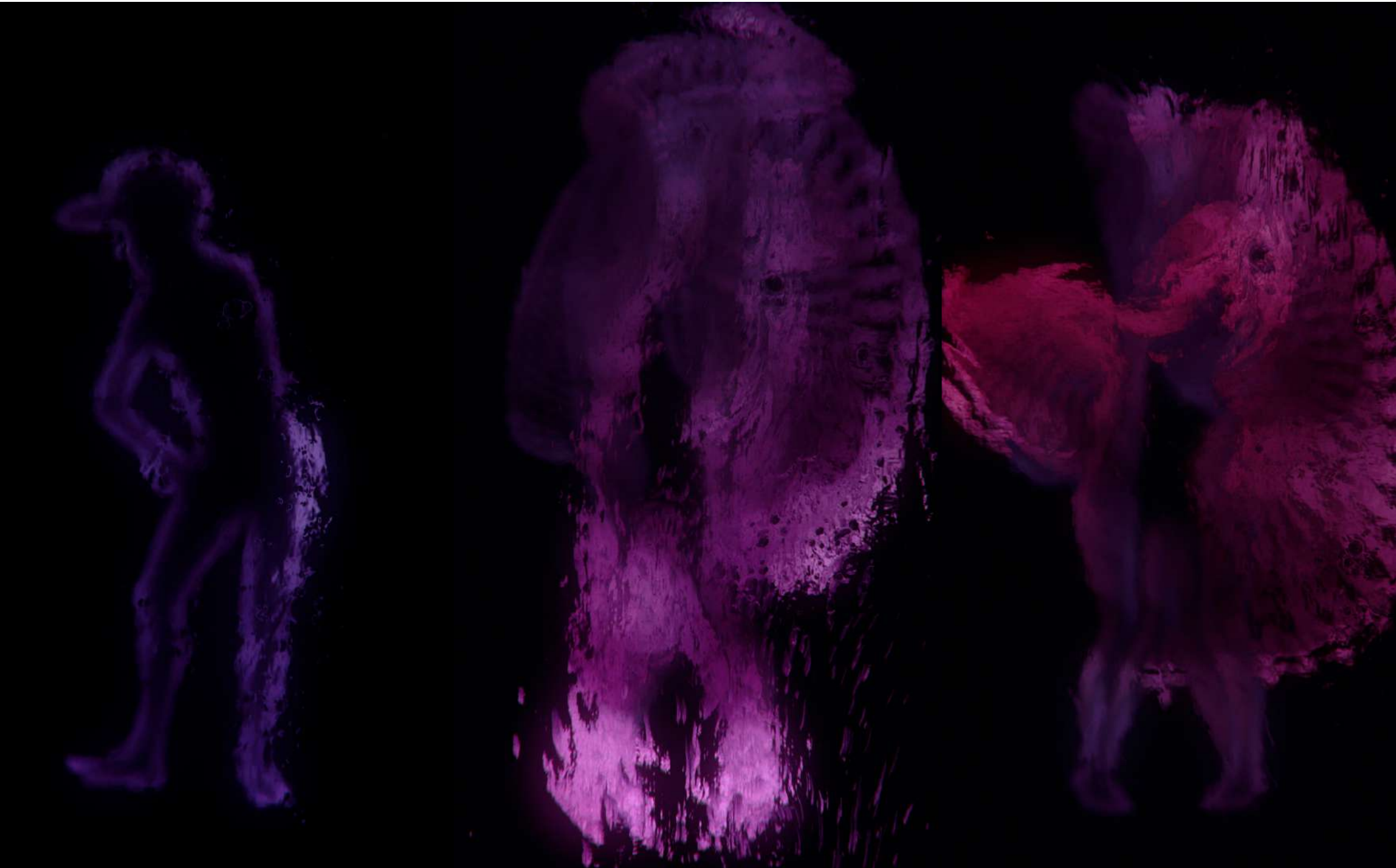














Correspondance (Belonging)

2021

One-To-One Performance

30 min each (x11 a day)

Correspondance (Belonging) is a participatory one-to-one performance designed to be encountered between one performer and one audience member at a time. During each thirty-minute performance, bodily acts of movement, speech and sound are employed to guide the audience member through a series of choreographed and improvised elements that explore attention, awareness, sensation and relation as forms of collective embodiment and being-in-space together.

Exploring belonging as a process of co-becoming through reflecting on notions of boundaries and negative space in the context of an affective encounter, *Correspondance (Belonging)* probes acts of responsiveness and

response-ability by establishing an intimate encounter in a relationship to belonging, where belonging is not bound to any specific location but to a system of movement.

Drawing on feminist, queer and diasporic concepts of belonging and relations with others, *Correspondance (Belonging)* touches on boundaries and borders as zones of contact to re-imagine other ways of being-in-space.

Links to videos:

2 min excerpt of 30 min:

<https://vimeo.com/798080326>

Full 30 min video of one of eleven performances:

<https://vimeo.com/771167455>

Password: Morphology





















Correspondance (Morphology)

2020

Long-Durational Performance

144 hours

Correspondance (Morphology) is a long-durational solo performance that took place daily during six hours across four consecutive weeks. The movement commits to the single gesture of “morphing”, which unfolds over time as an exercise in moving through thresholds and boundaries of the self. Various qualities and possibilities of morphing are explored somatically and architecturally as ways to probe potentialities for shifting and changing corporeal and spatial identities, as well as model an energetic presence at the threshold of self-perception.

The act of morphing, as a constellatory, ephemeral coming-to-appearance, evolves in the space of the museum on a moment-by-moment basis, triggered through a collective becoming-with ebbs and flows while occurring through a co-constitutive manner amongst all the present bodies (both human

and non-human). Together, all elements in space contribute to an entangled process of becoming-with one another through the choreographic process.

The choreographic-improvisation emerges through continuously moving through rhythms of morphing – creating complex accumulations of different bodily (trans)formations, shapes, orientations, rhythms and trajectories. Contingent and improvised structures reach in and around the audience, shifting and reconfiguring established constellations in space – re-organizing, shape-shifting, boundary-probing the patterns of a potential new becoming. Through experimenting with variable morphologies of co-presence, *Correspondance (Morphology)* attempts to create an encounter of reconfiguring a mutual field of potential, animate relations.

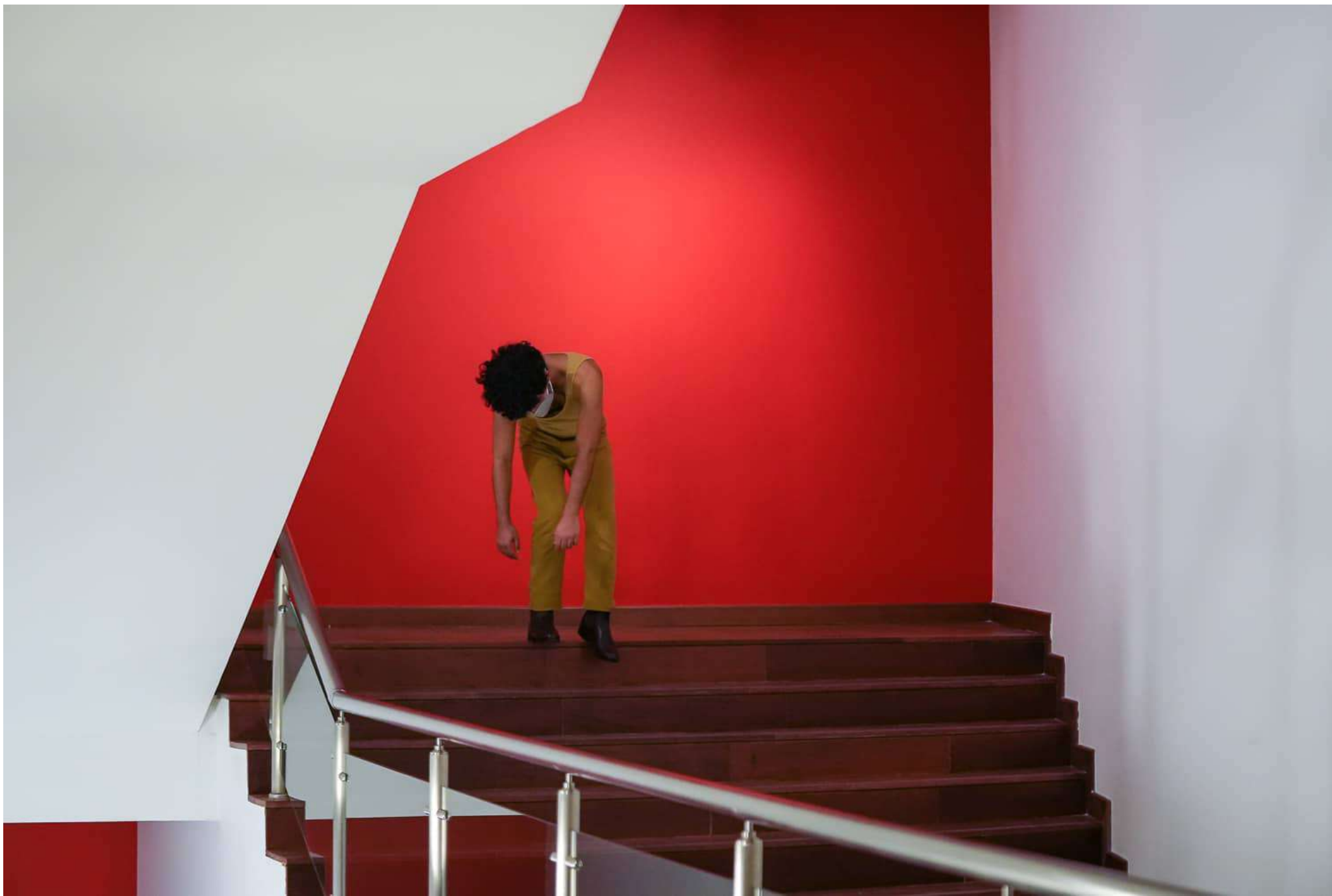
Links to videos:

2 min excerpt of 144 hours:
<https://vimeo.com/541732685>

15 min excerpt of 144 hours:
<https://vimeo.com/539553321>













































Correspondance (Contact)

2019

Moving image

9 min

In *Correspondance (Contact)*, two protean subjects both move through and are moved by their surroundings – an amorphous urban structure resembling mountainous landscapes. An improvisatory dyadic composition, of a somatic camouflage, unfolds between concealment and revealment through bodily acts of coloring, shading, melting, expanding and shimmering. Oscillating along the threshold and around the edges of self, is where the dyad surfaces, where they touch and are touched by each other.

Through an embodied, sensuous correspondence, they perceptibly co-respond to one another by blending into their environment not by becoming invisible, but, rather, through rehearsing the problem of locating oneself, and thus,

the problem of location. For to camouflage is precisely the blending of figure and ground, of interiority and exteriority, and hence, they practice, at the surface of their skin, a chameleonic being-of-the-world.

Intermittently, apparitions of bodies of water, light and color crop up and disappear – living materials that co-perform and correspond as they appear on the vibrating interface between the physical and virtual. *Correspondance (Contact)* emblemizes a trans-subjective becoming of animate being, both human and beyond the human, allowing for a shared geometry to emerge.

Links to videos:

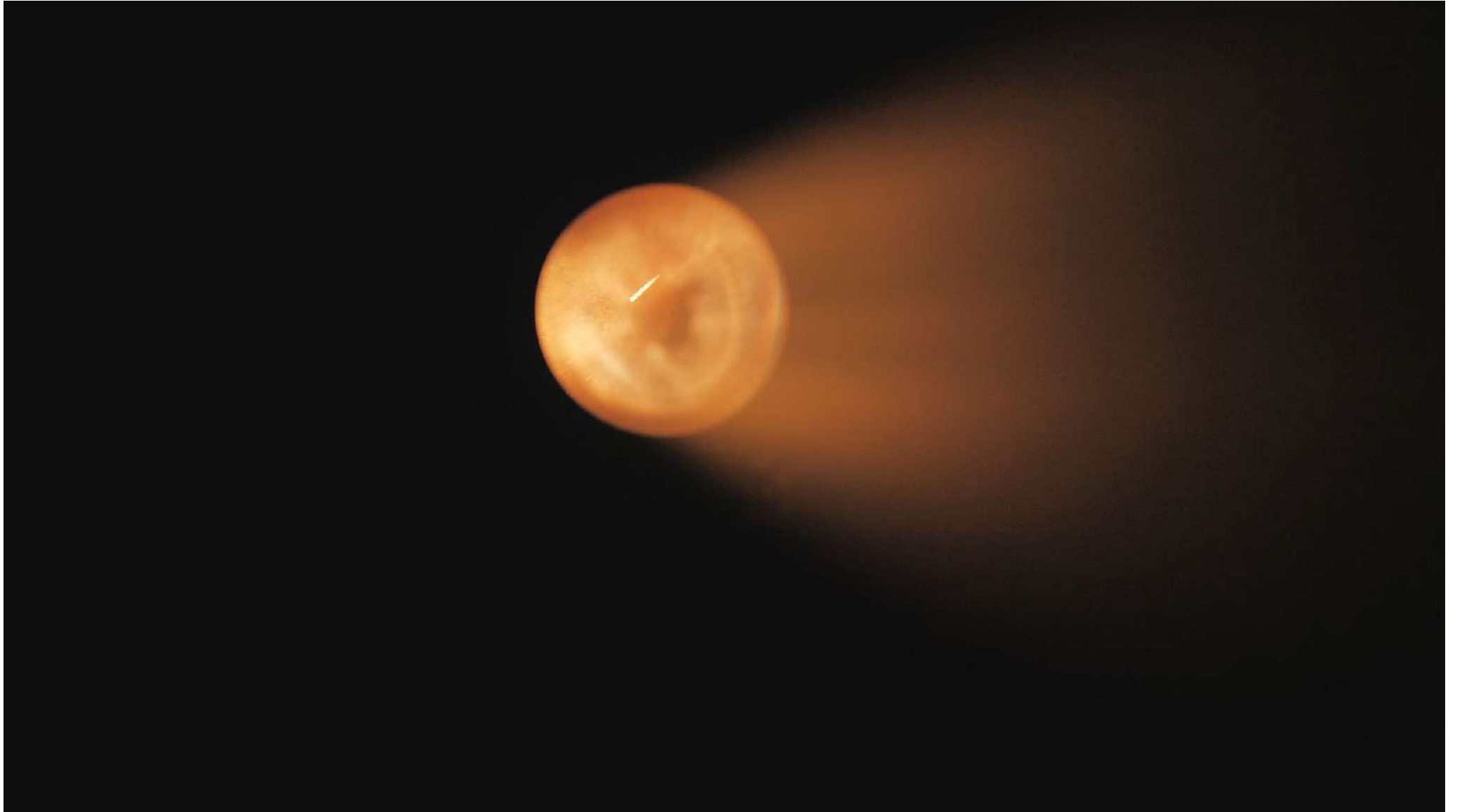
2:30 min excerpt of 9 min:
<https://vimeo.com/368578186>

Full video of 9 min:
<https://vimeo.com/368578472>
 Password: Morphology

















Correspondance (Touch)

2019

Live Performance

20 min

Correspondance (Touch) unfolds as a polyphonic, entangled constellation between all the present bodies – set amidst a light projection, that, while marking the duration and space of the performance, gradually, like a sudden change of weather, transitions from complete lightness to darkness. The light projection – through its gradual transition over an extended period of time – is itself a co-performer, a living material, whose task it is to not only delineate space and time, but to form a threshold space, a diaphanous presence, an ephemeral localization constituting a playing field and boundary where the field of relations become mobilized.

space through processes of sensuous correspondence and wit(h)nessing, both calling them into question while acknowledging their affordances. *Correspondance (Touch)* employs movement as a relational practice, negotiating individual and collective bodily boundaries, mobilizing them as corporeally co-responsive matter, slipping and leaking into the other as permeable and porous interfaces. The choreography unravels as a bodily encounter where one can camouflage and cross oneself into the other like a threshold, while touching and being touched, watching and being watched, moving and being moved, by the other.

Links to videos:

4 min excerpt of 20 min:

<https://vimeo.com/368578291>

Full documentation of 20 min:

<https://vimeo.com/372126206>

Password: Morphology

The choreography touches upon the boundaries between performers and their audience as a dynamic

















