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[r{e}volving} apparatus

The [r]evolution of a bodily, technological, spatio-temporal practice.

An exegesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Fine Arts at
Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand.

2018

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Abstract:

*This text is one of many **apparatuses**, produced whilst in motion of turning - a particularly acute turn of which has reconfigured my performance and writing practice indefinitely.*

The performing *apparatus*, in ever [r]evolving configuration, forms the foundation for a selection of personal artistic works spanning live spatio-temporal performances, 'live' installations, and discursive experimentations. Within this, the presence of human and non-human bodies - in virtual, mechanical and fleshy form - activate, enact, comprise, and pass through these *apparatuses*.

The evolution of three major works guide the research through several interpretations of Karen Barad's theory of *Agential Realism*. Through these *turns* the practice of *apparatus* transforms from technical means, to the locus of performance, and finally to a means of performatively *entangling* with the world.

The culmination of this thesis has encode in myself and my practice a commitment to [r]evolving or perpetual *falling*. This momentum signals towards a future practice which is resistant to certainty or definitive conclusion, seeking *ground* only momentarily before continuing to [r]evolve.

turn zero...

*This text is an **apparatus**, produced whilst in motion of turning - a particularly acute turn of which has reconfigured my practice indefinitely.*

*This text is a **[r]evolving apparatus** and continues to provide momentum.*

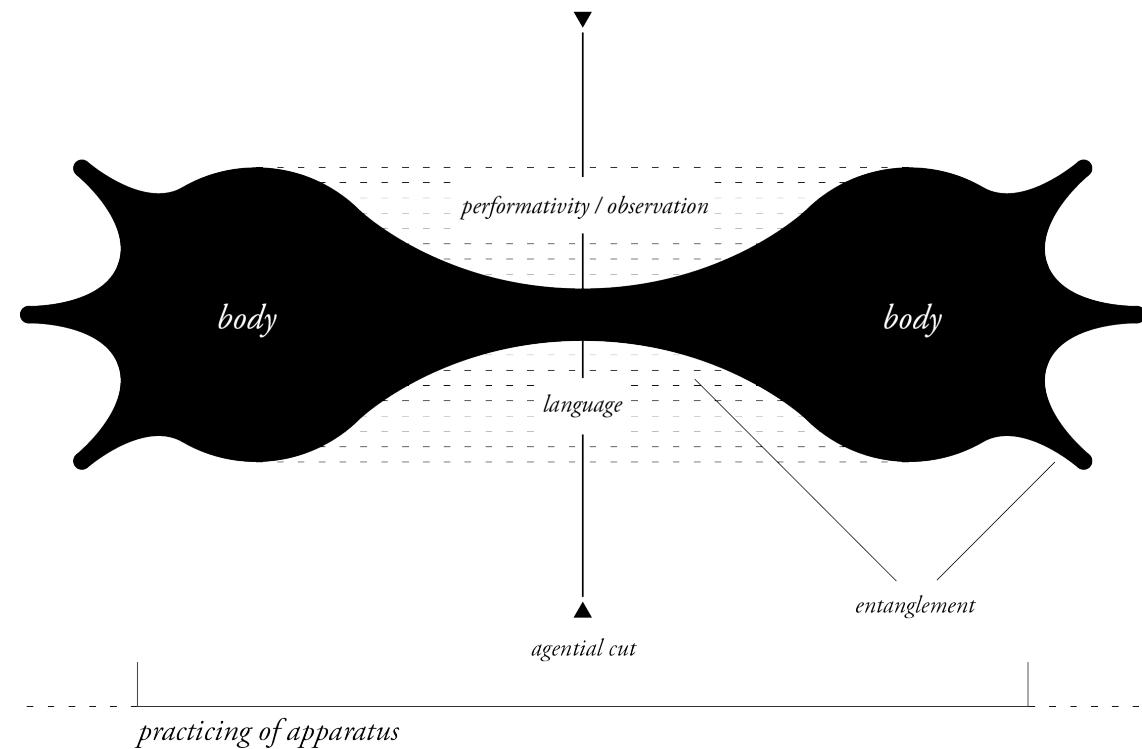
[r]evolving apparatus

The performing *apparatus*, in ever malleable form, remains the foundation for a selection of personal works spanning live spatio-temporal performances, ‘live’ installations, and discursive experimentations. Within this, the presence of human and non-human bodies - in virtual, mechanical and fleshy form - activate, enact, comprise, and pass through said *apparatuses*. Technological elements, appropriated from emergent digital camera and capture devices, effectuate the nucleus through which these bodies perform. Upon performing, the apparatuses may be inflected upon themselves in an attempt to deconstruct the nuanced relationship of technology and flesh.

Central to my motivation is the development of a richer understanding of the ways in which bodies, machine and human, might perform as an entangled *apparatus*. This development considers reconfigurations of both *body* and *apparatus*. Each work - each *apparatus* - might be considered a ‘wondering’ or partial *turn*, directed towards *[r]evolving* the definition of *apparatus*. I am not seeking clarity for the *apparatus*, and the use of its definitions need not be consistent; I only ask they are *[r]evolving*. Karen Barad’s theory of *Agential Realism*, specifically in its notion of the *apparatus*, has (and continues to) sustained my inquiry - not only for its dense theoretical provocations but for how these provocations can be continually reinterpreted.¹

As the definition of *apparatus* has evolved from a technological means to the locus of my performance practice, I have turned too - *we turn each other*. Over the period of this masters study, I have evolved from *programmer of the apparatus* (as designer), to *rival to the apparatus* (as performer) and finally to become a *conduit of the apparatus*.

¹ Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2007).



Lewis, Joshua. 2018. *Agential Realism diagram*.

Agential Realism

Apparatus, as a material-discursive practice

“What is the outline?...it is not something definite. It is not, believe it or not, that every object has a line around it! There is no such line.” ²

“Bodies are not situated *in* the world; they are part *of* the world.” ³

Karen Barad’s theory of Agential Realism considers all matter to be *entangled*, inseparable in both space and time. “All bodies, not merely “human” bodies, come to matter through the world’s iterative [...] performativity” ⁴. That is to say, it is *performativity* that defines and delineates a body from *all* other matter. Bodies do not exist independently, but are instead *cut* from all matter. This **cut** is performed by the act of observation, in where observing body/s enact their agency to define another. This *cut* between bodies is what Barad terms the **agential cut**. ⁵ In a reductive sense, this ‘cut’ may be compared to that between the Cartesian ‘subject’ and ‘object’. However, this *agential separability* is not only reserved, nor individual, to the organic body. ⁶ All bodies, or assemblies of matter, may perform *agential separation* through observation. With this considered, it may be advantageous to entertain the concept that ‘non-human’ matter may observe or ‘perceive’ us, in much the same way the human body delineates ‘objects’ (or other *bodies*) by sight.

Apparatuses are practices. Barad states that *apparatuses* “are specific material-discursive **practices** (they are not merely laboratory setups that embody human concepts and take measurements)” ⁷. *Apparatuses* are boundary-making practices that form the **agential cuts** where bodies ‘end’ and ‘begin’ - configuring and reconfiguring bodies. Most importantly to this thesis, “apparatuses have no intrinsic boundaries but are open-ended practices” ⁸ - leaving them free to the condition of re-interpretation in each of my performance works.

While I often refer back to Barad’s *apparatus* and adjoining terminology, I am not seeking clarity nor ‘correct’ interpretation of her theories. *Agential Realism* may offer ‘momentary grounding’ for each *turn* or [r]evolution, but there is no expectation that, as the definition of *apparatus* evolves, it remains ‘true’ to Barad.

² Richard P. Feynman, Robert B. Leighton, and Matthew L. Sands, *Feynman Lectures on Physics* (Massachusetts: Addison Wesley Publishing, 1963), 345.

³ Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 376.

⁴ Ibid., 152.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., 146.

⁸ Ibid.

Bodies of Bits

And the potential of language to define (and un-define).

Throughout this exegesis I have adopted the term *body* with intentional ambiguity. This serves firstly, to decentralise the term from being innately human or pertaining to the biological; and secondly, to acknowledge the definition of *bodies* as performative - occurring as the consequence of *observation*. Moreover, misinterpretation is welcomed (including my own), as it facilitates further possible reconfigurations of *body*.

Drawing from Karen Barad’s theory of *Agential Realism*, it is essential to acknowledge that “what is on the other side of the *agential cut* is never separate from us.”⁹ It is the practice of observation that defines a *body*. The *body* that is observed by the eye is just as much a *body* as that observed by a camera or other measuring device. All bodies are co-ubiquitously entangled in reality.

This use of *body* is not definitively human but may refer to any entity established through the boundary-making practice of observation. Bodies may be of flesh, of time, of data, of event or any other conceivable semblance. Language, in its many forms, may often perform this definition for us - this *agential cut*.¹⁰ Such as when referring to a body of water, we imagine a line through the water but in reality there is no such cut. Similarly, an event is cut from time, a hand from flesh, or more correctly, cut from all matter.

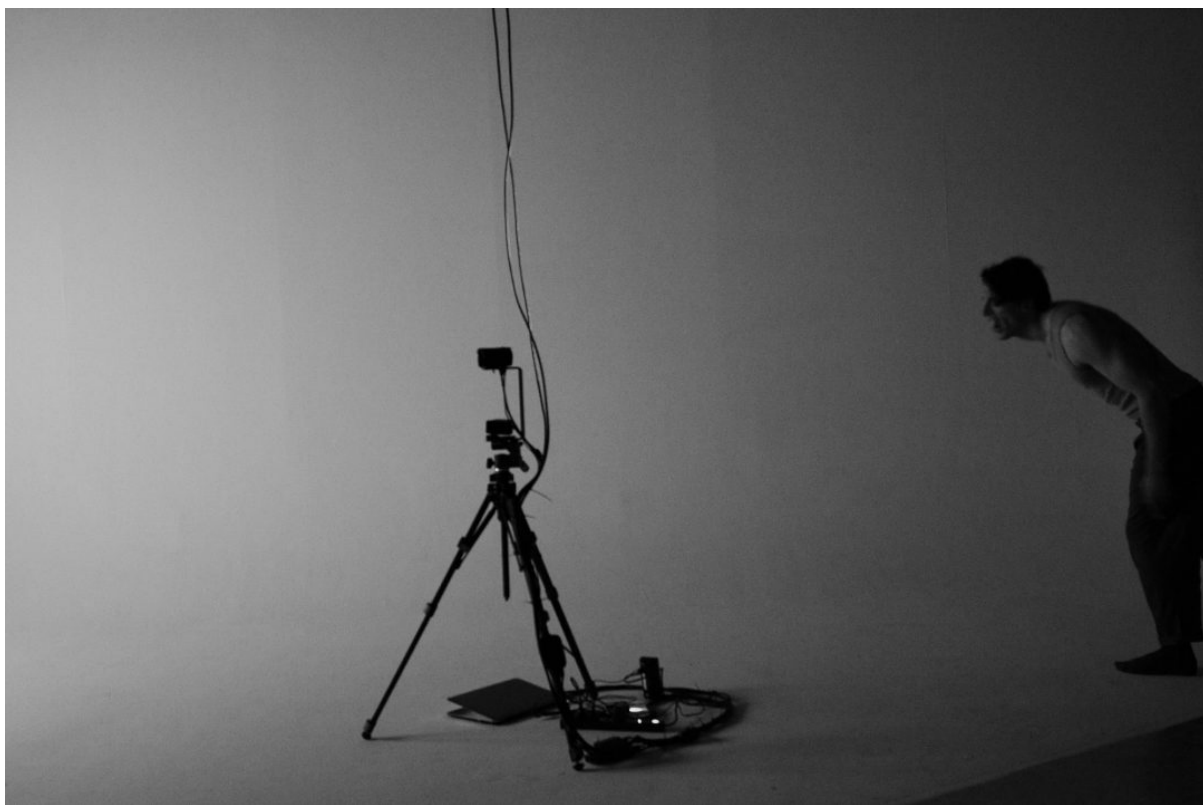
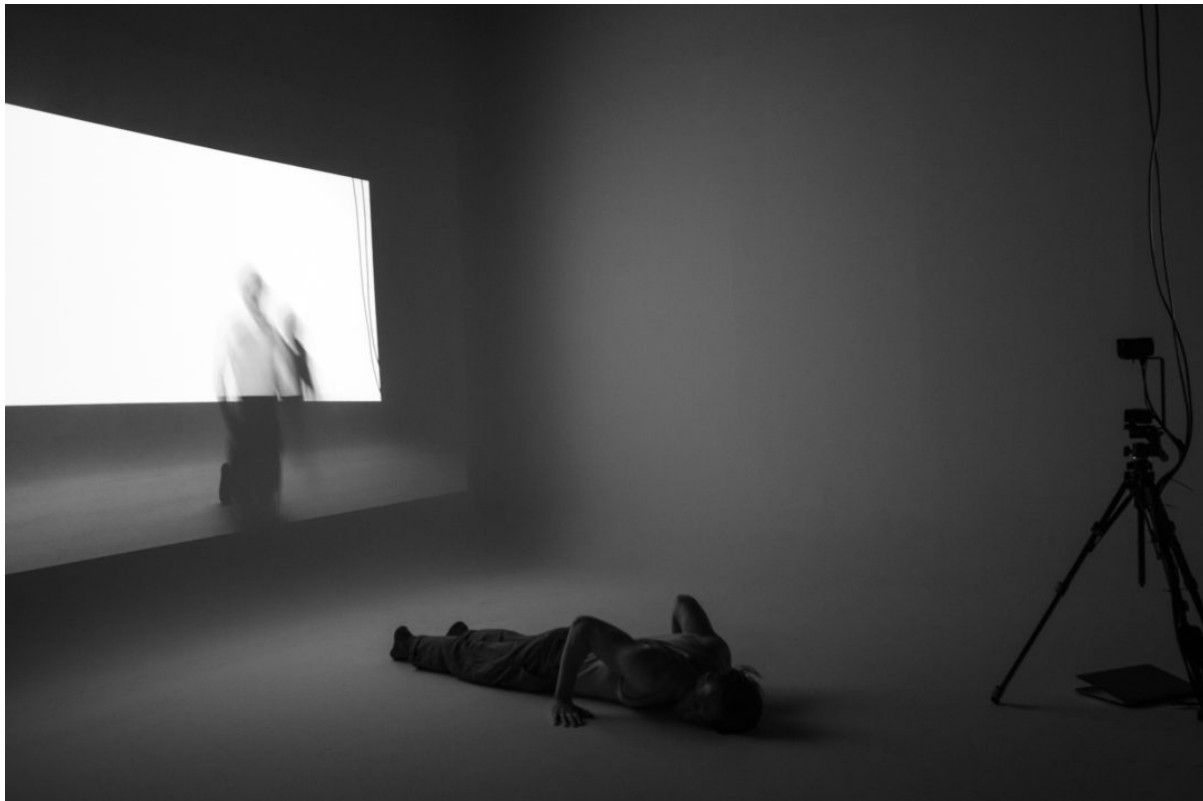
I should also like to annotate the term *fleshy body*, a term employed where I may have traditionally used *human body*. I wish to suggest that the human body is entangled beyond its perceived ‘pure’, biological outline.¹¹

turn one...

9 Ibid., 393.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.,155



Lewis, Joshua. 2017. Photographic stills from *Zeroing*, live performance. Wellington: Massey University.

Zeroing practice performance excerpt:

www.vimeo.com/joshualewis/zeroing

Zeroing

*Live performance*¹²

A darkened space is illuminated by only a large projection which wholly occupies a single wall. The surface offers a window to what appears to be a virtual mimicry of the space - not a reflection but a continuation. The only difference is an unnervingly still, black smudge which takes the form of a human body, cut at the torso by the edge of the frame. Standing with confident, even oppressive, authority, a heavyset recording apparatus dominates the centre of the space - three splayed legs consolidating its position. Cables protrude from its neck towards the ceiling, spatially establishing a threshold.

I place my body behind the apparatus, facing the projected surface. In this moment I attempt to passively enact both observer and observed. Standing, I walk cross the threshold, pausing briefly before wheeling to confront the apparatus. The apparatus responds by flattening the projected surface to an relentless plane of white - exposing and defining the upright human body. Flesh and muscle soften, succumbing to groundward tug. My body descends violently as the apparatus looks on. With a dull slap the body is rendered an unmoving mass upon the ground - flattened, zeroed and definitively reorganised. Upon the projected surface the virtual space has again opened, displaying a rhythmic oscillation of my falling, then un-falling body; played forward, then in reverse, seamlessly looping between the two states. This imagery is accompanied by an aligned audio recording which permeates the space.

My fallen body lays grounded, its previous configurations loop continuously overhead - appearing first as sadistic mockery, then as trivial time keeping. Slowly, I raise my body to an upright position. Walking past the apparatus, I move towards the back of the space until both my physical and virtual bodies are at equal distances from the threshold. Again, I wheel around, shoulders pulled back, chin up, heels firmly planted, mimicking the apparatus.

“One!”, I command, staring through the apparatus, to the perpetually falling body. The body stutters momentarily, dropping a frame before continuing to loop, though now, each bodily oscillation is quickened, not quite returning to to an upright position. I move forward.

“One!”, I reassert. The loop compresses further towards the ground, oscillating with even greater urgency. I execute this command repeatedly, each time moving closer to the apparatus until I loom beside it, my shadow superimposed dominantly upon the projection. The oscillating body has been reduced to a rapidly vibrating smudge, hovering just above the ground - the accompanying audio condensed to a constant drone. Inhaling, I bend to level myself with the apparatus.

“One”, I whisper. All bodies are still.

Return.

12

Joshua Lewis, *Zeroing*, Massey University, Wellington, October 2017, live performance.



Lewis, Joshua. 2017. Still from *Sonnets from Orpheus*, investigative live performance. Wellington: Massey University.

Sonnets from Orpheus excerpts:

www.vimeo.com/joshualewis/sonnetsfromorpheus
+
www.vimeo.com/joshualewis/sonnetsfromorpheus

*O dancer, who transposes passing things
Into your gait, how you presented this!
Didn't your final spin, tree made of motion,
Take full possession of the swaying year?*¹³

Sonnets from Orpheus *Investigative live performance*¹⁴

This space between the material and the immaterial world opens and closes by means of gesture of turning, by the torsion of the body which ‘holds open the door to the grave’.¹⁵

Staring at each other, we keep our heads fixed firmly forward, unwilling to break gaze. Our two silhouettes mimic each other; our bodies of flesh and aluminium craned so we might see eye to eye. I read aloud to *the other*, with slight enmity, a translated section from Rainer Rilke’s *Sonnets to Orpheus*, “*Oh dancer, who transposes passing things ...*”¹⁶. The excerpt I recite, enacts a cenotaph for a young dancer who died of an unknown disease at age nineteen. “*Oh dancer, oh dancer...*”; I continually interrogate the opposing body, whilst skating backwards and forward upon the office chair. Yet, there is a third body, sitting perpendicular, gazing the space between us. This third body is my own - but of bygone configuration, transposed in time. As I move and speak, *as I dance and sing*, the third body converses, oscillates its temporal transposition - at times of nearness, holding the same configuration as my own body. We continue to perform. Together, we are Orpheus - capable of turning the dead with a *divine note*.

body.cut [flesh, flesh, flesh, ...] projected
video imagery:

www.vimeo.com/joshualewis/bodycutflesh

body.cut [flesh, flesh, flesh, ...] *Video-based Installation*¹⁷

Projected upon the gallery’s exterior wall, a body moves from frame to frame. The width of each frame is shared by both the concrete panel cladding and the distance from the body’s elbow to fingertip. This common unit is not coincidental, but *defining* of the performance. Keeping either fingertip or elbow ‘points’ upon the surface, the body contorts as it transitions across the wall in a gesture encoded by its own physical limitation.

An overlaid ‘text-port’ code readout displays the coordinates of each point, *frame by frame*. With each *frame* a hand or elbow is *cut* from the body, shifting itself spatially. The body reconfigures with it. It is uncertain whether the body is *read* or *written* by this coded language. The code serves to define and choreograph the body; the body defines and writes the code. Site is enacted as porous interface. Reaching the final frame, the body returns to the zero (or initial) position - looping. On occasion the projection ceases and is replaced by plain text resembling code executed on a computer.



Lewis, Joshua. 2017. Installation view *body.cut [flesh, flesh, flesh, ...]*, projection based installation. Wellington: The Engine Room.



Lewis, Joshua. 2017. Installation view *body.cut [flesh, flesh, flesh, ...]*, projection based installation. Wellington: The Engine Room.

13 Rainer Rilke, *Sonnets to Orpheus*, Translated by and David Hills, Stanford University, last modified October 31, 2006, <https://web.stanford.edu/~dhills/orpheus.pdf>, 9.
14 Joshua Lewis, *Sonnets from Orpheus*, Massey University, Wellington, August 2017, investigative live performance.
15 Gabriele Brandstetter, Hortensia Völkers, and Kyo Maclear, *Remembering the body: Körper-Bilder in Bewegung* (Ostfildern: Cantz, 2000), 102.
16 Rainer Rilke, *Sonnets to Orpheus*, 9.
17 Joshua Lewis, *body.cut [flesh, flesh, flesh, ...]*, The Engine Room, Wellington, June 2017, video-based installation



Control technological body in use during *Liminal* by Joshua Lewis, audio-visual performance, Studio Alta, Prague, 2016.



Lewis, Joshua. 2018. Still of *control technological body* during *Zeroing* performance setup. Wellington: Massey University.

Observation brings about the symptom of Mattering

“Nothing stands separately constituted and positioned inside a spacetime frame of reference, nor does there exist a divine position for our viewing pleasure located outside the world.”¹⁸

“Apparatuses are not passive observing instruments; on the contrary, they are productive of (and part of) phenomena.”¹⁹

In early endeavours of this research, primarily occurring within the field of performance design, I have explored the role of the technological device *as* the apparatus. While the research, propelled by Barad’s theory of the *agentially realised apparatus*, acknowledged the observing technology’s ability to ‘define bodies’, it still placed the device *outside* of the performance of which it was involved - outside of the *frame of mattering*. To put it another way, the technological device was not considered ‘part’ of the performance, but merely a tool or means, often hidden or placed beyond audience’s view.

However, a recent shift in thinking, provoked by a re-interrogation of Barad’s *apparatus*, has welcomed in the technological device to contest with the human bodies present within the performance. This shifting of the technological device, from darkened perimeter to centerstage, is a gesture which has manifested within my recent work both literally and conceptually. *The technological body, brought in from the dark*.

For Barad, *apparatuses* are not passive instruments existing outside of the phenomena of which they observe; there exists no such divine position of observation.²⁰ To term the technological device as ‘the apparatus’, placing it outside of the *frame*, is inherently problematic. A more applicable definition of *apparatus* should extend to include all entangled *bodies*, of both flesh and technology. For example, the term ‘apparatus’ used within the aforementioned description of *Zeroing*, might be better substituted for *technological body*, or simply, *body*. With the *technological body* and human body simultaneously observing and performing each other, one may go so far as to define the *entire* work of *Zeroing as* an *apparatuses* (which would also apply to my other performance works).

The technological body, brought in from the dark

Initial works within *turn one*, namely *Zeroing* and *Sonnets to Orpheus*, have utilised a particular *technological body* within them.²¹ This technological *body* consists of a *Kinect* sensor device mounted upon a tripod. The *Kinect* observes live *fleshy body* coordinates, digital colour video and sound that is fed via USB to a laptop as data. This data, this *body of data*, is then reconfigured (and represented) through programming code. I have come to refer to this ‘setup’ as the *control technological body*, named after a ‘scientific control’. Having a ‘constant’ *body* across these initial works

18 Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 376-377.

19 Ibid., 142.

20 Ibid.

21 While the physical components of the *control technological body* are not present within *body.cut[flesh, flesh, flesh,...]*, the work explores the *Kinect* sensor’s relationship with a fleshy body - bodily positions converted to coordinate data. This is a digital technique used across all *turn one* works.

allowed for closer comparison of other variable aspects. This particular *control*, was borrowed from a setup I developed (as a designer) across numerous personal and collaborative, dance-based audio-visual works. Having worked with this setup closely and at length, I began questioning its ‘positioning’ within each performance. Subconsciously, I had already begun to personify the device, giving rise to the initial inquiries which birthed this research. Hence, its suitability as the initial *body in question*.

The Sinew of Language

If the proposed *apparatus* is comprised of human and technological *bodies*, then it is **language** that entangles them. Language - the sinew which appends and mediates performativity from within - may take on ever-shifting form within the work, including ‘natural’ language, programming code and choreography, or most commonly (and usefully), an entanglement of all these. Via its many forms, language’s role as mediator between *bodies* is omnilateral, where all *bodies* enact both ‘reading’ and ‘writing’ with empathetically fluctuating agency.

Coded Language

I was first introduced to coded language’s potential as mediator of *bodies* during a keynote lecture by writer, performer and code artist, Judd Morrissey delivered in Wellington as part the *Performing, Writing* symposium.²² Within his keynote *Taking Place*, Morrissey introduced the concept of considering code or programming as inseparable from, or at least paralleling ‘natural’ language.²³ Morrissey demonstrated coded language’s ability to categorically define and locate bodies within the world - *bodies taking place*. He suggested coded language need not be reserved to the digital computer and that through the *entangling* of ‘natural’ and programing languages we may perceive an “endlessly programmable world”.²⁴

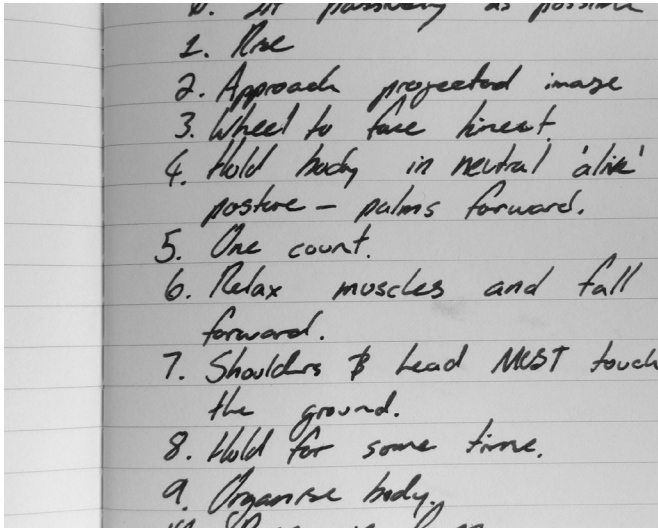
The correlation between ‘natural’ and coded language is well articulated by digital poetics professor Loss Pequeño Glazier within his short essay, *Code as Language*.²⁵ Glazier states that if “language is defined as written symbols, organised into combinations and patterns to express and communicate thoughts and feelings, language that executes, then coding is language.”²⁶ The discourse which Morrissey provided allowed me to reconsider a previously misconceived component of the *technological body*; the language which mediates its ‘unseen internal void’ (on the machine or computer).

In her recent writing *My Mother was a Computer*, postmodern literary critic N. Katherine Hayles provides a nuanced and insightful comparison of natural and coded language.²⁷ Hayles states that coded language is arguably as important as ‘natural’ language as it is created with the sole intention of objective execution. Language “run on a machine is performative in a much stronger sense than

22 Judd Morrissey, “Taking Place” (lecture, Performing, Writing, Massey University, Wellington, March 14, 2017).
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
25 Loss Glazier, “Code as Language,” New Media Poetry and Poetics Special Issue 14 (2006).
26 Ibid., 1.
27 N. Katherine Hayles, *My Mother Was a Computer* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010)

```
1 # me - this DAT
2 #
3 # channel - the Channel object which has changed
4 # sampleIndex - the index of the changed sample
5 # val - the numeric value of the changed sample
6 # prev - the previous sample value
7 #
8 # Make sure the corresponding toggle is enabled in the CHOP Execute DAT.
9
10 state = 0
11
12 def valuechange(channel, sampleIndex, val, prev):
13
14     alive = op('state')['alive']
15     dead = op('state')['dead']
16
17
18     if alive == 1:
19         life = 1
20         op('lifeState').par.value0 = state
21     elif dead == 1:
22         life = 0
23         op('lifeState').par.value0 = state
24
25
26     return
27
```

Lewis, Joshua. 2017. Programming snippet from *Zeroing*, 2017, live performance. Wellington: Massey University.



Lewis, Joshua. 2017. Script notes from *Zeroing*, 2017, live performance. Wellington: Massey University.

that attributed to [natural] language” of which, is tied to more complex chains of mediation.²⁸ Put another way, coded language will perform and re-perform consistently, with absolute exactness unless interrupted by external forces ‘outside’ of the language. It is this attribute that enables coded language, and the machine on which it runs, to provide a nucleus or grounding body of which to perform around and through.

Expanding this further, in conjunction with Barad’s *Agential Realism*, I would like to suggest that coded language run on a machine not only mediates the world but consists of that *body’s* entire mediation of the world.²⁹ Between the *agential cuts* of ‘inputs’ and ‘outputs’, all acts are *performed through* and *of* the coded language; the ontology of the digital *technological body* is enacted not only through language but *is* language. Without coded language, the machine’s senses (sensors) are functionless - they can not ‘perceive’ - leaving it unable to perform *agential separation*. To give example, let us consider the **control technological body** within *Zeroing*. While its boxy sensors, cables and tripod denote its visual presence as a *body*, in actuality, its bodily agency lies in the coding language of which it runs - mediating how it perceives the data provided to it.

Scripting the act of falling

As the artist, I prepare the *technological body(s)* for performance. This process involves providing the device with coded language as *commands to be executed*. The score, or script, requests constant actions as well as appropriate responses to data provocations which pass through the device’s various ‘sensing’ interfaces, most commonly microphones, digital camera and computer peripherals. Using the example of *Zeroing*, the depth sensing camera observes or *reads* a selection of coordinate value and defines them a *body*, my body. This process is repeated sixty times a second, each time defining a new *body of data*. From the script, the machine will recognise when I stand in a neutral posture - defining this event or *body* as ‘1’. As I fall, the ‘y value’ of my head passes below a set threshold and defines this *body* as ‘0’. Thus between one and zero the act of falling is *defined*.

Just as the *technological body* has a script, so do I. In order for the *apparatus* to perform as intended our scripts must be synchronous with *entanglement of bodies* occurring upon the alignment of our scripts - our shared language. When my body within *Zeroing* is choreographed to “hold body in neutral ‘alive’ position - palms forward” the *technological body* reciprocates, identifying this as “state = 1” of which it computes as “alive” - therefore entangling (through language) *fleshy* and *technological bodies* and performing the *apparatus*.³⁰ This scenario highlights the intricacies of conveying language that can be *read* unanimously among multiple *bodies*.

Movement Language

Dance and theatre theorist, Gabriele Brandstetter’s, *Choreography As a Cenotaph*, has provided my practice with both theoretical support as well as offering

28 Ibid., 50.
29 Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*.
30 Ibid.

ongoing poetic stimulus.³¹ Brandstetter suggests that at any given moment, a *fleshy body* (perceivably, that in motion) reconfigures itself - perpetually oscillating the *liminal* space between choreographic reading and writing.³² This concept is useful in considering the *fleshy body* as more ‘porous’ or unresolved in its definition. Like the *digital body*, the *fleshy body* must continually define or *execute* itself through process of self choreography, in order to exist.

Choreography is an attempt to retain as a graph that which can not be held: movement. On the one hand, ‘choreography’ means the writing of movement as notation; on the other hand, it also refers to the text of a composition of movement. Choreography, as the writing *of* and *about* movement, as preserved memory, thus always includes something of a *requiem*.³³

Brandstetter utilises this definition of omni-laterally performing, choreographic language to critique both recent and historic technological attempts to materially *reconfigure* (which she terms *re-member*) the *body in motion*.³⁴ A digital technological device in the act of observing a *fleshy body* must, even momentarily, ‘store’ such a body as a digital reconfiguration - as a *body of data*. For this reason, Brandstetter’s discussion assists in unpacking the concept of the digitally read, reconfigured, written *body*.

Re-membering

I explored these ideas most notably within *body.cut [flesh, flesh, flesh ...]*. As my body moves along the wall it simultaneously enacts both reading and writing in relation to the *body of data* (as represented in the overlaid ‘texport readout’).

In this context, the *body of data* might be considered the ‘re-membered’ body. However, this term ‘re-membering’ might not only be considered a writing to digital memory but also a literal *reconfiguring* of limb members. As the *fleshy body* is read (or observed), it is *dismembered*, limb by limb, and *re-membered* in its data counterpart. This example of ‘re-membering’ again highlights languages ability to define, cut and reconfigure the body.

Fleshy limbs cut from the body, as defined by the script as foot, hand, and elbow. Reconfigured a coordinate point data, limbs are held, dismembered re-membered as a fleshy body they once were.



Lewis, Joshua. 2017. Video projection still from *body.cut[flesh,flesh,flesh...]*.

31 Gabriele Brandstetter and Hortensia Völkers, *ReMembering the Body* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2000).
 32 Ibid.
 33 Ibid., 104.
 34 Ibid.



Nauman, Bruce. 1968. *Walking with Contrapposto*, black-and-white videotape (still). Los Angeles: County Museum of Art. <http://www.lacma.org/beyondgeometry/artworks8.html>



Beckett, Samuel. Directed by Lindsay-Hogg, Michael. 2011 (written 1949). *Waiting for Godot*, film still. Ireland: Blue Angel Films.

Seducing the ground

In developing a ‘framework’ for the aforementioned performances I have looked towards the work of playwright and theatre director Samuel Beckett and artist Bruce Nauman, particularly in their revolving seduction of *the ground*. Or, **zero state**.

Nauman’s practice, especially in his *performing* of the human body, will often approach this zero state, enacted through falling, lying, rolling, collapsing and walking. This is notably evident in Nauman’s recent video installation, *Contrapposto Studies*³⁵, in which the artist remixes a recording of himself walking, to and from the camera, a gesture that traces back to his earlier *Walking with Contrapposto*.³⁶ The exaggerated contrapposto posture, of which the artist holds with each repeating step, accentuates the effect of groundward tug; it pulls the body into disorganisation. Additionally, the subversion of a temporal *zero state* is also present in Nauman’s asynchronous iterations of the original video played in unison. The constant threat of a *zero state* provides *a ground to bounce upon* - a means for oscillation. It is this palpable oscillation - this perpetually approaching *zero state* - of which materialises the performance itself, preventing it from falling indefinitely.³⁷ This notion is elegantly represented by a phrase within Beckett’s play, *Footfalls* where a girl paces constantly up and down a hallway, eventually requesting her mother to remove the carpet, explaining; ‘the motion alone is not enough. I must hear the feet, however faint they fall.’³⁸

Among the technologies of which I have explored within *turn one*, there exists a similarly threatening *zero state*. Given by the black screen, the still and silent image, the *elifstate* = 0, or the data signal that reads a constant stream of zeros. These states represent a lowest common denominator, or *motion in a direction which can move no further*. Within *Sonnets from Orpheus*, this *zero state* is marked by an absolute closeness, where *technological* and *fleshy bodies* come together to consequently perform in temporal sync. Falling occurs upon a horizontal axis with *ground* being enacted by both the screen and ultimate intimacy of *bodies*.

At one moment during Beckett’s, *Waiting for Godot*,³⁹ all four main characters, one by one, fall upon the ground into a single, motionless heap. As each body falls, the action of the scene is condensed, until all lie motionless. This scene, in amalgamation with ideas explored in *Sonnets from Orpheus* contributed to the development of the work, *Zeroing* - specifically in the performances treatment of a *zero state*.

At one stage of *Zeroing*, I fall to the ground while the *technological body* looks on. As the motion of my falling body oscillates between upright and grounded within the projection, it is neither one nor zero. The distinct ‘placement’ of these two states is made trivial as the motion turns without discernible start nor end. From the other side of the technological body, a command is made: “One ...”. The command is *executed*, bringing the oscillating body closer to the ground as if ‘balancing’ the two spatially defined sides or *states* of the performance.

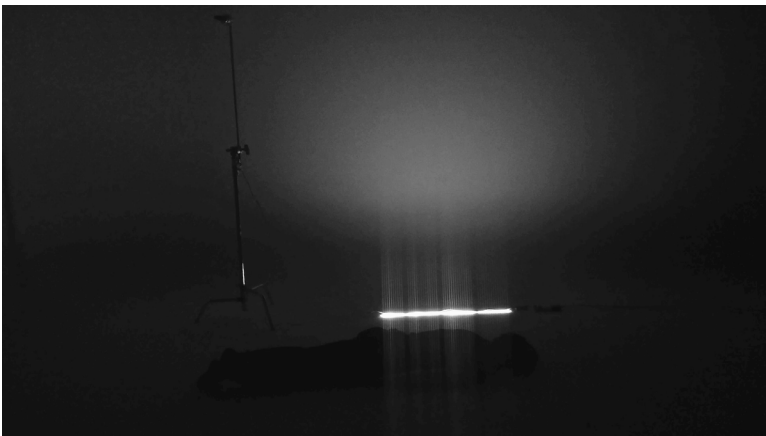
³⁵ Nauman, Bruce. 2016. *Contrapposto Studies*. Video Installation. New York: Sperone Westwater.

³⁶ Nauman, Bruce. 1968. *Walking with Contrapposto*. 16mm film.

³⁷ Steven Connor, “Shifting Ground,” in *Samuel Beckett, Bruce Nauman* (Vienna: Kunsthalle Wien, 2000), 80-87.

³⁸ Samuel Beckett, *Footfalls* (Faber: Faber London, 1976).

³⁹ Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* (Faber: Faber London, 1956).



Lewis, Joshua. 2018. Stills from *Fallen without Falling*, investigative live performance. Wellington: Massey University.

Fallen without Falling investigative performance video:

www.vimeo.com/joshualewis/fallenwithoutfalling

As I repeatedly assert the same command with decreasing volume, the body is eventually brought to an absolute *zero state*, only to be put into motion again as the *apparatus* and code *returns*.

turn two...

***Fallen without Falling** Investigative performance ⁴⁰*

Following the performance *Zeroing*, I spent time exploring the work's gesture of the falling body. Of interest was the notion that my *fleshy body* could perceivably occur only in one direction; a concept which facilitated my interest in subverting its projected counterpart within *Zeroing*. Within the work my body no longer fell in a single direction from 'I' to 'O', but instead oscillated between the two states. The investigative work, *Fallen without Falling* was produced during these experimentations.

A vertical lighting strip illuminates my upright, unmoving body. On coded cue, the light turns off. I fall to the floor, under vale of darkness.

A horizontal lighting strip illuminates my lying, unmoving body. On coded cue, the light turns off. I fall to my feet, under vale of darkness.

Loop.

The work subverted the notion that falling should occur in any one direction, but more importantly depicted these two states as distinctly observable *bodies*, each denoting a *ground or zero state*. Considered in relation to *Zeroing*, the commanding of the projected *body* towards the the floor would have held the same relevance to 'zeroing' the body, had the body instead been commanded to its feet. The potential within *Zeroing* was not in the *falling* of a body, but instead the *oscillation* (*between grounds*) of its bygone counterpart - with 'O' (lying) and 'I' (upright) *bodies* providing the turning points for this motion.

Consequently, *oscillation* (or *revolution*) became a more useful terminology for its conceptual facilitation of two or multiple *grounds* in contrast to *falling*, which privileges one.

40

Joshua Lewis, *Fallen without Falling*, Massey University, Wellington, April 2018, Investigative performance (not public).

Bodies of [different] bits.

I've never seen the [human] body as purely biological, so to consider technology as a kind of alien other that happens upon us at the end of the millennium is rather simplistic. [Humans] have never been purely biological entities.⁴¹

Through cultural and historical repetition, we are susceptible to delineating the human body by its fleshy ‘outline’.⁴² Contrary to this tradition, the human body does not, and has never, ended at the flesh. Defining bodies categorically, using terms such as *technological body*, *the data body*, *the fleshy body*, has been useful in evolving the definition of *apparatus*. However, terms such as these delineate each *body* strictly by its perceived ‘materiality’, much like one does when confining the human body to the flesh.

Within *Sonnet's from Orpheus*, four (perceived) bodies sit perpendicular as if seated round a table; *fleshy body*, *projected body*, *technological body* (the **control**), and ultimately, the ‘first person’ camera *body* which watches on. Upon initial observation these *bodies* appear as distinct - as semblances of their materiality. However, this is only one possible semblance; one possible performance of *agential separation*. Considered differently, these bodies are densely entangled.

The use of the office chair gives a subtle suggestion that my *fleshy body* is already entangled in the technological. The chair, as technology, performs the same function as the tripod, bringing our *bodies* eye to eye. My *fleshy body* is *entangled* with that of the *technological body* through our shared understanding of coded/choreographed language. When my *fleshy body* moves and speaks, the *technological body* ‘perceives’ this, defining our presence, simultaneously with my projected counterpart upon the screen. Our three bodies are inseparable in their *agential* performances, unable to ‘exist’ or be defined without one another. Together we perform as a single body; *Orpheus*. Furthermore, the *bodies* we see when we watch this performance as a video all exist due to the, *body which watches on* - entangling the *bodies* further.

Personification of the technological

My initial investigations, including *Sonnets from Orpheus* and *Zeroing*, made attempt to recognize the **control** observing technological device *as* a body - acknowledging its agency as an distinct entity, and bringing it *in from the dark*.

Upon reflection, this was facilitated through what I shall term; *personification of the technological* - digital sensing and processing devices, bundled and arranged, in human-like semblance. This was most exemplified by the use of a *legged* tripod, of human stature, upon which sat *a head*; containing microphones, cameras and motion capture recognition. A gathering of the senses to a centralised *face* of perception. A centralising of the technological body to a single identifiable entity. Put simply, the body which faced me within *Zeroing* mirrored (and rivaled) my own.

⁴¹ Gary Hall and Joanna Zylinska, 'Probing: An Interview with Stelarc', in Joanna Zylinska(ed.), *The Cybord Experiments*(London and New York, 2002), p.144.
⁴² Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 155.



Lewis, Joshua. 2018. Experimentation with “making handheld” the technological components of the **control**. Wellington: Massey University.

Practicing the *technological body* through personification has proved useful in unpacking an evolving definition of *body and apparatus*. However, this particular method of practicing *personification* is problematic for two main reasons.

Delineation among materiality

Firstly, *bodies* - technological, fleshy, and otherwise - are not so easily separated. As discussed, to make distinct *cuts* between flesh and aluminum is reductive, disregarding consideration of Barad’s notion of the *agential cut*. Within *Zeroing*, I was striving to give the technological body equal agency. I inadvertently assembled its physicality in like image to myself. This was a gesture which, not only enforced our separability, but reinforced the redundant duality of human and technology. Personification, in this regard is better enacted in *Sonnets from Orpheus*, where Orpheus is enacted throughout flesh, aluminium, light and data. It is difficult to define exactly ‘what’ Orpheus is in this work or where he ‘starts’ or ‘ends’. Such is the nature of abandoning material delineation.

Decentralised observation

Secondly, the assembly of *sensor and senses* to a single locus of perception perpetuates the paradigm of *linear observation*, a concept, which emerging technological practices are in process of rendering outdated.⁴³

My consideration of decentralised observation was inspired by artist and writer Hito Steyerl’s text, *In Free Fall: A Thought Experiment on Vertical Perspective*. Steyerl asserts that that in order for linear perspective to “operate, we must necessarily assume an observer standing on a stable ground looking”.⁴⁴ Steyerl suggests that recent methods of technological observation have decentralised (spatio-temporarily) the body from a single ‘point’ of observation. Methods such as aerial map views, surveillance panoramas and mass data collection (and representation) has made perception from of a stable *ground* an obsolete practice, both literally and figuratively.

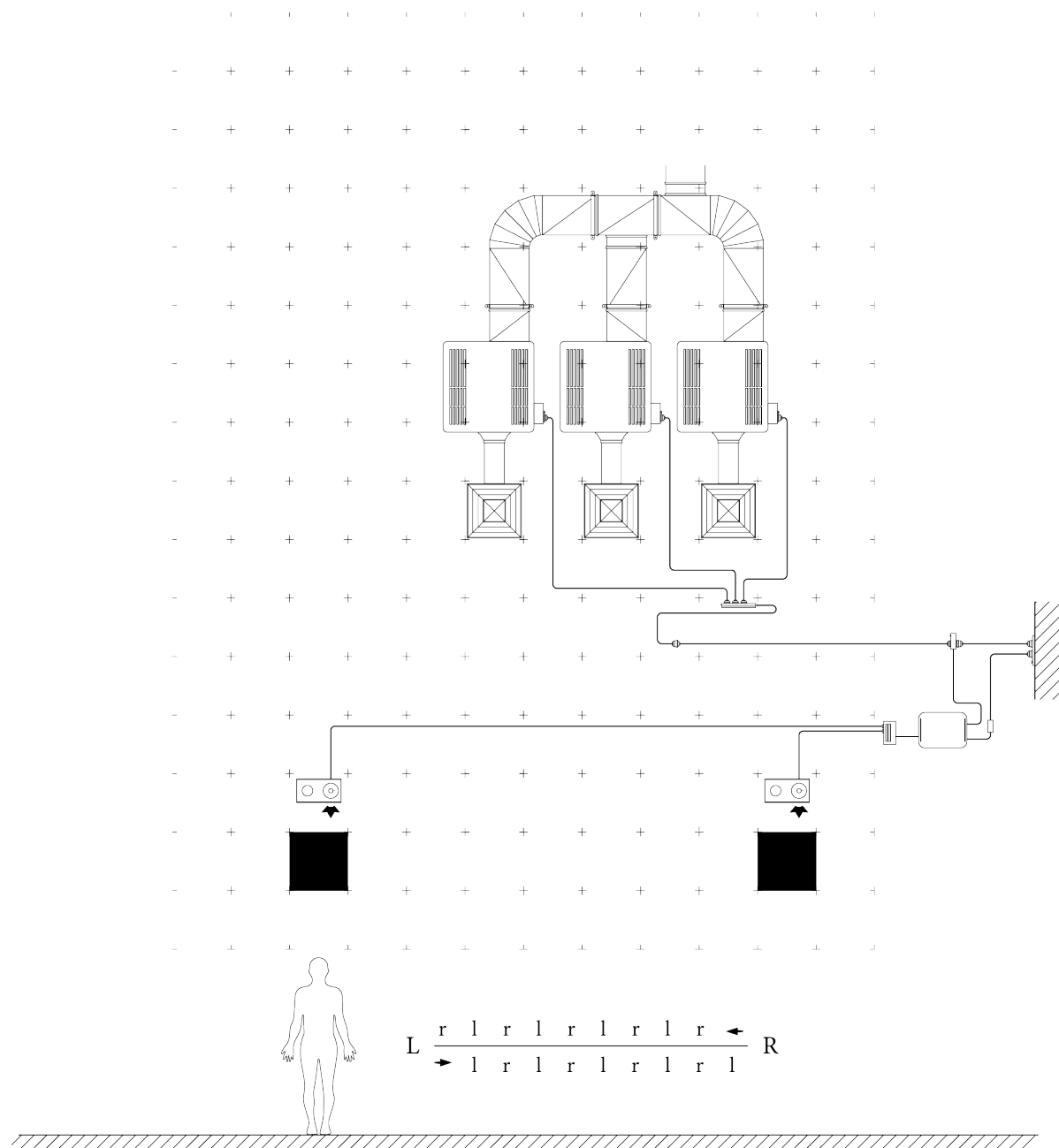
Steyerl comes to conclude the *ground* to be relative, in a way similar to that discussed within my work *Fallen without Falling*. Steyerl suggests that we imagine we are falling, but there is not ground. As everything around us falls too; *groundedness* is only enacted by that which falls at the same speed.⁴⁵ Steyerl’s analogy parallels that which I have developed: *bodies* are in constant *oscillation between grounds* - *grounded* only briefly with each *turn*.

In response, the investigative *turn three* works to follow will attempt to take on a more ‘dispersed’ notion of the *technological apparatus*. *Dispersed*, in this regard referring to both the dispersion of technological observation as well as the dispersion of *bodies* among each other, beyond ‘neat and tidy’ bodies. Furthermore, this dispersion shall also apply to the *apparatus* as bodies will be considered in relation (in *entanglement*) to performance site.

⁴³ Hito Steyerl and Franco Berardi, *The Wretched on the Screen* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012).

⁴⁴ Ibid., 24.

⁴⁵ Ibid.



Lewis, Joshua. 2018. Diagram of technological setup within *Will you never have done revolving it all?*

The **control body** as a technological setup, used in *turn one* will no longer be used. I have also chosen to move away from camera type devices, due to their predisposition to perform centralised linear perspective as an ‘eye’.

turn three ...

Site-entangled Apparatus

If the emerging [r]evolutions of *apparatus* within my practice are to more carefully explore ‘dispersion’ or *entanglement*, then greater consideration of **site** is required. To acknowledge these performances as innately *site-entangled* releases the ‘outline’ of the *apparatus* and thus entangles bodies both ‘within’ and ‘outside’ of it. Consequently, as Karen Barad has suggested, this makes the *agential cut* of the *apparatus* rather pervasive, a daring of which I hope to welcome.⁴⁶

Revolving it All sound snippet from installation:

www.vimeo.com/joshualewis/revolvingitall

Will you never have done revolving it all? (*Revolving it All*)
*Live Installation Performance*⁴⁷

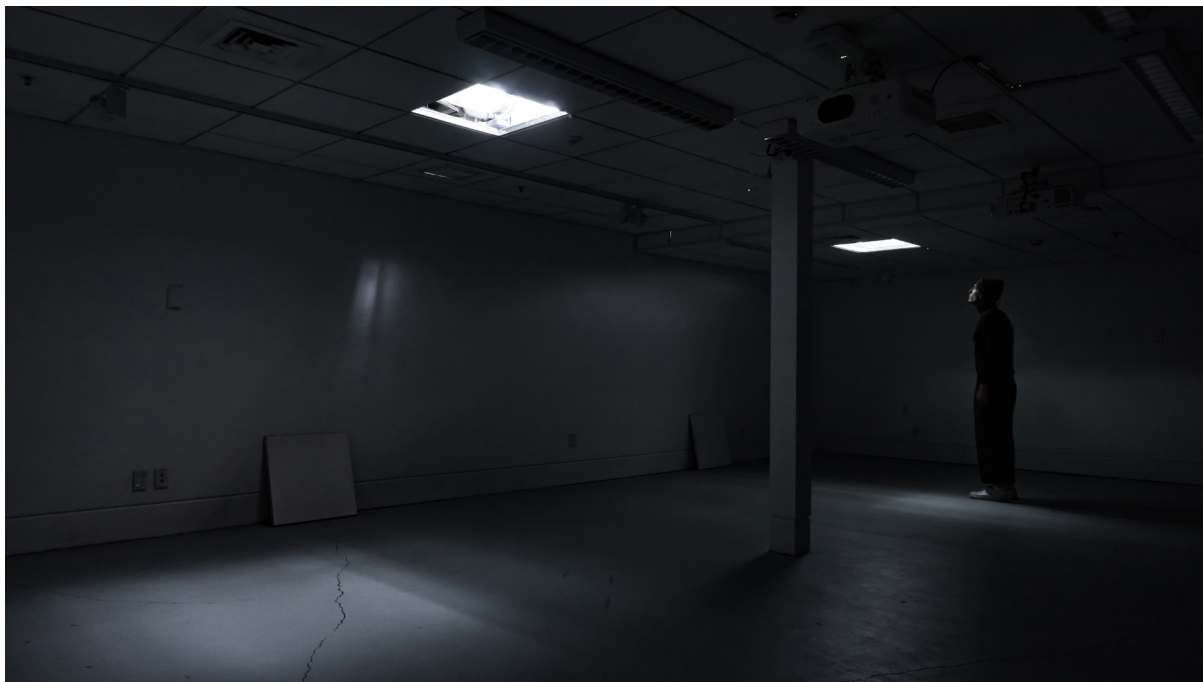
Removal of two ceiling panels, nine steps apart. Cold-white led strip lighting placed at perimeter of each openings, projecting light downward. All other light sources either turned off or blocked. One of two stereo speakers installed at each opening. Power to air conditioning units (three) spliced to a single digital relay. Air conditioning relay and speakers connected to computer. All technology installed out of view, within ceiling plenum. Each cycle below to be executed from computer, one after another, on loop.

Cycle 1. Air conditioning powered ON. “Footstep” audio track stopped. Seven minutes.

Cycle 2. Air conditioning powered OFF. “Footstep” audio track played over stereo speakers. “Footsteps” to appear to ‘move’ between openings. Seven minutes.

⁴⁶ Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*.

⁴⁷ Joshua Lewis, *Will you never have done revolving it all?*, Dominion Museum, Wellington, June 2018, Live installation performance.



Lewis, Joshua. 2018. Installation view *Will you never have done revolving it all?*. Wellington: Dominion Museum Building.

Mother's Body:

Buried within the bowels of the Dominion Museum building, a room of nondescript character is presented bare. Walls and floor, rendered white, make all attempts to appear featureless. Suspending the void, a ceiling grid floats with oppressive heaviness. Panels dissect the ceiling into discrete units, holding vents through which the space breaths.

Her body it breaths; but we shall only become aware when it does not. In the air-conditioned hum of the void we consider having reached stillness, only to notice when the hum is removed, and we too are left breathless.

Upon entry, the space appears as darkness, softly illuminated by two square panels - each projecting a coolness upon the ground below. As pupils dilate, these lights appear not as panels but portals; openings in where ceiling panels have been removed. Incisions made through skin, exposing respiratory and nervous systems beneath.

With the distinct click of an electronic relay, all breathy hums cease. She exhales. The intense still brings a coldness; a groundedness. If the luminance was at first considered *the above*, might we consider ourselves *the below*. The openings suggest the celestial above, but do we also look up through the windows of the grave?

Body:

It happens above, as if birthed by silence. Feet are heard to fall, not next to our own but suspended above the ground; the ground above. Left foot; a prolonged pause. Right foot; a pause again. Left. Right. Left. Right. Left. Right, a pause. Wheel. The body pivots upon unseen heels, pacing space between illuminated openings, backwards and forward. Her feet fall like pendulum's turn; pause unnatural. Keeping time.

In the void between the openings the apparition becomes faint; feet heard only by open ears. At each opening she returns with sureness. It is unclear if these feet have ever walked the ground we stand upon. Or has the ground itself transcended, allowing her to join her mother among the alloy sinuses and copper nerves which entangle this building.

Mother's Body:

A click is again heard as the last foot falls. She inhales; humming once more.

(The loop repeats)



Beckett, Samuel. Directed by Asmus,Walter. 2001(written 1975). *Footfalls*, film still. Ireland: Blue Angel Films.

An entangled foot falls

In creating the work *Will you have never have done revolving it all?* the work of playwright Samuel Beckett, especially his aforementioned *Footfalls*, provided a **tool** for considering how bodies might perform each other as *entangled apparatus*. Beckett’s approach within *Footfalls* is of particularly interest for how it *personifies* site (or building), entangling the *bodies* among it.

The text of *Footfalls*, may be considered a permeant, a permeating body, to my work *Will you never have done revolving it all*. This work is **not** a restaging of Beckett’s *Footfalls*; but perhaps an apparatus that may live alongside, and through, his text. It was never my original intention of the work to ‘require’ the *Footfalls* text. Though in hindsight, this may have provided a valuable layering to the work - bringing it closer to my ‘poetic description’ of the performance installation.

*Footfalls synopsis: May, a woman ‘timeless’ in age, tirelessly paces back and forth upon a strip of bare landing outside her dying, if not already dead, mother’s room. Her mother speaks but is never seen. She walks, with metronome like steps; nine there, nine back. There is little to suggest she has, or will, exist outside of this. The play contains, necessarily, little semblance of plot.*⁴⁸

*“[These] life-long stretches of walking [are] the centre of the play; everything else is secondary.”*⁴⁹

Within *Footfalls*, the threatening of a *zero state* perpetuates the performance, however it is not the performance which is under threat but the bodies within it; bodies of which uphold the ‘action’. Within both Beckett’s *Footfalls* and my *Revolving it All*, the persistence of footsteps uphold the *apparatus*. For May within *Footfalls*, her footsteps assert her *being* not only to her mother and us, but to herself. She must know she is not dead; the process of walking considered as an *oscillating* definition (or repetitive *grounding*) of body and self. When Beckett describes May’s “lifelong stretches of walking”⁵⁰, he suggests, not only May’s enduring pacing throughout her lifetime, but that she, within the motion of each step, both defines herself [, *I* ...] and threatens her own erasure should she, in prolonged pause, not take another [, *O* ...].

However, May’s mechanism of walking not only defines her own body but the body of the building. It is conceivable that amidst May’s tireless pacing, her Mother took her final breath - a truth only known to her subconscious. May’s oscillatory *grounding*, enacts the apparatus which sustains, not only herself, but the requiem body of her mother through the building. One might go so far as the suggest the *apparatus of walking* performs the house **as** the body of May’s mother.

Similarly within *Revolving it All* we may consider two discernible *bodies* entangled through the *apparatus*, both of which enact their definition through

48 Samuel Beckett, *Footfalls* (Faber: Faber London, 1976).
49 W. D. Asmus, “Practical aspects of theatre, radio and television, Rehearsal notes for the German premiere of Beckett’s That Time and Footfalls at the Schiller-Theater Werkstatt, Berlin,” *Journal of Beckett Studies* 2 (Summer 1977): 1.
50 Ibid., 1.

the site. The obvious *body* is that of the footfall’s sound. The second, might be considered the *body of the building* itself, which performs its presence through manipulation of the air conditioning.

The definition of the *body* entangled through the air conditioning is not immediately present, possibly considered by those who experience the work as a byproduct of the space - *a* given sonic *zero state* or *ground*. It is only when the air conditioning ceases that we realise its presence. As the sonic stillness is ‘brought lower’ so is the *ground* (or ‘constant’ state of the room) with it. As hum of the building is *dies*, the sound of footsteps is *birthed* from the its ceiling. Similarly, the *body made of footfalls sound*, transcends the familiar ground to the space above, having divorced its fleshy in the process.

The ability of these two *bodies* to perform as *apparatus* is enacted by the coded language which ‘executes’ them. Both the powering on and off of the building’s *hums* and the speakers which generate footfall’s sound are entangled through the concealed computer; physically through copper cable and performatively through the sinew of language. This relationship may be considered comparable to that of May and her mother; between these two entangled bodies, *the umbilical cord was never truly severed*.⁵¹

The two personified *bodies* present without *Revolving it All* enact their *entanglement* through and among the site. When beginning to ‘trace’ the beginnings and ends of such *bodies* (even what we are calling the *apparatus*), observation of boundaries become unclear; these *bodies* are *dispersed*, permeating the ‘space’ and one other. Further, as welcomed consequence, the categorisation of what might constitute human and technological elements become pleasingly abstracted.

I should like to briefly address the *fleshy* human bodies of which are also *entangled* within this *apparatus* as the ‘audience’. The recognition of footfall’s sound as that which regularly ‘belongs’ to a *body* allows for the *personification* of this technological component. This therefore bringing attention, to other *bodies* which may be personified within the performance work (such as that among the air-conditioning). This notion may have been stronger had audience members had awareness of Beckett’s *Footfalls*.

“It is not clear who makes and who is made in the relationship between human and machine. [...] there is not formal, ontological separation in our formal knowledge of machine and organism, technical and organic”⁵²

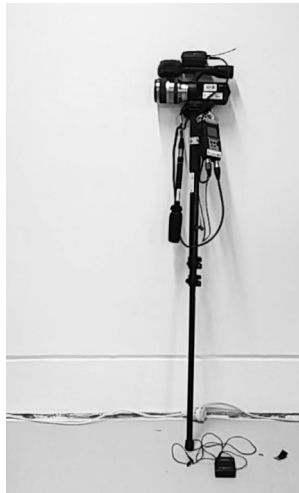
RPM Hums⁵³
by Julieanna Preston

Julieanna Preston is a spatial artist, performer and theorist whose artistic research often takes form in live art, performance writing, and site-situated spatial experiences. Presented as part of the Wellington, *Performance Arcade*, Preston’s

51 Ibid.
52 Donna Jeanne Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 30.
53 Preston, Julieanna, and Joshua Lewis (contributer). 2018. *RPM Hums*. Live art performance. Wellington: Performance



Preston, Julieanna. Photographic still from *RPM Hums*, live art performance. Wellington: Performance Arcade.



Lewis, Joshua. 2018. Documentation 'setup' from *RPM Hums*.

work *RPM Hums* played a considerable role in reshaping how I consider site-entanglement in relation to the *apparatus*. I worked closely with Preston during the performances of this work; formally in the role of documentation person (audio/video), but also as partial collaborator.

The work *RPM Hums* was performed primarily within the underground car park of Te Papa Tongarewa Museum. A space populated with the humming *bodies* of air conditioning units - and their entangled ducts, vents and pipes. Within the live art performance, Preston enacted empathy towards these *bodies*, **tuning** with them through the choreography of her *fleshy body* - in form as bodily and vocal vibration.⁵⁴ In Preston's words;

In *RPM hums* I sought to absorb, sound, repeat, mimic and emulate their vibrations. This is a performance of tuning that drew the audience and I into my their life; to quiver, tremble, shudder, shiver and spasm as a counter-humming machine.⁵⁵

The work was performed multiple times daily over the period of *The Performance Arcade*; each occasion of which I accompanied Preston, documenting the performance. With every performance we took different routes through the car park. As the artist was drawn by the hum of airy *bodies*, I was too. While repeating this performance, this *choreography*, I began to consider that my body too, was becoming entangled amongst the air-conditioning *bodies* and the performance itself. I was in fact part of the *apparatus* of the performance. To discuss this further it is necessary to explain the technology I used for 'documentation' (Though I must note, at this point my involvement had expanded beyond simply documentation):

A camera is mounted upon a monopod, collecting video. I must stay 'attached' to the monopod to keep it upright. Sound was captured via a wireless lapel microphone attached to Preston's body. I monitor the audio over headphones, allowing me to hear sound of Prestons vocalisations as well as the machines with which she 'tunes', even when I am spatially distant.

At times Preston and I performed with no audience, allowing us to experiment with different ways in which each of us may 'perform our roles' - or different *reconfigurations of apparatus*.

I would like to focus on one particular experiment we performed, in where, rather than following Preston through the carpark, I navigated the air-infused carpark as a spatially independent body. As I roamed I attempted to listen; with one ear to the sound of hums overhead, and with the other ear (via headphones), to the hums which Preston was 'tuning' to. Listening carefully as I moved, I attempted to find Preston by matching or 'tuning' the hums. As Julieanna **tuned** her fleshy *body* to the airy hums of the machine *bodies*; I **tuned** the airy *bodies* (closest to me) with the hums of her *body* - thus entangling my *body* among

Arcade.

54 Julieanna Preston, "RPM Hums 2018," Julieanna Preston, accessed October 14, 2018, <http://www.julieannapreston.space/rpm-hums-2019/>.

55 Ibid.

others with the *apparatus*. An *apparatus* of which we had both inserted (or *entangled*) ourselves.

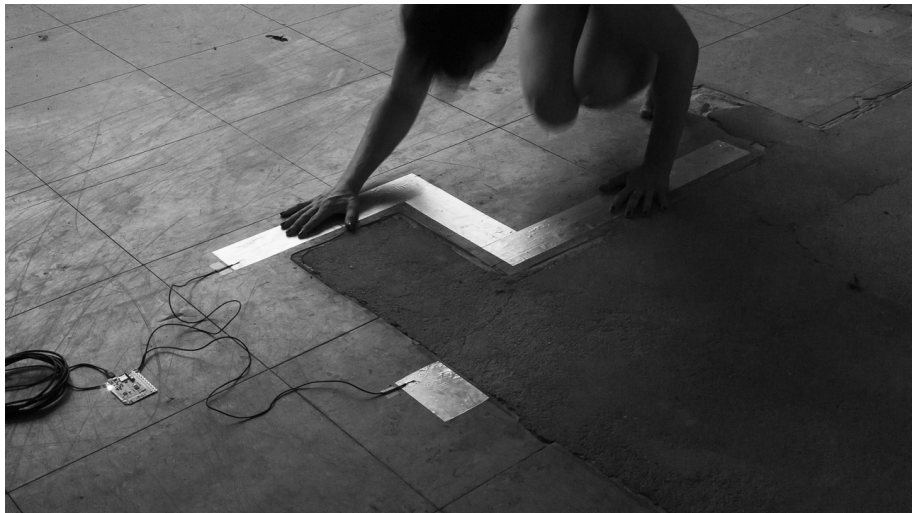
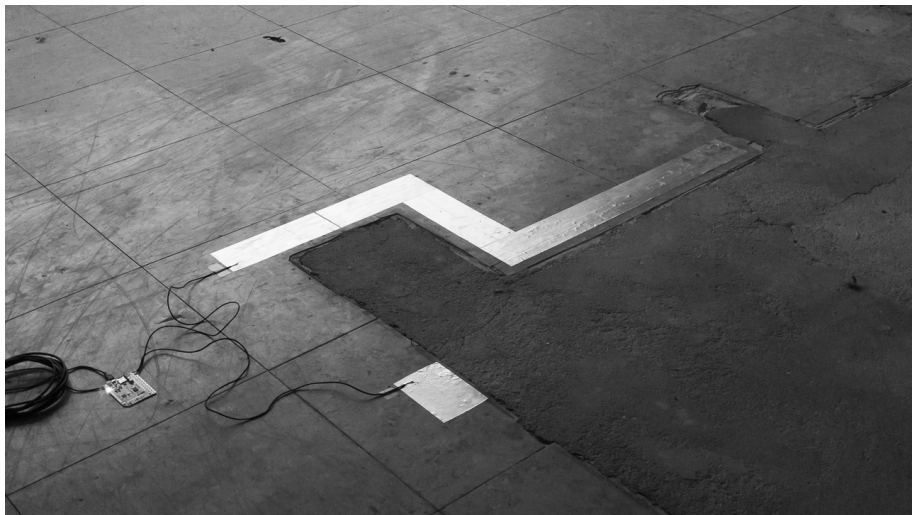
One way to represent this *entanglement* is to consider a single ‘thread’ which runs through all the *bodies* in this *apparatus*. Each of these stages might be considered possible *bodies*, with each “//” representing a possible agential cut.

... // Te Papa building // Air-conditioning machines // Preston’s “tuning” body // Lapel microphone and signal sender // Lapel microphone signal sender // Building structure, bouncing signal and adding noise // lapel receiver and headphones // My “tuning” body // Air-conditioning machines // Te Papa building // ...

Looking at this ‘thread’ there are a few thing to consider in relation to the notion of *site-entanglement*. This ‘thread’ loops out as it entangles the *bodies* of Preston and myself, before *entangling* back into the building. However, the building by no mean has to denote the ‘end of this thread’ or the ‘edges’ of the *apparatus*. Let us consider an example where to the end of this ‘thread’ we add “... // ***Human bodies inside Te Papa*** // ... ”. And let us also consider the condition that if human bodies move through rooms within Te Papa it affects the air-conditioning units within the carpark. A condition which consequently choreographs the *bodies* of Preston and myself, the airy machines *bodies*, and in fact, *all bodies* within the *apparatus*. This scenario denotes an evolution of *apparatus* where, not only are all *bodies* performing entanglement through each other but the *apparatus* is perceivably ‘outlineless’. The *apparatus* is dispersed and permeating to the point where executable ‘control’ is beyond the agency of the artist’s *body*. In this scenario our fleshy *bodies* became more ***conduit*** than ‘commander’ to the *apparatus* - empathetically entangling both our *bodies* among others in the site.

This notion of *fleshy body*, or artist’s body, as ***conduit*** became the central idea explored within the upcoming *turn four*.

turn four...



Lewis, Joshua. 2018. Photographic stills from *I will make a space for you*, investigative performance. Berlin: Agora Collective.

I will make a space for you, video documentation:

www.vimeo.com/joshualewis/spaceforyou

Residency at Agora

Within recent months I took part in *Promiscuous Anomalies*, an artist residency facilitated by *Agora Collective*.⁵⁶ The residency which took on a workshop format was held in the *Agora's Berlin-based Center for Contemporary Arts*. While the residency focused on collective exercises among the group, I also continued independant experimentations towards practicing of *apparatuses*, utilising *Agora's* available spaces.

*I will make a space for you (, this apparatus awaits)*⁵⁷ *Investigative, live installation performance, 2018*

Whilst in Berlin, I fell in love with another body. However, I was soon to leave the city, putting us at distance for some time. I imagined the time to come, in where I would seek to remember their body. The short text which followed forms (dare I say), an *apparatus*, for this remembering - a means to retain the potential of a body.

A script, for loving the potential of a distant body:

*Find a clear space of wall - place your toes against the architrave
Lean forward until tender brow meets sur face.
Let breath fall out, quiver - let it lap between paint and upper lip.
Feel their weight against yours.*

The script tells of personifying the ‘non-fleshy’ *body* but more that this I consider it an *apparatus* for ‘holding open’ a space for a body; a space which a potential body may later fill. Through the surface of the wall I attempt to recall lovers touch. I went on to repurpose this short script in the creation of the unresolved performance work, *I will make a space for you (, this apparatus awaits)*. Here I attempted to *entangle* the short script with a space within *Agora*, utilising the capacitive ‘touch’ technology of which I had been experimenting with at the time. I do not consider this a fully formed work whatsoever, however unanticipated results within its creation lead to a [r]evolved definition of how an *apparatus* may permeate site.

Aluminium tape lines the remnants of interior walls, long departed from the ground. Crudely fixed wires protrude from the aluminium, attaching themselves to a small digital processor - its single LED providing the only illumination to the space. An unseen body begins contorting its limbs to the arrangement of the aluminum, lain as lovers may. As intimacy of flesh and metal intensifies, as the body grounds, the apparatus observes the body's presence, bringing it to eye by flood of light. As flesh breaths and quivers so does the light, empathising with the space to do the same as it too is bathed in light.

⁵⁶ Agora Collective, prototypes an interdisciplinary and collaborative community, that conceives models for working and living together.
⁵⁷ Joshua Lewis, *I will make a space for you (, this apparatus awaits)*, *Agora's Berlin-based Center for Contemporary Arts*, Berlin, August 2018, investigative live installation performance.

Body Conduit

Like the scenario of *RPM Hums*, my *fleshy body* within *I will make a space for you* positions itself as **conduit** rather than ‘commander’ to the *apparatus*. This became most apparent when the *apparatus* I was seeking to enact began to ‘leak’, permeating and dispersing further than I had intended.

The processor (computer) was programmed in such a way that when flesh made contact with the aluminium tape a signal was received, illuminating the interior lights of the space (via a relay switch). However, unintended to me, other *bodies* were activating the processor (and therefore lighting). Other *bodies* were ‘joining’ the *apparatus*.

For the capacitive ‘touch’ sensors (formed by the aluminium tape) to function ‘correctly’ they must have a stable electrical earth *or* ground. For simplicity, we may think of this *earth* as similar to *the* Earth; a large stable *body*. All electrical components within a building are connected to this electrical earth. When using a capacitive sensor, a ‘touch’ is detected by comparing the electrical potential⁵⁸ of the *earth body* with that of the *fleshy body* in contact. However, due to the makeshift nature of Agora’s electrical system, the building’s electrical earth was in constant surge - a condition which conceptually and electrically placed this comparison of *bodies* on *unstable ground*. As a result the processor, and therefore *apparatus*, could not differentiate the ‘joining’ of my body, with the ‘joining’ of an electrical *body*; such as a laptop being plugged-in in an adjacent room.

In this scenario, my *fleshy body* becomes one of many **conduit bodies** of the *apparatus*, decentralising the *fleshy body*’s performative agency. Has this experiment not unintentionally ‘leaked over’, my human body would have still been centralised, and the *apparatus* functioning with perceivable ‘edges’.

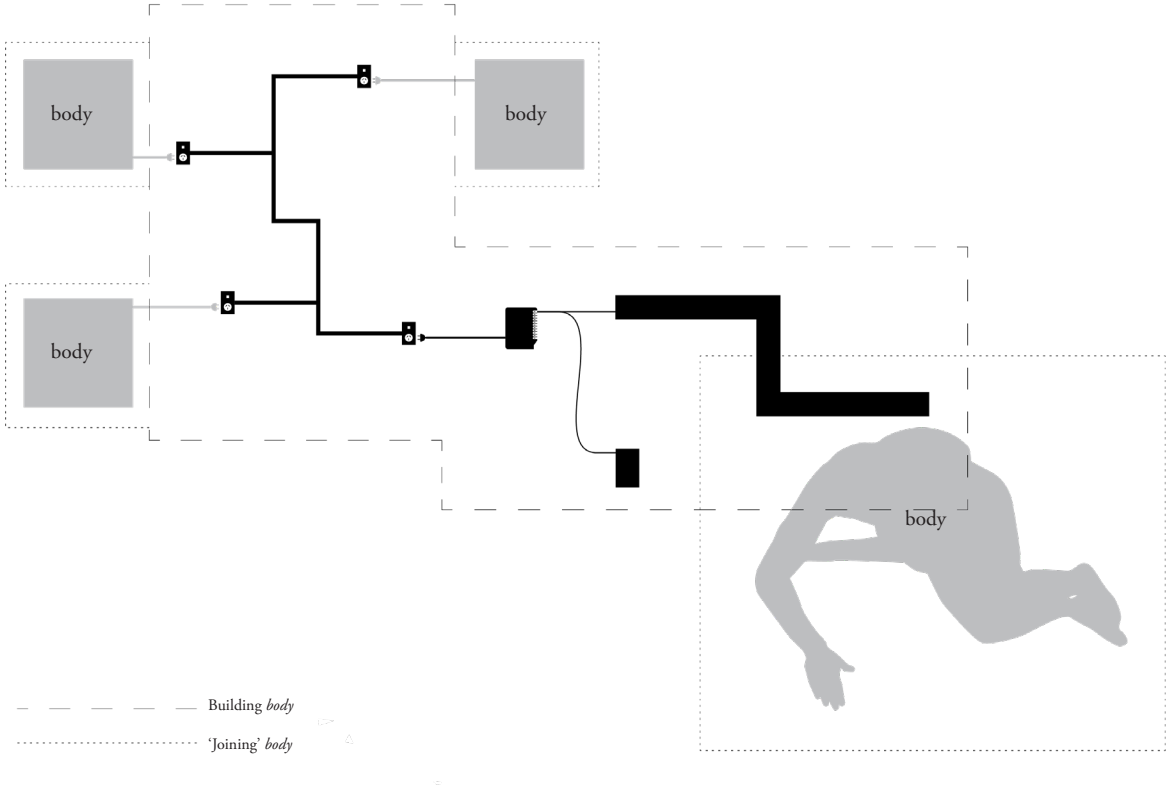
Dispersed apparatuses

At this point it becomes difficult to trace the ‘edges’ of what might constitute an *apparatus* - the task of containing it seems unwieldy. However, while the **potential** entanglement and dispersion of an *apparatus* is endless, individual praxis of it are not. *Bodies* within the *apparatus* must be observed to *oscillate*, *turn* or ‘pace the floorboards’ in order to define themselves - in order to exist. If *apparatuses* are made, if they are *mattered*, of and from *bodies*, then an *apparatus* can only be considered to extend as far as entangled *bodies* are observed to revolve or define themselves.

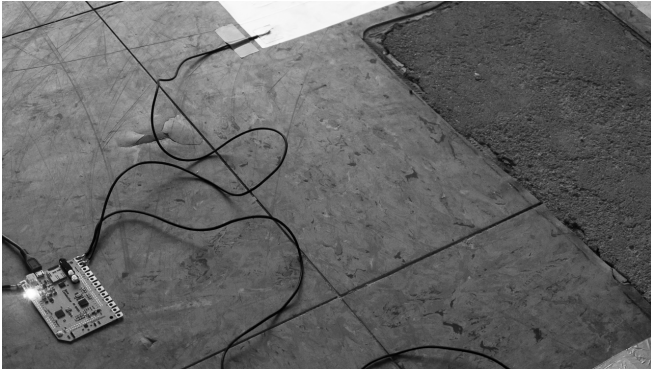
(Entangling) Promiscuous Anomalies

As part of the Agora residency, I collaboratively participated (with the residency group) in numerous non-efficacy focused exercises, lead by independent researcher and artist Diego Agulló. Agulló’s practice operates primarily within the field of contemporary dance and performance, investigating the affinity

58 Electrical *potential* might be thought of as how much electrical charge can ‘fill’ a *body*.



Lewis, Joshua. 2018. Diagram of entangled *bodies* among the Agora building within *I will make a space for you*. Berlin: Agora Collective.



Lewis, Joshua. 2018. Photographic stills from *I will make a space for you*, investigative performance. Berlin: Agora Collective.



Diego Agulló, *Injecting the anomaly. Practicing in the subway*, 2018, <https://diegoagulloworkshop.wordpress.com/2018/02/22/injecting-the-anomaly-practicing-in-the-subway/>

between body and event. During Agulló’s exercises we sought to introduce *alterity* into our personal and artistic practices, by way of practicing promiscuity. In one particular exercise we injected (or *entangled*) a personal, private practice of Agulló’s, as a collective body, into a public space. Agulló’s practice was a series of choreographic exercises performed with a Tai Chi stick; of which he taught to the residency group. In its essential form these exercises involved balancing the centre of one’s body with the Tai Chi stick. Our group then went on *entangle* Agulló’s practice with the interior space of the Berlin U-Bahn (underground train) carriage .

Substituting the Tai Chi stick for the vertical handrail of the carriage interior, we shifted and swayed with its *body*. Our own *fleshy bodies*, a choreographic extension of its motion. Over three hours of experimenting with this practice, we developed a choreographic script, or code - of which was injected (*entangled*) into the U-Bahn. One particular script experimented with, was performed as follows (as written in pseudo-code):

```
board _u-bahn ( ) {
    board the u-bahn as a group
    navigate to an available handrail
    take hold
    enact Agulló’s practice
}

station_stop ( ) {                                     // this
section loops
    during each station stop, release hold
    change position, to new available handrail within the
    carriage
    take hold
    enact Agulló’s practice
}
```

While the presentation is vastly different, I should like to consider how this scenario might be considered the practicing of an *apparatus*. Firstly, the U-Bahn might already be considered an *apparatus* of reconfiguring *bodies* - facilitated by the technological; our group’s *script* might be thought of as an ‘interjection of code’ to this *apparatus*.

The carriage as a *technological body*, travels between stations, its repeating motion considered an *oscillation*. With each repeating *oscillation* (with each station stop) passengers are transported; *bodies redefined* and *reconfiguring* spatially. At each station (or *ground*) *fleshy bodies* ‘join’ (board) or ‘depart’ the *apparatus* through shared choreography. This choreography also extends to an ongoing ‘social script’ for how they might ‘correctly’ perform among this public *apparatus*. *Board quickly, take an available seat or handhold, keep this position until your stop, don’t look around*. It is a sharing of this human script with the script of the *technological body* that allows the *apparatus* to perform, and to exist.

With the U-Bahn as an *apparatus*, we may consider our group’s exercise to enact an *entanglement* of our bodies among it, rather than the defining of a ‘new’ *one*. Had our actions on the U-Bahn been ‘normal’, our *bodies* would still have been *entangled*. However, since our actions (or script) were ‘anomalous’, our

entanglement notably reconfigured the *apparatus* - and therefore *fleshy bodies* around us. For instance; when we swayed with the carriage people moved away, becoming weary; when we ‘unnecessarily’ changed position at stops, we slowed the exit of passengers. The injection of our ‘code’ was subtle but it did in fact reconfigure *bodies* beyond our own, and thus reconfigured the *apparatus*.

In this work, rather than performing ‘new’ apparatuses, the injection of ‘code’ or language reconfigures existing ones. Just like programming code was ‘injected’ into the air-conditioning units within the work *Revolving it All*, the movement or choreographic language injected within Agulló’s U-Bahn exercise reconfigures the *bodies* defined in the *apparatus*. This method of practicing *apparatus* offers a way, in while still engaging technologies, does not require direct written programming of them. Furthermore, like the scenario of *RPM Hums* this approach offers a performance which is further permeating of existing *bodies* among the ‘site’ - entangling my body them as performative *conduit*.

Oscillations between alterity and ground

Diego Agulló’s offering within the workshop centered how one might facilitate a personal “practice that seeks to keep open the relation to alterity”.⁵⁹ He proposed an approach of “cyclic interval oscillation” in where one’s practice is in constant revolution between states of *alterity* and, to use a term of my own, *grounding*.⁶⁰ *Grounding*, in this case being definition, conclusiveness, or comfort of practice. And *alterity* being the unfamiliar, the undefined, and the densely entangled. Agulló’s articulation parallels the way in which this thesis text, as *apparatus*, seeks to perform. With *each* of its *turns* performing a momentary *grounding*, before [r]evolving back into alterity. The most recent *forth turn*, while the last in this text, is not the last for the *[r{e}volving} apparatus* - there will be a fifth.

[r{e}volving} apparatus

During *turn one* the definition of *apparatus* transcended the technical device, to become a *practice* inclusive of all *bodies* of the performance; the device consequently reconsidered as one of these *bodies*. I began to see the relationship (the *entanglement*) between these bodies as formed by language. Language in its many forms came to be considered as that which *entangles*, *defines* and *reconfigures* these *bodies* within the *apparatus*.

In *turn two*, the way I was *personifying* the technological was assessed. I sought *personification* which permeated beyond a single perceived materiality and did not seek to mirror my *fleshy body*; physically or through its observations methods,

Investigation surrounding falling and oscillation exposed the [r]evolving condition of *bodies* among an *apparatus*. Exploring this condition of oscillation within *turn two* and *three* assisting in unpacking the relativity of bodily ‘states’ or *grounds*, prompting me to consider the notion of the perpetually reconfiguring *body*.

59 Diego Agulló, “Workshop Practice,” Diego Agulló, accessed October 14, 2018, <http://cargocollective.com/diegoagullo/Workshops>.
60 Ibid.

Among *turn three* and *four* the potential ‘edgelessness’ of the *apparatus* was explored. This redefined the practicing of *apparatus* beyond discrete works or performance pieces, entangling the *bodies* (among the *apparatus*) with both the ‘site’ and the world. The most recent *turn four* came to consider *apparatus* as that which may ‘exist’ independently (outside of my active practice). Offering an alternative practice in where, rather than ‘making’ *apparatuses*, language or code (in many forms) might be injected to *reconfigure*, not only *entangled bodies*, but these preexistent *apparatuses*. The coming *turns* of my practice will explore this notion of the existing *apparatus*, and my potential *injection* among them.

This text is **still** a *[r]evolving apparatus*, and continues to provide momentum with each *turn*. This is not a conclusion, as such would permanently *ground* the *apparatus* and myself among it, ceasing our *[r]evolution*. Instead, I should like to propose a poising for further *turns*. Like the falling feet of *May*, this thesis seeks only to *ground* only monetarily; to know it exists, before again becoming indistinct.

What is conclusive is the *perpetually oscillating* nature of this practice. This text is just as much the proposing of an *apparatus* practice, as it is the building of one. This *apparatus* continues to wonder - it continues to turn...

turn five ...



Lewis, Joshua. 2018. *Evans Bay Slipway*. Wellington.

turn five...

At this moment of writing my thoughts are departing their *ground*. The ‘edge’ of this *text as apparatus* is becoming indistinct as we reach the present day. And still the *apparatus* is [r]evolving. The work which will follow, forms the next wondering and the beginning of *turn five*. It is an investigation, a test, a *falling* towards alterity and yet another [r]evolution of *apparatus*.

Evans Bay Slipway

I imagine this performance upon unsure *ground*. Two *bodies* of water and land *reconfigure* themselves, pouring upon each other, yearning for shore ground - their revolving tides provoked by the celestial third. Threads of iron rail adjoin the two bodies like a cord never cut. The *apparatus* of ships hauled from the depth by sweat and flesh, all but forgotten. I wonder if the water felt its own displacement as the timber hull hit its surface once again. Did its ripple travel far?

I imagine Odysseus as he listens to the Siren’s call. A score which beckons the *body*, foolish enough to consider itself upon *stable ground*, toward watery *reconfiguration*. Is lashing oneself to the mast, or ears full of wax really enough to prevent our *turning*? *Entanglement* has already occurred.

...

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