# Choreographic Strategies in Moving Image Practice: Task-based Improvisation and Somatic Inquiry

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ABSTRACT

This practice-based PhD is centred on the production of the moving image artwork *The Hide.*[1] *The Hide* is a 30-minute single-channel (HD video) moving image artwork, developed with and contributing to knowledge within the context of contemporary art, specifically the sub-disciplinary area of moving-image. It also draws upon and is relevant to the of sub-disciplinary area of performance art, specifically performance that employs the practice discipline of dance.

The moving image artwork *The Hide* features a number of subject matters including the landscape of Northern Portugal, histories of wolves in that region, the artist/researchers' activities with wolf conservationists, a choreography by a dancer, and a conversation with a Jungian psychoanalyst. The title of *The Hide* refers to the way in which the wolf (wolves) are rarely visible, as well as naming the ad-hoc architecture used to conceal an onlooker waiting to observe them.

The title points to the tension of visibility itself when the subject is mainly outside of the frame. *The Hide* builds through tensions of absence and presence; as wolves (wild animals) avoid being seen. The ethical consequences of the wolf being unseen is that other aspects of human experience become evident and open to interpretation. The images we see in *The Hide* are defined by the wolf's absence, and this necessitates that the subject of 'wolf' is communicated through other subjects; the landscape, a number of different (human) protagonists, their spoken accounts that are bound to wolves in various ways, and the choreographed gestures of a dancer. These events stand in for the elusive wolf, and as a consequence the wolf is a strategy to embrace multiplicity.

*The Hide* is informed by improvisatory techniques drawn from the field of dance. These are somatic inquiry and task-based improvisation. These techniques gained momentum in the 1960's following dance artist Anna Halprin's workshops held predominantly outside at her Mountain Home Studio (the San Francisco Dancers Workshop). In the production of *The Hide* somatic inquiry and task-based improvisation are used as strategies to choreograph the movement of bodies and the movement of the camera. Somatic inquiry and task-based improvisation are of specific interest due to their accessibility, as Anna Halprin stressed, you

[1] *The Hide* (2022); HD video; Colour; Sound, 30.32 minutes.

do not need to have specialised training in dance to learn and use these techniques. Hence, these techniques were used to organise material and to develop collaboration with consideration of the ethical consequences of improvisational methods. This contextual document reflects on the movement workshops which the artist/researcher has attended, as well as the contextual historical backdrop of postmodern dance, from which these movement workshops have emerged.

The form of the contextual document compiles the varied research materials generated throughout the project. The purpose of the document is to provide some context for *The Hide* and to offer insight into the artistic methods and approaches employed that are not explicitly disclosed by the artwork itself. It includes, in no order of priority, passages of contextual historical or theoretical research; research into the practices of relevant artists, filmmakers, dancers and choreographers; brief notes and reflections made before, during or following production processes of *The Hide*; creative writing; transcriptions of dialogue, video-stills, synopses, photographs, diagrams, models, drawings and scores.

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# PREFACE

This project aims to make a contribution to the field of knowledge that is contemporary art, specifically to the sub-disciplinary area of moving image art, through the creation of a moving-image artwork *The Hide,* (*The Hide,* 2022; HD video; Colour; Sound, 30.32 minutes). The primary purpose of this document is to provide context for that artwork. It is also intended to offer insight into certain distinctive artistic methods and approaches that are not explicitly disclosed by the artwork itself. In this way, the project also aims to make a supplementary contribution to the knowledge of the discipline, by offering an account of a distinctive, innovative artistic method. These roles and relations: of the moving image artwork and the contextual document are also communicated through in the research questions that follow below.

Research Questions:

- How can the integration of methods developed through dance, specifically task-based improvisation, transform processes of moving image production and collaboration? How does this manifest in an artwork, such as *The Hide*?
- Can the use of somatic practice, in processes of artists' moving image production, impact engagement and dialogue between collaborators?
- How can different modalities of writing, note-making, marginalia, diagrams, document an experimental moving image production, such as *The Hide*?

This approach and these questions depend upon a definition of practice-based research that acknowledges art itself as the proper goal of research within the academic discipline of art. This definition of research has been practiced by Kingston University's School of Art over the last fifteen years. It is a progressive approach which claims a parity of esteem for art alongside other academic disciplines and whilst this position was once bold, it has lately become mainstream. The results of the REF 2021, and accounts of how the REF Sub Panel 32 for Art and Design assessed artwork; as well as the new approach of the AHRC validating and encouraging non-textual forms of research indicate that it is no longer a minority position to assert, as this project does, that the research consists in/as a work of art.

Given this institutional context, and these research questions this contextual document does not model itself upon a humanities thesis. Instead, it gathers and organises diverse research materials to provide an apt and revealing document of the work undertaken while realising *The Hide*. The range of materials included in this account, and the purposes of their inclusion are more fully detailed towards the end of this passage.

Further to this, where the research draws upon the knowledge of other disciplines, I would like to argue that the primary context for understanding the efficacy and impact of this use, is not those disciplines. Instead, I position the research within the established history of artists drawing upon the knowledge and methods of other disciplines, in order to innovate within the subject area of art.

An established and historic example of this would be the photographic work of conceptual artists Bernd and Hilla Becher. It could be argued that their systematic, typological approach drew upon social-science methods. For example, their 1988 series 'Water Towers' documents various and distinct water towers across the USA, photographed similarly to an inventory of industrial structures. This approach was applied to images of gas holders, winches, blast furnaces, where the photographs were exhibited in lines or grids, and drew on the sequential patterning of scientific images.[2]

Yet, we primarily consider the contribution to knowledge of this work, to be within the context of art, where it had very specific consequences: challenging notions of artistic authorship and the status of the art object whilst expanding the range of forms and subject matters that artists can use.

A contemporary moving image example, more directly relevant to my research, might be UK artist Rehana Zaman's 'Everything Worthwhile is Done with Other People' (2023). For this project Zaman spent five years meeting and learning from and with women affected by incarceration whilst seeking asylum in the UK. The work develops a method of collaboration by establishing a support group in which the women could share stories and advice to address the barriers they faced applying for asylum, medical care and housing.[3] In the course of this

[2] In addition, reflecting the role of the camera in modernization, and in depicting industry through photography. Blake Stimson, *The Photographic Comportment of Bernd and Hilla Becher* Tate Papers, Spring 2004, <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/tate-papers/01/photographic-comportment-of-bernd-and-hilla-becher> [accessed 14 May 2024]

[3] *Serpentine* (2018) https://www.serpentinegalleries.org/whats-on/rehana-zaman/ [accessed 14 May 2024]

project Zaman employed methods drawn from the situations and practices of social and therapeutic science, as well as law. And whilst this artwork clearly desires social effect and consequence beyond the field of art, it seeks to achieve this from/through the discourses, modes and debates of contemporary art. Zaman's research might also generate findings that contribute to the knowledge of other fields, but its legitimacy as research does not rest upon that.

In a similar way, my project seeks to provide an account of how an artist may employ the knowledge and methods of other disciplines in order to challenge and reinvent methods and means of expression in art. Hence, while referencing Jungian psychoanalysis or the history and theory of dance in the post-war period, my project does not see itself as primarily responsive to these broader disciplinary fields. Indeed, it makes no claim to directly contribute to those knowledge fields. So, whilst the references to these subject areas aim to be precise, accurate and useful, there is often little scope to expand them greatly within this document - which has a different focus.

Further to that, the account of my method doesn't offer itself as an iterative model, that might be replicated, but as an example of a distinctive approach, that might inform the development and understanding of other distinctive, artistic methods.

What this document includes:

The purpose of this document is to reveal the process of creating the research that is *The Hide* and to contextualise it. As such, it is a compilation of varied research materials generated throughout the project. These include, in no order of priority, passages of contextual historical or theoretical research; research into the practices of relevant artists, filmmakers, dancers and choreographers; brief notes and reflections made before, during or following production processes; short passages of creative writing; transcriptions of dialogue, video-stills, synopses, photographs, diagrams, models, drawings and scores. These elements have been edited and compiled together to permit coherence, but they are not fully synthesised: not rendered into essays, nor presented as case-studies. Indeed, some sections are explicitly organised as compilations of fragments. The synthesis, the working through and transformation of material consulted, take place in the artwork. The artwork is the main carrier of the doctoral argument and therefore is the conclusion.

The artwork *The Hide* is represented within this contextual document by means of an introduction, a section of stills and a transcription of dialogue. It is accessible for viewing via a link, also provided.

The section of this document: Part Two: Context, attends to the knowledge field and includes a compilation of short passages of contextual enquiry concerning relevant dance practitioners, artists and filmmakers. These were initially produced in the course of developing the artwork and have been compiled and edited sequentially into five interrelated sections (Artist Moving Image: Hybridity and Genre; Choreographic Strategies in Moving Image; The Historic Context of Dance at the Margins of Visual Art; Task-Based Improvisation and Somatic Inquiry, as a Legacy of Postmodern Dance; The Non-Explicit Impact of Postmodern Dance on Artists' Moving Image) to provide an unfolding context for the creation of *The Hide*. Multiple points of reference to artworks and to dance performance are used to map a complex, interdisciplinary field of influence and relation. These are not conceived as case-studies, but as examples of practice that the artist returns to, that are necessarily concise to allow reference to multiple and overlapping practice histories.

The section of this document: Part Three: Method, addresses the method and process of making *The Hide*, formulated as a compilation of visual and textual fragments, dwelling upon all aspect of the process of developing and creating the moving image artwork *The Hide.* It is divided into two parts, 'Wolf as a Score in *The Hide'* and 'Reflections on Methodology in the making of *The Hide',* to allow a specific attention to innovative uses of the score within the method, and then a broader address to the artistic methods used, and the impact of the somatic in all aspects of production and postproduction. The cumulative coherence and value of this heterogeneous compilation of fragments intentionally depends upon reference to the artwork.

The Appendices includes an account of the ethical approaches and considerations that underpin all the interview preparation and processes in *The Hide*, in support of reference to these interviews in 'Part 3 Method'. It also includes a chronological list of all referenced artworks in 'Part 2 Context' and where possible, images of those artworks.
The Appendices includes additional creative materials not explicitly related to the method of *The Hide*, such as the synopsis of an earlier artwork *Grain* (2016) and a creative text written alongside the production of *The Hide* titled *Piscina*, which explores related, significant

thematic concerns of predation and myth. These are included to provide knowledge of the wider artistic practice that supports and enables the work of *The Hide*.

# PART ONE

## THE HIDE

Part One contains an introduction to *The Hide*, a section of stills from *The Hide* and a transcription of dialogue in *The Hide*. The moving image work *The Hide* is accessible for viewing via a link, also provided.

## INTRODUCTION TO *THE HIDE*

The central outcome of this practice-based research is the moving image artwork *The Hide*. *The Hide* is a 30-minute single-channel film that includes HD video, archival material and field recordings of wolves, and a soundtrack composed in collaboration with musicians. It was shot over a three-year period (2019-2022), both in the remote mountainous region crossing Northern Portugal and Spain, and in Brussels.

The title of the artwork refers to the way in which its primary subject, the wolf (wolves) is rarely visible, as well as naming the ad-hoc architecture used to conceal the conservationist/hunter waiting to observe it. The title points to the tension of visibility itself when the subject, the wolf, is mainly outside of the frame.

The images that we see in *The Hide* are defined by the wolf's absence, as a subject that strives to elude human observation and therefore also, sometimes the camera. As a consequence the wolf, the subject matter for this moving image artwork, is constituted through a collage of multiple other subjects, including: images of a woman reading, of people walking, close-ups of their shoes, a deep stone pit (wolf trap) at sunrise, uninhabited landscapes, a woman driving, a recurring dance performance, a woman performing an ancient ritual with a wolfs throat, a CGI interpretation of the object (the wolfs throat), and footage from camera traps (with fleeting images of wolves).

By presenting alternative subjects, many of which also directly address the subject matter of wolf, an idea of the wolf is elaborated, in its absence, through the course of the artwork. These alternative subjects are drawn from varied contexts of knowledge such as psychoanalysis, biology and dance. In this way *The Hide* assembles the different forms of knowledge to constitute a complex non-singular representation of the wolf. A heterogeneous combination of moving image genres, such as documentary, the locked-off shot, performance to camera, and CGI animation are used to further explore multiplicity around an absent subject (the wolf). The intention is that the audience is invited to think about how the subject matter is being constructed, through dialogue, literature, psychoanalysis, and

accounts of folk traditions, which draw on different aspects of the myth of the wolf, and as a predator.[4]

*The Hide* also considers absence and presence as relative to somatic experience; what is felt 'inside' the body is not always stated 'outside' the body.[5] Attending to somatic experience and to the subject matter of wolf both share in the problem, or the expression, of a seen/unseen split; a parting in the ways that we habitually understand presence and absence. An exploration of somatic practice(s) is useful to this project as it considers inside/outside (seen/unseen) as non-binary. Somatic practice trains awareness to hold seen/unseen in accordance. This somatic awareness has been employed throughout the production of *The Hide*, on the premise that it has the potential to more sensitively communicate the seen/unseen wolf.

The spoken narrative in the film is constructed from improvised conversations with a psychoanalyst, wolf conservationists, shepherds, and (overheard) sightseers. In this way the voices in *The Hide* are conceived as polyphonic. At times we hear voices layered on top of one another, at other instances we hear the distinct perspectives of different individuals who speak from their specific knowledge of wolves. The voices are often asynchronous with the images on screen, as they speak about their lived experience of dreams, ecology, and ritual.

At the same time, *The Hide* threads multiple perspectives on human-animal relations. This is achieved by means of interviews with those who live closely with wolves, accompanying wolf conservationists/ biologists to monitor wolves in the wild, and the use of existing (found) footage from camera traps and audio from howl surveys.[6] The mutable subject of 'wolf' is, in this way represented through the embodied language and the specialist labour of characters whose daily lives and social realities are enmeshed with wolves.

The work also features audio recordings and camera-trap footage from the archive of CIBIO-

[4] The wolves seen and discussed in *The Hide* are the Iberian wolf. As understood from Francisco Alvares and Patricia Gíl, the main prey for the Iberian wolf are medium sized mammals such as wild boar and roe deer, as well as domestic livestock when wild prey is scarce, such as sheep and young cattle. There are no known wolf attacks on humans in the Iberian Peninsula negating the myth that wolves are a concern for human safety.

[5] In other situations, however, what is felt 'inside' the body (as somatic feedback) is creative material, as we see in the practice of artist-dancers such as Anna Halprin, Simone Forti, Okwui Okpokwasili (and other dancers I discuss in this contextual document).

[6] *The Hide* features audio recordings and camera trap footage from the archive of CIBIOInBio, whose mission is to understand and monitor the Iberian wolf population and how wolves coexist with humans. The archival material consists of non-invasive methods of observing wolves in the wild, the audio-visual material captures information about pack size, breeding and the impact of human activities

InBio, Porto. Conversations with wolf conservationists/ biologists reflect on non-invasive methods of observation, as well as the material and symbolic significance of the wolf in community practices and collective memory. Shepherd Glória Alves Alfonso describes the curative practice of passing water through a Gola do Lobo (wolfs throat) to rid livestock of disease. Such ancient customs and images of organic life are contrasted with a more-than-human landscape of processed field recordings, resynthesised imaginary insects, and a CG wolfs throat.

# The Hide

https://lux.org.uk/work/the-hide/

Specifications for ideal viewing:

The opening sequence of *The Hide* begins in the dark. Please watch it in a dark environment. Please listen with high quality speakers or with headphones.

The
Hide

THE COLLECTED WORKS
OF C.G.JUNG

And that's how he built this
idea of imago, and then complex,

I was thinking about other animals.

We've met several times.
When I was up there with the sheep.

But that was over 50 years ago.
I was about 18.

It's poured through here and then...

– That one is coming to hunt.
– Yes, right?

[Catherine Massin]

Let's say Jung had a lot of…

a lot of things happened in his psyche.

He comes from a family of mediums.

And I think the way he was,

if something was coming in his psyche

he was really taking it and he was

trying to get in contact with it, and he was really…

appealed by it,
and he was searching…

And that's how he built this
idea of imago, and then complex
and then archetype.

Archetype like,

trying to connect what
he called the collective unconscious.

In the car, when I was arriving here

I was thinking about other animals.

Because I was thinking, uh it's strange because me,

I never had a patient bringing

in a dream or whatever, a wolf.

Of course dogs.

What's important is how the person's going to associate,

there is no generalisation.

But snake…

I don't remember
somebody associating it with

a positive, protective…

It's dangerous, point!

Today I was remembering
a game like we said:

"Loup, où es-tu, où vas-tu, dadada"

I remember you know, like when I was a child.

Okay, so the game of hiding and…

– there is always a part of phantasy, projection…

She associates it with beauty and strength.

But at the same time, danger, sickness and death.

– It's a mystery,
it's a strange stranger…

– So when you listen, you have these…

– an attraction…

[Keira Greene]

– Images?

[Catherine Massin]

Yes images or…
feelings.

– It's a kind of phantasy also theories…

But then I remembered suddenly, already one month ago,
when I was teenage, maybe…

17, 18.

I went through a very difficult time.

And it's the first time that I…

draw, I paint.
I didn't used to do that before.

It's really my first… my first drawings.

And one,

It's incredible
because I remember it.

It was like…

black,

grey,

blue,
but not like blue sky, you know… kind of a sad blue.

And there was this figure of a wolf.

Really with the teeth, the shadow.

It's incredible.
I remember the drawing.

[Patrícia Gíl]

Some people,
a lot of people actually,

fear the wolf.

And before
you had all these fancy roads,

you had to walk
a lot in the mountains.

The only way to connect cities was through old roads

in the middle of the nature with no lights at all.

So they were in the mountains,

and they were coming from the mountains to their houses,

and they would be followed, almost like a thief,

like hiding and seeking, they would look back,

they would look behind
and there was a wolf kind of hiding.

What else, do you remember me telling you more?

Oh the cigarettes.

People, in order to scare the wolves,
they would always bring a cigarette,

even if they didn't smoke,

because the lights supposedly scares the wolf.

[Patrícia Gíl]

When I was up there walking in the trails…

[Sr. Anarolino]
Yes.

[Patrícia Gíl Sr. Anarolino]

- But we didn’t speak.
- No, you just walked by.

[Sr. Anarolino]

We’ve met several times.
When I was up there with the sheep.

[Patrícia Gíl]

Yes.

*

[Sr. Anarolino]

I used to hear them howling at night.
At night,
I heard them howling.

[Patrícia Gíl Sr. Anarolino]

- Did you live up in the mountains?
- No I lived here.

[Sr. Anarolino]

But when I was a boy,
I would sometimes water the fields at night.
And I heard them.
Look, even down there...

I went at night
because I wasn’t afraid.

[Patrícia Gíl Sr. Anarolino]

- You weren't?

- No.

[Sr. Anarolino]

And I sensed

the presence of two wolves.

I said:

"Look, two wolves."

Further ahead, two of them jumped on me behind the crossing.
I hit the ground

[Patrícia Gíl Sr. Anarolino]

- Over there?

- Yes

[Sr. Anarolino]

But that was over 50 years ago. I was about 18.

*

[Sr. Anarolino]

Tales were told…

Sometimes, during Carnival, the elders said:

"Beware, the wolves want to play pranks too."

[Patrícia Gíl Sr. Anarolino]

- Really?

- That's what they said.

[Sr. Anarolino]

Those were the tales of the elders.

But now…

We haven't seen them for many years.

Some people even say:
"If only there were wolves!"

The elders used to say:
"Wolves are the guardians of our land."

Without wolves,

shepherds would let their herds graze on somebody else's land.

Since they feared the wolves, they took the herds home.

[Patrícia Gíl]

They would be safer there.

[Francisco Álvares]

And how did you learn to use it?

[Glória Alves Alfonso]

My mother-in-law taught me.

[Francisco Álvares]

It's mostly used by women, isn't it?

[Glória Alves Alfonso]

Women use it mostly. Nobody else.
*

[Glória Alves Alfonso]

Go away.

Come on.

Go inside.

*

[Francisco Álvares]

I wanted to ask you
about the story of that wolf.

Do you remember how it was killed? Was it shot?

[Glória Alves Alfonso Francisco Álvares]

– I don't know…
– It was here before you.

[Glória Alves Alfonso]

I don't recall,
I wasn't here then.

When I arrived,
they had killed it years ago.

[Glória Alves Alfonso Constança Vieira De Andrade]

- I don't know...
- Did they explain how they cut it?

[Glória Alves Alfonso]

No. I don't recall and I never asked. I never...
I know nothing about it.

All I know is I found the gola do lobo
and the pelt. Nothing else.

My sisters-in-law talked about it,

I heard about it and I found it here,

but I don’t know how it was killed nor anything else.

[Constança Vieira De Andrade]

And how do you pass the water through the throat?

[Glória Alves Alfonso]

Its poured through here and then...

[Constança Vieira De Andrade Glória Alves Alfonso]

- Which end points down?
- This one.

[Constança Vieira De Andrade Glória Alves Alfonso]

- Is that how you were taught?
- That’s how I was taught.

[Constança Vieira De Andrade]

One end points down and the other one up.

[Glória Alves Alfonso Constança Vieira De Andrade]

- That end is always the top.
- Did they tell you why?

[Glória Alves Alfonso]

No, they never told me and I never asked.

I’ve always done it
like they did in the old days.
Like when I had piglets

Now it hasn’t been used for a while.

I haven’t been using it, but I keep it anyway.

As long as I live,
it won't leave this house.

I will keep it always.

Whatever memories they left in the house,

I will keep them
just as I found them.

[Francisco Álvares Glória Alves Alfonso]

- It belongs to the house, right?
- It belongs to the house.

*

[Francisco Álvares]

Are there wolves close to the village?

[Glória Alves Alfonso]

I haven't seen them,
but they've been around.

Because they killed my little cow

They came one night and left only its head

and the hooves.

When people came to collect the remains, that's all they took

In just one night,
the wolves ate almost all of it.

And is this right?

We can't harm them, but they kill our animals

and we're left with no animals and the damage.

That’s not right.

The man who came for the remains said the same thing.

And they say
remains won’t be collected anymore.

This cow was big
and had two calves to feed.

And we’re left without her.

*

[Unknown group at Centro del Lobo Ibérico de Castilla Y León]

Look, look at the crow!

It’s a scavenger crow.

– That one is coming to hunt.
– Yes, right?

Crows and wolves
are very good friends.

– Look, over there…
– With the crow

# PART TWO

## CONTEXT

This Section attends to the knowledge field and includes a compilation of short passages of contextual enquiry concerning relevant dance practitioners, artists and filmmakers. These were initially produced in the course of developing the artwork and have been compiled and edited sequentially into five interrelated sections (Artist Moving Image: Hybridity and Genre; Choreographic Strategies in Moving Image; The Historic Context of Dance at the Margins of Visual Art; Task-Based Improvisation and Somatic Inquiry, as a Legacy of Postmodern Dance; The Non-Explicit Impact of Postmodern Dance on Artists' Moving Image) to provide an unfolding context for the creation of *The Hide*. Multiple points of reference to artworks and to dance performance are used to map a complex, interdisciplinary field of influence and relation. These are not conceived as case-studies, but as examples of practice that the artist returns to, that are necessarily concise to allow reference to multiple and overlapping practice histories.

## ARTISTS' MOVING IMAGE: HYBRIDITY AND GENRE

The research is approached primarily through my practice as an artist working with moving image. Typically this involves working alone, with one lightweight video camera (Blackmagic Pocket Cinema Camera) and a separate audio recorder.[7] *The Hide* was developed in the field of those contemporary art practices that are institutionally defined as artists' moving image.[8] What the term moving image offers visual artists is a distinction from the either/or of art/cinema, to draw on the aesthetics of video art, historically belonging to the visual arts, (often existing in close relation with performance art), as well as the tradition of experimental film, historically belonging to cinema[9]. Moving image[10] affords multiple and hybrid modes of production, ranging from the use of sound and image technologies to how the artwork is edited.

Fragmentation of narrative, the use of symbolic images/objects as metaphor, an interest in the sonic and the sensual, and collaboration across disciplines, are common conventions of artists' moving image.[11] These concerns extend beyond the space of an artwork into the physical space of exhibition, whereby moving image occupies the white cube/gallery[12] and the black box/ auditorium,[13] amongst other possibilities of exhibition/display.[14] *The Hide* is a single-screen digital video artwork intended for presentation in a gallery with black box conditions, and in some instances the cinema.

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[7] Each phase of filmmaking directly results from the improvised space of studio practice, working on a shot-by-shot basis, rather than from storyboards or an overarching proposal.

[8] María Palacios Cruz, *Artists' Moving Image in Flanders*, *Flanders Arts Institute*, (2021), <https://www.kunsten.be/en/now-in-the-arts/kunstenaarsfilm-en-video-in-vlaanderen/> [accessed on 5th September 2022]

[9] Erika Balsom and Hila Peleg, editors of the 2022 book *Feminist Worldmaking and the Moving Image*, observe, in their introduction, that the history of experimental film and video depart from: "the representational protocols of the mass media, exploring the epistemological, political, and aesthetic possibilities of the moving image in ways that dislodge received ideas and make space for the conveyance of other voices, stories, and images—including the voices, stories, and images of others". We see here that the fields of experimental film and video give way to the terminology of moving image, which denotes something new and non-singular, and rejects the standards of commercial filmmaking.

[10] Prior to the term 'moving image', which began to circulate in the early 2000's, there was no consistent, agreed classification to describe artworks that utilised audiovisual technologies, situated in the gap between art and cinema: Dan Ward, 'Artists' Moving Image in Britain Since 1989', Art Monthly, no 437 (2020).

[11] For example, fragmentation of narrative – see *Some Women, Other Women and all the Bittermen* (2014) by Rehana Zaman, the use of images/objects as metaphor – see *Vivir para Vivir / Live to Live* (2015) by Laida Lertxundi, an interest in the sonic and the sensual – see *The Glass Note* (2018) by Mary Helena Clark, and collaboration across disciplines – see *Oramics: Atlantis Anew* (2011) by Aura Satz.

[12] For example, the exhibition: *Theatre* by Hilary Lloyd at Focal Point Gallery, Southend, UK, (2017).

[13] For example, the exhibition: *Back-Door Exposure* by Rosa Barba at Jeu de Paume, Paris, France, (2012).

[14] For example, the purpose-built outdoors screen Big Screen Southend at Focal Point Gallery, Southend, or the Media Wall at The Photographers' Gallery, London.

*The Hide* brings together diverse formal characteristics of the moving image interwoven as collage. *The Hide* makes use of a specific set of genres (documentary, the locked-off shot, performance to camera, and CGI animation) and investigates the tensions and proliferations established through their relationship in the edit. The artwork arrived at these typologies through the process of exploring different means of representation for the rarely visible subject, the wolf (wolves). Each genre has inherent codified language and offers different means to address the tension between the visible and the invisible. This research investigates the play of difference between genres by addressing questions of meaning when these genres (in the context of artists' moving image) meet in the edit. What follows is an exploration of documentary, the locked-off shot, performance to camera, and CGI animation; their genealogy in moving image, and how they are employed in *The Hide.*

In the context of artists' moving image all genres are entangled and taxonomies are of significance. Of interest is how scenes developed with reference and production values of one genre might meet, in an otherwise discordant relationship with other genres (outside of the context of moving image) to form hybrid compositions and proliferate meaning (possible readings of the work). *The Hide* employs the format of the interview, derived from documentary, and challenges the convention whereby interviews are used to legitimate a central theme. In contrast, moving image utilises the interview as part of a constellation of perspectives that decentralise interpretation.[15] For *The Hide* the interview is employed to elicit information-as-material, where phrases and passages of a conversation will be isolated from dialogue, eventually composed alongside material that communicates non-verbally such as gesture and pause.

The accepted understanding of the interview, i.e., for cinema, documentary and television, offers moving image artists' opportunity to re-think the value of the interview form. This practice-based research re-thinks the value of this convention anew, using interview-as-exchange. As such, interview is used to compose and to open out relationships through dialogue with individuals or with groups. Emphasis is on establishing trust and the desire to foreground the quality of the (unfolding) relationship.[16] What is 'told' is often deconstructed rather than presented verbatim. In the end it may only be the nuance of social interaction that is permitted in the edit.

[15] For example – see *Conversation Between Blacklisted Construction Workers* (2015) by Lucy Parker.

[16] This is atypical in reportage, where an interviewer grabs opportune moments around events that are already taking place.

This idea of interview-as-exchange, is powerfully demonstrated in the moving image work *Karmel Dachau* (2019) by German artist Andrea Büttner. *Karmel Dachau* brings together interviews with nuns at the Carmelite convent in Dachau. The convent is located next door to the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial, visible to the sisters' from their windows. Büttner uses the (dis)orientation between inside and outside, past and present, to frame the sisters' dialogue. Images of the outside are asynchronous with the voice recorded inside, alongside interviews to camera. The work plays with a tension of intimacy, exemplified by one of the sisters' speaking about her life in the convent and the location at Dachau, she says, 'it's got to be good for something that we Carmelites are here', followed by a pause and then 'yes'. The subtlety of this pause demonstrates Büttner's craft with interview, it exposes the vulnerability between speaker and artist and communicates that this particular conversation has been taken to its edge. What follows is the suggestion of a motion to turn off the camera. The next image shows the sisters' inside again engaged in prayer. This decision by Büttner in the edit is a nod to the complexity of contemplation just moments before. Interview used in this way is about figuring different experiences; the subjects on screen, the artists and that of the viewer.

In *Karmel Dachau*, Andrea Büttner's static locked-off images document space by drawing on a sensibility of sculptural composition akin to still photography.[17] By locked-off I refer to moving image whereby the camera is still (with use of a tripod), and the lens is fixed (or static). Büttner's frame remains with the interior spaces of the convent long enough to scan the composition of the image and its contents. Büttner's choice of camera angle, the use of natural light, and the objects she includes produce images for the eye to roam around. In one locked-off shot there is a cylindrical object, which the viewer understands must have a function in this environment of the convent, but it is not until later that we see one of the sisters' using what we discover is a baptismal font. Within the codes of visual art these functional objects register sculpturally. In another shot a trailing hosepipe runs the length of the corridor central to the image, connecting the top left hand with the bottom right hand of the frame. This gesture pulls the eye into the image, enabled by the depth of the corridor, but in a counter gesture the image is flattened by the hosepipe crossing the image, as in a drawing. The artwork exemplifies locked-off images used to build a world through fragments, inside and outside. These shots reconfigure the environment and do so to express

[17] For example – see the series *RE-PRISE* (2015) by Heidi Specker.

Büttner's interest in the Carmelite convent, 'the relationship between remembrance and suppression, religion and violence, and between culture and crime.[18]

The locked-off shot affords an objective gaze to consider the distillation of everything happening within the frame as a set of relations. Whereby the stability determines a formal space in which small movements within the image or gestures that cross the edge of the frame have significant affect and influence meaning. A durational locked- off shot adds to this dynamic 'a conscious acknowledgment of (*real*) time passing'.[19] *The Hide* investigates duration and stillness, and it builds a portrait of place through locked-off partial views of inconsistent landscapes. Wide images of seemingly uninhabited mountains and forests are coupled with interiors and the city.

> What the screen shows us seems to be part of something prolonged indefinitely into the universe […] the screen is centrifugal.[20]

Other examples of moving image artworks that use the locked-off shot to different ends, include Sarah Dobai's *Nettlecombe* (2008). Where a static lens frames a 'natural' environment with a body of water in the foreground, intermittently this water is disturbed by a strong gust of wind, 'an orchestrated performance of wind machines and ropes in which the trees and bushes in the garden are animated like puppets within a constructed set.'[21] Here the locked-off shot is used to engineer performance within an otherwise uninterrupted scene. The viewers' attention is motivated to uncover the source of this artificial intervention in the environment. In contrast the position I adopt in *The Hide* is consistent with this comment from artist Rosa Barba,

> I decide for a frame but then, when I point my camera to it, I have no control anymore over what actually happens inside the frame.[22]

Performance to camera, which I define as film/video depicting people that are conscious of

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[18] Jan Mot, *Andrea Büttner, Karmel Dachau* (2019) <https://janmot.com/exhibitions/2020-andrea- buttner-karmel-dachau-detailed-page/> [accessed 05 August 2022].
[19] Ian White, 'Death, Life and Art(ifice): The Films of Sharon Lockhart', in *Here is Information. Mobilise. Selected writings by Ian White*, ed. Mike Sperlinger (London: Lux 2016), pp. 175-187 (p. 176).
[20] Andre Bazin, *What is Cinema?* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005) pp.165-166.
[21] Film London*, Nettlecombe* (2008) https://filmlondon.org.uk/film-library/nettlecombe [accessed 08 August 2022].
[22] Bomb Magazine, *Rosa Barba by Joan Jonas* (2015) <https://bombmagazine.org/articles/rosa-barba/> [accessed 08 August 2022].

being filmed, is a technique used to capture the body and its staged or unrehearsed behaviour(s). In moving image artwork performance can take many forms, for example Rachel Reupke's HD Video work *Wine & Spirits* that stages awkward social behaviour borrowed from the stylised language of advertising. Vignettes are shot within minimal studio sets recognisable for their clichés (i.e. a rose on the table to symbolise romance).

Scenes that employ performance to camera in *The Hide,* stem from representations of everyday and simple tasks. These are informed by a history of dance and choreography in 1960s America, coming out of the New York Judson Theatre and the San Francisco Dancers' Workshop. An artist for who the same context has been important is American artist Sharon Lockhart.[23] In Sharon Lockhart's work the subjects often appear composed in the frame,[24] or they are walking towards or away from the camera.[25] In each instance sensitivity with portraiture and with composition found in dance is tangible; Lockhart works across photography and moving image, she has worked with choreographers and dancers, and her work is often discussed in relation to the critical space between photography and cinema.[26] Lockhart's work exemplifies a connection between the locked-off shot and dance, a tension between movement and stasis, and particular environments that give insight to her deeper research into place and community.

Sharon Lockhart's work *Rudzienko* depicts a series of staged encounters with teenagers, with gestures that were born out of workshops, a process from which Lockhart later draws out naturalised performance(s). In one scene, from a singular perspective, we see two young women in a forest, one body lays horizontal in the foreground with the other resting her head on their thigh and forming a T-shape in the image. These gestures evoke an aesthetic of performance that expresses simplicity, albeit formally considered. Comparably *The Hide* engages with performance through slight and explicit examples of choreographed performance, refigured for the (moving image) frame. The unspectacular event, coupled with the decision to omit additional camera angles, gives weight to the representation of the body engaged in a given act at a given time. *The Hide* explores a dyadic relationship between the body of the performer, the body of artist/filmmaker (the camera operator) and by extension,

[23] Catherine Wood, *Entr'acte*, (2006) <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f1b6ad9a772491cab080564/t/5f5e79fe1dbe6930fb48bd5c/1600027136137/35_Wood_PF.pdf> [accessed 05 August 2022].
[24] For example, see – Sharon Lockhart, *Rudzienko* (2016)
[25] For example, see – Sharon Lockhart, *Lunch Break* (2008)
[26] Aware, *Sharon Lockhart* (2013) <https://awarewomenartists.com/en/artiste/sharon-lockhart/> [accessed 05 August 2022].

the 'body' of the camera. In American artist Kevin Jerome Everson's video work *Recovery,* a trainee with the US Air Force is seen in an exercise as part of a young pilots training.[27] The man is seen spinning on a revolving chair and undertaking commands to which he must define the level of physical exertion using numbers,

> 'Filmed in one single take, this video concentrates on this man's moving torso. The fixed position of the camera means that nothing of his surroundings, in which the image is anchored, is visible.'[28]

As with Lockhart, Everson often works with 16mm film, both artists began making film within the context of the visual arts and in response to the specific historic moment in filmmaking encapsulated by the term 'structural materialism'.[29] In *Recovery* Everson is working with the durational constraint of the film reel, a decision that is self-referential of the medium and in turn referential of this movement in film history. However it is the intimacy of *Recovery*, the intersubjective relationship with the viewer that is key to my interest and the sensitivity to bodily awareness taken up by *The Hide.*

> Intersubjectivity is bound to our embodied presence and self-other relatedness.[30]

Everson brings the viewer close to the subject who fills the frame, leading to an awareness of our own bodies, rather than positioning the viewer as a passive consumer. In *Recovery* Everson uses the conditions that the subject is put through in this exercise, the rhythm and the repetition, as a formal device in contrast to the stable situation of the camera and the viewer. As Laura U. Marks writes in *The Skin of the Film,*

> film is grasped not solely by an intellectual act but by the complex perception of the body as a whole.[31]

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[27] Kevin Jerome Everson, *Recovery* (2019)
[28] Halle Fuer Kunst, *Recovery* (2019) <https://halle-fuer-kunst.at/en/guide/exhibitions/kevin-jerome-everson-recover/2783-recovery/> [accessed 05 August 2022].
[29] Peter Gidal, (2005) 'Theory and Definition of Structural/Materialist Film' *LUXONLINE*. <https://www.luxonline.org.uk/articles/theory_and_definition(1).html> [accessed 05 August 2022].
[30] Rosemarie Samaritter and Helen Payne, 'Kinaesthetic intersubjectivity: A dance informed contribution to self-other relatedness and shared experience in non-verbal psychotherapy with an example from autism', *The Arts in Psychotherapy,* Vol 40, Issue 1 (2013), pp. 143-150
[31] Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film. Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment and the Senses.* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000), p.145.

In *The Hide,* a sense of movement is sustained by the tracking of an invisible subject. Movement occurs within the frame as dance, hands turning pages, people walking or driving, the movement of organic life (plants and insects), the movement of light, and sometimes the movement of wolves. Movement has been studied in the context of dance and its histories. Choreography has been put into practice as a means to sequence movement in the artwork and as a characteristic and a conceptual tenor of the edit. Central to *The Hide* has been an investigation into movement as both practice and subject, within the context of dance and the visual arts. A sense of movement is sustained to signify the importance of process; images open onto situations that have already begun, to keep ideas in motion and to raise questions rather than to fix knowledge. Choreographic thinking is a way to explore the subtle and the explicit and to think about dance as a conceptual support, manifest in and by performance. An expanded understanding of choreography has contributed to how I frame and direct movement in *The Hide*. I refer to this practice as the use of choreographic strategy.

The work of Dutch artist Manon de Boer often features performance and often uses movement as a structural device.[32] In *Dissonant* (2010) the camera follows the dancer Cynthia Loemij's every movement until, on a number of occasions the camera runs out of film (*Dissonant* is shot using 16mm film, with each roll having a duration of three minutes). Manon de Boer herself refers to the long take (a single shot that is determined by the length of the film stock) 'as a performance in itself'.[33] *Dissonant* uses the choreographic strategy of the dancers repeated phrase as a device to draw attention to the constraints of the film medium. Manon de Boer holds Loemij's moving body centrally in the frame as the camera moves with her, uprooting dance from the context of performance on stage.[34] When the roll of film runs out the viewer is left only with the sound of her dance, her breath and her feet landing on the hard wood floor in a switch from image plus sound to (only) sound, the steps, breath and breathing of the dancer – as indicators of this body in action – compel us to recompose the choreographic sequences from memory until the mechanics of the machine cause the image to reappear.[35]

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[32] See - On a Warm Day in July (2015) and From Nothing to Something to Something Else (2018)
[33] María Palacios Cruz, Manon *de Boer, "On a Warm Day in July"* (2015) <https://www.art-agenda.com/criticism/237825/manon-de-boer-on-a-warm-day-in-july> [accessed 05 August 2022].
[34] Cynthia Loemij is a member of the dance company Rosas.
[35] Lilou Vidal, *Displacement (Part 1) Choreography and Mechanics of the Mind* (2017), <https://bureaudesrealites.org/onewebmedia/Press.RElease.Displacement.Part1.ENGL.pdf> [accessed 05 August 2022].

The affect reminds the viewer that this encounter can be experienced through different formal, technological and sensorial registers. The disappearance of the dancer is crucial to the concept of the work, which is the dissonant relationship between filmic time and the actual experiential time of the dancer. Manon de Boer plays with the intersubjective relationship between the performer on screen and the audience, whereby in the absence of the performer the audience might become more aware of their own body. The choreographic strategy of the dancers repeated phrase means that when the black screen appears, the audience has already made an investment in Loemij's movement and therefore they are implicated.

Like *Dissonant*, the experimental short film *Water Motor* (1978)[36] by French artist filmmaker Babette Mangolte composes the moving body within a moving frame. The human subject and the body at work, in this case dancer Trisha Brown, is contrasted with the material subject (film) and brought into a critical formal dialogue. In both instances the artwork is acutely conscious of the construction of the image whilst the performer attends to their own artistic work, the dance. Mangolte frames Brown's movements with a front on address in a single take; in turn Brown's movements affect the physical movement of the camera (the choreographic strategy). Mangolte's distinct aesthetic centrally frames the body through sustained, stable, supportive use of the camera and composition. To achieve such synchronicity Mangolte first observes Brown's movements in rehearsal, before working with the camera. Of this process Mangolte says,

> I decided that I would learn the dance and have it so much in my head and brain that I would follow the dance with the film camera with no effort on the day of the shooting.[37]

*Water Motor* repeats the same choreographed sequence twice, once at normal speed and then again in slow motion. This opens a generative intimate space between the viewer and the performer. In the second half of the artwork, the same footage is seen at forty-eight frames per second, it is the same material but experienced in slow motion. Mangolte makes manifest her proximity, interest and skill working across the threshold of performance and the moving

[36] *WATER MOTOR,* 1978, 16mm 7 min. B&W.

[37] Babette Mangolte, *The Making of Water Motor* (2017) <https://babettemangolte.org/maps2.html> [accessed 28 April 2022]

image.[38] Brown's fluid sequence of movement and the rhythm of the performance can be explored in more depth and 'informs the viewer of what was missed before'.[39]

*Water Motor* exemplifies an interdisciplinary approach, summed up by Mangolte in her own words, 'for me performance and the dancer's body are more important to my own practice than the films I see'.[40] Mangolte closely watches Brown's performance with a sensitive gaze and embodied understanding that expresses a tactility and prescience for dance in moving image. In *Water Motor* (1978), but also in *Dissonant* (2010) and in *The Hide* (2022), there is an interest in framing the choreographic process and intent of the mover. What each work communicates, albeit in different ways, is the trajectory of an investment in everyday movement which can be traced back to postmodern dance, associated with the Judson Church in New York and the San Francisco Dancers' Workshop in California. The Trisha Brown Dance Company says of this period,

> She [Brown] discovered the extraordinary in the everyday, and brought tasks, rule-games, natural movement, and improvisation into the making of choreography.[41]

I will go on to discuss this history in more depth, however the intention was to reject virtuosity in favour of more quotidian and accessible movement. The artworks listed here commit to these politics and extend them, with an interest in the economies and value systems of production as well as how the medium of film and video can physically and temporally extend the minutiae of performance. Through an interdisciplinary approach performance is subverted to bring attention to the body at the centre of the movement.

*Water Motor* encapsulates the intention of postmodern dance and choreography at the time, to favour everyday movement over virtuosic skill. The formal principles of this tendency are given privileged access in *Water Motor*'s slow dance. Mangolte cites Brown as having

[38] *Water Motor* continues to be an iconic reference for dance appearing on screen, in experimental film and in the interdisciplinary context of the visual arts and performance.
[39] Babette Mangolte, *Babette Mangolte* (2017) <https://babettemangolte.org/film1978.html> [accessed 10 August 2022]
[40] Babette Mangolte, 'Life in Film: Babette Mangolte', *Frieze*, 117, (2008).
[41] Trisha Brown Dance Company, *Trisha Brown Biography* (2017) <https://trishabrowncompany.org/trisha-brown/biography/> [accessed 10 August 2022]

described her own work (Trisha Brown, *Line Up*, 1976) as 'a series of negotiations'[42] and that it was 'choreographed for an open space with no stage and no standard seating.'[43] These are prescient indications of how dance and artists' moving image (known more commonly then as experimental film) moved in parallel and shared concerns about content, structure and dissemination. In contrast American dancer Lisa Nelson's video work frames dance from the perspective of a dancer who extends their practice to incorporate video, as a tool for making dance.

Lisa Nelson's exploration with video technology is evident in the work *Jump Cut* (1979) in which Nelson is seen moving, mostly jumping, in an ad-hoc dance studio. In the video, her movement is disrupted by the editing technique of using jump cuts, i.e. cutting an image and joining it to another (within the same action) so that the continuity of flow is broken. Nelson says of this work,

> Those studies came out of what the medium or the tool could offer. For example: when I am looking at dancing, how could I imagine flow by constructing cuts [and] make myself do things that I couldn't do. To use myself like a plastic.[44]

In *Jump Cut* Nelson moves between dance and editing, after each jump, she returns to the camera and switches it off, tidying the in/out action of entering the frame in post-production.

Uniquely, Nelson developed a means for collaboratively composing dance that stemmed from her interest in video technology and she called these improvisatory methods Tuning Scores. The instructions for the Tuning Scores use explicit language borrowed from video editing, such as pause, reverse, repeat, replace. In Nelson's own words, the Tuning Scores are a 'live' practice that 'offers tools of play—live actions and verbal calls—to investigate fundamental elements of performance.'[45] The verbal calls used in the Tuning Scores stem from the video technology of the 1970's, for Nelson the Portapak video camera. Portapak

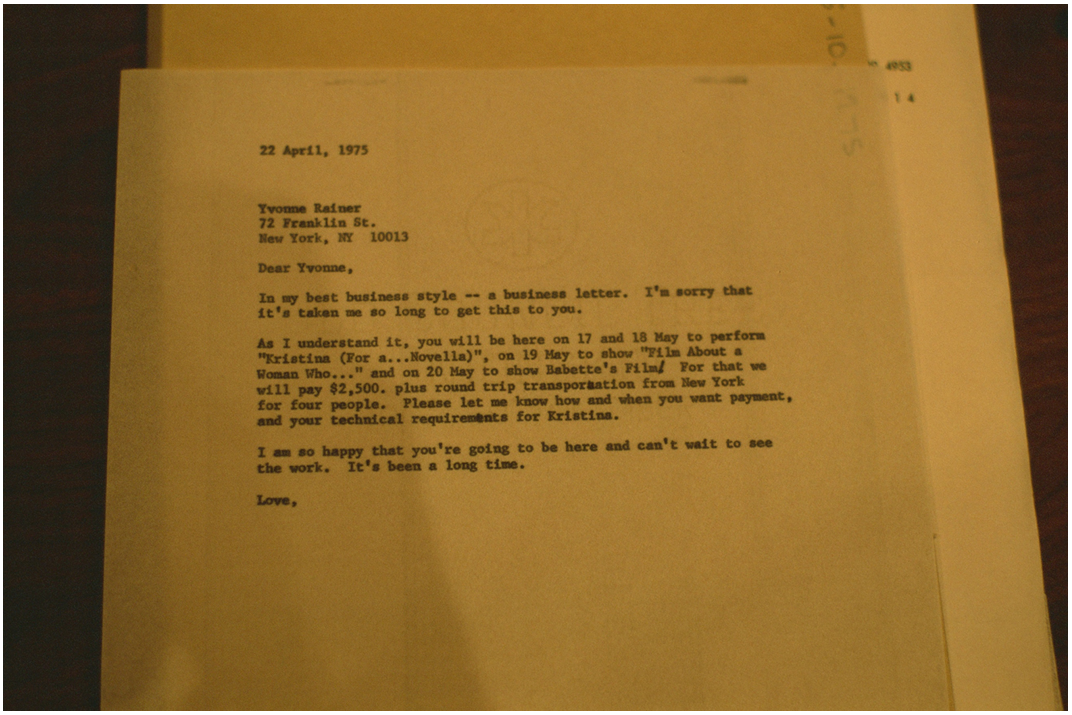
[42] Babette Mangolte, 'Trisha Brown: Portfolio', *OCTOBER* 140, Spring 2012, pp. 45-53, (p.1).
[43] Ibid.
[44] Lisa Nelson, *Contact Improvisation. Flow, Tone, Cut* (2001) <http://www.conversationsinvermont.net/lisa-nelson/contact-improvisation-flow-tone-cut.html> [accessed 10 August 2022]
[45] Lisa Nelson, *Tuning Games* (2022) <https://contredanse.org/lisa-nelson-tuning-games/?lang=en> [accessed: 24 April 2022]

was significant for video artists due to its immediate playback capability, a small and relatively affordable camera that could be carried and operated by one person. In Nelson's practice, the choreographic strategy is to translate knowledge of video technology as a means to generate specific qualities in movement, informing her own performance and working pedagogically with other dancers using the Tuning Scores.[46]

[46] My experience, in practice, with Lisa Nelson's Tuning Scores has been through the research and workshops of dance artist Anouk Llaurens and taken place in Brussels, Belgium.

## THE HISTORIC CONTEXT OF DANCE AT THE MARGINS OF VISUAL ART

The investigation into dance and choreography at the heart of this practice-based research focuses on the genealogy of ideas and practice borne out of the San Francisco Dancers' Workshop (1955–) and the New York Judson Theatre (1962– 1964). The canon of women-artist-dancers and choreographers of the 1960s who underpin this research are Anna Halprin (1920 – 2021), Joan Skinner (1924 – 2021), Yvonne Rainer (1934 –), Simone Forti (1935), Deborah Hay (1941 –) and Lisa Nelson (1949 – ), all of whom I will elaborate on, and how they inform the context and methods of this research. In this section I use a dialogic approach to present full passages by dance practitioners and dance critics, among others, to frame dance performance that is either not fully recorded, or due to the nature of the immateriality of dance, is best communicated and energised by those directly involved.



22 April, 1975

Yvonne Rainer
72 Franklin St.
New York, NY 10013

Dear Yvonne,

In my best business style -- a business letter. I'm sorry that it's taken me so long to get this to you.

As I understand it, you will be here on 17 and 18 May to perform "Kristina (For a...Novella)", on 19 May to show "Film About a Woman Who..." and on 20 May to show Babette's Film. For that we will pay $2,500. plus round trip transportation from New York for four people. Please let me know how and when you want payment, and your technical requirements for Kristina.

I am so happy that you're going to be here and can't wait to see the work. It's been a long time.

Love,

Figure 1. Letter from Suzanne Weil to Yvonne Rainer, Walker Art Center Archives, 1975. 35mm photograph, Keira Greene, 2022

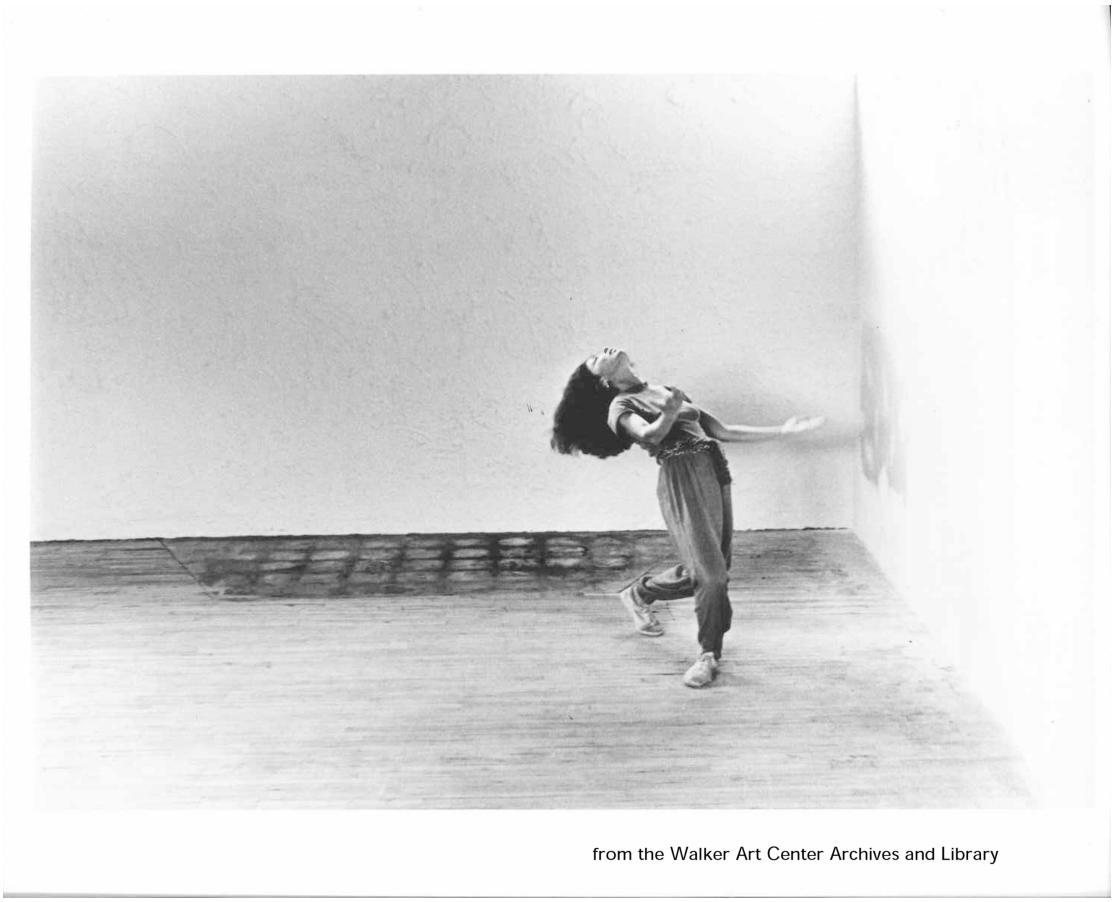



Figure 2. Deborah Hay. Photographer unknown, courtesy Walker Art Center Archives

This thesis has developed out of a study into the approach, processes and performances of these artists and a fascination with the socio-political principles and (countercultural) vision that their work embodies.[47] The 1960s marked the birth of postmodern dance,[48] a moment of

[47] It is key to stress that this thesis stems from practice and an investigation into pedagogic processes, it is not intended as a historic account.

[48] In the last 1980s there was contestation around the term Postmodern dance. Sally Banes wrote in her 1988 book *Terpsichore in Sneakers - Post-modern Dance*, that dance was never really modernist. Dance historian Susan Manning opposed this saying that the Judson legacy was in fact 'the last outpost of modernism'. Both focus on the Judson Dance Theatre. For Manning, Judson was modernist as it 'fulfilled (…) focusing on the reflexive rationalisation of movement and upholding the distinction between modern dance and ballet'. For Banes, the Judson Dance went further than this, because their egalitarian approach assimilated other art mediums, such as musical composition, painting, sculpture, and in particular, working alongside non-dancers: 'Perhaps the most important legacy of Judson Dance Theatre for post-modern dance was the attitude that anything might be looked at as a dance, if its maker presented it as a dance.' In 'Terpsichore in Sneakers - Post-modern Dance' Banes adds that the classification postmodern in dance history does not correspond to the wider field of postmodernism in art and music, and actually in many respects resembles modernism in the other arts, in so far as it rejects conservative values in favour of innovation and experimentation with form. More about the contestation of the term postmodern, or post-modern as Banes coined it, can be found here: Walker, Talking Dance: Yvonne Rainer and Sally Banes (2011) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cn6HtsbThKc> [accessed 6 July 2024]; Sally Banes, 'Democracy's Body: Judson Dance Theatre and Its Legacy', Performing Arts Journal, Vol. 5, No. 2, (1981), pp. 98-107;

exploration developed alongside and influenced by Second-Wave Feminism, the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Movement.

Postmodern dance is the term I will use to describe dancers who experimented with how to choreograph movement differently circa 1960s. The criteria for postmodern dance is agreed upon as choreography which sought to:

> utilize pedestrian, unstylized, or found movement; works that can be successfully performed by people who possess no formal dance training; works that conceive of choreography as the execution of a "task" assigned to the performer, works that are rigorously anti-illusionistic; and works that unfold in objective or clock-time rather than a theatrically-condensed or musically-abstract time.[49]

It is important to consider the context from which this experimentation in dance and choreography springs, a movement away from the mainstream towards a countercultural impulse. Protest and self-exploration defined the mood in America and people sought social, material change that was often about bringing together heterogeneous practices and knowledge, to fuel new and expansive thinking.[50]

It was through the production of my video work *Grain* (2016)[51] that an interest in dance and choreography took hold, when I had the privilege to work with Anna and Daria Halprin and to spend a week to-and-fro their home/work environment Mountain Home studio, where much of the early history of postmodern dance began.[52,53]

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Susan Manning, 'Review: Modernist Dogma and Post-Modern Rhetoric: A Response to Sally Banes' "Terpsichore in Sneakers"', The Dance Review, Vol. 32, No. 4 (1988), pp. 32-39

[49] Roger Copeland, 'Postmodern Dance Postmodern Architecture Postmodernism', Performing Arts Journal, Vol. 7, No. 1(1983), pp. 27-43, (p.32).

[50] In a reference (1969) from the Whole Earth catalogue, the countercultural impulse of the 1960s is succinctly described as 'getting a variety of heterogeneous thinkers together [so] that some sort of alchemical fusion would create a new kind of knowledge, based on both experience and imagination.' (ed by) Caroline Maniaque-Benton and Meredith Gaglio, Whole Earth Field Guide. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2016)

[51] See Appendix 1 for a synopses of this artwork

[52] See – Aliza Edelman, 'Radical Bodies: Anna Halprin, Simone Forti, and Yvonne Rainer in California and New York, 1955–1972' *Woman's Art Journal*, Spring/Summer 2018, Vol. 39, No 1. pp. 50-53

[53] Ross Simonini has written, 'Along with her contemporary Merce Cunningham and her students Trisha Brown, Simone Forti and Yvonne Rainer, Halprin is one of the undeniable pioneers of avant-garde dance'. Ross Simonini, 'All Things Connect', *Frieze*, 180, (2016).

> Around 1956, Halprin became concerned about the direction of contemporary dance, and she started conducting experimental workshops at her home in Marin County. The goal was to explore her preconceptions about what constituted dance, movement, and composition. Informed by Halprin's knowledge of anatomy, [Simone] Forti and other students analyzed movement to determine whether their actions were executed in the most anatomically efficient way, or whether they were learned motions performed according to habit. Improvisation proved Halprin's greatest tool during these years, not as a means of self-expression, but as a way to generate unpredictable actions.[54]

My research draws on the specific dance history, from the San Francisco Dancers' Workshop to the New York Judson Theatre, for its interest in inclusivity, the rich emphasis on collaboration across disciplines, a critical relationship to place and site- specificity, and how these eventually shape an aesthetic in/of the work. These principles have had a significant bearing on my own artwork and have informed my relationship to the movement and observation of dance.

In the 1960s, what has now come to be known as postmodern dance, was occupied by embracing ordinary gestures, with an emphasis on attention. This resulted in dance being deconstructed and analysed creatively, into different areas of study or schema; the body, movement, score, site, etc. Postmodern dance is known for being subversive and resisting dance technique 'by focusing on individual interpretation rather than learning specific steps'.[55] A major shift for these dancers was to reject dance purely as spectacle favouring a pared down aesthetic, as in Yvonne Rainer's work *Terrain,*

> two young men in tights stand on a scuffed stage behind a traffic blockade brought in from the street (…) People waiting for instructions from a supervisor or for a teller or cashier to open her station might stand in exactly this way. Such poses appeared to Rainer's audience in 1963 as utterly, liberatingly ordinary (…) For Rainer and her contemporaries in the downtown New York scene (…) embracing ordinary things, gestures, and sounds over virtuosic skill promised a democratic shift for art, out of museums and studios and into the

[54] Virginia B. Spivey, 'The Minimal Presence of Simone Forti', *Woman's Art Journal*, 30.1(2009), 11-18 (p.11).

[55] Harmony Wolfe, 'Between Structure and Indeterminacy: Anna Halprin and the Score for The Five Legged Stool' Kunstlicht, nr. 2/3 (2012).

> extra-artistic realm of everyday life.[56]

And turning towards the city as a productive site for the context of dance, in Maggie Nelson's book Wo*men, The New York School, And Other True Abstractions* (2007) she cites writer and activist Jane Jacobs who describes a moving complex, that through a choreographic lens might change perceptions of rote behaviour (written in 1961),[57]

> [The city] is a complex order. Its essence is intricacy of sidewalk use, bringing a constant succession of eyes. This order is all composed of movements and change, and although it is life, not art, we may fancifully call it the art form of the city and liken it to dance—not to a simple-minded precision dance with everyone kicking up at the same time, twirling in unison and bowing off en-masse, but to an intricate ballet in which the individual dancers and ensembles all have distinctive parts which miraculously reinforce each other and compose an orderly whole. The ballet of the good city sidewalk never repeats itself from place to place, and in any one place is always replete with new improvisations.[58]

Rainer and others embodied the political resistance of the time and as a result their performance(s) offered the audience a sense of association. Drawing on the 'pedestrian' context of the street was also a means to confront the racism, classism, and homophobia that precluded some bodies from art. For Anna Halprin this was an explicit engagement, in 1968 she initiated (rather than authored) the work *Ceremony of Us* with Studio Watts, in response to the 1965 riots in the Watts neighbourhood of Los Angeles,

> In 1968, Halprin offered a counterproposal to James Woods […] What if his Studio Watts and her San Francisco Dancers' Workshop built something together, an experiment to see what could come of black and white dancers sharing time and space at a moment when the country was at war with itself

[56] Elise Archias, *The Concrete Body: Yvonne Rainer, Carolee Schneemann, Vito Acconci* (London: Yale University Press, 2016) page reference (p.1).

[57] Jane Jacobs saw cities as integrated systems that had their own logic and dynamism and which would change over time according to how they were used. See: http://www.janejacobswalk.org/aboutjane-jacobs-walk/meet-jane-jacobs/ [accessed 08.11.2023].

[58] Maggie Nelson, *Women, The New York School, And Other True Abstractions*. Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 2007, p.87

and the rest of the world?[59]

> Her goal was to craft a careful process for integrating her dance company, reflecting later that she had "wanted to do a production with a community instead of for a community". Anna taught the dance Ceremony of Us to the two companies over a period of five months.[60]

As well as staging performance, dance did the work of destabilising hierarchies and bringing people together, performers and non-performers, who shared common values. Dance understood in this way was a means of both explicit and implicit communication and the refusal of cultural norms through non-verbal expression.

Figure 3. The Grand Union, performance, Walker Art Center Auditorium, October 6, 1975. Photographer unknown, courtesy Walker Art Center Archives

The representation of everyday activity was performed in day-to-day clothing and simple

[59] Claudia La Rocco, 'On Anna Halprin', *Artforum,* August 18, (2014).
[60] Judith Wasserman, 'A World in Motion', *Landscape Journal,* 31:1-2, (2012), p33-52 (p.48).

tasks and gestures emphasised the lives and bodily experience of the performers. This turn in contemporary dance offered the potential to be more intimately involved in dance performance. An audience might relate to the gestures or/and their metaphoric tenor, whilst also having a kinaesthetic connection with the performers, whose physical efforts were recognisable to their own experience. However, it is key to note that the intention towards kinaesthetic association was rooted in form and function rather than esoteric contemplation. In Rainer's own words, she says about one dancer learning her choreographies,

> One notable execution by one of the participants was so slow and ingrown as to make the dance look like a meditation. I corrected him with "it's not a meditative event; it's task-like, word-like, matter-of-fact. The pace and 'look' of it are determined by expediency and weightiness, not be introspection".[61]

Dance (in this context) experimented with ways to reclaim the body as material, what dance could be and how the moving body functions, and to emphasise the relationship between individual dancers' bodies with labour.

Yvonne Rainer's choreography *Trio A* (1966) is a performance of quotidian gestures. Perhaps the most widely seen version of *Trio A,* other than in the various live iterations over the years, is the silent ten-minute video of the performance produced by dance historian Sally Banes in 1978.[62]

> The film's stationary camera frames an empty, gray space, in which Rainer performs her piece at a deliberate pace and with quiet concentration,[63]

> It is 'a series of precisely constructed sequences of seemingly disconnected motions,[64]
> [in which] 'body pans seem to move out of sync, like separately functioning

[61] Yvonne Rainer, *Moved and Being Moved*, (Amsterdam: Roma, 2017) p.21.
[62] At the point of writing this, the video is available online with open access: Yvonne Rainer, *Trio A*, dir. by Sally Banes, (1978). Available to watch at the YouTube channel *Plataforma ANM*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_vHqIMFDbQI> [accessed: 24 April 2022]
[63] Carrie Lambert, *Moving still, Mediating Yvonne Rainer's Trio-A* (1999) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/779141> [accessed: 5th September 2021]
[64] MoMA*, Judson Dance Theatre: The Work is Never Done,* (2008) <https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/3927> [accessed 5 September 2021]

mechanisms',[65]

The language which describes *Trio A* is often indicative of the relationship that postmodern dance has with the toils of labour. Labour in this sense should not be reduced to the workplace but incorporates all activity that is necessary for the maintenance of life.[66] Words used to comment on *Trio A* often express an element of perseverance on the part of the writer/viewer, common references reveal a slowness, even a heaviness experienced in and by the work. *Trio A* has been described as 'chugging along',[67] or by Rainer herself as 'quiet plodding'. [68] Maggie Nelson describes postmodern dance as 'non-dancerly' and 'pedestrian'.[69] As with the repetition of manual labour, the dancer appears consumed by their work, and their averted gaze (originally performed by Rainer, but subsequently by many others) reaffirms this.[70] However, this avoidance to meet the audience's eye was not a tactic to evacuate emotion in the work, rather, as Rainer explains,

> Passion was a given; it resided offstage, in the obsessions of the artist, among other excesses and more quotidian expressions of emotion. While no emotions were consciously generative of or relevant to the movement phrases in the ultimate sequence, they remained latent, submerged in the uninflected flow.[71]

In *Trio A* the self-control of the performer points the audience to the choreographers' intentions (Rainer herself) and generates questions about what motivates this choice. The gestures, although dealing in abstraction, or abstracted from the fluidity of modern dance or/and daily life, were self-reflexive of both contexts, modern dance and daily life, and how one needed the other. Looking outside of dance and its taught disciplines was commonplace, dancers looked for ways to produce movement that responded to local, social, political, and environmental needs or concerns. Often the political dimension of choreography was communicated by the choice of subject matter and the demeanour of the dancer.

Speaking historically, one can say that, for instance, the (post-)minimal dance

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[65] Carrie Lambert, *Moving still, Mediating Yvonne Rainer's Trio-A* (1999) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/779141> [accessed: 5 September 2021]

[66] See Kirsi Monni discussing Hannah Arendt's philosophy of Labour in 'Practicing composition: Making Practice', (Helsinki: University of the Arts Helsinki Press, 2015) p.14.

[67] Carrie Lambert, *Moving still, Mediating Yvonne Rainer's Trio-A* (1999) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/779141> [accessed: 5 September 2021]

[68] Yvonne Rainer, *Moved and Being Moved*, (Amsterdam: Roma, 2017)

[69] Maggie Nelson, *Women, The New York School, And Other True Abstractions*, (Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 2007), p.241.

[70] The body is kept busy whilst in counterpoint the mind turns over its thoughts in secret.

[71] Yvonne Rainer, *Moved and Being Moved*, (Amsterdam: Roma, 2017) pp. 20-21

> of the Judson Church Dance Company (Yvonne Rainer, Trisha Brown, Steve Paxton, etc.) practiced an emancipatory politics without saying a word on political themes.[72]

Particularly characteristic was an interest in slowing down and inaction, a source of agitation for some audiences. *Trio A* communicates through its matter-of-factness and ordered composition; the movement stemming from interests that direct the audience imagination away from the stage and its conventions and toward the social.

*Solo Nº 1* (1974) by Simone Forti is a dance composition, a performance to camera and a video work, which shares a thematic relationship with another of Forti's video works titled *Three Grizzlies.* In *Solo Nº 1* Forti is seen moving on hands and knees with a bear-like gait[73] as she performs bear-like movements in an empty studio. In these two works, *Solo Nº 1* and *Three Grizzlies*, Forti responds to the behaviour of three grizzly bears in a small enclosure at the New York Zoo. In *Three Grizzlies* the camera follows the three enclosed bears back and forth, pacing from left to right. *Solo Nº 1* follows the movement of Forti as she takes a spiraling walk down onto all fours. The works implicitly ask the question, how to reconnect our human body to the bodies of animals? I am reminded of Forti's writing on chimps,

> Two chimps in a cage have a system worked out. A kind of music and dance which keeps them shifting around within earshot out of each other's way, a song and dance of protocol.[74]

Protocol for the caged animal means negotiating a cruel imposition of scale and cramped conditions. Protocol for Forti means undergoing a series of investigations through video and performance, to lessen the gap between human and animal. She begins standing, with a slow circling walk, one arm extending as if holding a pole that she orbits. She spirals outward slowly from a central position and then begins to walk her way down onto the floor. There she moves with a heavy chest between loping shoulders, further emphasised by the baggy shirt that falls to the floor. Her movements appear to pass between human to bear and back

[72] Gerald Siegmund and Stefan Hölscher, Dance Politics and Co-immunity, (Zurich: Diaphanes, 2013) p. 188.
[73] Simone Forti uses the video *Three Grizzlies* as a score for her subsequent video work *Solo Nº 1* in which she is seen dancing alone in a large loft like space in New York performing bear-like movement. I visited the archive at Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid, specifically to watch these works in January 2019.
[74] Simone Forti, 'Animal Stories', in Terpsichore in Sneakers, ed. by Sally Banes (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1987). pp. 38-39 (p.38).

again, with Simone Forti returning to the first position, orbiting to upright with an arm outstretched as if holding on or being guided.

Figure 4. Solo Nº 1 (1974) by Simone Forti, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, digital (iPhone) photograph, Keira Greene, 2019

For Forti and her peers in the dance scene, as well as artists, musicians, and writers at the time[75] the notion of indeterminacy was a critical way to address process rather than result.

The impetus was to be guided by questions in the doing of the work, and to consider process itself as open ended phenomenon. Forti speaks about trying the movement of bears out in her body.[76] The repeated pattern of Forti's phrase is not a mimetic attempt to become bear and understood within this framework *Solo Nº 1* is comprised of only the essential elements needed to present the inquiry in its immediacy, staying true to the possibility of emergent responses for both performer and audience.

[75] e.g., Cy Twombly, John Cage, Alice Notley, etc.

[76] Simone Forti, *The Bear in The Mirror*, (London and Vleeshal: Koenig Books, 2018) p.14.

In 2015 the British choreographer Jonathan Burrows gave a talk in which he said,

> I heard there was a reunion at Judson a while back and Simone Forti said the problem was that nobody had ever rejected Judson, and I have to say in some ways it does look weirdly like Judson is still the future, and it's hard to work out what the consequences of that might be.[77]

Thinking about the future of dance in consideration with the Judson Dance Theatre and the San Francisco Dancers' Workshop, poses questions about how the lineage of postmodern dance informs and is extended in current discourse and practice; for example, in the context of interdisciplinary dance and visual art practice, and in academic research.[78] The fact that this history is vital is exemplified by recent exhibitions such as, in 2017, Radical Bodies: Anna Halprin, Simone Forti, and Yvonne Rainer in California and New York, 1955-1972 at the Art, Design & Architecture Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara, or in 2019, Judson Dance Theatre: The Work Is Never Done, at MoMa, New York.

Burrows continues,

> And Ramsay Burt talks about 'the disinterested mode of performance' which he says is the dominant mode, and I know what he means and what it feels like, and I got to noticing recently when I use it and when I don't, and I use it mostly when I feel I should be more contemporary.[79]

Although my concern is not with what constitutes 'contemporary' (neither does this seem to be a specific interest for Burrows), what interests me is that which perpetuates in the now, about what dance might be, and how these questions stem from those explored by dancers such as Halprin, Forti and Rainer. The 'disinterested mode' calls to mind the comments made

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[77] Jonathan Burrows, 'Keynote address for the Postdance Conference in Stockholm' in Post-Dance, ed. by Daniel Andersson, Mette Edvardsen and Mårten Spångberg (Stockholm: MDT, 2017), p.87.

[78] The origins of interdisciplinary practice across art and dance can be traced back to Anna Halprin, who wrote of this period in 1960 as the beginning of multidisciplinary practice: 'As a matter of fact, that word "multidisciplinary art" was really invented during that period. That was not a way that artists worked. In the past, a dancer might create a dance and then hire a musician to write the music. But this new collaborative method was very different. It was more about mixing up who did what.' — Anna Halprin interviewed by David W. Bernstein in *The San Francisco Tape Music Center, 1960s Counterculture and the Avante-Garde*. (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2008), p.235.

[79] Jonathan Burrows, 'Keynote address for the Postdance Conference in Stockholm' in *Post-Dance*, ed. by Daniel Andersson, Mette Edvardsen and Mårten Spångberg (Stockholm: MDT, 2017), p.87.

about *Trio A* and how dance artists worked critically with ideas around inaction. Now inaction might be closer to a conversation around exhaustion, 'the social structuring powers' [80] that shape our experience have radically changed since the countercultural moment and what it had hoped for. Burrows again,

> Because all the time dance is busy stripping away and then reclaiming the messiness of everything the body might throw up and indulge, in which battleground the queer, the folk, the pop, the trash, the burlesque, the black, the kitsch, the street and the vaudeville are constant casualties and occasionally triumphant victors, and long may they also thrive regardless of that construct called the contemporary, because the future contains all of it. Or as Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker said to an early group of P.A.R.T.S. students, 'Why would you want less?'[81]

[80] Fred Turner, *From Counterculture to Cyberculture*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), p.3.
[81] Jonathan Burrows, 'Keynote address for the Postdance Conference in Stockholm' in *Post-Dance*, ed. by Daniel Andersson, Mette Edvardsen and Mårten Spångberg (Stockholm: MDT, 2017), p.87.

# TASK-BASED IMPROVISATION AND SOMATIC INQUIRY, A LEGACY OF POSTMODERN DANCE

At Anna Halprin's Mountain Home Studio, Halprin used props from the natural environment to engage in task-based improvisation.[82]

She said, 'I went into tasks like carrying logs and passing them to people, fall and stand for twenty minutes, lean on 25 things, etc'. [83] Anna Halprin's practice explored the deconstruction of movement, around themes such as (in)stability, contingency, temporality, and repetition:

> Halprin approached improvisation analytically. The body's operation as an instrument was the primary focus of her investigations. She might explore, for example, what happens when the position of the spine changes while running, or ask her students to notice how, when holding two rocks, the added weight and momentum changed the relationships among body parts.[84]

In her own words Anna Halprin said,

> We began to find new methods of organising material in a collaborative way, that had an open score feeling, but wasn't totally improvised. There was a structure to it. So out of the sort of improvisation which was "come into the room and do anything you want," we gradually began to find containers and structures that didn't box us in, but gave us opportunities to focus and to deepen and to refine.[85]

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[82] Although I am unable to locate the first use of the term task-based improvisation, all early references to the term lead to Anna Halprin. For example, Trisha Brown, Simone Forti, and Yvonne Rainer all reference their introduction to task-based improvisation as having taken place at a workshop given by Anna Halprin at Halprin's Mountain Home Studio, what was then known as the San Francisco Dancers Workshop, founded in 1959. In an essay on Trisha Brown, it is said that "At a workshop with the dance innovator Anna Halprin, she explored experiential anatomy, task-based improvisation, breath and vocalization, and sensory awareness of the environment." Martha Bremser, *Trisha Brown, In the New Body* (2015) <https://trishabrown.brynmawr.edu/2015/10/23/trisha-brown-by-marianne-goldberg/> [accessed 13 May 2024].

[83] Harmony Wolfe, 'Between Structure and Indeterminacy: Anna Halprin and the Score for The Five Legged Stool' *Kunstlicht*, nr. 2/3 (2012).

[84] Sally Banes, *Terpsichore in Sneakers* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1987) p.22.

[85] Anna Halprin interviewed by David W. Bernstein in *The San Francisco Tape Music Center, 1960s Counterculture and the Avante-Garde*. (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2008), p.235.

Halprin also introduced an interest in somatic experience into her teaching and performance. This was largely guided by working in direct relationship with the outdoors, prompted by contingent events in the environment, which informed sensations and guided movement in her classes.[86] Although Halprin did choreograph and perform solos, by and large she developed ensemble works in which somatic awareness would contribute to attuning with both the environment and the embodied presence of others. Anna Halprin's work upheld accessibility, working with dancers and non-dancers alike.[87] Honing a somatic awareness enabled the dancer to be simultaneously aware of their movements in space, whilst attending to sensations of the body, moving with a sense of exterior and interior perception.

The term 'somatic' was derived from soma the Greek word for body and circulated within the dance community in the 1970's after being introduced by movement theorist Thomas Hanna. Hanna coined somatics to describe the field of study of 'the human being as experienced by him or herself from the inside'.[88] Somatic modes of attention focus on the physical, sensorial and emotional awareness(s) experienced when the body is in motion, but also in stillness.[89] Although dance performance is on the whole associated with being-in-movement, the dance and choreography of the postmodern era was interested in pause and its duration, especially as a means to reconnect with feeling, and move from the impulse of sensation. Somatic engagement, in stillness or pause, might also be considered as an individual taking stock of their material, the body.

To deviate from the history of postmodern dance for a moment, contemporary dance artist Okwui Okpokwasili gives an account of the opening sequence of her 2012 dance-theatre work *Bronx Gothic,* in which she articulates so succinctly a somatic engagement as encounter in live performance. To give a brief context, *Bronx Gothic* opens with a fifteen-minute sequence of shuddering and quaking, with Okpokwasili stood in the corner of the stage with her back to the audience before she turns round. Okpokwasili describes this as,

> In that space of duration, I give myself a chance to open up portals, to somehow

[86] See – *Grain*, Keira Greene, 2016. Synopses included as Appendix 1 in this document.
[87] Ralf Assmann, 'Interview with Anna Halperin', 2020 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7iRJtwa44c4> [accessed on 28 June 2024]
[88] Nancy Allison, *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Body-Mind Disciplines* (New York: The Rosen Publishing Group, 1999), p.219.
[89] My understanding of somatic inquiry arises from my studies and direct experience of movement practice, which to different degrees connect to the field of dance. However, it is important to note that other practices employ somatic principles such as hands-on bodywork and other body centred therapies. Or, poetry and writing, such as American poet CAConrad who produces poetry through what they call a '(Soma)tic method', that involves living and writing in the extreme present. See — 'Queer Bubbles: How CAConrad turns ritual into poetry', *The Paris Review*, July 6 (2017).

> shed a particular idea of how I'm occupying a space in time. And I think in the exhaustion, in the sweat, in the layers of skin that are being dislodged because of sweat, is it possible that physically, psychologically, I have opened up some kind of energetic connection to what has marked me, not just socially and culturally but cellularly.[90]

As with task-based improvisation, somatic attention offered postmodern dancers and choreographers another tool to structure movement. Somatic awareness for dance artists was not about stripping all other structure back and simply attending to sensation (although this might be one element of preparing to move), rather a way to reflect on and from movement, as it is happening.

> A dancer will turn their attention inward, into somatics, trusting that everything is already there; a body to scan for sensations and a map to move from, a proprioceptive consciousness of belonging to no place other than their self, the body.[91]

Task-based improvisation and somatic practice corresponded with a growing interest in ecology and engaging in a direct response with the environment. There was also an interest in the distinction between human and animal, as we see in Simone Forti's *Solo Nº 1,* where human and animal (or human-animal) embodiment is explored. The sensing body was essentially turned inside out, and an aesthetic emerged which incorporated and was informed by feeling. The combination of task-based improvisation and somatic inquiry for postmodern dance offered ways to think about corporeality through exploration of the body and the choreographic forms (and images) this produced.

Somatic practice focuses a sense of interiority, i.e., a reflection on feeling. However, as Yvonne Rainer points out, this is different to reaching a meditative or transcendental state, the embodiment that somatic practice moves towards is grounded in the here and now, (self) aware of the politics of subjective experience and rooted in collective experience. Somatic practice offered a new dimension to the language used in dance, for example the invitation to feel something in the body and let this develop as movement (or not), rather than giving

[90] 'Earth and World: Being Mud', (2022), *Camden Arts Centre*, online recording, <https://soundcloud.com/camden-arts-centre/earth-and-world-being-mud> [accessed 5 September 2022]
[91] Bojana Cvejic, 'Credo in Artem Imaginandi' in Post-Dance, ed. by Daniel Andersson, Mette Edvardsen and Mårten Spångberg (Stockholm: MDT, 2017), p.103.

instructions about form. Thinking anew about language and instruction correlated with the socio-political concerns of dancers, looking to dispute the dominant vernacular in dance, and instead explore the possibilities of non-verbal expression. In some instances, this might lead to performers sounding with their voice and expressing physicality in unpredictable ways during rehearsals and later performance.[92]

Figure 5. Production image for Grain, Movement class with Anna Halprin, 35mm photograph, Keira Greene, 2016

An interest in task-based improvisation and somatic principles emerged through necessity; to develop a practice that dispensed with their former modern dance training (for example Graham technique). In Anna Halprin's own words, 'I was trying to reinvent movement, and to find a different basis for movement than modern dance'.[93] Experimentation evolved as an organic process and through collaboration, Anna Halprin for example collaborated with the Gestalt psychologist Fritz Perls, which she says 'gave me the emotional responses that come from movement'.[94] Experimentation in the 1960s, in dance, in music, and in the visual arts,

[92] During the production of *Grain,* I had the privilege of observing Anna Halprin teach a group of regular attendees to her workshops. The voice and 'sounding' were a key element of the practice.

[93] Anna Halprin interviewed by David W. Bernstein in *The San Francisco Tape Music Center, 1960s Counterculture and the Avante-Garde.* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2008), p.230.

[94] *Ibid*, p.233.

was a catalyst for interdisciplinarity in art as we know it now. The integration of movement, sound and image as demonstrated by Halprin (among others) is particularly relevant to the development of artists' moving image today.

In *Grain* my moving image artwork made at Anna Halprin's home, the final frames show a black and white photograph of Anna Halprin and a group of performers sat on her Mountain Home Studio dance deck circa 1960. In the photograph the dancer's body language is informal, as if this were a moment for discussion or reflection after or before dance. *Grain* is a collage of analogue and digital, still and moving images. I re-photograph the original, using black and white film in an act of revisiting and of recognising descent. This image then cuts to a black screen. The voice of Daria Halprin (Anna's daughter) closes the work:

> A legacy can never be dependent on a physical thing, physical things come
> and go, you know, just like our bodies do.
> But the work is what I'm talking about, that the work continues.
> And also it will need to develop and shape shift itself to meet the needs of the time.
> But I think that there's enough that's intrinsically really solid,
> that it can last over time.

The individual bodies of the dancers do not constitute the 'work', as Daria expresses, but rather the processes explored and embodied are passed on through collaboration, through teaching, and through performance. The work is ethical, social, collaborative, experimental and forward thinking, and this conviction inspires and is kept alive by a successive generation of dancers and artists, along with the impulse to push boundaries, 'the practice of dance and music [and art] is not there to validate the state of society and its divisions, but to transform it with novel arrangements'.[95] The role of film can act as a form of knowledge transfer that is transgenerational. I have taken this ethos forward into my own artwork and Glória Alves Alfonso exemplifies this in *The Hide* when she handles the wolf's oesophagus, passed on to her by many generations of women healers before her.

[95] Pierre Bal-Blanc, 'Anna Halprin's Dance Deck', *Flash Art*, 29 May (2020)
< https://flash---art.com/2020/05/anna-halprins-dance-deck/> [accessed 28 April 2022]

# THE NON-EXPLICIT IMPACT OF POSTMODERN DANCE ON ARTISTS' MOVING IMAGE

The field of contemporary moving image is inflected by the politics and choreographic strategies stemming from postmodern dance. This is identifiable in non-explicit ways through the traces we find in (for example) the following works, *BRIDGIT* (2018) by Charlotte Prodger and *Why are you angry?* (2017) by the artist duo Nashashibi/Skaer (Rosalind Nashashibi and Lucy Skaer), comprising these features: an interest in pictorial composition in which the moving body is present; a critical relationship with 'the frame' and 'the body framed'; a play between the gaze of the subject and the camera, and as such the gaze of the audience; the physicality of the moving camera; the physicality of the artist/director holding or behind the camera; the environment as a stage or set in which all these conditions occur.

In *BRIDGIT* (2018), Charlotte Prodger films using an iPhone, with an opening shot looking down her body to her feet as she lies on a sofa,

> The viewpoint rises and falls, and it becomes apparent that the camera is balanced on the artist's chest, moving as she breathes (…) the viewer feels as though they are grafted onto Prodger's body.[96]

Prodger shares a personal scene: a sofa, a body laying down, at rest. This is also Prodger's personal space of experimentation and moving image production, bringing to mind *Jump Cut* by Lisa Nelson (1979). This shot in *BRIDGIT* exploits the malleable handheld technology of the smart phone and its video function. The artist's body is a gauge for measuring formal relationships such as scale. The availability of this vernacular consumer technology allows Prodger to play with making public the intimate private life of emotions. Obvious parallels could be drawn with Yvonne Rainer's *Trio A,* in so far as the works 'unhurried leisureliness and pure aesthetic form expand and extend movement-time outside of the usual frame of activity'.[97]

[96] Frances Whorrall-Campbell, 'The Queer Subjectivity of Charlotte Prodger's BRIDGIT' *Another Gaze*, September (2019)

[97] Catherine Wood, *Yvonne Rainer. The Mind is a Muscle* (London: Afterall Books, 2007) p.98.

I am reminded of this quote from Lucy McKeon in her review of the 2022 exhibition at MoMA, 'What is a Feminist Picture',

> The subject of embodiment is often linked with a process of 'returning our gaze to our selves'.[98]

The 'return' of the gaze then, can also be considered as a reflection upon the personal circumstances and structural conditions of the subject, which inescapably is about the body living through and expressing their conditions. In *BRIDGIT* the viewer participates intimately in the work, in part due to the proximity of the artist's body to the screen/lens, as the body moves the camera. We also find this choreographic strategy in the video work *SaF05* (2019), whereas camera and body move, a reflection of Prodger's body is obscured and revealed in a glass wall. In another shot in *SaF05*, Prodger stands on what appears to be chalk or lime, abstract in proportion until she reveals her legs and trainers, 'the panning motion foregrounds the relationship of the body to space.[99] An authorial presence is evident in Charlotte Prodger's work; she incorporates within her role (evident by the authored camera's point of view) that she is director, editor, and subject within the work.[100] The body, and therefore the artist, asserts herself within the image, present, whilst the voiceover speaks about the past and about formative personal experiences.

*Why are you angry?* (2017) is a 16mm film by artist duo Rosalind Nashashibi and Lucy Skaer shot in Tahiti, which revisits the French post-impressionist Paul Gauguin's painting of the same name (1896). Nashashibi/Skaer deconstruct the painting and restage the gestures of the six Tahitian women it depicts with another six women of comparable age, height, hair colour and length, clothing, etc. They develop a number of compositions as tableau vivant, where the camera depicts the women in close-up; we sense these women's concentration as they hold their pose, whilst the camera, trees, and dogs, move around them. In this sequence, the film takes up different perspectives on the women's' held positions, there is a choreographic mapping of the yard in which they are spread out, some in pairs and others

[98] Lucy McKeon, 'What is a Feminist Picture' *Aperture*. May 26 (2022), <https://aperture.org/editorial/what-is-a-feminist-picture/>

[99] Laura Guy 'What is the Lioness After?', in *Charlotte Prodger. Selected Works*, ed, by Herausgeber, Lynn Kost and Chris McCormack (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther und Franz König, Kunst Museum Winterthur, 2022) p.73.

[100] These levels of control, taking production into one's own hands, resonate with experimentation deep-rooted in postmodern dance history. Prodger eschews expected production standards, opting for affordable and easy to-hand technology, without a large crew, often working with collaborators and within an immediate artistic community.

alone. The camera visits each smaller composition (within the larger composition) from different angles, handheld and close.[101]

Nashashibi/Skaer's work *Why are you angry*? is sensitive to the ways in which we read the attitudes of bodies in movement and in stillness. There is a minimalism to this work, reminiscent of the video and film works of postmodern dance, e.g. *Trio A* (1966) and *Solo Nº 1* (1974), it is non-verbal; there is diegetic sound that comes in and out, providing a sonic textured music (at times the soundtrack is removed altogether). This minimalist quality provides space to consider the collaboration between the artists and the women we see on screen. In turn it offers the viewer a subjective relationship with the politics and aesthetic(s) issuing from the decisions in the work; the role of poise, dance and the bodies engaged in this specific yet improvised task. Intercut with the filmic portraits of near static poses, there is a scene of the women dancing socially together in the yard following steps that they evidently know by heart as the camera observes them. In the sequence where the women dance, their behaviour is wholly changed, as if each composition produces new forms of subjectivity. This matter seems to be at the core of the artwork, how does the arrangement of bodies reflect the ideology through which they are constructed?

Nashashibi/Skaer re-sensitise us to Gauguin's exoticising gaze by restaging the postures of Gauguin's painting, in the artists own words the intention was to problematise his gaze:

> Taking its title and its poses directly from Gauguin's paintings, the project looks at the problems and also the potentials of imagining women through his particular gaze. The film moves between choreographed and informal footage of Tahitian women in front of their homes, at work, and in our rented apartment.[102]

The decision to not include within the film an explanatory discourse on Gauguin's images, along with the decision that the women do not speak, results in an ambiguity around the subject of exoticisation, 'The film hovers ambivalently between re-enacting and repairing

[101] The filmmakers Nashashibi/Skaer offer us a privileged relationship with the image, rather than the two-dimensional plane of the painting.

[102] *Tate,* (2017) https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-st-ives/nashashibi-skaer-thinking-through-other-artists/nashashibiskaer-why-are-you-angry [accessed 21 May, 2024]

that violence'.[103] The silence of the women in the work could be read as an iteration of Gauguin's 'colonial narrative of exoticised women and faraway lands',[104] however the artists decision to include evidence of arriving at the images with the women participants could be understood to destabilise the colonial gaze.

In the work the six women often face the camera and simultaneously therefore, the gaze of the future audience. In these exchanges there is an unspoken intimacy that communicates the conditions of making the artwork.

> it is through framing a thing that we come to understand it, and by changing the frame surrounding things, change how we relate to them.[105]

It is not the project of Nashashibi/Skaer to achieve a portal into the embodied experience of the women in their film. Their statuesque bodies on screen are doing a different work. What we do experience is the very edge of these bodies standing still, their tremors of concentration, being looked at. It is in this configuration or framing, following the above quote from Skaer, that we find demonstrated the non-explicit influence of postmodern dance, specifically the choreographic strategies of somatic inquiry and task-based improvisation. Making physicality public in this way, whether the body is exerting itself or not, challenges the now outdated idea of the body as spectacle, and turns the audience towards the performers experience. The artist (choreographer or visual artist) invites the audience/viewer to observe the performer/subject, and to at once attend to their own experience in doing so. Why are you angry? demonstrates the contemporary relevance of the discourse around the performing body as spectacle and resonates with the questions postmodern dance asked of and through dance, extending these to consider the arrangement of bodies, whose bodies, and whose lens, in artworks that present non-verbal performance to camera.

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[103] Nora Heidorn (2022) <https://www.neroeditions.com/laying-horizontal/> [accessed 7 December 2022].
[104] Minou Norouzi, 'The communicative Power of Silence: 'Why are you angry' *Another Gaze*, 03 (2019)
[105] *Lucy Skaer / The Green Man* (2018) https://www.trg.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2020-04/LucySkaerTheGreenMan.pdf [accessed 21 May 2024]

# PART THREE

## METHOD

This section addresses the method and process of making *The Hide.* It is formulated as a compilation of visual and textual fragments, dwelling upon all aspect of the process of developing and creating the moving image artwork *The Hide.* It is divided into two parts, 'Wolf as a Score in *The Hide'* and 'Reflections on Methodology in the making of *The Hide',* to allow a specific attention to innovative uses of the score within the method, and then a broader address to the artistic methods used, and the impact of the somatic in all aspects of production and postproduction. The cumulative coherence and value of this heterogeneous compilation of fragments intentionally depends upon reference to the artwork.

## ‘WOLF’ AS A SCORE IN *THE HIDE*

Whilst I am making the moving image artwork *The Hide*, I use ‘wolf’ as a score. By this I mean that ‘wolf’ is an organising principle for the development of my ideas, and I return over and again to assumptions about wolves, i.e. that wolves are elusive, nocturnal, threatening, are endangered. Whilst *The Hide* is visually concerned with wolves, they are not its subject matter in any straightforward way. Instead of this, by designating ‘wolf’ as a score, I am using it as an organising principle. It is the central idea around which aesthetic and conceptual decisions are being made.

Over the following pages I will attempt to express the consequence of this - of designating ‘the wolf’ as a score. What follows is a compilation of selected fragments which take both textual and visual form, many of which were created during the development and production processes of the artwork, or shortly after completion. These reveal how I attempt - in practice - to use ‘wolf’ as a score. They include overlapping, related definitions of the score, they reflect upon the conceptual premise as well as the reality of the wolf/wolves and explore some of my reflections upon the wider political consequences of the endeavour.

Italicised fragments have been collaged from a range of notebooks, word-processed documents, iPhone notes. marginalia and scraps of paper that have been accumulated during this PhD process, over a 4-year period.

○

*Scores are a form of notation, that direct action, gesture, and expression; as such whilst I am making The Hide I think about the wolf as a score, I do this to create a provocative assertion, to direct action, gesture and expression. A score is different or distinct from subject matter, rather acting as a relational trigger that impacts on and alters all other decisions in the artwork. The difference between wolves as the subject matter and ‘wolf’ as a score is that, were wolves the subject matter, then the language of moving image, the direction of performance, the organisation of content, the dialogue of collaboration and the logic of the edit would remain largely unaltered by the specificity of this subject matter. A film about wolves could therefore be formally the same as it might be for any other subject. However, if I conceptually designate ‘wolf’ as the score for making the*

*work, every decision of the practice is potentially disturbed or needs responsively reconfiguring in relation to it.*

35mm colour photograph (Keira Greene) taken at *Centro de Recuperação do Lobo Ibérico – CRLI,* Mafra, Portugal, in March 2019. This photograph was taken on a visit to the The Iberian Wolf Recovery Centre in Mafra. This visit happened at the beginning of an investigation into wolves, the result of a conversation with the biologist Francisco Álvares (from the institution CIBIO- InBio, Porto, Portugal), who informed me about the centre in Mafra. Following on from this visit I became interested in the fence at the sanctuary, which acts as a boundary between the human and animal and through which visitors wait hopefully to see a wolf.

○

*'Wolf' is continually acting as a subject refusing to be the subject matter; the wolf itself is a deliberately unsatisfactory visual subject because it is elusive and avoids being seen. 'Wolf' as a score alters how the film is structured, its form, its script, its shot composition, and the edit.*

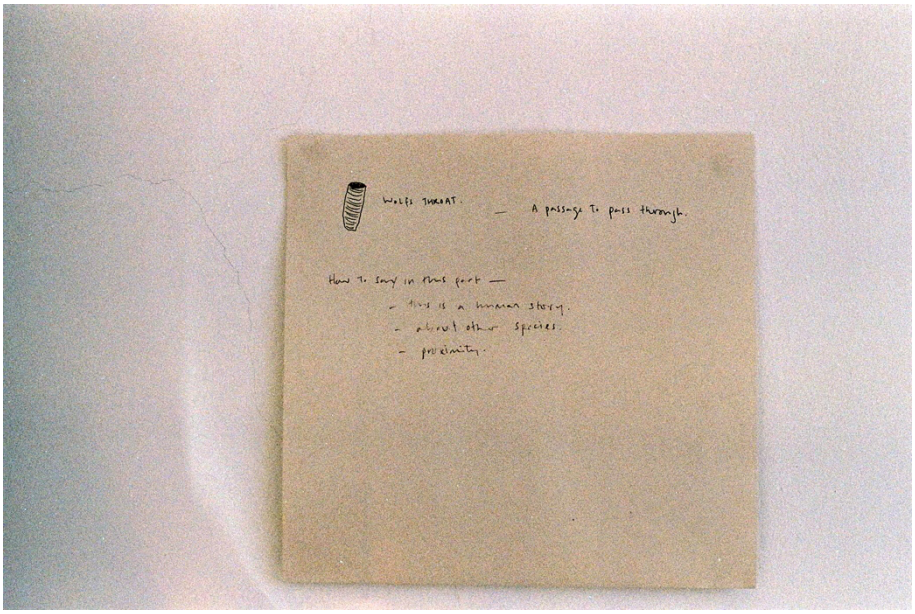
○

*Scores are process-oriented, not thing-oriented (...) this works through open scoring, which establishes "lines of action" to which each person contributes*

*and from which a final performance then emerges.*[106]

*Lawrence Halprin considered a score as an anchor point to generate material. In The Hide I am using the conceptual premise of the animal, the wolf, as a score to allow for different human and non-human experience to run parallel in the production, the edit,*

*and in the artwork. A score, in this vein, is something held in abstraction to respond to, to interface with and allow for variable feeling, emotion, and sensation,*




35mm colour photograph (Keira Greene) taken of my studio wall, March 2021. The photograph shows a square of paper with a small drawing of a wolfs oesophagus, next to which is written 'a passage to pass through'. I was interested in the *Gola do Lobo* having a formal relationship with the wolf pit, a deep hole in the ground. Both represented passages, and I imagined the themes in this work passing through these cyclical spaces and getting entangled, this was being considered at the same time as researching Jung's idea of 'the complex'. Sometimes I found it useful to think about the *Gola do Lobo* and *Fojo do Lobo* as a kind of black hole, where information shapeshifted in a mysterious manner, out of sight.

○

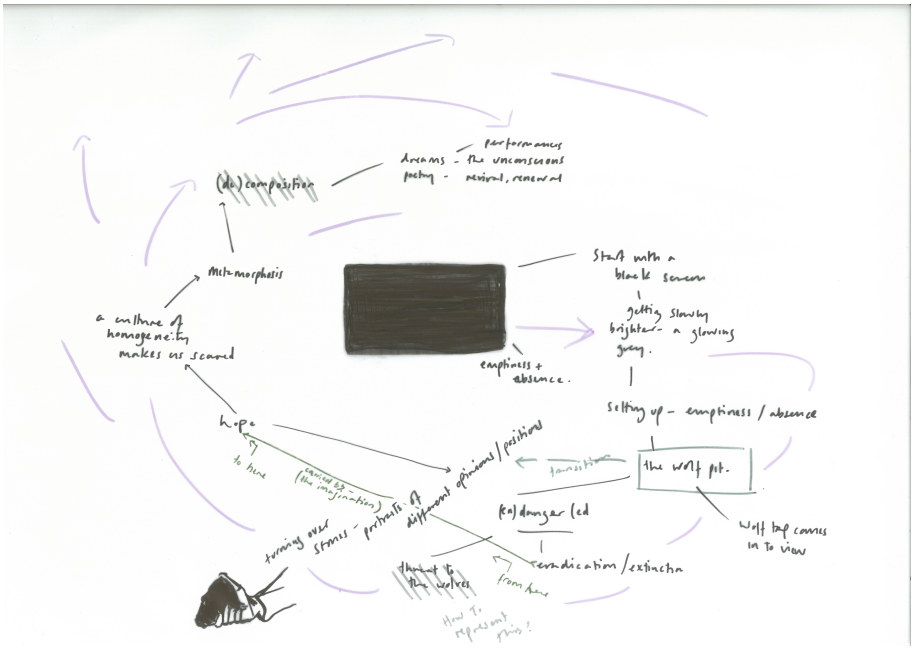
*'scores open up a performative space within the discursive and vice versa'.*[107]

[106] Lawrence Halprin, *The Rsvp Cycles. Creative Processes in The Human Environment*, (Canada: Doubleday, 1969), p.4.
[107] Walter Heun and others, 'SCORES°0 The Skin of Movement '*Tanzquartier Wien,* (2010), <https://tqw.at/mediathek/scores-no-0-7/>

*The editorial team*[108] *of the publication 'SCORES N.0' (2010), a dance magazine produced by the dance venue Tanzquartier Wien (Vienna), aimed to 'analyse the thinking and doing of the choreographic.'* [109] *Their understanding that 'scores open up a performative space within the discursive and vice versa' is helpful when considering the way a score can disrupt debate around choreography. Scores in their conventional role, direct movement or music in real time, but in the absence of a performance, they are autonomous graphic representations of possible performance held in the imagination. This quotation reflects on the score as a communicative tool, opening up a discourse with performers.*

*This quotation is relevant within this thesis, where the role of the score is to consider multiple entry points to think about performance rather than a direct representation of a (linear, real-time) performance.*

*As a translation from one medium into another, » scores « mark a figure of our interest in the correspondences and interferences between discursive and performative practice, respectively for the irritation potential of their incompatibility. Scores open up a performative space within the discursive and vice versa.*[110]



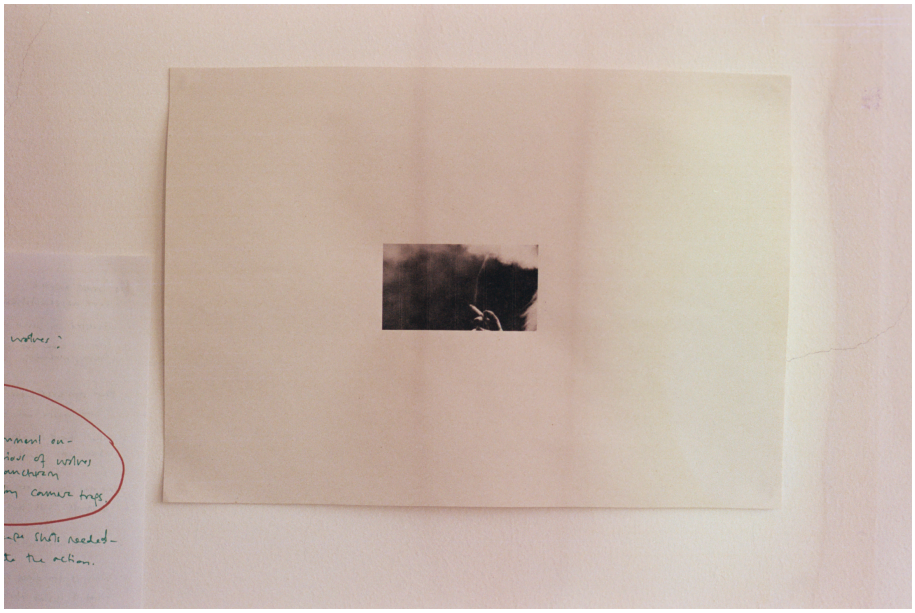

[108] Walter Heun and others, 'SCORES°0 The Skin of Movement '*Tanzquartier Wien,* (2010), <https://tqw.at/mediathek/scores-no-0-7/>
[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid.

Drawing and diagram on A5 paper from March 2021. The black square stands in for the unseen subjects in the work; the wolf, fear, desire. It is also a literal reference to the opening shot in the video, where the wolf pit emerges from darkness (shot at daybreak). These notes explore ways to depict absence and question what steps into the space of absence (of knowledge, for example the whereabouts of the wolf), such as threat or fear.

○

*In The Hide 'wolf' is an organising principle, a subject held in mind, as a translation from one medium into another, scores mark a figure of our interest [in] correspondence and interference.*[111]

*'Wolf' as a score is an absent wolf, the 'interference' is happening through the search for its representation. I am trying to surface or prioritise human impulses such as desire, fear and instinct and use these to shape a 'correspondence' through reference to the physical attributes, elusive behaviour, and symbolic associations of the wolf.*



35mm colour photograph (Keira Greene) taken of my studio wall, March 2021. The photograph printed on the sheet of paper is of a person smoking. I remember being told that wolves are afraid of fire and that farmers and herders in Northern Portugal used to go out into the countryside with a lit cigarette, even if they didn't smoke, so as to warn off wolves.

○

[111] Ibid.

*I am using 'wolf' as a score to open out dialogue with participants and to allow for emergent processes, across disciplines, whilst being anchored by a common theme.*

*Specifically, in this thesis wolves are considered through their cultural reference, for example in literature, poetry, and psychoanalysis, as predators, fierce, dangerous, with erotic significance, and as archetypes.*[112] *As well as their behavioural characteristics, especially as and in comparison, with human behaviour.*

*Participants are approached because of their various understanding of the wolf through their specific professional work. The knowledge across the various disciplines of biology, psychoanalysis, cattle herding, and dance, will be brought together in the edit. I am interested in enabling a space of translation in the artwork; where the viewer finds themselves moving across different perspectives, as well as different sub-genres of artists' moving image.*

○

> *'What collage achieves is a metalanguage of the visual. It can talk about space without employing it; it can figure the figure through the constant superimposition of grounds'*[113]

*Art critic Rosalind Krauss uses collage to explain how once space (or territory) is created it is not obliterated; representation is layered and exists whether real or imagined. In The Hide the figure of the wolf is employed through the layering of testimonies and images that signify the absent animal. The wolf is a subject 'collaged' together through fragments, deliberately constructed; 'collage in film could be seen as a founding tenet of any editing'.*[114] *Therefore collage is a formal device occupied with abstraction, inviting translation(s). It is constructed in part to point the viewer to question how a subject is formed, as well as back to the wolf, a subject we cannot see, but only glimpse in passing or through other people's renditions.*

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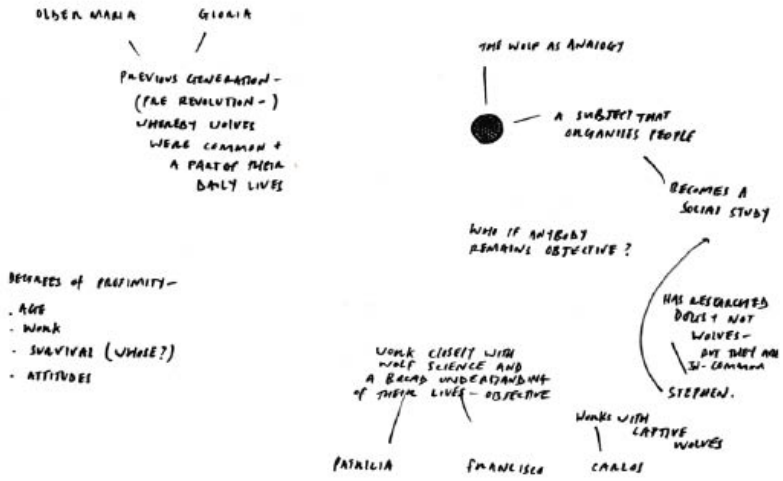
[112] Some examples include: 'Love of the Wolf' in *Stigmata*, Helene Cixous, (London: Routledge, 1998); *The Old Man and the Wolves,* Julia Kristeva (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); 'One or Several Wolves' in *A Thousand Plateaus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia, Gilles Deleuze and Felix* Guattari, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987); 'That Winter the Wolf Came' in *That Winter the Wolf Came,* Juliana Spahr, (Oakland: Commune Editions, 2015), 'The Wolf Man' in *The Wolf Man and Other Cases,* (London: Penguin Modern Classics, 2002).

[113] Rosalind. E Krauss, The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths, (Cambridge Massachusetts, London, England: The MIT Press, 1986), p.38.

[114] David Spittle, *Tyneside Cinema* (2023) <https://tynesidecinema.co.uk/news/reel-recommendations-collage-films/> [accessed 13 March 2024] 13




Notes on A5 paper from April 2021. Here I explore the proximity that the different people I spoke with about wolves had in terms of direct experience with them. I am thinking about this as a cross-generational inquiry, and I use the wolf as 'a subject that organises people'.

○

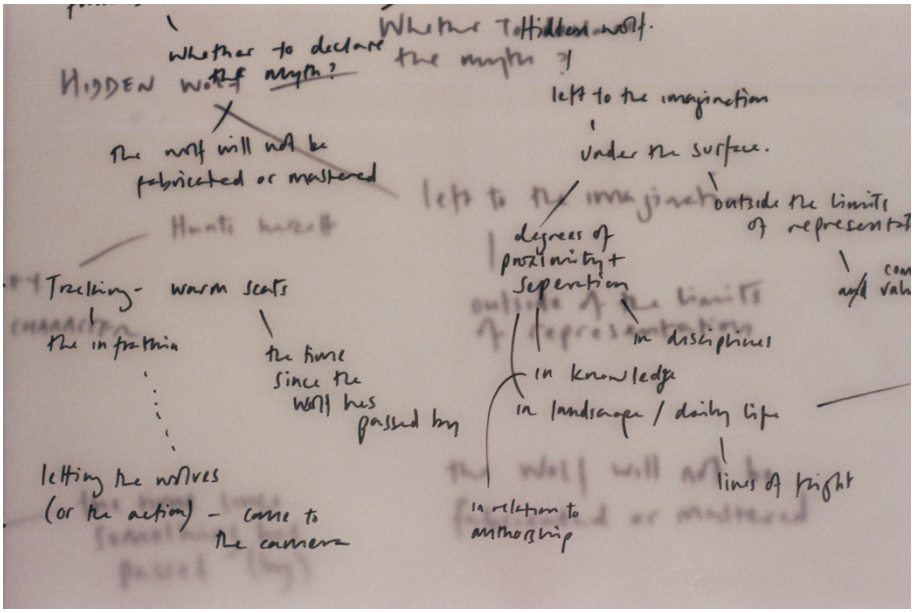
*The Hide is not a film 'about' wolves. Rather 'wolf' is being used to explore tension, affect, spatial awareness, heightened feelings (such as fear and desire), absence and presence, human and non-human.*

*In making this film I am attempting to thread multiple perspectives on human-animal relations, achieved by means of interviews with those who live closely with wolves, accompanying wolf conservationists/biologists to monitor wild wolves, and also by analysing existing (found) footage from camera traps, and audio from howl surveys.*[115] *Alongside these dialogic and observational approaches, the artwork will investigate the symbolic manifestation of 'the predator' in culture, literature, psychoanalysis (with psychoanalyst Catherine Massin) and folk traditions, through a non-linear editing structure.*

*I am tracking the process of observing wolves with wolf conservationists/biologists (and with dancers observing somatic experience), and much of the research activity is occurring outside of the frame, where different forms of knowledge are being assembled*

[115] This involves locating the highest point in the landscape where wolves are known to live and simulating their call, their howl, and waiting for response.

*to constitute a complex non-singular representation of 'wolf'. Within the frame heterogeneous moving image genres will further extend an exploration into multiplicity around an absent protagonist.*




35mm colour photograph (Keira Greene) taken of my studio wall, March 2021. On the wall are handwritten ideas to stimulate thinking during the edit of *The Hide,* overlayed on top is a sheet of tracing paper with additional handwritten notes. The notes on both layers refer to representation of the wolf, thinking about how much or if at all we see the wolf. There is reference to wolves just beyond the frame, for example 'warm scats' of the wolf, who was recently in the area (prompted by conversation with the biologists I accompanied in the field). The method of overlaying notes with tracing paper reflects the later decision to overlay voices and conversation at the start of *The Hide,* to build a sense of a protagonist that we do not see (until much later).

○

> *The locus of the human keeps shifting […] thought is produced by neural synapses that are going on through the entire body. Thinking is trans-corporeal, and I would say between bodies as well.*[116]

*This, from the writer and poet Lisa Robertson comes from a conversation between Robertson and poet and choreographer Aisha Sasha John in which they discuss language and its grasp of being human. Encapsulated here is the idea that thinking and feeling – being a human subject – is a complex event, with the shifting experience of subjectivity*

[116] Lisa Robertson, *Art and Education* (2014) <https://www.artandeducation.net/classroom/video/66315/lisa-robertson-and-aisha-sasha-john-in-conversation> [accessed 27 April 2022].

*distributed throughout the body. They discuss thinking as something unbounded by the human body and rather as something that happens between subjects, including human and animal, and therefore as a trans-species experience. The Hide is delving into the complexity of representing embodiment and articulates that embodied experience necessitates thinking language beyond human terms.*[117] *I am constructing a non-linear narrative where thought is inseparable from the body, and happens between bodies, with emotion and instinct complicating the limits of language, bodies and the notion of separation.*

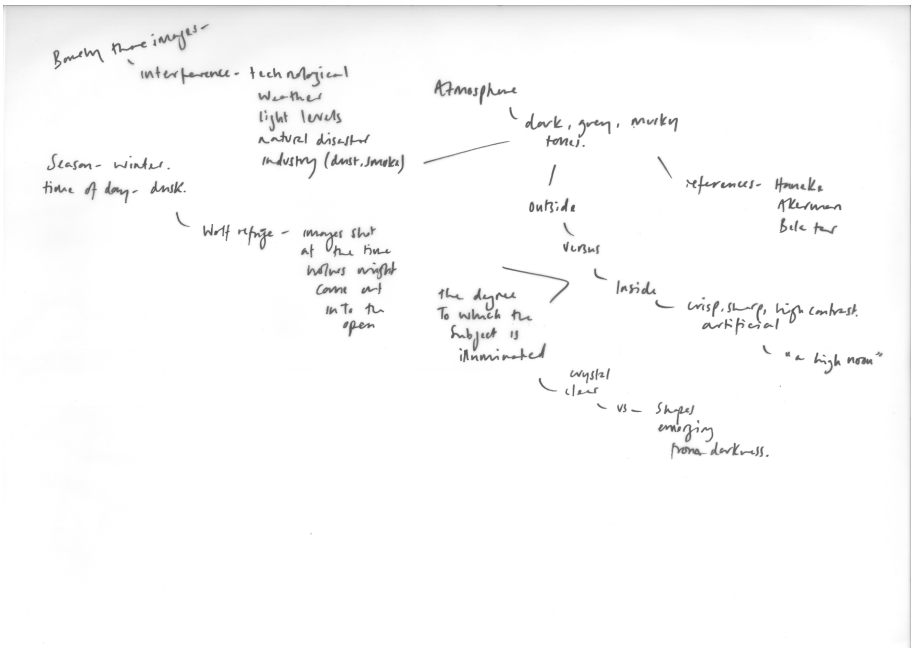
○

*The Hide is attempting an interlocking story of the perspectives of people whose lives intersect with wolves, plus the fleeting appearance of wolves themselves. Denise Ferreira da Silva describes co-existing as an entanglement between human and non-human, and proposes what she describes as 'difference without separability',*

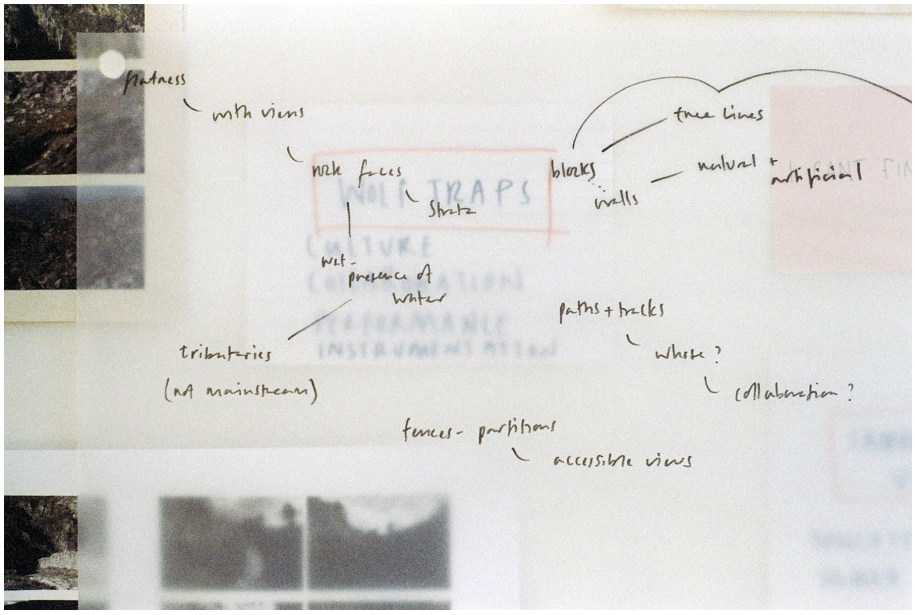
> *What if instead of the Ordered World, we imagined each existent (human and more-than-human) not as separable forms relating through the mediations of forces, but rather as singular expressions of each and every other existent as well as of the entangled whole in/as which they exist?*[118]

[117] Trans-corporeality is a term from critical theorist Stacy Alaimo who wrote that trans-corporeality 'emphasizes the imbrication of human bodies not only with each other, but with non-human creatures and physical landscapes' — to imbricate is to overlap to the extent of inseparability.

[118] Denise Ferreira da Silva, 'On Difference Without Seperability '*Catalogue of the 32a São Paulo Art Biennial, "Incerteza viva" (Living Uncertainty)* <https://biennial.com/files/pdfs/7879/d-ferreira-da- silva-on-difference-without-separability.pdf> [accessed: 5 September 2022].




Handwritten notes on an A5 page from March 2021, thinking through light levels in *The Hide* and the significance of dark, grey and murky tones. These notes were written shortly after watching Michael Haneke's film *Time of the Wolf* (2003), a tonally dark film in which much of the action is barely visible, taking place at night or in the shadows.




35mm colour photograph (Keira Greene) taken of my studio wall, March 2021. On the wall are photocopies of other photographic and handwritten references to produce *The Hide,* overlayed on top is a sheet of tracing paper with additional handwritten notes. The notes on the tracing paper refer to the landscape shots in the film. I am thinking through the formal qualities of different landscapes and environmental features on screen. For example, the 'flatness' of a rock face, or the 'blocks' of the walls, the 'partiality' of a fence.

*In The Hide images of real wolves appear for 1 min 10 seconds in total, in the 26th and 30th minutes of a film lasting 32.30 minutes. Early on, the question is being set up for the audience as to whether they will see the wolf at all. The intention is that the audience begins to think about how the subject matter is being constructed, such as through dialogue, literature, psychoanalysis, and folk traditions, which draw on different aspects of the myth of the wolf as a predator. The subject of wolves, is emerging through a non-linear narrative and this non-linearity is also a form of myth making, using different perspectives about wolves to embody curiosity around the underlying subject of predation. Eventually when the animal is seen on screen, the question of predation is deliberately undermined (with the wolves bearing resemblance to large dogs), however the spectre of anticipated threat lingers on, revealing (as was my hope) that the phenomenon of an unseen threat is something specific and pervasive to human culture.*

35mm colour photograph (Keira Greene) taken at *Fojo do Lobo Fafião*, Fafião, Portugal, in April 2019. This photograph was taken on the first visit to the stone walled wolf traps in Fafião. This visit happened as a result of a conversation with the biologist Francisco Álvares, who told me about this and many other wolf traps in the Northern region of Portugal. This visit continued my interest in entrapment, following on from the fence at *CRLI*, but in this instance the construction of a specific architecture built to trap and kill wolves. Since the 11$^{th}$ century the use of the *Fojo do Lobo* to control wolf numbers was widespread, until the end of the 19th century. The *Fojo do Lobo Fafião* continued to be a point of interest for me, for its real and then later symbolic violence, and the site features in the final version of *The Hide*.

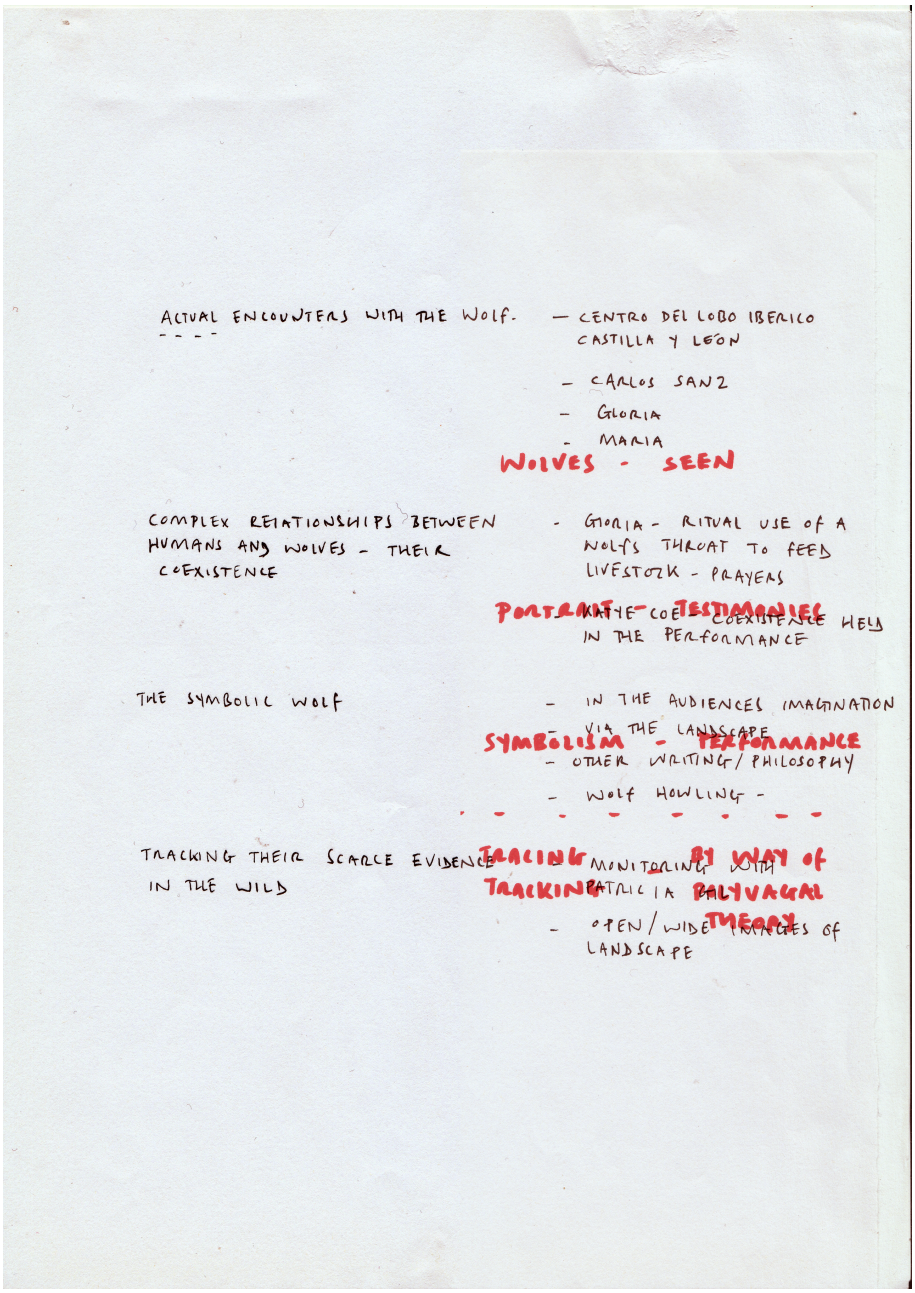
○

*The title of the artwork The Hide refers to the way in which its primary subject, the wolf (wolves) are rarely visible, as well as naming the ad-hoc architecture used to conceal the*

*conservationist/hunter waiting to observe them. The title points to the tension of visibility itself when the subject is mainly outside of the frame. The research considers liminality (beyond the boundaries of the frame) as a productive space and therefore is equally concerned with how the subject is framed, as to what is contained within the frame. The Hide accounts for a spectral figure (wolves) through assembling impressions of the subject, drawing on the interdisciplinary fields of psychoanalysis, biology and dance, with an interest in multiple interpretations.*

*The work opens with a 'Fojo do Lobo'*[119] *or wolf trap emerging from darkness, accompanied by dense synthetic sound and layered dialogue. The Hide puts forth a textured narrative of fragments that builds through images of people, close-ups of shoes, sound and visual recordings made from a moving vehicle, uninhabited landscapes, a recurring dance performance, all of which fold the circadian rhythms of human and animal.*

[119] A fojo do lobo is a pit constructed on a steep slope at the limit of two converging stone walls.




Handwritten A4 page of notes written in December 2019, detailing the 'actual' sightings of wolves by people I had come into contact with during my research. I go on to consider how these individuals have varied and 'complex relationships' with the subject of wolves, and I think about how I might choose to depict the 'scarce evidence' of wolves in the wild. I refer to the 'symbolic wolf' which is a dimension of the wolf that I rely heavily on as I develop the edit of *The Hide*

## REFLECTIONS ON METHODOLOGY IN THE MAKING OF *THE HIDE*

There are two central methods that inform the production of the artwork *The Hide*, these are task-based improvisation and somatic inquiry. Throughout this contextual document I refer to these methods as choreographic strategies, a term that emerges from the field of dance, and in this practice-based research is applied to the field of moving image.[120]

This research has also considered somatic inquiry[121] from my own perspective (as an artist and filmmaker), as well as the perspective of participants or/and performers, and the audience.[122]

In brief, this approach means that choreographic strategies are held in relationship with the moving image and questions are asked of that relationship. If choreography is the practice of sequencing movement, a choreographic strategy within the practice of moving image might be the sequencing of moving bodies within the frame, it might also be the movements of the cameraperson, or in an expanded sense, motion caused by other non-human forces.

The process of exploring somatic inquiry and task-based improvisation within the context of moving image, has been used to extend the notion of choreography, to inform and elaborate on processes of varied collaboration. This has led me to work with participants from other disciplines (two biologists, a psychoanalyst, musicians, a visual effects animator, two shepherds). Considering collaboration as, in part, a choreographic strategy has led me to undertake processes such as conducting interviews, tracking wolves, and addressing simple actions such as walking or driving (with participants) as having choreographic potential. During those processes the following critical reflections were explored: the entry

[120] Choreographic strategies have been developed through attending specific movement and dance workshops, to later develop a practice of moving and filming with dancers and non-dancers alike. Over time, during the process of this PhD, I have integrated some of the approaches I have learned by attending movement workshops. These movement workshops include: Klein Technique™ with Susan Klein, Skinner Release Technique with Gaby Agis, Lizzy Le Quesne, Kirsty Alexander, and Lily Kiara, Authentic Movement with Julien Bruneau, working with Lisa Nelson's Tuning Scores with Anouk Llaurens, and a week-long workshop 'Hand power, horse labour and dance' with Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker. These practices vary in the degree to which they use the terminology 'somatic'.

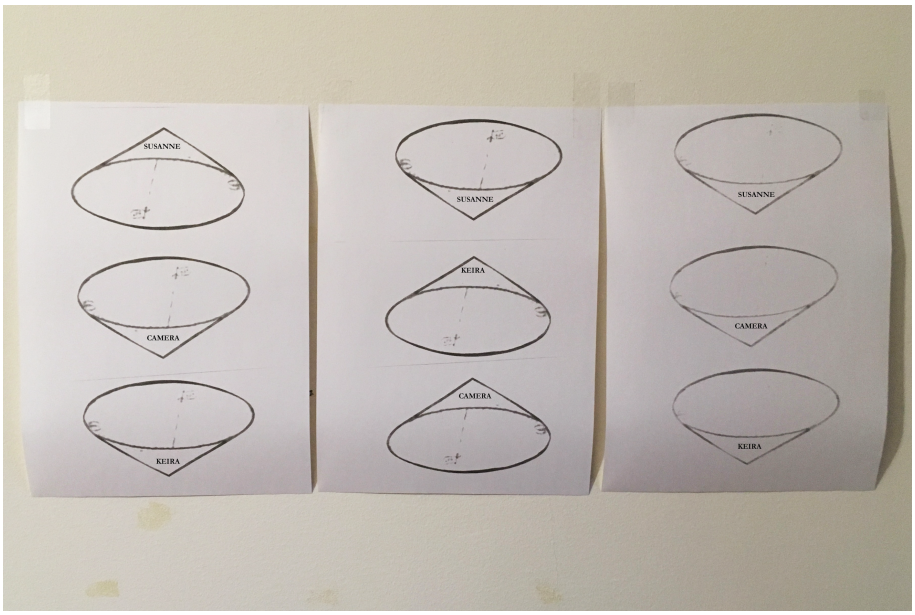
[121] As noted already in the section *Task-Based Improvisation and Somatic Inquiry, as a Legacy of Postmodern Dance,* the term somatic refers to modes of attentive focus on the physical, sensorial and emotional awareness(s) experienced when the body is in motion, but also in stillness.

[122] It is important to maintain some critical distance to the term somatic, to not fall into a broad definition that would assume equivalence in human experience. However somatic inquiry is a useful concept from which to talk about first-person experience of oneself/themselves turned in on itself, and to consider the information arising from these experiences as material.

into a given task; the embodied feedback; and the conversation that is taking place. In addition, I developed a specific method incorporating diagrams, producing scores, and writing, to explore and communicate the use of the camera with eventual collaborators.

More generally, such methods have been used during the production of *The Hide* to critically assess felt experience (somatic inquiry) and to home in on habitual tasks (action in the frame as well as action behind the camera). In addition, somatic and task-based methods and their impacts have been considered to develop participatory relationships. And finally, these methods and their influence on all these encounters have informed solitary studio process and production.

The following notes are intended to convey how these methods have been applied, through task-based improvisational methods in the studio, whilst making the artwork *The Hide,* as well as work that was made concurrently with *The Hide,* documenting instances of critical reflection and understanding occurring through or in relation to them. Woven throughout these notes are accounts of the significant somatic movement practices which have informed my understanding of somatic inquiry and have helped me to develop choreographic strategies. Workshops in movement and dance have been an essential way to learn and develop as an artist, not formally trained in dance. I enter workshops incorporating two different perspectives, an interest in deepening knowledge in the specific dance techniques, and as an artist working with moving image undertaking interdisciplinary research concerning choreographic strategies. Choreographic strategies have been used to rethink my own movement behind the camera.




35mm colour photograph (Keira Greene) taken in my studio, June 2019. This photograph was taken to illustrate the following idea, written to dance artist and collaborator Susanne Mayer in the following email (June 2019):

Hi S, I've been trying to represent relationships/options of lens (me + camera) - to – subject (you) compositions for our upcoming session in the studio.
This drawing I'm sending you represents the following compositions/set-ups for us to try: no1. Susanne faces camera + Keira. no2. Susanne out of frame. no3. Susanne turns away from camera + Keira.
I'm calling these cones of vision, I was inspired by a chapter in Lisa Robertson's book *Nilling*, the chapter is 'Perspectors/Melancholia' and it's on p47. I'll bring it with me to Lisbon!
I hope this is helpful, to think about working with different fixed positions of the camera. I have been thinking about rules/ and their subsequent questions, these came up —
When S is out of frame, how can I let S know? how can I ask S to wait for me to locate her? how can I ask S to re-enter frame? how can I work with S's absence?

○

*Each exchange with those who participate and perform in The Hide has begun in the following way: prior to meeting I will send them material about the project, to share my interests and to invite the opportunity for them to do the same. As a result, a resource of materials is collected, the intention being that this offers us both a support to refer to, based upon a shared context. I emphasise, if relevant, that my interest is in interdisciplinary artistic research through collaborative fieldwork and that The Hide intersects with the fields of biology (specifically wolf conservation) and psychoanalysis as well as with dance and performance.*

○

*In The Hide the filmmaking takes into consideration that some of the action in the frame will be improvised. This decision has emerged over time, finding ways to compose and capture an image, whilst allowing for an open score.*

○

*I am playing with a designation between the performance space and the space occupied by the camera; giving the performer a clear delineation of the frame; establishing the 'front' facing the camera.*

*'the frontality of the composition shows that there is full awareness of the viewer's presence'.*[123]

○

*I want the participants to have agency to make choices within the frame, to co-produce and choreograph the composition. Participants can come to the other side of the camera to see the production space that they will occupy, providing the possibility to imagine the image as it is being made. In this way, the participants are encouraged to embody the viewer's perspective as a part of their own process.*

[123] Norman Bryson, Looking at the Overlooked, Four Essays on Still Life Painting, (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 1990), p 74.

35mm colour photograph (Keira Greene) taken in Brussels, January 2021. This photograph was taken during a test 'walk' with Catherine Massin to practice walking (and talking) in step, as a simple choreographed task.

○

*I want to acknowledge the importance and thinking of Deborah Hay. Hay focused on finding ways to get her performers to dance starting from ground zero, beginning from where they are and from their own bodies, to detach from the notion of style and image and from schooled techniques.*[124] *How do you get a group of people dancing without telling them what to do?*[125]

*The simple act of walking together in time was informed by an exercise learned from and practiced with dance artist Susanne Mayer in which we would take it in turn to walk one another's walk. We spent time in the studio observing one another walking, to eventually join the other (in an attempt) to mirror the nuance of their walk. A great deal of the experiential knowledge that contributes to my process of capturing performance, as well as witnessing movement with a camera, was informed by the collaboration*

[124] Stephanie McMann and Flora Wellesley Wesley, *Dancing with Deborah Hay: "It was so very personal"* (2019) <http://blog.sadlerswells.com/dancing-with-deborah-hay-it-was-so-very-personal/> [accessed 5th September 2022]

[125] Deborah Hay, *Deborah Hay on her work with the Judson Dance Theater* (2018) <https://www.artforum.com/interviews/deborah-hay-on-her-work-with-the-judson-dance-theater-76538> [accessed 5th September 2022]

*Correspondência Um (2019) with Susanne Mayer. We practiced task-based improvisations focusing on the interplay of mover and camera. We paid particular interest in sensing the emotional feedback we both encountered in the exchange and later discussing this. These conversations led onto other experiments with ways of filming movement and moving with one another as a 'shared practice' rather than a 'filming-movement-practice'.*

35mm colour photograph (Keira Greene) taken of Susanne Mayer walking with her eyes closed in a dance practice studio in Porto, September 2018. Mayer's background is in contemporary dance, and we began to meet regularly between dance studios in Porto and in Lisbon, sharing ideas and experimenting, moving together with and without the camera. In the gaps between practice together we established a form of continuous dialogue in writing and sharing material. The collaboration resulted in the artwork *Correspondência Um* (2019)

○

*The pedagogy of Authentic Movement teaches me to destabilise the hierarchy between subject/performer and cameraperson, a discipline founded by American dancer Janet*

*Adler, whose focus is on the dyadic process between the mover and the witness.*[126] *These two roles, which are often switched within the duration of a class or workshop, share the intention of 'the development of the inner witness'.*[127] *There is an important distinction in this work, that the witness is not filling the role of audience member, nor is the mover performing for the witness.*

35mm B&W photograph (Keira Greene) taken in Tervuren Park Brussels, December 2020. This photograph was taken, trying to locate the place where Chantal Akerman shot the final scene in her film (Portrait d'une jeune fille de la fin des années 60 à Bruxelles, 1994), and in preparation for the test 'walk' with Catherine Massin.

○

*What is expressed by the opening sequence, with images and audio from two different shoots with Catherine Massin, intercut with the image of the fojo do lobo, is formally complex, a collage of fragments. Excerpts of our conversation are overlaid with repetitions of words such as wolf, desire, devour, that rise to the surface. Sentences are*

[126] In practice, two individuals make a decision about who will be the mover and who will be the witness. The mover then closes their eyes and moves out into the room, whilst the witness takes up a comfortable unmoving position from where they will watch, or 'track' the mover.
[127] Janet Adler, *Offering from the Conscious Body* (Vermont: Inner Traditions, 2002), p. xvi.

*intentionally incoherent so that a new coherence develops, one that is about feelings, textures and transformations.*

○

*In the opening sequence of The Hide, where the two pairs of feet walk in time in matching shoes, a conversation is heard, one voice is mine and the other Catherine Massin, a Jungian psychotherapist. The conversation loosely weaves psychoanalysis, wolves, and deviations into our own lives. This scene had undergone two iterations that overlap in the edit. The first iteration took place in Tervuren Park, Brussels. We were walking at the site of the closing shot from Chantal Akerman's Portrait d'une jeune fille de la fin des années 60 á Bruxelles (1994). In Akerman's film, two young women walk towards the camera at sunrise. The soundtrack for the scene with Catherine Massin originates from this location. As we walked and talked about the behaviour of humans and wolves, I documented our voices using lapel microphones. The close recording has residual traces of Tervuren Park, such as the dynamic of the weather and a grounds person with a leaf-blower.*

Digital photograph (Keira Greene) taken in my studio (2021) of the tree bark used in the rehearsals with Louise Tanoto as a stand in for the Gola do Lobo.
35mm photograph (Keira Greene) of a Gola do Lobo photographed at the Eco Museum Barroso, Montalegre, Portugal, November 2021.

○

*I developed the score with dancer Louise Tanoto with a focus on the Gola do Lobo or wolf's oesophagus, an object used in the curative practice of ridding livestock of the disease lobagueira. Water is passed through a wolf's oesophagus to cure livestock*

*believed to have been touched by the 'wolf's noxious breath'.*[128] *I came to know what a Gola do Lobo is through spending time and informally interviewing shepherd Glória Alves Alfonso, as seen in the artwork. Given the sentimental and cultural value of this rare object, understandably Alves Alfonso would not want it to leave her house. As a substitute Tanoto and I practiced with a tubular piece of tree bark to work with the somatic feedback of an object with similar scale and texture. We developed a system of filming centred on the complexity of the absent-presence of the Gola do Lobo. Louise Tanoto and I watched the scene with shepherd Glória Alves Alfono in The Hide, so that she was able to respond without the Gola do Lobo and instead with the tree bark. We established five-minute performances to camera, improvised around cues that we had arrived at together. In the final shots Tanoto moves without any physical object, rather she is working with the sensation of the phantom object(s) and her somatic feedback relative to her interpretation.*

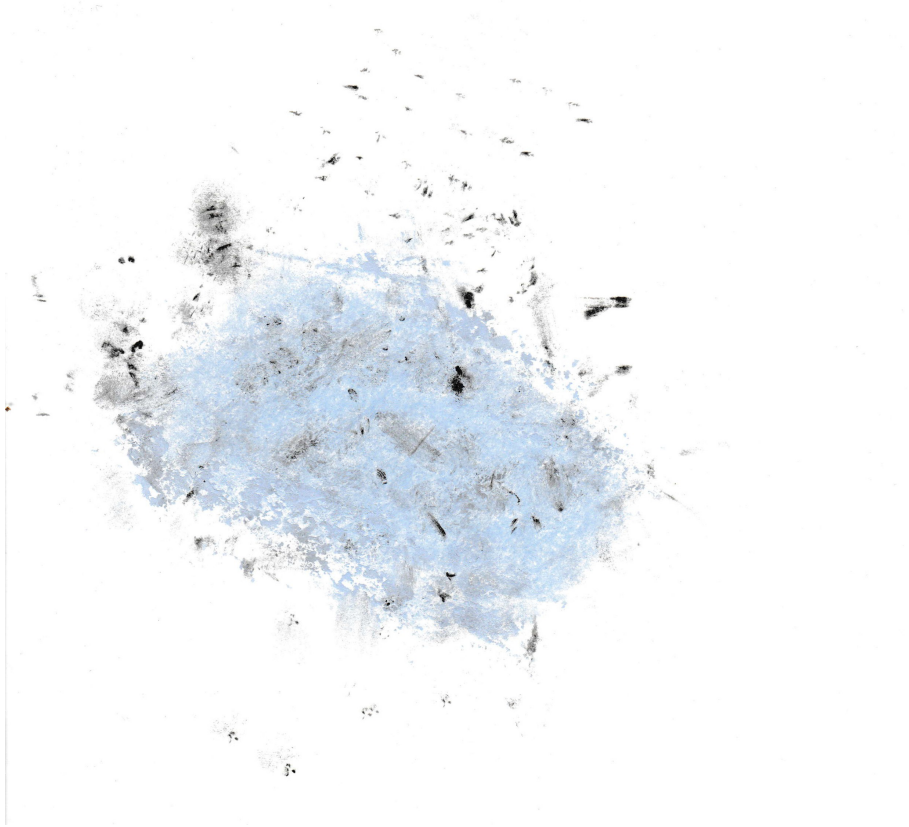
○

*Attending classes in Skinner Release Technique I learnt about the 'watchful state', a term used by the late American dancer Joan Skinner. I was interested to apply the 'watchful state' to a moving image practice with performers and with the camera. Lizzy Le Quesne writes,*

> *As classes progress, students practise increasingly with eyes open while tuning in to inner space, blending inner and outer awareness in a primal, ultra-present and engaged being in the space. Moving in 'the watchful state' we blur the boundary between self and environment, approach one another delicately causing minimal disturbance and giving maximal attention […] to give others due space as we take our own.*[129]

[128] Francisco Álvares, 'Cultural Dimension of Wolves in the Iberian Peninsula', Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science. Research October 14 (2011).

[129] Lizzy Le Quesne, 'Learning to dance in the twenty-first century: Skinner Releasing Technique as technology of becoming, within a new materialist frame.' *Journal of Dance & Somatic Practices*. Volume 10 Number 1 (2018), 79-93 (p. 90).



Chalk and charcoal drawing (Keira Greene) created in a Skinner Release Workshop as feedback from movement, 2019.

○

*A CGI animated image of a Gola do Lobo became the solution to including a representation of the wolf's body part in the film. It is superimposed onto the absent space where Tanoto imagines it to be. The CGI wolfs oesophagus offers another register that is out of step with the moments in the film that edge closer to documentary (the conversation with Glória Alves Alfonso). The contemporary technology is a stark contrast to the real Gola do Lobo that is hundreds of years old and belongs to a ritual passed on through matrilineal succession, 'something that connects generations, in a material object'.*[130] *The inclusion of the CGI Gola do Lobo offers the work an apparent disjunct of temporalities which became a productive moment in developing the work.*

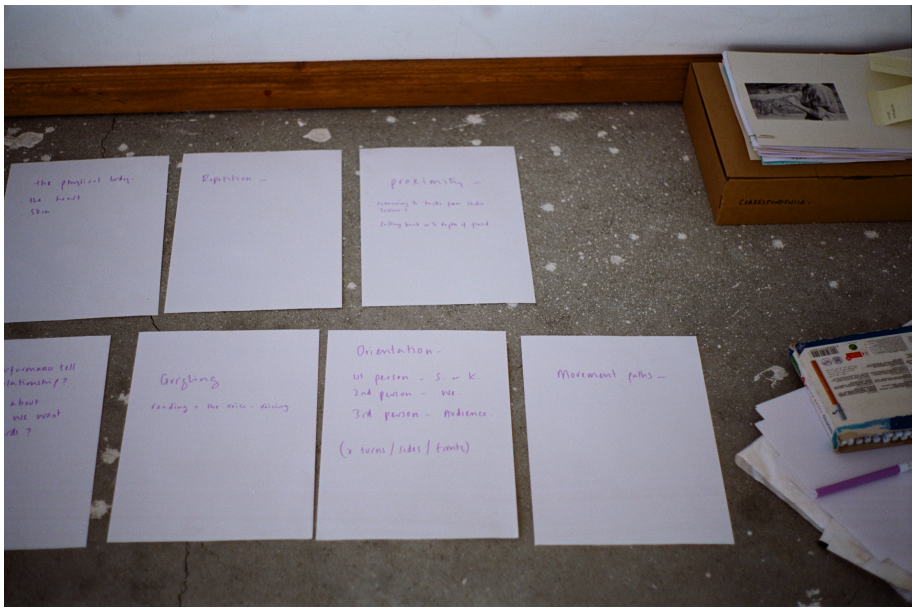
[130] Chiara Zamboni, 'Cristina Campo and Iranian Mysticism' in *Cristina Campo: Translation / Commentary,* ed. by Andrea di Serego Alighieri and Nicola Masciandaro, (New York: Open Humanities Press, 2021), p.148.

iPhone photograph (Keira Greene) taken in my studio (2021), I attempted to make a 3D scan of a piece of wood, as a way to think though producing a 3D scan of a Gola do Lobo in Portugal. Eventually I abandoned that idea as it was too compromised due to requiring much more advanced technology and very controlled conditions, coupled with that fact that having direct access to the Gola do Lobo was impossible, taking the object outside of Gloria's home was not something I would have asked to do. Therefore, I commissioned the visual effects artist Rose Goddard to model a CGI Gola do Lobo. which appears in the sequence with Louise Tanoto's performance in *The Hide*.

○

*Standing behind the camera has been informed by another movement system, in 2019 I attended an intensive workshop with Susan Klein focusing on posture, slowly building up to walking. The intention was to move beyond habitual patterns, to use 'the bodies mind, rather than the mind's mind'.*[131] *The emphasis was on 'grounding' and alignment, function over form, and Klein spoke of letting go of old ideas that are held in the body to instead embrace confusion (or counterintuition), as it opens a space in which anything can happen. Klein Technique™ offers my practice a mental checklist as to how to hold the body or stand behind the camera with a heightened awareness. Standing still whilst being ready and able to move at any given moment, and ways in which to be adaptive and organise for a more responsive approach.*

[131] Susan Klein repeated this statement a number of times during the week-long workshop.




35mm colour photograph (Keira Greene) taken of my studio floor, December 2019. Notes on sheets of paper, thinking through techniques for collaborating with dance artists, including warm-up exercises such as 'gurgling' –which I learnt through a movement workshop with Catherine Annis, can stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system.

○

*In The Hide, one scene depicts Patricia Gíl driving; Gíl looks at the road, she looks at me, I/the camera look at her, I/the camera look beyond her out of the window. These lines of sight are also 'lines of action' (following Halprin), and they form a conversation about our work, and us as individuals. I choose to frame this communication in place of dialogue. Throughout the process of The Hide, I practice making room for contingency, to frame what is happening if it is given a chance to reveal itself.*

○

*The Hide emphasises engaging participants to collaborate in a task yet resisting unnecessary structure. With Patricia Gíl, I wanted to accompany her in the work that she would ordinarily undertake alone without a witness. With both Gíl and Catherine Massin (Jungian psychoanalyst), I chose to begin the exchange with us recording a conversation, prioritising audio over moving image. In the first exchange with Massin, we both chose*

*quotations around the theme of archetypes.*[132] *We read and recorded these excerpts, reading aloud to one another as we walked in the park. These quotations were the departure point for the conversation that followed.*

○

*We are developing a conversation; it is not predetermined. Catherine Massin also has a background in dance which means we can discuss somatic awareness and task-based improvisation easily. We share an interest about attention to detail in one's own (somatic) experience. We experiment using this attention to embodied feedback as we walk in step, there is a subtlety as to who is leading who and how it shifts. There is a minor dance with power and control and an awareness of how this too is material to work with. Catherine reveals aspects of the psychoanalytic process to me as we work together, some of this is captured in the conversation we record. Our specific roles in this collaboration are important, and Catherine is considerate of our boundaries in this (collaborative) relationship, she steers this through her (discipline specific) knowledge. I have approached her to discuss wolves and predation as themes which might occur in her psychoanalytic work (I have not approached her as a client). I am interested in whether these methods of somatic inquiry and task-based improvisation, whilst stating our roles explicitly (and reminding ourselves as such), could have a potential benefit in terms of improved encounters in collaborative work, that might inform or contribute to heightened ethical standards. In turn, I am interested in how the impact of collaborative processes, alert to ethical potentials, might also transform, or be evident in the resulting artwork(s).*

○

*What I wanted to achieve was that the subject is not performing for the camera, but rather that there is an exchange.*

[132] Some examples include: 'Love of the Wolf' in *Stigmata*, Helene Cixous, (London: Routledge, 1998); *The Old Man and the Wolves,* Julia Kristeva (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); 'One or Several Wolves' in *A Thousand Plateaus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia, Gilles Deleuze and Felix* Guattari, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987); 'That Winter the Wolf Came' in *That Winter the Wolf Came,* Juliana Spahr, (Oakland: Commune Editions, 2015), 'The Wolf Man' in *The Wolf Man and Other Cases,* (London: Penguin Modern Classics, 2002).

35mm colour photograph (Keira Greene) taken of Susanne Mayer in a dance practice studio in Lisbon, June 2019. The collaboration resulted in the artwork *Correspondência Um* (2019)

○

*During The Hide when I work alone, I am mostly conducting site visits, I travel with a camera and the desire to record unexpected moments. I am looking through the lens (at the outer landscape) with an awareness that this is dependent on my internal response to the images that I see. With most attempts the given situation doesn't result in recording an image, but I am increasingly aware that this non-capture also supports my practice, and it contributes to making the film. However, in situations that involve working with other participants I take a different approach, these situations are planned, and I develop structures to work within. Before we begin any filmmaking, we will have discussed the conditions of the shoot and the composition of the shot in depth, and I capture our interactions in the manner we have agreed upon.*

○

*Further reading on artist Sharon Lockhart shows similarly the importance of sustained relationships. Writer Eva Diaz highlights that Lockhart's work demonstrates the building of deep relationships, which also have an unknown impact on the outcomes for her collaborators. This approach indicates the socially transformative nature,*

*through personal growth and community building, that Lockhart's practice engenders, 'The depth of those relationships in turn sketch new contours of what the projects can become.'*[133]

○

*The method needs to be open to ways to process ideas; to simultaneously move forward with the production and to build relationships.*

35mm colour photograph (Keira Greene) taken of Patricia Gíl collecting video footage of wolves from camera traps which she places in the wolves' habitat. Northern Portugal, October 2020.

○

*The intention is always to reach enough insight so as to continue in a confident and unguarded exchange, without being specialists in one another's field.*

○

*The Hide was not produced with a predetermined structure; rather I wanted the*

[133] Eva Diaz, *A Fierce Education*, (2021) <https://stories.artbma.org/a-fierce-education/> [accessed: 5 September 2022]

*overarching research into task-based improvisation and somatic inquiry to exert influence on and shape the artwork.*

○

*Dancer Lisa Nelson's Tuning Scores have created a focus in my practice on/with the senses, isolating them one by one, I share in Nelson's specific interest in visual perception to initiate movement. The Tuning Scores invite the mover to become interested in something in the environment and move in response, keeping an intent gaze on this point of interest before determinedly choosing another. The Tuning Scores can be applied to the context of moving image and to both sides of the camera. The eyes are an extension of the body and so is the gaze; therefore, it is embodied and guided by personal experience.*

○

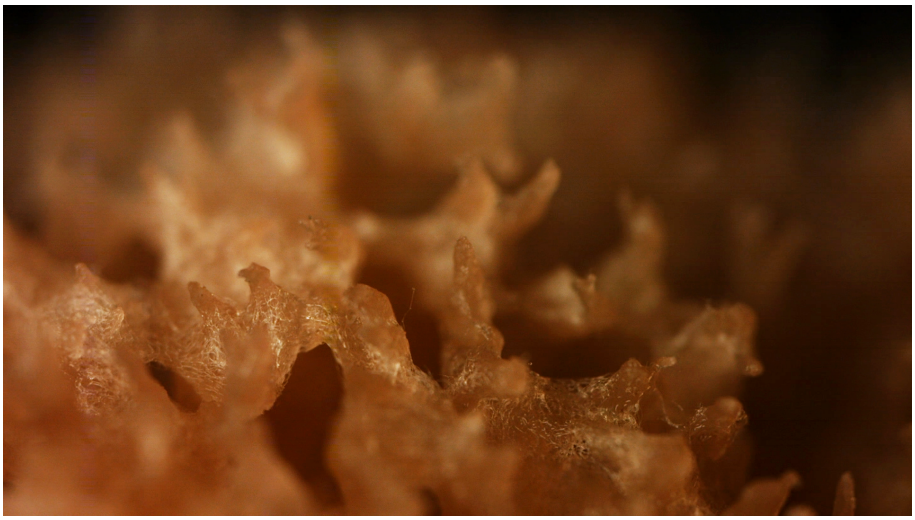
*The outcome of numerous informal conversations over a four-year period appear in shortened form (dialogue and performance) evoking the complexity of these relationships; intimacy, intensity, separation (outside of their disciplinary context), and responsibility, these qualities are synthesised within the work.*

○

*I want to allow the artwork itself to produce physiological and non-verbal experience, rather than to illustrate embodied states.*

○

*I work in a solitary way in the studio, enabling reflection during the production and the editing process.*



HD Video, still image (Keira Greene) taken from a studio shoot of a wet sponge unfurling, shot with a macro lens – this footage was never used in any final artworks. November 2020.

○

*Through collage, there is a proliferation of meaning within the artwork and a sense of disorientation and volatility analogous to somatic inquiry.*

○

*Carl Jungs' theory of a' complex' —*

*In the introduction to Gaston Bachelard's book Lautréamont, Joanne H. Stroud uses the following metaphor to describe Carl Jungs' idea of a complex:*

> *a psychic knot that most likely will never be loosened or only with a great deal of effort*

*A knot, any knot, is the material evidence of the events that informed it. Jung's theory is that a complex is an entanglement of both personal and impersonal associations that a person might have with specific events or situations. "The (cause) of a complex usually has to do with a trauma, an emotional shock that splits the psyche into compartments."*[134] *The complex is the affective tone, the resultant feelings of the knot,*

[134] Joanne Stroud, Foreword in Gaston Bachelard's Lautréamont. (Dallas, Texas: The Pegasus Foundation, 1986)

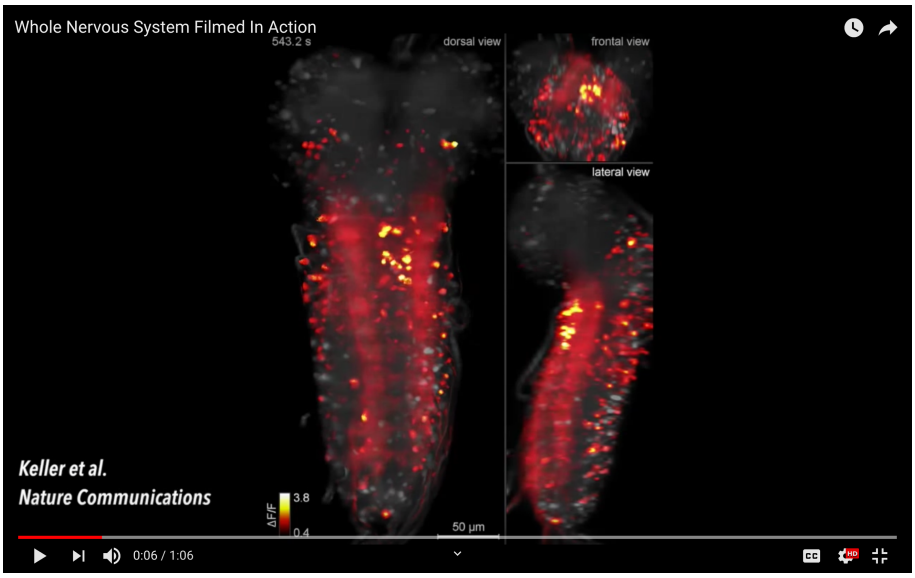
*where conscious and unconscious, personal and impersonal are bound together. Stroud's choice 'to loosen' rather than to 'undo' the knot suggests an inquiry into the psychic entanglement rather than the need for resolution.*

○

*The Hide composes the salient moments of the filmmaking process and its open score. By bringing together different textures, registers, and genres, sensual and conceptual overlaps begin to happen, akin to improvisation. Contingent events (material and emotional) present themselves during the edit and sometimes I allow myself to be guided by these to change the course of my decision-making. Put another way, to resist the urge to immediately control the material and instead to follow complexities of embodied feedback. This is comparable to the sensation of automatic-self-movement in an improvisation class; the body attends to cues in the environment (light, heat, sound, other people, etc.) and responds intuitively. This awareness, to witness oneself simultaneously thinking and feeling, has been learned through attending to somatic movement practices.*

> *We are constantly recomposing our body and our attention in response to the environment, to things known and unknown. This inner dance is a most basic improvisation—reading and responding to the scripts of the environment. It's our body's dialogue with our experience.*[135]

[135] Lisa Nelson, 'Before your eyes. Seeds of a Dance Practice.' *Contact Quarterly*, Vol. 29 No. 1 (2004), 20-26. (p.2).




Screengrab taken from a video that represents the human nervous system 'in action' – I was thinking about how to represent the subtleties of nervous system responses with dance artists, and this was a helpful tool to think through the discrepancy of interior and exterior 'action'.

○

*I refer again to the opening sequence in The Hide in which darkness, daybreak, rural, urban, human, animal, French, English, time sped up (the image) and slowed down (the audio), playback forwards and reversed (both sound and image), are happening simultaneously and are overlapped. Perhaps the sensations, emotions and thoughts experienced by this simultaneity, stimulate emotion, memory and imagination for the viewer, to extend the embodied experience of thinking and feeling further*

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Moving Image Artwork

*Yvonne Rainer, Trio A,* Sally Banes, 1978, 16 mm and video
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*Karmel Dachau*, Andrea Büttner, 2019, HD video

*The Glass Note*, Mary Helena Clark, 2018, HD video

*On a Warm Day in July*, Manon de Boer, 2015, 16 mm and HD video

*From Nothing to Something to Something Else*, Manon de Boer, 2018, 16 mm and HD video

*Dissonant,* Manon de Boer, 2010, 16 mm and HD video

*Nettlecombe,* Sarah Dobai, 2008, video

*Recovery,* Kevin Jerome Everson, 2019, 16 mm and HD video

*Three Grizzlies*, Simone Forti, 1974, Vídeo (Betacam Digital and DVD)

*Solo No. 1*, Simone Forti, 1974, Vídeo (Betacam Digital and DVD)

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*Lunch Break*, Sharon Lockhart, 2008, 16 mm and HD video

*Rudzienko,* Sharon Lockhart, 2016, 16 mm and HD video

*WATER MOTOR,* Babette Mangolte, 1978, 16 mm and video
Available to watch at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3FALHd5Viz4>

*Why Are You Angry?* Rosalind Nashashbi and Lucy Skaer, 2017, 16 mm

*Jump Cut*, Lisa Nelson, 1979, digital conversion from 1/2" reel to reel

*Conversation Between Blacklisted Construction Workers,* Lucy Parker, 2015, HD video

*BRIDGIT,* Charlotte Prodger, 2016, HD video

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*Wine & Spirits*, Rachel Reupke, 2013, HD video

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# APPENDICES

The Appendices includes an account of the ethical approaches and considerations that underpin all the interview preparation and processes in *The Hide*, in support of reference to these interviews in 'Part 3 Method'. It also includes a chronological list of all referenced artworks in 'Part 2 Context' and where possible, images of those artworks.

The Appendices includes additional creative materials not explicitly related to the method of *The Hide*, such as the synopsis of an earlier artwork *Grain* (2016) and a creative text written alongside the production of *The Hide* titled *Piscina*, which explores related, significant thematic concerns of predation and myth. These are included to provide knowledge of the wider artistic practice that supports and enables the work of *The Hide*.

# APPENDIX 1

## Ethical considerations that underpin interview preparation and processes

*The Hide* features excerpts from two longer interviews, the first is with psychoanalyst Catherine Massin and the second with biologist Patricia Gíl.[136] These interviews were devised as informal conversations, guided by my questions and the participants response.

The following ethical framework for interviews was undertaken:[137]

1. Provide participants with information about the nature of the project and clearly state their involvement:

Information was sent to the participants in an introductory email, in which I outlined the project and gave a working synopsis of the film. During initial correspondence I explained how I would like the participants to be involved, as subjects within the artwork *The Hide*.

What followed was a meeting in person, to get to know one another better, which led on to a recorded conversation (capturing audio only). In both instances, with Massin and Gíl, the recorded conversation happened early on in our relationship. My intention was that a quality of 'getting to know one another', an inquisitiveness, would be evident in the recording.[138]

2. Ask open-ended questions rather than guided questions:

Prior to recording the conversations with the participants, I drafted questions and sent these to the participants ahead of time. The nature of the questions was centered on characteristics of the wolf that would serve to open out dialogue, rather than those which required an explicit answer.[139]

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[136] This order follows their sequential appearance within the film, whereas the interview with Patricia Gíl took place in October 2019 and the interview with Catherine Massin in November 2020.
[137] This approach was arrived at as a model of good practice, following discussion and review with the Faculty Research Ethics Lead for the School of Research at Kingston University.
[138] Some comparisons can be made with the methods artist Sharon Lockhart employs to depict encounters with participants in her work. Some of these encounters are born out of workshops, a process Lockhart uses (in part) to enable naturalised performance. See p.40 of this document for more about Sharon Lockhart's process.
[139] With Catherine Massin we also shared between us quotations from literature we had both read around the subject of wolves, specifically their symbolism within fiction and psychoanalysis. See p.74 of this document for more about this process.

3. Give the participants authorship of their own story/experience and make room for their perspectives

In both instances I was particularly interested in the ways in which wolves intersected with the two women's work and their direct or indirect experience (through their distinct professions) with the animal. In different ways, these conversations led to personal accounts of wolves, that varied from symbolic (Massin) to actual (Gíl).

In *The Hide* we do not hear my questions, however I have chosen dialogue where there is a palpable sense of the participants response to a question.[140] What communicates, therefore, is the participants authorship of their personal experiences with wolves.[141] In this way, the initial interview questions act as a guide rather than a script, the questions are a container for improvisation and enable deviation in our conversation.

4. Agree on the content of the conversation to be used in *The Hide*:

Following on from the recorded conversation, and prior to working with the material in the edit, the conversation was transcribed (by a professional service) and shared again with the participant. At this point there was the opportunity for the participant to mark and therefore dispense with any of the transcription and recording before I began to work with it. The transcriptions were also an invaluable way for me to examine carefully the content of the discussion, and to consider the meaning in relation to the wider work.[142]

[140] I do this through working with shifts in the intonation of a response, where a question might stimulate an idea or a memory.
[141] What is important in the artwork is that the wolf is understood through the embodiment of participants experience(s).
[142] With both recordings (Massin and Gíl), the process of testing excerpts of the conversations within the edit was extensive, to reach a balance between coherence, accessibility and open-endedness.

APPENDIX 2

**Grain**

Keira Greene

2016

Duration: 9 mins |36 seconds

Colour, Sound: Stereo

Ratio: 16:9

Original Format: HD Video

**Grain** (2016) is a portrait of Anna Halprin's Mountain Home Studio built by her husband and environmental architect Lawrence Halprin (1916-2009). A voiceover from Daria Halprin, their daughter, and a dancer, actor, and teacher herself, relates an intimate family history. Daria gives tender impressions of her parents, detailing their individual perspectives on social experience, the natural environment, process, design, and movement. The images move from the landscape to the dance deck, a structure intended to have minimal impact on the environment, built in symbiosis with the mountain and with Anna and the Halprin family, as well as with a wider community of dancers and artists.

APPENDIX 3

Chronological list of Artworks and Performances referenced in this document:

| YEAR | ARTWORK | ARTIST | PAGE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2019 | Karmel Bachau | Andrea Büttner | 45 |
| 2019 | Recovery | Kevin Jerome Everson | 48 |
| 2019 | Saf05 | Charlotte Prodger | 74 |
| 2019 | Correspondencia Um | Keira Greene | 87 |
| 2018 | Bridgit | Charlotte Prodger | 73 |
| 2017 | Why Are You So Angry | Rosalind Nashashibi, Lucy Skaer | 73 |
| 2016 | Rudzienko | Sharon Lockhart | 48 |
| 2016 | Grain | Keira Greene | 57 |
| 2013 | Wine And Spirits | Rachel Reupke | 47 |
| 2012 | Bronx Gothic | Okwui Okpokwasili | 68 |
| 2010 | Dissonant | Manon De Boer | 50 |
| 2008 | Nettlecombe | Sarah Dobai | 46 |
| 1979 | Jump Cut | Lisa Nelson | 53 |
| 1978 | Water Motor | Babette Mangolte | 51 |
| 1976 | Line Up | Trisha Brown | 53 |
| 1974 | Three Grizzlies | Simone Forti | 63 |
| 1974 | Solo No 1 | Simone Forti | 63 |
| 1968 | Ceremony Of Us | Anna Halprin | 59 |
| 1966 | Trio A | Yvonne Rainer | 61 |

APPENDIX 4

Images of referenced Artworks and Performances:

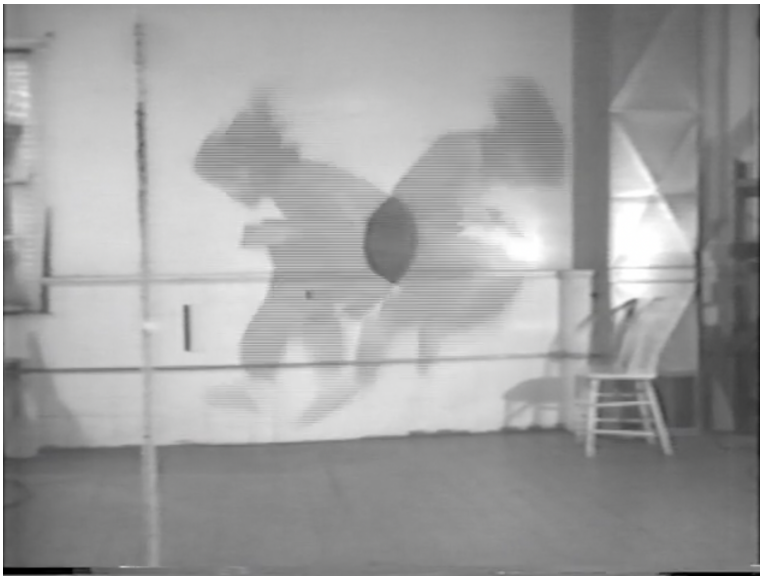
Andrea Büttner, *Karmel Dachau*, 2019, HD video, colour, sound [German with English subtitles] 32.25 minutes, [still]. Courtesy the artist and Hollybush Gardens, London.
Referenced on page 39.

Sarah Dobai, *Nettlecombe*, 2008, 16mm film projection transferred to digital video, 14:9, stereo, loop/ 7minutes 25 sec. Courtesy the artist & Film London.
Referenced on page 40.

Rachel Reupke, *Wine & Spirits*, 2013, HD video, Colour, Silent, 20mins. Courtesy of the artist and LUX, London.
Referenced on page 40

Sharon Lockhart, *Rudzienko*, 2016, HD video (color/sound), 52 minutes. Courtesy the artist, neugerriemschneider, Berlin, and Gladstone Gallery.
Referenced on page 41

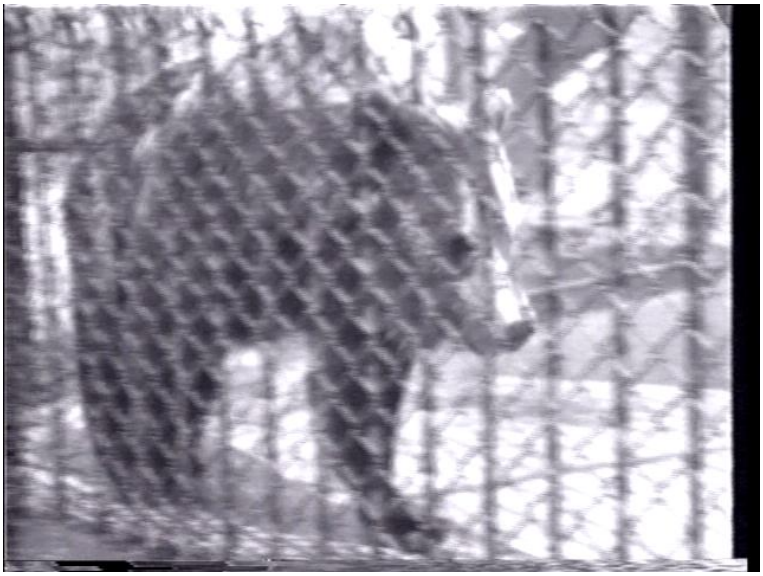
Manon de Boer, *Dissonant*, 2010, 16mm installation/video, color, 4:3, stereo, loop/11 minutes, [still]. Courtesy the artist, Jan Mot gallery and August Orts, Brussels.
Referenced on page 43



Lisa Nelson, *Jump Cut*, 1979, digital conversion from 1/2" reel to reel, edited on Sony 8650s, black and white, sound. 03’04”. Courtesy the artist.
Referenced on page 46

Rehearsal *Ceremony of Us*, Anna Halprin. circa 1960s. Anna Halprin Papers, The Elyse Eng Dance Collection, Museum of Performance + Design.
Referenced on page 52

Yvonne Rainer, *Trio A*, 1978. Film, B&W, Silent, 10:30. Image copyright of the artist, courtesy of Video Data Bank, School of the Art Institute of Chicago.
Referenced on page 54



Simone Forti, *Three Grizzlies*, 1974, Vídeo (Betacam Digital and DVD), black and white, sound [English] 16'40" [still]. Courtesy the artist and Photographic Archives. Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid.
Referenced on page 56

Simone Forti, *Solo No. 1*, 1974, Vídeo (Betacam Digital and DVD), black and white, sound [English] 16'40" [still]. Courtesy the artist and Photographic Archives. Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid.
Referenced on page 55

Charlotte Prodger, *BRIDGIT*, 2016, single-channel video, 32 minutes (still). Courtesy the artist and Hollybush Gardens, London.
Referenced on page 65

Rosalind Nashashbi and Lucy Skaer, *Why Are You Angry?*, 2017, 16mm film, Colour/B&W, Stereo, 18mins. Courtesy of the artist and LUX, London.
Referenced on page 65

Charlotte Prodger, *SaF05*, 2019, single-channel video, 39 minutes (still). Courtesy the artist and Hollybush Gardens, London.
Referenced on page 66

Keira Greene, *Correspondencia Um,* 2019, single-channel video, 6 minutes (still). Courtesy the artist.
Referenced on page 95

# APPENDIX 5

***Piscina***

My father is a decorative painter and when I was eight, he went to work in Spain. It was the 1980s and gaudy *trompe l'oeil* was much in demand on the Costa del Sol. This distance enabled my parents' separation and I transitioned to having two homes, spending long stretches in Andalucía in southern Spain, before returning for term time in England.

Salto del Agua, or 'Waterfall', was the name of our neighbourhood where I played with my friends, copying their language, or else, losing myself in the baroque grounds of my father's wealthy clients. In the evenings we were always out, meaning outside, with a group of his friends, the smell of heat rising off everything, and with the sense of a never-ending party. People were tactile, I was shy, but nonetheless enjoyed being caught off guard by strangers.

At that time my mother, who is a gardener but also a painter, eagerly began her arts education in the UK. Because she was a single mum, she did most of her painting at home in our kitchen where she dressed in a dark-blue boiler suit and often worked on multiple large-scale oil paintings at a time. The house was creative and chaotic, and I recall eating dinner flanked by these paintings, two of which I remember distinctly. The first was Mary Magdalene washing Jesus' feet with her tears. In this case it was the feet of my mother's then-boyfriend with the hair of some unknown Mary draped over them. The other was a rendition of Titian's *The Death of Actaeon* (c.1576) in which the Roman goddess Diana bolts across the canvas in pursuit of a stag. In her portrayal there was no Actaeon as stag, so all I knew of the story was a woman running and armed.

Since then, I've been giving 'the myth of Artemis' the wrong name. Now I know that the root of both paintings, my mother's and Titian's, stem from the story of Actaeon in the epic *Metamorphoses* by Ovid. In Ovid's myth, the divine figure Diana punishes the mortal Actaeon by transforming him into a stag when he stumbles across her bathing.

I am reading Actaeon, it is 2020. I am gripped by the woman Diana – or Artemis in the Greek tradition – and by questions about why she transfigures a man into a stag, the stag who my mother left out, and who is mercilessly torn to pieces by his own hounds. Does Ovid intend some moral counsel by Diana's abrupt act of violence, where she upends the power dynamic between woman, man and stag

To follow Diana is difficult, she is pliable but with limited overall movement. For example, in Titian's painting *The Death of Actaeon*, she is depicted running through the forest, perhaps chasing or else fleeing. But in Ovid's poem Diana does not run, she is embedded in a landscape that morphs around her, in which a proscenium arch of plants and rock seems to grow about and confine her.

Below the words that appear in italics belong to Ovid:

It happens on a mountain sometime after noon. Diana is here, naked with tied-back hair. The days heat has created a mirage. Even Diana's name is susceptible. At times she is also 'an Artemis'[143].

I call her Artemis from the Greek tradition; the roots are in 'artomos' meaning butcher. She is Artemis, since this is a grave tale about hunting.

She is found bathing in a *widening* pool in the company of friends. We know nothing of the depth of the pool. We hear none of the women's conversations.

Elsewhere, there is a bloodbath. Actaeon is a young hunter. He stands with his hunting party. The mountain is *stained with the carnage of hounded beasts.* Already the story signals betrayal.

Actaeon leaves the party to go walking; his name is intact. He comes across Artemis as if by accident.

Artemis's friends are washing her *virginal limbs*[144]. There is confidence between the bathers.

Sacred trees enclose their pool, the group are outlaws.

It is unclear for how long Actaeon is watching, his look isn't described either. Artemis is framed by an arch of calcified rock and *anger* spreads through the tissues of her entire body.

What does Actaeon glean from Artemis's dripping hand? Artemis is an immortal god and he a young buck of a man.

Artemis or Diana, divine as she may be, blushes. Then she uses a splash of water to transform the man into a stag, rendering him speechless.

He flees and is set upon by his own hounds who maul him to death.

But let's return to when Artemis and the nymphs gathered in *the clear, clean water*. Artemis, a virtuoso guard is *weary* from work and takes a bath.

Ovid, our narrator, has us brushing through the ferns, placing the reader right there alongside Actaeon. This is apparent when Artemis turns around. She does not so much as rotate, as she is wrung.

[143] In Ovid's *Metamorphoses* she is known as Diana.
[144] She protects wild animals and virgins. She is a guard and not a hunter.

Artemis is uncoupled from the Elysian scene and warps towards us. She is *stood with her front turned sideways* looking *over her shoulder.* This uncomfortable move adjusts the composition and we become aware of 'our' privileged 'front'.

The reorientation distorts her, and it changes her temperament, she speaks as if from outside herself,

*Now you may tell the story of seeing Diana naked*

*If storytelling is in your power!*

What follows is a hard cut to Actaeon bounding through the forest of his own volition. One by one, Actaeon's dogs enter, each one named before brutally *burying their noses inside his flesh.*

But what about the bathers and their architecture? They are described within *a secret corner* where *nature has used her talent to imitate art: she has moulded the living rock to form the shape of a rugged arch.*

Where do I know her from, this woman, Diana or Artemis?

The narrative jumps abruptly between scenes, each reaching a dramatic peak before relocating us in Ovid's landscape. I move across each scene and orient back to Artemis, compelled by her detachment. She is conspicuously volatile, and her volatility is heightened because she is evasive, or rather, because we are given so little information about her. As a god and a hunter, she might take remorseless pleasure in acts of aestheticized violence like this one. But Ovid has her blushing and alludes to her having human-like and 'feminine' passions. Hereinafter how we interpret Artemis's red cheeks too will effectively transform her.

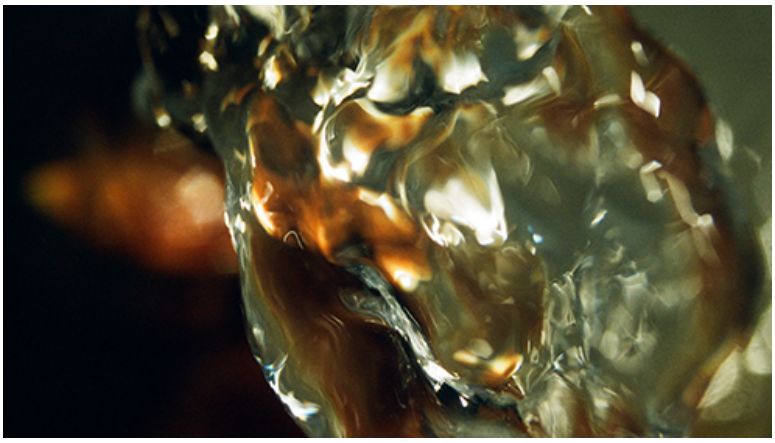
Given the scene's apparent power dynamic – one figure male and clothed, the other female and naked – it would be sound to read Artemis ensnared by misogynistic order: Actaeon *saunters* into the *unfamiliar* glade and the women react in *horror* with *re-echoing screams*. Since Artemis cannot defend herself with her weapon, she *used what she could* and splashes him with *revengeful drops* of water.

However, rather than through a prism of shame, I choose to understand Artemis's response in terms of arousal, an incitement to emotion; self-conscious as in, alert to her environment. The intrusion engages her defensive nervous system commonly known as fight-or-flight. Her heart rate increases, and her blood pressure is higher, causing her *crimson glow*.

In this piercing moment, where her autonomy is under threat, she intuits in an instant that there is a possibility for redemption. Metamorphosis happens as a cut in the timeline, the flash of oblivion in which narrative is irreversibly reconfigured.

In an act of aroused refusal, she rejects the responsibility of Actaeon's desire. The catalyst for her wilful act is perhaps informed by her contradictory godly duties; Diana or Artemis was understood to be the god of wild animals, hunting, chastity and childbirth.

What ultimately transpires is that Artemis sends Actaeon back into the landscape, formerly *his* landscape where he had roamed freely, but now he returns without language and so this is a fable that signals responsibility.



I invited Artemis back.

My mother says she has the painting rolled up somewhere, she has moved house half a dozen times since she left our 'family home'. It was called 'Riverside', a 1930's semi-detached house flanked by a main road and a river. When the bathroom walls had begun to crack my father came and painted faux marble veins to 'tie them in'.

In my mother's translation of the Actaeon myth, the form of a woman moved through thick orange and brown paint with a cobalt blue bow cutting across the dense earthy tones. She was bold, filling the frame and moving at speed. Now I too have uprooted her for my work, in the film *The Hide* (in production) dance artist Katye Coe is seen running in the forest in a tracking shot where the camera persistently holds her in frame. It is nighttime and car headlights follow her, but this is her car, we have just seen her get out of it. She falls to all fours, crawls and then rises to her feet and continues running.

For my mother and myself at least, her forward propulsion matters, even if this is a gesture held in stasis as-in painting. In the myth itself her variable and slippery subject position is her most intriguing quality and to keep that in flux has been our familial duty.

Artemis responds to Actaeon's intrusion by spilling water at him, an act of revenge in which her godliness passes through the water and mutates him. Or perhaps it is the liquid and not her gesture that possesses supernatural power, performing an elemental mutation from water to flesh.

To ask whether Artemis has supernatural powers is to wind up in a cul-de-sac, but if we attend closely to her gestures we might find that the drama they incite stirs up within us – the politics of arousal.

A gesture can cause a grievous or emancipatory transformation, for example, the separation of a family, speaking another tongue, becoming animal. Attending to gestures that we re-perform may reveal something of their complexity, hidden in plain sight we may find libidinous shame, wilful vulnerability, the mutability and the muscle memory of previous experience.