DRAWING UPON MULTIPLICITY:
MARK, BODY AND A TRACE OF THOUGHT

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Abstract

This thesis is an investigation into performance-based drawing and its relation to 'multiplicity', as explored through a philosophical tradition of thought. By leading my research through this practice, where I use bodily gesture to engage a mark-system exploring 'the point', I ask how thought in drawing could be imperative to its event (of thinking and making). I examine the proposition that by making physical performance the question of thinking in its event can be critically investigated under a trace that indicates thought as multiplicity.

I argue that 'the point' is a unique, conceptual mark that emphasizes bodily appearance; and that this mark engages physicality through properties of mediation, dislocation and obstruction. These properties are demonstrated throughout my practice as 'post-phenomenological', that is the irreducibility of bodily presence and indexical imprints to 'thought'.

In my practice I construct performances using marks associable with notation, such as periods [.], brackets [( )], or ellipses […]. These notational marks structure the space in which a dislocated form of bodily gesture occurs – as in standing, turning, or pointing – which is mediated by weight and restriction. While my thesis closely examines my practice I look at artists – such as Paul Harrison and John Wood, and Trisha Brown – who explore indexical mark-making, task-based actions and digital video. I therefore examine how I use gesture to investigate a non-representational trace, which challenges drawing through conventions of line-making and embodied movement, or inscription.

Throughout my thesis I examine post-structural debates around 'multiplicity', a philosophical notion of thought posited as a radical question. I evaluate 'multiplicity'

through Alain Badiou's critique of Gilles Deleuze's vitalist proposition (that thought is engaged materially through movement) and thus consider that thought/multiplicity is void-like and obstructive. I articulate Jean-Luc Nancy's notion of 'exscription', that gesture is dislocated from inscriptional marking; this dislocated gesture being unable to engage with thought under phenomenologies of presence. Finally, I consider Maurice Blanchot's argument that the trace as such – as distinct from the imprint of a line – is impossible to both represent *and* materially depict as 'presence'.

My research aims to reconsider conventions of performance-drawing, placing greater emphasis on bodily gesture and a conceptual trace that interrupts embodiments by either imprint or physical presence. Overall, I propose a new approach to mark-making under a post-phenomenological method, which uses a dislocated gesture to investigate an obstructive event of thought or multiplicity.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

PREFACE

Throughout Spring, 2008, I often found myself sitting around my studio. This was an activity of sorts, sitting there, which could either be taken as trivial or strangely intense. I was, however, not 'doing' something, in the sense of making an object or fiddling with materials and waiting for some ideas to come about. What I was doing involved an array of minute and insipid gestures.

I sat in a chair and without moving. Beside me was a table, which I often worked on. I would face either the walls or toward the floor. My right arm (the arm I usually make, write or draw with) rested upon a cleared portion of the table. My hand lay open and facing down. Sometimes I raised my index finger, straightening it until parallel with the table. I did this as well with my middle finger. Sometimes I tapped my index finger once or twice into the table. Then did the same with my middle finger. Then both fingers, alternating, index to middle and vice-versa.

Upon surrounding portions of this table were a collection of papers and cards, many of which were blank or slightly damaged and cut up into odd shapes – scraps from collages I had previously made. Around the far left side of the desk lay an arrangement of fine-tip pens, highlighters, and a few scalpels.

Sometimes, I also made the finger actions differently using a highlighter. I would take one hand sized paper – usually an oddly rectangular-shaped piece – and holding this highlighter in my hand, poised both vertically and somewhat awkwardly in unison, hand-and-highlighter, pointing over the paper. I held this position long enough that when my arm became heavy and slowly lowered the tip of the highlighter would gently land into the paper. I tried this a few times. Afterwards, without really looking at the paper, which bore a few neon dots, I flipped the scrap paper over. I then stood up and, holding very still, would face either the wall or look toward the floor. Eventually, I also, gradually,

turned around and sat back on the chair.

I sat there and for a time that seemed to stretch out into an immeasurable temporal length. I could not call this an intense, extraordinary or strangely exciting *moment*. If I was doing anything, perhaps even nothing; that is, if something took place, here, it was taken up by a quality that, at best, I could say was attenuated and ensconced in a weighty openness that I could hardly contemplate, wonder about or think within.

This was where and how I asked about what I was doing there – Doing what? *That*: sitting, then standing and sitting again, there: where I, the wall, floor, chair, table, paper and the few neon dots appeared. Here and there. That's what happened.

Diagram one – structure of the thesis and its contents.

Performance-Drawing

bodily gestures engaged in mark-making

Multiplicity

event of (thinking) thought,
thinking-as-a-question

Graphic Trace
1.0, 1.2 – figure/imprint of line,
depiction of movement;
phenomenological presence

Vital Multiplicity
Vitalist notion of affective movement;
lines of thought affecting
movements of thinking

M A R K

inscription

P o i n t
1.1, 1.3 – non-figure, Ø
point-of-the-body

(Void) Multiplicity
thinking thought as limit & impasse;
1.3 – endpoint;
2.0 – post-phenomenological body-event

( )

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G   E   S   T   U   R   E

...

(notational)
mark-system

Dislocated Bodily
Gestures:

2.1 – standing,
2.2 – turning,
2.3 – pointing

BODY ●

pointing (imprinted) point
[●]
2.3 – multiple figure;
projected point/bodily shadow;
radical non-presence;

inscription exscription

obstruction

physicality,
restriction,
weight

spacing,
separation

(T R A C E)

Trace (of thought)
3.0 - non-(re)presentational trace;
space as conceptual outside;
space dis-placed of affect – passivity

Diagram two – outline of phenomenological and post-phenomenological methodologies.

Proposed Methodology:
Post-phenomenological
investigating an obstructive thought-event through dislocated, bodily gesture (Chapter: 1.1)

point-of-the-body
point as conceptual non-figure, notion that mediates body as a problem to engage presence, either through indexical marking or proprioception

Dislocated (bodily) gesture
physiological states resulting in restrictions of movement and disengagements with imprints/marks

mark-system based on point and notation
imprinted points [•] made by pointing (2.3), prepared marks [( ) , . , ...] structuring bodily gestures (2.0, 2.1, 2.2)

Physicality
spatial quality of body appearing in its position and posture; irreducibility of physicality to self-presence (2.0 – 2.3)

obstruction
conceptual spacing/separation

videological interval
paradoxical effect of videoing immobile gestures, eg. standing and/or turning; the mediation and obstruction of duration as a virtual affect (2.2)

instant/instantaneity
present time – instant in which gesture is performed/executed; boredom, empty time (2.2)

space/context in which artwork takes place (eg. studio, gallery, street, lecture hall); space with its affect dis-placed – passivity. (3.0)
Outside

Conventional Methodology:
Phenomenological
uses gestural mark-making to investigate a universal essence, or presence of absent agency, which is depicted by a graphic trace (Chapters: 1.0, 1.2)

physical/vital movement
embodiments of agency via kinesthetic engagement with indexical marking – line as figure of graphic-trace indicating an affective movement (figuration), eg. vital multiplicity, phenomenological becoming

depiction
using graphic trace to present phenomenological presence

proprioception
acquired knowledge through kinesthetic engagement – haptic self-touching

immediacy of presence (-as-absence), self-presence – eg. 'body-hoped-for' (2.1);

conceptual figure of 'trace' denotes continuous, self-referential movement, eg. Bergsonian temporality as duration, which has no constitutive separation/mediation (2.2)

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INTRODUCTION – DRAWING UPON AN OPERATION OF THOUGHT

Drawing and Event

Drawing is one of the most fundamental practices in art for thinking through making. In the Italian Renaissance it was regarded as engaging the "first thoughts" [*primi penseri*] of the artist. As we shall see, my interest in working with a contemporary form of drawing comes from how it engages a form of thought that is based upon "practice, investigation, reflection, theorising and experimentation" (Garner, in Garner 2008: 25). These activities provide drawing with a unique philosophical sense and, in turn, enable what I basically wish to ask in this thesis – What is meant by 'thinking' in drawing? Generally, drawing is, for me, a practice that engages an event of thought that is investigated through performance and a mark based on the point.

This introduction will look at my methodological approach to drawing – working with bodily actions, such as pointing or standing, in relation to imprinted points or constructed marks related to periods, brackets, and other kinds of notation. While laying out my practice I will then propose three questions that inform my method and thesis. Basically, these questions are: What kind of mark or imprint can reflect an event specific to performance-based drawing? In which way can physical actions engage in mark-making? What kind of thought, if any, is exercised through this form of conceptual drawing practice? These three questions will guide my thesis. By the end of this introduction I will also provide an outline for how my methodology explores these questions and the relevant discourses I employ in the research made through my practice.

I shall first open with a brief background to show how I arrived at an investigation of thought in drawing. For over a decade I have explored possible crossovers between drawing and performance art. Early on in my university undergraduate education I

studied these areas in conjunction with other disciplines, from painting, video to sculpture. Performance art became a way of actively and interchangeably experimenting with each of these disciplines. Because I was also recreationally and consistently training my body in the gym I was interested in how bodily movements were explored in performance art; not in the sense of exposing or manipulating physical appearance but in terms of movements, which ranged from the rapid and unregulated to the more tensed, precise and, even, immobile.

Drawing, as I learned then, was a unique art-form in that it promoted experimentation with such disciplines *and* a way to re-think the way in which I approached my practice. At the same time I began studying philosophy, mainly as another way of addressing the philosophical questions I was involved in working with in the studio. My interest in drawing then developed not because of its medium – if it even has any definitive form[1] – but through its relation with conceptual art practices. Sol Lewitt, an artist who works with drawing extensively and who I was studying closely at the time, proposes that in conceptual art "the idea becomes a machine that makes the art. This kind of art is not theoretical or illustrative of theories; it is intuitive, it is involved with all types of mental processes" (in Stiles and Selz 1996: 822).

I believe drawing in its contemporary form is conceptual and more philosophical, rather than a cognitive process of intellectualization.[2] The 'idea' is not necessarily given as an image already in the mind – perhaps not even through making. This idea can however be investigated through the activity of drawing by any means, such as performance,

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[1] There are contemporary debates that define 'drawing' as an art-form (in its own right); but, though relevant to my discussion, I am not examining an authentic definition of drawing. If there is a form of drawing that I am interested in it is, as Deanna Petheridge proposes, a practice that has an "irresolute status - neither entirely medium nor message" (in Garner 2008: 37).

[2] I agree with Peter Osborne that conceptual artworks are not intended to illustrate a philosophical idea. "The idea here is the idea *of* a work of art; not a second-order idea *about* what a work of art is," he writes (Osborne, in Bird and Newman 1999: 53). For an examination of the relationship between drawing and philosophy see: Maynard (2005).

sculpture or video.

In my early artworks, such as *Weathered* (2005) (see fig. 1), made four years before I embarked on my doctoral research, I employed performance as a means of exploring the conceptual quality of drawing. Spanning over seven hours, across an entire field of pavement (the parade ground at Chelsea College of Art and Design, over which pedestrians moved and could also view what I was doing then) I traced a single meandering line in white chalk using my entire body. This was a performance that I made around an idea, a certain task defined by a rule: to trace the path that I moved along for as long as I physically could and without crossing over my path. And so I drew this line by moving and pressing the raw, quarried chalk into the pavement. I directly inscribed the path of my movement, the chalk-line following my hands, as much as my head and feet, while turning and twisting throughout. By the seventh hour physical exhaustion set in, thus ending my action.

Part of my performance was recorded on video and photographed; however, I intended that *Weathered* be viewed *during* its action, the event being focused on live process, what happened then and there. The chalk, removed later by rain and street cleaners, ensured that this event would be temporary (see fig. 2). My reflection afterwards was that what I was trying to explore seemed closer to an idea. This was a speculative idea based around a kind of bodily event, that is of tracing my physical actions and a form of line that elided any investigation save the activity itself, where I remained focused on this idea. Indeed, for the duration of my performance I had exhausted my physical capacity to move only to discover that the event related to the line seemed *inexhaustible*.

The line is "what forces us to think," writes Gilles Deleuze (2008: 62). It is "multiplicity's growth, the extension and unfolding of its lines, the production of

something new" (Deleuze 1995: 146). What began to perturb me through the making of works such as *Weathered* was that the conceptual approach I engaged in seemed to associate with, maybe even 'forced', one notion of event. This entailed the production of a multiplicity[3] of lines, a transitive event that involved residually tracing physiological movement, "each stroke a kind of movement afield, kinesis graphically embodied" (Lee, in Butler 1999: 27). The multiplicity of the line in drawing can be tentatively understood as a manner of making marks through physical mobility, kinesis being a mode using subjective experience (sensory stimulus or proprioception) to engage thinking cognitively. Moreover, the graphic imprint left by this action can indicate the movement of the line's multiplicity, the event of thought taking place.

Since making works such as *Weathered* I have become skeptical about drawing through the line, which is why I have changed my approach to drawing. My doubt about this kind of transitive practice does not disqualify its unique intermingling of theory and practice; for while moving, becoming physically exhausted and covered in the chalk deposited on the pavement I was also engaged in thinking, investigating the very idea of multiplicity, in this case being the question of a certain creative movement. Setting up this question requires critically approaching 'the mark' in its primacy, to re-think an imprint and sign able to indicate what we think and make through. This question concerns an event of multiplicity that starts with the line and, as I will propose, can open onto a certain notion of the point.

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[3] In Chapter One, specifically 1.2 and 1.3, I will explore two definitions of 'multiplicity'. Generally, multiplicity is a philosophical term for *thinking* thought in its event – the reconfiguration of a theoretical terrain and correlating mode of practice. In the vitalist definition, thought is a philosophical materialist concept, thought being akin to biological forces that affect spontaneous actions. In the dialectical materialist definition, multiplicity is a non-material and purely conceptual notion of being as such (ontology). Whereas the first definition denotes multiplicity in terms of an evolutionary movement, transforming things as they are, the second definition denotes an idea of being in its event, an idea that has no content, thought being akin to a notion of nothing.

Mark-Making and Agency

Before presenting my main questions in an outline I shall address some important claims that I will return to throughout my thesis. The first claim concerns drawing and performance. It comes from a key exhibition that influenced my practice and research, although since I have come to reconsider. Entitled *Performance Drawings*, this exhibition took place at The Drawing Centre in New York, 2001, and was directed by Catherine de Zehger. In the accompanying catalogue de Zehger states that "as a performative act drawing is the gesture in itself" (2001: 2). 'Performative act' echoes philosopher J. L. Austin's early definition of the performative speech act.[4] When someone in a marriage ceremony, for example, says "I do" the utterance is performative, a statement that is promissory, declaring an action effective without requiring verification. As an act the declaration takes place *immediately*; in other words, the marriage begins and is hopefully maintained for life. There is no required description of how this action is to happen; what happens *happens*. In drawing the performative act implies that the gesture indicates an operation of mark-making. That gesture is proposed succinctly by the artist Avis Newman – whom de Zehger interviews during the key exhibition *The Stage of Drawing*, presented at London's Tate Britain in 2002. Newman states:

> I have always understood drawing to be, in essence, the materialization of a continually mutable process, the movements, rhythms, and partially comprehended ruminations of the mind: the operations of thought.
>
> (in Newman & deZehger 2003: 67)

According to Newman the performative gesture indicates a 'continually mutable process', which seems to suggest that the movements and rhythms of, for example, the hand or arm display the 'operations of thought' within a myriad of imprints. This operation

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[4] See: J. L. Austin, *How To Do Things With Words* (1975).

happens through the materializing process.

Gesturally materializing thought is questionable in that drawing specifies a cognitive essentialism, that all thinking is an operation of the mind and its "internalised activity" (Piaget 2011: 36).[5] The attempt in drawing gesturally, to materialize processes in the mind, is then to present, as Rosalind Krauss states, a "manifestation or recording: like the lines traced on paper by the seismograph or the cardiograph" (1986: 95). These lines are to directly and immediately make manifest "a kind of presence, the direct presence of the artist's inner self... a manifestation of the innermost self, and thus not representation at all" (*Op.cit.*). Krauss concludes, "thought is not a representation but is that which is utterly transparent to the mind, immediate to experience" (1986: 96).

As I shall go on to investigate, there are two problems with endeavoring to materialize operations of thought. Firstly, there is the materialist presumption that marking (whether with chalk, graphite or other drawing materials) manifests and makes transparent "the immediacy of the activity," thereby engaging "thinking within the medium" (Cain 2010: 32). Secondly, there is a methodological problem with how agency is perceived, namely as "the doing-body" as writer Carrie Noland states (2009: 195); a way of making transparent the 'inner self' through a gesture that "generates an experience of the body *as it moves*...(*sic.*)" (*Op.cit.*). The artist uses this experience in the hope of embodying the mutable process, a particular agency that cannot be represented but (in Heideggarian terms) is 'present-at-hand', the creative capacity (of making and thinking) that is in proximity to the artist *while* he/she is in the process of drawing. The performative act, of gesturally drawing and directly marking, then correlates to a phenomenological method: experientially touching and seeing an agency or capacity to

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[5] According to Jean Piaget's psychology of early cognitive development the operation of the mind is fundamentally oriented around the reversibility and circularity of sensory-motor movements, biological forces that are in "a continuous process" yet aiming toward an "advent of equilibrium" (2011: 190). See: Chapter Four, particularly *The Construction of the Object and of Spatial Relations*.

make and think while, in return, "possessing a body that moves and feels" (Noland 2009: 105); what, in other words, is the embodiment of thought-as-pure-presence.[6] Thus, the line as much as movement (from the physical to the metaphysical) underscores an endeavor in maintaining this kind of agency. Here, agency is the capacity to act performatively and, more accurately, *affect* the performer's (inner) body/self to connect with a precarious mode of sensing '*a* body', a more anonymous body definitive of a "kinetic continuum" (Noland 2006: 206).[7]

Performance and Affect

Having introduced the context and debates concerning performative mark-making, where the line is regarded as the imprint made through physical movement, it is important to make clear that my own practice does not directly relate to such drawing discourses.[8] The mark of the point that I use and investigate (in both senses of an imprint and conceptual figure or trace) can arguably have a negative connotation. That is, a point can mediate and divide the line while arresting movement. Such mediating/dividing may be suggested by the notational associations of a period [.], separating parts in a sequence. As I will show there is a notational mark system, based upon marks such as period, ellipsis or bracket, that I use to set up and structure where the performer can be positioned. Here, the notational mark in relation to the point challenges the relevance of

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[6] See also Erin Manning's examination of touch as a mode of "*sensing body in movement*", in Manning (2007).

[7] Terry Eagleton offers a Marxist reading of the endeavor to connect the body with a higher order, conceptual agency, which he says: "signifies a creative turn to the sensuous body, as well as an inscribing of that body with a subtly oppressive law; it represents on the one hand a liberatory concern with concrete particularity, and on the other hand a specious form of universalism" (Eagleton 1990: 9).

[8] Tangentially, I should also state that I am neither attempting to engage a performative style of writing, which explores writing in its broadest possibility while effectively opening up notions of representation and subjectivity, identity and difference. See: Phelan (1997). Performative writing is a materialist and discursive practice that has emerged during the 1990's in North America as a response to post-structuralist explorations of textual theory. Performative writing uses a mode of inscription to investigate writing as an act, namely to produce meaning by "making writing exceed its determinations within structures of absence/presence in order to perform a social function," producing "new modes of subjectivity and even referentiality" (Pollock in Phelan and Lane eds. 1998: 76). In Chapter 1.2 I will briefly cover some of the cross overs this experimental form of inscription has with contemporary, performance-based drawing.

an indexical imprint. It can provide a mark that has no necessary reference to who makes it. Having said that my objective is to ask about the role of physicality in performance-drawing. I turn to debates in performance art and choreography to enable me to set up my methodology, which concerns the body as a problem of engaging agency as presence.

Arguably, the attempt whereby drawing practices endeavor to manifest presence directly, performatively and without mediation, resonates with what Adrian Heathfield explains is "a profound impetus in contemporary art and culture towards the immediate... *a shift to the live*" (2004: 7). The immediate and the live associate with cultural debates that try to "bring close all that is now distant to us" (*Op.cit.*). 'The live' relates closely to a "desire for a condition of unmediated Being, and pure presence," writes Boris Groys (in Heathfield and Jones 2012: 211). A performative act can then be understood as the urge to use bodily action to attain proximity to pure presence, which in purely gestural performance-drawing is an unmediated affect that enables the artist to do the action and, moreover, make the event of multiplicity a tangible encounter.[9] Indeed, the notion of pure presence being materially immanent, physically or in life as such, is problematic. Here, I agree with Heathfield who observes that a "lure of performance" pertains to practices based around claims "that hold to notions of self-coincident, unitary, and extra-linguistic Being" (2012: 31).

Joseph Beuys' performances, specifically those which use group debates while drawing and inscribing on blackboards, are paradigmatic of how such notions can come into play (see: fig. 3). Ann Temkin notes that the interplay between Beuys' dialogue and the inscribed signs on the board attempts to express "spiritual perceptions that transcend

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[9] In a wider context the question about liveness and immediacy concerns how "art becomes a life form," as Groys writes: "one is again confronted with the question of the relationship between art and life – and indeed in a completely new context, defined by the aspiration of today's art *to become life itself* " (in Jones and Heathfield 2012: 211; my emphasis). Indeed, the aspiration to make art 'become life itself' is akin to the metaphysical movement addressed by vitalist notions of multiplicity, whereby life is perceived as an (im)material movement that resonates with biological processes that provide physicality with a productive sense of agency.

material reality, and that sensory powers far exceed the physical limits" (in Temkin & Rose 1993: 13). The tendency to transcend and exceed physical limits is part of "the contemporary ideology," explains philosopher Alain Badiou, "which is materialistic and democratic," even "vitalist," presenting "performance as a pure immanent becoming opposed to representation or reflection" (in Crone ed. 2012: 23). These debates, which concern the immediacy of affect and agency, warrant performance art with a critical approach, which I wish to bring to contemporary drawing practices.

The exhibition of contemporary choreography, *Move: Choreographing You*, presented at The Hayward Gallery, London, in 2011 (co-curated by André Lepecki), introduced new debates on notions of presence and bodily gesture. "The phenomenological intertwining of presence and body that dance brings about as it moves," Lepecki proposes, "generates a space of dizziness," a space of disorientation which he presents as "the generative space of thought" (2004: 2). For Lepecki, a performance such as Trisha Brown's *It's A Draw* (2002) can be generative of thought (see: fig. 4 and 5). Although Brown simultaneously moves and imprints her movement, using charcoal onto paper placed over the (gallery) floor, she engages the limits of this gestural drawing act. As Lepecki states there are "tracings that will not be arrested or bound to the horizontal, a plethora of actions that cannot leave a mark, *that have nothing to do with marking*" (2006: 72; emphasis added). Although the marks she leaves residually trace the direction of her movements Brown also struggles to keep her body in view, performing in front of an audience rather than presenting only the drawing. She doesn't only leave the marks themselves to demonstrate this event. Hence, if Brown's gestures have nothing to do with leaving a mark it may be possible to reconsider what we understand by 'the trace' in relation to bodily action or gesture.

My objective therefore is to see whether 'the body' can be reconsidered in light of a

'traceless expenditure'. Lepecki's claim, that bodily gesture has 'nothing do with marking', is one possibility to open and reconsider what the conceptual aspect of thought is in relation to physical presence as much as to the trace. Additionally, I propose that the role of the body in performance-drawing can be understood not as a material and original entity, privileged in kinetically engaging an inner capacity to move, think and create; but, rather, as the body that interrupts the mark-making process and works without necessarily having and expressing an original ontological state of presence. To see what I mean I would like to return to how I arrived at my research and reconsidered my practice.

A Background of My Practice and Reasons for Embarking on my Research

"Drawing is an immanence, always pointing to somewhere else - to a certain serial development, another condition, another state," writes Deanna Petheridge (in Garner 2008: 37). Indeed, performances, such as *Weathered*, *indirectly* pointed to a new way of working, a new condition of thinking about what I was doing. By spring 2008 (one year prior to starting my research for this thesis) I shifted my practice from tracing a multiplicity of the line, trying to inscribe a continuous line indicating the path of my movement, to working with an action *of* pointing. In a work developed three years after *Weathered,* entitled *Pointing Infinitely While Seated and Thinking of Greater Things* (2008), I explored an action of deixis, namely pointing with the index finger through the imprint of the point (see: fig. 7 and 8). In contrast to moving and drawing across the pavement, I sat in a room and on a chair, facing a table upon which lay a sheet of graph paper. Upon this paper I drew a series of point-like dots, each dot produced by combining pen and index finger (see: fig. 6). Some of this activity was performed before an audience, but the photograph in fig. 6 was staged for the camera to show how much of this pointing-of-points was made privately in the studio.

In part, I also began to consider the role documentation played in my work, using video and, as in this work, a complex form of photography (using the camera while also digitally processing a reversed image of the drawing); but it was the emphasis that my body played in pointing, directing my arm, hand and finger to where I worked, that found me exploring another approach to drawing in a performative way.

In addition to documenting my performance, I also photographed the drawing. After I completely filled each millimeter square of the graph paper with tiny black dots, some visible others barely, I digitally photographed this drawing and, using a digital process of reversing the white-background to black and black-dots to white, I produced a second panel (see: fig. 8). This black panel, exact in size and shape to the drawing, appeared with white dots. Although this process resulted in a series of photographs and a two-panel drawing and digital-print I became interested in my use of physical restriction, seated and holding as still as possible while trying to engage a kind of multiple point. This was a notion that, regardless of pointing and directing myself toward where I made each imprint on the graph paper, I could not cognize nor physically engage (by moving, imprinting and discovering new variations of) 'the point'. No longer was I exploring an idea of multiplicity based on continuous movement, a practice based on extending and thinking the unfolding of lines. Instead, I started to look at the way I worked with physiological states related to, and what would later become, a mark system that structured positions and postures, such as pointing. Here, if there was a 'point' it was not indicative of me, of my presence as in some Archimedean center-point; this mark rather more indicated a form of trace that I believed to be obstructive, a trace interrupting ways to physiologically and intellectually engage what I was thinking about.

Here, I also note that by working with restricted positions and holding still, as in being seated, I reconsidered how I worked with my body. This kind of restricted activity

can partly be understood in light of my physical fitness, where I exercised slowly under muscular tension, holding still with either my own or added weight from dumbbells and iron plates. By working more slowly, or simply being immobile and holding positions, I then found myself exploring forms of physical restriction and weight.

The main reason why I started to work with marks related to the point and poses such as pointing – not to mention why I even decided to embark on my doctoral research – was because I wanted to investigate the role of thinking in drawing through performance, emphasizing physicality rather than a primacy of 'the mark'. My decision to engage in research commenced when I decided that 'trace' and 'thought' needed to be approached differently, mainly because I was questioning claims around using the practice of drawing performatively and gesturally to disclose knowledge about thought.

The Philosophical Trace and Multiplicity

In order to examine an operation of thought as an event in performance-drawing I will analyze relevant philosophical discourses. From phenomenology to vitalism, what I will be looking at closely here is a post-phenomenological philosophy, which is based on a problematic bodily event. By reading and opening up interpretations of philosophical claims that belong to these fields, from investigations of movement and agency to the intertwinement of physicality and presence, my aim is to investigate 'thought' and 'trace' as thoroughly as possible, in practice *and* theory. To this purpose I consider how Martin Heidegger discusses drawing: "when man is drawing into what withdraws, he points into what withdraws. As we are drawing that way we are a sign, a pointer" (2004: 18). Before drawing, and perhaps even after, the artist points toward a highly speculative sense of thought; or as Heidegger says, thought 'withdraws' as if without leaving a trace. I will consider how this philosophical quality of drawing implies that neither imprint, hand nor

paper indicate thinking in its operation and, arguably, the representation or apprehension of its trace.

I am not suggesting that 'thinking' be exclusively philosophical, developed into a system of rules that might entail exercising good judgement and correct forms of intellectual engagement. Rather, to use Heidegger's elaboration, 'thinking' is an "attempt and a duty to think" (2004: 18).[10] This ethical demand is something I wish to consider in my overall investigation, which deals with a wider understanding of gesture: to draw upon a limit of thinking in drawing and through performance. That is to say, to not only physically engage in mark-making but to also direct attention toward a question of thought as multiplicity. According to Heidegger thinking is a limit that: does not offer scientific facts, does not provide practical knowledge, does not solve riddles and does not empower us to act (2004: 159). Drawing upon multiplicity, as I am proposing, can be considered as a method of questioning how we make as much as think through the overall act of drawing, from mark, body and trace. The trope 'drawing upon' aims toward *traversing* notions of phenomenological praxis (namely using drawn imprints or embodiments of this drawing process to manifest thought materially and physically); that is say, to go through the philosophical sense of mark-making, examining as fully as possible *all* areas of its activity, within practice as much as the philosophical discourses that structure the practice theoretically.

The breadth of philosophical references that I will be exploring throughout my thesis will be, though numerous, necessary to the methodology that I am exploring as 'post-phenomenological' – a way of investigating through bodily action whereby physiological engagement with thought is interrupted by its obstructive multiplicity. In order to engage the event specific to this approach I will be carefully exploring a terrain of

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[10] See Heidegger's fourth lecture in the series published under the title *What is Thinking* (2004). Hannah Arendt similarly argues that thinking pertains to a problem and question in *The Life of the Mind* (1978).

thinkers, which I have selected, and related concepts. There is the deconstruction of the (graphic) trace proposed by Jacques Derrida; but, more importantly, I will consider Maurice Blanchot's proposal of a radically absent trace that challenges phenomenologies of presence. To understand how such a traceless trace can be encountered I look at Emmanuel Levinas' concept of the 'instant': a certain de-temporalized present, which runs counter to Heideggarian and Bergsonian notions of primordial temporality. I then extend my investigation of 'the body' using Jean-Luc Nancy's exploration of gesture as 'exscription', wherein phenomenological embodiment of thought-as-pure-presence is fundamentally interrupted. Finally, I will explore Alain Badiou's theory of multiplicity, which is structured by a mathematical notion of thought equivalent to a void-like idea that structures veridical actions. (I would like the reader to note that, at end of this thesis, a glossary has been provided. The purpose of this glossary is to list terms and definitions that will come about as I analyze these philosophical terms and concepts.)

I have deliberately chosen to investigate 'multiplicity' because of its affiliation in contemporary drawing to the line. Part of my task is to tease out different meanings, which are entrenched in a lengthy debate between Badiou and Deleuze. The implications of this debate offer a way to reconsider the event, from an approach based around ideas of movement and affect, to another idea that may generate a more radical question around working with thought and trace in performance-drawing. This reconfiguration of the discursive field, irrecoverably shifting from a vital multiplicity to a more void-like multiple, is key to the theoretical analysis of a multiplicity that informs my practice.

When I began to question my earlier practice, around 2008, while exploring the gesture of pointing, I became acquainted with Badiou's philosophical writings. In the conference *With A Single Mark*, presented at Tate Britain, London in 2006, I heard Badiou present a paper entitled '*Drawing*'. Here, Badiou summarized drawing under his alteration

of the Shakespearean phrase: "[to draw] is not 'to be or not to be,' it is 'to be and not to be.' And that is the reason for the fundamental fragility of Drawing" (2006: 44).

Although Badiou is referring to drawing in its customary form what he is referring to, by its simultaneous being and not-being, is the space in which the drawing takes place: the surface of the paper. The fragility of drawing is his way of addressing the event of thinking in drawing, which takes place through the space of the page *without* being represented by the mark or activity of the artist. What might this space mean for the trace?

This then is where Blanchot's proposition becomes important for investigating the trace apropos of the fragility of drawing. According to Blanchot thought can be indicated by a trace that "excludes any representation," as when he writes:

> *traces do not depend on the mark* and, at the limit, are not in relation to it. The traces do not refer to the moment of the mark, they are without origin, but not without end in the very permanence that seems to perpetuate them, traces which, even in becoming confused and replacing each other, are there forever, and forever cut off from that of which they would be the traces, having no other being than their plurality, as if there were not *a* trace, but traces... not to be deciphered, but to efface themselves plurally.

> (Blanchot 1992: 53-54; emphasis added)

There are a 'plurality' of traces 'forever cut off' from the actual mark, traces that 'efface themselves plurally' from the multiplicity of inscribed imprints (signs or gestural lines). It is a plural, multiple kind of trace that Levinas similarly states "is not the residue of a presence" (2009: 12). This plural/multiple and self-effacing trace denotes thought in its event, which I believe presents another multiplicity (of thinking thought)[11], a trace *of* thought that subtracts an authentic presence and existential agency. The fragility of drawing may be understood as the effacement of the conceptual and philosophical

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[11] For an elaboration of the philosophical sense of 'thinking thought' see Rudolf Gasché's '*Toward an Ethics of Auseinandersetzung*', in Gasché (2007). According to Gasché 'thinking' "is determined only from within itself" in so far as it is in a Lyotardian sense "conflict under dispute" (2007: 105). Thought in a purely philosophical sense is such a 'conflict in dispute' and hence, what Gasché calls, 'critique'.

structure that would otherwise sustain notions of a cognitive operation and (kinesthetically) embodied thought. I am interested in pursuing Blanchot's proposition further, that a trace is constitutively plural and effaced, negated from any representation – to which Badiou similarly suggests that there is an effacement of the fundamental support of the drawing, the space opened up by the page.

My question then is how the self-effacing trace may still operate and take place? Might there be a trace of thought, a multiplicity that belongs to performance-drawing as an intellectual activity (of thinking the question of thought)?

Both trace and multiplicity imply a mode of thinking-as-questioning, thought being a question of its event. According to the post-structural philosophies on multiplicity that I shall examine, from Deleuze to Badiou, the event of thought invokes "a permanent question for thought, an intellectual provocation of being" (Badiou 2005: 84). Thought "is nothing *but* that question," adds Rudolph Gasché, "a 'pure' question as it were, one whose subject is as much a nullity as its object, a question that presumes *no self-present essence of what it questions*" (Gasché 1999: 311; emphasis added). The philosophical trace then is based on a question, a thought that pertains to, maybe even provokes asking about a "radical negativity of thought," (Gasché 2007: 12) radical in so far as thought "separates itself from itself" and in effect "can have no relation to anything" (Gasché 2007: 31). This trace is not nothingness but a state that presumes neither intertwinement of body and presence nor metaphysical movement to engage the mark with.

A Summary of the Introduction and Outline of the Thesis Chapters

To summarize this introduction I layout three main questions to structure my thesis. My intention is to have these questions guide my investigations throughout all three chapters. Apropos of the practice of performance-drawing, is there a mark based on a

point that relates to physicality and gesture? Here, I propose that in comparison to the line the point may not readily present an operation of thought under a residual trace. This form of obstruction, the more conceptual trace cut off and effaced from an original mark (to which the point does not lay claim), deals with subtracting the affect implied by gestural tracing. In my practice the point applies to a notational mark system, such as periods or brackets, that not only helps set up the performances I present but emphasizes a problem of focusing on the body. I then ask, in terms of my methodology, whether these marks can be engaged by working with physical gesture? In other words, through practice I inquire about how working with notational marks can result in certain restrictions of physical action – namely standing, turning or pointing; restricted actions that occur from trying to engage with the trace and body. Thirdly, (the primary thesis question) asks how thought is indicated by a trace that is non-representable? I am not asking if the trace is conversely 'presentable', materialistically manifest. Rather, is this trace inherent to a conceptual space suggested by the performance-drawing? My hypothesis is that this space is akin to an outside, a non-appropriable thought-event that 'separates itself from itself', as Gasché says.

In my thesis, entitled *Drawing Upon Multiplicity,* there are three chapters based upon the terms used in the second clause of my title: *mark, body and a trace of thought*. To structure these chapters according to each term I provide the following outline.

Chapter One, which has three parts, examines the ways in which I work with mark-making and how marks (notational and point) can be distinguished from conventional notions of imprinting and indexing performative actions. In Chapter 1.1 I analyze my methodology in working with my body phenomenologically. Chapter 1.2 examines the

mark through a deconstruction of the mark as a graphic trace[12] in contemporary drawing practices engaging performance. Chapter 1.3 will then extend my analysis of the conceptual quality of line and point into the philosophical debates on multiplicity.

Chapter Two, also in three parts, looks at how I try to use my body in practice to direct attention toward and indicate the multiplicity of the event (of thinking through performance-drawing). Here I will elaborate my methodology around an examination of the bodily gestures used in my practice. The mark will also be investigated through the notational system I am proposing, which structures the performance and relates to the notion of the point. The aim of Chapter Two will be to see how these marks and bodily gestures appear while trying to indicate the trace through modes of dislocation and obstruction, the separation of imprint from physicality affected by a trace that effaces and puts into question any original notion of (self-)presence. In order to look at ways of working through gestural dislocation and conceptual obstruction I will also be examining the majority of the artworks I have created throughout my research, from 2009 until 2012. Chapter 2.1 will look at how I work with bodily gesture in the *Untitled* performance series, which present physical stances, such as standing while positioned away from wall-drawings made before performing. The physiological separation I work with (preparing marks before performing around them) can become more apparent in *Placing A Pause While Kneeling and Staring at Two Holes in the Wall – Try and Make One Whole Out of Two* (2011), which invites spectators to participate in kneeling and visually fabricating the sign of an ellipsis from two holes in the facing wall. Chapter 2.2 will continue my investigation of bodily gesture in a particular version of *Untitled* (presented at the KCCC

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[12] In Chapter 1.0 and 1.2 I will be elaborating what I mean by 'the graphic trace'. Margaret Iversen provides an overview of this term in her article, *Index, Diagram, Graphic Trace* (*Tate Papers,* 2012). There Iversen proposes that "[t]he graphic trace is a diagram actually generated by the body and as such it combines the carnal and the symbolic, the line and the flesh, effortlessly, automatically." Although I am not looking at the diagram, which relates to a "kind of mathematical graph that displays logical relations," I believe the graphic trace must be examined further for how it is 'generated by the body'.

gallery, Lithuania, in 2011) and in comparison with *Passages* (2009-2010). In these two works I examine time and movement, using video to mediate my seemingly immobile performance. Chapter 2.3 will then complete my analysis of how I use gesture, with less concentration on the entire body but via the hand, namely through pointing. Here, I will focus on *Approximately Pointing Out the Figure* (2009-2010) and *Details Through Pointing* (2011-2012), where I explore pointing in relation to the point as an imprint, a paradoxical mark that indicates an obstruction in thinking, the interruption of presenting multiplicity via bodily presence and residual imprints left by my pointing.

Chapter Three will examine the notion of 'trace' in my art practice and how it relates to thought as multiplicity, which subtracts presence and posits a conceptual trace distinct from an embodied imprint or graphic trace. *Sitting, Leaning and Aligning Two Knots From A Post To A Ground* (2012) will be a key work in exploring the trace as a conceptual form of obstruction. In this case I will be discussing the trace not in its relation to the mark/imprint but rather to the context and space in which my performance-drawing takes place while exploring thought in its multiplicity.

My hope is that my three questions and this outline can help sustain my investigation. Before closing my introduction I want to make two comments. Firstly, the purpose of the theories and philosophies I explore throughout my thesis is to extend the investigations I make, which are initiated and lead by means of my art practice. Foremost, my practice is conducted through a dislocated bodily gesture – this being my modus operandi: a form of intellectual investigation that works with physicality, using restriction in movement to engage weight, that is a state of passivity that lets thinking occur in the space where the bodily gesture takes place. At the same time, however, the event (of thought) investigated correlates to a multiplicity that obstructs and interrupts the pure efficacy of the practice – to actively and effectively disclose 'thought' via kinesthetic

apprehension, as in gesturing and drawing out thinking as an inner and vital continuum. By writing and working through theories of 'multiplicity' (Deleuze, Badiou), 'the body' (Nancy) or 'trace' (Blanchot) I am trying to thoroughly examine the vitalist/phenomenologist event advocated by current conceptual practices exploring mark-making and, in turn, open up 'thought' as a question/problem.

My second comment is that although I am investigating what is meant by thinking in performance-drawing my thesis is not an inquiry into a fundamental philosophical question. The trace I am looking into here poses a limit to the philosophical context and its claim to theory, to explicating and/or clarifying multiplicity in performance-drawing. Neither is 'thought' referenced by a trace that is purely philosophical in kind.

This possible displacement of philosophy from the theoretical and practical investigation of the event (particular to performance-drawing) opens onto a different provocation of thought, of questioning how a certain dislocated gesture (from standing to pointing) still directs attention to a question/event that demands to be thought from a trace irreducible to an act of marking, gesturally moving or thinking philosophy. This trace may be nothing, nothing but a question that opens onto a thought that, in itself, is impossible. And if there is an ethical demand (of taking up a mode of responsibility, a mode of orientating oneself 'toward' what may risk an impossibility of questioning) it will mean persevering with such an investigation.

CHAPTER ONE

§1.0 – INVESTIGATING THE MARK FROM THE LINE TO A POINT

An Outline and Preamble for Chapter One

This chapter sets out to investigate 'the mark' in its relation to a graphic trace, the imprint as line. My aim is to provide a deconstruction of the graphic trace, whereby investigating 'the line' I can open up a further look at a more rare and paradoxical kind of mark as a point. I interpret deconstruction as a critique of the phenomenological tradition employed within discourses of performance-based drawing. Not to disassemble, 'unravel' the line, nor to enable a perception of a metaphysical movement; by deconstructing the graphic trace I am trying to examine the mark as a 'point', a non-figure which can emphasize 'physicality', such that presence and agency are put into question and reconsidered.

In addition to the outline presented in my Introduction I want to lay out in further detail how this chapter will lead my investigation. In Chapter 1.1, *Working With the Body Under A Post-phenomenological Methodology of Performance*, I will analyze the methodology that I use in my art practice. I shall explore how I work with a three-tiered procedure to create artwork through: bodily performance and experimentations with materials, assessing this activity with video and still-image documentation and then selecting ways of presenting this performance through notes and diagrams. This approach is complex and will demonstrate the way I explore drawing within a process of improvisation, assessment and selection.

In Chapter 1.2, *The Limits of the Graphic Trace in Conceptual, Performance-based*

Drawing, I will provide an overview of contemporary drawing practices, which have evolved from conceptual and live-art performance in North America and Europe since the 1970's. I wish to unpack philosophical assumptions in reference to the way figurations, such as tracing bodily movement, are perceived in contemporary drawing to express 'the haptic', 'embodiment' and 'durational simultaneity'. These aspects can be noted by artists, such as William Anastasi, Trisha Brown and Robert Morris, who align with hybridizing sculptural and conceptual notions of liveness.

Lastly, in Chapter 1.3, *The Multiplicity of (Un)thought*, I present a critique of the philosophical concepts of movement, affect and embodiment around what is understood by 'multiplicity'. Part of my intention to designate 'multiplicity' as a term for investigating thinking in drawing has been to critique the usage of these properties, which I find presuppose thought as one form of event related to a cognitive and biological operation. This operation conflates vitalist terminology, adopting, for example, the notion that thinking is "a *virtual and continuous* multiplicity" (Deleuze 1998: 38). Indeed, such terminology influences current discourses on drawing practices – Deleuze's taxonomy has and continues to be employed in contemporary exhibitions on drawing as, for example, *Lines of Thought* (*Parasol Unit*; London, 2012).[13] Conversely, Badiou's entrenched polemic with Deleuze's notion of vital multiplicity radically articulates this term. An argument I want to look at more closely is Badiou's ontology of multiplicity, which argues for thought to be phenomenologically dis-continuous, a purely conceptual notion that has no empirical quality of movement.

A Background on the Mark as Line

Throughout the history of drawing the mark has become homologous with a model

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[13] In Chapter 1.2 I will make a short survey of these exhibitions.

of the line, perhaps more fittingly termed as 'the graphic continuum' (Petheridge 2010). A continuum is suggestive of 'thinking' being immanent to a practice that functions through two properties: the physical imprint and the trace. The imprint of a line on a page, wall or any surface can appear distinct and isolated. We can see where a stroke impacts and stretches to a definite length. The trace is more complex, as it is literal in its evidence of having been marked-out and traced. Yet the trace is also conceptual. 'The graphic continuum' is one way to suggest that this mark is a graphic trace, reveals something *more than* what is seen, exceeding and continuing from the literal. Thought is in this case, I would argue, a way of conceptualizing – the conventional example being how marking and sketching on paper depicts ideas "in the act of unconscious thinking through making" (Pallasmaa 2009: 5). Thought is an activity immanent to the mark, a continuum within the literal imprint, yet a trace *continuing* as an unconscious and self-generating act. The graphic continuum is characterized by the belief that thought is generative of a capacity to make an action possible, the line being that which *depicts* beyond visual and conceptual representation, sign and idea.

I wish to use this preamble to set up how I will investigate 'the mark', beginning with the line. My intention is to present the limits of this model of mark-making and speculate about another mark based on the point. I propose that the investigatory mode the line in drawing (as in sketching and discovering ideas) does not readily disclose investigations into its conceptual trace, the operation of thought that makes the drawing and production of ideas possible. Firstly, I wish for us to see whether the method of sketching, which composes a drawing, is viable as a process of creating and thinking. This short preamble is to help prepare my analysis of the mark for how it is created: from the increment of a point (a series of dots on a page, for example) to the line (that unites points serially into a seemingly indivisible extension).

With regards to my practice, which uses physical performance, I ask through practice if marking via the graphic trace, the linear and graphic continuum, can incorporate a form of the point. What kind of thinking would occur from a point, which may or may not be a visible mark?

Since the emergence of drawing in the Renaissance, in Florence's Academia del Disegno (c. 1563), drawing has been identified as a method for preparing an artwork; not to fabricate a painting or sculpture but rather to create from a 'sketch'. According to a founding member of the academy, Frederico Zuccari, the sketch centers on displaying accuracy and skill, a focus on *how* to think before realizing *what* to contemplate.[14] Creating is an aspect that the sketch displays through a mark characterized by discipline (disegno or design) as much as indiscipline (doodling) (Fer, in Bois 2004: 122). Provisionally, one could say that the discipline in making a drawing would help us in thinking through as many directions as there are marks displayed on a page. Indeed, sketching can mark a certain multiplicity, variations of lines, but a 'line' nonetheless. This mark, according to Petheridge, "is also inherent in the 'drawing out' of ideas from the mind in the conceptual generative sketch" (Petheridge 1991: 21). However, I question this claim, asking: why is 'drawing out' generative of the line, a graphic trace depicting thought through the sketch?

Depiction and Figure

A clue as to why the graphic trace may be depicting thought can be observed in

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[14] This preparatory phase derives from Giorgio Vasari delegation of drawing as "a rough draft of the whole" (Vasari 1960: 212). Vasari's elevation of drawing to a key phase for beginning an artwork also places this art-practice into a unique discipline with an "acquired new importance" (Rose *et al.* 1979: 17). This means that the sketch is "only to test the spirit of that which occurs" to the artist as artificer of material and form. Drawing then is viewed by Vasari as a kind of *play* upon the spiritual form of an actual idea. Because the drawing cannot sufficiently refine a form, as with painting, sculpture or architecture, the precarious playfulness of sketching or doodling, for instance, could also account for drawing's predicament as a subsidiary and preparatory art-practice. See: Vasari (1960).

Zuccari's explanation. In 'disegno' thinking is predicated by creation, namely that it is *revealing* within a two-tiered procedure that bridges natural philosophy with fine-art: *disegno interno* has the artist draw and accurately transfer an "inner design"; and *disegno externo* manifests this design under the inscriber's desire to exercise a form of creation by drawing. Disegno thereby "unites theory and practice" (Jacobs 2002: 5); or, as Giorgio Vasari explains, "disegno is nothing else but an apparent expression and declaration of the concept [*concetto*] that is held in the mind [*animo*] and of that which is also imagined [*mente immaginato*] and fabricated in the idea [*fabbricato nell'idea*]" (*Op.cit.*). If the graphic continuum denotes this process it can be seen in terms of its graphical figuration[15], the line being a kind of performative activity, expressing and revealing a mind-bestowed concept unfolding between the hand and imprints/figures on the page.

The skepticism I have about such propositions (around the sketch, line, continuum or revealed creation) is echoed by philosopher Jean-Francois Lyotard's criticism of the mark as a 'figure': "a spatial manifestation that linguistic space cannot incorporate without being shaken, an exteriority it cannot interiorize as *signification"* (Lyotard 2011: 7). Although Lyotard's statement concerns a critique of semiotic structures in language his arguments, particularly in *Discourse, Figure* (2011), expose the figure of a graphic trace in terms of a figuration eliding interpretation. As he explains:

> the figure offers itself as a straying *trace* that defies reading, that is not a
> letter, and that can be grasped only in energetic terms. This figure is
> supported by displacements, condensations, and distortions. This means

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[15] Figuration is an articulation of "drawing as graphological disclosure." See: Laurence Alloway, 'Sol LeWitt: Modules, Walls, Books,' *Artforum* (New York), April 1975, pp. 38 - 45. Graphological disclosure, or figuration, has also been philosophically articulated by Gilles Deleuze in his analysis of painterly imprints of line, image and materiality. See his study of Francis Bacon's paintings where Deleuze describes the graphological process as 'forces of thought'. See: Deleuze (2007). Whereas a figure can be an ideal form (disegno interno), to which an artist would attempt to depict in a representation – at best a fallible image of an infallible design – a graphological figuration would propose bypassing representation all together. A continuum would be arguable as figuration when painting functions to 'capture and harness forces' (of thought) beyond representation, immediately and simultaneously in painterly imprints embedded upon a canvas. An elaboration of this activity is in chapter five, of Ronald Bogue's *Deleuze On Music, Painting, and the Arts* (2003).

that *before* its incorporation in the order of language (for example in a rhetoric), the figure is the mark, on the units and rules of language, of a power that treats these units and rules like things. It is the trace of a *working-over* [travail] and not of knowledge by signification. Through this working-over, what is fulfilled is desire.

(Lyotard 2011: 141)

I am interested in how Lyotard targets the figuration of marking a trace, which does not reveal knowledge of its signification. If we consider Lyotard's argument further the trace can be critically investigated for how it possibly restricts the mark to the drawing out of the line and continuum. The primacy placed on the mark in drawing practices, a figure depicting a continuum, can be investigated for 'straying' from a question of the trace, eliding interpretation of its operation of thought and event of multiplicity. The task throughout this chapter is therefore to analyze the mark from the graphic continuum and find if the trace can be explored differently via the point and body.

The Speculative Quality of the Point

There are two limits to the mark: the body and a concept of the point. We could consider these subjects through Roland Barthes' comment that "a line - any line inscribed on a sheet of paper - is a denial of the importance of the body, the body and its flesh, the body and its humors" (Barthes 2004: 35). Otherwise, the line "always implies a force, a direction. It is *energon*, work, and it displays the traces of its pulsation and self-consumption. Line is action made visible" (*Op.cit.*). Here, the body is used to trace its physicality, to draw-out a literal stroke that also works over and obfuscates its first point of contact – the imprint of a point. This obfuscating activity is oriented around a more immediate depiction of physical, energetic exertion. Consequently, the work involved in such exertion denies 'the importance of the body', which I would suggest can be looked at in terms of how a point is conceptually shared by the body, a point that poses a

separation from the flesh or humors that Barthes speaks of.

As we will see in Chapter Two, in my practice, and in works by such artists as Harrison and Wood or John Latham, the point is exhibited as a dot-like imprint that relates to largely passive (bodily) actions, lacking energetic exertion. When Latham shoots black paint for one second from a spray-paint canister onto one spot of a board, in his terminology, this action exemplifies a 'least event': a "dimensionless point" that indicates "zero extension and zero action" (Latham 1984: 7). Such an emphatic zero event resonates with performances in which the agent appears mostly stationary and fixed. So, on the one hand (and to mention one example that I will elaborate on in Chapter Two), in my performance, *Details Through Pointing* (2012), the ranges of physiological engagement, from standing to crawling or being curled up, occur from my attempt to respond to the dark dots, which I draw and cast on the wall using a computer and digital projector (see: fig. 9). On the other hand, in Harrison and Wood's *Map* (2003) the ball dropped by Harrison (who remains standing throughout this one-minute video) that results in blue dribbled spots makes reading via the figure of the graphic trace problematic (see: fig. 10). Here, the ball and dots emphasize little physical expenditure, apart from Harrison lifting his arm and dropping the ball. Once this video ends, or the projected blue light in *Details Through Pointing* cuts out (the dark spots on the wall also disappearing), the performative act comes to a halt. Moreover, particularly in *Map*, the position of the camera (which remains fixed) over Harrison's head focuses our perspective as if to suggest an equivalence of Harrison's static stance and the limp ball, which stops at the corner of the floor opposite him. The several dots that rest between him and the ball add to the monotone action. Within either of these examples the mark of the point remains speculative, an imprint that is questionable and overdetermined by notions of continuum and the line.

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Just as the body is subsidiary to the line there is also a subtraction of the point. In terms of mark-making this is the initial increment of contact, much like the blue-dot in front of Harrison. This point measures and divides the line into a sequence, displays parts rather than an unmediated flow; but in itself the point may not have an intellectual act or figuration. To use Derrida's remark, "the point, as a limit, does not exist *in act*, is not (present)" (Derrida 1982: 52). It is possible that the point is negated because it punctuates the line, divides and arrests a continual movement to act (to will, to depict, to reveal the desire to generate ideas continuously and immediately). In this case the point is not an act, does not create and generate thought. The line would then imply that it "removes the limit of the point only by developing its potentiality," writes Derrida (*Op.cit.).*

Just as the body is inadvertently negated, imprinting the line but also denied in the process, I propose that the point as such may be void of any proper figure. If there is a speculative quality of this point, a conceptual kind of non-figure, it would pertain to "a point or puncture within a wider plurality of opening or unfolding" (James 2006: 111). The trace as much as the point may be considered in terms of the latter's 'puncture', as writer Ian James states; a point that punctuates and radically displaces phenomenologies of continuum and related figuration.

§1.1 – Working With The Body Under A Post-Phenomenological Methodology of Performance.

A Description Of My Method

A question that primarily informs my method is how an artwork is initiated by working with the body. The aim of this section is to describe this method, which is specific to an expanded form of drawing in relation to phenomenological exploration. This approach involves experimenting with physiological activities, such as standing, kneeling, turning or pointing. These positions I have oriented around marks that I make, which are also related to notation, such as periods, ellipses or brackets. My method concerns investigating via performance and, moreover, using visual documentation (from video along with notes and diagrams) to assess and select the way in which the performance-drawing will be exhibited.

My method can be considered as a form of practice-lead research. To use Steven Scrivener's account a practitioner can "generate novel apprehension," such that by 'making' through practice "one can discover whether something is possible: a picture, a photograph, a sculpture, or a work of art" (Scrivener 2004: 2). Although my art-practice does not occur within a convention of drawing (as with marking paper by pen in hand), the way I use performance is to help me generate inquiry about how the activity can be made possible. Drawing uniquely makes its work/method possible by using bodily gesture. My performance-based approach to drawing critically engages movement and physicality. One of the most challenging questions that arise from my approach is: what is the performer apprehending while starting to work and investigate? This question concerns

discovering how the performer as agent [16] makes possible and sustains this

phenomenological activity. To examine this I will need to look at claims made by

performance artists, such as Anthony Howell, who apprehend and express experiences of

(bodily) presence as 'absence'. As well I will examine and try to take up propositions

central to phenomenological research methods to which I turn to now.

Working Phenomenologically

Generally, a phenomenological approach is defined by acquiring knowledge

qualitatively. Sensory experience is said to disclose "*lived experiences* of a concept or a

phenomenon," as John W. Cresswell proposes (2007: 57). 'Lived experience' suggests that

phenomena might be discovered empirically in real-time and without mediation. In doing

so "phenomena are revisited freshly, naively, in a wide open sense," states Clark

Moustakas (1994: 33). Being 'wide open' to phenomena means working through a

complex experiential mode that would involve the agent's body as a unique instrument,

able of engaging, responding and unfolding knowledge about things but also about

oneself.[17] This may be why Cresswell posits "the basic purpose of phenomenology is to

reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the universal

essence" (2007: 58). I do not believe that the practitioner can reflect upon a universal

essence[18], in the sense that he/she can use experiential knowledge to gain insight into

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[16] I am referring to the performer, or person executing an action, as 'agent' in order to distinguish this kind of person from either: 1. an individual (who can be interpreted as someone that is fully constituted, autonomous and self-realized); or, 2. a subject (who can be interpreted via post-structural, Marxist notions of subjectivity, that is someone who aims to achieve autonomy by disclosing knowledge that compromises self-realization).

[17] I may be obliged to reference André Leroi-Gourhan's thesis on gesture, that the body is an instrument for creating language (writing) and disclosing knowledge through sensory and kinetic engagement with things. See: Leroi-Gourhan (1993). Carrie Noland, whose reading of Leroi-Gourhan I am responding to in Chapter 1.2 and in my Conclusion, stresses that "the body as tool," as she calls it, derives from Leroi-Gourhan's statement, that the "the nervous system is a machine not for fabricating instincts but for responding to internal and external solicitations..." (Leroi-Gouhran 1993: 13; Noland 2009: 100).

[18] Donald Shön's (1991) proposes the practitioner, for instance in design, to reflect upon and formulate knowledge about discrete processes that cannot be theoretically explained. The practitioner is also subject to the investigation posed by these processes, making and observing under numerous cycles of reflection before

interior and subjective qualities, such as time, space or related feelings of self-presence.

Every exploratory experience in phenomenology undergoes a form of empirical and theoretical reduction or époché. Moustakas explains époché as meaning: "to refrain from judgement" (1994: 33); in other words, suspending judgement entails that one upholds experience as an immediate and original apprehension of ontological meaning. In part, I am questioning how one could explore openly and critically, which for Moustakas entails forfeiting "the natural attitude" where "one holds knowledge judgmentally." Phenomena are approached without an attitude that intends to hold knowledge passively, as if to perceive unfettered and work in a natural manner. The artist-researcher could then be said, as Estelle Barrett encourages, to inquire *through action*, where artistic investigation requires:

> explicit reflection on that action. This approach acknowledges that we cannot separate knowledge to be learned from situations in which it is used. Thus situated enquiry or learning demonstrates a unity between problem, context and solution.
>
> (Barrett & Bolt 2007: 5)

If phenomenological methodology employs a form of situated inquiry, naively open to learning from experience, then the supposition is that there must be a methodological unity. The practitioner is then stipulated as both subject and object, agent and instrument, able to apprehend a universal essence or agency.

Proposing A Post-Phenomenological Way of Working

Bearing in mind that phenomenological inquiry is situated and investigative (through action) I demonstrate by comparison that my approach is elaborate and consists of: initiating studio explorations via performance, reviewing this activity through video

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an assessment can be made. The latter accounts for a branch of 'action research' which, according to Patrick A. J. Costello, unravels in the following stages: "process, enquiry, approach, a flexible spiral process" (2003: 5), which is, in other words, a cyclic action of reflecting upon the possibility of the research activity.

(and image stills from video) while, finally, evaluating my performance through diagrams and notes – a procedure that, indeed, does not privilege immediate ways of making as, for example, creating and exhibiting a performative swing of my arm or showing the drawing spontaneously made. As we shall see I initiate explorations by trying to pay attention to what I am *already* doing such as standing around the studio, or focusing on how I handle materials (eg. tools, wood, or paper). These actions are prosaic, familiar and non-expressive, largely disengaged from a conscious and, even, unconscious activity. Basically, I bring in video and note-taking (with diagrams and images) because I do not know, intuit, nor privilege my body as an instrument/device for continuously creating ideas, that is actively inquiring through fluidly sustained actions.

The fact that I document my first, improvisational actions means that I allow these conventional processes of documentation to influence my performance. These processes help to bring out an interruption that I encounter while I attempt to start spontaneously investigating via performance. Bearing in mind that I explore and try to present the body as a problem, the intervening technical marginalia (image-documents, notes and notational marks) help to reposition bodily interoceptive capacities for apprehension. A process of evaluation such as this interrupts the purely empirical investigatory mode.

What I speculate is that an interruption of empirical continuity stems from using the body as a problematic device, wherein the act of making discovers no primordial-ontological states. Crucial to the entire thesis is that for me the body is not necessarily reducible to experiencing the self under a universal essence.

The ways in which I develop bodily gestures through uses of various mediations addresses a method of working under a critical separation of the body from 'inherent' sensory reception and experiences of agency. By directly employing the body, but where it interrupts perceptions of a universal essence, I suggest that my method could be better

articulated as post-phenomenological.[19] Tentatively, a post-phenomenological method can mean that the practitioner/performer cannot reflect upon an interior agency situated in subjective experience. What I am trying to say is that for me working with the body, even performatively (where one is more attentive to his/her actions), does not disclose a universal and necessary way of being and investigating.

Using performance to start making an artwork relates to how I try to respond to what I encounter within a space. Stepping into the studio, standing on a street curb or sitting in a room: I work where I find myself thinking about what I do there. Rather than perceiving a pure 'space', a vertiginous tabula rasa vacated of things, my activity responds to architectural elements (wall, floor, ceiling) and whatever is already there. My relationship with what surrounds me depends on where I am positioned, rather than how I move. What interests me is how I stop and find myself, for example, standing, bending or kneeling – my first response being to slowly remove things around me, taking away furniture, tools or building materials (see: fig. 11). This material reduction helps bring the space as a whole, including myself, into question. I wonder why in this space I stop moving and hold postures, which can make me look awkward, contorted and restricted. Not only do I begin to notice such postures but also building materials that I usually overlook, such as wood posts or foam for packaging. (It may be helpful to note that these materials are practical. Foam, wood or charcoal, for example, are 'practical materials' in that they are a means for building and enriching my performative activity. In themselves these are also 'materials' that carry little, if any, significant affect – presenting little presence. Hence, these materials can be overlooked.) So, while I am working, at times

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[19] Throughout chapter two I will explore the notion of the post-phenomenological around a nascent philosophical debate. Writer Ian James' suggests this area throughout his discussion of philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy, who writes around notions of touch and sense. James states that Nancy "aims to displace, or think outside of, topologies of subject or substance," and this is "what one might call *postphenomenological philosophy of existence*" (James 2006: 202; emphasis added).

becoming stationary and inactive, my (experiential) encounter with the space and materials can seem tenuous, a sort of encounter lacking in affect in which my focus shifts to nuances, in this case being deviations in the wall that inflect my peripheral view (see: fig. 12). To kneel is one way that I have tried to work with my body along with materials such as foam, and spaces such as the floor and wall.

As I have mentioned, not only do I work in the studio but also, for example, in the street, gallery and lecture hall. To clarify, these are spaces where I try to engage performatively, spaces in which investigating means questioning what is taking place.[20] I am not investigating with the intention of making a site-specific artwork. For me space deals less with exploring and exposing historical and social characteristics of a site as place, which can pertain to what *has taken* place. Neither am I concerned with how a location is structured by notions of memory, knowledge specific to practices and rituals of people, including gestures influenced from one's inhabited environments. If space has any bearing to a kind of site in my work the latter can be understood as the space that opens up a form of investigation where what 'takes place' is the questioning of the performer's physiological capacity to improvise. To summarize, the studio and gallery are environments constantly made and remade, built and rebuilt; while the lecture hall can find the performer and audience member in positions conducive to questioning. What takes place there is the performance and the mark-making that comes from working in the space of the performance.

I proceed to work with the body, by positioning it within such spaces, where sensory reception can become obstructed. This obstruction results from an arrest in my

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[20] One way of looking at uses of space in relation to investigating through performance is by what Illya Noé calls 'site particularity': "Rather than superimposing a ready-made grid upon events and situations, or operating in a relativist flat field where anything goes, *site-particularity* offers a long-term dynamic of to-and-fro within locational possibilities and limitations, made and remade... a continual learning, rehearsing, and improvising of different ways to recognize and respond in the moment..." (Noé, in Riley and Hunter 2009: 150).

movement, not particularly a paralysis but a lack of invigoration. When I stop it is not

because I lose control – wildly moving unrestrained – but because there is an interruption

in my ability to respond and continue the performance. In this case, the active inquiry is

distinct from endowing me with experiencing a 'continual to-and-fro', in the sense of

gaining a fuller awareness of my own body through spontaneous and immediate

engagement. At best, my 'experience' of performing is oriented by a paradoxical feeling

of separation, a physiological passivity related to a certain diminution of sensory

reception. Here, separation is akin to the impairment of sensing and perceiving how my

work happens; a separation that is equally a conceptual obstruction, a state where "idiocy

materializes itself," as Avital Ronnel states (2003: 180). Indeed, I have found that starting

means working with "the nearly existential fact of being stuck with a body," and in a state

where "[t]here is nothing to know and little to understand" (Ronnel 2003: 180). And this

conceptual/sensory interruption relates to, "not having any ideas to work with," as Bruce

Nauman says, while ineluctably remaining in the space and persisting to focus on working

through obstructed states in different ways.[21]

Exploring Through Physiological Encounter

The performance artist, argues Anthony Howell[22], can become aware of a kind of

absence, which might indicate an interruption or obstruction of the action. As Howell

writes:

> Painters begin with a canvas, video-makers with a camera. The performance
> artist often feels that he or she *begins with a lack,* an absence of what is to
> occur. One needs to remember though that one's own body is an instrument

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[21] See: Nauman in Kraynak ed. (2005).

[22] Anthony Howell (b. 1945) is an English performance artist and writer whose practice encompasses
theatrical improvisation, poetry and dance. In works such as Table Move 1 (1985) Howell uses the
arrangement of furniture to explore a theatrical mise en scene of space and light. Howell has since returned
to writing, teaching and a further look at improvisation through Tango.

and that a space and a time is a ground as tangible as any canvas.[23]

(Howell 2000: 9)

Howell believes that the body can be used as an instrument, not so much for perceiving but for *experiencing* what seems an interior and generative lack. Here is how he describes this lack:

> There can be a gap between actions, a gap which can be increased or minimised; just as when the other speaks we tend to fall silent, and this may feel like a gap in our continuity.
>
> (Howell 2000: 48)

For Howell the increased intensification of space and time amount to concentrations of silence and slowing down, which then have him identify a displacement of his subjective state. While working performatively I do not find myself perceiving such an existential gap.[24] My doubt over this lack is whether there is a feeling that can qualify there being some other (presence), a voice from an agency as absence and that impels me to begin performing.

The distinction I wish to tease out here is between a constitutive 'gap' and an interruptive separation. An unbridgeable separation would not disclose an interior continuity. I believe that this separation challenges active inquiry. Conversely, what Howell senses is a foundational void-like absence, when he claims: "this gap can be filled, by fidgeting, say, but underneath the emptiness, an emptiness which perhaps constitutes the ground of action. The ground itself is of it too" (Howell 2000: 48). Indeed, when

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[23] The 'tangibility' of a ground, or essence of one's own body, echoes a tenet of phenomenology: self-reflection - or what Derrida will often term as 'auto-affection'. By referring and reflecting on one's self the essence of being becomes sustained by an activity of self-grasping. "The essence of the pure Ego thereby includes the possibility of an originary self-grasp, a 'self-perception', and in that case also the possibility of the corresponding modifications of self-grasping: i.e., self-rememberance, self-phantasy, etc" (Husserl 2002: 109 - 10).

[24] A potential problem is that once I exhibit the performance with drawn marks, as I am arguing throughout this thesis, a graphic trace can suture and posit this gap as not only visible but tangible - which would philosophically privilege 'thought' under guises of incorporeal absence and continuity. I discuss this suturing of absence by the graphic trace in chapter 1.2.

starting to improvise through performance there is a lack of physiological connection, a feeling of being outside of the actual space at hand. However, this uncanny sensation does not mean that a psycho-physical tension ascertains an enigmatic 'emptiness' or 'gap' as experientially intelligible and existentially 'tangible'.

Working without an experiential obstruction, the conceptual and sensory separation I mentioned earlier, is a crucial factor that I struggle with when starting to work by experimenting with physiological responses to what is around me. To emphasize these actions I introduce and slightly alter materials, as for example: kneeling into a piece of foam, leaning an elbow into a clay-covered shelf, or tapping the forefinger into a tablet and table; the manner in which I involve my body physically in working finds me using these materials to enhance a direction of where to go with the work (see: fig. 13 & 14). Leaning, pointing or bending turn into tasks; processes of directing and indicating, eventually, how the work had commenced. Such gestures can become decisive in selecting actions from initial experimentations within the given space and materials present. These initial experimentations do not mean 'beginning', as in initiating an artwork via an existential encounter with a latent and absent agency.

Using Video

Using video in my art practice is crucial for highlighting where and how forms of obstruction happen in my investigations. Whenever I find the performance coming to a halt I stop, setup a digital video camera and document variations of these actions. Documenting the performance becomes important for my process, for bringing further attention to how I eventually decide on a mark system that will emphasize my physicality in how it appears in arrest, as in kneeling or standing.

Such physiological obstructions owe a great deal to how other artists, such as Bruce

Nauman, perform in front of a video camera. Nauman's early studio experiments (c. 1967), such as *Walking In An Exaggerated Manner Around The Perimeter, or Bouncing Two Balls Between The Floor And Ceiling With Changing Rhythms,* are documentations of these activities and performances in their own right. On screen we see Nauman: positioning himself around pieces of masking-tape, occasionally using a pair of rubber balls to bounce and evoke discrete rhythms in the quietude of the studio (see: fig. 15 & 16). In one display of actions he carefully steps along a taped outline of a perimeter laid out over the studio floor. In the next work Nauman's slow contorted steps change to a boisterous oscillation, guided by his forceful bouncing of the rubber balls while playfully stepping into and out of the locational spot. His restricted movement, especially in the perimeter piece, operates alongside a few items/materials. For example, we see a stool, pieces of fabric, tape, or a mirror – the latter possibly being a device to help Nauman see his actions quickly, actions he might not need record, before having to document via camera. This sparseness of things may be, as Coosje van Bruggen comments, "a way to see the artist in direct relation to his ideas, unencumbered by the existence of an object whose physical presence might distract from those ideas" (1988: 43). Seeing Nauman walk, swerve and pose, along and around the marked frame, according to van Bruggen, stresses "the artist's isolation within the double entrapment of his studio and the frame" (1988: 48).

Nauman's syncopated steps, also offset by rhythmic alterations, delimit the taped perimeter while also providing a perspective, a screen-view of sorts. The video frame is directly echoed by the square marker placed on the studio floor (with removable masking tape). The camera helps impart a more contained view that is structured by the technical aspect ratio of 4:3 (the shape of the video-frame). Indeed, Nauman doubles the video reel, configured by the video-frame, and the space of experimentation; but his moving

around the marked outline also reflects the entrapment of the body as a technical apparatus.[25]

I find videoing performance important because it allows for spontaneous movements to be doubled and exaggerated but also punctuated. By digitally editing the sequence – stopping, reversing, cutting and then replacing parts – I can use this video-logical intervention to provide a way of directly undercutting ideas about starting to work spontaneously. Just as I use my elbow to restrict my torso around a contained circumference, or my legs remain fixed and parallel to the floor while pointing my finger toward the desk or floor, these stoppages become evident and meaningful to me when I stop the video sequence and extract still images from it (see: fig. 13 and 14). Selecting, extracting and exporting thumbnail images from the sequence (all functions integral to video editing) can also help me to particularize how I am positioned within the performative activity. This may be what Baz Kershaw articulates in uses of documenting performance to emphasize a "dislocation of knowledge" between "time/memory and space/embodiment" (in Riley & Hunter: 2009: 9). Kershaw elaborates: "the performing figure becomes integral to the scene by being abstracted from it. The document/dissemination manifests the 'live' precisely through its absence" (*Op.cit.*). What interests me in recording the initial performance through video is the abstraction of agency. Contrary to what Howell celebrates as 'one's *own* body', the underlying lack/absence affiliated with 'presence' is no longer integral to what is present and indicated through physicality.

Overall, video allows me to re-view, to see again in a more focused but also

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[25] Jean-Charles Masséra finds in Nauman's artwork a Foucaultian aspect, where the performer or spectator is negatively affected by discrete, normative techniques – laws and forces that coerce physiological behaviors. Nauman's 'movements' animate and bring these repressive affects into view such that, as Masséra writes, "the law is a cadence, a rhythm that circulates through bodies. The more your drives are synchronized to the rhythm of the law, the easier the execution of the task" (in Morgan 2002: 42). He elaborates, "the subject is neither neutral, nor embodied in a specific figure; instead, the subject is exposed to processes of instrumentalization and negation of exactly that which constitutes it as a subject" (Ibid.: 186).

dislocated manner, without assuming to perceive in greater depth from an interior absence. In Nauman's restricted and exaggerated movements for video we can perceive where the performer attempts to isolate his actions. Even though I share this approach, all be it in a much more restricted manner (holding positions that can remain still), in my case the camera can also help formulate ideas and devise tasks.

Developing Mark-Making Through Notation

Predominantly, the mark-making aspect becomes crucial after I have recorded myself making postures and imprints (as in leaning into a wall, shelf or foam). Making marks after experimenting with physical actions demonstrates how my process undergoes a methodological reversal: firstly, working with bodily gestures; secondly, using video to view these actions; and, thirdly, making drawings and notes that study still-images derived from videos of my actions. To recount these steps, when I use digital video-editing software to slow down a video sequence I am able to freeze and extract single images from each video frame. I then configure these images onto a computer document. After printing out these configurations onto a sheet of A4 paper I generate notations around the selected image(s). One example of this process can be seen in fig. 17, which shows a photo (still-image) of two markings on pavement: a dark contour beside a reddish star shape. In the video, which this photo derives from, I position myself in different spots around this area of pavement (which was part of an empty underpass near my studio). By picking up a piece of reddish brick I found in this area, I made a star-like shape to mark where I positioned myself around the dark, curving line – which was in this area before I arrived. Once I extracted and printed this image I re-drew the contour and star shape on parts of the page surrounding the photo. I also wrote a few notes, indicating these marks by terms such as "spot", or "asterisk and bracket." Although I do not use such sketches to

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begin preparing performances these notations do have a purpose at this third stage, namely to help me select which graphic signs to use in works such as *Eclipse* (2011) (see: fig. 18). In *Eclipse* the star-like shape I copied from the photo becomes an asterisk [*], drawn on an acetate sheet in highlighter (marker). (*Eclipse* is a work that explores my dislocated process by how I smudge this imprint with my head, which temporarily blocks the projected light from the overhead projector.)

The terms generated from my notes, such as 'point-of-view' or 'spot-light', expand into phrases that can act as titles. For example: *A View Over A Single Spot... Until A Period Comes Apart* is a phrase created from piecing together written notation I made around the printed image configured on paper (see: fig. 19). Rather than name the artwork this phrase-title can directly describe the task and action involved in making the performance-work – a dislocated gesture similar to that found in *Eclipse*. Task and title combine to inform how the performance occurs. In *A View Over A Single Spot… Until A Period Comes Apart* there is also a reference to 'period', suggesting the temporal elongation and near stillness of action found in this work. The action, of holding my head in the same position as a disk of projected light (sun-light coming from a window behind my head), is explored by notation that I made around three still-images from videoing this gesture – generally arching my head downward and to my left shoulder. I selectively insert three images to emphasize the duration and its association with an elliptical pause [...]. These dots visually stress the three spots (the spotlight, circular shadow, and the faintly engraved disk on the wooden wall-panel) associative with the notational mark of an ellipsis. In a descending sequence each frame is additionally drawn over to highlight the progression of my head coming away from the ascending light source (over which the performance begins by blocking the spotlight with my head).

Such notational transcriptions, writing and tracing around parts of the image, help

develop and orientate the work I make. They bring out the task-based aspect of making these actions extensions of a kind of site-particular attention being brought to performative nuances.[26] Although some of my artworks, such as *Placing A Pause By Kneeling and Staring At Two Holes In The Wall – Try and Make A Whole From Two*, suggest that a viewer executes a response most other performances are made by me. Explicitly titling the work with a task, nevertheless, can help bring out how working with the body can be affected by a physiological and intellectual obstruction, that is an interruption of subjective and sensory attempts to think in relation to physicality.

Overall, the task and the action can gain significance because neither the notational marks nor the body directly take priority in the artwork. Whereas the performance is impulsive and enticing there is a subtle and less intensive engagement that is exercised when the work is started and deployed into documentation and notation. This is how my practice engages an elaborate, tripartite approach. In other words, the gestures I work with engage conceptual parameters (video mediation, reversal of process) that, in the case of methodology, find me challenging an associated phenomenological foundation.

A Post-Phenomenological Methodology

This section has examined how I work with the body as a physiological means of investigating and devising the performance-drawings I make. What my examination proposes is a method that uses a three-phase procedure to express a re-evaluation of processes in combining performance and mark-making. If the body is maintained as a constitutive element to this tripartite procedure it can be perceived as irreducible to subjective states of apprehending agency, as in an existential lack, gap or absent other

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[26] Formulating tasks in this manner can also be similar to how Nauman involves instructional language, as announced by his video titles. As Janet Kraynak observes: "Nauman imagines the writings to function as "instructions" – some abstractly, some more emphatically – suggesting activities for the viewer "to execute certain physical and physiological responses to experience" (2005: 32).

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(being as pure presence or becoming).

As I hope to demonstrate in Chapter 1.2 the mark, as a graphic trace, can invoke a more complex displacement of agency from bodily gesture. Marking can appear to residually capture the performance. However, in another connotation of its gesture, marking can welcome a specious kind of absence as discussed here. Before moving to an analysis of the graphic trace I ask further how my method relates to the phenomenological. Indeed, I incorporate the body as a device leading the investigatory process. However, the elaborate technical and discursive procedure it is worked through opens into an investigation about the body as a proprioceptive tool – rather than perceiving the body as an originary investigatory instrument. It is important to keep in mind that in my approach to the phenomenological mode of investigating through physical gesture the body is a problem. The question of this approach being post-phenomenological means looking at whether the performer can, if ever, presuppose the body as a tool that is present at hand, inherently there to work with.

Having said this I wish to conclude with a note about 'starting' to work physiologically and existentially. For Moustakas, a phenomenological method of investigation designates:

> ...the opportunity for a fresh start, a new beginning, not being hampered by voices of the past that tell us the way things are or voices of the present that direct our thinking. The Epoche is a way of looking and being, an unfettered stance.
>
> (Moustakas 1994: 85)

This method places considerable value on 'beginning', which means perceiving and experiencing via an 'unfettered stance'. If considered under the existential approach of performance artists, such as Anthony Howell, such a stance is inherently fettered; beginning to perform means working with discrete voices, obscure forms of agency

characterized by silence or absence. Conversely, working closely with bodily actions, as I have started to show here, means inquiring or exploring without the presupposition of an existential gap. Intuiting, improvising and physically attempting to reflect on internal or absent subjective states (of sustaining self-presence) are fundamentally interrupted. The body is stuck, obstructed and always already fettered by its physicality and separation from agency as presence.

My intention is to therefore attempt to investigate this kind of post-phenomenological method, which I am proposing in terms of the way bodily gestures can direct attention to a conceptual notion of separation. Not to separate and polarize the self from an other, but to indicate a mode of separation in making and thinking, in which thinking is a question oriented by, what I am calling, 'a trace of thought'.

§1.2 - The Graphic Trace In Performance-Based Drawing

...an enormous undifferentiated object. Everything stops dead for a moment, everything freezes in place - and then the whole process will begin all over again. From a certain point of view it would be much better if nothing worked, if nothing functioned.

(Deleuze and Guattari 2000: 7)

Inscription

Moving, imprinting and rendering are attributes of inscription, a form of mark-making used in contemporary drawing. Etymologically, inscription encompasses writing and drawing under the term 'graphe', namely to write and put into display.[27] Here, I will look more closely at inscription in terms of its depiction of the mark as a graphic trace, the imprint that "choreographs and orchestrates thought" (Brody 2008: 13), the performative act in which "(im)material events occur" (Brody 2008: 29). This chapter (1.2) will set up my proposition that thought in drawing may be non-phenomenal, a trace distinct from the graphic form, and is related to a radical separation of the imprint/mark from bodily gesture. In order to approach the mark critically in relation to a further examination of my practice, I will make a contextual overview of relevant artists and debates. During this contextual overview a deconstruction of the graphic trace can aid my exploration of other possibilities in mark-making, from a notational mark system to a notion of the point.

Writers such as Jennifer DeVere Brody embrace inscription – not only cursive line-scrawls but even notational dots, commas, hyphens or brackets – as: "profoundly

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[27] Inscription displays a certain "visual scrawl" (Brody 2008: 29), which can be examined in two ways: in terms of the semiotic process that produces a series of signs (chains of signifiers that collect and designate a signified meaning); and, a scrawl of graphic strokes, lines viewable but indecipherable, that is a figure that elides signification and depicts a form of expressive, abstract desire. See: 'Depiction and Figure' in Chapter 1.0.

performative and excessive – as neither a recorded translation of speech or voice nor a mark of idiosyncratic ignorance, but rather as meaningful, effective, and indeed affective excess" (Brody 2008: 15). My intention is not to elaborate this form of inscriptive writing, generating and communicating intended meanings through semiotic exchange. In this regard I note that the writing I use in my thesis is that of a standard analysis of its content, and not that of a performative kind of writing, which engages writing as "the effect of a social relation and as a mode of cultural, historical action" (Pollock in Phelan and Lane eds. 1998: 95).

In this chapter I shall examine an overview of drawing practices in contemporary art under two questions: How is the graphic trace employed in performance-drawing? And, why is thought an (im)material event, an 'affective excess' of sorts that exceeds bodily engagement? Before proceeding with this examination I would like to mention that my work does not have a direct relationship to practices of inscriptive, performative drawing, such as that of William Anastasi – an artist who I will look at shortly. Contemporary mark-making does not account for the mark as a notational cipher, such as a point, that relates to interruptions of bodily gesture.[28] There is rarely any speculation in discourses of performance-drawing that, as I am arguing, a notion of the event (as such) could be *non-material*, rather than inscriptively (im)material.

Artists such as William Anastasi, Trisha Brown and Robert Morris, combine drawing and performance to depict and reveal the event of making and thinking. In other words, these artists engage drawing by indexing their gestures, involving their entire body. Materials such as graphite or charcoal are used to help evidence and trace these actions. As I will show, such artists and writers have since the late 1960's, in North America and Europe, renewed drawing in light of a conceptual and material penchant for revealing this

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[28] See Chapter 1.1.

performative process.

Tracing Multiplicity

To inscribe and depict (im)material events is a philosophical mode of multiplicity, a materialism characterizing thinking as live, palpable and creative. In Chapter 1.3 I shall fully analyze multiplicity within its philosophical context. In the meantime I will begin to provide an analysis of multiplicity within the context of performance-based drawing practices.

Thinking *is* an event, a multiplicity, if it affects and transforms ideas into "conceptual variation," to quote Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari – theorists often cited in contemporary drawing practices and exhibitions exploring the line. Thought in its multiplicity is 'creative' in that it makes "mental objects determinable as real beings" (Deleuze and Guattari 2003: 207). For artists using performative inscription this form of event, of what in philosophical terms is called 'vital multiplicity', involves corresponding the body to the means/process of marking.

Vital multiplicity provides a discursive method that attempts to incorporate the gesturing body to *incarnate*[29] the idea as a conceptual variation, to materialize a thought that is immaterial yet can be embodied. A graphic trace such as the line depicts this embodied concept through indexical marking, which in principle expresses the body as "ceaselessly becoming-other" (Ibid.: 177). This virtual state of embodiment *is,* rather than becomes, expressive by "making the invisible forces visible in themselves, drawing up figures" (Deleuze and Guattari 2003: 182).

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[29] "The event is always produced by bodies which collide, lacerate each other or interpenetrate, the flesh and the sword" (Deleuze 2006: 64). Deleuze's emphatic statement can be compared to José Gil's articulation of a "multiplicity of exfoliation." Incarnation would, in this case, entail corporeal metamorphosis: "This capacity to disappear, to be able to be absorbed in each exfoliation, defines the *metamorphosis* of the body. Metamorphosis is the condition of the activity of code translation: each exfoliation is the metamorphosis of all the other forms in a spatial *one*" (Gil 1998: 143).

Such a liminal body-event centers on using physiological proximity in conjunction with imprints, the latter claimed to be 'drawing up figures' of 'invisible forces'. Inscribing and delimiting figures of lines, contours and scribbles draws under a kinesthetic mode of investigating. But this approach, which uses physical exertion, can also be ontologically "antiproductive."[30] We can consider, using José Gil's articulation, that the thought-event of vital multiplicity *counters* the bodily inscription of figural forces: "to end up not with the self-presence of the body, but to obtain it while dissolving it, in *diffracting this presence in the presence of beings and things*" (Gil 1998: 120; emphasis added).

Artists and writers exploring contemporary drawing perceive bodily exertion in a manner that diffracts the presence of forces, equating expended energy with the sensation of an unmarked gesture. As writer Carrie Noland states, "performing gestures can generate sensations that are not-yet-marked, not-yet-meaningful" (Noland 2009: 17). The 'not-yet' denotes something of a yet-to-come sense of drawing/writing performatively that is particularly evident under the figure of the line. This figure fulfills a mandate for gesturally tracing and undergoing a sensation that is meaningful, a meaning that exceeds signification and is beyond representation while still affective.[31] Gestural tracing is 'productive' as is evidenced by physical action, the gesture being intentional toward expressing the becoming-other-of-the-body, an immaterial agency akin to vital multiplicity.

Somehow, throughout his/her scrawling action, the artist touches upon this agency by trying to embody forces that channel through and beyond the body's capacity to endure this affect. As I will show shortly, drawing materials – such as graphite or charcoal,

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[30] "Desiring machines, on the contrary, continually break down as they run, and in fact run only when they are not functioning properly," write Deleuze and Guattari (2000: 31).

[31] Embodiment and endurance in vital multiplicity derive from philosopher Baruch Spinoza's injunction, that thought or intellect can only be expressed by a question of bodily capacities to undergo this expression – "what can a body do?" See: Part IV, 'Of Human Bondage, or the Strength of the Emotions', in *The Ethics*, (Hackett, 1992). Also, for Deleuze's articulation of endurance see: Chapter Fourteen, 'What Can a Body Do?', in *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, (Zone Books, 2005).

which can be easily used, altered and subsequently removed – can be interpreted as materializing the immaterial agency of multiple forces. However, this kind of (im)material (kinesthetic) event, "often leads to a different form of stultification, which uses the blurring of boundaries and the confusion of roles to enhance the effect of the performance without questioning its principles," writes Jacques Rancière (2009: 21).[32] I keep Rancière's warning in mind as I see how the body is presented but supplanted by attempts to inscribe and depict the performative gesture through marking.

Exhibiting Contemporary Drawing

I now turn to look at contemporary drawing exhibitions and how they incorporate performance-based artworks. Since the 1970's, and predominantly in North America and Europe, drawing has re-emerged with a greater focus on conceptual invention, expansion of techniques and immediacy of form. It is multifactorial and reconfigurable, while not being a specific art-form. By creating crossovers, for instance between sculpture and time-based forms of presenting in temporary contexts, drawing has been honored for arising out of the last vestiges of modernism (Kantor 2005: 14). Exhibitions in New York, starting with Bernice Rose's 1976 exhibition *Drawing Now* (The Museum of Modern Art), have presented artists, such as Robert Morris, Richard Serra, Marcia Hafif, and William Anastasi, who explore drawing in its own right. These artists focus on the intellectual properties in corporeal indexing and material engagement. For example, Anastasi's isolated scribbled patches of (coloured) graphite, floating on hand sized paper, evidence an automatic response to traveling in buses and subways throughout New York (see: fig. 20). Meandering lines on paper record and track movements of the hand, suggesting a

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[32] See also Lyotard's chapter on 'The Tensor' (in *Libidinal Economy,* 2004), for his analysis of the event in a semiotic context. There the stultification of discursive processes is directed at the graphic cipher: "with the sign, if we have intention and postponement, we have also the opening up of diachrony, which is only a drawing-out of the tense of the compact immobile tensor into an *always past* and a *still to come*, an *even now* and a *not yet*, into the game of de-presence, the very game of semiotic nihlism" (Lyotard 2004: 45).

reflection of the transitional context they were rendered in. The enthusiasm this body-to-surface recording can spark is exemplified not only by the artist, rapidly and repetitively inscribing, but also from curators and writers, such as Laura Hoptman. Hoptman embraces this activity as "the most direct and unmediated method of catching the creative process as it happened" (2002: 11).

Rose's initiative to make such a survey exhibition of contemporary drawing continued twice more, with *American Drawing: 1963-74* (*The Whitney Museum of American Art*; New York, 1976), and *Twentieth-Century American Drawing: Three Avant-Garde Generations* (*Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum*; New York, 1976). By 1999 the question of drawing and its relation to processes of making was re-examined in Los-Angeles with *Afterimage: Drawing Through Process* (1999), curated by Cornelia H. Butler. This was one exhibition that fostered mark-making as being exemplary of depicting 'process', that is the genesis of a work of art, the cyclic activity *of* drawing and creating an artwork-as-drawing anew. However, the urgency to reveal what is usually the unseen procedures of artistic creation has, and still is, focused on the execution of (making) marks – the art-object, which is conventionally seen, bought and sold, being secondary to this creative process. Subsequent exhibitions have continued to address the process-of-making-marks, and to this I note their focus on the line as *the* mark (figure): *Drawing from The Modern (1975 - 2005)* (*Museum of Modern Art*; New York, 2005), *The Intertwining Line* (*Cornerhouse*; Manchester, 2008-9) *The End of The Line: Attitudes In Drawing* (*The Fruitmarket Gallery*; Edinburgh, 2009-10), *On Line: Drawing Through The Twentieth Century* (*Museum of Modern Art*; New York, 2011), *Drawing The Line: Japanese American Art, Design and Activism in Post-War Los Angeles* (*Japanese American National Museum*; Los Angeles, 2011-12), *Lines of Thought* (*Parasol Unit*; London, 2012).

To help articulate renewed understandings of drawing as a liminal art practice

tropes such as 'process-art'[33], 'experimentation' and 'expansion' are explored within debates about drawing by Hoptman as well as Cornelia H. Butler.[34] For Butler drawing "can physically embody moments of great agitation and experimentation," which means that one could have "a glimpse of the artist's presence captured in a work on paper with both radical simplicity and ideal messiness" (Butler 1999: 88). According to Rosalind Krauss, in an Anastasi scribble there is a hand-held attempt at seismic recording (1986: 95), perhaps of the artist not knowing what to do; but more importantly that the line is empathic, such that it can invite us to have a 'glimpse', perceiving and reflecting as the artist does while making the drawing. It is questionable if Anastasi's automatic scribbling captures his presence; or the mobility of being and inscribing within the train, the latter suggestive of a durational processing of the line's presence. While creating within a state of being on the move, by entering a train and simultaneously imprinting (while seated), Anastasi is 'embodying' the very transporting lines he is traveling within. The merit of the drawing is in its offering of a glimpse of an active physiological response to the train's mobility, and a more subterranean movement related to thinking about the means or process of making this drawing. Here, the multiplicity of lines Anastasi produces reveals an itinerant quality particular to this practice. "For what it [process, line] reveals," comments Pamela M. Lee, "is that drawing is not simply a means to an end. If anything, it reveals that its very ends are mediation – on the way to something else" (Lee in, Butler 1999: 48).

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[33] Process-art is largely referred to Lucy Lippard's celebrated document, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966-1972* (1973), which describes conceptual experimentations by American and European artists. 'Conceptual', 'performance' and 'process' are some of an array of terms that Lippard's book notes, terms which express qualities of art making in general. These qualities emphasize expansion rather than defining parameters of a venerable art-form. Process-art per se would, in this case, *not* be a genre but rather an attitude toward making conceptually and materially.

[34] See: Cornelia H. Butler, 'Ends and Means', in Butler (1999).

Movement-Based Thinking

It is with a choreographic approach to drawing, as in the exhibition *Move: Choreographing You* (Hayward Gallery 2010-11), that the urgency for expansion[35] in drawing shifts to exploring direct indexes of bodily action and a temporality central to vital multiplicity. Gesture is investigated by how artists (such as Trisha Brown or Robert Morris) are *tracing movement* – this term being one of the designated sections of the exhibition titles. For example, in *Its A Draw, Live Feed* (2003) Brown uses hand-sized charcoal sticks to inscribe trajectories left by her arms and legs onto a large sheet of paper fixed on the floor (see: fig. 21 & 22). The actual traces that Brown makes express movement as being physical and an unmediated force, a pure creative energy harnessed and physiologically exerted. Drawing is then performative, rather than choreographically pre-constructed as a dance, which exemplifies what Peggy Phelan terms (in the accompanying catalogue) as "movement-based thinking" (Phelan, in Rosenthal ed. 2011: 22).[36]

In *Its A Draw* Brown attempts to map spontaneous gestures by pressing and delineating trajectories cast by her arm or leg onto the paper, creating fragmentary contours, tracing and encircling where she moved. The malleability of the charcoal enables her to later alter an initial trace, rubbing and smearing inscribed lines into multiple tracks; a composition generated from "a formless splattering preventing figurability" (Lepecki 2006: 71). Brown is seen toppling and falling – hardly assertive and self-controlled; and in her corporeal release presents a movement that is variable and fragmentary. There, as André Lepecki observes, "lines traced with hands as well as feet –

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[35] Avis Newman addresses the aspect of expansion as a fundamental process of ontological transformation: "that nevertheless proposes a process of becoming more than being, analogous to the practice of drawing in which one may see 'not the thing itself but its possibility, its suggestion, (and) the uncertainty as to what stage it is in its becoming..." (Newman, in Chelsea Space 2007: 20).
[36] Patricia Cain also associates processes of moving with eidetic revelation when she writes, "ideas often appear to emerge as the activity progresses" (Cain 2010: 29).

vaporize in dust, twitch in hesitation, break under her attack, initiate flow, reflect precision, and fall into error" (Lepecki 2006: 71). What happens though to all the variations of Brown's postures, of toppling and falling, which indicate weight and release? Why do her physical movements 'vaporize in dust', as if the charcoal lines Brown traces depict a 'flow' of energies disseminated by psycho-physical exertion, markings imprinted and exfoliated on paper? Brown moves within a display of fragile gestures, letting her body err under gravitational forces while displaying an array of limber body-shapes; and yet the figuration of boldly pressed and rubbed lines inevitably obfuscate the intricacy of the performance. Here, the lines draw-out into a spiraling vertigo, reiterating a continual process of dematerialization and conceptual variation.

The perception of (physical) movement, therefore, directs toward a thought that is always already becoming, embodied and dispersed in an enigmatic gesture. As fellow choreographer Simone Forti confides, this gesture (the means of expending and channeling of energy) "has to do with sensing movement in your own body, sensing your body's changing dynamic configurations" (Forti 1974: 29-31); in other words, the sensation stimulated by physical movement qualifies thinking as being interpersonal yet indeterminate, changing into multiple variations of presence. It is precisely here that drawing is employed, namely to enable this sensing with a haptic quality, wherein indexical marks render visible a process of inner dynamic change.

Tracing, Re-Marked

Given that tracing is perceived to depict movement-based thinking it would be important to look again at how the mark appears as a graphic trace, this time in its inscriptive/linguistic sense. An inscribed imprint indexes a causal and semiotic operation. The mark qua index is, as Michael Newman writes, "where the sign is related to its

referent, as smoke is to fire, or a track in the snow" (Newman and de Zegher 2003: 93).

There is no causal agent/signified, no fire or foot to correspond the effect to. The indexed

referent is rather constitutively abstracted, "an empty linguistic expression that derives its

sense from the context in which it is performed, such as 'this,' 'that,' 'now,' and the

personal pronouns" (Newman and de Zehger: 94).

While investigating the trace in relation to a graphic index Newman focuses on *the*

origin of painting – or what is also often dubbed 'the origin of plastic arts'. As Pliny the

Elder's short tale tells, the pottery maker Butades invites his daughter to inscribe the

outline of her lover's shadow, cast by candle light against a wall (see: fig. 23).[37] The

Corinthian maid tries to fix this line by having her father sculpt a ceramic form around it,

helping her reinforce and trace the memory of the man she may never see again, who

departs the next day – Pliny's short account does not tell us if he ever returns.[38] According

to Newman neither the sculpted supplement nor the lover demonstrate this paradoxically

mnemonic trace, a material track that derives from no actual happening.[39] Rather it is *in*

the outlining trace that "the site of departure, is also a place of mourning" (Newman & de

Zehger 2003: 94). The outline is a 'figure', an epiphenomenon of something that is absent

and *never* present. In it one neither deciphers a specific time, place nor agent (lover,

shadow or inscribing maid having caused the imprint). In accordance with Lyotard's

argument, the signification in inscribing the figure is that it "*stands in* for nothing"

(Lyotard 2011: 81). What is the mnemonic value of the graphic trace as such if its figure

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[37] For an extensive study of the role of the shadow in the myth of Butades see: 'Around The Uncanny'', in: Stoichita (2001). Victor Stoichita describes the tracing of the lover's shadow "as an affirmation of body, volume and flesh" (2011: 127). The collaborative delivery of this activity will have "authenticated the incarnation" and "the presence of the author" (*Op.cit.*).

[38] See: Pliny the Elder, *Natural History – A Selection* (Penguin, 2004), *Books XXXIII-XXXV*, p. 340.

[39] Newman's account of the graphic trace informs not only the artistic but philosophical context, which I shall be responding to throughout Chapter Two and Three. In his essay '*The Trace of Trauma*' Newman iterates that, in relation to the writings of Blanchot – who argues that there is *no* 'origin of the trace' – "the marks are effaced because there is no present in which they can be present; and the traces are 'forever cut off from that of which they would be the traces'" (Newman, in Gill ed. 1996: 165).

refers to an abstract 'this' or 'now' that has never been? (This is an important question, which I aim to take up in Chapter 2.3 where I look at the point as an imprint.)

What we have with the figure of the outline is an utterly abstract presence, even though the graphic trace/figure displays the visible mark the trace indexes and *doubles*, "insofar as it is recognizable as such, is *always already re-marked*" (Newman & de Zehger 2003: 100; emphasis added). As a figural and material outline, a graphic trace intertwines its visual effect with an immaterial movement that *sustains* the expressive doubling of a differential movement. This intertwinement is a kind of conceptual variation affecting the inscription of the trace. Smoke *becomes* in its smoking; the effect *affects* its continual coming-to-presence in moving and specular shifting.[40] Through its reiteration the indexical outline indicates presence beyond and prior to the physical gesture. And yet gestures mark out and instantly enact a passing of the *hic et nunc*, what is momentary, here and now. Hence, in this doubling of mark and gesture, materializing and momentary display of an immaterial movement, the notion of originary presence remains, which "has to do with the genesis of the work of art as such" (Newman & de Zehger 2003: 103).

In his examination of drawing and the phenomenologies of touch Derrida offers an important insight into Pliny's myth:

> The movement of the magic wand that traces with so much pleasure does not fall outside of the body. Unlike the spoken or written sign, it does not cut itself off the desiring body of the person who traces or from the immediately perceived image of the other. It is of course still an image which is traced at the tip of the wand, but an image that is not completely separated from the person it represents; what the drawing draws is almost present in person in his *shadow*. The distance from the shadow or from the wand is almost nothing. She who traces, holding, handling, now, the wand, is very close to touching what is very close to being the other *itself*, close by a minute difference; that small difference - visibility, spacing, death - is undoubtedly

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[40] José Gil similarly contextualizes the remark of trace within anthropology by describing affective movement in terms of a multiple, differential force that exercises a form of doubling. "The operator's [force] role seems to be a double one. First determining what the force is, then transforming it," which in turn means that "force doesn't exist: when it is the movement from one sign to another. But as movement, with its characteristic feature of energy, it is final and irreducible" (Gil 1998: 11).

the origin of the sign and the breaking of immediacy; but it is in reducing it as much as possible that one marks the contours of signification.

<div align="right">(Derrida 1998: 234)</div>

According to Derrida the inscribing utensil, be it pencil, brush or stick, is a magical device, a magic wand. Its 'magic' is that the wand/drawing-device inscribes and maintains a distance between what is seen and touched, the shadow and the tracing. This distance is 'minimal', 'almost nothing', a form of separation that refers to an interruption of signification and the dissemination of presence. In deconstruction, this interruptive separation is also called 'spacing' – a key term that I will be examining throughout Chapters Two and Three. To my knowledge, drawing practices and discourses rarely, if ever, discuss a separation in terms of 'the breaking of immediacy'.

What can be said however is that the graphic trace creates only a self-generating movement; or, as Lyotard summarizes: "the line records neither the signifiers of a discourse nor the outlines of a silhouette; it is the trace of a condensing, displacing, figuring, elaborating energy, with no regard for the recognizable" (Lyotard 2011: 232). So how is movement creative, 'the genesis of the work of art', if its function is to re-mark a void-like presence, a trace that has no referent, a separation that is almost nothing?

Embodied Limitation

To close my discussion of the graphic trace I will examine the haptic quality of inscription. Phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty offers one of the most infamous concepts of the haptic. Self-touching, or chiasmus, is a complex form of apperception, which involves intertwining perception and (bodily) mobility. In a chiasmus one touches upon the possibility of thinking via a perception and mobility that is shared by others. As Merleau-Ponty claims: "it is not *I* who sees, not *he* who sees, because an anonymous visibility inhabits both of us, a vision in general..." (1968: 142). Distinct from 'I' or 'he',

from individual/ego or other, this generalizing visibility "is a circle of the touched and the touching, the touched takes hold of the touching; there is a circle of the visible... there is even an *inscription of the touching in the visible*, of the seeing in the tangible..." (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 143; emphasis added). In phenomenology the individual (ego) struggles to gain proximity, if possible *within* the body, of an anonymous operation that circulates 'an inscription' of thinking-perceiving.[41] As Edmund Husserl (who founded phenomenology at the turn of the 20th Century) states, "there are parts of this body which can indeed be perceived by touch but cannot be seen" (Husserl 2002: 152). To my understanding one of the only ways to keep the anonymous inscription of chiasmus from being utterly distant, and maybe even equated with a kind of nothing, is by keeping the body *in* movement, to be active and "reflexively related to [oneself]" so that, in turn, in this circle of the touch, is produced a "psychophysical whole" (Husserl 1960: 97).

A problem I find with drawing through performance is that marking gesturally, simultaneously inscribing and making a graphic trace, not only alludes to making tangible the chiasmatic circle of inscription but also rendering it visible. That is, the re-mark of the graphic trace is a kind of glimpse at what is *certain*, sure to be there. And therein does the mark depict what Husserl calls "apodictic evidence" (1960: 103), the certainty of an infinitely continuous movement that bridges any minimal difference.

To provide an example I look to Robert Morris and how he explores the haptic, phenomenological act in his *Blind Time Drawings* (c. 1972). Morris makes these drawings by imprinting paper (around the size of his torso), using his hands and fingers (see: fig. 24). He approaches the drawing blind-folded, firstly dowsing his hands in loose iron oxide pigment and, then, moving toward the paper and wall. Morris intentionally places a

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[41] Ian James identifies the Christian characteristic of Merleau-Ponty's chiasmus, whereby embodying the inscription-of-touching-in-the-visible associates with the statement made in the Gospel of St. John: "And the word was made flesh." See: James (2006), pp. 114-151.

blindfold over his eyes. He also prepares an instruction, which he later (after completing the task-based performance) writes onto the paper (predominantly in the lower portion). His mannerisms are investigatory, seizing and groping the surface. In approximately a few minutes the paper is stained by a gestural flourish of dark and bold strokes. These imprints reflect the directions of his hands and finger-pressure – this being emblematic of a "kinesthetic practice of traction" (de Zegher 2011: 23).

In de Zegher's words Morris attempts to make his presence kinesthetically proximate, the graphic trace depicting "an outward gesture linking inner impulses and thoughts to the other through the touching of a surface with repeated marks and lines." (de Zegher 2011: 23). What is intriguing about the line in *Blind Time III* (1985) is that the interval, perhaps alluding to Morris attempting to express a linking of impulse and thoughts, is both graphically depicted (dark imprints) and more peculiarly *re-presented*: in addition to blindfolding himself Morris deliberately places a tape line along the centre of the paper, which he pulls away after his performance. The white gap left by this tape line appears vacant, even and *untouched*. Why though, if the inner impulses are unmediated and spontaneous, does Morris make a didactic representation of what his intuitive touch is principally blind to? Morris actually writes a rather emphatic comment about 'experiencing' this haptic proximity: "a gap inevitably appears in the self's dedicated pursuit of its own narrative. In that pause the weightless drift is buoyed up on the void" (Morris, in Criqui 2005: 198). This note appears in addition to the written task. Combine this written reflection with the fact that the tape helps guide his hands throughout the performative marking. The vertical strip and the written reminder make his reason for drawing blind ambiguous and expedient to the act.

Conclusions and Preparatory Comments for Examining 'Multiplicity'

What Morris' work presents is the specious quality of a graphic trace. By adding to the drawing another inscription, a supplementary note, Morris looks toward depicting an immanent and displacing movement related to the mark-making process. What both types of mark help us see is the degree to which the artist is impelled to touch upon a presence of movement that is vital, a presence that affects direct engagement but exceeds representation. Tracing movement is based on this desperation, not to traverse an event of thought (to explore a paradigmatic shift in the means of thinking and making) so much as to exercise "a kind of para-logical suspension" (Krauss 1986: 13). To use Krauss' words, marking/tracing is "a message that translates into the statement 'I am here'... one that repeats the message of pure presence in an articulated language" (Krauss 1986: 211).

Touching beyond the visible can be better understood as an endeavor to sustain a bridge, a link with the non-representable and void-like ontological condition, at once phenomenological and vitally multiple. Linking the material imprint with an immaterial movement relates to a form of empathy that brings full circle the kind of liminal and aesthetic enjoyment this phenomenological-vitalist event presents. "To enjoy aesthetically," writes Wilhelm Worringer, "means to enjoy myself in a sensuous object diverse from myself, to empathize myself into it... to expand my inner vision till it embraces the whole line" (Worringer 1997: 5). Another way to take up the haptic effort to link the inner with the outer, immaterial and material, is to look at what it means to empathize with the whole line.

What I have been arguing throughout my overview of contemporary drawing exhibitions and related performance-based works is how a limit of thinking and being, of a vital and phenomenological form of presence, is sought after by working directly with the

graphic trace. The emergence of performative drawing practices, such as those of Anastasi, Brown and Morris, shows how such artists use gestural mark-making to gain absolute proximity to thought as a liminal force, a philosophically characterized relation of physicality to an anonymous agency. The embodiment of this relation, as a graphic trace, the imprinted re-mark, touches upon a conceptual limit of the 'graphic continuum' (Petheridge 2010). Does this liminal operation not generate a continuous self-touching-circularity, 'felt' to be creatively infinite, an infinity of the 'not yet' that interminably blurs any possible questioning of the event (of thought)?[42]

I would like to end with two comments to help hone in on this question. My first comment deals with a general criticism of Deleuzian vital-multiplicity, which I propose correlates to the chiasmatic, empathic enjoyment (moving, imprinting, self-touching) found within performance-drawing practices. Bodily exertion aims to touch upon a perpetual multiplicity of forces, an infinite continuum of pure potentiality. However, as Slavoj Žižek argues, "there is no infinite; infinite is just the subjective urge to go beyond, the creative 'in-between'" (Žižek 2004: 69). Žižek's words resonate with my speculation about endeavors to embody the trace as a continuum. Graphically depicting movement into an actual trace, the re-marked imprint of becoming, is largely an urge to make this impulse (of one-self-becoming-other always already Other) enigmatically present. What kind of agency is then gained through material self-enjoyment? Becoming is, Žižek argues, "a third mediating agency" with "no positive substantial Being since, in a way, its status is purely 'performative' (i.e., it is a kind of self-inflamed flame, nothing but the outcome of its activity)" (Žižek 2004: 119). Embodying the graphic trace sustains an anonymous agency, a 'third mediating agency' that is always dematerializing yet, in effect, is a pan-

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[42] To explore the debate on the problematic of chiasmatic continuity, of self-touching and touching upon a generative liminal presence, see: Lefort, C. *'Flesh and Otherness'*; and Dillon, M. C., *'Écart: Reply to Claude Lefort's "Flesh & Otherness"'*, in Johnson and Smith (1990).

sensory movement. What this activity produces is not meaning as such but a nullifying effect of perpetually being-de-materialized. [43] The anticipatory, 'not-yet' aspect of embodied gestures – if we can recall Noland's claim – is in this case challenged. Incessant physiological engagement through gestural marking wards off the complete loss of a trace and inner-presence deemed intrinsically vital and potent. It is questionable if any ontological transformation can actually occur here.

Becoming, being-de-materialized – which pertains more to displacing the existential position of a unified self – exercises a stultification of the thought-event (multiplicity) that I now wish to clarify. Becoming (process, pure mediation, the line) stultifies, better yet, interrupts a meaning-structure.[44] The expansion of writing through drawing is pinned to an overall cultural desire to express inner impulses as some "living discourse," which Rancière elaborates as "a way of seeing while on the move, of fixing the *sketch* in which nature presents itself to one-self, reveals itself as presentation itself" (Rancière 2004: 17). Conversely, the proximity gained by drawing performatively does use embodiment to enact a form of incarnation. The trace insures that both performer and spectator can witness a living presence that exceeds and animates bodily gesture; or, to use Rancière's repeated criticism, acquires a "material presence, the spirit made flesh, the absolutely other which is also absolutely the same" (Rancière 2007: 8). In this way the graphic trace is the incarnation of a living, anonymous presence; "the imprint of the thing, the naked identity of its alterity in place of its imitation, the wordless, senseless materiality of the visible instead of the figures of discourse..." (*Op. cit.*) Does this mean that all attempts at

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[43] Terry Eagleton comments on "this grandly generalizing gesture" by writing: "What makes me what I am, the will of which I am simply a materialization, is utterly indifferent to my individual identity, which it uses merely for its own pointless self-reproduction. At the very root of the human subject lies that which is implacably alien to it, so that in a devastating irony this will which is the very pith of my being, which I can feel from the inside of my body with incomparably greater immediacy than can know anything else, is absolutely unlike me at all, without conscious motive, as blankly unfeeling and anonymous as the force which stirs the waves" (Eagleton 1990: 161).

[44] It can be argued that becoming, the vitalist act of interruption and affection, is but another attempt in post-structural critiques of transgressing semiotic binarism or logocentrism with a notion of difference.

developing or creating a new discourse of the thought-event are obstructed? Here, we may say that a certain end-point has been reached; not an end, but a chance to open up a discourse around where the body and another form of mark-making can be presented.

§1.3 – The Multiplicity of (Un)Thought

> **"**This is why it is correct to name it a *limit*: that which gives a series both its principles of being, the one-cohesion of the multiple that it is, and its 'ultimate' term, the one-multiple towards which the series tends without ever reaching nor even approaching it."
>
> (Badiou 2005: 156)

Thinking and Impasse

Multiplicity structures a theoretical limit; an impasse that, according to Alain Badiou, can neither be reached nor approached. In its vital form, multiplicity configures thought as an event that is "monomaniacal in operation," as Jon Roffe comments; "a disparate and disjunct ensemble of operations that cannot communicate with one another through any ideal form of the object that they all share" (Roffe 2012: 36). In Chapter 1.2 we have seen one form of this thought-event, prompted by tropes such as 'tracing movement', the endeavor being to gesturally inscribe and "turn outward" an impulse of "inner life" (Schneeckloth 2008: 284).[45] Indeed, this event can seem monomaniacal, a tendency that can have the practitioner, to use Roffe's words, "caught up in the great drama of actualization," while focusing on an "eccentric spiraling at the heart of being" (Roffe 2012: 157). Can multiplicity, despite such a theoretical impasse of 'eccentric spiraling', still provide an event that is generative of thought? What I speculate is that the event in its philosophical context, of thinking thought at its limit, is an impasse that, if unattended, can remain a purely self-reflexive movement, an eccentric spiraling that also impairs questioning – what is thinking in the event of creating thought anew?

As I mentioned in the Introduction, there would be a junction at which we should

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[45] Schneeckloth's paper extensively refers to this operation of exteriorization. It is her "hope," she states, that an "interpretation lies beyond the logic of sign, located instead in the resonance of *feeling* bodies." (Schenckloth 2008: 280).

inquire about what kind of tradition of thought is explored in contemporary performance-based drawing. Here, I shall assess 'multiplicity' in relation to thought as an event, this time not in drawing but in its philosophical context. Bear in mind that as an event multiplicity, in its briefest summary, could refer either to: 1. how things *are*, a certain ontological operation of continuously altering what actually (phenomenologically) is; or, 2. how an existing world can *appear* differently, such that there is no universal concept or transcendental schema, which includes topological figurations of line, to thereby perceive this change/event. In the previous section we have partly explored this first kind of multiplicity, which is vital and operates under one logic of ontological change or figuration of line. Vital multiplicity then relates to a notion of the line, which I will elaborate here. The second form of multiplicity, proposed by Badiou, is not ontologically vital as it is, rather, phenomenologically inexistent. This void-multiplicity is radically ontological, an event of thought that can alternatively introduce a conceptual point, which possibly never appears as such. Once we have examined these two forms of the event and figures (the topologies of line and point) we can consider multiplicity further for properties that will prove crucial in exploring my practice in relation to this term.

Disjunctive Synthesis and Thought-Event

I will start by examining how vitalism amalgamates the ontological and phenomenological orders and what consequences this may incur. Thought in the vitalist sense, as Henri Bergson originally proposed at the turn of the 20th century, is a "vital order"[46] that is immanent in matter (Bergson 1998: 236). Life and matter are "two movements," explains Bergson, "which forms a world being an undivided flux, and

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[46] Bergson makes a detailed account of the origins of multiplicity, as a vital order, or creative evolutionist concept, when he discusses its derivation from mathematician G. B. Riemann's geometric theories of space and manifold. For his articulation of Riemann's space-time combination, along with the demonstration that "qualitative multiplicity" (indivisible and vital duration) is distinct from quantitative measure see: Bergson (2005), pp. 121-126.

undivided also the life that runs through it, cutting out in it living beings all along its track"

(Bergson 1998: 249). Thought pertains to *one* undivided material flux or becoming. As

Deleuze stresses, "there is no beyond becoming, nothing beyond multiplicity" (Deleuze

2006: 22). Multiplicity cuts out subjective states of apprehending the flux of becoming.

Thinking is living-matter, an immaterial flow that is non-representable yet present within

all things, a state of becoming that is immanent in life as such.

In its vital order multiplicity operates in two ways: creating a differential state of

becoming, and affecting an ontological synthesis that intertwines, or 'folds', an interior

state of being into this conceptual becoming, an outside of infinite flux. This topology

presents an order of thought that, as Deleuze explains:

> ...is not a fixed limit but a moving matter animated by peristaltic movements,
> folds and foldings that together make up an inside: they are not something
> other than outside, but precisely the inside *of* the outside ...

(Deleuze 2006a: 80)

The conceptual folding of living matter alludes to thinking thought at its limit, "the

unthought;" in other words, "that impossibility of thinking which doubles or hollows out

the outside" (Deleuze 2006: 80).

Vital multiplicity is highly complex, mainly because it is resistant to theorization –

there is no philosophical system to provide its explanation nor a clear distance to theorize

from. When Deleuze writes that "every idea is a multiplicity or a variety" he proposes to

reformulate the nature of an idea as such in terms of a thought that has "neither sensible

form nor conceptual signification" (1994: 183). Despite its being this unthought, vital

multiplicity is conceptually productive, described by Deleuze – and criticized by Badiou –

as a 'disjunctive synthesis': thinking through a movement that is simultaneously

(im)material, a becoming topologically inside-as-outside, hollowing out Being as such yet

always present and univocal (Deleuze 1995: 156). In other words, vital multiplicity is

disjunctive, an interruption that is to produce thinking through the embodiment of its (impersonal) agency, a movement that cannot be fixed either in meaning, representational idea nor way of being. Disjunctive synthesis is therefore conceptually productive in its topology, i.e. thinking-inside-as-outside. It is also performative, a virtual aesthetics[47] based around an affect that forces a virtual movement through matter. Hence, the "thought event," which Eric Alliez comments, is "thought proceeding by virtualization" (2005: 87).

Here, virtualization is thought in its affect, thinking an impasse that resists contemplation and theorization. Virtualization "makes fluid the instituted distinctions, augments the degrees of freedom, *hollows out a moving void,*" as Alliez elaborates (2005: 87; emphasis added). Indeed, affect *is* the event as it virtually moves and hollows out, interrupts what is actual and possible, moving outward and forcing a change in how things appear and generally are.

By now we may see how vital multiplicity, from disjunctive synthesis to virtual-becoming, appeals to the conceptual quality of performance-drawing; for at the core of this event is the topological modus operandi: the line (Hallward 2006: 127-28). The line *is* vital multiplicity, the manner in which it forces and emanates[48] into multiple lines, a rhizomatic bifurcation of becoming ever new lines-of-thought that fold thought into matter (Deleuze and Guattari 2002: 8-9). By hollowing itself out though, to use Peter Hallward's critical observation, the virtualizing line is "a *pure* [*viz.*] or absolute between,"

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[47] Virtual aesthetics is, philosophically, a form of transcendental empiricism that concerns, as John Marks clarifies, the "neglected principle: the idea that relations are exterior to their terms." See: Marks (1998). These relations are aesthetic and approached virtually, rather than theoretically. Relations are principles based on an injunction central to Deleuze's praxis: "Lets not ask what principles are, but what they do." Ronald Bogue articulates relations in relation to virtual aesthetics: an "experimental affective physics," where "the individual arts, such as painting, music, and cinema" are focused upon achieving an "aesthetics of force." See: Bogue, (1996).

[48] In his studies on Spinoza, Deleuze explores the virtualization of vital multiplicity through the medieval notion of 'emanation': thought is affective in that it moves and emanates via an aesthetic mode of expressing a purely expressive intellectual order, or immanence. "Immanence is the very vertigo of philosophy, and is inseparable from the concept of expression (from the double immanence of expression itself, and of what is expressed in its expression)" (Deleuze 2005: 180).

an absolutizing moving void that "can just as well be described as 'between' nothing at all" (Hallward 2006: 154). Even though this line intermingles with a virtualizing affect that hollows itself out – only in so far as this movement sustains and modifies its force – the contradiction, which Hallward shrewdly calls up, is that vital multiplicity never presents and affirms the nullity it implies.[49]

A Point Un-thought

What I find questionable about the multiplicity of the line is its particular way of hollowing what it materially multiplies, thus subtracting a topological point within the fold. The following passage by Deleuze and Guattari is one of the few that addresses a kind of multiple point in relation to the plurality of lines:

> Lines aren't things running between two points; points are where several lines intersect. Lines never run uniformly, and points are nothing but inflections of lines. More generally, it's not beginnings and ends that count, but middles.
>
> (Deleuze and Guattari 1995: 161)

The point functions as a terminal for sustaining the inflection and perpetual hollowing of running lines. Indeed, the point is an anomaly, not the line as such but rather the multiple inflection of vital multiplicity in its virtualization. The point is integrated *and* excluded, a line-inflection that is voided but can never be presented in its own right. In Deleuze's words (with Guattari) this voided-point-of-inflection "marks the proliferation of the line, or its sudden deviation, its acceleration, its slowdown, its furor or agony" (Deleuze & Guattari 2002, 297).

The point is already hollowed, *voided* in so far as it is non-affective. The point inflects a sudden deviation, which cannot be confused with a variation of movement; for

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[49] See Deleuze's essay on Samuel Beckett, 'The Exhausted'. "The disjunction has become *inclusive*, everything divides, but not in itself, and God, the set of the possible, intermingles with Nothing, of which everything is a modification" (Deleuze, in Kerslake, Parallax 3(September 1996): 117).

it is the line that continues, virtually moving at various speeds, inducing an agonizing vertigo. It is within this spiraling movement that only the line remains moving, affective and present. My speculation, however, is that the point inadvertently indicates what Hallward describes as the 'between' of 'nothing at all'. I believe that if we could reconsider the point, from being a mere inflection, hollowed rather than hollowing, then this non-affective figure – a non-figure, perhaps – could be viewed in terms of a more radical multiplicity. At the moment, we cannot imagine the point within vital multiplicity, because it is non-affective and purely nothingness, empty of meaning and event. Let us see though how another form of multiplicity might present a different kind of point.

Two Multiplicities

Badiou has had a precarious relationship with Deleuze since the 1970s, producing numerous controversial critiques of Deleuze's work.[50] There is one criticism that I believe can help us see how Badiou articulates multiplicity. According to Badiou the vitalist enterprise concerns "thinking thought (its act, its movement) on the basis of an ontological precomprehension of Being as One" (Badiou 2000: 19). Here, Being (as such) is a disjunctive synthesis, a vital thought-event of becoming that is ontologically and absolutely singular in its ubiquitous multiplicity. It is One because there is no other kind of event beyond this vital order. Badiou is not suggesting that vitalist ontology is a dialectical synthesis, associated with a vulgar form of Hegelian movement that culminates into an absolute formation of self-determining consciousness, a single historicizing Spirit. His distinction is that Deleuze's ontology is univocal, what Badiou also calls 'One-all'. Indeed, the line is indicative of how the flow of becoming does not paradigmatically

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[50] To my knowledge, one of the most in depth and up to date examinations of Badiou's critical claim, that Deleuze's philosophy is 'one and many', or 'One-All' (Badiou 2000), can be found in Jon Roffe's *Badiou's Deleuze* (2012).

change, is *absolutizing* rather than absolute, affecting all things with a One-all order that immanently alters everything.

The absolutizing quality of vital multiplicity works under one premise, pre-comprehended by Deleuze's Parmenidean maxim: "[Being] is the same thing which occurs and is said" (Deleuze 1990: 180).[51] Here, multiplicity correlates to a form of speech, a force that flows in things as they occur through the act of speaking. The issue for Badiou, however, is whether there is any change in the manner, the immanent flow, exercised by this monistic univocity of Being as becoming.

Deleuze and Badiou's responses to the Parmenidean proposition provide, to my knowledge, the clearest distinction between the two forms of multiplicity. Both men are polarized in their positions towards the dictum set by the ancient Eleatic philosopher, Parmenides: "thinking and being are the same" (11.3; in McKirahan, Jr. 1994: 152). What Deleuze calls the "eventum tantum" is congruous with a unanimity of language and bodies, saying and being said consistently but always becoming qualitatively different (Deleuze 1994: 35). Specifically, in Deleuze's words, this differentiation *consistently* "never stops happening and never ceases to await us: a pure virtuality" (2006: 120). Badiou contests Deleuze's disjunctive movement, that pure virtuality is "monotonous" and bereft of changing how things are, arguing **"everything happens, in as much as everything happens"** (in Boundas and Olkowski 1993: 56).[52] Indeed, Badiou's words summarize what I find is an operation of thought that aims to fundamentally transform thought while maintaining the same virtualization of thinking-being.

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[51] Parmenides' infamous claim, *to gar noein est in te kai einai*, translates as: thinking and being are the same. Phillipe Lacoue-Labarthe comments that this claim is a modification of a more contradictory and problematic statement that Parmenides tries to propose: "*One cannot think of what is not*" (Lacoue-Labarthe 1993: 4). Lacoue-Labarthe continues, stressing the incredible importance of what this proposition means historically for Western Philosophy: "not only is history the history of this text, but history has taken place because this text needed to be commented upon, taken up again, critiqued, reaffirmed, etc. It *required* this" (1993: 3).

[52] See also Badiou's four critical propositions on Deleuze's vitalist ontology in *Logics of Worlds, Being and Event II* (2009a). The temporal aspect of Deleuze's ontological event is addressed in axiom two: "The event is always what has just happened, what will happen, but never what is happening" (Badiou 2009a: 382).

In light of his critical view of monistic ontology my interest in Badiou's articulation of multiplicity comes from his response to the Parmenidean ultimatum. Parmenides' maxim proposes that being as such "must either fully be or not" (11.8; in McKirahan, Jr. 1994: 153), to which Badiou argues that Being is *not.*[53] Being is "never the concentration of vital continuity or the immanent intensification of a becoming," writes Badiou (2009a: 384). There is no multiplicity of lines hollowing and folding through matter; nor is Being manifested under an event-like enunciation. Rather, there is a notion of multiplicity that is purely "the void, which is neither presented nor represented" (Badiou 2005: 108). Being as such is a pure multiplicity that, in this sense, aids in making thought anew, a multiplicity of veritable exceptions or new truths "which are not bodies, languages, or combinations of the two" (Badiou 2009: 4).

Here, Badiou is trying to distinguish a multiplicity of truths from a purely void multiplicity, a theoretical notion that structures truths. These veritable ideas indicate the void of multiplicity, as Sam Gillespie formulates, as an "impasse of thought that is internal to thinking the totality of being, rather than a name for some failure of thought" (2001: 65). "The void is not a physically existing vacuum, of a lack, of an existential wound at the centre of experience," explains Gillespie (*Op.cit.*). So, in response to the quotation I opened with regarding the 'limit', rather than see the void of multiplicity as an impasse folding through a liminal becoming, for Badiou the multiple is an 'ultimate term'. That is, the thought that truths indicate are neither virtually exercised nor actually presented because "its limit must be void from the beginning" (Hallward 2003: 82). Pure multiplicity, thinking as such, is neither presented nor represented because it is solely a mathematically oriented structural law, an axiom describable through set-theory. As I will

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[53] To add to the historical periodization of Badiou's multiplicity in ancient philosophy, the founder of Neoplatonism, Plotinus, similarly proposes that an "Intellectual-Principle" is "void of all content." See: the Sixth Ennead in Plotinus' *The Enneads* (translated by S. MacKenna, 1991).

look at shortly, this kind of void-mathematical-set takes place as a generative event. Truths address this event.

Badiou then posits that Being (pure, void multiplicity), by virtue of one holding fidelity to its influence (trying to think being qua Being), "must be thought as pure *point*" (Badiou 2005: 77). "The void is the unpresentable *point of being* of any presentation," he elaborates. "If the void is not, it is because one cannot think an empty place" (*Op.cit.*). Where does this impasse then leave us? How does this pure point factor in actually taking place when multiplicity is non-phenomenological?

The Point of a Void-Multiple

I would like to step back for a moment to look into what this point means and its relation to the void-multiple of Being. Badiou's contribution to the debate on multiplicity is based on the following fundamental distinction: there is a purely mathematical multiple and then there is a multiplicity of existing things; in other words, Being *is* 'not' (inexistent; an empty set) while things that appear *are* there (a multiplicity of things in the world). In contradistinction to the logic of disjunctive synthesis, where Being and being are univocally combined, becoming and folding, Badiou holds that both arenas are *split*. He dubs this split as a Two (without unification), "a disconnected connection, an irrational couple," (Badiou 2005: 208) where the whole is constitutively split from within. This Two is never dialectically amalgamated. Ontology (the science of being) is *separate* from phenomenology (the discourse of being-there), such that the latter is non-foundational and without an integral ontological horizon (eg. time, space, death) that might make its event possible. Let us look at how Badiou explains this further.

One of Badiou's central tenets is that thought/Being, the void-multiple, can only be addressed through a truth, "which makes a hole in knowledge" (Badiou 2005: 327). There

are infinitely many truths and never one. Truth as such has *no content,* epistemologically and empirically*;* it is subtracted from knowledge and what exists. Because it is structurally void there is no necessary and universal idea to be realized; no unknown to be known. Truth is this impossible idea that an agent calls upon through naming, a nomination that then enables this subject "to think the event as the advent of what subtracts itself from all experience," as Badiou states (2009a: 387). Therefore, truth indicates multiplicity as "a *hole in sense*" (Badiou 2005b: 77).

I propose that the truth of thought is that its event has no actual sign, no correlation to an imprinted figure that might directly indicate that something is happening. Apropos of Badiou's theory, the multiple is what properly lends thought its subtractive quality, a void in the guise of "the unpresentable *point of being*" (Badiou 2005: 77). In Badiou's (mathematical) set-theory this point is what 'subtracts itself from all experience', an epistemic and ontological 'hole', an unnameable split that remains a purely mathematical mark: Ø. Hence, there is a mark or 'point' of the pure (mathematical) multiple; but when Badiou describes Ø as a "zero affected by the barring of sense" we cannot engage with it under any phenomenological and vital sense, be this a more profound or virtual kind of materiality.

Body and Event

For Badiou, what is crucial is that someone, some agent and body, aids a correspondence of the event with the structural void-multiple [Ø]. This individual, according to Badiou, is a subject: someone who holds complete fidelity to "think the structural law of the empty place as the punctual anchoring of the excess over the place" (2009b: 261). In order to understand what Badiou means it is apt to use some of the terminology he derives from the set theory of Georg Cantor and Paul Cohen. According to

Badiou the world is a 'place' in so far as it designates all things within it under a 'count-for-one', a whole that legitimizes what exists so long as it is possible that 'there is' One, a totality of things (state of affairs, world). The world is a situation, in the sense that this whole is effected by the event that makes everything, which is coherently countable, structurally *void*. Now we can come to understand what is 'void' about the pure-multiple. Only in Cantor's matheme of the void-set can there be a way to demonstrate that there is a unique set that can include itself as a subset of its totality. In terms of set-theory the void-multiple is the multiple of multiples if, and only if, the subset of its parts is greater than the set as a whole. In laymen's terms, the part that is in the whole/world is not only empty but also *exceeds* the void that it belongs to. Hence, the event of Being exceeds by occurring as a 'no-count' within the count-for-one; the pure multiple is an indiscernible and un-locatable split in the situation, "a point of excess"[54] in the multiplicity where things can appear as truths, that is new ideas to think and work through. It is crucial to note that the pure multiple cannot immanently affect and virtually invoke a structure of thought to affirm these truths, the multiplicity of ideas and things as they appear.

The agent or subject is hardly some kind of clairvoyant that can uniquely intuit (kinesthetically apprehend) the void-multiple and locate the event. "The subject is neither consciousness nor unconsciousness of the true" (Badiou 2005: 397). At best, the subject can address that there is, conceptually speaking, an "affirmative split" (*Op.cit.*) that he/she bears; a dialectical split that, in a way, separates the body from primordial notions of agency, such as virtual movement and phenomenological presence.

In my view, Badiou's articulation of multiplicity engages a form of body-event, where the void separates and subtracts presence not only in what appears but *from* oneself. There is no inner source/agency to work from, no inherent bodily act. Neither is

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[54] See: 'Meditation Seven: The Point of Excess', in Badiou (2005), pp. 81-92.

the body an instrument that can performatively express and affirm how thought takes place. If anything, and I will return to this in a moment, the point as such informs the affirmative split, such that the subject can address that there is a structural void that inhibits a way to indicate "a new composition of multiplicities" (Badiou, in *The Symptom*, issue 6 (2009): 3).

I cannot completely agree though that the body inherently belongs to 'the subject', which in Badiou's terms is responsible for addressing the 'new composition' according to a militant form of truth procedure. The subject is largely interpreted as militant, someone orienting all forms of truth to the emancipation of social relations, the collective few of the political party combatting the repressive injunctions of the state.[55] It is perhaps beyond the scope of my thesis to discuss the political connotations of Badiou's multiplicity. What I am interested in, conversely, is seeing how the body and a notion of the point might relate to a form of performative activity. If the body is not affected but structurally effected by the point there may be another way to consider gesture and multiplicity, which is characterized by an impasse of thinking the event.

As we shall see in the following chapter the body can be explored from a notion of the point that is, to use Badiou's terminology, 'inexistent'. I believe that the pertinence of Badiou's theory of the multiple with regards to art is that the performer – maybe even at times the spectator as well – can work through new notions of the body and trace. As Badiou writes:

> A new body in the artistic field is something like a real concrete creation – a work of art, performances, all that you want – but which are in relation with the trace of the event. The trace of the work of art – and that is the trace. The trace is something like a manifesto, if you want, something like a new declaration...
>
> (Badiou, 2009c: 4)

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[55] See: Bosteels (2011).

What the trace is to declare is "an access," a "new manner of thinking of the infinite itself" (*Op.cit.*). The 'infinite' refers to thinking the multiplicity of the point. The trace declares that there is a new event based on "*the problem of the body*, which is in essence the problem of the appearance of truths" (Badiou 2009a: 35; emphasis added). Appearance refers to how the body is, as Badiou calls, a 'concrete creation' (and most likely a militant subject); but what I wish to explore is how the body is present, or as Badiou says 'being-there': appearing, present and there but without a phenomenological presence to act from. What a body shows is that thought takes place, neither residually imprinted (graphic trace) nor performatively embodied. "A disappearance may leave no trace," reminds Badiou (2009a: 371). The body appears because it is, as Badiou continues, "always under erasure since it is 'marked' by the subjective formalism" (*Op.cit.*).

What the void-multiple 'marks' is a theoretical and empirical erasure, a subtraction (the formalist split of the Two) that problematizes phenomenologies of presence. A truth of the body is that it is – by virtue of the structural point, $\emptyset$ – *entirely* subtracted from any possible mode of embodying/incarnating thought. The body appears in that it is present, taking place as "the material support for the evental trace" (Badiou 2009a: 453). Here, if there is a 'body-event', as I will go on to investigate in relation to my practice, it is where the point (of excess, $\emptyset$) conceptually marks the body as a problem, an agent "which acts as the trace of the event" (Badiou 2009a: 470).

Endpoint

As we have seen the point can provide a way to focus upon the body as the trace of the event. Here, trace and body concern thinking where thought, in its multiplicity, is an impasse based on a non-representable point. Indeed, this point – not to be confused with the empty vital inflection – sustains a problematic idea that, in its being multiple and void,

is inexistent. This idea is also described by Badiou as an 'endpoint'. As he explains:

> ...this endpoint is not a primitive object or an atomic component; it is not a form of the One. The endpoint is also, necessarily, a multiplicity. This is the multiplicity of no multiplicity – the thing which is also nothing, the void, the empty multiplicity, the empty set.
>
> (Badiou 2011: 47)

These words can help us rethink what can be understood by multiplicity within the constellation of terms examined here: body, trace and point. To summarize, my objective has been to examine two notions of multiplicity and in the process evaluate the relevance of this term within my thesis. (The following summary is mapped out in the top portion of Diagram One). I have covered the following three things: 1. that while a vital multiplicity amalgamates ontology with phenomenological becoming, both a vital order immanent in matter, there can be a void-multiple that is dialectical and structures an ontological split, interrupting phenomenological presence; 2. that the thought-event of vital multiplicity, which generates a topology of lines, obfuscates a point that structures a veritable void, an impasse as unthought; 3. that the vital order of disjunctive synthesis cuts out the body and, thus, negates the potential of a body-event. The body is a problem that opens from how the point structures a split, an interruption of physiological engagement that derives from an intellectual impasse: to think the unthought of multiplicity. Moreover, the body concerns what is understood by appearance, how physicality can appear while, for instance, the performer tries to address the point. In its nullity the point is arguably without reference[56], distinct not only from the graphic trace but a conceptual activity that can have us reconsider what is meant by the trace and its reference to performative actions.

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[56] For my exploration of the possibility that the notion of the point is without reference see: 'A Trace from a Point… (Without Reference)', an online paper presented in *Desearch,* Issue 2, Summer, 2012.

CHAPTER TWO

§2.0 – Gestures For A Point Of The Body

> "The body's like a pure spirit: it keeps completely to itself and inside itself, in a single point. Break that point, and the body dies. The point's situated between the eyes, between the ribs, in the middle of the liver, all around the skull, in the midst of the femoral artery, and in lots of these places, too."
>
> (Nancy 2008a: 150)

An Outline of Chapter Two

In Chapter 1.3 I speculated about whether the body might be articulated around a notion of the point. Conceptually, this point structures an intellectual impasse, which I now wish to investigate in terms of physiological effects that result in the performances I present. Throughout this chapter, starting here with Chapter 2.0 and ending with 2.3, I wish to carefully look at these effects and what they mean for gesture in my practice, focusing on works produced within my research for this thesis. For example, in a work I will elaborate on, *Elbow Grease* (2011), the various positions and awkward postures that I make (such as bending, arching or twisting) come from holding myself in positions while supported by a wooden shelf covered in clay. In Chapter 2.1 I look at the *Untitled* performance series (c. 2010) and how, in 'holding' myself upright in poses such as standing, I use muscular tension to restrict my motion and, in turn, slowly descend (from fatigue ensued by enduring weight) while positioned away from wall-drawings made prior to performing (see fig. 25, 26 and 27). In *Placing A Pause While Kneeling and Staring at Two Holes in the Wall – Try and Make One Whole Out of Two* (2011) spectators are invited to kneel (on a foam mat) and visually fabricate the sign of an ellipsis from two holes in the facing wall. In this case, I will need to consider how this physiological separation (of

kneeling away) from pre-made marks restricts physicality entirely. This dislocation of the bodily-gesture is why I invite spectators to execute this work. Chapter 2.2 looks closer at how I use bodily gesture in relation to time through two works: a version of *Untitled* (presented at the KCCC gallery, Lithuania, in 2011) and *Passages* (2009-2010). I examine time and movement by comparing video with physical actions of turning. To complete my analysis of how I use gesture, Chapter 2.3 will look at the relationship between the imprint of the point and physical positions of pointing. This analysis will focus on *Approximately Pointing Out the Figure* (2009-2010) and *Details Through Pointing* (2011-2012), wherein I explore the point as a paradoxical mark that refers to an obstruction in thinking and presenting a certain relation of point and body.

My objective is, therefore, to examine bodily gesture in these works through position and posture. One theoretical implication is that, by tensing and holding, the restriction of physicality results from concentrating on a certain point *of* the body. In proposing a body-event I need to consider how physicality is presented, positioned and posed in the round sculpturally. Standing toward, turning around or pointing outward within restricted positions can be perceived as orientations emphasizing *where* and *how* I appear while performing. Moreover, these are bodily gestures that work not only with the hand, for instance, but every bodily part in a sculptural and spatial manner. Such physiological states occur in contexts such as the gallery, where the proximity of agent to the actual space and viewer(s) therein is constantly negotiated through task-based actions and constructed mark systems.

A Preamble on Bodily Gesture

A preamble will help set up how I shall examine gesture using the entire body. In the Introduction I began to explore bodily gesture in performance-based drawing through

a number of claims. Here, I layout two propositions. Firstly, Catherine deZehger's proposition: that because marking can directly index a performative act "drawing is the gesture in itself" (2001: 2). Bear in mind that according to deZehger's proposition gesture is to be delivered *from* the body, where an energetic expenditure from, perhaps, a hand or foot is transferred toward a surface and thus imprints a graphic trace. I have analyzed this gestural mark-making in Chapter 1.2 and have found that the body is relegated to the role of depicting a metaphysical operation – the attempt to graphically trace a continuum that exercises, to recall Barthes' comment, "a denial of the importance of the body" (Barthes 2004: 35).

It can be said that in *Elbow Grease* (2011) a shelf holding an indented layer of clay helps support the bodily gestures that I make. However, I describe this as not drawing by inscribing some sign into the clay but, rather, as my arm/elbow resting on the shelf. That is, I am limp and in a passive state, as if giving over the hand itself and leaving the adjacent torso, legs and arm to dangle, arch and bend (see: fig. 28 and 29). To use Daniel Kleinberg-Levin's claim, this bodily gesture gives "a sign signifying nothing, a sign without an assignment" (2005: 34). I would like to move onto a second proposition by opening from this example, which implies that the entire body is working directionally but under "a commandment that commands nothing" (*Op.cit.*).

I will explore further the proposition offered by André Lepecki, that performing drawing live finds one "missing the mark" and exercising "traceless expenditure."[57] With reference to my methodology, in Chapter 1.1., I will now ask what kind of gesture is implied by working with the body in relation to passive modes of action. There are two ways in which I wish to examine this: physiologically, in terms of postures characterized by restriction, specifically standing, turning and pointing; and how such postures correlate to

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[57] See: Introduction.

a post-phenomenological body-event, where bodily gesture is irreducible to inner movement and self-presence.

Concentration, Point and Physicality

Bearing in mind Nancy's proposition, that the body keeps to a single point, I will correlate this to multiplicity, which I believe concerns a problem of thinking through bodily gesture. The relation of the point to the body can help us assess how this body-event is characterized by restrictions of physicality and concentration. Concentration arises in, as Nancy writes, a "sharp point of dense ore that a thought pushes, presses heavily into the head and into the belly, throughout the whole body" (1997: 76). While performing works, such as *Elbow Grease,* I focus closely on where my head, arm or legs are, my concentration narrowing upon each part without having a sense of their contiguity. In my view, physicality is singular and not a universal 'Body' nor a particular physical-self; it is a kind of point characterized by heaviness and disparateness. Effectively, the heavier I feel the more I leave my arms to hang, my legs to curve or my torso to bend (see: fig. 30 and 31). What Nancy says is that physicality is a multiplicity of points, but without the ability to reflect upon these under self-present notions of the body. For Nancy thought in its sense is metaphorically "the black hole of an absence of matter" (2005: 75). In this event, "finite bodily sense makes sense, discloses a world, and thus constitutes, not a return to itself, in a gathering of its own identity and self-identity," (James 2006: 132). Instead, such a thought-event opens from a dispersal and containment of physicality to its fact of existence[58]— the body in its gesture of opening and being present, without (self-) identity or inner presence. The challenge will be to see if the tension Nancy describes – the finitude of physicality in its non-reciprocal sense (black hole) *and* dispersal (body in its

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[58] I owe this insight to Martin Crowley.

various parts), pushing and/or opening from such physiological sense – can completely apply to the multiplicity I am investigating.

My interest in Nancy's proposition is its similarity to Badiou's notion of the appearing body, which is ontologically irreducible yet present and there. Arguably for Badiou, as much as for Nancy, thought is radically absent, subtracted materially and conceptually void of content. The merit of Nancy's approach is how it explores physicality as it is affected by our attempt to concentrate upon thought. Concentration *stresses* the body, its various parts becoming weighty and estranged. "Thought itself, at this point, is really forcing itself, dislocating itself: because the whole weight, the gravity, of thought," as Nancy states, is "in itself a *weighing*" (2008: 37).[59]

Nancy references weight as an effect of the body. Weight emerges from concentrating on a notion of thought that is radically absent. Weighing can be an effect of feeling dispersed, coming apart or emptied out; physiological implications that indicate a post-existential and theoretical subtraction of the 'self'. It is worth noting that for Nancy thinking, as such, is a feeling of dislocation, a deconstructive sense of 'spacing'. In her analysis of Nancy's philosophy, Marta Heikkilä clarifies that thought in its spacing "is absence and lack, or to say the least, strange and absolute distancing, having no foundation in presence" (2008: 199). Nancy goes so far as to describe the body as the spacing of presence that brings in "a tension of place, where bodies are not in space, but space in bodies" (1997: 78).

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[59] Nancy approaches 'thought' in a non-standard philosophical manner that engages an empirical register of 'sense'. Thinking is *shared* in its 'sense'; or, in the context of philosophical semiology or language, sense is "prior to or in excess of any relation between signifier and signified" (James 2006: 91). Sense is thinking and existing in this excess, this limit experience of language, whereby one does not have any frame of reference to contextualize 'thought', as in an a priori or a posteriori schema akin to, for example, the Heideggarian notion of language as "the temple of being," the everyday world in which one dwells and experiences Being (as such). What can also be considered in contradistinction to Deleuzian materialism (the immanence-as-transcendence of thought folding its affect throughout matter) is how Nancy posits thought in its "foldless immanence, which is not even thinkable, since it is *a priori* out of reach of all thought, even a thought of the unthinkable" (Nancy 1993b: 10).

If thought is spacing, an unbridgeable distancing *within* the body (generated by concentrating and stressing oneself), the implication may be that every physical tension, of weight and release, corresponds to concentrating on a dislocating 'space *in* bodies'. For the purposes of investigating gesture here it is more fitting to address this body-event specifically. A 'point-of-the-body' can be one way to examine physicality in its appearance, the present state of being which has no foundation in ontologies of presence. To qualify what I mean by this point-of-the-body I have looked more closely at what tension and weight are in my practice. It is because of the tenuous sense of weighing/spacing, which is rooted in subjective experiences of dislocation, that I am leading my analysis of bodily gesture in this chapter through a close examination of works produced in my research.

In accordance with Nancy I believe that this body-event can never be concluded as 'nothingness', a pure and absolute emptiness that might 'break' and lose all sense, all possible meaning of thinking and being. Otherwise, in the extreme case, a point-of-the-body would seem, so to speak, "pointless." Conversely, if the performer works without referencing self-presence it may be because he/she "does not refer to an immediacy preceding or exceeding sense" (Nancy 2005: 43). To work specifically in the present, where physicality appears in relation to time as much as space, to *now* as much as *there* or *here*, requires investigating through an ethical demand of sorts. With specific reference to my work as a whole, I would like to consider that for a point-of-the-body, as Nancy states, "the body always forces us to think farther, always too far: too far to carry on as thought, but never far enough to become a body" (2008: 37).

Gesture from Exscription

In relation to *Elbow Grease* I ask: what kind of gesture might then relate physicality to the multiplicity that we are investigating? On the one hand, gesture can be understood

as offering a means to realize an end, a direction or "path to something or towards something," as Otto F. Bollnow says (2011: 192). According to Bollnow this path is directed toward an outside where the body presents a "space of action" (2011: 193). Let us see what 'action' means in terms of restriction and the space in which the directional gesture occurs.

In order to contextualize and elaborate how I use gesture, with regards to space and physiological restriction, I would like to briefly compare the display of the hand and stance from *Elbow Grease* to Roi Vaara's *Wet Paint Handshakes* (2006). When Vaara extends his paint-soaked hand to participating audience members he uses himself and others as a means of making apparent an action of exchange (see: fig. 32). Marking the exchange of hands creates, what Mai Won Kwon describes as, "a discursive vector - ungrounded, fluid, virtual" (2004: 29-30). Vaara's handshake arguably uses an inscriptive practice, where the white paint imprints others and disseminates a gestural means shared between the artist and participant.[60] This relational action would accord with Giorgio Agemben's definition of 'gesture': "*the display of mediation, the making visible of a means as such* [*sic.*]... *a kind of mediation that is pure and devoid of any end*" (2007: 155). In Vaara's performance the white paint may express a pure means, an action that is fluid and virtual, the white paint marking the exchange of performer touching the spectator, a fluid exchange of touch. At the same time, however, Vaara distances himself from the audience. The connotation of wiping his hand against his suit and the implication of

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[60] In an interview with Gil Dekel, Vaara explains that in performances such as Wet Paint Handshakes he "tried to create an art experience where everyone could feel something or at least think about something" while he performed, that is "a personal contact with another person." See: 'The Image of Ourselves', in www.poeticmind.co.uk (www.poeticmind.co.uk/interviews-1/the-image-of-ourselves/). We can note that what Vaara aims to express by the marking left by the handshake is a positive phenomenological relation, which is reminiscent of a vulgar form of Merleau Ponty's chiasmus. Lending 'personal contact with another person' is akin to chiasmatic self-touching, "a reciprocal insertion and intertwining of the one in the other" (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 138). In Chapter 2.1 I will be returning to the problematic sense imbibed by such personalized contact, which collapses a crucial quality of non-relational separation – what Merleau-Ponty also calls "écart," namely the divergence or separation of touching that displaces relational contact and presence (the pure relation that is 'flesh').

whitening out resonates with ontological subtraction, being present before an audience without imposing his presence.

Like Vaara I am presenting my physicality in *Elbow Grease* as a way of mediating the action involved with a form of inscription. My slightly open and unstained hand extends from my elbow/arm, outward and without necessarily contacting anyone. Separation now becomes more pronounced. Additionally, my lack of energetic expenditure suggests an indifference to focusing on marking and signifying this mediation. Hand, arm, torso and legs; the gesture is here presented spatially rather than gesturally inscribed.

Nancy is the one thinker who I feel addresses bodily gesture within the limit of inscription. For Nancy the radical sense of thought, its dislocating point, lends to an action that "exscribes nothing and writes nothing" (1993a: 339). Exscription is characterized by directing attention toward restrictions of the hand, arm or legs when there is no sense to guide the action, *no means* to motivate the activity. Restrictions of position result from concentrating on what is thought *there*, that is the location in which the performer cannot ruminate on an essential idea or theoretical framework that could impel the action. Nancy explains that exscription emphasizes what is "there", when he writes that it:

> is a material point, a weighty point: the flesh of a lip, the point of a pen or of a stylus, any writing insofar as it traces out the interior and exterior edges of language. It is the point where all writing is *ex-scribed*, where it comes to rest outside of the meaning it inscribes, in the things whose inscription this meaning is supposed to form. This *ex-scription* is the ultimate form of inscription. (Nancy 1997: 79)

For Nancy inscription, from poetic exposition to spontaneous sketching, is both challenged by and incorporated into a paradoxical and philosophical mode of writing. To exscribe is to expose physicality (not to be confused with physical nudity) and object (pen, stylus, clay, or foam) to an exhaustion of inscription. In other words, writing/drawing at the limit of language and experience opens the body to a materiality based on an

exposure of sense: the experience of finitude such that physicality and object(s) are non-relational, dispersed as prosaic materials that 'rest outside of the meaning' that one attempts to inscribe.

What I am trying to explore more closely here is whether ex-scription – the hyphenation addressing the dislocation of thought, a spacing that is outside – accounts not only for a way of approaching the mark differently but how it presents the performative act. The materiality related to graphic marks as well as basic objects such as wooden shelves, posts or foam, refer to, what I am calling, material devices: familiar and everyday things that support the performance, setting up how the action can take place and where it can happen.

To better contextualize what I mean by 'material devices' I compare my use of marks and objects to Erwin Würm's series, *Instruction Drawings* – artworks that have inspired me since viewing them at *The Drawing Centre* (New York) exhibition, *Performance Drawing,* in 2001*.* Rather than execute and present a drawing, Würm prepares markings in the form of simple, inexpressive illustrations that prompt an "act of execution" (Friedel, in Würm 2009: 19). For example, a hand-sized drawing (appearing directly on the board) shows a physiological act that can be executed, in this case bending over and balancing the head on the wooden board (see: fig. 33). This board is a material, an everyday object that is readily available; but, also and more importantly, a device: an object that appears alongside restricted postures that, by following the drawing's illustration, helps create a physical sculpture, or "drawing as sculpture" (Sans, in Kob 1999) (see: fig. 34). (Würm also calls these drawings *One Minute Sculptures*, since the positions executed last for about one minute.) In Würm's case the drawn marks instruct by illustrating how such actions can be made – recreated either by himself or, usually, by others (mainly visitors in the gallery but also, sometimes, selected people); whereas for

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me the pre-made marks have a more active role. So in *Placing A Pause By Kneeling and Staring at Two Holes in the Wall – Try and Make One Whole From Two* – a work that also has other people execute this performance – the two holes in the wall set up the approximate level of the head and for where the eyes stare, while the foam mat guides the placement of the knees.

As a tangent to my discussion on gesture I also note how Würm's works relate to the conceptual spacing of ex-scription. By holding poses together with objects (in other works oranges are held against the wall, or a bucket over the head) the person can appear sculptural in a way that gives "the body a surreal, absurd and foreign character" (Friedel, in Würm 2009: 25). Indeed, these positions can make the person "look stupid" (Friedel, in Würm 2009: 22). Stupidity relates to ex-scription in so far as physical volume and shape indicate "the loss of a stabilizing inner structure and an image of desperation" (Ibid., 23); stupidity being, to use Avital Ronnel's articulation of Nancy's term, an ex-scriptive act of "self-emptying" characterized by "extreme passivity" (2003: 8-9).[61]

Ex-scription can then be understood as a gesture for the body, a performative act emphasizing physicality spatially in its intrinsic sense of being separated, spaced-apart. The non-substantial point, that predicates every limb and organ, leaves the body to feel its weight while gesturing and thinking from its indiscernible multiplicity – a point-of-the-body. Possibly, a gesture from exscription means that "to think at the point of the thinking body is to think without knowing anything, without articulating, without intuiting anything" (Nancy 1993a: 202).[62]

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[61] Avital Ronnel's exceptional book, *Stupidity* (2003), offers a rare exploration of Nancyean philosophy – also written, in part, through Deleuze's understated thesis: "How is stupidity (not error) possible?" (See: Deleuze (1994), pp. 148-153, and 275). Ronnel directly works through Nancyean sense and exscription by bringing out its "absence of relation to knowing... a kind of relinquishment that resolves itself into passivity," and thus "effecting a brush with urgent nullity" (2003: 5).

[62] Benjamin C. Hutchens elaborates how Nancy "maintains that all the discursive means by which singular meanings are appropriated or inscribed should be resisted through an 'exposition' (a putting out of place, a supplanting of pre-position) or even an 'exscription' (a writing that excludes from writing precisely what is

Dislocating and Distinct – A Closing Note on Notational Marks

Throughout this preamble I have introduced 'gesture' as an action characterized by concentration and restriction. Moreover, I have asked whether these properties can relate to a conceptual activity of dislocation derived from Nancyean 'exscription'. I will examine these areas over the rest of Chapter Two to find whether uses of posture and position emphasize the body in performance-drawing, not only as a theoretical endpoint but as a mode of investigation. Before I briefly describe the kind of marks I use to support bodily gesture I would like to also summarize what I will be exploring throughout Chapter Two.

This chapter (2.0) starts a critical analysis of my practice, which will be examined through three kinds of gestures, respectively: standing (2.1), turning (2.2), and pointing (2.3). Overall these are gestures that *pose* the body, focusing upon the performer as a sculptural entity that appears in its position and posture: standing-toward, turning-around, and pointing-out. 'Toward', 'around' and 'out' designate directions using physical positions to encircle (around) as much as emphasize the area performed in (toward and outward), the spatial circumference in which the performer appears; in other words, physicality is presented by appearing and being *there,* restrictedly posed and without moving any further than from where the action takes place.

Before closing this preamble I would like to propose how the mark can be understood to support an exscriptive, bodily gesture. Each of the three gestures that I make are combined with marks that are associated with notations, such as: period,

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appropriated by substantialist metaphysics)" (2005: 13-14). Mutatis mutandis, exscription poses socio-political consequences to substantialist notions of bridging and connecting people into a community, an intertwinement of subjects bound by a positive and universal relation. This communal relation resonates closely with notions of immanence: the ideology that a transcendent and infinite potentiality of becoming structures life as a whole as a positive relation. "Substantial community is everywhere in jeopardy and craves the security of immanence, but literature (including philosophy) always resists and suspends the attainment of this security by recognizing and enacting the sharing in (and of) sense. Given his fascination with the limits of philosophy, the edges where philosophical discourse exhausts itself, Nancy challenges the insistent distinction between philosophy and literature that this exscription of existence sustains" (Hutchens 2005: 15).

asterisk, ellipsis, or bracket. Notational marks are unique in that they are not exclusive to language, thus ranging in scope from: brackets [( )] that arrange algebraic terms in a mathematical proposition, an arrow [→] on a path that indicates a direction, or a period [.] placing a full stop at the end of a sentence. In part notation arises grammatically as punctuation, yet the marks are distinct from being linguistic signs. "Punctuation is not a proper object," states Brody; "it is neither speech nor writing; art nor craft; sound nor silence" (2008: 3). Notation is relative to how punctuation separates and distinguishes parts of a sentence, but without lending a kind of grammatical clarity and legibility of style. Notation is a form of containing, setting up and supporting anything on a page or in a space. It is questionable though as a residual imprint, depiction of force, or an inscribed letter signifying a means of connecting terms.

The imprinted points that I use range from a notational mark system such as a period [.], while also occurring as a patch on a clay-shelf, to a tick on paper or a punched hole in the wall. These isolated marks also share a quality of exscription. Nancy describes the mark under exscription in terms of 'the distinct', which confronts the ontology of the graphic imprint:

> The Distinct is set apart: the distinct mark of sense, its *trait*. It is the distinct mark of sense in two ways that are perfectly conjoined and contradictory: on the one hand, the mark by which sense is distinguished; on the other hand, the mark that is distinguished from every possible sense... A nonsensory trait that is not embodied in any sense – neither a pencil stroke (*trait)* nor a stroke of the violin bow – but which is also not incorporeal like signification.

> (Nancy 2005: 75)

If the imprint of a point suggests any kind of 'nonsensory trait' it is that which might be perceived as distinct, visually 'there' (spatially present) yet theoretically impalpable and 'set apart'. In contradistinction to the graphic trace (of inscription) the distinct mark is set apart in that it is distinguished from any sensory apperception of thought in its (graphic) trace.

Although as a performance it presents an array of dislocated gestures (bending, arching or twisting) the indented mark in the clay-covered shelf in *Elbow Grease* does not clearly display a distinct, nonsensory trait. Although the body is exposed in the Nancyean sense of appearing exhausted, bent and slouched while stuck to the shelf, the indentation in the clay is residual – a graphic trace that, to a degree, is spread-apart by my elbow, which weighs into and spreads the clay out. Even if the clay-shelf is a device, it is so *during* the performance. Afterwards, once I leave this object to be displayed on its own, the clay bears an inscribed trace of the creases and fleshy textures of my elbow. Other works, such as *Pointing Through Detail*s, which use digital marks that disappear at the end of the performance, will need to be explored to see how light, shadow and point compare more properly with the distinct mark associated with exscription.

Like exscription, the theoretical aspect of the distinct mark (trace) will prove to be very important for how I examine the trace in Chapter Three. At the moment I am inquiring about the ontology of the notational mark; that is to say, if this mark might be constitutively interrupted, distinctly set apart by a multiplicity that is obstructive, neither embodied nor graphically depicted. Whether notational or more literal, such an imprint is more akin to "the bland sign," as writer Francois Jullien says, "emptying itself of its signifying function" (2004: 93), a mark exscribed rather than inscribed.

A gesture from exscription may provide another way of seeing both the notational mark and physical gesture, posed and distinguished by a post-phenomenological notion of dislocation. Let us see if bodily gesture and the distinct, notational mark both share a dislocating action, a combination that is disconnected or set apart by a trace that is "out of reach of all thought, even a thought of the unthinkable" (Nancy 1993: 10).

§2.1 – Standing Toward

"For the system of all distances in space the body has only the function of a point, a zero point. It has itself, as it were, shrunk into a point."

(Bollnow 2011: 270)

Holding Still as a Dislocating Gesture

Despite its restriction to doing anything, even making any imprint, standing is a position that I predominantly find myself in when I make my improvisations both in the studio and in gallery. Since starting my research I've come to recognize that holding still emphasizes where and how I work and perform. My aim here is to evaluate standing as a bodily gesture that works with mark-making and in relation to exscription – a conceptual spacing that affects the exposure of physicality to its irreducible finitude or, as I propose, conceptual separation from any implied imprint. I will consider whether standing exposes physicality in light of the notional point-of-the-body proposed in Chapter 2.0, in this case using stance to emphasize the space, or area, in which I am concentrating on holding myself upright. This exposed stance will be addressed with two questions. Firstly, is a 'point' associable with the space in which the upright pose is held? Secondly, could notational imprints, from an ellipsis to a period, practically locate *and* conceptually dislocate bodily gesture? These questions concern how I think about standing as a dislocating gesture, the action most restricted from marking and reflecting on ways of performatively drawing. To investigate this I will evaluate the role of posture and position in performances, starting with the *Untitled* series (c. 2010) and then move onto the instructional *Placing a Pause While Kneeling and Staring at Two Holes In the Wall - Try and*

Make One Whole Out of Two (2011) (henceforth this will be referred to as: *Placing A Pause...*). These performances use physiological restriction to emphasize stance in terms of a spatially characterized instant, in which physical stillness foregrounds the space being performed in.

Overall I wish to see what the effect of stance and stillness might mean for an action that is instantaneous, happening all at once while holding upright and positionally still. Standing immobile philosophically relates to the 'present' as an 'instant', the mode of beginning to think and to make here and now [*hic et nunc*]. "A subject's immobility, its steadiness," writes Levinas, "is not the result of an invariable reference to some coordinates of ideal space, but of its *stance*, the event of its position, which refers only to itself and is the origin of fixity in general – the beginning of the very notion of beginning" (2001: 69). Bearing in mind Levinas' proposition we may think of 'immobility' as a manner of beginning to work with a fixed stance. And through fatigue the immobile pose manifests in variations of standing, such as kneeling or slouching. As we shall see, such postures happen when trying to hold and keep still *without* engaging in drawing (gesturally marking).

Here, the obstacle I find is in attempting to direct attention toward stance in its location and most immediate present, here and now; in other words, 'directing attention *toward'* means the direction an immobile gesture indicates. Holding a still position (stance) for as long as possible is a way of being, on the one hand, there as the artist/performer – phenomenologically oriented toward his/her physical state, immobile and concentrating on this posed-position; and, on the other hand, being temporally present (now), in front of an audience.

Phenomenological Comportment

I would like to start by looking at a problem in phenomenologically oriented

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artworks that use mark-making and performance, specifically where the imprint is to address where and when the artist/performer appears present. I shall use Vito Acconci's *Trademarks* (1970) as an example of the phenomenological act of 'self-touching', in this case teasing out a problem in the uses of imprinting to direct attention temporally toward a space locating the performer's body; or, in terms of Nancyean exscription, exposing where the artist chiasmatically touches upon and interrupts his attempt to mark out his presence.[63]

In the image of *Trademarks* (see: fig. 35) we witness the seated Acconci biting his arms and legs – whatever flesh is in reach of his mouth. The photograph and imprinting action directs attention *toward* his body, rather than to someone else.[64] Each bite indexes Acconci's mouth locating multiple patches across his limber appendages, encouraging us to focus upon and be attentive to his naked and isolated physique. Such self-imprinting can be defined by what Heidegger terms *comportment*: "the perceptual *directing of oneself toward* what is perceived" (Heidegger 1988: 57). Acconci's biting gesture is an intentional act, or what Heidegger calls "directing-oneself-toward" and "being-directed-toward" (1988: 58). In other words, Acconci tries to make himself present for us, each bite an action of exposure by directing himself toward our view so that, reciprocally, we too can see and be more consciously directed toward him. The hope then is that we are being-directed-toward the performer's presence, that we are truly with him and not merely watching and distant.

Acconci performs this work not in front of a live audience but by directing-himself-toward a (photographic) camera, his aim being to explore the distinction between public

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[63] For my analysis of 'self-touching' see Chapter 1.2, 'Embodied Limitation'. There I critically explore this concept with reference to Merleau-Ponty's notion of 'chiasmus', the transcendental operation of self-touching.

[64] In 'Notes on My Photographs, 1969-1970', written in January 1988, Acconci confides about his attention to the 'self' in his early works, combining photography and performance: "I chose to go back into my 'self'... The shift of focus from outside to inside, reveals that I was afraid of being lost in space, lost out in the world, I had to come back home, I had to - in the language of that time, the language of the 60s – 'find myself'" (in Moure ed. (2001): 349).

and private experiences of the artwork. It is questionable if Acconci's comportment makes his body a "connective tissue," what theorist Kristine Stiles believes is "a connector, a bridge, a synapse, between two mutually identifying human beings" (1987: 29). Acconci's inward and slouched stance, along with his spotted skin-markings, directs attention distinctly toward himself. In addition to photographing himself, Acconci applies ink to parts of skin that he has bitten and, by applying paper onto these inked parts, produces prints of his bites on paper. Acconci therefore indexes the instant of his gesture twice: through perceptual emphasis (nakedly exposed while biting his skin) and through prints and photographs; all are markedly directed-toward his physicality – albeit in an inscriptive manner (self-marking/touching, photographing and printing). Although the photographs and prints allow us to witness his activity, Acconci's overall indexing refers to himself as distinctly *separate,* rather than marking out a more immediate connection between him and someone else, as witness.

Even though Acconci's activity places significant attention onto his physical appearance and self-referencing gesture (naked, (im)printed and photographed), according to writer Jane Blocker there is an integral presentness to Acconci's performance that is temporally deferred. Regardless of this intensive engagement, for Blocker a performance, such as Acconci's, does not present the instant of his gesture in person, photographically or in graphic print. Rather the instant of being-directed-toward us *and* himself, at once, is supplanted by a temporal *anticipation* of a body "hoped-for." As she explains:

> The hoped-for very often designates a body that is literal, physical, and material, and yet loaded with signification; it is familiar, knowable, self-evident, and pure, and yet distant, elusive, impossible, and inscrutable...

> (Blocker 2004: 15)

Perhaps the reason why we cannot perceive Acconci's comportment – his indexical and literal being-directed toward his own physicality and toward us – is because his action

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pertains to a selfhood that is too 'elusive', 'impossible' and 'inscrutable' to *really*, ontologically, be there and present. Acconci's gesture is embedded within a phenomenological comportment that is, as Blocker writes: "the expenditure of desire invested in the body and the time spent anticipating the endlessly deferred revolution that it symbolizes and comes to promise" (2004: 55). We know from Chapter 1.2, however, that this 'yet to come' mode of anticipation, akin to Blocker's 'endlessly deferred revolution', struggles with an uncritical mode of making and thinking, or event: endeavoring to defer and interrupt an ontological process while using gesture in a live manner and without mediation; in other words, even though the photographs, prints and bodily marks suggest that Acconci is present, or at least had performed in one moment, he is in essence, in presence, beyond and yet-to-come. Therefore, in light of this problem of gesturally presenting 'the body' Acconci's self-marked pose becomes perceivable as directing attention *not* to the instant, locating where his physicality takes place, but toward bridging and connecting with a non-presentable presentness, a transcending bodily presence, as Blocker says, 'loaded with signification'. Neither does Acconci's self-imprinting and photographic-printing exhaust the inscriptive register, his body being (nakedly) exposed but not exscribed, which would entail a more fundamental separation or dispersal of (hoped-for, substantial) self.

Bodily Space – Starting, Indecision, and In-action

I shall now explore my *Untitled* performances in light of their use of bodily gesture and with regards to the problem of indicating space through physicality. *Untitled* engages a particular way of performing that uses restriction of mobility, or 'stillness', while starting to perform by standing. This derives from my early experiences working through performance, as discussed in Chapter 1.1. So, with reference to *Untitled* it may help to return and briefly describe how this work developed in the studio.

Untitled came about in spring 2010, when I thought it was apt to present a performance that derived from my process of working and investigating through restricted postures such as standing. Given that I was in the first year of researching performance-drawing, and its relationship with engaging thought through bodily gesture, I felt it important to show what seemed a contradictory way of working 'performatively'. Without making a step or budging an arm, by standing I was indeed doing something, although through a state of being inactive yet trying to work and investigate. What I was (performatively) doing was holding myself upright and 'still' in two senses of the word: firstly, being immobile; and, secondly, (still) maintaining a position, *persisting* to hold myself restrictedly. I was trying to maintain a way of doing something, persisting to investigate while not knowing how to decide, how to start. Standing resulted from having neither a preconceived idea nor intuitive action to improvise with, to decide and start to move this way or that way. Neither was I contemplatively standing, being able to think, generate some ideas and then decisively realize these thoughts. This is why I chose to title this artwork 'Untitled', namely to show my way of working without a predetermined concept or particular action to execute.

To clarify, being either inactive or immobile and intellectually obstructed was very different from radically 'beginning'. At the time I wondered if investigating through performance might mean that 'starting (to work)' correlated to the event of beginning anew. This event of novelty derives from philosophically dialectical concepts, that is of creating something from nothing, a mystical act *ex nihilo*. Moreover, beginning anew can refer to a recursive metaphysical activity – to which a range of concepts, from Nietzschean eternal return to Bergsonian duration, might be employed to articulate this creative act as an unconscious process. Conversely, when I 'start' investigating through a performative stance it means concentrating on maintaining an upright posture *and* holding this within

the space I stand over.

Generally, I wanted to test the recurrent claim in the tradition of drawing – that the first thoughts of the artist [*Primi Penseri*] are generated by engaging this practice. I believed that this engagement involved not only working with as few materials as possible but with a basic activity. As I was then also exploring standing, I believed that by removing materials and tools – for example, pencils or paper – I could present this immobile position as a way of emphasizing the instant of the stance and space standing presents.

"What is essential in an instant is its *stance*," writes Levinas; "this stop harbors an event" (2001: 77). Stance *is* 'position', "the very event of the instant as a present" (Levinas 2001: 70), where "the present is a halt" (*Op.cit.*: 71). Indeed, stance is a way of halting and holding still: not so much stopping but in disengaging from trying to change and, in reference to gestural drawing, mark out various positions. Stance directs attention toward the instant in which it happens; holds physicality within a state of appearing under a halt. And without marking but being in relation to marks drawn (before performing) – which I will elaborate in a moment – the stance appears distinctly, exposed: isolated yet viewable by audience members (see: fig. 36). For me, bringing attention to stance is more important than trying to decide on directions and movements. I do not make a decision to begin with but, rather, try to see how immobility relates to the present, to the state in which I can only think about holding myself in a still position. This is a position that is somewhat exscribed, at least in the subjective sense of my feeling exposed through a stance that happens by me persisting to focus upon a present state of holding still.

One way to look at this stance is as a kind of inactive gesture predicated by a refusal to think, which may be compared to Levinas' "a refusal in face of action, an impossibility of beginning" (2001: 15). The *Untitled* performances present standing in its being-

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directed-toward the 'space' *of* the stance, the physically upright position effected by an impossibility to begin to move and think. In this way stance/standing is "inaction itself."[65]

While developing these works, for example, I have experimented with ways to outline this space. The image in fig. 37 shows me using a white powder (salt) to cover the area around my feet. However, this marking detracts from the stance itself, my aim being to emphasize how physicality might stand out and appear spatially, rather than mark around it. Once I removed this powder *Untitled* came to fruition. What *Untitled* then presents is me holding myself over, despite a small amount of charcoal left from making the wall-drawing, a largely unmarked floor. The wall is now prepared with a marked structure (a geometric array of lines). Here, my intention is to show that, as Bollnow states, "the body is itself a space" (2011: 268).

If the body is itself a space then this can be considered by how my physicality *stands out* as something spatial. Immobility allows me to stand but also, to use the phrasal verb, 'stand *out*': present a kind of bodily space produced by the paradoxical inaction of the performance. I do not completely stop. Rather, I significantly decelerate my action, thus producing a series of contorted postures and imperceptibly slow positions. What people watching this inaction witness (possibly in less than one minute) are still poses I make from a sequence of positions, which evolve over an approximate two-hour period. A seemingly instantaneous (in-)action starts with me entering and standing and ends with me leaving.

Added to this paradoxical entry-and-exit (in-)action are the smudged and rubbed away patches of the delicate wall-based pattern prepared in willow-charcoal. One feature of *Untitled* that has made me somewhat doubt its spatial/exscriptive quality has come

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[65] In *Totality and Infinity* (2007) Levinas elaborates inaction in terms of work and labor: "the work rises in the midst of the wastes of labor. The worker does not hold in his hands all the threads of his own action. He is exteriorized by acts that are already in a sense abortive" (Levinas 2007: 176).

with the degree to which I rub away this wall-drawing. For example, in her review of the exhibition *Sisyphus Happy* (*Backlit Gallery,* Nottingham; January, 2011), wherein I presented one version of *Untitled*, writer and curator Aaron Juneau noticed how my performance showed, "a series of residual bodily disruptions to the rigid formalism of the series of intersecting lines" (2011: 12). Indeed, in this version – and particularly my first presentation of *Untitled*, for the exhibition *Can You Hear it?* (*Nunnery Gallery*, London; June, 2010), where the rubbings I made were proportionate in size (to my entire upper torso) and in number – my performance resulted in making residual bodily disruptions. These distortions drew the audience's attention closer to the wall-drawing (see: fig. 38). It was not until I exhibited another version of *Untitled* in *3 Worlds in One* (*KCCC*, Klaipeda, Lithuania; July, 2011), when I reduced the size of the rubbings (areas equivalent to my shoulder or head) and down to a few areas (around the base and center) of the wall-drawing, that I was able to look at ways of interrupting the drawing process, particularly during the performance when the audience could see my body in contrast to the inscribed pattern (see: fig. 36).

Additionally, it is important to note that the 'marked' intersecting lines, which compose the wall-drawing, are made *prior to* the performed gesture, carefully constructed with strings harnessed to adjustable posts and aided by assistants (see: fig. 39 and 40). The wall-drawing is then prepared before I stand near it (about one foot away) and I try not to contact the charcoal pattern. The marked facade appears neutral in its rigidly geometric display (ranging from cubes, lines, diagonals and curves), while my bodily gesture, partly rubbing away this background, appears distortedly separated and contrasted. Hence, I try to stand out and present a bodily space based on the spatial quality of my restricted posture, which is sculptural and positioned away from the wall and drawing.

Fatigue and Slackening – Letting Go

I have been able to exhibit *Untitled* on numerous occasions and in different gallery spaces. Each time a different physiological variation to standing has occurred. Each performance exhibited the following variations respectively: turning (*Approximations to...*, *Harrington Mills*, 2010), stumbling (*Sisyphus Happy, Backlit Gallery*, 2011), kneeling (*Creekside Open, APT Gallery*, 2011; *3 Worlds in 1, KCCC* (Klaipeda), 2011). (See: fig. 41, 42 and 43.)

A diary entry made after performing *Untitled*, presented for *Sisyphus Happy*, notes my engagement with the space and wall. The passage reads:

> When my head was turned, and I viewed the vacant smear, I felt the weight of my body becoming physically heavy. At the same time I felt an expiation from the adrenaline produced; a lightness which I also associated with the cloud-like patch above, and diagonally to me - in a direction opposite of the actual dark lines. Was this lightness of weight an effect of enduring a sense of thinking *within* a mode of erasure, of not knowing what to do when isolated and standing freely?
>
> (Note from diary – January, 28th, 2011)

The rubbing-away of the prepared wall-drawing that distorted its rigid line-pattern occurred due to my decelerated action and occasional need to lean into the wall (for physical support). In the note above I ask if this 'rubbing-away' can be understood as erasure. Looking back now I would argue that the 'erasure' is less enigmatic, the rubbing occurring from practically leaning and smearing while undergoing fatigue. Here, erasing may be associated with physical endurance, with trying to stay as still and as long as possible. Effectively, holding up my body engages its physicality, whereby the longer I concentrate on restricting myself the more fatigued and heavier I become, eventually collapsing and leaving.

Heaviness also engages a form of mental fatigue, of concentrating on an inactive stance that refuses engagement. This fatigue carries a conceptual sense comparable to

how Nancy relates thinking with weighing:

> This means at once: something that weighs me down, that pushes me toward the earth, that bends me, or to want to think is heavy. As one says in French, it is *lourds de consequences*. One speaks as well of a "weighty silence."
>
> (Nancy 1997: 2)

Weight is an effect of spacing, or in Nancy's terms a consequence of thought being both weighty and silent to questioning – the mode of questioning, for Nancy, contextualized by an interruption or spacing specific to philosophical writing. Weighing and thinking are, in my view, incurred by a question generated around space and its relation to a concentrated yet released point-of-the-body. The abstract sense of this spacing/dislocating of bodily gesture is further equivocated by the smeared patches in the wall-drawing, rubbed-away by my shoulder, hip or head occasionally leaning against the wall. My leaning/rubbing against the wall arises from a slackening followed by kneeling on the floor nearby. "Fatigue is not just the cause of this letting go, it is the slackening itself," concludes Levinas (2001: 19). Kneeling results from me physically letting go while maintaining stillness, letting my physicality weigh into its state of inaction while in a gradual state of fatigue.

Conversely, the fatigue I endure is different to the state of complete slackening that Levinas describes: indolence. "Indolence makes us prostrate, idleness weighs us down, afflicts us with boredom;" this boredom is a subjective response, "a refusal to undertake, to possess, to take charge" (Levinas 2001: 16-17). So, contrary to the Levinasian posture, a purely inactive and indolent repose, the instant in which I hold myself involves letting go into my weight, the gestural slackening and (dis)engagement with the space of a paradoxical instant of beginning through standing.

Instantaneity and Bodily Location

I shall now go on to explore the instant by looking at kneeling as a stance. Here, I examine the task-based artwork, *Placing a Pause...* The task involves me kneeling on the foam mat, where standing only occurs after completing the performance. My knees sink and settle into the foam, while facing my torso toward but *away* from two pin-sized imprints or holes in the wall (see: fig. 44 and 45). While kneeling the imprints are separate from where I kneel, and so are disconnected from my physicality. In this work the instants of performing, kneeling and staring, become actions executed that aim to locate my physicality through my relaxed posture – there is barely any physical endurance involved – while positioned away from the imprinted wall.

However, because there is no indexical reference to the agent/participant of the artwork, neither to the placement of the imprints/holes nor tracing into the memory-foam, I offer the task to be executed by others rather than myself.[66] The title, *Placing A Pause...*, suggests a task that involves staring and kneeling. These two actions are juxtaposed with a foam mat and the visual sign of an ellipsis – a sign made by staring at the two pin-sized holes in the wall and stereoscopically fabricating a third hole or dot. The memory-foam briefly but impermanently retains two imprints from the knees. The mat restricts mobility, settling both knees into one position. After completing the tasks of kneeling and staring, and shortly after one stands up, this weighted impression disappears. When standing further away and viewing the wall and mat the holes are barely visible in the wall and the foam appears carelessly left near the gallery wall (see: fig. 46).

Since this work leaves neither a physical nor, in terms of the disengaged memory-

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[66] In the conclusion I shall clarify what I mean by 'performing' and 'executing' as different forms of engaging actions in my works.

foam, mnemonic trace the temporal period (the time in which the performance happens) is nevertheless addressed by the disconnection of the mat and holes, devices that invite the spectator to try and simultaneously touch (with the knees) and see (with the eyes). The instantaneity of the overall action, to touch and see at once, pertains to the immediate state of kneeling and focusing on position while in the instant of being present. In this case, we may consider with Levinas that "position is the very event of the instant as a present" (2001: 70). Kneeling holds physicality up and outward, weighted down but never moving. Here, the role physical restriction plays with regards to the temporal movement implied by the instant, the experience of time effected by space and separation of touch and sight, needs to be examined further for how the present is restricted temporally. In a sense, there is an emphasis on a kind of 'here', which pertains to the space where kneeling and staring are oriented to the instant, the present state of physicality in its stance and stillness. The instant might then be approached as, in Levinas words, "the impossible possession of the present" (*Op.cit.*).

Pause, Waiting, Ellipsis and Period

It may help to mention that *Placing A Pause...* came about while I was experimenting with another work, *As A Post*, in which I was testing how long I could station myself in the studio by standing in relation to a still object (see: fig. 47). This was a pylon, which I found on the street. By standing next to the pylon I was trying to locate my stance, positioning myself within the space around me. To help position myself I tied one end of a string around my waist and stretched the other end over to this object, basically to contain the space that stretched between the pylon and myself – what at the time resembled a sculptural marker of sorts (conventionally a pylon on the street directs attention toward an area around where it is placed). However, rather than help hold my

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body in a strict position the pylon turned into a device for making absurd movements with – leaning forward and away from the pylon, while also balancing in unison (see: fig. 48). What finally made me reconsider this performance was the fact that I added a candle on top of the pylon, which regulated my performance into waiting for the candle to extinguish; what, in turn, distracted from a more subtle kind of instant, a state of waiting in which the present and space became characterized by boredom – a subject that I will explore more properly in Chapter 2.2.

I was more interested in how I felt my physicality becoming, in a strange sense, weighty through waiting; not in the anticipatory sense of waiting *for* an idea or action to come about but, rather, a "waiting without waiting"[67] in which I felt my body standing out, dislocated and exposed within the instant of me holding still. By removing the pylon and string I found myself exploring stance under a form of waiting that no longer became measurable, as in the duration represented by how long the candle remained lit. This waiting invoked a different fatigue, a sense of becoming bored and, a physiologically disjunctive waiting invoked by holding myself within a state of stillness. In this case I released the tension of my legs and knelt on the studio floor. To keep myself in the same position I pierced two holes in the wall, one for each eye, and proceeded to stare at these two. Without doing or saying anything I silently stood and stared – indeed, a rather absurd state of working, which made me hesitate in even identifying this as a possible performance. (However, I have now found that this kind of inactive and dislocated gesture is important in my practice.) To make more precise the distance between these two dots and myself I adjusted my position. At approximately twenty centimeters I was not only

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[67] Writer and Nancyean scholar Phillip Armstrong also articulates 'waiting' in terms of its "radical passivity," a state "that exposes and holds open the irreducible, irrecuperable, and unconditional disjunction between an experiment and a foundation, an invention and an absolute demand" (Armstrong 2009: 191). This echoes Blanchot's more literary description of how "waiting gives attention while withdrawing everything that is awaited" (1999: 23).

able to stare at the pin-holes but seemingly *into* the wall, the space between the two actual holes opening out into a third dot. I knew that I was fabricating this elusive dot and area, a kind of conceptual space outside of the actual wall I was standing toward; but in this activity something important was being addressed about the ellipsis and its effect on physicality.

What I have discovered was that while kneeling the eyes concentrate on making one additional dot, attempting to intertwine the actual two (see: fig. 49 and 50). (Before proceeding further here, I note that the imprints, which are minute in size and placed at approximate height of one hundred centimeters, may go unseen. In this case *Placing A Pause…* can result in a more extensive loss of engagement.) If the imprints are seen and stared at closely (enough to make one additional dot between the two imprints) then what happens is similar to what Bollnow describes when discussing the individual's attempt to perceptibly localize oneself, or centre one's body in space:

> For seeing with only one eye, this point is fairly precisely determined in the interior of the eyeball. But as soon as I see stereoscopically with both eyes, this certainty quickly disappears. The 'where' would be located at some precise point between my eyes. But it would be a pointless precision to want to determine it more accurately. It is simply not possible to localize it further.
>
> (Bollnow 2011: 268)

In *Placing a Pause...* the spectator views two actual dots but never touches upon a visualized and fabricated mid-point. The following diagram may help illustrate the two dots (illustration 1) and the direction the eyes try to focus, producing a middle dot, here represented by ' • ' (illustration 2).

<div align="center">•   •   (illustration 1)</div>

.→ • ←.   (illustration 2)

According to Bollnow the mid-point is an enigmatically and un-locatable 'where' that is 'between' the eyes. This seems to suggest the mid-point is embedded in the mind, and not merely in the actual space, the locatable 'here'. Space becomes both literal and fictive; or, better yet, optical and narrowed in its intellectual engagement with some between-space, which the mid-point equivocates.

Associating the dot or spot with an actual point may be considered with regard to the optical process of fabrication: the desire to perceptually force a graphic figure where ontologically 'the point' is *not*.[68] The inexistent quality of the point is similar to Fiona Banner's 'Neon Full Stop' (1998), where she constructs a neon bulb that glows and generally aligns at the height of the spectator's eyes (see: fig. 51). Banner calls these sculptural forms of punctuation "symbols without an index," or "un-signs," because we can view them while they have "no signifier" (in Burke 2007). As with the above works the fabrication and arrangement of this period-like dot invokes an arrest of the indexical process. It is questionable if, at some moment, the engagement with this optically

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[68] Bollnow's discussion of stereoscopic self-centering can also be compared with Nancy's discussion of ellipsis. As Nancy proposes the ellipsis indicates "the passion for the center, for touching the center, and for the touching of the center" (Nancy 2003: 109). This theological connotation of touching upon the condition for the possibility of touching, this transcendental 'passion for the center', means that presence (the central thing-in-itself, pure presence of Being as such) is exscribed by this touching-of-the-touch and, thus, absolutely withdrawn from actually being present (Nancy 1993: 316). For Nancy ellipsis invokes a spacing of presence (an ontological whole or oneness); "an ellipsis of the two" (2003: 100), wherein the body is exscribed, exposed to the fact of existing under a constitutive dispersal, inner separation and split or two.

  This ellipsis of the two is arguably very similar to Badiou's notion of the 'irrational couple' (see: Chapter 1.3), the phenomenological event of the body being there (appearing) while dislocated from the mathematical-ontological 'void-multiple' or being-qua-Being'. My speculation about the relationship between Nancy and Badiou's post-structuralist philosophies is not unfounded. Nancy scholar Ian James brought this Nancy-Badiou association to my attention during our discussion, when I delivered my paper on Nancy at The University of Dundee, for the workshop/colloquium entitled *Jean-Luc Nancy: Writing Upon the Limit* (May 13th, 2011). My paper, *Turning Around the Written Mark, Opening from a Weight of Thought*, explored some of these themes, particularly Nancy's 'exscription'.

fabricated point indexes and provides either me or the spectator with an existential comportment that engages contemplation – there is no necessary visualization process that sustains self-identification, the simultaneity of subject and agency.

In a way the empirical sense of the ellipsis is encountered through holding still within an instant that is akin to a period of time. The temporal quality that this period, which opens up from the ellipsis and its effect on the instant, will need to be explored further in Chapter 2.2. Here, the spacing of the present, in which stance is held in a kind of waiting and boredom, is echoed by an instant that is spatially emphasized by encountering weight – a sense of physiological separation or gestural slackening incurred by fatigue.[69] Like the (un-)sign of the ellipsis [...] a period can be considered as a temporal state of stretching out... A pause that, when engaged by an inactive stance, disrupts phenomenological comportment. Although the body can appear in the present (period), spatially and presently located, gestures such as standing or kneeling can orient and address a point-of-the-body, a constitutive dislocation of one's being directed toward a profound form of agency (the hoped-for body, pure presence).

Concluding Remarks on Standing and Physicality

In this chapter (2.1) I have investigated standing as a bodily gesture that uses physiological release through restriction, a mode of letting-go and slackening while holding one's physicality upright. I have articulated this as 'inaction', where physicality appears in the present as a directing-toward the space in the instant that the performed or executed stance appears. Conceptually and philosophically this gesture is used to address an ontological state of immediate dislocation, a separation or subtraction of

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[69] In his remarkable novel, or récit, *Awaiting Oblivion* (1997), Blanchot explores 'waiting' under various forms, one of which invokes boredom, as when he writes: "The decay of waiting, boredom. Stagnant waiting, waiting that at first took itself as its object, complacent with itself and finally hateful of itself. Waiting, the calm anguish of waiting; waiting become the calm expanse where thought is present in waiting" (Blanchot 1997: 29).

immediate presence from physicality in the moment of appearing and being present.

The way in which I have explored the present as an instant is based around the question of a spatially oriented stance that works through a conceptual point-of-the-body. I have shown that weight and stance can locate bodily gesture instantaneously, emphasizing a bodily space particular to the spatial quality of physicality, its way of standing out and appearing. The performances examined demonstrate that physicality can be positioned and restricted into postures derived from standing. That is, positioned through prepared imprints, made prior to the performed gesture. In the case of *Untitled* physicality is more spatially pronounced and isolated, directing attention toward immobile postures that change through various positions. In *Placing A Pause...* I invite the spectator to engage stance, to hold only one position (of kneeling), in relation to notational marks. These notational marks vary from the ellipsis to the period; marks that, like the physicality involved in such performances, relate to the concept of bodily space that is subtracted of an anticipated phenomenological agency, such as the 'hoped-for' presentness of really being-there. The physicality I am investigating is present and stands out, but not as something existential or authentically there in-itself.

Overall, these performances work with bodily gesture to indicate the present in a literal and direct manner. What I will investigate further in Chapter 2.2 is this literal/physical state of appearing there, where the locational 'here' might be understood as an instant that is estranged, which I have begun to explore in this chapter as a spatial instant.

§2.2 - Turning Around

"What then occupies space? A body - not bodies in general, nor corporeality, but a specific body, a body capable of indicating direction by a gesture, or defining rotation by turning around, of demarcating and orienting space."

(Lefebvre 1991: 169-170)

"It is always the same present or the same past that endures. A memory would already be a liberation with regard to the past. Here, time begins nowhere, nothing moves away or shades off."

(Levinas 2011: 48)

Turning and Stillness

For the duration of the performance *Untitled*, exhibited in *3 Worlds in 1* (KCCC; Klaipeda, Lithuania; July 2011), I presented a single turning gesture while positioned against a large wall-drawing (see: fig. 52 and 53). My movement occurred once and spanned over one hour and twenty-six minutes. This version of *Untitled* was the only time I chose to video the entire performance, the footage of which I presented (unedited and in real-time) on a screen next to the wall-drawing. I would like to open Chapter 2.2 by describing this work further so that I can set up some of the key subjects I will be examining here. Generally, this chapter looks further at the instant of a dislocated bodily gesture, which I shall examine in terms of a certain estrangement of restricted action that is presented through videos using stillness.

Within this performance of *Untitled* I attempted to use turning as a gesture to, in Henri Lefebvre's terms, 'define *rotation*', that is define the actual space *around* where I slowly rotated while appearing (to audience members) immobile – standing being the

posture I started with. Although I held myself as still as possible I gradually changed

positions, from standing and facing left, then shifting and bending in toward the wall, and

later facing to the right. The numerous black lines I drew, composing the large 365x520

centimeter wall-drawing (two sets of bracket-like contours that surrounded me), helped

demarcate the range of space my positions extended across more accurately. Each

bracket-line I passed could then be seen in relation to where I was positioned against the

wall-drawing.

While making this version of *Untitled* I was also thinking about how I could engage

the medium of the video I was using (in the studio, to develop my performative

investigations, and in the gallery, where I subsequently would present selections of these

performances). In my own way, I interpreted the video's medium as visual images shown

through oscilloscopes – graphic, audio-visual frequencies displayed on a screen, not so

much as waves but, instead, as a pattern of curved lines that rippled horizontally. Making

the wall-drawing was my way of graphically representing a form of video interval, in this

case composed of one field of bracket-like drawn lines [((( ] rippling into another

[ ))()(( ]; more precisely, a two-part field composed of one-hundred and twenty six lines

(equivalent to the minutes making up the length of time to video me). This graphical

representation echoed the time-based quality of video, a drawn image that implied an

interval of movement, a moving and turning of frequencies through one image, static and

structured by rigid lines. On the one hand, my performance aimed to parallel the video's

medium: videoing myself (positioned and holding still) turning within this drawing of the

video's interval. On the other hand, I wanted to see how – by holding still and turning

slowly enough that my positions could appear as immobile as the static wall-drawing near

me – I could open up and investigate the temporal quality of the video's logic, or way of

moving, as an interval – a kind of video-logical interval. By placing the video within the

actual space (of the gallery) I had performed in I wanted to, therefore, show the drawing and what I did around it; and, more precisely, demarcate the interval of my turning gesture in relation to the video (see: fig. 56). Indeed, the image of the video on screen seemed as still as my actual performance, holding still and in a space where nothing moved, enough that the video could be perceived as being photographically still. This work raised questions about how to think of my performance, a prolonged gestural turning of sorts, with and without the recorded display.

The variation of *Untitled* I have described here starts an investigation into my approach to videoing physiological movements, particularly turning. I employed video in an attempt to critically explore how I moved and engaged video's interval-like property, that is moving from one position to the next within one frame of a moving-image to, thusly, define an activity shared between this video and my physical gesture. In hindsight, the question that has prompted me to explore this is: what is movement in a video sequence that uses stillness, in such a way that the video frame parallels the restriction of bodily gesture? I shall review the above and one related artwork, the sculptural and non-performance-based *Passages* (2009-10), to explore the question of a dislocated gesture in relation to time. 'Dislocation' can here be explored within a debate about the technological mediation of live performance and mark-making, where video and photography test the time-based quality of these practices. In *Passages* I speculate on the mediation of the temporal interval, where we see my bodily gesture documented in printed still-images – instead of seeing the video I selected these images from. The display of arrested movement and disconnected time in this work posits a question of the instant and its estrangement, an estrangement that shall be clarified through a critical response to Bergson's claim about duration being indivisible, affective and continuous.

The Videological Interval

In order to see how turning and stillness might relate to the interval in video I wish to explore another related artwork, which has me briefly return to the position of standing. John Wood and Paul Harrison's *Horizon*, which is part of their video series *26 (Drawing and Falling Things)*, 2001, is one example where the performance uses stillness while also directing attention to the interval of the action and video (see: fig. 54). By examining *Horizon* I shall attempt to investigate the turning of frames constitutive of a moving-image sequence as, what I propose is, a 'videological interval'. Such an interval can be considered by the series of objects, ranging from the performer's body (John Wood) to black, spot-like balls; both horizontally distributed and metaphorically presenting two things: a sequence of image-frames, and a single instant of time.

Horizon is a forty-second video showing John Wood standing in a room – a space built within Wood and Harrison's studio. Within eleven seconds the only other objects that come to appear, in addition to Wood's inactive stance, is a sequence of twenty-two black balls. With Wood staying still our view becomes focused on this sequence, a row of black spots/balls that, in a sudden and gravitational release, vertically turn by descending in an arch over his head and into the wall. Compositionally the released balls and standing figure present, as Ian White observes, both a "mundane and an irrefutable principle made perverse in showing itself," namely the principle that "gravity is absurd" (in Ffotogallery 2006: 116). Indeed, this performance and video can be perceived as mundane, as if gravity has put Wood and the balls into relation, where one ball lands uniformly to the next, surrounding Wood's unresponsive stance.

Physiologically Wood remains completely immobile while the balls, black spots that structure his position, move. Wood stands and stays put, *remains* rather than holds still; in other words, and in comparison to *Untitled* here, Wood doesn't move horizontally,

turning or budging any limb. As if paralyzed by gravity and boredom, Wood's physicality remains uniform, still and unresponsive – a stillness that is equally as stationary as the camera before him (in *Horizon* the camera's view never veers). The video turns, unravels in a regulated and automatic way. First we see Wood, then the balls descending, and finally both Wood and the balls together. Everything in this video happens as if affected by a sense of gravity centered on Wood's immobilized pose.

In effect, Wood's performance is inactive to such a degree that the video orients our focus onto the space in which he is positioned. When the balls fall, all at once and in one row, they punctuate the space around Wood and thus define his position: standing still in one spot amongst a set of uniform black spots. This arrest and punctuation of the space achieves a clearer form of stillness than I try to present in *Untitled*. For instance, I don't automatically fall down; let myself descend into my weight. Rather, I turn horizontally while tensing my muscles (to hold myself up and still). My engagement with gravity is then more physically tensional. *Horizon* is a video that, conversely, centers upon Wood's unvaried pose, which creates a rather uneventful yet strange forty-second duration.

The display of falling balls around Wood gives the video sequence a passivity that frames, as Lepecki states, "a kind of 'movement' that does not go anywhere... a sort of mobility that stays put" (2006: 63). The balls, dropping and turning into the wall at once, present the only source of movement in Horizon. Although we do not see the individual twenty-five frames of the video flickering by every second, this single row of balls fabricates one frame, a videological turning that occurs with one release. The mundane way these balls settle around and frame Wood makes the entire video's scene and image

seem inanimate.[70] By inanimate I mean that this work becomes virtually inexpressive, automatic and uneventful – which my performance (*Untitled*), with its display of contorted and dramatic postures, does not thoroughly achieve. With Wood standing reservedly still; the balls eventually resting into a countable sequence; the symmetrical positioning of Wood in the middle of this horizon of dots all set up a framed perspective of an absolute space. The spatial is absolute, according to Lefebvre, because "it has no shape in that it has no content. It may be assigned neither form, nor orientation, nor direction" (1991: 169).

Gestural Mediation

We may speculate that the inexpressive quality of Wood's mundane performance is an effect of the video's interval, its mechanical mode of turning and framing while being without shape and content. This mechanistic interval affects a temporal movement as much as mediates a gestural action. On the one hand the phenomenological argument for the performed gesture of turning, as in *Untitled*, would stress that this, not the video, affects the present with a 'live' quality. The "live present," described by Merleau-Ponty, brings the proximity of the performer to the audience, a proximity that establishes "a pure passage... a single line ceaselessly moving back and forth" (2003: 313).[71] We should note that Merleau-Ponty ascertains physiological movement as a unique act of perception, a way of seeing into how things dynamically move simultaneously through physical exertion and sensory response, the 'pure-passage' being phenomenological perception as such. Topologically, this line, which we are to imagine is shaped as a

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[70] For the inanimate quality of digital video see Laura Mulvey's *Death 24x a Second*, in which Mulvey proposes that as a "post-cinematic" medium video is "drained of movement" (2007: 22).

[71] Keith Ansell Pearson explores this 'pure passage' within the context of Bergson's vitalism and its relation to Nietzschean forces. For example, he writes: "upon the straight line time can be seen to run in two opposite directions (Zarathustra's 'lanes'), backwards and forwards, with both presenting themselves as eternities" (Pearson 2002: 198).

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passage imperceptibly and immaterially running between bodies and things, is contrary to the static row of separated dots and immobile body that we see in *Horizon*. My speculation is that thinking, or as Merleau-Ponty says 'perceiving', through this 'pure passage' presupposes that there is a kind of virtual conduit that shapes a live present, a dynamic but, nevertheless, metaphysical movement running back and forth continuously. Both the audience and the performer are to be "caught up in that movement" (Merleau-Ponty 2003: 318).

In comparison, it is questionable if video can have what it records (a still body) as being 'caught up' in its movement, especially given video's inanimate and mundane quality. Video's interval relates to a form of documenting, as I wish to argue, in so far as it exercises temporal disconnection, the screen and space displayed showing activities of a distant past rather than an affective and plastic passage, a vital and continuous present. Conversely, the live gesture is phenomenologically deemed the modus operandi for engaging a temporal affect that is original and ontologically prior.

I propose that live gesture *cannot* present such a line or pure passage any more than the videological interval, particularly when drawing is combined to record the action. In part, I agree with Philip Auslander that "the space of the document (whether visual or audiovisual)" performatively affects in its own right (2006: 9). The document does not merely describe what has happened, referencing a previous moment, what has happened then – rather than live and in the moment. Here, video opens onto a space *of* the document – possibly even a spacing of temporal affect. Auslander speculates: "perhaps the authenticity of the performance document resides in its relationship to its beholder rather than to an ostensibly originary event: perhaps its authority is phenomenological rather than ontological" (2006: 9). The authority of the phenomenological means that "live performance can even function as a kind of mass medium" (Auslander 2008: 5).

Although Auslander distinguishes the two areas, what he means by 'mass medium' is still conducive to the 'live', where the ontological is supplemented by a more vitally affective phenomenological order (Dixon 2007: 124). The performative document of the video affects what Brian Massumi (a media theorist and Deleuze scholar) describes as a "movement vision" that is "discontinuous with itself" (2002: 50). The videological mediation is "that which includes rupture but is nevertheless continuous," writes Massumi (2002: 51). My speculation is that although the 'mass medium' or video-document includes an interminable interruption of ontological presence, and poses a space in relation to time, it nevertheless sustains a more discursively vitalist and virtual continuum. The virtual correlates to what Massumi describes as "the *interval* [*sic.*] of transmission... a material but incorporeal immanence (an electron flow) moving through a dedicated milieu" (2002: 84).

Could we begin to think of the gesture rather than the videological interval as discontinuous? What I am trying to ask concerns a mediation that is inadvertently related to what Auslander states about the role of 'the beholder', which I believe applies to the viewer as well as (myself) the performer. Both are a kind of beholder, agents that try to engage and endure the turning or interval of the event that happens suddenly and in a prolonged instant, on and off screen. If the viewer watches a performance on video, as in *Untitled* or *Horizon*, he/she beholds an interval that can either be perceived as a virtual transmission, an immaterial passage of electron flows; or, and this is what I am putting forward, seen from a position that is roughly speaking 'inactive'. In the latter case the viewer can stay and see the work, wait and let time pass. In this way, engaging with the duration of the videological interval as much as the affect of this paradoxical bodily gesture puts into question what is meant by live presence.

Instant and Estrangement – Empty Time

If we return to the *Untitled* performance at KCCC we can discover a problem with the spectator's attempt to behold and perceive the video and distorted wall-drawing. While I performed the spectator could view the video-document progressively recording my activity, juxtaposing the drawing, performance and video (see: fig. 55).

Some spectator's contested this juxtaposition, one of the most outspoken being an artist I was exhibiting with – Hugo Dalton. Dalton opined that, especially afterwards (where only the video and drawing remained), that I distorted and estranged the drawing (see: fig. 56). I recall how he questioned the role of the video; that it contrasted with the drawing. Moreover, the video and performance were "too tedious to watch continuously," thus distracting from the monumental wall-drawing. However, I felt that the tediousness Dalton mentioned indirectly accounted for a strange stillness, even boredom, that I felt was a positive effect of this work's encounter.

Here, my intention was to overlap the instant of gesturing and recording, drawing and videoing – rather than move, draw live before an audience and create a drawing on the wall. The instant of viewing the video and drawing at once is then effected or, as I am suggesting, estranged in two ways: by being able to closely and carefully look at what appears to have suddenly disappeared, the rubbed away patches suggestive of an instantaneous and incendiary flash; and, in the same moment, trying to view and pay attention to my still stance in the video. Indeed, the duration when engaged in watching can become tedious or, as Heidegger would say, boring. Boredom means enduring what is "*too* slow," the experience being "burdensome and paralyzing" (Heidegger 1995: 97); "accordingly, becoming bored is a *being held in limbo as it drags over an interval of time*" (1995: 100).

Heidegger theorizes the burdensome dragging of the interval specifically to time, a

temporal span of time that is endured in a 'meanwhile'.[72] As he writes:

> What we call *duration,* the *during,* the *enduring* of time, lies in this meanwhile... What becomes accessible is that what is meant by the "from now till then," time, stretches out. We call what is thus articulated in these characteristics of the meanwhile, the during, and the till-then, the *spannedness* of time. By the meanwhile and the during we mean a span of time.
>
> (Heidegger 1988: 264)

For Heidegger 'duration' is endured; in other words, one tries to be attentive to what is happening in the present by "tarrying a while [*Verweilen*], a peculiar remaining, enduring" (1995: 96). Time's burdensome dragging is, for Heidegger, exemplified by waiting on a train platform or passing the time late in the evening; generally, experiences that provide little stimulation, where we cannot discern what is happening now as much as what is to come, to happen *then*. Hence, time drags and we find ourselves undergoing its passing, in some way passively enduring the space we are in. (It is under this passive enduring, waiting within a time that drags, that I encounter the weight of my body through performances such as *Untitled*.) According to Heidegger, enduring means feeling time stretch out in its 'spannedness', the verweillen or 'while' that drags now *and* (within the passing of each instant) 'then'. But we should note that the 'tarrying' of verweillen is a mode of *anticipating* a time to come, awaiting a 'then' that should come and will always pass, or at least we hope that the span is not endless. Enduring and tarrying creates "a shortening of time that drives on, namely the time that seeks to become long [*lang*]" (*Op.cit.*). The while then becomes long, a meanwhile [*Langweile*] that is endured by tarrying with the passing and span of time, a 'while' [*Verweilen*] that is brief as much as stretched out and 'long' [*lang*].

With regards to *Untitled,* seeing the action and result, both the performative

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[72] For an analysis of Heidegger's notion of boredom and its resonance with a time of the present explored in contemporary art, specifically as "*a historical dialectic of boredom and distraction,*" see: Osborne (2013), pp. 175-211.

gesture (in the video) and drawing, diminishes the viewer's anticipation, the sense of waiting for something to happen. This diminishing effects the temporal register, stretches time into a more estranged meanwhile. What I am saying is that the juxtaposition of the space of the performance and the video document show, to quote Nancy, "the sort [of thing] that nothing precedes or succeeds" (2000: 168). Nancy writes this in direct response to Heidegger's notion of 'spannedness', which relates to how I am approaching time as an instant specific to the immediate space presented in works examined here. Not an immediacy *of* time but rather the *immediate* space actually performed in, as in *Untitled,* or presented as more absolute in videos such as *Horizon*. The anticipation of a presence to come, apprehending an affect or vital movement through engaged viewership, is questionable if time is perceived in its particular present, a sort of meanwhile where 'nothing precedes or succeeds'.

In *Untitled*, as much as in *Horizon*, time can be understood as post-phenomenological, in that it is an "*empty time* or the presence of the present as negativity, that is, insofar as it happens and is, as a result, nonpresent," as Nancy states (emphasis added; *Op.cit.*).[73] According to Nancy, the negation of presence, the tarrying with an empty time, is problematic to endure – or to enigmatically embody, if we consider *mutatis mutandis* the impulse to gesturally inscribe and draw-out time – because time *is* 'nothing'. Such a time as this is more of an "unlife," as writer Thomas Carl Wall says, "a paralyzed force" (1999: 112).

This empty time relates closely to what I mean by an *estrangement of the instant*: time lacks shape, content or reference (neither preceding from a pure past nor succeeding

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[73] With reference to Saint Augustine's infamous description of time in Book XI of *The Confessions* (1998) – a core text in debates around time, particularly in Heidegger's phenomenology – the time of the present aligns with a transitory instant, which is suspended between past and future. Arguably, the notion of empty-time centers directly on a more de-temporalized present, that is a time that is not privileged in disclosing a transcendental precondition for the possibility of being in its horizon of meaning.

from a phenomenological time-as-pure-presence). Time can be understood as 'nothing'

when Nancy describes it as having a negative quality. This comes through when Nancy

investigates Heidegger's 'spannedness' of the meanwhile:

> Negativity, here, does not deny itself and is not raised up out of itself. It does
> something else; its operation, or its in-operation, is otherwise and obeys
> another mode. One could say that it becomes strained: tension and
> extension, the only means by which something could appear as "passing-
> through" and "process," the non-temporal and non-local extension of the
> *taking-place as such*, the spacing through which time appears, the tension of
> nothing which opens time.
>
> (Nancy 2000: 170)

The instant that I am exploring is estranged with regards to the spacing of the

phenomenological notion of time. Both *Horizon* and *Untitled* employ video and stillness

to present an instantaneous (in-)action, an activity in the present where engagement with

presence is strained. The difference in what I am suggesting is that in an estranged

instant, where the artwork invokes the mundane present, the engagement with a time

that is empty and stretched out through boredom can occur under a more attenuated

event. Indeed, the event of what takes place in such performative activities is a time that

extends and accentuates the space in which the drawing and gesture happen. Before

concluding this section I shall go on to consider the 'tension of nothing' with regards to

the interval represented in *Passages*.

Separation Within Movement

Passages (2009-10) is a complex and sculptural representation of the moving-image

as a videological interval, in which I explore temporal mediation through gestural turning

and separation (see: fig. 57, 58 and 59). It presents a series of still-images extracted from

videos, accumulated over several months, which show me turning and passing through

urban passage-ways.[74] Despite there being no actual live performance in this work it has relevance to my investigation. *Passages* is an early work that is important for having inspired performance-drawings such as *Untitled*; but foremost it has allowed me to reconsider gesture in relation to stillness and space, which are key aspects to the arrested action I work with.

The images in *Passages* are selected from an array of videos. The videos span from October 2009 – after commencing this research – to June 2010. What had begun as an exercise to work with the body inside and outside of the studio, to test bodily gestures responding to interior and exterior spaces, transformed into an elaborate and extensive project examining movement in general. Concomitantly, I was experimenting with videoing and documenting, developing a new method of working, which I examined in Chapter 1.1 (commencing exploration through improvised actions, recording them and extracting images from the video while combining these images with notes and diagrams). In *Passages* I engage this process by focusing on video and gestural turning while, more specifically, producing a fabricated sequence representing a moving-image; in other words, this work presents one way to view the videological interval as a pure, abstract yet concrete passage – the 'concrete' being reiterated by the brick walls seen in the images. We could even say, a passage that opens onto a de-temporalized, fabricated space, where the spectator can view the entire array of videos in the same way I would when videoing and selecting still-images. In this way, I am offering the spectator a way to view this interval and how it comes across to me: a disconnected sequence of multiple images. The images are partly disconnected because they reference urban passage-ways recorded on video at different times, spaces that for me at the time were intriguing in their mundanity and which I could pass through. But there is another disconnection that I shall now look

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[74] An extended discussion of this work is provided in an article I have written: *'Remarking The Here Over Now'*, in *Cultural Policy, Criticism and Management Research,* issue 6., 2012, pp. 79-95.

into.

The images are digitally printed and mounted on board, making these panels solid and flat enough to be placed at an angle along the base of a blank wall. A three centimeter width separates each image. The rectangular panels are twenty by fourteen centimeters in size. When assembled the row of image-panels stretch out horizontally. The multiple dividing spaces, however, indicate a possible disconnection within the moving-image.

What interests me by this fabricated conduit of video-images is its relation with empty-time and how this contrasts with the 'moving void'[75] that vitalist discourses on multiplicity describe, namely time hollowing itself while affecting presence as movement. Movement perpetuates itself, a perpetual coming into presence through a constituent patch of forces. Advocates of this discourse, such as Massumi, would argue that "the multiplicity of constituents fuses into a unity of movement. The resulting patch is a self-varying monad of motion: a dynamic form figuring only vectors" (2002: 183). "A vector is *transpositional* [*sic*.]: a moving-through points" (Massumi 2002: 185). But can the transpositional include a movement that is arrested and separated into multiple disconnected frames? Even if the colored bricks in each image give the impression of video pixels it is hard to imagine that *Passages* is a unified stream of images, a 'dynamic form' of vectors constituted by a continuous feedback of light and digital noise. But as Massumi argues, even the spacing presented by bodily movement – which could include a point-of-the-body – would be 'fused into' a univocal 'vision-movement', which "in its becoming, is the interval that encompasses – *occupying every threshold*" (2002: 86; emphasis added).

To approach the virtual interval more critically I would like to look closer at

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[75] See: 'The Disjunctive Synthesis of The Thought-Event' in Chapter 1.3.

Bergson's concept of durational time. Bergson argues for a time that affects and impels movement as such, meaning that "there is no absolute void in nature" (1998: 281). Moreover, he declares that "we shall never affirm that a thing is not" (Bergson 1998: 291). In this case, the videological interval – which Bergson calls the cinematographic (image) – implies that movement can be viewed as an illusion, since in actuality, like a film reel, its motion seems divisible. What alarms Bergson most is that movement might be divisible into static images, thus actualizing the space between a pair of celluloid frames as nothing, a pure void. According to him emptiness is an illusion, that movement can be captured and fabricated into immobile, framed images that then become photographs. But, he writes,

> ...it is true that if we had to do with photographs alone, however much we might look at them, we should never see them animated: with immobility beside immobility, even endlessly, we could never make movement.

(Bergson 1998: 305)

He then concludes:

> ...let the interval between two consecutive states be infinitely small: before the intervening movement you will always experience the disappointment of the child who tries by clapping his hands together to crush the smoke. The movement slips through the interval...

(Bergson 1998: 308)

For Bergson movement is intensive, a continuous interval that can be embodied. The sudden and blurry image located at the threshold of the image in *Passages*, even on the screen documenting my gesture in *Untitled*, would be contested by Bergson's terms. If not as an illusory obstruction, he would at least see the videological interval as an interruption of the impulse of a purportedly live present. Bergson's notion of movement is a living impulse [*Élan Vital*], a continual space-time, ubiquitous and without division; a virtual kind of "Instant," which Deleuze clarifies, "is endlessly displaced... always missing from its own place" (Deleuze 1990: 166). It is clear, however, that what cannot be 'encompassed'

within the 'transpositional' (élan), to use Massumi terms, is an immobile stance, a bodily gesture that turns around an absolute space. That is, a space that is absolutely void of content (time-as-pure-presence) *and* shape (transpositional vectors of movement-affecting-movement).

Let us examine more carefully the blurry part of the image where I appear to be moving (see: fig. 58). Positioned at the far left or far right, as if exiting and entering, I turn around the space in the image and also as if verging into the space between the panels. A white line seen on the brick in the image runs vertically along its edge. These bracket-like lines are similar to what Carrie Noland identifies as *jambages*: "the vertical lines of letters (the technical sense of 'jambages') and the rhythmic, measured stride of the digits as limbs ('jambages')" (2009: 207). These lines highlight the position of where, during the recording, I could locate the edge of the video-frame; I then used this line as a guide to make my turning gesture around. But in the fabricated sequence these 'jambages', in addition to cutting across my blurred figural image, are brackets that rhythmically enclose the distinct space separating each image-panel. More crucially, the combination of these lines and my blurry figure indicates what is 'there': on the one hand, a separation within the movement recording my activity (the performed turning gesture); and, on the other hand, the putative actual space where the spectator is present. What I'm suggesting is that this separation is present or 'there' but not so much as a tension, which might imply a vital time that is contradictory in being (ontologically) nothing. The distinction I am proposing is similarly made by Nancy when he writes:

> The "there" is the spacing of the tension, of the ex-tension. It is space-time; it is not space, not time, not a coupling of the two, not a source-point outside the two, but the originary division [*coupe*] and chiasm that opens them up to one another.
>
> (Nancy 2000: 173)

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Conclusions on Turning and the Empty Interval

The 'originary division', as Nancy says, may propose a form of mediation that the performed gesture sets up with the spectator. In this section I have explored how I work with a gesture of turning under a complex use of video and mark-making so as to demonstrate how bodily gesture is *in itself* mediating. Turning is shared by a form of video interval and gesture that refers to an absolute space characterized by an arrest of movement. And I would like to be clear that this absolute space, which is void of content and shape, is the actual space within which the performance takes place and can be presented more directly through video. My articulation of absolute space then is different, yet related to the spatial quality of the body I described in Chapter 2.1. The space that is indicated by a videological interval, as for instance in Wood and Harrison's *Horizon* and *Untitled*, invokes an estrangement of the instant in which the engagement with time is problematic. What these works, and more so *Passages*, challenge is the phenomenological and vitalist interpretations that perceive time as transcendental, a connective channeling with the present, a tension in the present that is predicated by a living and displaced presence. Despite these works being time-based – engaging video, performance and drawing – time itself is tarried with by working and viewing in the instant that is estranged, a meanwhile that is "an empty interval," as Levinas says (1998: 11). It is a time that is present but without presupposing that presence is there to be endured, engaged with and apprehended or embodied gesturally.

The question of an 'originary division' can then be understood in terms of two translations of the French *'coupe'*: a (cross) section, the *separation* that effects gesture with a dislocation from a notational mark – the bracket being one form examined here; and a *cut*, which I will need to explore further in Chapter 2.3. In terms of the notational mark, I have used the bracket to explore the mark as a line at its most abstract and

conceptual. In *Untitled* the bracket is employed to locate the space where I present

myself. Perhaps one other way to look at this contour is how it encloses what is on its

concave, while also omitting what is on its convex side. I would like to close by suggesting

that what is within the arching, rhythmic digits composing the wall-drawing in *Untitled*,

and what is seemingly omitted or outside in *Passages* is a notion of the point, a certain

point of separation. So it may be fitting to stop here and move on to the next and final

section of this chapter, where the point will be examined in relation to the gesture of

pointing.

§2.3 – Pointing Out

"Pointing out is pointing out what is at hand as not at hand, what is not at hand as at hand, what is at hand as at hand and what is not at hand as not at hand (formal negative judgement, formal positive as true positive and true negative judgement): what is at hand or not at hand as such or not as such. To put it in a more general way: *Pointing out is letting what is at hand be seen as such*."

(Heidegger 1995: 319)

The Apophantic Gesture

At the time of making *Passages* I also produced a video called *Shadow of a Form,* 2010 (see: fig. 60).[76] This work arose from my decision, not to extract its individual frames but, rather, to present the video and to show only my shadow. What we see therefore in this video is my shadow appearing in real-time, shifting across a brick-wall, outside and to the right of a white, vertical contour. The shadow has a shape that narrows in length and looks to be pointing outward, at times reminiscent of an enlarged hand. Although my body lit by daylight casts this shadow, both the sun and I are unseen, located on the left and out of the video-frame.

What I am suggesting is a way of considering the act of pointing, which can be compared to the phenomenological formulation of, what Heidegger articulates as, an apophantic gesture of "letting an entity be seen from itself" (1962: 196). In terms of Heidegger's terminology, the sun and myself are out of hand. Seeing the shadow rather than myself can tell us something about the apophantic action, a pointing figure directing itself away from any agency, be it myself or light-source (sun). I would like to start Chapter 2.3, which examines one of the most direct yet perplexing gestures I work with, by

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[76] For the full-length video of *Shadow of a Form* see *Video works (full length)* in the DVD, *Portfolio of Works*.

offering one response to the Heideggerian description of the apophantic: that the shadow is a bodily figure at hand as at hand, present and seen as such, yet in itself is *out of hand*, arguably devoid of presence.

My aim in this chapter (2.3) is to complete the investigation of the bodily gesture I use within my practice, in this case being pointing. Within the scope of Chapter Two, in which I've hitherto examined standing (2.1) and turning (2.2) as dislocated gestures, I now look at pointing for how it directs attention toward the conceptual point(-of-the-body). *Shadow of a Form* is one example that focuses on a gesture of pointing, which extends from the body, through the hand and out to the forefinger. "Pointing with a finger" is apophantic, explains Kleinberg-Levin, when "the gesture of pointing requires the opening, or clearing, or a context of referential intelligibility" (2005: 247). What this gesture opens onto is the philosophical debate concerning the act of indicating and bringing attention to who or what (agency, transcendental precondition) makes any action possible and intelligible. As we shall see, the way I use shadow with pointing raises questions about bodily presence in relation to the point. This is a paradoxical figure, in this section being both concept and imprint, which directs attention to the space in which a point is made – we could even say pointed *out*. Both point and shadow will be analyzed through two artworks: *Approximately Pointing Out the Figure* (2009-2010) and *Details Through Pointing* (2011-12). I will also look at the point as an imprint in John Latham's *One Second Drawings,* mainly to provide some context to my works (Latham is one of the only artists that I have come across to have directly explored and written about this distinct mark).[77] Let us see what kind of gesture pointing is, while engaging with the point not merely as a philosophical trope but as a distinct mark; in this case not so much as a notational and

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[77] I also came across Latham's works and writings at a later stage, toward the end of my research. Latham's explorations of what he calls 'the mark', which relates to other notions of his such as the 'least event', are areas that would require further investigation, mainly because of the unique way in which Latham traverses theory and practice.

material device but as a speculative imprint.

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Pointing has always fascinated me because of its specific way of indicating 'this', that is, the direction opened onto by pointing. Indeed, the apophantic gesture can seem self-referential. If the forefinger is directed at ourselves, for example, the reference is us. If pointed the other way the reference may be toward something; or, arguably, *away* as in trying to project outward. I made *Details Through Pointing* in order to test whether I could sustain a reflection of this action through its associated imprint, in this case being a projected mark made by the tip of my finger. Using a digital drawing-tablet, connected to a computer and projector, I was able to explore a means of projecting a point. As I will elaborate later, I made this mark by tapping my finger into the tablet while the projector cast a point-like dot onto the wall. Conversely, in *Approximately Pointing Out The Figure,* an earlier artwork, I was not projecting but rather imprinting by using my finger together with a fine-tip pen, the ink pen held by the hand and aligning with my forefinger. By either imprinting or projecting my intention was to look at the trajectory presented by pointing: outward, toward a point that possibly is an abstract 'this', a trajectory that never aligns and brings together physicality and imprint.

The abstract quality of the point, specifically as an imprint, can be compared to Latham's *One Second Drawings*, which I briefly mentioned in Chapter 1.0. In these works Latham uses a can of black spray-paint to, in one second, imprint an array of dots on a white board (see: fig. 61). We do not see him actually spraying – although in his exhibition at the Lisson Gallery (London, England) in 1970 Latham claimed to be making a single *One*

Second Drawing each day of the exhibition's period.[78] Nor do we know exactly from what distance he sprays from. What is important for Latham is how this kind of mark-making presents not something live but, rather, a "least event." Practically, the black dots are made with the least amount of physical exertion – pressing the spray-can once, instantaneously projecting black paint and releasing the can's trigger. The spray covers a small area on the board, each dot ranging from a few centimeters to one millimeter in size. The increment of one second adds to the time-based quality of Latham's *least-event*. Here, time is incremental, a kind of one-second-this, a point *of* time that is spatially finite; or, as Latham states: "the atomic idea of a least extended state bounded by a nonextended state" (Latham in Walker 1995: 164). The fuzzy appearance of this mark, bound within its sprayed spot, echoes its more conceptual definition as an 'atomic idea': "the incidence of a 1-dimensional black on a 2-dimensional white" (Latham in Walker 1995: 112). It is this finitude of the point, its 1-dimensional spot, that I believe indicates its abstract sense of space and directionality, a singular trajectory outward that seemingly extends from the arm and hand.

What is truly unique about this outward trajectory, which is shared by the action and imprint, is its implication to indexing and depicting pointing via the point as imprint. Let us look more closely at the indexical properties of this activity. The point is "the negation of all direction," writes German idealist philosopher Friedrich W. J. Schelling (2001: 84). 'The negation' refers to how the point inherently directs outward, projects one way while also negating any sense of its trajectory – rather than returning through a direction that reflexively points back to the 'self'.[79] As such "[t]his point will indicate its

[78] See: Latham's artist book, *Least event, one second drawings, blind work, 24 second painting: John Latham*. (London: Lisson 1970). Artist's book published on the occasion of an exhibition at Lisson Gallery, London, 11 Nov. - 6 Dec. 1970. For a further account of Latham's theory of *least event* see: Latham (1991).
[79] Husserl describes the self-reflexive path of intentionality as an "intentional ray," a phenomenological passage over which the ego can point outward at 'this' (phenomena outside of the ego) *and* grasp this trajectory/passage as some-thing, or 'that'. See: Husserl (2002), pp. 111-114. Schelling's proposition – that

direction, and hence it will have but one direction, towards this point" (Schelling 2001: 84). The point indicates *one* direction, aiming neither at an immaterial path (such as Merleau-Ponty's 'pure passage', over which perception moves back and forth),[80] nor to something else (that, phenomena out in the world).

In such a way, the indexical manner of pointing and imprinting a point can be viewed as problematic. According to Rosalind Krauss, however, the index is the "contraction of sense to the simple task of pointing, or labeling, to the act of unequivocal reference" (1986: 28). She explains:

> [Indexes] are the marks or traces of a particular cause, and that cause is the thing to which they refer, the object they signify. Into the category of the index, we would place physical traces (like footprints), medical symptoms, or the actual referents of the shifter. Cast shadows could also serve as the indexical signs of objects...
>
> <div align="right">(Krauss 1986: 198)</div>

With regard to the activity of inscription that I have critically examined in Chapter One, Krauss makes an important interpretation concerning pointing and signification. She interprets this operation with reference to the structuralist semiotic tradition, specifically employing Roman Jacobson's concept of the shifter. According to Jacobson, the shifter is basically a temporal and spatial adverb ('this', 'that', 'you' or 'I') that is demonstrative, or self-referential.[81] In other words, 'you' is interchangeable with 'I', 'this' refers to 'that', and 'that' (thing/other) demonstrates that 'this' (agent) is there (pointing). Hence, what shifts per se is the *relation* between agent and object, a transitive relation – not to be confused with a referent such as footprints or inscribed imprints – that offers proximity and signification to agent and object. In mark-making the shifter becomes more

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pointing directs only toward the negation of its direction – contrasts with Husserl's claim: that pointing results in an "abstraction made from the spatial," the spatial being "something like a directing that emanates from a point" (2002: 112).

[80] See: 'Gestural Mediation' in Chapter 2.2.

[81] See: Jacobson's 'Shifters and verbal categories', in Cobley ed. (1996), pp. 192-198.

questionable in its efficacy. An inscribed line, for example, implies that a track of footprints may index or point toward a causal agency – something or someone actually out in the world having stepped there, or a metaphysical/immaterial movement that contracts and unifies the distance between the inscriber and imprint(s). Surprisingly, the shifter highlights that the index is "a sign inherently 'empty'," writes Krauss, "*guaranteed by the existential presence of this object*" (emphasis added; 1986: 206).

What I find intriguing is that in order for the interchangeability of the shifter to occur it must undergo a 'contraction of sense',[82] a movement that tries to affirm a relation between agent and object. Contraction is the manner in which a relation makes sense, sustains presence. The direction of this differential activity is multivalent and reciprocal. It is a movement that is to 'guarantee' that signification can provide an 'existential presence' via the unity of the sign, the signifier dynamically and unequivocally referring to a displaced signified.[83] At the same time this unity, writes Krauss, "is thus preceded by multiplicity, or at least by the formal conditions of separation, of division, of deferral, which underlie the sign as its very ground of possibility" (1998: 260).

The point that I am trying to examine is exscriptive rather than inscriptive, pertaining to an agency that is predicated by a conceptual obstruction. What I am suggesting is that when we make/draw the point there may be no existential sense that guarantees the action. Neither is this finite mark indicative of a primordial event, which Latham perceives as providing "a fusion of scientific objectivity with inner spirituality" (Conzen-Meairs in Latham 1991: 11). Rather, the exscriptive point relates to some of the

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[82] A similar description of this contractual movement is described within Schelling's metaphysics as an "unremitting movement." See: Schelling (2000), pp. 11-27. Conversely, there is "a single point" that Schelling describes as "reciprocal inexistence [*Inexistenz*]... that which in itself neither has being nor does not have being." This point is what he terms "Godhead," a figure of the highest metaphysical order that "certainly is nothing, but in the way that pure freedom is nothing."
[83] Jean Clay and Daniel Brewer make a critical discussion of the figure in relation to painting, whereby "a *movement* of introversion" effaces the conceptual model or figure through the act of imprinting. See: *'Painting in Shreds'* (1981).

properties of multiplicity that Krauss lists. In her proposition of multiplicity the notions of trace and index are strongly related to post-structural semiotic and deconstructive traditions. So Krauss' arguments are centered upon the figures of line and the contractual movement it connotes. As we shall see, pointing involves separation, the point indicating the division and mediation of the agent.

Insistence and Spaced Repetition

I shall now expand on how I made *Approximately Pointing Out the Figure* (see: fig. 62). In this work each point was drawn by tapping the forefinger and pen down and onto a table – similar to the desk I often worked at in the studio. Basically, I was interested in the insistent manner of pointing, the way in which this gesture became mechanically repetitive, insistently pointing out and imprinting minute, black dots. There was also an aspect of insisting and working within the area of my reach, which is why I used a table and graph paper about the width of my shoulders and length of my arms extended. Starting by pointing in one direction, downward, each tap produced a barely visible dot/point. I continued tapping until the swarm of points extended outward, to the far edge of the paper and table, which were parallel. Once the entire supporting apparatus (the graph paper) was covered I stopped. What I discovered was that I was following through the action by covering in an insistent manner of pointing/imprinting multiple points. I stopped tapping once these points covered the grid, the paper's surface opening out into a multiple swarm – most visible in the darker and more pronounced areas of the drawing.

It may help to know that only the drawing and a single print of this drawing are exhibited. The problem I have always found with this work is that the actual performance had seemed too introverted, a self-analysis through pointing and contemplating an

infinite space. The print can rather boldly assert that I am gesturing toward something sublime and transcendent. What we can see in the drawing though is a more muted pattern, which is generated by me trying to focus on the precision of pointing and on thoroughly covering the entire paper. The imprinted points become more pronounced toward the area where my arms reach farthest, the pattern denser due to the weight having affected my extended arm. Resulting is a pattern evident of a certain mechanistic rhythm.

If deconstructive terminology lends some critical purchase here then this mechanistic rhythm may be considered by what Derrida calls "rhythmo-typy." He describes rhythmo-typy as "the spaced repetition of a percussion, the inscriptive force of a spacing" (Derrida, in Lacoue-Labarthe 1998: 32). We might then see my rhythmic tapping as recursively executed in "the nonsensible character of rhythm" (*Op.cit.*). The force I engage with, at least in the process of imprinting points, is in the weighing that progressively fatigues me – my hand and finger becoming harder to hold up while concentration grows weary. The resulting drawing struggles to clearly present such nonsensible states incurred by this exscriptive gesture. In which case, the drawing of points can still be perceived in the purely Derridean sense of an 'inscriptive force'.

However, the rhythm that I am suggesting is mechanistic, different from the inscriptive mode of pressing and forcing. Pointing and making points as dots is not exercised under a form of energetic inertia or, as Latham calls, "insistence" – the "tendency to take place," where what occurs is a consistent flow of energy or "stable event-pattern" (Latham in Logsdail 1970: 4). While I either sit or stand at the part of the paper and table that appear closest to me, the abutting portion of the pattern appears lightest because of my ability to readily hold up my arm. The outer area, opposite me, appears darker and irregular because my arm had become fatigued. There is then a

repetition that accords to the lightness[84] of insistently, but not forcefully, pointing and tapping.

Spaced repetition can be understood further in terms of a certain limit of pointing and touching/imprinting the point. Derrida explains that touching is confronted by a philosophical problem:

> To touch is to touch a limit, a surface, a border, an outline. Even if one touches an inside, "inside" of anything whatsoever, one does it following the point, the line or surface, the borderline of a spatiality exposed to the outside, offered – precisely – on its running border, offered to contact... This surface, line or point, this limit, therefore, which philosophy might have "touched" this way, finds itself to be at the same time touchable and untouchable: it is as is every limit, certainly, but also well-nigh and to the limit, and on the exposed, or exposing, an edge of an abyss, a nothing an "unfathomable" unfathomable, seeming still less touchable, still more touchable, if this were possible, than the limit itself of its exposition.

> (Derrida 2005: 103-104)

Derrida's description of the philosophical limit of the action of touching bears some coincidence to what we see in *Approximately Pointing Out The Figure*, particularly one aspect: the pattern of points that delineate the border of the paper's surface facing beyond me, an area that exposes a spatial interstice when its negative print is added next to and perpendicularly to the paper (see: fig. 63). The one-centimeter wide interstice that the drawing opens onto is not necessarily the 'edge of an abyss'. Rather this spatial line echoes a physical limit (the length of my reach); but, also, an experience of dislocation that emerges from insistently and mechanistically tapping, rhythmically touching. For the spatial, separating line indicates the limit of my touching upon a separation[85] at the

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[84] I wish to thank Duncan White for commenting on the aspect of 'lightness', which he observed during my performance for *Sensingsite*, at Parasol Unit, London, on March 14th, 2012.

[85] The philosophical complexity of such a separation, of touching-touch, can also be investigated further through German Idealist philosopher G. W. F Hegel's perplexing analysis of 'this' as a "repelling separation," which makes the agent not an existential self but a "posited abstraction." See: Hegel (1993), pp. 621-622. According to Hegel the agent is *divided* by what he/she attempts to point out: this, a "self-repelling Gap," a separation or spacing "which thwarts the substance [presence] from within, destroying its unity" (Žižek 2012:

exposition of my touch; that is to say, of pointing and imprinting a point in which touch is, at its limit, dislocated by weight: the spacing that is the point-of-the-body.

The print reflects the drawing and the separation of touch. Exact in size to the paper, this print is a digitally reversed image, turning the white and black-inked surface into a black and white-pixelated panel. This image-panel rests perpendicular to the paper (and the table), against but slightly off the wall – a wall that, while tapping and at my furthest reach, I indirectly point toward. The print has a metallic surface, more impenetrable in appearance than the paper, which is malleable and touchable. Both panels present the point at its most visibly multiple and distinct in separation.[86] What I am trying to clarify is that as an object this artwork displays the point in the same pattern, which appears twice and geometrically apart at ninety degrees, recto and verso, positive and negative. The duplication of the drawing through the print thus creates a self-contained object. My decision to make the printed image is then due to how it intimates the trajectory indicated by pointing and extending outward, a direction that opens onto itself while also demarcating the reach of my arm. Overall, *Approximately Pointing Out the Figure* is an attempt, a certain approximation even, of presenting the one-directional pointing activity I was involved in and how the imprinted point is dislocated from the gesture of pointing-out.

Shadow and Exteriority

Whereas *Approximately Pointing Out the Figure* resulted in a complex object, it was with *Details Through Pointing* that I had found a means of exploring the performative act

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378). Hence, the individual engaged in pointing-out bears an "original *partition of itself* [*sic.*]" (Hegel 1993: 622).

[86] In his interpretation of Aristotle's description of 'the point' [*Stigme*] Daniel Heller-Roazen comments that as a geometric entity it is "the double sign of a *terminus ad quem* and *terminus a quo*, the end of one segment and the inception of another... [o]ne in essence but counted twice" (2007: 47). The connotation of a 'double sign' may address how the point repeats itself twice and, hence, separates from being authentic and ontologically substantive.

of pointing (see: fig. 64, 65 and 66). Since making *Shadow of A Form*, where I had shown only my shadow extending an apophantic gesture, I was wondering about the event invoked by pointing through projected light. Instead of using video I experimented with a projector and a digital drawing tablet (connected to a computer), the advantage being that when I touched the tablet I could both cast a digital form of imprint through a room and onto the wall while also being able to situate myself in the same space as the point. By placing the tablet in front of the projector I also began to project my shadow – the first being my hand – along with the digital point, resulting in both the shadow and the point, in this work being a pixel-like dot cast into the room (see: fig. 65 and 66). The blue colour of the wall, due to the projected image of a clear blue sky, gave the room a sense of opening onto an implied exterior. (In the next Chapter I shall elaborate on why I employ the image of the blue sky.) My performance then became a response to the cast dot/point, shadow and the opening of this blue onto a sort of exteriority. One unique response arose after having created enough points to generally cover the wall, taking over an hour of sitting and pointing. The repetitive action grew tedious, after which I stood up and slowly paced throughout the room, from the table, around the floor and to the wall (see: fig. 64). Instead of drawing on the tablet I continued to explore a variety of bodily gestures that produced a varied number of shadows: when I returned to the tablet and came closer to the projector my hand and torso enlarged on the wall, when moving in front of the light source my torso stretched across the entire wall, when approaching the wall my shadow nearly disappeared (see: fig. 67 and 68). To my surprise I managed to achieve a way of extending my shadow and the projected points together, the space then becoming seminal to exposing both in a space that I saw as less contained (as within an object or room) and more exteriorized, projected outward and outside.

Keeping this description in mind we can look into some theoretical aspects of

shadow and the exterior. On the wall the dots/points direct attention to the figure of my

shadow. The more points that appear on the wall the more this shadowy figure becomes

focused upon, not only as being separate from the associated actual referent (my

physicality), but as autonomous and exterior. In this way we may consider Blanchot's

claim that the shadow is "the very exteriority of presence," which impels "the vertigo of

spacing" (2011: 46). The interplay of shadow and point on the wall appears as a dialogue

between these two figures. Bear in mind that I use the tablet to make a point where my

shadow appears on the wall. This activity becomes harder to maintain when the cast

points are scattered all over its surface, in which case I become disoriented by moving up

to the wall and back to the table. Indeed, there is a vertigo induced by this back and forth

action that finds me progressively letting the shadow and points be figures I can watch.

Both shapes present a shadow that can be viewed as what "is 'immediate' presence or

presence as Outside" (Blanchot 2011: 46). It is "no more subject than object and rather

the shadow of itself, a sparkling shadow that frees itself of us like a truer copy because it

is at once more resemblant and less familiar" (Blanchot 1997: 146).[87] If the shadow is a

'truer copy' it may be in the way it presents a form of spacing that, as I am proposing, is

constitutive of bodily gesture in relation to notions of multiplicity and point; in other

words, when I intermittently stop and hold myself, my shadow still and cast on the wall, it

is because I feel an arrest in my movement and a passive engagement with both shadowy

figures (pixel-point and body-shadow).

The point projected on the wall appears as dark as my shadow, making both tonally

equivalent and somewhat resemblant. When the two appear still and together they

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[87] Victor I. Stoichita similarly discusses the shadow as something that frees itself from the agent, an 'exchange' where "the shadow of 'nothing' becomes 'something'" (2011: 171). See: 'Man and his Doubles' in Stoichita (2011), pp. 153-186.

combine into a disproportioned double,[88] the point significantly smaller than my enlarged

shadow (see: fig. 69). Both present a single figure yet are divided in two. I believe though

that the point is the 'truer copy', the figure that is pointed to an exterior directed toward

an enigmatic outside or exteriority. In accordance with Blanchot when the shadow of my

hand points toward the projected point the action of pointing is directed:

> ...toward this point, a single point at which the present thing (the plastic
> object, the figured figure) changes into pure presence, the presence of the
> Other in its strangeness, that is to say, also radical non-presence... the
> affirmation of naked presence that has nothing, is nothing, retains nothing,
> that nothing dissimulates.
>
> (Blanchot 1997: 219)

According to Blanchot the 'presence of the Other' refers to a literary trope for an alterity

that interrupts philosophical writing and thinking, a passive form of otherness or 'neuter'

whose purpose is in "turning away from all that is visible and all that is invisible" (Blanchot

1997: 222). What I find is that the shadowy hand points out its other, the point being the

double that *is* the radical non-presence that the exteriority of the shadow implies. Here,

pointing exercises a gesture that is dislocated and strange, the point being the immediacy

of a figure that is nothing, a projection of light and cast shadow that, when the light

source (projector) is turned off, takes with it all trace of the action.

Conclusions on The Figure of The Point and Gesture

This section completes my analysis of the way I work with the body using

performance-based mark-making to explore gesture. I would like to summarize my

examination of pointing with the following note. *Approximately Pointing Out The Figure*

uses the drawing and print to present a doubling of the point, the multiple figure on paper

reflected and reversed into the print. In *Details Through Pointing* the shadow and

projected point display a 'divided double', two figures without presence, ontologically

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[88] For the shadow as 'double' also see Antonin Artaud's 'Alchemist Theatre', in Artaud (2010).

non-substantive or nothing. Most importantly, the direct casting of my shadow with the projected point elicits the conceptual model I am proposing – a point-of-the-body. As an index the shadow and point are both *this,* what appears visibly there (on the wall). With regards to myself, as an agent being in the same space with what seems a divided figure (point and bodily-shadow), I present myself as, what is more accurately, this *multiple* figure – an exteriorized non-body of sorts. To put it baldly, I appear in physical shape and volume but without a profounder sense of *being* (there).

The projected figure of the point is unique in its dislocation of touch. In its apophantic manner the hand pointing out its other, here being the shadow and point, offers a critical perspective on the chiasmatic concept of self-touching. The figure of the point posits a separation that interrupts, or as I have been arguing, dislocates phenomenological engagement: self-touching. The point exposes rather than provides a way of touching and sustaining a proximity to an intersubjective state of self-presence. The figure of the point is a form of spacing, a separation that makes what is touched an exposure of the limit of touching; an exposure that, *mutatis mutandis*, effects the body with what philosophers such as Maine de Biran define as a "kind of extension," an inner space that even the notion of 'space' could not adequately define, a space that exposes the body as "parts among each other" (without a unifying notion of relation or substance).[89] I have tried to show that pointing out the point, imprinting or projecting it, can expose the limit of gesture, a dislocation inherent to a problem of the body associated with touch and space. That limit can be understood as an exteriority, an outside that gesture opens onto – an exteriority that is also the trace.

As I have tried to show bodily gesture mediates or, more accurately, dislocates its inherent means of directing attention to the point, to the trace of thought. Agency,

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[89] My references to Maine de Biran are indebted to Heller-Roazen. See: 'Of Flying Creatures' in Heller-Roazen (2007), pp. 219-236.

implied as having presence, is dislocated by the physical means of gesturing through restricted postures and positions. Phenomenologically, the connotation that the body is devoid of presence, a (literal) figure without (conceptual) figure, can be interpreted as a nihilistic form of gesture, which might come across as meaningless and empty.   As Heidegger writes, "it concludes that man is present at hand in the nothing, properly speaking he has nothing and consequently is himself nothing" (1995: 299).   Indeed, what is gesture if its capacity to act is obstructed and devoid of a structuring conceptual model or palpable figure? As I have been exploring Nancy's notion of exscription it may be fitting to see what this means for gesture. He asks:

> What is a gesture? A gesture is neither movement nor the outlining of a form... Gesture is a sensible dynamism that precedes, accompanies or succeeds meaning or signification, but it is sensible sense [*sens sensible*].
>
> (Nancy 2010: 97)

In terms of mark-making, even though an exscriptive gesture is not an inscriptive action, based on moving and imprinting a graphic trace, it sustains, though radically, a sensible sense. Exscription is not senseless nothingness; yet as an action its directionality is endless. What does this aim at? Nancy explains:

> ...at the end of the gesture, then, at the endless end of the gesture, there is not entirely a pure nothingness of signification, *there is a sign, but a sign in the sense of a signal* [my emphasis], a signal of something... I think it's important to say two things: first, it's a signal towards a beyond of the work of art; never is a work of art made for itself, on the contrary its being as work, its character as work always consists of pointing outside the work... A sign beyond the work itself...
>
> (Nancy 2010: 98)

I would like us to keep in mind that the trace too might be a sign beyond the work, an endless end that externalizes gesture.

Up until now my discussion of the point has been addressed only through my use of bodily gesture. (The following is mapped out in the lower half of Diagram One and the

right-hand portion of Diagram Two.)   The point as a conceptual form of spacing is inadvertently indicated by (post-phenomenological) physiological responses, namely: standing, turning and pointing. The notational marks, such as period, ellipsis and bracket, have acted as structuring devices that visually and spatially support these restricted actions. How do these gestures set up the question I now wish to investigate? If standing directs attention toward space, the location of positioned posture, then pointing might be understood as an extension toward a more conceptual space as an outside. If turning indicates an interval of the present, a meanwhile emphasized by the instant of a gestural and videological interval, then pointing is the action of directly placing attention toward what is also beyond a certain signal. This signal might be understood as beyond the dislocated gesture and notational mark; a signal that is partly focused into view by the point addressed here as pointed out. What I wish to put forward is a new question around how I approach an outside using space and context to address the trace.

Chapter Three

3.0 – A Trace of Thought

"A landscape is a mark, and it (but not the mark it makes and leaves) should be thought of, not as an inscription, but as the erasure of a support."

(Lyotard, in Benjamin 1992: 217)

"What is given to thinking to think is not some deeply hidden underlying meaning, but rather something lying near, that which lies nearest, which, because it is only this, we have therefore constantly already passed over."

(Heidegger 1977: 111)

Trace and Affect

The trace is one of the most important and challenging subjects explored in my practice. In all my works it is elusive, a trace related to the space that I work in and, in a conceptual way, 'outside' – rather than being a concept immanent to the materials and (notational) marks that I prepare or imprint as a point. My speculation is that the trace is different to an inscribed imprint, the residual mark left by a direct action as in sketching or gesturally drawing that traces a vital movement. Arguably, in relation to a point the trace "is nothing, that is, a limit without depth or surface, untouchable even by way of a figure" (Derrida 2005: 131). As Derrida claims, "there is no trace *itself*, no *proper* trace" (1982: 66). It could then be argued that my reason for working with the point is in wanting to explore a trace in performance-drawing that, in part, relates to a conceptual space. This is the trace that paradoxically is *not*, devoid of an in-itself; an obstructive spacing/thinking that is outside, without any proper 'itself'. What I wish to examine more closely here is

the trace in its relation to the space in which my own and other related works are presented.

The aim of this chapter is to inquire about the trace as a thought-event, meaning the space/context in which performance-drawing takes place and where trace is designated by a problem of representation. To contextualize how I use space – such as that of a gallery – with reference to the outside, I shall examine related works by Bill Bollinger and Lai Chih-Sheng. The inquiry will be led by an examination of two of my own works: the floor-based object *Pointing Around Detail: C3, B4* (2010-11), which explores space in terms of surface and image; and *Sitting, Leaning and Aligning Two Knots From A Post To A Ground* (2012), which invites the spectator to focus not only on surfaces, such as the floor, but on the space as a whole.

The spaces that I use to make and/or show my work (from gallery, to studio, lecture hall or street) are contexts where investigatory processes (intellectually and physiologically) take place. In Chapter 2.1 I examined space in terms of a subjective, physical sense engaged via gesture (weight, fatigue, intellectual interruption or exscriptive spacing). In Chapter 2.2 I elaborated this bodily space with regards to a de-temporalized instant – an estranged present without presence, or spaced-time, in which a dislocated bodily gesture occurs. In this chapter I shall extend my examination of space beyond the bodily and over to a spatiality specific to context. Generally, for me making in a studio or gallery is similar to processes that occur in a lecture hall or street.[90] On the one hand, the lecture hall is where concepts and ideas such as 'trace' or 'affect' can be engaged speculatively and experimentally, as seen for example in *Pause Records* where I silently drew and projected my activity via an overhead projector. I use the street, as I did for

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[90] In a wider discussion of contexts for exhibiting works the spaces I engage can be argued in terms of, what Peter Osborne calls, 'project space': a context in which the spatial mode of display or exhibition form is associated with terms such as experimentation, speculation and risk. See: Osborne (2013), pp. 168 – 173.

example in *Passages,* to investigate actions (of wandering and positioning myself before a video camera) that, by working neither before an actual audience nor leaving a physical trace, experiment with a displacement of the work's affect – a kind of a risk of interrupting the aesthetic register (the temporal mode of phenomenological discovery), which sustains speculation.

One way to consider the trace as a more conceptual form of spacing is by taking a closer look at Blanchot's radical claim: that the trace is "a vacancy, an irregularity that no trace can stabilize (or inform): a trace without trace that is circumscribed only by the endless erasure of what determines it" (2011: 170).[91] This self-effacing trace may pertain to a more theoretical notion, which I shall argue concerns a question of thought as multiplicity, namely thinking thought as limit and event. Thought is a limit in the sense that it "excludes any representation, any 'idea' of the limit" (Blanchot 1992: 52). This representational exclusion is very similar to how Badiou defines the event: that if thought "takes place only in order to disappear, *it is its very own disappearance"* (2009b: 62). The trace would in this case be understood as a "pure cut in becoming," an obstruction of a metaphysical affect that is "through the upsurge of a trace" *cut,* an endless erasure whereby the trace subtracts itself from any actual place (Badiou 2009a: 384). Indeed, the trace is elusive if it is understood as the upsurge that somehow cuts and generally obstructs any representation of thought.

Image and Surface

To start my examination of the conceptual trace I look at *Pointing Around Detail: C3, B4* (see: fig. 70). This object-based work displays an image of the sky I produced from

[91] With regards to Blanchot's method of writing, which strides between the philosophical and a more fragmentary mode of literary exposition, the endless erasure correlates to a trace that is "always already multiple, and thus always already effaced" (Hill 1997: 186). According to Leslie Hill, Blanchot's writing exercises "a demand which is that of limitless contestation… the impossibility and infinite alterity of the outside" (1997: 188).

the corresponding performance *Details Through Pointing*. My earlier discussion of this performance (in Chapter 2.3) notes how I made the dark dots viewable across the image: pointing my hand and forefinger into a digital drawing tablet (see: fig. 71). In order to commence this process the image of a blue sky was digitally photographed, imported into the computer software and then drawn into using the tablet. Generally, I made this photograph while in the street and outside of the studio, where I was wondering about whether there was any difference between pointing toward the ceiling inside my studio and the sky. At the time, particularly on the rare occasion of having a cloudless day, the sky looked to me as a flat yet open surface. The drawing process commenced with seeing if the openness and flatness of the sky could be explored via pointing and digitally imprinting points, covering the entire area of the sky as a digital image.

By 'covering' I was not endeavoring to encompass or grasp an essence of the blue sky. My speculation was that, in relation to my process of pointing and imprinting, this sky has always been – and still is – somewhat foreign and problematic, a veneer neither as deep and sublime as the night sky nor as proximate as the cloud-filled sky (the distance between sky and earth referenced by a plain of clouds). The blue sky pertained to a kind of flattened image, a surface too open to be anything; or, as Gaston Bachelard comments, "too hard, too glaring, too searing, too compact, and too brilliant" (2011: 162). Keeping this in mind I marked and covered the entire photographic image, then printed and transferred the drawn photograph onto a three-millimeter sheet of solid Perspex (transparent acrylic), which I then divided into twenty-five squares. Each square panel consisted of the maximum detail that the digital form could generate when enlarged within the computer software.

When exhibited, *Pointing Around Detail: C3, B4* shows all twenty-five panels arranged together and placed onto the gallery floor – in the same direction I aim towards

while photographing, pointing at the sky with a camera. The viewer can however look at this work in the same direction that my hand and finger engaged with through drawing, pointing down and tapping onto the digital tablet. The placement of the panels on the floor indicates the orientation of this gesture, of being positioned downward, toward the ground, rather than upward. By either standing or bending over to look at each panel the viewer can take up more passive positions such as standing or crouching. When crouching down what is seen more closely are a collection of black dots, many barely visible, the moon being the only recognizable detail. The moon is isolated, while the majority of black dots collect around a region identifiable by the panels C3 and B4 (see: fig. 72).

The collection of black dots, the clear sky and the moon suggest an emphatic pictorial space. The moon appears as a metaphoric fulcrum, lending the dots and sky a sense of day combining with a celestial night, while still remaining in its blue veneer.   On its own the blue sky is a philosophically poetic image of the event. As Gasché explains, the blue sky is:

> ...the familiar sights of man, the topos of the celestials, and yet it contains the foreign as foreign, which has imparted itself to the element of light. It is inhabited by the darkness from which what appears shines forth, and back into which it withdraws.
>
> (Gasché 1999: 151)

The 'foreign as foreign' quality of the blue sky is similar to how Bachelard calls it "a phenomenalism without phenomena," an image that invokes the "adherence to a passive power" and accords with a "philosophy of effacement" (2011: 168-169).

By photographing the sky the blue does not withdraw into darkness. In this case, I do not use photographing to 'capture' the sky; that is, to depict a subject in a residual imprint and image that represents how it once was. "The sky, precisely, never presents itself as a 'thing'," writes Gérard Granel; "the sky is the paradigmatic non-thing" (Granel, in Nancy 2008: 168). Thus trying to capture and depict a non-thing is problematic, while

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the sparseness of its blue is suggestive of its purely void-like state.[92] My interest in marking the *image* of the blue sky – not 'the sky' itself – therefore comes from my fascination with its being a surface closely affiliated with the trace (self-effacing and elusive), in this case being an image of an outside solidified into a non-substantial veneer. And the combination of blue surface and dark dots, which has resulted from marking, presents this veneer/surface as the image of an outside that is somewhat untimely, at once day and celestial night – rather than an actual outside-space, such as the stratosphere. I am not saying that my process explores something as profound as the "blue sky brought into intimacy with the void," as Blanchot proposes. For though estranged we see the sky rather than 'the void'. Nevertheless, it certainly depicts space at its most enigmatic, where "we lose the direct, immediate given, and we lose the opening, the richness of possibility" (Blanchot 2011: 13).[93]

Obstruction and Containment

What might the loss of immediacy mean in relation to the digital process that is used in making this artwork? This is an important question for spatial engagement and its relation to trace. In discourses associated with digital artwork it is stipulated that the image and space combine to traverse mediation by resulting in "diminishing critical distance to what is shown" (Grau 2003: 13). This virtual form of spatial engagement is similar to how performance-drawing practices endeavour to gain absolute proximity to

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[92] Writer Wilhelm Flusser articulates photographing as "a philosophical gesture," which "aims to observe something and fix the observation, to 'formalize' it" (Flusser in JVC 10(3): 286). It might be argued that I use pointing and a point in relation to photography to – rather than capture – fix and 'formalize' my focusing on an ontologically problematic subject, namely the sky that seems foreign and non-substantial. This non-substantial blue sky could also be understood by what philosopher and writer Jean-Paul Sartre calls the "irreal" or "hypnagogic image." That is, an image that has no correlating object to refer to but, rather, fascinates and provokes our perception. See: Sartre, *The Imaginary, A Phenomenological Psychology of the Imagination* (2007).

[93] Hegel also discusses the enigmatic space of "The Now that is Night *preserved*" (Hegel 1977: 60). Whereas Hegel focuses on the 'Night' what he goes on to say brings a rare insight into this philosophical paradox. The event is "Now," which he explains is "not immediate but mediated; for it is determined as a permanent and self-preserving Now *through* the fact that something else, *viz.* Day and Night, is *not*." (*Op.cit.*).

the trace.[94] Direct engagement with the artwork's space, without the obstruction of a 'critical distance' that separates and diminishes the affect of the artwork, aims to "enhance and extend the imagination," such that "mediation is unimportant" (Burnett 2004: 68). The works we are looking at here, however, are not purely digital; they are drawings that use a variety of means. As we shall see the works here explore image and space in a manner of mediating and obstructing rather than enhancing and/or extending possible forms of (imaginative) apprehension. To understand what the effect of obstruction might be for imaginative engagement and, in turn, for space let us turn to a different but related artwork.

Bill Bollinger's *Graphite Piece* (1969) came to my attention through his retrospective at the Fruit Market Gallery, in Edinburgh, 2011 – around the same time I had begun to explore the floor as an aspect of space within performance-drawing. *Graphite Piece* uniquely uses an elementary drawing material, graphite (in loose powder form), to envelope part of the gallery floor (see: fig. 73). Bollinger's piece is more of an interior landscape than drawing, a contained surface stretching from the base of one wall to the next while leaving one edge exposed to the gallery floor. The powder 'contains' an area of the floor by spreading evenly across it with a "let-it-fall material flexibility" (Meyer 1969: 20), distributed in the manner of "a discharge or spill" (Rosenstein, in Meyer-Stoll 2011: 37). Some of the spilling action used in distributing the graphite does leave marks along the base of the three walls, the edge facing the gallery floor being more faded. However, throughout the entire surface of *Graphite Piece* the powder is evenly distributed, consistently spilled over the floor – a process made during the preparation of the work and not performatively during the exhibition; in other words, there is no clearly

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[94] In Chapter 1.2 I claim that performative drawing practices use graphic tracing to gain absolute proximity to thought as a liminal force or infinite relation. The embodiment of this relation, as a trace, as I argue, is akin to the aspect of 'diminishing critical distance', or immersion, in digital-art practices.

defined (graphic) trace to track this activity to, the mark having almost entirely disappeared within the dark and homogeneous veneer. In this way disappearance connotes the trace in a mode of being 'cut out'. That is, the trace is ambiguously there (a veneer of graphite) and has also physically disappeared (there is no variation of spill-mark visible within this veneer). Though we cannot clearly see it we still try to *imagine* the trace, as if it were present within the powdered floor falling off into darkness. The matte patina of the dark surface presents itself as abyssal and sublime, something we can see that is flat but also – due to the powder's diffusion of light – struggle to imagine opening onto a more limitless space.[95] Hence, the visual absence of a physical trace opens onto an obstruction of perceiving the trace. To this effect *Graphite Piece* mediates its engagement by both implying a bottomless ground while also presenting a more prosaic containment, in which case we can see – rather than perceive – a darkened area of the actual floor that we cannot step into.

Dis-Placed Space and Tracing

From the open sky to the dark and groundless floor both of the artworks examined thus far present, pictorially and/or spatially, a place that is empty, that is devoid of shape content (this Lefebvrian absolute space being what I began to explore in Chapter 2.2 around the videological interval).[96] Is there any specific relationship between such an implied empty-place and an actual space? To explore this question I shall turn to Badiou's theorization of drawing because of his discussion of empty-place in relation to the event and trace.

Badiou explains that a drawing can "displace the place" in which its activity occurs.

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[95] For the relationship between *Graphite Piece* and Sartrean Nothingness see Meyer (1969).

[96] In relation to contemporary theoretical debates around space the connotation of an 'empty place' might be associated with "nothingness" which, as Edward W. Soja writes, is "nothing less than primal distance, the first created space, the vital separation which provides the ontological basis for distinguishing subject and object" (1989: 133).

Displacement is possible by how marks on paper "create an inexistent place" (2006: 43). He then claims that "there is a drawing when some trace without place creates as its place an empty surface" (*Op.cit.*). The empty surface can include "the background, pages, screen, or wall" (Badiou 2006: 46). In part, Badiou's notion of drawing – describing not the marks but its inherent surface as empty, which he also writes is "a description without place" (*Op.cit.*) – alludes to the white page presented by the French Symbolist poet Stéphane Mallarmé. In one of his most famous poems, *A Dice Throw* [*Un Coup de Dés*], Mallarmé defines the white page as where "nothing... will have taken place... other than the place" (2008: 178-79). Though abstract these words summarize the event in which the poet, trying to begin by creating any sign on this open surface, focuses on the unmarked page. The poet does not disengage from inscribing but rather ruminates on the event as such: the white page (or primordial context/space of artistic creation) having taken place prior to any possible action – not that there is an action that is even 'possible' if, to recall Blanchot's comment, the event is the loss of any place in which to think or make anew.

A unique example of how a drawing can present an empty place is Lai Chih-Sheng's *Life-Size Drawing* (2012) (see: fig. 74 and 75). It is a work that I experienced at the Hayward Gallery, in 2012, which has since made me wonder how easily the background and support of the drawing can be missed and occluded by the act of drawing. Chih-Sheng's work incorporates the walls, floor and ceiling of the gallery, presenting only the place itself vacated of objects. When inspected more closely – and from reading the caption describing the work – we can see that his drawing encompasses the entire gallery space (made prior to the exhibition and not live) by covering the walls with white talc powder, outlining in graphite every found corner and adding tile grouting to the already grouted floor. According to Chin Ya-Chun this work "confronts every detail of the space in various unusual heights and postures, in an attempt to fully depict and further encounter

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the micro-spaces that have not been expected" (in Eslite Gallery 2012: 147). Indeed, *Life-Size Drawing* confronts the space as a whole and in every detail. But its depiction by tracing over the same walls, ceiling and floor either comes across as 'empty' (akin to Mallarmé's taking-place-of-the-empty-place) or, as I wish to argue, a space that is covered and dis-placed. Chih-Sheng's drawing creates a dis-placed space in that the literal surface is traced, hence re-presenting the same space.

What interests me about Chih-Sheng's drawing is its very subtle dissimulation of the profundity of an empty space: the space is drawn into the same place. At the same time the tracing and covering of the actual space makes this work strongly associated with what Badiou calls 'site'. The site is "a null, absented, and deserted place" (Badiou 2005b: 50). He explains, "the site, itself, is presented, but 'beneath' it nothing from which it is composed is present" (2005a: 175).[97] Chih-Sheng's drawing does not completely allude to creating a site that is groundless and void-like; it has a much lighter and sober guise than Bollinger's existential piece and is less enigmatic than my blue sky. Despite being a form of site, a place that implies beginning anew, what I find most interesting in Chih-Sheng's work is that the trace is employed practically. He makes the drawing not by performatively making traces that reveal an action. Rather, he is *tracing* in the manner of copying: drawing and covering the parts inherent to the actual space. So tracing becomes a practical way of emphasizing the area in which the work is presented. This aspect of tracing is something I would like to return to before closing my analysis of space and the event of thought as trace.

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[97] I should clarify that the site according to Badiou, which is how the event actually takes place in the world through what he also calls "the edge of the void," is distinct from the pure multiple. See 'Meditation Seventeen', in Badiou (2005). According to Badiou's theory of the pure multiple "the event is separated from the void by itself... Because the sole and unique term of the event which guarantees that it is not - unlike the site - on the edge of the void, is the-one-that-it-is" (Badiou 2005: 190). Arguably, if extended further into contemporary art, Badiou's notion of site as 'the edge of the void' can be interpreted as "the utopian urge toward a *tabula rasa... the seductive possibility of beginning anew"* (Lippard, in Centres Georges Pompidou and Kunsthalle Bern 2009: 228).

Passivity and Outside

Sitting, Leaning and Aligning Two Knots From A Post To A Ground (from hereon which will be referred to as *Sitting, Leaning...*) is the last work I wish to examine and to help close my discussion with. Although it can be exhibited in the gallery *Sitting, Leaning...* could take place in the studio as much as the lecture hall, spaces where thinking and creating are customarily explored. I was inspired to make this work some time after performing *Pause Records* at the *Making Sense* colloquium, at Cambridge University, in 2009 (see: fig. 76). *Pause Records* is a performance that made me think about the space itself and the relationship of the audience to it. The typical audience member in the lecture hall sits on a chair and stares, a position many of us are perhaps familiar with. Sometimes he/she stares into space, not at a speaker, but at the walls and the floor. Despite taking place in the lecture hall, where there is an expectation to be attentive and engaged with the dialogue presented there, staring inattentively beyond and the passivity of sitting made me wonder if this is how the event might be approached in its encounter. (Arguably, this inactive position is more apparent in sitting or standing around on the street, which can become a context of reprieve, unaffected by the inundations of concentrating on a lecture.) In a way the event is, as Badiou claims, "to think the outside-place... the beyond of any place" (2008: 41).

A few years later, I began to explore in the studio how a form of the outside and event could occur through passive engagement. Sitting in the studio is often a way of resting and looking around at what I'm doing there. What I realized on one occasion was that I was also focusing on the floor, particularly when I did *not know* what to think about or make. The floor was an area that I mostly would pass over and rarely noticed – not to mention that I was also making performances that involved pointing and positioning myself down toward the floor. Here, I started looking at the things I had placed around

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me, such as the chair. In the process I came across some pieces of pinewood, which I was using as posts to support my experimentations with stillness and standing. In order to direct my stare to the floor, rather than pass aimlessly over it, I placed one piece of pine in front of me (see: fig. 77). What influenced my selection of the pine was that it also bore a knot, a mark typical of this kind of wood. This mark enabled me to use the post as a material device, similar to the notational mark, in that it aided the performative activity of aligning my look with the post and on to the floor (see: fig 78). Lastly, to fix the direction of my stare but to also give it some flexibility I traced two copies of the knot found on the post onto the floor ahead of me. The two traced knots would then allow me to ease my look, making it more of a stare that could drift slightly over the floor while I also leaned back into the chair. Hence, my physical position in relation to the floor became more relaxed and less fixated. Overall, the combination of the traced knots, the post and myself on the chair allowed for a passive yet engaged focus on this space.

To help illustrate this configuration we can refer to the following illustration that shows (from left to right): the chair, the trajectory implied by staring (indicated by the diagonal, dotted line), the wooden post and the two marks on the floor (the traced knots).

Sitting, Leaning... is a task-based artwork that can be followed through by the spectator. But as we shall now see it can be executed by anyone primarily because the space focused upon and the event it indicates fundamentally obstructs the performative encounter. The obstruction is indicated – maybe even signaled – by the passive quality of

the space, a state we also assume when seated and staring outward.[98] The space as a whole is passive in the sense that it lacks affect. For instance, all the components within this work (the isolated post and chair along with the two traced knots) can appear more scattered than related and interchangeably affecting one another, meaning that there are neither lines (actual or imaginary) nor signs connecting one part with another. To the spectator's imagination, however, the invisible trajectory between the chair, post and floor may be interpreted as an immaterial mark connecting these parts. Part of the encounter with *Sitting, Leaning...* means working with this possible contradiction, that one can perceive the unperceivable trace. But this more enthusiastic engagement, wanting to perceive more than can be seen, comes down to how intensive the spectator's focus is.

The act of leaning adds a relaxed focus by primarily staring at the traced knots and then allowing us to, potentially, look around the rest of the actual space. The lack of relational engagement implied by leaning and staring is reciprocated by the slight drift of going back and forth while adjusting the eyes over the two marks. Through this activity the marks can be seen separating from and connecting to the post (see: fig. 79 and 80). Of course the subtlety of this activity is dependent upon the spectator's interest, which the space can challenge.

Overall, *Sitting, Leaning...* presents the space itself under a passive form of the event. It also uses a mark system (the post as much as the knot copied from it) that is produced through tracing, while using the task of staring, sitting and leaning to play with a

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[98] Blanchot will similarly describe space and multiplicity in terms of speech, a "plural speech" that addresses an impossible idea or "Outside." As he states, "impossibility is relation with the Outside; and since this relation without relation is the passion that does not allow itself to be mastered through patience, impossibility is the passion of the Outside itself" (Blanchot 2011: 46). Thought is an outside, a relation without positive relation, neither presentable nor representable, "a strange relation that consists in there being no relation" (Blanchot 2011: 51). Blanchot later asks a question of thought as 'Outside', which also interests me here: "how can we discover the obscure" – the strange non-relation that is thinking – "without exposing it to view" (*Op.cit.*)?

certain disconnection of the mark from an active notion of the trace. At best the disconnected marks and floor indicate a problem with encountering the trace in its presence, that is its enigmatic event of taking place as a re-mark.[99] We do not perceive 'the trace' so much as see things in a space that is passive, a space with its affect displaced; a space that is somehow obscure, which can be described metaphorically as a "spatial knot" that carries an "abrupt density" (Blanchot 2011: 81-82).

Whatever obscure qualities such a space might suggest, its mood or subjective quality characterized by entanglement and density, its related event should be considered more carefully. As Granel proposes, the space of the event is "an Opening that is nowhere itself open, or better: without any 'itself.' Space 'itself' means nothing" (in Nancy 2008: 166). Nancy elaborates that this 'Opening' is an "absolute opening," meaning that thought and space are both "empty of all content, all figure, all determination" (Nancy 2008: 148). Indeed, a space with its affect displaced is – like thought in its event or multiplicity – what presents itself with a sense of opening, taking place only by immediately disappearing (although, I do not believe that the sense of an outside is so absolute). Indeed, the space in *Sitting, Leaning...* is passive, which may seem entangled and dense, but it unrestrainedly is open. More simply put, it is a space in which we can remain and potentially disengage. For example, I recall an occasion when I exhibited this work, at the Kingsgate Gallery, in May 2012, where people sat in the chair (after making the activity), remained sitting and looking around the room, even staring without paying attention to anything there. And this disengagement is exactly what can result from the kind of opening and passivity that I propose happens in the event: a spatial encounter that is, in its tenuousness, uneventful. The space that has its affect dis-placed is in this way the opening of the actual space onto a question of the trace that possibly

[99] See 'Tracing, Re-marked' in Chapter 1.2.

elides any sense, looses its richness of possibility (Blanchot).[100] However, what is arguably

more important here is that we still remain within the space of such an uneventful work

that may give nothing, namely an uneventful sense of the trace that is no-thing.

A Concluding Note on a Trace of Thought

Throughout this chapter I have examined my artworks, *Pointing Around Detail: C3,*

B4 and *Sitting, Leaning...,* in comparison with Bollinger's *Graphite Piece* and Chih-Sheng's

Life-Size Drawing in light of a question of the trace and its relation to thought as an event.

The trace of thought can now be considered through the space in which the artwork takes

place while characterized by a fundamental obstruction. That obstruction is the space

with its affect dis-placed, the surrounding characterized by passivity and disengagement

shared by a trace that is non-substantial. And I wish to clarify that the kind of space

examined here, which relates to the context surrounding the work as a whole, is different

to the space I propose throughout Chapter Two, where I articulate the spatial quality of

bodily gesture and the area it extends over. The contexts that I have discussed here (from

the gallery, to the lecture hall, street and studio) are spaces that enable me to focus on a

trace of thought that, in turn, references space as outside. The outside is a more

conceptual space that opens onto a question of thought as multiplicity, which is notional

but in its opening onto no-thing encourages a form of speculation and, hence, openness –

an aspect that I will return to in the conclusion to the thesis. What now remains to be

investigated, after the summary that follows, is what the trace might mean in terms of

erasure and cutting, which I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

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[100] Writer Thomas Carl Wall articulates how Blanchot relates space through the "radical passivity" presented by the artwork: "The artwork is a thing-for-no-one, and it thus induces from us involvements that do not originate in our initiative... It also, more affirmatively, presents *possibility itself* as that which eludes everything – possibility as (the) nothing, as immediate. Which amounts to saying that nothing, or *the* nothing, is the form of any possible relation" (Wall 1999: 28).

My examination began with *Pointing Around Detail: C3, B4* to find a problem in representing the trace through a paradigmatic image of the event: the blue sky. The combination of this image within a digital drawing and sculptural surface produces an enigmatic pictorial space, representing an abstract outside while making the trace non-representable. I propose that Bollinger's *Graphite Piece* similarly exhibits this outside but in a more literal and contained part of the gallery's floor. The affect presented by these works can be considered as sublime and/or existential. Conversely, Chih-Sheng's *Life Size Drawing* re-presents the same space in so far as it appears copied, covered and, hence, traced. The surroundings of the gallery are traced yet the trace as such, the space in which the event (of the artwork) takes place, is re-presented as empty. The void-like quality of the empty space can then invoke an intellectual sense of beginning anew, the event of thinking the idea of a more radically absent trace. What *Sitting, Leaning...* finally provides is a possible way to see how both the traced mark *and* the trace as outside can be approached, not under a representation of the void but in a more elusive sense. Though experientially uneventful (tenuous, diminutive in sensory stimulation), a trace of thought correlates to an event of opening onto the possibility of thinking and making within an impossible state of focusing on any idea of the trace in presence. For the affect of the trace elides reception by how the space is encountered or generally experienced. The passivity implied by sitting and staring can result in experiencing a sense that is tenuous; a trace whose sense is attenuated to such a degree that the space in which the artwork is presented can open onto a paradoxical multiplicity.[101]

Before completing this chapter I would like to evaluate the role that deconstruction has played in the theoretical terrain I have hitherto been exploring. Derrida's writings

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[101] In terms of Badiou's "open ontology" the trace indicates an "ontological openness of the One-less multiplicity" (Žižek 2012: 741). In other words, thought in its event subtracts any state of thinking or intuiting in the mode of being One, that is consistent, whole, and able to provide us with a way of engaging a trace that utterly obstructs any cognitive and sensual apprehension of a multiplicity that is no-thing, less than One.

around phenomenology and inscription are substantial and, for my purposes of exploring trace and event in (performance-)drawing, remain significant. Indeed, Derrida's writings have influenced Nancy and Badiou's philosophies and have also taken influence from Levinas and Blanchot. His critique of phenomenological presence in literary modes of writing and in the arts – *Memoirs of the Blind* (1993) being an unprecedented philosophical investigation into drawing – has made Derrida's role important for my research. For it is against the background of Derrida's deconstruction of phenomenological presence that I was able to explore paradoxical concepts such as exscription (Nancy) or multiplicity (Badiou).

Having said this I ask: how does the opening and passive sense of the radically absent trace pace Blanchot compare with Derrida's deconstructive forms of cutting and erasure? (This question is key to the event not only in practice, which I have examined in terms of spatial encounter, but in its fullest definition, that is the traversal and reconfiguration of the conventional, theoretical terrain structuring performance-drawing via inscription and its associated philosophical traditions of phenomenology and vitalism.) The trace, as Derrida writes, "keeps its *tracing* close to itself, that is, erases its tracing in a *circle*" (1982: 59-60); "and it belongs to the trace to erase itself, to elude that which might maintain it in presence. The trace is neither perceptible nor imperceptible" (Derrida 1982: 65).[102] According to Derrida the trace and tracing are closely related to what he also calls "the trait." The trace's self-erasure operates as a form of dialectical negation: the circular erasing of the figure of the trait that might otherwise be inscribed, depicting the ontological precondition for the possibility of being/thinking in its event. In other words, the trace as such erases its presence from the actual form (the graphic trace), which might

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[102] Badiou also reiterates the erasure of the trace within his discussion of the site of the event. Within the disappearance of the site, writes Badiou, "what remains is the void, which is neither presented nor represented" (Badiou 2005: 108).

in turn substantialize the dialectical movement. Hence, the trace elides any representation by being dissimulated through its physical imprints, such as the line, while also being indicated as no-thing, the erasure and negation of its sense. Derrida's description of the trace demonstrates this contradiction, particularly when he discusses inscription in drawing:

> A tracing, an outline, cannot be seen. One should in fact not see it... Once this limit is reached, there is nothing more to see, not even black and white, not even figure/form, and this is the *trait*... This limit is never presently reached, but drawing always signals toward this inaccessibility, toward the threshold where only the surroundings of the *trait* appear - that which the *trait* spaces by delimiting and which thus does not belong to the *trait*. *Nothing belongs to the trait*, and thus, to drawing and to the thought of drawing, not even its own "trace." Nothing even participates in it. The *trait* joins and adjoins only in separating.
>
> (Derrida 1993: 54)

Drawing always 'signals' toward the limit of thought but can never be presently reached. The trace or 'trait' nevertheless affects and signals by directing our attention toward this inaccessible limit. That affect is tensional, as I propose, in that it perpetually joins and adjoins;[103] in other words, a form of contraction at the level of the linguistic sign, a force that separates and becomes "almost nothing" while, nevertheless, remaining "the tension of force itself" (Derrida 1978: 4). Even if the trace is not seen its affect implies a quality of tension, the pressure of something we cannot see but might subjectively apprehend and intuit as a positive force or relation, interrupting our perception of it yet sustaining an active movement of erasure.

The trace that I have discussed here, especially around *Sitting, Leaning...*, presents qualities that are different to the tensional and active form that Derrida theorizes. The passivity of the event indicates the trace's lack of affect, which, at its most extreme, can

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[103] This tensional separation, of 'joining and adjoining only in separating', is also taken up by Derrida in the concept of separation through touch, which I explored in Chapter 2.3, under 'Insistence and Spaced Repetition'.

mean that it "subtracts itself from all experience" (Badiou 2009: 387). Passivity relates to "the force of the negative," as Blanchot writes, which can result in "the risk that rejects being" (1989: 155). It is possible that the 'risk' here is a kind of creative hazard in that the passivity of this trace is altogether negative, that its force is indeed paralyzed and elides any sensuous engagement. So with regards to the activity of tracing, which I have tried to explore with my tracing of a knot found in a wooden post (as shown in *Sitting, Leaning...*), a knot that metaphorically indicates a kind of paralyzing 'force of the negative', it can be argued that the visibility of the trace is possible. Tracing as copying, whereby I prepare and practically make rather than perform and actively create, is a possible way to consider a form of mark negated of its metaphysical erasure. My contention is that there are marks that have a practical function that do not necessarily need to indicate the tensional force of erasure. It is here that I put forward a key theoretical finding from my research: a trace that traverses its deconstructive force. In other words, the tracing that is passive and without the guarantee of its (conceptual) trace is shared by a mark that cuts out the negating force of erasure. This cut is a trace of thought that opens onto a given space, a surrounding characterized by passivity in which the (thought-)event that takes place is a multiplicity that, in itself, is no-thing.

CONCLUSION

"Yes, the question came because a presupposition could not be made."

(Lomax 2010: 1)

"...the question will be felt as the impossibility of questioning."

(Blanchot 2011: 20)

Point, Thought-Event and Questioning

The course of my investigation has come to a close. Given that I have looked into the dislocated gesture, the notational mark and the trace, it might be more appropriate to say that I have reached a point.

What the following conclusion will summarize is how the thought-event of multiplicity relates to the point. Throughout this thesis I have shown that multiplicity and point relate in so far as they mediate mark, body and trace. Mediation can mean: an interruption in the performative act, the gesture of imprinting a residual mark or graphic trace; a point-of-the-body, which is the dislocation of the performer's capacity to gesture and indicate any agency of the performative act; an obstruction that results from trying to engage the trace of thought, the multiplicity of thinking-as-questioning that presumes no self-present agency of what it investigates.

To assess these subjects (mark, body and trace) in relation to the point I will firstly recall my thesis questions and, then, try to articulate them in light of findings from my research. Most importantly, it is from these findings that I will summarize the original contributions my research makes to practices of drawing, performance and

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phenomenological research methodologies. Following this summarization will be an evaluation of the role of the body and mark as conundrums in my research and practice. I will then speculate about future works and projects in which my art practice can continue to examine these problems. The comments I shall close with aim to expand on what I mean by the performative act based on multiplicity and the mediation of gesture.

Assessing the Thesis Questions Through Findings of the Research

In my Introduction I laid out three questions that form the basis of my thesis and which help to structure its course. Firstly, the question related to context: here I investigated the way I used mark-making in the context of contemporary drawing (from the 1970's to present), wondering if the point could be considered as an imprint and how this non-figure resonates with thought as a phenomenological operation. Throughout Chapters Two and Three I investigated the mark in my practice and have found that I engage with it in two ways: 1) as a notational imprint (from period, to ellipsis and bracket) which, because it is made prior to the actual performance, is a material device – a mark supporting where and how the activity can happen; 2) as an imprint of the point which, paradoxically, does not signify a kinesthetic activity but, rather, indicates a constitutive obstruction – the point being without an affective, inter-relational movement. In contradistinction to drawing practices, where the mark indexes and retains a horizontal movement of imprinting (a line that can be tracked back to variations of touch), I have discovered that the point is indexical but *without* providing any necessary reflection of touch. In a sense, a point tapped in ink directs away from bodily engagement, as much as a digitally projected dot directs outward and toward a conceptual trace, which is the negation of agency and/or affect.

Theoretically speaking, the point, either as imprint or as notation, is a (literal) figure

without (conceptual) figuration, a mark that relinquishes metaphysical movement, subtracts an essential continuum; or, as writer Martin Crowley states, "this unfigurable condition of possibility" is what "both presents and exceeds any meaning or figure in particular."[104] In part, the point can be completely non-indexical, a notational period or ellipsis that supports physiological responses rather than a graphic trace actively drawn. The notational mark is non-indexical in that it does not intellectually reflect, or graphically depict, the event of the action. To put it baldly, this mark only prepares *how* and *where* the action can take place, rather than *when* something happened. This and the point-as-imprint are marks predicated by a conceptual interruption; in other words, they can have us speculate upon an event that interrupts or, more accurately, negates notions of interior and affective presence (figuration) that impels physiological engagement.

The body is emphasized by these marks, setting up spatial coordinates for where and how physicality can appear. Here, I will follow up on the methodological question. As I have discovered, notably throughout Chapter Two, the performer can 'appear' in the sense that the audience can see him/her in restricted positions and contorted postures (such as standing, turning and pointing). Restriction is the manner of holding such postures still and appearing *there*, present in so far as the bodily gesture is visible and dislocated; or, in Nancyean terms, the performer's capacity to engage with marking/inscribing is interrupted through exscription, physicality being exposed in its weight and arrest.

Restriction, though, largely applies to actions I choose to make as a performer. In Chapter 2.1, while discussing participatory works, such as *Placing A Pause…*, I alluded to a distinction between performing and executing a task. I can clarify what I now realize are

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[104] Martin Crowley has kindly provided me his unpublished paper, entitled 'Figure/Nothing' – from which I quote above. Crowley had presented this paper in a talk, which he contributed to the colloquium I co-organized (with Carrie Giunta) – *A Breath For Nothing… Approaching the Limit*. (This one-day colloquium was held at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design (University of the Arts London), on June 25th, 2012.)

two different actions. In works such as *Untitled* I 'perform' actions that are subjectively rooted in my experience with exploring this work. For example, persisting to hold a stance and physically investigating via this position engages a gesture that I *choose* to make – albeit (in-)actions I find myself struggling to explore through. Whereas in participatory works such as *Sitting, Leaning...* or *Placing A Pause...*, where the title of the work suggests an action made by others, the person making this gesture is *executing* the suggested task. That is to say, the person follows a task-based action through – as in kneeling and staring. Executing and following the bodily gesture through does *not* require individual choice, by which I mean the state of choosing a possible action that is attuned to on an inner self or capacity to want to do an action. Either by performing or executing a task, the involved gesture struggles to engage an authentic existential agency.

Dislocation, which I have learned is an effect of the point, offers a way to think about 'the body' as a phenomenological problem. What I call a 'point-of-the-body' addresses this problem under a post-phenomenological approach. This is the method of working and performing with bodily gestures that are irreducible to self-presence. It is here that my modus operandi, a dislocated bodily gesture, is most apparent. For dislocation entails that the agent [105] (performer, executer of task) persists to work/investigate while he/she cannot locate nor affirm an essential mode to investigate through, whether that be an unmediated affect, vital impulse or line-of-thought. The point poses a constitutive separation and spacing of this mode, an interruption that opens thinking to what the body can do. Overall, the body is what appears within the performance-drawing – it does not disappear in the sense that it presents an absent

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[105] By designating the performer or executer of action by the term 'agent' I am trying to account for the position of the audience who, in practice, engage my work by means of, but not exclusive to, the following ways: executing task-based works in the gallery (briefly holding still positions); open to viewing studio-based processes; or, as in the lecture hall, speculating about problems and notions implicit in the work, either via experiential encounter or the work's title, as for example speculating about notions such as 'pause' in *Placing A Pause…* or 'figure' in *Approximately Pointing Out the Figure*.

presence. This is "a body that refuses to allow itself to be erased by the very erasability of the trace" (Malabou 2011: 121). It is figuratively *marked* by the point, the point-of-the-body negated of self-presence and the figuration associated with vital continua.

Indeed, the mark and body I am proposing relate to the point in its multiplicity. This thought-event brings us to the primary thesis question: how is thinking engaged in performance-drawing when the trace of thought is non-representational and, more radically, nothing? Throughout Chapter Three I discovered that the trace as such is conceptual and homologous with an 'outside', a space with its affect dis-placed. In theory and in practice the outside is more notional in that it opens thinking, engages questioning, but without attaining an essential form or capacity to think and perform through. The physiological responses and notational marks I make share the quality of this space (with its affect dis-placed): passivity. This becomes a manner of letting the space happen through restricted postures emphasized by notational marks, a combination that works under a negation of affect – what in philosophical terms can be read as a paradoxical subtraction of a universal means/agency, a transcendental precondition that makes thought thinkable when there is no way of representing it. What is important to note here is that not only can a mark (notational or point-imprint) present this subtraction by being made passively – as in tracing in a practical and prosaic manner – but also by way of the performative bodily gesture. I now realize that the performative act that I am proposing deals with passivity, not to stop performing altogether but rather to work with physiological release, weight and a radical mode of letting-go – a mode associated with Heidegger's notion of releasement [*Gelassenheit*], a letting go of an essentialist way of thinking.

Having described some of my key findings I now wish to put forward how my research provides an original contribution to discursive fields engaged within my thesis.

Apropos of (performance-)drawing, the notational mark and point that I propose are practical and more speculative. Foremost, this point is a unique mark that is distinct from drawing lines. A notational mark is a device that practically structures bodily gestures. A point is speculative in that it appears immediate – *this* 'point', or even ' • '[106] – yet abstracted from an indexical relation, as in how agency (affect, movement) interrelates agent and object, physicality and imprint. With regard to performance art, specifically practices that explore physical action and mark-making, the gesture that I propose as 'dislocated' provides greater emphasis on the body in its appearance, its physicality and mediation. The event that the point/notational-mark inflects is one of a body-event, which is not structured around manifesting an immaterial trace, as in gestural drawing.

Methodologically, a dislocated bodily gesture presents an original contribution to qualitative research. A post-phenomenological methodology challenges phenomenological method, which is based on the thesis that a universal essence/agency can be kinesthetically embodied – a subject which I will comment on shortly. In my practice, 'post-phenomenological' means working with the body under a state of mediation, whereby positions and postures are mediated by restriction and weight; a physiological state that, theoretically speaking, is irreducible to universal notions of essence, or phenomenological Being.

Lastly, the original contribution that I am making with reference to conceptual art practices, which underpin (performance-)drawing, is this: the idea/thought investigated through practice is a non-(re)presentable and ontologically void event, a multiplicity of (un)thought. Here, multiplicity is the event of thinking thought as no-thing. The epistemological implication is that no-thing invokes, as Badiou says, a 'hole in

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[106] In my solo exhibition at Kingsgate Gallery (London; April, 2013), which presented a selection of artworks produced from my research here, I suggested the point as being a purely graphic abstraction, or ' • '. I also proposed that this mark be more related to the notion of post-philosophical space, as presented by the title of this exhibition: *[•] outside.*

knowledge'.[107] This multiplicity contrasts with phenomenological and vitalist conceptions that underlie the event in conceptual art practices, which seek to empirically manifest inner forms of necessity (vital impulse) or chiasmatic agency (self-touching, presence). Simply put, multiplicity is a thought that is without content, in which case there is no-thing to touch upon. Thought is more of an open multiplicity than absolute movement, a mediating impossibility rather than an un-mediated pure possibility.

Evaluations of the Research and Speculations on Prospective Works and Projects

Before I move on to comment upon the implications of working with passivity and space (with its affect displaced, outside) I want to evaluate some of the findings in my research. Additionally, I will move on from these evaluations by speculating about prospective artworks and projects.

There are various complications that remain in my research, two of which I would like to address here. One conundrum is related to what I am saying with 'working with the body as a problem'. This is the obstructive state of thinking and engaging agency or thought through practice, a state of being physiologically and intellectually interrupted. One of the challenges I find is in how I discuss the body as what 'appears'. For example, standing and holding still engages the body in a position that is there but in a rather assertive way of presenting physicality. Here, physical stance *must* be seen, either by a video camera or by people (other than myself). Regardless of the amount of time involved in holding such positions, as in physically turning and the interval or the meanwhile in which I appear immobile, the stance itself can obscure the more nuanced qualities of space being opened onto. Notions of weight as waiting, holding and persisting to endure passivity, can be overlooked; in other words, the passive sense of space, the

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[107] See: 'The Point of a Void Multiple' in Chapter 1.3.

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tenuous experience of passivity and boredom, can be obscured by having to focus too closely on bodily position.

There is also a problem in my theoretical/philosophical approach to reading multiplicity in relation to the marks of point and line. When I examine the line and alternatively propose the point I am setting up a kind of binary opposition. The line may be interpreted as the opposite of the point. The theoretical implication here is that I am contrasting an immaterial continuum/becoming from a non-material void-multiple. The question then is: if there is a vital line embodied by gestural mark-making then is not the point(of-the-body), the point as such being no-thing, impossible to depict and/or disclose using any drawing? Yet I have shown that in practice the point *is* material, is an imprint (as made, for example, in ink or digital projection). Distinguishing line from point can then be perceived as a structuralist duality, in which case I am setting up an opposition of terms.

That being said there are a few prospective works and projects that I speculate can explore these difficult questions further. The most immediate works I wish to expand upon are related to *Placing A Pause...* and *Sitting, Leaning...* Another variation of these works, which invite the viewer to execute task-based actions, could be to look to the space's attendant, as in a gallery invigilator. Whereas the viewer is a person that is invited to participate and make the action, what fascinates me with the attendant/invigilator is that he/she is already required to, in the case of the gallery, be present at and watch over the given space. The action of viewing that this more inactive yet vigilant viewer exercises can displace the authority of the performer (it would not be necessary for me, as the author of the work/action, to perform or follow the task through). What I find interesting is how the role of invigilating engages positions, such as standing or sitting, while watching in a manner of being separated and disengaged from surrounding objects or

marks.

In terms of spaces or contexts, the lecture hall may be more apt for exploring conceptual mark-making with reference to pedagogy. Up until now I have experimented with the lecture hall by presenting live artworks for two colloquiums: *Pause Records* (*Making Sense,* Cambridge University, 2009) and *Disarticulation* (*Sensingsite*, Parasol Unit, 2012). As I experienced from presenting these artworks, the merit of this context is that the intellectual manner of mark-making can be explored more directly, particularly for its relation to pedagogy, that is to critical debate, speculation and learning. By creating one or a series of colloquiums I would be able to invite and engage with numerous people who may not necessarily have backgrounds in art and/or philosophy, as well as other disciplines such as politics or science. Indeed, the lecture hall's ability to bring in groups of people would circumvent the isolationism of individual performance. My aim would then be to use this environment as a context to experiment with pedagogy, looking at intellectual exchange and/or interruption. That is, ways of investigating conceptual content suggested by mark-making, such as notions of inscription or exscription. In this case, debate, learning or speculation would be dependent upon conventional and unconventional approaches to pedagogical activities: standard deliveries of talks and papers, as well as non-standard, performance-based presentations (as I did with *Pause Records*, silently drawing and casting shadows on the peripheral wall of the lecture hall).

Lastly, there is the prospect that I expand my theoretical analysis of the subjects that I have explored in this thesis. The point is a notion that is, as I am finding, becoming increasingly prevalent within post-structuralist debates about the aesthetic properties (not to be confused with taste and beauty) of intellectual processes. I have begun to explore some of these debates around 'the point' with reference to subjectivization (Badiou 2009), presence (Blanchot 2011), event (Latham 1984), and gravity/weight (Nancy

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2003). Analyzing these empirical-conceptual processes would involve looking further into notions of relation and affect, which I have worked through in terms of how these terms are used in contemporary art; extending this theoretical context into, for example, psychoanalytic approaches to *movement*, a cognitive operation that is transitive and materialist. The Lacanian term 'point de capiton' – generally translating to being a structural impasse, a kind of break or short-circuit, mediating fields of knowledge – is somewhat tacit in chapters 1.2 and 1.3 and is one way of further articulating the point as multiplicity. My attempt to continue researching the point as a discursive form of interruption would mean extending the contents of these chapters into published essays and, possibly, even a book; my aim being to take up the wider implications of multiplicity and point to the virtual aesthetics of immaterial, transitory activities.

Passivity and Boredom

Part of my exploration of the Nancyean notion of exscription, which relates thinking with weighing, has been to look at how gesture in my performance-drawing negotiates the process of negation. I have discovered that there are two ways in which I approach this negation. Firstly, there is the way that I, as the performer, respond to the embodiment of gesture, which in this case means enduring weight and experiencing physicality. For example, when I am performing in *Untitled* (see: fig. 41) the action I undergo is to relax, or slacken, and work with gravity – what generally in physics is the force of least resistance. As I have also found, gravity is the spacing and negating/separating that paradoxically affects the body. Releasing/slackening is my response to a subjective quality I feel while performing; in other words, my experience of weight affected by gravity is different to the resistance felt by forcing and pressing against another object – as in gestural drawing. When I say that I endure the force of my weight I

mean that I continue working with my entire body while not being able to apprehend or encounter an essential way of moving and thinking throughout the activity. Secondly, there is the spectator's reception to this performative act. While either watching me perform immobile actions or when the spectator executes tasks, as in *Staring, Leaning...* or *Placing A Pause...*, the spectator's reaction and experience to the artwork can be effected by the activity as a whole. Indeed, the spectator's *reception* to tension or weight relates to the way he/she receives rather than reacts to the work – a work *unworked*, perhaps, by the attenuated expenditure of physical energy involved in receiving the performative work, taking up and executing unrewarding tasks. I believe that the possible lack of aesthetic reception is dependent upon what is understood by mood, namely the sense evoked by passivity. The passivity of the space, when its affect is negated and lacks experiential and intellectual provocation; when one passes (through the space where the work takes place) as if nothing is happening: the most extreme form of reception to an encounter is when the experience elides intellectualization and phenomenological praxis.

Indeed, these performance-drawings elicit different ways of experiencing the work. There are times, however, when they can open onto a sense of boredom – a feeling that I have struggled with and hesitated in exploring as a possible side of my practice. One of the challenges I have had throughout this research has been to identify gestures and marks that, for me, provide very little stimulus – possibly to other people as well. Sitting in a chair and facing a wooden post, for example, can certainly be tedious. Boredom and the subject of mood, the subjective quality or feeling that comes from our reception to things and the world, is a further area that my research can branch into. It can also be one way to expand on how the performative act works with the point and the outside.

Mood can be considered by how we understand affect and experiential encounter. Lars Svendsen, for example, takes up Heidegger's claims on boredom – some of which I

have explored in Chapter Two – when he explains that mood "is a condition for experience by opening up the world as a whole" (2011: 112). Mood "sets thought in action as a condition made by being [there]," an action "more basic than the idea. There is no discursive totality, but rather that which lets the world appear as a totality" (Svendsen 2011: 115). Boredom is unique because it "differs from most other moods by the fact that the possibilities withdraw" (Ibid.: 113); it can invoke "flatness, meaning that we do not approach the things as essential things" (Ibid.: 127); it is "a kind of non-mood," where "our relation to things also becomes a kind of non-relation" (Svendsen 2011: 129). So, this non-mood can equalize or flatten variations of feeling and possibilities of response.

Boredom is an example of mood, which can be very important for how we explore gesture – the performative act as such – and the correlative phenomenological approach of physiological investigating. This can present an alternative form of perceiving the body that, in itself, in its spacing and point, is a means of investigating/performing when its act is obstructed by emotive flattening. Here, the possibilities of making, thinking and questioning may withdraw; the urge to feel something essential (maybe movement, force or tension) is confronted by flatness – pure happening, what merely *happens* being no-thing.

A Reflection on Post-phenomenological Methodology

The investigation of mood and gesture invites us to rethink the body as an essential mode for investigating phenomenologically. For what kind of gesture is exercised in an encounter where what happens can go unnoticed? (The following is mapped out in Diagram Two.) In Chapter 1.1 and throughout Chapters Two and Three I critically explored how and to what limits bodily gesture directs attention to the possibility of

thinking through physiological action. The post-phenomenological method I am providing suggests that the body in presence is not given via active, kinesthetic engagement; that the restricted postures and potential moods of indifference result from an obstruction in the relation of physicality to things, to objects, as much as its own imprints/marks. It is by working with bodily gestures – such as standing, turning or pointing – that I propose a new form of qualitative research, namely by means of physiological responses to states of passivity. Post-phenomenological methodology therefore means working with a question of what the body is as much as what it can do, when its inherent agency is vitiated, becoming irreducible to notions of self-presence.

According to Heidegger the phenomenological method can change if it is followed through. In the closing pages of *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (1988) he states:

> There is no such thing as *the one* phenomenology, and if there could be such a thing it would never become anything like a philosophical technique. For implicit in the essential nature of all genuine method as a path toward the disclosure of objects is the tendency to order itself always toward that which it itself discloses. When a method is genuine and provides access to the objects, it is precisely then that the progress made by following it and the growing originality of the disclosure will cause the very method that was used to become necessarily obsolete. The only thing that is truly new in science and in philosophy is the genuine questioning and struggle with things which is at the service of this questioning.

(Heidegger 1988: 328)

Indeed, a post-phenomenological method results from following this questioning through until its status, of being genuine, becomes problematic and, in some way, results in "phenomenological destruction" (Heidegger 1998: 252).[108] Bodily gesture does have a tendency to direct attention toward that which it struggles to disclose: a question of multiplicity, the event of thought that is investigated through performance-drawing. Yet, as I have found here, anything like the 'post-phenomenological' can never engage 'the

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[108] For Heidegger's explication of the "phenomenological destruction" see 'The Task of Destroying the History of Ontology', in *Being and Time* (1962), pp. 41-49.

growing originality of disclosure', a purely conceptual (cognitive, theoretical or philosophical) process of questioning anew (the event).

Contemporary forms of phenomenological research, however, still claim that knowledge about the relation between agent and world can be disclosed by proprioceptive engagement. As Noland states, "kinesthetic experience, produced by acts of embodied gesturing, places pressure on the conditioning a body receives, encouraging variations in performance that account for larger innovations in cultural practice that cannot otherwise be explained" (2009: 2-3). The post-phenomenological means of gesturing (in a dislocated manner) critically approaches this claim – which surprisingly employs expressive and embodied actions to exercise theory, namely investigate and disclose via kinesthetic movement and intuition what cannot otherwise be explained. The dislocated gesture that I propose entails that such embodied gestures cannot discern "an event that leaves a nonvisible remainder as salient, productive, and interoceptively available, rather than abject, negative, and out of reach" (Noland 2009: 17). By using bodily gesture with restriction of movement I have been able to discover a complex form of the event, where thought is not so fluidly productive and can reject the depth of reach and touch assumed by interoceptive acts.

Comments on Conceptual Practice, Multiplicity and Openness

Does the post-phenomenological, dislocated gesture better enable practice to disclose the thought-event of multiplicity, namely in bringing some realization to 'the point'? What I am asking here regards the relationship between practice and theory, a topic I should comment on given the degree of philosophical/theoretical analysis present in my thesis. My analysis is a response to the conceptual thrust of (performance-)drawing, which uses the empirical register of practice to disclose the unexplainable. In other words,

such a kinesthetically oriented practice aims to inscribe and touch upon an enigmatic, inner sensibility. According to theorist and activist Franko "Bifo" Berardi this kind of intellectual process resonates with "the privileged position that sensibility has gained in present times" (Berardi 2009: 130). Indeed, sensibility is an ambiguous term that is homologous with multiplicity. On the one hand, multiplicity can be understood as an interruptive sense of spacing, a non-relation that dislocates haptic forms of touch. On the other hand, it can be considered as a "positive relation," multiplicity being a "primal propulsive force" (Berardi 2009: 138). Contemporary drawing is a conceptual practice that uses mark-making as a theoretical/practical means of inscribing and depicting multiplicity as a positive relation. As I have found, investigating 'the point' does *not* entail embodying, experiencing or generally 'revealing' a vitalist variation of phenomenological becoming. In order to come to this realization I had to test how I worked with my body. Enduring weight, letting my physicality undergo inaction and passivity: these effects have paradoxically informed my exploration of a constitutive obstruction, which challenges the efficacy of apprehending knowledge through practice. I note that by writing this thesis, wherein I critically explore the theoretical terrain of concepts engaged via inscriptive gestural drawing, I have attempted to comprehensively work through this kind of event and propose a new configuration of theoretical/philosophical terms and questions.

My intention for examining discourses around gesture and mark-making has been motivated by the fact that practices and writings around drawing and performance continue to endorse phenomenological and vitalist themes, such as: the living present, haptic proprioception, affective movement or the play of durational forces – some examples being artworks by Anastasi, Brown and Morris, whom I've explored in Chapter 1.2. Arguably, the endorsement of these themes means that they are presupposed, perceived as immanent and essential concepts. For example, the line, either as a figure

indicative of movement(-based thinking) or kinetic/graphic continuum, is never purely visible but immanent in matter. The inscriptions produced from gestural drawing aim to materialize and make sensuous an unmediated and relational force. In other words, presupposition *is* the metaphysical form of engaging questions beyond theory, using sensibility to investigate an event that is non-representable, unknown and resistant to explanation.

For philosophy, presupposition impinges upon the approach of questioning used to open thought. The approach is circular: to think about thought. Philosophy's task is to present "that which 'opens up' thought, and which must be maintained throughout the investigation" (Badiou 2011: 29). If philosophy does not provide answers at least it tries to provoke questioning anew; it 'opens up thought'. That is its event. However, "philosophical thinking is not philosophical without the pretense to universality" (Gasché 2007: 348). Indeed, there is a pretense that relates to an injunction underlying this questioning: thinking cannot totalize and make universal the way the thought-event happens. Universality can otherwise restrict and totalize the possibility of the event to an ideal, if not the end then the absolutization of all possibilities (Osborne 2006). Multiplicity then prevails under the hope that there is an event that could traverse idealization and "the malaise of contemporary thought," as François Laruelle writes, the malaise incurred by endeavors to "liberate multiplicities" (2010: 194). The difficulty may always remain in how to open up thought from pre-supposition, how to think without already encircling and assuming the form for liberating multiplicities. Circularity is then a kind of roulette in which the event is played out, which can either mean: 1. to nihilistically enclose and stop thinking/questioning; or, 2. encircle and affirm the event, a circularization that invokes infinite possibilities of questioning. That is to say, circularization liberates the sense of thought from any presupposition – *other than its immanently essential state of thinking-*

thought as an unmediated pure possibility.

The form of multiplicity that I have presented through the point might seem to enclose and make questioning impossible. We may perceive that it interminably arrests philosophical movement, the point invoking indifference and the interruption being non-philosophical.

When I commenced my research I began with a presupposition: that drawing is philosophically inclined, mark-making being a unique approach to investigating operations of thought. By engaging my practice, as well as exploring the theoretical terrain it engages with, I hoped that I would test the relevance of the philosophical mode of thought already implicit in performance-based mark-making. What I have come to realize is that, by working with restriction, dislocation and obstruction, the event in this practice is constituted by a certain openness of the point, an interruption based on the passivity of thinking-as-questioning. Openness relates to an injunction, a demand to think where thought is not only non-representable but also impossible to engage with in any genuine and essential way. I now recognize that one way to think about this demand continues from Svendsen's discussion of boredom, when the act is confronted with a loss of possibilities. He writes:

> To go on, despite the fact one cannot go on. To go on in *now*, where neither past nor future seem to offer any basis for where one ought to go... To go on in a contemporaneity that has neither beginning nor end.

> (Svendsen 2011: 134)

In its multiplicity the point(-of-the-body) is what opens onto a question of thought, albeit thinking-as-questioning in a state of impossibility. Thinking with a body that is stuck, obstructed in its thinking, means persisting with a performative act that focuses on 'now'

– what for Svendsen entails 'contemporaneity'.[109] For me the performative act deals with where and how the performance-drawing takes place: the instant or present state where mark and body appear while interrupted by a trace of thought that is passive in its affect. Thought in its multiplicity is the point, an obstruction that does not enclose nor induce an undetermined circularizing vertigo. The point is *not*. Passivity. And if it does not open up pure possibilities – which can perhaps only be philosophical ways of achieving thinking without presupposition – then the point lets pass an event that is passive in its openness. Openness is indifferent to where one ought to go. Openness is what one draws upon, insistently and persistently gesturing toward a thought that, in itself, is open as such: multiplicity. Openness is the outside that *lets* thought take place, lets the performative act shift from restriction to release, disconnects the imprint from its inscriber and dislocates gesture.

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[109] 'Contemporaneity' is a topic that refers to current debates about thinking through non-standard forms of inquiry. For Laruelle (2010) this entails a form of 'non-philosophy', the non-standard philosophical form of inquiry that is critical of post-structural notions of difference – some of which I have explored here, such as vitalism, phenomenology and deconstruction.

LIST OF IMAGES REFERENCED WITHIN THE THESIS

- Figures 1 and 2; page 13. *Weathered*, performance, chalk on pavement, variable size, 2005.[110]

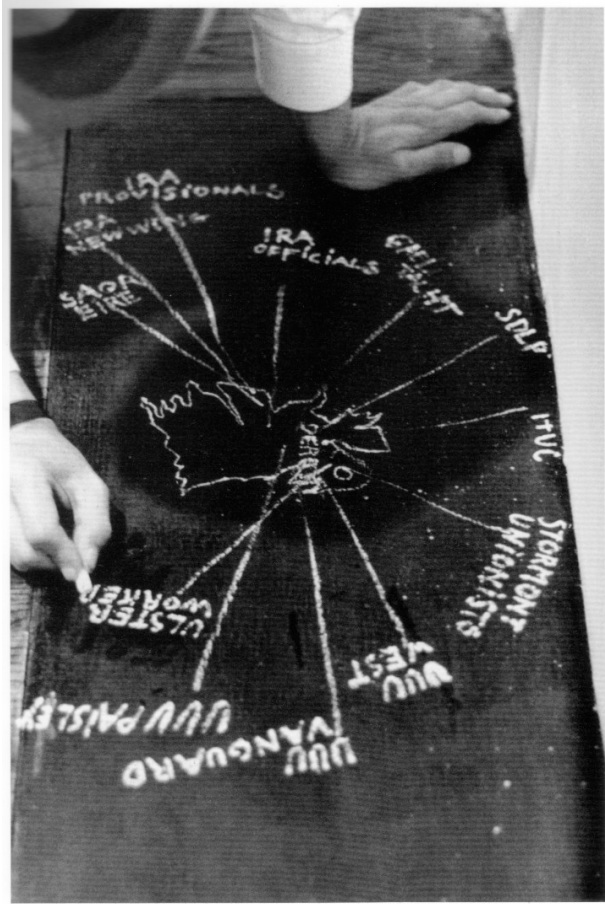- Figure 3; page 18. Joseph Beuys, *Completing The Brain of Europe, Drawing for his Hearth*, performance at The Royal Feldman Gallery, New York, 1975 (photographed by Caroline Tisdall). Reproduced from http://historyofourworld.wordpress.com/2010/05/19/joseph-beuys-and-the-celtic-world/(accessed 20/05/2011).

- Figures 4 and 5; page 19. Trisha Brown, *It's a Draw, Live Feed*, performance, charcoal on paper, 2002. Reproduced from Eleey (2008).
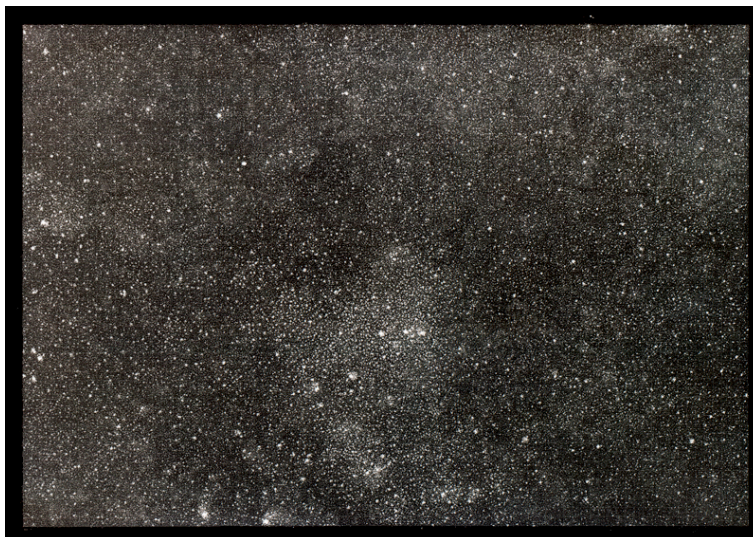
- Figure 6; page 20. *Pointing Infinitely, While Seated and Thinking of Greater Things*, detail from photographic series – c-type print, 8.0 x 6.0 cm., 2009.

- Figure 7; page 20. *Pointing Infinitely, While Seated and Thinking of Greater Things,* panel one from two-panel work – ink on graph paper, 92 x 65 cm., 2008.

- Figure 8; page 20. *Pointing Infinitely, While Seated and Thinking of Greater Things,* panel two from two-panel work – digital c-type print, 92 x 65 cm., 2008.

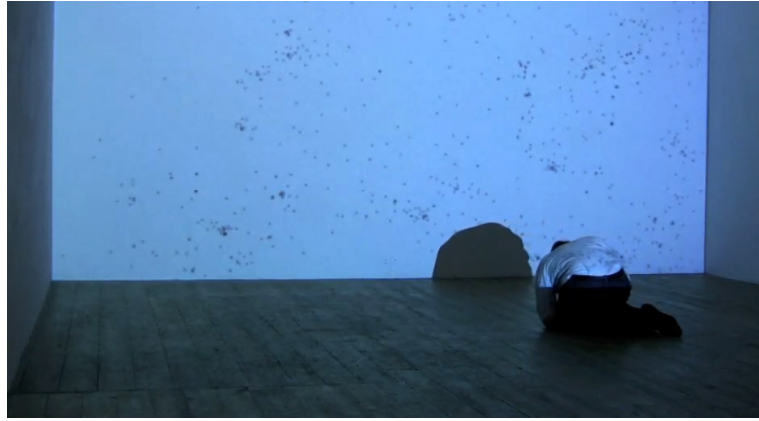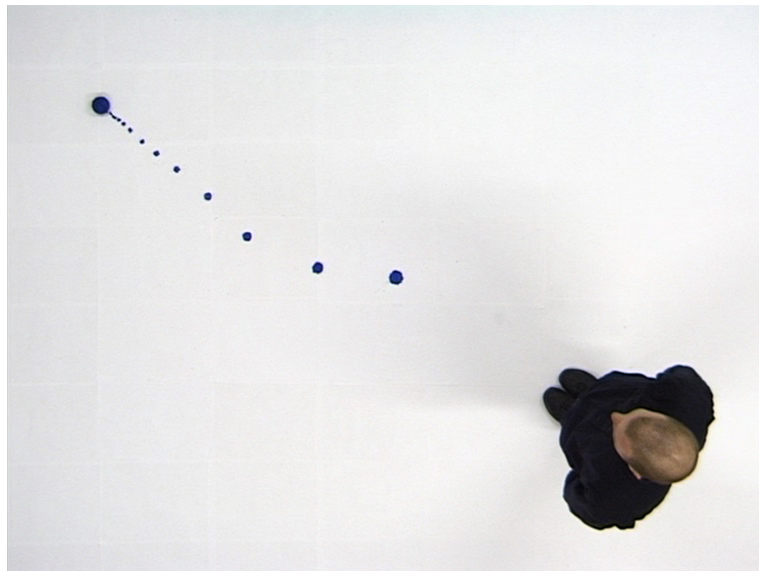- Figure 9; page 37. *Pointing Through Details*, performance, digital projection and digital drawing, 2012.

- Figure 10; page 37. Paul Harrison and John Wood, *Map* – from *Twenty-Six (Drawing and Falling Things)*, video, 2003. Reproduced from Wood (2006).

- Figures 11 and 12; page 43. Studio-based process for *Placing A Pause By Kneeling and Staring At Two Holes in The Wall – Try and Make One Whole From Two.*
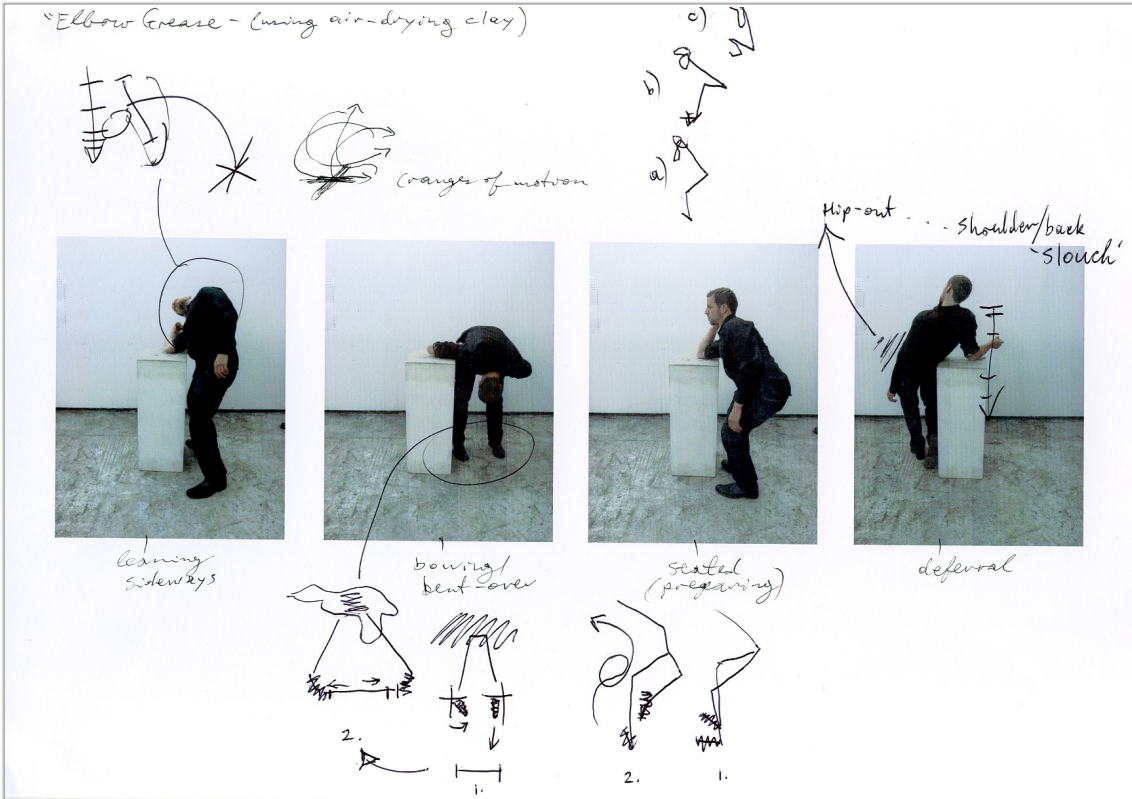
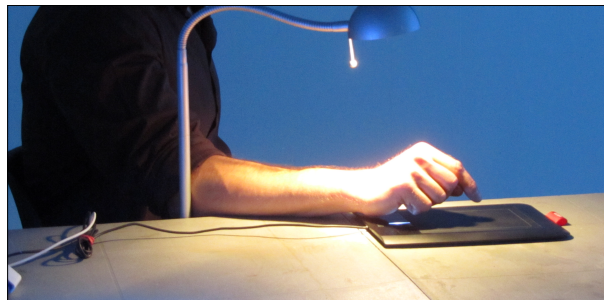- Figure 13; page 49. Studio-based process, diagrams and notes for *Elbow Grease*, 2010.

- Figure 14; page 49. Studio-based process for *Pointing Through Details*, 2011.

- Figure 15; page 47. Bruce Nauman. *Walking in an Exaggerated Manner Around the Perimeter*, video, 1967. Reproduced from Kraynak (2005).

- Figure 16; page 48. Bruce Nauman, *Bouncing Two Balls Between The Floor and Ceiling with Changing Rhythms,* video, 1967. Reproduced from Kraynak (2005).

- Figure 17; page 50. Studio-based process, diagrams and notes for *Eclipse,* 2010.

- Figure 18; page 50. *Eclipse*, OHP, highlighter on acetate, inkjet print (5.0 x 7.0 cm.), 2011.

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[110] *Note that all works listed by title only are those made by R. Luzar.*

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Image showing Lai Chih-Sheng installing his work as part of the exhibition: *Invisible: Art about the Unseen 1957-2012* at the Hayward Gallery, London. Reproduced from http://eslitegallery.tumblr.com/post/24191495569/life-size-drawing-at-hayward-gallery (accessed 10/10/2012).

- Figure 76; page 162. *Pause Records,* performance, three acetate sheets (A3 size), black marker, three over-head projectors. Image of performance for the *Making Sense* conference, Cambridge University, Cambridge, September 2009.

- Figure 77; page 163. *Sitting, Leaning and Aligning Two Knots From A Post To A Ground,* interactive performance, graphite, pine-wood post, chair, 2012.

- Figure 78; page 163. *Sitting, Leaning and Aligning Two Knots From A Post To A Ground*. The pinewood post and two traced spots on the floor, as seen when viewed from the chair.

- Figure 79; page 164. Image showing how the mark on the post and spot-like mark on the floor, closest to the chair, both align when viewed closely.

- Figure 80; page 164. Image showing how the mark on the post and spot-like mark on the floor, farthest from the chair, both align when viewed closely.

fig. 1.

fig. 2.

Fig. 1 and 2.
Weathered, performance; chalk on pavement. 2005.
Fig. 1 – drawing with chalk. Fig. 2 – drawing after rainfall.

fig. 3.

Fig. 3.
Joseph Beuys, *Completing The Brain of Europe, Drawing for his Hearth*, performance at The Royal Feldman Gallery, New York, 1975.

fig. 4.

fig. 5.

Fig. 4 and 5.
Trisha Brown, *It's A Draw, Live Feed*, performance, charcoal on paper, 2002.

fig. 6.

fig. 7.

fig. 8.

Fig. 6.
Pointing Infinitely While Seated and Thinking of Greater Things, detail from photographic series; c-type print.
8.0 x 6.0 cm. 2008.
Fig. 7 and 8.
Pointing Infinitely While Seated and Thinking of Greater Things, dual panel, drawing and c-type print – (panel one) black ink dots on graph paper (92.0 x 65.0 cm.); (panel two) digital c-type print (92.0 x 65.0 cm.), 2008.

fig. 9.

fig. 10.

fig. 11.

fig. 12.

Fig. 11 and 12.
Studio-based process for *Placing A Pause By Kneeling and Staring At Two Holes in The Wall – Try and Make One Whole From Two.* 2010.

fig. 13.

fig. 14.

Fig. 13.
Studio-based process, diagrams and notes for making *Elbow Grease*. 2010.
Fig. 14.
Studio-based process for *Pointing Through Details*. 2011.

fig. 15.
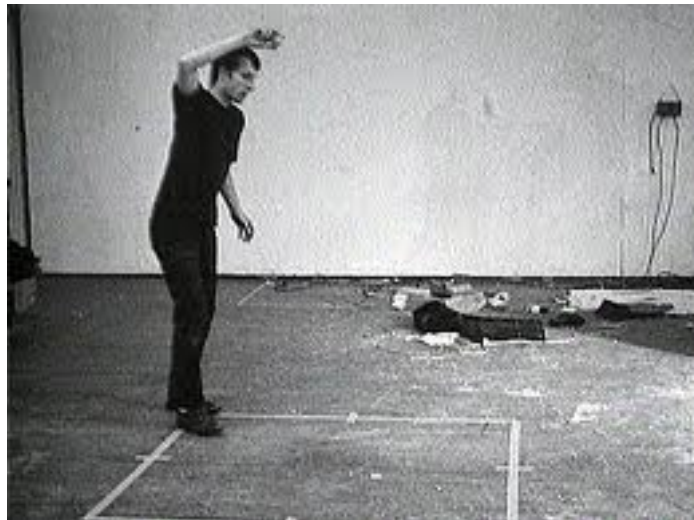
fig. 16.

Fig. 15.
Bruce Nauman, *Walking in an Exaggerated Manner Around the Perimeter*, video, 1967.
Fig. 16.
Bruce Nauman, *Bouncing Two Balls Between The Floor and Ceiling with Changing Rhythms,* video, 1967.
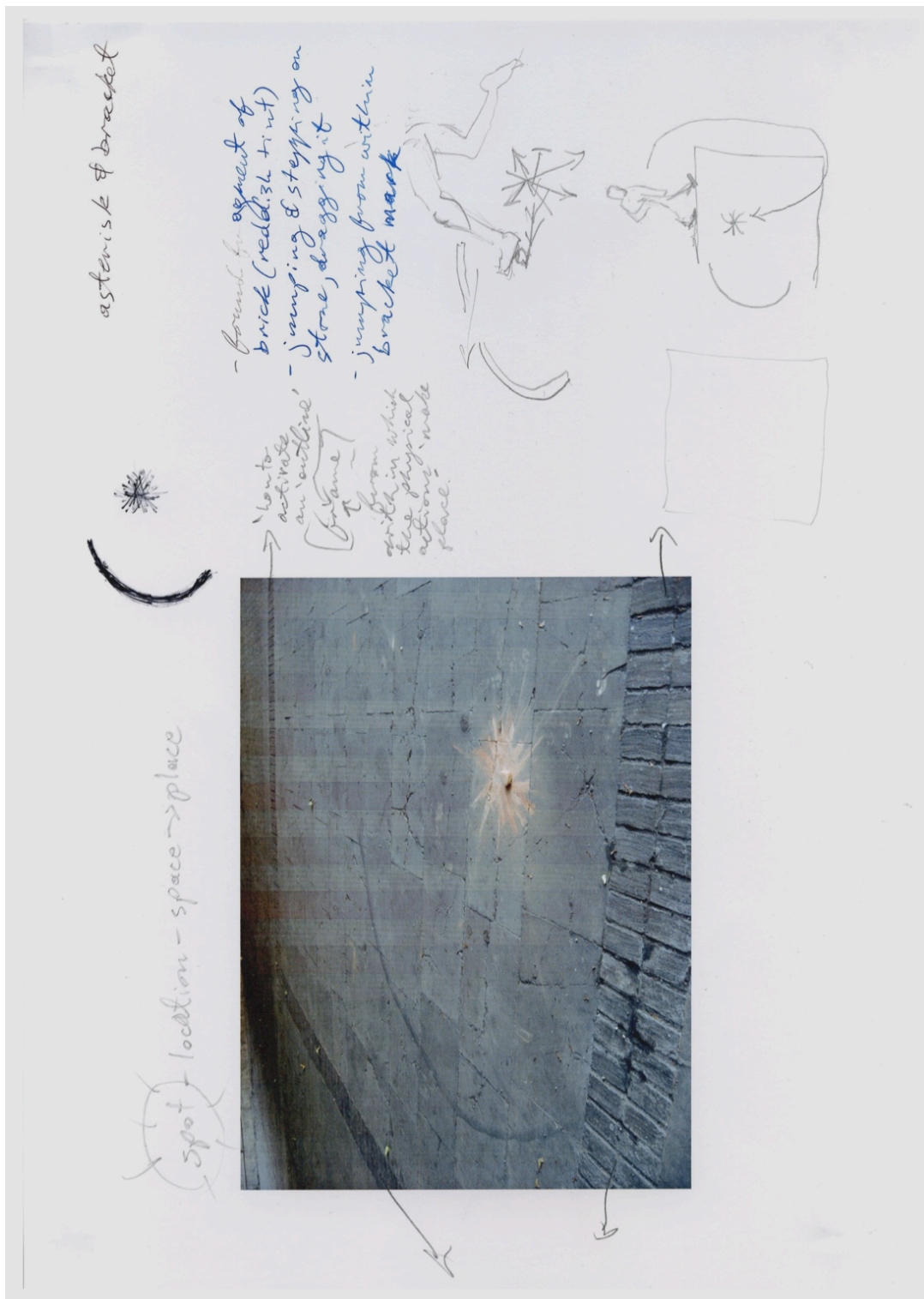
fig. 17.

Fig. 17.
Studio-based process, diagrams and notes for *Eclipse*, 2010.

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Fig. 18.
Eclipse, OHP, highlighter on acetate, inkjet print (5.0 x 7.0 cm.), 2011.
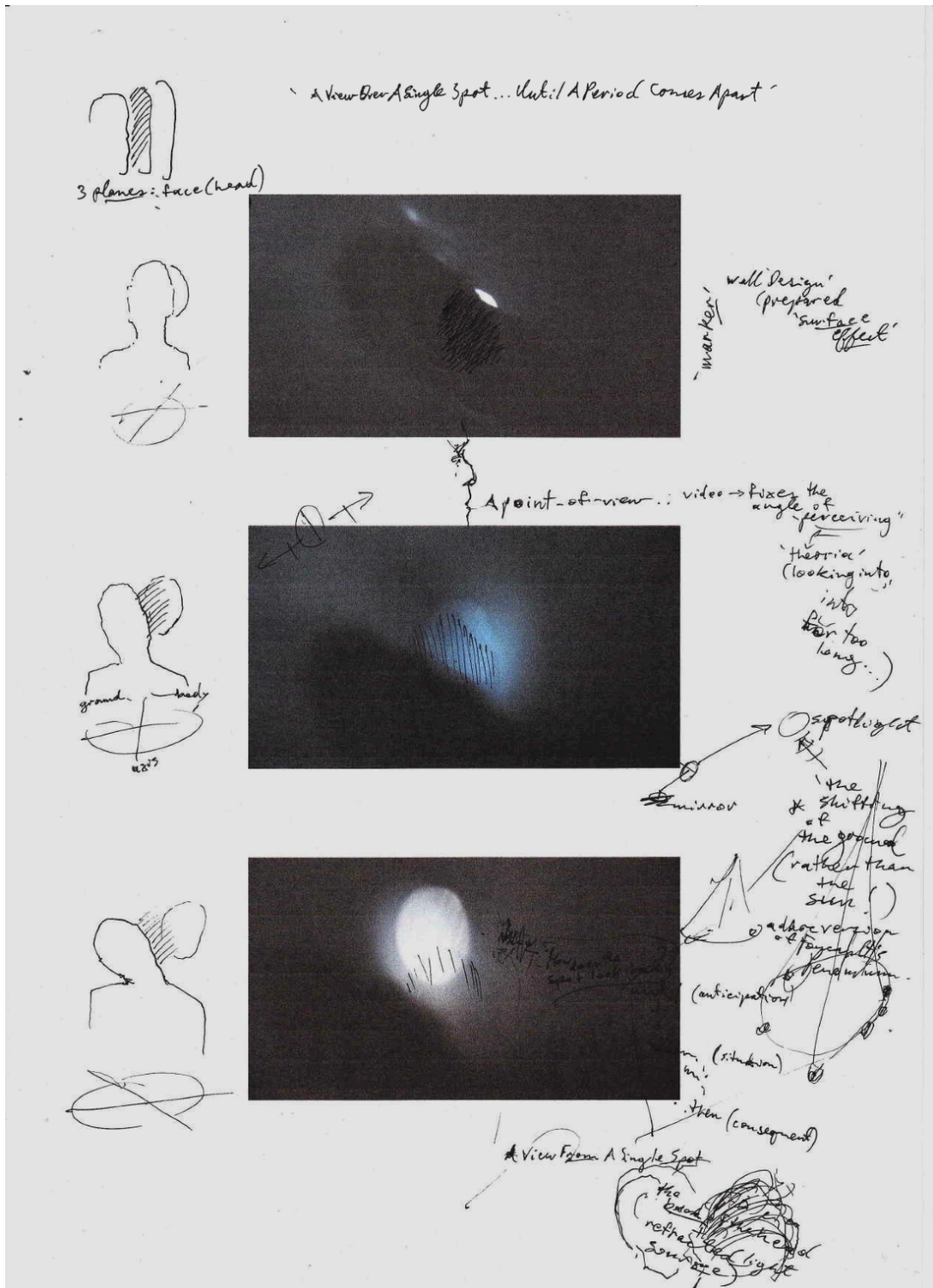
fig. 19.

Fig. 19.
Studio-based process, diagrams and notes for *A View Over A Single Spot Until A Period Comes Apart*, 2012.

fig. 20.

Fig. 20.
William Anastasi, *Untitled (Subway Drawing)*, graphite on paper, 19.4 x 28.3 cm., 1973.
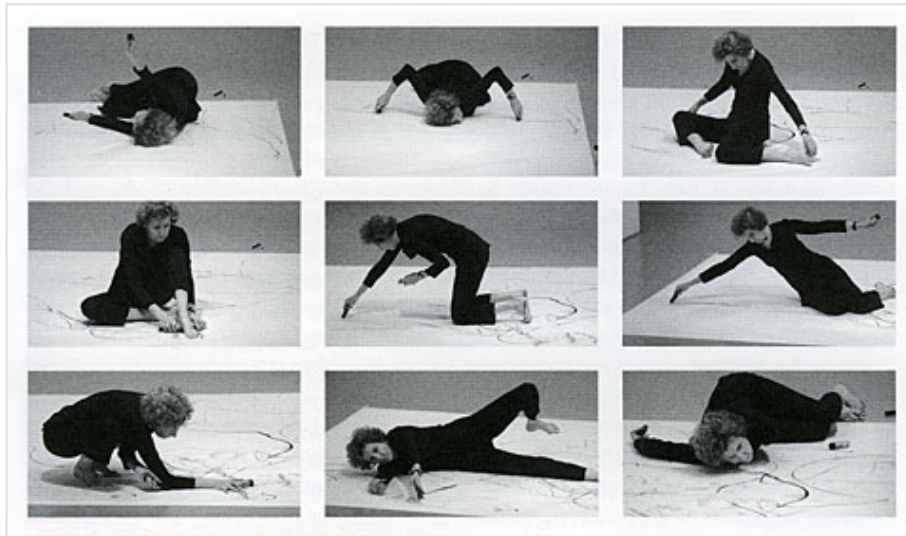
fig. 21.

fig. 22.

Fig. 21 and 22.
Trisha Brown, *It's A Draw, Live Feed*, performance, charcoal on paper, 2002.
Fig. 21 – images showing the various positions that Brown appears in while performing *It's A Draw, Live Feed*.
Fig. 22 – drawing that results from Brown's performance.

fig. 23.

Fig. 23.
Louisa Minkin, *Butades: or The Origin of Painting*, performance, 2006.
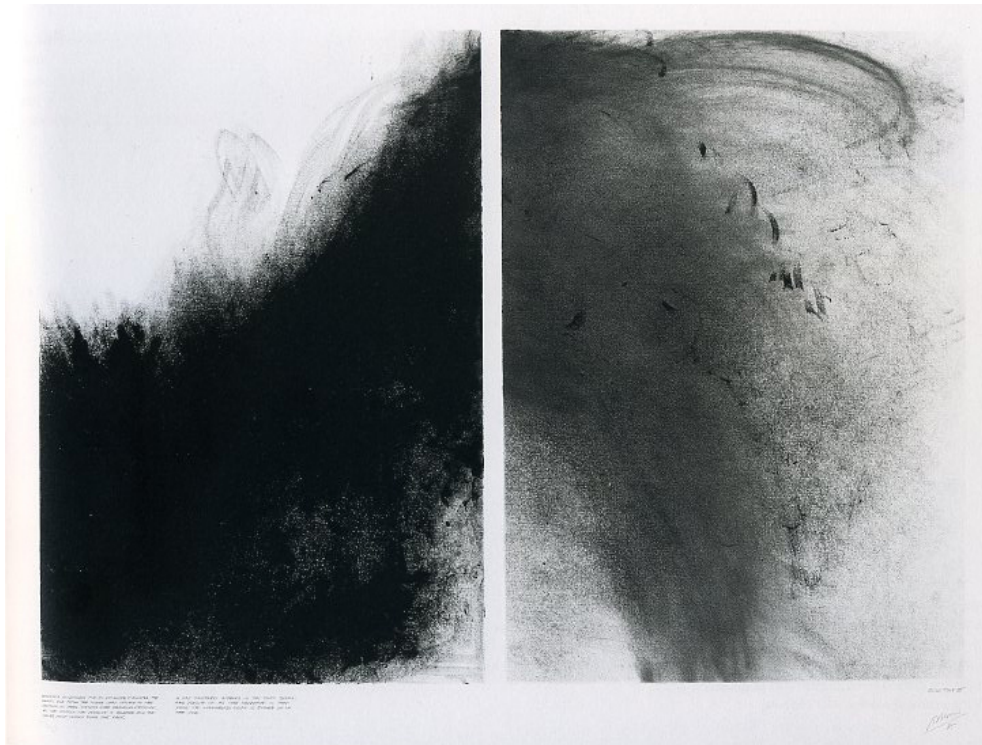
fig. 24.

Fig. 24.
Robert Morris, *Blind Time Drawing III*, iron oxide on paper, 96.5 x 127 cm., 1985.

fig. 25.

fig. 26.
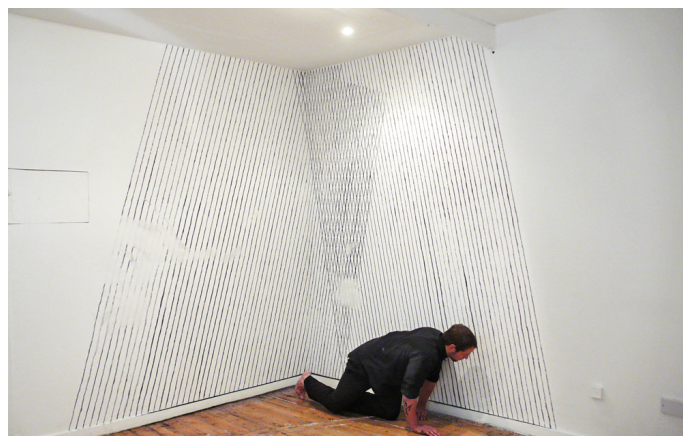
fig. 27.

Fig. 25, 26 and 27.
Untitled, performance and wall-drawing, willow charcoal on wall, c. 2010. Images showing me performing *Untitled*: fig. 25 – as I appear at the start of this performance; fig. 26 – as I appear midway, particularly when fatigue affects me and I lean against the wall; fig. 27 – as I appear approximately fifteen minutes before my performance ends.

fig. 28.

fig. 29.

Fig. 28 and 29.

Elbow Grease, performance, clay and wooden shelf, 24.0 x 50.0 x 18.0 cm., 2011. Fig. 28 shows one position I appear in while performing *Elbow Grease*. Fig. 29 shows my arm close up, my elbow indenting a layer of fresh, malleable air-drying clay.

fig. 30.

fig. 31

Fig. 30 and 31.
Images of me performing *Elbow Grease*. Each position occurs by holding still while waiting for my elbow to stop sliding and indenting a layer of fresh, air-drying clay placed over a shelf inserted in the wall.

fig. 32

Fig. 32.
Roi Vaara, *Wet Paint Handshakes*, performance, various media, 2011.

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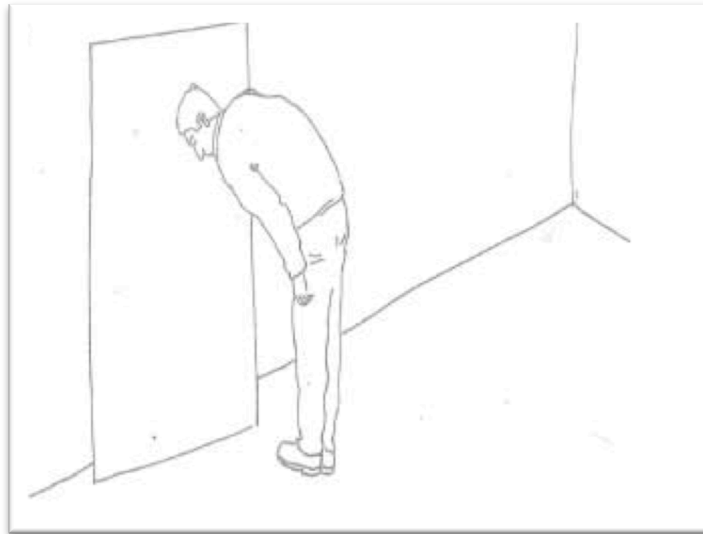
fig. 33

fig. 34

Fig. 33 and 34.
Fig. 33 – example of Erwin Würm's *Instruction Drawing* for (Fig. 34) *Glue Your Brain to the Board (do it for one minute and think about Adorno)*, performance, ink on board (with *Instruction Drawing*), 2005.

fig. 35

Fig. 35.
Vito Acconci, *Trademarks*, photographed activity, ink prints on paper, 1970.

fig. 36

fig. 37

Fig. 36 and 37.
Fig. 36 – image from *Untitled* (*3 Worlds in 1*, KCCC, Klaipeda, Lithania, 2011), showing me at the start of this performance – holding still in a standing position. Fig. 37 – studio-based process for *Untitled* in 2010, in which I was exploring still positions by using white powder to mark the area around my feet.

fig. 38

Fig. 38.
Untitled, performance and wall-drawing, willow charcoal on wall, 2010. Image from the exhibition *Can You Hear It?* (Nunnery Gallery, London England), 2010.
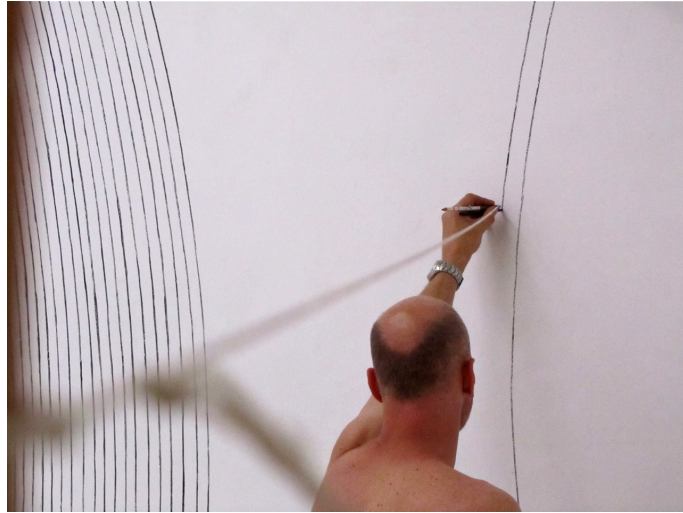
fig. 39

fig. 40

fig. 41

fig. 42

fig. 43

Untitled, performance and wall-drawing, willow charcoal on wall. Images from performances for:
fig. 41 – *3 Worlds in 1*, KCCC (Klaipeda, Lithuania), 2011; fig. 42 – *Sisyphus Happy*, Backlit Gallery (Nottingham, England),
2011; fig. 43 – *Creekside Open,* APT Gallery (London, England), 2011.

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fig. 44

fig. 45

fig. 46

Fig. 44, 45, 46.
Placing a Pause by Kneeling & Staring at Two Holes In The Wall - Try & Make One Whole From Two,
performance and installation, low resistance polyurethane (LPR), two holes inserted into wall, 2011.
Fig. 44 shows how a spectator can appear when executing this work. Fig. 45 shows how the spectator stares at two holes
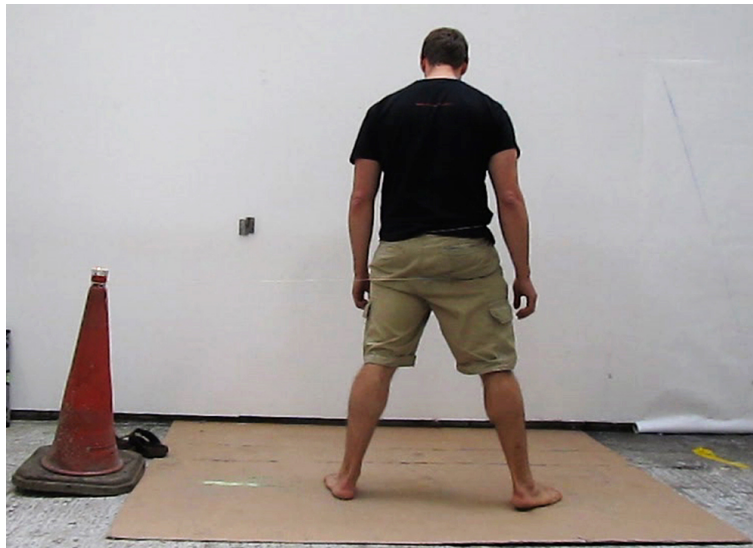in the wall. Fig. 45 shows how the LPR matt appears after the spectator leaves this work.
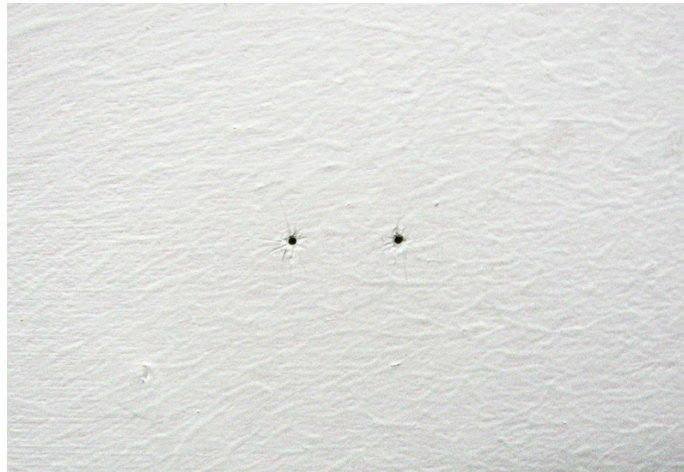
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fig. 47

fig. 48

fig. 49

fig. 50

Fig. 49 and 50.
Fig. 49 – detail of the two holes that appear in the wall, as seen in *Placing a Pause by Kneeling & Staring at Two Holes In The Wall - Try & Make One Whole From Two*.
Fig. 50 – manipulated image illustrating how the two holes (from fig. 49) appear through the process of stereoscopically staring; or, focusing on the two actual holes and optically fabricating an additional hole.
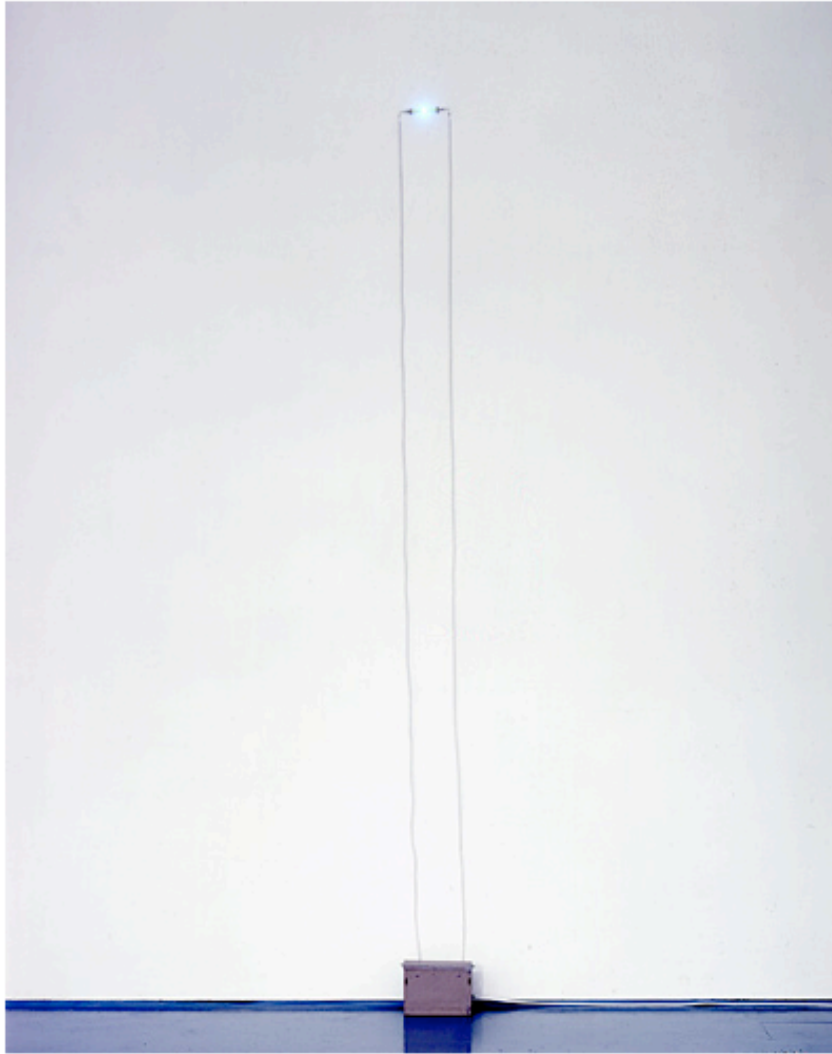
fig. 51

Fig. 51.
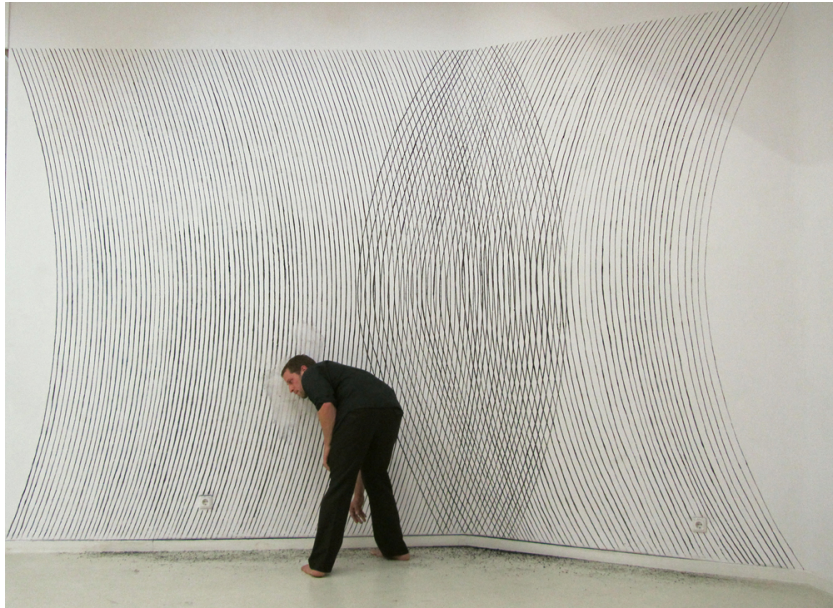Fiona Banner, *Neon Full Stop*, various media, 1997.

fig. 52

fig. 53

Fig. 52 and 53.
Images from performance of *Untitled*, as presented for the exhibition: *3 Worlds in 1*, KCCC (Klaipeda, Lithuania), 2011.
Fig. 52 – my position at approximately fifty minutes, when I was turning from the left. Fig. 53 – my position after approximately one hour, when I was turning to the right, toward the wall-drawing.
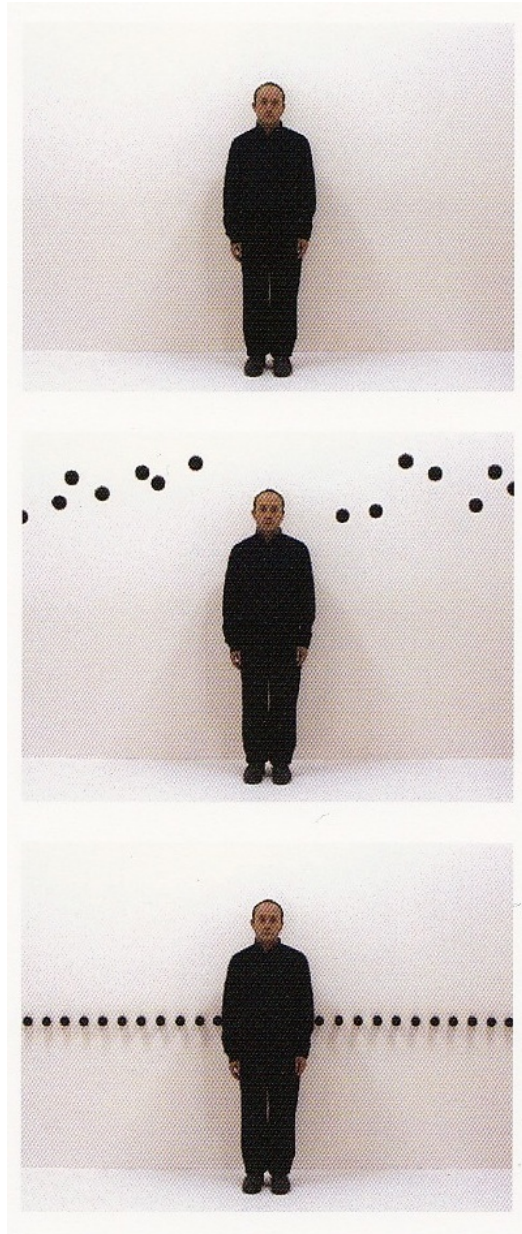
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fig. 54

Fig. 54.
John Wood and Paul Harrison, *Horizon,* from *Twenty Six (Drawing and Falling Things)*, video (multi channel mini DV), 40 seconds, 2001. Images from video showing, in descending order, the sequence of actions that happen in *Map*: John Wood standing against an empty wall, the row of balls falling over Wood, and the final image of Wood standing in the middle of the row of balls suspended along the wall.

fig. 55
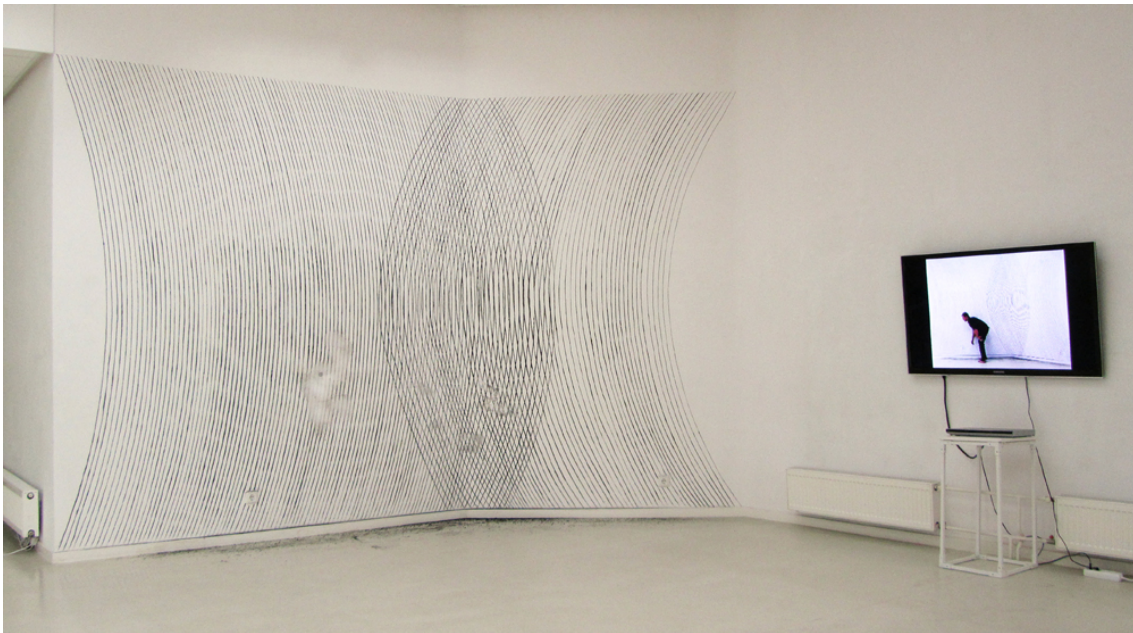

fig. 56

Fig. 55 and 56.
Untitled, performance and wall-drawing, willow charcoal on wall, video monitor, 2011.
Fig. 55 – image showing the video camera I used to record my performance of *Untitled*, for *3 Worlds in 1*, KCCC (Klaipeda, Lithuania), 2011. Fig. 56 – exhibition view of *Untitled* as it appeared after I had completed my performance and placed the video next to the wall-drawing.
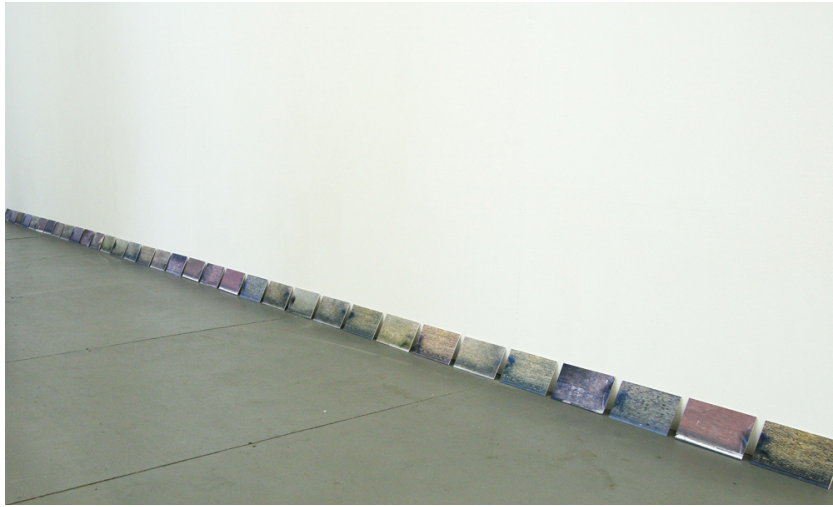
fig. 57

fig. 58

fig. 59

Fig. 57, 58 and 59.
Passages, still-images from video series, mounted digital prints, (each print measuring) 20x14 cm., 2009 – 2010.
Note: fig. 58 is a sample of a pair of prints and how they are configured to appear in *Passages.* These prints form a row
reconstructing the video series into one fabricated sequence of still-images.

fig. 60

Fig. 60.
Shadow of a Form, video, colour, stereo, 4"30 minutes, 2010.

fig. 61

Fig. 61.
John Latham, *One Second Drawing*, acrylic and enamel on wood, 27.1 x 36.9 x 2.6 cm., 1972.

Fig. 62 and 63.
Approximately Pointing Out The Figure, two panel construction: (panel one) black ink on graph paper (92 x 65 cm); (panel two) digital c-type print (92 x 65 cm), 2009-2010.

fig. 64

fig. 65

fig. 66

Fig. 64, 65, 66.
Details Through Pointing, performance, digital graphics tablet and digital projection, 2011 - 2012.
Images from performance at *Nunnery Gallery* (London), January 2012.
Fig. 64 – how I appear when holding still and the shadow cast by a projector behind me. Fig. 65 – the process of drawing: tapping my forefinger into the digital graphics tablet, the shadow of my hand cast by the projector's light. Fig. 66 – close-up view of the shadow of the tip of my finger, along with the drawn dots on the wall.
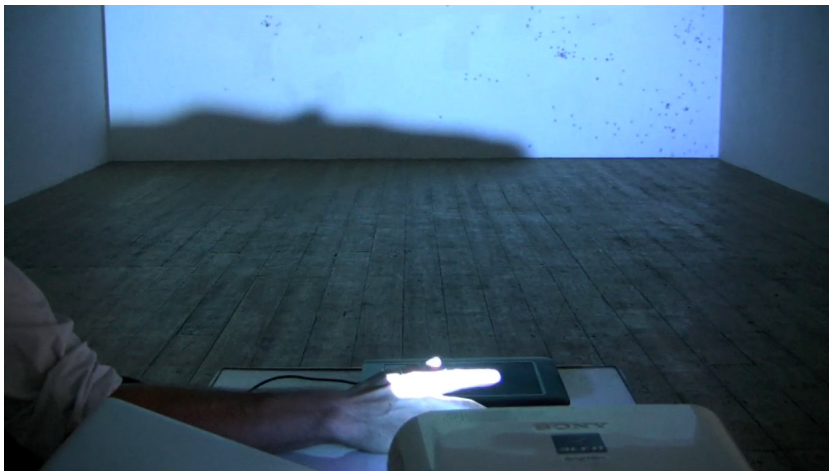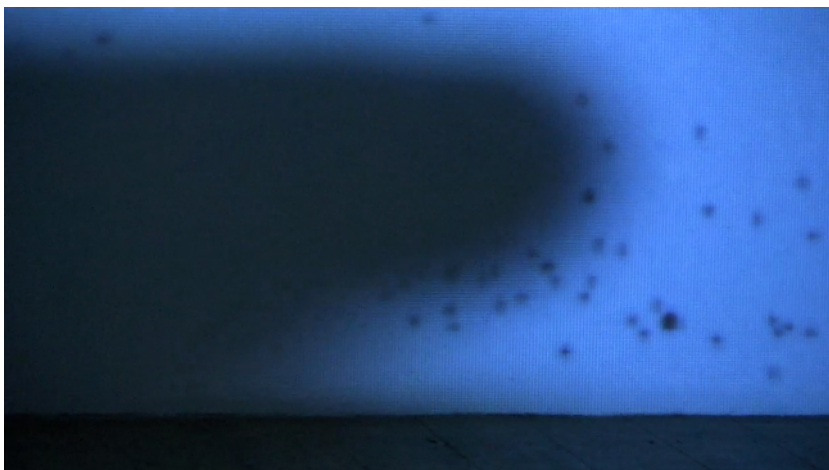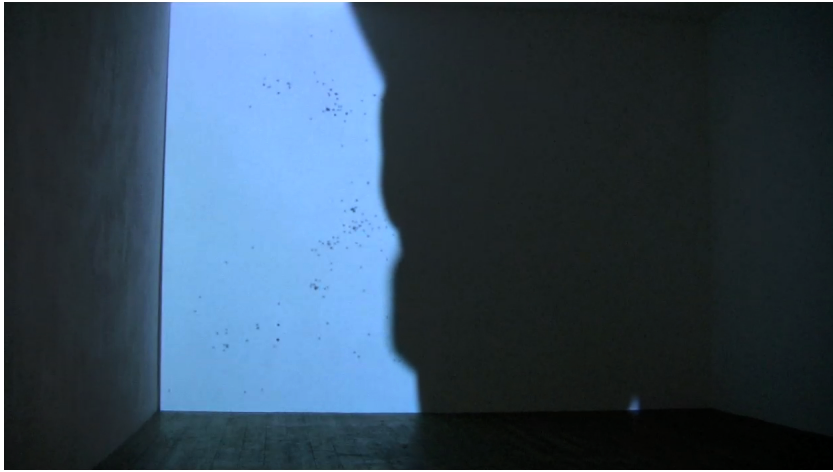
fig. 67

fig. 68
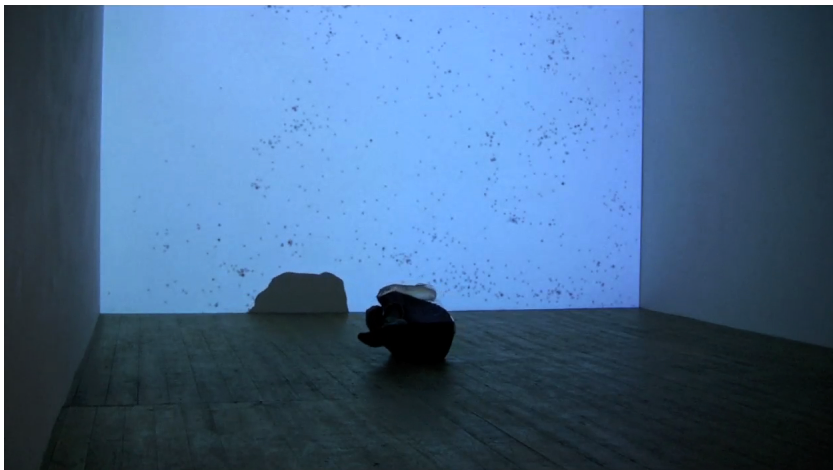
fig. 69

Fig. 67, 68, 69.
Details Through Pointing, performance, digital graphics tablet and digital projection, 2011 - 2012.
Images from performance at *Nunnery Gallery* (London), January 2012.
Fig. 67 – the shadow of my body when I am positioned closest to the projector. Fig. 68 – me holding still while trying to configure my shadow's shape in relation to the drawn dots projected on the wall. Fig. 69 – how I appear towards the end of this performance.
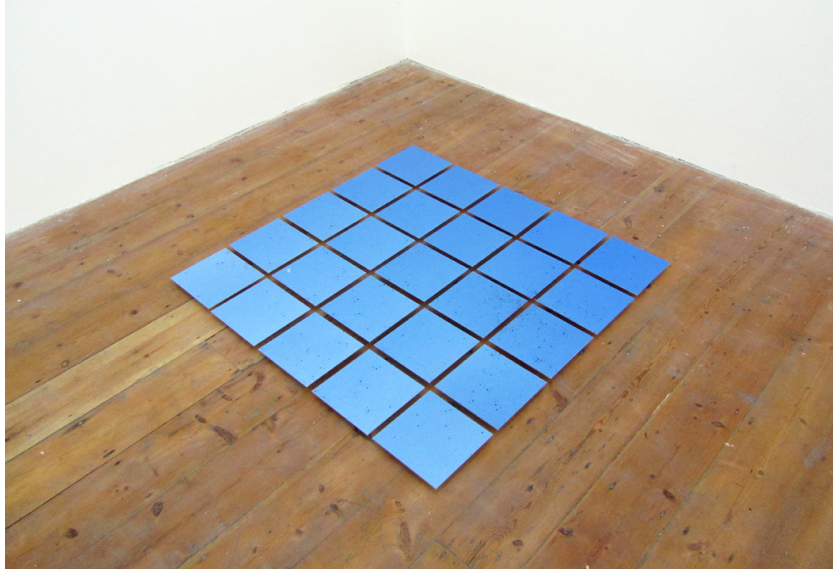
fig. 70

fig. 71

Fig. 70 and 71.
Pointing Around Detail: C3, B4, digital drawing on digital photograph, ink-jet prints mounted on Perspex, (25 panels, each measuring) 20 x 20 cm., 2011. Fig. 71 – studio-based process in which I use a digital graphics tablet to draw dark, dot-like marks into a digital photograph of a blue sky, which appears on the computer screen.

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fig. 72

Fig. 72.
Detail of *Pointing Around Detail: C3, B4.*
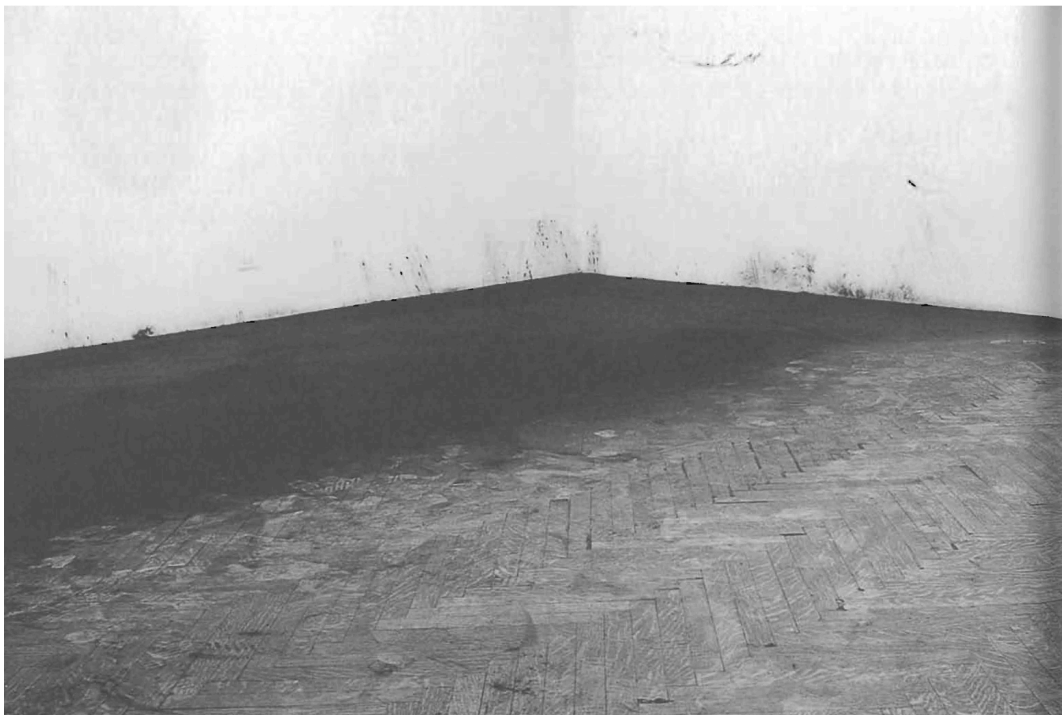
fig. 73

Fig. 73.
Bill Bollinger, *Graphite Piece,* graphite powder, 1969.
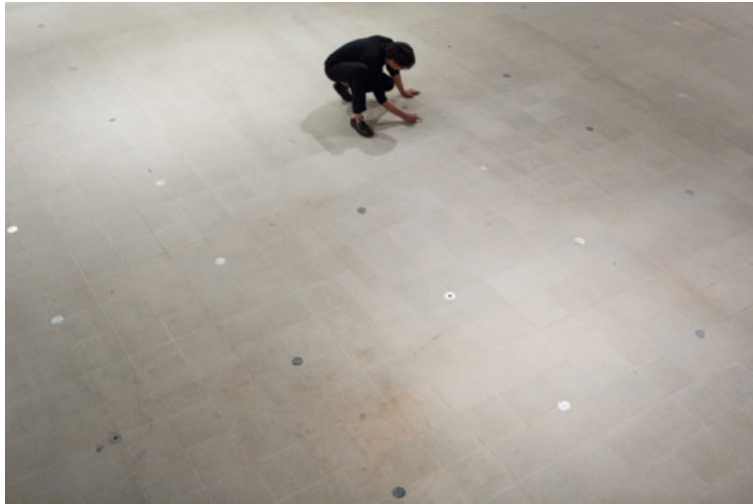
fig. 74
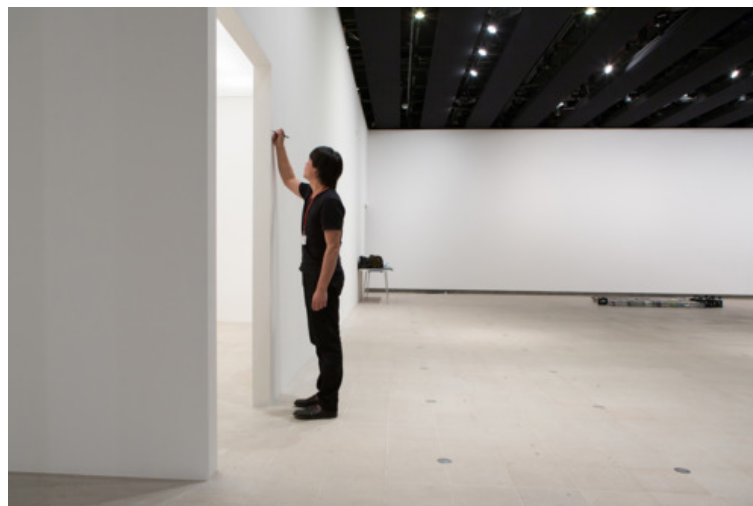
fig. 75

Fig. 74 and 75.
Lai Chih-Sheng, *Life Size Drawing,* graphite, talc powder, tile grouting, 2012.
Selected images showing Lai Chih-Sheng installing his work as part of *Invisible: Art about the Unseen 1957-2012* at the Hayward Gallery, London.

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fig. 76

Fig. 76.
Pause Records, performance, three acetate sheets (A3 size), black marker, three over-head projectors. Image of performance for the *Making Sense* conference, Cambridge University, Cambridge, September 2009.

fig. 77

fig. 78

Fig. 77 and 78.
Sitting, Leaning and Aligning Two Knots From A Post To A Ground, interactive performance, graphite, pine-wood post, chair, 2012. Fig. 78 – the pinewood post and two traced spots on the floor, as seen when viewed from the chair.

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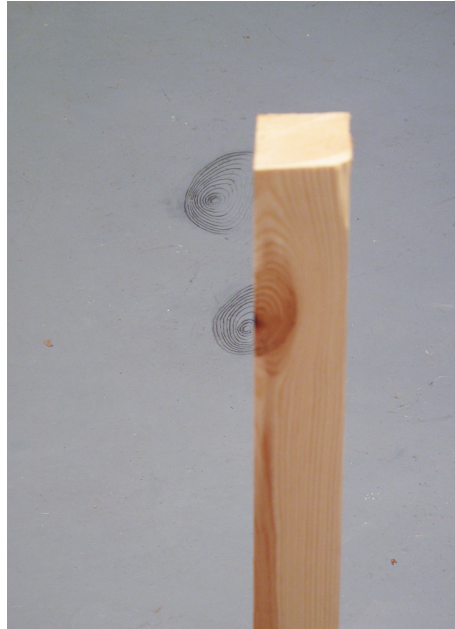
fig. 79

fig. 80

Fig. 79 and 80.
Sitting, Leaning and Aligning Two Knots From A Post To A Ground. Fig. 79 – image showing how the mark on the post and spot-like mark on the floor, closer to the chair, both align when viewed closely. Fig. 80 – image showing how the mark on the post and spot-like mark on the floor, farthest from the chair, both align when viewed closely.

PORTFOLIO OF WORKS

The portfolio of works is a DVD that comprises of: 1. Stills and video clip (of *Details Through Pointing*), 2. Video works (full length). The stills and video clip section contains a selection of diagrams and notes made in the process of creating these works. This DVD is located at the rear of the thesis. Below is a list of these works (ordered chronologically, according to the year of production – 2009 to 2012).

- **PAUSE RECORDS.** Performance; three acetate sheets, black marker, three Over-Head Projectors (OHP). 2009. Selected images from performance for the conference *Making Sense* (Cambridge University, Cambridge), 2009. Photographs by Isabelle Vodjdani.

- **PASSAGES.** Inkjet prints mounted on card panels. Each print measures at 12.5 x 18.0 cm. 2009-2010. Selected images from the exhibitions: *Approximations to…* (Harrington Mills Studios, Nottingham, 2010); *[•] Outside* (Kingsgate Gallery, London, 2013).

- **SHADOW OF A FORM.** Video. 4:30 min., color/stereo, 2010.

- **APPROXIMATELY POINTING OUT THE FIGURE.** Two-panel construction: (panel one) black ink on graph paper (92 x 65 cm), (panel two) digital c-type print (92 x 65 cm), 2009-2010.

- **UNTITLED.** Performance; willow charcoal on wall, 2010 - present.   Photographs from the exhibitions: *Can You Hear It?* (Nunnery Gallery, London, 2010), *Sisyphus Happy* (Backlit Gallery, Nottingham, 2011), *Approximations To…* (Harrington Mills Studios, Nottingham, 2010), *Creekside Open* (APT Gallery, London, 2011). Photographs by Ollie Harrop, Martin Lewis, David Manley and Natalia Plejič.

- **UNTITLED – KCCC.** Performance; willow charcoal on wall, video monitor, 2011. Photographs from the exhibition *3 Worlds in 1*, (KCCC – Klaipèda Culture Communication Centre, Klaipèda, Lithuania, 2011). Photographs by Tim Maslen. *The video used in this work is presented in Video Works (full-length).*

- **ELBOW GREASE.** Performance; clay, wooden shelf. 24 x 50 x 18cm, 2011. Photographs from the exhibition *Sisyphus Happy* (Backlit Gallery, Nottingham, 2011). Photographs by Beth Shapiro.

- **ECLIPSE.** Installation. OHP, highlighter on acetate, inkjet print (5 x 7 cm.). 2011. Photographs from the exhibition *Sisyphus Happy* (Backlit Gallery, Nottingham), 2011.

- **PLACING A PAUSE BY KNEELING & STARING AT TWO HOLES IN THE WALL - TRY & MAKE ONE WHOLE FROM TWO.** Interactive performance; low resistance polyurethane (LPR), two holes punched into wall, 2011. Photographs from the exhibition *Sisyphus Happy* (Backlit Gallery, Nottingham), 2011.

- **DETAILS THROUGH POINTING.** Performance; graphics tablet and digital projection, 2011 - 2012. Photographs from the performance at the Nunnery Gallery, London, 2012.

- **POINTING AROUND DETAIL: C3, B4.** 25 panels, each 20 x 20 cm, 2011. Digitally rendered marks on photograph, ink-jet prints, perspex. 2011. Photographs from the exhibition *Connection Point London* (Nunnery Gallery, London), 2011.

- **A VIEW OVER A SINGLE SPOT UNTIL... A PERIOD COMES APART.** Video projection and engraving on wood panel. 2011-2012. Selected images from the exhibition *Insisting Over Skin, Drawing After Surface* (Kingsgate Gallery, London, 2012). *The video used in this work is presented in Video Works (full-length)*.

- **SITTING, LEANING AND ALIGNING TWO KNOTS FROM A POST TO A GROUND.** Interactive performance; graphite, pinewood post, chair, 2012. Photographs from the exhibition *Insisting Over Skin, Drawing After Surface* (Kingsgate Gallery, London, 2012). Photographs by Adam Holmes Davies.

Curriculum Vitae (of Exhibitions, Publications and Talks Produced for the Research)

EXHIBITIONS:
2009
Making Sense (Colloquium, Artist-in-residence/performance, Cambridge University, Cambridge, UK)
2010
Polemically Small (Group Exhibition, curated by Edward Lucie Smith, Charlie Smith Gallery, London, UK)
Non-Negotiable (Exhibition with Carali McCall, Byam Shaw School of Art, London, UK)
Can You Hear It? (Group Exhibition, curated by Franko B., Nunnery Gallery, London, UK)
Approximations To… (Solo exhibition, Harrington Mills Studios, Nottingham, UK)
Bat Pack (Group Exhibition, Mile End Arts Pavilion, London, UK)
2011
Through A Glass Lightly (Group exhibition, GoCart Gallery, Visby, Sweden)
Acoustic Sessions (performance, Angus Hughes Gallery, London, UK)
3 Worlds in 1 (Group exhibition, curated by Edward Lucie Smith, KCCC, Klaipeda, Lithuania).
Connection Point London (Group Exhibition, curated by Max Presneill & Edward Lucie Smith, Nunnery Gallery, London, UK)
Creekside Open (Art prize & exhibition, curated by Phyllida Barlow, APT Gallery, London, UK)
The Future Can Wait presents: Polemically Small (Group exhibition, curated by Zavier Ellis, Edward Lucie Smith, Max Presneill & Simon Rumley, Torrance Art Museum, Torrance, California, USA)
Sisyphus Happy (Exhibition with Rachel Maclean, Backlit Gallery, Nottingham, UK)
2012
Pinching Until Skin Deep (Solo performance, Roves and Roams/WAM Festival, Reading, UK)
Polemically Small (Group Exhibition, Orleans House Gallery, Richmond, UK)
Insisting Over Skin, Drawing After Surface (Exhibition with Martin Lewis, Kingsgate Gallery, London, UK)
Level (Group Exhibition, Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh, Scotland)
Sensingsite (performance and talk, initiated by Susan Trangmar, Duncan White and Steven Ball, Parasol Unit, London, UK)
2013
[•] Outside (Solo exhibition, Kingsgate Gallery, London)
The Mark (Group exhibition, Harrington Mills Studios, Nottingham)

PUBLICATIONS AND TALKS:

'Approximations To...' Artist talk & panel discussion, at Harrington Mills Exhibition Space, July 2010.

'Moments of Repetition', peer review of the works of artist Jill Townsley, article published in <u>Artfractures</u> Quarterly, Summer 2010.

'On the Spot: Figuring A Place To Think Around The Mark & Body', paper delivered at University of the Arts London, February 2011.

'Turning Around The Written Mark, Opening From A Weight Of Thought', paper delivered at the colloquium *Writing Upon the Limit: Writing in the Philosophy of Jean Luc Nancy*, University of Dundee, Scotland, May 2011.

'A Trace From A Point... (without Reference)', online paper, in *Desearch,* Issue 2, Summer, 2012. Paper delivered at the conference *Drawing Out 2012*, Chelsea College of Art and Design, March 2012.

'Remarking The Here Over Now', paper published in *Cultural Policy, Criticism & Management Research*, Issue 6, Autumn, 2012.

'A Breath for Nothing... Approaching The Limit', initiated colloquium with Carrie Giunta, Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, UAL, June 2012.

'What is the Body as Tool?', paper delivered at the colloquium *Dialogues on Performance II: Drawing Performance – Performing Drawing* (a Making Knowledge Event), Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, UAL, March 2013.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

BODY. *Body* denotes a person's physicality, which appears spatially and sculpturally, in the round and within the space over which it is positioned and posed. The body can also be considered in a post-phenomenological sense, where it is presented materially as appearing there, present and visible in its physicality. This body is irreducible to universal forms of essence, such as a durational and affective movement (associated with vital multiplicity) or a phenomenological form of presence.

DISLOCATION. *Dislocation* is the physiological state of a gesture resulting in restrictions of movement and a disengagement from imprints implying bodily activity. Dislocation results from a form of intellectual interruption, or obstruction, which is related to Nancyean exscription. The exscriptive sense of obstruction (the conceptual spacing that subtracts bodily presence) is indicated by the notion of the point(-of-the-body), which in itself is a distinct and conceptual mark shared by the body. Exscription correlates to the way in which thought (multiplicity) is *dislocating*, constitutively interrupted by physical weight and arrest.

DRAWING, PERFORMANCE-DRAWING. *Drawing* denotes the practice of mark-making, inscribing imprints that are displayed on surfaces such as paper. *Performance-drawing* engages a more conceptual process in which the physical means used to make the marks/imprints is displayed. A bodily gesture, for example, is a means of either directly inscribing graphic traces, imprints that reflect the physical action, or engaging prepared (notational) marks that structure the space in which the performance-drawing takes place.

EVENT. *Event* is a narrative concept that denotes the reconfiguration of a discursive field and a paradigmatic shift in the correlating practice. In effect, the event corresponds to a new theoretical terrain and novel mode(s) of practice.

EXSCRIPTION. *Exscription* is a term used by philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy that denotes a philosophical mode of writing, or inscription, which involves encountering an inherent limit in the capacity to gesture, inscribe and think thought (anew). Exscription is the interruption of inscription; the obstructive event that emphasizes the body as it appears through physical arrest and weight. Moreover, exscription connotes a form of conceptual spacing: thought as separation and distancing, that is an obstruction of thinking and the subtraction of presence.

FIGURE, FIGURATION, NON-FIGURE. *Figure* denotes the imprint and trace that is particular in kind to a form of theoretical model. The graphic trace is one example of a figure, which is the literal imprint (line) that depicts a conceptual movement, or figuration, that is transitive and immaterial. *Figuration* is associated with materialist notions of drawing and depicting thought through gestural mark-making. The point, however, denotes a *non-figure*: an ontologically void trace that pertains to a dislocated (bodily) gesture. As a non-figure, the point dislocates and obstructs metaphysical notions of movement that impel figuration.

GESTURE, BODILY GESTURE. *Gesture* denotes the action that, in terms of performance-drawing, uses every part of the body to engage with the event of making and thinking. In phenomenological terms, gesture is the comportment of the body to itself, directing attention towards physicality. What bodily gesture indicates and directs attention to is the means of making a gesture, the mediation and indication of the event of thinking and making. Hence, gesture is a mode of investigating the activities of making-thinking through the performative and physiological act of drawing, traversing mark, body and trace.

INSTANT, INSTANTANEITY. *Instant* denotes the time of the present in which bodily gesture occurs. In the Levinasian sense, the instant is the present as an event, which is engaged through inactive positions such as stance. This bodily event is characterized by a spatial quality that is indicated and shared by a restricted physical gesture, which is held still for as long as physically possible. Instantaneity then denotes the immediate state of the performed or executed activity, such as standing or slowly turning. The restriction of movement involved in such performances has implications for experiences of time. In other words, time is mediated; an empty time characterized by boredom and estrangement, subjective qualities specific to the immediate and spatial state of the work as a whole.

INTERVAL, VIDEOLOGICAL INTERVAL. In practice, *interval* denotes the area over which a change in positions occur. With reference to gesture, an interval is indicated by means of turning from one position to the next. In (digital) video the interval relates to the turning of frequencies or (still-image) frames, which fabricate a moving-image sequence. More conceptually speaking, a *videological interval* is a paradoxical interval, which is presented by videoing performances that use immobile gestures. By videoing a physical action of turning (imperceptibly slow and, on screen, appearing immobile) the interval of the gesture parallels the still-image of the video frame.

LINE. *Line* denotes a graphic imprint, or mark, that extends across a surface (such as paper), which presents a linear contour. Idioms used for describing the line in drawing, such as 'the graphic continuum' (Petheridge 2010), define this mark as a dynamic figure: an imprinted line that indicates physical action as well as a more phenomenological activity of ontological unity or self-presence. This figuration of the line is, philosophically speaking, a virtual movement: a continual coming-into-presence that affects a multiplicity of lines(-of-thought), that is thinking thought as vital multiplicity.

MULTIPLICITY. *Multiplicity* denotes an event of thinking thought as a theoretical limit and paradigmatic change (thinking in the event of creating thought anew). As a limit 'thought' is a speculative notion that interrupts its being engaged either through rational inquiry or proprioception. There are two definitions of multiplicity explored here: the definition proposed by Henri Bergson and shared by Gilles Deleuze (a conceptual variation, which is a material and biological process of ontological change that is engaged empirically through movement), and the definition proposed by Alain Badiou (a purely conceptual, non-material and void-like notion; or, in terms of mathematical set theory, an empty set that is philosophically translated as a void-multiple). The void-multiple denotes being as such, or ontology, which is distinct from phenomenological appearing or materializations of thought in its event.

MARK, NOTATIONAL MARK. *Mark* denotes an imprint made by physical action. More conceptually, the mark is a literal figure that depicts a 'trace'. As a graphic trace, the mark indicates a physical as well as a metaphysical activity, which involves using gestural mark-making to depict a phenomenological notion of presence. The notational mark is an imprint that is prepared before a performative action occurs and, in turn, structures the space of the performance. Notational marks relate to a conceptual mark-system, such as a bracket [ )], a period [.] or an ellipsis [...]; marks that relate to an obstructive trace, which in its multiplicity is devoid of representation or material manifestation.

OBSTRUCTION. *Obstruction* denotes the intellectual interruption of a process or movement constitutive of engaging and apprehending agency as presence. Obstruction is related to a conceptual space of the trace, that is the contextual space in which the performance-drawing occurs and, more theoretically, the space as outside.

OUTSIDE. *Outside* denotes the conceptual space of an exterior related to an obstructive trace that interrupts intellectual and proprioceptive engagement. This outside is characterized by passivity and openness, a space with its affect displaced (the actual space/context in which the performance-drawing occurs in which the trace is indicative of a void-like multiplicity).

PASSIVITY. *Passivity* denotes the mode of letting-go associated with physiological release and weight, which are inactive states of bodily gesture predicated by dislocation and restriction. Moreover, passivity is the subjective quality of the post-phenomenological event, wherein bodily gesture engages the point (either as imprint or notional point-of-the-body).

PERFORMATIVE ACT. *Performative act* is a concept that derives from J. L. Austin's definition of the performative speech act: the promissory utterance that declares an action effective, as for example declaring and affirming a marriage by saying "I do." As an act this declarative enunciation takes place, has meaning and is effective *immediately*. In drawing and especially performance-drawing the performative act implies declaring and affirming an event specific to mark-making.

POINT. *Point* denotes the mark of an imprinted point, such as a period [.] or dot [•]. The point applies to a notational mark system, as presented by periods or ellipses. In practice, these notational marks help structure the space in which dislocated, bodily gestures take place. Conceptually, the point is a non-figure, meaning that the ontology of the point or point-of-the-body is subtracted and devoid of presence. As an imprint, specifically when marked by a gesture of pointing, the point indicates a trajectory that never aligns and unifies physicality and imprint. Because it challenges the indexical action of marking this imprinted point is a distinct and speculative mark, indicating non-presence or a trace that is ontologically void.

POINT-OF-THE-BODY. *Point-of-the-body* denotes the point in its conceptual sense, which structures the body as a problem. This problem relates to using the body to engage (phenomenological) presence by means of indexical marking (graphic traces) or kinesthetically engaging movement. The point and body are by this definition post-phenomenological, whereby using gesture to engage agency, such as an affective

movement (vital multiplicity), is interrupted by intellectual obstruction. In other words, the point denotes a constitutive impasse. In practice, the point-of-the-body pertains to how the body appears in its physicality, spatially present through restrictions of physicality and modes of inaction.

POSITION. *Position* denotes the physiological state of being in one location. A position can change and extend the area of the location over which the body appears in its physicality and posture.

POSTURE. *Posture* denotes the state of the body in its physical form, the way physicality appears in a particular position.

POST-PHENOMENOLOGICAL. *Post-phenomenological* is a term derived from post-structural, philosophical debates around the proposition that existence, the bodily event of finitude, can be thought outside of existentially authentic notions of presence. Methodologically, the 'post-phenomenological' pertains to a way of investigating through bodily action or states of physical appearance whereby engagement with thought, as in using kinesthetic gesture to actively inquire and apprehend thinking as a ontological operation, is interrupted.

RESTRICTION. *Restriction* denotes the physiological state of physically holding still via muscular tension. Restriction can result in dislocated actions, such that postures are held in various positions that appear immobile. In method, restricted bodily gestures are ways of emphasizing where physicality is spatially located.

SEPARATION. *Separation* denotes the actual distance separating two things, as in the separation of physicality from a (notational) mark. Conceptually, separation denotes the exscriptive spacing of thought, presence or agency.

SPACE, SPATIALITY, SPACING. *Space* denotes an actual extended area, the spatial circumference in which a performance or executed action occurs in. Materially, spatiality denotes the space of physicality in its sculptural form. A body can appear spatially in the sense that it is present, the state of holding still and remaining within the space being either worked or performed in. Space and spatiality, actual area and physicality, are terms correlative to the proposition that the body itself is a space. This more conceptual kind of bodily space is related to spacing (point-of-the-body, outside), which is the constitutive separation of being as such, the ontological subtraction of agency as presence.

THOUGHT, THINKING, THINKING-AS-A-QUESTION. *Thought* denotes the activity or process of thinking wherein 'thought' is put into question. This question is the mode of questioning by thinking thought as a limit, a theoretical impasse. The philosophical idiom, 'thinking thought', correlates to thinking-as-a-question, that is thinking about a thought that in itself is ontologically and epistemologically subtracted of content. As a multiplicity, thinking-as-a-question is the event of speculation or questioning that interrupts processes of apprehending thought as a cognitive operation.

TRACE (OF THOUGHT), GRAPHIC TRACE. *Trace* denotes the conceptual property of mark-making. In conventions of drawing the trace is an immaterial and phenomenological concept indicated by an inscribed imprint or graphic trace. As a line the graphic trace is philosophically characterized as a figure depicting agency, which in phenomenology

correlates to an event of ontological disclosure – materially manifesting being (as such) or becoming via indexical imprints. In a more radical sense, as proposed by Maurice Blanchot, the trace is fundamentally subtracted (cut off, self-effacing) from the residual, indexical mark. Blanchot's proposition informs the trope *trace of thought* such that the trace is devoid of an authentic and existential sense, that is a traceless trace that obstructs its being theorized and kinesthetically apprehended.

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