

feel

as you walk,

move

take up space

in a natural setting

try

gradually deepen your inhales and exhales,

you see, hear,
smell, taste, and
touch

listen

do nothing

explore different
qualities of breath,

make shadows

with
your
body

try to catch
the shadows

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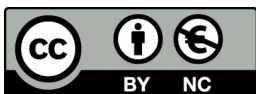
Hochschule für Bildende Künste Braunschweig



MASTER THESIS

Somatic Practices of Being-in-the-World

An Exploration into Feminist Artistic Strategies
of Materialist Demands for the Recognition
of the Body as the Base of Human (Inter-)Action



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»We use ›body‹ to give material form to an idea that has no form, an assemblage that is abstract. The concept of a body houses within it social, political, and cultural discourses, which change based on where the body is situated and how it is read.«

— Legacy Russel. In: Glicht Feminism. A Manifesto

1 PROLOGUE

*»In most European languages one differentiates between a being and its body. One talks of having a beautiful, thin, small, fat, ugly body - not of being a body«
— Kim de l'Horizon¹*

In this master thesis I write about bodies and how this concept, this term, has evolved over time, how it has been and is defined, and how contested and regulated it still is. I write about the political and social dimensions of bodies and their matter and examine theoretical frameworks that address these dimensions, including feminist materialisms and the works of Judith Butler. In addition, I incorporate Hartmut Rosa's concept of being-in-the-world and combine his analysis of social structures with the multi-level perspective of Geels and Shot. In doing so, I seek ways to talk differently about bodies. Ways that surpass mere acceptance and advocate for a discourse that recognizes and embraces our embodied experiences, acknowledging their inherent presence and influence in shaping our positions of power. This theoretical engagement manifests in my practice as I explore and articulate my personal encounters with embodiment. Moreover, I describe my process of creating an exhibition piece which was showcased in distinct contexts. I illustrate my attempt to bridge the abstract and non-visual realms into tangible expressions through the creation of written scores. I am writing this from the perspective of an able-bodied, white, and queer woman who grew up in Germany.

I first became academically involved with bodies and somatic experiences while organizing a workshop during the winter of 2021 at the Braunschweig University of Art as part of the Transformation Design program. This workshop was part of a semester-long project focusing on the exploration of a new curriculum that enables power-critical action in educational contexts. Throughout the course, we discussed the predominance of androcentric and Eurocentric perspectives, as well as the importance of feminist and collaborative (re)-production of knowledge. Our lecturer, Lisa Baumgarten, was responsible for teaching the course.

Without much prior theoretical knowledge, but with the motivation to give bodies and corporealities more space in teaching and learning spaces (having had only online lectures throughout the Covid-19 pandemic), my fellow student Vee Hoffmann and I developed a workshop format on bodies and somatic education. We intended to promote individual, non-comparable experiences and to impart knowledge in a way that cannot be generalized, following Donna Haraway's² ›situated knowledges‹ (Haraway 1988). Vee and I created a space to try out autogenic relaxation exercises, reflect on experiences and position oneself.

¹ de l'Horizon 2023: 287

² Donna Haraway is an American philosopher and biologist who has focused on the overlap of feminist theory and information technology. Additionally, she is a notable expert in contemporary ecofeminism.

Questions we asked to start a discussion were:

*»How do different bodies in teaching
and learning spaces relate to them and
to each other?«*

»How aware am I of myself in an environment?«

*»How might an exchange about corporealities
be made possible?«*

(Hoffmann, Merly 2022: 104)³

The discussion centred on various perspectives, privileges, and past experiences in school or university settings, while it was evident that the group was quite uniform in composition, with a majority of white, educated, and able-bodied individuals. It was not our intention for the participants to answer our aforementioned questions, but rather to initiate a process of reflection that creates a general awareness of our bodies in teaching and learning spaces.

³ Translation of the author.

Figure No. 1: > Positioning <
Photographer: Lukas Unterholzner



Figure No. 2: > Discussion <
Photographer: Lukas Unterholzner

The semester project was related to a design theory course, concurrently taught by Lisa Baumgarten. There was a significant overlap in the literature of the two courses, with references made to each other. I wrote an essay on design theory during the same semester, explaining and providing a theoretical framework for our approach to the workshop.



Figure No. 3: ›Körper & Raum‹ Own image

I dealt with the question of how one can recognise the inevitability of the body as the basis of human (inter-)action. The reflection of the workshop, as well as the essay were prepared for a publication by us course participants and can be found here (in German):

<https://transformazine.de/a-new-curriculum>



At that time I could not name it yet, but I represented a materialistic-feminist position by demanding that the influence of our body in our position of power and in society be recognised. I related this demand to the relevance of bodies and corporealities in teaching and learning spaces and argued with theses of Bell Hooks or Silvia Federici. In the essay, I wrote about how the mind-body separation has emerged historically, I discussed the subjective / objective dualism and made it clear that the text cannot be seen as a starting or ending point but rather as a contribution to a process that is already in progress.



Figure No. 4: ›Körperschaft‹ Own image

I further investigated and extended my position in a paper I wrote as part of a course on digital cultures and sustainability during the summer semester of 2022 that was taught by Paul Feigelfeld. In this paper, I redirected my attention towards identifying the theories and types of knowledge that might support the recognition of non-traditional forms of subjectivity, relationships, and social structures. These theoretical investigations into posthumanist, materialist, and feminist discourses served as the foundation for my ongoing interest in the theories and types of knowledge that can be used to scrutinise and challenge power dynamics in society. My intention within this paper was the recognition of decolonial, indigenous practices and non-Western forms of knowledge in which the theoretical approaches outlined are already implemented or applied. It can be read here:

<https://transformazine.de/i-finally-got-it-all-together-now-where-is-it> ⁴



⁴ Even though this introduction is the basis for my further discussion, I want to emphasize that the texts do not have to be read. Nevertheless, I want to offer this possibility.

2 THE BODY

»I can go

to the other end of the world;

I can hide in the morning under the covers,

make myself as small as possible.

I can even let myself melt under

the sun at the beach –

it will always be there.

Where I am. «

— Michel Foucault ⁵

⁵

Foucault 2006: 229

2.1 FROM MATTER TO MEANING

In the forthcoming chapter, I will revisit the topic of bodies and corporealities, highlighting their historical dimensions. The focus will be on examining how western societal norms have exerted influence over the formation and perception of bodies, of their material.

Prior to the modern era, many cultures, including ancient Greece and medieval Europe, held the belief that the body was a container for the soul, and therefore its physical needs and desires were considered less important than spiritual matters. The foundations for this binary body-mind split can be found in the writings of the French philosopher René Descartes, who lived from 1596 to 1650. Descartes defined the material “as corporeal substance constituted of length, breadth, and thickness; as extended, uniform, and inert”, which formed the foundation for modern concepts of nature as quantifiable and measurable (Coole, Frost 2010: 7). Applied to the body, this perspective implies that human body is mechanistic, subject to the control of our mind. “The Cartesian [...] understanding of matter [...] yields a conceptual and practical domination” (ibid.: 8).

However, the emergence of materialism during the eighteenth century challenged this hierarchy and led to a philosophical shift that reevaluated the role and agency of materiality, by emphasising its influence in shaping human experiences and societal dynamics. This development was further accelerated by the findings of the natural sciences and the rise of Marxism⁶ in the 19th and 20th centuries (cf. Hoppe, Lemke 2021: 9).

This agency of materiality and its interweaving with societal developments can be well illustrated by the example of the rise of medical science and the resulting increase of importance placed on physical health. The discovery of the germ theory of disease and the development of anaesthesia in the 19th century led to significant improvements in public health and a growing understanding of hygiene and the importance of sanitation (cf. BBC 2023). This led to the introduction of civic health measures such as clean water supplies and sewage systems and to a growing focus on preventative medicine, hygiene, and nutrition. The body became seen as a biological entity that required care and attention in order to maintain health and vitality. In the 20th century, medical science continued to advance rapidly, with the development of antibiotics and vaccines, as well as the establishment of government-funded health-care systems in many countries (cf. *ibid.*).

⁶ According to Marxist theory, historical and social events are determined by material factors, specifically economic factors such as the ownership of the means of production. This view emphasises the importance of understanding the material conditions of society and rejects idealistic explanations of history and society.

The meaning of bodies began to be negotiated by the state within these systems, by contractually classifying bodily conditions. Economic factors also came into play, as certain services received financial support through health insurance systems, such as preventive care, hospital stays, or rehabilitation, while others, such as gender adjustments or alternative medicine, remained unsupported. This complex interplay between medical advancements, state interventions, and economic considerations had and still have significant implications for individuals. Establishing norms inherently involves the process of regulating entities that deviate from the established norm. This can be exemplified by considering the experiences of individuals who identify as transgender and face multiple challenges arising from the regulations and conscriptions imposed by the state, as eloquently expressed by T. Fleischmann⁷ in their essay ›Time is the Ting a Body Moves Through‹: “So many different ways to be illegal, these constantly overlapping conscriptions to our⁸ behaviours by the state, and the countless ways they enact themselves onto us or through us”.⁹

⁷ T. Clutch Fleischmann is the author of ›Syzygy, Beauty‹ and curator of ›Body Forms: Queerness and the Essay‹. They have published critical and creative work.

⁸ With the use of “our” and “us”, Fleischmann refers to people identifying themselves as trans - an individual’s self-identification as a gender different from the sex they were assigned at birth.

⁹ I sadly don’t have an exact page number for this quote, as I noted it down while reading the essay some time ago, no longer own the book, and can only find snippets of text online.

In addition to the beginning of the categorisation of physical well-being and illness, normative conceptions of a healthy lifestyle and its opposite developed over time. The rise of consumer culture and the growing focus on physical appearance brought about a notable transformation in how bodies were perceived (cf. Edwards 2010: 289). In the 20th century, the body became a key site of consumer desire, with products and services designed to enhance and modify its appearance. Fitness and beauty industries, for example, have become huge global markets driven by the desire for physical perfection - with physical perfection being a condition influenced by beauty norms that aren't static. Whereas in times when food was a limited resource, bodies with greater weights were considered the epitome of beauty, today's societal ideals have shifted towards the glorification of athletic bodies, which necessitate investing significant amounts of time in physical exercise. Within these developments, bodies became physical manifestations of social class and status, serving as a visible representation of the cultural and economic resources available (cf *ibid.*: 295).

Through these developments, with the body being a site of political and social contestation, feminist movements have played an important role in challenging those prevailing norms and power structures. Feminist materialist theories that emerged during the 1980's played a significant role by emphasising the importance of bodily processes and advocating for a paradigm shift in the understanding of nature. "Materiality, particularly that of bodies and natures, has long been an extraordinarily volatile site for feminist theory" (Alaimo, Hekman 2008: 1). These theories, like their materialistic origin, challenged the perception of matter as a passive resource to be exploited, and promoted a more nuanced, interconnected and non-anthropocentric view instead (cf. Haraway 1991: 33-72). "Conceiving matter [...] no longer as simply passive or inert, disturbs the conventional sense that agents are exclusively humans who possess the cognitive abilities, intentionality, and freedom to make autonomous decisions and the corollary presumption that humans have the right or ability to master nature" (Coole, Frost 2010: 10).

But those theories not only have conceptual implications, they also aim to create space for marginalised bodies and ways of being by seeking to redefine societal norms and structures. Feminist fights, both in theory and practice, actively strive for change by dismantling oppressive systems and advocating for inclusivity and equity.

Queerness, for example, is a concept that defies traditional notions of gender binarity, sexuality and beauty, and therefore disrupts the established social order that has long been built around these concepts. Modern dualisms like woman / man, beautiful / ugly or healthy / sick are dissolved by queer feminist positions, as they imply that there is an interdependence and a reciprocal relationship between those.

»Queer not as being about who you're having sex with (that can be a dimension of it); but queer as being about the self that is at odds with everything around it and has to invent and create and find a place to speak and thrive and to live.« — Bell Hooks

With the appropriation and reassignment of words and categories, queer theory and practice acknowledges that these terms are not static, that there is an in-between that cannot (yet) be named.¹⁰ This has led to a growing recognition of the diversity of bodily experiences and the importance of bodily autonomy and agency.

¹⁰ Prior to the word ›queer‹ being associated with homosexual desire, it was used to describe Black women. In 1897, the article “A Queer Colony of Female Convicts in Georgia” was published, focusing on incarcerated Black women. In this context, ›queer‹ served to depict “black bodies, ideas, and behaviors” (Haley 2016: 40) that challenged racist societal norms. Within medical discourse, Black women’s bodies were stigmatized, being labelled as “less sexually differentiated than white women’s” (ibid.: 6) and positioned outside the binary categories of woman and man. In the late 20th century, members of the LGBTQ+ community began to reclaim the term and use it as a self-affirming and empowering label.

Overall, the relevance of the body has shifted over time, from a more spiritual or metaphysical understanding to one that focuses “on the way power constitutes and is reproduced by bodies” (Coole, Frost 2010: 19). The examination of the ways in which bodies are viewed and regulated helps to illustrate the power dynamics at play and work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable society.

Given that my female read¹¹ body has been subject to scrutiny and regulation for 27 years, I cannot extricate myself from this process. This realisation underscores the autobiographical nature of my attempted scientific inquiry into the subject of bodies and being-in-the-world. While this thesis is not a replay of that exploration, it is indeed influenced by the insights of my own location.

¹¹ By using the phrase ›female read body‹ instead of ›female body‹, I want to emphasise that the meanings of female or male are something that I do not see as something inherent in my body, but as labels given to me by others.

2.2 FEMINIST MATERIALISMS

»We need a way to talk about [...] bodies and the materiality they inhabit.«

— Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman ¹²

Within the scope of my master's thesis, I will further examine and integrate the theoretical approaches that can contribute to a practice that recognizes the body as the foundation of human (inter-)action.

One perspective that investigates the possibilities of a more inclusive and equitable society are feminist materialisms.¹³ Central to these theories that focus on scrutinising the production and regulation of gendered and sexed bodies through material practices and discourses is an examination of how certain bodies are accorded higher value than others, thereby shaping individuals' experiences of embodiment (cf. Alaimo, Hekman 2008). “[F]eminist philosophy of the body emphasises bodily experience, [it] starts from the [...] position that my embodied self is the ground of all possible experience” (Heyes 2021: 410). This inquiry delves into the social and cultural forces that confer privilege and advantage upon specific bodies, while marginalising and devaluing others. By critically interrogating these processes of valuation, feminist materialists seek to expose and challenge the hierarchical systems that perpetuate inequalities based

¹² Alaimo, Hekman 2008: 4

¹³ By using the plural form, I aim to highlight the wide range of academic pursuits and theoretical variances associated with this perspective.

on gender, race, class, sexuality, and other intersecting identities (Alaimo, Hekman 2008: 27). Material feminisms shed light on how bodies become sites of contestation, resistance, and transformation, as they negotiate and navigate oppressive structures. By situating embodiment within broader material realities, feminist materialists provide insights into the ways in which bodies are not only shaped by but also actively shape the world around them. This approach challenges essentialist notions of bodies as fixed and passive entities, highlighting their agency and potential for subversion and change (cf. Neimanis 2018: 242).

2.3 MATERIAL / DISCOURSE

»[T]he 'body' often appears to be a passive medium that is signified by an inscription from a cultural source figured as 'external' to that body. «

— Judith Butler ¹⁴

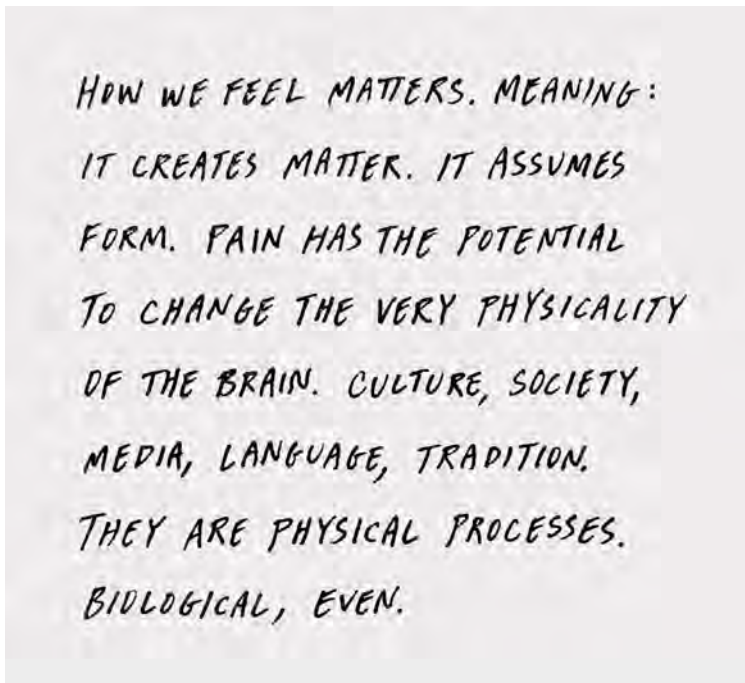
One philosopher that focuses on scrutinising the production and regulation of gendered and sexed bodies is Judith Butler. Butlers contributions to feminist and queer theory have been significant, particularly in their critique of the conventional dichotomy between materiality and discourse, and their emphasis on the role of language and social norms in constructing bodies.

¹⁴

Butler 1999: 164

While Butler's approach may not fit neatly within conventional materialist frameworks (the approach is often referred to as ›post-structuralist‹ or ›postmodernist‹), their texts form an important basis for the examination of the material. In the 1993 book ›Bodies That Matter‹, Butler challenges the common idea that materiality and language are separate from each other by acknowledging their interplay in the formation of bodies. After Butler, “[a]ny discourse that establishes the boundaries of the body serves the purpose of instating and naturalizing certain taboos regarding the appropriate limits, postures, and modes of exchange that define what it is that constitutes bodies” (Butler 1999: 166). Judith Butler defines materiality as the physical, biological, and environmental aspects of the world that are capable of affecting and shaping bodies and their experiences (cf. Butler 1993: 28). They define discourse as a system of language, symbols, and practices that are socially constructed. But it is not limited to verbal communication, it also includes non-verbal gestures, images, and various other forms of representation (cf. *ibid.*). Furthermore, Butler argues that the body is not simply a passive object upon which language and culture act, but rather an active agent in the production and negotiation of meaning-making. So the corporeal material should no longer be understood as a resource and an object of human access, but it rather is characterised by inherent power and agency, which has an effect on human actors, their forms of interaction, and their self-understanding (*ibid.*: 12).

Developing a practice that recognizes the body as the basis of human (inter-)action involves acknowledging that this materiality is always already imbued with cultural and linguistic meaning and is shaped by discursive practices. Tackling this interdependence between materiality and discourse allows for bodies to be seen as not only entities, but rather as being produced through ongoing social practices that shape how bodies are understood and experienced. This can help to challenge essentialist and biologically deterministic understandings of gender, sexuality, and other identity categories, and allow for a more fluid and open-ended approach to understanding bodies and identities.



HOW WE FEEL MATTERS. MEANING:
IT CREATES MATTER. IT ASSUMES
FORM. PAIN HAS THE POTENTIAL
TO CHANGE THE VERY PHYSICALITY
OF THE BRAIN. CULTURE, SOCIETY,
MEDIA, LANGUAGE, TRADITION.
THEY ARE PHYSICAL PROCESSES.
BIOLOGICAL, EVEN.

Figure No. 5: ›Anatomy Lessons‹ Excerpt from a poem by Alok Vaid Menon (Alok 2023)

2.4 BEING-IN-THE-WORLD

Hartmut Rosa, a German sociologist, shares Butler's recognition of the crucial role played by the body in shaping our experiences and identities. He too acknowledges the importance of our embodied experiences in shaping our relationship with the world around us. And in both cases, the body is seen as a site of struggle and transformation, where our relationship with the world is constantly being negotiated and contested. While this involves, for Butler, critically engaging with the norms and discourses that regulate the body and working to challenge and subvert them, Rosa is more concerned with how we can cultivate a deeper awareness of our embodied experience and find ways to connect with the world in more resonant and harmonious ways.

»Anyone who is looking for ways to overcome the modern mode of dynamic stabilisation in such a way that growth, increase and acceleration no longer function as structural reproduction requirements will not simply find the lever in certain economic or political reforms, but only in a changed relationship with the world around us.« — Hartmut Rosa ¹⁵

¹⁵

Translation of the author. (Rosa 2019: 58)

In his book ›Resonance‹ from 2019, Hartmut Rosa criticises the contemporary western world's obsession with speed and acceleration, which he argues leads to a sense of disconnection and alienation from the world around us (Rosa 2019: 54). A constant focus on efficiency and productivity has led to a prioritization of speed over other values, such as quality, sustainability, and human connection. This neoliberal emphasis on economic growth and efficiency has led to a number of negative consequences, including environmental degradation, social inequality, and a sense of disconnection and alienation from the world and from one another (ibid.: 56, cf. Eikelboom 2018: 139). Rosa argues that the constant acceleration of modern life creates a sense of unease and disorientation. We are always rushing from one task to the next, without taking the time to reflect on our actions and their impact on the world around us. This has led to a lack of engagement with the world, and a feeling of detachment from our surroundings. The consequences of this narrow focus on growth and efficiency are not limited to the individual level. The emphasis on speed and productivity has also had a negative impact on the environment and society as a whole. Western societies are consuming resources at an unsustainable rate, and their relentless pursuit of growth is causing irreversible damage to the planet. Additionally, the prioritisation of efficiency over human connection has resulted in social inequality, as people are reduced to mere economic units in the pursuit of profit (Rosa, 2021: 24:07 - 32:44).

One of the key concepts in Rosa's work to overcome this contemporary state is resonance. He argues that resonance is a fundamental aspect of human experience, and that it is closely tied to our sense of being-in-the-world.¹⁶ Resonance refers to the feeling of being deeply connected to the world around us, of being attuned to the rhythms and patterns of our surroundings. When one experiences resonance, they feel a sense of harmony and well-being, as if they are in sync with the world (cf. Rosa 2019: 331-341). Rosa also emphasises the importance of the body in our experience of being-in-the-world. He argues that the body is not just a physical object, but also a site of subjective experience and meaning-making. Through our embodied interactions with the world, we develop a sense of who we are and what we value. Bodily experiences also shape our perceptions of the world around us, and can either facilitate or hinder our experience of resonance (ibid.: 86). After Rosa, a deeper understanding of what it means to be in the world can be developed by paying attention to resonance and the body.

¹⁶ Being-in-the-world is a state of being that presupposes awareness of our embodied experiences and finds ways to connect with the world in resonant and harmonious ways. This involves recognizing the importance of our physical surroundings and the ways in which they shape our experiences, as well as valuing the connections and relationships that we form with others and with the natural world.

2.5 FROM MICRO TO MACRO

When analysing social structures, Rosa categorises them into three different levels (micro, meso, and macro), which overlaps with a division that Diana Coole¹⁷ also mentions in her text ›New Materialism: The Ontology and Politics of Materialisation‹ from 2014.¹⁸ Coole emphasises the interconnectedness of social structures and the need to understand how different levels of analysis intersect and shape each other. After her, the micro-level of new materialistic analysis focuses on small-scale interactions. It is concerned with the socialisation and interaction processes that occur between individuals, and how these processes shape social structure. The meso-level includes socio-economic structures and governance and “is directed at the social, economic and governance structures where production, consumption, distribution and the management of resources and embodied individuals occurs” (Coole 2014: 38). The macro-level of new materialistic analysis focuses on large-scale social structures, such as societies, cultures, and geo-, bio-, and ecosystems. This level of analysis is concerned with the broad patterns and structures that shape social life, such as economic systems, political systems, and cultural norms. Each level of analysis provides a different perspective on social structure, but they are all interconnected.

¹⁷ Coole is a professor of Political and Social Theory in London researching on contemporary continental philosophy & feminism and gender in political thought. (Birbeck University of London, 2017)

¹⁸ From the publication ›Power of Material/Politics of Materiality‹, edited by Kerstin Stakemeier and Susanne Witzgall.

In a similar vein, Frank W. Geels and Johan Schot's work on the multi-level-perspective offers a framework for analysing complex social systems and transitions. The model comes from research on system change by the Dutch professors Jan Rotmans¹⁹, Johan Schot²⁰, and John Grin²¹ and is intended to help take into account the complexities, multi-layeredness and non-simultaneities in transformation processes and at the same time radically simplify them (cf. Geels, Schot 2010). By examining the interactions and interdependencies between the different levels of analysis, the multi-level-perspective allows for a more nuanced understanding of how changes in one level can impact the larger system as a whole. The perspective provides a valuable complement to Coole's work, as it helps to bridge the gap between individual-level analysis and broader social structures and provides a comprehensive approach to understanding social phenomena.

The three levels of analysis in the multi-level-perspective are niches, regimes and the landscape. The niche level represents the space where new technologies and innovations emerge and develop. Niches are typically small-scale and protected environments where experiments with

¹⁹ Jan Rotmans is a socially engaged scientist, with publications in the field of climate change & global change modelling, sustainable development, and transitions and system innovations. (DRIFT, 2023)

²⁰ At the Utrecht University Centre for Global Challenges, Johan Schot is professor of Global History and Sustainability Transitions and is one of the founders of the Sustainability Transitions research field. (Schot, 2023)

²¹ John Grin is professor of Public Policy and Governance at the Department of Political Science at the University of Amsterdam. (UVA, 2023)

new technologies can take place, allowing for learning and development. When contrasted with Coole and Rosa's three-level system, the niche level can be considered as the micro level. Innovations that originated at the niche level include individual technologies like electric cars as well as social innovations like solidarity farming. The regime level represents the dominant rules, norms, and practices that govern a particular technology or system. This level can correspond to the meso level. Regimes are the established systems, infrastructures, and institutional arrangements that shape the way technologies are used and developed. They have clearly articulated rules and a structuring effect. The landscape represents the broader social, political, and economic context within which niches and regimes exist, equivalent to the macro level. It includes factors such as cultural values, political institutions, and global economic trends that shape the possibilities for technological and social change. As you can see on the graphic, the interactions among these three levels are dynamic and non-linear. Changes at the landscape level can create pressure on the regime, making it more open to experimentation and niche innovations. Conversely, successful niche innovations might influence the landscape by altering public perceptions, generating new policies, or attracting investment. Over time, sustained niche developments can accumulate and trigger regime shifts, leading to transformative transitions in the socio-technical system.

Within the context of transitions, as viewed through a socio-technological lens following the insights of Geels and Shot, both the sociological di-

Increasing structuration
of activities in local practices

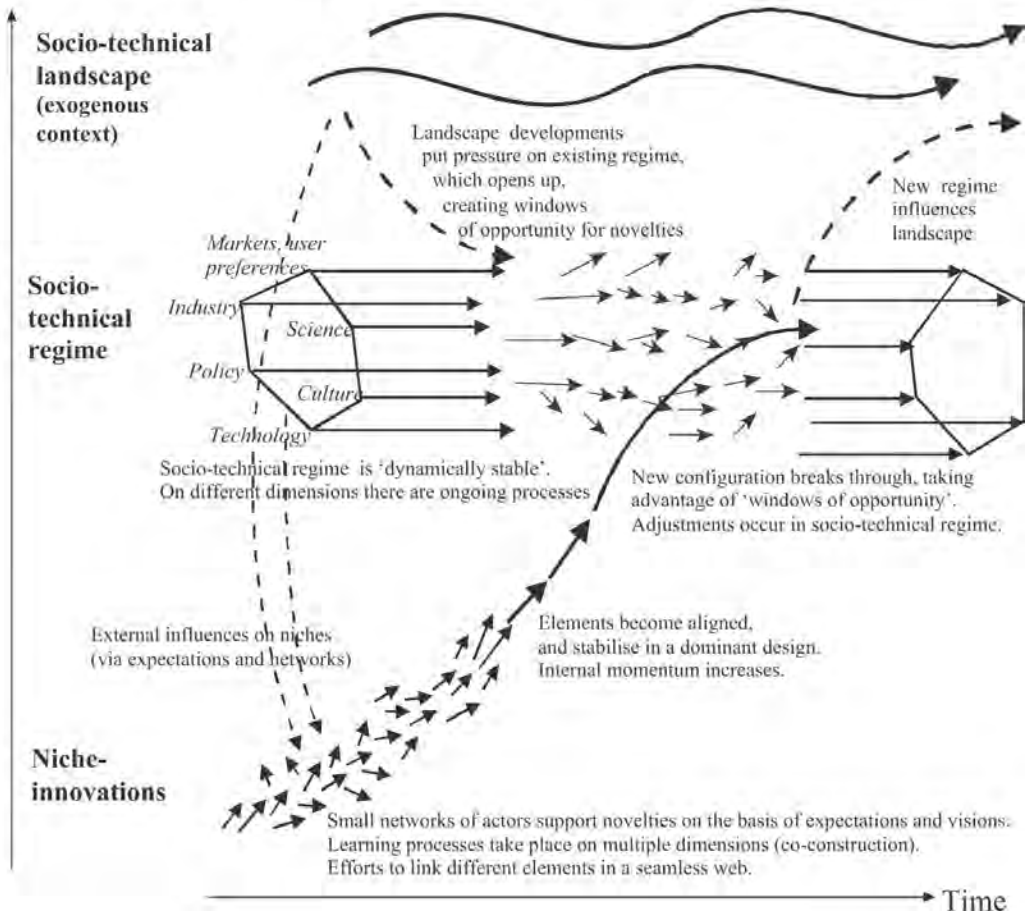


Figure No. 6: ›Multi-Level-Perspective‹ Source: Geels, Shot 2010

mensions of Rosa's work and the neo-materialistic perspectives inspired by Coole can be found. The multi-level-perspective integrates both these analytical frameworks, thus fostering a more nuanced understanding of the multi-faceted dynamics at play.

Within the scope of my master's thesis, focusing on the body as a central theme, I will be specifically targeting the micro-level. As "[i]t is here that resources are consumed, wasted, recycled, thus feeding distant markets while despoiling the earth. It is here, too, that fit or skilled flesh, agentic capacities and incapacities, human capital, are nurtured through apparently personal yet socially prescribed practices, habits and routines" (Coole 2014: 39). This bottom-up approach²² can only address the political dimension of bodies to a certain extent, although it can certainly influence the landscape level initially as a personal engagement. When considering the factor of time, the practice of acknowledging the body is something where one cannot directly observe the effects or measure success. However, I perceive the multi-level-perspective in combination with a materialistic approach as a framework that can illustrate how work for transformation within niches can lead to dynamic changes and influence other levels.

²² A bottom-up approach is a strategy that initiates the problem-solving process by examining individual elements or components and then progressively constructs the larger framework. Its primary emphasis is on comprehending and dealing with smaller parts before delving into the broader context or overall structure. The top-down approach works in reverse, commencing with an overarching perspective and subsequently deconstructing it into smaller components. However, as illustrated by the Multi-Level-Perspective, these approaches are not entirely distinct and tend to influence one another.

2.6 LE GUIN'S CARRIER BAG

This intersection of political dimensions with the private realm is what represents the body for me. It embodies both dimensions simultaneously, as it encompasses our most intimate and personal experiences while being subject to the shaping and influence of state and societal forces. This multifaceted understanding of the body aligns with Ursula K. Le Guin's²³ alternative perspective of our evolutionary origins through her carrier bag theory of evolution.

»[...] Le Guin proposes a different way of looking at early humans than the one of the big hunter-hero-meat-eater-stories. [R]ather than weapons, phallic knives, the earliest objects probably were containers, carrier bags, nets: something where you could keep your food. Keep it from becoming wet or eaten by other animals. [...] A story told in this manner doesn't have a one-way direction, a clear goal, one central conflict, a hero. Rather, it holds things. Like berries in a bag. They don't have one clear order. This way of telling stories gives things a space to be, to be kept, to be sheltered, to be shared, to be passed down, to come to life.«

— Kim de l'Horizon²⁴

²³ Ursula Kroeber Le Guin (1929–2018) was an American author known for her ground breaking works of science fiction and fantasy, exploring themes of gender, politics, and the human condition. (Le Guin 2023)

²⁴ de l'Horizon 2023: 286 f.

Similarly, viewing the body as a carrier bag of experiences resonates with this narrative, emphasising the capacity to hold, protect, and nurture the complexity of our existence within the intertwined contexts of the personal and the societal. Then, the body transforms into a carrier bag, which we bring with us every day, which we are. Within this metaphorical carrier bag, we carry our experiences, memories, and scars that shape and define us. It is through this continual accumulation of our lived existence that we construct our being. Embracing this perspective acknowledges that our bodies are not mere vessels but rather vessels intertwined with our lived experiences, a mixture of materiality and discourse. It highlights the significance of the body as a repository, a holder of our personal narratives. As “every gesture, every word involves our past, present, and future. The body never stops accumulating” (Minh-ha 1989: 179). By recognizing this, we open ourselves to a potential paradigm shift in our state of being-in-the-world — we move beyond the inclination to overlook the body’s significance. We invite a more profound understanding of ourselves and the interplay between our physical forms and our experiences. By acknowledging that we cannot deny the fact that we have a body - which may sound trivial - we open ourselves to a changed state of being-in-the-world, enriching our connection to ourselves, others, and the broader environment.

It is thus the approaches of feminist, materialist, and post-structuralist theories and practices in conjunction with LeGuin's carrier bag theory and Hartmut Rosas being-in-the-world that I want to combine with the earlier mentioned concept of queerness.

Queerness, transferred to the recognition of one's own body, is an intersectional concept that acknowledges the existence of multiple social identities and experiences that intersect and interact with one another. It goes beyond a singular focus on sexual orientation or gender identity and encompasses a broader understanding of diverse performative experiences. It means searching for places of self expression and feeling one's agency - while overcoming binary definitions like self and other, homo and hetero or normal and abnormal, thus opening up possibilities for more diverse and inclusive futures. Combined with the materialistic acknowledgment of how we embody our positions of power, this can lead towards an active connection of individuals and communities that defy these norms and courageously embrace resistance.

3 EXPERIENCE

»To be a body, to be here, is to be water, 75 percent, but also, it's a constant practice.«
— Kim de l'Horizon ²⁵

3.1 SOMATIC PRACTICES

In a course I took in the winter semester 2022 at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna, I was able to put the theoretical knowledge supported by the aforementioned frameworks into practice.²⁶ In the course ›Somatics, Scores, and a Sense of Embodiment‹ with Mariella Greil-Möbius that took place in the Angewandte Performance Laboratory (APL), I was introduced to a range of body mind concepts and somatic practices that activated intuition and sensitivity of the body. We used perception as a tool for empirical observation and directed touch and imagery to create an awareness of physical habits that originate in cultivating an openness in the body (Greil-Möbius 2023). One thing that has stayed very clear in my mind is the difference of the connection I made with the ca. 15 other participants during the course. I remember that a very great familiarity had built up and I was able to feel connected to them in a different way than usual.²⁷

²⁵ de l'Horizon 2023: 288

²⁶ I am unable to name a specific starting point for my personal investigation of the body since I see it as a constant practice.

²⁷ Compared to other learning situations during my studies.

Since bodies and physicality had never been so much a part of my studies before, I found it partly overwhelming, or rather I was insecure and very self-conscious. I repeatedly put myself outside my comfort zone during participation. Developing a practice that engages with and acknowledges bodies and corporealities has therefore always meant a certain amount of effort for me. It is a practice that I myself can't reject (I am my body, or I have it, or it is always with me...) and therein lies on the one hand a lot of potential for change, but on the other hand I would sometimes have wished to be able to distance this topic more from myself.

I CANNOT TALK ABOUT theatre because I have no background except acting out everything in everyday life. That is a complete, comprehensive background, because it happened every day of my life.

Figure No. 7: ›Statement‹ Source: M.Kirby: Happenings, New York, 1965

In the class, I also thought a lot about the concept of performativity. Previously, I had a vague definition in my mind that performativity was something like a conscious act, the attempt to bring the concept of one's own self from the mind to the outside, dependent on the context in which it takes place. However, I was always uncertain about the boundary between what actions are performative and what are not, and what exactly constitutes performative behaviour, or whether somehow everything is performative. After all, our self-image is also created through a certain sense of the ›other‹.

» *My body is not a something that a pre-existing cognitive self 'has', but rather is the condition of possibility of that self* « — Cressida J. Heyes²⁸

According to Judith Butler, performativity refers to the idea that social constructs, such as race²⁹, disability³⁰ or class³¹, are not inherent or fixed, but rather are created and reinforced through repeated performances, norms, and expectations within a given cultural and social context. In her book ›Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity‹, Butler discusses the concept of gender by employing this particular definition. She writes that one might “[c]onsider gender, for instance, as a corporeal style, an ›act‹, as it were, which is both intentional and performative, where ›performative‹ suggests a dramatic and contingent construction of meaning” (Butler 1999: 177). As a result, performativity challenges the idea that one’s sense of self is predetermined or fixed. Instead, it suggests that one’s sense of self is shaped through the ongoing performance and repetition of gendered behaviours and identities. This means that individuals are not simply passive recipients of pre-existing categories, but active participants in their own self-construction.

²⁹ Butler sees race as not only a biologically determined category but a social construct that is performed and enacted through various markers such as cultural practices or social interactions. (cf. Butler 1993: 161 – 181)

³⁰ Disability is a social construct that is performative in nature. The categorisation and experiences of disability are shaped by societal expectations, attitudes, and barriers.

³¹ According to Judith Butler, social class is a performative social construct influenced by economic, educational, and cultural practices. She describes social class as something that is not solely determined by financial status but is also performed and maintained through behaviours, lifestyles, and cultural preferences associated with different social classes. While the three mentioned examples are not intended to be treated as equal, they effectively illustrate the performative quality inherent in them as classifications.

In Butlers framework, one's sense of self is not based on an inner essence or an objective reality, but is a product of social and cultural processes.

This understanding of performativity lead to a more fluid and contingent sense of my self. Furthermore, this realisation pushed me out of my comfort zone, particularly in this course, where I found myself in an environment with many people from backgrounds in the performing arts, dance, or theatre. I noticed a difference here in that I felt uncomfortable in many situations, whereas most of the other course participants had more experience in self presentation and exuded a sense of ease. In a certain way, I sensed that I didn't belong to the norm in this space.³² Nevertheless, as time went on, I gradually began to adapt and find my place, strengthening my self-confidence, which opened doors to new opportunities for personal and also artistic growth. Through this process, I discovered that belonging in a space was not about conforming to a prescribed norm but rather about embracing one's authentic self.

³²

In a lot of other contexts, as a white european, I belong to the norm.

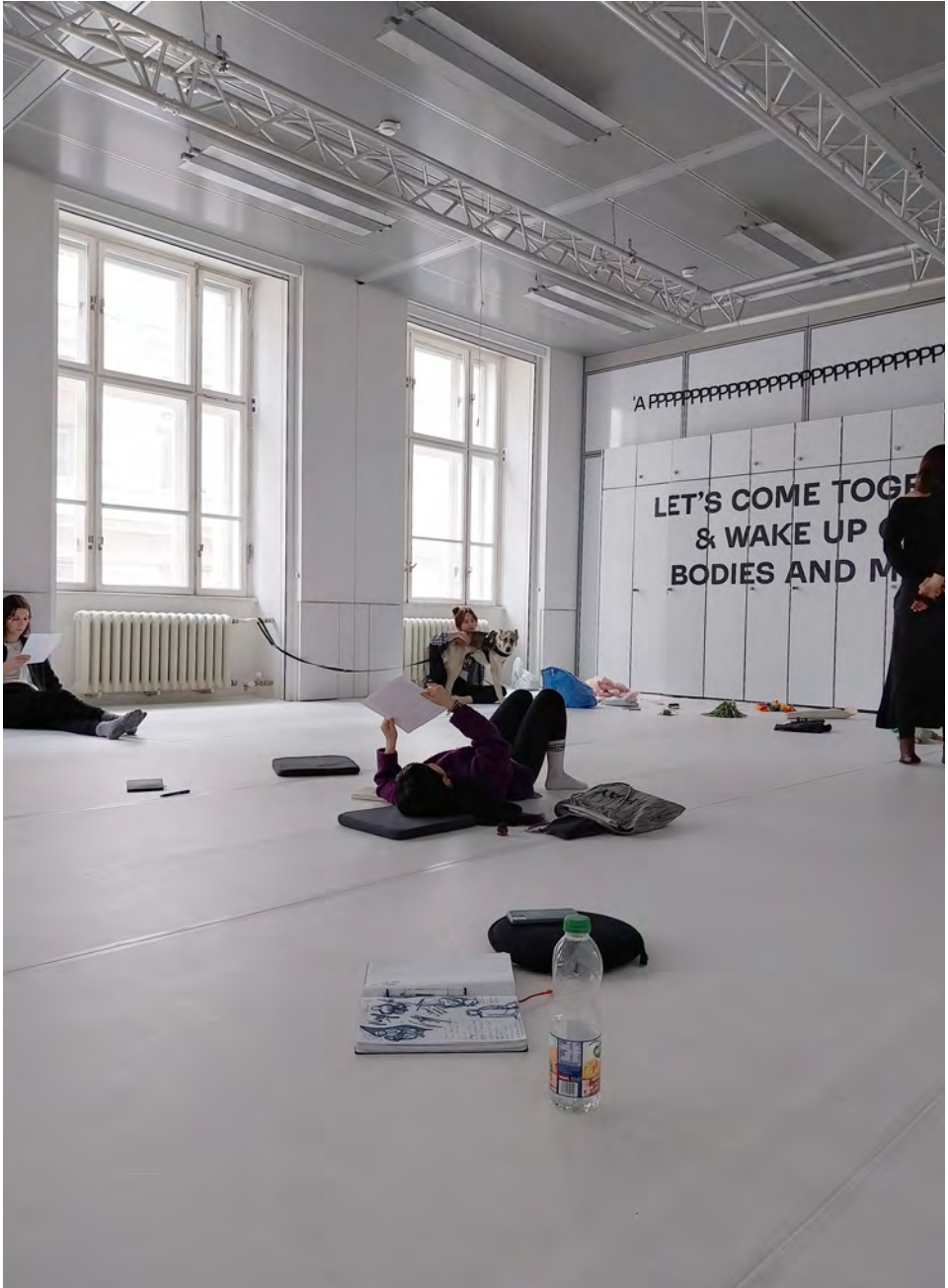


Figure No. 8 › Angewandte Performance Laboratory ◀ Own Image

Another development that took place during the winter semester was that I began to understand my own practice as an artistic practice. I knew relatively early on which topic I wanted to address in my master's thesis, but I found it very difficult to see how my work related to the ›Art & Science‹ master's program in which I was a guest student. Having studied a bachelor's program in Communication Design and then a master's program in Transformation Design, I believed that my practice would fit more into the category of design than into art or science. But my understanding of art and design has undergone a transformation, diverging from the notion that design must adhere to practical application. There is so much artistic design involved in the process of creating, blurring the lines to the extent that I find it challenging to establish definitive boundaries between the two within my own perspective.

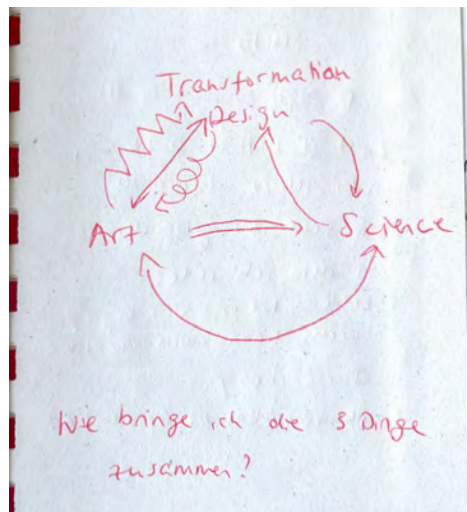


Figure No. 9: ›Art, Science, Transformation Design‹ Own Image

This development has continued in another university course (Insularities, Immunities, Communities) last winter semester with Anne Juren,³³ where Anne talked about the great potential of the freedom of art. Not everything has to have a purpose and be precisely justifiable. Working artistically allows for a lot of experimentation and things that may not be targeted towards a specific goal because perhaps the goal is not even known. I wanted to allow myself this aspect of freedom in this master's thesis, which has also made me feel a bit desperate at times since I have worked differently in the past and had to unlearn a need for explainability and applicability.

3.2 *FELDENKRAIS*

In the aforementioned university course ›Insularities, Immunities, Communities‹, led by Antoine Turillon³⁴ and Anne Faucheret,³⁵ the focus was on (patriarchal) nationalist ideologies and technologies of separation that were developed to sort populations apart, and thus are reconfiguring the geographies of production, accumulation and extraction. The conversations during the course centred on exploring what

³³ Anne Juren is a French choreographer, dancer and performer. She lives and works in Vienna. In 2003, she founded the Wiener Tanz- und Kunstbewegung.

³⁴ Antoine Turillon is a french artist based in Vienna whose practices focus on site-specific community-based art projects.

³⁵ Anne Faucheret is a contemporary art historian, art critic and contemporary art curator. Since 2014, she has been a curator at Kunsthalle Wien.

kind of language, storytelling, and creative techniques could foster a different type of community, one that prioritises social justice, solidarity, and collaboration between humans and non-human entities (Faucheret 2023). Within this course, the instructors made an effort to acknowledge that we as students all participate as bodies with needs, which is why they invited Anne Juren to lead a Feldenkrais exercise with us in one of the classes. The Feldenkrais Method is a body-oriented, educational approach named after its founder, Moshé Feldenkrais. According to Feldenkrais, it is believed that by training kinaesthetic³⁶ and proprioceptive³⁷ self-awareness, fundamental human functions can be improved and pain reduced, leading to movements that are generally experienced as easier and more pleasant (cf. Feldenkrais 1990: 9). During the Feldenkrais exercise, we were asked to lie on the floor and engage in an internal exploration of our bodily contours. Sequentially, we directed our attention from the toes to the legs, arms, head, belly, and back. By doing so, with closed eyes, I developed a sense of my physical boundaries and gained a conscious perception of their existence. The atmosphere during the exercise was very calm, allowing me to deeply perceive the surround-

³⁶ ›Kinaesthetic‹ refers to a person's awareness of their own body and movement. It's the sense that allows you to know where your body parts are without looking at them. For example, when you close your eyes and touch your nose with your finger, you are using your kinaesthetic sense to guide your hand to your nose.

³⁷ ›Proprioceptive‹ refers to a person's sense of their own body position and movement. It's the sense that tells you where your body is in space, even if your eyes are closed. Walking up stairs without looking at your feet involves using your proprioceptive sense to judge the distance and height of the steps.

ings, including the architectural presence of the historic Postsparkasse building in Vienna. The sounds, the cracking, which a large building makes. Since our classroom was next to the café in the building, I could also perceive the subtle soundscape within the environment, music and voices of the guests. Notably, the acoustics coming from the café, differed significantly from our classroom, which led to an interesting mix of soundscapes. In addition to the building, I was also able to connect with my fellow students in a different way, as the silence created a kind of familiarity that I was able to accept at times, but which also overwhelmed me given my relatively short duration of four weeks at Angewandte at that point.

3.3 MARY MAGGIC

During the past winter, I found further inspiration and gained insight into the potential ways of incorporating queerfeminist materialist aspirations that emphasize the acknowledgment of the body through my participation in a workshop facilitated by the artist Mary Maggic.³⁸ The workshop took place on 27.10.2022 at the Künstlerhaus in Vienna and was part of a three-day ›Practice(!)Symposium‹ co-organised by the Angewandte Performance Laboratory. The “artistic and theoretical spectrum of imme-

³⁸ Mary Maggic, born in 1991 in Los Angeles and based in Vienna, is a non binary artist and researcher of Chinese-American descent. Their work operates within the crossroads of body, gender politics, and the alienating effects of capitalist ecological systems. (Maggic 2023)

diate and mediated presence” was to be traced and made tangible from “the perspective of performative practices” (APL 2023). The workshops, lectures, labs and performances aimed at creating “knowledge through practice, participatory understanding and applied awareness” (ibid.). Within Mary Maggic’s performance workshop, we actively engaged with materials derived from late industrial capitalism - trash, a human-made invention -, establishing a deliberate collaboration in the realm of biochemical transformation. Through a series of exercises encompassing non-visual perception and the construction of scenography, we permitted our personal intimacy to extend beyond human boundaries, embracing the influence of the non-human realm. During the workshop, we were located in the Factory of the Künstlerhaus.

When walking in, the room was empty, with materials scattered in the middle. In the first part of the workshop, we were instructed to move around the room with blindfolded eyes. The materials present in the room were meant to be destroyed to the best of our abilities and desires, only to then build a ›new world‹ out of them in the second part. I could clearly feel a distinct difference compared to how I would have behaved with my eyes open. On one hand, I was cautious about my movements, but I also had fascinating encounters with other workshop participants, of whom I still don’t know their identities to this day. I felt much less inhibited when it came to physical contact and moved with a greater sense of freedom.

At the same time, my other senses, especially hearing, became much more sensitive, allowing me to perceive the space and its happenings in a completely different way. Interacting with the materials was also more intense; I could explore the tactile sensations of textiles or soft materials in a whole new manner without relying on my sense of sight. However, during this initial phase of about 20 minutes, there were moments when I needed to step back, sit down, and simply listen, as this type of interaction was unfamiliar to me and the intensity was occasionally overwhelming.

The task we had in the second part of the workshop, with our eyes open, was to build a new world out of the altered, destroyed materials. During this phase, we were encouraged to be guided by the materials, to let them lead us and influence us. The concept of the ›new world‹ was not precisely defined, and it was left up to us as participants to interpret it. During the process, I felt that certain individuals in the room were more accustomed to such contexts, which gave them a sense of calm and self-assurance. This sometimes resulted in them taking up more space than others (including myself). However, I personally appreciated that the context allowed for withdrawal and less active participation if desired. The task was directed towards the collective, so it didn't depend on the involvement of individuals but rather was a collaborative process.

Overall, I found the way Mary Maggic facilitated their workshop, providing specific guidelines for participation while also allowing for more freedom in certain areas, to be a great example of how new materialist and, in this case, especially posthumanist demands can be acknowledged. The workshop fostered an inclusive environment that recognised the agency and significance of non-human entities, encouraging a holistic approach to creation. At the same time, I appreciated the emphasis on viewing it as a collective effort.

The aforementioned experiences provided me with valuable insights into the significance of acknowledging the corporeal inevitability and their consequences. They made me experiment with, introspect upon and evaluate my theoretical involvement and have shown me different approaches to the artistic aspects of working with one's own body.



Figure No. 10: ›Scattered Materials‹ Photographer: Suchart Wannaset



Figure No. 11: ›Building a New World‹ Photographer: Suchart Wannaset



Figure No. 12: ›Scenography‹ Photographer: Suchart Wannaset

4 EXHIBITION MAKING

In this chapter I will document the process of creating an exhibition piece for the Künstlerhaus in Vienna. Established in 1868 at Karlsplatz, the Künstlerhaus embodies a space for engaging dialogue, intellectual exchange, and the showcasing of modern artistic expressions. Alongside its conventional exhibition spaces, the Künstlerhaus also houses the ›Stadtkino im Künstlerhaus‹. Moreover, within the basement, the Albertina modern exhibits Austrian artists as well as international creatives through temporary showcases (Künstlerhaus 2023).

During my time as a guest student in the Art & Science program over the past year, the students of the first semester were tasked to organise a student exhibition at the Künstlerhaus for June 2023. Collaborating with the teachers and department, they planned and executed the exhibition. I considered it a great privilege to have gotten the chance to present something and decided to exhibit the practical part of my master's thesis, since I was planning to finish my studies in this period. The process of preparing for the exhibition began well before the official registration of my thesis, as I found myself contemplating about what I wished to present in the Künstlerhaus exhibition at the onset of the winter semester 2022/23.

4.1 GETTING LOST

As of November 2022, my initial approach to the subject matter involved building upon the term paper I had written under Paul Feigelfeld during the summer. My theoretical exploration aimed to acknowledge queer, alternative, and non-anthropocentric forms of knowledge, which I intended to convey in a manner that was both emancipatory and empowering. In practical terms, I sought to achieve this through mediums such as performance, workshops, guided meditation, or scores, while also incorporating somatic learning. Through these means, the goal was to foster a recognition of individual agency. One question that preoccupied me from the beginning was the target audience for my master's thesis. As I constantly had the exhibition of my work at the Künstlerhaus in mind, it became challenging to envision who would be the viewers of my work. Contemplating the end goal, the exhibition, right from the start, had a paralysing effect on me, making it difficult to even begin. In my master's thesis journal, I wrote in December 2022, "Do I want to create experiential spaces for people to actively engage in political discussions? Or do I want to remove the discourse from the academic context? - For people who are not engaged in the academic posthumanism discourse?" These questions arose at that time because I had initially planned to implement a workshop in the practical part of my master's thesis, which I would personally facilitate and for which I would need to target a specific audience.

In the beginning, I held a vision of organising a workshop that aimed to engage individuals who typically didn't hail from academic backgrounds. My objective was to create an inclusive environment where those individuals could feel comfortable and empowered to participate actively. By intentionally targeting a diverse audience, my intention was to bridge the gap between academia and the broader community. However, this situation never materialised because in Vienna, a new city, it seemed much more challenging for me to find suitable locations for workshops and, more importantly, to reach out to people who would be interested in participating. Consequently, I gradually distanced myself from the idea of targeting a specific group of people as a workshop facilitator. However, at the same time, it always felt as though I was doing this master's thesis "just for myself" if I were to approach my topic artistically. Coming from a background in design, I realised that I had been less exposed to abstract, non-applicable, and experimental approaches in my previous studies. As a result, I found it difficult to allow myself the freedom to explore these unconventional paths and embrace the uncertainties. Freeing myself from the notion that I needed to precisely define the target audience of my master's thesis, since we all have a body, was an exhausting process. Additionally, my aspiration to present a representative piece at the Künstlerhaus had an influence on my approach to work. Granting myself the freedom of working more abstract required a shift in my perspective, but this process of (un-)learning was juxtaposed with my intention to exhibit something tangible in a museum. The questions that

persisted in my mind were once again: Whom do I manage to reach? And whom do I not?

The annual theme given to us by the Art & Science Department for the year I studied there was ›Crystallisation‹. The fact that even today I still don't know exactly how to write this word shows quite well the extent to which I have come to terms with it. During the winter semester, this topic was introduced to us from a highly scientific standpoint, with introductory lectures on subjects such as ice crystals. As a guest student, I attempted not to be overly influenced by the guidelines provided by Art & Science, as I felt I already had a sense of the direction I wanted to take with my master's thesis. Instead, I envisioned the implementation of the theme in such a way that the object exhibited in the Künstlerhaus would represent a crystallisation, a solidification of my fluid process throughout the master's thesis.

The theme that we collectively brainstormed for the exhibition was ›Licking Structures‹. During the exhibition planning, I was part of the curatorial team, which involved a lot of decision-making regarding the placement of artworks to ensure a coherent thread throughout the exhibition. In ›Licking Structures‹, we saw our aspirations fulfilled to engage artistically with topics that embody the process of dissolution and re-creation.

For a press release text for the Künstlerhaus, we put it into those words: *»Like rocks and crystals, social and institutional structures erode, but in their fragmentation and breakage, also lies creation. The act of licking is instinctual and internal but it also penetrates and reaches into the world; it is through this exact engagement that geologists, archaeologists – and children – understand their surroundings.*

›Licking structures‹ creates an interdisciplinary space in which the artworks explore both literally and metaphorically the concept of dissolving orders. The 24 artists utilise their personal perspectives to create, broaden or re-imagine institutional frameworks and embedded dichotomies in an intimate way. «

I wanted to fulfil this aspiration by exploring new perspectives on the institution of the museum. In an interim presentation in January 2022 at the Art & Science department, I presented the idea of exhibiting a Rage Cage, in which I would put objects and materials that the museum visitors are then allowed to destroy. During my childhood, museums often were places where very valuable art was exhibited, which should not be touched and where one had to be quiet. In this idea, one can perhaps discern that I attempted to generate new ideas that could be exhibited. I struggled greatly with staying focused on my area of interest, bodies and somatics, and not prematurely fixating on the end goal, the exhibition.

This process continued as I prepared my presentation for the master colloquium of Art & Science, which was organised for the students of the department at the end of January. For this presentation, I deliberately shattered numerous objects with a hammer, metaphorically attempting to break their structures and then exhibiting their materiality. This act of destruction may have emerged from a sense of frustration, as I found it incredibly challenging to grasp the essence of new materialism. Up to that point, I had read a considerable amount of theory, yet sometimes struggled to envision how this theory could be translated into practical application. Engaging with the material, for me at that moment, resulted in its destruction.



Figure No. 13: › Wax . Own Image



Figure No. 14: ›Wood‹ Own Image

I also had the idea of exhibiting an object at the Künstlerhaus that would require effort to work on, something that would be seemingly indestructible in a way. I wanted to convey the feeling of the exertion that can arise when one strives against structures, which can be incredibly demanding. However, I realised that I hadn't thoroughly thought through this theme, as the feedback during my presentation at the Art & Science master colloquium emphasised the need to "practice the practice." I lacked experience in transforming an idea in my mind into a tangible object that effectively conveys my intentions. At the same time, I received feedback that it could be highly critical for me, as a white and privileged person, to exhibit an object aiming to depict the experience of working against discriminatory structures. I understood this criticism well, as it highlighted that I had reached a point in my master's thesis process where I had somewhat lost my way. Consequently, it was helpful for me to present my topic choice in the master colloquium of the Transformation Design program, where I originally intended to graduate. There, I introduced the idea of writing scores and received positive feedback, indicating that it seemed like a meaningful approach. This feedback reaffirmed my intention to engage with this topic further.

4.2 FINDING MY WAY AGAIN

»Why, what and how am I doing what I am doing? In wishful thinking, I think art is inherently political by its condition of proposing the transformation of a given system.« — Lilia Mestre ³⁹

I remained committed to my initial concept of utilising scores as a means to explore alternative ways of generating knowledge about one's body and cultivating a new approach to being-in-the-world.

4.2.1 SCORES

Given that the term ›scores‹ was unfamiliar to me until reading it in the course description at the Angewandte Performance Lab, I will provide a brief explanation of my understanding of the term and share the reasons behind my decision to employ it as the medium for my exploration. The term ›score‹ (known as ›Partitur‹ in German) originates from the field of music and refers to a handwritten or printed notation of a musical composition. A score can encompass either a single part for a solo performance or multiple parts that collectively form an orchestral or ensemble piece. Primarily utilised by the conductor, a score serves as a written document that provides an overview of the entire musical work. So “scores are a frame that allow us to see what is actually there. [I]n a creative

³⁹

Mestre 2014: 11

artistic research a score [...] functions as a tool to create the attention and intensity needed to let something of the unexpected enter into the social field of the knowledge and practice process” (Mestre 2014: Glossary). The way I understood scores is that they are, in a way, instructions given by one person for another person to follow. They involve simple actions or ideas from everyday life, recontextualised as performance, they are texts that can be seen as proposal pieces or instructions for actions. The idea of a score can be realised by people other than the original creator and is open to variation and interpretation. This creates a situation in which one engages in observing oneself or the surroundings for a limited period of time according to the guidance provided. I deeply resonated with Lilia Mestre’s⁴⁰ perspective on scores, which she describes in a publication⁴¹ “as triggers for accidents that instead of being avoided are embraced. It’s a call for risk taking on unstable grounds, for the imagination and the manifestation of emotions, ideas, and states of being, not as ideologies but as an awareness of being in the present” (ibid.). Scores can therefore create spaces in which knowledge about one’s own body and beyond can be generated.

⁴⁰ Lilia Mestre (born in Lisbon in 1968) is an artist and researcher who currently resides in Brussels. Her work revolves around the exploration of art practice as a medium that bridges multiple domains of semiotic existence. (Dutch Art Insitute 2023)

⁴¹ “Writing Scores” is a publication co-edited by Lilia Mestre and Elke Van Campenhout, published by a.pass in 2014. This publication delves into the realm of scores as a form of written documentation, providing a framework for artistic practices and exploring the potential of scores in various creative contexts. (Mestre 2014)

I perceived myself in the role of an initiator by engaging in the act of developing scores, writing them down and subsequently sharing them for others to explore. My intention was to enable or deepen a process – a research process – regarding the embodiment of individuals who engage with the scores. Through this approach, I aimed to trigger an exploration of the body, encouraging others to allow for the emergence of unexpected connections. I wanted to materialize the knowledge of space, temporality and experience that is achieved in one's physicality. For the exhibition at the Künstlerhaus, I intended to create an art piece consisting of written scores, written on small pieces of paper that visitors can take with them and experiment with in the environment and context where they feel



Figure No. 15: ›Scores‹ Own Image

comfortable. It was important for me to convey that these instructions do not have to be carried out during or in the exhibition at the Künstlerhaus, but rather at any other time, such as on the way to work or in one's own room, whether it be morning or night, alone or with someone else. This approach aims to enhance one's awareness of personal experiences, enabling individuals to examine and compare how their perception and experiences are shaped within different contexts by performing the same score. By choosing this medium and allowing the scores to be tried out in a decentralised manner, it becomes possible to cultivate a personal practice that acknowledges the body. As of now, I find it challenging to determine the criteria for measuring the success of developing such a practice. Even though frameworks like the multi-level perspective can help to decipher the interdependencies of such endeavours, I have the feeling that I cannot make a prognosis. In this regard, scores provide a suitable method as they actively embrace ambiguity and ambivalence. When writing the scores, I deliberately kept the action instructions brief, allowing for individual interpretation and explanations. I am trying to prioritise the process over the product and demystify my role as an artist by involving the visitors and giving them the agency to determine what they make of my piece. They were not only spectators but active participants, creating a "palimpsest of [their] bodily constitution, priming [them] for certain future realities" (Karolczak 2014: 44).

One art movement, that engaged extensively with event scores, was Fluxus. It emerged in the 1960s and was characterised by its interdisciplinary nature and its emphasis on merging art and life. Fluxus artists sought to break down the boundaries between different artistic disciplines and challenge the traditional notions of art by creating works that encouraged audience participation and interaction (cf. Hendricks et. al. 2008: 9). In the context of Fluxus, being-in-the-world referred to the notion that art should not be confined to the gallery or the museum but should permeate everyday life. Fluxus artists sought to dissolve the boundaries between art and life, incorporating everyday activities, objects, and experiences into their works. They aimed to create works that were accessible and participatory. The movement rejected the notion of art as a precious or elite commodity, and instead embraced the idea of art as a process and a way of being in the world (cf. *ibid.*). Fluxus scores often involved simple actions that engaged the body and the senses. These actions could include walking, breathing, listening, or even eating. The emphasis was on the experience of the action itself rather than on the final product. By acknowledging the body and its sensations, Fluxus aimed to create a more intimate and embodied engagement with art.

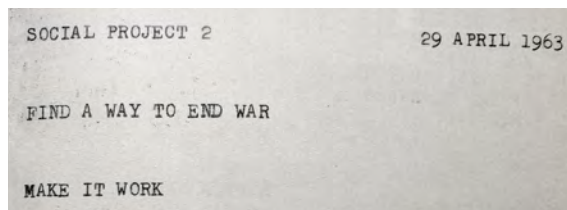


Figure No. 16: › Jackson Mac Lows Score ‹ Source: Hendricks et. al.: 10

Erase everything. 1964

Paint sky on everything. 1965

WINTER EVENT (dramatic) 1964

Invite a wild bird* out of the cold, snowy, winter winds into a great feast hall, brightly-lit, with a blazing fire. (the time of day is dusk)

*The invitation could also be extended to a small, impecunious match girl (preferably blind).

Put out bird and/or match girl.

CONSTRUCTION 1965

1. Take a 12-foot 2x4. 2. Measure off your own height. 3. Cut. 4. Measure off your wife's (or girl friend's) height. 5. Cut. 6. Nail together. 7. Place upright or horizontal.

YEAR-LONG EVENT 1964

1. Collect 5 clichés a day for 365 days.
2. On the following July 4th* burn all the clichés

OR:

Compile them a) alphabetically, b) by subject, c) by number of letters, d) by approximate color.

*October 12th is better than July 4th.

TWO YEAR PIECE 1965
(for individual performance)

1. Write down 5 questions a day for 365 days.
2. During the following year: answer 5 questions a day, or think about the questions you have difficulty answering, or select 1 question a day from last year's list and ask it on 5 different occasions to 5 different people.

Building upon the principles of Fluxus, I, too, adopted this focus on experience and will delve further into the selection of somatic practices, to provide further context to this aspect of my approach. The term ›somatics‹ finds its etymological origin in the Greek word soma, a reference to the self or the tangible embodiment of the physical. The International Somatic Movement Education and Therapy Association (ISMETA) elaborates:

» *The field of somatics has developed over the last century through a process of inquiry into how consciousness inhabits the living body. The term is derived from the word ›somatic‹, which means pertaining to the body, experienced and regulated from within.* « (Lester 2017: 31)

According to Kelly F. Lester,⁴² somatic experiences can be likened to self-awareness, “but somatics as a genre is much more complex than this. An individual observes [their] state of being in the present moment with a sense of nonjudgment, and then invites a process of self-reflection and consideration of positive change” (ibid.: 32) After Thomas Hanna,⁴³ the human being is not simply an aware body, passively witnessing itself, but is rather actively engaging in simultaneous actions: it constantly acts upon itself, consistently participating in the process of self-regulation.

⁴² Kelly F. Lester is a professor of dance at the University of Southern Mississippi and a somatic movement therapist.

⁴³ Thomas Hanna (1928–1990) was a renowned philosopher, author, and somatic educator. He pioneered somatic practices emphasising the mind-body connection for enhanced well-being.

This ongoing regulation, commonly referred to as re pattering in somatic practices, involves making choices influenced by both internal and external observations. By providing the written scores, I aimed to provide an opportunity for self-observation and the exploration of re pattering. Although my work involves terms and concepts from performance and dance arts, it was crucial for me to maintain simplicity in the scores. I wanted to ensure that the encounter with one's own body remains low-threshold, regardless of a dance background or prior preparation. As individuals, we are experts of our own bodies, capable of generating situated knowledge from this standpoint. My intention was to place the ownership of learning in the hands of the participants, I wanted to facilitate the ability to already perceive subtle changes. Writing the scores from a somatic perspective, my aspiration was to accentuate experimentation over execution, attending to the whole self (thinking, sensing, feeling and intuiting). By keeping most of the descriptions brief, I wanted to allow exploration without trying to make it ›right‹ or ›wrong‹.

»*You are all doing the same scores yet you are all doing different scores*«⁴⁴

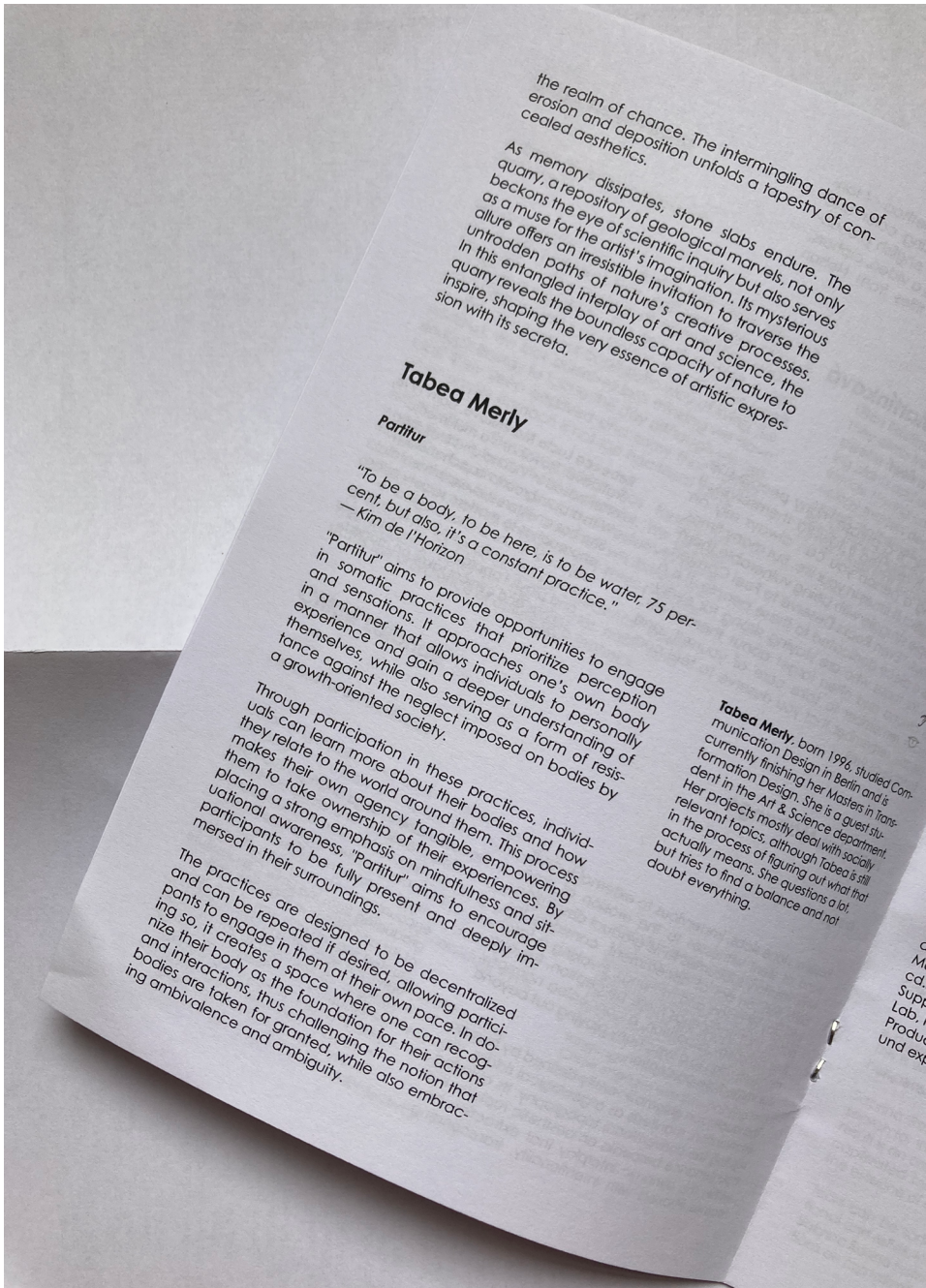
⁴⁴ This quote is adapted from one said by dance professor and education specialist Bill Evans:
“We are all having the same class, yet we are each having a different class.”

For the title of my work, I opted for the German literal translation of the word ›Score‹ - ›Partitur‹ - because I really liked the musical aspect of it. Additionally, having a German word for the piece added an interesting context, considering that the exhibition featured works and their descriptions predominantly in English. In the text I composed for the Künstlerhaus exhibit, I described my work as follows:

»›Partitur‹ aims to provide opportunities for engaging in somatic practices that prioritise perception and sensations. It approaches one's own body in a manner that allows individuals to personally experience and gain a deeper understanding of themselves, while also serving as a form of resistance against the neglect imposed on bodies by a growth-oriented society.

Through participation in these practices, individuals can learn more about their bodies and how they relate to the world around them. This process makes their own agency tangible, empowering them to take ownership of their experiences. By placing a strong emphasis on mindfulness and situational awareness, ›Partitur‹ aims to encourage participants to be fully present and deeply immersed in their surroundings.

The practices are designed to be decentralised and can be repeated if desired, allowing participants to engage in them at their own pace. In doing so, it creates a space where one can recognise their body as the foundation for their actions and interactions, challenging the notion that bodies are taken for granted, while also embracing ambivalence and ambiguity.«



the realm of chance. The intermingling dance of erosion and deposition unfolds a tapestry of concealed aesthetics.

As memory dissipates, stone slabs endure. The quarry, a repository of geological marvels, not only beckons the eye of scientific inquiry but also serves as a muse for the artist's imagination. Its mysterious allure offers an irresistible invitation to traverse the untraveled paths of nature's creative processes. In this entangled interplay of art and science, the quarry reveals the boundless capacity of nature to inspire, shaping the very essence of artistic expression with its secrets.

Tabea Merly

Partitur

"To be a body, to be here, is to be water, 75 percent, but also, it's a constant practice."
— Kim de l'Horizon

"Partitur" aims to provide opportunities to engage in somatic practices that prioritize perception and sensations. It approaches one's own body in a manner that allows individuals to personally experience and gain a deeper understanding of themselves, while also serving as a form of resistance against the neglect imposed on bodies by a growth-oriented society.

Through participation in these practices, individuals can learn more about their bodies and how they relate to the world around them. This process makes their own agency tangible, empowering them to take ownership of their experiences and situate a strong emphasis on mindfulness and situational awareness; "Partitur" aims to encourage participants to be fully present and deeply immersed in their surroundings.

The practices are designed to be decentralized and can be repeated if desired, allowing participants to engage in them at their own pace. In doing so, it creates a space where one can recognize their body as the foundation for their actions and interactions, thus challenging the notion that bodies are taken for granted, while also embracing ambivalence and ambiguity.

Tabea Merly, born 1996, studied Communication Design in Berlin and is currently finishing her Masters in Transformation Design. She is a guest student in the Art & Science department. Her projects mostly deal with socially relevant topics, although Tabea is still in the process of figuring out what that actually means. She questions a lot, but tries to find a balance and not doubt everything.

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Figure No. 18: › Exhibition Booklet ◀ Own Image

4.3 DESIGN

To prepare for the exhibition at the Künstlerhaus, I obtained a typewriter and utilized it to transcribe the scores onto handmade Hanebüchten paper. Subsequently, I folded and tore the sheets, creating a hand crafted appearance. This technique imbues the scores with a visual quality that should convey their manual origin.

To differentiate among the various categories, I colour-coded them, selecting hues that fit harmoniously and opting for the Hannebüchtenpaper because of its easy tear-ability and softness that prevents it from wrinkling upon touch.



Figure No. 19: ›Paper Tearing‹ Own Image



Figure No. 20: ›Space Score‹ Own Image



Figure No. 21: >WIP< Own Image

Figure No. 22: > Hair Score Fail < Own Image



Figure No. 23: > Tearing Paper < Own Image



Figure No. 24: ›Finished Scores‹ Own Image

During the process of designing the paper snippets, I thought about the organisation of the various scores. Initially, I considered categorising them by specific instructions, such as ›Partner Scores‹ or ›Breathing Scores‹. However, I found it difficult to precisely classify them under specific themes. So I opted to divide them based on duration, resulting in the 5 categories ›for a moment‹, ›5-10 minutes‹, ›10-20 minutes‹, ›20-30 minutes‹, and ›indefinitely‹. This method allowed for a more flexible classification of the scores but it was still important for me to emphasize that the time divisions should serve more as guidelines rather than rules, so that each person could decide for themselves how long they wanted to perform a score.

Of the green scores intended for a moment I have written ten different ones with the dimensions 56 by 40 mm. In my choice of wording, I aimed to emphasise that these exercises do not prioritise productivity. For instance, the score ›pause‹ is designed to foster an attitude that values gentleness towards oneself rather than placing efficiency at the forefront. There is also a seemingly impossible task: doing nothing. Through practice, one can explore the personal meaning of doing nothing and how it can vary depending on the context. It might involve stillness or a deliberate choice to let something be without reacting.

I imagined these scores as quick interruptions in daily life, inviting one to pause and engage in breathing exercises and mindfulness, allowing to fully immerse in the present moment.

The 10 scores I wrote are:

- › *sit still* ‹
- › *hold your breath for as long as you can* ‹
- › *pause* ‹
- › *focus* ‹
- › *sense the presence of other beings in the space* ‹
- › *close your eyes* ‹
- › *apply pressure - using your thumb - on the area between the eyebrows* ‹
- › *let go* ‹
- › *do nothing* ‹
- › *concentrate on your breath* ‹

FOR A MOMENT

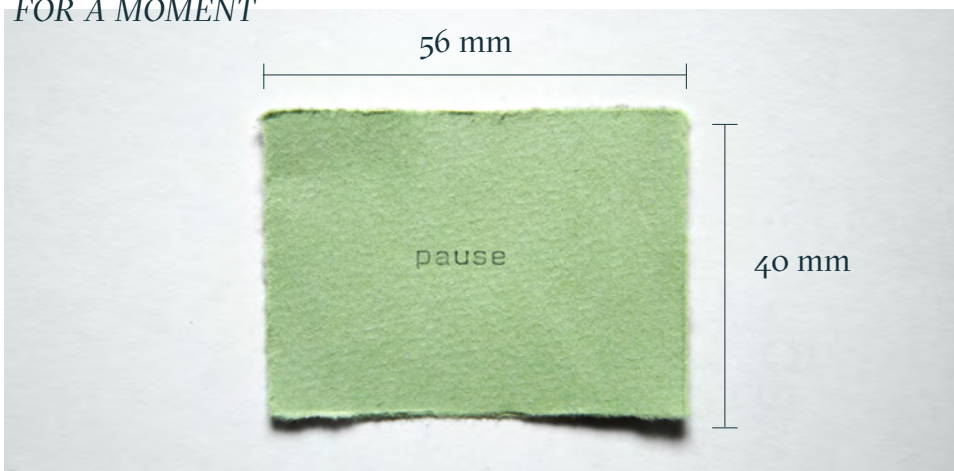


Figure No. 25: ›Green Score Measurements‹ Own Image

The next longer category, ›5-10 minutes‹, consisted of more instructive prompts. In general, my intention was to create a variety of scores that would appeal to a broad audience by including a mix of rather free but also more didactic ones. By doing so, the options could resonate with individuals seeking different levels of guidance in their engagement with the scores. Writing the longer scores, I still wanted to create a sense of lightness by using line breaks and giving them a poetic quality. I wrote six scores on dark blue paper measuring 80 × 70 mm, which could be performed between 5 and 10 minutes.

I drew inspiration from yoga practices and exercises covered in the APL course.⁴⁵ The somatic practices offer a chance to connect with both the surroundings and ones own bodies through voice, breath, and perception. Additionally, there is a partner practice included to enhance the interactive experience:

›touch a body part (e.g. left elbow) with your eyes closed and explore it - then let your partner explore the same body part while you have your eyes closed‹

›gradually deepen your inhales and exhales, allowing the breath to flow freely - explore different qualities of breath, such as slow, fast, deep, or shallow‹

›in a quiet environment - shift your attention to the micro-movements happening in your body, such as the subtle pulsations, tremors, or vibrations - observe‹

›use your voice to explore the resonant qualities of different sounds - notice how the vibrations of sound reverberate through your body‹

›sit down in a quiet environment - look at one point - keep your eyes open as long as you can - observe the change in your perception‹

›pay attention to the contact between your body and the clothes you are wearing‹

5 - 10 MINUTES



Figure No. 26: ›Dark Blue Score Measurements‹ Own Image

As the interpretative flexibility of the categorisation lead to me reconsidering additional scores that could have fit within the 10 - 20 minutes time frame, I ended up writing only four pink scores that fit within this time frame. While one can certainly also do nothing, pause or focus for 20 minutes, the longer time frame allowed for a deeper engagement with the scores. As a result, I created two perceptual scores, another impossible task with a playful tone and one practice focused on the experience of time.

› *watch* ‹

› *make shadows with your body - try to catch the shadows* ‹

› *perceive* ‹

› *choose one action which would usually be completed in a short time - extend it* ‹

10 - 20 MINUTES



Figure No.27: › Pink Score Measurements ‹ Own Image

The scores I wrote for the duration of 20 to 30 minutes are the ones that require the most engagement and resources. Unlike the other scores that can be mostly done anywhere, the two walking scores necessitate a change of location. In my view, these scores are the least easily accessible. However, as I mentioned earlier, my intention was to provide varying levels of guidance to cater to different needs.

The scores are written on light blue paper, with the dimensions of 80 x 70 mm for three of them, while one shorter score measures 80 x 35 mm:

›take a walk with no aim‹

›find a quiet place to sit or lie down - close your eyes - bring your attention to your breath - notice the sensation of the breath entering and leaving your body - pay attention to the temperature, movement, and depth‹

›gather objects with different textures - close your eyes and select 1 object at a time - explore the object - pay attention to its texture, temperature, and any other sensory qualities you notice - observe‹

›go for a walk in a natural setting - as you walk, intentionally focus on each of your five senses one at a time - pay attention to what you see, hear, smell, taste, and touch - take in the details - be present‹

→

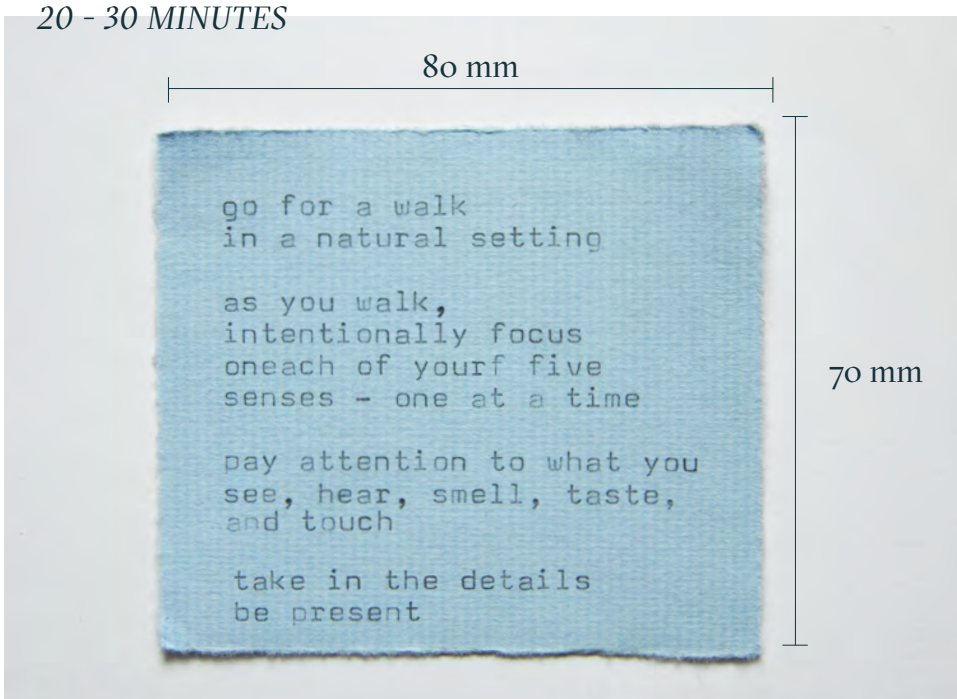


Figure No. 28: >Light Blue Score Measurements < Own Image

Composing the yellow scores, intended for an indefinite duration, was more like writing prompts or reminders for a repetitive practice, where one may get a grasp of Judith Butler's concept of performativity by observing subtle shifts or changes in their sense of self through the repeated practice of the scores. My goal was to compose a collection of scores that encourage a gentle, weird, and playful approach to being-in-the-world. With the intention of writing prompts that foster a sensual practice of being connected, I aimed to create an assortment that embraces an open, light-hearted and joyful perspective and ended up writing 17 scores:

›stay fluid‹ | ›grow your hair‹ | ›take up space‹ | ›express your self‹
 ›be weird‹ | ›move‹ | ›allow‹ | ›care‹ | ›be curious‹ | ›feel‹ | ›play‹
 ›take it slow‹ | ›try‹ | ›retreat‹ | ›sense‹ | ›explore‹ | ›listen‹

INDEFINITELY

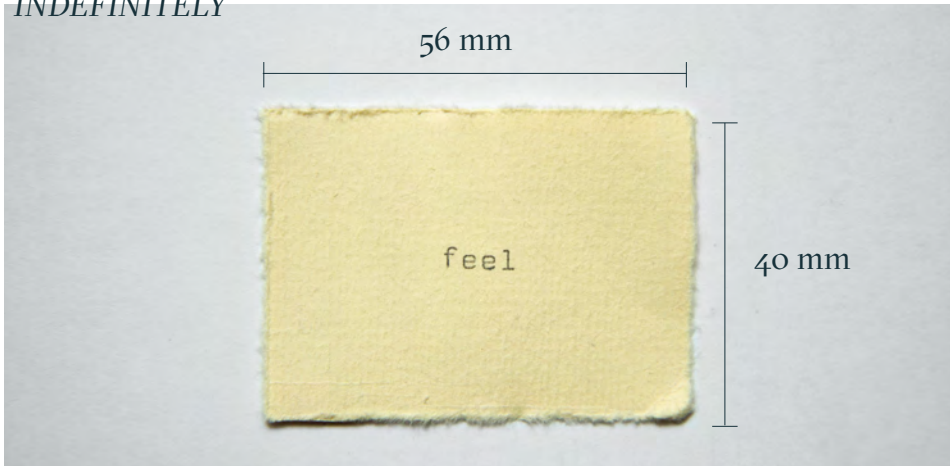


Figure No. 29: ›Yellow Score Measurements‹ Own Image

When describing the scores, I have utilized various terms like ›exercise‹, ›task‹, or ›practice‹, and I would like to clarify their intended meanings. Tasks refer more to the scores that demand attention and effort, with actions that can be more or less completed. Exercises, on the other hand, are inherent in every score for me. I perceive working with one's own body as something that can be physically demanding and requires a consistent practice. To me, exercising involves the ability to discern differences between the executions. And that's where the aspect of practice comes in, which I would define as a repeated and prolonged engagement with the condition of being-in-the-world.

In total, I devised a collection of 41 distinct scores, each of which I reproduced as 10 to 12 pieces, resulting in a total of approximately 450 paper snippets. The entire collection is visible in the following pages.

In this context, I would like to note that being able to take the time for such practices of being-in-the-world is a privilege, as time allocation, distribution and access are influenced by power dynamics and social structures (cf. Hersey 2022). The way in which time in western societies is valued, managed and distributed also reflects political choices and priorities, as working hours, access to leisure time or resource allocations all have political implications. Engaging with the scores, regardless of the duration or outcome, can therefore be regarded as an act of resistance against the neoliberal pressure for efficiency, as discussed by Hartmut Rosa. But is also a practice of becoming aware of ones self, of the inevitability of one's own body not as an obstacle but as recognition. Because acknowledging our own bodies as the foundation for inter-action, the recognition that we embody our positions of power represents the first step towards the transformation of existing hegemonic power structures. This process can serve both as a form of resistance and self-discovery.



Figure No. 30: ›Eyes Score‹ Own Image



Figure No. 31: ›Sit Score‹ Own Image



Figure No. 32: ›Presence Score‹ Own Image



Figure No. 33: ›Do Nothing Score‹ Own Image



Figure No. 34: ›Pressure Score‹ Own Image



Figure No. 35: ›Breath Score‹ Own Image



Figure No. 36: ›Pause Score‹ Own Image



Figure No. 37: ›Let Go Score‹ Own Image

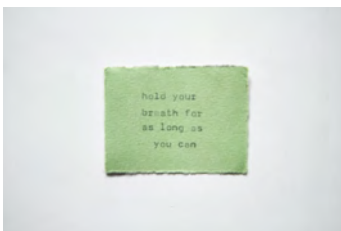


Figure No. 38: ›Hold your Breath Score‹ Own Image

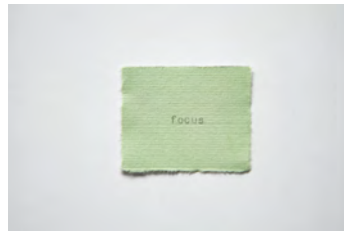


Figure No. 39: ›Focus Score‹ Own Image



Figure No. 40: ›Qualities of Breath Score‹ Own Image

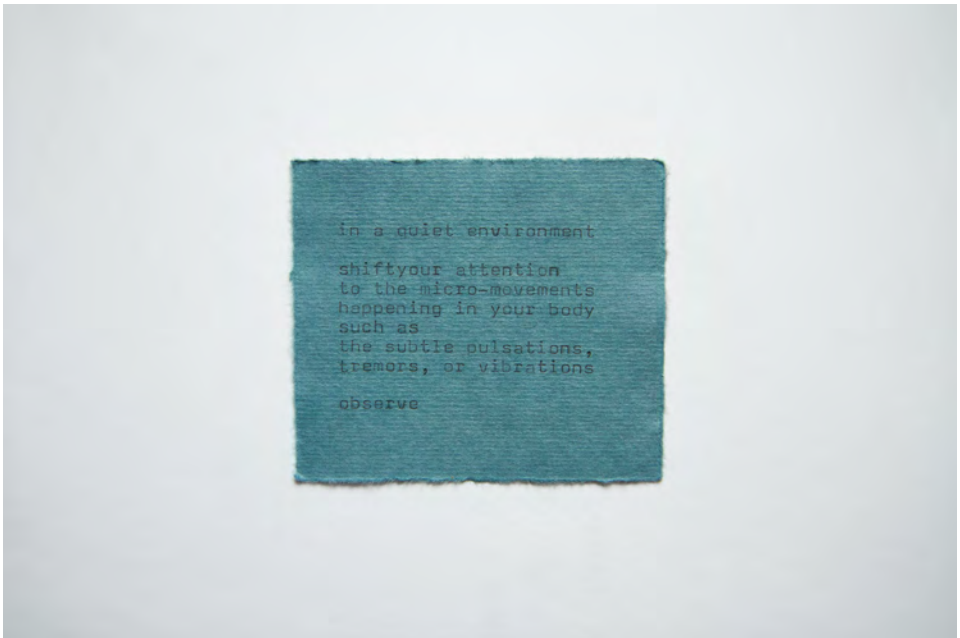


Figure No. 41: ›Micro-Movements Score‹ Own Image



Figure No. 42: ›Body Part Score‹ Own Image



Figure No. 43: ›Eyes Open Score‹ Own Image



Figure No. 44: ›Voice Score‹ Own Image



Figure No. 45: ›Contact Score‹ Own Image



Figure No. 46: › Watch Score ‹ Own Image



Figure No. 47: › Shadow Score ‹ Own Image



Figure No. 48: › Perceive Score ‹ Own Image

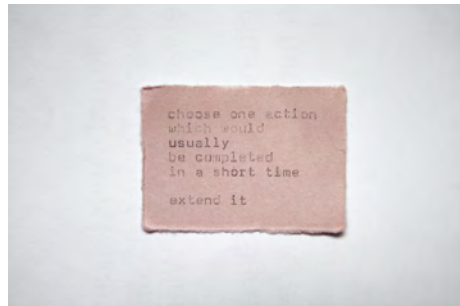


Figure No. 49: › Action Score ‹ Own Image



Figure No. 50: ›Walk Score‹ Own Image

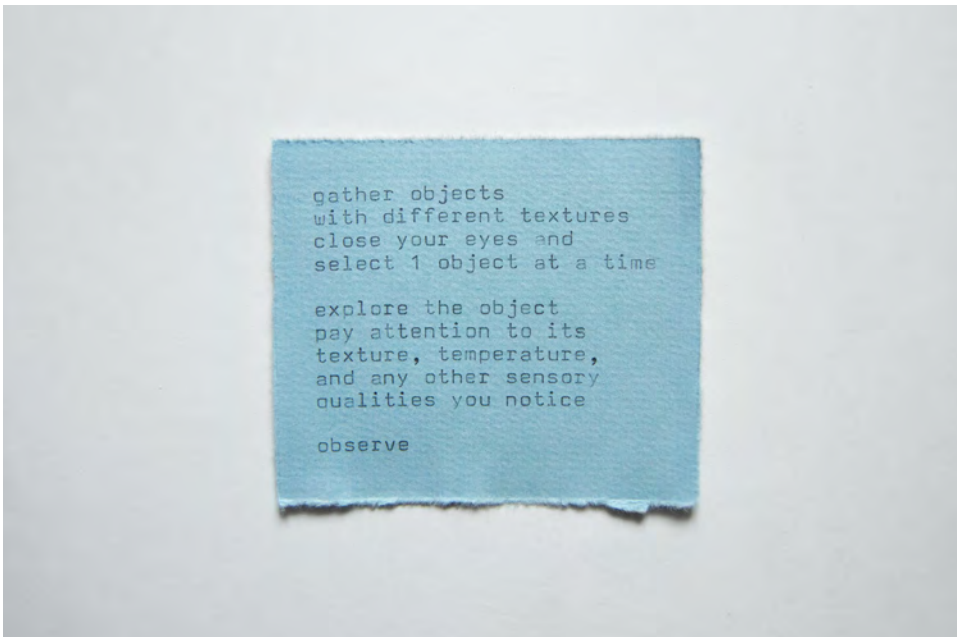


Figure No. 51: ›Object Score‹ Own Image

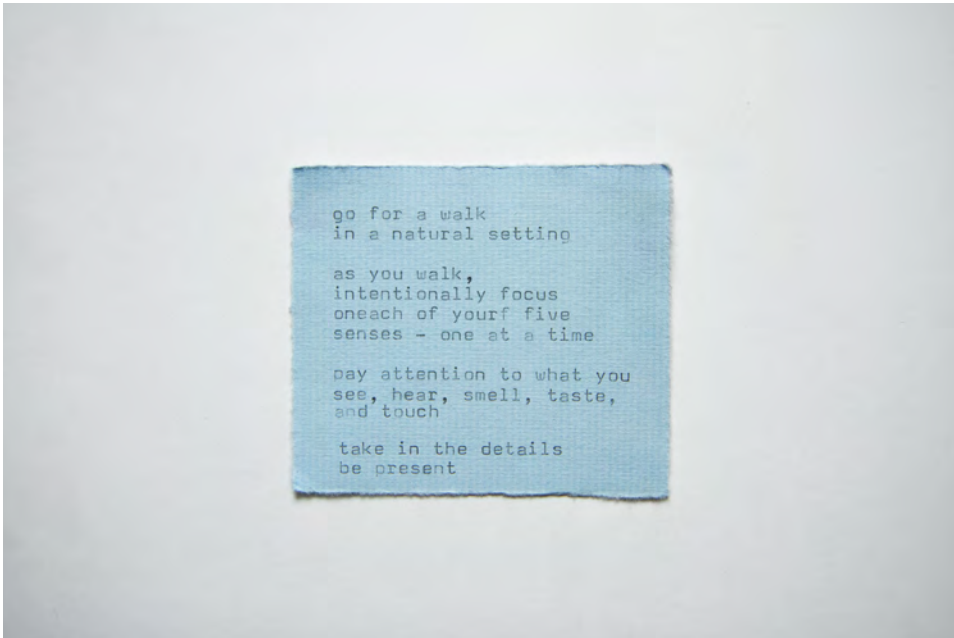


Figure No. 52: ›Five Senses Walk Score‹ Own Image

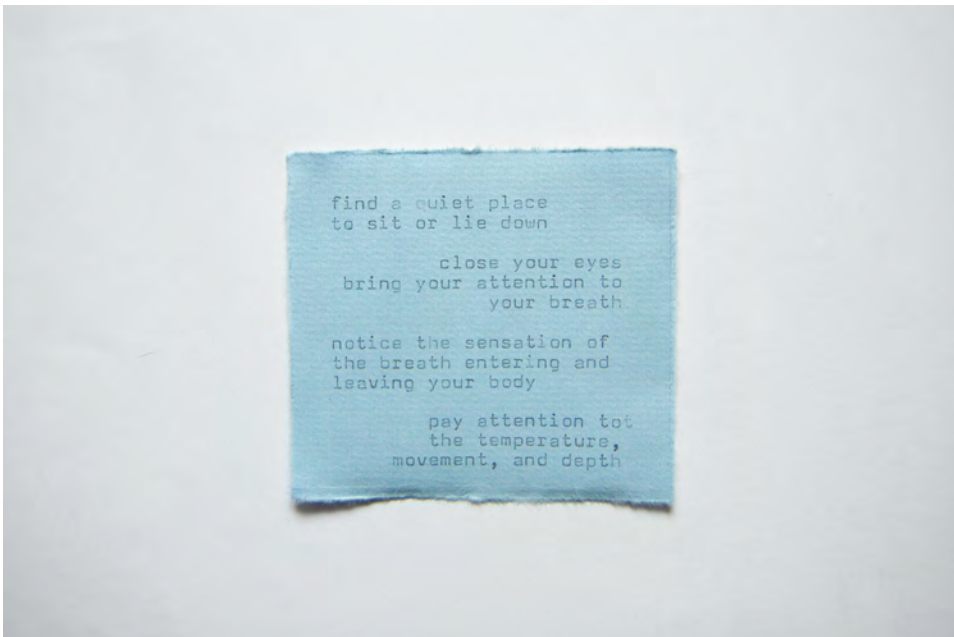


Figure No. 53: ›Quiet Breath Score‹ Own Image



Figure No. 54: › Explore Score ‹ Own Image



Figure No. 55: › Retreat Score ‹ Own Image

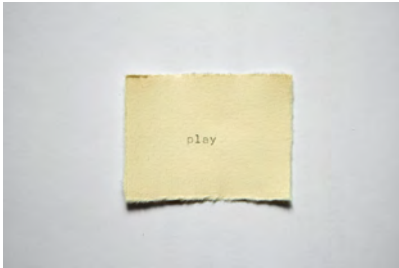


Figure No. 56: › Play Score ‹ Own Image



Figure No. 57: › Care Score ‹ Own Image



Figure No. 58: › Be Curious Score ‹ Own Image

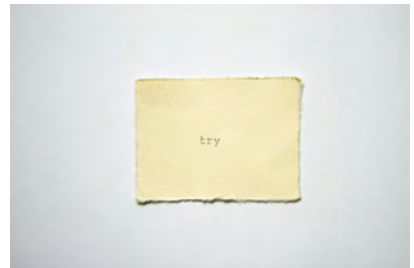


Figure No. 59: › Try Score ‹ Own Image



Figure No. 60: › Stay Fluid Score ‹ Own Image

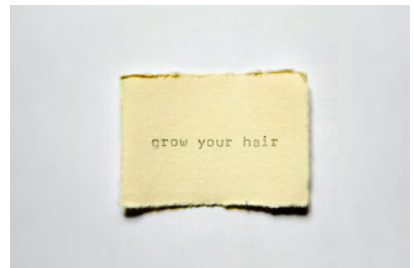


Figure No. 61: › Grow Your Hair Score ‹ Own Image



Figure No. 62: › Allow Score ‹ Own Image

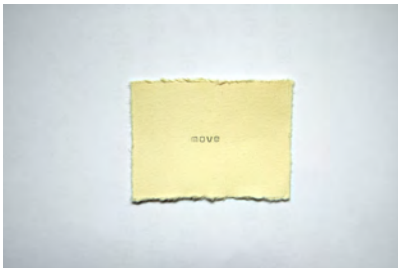


Figure No. 63: › Move Score ‹ Own Image



Figure No. 64: › Sense Score ‹ Own Image



Figure No. 65: › Take up Space Score ‹ Own Image



Figure No. 66: › Feel Score ‹ Own Image



Figure No. 67: › Listen Score ‹ Own Image



Figure No. 68: › Be Weird Score ‹ Own Image



Figure No. 69: › Slow Score ‹ Own Image



Figure No. 70: › Express Score ‹ Own Image

4.4 LICKING STRUCTURES

My work ›Partitur‹ was exhibited at the Künstlerhaus in Vienna alongside 23 other works from June 23 to July 02. The other artworks consisted of various materials, including wax, ceramics, or wood. The exhibition encompassed video works, paintings, performances, and audio pieces. Numerous works offered interactive experiences, such as one where viewers could sit and operate slide show projectors, while another allowed for closer examination with a flashlight. I also had designed my work to be touched, looked through and taken with by the visitors, and I was happy to see that almost all of my scores were taken during the course of the exhibition.



Figure No. 71: ›Exhibition Overview‹ Photographer: Jorit Aust

LICKING STRUCTURES

like rocks and crystals, social and institutional structures erode. But in their fragmentation and breakage also lies creation. The act of licking is instinctual and internal but it also penetrates and reaches into the world. It is through this exact engagement that geologists, archaeologists, and also children understand their surroundings. Objects melt in your mouth, and the universe can be experienced, absorbed, and possibly devoured, resulting in a moment of sensual synthesis.

"Licking Structures" embodies exactly this process of dissolution and re-creation. We long for the erosion of past architectures that shape our collective reality, enabling us to metabolize new ones in which we can better coexist.

"Licking Structures" creates an interdisciplinary space in which the artworks both literally and metaphorically explore the concept of dissolving orders. The 24 artists utilize their personal perspectives to create, broaden or re-imagine institutional frameworks and established dichotomies in an intimate way. We invite visitors to come in contact with the sensual through symbols on the labels, indicating which senses to use to appreciate each artwork. Lick at your own risk!

This exhibition is curated, organized and produced by students of the department of Art & Science at the University of Applied Arts Vienna, in collaboration with the Natural History Museum Vienna.

Wie Steine und Kristalle, so erodieren auch soziale und institutionelle Strukturen. Doch in ihrer Fragmentierung und ihrem Zerbrechen steckt das Potenzial, Neues zu erschaffen. Der Akt des Leckens ist instinktiv und intim, doch er greift auch nach der Welt und dringt in sie ein. Durch exakt diese Vorgehensweise verstehen Geolog:innen, Archäolog:innen und auch Kinder ihre Umwelt. Gegenstände schmelzen im Mund, und das Universum kann erfahren, absorbiert und möglicherweise verschlungen werden, was ein Moment der sinnlichen Synthese herbeiführt.

Licking Structures verkörpert genau diesen Prozess der Auflösung und Neuschöpfung. Wir sehnen uns nach der Erosion von Strukturen der Vergangenheit, die unsere kollektive Realität formen, damit Platz für neue geschaffen wird, in denen wir besser koexistieren können.

Licking Structures schafft einen interdisziplinären Raum, in dem Kunstwerke das Konzept der Auflösung von Ordnungen sowohl wörtlich als auch metaphorisch erforschen. Die 24 Künstler:innen nutzen ihre persönlichen Perspektiven, um institutionelle Rahmen und fließende Dichotomien auf intime Art und Weise zu erweitern, zu erschaffen oder umzudeuten. Die Symbole auf den Schildern weisen darauf hin, mit welchen Sinnesorganen die einzelnen Kunstwerke erlebt werden können, und laden die Besucher:innen dazu ein, mit dem Sensesicheren in Kontakt zu treten. Abschlecken auf eigene Gefahr!

Diese Ausstellung wurde kuratiert, organisiert und produziert von Studierenden der Abteilung Art & Science an der Universität für angewandte Kunst Wien, in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Naturhistorischen Museum Wien.

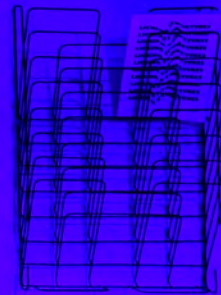


Figure No. 72: ›Licking Structures Wall Text‹ Own Image

To showcase the scores, I opted for two sockets from the Art & Science studio measuring 25 × 25 cm in width and 100 cm in height. This placement ensured the scores were positioned at a convenient height for easy viewing. On the sockets, I had a minimum of two of each score laid out, and I made sure to refill them while the exhibition was running to ensure that there were enough. In order to frame the scores and avoid placing them loosely on the sockets, I crafted a base using the Hanebütten paper. I selected a different shade for each score, creating a contrasting effect and wrote the durations of each category on the base, adding further distinction to the presentation.



Figure No. 73: ›Prototyping‹ Own Image

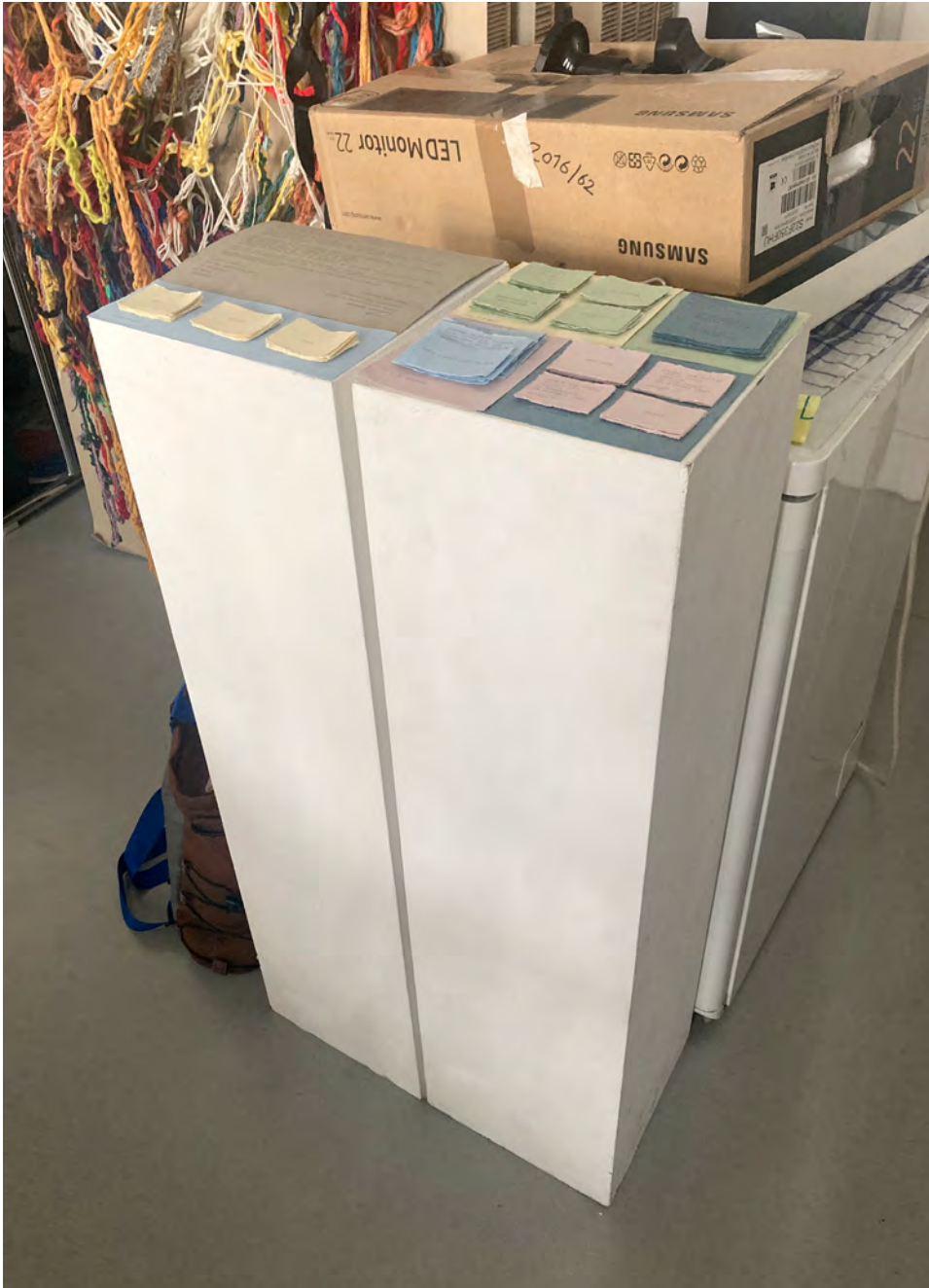


Figure No. 74: ›Sockets in the Studio‹ Own Image

As the work is not immediately self-explanatory, I considered creating a booklet to accompany the exhibition. This booklet would have offered detailed explanations for each score. However, I made the decision to avoid excessive descriptions and instead wrote a text outlining my intentions. This approach should allow a more intuitive and unrestricted engagement between the visitors and the artwork. The text I wrote was the following:

*this is an invitation
an invitation to take one of the paper snippets, a score,
that you resonate with and try it out*

*let the instruction guide you
the score does not have to be carried out here, but rather
at any other time - in the crowded tram, on an empty clearing in the forest,
whether it be morning or night, alone or with someone else
find your own practice*

*the scores have different colours based on their approximate time requirements
the green scores can be performed for a moment
the dark blue ones take between 5 and 10 minutes
the pink ones require 10-20 minutes
& the light blue ones take 20 to 30 minutes
consider the yellow scores more as reminders, as they don't have an exact time limit
but these are only clues - do it for as long as you like
there is no „right“ or „wrong“ way, it is open to variation and interpretation*

*examine and compare how your perception and experiences are shaped
within different contexts*

create attention

let the unexpected enter

be temporary

examine

reiterate

recognize your body

enhance your awareness

practice being-in-the-world

embrace ambiguity

get lost



Figure No. 75: › Setup Left Socket ‹ Own Image

Overall, I was pleased with the feedback and reception of my work. However, I envisioned utilizing the wall more effectively to draw greater attention to the piece. I only learned that my work would be placed near the wall on the day of the exhibition opening, as initially it was intended to be free-standing in the middle of the room. Due to safety regulations requiring clear escape routes, this arrangement was not possible. Consequently, I did not have enough time to implement the walls.

Another aspect that impacted the realization of my work was the limited time I had to attend meetings as the end of the summer semester approached and I had to prioritize my graduation. Generally, I noticed that I tried to make as little trouble as possible for the people organizing the Licking Structures exhibition when implementing my work and consequently opted for a smaller-scale design approach. Additionally, my only short-term stay in Vienna played a role in influencing my decision to create a piece of art that could be easily transported. Furthermore, reflecting on my role in between Art & Science and Transformation Design, I sometimes would have wished for me to belong more to the Art & Science students while I was inscribed there. This was due to the challenges I encountered while writing my master's thesis in an environment that focused on different disciplines than my own.

Nevertheless, I still see it as a great opportunity to have been able to exhibit the design of my master thesis at the Künstlerhaus, which wouldn't have been possible without the Art & Science department.



Figure No. 76: ›Partitur Close Up‹ Photographer: Jorit Aust



Figure No. 77: ›Partitur‹ Photographer: Jorit Aust

4.5 NOT IT

I had the opportunity to showcase parts of ›Partitur‹ at the Angewandte Festival, which took place from June 27th to June 30th 2023. The exhibition revolved around the theme ›Not It‹, was hosted in the Art & Science Studio, and the accompanying text for the event was as follows:

»This year our studio has been the busiest since a while, it is filled with nonsensical notes, failed experiments and abandoned ideas; aftermath of making ›It‹.

We invite you to share the familiar emptiness of a studio after the dust settles and ›It‹ has been made. Solo and collective works will be on display in our studio and in our very own Kunstverein PSK. «⁴⁵

I really liked the idea of exhibiting the things that don't make it into the big exhibition spaces and institutions, as it deviates from the typical perception by the visitors because these behind-the-scenes aspects often go unnoticed. For the Künstlerhaus, I had produced a lot of scores anyway, and frequently tore them or made mistakes while writing them, which led to me not having to actually produce something new for ›Not It‹. I saw it more as a showcase of all the fails that occurred while writing on the typewriter, sometimes tired and not so focused.

⁴⁵

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Figure No. 78: ›My Studio Desk‹ Own Image

I aimed to showcase ›Partitur‹ at the Angewandte Festival in a style that reflected the working environment at my desk. With the prior decision to exhibit at ›Not It‹, I kept the pieces of paper on which I had made mistakes or that I centred incorrectly.

Additionally, I wrote the descriptive text for the booklet on a spare piece of paper and typed another text that states it as part of my master thesis and mentions the simultaneous exhibition where it was showcased:

»This work is part of the ›Licking Structures‹ exhibition that you can see at Künstlerhaus until Sunday, 02.07. What you can see here are all the fails that happened while producing written scores. ›Partitur‹, the work, is also the design part of my master thesis.«



Figure No. 79: ›Studio Desk. View from Above‹ Own Image



Figure No. 80: ›Not It Scores‹ Own Image



Figure No. 81: ›Typewriting‹ Photographer: Theresa Hajek

4.6 *TRANSCENDING*

This process of trying to exhibit, to visualize, a work about sensations, about states of being and experiencing, that are not necessarily tangible, has been a great source of learning for me. Despite facing multiple crises during the process of completing my master's thesis, something that is immaterial and material at the same time crystallized. I tried to go beyond the visual realm, exploring spheres that are often difficult to capture. I tried to give an idea, to get a picture, of what it means to live in a body, to relate to the world and to one's self. I see this as something very abstract and deeply personal, which I kind of generalized in order to write about it in the context of my master's thesis despite its inherent difficulty to be generalized. I wanted to give prompts to observe one's body, to learn that one has a body and one is a body, both at the same time. I searched for ways of building a relationship with the body, to relate to it — to connect with it or solidify the connection that is already there. I don't have the feeling that this process is now at a conclusion. Rather, I see my work, my engagement, as a contribution to an ongoing process.



Figure No. 82: > Applied Scores Outside <
Photographer: Hanna Schwab

Figure No. 83: > Applied Scores Bed <
Photographer: Lilian Kaufmann



5 CONCLUSION

In this master's thesis, I have explored an interdisciplinary approach to the body combining elements of design and art with materialistic and sociological theories. In my search for new ways to talk about the body, I assumed multiple roles, sometimes simultaneously. At times, I embodied the role of an artist, while at other times, I served as an initiator and sometimes as a participant.

Given that this work revolves a lot around perception and personal experience, I would like to reiterate that the challenge lies in the fact that we can only truly experience our own lives. I can never surely know whether my work, ›Partitur‹, has enhanced the awareness of exhibition visitors, whether I initiated a practice of being-in-the-world. And as I acknowledge the inherent subjectivity of this work, and understand that it did not have a defined beginning and doesn't have a clear ending, I embrace the ambiguity within my design and value it. But in perspective, I would be interested in capturing the essence of this subjectivity that I have been allowing to be undefined. Currently, it feels as though I have exposed something and now must allow it to remain like this, leaving it to be interpreted by others.

Another limitation of this approach is that while engaging with somatic practices can foster personal growth and enhance one's sense of agency, it alone is not sufficient to effectively challenge and dismantle the broader systemic forces at play. The mechanisms of the neoliberal system

extend far beyond individual practices, encompassing complex structures, power dynamics, and institutionalized inequalities. However, it is crucial to recognize that this master thesis does not exist in isolation. In both my studies of Transformation Design and Art & Science, I have met many people dealing with comparable challenges and concerns, striving to address systemic inequalities, challenging oppressive structures, and advocating for alternative models of living together. By recognizing and engaging with these complementary approaches, I want to acknowledge the multifaceted nature of social change and the need for diverse strategies to create a more equitable and just society.

Therefore, while individual practices provide a valuable contribution to the process of transformation, they are just one piece of a larger puzzle. To achieve societal change, a holistic perspective embracing an interconnected approach that acknowledges the importance of collective efforts, collaboration, and solidarity will be necessary.

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As part of my master's thesis, I used Chat GPT as a tool, not for content creation per se, but to rephrase and improve sentences. Since I did not write this thesis in my mother tongue, the AI tool was helpful to reassure myself that I was putting the content down on paper in a well-worded way. I used Chat GPT mainly to rephrase existing sentences and convert them into alternative expressions.

For the typesetting of this master thesis I used the font GT Sectra, which is designed by Dominik Huber, Marc Kappeler (Moiré), and Noël Leu (Grilli Type) and was released in 2013.

The cover is designed with the Courier New font, which was developed in the mid-1900s by Howard Kettler of IBM as a typewriter face, and was later redrawn by Adrian Frutiger for the IBM Selectric series.

pause

play

pay attention

care

choose

take it slow

be present

go for a walk

allow

take in the details

explore

the resonant qualities
of different sounds

let go