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VIDEO ARTICLE

Embodiment and Social Distancing: Projects

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David Casacuberta⁶, Pep Gatell⁷ and Melissandre Varin⁸

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A collection of five video essays on embodiment and social distancing, with a focus on projects. ANNIE ABRAHAMS AND DANIEL PINHEIRO, “Why is the use of videoconferencing so exhausting? An analysis on the demands” (00:10): Video footage from *Distant Feeling(s)* project run by Annie Abrahams & Daniel Pinheiro, a yearly reconnection, eyes closed, no talking. MAURICIO CARRASCO AND DANIEL ZEA, “Vortex Decameron: Building narratologies in pandemic times” (05:22): Emerging from another plague, the fourteenth century Black Death, Boccaccio’s *Decameron* presents the reader with examples of pre, mid and post-plague societal perceptions and norms. This correspondence inspired Ensemble Vortex to propose a newly commissioned series of contemporary narrative works. TINA LA PORTA, “Internet Art At The Turn Of The Millennium” (11:32): This body of work spans from 1994 to 2005, during this time I made over twenty web-based works that explored the idea of “live-ness” on the internet. ALICIA DE MANUEL, DAVID CASACUBERTA, AND PEP GATELL, “La Maldición de la Corona: Revisiting videoconference as a system to foster group creativity” (16:50): A collective and remote experiment based on William Shakespeare’s classic *Macbeth*, carried out by Fundación Épica La Fura dels Baus during the lockdown. The experiment has involved around thirty creatives and resulted in a pioneering work that transcends technological barriers and investigates the future of theater. MELISSANDRE VARIN, “Freezing Elements of Research” (21:54): the visual is the abstract of the audio/the audio is the abstract of the visual – altogether – with you – it forms an assemblage into braids.

Keywords: videoconferencing; video chat; perception; delay; plague; narrative; concert; music ensemble; internet art; web art; web cam; voyeur; liveness; creativity; performance; autoethnography; assemblage

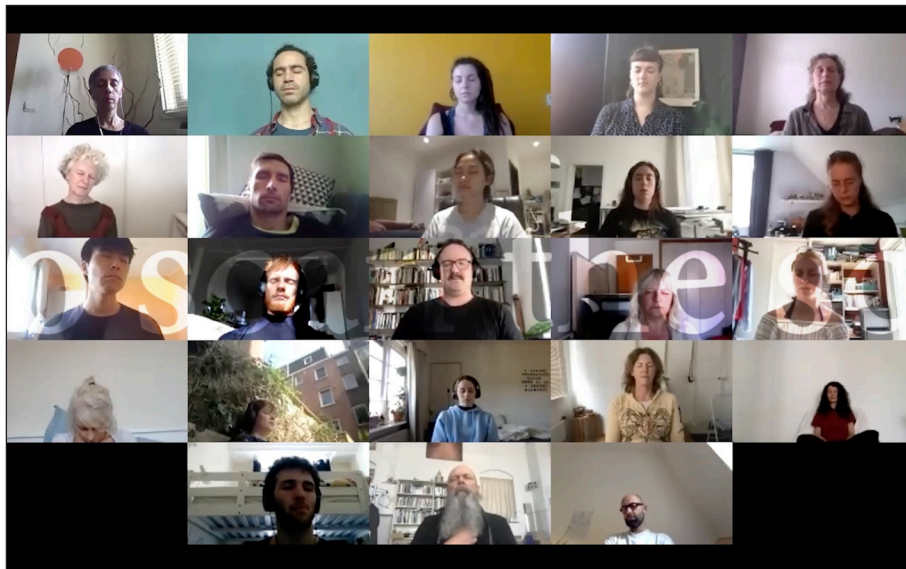
VIDEO ARTICLE

Available to view here: <https://doi.org/10.16995/jer.67>.

Available for download here: <https://doi.org/10.16995/jer.67.s1>.

VIDEO ARTICLE TRANSCRIPT

[00:10]



Why is the use of videoconferencing so exhausting? An analysis on the demands.

intimacy is awkward

intimacy is awkward

NO OVERVIEW NO OVERVIEW NO OVERVIEW NO OVERVIEW NO OVERVIEW

NO OVERVIEW NO OVERVIEW NO OVERVIEW NO OVERVIEW NO OVERVIEW

NO OVERVIEW NO OVERVIEW NO OVERVIEW NO OVERVIEW NO OVERVIEW

NO OVERVIEW NO OVERVIEW NO OVERVIEW NO OVERVIEW NO OVERVIEW

NO OVERVIEW NO OVERVIEW NO OVERVIEW

you have to scan the screen continuously

interruption(s)

impossible to detect any subtle details

no detail

imagination replaces the secondary signs of communication
and these have to be processed on usefulness

we are prone to check our own image all the time

as if we need a continuous assurance

that the connection still exists

all sound is mixed in one mono sound environment

this leads to a compression of the shared space

we have to guess where the sound comes from

distraction(s)

you, me and I

a triangular situation in

which we're feeling and watching

ourselves and the others...

this is psychologically demanding: our

brains need to process the self as body and image

interruption(s)

you only see faces in *close up* when

you are a baby in a cradle or

with a lover in bed

you only see faces in *close up* when

you are a baby in a cradle or

with a lover in bed

there is delay
we are never exactly in the same
time/space

All this contributes to an exhaustion.
We try to overcome the limitations of
artificial environments without
taking into account its specificities.

What happens if we take away
the senses we use most to communicate?

What if we close our eyes and don't talk.
What is left?

video footage from

Distant Feeling(s)

project run by Annie Abrahams & Daniel Pinheiro
a yearly reconnection – eyes closed, no talking

Annie Abrahams & Daniel Pinheiro

Annie Abrahams questions the possibilities and limits of communication
specifically under networked conditions.

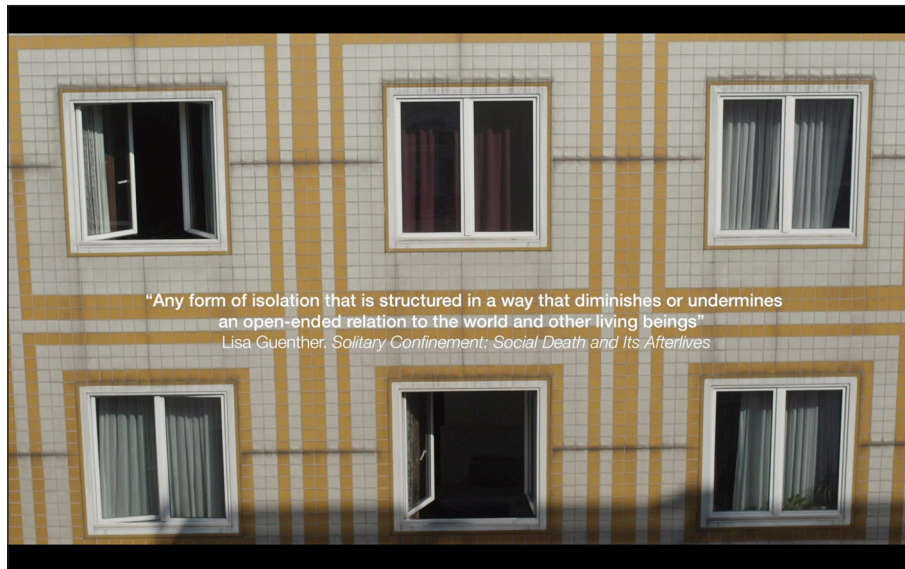
Daniel Pinheiro explores forms of performativity within the digital realm,
its possible translations and implications.

relevant articles

“Trapped to Reveal – On webcam mediated communication and collaboration”,
Annie Abrahams, JAR #2 (Journal for Artistic Research) 2012, ISSN 2235-0225.

“Performance como Processo: Práticas de “Embodiment” à Distância.” PINHEIRO,
Daniel; PARRA, Lisa. eRevista Performatus, Inhumas, ano 3, n. 14, jan. 2015. ISSN:
2316-8102.

[05:22]



VORTEX DECAMERON **Building narratologies in pandemic times**

by Mauricio Carrasco and Daniel Zea

Vortex Decameron, building narratologies in pandemic times, describes a project conceived during the period of confinement by members of the new music ensemble Vortex; a recollection of contemporary stories about austerity, miscommunication, isolation, and their consequent artistic and philosophical outcomes.

Dr. Mauricio Carrasco is a Chilean-Australian freelance performer and researcher resident in Geneva who investigates the figure of the Actor-Musician as a protagonist in the genres of contemporary Monodrama and Music Theatre.

Daniel Zea is a Swiss-Colombian designer, composer and sound artist established in Geneva whose work focuses on instrumental and electronic music, hybrid performances involving video, sound, gesture capture systems, physical computing and programming.

Suddenly, he straightens up, seated at a table where he must read? Write?
 I do not know; I only see the naked elbow and shoulder;
 and I wonder what dreams his eyes have drawn from the fold of his arm,
 what words or what designs can be born;
 but I tell myself that I am the sole witness, external,
 to shape and warp the graceful chrysalis as it is born.
 This morning the window remains closed;
 instead I write to you.

Michel Foucault, letter to Hervé Guibert

VORTEX DECAMERON

Building narratologies in pandemic times
 by Mauricio Carrasco and Daniel Zea

[Mauricio Carrasco:]

I too, have found myself strongly drawn to observing my neighbours, wondering about their lives behind those windows based on the discrete fragments my eyes catch from my desk. Just weeks earlier, we were preparing a concert in full knowledge that it would be the last, for who knows how long. Our circumstances were plagued by constant rumours about the concert having to be cancelled because of the advancing pandemic. On March 12th, we performed. On March 13th, the country went into confinement. Legally defined as “any form of isolation that is structured in a way that diminishes or undermines an open-ended relation to the world and other living beings,” the lockdown measures stopped radically all live culture.

“any form of isolation that is structured in a way that diminishes or undermines an open-ended relation to the world and other living beings”

Lisa Guenther, *Solitary Confinement: Social Death and Its Afterlives*

David Bird

Dark Ethnography, 2020

Now, as museums and exhibitions are slowly reopening to limited audiences, live cultural events remain indefinitely suspended. The open-ended relationship we have to the world has been profoundly undermined: the pinnacle social ritual of the live concert has been placed beyond our reach, with no precise promise to return.

Daniel Zea

Toxic Box (maquette), 2020

Emerging from another plague, the fourteenth century Black Death, Boccaccio's *Decameron* presents the reader with examples of pre, mid and post-plague societal perceptions and norms. Through pluralistic accounts and perspectives, the frame story form of the work serves to show how radical cultural shifts occurred. Similar to the Black Death, the current pandemic is generating discursive forms of life as pre, mid and post Covid-19. This correspondence inspired Ensemble Vortex to propose a newly commissioned series of contemporary narrative works – *Vortex Decameron* – a project that begins within the confinement period, touching on the recent past memories and reflections on modalities of life, and then as imagined perpetual project, transcending the period(s) of confinement to grow and map the emergence of new ritual norms as they manifest. That which has been the essential undisputed goal of a music ensemble until now – the experience of a live concert – will be radically captured, reimagined and become a dynamically expanding archive.

Daniel Zea

The Love Letters? 2018

The *Vortex Decameron* project will see the creation of a website platform where both digital and analogue outputs merge. It will seek new and blended ways of presenting live concerts where strong restrictions and rules must be adhered to.

I see
so good
play
striking
will I forgive
free trial
pay
locations
how do
bad sector
systemsoundserver
cloud storage
kernel_task [0]
cabin
fragility
fear clash
to you
I made love
was not
your navel
While you live!
myself up
or better
impossible
to assimilate

get lost

fuck

software installed

has grown

made of

K said

like an (artist)

the connection

the will to offer

register now

love urgently

to love

copyright

mechanism

sense

drawings

they're yours

are you

will

long time

better

I lighted

it will

report abuse

your knees

and smells

reasonable

plenty of

family

accompanied

in the concert
folded in two
you understand
kiss you
searching
password
the sense
dead
of your spine
and know
too?
Why are
moment
erase all
report abuse
the cave
this music
met mine
unprepared
it was
arched
performance
a dream
or
and

Each reconceived concert will exist like chapters of a story frame tale, broadly shaped by narratologies that will be articulated in 1) the production of audiovisual works, 2) the production of technical, artistic and philosophical outcomes that relate to the original work and 3) the

development of sharing strategies to disseminate the work pedagogically and commercially.

- 1) the production of audiovisual works
- 2) the production of technical, artistic and philosophical outcomes that relate to the original work
- 3) the development of sharing strategies to disseminate the work pedagogically and commercially.

James Rushford

Egyptian Love Poem in Nihilist Cipher, 2015

The *Vortex Decameron* tales will nourish from improvised, composed and every step in between contributions, and will start with three tales, the first being a staged version of James Rushford's monodrama for guitarist *Egyptian Love Poem in Nihilist Cipher*. The metaphoric solitude of this work takes a queer fifteenth-century Egyptian love poem and codifies it using a Russian cipher. Following this will be a hybrid performance that explores embodiment and communication through touchless interfaces. *The Love Letters?* by Daniel Zea, paints a dystopian portrait of a society where human relationships are utterly mediated by mechanical algorithms.

no love letters
day
when
goodbye
our souls
that journey
under the piano

Arturo Corrales

Princess Coma HiCry NY, 2019

To close the first stage of *Vortex Decameron*, *Princess Coma HiCry NY II* is a video virus project by Arturo Corrales based on the myriad permutations of interactions between three contrasting musical characters linked by subliminal threads.

ENSEMBLE VORTEX

ENSEMBLE VORTEXT – VORTEX DECAMERON

Building narratologies in pandemic times

by Mauricio Carrasco and Daniel Zea

Ensemble Vortex

Performers:

Mauricio Carrasco

Maximilien Dazas

Aurélien Ferrette

Anne Gillot

Rada Hadjikostova

Jocelyne Rudasigwa

Live electronics:

Daniel Zea

Video article written and narrated by Mauricio Carrasco. Edited by Daniel Zea

With thanks to David Chisholm for his precious advice

Camera by Juliana Fanjul

Live concert recorded by Daniel Zea

Princess Coma HiCry NY recorded by Giuseppe Greco

Performer/flutist: Elisabeth de Merode

References

Boccaccio, Giovanni. *The Decameron*, translated by Wayne A. Rebhorn (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2013)

Foucault, Michel. Cited in *L'Autre Journal* by Hervé Guibert (Paris: Gallimard, 2015)

Guenther, Lisa. *Solitary Confinement: Social Death and Its Afterlives* (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2013). Accessed May 27, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.ctt4cggj8.

Audio-visual references (in order of appearance)

Gottfried, Rama. *Apophanie*, video-puppetry instrument, 2017

Bird, David. *Dark Ethnography*, for four flashlights operators and cello, 2020

Zea, Daniel. *Toxic Box* (3D animation), 2020.

Zea, Daniel. *The Love Letters?*, for two performers, two webcams, two computers running face tracking algorithms, text generators and electronic sounds, 2018

Rushford, James. *Egyptian Love Poem in Nihilist Cipher* for guitarist, 2015

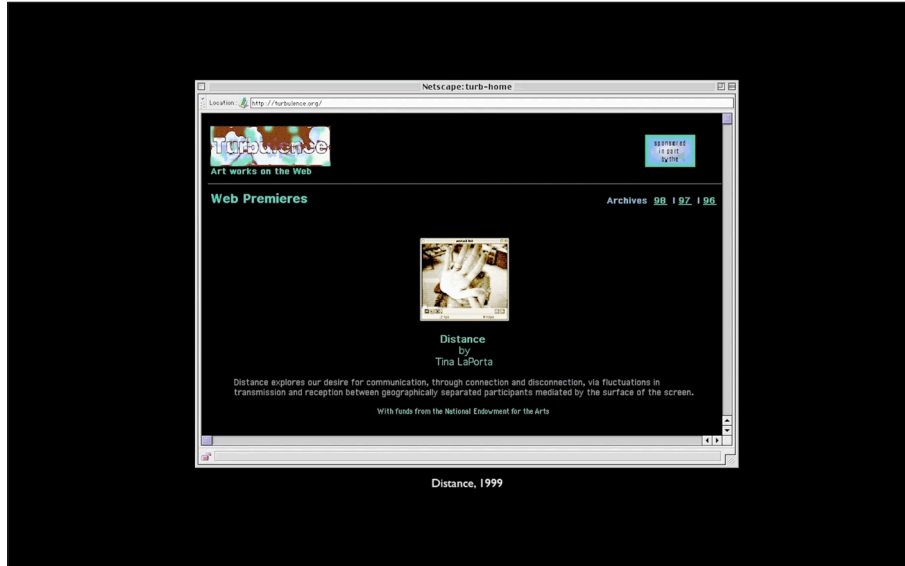
Corrales, Arturo. *Princess Coma HiCry NY* video virus performance, 2019

Vortex Decameron project is supported by Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia

Carrasco/Zea © 2020

www.ensemblevortex.com

[11:32]



Internet Art At The Turn Of The Millennium

Tina La Porta

This body of work spans from 1994–2005, during this time I made over twenty web-based works that explored the idea of “live-ness” on the internet.

If you live with a mental illness, then the concept of social distancing and self isolation is nothing new to you. For many, however, it is. The global arts community is responding to this time of distancing by shifting online via social media and the internet for digital connectivity and gathering.

In 1999 I launched a web-specific artwork titled *Distance*. In this work I explored the use of web cams to meet the desire for connectivity. These screen-based connections preceeded our current mobile means of communication. The internet was still an emerging medium impacting our culture.

Internet based communication continued to be the focus of my works *Remote_corp@REALities*, *dystopia mix*, *distance in real-time: eye to the ear remix* and *no access!*. “cu-see me” was the popular web cam application during

Y2K, which included text-based real-time chat. These works incorporated images and text taken from cu-see me as well as sound made from face-to-face interviews with artists and students working with these emerging technologies. Forms inviting remote user interaction were also incorporated into the work asking questions such as “What does distance mean to you?” and “Does technology bring us closer or further apart?”

In 2001, I wrote in an artist statement that these works have the “combined effect of functioning like an extended online conversation taking place in both real and delayed time, amongst geographically dispersed participants mediated by the surface of their computer screens.”

The idea of “liveness” on the internet was the primary focus of *voyeur_web*. Placing webcams in the home, using technology to reach out to the world, became a phenomenon within the emerging web cam subculture. Staging exhibitionism and inviting voyeurism was the guiding tendency that called “attention to the interplay between the public and private spheres.”

My work with digital media preceeded internet art. In 1993 I began working with three dimensional software and in 1994 exhibited an immersive installation, *Translate {} Expression*. In this work I created an avatar built by technology, constructed by computer code. Later, once the World Wide Web was developed and the the first web browser, Mosaic, was released, I made this work and distributed it online.

The works that followed, *future_body*, *net.works + avatars* and several remixed versions of the original *Translate {} Expression*, continued to explore the relationship between technology, the body and subjectivity – asking, “What does it mean to be embodied in a high-tech world?”

While this body of work spans from 1994 to 2005, during this time twenty web-based works were launched. Most of them are not available on the internet at this time. Many web hosts have long expired and most of the

plug-ins are now obsolete. Preserving and archiving the work from this period is a current concern. How to re-make the work for today's platforms and present the work in physical space are the challenges that I and many artists making work during this time face.

And now, during this time of self-isolation, I see so many arts organizations and individual artists turning to the internet, once again, to reach out to world, engage in dialogue, and distribute their work to a remote, geographically dispersed audience.

anita&360

.2 fps

8 Kbps

<http://turbulence.org>

Turbulence

Art works on the web

sponsored in part by the

Web premieres

Archives 98 97 96

Distance

by

Tina La Porta

Distance explores our desire for communication, through connection and disconnection, via fluctuations in transmission and reception between geographically separated participants mediated by the surface of the screen.

With funds from the National Endowment for the Arts

Distance, 1999

<http://www.bekkoame.ne.jp/i/ga2750/tina/mix.html>

Tina La Porta

Distance in Real-Time: an eye to the ear remix

send your responses

while sound file downloads

(requires shockwave audio plug-in)

who are you?

where are you from?

what's your e-mail address?

Is our interaction immediate?

What does distance mean to you?

Is technology a veil?

Is the virtual, real?

Does difference exist in cyberspace?

where will the body be in the future?

Does technology bring us closer, or further apart?

send

Distance in Real-Time: an eye to the ear remix, 2001

can't see nothing at all?

or is it building up slow

that's better.. thanks!!

its pixelating in s l o w l y

can u see now???

oh okay patience

Re:mote_corp@REALities, 2001

artport

Netscape: Cam 3

New Cam View! Cam is LIVE!

MASTER SUITE

LIVING

DINING

KITCH.

B.1

B.2

BED RM.2

BED RM.3

ENT.

P.

GARAGE

U.T.

distance.portal

distance real-time eye2ear dystopia remote

voyeur_web, 2001

translate

translate

translate

scale

translate

instance F4arm_R

translate

camera

translate

expression

translate

expression

completed pixelwoman2 file

done

http://mitpress.mit.edu/e-journals/LEA/GALLERY/laporta/gallery_index.html

Translate {} Expression, 1998

remote locations

mediated spaces

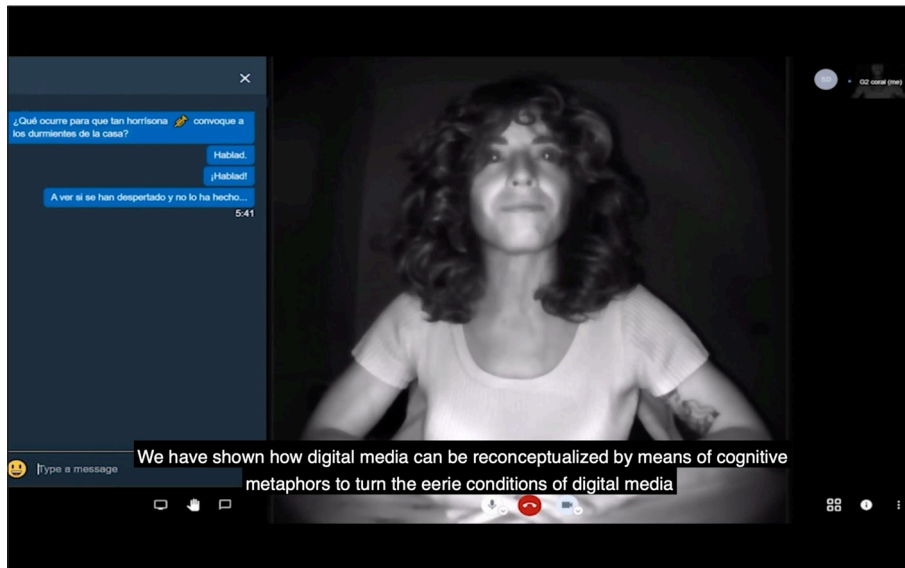
voyeur_web Installation, NYC 2003

why do you think that you are not real?

no access!, 2000

Born in 1967 in Chicago, Tina La Porta is an artist that works across disciplines, including photography, digital art, screen printing and mixed-media.

[16:50]



La Maldición de la Corona: Revisiting videoconference as a system to foster group creativity

de Manuel, a., Casacuberta, D. & Gatell, P.

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Fundación Épica

La Fura dels Baus

Abstract:

“La Maldición de La Corona” is a collective and remote experiment based on William Shakespeare’s classic Macbeth carried out by Fundació Épica La Fura dels Baus during the lockdown. The experiment has involved around thirty creatives who have worked at a certain distance through videoconferencing platforms, and it has result in a pioneering work that transcends technological barriers and investigates the future of theater in times of digital revolutions. Therefore, the aim of this video article is to analyze how the use of virtual platforms have affect creativity in the development of a collective work.

Keywords: performance, videoconference, creativity

Alicia de Manuel: PhD candidate in the Philosophy Department of Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Dr. David Casacuberta: PhD in Philosophy, researcher in digital technologies and lecturer at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Pep Gatell: director of La Fura dels Baus and president of Fundació Épica

[Voiceover, with simultaneous captioning:]

Fundació Épica is a space for knowledge transfer and mutual learning that promotes a horizontal interaction between Arts, Humanities, Science and Technology. Épica is born out of the knowledge developed throughout more than 40 years of experience by the theatre company La Fura dels Baus. Thanks to its application, the Foundation aims to project a center that reunites the generation of new disruptive ideas through creative projects that allows knowledge transfer to society.

Due to the activities and workshops developed at the Foundation, Epica has implemented a methodology that is based on work in action: beyond the

theories and reflections, the knowledge created is based on practice, team work, consolidation and mutual comprehension.

In our workshops, we rely heavily on interacting with specific objects that are free available to the students and participants and help them to constraint possibilities in order to create more interesting and relevant outcomes. What Hutchins calls “material anchors” for thinking.

During our last workshop called “La Maldición de la Corona,” we wanted to explore how to address creativity in lockdown. In order to accomplish so, we got together 30 creatives and 3 research groups to explore the possibilities of pure online creative processes while each participant was at their own place, without any chances of physical interaction. This fact posed several problems, and here we want to tackle one: how can we substitute material anchors with virtual ones?

[... Alexandro...It’s the turn of Alexandro...]

Of course, first of all, we must name the common difficulties everybody experience when performing a videoconference.

[...Can you hear me?...Yes... Yes]

Problems such as people trying to speak while the mic is muted, feedback loops when an open mic, the delay in the signal and so on and so forth.

Pep Gatell
President of Fundación Épica &
Artistic Director of La Fura dels Baus

[Pep Gatell:]

Escogimos *Macbeth* por varias razones. Una de las cuales igual es que está libre de derechos, esta es la primera. Segunda, que tiene una estructura dramática muy concreta. Por lo tanto, partimos de una estructura que ayuda a la creación, porque si hubiéramos partido de cero seguramente en dos semanas no nos hubiéramos puesto de acuerdo en qué historia íbamos a contar. En cambio, una historia que ya está explicada lo que sí le podemos dar es una forma especial de cómo explicarla, de cómo contarla.

We chose *Macbeth* for various reasons. One of which is that it is royalty free, this is the first one. The second one, it has a very specific dramatic structure. Therefore, we started from a structure that helps during creation, because if we had started from scratch surely in two weeks. Instead, with a story that is already explained, we can give it is a special way of explaining it, of how to tell it.

Después también elegimos *Macbeth* porque tenía cierto paralelismo con el hecho de estar encerrados y que nos ha cambiado la vida. A *Macbeth* le pasa algo parecido. Se encuentra en un hecho mágico, no sabemos muy bien si se lo imagina o son unas brujas que le explican un porvenir. De alguna manera había un paralelismo en lo que estábamos viviendo. Llegó un coronavirus y nos cambió absolutamente nuestras relaciones y nuestra manera de existir y nuestra manera de crear.

Then, we also chose *Macbeth* because it had a certain parallel with the fact that we are locked up at home and that it has changed our lives. Something similar happens to *Macbeth*. He finds himself in a magical fact, and we do not know very well if he imagines so or if there are witches who explain a specific future to him. Somehow there was a parallel in what we were experiencing. A coronavirus arrived and it absolutely changed our relationships and our way of existing and our way of creating.

[Voiceover:]

The difficulty of understanding a voice or where voices were coming from was solved in a spontaneous way using visual cues instead, like putting an ear close to the camera to indicate that one cannot hear what the other person is saying, or making a specific greeting in order to be identified. This is something our group has studied in detail while analyzing creative processes in choreographies and it was interesting to see similar patterns here.

[... Can you hear me? Lluís? ... ohhh ... Yes. Pedro, we can hear you ... I think Lluís has jumped off]

Another relevant solution was turning abstract concepts into spatial metaphors, as we see analyzed in George Lakoff studies of embodied linguistics. In this video fragment we see first how the concept of disconnection is turned into “jumping” a character, and how YouTube channels become “rooms” for performance rehearsal. In a similar vein, windows that normally represent participants, are labelled as G1, G2, etc. indicating “rooms” in which the different groups present their parts of the performances in specific group videoconferences.

We have shown how digital media can be reconceptualized by means of cognitive metaphors to turn the eerie conditions of digital media while working in groups to turn what can be named such as a panoptic object like a teleconference meeting into a “pathologic” one (in Dunne and Raby's sense) that is adapted to the need to reconvert abstract digital elements into virtual equivalents of material anchors.

PATHOLOGIC OBJECT

A. Dunne & F. Raby

[21:54]



Freezing Elements of Research

melissandre varin are an independent artist-researcher who use their identities as a Black non-binary co-parent to find, make and collect new routes to/ forms of knowledge creation/sharing.

'Freezing elements of research.'

melissandre varin

Five minutes to reflect on this time of social distancing

key words: in-betweenness, performance, autoethnography, assemblage, PhD research

You/ Black/ as a foreigner mothering// feeling close to Ellen Handler Spitz – suddenly jumping back in time in 2009, I read: "An artist's product, moreover, even a mother-artist's, is destined, one fine day, to move out of the studio and into the wider world, where it must live, in spite of and because of what

has been given it, a life of its own. All children do grow up, to an extent. Some of them even become artists in their turn.”

I give thanks to Jb for filming while cooking and taking care of Eole. I give thanks to Eole for teaching me to play (again and again). I give thanks to LaRi for walking me out everyday. I give thanks to the smartphone, and the laptop for mediating this performance in time of social distancing. I give thanks to my supervisors Dr. Yvette Hutchison (the University of Warwick), and Dr. Gabriele Budach (the University of Luxembourg) for being supportive and inspiring beings. I give thanks to the spaces I traverse and that traverse me – in and out. I give thanks to my body that teaches me humility each and everyday. I give thanks to the frozen jars and their many “its” for de-composing my research. I made this audiovisual assemblage from a place of gratitude. I am sending you positive vibrations. (Coventry UK, 01/06/2020 22:49)

In the middle of COVID-19 crisis, 16 months old Eole, and I started a home-based residency supported by Talking Birds in Coventry. I ended up spending time, fictional time with Charles Esche back in 2011. Taking some inspiration from the Deviant Art Institution I started to reflect on the kind of politics I/ my research stand(s) behind.

Second wave feminism thought us that the personal political. Third wave feminism in which my research is inscribed made us feel that the personal is constructed by multiple intersections for which in my research, race, gender, ethnicity, and class are being juxtaposed and superposed to give volume to an in-betweenness that is both informed by postcolonial thinkers such as Homi Bhabha and the concept of *lieu*, space to finally bloom, by Patrick Chamoiseau; but also in-betweenness as being the renegotiation of being in academic spaces, in artistic spaces, and in mothering as a practice.

Taking another *detour* to Fleur Summers and Angela Clark back in 2015, articulating challenges of being mother, academic, and artist/Inspired by the

labour of performance artists like Mierle Laderman Ukeles, early afternoon with Eole or late at night with my partner Jb, we collected the remains (flour, hair, food items, play dough among others) of our everyday performances at home. Gathered them into a ritualistic *balayage*/sweeping followed by a literal jarring process. We used a broom and a stainless dustpan and emptied the remains into emptied jars that were part of our home

Our everyday performances at home suggested how hegemonic dominant scripts may be disrupted, challenged, and transformed through intimate interventions within traditional spaces, collectively reorienting and reconfiguring conversations on how to know/make/nurture differently. That – needed to carefully pay attention, re-evaluates what making means for me in the context of Covid-19 – inspired by Jenny Odell 2019.

In April 2020, Rinaldo Walcott warns us that during the Covid-19 crisis academics have found themselves in a crisis of their work, acutely noticing that they were far from the reality on the ground. Humbly and collectively attempting to challenge and articulate counter-hegemonic ways of holding conversations, in Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's term, bringing us back to 2012. We find, we collect, we observe, we jar, I get prepared for when it is safe to meet again and to share embodied knowledge.

My partner Jb, Eole a toddler, as well as the spaces we traverse – all of them participate in the co-making of everyday performances and thus co-produce my PhD research.

We are in an assemblage of kin after Donna Haraway, collectively stocking and freezing archives of a time of social distancing/saving them for later.

My body has never been more covered by touch. In doing so, this research study is revaluing the labour it takes to breath, be, perform together, as I reconsider my environment – co-maker of my research.

Covid-19 made me deviate from what I thought it was to be a researcher. Being a researcher might be to take 15 minutes out of my caring responsibilities to articulate an initial step towards you. For us to have a discussion about power inequalities in white institutions of knowledge – to some extent reproducing itself behind closed doors, through endless Zoom meetings interrupted by a little one.

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Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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