

Reading Troupe Manual #02

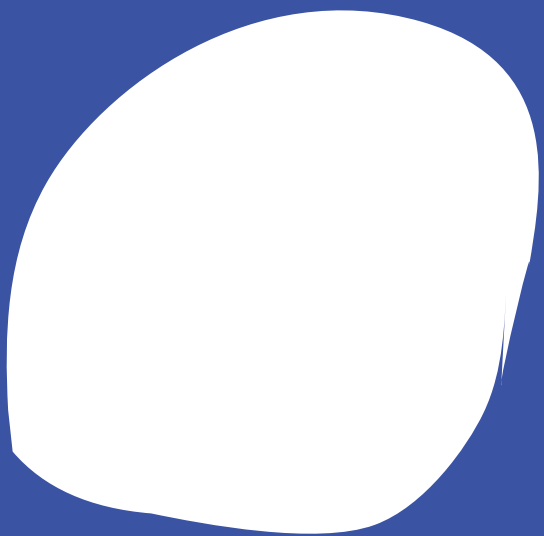
Exercises in Performative, Contingent & Collective Reading

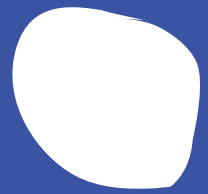
phobia.

e this forced me to make a choice: either to abandon a cultural idiom of
lication that had always been part of my life and personal identity as a
oman, or else to share this idiom with my audience so I could use it suc-
in my work as a recognized and comprehended medium of communica-
shared language. It also gave me a very different perspective on my status
tist and relatively privileged member of society. I had always assumed that
iningful political work I did had to involve utilizing the advantages of my
lass education and aesthetic acculturation as resources "for the benefit
disadvantaged community from which I came; as though those resources

Emma Haugh

was going smoothly, but I
warm bodies in it; the





Reading Troupe Manual #02

Introduction

The Reading Troupe (RT) is a concept and practice that emerged from conversations with curators Rachael Gilbourne and Kate Strain (collectively known as *RGKSKSRG*) in 2013. We were in the early stages of developing a project (*The Re-appropriation of Sensuality*) that would include engagement with students alongside an exhibition at the National College of Art & Design in Dublin. I was considering different approaches to participation and was curious about bringing amateur dramatics to bear on more austere forms of reading that often inflect on contemporary art and art education.

I was increasingly suspicious of the use of words like *rigour* and *precision* as expressive of good art practice. Rigour, meaning *stiff*, and precision, to *cut off*, don't sit right as descriptive terms when I imagine how I want to research, make art, and work with people. By 2013 I had paused previous long term work as a theatre practitioner in community contexts. I presumed I was developing an autonomous art practice that didn't require the tools and skills comprising that work. Now those tools proposed possible models for dancing in the gaps between research and practice, reading and knowledge production, opening questions about conventions of artistic authorship.

Since 2013 I have been travelling the RT and developing a performative toolkit that offers the possibility of a temporal and radical shift in relations between people, space and language. The RT has become a hybrid form of reading group, drama workshop, theatre rehearsal and arts and crafts class. As a practice I'm interested in how the space of a RT can become one of excess that speaks back to, and along with a text, via bodily response, imagination, random order, and a kind of organised chaos. It's sometimes surprising and often wildly generative to discover what languages a text will speak when teased loose from the tightness of type and perceived expectations of diction.

In RT workshops no prior knowledge is needed. There is no presumption that participants will be familiar with either the language or discursive context of the text. What the RT stages is a space where nobody has *more* or *better* knowledge than anybody else, and where reading encompasses many forms of response and entanglement. This can be frustrating for people who are more at home with standardised models of academic reading, who may be left wanting for the moment when we will *really* read.

The RT is not opposed to academic models of knowledge production and reception, many of the texts worked with come from, or are informed by, academic research. What *is* important is to propose a space for reading together where academic models are not privileged or treated as the highest order of knowing and speaking. It's not the many who have access to university education and it's problematic that visual artists are increasingly expected to achieve high levels of academic proficiency and accreditation. The RT proposes a space where response-ability can be formulated quickly and enacted together, where there is no fine point of analysis but more an expanded potential for how a text can be interpreted. RT's leave traces on the body that resonate with a particular text across time and space, making for a convivial and critical familiarity, a form of associative memory based on image-making and shared experience.

RT Manual #01 was published after *RT Workshop #01 Physical Education, Exercises in Embodying Discourse*. A two day affair at District Berlin as part of the exhibition *Dissident Desire*, curated by Suza Husse and Lorenzo Sandoval in 2013. In a group of ten we read an excerpt from Paul Preciados' *Testo Junkie* (2013) producing a series of highly memorable embodiments and enactments of and as the text. Since then there have been many more RT workshops and subsequent RT zines (made quite quickly and cheaply as printed and web publications). *RT Manual #02* is an updated and expanded edit of the first and includes documentation from across the RTs' life to date.

This publication is a commission by Klöntal Triennial 2017 *Part of a Moment*. In relation to their programme (which considers historical and contemporary participatory strategies) I have collaged materials together from Adrian Pipers' *Notes on Funk 1, 11 & 111* (1983/84) for the cover. In *Funk Lessons*, about which the texts refer to, Piper directed collective activity, invited physical movement and delivered discursive lectures in the form of *lessons* about funk music (dealing with history, race and class while also teaching dance moves) between 1982 and 1984. Piper writes about these *lessons* as forms of collaborative performance:

My immediate aim in staging the large scale performance (preferably with sixty people or more) was to enable everyone present to: GET DOWN AND PARTY TOGETHER

As a relational and critical exercise *Funk Lessons* has been important in thinking through potential approaches to participation. Although I haven't explicitly positioned RT sessions as collaborative performances, it would only take a slight tilt shift in perception for them to be understood as such. What *happens* within RT sessions is contingent to variable situated elements and is largely ephemeral in outcome. There is *something* particular that can happen when people agree to work together within a loosely prescribed set of exercises that include improvisation, physicality, critical response as well as the potential awkwardness and risk that comes with any kind of social engagement. That *thing* is materially elusive, difficult to articulate, and lingering. It opens up a space of potential that relies only on collective exchange and a (temporary) commitment to try things out together.

The exercises outlined in this Manual are compiled from experiments that have been effective in different contexts with diverse groups of people. Many have been informed by training and work with Augusto Boals *Theatre of the Oppressed* and also by many years as a member of Dublin Youth Theatre. Experimentation with exercises has been inspired by the work of Kathy Acker, Oreet Ashery, Keith Johnstone, Pauline Oliveros, Adrian Piper, Genesis P-Orridge and Jo Spence among many others.

Emma Haugh June 2017

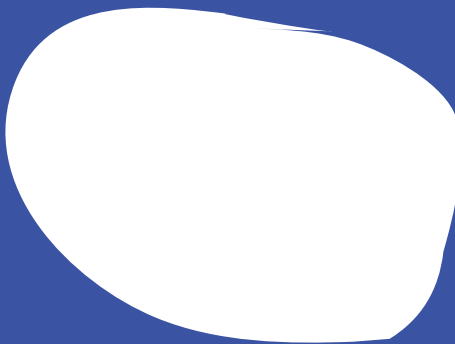




Fig.01

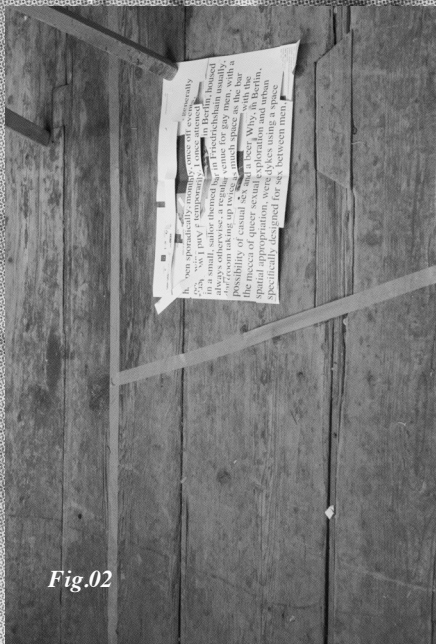


Fig.02

Fig.04

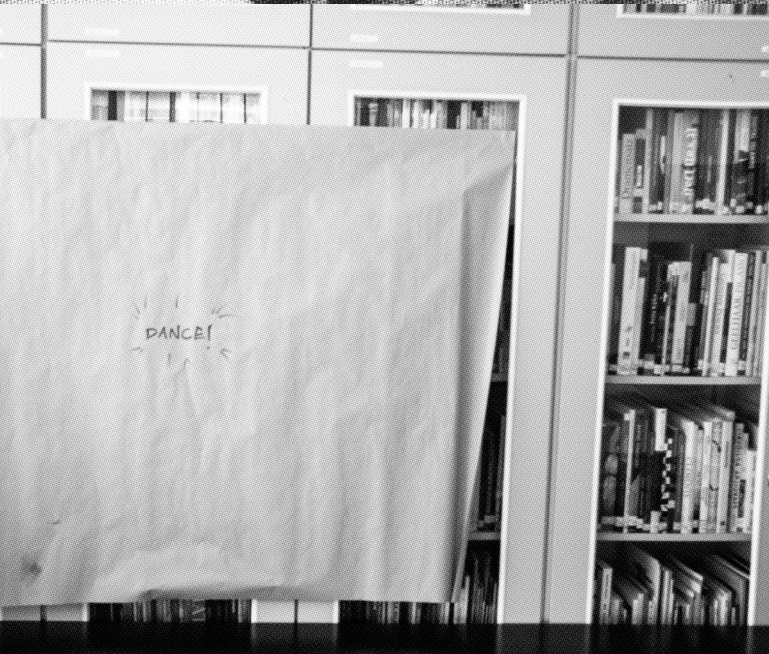


Fig.03

Fig.05



read |rēd|

verb (past read |redl|) [trans.]

look at carefully and comprehend the meaning of (written or printed matter) by mentally interpreting the characters or symbols of which it is composed; speak (the written or printed matter that one is reading) aloud or render in speech, typically to another person; discern (a fact, emotion, or quality) in someone's eyes or expression; have such a knowledge of (a language) as to be able to understand things written in it; apprehend the meaning of (signs, characters, etc.) otherwise than with eyes, as by means of the fingers; interpret the meaning of (gestures, movements, signals, or the like); make out the character, motivations, desires, etc., of (a person or persons); [intrans.] (of a piece of writing) convey a specified impression to the reader: the brief note read like a cry for help; [intrans.] (of a passage, text, or sign) contain or consist of specified words; have a certain wording; used to indicate that a particular word in a text or passage is incorrect and that another should be substituted for it; interpret the words formed by (a speaking person's lips) by watching rather than listening.

troupe |troōp|

noun a group of dancers, actors, or other entertainers who tour to different venues. ORIGIN early 19th cent.: from French, literally 'troup'.



Fig.06



Fig.07

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MATERIALS should be printed and prepared in advance. A RT can happen without any particular technical tools or by improvising alternatives. Draw pictures, write things down, use memory and storytelling, work with available space and resources.

RT participants can choose to be recorded, photographed or not.



A NOTE ABOUT EXERCISES

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EXERCISES can be combined in myriad compositions to make a RT session, they can and should be reformulated and experimented with. It's always good to begin with some simpler and shorter exercises to warm up the group

READING TROUPE

EXERCISES #01

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PHYSICAL AND VERBAL

MISBEHAVING

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DE-FAMILIARISING the text

SPEED reading // split the text between the group // take turns reading // *really* read as fast as you can // when you stumble on a word or phrase repeat it three times // when you stumble on a word the group repeats the word three times with you as a chorus

EMOTION of the text // Imagine the text a feeling thing // read a passage and inflect the reading with a strong emotion // as if it was yours // imagine that it is something you have written that is full of sentiment // imagine that it is a little revealing to read it

DEAF reading to techno with headphones // the reader stands alert // unable to hear their own voice // then pass the headphones from one reader to the next until the chosen text has been read

HIGHLIGHT pieces of the text that you like the feel of // glancing through as if an image // allow them to emerge off the page // don't think twice // work quickly // time limits are helpful

WRITE a phrase chosen from the text // re-model it // placing the words in a pattern that you like // be intuitive // it doesn't have to make sense // choose for whatever reason what words should sit next to one another // make three or four re-arrangements // choose the one you prefer and speak it aloud // in twos // speak your new line to one another three times

REPETITIVE reading // highlight phrases that hit you // choose one with a good rhythm // use only your chosen phrase and repeat it with a partner // converse with each other using only this line of text // inflect your conversation as if disagreeing // agreeing // flirting etc.



SCRIPT with a partner // take about five lines from the text each // ten lines in total // and write them as a ten line scene // read the lines as a conversation // inflected with various tones // relations // emotions

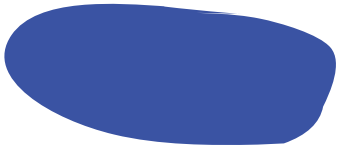
PAIRS can read their scripts once straight through // then a second reading enacted in an imaginary location as suggested by the group // the reading can also be inflected with a specific emotion // e.g. on the moon and depressed // lines of text can be repeated



Fig.09



Fig.10



READING TROUPE

EXERCISES #02

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IMAGINATIVE DISSONANCE

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ENTERING the space of the text //

discovering its architecture // one person takes
response-ability for preparing and leading this
guided imaging exercise

FIRST lie down for a guided warm up exercise
// led by one voice // *slowly*

become aware of the room // others in the
room // proximity // the air close to your face
// the feeling of your body against the floor
points of contact // muscles like bags of sand //
breathe // filling your body // stomach // inhale
// exhale // bring awareness to your feet // legs
// hips // pelvis lower back // stomach // chest //
arms // hands // face // eyes // skull // brain

CONTINUE lying down // imagine the text as
an architectural structure // look at it from a
distance // take your time // begin with the
entrance // picture it // go with the first image
that comes // what shape // what size // does it
invite you in // what kind of threshold // how to
enter

ONCE you enter what is the first sensation
that strikes you // what is the first thing that
you take notice of // stick with your first
image // how does it feel inside // what is the
light like // what is its volume // smells //
textures // colours

NOTICE some objects within the space
move towards one and examine it // size //
purpose // placement

EXAMINE any ornamentation // furniture
fabrics // materials // what are the dominant
colours // what kind of lighting // this first
space continues to another // where does it

lead // what kind of activities does the space suggest

WANDER freely around the structure // try to get a sense of the building as a whole // see from a distance its architectural form // as if a blueprint or 3d model // is it divided into sub spaces // how is it divided up // what scale // how high // sharp or curved lines // hard or soft materials

WRITE it down // draw it // then read it with a partner and listen as they read their text or describe their image // encourage description by asking questions // then your partner tells it back to you as they remember it // read it to the group // put the texts and drawings somewhere visible in the space

READING TROUPE EXERCISES #03

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BECOMING THE TEXT
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INHABITING THE BEAST // what kind of beast is the text // describe it // colours // textures // smells // volume // and distinctive features // fierce or passive // if this text were a creature // living and breathing // embodied // what questions would you have for it

HOTSEATING // in a semi circle with one hotseat placed in the centre and facing the other chairs // audio recording device between the hotseat and semi-circle of chairs

PARTICIPANTS take turns in the hotseat // one by one // they decide whether or not to start the audio recorder // somebody stands close by and mediates between the person in the hotseat and the group // the person in the hotseat answers questions *as* the text

and not as themselves // as if the text were an entity with an active mind and imagination // the person in the hotseat responds to the questions spontaneously // improvised // and is also allowed the right to deny response // the group should ask generous and generative questions and *be with* and not *in competition with* the person in the hotseat

READING TROUPE EXERCISES #04

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IMAGE THEATRE //
POINTS OF COLLAPSE
AND RE-GENERATION
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See also Augusto Boal: IMAGE THEATRE, in: Games For Actors and Non-actors, p.174

HANDS (STRING FIGURES WITHOUT STRING) // a speaker stays outside of this exercise and chooses a series of words or phrases that relate to the text // the group splits into pairs // each pair decides who is *a* and who is *b* // the speaker says the first phrase or word aloud // without talking *a* makes a sculptural gesture with their hands that responds to the phrase and holds it still // *b* then adds to this image with their hands // also in response to the phrase // *a* then removes their hands pauses and places them back in relation to *b* in a different image // the speaker says a new phrase after the pairs have imaged the previous one several times // this continues in a circular movement from *a* to *b* and back again and again // the speaker keeps it going until all phrases have been imaged

IMAGES in two's using words and phrases from the text // one person forms a shape with their body // the other considers this shape and becomes part of the image // hold it for several breaths // then the first person moves out to see the others position // re-considers a new shape // moves back in // and so on // as with the HANDS exercise



Fig.12

ONE MINUTE IMAGES // divide into two groups // read a descriptive line from the text // construct an image using bodies without talking // model the chosen line from the text physically as a tableaux

GROUP image response // the images produced respond to the text or part of the text // in a circle // one person moves into the centre and makes a shape with their body that they can hold // another person enters and becomes part of the image // adding to it // then another person joins // and so on // until the image is complete // then one by one people remove themselves // there should be absolutely no talking

A VOLUNTEER body and some basic props // take turns to sculpt the body into images that manifest the text (or part of) in some way // work instinctively (the body thinks faster than the brain)

PHOTOGRAPH each body sculpture // take turns on the camera // make a note of what piece of text corresponds to each image



Fig.13



Fig.14



Fig.16

Fig.17



Fig.15

READING TROUPE
EXERCISES #05

READING THE FUTURE PAST IN THE
PRESENT // BOOKISH FORTUNE TELLING
// AKA BIBLIOMANCY

BIBLIOMANCY is an old form of fortune
telling shared between friends // in pairs
decide who is the reader and who has a question
// the questioner holds the text or book between
their hands and asks their question or tells a
problem to be solved // with their eyes closed
they allow the text or book to fall open on a
random page and place their finger on a point
on the page // wherever their finger points will
offer the answer to their question or problem //
the reader helps in the interpretation through a
conversation exploring the possibilities // word
association can also be helpful in divining the
meaning of the reading

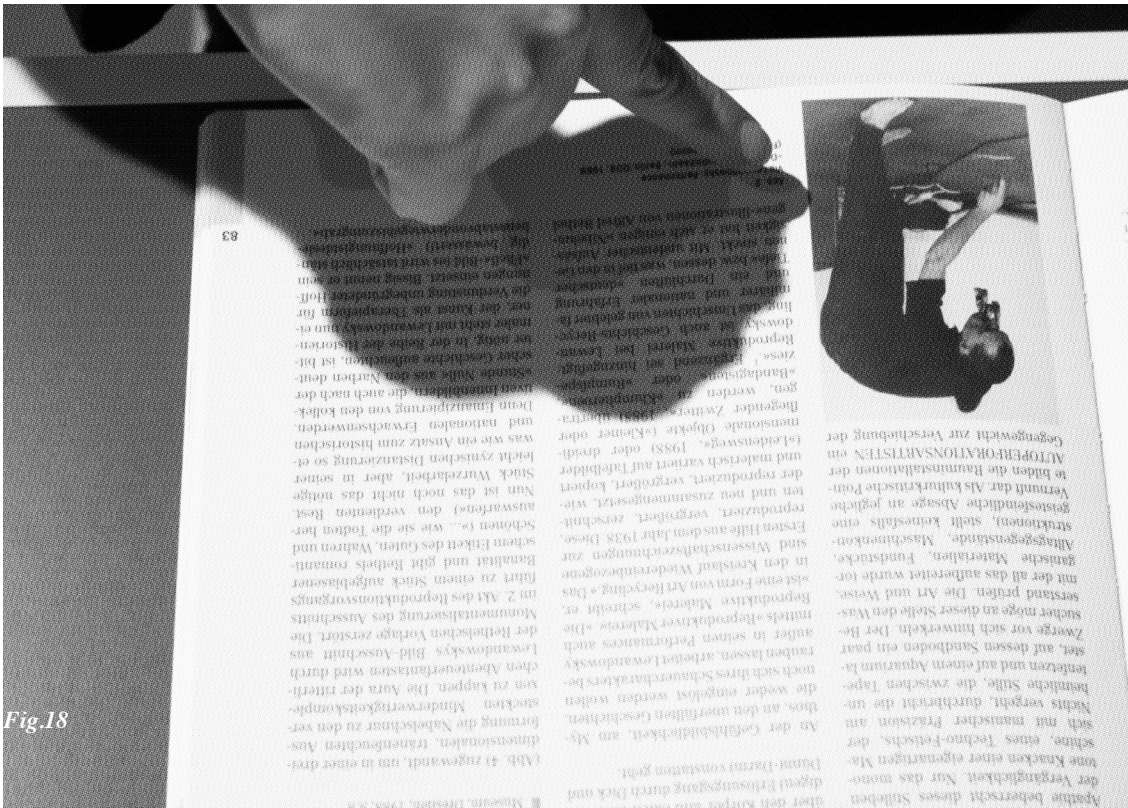


Fig.18

READING TROUPE

EXERCISES #06

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KATHY ACKER AS METHOD

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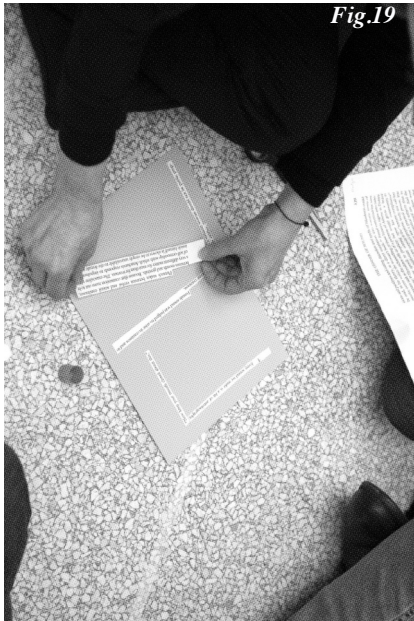


Fig.19

PRINT the text A3 size (easier for cutting up)

SPLIT the group into a number of smaller groups or pairs // divide the text between the groups // this is helpful for particularly long texts

MARK a stage // performance space // on the floor with coloured tape // each group marks their own workspace with coloured tape // connect all workspaces to the stage // the floor becomes a visual work surface // a page // inside each workspace place your text // scissors // glue // A4 blank (neon) paper // coloured dots



Fig.20

READ the text together in each group // make a summary (short description) of your text excerpt for the larger group // include subjective information in your summary // incorporate some of the techniques from the previous exercises // perform your summary for the larger group in the stage space

WORKING without talking in your group // in your workspace // collectively edit the A3 text onto the A4 page // the first person cuts a word or phrase from the original text and pastes it somewhere onto the blank A4 page // the next person does the same // and so on // one after the other until the page is full // or until you decide to stop // people can paste over previous words // only use one side of the A4 paper // place the unused scraps of text within the workspace in a pleasing way // the collective cut-up edit on the A4 sheet is your script or score // coloured dots can be added to indicate particular movements or sound effects // develop a performance for your script or score // rehearse your performance // present a rough version // invite feedback from the larger group // what worked // what could be changed // prepare a second performance that considers the most helpful feedback

DRAW set designs for a developed staging of your script or score // sketch costumes // map stage directions // present to the larger group

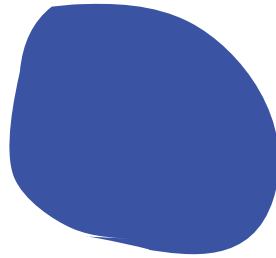
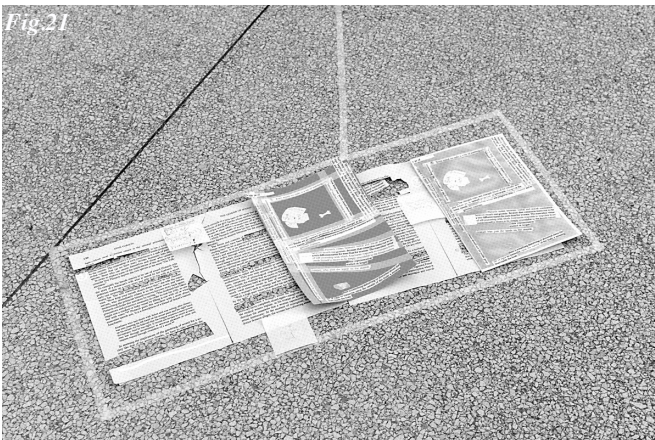


Fig.21



////////////////////////////////////
A NOTE ON DOCUMENTATION //
ZINES & POSTERS
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MATERIALS including photographs, audio recordings, drawings, cut ups, scripts and scores can be collected together and processed, transcribed, scanned, then shared with all group members. Depending on the how the group is organised (as a once off or continuous meeting) materials can be edited by one person or as a group into a zine/poster/printed matter. It's recommended to acknowledge co-authorship of all materials and list participants names (unless people would rather stay anonymous).



Fig.22



Fig.23

ad sound

Fig.24

rarely means

speaks of the need

of voice.

sex

minimum of sound

saying ugly thing...
in which women shouted abusive remarks
Eileithyia



Fig.25

woman's language"

like

emotional matters.

response to otherness
katharsis.

Echo,

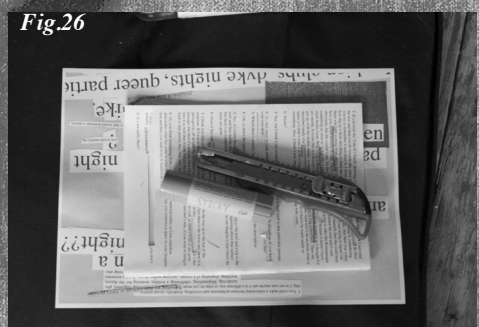
("prudence,
rop")

denounce

The official rhetoric of the lawgivers

bit off her tongue rather than
obedience to male direction and

Fig.26



mind, moderation, temperance, self

...cantant...
...intent and to...
...In his law...
...female noise and...
...followed. In his law...
...to regulate female speech...
...Laws were passed spec...
...choreography, musical...
...lament on the...
...ive remarks or obscenities o...

...en's fest...
...remarks or obscenities o...

...different synt...
...ranging of intonation, c...
...tic fields. different dic...

...soundness of m...
...different synt...
...n, differc...



Fig.27

...mouth...
...literature...
...ejaculation...

...embered or killed

...hings on behalf of the ci...

Image index

Fig.01, Fig.09, Fig.10, Fig.11, Fig.14

RT #02: Imaginative dissonance

Reading José Esteban Muñoz 'Cruising Utopia - The Then and There of Queer Futurity'

As part of the exhibition 'What is Queer Today is not Queer Tomorrow' at the NGBK, Berlin, July 26, 2014

Fig.18

RT #03: Dark pools, Bookish fortune telling sessions

Reading The NGBK library. As part of the NGBK Book Garden Readings, public event at the NGBK, Berlin, February 15, 2015

Fig. 13

RT #04: Love is disturbing

Reading Etel Adnan 'The Cost For Love We Are Not Willing To Pay'. As part of the exhibition 'More Than One Maker'. At The Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA), May 23, 2015

Fig.15, Fig.17, Fig.19, Fig.20, Fig.21, Fig.23, Fig.24, Fig.25

RT #07: Madness, Witchery & Beastiality

Reading Anne Carson 'The Gender of Sound' As part of the symposium ›stumble bumble fail fall hurt‹, at Heidelberger Kunstverein, January 21, 2017

Fig.03, Fig.06, Fig.16, Fig.22, Fig.27

RT #08: Making Something Happen

Reading Hakim Bey 'Temporary Autonomous Zone' (T.A.Z.). As part of the public program of 'Itinerant Assembly', at Bonnington Community Centre & Gasworks, London, March 15/16, 2017

Fig.02, Fig.08, Fig.23, Fig.26

RT #09: Considering the utopian

queer/feminine performative in architecture

Reading research & archive materials from 'The Re-appropriation of Sensuality'.

As part of the 'Gender/Queer Seminar 2016/17', at Akademie der bildenden künste, School of Architecture, Scenography Department, Vienna, Summer term, 2017

Fig.04, Fig.05, Fig.07, Fig.12

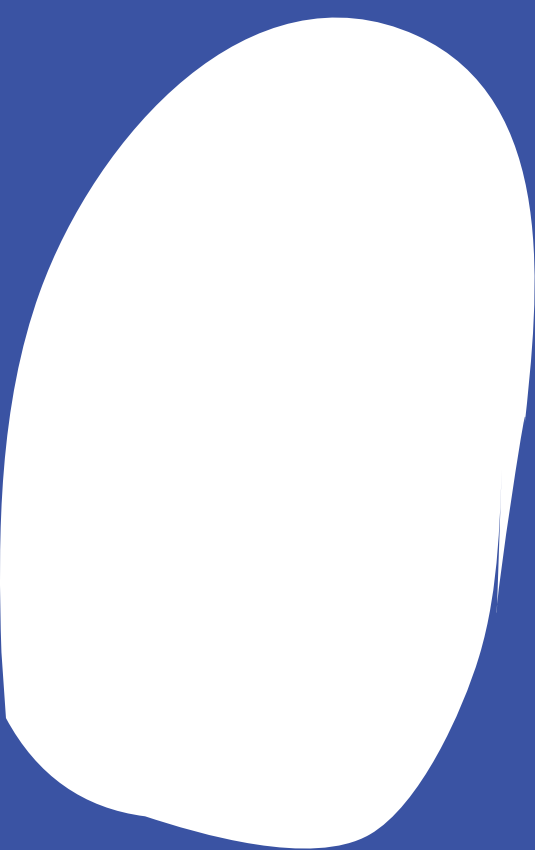
RT #10: Licking Concrete

Reading a selection of materials from 'The Re-appropriation of Sensuality' archive.

As part of the exhibition 'Legitimate Rehearsals' at D21 Kunstraum, Leipzig, May 7, 2017

All images courtesy RT participants

Except for Fig.20 & Fig.25 courtesy of Heiko Karn



This zine is published on the occasion of the Klöntal Triennale 2017 in the valley of Klöntal and Kunsthaus Glarus.

The project is conceptually oriented around the Arena Seatings, a group of three sculptures by Rita McBride from the late nineties. These bleacher-like structures form the context for a variety of performances and artistic interventions that will be staged in and around them. In this way, the audience becomes integrated into artistic moments - hence the motto for this year's Klöntal Triennial, "Part of a Moment" — and is invited to create new connections between art and the everyday.

Over the course of the exhibition, a series of so-called Blind Dates will be organized in the Arena Seatings by Rita McBride. Here, historical and recent participatory strategies will be played through, discussed and evaluated with respect to their contemporary relevance. These Blind Dates consist of an interdisciplinary program of events, in which various artists, authors, critics, and musicians have been invited to stage performances, discussions, readings, and concerts.

The Reading Troupe Manual #02 is a Blind Date by Emma Haugh.

Klöntal Triennale

Concept & design © Emma Haugh.

Cover text collage made using excerpts from *Notes on Funk I, II & III* by Adrian Piper, 1983/84.

Published in *Out of Order, Out of Sight, Volume 1, Selected writings in Meta-Art 1968-1992* (1996).

Commissioned by Klöntal Triennial 2017

Part of a Moment curated by Sabine

Rusterholz Petko and Alexandra Blättler

categories should be the sole existing Art Institutions, to do with the both from white these days Or 'color' years and hen m and e ate

I suppose that what finally vindicates the performances in my own eyes (as well as the effort to continue engaging with very different kinds of people in doing them) is the undeniable experience people seem to get, almost invariably, from participating in them, including me: It just seems to be true that most of my white friends feel less alienated from this aesthetic idiom after having participated in it directly, and discussed their feelings about it in a receptive context, regardless of their reservations about whether what I'm doing is "art" or not, whether funk deserves the legitimization of "high culture" or not, and so on. For me what it means is that the experiences of sharing, commonality, and self-transcendence turn out to be more intense and significant, in some ways, than the postmodernist categories most of us art-types bring to aesthetic experience. This is important to me because I don't believe that my personal and cultural heritage. At the same time, the piece enables me to affirm and utilize the conventions and idioms of communications I've learned in the process of my acculturation into white culture: the analytical mode, the formal and structural analysis, the process of considered and constructive rational dialogue, the pseudoacademic lecture/demonstration/group participation style, and so on. These modes of fluency reinforce my sense of identification with my audience and ultimately empower all of us to move with greater ease and fluidity from one such mode to another. It also reinforces my sense of optimism that eventually the two shall meet!

Notes on Funk III

February 1984

"We're all cool here," he said ____ly.

utilize of my acculturation, the pseudoacademic lecture/demonstration modes of fluency reinforce my sense of identification with my audience and ultimately empower all of us to move with greater ease and fluidity from one such mode to another. It also reinforces my sense of optimism that eventually the two shall meet!

and xen

To realize
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middle-c
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