

reverberation

There were dreams about drums. So it's a weird idea, how it attacks you on a very personal level, like you won't escape.¹

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MFA Time and Space

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This text is the written component of my MFA thesis project

Date of submission 4th October 2022



¹ from anonymous participating student in the KUVAN KEVÄT 2022 Seminar

reverberation is an installation consisting of a 4-channel video installation (4x LED screens á 1920 x 1080) and a performative installation (drum kit, fair carpet in royal blue, bricks made of coloured ballistic gel and a live performance. The live performance took place throughout the exhibition time. The time slots of the performance remained unannounced.)

Kuvan Kevät 2022 (6th of May to 5th of June 2022)

Venue of exhibition: Mylly and Kuva/Tila gallery

Supervisors: Sonja Jokiniemi and Özgü Gündeslioglu

Examiners: Jana Unmüssig and Itha O'Neill

Credits:

Concept, Video Editing and Installation: Simone Gisela Weber

The drums of the performative installation were played by Henri Nikkilä whom I have collaborated with in developing the composition of the sound.

The drums were also occasionally played by visitors of the exhibition and students.

The footage for the video installation comes from an earlier work called *Hypothetic Bodies* (2021):

Concept, Choreography: Simone Gisela Weber & Julia Keren Turbahn

Director of Photography: Svenja Simone Schulte

2nd Camera: Charlotte Grief

Light and Stage: Hanna Kritten Tangsoo

Sound: Nikola Pieper

Dramaturgical Advice: Vilja Mihalosvsky

Movement Coach: Rahell Bo Clark

Produktion: Alexander Schröder

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Summary

reverberation is an installation consisting of a 4-channel video installation (4x LED screens á 1920 x 1080) and performative installation (drum kit, fair carpet in royal blue, bricks made of ballistic gel colored, live performance). The live performance took place throughout the exhibition time. The time slots of the performance remained unannounced.

reverberation deals in its two foldedness with the performativity of materiality and the inhabited violence, symbolic power and gender/class struggle. On a compositional and musical level which is presented in repetition, synchronicity, mirroring and jump cuts, *reverberation* explores the plasticity of materials, emotionality and their resistance to human control. Furthermore, *reverberation* is a work on body memory, on what is left in human flesh, structure and architecture. The two parts of the work, the video installation and the performative installation were kept in distance, spatially they were almost on top of each other. The video installation was installed in the first floor (KUVA/TILA gallery) and the performative installation took place on the second floor of Mylly building, visible right after the stair cases. In order to witness the second part of the work, one had to cross the exhibition space, walking along several art works which were displayed in the entrance and stairs of the Mylly building. Then, one had to go up or down the staircase. The soundtrack of the video is detached from it. In the written component I attempt to describe and reflect on the artistic process that lies behind the work *reverberation*. The thesis consist of fragments of reflections, documentations and contextualizations. Through the term *distance* I unfold the process of moving from a choreographic and dance practice into video and installation based work. I put the process of *reverberation* in relation to this reflection in order to map my development and position as an artist who is working on the intersection of choreography, performance, video and installation. Further on I am describing the process behind *reverberation* oscillation between artistic interest, past works such as *Hypothetic Bodies* (2021) and *LEASHED UNLEASHED* (2021) and in reference to artists who have inspired my work, such like Yvonne Rainer, American dancer, choreographer and filmmaker and also danish choreographer and dancer Mette Ingvarsten and the writing of Jenn Joy, performance artist. By reflecting on the process of operating with different materials I am thinking around the question of: how can we think beyond the human in art? And not least, I open the speculation about an artistic practice that not only collaborators, co-creates amongst disciplines, ways of thinking but involves and is aware of material/nonhuman/inanimate in order to understand human movement - and the nonhuman in us.

Introduction

In this thesis I attempt to describe and reflect on the artistic process that lies behind the work *reverberation*. It is an attempt to articulate an artistic process, which is often so difficult to grasp. The written part of my thesis consist of fragments of reflection, documentation and contextualizations. It is looking for coherency but yet remains in some part incomplete, raising more questions than results.

Through the term of *distance* I unfold my the process of moving from a choreographic and dance practice into video and installation based work. Distance seems to be a notion that describes a movement away from something, as Susan Sontag calls it to take a position of “coolness or impersonality”. Though this distancing or detachment evoke a proximity which allows a shift in perspective. I consider distance and proximity/intimacy as two movements or position which go alongside each other. I put the process of *reverberation* in relation to this reflection in oder to map my development and position as an artist who is working on the intersection of choreography, performance, video and installation.

Further on I am describing the process behind *reverberation* oscillation between artistic interest, past works and in reference to artists who have inspired my work, such like Yvonne Rainer, American dancer, choreographer and filmmaker, danish choreographer and dancer Mette Ingvarsten and the writing of Jenn Joy, performance artist.

By the method of describing *reverberation* on the level of experience within the exhibition I unfold the main concerns of this work: performativity of materiality and the inhabited violence, symbolic power and gender/class struggle. Material and bodily trans- generational memory will be addressed. Hereby I will refer to family biography and unravel choices in artistic practices, that lead back into unknown, the past and bodily memory.

Furthermore, I will elaborate in what extend it is possible to shift attention away from human body through different art practices. By elaborating on my practice of working with material and installation which do not hierarchize the human body as the center of attention or do not consider a moving body as human. I am thinking around question of: How can we think beyond the human in art? Also, here I will relate my practice to artists that I see my work in relation to.

Positioning - Distance as a strategy

(...) distance is often linked with the most intense state of feeling, in which the coolness or impersonality with which something is treated measures the insatiable interest that thing has for us. (Susan Sontag)²

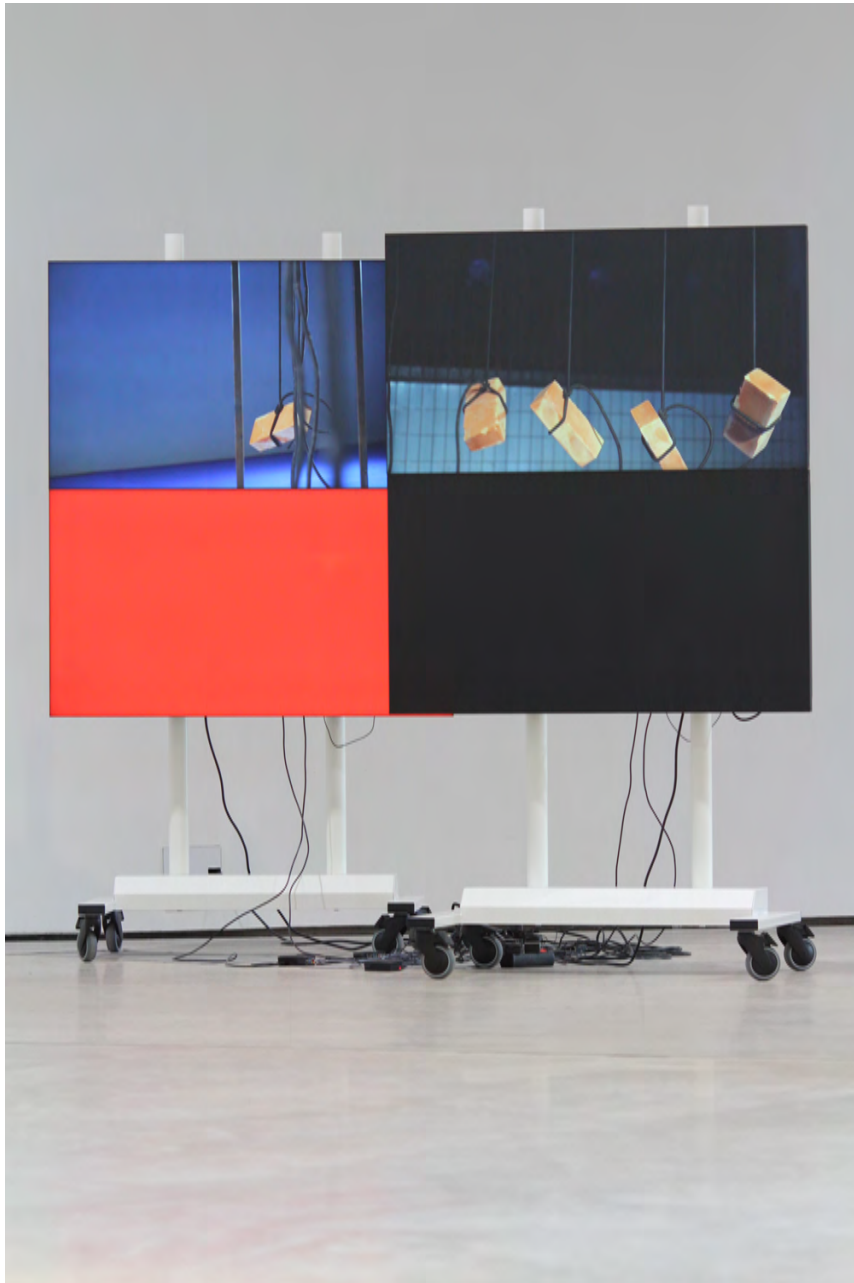


Photo by Karoliina Korvuo

² Van Kerkhoven, Marianne. 1994. Looking without pencil in the hand. Theaterschrift 1994 nrs 5-6: On dramaturgy. Online available at <http://sarma.be/docs/2858>

It is August, I am sitting in Canada on the veranda of a wooden cabin, far away from Europe, as I am writing these few paragraphs. Since yesterday, I am thinking a lot about distance. Not yet quite elaborated, I felt like I should start my master thesis with the concept of distance.

Distance refers to a spatial quantity, but also to a mind set. Writing this thesis became a practice of looking from distance as much as it has become an act to find proximity to my own artistic practice. I am seeking a perspective that might describe a spatial remoteness/removal from a familiarity, but simultaneously suggests a movement towards it, approaching from another angle. This experience I can discover in one of the understandings about distance in the field of Aesthetic Theory. John Dewey describes distance not merely in its juxtaposition to intimacy or proximity: “Distance is a name for a participation so intimate and balanced that no particular impulse acts to make a person withdraw, a completeness of surrender in perception.”³ Distance is not a counter term or the opposite of proximity. Distance and proximity are rather qualities which go alongside each other. One can be so close that this nearness can create distance and also, distance, watching something from far can create a closeness, too. In the following I will describe in what extent distance is a relevant term in relation to my artistic practice.



Photo by Karoliina Korvuo

³ Toepfer, Georg. online 2016 (2012). Distanz. Online available at <https://publikationen.uni-frankfurt.de/frontdoor/index/index/docId/40660>, p. 14



Photo by Karoliina Korvuo

Distance - as in order to get closer to ones own artistic practice

I am educated as a dancer and choreographer, both are body and live events related art forms. Dance and Choreography inhabit quite an ideological and historical connotation. With dance, the usual image one might possibly have in mind - still even beyond the development of conceptual dance in the 90s which detached dance from its pure relation to body and movement - is a virtuous trained body moving in space.

By choreography - which is a term that is difficult to me to define - is more or less not more than organization of movement in space and time - etymologically it means nothing more than writing dance. Often one is picturing dancers moving in space, as choreography.

But both forms of art are beyond more than that - have become richer for me as an artist than this expectations and the means and tools dance and choreography might bear. Personally both disciplines formulate a strong taste in my mouth, rarely do I name myself a dancer or a choreographer, minding the strong connotations and reflecting upon my biographical background which is lacking of live long training in dance .

Let's ask: what are choreographic practices? By invention of Expanded Choreography in the 90s, the production of dance entered other disciplines and therefore emancipated itself extensively from dance:

In the last few years the term 'choreography' has been used in an ever-expanding sense, becoming synonymous with specific structures and strategies disconnected from subjectivist bodily expression, style and representation. Accordingly, the meaning of choreography has transformed from referring to a set of protocols or tools used in order to produce something predetermined, i.e. a dance, to an open cluster of tools that can be used in a generic capacity for both analysis and production. Choreography is today emancipating itself from dance, engaging in a vibrant process of articulation.⁴

Jenn Joy is a Performance Artist, who does not think of choreography merely in terms of Expanded Choreography, but takes the idea of expansion further in developing another notion of choreography in her book: *the choreographic* (2014).

Trespassing into the discourse and disciplines of visual-sculptural- audial - philosophic practice, the choreographic works against linguistic signification and virtuosic representation; it is about contact that touches even across distances. The choreographic is a metonymic condition that moves between corporeal and cerebral conjecture to tell the stories of these many encounters between dance, sculpture, light, space, and perception through a series of stutters, steps, trembles and spasms.⁵

Choreography is a network of entanglements, of different disciplines, aesthetic practices and even more of modes and scales of perceiving. Jenn Joy describes *the choreographic* as a relational practice that goes beyond the human body, but realizes itself within the encounters of different sensorial and physical means.

⁴ Expanded Choreography (2014) <https://www.e-flux.com/announcements/34425/expanded-choreography/> (accessed September 21, 2022)

⁵ Joy, Jenn. 2014. *The Choreographic*. Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England: The MIT Press, p.1

Choosing to follow up my bachelors education with entering a master program in Fine Arts, I developed an artistic practice of distancing myself from my familiar way of expression.

Moving on towards the inhabitation and learning of means that are rather connected to visual arts in the tradition of time based media art, could mean from the first sight taking a distance from dance and choreography. That was the initial idea. But I could argue, it brought me even closer to an understanding what these terms - dance and choreography- mean in relation to my artistic practice. Taking distance can be accompanied by looking above your plate. Moving towards and within in the context of visual arts and its practice of verbalizing, conceptualizing and thinking around body, time and space put in question my trained way of talking about and contextualizing my work and topics of interest.

Especially the act of translating and materializing my ideas, concepts and ideas into materials, forms and shapes that are other than human body, allowed me to distance myself from the human centered thinking that is per se dominant in dance and choreography since it is a art form that works foremost with human bodies.

There are perspectives of dance artists and I want to count myself in that stream, who question the anthropomorphic hegemony in performing art.

I am not fully committed to a complete erasure of humans in arts - it is still my human hands and my human brain and human limitation which bring ideas and concepts into a form. But, as an artist who foremost works with human body as material that contains, translates and transmits, I am interested in investigating in the thought experiment of how we can recalibrate the way of in which we perceive art and support other ways/forms of experiencing that can be rather linked to ways of making sense that are common from nonhuman world.

Especially the work of Mette Ingvarsten I find enriching to reflect on in relation to my own practice. An important strand of Ingvarsten's work was developed between 2009 and 2012 with The Artificial Nature Series. In a series of five works she focused on reconfiguring relations between human and non-human agency through choreography. In three of these works the human body was complete extracted. The performers were inanimate, different kind of material, like foam, smoke, light etc.

As a consequence of this interest I have focused on working with different materials and materialities on which I can practice the vitality and performativity of materials and ask what we as human can gain on knowledge through thinking through different organic or artificial materials, through the animate and inanimate and as: How can we think artistic practice beyond human?

In Ingvarsten's dissertation she writes:

(...) dance or choreography does not necessarily come from within the body, but can also be entirely decorporalized or created in the intersection between humans and larger nonhuman environments.⁶

Writing these sentences, reflecting while writing, detachment as distance can be introduced. A detachment from my initial practice, but also a detachment of the human body.

I started to work with clay. I was curious about working with my hands, to touch, to pinch, to imprint, in order to create form and shape. Clay absorbed traces of the human.

I wanted to feel the matter, the temperature, the resistance to my touch, the plasticity. I found notions and qualities in the material of clay that I recognized from working with bodies. Clay reacts to heat, to liquid, to the intensity of touching. It can dissolve, it can harden and it can merge. It can break and resist.

Clay is a soft material. It reminds me of wet skin, soft baby skin.

No matter what it is, it looks like something. In your mind the tiredness and the soft wet flow of time. The warmth of the studio, the floor. anxious about the dirt, the dirt on my hands. The left side of the brain is ridiculously empty. Maybe the goose is straight but the floor is brown and there next to me lies this sculpture and everything looks like an organ, a rotten organ.

Putting the clay in my face. Maybe a mask and looking like a clown.

The music is close and a memory of the past is a memory of the present.

Remembering in clay is remembering playfulness and childish interaction.

And that's exactly what I like on clay. It brings joy. Deep joy and everyone has kind of a relationship to/ with clay. A memory of the interaction with clay. It talks actively. It speaks and it brings us to speak. It's a democratic and egalitarian material. It is clean but dirty. It leaves traces and transforms all the time and it can try without help. It lives with water, it gets alive with water. It will bring us to a more stable mind and we can be brought into a recent state of mind where my eyes get tired.⁷

⁶ Ingvarsten, Mette. 2016. EXPANDED CHOREOGRAPHY: Shifting the agency of movement in The Artificial Nature Project and 69 positions. Dissertation. Lund University, Malmö Faculty of Fine and Performing Arts. Online available at <https://www.lunduniversity.lu.se/lup/publication/4ee35659-764e-48fe-92a6-f1167735ce37> p. 10

⁷ notes from my personal notebook.



Photo from personal archive

Clay finds its form by touch. During the process of working on *reverberation*, I was looking for a material, that is more responsive to its environment. Through a physical practice which tries to exercise vibration of the space through movement and sound I encountered the idea of the material jelly. There was immediately a problem. Jelly as we know it as a dessert, and only retains its shape when kept cool. . The idea of impermanence was interesting to me, but in relation to the exhibition I wanted to create objects that remain, but transform in time without melting or molding. By doing a lot of online research of how to make durable Jelly, I got aware of the material “ballistic gel”. Ballistic gel is a type of jelly, that is used in context of medicine, police, military and forensics. The composition of the ingredients create a

material that replicates the consistency of human flesh. Therefore medical students might learn to open a human body on ballistic gel objects. In the context of police, military and forensics ballistic gel is used to reconstruct the bullet hole or puncture of a weapon:

Ballistic gelatin is a testing medium designed to simulate the effects of bullet wounds in animal muscle tissue. It was developed and improved by Martin Fackler and others in the field of wound ballistics. It is calibrated to match porcine muscle, which is itself ballistically similar to human muscle tissue.

Ballistic gelatin is traditionally a solution of gelatin powder in water. Ballistic gelatin closely simulates the density and viscosity of human and animal muscle tissue, and is used as a standardized medium for testing the terminal performance of firearms ammunition.⁸

This material caught immediately my attention. My fascination let me spent hours on watching youtube videos about this material, but nevertheless ballistic gel did not get rid of the problem of the impermanence of Jelly. After a long research I found a recipe that promised the permanence and heat resistance of the jelly without loosing its quality.

Tests showed that it worked to at glycerin in order to give the materiality more stability. The Ballistic Gel blocks I was made did not melt or mold but they reacted to temperature and changed. They age, that's how I started to describe this transformation. They stay in form but they get dry or crack and shrink because of evaporation of the water inside their body.

Surprised but satisfied I started to make approximately 40 ballistic gel bricks, colored in red. The jelly carries the reverberation of other bodies and movement in space. Jelly performs an interconnectness- in-between matter- effecting and being effected by bodies near by. Speaking of bodies, I am talking about bodies of vibration, reflection and movement.

⁸ Ballistic Gelatine, Wikipedia, last modified July 30, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ballistic_gelatin



Photo from personal archive

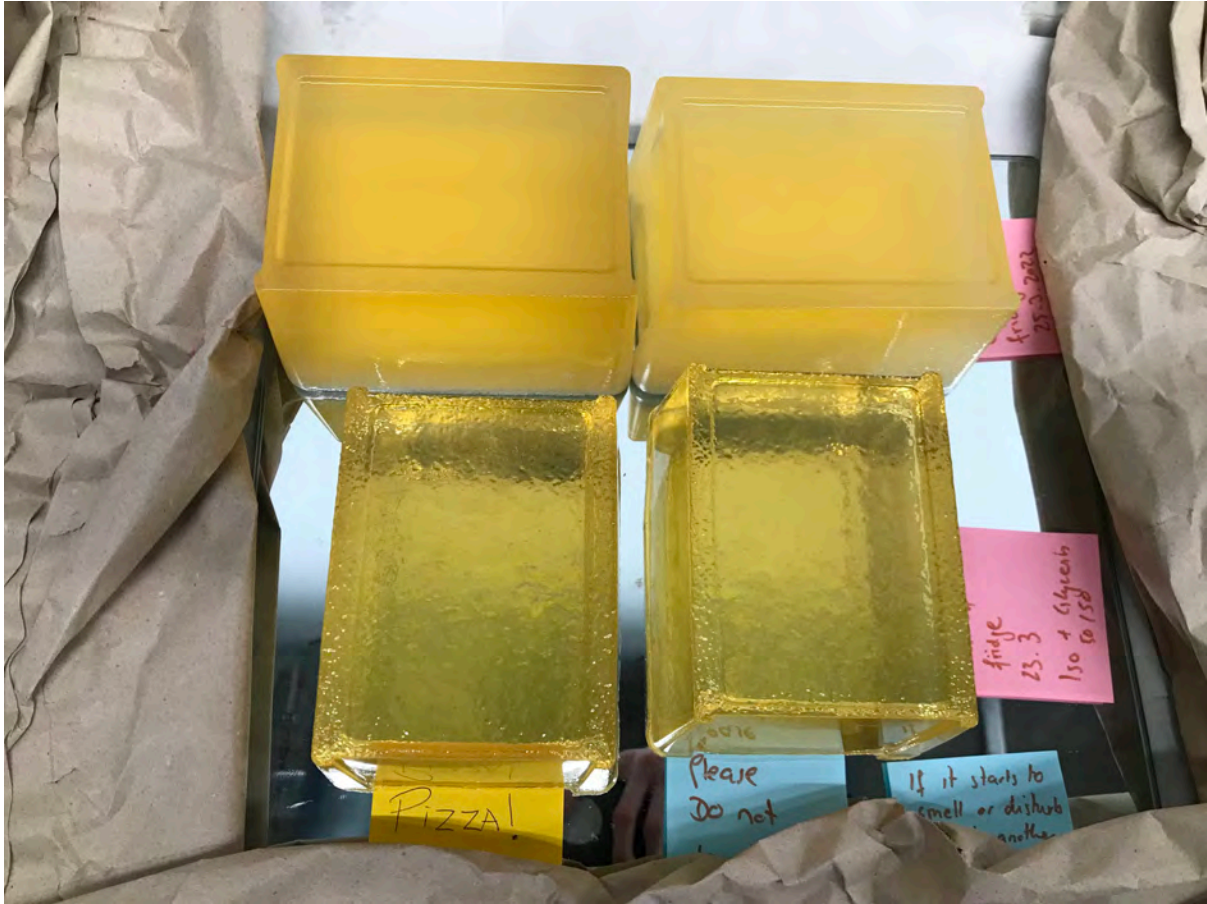


Photo from personal archive

reverberation

reverberation is an installation work which consists of two parts: a 4- channel video installation which was displayed in KUVA/TILA gallery and a performative installation which took place in first floor of the Mylly building.

reverberation deals in its two foldedness with the performativity of materiality and the inhabited violence, symbolic power and gender/class struggle. On a compositional and musical level which is presented in repetition, synchronicity, mirroring and jump cuts, *reverberation* explores the plasticity of materials, emotionality and their resistance to human control. Furthermore, *reverberation* is a work on body memory, on what is left in human flesh, structure and architecture.

The two parts of the work, the video installation and the performative installation were kept in distance, and were nearly on top of each other spatially. The video installation was installed in the first floor in the KUVA/TILA gallery and the performative installation took place on the second floor of Mylly building, visible right after the stair cases.

In order to witness the second part of the work, one had to cross the exhibition space, walking along several art works, encountering sculptures, paintings, installations in the main gallery, which were displayed in the entrance and stairs of the Mylly building. Then taking the stairs up or down. The sound of the video is detached from the video installation.

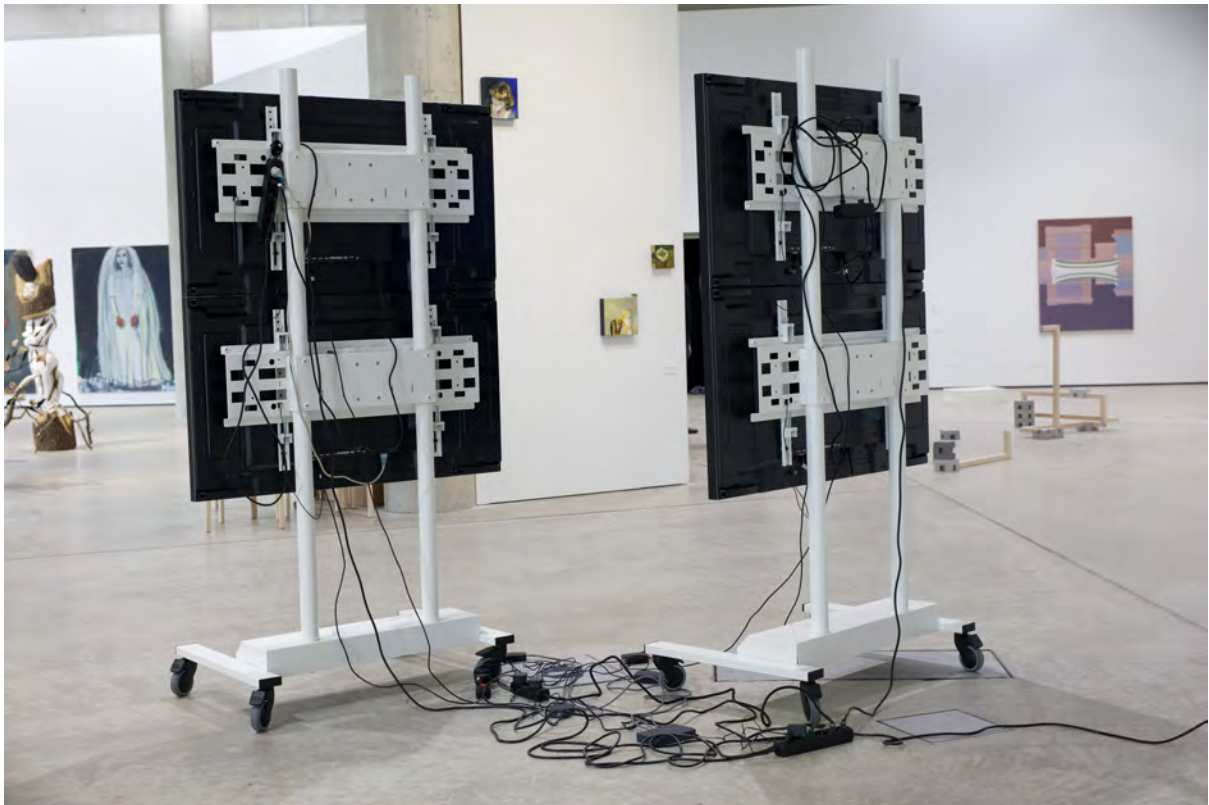


Photo by Karoliina Korvuo

Interconnectedness in artistic process - memories evoked by material

In summer 2021 I worked on a dance performance called *Hypothetic Bodies*⁹ in Uferstudios for “Dance in Berlin” which dealt with question concerning hesitation and the physicality which arises in a hesitant state.

Throughout the preparation period, the creative team¹⁰ of the performance had to face restrictions due to Covid- 19 and for a long time it was unclear whether the work could happen live or would have to be reconfigured in digital form that is resulting in a video work. We decided to realize the work in the form of a video, additionally *Hypothetic Bodies* was shown twice in the frame of internal showings for invited guest in order to keep the risks minimal.

Hesitation is very much connected to an alternated perception of time. The body is in an in-between state, resisting the flow of action produced by a standstill. Though this standstill is just a seemingly motionless state. Internally, many possibilities open.

In order to work performatively and physical on this mental and bodily state, I was looking for a material that can counteract with my body and become a body on stage that provokes a standstill as a force my body has to enter a negotiation, a physical interaction with. The search for a material that is able to do so, was one possibility, but since I’ve got within my artistic practice more and more interested to explore different forms of materialities in relation to performativity, I wanted to find a material that can produce or perform or visualize qualities that are related to hesitation. To work with bricks was at the first sight arbitrary. We were lying on the floor in my Berlin studio, talking about the rehearsals of today and how we continue. As we were lying there we looked up to the ceiling. The ceiling consisted of red bricks. That day we had been working with stockings and sand –which did not match our aesthetic expectations– and so started to feel very attracted to these bricks that were just a meters away from us; not knowing yet that they would become a huge artistic interest of mine. Two days later we drove to a brick manufacturer and bought 60 bricks.

During the process of creating the physical material for the video, I became one with the bricks. I felt very comfortable working with them daily. I liked the physical effort which lied

⁹ <https://vimeo.com/607687115> Password: eyedance

¹⁰ credits: Concept, Choreography: Simone Gisela Weber & Julia Keren Turbahn, Director of Photography: Svenja Simone Schulte, 2nd Camera: Charlotte Grief, Light and Stage: Hanna Kritten Tangsoo, Sound: Nikola Pieper, Dramaturgical Advice: Vilja Mihalosvsky, Movement Coach: Rahell Bo Clark, Produktion: Alexander Schröder

in their materiality. From my performer's perspective and on a level of performativity the work's interest shifted. It became increasingly a work about control, risk and labour. Interestingly another work collided with these notions. A few month before *Hypothetic Bodies*, I was working on another video work called *LEASHED UNLEASHED*¹¹ that explicitly dealt with the topic of control by asking about control mechanisms in society.¹²

For me, when I compare the common aspects of these two works, I was curious about what it is that draws me to this topic. The work *Hypothetic Bodies* ended with a digital premiere of the video beginning of September 2021 and almost intersected with the moment I had to first name what I will work on in my work for Kuvan Kevät 2022, so I decided to to pick up control on continue working on that - it became a starting point.

First it was only clear to me that I do want to develop an installation consisting of different material and objects. I held the possibility open to including a video work, but during this time I did not intend to continue working with the footage of *Hypothetic Bodies*.

During the phase of conceptualization I realized that I wanted to continue with footage that was shot for *Hypothetic Bodies*. A large volume of footage was not used in the original video work and I was especially interested in working with close ups from the different materials we used.

I restricted the selection of the footage to a minimum. I only choose close ups and footage which captured the bricks, strings and hands. I left the whole dance and human body out of the center of attention. My interest did not lie in showing the movement material but to elaborate the materialities I was interacting with in order to understand further aspects of performativity of material, their embodied emotionality and aspect of labor.

The manifestation in a 4- channel video installation turned out to be the most effective way to explore the edges of the materiality. The four screen arrangement made possible that I could really exhaust the composition of the footage and to create a rhythm which awakes in the interplay of the four screens. Another editing approach was to erase the human figure as

¹¹ <https://vimeo.com/555247200> Password: unleashed

¹² BY AND WITH: Kimberly Kaviar & Zhenya Salinski CHOREOGRAPHY & PERFORMANCE: Simone Gisela Weber & Juan Felipe Amaya Gonzalez (Kimberly Kaviar) TEXT & PERFORMANCE: Zhenya Salinski AUDIOVISUALS: Max Wigger LIGHT DESIGN (STAGE): Catalina Fernandez LIGHT DESIGN (VIDEO): Timo von der Horst STAGE: Yoav Admoni COSTUME: Sara Wendt PROPS (VIDEO): Sara Wendt VOICES: Rachell Bo Clark, Maciej Sado PRODUCTION: Sophia Keßen DRAMATURGY: Tim Jakob ADVICE: Thomas Schaupp

much as possible by cropping and selecting the footage. The face and the body itself was never center staged.

Choreographers usually make live performances. This expectation though has changed by the arrival of digital and virtual technology in the field of Live Art. Also the access to video cameras and other motion and sound capturing devices has changed the creation of live art incredible.

Already in post modern dance, such like the American dancer, choreographers and co-founder of Judson Dance Theater Yvonne Rainer experimented with the medium film. The short movie *Hands* from 1966 is one of their first video work followed by many others such like *Film about a Woman Who...* (1974) or *Lives of Performers* (1972). The work with camera and video let them investigate body and movement in another way, from another perspective.

Choreography is ephemeral, this is its beauty but simultaneously curse. Video brings the chance to capture movement on one hand, but the downside is that it limits and of course flattens the perception of choreography which is always meant to be in a three- dimensional space in its traditional sense. *reverberation* tries to capture the ephemeral, to zoom in. The process of working with video which is based on footage that captured also a live performance, a performance I have performed and experienced from within, I strongly connect with the notion of ephemera, as José Esteban Muñoz, a performance scholar formulated:

I want to take some time to reflect on what I'm calling "ephemera" as modality of anti-rigor and anti-evidence that, far from filtering materiality out of cultural studies, reformulates and expands our understandings of materiality. Ephemera, as I am using it here, is linked to alternate modes of textuality and narrativity like memory and performance: it is all of those things that remain after a performance, a kind of evidence of what has transpired but certainly not the thing itself. It does not rest on epistemological foundations but is instead interested in following traces, glimmers, residues, and specks of things.¹³

¹³ Muñoz, José Esteban (1996) Ephemera as Evidence: Introductory Notes to Queer Acts, Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory, 8:2, 5-16, DOI: [10.1080/07407709608571228](https://doi.org/10.1080/07407709608571228), p. 10

There is the presence of a performance and there is an after, a reverberation of what was experienced, that can manifest in different textures, vibrations and things. *reverberation* attempts to make the ephemera visible, perceivable, holding.

To me, also the bricks operate on this level of aftermath, memory. They hold the performance, they break, their dust and broken fragments leave traces, they incorporate a history of the performance itself but also on a historical level. As construction material they evoke a perception of a certain sphere of things. One can think about groups of people who are in close contact with bricks- such as bricklayer, construction worker, or gardener. No matter how large the ruin is, the bricks remain – as dust, as deformed artifacts.

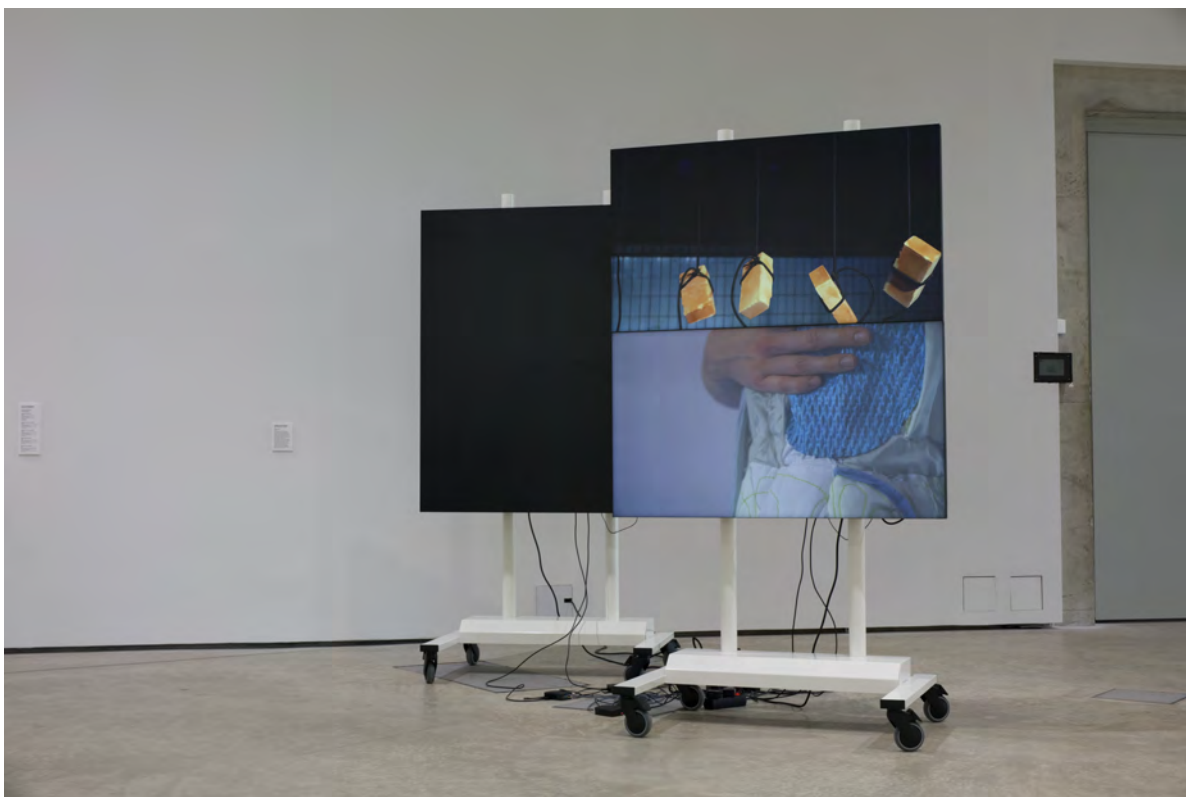


Photo by Karoliina Korvuo

What you see but not hear

The videos are displayed in the Kuva/Tila gallery and consist of four LED screens. Two screens are attached to each stand. The video is mute.

The stands are on wheels. They are not positioned exactly next to each other, but one is installed more into the space while the other one is standing in the background closer to the wall. They are installed in that manner that depending on what angle you look at the screens, they are overlapping.

One can walk around the screens and go behind them. On the floor one can see the technical set up; the cables are coming out of the screens, leading to the floor and connect with four media player which are connected to a router. The installation foregrounds both aspects of the work: the video and the technical set up (screens, cables, media player). The cables work as extensions of the strings, which hold the bricks, one can see in the video.

On the screens you can observe a possible female body dealing with bricks. The face of the body is not center staged. The footage depicts especially the hands working with bricks. One can witness bricks clashing onto each other repetitively, the images are displayed mirrored on two screens or three, playing with synchronicity and counterpart.

The actions take place in a blue room created by a blue carpet, the room lights up in flickering light.

Two screens though are falling partly out of the composition. It is the left down screen which shows a red colored flicker image. Most of the time the red flicker is appearing by an action in another screen. Sometimes duration of the red flicker is longer, sometime the flickers appears for few seconds. On the screen beside, on the right side occasionally shows a body, wearing a costume which consists of different patchwork textures. The hands are striking above the different texture, squeezing the fabric following the outline of the body. The body stands in a hazy room.



Photo by Karoliina Korvuo

What you can hear - sometime

The performative installation on the second floor of Mylly right after the staircase highlights a drum kit which is surrounded by red blocks that look like candy or jelly.

Some parts of the drums stand on a pile of jelly blocks, the stands of the drums pierce into the jelly. Jellies are flipped in a way that they are leaning on the drum. Some Jellies are broken apart and small fragments lay on the surrounding floor. The whole set is placed on a blue carpet that looks like a fair carpet. It could be the same carpet that one can see in the video. There is no drummer, no sound, but the drum sticks are lying around, and the drum is ready to be played.

One can observe visitors approaching the installation, touching the jellies, a kid takes the drum sticks that remain in the installation and starts to play around. The remaining drum sticks suggest a performance that happened or will happen. The form of the jelly block reference the bricks in the video, spending time looking at the installation it is also clear that there are concrete references to the video. Especially the blue carpet closes the connection and the red color of the jelly bricks referring to the red screens, alluding to something that could possibly be a brick- visual reference - the contact of the two pieces.

Traces - memories - left overs

Speaking from a choreographers point of view, I am interested in building situations for audience that allow them experience something on a sensorial level which they would not experience otherwise. I am eager and curious to build experiences that go beyond the visual, but invite other senses, perception of time and space.

An immersive experience pulls one into another real or imagined world, enabling us to manipulate and interact with their environment.¹⁴

Immersive experiences are created by a network and layers of modes of experiencing such as visuals, sound, smell and technology to deliver unforgettable and engaging worlds.

A similar quality is described by Jenn Joy when they elaborate on their concept of the choreographic:

¹⁴ Vismedia Team; What is an Immersive Experience? (2021) <https://vismedia.agency/insights/content-tech/what-is-an-immersive-experience/> (accessed September 21, 2022)

*(...) as the work of the choreographic as one possibility of sensual address - a dialogic opening in which art not only is looked at but also looks back (...)*¹⁵

reverberation in its combination of the video installation and the performative installation is a work that plays with traces: the human, sound, drumming, concert, music, performance, death and violence, in their (temporary) absence.

The video installation remains silent. The use of repetition in the video and the play with the duration, mirroring and synchronizing of images create a rhythmicity. The repetitively clashing of bricks, the hand that squeezes the fabric, the swinging bricks that bump into each other and the flickering movement of the strings evoke memories of a possible sound. It is almost like awakening vague memories that are inhabited in materiality, sound that is coming to live through its absence. The presence of imagined sound is formulated by the persistence of repetition, and the loop of the video.



Photo by Karoliina Korvuo

¹⁵ Joy, Jenn. 2014. *The Choreographic*. Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England: The MIT Press, p. 1

Also the performative installation hints to a particular sound - drums. This part of the work too remains mainly silent, the drum sticks hint on a possible activation of the drum. One can imagine sound of the drums, one can remember and one can guess how loud and noisy this will be in this very particular space of Mylly, a concrete architecture with only little walls but a metal staircase. The architecture of the building clearly reads to visitors as a space with many reflective acoustic surfaces for the drum beats and vibrations. The piece plays with the idea of sonic memory which is evoked in us through a synesthesia experience: The eyes become the ears. Also, it asks the question how space and body carry and remember sound formulated by sonic vibrations that possibly could have happened.

Only sometimes one can witness visually and audibly what is actually happening, when visitors of the exhibition take the drum sticks and play, or when Henri Nikkilä, the drummer I worked with performs the sound piece which we have created together based on the editing strategies of the video.

Taking away the sound, one level of perception can create an experience that tricks and provokes an involvement of the viewer, so that they have to use other senses in order to perceive - to hear what is missing. The eyes replace the ears. The witnessed sound through the visual composition, the supplement of the missing sound of the bricks by calling back memories how bricks on bricks sound opens a dialog between the viewer and work. This act of memory can produce an immersive experience in ones own memory.

The focus on the hands in the footage with the costume, every single little movement is visible in the longer shots remind on the haptic and tangible quality of touch. The hands hint also to the topics of labor and the hands are also the body parts that replace the face. They speak of the effort, the strength. They also hint towards the bricks as a human made material, that is formed and shaped for human needs, building homes, building walls, building shelter and security, creating division, creating blockade.

My grandfather was a bricklayer. This was a distant memory sitting in the background, but the choice of working with bricks was not consciously directed by this family history. My mother reminded me of this during a conversation when I told her that I am working with bricks. I felt very comfortable in working with bricks. I fell in love with the materiality, the fragility but also firmness, the uniformity but difference, their heaviness but contrasted against their thoughtful ergonomics and size that allowed them to be carried. They left marks

on my body, in the shape of muscles formed by laboring them, blue spots, scratches and red color mark from their minerals. But they were gentle. My body knew how to handle them. From an artistic side, coming from choreography and performance, I enjoyed the resistance I had to work through. There was an interplay of control, being controlled and losing control (on both sides: bricks and performer). I've got curious about the memory held by a material and picked up the footage for exploring my fascination further. The process of editing, the attempt to highlight the materiality of the bricks, to make the synthesis of the different bodies tangible brought me even closer to the material.



Photo by Karoliina Korvuo

Interruption and Disruption

The installation involved a sound performance performed by Henri Nikkilä.¹⁶ It was a sound piece that was interrupting and disturbing the space of the Mylly building occasionally and surprisingly. I made the decision that the performances of Henri will not be announced. They occurred unexpectedly. Part of the musical score which was based on the editing strategies (repetition, counterpart, and doubling) was the length and the entrance of the prelude. I decided for a quick high intensity score in order to strengthen the aspect of interruption and disruption. Interruption and disruption are events that happen quickly and unexpectedly. So they create a certain confused attention, a redirection of attention and provoke also a certain notion of danger and violence.



Photo from my personal archive

¹⁶ Video documentation of the performance at the KUVAN KEVÄT opening <https://vimeo.com/710005226> Password: opening



Photo from my personal archive

Furthermore exploring danger and violence the score also explored in relation to the material of ballistic gel the sound of bullets in space. This intention and artistic curiosity received a whole other connotation through the war in Ukraine which broke out in February. Conversations with some visitors made me aware of the recognizable reference, which was further supported by the materials (ballistic gel, scattered bricks which suggested ruins). I must admit, that I was not prepared and also surprised for this perception of some of the viewers. It opened up new questions about control. So to say, perception of an art work, the reading of it from the viewers perspective cannot always be anticipated and be under control. The work allowed this politically reading because its original format was open enough, that viewers could project into the gaps.

Another dimension of the work which was unexpected was the participation of the viewers in the performative installation. The work was very much staged: to reach the drums one had to step on a blue carpet, and in break established norms about not touching an art piece without explicit invitation. But *reverberation* turned out to be too enticing – its objects, the jellies and the drums called out to visitors to step into the installation, touch the jellies, and especially the drums proved too tempting for children to not play.

Also the installation of the videos suggested a participation. The screens were portable, movable, on wheels – the space could have been easily re-arranged, although this did not happen. Crossing in-between the two stands, and stepping on the the cables on the floor was the maximum interruption of this part of the work. This makes me think that there was an invitation inherent in materiality of the jellies. They provoked the need to touch and explore. The ballistic gels bricks did not have a sleek surface. They had wrinkles, they laid on the carpet, creating contrast in a luscious red. They stimulate the desire to touch and investigate this material that was in-between firm and soft, rigor and moving, which could have created the allowance to also touch the drum sticks and play and dare to interrupt, disrupt the space, also becoming visible as a visitor.

Another way of working with the notion of interruption and disruption can be witnessed in the 4 - channel video installation. One screen is flickering in red. The red is still transparent enough in order to see an image behind, but opaque enough to alienate the image. The red flickering screen is a distraction. The color red stays in contrast with the blue and emphasis the strong color scheme of the video. Behind the flicker one can see close ups of the bricks. The appearance of the red plays with our attention.

Additionally, the red screen comments on the moving image itself. It breaks with a possible narration and readability of what one can see in a possible linearity of events on the screens. It rather works as a painting and less as moving image. It falls out and even more, reminds us on the non- narrative structure of the installation. It is there to be perceived, it is there to create a perception that exceeds a moving image installation. The red screen stays in relation to the set up of the installation. The screens are not mounted to the wall, they stand in space, on stands with wheels, which could potentially be moved. The 2D moving image becomes perceivable as 3D, the moving image becomes movable. The red screens falls out but

emphasizes on the installation as sculpture and references in color and dimension the form of a possible brick.

The footage capturing the body in the texture costume opens up the dimensionality of touch, and sensual qualities. It also falls out but in its appearance as in the long shots of the hand stroking the different textures, squeezing them, it creates a contrast to the firm and rough qualities of the bricks, which then highlights their quality. It brings sensual moment - a contrast to the rigid and edgy bricks. It is a materialized counterpart that contrast the other footage. Created by the repetition, the attempt to destroy the material appears. The bricks though stay firm. No brick breaks, the potential of destruction materializes in the dust.

In the scenes of the stones being fixed on a rubber string, first held in hand, then let loose, falling from one screen into the next, one can see the work with gravity. There is an attempt to withdraw the bodies of bricks from gravity. They must actually touch the floor, but no: they swing back. There is a quite long scene in which the stones get pushed by the body, the body moves in-between the swinging bricks, chaos is created and one asks: who/what is under control. Notions of danger but also effortlessness can be witnessed.



Photo by Karoliina Korvuo

Speculation as an end

I want to end this text with an open question, which has evolved during the process of writing these words and trying to articulate my thoughts, a process of artistic work and reflection on my artistic practice:

How can we think of visual arts practices through choreography and movement? And therefore, how can we think of choreographic and bodily practices through visual arts?

These questions offer an impulse for speculations about artistic practices which are entangled and intersected in a way, that they do not merely remain trans- or interdisciplinary. Each artistic practice, training or education also evokes articulations in a physical, spatial and linguistic as well as discursive way. Art practices shape, configure and fabulate our thinking, perception, thoughts and how we are situating ourself in our surroundings and how we relate to human, inhuman, more-than- human, beyond the human, the animate and inanimate - whatever concepts we apply to name these relations to what we are and are not at the same time.

It is even a speculation about art practices that go beyond the human. What does that mean? Let's raise another question: how can we rethink making art, being involved in an artistic practice that not only collaborates, co-creates amongst disciplines, ways of thinking but involves and is aware of material/nonhuman/inanimate in order to understand human movement - and the nonhuman in us.

And, if that could mean giving up or scaling back human control, how can art practices be the place to acknowledge a movement toward the presence of the multiple, the entanglement of different forms of vitality, matter and live?

These are the questions that remain for me to ponder. They stay unanswered, but remain speculations filled with intentions, impulses, confusions - as left overs of a writing process.



Photo by Karoliina Korvuo

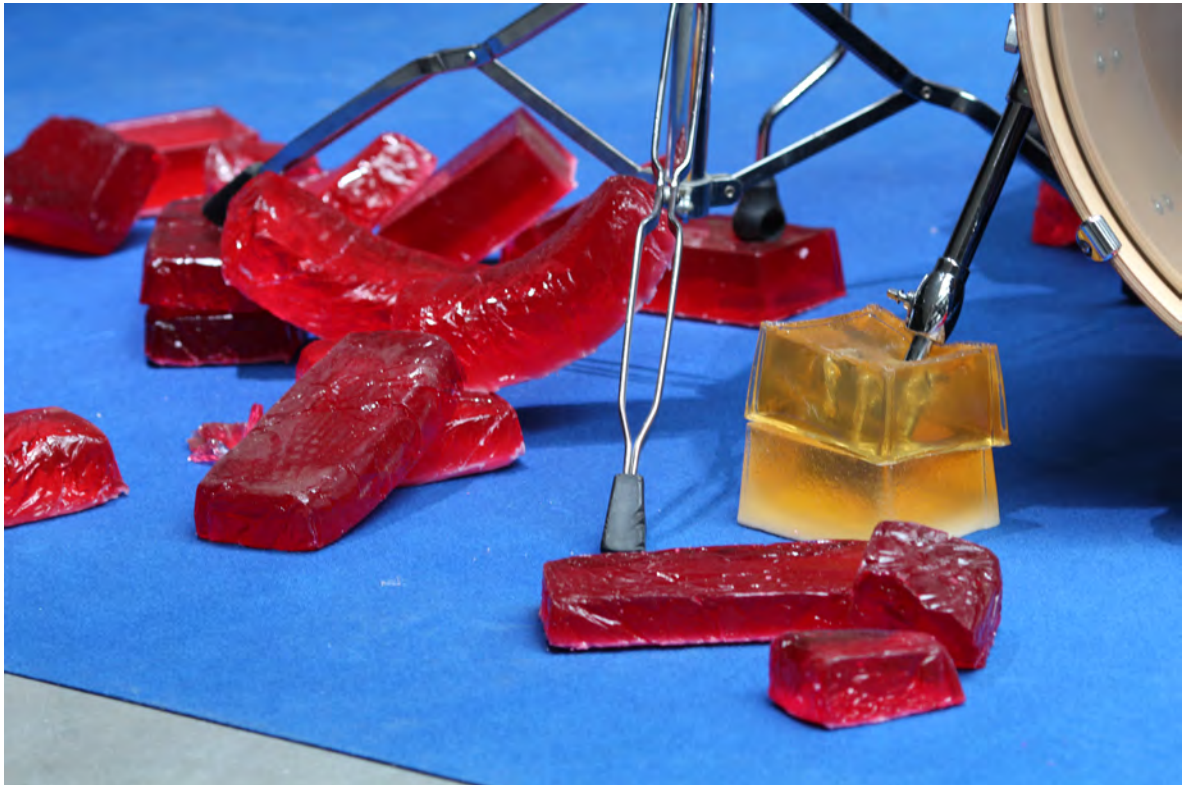


Photo by Karoliina Korvuo

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