
Impression

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Abstract

Impression is the written component of the Master of Fine Arts thesis at the University of the Arts Helsinki, Academy of Fine Arts authored by the writer of this text. The supervisor of the thesis project is Simon Thompson and supervising professor Marjaana Kella. The writing of the written component has taken place under the supervision of Lena Séraphin. The examiners of the Master of Fine Arts thesis' artistic and written parts are artist Ed Atkins and art historian Gertrud Sandqvist.

The artistic component of the thesis work, titled either as *Ville Laurinkoski 7.5.–5.6.2022* or *7.5.–5.6.2022*, was exhibited in 'Kuvan Kevät 2022' exhibition in Kuva/Tila, the exhibition space of the Academy of Fine Arts, in Helsinki in the spring 2022. The work *7.5.–5.6.2022* is composed of the interior of a room and a 14-minute soundtrack that is played in a loop. Besides the already existing infrastructure of the space, the interior contains a one-person mattress, XLR cords and power outlets, a media player and four loudspeakers mounted on the walls. Voice and piano in the soundtrack: Ville Laurinkoski.

The written component consists of the written and photographic documentation of the exhibited work. The written documentation is incorporated in the essay, and the photographs can be found under 'Figures'. Under 'Libretto' one can find the score of the audio track. 'Audio' in turn comprises links to the soundtrack of the work. The title essay 'Impression' is an inquiry on *7.5.–5.6.2022* and is divided in two parts. The first section presents the work as a series of transgressions and the second as infrastructure of relation, reconciliation, and style. It is written into a succession of shorter sequences of items closely related to the work – its source materials, artworks, literature, and theoretical propositions.

Céline has compared his style to that of impressionist painters. It is indeed possible to liken to color dots statements in which the binary turn of the early novels is condensed in short units that the blank spaces of the three dots place side by side to form a halo not of descriptions but of subjective impressions.

You know, three dots, the impressionists made three dots. Take Seurat, he would put three dots everywhere; he thought it let air into his paintings, made it fly about. The fellow was right. It didn't start much of a school [...] It's too hard.¹

—Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, 1982

Quoted in the text, ¹ Louis-Ferdinand Céline

*Objects without an owner, like an island
of mistfit toys, castoffs.*

—Contemporary Art Writing Daily, *Anti-Ligature
Rooms*, 2020

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Introduction

Impression is the written component of the Master of Fine Arts thesis at the University of the Arts Helsinki, Academy of Fine Arts authored by the writer of this text. The thesis work, titled either as *Ville Laurinkoski 7.5.–5.6.2022* or *7.5.–5.6.2022*, was exhibited in ‘Kuvan Kevät 2022’ exhibition in Kuva/Tila, the exhibition space of the Academy of Fine Arts, in Helsinki in the spring 2022. The supervisor of the thesis is Simon Thompson and supervising professor Marjaana Kella. The writing of the written component has taken place under the supervision of Lena Séraphin. The examiners of the Master of Fine Arts thesis artistic and written parts are artist Ed Atkins and art historian Gertrud Sandqvist.

This booklet consists of the written and photographic documentation of the exhibited work. The written documentation is incorporated in the essay and the photographs can be found under ‘Figures’. ‘Audio’ in turn comprises links to the soundtrack of the work. The title essay ‘Impression’ is an inquiry on *7.5.–5.6.2022* – a work composed of a mattress, audio tech, the infrastructure of the space, and an audio track. Under ‘Libretto’ one can find the score of the audio track. However, the libretto was not presented as part of the exhibition and should be considered as additional material to the thesis

work. A prose version of the score is published in the double number of the Swedish journal *Filmögon*.¹

The essay 'Impression' is divided in two parts; the first section (I) presents the work as death, reversion, negation, transgression, and as work of love and the second (II) as a space of relation, reconciliation, abstraction, and décor. The essay is an exposé of items closely related to the work, either its materials, inspirations, or theoretical propositions. The selection of fragments is subjective and predominantly informed by my interests in literature and by the people with whom I've had a closer exchange with during the past years, namely artist Simon Thompson and art historian Sabeth Buchmann. In a sense the essay is a conclusion of these exchanges as many of the ideas around and about the work have been introduced by these two persons. Throughout the entire essay, and especially in the end of the first section, there are segments that are informed by my subjective experience of making the work. In the very beginning of 'Impression' there is a poetic, textual movement that I have separated from the other writing in italics. An ambiguity between using passive tense and writing in first person has been preserved in the text as an expression of the effort of writing about one's own work. Whenever referring to 7.5.–5.6.2022, it is indicated as *the work*.

The initial idea for the melange of ideas came from author Marcel Proust's writing that has the ability to envelope images into brilliant impressions. In his short story 'In Slumbers', he describes how 'the bottles that boys laid in the current to catch minnows gave a double impression of coolness.'² I use the water bottles in the cold spring to illustrate how 7.5.–5.6.2022 contains several spaces enclosed inside each other: the auditive literary space within the exhibition space, to begin with – and how the superimposition of the spaces can produce an effect of unforeseeability and newness. For Proust it was the materials beginning to resemble each other that made the scene so alluring, 'because not only do they [bottles] contain water, and make it seem like glass, as a table of carafes do, but are contained in water, which makes them seem almost liquid.'³ Throughout the essay I try

¹ Ville Laurinkoski, "Co-ire," in *Filmögon* 4/5 (Stockholm: Filmögon, 2022) 149–163.

² Marcel Proust, "In Slumbers," in *By Way of Sainte-Beuve*, trans. Sylvia Townsend Warner, (London: The Hogarth Press, 1984) 25.

³ *Ibid.*, 25.

to establish a sense of what could be characteristic for giving the effect of freshness in 7.5.–5.6.2022. This leads us to the underlying and more general question along which the essay is written: how can the sense of freshness, brightness, brilliance, inexpressibility, and edge be produced in a piece of contemporary art?

In 'Impression', I attempt to assess the many facets of 7.5.–5.6.2022; first as transgression and inversion and then as reconciliation and reparation, written into a succession of vignettes. As listening, space, and the work itself, the structure of the essay is fragmentary. Fragment in turn is a leftover of a past totality being simultaneously a movement toward the unforeseeable and what cannot be named. The work not having a proper name is a result of this. Its final title 7.5.–5.6.2022 marks the time span of the exhibition optionally including the name of its maker (*Ville Laurinkoski 7.5.–5.6.2022*). This necessary choice of leaving the work without a proper name allows the work to open towards the unutterable as it cannot be attached to anything given except the name of its maker or a time range. Consequently, the essay takes this singular impression of unutterability as its subject. This lets the writing be moved by what cannot be expressed, painting a fragmentary picture of the inexpressible by its own means. In this way 'Impression' is not only an inquiry on the work but a new impression in its own right.

Ville Laurinkoski

Impression

In a reproduction of Claude Monet's Impression, soleil levant there is only an atmosphere; one can't tell what season it is, there is only one state, no weather, nor a time of the day. And there is no outside of this condition. An endless exterior that has become the inside, an outside turned inside, the interior world that we live in. So, it is with the work at display. Once you have entered the work you can't tell where it is anymore, the lights are gleaming incessantly, the sound system keeps repeating the 14-minute loop until it's turned off. And there is no explanation, only an expectation – an endless wait for it to end and to begin again, the season to change and stay the same, until one turns around and decides to leave.

I

7.5.–5.6.2022

A mattress is lying on the floor in a room with white walls and white light. Besides the already existing infrastructure of the space and the one-person mattress, the interior contains XLR cords and power outlets, a media player and four loudspeakers mounted on the walls through which a 14-minute long soundtrack is played in a loop. Voice and piano in the soundtrack: Ville Laurinkoski.

The soundtrack consists of four parts. It begins with an order first heard in Swedish 'Skriv ditt namn på det här pappret. Läs nu vad du själv har skrivit. / Det står...', and then in English 'Write your name on this piece of paper. Read what you just wrote. / It says...'. As an answer to the order follows the beginning of the first movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata No.

14, interrupted abruptly just before the nocturnal melody would continue its chant, proceeding to a voice reading a list of names in alphabetic order in French starting from Abel and ending to Willigis. That is the second part. After this comes the third movement, a text, read aloud by a voice, at one point interrupted by a scream 'Jag anses farlig, därför är jag inlåst!', and coloured with changing intonations and rhythms, emphases, pauses and whispers, fading slowly into a quietude – a long diminuendo to a muteness, the fourth movement, and the appearance of an opaque noise produced by the work.

The Word

According to authors Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari words are used to give orders and order things by the given order.⁴ The ‘order-word [...] carries a little death sentence—a Judgement’⁵ they write. Following their thought, the imperative word sets in motion its object as it makes it escape the death sentence, the judgement that is imposed by the given order, for the sake of life. In my opinion this is relevant for creative processes as escape can take form through music, voice, and body, setting in motion passages that transgress, subvert, and prepare the order-word and the given order amounting to works of art.

As already mentioned the soundtrack of *7.5.–5.6.2022*, the work at hand, literally begins with an order read out loud by a voice played through the loudspeakers, an order against which the entire succession of the soundtrack develops. This choice can be seen in contact with what Deleuze and Guattari described in their writing shedding some light on the structure of the work. The order that marks the beginning of the work leads to a series of transgressions, refusals, and inversions that will be discussed throughout this essay.

⁴ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, “November 20, 1923—Postulates of Linguistics,” in *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Continuum, 2022) 75–76.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 76.

Music

In the soundtrack, the music begins as soon as we are left alone with the order and the voice holding back from answering the command. It is as if the voice conceals the answer in order not only to disobey the order but to overcome the word by giving the response in music. The tune that we hear through the loudspeakers reverberating in the entire room is the beginning of the first part *Adagio sostenuto* of Ludwig van Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 14 Op. 27, a well-known and excessively circulated piano piece also known as 'The Moonlight Sonata.' The particular sheet music used for playing and recording this excerpt can be found in a note collection of piano music for popular cinema that was also my source when practicing and recording the tune.

French writer Jacques Attali points out in *Noise: The political Economy of Music* that 'All music can be defined as noise given form'⁶ and 'that *noise is violence*: it disturbs'⁷ adding that it is 'a weapon of death'⁸ as it is capable of giving death – it can physically destroy things.⁹ Later in the same book Attali deepens the analysis of music as music being the reflector of a certain order and the product of its time's political order. Harmony sustains the ruling class and any disharmony destroys order. In 7.5.–5.6.2022 the 23 bars of music transgress effectively the word, though, following Attali's proposition, the music turns out to be yet another deadly organisation as it is arranged noise that reconjures the given order and the taste of the ruling class since the piece is accepted as part of a musical repertoire that can be seen reflecting an accepted taste. It cannot but reproduce the given order.

But what is noteworthy is the attempt of destabilisation of the given order through the persecution of the recorded excerpt. We also experience this destabilisation – not only a deadliness. The extract that is heard through the loudspeakers is a recording of the tune played with an old upright piano that is slightly out of tune. What we hear is the timbre, the specific sound of

⁶ Jacques Attali, *Noise: The political Economy of Music*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 1985) 25.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 26–27.

the instrument that, like a voice, chants the melody line as an answer to the command; a pianist playing as the voice that refuses to speak to show us their interior; something unforeseeable yet familiar and affectively charged, communicating without words the twilight of their own in the isolated space under the white gleam of fluorescent lights.

The subversive effect of the tune played in the space is not only based on its out-of-tune quality but also on its insurmountable and touching, yet not anecdotal but abstract, affective capacity that sinks us into a stage of melancholy and intimacy. The chant-like melody is abruptly cut short just before it would continue its musical uttering leaving us in great suspense with an ever-increasing unease. In this way the sudden cut introduces a way to destabilise the given musical order leaving its quest unfulfilled and abrupt, undefined and open – in order to let the listener flee the organisation of the ready-made world.

Co-ire

Names appear after the music. What was concealed is brought up to us now. The second part is a list of names ordered alphabetically, beginning with Abel and ending at Willigis. The list contains names familiar to us, yet their origin hasn't been disclosed in the context of the exhibition. They originate from the list of children's names indexing the literary characters that appear through *Co-ire: album systématique de l'enfance*, a book co-written by gay activist and writer Guy Hocquenghem and his teacher philosopher René Schérer published in 1977 in Paris.

The translator of the book asks in the introduction of the English translation: 'What do you do when a full-length translated manuscript is left on your doorstep, of Guy Hocquenghem and René Schérer's 1977 book *Co-ire*?'¹⁰ I asked the same when I came across *Co-ire*, as the book doesn't serve uncomplicated ideas of the relation between the child and the adult, the 'coming and going together,' and the autonomy of minors. The source material carries a halo of negation as it has been forgotten and rejected due to its controversial insights on childhood, suggesting that the initial drive of the child is to be captivated and abducted; that the child flees only wishing to be caught in the end of the flight.

This proposition is taken as the point of departure for the second part of the work. What we hear in this part of the work are the names called with a soft and gentle voice, a companion secretly uttering the names of their brothers and sisters from a place that is out of reach for those who aren't part of it: the grownups. As if the voice would be blowing a new life in the literary figures imagined through an autonomous place that is concealed as the space of their own, independent of the adults. There is a pleasure in disrupting the proposed dialectics between the abductor and the child proposed by Hocquenghem and Schérer; to be their voice from the place from where they speak.

¹⁰ Irene Windsor, "Translator's Note," in Guy Hocquenghem and René Schérer, *Coming and Going Together: A Systematic Childhood Album*, trans. Irene Windsor, *Homintern*, (9 November 2020), accessed 23 March 2024, <https://homintern.soy/issues/11-9-20/comingandgoingtogether.html>.

Kinder dieser Welt

An echo of artist Hanne Darboven's exhibition catalogue *Kinder dieser Welt*¹¹ can also be sensed in the choice of including a list of children's names in the work, as it has affinity to her much more complex systematic work that doesn't let itself be explained too easily.

¹¹ Hanne Darboven, *Kinder dieser Welt* (Stuttgart: Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Cantz Verlag, 1997).

Death in Venice

Death follows us to the third part of *7.5.–5.6.2022*, which is a poem read aloud by a voice opening yet another auditive literary space echoing in the room, decorating the space with the images that it recalls, showing another face of the interior. The main source of the third part of the soundtrack is the infamous novella ‘Death in Venice’ by the German modernist author Thomas Mann published for the first time in 1912 after Mann’s stay in Venice in 1911. In the story, a young boy is enamoured by an older man, who obsessively follows the child, facing death in him: the protagonist sees himself dying in the boy’s gaze as it reminds him of the loss of his own youth – youth that is only an idea, a dead image that will keep living in eternity, not as life. The child remains unknown through the novella.

This resonated in me, leading to a conclusion: even if the child stays unknown through the literary work it doesn’t mean that he can’t see. He can see death in the eyes of an adult and this leaves a permanent impression in the child. Once being gazed at – or being seen in the corridor of the gymnasium or in the metro of Paris – one can’t but gaze back. Yet that gaze must be of another regard than that of the pursuer’s. The imagined child who was once the object of the man’s search reverses his projection and re-tells the entire novella with his own voice, gazing back through the third part of *7.5.–5.6.2022* which is an appropriation of Mann’s writing. This rewriting happens through the literary space of *7.5.–5.6.2022*. Appropriation and writing aloud is used in inverting the entire construction of the gazes and deadly visions faced in the novella’s haunted city of Venice. Now, in *7.5.–5.6.2022*, the novella gets transformed by the soundtrack that echoes in the windowless room – that at other times functions as a class room – in order to produce an image that cannot be seen, but heard and felt.

Impression

When we hear the voice declining in a slow diminuendo we are in the fourth and last part of the work. We are left in the room hearing nearly nothing for an undefinable amount of time – yet only until the soundtrack starts playing again. After a while we can hear the rustle of the ventilation system and the sensors measuring the room temperature and movement in the space. We hear not a silence, but a noise produced by the work. When the soundtrack ceases, its absence makes us hear the sounds of the space – a silence of the expectation, of the wait.

This noise is like a blank image, a non-retinal apparition forming an impression of an image that is not seen, only heard. It could be an image that shows itself at the moment of death, or in this case at the end of the work. Once the sound has been perceived, the vision that cannot be seen has left its impression passing away as if nothing had happened, throwing us back to the unutterable expectation, to the isolated and bare room with only a mattress and the inexorable gleaming of the fluorescent lights in the ceiling.

This reminds us of the last vision on Lido concealing Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*: 'Then he stood right up and walked slowly away. [...] a quite isolated and unrelated apparition [...] into an immensity rich with unutterable expectation.'¹², or of the reproduction of Claude Monet's painting, that worked as a model when I composed the work, both of them captivating an ambiguity that is predominant for the greyness of the industrial time.

¹² Thomas Mann, "Death in Venice," in *Death in Venice and Other Stories*, trans. David Luke (New York: Bantam Classics, 2008) 343.

Silence

Susan Sontag's writing of silence is the inspiration for my description of the silence that the work produces in the previous segment. In 'Aesthetics of Silence' she explains how it is constructed by the noise that precedes it:

Silence doesn't exist in a literal sense, however, as the *experience* of an audience. It would mean that the spectator was aware of no stimulus or that he was unable to make a response. But this can't happen; nor can it even be induced programmatically. The non-awareness of any stimulus, the inability to make a response, can result only from a defective presence on the part of the spectator, or a misunderstanding of his own reactions (misled by restrictive ideas about what would be a "relevant" response). As long as audiences, by definition, consist of sentient beings in a "situation," it is impossible for them to have no response at all.¹³

The experience of silence is a relative phenomenon produced in the audience when something ceases or is left unaware and this can intentionally be used in an artwork. Sontag continues and likens silence to the neutral:

Nor can silence, in its literal state, exist as the *property* of an artwork—even of works like Duchamp's readymades or Cage's *4'33"*, in which the artist has ostentatiously done no more to satisfy any established criteria of art than set the object in a gallery or situate the performance on a concert stage. There is no neutral surface, no neutral discourse, no neutral theme, no neutral form. Something is neutral only with respect to something else—like an intention or an expectation.¹⁴

Silence can only be experienced as an expectation produced by an art work and as it turns out in this case, there is no such thing – only noise: the gentle rustle of the technical infrastructure of the space where the work is exhibited.

¹³ Susan Sontag, "The Aesthetics of Silence," in *Styles of Radical Will* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1969) 9.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 9–10.

Julia Kristeva

Like the impressionist who moved to an objective system of representing the world through arranging colour under optical rules to produce certain impressions perceptible for the eye, Julia Kristeva describes Céline's attempt to describe his own writing as an impressionism of words while also citing him:

Céline has compared his style to that of impressionist painters. It is indeed possible to liken to color dots statements in which the binary turn of the early novels is condensed in short units that the blank spaces of the three dots place side by side to form a halo not of descriptions but of subjective impressions.

You know, three dots, the impressionists made three dots. Take Seurat, he would put three dots everywhere; he thought it let air into his paintings, made it fly about. The fellow was right. It didn't start much of a school [...] It's too hard.[i]¹⁵

Here Kristeva and Céline present us to a model of non-retinal image, a literary image that is blank to the eye, and contrary to the objective attempt of the impressionist, producing a relational space where the space between the words lets in air and in this way calls for subjective reflection, a light that shines through the text.

¹⁵ Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leos S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982) 200–201. Quote in the text: [i] Louis-Ferdinand Céline “Louis-Ferdinand Céline vous parle,” in *Romans II* (Paris: Gallimard, 1974) 934.

Coma

An example of an attempt to reach the most extreme form of the impressionism of words – produced through a different kind of experimentation than Céline’s pointillism – can be found in author Pierre Guyotat’s novel *Coma*, in which he rewrites his earlier journey towards artificially produced coma by the use of drugs. In Guyotat’s case the ultimate obliteration of the self is attained by putting to test the literary subject of enunciation that is the body – by driving it to a near death. The result is striking as Guyotat describes the experience of the close death as a halo or an apparition, a light appearing before him just when passing into coma:

It is within that dream that I feel myself dying, and an angel marks the ground and the bottom of the door with its imprint (its wing). It is morning.¹⁶

The last and fourth part of the soundtrack is a product of the fascination for, and the resonance with, this literary experiment by Guyotat as 7.5.–5.6.2022 was produced under and during isolated conditions spent in my childhood home in voluntary confinement. Instead of the death, the voice in the work utters ‘I’ just before falling asleep. There is a blankness in the utterance of *I*. This blankness is the image one imagines to be seeing just before they will pass away. Only by returning to life one can bring this image back, making the near-death impression, after all, a sign of life.

¹⁶ Pierre Guyotat, *Coma*, trans. Noura Wedell (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2010) 212–213.

The Interior

Artist Simon Thompson proposes in a text on artist Enrico David's work that blueprints, the maquette, and architectural plans are the unconscious of the object.¹⁷ This could be applied to the work as it is not only furnished with a dirty one-person mattress installed with a distance to the walls, the AV equipment to play the audio track in the space, the already existing infrastructure of the room, the entrance and the door that closes by its own weight, but also with what isn't there. This unsettling presence gives the work its signature. It is as if everything that isn't present in the room presses itself through the space in its own absence.

This signature could be likened to the function of the mystic writing pad that psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud used as an analogy of the working of the subconsciousness of our psyche.¹⁸ In Freud's description, scription appears on the mystic writing pad when the writing tool touches the surface and thereby what is underneath it, leaving a trace on the pad that then eventually can be wiped off. The scription is an illustration for us of what is beneath – the unknown. What appears on the surface of the writing pad fades away back to where it came from.

Reversely, this unknown touches the surface of the spectators when the voice played through the loudspeakers in the room writes the word in reverberations. The reverberating word that is absorbed by the visitors leaves an impression inscribed to their bodies speaking to what isn't apparently present in the room, making the literary image and the subjective impression of it appear. In this way we aren't only inside the work, but the work is the inside of the spectator as the subjective impression appearing to them is a predominant part of experiencing the work of the same right as the physical space. In this way the work is an interior at least in a double sense: a white-walled exhibition space superimposed with the interior world of the spectator.

¹⁷ Simon Thompson, 'Enrico David,' in *Enrico David*, appendix (London: ICA, Koenig Books, 2009) 9.

¹⁸ Sigmund Freud, "A Note Upon the 'Mystic Writing-Pad'" in *Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. XIX (1923–1925): *The Ego and the Id and Other Works*, trans. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press, The Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1961) 225–232.

Blanchot

French writer and philosopher Maurice Blanchot pictures an emptied room in his first novel. It is emptied so that Anna, the person inhabiting it, would abandon it sooner. But instead of inspiring leaving, the room turns into a twilight stage:

Her room became uninhabitable: given a northern exposure for the first time, with a single window which admitted only the late afternoon sun, deprived each day of another lovely object, this room gave every evidence of being secretly emptied in order to inspire in her the desire to leave it as soon as possible. The world too was devastated. They had exiled the pleasant seasons, asked the children to cry out in joy elsewhere, called into the street all the anger of cities, and it was an insurmountable wall of shattering sounds that separated her from mankind.¹⁹

Something similar happens in the work. It is a twilight room filled with light, a stage prepared for an event, an end – a death. It is a stage of an endless anticipation, being signed by a body that isn't there. Modernity has offered deadly structures like this, false purifications, absence, and removal in order to realise its ideals.

¹⁹ Maurice Blanchot, *Thomas the Obscure*, trans. Robert Lamberton (New York: Station Hill Press) 78.

Olesen

Artist Henrik Olesen writes about the work of minimalist composer John Cage, who deliberately used silence in his work as material, noting that this was a way to refuse and resist ‘the macho, homophobic company of the Abstract Expressionists of the 1940s and 1950s.’²⁰ Olesen continues:

The site of “silence” was to continue through Cage’s production. As Jonathan Katz points out, to be gay in a homophobic culture was to realize that conversation was not always about expression: “If silence was, paradoxically, in part an expression of Cage’s identity as a closeted homosexual during the Cold War, it was also much more than that. Silence was not only a symptom of oppression, it was also, I want to argue, a chosen mode of resistance. Cage became notable precisely for his silences—clear proof of its unsuitability as a strategy of evasion. Closeted people seek to ape dominant discursive forms, to participate as seamlessly as possible in hegemonic constructions. They do not, in my experience, draw attention to themselves with a performative silence, as John Cage did when he stood before the fervent Abstract Expressionist multitude and blasphemed: ‘I have nothing to say and I’m saying it.’”²¹

Despite the quite contrary approach of 7.5.–5.6.2022 – as it instead of the Minimalist reductionism, that approaches a certain distance and removal of body presence, fills the space with affect and sound – it also utilises some of the Minimalists’ strategies that Olesen describes. The seemingly empty space and the silence that follows in the end of the work are rejections of the coercion to pronounce and illustrate a specific subject position either through words or the spatial arrangement. In this way the work can be understood as negative form rather than empty or silent, non-expression being used to express what cannot be said.

²⁰ Henrik Olesen *Some Faggy Gestures*, ed. Heike Munder (Zurich: JRP|Ringier, 2008) 18.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 18–19. Quotes in the text from John Cage “Lecture on Nothing,” taken from Jonathan Katz, *John Cage’s Queer Silence or How to Avoid Making Matters Worse* (Durham, NC: GLQ/Duke University Press, 1999), as found on the Queer Cultural Center webpage: <http://www.queerculturalcenter.org/Pages/KatzPages/KatzWorse.html>.

Yang

One work that gives an insight to what subversion can be is artist Haegue Yang's *Sol LeWitt Upside Down – Structure with Three Towers, Expanded 23 Times, Split in Three* (2015),²² in which she has reconstructed a minimalist work by Sol LeWitt from 1986 by using venetian blinds, scaled it up 23 times, split it in three parts, and hung the entire construction from the ceiling in the exhibition space. The upside-down construction is lit by fluorescent lights installed above Yang's work. The space, that can be concerned as the negative of form that the venetian blinds produce in between and under the sculpture, is the most prevailing quality of the work, subverting the entire locus of modernist idea of form, transforming it to intimacy, a presence that reminds us of the space around us by making it perceivable through the sculptural intervention.

²² "Sol LeWitt Upside Down – Structure with Three Towers, Expanded 23 Times, Split in Three," Tate, accessed 10 April 2024, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/yang-sol-lewitt-upside-down-structure-with-three-towers-expanded-23-times-split-in-three-t15081>.

Love

Another explanation for an emptied room is given by Roland Barthes who writes as follows:

The hypnotic episode, it is said, is ordinarily preceded by a twilight state: the subject is in a sense empty, available, offered unwittingly to the rape which will surprise him. In the same way Werther describes at some length the trivial life he leads at Wahlheim before meeting Charlotte: no mundanity, no leisure, only reading Homer, a kind of blank and prosaic daily round, lulling him (he has nothing but pease porridge). This “wondrous serenity” is merely a waiting—a desire: I never fall in love unless I have wanted to; the emptiness I produce in myself (and on which, like Werther, quite innocently, I pride myself) is nothing but that interval, longer or shorter, when I glance around me, without seeming to, looking for *who to love*.²³

The lover empties his life in order to fall in love.

In 7.5.–5.6.2022, the emptiness of the spatial arrangement could hint toward such a pregnant state. With the work being a stage, the twilight of the white-walled room of light is just a temporary state, ‘an interval,’ and it is emptied in preparation to fall in love, and, not anymore, to death. Behind it all is the need to fall in love, and the intentionality to exit the stage in this way after experiencing word, noise, death, abandonment, isolation, rejection, and emptying.

²³ Roland Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, a division of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001) 190.

Ravishment

Let us make a detour through my encounter with the city Venice in summer 2022 where yet another apparition appears, now at Gallerie dell'Accademia after I eventually had fallen in love, at a painting by Domenico Tintoretto. There *The Dream of Saint Mark* (1585) turns into a weighty vision, an apparition, a mirage of an angel burning in counter light, representing the one who I had fallen in love with and destroying in its flames both the loved one, me, and the lover leaving behind only the source of the love – the blinding light. This tormenting apparition burned what it had to burn and made me face death. The painting was accompanied by a text explaining that an angel appears before Saint Mark announcing in his dream “Pax tibi, Marce, Evangelista meus, hic requiescat corpus tuum.”²⁴ In these words, the death is faced as a prediction that kept echoing in my thoughts during this episode: ‘may your body rest here.’

The light in twilight as the result of reduction by emptying described by Barthes in the previous sequence wasn't what it was supposed to be; it led to falling in love and after that to the ravishing experience of death in the form of a tormenting apparition that burned in blinding power; a new form of whitening, since the only thing that was left was the source of the light.

Artist Etel Adnan writes in a similar way about dramatist Heiner Müller's experience of the paintings of Jacopo Robusti known as Tintoretto (1518–1594):

L'impact de l'œuvre de Tintoret sur Heiner Müller rejoint – et justifie – ce que ce dernier [...] avait pressenti et exprimé dans un poème intitulé « Images » :
« Car le beau veut dire la fin possible de l'effroi »[i]. Puis, deux décennies plus tard, à propos du *Miracle de saint Marc* il dira : « La lumière est un cyclone »[i].²⁵

²⁴ “The Dream of Saint Mark,” Gallerie dell'Accademia, accessed 19 March 2024, <https://www.gallerieaccademia.it/en/dream-saint-mark>.

²⁵ Etel Adnan, *Heiner Müller et Le Tintoret : la fin possible de l'effroi* (Tousson: L'Échoppe, Envois, 2015) 20. Quotes in the text: [i] Heiner Müller, *Poèmes. 1949-1995* (Paris: Christian Bourgois, 1996) 15. [ii] Heiner Müller, *Fautes d'impression* (Paris: L'Arche, 1991) 77. My translation of the citation: The impact of Tintoretto's work on Heiner Müller intersects – and justifies – what the latter [...] had sensed and expressed in a poem titled “Images”: “For beauty means the possible end of horror”[i]. Then, two decades later, regarding the *Miracle of Saint Mark*, he will say: “Light is a cyclone”[ii].

In the summer of 2022, I experienced something similar to what Adnan describes that Müller had experienced years earlier in Venice. The ravishing episode marked the end of fear. This time the city of Venice was capable of working as a stage of resurrection where the experience of ravishment transformed the amphitheatre of death to a mirage. This gets us to yet another proposition of what the work is capable of doing, now working as a catalyst for, or a simulator of, ravishment, rather than only being an instrument to represent a final and unmistakable ending.

Depression

But after all, one is weakened by the preparations to fall in love and by being tormented by the destructive and ravishing cyclonic apparition. Exhaustion follows undoubtedly. Modernist poet Mirjam Tuominen's words describe this stage of exhaustion:

Svalorna flyger	The swallows fly
högt	high
in mot blåare himmel	in towards bluer sky
lågt	low
ned under mörknande moln. ²⁶	down beneath darkening clouds. ²⁷

The double movement of the swallows in the poem that ends in the heaviness of the darkening clouds reminds us of the unreachable sky, the mirage that is an impossibility, like a ghost image. Let's return to the work, under the gleaming of the fluorescent lights. Seeing now the ravishment as an afterimage makes one doubt and forget about it. One can only sense the limitation, hearing the imagined echoes of the screams of the swallows – learning to know later that this is called depression.

²⁶ Mirjam Tuominen, "Svalorna flyger," in *Under jorden sjönk* (Helsingfors: Söderströms, 1954) 34.

²⁷ Mirjam Tuominen, "The Swallows," in *Selected Writings* trans. David McDuff (Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe Books Ltd, 1994) 97.

Reparation

But Venice is not only a tomb or a death machine, an amphitheatre of death, or a place where one is faced with unreachable object, the infinity; it is built of pieces, fragments, and partial objects and is parallelly a space for re-organisation. It is a model for reparation as its eclectic character allows that. It is a relational space where one can dwell in the melancholy of seeing oneself becoming an object that then collapses in the eyes of the pursuer. Venice is a place for the loss of the self.

Scholar Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick reflects on psychoanalyst Melanie Klein stating ‘Among Klein’s names for the reparative process is love.’²⁸ It must be true that love is capable of reparation, but it can also lead to destruction. What is more remarkable in my experience, is the depressive position following the ravishment. Sedgwick writes in *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* that the depressive position is the place through which the reparation starts, making it possible to collect the partial objects to a new whole:

By contrast, the depressive position is an anxiety-mitigating achievement that the infant or adult only sometimes, and often only briefly, succeeds in inhabiting: this is the position from which it is possible in turn to use one’s own resources to assemble or “repair” the murderous part-objects into something like a whole [...].²⁹

This could be applied to the work that also carries a promise – that of reconciliation. The work that has thrown us at exhaustion and depression has enabled a state that can become productive. In its solitude, it mustn’t only be an anti-ligature room, a deprivation chamber, but a site from where remaking can begin. The other signature of the room, a void tomblike mattress resting on the floor points to the space around it like Venice that shows us its capacity as a theatre of resurrection.

²⁸ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, “Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You’re So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay Is About You,” in *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2003) 128.

²⁹ Ibid.

II

Language

How to make something old become new? A friend of mine made Miu Miu shoes of second-hand low heels by beating and rubbing them against the surface of the street, by hammering and spitting on them, by burning them with cigarettes, and by covering them in dust and dirt; and so, the used and worn-out shoes became completely new – exactly like a pair of brand-new shoes. And so is the case with this work as well.

Susan Sontag writes: ‘language is the most impure, the most contaminated, the most exhausted of all the materials out of which art is made.’³⁰ And the work is made of language as well ‘its, abstractness, and its “fallenness” in history,’³¹ ‘weighed down by historical accumulation.’³² But the language in the work has also gone through a process of becoming something new and unforeseen.

The libretto of the soundtrack consists of text fragments that are appropriated from a variety of sources such as Thomas Mann’s *Death in Venice* and fragments of Marcel Proust, to mention a few. All of the material carries a weight of pastness and are from the past time – old. The collected fragments are put together in a digital text editing programme, arranged as a composition, then recorded in a studio, re-edited and recorded again. The material goes through a number of rounds of rehearsals and recordings, is cut and edited in a digital sound programme, listened to, and then recomposed in the text tool. This process is repeated until the fixation to given meanings disappears – when the only thing left is a voice absorbed in itself, shimmering its own light, expressing the inexpressible, producing an impression of unutterable and unintelligible opacity and obliqueness, a blankness of words and an endless wait, something that refuses to show itself.

In this process the oldness and fallenness of the worn-out literacy gets its strange shine, attaining its final touch when activated as part of the work as the soundtrack played through four loudspeakers mounted in pairs on the

³⁰ Susan Sontag, “The Aesthetics of Silence,” 14.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*, 15.

two opposite walls of the exhibition space. In the space the sound object inscribed on the soundtrack is dissolved as it is blasted in the echo-y room and amplified, according to the room's acoustic capacities, into reverberations and the rustle of the space.

Proust

It's not a surprise that the genealogy of the work starts from the singular experience of reading Marcel Proust. The specific passage that sparked joy in me can be found in the beginning of the third part of the soundtrack, and it is cited from *Against Sainte-Beuve*. It is the vivid image produced by Proust's words that carried me immediately to my childhood backyard, being the initial impulse to use that passage of Proust in the work. But what can be said about an art work like 7.5.–5.6.2022 that is made in a manner of a blindness of a sort, in isolation and confinement away from the external world?

Julia Kristeva writes in her book on Proust, where she sheds light on the special quality of the French author's words:

There have been many people, since Proust, who have applied themselves to enlarging a fragment of felt time – writers of the *nouveau roman* have enhanced such fragments as if they were installing them in a stained-glass window. They may appear to be more modern, more elliptical, provocative and 'transgressive'. But Proust remains the only one to keep the balance between the violence implicit in the marginal status of the main character (and the author) of *A la recherche*, and the graceful capacity for creating a world, a place of communion in worldly time. It is this fragile balance that we seem to have lost. Perhaps that is another reason why Proust, our contemporary, is also so difficult to reach in his intimate life.³³

As Kristeva puts it, it mustn't only be the blissful quality of Proust's writing, but the balance between conflict and reconciliation that tempts the reader. After all, it seems like the work leans toward pleasure and reconciliation while its foundation lies in the initial conflict of the given order-word, death, and indigestible ideas on childhood. This happens in such a measure that it becomes a virtue. The realisation of the need for care and bliss was brought to me initially by the author project Contemporary Art Writing Daily that states in an information panel for an exhibition: 'Your favorite virtue? Proust:

³³ Julia Kristeva, *Proust and the Sense of Time*, trans. Stephen Bann (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993) 8.

“The need to be loved; more precisely, the need to be caressed and spoiled much more than the need to be admired.”³⁴

Roland Barthes reminds us of the special capacity of pleasure:

Pleasure, however, is not an element of the text, it is not a naive residue; it does not depend on a logic of understanding and on sensation; it is a drift, something both revolutionary and asocial, and it cannot be taken over by any collectivity, any mentality, any idelect.³⁵

It must be this overarching faculty of pleasure – that it cannot be imposed, that it is able to drive us towards what is to come – that inspired me to work along it in my search of bliss.

³⁴ Contemporary Art Writing Daily, in *Ed Atkins* (Köln: Kunsthau Bregentz, Walther König, 2019) 473.

³⁵ Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. Richard Miller, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1975) 23.

Voice

Against and in front of the deadly blankness of the words and the order-word that judges and gives little death sentences putting the work in motion, there is the gentle rustle of the voice in the loudspeakers. First the voice gives the order, then ceases for the music, then returns and lists the names, and finally reads aloud to us. Especially the third part of the soundtrack is dominated by the voice even more so than the text itself. Something specific takes place, which is the capacity of voice to exceed semantic functions of signification as the predominant form of meaning-making.

Theorist Roland Barthes writes on voice in *The Pleasure of the Text* stating that ‘if it were possible to imagine an aesthetics of textual pleasure, it would have to include: *writing aloud*.’³⁶ He continues:

Writing aloud is not expressive; [...] it is carried not by dramatic inflections, subtle stresses, sympathetic accents, but by the *grain* of the voice, which is an erotic mixture of timbre and language, and can therefore also be, along with diction, the substance of an art: the art of guiding one’s body. [...] Due allowance being made for the sounds of the language *writing aloud* is not phonological but phonetic; its aim is not the clarity of messages, the theater of emotions; what it searches for (in a perspective of bliss) are the pulsional incidents, the language lined with flesh, a text where we can hear the grain of the throat, the patina of consonants, the voluptuousness of vowels, a whole carnal stereophony: the articulation of the body, of the tongue, not that of meaning, of language.³⁷

In another text by Barthes he describes how the grain of the voice belongs to the voice of a singer: “The “grain” is the body in the singing voice,”³⁸ and in a third one ‘the singing voice is not the breath but indeed that materiality of the body emerging from the throat, a site where the phonic metal hardens and takes shape.’³⁹

³⁶ Ibid., 66.

³⁷ Ibid., 66–67.

³⁸ Roland Barthes, “The Grain of the Voice,” in *The Responsibility of Forms*, trans. Richard Howard (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1991) 276.

³⁹ Roland Barthes, “Listening,” in *The Responsibility of Forms*, trans. Richard Howard (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1991) 255.

The voice reading to us in the work takes pleasure in voice as materiality and not that much in trying to be understood or illustrating the meaning of the words with changing intonations, but in *writing aloud* that chants the text as a long melodic progression in its simple way of pronunciation. The voice feels itself, its own grain, and gets absorbed in itself. The voice listens to itself, to the body.

It isn't only the appropriating and reworking of the source material, but rather the capacity of the voice that does the work. If the word gives orders, death sentences so to say, something activated by the work reverses this completely, not only by the dialogue-form of the piece but the voice and thus body – creating the atmosphere. So, voice exceeding language itself becomes the source of reconciliation of the judgement, the little death sentence that the order-word gave to us. The voice writing aloud rewrites what has been deadly, negated, and inverted. It is the drive, the promise of happiness embedded in the grain of the voice – the bodily resonance – that drives forward the reader in the loudspeakers. The source texts are not only appropriated and recomposed textually, but here rewritten aloud in sound – activated and transformed to a body to resonate in a similar fashion in the body of the spectator.

Listening

If we know that the experience of the work is produced in the expectation of the spectator, what is then consequently important for the work is listening. It's a setting where we aren't listening to a teacher or an analyst, but a work of art that from the very beginning of it escapes the order, interrupts the music, enouncing an indigestible list of names, fading into the indirect and oblique ending of the work. The appropriated text circumvents the readymade meanings of the source material turning it toward its own materiality and in this way opens it toward new meanings. The work is in its nature already fragmentary and deconstructed in its composition, and the aspect of listening only reinforces this.

Roland Barthes writes on the contemporary way of listening as follows:

In the third place, what is listened to here and there (chiefly in the field of art, whose function is often utopian) is not the advent of a signified, object of a recognition or of a deciphering, but the very dispersion, the *shimmering* of signifiers, ceaselessly restored to a listening which ceaselessly produces new ones from them without ever arresting their meaning; this phenomenon of shimmering is called *signifying* [*signifiance*], as distinct from signification: "listening" to a piece of classical music, the listener is called upon to "decipher" this piece, i.e., to recognize (by his culture, his application, his sensibility) its construction, quite as coded (predetermined) as that of a palace at a certain period; but "listening" to a composition (taking the word here in its etymological sense) by John Cage, it is each sound one after the next that I listen to, not in its syntagmatic extension, but in its raw and as though vertical *signifying*: by deconstructing itself, listening is externalized, it compels the subject to renounce his "inwardness."⁴⁰

Listening is fragmentary. It calls the listener to listen separately to each element of a piece at hand, when the given order is transgressed and disrupted and the traditional functions of signification aren't effective anymore. The act of listening becomes central as the spectator is called to listen and not to decipher or to understand. In this way the listener has to collect the pieces, parts, and fragments and compile them to a new entirety.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 259.

This can be used to illuminate what makes the work to resonate; it is the movement in the listener's experience that constantly produces new relations in between the listened material that doesn't allow settling into any fixed positions, calling for reinvention and openness providing a liberating effect. This is the counter-totalising guest of listening, and is called *composition* according to Attali, who summarises:

Composition thus appears as a negation of the division of roles and labor as constructed by the old codes. Therefore, in the final analysis, to listen to music in the network of composition is to rewrite it: "to put music into operation, to draw it toward an unknown praxis," as Roland Barthes writes in a fine text on Beethoven.[i] The listener is the operator. Composition, then, beyond the realm of music, calls into question the distinction between worker and consumer, between doing and destroying, a fundamental division of roles in all societies in which usage is defined by a code; to compose is to take pleasure in the instruments, the tools of communication, in use-time and exchange-time as lived and no longer as stockpiled.

Is composition future or past? Is there a noise that can organize the transition toward it from the gray world of repetition? Is it possible to read composition in music—if it develops—as an indication of a more general mutation affecting all of the economic and political networks?⁴¹

Listening is an activity and as the work loops endlessly in the resonant chamber it is rewritten by the listener each moment it is heard, over and over again.

⁴¹ Attali, *Noise: The political Economy of Music*, 135. Quoted within text: [i] Roland Barthes, "Musica practica" in *L'Arc* #40 (Paris: L'Arc, 1970) 17.

Reconciliation

Repetition being characteristic to listening brings us back to music. Jacques Attali writes:

Adorno, for example, speaks superbly of music as a “*promise of reconciliation*,” [...] reconciling people with the social order. Primordially, the production of music has as its function the creation, legitimation, and maintenance of order. [...] Every human production is in some way an intermediary and differential between people, and thus, in a sense, can be a channeler of violence.⁴²

This leads us to the reconciliatory capacity that can be found not only in music that controls violence, but in noise itself as well. Attali writes on the possibility of noise as follows:

For despite the death it contains, noise carries order within itself; it carries new information.[i] This may seem strange. But noise does in fact create a meaning: first, because the interruption of a message signifies the interdiction of the transmitted meaning, signifies censorship and rarity; and second, because the very absence of meaning in pure noise or in the meaningless repetition of a message, by unchanneling auditory sensations, frees the listener’s imagination. The absence of meaning is in this case the presence of all meanings, absolute ambiguity, a construction outside meaning. The presence of noise makes sense, makes meaning. It makes possible the creation of a new order on another level of organization, of a new code in another network.⁴³

In the work, where music is combined with voice that breaks the order-word and the literary meaning (signification) of the word bursting it into *signifiance* and ultimately letting the shimmer of *writing aloud* to fade into noise produced by the arrangement of all what has preceded it, we have arrived at a form of noise that could be likened to what Attali describes above. Applying Attali’s thoughts, the rustling white noise in the end of the soundtrack doesn’t impose any given messages in its ambiguity and in this

⁴² Ibid., 30.

⁴³ Ibid., 33. Paraphrased within text: [i] Henri Atlan, *Organisation en niveau hiérarchique et information dans les systèmes vivants* (Paris: ENSTA, 1975).

way relieves the listener of the ready-made forms of perceiving, the space around them, and ultimately the society which they inhabit. The noise of the work fills the entire space like an impression in its unorganised resonance, being now, in my proposition, a reversed form of deadly noise in its gentleness and incomplete blankness, concealing and hiding with its opacity any meaning that could fix the anteriority to a consumable image or a message, resisting in this way the given order and sheltering the listener in the unutterable expectation. This doesn't only resist the past, but reconciles the conflicts that set in motion the work – the order-word, deadly gaze in *Death in Venice*, and false purification of the space – all being driven by pleasure and the search for enjoyment.

Space

As listening is fragmentary, so is the spatial aspect of 7.5.–5.6.2022 as well. The space is a result of montage, montage of all the components of the work at hand. When assembled together they produce the specific intimacy of the work, a melange of all the elements together. The bedroom functions as a model for this space – as this activity has to happen somewhere, and for Proust it was in his bedchamber. Simon Thompson describes the capacity of the bedroom in connection with one of Enrico David's works that is 'a version of the bedroom [he] occupied between the age of 5 and 14'⁴⁴ as a generative space of language that becomes the interior itself:

The bedroom interior provides the dramatic conditions from which to nurture a dysfunctional language – not the more commonly understood drama of alienation but a language which in turn takes on the infuriatingly flexible dimensions of an interior itself.⁴⁵

Like décor, the soundtrack played back becomes momentarily the space, the interior: an exteriorised interior voice uttering and crying, screaming, filling the space with exclamations and the excess of language. As if we were hearing an inside of a body, the grain of the voice – a voice enchanting and overriding the semantic meaning of the short and punch line-like exclamations. In this melange there is an impression of a certain period of past time that is the result of the montage of these elements: the rejected effeminate voice, the inverted interior world, and a past time – all anachronisms – combined with the contemporary institutional exhibition space, the mass-produced mattress, and the tech from our time. Not much can be said of what actually is past and what keeps on living, what is contemporary or obsolescent. It is rather the aesthetic operation reversing and colliding these presumptions in the superimposition of the elements. As

⁴⁴ Simon Thompson, "Enrico David," in *Enrico David*, appendix (London: ICA, Koenig Books, 2009) 44.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 17

theorist Walter Benjamin puts it: ‘Proust’s method is actualization, not reflection.’⁴⁶ What matters is the activity and not what is reflected upon.

⁴⁶ Walter Benjamin, “The Image of Proust,” in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections* (New York: Schocken Books, 2007) 211.

Rehearsal

Art historian Sabeth Buchmann writes on early modernist Edgar Degas' paintings and the shift that is connected with the modern turn. If the previous history and landscape painting contemplated the scene and the action, one can notice that the works of Degas turn their look to what is behind the scenes, the rehearsal of the performance. Buchmann writes:

Looking at Degas's oil painting *The Rehearsal* (1874), it is the asynchronous juxtaposition and succession of movement and action that refer to an event lying in both the past and the future. The rehearsal itself is a state of timing: before the rehearsal is after the rehearsal. For it is notably not the moment of performance that is captured by Degas's sketches, drawings, and panel paintings—it is an event lying in the past and/or future and, as such, an imagined event.[i] What instead comes into view is more or less an identical basic motif whose technical artistic production is “rehearsed” in a variety of ways. Therefore the painting evokes a condition of permanent change and alteration of subjects, procedures, and perspectives within a coded and self-transforming system of rules and conventions.⁴⁷

What Buchmann observes is the multifaceted procedure of the painting medium and the reinvention of itself against the previous constraints of the medium in order to capture the dance rehearsal and not only what is optically depicted. In a similar fashion, Minimal Art and Institutional Critique can be seen, reciting Buchmann's words, leaning toward ‘the topos of the stage’ that ‘provides an alternative approach to modern and contemporary image concepts that are interested not so much in performativity than in the spatial and temporal.’⁴⁸ Here the emphasis lies on the performative behind-the-scene aspect of the making of the works that becomes the aesthetics of them.

Placing 7.5.–5.6.2022 next to the continuum of artistic practices that use the topos of rehearsal as the motive and method of making reveals a crucial aspect of the work. The work doesn't simply restage a specific place,

⁴⁷ Sabeth Buchmann, “Rehearsing in/with Media: Some Remarks on the Relationship between Dance, Film, and Painting,” in *Painting beyond Itself: The Medium in the Post-medium Condition* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2016) 164. Quoted within the text: [i] Paul Valéry, *Tanz, Zeichnung und Degas*, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1996) 38.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 155.

but constructs an imaginative stage, a bedroom-like general backstage that reminds us of, and calls for, the invisible spaces that are supporting and making possible the performance of everyday life, reproductive labour, class, and sexuality. This exposure turns the gaze away from the highlights of the stage to the underlying infrastructure of contemporary life, with the dirty mattress containing traces of use, a body and a voice that very physically resonates in the space and in the bodies of the spectators. The organisation of the elements in the space produces more of a choreography by having the mattress lying on the floor direct and lead the spectators to move in the space in a circular way instead of recalling the visual representation of a specific bedchamber.

Besides the aspect of movement there is a trace of the making of the soundtrack in the footage of the recorded voice. After re-recording, editing, and cutting, one can still hear the trace of the other spaces where the soundtrack has been recorded, eventual breathing, and guttural and oral sounds, that remind the listener of the making of the work. The presence of the performing body hasn't been entirely removed. Instead, by exposing it and showing its materiality, the work seeks to produce an immediate relation to the spectator, not pretending to be appearing from a void.

Infrastructure

Susan Sontag writes: ‘Every era has to reinvent the project of “spirituality” for itself.’⁴⁹ In a catalogue text for artist Anne Imhof’s carte blanche exhibition at Palais de Tokyo, theorist Paul B. Preciado who refers to Sontag proposes that: ‘Perhaps the best name for “this” spirituality today is “atmosphere,” “breathable matter,” “voice,” and even “body.”’⁵⁰ adding ‘It’s about the infrastructure of subjectivity.’⁵¹ What gets my attention is the infrastructure of intimacy and solitude – protocols and timetables, reproductive labour and economy, speech and language, literature and music, spaces and interiors; structures of everyday life that don’t necessarily get an immediate attention, but are essential for supporting our reality, maintaining the conditions of social divisions of labour, race, sexuality, and class.

All of these are based on continuous repetitions of the processes and operations of everyday life. When a process becomes dysfunctional it reveals the previously invisible support system for the public.⁵² Art historian Maria Vishmidt sketches this in her text ‘Between Not Everything and Not Nothing: Cuts Toward Infrastructural Critique,’⁵³ in which she suggests a shift from the classic forms of Institutional Critique performed by artists such as Michael Asher and Andrea Fraser – who directly engage with art institutions or the artist subject – to infrastructural critique and aesthetics that tries to expose larger economic and political systems. In addition, Vishmidt introduces the temporal aspect of the functioning of systems that demand and take time when repeating the operations. Reversely, time is used to order things as well and is made metric. Timetables are exactly used to control people. Time can be used as a material of an artwork to break the given order – and an artwork can break this organisation of time by making the public

⁴⁹ Sontag, “The Aesthetics of Silence,” 3.

⁵⁰ Paul B. Preciado, “After Beauty”, in *Palais 31 – Natures Mortes*, ed. Anne Imhof, trans. Jeanine Herman (Paris: Palais de Tokyo, 2021) 123.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Paraphrasing Sabeth Buchmann, “Parting with the Bonus of Youth—Maumaus as Object” in *Parting with the Bonus of Youth Maumaus—Maumaus as Object*, eds. Jürgen Bock, Simon Thompson (Lisbon: Galerias Municipais, EGEAC, Maumaus, Lumiar Cité, 2021) 20–27.

⁵³ Maria Vishmidt, “Between Not Everything and Not Nothing: Cuts Towards Infrastructural Critique,” in *Former West: Art and the Contemporary After 1989*, eds. Maria Hlavajova and Simon Sheikh (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2017) 265–269.

experience an endless wait, or a collapse of what is understood as ordered time, by introducing methods of composition and montage in durational works that destroy the categories of what is understood as present and past, beginning and end, and so forth.⁵⁴

What is characteristic to 7.5.–5.6.2022 is that the work doesn't criticise a specific subject position or an institution: it tries to propose a different way of understanding our relation to the world: through a *social abstraction* – a model built of both sounds and physical elements that carry certain social attributes such as the stained mattress or the recognizable Beethoven tune. Together they produce a relational space appearing in a juxtaposition of elements that seemingly don't have much to do with each other. The element of surprise, detachment, and sudden cuts in the music are central parts of this aesthetics operation where they together don't illustrate each other or point to specific topics risking becoming anecdotal, but retain some of their autonomy in relation to each other. The work contracts an anachronic set of elements, blasting them in space and making the spectator wonder 'What am I hearing?', breaking down the categories of what is understood and coherent. The disjuncture and use of literary space are utilised as effects and decoration to produce an unforeseen and unconsumable aesthetic experience. In this regard, the work could be seen as a form of critique as it is an attempt to formulate an abstraction about a certain specific affective performative stage and relation to body, an intimacy and solitude that is very specific to our time, and the product of modernity and capitalist reality, by using its very own products that are fragmentation, atomisation, isolation, and melancholy, exposing and subverting them in the search of bliss into an impression that doesn't only reflect the artist's subjective isolated position, but loneliness at large.

⁵⁴ The idea of time being infrastructure and infrastructure time was introduced by Sabeth Buchmann in her lecture, where she presented a paper *Within/Against Working Infrastructure* held at Den Frie Centre of Contemporary Art in Copenhagen by the invitation of artist-run initiative Jennifee-See Alternate on 1 February 2024.

CC

Another artistic piece relevant for the work is the *CC (Corner Cell)* (2021) by artist David Moser.⁵⁵ In this work he has built an isolation corner of a shower glass partition by installing it in a corner and placing a mattress in the space between the glass partition and the wall, in this way forming a space for one person. This isolation model of Moser worked as an inspiration for developing the work and formulating my argument on infrastructural critique.

⁵⁵ Laura McLean-Ferris, “Hard Limits: David Moser,” *Mousse Magazine*, 28 September 2022, accessed 20 March 2024, <https://www.moussemagazine.it/magazine/david-moser-laura-mclean-ferris-2022/>.

Décor

In turn, the reprint of artist Marcel Broodthaers' exhibition catalogue *Décor*⁵⁶ offers yet another insight to what the reflection of infrastructure might amount to. In the catalogue one can see how Broodthaers exposes the material past of ICA New Gallery, the exhibition place of *Décor*, by displaying an assortment of furniture, firearms, and other accessories related to the colonial past of the place, producing a strange and uncanny effect of colour and decoration. This logic of décor of the unwanted lends to the methodological reservoir of 7.5.–5.6.2022 as well.

⁵⁶ Maria Gilissen, ed., *Décor: A Conquest by Marcel Broodthaers* (New York: Michael Werner Gallery, 2007).

Body

Poet Antonin Artaud has said ‘It is not a spirit which has made things,⁵⁷ *‘but a body.*’⁵⁸ A notion in line with Artaud’s poetry is the counter-reaction to Minimal Art’s attempt to erase corporeality with technology and mass-produced materials well-articulated in a passage of *Anti-Ligature Rooms* by Contemporary Art Writing Daily.⁵⁹ They shed light on how body can be present in contemporary art:

But a body can be expressed not through “figuration” but its intermediary. Think of Cady Noland’s institutional objects as evidence, learning something about the specifics of flesh under society. Of elder’s walkers and handcuffs. We make objects for ourselves and so of course they express us. And eventually they exist for so long beside us, silently shape alongside us, that they begin to take on facets and express things that were latent, learning by proxy.

And today we are so acclimated to objects and commodities adapted to us that any object blurring suggestion for the function they provide (to us) produces an uncanny effect. We say they look otherworldly, alien, simply because we don’t know what good they are to us.

Objects without an owner, like an island of misfit toys, castoffs.⁶⁰

In 7.5.–5.6.2022 it is not only the dirty mattress that is relevant, but the cry, a scream, that traverses through the space reverberating in the bodies of the visitors. It is not only loud but heart-rending: ‘Jag anses farlig, därför är jag inlåst.’ translating to ‘I’m considered dangerous, that’s why they lock me away.’ It is a scream that stains and pollutes the white space. It is an intermediary of the body and not its representation. It is exactly because of this that the work feels so disconnected and alerting. Modernity has taught us to disregard the body from every possible surface, and hearing it being returned to us in a haunting scream makes us wonder what it is doing here. The stained mattress, as well, returns to our eyes what is necessarily part of

⁵⁷ Antonin Artaud, *Watchfiends & Rack Screams: Works from the Final Period*, ed. and trans. Clayton Ashleman with Bernard Bador (Boston: Exact Change, 1995) 129.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 227.

⁵⁹ Contemporary Art Writing Daily, *Anti-Ligature Rooms* (Copenhagen, London: Plea, Cabinet, 2020) 57–58.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 58.

the infrastructure of our everyday lives, making us feel uncanniness and shock. These are effects, and grimaces, to ravish and rupture, to let go of what we thought that we knew, to open the door to the unknown and inconvenient.

Style

What else is characteristic to the work is the conditions under which it is produced, i.e. the means of its production. In the crux of its aesthetics is the excessive use of different sources and materials circulated online and made accessible by a variety of platforms. The infrastructure provides seamless access to materials that used to be hard to retrieve, making it possible to work with unreachable things with ease. This current condition is a concrete part of the production of *7.5.–5.6.2022* as it allowed me to unexpectedly come across the English translation of *Co-ire*. Here the infrastructure amounts to a certain style, a décor, that is realised through the use of the information networks.

This notion brings us to avantgarde artist Marcel Duchamp. When asked to reflect on taste in an interview, Duchamp answers that taste is only a product of repeating what is considered good, bad, or uninteresting.⁶¹ He then describes the process of making the *Large Glass*, a work by him that is only finalised when it by chance cracks during its transportation. Here the inhuman element is introduced to art making, making it a defining factory. The movement away from the socially acceptable transfers us toward the singular and specific. This in turn leads to my reformulation of the question amounting to a proposition in which style does not only reflect socio-economic relations, but the constellation of the world and the inhuman capacities of it.

Another example of a particular style produced in assistance with a technical apparatus is poet James Merrill's *The Changing Light at Sandover* that was conducted as a conversation with the unknown during several years of sessions of seances by using a board and a glass to communicate. The poem shimmers in a way that is only made attainable in contact with the unfamiliar, shedding its light through the interstices of the words:

About us, these bright afternoons, we come
To draw shades of an auditorium

⁶¹ Marcel Duchamp, "I Propose to Strain the Laws of Physics" interviewed by Francis Roberts, *Art News*, December 1968, accessed 20 March 2024, <https://www.artnews.com/art-news/retrospective/archives-interview-marcel-duchamp-1968-11708/>.

In darkness. An imagined dark, a stage⁶²

—This outside world, our fictive darkness more
And more belittles to a safety door
Left open onto light. Too small, too far
To help. The blind bright spot of where we are.⁶³

And the light—imagined too?⁶⁴

He came alone? YES The lighting? WHITE
WE ARE STILL BLINDED BY IT GONE, THE 4
COLORS HAVE SUFFUSED THE ROOM No fear?
ONLY GREAT AND MIRACULOUS RELIEF
Relief? BOTH BOTH IF WE ARE CAPABLE OF THIS
WHY NOT OF E V E R Y T H I N G ? O LORD HOW ONE
DESPISES UNGRATEFUL WILLFULLY IGNORANT MAN!
“Despise”—is that the lesson? ITS UNGRATEFUL
AFTERMATH MY DEARS IT WAS A MOMENT⁶⁵

I find a similarity in *Co-ire* and the light that flickers through *The Changing Light at Sandover* not only in that they are written around the same period of time, the 1970's, but in that they both have been made in contact with the rejected, either the unknown or the socially unaccepted ideas on childhood. The fragmentary method of composing the libretto of 7.5.–5.6.2022 is informed by these two examples – the other one also being a direct source of the work – by welcoming in the making of the work the incalculable events of coming across something unexpected. By their guidance, the work opens toward the unutterable, an example from the libretto also literally illuminating this:

It is the door opening on the unknown, the monstrous, the inhuman—haunted by my power.

⁶² James Merrill, *The Changing Light at Sandover* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001) 147.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 148.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 174.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 250.

Conclusion

If the work should be described once more, what it has captivated, or better, what the piece is able to activate, it would be possible to use the words of Marcel Proust. At the end of his essay on Gérard de Nerval, Proust puts into words the inexplicable quality that is inscribed in de Nerval's novel *Sylvie*:

[...] when all is said and done it is only the inexpressible, only what one thought one would not succeed in putting into a book, which survives. It is something vague and obsessive like the memory. It is an atmosphere.⁶⁶

Proust continues, 'Only it is not in the words, it is not expressed, it is mixed between the words, like the mist in the morning in Chantilly.'⁶⁷

So is the atmosphere of the work as well, not expressed, yet saturating the entire room. And the visitor is brought into the middle of that inexpressible something. And it is not only made of words, but of a voice and the sound of a piano, a scream, whisperings, the white walls, the ceiling and the floor, a one-person mattress, the dirt on it, the gleaming fluorescent lights and the infrastructure of the room, a bin next to the door, the XLR cords and power outlets, a media player playing the soundtrack through four loudspeakers, noises, and the gaps between the sounds – echoing the making of the work in the windowless chamber.

And the only thing that remains is still the unnamed surviving through the gaps and interstices – a body yet again left alone at the unutterable expectation of the inexpressible and oblique transparent shimmer of the work, echoing Proust in bliss and without fear:

Such are those [...] early mornings, hollowed [...] out of the unyielding rock of our days, and miraculously preserving the delectable, exalted colours, the dreamlike charm that sets them apart in our memories like some marvellous grotto, magical and multicoloured in its special atmosphere.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Marcel Proust, "Gérard de Nerval," in *Against Sainte-Beuve and Other Essays*, trans. John Sturrock (London: Penguin Books, 1994) 32–33.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 32–33.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 30.

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Audio

Recording of the soundtrack of 7.5.–5.6.2022 paying in the exhibition space, duration 16:03 minutes:

<https://vimeo.com/villeaurinkoski/villeaurinkoski75562022>

The soundtrack played in 7.5.–5.6.2022, duration 16:03 minutes:

<https://vimeo.com/villeaurinkoski/villeaurinkoski75562022soundtrack>

Figures

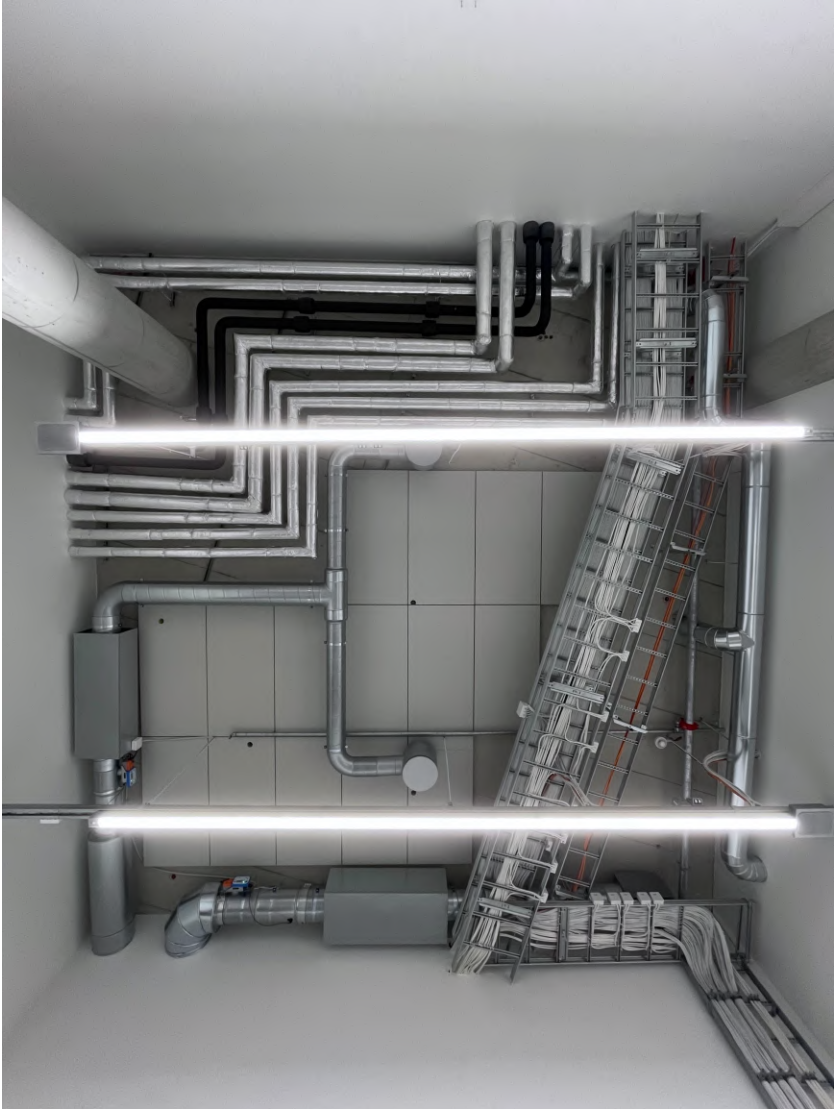


















* Claude Monet, Impression, soleil levant

Libretto

VILLE LAURINKOSKI

« Skriv ditt namn på det här pappret. Läs nu vad du själv har skrivit. »

« Det står: ... »ⁱ

« Write your name on this piece of paper. Read what you just wrote. »

« It says: ... »ⁱⁱ

* ...

'Moonlight' Sonata Op.27, No.2

Composed by Ludwig van Beethoven

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Adagio sostenuto

The first system of the musical score for the first movement of Beethoven's 'Moonlight' Sonata, Op. 27, No. 2. It consists of four measures. The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is common time (C). The tempo is marked 'Adagio sostenuto'. The first measure is marked 'sempre pp' and 'una corda'. The bass line features a sustained D major chord. The treble line has a melodic line with triplets in the first two measures. The second system starts at measure 4, marked 'pp'. The third system starts at measure 7. The fourth system starts at measure 10, marked 'una corda'. The score includes dynamic markings, articulation marks, and a 'Ped' (pedal) marking at the end of each system.

13

Musical score for measures 13-15. The piece is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. Measure 13 features a treble clef with a melodic line of eighth notes and a bass clef with a simple accompaniment. Measure 14 continues the melodic line. Measure 15 has a whole rest in the treble and a half note in the bass. A *Ped.* (pedal) marking is present under the first two measures.

16

Musical score for measures 16-18. Measure 16 has a treble clef with a melodic line and a bass clef with a simple accompaniment. Measure 17 continues the melodic line. Measure 18 has a whole rest in the treble and a half note in the bass. *Ped.* markings are present under measures 16 and 18.

19

Musical score for measures 19-21. Measure 19 has a treble clef with a melodic line and a bass clef with a simple accompaniment. Measure 20 continues the melodic line. Measure 21 has a whole rest in the treble and a half note in the bass. A *una corda* marking is present under measure 20.

22

Musical score for measures 22-24. Measure 22 has a bass clef with a melodic line and a treble clef with a simple accompaniment. Measure 23 continues the melodic line. Measure 24 has a whole rest in the bass and a half note in the treble. A *pp* (pianissimo) marking is present under measure 22.

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Wenda, 106
Willigis, 42ⁱⁱⁱ

P.

On a spring afternoon,
after a succession ...of cold, wet weeks,
‘the pale March sunlight put a sheen on the transparent
green satin of the tree trunks in the garden.

P.

Such are those early mornings,
hollowed out of the unyielding rock of our days,
and miraculously preserving the delectable,
exalted colours, the dreamlike charm
that sets them apart in our memories
like some marvellous grotto,
magical and multicoloured
in its special atmosphere.’^{iv}

PP

¶ Then, ‘in the background of my daydreams,’
I suddenly became aware that my gaze was being
returned.

‘An invasion at a strange time from a strange place.’
I turned away to take no further notice.

I now became conscious of an extraordinary expansion of myself.

A kind of roving restlessness, a feeling so long unaccustomed and forgotten.

P.

My imagination,
I saw it,
a landscape under a cloud-swollen sky,
moist islands, forests and fields.

Then the vision faded.

‘It is the door opening on the unknown, the monstrous, the inhuman—haunted by my power.’^v

* ...

(3)

d. 'It was daylight when I had fallen asleep, now, it was already night, the sounds that came in from the open window were no longer the same.'^{vi}

Where did one go?

cresc. What was I doing here in the early morning mist?

It will be a short ride.
I thought: if only it could last forever!
There was silence.
Images and perceptions.

the twilight of the immeasurable,
strange and shadowy figures,
the interior,
a forbidden longing deep within me,
a longing for the unarticulated and immeasurable,
passing with uncertain gestures
How still it was growing all round me!

I turned around
and my eyes met those of that come to us in dreams:

« *Jag anses farlig, därför är jag inlåst.* »^{vii}

« *I'm considered dangerous, that's why they lock me
away.* »^{viii}

And then it had passed.

There was no question of my staying here.

Too late.

I should stay here as long as I do!

What better place could I find?

***cresc.** Good-bye, fell away a stern, and my heart was rent with sorrow. To be returning, by a quirk of fate, to places from which one has just taken leave forever with the deepest sorrow—to be sent back and to be seeing them again!*

* ...

(4)

I would soon find myself driven by restlessness and dissatisfaction,
where the low clouds would drift through the yard,
violent evening thunderstorms would put out all the
lights, to the ends of the earth, where no snow is nor winter, no
storms and no rain down-streaming.

I felt I was gazing which had never yet come alive in my
own fire.

And a delightful vision came to me:

*'Thin clouds of mist drifted over the lawn, spreading tufts of
white upon the tips of the grass.'*^{ix}

A dying star still floated in the void, noiselessly and with
overwhelming power. The glow and the fire and the blazing
flames reared upward:

p *« I saw what really was but didn't let it live. »^x*

Where did it come from, what was its origin, this sudden
breeze?

Feelings I had had long ago,
early and precious dolour of the heart,
which had died out and were now,
so strangely transformed, returning to me.

Joy no doubt, surprise, admiration,

that profound, fascinated, protracted smile
I carried it away.

I was so deeply shaken that I was forced to flee the hall
and hurry into the darkness of my room.

* ...

(5)

A call, half warning and half greeting, was answered
from a distance concealed behind the doors.

I no longer feared the observant eyes of the others, they
were running away, leaving,
language be dying away into silence all round me,

My head was burning,
my body was covered with sticky sweat,
my neck quivered,
a no longer endurable thirst tormented me.

I looked around for something,
that would instantly relieve it.

A little room, opened up in front of me.

The place was stricken
and I peered around still more wildly in search.

I followed the sounds,
dreamt of what I had seen
addressed words to my mere shadow,
the foreign environment,
the joy of an intoxication
a secret,
which merged with my own innermost secret
to indulge myself in the most astonishing ways
in a complete drunken ecstasy!

ff “Where is this leading me!”

What would they say?

And in the end,
they were all laughing,

pp *‘He’s singing.’^{xi}*

d. And my eyes darkening:

« Can’t I be a girl after all...? »^{xii}

I had to leave today rather than tomorrow, to turn away
and flee from this place.

I remembered:
a landscape that glinted in the evening light, suffused
with meaning in which my mind had wandered.

“They want it kept quiet!”
I whispered.

That night “It shone from my eyes;”^{xiii}

I saw it, *soleil levant*...

Venise...

... *It's morning*.^{xiv}

...

... *light*^{xv}

... *I* ...^{xvi}

...

A. S.

The body of the text: Thomas Mann, 'Death in Venice', in *Death in Venice and Other Stories*, trans. David Luke, Bantam Classics, 1988.

* Ludwig van Beethoven, 'Sonata Op. 27, No. 2,' in *The Essential Collection: Classic Film Gold*, Chester Music, 2005.

ⁱ Ingmar Bergman, *Fanny and Alexander* (1982).

ⁱⁱ Ingmar Bergman, *Fanny and Alexander* (1982).

ⁱⁱⁱ Guy Hocquenghem and René Schérer, 'Coming and Going Together: A Systematic Childhood Album', trans. Irene Windsor, orig. *Co-ire : Album systématique de l'enfance*, Recherches, N°22, 1977.

^{iv} Marcel Proust, 'Gerald de Nerval,' *Against Sainte-Beuve and Other Essays*, Penguin Books, 1994.

^v Guy Hocquenghem and René Schérer, 'Coming and Going Together'.

^{vi} Hervé Guibert, *Ghost Image*, The University of Chicago Press, 2014.

^{vii} Ingmar Bergman, *Fanny and Alexander* (1982).

^{viii} Ingmar Bergman, *Fanny and Alexander* (1982).

^{ix} Gérard de Nerval, 'Sylvie', *Selected Writings*, Penguin Books, 1999.

^x 7 April 2017.

^{xi} Ingmar Bergman, *Fanny and Alexander* (1982).

^{xii} 19 November 2013.

^{xiii} Walter Benjamin, 'The Image of Proust', *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn, Schocken Books, 2007.

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Colophon

Ville Laurinkoski

Impression

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Ville Laurinkoski (born 1996 in Finland) is a visual artist based in Copenhagen. Alongside studying at the Academy of Fine Arts, University of the Arts Helsinki, Laurinkoski has attended Ed Atkins' class at The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Schools of Visual Arts and has recently completed the Maumaus Independent Study Programme in 2021. Working with both literature and voice, with and through exaggerated speech, screaming and singing, Laurinkoski denounces the given order and enchants the negative and oblique. Laurinkoski's work is a form of critique attempting to produce an unconsumable image; an image that is a constellation of names, cries, and apparitions, internal visions, and auditions, first composed and then recorded and installed in the exhibition space. This atmospheric image, painted with impressions, carries the trace of the violence that constituted it, while simultaneously remembering the promise of happiness. An image withdrawing as if it were a rainbow, 'it is the door opening on the unknown, the monstrous, the inhuman – haunted by my power.'
