LIVABLE FUTURES

Course ACCAD 5500 Spring 2023

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Advanced Computing Center for the Arts and Design (ACCAD)

The Ohio State University

Land Acknowledgement

For this course, students and faculty convened and attended public events on the campus of The Ohio State University, located in the lower plateau of the Great Lakes region in what is known as the city of Columbus in central Ohio. Ohio, meaning "great river" in the Seneca Iroquois language, a people whom we learned to call by their name for themselves, Haudenosaunee, or "people of the longhouse."

The Ohio State University occupies the ancestral and contemporary lands of the Shawnee, Potawatomi, Delaware, Miami, Peoria, Seneca, Wyandotte, Ojibwe, and Cherokee peoples. The university resides on land ceded in the 1795 Treaty of Greeneville and the forced removal of tribal nations through the Indian Removal Act of 1830.

We honor the resiliency of these tribal nations and recognize the historical contexts that have and continue to affect the Indigenous peoples of this land.

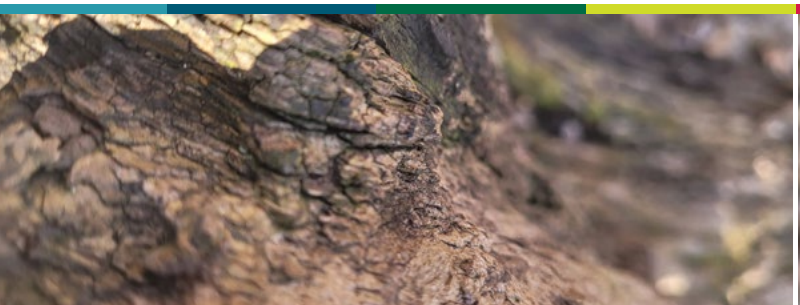
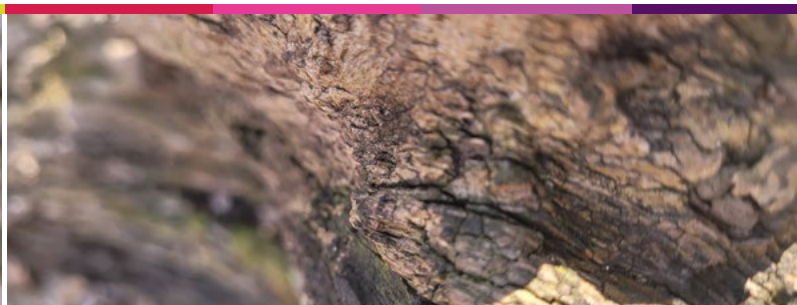
In acknowledging stolen land, we also acknowledge stolen people, enslaved Africans, that were kidnapped from their homelands and brought here to work these stolen lands.

Ohlone activist **Kanyon Sayers-Roods** reminds us,

"There have always been indigenous peoples in the spaces we call home, and there always will be. The acknowledgment process is about asking: what does it mean to live in a post-colonial world? What did it take for us to get here? And how can we be accountable to our part in history?"[1]

Such statements become truly meaningful when coupled with authentic relationships and sustained commitment. We therefore commit to move beyond words into programs and actions that fully embody a commitment to Black and Indigenous rights and cultural equity.

We are standing on indigenous land
We are living in extraordinary times
We arrive into this place, this moment, this body, this breath
And acknowledge that
We are standing on indigenous land
We recognize the enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories
We pay our respects to ancestors, elders, and relations past, present and emerging
And acknowledge that
We are living in extraordinary times with great capacity for change

We turn toward the seemingly insurmountable crises we face
the holistic breakdown and severity of our global predicament
the ongoing legacies of colonialism and the African slave trade
We turn toward our present-day involvement in the pervasiveness of oppression
And we choose love
We recenter around the infinite possibilities of Blackness
And renew every day, our commitment to fighting for Black lives
Cultivating in every moment, anti-racist thought and action
We orient toward open migration and immigration patterns
and uplift the enduring struggles for human rights
And the lives of our more-than-human animal and plant kin
We are standing on indigenous land
We are living in extraordinary times
And we meet today for the futures that are emerging
the lines of flight and as yet unknown possibilities that
we create with each choice we make in the present.

-Norah Zuniga Shaw

Note: I am grateful to the many authors and ancestors who are speaking in these passages, and I used italics where it is a direct reference to the work of Terry Patten, Adrienne Maree brown, Audre Lorde, Deleuze, Rebecca Solnit, DeRay McKesson, Candace Thompson Zachery, and the anti-racist working group and indigenous studies groups at The Ohio State University. This incantation weaves their voices and mine together.

Learn more about where you stand and how to get involved:
https://native-land.ca/

Land Acknowledgement

I've been a professor for twenty years. I find that hard to believe. I never planned this particular path, I'm an artist and the child of activists. I love facilitating groups toward our collective liberation and mentoring others in their creative longings. I come alive in inclusive spaces of inquiry, play, and curiosity. And I was raised in experiential and research-oriented learning contexts from kindergarten through graduate school.

And yet, even given my roots in liberatory pedagogies, I have found myself over the years doing what I think the institution requires of me: teaching what I "should" teach, giving grades, and covering the content I think I am duty bound to cover, trying to fit into old systems.

The upheaval, need, and humanity of the past three years of pandemic living and teaching have at last dislodged me from any final vestiges of these limiting beliefs. This year, with support from a Ratner Distinguished Teaching Award, I put out a call to students across campus to engage in creative research inquiry with me around Livable Futures.

ACCAD 5500 Course Flyer

This Livable Futures course fosters creative and scholarly responses to planetary conditions of crisis and uncertainty. Livability is a term that encompasses social, technological, and ecological justice by inviting critical re-thinking of who survives and who gets to thrive in our communities and extending that consideration to more-than-human life. Students collaborate in ongoing faculty research and are guided in creating their own projects responding to the themes of the course. Drawing on resources from the Livable Futures project and programming path the Wexner Center for the Arts, we will listen and read shared texts and podcasts, attend performances, screenings, and public dialogs together and explore novel forms of synthesis. Students in this course are eligible to receive funding to support their projects provided by the instructor's Ratner Award for Distinguished Teaching.

We met once a week all together and another time each week in smaller co-working groups and then our third meeting was at the various shows, talks and exhibitions we attended.

Norah Zuniga-Shaw

Performances as Texts

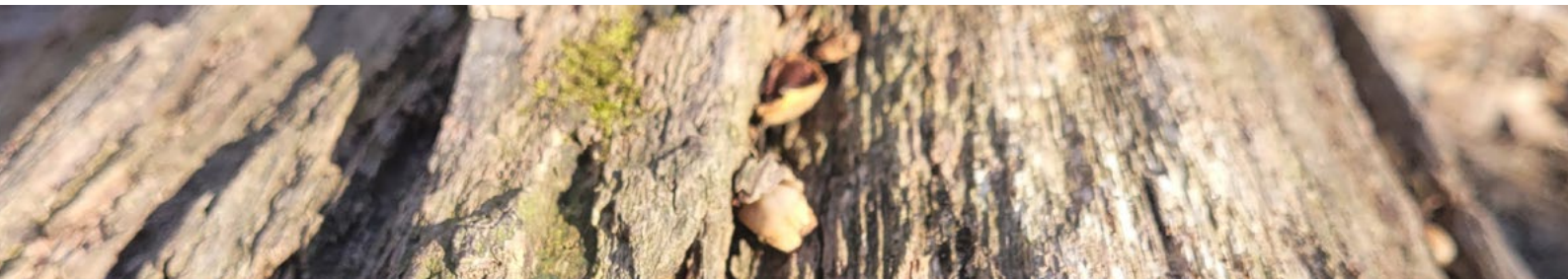
Inspired by friends in Art Education (thank you Tamryn McDermott, Richard Fletcher, J.T. Richardson), I made the performance season at the Wexner Center for the Arts the "text" for the course, i.e., the central learning material. In this way, the season became the syllabus. The students and I attended events each week. On our own time, we reflected in visual journals and short interpretative essays helping us to receive the nourishment of the program, synthesize it for others. In discussions and workshops, we sought to harvest and develop ideas for thriving in unstable times and creating more inclusive visions and actions for livability—the core mission of the larger Livable Futures project.

As we attended the shows, we moved beyond whether we "like or dislike" a piece and toward discovering the internal logic it offered, the nourishment available in deep attention and also asking how it might help us think about livability and futures. Together we are seeking solution stories (as Frances Moore Lappe call them) and creative means of thriving amidst planetary conditions of crisis and uncertainty.

In a very concrete way, we asked together: How can we create livable futures on the planet now? How do artists and arts practices contribute to this?

Generous Collaborators

I'm also grateful to Ronald and Deborah Ratner for supporting innovative teaching so generously at Ohio State and for the sustained collaboration of Lane Czaplinski and the entire performance curation team at the Wexner Center for the Arts for inviting us into an incredible season of performance foregrounding Black and Indigenous artists and world changing voices. Bhumi Patel, a PhD student in Dance, joined me as co-facilitator for this course / research community and brought her considerable wisdom in embodied anti-racist practices and creative research to our work together. She also recommended the text, *Becoming Kin* by Patty Krawec, which became an important foundation for all our work, helping us center Indigenous perspectives throughout. Catalina Muñoz-Arias and Brittany Halley continued working into the summer with me to complete the layout and editing of the book and it quite simply would not have happened without them. I am grateful for their skills and enthusiasm for the project.



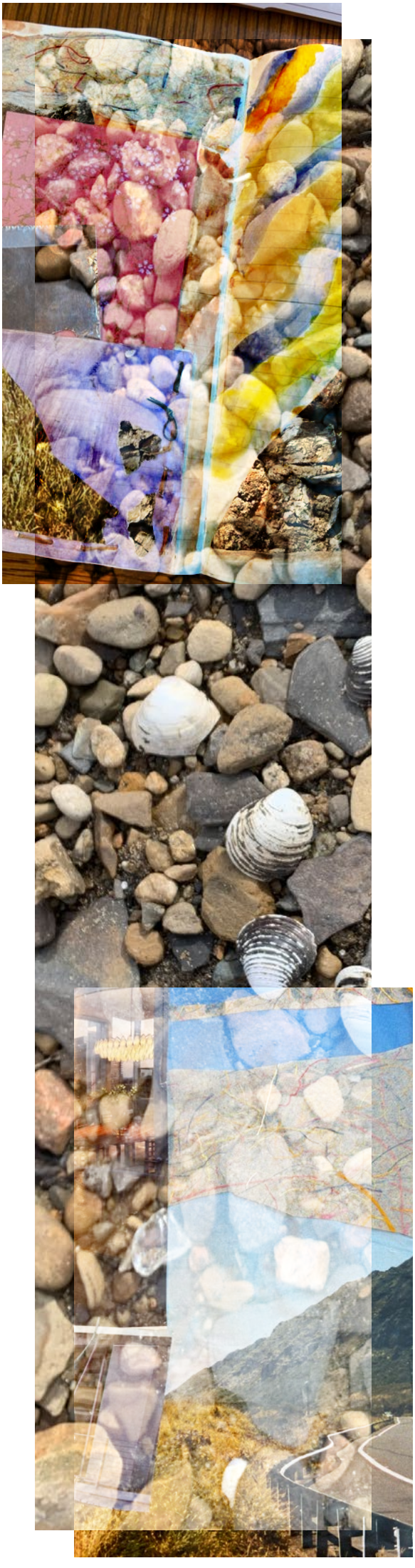
Learning Community

The course attracted a beautiful interdisciplinary group of students from undergraduate to PhD, and from Design to Dance, Marketing to English to Geography.

This eBook issues forth from the learning community we created together.

I am so proud of the deep thought and consideration evidenced in the following essays by the students, the multi-vocality of the work and the ethics of care that permeates their work. I'm inspired and strengthened by their energy and creativity.

This is "hope work" as social justice and Black Lives Matter activist Deray McKesson calls it. "Hope is this belief that our tomorrow can be better than our today. When Martin Luther King, Jr. says that the arc of the moral universe bends toward justice, that's about faith. But when we say the arc bends because people bend it, that's about hope." In this course, and in our collective sharing here, the students and I locate hope in each other, in sacred artistic spaces of performance and exhibition, in creative action, and in the practice of turning toward the issues at hand and feeling our ways into intention and action together, to start creating more livable futures, now.



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Livable Futures, Now

A Beginning

To say "Livable Futures" is to ask several questions: How do we construct livability, and for whom? How do we imagine the future, and for whom? What is livable? What is the future? These questions and more thread themselves through the work that follows. The challenge we confront throughout this work, this anthology, this mesh of ideas and ideals, is one of expansion and emergence.[1] In this exchange of ideas and energies, moments and maps, we attempt to become kin and become-with—each other, the non-human, the inanimate. This is chiefly a record of experience across time, of intersection in all its many forms.

Allies, Ancestors, Guides, and Wise Ones

Many people and places have guided us on this journey. Already, we are not individuals but something else. We acknowledge and thank our foremothers via their texts: Adrienne Marie Brown, Patty Krawec, Donna Harraway, Jenny Odell. And via the Livable Futures podcast: Emalani Case, Complex Movements, Alys Longley, Michael J. Morris, Andre M. Zachery, Crystal Perkins, Faustin Linyekula, Amy Youngs, and Candace Thomson. Finally, we must thank the artists and performers whose work this book confronts and embraces—they will be revealed in the pages that follow.

Perhaps it has already been said, but we must attend to the inevitable gaps: there are many, although we strive to reduce their number through re-memory and kin-making. Always and often we encounter ancestors past, present, and future, human and more-than-human, whose work already moves through us.

Reading and Noticing Together

Patty Krawec's book *Becoming Kin: An Indigenous Call to Unforgetting the Past and Reimagining Our Future* generously invited us to transform our thinking and thereby remake our worlds. Early in her examination of settler colonialism in North America, Krawec implores her reader to consider their own context: "Our creation stories situate us in a particular place, with particular relationships." Of the land and memory, she writes "Knowing what our roots sink into—what they wrap around and bring to the surface—helps us understand the tastes and sensations of our present."[2] It seems only right to consider our creation story—our being in this place at this time, asking these questions that have been asked before.

Changing Names, Growing Community

We write as individuals with specific identities, qualities, contexts, and dreams. These are accounted for in our being, and some may be revealed in the work that follows. As a collective, a classroom, we met at The Ohio State University in the late winter and early spring of 2023; brought together through the instigations and offerings of Norah Zuniga Shaw and her community of collaborators in the Livable Futures project; our experience structured at least in part by curation at the Wexner Center for the Arts; we came together in the lower plateau of the Great Lakes region in Columbus, Ohio, a place of false names. In our first few weeks together, we spoke often of names—what they meant, where they came from.

As Krawec explains and our research has illuminated, many of the names we encounter in our day-to-day lives — Olentangy, Ohio, Scioto — are evidence of forced migration following the 1830 Indian Removal Act.[3] This is one way we can trace our collective sense of creation: by noticing, by looking, by identifying. It's in this way that we attempt to relocate ourselves, to understand where we are and where we have been. We met in a floodplain by the Olentangy River, another misnamed friend. Ohio History Connection and other online lore suggest that during 1833 (only three years after the Indian Removal Act), the Ohio General Assembly passed legislation to restore Native American names to local waterways and mistakenly dubbed her "Olentangy," meaning "river of red face paint" in Delaware Lenape instead of "shale river" as intended. We met in a building whose foundation abuts bedrock dated to the Devonian period. We met in a valley of memory carved by the Laurentide ice sheet. We met in a place that will one day be forgotten.

Beyond place and time, we represent a scattered sampling of disciplines and academic contexts — our collaboration and community required that we meet "in hot compost piles," as Haraway would say.[4] We endured and pursued transformation through each other, through art, through the continual practice of noticing. As audience, we confronted and expanded our conception of livable futures through routine engagement with performance. In our efforts to absorb and metabolize, we are indebted to Marcia B. Siegel, whose lexicon method we practiced, questioned, and modified.

Questioning and Expanding Our Language

In her examination of dance criticism in "Rethinking Movement Analysis," Siegel writes, "language was the first problem to be solved."[5] By proposing the lexicon method, Siegel attempts to rewrite language's engagement with movement: she strays from the overly technical Laban system and questions the typical critic's approach, which relied on evocative descriptions without specific movement analysis.

Siegel advocated for a description in parts, a lexicon constructed from the base movements of a dance or performance—only then could interpretation be achieved. As Siegel prompts, "My goal as a critic is not to fix meaning but to point the reader toward what seems meaningful."[6] We sought to engage performance as a source of language expansion—a verbal experience abounding with direction. When there are no words to describe that which we witness, perhaps it is time to consider new words: the high-five of two men performed in reverse, the twitch of the elbow as a synth musician patches from one node to the next, the particular angle of the ankle as a dancer taps with rapidity, anger, grief, across the length of a stage. As we question and expand our language, it must be recalled that each of these movements is ultimately irreducible: we will fail. It must also be considered that we have borne witness to a metalinguistic event beyond our current capacity for speech or writing.

Via Haraway, we encountered Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Author of the Acacia Seeds and Other Extracts from the Journal of the Association of Therolinguistics*. Here, Le Guin formulates a new way of doing language:

'Do you realize,' the phytolinguist will say to the aesthetic critic, 'that [once upon a time] they couldn't even read Eggplant?' And they will smile at our ignorance, as they pick up their rucksacks and hike on up to read the newly deciphered lyrics of the lichen on the north face of Pike's Peak.[7]

A comparable discovery is made through our earnest attempts to witness and metabolize performance. Performance, broadly conceived and witnessed, involves us in an ecosystem, it makes kin. Throughout our months together, we attended performances and witnessed artwork as a means of meditating on livable futures—we wanted to better understand the relationship between art and livability, art and futurity. Essential to this practice was a tangle with text and the visual.

We continually re-confronted our ideas and memories by processing visually, through color and texture in visual journals: this practice was bolstered by Tamryn McDermott, an artist, educator, and arts administrator whose work investigates human-object relations and meaning-making via things. Often, we first processed our experiences visually—by scribbling across watercolor paper, stitching pockets out of magazine pages, or mind-mapping without need for linear thought or confinement to text. In the work that follows we consider many performances—movement-based, light-inflected, and sound-driven, as well as combinations and refusals thereof.

To Retreat or Participate

Our attendance also spurred conversations about participation and exemption—the ways presence and absence can mimic and resist the nihilistic temptation to eschew action in the face of the seemingly insurmountable and subsequently disengage from the reality of climate collapse. How does our practice of effortful witnessing prepare us to engage better in other contexts? How does a new language formulation allow us to access and reimagine our possible futures? In *How to Do Nothing*, Jenny Odell considers the temptation and "impossibility of retreat."[8] Like those of us who have longed to flee for forests and hills, or considered rejecting our broken Americanness in favor of Canada's expanse, Odell considers the lure of saying "goodbye to it all"—and the failures of such a desire. Odell advocates for a practice of "standing apart," which she formulates as a "resistance [that] still manifests as participating"[9]. Rather than remove yourself, she says, one must attend to their attention and turn toward the very thing that repels. For our purposes, Odell's suggestion manifests in the imperative of the audience—that we not look away from what disgusts us, from what we fail to understand.

Dilations of Breakdown and Breakthrough

How, then, does the act of witness put us in relationship with each other? How does paying attention—to art, to history, to rocks and stones—put us in relationship with climate change itself? In *Becoming Kin*, Patty Krawec writes on the infiltration of settler colonialism, its disruption of genealogy: "You may not be guilty of the act of dispossession, but it is a relationship that you have inherited."[10] By witnessing, by formulating new and better language, we endeavor to illuminate these inherited relationships—they rise up in us as we relocate our attention. It's in this way that we make kin that we find ourselves nestled in an ancestry that stretches beyond the human, beyond the animate, and into something else. For Krawec, becoming kin implies both unforgetting and reimagining—markers that stretch our sense of time and possibility.

We must ask if our relationship to climate change is also one of unforgetting and reimagining, of seeking out the "unknown knowns."[11] As Haraway writes, "Staying with the trouble requires making oddkin; that is, we require each other in unexpected collaborations and combinations, in hot compost piles."[12] Norah suggests that as we deal with the constant dilation of breakdown and breakthrough, we consider the practices of both healing and hospice care for a planet in need. If we are to make oddkin with climate change, we must engage the unexpected and unknown—we must adapt our sense of care to account for and acknowledge that which is unimaginable, disgusting, transformative, and true. We confront this adaptation in twists and turns, advances and retreats, with hospice and destruction in hand. What is it, we ask once more, to dream of a livable future? How many can we imagine? And, as Norah says, "How can we practice livable futures now?"

–Heather McCabe, May 2023

Listening to Indigenous Voices

01

Becoming Kin: An Indigenous Call to Unforgetting the Past and Reimagining Our Future
Text by Patty Krawec
Forward by Nick Estes

Isabel Bowser

As part of our collective scholarship and creative action in the Livable Futures course and research community, we read the book *Becoming Kin* by Patty Krawec. The book reflects on the ways colonialism in the U.S. has obscured, erased, and rewritten the history and present-day experiences of Indigenous peoples of North America.

In her text, Krawec suggests that a reckoning must occur in which there is ongoing and meaningful public dialog around settler colonialism that confronts what really happened and continues to happen. She points to our interconnection and urges us to consider the ways we are related and how our actions impact those with whom we come in contact. If we are to engage in practices of livability, we must also engage in practices of kinship with the people and beings around us.

Kinship is not easy. It requires us to show up, listen, learn, and act. Throughout her text, Krawec provides "Aambes," or guides for taking action. She explains:

> *Aambe is an Anishinaabe word that can mean 'Attention!' or 'Come on, let's go!' On this journey together, instead of going straight to the point, we will look at what is in the floodwaters and mud of history. We will see what the flotsam and jetsam can teach us. And at the end of each chapter, there will be something you can do, something tangible to move you forward on this journey we take together.*[1]

Alongside *Becoming Kin*, we listened to episodes of the Livable Futures podcast, an interview series Norah created to facilitate conversations with artists and activists whose work connects to ideas of livability and visionary futures. Artists interviewed on the podcast include Emalani Case, Complex Movements, Alys Longley, Michael J. Morris, Andre M. Zachery, Crystal Michelle Perkins, Faustin Linyekula, Candace Thompson, and Amy Youngs.

The following excerpts were pulled from our reflection essays on *Becoming Kin* and the Livable Futures podcast. These essays explore the ways this book spoke to us individually and as a collective, expanded our understanding of livability in the context of kinship, and how we engaged with the Aambes. They also incorporate reflections on the podcast episodes and how these ideas are showing up in our own lives and work.

Thank you for engaging with us!

Srinija: *Confronting Colonialism*

Growing up, I logically understood the impact of colonialism, not just globally, but pertaining to my own Indian heritage as well. I heard of how wealthy our country used to be, not just in terms of riches but in knowledge, culture, and spirituality – and how all of that was brought to the ground when the Europeans came to colonize the land. I heard of how they destroyed our temples and masjids to make way for their churches and how they raped and plundered the people and land. I heard of how even when they left, they did not let that happen in peace – of how this random man who did not know the true history and relationship of the land and its people drew borders between two countries that separated entire families and communities.

When I used to hear about colonialism, some part of me would feel so angry and helpless because why did any of this need to happen? Why could they not leave our country and hundreds of countries alone to live our lives? Why did they have to come and take so much from so many people, and not have to bear the burden of their crimes and suffer the repercussions that are not only physical, but mental as well? Why does it feel like such an isolating experience even though there are millions of people facing this unspoken, or maybe it would be better to say unprocessed, burden?

However, reading this book and hearing of how Native Americans in this country were and are treated and feeling this spirit of mourning the could-have-been future, I felt seen for the first time. Which seems selfish to say, because do I have a right to feel this way?

I am fortunate enough to live the life I do, far away from the violence faced by my ancestors. I am in the future... the future, however, is a consequence of the past and not something that can exist outside of it.

Whatever I am now, is in part due to what was lost and what was gained throughout these many years, and to not take the time to process this history would be a crime. As I came to this realization and allowed for the book to guide me in processing my thoughts and actions, one of the first things I felt was a sense of shame. The shame stemmed from the realization of how I viewed my own personal heritage and culture, at times, from a mostly white colonialist perspective. Even before reading this book, I knew of the horrible things colonizers had done (ex., American Indian Boarding Schools), but there was some part of me that tried to treat all of this as something of the past.

Yitong: ***Protecting Memories***

Throughout the journey in Livable Futures, I acquired a sense of urgency from learning about Indigenous activists' and artists' work and anti-racist practices we do together which keep reminding me to carry such awareness throughout every moment as my research and life progresses. The "urgency" does not refer to the rush to finish everything as soon as possible, but to start the actions and conversations right now and build the work day by day. The work includes how I understand myself and my privileges, what position they put me in in civil society, and how I can utilize them to serve my communities, the BIPOC Queer community in general, and other communities I cannot tell because of systematic oppression and authoritarian regime.

Another question that originated when I was reading Patty Krawec's work and kept me reflecting about my relationship with the land that I grew up in, northeast China, is what reparations I can do given what has been done in those contexts. By asking this question, it confuses me because I barely know who my ancestors are. The paperwork that proves my identity can only tell my nationality which is definitely not an ethnicity. The city I grew up in is a relatively new city with 200 years of history and was first developed during WWI after colonization and invasion from the Imperial Russian Empire and later again traumatized during Japanese military invasion and colonization.

There is almost zero information about which place my ancestors are from because documents and evidence weren't preserved. Knowing this tragic situation, I will be seeking archival documentation that records the memory of people from my homeland and research unheard voices from the locals about how they perceive the colonization history of my city. I want to look into the possibility of existing organizations already doing this work protecting memories as well.

Vivian: ***Noticing Names and Recovering Selves***

In reading and reflecting upon *Becoming Kin*, I have been deeply moved by the attention to faith/religion and the role of the Christian church in colonialism. This stood out to me since the first chapter talks about the danger of a single story and how, religiously, the single story of creation has been used to take power over others and move them out of their own lands.

It is a European colonial ideal that Christianity is right and only Christians live correctly in this world, but that has particularly struck me in my life experiences now. For the past couple years, I started to make commitments to beliefs that were not my own because they suited those I cared about and who I thought cared about me. Now being removed from such a situation, I can see that what I was starting to believe was becoming a superiority complex of ideas to make me "better." I have stepped back from these ideas and back into myself, and I have realized that first, religion is not something that grounds me, and second, I have no desire to use my beliefs to make myself "better" than others who disagree with me.

In Krawec's Chapter 3 Aambe, she asks us to research what names are around us and where they came from.[2] In looking up names and places from my hometown, I found that the native practices and cultures had been bulldozed over. This history written on my town's official website says that "no one knows" why the native tribes of mound builders left; however, the next sentence says that white settlers were soon to move in and create their settlements in the area. As inferred by the history of European conquest, one can expect that the reason these Indigenous people moved out of the land of my hometown is because they were driven out by the white settlers.

In the Livable Futures podcast with Michael Morris (they/them), they offered an outstanding piece of advice to creating artists:

Don't assume your audience needs help, just give them everything you can. - Michael Morris, Livable Futures podcast[3]

This is the view I would prefer to take on the world. If we could all walk into the day and give our passions and interactions the best effort we can muster, this would be a much more driven place. Recognizing that this is a bit optimistic, I will reference the podcast episode "Foraging Futures with Amy Youngs and Candace Thompson of C.U.R.B." that encouraged listeners to recognize the baggage that they carry with them. This baggage, the heavy part of life, will impact how you interact with and view others, but it is my belief that it does not have to hinder your life experiences. You can acknowledge that it exists and find your ways of coexisting with the baggage of the self.

Brittany: *Decolonizing Cartography*

The streams were taken from the sun and rain and made to run in concrete tunnels. Now flowing through culverts in the dark, finding their outlets at the ocean, not by their own memory, but by control.

–Emalani Case, Livable Futures podcast[4]

Columbus residents know Wyandotte Rd. as the street Jack Nicklaus grew up on. A stone plaque and a strip of grass between two residential roads commemorates this "great, American golfer." Why, there's even a bench looking out over Jack's old street. His childhood home, I suspect, sells for more nowadays than the American government spent on the entirety of Battle of Thames in 1813, a decisive U.S. victory which removed Shawnee peoples, and many others, from their ancestral homes.

This is one history.

Etymologically speaking, we can tell quite a lot about Columbus's past and present lives by looking at the street names that intersect Wyandotte Rd. Our asphalt structure is dissected by such streets as Stanford, Tremont, and King. Of Old English origin, stanford is a compound noun derived from stā (meaning stone) and ford (meaning, as a noun, a shallow place in a river or stream where one can cross; as a verb, to cross that shallow stretch of water). Like Stanford, Tremont also signals violent colonial remapping of the land. The French word trémont translates into modern English as "over the hill." There are no longer streams or hills along Wyandotte Rd., except for what is now obfuscated in cartographic name.

Most interesting—perhaps because the etymological lineage has been so well documented and so well preserved—is the word king. King is a cognate of the Old English cyning, Old Norse konungr, and Old Dutch kuning. These cognates developed from the same Middle High Germanic word, künec, which comes from the Old High Germanic word kuning or kunig which in turn comes from the Proto-Germanic *kuningaz. (This proto-language, with no surviving legible texts, has been entirely reconstructed through an immense amount of time, research, and funding.) King may also very likely be etymologically related to the word kin, which has its own painstakingly detailed Indo-European historiography. We can trace this single word farther back than many Black and Indigenous Americans can trace their genealogy.

I'll let you guess whether wyandot and the Indigenous peoples to which the word relates has seen the same level of zeal as these dead, European languages.

This is another history.

Wyandotte Rd. exists in physical space, running north-to-south through Grandview, Ohio. But it also, more importantly, exists cartographically. Under colonial cartography, Wyandotte does not signal a people with histories and language and alternative relationships to space and community. Wyandotte is a road. It is a line on a map, rendering invisible, through hyper-visibility, colonialism's habitual(ly) repeated violence.

A map controls the flow of history the way culverts control flowing water.

Colonial cartography is, in a sense, defined by linear relationality. (As a rhetoric scholar, I'm not at all surprised how well this maps onto the Western-logic imaginary.) An ideology composed of and sustained by expansion, supplantation, and exploitation—of the human, natural, and otherwise—almost necessitates a flat, 2-dimensional relationship to the land. Nothing can survive beneath colonial placenames if there's no third dimension for them to remain extant in. A map, then, renders the land as points connected through linear travel. And that is what land becomes in service of: movement atop and across it. What are exploited and exploitable are forced into new names, and old names are stripped of their contexts and relocated. A sacred mountain, for instance, becomes merely mined minerals transported from an ancestral home, commodified and commercialized over global trading routes.

Grief is the forgetting of names. It does not know which place the ancestors' feet last touched before leaving home forever. It looks back over shoulders and sees only darkness. Stolen lives mean stolen history means no thread to pick up and follow home. —Krawec, Becoming Kin[5].

How does *Becoming Kin* and the Livable Futures podcast and website shape my perspective on *life* and *livability*? What themes emerge to scaff old my research interests?

Our progression together here was intentionally, though perhaps needlessly, indirect—that is, purposefully nonlinear. I opened with a quote from Emalani Case, one that has permeated my heart perhaps more than any other this semester. Emalani tells of the culverts that control not just the water's memory, but our own; she tells us of Vā, that relational space, that dynamic space of relationship that "should be continuously nurtured and maintained and even cultivated."[6] From there, I told a story of Patty Krawec's Aambes, or specifically, how they reoriented and are reorienting the way I relate to placenames and place. The ineffable grief that comes from colonial remapping of cultures and land, which, by design, works to fractionalize and dismantle our Vā. Through Patty's Aambes, from Emalani's call to action, up against Orlando and Ricarrdo unapologetically—intimately—spinning my perspective on personal vs. systematic forgiveness, I have arrived at a rekindled anger for modern cartographical practices.

How can we decolonize cartography? How can we map memory so as to honor those who have been rendered invisible by the violent remapping of lands and their peoples? How can we undo colonial orientations to the land? Rethink, as Emalani says, the way we relate to space? "Open up," as Brother(hood) Dance's dramaturg, Nadine George-Graves, says, "a space for undoing the failures of the past while pointing to possibilities in the future"?[7]

I think one way forward is to expose the violence of colonial cartographic practices, as I began to demonstrate above. In part, this also requires articulating the way digital maps of roadways and buildings and planned-obsolescent human-made structures have become an extension of the human self. Inextricable from modern human experience. Inextricable from the way we now relate to the land. Inextricable, especially, from their violent present and past. Change also requires articulating alternative ways of mapping.

Mercedes: *Noticing Black and Indigenous Presence*

Krawec encourages the reader to notice where we (Black and Indigenous folks) are present. She also encourages readers to pay attention to our absence and ends the first Aambe with "Where are we?"[8] My initial thought was that we are everywhere yet nowhere all at once. We built this country, yet we are told to go back to our own. We've created some of the world's most life-changing inventions, yet we get no credit for them. We create the most popular music, the latest fashion trends, and all sorts of other things but they are taken away from us, colonized, appropriated and rebranded. We are a part of everything, but we are also excluded from everything. Because of this "we" are all that I see. Another thought that came to mind was the myth that is likely still going around claiming that Native Americans no longer exist. It has become very clear that this is said to cover up the never-ending genocide of these people. I think the question that Krawec poses is in conversation with the "Decolonizing Futures w/ Andre M. Zachery & Crystal Perkins" Livable Futures podcast. Towards the beginning of the conversation, Crystal talks about her background, or "natural history." and in the midst of that she rhetorically asks, "What's in your memory?"[9] Memories are biased in nature, and this explains why I always see Black and Native American people. They are a part of my lineage and quite literally who I am, so I have no choice but to remember them.

Wherever you notice our absence, think about how you might be able to assert our presence.
–Krawec, Becoming Kin[10]

I'm quick to notice when Native Americans are not in the room because it is intentional. Going back to the myth I mentioned earlier, a lot of people don't notice because they believe that they no longer exist. Being able to not notice or not remember comes from a place of privilege because white people in particular think it doesn't affect them. But it does; the inability to notice the absence of Indigenous folks affects us all.

Julie: *Solidarity*

Horrible events may feel like a one-off event/policy but reading Becoming Kin shows that the cruelty and systematic, calculated settler colonialism and white supremacy have long histories. As an Asian American who has been thinking deeply about racial formation and Asian American positionality, I was first drawn to thinking about this because of how Black/white the conversations on race are in this country. Nicholas de Genova's chapter called "Latino and Asian Racial Formations at the Frontiers of U.S. Nationalism," teases out the importance of thinking of Native Americans when we think of racial formation and questioning the fact that the white/Black binary even exists. Genova writes:

If it is indisputably true that white supremacy in the United States has long relegated Latinos and Asians to a racial terrain of nonwhiteness that they inevitably share with African Americans and that, thus, positions them in a complex, contradictory, but still substantial relation to Blackness, it is likewise the case that they are situated in a comparably complicated but meaningful relation to that other antithesis of whiteness—the "red" racial borderland of Native Americans.[11]

In terms of building solidarity, I think a lot about how the ever-hardening silo-ing of information and knowledge contributes to the same conversations that don't go beyond the surface level. Last semester in Professor Pranav Jani's class on Afro Asian linkages, I ruminated over the silo-ed nature of ethnic/race studies when the reality is that our histories are intricately linked and to understand race and racial formation require Indigenous histories along with others.

Katie: *Home Places*

The first Aambe that felt profound for me in Patty Krawec's text was at the end of Chapter 2 where Krawec gives a website that shows what treaties have been made and still govern the relationships between indigenous peoples and the states. I chose to look at Alaska, since I've been curious to know more about how Native Alaskans navigate, reside, and exist there. Although I grew up in Alaska and learned a lot about Native Alaskan ways of life, have Native friends and students, had courses on Alaskan history etc., I still feel like I am learning about pieces of history that did not get told in history classes (surprise surprise) and how Alaska has simultaneously honored Native Alaskans in certain ways, but continues to contain them as the northerners or the seal hunters or the homeless in our society.

I feel like, just through this second Aambe, I have gained more curiosity about government legislation in Alaska and how that legislation affects Native tribes. I have learned a lot from this small amount of research, but I also feel like I am much more aware of how many aspects I do not know about land ownership and Native Alaskan rights and resources. I continue to remember stories from my Native Alaskan friends about transitioning from village to city and navigating life in Anchorage, which begin to hold more significance as I learn more about indigenous and colonial American history. I feel committed to continue learning more.

Catalina: *Dreams of Care*

I value how the two things, the book, and the podcast, invite us to reflect on our ancestors, territory, relationship with nature and mother earth, bodies, forgiveness, and diversity. Additionally, they offer knowledge to unlearn practices with which we grew up. A very enriching aspect was hearing about their importance to nature and the small details we sometimes overlook.

The land is our first relationship, and it is the first relationship we need to restore. –Krawec, "Can these stones live?"[16]

As a designer, I am always interested in knowing how things were built, understanding how materials have been transformed into something different, or understanding a mechanism. In other words, by understanding the details of things and life. With the podcast, I understood many things about my personality that seemed normal, but it takes time to build. Over time I have learned to listen to my body, to be present, and accept myself as I am.

Behind me and who I am becoming or hope to become is a little girl who, at some point, dreamed of creating things with her hands to take care of the marine ecosystem. To be able to protect everything blue! As Krawec said, the land and water have memories. They can remember you.

I…put my hands in the water, and it remembered me. I cannot tell you how or why I knew it… I can only describe it as electric. –Krawec, "Can these stones live?"[17]

I always feel the same when close to the ocean or water source. I do not know how or why I have that vital connection, but I can recognize it.

Heather: *More than Human Lineage*

I found Krawec's interrogation of Christianity, tangled with her own belief, useful for reflecting on my schooling and identity-making. I attended Catholic schools until college, and it didn't really strike me that the missionaries in my textbooks were Catholic missionaries — I hadn't heard of the papal bulls that spelled the Doctrine of Discovery[12] until reading this book. In school, it was easy to imagine pilgrims, colonists, and missionaries as part of a different lineage — like the proselytizing, spreading 'the Word' that we learned about was somehow different from the forces that facilitated genocides on several continents. (It's clear that Krawec is invested in an institutional critique here, leaving personal belief to individuals).

While I don't practice within any formalized religion, I sometimes describe myself as culturally Catholic—before reading *Becoming Kin*, this served as a way of signaling life experience, Irishness, anxiety. Now, it seems that it must also be an acknowledgement of the ways Christianity and whiteness have conspired to drive settler colonialism forward. It's been stirring to consider how my proximity to a religion/institution/force colors my worldview and allows me to harbor inclinations toward conquest even as I resist the institution. Krawec might suggest that Catholicism is indelibly contained within my bundle—that it is mine to pick up.[13]

In all of *Becoming Kin*, I found Chapter 6, "The Land: Our Ancestor" most emotionally impactful. Like Michael Morris' appearance on the Livable Futures podcast, the chapter implores us to consider the more-than-human lineage we exist within. I've always loved rocks, stones, pebbles—I collected gravel as a small child—but I struggle to accept this interest as an authentic spiritual or emotional connection. I write often about bedrock, watersheds, the rivers and lakes I grew up going to, those elements that we choose to regard as non-living. Typically, I write about these beings as passageways through time: that touching a rock is touching time itself, that the ongoingness of the river speaks to an expansion of self. Once, I attempted to write into the divinity of the earth itself—to say something firm about what I believed—but I don't do this often, too shy, too interested in being taken seriously (by who?). "Do I really believe this?" Patty asks.[14] I've often wondered about the same thing, like belief is something worth proving.

I found the Louise Erdrich passage exciting:

"I found myself compelled to behave toward the world as if it contained sentient spiritual beings."[15]

I love the word compelled here, combined with behave—Erdrich makes belief into an active approach, just as Krawec implores again and again. It's easy to see the connections that Krawec is making, building a world over eight chapters, requiring an attentiveness to thought which leads to an attentiveness to action.

Synthesizing Synchronicities

02

Patchmakers: Synthesize Synchronicities. Artists Moxi Martinez, Lisa Bella Donna, Chantal deFelice, Dr. Chelsea Bruno (aka Eden Grey)

Sat, Jan 14, 6:00 PM
Wexner Center for the Arts, Mershon Auditorium

Curator's remarks from wexarts.org:

Don't miss this interactive evening of synthesizer exploration and performance programmed by local producer/DJ Moxy Martinez to highlight female, nonbinary, and trans synthesists. Performances by Lisa Bella Donna, Chantal deFelice, Dr. Chelsea Bruno (aka Eden Grey), and Martinez will fill Mershon Auditorium with sights and sounds from multiple electronic perspectives. Stop by Mershon Auditorium Lobby at 6 PM before the show to make your own sounds at jam stations featuring analogue Moog, Korg, and Eurorack format synthesizers.

An Invitation to Play

Happening on a cold evening in January just before classes begin, the event is billed as an "interactive evening of synthesizer exploration…to highlight female, nonbinary, and trans synthesists." The inclusive, queer feminist ethos of the work supports the community building values I have for this class and serves as a dynamic kick-off for **our shared practice of attending and interpreting artistic events as support for living in difficult times and inventing creative solutions.**

The event begins with visual play. As the audience enters, we are greeted by jam stations in the lobby. Once in the theater, we get the treat of seeing the artists' electronics set up onstage showing off their techno-nostalgic chic of wires, cables, blinking lights, and hardware everywhere.

These are machines of the 20th century with analog cables stretching between electronic patch boards in complex matrixes. **In the age of rapidly accelerating artificial intelligence, the transparently machine-made nature of this sound is refreshing. There are no deep fakes here.** Just obvious machine translations and a group of artists interested in composing transformative experiences with the beeps and clicks, and whirrs of their personalized hardware.

Vivian, a senior in the Dance Department, writes about the overall experience:

The artists inspire us to experience our lives always with intention. Even when outsiders may not be able to understand our actions, they can see choices and patterns and clear intent. And our best intentions, made by listening to the people and environments around us, can change the world.

In her reflection essay, Dance graduate student, Katie, sets the scene:

On Saturday, January 14th, the audience in the Mershon Auditorium witnessed four professional female and non-binary synthesizers create an atmosphere of aural, visual, and physical synesthesia. The stage was set with four stations, each holding visually unique synthesizer and sound equipment. The viewers were engaged before the production even began, as each of the four stations had its own "look" – some with cables and wires in a mass entanglement of connections, others with flashing lights, and others with running software on an open laptop. In their introductory speech, Moxy Martinez speaks as if to a group of close friends, cultivating a casual yet respectful atmosphere between the audience and performers.

Performing as soloists, each synthesist engages with their own station, representing four different liberatory approaches to synth music.

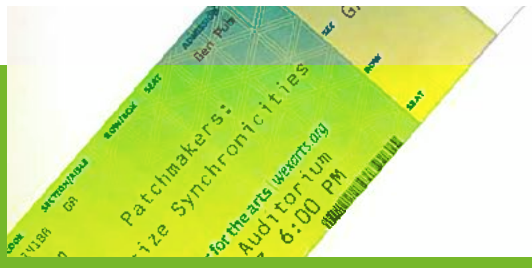
After Moxy's introduction the show begins quietly as Dr. Chelsea Bruno (aka Eden Grey) starts up her set. It is a stark, almost abstract, and minimalist sound she makes, one that demands time and patience and feels better as you think about it over the night. In their reflection essays, most of the students note the understated impact of Bruno's performance.

Brittany, a graduate student in English, offers an evocative description of both the work and her evolving experience of it:

Human hands – systematic – chin tilted to the table of wires and dials and a shy black cloth. A buzz in the right channel – yet then, the left – those hands, still systematic in their movement – still human though merged with the artificial humming and scratch of a synthetic beat.

Without a word, Dr. Chelsea Bruno slides a strand of "spaghetti" from the pile at her side, attaching one end with one hand to the one device she uses to synthesize many sounds. With the same hand, she connects the opposite end of the wire to her patch board. The emotions I first feel at this seem wrong.

Anticipation. Projected uncertainty. Detachment.



Are these her emotions or my trained response to non-normative sounds? I accept these thoughts so I can let them leave on their own; I want, instead, to return to her hands. It was the precise way they moved, almost mechanistic.

Bruno's artificially rendered sounds, the entirety of her artificially constructed performance, capture a part of my humanness I know all too well. The amalgamation of movement and synth mirror, as if intentionally synchronistic, the social dis-fitting of speech and body language that exist uncomfortably too far outside of the norm. The life of the misfit.

The hums-then-scratch begin as non-linearity to my ear until I recognize in them patterns of communication — communication like those interactions where my thoughts are intelligible to me, but then I come to realize... no one else has yet made meaning out of my words.

The feeling of, and will they ever?

To echo Marcia Siegel, Bruno's "movement work[s] together with everything else in [her] performance to produce the image, sensation, or idea" of social dis-fitting. But how could the melding of body and technology, sound and movement synthesize in me this knowing?

In experiencing Bruno's performance humanness and artificiality lost their fictitious bifurcation. The methodical adding of wire to synthesizer, deliberate shifting of hands from pile to board and back to her side again — in this I understand what it must mean for us to be posthuman. Bruno's synthetic sounds connect us to her, and her to her synthesizer. Yet, our integration happens only in such a way where we become hyper-aware of the wrongness inherent in separating artificial sound from the human hand. One cannot exist in that space at that time in that way without the other. Had she manipulated her Eurorack modular synthesizer to produce anything more melodic, that feeling would never have emerged then or there.

She communicated louder in her pauses, in the shifts from long static to quick, repetitive beeps, than in the sounds themselves. As if the pauses themselves were saying, see? Don't you see what I mean? These wires — removed and unremoved — they hear what these hands have to say. Too, don't you?

There is a 10-minute gap between each act and that amps up the social fun of the event. The audience shifts and laughs and chats and then the second act of the evening, Chantal deFelice begins. Chantal begins by casually telling a vulnerable and accessible personal story of caring for her mother in her illness and making a set of videos that she then shows us from her travels after her mother "returned to stardust." It feels important that personal stories are present, humanizing the technology and placing it in a trajectory of life.

Chantal is a VJ first I think, the sound making feels more secondary and supportive in her process. Much of the visuals are generated using VJ techniques of fragmenting and mirroring images in a kaleidoscopic blur leaving me wanting the ecology to take over the image instead of always being chopped up and re-purposed by the non-linear play of digital manipulation. It is important when the power dynamic is reversed, and digital compositing is used to integrate humans into the marine ecologies instead.

In one beautiful moment, people who are floating in the waves are composited with sea anemones, so they appear to become soft-bodied, many-fingered sea creatures themselves or at least join with them in community.

Dance undergraduate student, Mercedes, responds to the emotional resonances of in deFelice's performance:

As I begin to write this, I'm looking over my notes that hold the emotions, as well as the physical sensations I experienced throughout the Patchmakers event in their purest form. From the messy electrocardiogram drawings to the more organized jotting down of phrases, everything on this page brings me back to the moments in which they were created.

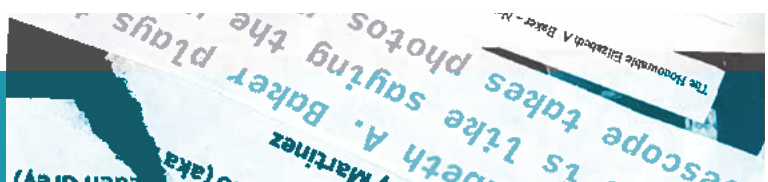
Chantal deFelice's performance in particular stood out to me because the notes I took during her set felt the most tangible. I made a flow chart out of three concepts:

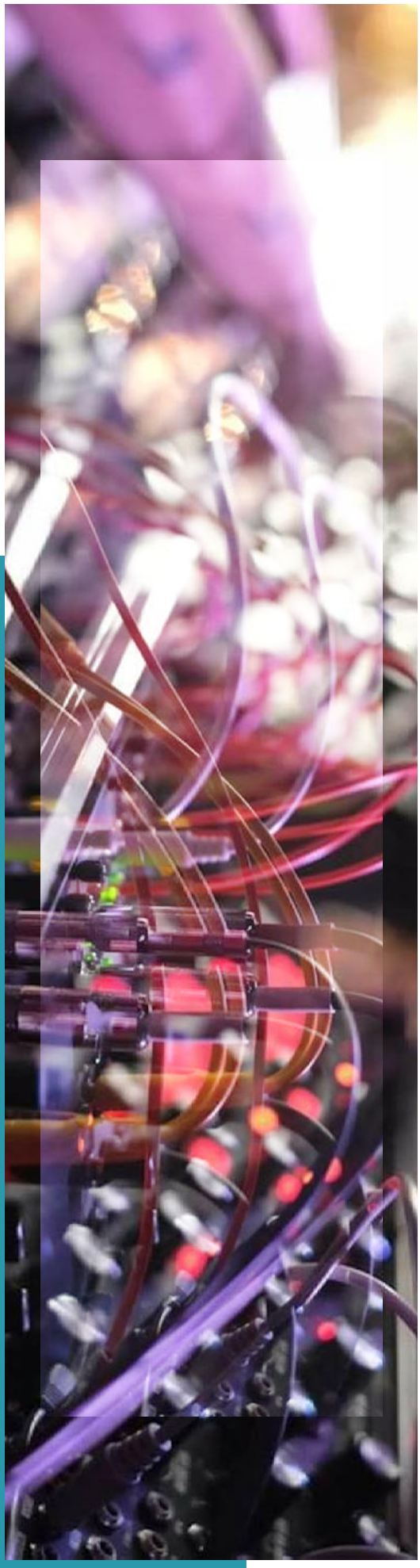
Memories, evolution, and distortion.

Below the flowchart I wrote a short sentence,

"Memories evolve and with time and/or impact become distorted."

This idea is closely related to the visual aspects of the performance. Almost every individual clip within the film was looped and each loop was slightly different from the last. After a while I would forget what the clip originally looked like because it became so distorted. In addition to this the lighting faded calmly between washed out greens and purples which seemed really fitting since these are the colors of a technological glitch.





The synth music that accompanied the film reminded me of the noise bugs make when they fly past your ear (except much less bothersome). It was fleeting which I didn't mind because the silence in between gave me time to process what I was feeling and why. This made me realize that for art to feel impactful for me I have to be able to sort out my feelings about it in the moment.

Even if I don't fully understand what I'm seeing or hearing, if I can make connections between the art and my emotions (positively or negatively) I will feel satisfied about the overall experience.

The presence of personal story, feeling, community, and care are themes throughout the evening. The queer feminist curation of the event makes it safer and more inviting to my cis-gendered female body than most synth shows that are often male dominated. I'm hoping it does the same for my students who bring a range of backgrounds to the work. I can feel the inspiration grow within me. What would I make with one of those gorgeous racks full of light and colorful cables? Do I want a vertical rack like Lisa Bella Donna and Moxy or something horizontal like Eden and Chantal (mostly her laptop with some VJ software, TouchDesigner maybe)? It makes me want to combine my voice with the synths and make a lot of big feminist noise, expressing the rage and grief of life on the planet now, my life, maybe yours too? A workshop where folks could come together to experience this catharsis?

Julie, a creative writing student, also finds in Chantal's work an invitation to expand her creative practice:

The second performance by Chantal deFelice was a surprising departure from the first performance as it utilized sound from her travels such as the ocean, insects accompanied with mirrored images of nature and the beach on the screen that changed colors along with the sound.

This performance inspired me most as I loved the idea of 'saving' everyday sounds that we may encounter and using them to create art. Sounds that come and go in a moment like a conversation or sounds that may continue repeatedly, albeit differently each time, like a wave.

I'm curious as a writer how I may be able to use sounds as a way to effectively recall memory or if there are ways I may be able to pair writing with sounds to tell transformative stories.

I love the way Merecedes and Julie's creative practices are activated in the act of receiving this work; I often find this for myself when attending performances. Whether I "like" the work or not, there is always something to be wrestled with, a creative or technical insight, or an opportunity to become more aware of the nature of my own attention and values.

Katie offers a choreographic account of the next act, a fulsome set by Moxy:

Moxy Martinez takes the stage next, and while they also face away from the audience, Martinez has a strong embodied approach to their performance. Taking the time to stretch or to find a physical movement to accompany the sounds, Moxy performs as if the synth equipment is arrayed in a scientific lab where one might also mix chemicals or study organisms under a microscope. Moxy is intent, delicate, and unapproachably focused, creating and sustaining their own world. Between Moxy's embodied sense of the work, the sounds, the connection to the synth equipment, and the accompanied visuals on the screen, the audience's attention is held rapt.

The last act, Lisa Bella Donna closes the show with a piece that involves transitioning between sitting at the synthesizer and sound board and standing at the large sound rack, changing cable connections. Lisa's sound is consistent and holds a throughline even with the focus on one aspect of the equipment at a time. Through this movement, Lisa highlights what all the performers of the night are: musicians and engineers simultaneously. The performance, though seemingly focused on the sound, is much more expansive.

The audience feels the sound resonating through their bodies, vibrating around the auditorium, and seeping fluidly through the visuals.

The themes of embodied response to these machinic performances feel significant given the technological basis of the sound offering a humane approach to technology. I believe any humane technology must put our bodies front and center and allow for more full-bodied expression. In addition to the artists' embodiment, our attention is drawn to our own physical experiences. The show makes us want to move.

Design graduate student and synth music fan, Catalina, writes:

What is new about the whole experience is listening to my favorite music while sitting down. This genre is listening, standing up to feel it throughout the body, and enjoying the experience with all the senses. The artists take the audience on a journey that begins with abstract and underground sounds, then evolves into emotional sounds loaded with memories. The path continues with sounds with different rhythms and frequencies — all to connect with the audience and make us dance without having to move our bodies.

Dance graduate student, Isa, describes her embodied, somatic reflections:

I quickly became aware of my body in relationship to the vibratory quality of sound due to tone and to volume. There were sounds that were harsh, booming, high pitched, tinkling, lilting and swinging back down. I had to close my eyes to fully settle into what I was sensing. I scrawled in my notebook in the dark: Time stretched and wound around me as I sat and listened with my whole body, the sounds taking on a force, a weight, a personality that reverberated in my flesh. I felt jostled, calmed, aware and dense as the sounds subsided and the lights came up. Images were overlayed, overlapping, lapping, kaleidoscoping and merging: water, vegetation, animals, and humans, veils of color, pinks, blues, translucent and vivid.

The artists bent time around me and I sank into the sounds easily. I noticed where sounds seemed to be coming from and what spaces they seemed to be filling. There were sounds that reminded me of the squeaking of thousands of mice and it felt like those eeks and eeeps were coming up from the floor. Deep and heavy tones seemed to fill the whole space and surround me on all sides while harsher, grating sounds slanted up in an ascending motion.

I found myself fully immersed in a sort of synesthesiatic meditation, thickly aware of my flesh body and at times a different kind of body, one that was decidedly uncontained. The waves, the plants, the tongue of a deer, the veins of a leaf were all sensorily vital.

I could place myself within the soundscape of textural tones and melodic lilts as if I were transformed into another form of being, not in this body but in another. One that had different boundaries, or no boundaries at all.

Yitong, Dance undergraduate student, adds her own synesthetic account:

All four performers taught me something about my body and the space within and around me. The synthesized sensual attachments between my different sensory organs while being in the performance space made me consciously aware of my existence as an audience member. Being in a dark immersed space increased my nerves, and therefore, incentivized my hearing, visual, and touch senses. I was hyper-aware of what was going on within the space. There were moments of synthesized looping images and sound that drew my attention into similar patterns in a subconscious state that provoked my internal

sensations to synchronize with them, which I became aware of later.

The abundance of color patterns from the moving images provided space for me to imagine the color of the sound, sometimes the color of images and sound that I imagined in my head happened to be synthesized, and sometimes not.

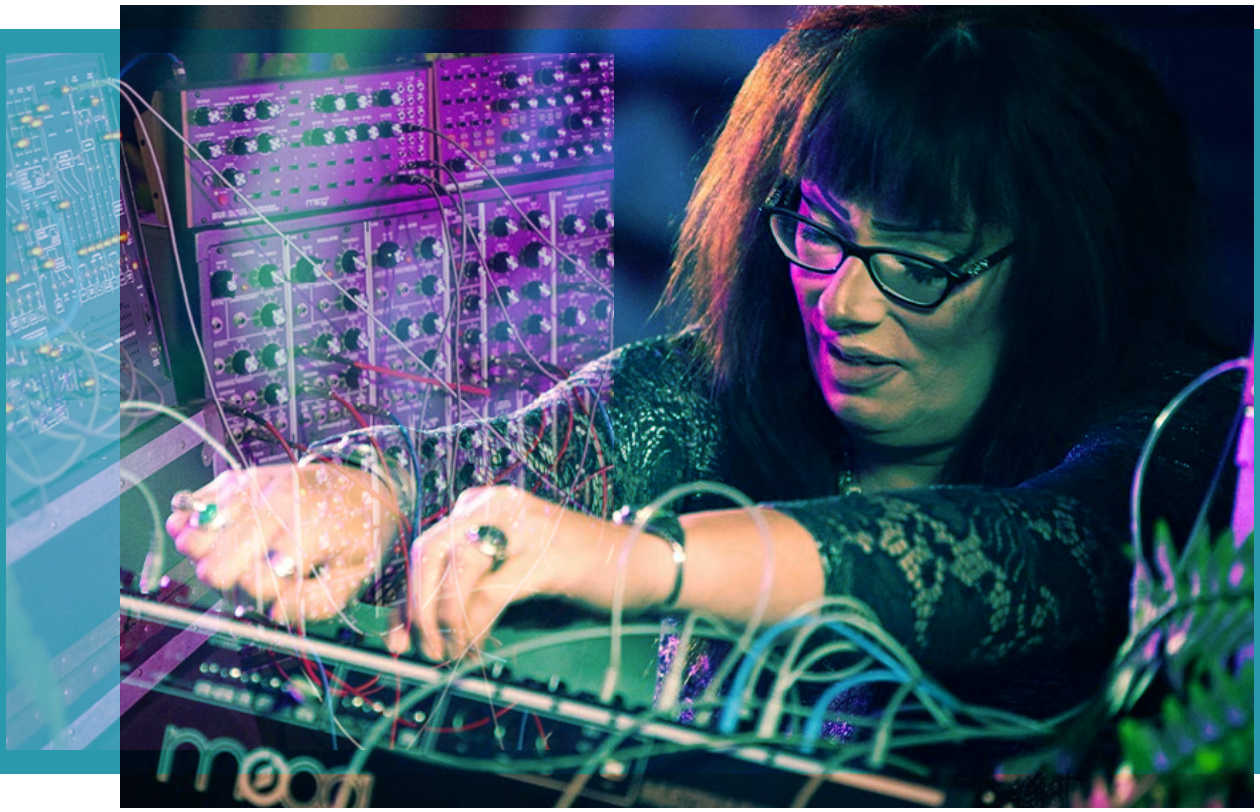
Sound became the vehicle for feelings and forms of consciousness which neither Mandarin nor the English language can touch. I am reminded of the strange nighttime hallucinations I had as a child; feelings of the more-than-material world are not only present but active and consequential.

Undergraduate student, Srinija, shares her budding awareness of how art can inform life and new ways of receiving work even if it is not what we expect. In an excerpt from her essay, she shares:

To be honest, I am not sure what to make of the work. This is in part due to the fact that I arrived with the assumption that I would be watching a dance performance. Patchmakers ended up being a creative process of developing sounds, that worked to transport audiences to their own little worlds. I felt as if I was in an episode of Star Wars, whereas my friend felt like he was back in El Salvador with his family.

I know that our readings emphasized how important it is to look at art in its entirety as opposed to breaking it into segments, and to consider the effect that the piece has on you as a viewer as opposed to a complete critical analysis.

These experiences of mine, my discomfort and curiosity, intertwined with the art that was presented, made it a memorable experience and I want to explore more.



Heather, a graduate student in creative writing, foregrounds the importance of embodiment in these performances even those focused on techno-wizardry in her account of the headliner for the show and the final act of the evening:

While watching four demonstrations of synth artistry on Saturday night, I was struck by the somatic nature of an art that one might assume rejects the organic. On stage, four modular synth apparatuses crowded out warmth with buttons and dials, flashing lights and wire 'spaghetti' patching synth to synth. There was a pure emphasis on the instruments themselves—before any single artist stepped forward we, the audience, became familiar with the synth, whether we understood it or not. I noted the patterns of repetition in the lights and the temptation to regard the bustle of the audience as a song itself; as I would note during the following performances, foreground and background were starting to blur…

The final offering of the evening was delivered by Lisa Bella Donna, using the most complex modular set up on stage. It's important to consider the role that Bella Donna's instrument takes in teaching us how to absorb the performance. The synth itself was illuminated for hours before Bella Donna stepped on stage—through every previous performance its lights blinked or flashed, patterns appeared with regularity that evoked randomness. Anticipation mounted as we all wondered who is going to play that and how?

In some ways, Bella Donna's performance was the most traditionally 'musical'—there were more familiar tones and harmonic progressions than previous. However, Bella Donna's performance contrasted delightfully, discomfitingly, with the previous synthesists. While playing, Bella Donna would lean into the music, bodily dictating the beat and the notes. In contrast, the previous performers, especially Dr. Chelsea Bruno, divorced their bodies from

the rhythms they presented. Bella Donna's movements called attention to the ways we typically read and interpret bodies, and made a compelling case for synthesis as an art without limitation — there is no exhaustion here.

The opening to Heather's essay emphasizing what is at stake for us physically, can also serve as a meaningful ending for this one, highlighting the intertwining themes of this course I am teaching for the first time and indeed of our lives in the 21st century — **the intertwining forces of technological change and ecological crisis and the need for creative approaches to thriving amidst uncertainty and creating more just worlds.**

How might these performances and beautiful reflections by the students help us think and make livability in our lives today?

The reflection essays from the evening of performance together offer a lexicon of keywords to savor.

Lexicon of keywords to savor

Inclusion, queer, feminist, machine, body, light, continuous flow, vibration, social relations, community, nostalgia, transparency, vulnerability, personal, performance, labor on display, organic, artificial, quakes, quivers, shivers, reaching back with the base of my spine, lifting of the throat, the irregular cadence of language and machine's operating, insects, sound is movement of air, of matter, of electricity, embodied change, physical to aural, complex stimuli, synesthesia, story.

Are these some of the keywords of livability?

Or is it more straightforward?

Is it something about full expression in inclusive community and immersive shared experience as transformative space?

Can we learn from this performance to know in a bodily way that our machines are already our collaborators? That the future need not be domination of one or the other but asks instead that we invest time, energy, resources, and commitment in creating humane and synesthetic relationships between our bodies and our technologies?

What more do we want to do with the opportunities we have when we convene folks like this and vibrate their cells with our sounds? How might these out of time, out of space moments that are performance become powerful portals into alternative imaginations of possible futures?

And then again, perhaps they already are.

03 Dancing Around Race

Dancing Around Race Anti-racism Training Workshops
Facilitated By Gerald Casel with Bhumi Patel, David Hererra, Kimani Fowlin, Raissa Simpson, and Alana Isiguen.

Fri–Sat, Jan 20–21
Graduate students in the Department of Dance, online workshops

Curator's remarks from Dancers in Graduate School (DiGS):

DiGS Anti-racist Working Group formally invites you to attend our free 2-day virtual workshop series with Dancing Around Race in January 2023. Dancing around Race will facilitate 2-hour workshops on Friday, January 20th, focused on embodied dance lineages, and Saturday, January 21st, focused on Embodied Manifesto Making. Please see the attached flyer and consider building the events into your Spring 2023 course offerings. We encourage all students, faculty, and staff to attend these workshops and continue building an anti-racist culture throughout our campus.

By Srinija Adibhatla and Vivian Corey

Dancing Around Race is an organization that guides workshops, conversations, and embodied practices of decolonizing and decentering white dance practice. Our cohort got the opportunity to experience two workshops with them this semester, which included their Dance Lineages and Embodied Manifesto Making Workshops. Our experience with Dancing Around Race was coordinated by the Anti-Racist Working Group at The Ohio State University, which is a student-led group that strengthens anti-racist thought and action. These workshops were essential in spearheading conversations among members of our cohort regarding the systemic barriers existent in our environment and what steps can be taken to decenter white dance practices.

Srinija:

Tracing Personal Roots of Institutional Racism

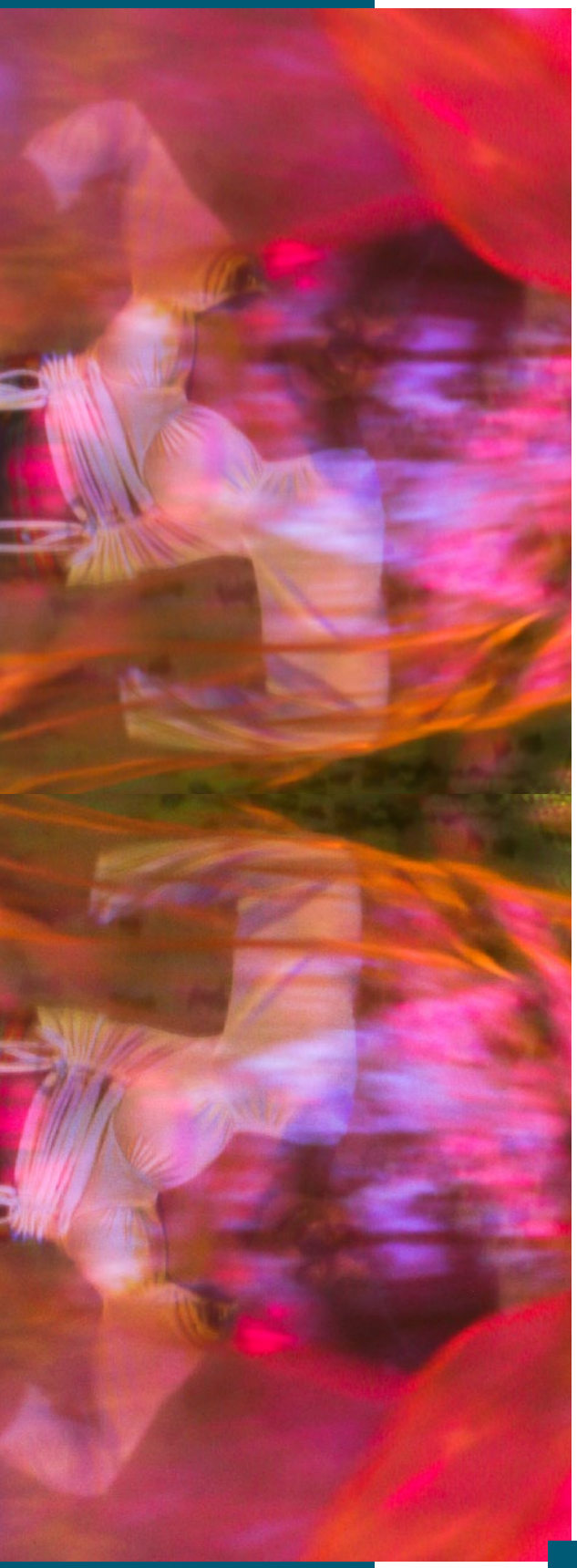
To start the workshop, a series of questions were posed that allowed us to consider, as Isa questions, "what forms of dance are considered techniques worthy of formal study." From this perspective, we began to trace our dance lineages by categorizing the forms of dances we have learned in terms of if they were elective, cultural, or technique-based study. Often, the types of dance forms categorized into the technique segment consisted of practices such as ballet and modern dance, whereas styles of hip hop, polka, and Kuchipudi were placed solely in the category of cultural study in many of our past experiences.

Throughout the process of this categorization, I began to question why this was. What instinctually made me classify my training in Indian classical dance as solely cultural when I know the amount of work that was put in, and the way that it was taught, should also classify it as technique-based? Comparatively, what makes me think of ballet as solely within the technique-based sector, when ballet is also a cultural practice? And why do I think technique is better than cultural practice? As Heather tells us, the answer to this of course is the significant role "that academic institutions have in enforcing conformity and institutional white supremacy."

Therefore, some of the first steps we need to make the change that is necessary in our times, is to understand that "white supremacy is prevalent in our culture and people need to be able to see how it exists," as Vivian puts it.. **One of the best ways to do this is to actively consider our own identities, hidden and visible, as well as our training and knowledge lineages and think about who influenced our practices.**

For many people in dance, most of their dance training has occurred under the guidance of white women, where often many did not experience training with BIPOC practitioners untill adulthood or if we did, it was outside the academic context. Often, Julie writes, "institutions can appropriate knowledge and gatekeepers or experts can look very different from elective or cultural learning spaces," which is why it is essential for practitioners of dance to constantly educate themselves to center the voices of BIPOC communities within the artistic community.

Forms of dances we have learned in terms of elective, cultural, or technique-based study.



Listening To The Body

Another important exploration that took place was that of an embodied practice. According to "The Embodiment Manifesto," in most institutions, we are taught to apply a disembodied approach where there is a top-down power structure that leads us to follow a set of guidelines set in place by one "head." This process works to eliminate our sense of connection from the world and the present.[1]

Being able to reunite the body with its intelligence allows for us to step away from the influence of others and approach life in a way that will allow for the establishment of harmony, truth, and justice beyond conviction and personal interest. This approach of embodied practice is what we focused on during the second part of the workshop through activities that brought up conversations about identity, hindrance, and support. Throughout this process, many students acknowledged complex feelings about the role of visible and invisible identities, taking into consideration what exactly needs to be done to provide support.

What Does Support Look Like For You?

The facilitators asked us at one point, "what does support look like?" According to Siera, often "support isn't defined by loyalty and consistency but attributes like attentiveness, active listening, interacting." The workshop allowed for a flow of conversation that let attendees to think for themselves to better process their own emotions regarding these questions and helped guide many in their implementation of action. This is especially important because the knowledge that we take back from experiences such as this are not enough. Rather it is essential to be mindful of what we have learned by emphasizing action over sentiment so that there exist tangible outlets for meaningful and radical change.

What do you need to fully show up?

Livability, Futures, and Solidarity

Having shared this, I would like to conclude this reflection with some of my own thoughts regarding the topics of livability, futures, and solidarity. Going into this workshop, I was not sure what to expect. However, coming out of this workshop, I believe there are so many of the systemic practices that I am in tune with, that have in turn, allowed for me to connect with myself. Specifically, it was not until this workshop that I realized just how quick I was to forgive the system for not providing me with resources to thrive in a way that was necessary. When I came to Ohio State, my interest lay in pursuing a dance major. However, at that time, when hosting the auditions for potential dancers, there was an emphasis on more "Western" forms of training, which in turn meant that there was no opportunity for me as an Indian Classical dancer to partake in anything besides a minor. Though I was disappointed, I remember convincing myself at the time that participating in the minor program was okay and that it was still fun, especially since my peers allowed me to explore my passion through the systems they had already established, which was so kind. It was not until this workshop that I realized that this precisely is where the problem existed.

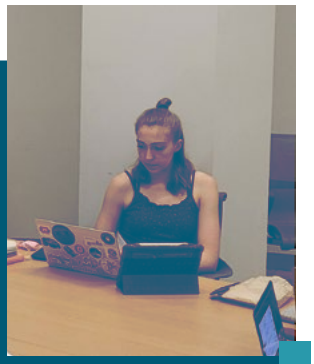
For years in this country, the existence of white supremacy sets the conditions for BIPOC communities to accept what little is provided with gratitude. Often, we are blind to this disparity as we view the kindness that is shared as an acceptance that might not have existed in the past. Yet, we forget that "niceness is whiteness" (Alex Christmas reminded us of this during the workshop: whiteness enforces a certain way of interacting, often called "nice" that hides cultural assumptions and racist bias).

It has become clear to me that in order for BIPOC communities to be able to live the life we deserve, one where we will be able to thrive, we need to rally for radical change. I believe this radical change can be brought on through the knowledge we have gained throughout the course of these workshops and our class. Livability occurs when we are able to understand the roots of inequity, reflect on our own experiences, think critically about our assumptions, and work on centering the voices of BIPOC.

Livability occurs when we proceed to not only emotionally bond with new narratives, but when we take action to create a tangible change. Finally, livability cannot occur without strong support systems that aim to continue the changes necessary and provide a platform for all to flourish in the present and future.

What do you need to fully show up?

What gets in the way?



Vivian:

The Dancing Around Race workshop was so inspiring for us that I chose to do some research on other anti-racist training organizations in dance. One important organization laying the groundwork for anti-racist work in dance is Urban Bush Women's Summer Leadership Institute.[2] This is a 10-day program that focuses on the "artist as activist." Throughout the intensive, participants engage in workshops and practices that use movement and discussion to explore unity through verbal and non-verbal practices. At the end of the intensive, the Summer Leadership Institute hosts a community performance that synthesizes themes of the program and demonstrates them through various modes of performance (dance, theater, visual art, etc.).

What do you need to fully show up?

What gets in the way?

Fear
Racism
Egos
Comfort
Lack of resources
Myths
Sexism
Trauma
Comparison
Individualism

A newer organization, led by milleneal dancers, is Practice Progress.[3] They too focus on embodied practices for social change. What is unique about this group is the types of workshops offered. They include BIPOC affinity groups, to establish healing; white working groups, to facilitate learning in a space that does not impose stress upon BIPOC colleagues; and multi-racial coalitions building groups to encourage supportive, anti-racist driven relationships. The purpose of this work is to build trust through embodied practice because of the white supremacy that we live in. The experience of white supremacy is held in all our bodies, so embodied practice brings about heightened awareness to these ideas and helps us identify and dismantle them.

Dancing Around Race, Practice Progress, and the Summer Leadership Institute are relevant to livable futures because the future depends on the work we do now to dismantle racist biases that are heavily present in our societies. All three of these programs share the goal of educating white people about the unnoticed biases of the systems they benefit from while uplifting BIPOC communities through conversation and embodied practice. Through these types of guided discussions and non-verbal experiences of moving through and responding to our oppressive systems, we can progress towards an anti-racist future. The future needs to be equitably accessible and livable to all, so anti-racist work needs to be the center of our forward progress, especially at the center of the work of white people.

Space and flexibility
Accountability
Self-compassion
No judgment
Confidence and motivation
Sense of play, fun, relief
Community
Acceptance of diversity

Climate Activism or Nihilism?

Photo by: Jonathan Mandell

Are we not drawn onward to new erA: Ontroerend Goed

Wed–Thu, Jan 25–26, 8:00 PM
Wexner Center for the Arts and Columbus Association of Performing Arts, Davidson Theatre at the Riffe Center

Curator's remarks from wexarts.org:

With a punning name that roughly translates as "feel estate," Belgian ensemble Ontroerend Goed ingeniously combines physical theater, video, and scenic design into a magical multimedia experience. Like its palindrome of a title, Are we not drawn onward to new erA unfolds in a sequence that appears the same going forward as it does backward, but here meanings change as we're transformed by the journey. Traveling from the time of Adam and Eve to the apocalyptic future and back again, the ensemble portrays a world forever altered by our quest for progress while questioning if our actions are reversible — or if we've gone past the point of no return.

Are we advancing, or is humanity headed the wrong way? This powerful work explores both scenarios while probing something deeper. Composer William Basinski's The Disintegration Loops — music made from deteriorating magnetic tapes and completed on the morning of September 11, 2001 — provides an appropriate sonic backdrop to this gripping theatrical event.

Synthesized by Julie Kim & Tal Shutkin

Context

Ontroerend Goed's Are we not drawn onward to new erA, is a multimedia performance that had its Ohio premiere in Columbus. The theatre–performance group originates from Belgium, EU, and toured North America with this work, landing in Columbus, OH before heading to Vancouver and Toronto, Canada. ***(Katie)***

Description of the Performance

The show opens to a nearly empty stage—a figure lies in the background, while a tree planted in soil occupies the fore. As the play goes on, or seems to, more and more things fill the stage—actors, plastic bags, a statue is assembled and raised, and smoke is released via long tubes, flooding the stage until the metaphorical more has nowhere to go but out to the abiding audience. With each addition, whether carried or dragged on stage by actors, or released from the nethers beyond our sight, it's clear that this is meant to be an allegory of human destruction. The allegory is further entrenched by the sporadic dialogue in the first half, words in English deftly delivered backward, consonants and vowels clashing for meaning. In some ways, this incoherence seems to mimic the actions of the actors—what world would allow for such destruction? Surely only one as unintelligible as the dialogue would suggest.

But the world—ours and the one built on stage—is intelligible, understandable when watched in order. In the second half of the play, a screen is lowered and the performance, the very one we watched, is played in reverse. Suddenly, those meaningless bits of dialogue assemble themselves into words and sentences. Jokes are being made and movements that previously lacked a feeling of weight or motivation, cohere into throwing or jumping or high-fiving. We are watching a strange story of arrival and joy, of melancholy and leaving. Of course, much of the second half utilizes the projection to depict magic—plastic bags are willed away, the smoke is cleared into those same long hoses, a statue is felled and cut to pieces, so easy. But it's not this way—I know it, the show knows it—the company seems to be imploring us to ask, simply, What if? ***(Heather)***



Photo by: Miriam Devriendt

Summary of critiques

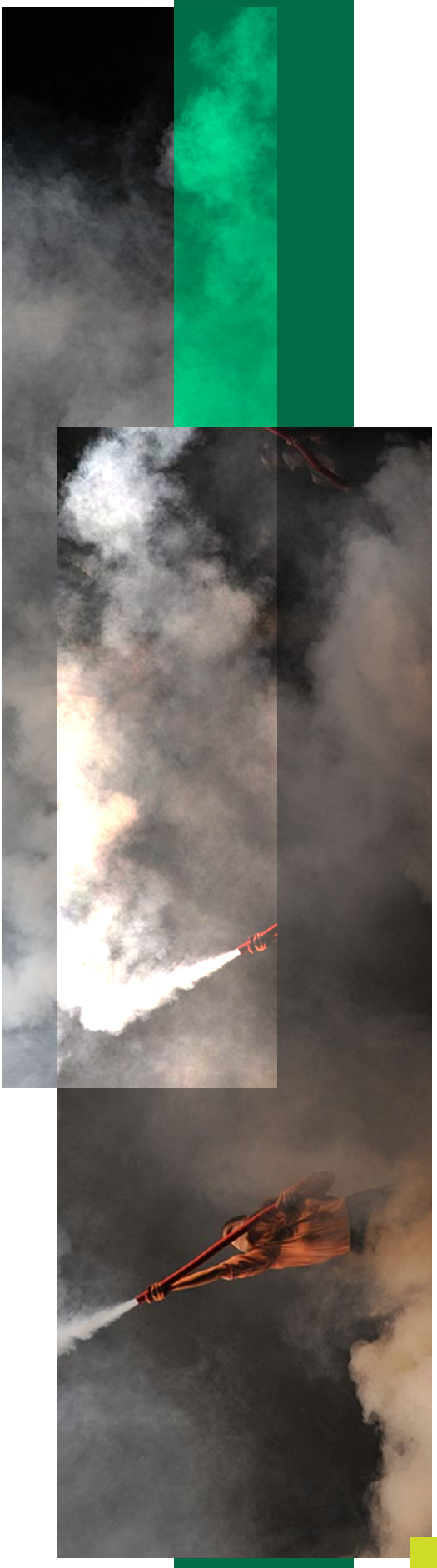
There were a range of reactions and reflections from the class. Unanimously, the class was impressed by the technical feats of the performance such as the meticulous choreography, exact and deliberate movements and the composure of the technical team who timed the transition from forward to backward seamlessly. Many experienced the pleasure of surprise during the time-bending reveal. Others who had the opportunity to meet with the artists prior to the show saw the final product resulting from months of intensive processes that blended conventional rehearsals with forest retreats and fireside dances.

While impressed with the technique and creative process, the class had mixed reviews regarding the structure of the performance. Constrained by its palindromic structure, the performance was limited in its ability to convey a meaningful message. There was a sense of universalism, the smoothing of differences in how people experience the causes and consequences of environmental crisis, which frustrated some members of the cohort but felt appropriate in the context of the piece for others.

Finally, the class disagreed on the meaning of the screen used to project the second half of the performance. While the images on screen fixed the broken world, the audience could still see the messy reality strewn about behind them. Was this a secret break from linearity telling us that even as we imagine a return to wilderness, human impacts will remain; or does this simply expose the piece as a gimmick, where commitment to process overshadows an authentic message?

Isa writes:
For me, the piece functioned as a poem. It did not offer solutions, it sat in the impossible and pointed to the emotional appeal of believing the impossible to be possible, the tree to be un-killed, the bags to be un-strewn, the smoke to be un-spewed. The simplicity of the structure was striking but the simplistic way of perceiving the climate crisis was not as compelling for me.

Photo by: Miriam Devriendt



Yitong writes:
To use such a loaded symbol of Edenic nature and original sin could have been a method of critiquing the way those ideas have directly led to a disconnect from land. But because the piece had to end where it began, that critique was never realized. There is a hierarchy that seemingly turns the audiences' values into a universal concept unless the audiences consciously questions what they experience.

Vivian writes:
Every step taken on the stage is planned because if it is done carelessly, the magic of the reverse performance would be dampened. It is an incredibly difficult and impressive performance challenge.

Brittany writes:
For a performance rooted around the Christian creation myth, perhaps forced guilt was always the point… The narrative's ecological lament feels similar to how the performers' reversed recorded backwards walking looks: uncanny, close to human movement but purposefully not. I think to myself: does it matter what of this was intentional and what isn't? I see a man tearing apart tree leaves and think how easy it is to see paper products not as pulverized tree's pulp but as necessary, quotidian scraps.

Julie writes:
The title of the show, *Are we not drawn onward to new erA* is a palindrome and the performance stays true to this commitment, perhaps at the expense of the message to the audience.

The palindrome model of performance that is used is still one of progress and linearity. However, we are living in times of rising temperatures, glaciers melting, microplastics in our water, oil spills and unpredictable catastrophes. There are no clear-cut reversals of what humans have done to the earth, only messy and un-

derdeveloped ways to try to clean up what has been spilled, patch what has been broken. Perhaps what felt missing was the messiness, hugeness, of our real-life situation.

Magic and the belief of it as real, is central to the narrative of Are we not drawn onward to a new erA. We, the audience, need to believe that an apple that has been eaten can be vomited and put back together, that a tree torn to pieces by a human's bare hands can be forcefully melded just through sheer force and willpower. But the utilization of a screen to show that takes away from the magic, the fact that it's just a screen, a recording, that it's a gimmick. The reality hits that it's all just a dream, magic that cannot happen in the real world. After all, even now when I can just sit back and believe the performance, the screen is a reminder that what we are seeing is only just a digital recording of the real destruction that has happened just before.

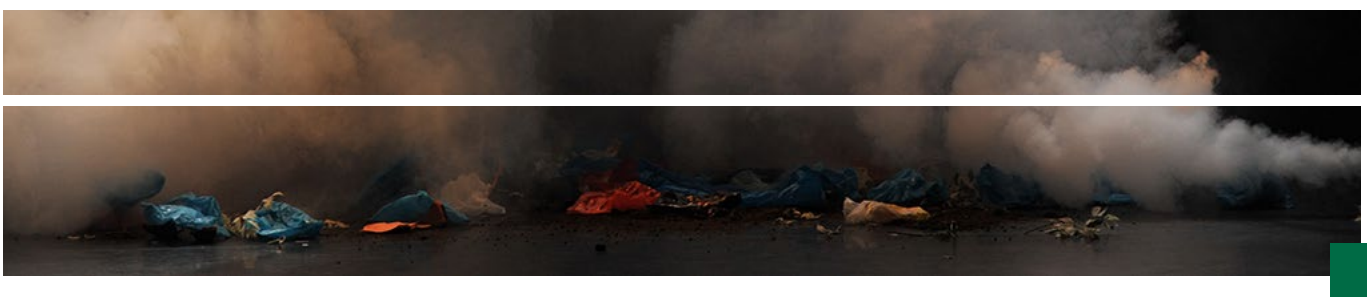
Catalina writes:
Movements could be seen with certain pauses of one or two seconds, something practically imperceptible if not observed enough. Pauses were so invisible that the actors' movements were fluid in the eyes of the audience.

Katie writes:
Although I can appreciate the idea of a clean slate and the question that hung in the air around "what would we do differently if we got a second chance?" I was also slightly dissatisfied with the ending. I am curious about what other possibilities there may be for a "new beginning" or "fresh start" as implied in the performance. Is our only option going all the way back to the origin?

I question whether this performance initiates changes in societal, environmental, and economic issues that are relevant to human audiences today. Though, without question, this performance evocatively addresses relevant issues through live performative and technological mediums and encompasses different perspectives on the issues we face in this world, which was performed powerfully, embodied diligently, and resonated deeply with me while witnessing the show.

Tal writes:
Though the rest of the show is about cleaning up the mess, by the end it becomes clear that while the technocratic discourse surrounding SSPs excludes the marginalized from a collective future, the eco-future envisioned by Ontroerend Goed leaves no room for a collective at all. Despite its highly entertaining, experimental, and technically impressive orchestration and acting, the show is limited by lack of socioenvironmental imagination.

Srinijia writes:
I believe that there was a significance to how the play ended, in that after the humans left, the light did not just stay on the tree, but after a point, it went out. Yes, this might seem like a small detail, but to me, it implied how neither nature nor humans are here to last.



Socioenvironmental Imagination

Are we not drawn onward to new erA: Ontroerend Goed

Wed–Thu, Jan 25–26, 8:00 PM
Wexner Center for the Arts and Columbus Association of Performing Arts, Davidson Theatre at the Riffe Center

Tal Shutkin

The most recent estimates from the Global Carbon Project suggest that at our current pace, we have less than a decade's worth of carbon to pump into the atmosphere before breaching levels that the U.N. agrees would mean serious trouble for the Earth and its inhabitants.

After that, conditions vary depending on what climate scientists call shared socioeconomic pathways (SSPs), or scenarios of global economic development that result in different atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations. While SSPs are useful heuristics for many scientific or political predictions, scholars like Kyle White, Janae Davis, and Katherine Yusoff[1] highlight how this way of conceptualizing planetary futures leaves many out.

- What do ideas about "shared pathways" mean for communities of the northernmost latitudes where, according to the 4th National Climate Assessment, warming is occurring at over twice the global average rate?[2]

- What about for species of amphibians already threatened by current warming levels?

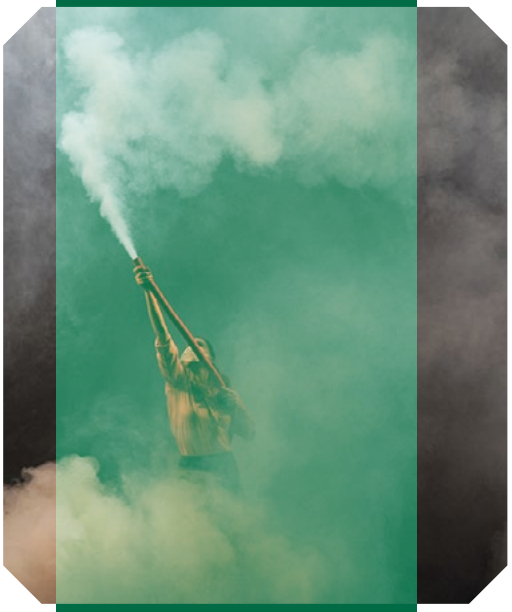
- When considered alongside the violent history of exclusion from the category "human," it is reasonable to suspect that many will be left out of these purportedly shared futures.[3]

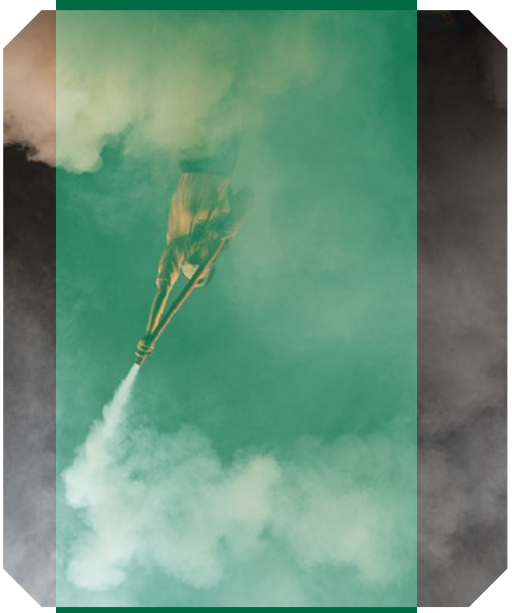
Contemplating collective but differentiated futures under various socioenvironmental scenarios then becomes an imaginative task more so in the wheelhouse of creatives than of scientists. One could even argue that this decade on the precipice of numerous planetary thresholds—from runaway ice sheet collapse to mass extinction—constitutes an exceptionally important moment to engage in this type of futuristic work.

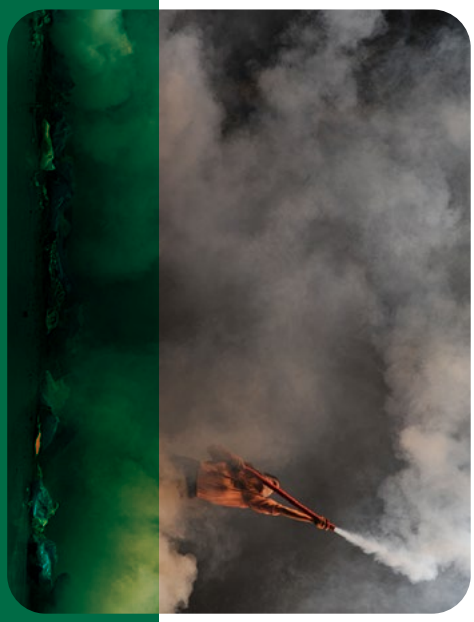
Are we not drawn onward to new erA by the Belgian company Ontroerend Goed situates itself at our planetary crossroads. "This is where we are now," says a narrator half-way through the performance just after the stage had been filled with litter and the audience thoroughly fumigated by smoke machines. Though the rest of the show is about cleaning up the mess, by the end it becomes clear that while the technocratic discourse surrounding SSPs may exclude the marginalized from a collective future, the eco-future envisioned by Ontroerend Goed leaves no room for a collective at all. Despite its highly entertaining, experimental, and technically impressive orchestration and acting, the show is limited by lack of socioenvironmental imagination.

It opens with an awkward encounter.

A man and woman stand facing each other in front of an apple tree on an otherwise empty stage. They hold their arms close and make uncomfortable gestures. But soon the tension diffuses as they pick and eat the single apple from the tree. Others join them on stage. A woman enters apparently crying and a bald man pops out from behind the curtain holding a helium balloon in front of his face. Soon others join, making for a group of five or six on stage. They speak to each other in gibberish, though I first think that maybe this is what Flemish sounds like. They start moving more quickly and two







characters begin enthusiastically dismembering the tree. They roll and laugh in plastic trash that magically falls from the sky. Eventually, once fully satisfied with the mess they've made, they begin scooting huge, gilded pieces of a statue on stage. Something is awkward about how they do it though, pulling from in front instead of pushing from behind with all their weight. The bald man enters last, scooting the bald head of what becomes a massive statue of a man, erected triumphantly to watch over the ruined landscape. Finally, the group assembles with pipes billowing smoke, filling the stage and eventually the entire theater.

This could be the end. Another tired tale of progress promised, and destruction delivered.

But then something strange happens. An actor steps out to the audience as a screen drops behind her. She says something in gibberish. Suddenly there are two of her. One in the flesh and one projected on screen. The projection begins to speak but this time in a choppy English. By the time projected figures start vacuuming the smoke out of the atmosphere, it is apparent that the entire play is going in reverse.

Like its name, the performance is a palindrome created digitally, live and on-the-fly by a poised and talented technical crew. All those words I mistook for Flemish turn out to be comprehensible English in reverse. Even some of the awkward movements (like the way the man scooted the statue) find more grace going in the opposite direction. When the characters are overwhelmed by the task ahead of them, magic intervenes, and the plastic bags disappear into the sky. An inspiring soundtrack accompanies this reversal, helping to transform the awkwardness of act one into inspiration.

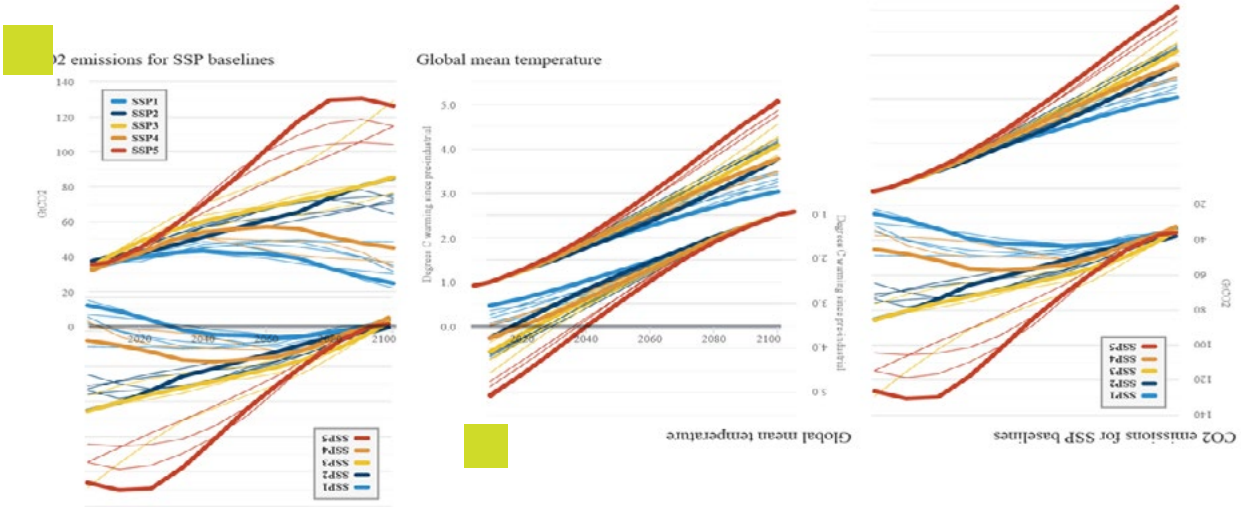
For many in the audience, watching the original duo regurgitate bits of fruit and return a shiny apple to the newly healed tree, would have immediately conjured biblical stories. Supposing this was a deliberate effort to suggest redemption from original sin, it is strange that immediately after returning the apple, all characters disappear. One even seems to commit suicide as she fires an imaginary gun through her chin (a gesture which looked silly and out of place when time moved in the opposite direction). After demonstrating that humankind can rejuvenate the earth, the play sends the message that this would not be enough. The sin of human existence is apparently so engrained, that even after replacing the apple, collective suicide is our only viable option.

This nihilistic call made prominent by Roy Scranton's *Learning to Die in the Anthropocene*[4] is far from original. Indeed, such sentiments seem to arise in art, literature, politics, and elsewhere, whenever trying to reimagine how we relate to one another and to Earth becomes too exhausting.

In the end, despite the exciting twist, the audience is left at the same point we supposedly started: contemplating planetary crossroads with no prospect for a livable collective future.

Worse yet, by bolstering the narrative of joint responsibility for environmental crisis, the show seems to ignore how racial and colonial capitalism has delineated injustices in both responsibility for and vulnerability to environmental change. By identifying humanity, not certain human systems, as the problem, this framing also unintentionally makes space for dangerous politics concerning population control.

While the show impresses from a technical standpoint (I can't imagine trying to learn a 45-minute piece speaking and moving in reverse!) and at times following the twist can feel quite inspiring, it ultimately struggles to breach the same imaginative barriers that limit meaningful climate change action outside of the theater.



Figures of CO2 emissions for SSP baselines and Global mean temperature by Zeke Hausfather

Sonic Social Justice

05

***Narrative Soundscape Composition and Radio Opera:* Yvette Janine Jackson**

Thu, Feb 2, 4:00 PM
The Ohio State University School of Music, Timashev Building Room N300

Event organizer's remarks from music.osu.edu:

The Music Theory area will hold this year's William Poland Lecture on Thursday, February 2. Yvette Janine Jackson, assistant professor at Harvard University, will present "Narrative Soundscape Composition and Radio Opera."

Yvette Janine Jackson is a composer and sound installation artist who brings attention to historical events and social issues through her radio operas. Building on her experience as a theatrical sound designer, she blends field recordings, synthesized sounds, and traditional instruments into her own aesthetic of narrative composition and improvisation. Her album *Freedom*, produced by the Fridman Gallery, debuted as Contemporary Album of the Month in the January 2021 issue of *The Guardian* and its track "Destination Freedom" was awarded the Giga-Hertz Production Award 2021 presented by ZKM Centre for Art and Media and SWR Experimental studio.

Recent projects include *Left Behind* for chamber ensemble and electronics for the Venice Music Biennale and *Hello, Tomorrow!* for orchestra and electronics co-commissioned by American Composers Orchestra and Carnegie Hall. Yvette is an assistant professor in Creative Practice and Critical Inquiry in the Department of Music and teaches for the Theater, Dance & Media program at Harvard University.

The William Poland Lecture Series provides an opportunity for members of the School of Music and the university-at-large to hear distinguished scholars in music theory and related fields.

Synthesized by Vivian Corey

Poésie concrète, or concrete poetry, is when the shape of the collections of words of a poem hold as much or more meaning as the words themselves. According to theartstory.org, this technique emerged in a time of modernist writers, who used complex patterns of words to convey significance to their works.[1] Simplicity was the key development in this medium for developing understanding across sociocultural lines. These ideas inspire composer Yvette Janine Jackson in her intermedia works mixing sound and visual media to create electroacoustic, orchestral, and chamber music for various contexts and venues from outdoor hiking areas to animation screenings.

Jackson visited Ohio State this semester to share and discuss some of her works, particularly radio operas and site-specific installations all focused on social justice themes and driven by her desire for meaningful change. She has established her own ensemble of sound-makers which she calls the Radio Opera Workshop, whose members use various media to compose sound for theatrical projects and installations. Her work transcends typical modes of human communication and creates emotional resonances—inner responses that move the audience without words. While individual sounds may seem abstract or unsettling, her works as a whole convey deeper messages to the audience.

Visual works by Mercedes Hicks, and Katie O'Loughlin.

One work Jackson introduced was her outdoor installation in a forest entitled Underground (codes), which is a companion work to her earlier piece Destination Freedom described by composer George Lewis as a representation of "the future of a creolized sonic art in which new subjects for opera and musical theater offer new possibilities for a decolonized Afrodiasporic gesamtkunstwerk (total artwork) without borders or limits."[2] Jackson's installation at Wave Farm uses two large speakers (Code Humpback steel projection cowls, which were donated to Wave Farm by Charles Lindsay) playing her sounds in a forest environment. The sound that plays over these speakers is designed not to disturb the wildlife or environment that exists on that land, but instead offer an addition that can be appreciated by the human ear and the more-than-human ears alike. While the two large, white speakers may seem out of place, they act as the means to transport moving sound into the space that creates an immersive audience experience.

Photo of Underground (codes) by Patrick McCormack.

Jackson's discussion of *Destination Freedom* was another very impactful topic for several of the students in our cohort who responded visually. In her album notes for this work, Jackson describes this work as an:

Immersive electroacoustic composition that takes listeners on a journey in search of freedom: from the hull of a 19th-century slave ship, across time, to a place in the imaginative future. Using history as a mirror for contemporary social issues, Yvette Janine Jackson anchors the work in research focused on how humans were stored in the cargo ships that carried them through the Middle Passage.

By blending and manipulating sounds from myriad sources including field recordings, electronic sound, and samples from the internet, Jackson creates a haunting, emotional, epic narrative without words.[3]

The visuals she shares with the sounds are equally impactful and together they were very moving to the audience.

Aside from the wonderful spectacle of her installation work, a key component of Jackson's creations is their focus on social justice. Her piece *Fear Is Their Alibi* depicts a black and white animation to go along with operatic singing and intense, moving music. This piece is based on a poem written by Jarita Davis that hauntingly states, *"After hatred has been discharged / fear is their alibi."*[4] This work wrestles with persistent racial inequities in the United States, and Jackson describes the accompanying animation as emphasizing the pain and struggle of being a Black person in this country. Some of the images are clear, showing outlines of people or buildings, but they quickly shift into amorphous shapes left for the audience to interpret. With the layering of Davis's words, Jackson's sound, and the animation, the audience is guided to notice the pain inflicted on Black people and to infer the breadth of this pain and the implications for society.

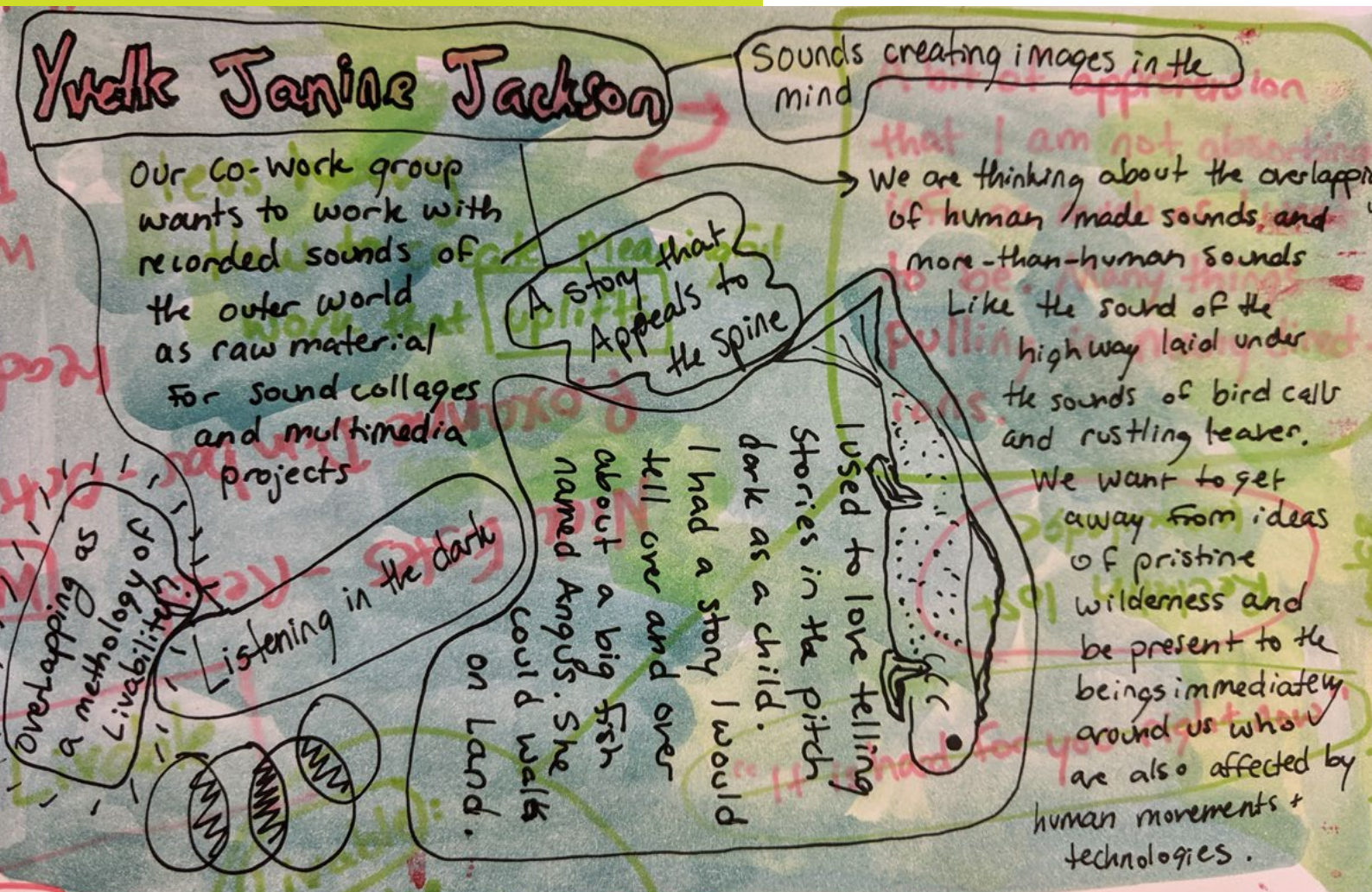
On her website, Jackson describes her radio operas as:

Stories address[ing] historical events and contemporary issues in an abstract manner that invites the listener to participate in the interpretation of the narrative. The texts are derived from archival materials, including news media, historical documents, corporate websites, and internet trolls.[5]

For me, as a young white woman learning to do anti-racist work, watching the work and listening to Jackson felt like a call to action. Jackson has composed a plethora of works that speak to her lived experiences, especially as a Black woman in America, and this artistic rendering of her deepest emotions was incredibly moving. It highlights the importance of personal story in social change work.

Overall, everyone in our cohort that attended this discussion recognized sensations that could be expressed with and beyond words. Many responded with visuals that I have compiled in these pages as a response and an expression of gratitude to the artist for her work. One thing to notice is how each image incorporates some kind of overlap. Whether it is shapes, lines, or words, each response layers visuals, demonstrating a wide range of thoughts/feelings/responses evoked by Jackson and her work and the interdisciplinary nature of her practice. Again, this idea of *poésie concrète* is relevant, that the whole experience of Jackson and her works impacts the audi-

Visual work by Isa Bowser.



ence in ways that are within and beyond verbal communication and even so, more impactful than just focusing on one mode of expression alone.

We are so thankful to Jackson for taking the time to come to our campus and share her work, and we connect her work to our growing understanding of livable futures. Jackson's work centers livability as it wrestles with themes of life such as access, justice, present and historical inequity, emotion and creative change work. It encourages us to make a connection between her work in sound and personal experience. It is also cognizant of the future.

These radio operas make us imagine what is, what was, and what could be, in Jackson's words. Together, Jackson's works demonstrate a wonderful intersection of livability and futures that sit at the center of our learning this semester and the hope we take into our lives beyond.

Overlapping as a methology of Livability?

06 Algorithmic Theater

Diversities in Practice: Annie Dorsen
Thu, Feb 9, 7:30 PM
Wexner Center for the Arts, online streaming event

Curator's remarks from wexarts.org:

Join us as Annie Dorsen shares aspects of her practice-making performances and installations that dramatize the complex interface between humans and machines in this virtual Diversities in Practice program.

Dorsen calls her work "algorithmic theater," in which computer procedures generate texts and other theatrical elements in real-time at each presentation. Drawing from a variety of disciplines, including philosophy, cultural theory, information science, and AI, her projects question the long-held assumptions of the theatrical form in order to envision its future. Dorsen highlights past and current works and will share some of the text for her upcoming project, made with the Generative Pre-trained Transformer 3 (GPT-3). For more information about Annie Dorsen, visit https://anniedorsen.com/

Provocations and responses assembled by *Bhumi B Patel*

Provocation 1:
Annie Dorsen offered the provocation, "Are we even capable of knowing the world we want?"

Are we? Why or why not?

Siera: I believe we are capable of knowing the world we want. We are in control of our thoughts, feelings, and emotions, and I strongly believe our world starts within. What we think and feel is what we project, and because we know what sets us off and what makes us feel good, it is possible for us to know the world we want, even if it changes over time.

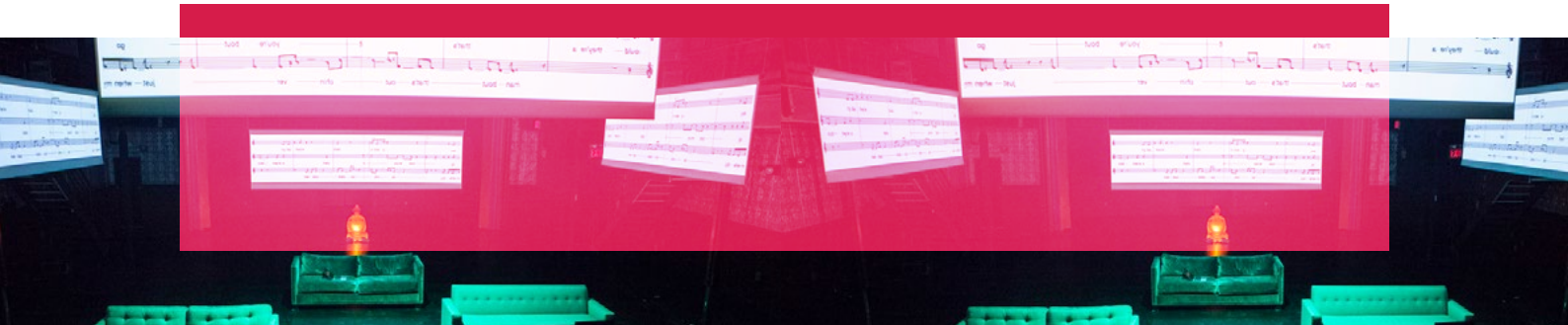
Brittany: Centuries of science fiction writing, co-constitutive, mutating mythologies, MMORPGs, or collaborative digital world-making, tell us that we're more than capable of envisioning the world we want. I think the more generative question to ask might, instead, be: how do we disentangle the many interlocking factors that prevent us from coming together to make these livable worlds?

Bhumi: I wonder what disentanglement looks like. Is it another form of tangling? Is it linear? Is it circular?

Mercedes: It depends on who you are. Being able to imagine your dream world is both a privilege and a (slight) disadvantage because you can envision it, but you can't create it. You've been able to experience elements of your ideal world, and you've also experienced some of the things that you wouldn't include. I think for some, they only know what kind of world they don't want because that has been the majority of their life experience-living in a world they don't want to. For others, it could be the opposite. They only know the world they want and have the resources to make it and maintain it. I would say most of us are somewhere in between, but there are lots of folks who live on the margins.

Yitong: I think I always subconsciously know what I want from how I behave in the past and present. What has been done in the past will always be carried with me and the people around me to the future. I could make excuses to say that it isn't my ability to change what I can't change, but still, it ends up being what I am framing for the future.

Norah: I liked the question when she asked it, but I also felt frustration with the cynicism in it. I think we absolutely are capable of imagining the worlds we want, and imagining is a form of knowing; perhaps we can only imagine aspects of what we want, but that's enough for change to begin to happen. And at the same time, I am comforted by the fact that we don't know the future.

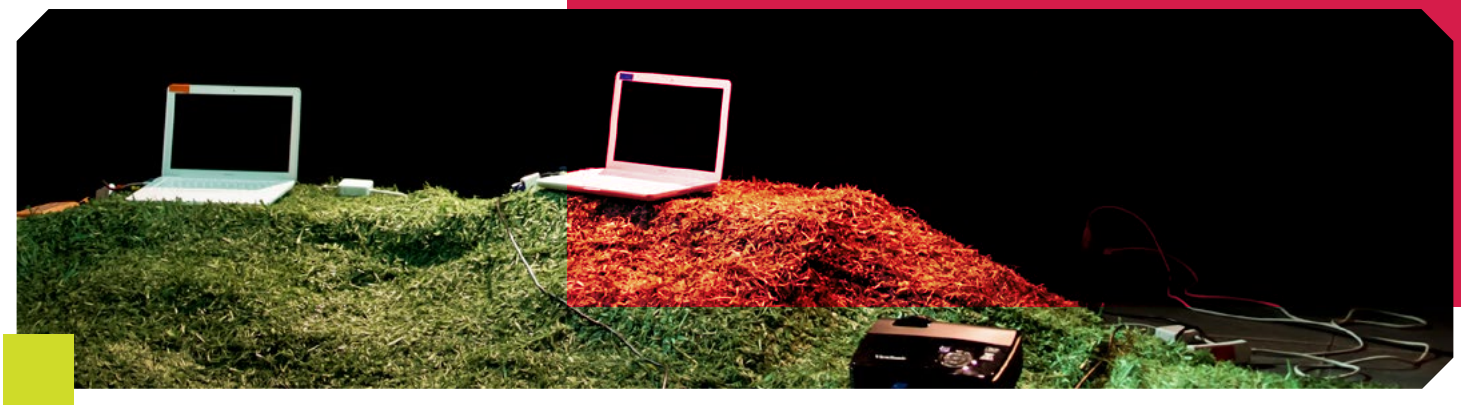


Provocation 2:
"...there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns — the ones we don't know we don't know."
– Donald Rumsfeld[1]

Annie Dorsen referenced this Donald Rumsfeld quote but added a fourth potential. Dorsen suggested that there are unknown knowns: things that we know but do not realize that we know. What do you think about this?

Siera: I think about this as human/second nature or even preparation. It's almost as if you've been doing something your whole life without realizing that it was preparing you for a bigger picture or how parents try to prepare you for future situations as you get older. Some information can be lost as we progress in our lives, and when we revisit that information it always feels so familiar hearing it, and once it's recognized, you have an 'AHA' moment. I often experience this for myself when I experience something, and I quickly realize I've always known about it or how to do it.

Brittany: This question returns me to my body, the knowledge that it holds that my conscious brain may not ever be aware of. When I take the time to hear what my body speaks, I can sometimes come to know these unknown knowns. I think, too, of the monarch butterfly's migration — how unfathomably complex that body-knowledge must be. Do they know how they find a home? Or is the multi-generational route home unknown known? What are all the ways I relate to the natural world that I, too, unknowingly know?



Mercedes: When I think about the unknown knowns that live within my brain/body, I become hyper-aware of myself. I want these to become known knowns because I want to be able to access all the knowledge that I possess. At the same time I don't want to rush the transition of my thoughts and/or knowledge from the subconscious to the conscious being. Allowing this to happen at its own time is a spiritual experience for me, and the more I think about it, the more I realize I can access all of my unknown knowns, just not easily as the information that is at the forefront of my mind. I'm able to find comfort inside of my hyper-awarenes because of this; the anxiety from feeling like I can't unlock my brain's full potential is settling.

Yitong: I 100% agree with the existence of "unknown knowns." Like what I said earlier, making excuses for behavioral change is a form of "unknown knowns"– knowing it is possible to change but pretending unknowing it is possible.

Bhumi: I wonder about the things that we truly don't know that we know, like the moment before someone nearly gets hit by a car and realizes our bodily knowledge has reflexes to stop that.

Norah: Things we know but do not realize that we know.... I think about what it feels like to hold a baby and the wisdom they clearly have when they first come into the world. This also made me think, in a less positive way, about bias, the ways that we "know" the world through our biases, and we often do not even know they are driving us. Or the science on the mind that tells us some tiny percentage of our consciousness is in our aware, rational mind.

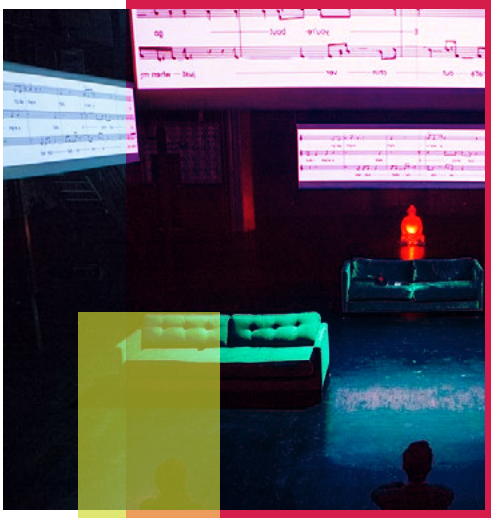
Provocation 3:
What else are you remembering about what Annie Dorsen had to say about the complexity of interactions between humans and machines? What is staying with you now?

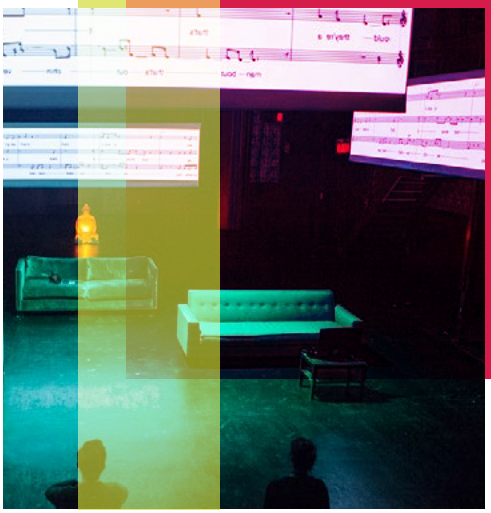
Siera: I feel there is a big love-hate dynamic with the relationship between humans and machines and how they can affect our world. There are many ways technology is evolving, and the more they evolve, the more beneficial it is to help our fast-moving world, but we can't help but notice how technology is moving people out of their jobs and ceasing communication and interactions with humans, which we thrive off of to keep us human. There will always be this teeter of not liking how complicated machines can be and needing to adapt to machine technology because the world as a whole is adapting to it, and there is a need to keep up.

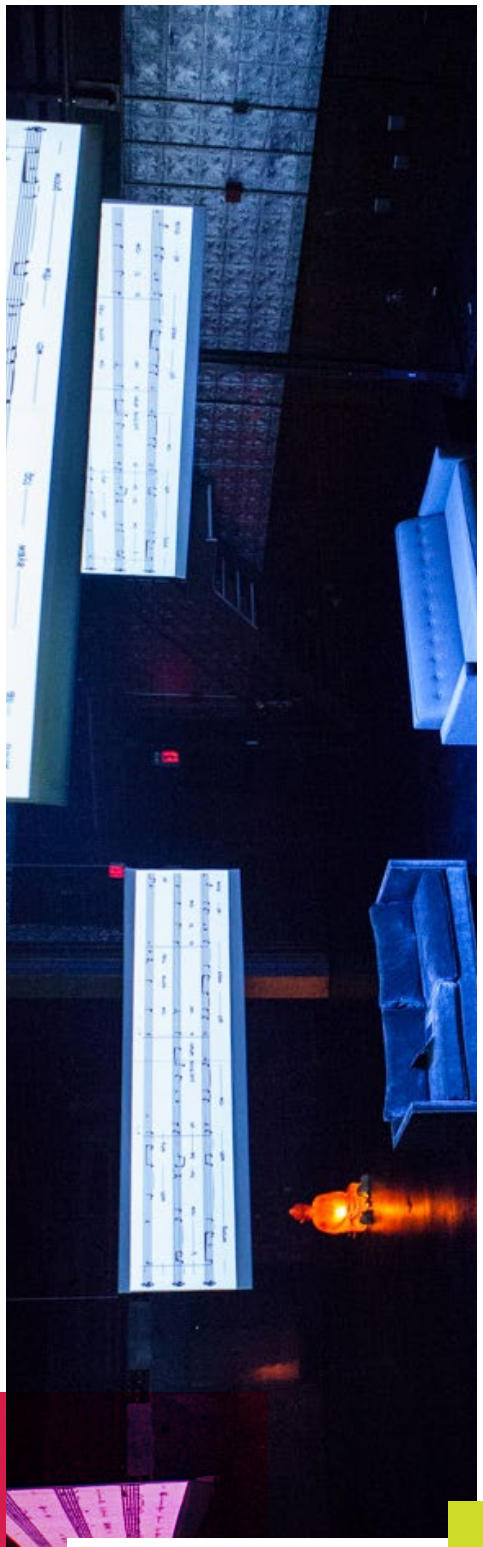
Brittany: A distrustful cynicism toward our human-technology relationship has continued to unsettle me. It's a cynicism certainly not isolated to Dorsen but one that makes me want to trace its root—explicate, even, the flat circle of time. I see the ways machines have augmented, assisted, or liberated, and I don't think that's in any way a failure. I feel radical hope for our kinship with machines, not nihilism, cynicism, or defeat.

Mercedes: I remember an overall sense of wariness being infiltrated by glimmers of hope. As AI/technology/machinery continues to advance, it becomes harder to trust, maybe because many people fear the unknown. Where will all of these advancements lead us, and are they ethical? Annie Dorsen considered a few potential answers throughout her audio and visual presentation, and by doing so, she gave energy to the possibility of technology being used for good. All of this is staying with me at this point in my life; a wariness, a little bit of hope, and the desire to know this particular unknown.

Yitong: To be honest, as a Gen Z who can't leave their phone for one day, I rely on smartphone technology hugely; however, this is an ironic moment. I do think about the possibility of abolishing AI technology several times when I can't sleep at night, especially when knowing how many job positions for working-class people will be replaced by machines and seeing Annie Dorsen introduce the work of Matt Loughrey, where he altered photos of victims of the Khmer Rouge genocide by adding smiling faces to some of them.[2] I actually have several friends who are obsessed with AI artmaking and constantly share those visual artworks "created" by AI with me on social media. These artworks scare me–not because of how fine they are, but how easy they can just alter the work of human artists with or







without consent, and make it something that is entirely different. I can't imagine how dark this would be as we go deeper. Yes, "technology advancement makes our lives better," but whose is "our." I don't dare to say the answer. I think this is one of the "known knowns," which I pretend are "unknown knowns."

Norah: I am remembering more from the aftertalk than the performance itself, although I loved the rush of words and the poetic register of her provocations even as she was talking about specific discernable topics in Artificial Intelligence. I relate to her sensation as someone who has also been watching machine learning and AI for a long time, that it suddenly sped up and became widespread to the point of it being dinner table conversation in the past few months. She's an artist who is training to become a lawyer because she's concerned about what's going on in terms of privacy and social justice. That was impressive to me. And she's afraid. Many people are afraid, deeply concerned, sounding the alarm, and a few are delighted. I'm not sure what to do. It feels a little like other issues at hand in our lives, including the climate crisis, increasingly rapid dangerous shifts that leave me paralyzed if I give in to the desire to turn away from my fears. But I have learned in my climate justice work to turn toward what frightens me and feel my way into intention and action, trusting the fractal nature of change.

Bhumi: I think I will continue to wonder about the relationship between fear and hope and how they fuel and inform one another.

Coda, from **Bhumi**

Part of my interest in this conversation is teasing out futurism from the progress-oriented narrative that is pushed upon us by neoliberal capitalism. I think that each of these respondents are speaking to imagined futures that are less about progress in the capitalist sense and more about humanity. There's also something beautiful and hopeful threading through these dialogues. Yes, we can feel fear. Yes, we can feel worry. But nevertheless, there remains a sense of hope.

I became interested in this idea of futurism through the movement of the Italian Futurists in the early 20th century and their distrust of anything of that past in favor of what would come in the future. I started to look at what was beyond the whiteness of Italian Futurism and see if and how contemporary movements of futurism differed from what came before. Contemporary movements like Afrofuturism and Chicanafuturism are strikingly different because instead of forsaking the past, they embrace it. With a focus on their lineages and how these lineages influence their critical imaginations of the future, these movements become more inclusive to communities who are often left out of the narrative and occupy the Global South.

I started thinking about all of this from the seed of Afrofuturism. Kathy Brown tells us that Afrofuturism is about "forward thinking as well as backward thinking, while having a distressing past, a distressing present, but still looking forward to thriving in the future."[3] This simultaneous nature of forward and backward goes precisely against the aggressively future-oriented narrative that has dominated the technological discourse.

Similarly, regarding Chicanafuturism, Catherine Sue Ramírez writes:

Using the tropes of speculative fiction (an umbrella term that includes science fiction, fantasy, magical realism, and horror), Chicanafuturist works excavate and retell histories of contact, colonialism, displacement, labor, migration, resistance, and social and cultural transformation in the Americas. Chicanafuturism defamiliarizes the familiar, thereby calling attention to that which tends to be taken for granted, such as tradition and the norm. And Chicanafuturism reckons with the past as it rethinks the present and envisions the future of the "New World."[4]

So what is the future? What is futurism? And how does technology play a major role in all of it? Linear ideas of time are not the only ones available to us. It is common in Indigenous cosmologies globally to take on a cyclical temporal worldview, one where the past is both past and before us and can show us that all events are connected, recurring, continuous, and fluid. And as far as technology goes, I think we've been relying on different forms of technology since the beginning of humanity. Fire is a technology, the wheel is a technology, a calendar is a technology, just the same as the smartphones in our hands are considered a technology in the computer-driven Information Age. Perhaps we can take that with us into the future to (re)imagine worlds otherwise.

07 Bio-mythographic Ecojustice

Photo by: Ryan Muir
Orlando Hunter, Jr and Ricarrdo Valentine

Afro/Solo/Man: Orlando Zane Hunter Jr., Ricarrdo Valentine, Nadine George-Graves, and Jibri Acid Blues St.Vil

Thu-Sat, Feb 16-18, 8:00 PM
Wexner Center for the Arts, Performance Space

Artist's remarks from bhooddance.com:

A multi-disciplinary mediation exploring the identities of individual Black men relating to provocative themes like origins, nourishment, heritage, nature, sexuality and technology in the 21st century. It is a bio-mythography that uses multi-media, dance and storytelling to engage the audience in the personal journeys of two men who questions and investigates the memory, life, death and connection to their ancestors. This work lies at the nexus of environmental justice, the degradation of the Black family identity, and the government's role in agricultural and media production. Ultimately, the omnipresence of the men's mothers slip through time and space in unexpected ways, guiding the men in very different directions. These are not stories of Black men that we think we know. We challenge assumptions, provoke rethinking and are unafraid to take on all of our demons around race, gender, sexuality and "brotherhood".

Synthesized by Mercedes Hicks and Brittany Halley

Though our Livable Futures community experienced several performances, artist talks, and installations over the course of our semester, Brother(hood) Dance!'s *Afro/Solo/Man* was one of our more pivotal events.

Orlando Hunter, Jr. and Ricarrdo Valentine's self-described biomythographic performance explores environmental and sociopolitical injustices through multimodal, interdisciplinary dance. Like many of Brother(hood) Dance!'s past performance projects, *Afro/Solo/Man* engages with their collective interest in "how life extends beyond its own subjective limits and often tells a story about the effects of global cultural interaction" and in "challeng[ing] the binaries we continually reconstruct between Self and Other."[1] Themes of forgiveness, memory, communal healing, environmental destruction, and persistent dehumanization are interlaced throughout this performance.

As you'll see below, *Afro/Solo/Man* asks us to consider what a livable future could and should mean for everyone — what our futures might look like with community-as-resistance, with food security, lived and living memory, and an unviolated connection to our ancestors. Too, Hunter and Valentine's performance exposes several sources for much of today's unlivability: racism, structural violences that affect agriculture, media production and consumption and, as their performance site states, "the degradation of the Black family identity."

Not only did we all experience Brother(hood) Dance!'s live performance, but a handful of our Livable Futures community members also attended their dress rehearsal and/or post-performance talk with the cast and dramaturgical collaborators. Below you'll find interwoven reflections — both within our individual passages as well as between them — on all three of these nourishing opportunities.

Food, Love, Forgiveness

Mercedes – Whether it was through a movement exploration or analytical essay, everyone within this particular Livable Futures course/community thought critically about the themes of food, love, and forgiveness, and allowed these to be a driving force for their reflection processes.

Walking into the performance space for *Afro/Solo/Man* and smelling the cornbread and collard greens brought me back to some of my fondest memories; including the ones that were created for me by my ancestors. To some people these are just normal everyday foods, but to me and other black folks they hold cultural significance. These foods were cultivated by our ancestors and passed down for generations so that we can remember them. It was the perfect prelude to such an eclectic, thought provoking piece. The idea of cultivation in relation to agriculture seemed to be the central theme that held everything together. Almost like a home base or return point.

I think when most people think of agriculture they think of white people. This further sparks my interest in memories, specifically who remembers what and why. As the piece developed I was able to experience the interweaving of the Black experience and how Black/African American/African cultures have their roots in agriculture. For instance, some of the dances that survived the transatlantic slave trade are about harvesting and cultivating abundance. These dances evolved into styles such as house and hip hop and although they are different they are still in the same conversation as the original (one of the basic steps of house is called the farmer, which resembles the Ekonkon step. The Ekonkon dance is about harvesting and celebration).

Photo by: Ryan Muir

One of my favorite elements of the piece was the use of repetition. Whether it was a gesture, a phrase, or a sequence of events it was really exciting to watch. It also reminded me of the fact that history repeats itself. Black American history especially has been repeating itself, unfortunately in some of the most gruesome ways. When Orlando asked the audience if we remembered a specific case of police brutality I thought to myself, "There have been so many in the last decade I genuinely can't remember them all." I'm still sitting with this thought and I wonder what it would be like to sort through it in class as a part of the work/research we do.

Another element of the piece I enjoyed was the calling out of big food corporations. It's so easy to ignore the harm that they cause because they've become a part of mainstream American culture. America has fallen into the cycle of noticing something is bad, sweeping it under the rug, and eventually normalizing whatever the bad thing is. We know that the fast food industry exploits farmers, but we've ignored that and now we've taken it a step further by blaming the farmers for pursuing this line of work. The effects of this are amplified for Black farmers due to racism, and it is rarely talked about. I'm also excited about the way Orlando and Ricarrdo are participating in Black land sovereignty movements and local community gardens as artists and members of their community. *Afro/Solo/Man* shines light on this injustice and I would like to continue this work in our class.

Heather – After an hour and two costume changes, Orlando Hunter speaks of collard greens. Thus far, we had witnessed life and death, watched as Hunter eulogized Valentine, scattered dried corn over his closed eyes and mouth. Hunter had spun through dirt, reciting a monologue about the killing of children born to enslaved people while on his back on the ground... Then, Hunter told a story about cornbread and collard greens, love and forgiveness.

Photo by: Ryan Muir

Julie – The fast food dream sequence that Orlando dances to and speaks in rapid succession is a series of popular advertisements for fast food like Kit Kat, Klondike Bars, Subway, Burger King, Mcdonalds, etc. As an audience member you find yourself both horrified and mesmerized by how you can easily identify so many of the advertisements. In hindsight, these advertisements are hammered into our brains mercilessly through the billions of dollars spent to make sure that we hold these brands in our minds unconsciously. I found myself reminiscing on the good food that I had right before I walked into the show and how good food prepared by people who know you, love you, is life itself.

Siera – We have been flooded with consuming culture that we often look past where the food is coming from and how it affects our lives. Again, we talk about livable futures and an important part of livable futures is sustainable living and being able to feed ourselves and our families the proper way. Long ago we were growing our foods and eating fresh and being moved out of our lands and culture we lost that to accommodate for the unstable world we live in today.

Tal – The piece closes with a farming scene as the duo rakes the land and one of them mutters the same phrase he'd opened the piece with: "the dead just don't stop chatting!" As bookends to the performance, this phrase highlights that while ancestral stories are imbued with the pain expressed in what I'll call act one, they also serve as the driving force behind the resurgence, resistance, and joy showcased in act two. In this way, Afro/Solo/Man takes the audience through a process of grieving, which generates possibilities for flourishing in the troubled present. It does not linger all too long in what Anne Anlin Cheng calls the "melancholy of race,"[2] a fetishization of pain that forecloses brighter futures.

Photos by: Ryan Muir

Vivian – 'I'm workin' all day, I'm workin' all night, I'm workin' all day, so my family can eat.' This song, which was sung several times in canon, literally mentions providing food to be eaten, but it can be interpreted to mean much more. To me, this came across as an artistic expression of the Black man's burden. It is apparent that as Black men, Orlando and Ricarrdo feel that their work is never done, especially in a society such as ours that devalues their existence because of white supremacy culture. No matter the effort they put in, they alone cannot change society, and white people, like me, are called to action to do the work. As we have discussed in class through conversation and workshops, antiracist work is active work that requires engagement and participation. This show from Brother(hood) Dance! was an incredibly moving call for white people to do the work because they (as Black men) are sick and tired of seeing the consequences of racism play out on their community. The community that is part of their selves. And the burden no longer needs to be on their shoulders.

Yitong – The journey carries the audiences to walk along the path as Ricarrdo and Orlando collectively and individually narrate, sharing their joys and struggles as queer men, getting a window into their relationship, their experience of systematic oppression, family bonds, and agriculture as Black people. The spectrum of these multi-layered connections embedded in their kinesthetic storytelling include the sound of historical events, the kitchen of a Black mother and her recipe, the physical labor of growing and taking care of crops and the soil, tracing back their ancestors and cultural lineages, etc.

Knowing the performers' personal experience and their activist practice with Black communities and outside to other BIPOC queer communities, it is heart-warming and reciprocal to see them narrating their real-life experiences on stage. I personally received a strong sense of them passing along the responsibility and mission to take care of our earth, the soil, the plants, the labor from farmers, which they value deeply. The journey reveals the idea of environmental justice focusing on the labor of Black agriculture communities to audiences which speaks a powerful counterpoint to the mainstream ideology.




Challenging Binaries

Brittany – We chose to anchor this section around the theme Challenging Binaries not only because of its centrality to Brother(hood) Dance!'s work but because this theme had emerged both implicitly and explicitly within each of our reflections. We each push back, in one form or another, against those artificially-imposed divisions within our Self as well as those "between Self and [human, natural, technological] Other."[3]

As Brother(hood) Dance!'s performance, *Afro/Solo/Man*, approaches a narrative close, the Wexner's stage lighting fades onto Ricarrdo Valentine's body. He asks—grieves—to his audience, "What part of me is me?" Too, he answers, beats of pause between "All of me is me." This auto-call-and-response is a culmination, not just of his and Orlando Hunter, Jr.'s interdisciplinary dance, but of the material politics of racialized violence informing their biomythography—a term borrowed in kinship from Black queer feminist, Audre Lorde, reflecting the mythic, folkloric, and auto/biographic aspects woven into and throughout their performance.[4]

The question, What part of me is me?, isn't merely rhetorical. Audience members, like myself, those with the immense privilege of not bearing racialized violence on a daily basis, have been primed by the duo out of passively experiencing the socio-political and environmental critiques before us. Those who know the violences all too well are urged by this question to go beyond empathy, identification, or self reflection. The question serves, almost, as a call to communal healing—a call, too, to both individual and systemic reclamation of one's humanity.

Photo by: Ryan Muir

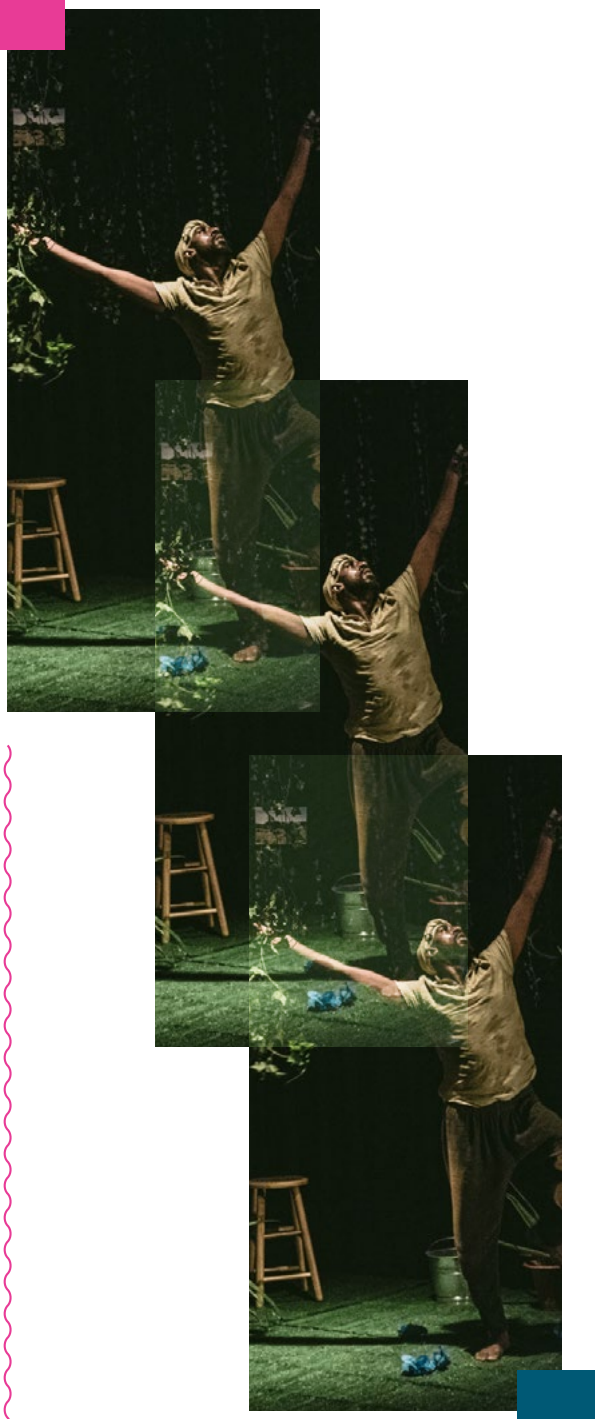


Photo by: Ryan Muir

The production crew offers homemade cornbread before the start of their show; Hunter cries out to members of the audience to throw back baby doll parts after one of many emotionally-demanding sequences; Valentine and Hunter both verbally and physically interact with us, their audience. In these moments, we engage in a co-constitutive process with them and each other. When asked, then, "What part of me is me?" we are meant to consider the question genuinely, if not communally as well. Indeed,

what part of me is me? — what part of him is he? — what part of we is we?

Within Valentine and Hunter's affective, audio/visual critiques, I see Black feminist scholar Louis Maraj's notion of para/ontology—a simultaneous state of being, un-/nonbeing, and "what flows and moves in between and across these two."[5] That is to say, Hunter and Valentine make hyper-visible the material reality of Blackness, queerness, and Black queerness that forces humans into a para/ontological state. Or, borrowing from another Black feminist, Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, identity and humanness become defined by ontological plasticity, wherein "the fleshy being of blackness is experimented with as if it were infinitely malleable lexical and biological matter, such that blackness is produced as sub/super/human at once, a form where form shall not hold: potentially 'everything and nothing' at the register of ontology."[6]

If we juxtapose, for example, the tone, content, and form of Hunter and Valentine's "Alligator Bait Babies" sequence with the stereotypically-sexualized Burger King commercial, we see the para/ontology of Black/and/queer bodies under white dominance. We see,

also, the (inherently dehumanizing) commodification. In the first of these sequences, Hunter and Valentine show us the paraontological Black body—a body so dehumanized and commodified, so pushed outside the bounds of "being," that it is relegated to a less-valuable-subhumanness than the sellable skin of an alligator. While simultaneously, through the Burger King television commercial sequence, Blackness is positioned (again, solely for the sake of commodifying it) as superhuman (i.e., hyper-sexualized and sexually dominant within the bounds of patriarchal heteronormativity). In both cases, the Black/and/queer body does not get to make its own meaning, but rather, is told how to mean. And in both cases, that meaning is rhetorically positioned dependent upon how it can (usually commercially) benefit a white audience.

Valentine and Hunter push back against this being-and-unbeing, binary thinking, however. Like their past performances, the duo "challenges the binaries we continually reconstruct between Self and Other, between our own 'cannibal' and 'civilized' selves."[7] Thus, we can see how Valentine and Hunter's physical and abstract/ed movement across these two states—between the ontological and paraontological, between being and un-/nonbeing—is the para/ontological Maraj describes. The affective dancing connecting such sequences as "Alligator Bait Babies" and the sexual/-ized Burger King commercial exemplify para/ontology. Too, they permeate unrestrained humanness. The identities explored in Valentine and Hunter's movements are, if not self- and socially-defined and defining, then, in the process of reclamation. Their movements also show us, the audience, how our identities and our relationships – connections – kinship! – can begin to no longer be marked by externally-imposed division/s.

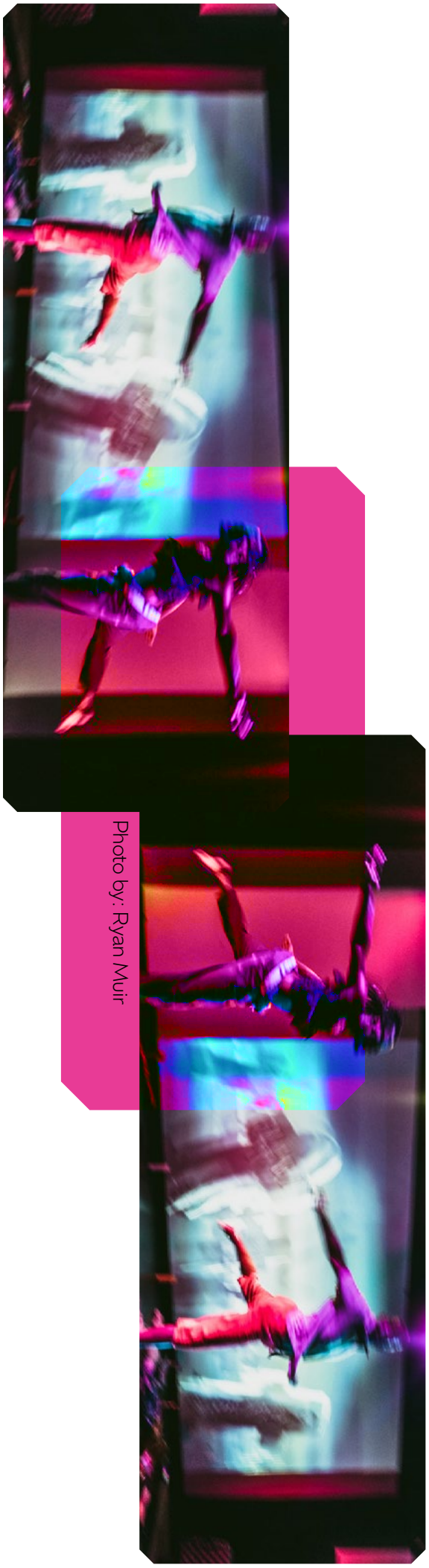


Photo by: Ryan Muir

When Valentine asks, "What part of me is me," and answers, "All of me is me," he subsequently also connects his call-and-response to his humanity. In turn, reaffirming individual humanness in this way opens space for collective re/affirmation. Those multiply marginalized at the intersection of Blackness and queerness are given room to make meaning out of the ontological, paraontological, and para/ontological through and with this biomythography. Those outside such intersections are shown, maybe even reminded, of the exigency in affirming an/other's humanity. Or, in other words, *Afro/Solo/Man* provides opportunity for audience members to re/claim their own humanity and re/affirm the innate humannes of all others.

Afro/Solo/Man, too, offers up a vision of identity that is inextricable from our classed, gendered, and racialized intersections. Styles of dance blend with and as multimodal sequences render centuries of racialized violence hyper-visible. We are thus forced to consider: What does it mean to be Black and/or queer under a white supremacist nation controlled by white supremacist (and neoliberal) ideology? How do Black and/or queer bodies navigate an antiBlack, antiqueer, and (especially) antiBlack-and-queer world? How do white audience members produce and perpetuate this dehumanization? And—not to obfuscate the larger, systemic scope of racialized violence in place of individual actors—how do those not viewing the performance who we are in, either and both, willing or unwilling kinship with also produce and perpetuate dehumanization, as well? How do the people who are, have been, and almost certainly will be dehumanized reclaim ontological selfhood? Forgive? Heal? How do we all coalesce in kinship to create, instead, a racially equitable present? *Afro/Solo/Man* helps us see that, equally as important to identifying and challenging sources of racialized violence, we must also celebrate our histories, identities, humanity, and kinship in order for us to cultivate livable futures.

Siera – A lot of the conversations we have in class are about how we can make a better future to live in and the most important part of knowing how to get to the future we must know where we come from and shift how we do things in the present. This work displayed how, as sung at the end, they were digging for their roots to understand where they come from and how it affects the life they live now. In order to move forward we must learn from the past so we can undo what has or undo what hasn't been done.

Heather – Throughout *Afro/Solo/Man*, Brother(hood) Dance! delights in creating and

collapsing boundaries—the set itself seems to contain two imaginaries, the grasses of Jamaica and a psycho-domestic sphere with frame, television, and table. Between the two spaces, Valentine poured piles of dirt, which Hunter blended together across body and face. It's in the title: the slashes that separate and clarify, holding meaning apart while inviting new interpretation in. This performance is not a solo. Even the parts that appear performed by one person contain the memories and legacies of so many others, ancestors past, present, and future.

Katie O – As the show went on, I began to think about the Cuban Deities and how some Cuban rituals draw people into trance, causing them to move and respond to the spirit and the drumming through continuous movement. Those rituals are spiritual, generational, and personal moments, bringing past, present, and future into one breath. The performance held aspects of that sacredness, drawing its audience in with warmth and with storytelling while simultaneously broaching the racist, harm inducing afflictions that generations of black and brown bodies have had to, and continue to, endure.

Catalina – *Afro/Solo/Man* reminded me of many of the stories and anecdotes of my friends about Colombian Pacific culture. The city where I grew up is close to one of the country's main ports, with much violence and social problems. As a result, there is a large migration of families. I had the privilege of knowing, living, learning, and listening to the traditions and history of Colombian Pacific culture. These interactions and opportunities change a life and the perception of things. The performance manages to do something similar, allowing you to get out of the bubble and understand/learn a little about the suffering of others. I respect and admire them because they have overcome indescribable things (stories full of pain) and still have incredible human warmth.

Julie – One moment that felt unforgettable was the dance that Orlando does incorporating the use of sand and soils. During that dance, a white powder that he uses to signify cocaine is thrown onto his entire face and he continues to dance with erratic movement. At the end of the show, during the talkback with the dancers and the dramaturg, I found out that there was a personal connection to that moment with his father. I could understand then why that scene stood out so much and felt very powerful, I didn't even realize there were tears streaming down my face.

Photo by: Ryan Muir

A Life of Abundance

How does *Afro/Solo/Man* help us conceive of livable futures? What does the performance tell us about how we can work toward those futures? We end this guided reflection on the generous time Brother(hood) Dance! spent with and in our community by offering some mantras for livability—mantras that emerged out our engaging with Brother(hood) Dance!'s work. We end, too, with an invitation to reflect on all that you read here and create your own mantra(s). What does it mean to cultivate a livable future around food, love, and forgiveness? How does our rejecting binaries help us to grow "a life of abundance," to borrow a phrase from the performance's dramaturg, Nadine George Graves?[8]

A livable future is one where our bodies, our lives, our identities, our histories, and our presents/presence are not commodified.

A livable future has no room for food insecurity, unsafe drinking water, polluted air that clings to the landscape and flows— as (not just) a carcinogen! — in and out of our lungs.

A livable future is a place where we can coalesce around safe, nourishing, and ethically-sourced meals, especially in times of love and forgiveness.

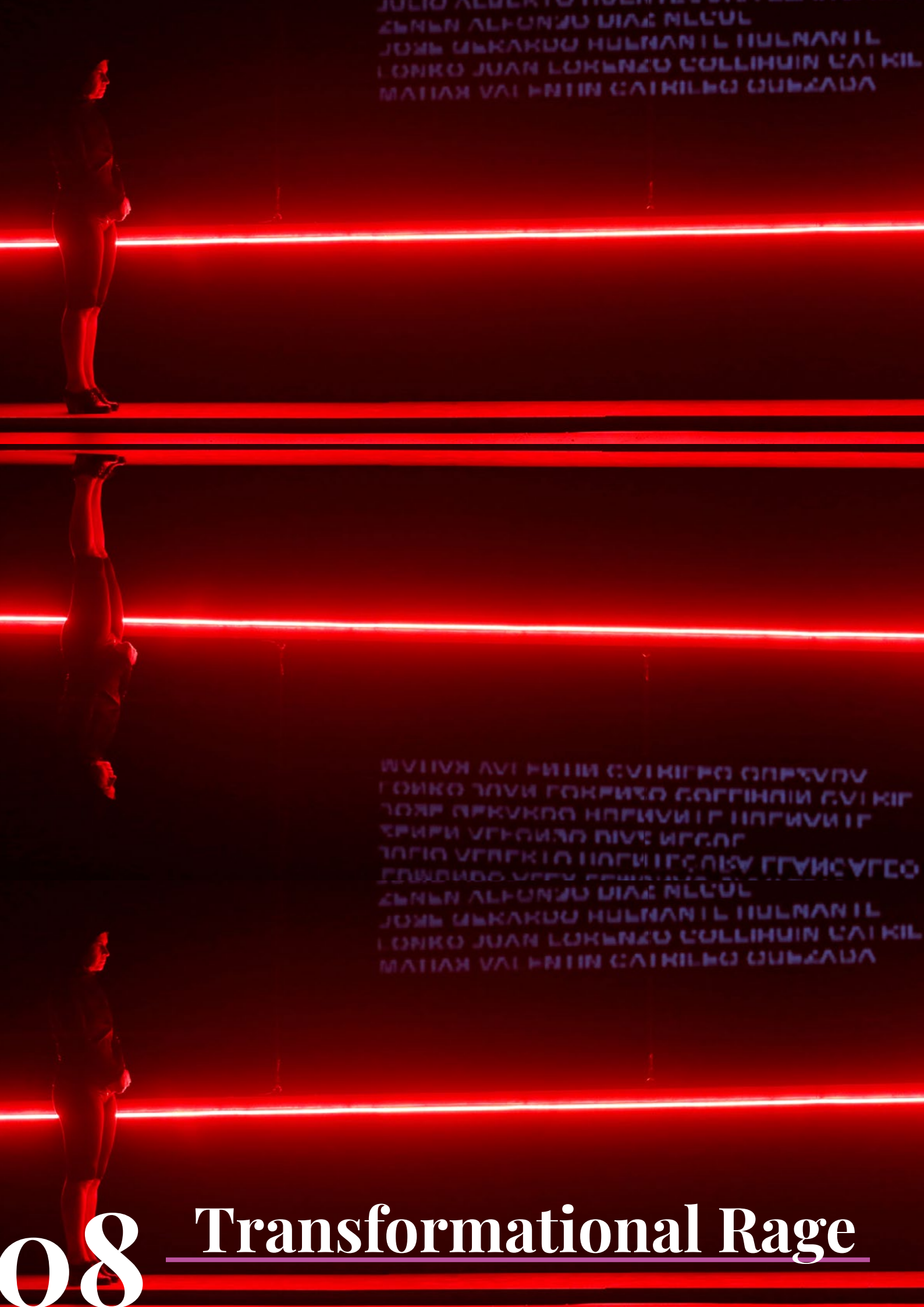
A livable future is BIPOC led but requires the labor of white people.

A livable future is a way of living that honors those before us; those who made livability a reality.

A livable future is multivocal and includes many stories.

A livable future is built with kinship.

Photo by: Ryan Muir



08 Transformational Rage

Love to Death (Amor a la muerte): Lemi Ponifasio, Elisa Avendaño Curaqueo, and Natalia García-Huidobro

Thu–Sat, March 23–25, 8:00 PM
Wexner Center for the Arts, Mershon Auditorium

Curator's remarks wexarts.org:

Witness this powerful collaboration that explores the reality of the Indigenous Mapuche people and the relationship between humans and nature.

In this interdisciplinary work from Samoan director and choreographer Lemi Ponifasio, strands of Chile's history come together through the performances of two Chilean women pursuing a more just and equal future for the Indigenous Mapuche people. Mapuche singer-songwriter and activist Elisa Avendaño Curaqueo and contemporary flamenco dancer Natalia García-Huidobro unite onstage in a ceremony that touches on questions of identity and destiny. The work was sparked, in part, by national protests after the murder of young Mapuche man Camilo Catrillanca at the hands of police in 2018.

Interpretation and Invocation and Syntheis by Bhumi Patel

Interdisciplinary collaboration reveals the material realities of the Mapuche Indigenous people in Chile. Movement, light, sound, and image combine to articulate the anger, pain, grief, and transcendent possibilities of the relationship between humans and place.

To be startled is to be awakened.
To be decolonial is to be connected.
To be ourselves is to be dimensional.
To be an artist is to construct space/worlds beyond imagination

– Bhumi Patel, 'tension and wonder'

The performance opened with a sound—a bang, a clang, maybe like the shutting of a door—so loud and so sudden that I jumped, and then I laughed. The house lights came down all at once, and a bright stripe of light appeared at the base of the stage. Around us, clattering beats seemed to pump through the air like smoke rising. Already, we were immersed in a world of Lemi Ponifasio's making—a space that seemed at once outside the self and yet infiltrated the mind. The soundscape had a binaural impact, the beats moved around us. Sitting in the dark, confronted by an overwhelming of sounds and a single bright light, I had the sense that some kind of trick was being played. It took minutes to adjust: so brutally aware of the functioning of my eyes and ears, I barely noticed as a tree was softly illuminated on stage.

– **Heather McCabe, 'Description'**

Each of us—Heather and Katie, Bhumi, myself, and Catalina—we began this written collaboration, our different yet interwoven sections, by reflecting on the jolting sound Lemi opened the performance with. How we all felt, in some sense or another, an incoming bang to follow the second and first that seemingly never came.

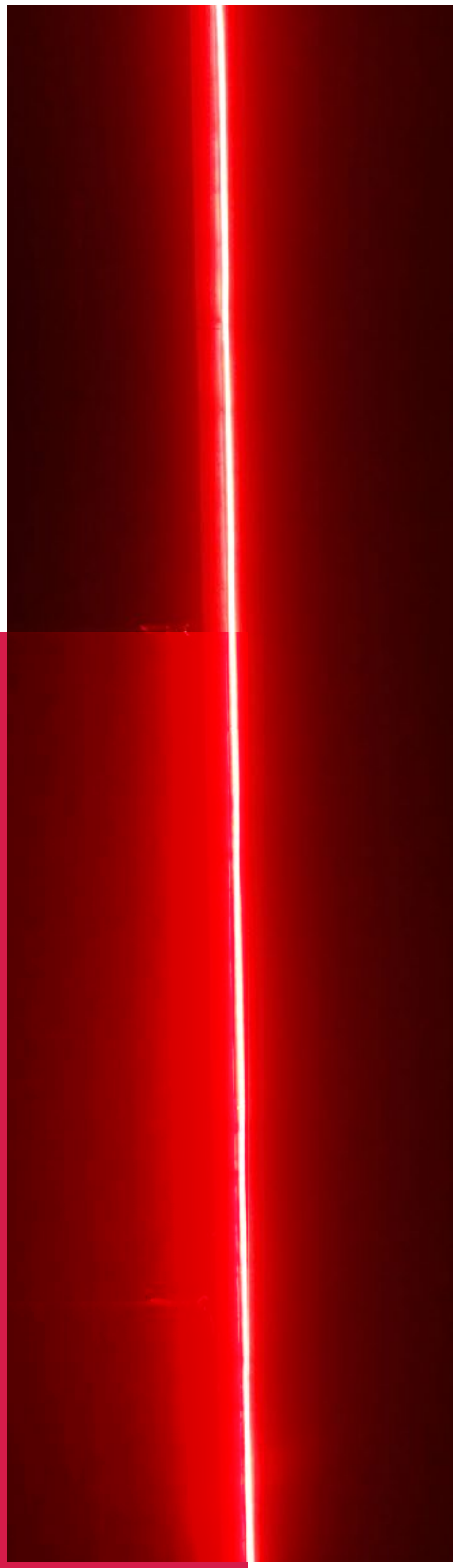
– **Brittany Halley, 'Conclusion'**

What are trees if not living, breathing bodies? We know that trees talk to one another, that they create communities, that they bear much of the burden of humanity continuing on despite our horrifying efforts to wipe ourselves out. After the first performance, I knew that I had to see it again. I knew there was so much more for me to take in.

Uncertainty is the way of being in the world.

– **Bhumi Patel**

What is a proper burial?



But it happened. It's happening. Every moment of racialized violence, violences that include State-sanctioned killings, of an ongoing refusal to affirm Mapuche peoples their basic human rights.

Europeans removed indigenous tribes – nations – families from their cultivated ecosystems through gunpowder and force. The canalized fields and swiddens, slashed and burnt with great care, respect, were separated from the kin who had loved and protected them. Honored them. Lived in reciprocal relationship with them.

This was the first bang. The fear, disorientation, the startlement of Lemi's opening re/awakens us to these histories. Indigenous communities, like the Mapuche tribes near the Aconcagua Valley or those of Puelmapu, though displaced, adopted new kin. Re/affirmed their relationship with the natural world. But soon, they were again re/moved, this time through (not just) treaties and bad faith negotiations.

This was the second bang. A series of physical, legislative, and environmental violations left displaced communities in affective states incapable of ever being fully captured or communicated in performative space.

– **Brittany Halley**

Elisa Avendaño Curaqueo stepped forward singing. Her voice filled the room, trilling up and down, up and down, a progression that repeated itself in permeating tones. At the base of the stage, a triangle was illuminated between singer and tree, bringing to mind a mountain. Already, the stage seemed demarcated into territories.

Barely more than an hour, the performance felt timeless, like we were brought into a bardo between here and there, a place of mourning and defiance, of judgment and death.

– **Heather McCabe**

In my own viewing of this performance, I see a tension between the materiality of the body and the power of the abstract. Perhaps I am thinking about that as the materiality of plant life and human life in tension with the power of the flag as an abstraction of nation, state, or even violence. Because this tension is so deeply grounded in historical events, when does it matter if people know the history as part of the poetry or healing or activism of an artwork?

– **Bhumi Patel**

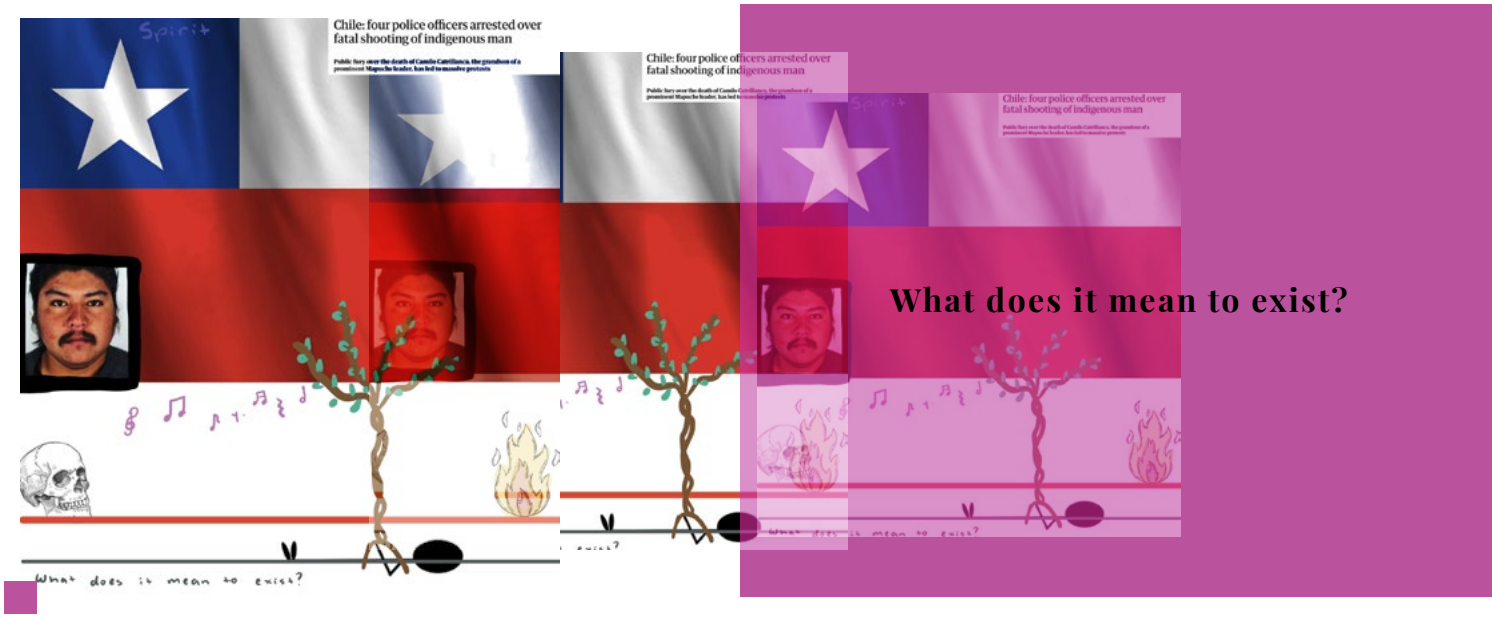
Another bang or clang, strips of red lights zoomed up and down. We in the audience gasped or jumped. Natalia García-Huidobro walked on behind the red lights, lower body revealed first. She wore all black and bent forward at the waist, focusing all attention at her rapidly moving feet. Down the stage and back, we watched as she shifted her body, the sounds of her shoes clattered loudly through the auditorium. Her performance was punctuated by moments of repetition and progression, pauses that allowed her to tap in place, heels lifting and falling faster than the eye could catch.

– **Heather McCabe**

It's been a month since Natalia, through the movements of a flamenco that transcends contemporary flamenco, stripped bare her rage—since Elisa filled her lungs with remembrance for Camilo Catrillanca and tinged the stage in sonic grief. It has been a month since their performance, and in that time, the Argentinian government has continued to detain four Mapuche women and their children to unlawful house arrest; distribution of Bariloche land to Mapuche communities has been suspended, likely halted in perpetuity by government officials; the Mendoza Chamber of Deputies have openly and legally denied any Mapuche their indigeneity—their deep kinship with the land, their collective memory, their futures.

– **Brittany Halley**

Do the histories of injustice, inequity, violence, erasure, and pain need to be legible to audiences? What do we risk losing? What could



we imagine gaining?

– **Bhumi Patel**

The dancer disrobed, something harsh under the red lights. From my vantage point, I was unsure of her presence—all at once she seemed like a trick of the light, her skin gaining metallic opacity and reflection. She walked naked to the triangle, revealed to be a pile of dirt. Setting her left hand into the side of the mountain, Natalia pushed down, lowering herself to the stage. Her hips settled onto the dirt and the peak of the mountain ate into her waist.

– **Heather McCabe**

Earlier in the talk [with Lemi, Elisa, Natalia, and OSU community] Natalia had asked how much a US audience knows about the Chilean dictatorship and the role that the US government played in it. There were a few nods in the room, my own included, but not many. There is so much history that is shrouded, hidden, obscured for the sake of maintaining the empire. It fills me with grief beyond my own comprehension that we don't know. This is not the fault of the individual of course, but it is an erasure of US global imperialism that fuels this imperialist machine and shrouds truths from those of us inside of it.

– **Bhumi Patel**

Singing once again, Elisa stood with both feet on the bundle that had been the flag and was now something else.

Elisa settled the tree over Natalia's body, still lying naked at the right of the stage. We watched as the light began to fade again, and Elisa's face became nearly indistinguishable against the backdrop. The light faded and silence lingered, inviting us into a vacuum of knowledge and memory.

– **Heather McCabe**

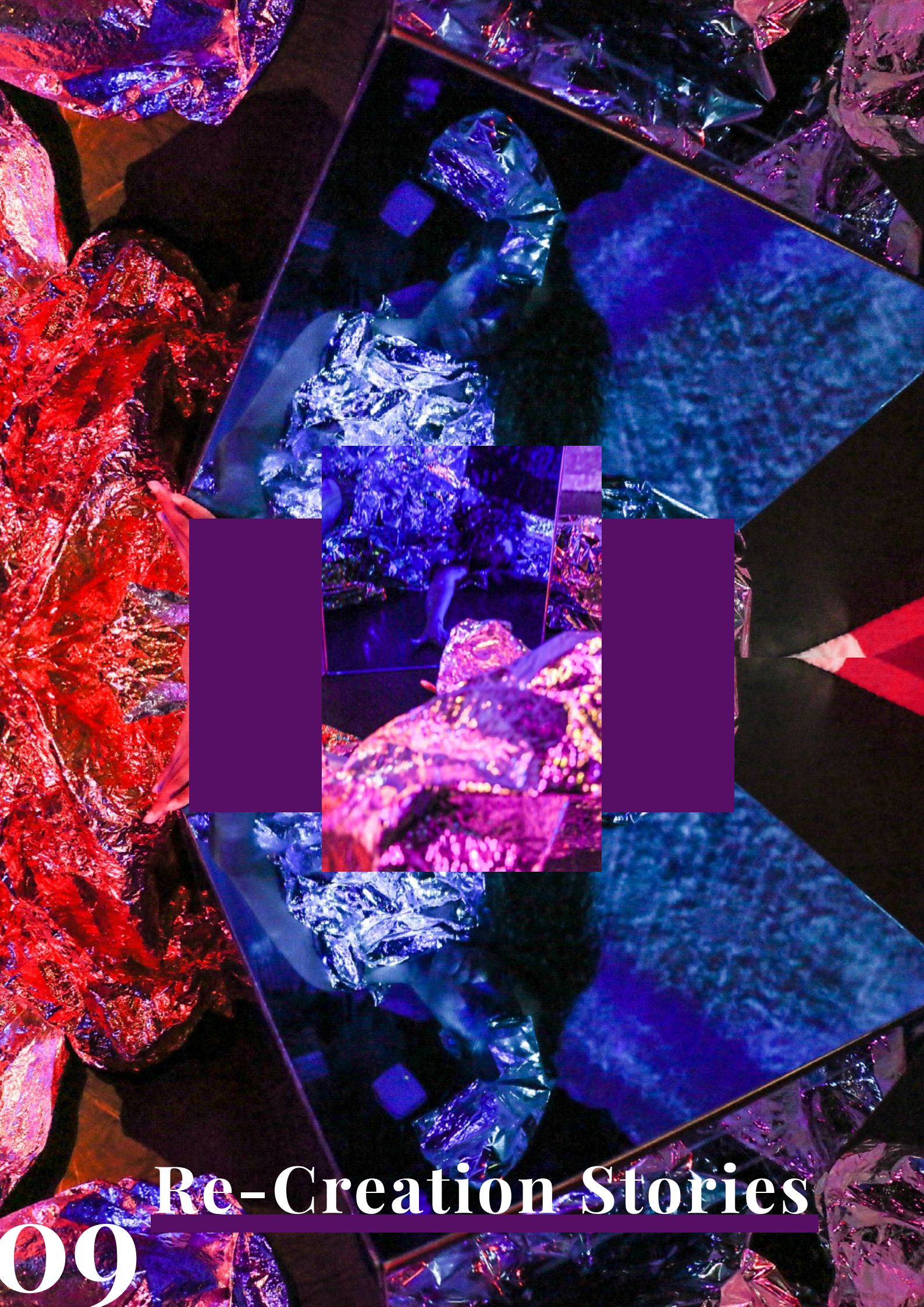
Indigenous communities, like the Mapuche tribes near the Aconcagua Valley or those of Puelmapu, though displaced, adopted new kin. Re/affirmed their relationship with the natural world. But soon, they were again re/moved.

– **Brittany Halley**

I'll leave you with two comments from Lemi Ponifasio in the artist talk that continue to resonate with me:

Our relations make us who we are.
Your body is the map of your genealogy.

I wanted to say more about the tree but all I can think about is the last time I stood barefoot beneath a redwood tree and listened deeply to my senses with awe and wonder at my own insignificance.



Re-Creation Stories

09

Photo Essay by Siera Dance with Katie O'Loughlin

Katie: About the Photo-Essay Project

This photoshoot emerged from the class Livable Futures and the ideas and inspiration I found in this community. In this course, some of the workshops helped us sift through vocabulary and language that felt relevant in describing what the term livable means, and what the term future means, to us personally and communally.

During these workshops, Siera Dance, an awesome undergraduate student in the class, developed a collection of themes that she felt condensed the web of her ideas around livable futures. These four themes are:

Creation, Death, Nature, and Future

She presented her ideas of these themes to the class with her idea of making them into a collection of images where each theme was represented through costuming, materials, projections, and movement. I entered into this project by offering to be the photographer for these images and supporting Siera in cultivating her vision for the shoot.

The images were taken in the Motion Lab (a facility that Norah co-founded in 2005 that allows for easy intermedia research and play) with the production support of Lexi Clark-Stilianos who is the Production Manager. We worked with five movers and models who each worked with us to embody the different elements of interest to Siera:

Mercedes Hicks (Nature)
Yitong Chen (Death)
Naiya Sayavong (Future)
Srinija Adibhatla (Creation)
Siera Dance (Creation)

Siera: On Co-Creating Death, Nature, and Futures

The inspirations for the photoshoot are concepts of creation, nature, death, future and how we connect to these representations of the concepts as humans.

In Livable Futures we often talk about the conditions of the world we live in today and what is livable for us. What does a livable future mean to us as individuals? In order to know what future we want we look at our past and where we are today. We are the product of tragic histories. We are witnessing the world crumble beneath us as we fight every day for our rights to live in this world.

I had the opportunity to hold space for my creative mind to roam for these photos and being creatively free in my approach to exploring livable futures. Behind these beautifully captured images (thank you Katie) is the struggle and creative and critical thinking we did together in this class underlining problems related to us such as colonialism, social injustice issues, constant reset on our environment, evolving technology, and much more in-between.

Creation

What is creation? In a discussion post during class, my classmate Vivian wrote about creation stories in response to Patty Krawec's critiques and it inspired me to question my own relationship to this word. The answers vary and for some the answer starts in Genesis, the big bang, origin stories, or even evolution. For me it is the literal definition that I resonate with and that is, the action or process of bringing something into existence. Here I am in this world today not only as a Black woman but also a mother. The problem we face is control over our own bodies and how we get to bring life into this world, creation. We face the threat we've been facing for many decades now and that is to be equal and have complete control over our life choices.

The second concept is nature. We have identified watersheds in our communities, discovered foraging plants to nourish our bodies, and even talked about how we love our plants and relate to them. With all the natural beauty in our world, we also face many problems in this category. As Brother(hood) Dance! showed us, we have developed destructive eating habits and lost access to healthy food and with growing our own resources. Nature can be represented as the natural world, physical world, and even our mental worlds or our human nature.

The third concept is death and there was a lot to take in here. We could talk about the obvious things, like how settlers took Indigenous lands and killed people for their own selfish reasons, slavery, segregation, police shootings or even the con-

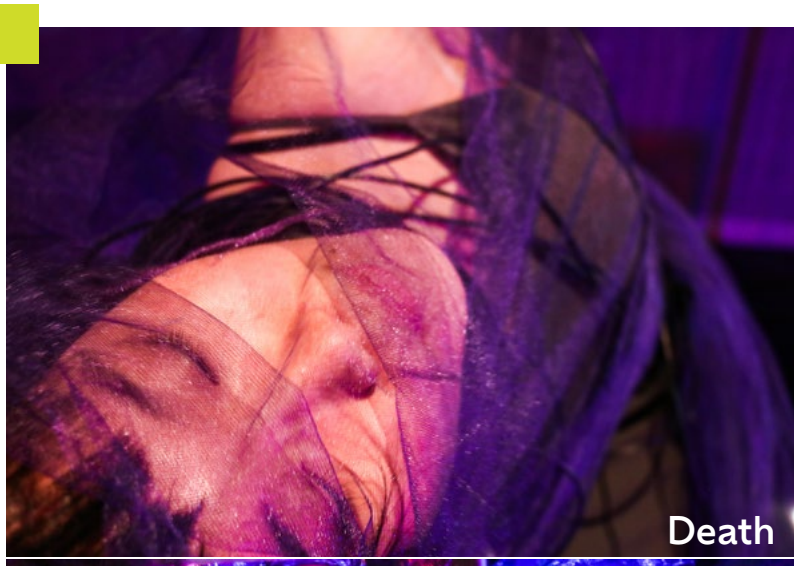
Nature

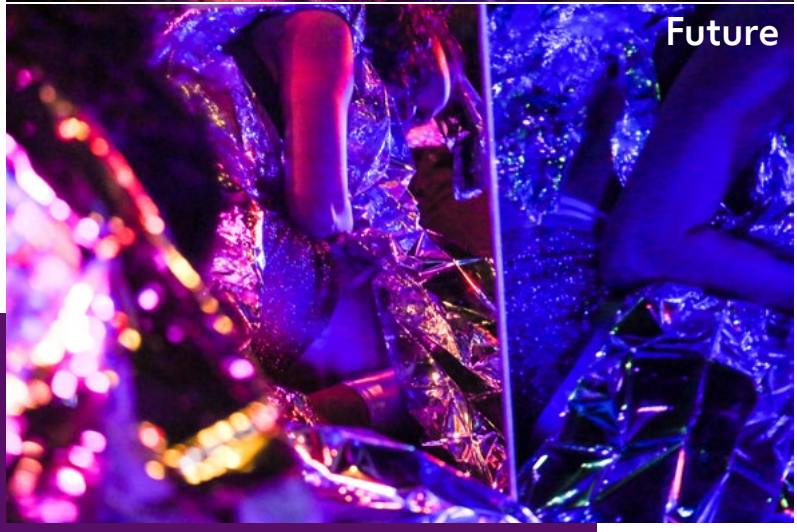
stant death and rebirth cycle of our world. With this creative exploration, I want the representation of death to reflect the tragedies in our world but also how they relate to the future that's coming.

Death spiraled into the fourth concept and the most obvious one which is future. From the beginning we discussed what is a livable future for us and we all had many different answers. We talked about equality, decolonization, safe spaces, humane technology, proper nutrition, caring for our world and each other and much more. I also thought of the future that is happening as we speak such as evolving technology, migration due to climate change, and gaining knowledge of ourselves and what we can do in this world to keep moving forward. All these constant changes are moving through our lives abruptly and quickly but that is not stopping us from finding ourselves and our voices and from making a stance in this world.

Putting all these concepts together, with the images, I want to play with juxtaposition and how we see all this beauty in the world around us even as we face many problems underneath and some of us are unaware.

There is a bigger picture to learn in all these different subjects and becoming aware of these issues is the real beauty because you can find a way to make a difference in this world.





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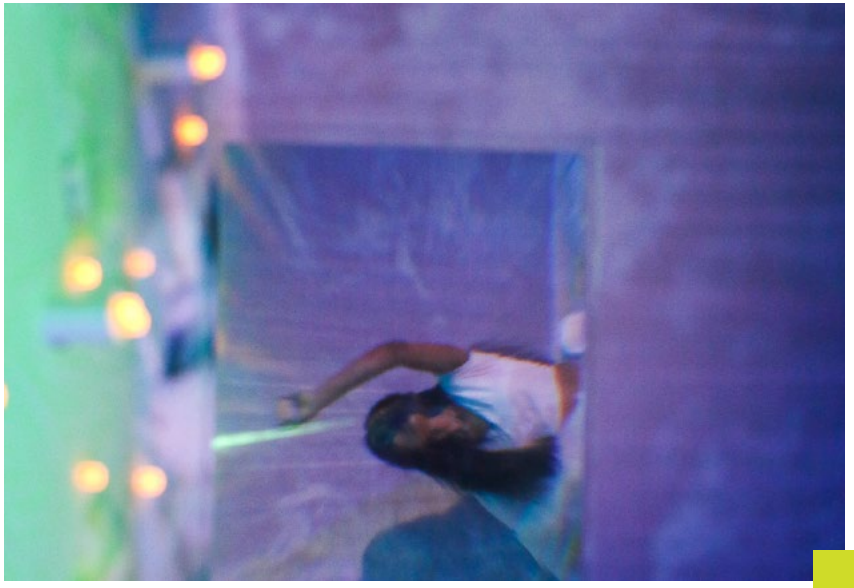

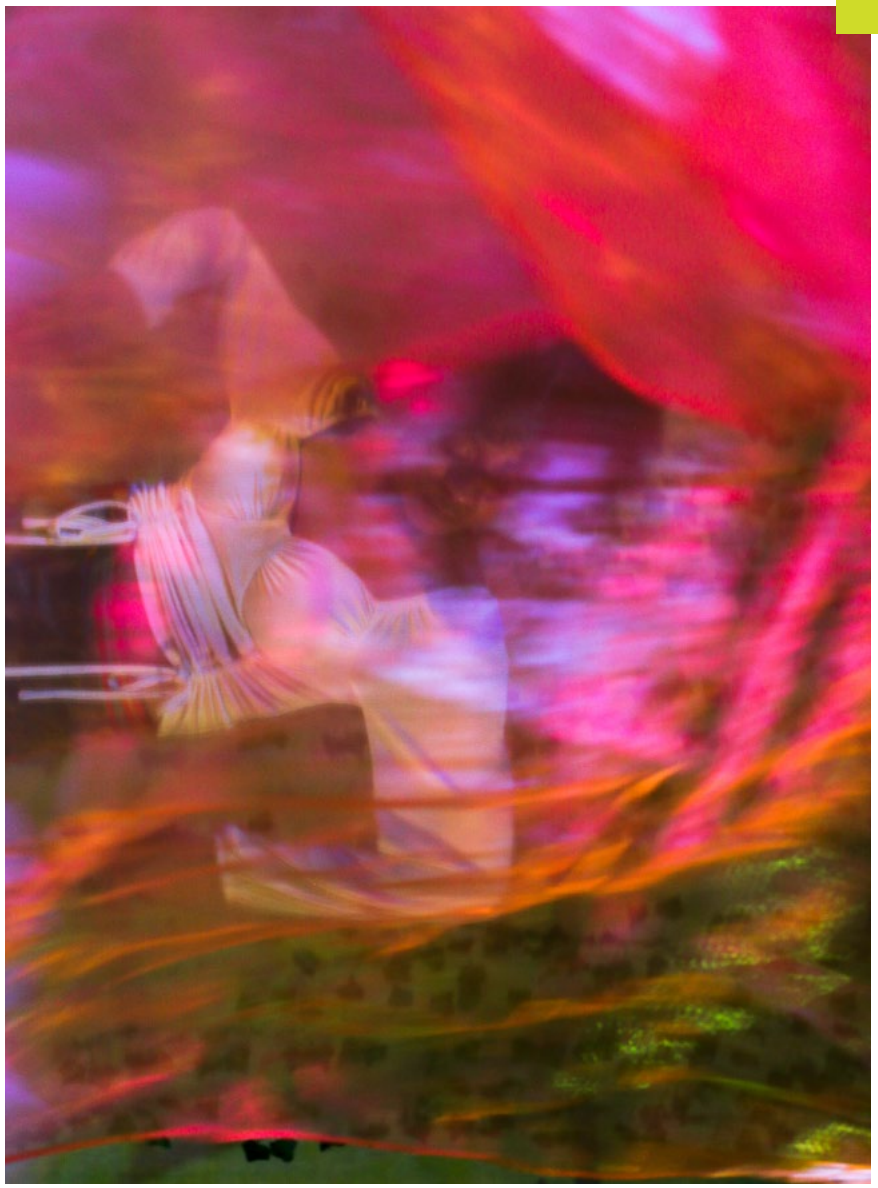

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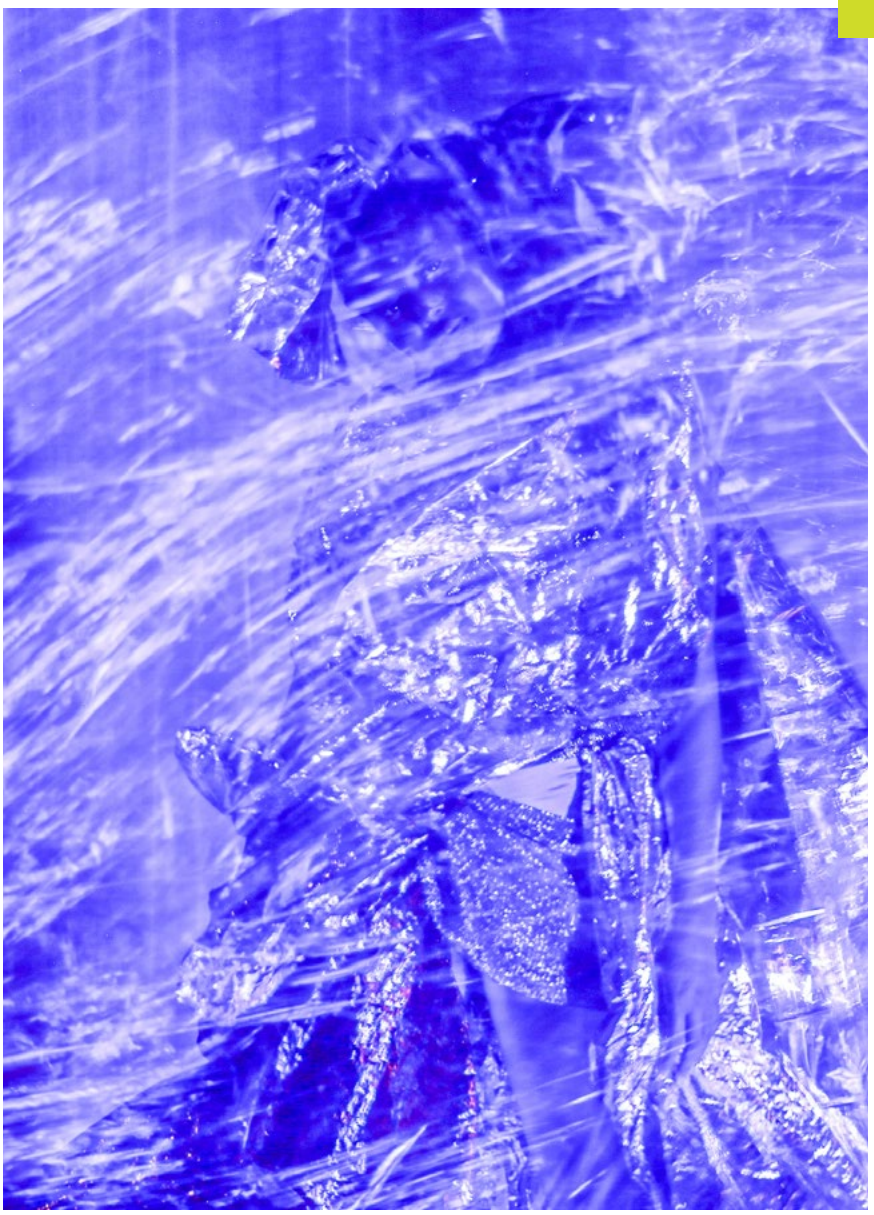
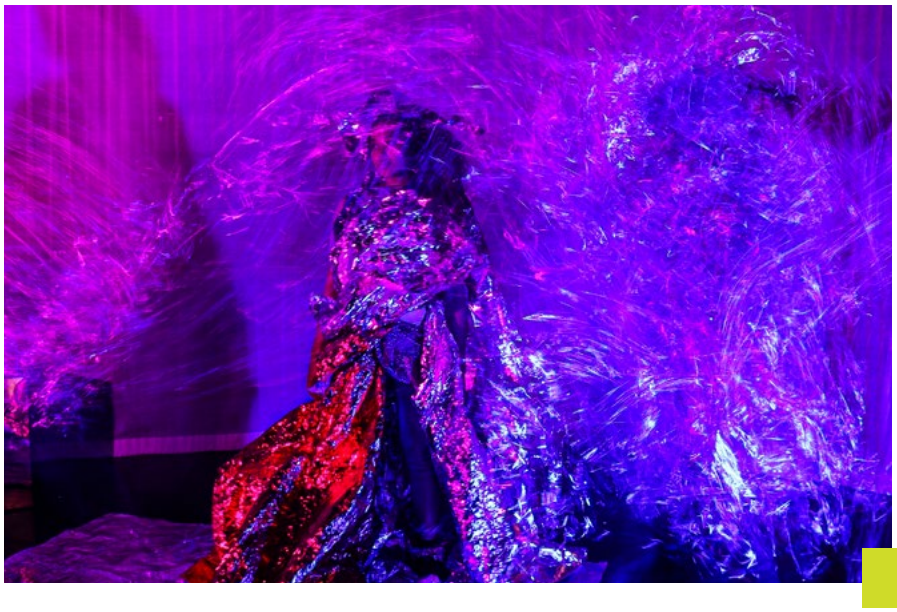




Who are we?

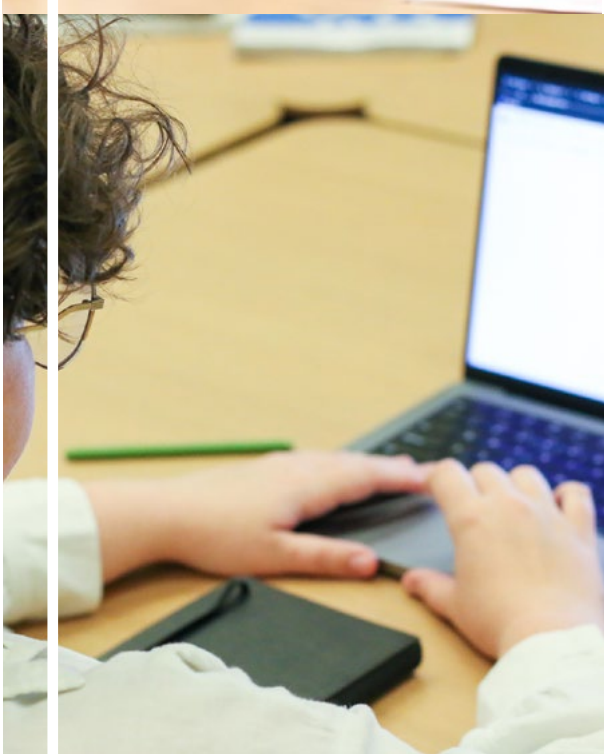
We are many things but one identity that brings us all together is our role as students at The Ohio State University pursuing graduate and undergraduate degrees in Dance, Design, Creative Non-Fiction/English, Geography, and Marketing.

We are convened and facilitated by **Norah Zuniga Shaw (she/they)**, an interdisciplinary artist, writer and creative director, and Professor of Dance and Technology with a joint appointment at the Advanced Computing Center for the Arts and Design (ACCAD). Norah is Artistic Director of the Livable Futures project and podcast: livablefuturesnow.org, which she co-founded in 2016. She was raised in the Rocky Mountains on Ute and Cheyenne land in what is currently known as Boulder, CO, and counts the Sycamore trees of central Ohio as great friends.

We are supported by the Ronald and Deborah Ratner Distinguished Teaching Awards, Global Arts and Humanities Discovery Themes, Greater Columbus Arts Council; and by the curation and generous collaboration of Lane Czaplinski, Director of Performing Arts at the Wexner Center for the Arts and his staff as well as several other inspired local curators supporting contemporary, socially-engaged work by BIPOC artists.

We are supported by the stewards of this land, past, present, and emerging, including the Shawnee, Potawatomi, Delaware, Miami, Peoria, Seneca, Wyandotte, Ojibwe, and Cherokee peoples. As we learned in this class, the university resides on land ceded in the 1795 Treaty of Greeneville and the forced removal of tribal nations through the Indian Removal Act of 1830. We honor the resiliency of these tribal nations and recognize the historical contexts that have and continue to affect the Indigenous peoples of this land.

We are supported by the land and our more-than-human friends and collaborators; the Sycamore trees and squirrels of the Glen Echo ravine; the Livable Futures community; the Campus Connector bus drivers; the mushrooms we find on walks; the insects that snuck into our homes for the winter; the warmth and nourishment of the sun; the cast of Abby Z's CANNONBALL; by making amateur pottery and going on tiny, fun adventures throughout the year that made life feel carefree at times; by meandering phone calls with faraway friends; by our families and partners; our access to transportation; our morning, afternoon, and evening coffees; the Dance Department faculty; the English Department's Digital Media Project; the heterogeneity in social and academic routines; by community-oriented work; Wednesday soccer games and walks in the ravine; the fresh air from all our beautiful houseplants and all the plants who filter the air outside; for the resilience and play of the neighborhood squirrels, for the good will and vibrancy of the community of this class, for the staff at ACCAD and the teams of healthcare practitioners helping us live with and through the pandemic, for the fresh shoots of spring, and so much more.



Srinija Adibhatla (she/her) is a Kuchipudi dancer, who aims to create and showcase stories that share relevant personal and community heritage, while allowing for a seamless combination of traditional and modern ideas and movements to provide accessibility for a more global audience. As a marketing student and minor in dance, she acknowledges that the exploration of dance will be an endless journey.

Isa Bowser (she/her) is a dancer, poet, singer and visual artist whose work is an ongoing ritual of aliveness. She finds home in the pine groves of New England, the rivers of North Carolina and the delicious weeds of Ohio. She is white, she is queer, she is an MFA student, and she is invested in disrupting domination culture through anti-racist work, collaboration with the more-than-human, and visionary collective dreaming.

Born and raised in China, **Yitong Chen** (she/they) is a movement artist interested in provoking vulnerability through extreme physicality. She is pursuing her BFA in Dance and has won numerous awards and recognition from the Beijing Arts and Culture Foundation, Beijing 77 Theatre, and the Goethe-Institute 798 Teahouse Project among others. She is now continuing her dance-making in the U.S.

Vivian Corey (she/her) is a BFA student in Dance, mover, teacher, and creator from Nashville, Tennessee. She focuses on dancer movement effectiveness and efficiency in her work and puts these ideas at the center of her dance science research to enrich her movement communities.

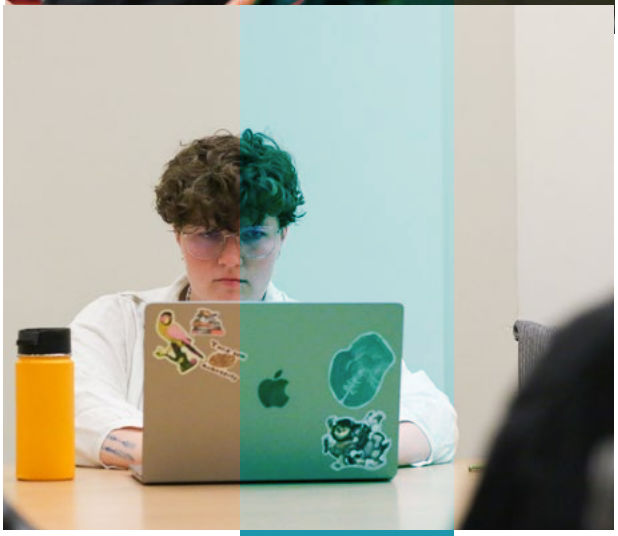
Siera Dance (she/her) is a dancer, artist, stylist, creative director, and a mother. Currently working on her BFA in Dance, she finds ways to express her raw creativity through advocating for Black communities, queer activism, supporting mothers and children, and allowing herself to be in her truest form. She strives to passionately show up with integrity and open herself up to investigative and playful processes.

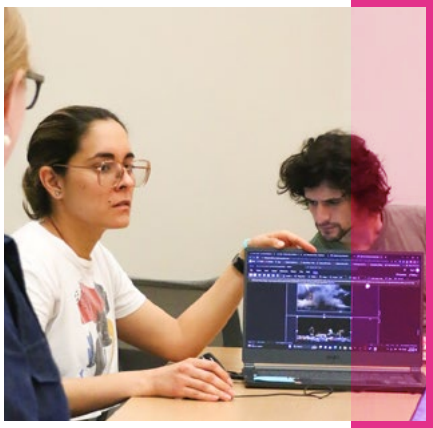
Brittany Halley (she/her) is a rhetorician and interdisciplinary writer. Her scholarly work concerns human rights rhetorics, namely, those exposing governments' complicity in human and ecological suffering. Through her poetry and artwork, she also explores themes of body reclamation, memory and non-linear temporalities, and the inherently interconnected relationship between self and the natural world.

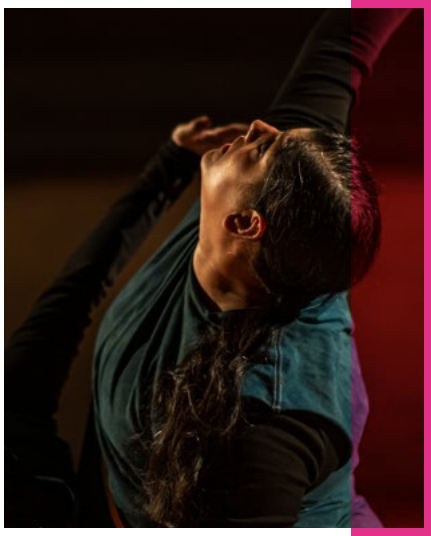
Mercedes Hicks (she/they) is a Black gender-nonconforming creator who has training in multiple art forms/disciplines including visual arts, martial arts, and music making, but dance–her favorite. They are a curious individual who follows any and everything that piques their interest. She loves to create resistance by forcing viewers of her art to confront, then challenge their biases about our world and the people living in it.

Julie Ae Kim (she/her) is a writer and community organizer from Queens, NYC. Currently, an MFA candidate in creative nonfiction, she serves as the Assistant Managing Editor of The Journal. She is also the co-founder of the Asian American Feminist Collective, a grassroots racial and gender justice group engaged in intersectional feminist politics that are grounded in members' diasporic communities.

Heather McCabe (she/her) is an interdisciplinary writer and artist from South Burlington, VT currently pursuing her MFA in creative nonfiction. Her work is concerned with collective experience, human-nature solidarity, and the fuzzy boundaries of self. She's an amateur potter and gardener.







Catalina Muñoz-Arias is a designer, an ocean lover, a swimmer, and a triathlete from Cali, Colombia. Her work goes around biobased materials and the environment to understand the relationship between industrial design and nature. She is pursuing an MFA degree in Design.

Katie O'Loughlin is a movement choreographer who has a deep curiosity about the intersections of dance and moving images. A born and raised Alaskan, she finds her inspiration in the quiet mountain valleys and vast ranges on Dena'ina Ełnena land. Her work focuses on kinesthetic experiences and visceral sensing by gathering, collecting, and listening to the micro-moments of the everyday.

Movement artist and writer **Bhumi B. Patel** (she/they) directs pateldanceworks and is a queer, desi, home-seeker, and science fiction choreographer raised on the traditional lands of the Seminole people and currently residing on the unceded, ancestral land of the Chochenyo Ohlone people. In its purest form, her performance work is a love letter to her ancestors. Patel moves at the intersection of embodied research and generating new futures, using improvisational practice as a pursuit for liberation. Bhumi co-facilitated the class this semester.

Tal Shutkin is a geographer from the Erie and Mississauga lands of Cleveland, Ohio who researches relationships between climate, landscapes, water, and people. With strong roots across the Great Lakes region, he is drawn to geographies that have been or continue to be shaped by ice. Tal is motivated by the messiness of social-environmental challenges and is involved in community activism in Columbus.

Who we are

Notes

Land Acknowledgement

[1] Land Acknowledgements

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[1] Adrienne marie brown, *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*.
Donna Harraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene (Experimental Futures)*.
Jenny Odell, *How to Do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy*.
[2] Patty Krawec, *Becoming Kin: An Indigenous Call to Unforgetting the Past and Reimagining Our Future*, 29.
[3] United States Statutes at Large, vol. 4, Twenty-First Congress, session I, chapter 148.
[4] Harraway, 4.
[5] Marcia Siegel, "Rethinking Movement Analysis," 7.
[6] Siegel, 25.
[7] Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Author of the Acacia Seeds and Other Extracts from the Journal of the Association of Therolinguistics* as qtd. in Harraway, 56-7.
[8] Odell, 30.
[9] Odell, 62.
[10] Krawec, 39.
[11] Annie Dorsen, *Diversities in Practice*.
[12] Harraway, 4.

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[1] Krawec, 21-2.
[2] Krawec, 77.
[3] Michael J. Morris, *"More-than-human Futures w/ Michael J. Morris." Livable Futures*.
[4] Emalani Case, "Indigenous Futures w/ Emalani Case." *Livable Futures*, 10:12-10:23.
[5] Krawec, 119.
[6] Case, 07:11-07:43.
[7] Nadine George-Graves, "Dramaturg's Note." *Afro/Solo/Man*.

[8] Krawec, 24.
[9] Andre M. Zachery and Crystal Perkins, "Decolonizing Futures w/ Andre M. Zachery and Crystal Perkins." *Livable Futures*, 03:05 and 06:50.
[10] Krawec, 102.
[11] Nicholas de Genova, "Introduction: Latino and Asian Racial Formations at the Frontiers of U.S. Nationalism." *Racial Transformations: Latinos and Asians Remaking the United States*, 11.
[12] Krawec, 51.
[13] Krawec, 122.
[14] Krawec, 139.
[15] Louise Erdrich, *Books and Islands in Ojibwe Country* as qtd. in Krawec, 139.
[16] Krawec, "Can these stones live?" The Christian Century.
[17] Krawec, "Can these stones live?"

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[1] Philip Shepherd, "The Embodiment Manifesto."
[2] Urban Bush Women, Summer Leadership Institute.
[3] Practice Progress, The Summer UNtensive.

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Kyle Powys Whyte, "Indigenous science (fiction) for the Anthropocene: Ancestral dystopias and fantasies of climate change crises." *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space*.
Kathryn Yusoff, *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*.
[2] U.S. Global Change Research Project, "Fourth National Climate Assessment," 39.
[3] Dylan M. Harris, "The Trouble with Modeling the Human into the Future Climate." *GeoHumanities: Space, Place, and the Humanities*.
[4] Roy Scranton, *Learning to Die in the Anthropocene: Reflections on the End of a Civilization*.

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[1] Greg Thomas, "Concrete Poetry Movement Overview and Analysis."
[2] George Lewis, "Press Release Giga-Hertz Award 2021," 6.
[3] Rachel Seligman, *Elevator Music 43: Yvette Janine Jackson — Destination Freedom*.
[4] Jarita Davis, "Fear is Their Alibi."
[5] Yvette Janine Jackson, "Projects."

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[1] U.S. Department of Defense, "DoD News Briefing - Secretary Rumsfeld and Gen. Myers."
[2] Eliza McPhail, "These People Were Arrested by the Khmer Rouge and Never Seen Again." *Vice Asia*. Photomanipulation by Matt Loughrey.
[3] Kathy Wise, "Anti-Racist Pedagogy in Art: A UNT Speaker Series Provides a Vision for the Future." *D Magazine*.
[4] Catherine Sue Ramíerz, "Chicanafuturism."

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[1] Orlando Zane Hunter, Jr. and Ricarrdo Valentine, "About."
[2] Anne Anlin Cheng, *The Melancholy of Race: Psychoanalysis, Assimilation, and Hidden Grief*.
[3] Hunter and Valentine.
[4] Audre Lorde, *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name: A Biomythography*.
[5] Louis M. Maraj, *Black or Right: Anti/Racist Campus Rhetorics*, 6.
[6] Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, *Becoming Human: Matter and Meaning in an Antiblack World*, 3.
[7] Hunter and Valentine.
[8] Nadine George-Graves, "Dramaturg's Note."