

Gatherings

Volume 1

Editors: Jenn Cole and Stephen Johnson
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Welcome to Gatherings

Persistent ideas, if we give them attention, sometimes turn material. We are very happy that this idea--a collection of creative work by theatre and performance scholars--is now in print, something to hold in your hands.

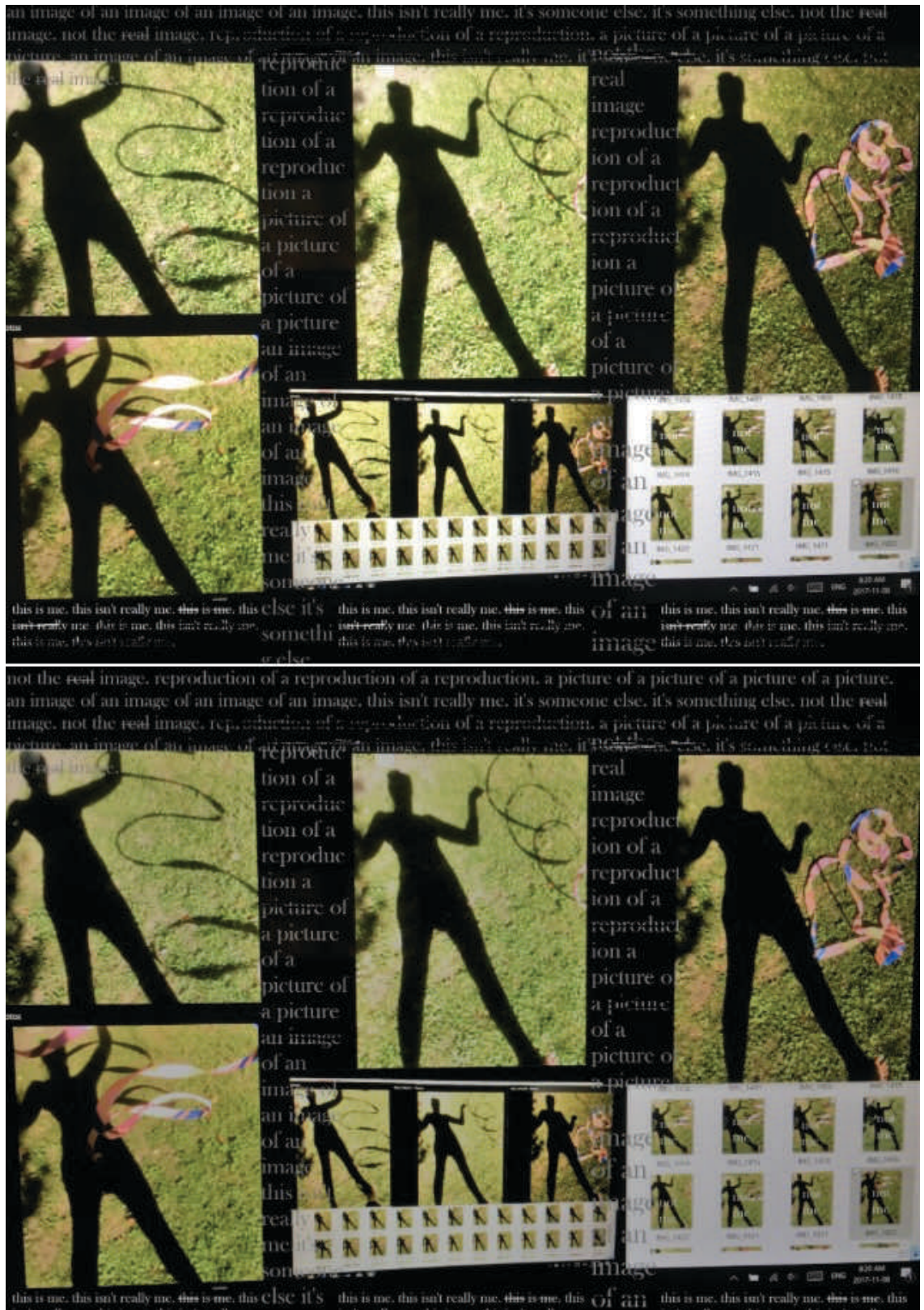
For a long time, we have each, on our own, considered how many people we know in our community use artistic practices to think through their research, and suspected that some of them had visual traces of these practices they might be willing to share. Talking together over the past few months has led us to this publication. We couldn't have imagined the range of works our first call for submissions would garner, or the versatile modes and motivations this first collection would represent.

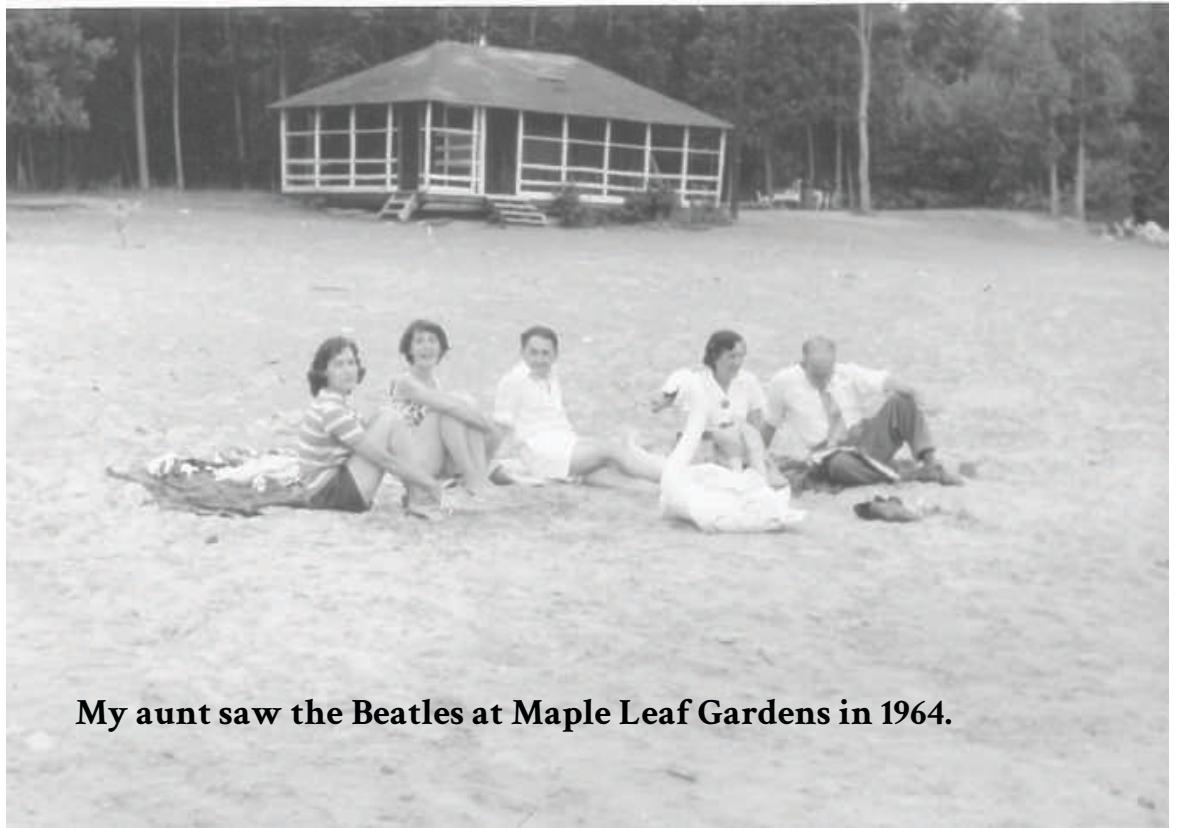
From photograph to poem, diagram to found materials, the works shared in *Gatherings* offer glimpses of hard work that so often remains invisible. This gathering demonstrates the work we all do: thinking alongside our scholarship at (and in) the margins; responding to archival materials and research spaces in unorthodox ways; documenting the often artful and messy process of intellectual discovery by any means possible; and activating the body as a way of 'thinking.' While these methods are often treated as alternatives to academic labour, we believe otherwise. They are processes that fuel and further our work and foreground the need for artistic practice as a support for and a part of the research process. This is one of the goals of *Gatherings*. Supporting the publication of raw, unfinished, exploratory and experimental work as a performance of the research process is another.

We are delighted to present this first issue of *Gatherings* and look forward to seeing what the Canadian theatre and performance community shares next.

The word 'Gathering' refers to an accumulation of folded pages that is a necessary first step in binding a book, as well as the coming together of people that is (most often!) a pre-condition of performance.

Jenn Cole and Stephen Johnson

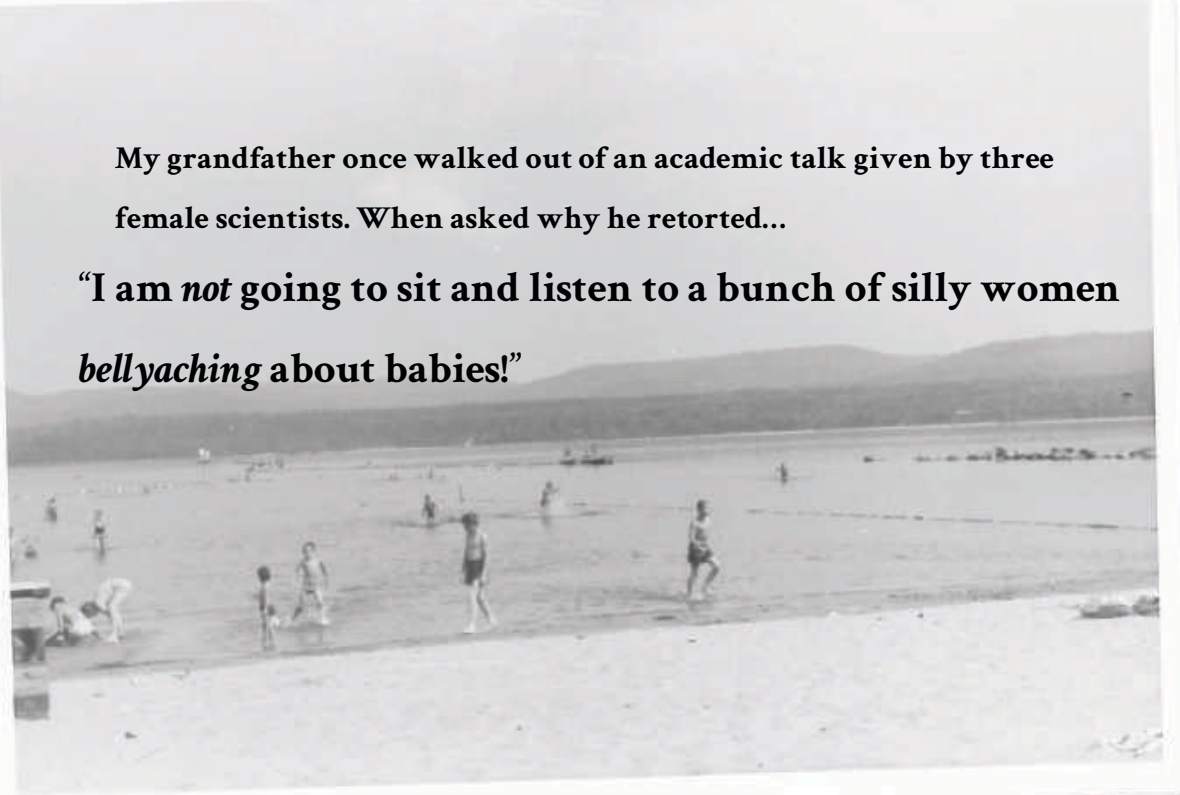




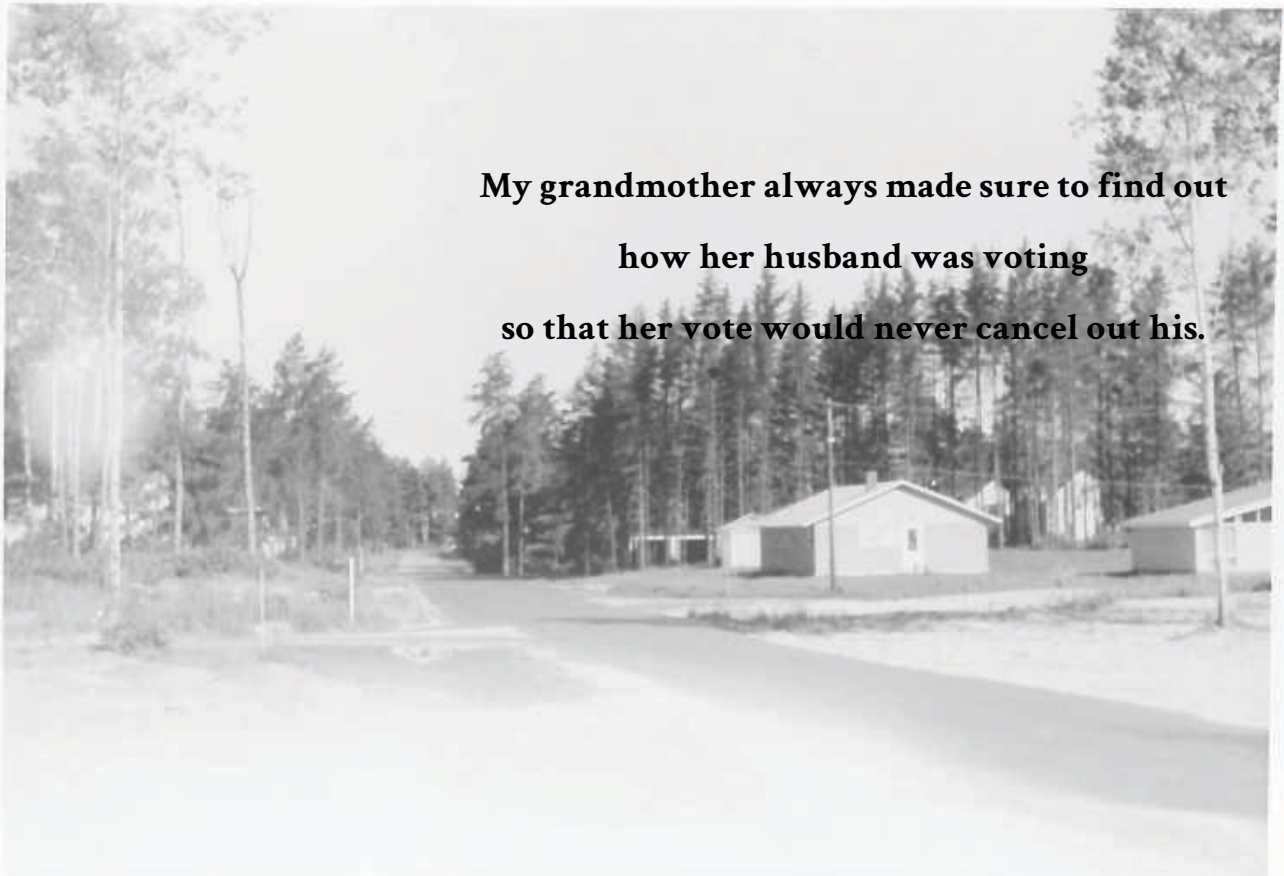
My aunt saw the Beatles at Maple Leaf Gardens in 1964.

My grandfather once walked out of an academic talk given by three female scientists. When asked why he retorted...

“I am *not* going to sit and listen to a bunch of silly women *bellyaching* about babies!”



**My grandmother always made sure to find out
how her husband was voting
so that her vote would never cancel out his.**



"Muuuuuum"

Where am I?
Back on the highway.
Back seat of the car.
Dad drives.
Sisters sleep.
Silence whispers, "mum where are you?"

In ambulance
somewhere between home and help.
Nearly alive.
Unconscious, alone.
Us together without you.

The tires drone
stinging my ears
carrying us full speed ahead.

Back up against the wall.
Emergency room.
My mother's eyes wide
peering at me in terror.
Limbs flailing.
Drowning.
I don't know what to do.



"Do you want to stay here for this, or do you want to go?"

Everything disappears.

This is my mother.
Unconscious on the operating table.
Red failing organ revealed.
Three mad blebs bypassed.
For me.

How much more time before the final final day?





kinesis

breathing into sensation
bones compression pain
breathing through the body/s
long walls of bricks and stone
to ecstatic vivid
breath flow
nerve line
bone arc
spiral

density

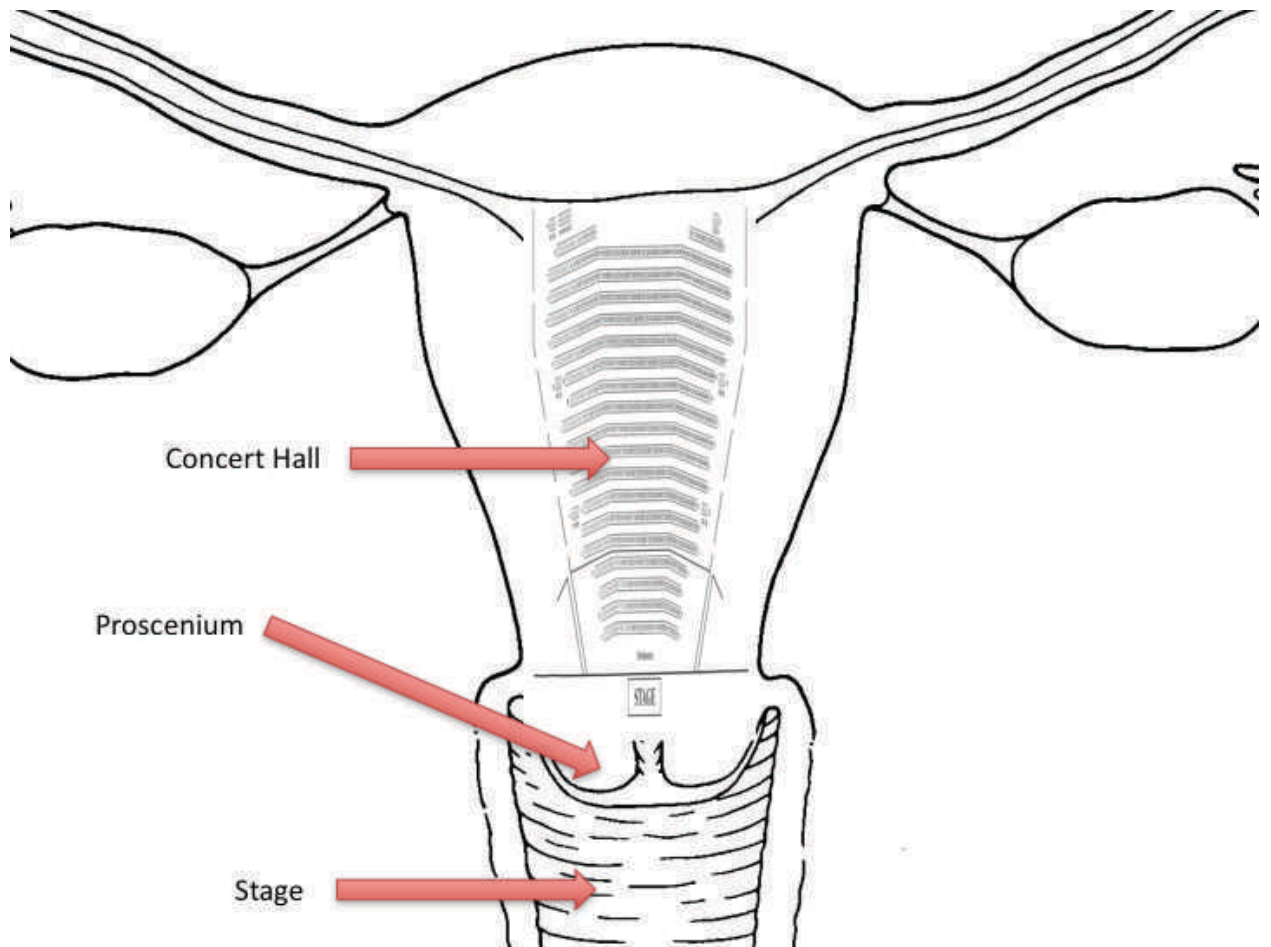
dueting
with his effervescent sister Levity
skipping along, tripping up
gazing up,
as Density drags;
swap one letter and
Density becomes Destiny
thick
slick
be longing
sticking
the goddam slow
down
coming to us all.

No.

be ware gravity's seductive laze
fight up right
true up / relevé
rise into dizzy verticality. balance,
vertiginous, precarious,
beats looking at the goddam ground.

gravity

...where there was spring
now residue
liquefying
as gravity pulls and skirls,
breathy spiral of mourning
pipes,
raincoursed mountainsides,
blanketed effervescence;
against this wet weight
the spine launches
nerve rockets
space, levity
echoes.



Uterine Concert Hall

an intimate concert venue based in Montreal.

[Tech specs](#)

[Shows + Pop-ups](#)

[Booking](#)

[Photos](#)

[Song Requests](#)

[News](#)

Tech specs

Diagrams and exact dimensions of the stage, proscenium, and concert hall are coming soon. Until then, here are estimated dimensions:

The stage: length is about 6.5 to 12.5 cm, diameter is 2.1 to 3.5 cm, approx.

This stage is flexible and expandable

Proscenium: diameter is 2 to 3 cm, approx.

Concert Hall: length is about 7.6 cm and width is 4.5 cm, approx.

Seats 0.

There are no fire exits

The venue is licensed for alcohol

Stage Sound

54KHz speaker with mini-jack input

DJ equipment

DJ gear and musical equipment (including microphones) is NOT supplied by the venue

Piano

There is no piano in the venue (sorry!)

Lighting

Currently, there is no fancy stage or effects lighting in the venue

*We also cannot accommodate pyrotechnics, regardless of your qualifications and expertise- sorry, it's a landlady issue :s

Video Projection

We are hoping to secure video projection for the outside of the venue in the coming months

Hours of Operation

We host regular nightly events

We are a 24/7 venue that hosts special programming and shows year round

We can schedule daytime and/or nighttime shows and activities

****PLEASE NOTE:** the venue is closed for renovations approximately once a month for 4-6 days



PACKING LIST:

**DO NOT WEAR ANY IDENTIFIABLE CLOTHING. NO MILITARY UNIFORMS!
BRING A SLEEPING BAG AND BLANKET TO PLACE ON YOUR BED
EYE PROTECTION (FOR LIVE FIRE EXERCISE)
HEARING PROTECTION
GLOVES AND HARD PROTECTIVE CUP FOR USE WITH SIMS/OPS
CLOTHING TO BE WORN WITH THE SHALWAR KHAMIS (LONG PANTS FOR OPS)
COMFORTABLE, CASUAL CLOTHING FOR THE WEDNESDAY EVENING DINNER AS JEANS, SHIRT, ETC.
RAIN GEAR
PERSONAL FOOTWEAR
BOOTS FOR OPS
SHOWER FLIP FLOPS
TOWELS AND WASHCLOTHS/SOAP FOR THE WEEK
SOCKS
UNDERGARMENTS
ALL YOUR DESIRED TOILETRIES
JACKET...GLOVES... ETC. < CHECK WEATHER FOR CEDAR CITY, UT>
DO NOT BRING WEAPONS. WE WILL SUPPLY THEM.
ALL MEDICATIONS, PRESCRIBED OR OVER THE COUNTER, SUCH AS ASPIRIN, SINUS, COUGH, ALLERGY, ETC.
IF YOU SMOKE OR CHEW, BRING YOUR SUPPLY FOR THE WEEK.
LIP BALM
SKIN LOTION**

With/Without...

Knowledge without wisdom
Pleasure without conscience
Power without responsibility
Strength without direction

Is

Zeal in ignorance
Sugar-coated with brief certainty.
Its carrier can turn the world upside.

Anarchy. Disorder. Inhumane.

“I know the story of a man who had everything but
was empty;
Everything, but gained nothing”

Vision devoid of mission
Life without love
Passion without purpose
Wealth without work

Is

Perspective out of control.
Lost in the voyage to no site
But used deceit, chaos and coax to fool our sights.

Immaturity. Naivety. Curiosity.

“Are we not that character that hold everything
Yet nothing
Dust gone dead – cold dead?”

Commerce without morality
Politics without discipline
Pursuit without patience
Religion without sacrifice
Science without humanity

Results

In the world's burden
That gives us loss and pain
With undying strength to lose sight
Of life's relevant perspective, because of

What we love most. What we want most.

I hope between our words and the world;
Behind these burns and thorns
Will arise

Life. Love. Light.

Quaking Custards: Flying in the Face of Comic Tradition

JOHN ASTINGTON

This link--<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aHY5SM0YFv0>--should take you to the 1927 silent Laurel and Hardy short *The Battle of the Century*, one kind of peak of physical slapstick; watch it or not, before reading on, as you choose. Ben Jonson, who was certainly fond of slapstick of his own devising, could be sniffy about "cheap" gags. In the Prologue to *Volpone*, published in 1607 after performance at the Globe in 1605, he commends his own speed-writing (the entire play supposedly having been written in five weeks) and the play's avoidance of easy laughs: ". . . thus much can I give you as a token/ Of his play's worth, no eggs are broken,/ Nor quaking custards with fierce teeth affrighted,/ Wherewith your rout are so delighted." Yet where the rout went to see custards and eggs flying about is nowadays hard to discover; there isn't much sign of such comedy in earlier play texts, and the stories of and by the famous clown actors of the time--Tarlton, Kemp, and Armin--don't feature such routines at all. Comic figures don't commonly have foody names: Costard, in *Love's Labour's Lost*, is one vowel away from Custard, but he's not a comic glutton. Things changed, it seems, once English actors began to tour regularly in Germany and the Low Countries, beginning in the 1590s, and hence, at first, playing to audiences that didn't get much from the words of their plays, but paid attention to gesture, expression, and other physical language (like audiences watching early films). From that point we begin to hear of lead comic actors with food names, and probably with *lazzi* to go along with them: Pickleherring, John Posset, Hans Wurst, and Hans Stockfisch. (No custard, but posset isn't far off.) Such names get re-imported, as it were, in the clown figure Jack Pudding, a name *OED* dates from 1648, but I know was in use from the early 1630s. (Shakespeare may have inspired these names to a degree: one of Toby Belch's belches he blames on "pickle-herring," and JACK Falstaff is parodied as "the roast Manningtree ox with the PUDDING in his belly.") By the Restoration, at the latest, Jack Pudding had (re?)introduced the custard gags, which ran through popular theatre to the time of Mack Sennett. John Lacy, famous comic actor and playwright, wrote facetiously in the Prologue to his 1664-5 play *The Old Troop* that it was aimed directly at Jonson's "rout": "To you that laugh with wide mouth'd grace,/ To see Jack Puddings Custard thrown in's face." Custard was back, if it had ever left, and politicians still occasionally get pied. Currently one of them seems overdue for it, bigly.

bath time

it's 4:45
15 minutes into our bath
you hold a truck
I hold you

you aren't even half my years in months yet

I'm suddenly afraid I'll forget this

we're both quiet

our buoyant legs sway in the warm water

close your eyes and we're in a strong wind that has lifted our feet from
the ground
I hold you with one arm and a tree trunk with the other
like in a cartoon

we are flapping like a flag
but in slow motion

so we're swaying

we both hold on
trying not to be blown away

This is not a surrender.

on this Thursday afternoon at 4:46

you tilt your head to let the water into your ear

I pour some on your belly and knees to keep them warm

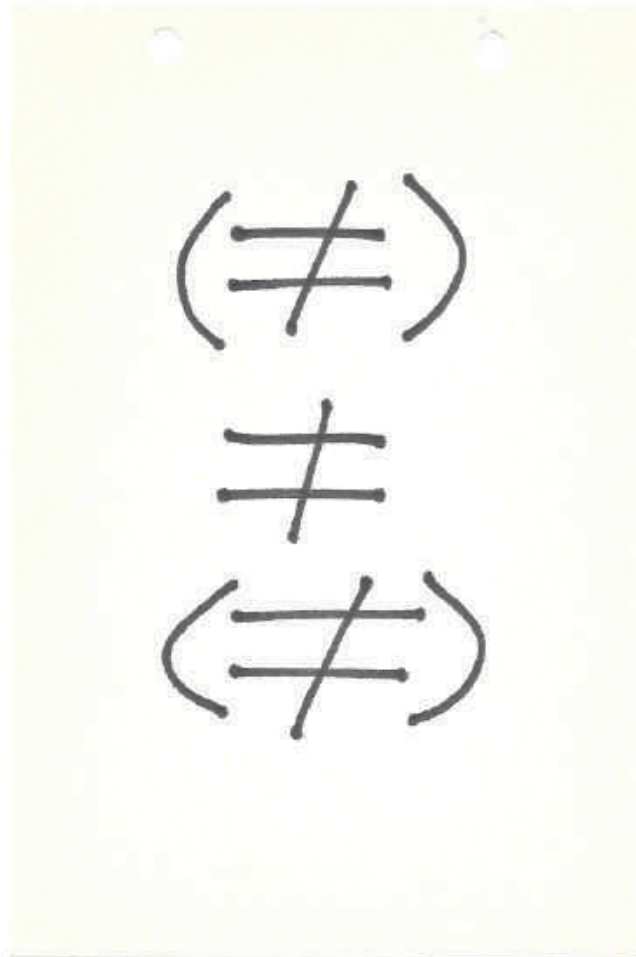
how could I forget this?



Fancy dress for children and girls:
For late nineteenth-century
White, middle-class and upper-class girls,
For children.
Princesses and bicycles,
Poodles and “national” dress.
For “Brunes” and for “Fair Women”
And careful study of one’s individual charms means “sure to be a
success.”
“Fancy dresses are never more piquant and charming than when
worn by children.”
One little girl “in a turban and a beard and mustachos and black
eyebrows…”
declares with glee “I thought Lily would have a fit she laughed so.”
And a shy girl in fairy garb
cast “languishing glances” from behind the imaginary footlights.
A ribbon of fabric “just saved” a cone-shaped princess hat from
being a dunce cap;
and girls claimed “they did not want the boys at all yet”
as they laboured at costumes
while boys gallivanted outside.
Sisters compete for attention:
“I think Mary of course looked very pretty as Cinderella.
H told her she looked very handsom(sic)…
I wish I were not so envious… I daresay he will come on Sunday
and I know he dislikes me
so I shall not trouble him with speaking to him when he comes.”

Or penned on a miniature note
to a beloved sister
“I’m going as a whale.”

AFTER DIDEROT
A PARADOX OF THE ACTOR, BRIEFLY



Claire Carolan *Clifton Hill and Goldney Avenue*





EN LAI: Whales. I was really into whales. Still kinda am. I like whales. [Meeting a whale] would be so overwhelming. It would make me really emotional. I definitely see them as these majestic creatures that are on a pedestal and better than us in a lot of ways. Just reaching down and feeling... I'd feel so honoured. The connection, the physical connection, what their hide, what their skin would feel like. Firm but soft. And sleek. Maybe a little slimy. Wet... no, not slimy. Wet but... it would have a soft firmness, a cushion, a firm bed that is so thick, you can push so hard and it would just give a little bit, it would be soft at the same time.

AMANDA: I grew up in Schomberg, Ontario. It's a horse-raising town. There were a lot of farms around. I begged my parents every year to let me take horseback lessons but they denied me every year! But yeah, I have met a horse. I've met many horses. They're so wonderful. They're so majestic! Soft. Bristly. Soft on the butt. Bristly around the head. When I touch them I can feel their power. [whispers] It's actually scary. [speaking] It's a little scary, or unnerving. But not enough for me to stay away from them. But almost as if I bow down to them.

EN LAI: I have this memory. I don't know if it's a dream or a memory. I was under five when I had it. I think it's real but it can't be. I was up at a cottage and I remember my sister and my mother being there and I was going under water to investigate something and realizing that I could breathe underwater and sort of delighted and astonished by it. And then I came up to tell my mother that I could do this and then I went back down to try it again and I couldn't. [laughter] Still I remember that feeling like, "Oh wow, I can do this." I felt very much at home. To be asleep in water...

AMANDA: I am thinking about my grandmother—my Italian grandmother. She'd make the pasta herself. So it would smell like corn flour. Fresh pasta is the best scent. It's damp. It's not wet but there's obviously water in the dough. When it sits in the cantina in the cold cellar you can smell the flour off it. Dangling strings. Sugo Pomodoro. Tomato sauce. Which she made from the tomatoes she picked from her garden. So every August, right about this time, we'd have bushels of tomatoes and we'd just sit in the garage and we'd have eight hours to pass the tomatoes through a press. A manual press. It was ridiculous! Get a thing! Get an automatic one! But I guess they used what they had. Soft and squishy. And even the scent: you could smell the acid of the tomato. But it was so fresh. It was so fresh! It's unlike anything. Fresh tomato sauce.

EN LAI: I kind of want to die in water. I know drowning is supposed to be very difficult but I feel like, if you could relax and die in water at sea... I'd like to do that if I was ready, at a ripe old age. To just row off onto the ocean, have a nice bottle of whiskey, maybe some other things if I needed them. I'd just lie there, look up at the stars and maybe drill a little hole in the boat, just sort of drift away to sleep. But only if I was ready. I don't mean this in any way of wanting to die now or soon but it seems like a really nice way to slip away. [MJ: When the time comes...] and then become part of the water. I'd like that.



Blurred lines of Silk and Linen

Blurred lines of silk and linen dress young
faces

... age and wisdom unremembered.

Curled edges of photopaper frame

... waning sepia caress.

Light embeds memory... a photochemical
layer

... an echo hemmed in my heart.

Ancient image shims memoir

And I reminisce in ecru.

Dark velvet's weight backdropped in
shadowy strata

... citing camera's capture.

I imagine metal cases throw fill light, forcing
shadows to curve

... expression meets the lens.

I imagine fingers shift f-stop, tripod

... quickly detain astonishment in the
facsimile.

It is not really them, it is not really me.

It is the emulsion of me and them.

I glance again and again, our paper
representation

Holding a future that did not come.

I search the faces, the arms bent at the
elbow, for a seam

... to split to uncover the story.

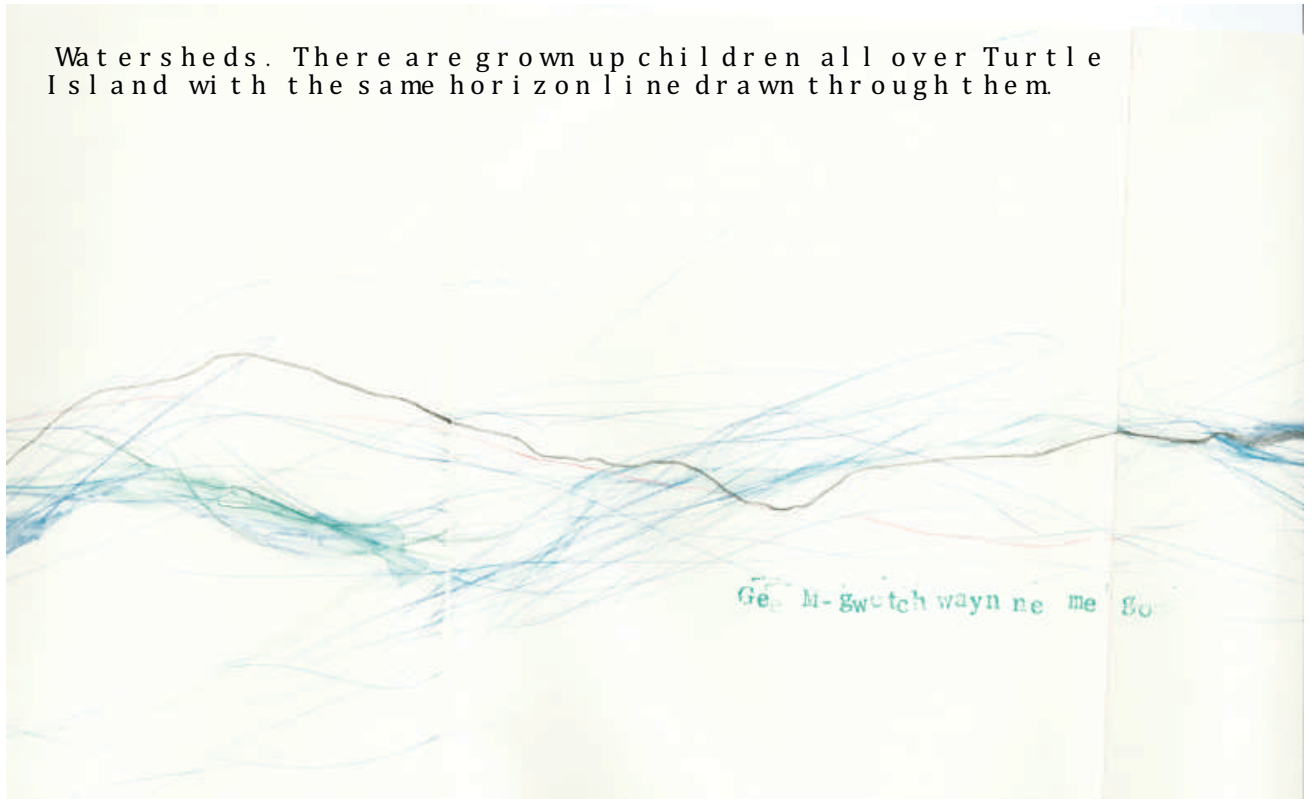
The camera's art creates a lamina of beauty

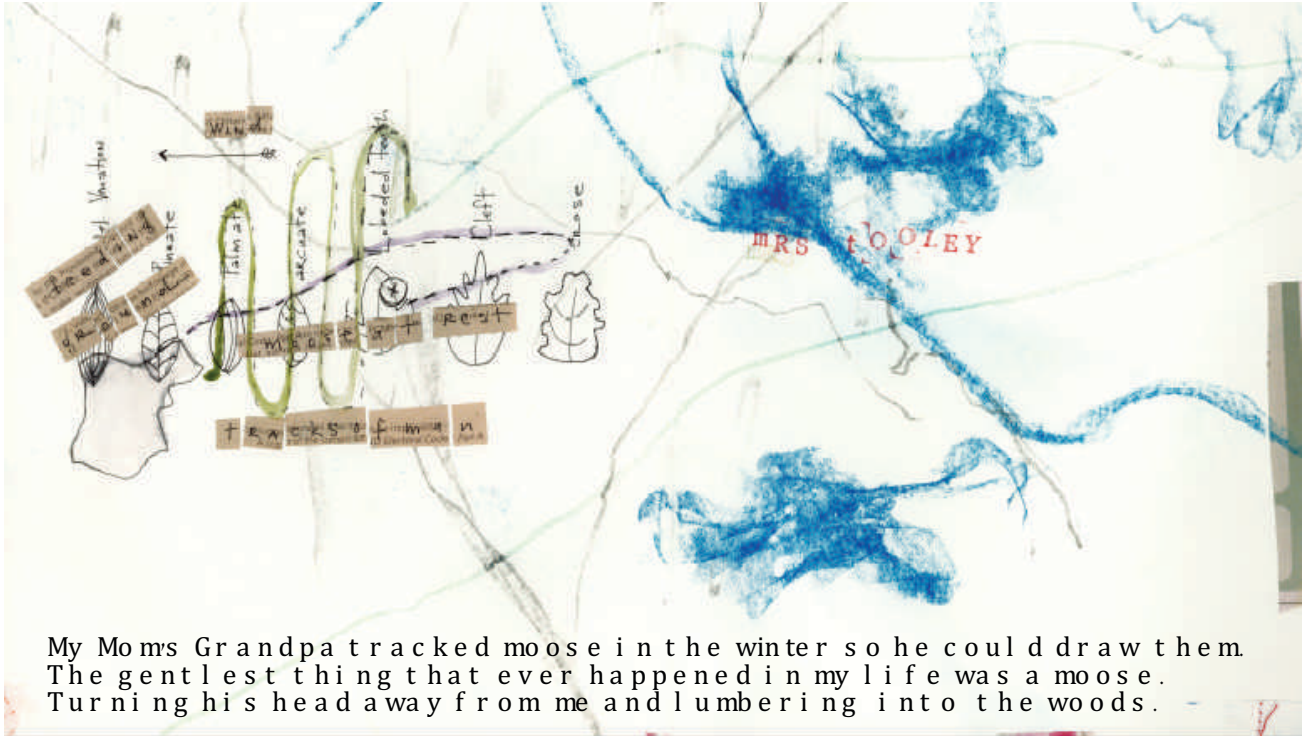
... over recall's difficulty.

I want so much to remember how it was

... treasured sepia reminds me how it is.

Watersheds. There are grown up children all over Turtle Island with the same horizon line drawn through them.





My Moms Grandpa tracked moose in the winter so he could draw them. The gentlest thing that ever happened in my life was a moose. Turning his head away from me and lumbering into the woods.

Descriptions



Christine Mazumdar Like(ness)

Drawing on my 25 years of practical experience training and coaching rhythmic gymnastics, my research investigates the aesthetic/athletic binary present in aesthetic sport—sports in which a score is awarded for “artistry” in addition to technical skill.

Like(ness) began in the summer of 2016 in Montreal when I took a series of photos of shadows of my silhouette with my gymnastics ribbon. I was most fascinated by the images in which both my shadow and a portion of my “real” body or “real” ribbon were simultaneously visible, and in some instances, interacted. The original photo, already a reproduction of the moment, engages with layers of realness as it archives my body, the object, and their respective shadowed reproductions. The manipulation of the images furthers this layering as I took several photographs of photographs to continue to degrade or decay the “real”. The overlaid text echoes these sentiments as it is partially erased, fading, and unreadable in spaces.

As my recent work examines the systematic breakdown of the virtuosic athletic body, I am drawn to the interrelationship between the virtual and the virtuosic, and moreover, virtual representations of the virtuosic. To quote Arcade Fire’s song’s “Reflektor”, “It’s just a reflection of a reflection.... Will I see you on the other side?”. At what point does this manipulation of the real become effaceable rather than archival?

Christine Mazumdar is a PhD candidate at the Centre for Drama, Theatre, and Performance Studies at the University of Toronto, focusing on the athlete as performer through the language of movement in aesthetic sport, dance, and circus. A former rhythmic gymnast and nationally certified coach, Christine considers the interrelationship between sport and art.

Bridget Cauthery *Treading dangerously: Transient (dis)passions in 1960s Deep River, Ontario*

These images and the accompanying anecdotes form a reflective inquiry into my maternal grandparents' life in Deep River, Ontario in the 1960s. Deep River was purpose-built on Algonquin land to house an exclusive community of physicists, scientists and engineers working towards the goal of "clean" nuclear energy at a laboratory in Chalk River. Taken together the images and anecdotes perform an intertextual narrative about prescribed gender norms and how those norms were being challenged by beliefs about women's rights and an emerging youth culture. The complementary pursuits of atomic research and domesticity enjoyed by my grandparents were ruptured by a relationship between their youngest daughter and an Anishinaabe teen. An ill-fated love affair on stolen ground, neither my aunt nor her boyfriend appear in the photos. As First Nations scholar Dwayne Trevor Donald suggests, even where absence signifies presence, "what is often not noticed or acknowledged is that Aboriginal people and Euro-Canadians are intimately connected through the stories they tell of living together in this place" (2004).

Bridget Cauthery (York University) is a dance and cultural studies scholar focussing on performances of post/neo-colonialism in contemporary and popular dance practices.

Alisha Stranges *Muuuuuum*

In the spring of 2011, I witnessed the temporary death of my mother when she entered into a brief cardiac arrest. While she survived, I most definitely saw her die, and muuuuum is my attempt to document the fright of witnessing this trauma. The memory of this moment, which continues to revive itself (often without warning), has inspired a rethinking the role of "cure" in traumatic recovery. When cure is no longer the goal, I believe that trauma survivors can seek conciliation with psychological trauma through the pursuit of spaces of respite — pockets of time that afford momentary relief from seemingly endless suffering. Currently, I am exploring how the practice of improvised rhythm tap offers one model for engineering spaces of respite because the body learns how to refunction the pathological tenets of trauma in ways that provide the survivor with a degree of agency, albeit temporary.

Alisha Stranges is a queer woman, theatre creator, and performer, currently pursuing an undergraduate degree in Women and Gender Studies at the University of Toronto.

Broadleaf Theatre *The Chemical Valley Project*

The Chemical Valley Project is an artistic collaboration between U of T alumni and theatre makers Julia Howman and Kevin Matthew Wong with Aamjiwnaang First Nation Water Protectors Vanessa Gray and Lindsay Gray, both of whom have also been involved with St. George Campus water events. The show works as a documentary on stage that highlights Vanessa and Lindsay's work to protect their community's land, air, and water. As a solo-performance, performed by myself – a first-generation Canadian and second generation settler – it is also a theatre piece that explores my role as the documenter of Vanessa and Lindsay's work, and part of the show necessarily questions Canadian identity and the role of settlers, immigrants, and non-indigenous Canadians alike in enacting reconciliation.

Image 1: An air quality monitoring apparatus sits at the side of the road in Aamjiwnaang. (Photo by Chantal Hassard)

Image 2: On November 20, 2016, hundreds gathered outside the Supreme Court of Canada in solidarity with the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation and the Clyde River First Nation. Both First Nations undertook legal action concerning the "duty to consult." (Photo by Chantal Hassard)

Kevin Matthew Wong is a theatre creator, performer, producer, environmentalist, and a first generation Canadian from Tkaronto. Kevin is the co-founder and Artistic Director of Broadleaf Theatre, a company that seeks to merge theatre praxis and environmentalism.

Carol Anderson

Three fragments – *gravity, density, kinesis* –

As a mover, I'm fascinated with forces that play through us and with us. Gravity and density temper the way we move, and we also make a lot of assumptions about them. They are undeniable characteristics of masses in our world – but they are also somewhat mutable and negotiable. As a 60-something mover, these elements have taken on a different meaning – there are choices to be made about our relationships with gravity, density, time, about learning how to stay in motion. Considering these elements with caution and respect is full of revelations about how we might move more lightly and fully, while the joy of being in motion is a constant. In January, 2018, joined by my exquisite dancing friends Terrill Maguire and Claudia Moore, I wove two of these fragments – *gravity* and *density* – into the fabric of a words/motion installation titled *gravity/grace/fall*.

Tree woman (Inside Cover)

An appetite for line and space sometimes leads me to the empty page, and the desire to make expressive use of simple elements – water, paper, colour, line. I really like fast gesture, though lacking expertise to inscribe elegant markings. The challenge of trying to inscribe the essence of an energy pathway inside a formal rectangle of white paper leads me to waste a lot of paper – but sometimes the muse is kind. While developing the score *A Dance in the Garden: Elemental* - a site specific work for six women dancers and musician - for the beautiful Oeno Gallery Sculpture Garden in Prince Edward County, I wanted to investigate the image of 'tree woman'. The summer of 2017 was hot and verdant, everything grew with abandon, deep roots and blooms. One day swift treewoman line drawings zoomed onto the page of my journal, as background ideas, research images, sketches...

A Professor Emerita of York U Dance, Carol Anderson is a dance artist whose practice and research embrace writing, choreography, teaching and ongoing engagement in figuring out how to dance forever.

Dayna McLeod *Uterine Concert Hall*

This diagram imagines *Uterine Concert Hall* as a viable, real place that is a site for *production*, not *reproduction*. *Uterine Concert Hall* is a vaginal media performance art piece that features my body as a concert venue. Equipped with a 54kHz internal speaker (Babypod™), my vaginal canal acts as the stage with my cervix as the proscenium, for the audience of my uterus. A live DJ pumps sound directly into me via 6-foot cable that reaches from their booth. My vaginal canal is the scene of the performance and the instrument of its production. External concertgoers are invited to eavesdrop via stethoscope, on the faint echoes of the recital through the very flesh of my body. Like showing up to a concert and listening from outside, this piece purposefully excludes listeners while engaging with explicit performance-based production practices, and feminist art practices of intimacy. *Uterine Concert Hall* is a site that questions cultural assumptions of women's bodies, our expectations of bodies marked female, and why we think we have the right to make any kinds of demands on these bodies in the first place. This project does this by using digital technologies and affordances to interrupt their intended functions (i.e. playing music for a uterus-bound fetus from an adjacent vaginal canal) that contribute to the medicalized surveillance and control culture of women's bodies.

More: uterineconcerthall.com

Dayna McLeod's work uses humour, and capitalizes on exploiting the body's social and material conditions using cabaret, duration, single channel video, and installation practices. daynarama.com

Natalie Alvarez Packing List

The field research for my book *Immersion in Cultural Difference: Tourism, War, Performance* (U of Michigan P, 2018) required me to be a participant-observer in a range of immersive sites in military training and dark tourism contexts. The image here was taken at one of these sites, an insurgent training camp run by the private military company Aeneas International for US Special Forces. The course is designed to immerse military personnel in the “cultural mindset” of the Afghan insurgent by living and operating as a “terrorist cell” for one week. Upon arrival at the training location in the Utah mountains, our cell phones and keys were confiscated, and we were not permitted to refer to our “real-world” identities from that point forward. I was given the *kunya* or *nom de guerre* “Noor Islam” and dressed in *shalwar khamis* as I appear here in this photo. The training week began each day with a morning prayer or *Salat*, followed by an examination of the oeuvre and tactics of infamous insurgent attacks, culminating in an afternoon “mission” given to us by our cell leaders, which we would plan and execute using weapons converted for Simunition fire. The camp trainers insisted that in this new frontier of irregular and asymmetrical warfare, “it is no longer sufficient to know the enemy, we must understand the enemy.” Empathy, they maintained, has become a key military strategy. The immersion began, arguably, as soon as I received this packing list in the introductory welcome letter: it threw me into a fantastical tailspin as I carried it with me to outdoor adventure stores to prepare my kit. I poured over its contents trying to discern—from the juxtapositions of chewing tobacco, weapons supply, lip balm, and skin lotion—who my fellow participants would be and what we would be asked to do. The list remains indicative of how, after this seven-day, immersive course, the Afghan insurgent remains, for me, a figment, exposing the limits and dangers of empathy as a military training strategy.

Natalie Alvarez is an associate professor in the Department of Dramatic Arts at Brock University.

Taiwo Afolabi With/Without

*Here's my hope: that **emotions** might move us to **social action**... that **empathy** might enhance our **critical thinking**... that we can beckon to a future characterized by **equity**... that sounds like the Utopia, don't you think?*

My research primarily focuses on refugees, internally displaced persons and theatre for social change. I explore diverse stories for different purposes – fun, dialogue, learning, relationship and social justice etc. I have seen the power of stories and how it can transform or change someone's perspective, decision and pursuit. I ponder on different stories and the need to create space for people's stories to bring about desired change because when we empathize, I think it gives wholeness to our thought. As a student, artist, theatre practitioner and a researcher who works among different communities – marginalized and un- marginalized, and diverse cultural settings, I consciously embrace stories that mirror the past, the present and perhaps provide lens into the future. Each story is carefully hidden, guarded and treasured in my heart. For instance, I cherish every conversation I have had – with bus drivers in Sudan, hawkers in Burkina Faso, traders in Iran, artists in Spain and Denmark, students in Canada and the United States, teachers in China and Ireland, policy makers in Nigeria and Cote D'Ivoire, strangers and friends; and many both known and unknown. At times, I situate myself in the context of some experiences while many experiences I cannot because it happened to the Other – them not me.

My reflection is an ongoing inquiry; a personal response through poetry to myriad of global issues with local realities that are neither peculiar nor particular to one location. The thought process is self-imposed and inspired by a series of stories and life's struggles among different generations. The concerns raised in this ongoing inquiry is no one's identity but we can identify with it because it forms and shapes our identities, personalities, relationships and daily pursuits. Although these poems are written in my words, the inspiration came from different communities that I have worked with – senior homes, refugee youths, immigrant workers, displaced persons, undocumented migrants and students. I have written this poem to honour their stories, burdens, words, perspectives and hopes. Therefore, as you read, I invite you to constantly remember that I am on an inquiry, my thought reflects my present position and it is influenced by my practice and thoughts of those that have gone ahead.

Taiwo Afolabi is an artist, a writer and a practitioner-researcher who is currently undertaking his doctoral studies at the University of Victoria, Canada.

John Astington *Quaking Custards*

John Astington's long-standing interest in jokes, the ridiculous, comedy, and comic theory (no, seriously) has tended to leak out from the edges of his more strait-laced work on early modern theatre history. The messiness of food and its consequences for the presumptions of human dignity have always been rich sources for comic performers, but the acts are harder to track the farther one goes back in time. This short piece attempts to suggest some continuities from Shakespeare's theatre to silent film.

John Astington is Professor Emeritus of English and Drama and a former Director of CDTPS, University of Toronto.

Seika Boye

This poem is not a manifestation of my research. It is a breath that has let me continue with my research on many occasions. I wrote it around the time I was accepted to do a PhD. My first son wasn't yet two. I was freelance writing and teaching. I would write with my son on the floor, sleeping just an arms-length away. But writing is a funny thing and it takes you such distances. When my son was young I think this was scary. One day I wrote this poem about the fear ... and the wonder. When I 'returned' to 'work' after my second son was born it became a meditation to read it. A copy sits on my shelf at work to this day. My babies are now five and ten. This is a reminder to myself that I am never far from them. They are in me. The research that I continue to do came into focus as an urgency when I became a mom. This poem is the embrace of our ongoing negotiation as mother and children and writing and research. I know I am not alone in what this entails.

Dr. Seika Boye is a dance scholar, writer, artist and educator. She is a Lecturer at the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies at the University of Toronto. Her research focuses on dance, dance advocacy, Blackness and historical omissions in Canadian history. She lives and works in Toronto with her husband and their two sons.

Heather Fitzsimmons-Frey *Costume Mashup*

These fragments are drawn from my research on nineteenth-century white, English girls, and their experience of at-home theatricals. I was struck by the instability of the term "girl," and the potential pleasures and pressures associated with dressing up (fancy dress).

Documents drawn from:

19th Century *Myra's Fashion* and *Hearth and Home* (GALE CENGAGE)

Heppel Family Private Collection, Kent, England

MacDonald Family Collection, Beinecke, Yale

Osborne Collection of Early Children's Literature, Toronto Public Library, Toronto

Trevelyan, Mary K. (Molly Bell), Special Collections, Robinson Library, Newcastle University, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne.

Heather Fitzsimmons Frey is a Banting Postdoctoral Fellow at York University with Marlis Schweitzer. Her project is "Rehearsing Revolutions: Amateur Theatre and Encounters Between 19th Century and 21st Century Girls.

Stephen Johnson *After Diderot*

I have been teaching Diderot's essay 'The Paradox of the Actor' to both undergraduate and graduate students for at least thirty years, and it always generates good debate. He certainly hit a nerve that keeps people flinching—it's an essential statement of the way most actors (all actors?) seem to feel as they prepare a role. Am I myself, or the other, or both, or neither, or a hybrid, or...? We talk it through, we move on to...oh, I don't know...Schlegel. And yet, it seems to me that the 'paradox,' as very much a work of the Enlightenment, can be summed up as a rational statement of an irrational event. What is it, really, but a simple equation? Or so I imagine. This, speaking as someone who, in a former life, studied Mathematics, and loved it most when it was most incomprehensible. As a final side-note: my own experience is that the camaraderie of Math students in seeking to understand, to create, to tease out a puzzling proof together, is the nearest I have ever come to the camaraderie of the rehearsal.

Stephen Johnson studies and writes about performance and popular culture, and teaches at the University of Toronto. He is from Lowville, Ontario.

Claire Carolan Clifton Hill and Goldney Avenue

As a practicing scenographer, working on a dissertation about scenography, buried in words and more words my brain cries out for non-textual sensory stimulation - a visual snack. I nudge myself over and through writing blocks by feeding my mind through my eyes. I escape from my desk out into the neighborhood with the goal of actually viewing things differently, framing them with the camera lens in ways I have not looked at them before. This break takes me physically away from the writing desk to reset my thinking and clearing the way for new perspectives. These two pictures are of a very busy intersection at the intersection of Clifton Hill and Goldney Avenue up the hill from the University of Bristol. My goal was to capture it in a moment of calm and really see the fine details of the setting behind the action and how they communicate.

Claire Carolan inhabits space in various West Coast universities as a scenographer/doctoral candidate/educator intrigued by the language of scenographies and teaching others the complexities of that language.

Matt Jones with Sarah Marchand, Amanda Cordner, En Lai Mah ASMRtist

In the summer of 2017, I worked as a dramaturg on ASMRtist, a play about the relationship between anxiety and sound. The play began as exploration of an internet phenomenon known as Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR). ASMR refers to the way that certain stimulations can have a direct effect on the body, triggering pleasant “tingling” sensations and soothing a person who is undergoing stress. Today, YouTube is full of videos of young ASMRtists speaking in gentle tones, running their fingers across smooth glass, popping bubble wrap, opening zippers, crinkling paper, pretending to comb hair. People watch them to ease their stress, calm their anxiety, and ease themselves to sleep. We wanted our play to explore sensations that could have this effect on our creative team. To find examples of what those might be, I conducted interviews with the cast, asking them about sights, sounds, smells, and other sensations that had a strong resonance for them. While the material didn’t end up being used in the final production, the interviews unlocked memories that were vividly imagistic, intimate, and strangely intriguing.

Matt Jones (University of Toronto) writes about performance and global politics. mattjones.space

Alexandra Simpson *Land-Based Mask Building*

I am investigating a performance creation practise that is based upon the nurturing of assemblages through land-based learning. This mode of learning is formalized through Land-based Mask Building, a methodology I am exploring in my doctoral studies as a form of bio-ethnographic research which involves listening, responding and co-collaborating with the stories hardest to hear, the ones that are embedded within landscapes. Land-Based Mask Building, inspired by Leanne Simpson's *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back* and the theories of Jane Bennett, who views individual bodies as a cumulative array of bodies (microscopic organisms that support human and nonhuman life), involves extensive observation and kinaesthetic explorations within an environment, the gathering of found materials, and then mask building. The artist underneath the mask becomes an amalgamation of themselves, the experience they had with the landscape and the creation of something new (i.e. the performance or piece of writing that is created from the mask). Land-based mask work can incorporate diverse perspectives, species, histories, levels of animacies and geographic locations in its creation and within its potential story outputs. I am currently exploring Land-based Mask Building as a means to re-interpret common stories within the news media, industry and arts and to identify a univocal multiplicity among living and nonliving beings.

Alexandra Simpson is an artist-activist and a PhD student at York University researching cultural narratives surrounding the oil industry through the lenses of performance and multi-species studies. She is the co-artistic leader of Animacy Theatre Collective (animacytheatrecollective.com). We tell stories that are driven by women; use humor and physical storytelling to raise social awareness; and involve characters who defy pre-existing borders (species, material and gender binaries).

Sandra Chamberlain-Snider *Blurred Lines*

My secret desire to be a poet has bled into my work as a grad student. The performance of children and youth on stage has a poetic quality that is revealed in the grainy archival photos I have come across in my years researching theatre history in Canada. The late 19th and early 20th century images of young people dressed up as fairies, nymphs, pirates, and royalty, a mixture of fairytales, romance, and history kindled the creative as well as the academic inside me. The ekphrastic nature of this poem harkens back to my undergrad years in English literature. And while those early photographers may or may not have considered their work as art per se, we can perceive the influence of those images as both art and archive. Historical images have the power to stir the imagination just as we look to our contemporary artists to create work that does the same. The idea of the historian as both spectator and creator is something that resonates with the young people in theatre that I research. Sometimes the first theatre these young people see and remember is the art that they themselves create. Although my dissertation and current research are grounded in the contemporary world of Canadian theatre training for young people, I am constantly drawn to the imagined world of performance promised in those photos.

Sandra Chamberlain-Snider is a Theatre History Phd Candidate at the University of Victoria studying pre-professional theatre training for young people in English Canada.

Jenn Cole, *Kiji Sibi*

My current research explores art-making practices that engage reciprocal relationships with the orders of creation and Indigenous resurgence as well as broken treaties, resource extraction, and colonial forgetting. In 2016, I began to map my way through the process of Biskabiyaang, or a decolonizing personal return to my Anishinaabeg ancestry through performance. These images are traces of drawings I did in durational performance at the American Society for Theatre Research conference in Minneapolis. As I spoke to people about their grandparents, gaps in the family archive, and lost family recipes, I made my way through family documents and materials about the Kiji Sibi (Ottawa River) of my home territory. Here is a map of the Kiji Sibi watershed against a map my great grandfather Gordon Dufoe drew of how to cross-track a moose in winter so that you can draw him, with cut ups of the *Métis Voyageur* and simple leaf drawings after my grandpa's forestry school notebook. Who is Mrs. Tooley? I am still trying to find out. As well, some text from the Nibi Song, which goes: *Ne-be Gee Zah-gay- e- goo Gee Me-gwetch -wayn ne- me - goo Gee Zah Wayn ne- me- goo* or Water, we love you. We thank you. We respect you.'

Jenn Cole is a Post-Doctoral Fellow with the Aging Activisms Research Collective and Gender and Women's Studies at Trent University.

Submissions

'Gatherings' is a Chapbook series co-edited by Stephen Johnson and Jenn Cole and printed at Coach House. We invite works that, in some measure and by some means, emerge from individual research, through creative expression.

We seek short works of poetry, prose, diagrammatic playfulness of any kind, or drawing, painting, photography, digital manipulations, visual traces of performance and other works of art that we might be able to reproduce in a small volume.

For any questions you may have, we invite you to read our 'Manifesto' or to contact us.

We will begin reviewing submissions for the next issue on **June 15, 2018**.

Style and Submission Guidelines

Submissions should ideally be kept to whatever can be included on one page. We invite imaginative formatting and original formal expression. Please submit text documents in docx, jpeg or PDF file formats and in high resolution (600 dpi).

We ask that, along with your submission, you send a 200-word summary of the work that contextualizes its production in association with your research and a one-line bio that includes your affiliation.

Please send submissions to performancegatherings@gmail.com, with the subject line, "Gatherings Submission."

If you have comments, we would be very interested in hearing them. This is a work in progress. We hope it always will be.

Looking forward to your creative submissions!

Stephen Johnson and Jenn Cole, Co-Editors

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