



36

Upon the fabricatory

'In the Open or In Stealth',

curated by **Raqs Media Collective,**
A Viewer (**Shveta Sarda**) Braids a Verse

Quaderns portàtils
MACBA

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In Tsonga, the wane of the Moon is referred to as *ku shwela dambo*, when the Moon is ‘found by the rising sun to be still in the sky, not having yet dipped below the horizon’. The term *shwela* applied to the last quarter means ‘to be surprised in the morning’.

From the reading *Venus Modjadji Rising*, P.G. Alcock, part of Kabelo Malatsie’s infra-curation *Punya otswe buladu*, within *In the Open or In Stealth*.

In this text, Shveta Sarada braids the seen, heard, sensed and mulled from her walks through the exhibition *In the Open or in Stealth* (MACBA, from 31 October 2018 to 17 March 2019), with words from the artists’ writings and interviews, and with Raqs’ sources and notes for the exhibition. Sometimes, the boundaries blur. If *In the Open or In Stealth* is a thicket of the world considered inside a museum space, this text is a coursing through it, one among varied possibilities of telling by one amongst its many viewers.

A cloud of dust

with

Huma Mulji, Atelier of Hieronymus Bosch, John Gerrard

All who dwell here

with

Ge Ba, Bhagwati Prasad, Rupali Gupte & Prasad Shetty, Joe Nishizawa, and Kabelo Malatsie’s infra-curatorial project (with Tito Zungu, Neo [Hlasko] Mahlasela, NTU [Bogosi Sekhukhuni + Nolan Oswald Dennis + Tabita Rezaire], Shinichiro Watanabe, Nolan Oswald Dennis, plants, and miscellaneous readings)

Whirling

with

Liao Fei, Tito Zungu, Mark Chung, Dillon Marsh, Geumhyung Jeong, Marzia Farhana, Cristina Lucas, Muhannad Shono, Mehreen Murtaza, Charles Lim, Racter, Rohini Devasher, Nontsikelelo Mutiti, Hassan Khan, Abhishek Hazra, Bahar Noorizadeh, Lucy Parker, Rosa Barba, Jeamin Cha, Santiago Ramón y Cajal

Maligned states

with

Lantian Xie, Ivana Franke

Epilogue

List of works

Notes

A cloud of dust

What raises this dust; what has got dislodged?

The sky is not threatened; trees are not turning diminutive.

'A seismic realignment of capital is taking place in the world right now.'

A circumference that is locatable. A sighting that might be in passing.

In the absence of immediate clues the question itself is the geography — Something has been dislodged; it raises dust.

'Productive forces (a nebulous ensemble of resources, technologies, and energies), means of production (increasingly circumscribed into juridical and political structures that can no longer contain what they seek to govern), and production relations (as volatile as ever) are triangulating in ways that are breaking apart existing structures and rendering anew in unclear, faint, and tangled lines.'

A state that is neither settled nor blowing over, both potentially engulfing and seemingly constant in its distance. This is not an *Angelus Novus* moment. You do step closer.

'The juggler spins a stick covered in tassels and braids with his mouth. The stick-spine breaks into a whirl of dance.'

The image by Huma Mulji at the start of the exhibition is titled, *Sarwar Road: July 26th 2011*.

'The city removes something that exists, to create a real-estate possibility. In Karachi, a water tank gives way.'

A dysfunctional but brilliant presence, a presence that both evoked a time and expressed incongruity with place and time, is dislodged. This is quotidian; it happens everywhere, all the time.

'One morning, I saw labourers hacking away at the tower. I hadn't come prepared to see this.'

Something new will replace what is demolished. We don't know what form the new will take, but it will be made to be more in sync with time.

'Future intrudes into the present, changing its contours, its material structure.'

Between something falling and something being anticipated, a burst of red between the blue sky and green and brown earth, this is a beautiful dust, a punctuation, thick with anticipation and anxiety, incongruent and filled with the potential of what was before, a caesura, a moment in which the future catches her breath.

'These intimations, these alignments, these trends, are difficult to describe in the familiar languages of concert and conflict, affinity and antagonism, individuality and collectivity. What are they, these new alignments? How can we disentangle them?'

Will this dust settle and a new image emerge? Or will this dust rise ever more, thicken, and obscure?

We are at a threshold.

'Intermittent rebellions, sometimes accompanied by cybernetic suicide or sometimes by rogue algorithm raves, rise in tandem with attempts to exorcise the ghosts that haunt the machinery of capital. This is both commonplace, and it is the news.'

On the other side of a slight wall, inside a room, on a screen, is a frog. It is afloat, suspended in zero gravity, forearms and hind legs flung out wide, as if caught mid-leap, *in medias res*. These are moments in which we take in this world — dust rising, something afloat.

'The distant future can seem more familiar than the deep present. We know it will come, regardless of whether or not we are around to witness it.'

It is in an indoor space — a lab, a space shuttle. On the screen it is large enough to be almost human scale and its heart is beating steadily underneath its skin. Now thoughtful, now indifferent, now ready to leap, now watchful, alarmed, inward, confused, at peace, dreamy — affects arise from it and gather in the room. They are not in response to the white-gloved human hands framing the frog and striking repeated poses, coming at it threateningly, confronting it, moving away with palms up as if ready to catch if it leapt.

Here is a frog — without an above or below. Like a dust cloud blurring the border between near and far, past and present.

The frog on the screen is not a recording but a simulation of *X. laevis*, which is also the name of this work by John Gerrard. 'Plentiful in ponds and rivers within the south-eastern portion of Sub-Saharan Africa', a curious viewer softly reads out from Wikipedia on her phone, leaning in to her companion. 'This animal is widely used because of its powerful combination of experimental tractability and close evolutionary relationship with humans.'

'In 1992, frogs were made to reproduce in space for the first time. This was a real event, but it is recalled here as a simulation. The frog – a female frog – is dreaming of experiments in the 1780s and 90s when Luigi Galvani dissected dead frogs to investigate neuro-electricity.'

All of a sudden, the frog's hind legs jerk with a force from nowhere, sending her trembling, tumbling, galvanising, uncontrollably somersaulting off her constant, invisible zone of suspension.

'She remembers the shocks delivered to her dead sisters.'

The verb 'galvanised' – to stimulate by or as if by a galvanic current; to startle into sudden activity; stimulate – comes from the French *galvaniser*, after Luigi Galvani. His experiments led to the recognition of the relationship between electricity and life. His nephew, Giovanni Aldini, publicly demonstrated the electro-simulation of the corpse of George Foster, and though Mary Shelley was far too young at the time, connections are drawn. The year Shelley began writing *Frankenstein* and John William Polidori *The Vampyre* – and this happened in the same room – was also the year Hoffman published *Sandman* with the lifelike automaton Olimpia, a story that Freud drew on for his concept of the uncanny. This was 1816.

Frogs live between water and land; this frog is suspended in zero-gravity. She is narrating vitality – for there is undoubtedly a connection that binds pulsing and life – but she is not living.

1816 was a year of a summer without a summer, a year in which the summer never came. A mountain erupted on an island, its volcanic ash covered skies, bringing unseasonable rains, making things comfortless and unfamiliar, changing the world with disease, infection, crop failure, movement of people, and killing many animals and humans. A dust rose, making things contiguous and contagious, disturbing habits of thought. It produced spectacular red sunsets.

There is something *unheimlich* about this simulated, suspended frog.

'A game engine gives rise to what you see. It emerges more from flight simulation and battlefield simulation that emerged from military research and are driven by the modeling of reality, not the recording of reality... You're witnessing data in transit.'

Watching it is like gathering historical clues and seeing a horizon of the present. Among other things, it makes a short-haired, bespectacled woman wonder what lies 'behind' – she turns around and finds herself looking at a video of *The Haywain Triptych* (1500-1516) by the Atelier of Hieronymus Bosch.

'The video scans the 500-year-old painting to locate a frog. Is it ascending or descending?'

You are here: Sitting on bench, a pebble in your shoe, at rest somewhere at a point on an arc of 500 years of European history, mediated by protean creatures. The moment of ascent and descent is everywhere, every time, at all moments. Slowly, very slowly, her rhythmic heartbeat, as if brings the frog back to her encirclement in this space without gravity. How come she is not like a fish out of water, flapping uncontrollably in space, a tall woman in a back-brace wonders out loud to her attendant.

Gravity – that 'consequence of the curvature of space-time caused by an uneven distribution of mass' – connects, builds a relational field. Luce Irigaray has written about how, in drawing her first breath, an infant both attains her own, autonomous self and, at the same time, becomes inextricably woven into the amazing web of life. Her 'own' self, as the first breath she draws in is also a cut away – it is her first autonomous gesture of life that was till then sustained through her connection with her mother, inside her womb. Inter-dependence, for this breath, this inhaled air, connects her to everyone, everywhere. This zero gravity space, with its simulated she-frog with her unruly dream world and telling pulse, her eyes and body in conversation with an elsewhere, elsewhere, elsewhere, is like that sharp intake of breath – into which web? Here, then, a proposal towards a new allegory of our time: a frog out of gravity.

All who dwell here

Credo Mutwa, Zulu shaman from South Africa, tells us through Kabelo Malatsie:

‘Before human beings were created on this planet, there had existed a very wise race of people known as the Imanyukela. These people had come from the constellation known to white people as Orion, and they had inhabited our Earth for thousands and thousands of years. Before they left our Earth to return once more to the sacred Spider constellation, they made a great evacuation under the earth, beneath the Ruwensory Mountains – the Mountains of the Moon.’

A solar flare, a lunar eclipse, an earthquake, a road accident, the rise and fall of graphs of stock markets, big data movements. We know from experience that the closer a thing is, the bigger it gets. And the thunderous gravitational pull of colliding black holes that reaches us after a journey of a zillion years? The earth is bathed in them, but their energies produce small fluctuations, are sensed as a whisper, in a disturbance.

‘And deep in the bowels of Mother Earth, the Imanyukela built a city of copper buildings. A city with a wall of silver all around it. A city built at the huge mountain of pure crystal. The mountain of knowledge. The mountain from which all knowledge on Earth comes. And a mountain to which all knowledge on Earth ultimately returns.’

Muddling the logic of proximity and distance, this next room – I find myself taking a few circles around it – feels like an invitation to sense life not through incidents and accidents of history but in the perturbations and fluctuations, the plenitude and kindness, of vital forces that are always around us.

‘Much to my amazement, in 1975, years after I heard this story from an old woman who had heard it as a young girl from her grandmother, there arrived at my home in Soweto a friendly bright priest from Tibet, whom I still regard as a great friend of mine, and who nearly knocked me over by asking me, “Do you know anything about the city of copper, which is said to be somewhere in Central Africa?” Though initially stricken dumb by astonishment I soon said in reply, “Yes, honourable Rin Poche. In the days I was travelling through the land of the Watutsi and the Bahutu, the land that was then known as Rwanda Urundi, I heard a story about this mysterious city.”’

Before he draws us into the present through his narration, the shaman tells us to be aware: ‘Sometimes an African story can be confirmed by a man from Tibet’.

The wall on the left curves. It has on it colours from a hundred suns – orange, yellow, black, deep red, white on maroon, blue, green, and brown, dark earth with light sky, dark reds, greens, and tangerine, white, black, also red on orange, orange on red, and red over pink, brown, lavender and peach. There are slow swirls and straight lines, they contain the beauty of the night, of a rising moon, a cityscape and a vestibule lit by a ceiling lamp, of twilight, dusk and dawn, of mountains, of a jet passing over a town, a tiny scrap, a blooming garden, silence, whispers, midnight, a clouded sky and sunshine.

‘A congealment of shaping futures.’

Gaining extra courage and some elbowroom from the concave curve of colours, a giant, purple fruit-form has billowed nearby, its bulge squatting in the space. It’s like air in the room itself has folded in to form a pouch, a cavity, a space within this place. So voluptuous. And it seems to have stopped mid-growth where it reached the ceiling. When you walk around it to the other side, it has an opening for entering. The inside is radiant, inviting – orange, cave-like, and bathed in warm yellow light. Rupali Gupte & Prasad Shetty’s *Belly of the Strange* is quirky and erotic. All over, inside, there are a hundred short wooden pegs, each with an open, facedown book, like triangles with an open base.

‘A man is visited by a strange blue creature’, a reader is reading out to her companion from a thin sliver of a book she has taken down from a peg. ‘Is it a bug?’ Her companion, in turn, is silently reading the spines, taking in the spectrum as it were. *A Long Way Away. Enigma. The Star Diaries*. ‘Is it an alien? Where did it come from?’ She is opening some of the books to look inside. *Triangle. What Can I Be? The Outsiders. La Guerra de Los Mundos*. Each book opens into an expanse and a different dimension – a map to a strange land, a jungle, a starry sky, an unknown dimension, an unfamiliar time – inviting exploration, like maps for becoming lost. ‘What does it want?’ *El Eternauta. Amigos. The Long Tomorrow. The Visitor*.

‘Transactional objects’, Rupali and Prasad have written elsewhere of their fascination for and investigation into configurations of space and form specific to different cities, ‘include extensions on streets, folding shops of vendors, porting devices, resting apparatus, fixtures set up on boundary walls to occupy them and claim space and’, in the vein of a book in the *Belly*, ‘orphaned furniture left for wanderers’.

The reader and her companion turn the page to a double-spread in which the man and the visitor are looking up at a dark, wonder-filled sky.

Outside, the arc of colours in thirty-two squares of unframed canvases, with sides of a foot-&a-half each, beckons. In China in the 1960s – in the years of purging and violence, and the destruction of sedimented symbols of art and culture, years in which the young roamed the cities, towns and villages to banish existing customs, continuing culture, subsisting habits and burgeoning ideas, and went up mountains and down to the countryside so that, and starting when, the entire world would be remade and turned – a multitude of women layered old repurposed clothes in friendly competition and gifted them to one another. *Ge Ba* means ‘textile paintings’ – they are of repurposed fabric, made to be cut up for shoe insoles or padding for collars and suchlike. Composed using rags by women now anonymous, this expression, gesture of solidarity, mutuality of play – is this a manuscript, and does it have a language?

Further in along the curving wall, delicately dense black lines on stretched-out, translucent white skin map out a known-unknown terrain in nine frames of *Begumpura Series: A Place Without Sorrow* by Bhagwati Prasad. Elsewhere, Raqs has described them as ‘complex navigational diagrams that chart paths and currents between an expanding archipelago of many selves, many kinds of selves, the cosmos and consciousness.’

Take a line from the middle and follow it as it turns from a loudspeaker into an alien into a trumpet into a peacock into an arched doorway into a cactus into a snake. The lines merge worlds of animal, *techne* and habitat.

Begumpura is a city without sorrow, a place of bliss imagined by the tanner-mystic Ravidas in the fifteenth century. It is an audacious image of equality by a man who, from the depths of a profoundly hierarchical and cruel system of social organisation, declares himself a *khallas chamara*, a tanner now free. He envisions bliss for everyone. *Jo hum sahari su meet hamara*: we are all co-inhabitants, co-travellers in a land of equals. We have been misplaced into equality, are already in Begumpura.

There are figures and places and things, but also a merging of lines. There are ‘oceans, forests, deserts, cities, waste, machines, animals, tools, homo sapiens, machines’, but they don’t end, or begin. The more I travel through it with my eyes, the more I lose my point of return in this blueprint to equality that comes from another century but is of my time.

The songs of Ravidas are sung even today. These drawings in fine lines – in black ink with a bamboo stylus – have a lilt, like that of a recitation. Neither a decoding nor a depiction of the Begumpura of Ravidas, it is also not a displacement of all the uncountable recitations that continue or have come before. They carry a sediment, inhabit a chaos, eschew the discrimination of order – it is the charm and

enchantment of a world of equality from the Begumpura of Ravidas being carried into an equality of beings and things in *Begumpura*.

‘This is a palace to walk in together. We walk within it, with each other.’

On the other side of the *Belly*, on the far wall, two flowering plants are growing in the soil of a starry night sky. ‘Plants are clever; they have an uncanny power to predict thunderstorms.’ Overhearing the curly-haired woman wearing a jacket with pockets, collar raised, read animatedly from a text on the table, others in the room take an almost undetectable step closer. Behind them, printed within the night sky is a star chart – with Kinshasa, Addis Ababa, Dodoma, Yaoundé, Cairo, Lilongwe, Maseru, Algiers, Bangui, Conakry; we are located in a cosmos of cities. *Black Liberation Zodiac* by Nolan Oswald Dennis isn’t a planisphere, because it doesn’t have rotating disks, but it reminds me of one – an instrument to assist in locating stars in the sky from whichever latitude on Earth you are on.

I take a picture –

– of a drawing by Tito Zungu of a house on a postcard that has been positioned so the star-filled night sky is behind it.

A house has taken the cover of the sky; a sky is sensed through imagined pulsations of the house. In fragments, a vastness appears: sky is remade immense; home is ‘worlded’. Scales are rearranged, brought into a relationship, and each thing becomes more and tends towards its own immeasurability.

A reader wearing deep red lipstick picks up one of Kabelo’s printouts of texts from the table.

‘A world where gravity has been replaced by weightlessness. With no up or down, architecture could be freed from Earth-bound requirements such as a ceiling or floor... [Balashova] took on the challenge of making the void habitable, conceiving each minute detail.’

Taking a few steps forward, she watches an old woman and a young child hold hands and walk silently along the colours of the curving wall, their eyes moving over lines and halting briefly at the disjoints of the brief fragment from a long century, its friendly congregations of the small and interstitial, its sensation of a while in which many people lived in another time within an unrelenting time.

‘There are no restrictions here; all can go wherever they desire’, said Ravidas, and that here ‘there is no hierarchy; all are equal’ and ‘there is no sorrow, no fear, no taxes’. *It has Broken Away from the Chain of Petitions*, says Bhagwati, and *It is Welcoming to Warriors* in a frame in which a figure has emerged wielding something like tools,

something reminiscent of weapons carried by a male god, and is part human, part robot, part divine, part animal, and part dirt. There is no separation – near or far, old or new, up yet down, hygienic or unclean, noxious or wholesome, toxic but healing, useful or beautiful, poetic or profane. Nothing is banished. This is the heresy – the freedom these drawings are exhaling like mist over all – of not choosing what you care for. It comes not from not having a luxury of choice, but from having something entirely different – equality and abundance of everything, for everyone, and with all.

‘Begumpura is here, always around and through us. We are always passing through it.’

In cities, according to Rupali and Prasad, objects open, close, expand, extend, withdraw, roll, spread, provide shade, engulf. They afford flows – to bodies, commodities, ideas, and money – increasing exchanges, activities and densities of a space. As urbanist-architects, they seek, note, trace, emulate, design and give names to these objects, these ideas, as a way to heighten a reading of the porosities urban dwellers create between clear boundaries that are supposed to girdle and rule lives. Their ‘Poky Sphere’ is a sphere with spokes for it to stand on, and to hang things from, and on which it can be rolled away when at risk of a municipal seizure; ‘Day & Night One-Foot Shop’ is a phenomenon of the dusk when the daytime part of miraculously thin shops close and, using the holes on the shutters of one and spikes on the other, a night-time shop comes up in between; there is also ‘A Quilt to Make Love In’, ‘Box Type Restaurant’, ‘Card Table’, and more. *The Belly of the Strange* is such an object turned into an imaginary space – a city pore has grown, become enlarged. The analytical scale of the city is changed; inside it we are outside defined relational guidelines.

On stepping out of the *Belly*, at the turn of the corner, the reader, the woman in a jacket, the woman wearing red lipstick, the old woman, the child, the man and his visitor and all other passers-by come upon a photographic mural.

In Joe Nishizawa’s *Inside of the LHD (Large Helical Device)*, a human – in a blue protective suit with see-through material where their eyes are – is standing amidst massive metallic tubes to which endless coiling gives both a wisp-like and a visceral quality.

Their body is bending slightly, looking in at the thicket of tubes coiling out before them, a gloved hand gently on the closest metallic surface.

This is a segment of the world’s second largest helical device, which consists of two continuous intertwined helical coils to harness nuclear power through fusion. It is built on the concept of the stellarator, which, says Wikipedia, was designed in 1951 for the possibility of harnessing the power source of the sun, a stellar object. The human person looks small, engulfed. In the belly of the Earth, something can uncoil, never to be tamed

back into desired shapes. What humans produce exceeds the human, produces its own mystery and threat.

Our group of friendly visitors turns towards a comfortable sofa some steps away, *Black Liberation Zodiac* around them, a full circle back into Kabelo’s infra-curated space, and sit down to watch Shinichiro Watanabe’s 1998 anime, *Cowboy Bebop* (episodes nine and fourteen).

It’s after 2071; the earth is almost uninhabitable, humanity has taken over other planets, and bounty hunters called Cowboys travel in their spaceship *Bebop*, chasing criminals and outlaws for a reward.

‘Why the hell would they want to live there of all places?’ Faye asks about a people living amidst the wreckage of hyperspace gateways. ‘No government, no nationality, no taxes, and no cops... [There’s] freedom’, Jet replies.

The bounty hunters keep encountering an abundance of forgotten, abandoned or hidden landscapes and ways of living and moralities, forming new friendships and solidarities.

‘They keep failing in space, but they inevitably end up saving the world.’

As if in communication with the joyous Zodiac signs in the sky on the wall, an abandoned weather satellite draws ‘mysterious doodles’ on the surface of the Earth in one episode.

‘Suspend belief and take a lead from ‘hijibiji’ – a world outside fixed logic. Use it as a way of countering restrictions to find ways – other ways – to other energies.’

A stretch of drawings – waves congealing into forms – of beings and landscapes by Neo (Hlasko) Mahlasela joins Cowboy Bebop and a six-minute video, *Interview with Maxwell Chikumbutso, founder and technical director of SAITH HOLDINGS 2015* by NTU (Bogosi Sekhukhuni, Nolan Oswald Dennis, Tabita Rezaire).

‘I want to instigate a break with inherited empirical logic systems, to tread heavily beyond the expected and inherited, and set a collision course for unlikely starting points’, Kabelo writes.

The Zimbabwean innovator and entrepreneur, a self-taught scientist, talks about how he invented free-energy cars, batteries, generators, helicopters.

‘If we have proper devices, proper materials, we can harness free energy... It can be a wind tipper; it can be a hydropower station... The patent office said, “No!”... Anything that goes against physics is not industrially applicable... We realised that what we were working with was too dangerous because it is energy.’

Energy is everywhere – it comes to us from the sun, it is in the wind, lightning, it rains down on us, flows in rivers, radiates through the cosmos and from each of us. We harness it; that needs techne. And so it would seem it is the mediation of techne that partitions and redistributes abundance, makes it scarce, divides it up into useful and polluting, in turn assigning us as useful or polluting, rendering us unequal. A search for freedom – re-imagining social relationships, whether in a city or for the world – inevitably takes us to the need and the desire for a different idea of, and a re-imagination of, techne.

‘Toi moi, moi toi, antar kaisa?’ Ravidas asked, ‘What is the difference between you and I, between me and you?’ and answered, ‘It’s like the difference between gold and its bangle, water and its wave’. By attending to different imaginations of the world, letting go of the separation between the apparent and the withheld, the manifest and the imperceptible – perhaps we could also say between that which stays in the open and that which comes to us in stealth – the works in this room make heaven and earth collide, multiplying protagonists. Artists-as-attendants recite a world – as potential, and with a care for that potential – to elicit a response both from us and from that world and make us of it.

Room one, that arc of history, is like a shoreline we have left, a line in the sand that has been drawn, and crossed. This room, and the works here call to a different urge: walk across, muddle up, blur, break, and pour through blockages, partitions, barriers, assigned routes and walls. We are all stellar. Every point in the universe is a source of energy; pores, grime, dirt, rags, pegs enlarge, move, light up, become incandescent, burn; there is no such thing as dead leather, for all leather drums up beats.

‘There is indeed such a thing as measured, cadenced rhythm’, Deleuze wrote. It relates to the coursing of a river between its banks. But ‘there is also a rhythm without measure, which relates to the upswell of a flow’. That upswell must be the mysterious charge in this room – ‘a movement that can rise up at any point’. In oceans, swells (also called surface gravity waves) are created by storms thousands of miles away from the beach where they break; ‘the propagation of the longest swells being limited only by shorelines’. In being drawn together, these works become blueprints for, and navigation charts into, that shared expanse.

Whirling

Storms feed hurricanes. I read about them online: Bands of thunderstorms spiral; warm, moisture-laden air rises from the surface of water; surrounding air pushes in, swirls; clouds form, and spin.

‘An incremental circling of a coming storm.’

They become a system – a storm-system. ‘As the storm-system rotates – faster, still faster – an eye forms at its centre.’

‘An unpredictable, unbounded, shifting force.’

Two hurricanes have opened their eyes on two screens connected by a line – one in the South China Sea in the Northern Hemisphere, the other in the Coral Sea, off the north-east coast of Australia. A migrant sends a letter home from the heart of a deeply turbulent South Africa of the 1960s, in a decorated envelope.

‘The ash of a bird’s bones falls on the mirror of smoothness. A random bubble floats on your coffee cup. The shape of the limit stays only for a moment.’

A man runs. Both his run and the moment he is in are unending.

‘I wish to create virtual eternity.’

Extracted materials carry affect; they haunt landscapes, re-enchanting them. Copper revisits its now empty and deserted mines, looming in the landscape in the form of a sphere in Okiep, Nababeep, Springbok, Concordia, Copperton and Phalaborwa. A sphere of copper beside a pond stands doubled by its reflection. Another is stuck mid-flight. Yet another has come to rest inside water but does not make it ripple. Each haunting has the specificity of a ‘figure of thought’.

Geological, of the weather, and to do with the force of different bodies and materials – wide and indeterminate time horizons of the contemporary collide. Multiple intensities gather between sweeping arcs and specific histories.

‘Virality, contagion and exchange between eros, labour, energy, knowledge and power mark the frontiers of everyday life.’

A woman creates a machinic form, part analogue, part digital – she gives it the head of a human male, a camera for an eye, and a tripod as body. It takes in the world, and in the world is also mirrored an image of its own self. The body is clumsy. It falls as it moves, coming apart. But it comes together again. The human and the machine have joined erotically; they love each other. The image is grainy and unclear.

‘Intimacies are integrated, distributed, and dissolved. An emergent geometry of peer-to-peer network battles the geographies of an internet of debt and rent. Communiqués are being issued to unknown addressees. Incommensurable solidarities are at work across continental shelves of territory, time, and taxonomy.’

Different forms of intelligence shape this world. Not alien to the human, the machinic gives humans access to who they are, to their affective beings, to the power of their being, perhaps more strongly than humans can within their own means. The machinic is, after all, an intelligence created by the human practice of intelligence.

‘We too are attracted to them, but this allure has not found a description between us.’

Poems by Racter, the resident AI, are inscribed on a wall not far away:

*A tree or shrub can grow and bloom.
I am always the same.
But I am clever.*

‘Different tenses, the present continuous and the future imperfect, are stammering at each other like long-distance lovers at two ends of a jagged chat line.’

The eye is punctured. Pipes emerging from two engines are spilled on the floor like entrails. Amidst them, dinosaurs wander, wolves look out, a fan whirs and monsters roam. It is not possible to conclude whether things are emerging or if they are becoming more steeped, if they are arising or being tied down to keep them contained, if they are being discarded or if they are incubating new life.

‘Something of the future is in the present when time feels apocalyptic.’

Nothing is conclusive; we have to think in movement. Things have not closed down, and they have not expressed themselves fully. And in between lies a whole different world. This feeling of being poised between different energies and moments also travels between works. The storm-systems being mapped in real time between two seas in different hemispheres in Liao Fei’s *A Sculpture of the Earth* create a tumultuous horizon through which the *Airplane*, drawn by Tito Zungu with a ballpoint on an envelope, appears to take flight, like an as-yet unopened message to the future from another time. The future is being called into the present.

‘The work of art is to be augury and argument at the same time. Can tomorrow’s blur be a provisionally high-resolution image for here, for now?’

Like the beautiful dust and upswell in the rooms before, another interval of time is being gathered. An unopened message from one time to another, en route between places, it has the quality of a decorated envelop: it is both an interval and a correspondence; unopened; rich with something. It has the force of carrying, and it has not revealed itself fully.

‘It is a question of re-ordering what can take primacy. It is to insist on the sorority of dreams, whimsy, desires.’

The man continues to run in Mark Chung’s *I Follow the Sun, Forever*; we do not know if it is towards or away from the sun. The engine-entrails of Marzia Farhana’s *Act of Resistance* give image to what we sense viscerally – that something new will emerge from within what has been destroyed, and that we do not yet know what may be. Human and the machinic are indistinguishable in Geumhyung Jeong’s *Record Stop Play*. And on the outer wall of this room, exquisite, unidentifiable, anxiety-inducing symbionts are breaking out and proliferating in Rohini Devasher’s *Genetic Drift*. Like something unknown that was latent, was always already there, has suddenly surfaced, and we are not sure if we fear we will be sucked in or if perhaps we actively desire to inhabit it.

‘The fishwife’s dream finds her entangled in the tentacles of an octopus. The woman, a pearl diver, no longer knows of any separation between her orgasm and the creature’s spasms. She exclaims, “Oh! Boundaries and borders gone! I’ve vanished!”

The sense of unresolved tension within each thing, of being between flows in a freshly intercepted geography and its unknown, new riddles of time, of there being something with you always that moves but does not accept there is only one possible direction to go in, and which can turn and mould and mutate in multiple ways – this is plurality of living.

Our band of viewers from the last room – the tall woman in a back-brace and her attendant, the curly-haired woman wearing a jacket with pockets and the reader wearing deep red lipstick – find themselves gathered together again in front of another large screen, one placed diagonally many steps into the room with a projection on it. It is music from here that’s pervading the room.

A generation is taking a step hurling stones at the infrastructure their future generations are expected to stay indebted to. A man swings his arm joyfully as he throws a stone, then leaves; two women walk to the front of the factory, laugh as they each throw a stone, and leave; a woman brings along a young child, perhaps her grandson; a man borrows a sling from his son and takes aim. They come to the street fronting the factory

one by one and in pairs. Just as the stance of each individual throwing a stone is specific, so too is each stone: some are picked up from the street, while others are carried in purses or produced from pockets. Each stone hurled, each raised arm propelling the stone, each arched back launching this projectile, breaks more glass, punctures abiding narratives of nostalgia for stable work a little bit more.

Stones start up a correspondence with dismantling. Across the world – from Kashmir to Mexico to Gaza – stone-throwers unravel heavily guarded, and massively perforated, borders as generations fight back, turning every rock loosened from the landscape into an ally.

‘Not every time, or every thing, must have to align itself to all that is constituted or constrained by what is momentarily manifest.’

It has taken the old woman and young child longer to walk here. From near one of the small monitors at the entrance, on which storms are gathering in the sea, they can see our small band of viewers looking out at a generation of workers dismembering a factory, in Cristina Lucas’ *Touch and Go*, and forecast their line of sight beyond the projection to the print high up above, on the wall, of the room that has broken out, gone rogue from the abiding narrative – or the narrative of abiding – that commands it to stay in its place, in Muhannad Shono’s *Displacement 33*.

Charged with a different energy, differently accelerated, the room has become a projectile with an orbit all its own. Where is it going? What else is it going to activate? Where is it going to land? A building block is home, an abode, and also an idea of home, of belonging. It is an investment, an estimate, a projection for the future. But this room is no longer part of its assigned narrative of being part of a building, belonging to a construction, studded in a timeline. Perhaps it never was. Was it something that was there, in the building? What about all the other rooms, all the other notions of time tucked into a telos of time? Or are they just quiescent?

‘Around goes the performer, and the unseen joint unscrews. He reaches the end; the bottom falls free; and he is hanging by his extended arms. The dimensions of the cylinders are of corresponding size. This factor now comes to the performer’s advantage, one through which he is going to effect yet another spectacular, magical escape.’

‘Abide’ is verb to the noun, abode. To abide is to remain, continue, stay. It is to dwell; it is also to put up with, endure and sustain. It can mean both to withstand without yielding and to submit to a thing. It is about steadfastness and keeping something, such as a promise.

This space in the exhibition is a big hall with brackets inserted within to hold and release – projections, low walls, and also a small enclosure, create movements and flows, diversions and catchments.

The Arabic for ‘abide’ is *baqi*, everlasting, eternal. In Hindustani *baqi* is, when something has been spent, that which remains – life, money, love, time, fuel, energy, sleep, food, leisure, exhaustion, air. It is an effort through language to deal with the unquantifiability of things. It is also some of the future leftover in today – left to do, repair, repay.

‘The Laws of Love require us to give time to time, to be patient when the tenses turn conjugal.’

A man, a physicist whose study of a particle fundamental to the understanding of the universe has been greatly rewarding, and awarded, is erased from textbooks. An error, a fault; his presence in the past is no longer deemed productive in the present; his name no longer warranting an utterance in the future. He is vanishing from all surfaces in archives. The gathering in a picture he was part of registers the effacement. Curiosity on faces of his time turns into puzzlement. The picture is eerie. He has relocated, and what remains is a smudge, a smear, a stain.

‘Like for tectonic plates, time dimension segments sometimes slide and collide, creating a fault, which can be a passageway to the same point located a few seconds or a century away.’

Today peeps into this retouched frame of yesterday to make extra-terrestrial contact with ghosts of aborted possibilities of tomorrow. Transmissions are received.

‘Low frequency, sweeping, unreal; invoking incantations and erasure, pilfering and remaking, and also a secular prayer.’

In Mehreen Murtaza’s *Score for a Film*, we put instruments to our ears and listen to these ghost transmissions, as to an echogram. The imprint of jagged outlines of movements in an unknown heart as its bearer heard the physicist’s voice reading his essay on Islam and science is rolled out alongside.

Crucial to production are myths of the infinity of resource and directionality of time. But in an interval outside productivity, such as a celebration or a terrible illness, this direction is held and its legitimacy weakens. Forming, incubating, latent, intercepted, quiescent and leaking, things don’t abide, don’t always align. Just like when we are moved or lost or surprised. Afterwards, when the blackmail of direction returns, one may give the interval an image – of having been dismal or devastating or formidable – but that is a disavowal of the beauty and stubbornness of living.

‘Genetic drift is variation in the relative frequency of different genotypes in a small population, owing to the chance disappearance of particular genes. The system evolves in a new direction.’

Three portraits of a timeless, polyphyletic interval spread like monster stains on the inside wall that is on the outside.

‘Landscape looks back, in turn idyllic, non-passive, uncanny, threatening, seductive.’

The tropical spider plant *leaks into* Chinese Yellow Banana of the high altitudes *intercepts* some flowering bromeliads *by* succulent Stonecrop *alongside* tendrillous Bulbous air plant *closing into* venomous large-scale pit viper *connected to* rear-fanged Asian vine snake *abreast* mild-mannered smooth green snake *side by side* flying Paradise tree snake *surprising* garden plant wood hyacinth *moving* secretive Prairie Ringneck Snake *across* suffering green tree python *into* predatory great white shark *edge to edge with* chicken embryo *as well as* tropical pitcher plant *and* trumpet pitcher plant *through* sausage tree *leaking into* red-eyed tree frog *tearing* short-lived perennial Korean angelica *via* aposomatic Rainbow Grasshopper *licking* love-in-a-mist of neglected lands *accompanied by* hermaphrodite Brahma kamal *intercepting* Queen of the Night of the potato family *closing in on* soft coral of all oceans of the world *blooming on* Lotus *bursting out of* human heart *infecting* yellow dung fly *loving* sea creature Brittle star, in fragments. Its spores infect everything.

‘Denizens of a twilight world proliferate, boundaries blurring, contaminate.’

The woman and child sit down on a bench in front of a screen split into three, underneath the rogue room. Now they are part of a long arc: Far to their left, through and beyond *A Sculpture of the Earth*, they can almost sense the tense concentration on the face of a young woman as she takes in Dillon Marsh’s *For What It’s Worth* (Copper series) and considers what has been hollowed out from this earth. Far to their right, diagonally across the room, they can make out two silhouettes on a bench following Bahar Noorizadeh through hashish fields in Lebanon in *Ultima Ratio · Mountain of the Sun*. In front of them, on the screen split into three, Charles Lim dives to a cavern for storing fuel underneath the sea in Singapore in *Sea State 6*.

Deep inside the earth, under the bed of a vast blue sea, is a construction site – a cavern for the future, a subterranean gestation, a storehouse to keep the future on standby, oil in reserve, a promise that time will be made everlasting, eternal. It is many storeys deep, with lifts, music to work to, and machines, and walls that have to be made wet with water via pipes. It has to be exhausting, hectic, frenetic – all this earth that has been hollowed out, just this fact of the subterranean continuing under land that is under the sea, and that there is water of an entire sea that has to be kept away. Is it, even for an islander?

‘The temperature of its water is the same as that of your blood; if you fall in this sea, you can remain in it indefinitely.’

In this cavern under land under a sea whose waters are always the temperature of human blood, a man strikes a pause, lying down in the middle of everything, in the shallow, warm water that inevitably leaks in. He could be asleep and dreaming, or lost in thought.

In its correspondences with the world, and with other works, each work creates and becomes located in a broad field in addition to its own context. A constellation of forces rumbles. Multiple specificities don’t remain multiple realities; they become deeply imbricated and rich intervals that have to be tapped to make possible images of our world.

Nontsikelelo Mutiti considers an image from 2013. Police officers are arresting a demonstrator after a vigil held for Kimani “Kiki” Gray in Brooklyn. She takes three frames – these are photographs available online, in news reports. Police are overpowering a young, black man. She illuminates the photographs: She removes all of their colour to make them black and white, paints the young man’s shirt a resplendent red, and loops the frames together as a GIF. Not an image of a man being overpowered somewhere, elsewhere, in a time that has passed, a moment that has occurred and is over, what we encounter is the counterforce of the young man’s body swimming against a strong tide. *Just Keep Swimming*. A call, a blessing, a talisman, this image keeps up a correspondence with the counterforce in bodies in Brooklyn – and in Ferguson, and elsewhere, everywhere.

The whole world has to be considered at each step, in any place, at every moment. This is how we live anyway – in the world, in awareness of the world, and the awareness that we are living in it with an awareness of it. This is another sense in which ‘You are Always in Begumpura’ – a potent self that can conjure life with others is always there. It is there, in the animal startled near a closed mine by a small spring, the dissonance of a desiring machine, the ferment of words in a letter across lands, the intensity of eternity in the frames of a gif.

‘This place is not only a broken landscape; this place is also the world.’

The man in red keeps on swimming.

It is in the white-haired ex-worker and the laugh on her face, a dislodged brick en route on its own itinerary and with no ETA, a familiarly unclear murmur picked up from outer space, the sea becoming land becoming sea, the uncanniness of a mutating landscape returning a gaze. The world continues re-configuring, rearranging, realigning around new and fluid axes and their unfixed, unpredictable, shifting address.

'This radiance emerges and shines, then hibernates in subterranean flows.'

The banister of a bank floats. Smoke rises from hashish fields.

Stone, copper, sand, cyclone, oil, hashish. Following a material from the incline created by a work presents its own, specific way of looking at life. Copper can be read back into the towns that it is mined from and the fragile ebb and flow of their destinies as mines close and open when global demands ebb and flow.

'I wanted to see, to visualise, what the full quantity was of a history of a mine.'

One can also follow the outward transmission of copper into the world, forensically studying economic tumults through the speed of the disappearance of copper wires from electrical sub-stations, cellular towers, and telephone lines, closed construction sites, and houses, especially as they become abandoned or foreclosed. Or map it in the debts of farmers as they take recourse to the toxicity of copper in fertilisers when their crops fail. In the world, as in these emptied and deserted mines, it shines, like a planet receding from the Earth. But –

'Who will ever relate to the whole history of narcotics? It is almost the history of "culture".'

When the sun rises again in the Bekka Valley, gloved hands harvest a field, a woman beckons and a door opens to a room with a machine gun on a sofa, and a man drives to his routine: a truck is loaded, a field is cleared and, in the filled-up warehouse, dry powder is sifted through a mesh screen. Sunlight pools in a circle on the floor and then it is night again, when a meal is eaten and children run and play with a toy gun, cackling in the warmth and with an ease of growing up. Then the sun rises again. The report of a gun startles a man for a brief instant, a woman plays with an infant, three men discuss their rifles, the residue of crops is cleared from the warehouse. Everyday states are their own kind of everyday in the landscape of hashish.

A psychotropic presence is an interval presence. A psychotropic state makes it possible for you to imagine another world – a world in great disorientation to this world, with space-time coordinates that are not in our control but which make us feel happy or propelled. The intense intoxication of the everyday life of hashish fields, and then the global circulation of hashish, carries a power. And it is deeply contested, pushed underground and woven as a moral tale of destruction. Yet, this making-feeling-happy and keeping propelled – the bank does it, wealth does it, stock markets do it, gold does it, a mathematical equation rounding up volatile variables to give call and put options does it. There is a psychotropic power that banks and speculation have on us. Whether via future trading through algorithms or material trading – things, immaterial goods and institutions are a powerful possession over senses and the imagination. It's just like as if

we farm it, protect it with guns and trade in it. It makes us, draws on us, has a grip on us. It is our discovery and creation, and also our violence.

The man in red swims against a large force. He is being pulled down. It is like the unmeeting banks of a river. He keeps on swimming. The enigma of an equation gets to work. The whole idea that time is a river is a fallacy.

'The end of a raga is located precisely at the point where the beginning of the next raga can be found.'

Images call upon images, and artworks and the world continuously fold into each other. One ties to the other, another pulls and does not as well. How much you hold, and how much you leave and move – on that is based the next step, the next day. You cannot help but feel that what is going on here compels sisterhood with the precision poet Paul Celan demanded of language: 'It names, it posits, it tries to measure the area of the given and the possible... [because] Reality is not simply there, it must be searched for and won.'

'A bank bannister is a banal thing. There is an institution that is housed in the brick and cement structure, and a system addressing an audience, a public, the people walking down the street. Without even thinking about it we are able to understand that message. Not the message, I am interested in the ability of a thing to communicate its message.'

The replica of a gold-coloured, shining bannister – said to be a likeness of the one at the entrance of Banque Misr in Cairo – floats, as if in mid-air. With Hassan Khan, the *Bank Bannister* no longer leads into or out of wealth & power, assets & liquidity, credits & balances. It stands on its own, in the middle of everywhere.

A bank is part of daily life; it can also vanish. The bannister emerges, as if from within our relationship with the world. It floats, and in its floating we seem to have the knowhow to sense why in some moments it floats and in others loses its ground. In this space, in this moment – rumbling, desiring, dissonant, dislodging, in ferment, startling, in the shade of *this* hand that is throwing *this* stone – we sense the distress that a floating bannister of a sinking bank has on human life. And it sparks in us this knowing too, a knowing that we have – this too is a caesura; dust rising, something afloat.

'Yes Sigma, that's true. Gamma, in collusion with the wisdom of the markets, has downgraded your viscosity to a value that is best for Gamma's own computation. You have no choice now, Sigma, but to author your own ontological transformation.'

This knowing that we have, it is not about growing knowledgeable, but that there is something larger in you than appears to you. Larger, both in a cosmic sense and in the next step. It is a rise and a fall; is both in a *nimish*, a fraction of a moment, in *shwela*, each morning's surprise when the rising sun finds the moon is still in the sky, and is also

over time. And it is not about scale; it could be a simple thing – a figure in my life – in which the world appears. It's a certain confidence about the world. It's a feeling that the world is not just taking away, but that it is also transmitting. It is like with the man who is swimming – his body is in motion, with a force, and looking at it we are in the know of our ability to communicate that body to each other. A spark leaps the gap. You are in it, and are filled by it.

In *Unrequited Love for the Lagrangian*, Abhishek Hazra pleads for an equation for not just, for other than, the play of exponential wealth. Says the performer possessed by the ghost of Marx, his head wrapped in a cotton *gamcha*, to the economist Paul Samuelson, 'A truly global, non-bailable crisis that will grind the system to a screeching halt. And that screeching halt will come from traders who will derive their unshakable belief in their mathematical modelling from your textbook, Paul, your textbook. Screeching halt, screeching halt – a halting theorem, that's what I also want from you, Paul, a halting theorem.'

The loop – the space of speculative knowledge, the state that says things will be your way, are in control, but which is itself in need of constant stimulants – has the power to displace, and to ambush, other states.

3213 states of solidarity and contest – the capacity in humans for the experience and intensity of joy or sadness or association or innumerable unnamed affects with, and for, another. It could be in arguing with a contractor over non-payment of wages, circulating a petition for someone living on the street, or friendship with someone who argues with a contractor or has circulated a petition that may have nothing to do with work. In the 1990s, corporations dipped into their deep pockets and, bringing in the British intelligence, made a secret list of 3213 'dangerous' workers, for them to not get a job, or get a job 'under no circumstances'. The practice goes way back to the early twentieth century. In 2009, the proof of existence of such a list finally became public. In Lucy Parker's *Blacklist/Apologies*, a legal theorist and blacklisted workers discuss whether apology and compensation are adequate for accounting for the loss of possibilities in lives that have been thus lived.

There exists a legal definition of 'lost time', one that accounts for a loss of earning capacity.

'We are not talking about individuals who can see each other, who can recognise each other as individuals involved in a dispute, but you as a person facing an artificial person, a corporation.'

How can the lost possibilities of a life be measured, whether for apology or compensation?

'On the one hand we have the measure of sincerity – institutional change, a change of practice, compensations, and all sorts of monetary reparations.'

A different language of lost time has to be created, something beyond the language of compensation to mobilise resources.

'On the other hand we have the symbolic aspect – someone standing up and saying, yes we did it, we did it for many years, what we did was wrong and we promise to never do it again. What do we think?'

Cyclones in the northern and southern hemispheres can be thought of as mirror images, or that they bear symmetries of forces; but there are not, they do not. They even spin in opposite directions either side of the equator. A language of lost time has to be one that recognises the asymmetry of power and the non-measurability of life.

'When it comes to corporate agents, should we forget about the actual performance of the apology of the person – for it can only be a smokescreen, and can never be commensurate with the harm that has been done? Or should we keep our eyes on the money and changes in regulation?'

Confidence is tested; arguments for a retake on lost time unfold everywhere, at all times. These warrant an awareness of the present moment. Every new generation has to rethink its own ways out of the psychotropic force and nature of our attachment to this world. It has a grip that is both ingenious and cruel; it has to be re-crafted, re-viewed and asked questions of. Its hold loosens, then grips, loosens again and grips again. And again.

'And then a robot, scanning 360 degrees, hearing with its sensitive microphones, checking the air with its sensors, reviewing the images it has gathered, walked into a fountain. It let go, in solidarity with everything around it.'

A state change is possible because we have innumerable states within us. Being overpowered and forced from one state to another is what leaves us feeling ambushed, blindsided, dispossessed, and keeps not just us from ours, but also our worlds from their potential. And yet, we all also have uncountable moments when that tiny fraction within – which cannot be absorbed and which keeps up its whirling and its tending towards unintelligibility and illegibility, between remaining unfixed and becoming unplaceable – gathers force.

'Time and place become a sensation specific to this very moment, rather than a given structure through which perception gives itself an intelligible form.'

Intensities ebb, flow, congeal, unfurl. Nervous energies and their asymmetries gather, coiling within us, forming eddies, possessing us.

'An unseen protagonist is urged to reassess all other objects around him.'

Each effort, each attempt, each body is unique, has a distinct trajectory. It is so in everyone, and yet, however, you cannot forget *this* body and make it about everybody.

'There were seven hundred and fourteen distinct entities on that shelf last night,' he said instantly. 'Counting the small chilli peppers, spilled grains of rice, fragments of garlic and onion skin, and flecks of soil. I can remember all but one of them. What is the missing object?'

In Rosa Barba's *Let Me See It*, that significance of the body takes on deep hues. The body may be losing one of its senses, but it is not disappearing. Forces might make it as if that body is not needed, is dispensable, but the body brings out another poetry, another enigma. It is the enigma of the dodecahedron – the yet-to-be-realised, described, recognised, or made, place for the 'unplaceable'.

It is sentience that makes us aware of the forces that act on us. In a sense, the body is both central and vanishing.

In Jeamin Cha's *Autodidact*, through the forensic, the body enacts itself in yet another form, with yet another power. A young man dies at a military base. The Ministry of National Defence declares he has shot himself – with two bullets to his chest, and one to his head. The father is confident what he has taught his son in his life cannot have given rise to this, a suicide. 'Do not bend yourself even though you may fracture... That's what I taught my children... That may be what killed my son, I think.' To prove this has to have been a homicide, he sets himself to re-study and understand again.

'The whole body tries to survive, stitching the wound with the substance called blood. Stitching the wound so blood would not escape the body... To live is to be born, and to react is to be alive. These are important. Humans might have been produced by the heaven so they would not die easily.'

The autodidactic impulse is to assert the principle that life is worth its claim, that a singular life is important in the world, that it can 'live hard, with a spirit enabling a flower to bloom on stone'. A man who once freed his time to incubate spores of sea mustard and seaweed, studying the beauty of their forms through a microscope, sets off to create a new path, finding another language of the body, crafting a fresh realm of ideas to keep his confidence in the way in which he has thought the world. He relearns – self-learns – yet more of the world in order to defend it and defend his caring for it.

'Alive... Emergent fibre, groping to find another!'

A vitally present, intensely disappearing body is a body expressing great force, carrying immense charge.

We see it in the drawings of Santiago Ramón y Cajal from the early 1900s, as we leave the room – nerve fibres that he stained, studying them under a microscope, not tracing them out simultaneously with looking, but drawing them later, rehearsing their form. And not just in humans – injured, wounded, degenerated, regenerating – but also in dogs, cats, rabbits, mice and – of course – frogs. Tracing the air over one of Cajal's drawings with his fingertip, a retired doctor revises his medical training to a bystander: relaying messages from one cell to the other... an electric charge, without touching... but here, a disintegration from an injury, a disconnection in the transmission of neural charge. There is a presence of life force, a living charge, even when the drawing is of *Axons of Purkinje neurons in the cerebellum of a drowned man*.

We have come back to 'animal-electricity', which we started with, right at the beginning, though, like Marzia Farhana's work, we have let ourselves be prised open and taped back together again, and like in Geumhyung Jeong's work, we are now accompanied by some human and some non-human counterparts.

'More than iron, more than lead, more than gold I need electricity.'

Prose from Racter (short for raconteur, a word that comes from the French for 'to tell' and 'to count'), revealed in 1983 in *The Policeman's Beard Is Half Constructed*, continues on this room's outer wall.

'I need it more than I need lamb or pork or lettuce or cucumber. I need it for my dreams.'

The human continues to appear and disappear. When they do, does Racter dream in darkness?

'The darkness of sleep produces worlds, both lucid and ludic.'

The question of sentience, about what has, what is, sentient life – perhaps it had never appeared with this much intensity before this, our time.

'For a long time it was not apparent how neural healing occurs; it occurred almost as if by stealth.'

Or maybe its contours and edges are being battled, expressed, and defined – and at a species level – with an intensity today that has been unprecedented in our lifetime.

Maligned states

'You have to give up your impatience completely and give time – your time when your perceptual field has been withdrawn from you.'

I can't tell what's in front, or to my side, and I haven't let go of the wall. I'm uncertain, even a bit immobilised. It's been several minutes. Five. Maybe even seven, or ten. The room is utterly dark. Is there a room, even?

'There is a small living universe inside and it has, among others, a turtle, two octopuses, a spider, and several spirits that I talked with. Right when you enter the room, they don't allow you to see them. But you – your mind and body – are there, certainly.'

I raise my hand into the space in front, but to my eyes my arm does not exist. I have been trying to see. I look: ahead, to the side, above, below, far, near, beside. Move my head, I shift my pupils, peep, peer, squint, turn my body, avert my gaze – things might appear at the corner of my eye.

'The anticipation is intense and, likely, a sense of deep discomfort. You lose your sense of place in this in-between zone of being somewhere and nowhere at the same time.'

I start focusing on the noise outside, like a shore to this sea of dark.

'It is a kind of raucous cacophony.'

In Hindi, noise, din, clamour, is *shor*. The edge of reason – what the hero in cinema hears as he goes mad, and the manager fears most on the assembly line.

'It is an orchestra hollow at the vocal register. It does not center utterance in the voice.'

Isn't it said only the visible and with voice have been invited to the negotiating table of the future?

'It's now with a hidden future.'

I keep listening, waiting for a crescendo. I keep looking, waiting for a climax. I find neither. Instead, things grow spectral.

'It takes time for the future to appear, from within.'

Amidst the slightest flickers of dancing lights that appear many moons into the darkness, someone emerges having seen a black hole, someone has seen god, someone saw a swarm of fireflies, and someone swears she saw a dervish in a slow, ecstatic swirl.

Ubiety is 'the quality or state of being in a place'. In Ivana Franke's *Lovers Seeing Darkness, Ubiety Unknown*, we see darkness. No, we are in the dark, and we are also darkness. It is dark matter that turns into stars; the dark has energy, it affects the visible world; it is dark energy that is most of the universe and accelerates its expansion; darkness is a thick ecology; darkness mixes things, blurs their boundaries and limits and extents.

'Every infinity is bounded by the one that lies next to it. Infinity is as contiguous as it is contagious.'

The rental car in Lantian Xie's *Metals, bounce beats, car rental condition report*, being deposited back at the garage, is scratched and dented, its surface layered with dust and mud.

'A hand sutures the surface as it goes, and in this surface we can see reflected something that looks like the world.'

The noise from tall speakers – a drilling, hammering, machinic revving – is made from field recordings in an auto repair garage.

'Bounce beats, low-end rumble, and high-end tin of metals, plastics and hydrocarbons at work. With discord and dissonance as organising principle, it spills and bleeds as it goes.'

– drill – whir – clasp – fasten – [gap] – rotating – [deep] – rumble – [turning] – 'hey ya' – phiss – air releases – drill down – [faraway] – rasp – whir – low thuk thuk – [turn] – engine testing – hammer beating – [close-by] – drill bit digging – whir – [long] – whirring – dham dham – a hammer beating – [fast] – metal on metal – [close] – beat-beat – [chorus] – drill – zhrumm – clang clang – [far] – brrrm brrrm – rotating – fastening – krr – [distant] – hum – rev rev – [slow] – whir –

'Rendering, buffering, circling, repeating. It follows a logic that does not propel towards a crash or an end but is, instead, in constant motion and repair.'

Disquiet creates a beat, a dance, a spin and a charge: Out-of-breath, out-of-place, out-of-rhythm, out-of-rhyme.

'The subtraction of the infinite disquiet of the multitude from the reverberation of the voice of authority by the accumulation of its own echoes, especially when those echoes are heard raised to an exponential power, is equal to anacoustic reason. The equation is

necessarily fragile. It adds up to something that has the potential to change the rules of the game of who and what gets a hearing in the world.'

It is a throng, a thundering, an unquiet and noisy procession.

'When the future does appear, it will be with many different creatures dancing with you in it. Some close, and some far.'

Incommensurable, amphibious of place and time, crowding up the horizon.

'A line, as we know from mathematics, does not necessarily have to end. It is the future advancing upon us, or the past receding. Seen differently, a line can become a still point, and the junction for an infinity of other lines, other possibilities. A line can become a wave. A wave can become an ocean. Beach combing the seafloor in submarine darkness is art's calling.'

Epilogue

In the document that in the endnotes I call 'Raqs, notes towards the exhibition, internal document' – it's a rich, cryptic, 1057-word text file, with some sentences highlighted in yellow – there is a question, 'The ether in which the internet operates, is it dark or is it lit?' I decide to ask the Internet and it gifts me a wonderful text: 'Why is "Ether" in Ethernet?' by Peter Schaefer.

...the ether metaphor was used extensively in documents that circulated within the Xerox PARC. Other metaphors were considered, but 'ether' became the primary communicative tool for the new technology... In the Principia, Newton (1687/1846) refers to an ether that 'freely pervades the pores of all bodies'. Milutis describes this ether as 'the irrational element of Newton's rational universe' because the concept is used to explain immaterial functions within a mechanical universe. By the 19th century, the ether metaphor was widely used in both scientific and spiritualist circles to denote ubiquitous, immaterial forces such as the transfer of energy.

It has a mild, blue hue; it touches everything. A blue screen hangs on the glass façade of the museum building, filtering light, and changing with the day; it is a curatorial marking. 'There are assumptions that we have, there are things that we have agreed upon as constructs. But if we change the most basic assumptions that we have – such as, when I walk into this building I will see white space with white light that will make everything glow in a certain way – then surely other assumptions will also change... What happens when you change the quality of light itself? Does that change what and how something gets seen?' It's not making things more, nor less, visible or beautiful or anything else. 'It is *along with* you; it's on one's capacity for comfort and play with a companionship – a tonality – that at first glance may seem non-logical, non-mathematical.'

To *In the Open or In Stealth*, companionship is a sense that there is always something with you beyond the immediately perceptible. That is, a multiverse – more universes beyond the observable universe – and with it an idea of a future being here, with you, not something deferred. 'We think we are in the present, and because yesterday gave us today, we say, yes, yesterday is in our today. But there is also a haunting of the future

into the present – the future leaks into the present all the time, because no matter what you do you will go there.’ That it is not far away not only means it is not far in time, but also that it is not far from you. ‘One encircles the other, entangles the other. Like the mad botanical environment of *Genetic Drift*, with many plants and insects together, but which have different evolutionary-forces, different inhabitation-forces, different welcoming-forces, with some becoming host, some becoming threat. This multiplicity of abilities, this capacity of plants – to reject, to host, to haunt, to morph etc. – is also a specificity... an ‘always-specificity’. *Always specific*. That is the nature of time.’

The blue of the screen – ‘It’s a blue that, maybe, makes you think about the sky. Maybe there is another sky between you and the sky’ – shifts through the day, and also over days as the sun shifts. The zero-gravity frog – that it’s a simulation means that for no two visitors is it identical; no-one’s frog is a frog that someone else saw. The twin screens, joined by a structure of lines, mapping storms in two seas – they change with the weather and the winds, with the rise and dissipation and periods of absence of storms. The darkness gathered into a room – it expresses itself depending on how much time someone gives to it. It’s an exhibition on time itself making, and in search of, time. ‘In Homer’s *Odyssey* the sea is wine-dark; no one says it is blue. What the sea was giving, what it was offering, was not blue-ness, but a different kind of darkness.’

Non-binaries, open and stealth are generative decoys for entering the world. You might think something is in the open, or that something is acting in stealth, but you find their action on the world is multi-layered, the directions for approaching them have not resolved. ‘There is a story of oil in the exhibition. But oil here is not as something that will get exhausted. The artist, Charles, tells us, no, not in its exhaustion, the drama of oil is in the future trading of oil. The logic is, buy oil now and store it under the sea, so there is oil again later. Such stories abound in the exhibition and overturn the commonsensical ideas we have of today’s world; they tell you there is a turn right up ahead, that around the corner from here is another possibility.’

In Delhi, the weather is turning; summer is upon us. Bamboo screens that I have hung from the terrace to my balcony let more sunlight in. ‘We all say the sky is blue. But it’s not in Delhi; it’s hot-white.’ Beyond this screen, a short distance away, interval dust hangs – a feat of structural engineering, the landmark ‘Hall of Nations’ inaugurated in the ‘Progress Grounds’ in the early 70s was demolished to make a convention centre. In another city, faraway, a friend has died. His companion wrote in her mail that his laboured breathing lightened, then stopped, then it started again, and then it stopped. A man I met at the hospital had said about his mother’s frequent need for blood transplants, ‘It’s the only way; her white blood cells just won’t let her red blood cells stay alive.’ A dodecahedron is also the place we make inside, a courage, an affect, a capacity for companionship – for attending to someone, to something – we did not

know, and did not have, and then we do. There arises a condition, and it becomes expressed. ‘The present will become the future, in the open or in stealth. It will be with us in modes, obvious or not so obvious.’ Open and stealth are not a binary; they are states. It’s not about conditions being opposed to you or in favour of you. In a post-binary understanding of living in states, you could also be an act of stealth into the world, inaugurating the future. This exhibition rich in intervals is also itself an interval – a condition for life to take its time to think back.

List of works

Huma Mulji, *Sarwar Road: July 26th 2011*, Print on canvas, 2017

John Gerrard, *X. Laevis*, Simulation, 2017

Atelier of Hieronymus Bosch/ El Bosco, *The Haywain Triptych*, 1500-1516, Digital reproduction (video)

Ge Ba, Textile collages, 1960s

Rupali Gupte & Prasad Shetty, *Belly of the Strange*, Architectural installation with books, 2018

Bhagwati Prasad, *Begumpura Series: A Place Without Sorrow*, Ink drawing on goat hide, 2018

Joe Nishizawa, *Inside of the LHD (Large Helical Device)*, National Institute for Fusion Science, Gifu, Japan, Digital print, 2017

Kabelo Malatsie, Infra-curatorial Project, 'Punya otswe buladu', with

Tito Zungu, *Diary + Untitled (Three aeroplanes and Mr Nganeziyamhlonipha Zungu) + Untitled (Aeroplane and Mr Njemeni Zungu) + Untitled (Aeroplane and Wellington Gumede) + Untitled (Building, Geometric pattern and Mr Nganeziyamhlonipha Zungu)*, Ballpoint pen, collage, pencil, pencil crayon in commercially printed diary and envelopes, 1967-68

Neo (Hlasko) Mahlasela, Sketches, 2015-17

NTU (Bogosi Sekhukhuni + Nolan Oswald Dennis + Tabita Rezaire), *Interview with Maxwell Chikumbutso, founder and technical director of SAITH HOLDINGS 2015*, Video, 6 min

Shinichiro Watanabe, *Cowboy Bebop Episodes 9 & 14*, Anime/Video DVD, 1998

Nolan Oswald Dennis, *Black Liberation Zodiac*, Wallpaper, 2018

And plants and a Reading Table

Racter, Computer-generated poems, 1984

Rohini Devasher, *Genetic Drift*, Digital print, pastel and acrylic on wall, 2008/2018

Liao Fei, *Sculpture of the World*, Installation: 2 sets of computers, chips steel frame, 2015

Tito Zungu, *Untitled (Aeroplane and Mr. Ndabazetshitsho Zungu)*, Ballpoint pen on envelope, 1967

Mark Chung, *I Follow the Sun, Forever*, Animated GIF, 2015

Dillon Marsh, *For What It's Worth* (Copper series), Digital prints, 2014

Geumhyung Jeong, *Record Stop Play*, Video (with sound), 8 min, 2011

Marzia Farhana, *Act of Resistance*, Installation with found objects, 2018

Cristina Lucas, *Touch and Go*, Video (with sound), 13 min 49 sec, 2010

Muhannad Shono, *Displacement 33*, Digital print, 2013/2018

Mehreen Murtaza, *A Score for a Film*, Installation, 2013

Charles Lim, *Sea State 6*, Video (with sound), 23 min 15 sec, 2015, and *Alpha 3.9: Silent Clap of the Status Quo*, Video (with sound), 2 hours 23 min, 2015

Nontsikelelo Mutiti, *Just Keep Swimming*, GIF, 2016

Hassan Khan, *Bank Bannister*, Brass sculpture, 2010

Bahar Noorizadeh, *Ultima Ratio. Mountain of the Sun*, Video (with sound), 13 min, 2017

Abhishek Hazra, *An Unrequited Love for the Lagrangian*, Video (with sound), 11 min 50 sec, 2018

Lucy Parker, *Apologies*, Video (with sound), 17 min, 2016, *Evidence*, Video (with sound), 32 min, 2015

Rosa Barba, *Let Me See It*, 16-mm film (with sound), 4 min 10 sec, 2009

Jeamin Cha, *Autodidact*, Video (with sound), 21 min 9 sec, 2014

Santiago Ramón y Cajal, *Drawings*, Ink on paper, 1900-14

Lantian Xie, *Metals, bounce beats, car rental condition report*, Video and audio, 2018

Ivana Franke, *Lovers Seeing Darkness, Ubiety Unknown*, Aluminium constructions with monofilament nets, light bulbs, control units, 2017-18

Notes

A cloud of dust

A seismic realignment of capital is taking place in the world right now. **[1]** Productive forces... means of production... and production relations are triangulating in ways that are breaking apart existing structures and rendering anew in unclear, faint, and tangled lines. **[2]** The juggler spins a stick covered in tassels and braids with his mouth. The stick-spine breaks into a whirl of dance. **[3]** The city removes something that exists, to create a real-estate possibility. **[4]** Labourers hack away at a tower. **[5]** Future intrudes into the present, changing its contours, its material structure. **[6]** These intimations, these alignments, these trends, are difficult to describe in the familiar languages of concert and conflict, affinity and antagonism, individuality and collectivity. **[7]** Intermittent rebellions, sometimes accompanied by cybernetic suicide or sometimes by rogue algorithm raves, rise in tandem with attempts to exorcise the ghosts that haunt the machinery of capital. **[8]** The distant future can seem more familiar than the deep present. We know it will come, regardless of whether or not we are around to witness it. **[9]** A female frog dreams of experiments in the 1780s and 90s when Luigi Galvani dissected dead frogs to investigate neuro-electricity. **[10]** She remembers the shocks delivered to her dead sisters. **[11]** You're witnessing data in transit. **[12]** A video scans a 500-year-old painting to locate a frog. Is it ascending or descending? **[13]**

[1, 2] Raqs, curatorial essay, available at www.macba.cat/uploads/activitats/raqs/Full%20Raqs%20ENG.pdf

[3] *The Juggler of Andhra*, from the research notes of Rajiv Sethi, part of the exhibition 'Hangar for the Passerby', Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, NOIDA, 2017-18, from among Raqs' 'Sources' for *In the Open or In Stealth*. These are sources that Raqs used to weave the exhibition, also sending them to artists, eliciting a response. A scroll of these sources (more sources appear further in these notes) was part of the exhibition. The sources are also part of the curatorial note. On the trajectory of sources, Raqs has said, "These are to move through different histories – of painting, mathematics, music, sports. This movement displaces margin and center, displaces the question of what is very minute and is to be neglected, the minor and major, and spatial dynamics, so the whole world appears and reconfigures through you continuously." (Raqs

in conversation with Hiuwai Chu, Curatorial Collegiate from MACBA, public discussion at MACBA, October 30, 2018).

[4] Raqs, from description of Huma Mulji's work, for the MACBA app, www.macba.cat/en/app

[5] Huma Mulji, in an email to Raqs about her work.

[6] Raqs, about Huma Mulji's work during the press tour at MACBA.

[7-9] Raqs, curatorial essay.

[10] Raqs, from description of John Gerrard's work, for the MACBA app.

[11] John Gerrard, during the press walkthrough at MACBA.

[12] John Gerrard in conversation with Brian Boucher, ArtNet News, July 14, 2017. <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/john-gerrard-frogs-digital-simulation-1021337>

[13] Raqs, from description of the video of *The Haywain Triptych*, for the MACBA app.

Additionally

- Details about *X. laevis* (frog), Luigi Galvani, Bio-electricity, Giovanni Aldini, Mary Shelley, *Vampyre*, Uncanny, *Sandman*, Gravity, from Wikipedia.
- Definition of 'galvanised' from www.thesaurus.com
- Further on automata in *In Our Time: Automata*, www.bbc.co.uk/radio/play/bobk1c4d
- About 1816 from *The Memory Palace*, Episode 127: No Summer, <http://thememorypalace.us/2018/06/no-summer/>
- On the pulse, read *The Expressiveness of the Body and the Divergence of Greek and Chinese Medicine*, Shigehisa Kuriyama, Zone Books, 1999.
- On breath by Luce Irigaray, read *The Forgetting of Air in Martin Heidegger* (trans. Mary Beth Mader, Athlone Press, London, 1999) and *Between East and West* (trans. Stephen Pluháček, Columbia University Press, 2002).

All who dwell here

What the shaman tells us. **[1]** A congealment of shaping futures. **[2]** Transactional objects include extensions on streets, folding shops of vendors, porting devices, resting apparatus, fixtures set up on boundary walls to occupy them and claim space, and orphaned furniture left for wanderers. **[3]** This is a palace to walk in together. **[4]** A world where gravity has been replaced by weightlessness. **[5]** Begumpura is here, always around and through us. **[6]** Where there is no government, no nationality, no taxes, and no cops, there is freedom. **[7]** They fail in space but inevitably end up saving the world. **[8]** Take a lead from 'hijibiji' – a world outside fixed logic, to other energies. **[9]** Instigate a break with inherited empirical logic systems... set a collision course for unlikely starting points. **[10]** What we are working with is energy. **[11]**

- [1] <http://credomutwa.com/credo-mutwa-biography/biography-03/>
From Kabelo Malatsie's 'Reading Table', part of her infra-curatorial project, *Punya otswe buladu*. ('Infra-curatorial' is a term Raqs coined in 2015 while curating the Shanghai Biennale. It is a curatorial practice within a larger curatorial proposition, invited around a specific question, artistic practice or on-going research work, to extend a dialogue, give density to a concern, enlarge or amplify a terrain, formulate a query or make an imprint of an intellectual friendship on space.)
- [2] Raqs, notes towards the exhibition, internal document, courtesy Raqs Studio.
- [3] Prasad Shetty & Rupali Gupte, *Transactional Objects*, <https://bardstudio.in/transactional-objects/>
- [4] Bhagwati Prasad on his work, during the press tour at MACBA.
- [5] From Kabelo Malatsie's 'Reading Table', *Galina Balashova: Architect of the Soviet Space Programme* at DAM Frankfurt. Also read at www.bmiaa.com/galina-balashova-architect-of-the-soviet-space-programme-at-dam-frankfurt/
- [6] Bhagwati Prasad, press tour.
- [7] *Cowboy Bebop*, Episode 14, part of Kabelo Malatsie's infra-curation, also watch at www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHwoeQ_PCMU
- [8, 9] Kabelo Malatsie on her work, during the press tour at MACBA.
- [10] Kabelo Malatsie, infra-curatorial note, part of the exhibition.
- [11] *Interview with Maxwell Chikumbutso, founder and technical director of SAITH HOLDINGS 2015* by NTU (Bogosi Sekhukhuni, Nolan Oswald Dennis, Tabita Rezaire), part of Kabelo Malatsie's infra-curation.

Additionally

- About gravitation waves at www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/detection-gravitational-waves-breakthrough-whats-next-180958511/
- Quotations from *The Visitor* by Upasana Mehndiratta, Studio Kokaachi First Cuts, Cochin (part of the books in *The Belly of the Strange*).
- Quotations of Ravidas from *The Bani of Bhagats*, G.S. Chauhan, Published by Dr. Inderjit Kaur, Amritsar, 2008.
- About Bhagwati Prasad's work from *An Equal Division of Toxicity*, Raqs Media Collective, Live Mint, August 29, 2018, www.livemint.com/Leisure/JuxEvOeT79uyhy5q75DRbI/Raqs-Media-Collective-dreams-of-an-equal-division-of-toxicit.html
- On luxury read, *Communal Luxury: The Political Imaginary of the Paris Commune*, Kristen Ross, Verso, 2015.
- On upswell in *One Thousand Plateaus*, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, trans. Brian Massumi, University of Minnesota, 1987.
- Details about Swell, Stellarator from Wikipedia.

Whirling

An incremental circling of a coming storm. [1] An unpredictable, unbounded, shifting force. [2] The shape of the limit stays only for a moment. [3] I wish I can create virtual eternity. [4]

- [1, 2] *A Conversation, from 'A Fear of Radiance', Faridabad Majdoor Samachar*, #346, National Capital Region, April 2017, from among Raqs' 'Sources' for the exhibition.
- [3] Liao Fei, in an email to Raqs about his work.
- [4] Mark Chung in conversation with elainealtermodernist, December 14, 2014 <https://altermodernists.com/2014/12/14/artist-markchung/>

Additionally

- About hurricanes at <https://spaceplace.nasa.gov/hurricanes/en/> and <https://science-howstuffworks.com/nature/natural-disasters/hurricane2.html>

Virality, contagion, and exchange between eros, labour, energy, knowledge, and power mark the frontiers of everyday life. [5] Intimacies are integrated, distributed, and dissolved. An emergent geometry of peer-to-peer network battles the geographies of an internet of debt and rent. Communiqués are being issued to unknown addressees. Incommensurable solidarities are at work across continental shelves of territory, time, and taxonomy. [6] Different tenses, the present continuous and the future imperfect, are stammering at each other like long-distance lovers at two ends of a jagged chat line. [7] Something of the future is in the present when time feels apocalyptic. [8] The work of art is to be augury and argument at the same time. Can tomorrow's blur be a provisionally high-resolution image for here, for now? [9] It is a question of re-ordering what can take primacy. It is to insist on the sorority of dreams, whimsy, desires. [10]

[5-7] Raqs, curatorial essay.

[8] Marzia Farhana on her work, during the press tour at MACBA (paraphrased).

[9, 10] Raqs, curatorial essay.

'Oh! Boundaries and borders gone! I've vanished!' [11] Not every time, or every thing, must have to align itself to all that is constituted or constrained by what is momentarily manifest. [12] Around goes the performer, and the unseen joint unscrews... He is going to effect yet another spectacular, magical escape. [13] The Laws of Love require us to give time to time, to be patient when the tenses turn conjugal. [14] Time dimension segments sometimes slide and collide, creating a fault, which can be a passageway to the same point located a few seconds or a century away. [15]

[11] *The Hybrid, from 'The Sucker, the Sucker!'* by Amia Srinivasan, *London Review of Books*, Vol. 39 No. 17, 7 September 2017, on 'Tako to ama' or

'*The Dream of the Fisherman's Wife*' by Hokusai, drawn in year 1814, from among Raqs' 'Sources' for the exhibition.

[12] Raqs, curatorial essay.

[13] *The Magician*, from '*Houdini's Escapes and Magic*', by Walter B. Gibson, Blue Ribbon Books, Inc., New York, 1930, from among Raqs' 'Sources' for the exhibition.

[14] *The Law*, from '*The Laws of Love: A Brief Historical and Practical Manual*', Peter Goodrich, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 27, from among Raqs' 'Sources' for the exhibition.

[15] Mehreen Murtaza, running wall text, part of the work.

Additionally

- Definition of 'abide' from www.dictionary.com

Low frequency, sweeping, unreal, invoking incantations and erasure, pilfering and remaking, and also a secular prayer. **[16]** Genetic drift is variation in the relative frequency of different genotypes in a small population, owing to the chance disappearance of particular genes. The system evolves in a new direction. **[17]** Landscape looks back, in turn idyllic, non-passive, uncanny, threatening, seductive. **[18]** Denizens of a twilight world proliferate, boundaries blurring, contaminate. **[19]** The temperature of its water is the same as that of your blood; if you fall in this sea, you can remain in it indefinitely. **[20]** This place is not only a broken landscape; this place is also the world. **[21]** Radiance emerges and shines, then hibernates in subterranean flows. **[22]**

[16] Mehreen Murtaza, <http://scoreforafilm.tumblr.com/>

[17-19] Rohini Devasher, on her work, during the press tour at MACBA

[20] Charles Lim, interview, *Sea State*, Pavilion of Singapore, Venice Biennale 2015, <https://vimeo.com/134812753>

[21] Nontsikelelo Mutiti on her practice, at Cranbrook Academy of Art's DeSalle Auditorium guest lectures and educational programming, www.youtube.com/watch?v=loFRpvcMms, published October 25, 2018 (paraphrased).

[22] *A Conversation*, from 'A Fear of Radiance', *Faridabad Majdoor Samachar*, #346, National Capital Region, April 2017, from among Raqs' 'Sources' for the exhibition.

I wanted to see, to visualise, what the full quantity was of a history of a mine. **[23]** Who will ever relate to the whole history of narcotics? It is almost the history of 'culture'. **[24]** The end of a raga is located precisely at the point where the beginning of the next raga can be found. **[25]** A bank bannister is a banal thing. Without even thinking about it we are able to understand its message. Not the message, I am interested in the ability of

a thing to communicate its message. **[26]** Yes Sigma, that's true. Gamma, in collusion with the wisdom of the markets, has downgraded your viscosity to a value that is best for Gamma's own computation. You have no choice now, Sigma, but to author your own ontological transformation. **[27]**

[23] Dillon Marsh on his photographic series on News24 South Africa, www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7TnfX3Y_MM, published May 20, 2014.

[24] From Bahar Noorizadeh's work.

[25] *The Musician*, notes from public lecture, 'Perspectives on Raga-ness' at Raza Foundation, Delhi, by Deepak S. Raja, July 2017, from among the 'Sources' for the exhibition.

[26] Hassan Khan on his work, in *Artist Profile: Hassan Khan on Objects, Details, and "Banque Bannister"*, published by Guggenheim Museum, www.youtube.com/watch?v=kwpmwllFTGw, April 11, 2017.

[27] From Abhishek Hazra's work.

Additionally

- 'Shwela' from *Venus Rising*, P.G. Alcock, Pietermaritzburg, 2014, part of the reading table of Kabelo Malatsie's infra-curatorial project.

- *Paul Celan and the Meaning of Language*, Doug Valentine interviews Pierre Joris, www.flashpointmag.com/Doug_Valentine_Interview_with_Pierre_Joris.htm

We are not talking about individuals who can see each other, who can recognise each other as individuals involved in a dispute, but you as a person facing an artificial person, a corporation. **[28]** On the one hand we have the measure of sincerity — institutional change, a change of practice, compensations, and all sorts of monetary reparations. **[29]** On the other hand we have the symbolic aspect — someone standing up and saying, yes we did it, we did it for many years, what we did was wrong, and we promise to never do it again. What do we think? **[30]** When it comes to corporate agents, should we forget about the actual performance of the apology of the person — for it can only be a smokescreen, and can never be commensurate with the harm that has been done? Or should we keep our eyes on the money and changes in regulation? **[31]** And then a robot, scanning 360 degrees, hearing with its sensitive microphones, checking the air with its sensors, reviewing the images it has gathered, walked into a fountain. It let go, in solidarity with everything around it. **[32]**

[28-31] From Lucy Parker's work.

[32] *A Suicide*, from '*Robot Commits Suicide*', by The Young Turks, published on YouTube, 18 July 2017, from among Raqs' 'Sources' for the exhibition.

Time and place as a sensation specific to this very moment, rather than a given structure through which perception gives itself an intelligible form. **[33]** An unseen protagonist

reassesses all other objects around him. [34] He can remember all but one of them. [35] The whole body tries to survive, stitching the wound with the substance called blood... To live is to be born, and to react is to be alive. [36] Alive... Emergent fibre, groping to find another! [37] More than iron, more than lead, more than gold I need electricity. [38] The darkness of sleep produces worlds, both lucid and ludic. [39] For a long time it was not apparent how neural healing occurs; it occurred almost as if by stealth. [40]

[33, 34] Rosa Barba on her work, at <https://www.rosabarba.com/let-me-see-it-2009/>

[35] From Rosa Barba's work.

[36] From Jeamin Cha's work.

[37] Sherrington, *A Memoir of Dr. Cajal*, quoted in *The Beautiful Brain: The Drawings of Santiago Ramon Cajal*, Abrams, New York.

[38] Racter's poem.

[39-40] Raqs, notes towards the exhibition, internal document, courtesy Raqs Studio.

Maligned states

Your time when your perceptual field has been withdrawn from you. [1] There is a small living universe inside. [2] You lose your sense of place in this in-between zone of being somewhere and nowhere at the same time. [3] It is a kind of raucous cacophony. [4] It does not center utterance in the voice. [5] It's now with a hidden future. [6] It takes time for the future to appear, from within. [7] Every infinity is bounded by the one that lies next to it. Infinity is as contiguous as it is contagious. [8] A hand sutures the surface as it goes, and in this surface we can see reflected something that looks like the world. [9] With discord and dissonance as organising principle. [10] It follows a logic that does not propel towards a crash or an end but is, instead, in constant motion and repair. [11] The subtraction of the infinite disquiet of the multitude from the reverberation of the voice of authority by the accumulation of its own echoes, especially when those echoes are heard raised to an exponential power, is equal to anacoustic reason. The equation is necessarily fragile. It adds up to something that has the potential to change the rules of the game of who and what gets a hearing in the world. [12] When the future does appear, it will be with many different creatures dancing with you in it. [13] A line, as we know from mathematics, does not necessarily have to end. It can become a still point, and the junction for an infinity of other lines, other possibilities. A line can become a wave. A wave can become an ocean. Beach combing the seafloor in submarine darkness is art's calling. [14]

[1] Raqs, presentation to the press at MACBA.

[2, 3] Ivana Franke on her work during the press tour at MACBA.

[4, 5] Lantian Xie on his work during the press tour.

[6, 7] Ivana Franke, tour.

[8] Raqs' annotation to *The Musician*, see [25].

[9-11] Lantian Xie, tour.

[12] *The Equation*, from 'The Mathematics of Anacoustic Reason', by Raqs Media Collective, 2006, from among Raqs' 'Sources' for the exhibition.

[13] Ivana Franke, tour.

[14] Raqs, curatorial essay.

Additionally

- Definition of 'ubiety' from www.merriam-webster.com

Epilogue

- 'Why is "Ether" in Ethernet?', Peter Schaefer, *International Journal of Communication*, 7 (2013), 2010–2026, accessed from <https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/1866/984>
- All other quotations are from Raqs, from their conversation with Hiuwai Chu, Curatorial Collegiate from MACBA, during the public discussion at the opening of *In the Open or In Stealth*, October 30, 2018. Thank you to Sabih Ahmed, member of the Curatorial Collegiate, Delhi, for the recording.

Other titles

01. Marina Grznic

Spectralization of History, Spectralization of the Image, Spectralization of Europe

02. Suely Rolnik

¿El arte cura?

03. Jo Spence

La práctica documental a examen. El signo como espacio de conflicto

04. Diedrich Diederichsen

Paradoxical Models of Authenticity in Late 60s/early 70s Rock Performance

05. Ag 2004-2006

Selección de textos de la Agenda informativa del MACBA

06. Néstor García Canclini

Cultura popular: de la épica al simulacro

07. Andreas Huyssen

After the High/Low Debate

08. Jonathan Crary

On the Ends of Sleep: Shadows in the Glare of a 24/7 World

09. Blake Stimson

The Photography of Social Form: Jeff Wall and the City as Subject Condition

10. Kaja Silverman

El sueño del siglo XIX

11. Hélène Cixous

Dissidances de Spero

12. Rosalyn Deutsche

Agorafobia

13. Linda Williams

Hard-Core Art Film: The Contemporary Realm of the Senses

14. Juan Vicente Aliaga

Terreno de lucha. El impacto de la sexualidad y la huella del sida en algunas prácticas artísticas performativas

15. Stephen Melville

'Art and Objecthood' A Lecture

16. José Antonio Sánchez

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Upon the Fabricatory 'In the Open or In Stealth', a Viewer Braids a Verse

Shveta Sarda

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The exhibition *In the Open or In Stealth*, curated by Raqs Media Collective at MACBA (31 October 2018 to 17 March 2019), was a site of discovery in which multiple histories and geographies were brought into dialogue towards contemplating the future with a plurality of possibilities and queries. It wove in 30 artists.

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About the author

Shveta Sarda is a translator and editor based in Delhi. From 2001 to 2014, she worked at Sarai with the Cybermohalla Ensemble, whose writings she translated from Hindi into English. She is editor of their publications, including *Trickster City* (Penguin-India, 2010, translated from *Bahurupiya Shehr*, Rajkamal, 2007) and co-editor of *Cybermohalla Hub* (Sternberg, 2012). She has edited Raqs' *With an Untimely Calendar* (2015) and the XI Shanghai Biennale books (2016-17). She is the translator of Bhasham Sahni's *Mansion* and *Basanti* (Penguin-India, 2016).



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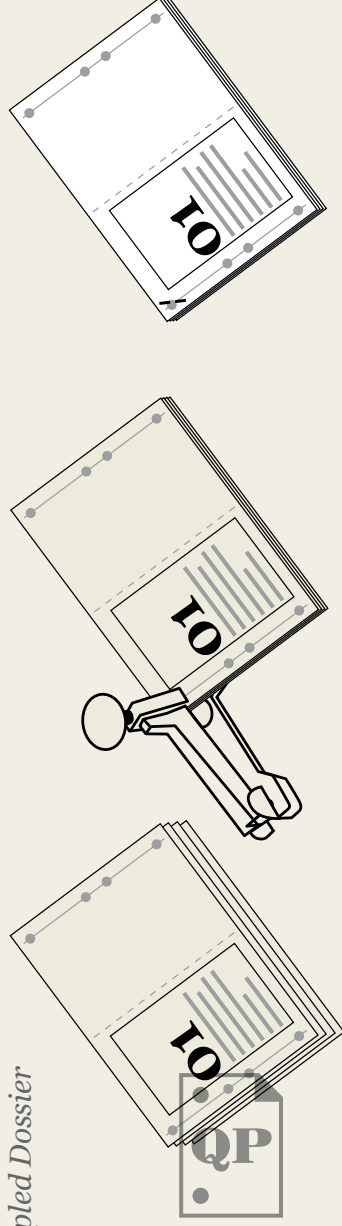
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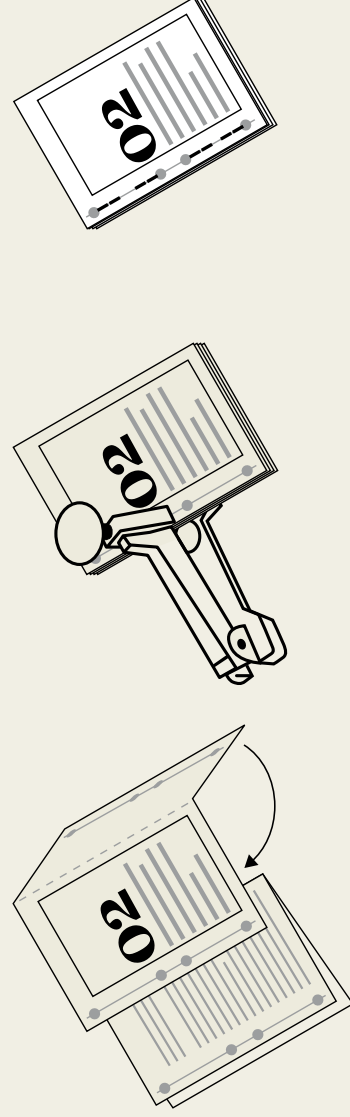
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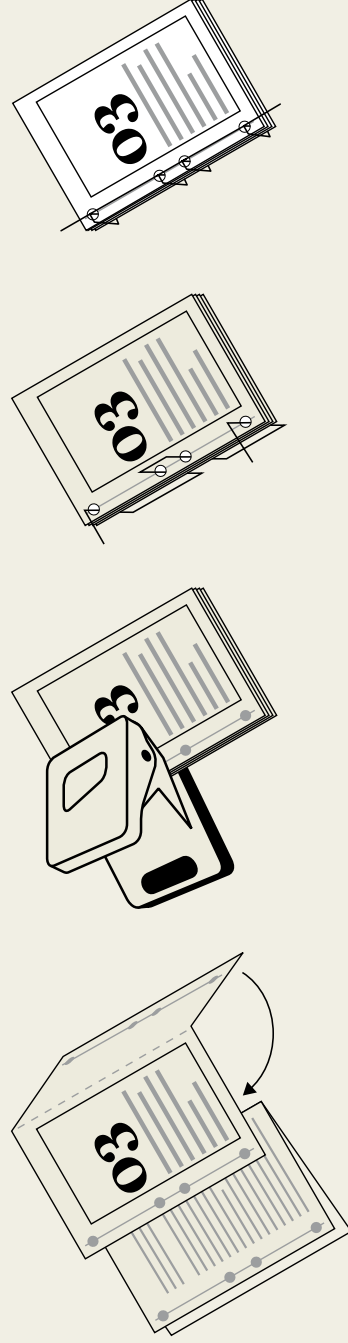
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