

**The Exquisite Corporealities of LEIBNIZ:
Performance as Embodied Practice of Thought and Documentary Praxis**

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ABSTRACT

This document offers a theorized contextualization and analysis of the performance research I (Helen Spackman) have undertaken with and through LEIBNIZ, the fluid Live Art collective that I co-founded with Ernst Fischer in 2005. Extending Ernst's and my long-standing engagement with issues of alterity, 'home' and 'belonging', our more widely collaborative activities as LEIBNIZ have developed to specifically address the polemics of grafting personal with communal and political identities and the often problematic relation of such, both to civil and human rights and the wider ecologies of which we are each formed/ forming a part. Our particular research interests reside in the ways in which the embodied and transient acts of performance and the im-material traces it generates and/or leaves behind might together serve as an accessible and vibrant means of exploring and articulating marginalized life experiences, concerns and aspirations. While issues concerning the documentation of performance as an inherently ephemeral art form have recently preoccupied critical debate within the intertwined fields of contemporary Live Art and Performance Studies to which our creative and critical practice as LEIBNIZ belongs, this dissertation examines the ways in which performance can itself serve as a vibrant and accessible means of both recording and generating experience with reference to the four LEIBNIZ projects (namely: *The Book of Dust*, *The Ship of Fools*, *The Book of Blood: Human Writes* and *Ghost Letters*) presented as case studies in this submission of PhD by prior output.

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This work is dedicated to the living memory of a great gardener, Jack Spackman and to Emmet, who remains at the end of the day my reason for looking forward to the next.

As a queer form of 'ghost-writing', this material has been crafted according to the particular 'give-and-takes' of one/the other half of the collective's artistic directorship. The whole is of course more than the some of its parts and while other members of the collective may not agree with the thoughts offered in the following pages, such doubling of vision and dissent nonetheless reflects the positively creative tension of the collective's collaborative ethos. With this thought in heart-mind, I bid you welcome in the spirit of LEIBNIZ and declare the house open for debate.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This document offers a theorized contextualization and analysis of four practice-led research projects undertaken in collaboration with LEIBNIZ, the fluid collective of performance and visual artists that I co-founded with Ernst Fischer in 2005. These four projects are:

- *The BOOK of DUST*: Volume I: “Filz” (2005 - 2007)
- *The SHIP of FOOLS*: Volume I: “Voyages of Dis(re)covery” (2005 -2010)
- *The BOOK of BLOOD: Human Writes* (2006, ongoing)
- *GHOST LETTERS* (2008, ongoing)

Supporting documentation of these projects is presented as four succinct case studies that include primary visual evidence of their respective outputs in the form of DVDs and CD ROMs and written descriptions that outline each project’s specific research questions, methods and discoveries. These evidential, descriptive and analytical documents together comprise this submission of PhD by prior output.

1.i. Ethos of Practice/Research

The body of work that informs this document strategically prioritizes kinaesthetic and visual modalities in a disquiet/ing bid to ‘make strange’ (Shklovsky, 1917), fresh and tangible sense of the ‘found’ and ever-shifting conditions and possibilities of mundane experience.

This research is located in a practice that stems from the need to continually re-negotiate, adapt and extend our individual and collective understanding and application of an ‘aesthetic of response-ability’ (Lehmann, 2006: 185) - both in relation to each other and to the immanent psychophysical, socio-cultural and geo-political environments of which we form part. Our commitment to serving each performance as an inherently collaborative and potentially empowering process is geared towards the emancipation of the imagination afforded by the embodied encounter between performer(s), spectator(s) and site(s) and the retentive and protensive ‘sights’ that such an encounter generates. The tenor of the material presented for public attention and display is intentionally ambivalent, inquisitive and provocative and as mutable as the flesh from/into which it springs.

These aesthetic, ethical and political concerns inform our fundamental aims as LEIBNIZ:

- to blur the boundaries between different spaces and disciplines;
- to create rituals and mythologies for a secular age;
- to present socially engaged and interactive artwork;
- to generate new audiences and assist emergent artists.

I.ii. Research context

The foregrounding of the body as a potentially disruptive, interrogative and regenerative site of cultural intervention has marked radical performance practice and theory throughout the twentieth century. This issue remains a focal concern of the closely allied and diasporic fields of Performance/Live Art and Performance Studies to which our experimental, inter-medial and critically reflexive practice as LEIBNIZ belongs. Writing within and against the wider geo-political context of the 'War on Terror'¹, Adrian Heathfield (2004) argues that the increasing atomization and mediatization of socio-cultural experience has triggered a widespread if ambivalent 'drive to the live' that reflects both a desire for an intimacy that might acknowledge our "connectedness and interdependency" and serve as "a means to encounter new realities", coupled with the anxiety about what such changes might entail and the concern to keep potential "threat" at bay. The negotiation of this uncertain terrain has, he continues, long constituted the *raison devenir* of performance and live art, where:

[...] the embodied event has been employed as a generative force: to shock, to destroy pretence, to break apart traditions of representation, to foreground the experiential, to open different kinds of engagement with meaning, to activate audiences (Heathfield, 2004:7).

¹ The following commentary is drawn from Heathfield's introduction to the catalogue documenting *Live Culture*, a symposium he co-curated with Daniel Brine and Lois Keidan of the London-based Live Art Development Agency (L.A.D.A.). Hosted by the Tate Modern on March 27th – 30th, 2003, the event's aim - "to examine the expansion of performance art across broader artistic and social arenas, and its role in relation to cultural change" (<http://www.tate.org.uk/modern/exhibitions/liveculture/>) - was brought into sharp focus by its timing in the wake of the bombardment and subsequent invasion of Iraq by the multi-national forces led by the United States of America.

Harking back to the Modernist avant-garde's carnivalesque² agenda to 'destroy and invent' (Calinescu, 1987: 275), Heathfield's words flag contemporary Live Art's subversive preoccupation with the heightened sense of 'precarity' shared by current aesthetic, political and philosophical discourse (see Birrell, 2009). The potential of performance to function as a critically reflexive, liminoid form of ritual (see: Turner, 1984; Schechner, 1993, 2002; Kershaw, 1999) and site of auto-poiesis³ (Fischer-Lichte, 2008) as a means of exploring what Judith Butler posits as the "other passages" (2004: xii) beckoning us beyond the vicious cycles of warfare promulgated by 'dominator' cultures⁴, is a process that we as LEIBNIZ, together with many others, believe necessitates laying our own bodies and dreams on the line.

1.iii. Methodological Considerations

In accordance with Lois Keidan's assertion that Live Art effectively functions as a "research engine" (Keidan, 2006: 9), this contextualizing document seeks to reconfigure and explicate our predominately image and action-based practice in verbal form. The articulation of what Michael Polanyi (1961) terms the 'personal' or 'tacit' knowledge born(e) of and by each individual's experience of embodiment cannot – initially at least - be communicated in the abstract

² Mikhail Bakhtin's seminal writings on the medieval counter-culture of carnival folk humour and its aesthetics of 'Grotesque Realism' as discussed in his *Rabelais and His World* (1984) should here be acknowledged as a key influence on the author's performance research over the past twenty years. For discussion of the relevance of Bakhtin's concept of the carnivalesque for radical art and performance, see: Russo (1986, 1995); Kershaw (1992); Innes, (1993); Campbell and Spackman (1998).

³ Fischer-Lichte links Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela's concept of 'auto-poiesis' (1980) – generally defined as the recursive process of feedback through which systems (cells, organisms and/or social organizations) self-reproduce/regenerate - to postmodern performance's characteristic emphasis on performer-spectator dynamics and its facilitation of "a fundamentally open and unpredictable process [...] as the defining principle of theatrical work" (2008: 39).

⁴ The coinage of this term is generally attributed to Riane Eisler's *The Chalice and the Blade* (1987) and her distinction of such hierarchical cultures from those based on partnership and egalitarianism. The urgent need to expose and resist the traditional power hierarchies and colonialist mentalities reinforced by patriarchal ideology has been a recurrent theme of feminist, post-colonial, queer, subaltern and disability studies and remains a particularly pronounced feature of the 'Theatre of the Oppressed' pioneered by Augusto Boal and bell hooks' emancipatory pedagogy (see especially her *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* [1994] and "Performance practice as the site of opposition" [1995]).

register of words. The collaborative exploration and re-generation of such embodied knowledge and thought through its ‘fleshing out’, working through and dissemination in performance forms the mainstay of our creative and critically reflexive practice as LEIBNIZ. This practice works “from rather than about the body” (Bacon and Wainwright, 2007 cited in Bacon and Midgelow, 2010: 13) and is here viewed as a primary research resource – a resource that is reciprocally informed by observation of others’ practice, theoretical research and dialogue, ethnographic fieldwork and the ongoing development and sharing of practical and critical skills. All these research methods reflect what Baz Kershaw and Helen Nicholson (2011) have identified as characteristic of the multi-inter-trans-disciplinary field of Performance Studies, the ‘quasi’-disciplinary nature of which acknowledges aesthetic ambiguity, creative dissent and messiness, emotional experience, intuition and getting lost as potentially research-rich pathways that:

[...] are not concerned with legitimating the cultural authority of the researcher or the research. Rather, they are about the engaged social-environmental production of systems and the cultural production of flexible research ecologies wherein tacit understandings, inferred practices and theoretical assumptions can be made explicit and can, in turn, be queried and contested (Kershaw and Nicholson, 2011: 2).

In support of Brad Haseman’s call for the academy’s recognition of a third ‘performative research paradigm’ (2006) to supplement the qualitative-quantitative binary that has traditionally characterised research in the humanities and sciences, this document is staged as a queer form of ghost-writing that seeks to articulate the symbiosis of practice and theory that informs the hitherto largely ‘unwritten theatre’ (Read, 1993)⁵ of LEIBNIZ.

⁵ In his *Theatre and Everyday Life: an Ethics of Performance*, Alan Read coins the term ‘unwritten theatre’ as a euphemism for non-text-based performance that takes the mundane as its subject and which foregrounds the creativity of performers and spectators alike in the production of theatre, both ‘on-’ and ‘off-stage’. Arguing that such theatre has generally been neglected by critics, Read asserts that “the majority of those making theatre are considered, like audiences, to be speechless, until orality has become literacy” (1993: 14 -15). Read’s critique of the ‘written’ forms part of the ongoing interrogation of the traditional authority of the archive forwarded by Derrida (1995) and –in specific relation to performance - by, *inter alia*, Owusu (1986); Phelan (1993); Schneider (2001, 2011) and Taylor (2003).

1.iv. Topics and Aims of Research

While all the projects discussed in this document form a coherent body of research that reflects our fundamental concern and active engagement with ecological and humanitarian issues, each one focuses on a specific topic of investigation, respectively asking:

- What might be made out of dust in the post 9/11 worlds we inhabit?
- How might performance serve to both expose and subvert the traditionally close association and denigration of 'Woman' and 'Nature', 'Madness' and 'Death'?
- How might the spectator become a voluntarily active participant in the exploration and dissemination of human rights issues at both local and global levels?
- How might the documentary facility of performance to both record and generate experience be developed as an embodied, living archive?

This body of work as a whole is driven by three over-arching objectives:

- i. the development of multi-disciplinary and collaborative modes of performance making that evoke, explore and articulate marginalized life experiences, concerns and aspirations;
- ii. the creation of rituals and/or performative documents that invite participation and remain open to interpretation;
- iii. the further development and dissemination of what has been discovered through these processes in our pedagogic practice with emergent artists and in research fora.

The aims of this contextualizing dissertation are:

- i. to articulate how these four projects function as embodied practices of thought and creative manifestations of sustained research investigations;
- ii. to explicate the precise aesthetic compositional strategies, processes and methods developed and deployed in the construction of the work, in order to make accessible new knowledge of creative practice;
- iii. to situate such practices within a wider critical context in order to clarify how their active engagement with current socio-political concerns and issues of collaboration and participation, documentation and representation functions and offers a working model of emancipatory pedagogy.

1.v. Structure

To these aims and new beginnings, in the first contextual section I offer an overview of the key aesthetic influences informing this research and outline the ways in which the four case studies described in the supporting documentation actively engage with recent critical debate concerning the facility of performance to both record and bring into view latent concerns, desires and memories and to generate experiences that may in turn stimulate new ideas and issues for future development.

In the following sections on methodology, I address the ways in which these projects function as research and how their common albeit differently oriented emphasis on issues of spectatorship and collaboration, liveness and participation, the retro-prospective dynamics of memory and bodily imaginings effectively functions as a model of emancipatory pedagogy in progress, followed by a summary of the key creative strategies we have developed in relation to generating and composing work.

2. CONTEXTUAL INFLUENCES

In the following pages I aim to clarify the key artistic and philosophical contexts informing this research submission concerning the creative tension of 'the' body as both a material, sentient entity and as an ideological construct subject to social control. I then discuss how Butoh has informed our particular concern with issues of both sight and site-responsivity as referenced in the supporting documentation and how this resonates with aesthetic theories forwarded by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Mikhail Bakhtin, Julia Kristeva and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari.

2.1. The Body as Sentient Subject and Sensible Object

The common focus of the projects discussed in this document is their recurrent exploration of the communicative potential of the body as situated in dynamic relation to a shifting array of other bodies and objects within, between and across a variety of actual-ideological spaces, including that of time. Our broadly eco-phenomenological approach begs reference to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's seminal writings on the double nature of 'the' body as both a sentient subject

and sensible object (1945, 1968) that forms part of and mediates our relation to the 'Flesh of the World'. For Merleau-Ponty, body-mind-world are inextricably inter-connected and in a constant state of flux, and in contrast to classical conceptions, 'the' body is:

[...] no longer conceived as an object of the world, but as our means of communication with it, to the world no longer conceived as a collection of determinate objects but as the horizon latent in all our experience and itself ever-present and anterior to every determining thought. (Merleau-Ponty, 2005: 54)

Merleau-Ponty's re-configuration of perception is that of a complex and dynamic process, where sensory data are filtered through the affective workings of language and memory, each marked by "historical and cultural forces [...] in a deep chiasmatic intersubjective relationality" (Lepecki and Banes, 2007: 6), an 'intertwining' that - as elaborated by his close correspondents, Jacques Lacan and Simone de Beauvoir - shapes thought and behaviour at a predominately unconscious level. Exposing the inequitably engendered mind (masculine-master) - body (feminine-slave) dualism and self-contained strictures of Cartesian thought, these three veterans of post-WWII phenomenology, psychoanalysis and feminism together set the philosophical stage for the decentring tendencies of postmodern thought, where subjectivity is re-cognized as both a phenomenal and psycho-linguistic *coup de théâtre* - as embodied and enworlded, intersubjective and performative. Such re-cognition is not - as Michel Foucault, Mikhail Bakhtin and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari remind us with their respective critiques of Modernity - a peculiarly postmodern occurrence, but rather harks back and fore to older and potential ways of being, or more specifically, *becoming*, that are not based on the grossing of material 'goods' or 'property' but which be-long only to the hidden variables of desire.

2.ii. (Re-) Write the Body as Text!

Despite postmodernism's radical decentring of subjectivity and the legislative advances made in the name of democracy in the latter decades of the twentieth century, we remain daily witness to the erosion of civil and human rights and the wider ecological damage wrought by the inter-machinations of market and

military forces. As Grosz notes (1995: 83-84), the major shift evident in postmodern critiques of subjectivity from issues of (mind-dominated) consciousness to those of corporeality - a term she defines as "the material conditions of subjectivity" (ibid. 84) - is in no small part due to second-wave French feminism's overtly phenomenological bent and double-edged agenda to both:

[...] insist on the recognition of differences between sexes (and race and class) and to question the assumed humanity and universality of prevailing models of knowledge" (1995: 84).

My encounter with French feminism during my MA studies (1991-3) was and remains for me a lifeline. The call for women and other Others to 'write the body as text'⁶ literally made sense to me, both in relation to the need to resist and subvert the mindless perpetuation of violence that was then⁷ - and still is - taking place on the world-stage and in my teaching and learning practice with a culturally diverse body of students, the collaborative practice I was then embarking on with Ernst and as an initially stunned witness of the visceral performances of Ron Athey, FRANKO B. and Karen Finley. As I have previously discussed (see Campbell and Spackman, 1998; Spackman, 2000) these artists' graphic representations of the 'traumatized body' (Birringer, 1993) and the 'body-in-pain' (Scarry, 1985), remain firmly ingrained in my own heart and mind, not only as searing reminders of the suffering and trauma that the human propensity for psycho-physical violence inflicts but as radical affirmations of what, after Kristeva (1982), might be termed the fundamental

⁶ This call is in general jointly credited to Chantal Chawaf's "Linguistic Flesh" (1976) and Hélène Cixous's "The Laugh of the Medusa" (1976). For an early analysis of the relevance of this concept to body-based performance, see Forte (1987).

⁷ I refer specifically to the blatant homophobia, misogyny and racism that, at a global level, was and remains manifest by the often reactionary response to the global AIDS pandemic and the prohibitive cost of antiretroviral medication which continues to restrict access to treatment, especially in the worst-affected region of Sub-Saharan Africa; the revival of 'shock and awe' tactics by coalition forces during the 'First' Gulf War (1990-1) and the mass 'ethnic cleansing' and rape camps of the civil war in the former Yugoslavia (1991-4). At a national level, these failings of democracy were reified in the UK by Section 28 of the Local Government Act (1986-2003) which prohibited discussion of homosexuality in schools; the 'back-to-basics initiative' spearheaded by the (then ailing) Tory government in 1993 that targeted single mothers as a prime cause of societal breakdown and the "institutionalized racism" exposed during the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry - some six years after his murder - in 1999.

abjection of the human condition and the recalcitrance of the body coupled with the make-believe thrust of the imagination to disavow the impasse of thought caught in the relatively abstract and circuitous barrage of words.

2.iii. Beyond Butoh

My understanding of Merleau-Ponty's writings on the flesh has been strongly influenced by Butoh, the neo-expressionist dance style founded by Tatsumi Hijikata (1928 - 1986) in the 1950s. Emerging from protests against the rapid Americanization of Japanese culture in the decades following WWII, Hijikata's *Ankoku Butoh* (commonly translated as 'Dance of Darkness') reflected the primitivism celebrated by German Expressionism and Artaud's 'Theatre of Cruelty' and sought to revitalize Japanese aesthetics through recourse to the indigenous folk and spiritual traditions of Shinto and Zen. Developed through his collaborations with Kazuo Ohno, Yukio Mishima, Eikoh Hosoe and Yoko Ashikawa, Hijikata's notoriously taboo-breaking performances (see Fraleigh, 1999; Fraleigh and Nakamura, 2006; Hoffmann and Holborn, 1987) launched a syncretic somatic practice that continues to cross both cultural and geographical boundaries through its diversification and international dissemination.

In contrast to the rigidity of most eastern and western dance forms, Butoh does not adhere to a set technique for it is not a dance that can be taught, but - like Grotowski's similarly holistic training for actors - only prepared for and discovered by the individual. To this end Butoh practitioners aim to strengthen the bio-skeletal body's capacity for endurance, flexibility and balance through intensive physical (often yoga-based) training and to exercise the dancer's imagination and intuition as a means of facilitating what Hijikata and contemporary practitioners such as Masaki Iwana refer to as '*niku-tai*' (肉体). The metaphysical connotations of this term are easily lost in its English translation as 'flesh-body'; as loosely defined by Iwana, *niku-tai* refers to the 'dance' that is already immanent in the performer's body – the dance of an 'originary' landscape that resists socio-cultural prescription and is:

[...] sustained not by the body as a functional object as demanded by society but the body as a living and changing sculpture fashioned by life itself. We refer to this latter body as '*nikutai*', and it is a body that resounds

with the desire for individual life, one which encompasses individual history and experience (Iwana, 1995).

The eco-phenomenological inflection of Butoh is particularly pronounced in the work of Min Tanaka⁸ and his relative emphasis on inter-subjectivity. As described by Katerina Bakatsaki and Frank van de Ven, co-founders of Body Weather Amsterdam⁹, Tanaka's 'Body Weather' somatics is:

[...] a comprehensive training and performance practice that investigates the intersections of bodies and their environments. Bodies are not conceived as fixed and separate entities but are - just like the weather - constantly changing through an infinite and complex system of processes occurring in- and outside of these bodies (<http://bodyweatheramsterdam.blogspot.com>).

The focal concern of Body Weather' is, they continue, to undertake:

[...] a re-examination of the habitual body and its accompanying mental structures as a means of indicating and reflecting upon possible areas of change in the perception and the actual state of our own body and that of others (ibid.).

This understanding of the body as part of an elemental landscape in flux and a conduit of bodily imaginaries continues to exert a strong influence on our work as LEIBNIZ. Here we can link the kinaesthetics of Butoh to phenomenological perspectives on the double nature of the body as both sentient subject and sensible object - as a permeable limen or filter of sensory perception where ideation blurs normative psychophysical and spatio-temporal boundaries and transgresses the illusory boundary between the inner/outer, self/other on which

⁸ In his essay "I am an Avant-Garde Who Walks the Earth: Homage to Tatsumi Hijikata", Tanaka (1987: 65) states his preference for the term '*shin-tai*' (神体; 'mind-body') rather than '*niku-tai*' to describe his own holistic approach towards 'the' body. For a discussion of the subtle nuances of these terms and their relative emphasis on the carnal and spiritual dimensions of corporeality, see Slaymaker (2004).

⁹ Previously members of Min Tanaka's *Maijuku* Performance Company in Japan (1983-1991), Bakatsaki and van de Ven co-founded Body Weather Amsterdam in 1993 as an international platform for training and performance. I was introduced to Body Weather through Ernst (who also undertook intensive training with Tanaka in Japan in 1989) while devising our first collaborative performance *The Visitation* in 1994 and I have recently resumed Body Weather training with van de Ven. My practice has been further influenced by workshops with Marie-Gabrielle Rotie and Iwana whose 'White Butoh' supplements Hijikata's emphasis on decay and the grotesque by asserting that "such exposure should be so complete that it comes under the 'white sun', meaning a perfectly clear and cloudless light" (Iwana, 1989).

the 'sanctity' of the Modern subject now stands exposed as forged. It is noteworthy here that Artaud's writings - in particular his concept of the 'body without organs' (1947) - has served as a catalytic reference not only for Hijikata and his wayward followers, but also for Julia Kristeva's reconfiguration of abjection and Deleuze and Guattari's call for deterritorialization.¹⁰ These critical references are perhaps best linked with reference to Deleuze's consideration of subjectivity as a recursive 'folding' of the in/outside, as developed via his readings of Leibniz, Merleau-Ponty and Foucault:

The outside is not a fixed limit but a moving matter animated by peristaltic movements, folds and foldings that together make up an inside: they are not something other than the outside, but precisely the inside *of* the outside (Deleuze, 2006b: 80).

It is important to note here that Butoh practitioners do not subscribe to a naïve rejection of the powerful role played by verbal language in determining consciousness, but often use poetic imagery as choreographic device¹¹. Butoh does not claim or attempt to escape the throes of language but quite literally seeks to *make words matter* – an aim that resonates with Chawaf's assertion that the role of words is "to develop consciousness and knowledge by liberating our unconscious as well as to bring back hope" (1976: 177). Hijikata (1984, cited in Fraleigh and Nakamura, 2006: 50) described Butoh as a way of 'shaking hands with the dead'. In the ambivalence that this grotesque and sublime anti-art form celebrates, it is also a way of reaching out to those yet to be born.

2.iv. On the Issue of Documentation

In her seminal *Unmarked: the Politics of Performance*, Peggy Phelan infamously pronounced that performance "becomes itself through

¹⁰ For excellent summaries of these philosophers' writings on space and time, see Elizabeth Grosz's *Space Time and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies* (1995) and, for further discussion of Bergson's, Merleau-Ponty's and Deleuze's respective takes on Vitalism and the relevance of such for contemporary feminist praxis, her *Time Travels: Feminism, Nature, Power* (2005).

¹¹ For a discussion of Hijikata's deliberately equivocal and idiosyncratic use of language as a choreographic stimulant and device, see Nansko (2000). As discussed by Nansko, "Hijikata's language implies meanings and feelings that logical language cannot convey. His words are fingers between which sand slips. Although his writings are strange, they are not necessarily unfamiliar or unapproachable. Hijikata's writings are both evocative and challenging" (2000: 15).

disappearance” (1993: 146). This simple, stark utterance encapsulates both the resistance against the commodification of art and culture in general as reflected by the emphasis on process over product that has marked radical arts practice over the last hundred years and simultaneously forms the basis of Phelan’s focal, neo-Artaudian argument: that as an embodied and transient art that demands witnessing, the ontology of performance doubles that of subjectivity itself. Her assertion that the subversive potential of performance lies in its inherent ephemerality nonetheless poses an apparent paradox for any graphic or visual documentation of the live event:

Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance. To the degree that performance attempts to enter the economy of reproduction it betrays and lessens the promise of its own ontology (Phelan, 1993: 146).

Importantly, Phelan continues to state that the ‘implication’ of the real attendant on performance as enacted and perceived “through the presence of living bodies” does not simply vanish into thin air but “disappears into memory, into the realm of the unconscious where it eludes regulation and control” (ibid.148). It is noteworthy that *Unmarked* was written in the wake of Karen Finley, John Fleck, Holly Hughes and Tim Miller being stripped of their National Endowment for the Arts (N.E.A) funding on the grounds of obscenity¹² – an issue that points to the potential downside of documentation about ‘minoritarian’ acts being circulated as misinformation but which, as I have previously discussed (see Spackman, 2000: 17-19) also points to the crucial role of the critic in articulating the validity of ‘challenging’ artwork. Phelan’s French feminist-tinted response to the can of worms that she opens is that rather than submitting to silence, those writing about performance must both acknowledge that any such documentation inevitably alters it and to accept that “the challenge

¹². As documented by C.Carr (n.d.), while the grants denied the NEA 4 in 1990 were reinstated in June 1993, they continued to litigate against the ‘decency clause’ that was upheld by the Supreme Court in 1998. In 2001 William Pope L.’s grant for his ‘Eracism’ retrospective was rescinded, ostensibly due to his “Member, or Schlong Journey” (1996) when, as described by Carr, “Pope. L walked through Harlem with a white cardboard tube mounted crotch-high on the rolling base for an office chair, a white stuffed bunny in a Snuggli strapped to his chest. The Times reported that he was walking around Manhattan with a 14-ft-long white cardboard penis” (<http://www.franklinfurnace.org/research/essays/nea4/neatimeline.html>).

Vieyra and Manuel Vason, and most recently, Anne Robinson, should be acknowledged as a key influence on my thinking and current practice - we become the second-hand spectators of the work we have performed, re-playing and doubling the role of the reader in the perusal of material that as Bakhtin, Deleuze and Guattari and the Queer theorists remind us, is 'always already' viewed from the shifting perspective of the self as an other.

At this stage I would like to take a step back from the debate of what happens to performance post-production to consider the pertinence of Lois Weaver's observation that "the work is a document in and of itself – a document of lives and experiences not represented elsewhere in the culture" (Weaver, cited in Etchells, 1999: 75). The concept of performance as an accessible and vibrant means of counter-cultural documentation that remains open and responsive to spectatorial engagement both during and retrospectively to its actual occurrence is integral to our practice as LEIBNIZ, as briefly outlined below.

The Book of Dust (2005-7) is a performance-installation that incorporates the exhibition of 'found' objects and recycled artefacts, live action and pre-recorded video projections, complemented by an original soundscape. Its hybrid form is designed to stage an act of writing and remembering and is laid out like the pages of a book, with 'pages' of sand/sawdust containing objects and variously in/active bodies added with each successive presentation. These pages are surrounded by blank spaces/paths, enabling the spectator to walk around and take a closer look at the materials on display, materials which are - literally – made of dust. The making of objects and actions with and around these materials functions as a mode of anthologizing, constructing objects of interest and matters of concern out of initially indistinct detritus and organising these in a readable arrangement.

Conceived primarily as a laboratory project for the development of body-based methodologies, *The Ship of Fools* (2005 - 2010) consists of three overlapping performance projects, each of which was initially performed for the camera or 'one to one' in a variety of in- and outdoor sites in London and the Salentine peninsula, Italy. The particular concern of this project is to work and write "from rather than about the body" (Bacon and Wainwright, 2007: 24) in direct

raised by the ontological claims of performance for writing is to re-mark again the performative possibilities of writing itself” (ibid. 148).

Rising to Phelan’s call for a mode of critical writing that might write “with and toward a theatre of affect” (Phelan, 1997: 18) and in re-consideration as to what ‘liveness’ actually entails in the increasingly mediatized and virtual worlds that we dwell in (see e.g. Massumi, 1987; Auslander, 1999), recent debates within the trans-Atlantic Live Art arena have focused on developing multi-modal documentary strategies that, as summarized by Dawn Abbott (2007), might effectively disseminate its affordance of mental and physical experience, (re)creation of memories, affective resonance and openness to (re)interpretation. The common concern is to ensure that even when ‘gone’, the potential impact of performance remains ‘live’ and not subject to the closure of authoritative definition (what Diana Taylor [2003] specifies as the tendency of the archive), but rather as Rebecca Schneider has suggested (2001, 2011), as remaining in cultural circulation and ‘interanimate’ (what Taylor links to the role of the repertoire).

As Augusto Ponzio has argued in his discussion of Bakhtin’s “The Problem of the Text” (1959-69), as a form of objectified discourse, the artist’s expression “consists in what the subject did not succeed in grasping” (Ponzio, 1993: 115) and the artwork does not, as Duchamp reminds us with his concept of ‘art coefficient’ (1957), begin or end with the artist. In his *Camera Lucida* (2000 [1980]), Barthes similarly draws attention not so much to the ‘studium’ (the studied effect intended by the artist) as to the potentially subversive impact of the ‘punctum’ – the accidental or unintentional effect as perceived by the viewer that supplements “what is nonetheless always already there” and permits access to “a kind of subtle beyond – as if the image launched desire beyond what it permits us to see” (2000: 59). While Barthes’ writings transposed to performance are in general geared towards ‘emancipating the spectator’ (Rancière, 2009) as a creative and critical reader, once the performance has taken place, it becomes ‘other’ not only to the spectator as artist but also to the artist as spectator. By virtue of its documentation - and here the collaborative work I have undertaken with photographers and film-makers Lisa Cazzato-

communication with its im-mediating environments as a means of facilitating the emergence and articulation of bodily imaginaries and narrative threads.

The Book of Blood (2006 ongoing) is a performance-installation-cum-happening, the central performance of which consists of the spectator's voluntary donation of a pinprick of blood, extracted by a qualified nurse under sterile conditions. Each drop of blood is mixed with anti-coagulant and red ink, and used to transcribe the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in a purpose-designed book, the contents of which grow as the project travels. This central act is contextualized with various micro-performances, presented by local artists, community groups and educational institutions that explore the host community's specific concerns and issues relating to human and civil rights.

Ghost Letters (2008 ongoing) is designed to function as a living archive and is an installation of miniature landscapes/scenarios, restaging memories of previous performances as well as personal experiences of love, loss and longing. The installation is constructed live in the presence of spectators as it moves across the room on free-standing butler trays, constantly making and unmaking itself and in the process tracing the imaginary history of LEIBNIZ performance collective.

In the following pages I aim to clarify some of the ways in which our working methods are located in the tension between the liveness of embodied praxis and documentation in/as performance. The over-arching objective is to create a performance vocabulary that homes in on the periperformative¹³ potential of images and actions in order not to fix but to 'open the text' on the un/known, to re-circulate memories and to generate new understandings on aspects of embodied experience that are often taken for granted and left unspoken, subject to censorship on the grounds of 'impropriety', dismissed as dreamy idealism - or simply as yet un-thought.

¹³ As defined by Eve Kosofosky Sedgwick (1995: 18) "Periperformatives are utterances, not themselves proper performatives, that explicitly allude to explicitly performative utterances" that potentially serve to "spatialize a neighbourhood of language around or touching the performative". For her extended discussion of the potentially liberating impact of periperformative utterances see her *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (2003).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.i. Reflective Practice

As outlined in the preceding pages and detailed in the supporting documentation, each of the projects discussed in this document is conceptually and pragmatically linked by our recurrent, tri-fold focus on:

- the communicative potential of the human body and its traces;
- the inter-subjective dynamics of the performer-spectator relation;
- both parties' collective occupation of/with a variety of both actual and virtual sites and spaces.

While all these projects form a coherent body of 'action research'¹⁴ that reflects our fundamental concern and active engagement with ecological and humanitarian issues, each one functions as a host 'book' or 'portfolio' that focuses on a specific topic of investigation. As is characteristic of action research, these topics have been researched through a recurrent and spiralling process of 'action reflection cycles' (Lewin, 1946; Zuber-Skerritt, 1996) that consists of:

- identifying a specific issue;
- planning how to address it;
- enacting such plan;
- reflecting on the outcome of such enactment;
- evaluating how it might be improved /developed;
- re-planning development of action, enactment of such etc.

3.ii Embodied practice as performance of thought

As Schneider (2011: 99-100) notes, the flesh is itself an unofficial archive of memories albeit one that in Cartesian thought systems has generally been considered blind. Here it is important to acknowledge that the verbal articulation of the themes and issues addressed and raised by each of the

¹⁴ Derived from the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory and the pioneering work of Kurt Lewin in the mid 1940s, 'action research' is defined by Carr and Kemmis (1986: 162) as " [...] a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out".

projects discussed in the following pages has emerged retrospectively to what was and remains an imagistic and action-based process and style of performance where observation, responsivity to happenstance and intuition play an equally important role as consciously registered volition. Our work often starts with a hunch, a fascination with a particular image, event and/or site that arrests the attention and seems in some way significant but which we do not fully understand – at least, not on a purely cerebral/ intellectual level – until it has been explored and worked through in performance. This manifestation of the ‘what is it?’ that wants and demands to be shown is a process that necessarily admits to a fair bit of groping in the dark – of what Charles Sanders Pierce (cited in Wheeler, 2009: 27-28) refers to as the ‘play of musement’ and where the role of the artist is that of Levi-Strauss’s *bricoleur*, described by Derrida as:

[...] someone who uses ‘the means at hand,’ that is, the instruments he finds at his disposition around him, those which are already there, which had not been especially conceived with an eye to the operation for which they are to be used and to which one tries by trial and error to adapt them, not hesitating to change them whenever it appears necessary, or to try several of them at once, even if their form and their origin are heterogeneous – and so forth. There is therefore a critique of language in the form of *bricolage*¹⁵, and it has even been said that *bricolage* is critical language itself... If one calls *bricolage* the necessity of borrowing one’s concepts from the text of a heritage, which is more or less coherent or ruined, it must be said that every discourse is *bricoleur* (Derrida, 1997 [1967]: 285).

3.iii Quality Assurance and professional practice

All of the included projects have been developed and presented within professional arts contexts, have been supported by grants from local and national funding bodies and sustained by commissions and funding in kind by the international arts organizations who have hosted our work. Each stage of these projects’ development and evaluation has included the writing of proposals, the presentation of performances, participation in artists’ panels and long tables, giving talks about the work, receiving and responding to peer

¹⁵ As defined by the Merriam Webster online dictionary, ‘Bricolage’ is “a construction (as of a sculpture or a structure of ideas) achieved by using whatever comes to hand; *also*: something constructed in this way; derived from French *bricoler* to putter about; First known use: 1964” (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/bricolage>; accessed 16/12/11).

assessment, including that of artistic and academic colleagues, critics and our spectators in general and on-going theoretical research and reflection on the issues addressed and/or raised by these projects.

3.iv Emancipatory pedagogy as research dissemination

Our performance research has been further disseminated and inspired through our pedagogic practice with emergent artists. Several of our current associate artists are ex-students and have played key roles in developing projects, which has in turn informed their independent performance and research practice.

Of particular note in terms of our aim to assist emerging artists are the 23 London Met alumni who, on my invitation, have participated as artistic collaborators in the two high-profile presentations of *The Book of Blood* at the NRLA, Glasgow and Sacred, London (2008), while London Met alumni Isabella Di Cola and Annalaura Alifuoco have also played increasingly key roles as LEIBNIZ associate artists in the additional development and presentation of *The Ship of Fools* and *Ghost Letters* - activities which have also had a positive impact on their respective work with Cercle/RIFRAZIONI and PhD research.

3.v. Metapattern¹⁶

As detailed in the supporting documentation (p.10) and in the following section, the progressive and gradually concurrent staging of the host projects has further served to stimulate and reciprocally inform their development, as the individual performances 'contained' within each project both respond to and in turn trigger new ideas and issues in 'rhizomatic' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987)¹⁷ correspondence between, within and across the 'hosts' to which they only ever in part belong. There is a recursive feedback loop between each of these

¹⁶ The coinage of this term is generally attributed to Gregory Bateson who defines it as "The pattern which connects [...]. It is a pattern of patterns" (Bateson, 1980: 12).

¹⁷ Deleuze and Guattari (1987) use the metaphor of the rhizome to describe a mode of thinking that – in sharp contrast to the master narratives of 'aborescent' thought – is non-hierarchical, anti-hegemonic and characterized by interconnecting 'lines of flight' that embrace complexity and the immanence of multiple narratives and potential becomings.

projects, both in terms of their conceptual refinement and the ongoing development of their respective performance-making processes.

3.vi. Testing modes of collaboration

The various roles I have undertaken in each of these projects has also served as a means of researching and testing out differing modes of collaboration through embodied practice. For example, in *The Book of Dust*, my role was primarily that of a performer who was given a task to embody and enact, while in *The Ship of Fools*, it was that of performer and co-auteur in dialogue with my collaborators and the sites in which the work took place. My experience of durational, still performance in *The Book of Dust* directly stimulated the embodied investigation of the concept of petrification that formed the starting point of *The Piet(r)à Project*, while this and the other site-responsive, self-experiments within *The Ship of Fools* have in turn informed my role as facilitator of participating artists in *The Book of Blood* and its staging across a range of indoor and outdoor sites. *The Ship of Fools* progressive exploration of issues of abjection, psycho-social alienation and psycho-somatic disturbance also inform and support the socio-political inflection of *The Book of Blood* and vice versa. *The Ship of Fools* characteristically introspective and small scale performances initially served as a means of re-charging and reflection in relation to my performance in the large-scale projects in professional and arts activist contexts. In *Contaminare* (the third and culminating chapter of *The Ship of Fools* research portfolio), the distinctions between the micro-macro have successfully merged through the short film *Salento*, which weds ecological with both psycho-physical and socio-cultural concerns and has recently been exhibited in eco-arts –activist events and demonstrations.

3.vii. Testing the extreme and recycling

A common methodological thread running through this body of work are notions of testing the extreme and the recycling of working modes. While all projects in this submission are concerned with actively engaging the spectator, this notion is taken to the extreme in *The Book of Blood*, where the spectator's voluntary donation of blood is the essential element of the performance. This testing of spectatorship as embodied, intimate, and visceral participation is then

recycled most distinctly in the culminating project *Ghost Letters*. An ongoing emphasis on the haptic is contested most extremely in *The Ship of Fools*: Chapter 3: *Contaminare*, where the performer adopts strategies of ‘merging’ with the environment, challenging anthropocentric notions of the body as a discursive construct. Such testing of the extreme informs the re-occurring use of site, on the one hand testing remote and private spaces, such as disused quarries and domestic sites and on the other hand probing populated non-arts spaces, such as railway stations and the street.

4. CREATIVE STRATEGIES and MODES

4.i. Bricolage

All projects submitted have been constructed through processes of defamiliarization¹⁸. This mode of process and production has led to a preferred format of presentation that bridges visual and kinaesthetic modalities of communication, namely performance-installations. This includes the juxtaposition of live and recorded action as a hybrid form, the staging of which is responsive to the particular situatedness of the performance event and allows for creative tension and ambiguous complexity in construction and perception. While each of the projects uses bricolage to create non-linear narrative traces, it is the simultaneous layering of imagery and live interaction between performers and between performers and spectators that opens our work for public display.

4.ii. Body

Notions of bricolage are evident in the eclectic construction of body codes throughout the work. In both *The Book of Dust* and *Ghost Letters*, the mundane body is juxtaposed with highly sensitised and figurative bodies, as task-based actions are juxtaposed with uncanny stillness. In *The Ship of Fools*, the carnivalesque strategy of masquerade is combined with techniques drawn from *Body Weather* as a means of facilitating the emergence of what Mark Johnson (1987), drawing on Paul Schilder’s concept of ‘body image’, terms ‘embodied

¹⁸ For a discussion of the specific defamiliarizing strategies used in the performance-installations, please see section on “How the *Book of Dust* works in performance” in the supporting documentation, pp. 4-8.

schemata', using costume and elemental coverings (e.g. earth, chalk as body-paint) to create chimerical and hybrid human-plant-mineral figures.

4.iii. Improvisation, Repetition, Ritual

Improvisation is used as a generative and compositional tool and performance strategy in its own right, particularly in *The Ship of Fools*. Both of the films *Ferry Water* and *Salento* montage a series of 'one-off' improvised actions. In *The House Opposite, Part 2: Perdita/Contrada*, the initially improvised actions were progressively refined and condensed through repetition over the two-hour performance. This process of ritualizing initially improvised material through repetition was used extensively as a devising strategy in *The Piet(r)à Project*.

4.iv. Site

Broadly speaking, all of the projects might be described as site-specific in so far as they are undertaken as "articulate exchanges between the work of art and the places in which its meanings are defined" (Kaye, 2001: 1). The intercultural inflection of *The Ship of Fools*, together with its doubled situated-ness of the project as it moves between the collaborating artists' workplace of London and native/holiday-home of Salento, are here key to the immanent other-worldliness it sets out to explore. While Salento remains, in socio-economic terms, one of the poorest areas of Italy, it is renowned for the beauty of its Adriatic and Ionian coastlines, the fertility of its soil and cultural heritage of archaeological sites dating back to the Messapiic era, *Griko* ritual traditions (of Tarantism, the *Prefica* and related musical genre of *pizzica*) and *Leccese* baroque architecture. These natural and cultural resources together form the dancing ground of this project, which, despite its initial focus on 'solo' performance, has been undertaken as a progressive series of collaborative and inter-corporeal encounters between observing-observed-observant bodies and sites. Whereas *The House Opposite* dwelt on a personal-political investigation of what Ernesto De Martino terms a 'crisis of presence' (2005 [1961]), *The Piet(r)à Project* focused more specifically on the socio-cultural repression of desire, while *Contaminare* further engaged with broader ecological issues as a reclamation of the wild. Throughout this project, by drawing on Body Weather training I developed particular strategies of merging with landscape and site. These merging strategies have included:

- working on moving without leaving traces;
- abandoning postural verticality for a fluid, multi-directional mode of interacting with different surfaces;
- immersion in different natural elements, drawing on process of masquerade to allow the elements to leave their visible mark on my body;
- tuning into the rhythm of the natural environment with an emphasis on slowing down and stillness;
- in relation to the film work, a highlighting of texture and colour for link between different images rather than form and seeking a general ambiguity in the visual framing of the enworlded flesh.

This general tendency of responding and adapting to different sites and social contexts rather than imposing our physical presence and ideas upon them, informs the flexibility of our creative practice.

4.v. Collaboration

Developing modes and strategies of responding and adapting to each other underpins all of this work. Developing dialogic and non-hierarchical modes of collaboration between performer and photographer and/or film-maker became the crux of the working methodology in *The Ship of Fools*. There needs to be absolute trust in each other and each other's practices from the outset. Nurturing this trust as a social contract and construct has been key to developing collaborative working modes. Such nurturing includes:

- developing and sustaining effective feedback loops between collaborators;
- creating time and space for observation of each other's practice, including opportunities to swap roles to aid experiential understanding of the other's position (e.g. in *Contaminare*, I also took some photographs of Manuel in the sites where we were working);
- sharing our different perceptions so that the haptic informs the visual and vice versa and allowing each other to be affected by the other's experience and the images created.

This emphasis on non-hierarchical collaboration is carried through to our relation with spectators who become part of the performance-installations and in *The Book of Blood* are the key players.

4. vi. Identification and acceptance of different performance-making processes

The Ship of Fools develops aspects of Ernst's and my earlier collaborative practice (e.g. Butoh, focus on gender issues), my observations/ reflections on aspects of *The Book of Dust*, *The Book of Blood* and *Ghost Letters*, together with the reflexive development of my research on body politics, eco-criticisms and various pragmatic and critical aspects of the modernist avant-garde and postmodern performance. *The Ship of Fools* consists of three micro-projects that have developed alongside and in-between the other three major 'holding' projects – as chapters on a 'journey' rather than 'books' in themselves. The 'books' are largely conceived and directed by Ernst and they are projects in which I (willingly!) take a supportive, co-ordinating and 'housekeeping' role in addition to performing in them. These major projects are clean and polished in terms of their artistry and conceptualization, whereas *The Ship of Fools* is relatively 'messy', improvisational, movement-based and fluid in form as each of its constituent elements adapts/is responsive to the site and contexts of its (often initially, private) presentation, homing-in on gender issues as integral to wider human rights and ecological concerns. These concerns are however, together with our mutual albeit differently oriented takes on the notion of 'home' and belonging, integral to and constitutive of the common ground of all LEIBNIZ projects.

Ernst's performance-making processes are both relatively more developed and different to mine and we have discussed the gender issues and differing aims and agendas at stake in our different modes of working and representation. Ernst's work has moved away from movement to performance-installations, where the body of the performer is generally situated as an object amongst other objects, whereas my work is still very much based on the exploration of an embodied and embedded subjectivity through movement improvisation in a variety of sites. His tendency is towards distillation, mine towards disturbance,

although it is ‘slowing down’ in a positive sense in relation to my increasing interest in working in direct correspondence with rural sites.

The e-motionality of my work might also be linked to the concept and practice of masquerade, reflecting a predominant concern with notions of agency and performativity – of the concept of the fictionality/ theatricality, contingency and itinerancy of identity that is both the product of a particular time and space and as a process that admits to the possibility of change and transformation and which has always been a core concern in my pedagogic practice. Ernst tends to have a clear vision of his work before its realization – albeit with the assistance of others in performance - while I need to work with/ be observed by/bounce off others. The recurrent pattern of my preferred mode of improvising for a private audience of trusted observers such as Manuel Vason or Lisa Cazzato-Vieyra, and subsequent involvement in the editing process of what material we should/ not forward for public display is directly related to my concern with issues of representation, especially as regards the female body and all the luggage that entails. There is, nonetheless identifiable in our differing modes and methods of working a common and recurrent concern with a making-strange of the found, ‘haptic vision’ and ‘visual speech’. Personally I think we are simply the opposite sides of the same coin and ultimately singing from the same hymn sheet – but Ernst would not necessarily agree with this. These are however ultimately positive issues relating to the creative tension of queer collaboration and its celebration of difference. We have been working together for almost twenty years, and we are here for the duration.

(There is No) Conclusion

As I have aimed to make clear in the preceding pages and supporting documentation, ecological and humanitarian concerns constitute the core of LEIBNIZ activities. The discoveries that I have personally made through my journey with LEIBNIZ over the last several years have, for the time being, been recorded in the supporting documentation. Our commitment to developing modes of transfer of collaborative performance-making strategies as a form of emancipatory pedagogy is geared towards the ongoing facilitation and articulation of shared bodily imaginaries that might function not only as the

site/sight of auto-poiesis as articulated by Fischer-Lichte (2008) but more specifically, due to our investment in performance as an embodied and intimate process of regeneration and transformation, as a potential site of the 'matrixial co-poiesis' posited by Bracha L. Ettinger (2005, 2006). Extending her concept of the 'matrixial borderspace' as a trans-subjective, psychic sphere where subjectivity is experienced as "a transgressive encounter between 'I' (as partial-subject) and uncognized yet intimate 'non-I' (as partial-subject or partial-object)" (2005: 703), Ettinger argues that:

Co-poietic transformational potentiality evolves along aesthetic and ethical unconscious paths: strings and threads, and produces a particular kind of knowledge. Unconscious transmission and reattunement as well as resonant copoietic knowledge don't depend on verbal communication, intentional organization or inter-subjective relationships. Aesthetical and ethical processes are impregnated by matrixial copoiesis. In aesthetical working-through, the artist transforms time and space of an encounter-event into matrixial screen and gaze, and offers the other via com-passionate hospitality an occasion for fascination (ibid.).

Griselda Pollock's matrixial readings of Bobby Baker's performance practice (2007) and Ettinger's installations (2011) have, to a certain extent, already articulated the therapeutic and transformational benefits of Live Art. Further articulation and actualization of such potential through the dissemination of the image- and action-based praxis I have undertaken with LEIBNIZ remains an ongoing project. It is a project that will continue to be written in the flesh as a means of sustaining a passionate and mindful relationship with the often turbulent worlds in which we live and in praise of 'the Long Revolution' (Williams, 1965).

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Appendix (i): List of Published Works Submitted as Prior Output

Projects are listed in chronological order from date of initiation.

1. *The BOOK of DUST*: Vol.1: “Filz” (initiated 2004 - 2007)

Performance-Installations:

i) 2 hour R and D Presentation, Toynbee Studios, London (6/01/2004)

(supported by Arts Admin bursary awarded to Ernst Fischer);

Performers: Ernst Fischer and Helen Spackman; photographic and video documentation: Lisa Cazzato-Vieyra and Manuel Vason. Reviewed by Prof. Joe Kelleher; shortly available on LEIBNIZ website, currently under construction.

ii) **The Bargehouse, Oxo Tower Wharf, London (19-26/06/2005); 5 x 3 hour performances; commissioned for *Insomnia*, funded by the Red Cross for Refugee Week. Performers: Ernst Fischer, Pamela Lanyero, Helen Spackman; Photographic documentation: Manuel Vason and Emmet Ward.**

This presentation marked the official launch of LEIBNIZ.

iii) **The National Review of Live Art (N.R.L.A.) The Tramway, Glasgow (11/02/2007); selected and commissioned by New Moves International [NMI]).**

Performers: Ernst Fischer, Pamela Lanyero, Helen Spackman, Mica Sugawara and Emmet Ward, assisted by Yara Burkhalter; DVD and photographic documentation: NMI and Manuel Vason.

Reviews

The Book of Dust (for the NRLA, 2007) reviewed by Kirsten Norrie in *Art Monthly*, April 2007 / No 305, pp. 30-31, available online at: <https://www.exacteditions.com/read/art-monthly/april-07-2129>

Images from the R and D stages of *The Book of Dust* and *The House Opposite* (please see below), are featured in Dominic Johnson's "Geometries of Trust: Some Thoughts on Manuel Vason and the Photographic Conditions of Performance" in *Dance Theatre Journal*, Vol.20, #4: (2005: 12-19); 1 minute edit of the NRLA performance-installation (2007) material is included in Heddon, D., Millican, N. and Klein, J. (eds.) *The National Review of Live Art 1979-2010: a*

Personal History (Essays, Anecdotes, Drawings and Images), Glasgow: NRLA (2010).

2. THE SHIP OF FOOLS: Vol. I: “Voyages of Dis(re)covery” (2005 - 2010)

LEIBNIZ gratefully acknowledges the support of the Facility, London Metropolitan University’s Research Centre for Creative Practice in developing this project (<http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/thefacility/>).

Chapter 1: *The House Opposite* (2004 - 2008)

Conceived and performed by Spackman in collaboration with Lisa Cazzato-Vieyra (videography) and Manuel Vason (photography); ‘Perdita’ costume designed by Spackman, made by Yara Burkhalter.

Performances:

***Part I:(untitled)* (2004):** a series of one-off, improvised actions performed for the camera (stills and video), at the performer’s flat in London (12-14/04/2004), subsequently presented as part of *II* and *III* and *Pure Collaboration* exhibition (see additional public presentations below)

Part II: *Perdita/Contrada* (2005): 2-hour, improvised performance, juxtaposing live and recorded action and imagery for “Problems and Mysteries”, performance research symposium, funded and organized by the Facility, at London Metropolitan University (2/04/2005).

Part IV: *Perdita* (2006): solo live actions, presented as part of:

- (i) ***The Monster in the Night of the Labyrinth***, (curated by Lee Adams and Ron Athey), at the Hayward Gallery, South Bank Centre, London (3/ 07/ 2006);
- (ii) ***Sonic Swamp*** (dir. Stephen Montague) for COLOURSCAPE, Clapham Common, London (24/ 09/ 2006);
- (iii) ***Ghost Letters (R and D)*** for DEFORMES, Valdivia, Chile, 2008.

Pt. V: *No Man's Land* (2008): solo performance installation, presented with *Pt. III* above as part of *The Book of Blood (4): Chelsea*, commissioned by and presented at Chelsea Theatre, London for *SACRED*, 10/5/08.

Exhibition:

A selection of still images created during *The House Opposite, Pt. I: (untitled)* were exhibited/featured in Vason et al's' *Pure Collaboration*, funded by A.C.E./ National Touring Award, including exhibitions at: the National Review of Live Art, The Tramway, Glasgow (February 2006), Fierce Festival, Birmingham, (May 2006), Anti-Festival of Live Art, Kupio, Finland (September 2006) (www.artcollaboration.co.uk).

Film:

The House Opposite Pt. III: Ferry Water (2005): 16 minute DVD incorporating edited extracts from *Pt.I: (untitled)* montaged with video footage taken of 'Perdita' in London's docklands, April, 2005; presented at:

- (i) "Act Art3" (curated by Oliver Frost and Marc Massive), Central Station, London (11th 10/ 2005);
- (ii) "Act Art 5", The Arches (XXL), London (8th 06/2007);
- (iii) Booze Theatre Co-operative, Athens, Greece (29th Oct. 10th Nov., 2007);
- (iv) "RIFRAZIONI", Nettuno/Ancio, Italy (Aug., 2008);
- (v) "DEFORMES", Santiago di Chile and Valdivia, Chile (Nov.2008);
- (vi) as part of "Correspondence" (part of *The Ship of Fools*, Chapter 3: *Contaminare*; detailed below)

Pt. IV 'Perdita' features in a DVD of *the Monster in the Night of the Labyrinth* (includes additional performances by Lee Adams, Ron Athey, Stav B., Ernst Fischer, and Fischer and Spackman); available to buy from: www.thisisunbound.co.uk.

Written Publications

Spackman, H. (2007) "The House Opposite" in Vason's *Encounters* (2007). This text also includes images made in collaboration with Vason (see *Pt. I*). Fischer and Spackman were invited to participate in the artists' panel discussing their

respective collaborations with Vason at the related symposium on his work at the Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol (8-10/06/2007).

A selection of images from *The House Opposite, Pt I* and discussion of such are included in Johnson's "Geometries of Trust" (2005).

Chapter 2: *The Piet(r)à Project (2005 – 2007):*

Conceived, devised and performed by Spackman in collaboration with Fabrizio Manco and other artists as indicated below.

Public Performance/ Performance Research Events:

(i) *Piet(r)à preziosa* at #48, Via A. Dolce, Galatina, Salento, Italy (21/07/2005); site-responsive performance on private domestic terrace conceived, directed and performed by Helen Spackman with assistance in performance by Fabrizio Manco; presented as work-in-progress to invited audience.

(ii) *Thread, for Calici di Stelle* (a nation-wide festival of art, food and wine), on the streets of Galatina, Salento (10/08/2005); series of site-responsive actions (co-directed by Manco and Spackman, devised and performed by Thomas Kampe, Manco, Spackman and Emmet Ward in association with local sculptor, stone-mason and painter Antonio Baldari, *Gruppi Artisti di Via D'Aruca* and the commune of Galatina;

(iii) *Piet(r)à* at London Metropolitan University as part of "Happily Ever After...?", Symposium on Narrative organized by The Facility (LMU Performance Research Unit; 22/04/2006); development and 45 minute theatrical adaptation of above performances. Directed and written by Spackman; design and Italian translation of texts by Manco; performers: Anna Laura Alifuoco, Ioanna Danezi, Pamela Lanyero, Manco, Spackman and Emmet Ward; music: traditional Salentine, Baroque, Klezmer and contemporary Turkish; sound editing: Robin Scobie; lighting: Jon Pringle; performative documentation: Ernst Fischer; photos: Steve Blunt.

(iv) Taking Place: 2: *Piet(r)à/ Strascico* (June 2007) at The Roundhouse, London (18/06/2007). Conceived and presented by Manco and Spackman,

commissioned by The Facility, London Metropolitan University. This event included live actions by Manco and Spackman (assisted by Ernst Fischer, Arturo Roura-Labiaga and Sam Quinn) and screening of *Stitch (Punto)*, a key note address by Dr. Patrick Curry and the artists' presentation of papers and open discussion (chaired by Facility Director, Lucy Richardson) of Manco and Spackman's collaborative performance research undertaken in Salento (2005-7).

Film:

Stitch (Punto): 15 minute DVD filmed on location in Salento, August 2006, based on imagery and action derived from our making of the '*strascico*' (bridal train), shot and edited by Fabrizio di Carlo, with guest appearance by Isabella Di Cola).

Screenings:

- (i) **Taking Place: 2: *Piet(r)à/ Strascico* (18/06/2007);**
- (ii) ***RIFRAZIONI*, Ancio, Italy (10/08/2008);**
- (iii) **"Recording the Performance", PaR series on documentation, London Metropolitan University (25/06/2009)**

Additional Research Outcomes:

Research undertaken through *the House Opposite* and *The Piet(r)à Project* informed Spackman's direction of *Mission Unica* (2007), a 50 minute theatrical adaptation of Unica Zurn's novel, *The House of Illnesses*, devised in collaboration with London- and Athens-based performers: Iraklis Adamopoulos, Irini Adamou, Roberto Campagnolo*, Elisabeth Dahl, Ioanna Danezi*, Eileen Kaimaikidi-Kay, Kristina Leon and Eva Tsakni; assistant director: Isabella Di Cola*; financially assisted by KORRES and presented at **Booze Theatre Co-operative, Athens, Greece (29th Oct.– 10th Nov., 2007).** (*London Met alumni)

Chapter 3: *Contaminare* (2009-2010)

A series of acts, short films and performance-installations conceived and performed by Spackman in collaboration with the Manuel Vason Studio and other artists as listed overleaf.

Public Performance/ Performance Research Events:

(i) **“Recording the Performance”** (performance research series on documentation organized by **The Facility, London Metropolitan University (June - September, 2009)**; performance installation in **The Boiler House, LMU (25/06/2009)** with additional screenings of unedited fragments from *Salento* (see below), *The Book of Dust* (2004)*, *Stitch (Punto)* (2006) and documentation of *Thread* (2005), with assistance in performance by Ernst Fischer.

*DVD of *The Book of Dust* (2004; 19 minutes); written by L.Cazzato-Vieyra, E.Fischer, M.Vason; performed by E. Fischer; photographed by M. Vason; music and sound design by Daniel Biro; directed and edited by Cazzato-Vieyra; produced by Native Voice Films.

(ii) *Correspondence* performance -installation **The Facility, at The Daniel Liebeskind Graduate Centre, London Metropolitan University, London (25 - 26/ 06/2010)**; devised and performed by Spackman, assisted by Fischer.

Film:

Salento (2009) 15 minute DVD, filmed in Salento by Vason, performed by Spackman; written and edited by Spackman and Vason with Jesse Sanders, performed by Spackman; sound by Guiseppe Amato; also includes 4 x 1 minute clips and still images from R and D process.

Screenings:

- (i) **RIFRAZIONI 2010** festival of live art, **Ancio, Italy (July, 2010)**;
- (ii) **ARTE DEI VELENI***, (in association with sculptor Tonino Baldari and video artists, Tommaso Faggiano, Alfredo Melissano and Chiara Zilli) at **Circolo Aci-Kilometro Zero, Galatina, Italy (30th Oct. – 27th Nov., 2010)**;
- (iii) **TESTIMONIAL D’ECCEZIONE***, **Piazza Aligheri, Galatina, Salento, Italy (20th 03/2011)**;

*These arts activist events were held in support of environmental protests against the burning of toxic waste at a cement factory on the outskirts of Galatina. Due in part to the pressure of these local protests, such waste disposal has recently been suspended.

(iv) **LIBERA GRECIA** (a multi-media arts festival of creative resistance against capitalism) organized by Federazione Della Sinistra/Comunisti Italiani, **Zollino, Salento, Italy (20/08/2011).**

(v) **Il Sogno/ Utopie del Futuro** (a multi-media arts festival, organized by *I Nuovi Selvaggi* with the patronage of the Commune of Galatina), **Corte Santa Maria, Galatina, Italy (18/03/2012).**

3. THE BOOK of BLOOD: Human Writes (initiated June 2006, ongoing)

Conceived by Ernst Fischer, Spackman's roles in this project are:
project manager, co-director/ facilitator, co-devisor and performer.

In addition to the specific funding awards and commissions outlined below, LEIBNIZ gratefully acknowledge R and D funding from the Arts Council of England (ACE) and Live Art UK which - in addition to the specific commissions acknowledged below - has facilitated the subsequent performances. Special thanks are due to all our past and present participating artists and spect-actors in helping us realize the writing of *The Book*.

Presentations

(i) ***The Book of Blood (1): LONDON (17/6/2006) for Psi#12: Performing Rights***, at **The Chapel, Queen Mary's, University of London** as part of an international conference and performance platform of academics, arts activists and artists whose work engages with human rights issues (14/6 – 18/6/06), at Queen Mary's, University of London <http://psi-web.org/organization/groups-and-committees/performance-human-rights/>; commissioned by Performance Studies International and the Live Arts Development Agency with R and D funding from Arts Council of England (ACE), The Crucible (Centre for Human Rights, Roehampton University) and support in kind (use of studio space for preliminary sharings and technical equipment) from London Metropolitan University.

Participating artists:

Anna Laura Alifuoco, Eddie Allebe, Erica Borobia-Canadell (calligrapher), Yara Burkhalter, Roberto Campagnolo, Ernst Fischer (artistic director/ facilitator), Charlie Fox, Soheila Ghodstinat, Michael Groce, Pamela Lanyero, Stacey Lynch,

Fabrizio Manco, Carlos Martin-Sanchez, Styliana Noutsou, Arturo Roura-Labiaga, Helen Spackman (projects manager/ facilitator), Emre Taskin, Emmet Ward, Justin Watson, Joseph Watters with musical relief provided by the City Lit A Cappella Ensemble and Vivi Lachs; video documentation: George Butler and Fatima of Mutiny Arts, Stephen Cleary, the British Library and Manuel Vason; sound documentation: Nick Merwitzer, Diversecity.

(ii) *The Book of Blood (2)*: **NOTTINGHAM (11/5/2007)** took place at **All Saints Church, Nottingham**, as part of **Sensitive Skin**; commissioned by the Future Factory in association with The Powerhouse/ Bonnington Gallery, Nottingham Trent University.

Participating artists:

Tony Ajoup, Erica Borobia-Canadell (calligrapher), Becky Bowley, Benjamin Chandler, Joana Cifre-Cerda, Sarah Duffy, John Filton, Ernst Fischer (artistic director/ facilitator), Helen Spackman (projects manager/ facilitator), Annette Foster, Richard Hancock, Traci Kelly, Midori Manabe, Fabrizio Manco, Rachel Parry, Alia Pathan, Fabiola Paz Ramirez, Joy Pitts, Sam Rose, Rob Squirrel, Dave Thomas, Arnold Hill School students: Ellie Appleby, Rory Collins, Aijun Lamda, Aftab Mughal, Brittany Palethorpe, Hannah Skevington, Kirsty Wiseman, Laura Woodward; photographic documentation: Lisa Urwin; with special thanks to Rector Andrew Deuchar and Arnold Hill teachers Vicky Price and Claire Backhouse.

(iii) *The Book of Blood (3)*: **GLASGOW (10/2/2008)** took place at the Tramway, Glasgow as part of **Performing Rights/Glasgow for the National Review of Live Art (NRLA)**; commissioned by New Moves International (NMI) and The Live Art Development Agency (LADA), funded by Arts Council Scotland; <http://www.newmoves.co.uk/nrla-2008/37-archive-2008-nrla/151-performing-rights-glasgow>).

Participating artists:

Accidental Collective (Pablo Pakula and Laura Dean), Sonia Nadia Abdelaziz, Erica Borobia Canadell (calligrapher), Celine Bourd (nurse), Benjamin Chandler, Joana Cifre-Cerda, Rebecca Cunningham, Isabella Di Cola, Ernst Fischer (artistic director/ facilitator) Justine Flynn, Benita Gibbins, Silja Ilmonen, Rachel Laming,

Juan-Carlos Martin-Sanchez (nurse/ performer), Rachel Parry, Alekos Plomaritiis, Fabiola Paz Ramirez, Arturo Roura Labiaga, Naomi Shoba, Helen Spackman (projects manager/ facilitator), Francesca Steele and Paul Grimmer, Seeds of Thought (Tawona Sithole, Tarneem Al Mousadi, Ernest Sithole, Wendy Miller, Oli Higham, David Findlay), Lisa Urwin (administrative support); photographic documentation: Lisa Johnsson; video documentation: Paul Hough and Richard Graham/ NMI.

(iv) *The Book of Blood (4): CHELSEA (10/5/08)* took place at **Chelsea Theatre, London, UK** as part of **SACRED 2008**; commissioned by Chelsea Theatre; <http://www.chelseatheatre.org.uk/sacred08.htm>.

Participating artists:

Sonia Nadia Abdelaziz, Accidental Collective, Anna Laura Alifuoco, Tonny Ajoup, Charley Atkinson, Thomas John Bacon, The Chelsea Belles, Erica Borobia-Canadell (calligrapher), Celine Bourd (nurse), Barry Davis, Eva Danickova, Emily Dell, Pete Edwards and Michael Achtman, Roberta Edwards, Ernst Fischer (artistic director/ facilitator), Charlie Fox, Soheila Ghodstinat, Benita Gibbins, Jenny Glithero, Lauren Goldsmith, Juancho Gonzalez, Cat Goscovitch, Daniel Gosling, Hayes Hopkinson, Silja Ilmonen, Tom Kirk, Fabrizio Manco, Carlos Martin-Sanchez (nurse/ performer), Sam Quinn, Shabs Rehman, Arturo Roura-Labiaga, Alma Segura, Helen Spackman (projects manager/ facilitator/ performer), Naomi Wagner, Zoe Walker, Andrea Ware, Charlene Webster, Joe Williams, Emily Willis, Nigel Young, Mimi Yung; photographic documentation: Steve Allen and Rob; video: Stephen Cleary and the British Library

(v) *The Book of Blood (5): PARQUE La BANDERA, SANTIAGO (9/11/08)* took place at Parque la Bandera, Santiago, Chile as part of **DEFORMES (2nd International Biennale of Performance <http://bienaldeformes.blogspot.com>)**; curated by Livia Caputo (Italy) and Gonzalo Rabanal (Chile); financially assisted by The Arts Council of England, with research funding respectively awarded to Spackman and Fischer from London Metropolitan University and Roehampton University; photo documentation: Fabrizio di Carlo, Fischer and Spackman, with funding in kind (technical support, publicity and artists'

accommodation/subsistence expenses) provided by DEFORMES 2008.

Participating artists:

Amaranta (nurse), Livia Caputo (CERCLE/Italy), CASA CROMA (Chile), COLLETIVO MAPOCHO (Chile), Laura Corona (Chile), Samuel Ibarra (Chile), Juan Guerrero y LA POBLACION de la BANDERA (Chile), LEIBNIZ (Isabella di Cola, Fabrizio di Carlo, Ernst Fischer, Helen Spackman, Italy/UK), MUERDA (Chile), Lisette Olivares (USA), Morgan O'Hara (USA), Tita Para (Chile), Gonzalo Rabanal (DEFORMES, Chile), Priscilla Santos (calligrapher), Francisca Tironi (Chile), Mauricio Torres Paredes (Chile).

(vi) *The Book of Blood (6): LONDRES 38, SANTIAGO (10/11/08)* took place at Londres 38 (Ex centro de Tortura de la DINA), Santiago di Chile, Chile as part of DEFORMES 2008 (curation, funding and documentary details as above).

Participating artists:

Anita Berrios (nurse, Chile), LEIBNIZ (Isabella di Cola, Fabrizio di Carlo, Ernst Fischer, Helen Spackman, Italy/UK), Gonzalo Rabanal (DEFORMES, Chile), Senaquerib Astudillo (COLECTIVO MAPOCHO, Chile); with special thanks to Isabel Piper (INFORMA VALECH/ LONDRES 38, Chile).

(vii) *The Book of Blood (7): NETTUNO/ANCIO (31/7/09)* was dedicated to Navtej Singh Sidhu and took place at Nettuno Railway Station, Italy as part of **RIFRAZIONI 2009** (curation and funding in kind [administration and technical support, publicity and artists' accommodation/ subsistence expenses] provided by CERCLE performance collective for **RIFRAZIONI**, 2009; <http://www.rifrazioni.org>)

Participating artists:

Anzio Choral Society (Italy), Aretè Ensemble (Saba Salvemini and Anneka Strohm, Italy/Norway), IFA (Inteatro Festival Academy of Polverigi: Joao Fernando Cabral, Lorraine Dozio, Kay Patru, Charlotte Scioldo and Anna Serlanga, Italy/Brazil/Netherlands), Anna Mariani (Italy), Tamar Raban (Israel), Ashur Salameh (Representative of the Friends of the Palestinian Red Crescent in Rome), Standard Saints (Norma Santi, Italy); with special thanks to the Red Cross, Ancio/Nettuno for the administration of nurse duties and calligrapher, Francesca De Luca and CERCLE.

(viii) *The Book of Blood (8)*: PIMLICO, LONDON (12/3/11) at The Chelsea College of Art and Design, London for *If Not Then What?* (a day of creative resistance against the government cuts in the funding of the arts and education, curated by Cecilia Wee).

Participating artists: Fischer, Spackman, Celine Bourd (nurse), Bobby Whittaker (calligrapher).

Additional Research Outcomes:

Spackman was invited to give a 5-minute radio interview on RAI (Radiotelevisione Italiana S.p.A.) on 24/7/2011 in relation to the (then forthcoming) presentation of the seventh *Book of Blood* at Nettuno Railway station. Fischer and Spackman have given illustrated lectures on *the Book of Blood* and other LEIBNIZ performance research projects at:

- (i) The “Resensitized Symposium”, *SENSITIVE SKIN*, The Powerhouse/ Nottingham Trent University (12/ 05/ 2007);
- (ii) Inter-University Colloquium organized by DEFORMES 2008 at Universidad Mayor, Santiago (14/11/08) and Universidad Austral de Chile, Valdivia (20/11/08).

4. GHOST LETTERS (2008, ongoing)

Various site-responsive actions from the R and D stage of *GHOST LETTERS* were created for and performed by Di Cola, Fischer and Spackman at:

- (i) *RIFRAZIONI 2008*, Ancio and Nettuno, Italy (August 2008)
- (ii) *DEFORMES*, Santiago di Chile and Valdivia, Chile (November, 2008).

The project in its developed performance-installation format has since been commissioned and presented for public performance at:

- (i) *Tell It Like It Is. Tell It Like It Isn't: Queer Lives Remodelled* (research symposium on queer autobiography organized by ‘Queer at Kings’ research unit, curated by Richard Macguire with keynote addresses by Peggy Phelan and Alan

Read) at **King's College, University of London (12/06/2009)**; performers: Fischer and Spackman.

(ii) ***Festival of Live Art*** curated by Alekos Plomaritiis, **Block 33, Thessaloniki, Greece (30-31/10/ 2009)**; performers: Fischer and Spackman.

GHOST LETTERS has since been presented in extended form with the additional collaborative input of Annalaura Alifuoco (documentarist), Howard Haigh (composer) and Manuel Vason (photographer) at:

(iii) ***OUTSIDE AIR*** (a festival of live art events marking the official launch of the Air Project initiated by the Drama Dept, Queen Mary, University of London; www.airproject.qmul.ac.uk) at **the People's Palace, Queen Mary, University of London (13-14/03/ 2010)**; performed by Alifuoco, Di Cola, Fischer and Spackman.

(iv) **The 30th Anniversary of the National Review of Live Art, The Tramway, Glasgow (21/03/ 2010)**; performed by Alifuoco, Di Cola, Fischer and Spackman.

(v) ***ACCIDENTAL FESTIVAL 2010*** presented by Central School of Speech and Drama at **Battersea Arts Centre, London (28/05/2010)**; performed by Alifuoco, Fischer and Spackman.

(vi) ***LIFE: Lazio in Festival Estate 2012 (Viterbo)***, curated by *atellazio* at **Supercinema, Tuscania (11/08/2012)**; performed by Sofia Figuerido, Fischer and Spackman.

STATEMENTS from COLLABORATING ARTISTS

24/2/13

To Whom It May Concern

I am writing to confirm that I have read Helen Spackman's PhD by prior output submission and that the extent of her contribution to the artwork and the conditions and circumstances under which the work was created and presented to the public are as described in the contextualizing document and supporting material.

Ernst Fischer

Lisa Cazzato-Vieyra

Manuel Vason

THE EXQUISITE CORPOREALITIES of LEIBNIZ:
Performance as Embodied Practice of Thought and Documentary Praxis

Supporting Documentation (in four parts),
compiled and submitted by
Helen Spackman
in partial fulfilment of the requirements of London Metropolitan University
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Prior Output
September 2013

Acknowledgements

Full critical references, together with acknowledgement of all collaborating artists, details of specific performances, screenings, exhibitions and additional research outcomes relating to each of the four projects documented in the following pages, are respectively given in the Bibliography and List of Published Works Submitted as Prior Output in the preceding covering document (pp.26-36, 37-48).

Visual Documentation

This document is accompanied by a series of CD ROMs and DVDs respectively providing photo- and video-documentation of each of the four projects submitted as case studies in this submission of PhD by Prior Output. This material has been selected by Spackman, with assistance in its production from Michelle Outram and Anne Robinson, the contents of which are detailed below.

1. *The BOOK of DUST: Volume 1: “Filz” (2005-2007)*

The CD Rom includes: still images taken during presentations of the project (2005; 2007); photo credits: Manuel Vason.

The DVD includes:

- a) 15 minute video documentation of the R and D presentation at Toynbee Studios (2004), filmed and edited by Lisa Cazzato-Vieyra;
- b) 19 minute film, also entitled *The Book of Dust* (2005), created by Ernst Fischer, Cazzato-Vieyra and Vason with original soundscape (added post- visual production), composed by Daniel Biro. This DVD was included in various stages of development at all three presentations;
- c) 3 minute video documentation of the NRLA (2007) presentation, filmed by New Moves International (NMI).

2. *The SHIP of FOOLS*: Volume 1: “Voyages of Dis(re)covery” (2005 – 2010)

The CD Rom includes: still images taken during the process and public presentation of all 3 chapters (in separate folders) of the project and additional research outcomes; photo credits: Steve Blunt, Helen Spackman, Manuel Vason and Emmet Ward (specific credits given on CD).

The DVDs include:

(a) *The House Opposite*:

- (i) 30 minute video documentation of **Pt. 2 “Perdita/ Contrada”** (1 of 2, 2 hour durational performance incorporating live action and pre-recorded material for “Problems and Mysteries”, Performance Research symposium, London Metropolitan University, April 2005);
- (ii) ***The House Opposite* (2 of 2): Pt. 3 “Ferry Water”** 15 minute film, shot and edited by Lisa Cazzato-Vieyra, performed by Spackman (London, 2005);

(b) *The Piet(r)à Project*:

- (i) 30 minute street performances from ***Thread*** for Calici di Stelle, Galatina, Aug. 2005; filmed by Fausta Manco, edited by Emre Taskin;
- (ii) 40 minute video-documentation of performance of ***Piet(r)à*** for Happily Ever After...?, London Metropolitan University, April 2006; filmed by Andy Lee);
- (iii) ***Stitch (punto)*** 2006, 15 minute film; filmed and edited by Fabrizio Di Carlo, performed by Fabrizio Manco and Spackman with guest appearance by Isabella Di Cola

(c) *Contaminare*:

- (i) 3 minute video documentation filmed by Manuel Vason during **R and D** (1 of 2a, 2009);
- (ii) ***Salento* (1 of 2b)**, 15 minute film, performed by Spackman, filmed by Vason, edited by The MV Studio (Jesse Sanders, Vason and Spackman); sound Giuseppe Amato (2010);
- (iii) ***Contaminare* (2 of 2)**: 5 minute video documentation of *Correspondence*, London Metropolitan University, June 2010; filmed by Anne Robinson in slow-time; extracts selected by Spackman.

3. ***The BOOK of BLOOD: Human Writes (2008–ongoing)***

The CD Rom includes: still images taken during the eight presentations of the project to date, arranged in separate folders; photo credits as listed on CD.

The DVD includes 50 minute video documentation (approximately 10 minutes per event) of:

- a) Parts I-IV: *The Book of Blood I: London* (2006) for Psi 12, Queen Mary's, University College London; *The Book of Blood II: Nottingham* (2007) for Sensitive Skin, All Saints Church; *The Book of Blood III: Glasgow* (2008) for Performing Rights/ NRLA; *The Book of Blood IV: Chelsea, London* (2008) for Sacred 2008, Chelsea Theatre; credits listed at end of each clip.
- b) *The Book of Blood VII: Nettuno, Italy* (2009); filmed by Fabrizio Di Carlo; edited by Isabella Di Cola.

4. ***GHOST LETTERS (2009 – 2012)***

The CD Rom includes: still images taken during the R and D and subsequent presentations of the project to date, arranged in separate folders; photo credits as listed on CD.

The DVD includes:

- a) 3 minute video documentation of *Ghost Letters (R and D)*, Villa Neroni, Anzio, 2008; filmed and edited by Fabrizio di Carlo (please note, the second 3 minutes of this 6 minute film are of CERCLE performance collective);
- b) 10 minute film of *Ghost Letters* (performance for students at Roehampton University, Nov. 2011); filmed and edited by Lu Lyndon.

Supporting Documentation: Contents

Part one: *The BOOK of DUST*: Volume I: “FILZ”(2005 – 2007)

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(b) Extract from Kirsten Norrie’s review of “The National Review of Live Art” in <i>Art Monthly</i> , No.305, (2007: 30-31)	p.17
6.7 Spackman “Bearing Witness to the Witness: Im-personal Reflections on Performing in <i>The Book of Dust</i> ”	pp. 18-21

Part two:

The SHIP of FOOLS: Vol. I: “Voyages of Dis(re)covery” (2005 – 2011)

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Part three: *THE BOOK of BLOOD: Human Writes* (2006-)

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2. Project History and Credits	p. 37
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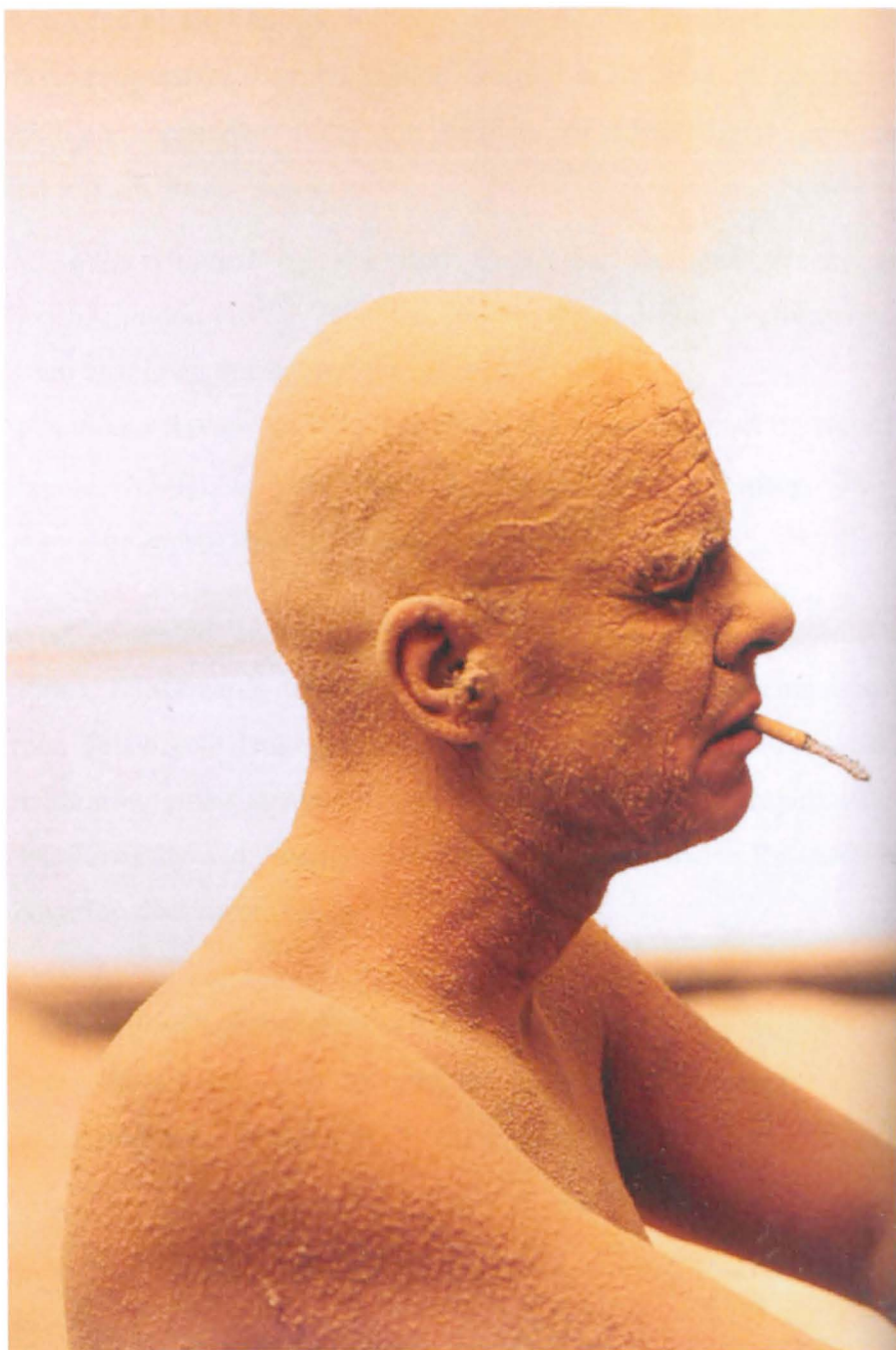
Part four: *GHOST LETTERS* (2008, ongoing)

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Supporting Documentation (part one of four)

The BOOK of DUST: Volume I: "Filz"

(2005 – 2007)



(untitled)

Photo: Ernst Fischer and Manuel Vason (2004)



Figure ii: Still from Chapter 2 of *The Book of Dust* (DVD, 2005)
(DVD included as item 2 in accompanying video documentation)

3. Research Context

Extending the ‘dust and dirt archivization’ initiated during Fischer’s doctoral research¹, *The Book of Dust* explores the fundamental ambivalence of dust as both the raw stuff of creation and as a trace of material disintegration. Containing scenes of industry and catastrophe, poverty and wealth, the key question addressed through the project remains:

What might be *made out of* dust in the post-9/11 worlds we inhabit?

The project is informed by the aesthetics of Butoh (specifically, its holistic view of the human body as embedded within a wider elemental landscape in constant flux), Marcel Duchamp’s seminal focus on ‘ready-mades’ and the task-based methodology characteristic of performance art, together Fischer and Spackman’s independent research on the ‘Uncanny’ and the ‘Abject’². The

¹ *Minotours: Mapping the Queer Space of Living Room Theatre and Domestic Performance* (2002); PhD thesis, copy available at Roehampton University Library.

² See Fischer’s “Writing home: post-modern melancholia and the uncanny space of living-room theatre” (2001); Campbell and Spackman’s “With/out An-aesthetic: the

whether kneeling or sitting on the cushion provided for her/his ease when inspecting the book, or if standing - survey all of the installation's pages.



Fig. (iii): *The Book of Dust (2)* London (2005); photo: Manuel Vason
Performers (from bottom left): Page 1: Pamela Lanyero; Page 2: Ernst Fischer;
Page 4: Helen Spackman.



Fig. (iv): *The Book of Dust (3)* Glasgow (2007) photo: M.Vason
Performers: Page 1: Lanyero; Page 2: Fischer (behind whom, sitting on the floor, can
be discerned an anonymous spectator) and Emmet Ward; Page 4: Mika Sugawara;
Page 5: Spackman.

moments of stillness that mirror the ‘suspended animation’ sustained by the prone and seated figures situated in the second and final pages of *The Book*.

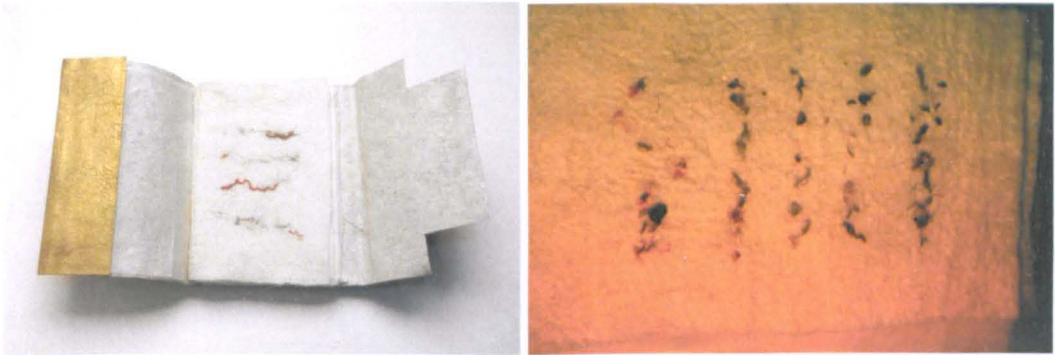


Figures (v-viii): clockwise from bottom left: (v) spectators with dust and felt book (opening exhibit); (vi) and (vii) detail of humanoid figures, Page 3; (viii) detail of bag and hair, performer’s props final Page; photo credits: M.Vason (2007); close-ups cut to detail by Spackman.

The disproportionate scale of the third page’s overtly ‘homely’ objects, juxtaposed with the ‘matter of fact’ actions being played out in ‘real-time’ that are in turn juxtaposed with the pre-recorded and relatively stylised ‘television drama’, together effect a perplexing array of doubled, Magritte-like images, the ambivalent contemporaneity and situated-ness of which is heightened by the overtly ‘retro’ apparel of the performers’ costumes and the ‘closing’ sequence of the figures’ leave-takings set against the sublime backdrop actions added into the NRLA presentation (see appendix vi). Viewed as a ‘(w)hole that is more than the sum of its parts’, *The Book of Dust* has its own tales to tell and functions as a *bricolage*⁷ - a fabrication of found actions, images and objects

⁷ ‘Bricolage’: “a construction (as of a sculpture or a structure of ideas) achieved by using whatever comes to hand; *also*: something constructed in this way; derived from French *bricoler* to putter about; first known use: 1964” (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/bricolage>; accessed 16/12/11).

that, like any text, remains ready and waiting for its unravelling and re-making in the eyes and grey matter of its erstwhile beholders.



Figures ix, x: Opening exhibit: felt book with writing in dust and cover of gold paper (remnant of previous performance); made by Fischer; photo: M.Vason (2005).

5. Discoveries

5.1 Learning through observation.

The discoveries I have made through participating in this project are largely written into the above account of its methodology, which - after many years' hard grafting - is tacitly rather than verbally articulated on Ernst's part as the project's (initial) auteur.

5.2 Engaging the Spectator

The dust-covered figure it has been my task to embody is situated both as a performer/exhibit and as a spectator - a doubling/hybridity of roles that obliquely reflects the silent request made of the spectator, whose attendance of *The Book* and use of her/his imagination and memory in re-visioning what its contents might mean are integral to its perhaps interminable composition.

The relevance of Lacan's concept of the 'mirror stage' – specifically, his assertion that both alienation and (mis)-recognition are integral to the formation of subjectivity in the perception of the self as an other - to theatrical reception has long been recognized, but merits reference again here in relation to the viewer's potential identification of/with the human figures and other 'objects'

6.2 Appendix ii: Actions and Objects included in *The BOOK of DUST* (2005, 2007)

Items written in red indicate material added in the latter presentation.

Opening exhibit: a book made of felt and dust, accompanied by a pair of white cotton gloves and magnifying lamp to encourage and assist its handling and study, all of which are on a low coffee table. There is a cushion on the floor between the table and the empty 'back' space for the ease and comfort of any spectator who might wish to kneel or sit while inspecting the book.

The 'first' (i.e. closest) page to the table is in the process of being 'written' by a young, black woman dressed in a loosely fitting, shabby black shift. She repeatedly: (i) cards white wool (contained in a wicker basket) with one of the two combs laid out for this use; (ii) mixes the wool with small quantities of dust; (iii) dampens this wool and dust mixture with soapy water (contained in glass bowls); (iv) rolls the moistened mixture into tennis-ball-sized spheres; (v) lays out the 'finished' spheres at the other end of the page in neat, evenly spaced rows. This process is repeated throughout the duration of the performance-installation.

In the second page, a middle-aged white man, dressed in a white shirt and underpants, lies on his back – immobile and with eyes closed - on a semi-collapsed iron bedstead, his torso partly covered by building rubble. A pair of slippers made of cat hair and wool is below the bed; to its side at the edge of the page, a pair of leather shoes and a hat stand, on which hangs a man's black two-piece suit, covered in cat hair. *A few feet away from the bed, an adolescent boy wearing large angel-wings sits cross-legged on the floor, using some stacked leather suitcases as a the table for his solo card game of 'Patience'. A few spheres are dotted around the 'Boy-angel', together with a stuffed and moth-eaten little owl and an old, small, leather bound Bible.*

The third page contains several more suitcases, together with spheres and knee-high cones made of sand and paper, a dolls house, several tiny model figures - some grouped around a broken egg, another standing on a sphere - *and a portable television set propped on bricks, on which the DVD of 'The Book of Dust' is playing in a continuous loop.*

In the fourth page, *a woman wearing the full kimono and white-painted face make-up of a Japanese Geisha or Court lady, repeatedly writes and erases characters in the sand, using a long stick and broom (for smoothing and preparing the sand). Her make-up obscures her age and is gradually cracking and peeling as it dries. Now and then she retires to the opposite end of her page where a tea service on a lacquer tray affords her refreshment and a brief rest.*

In the final page, a white, middle-aged and shaven-headed woman sits immobile on a chair, elevated by its position on some large trunks. To her left is a small, round-topped table heaped with dust and a large rotating fan; to her right a floor lamp; *behind her a white screen.* Her face – part-covered by the oxygen mask connected to the large cylinder by her side - and long black dress, are coated by a film of dust. Her hands are resting on her lap; the left loosely holds the black leather clutch bag lying open on her lap, revealing the cut hair that it and her unmoving half-open right palm contains.



The Book of Dust (2005): performers: Fischer, Spackman;
Photos: top and bottom: Manuel Vason; centre: Emmet Ward,
details cut to close-up by Spackman

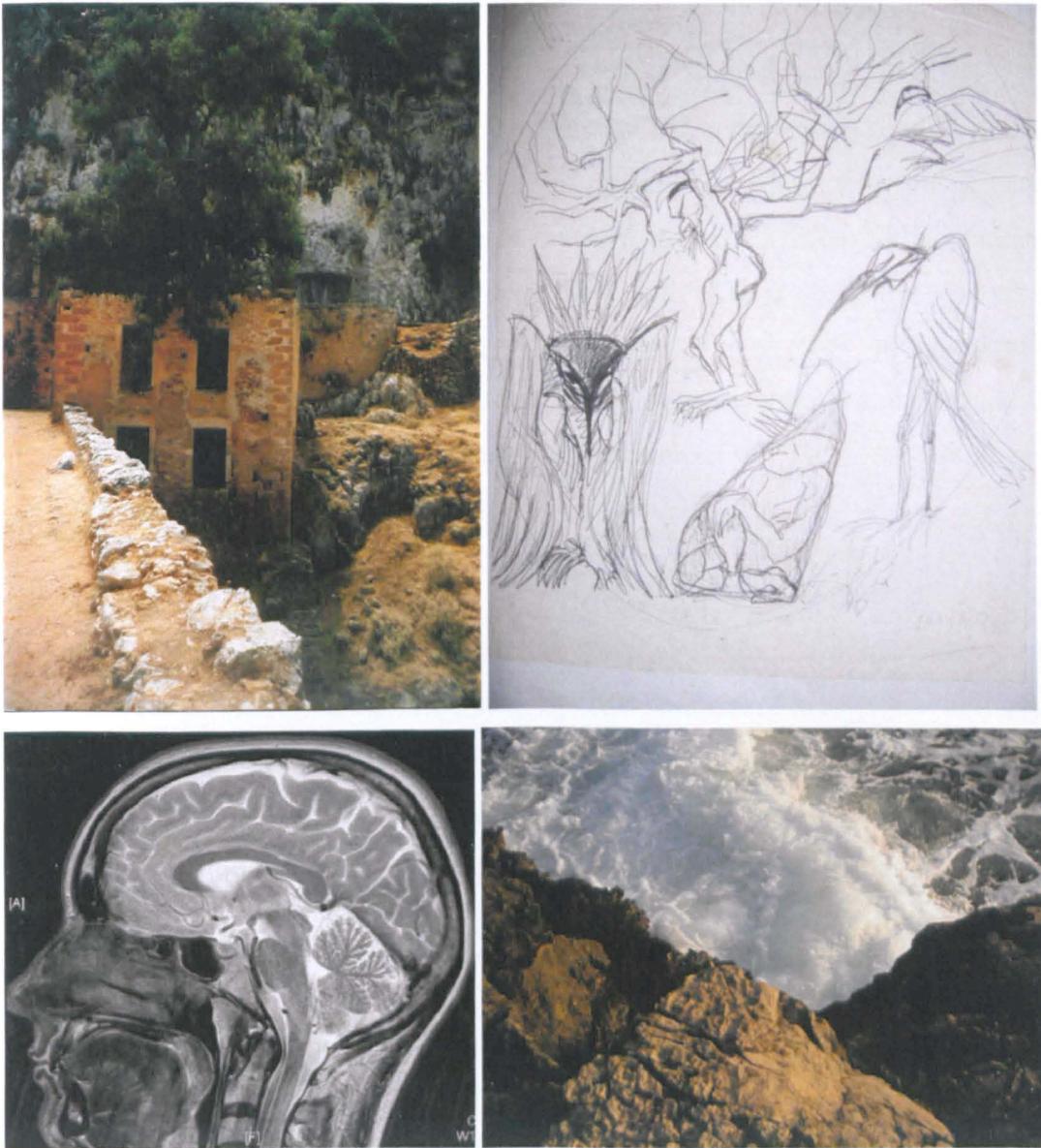
Supporting Documentation (part two of four)

The SHIP of FOOLS: Volume 1: “Voyages of Dis(re)covery”
(2005 – 2010)

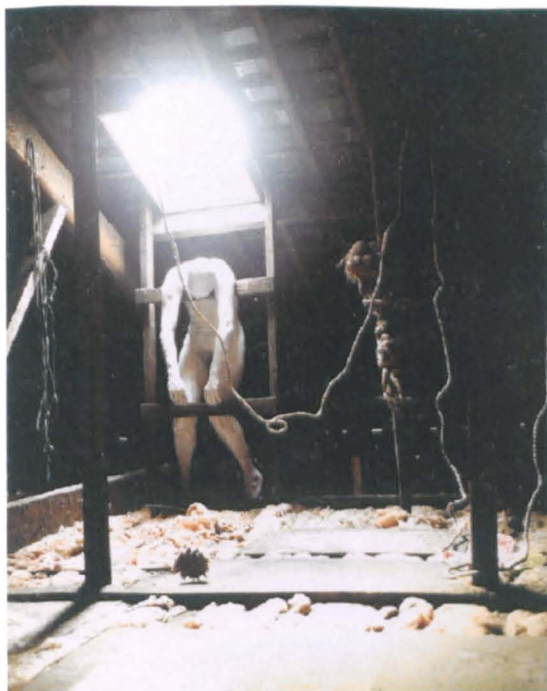


The House Opposite Part II: Perdita/ Contrada,
Chapter 1 of *The Ship of Fools* series;
photo: Helen Spackman and Manuel Vason (2005)

of decolonizing the fragile psycho-physical terrain of ‘aberrant’ action, desire and thought.



**Figs. Informing images (anti-clockwise from top right);
Sketches (Spackman, June 1991); Crete, August 2003, photo: Spackman;
Spackman brain-scan, April 2008; Torre Uluzzo, Salento, August 2004**



The House Opposite: Part 1: untitled; images created in (L) loft; (R) bedroom
photo: Spackman and Vason (2004)



The House Opposite: Part II: Perdita/Contrada, LMU (2005)
photo: Steve Blunt



Pt. 3: *Ferry Water*(2005); photo: Manuel Vason

Part 4: *Perdita*: solo performances enacted without video projections.



**(above): Hayward Gallery, London (2006); photo: Regis Hertrich;
(below): Colourscape, London (2006); photo: Seamus Ward**



Part 5: *No Man's Land*: performance installation that included projection of *Ferry Water* juxtaposed with new distilled action that responded to feedback from above stages of the process; created for specific context/space of *The Book of Blood 4: Chelsea*.



Pt. 4: *No Man's Land* for *The Book of Blood 4: Chelsea*, Chelsea Theatre, London (2008); photos: Steve Jones

5. 4 Discoveries:

- Dialogue of live action and use of camera as trusted eye.
- Emergence of embodied schemata of a hybrid tree-sea-woman ('La Perdita') through artistic practice.
- Use of site as "symbol, story-telling and structure" (Wilkie, 2002: 158 cited in Pearson, 2010: 8) and auto-ethnography.
- Emergent awareness of this reflexive process as progressively disrupting conventional spatial (inner/outer, private/public, presence/absence) and temporal (past/present) distinctions through the re-play of the slippage between the actual and the virtual.

6. Chapter 2: *The Piet(r)à Project* (July 2005 – June 2007)

6.1 Credits

Conceived, devised and performed by Spackman in collaboration with Fabrizio Manco and other artists as detailed below.

6.2 Project Description

This project explored the intercultural significance of the (now largely extinct) *Griko* ritual practices of Tarantism and the *prefica* and the influence of such on the ‘high art’ aesthetics of the Baroque and contemporary critiques of subjectivity, the repression of desire and hysteria. Based on site-responsive performances created in the summer of 2005 in the Salento region of Puglia, southern Italy, the project migrated back and forth between Salento and London and was developed through its progressive staging in private, public and academic research contexts (see covering document, Appendix i: Published Research Outputs, pp. 39-40).



still from video documentation of *La Cieca*
for *THREAD, Calici di Stelle*, Galatina (2005)

6.3 Methods

The devising process collaged physicalised fragments of dream and memory, myth and folklore, juxtaposing visual and verbal/ written imagery as counterpoints to, rather than direct illustrations of, a fable written by Spackman



Contaminare R and D, Salento, Italy 2009;
photo: Spackman and Vason

7.1 Credits

Conceived and performed by Spackman in collaboration with the Manuel Vason Studio and additional artists as acknowledged in Appendix i: Published Research Outputs in contextualizing document, pp. 41-42).

7.2 Project Description

This culminating chapter of the first volume of *The Ship of Fools* consisted of a progressive series of actions, short films and performance-installations, initiated as a series of one-off movement improvisations performed by Spackman and filmed by Vason over two weekends in Salento, Southern Italy (April – May, 2009). Extending the culturally specific narratives and site-responsive body-based strategies developed in prior *Ship of Fools* projects toward current eco-social issues in and beyond Salento, the project resonates with Elizabeth Grosz's (2005) assertion that contemporary feminism - and by extension, anyone interested in socio-political change - must return to Merleau-Ponty's notion of 'wild being' in order to engage with the real and to "give being to that which may become, to explore openly that which we do not yet know, to expand on that which we might come to know and on our ways of knowing" (ibid.129). To these ends and new beginnings, we aimed to:

- redress bewilderment as a creative strategy that might effectively subvert anthropo-phallogocentric representations of the sexed body and 'Nature' by merging with rather than imposing ourselves on the landscape;
- incorporate our double vision as a film-maker and performer in our observance and correspondence with the environment and its in/visible elements as 'found', 're(dis)covered' and tangible.

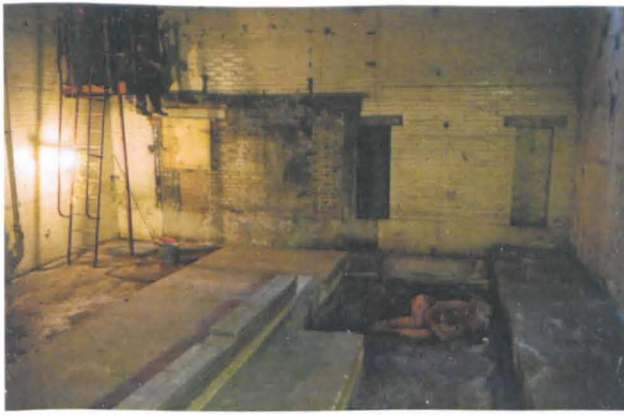


Contaminare R and D, Salento, Italy 2009; photos: Spackman and Vason

7.3 Methods

Drawing on Spackman's training in Butoh and Body-Weather somatics, the first stage of *Contaminare* was undertaken as a haptic, kinaesthetic and visual exploration of a variety of coastal, rural and industrial sites in Salento. It followed Spackman and Vason's previous process of private performance for the camera, distinctly focussing on the reciprocity of the dialogues between artists and site and the live and recorded moving image.

The film work was developed through a series of one-off improvisations, followed by montage based editing strategies using colour, movement and textures as narrative threads. This imagery was further developed in performance–installation contexts, where the 'wild being' of the film context was intentionally dis-placed into interior urban environments.



Contaminare for Recording the Performance (London 2009)
photos: Steve Blunt



Correspondence (London, 2010); photo Anne Robinson

7.4 Discoveries

- Emergence of a third embodied schemata through strategies of merging with landscape and elements.
- Subverting anthropocentric and gendered performance modes, by developing relational body-environment codes rather than foregrounding the sexed human body.
- Using different rural, urban, and both working and defunct industrial spaces to tease out environmental concerns and issues.
- Development of collaborative site-responsive film methodology between performer, site and filmmaker.
- Dissemination of film-work in public and eco-activist contexts.



Contaminare R and D, Salento, Italy 2009;
photo: Spackman and Vason

“CONTAMINARE examines the relationship between the human body and the environment in a way that teases out political and aesthetic concerns. The threat of a return to nature following some technological catastrophe is suggested, but contradicted by the physical display of the body merging with earthly elements. Spackman's mud-encrusted form brings to mind the tortured and dynamic figures that fill Blake's *Illuminated Books*...”

(Alison Smith, Senior Curator, Tate Britain, London, 2009)

Supporting Documentation (part three of four)

The BOOK of BLOOD: Human Writes

(2006, ongoing)



close-up of bowls containing spectators' blood mixed with red ink from
The Book of Blood III: Glasgow (2008);
photo credit: Lisa Johnsonn

How might the spectator become a voluntarily active participant in a project that focuses on the exploration and dissemination of human rights issues at both local and global levels?

4. Methods

While the staging and content of each *Book of Blood* event is determined in response to its site and the concerns of local participants, its central intercorporeal performative strategy remains constant. This consists of the spectator's voluntary donation of a pinprick of blood, extracted by a qualified nurse under sterile conditions. Each drop of blood is mixed with anti-coagulant and red ink, and used to transcribe one letter of each word in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)¹² in a purpose-designed book, the contents of which grow as the project travels from venue to venue. The spectator's active participation is, quite literally, the lifeblood of the event, which aims to serve as a pro-active ritual of observance and co-commitment to the realization of fundamental human rights in our everyday lives.



The Book of Blood I: London (2006); photos: George Butler

Local 'ownership' of each event is strongly encouraged in order to maximise the project's double function as a platform for the airing and sharing of individual and/or collective concerns and for the expression of local artistic achievement. To date, *Book of Blood* events have variously incorporated arts workshops for children, circus and clowning, social and contemporary dance, film and video, live

¹² The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as adopted and proclaimed by the General Assembly of United Nations, resolution 217 A [III], 10 December 1948, is available online at: <http://www.udhr.org/UDHR/default.htm>.

embroidery, painting and sculpture, live renditions of choral, classical, folk and pop music, performance art, poetry and theatre. Any such contextualizing activity may represent its maker's/s' creative response to specific socio-political issues.



The Book of Blood II: Nottingham (2007) and V: Parque de la Bandera, Santiago (2008); photos: Spackman

The scope and tenor of contextualizing activities is responsive to the opportunities proffered by the unique performance venue of each event. For example, the open space of *Parque de la Bandera*, Santiago di Chile which functions as the local (originally home-steaded) community's centre for leisure activities, loaned itself to a jubilant and carnivalesque manifestation of *BoB 5*, while the event that took place on the following day on the street outside *Londres 38* in central Santiago was a relatively minimal and deliberately low key event in respect of the site's sombre history as an ex-torture centre (1973-4) during the military dictatorship of Chile. The structure and content of previous UK events has been similarly site-responsive in relation to their respective, general usage as: places of worship (*BoB 1 and 2*); white-box rehearsal space in renovated tram-station-cum-arts centre (*BoB 3*); a community centre that is home to language and ballet schools, local Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) group as well as a fringe theatre (*BoB 4*) and a small railway station in Nettuno, Italy that was in April, 2009 the site of a brutal Neo-Nazi attack on a young immigrant (*BoB 7*).

All these artistic and interactive activities are intended to promote the concept of live performance as an alternative, dialogic form of writing and cultural

documentation, juxtaposed with the transcription of the 'official' UDHR. The variously participatory and symbolic contributions that constitute each *Book of Blood* event testifies to the project's wider aims of asserting the diversity of human rights issues at both local and global levels, a deliberately celebratory and commemorative process that is further serving to generate a burgeoning *communitas* of international individuals, voluntarily bound by the shared commitment to the realization of human rights in our everyday lives.

5. Discoveries:

- Extending notions of a politicised inter-corporeality.
- Celebrating the potential of performance to function as a non-discriminatory and eclectic trans-disciplinary ritual.
- Re-defining the potential of performance-installation in non-conventional spaces and as nomadic global networks.
- Extending the notion of participation to that of collaboration.



The Book of Blood 1: London (2006); photo: George Butler

Supporting Documentation (part four of four)

GHOST LETTERS

(2008, ongoing)



Performative and photographic documentation of Ernst Fischer's hand-scrubbing action, initially presented at *The Book of Blood VII: Ancio/Nettuno* (2009); photo credits: Annalaura Alifuoco (during *GHOST LETTERS* for the NRLA (2010) and Nigel Young (2009)

as well as personal experiences of love, loss and longing. The event is constructed live in the presence of spectators as it moves across the room on free-standing butler trays, constantly making and unmaking itself and in the process tracing the imaginary history of LEIBNIZ performance collective.

Starting with a space empty save for the performers and incoming spectators, the trays are progressively made and dismantled, so that at any one time no more than a maximum of six trays are on display. A third performer removes and clears the trays, preparing them, as well as the various objects and materials, to be put away 'for the night' or possibly used again, albeit repeated with variations or in different combinations. There is no formal viewing or seating arrangement, although the trays are carefully positioned to allow adequate space for the spectators' close examination of the constructed images and a few chairs have usually been placed along the walls of the space for those visitors needing or seeking rest periods. Spectators should however generally be free to move around the space which they can leave and (re-) enter as and when they wish, although LEIBNIZ strongly encourage all spectators to stay for the duration of the presentation in order to experience the full (de)-materialization of the event.



Ghost Letters (for Outside Air, London, 2010); photo: M.Vason



***Ghost Letters* (Accidental Fest, BAC, London, 2010)
photos: Jemima Yong**

The performers' serving of the trays is performed without words, but enacted under each other's close surveillance, with a small bow of the head to each other to mark and confirm each tray's completion. The performers do not actively seek eye contact with the spectators, but neither is it avoided if and when it occurs. As the event progresses, the performers choreograph the space through their repeated and increasingly formal re-tracing of each other's steps and maintenance of a mutually steady pace, steps deliberately designed to both frame the emergence and disappearance of the trays and to heighten the event's ritualistic atmosphere.



Ghost Letters (for Outside Air, London, 2010)
photos: Manuel Vason

5. Discoveries:

- Exploring the co-existence of the instrumentalised and expressive body
- Formalization of the recycling methodology characteristic of our practice and increasing awareness of such as an exemplary form of autopoiesis
- Creation of intimate performance space through use of miniature installation, encouraging close proximity, even haptic spectator engagement, with constructed environment and performers.
- Flexible format that can adapt to different interior spaces.

1. Formal Description

The Book of Dust is a performance-installation that incorporates the exhibition of ‘found’ objects and recycled artefacts, live action and pre-recorded video projections, complemented by an original soundscape.

2. Project History and Credits

Initially funded by an Arts Admin bursary, *The Book of Dust* was first presented as work-in-progress at Toynbee Studios, London in 2004. It has since been developed and presented under the auspices of LEIBNIZ in progressively extended formats for:

- *INSOMNIA* (funded by the Red Cross for Refugee Week) at The Bargehouse, London (19th – 26th June, 2005); five x 3 hour performances with installation also open throughout the week;
- The National Review of Live Art ([NRLA]; commissioned by New Moves International [NMI]), at The Tramway, Glasgow (11th February, 2007); one performance of approximately 70 minutes’ duration.

Conceived, designed and directed by Fischer (who also performs in the installation), Spackman’s roles in this project are that of documentarist and performer. Full acknowledgement of theoretical stimulants, together with that of the collaborating artists and additional research outcomes are respectively given in the Bibliography and Appendix of Published Performance Research outputs in the covering document (pp.26-36, 37-38).

Due to this project’s paradigmatic initiation of LEIBNIZ’s hallmark style of performance-installation, it is documented in more detail than the other three case studies submitted for this PhD by Prior Output.

project's hybrid form is designed to stage an intertwined act of reading, writing and remembering, offering a kinaesthetic examination of post-structuralisms' critique of 'écriture' (as 'always already' intertextual and subject to *différance*, erasure and supplementation) and sharing its emphasis on the 'Role of the Reader'³.

4. Methods

4.1. Design

The form and content of *The Book of Dust* are 'part and parcel'. All the materials used in the installation are – literally – 'dust': microscopic traces of human (and other) life, collected in domestic and public spaces. The making of objects and actions with and around these materials functions as a mode of anthologizing, constructing objects of interest and matters of concern out of initially indistinct detritus and organising these in a readable arrangement.

The installation is set prior to the spectators' entrance. It is laid out like the pages of a book, with rectangular strips (minimum 4' x 15') of sand and/or sawdust sprinkled onto the floor, 'containing' the various objects, embodied actions and/or video projections that, together with the 'ground' of sand/sawdust, constitute the materials on display. These pages are illuminated by domestic lighting and– if available - overhead stage lighting and are surrounded by 'blank' spaces (minimum 3' wide) that serve to both individuate and frame the *Book's* pages and function as pathways between them, thus enabling the spectator to walk around and take a closer look at its contents⁴.

Terrible Beauty of FRANKO B" (1998) and Spackman's "Minding the Matter of Representation: Staging the Body (Politic) (2000).

³ These key staples of poststructuralist discourse are generally attributed to Roland Barthes' *Writing Degree Zero* (1977 [1953]) and "Death of the Author" (1968); Jacques Derrida's *Of Grammatology* (1997 [1967]) and *Writing and Difference* (1997 [1967]) and Julia Kristeva's development of Mikhail Bakhtin's writings on 'dialogism' and 'carnivalism' in her "Word, Dialogue and Novel" (1980 [1969]).

⁴ Written and visual documentation of objects and actions included in the R and D presentation are given in Appendix 6.1 (p. 11) and as the first item on the accompanying DVD. A detailed itemization of objects and actions included in the second and third presentations of the project is given in Appendices 6.3 and 6.3 (pp. 12-13), photo-documentation of which is provided in the accompanying CD, together with a short video clip of the third presentation (third item on DVD).

It is intrinsic to the project that a new page and/or 'line' (i.e. within already existing pages) of dust, together with its accompanying objects/activities, be added into the installation with each new instance of its (re-) presentation so that the process of its 'writing' remains continuous (see Figures iii and iv overleaf). Once the spectator enters/exits the space occupied by *The Book*, s/he becomes a part of its pre-scripted and yet-to-be written occurrences.

4.2 Actions and Performance Modes

Actions are generally devised by Fischer and allocated in accordance with the age, ethnicity and sex of such erstwhile 'figures of the imagination'. These actions are discussed with the performers but generally not rehearsed prior to their enactment in performance. Performers are directed to undertake their specific actions in a neutral, task-based manner and not to actively seek eye contact with spectators, while such contact is 'denied' by Fischer (who performs with eyes closed) and 'blanked' by Spackman. Fischer and Spackman's respective performance of stillness uses techniques drawn from yoga and Min Tanaka's 'M-B' (mind-body/ muscle-bone) training in order to sustain presence and draw attention to the 'still dance' of the body's vital organs in synchronization with its surrounding environment. The influence of Butoh is relatively overt in Fischer's performance of the film of *The Book of Dust* (2005; see Fischer's statement, Appendix 6.4, p.14 and item 2 in accompanying DVD).

4.3 How *The Book of Dust* works in performance

The following reflexive account of the creative strategies deployed in *The Book of Dust* is based on its second and third presentations. As the title and other word-based information made accessible to spectators prior to their entrance may frame her/his reception of the piece, the publicity cover accompanying both these presentations is given in Appendix v.

The most immediate exhibit the spectator encounters when entering *The Book of Dust* is a low, glass table on which lies a book, accompanied by white cotton gloves and a magnifying lamp to encourage and assist its handling and inspection. Observation reveals that the book's pages are made of felt, its calligraphy crafted from dust. From this vantage point, the spectator can -

The preliminary positioning of this micro ‘book of dust’ as the opening exhibit denotes it as a ‘preface’ – a framing device that implies what remains to be seen will require a similarly close reading. Its peculiar substituents also function as one of the defamiliarizing strategies – specifically: anamorphosis⁵, inconsistency, juxtaposition, repetition and stillness⁶ – operative in the performance-installation. The fact that spectators are free to move around the installation at their own pace and whim, effectively opens up the potentially innumerable perspectives each might take during their attendance of the event. The time and space granted to the spectator to ‘stop and stare’, together with the performers’ silent, slow and/or ‘still’ enactment of their respective tasks and their general deferral of eye-contact, generates a meditative ambience that invites introspection. While the installation can be surveyed from any of its surrounding and/or interim margins, the detail of its content can only be seen on closer inspection (see Figures v- viii overleaf). Such focus shifts attention away from some other aspect of the installation, shifts that may progressively alter and/or reinforce the spectator’s perception of what has, and has not yet, been seen elsewhere.

The cause and purpose of the performers’ individual in/activities is not made readily apparent. Their various (still/moving, continuous/repetitious, productive/non-productive) actions are mediated by the third page. This contains ‘only’ objects, including several leather suitcases (similar to those that the boy-angel in the second page is using as a table for his card-game) and a portable television, on which a short film is playing in a continuous loop. Observation of this film reveals that it features both the prone male figure of the adjacent page and several of the spheres and cones that are now simultaneously *en situ* in this third page. The expressionistic movement vocabulary of this film contrasts with the predominately task-based ‘live’ action, while also containing

⁵ Derived from the Greek *anamorphoein* (‘transformation’) from *ana* – (‘up, on, upon, throughout, again’) + *morphe* (‘form’), ‘anamorphosis’ is used in aesthetics to describe the trick or distortion of perspective, where an image can only be seen from a particular angle or with the use of a mirror, as famously exemplified in Holbein’s *The Ambassadors* (1533).

⁶ As discussed by Anthony Howell in *The Analysis of Performance Art: A Guide to its Theory and Practice* (2000), all these techniques reflect the continuing influence of painting on the genre of performance art and characteristically form part of its toolbox.

on dis-play. That this lure seems to be working is suggested by the two reviews respectively written by Joe Kelleher (2004) and Kirsten Norrie (2007; see Appendix vi). Norrie suggests that *The Book of Dust* and the five other events discussed “highlight a compelling relationship between contemporary art action and its ‘other’ (witness, viewer, audience) where the ‘other’ necessarily constitutes a working part of the performance” (2007: 31) and which, by facilitating the “witnessing and writing about the work [...] enabled a sense of the transformative...” (ibid). Both Kelleher and Norrie draw attention to the affective dimension of *The Book* – an aspect enhanced by the fact that the work is addressed as much to absent others as to those who are actually visibly present in the space (e.g. Ernst’s heart-cutting action is addressed: ‘to whom it may concern’). Kelleher in particular notes its haptic qualities and blurring of past, present and future as “ a work as it might be conceived for a stage or a screen [...] exposing glimpses of a lost world, reconstructing its epic, fragment by fragment” (2004: 2).

The queer temporality of *The Book* is evoked through its proxemics. In contrast to the conventional categorization of exhibits in art galleries and museums, the *Book’s* artefacts are not overtly labelled, loaning each an anonymity that is ‘marked’ by their segregation ‘on the grounds’ of their different ethnicities and sex. Here contained within their disparate pages of dust, in one and the same space, mediated by a similarly desert-like ‘New World’, populated only by tiny figurines, made even more miniscule in their adjacency to a TV the same size as a house. The ‘suspended animation’ and repetitive actions variously endured by these human ‘artefacts’ both gestures towards and disavows the traditionally feminized and displaced abjection of ‘otherness’. Viewed through the fluid looking glass of the eyes, the presence of otherness both is and is not what it seems. While the cultural and historical references encrypted in this *Book of Dust* (a.k.a. *BoD* by the collective) might seem blatantly obvious, once encountered as embodied ‘they’ are nonetheless ‘brought home’ in a way that makes strange our relation to what is no longer ‘them’ but ‘us’. In this respect it can be argued that the *BOOK’s* potential to evoke the ‘return of the repressed’ is ‘uncanny’, while the Deleuzean ‘lines of flight’ invited by its myriad

juxtapositions of imagery also touches on and draws that which is conventionally deemed 'Abject' back into its folds.

In contrast to Freud's definition of the '*unheimlich*' as the eruption into consciousness of "that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar" (1988: 340), Kristeva argues that abjection is:

Essentially different from 'uncanniness', more violent too, abjection is elaborated through a failure to recognize its kin; nothing is familiar, not even the shadow of a memory... (1982: 5).

Kristeva's reconfiguration of abjection as a fundamental process of establishing boundaries between 'self' and 'other' that occurs as a primary and pre-Oedipal narcissism prior to the acquisition of language and its prescriptive formulation of the '*corps propre*' is further likened by her to "a resurrection that has gone through death [of the ego]. It is an alchemy that transforms death into the start of new life, of new signifi-ance" (ibid. 15).

5.3. A/effective contamination / generation of ideas

As acknowledged in my 'im-personal' memories of the piece (see 6.7) I found my participation in this project a disturbing experience. Two weeks after the Bargehouse performance, the 7/7 bombings and subsequent killing of Jean Charles de Menezes by members of the British police force (on the unfounded suspicion that he was carrying a bomb at Stockwell underground, 22nd July 2005) triggered yet more waves of xenophobia both at home and abroad. The desire to creatively resist all such state-sanctioned infringements of human rights was a key factor in our foundation of LEIBNIZ. I perceive *The Book of Dust*'s open invitation to join in the de-composition and reconstruction of imagery that references both the 'epic' and mundane struggles of and for life as one small step towards a collective and pacifist 'Re-writing Ground Zero'. In terms of our progress as LEIBNIZ, this 'outing' of the collective was followed by Ernst's conception of *The Book of Blood: Human Writes* as a large-scale participatory project exploring human rights issues and the relatively personal but still political exploration of 'petrification' in what was to become *The Piet(r)à Project* (Chapter 2 of *The Ship of Fools*).

6. APPENDICES

6. 1 Appendix i:

Actions and Objects included in R. and D. presentation of *The Book of Dust*

On January 6th, 2004, a 'skeletal' version of the performance-installation was presented as work-in-progress at Toynbee Studios, London. This presentation included:

- Fischer's assemblage of 'found' objects associated with human 'clutter' and/or migration such as suitcases, packing boxes, household containers and 'keep-sakes', including a stuffed little owl, an old leather-bound Bible and a photograph of his late father as a child;
- the (then unedited) video extracts of a series of loosely structured but unrehearsed actions performed by Fischer improvising with large quantities of sawdust, filmed by Lisa Cazzato-Vieyra, assisted and photographed by Manuel Vason, over an intensive 3-day period immediately prior to this presentation;
- the exhibition of a man's two-piece suit and slippers made by Fischer from felt consisting of moulted cat-hair collected in his flat, together with his demonstration of how to make felt from un-carded wool – material that, with a few drops of water and a pinch of dust, he then moulded into small spherical objects and neatly arranged to form part of the wider display;
- the installation of Spackman as a living sculpture, breathing through a mask connected to an oxygen cylinder, her shaven head and black clothes covered in a film of dust.

All of the above exhibits and actions have since been incorporated into the two subsequent presentations of *The Book of Dust*. In 2005, Cazzato-Vieyra edited the 'raw' film footage into a short film, also entitled *The Book of Dust*, which was then set to an original soundscape composed by Daniel Biro. This film was included in both subsequent presentations of the performance-installation, with its soundscape perceptibly amplified in the NRLA presentation in order to complement the installation as a whole.

6.3 Appendix iii: Closing actions of *The Book of Dust* (2007)

After one hour, a bell rings.

The woman in the first page ceases her task, arranges all the spheres she has made, together with the vessels and instruments she has been using, in a pattern to her liking on the dust. She then curls up among these objects to sleep.

About 5 minutes later, the man on the bed in the second page opens his eyes and gets up. He puts on the cat hair slippers and walks over to the hat stand, puts on the suit trousers and a pair of socks and exchanges his slippers for the leather shoes. Carrying the jacket, he returns to the bed and produces a scalpel from its pocket, which he uses to cut a heart shaped piece of fabric from his shirt (at chest level, left side). The knife's blade breaks his skin, causing him to bleed. He inserts the bloody piece of fabric into an envelope, addresses it 'To Whom It May Concern' and places it on the bed. He then puts on the jacket and is led from the space by the boy-angel.

Following the departure of the man and boy-angel, the Geisha/Court Lady in the fourth page also exits, leaving behind the tea tray and a poem written in dust.

Finally, the shaven-headed woman removes her breathing mask, rises from her chair and begins to sing 'We'll meet again' unaccompanied. On the screen behind her, a film simulating the creation of our planet from free-floating particles of space dust is projected, a projection that continues as the woman exits, then slowly fades to black-out and silence.

6.4 Appendix iv: Artist's Statement on the DVD of *The Book of Dust* (2005)

Dust as a substance is so varied yet ubiquitous, the processes involved in its creation so numerous, that a book of it is unlikely to ever reach completion. This DVD is part of an ongoing, open-ended project that is concerned with the collection of dust and the exploration of its various and often contradictory qualities. Of particular interest is the fundamental dichotomy between dust as the raw material of creation and as a documentary trace of destruction. Dust speaks both of movement and stillness, poverty and wealth, the body and the abject, and serves as a metaphor for the artist's endeavour to create beauty, which invariably ends in failure. Inspired by Butoh, the expressionist Japanese dance form that rose from the ashes of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to challenge received Western notions of ballet and modern dance, *The Book of Dust* seeks to explore the movement of the traumatised body in a dystopian society. From sowing dryness and doubt to the creation of new worlds, the body in these (neglected) fragments is both passive and active - a landscape and the forces impacting on it - its physicality moving between the everyday and the grotesque towards the beginning of dance (Ernst Fischer, 2005).

6.5 Appendix v: Publicity Cover for *The Book of Dust* (2005 and 2007)

The BOOK of DUST contains scenes of creation and catastrophe, poverty and wealth. However, dust here is not only presented as the documentary trace element of events or the raw material for production but as a measure of time passing. Around a body half-buried in rubble, three women wait, unable to settle down or to leave, each engaged in her own activity, which implicates each in the actual making of this 'book'. Is this environment or text through which the spectators wander a dream, a memory or a dire warning of things to come? In the midst of destruction, life clings on and renews itself; in the absence of old certainties, fresh opportunities arise to re-define our notions of 'history' and 'belonging'. Maybe all that is left now is to make ourselves at home in a nomadic existence, traversing an ambivalent and continuously shifting landscape of our own creation.

(Written by Ernst Fischer on behalf of LEIBNIZ, 2005)

6.6 Appendix vi (a) (3 pages): Joe Kelleher “Review of *The Book of Dust*” (Artsadmin, Toynbee studios, London, 9th January, 2004).

The installation is laid out in a series of strips, four or five grey-white lengths like filled-in trenches that line up across the floor between the door where you come in and a platform at the far end of the room. Everything, it seems, is already visible.

Nothing is hidden; there are no secrets. Over there on the platform, raised above the exhibition, is a human figure, still and silent, linked up to some kind of breathing apparatus. Immediately in front of us, before the first strip, is a book, set on a low trestle, with cushions in front for a reader, and reader’s tools: a magnifying glass for close inspection of the text, archivist’s gloves for handling the pages. Everything in the room appears to be on show already, as if seeing and taking it in will be easy – as obvious – as breathing. But the book may persuade us that in order to see anything, in order to organise our understanding and read, we will have to go closer, we will want to get in amongst things and touch them, test their surfaces and peer into their innards. And, perhaps, be touched and invaded in our turn; just as the oxygen tank rigged up to the immobile figure in the distance might remind us of everything that everyday breathing ‘takes in’ whether it will or not – microscopic particles, nutrients and germs and whatnot, atmospheric filler, dead matter and living matter whirled up together: fluff and dust.

Indeed, as the title of the exhibition invites us to recognise, dust is the substance of this show, the subject of its story as it where, and also the stuff – the medium – in which that story is told. The book that is given at the head of the installation is a folio of homemade felt, matted hair pressed into a certain density, stitched and bound together. The text of this book is a set of brief visual poems composed out of the seemingly weightless material that even so settles under the bed, or on the lip of the skirting board, or gets caught in the weave of the carpet; threads and flecks and flakes and occasionally brightly died tangles.

As such, these are poems about what drifts at the very edge of what concerns us, life’s most insignificant leavings. Everything, that is, that collects in the places where we are always shedding ourselves and putting on age. We might even say that this is a book of remembering devoid of memories, made up not of things or creatures or

happenings, but the merest substance that gets left behind by events, as a barely perceptible supplement to absence and forgetting. With the gloves on, with the magnifying glass in hand, kneeling there on the cushions, turning the pages over onto leaves of protective transparent paper, our tendency is to treat the book with reference – or at least care – as we might a unique or antique artefact, even though this stuff is neither extraordinary nor venerable. Something of that same peculiar impulse is called upon by the exhibition ‘strips’, beyond the installation of the felt book, which make up the main part of the show. The objects shown there are again made out of domestic pickings and scrapings, dead hair mostly (in particular cat hair), but refashioned again into things, objects of interest, that appear to conjure a history and significance out of the most banal materials. From a distance the strips appear to be lengths of white cloth, although when you go closer you see they have been poured out of some sort of micro fine powder. They divide the room like an extension of the book, like lines of text on a page. Or perhaps like the stratifications of a work as it might be conceived for a stage or a screen, layers of text but also layers of movement, sound, mise-en-scene, costume, actor’s bodies and so on, that might be superimposed one upon another to construct a performance. As if the book’s amnesia were here turned inside out, exposing glimpses of a lost world, reconstructing its epic, fragment by fragment. Tiny plastic toy figures inhabit the dust strips. The architecture of their world consists of cones of compacted powder, like monumental tombs, and peculiar spheres of various sizes made out of matted hair.

A few of these, like eggs or containers or crashed transporters, have cracked open and are leaking their substances, honey, soot, coloured powders: oozings and drifting. This Lilliputian dust-world appears to function as if its substance could be taken for granted, as if its universe were a given thing, the very stuff of life. In that world there is no conceiving another perspective in which all of this has been fashioned, with great patience, out of dead skin, the human body’s dried juices, cat’s hair, kitchen spillage and the like. In that world there is no eye that can take in the scale of the full-size felt suit that is suspended over one of the strips, or the unimaginable human creature, herself covered in dust, who is installed at the far side of this performance, high on dust-free oxygen, her eyes closed, dreaming this world

maybe; or dreamed in her turn by the creatures of another world – a future world? – that shape her substance out of their dust. Creatures in whose book we ourselves might appear, at best, as something ‘felt’, something that surprises in spite of forgetting. Something that, in spite of sadness, sticks.

b. extract on *The Book of Dust* from Kirsten Norrie’s review of “The National Review of Live Art (2007” in Art Monthly, April 2007/No. 305 (pp. 30-31); full article available online: www.artmonthly.co.uk/norrie.htm

The Book of Dust by Leibniz (Ernst Fischer and Helen Spackman) operated as a captivity, lying somewhere between film and live art. Several strips of dust on which separate performers created vignettes - a geisha with tea ceremony; a man caught on a TV screen whirling a bag of dust in a silent, miniature tornado surrounded by small spheres and a small wooden house; a boy angel playing cards on a battered suitcase by a deckchair of rubble - created images which constituted a book, *The Book of Dust*, constantly shifted and corroded by the actions of the performers, physically and metaphorically. The work concluded with the almost unbearably poignant performance of 'We'll Meet Again' sung by a shaven-headed woman, behind which a projection of moving stars and planets zoomed and revolved. But not before the angel, having risen from his card game, confronted the chair of rubble and infinitesimally it began to move, emerging as a man of dust, to be taken by the hand and led by the boy angel out into the darkness of the concrete warehouse.

The subjective and metaphoric readings of the works selected for discussion here* highlight a compelling relationship between contemporary art action and its 'other' (witness, audience, viewer) where the 'other' necessarily constitutes a working part of the performance. This may mean a structure or framework of specific preoccupations that we bring to the space and perform ourselves, both in witnessing and in writing about the work. It is in this that all of these works enabled a sense of the transformative - fixed, witnessed and abandoned by the significant other of 'audience' (Kirsten Norrie, 2007)

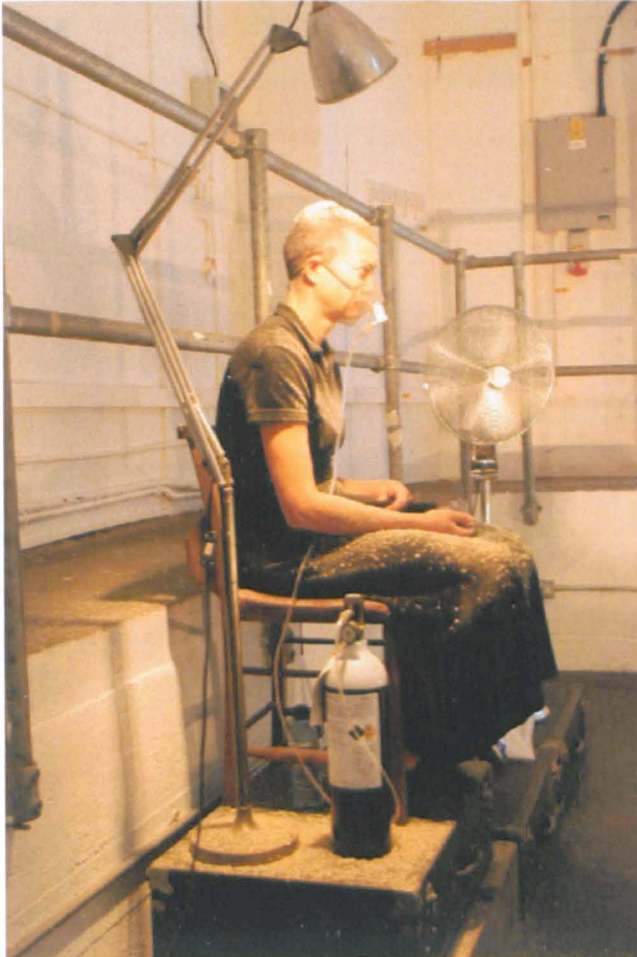
**The other artists selected for specific discussion out of the 50+ events that comprised the 2007 NRLA were Black Market International, Marie Cool and Fabrizio Balducci, Silke Manshott and Anne Seagrave.*

6.7 Appendix vii:

H. Spackman “Bearing Witness to the Witness: Impersonal Reflections on *The Book of Dust*” (2009)

“Nobody bears witness for the witness”

(from Paul Celan’s “Ash Glory”, 1967; cited by Derrida, 1993; cited by Phelan, 1997: 9)



from *The Book of Dust for Insomnia*, London (2005)

Performer: Helen Spackman Photo: Manuel Vason

Position: The figure is in a fixed, seated position on a rostra of suitcases, slightly raised above floor level at the far/near end of the installation, pending the viewer’s perspective. From this position, the entirety of the installation is visible, albeit from a distance.

Task: To occupy the image; to remain still and present; to keep the eyes open but avoiding eye contact with other occupants in the space. In the most recent installation: to also stand and sing, at the sound of a bell (of an alarm clock, set for one hour at the start of the performance), ‘We’ll meet again’, and to exit.

From the raised platform on which she is sat, she can survey the installation laid out before her in its entirety, save for the screen that for once has been set behind her, and on which, she is told, the dust will in time accumulate, explode and form stars. She cannot see all of the bodies and other objects ahead or besides her clearly, but having assisted in their making and laying-out, she thinks she knows what they are, what is happening and where each of these actions and objects belong. She is aware of being looked at, when someone draws close, as they often do, she senses that eye contact is sought, even demanded. It takes a conscious effort on her part not to meet such request. This is neither easy nor pleasant, but it is something she is used to, the *modus operandi* of the urbanite in transit, days in and out, as years amount to nothing in their unmaking. It is not the way she was taught to behave, and it does not really bear thinking about, not that she is meant to be thinking anyway. She must stay present, not drift, stay put with the image it is her task to inhabit. Sit still, eyes open, just be looked at without looking back. But sometimes they come close, right into her direct line of view and a curious clash of wills comes into play: her exhibitionism begs attention, yet here the fundamentals of co-existence are both given and denied. Immobilized, she is set above but beneath the others, imperiously breathing in rarefied air, petrified. There is a sense of urgency in this passivity. Going nowhere fast, she must not move. If she moves, this world may fall apart. If she does not, it may fall apart anyway. She/they might or might not get shot, fired even. "Sometimes the earth must be plunged into the flames to be born anew". But this is a cold place, colder still now she looks forward. The light is low, dim, half-light, like the moments just before dawn, or just after dusk, arrested - some kind of long night to be sure. It is not a natural but fake light, just as each of those placed here are not 'the real thing'. Don't drift, sit still, be present, don't move. Do not speak of the chinks that might be perceived in the walls, where bullets have ripped and lives been spilt through. Do not speak of the woman, raped down to her cut-out tongue, writing her testament with a stick in the sand in a language beyond common ken. Do not speak of the unholy nativity, nor of the sheep, nor of the bowls that will not long contain the last water of tears. Do not - no, don't even go there. Sit still, don't move. Don't think. Stay present.

She is trying.

She has been given a task, but no reason for being here.

She does/not know what there is to not/do

She does/not know where she is

She is/not turning into stone

She is /not a collaborator

She is/not responsible

She is/ not culpable

She is/not found

She is/not free

Cut.

She knows what no means. She wants for nothing.

She could claim to know these other bodies of dust in a way that the others do not; that the man and the women, are amongst the dearest of friends, that the boy-angel biding his time playing patience is her son. 'Somebody's son'. Here in this quare where eyes do not meet, these givens are cast into doubt as half-remembered images glide like a coil of snakes behind her glazed eyes and belie the tensing of time without and within. This other-worldliness of which she-they forms a part is here and now, now here, nowhere. So much for Utopia... She is disturbed but cannot – although of course she, could, couldn't she? - move, just like those others who come and go, and wander free in the spaces between the leaves of dust, a lineage set apart for no apparent reason beyond their display and where repeated, purposeless actions and stillness, are taking place, between the Lines. The banal punishment of scholastic transgression bears its own humiliations. These wandering others do not know each other's histories, nor those of the dusty bodies here laid out for the gaping, perhaps as the booty or freaks of culture as the doubly defeated enemies that their parents' and parents' generations, as the matter of the happenstance they called history, were to become each to the other in their own erstwhile worlds, rendered asunder at home and abroad. Worlds that still are being blasted apart, and not so very far away. To dwell in, to dwell on, there shouldn't be a difference, but it is easier to pretend that there is. We are all lying in bits in foreign fields. At 'the end', she will be released from this place to which this 'I' remains invisibly pinned down. The place of return will not be the same, not anymore. Never, again.

2. *The SHIP of FOOLS*: Vol. I: “Voyages of Dis(re)covery” (2005 – 2010)

2.1. Formal Description

Conceived primarily as a laboratory project for the development of body-based methodologies through self-experiment, *The Ship of Fools* consists of three, overlapping micro-projects, namely: *The House Opposite* (2005-8), *The Piet(r)à Project* (2005-7) and *Contaminare* (2009-11). Each of these ‘chapters’ was initiated as a series of improvised, site-responsive actions performed for the camera or one-to-one in a variety of in- and outdoor sites in London and the Salentine peninsula (‘Salento’), Italy. These generated photographs and film footage, a selection of which was exhibited as stills, montaged as short films and used as source material developed as a progressive series of solo, duo and/or small group performances and performance-installations.

2. Project Credits and History

Financially supported by The Facility, Research Centre for Creative Practice, London Metropolitan University (www.londonmet.ac.uk/thefacility/), the project was conceived and performed by Helen Spackman in collaboration with photographers and film-makers Lisa Cazzato-Vieyra and Manuel Vason, multi-disciplinary artist Fabrizio Manco and other LEIBNIZ associate artists as acknowledged in the ensuing chapter descriptions.

Various elements of the project have been presented at research symposia organized by The Facility at London Metropolitan University (2005-10) and The Roundhouse, London (2007), and in professional arts contexts, including:

- *Calici di Stelle*, Galatina, Salento, Italy (2005);
- *The Monster in the Night of the Labyrinth*, Hayward Gallery, London (2006);
- *Sonic Swamp* for *Colourscape*, Clapham Common, London (2006);
- *The Book of Blood (3)* for *Sacred*, Chelsea Theatre, London (2008);
- *Rifrazioni*, Nettuno/Ancio, Italy (2008, 2009);
- *Deformes*, Santiago di Chile and Valdivia, Chile (2008).

The short film *Ferry Water* (2005; part 3 of *The House Opposite*) has been screened at *ACT ART 3* and *5*, London (2005, 2007), *Booze Theatre Co-operative*,

Athens, Greece (2007) and, together with Ernst Fischer's object-based documentation of *Piet(r)à*, incorporated into *Ghost Letters* (2008-).

The short film *Salento* (2010; part 3 of "Contaminare") has been screened as part of arts-activist events in Salento in support of public protests against the burning of toxic waste at a local cement factory and in association with anti-capitalist debates (2010 -11).

Full acknowledgement of theoretical stimulants, together with details of collaborating artists, performances, screenings, exhibitions and other research outcomes relating to each of the project's three chapters are respectively given in the Bibliography and the Appendix of Published Performance Research Outputs in the covering document (pp. 26-35, 37-41).

2.3. Research Context

The SHIP of FOOLS was initiated as a means of re-charging and reflection in relation to Spackman's work with LEIBNIZ in professional arts and pedagogic contexts. Developed besides and between the other, relatively high profile projects submitted in this PhD by prior output, its correspondent liminality seeks – quite literally – to defrock and redress the gender issues integral to the ecological and humanitarian concerns that drive our practice as LEIBNIZ as a whole. At a time when official reports estimate that some 450 million people world-wide are experiencing seriously debilitating mental health issues⁸, this project explored the affective legacy of traditional representations of 'madness', questioning the cultural legitimacy of western philosophy's historical feminization and abjection of psychosomatic disturbance as symptomatic of the allegedly 'dark and destructive' forces of the 'chthonian' and the 'primitive'⁹. The key question researched through this project remains:

⁸ See Booth, I. ed. (2007) "The Fundamental Facts: The Latest Facts and Figures in Mental Health", researched and written by Ed Halliwell, Liz Main and Celia Richardson, based on data provided by the Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health; available online: http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/content/assets/PDF/publications/fundamental_facts_2007.pdf [accessed 15/12/2012].

⁹ Key critical stimulants here include: Bakhtin's writings on the medieval counter-culture of carnival folk-humour (1984 [1965]) and Mary Russo's feminist critiques of the female

How might performance serve to both expose and subvert the traditionally close association and denigration of ‘Woman’ and ‘Nature’, ‘Madness’ and ‘Death’?

Tapping into a wide range of aesthetic and critical references¹⁰ informing the now widespread ‘affective turn’ (Ticinese Clough, 2007), this 21st Century apparition of *The Ship of Fools* aimed to evoke the untold stories of various phantasms of ‘madness’ that continue to haunt the collective ‘cognitive unconscious’ of (perhaps not only) the collaborating artists and to reclaim the potential space opened up by what De Martino (2005 [1961]) terms a ‘crisis of presence’ as the site/sight of new learning and growth.

4. Methodological Concerns

This project’s particular concern from the outset was not so much to ‘write the body as text’ (Chawaf, 1976; Cixous, 1976) as to let the body ‘speak’ in direct communication with its im-mediating environments as a means of facilitating the emergence of ‘new’ bodily imaginaries and narrative threads. To these ends and new beginnings this project deployed creative methods derived from Butoh and Surrealism as twentieth-century counterpoints to the aesthetics of ‘Grotesque Realism’ identified by Mikhail Bakhtin (1987) as characteristic of the carnivalesque and its celebration of the ‘material bodily principle’ of life.

grotesque (1985, 1995); the ‘radical psychiatry’ of R.D. Laing and Deleuze and Guattari; Michel Foucault’s writings on the association of criminality and madness forged during Modernity (1961, 1975); Ernesto De Martino’s study of Tarantism (1961); feminist critiques of ‘hysteria’ as variously forwarded by second-wave French feminism and historical studies focussing on medical, religious and literary representations of the ‘female malady’ proffered by cultural historians such as Margaret Miles (1989), Thomas Lacquer (1990) and Elaine Showalter (1993, 1997).

¹⁰ Key critical stimulants here include: Antonin Artaud’s (1938) call for ‘an affective athleticism’ in order to realize ‘The Theatre of Cruelty’; Abraham and Torok’s concept of cryptonomies (1987); Derrida’s concept of ‘hauntology’ (1993) and writings on touch (2005) and the wealth of postmodern feminist and queer criticism drawing on trauma theory and the affective dimension of art and performance (see especially: Vergine (1974); Phelan (1993, 1997), Sedgwick (1995, 2003); Caruth (1995); Diamond (1995); Schneider (1997, 2011); Jones (1998); Ettinger (2005, 2006); Wark (2006).

These trans-cultural aesthetic influences' common emphasis on defamiliarization and championing of ambivalence, degradation¹¹, excess and irrationality as the staple 'ingredients' of metamorphosis, coupled with the doubled situated-ness of the project as it moved between the collaborating artists' workplace of London and native/holiday-home of Salento, are here key to the immanent other-worldliness it set out to explore. While Salento remains, in socio-economic terms, one of the poorest areas of Italy, it is renowned for the beauty of its Adriatic and Ionian coastlines, the fertility of its soil and cultural heritage of archaeological sites dating back to the Messapiic era, *Griko* ritual traditions (of Tarantism, the *Prefica* and related musical genre of *pizzica*) and *Leccese* baroque architecture. These natural and cultural resources together formed the dancing ground of this project, which, despite its initial focus on 'solo' performance, was undertaken as a progressive series of collaborative and inter-corporeal encounters between observing-observed-observant bodies and sites.

As outlined in the ensuing chapter descriptions, each of the project's overlapping chapters contained scenes of desolation and entrapment, juxtaposed with the quest for sanctuary and growth, themes that emerged retrospectively to the imagistic and movement-based process and style of performance through which the project as a whole was progressively developed. The practical exploration of affective images drawn from observation, hearsay, mythology and autobiographical writings, typically focused on the performers'/'s (generally, but not exclusively, female) body, as situated in and correspondent with a variety of conventionally 'private' (e.g. domestic, industrial, studio) and 'public' (e.g. coastal, rural, sub/urban) sites.

This largely improvised and kinaesthetic process led to the emergence of three chapter-specific embodied personae - sibling 'flesh-vessels' that each embarked on a voyage of 'dis(re)covery' (Spackman, 2007) as both the method and means

¹¹ Bakhtin stresses the positive and regenerative aspects of degradation (which he defines as "the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract; it is a transfer to the material level, to the sphere of the body in its indissoluble unity" (1984: and argues that "the theme of madness is inherent to all grotesque forms, because madness makes men look at the world with different eyes, not dimmed by 'normal', that is, by commonplace judgements" (1984: 39).

5. Chapter 1: *The House Opposite* (April 2004 – May 2008)

5.1 Credits:

Yara Burkhalter (specialist props-maker), Lisa Cazzato-Vieyra (film-maker), Helen Spackman (performer), Manuel Vason (photographer).

5.2 Project Description

The House Opposite began as a series of improvised actions with found objects and elements exploring the ‘no-thingness’ of presence, performed for the camera at Spackman’s flat in London. The raw material generated through these initial improvisations was subsequently developed through a reflexive process incorporating live and recorded, site-responsive actions that progressively disrupted conventional spatial (inner/outer, private/public) and temporal (past/present) distinctions in a sustained interrogation of the ‘Real’ aspects of representation.

5.3 Methods

Our fundamental aim was to create performative photographic documents of an initially private performance witnessed by two spectators who were actively involved in the creative process (i.e. film-maker and photographer) and that would remain open to interpretation and thus might be encountered ‘live’ with each representation and viewing.

Part 1 (*Untitled*) used improvisation with ‘found’ elements, objects and spaces through collaborative experiment between the contributing artists as generative modes of image production.

Part 2: *Perdita/ Contrada*: two hour performance-installation that juxtaposed live improvisation and recorded imagery and actions in a black box studio.

Part 3: *Ferry Water*: a second series of movement improvisations performed for the camera in the outdoor space of a deserted stretch of the docklands, East London that were then montaged by Cazzato-Vieyra with the initial series of actions performed in the flat.

shortly after her son's birth in 1991. Structured in seven 'stations', the various manifestations of the project begin and end with this fable; in between, a cyclical journey of remembrance of lost moments recollected, remarked and transformed: of tales of love, the mourning before, blindness, petrification and the quest for sanctuary - 'uncanny' themes perhaps 'known of old and long familiar', but revisited, never the Same.

6.4 Discoveries:

- Emergence of a second embodied schemata as development from *The House Opposite*, through the process of gathering stones and 'blind' exploration of sites.
- Development of eclectic performance modes through combining task based action, Body Weather sensitisation practices and strategies of the grotesque.
- Development of performance narratives in response to culturally specific sites and ritual traditions.
- Progressively extended collaborative working modes including the facilitation of group events.
- Testing of work in public spaces with new audiences and negotiation with local administrative bodies.

The research I have undertaken through the *House Opposite* and *The Piet(r) à Project* also informed my direction of *Mission Unica*, financially assisted by KORRES and presented at Booze Theatre Co-operative, Athens, Greece (29th Oct.– 10th Nov. 2007). This 50 minute theatrical adaptation of Unica Zurn's autobiographical novel, *The House of Illnesses* was devised in collaboration with London and Athens based performers: Iraklis Adamopoulos, Irini Adamou, Roberto Campagnolo*, Elisabeth Dahl, Ioanna Danezi*, Eileen Kaimaikidi-Kay, Kristina Leon and Eva Tsakni; assistant director: Isabella Di Cola* (*London Met alumni);

Part three: *THE BOOK of BLOOD: Human Writes* (2006, ongoing)

1. Formal Description

The BOOK of BLOOD: Human Writes (BoB) is a large-scale, participatory performance-installation exploring human rights issues, presented by LEIBNIZ in collaboration with host venues and members of their local communities.

2. Project History and Credits

LEIBNIZ gratefully acknowledges The Arts Council of England, Live Art UK and the Live Art development Agency for R and D funding and support of this project.

The BOOK of BLOOD has to date been presented eight times, chronologically: three times in the UK (2006, 2007 and 2008), twice in Chile (2008), once in Italy (2009) and again in the UK (2011). This central act has been contextualized with various artistic activities contributed by local artists, community groups and educational institutions. These contextualizing activities are structured in preliminary sharings and/or workshops facilitated by Fischer and Spackman in collaboration with host venues, local artists, community groups and educational institutions. Full details of performance-installation presentations, collaborating artists and other research outcomes relating to the project are given in the Appendix of Published Performance Research outputs in the contextualizing document (pp. 42-46).

3. Research Context:

Despite the legislative advances made in the name of democracy in the late 20th century, we remain daily witness to the erosion of civil and human rights and the wider ecological damage wrought by the inter-machinations of market and military forces. This issue reflects the core concern driving our foundation of LEIBNIZ, which in turn reflects the overt re-politicization of performance/live art that emerged as a specific genre during the 'Radical 60s'. Our major aim in *The Book of Blood* is to facilitate the spectator's transition from passive witness to active participant. The key question stimulating the project was:

Part four: *GHOST LETTERS* (2008, ongoing)

1. Formal Description

GHOST LETTERS is a performance installation designed to function as a living archive of LEIBNIZ.

2. Project History and Credits:

LEIBNIZ gratefully acknowledges The Arts Council of England for R and D funding and support of this project.

Conceived, devised and performed by Isabella DiCola, Ernst Fischer and Helen Spackman, the project was initially researched and developed as a non-linear series of fragmented episodes and site-specific performances during our residencies at RIFRAZIONI, Ancio, Italy, August 2008 and DEFORMES, second International Biennale of Performance, Santiago di Chile and Valdivia, Chile (November, 2008). The project in its embryonic performance-installation format was first presented by Fischer (in collaboration with Matthew Fink) at Performance Studies International P*Si* 14 Interregnum, Copenhagen, Denmark (Aug. 2008) and Chelsea Theatre, London, UK (with the additional collaboration of PA Skanze and Emily Watson, assisted by Spackman, Sept. 2008), a format that has since been further developed and presented for public performance at:

- *Tell It Like It Is. Tell It Like It Isn't: Queer Lives Remodelled*, curated by Richard Macguire, at King's College, University of London (12th June, 2009)
- *Festival of Live Art*, curated by Alekos Plomaritis, Block 33, Thessaloniki, Greece (30th-31st October, 2009)

GHOST LETTERS has since been presented in extended form with the additional collaborative input of Annalaura Alifuoco (documentarist), Howard Haigh (composer) and Manuel Vason (photographer) at:

- *OUTSIDE AIR* (a festival of live art events marking the official launch of the Air Project initiated by the Drama Dept, Queen Mary, University of London; www.airproject.qmul.ac.uk) at the People's Palace, Queen Mary, University of London (13th & 14th March, 2010);

- The 30th Anniversary of the National Review of Live Art, The Tramway, Glasgow, 21st March 2010;

- *ACCIDENTAL FESTIVAL 2010* presented by Central School of Speech and Drama at Battersea Arts Centre, London, Friday 28th May, 2010;
www.accidentalfestival.com

- *LIFE: Lazio in Festival Estate 2012 (Viterbo)*, presented by *atcllazio* Supercinema, Tuscania, Sat. 11th August, 2012, www.lazioinfestivalestate.it

3. Research Context

Ghost Letters explores themes of dis/appearance, metamorphosis and surveillance. The project interrogates the relationship between ghosts, memory and performance, with reference to Derrida's assertion that technological developments in the mid-late twentieth century have increased rather than diminished the power of phantasmal images to haunt us, that "ghosts are part of the future" rather than the past (Derrida, interviewed in Ken McCullen's film *Ghost Dance*, 1983). In accordance with other current LEIBNIZ projects such as *The Book of Blood* and *Allotment* (2011-), *Ghost Letters* engages with recent critical debate concerning the documentary facility of performance spear-headed by Peggy Phelan (1993), Rebecca Schneider (2001, 2011) and Diana Taylor (2003) and seeks to promote the concept of performance as a dialogic form of counter cultural documentation that remains open and responsive to spectatorial engagement. It asks the question:

How might the documentary facility of performance to both record and generate experience be developed as an embodied, living archive?

The underlying aim of the spectral writings created through this project is to build a portfolio of performances – an 'assembly of ghosts' – that speak intimately to each other and to their spectators of friendship, community and remembrance.

4. Methods

Ghost Letters is displayed as an installation of miniature landscapes/scenarios, using strategies of restaging and recycling memories of previous performances