

2024 VISITING FACULTY LECTURE, July 12, 2024

Ruth Estévez: [with static slide on screen behind her, and Sagri nearby on onstage] Georgia said, 'Somebodies, which means some voices, are under shock, and there is a need to form a stage for recovery. There is no such thing as recuperation in a healthy, normal state.' [inhales deeply]

We all gather in a space that is too small. We move from a closed space to an open space, and it's too hot. Georgia said, 'We have to learn to breathe at a different pace.' Like the weather. This way of breathing reminds me of an act of occupation.

For Georgia Sagri, performance is a way to give insight in how we and this society that we are building can deal with transformation. Georgia told me, 'Ruth, I don't want to do these workshops in the morning. They're going to think this is just an exercise to start the day. It's not. This is a studio practice.'

Georgia said, [laughs] 'What in the past has started with my need to repair and to recover from physically and mentally demanding performing pieces has gradually become research into the physiological and pathological conditions of the body in this hyper-capitalist era.'

[exhales] Georgia reminds us that the most important thing is to stand there and be present, and recognize the other, right leg, left leg, and then circles. Let's think in circles, and then in spirals. We all got too close, and we were surrounded by hundreds, hundreds of flies. It doesn't really bother me at all. [exhales]

Someone said, 'Close to a spiritual anarchism, Georgia Sagri's writing happens in the heat of negotiation.' [exhales] The level of concentration is too high, Georgia, and I'm losing my patience, and my body is too disciplined; then, I have to share this state with Nadia. I imagine her like a wheel that walks slowly towards me. She brought me a lot of peace - I don't know where you are, but you did.

A review said, 'Through attention to the diaphragm, metaphorically, suggested by Sagri as horizon, the exhibition open ups the possibility of recovery from the mechanism of aggression and fragmentation in which the body is considered an instructible resource.' [exhales]

After the first session, I feel like my energy is overflowing. I am completely high, because I have been breathing oxygen through my nose for two hours. Sipora [?] and Maya's hands are soaked; mine too. [exhales]

Four years ago, I was in Berlin, and I saw *Care, Repair, Heal* at the Gropius Bau. This time, the one to one propose, process, sorry, of guided somatic therapy from Georgia Sagri took a [WORD UNCLEAR] like here, at the Skowhegan. [exhales]

We committed to see each other three times this week. Each of these sessions have a different energy, because each body is different. Sagri didn't tell me what she wanted to do – I'm sorry, Georgia, that's in light to tell you what to do, but she guided us. I don't know if I am learning, I don't really know, but I definitely am learning about the others.

André Lepecki, who is a mutual friend, said, 'Her desire to affirm spiritual anarchism as an experimental dimension of existence requires the aspiration that the whole world become a sultry nest. Once that happens, we can then engage in all sort of propositions for free experimentality.' [exhales]

'We exhaust ourselves,' Georgia said. 'First, we create binaries, then categories.' This summer, I am performing the role of being the director – I am trying to be functional, but I'm totally exhausted sometimes. I just want to be me! [laughs]

Georgia doesn't make works; Georgia works. In 2016, in a statement accompanying *Documentary of Behavioural Currencies*, one of Sagri's contributions to Manifesta 11, the artist wrote, 'Work is not the decision of a free person, of a free will; on the contrary, it's a barrier to living freely.' There is a lot of talk about the present moment of performance, the presence of the artist, and the fact that performance is temporal. Well, according to me, what happens in performance have happened already many, many times, we are just carrying a suitcase full of shadows.' [exhales]

Georgia is teaching me, us, to live into a sort of anti-utilitarian temporality. This last day, we look for objects. I found stones; I know, it's easy to find stones at the Skowhegan, [Sagri moves a video onto the screen] very literal, but I remember once the Chilean artist Cecilia Vicuña told me how to perform with stones, and I also like the song by Caetano Veloso that came to my mind. [singing] 'If you hold a stone, hold it in your hand. If you feel the weight, we'll never be late to understand' – it's a bit cheesy, but [video plays 00:05:29 – 00:21:25, muted immediately] it came to my mind during the performance.

Omar asked the question, 'Should we be aware all the time?' Georgia said, 'We need to be dumb, stupid sometimes.' Marceline is pouring water, and Erica is trying to find balance with the sticks. And Armando hurries everywhere. [laughter] I lost Abby's set during the spiral, and I felt really, desperately sad. I mean it. But Ruhi was there all the time, just in front of me, and I could see her with my eyes closed. [sound comes in on video]

Georgia said, 'Be the point of no reference, constant, and as a state of formation.' Thank you, Georgia. [applause] [video continues, lights dim]

Georgia Sagri [speaking over video] No matter what, even from the objects themselves, we hear what are todays becoming more [WORD UNCLEAR], tautological and ephemeral, come there to call it democratic. No matter what, even from the objects themselves, we hear what are todays becoming more temperamental, tautological and ephemeral. Some dare to call it democratic, social, or even open. However, people be correct to add that all of these artistic expressions do not reflect but a few individual and collective illusions. If, for example, we take the pathology of the body in contemporary

artistic creation, we will come to recognize the pathology of representation at large. What is the body capable of, pondered Spinoza years ago, suggesting a theory of passion. That which a body can be in it, and is defined by the limits of its ability to be affected. In other words, be – in other words, by our disposition.

In his excellent book on Spinoza, Gilles Deleuze defines the body not as a figure, but as a sequence of complex relations that develop within a [PHRASE UNCLEAR] between declarations, decelerations, and accelerations of different acts and behaviors.

We all recognize this fluidity and alteration from our own experiences, but it is not in our ability to fully demonstrate it. We can deal with the what, and the where of the body, but the how is how always left to those who have the power, the capacity, and the access to declare their power to act, to demonstrate, their definition of bodily representation, and insist on compliance with it.

Where is the body activated today? In the AirBnB. In the waiting room. At home. If we have a place to call home. In the refugee camp. In the color of our masks. On the street. Through illusion. While clapping. Within exhibition spaces. In the material universe of networks. Through mass media. On the borders of desire. In advertisement campaigns. Within secret passages. At the gym. In the things we take. In the traces of dilemma. In the extended fields of conflict. Whichever the case of the activated body, what we finally conceive of are the contemporary bodily transitions that reflect the very performance of the body in contemporary society. A body that is constantly under pressure to expose the very rows, scripts, and choreographies of the subjectivity to count as a living being.

Whether we admit it or not, the return of the body to a younger generation of artists is a kind of diversion within this, the, the saturation of artistic dexterity, and the overabundance of concepts within the unsuitably to describe the act of art, but most notably, especially, the act of life itself.

I have the impression that the spasmodic storming of the body is instead more a side effect of an awkward awareness that, in our post-human era, in the mass advertised body, in service of profit-making, and its exhaustion and its exaggeration of well-being, the life form and undermined and that this is why we must deal with it. Some tend to react in extremes through overexposure. Some declare its irrelevance, and find refuge in nature at large. Fighting for broader planetary reforms, in which the body's part of nature, and they suggest revolutionary approaches to its inclusion.

And I'm searching for its pathological causes, causes that are in its performance, and its exhaustion, and its pain. All is at risk now, on either side of the natural mess of which the body once was composed. This is why the more we talk about the body, the more we expel it.

I'm moving away from the term nature, in search of the practice of IASI, recovery. No conclusions, then. The work is transitional. If performance is everywhere, we live in a constantly demanding stage of behaviors, announcements, and categories; therefore my

practice is an endless curiosity, where performance becomes a medium of inhabitation of all of these performances. A breaking apart of labor time, and the available, untaxed body.

This is the piece *Invisible Ones*. 2007? And here we performed at the Oppenheim School of Fine Arts [?], in 2018.

Spiritual anarchism: we are trying to make a space in which desire, exchange, libidinal economies, can be possible without centralized organization. A few of us are queer; some women and some men, we try to maintain this space with few means. There was a time we considered stopping paying rent, and demanding to remain inside. But who would be our representative, and, and hold and maintain the negotiations following this decision? None of us wanted to take on the political agenda this responsibility might be, so we dropped the idea. We didn't want to buy the house, we didn't want to own anything in order to be together. We wanted to gain time to fill some, to fill ourselves in common everyday struggle. At ten in the evening, we discussed creating ethics, daily routines for going beyond mores [?] and doing ethics. (00:20:01) Forms of participating in the house, at school, at work, on the streets, in meetings, to become hypersensitive. To recognize relationships. To recognize that there are forms at moments of emotional limbo. To cultivate and commit to extensions of the self, the incomplete self links with other incomplete selves to perceive the world. Not based on universal truths, neither from a pre-determined social agenda, nor a personal one. The ethics of these transformative moments are made with an [WORD UNCLEAR] god is dead seeks to all the gods are constantly created. Ethics are sets of negotiable temporalities. [video visuals end 00:21:25, audio continues as Sagri looks for other visuals]

[new video begins 00:22:34 – 00:25:04, with other video's sound playing simultaneously] [old video resumes 00:25:04 – 00:25:21, then alternates as Sagri seems to try to sort tech]

[newer video plays with its own sound 00:25:59 – 01:34:36] So, this is *Semiotics of the Household*. It is mid-afternoon on Hester Street, in the Lower East Side of Manhattan. This is the time when the majority of passerby are returning from work, tired from the overuse of screens, running for last minute groceries, hanging out to check store windows, or strolling through galleries. I took a packed wheeled suitcase containing the bare essentials needed to travel and to exist in the US, as destabilized subject. The familiar sound of the suitcase's wheels on the pavement signals precarity, but also Lower East Side Manhattan, as in the center of Athens, triggers the annoyance of tourism, extractions of the everyday life of, for sake of packaged experiences. I insist on throwing the suitcase into the street, very purposefully, outside the entrance to the gallery where my exhibition is hanging. The title of the exhibition is *Household*, and the performance is *Semiotics of the Household*. And it was a double exhibition that was going at the same time in Berlin and in New York, with the same title. And with a series of stickers that you, I will show you later, but they were different in scale. In Berlin, they were medium sized, and in New York, much bigger. And they were wounds. Stickers of wounds. You will see them later.

Where the suitcase lands marks where the suitcase will open. I unzip the suitcase and pack and fold the contains carefully across the street. (00:30:02) The personal

belongings, underwear, trousers, t-shirts, a dress, sanitary products, passport, notebook, set a line, a barricade, across the street, from pavement to pavement. The headlights from the cars make the details dramatic. I continue playing with the theatricality of the upset drivers, their high-pitched horns, insisting on the precarity of the suitcase, of the timing it contains. I push it against the precondition of the street I described, making the precondition light up. When I re-pack the suitcase, I let the posed hang; everything around is in slow motion, and I raise the suitcase like pressing the slow motion button on the entire street. I lift it up high, as a totem of the situation, and without a second thought throw it down to begin again.

Wherever it fell, I opened the zip and unpacked my belongings across the street. Toothbrush, notebooks, drawing a line to connect the pavements, making this invisible, and the intimate a place.

The performance lasted more than ninety minutes. Its look [?] has its own attractions, smells, senses, sounds, protagonists. A person screams at me, asking if what I'm doing is art. The scared parent runs with her kids to avoid the scene. The cabs pass over my stuff, crushing some cosmetics. A skater ollies the line, showing off. Some familiar faces try to avoid eye contact with me. A garbage truck pushes to keep to the curb [?], and the work is suspended labor until I have cleared the street on my own. Customers complain, shop owners complain. There is a sense of the protest. Or parody, as in a musical.

I hold the suitcase and make it my partner, my support. Instead of speaking, I whistle. A consistent tool to block the self-policing that can take over the work, and to let go of fear. To allow the joy of the movements and the differences which emerge every time, a repetition expands in each second of the reality.

Austin's concept of performative utterances, speech acts that do not merely describe reality, but create one, can be extended to the bodily acts in contemporary art and life. Much like performative utterances, our bodies do not simply represent, but actively create social realities. This continuous creation, this unending performance, becomes a source of immense pressure, and leads to physical and psychological exhaustion. This is where my work derives, and is what performance, for me, lies out within the visual arts. It is not merely a representation or a critique of the condition itself, but its real time catalytic cure, record, committed embodied observation, and the belief of the notion of change.

Austin's notion of performative utterances refers to speech acts that do not merely describe a given reality, but produce a new one. These utterances enact what they declare. For instance, when a person says, 'I apologize,' the act of apologizing is performed in the utterance itself. This concept can be extended to bodily actions in contemporary art, and life, where the body does not merely express but actively performs and creates social realities. This idea manifests in the immediate ways our bodies are compelled to perform specific roles and identities in today's society. The performative nature of bodily actions is especially evident in social media, workplace dynamics, and even personal interactions, where the body's constantly under pressure to conform to societal expectations and norms.

This restlessness performance, relentless performance, endless performance, leads to anxiety, a way of life under pressure that reflects our constant state of being on stage.

Butler's theory of performativity, which posits that identity is not an innate quality, but an ongoing performance, deepens our understanding of these pathologies in today's society where the performance of identity is relentless, where one's self is continually curated and displayed, the distinction between the performed identity and the authentic self, if there is one, becomes increasingly blurred. This performative pressure, this constant need to act following societal expectations, results in profound ontological limbo, and a sense of disconnection from, from each other.

Butler's theory of performativity takes Austin's idea further, suggesting that identity is not one is born, but – born with, but something one continually performs. According to Butler, gender, for instance, is not an innate quality, but an ongoing performance, reinforced through repetitive acts. This framework is crucial for understanding the contemporary pathologies of performance, as it highlights how identities are constructed and maintained through persistent and often exhausting performances.

In our current era, marked by oxymoronic state of constant connectivity, of enormous exaggeration, the performativity of identity has become even more pronounced. Individuals are required to curate and perform their identities constantly, leading to a state of perpetual self-surveil, surveillance, and self-regulation. (00:39:57) This performative pressure can result in severe stress, and a disconnection from the bodily conditions to what is actually at stake in reality, as the boundaries between the performed identity and the genuine self become increasingly blurred. Again, if there is a genuine self. It's always debatable, that.

As [?] we are trapped in a circle of performative acts, and performativity, where the body's both the instrument and the victim of these relentless demands. The commodification of the body, seen in the gig economy and digital spaces, exaggerates this condition, leading to a state of perpetual space and burnout. This commodified body's not merely a site of production, but also consumption, a dual role that intensifies performance pathologies.

[a still is overlaid on top of the playing video, which continues, at 00:44:22 – 00:48:18]

Stage of Recovery is the size of an average small stage, it is 250 centimeters by 250 centimeters in size, and sixty-five centimeters high. Four large thick pillows are placed on top, attached to the base, stable, covered with cotton fabric, it can hold the activities of one participant, and sometimes myself, and it is only used during the one-to-one sessions in the studio. And space [WORD UNCLEAR].

During the sessions, the participant is on stage, mostly alone. They are exposing themselves, their condition on the stage, as they are so used to do in daily life, with one small difference: here they're working on the condition that made them feel pain. I'm

around the stage, and I can see what is going on, how the movements are progressing. Sometimes I will ask the participant to repeat a technique to continue, to take time, and to rest. The soft stage is there to remind them that there can be a place that can be soft and easy, a place where instead of performing a social role, they can release the tension created by the same role that they have constructed for themselves to perform in their daily life. Instead of creating even more difficulty than they have already, the process helps them navigate the ways of releasing the difficulties. The structure is made out of wood, it is installed in a room, it is warm, but sometimes I need a blanket. Especially during the breathing techniques, I have noticed that the participants' circulation is altered, and that they feel colder than usual.

What in the past started with my need to repair and to recover from physically and mentally demanding performance pieces has gradually become a research into the physiological and pathological conditions of the body in the hyper-capitalist era, which dooms us to autoimmune illnesses, stress, discomfort, asthma, insomnia, panic attack, anxiety, fatigue, nausea, food disorder, mania, paranoia, arthritis, depression, addiction, to name some.

Over the years, I recognize that some of my own techniques – breathing, movement, voice – could help others to build their own routine of self-recovery. If in the past, this practice was a medium to build technique within the medium of performance, now it is a shared practice that is open-ended.

The pathologies of performance are evident in how our bodies [moves still to be alongside video 00:48:18] are treated as commodities, subject to the demands of productivity and efficiency. This commodification is seen in the gig economy, where workers must constantly perform to maintain their livelihoods, and in the digital economy, where personal branding and the performance of a curated identity are essential for social and professional success. Therefore, the body becomes a site of both production and consumption, leading to continuous burnout. This condition can be likened to what philosopher Byung-Chul Han describes as the burned out society, where individuals are driven to exhaustion by the imperative to perform and produce constantly.

[new still is overlaid over ongoing video 00:49:20]

This piece, this [WORD UNCLEAR] is called *Breathing Score*. It was presented in Documenta14, in Athens and in Kassel, and the work that you saw before is the *Stage of Recovery*, one of the stages of recovery. (00:49:58) And they are featured in three colors: green, orange, and red. And this is the color for Athens, the green stage. And this is the one that is also in my studio in, in Omonoia Square, in Athens.

With a *Breathing Score*, and also with the *Stage of Recovery*, in a way, I visually document but also commit to the practice of [WORD UNCLEAR] of recovery. In performance, sometimes the audience is in the way that basically I tend to understand performance, the, the audience is not passive observer, but an active participant, exactly as it happens in the recovery sessions, but also what we have experienced during the

workshops. The participants influence the performance, and vice versa, creating an in, a dynamic interplay where the boundaries between the performer, what we call the subject, and the object, what we call the observer, the audience, are dissolved.

My work, the past now almost seven years, attempt to present those moments of dynamic transition, physically, and to turn them into portals for these transitions. For works, for example, as *Breathing Score*, that you see here, as well with a recent piece that was now on view, is now on view in Cologne [moves new still to overlay above others 00:52:10], at the Sculpture Park of Cologne, that is called, called *Sitting with My Breath*, I, I call, I invite, but also, I engage with the fragility of engagement, and the fragility of this transition, when it takes place, when the boundaries are not anymore clear, when the dichotomies are not anymore defined. And there, in this moment, there might be a relief from performance, even for a few minutes; that's enough for the works', for the sculptures' meaning to arise.

In, in the IASI paintings, on the other hand, something else happens. [changes image within one of the frames on screen] The paintings are, are depictions of, I call them affective anatomies, and they're paintings of treatments in cases that, in a way, epitomize the continuous commitment to the practice of IASI, and to the public sharing of the practice. [changes images within frame]

The large dropper is filled with hematic [?] anthropomorphic figures, that they're made with charcoal, only by touch of the, of the paper. And not in direct with the charcoal, but only with the hand. It indicates, in some of them, zones of affective intensities, and it's also a map, but also a score, of the internal states.

They also, in a way, transmit and record an archive, the essence of the sessions, and after the sessions have occurred. So they don't happen with a participant, they happen after the sessions, in the studio. In this way, they are the textual and tactile recording of the several encounters that arise, as well as the treatments themselves.

[Semiotics video returns to front 00:55:48]

[new still is overlaid 00:56:31]

I'm gonna close with *Case_L*, which was an exhibition, and, based on Case L, the case from IASI sessions, and I will also show some [changing images within one of the frames on screen] of the images of the exhibition.

[settles on different still] And the performance was called *Shelter Refuge*. And the case was based on a participant, but they were, they started to work for a problem, like a [WORD UNCLEAR] problem, but it end up being what I later called birthmark, which is the kind of new terminology I kind of created with them to, to talk about panic attack. So I want to close this, this lecture, this presentation, with the text that was created out of this case, case L.

'Expression: there is no problem, everything is quite settled. I'm just curious about your practice. Thank you for that, it's flattering, but are you interested in knowing about your practice? I replied. If I everything is fine, that somehow is against what we're going for here. We need to recover, and the prime material of recovery is performance, your performance, and its imprints on your body.

Well, there is a chronic pain in my back, which was diagnosed as lordosis – is this something we could start with? The participant points out that lordosis has to do with their posture. They go on the stage and we start the session.'

And the case is not from one session, of course; the text is not created out of one session, it's created from several sessions with a participant, and still going on.

'Manifestation: lordosis is a matter of standing and not posture. It is not a matter of the figure we are looking at, but the distribution of weight, which is not happening. (00:59:56) Would it be possible for the standing position block the lungs? Standing in such an over-performed uprightness brings the chest up front, thus blocking the breathing expansion. It is so harshly correct that they might be suffocating themselves, which could register as a panic attack. Is a panic attack a suffocation that has been neglected to be exposed? The exhausted actor, the participant, has been performing a perfectly youthful body that everything is fine and upright. Lordosis is just a structural signant, signal of a birthmark that cannot be revealed because although it is on the surface of this person's acting, how is it possible to reveal something that is already exposed?

Session: lordosis is a matter of standing. They lay on the stage of recovery, but there is a care, a gap, between the back and the surface of the stage. I ask them to tell me if this is the point that they feel pain, and they say yes. For how long this is going on, it doesn't matter. The chest is the matter. Now that the participant is in the relaxed point, position, the chest is squeezed in, but its tendency is to go up. It feels very confusing, and painful. We are doing breathing technique 515, and they can't inhale without using their mouth before exhaling.

I'm starting to feel their anxiety. There is something not quite well going on. They stopped using the technique, and began speaking to me with no voice. I pressed their chest down during the hold of the diaphragm during the one, and now that feels a bit better. Holding the diaphragm is an expansion, not a squeezing. It is making space for the interior, and we continue the technique like this. It starts to become even more important that the panic attack is not a psychological symptom, but a pathological state that turns psychological because it is neglected, or treated as a glimpse of the nervous system. Although it is on the surface of the idiosyncrasy of this body, it is covered like a birthmark, needing to be recovered. I change the term panic attack to a birthmark.'

Birthmark – and this is the [changes image within a frame] the sculptural *Shelter Refuge*. [changing images] And this is the birthmark. [PHRASE UNCLEAR] on the wall of the exhibition, *Case_L* at Kunsthalle Friart in Fribourg.

'Birthmark. There is such a mythology about birthmarks, and some are pretty accurate. Scientific papers trace the birthmark as an event during pregnancy. Those significant events took place during pregnancy, and the birthmark can reveal an accident or harm that happened to the carrier of the baby while the baby was still in the womb. If the incident was very violent, such as threatening the life of the baby, and an incident that could prevent the birth from happening, the birthmark is even more prominent on the skin. Likely or not, the pregnancy continued, and the baby was born; nevertheless, the mark remains. Every birthmark can tell us what happened. But what if the mark also remains in the interior organs, and is contained as an invisible mark? How could an interior mark be revealed if another is already profoundly visible on the skin? It might seem confusing, but somehow, it makes sense if you think about how we look at things. But we are used to looking only at the surface of things. If there is sensitivity in the lungs, then the birthmark is just proof that there is something hidden. The birthmark is proof, but it is not the only thing that helps us understand what has happened.

[overlays are removed from video 01:04:31, video continues]

[mutes video] Thank you very much. [applause, lights go up]

A lot. [laughs]

I, I wanted also to show some of the archive from the space, and I thought that we are already, we had so many different things going on today, and I feel how tired you might be, but I would really like to hear your thoughts, and have questions from you, and also maybe this will be an opportunity to open a conversation, and, yeah, because this really matters to me a lot. And –

Audience member I have a question.

Sagri Yeah.

Audience member I have two questions – one is a clarification question.

Sagri Yeah.

Audience member And the other one is a question about the work specifically, and your practice.

So, my first question, I guess is like a clarification of terms. I wonder if you could – so like, a lot of the work is invested in, like, the kind of like political, you know, social way that we inhabit the world –

Sagri Mmhmm.

Audience member -- as, like, human bodies, right? And you are a person in these performances, in your body. So I wonder if you could just clarify a little bit, like, when you

say the body, whose body you're talking about? And when you say we, who, who are the we? I would love to hear, just hear you talk a little, like, clarify those terms a bit more, because they seem to be, like, embedded in political thought.

And then my other question is maybe about the piece that we're seeing now on the screen, which I really enjoyed, and it seems to me to come sort of from this tradition of Fluxus, right, and intervention. And I'm wondering if you have a relationship, like, what your relationship to humor is here, and, if there is one. Yeah. Thank you.

Sagri Okay. I didn't hear so much we, in what I was reading, but when I say we, most of the times I refer to the moment of encounter. Like, in a social state. Like, we takes place on the stage of recovery, for example. When there is a session, and there is intimacy, there there is some we happening.

Then there is the we that takes place in social interactions, where, you know, you are confronted or encounter with another. That's a we. As a, as far as I understand it. And most of the times, when I use we, it is in the context of encounter, of social encounter, where the I becomes we, because it's in the context of another, sharing space with another.

Then for the body, similarly – the body's not a body on its own, if it's not in connection with something else. Body as a living thing. A living thing, a container of things. Of organs, of circulation, of blood, of sweat, of everything. That's what I mean as body. As a container, as a vessel of things. (01:10:00)

Audience member Yeah, I got that. I wonder if there's, like, I wonder if there's, like, if it's an, if, like, specificity of individual bodies is important to me- is important to you, [laughing] sorry. Young, old –

Sagri For me, the specificity –

Audience member You know.

Sagri -- the specificity of the body, it becomes confusing when the specificity comes with separation.

Audience member Okay, got it. Thanks.

Sagri So, I prefer to start with connection, not with separation, to make the distinction.

So, I'm not a Marxist, in that sense. Like, I don't know if it's clear to you: I'm not a Marxist, like, really, like, not, not because I don't, I don't, I haven't read my Marx, it's just that, it's, I don't like to start with separation, I like to start with the possibility. With the possibility. The encounter.

Audience member Okay.

Audience member -- about humor, could you speak to that?

Sagri Mm? [laughs]

Audience member I had a second part to my question about humor, could you –

Sagri Ah, yes –

Audience member -- speak to that?

Sagri -- the humor, of course, humor is, everything is very, everything is very – but I also, you know, said, it's also grotesque. And it's also inevitable, and they're all in, everything is in, and everything happens, and that's why, also, the whistling. The whistling is very important. It happened several times in performances, especially in public performances like this one, where there's no, basically there is no permission for this performance, there is no, you know, in the end of this, you know, police comes, they try to arrest me, then all the people that were surrounding this whole thing, and were looking at it, they became a kind of protective, protective public, that this was we, in that sense, that prevented this body to be arrested. And that was me, that was me, brilliant, in that sense, that still like the, the public was, the public was there. The social, the social, the social connection was there. The people were not just looking; they were there. They were not just taking photos. They, they never take just photos. Never. They, they just observing, and, you know, they're a part of this whole thing. You know, if you see all these people, they are just, you know, they are active in, in the entirety of this movement. Without them, there wouldn't be any of these movements taking place. It's impossible, to have such a motive for, for the, for the movement to take place. So you, you need the social fabric. You need, you need it, you're a part of it; you don't need it, you're a part of that. Uh.

Audience member Yeah, I wanted to thank you, because the workshop was really incredible, because like I read about, like, separation, that like, we're not separated. And, like, I know it in my head, like, sometimes, and sometimes I feel, like, moments of connection, and you know, where I realize we're all together. But I really felt like through the recovery, that there was this, like, falling away, and this, this really amazing connection that I felt with people during the workshop, and I wonder if you have always felt this way, or if you've always been really awake in this connection of things, and if you, if you could share a little bit about your own, like, experience, and, and coming to this way that you are, which is like full of so much wonder –

Sagri Mmm.

Audience member -- and curiosity.

Sagri [laughs] I don't – it's a very beautiful question, thank you. Mm. I guess, I guess, there, there was a moment in the, in the, in the practice, that I started feeling that I kind of, I, I'm obliged to things. That I do things because I feel obliged to. I don't know how to explain it.

For example, when you, when you train as a musician, I don't know, some of you might be musicians, there is a moment that you need to decide either you really learn an instrument, you really become a virtuoso, or you, you know, you just play music for the joy of it. And with music, it's very, very, profound, that; it's very clear. It's very clear of how much work you need to do in order to go into this mastery. Like, the virtuosity. And that was one of the major issues that I had with music. [laughs] That I really needed to, I really need to compose myself in such level, and to abandon any of the accidents that take place within the practice, within the, let's say, anxiety of performance itself. Forgetting the score. Doing mistakes within, within the performance itself. Which for me was such a pleasure. Like, pleasure in terms of like, it was very surprising; and it really made me go into visual arts because of that. Like, I really enjoyed this matter of fact, which comes out of precision to the practice, but not in the goal of virtuosity. Like, to really go in a practice in such level that it doesn't separate you from the material, from the world, from what you are exposed to, with the fears, with the issues, with, with your biography, with experience. And through that, to be able to accumulate that, and make it your language. Make, make, make it, make it your practice. And that's for me the beauty of visual arts.

I mean, and that's, that's why, that's why I'm an artist, and I'm not, you know, I'm not a soloist, I'm not a musician in that level of virtuosity. Because still, whenever you are performing a piece, as many times as you have performed, it is always like you are in the first time you do this. There will never be, there will never be a moment of, you know, awakens. It's, it's not that. And, and, and that's, for me, very important in, in the practice, and that's why I, I'm so insisting in the, in the daily practice, in, that, that's why.

Because you go about, you go about the work, but not with a goal. (01:20:00) Did, did it answer to you?

Audience member Okay, I have a question. Which might build on what you just said, but you talk about work, exhaustion, pain, but you also talk about breath, and there's an inhale and an exhale, so I'm curious about the role of pleasure in your work, and how you think about it.

Sagri Yeah, I mean, obviously, obviously the pleasure is, is to be able to conduct the, the sessions. To be with another in an intimate encounter, and that encounter to be a place where we both feel that profoundly we, we share so much. And that's, that's in confidentiality, and there is a trust built, and then through, through these encounters, there is a way for, for the participant to, to do their stuff, and with a different point of view, and feeling much better than they were feeling before, and for me to work with a material that is actually coming from these encounters. From this, this public, this social encounter. That is not, it's not on the street, or it's not on the purpose of, you know, consuming, but it's the purpose is to actually share my practice for each other to feel better. Which is, I don't know if this makes sense, but for me, this is such a pleasure.

When, when the sessions started, like in 2019, in that format, in the one-to-one, in the studio, it was like I was doing this in my entire life. It felt like, why I wasn't doing this before? Like, what, what's – and this is where, like, literally, it was the moment that I found

pleasure in the work. Like, you are completely right, like, before that, it was, it was, it was so difficult for me to get out of the performance itself, and now, you know, it's not a performance itself. That's, that's why I wanted, I wanted you to see, like, this piece, for example, is from 2007. And the piece *The Semiotics of the Household* is from 2019. And, you know, I wanted to show you another work that is more recent, but I didn't want to take more time, but, you know, the work is also changing, the performance work is changing. Through this, through this practice, through this, yeah, one-to-one sessions.

Audience member Hi. I was wondering when does the performance end, or if it ends? And if it ends, is there a duality that's created between performance and not performance?

Sagri [laughs] Yeah, I mean, we, there is also a play of words, eh? Obviously. Maybe we think of it, if there was no beginning? How would we think of it?

Audience member I don't know. [laughter]

Sagri Exactly. Exactly. [laughs] So, [laughs] –

Audience member I retract the question. [laughter]

Sagri Yeah. [laughs]

Audience member Thank you! [laughter]

Audience member Thank you, Georgia. Yeah, thanks for all those amazing days here, and I'm, want to ask a question about this practice is a connection that you were talking about, and the fact that you were doing this training song [?] for three days. How much of that you can trace to, or, what is the connection to Occupy Wall Street, in terms of –

Sagri Mmm.

Audience member -- were they somewhat developed there? In a particular way, and then you're personally, after that, elaborated further with your own personal practice? Was it both, somehow, where you brought some ideas and they were actually part of the formation of Occupy?

Sagri Mmm.

Audience member Can you make that link a little bit; I'm really curious how that played in your life, and especially now, when we are, like, a good number of years after, I wonder what your perspective on that is, on some of those practices as they were playing on the streets –

Sagri Mmm.

Audience member -- then.

Sagri Definitely, there is a part of the, the, there is a part of the need of recovery from, from oppression, from brutal violence, obviously. And also from, you know, witnessing friends and, you know, groups of people, and, you know, to violence, or to be in prison, or to be burned out. So there, there is a part of, of IASI, as recovery, not in the sense of departing, like, leaving the movement, but trying to infuse the movement with a sense of understanding of calibration. Of the social. Of how we understand the collective. Because there was so much overperformance, and there is so much overperformance in political movements, that it makes it impossible to have a continuum. Because of, because of this, yeah, super kind of human idea of bodies in, in the street, in action, in, in struggle. So, so there is an after effect of that, but there is also a before – like, in organizing. Where the tactics of movement within the organizing is, is very much composed on rhythm. Like, temporalities, tempos.

So, an artistic practice, and a practice that is primarily based on performance, I assume [laughing] has a lot to offer in political organizing. In that sense of, you know, how, how, how people come together, what, what makes them fall apart, if, if there is a pressure, how to move so you don't fall into the, fall into the reactionary game that power wants you all the time to be. So all of these tactics, let's say, are tac, are, are creative tactics, are artistic practice-based. It's not, you know, like some kind of political intellect, of that level of political intellect, comes from some leader. It comes really from the ground, like from, from, from bodies, coming together. And how you, how you're a part of them, and what you share with, with those bodies, and how you are able to culminate and empower yourself and others through, through this coming together. But, but in that sense, Occupy was, was in that sense –

Audience member Yeah.

Sagri -- a moment that the constellation of things took place, and that it is in that place. It, it cannot be reactivated. And that's, that's the whole point of movements, because it's movement, it needs to move. It needs to create other moves. And if we are, you know, hopefully, like in our time here, in this, you know, in this planet, like, in this kind of existence, and we have the chance to have another moment like that, where constellations of things really come together and create a movement like that, yeah, I will be very happy to again be part of it.

Audience member So, sorry, just to follow up, not a question, but just a mini kind of follow up in terms of – is it a bit like Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed where, where theater, basically, tac, techniques –

Sagri Mmm.

Audience member -- are taken on the street to resist a demonstration or survive a police brutality –

Sagri Mmhmm.

Audience member -- or whatever, are we talking about a similar –

Sagri Yeah, but, but we really need to see, in the current moment, that there is such fragmentation of what we understand as social that for me, the reason that I'm very meticulously doing my practice in the one-to-one level is because I consider the one-to-one commitment as a reinforcement of the social fabric from really the base, which is, which is the actual personal state, which is unique, and it cannot be understood as social if it is in self-flagellation, and in such pain that it's impossible to even be in the same place with hundreds of people and not feel isolated.

So this is, this is, this is what I'm doing now, for the, for all these years: I'm taking one by one, each person, and I'm trying to understand and bring them back to, to, to connection, to some kind of connection, to some kind of trust. [*Semiotics* video ends 01:34:36; *Invisible* video continues playing in overlay, until the end of the lecture] Because there is a lot of fear, there is a lot of anxiety, and it's only, only exposed in the level of psychological terminology, but I don't consider it psychological. I consider it simply, simply, not simply, I consider it as material. It's like a material. It is a, it is a physiological state of our social fabric, that is creating this, this, let's say human. This, this type of human. That we are kind of part of it, we have a memory of how it was, like, before, where we were feeling like we're part of a social fabric, we were part of a, you know, community, we were kind of identifying ourselves as part of a group, we were kind of understanding, like, okay, I have these friends, and I have this in common with these people, and I feel trusting with them, and I'm not, like, immediately finding, searching for something else, or immediately thinking that there is another option.

I don't, I don't, [laughing] I don't know if it's clear, what I'm – but this is what I am experiencing, in the one-to-one sessions: I'm experiencing – and not only in Athens, obviously, like in London, that I have done the sessions, in Germany, Berlin, in Amsterdam, you know, there, there is, there is isolation in that level of profound, like, yeah. And not loneliness. I'm not talking about loneliness. I'm talking about isolation. You know, like enclosurement, enclosed, enclosed, and that also means that there's enclosed identity, in that sense, and this identity needs to be even more enclosed, even more specific, even more clear, even more productive, even more understood, even more consumed, even more defined. And that is, that is something that you do in order to exist. And, but that existence is isolation. This is, this is, this is the, this is, this is what you get! As a reward. You do all of this, but then what you get as a reward is that you feel completely isolated. So, I'm, I'm, I'm trying, with these one-to-one sessions, to build a bridge of trust and connection with another, that just doesn't want anything. Doesn't, doesn't want anything. They just provide you a soft space; this is what I, this is what I'm trying, to provide a soft space that the participant could also just sleep. For forty minutes. Just like go there, like, [imitates snoring] you know – don't do, they don't do anything. Because there's no one telling them, okay, tell me about you, what's happened? Nothing. Okay, hello, here, you can just, you can go here now. Okay, why? It's like, no, it's okay, it's soft, it's comfortable, you can just stay a little bit there.

Most of the times, it's just immediate collapse. Collapse, like, like this. Three, six sessions, seven session, ninth, then, like, shall we do something? Okay, maybe. Like, are you oaky? You feel tired? Mmm, I'm a bit tired. Okay, I will leave you here. [imitates snoring] Sleep.

Audience member Hi, Georgia.

Sagri [laughs] Hi. (01:39:58)

Audience member I know everyone is probably winding down, as you said, lots of activity today, but I, I couldn't help but want to bring this conversation full circle after Daniel's question, particularly about these individual instances, because we just finished three days of group activity, which –

Sagri Mmm.

Audience member -- is different from these experiences you described, and so I wanted to kind of hear your thoughts about how you feel the group activities went, especially in the context of empathy, especially after Omar and Lala had asked this question in our last question about being too aware, and then also being overly sensitive, and so –

Sagri Mmm.

Audience member -- how do we negotiate boundaries, and negotiate how we take in – I remember you had mentioned how, you know, being too aware, as if you are position, repositioning the awareness to yourself, right, at the end of it?

Sagri Mmm.

Audience member But I, I'm particularly interested in your answer to this question in the context of you as sort of our maestro, as our sort of, like, [Sagri pulls a still into the overlay space on screen, alongside the ongoing *Invisible* video] guide into this experience –

Sagri Mmm.

Audience member -- and the intensity of performing this activity with so many people in the room. Because it was surely incredibly intense for myself.

Sagri Mmm, mmm. In which way it was intense? I'm just, I'm just, I want to –

Audience member Yeah, wow. [laughs] It was, I guess it was [laughs] – wow. [laughs] It was personally intense, I think, because it's been a very long time since I have experienced childishness –

Sagri Mmm.

Audience member -- silliness, and idiocy, and joy, indescribable joy, amongst more than a handful of people.

Sagri Mmm.

Audience member -- and so, I felt there was an awkwardness, and a difficulty, in being able to trust all of these people that I've barely known for a few weeks, and that in order to be capable of trusting all these people with a very personal part of myself, I had to trust you.

Sagri Mmhmm.

Audience member And so that also was incredibly intense, because I've known you less than I've known these people. And [Sagri laughs] then I'm also curious [laughs], you know, I think about, as, as the artist who is sort of creating all the parameters and scaffolding of the activity, and bridging all these people to perhaps experience connectivity, what does that look like for you? You know, so, I think I'm like looking from, I'm thinking about all the perspectives in that space –

Sagri Mmm.

Audience member -- and all the difficulties and intensities, and I'm curious about –

Sagri Mmm.

Audience member -- where you end after all of this.

Sagri Yeah, I understand the collective not as a, in, in that sense, the sessions where we're moving according to what this body needed. So I didn't have like a program in that sense. I don't, I don't know how to explain it. You know, there is no program. It's what, what moves us that creates the techniques.

Of course, of course there is this, you know, this script, which is, okay, we're gonna do breathing, and movement, and, you know, also voice. Because the three elements, let's say, are very important to, to the practice. And this is the, this is how the work is also kind of, this is where I'm experienced in that sense, this is my experience I'm bringing. But what takes place, it's not, it's not moved by me.

I really honestly don't, I go along with what is needed. Like, really, as a creative process, on this stage of recovery. And this, this that you described, it, it was also for me very beautiful, because this was exactly what is needed. What it was needed: it was needed playfulness, it was needed joy, it was needed silliness, it was needed childish curiosity, and, yeah, and then I realized that I needed it, too. I mean, I didn't, I didn't come here with a, you know, like, we're gonna do childish things, and we're gonna run in the field, and like, then

it's going to rain, and then we will continue because it's so nice, and, I, I [laughs] like, honestly, it was just, it just, you just, you just taken, taken through what's happening, and that's, that's for me the surprise of, of, of, of working with you, and being with you.

And this is what you learn in the collective, in collective processes. That there is no anymore you, me, who, it's all become like one, one experience! And we all build to create this one experience. One experience not in terms of unity, only, but, but in terms of like a shared experience where there is no anymore separation between who is the creator and who is the one that is playing in this creation. No! There was no such thing, at all, like, from the beginning until the end.

Audience member My, my question is, I know that you, I think you mentioned spiritual anarchist at the beginning –

Sagri Yes, spiritual anarchism.

Audience member -- and I, I, you know, going to your workshop also, there was like this sense of, like, kind of – from, just, and also, from seeing your work, I'm kind of sensing this like kind of spiritual – at least for me --

Sagri Mmm.

Audience member -- kind of journey? And I'm curious A, if there, what's, if that takes some type of place in your work, and also, I'm curious about, you've also been mentioning about restoration, and recuperation, but what about refiguration? Cause, how does that also kinda take place in your work, or does it at all?

Sagri Which, which, which words did you say, sorry, I didn't hear the last words. So I, that in my work, it comes, this, which words? Respiration? Recuperation?

Audience member [PHRASE UNCLEAR] but what I was curious about was refiguration.

Sagri Refiguration. I mean, refiguration is inevitable. If, if you, if there is respiration, and if there is recuperation, refiguration is inevitable. Because there is change, in, in – respiration means that you are acknowledging the very fact that you are open to change. You are here, and you are not here, and it's not up to you, in the, in a way, to decide.

Then recuperation, it means that you are willing to share that understanding with others. In connection to, with others. So refiguration is inevitable.

So with, with spiritual anarchism, I guess I answered it. [laughter] [applause]

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