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## **Territoriality and choreography in site-situated performance**

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## Chapter 4

### Borrowing: *Surface Rising*

*Images documenting Surface Rising, November 15, 2015, photographed by Go Eun Im*



In November 2015, after researching and performing *Surface Rising* in Montreal, I travelled back to the Netherlands for a period of study. There I met with Igor Sevcuk and Go Eun Im, the coordinators of *Klupko*, an artist initiative of curated events and

exhibitions taking place in their apartment. *Klupko* is their collective project of “a situation in which everyday life, hospitality and art practice are intertwined. ... a certain entanglement.”<sup>121</sup>

I recounted my experience of *Surface Rising* in Montreal. Igor and Go Eun thought the project would be a good fit for the opening of *Klupko*, as both projects shared curiosities of “interpersonal encounter that merges art and real life situations.”<sup>122</sup> I thought it would be an excellent opportunity to think through the site-situatedness of my project, to explore consistencies and contrasts as they emerged.

I was invited into the apartment for one week of preparations and one week of daily performances. The first steps of the process were to observe the apartment closely and explore its possibilities, its relations, its new trajectories, and intensities. My relation to the space was as an invited artist. Not only was I welcomed into the space, I was also invited to explore and use any of the apartment’s objects for my work.

I felt a depth of welcome from Igor and Go Eun, as we shared a curiosity and a desire for this artistic experimentation. My relation to the space felt akin to short-term borrowing in that it was made clear that I could make use of anything “at hand” (books, plates, records, posters, blankets, etc.) with the expectation that I would return everything in good condition.

Borrowing in this chapter will be considered as choreographic practice, the craft of composing and perceiving movement. Borrowing activates the movement of materials and foregrounds the entanglement of objects and spaces with people. As a choreographic force, borrowing infuses felt relations into movements, borders, objects, surfaces, and

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<sup>121</sup> See: <https://klupkorooms.wordpress.com/2015/11/01/klupko->.

<sup>122</sup> Personal communications between k.g. Guttman, Go Eun Im, and Igor Sevcuk, 2015.

bodies.

Borrowing creates relations. Borrowing happens in the midst of other relations. This movement of relations may be called *assemblages*. A key concept in Félix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze's *A Thousand Plateaus*, the philosophers define assemblages as the dynamism of many heterogeneous components, movement that intensifies connections. A situation is not just an accumulation of many parts, but, as Guattari notes, "the different components are swept up and reshaped by a sort of dynamism."<sup>123</sup> To consider borrowing, then, as a movement of relations, to understand it as a dynamism of an assemblage, is to study the effects of borrowing in both an immediate sense and in terms of effects not yet imagined.

Thinking dynamic systems rather than precise structures creates an emphasis on how territories are constituted by practices, in continual motion. A shift of one practice within a territory animates diverse and, probably, unintended effects. Borrowing, then, sweeps through the designated space of Igor and Go Eun's apartment and becomes an assembling force. Assemblages gather up multiple relations to make a territory. "We will call an assemblage every constellation of singularities and traits deducted from the flow—selected, organized, stratified—in such a way as to converge (consistency) artificially and naturally; an assemblage, in this sense, is a veritable invention."<sup>124</sup>

The apartment transforms, for a time, into a borrowed apartment, *extracting a territory from a milieu*, animating multiple expressions of this temporal territoriality.

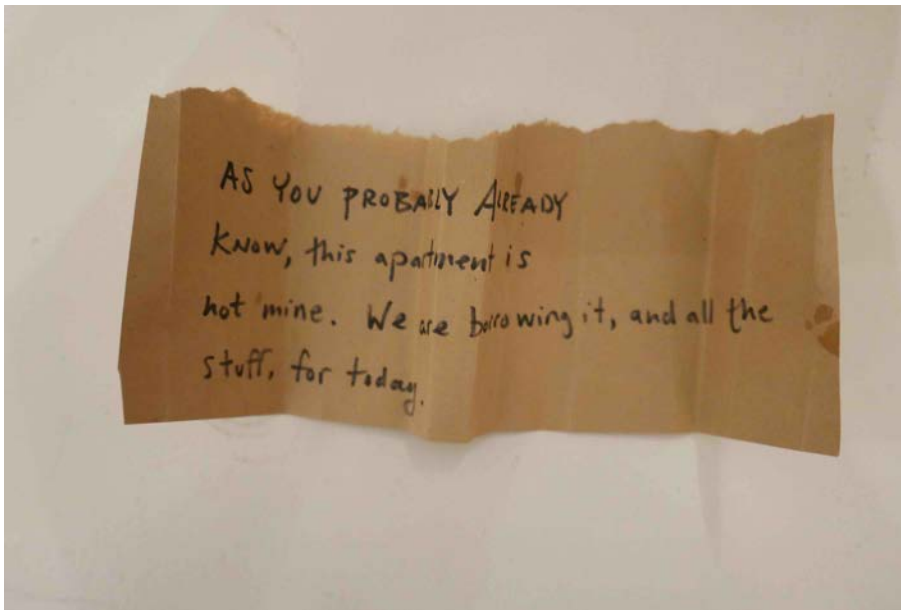
#### 4.1 Entrance

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<sup>123</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, 35.

<sup>124</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 406.

*A guest enters—a big white man, with blond hair and glasses. He says hello, and I nod and say nothing. I know he has read my introductory email, but perhaps he's forgotten about the code of silence. He catches on very quickly, though, after I nod in a friendly manner a few more times but do not speak. He stops talking.*

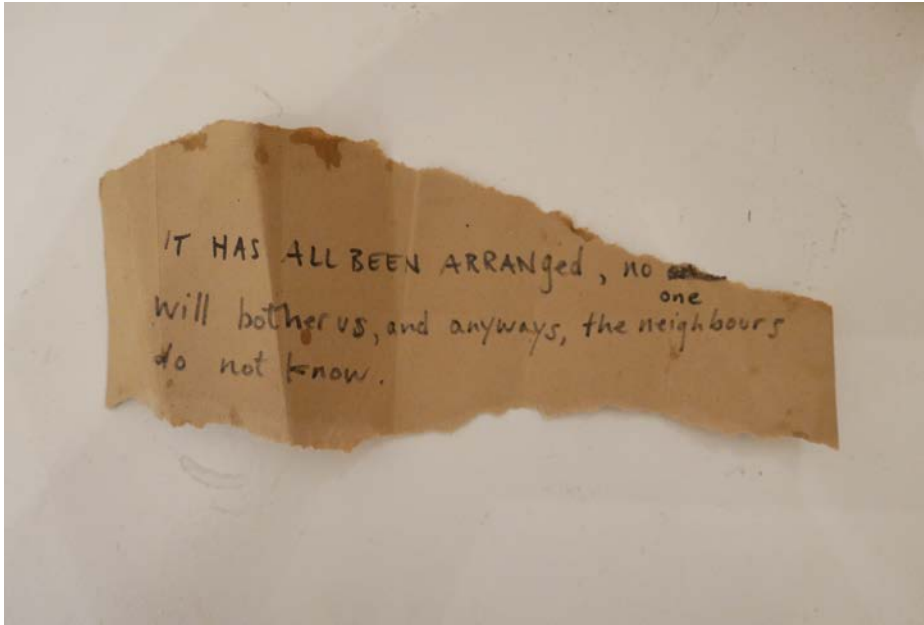


*I hand him a note:*

As you probably already know, this apartment is not mine. We are borrowing it, and all the stuff, for today.

*I hand him a second note:*

It has all been arranged, no one will bother us, and anyway the neighbours do not know.



The notes aim at a touch of complicity. (I used the word “we,” meaning myself as host-performer and my audience-guest.) I am also aiming at a gentle reminder that the apartment is ordered according to municipal codes for residential spaces, and this encounter is neither specifically official nor specifically permitted. The note signals how the performance brushes up, quietly, against the force of law, against ambient conduct in appropriate spaces.<sup>125</sup> The force of law is operating behind a cultural activity, which provides a sense of legitimacy and security.

The scribbly, handwritten notes on bits of brown paper point to a contrast; our purpose here is not neatly known and we will be experiencing the apartment differently. We will be “out of time” in the sense of being disconnected from the living metric of going about everyday business. We will be nudged out of normative regulations.

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<sup>125</sup> Relations of power and discipline are “inscribed into the apparently innocent spatiality of social life.” Soja, *Postmodern Geographies*, 6, quoted in Larkins, “The Idea of the Territorial State,” 48.

I welcome my audience-guest into the space, already coded with expectations and responsibilities. The notes act effectively as a sort of contract—it has all been arranged. But the notes also withhold details (the character of the negotiation between myself and Klupko, who the neighbours are, etc.) and so are lacking in information as to how access was negotiated. This may hinder a precise understanding of what is to be expected here.

Entering into the territory of someone else (somewhere). Entering not into the neutral space of a black box, but a space that expresses its territoriality, articulated through everything one may be invited to touch, handle, and experience. Entering not as a dispassionate neutral viewer (well, perhaps), but into a space of relation and of constraint, of the immediacy of an absent owner, and of the illicit knowledge that the neighbours do not know.

#### **4.2 Small Slipper, Big Foot: Embodiment**

*I gesture for my audience-guest to take off his shoe. We sort through some slippers, but they all seem too small for the width of his feet. I give him the biggest ones, a white, terrycloth pair. He tries to put them on, but they are quite tight so he takes off his socks. His wide feet stretch out the fabric a bit. In one direction, his heel sticks out past the edge of the sole; in the other, his toe hangs out a bit. Generously, he doesn't seem too bothered.*





This is one of the first corporeal and aesthetic manifestations of borrowing that emerges: a non-perfect fit that creates an aesthetic of tightness, of too-smallness, a heel hitting the cold floor as one walks, a palette of the makeshift, of slightly uncomfortable sensations.

Due to this vaguely imperfect fit, distinctions are legible between slipper and foot, and quite soon it is possible to notice how the object affects the foot, and reciprocally, how the foot impacts the object. The foot stretches out the front of the slipper. The too-small slipper disrupts its wearer's ease of walking ever so slightly, tips his weight back gently onto the heel, prevents the foot from spreading into the floor. This destabilizes the audience-guest's way of walking somewhat, causing him to shuffle more than step, and places the size of his feet in relation to smaller feet. Borrowing evokes imaginative relationships to other bodies, a material way of exploring someone else's scale and proportions compared to one's own.

Borrowing some ill-fitting slippers becomes a proposal on my part to the

audience-guest to experiment with moving differently. It is corporeality extended to the multiple, to many bodies, to the many bodies imagined alongside the actual flesh. “Each body,” Potrović observes, “holds within itself an experience of being another body, and even more, it holds within itself infinite modes of bodying.”<sup>126</sup> A body, considered here via its ways of expressing, a never-finalized body—a “bodying.”<sup>127</sup>

It is also a way to grapple with the entanglement between movement and bodying: the tight slippers produce new movement, and new movement produces a new bodying, and so on. As Manning writes, “the body becomes through forces of recombination that compose its potential directionalities: When I take a step, how the step moves me is key to where I can go.”<sup>128</sup>

*How the step moves me*, the capacity to be affected, to be transformed, to head in a new direction, is a key inquiry into borrowing. The audience-guest is being asked to engage with that which might *move him* (differently), to move across the thresholds of corporeality and relations. With borrowing, a potential opens up to embody otherwise.

### 4.3 Making the Bed (Dancing)

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<sup>126</sup> Potrović, “What a Body Can Become,” 263.

<sup>127</sup> Manning, *Always More Than One*, 19.

<sup>128</sup> Manning, *Relationscapes*, 6. Quoted in Potrović, “What a Body Can Become,” 165.



*On the third day of the performance, Marianna M., a young, smallish woman, is my audience-guest. After welcoming her and giving her some slippers (which fit her well), I ask her to wait in the main room.*

*I exit the room and re-enter some moments later with some blankets and comfortable pillows. As part of the action of the performance, I begin spreading out the blankets and making a temporary bed on the floor. At several junctures while making the bed, I pause, slow down to the point of stillness, and sustain my position through a couple of deep breaths. I then resume the flow and finish making the bed.*

In those extended moments of bed-making where I am near-still, the context keeps flowing through the moment—the apartment, the performance, the expectation to move, to continue making the bed. A mode of production (the performance) is flowing through my stillness. My major bodily movements are stilled, I become a shape hanging in the air, I seek to come impossibly close to the apparent inertia of the bedding, I become just a bit more sweater and pants than breath and skin.

I am unsure whether my audience-guests are aware that I consider *Surface Rising* to be a dance; I have not presented the space of production in the strictest categories, and

*Klupko* is a platform for contemporary art rather than for dance. Thus, being still might not necessarily be understood as dance here, but in my framing of the situation, being toward *still* affords me an opportunity to emphasize *Surface Rising* as dance!

For a few moments, I am pruned apart from my instrumental relationship to the objects, and occupy space as a pulsing, warm shape. My body aims to stall purposeful action and become a quality, an abstract shape, a duration beyond the temporal norms of the apartment. My near-stillness perhaps propels a shift in the audience-guest's perceptions of me, allowing me to draw her attention away from the objects and toward my movement and non-movement, knowing that the qualities of my movements would normally not be perceived in everyday contexts. With this deliberate focus on my body and how it is (not) moving, I attempt to craft her attention such that it extends beyond everyday utility toward the aesthetic experience of moving.

The extended moments of stillness afford enough time, perhaps, for my audience-guest to take in my body's stance, my way of touching-holding the bedding, and my own attention toward gently and calmly breathing while sustaining a form. The stillness might open up an infinite field of ways in which I might move next, or it may arouse impatience.

Is there an enduring opposition that connects dancing with expressivity and non-dancing with functionality? Choreographer and theorist Elizabeth Dempster writes on how the category of the pedestrian in dance enlivens the notion of everyday movement and expands modernism's strict definition of dance. "The pedestrian functions to confuse or disable entrenched oppositions upon which dance modernism is founded, in particular, the oppositions between dancers and non-dancers, dance movement and everyday

movement, and the choreographic scheme and the performance.”<sup>129</sup>

If dancing is considered as creative world-making—inventing sensibilities and rhythms of living, modes of physicality that gesture at other, unknown purposes and desires—then a dance beckons to another world, a differently organized world. A dance does not only enact a physical movement of the body, but forms a relation with the world. A dance acts *upon* the world, producing contrasts, qualities, and desires, a world becoming, a “worlding.”

I am halfway through making the bed, an ordinary task, yet I am suspended. My slowed-down embodiment demonstrates a deep connection to economic and political forces that habituate rhythms and conform the body, and its possibilities, to the site—a body closely bound to the world of progress and production. And yet, my slowing of time is a gesture that is opening up some new world, some new aesthetic pattern between the bedding and my body. The apartment’s world is simultaneously being made and unmade. The space between dancing and non-dancing is being explored.

*And then, finally, I finish making the bed.*

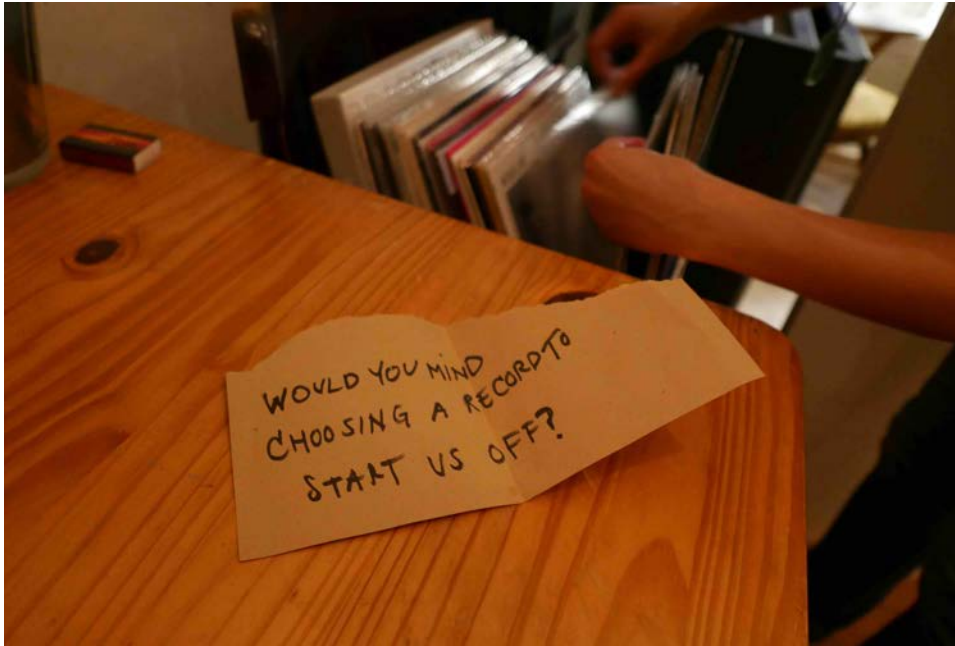
#### **4.4 Choosing a Record**

*Before we lie down upon the newly made floor-bed, I usher my audience-guest across the room toward a table, a record player, and a box of records belonging to Igor and Go Eun. I am unfamiliar with most of these records. I hand the audience-guest a little note that says:*

Would you mind choosing a record to start us off?

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<sup>129</sup> Dempster, “The Choreography of the Pedestrian,” 24.



Tasking each audience-guest to select a record to start us off was an effective way to convey the fact that I am not invested in total aesthetic control of the situation, but am more interested in exploring thresholds of agency within the guest-host-site dynamic. It was also a way to explore the belongings of Igor and Go Eun.

Audience-guest Marianna M. picked *Winterreise—6 Lieder*, a work composed in 1827 by Franz Schubert.<sup>130</sup>

*We lie down upon the makeshift bed to listen.*

The music's romantic aesthetic, contrasted with the intimate performance, provoked a burst of laughter between us. The laughter took hold as the music surrounded us with its lush power, and both host and guest were swept up in an uncontrollable fit of giggles.

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<sup>130</sup> Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and Jörg Demus, *Winterreise—6 Lieder*, by Franz Schubert, Deutsche Grammophon, 1977, vinyl LP, <https://www.discogs.com/fr/Franz-Schubert-Dietrich-Fischer-Dieskau-J%C3%B6rg-Demus-Winterreise-6-Lieder/release/4577712>.



Admittedly, this was a temporary loss of composure, but it did not disrupt the general vector of the performance. Still, the stability of who was leading and who was following became slightly blurred. The site had unexpectedly shifted us into becoming joint shaking-laughing-bodyings together.

Borrowing helps me and reminds me, as a performer, that unexpected things will happen. Borrowing values the unexpected.

As a host-dancer, borrowing heightens the need for agility, the ability to move along with the circumstances. This agility, however, must be balanced carefully, between the task of moving along with new circumstances, while also sustaining the consistency of the choreography.

*While I was swept up in the laughter of my guest and myself, and in my enjoyment of Winterreise, I did not speak. I did not break this particular parameter of the*

*performance; in this way, I practiced intentionality even within the spontaneity of the laughter.*

The agility of the host-dancer is the agility of one who *insists or persists* upon an invented mode of moving (a choreography), yet must remain open to the infinite becomings of how to move (a dancing). This skill enlivens the dance.

According to Contact Improvisation founder and somatic scholar Nita Little Nelson and performance/ anthropology scholar Joseph Dumit, a dancer may train to become aware of a “field of attention,” an ability to hold many possibilities for movement within the readiness of one’s body. A field of attention is facilitated by a “soft focus or a distributed extension of awareness in order to catch the *initiation* of new action pathways within ourselves, our partners, or within a field of activity.”<sup>131</sup>

Because Contact Improvisation is a technique based on dancing with others, the readiness of the body is necessary for sensitive dancing. This technique of attending is a multidirectional skill, a simultaneous ability to follow, to seek, and to offer. The aim is never to lead too much or to follow too much, but to become so absorbed that one’s movement is both following *and* initiating the given situation. This simultaneous following and initiating creates a relational space of attending and being attended to. When dancing with others, the host-dancer attends sharply to what is already moving in order to move.

*At one point in a subsequent performance, I was not able to get the record player to work. My audience-guest, being familiar with the model, fiddled around and, after some excruciating minutes, got it to work. All the while—unbelievably—both of us sustained our silence.*

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<sup>131</sup> Nita Little Nelson and Joseph Dumit, “Articulating Presence: Attention is Tactile,” in *Thinking Touch in Partnering and Contact Improvisation* (forthcoming, 2020), 2.



An interruption of how things were supposed to go, a material breakdown, and a guest who suddenly knows more than I do. The tasks of knowing how to sustain my own choreography (of silence) and how to move with new circumstances becomes quite perplexing. A new situation where I knew less and less exactly how to move as a host-dancer.

In “Moving as some *thing* (or, some things want to run),” chapter 1 of his book *Singularities*, performance scholar André Lepecki addresses the principles of relation between materiality and the will of the choreographer.<sup>132</sup> Lepecki cites seminal choreographer Yvonne Rainer’s engagement with questions of authorial will in her influential essay on her own dance work, *Trio A*, in which she described her choreographic motivation as being to “move or be moved by some *thing* rather than oneself.”<sup>133</sup>

Lepecki takes up Rainer’s prescient call to question the authorial role of the choreographer<sup>134</sup> in order to allow for an exteriority to enter, to engage with the forces of the unseen, the material errancy of bodies and objects, “the wild autonomy of things”<sup>135</sup>—in short, to move away from a notion of the author as the most important agent in emergent movement. This radical reorganization of the choreographer’s deployment of objects and space shifts their role away from the convention of being the

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<sup>132</sup> Lepecki, *Singularities: Dance in the Age of Performance*, 26–54.

<sup>133</sup> Rainer, “A Quasi Survey,” 263–73.

<sup>134</sup> Looking back on Rainer’s prophetic essay through the contemporary socio-economic lens of neoliberalism, Lepecki asks: “How does one choreograph and think freedom beyond the bounds of liberal individualism?” Lepecki, *Singularities*, 13.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

one who masters and commands, and instead toward being the one who attempts to become oriented through unpredictable movement.

Critically, Lepecki distinguishes an object from a thing: an *object* is a known entity that may be manipulated or that manipulates the prescribed world, while a *thing* is errant, “less an object than a mode of actioning the absolutely unforeseen.”<sup>136</sup> This distinction points to a structuring value within Rainer’s artistic practice: to aim at an impossible, vague thing, a mutual surrender of subject and object into a dynamic, unforeseen assemblage of matter, audience, performers, and choreographer. To abandon the limit that we call *oneself* in order to be implicated into the greater project of the not-yet-recognized, the not-yet-valued. “Between these two poles, between ‘some thing’ and ‘oneself,’ a point of singularization, a critical move, or a teetering event is defined; the project of making dances moved by things, not selves.”<sup>137</sup>

To “move or be moved by some *thing* rather than oneself,” as Rainer writes, and which Lepecki affirms as “a mode of actioning the absolutely unforeseen,” is a very ambitious and difficult goal for a choreographed performance. In proposing that my audience-guest selects a record to play, I do not claim to have achieved this. A record is a recognizable object in the world. However, considering that Marianna M.’s choice of record yielded such surprising, involuntary laughter, I am curious to attend to the distinctions between moving and being moved through the experience of the choreographer-dancer.

I find that Rainer’s aspiration “move or be moved by some *thing* rather than oneself” attests, in part, to the experiential roles of dancer and choreographer, both of

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 33.

which were implicated in creating her self-performed solo work *Trio A*. The dual role of dancer-choreographer engenders very specific intuitions while dancing, immersed in the experiential emergence between planned and unplanned of a choreography performed.

What is being moved and what is moving? Dance scholar Diego Gil describes “movement as an immanent becoming of relations between different entities. Its potential to transcend the conditions of the given actual situations is folded *with* and *through* the actual.”<sup>138</sup> Movement has the capacity to exceed the actual, to unfold into further, unexpected dynamisms. Movement is always in excess of its capture, beyond its (choreographic) predeterminations. Movement is always moving beyond a limit of that which was already experienced. If movement is considered as a force of the new, as a force exceeding the given, then the choreographer-dancer may be considered to be caught up in an excess, in forces that she is moving and being moved by.

With my request to the audience-guest to select a record unfamiliar to her, and in the event of the record player’s malfunction, I attempt the agility, the readiness required to continue performing with and through the emerging relations and forces. Here, the distinctions between moving and being moved become diminished. Or, as Potrović puts it: “How to think choreography as a relation between the body moving the movement and the body being moved by the movement?”<sup>139</sup> I move my body into a relation with the act of borrowing. And my body is moved by the relations that borrowing unleashes.

#### **4.5 Postcards and Flyers: Exterior Relations**

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<sup>138</sup> Gil, “A Study on the “Intervals of Perception,”” 13.

<sup>139</sup> Potrović, “What a Body Can Become,” 290.

*We are lying on the makeshift bed and the laughter has finally subsided. I hand my audience-guest some postcards and mail, including a lenticular image of a horse, a flyer from a 2008 Morton Feldman music event in Amsterdam, a brochure from a 1976 Montreal art show by the artist Freda Guttman, a found notebook containing a to-do list, and a postcard depicting a 2014 art exhibition in nearby Haarlem.*



It is left to the audience-guest to inspect, or not, the source of each postcard. There is no specific order—each card is offered and the audience-guest contends with how it might have arrived and why it is being presented. I am not proposing a representational

meaning for the content of each card or brochure, but presenting them as indexes or landmarks to exterior relations, a selection of correspondences (distant or close by) to the moment. The flyers and cards become a processual mapping of what is gathered together here, the co-presence of events at the edges of this performance.

I am aiming at a composition of near and far in time and space, of a backgrounding and a foregrounding of here and there. In this way, I am exploring a cartographic dimension to borrowing—how it composes temporal and spatial relations. I am mapping out and mixing up *what is at hand* with *what I have brought with me*, a sequence of local Amsterdam events with Montreal references, gently and randomly collapsing, yet sustaining, the separations between my collection of postcards and flyers, and those of Igor and Go Eun.

A borrowed apartment may be navigated as a plane of composition, a territory of here and there, of co-mingling presences. A territory expressed not through homogeneity or dominance of a single voice, but through multiple, co-existing references of dispersed spatial and temporal distributions.

#### **4.6 Image in the Bathroom**

*I hand the audience-guest a little note:*

Please come this way.

*I usher the audience-guest into the bathroom. (On the day of documenting the performance, Go Eun squeezes into the bathroom next.) I follow inside and shut the door. The shutting of the door floods the borrowed bathroom with darkness.*



*My audience-guest, Go Eun and I are immersed in this borrowed-bathroom-darkness.*

In the darkness, a powerful force of disorientation manifests itself. The room can no longer be navigated by sight; sensory perception must draw upon listening, smelling, and touching to seek out where one is. Scale becomes elastic as the edges begin to melt, inside and outside become uncertain. In this moment, “what” I am borrowing loses its

clear dimensions. The darkness allows the room to flow, “the flow of matter-movement, the flow of matter in continuous variation.”<sup>140</sup>



*I pick up my lighter and, in the darkness, hand the audience-guest a booklet. Quickly, I flick on the lighter, revealing the booklet's frontal image—a black-and-white photograph, the work of Dutch documentary filmmaker Johan van der Keuken.*<sup>141</sup>

*The lighter throws its light across a certain sphere in the darkness, onto hands, fingers, a bit of arm, and the image, partially illuminated. After some time, I take my thumb off the lighter, and we return to the darkness of the enclosed space.*

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<sup>140</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 406.

<sup>141</sup> A booklet that happened to be in Igor and Go Eun's apartment: *Johan van der Keuken, Tegen het licht*, exhibition booklet (Amsterdam: Eye Filmmuseum, 2013).  
<https://www.eyefilm.nl/en/exhibition/tentoonstelling-johan-van-der-keuken-tegen-het-licht>.



In the borrowed-bathroom-darkness, room-image, the audience- guest, the host-dancer, and the performance-site become assembled. Go Eun is present (as photographer), truly



the host of the host, in the darkness. And I feel Igor's mingling presence too, gathered in the dark, his absence as a presence invoked through borrowing, a nonlinear system of relations.

*I open the door, and all of us exit.*

#### **4.7 Teacup: Commodity**

*On the fifth day of the performance, I am hosting an audience-guest named Mari. After we exit the darkened bathroom, I gesture to her to sit in a comfortable chair by the window. I hand her a pair of cardboard glasses, the plastic lenses of which refract the light into a rainbow spectrum of colours. I also give her a pair of noise-cancelling headphones.*

*I retreat into the kitchen to give her time to adjust to observing with these new props. After some moments, I offer her a choice of two teas. She chooses one, and I go to prepare it. When I return carrying Go Eun's dainty little mug, embellished with what appears to be a multicoloured daisy, suddenly Mari erupts and exclaims a strange word. I do not understand the word, and do not react.*

Figgjo!

*Later, Go Eun explains to me that the mug is from the Figgjo daisy series, a well-known Norwegian brand. My audience-guest recognized the daisy and was excited to see it, as the series was in production in 1969 and is nowadays quite rare.*



The piercing of my audience-guest's voice, exclaiming the name of a brand in the midst of the silence, was admittedly startling—a sharp reminder that I am engaged in a territory already deeply inscribed with economic, aesthetic and social values, choreographing amidst the powers of brand recognition<sup>142</sup> to shape perceptual experience.

I had offered my audience-guest the tea, along with the glasses and headphones, in a composed sequence. The noise-cancelling headphones have a slight disorienting effect; they muffle the wearer's contact with the room. The glasses, which flare out in rainbow prisms when the wearer looks directly at a light source, produce a similar, slight disorientation, albeit as a visual effect. These minor alterations of the audience-guest's sense perceptions, purposefully crafted, were at play when the tea was offered.

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<sup>142</sup> Within late capitalism, brand recognition is a form of affective power that serves as an assertion of consistency, an operation that “develops market presence and maintains customer loyalty.” Moran, *Identity and Capitalism*, 147.

In that moment of brand recognition, however, the teacup, offered as a particular mode of relation—of teacup-glasses-headphones-silence—loosened its newly invented attachment to my experimental performance. It is parsed out from the relations within which it has emerged, and its prior status is again foregrounded. In short, with this utterance of recognition, the teacup is deterritorialized from the performance and appears again in its mode as commodity. “Territorialization,” writes Larkins, “signifies the regulation and coding of flows of material bodies and desire by social and political ‘machines.’”<sup>143</sup>

A commodity ushers in the world of goods and services, the world of the market, of property, power, and control, which define and govern producers and assets. A commodity harnesses the material potential of an object into a very specific perceptual mode, inscribing the object into an economic system of use, exchange, and circulation. The teacup is embroiled in a generalized way of seeing, an entire orbit of circulation and relations ordered and governed by capitalism.

Theorist Guy Debord, in his 1967 critique *The Society of the Spectacle*, situates the commodity as a world-making force of the spectacle, a discourse of what is deemed worthy of being seen within the logic of modern capitalism. “The spectacle manifests itself as an enormous positivity, out of reach and beyond dispute. All it says is: Everything that appears is good, whatever is good will appear.”<sup>144</sup> The commodity, then, following Debord, may be understood as mode of appearance oriented toward future profitability and future value exchange.

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<sup>143</sup> Larkins, “The Idea of the Territorial State,” 56.

<sup>144</sup> Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, 15.

The commodity as a force that influences perceptual acts  
(within-across)  
A performance as a force that influences perceptual acts.

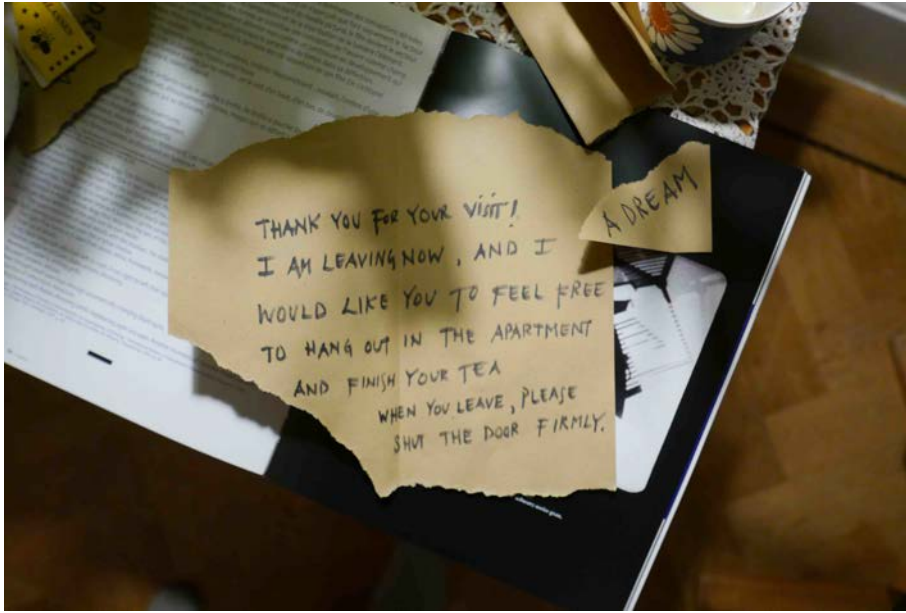
A Figgjo teacup, appearing in the overlap of two orbits: the micro-orbit of a performance and the macro-orbit of the economic relations in late capitalism. I had not even attempted to mask the various brands of items in the apartment. In hindsight I realized that the objects in the apartment awaited the activation of the audience-guest's recognition, the powerful, territorializing force of the commodity threading through the space. "Territorialities, then," explain Deleuze and Guattari, "are shot through with lines of flight testifying to the presence within them of movements of deterritorialization and reterritorialization."<sup>145</sup> The potential of deterritorialization and reterritorialization within the objects engage the stakes of borrowing in site-situated practice.

#### 4.8 Exit

*My audience-guest sips her tea. I walk to the other end of the apartment, leaving her be for a few minutes. I return, and I hand my guest a small note stating that I will leave the apartment. My guest is invited to take off the glasses and headphones whenever she wishes, and to stay for a while, finish her tea, and leave when she is ready.*

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<sup>145</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 55.



What moves with the movement of my exit?

As I leave the apartment, the tea is still warm in my audience-guest's hands. She is still wearing her (perhaps ill-fitting) slippers. The lights are still on. The smell of the soup that I cooked still lingers in the rooms. The bedding and pillows of the temporary bed on the floor are still lying about. The flyers and postcards are on the floor, and small, handwritten notes on brown paper are scattered about.

The consistency of the performance might sustain a plane of intensity without my physical presence. The capacities of assemblage are more than human, as Guattari observes: "The notion of agency to create a plane of living is made of micro agencies that pass through wider and more multiple planes than the human conscious mind."<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Guattari, *Schizoanalytic Cartographies*, 18, quoted in Gil, "A Study on the "Intervals of Perception,"" 87.

Within my choreographic proposal, many heterogeneous elements are still composing with one another. For a brief “while,” the apartment as unfolded through the guesting and hosting might be still “captured” by the world of the performance.

My exit brings into awareness how my presence formed a relational body with the apartment. My exit is a continuity of the relation between myself and my audience-guest, between myself and the site. As I shift out the door, everything I touched, moved, or attended to also shifts.

Writes Potrović: “Relation makes the idea of beginning and the end of the body – at the level of its edges – impossible. Relation is a movable edge, fluid edge, porous edge.”<sup>147</sup> How I moved inside of the apartment is inseparable from the apartment. I *moved with* the apartment (moving). The apartment *moved me* (moving).

The tea cools in relation to the moment it was given. The soup smells grow fainter in relation to the moment I turned off the stove. Fresh air enters through the window in relation to the moment I opened the window. I exit, and the apartment moves *with* my exit. *Moving with* is expressed as the qualitative transformation of elements.

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<sup>147</sup> Potrović, “What a Body Can Become,” 180.



*I go down the stairs and out the door. This apartment does not have a back door, as did my apartment in Montreal, and so I am obliged to exit the same way I entered. I need to pull instead of push, I need to step down instead of stepping up.*

## 4.9 Assemblage

Borrowing foregrounds the multiple temporalities and relations of place. It is a fold of simultaneity, in that the apartment is at once “mine” as it remains belonging to Igor and Go Eun. Analyzing the technique of borrowing as assemblage, the concept from Deleuze and Guattari that entails the gathering up of singularities that generate unexpected events, a dynamic of deterritorializations and reterritorializing forces, has been helpful to evaluate how borrowing as choreographic process has been in excess of what I initially thought I was borrowing. I wasn’t so much borrowing the *form* of the apartment but I was borrowing its multiplicity of *forces*, entangling myself to unexpected relations.

Borrowing, then, creates new territories of relations. As Deleuze and Guattari observe; “Every assemblage is basically territorial.”<sup>148</sup>

The cluster of forces (which I call the apartment), will be returned. The entire time I am borrowing the apartment, I am oriented to this idea of return- the way in which I take care of the place in each moment is aligned to the knowledge of this eventual return. Borrowing is clearly not an act of ownership. It is about enjoyment and activation, multiplying the connections, and for which the daily care is applied predicated on returning the something borrowed in good condition. The idea of return is key to understanding a form of receiving that is not consumption or accumulation. As a borrower, I receive what you have lent to me, but I will eventually return it to you. This mode of pleasure and indebtedness provokes a way of thinking territory that puts relation

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<sup>148</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 503.



front and center. (With the return of this something that I have borrowed, I am transformed, affected, a connection intensified that lingers beyond the actual moment of return). It is a return that generates new possibilities.

#### **4.10 Site-situated Performance**

As a settler (Canadian) artist working on this project in the Netherlands, I am keeping in mind ways that build generative, sustainable relations, and engagements with resources that are not oriented towards the familiar colonial-capital mode of accumulation and consumption. *Surface Rising* at Klupko, as choreographic production, admittedly participates in the broad colonial- capital infrastructure of which the contemporary art world is constituted. However, practices invested in relations and an engagement with materials that are not transplanted for yet another re-production, might be a way to tweak the conventions of professional touring in the field.

Situated art practices avoid a homogenizing tendency of a standard of meaning to be made anywhere at anytime. They are practices that tend towards valuing the circumstantial. The work traveled from Montreal to Amsterdam. The material needs for the project had been transported in one bag, and the remaining material needs were what was available, at hand. The performance sustained some consistency but was re-activated through new, local materials and relations. The situated, non-transportable making of meaning in the performance may be considered a minor way to engage in the vast and urgent task of de-colonizing contemporary art production. Decolonization, the “unearthing of seemingly invisible colonial agendas, apparatus and narratives,”<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Decter and Taunton, “Addressing the Settler Problem,” 33.

includes attending to the ecology of relations already in place as a way of drawing meaning from an artwork. The practices of borrowing in site-situated performance rely on a mutuality- being bound to others in order to produce the work. This indebtedness is a very key part of its very meaning and value.