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Territoriality and choreography in site-situated performance

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Summary

Territoriality and Choreography in Site-Situated Performance

The PhD project *Territoriality and Choreography in Site-Situated Performance* is conducted through artistic practice and theoretical inquiry. The project performatively activates a series of residential sites in Canada and the Netherlands.

Site-situated performance refers to an artistic process that begins and ends on-site, working within the specific conditions of a location. The key terms territoriality and choreography here represent concepts and practices that express and navigate space-time(s). The project animates qualities of territoriality through a choreographed encounter between host-dancer, guest-audience and site-performance.

Written and explored from the perspective of a Canadian settler scholar and artist, the project attunes to the material and discursive agency of the guest, host and site within colonial and settler colonial conditions. The project develops a critical and creative mode of engagement with the social, material and political characteristics of a site and with the world-building potential of performance.

Description of Artistic Component

The artistic component of the research project *Territoriality and Choreography in Site-Situated Performance* involves multiple elements, consisting of documentary images and video, a live performance, and a final thesis presentation.

Woven into the written thesis are documentary photographic images and drawings from the series of four performances in residential sites (2014-15). The images capture both the process of developing works as well as the final installations and performances.

Documentary photographic images of the exhibition Visiting Hours (2019) are included in the epilogue of the thesis. A supplementary documentary video of the research is also accessible here. (Link to video documentation: <https://vimeo.com/415156570>
Password: Visiting1)

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Due to the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, I was not able to travel to the Netherlands to perform in person. In this context, the thesis presentation includes a performance-at-a-distance for a solo audience member, entitled *I asked my guest to close one eye* (2020). The performance embodies the final artistic presentation of the research.

The performance *I asked my guest to close one eye*” must take place in a residential site. The participant must arrange, through their personal or professional relations, a visit to someone else’s residence, specifically, to gain access to one room that is not one’s own.

It must be a location where the participant, newly transformed into a guest, may be permitted to be alone for approximately one hour.

The performance *I asked my guest to close one eye* consists of an audio recording that the participant may download and listen to through earphones. The participant will receive a small bag, containing items that may be opened through the prompts of the voice on the audio recording. *I asked my guest to close one eye* choreographs ways of attuning to the material-discursive forces of one room in someone else's house. "Becoming guest" in this work seeks a heightened observation process of the material site, as well as an exploration of the responsibility and reciprocity implicated in the hospitality of this specific situation.

Through precise instructions of looking, touching, and holding, the performance expands a sensorial attunement for the audience, and probes the seemingly inaccessible dimensions of the site.

The project choreographs an encounter of relations of guest-audience, host-performer and site-performance. The use of documentary photographic images and voice recordings constitute a final form of the research.