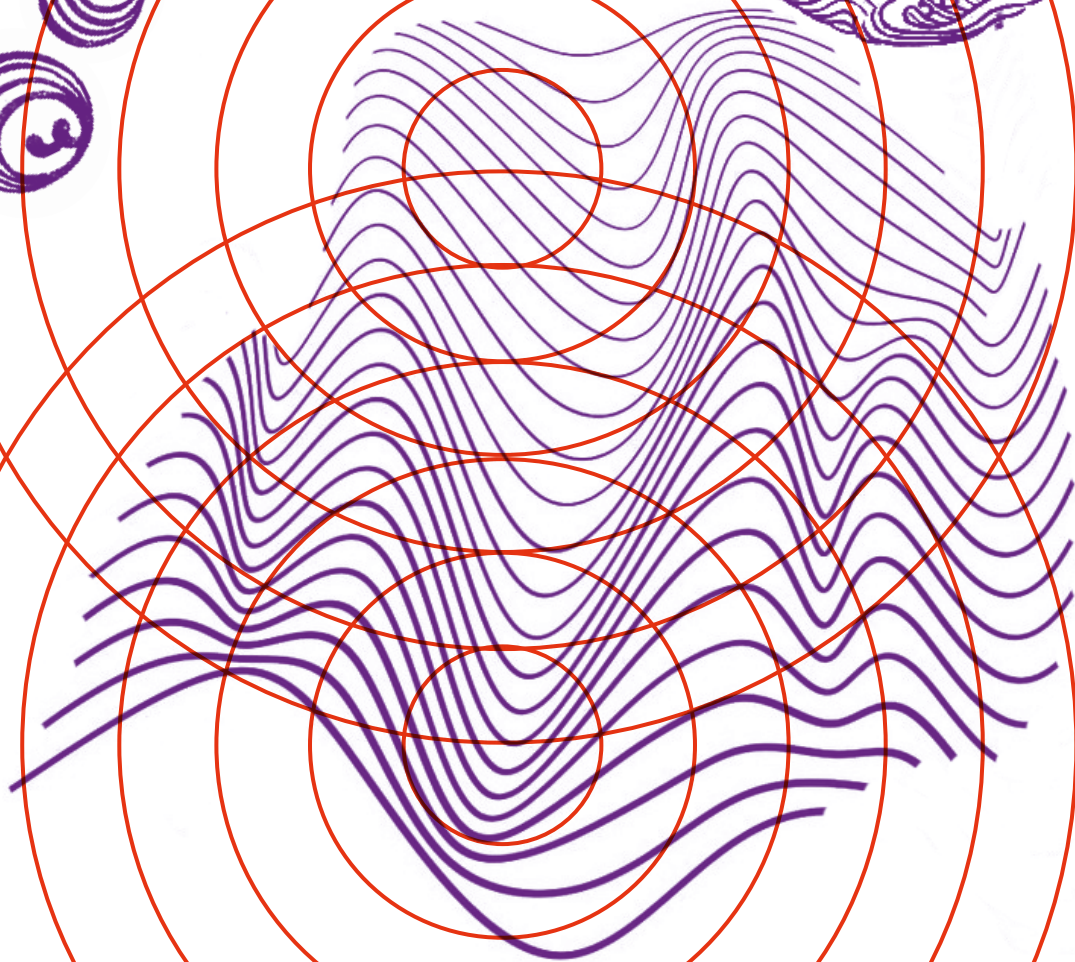


Non-Knowledge, Laughter and the Moving Image

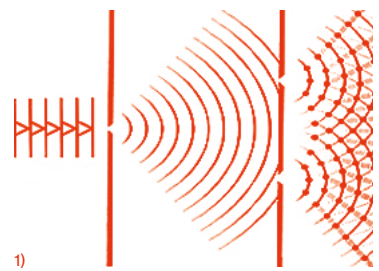


Seminar SoSe20,
HFBK Hamburg

It would be a year ago, that this story began
 That I would be waiting for you
 That you would be waiting for me too...

This is a Proposal for a Show.
 Which is going to happen at some moment
 but at the moment it just exists
 HERE
 And what I'm proposing is that the show, in as far as
 possible
 is set in the Past and the Future at the same time

This is a Proposal for a Show.



that would be
 populated by Things
 that have one foot in
 this world
 and one in another
 And its going to toggle between the two

–Du nix Mann? Verheiratet?
 –Mein Mann ist tot. Schon lange.
 –Was arbeiten Sie denn?
 –Mit Autos. Ganze Tag. Immer.
 –Mhm. Und Abends gehn Sie dann
 hierher?
 –Ja.
 –Hat schön Musik. Viele Kollege
 arabisch. Weiß nicht andre Platz.
 Deutsch mit Arabisch nicht gut.
 –Warum?
 –Weiß nicht. Deutsch mit Arabisch
 nicht gleiche Mensch.
 –Aber – am Arbeitsplatz?
 –Nicht gleich. Deutsche Herr, Arabisch
 Hund.
 –Aber dass...
 –Egal. Nix viel denken – gut. Viel
 denken – viel weinen.

Mark Leckey, Prop4aShw (2010)

When two hands touch, there is a sensuality of the flesh, an exchange of warmth, a feeling of pressure, of presence, a proximity of otherness that brings the other nearly as close as oneself. Perhaps closer. And if the two hands belong to one person, might this not enliven an uncanny sense of the otherness of the self, a literal holding oneself at a distance in the sensation of contact, the greeting of the stranger within? So much happens in a touch: an infinity of others – other beings, other spaces, other times – are aroused. When two hands touch, how close are they? What is the measure of closeness? Which disciplinary knowledge formations, political parties, religious and cultural traditions, infectious disease authorities, immigration officials, and policy makers do not have a stake in, if not a measured answer to, this question? When touch is at issue, nearly everyone's hair stands on end. I can barely touch on even a few aspects of touch here, at most offering the barest suggestion of what it might mean to approach, to dare to come in contact with, this infinite finitude. Many voices speak here in the interstices, a cacophony of always already reiteratively intra-acting stories. These are entangled tales. Each is diffractively threaded through and enfolded in the other. Is that not in the nature of touching? Is touching not by its very nature always already an involution, invitation, invisitation, wanted or unwanted, of the stranger within?

Karen Barad, On Touching – The Inhuman That Therefore I Am (2012)



2)

It will be a year ago that this story begins
 That I will be waiting for you
 That you will be waiting for me too...

–You have no man? Married?
 –My husband is dead. Ages ago.
 –What work do you do then?
 –With cars. All day. Always.
 –And you spend your evenings
 here?
 –Yes.
 –Good music. Many Arab colleagues.
 Don't know other places.
 Germans with Arabs not good.
 –Why?
 –Don't know. Germans and Arabs not
 the same people.
 –But – at the workplace?
 –Not the same. German master, Arab
 dog.
 –But...
 –Who cares. Better not think too
 much. Think much – cry much.

Ming Wong, Eat Fear / Angst Essen (2008)

rat. He tries with all his might to remain
 the advances of a young woman in the of-
 to a rat – but it is only a resemblance [...]

We can be thrown into a becoming by anything at all, by the most unexpected, most insignificant of things.
 You don't deviate from the majority unless there is a little detail that starts to swell and carries you off.

Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattar, A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia (1980)

I recall the fine film Willard (1972, Daniel Mann). A “B” movie perhaps, but a fine unpopular film: unpopular because the heroes are rats. My memory of it is not necessarily accurate. I will recount the story in broad outline. Willard lives with his authoritarian mother in the old family house. Dreadful Oedipal atmosphere. His mother orders him to destroy a litter of rats. He spares one (or two or several). After a violent argument, the mother, who “resembles” a dog, dies. The house is coveted by a businessman, and Willard is in danger of losing it. He likes the principal rat he saved, Ben, who proves to be of prodigious intelligence. There is also a white female rat, Ben's companion. Willard spends all his free time with them. They multiply. Willard takes the rat pack, led by Ben, to the home of the businessman, who is put to a terrible death. But he foolishly takes his two favorites to the office with



3)

him and has no choice but to let the
 employees kill the white rat. Ben es-
 capes, after throwing Willard a long,
 hard glare. Willard then experiences
 a pause in his destiny, in his becoming-
 among humans. He even responds to
 face who bears a strong “resemblance”

To become is not to progress or regress along a series.
 Above all, becoming does not occur in the imagination.
 Becomings-animal are neither dreams nor phantasies.
 They are perfectly real. But which reality is at issue here?
 For if becoming animal does not consist in playing
 animal or imitating an animal, it is clear that the human
 being does not “really” become an animal any more than
 the animal “really” becomes something else.

Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattar, A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia (1980)



In all traditions they speak of Holy Mountains—The Meru Mountain of India, Mount Kunlun of the taoist, the karakoram of Himalaya, the mountain of the philosophers—the Rosacruz mountain, the Kabbalistic mountain of San Juan de la Cruz. There are many other Holy Mountains. The Legend is always the same. Nine immortal men live on top of the mountain. From the highest peak they direct our world. They hold the secret to the conquest of death.

Alejandro Jodorowsky, The Holy Mountain (1973)

One day
Death arrive
and man finally began to think about it

Seeing himself as an immortal soul,
far, far away from his animal origins,
and not accepting one instant inexistence
he created holes
where he thought he could continue to exist

Yet man is very attracted to this void
with its black teeth and its velvety body
and his thoughts return there often,
showing how he can't stand it...

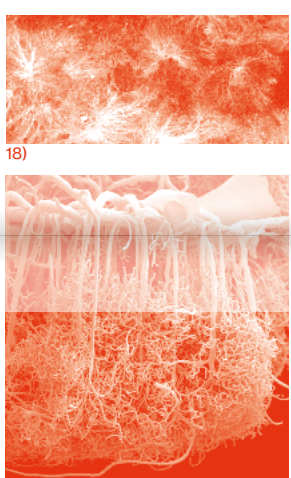


Death is a spider
whose demented song will help you leave this world
where questions never answer you

Pauline Curnier Jardin, Grotta Profunda - the moody chasm (2011)



17



18

What if Nature, too
Made art, too?
What if Nature could make art?
could sing, and paint?
and play and sculpt?

What if all meaning is lost?
neither hands nor tails,
What if the cave itself,
had made this feast?

Pauline Curnier Jardin, Grotta Profunda - the moody chasm (2011)

singing
moving back and forth in front of the window
scratching a stone over a wooden plate
moving the hand strongly over a computer keyboard
swinging a necklace towards a window with the one hand while holding it with the other
bouncing a spiral toy- listening to the sound
still singing
stepping a book with the foot
moving a wire around a doors handle
touching the wavy bottom of a plastic tub with the tip of the fingers
going on

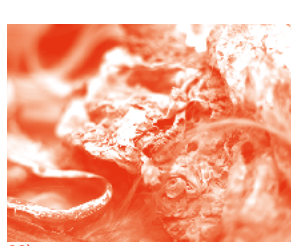


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waving with a receive towards the window
circling around a cupboards handle
moving the nose up and down in the middle of an opened magazine
listening the sound of the magazines pages
moving the nose in the middle of the magazine again
switching between pointing outside and inside the room
touching the water coming out of a water tap with the tip of a finger
circling the finger up and down in the water coming out of the tap
flipping the water using different fingers of the same hand
whipping back and fourth towards the window while moving all fingers of the hands

21

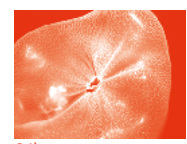
tipping very fast on a
ing at the screen
smelling the upside of a
from left to right
listening to the sound



23

computers keyboard while look-
ing at the screen
hand while moving it constantly
of a spinning tool by spinning it

close to
feeling the texture
chewing on a pen
looking into the cameras lens



24

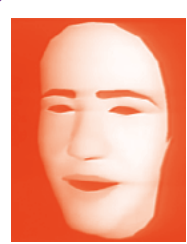
the ear
of a pillow by circling the face on it
by only using the lips



25

keep looking on an opened book
putting together block toys carefully
standing in front of the window moving your fingers with the hands on height of the shoulders
walking outside of the cameras range

This language is not designed for the
ed. It's not about designing
sols for people to interpret. It
conversation with every
reacting physically to them.



26

human mind to get interpret-
words or even visual sym-
bols is about being in a constant
aspect of the environment,

A. M. Baggs, "In my language" (2008)

Waves make diffraction patterns precisely because multiple waves can be at multiple places at the same time. And a given wave can be at multiple places at the same time. Particles do neither. By definition particles are localised entities that take up space. They can be here or there. But not in two places at once. However it turns out that entities we take to be particles can produce diffraction patterns under specific circumstances. How can this be? According to quantum physics this is because a given particle can be in a state of super-position. To be in a state of super-position, between two positions, for example is not to be here or there, or even here and there. Rather it is to be indeterminately here-there. That is it is not simply that its position is unknown but rather there is no fact of the matter of weather it is here or there, or anywhere.

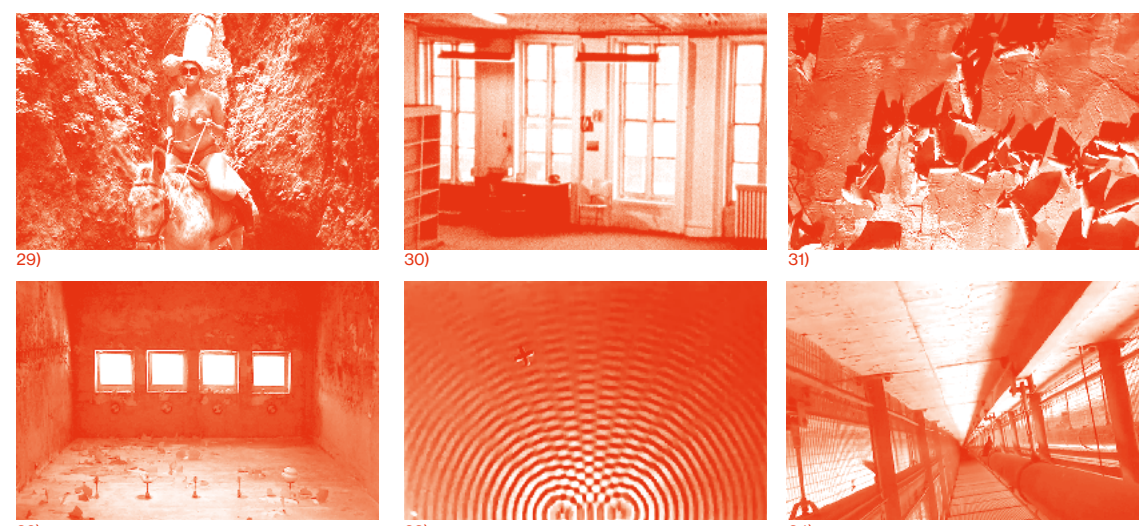
Karen Barad, Undoing the Future, Barnard College in NYC (2018)

Diffraction is an optical metaphor, like mirroring, but it carries more dynamism and potency. Diffraction patterns are about a heterogeneous history, not originals. Unlike mirror reflections, diffractions do not displace the same elsewhere.

Donna Haraway, How Like a Leaf, Donna J. Haraway, An Interview with Thyrza Nichols Goodeve, NY: Routledge, 2000

The Mothership Connection is Clinton's symbol for what happens to funk when you pass it through the studio, and when it becomes kind of an astroid, or becomes space, or becomes extraterrestrial. The Mothership Connection is like a link between Africa as a lost continent in the past and between Africa as an alien future.

John Akomfrah, Last Angel of History (1995)



29

30

31

32

33

34

Queerness is essentially about the rejection of a here and now and an insistence on potentiality or concrete possibility for another world. The future is queerness's domain.

Jose Estaban Munoz, Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity, New York: New York UP (2009)

<Laughter>
– Sit down!
– I promised you the great secret,
and I will not disappoint you.
– This is the end of our adventure!
Nothing has an end.

We came in search of the secret of
immortality. To be like gods.
And here we are—Mortals! More human
than ever. If we have not obtained
immortality, at least we have obtained reality. We been learning a fairytale—
and we came to life—but, is this life reality? No, it is a film. Zoom back camera!
We are images, dreams, photographs. We must not stay here. Prisoners.
We shall break the illusion. This is Maya. Good by to the Holy Mountain! Real life
awaits us!

Alejandro Jodorowsky, The Holy Mountain (1973)

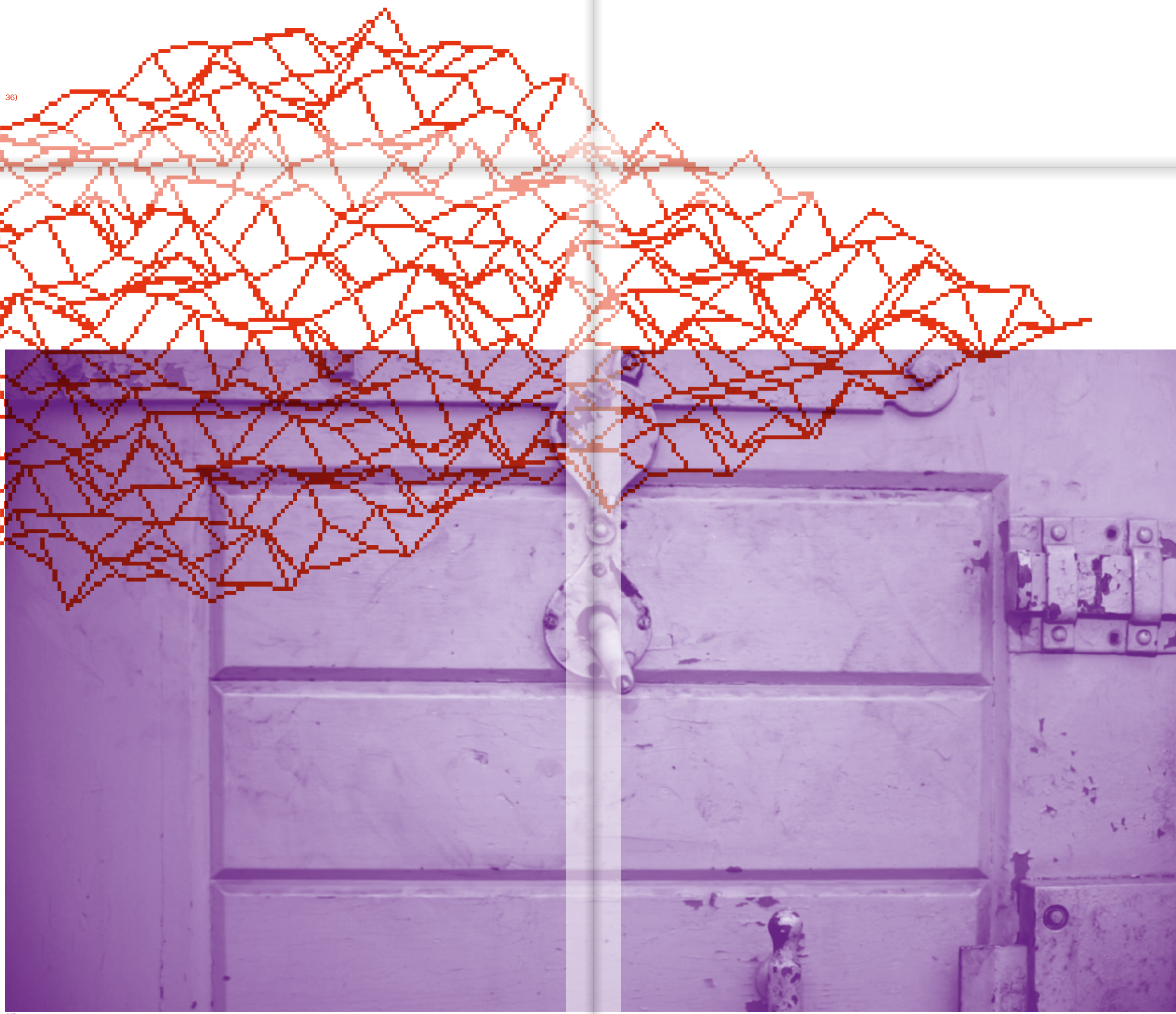


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IMAGE CREDITS 1) The Quantum Double Slit Experiment; 2) Ming Wong, Next Year – L'Année Prochaine (2016); 3) Fred Parke, Faces & Body Parts (1974); 4) Sun Ra, Oakland, 1972, Photographer Unknown, Collection of John Corbett and Terri Kapsalis; 5) A bacteriophage (a virus that infects bacteria), Photographer Unknown; 6) A small biological organism that might originating from space, University of Sheffield; 7) Pauline Curnier Jardin, Qu'un sang impur (2019); 8) Jean Genet, Un Chant d'Amour (1950); 9) Fred Parke, Faces & Body Parts (1974); 10) Daniel Mann, Willard (1971); 11) The rhizome of the medicinal plant Caulophyllum thalictroides (blue cohosh), Lloyd and Lloyd (1884); 12) Diffraction Pattern – Interference of Waves in a Ripple Tank, Ealing Film-Loops 80-2405; 13) Scientist tickling a rat, photo by Shimpei Ishiyama & Michael Brecht; 14) Pauline Curnier Jardin, Grotta Profunda – the moody chasm (2011); 15) Mark Leckey, DREAM ENGLISH KID 1964 199AD (2015); 16) Magia Naturalis, Giambattista della Porta, 1558; 17) Photo by Luise Thiele; 18) Mycellium, Photo by Rob Hille; 19) Photomicrograph of the microscopic blood vessels that carry nutrients to neurons in the brain, Photograph: Alfonso Rodriguez-Baeza and Marisa Ortega-Sánchez (2009); 20) Pauline Curnier Jardin, Qu'un sang impur (2019); 21) Dans le lit (In the Bed), by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, 1892; 22) Photo by Luise Thiele; 23) Benjamin Janzen, Hatsune Miku – skin close up (2020); 24) The shape-shifting Deepstaria jellyfish, You Tube Capture; 25) Pauline Curnier Jardin, Qu'un sang impur (2019); 26) Fred Parke, Faces & Body Parts (1974); 27) Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Angst essen Seele auf Fear Eats the Soul (1974); 28) Ming Wong, Angst Essen – Eat fear (2008); 29) Tracey Rose, The Prelude The Gardenpath (2003); 30) Michael Snow, Wavelength (1967); 31) DEMSAM, AU! AU! Shark Something is Very Heavy (2018); 32) DEMSAM, AU! AU! Shark Something is Very Heavy (2018); 33) Diffraction Pattern – Interference of Waves in a Ripple Tank, Ealing Film-Loops 80-2405; 34) Vinnie & Fabi – locked Doors open Rooms (2020); 35) Cave from a geological-speleological expedition in China, Michal Filipi; 36) A children's Picture-book Introduction to Quantum Field Theory, Blog Post, Brian Skinner (2015); 37) Pauline Curnier Jardin, Qu'un sang impur (2019)

Seminar Texts Karen Barad, On Touching – The Inhuman That Therefore I Am, in differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies, 2012, p.208; Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia. Trans. Brian Massumi. London & New York: Continuum, 2004; Donna Haraway, How Like a Leaf. Donna J. Haraway: An Interview with Thyrza Nichols Goodeve. NY: Routledge, 2000; Jose Estaban Munoz, Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity. New York: New York UP, 2009

Seminar Moving Images nonknowledge.org/hfbksose20



Non-Knowledge, Laughter and the Moving Image

In this seminar we are examining the moving image and the laughing body's potential to overturn our habitual course and change the dominant order of things. We are looking into situations in where bodies, images and sounds speak through unstable and unforeseen movements and encounters. How is this relevant today in a time with big data and algorithms? Like the sudden invasion of laughter that for a moment sets us off course, this seminar explores ways in which we communicate beyond instrumental language, subjectivity and reason, to experience what the moving image and our bodies can do and how they can teach us about the limits of our thinking.

Non-knowledge, Laughter and the Moving Image is an artistic research project led by Annika Larsson. The project is funded by the Swedish Research Council and done in collaboration with The Royal Institute of Arts in Stockholm and HFBK-Hochschule für Bildende Künste Hamburg.

Text and Images compiled by Esther Roth, Benjamin Janzen, Lisa Ostapenko, and Annika Larsson, design by Leon Lothschütz

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