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Beneath the surface of the event: Immanent movement and the politics of affective registers

Keywords

subjectivity
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Abstract

This article articulates the equation between subjectivity and time through performance. It discusses ways in which choreographic strategies of stillness and slowness have the capacity to interrupt the distribution of the senses and thus affect the production of subjectivity. In doing so I consider a series of solo performances titled Pressure Points (2010–2012). In this work, the act of crawling backwards in slowness, coupled with stillness and close proximity, aimed to shift the perceptibility of movement from kinetic to kinesthetic registers. The argument is positioned in relation to Erin Manning's notion of 'incipient action' and Jacques Rancière's 'Distribution of the sensible'. These frameworks are expanded upon by being placed in the context of the turn to conceptual choreography of the early 1990s.

As its point of departure, this article discusses ways in which choreographic strategies of stillness and slowness have the capacity to impact the production of subjectivity. Through a consideration of Italian

philosopher Maurizio Lazzarato's assertion that, 'Only an interruption in the flow of temporality can change subjectivity' (2010) and art theorist Maria Walsh's 'Subjectivity is time' (2005: 3), I will attempt to articulate the dynamic equation between subjectivity and time, through performance.

The article centres around an interconnected series of my research-led solo performances, titled *Pressure Points* that were performed between 2010 and 2012 in various locations, including the United Kingdom, United States and Germany. During the performance I used the physically challenging act of crawling backwards in slow motion, coupled with protracted moments of stillness, to shift the perceptibility of movement from kinetic to kinesthetic registers. As a micro-interruption this action had as Lazzarato claims, the potential to affect subjectivity by antagonizing spatio-temporal flow. The singular act of crawling aimed to make visible and palpable affective registers, those that are perhaps not supposed to be revealed.

It is notoriously difficult however, to render those affective registers tangible on the page. Despite this challenge, throughout the article I interweave a series of short writings that reflect on my kinesthetic experience of the performance over the course of two years. Here, there is a deliberate switching between personal pronouns to emphasize the symbiotic experience of my own body in relation to that of spectators. Like the crawling action in *Pressure Points*, these texts are micro-interruptions that disrupt the temporal flow of the article. As textual modes for conceptualizing the transmission of affect (Brennan 2004) they facilitate a spatio-temporal proximity to my trans-subjective experience of the performance, subverting the safe distance that theoretical lenses often produce.

Pressure Points (2010–2012)

*We are speaking from my position on the ground,
We have my ear to it and our bare breast to it.
A face skims the floor, brown hair, unsighted vision,
An audience we cannot see enters the space.*

Pressure Points was performed over two years in diverse contexts between 2010 and 2012 including, a squat in East London, a church and a graveyard in Manchester, art galleries in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, London, Cardiff and Brooklyn, New York City and finally in the communal space of Künstlerforum gallery in Bonn, Germany. As such, there is a meta-prolongation at work, extending not only across the temporality of each individual performance which ranged from 30 minutes to several hours, but stretching across the expanse of two years. In each performance I carried the resonance of the last and this impacted upon my actions and choreographic decision making in each new context.

Unsighted and moving backwards, my pale body on the ground appeared as if from nowhere. Covertly shifting in the in-between space of unbeknown spectators' feet, I wove in and out of the negative space between bodies in the room (Figure 1). The ground became a surface with which to



Victoria Gray, Pressure Points (2011). Image: artist and Roshana Rubin-Mayhew.

detect the movement of spectators as each shift in the room was sensed through my skin via my bare torso. At times, it felt that my bones were conducting and amplifying the minutest sound of people's movements. As such, these movements were sensed through my body as vibrations, rather than as visual information. My spine became a powerful aerial, conducting my peripheral senses. It was my primary orienteering device; an interface that processed not visual but kinesthetic data. Put simply it was as though each of the thirty three vertebrae in my spine became eyes, whilst the 31 pairs of spinal nerves acted as highly sensitized fingertips. A visual reference might be a work by Picasso for example, where a cubist morphology of body parts creates a radical reorganization of sensory organs, thus questioning how the body functions on the level of perception. Instead of navigating a vertical plane on foot, with an eyes front, forward moving perspective; my horizontal, unsighted and backward moving perspective in *Pressure Points* called the primacy of visual senses into question.

Over a greater period of time, the crawling action became more physically challenging and in turn my speed was impeded the longer the action was performed. The protrusion of my hips and ribs on most often cold, hard and occasionally damp floors heightened the uncomfortable sensation and my ability to move efficiently was problematized. As a result, my own sense of movement became increasingly internalized as no external displacement across space was physically possible. In turn, I activated my internal and external abdominal muscles, my deltoid and trapezius across the breadth of my shoulders, and the deep muscles of the thoracic wall, running through the rib cage. These muscles, large and small, powered the action and yet, despite the exertion of their performance, the visibility of somatic work was perhaps only just visible to the naked eye. Here, I am engaging with what I can only describe as a complex and rich kinesthetic universe.

However, over a duration, this deeply internalized work began to manifest externally as the kinesthetic effort caused my body to literally shake or perhaps vibrate. The decision to perform with a bare torso therefore became a central element of the performance, thus, revealing these highly subtle muscular reverberations and transformations as sculptural (Figure 2). Goose-bumps would raise on the surface of my skin, whilst the hair on my arms would stand on end like very fine antenna. These physiological affects were symptomatic of the inhospitable temperature of the floor and the body prickling to attention as (occasionally inhospitable) spectators would enter the room. In addition to my back becoming a site of sculptural activity it also became a canvas. The impact of nerves during the performance caused red painterly blotches to emerge, colonizing the otherwise pale skin on my back.

In the moment of performance, the action of crawling, as sensorial, temporal and spatial antagonism, produced what philosopher Jacques Rancière would identify as a 'dissensus' (2009). For Rancière a 'dissensus' has the potential to interrupt and thus confront the established frameworks of perception (2009). Synthesizing Rancière's claim with my own performance strategies, I propose



Victoria Gray, Pressure Points (2011). Image: artist and Roshana Rubin-Mayhew.

that stillness and slowness critically produce the possibility for an attention to kinesthetic and affective registers. This experience of time subverts the often distracting temporality of capitalist frameworks with which we are already entrenched. By this I am referring to procedural systems of production and consumption that control one's experience of time, the body, and ultimately one's subjectivity according to criteria's of efficiency, productivity, performance management and accountability. Performance in these instances act as respite from these apparatus; re-working the equation between subjectivity and time in order to produce new, unbound and untethered subjectivities.

Choreographies of immanence

*'I am almost at stake (t)here,
Contaminating (their) postures, corrupting (his) gestures.
Her body softens cold concrete as the room moves backwards,
Massaging our gray institutional time.*

How does the equation between time and subjectivity manifest in my own choreographic practice? I enter this debate as an artist with over a decade of training in movement. For better or worse, this largely constituted a modernist and conservatoire approach to dance pedagogy. This rigorous training developed within me an acute ability to attune to the phenomenological experience of bodies and spaces. Dance artists and choreographers have honed an attention to affective phenomena as the very core of their practice and are therefore, I believe, very well placed to frame, mediate and analyse affective experiences through choreographic strategies.

My own methods have been radically influenced by discourse within conceptually orientated choreography. I am using the term 'conceptual choreography' to define work that asks questions through choreographic strategies and is self-reflexive; commenting on dance through dance itself. However, in their article, 'To end with Judgement by Way of Clarification' (2005), choreographer Xavier Le Roy and theatre theorist Bojana Cvejić make important arguments for and against the use of this term.

Brought to critical attention during the early 1990s in contemporary European dance theory, this paradigm shift embraces the work of choreographers such as La Ribot, Xavier Le Roy, Mårten Spångberg, Jérôme Bel, Boris Charmatz, Tino Sehgal and Eszter Salamon, for example. This movement, coined by Cvejić as 'post-aesthetic' (2010) employs choreographic strategies of stillness, slowness, close-proximity, micro-movement, repetition and extended duration. Regarding the work *NVSBL* (2006) by choreographer and dancer Eszter Salamon, Cvejić notes, 'The problem the choreographer poses here is, how to entirely shift the perceptibility of movement from vision to

kinesthetic and proprioceptive sensibility. The solution was to obscure movement visibility by making it excessively slow' (2010). In the 'post-aesthetic turn' therefore, dance, and performance more broadly, unburdens itself from mimetic logic and the scopic regime of visibility, challenging the aesthetic dominance of the visual in dance (Cvejić 2010). Theatre and dance theorist Jeroen Fabius conceives that this strategy places an explicit focus on kinesthetics as, '(1) the subject matter of performance; (2) a mode of presentation; (3) a principle of choreographic organisation' (2009: 332). In my own choreographic practice, stillness and slowness are temporal *intervals* that enable this explicit focus on the kinesthetic to actualize.

According to Erin Manning, these temporal intervals may also be described as moments of 'immanence' or 'incipient action' (Manning 2012). In her book, *Relationscapes: Movement, Art, Philosophy*, Manning describes 'incipient action', or as Lazzarato prefer's 'interruption', as 'the immanence of movement moving: how movement can be felt before it actualizes' (2012: 6). Accordingly, immanence is inherently unstable and as such we experience an oscillation 'between'; between movements, between moments, between bodies and between subjectivities. The liminality of incipient action requires us to re-orient ourselves and our senses in relation to the many corporeal and temporal axes that populate a given space, some of which may be very subtle. It is here, in the space and time that stillness and slowness make for attention to kinesthetic registers that we become aware of these refined sense perceptions. I want to be clear however, that by foregrounding slowness and stillness in this article, I do not wish to construct a binary whereby slowness equals somatic attention, whilst speed evades this level of perceptual subtlety. Indeed dance theorist Isabelle Ginot challenges this reductive assumption, asking why modes of low intensity, such as stillness and slowness are regarded as synonymous with greater attention. Ginot warns against a renunciation of what she describes as, 'a frenzied uncontrollable warrior body' (2010: 26), a proposition I find compelling. Without renouncing this warrior body, my focus on slow temporal modes in this article is but one example of choreographic strategies that foreground affective and kinesthetic sensations. Yet, these registers, however arrived at, are without a developed language or conceptual framework for articulation.

A lack of theorization regarding affective and kinesthetic experience in favour of discursive and representational modes, I suggest, is more than a result of an incompatibility between affect and its articulation in language. It is a political and ideological 'parcelling out of the visible and invisible' (Rancière 2009: 19) which operates in social but also performance contexts. I would suggest that with intent, this 'parcelling out' has desensitized our capacity to be attuned to affective sense perceptions, thus cultivating a blind spot in our somatic intelligence. Thus, through stillness, slowness and protracted durations my performances ask, what are the politics of a deficit in our ability to attune to affective registers, those that are systematically occluded? In turn, how might choreographic strategies that make an explicit effort to attend to those forms of experience make palpable, 'the

implicit law governing the sensible order' (Rancière 2009: 85). This sensory governance, implicitly (and therein lies the danger) has the effect of governing the production of subjectivities.

The politics of immanence

*We speak to risk through a body as a pause,
The new sense of a body waiting flatly, face down.
The politics of a room experienced through and on the ground,
Interrupts 'me' and causes 'I' to end early because of 'us'.*

Manning suggests that 'Political philosophy has not made space for the interval within the vocabulary of the rational modern subject [...]' (2012: 28). However, I find Rancière's theory of 'dissensus' (2009), which intervenes in the established frameworks of perception, compatible with Manning's notion of 'incipient action'. As a form of interruption, incipient action is I believe, a form of dissensus. It reveals that the political potential of immanent movement is its temporally interruptive force, thus causing a re-distribution of our senses. According to Rancière, 'The distribution of the sensible' (2009) is,

... a delimitation of spaces and times, of the visible and the invisible, of speech and noise, that simultaneously determines the place and the stakes of politics as a form of experience. Politics revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak, around the properties of spaces and the possibilities of time.
(2009: 13)

Extending Rancière's project, I have considered not only who and what can be *seen* and *said* but also, who and what can be *sensed corporeally* in non-ocular and oral modes. In my performance of *Pressure Points*, the action of crawling in stillness and slowness had the capacity to be political precisely because it sought to interrupt the already established frameworks of representation, particularly the visual and oral delimitation of the senses. As somatic forms of 'dissensus', these choreographic strategies perform the political potential of Manning's 'incipient action' and Lazzarato's 'interruption'.

It would appear necessary at this juncture to clarify two theoretical positions through which I have come to understand the term 'political' in relation to the ontology of movement; since, depending on the context, we may wish to define the term in differing ways. Furthermore, I seek to provide extenuation in response to dance theorist Mark Franko's important question which asks, 'In

what historical and aesthetic circumstances does it become justifiable and necessary to speak of dance as political?’ (2006: 4).

The first context, Rancière’s notion of ‘The Political’ or ‘Le Politique’, is the terrain by which the established frameworks of perception and processes of subjectivization are called to question via acts of interruption (Rancière 2009). The second is conceived by Franko who defines the political as the space where personal, artistic and institutional forces converge. The political in this formulation is not ‘in’ dance per se but in the way that the dancing body can deviate from the established frameworks of perception and subjectivization through movement (Franko 2006). On my own terms, my body and the spatio-temporality of performance are the terrain for this interface between personal, artistic and institutional forces. My dancing body therefore has the political potential to interrupt and be agential; affirmatively deconstructing these established frameworks so as to re-construct new subjectivities.

Therein lies the performance’s, perhaps latent, political potential. It is not that *Pressure Points* represented a certain politics necessarily, but rather, as choreographer and theorist Mårten Spångberg asserts it, ‘is producing a possibility for the emergence of the political’ (2006/2009: 6). Rather than represent political events, performance is a dynamic action, which by virtue of being contingent upon a multiplicity of spatio-temporal relations, creates political *situations* where a nexus of social interactions between performer and audience can be enacted (Spångberg 2006/2009). Furthermore, as an apparatus for privileging subtle corporeal perceptions that, in my experience, are suppressed in a predominantly ocular and oral society, performance has the critical potential to challenge the sensible order (Rancière 2009).

My somatic approach to performance, by virtue of it being located in my own body, means that I am speaking from an affective and embodied position. This approach, arrived at through stillness and slowness, positively affirms my somatic voice in ways which would be ordinarily difficult in most everyday contexts. The ability to ‘speak’, albeit in the language of affects is thus empowering and political. We might call this ‘affective politics’ or ‘the politics of affect’. According to Manning, ‘Affective politics are not moral politics. [...] In this way they are much more dangerous and much more powerful than content-driven politics. They are politics for the making’ (2012: 137). This suggests that the danger lies in our inability to ‘recognize’ affective politics because affects are not predictable or definable in the way that content-led politics can be. A politics for the making implies the processual, the new, the not yet thought, the not yet felt and the not yet experienced. It also foregrounds a politics that is situated and relational, dependent upon a particular context, a certain body and a moment in time. Thus affects are heterogeneous and not derivative of what is already known or what has already been experienced. Thus, if we cannot predict or define affective politics, if it continually shape-shifts, then it might also succeed in escaping already existing systems of power that seek to tame, control and mitigate affects radical potential.

Choreographies of relation

*'I am the vulnerable centre of the space we think,
A pale rogue affect re-positioned on the ground.
This collective body is hostile we almost feel,
Our spine stands to attention when new energy enters the room.*

Manning reminds us that the body is 'always more than one' (2010, 2013). Thus, if our subjectivities are relational as Manning proposes then it becomes necessary to expand our sensory awareness to the multiple temporalities and bodies within any given environment. Here we become attuned to what cultural studies theorist Lisa Blackman has termed, 'registers of experience which are primarily trans-subjective (that is they are not contained by singularly human subjects)' (2012: xv). Therefore, if our subjectivity is co-extensive with one's fluctuating context, we must engage with embodied processes that heighten our affective and trans-subjective awareness of space and time.

Accordingly, Félix Guattari, who undoubtedly informed Manning's formative theories, reminds us that time is 'the object of qualitative change [making] an immense complexity of subjectivity possible – [rendering] harmonies, polyphonies, counterpoints, rhythms and existential orchestrations, until now unheard and unknown' (2006: 18–19). I would propose that the space and time created by the interval, specifically, of my still and slow crawling, makes such relational complexity palpable.

It is interesting to note that in all of the iterations of *Pressure Points*, without any specific direction, most audiences adopted a position on the floor, close to my body, in relation to my plane of action. Spectators came so close that we were almost touching and in some cases I could smell and feel their breath on my bare skin. My response to this relation varied dramatically in each performance. In some instances I felt moved by this sense of closeness and in others I felt threatened. Regardless, this auto-choreography performed by the audience themselves, I believe, was conducive to a more powerful physiological experience of kinesthetic phenomena.

It is apparent therefore, that in addition to a shift in temporality, close proximity can also foreground kinesthetic experience and thus affect spectators in challenging ways.

In *Pressure Points* this physical closeness between my body and the audience was a result of a negotiation of space, a spatio-temporal relation between performer and spectator. My crawling action subtly coaxed spectators to move out of or perhaps into my pathway of movement. By gently inhabiting spectators' personal space, an intimacy occurred which was dialogic and not didactic. My action did not intend to colonize the performance space, nor did it aim to choreograph bodies in a certain way. Rather, the contingency of this auto-choreography created a social situation where personal,

artistic and institutional forces could spark and converge (Franko 2009). This spatio-temporal negotiation reinforces Manning's earlier notion of the body as 'always more than one' (2010). It is as though performer and audience merge, which as theatre theorist Nicholas Ridout notes, demonstrates that the performance, 'is experienced as social when we find ourselves part of the body that is the audience. [...] It is the individual experience of social reciprocity, apprehended physiologically' (2008: 225).

It is clear therefore, that in addition to slowness and stillness, the potential to affect a change in subjectivity happened in the relational and perambulatory nature of *Pressure Points*. My slow crawling, combined with the proximity of my body to their body, and indeed their body to that of other spectators, implicated them in the performance in a variety of ways. For example, my unsighted position on the ground placed my body in various degrees of risk. Therefore, it is possible that spectators were at times required to adopt a position of care. I experienced this on a number of occasions whereby spectators felt compelled to subtly guide me through touch and voice when I would enter awkward spaces. On one occasion a spectator was able to stop a rogue audience member from making potentially harmful physical contact with me. By placing spectators in a mode of active watching, they too have to make decisions that interrupt their otherwise comfortable viewing conditions. This ultimately changes the way they view the performance, but more importantly the way they re-constitute themselves within it. My proximity to spectators, and the deliberate disruption of clarity between 'performer space' and 'audience space' meant that spectators' body's entered the choreography and in fact determined its course of action. This confuses the lines of subject/object by placing spectators in the position of being watched by other audience members. At times, when I am moving slowly or resting at the foot of a person, the audience's attention is drawn not only to my body but to the person(s) in my wake. This attention, when re-directed to the spectator has the power to affect their emotions and their physicality in the experience of the work. One might ask a number of questions in this situation, for example: do I feel uncomfortable in close proximity to a stranger's body? does the time and space that stillness creates make me feel awkward? does the invitation to move and be visible in the space make me feel nervous? how is my subjectivity affected moment by moment by these propositions?

Except for anecdotal evidence in post-show discussions, I cannot know that spectators question their subjectivity in my work in this way. However, I do know that these are questions that I have asked myself when spectating similar kinds of choreographic works. This experience as a spectator has caused me to construct similar conditions in my own work in an attempt to challenge spectators in the same way.

To illustrate this I would like to describe my recent experience of 2013 Turner Prize nominee, Tino Sehgal's work, *This variation* (2013) performed at Manchester International Festival. On entering the space the audience is plunged into total darkness to the extent that you cannot see your

hand in front of your face. You can hear the subtle, dislocated sounds of people making various noises; whispering, chanting, laughing, talking and occasionally singing. The darkness was akin to my own experiences of performing unsighted in *Pressure Points* and had the same physical affect of slowing my pace dramatically. This is in fact one of the reasons that I decide to perform unsighted, it is not to cause danger or risk, but rather to affect a change in my temporality and somatic awareness. What is interesting in Sehgal's work is that this unsighted experience is not exclusive to the performer but is experienced by the spectator too. All are subject to this darkness and all bodies, in the first few minutes at least, are forced to slow and still their movement as a matter of necessity. This period of absolute blackout is a space of imminence; bodies are caught between stillness and moving and one's actions are incipient (Manning 2012). As bodies bump into other bodies we experience a series of physically interruptive forces that shatter our 'personal space'. Our inter-subjective attention floods in as we find ourselves reaching out for other bodies to guide us, for arms and shoulders to help us find our balance and for the reassuring touch of another's skin. Sehgal's intention to problematize sight in this performance challenges the dominance of vision in performance and caused a heightened sense of sound and touch.

The initial disconcertion starts to wain as the pupils start to dilate and adjust to the space. Gradually, and cinematically, bodies start to emerge out of the darkness but never to the point of full clarity. Here, you begin to locate where you are in the room and indeed where the dislocated and disembodied sounds had been coming from. Even over the course of two hours, which is the length of time I stayed with the work, the experience is still one of being in a thick fog. Apart from the initial darkness, what was most profound in this experience was the proximity of performer to audience. This produced a genuine inability to ascertain whether the body moving against your own was a performer or a new spectator desperately grasping out in the dark. Despite my relative experience of performances that challenge the senses and the performer/spectator binary, I felt genuinely nervous and self-conscious during the beginning of my two hours in the room.

Throughout the durational work (4–9 p.m.), the performers oscillate between periods of stillness and hushed tones, to ecstatic dancing, singing and beat-boxing. Most often the dancers are referencing songs and in some cases movement vocabulary from popular culture, particularly hip hop and R&B. In addition to generating audible sound, their bodies underwent silent physiological changes due to the sheer physicality of their voices. This resulted in a similar shaking or vibration that I have experienced in the physicality of crawling in *Pressure Points*. The polyphony of rhythms created by the dancers (both audible and kinesthetic), were infectious and less than an hour into the performance my own physicality had altered dramatically. I found myself dancing, singing and challenging myself by moving closer to performers or at least choosing not to avert interaction when they would dance with or right next to me.

It is important to note that, for me, this change was only possible over time. Had I left after fifteen minutes for example, my subjectivity would not have had sufficient time to alter in such radical ways. This shift was palpable and I emerged feeling elated and luminous, markedly different to my feeling's on entering two hours previous. I experienced a noticeable change in my physicality, seemingly more dynamic with a much wider and more confident range of movement, even when simply walking. I am aware that the changes in subjectivity I am referring to are perhaps relatively short term and exist in the context of the performance with the potential to 'wear of'. The difference in my sense of subjectivity at the time of writing this article for example would be a case in point. Theories related to the temporality of changes in subjectivity are developed significantly by Erika Fischer-Lichte (2008) by considering performance as a transformative event, specifically in the context of liminality and ritual. I wonder to what degree I can re-embody the post-performance experience of my subjectivity, perhaps when I most need its empowering affects. Optimistically, a kernel of this positive change in subjectivity still persists. I imagine this feeling as a rogue affect. Once experienced, it has the powerful potential to recur, moving me in stealthy ways, just like my crawling.

Whilst Sehgal's aesthetic and physical dynamic is different to my own, *This variation* (2013) is a clear example of instances where an insatiable warrior body (Ginot 2010) can bring attention to subtle kinesthetic senses, just as stillness and slowness did in *Pressure Points*. I conceive that both affect a change in subjectivity for performer and spectator, via choreographic strategies of close-proximity, changes in temporality and their combined kinesthetic affects.

Conclusion

*A cold breath between my shoulder blades,
Listening with our re-sensitized skins.
This people is unstable we fear to feel,
Yet, our spine still seeks un-safer bodies to re-attune to.*

To summarize, approaches to temporality and proximity within the choreographic 'post-aesthetic turn' (Cvejic' 2010) have affected the palpability of kinesthetic senses in ways which are ordinarily difficult within orthodox, or to quote Guattari, "'flattened" capitalistic time' (2006: 16). Importantly and politically, an attention to kinesthetic sensory information in performance contexts offers a somatic intelligence that can shake us up and out of our fixed subject positions. Thus, in *Pressure Points* re-choreographing the senses had the political potential to interrupt the established frameworks of perception, affecting change in the construction of subjectivities. Slowness and stillness, as incipient actions (Manning 2012) grant us critical and political space-time to experience this

affirmative instability. Here, we experience the warrior-like radicality of choreographies and subjectivities *for the making*, should we be open to their dispossessing potential.

Performance information

Various iterations of *Pressure Points* were performed in the following venues:

2010: ArtEvict-London, O U I Performance – York, Chisenhale Dance Space – London.

2011: Elevator Gallery – London. 11 11 11: In Remembrance – Manchester, Grace Exhibition Space – New York, New Bridge Project Space – Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, Experimetica 1.1 (TactileBOSCH) – Cardiff.

2012: PAErsche, Kunstlerforum, Bonn – Germany.

Past documentation of this work can be viewed at: www.victoriagray.co.uk. The work has also been titled, *Crawling (after Carl Andre)*.

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Living and Sustaining a Creative Life

Essays by 40 Working Artists

Edited by Sharon Louden

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In this day and age, when art has become more of a commodity and art-school graduates are convinced that they can only make a living from their work by attaining gallery representation, it is more important than ever to show the reality of how a professional, contemporary artist sustains a creative practice over time. The 40 essays collected here are written in the artists' own voices and take the form of narratives, statements and interviews. Each story is different and unique, but the common thread is an ongoing commitment to creativity, inside and outside the studio. Both day-to-day and big picture details are revealed, showing how it is possible to sustain a creative practice that contributes to the ongoing dialogue in contemporary art. These stories will inform and inspire any student, young artist and art enthusiast, and will help redefine what 'success' means to a professional artist.

Sharon Louden is a practising, professional artist living and working in Brooklyn, USA. Her work has been exhibited at the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Birmingham Museum of Art, Neuberger Museum and the Weisman Art Museum, among other venues, and it is held in public collections such as the Whitney Museum of American Art, Weatherspoon Art Museum and the National Gallery of Art.

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