



MONASH University

The mouth is a Möbius strip
Briony Veronica Galligan

An exegesis submitted for the degree of *Master of Fine Art* at
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Department of Fine Art
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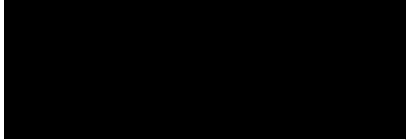
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The mouth is a Möbius strip

Declaration of originality

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Briony Veronica Galligan

21 January 2019

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Abstract

In my research and exegesis, I position the Möbius strip—a loop of two continuously intertwined surfaces without orientation, inside or outside—as a model for my practice. Through the work, I consider revolving and repeating forms both materially and conceptually; the Möbius strip, the mouth, and the horse’s mouth as thresholds between internal bodily experience and external social order. I follow Brazilian psychoanalyst and art theorist Suely Rolnik’s readings of the work of Brazilian artist Lygia Clark (1920-1988). Rolnik positions the Möbius strip as a digestive process referred to as *anthropophagic* that redefines the relationship between Self and Other and makes way for divergent and fluid subjectivities. My project critically engages with: Samuel Beckett’s *Not I* (1972), scenes from the television series *Mr Ed* (1961-66), and readings of Clark’s *Caminhando* (1963) and *Structuring of the Self* works (circa 1979-1988). I write about these works—each being playful, experimenting with how speech might be avoided, and repositioning the centrality of the body in speaking—in order to situate my own practice. Through the project, I make objects that work like a bit in the horse’s mouth that tightly control what is seen: a curtain that gets opened and closed, a spoken script, and ceramic vessels with mouth-shaped apertures that each purposefully limit and subtly manipulate the viewer within the exhibition space. Other objects operate as appendages—an object to transfer energy between the animal and the human—such as a latex rubber horse racing mask. I consider the voice and appendages as Möbius strips, moving between language or social forces and the body.

Methodology

As a method, I make a loop between my own desires and a tangible social form. It feels a bit embarrassing to make art in this way, I don't always know where it's going and feel ashamed that there isn't a clearer macropolitical agenda attached to the work particularly in its early stages. I use this concept of 'shame,' now, as a point of connection between my human body and the objects that I work with as well as my social context. For example, one object I make—a horse's racing mask—is considered by me as art object, and by Rubber Kitty (the latex-wear designer who fabricated it to my pattern) as fetish wear for my horse. I work between writing scripts, making costumes, sets and textiles, drawing, building, glazing and firing ceramics. Alongside my material process, I visit sites such as race tracks and saddleries, colonial sculptures, public garden beds, cemeteries, theatres, 101 Collins St (where columns that serve no structural function frame a view of the sky), sex shops and underground venues like carparks and tunnels. This collection of sites may seem unreadable within the work, yet I do this purposefully. It is in the editing together of these elements in an exhibition—the material form, the locations I visit, reading, writing and the theatrical tropes I mimic—that my practice lies. I am interested in my relationship to a critical art community and the privileges and challenges I have as a queer white cis-gendered woman. I seek to utilise art as a space to 'speak from' a located position.

For me, apparatuses, objects and performance modes question the limits of what can be controlled in a 'logical' order. This includes objects that I consider 'bossy' such as curtains and fabric rotating doors that move people around the exhibition space, or through costume and play to direct the viewer's attention. I use these set items and scripted speech as measures of control (the bit in the horse's mouth) within the exhibition space. I have considered the work of Ruth Buchanan (with Judith Hopf and

Marianne Wex), *Bad Visual Systems*,¹ and the way textiles and curtains guide the viewer through the exhibition. I also work with textiles including latex and silk and understand this as connected to ideas of skin, screens, and objects, that double as appendages for the body. Costumes, clothing, sets and props, operate as thresholds between the animate and inanimate and human/non-human. I consider these as appendages that are points of connection between the horse and the human. I combine both *bits* and *appendages* to manipulate the viewer and challenge the order of the exhibition space.

I draw from Lygia Clark's therapeutic objects (discussed in Chapter 1) and her works that connect an internal experience with an object, such as *O eu e o tu* (The I and the you, 1967), a costume that connected two bodies, both hooded and masked.² The exhibition *Jenny Watson: The fabric of fantasy* (Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 2017) was a pivotal part of early research in the project, in particular how her use of text in the paintings works to unhinge words from neat representations to sit ajar in the paintings. For example, *Death of a Horse* (oil on canvas, 1989) sees the letters that spell out the title of the painting surround a figure of the horse, upended at the painting's base.³ There is a relationship, between what Watson writes and depicts, but neither are seeking to capture the other. Her depiction of the horse feels deliberately positioned and marked, yet also subconscious and loose like a dream, not just a representational image. It is that relationship between language and the making of the image that I have gleaned from.⁴

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- 1 Ruth Buchanan, with Judith Hopf and Marianne Wex, *Bad Visual Systems*, 2016, installation including temporary walls, curtains, carpet, room dividers, video and sound, Adam Art Gallery, Wellington, New Zealand.
 - 2 Lygia Clark, *O eu e o tu*, 1967, industrial rubber, foam, vinyl, acrylon, zipper, water, fabric, Associação Cultural 'O Mundo de Lygia Clark', Rio de Janeiro.
 - 3 Jenny Watson, *Death of a Horse*, 1989, oil on canvas, *Jenny Watson: The Fabric of Fantasy*, MCA Australia: Sydney, 5 July-2 October 2017.
 - 4 In another of Watson's works, a text painting that accompanies *Dolly Mop*, 2007, there is a blurred relationship between a sexual experience, and putting a saddle on the horse. The text in the painting reads; 'It was hot. He was tall, hair covered one eye. We'd done this before but he was reluctant. He came closer, there was some appeal in being in a cool dark space with me. His whiskers touched my

My work draws on puppetry and theatrical sets, for example, Czech filmmaker and puppeteer Jan Švankmajer's *Faust* (1994), for its use of life-sized puppets in conversation with human actors, and Oscar Schlemmer's *Das triadische Ballett*, (1922), produced as a film (1970) for its stiff coloured stage settings.⁵ I refer extensively to Samuel Beckett, but do not refer to other theatrical references in the exegesis. I work with the apparatus for filming and theatrical performances, including speaker stands and improvised film equipment, such as my bicycle turned into a dolly. I have hand-built ceramics to create large-scale vessels that operate as speakers and props for performance. I also work with other people within this project: with Melissa Deerson as a performer and in early development of the ceramic prototypes, and with Alex Cuffe as a performer and photographic documenter.

Within the exegesis I combine fictional writing and an audio script with reflections and readings of television and theatre works. The thinking of Suely Rolnik in *Molecular Revolution in Brazil* (with Felix Guattari, 2008, originally published in 1986) and Hélène Cixous in *Zero's Neighbour: Sam Beckett* (2010) are key to my research as they foreground the confusion between the feeling and speaking body.⁶ In the texts I look it, speech is often presented or metered through the body with interruption, ellipsis, slobber, and voice-over. In all of the works discussed in the exegesis there is a slipperiness to logical order that I am seeking to develop in my own work; the speaking horse, a disembodied mouth, a net of string to transform individuals into a collective body.

neck. He walked forward, settled his muscled frame and heaved a sigh of relief. It can be hard to load a horse sometimes.' *Dolly Mop*, 2007, synthetic polymer on rabbit skin glue primed Chinese organza over Chinese cotton; synthetic polymer on prepared stretcher, *Jenny Watson: The Fabric of Fantasy*, MCA Australia: Sydney, 5 July-2 October 2017.

5 *Faust*, Jan Švankmajer (Pandora Cinema, 1994), and *Das triadische Ballett*, Oscar Schlemmer (Bavaria Atelier GmbH, 1970).

6 Félix Guattari and Suely Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The MIT Press, 2008) originally published as *Micropolítica: Cartografias do desejo* (Vozes: Petrópolis, 1986) and Hélène Cixous, *Zero's neighbour: Sam Beckett* trans. by Laurent Milesi (Cambridge and Malden: Polity Books, 2010), originally published in French as *Le Voisin de zéro*, Éditions Galilée.

Notes

On the text

The written exegetical text informs the making of the artwork and includes fictional writing and personal reflection in the form of journal entries. These sections are marked within the text through subtitling and italics. I have also used the digestive, turning form of the Möbius strip in pulling this text together.

On terms

Throughout this text, I have paid close attention to gendered language. Where possible, I refer to people by their names and use they/them pronouns. This project is grounded in an approach to feminist practice, thinking about how to expand divergent subjectivities and forms. I understand the ‘feminine,’ as articulated by Tamsin Green to ‘denote a question about subjectivity, a subjectivity that is still under formation.’⁷ I use ‘feminine’ and ‘women’ and do not intend for these terms to be trans-exclusionary. Earlier in the research, I considered French feminist theorist Luce Irigaray’s description of ‘feminine’ language as a continual motion that is multiple and decentred where ‘language [has] no circularity,’ but instead shapes the body; that is, language does not need only to present solid and exchangeable objects within a phallogentric framework.⁸ This was important to my thinking through Beckett’s *Not I*, and in particular the speaking feminine mouth.

7 Tamsin Green, “Documentation Studies Paper: The Missing Novels of Marguerite Pantaine,” (Monash University, 2017), 8. Sent to me in preparation for a discussion with Tamsin about her work *Detraction*, Eildon Gallery, Alliance Francaise, 28 June – 27 July 2017. Green provides some background to this work: ‘Despite my admiration for his work I was troubled by Lacan’s misuse of Marguerite Pantaine - Anzieu. In particular how he acquired but never returned her novels. The missing novels of Marguerite Pantaine are an analogy for the place of the feminine in the history of art and theory: where women are often the under-acknowledged material support for artistic and literary products. In this new work, *Detraction*, I have a different subject, but have continued with the same methods: working to reveal and emphasise the place of the feminine within art history.’ Accessed: December 24 2017, <https://www.afmelbourne.com.au/culture-and-events/exhibitions/detraction-tamsin-green/>

8 Luce Irigaray. *The Sex Which is Not One* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985). Irigaray introduces the fluid as conductive and ‘fluctuating’ to confront a world and language built as solid and

Introduction

In my project, I position the mouth and the horse's mouth as Möbius strips where language and social order are not so easy to maintain. As a starting point in the first chapter of the exegesis, I examine the Möbius strip, with a closer reading of Lygia Clark's *Caminhando* (1963) and later *Structuring of the Self* works (circa 1979-1988).⁹ In the second chapter, I discuss Samuel Beckett's *Not I* (1972), reimagined on a rotating stage.¹⁰ I use this reading to develop sculptures in my work. In the third chapter, I include a script and expanded notes from my *Haul Body* exhibition at West Space (2017, Melbourne) and engage with scenes from the television series *Mr Ed* (1961-66).¹¹ By altering and re-digesting my earlier work, this chapter explores how the looping structure of the Möbius strip operates as a model for the project. I will show how this model forms an 'ethical micropolitics' that is capable of challenging particular linguistic and social orders for me in making artwork and exhibitions.

exchangeable objects within a patriarchal order. Irigaray positions the lips of the vagina as, 'an incompleteness of form which allows her organ to touch itself over and over again, indefinitely, by itself. ... without any possibility of distinguishing what is touching from what is being touched.', 26. Whilst Irigaray aims to confront patriarchal linguistic orders, she does use essentialist language which is trans-exclusive. The 'vagina' could be read as symbolic, but I think she does intend it as biologically literal for cisgendered women.

9 Lygia Clark, *Caminhando*, 1963, paper, and *Structuring the self*, circa 1979-1988, aesthetic and therapeutic practices, Associação Cultural 'O Mundo de Lygia Clark', Rio de Janeiro.

10 Samuel Beckett's *Not I*, Forum Theatre, Lincoln Centre, New York, 1972 and Royal Court Theatre, London, 1973, and television presentation, *Lively Arts: Shades, Three Plays by Samuel Beckett*, aired 17 April 1977 on BBC2, England

11 *Mr Ed*, directed by Rod Amateau, Arthur Lubin, John Rich, Ira Stewart, Alan Young, aired 1961-66, 143 episodes, on CBS/syndication



Figure 1 Briony Galligan, *walking*, 2017, watercolour and wax pencil on board, 20 x 25 cm.

Lygia Clark first developed the Möbius strip as a formal and relational device in her 1963 work *Caminhando*, where the audience made their own loops from paper and noted the relationship between their own body and the art object. Clark shifted her practice over a long period of time and wrote of her work as transformative at the level of the body. My project takes Brazilian psychoanalyst Suely Rolnik's reading of Clark's work and the Möbius strip as 'sensitive, perspectivist and ethical micropolitics.'¹ Rolnik has written much about Clark and considers the anthropophagic, a process of digestion, as an extension of the Möbius strip where divergent subjectivities that continually rework boundaries between self/other, inside/outside, animal/human, become possible.

'Walking...what is me to the world' is a quote from the 1973 film, *O Mundo De Lygia Clark*, made by Brazilian artist Lygia Clark with her son, Eduardo Clark.²

Perplexed, I feel the crowds in the subway in the cadence of the accumulation of footsteps, in the passing of bodies that almost touch, but move away, each one bent on the secret path of its private existence. I speak and no one understands. I cannot communicate this change of concept that, for me, was so deep and radical as the elastic passage between what it was and what it could be. I feel deeply the fall in the value of words which no longer have meaning of genre, works, individualism. I think and live death. I feel the crowd creating over my body. Walking...what is me to the world.³

In the film, Clark's conception of walking and touch are oriented as types of spatial actions to navigate a relationship between the Self and the Other and between bodily

1 Suely Rolnik, "Suely Rolnik Deconstructs the Colonial Unconscious" (online video), published May 8 2015, accessed August 20, 2016, www.guggenheim.org/video/suely-rolnik-deconstructs-the-colonial-unconscious.

2 Eduardo Clark, *O Mundo De Lygia Clark*, 1973, black and white film, sound, 27:00min, PLUG, Rio De Janeiro, accessed April 5 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0Q88KcEO6M>.

3 Ibid.

experience and recorded or written experience. Clark describes walking as both a physical and psychical circumambulation. She also refers to it as a process to disappear the Self, the I, into the world. Lygia Clark's walking statement suggests a relationship to the ideogram of the Möbius strip. Accordingly, I ask here, how is the Möbius strip constructed by Rolnik in reading Clark's work? How is it a model of 'digestion' as transformation? How can I move away from trying to assign language to the Möbius strip, from trying to 'learn it' and instead employ it as a method in making work?

The archive of Lygia Clark. Fieldwork.

Reading about Clark's work is quite different from participating in it. In the exhibition *Lygia Clark: The Abandonment of Art 1948-1988* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York (2014), neat re-enactments of performative works are set up around the gallery to be 'activated' at particular times throughout the day. In trying to access the archive of Clark, there is a push towards the 'lived experience' or doing the work, rather than the museological apparatus that frames the work.⁴ Rolnik has curated Clark's work for public exhibition and has interviewed participants from the later parts of Clark's practice known as *Structuring of the Self* (circa 1976). These works were developed by Clark from the 1970s and throughout the 1980s as private somatic, psychotherapy sessions and according to Rolnik 'sat between art and therapy and moved outside of institutionally-acceptable for

4 There are gendered dimensions to how artists' work is institutionalised. For example, part of Australian artist Fiona Macdonald's practice follows Eva Hesse's work, noting how the artist's biography is employed and Hesse pathologised as a subject, whereas the work itself disappears into museological and art historical discourse. Macdonald's 2016 work *Opening Act* 'critically engages the contemporary condition of the artwork as already-appropriated art historical document.' One example in the show included replicating scenes or imagined scenes that Macdonald had heard about from a documentary based on Hesse's life, without seeing the documentary. Fiona Macdonald, *Opening Act*, accessed 24 December 2018, <https://westspace.org.au/exhi/14939/opening-act-2016>. Chris Kraus writes along similar lines about the work of Simone Weil. Kraus posits that Weil's anorexia is often rendered as narcissistic, attention-seeking and related to an internal resistance to her 'female' body, rather than a philosophical pursuit towards 'decreation'. *Aliens & Anorexia*, (Los Angeles, Semiotext(e): 2000). The institutionalisation of the biography of women artists, rather than their work, limits the fluidity of such practices.

terrains for them both.’⁵ Rolnik reintroduces interviews and recollections of peoples’ experiences of these practices into the archive and museological display of Clark’s work, exhibition alongside the material detritus.⁶ I am interested in this relationship with the strip imagined as a living process: a conceptual model that can be performed and enacted.

December 2017, Rio de Janeiro

I get some money from the university to see Lygia Clark’s archive in Rio de Janeiro. I can’t see it, the archive doesn’t get back in touch; so instead I look to a ‘living archive.’ I go to Rio regardless and travel way too far out on the train, trying to get to the Museu del Inconsciente, The Museum of the Unconscious. A friend from university is working with a group from SenseLab, made up of mainly Canadian and Brazilian researchers, artists and therapists, along with the theorists Brian Massumi and Erin Manning. I tag along after hearing a lot about the politics within the group, spurred by the complexities of its being part research/part self-help centre. It feels good to be with a group. We meet a man at the front of the hospital in an orderly’s uniform, he walks us to the other side of the block, to the Museum. We enter through a central door after passing by the galleries of artworks produced by patients at the hospital, walking past hospital cats and rubber trees. There are a few rooms with plastic-covered tables and images of the Virgin Mary, a clay studio that’s in an open-air space, and in amongst this, therapist Lula Wanderley’s room. It’s hot. The room is big. Trained by Lygia Clark, Wanderley uses Clark’s

5 Suely Rolnik, “Archive for a Work-event: Activating the body’s memory of Lygia Clark’s poetics and its context / Part 1,” *Manifesta Journal: Fungus in the Contemporary* 13, no. 3: 77, accessed December 24, 2018, <http://www.manifestajournal.org/issues/fungus-contemporary#page-issuesfunguscontemporary>.

6 Ibid., 74. Rolnik states that exhibitions of parts of the archive, accompanied by conferences, ‘were presented in Belgium, Extra City—Center for Contemporary Art, Beursschouwburg Theatre, and Gallery Jan Mot, (Brussels and Antwerp, 24 March–31 April 2007); in Germany, as part of IN TRANSIT 08 Performing Arts Festival “Singularities”, at Haus der Kulturen der Welt (Berlin, 11 June–21 June 2008); in the US, at Cage gallery with a one-year-long presentation of the archive (New York, January–December 2012). In Brazil, at the Museu Universitario de Arte of the Federal University, 14 March–25 April 2008); at the Centro Cultural Banco do Nordeste (Fortaleza, 17 April–07 May 2010) and at the Museu de Arte Moderna Alosio Magalhes—MAMAM (Recife, 2011).’ This is also alongside a series of DVDs produced by Rolnik containing interviews with participants of the works. There is, however, limited access to these within the English-speaking world, as they are conducted in Portuguese with French subtitles.

'relational objects,' including plastic bags and ropes, plastic balls and rocks, as psychiatric therapy.⁷ There are large white tiles on the floor. On the shelf, there is a book about Clark, a book on sacred imagery, a cartoon figure of Freud, textures, paintings, a chart of the Zodiac, and colour chart paintings on the walls. Wanderley asks for a volunteer; one of the group lies on a small bed with a soft mattress. It's a single bed and somebody whispers to me that it's Lygia Clark's bed. It has a small wooden bed head, curved up in the middle, the inverse of a heart-shaped symbol. There is a cold floor. People are laughing. Someone checks their phone. Conch shells are placed around the volunteer's ears. They are giant. Like elephant ears encasing their head. The objects are placed in the volunteer's hands, moved over their body. Wanderley brushes an orange bag and other plastic nettings down their body. It's a perfunctory touch, not quite gentle, purposeful. Not erotic. But it feels strange to watch, being included in something so intimate. I think of the feel of the plastic, which seems somewhat different from feeling it. People look and talk, move around, take pictures. It feels odd to photograph. I can't fully remember what is happening. A fly crawls across a mat. This is the closest I have come to being able to access Lygia Clark's archive...My notes end...now my memory is falling short...I feel hot and I can't quite remember what happens next.

Afterwards, the group is getting soft drinks and ice-creams, and I ask the volunteer how the demonstration of the treatment felt. The volunteer says they've been researching Clark's 'relational objects' for more than twenty years and have experienced something like this, but never in public. It's too quick to give a response. They describe feeling a hum in their body but then trail off into soft drinks and the conversation never gets finished. It is this part of Clark's practice that is most difficult to access in institutional

⁷ Clark refers to the objects she used in *Structuring of the Self* therapies as 'relational objects' that included ephemeral, 'quotidian, cheap, precarious materials.' These had been partly developed through her earlier use of 'sensory objects.' Clark in André Lepecki, "Affective Geometry, Immanent Acts: Lygia Clark and Performance," *Lygia Clark: The Abandonment of Art 1948-1988*, Exhibition Catalogue ed. Luis Pérez-Oramas, Cornelia Butler (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2014), 281.

contexts—the part where she is directly engaging internal experiences and movements of the body in an understanding of external and socially-produced structures. Months later, I think about how that hum the volunteer described in their body, translates, or fails to translate into words.

There is a great difference between conceptualising the work of Clark and the feeling of doing it. Thinking about the feeling of the work becomes a reflexive place, but one that might limit that ‘hum’ the participant described. Emma Sidgwick in “Vivência: From disciplined to remade lived experience in the Brazilian avant-garde of the 1960s” positions Clark’s ideas of *vivência* or ‘lived thought’ as both socio-culturally produced and psycho-corporeal.⁸ In other words, an experience that exists in a sensory and physical way also changes standardised, socially-defined expectations. Within *vivência* the attitude was ‘to appeal to the body not as a mere ‘eye-machine’ but in its synaesthetic totality.’⁹ This idea of *vivência* is crucial to Clark’s practice; thinking *is* a sensate experience.¹⁰ Clark’s Möbius strip maps this process. She writes, ‘it breaks our spatial habits, right-left, front and reverse, etc. It makes us live the experience of time without limit and of a continuous space.’¹¹

8 Emma Sidgwick. “Vivência: From disciplined to remade lived experience in the Brazilian avant-garde of the 1960s.” *Subjectivity* 3, no 2 (2010): 193-194.

9 Ibid., 194.

10 Maria Walsh, argues in relation to Clark’s work that the ‘relational interplay between psychic immaterial energies and bodily material ones allows us to reconnect with the sensory, transpersonal ground of being that generates the possibility of a new ego skin, one open to the outside, yet fully cognizant of its inner sonorous landscape.’ Maria Walsh, *Art and Psychoanalysis*. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 128.

11 Lygia Clark writings, 1963, *Lygia Clark: The Abandonment of Art 1948-1988*, Exhibition Catalogue ed. Luis Pérez-Oramas, Cornelia Butler (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2014), 158-163. The concept moved from a geometric one to a psycho-corporeal idea within her practice. Clark’s earlier painting and sculptural works suggest she was familiar with the Möbius strip as geometric form as described by German mathematician August Ferdinand Möbius (1790 – 1868) in 1858. (Abraham Ungar, “From Mobius To Gyrogroups,” *American Mathematics Monthly* 115, no. 2, (2008): 138.) Clark’s Neo-Concrete work and paintings connected geometry to corporeal viewing experiences thus marking one of the early transitions between her understandings and deployment of the strip over her practice. (Adele Nelson, “Sensitive and Nondiscursive Things: Lygia Pape and the Reconception of Printmaking,” *Art Journal* 71, no. 3 (Fall 2012), 28 and also see Monica Amor, “From Work to Frame, In Between, and Beyond: Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica, 1959–1964,” *Grey Room*, no. 38 (Winter 2010): 24.)

The Möbius strip as ideogram

I am wary that the Möbius strip can be co-opted neatly into any research focus.¹² However, it seems fruitful to follow Clark's thinking around how a graphic form could imagine a relationship between bodies and also describe digestive processes and even political ones.¹³ Whilst Clark does not refer specifically to Jacques Lacan's articulation of the Möbius strip in 1962, she was working at a similar time, engaged in reading psychoanalytic theory and undertaking psychoanalysis.¹⁴ For Lacan, the Möbius strip spatialises Euler's interior 8, a continuing loop with two perceptibly intersecting fields: 'the unconscious,' and 'sexual drive,' with the overlap labelled as 'the libido,' then also

12 In a discussion with Dr. Jan Bryant, she mentioned that it is important to define terms by what they aren't. Baudrillard, writing in 1988, speaks of the Möbius strip but with an entirely different reading; he describes the Möbius strip as a map where there is no difference between the representation and the real. Baudrillard's argument is that political power is so corrupt that even the end of it, only seeks to ensure its repetition, so the end of it, is consumed back within the cycle. Capital has consumed and can consume everything that surrounds it, yet maintains that sex, desire, life must continue to hold meaning in order to be consumed. For Baudrillard there is an implosion of simulation, yet he does not detail, other than mentioning authoritarian regimes and capitalism, how these forces and power cause an intermingling of discourses, other than through mediation. This reading of the strip as a form is quite different from Lacan's and does not retain any further focus for my project. 'As for the moebius strip, if it is split in two, it results in an additional spiral without there being any possibility of resolving its surfaces (here the reversible continuity of hypotheses). Hades of simulation, which is no longer of torture, but of the subtle, maleficent, elusive twisting of meaning...' Jean Baudrillard, "Simulacra and Simulations" in *Jean Baudrillard, Selected Writings*, ed. Mark Poster (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 168.

13 Rey Chew discusses how graphical language can provide a way to express the 'inexpressable' in his 2011 essay, "On the Graphic in Postmodern Theoretical Writing." Chew notes how French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan's Möbius strip and use of graphical notation moved from providing a 'spatial demonstration' of theoretical propositions, and instead became 'the thing itself...embodying something that cannot be rendered in any other way.' Mladen Dolar in Rey Chew, "On the Graphic in Postmodern Theoretical Writing," *Twentieth-Century Literature* 57, no. 3 & 4 (Fall/Winter 2011): 377. It is a strange choice, the word 'embodiment', as it likens the Möbius strip to a *body*; material and physical, but also a socially and culturally responsive site. Chew does not clarify this term 'embodiment', and perhaps I shouldn't pick at it too closely, but in this phrase, the form of the strip is somehow alive. I think about Jacqui Shelton and Therese Kheogh's recent work in *un Magazine* 12.2. They discuss the positions of bodies in relation to each other and mathematical propositions. They eschew a straightforward reading of the graphical, line, position and relation. 'Between up and down is a trajectory of rising and falling...a fall into what? Could this relation be crystallised as a line? Is a line a distinction, or a connection between? Or, mathematically a relation?...I wonder if we should return to a rhythmic pattern of touching hands, a linking of bodies and actions.' Jacqui Shelton and Therese Kheogh, "A Rhythmic Pattern of Touching Hands, a Linking of Bodies and Actions," *un Magazine* 12, no. 2 (2018): 80.

14 'In a letter from 1974, Clark tells [fellow artist] Oiticica about several fantasies dealt with in her analysis with Pierre Fedida in Paris, referring to them as 'discoveries', and saying: 'One day I will have to write a book where this analysis can unify art, creation and life in a single experience.' She remarks that her work 'fits' perfectly in an analytical framework, and this stuns her.' Tania Rivera, "Ethics, Psychoanalysis and Postmodern Art in Brazil: Mário Pedrosa, Hélio Oiticica and Lygia Clark," *Third Text* 1, no. 26 (2012): 248.

described as ‘desire.’ Here, a relationship is constructed within the body and subject; between ‘sexual reality’ and the subject formed psychologically and socially through the patriarchal order of family and the Law in the development of ‘the unconscious’. This overlap between the unconscious/sexual drive is where desire is figured.¹⁵ Yet, Lacan continues, if the diagram is viewed in profile or from a different orientation, the overlap is actually a void. For Lacan, the Möbius strip is a form used to diagram *objet a*, those things that cause desire, are shared by the Self with the Other and avoid a specular image or fixed name.¹⁶ *Objet a* exists in the overlap/void that the Möbius strip contains. I make a paper diagram of *voice* (one of the *objet a* listed by Lacan). One side says *language*, the other says *mouth*. These two sides interweave and in Lacan’s model, *voice* is the hole inside the strip itself.¹⁷ My friend Georgina Criddle writes to me:

I don’t think it works to call the space in the Möbius strip a hole. It’s not a hole because the Möbius strip doesn’t contain anything. It’s containing what’s inside and outside of it at the same time so there is no containment, the containment is a mirage.¹⁸

15 Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis; The seminar of Jacques Lacan Book XI* (New York: WW Norton & Company, 1998): 76-77. Also see 156: ‘The edge is continuous, except that at one point it does not proceed without being concealed by the surface that has previously unfolded itself. This drawing seen from a certain perspective, may seem to represent two intersecting fields...I have placed the libido at the point at which the lobe defined...as field of the development of the unconscious covers and conceals the other lobe, that of sexual reality.’

16 The Other here refers to that which is distinct from or opposite oneself. Gilbert Diatkine in his reading of the seminar states that Lacan differentiates himself from Freud who sees such objects as partial and that might be lost the Other, whereas for Lacan, anxiety is produced because they might have to be shared. Lacan has a meaty list of *objet a* that include breast, phallus, scybalum, child, the foreskin in circumcision, eye, voice, superego, Jesus Christ. Gilbert Diatkine, “A Review of Lacan’s Seminar on Anxiety,” *International Journal Of Psychoanalysis* 87 (2006): 1054.

17 Ibid. *Objet a* don’t have a clearly defined interior or exterior, yet the idea of this figure is that there is a hole between the two interweaving sides that cannot be depicted. According to Lacan, *objet a* also ‘resist assimilation by the Other’. Ibid.

18 Email sent to me by Georgina Criddle, December 10 2018. In addition, Fiona Macdonald, in her recent work *FILM PERFORMANCE (Act 3) 2018*, live performance at Monash University Museum of Art, expanded on the idea of ‘a hole with indeterminable borders’ through a performance work. Part of the script for the work used references from Fiona Macdonald’s earlier writing on Derrida’s position on the hole. I include the reference here that formed part of Fiona’s script for the work, translating quotes from Alan Bass’ notes on Derrida into words for performers. ‘The phrase, “...a hole with indeterminable borders (for example, in a topology of castration.)” was added to “La Différance” [Derrida] for publication in the French edition and refers to Derrida’s argument (in *Positions*; elaborated further in *le Facteur de la vérité*) against Lacan’s “topology of castration” that assigns the “hole” or lack to a place—“a hole with determinable borders”—and thus repeating “the metaphysical gesture (albeit a negative one)

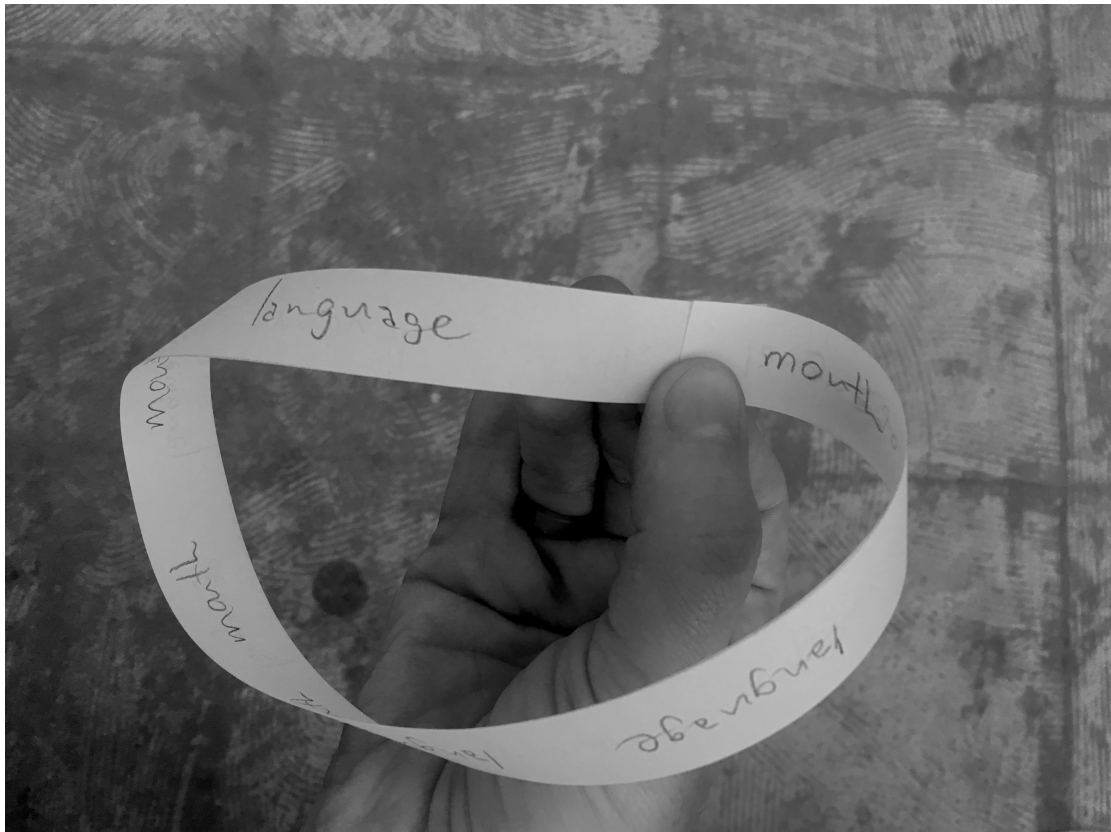


Figure 2 Briony Galligan, *voice in progress*, 2018, studio work.

of making absence, the lack, the hole, a transcendental principle that can be pinned down as such, and can thereby govern a theoretical discourse.' (Fiona Macdonald, *Translating Relation*, Monash University 2008. P 53) In addition, Melissa Deerson as part of this work, also wrote a speech delivered for the performance as a lecture about holes. Fiona Macdonald, *FILM PERFORMANCE (Act 3)* 2018, Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne 2018.

In the models I make from paper, the same hot studio air moves within and outside the strip. I think about the mirage of a hole and of containment. Whilst the Möbius strip has two distinct surfaces that are not static, it can't hold what is inside separate from the outside. Instead, it seems marked by the precariousness of the edge.

January 2018, Narrm/Melbourne

Unsatisfied with my own diagrams and with Lacan's model, I follow the instructions that Lygia Clark issued to viewers in 1963, for her work Caminhando (translated from Portuguese as Walking or Trailing).

Make yourself a Trailing: you take a band of paper wrapped around a book, you can cut it open, twist it, and you glue it back together as to produce a Möbius strip. Then take a pair of scissors, stick one point into the surface and cut continuously along the length of the strip...to the extent that you cut the strip, it refines and redoubles itself into interlacings. At the end of the path it is so narrow that you can't open it further. It's the end of the trail.¹⁹

I read a statement by Rolnik, but my mood has shifted.

[I]t is the state of 'art without art', for the important thing is the act of doing that has nothing to do with the artist and everything to do with the spectator...the poetic is not outside him but within him.²⁰

19 Lygia Clark, 1964: *Trailings*, and *Nostalgia of the Body*. In Susan Best, "Brazilian Participatory Art of the 1960s," *Art and Australia* 49, no 4 (Summer 2012): 99. Clark also states in her writings: 'At the beginning, the Caminhando is nothing but a potentiality. You are going to form, it and you, one single reality, total, existential. There is no separation between subject-object. It is a body-to-body situation, a fusion.' "Writings by Lygia Clark 1968-Mid-1980s" *Lygia Clark: The Abandonment of Art 1948-1988*, Exhibition Catalogue ed. Luis Pérez-Oramas, Cornelia Butler (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2014), 238.

20 Suely Rolnik, "Moulding a Contemporary Soul: The Empty-Full of Lygia Clark" in *The Experimental Exercise of Freedom: Lygia Clark, Gego, Mathias Goeritz, Hélio Oiticica and Mira Schendel*, Exhibition Catalogue ed Rina Carvajal, Susan Martin, Alma Ruiz (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1999), 12.

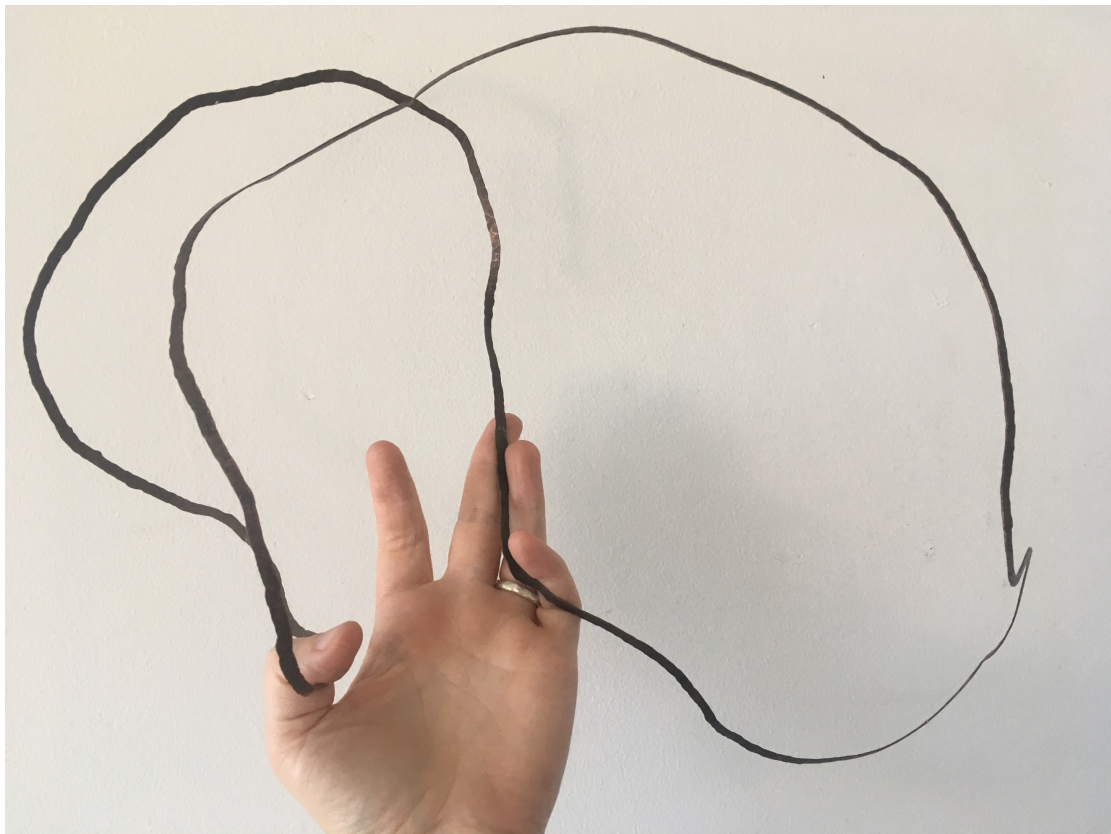


Figure 3 Briony Galligan, *hello? Hello!*, 2017-18, studio work in progress, copper and hand.



Figure 4 Briony Galligan, *a floating hole?*, 2018, pencil, collage and leterset on paper, 15 x 21 cm.

I quickly change the [him] in the text to [you] as I read, sure that this must be an error in the translation. Clark's Caminhando work might feel different from when it was first created. I am left with questions about how a formal model for the ideogram translates into a bodily experience.²¹ It's a constant contradiction within the research; I am seeking a neat definition within which to situate something that is deliberately resisting this.

I keep returning to the physical form of the Möbius strip, moulding them out of clay strips in the studio and then forming them into loops. I make versions heating and beating copper wire. Making the loops is a meditative and solo process, just me in the studio, rather than a participatory one. Some paper loops are so thin, they droop like nets until they break, some maintain their form and rest floppily on my fingers. In clay, the point of intersection that marks the join in the strip often cracks in the kiln. With the ones that make it through the firing, it's that point of connection that also vitrifies. The loop transformed.

21 The artwork was considered a latent proposition, something that could only exist between the artist and the viewer when the viewer came into contact with the work. According to Sidgwick, who mentions Clark's writings about the Möbius strip: 'the Möbius strip 'visualised' or allowed one to experience not only 'inside' and 'outside' (that is, life experience and artistic proposition) merging into a single continuity, but it also related to a particular conception of 'becoming'.... as an incessantly 'being turned inside out', a becoming as a continuity without caesura.' In this sense, the Möbius strip within Rolnik's reading of Clark's work, charts desire. Sidgwick, 193-194.



Figure 5 Briony Galligan, studio work in progress, 2017, glazed stoneware and earthenware Möbius strips.

Anthropophagic slobber

It felt boring making the paper Möbius strips, instead I start to daydream that Clark is teaching me at the institution where I am studying. In 1973, a decade after *Caminhando*, and after she was exiled from the Brazilian military dictatorship, Clark worked with a group of students in Paris where she teaching a course in ‘gestural communication.’ Clark asked students to place spools of thread in their mouths and unwind them simultaneously, looping thread over someone in the middle, in an attempt to dissolve their individual bodies. I imagine her telling the students to let their tongues glide over the thread, to conjure as much saliva as they need. In this artwork, *Baba antropofágica* (Anthropophagic slobber), the cotton pulled from spools becomes a connecting skin or tissue that can be thought of as an external membrane of internal process, woven from the mouth.²² Fabião, a participant in *Baba antropofágica*, gives a personal account of Clark’s model to ‘assemble and self-structure’ this collective body. A person in the centre of the group is fully covered with thread, then the group remove the ‘cocoon,’ a net of cotton and drool. The work ends with a spoken exchange between group members about their experiences. Fabião describes how Clark’s aim, ‘to construct with the body a space for the word, becomes a slobbering speech act where words are spoken that are not already known and ‘corporeal listening’ is intensified.²³ It is not clear if participants make sounds, phrases or sentences. The relationship within the group and their attempt towards a bound collective body is blurred in the process of making the cotton cocoon. The mouth becomes not only a speaking site, but a place

22 Clark, Lygia. *Baba antropofágica* (Anthropophagic slobber). 1973, performance Associação Cultural ‘O Mundo de Lygia Clark’, Rio de Janeiro.

23 Fabião, Eleonora, “The Making of a Body: Lygia Clark’s Anthropophagic Slobber,” *Lygia Clark: The Abandonment of Art 1948-1988*, Exhibition Catalogue ed. Luis Pérez-Oramas, Cornelia Butler (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2014), 298.
The *Baba Antropofágica* work is re-enacted in New York in 2008 at the gallery *Pablo’s Birthday*. Marie Carter describes that, ‘it was also beautiful to watch the process because the threads form a web mesh over the person on the floor. When the threads are pulled apart it is supposed to be done with aggression, but that drew giggles from the group as the participants attempted to mimic growling dogs.’ Marie Carter, “The Re-Enactment of Lygia Clark’s *Baba Antropofágica* (Anthropophagic Drool),” *The Brooklyn Rail*, October 10, 2008.

where a form of collective identification can occur, the mouth makes the material before it makes speech. The self, so often individualised through language, is partially dissolved through slobber. This cocoon created by the mouths, is an impossible place between the individuals' physical and collective bodies. However, it still feels like I'm looking for the safer, more sanitised version of the strip, I'm still trying to think.

Rolnik traces the lineage of Brazilian artists who, along with Hélio Oiticica and Lygia Clark, reinvigorated the idea of the anthropophagic as resistant to Western capitalist and colonial values, and changing relations to psychoanalysis. Brazilian Modernist poet Oswald de Andrade writes in *Anthropophagic Manifesto* of 1928:

Death and life of all hypotheses. From the equation 'Self, part of the Cosmos' to the axiom 'Cosmos, part of the Self.' Subsistence. Experience. Cannibalism. Down with the reversible world, and against objectified ideas. Cadaverized. The stop of thought that is dynamic...²⁴

De Andrade looked to anthropophagic rituals to seed an idea of subjectivity developed outside Western frameworks which keep subject and object discrete from each other. Rolnik then traces the lineage of anthropophagia as a cultural practice. Documented by anthropologists Manuela Carneiro da Cunha and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro of indigenous Tupinambá, anthropophagic (cannibal) rituals included where a prisoner would live with a community for months, or even years, and then be killed publicly: 'having killed the enemy, the executor would change his name and have scars made in

24 De Andrade continues: 'The individual as victim of the system. Source of classical injustices. Of romantic injustices. And the forgetting of inner conquests. Routes. Routes. Routes. Routes. Routes. Routes. Routes.' Oswald de Andrade, *Anthropophagic Manifesto*, [□]
<http://www.antropofagia.com.br/manifestos/antropofagico/>. See also: Suely Rolnik in *Spaces of Transformation: Epistemologies of the South reinventing Social Emancipation*, 28 April 2012, accessed August 4, 2016, <http://www.artandeducation.net/videos/suely-rolnik-beyond-colonial-unconscious/>.

his body during a long and rigorous period of reclusion.²⁵ In other words, Rolnik describes how only when the Other was integrated into the group, would the Other be executed and digested. Culturally and at the level of subject formation, Rolnik argues this was a way of integrating the Other into the body to understand and feel difference at the level of the body. For Rolnik, this idea drew on a Brazilian Modernist cultural interpretation of indigenous ritual to push against Western colonial forms. Rolnik states: ‘the politics of plasticity, fluidity, hybridization, and creative, experimental freedom characterize what I [call] anthropophagic subjectivity.’²⁶ In some ways, these descriptions of anthropophagic subjectivity are both a position of alterity, but seem like a utopian space. Above all, they reject an idea of difference that can’t be consumed within the body and instead assert a digestive process where difference can be absorbed as energy.

An external membrane of internal process

Rolnik’s reading of the Möbius strip connects to Lacan’s: that of a model without interior or exterior, with physical and psychological dimensions. Rolnik positions the strip as a place where sensory experience can rework and challenge the external world. The major difference between Rolnik’s position and Lacan’s is that these unnameable *objet a* whilst resistant to the Other, can also be incorporated into it. This becomes a decision then, within the research, to follow Rolnik, rather than Lacan. The Möbius strip becomes a model for ‘the knowing-body’²⁷ where one side of the strip is the ‘form of the world’, whilst the other is described as ‘the living body’. Rolnik argues that this tension between

25 Suely Rolnik, “Avoiding False Problems: Politics of the Fluid, Hybrid, and Flexible,” *e-flux journal* 25, (May 2011): 1, cited from Manuela L. Carneiro and Educarado B. Viveiros de Castro, “Vingança e temporalidade: os Tupinambás,” *Anuário Antropofágico* (Rio de Janeiro: Ed. Tempo Brasileiro, 1986): 85.

26 Ibid., 4.

27 Rolnik, Suely. “The knowing-body compass in curatorial practices,” *Theater* 47, no. 1 (2017): 117.

the sides of the strip produce an unhomeliness, or uncanny that ‘convokes *desire to act in order to produce a new equilibrium*’. In this way, ‘desire’ is figured as similar to Lacan, an overlap between the body and social and psychological controls over the body. Where the models of the strip differ, is how the Other is constructed in relation to desire. This is crucial to understand and to follow what Clark intended within the work. In Lacan’s model, the *objet a* that cause desire remain as objects that have to be shared with the Other; in Rolnik’s model, *objet a* can be incorporated/digested back into the Self.

In Clark’s later *Structuring of the Self* works, she continues to engage speech acts or movement of the mouth after tactile experiences. Clark also positions and shares these practices through a 1984 documentary film, *Memória do Corpo*.²⁸ With the additional lighting for the film in shot, Clark explains and moves ‘relational objects’—bags filled with sand, water and plastic balls—along her body, legs or arms. I see the film after observing Lula Wanderley using similar objects at the Museum of the Unconscious, Rio de Janeiro. Clark holds a large plastic bag full of water, it brushes over her shoulder and the microphone attached to her. It sounds like a squelching wine bladder, or being underneath water very briefly. She holds jute netting wrapped around a plastic bag, one half full of stones, the other half full of cold water—one to create different sonic and textural sensations for the body, and the other to change the temperature. In another section of the film, she brushes her lips with honey and then shines a torch inside her mouth. ‘It’s the duality of the objects that is important, she says, ‘they need to speak to an internal world.’²⁹ The documentary then cuts to another scene where Clark is demonstrating the objects with a ‘client.’ Dressed only in underpants and lying on a deep pink sheet, the client is covered in sandbags, rocks, his ears surrounded by conch shells,

28 *Memória do Corpo*, Dir. Mario Corneiro, (Studioline, 1984, remastered 1993), accessed January 3 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ymjW6yVKAq>.

29 Ibid., 12:27.

amplifying the sound of his own heartbeat. The image is hard to describe and even harder to imagine how it would feel. He starts moving his lips at a rapid speed, the torch shining into his mouth.

‘Suddenly I had an inside again,’ he says and begins to put on his clothes, suggesting that the objects allowed him to fully experience his body as both an outer and inner space.³⁰

In the therapeutic works, it is difficult to know exactly how these objects that create sensation transform the internal and external world through second hand accounts. The formation of subjectivity that the works demand requires a rethink of the body and of experience. There is still a leap here, however, to how changes at the level of the body infiltrate social structures. This is critical for me in my own work because I want viewing the work to be both internal within the body and to infiltrate the construction of the exhibition.

Although I do not make participatory or art therapy work—in my practice I follow Clark’s development of language, a speaking from the body. For example, through the voice in the *Haul Body* work at West Space (see Chapter 3), I consider both speaking and the reading of the script as sensory experiences for the brain and the mouth. In developing objects through writing, I construct a script as a formal and sensory process; I started to rewrite *Not I* blindfolded, wearing ear plugs with a voice recorder (see Chapter 2). After this, I wrote a script by making paper Möbius strips with this text, *Not I* on one side, and a description of a foyer with a revolving door on the other. Being able to hear the words spoken in my body and also being able to touch the words physically in the script as a diagrammatic form informs the language that I chose to use and the editing process.

30 Valerie Reardon, “On the borderline,” *Afterimage* 27, no. 6 (May/June 2000): 7.

Micropolitical activism

Rolnik discusses Clark's work as micropolitical activism and articulates differences between a political activist position and an artist's position. According to Rolnik, activism operates on the level of perception; it maintains subject and object in exteriority to each other. Art operates on the level of sensation, a plastic multiplicity in our sensible textures. She suggests there is a tension between these two capacities—perception and sensation—and in this tension creative thought can unfold.³¹ Yet whilst Rolnik focuses on the body in renegotiating institutional spaces and neoliberal cultural capital, I think she oversimplifies political activism, where nuanced bodily experiences, in particular in regard to race, gender and sexuality can compel political movements. That being said, Rolnik was writing her book *Micropolitical Revolution in Brazil* around 1986, in a period following the end of three decades of military dictatorship. Rolnik organised discussion tours with Felix Guattari. Connections between individual identities and alternatives to Western capitalism were discussed with a range of groups seeking new micropolitical possibilities. Part of the strength of that work and time was that gay and lesbian groups and feminist groups were interested in political change, because of new possibilities at the level of the body. Rolnik writes:

The situation [of authoritarian rule] affects desire at its core and weakens it, shattering the potency of thinking that desire summons and releases, and emptying subjectivity of its consistency. Since art is the privileged territory for exceptions within the rule of culture, it is especially affected.³²

31 Suely Rolnik, trans. Rodrigo Nunes, *The Body's Contagious Memory: Lygia Clark's Return to the Museum*, accessed 10 April 2016, <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0507/rolnik/en>.

32 Suely Rolnik, "Archive Mania," in *Documenta 13: The Book of Books, Catalog 1/3*, ed. Carolyn Christov-Barkagiev (Kassel and Ostfildern: documenta and Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2012), 177. Rolnik adamantly argues that poetic and aesthetic experience can puncture the macropolitical discourse. She also argues, that torture and trauma under authoritarian regimes target bodies and the phantasm of this trauma reduces possibilities at the level of the body. In the *Manifesta Journal*, Rolnik states, 'the micropolitical characteristic of dictatorships, for example, tend to summon and strengthen existing traumas; or to produce them for the first time in those who have had the opportunity to live the aesthetic experience and its expression before the installation of such regimes in their countries (an opportunity

In my reading of the Möbius strip in relation to Rolnik's position, I read that micro-political shifts require change in our conception and use of bodies in establishing specific critical and political stances. The political context of Rolnik's Brazil is completely different from my own and I am not seeking to translate this context.³³

The works described by Clark as 'therapeutic' require participation and consideration of the body, not as productive in terms of labour or as a capitalist subject, but of a body that emerges from another episteme. Paul B Preciado outlines in *Testo Junkie* (2013), the construction of desire, pleasure, sex and gender, not as discrete and individualised, but as corporatised, Government sanctioned fields.³⁴

that was especially favoured by the countercultural movements that preceded the dictatorships and that continued during their first years, before being repressed). Phantasmic barriers are inscribed in the body's memory as a strategy of defense, alongside the traumatic experience that unleashed their construction; both the trauma and the defense can simultaneously be mobilized by any context that directly or indirectly evokes the original situation.' Suely Rolnik, "Archive for a Work-event: Activating the body's memory of Lygia Clark's poetics and its context / Part 1," *Manifesta Journal: Fungus in the Contemporary* 13, no. 3: 77, accessed December 24, 2018, <http://www.manifestajournal.org/issues/fungus-contemporary#page-issuesfunguscontemporary>.

- 33 Rolnik, in more recently reflecting on the global art market and Western European-US axis interest in the 'archive' of Latin American conceptual practices, does believe that this idea of a split between macro and micropolitical is part of a broader history of 'unconscious colonial repression.' That is, through slavery, poverty, social exclusion, external domination and authoritarian regimes (in Latin America, but Brazil specifically) the object of repression is the body itself and the possibility of inhabiting it.' Rolnik, "Archive Mania," 180.

Since Bolsonaro's election in Brazil in 2018 and a return to a hard right-wing position, these works provide increasingly potent challenges to authoritarian rule. There have already been intimidating moves from right-wing and evangelical groups. An example of how this move to the hard-right has affected the left, in 2017, ahead of a tour to Brazil by the theorist, Judith Butler, far-right Christian groups burnt a papier-mâché effigy of Butler as a witch to protest against her feminist and queer "outspokenness", forcing the tour's cancellation. The article also outlines how hard-line groups are shaping state-based policies and their obsession for interfering within art. Daniel Steegmann Mangrane and Michelle Sommer, "Judith and Holofernes in Brazil," *Frieze*, December 18, 2017, accessed December 27, 2018, <https://frieze.com/article/looking-back-2017-judith-and-holofernes-brazil>.

- 34 Paul B Preciado, *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era*, location 3615-3618, Kindle e-reader reference (2013). Preciado charts the control exercised over the body by religion, then by Governments and outlines how pharmaceutical companies chemically produce and attempt to establish biologically-stable ideas of masculinity and femininity where oestrogen and progesterone are tied to capital demands for feminine labour and production. 'one must develop a micropolitics of gender, sex, and sexuality based on practices of intentional self-experimentation that are defined by their ability to resist and dismantle the somato-semiotic norm and to invent collectively new technologies of the production of subject...'

Preciado explains:

Rolnik has taught us to consider modern clinical practices—those of psychiatry starting in the eighteenth century and psychoanalysis at the beginning of the twentieth—as techniques that arose precisely for the management of the collateral effects of this mode of historically dated subjectification that is characterised by the reduction of subjectivity to its psychological dimension and the proscription of its aesthetic dimension.³⁵

In other words, Rolnik is pushing to dissolve the logical order of the body and repression as understood in psychiatry. Preciado continues:

[G]ender must be torn from the macrodiscourse and diluted with a good dose of the micropolitical...the Lacanian theory of the mirror state, according to which the child's subjectivity is formed when it recognizes itself for the first time in its specular image, political subjectivity emerges precisely when the subject does not recognise itself in its representation.³⁶

This critique is important; it is when you don't see yourself in the representation within the specular or mirror image that political subjectivity is formed. This brought me back to watching Clark's *Memória do Corpo* film, and the client's response 'suddenly I had an inside again.'³⁷ After an experience that shifts the body in such a way, political

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 Valerie Reardon describes seeing Clark's film in an art therapy conference (2000); but her account speculates that Clark was doing the work 'for the cameras.' 'The objects themselves have no intrinsic meaning, just sensory qualities such as weight, vision and cognition. In a later conversation with [Guy] Brett [who ran the film and discussion session] I learned that the man in the video was an actor friend of Clark's, so it is likely that the video depicts a demonstration rather than an actual therapeutic session. Clark's practice was considered controversial in Brazilian psychiatric circles although advocates of her technique regularly sent her agitated and disturbed patients, indicating that her methods were beneficial to some. An art therapist in the audience, however, condemned it as 'highly dangerous' in that it could trigger a 'psychotic regression' which (in his view) Clark was not trained or qualified to handle.' Valerie Reardon, "On the borderline," *Afterimage* 27, no. 6 (May/June 2000): 7.

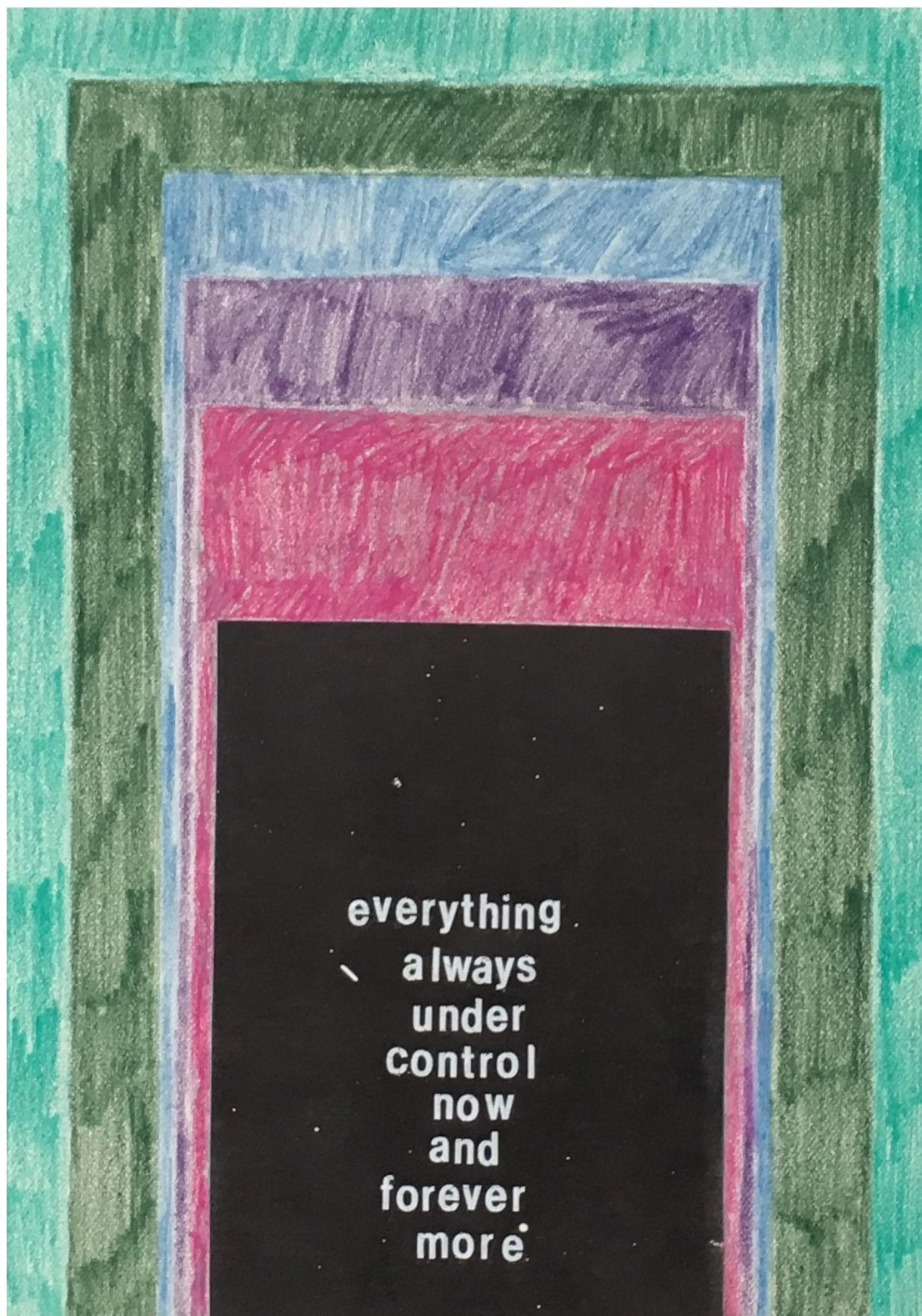


Figure 6 Briony Galligan, *everything always under control now and forever more?*, 2018, pencil, collage and lettraset on paper, 15 x 21 cm.

subjectivity is created through an experience of inner space in the world, rather than specular image. In *Haul Body*, I created the figure of the horse's body and the horse's mouth as a way to touch and think about corporeal transformation alongside the structure of the city. I cannot know a horse's experience, but I can know more about my own human-ness through the mouth and its slobber.

The problems of a shape with no orientation

One of the questions I am left with regards the problems associated with the Möbius strip as being 'universal' or without orientation. Clark's relational objects locate the body quite specifically and connect to particular historical timeframes that the work was made in, for example, earlier Neo-Concrete work and the Brazilian Tropicalia movement.³⁸ The Möbius strip, whilst without orientation, isn't imagined by Rolnik as a universal model by any stretch. Her curatorial work seeks to place *vivência* within institutional contexts, and the experiences of Clark's clients are central to understanding the work. The concept of a shape with 'no orientation, no inside or outside' could be dangerous if followed without context as a model for subjectivity. As Sara Ahmed outlines in *Queer Phenomenology: Objects, Orientations, Others*, a subject is never entirely 'without orientation.'³⁹ My way of looking and perceiving objects in the world orientates me in particular directions that form a background from which I see and experience and also fail to see. That is, it is impossible to see without forming an orientation.

38 Rolnik, "Avoiding False Problems: Politics of the Fluid, Hybrid, and Flexible," 4.

39 Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Objects, Orientations, Others* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 28-33. Ahmed's model and diagrammatic explanations of 'orientation' challenge and connect how perception of subject and object are already oriented. Ahmed argues that when an object 'arrives', it has already been shaped by social, political and linguistic systems oriented within a subject's field of view. In other words, the subject has oriented itself in relationship to the object, and has also determined what will fall into the background. This language of orientation, stemming from mapping and navigation, and the critiques she offers to universalising positions of Husserl, draw on cartographic revolution, but also read them very closely as linguistic operations.

There are still many gaps when it comes to how I can follow this model for the Möbius strip. In Clark's Möbius strip, there is no separation between subject and object; 'it is a body-to-body situation, a fusion.'⁴⁰ Rolnik describes how repressive forces metered through the family, language, psychiatry and the State reduce possibilities within subjectivity at the level of 'the body itself and the possibility of inhabiting it.'⁴¹ I am considering here Preciado's argument that political subjectivity begins when we don't recognise ourselves in the representation. Clark's interest is in transformative politics with transformations in subjectivity. I want to follow this within my practice, but this is a long process and my practice isn't ready to work with therapy or transformation in this way. A leap for me, is that increasingly, I am addressing more of my works' relation to art institutions as social and economic sites, rather than as a (white-cube) void space where bodily action is framed. In my work, this includes considering how roles such as the photographer and the audience function within and external to the work. For example, in my *Haul Body* exhibition the role of the photographer was played by a photographer, their body part of the artwork, but also part of the construction and documentation of the exhibition. This is a slippery, looping relationship between my body, the bodies of the performers and the conceptual conceit for the show, a Möbius strip.

40 Lygia Clark writings circa 1970, in *Lygia Clark: The Abandonment of Art 1948-1988*, Exhibition Catalogue ed. *Luis Pérez-Oramas, Cornelia Butler* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2014), 238.

41 Suelly Rolnik, "Archive Mania," 177.

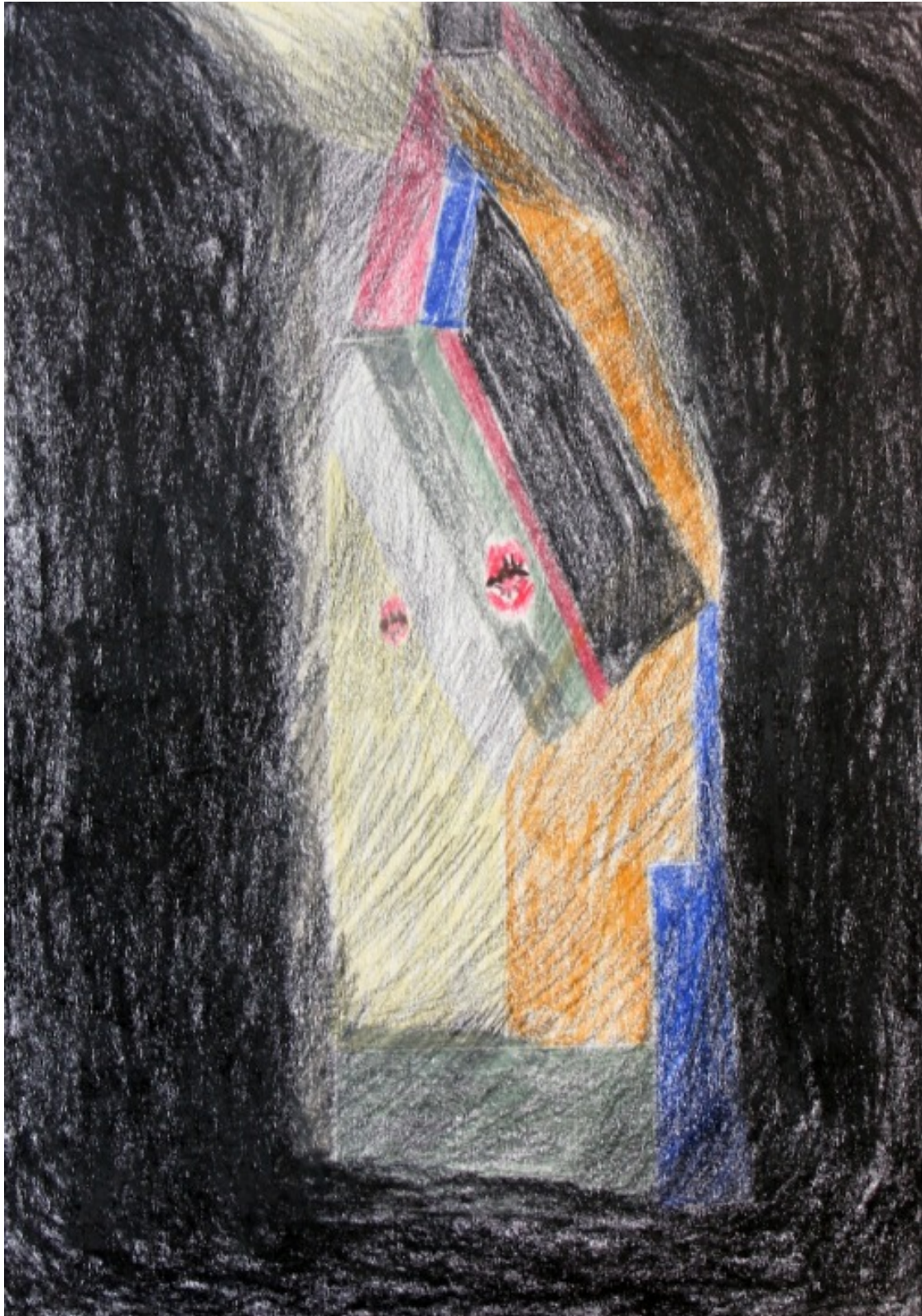


Figure 7 Briony Galligan, *sketch for performance 'She imagines a city,'* 2016, pencil on paper, 15 x 21cm.

The mouth is a Möbius strip

There is no inside or outside to the mouth, I consider it as a Möbius strip and form of threshold, a pushy structure and even a revolving door. I start researching mouths in my work, both human and horse, and how they are controlled—the human mouth by language, the horse mouth by humans with a bit. I wanted to think about my own mouth that is part of me, that I can speak from and for and the performed character of MOUTH in Samuel Beckett's *Not I* (1973). The mouth is an opening to the inside of the body and a closing to the outside world. The mouth is a slick bacteria laden opening, alive and rotting, that doesn't always finish its sentences.⁴² My own mouth is a reconstructed site – fitted with an implanted prosthetic tooth and lip surgery after a bicycle accident eighteen months ago. I watched the operation on my face from below, my mother moving around the hospital room to get a better view. The surgeon kept their hand steady using tiny little stitches. I felt no pain, I felt nothing apart from the force of their body pulling my lip together. Months later, the screw is put in to my jaw, softened by a gel made with cow bone extract. With metal masquerading as animal, my body is less likely to reject the screw. I think about words masquerading as animal, dressed up so our bodies don't reject them.

I imagine reworking Beckett's *Not I*, initially staged in 1972 and launched on UK television screens in 1973 with Billie Whitelaw's 'oversexed jelly-fish' MOUTH moving 'like a missile.'⁴³ *Not I* comprises a black screen with a large woman's mouth at its

42 Dr Jan Bryant tells me that I need to be more visceral in my descriptions of the mouth: 'really talk about the wetness, the open-ness, you need to describe the mouth. MOUTH is a nutcase, but we need more of you.' In conversation, Melbourne, December 12, 2018,. I think more about my mouth as a disturbance, my accident and surgery interrupting my life and art-making for several months.

43 'Mouth' played by Jessica Tandy at the Forum Theatre, Lincoln Centre, New York and then by Billie Whitelaw at the Royal Court Theatre in 1973. Whitelaw described the image of her MOUTH in the darkness as 'strangely sexual and glutinous, slimy and weird, like a crazed, oversexed jelly- fish.' Cited in Sarah West, *Say It: The performative voice in the dramatic works of Samuel Beckett* (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi Editions, 2010), 149.

centre, speaking at a turbulently fast pace. The mouth speaks of ‘she’ in the third person. Disembodied, MOUTH (the name of the character and a description of the image itself) remains strictly contained in a clipped rhythm, inexhaustible in its speed. Onstage, rather than onscreen, MOUTH is the performer’s forward-facing trace. Her body is backstage in the dark, masked and hooded as she pushes the words out to the audience. For me, rethinking the staging of *Not I* is an exercise toward developing new work. The work is a visceral experience impossible to conceptualise. In 2015, I watched it for the first time in a darkened living room with friend/collaborator Rosie Isaac. We were both speechless afterwards.

In my imagined version, the version that doesn’t get made, the performance of *Not I* is held in a rotating door or stage that makes one centripetal rotation during the 14-minute performance. I ground this imaginary staging by looking at Hélène Cixous’ 2007 response to *Not I* in *Zero’s Neighbour: Sam Beckett* and draw from performers’ accounts of playing MOUTH, in particular Lisa Dwan’s recent productions (2013-2016) and the backstage photographs that accompany them.⁴⁴ Cixous suggests that ellipsis and interruption within the script present a breakdown of an existing symbolic order which could be understood as feminine language, a ‘writing towards zero’...stopping short...pulling back...finding a way to continue in particular through movement.⁴⁵

Hannah Hachohen also describes her involvement in a Shimon Levy production: ‘when the day arrived, when I was sitting on the seat on the ladder, tied, packed, concentrated, and the entire me filled with joy and fear. All of me was ready. For what? For a striptease? A theatrical performance? I felt more like a missile ready to be launched – ‘out’! And the light beam!...’ in Shimon Levy, *Samuel Beckett’s Self-Referential Drama: The sensitive chaos* (London: MacMillan, 1989), 160.

44 Hélène Cixous, *Zero’s neighbour: Sam Beckett* trans. by Laurent Milesi (Cambridge and Malden: Polity Books, 2010), originally published in French as *Le Voisin de zéro*, Éditions Galilée. xiii, Author’s Note

45 Ibid. In Cixous’ opening paragraphs to *Zero’s Neighbour*, she speaks of love for Beckett, an insistence that a clinical look is impossible from the outset; she will touch and circle his words with her own xiii, Author’s Note, then repeated p. 1, ‘Sam Beckett. Why, Beckett, I can love him, a rare, precious can, I who am not on the side of grey blackness, I can love him, frozen and collapsing endlessly I who’d rather leap, cross all the thick, opaque, slothful, luxuriously slothful zones in his fog, in order to come and love him all the same thus like my next of kin?’ Cixous cannot help but love Beckett, in spite of herself and they share a bond through her body and in rereading bodies of text.



Figure 8 Briony Galligan, *Watching 'Not I' together*, 2016, pencil on paper, 15 x 21cm.

I want to read the text and draw it back to Rolnik's idea of the Möbius strip, where inside and outside continue vacillating. MOUTH keeps swallowing back in the interruptions she makes of herself, the bodily aspects of the MOUTH move around the constructed and controlled language of the play. Whilst Beckett's text unhinges the body, an alternative staging of the work could draw further connections between the refusal of fixed subject positions in the text and its structure, and the backstage pictures with their specific contexts and bodies. Through this staging, interruptions and ellipses are foregrounded and endlessly oscillating.

'[Curtain fully down. House dark. Voice continues behind curtain, unintelligible, 10 seconds, ceases as house lights up.]'⁴⁶

As it stands, to begin the live 'official' Beckett staging of the show, as the audience walks into the theatre, MOUTH is suspended and ready for the performance.

Stage in darkness but for MOUTH, upstage audience right, about 8 feet above stage level, faintly lit from close-up and below, rest of face in shadow. Invisible microphone.'⁴⁷

Beckett's instructions are precise and set an expansive space for the language of the play.

'out . . . into this world . . . this world . . . tiny little thing . . . before its time . . . in a godfor— . . . what? . . . girl? . . . yes . . . tiny little girl . . . into this . . . out into this . . . before her time . . . godforsaken hole called . . . called . . . no matter.'⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Samuel Beckett, *Not I*, stage directions from *The Complete Dramatic Works of Samuel Beckett* (London: Faber and Faber, 2006), 376.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

The words ‘Imagine! Stop! What? Why?’ are used as the mouth’s interjections to itself, yet they are so regular that they lose meaning as disruption. Billie Whitelaw recalls Beckett’s insistence that the play was written to be felt.⁴⁹ The truncated sentences with interruptions are swallowed back into the trapped speech of the mouth at a rapid pace. In this opening passage Beckett also sets the scene of a girl, who has arrived, by birth or death, or some other means, into a ‘godforsaken hole’ a place without name, a place of no matter.

The staging of the work appears entirely different front of stage from the backstage contraptions; onstage the mouth is completely disembodied, backstage the images of control and restraint for the body create a different idea of MOUTH. The images of performers Dwan and Whitelaw backstage performing MOUTH become part of the experience of re-watching the piece and also shape the feeling of the work. During a recent tour of the work to Australia in 2015, Dwan described the experience of performing the role as like ‘being crucified in a sensory deprivation tank.’⁵⁰ The script requires complete discipline from the performers who play the role. Their bodies are strapped into elaborate devices to keep the mouth absolutely still and open to the spotlight. Backstage, Dwan’s arms are interlinked behind an industrial, hospital-like barre, her hands rest at her waist, her head is hooded and black greasepaint covers her chin and the edges of her mouth.⁵¹ Her head is strapped to the wooden theatre flat, in

48 Samuel Beckett, *Not I*, 376.

49 Billie Whitelaw in her introduction to the video during a 1993 Beckett retrospective. Samuel Beckett, *Not I*, performed by Billie Whitelaw, London: Two, 1973. Online video version accessed 10 April 2016, http://www.ubu.com/film/beckett_not.html.

50 Cited in Cameron Woodhead, “Lisa Dwan hailed as a Beckett prodigy in *Not I*,” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, February 19, 2015, accessed May 30, 2016, <http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/stage/lisa-dwan-hailed-as-a-beckett-prodigy-in-not-i20150209-139jcx.html>.

51 Image from Lisa Dwan’s instagram account, accessed 10 June, 2016, <https://www.instagram.com/p/BD6TPIBCLUj/?taken-by=dwanlisa>, and ‘Straps and metal brackets keep Ms. Dwan stationary while the audience sees only a disembodied mouth.’ Image credit Finn Beales, from Robyn Sulcas, “Suffering for Her Art, and Beckett: Lisa Dwan Performs Solo at BAM in 3 Beckett

order to remain motionless, whilst her mouth is in position to be lit up through a hole in the wooden panel. The wooden staging is a physical and psychical block between ears and body and her speaking mouth. MOUTH may speak at the speed of thought with no need for listening to get in the way. As long as it appears a particular way from the auditorium, the apparatus backstage can be improvised with each production, a calculated, yet makeshift, temporary constraining device. In my version, the staging is amplified, you see the body of the performance behind the ‘disembodied’ image of the mouth.

5 July 2018

In recent years, I spent time moving in and out of revolving doors, doors that glisten with steel and glass, appear transparent and feign openness. I make videos each time I enter and exit one of these doors. Everything goes quiet for a second in there. There's a button upon entrance that you can press to slow everything down slightly. Some doors have corporate logos at eye height, so you don't mistake glass for open air. Some slow down or stop entirely when there are no bodies to push through, keeping the inside warm. The revolving door is the illusion of open architectural space. At a casual administration job, I go through revolving doors to the concierge in a large government building. A man in a suit carrying a skateboard asks me if I am a 'refugee from Nicholson St.' There was a fire at a nearby public service building and their offices are temporarily relocated. I'm confused and I think about the Border Force office nestled into the side of the building. A man recently self-immolated outside the office after his claim for permanent residency was rejected. There are no revolving doors at Border Force. 'No, I'm not,' I reply. I take the temporary swipe pass and move through another glass barrier.



Figure 9 Briony Galligan, *revolving door research*, 2018, digital video still.

April 2016

I made a huge revolving door from fabric and hand-dyed silk. It hangs on a mirror-ball motor which has a fixed speed, one 360 degree rotation per minute. I read about Elizabethan gestural languages and how Queen Elizabeth I controlled time, stopped the clocks when she entered a village, her political power connected to how she entrenched herself in nature and in the seasons. She made herself an eternal loop. The mirror-ball motor whirs and occasionally stops pulling the weight of the fabric. I then made a domestic sized revolving door that hangs ajar from a larger backdrop for a performance where two women sing following each other around the door. I cringe my way through the performance.⁵² My notes from the performance read:

'Difficulty getting the words out, beautiful A-NUN-CI-A-TION, shhhh, very staged, staging itself, words are tricky and too much, needs an interruption, no sound, too much sound, bored the people shitless, bored, bore them, bore them more, liturgical dancing. A photographer taking photographs. Nice. Cherry picker. A long delay. Interruptions, interruptions of the birds and a child crying.'

Artist and photographer, Christian Capurro comes wearing knee pads, dressed all in black to photograph the work and is by far the best part of it. Immediately before the show, a light bulb needed to be replaced, but the gallery was already open. The exhibitions install crew get out the cherry picker as family and friends waited for the

⁵² "She imagines a city", part of *Dancing Umbrellas* exhibition, curated by Sue Cramer at Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, April 2016.

performance. These staging devices become both a problem and generative part of the work. I had earnestly attempted to pretend that the gallery and social context of the 'art exhibition' didn't exist. I made the mistake of approaching the space as though it was neutral ground, where possibilities and staging were very tightly bound. The performance was held in full daylight, Tace Kelly and Eva Popov sang to each other improvised tunes to words 'Her mouth wet for wanton speech, she plots between ruin, fuck and destroy. She hates talking about architecture, it's mean and patriarchal and unforgiving. Tastes like nothing incarnadine.' Their voices were so important to it, but there was no mouth in it. Now, the bottom of both the fabric doors are caked in grime from the exhibition spaces, leaching up into the calico. None of that is captured by the camera.



Figure 10 Briony Galligan, *Nothing incarnadine*, 2016, Installation, dimensions and duration variable, calico, handdyed silk, pine, acrylic on pine, mirrorball motor, teak hands made in collaboration with Lejar Budiharjo, pencil on paper, slide projected text work. Photo credit: Christo Crocker. Abbotsford Convent Melbourne/4A Gallery Sydney.



Figure 11 Briony Galligan, performers Eva Popov and Tace Kelly, *She imagines a city*, 2016, Installation; hand dyed cotton, mirror ball motor, synthetic, acrylic on pine set pieces, photocopied text, 3 metres x 6.5 metres, duration variable. Heide Museum of Art, Melbourne 2016. Photo credit: Christian Capurro.



Figures 12 and 13 Briony Galligan, performers Eva Popov and Tace Kelly, *She imagines a city*, 2016. Photo credit: Christian Capurro.

Actresses who have performed *Not I* speak of the work of delivering the text and the personal, psychological labour required; their specific experiences and bodies are crucial to give shape to the character MOUTH. Dwan speaks very specifically of the need to strip away her own sense of macropolitical narrative to deliver the words and leave the interpretation open for the audience:

I am in Birmingham, it's a Wednesday, I can hear that the audience has brought their lunch in with them [...] Do I want to pick my most traumatic wounds, [...] or should I question what theatre is about, [...] why am I doing this, does anyone care? It happened to be the day that the American journalist Daniel Pearl was beheaded, [...] and we had reached a whole new low, a different sphere, so I decided to use that as a control—and within seconds, within seconds, I felt I had lost the audience.⁵³

Dwan describes how this external world, the political context of the event and reports of Daniel Pearl's beheading, interferes in her delivery of the work. However, Dwan realises when she loses the audience, that it is not external events that shape or give weight to the performance. Dwan does and must position her own internal life, 'her most traumatic wounds' at the centre of her performance of MOUTH. It is her internal private world that is required to give strength to the character, rather than a more general focus on theatre and Daniel Pearl, or macropolitical speech. Joy Coghill—who rehearsed the role but never performed it onstage—describes that it 'was wrong to be used like that...as an emotional machine...for the sake of theatrical effect.'⁵⁴ I read these statements by performers as an insistence that neither their bodies nor their mouths cease to be their own, they are not '*Not I*' nor are they 'she'. However, it is impossible for '*Not I*' to be '*Not I*' in general;

53 Interview with Lisa Dwan & Walter Asmus by Michael Coffey, "I am not a human being up there, true, and I am not a woman. I'm consciousness," *BOMB Magazine*, 6 April 2016, accessed 30 May 2016, <http://bombmagazine.org/article/333746/lisa-dwan-walter-asmus>.

54 Joy Coghill in Levy, 159.

MOUTHS strength as a character must be located in relationship to a specific speaking woman's body. Dwan's critique of a general political position devoid of psychological depth, insists on her experience of her body, present with her own 'phantoms,' for the performance to exist.⁵⁵ There is a separation between the space of the mouth and the words spoken, the mouth is transformed from being external, to internal to the body.

As Cixous moves to a direct discussion of *Not I*, circling into it from other holes and pauses in her text—burrowing down around the text becomes part of how she addresses it—there are a series of holes that always fall short, into ellipsis.⁵⁶ There cannot be a circular return to an originary experience, but rather an interminable ellipsis, where something falls short each time.⁵⁷ Thus, in the repetition in her text, and in *Not I*, the loop can never have the same centre.

55 Dwan expands in an interview: 'I use my own landscape. So they're all my phantoms, they're all my ghosts. Like with all phantoms, you can't control them, really.' Lisa Dwan in Elianna Kan, "Finding the hope in the one-woman plays of Samuel Beckett," *BOMB Magazine*, November 20, 2014, accessed June 1, 2016, <http://bombmagazine.org/article/2000021/lisa-dwan>.

56 Shifting focus from psychical and linguistic 'holes' in Beckett, Cixous shifts to pauses in stage directions, to steps and then finally, to the ellipsis in *Not I*. For Cixous, the visual hole is conflated with spatial, psychological and linguistic holes. Cixous plays with the language and relationship between holes in the earth, the body and time, beginning with a discussion between Beckett's characters Henry and Ada from *Embers*. 'One agrees with Ada: there are all the holes there, the earth is full of them. And what about time then? Nothing but holes. A pause in time is also an eternity. An empty time is an eternity. Time has a finite duration as long as it is full. The moment you take an empty time you have all the hole. The hole is still there after an eternity. Between you and me, the Earth is above all a feminine element. The earth is full and has holes.' Cixous, *Zero's neighbour: Sam Beckett*, 33-34. In this passage, Cixous positions the hole as a spatial presence alongside a temporal presence. In speaking of a hole in time, a black hole or an 'empty time', she is also referring to the impossibility of time being full or finite. Yet, her later reference to the black hole counters this, where an absence of space or time can never be entirely empty, but rather is marked by the hole. Jacqueline Scott's analysis is most useful in considering whether the 'hole' is actually a 'hole'. Across both Beckett and Cixous, she argues, there is a focus on 'presence' within a text, where rather than dichotomous relations between past and present, or hierarchical linguistic binaries, presence exists alongside presence, 'even when representing memory, which [in presence] always recalls something absent - the past.' Jacqueline Scott, "Inside and Outside at the Same Time: Language Play in Beckett and Cixous," *The Journal of the Midwest Language Association* 45, no. 2 (Fall 2012): 60.

57 Jacques Derrida discusses the idea of the return and uses the graphical idea of ellipses that stems from the Greek word *elleipen*, or to fall short. If the centre is indeed 'the displacing of the question,' it is because the unnameable bottomless well whose sign the centre was, has always been surnamed; the centre as a sign of a hole that the book attempted to fill. Derrida proposes that something invisible is missing from the repetition. He argues that the original always was invisible, and then repeated. In discussing *The Book of Questions* by Edmond Jabès, Derrida considers the elliptical form as shortfall, and the relationship of the three books to one another. Derrida take excerpts from the book to discuss how the book doesn't trace back to an origin of passion, but a 'trace which replaces a trace that has never

she did not know . . . what position she was in . . . imagine! . . . what position she was in! . . . whether standing . . . or sitting . . . but the brain— . . . what? . . . kneeling? . . . yes . . . whether standing . . . or sitting . . . or kneeling . . . but the brain— . . . what? . . . lying? . . . yes . . . whether standing . . . or sitting . . . or kneeling . . . or lying . . . but the brain still.⁵⁸

Cixous speaks of never reaching zero, never reaching the centre, the beginning, any point of origin, but rather, of Beckett's 'carving' towards it. In the passage above, the position of the body is unsure, as is the body's relationship to any kind of central truth. In the interjection 'lying?' it is unclear if lying refers to the body in repose, or to telling a lie, an untruth that the body or brain tells others, or itself.⁵⁹ This ambiguity about 'her' body's position in relation to the speaking mouth and the buzzing of the brain continues throughout *Not I*. For Cixous, the ellipses are points of suspension, dots, neither here nor there, all or nothing.⁶⁰ These points also consider the literalness of moving towards zero, a looping around but never reaching it.

been present.' Jacques Derrida, 'Ellipsis' in *Writing and Difference*, Trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 295.

58 Beckett, *Not I*, 377.

59 Cixous also playfully toys with the position of the body in which one locates the belief that allows one to 'do' anything. Cixous refers to Freud's voice after where one cannot do, without a secret 'justification' one believes in but, 'by sheer dint of believing [à force et à force d'être cruës]' there eventually becomes enough space or reality to place one's body 'in a sitting position, or lying, or straddling a bicycle or writing a book.' Cixous, *Zero's neighbour: Sam Beckett*, 41.

60 Ibid., 46. The ellipses that punctuate the text could be thought of as a stand-in for unheard speech, a generative space within the theatrical dialogue. These moments of silence and moments of interjection mean something new every time, but also refer to silences that have already taken place, both in the narrator's memory and the structure of the text. Cixous quotes *Not I*: '...it can't go on...all this [tout ça]...all that [tout ça]...steady stream...straining to hear...make something of it...and her own thoughts...make something of them...all – [tout ça en] Then she continues; These words. And these dots [points de suspension], which I am forced to name in bulk. In order to distinguish them from the indication a pause, for instance. There are problems with each (non-)step, stop [pas, point], deictic, etc. All this and that. All that but there's never all, is there, **all that is not all**.' (p.50). In this way, the interruption swallowed by MOUTH is not only deictic—a context specific spatial marker—such as 'all this' and 'all that', but in the ellipses, the steady stream becomes unstable, we do not know what is missing and what is missing each time is completely open to interpretation. I think ellipses are different from the Möbius strip, as entirely different markers and ellipsis being specific to the written word.



Figure 14 Briony Galligan, *manipulating MOUTH*, 2016, studio work, doctored monotype with hand and finger prints and photo polymer process on paper of Billie Whitelaw in rehearsal for the Anthony Page production of *Not I*, 2016.

The hole as illusion?

The hole that Cixous describes in the text, indicates a point where time is neither empty or full, but marked by the hole, yet I return to Georgina Criddle's suggestion that the hole is an illusion of containment/emptiness. Let me consider the Möbius strip in relation to MOUTH. MOUTH is the overlap/void in Lacan's diagram, or the point of connection where 'desire' is figured between 'sexual reality' and 'the unconscious.'⁶¹ MOUTH cannot be a hole, the character has no stable boundaries, is always redrawing herself, MOUTH interrupts, swallows words back within, overlaps, screams, refuses, through both body and jaw as well as frenetically-crafted written speech. I think here about the interweaving nature of the surfaces of the Möbius strips and how they must be situated. The essential movement of the Möbius strip is an oscillation between sides with no central point. This, in my understanding, means that the voice, the speaking MOUTH is an illusion of containment and an extension into the space around it. Thinking again about Lygia Clark, French curator Christine Macel argues that Clark, rather than cutting apart the subject or making holes in the subject, proposed with *Caminhando* to 'allow one to experience the cutting apart as eternally replayed but never definitive, where the border becomes thin to the point of precariousness but does not break.'⁶² It is this movement, an attempt to circulate, but each time differently, that marks the Möbius strip. Macel defines the Möbius strip by the precarity of the border between the sides of the strip, between the inside and outside. MOUTH is compelling as a character because her body and movement is as much a part of her as the words she speaks, interrupts and swallows back in.

61 Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis; The seminar of Jacques Lacan Book XI*, 76-77.

62 Christine Macel "Lygia Clark: At the Border of Art," *Lygia Clark: The Abandonment of Art 1948-1988*, Exhibition Catalogue ed. Luis Pérez-Oramas, Cornelia Butler (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2014), 254.

Physical loops and revolving doors

Initially, I wanted the physical rotation in my proposed revolving stage to draw on revolving architecture in the theatre, and actively insert the performers' bodies back into the aural and oral world of the play. The rotating stage or door presents the body as decipherable. This could be read as coding the actor's body in a way that is easily recognisable and constructed as object. At the same time, this body is neither mute, nor absent when presented through a spot-lit mouth. Although physically separated from its speaking orifice, this body is also speaking. Dwan speaks of the physical effort required for the voice to have a particular resonance.

I approach the text like a dancer, so I find the internal rhythm and the overall arc in the poetry first and I feel that throughout my body. I approach it in a physical, emotional way.⁶³

As demonstrated in this statement, Dwan outlines that her body is already present within the delivery and sound of the text. In a written response about rehearsing for the role with Whitelaw's assistance, she speaks of the 'neck strain, the hernias, the stroke-inducing stress of it' and the 'development of pelican-like jowls for spit collection, since there is no time to swallow.'⁶⁴ The physical controls of the body are on display within the piece, the actor's own internal rhythms give shape and force to the text. And the text becomes different each time through these rhythms. In seeing the MOUTH speak, the audience already imagines the body behind it, but cannot grasp it in their 'eye', 'I' or 'aye.'⁶⁵

63 Lisa Dwan in Kan, "Finding the hope in the one-woman plays of Samuel Beckett."

64 Lisa Dwan, "Mouth Almighty: How Billie Whitelaw Helped Me Find Beckett and *Not I*," *American Theatre*, April 12 2016, accessed May 29, 2016, <http://www.americantheatre.org/2016/04/12/mouth-almighty-how-billie-whitelaw-helped-me-find-beckett-and-not-i/>.

65 Cixous begins the section about *Not I* with the surtitle NOT AYE. Aye meaning ever, or always, referring to the presence of God. Cixous, *Zero's neighbour: Sam Beckett*, 48.

The body backs into the MOUTH and speaks from and within it.

An unheard-of sentence which lets go of nothing. Resists. Not let go (of I). I never there.

Prowls. Already heard Not I weaken.⁶⁶

The words cannot simply float eight feet above stage, but require the body, mind and engine of the performers who play MOUTH.⁶⁷ I think back to Clark's writing on *Baba antropofágica* to 'construct with the body a space for the word.'⁶⁸ I understand this statement to mean that speaking after a bodily experience changes the abstraction of the experience as well as the words around it. The words and the body are both changed through this process. My current staging of *Not I* is similar to a marionette puppet show; the excluded body pulls the strings of MOUTH. The performing speaking voice of MOUTH is a staged Möbius strip, at the precarious breaking point between the words she speaks and her corporeal body. In my mind, the slow revolving of the stage continues as the audience leaves the theatre, grumbling and unsure about this new staging.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 50.

⁶⁷ In another recent 2017 production of *Not I* by Jess Thom in Britain at the Battersea Arts Centre, the work was presented with a conversation at the end of the play. Thom performed the play strapped into her wheelchair 8 feet in the air and described how she related to the character's feeling of disembodiment through her Tourette's syndrome. Thom described the rapid force of the words, where scripted language was presented with her verbal and kinetic ticks. Describing the script, Thom states, 'like a sausage dog in a masturbating tortoise... Urm... Maybe not quite like that. I relate to the idea of not being able to recognise your voice.' The light emphasising the MOUTH was stitched into Thom's costume so as to follow her body. Thom describes how she is interested in pulling apart and using the conventions of the play to think through how words and lack of control of them can challenge contemporary ideas around disability. She uses the play to think through neuro-diverse approaches to language. The discussion following the play creates a complex place to think through the surprises of the scripted language in the play, as well as her performance of it. She grounds the work quite specifically in her body and her articulation of the work. In Emma Robdale, "BBC Two's Documentary 'Me, My Mouth and I' : Biscuits! Fuck a Goat! Hedgehog!" *Disability Arts Online*, July 27, 2018, accessed December 24, 2018, <http://disabilityarts.online/magazine/opinion/bbc-twos-documentary-me-my-mouth-and-i-biscuits-fuck-a-goat-hedgehog/>. See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bwv8riGhOcw>, Arts Council Britain promotional video.

⁶⁸ Eleanora Fabião "The Making of a Body: Lygia Clark's *Anthropophagic Slobber*," *Lygia Clark: The Abandonment of Art 1948-1988*, Exhibition Catalogue ed. Luis Pérez-Oramas, Cornelia Butler (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2014), 298. Participant Fabião continues, 'Speech acts and hearing acts traversed by moments of speechless vertigo, that, like slobbered threads, continue piercing and suturing the body; opening it, penetrating the skin; suck the contents to the surface.'

When working with Melissa Deerson on *Some Scenes inlaid not in wood but in speech*, (Melbourne Art Theatre, 2018) we constructed a large ceramic cone that blocks the face from the audience and similar to the prescribed staging in *Not I*, separates listening from speaking.⁶⁹ The cone became a block separating mouth from body, but did not disembodify the performer's mouth entirely. A performer's body makes scripted possibilities—of ellipsis and repetition—change with their specific physical and emotional worlds. The cone could be swapped between mouths and be picked up and discarded as required. We also toyed with how a voice cannot be entirely disembodied. In Figure 21, the speaker separated their hand from the rest of their body in a slapstick way behind a curtain, holding a phone that played their voice. We consistently played with how a body is disembodied and then dislocated, but brought back into the scene in a different way. The ceramic cone was a prop and set object that has been further developed as sculptural objects.⁷⁰ The ceramic cone speaker stands in for the body and becomes entirely apparatus.

69 Melissa Deerson and Briony Galligan, *Some scenes inlaid not in wood but in speech*, May 14 2018, performance, 28 minutes, at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Gossard Theatre, curated by John Nixon.

70 This is part of the work I am presenting for the Monash Masters of Fine Art exhibition, Melbourne 2019.



Figure 15 Melissa Deerson and Briony Galligan, *Some Scenes inlaid not in wood but in speech*, May 14 2018, performance, 28 minutes, Melbourne Art Theatre, Gossard Theatre, RMIT, curated by John Nixon, performance still. Photo credit: Jacqui Shelton.

July 2018, Narrm/Melbourne

I blindfold myself, place earplugs in and record my voice speaking as fast as I can trying to remember the words of Not I, inserting my own thinking as I go.

Small and lightly pawed, reading his book, when suddenly...she starts to speak...speak...yes...where?...from the couch. ..what...walking tooo fast, what her stride smaller than mine..reaching out her legs, struggling to keep up. She stretches them as far as she can. I am walking, she runs...runs. Aaaahhhh...

Buttoned up legs. Stitched up, nothing of any note. Just a great height. Difference...We walk along the creek. By creek I mean drain... Drain, stormwater drain. She needs another rest. Aaaaaah..ah.. rest...rest...rest.....rrrrrrressst...Struggling to keep up with the pace of the words, coming out of my mouth. Her current research is about sphincters. Two channel part. An internal and external. Voluntary and involuntary.

I start rewriting the stage directions, thinking about how to use my mouth like a puppet and make a stage for the show.

[Large hospital curtain drawn. Dim Lighting. Fawn and pink. Soft. Safety. Apocalyptic. Silence behind the curtain, indecipherable, stands visible below, 10 seconds, the curtain is opened.]



Figure 16 and 17. Melissa Deerson and Briony Galligan, *Some Scenes inlaid not in wood but in speech*, May 14 2018, performance, 28 minutes, Melbourne Art Theatre, Gossard Theatre, RMIT, Melbourne 2018, curated by John Nixon. Performance still. Photo credit: Jacqui Shelton.

January 2019, Narrm/Melbourne

In the Masters of Fine Art exhibition, I re-digest the reimagining of 'Not I', not as a performance on a revolving stage, but as a series of sculptures waiting for a mouth. In the exhibition space, MOUTH and the REVOLVING DOOR are sculptures. The viewer touches the characters of MOUTH and REVOLVING DOOR as they repeat themselves in written language that can be touched on Möbius strips made of clay and paper. The words function as a loop, MOUTH's voice ruminating between her body and the scripted words, REVOLVING DOOR between the corporate body and materials of its construction. Instead of an entirely black theatrical setting, the curtain in the space alludes to theatre, yet is also modelled on hospital privacy curtains that compartmentalise individual bodies and patients within a larger room. The curtain organises and manipulates the viewer into a particular spatial formation, being inside or outside the curtain. The sculptures inside the curtain are strapped onto black speaker stands. Constructed from clay, the impression of my hands has been transformed through the kiln and vitrified. The sculptures are imagined as apparatuses ready and waiting for viewer's mouths to start to speak.



Figure 18 Briony Galligan, *spatial relief*, 2019, studio work in progress, glazed ceramic, mouth.



Figure 19 Briony Galligan, *Look for her*, 2017, pencil on paper, 15 x 21 cm.

In my 2017 exhibition *Haul Body*, I imagine a scene inside the gallery space.⁷¹ I write a script in developing the exhibition to assist organising my thoughts.

The student film crew were due to stand in the centre of the circle with all their gear. They felt embarrassed, so the artist changed the script and they are now positioned at the edge. A headless horse saunters past in a loop. She has words pinned onto her tail.

HELLO?

HELLO!

Everything in the set is fake. It might read like skin or like silk. It is plastic, stripped from the earth, extruded and changed in its sensible textures.

...

The artist descends the staircase to answer the phone. The horse picks up another receiver and listens in. She is kept in a carpark, standing on compacted earth, straw and her own muck by my house in Kensington. She is creature kept as vehicle. Practical. Majestic. Beautiful. It is late at night. There is one halogen light and the purple din cast underneath the freeway. The artist hangs up the phone, the photographer hangs up the phone, the horse hangs up the phone. The photographer asks the horse if she has been eavesdropping again.

Horse: Yes if you saw me and no if you didn't.

Photographer: Well I saw you and you should be ashamed of yourself.

⁷¹ *Haul Body*, live performance, 15 minutes with Melissa Deerson, Alex Cuffe and Swinburne University Students; installation including latex, aluminium frame, enamel, my mother's shoes, ribbon, velvet, lamb leather, cotton, wool, horse dung dyed fabric, dental floss, acrylic, rubber horse blinkers, acrylic coat hangers, Westpace, Narm/Melbourne (1 Sep – 7 Oct 2017).



Figure 20 *Edward on a trail ride through the Dandenongs*, research image, 2018, Photo: Briony Galligan.

22 January 2018

I am researching possible ways humans imagine the figure of the horse and the horse's mouth. As part of this, I went horse-riding in the Dandenongs for the first time on the weekend. My horse, a blonde-bombshell called Edward misbehaved and refused to budge, only wanting to eat grass. The tour operators told me to hold a riding crop where he could see it, that even the sight of it would make him walk. The guide threatened Edward in English; "when I get you home Ed I'm going to ride you like a rental car." I was riding Mr Ed and I didn't know.

In this chapter, I look at the horse's mouth, where representation and speech blur. The horse's mouth is where linguistic and psychological structures are both tightly controlled, yet there is some kind of resistant slipperiness and desire made possible from inside of it. I consider the horse's mouth through my script for a performance and through two scenes in *Mr Ed*.⁷² The horse's mouth speaks, slobbers, digests, and breathes; actions that refute the bit inside its mouth controlling what the animal sees. I also anchor my work around Rolnik's idea of 'slobber' and digestion where distinctions between a molecular or bodily shift, and macropolitical discourse fall away. The horse's mouth unmoors speech from how it is ordinarily controlled.

⁷² "The First Meeting", *Mr Ed* (pilot), directed by Rod Amateau, written by Sonia Cernu, William Burns, Irving Elinson, Robert O'Brien, Phil Shuken, screened January 5, 1961, Los Angeles: CBS/syndication, accessed November 1 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H2sVCCqfUFI>.



Figure 21 *Wallace's Hoof*, 1917, horse hoof and silver in acrylic display case, 20 x 25 cm, exhibited alongside my work "she must learn to move in circles", at the Bundoora Homestead in *We*, a group exhibition curated by Renee Cosgrave. This object is a sawn off horse hoof, with a silver encrusted top. I exhibited the film documentation from the *Haul Body* performance on an i-pad resting in a horse blanket. Wallace lived at Bundoora Homestead, 1892-1917 and was a champion racehorse. His foot appears like jewellery or dinner ware.

The horse's mouth is a threshold

My initial instinct to connect my mouth to a horse's process of digestion was a material one, a way to 'kiss the horse's arse'.⁷³ I had been working with silk, and thinking about the digestion of the silk worm, where the worms excrete silk both through their mouths, but also their arseholes. This project began as I was passing the horse stables on Stubbs St, Kensington near my house on the way to and from work and my studio. In 2016, I collected horse shit and hand stitched textiles from the horse-dung dyed fabric, silk, and dental floss. Actually, I didn't collect the horse shit, I felt too anxious and ashamed, my friend collected it 'for her garden' shovelling it into supermarket plastic bags as I waited around the corner, unsure I could explain my instincts to turn dung into art. I think drawing this connection is about a process: of making textiles, utilising dung as though tanning leather, and creating a connection (digestion and rumination) between my body and the horses' body. In my garden, I rubbed the dung into the fabric with my hands, it was a lot like gardening or cleaning. I also started to touch symbolic horses and horse statues. I made rubbings of the sculpture of Saint George out the front of the State Library of Victoria, where the dragon meets Saint George on a horse, where the human, the horse and a fantastical beast are all entwined. Rosie Isaac came with me. I brought a ladder. Within fifteen minutes security guards called the police; touching a public sculpture is not illegal, but the ladder wasn't authorised.

The horse's mouth might not be a place where the horse always speaks the words she means, it might be more like a threshold, where language is playful and conventional meaning can be slightly unhinged.⁷⁴ In *Mr Ed*, the palomino constantly speaks to interfere in human affairs. The pilot episode in 1961, (directed by Rod Amateau)

73 Phrase from Fiona Macdonald in conversation, January 10, 2019.

74 Elizabeth Newman on the dangers of saying what you mean and meaning what you say: 'Call me crazy, but what I see is a world of secret drone strikes, secret prisons, indefinite detentions, and brutalization



Figure 22 Briony Galligan, *Studies*, 2017, horse dung, dragon fruit, cotton, silk, polyester, dental floss, each piece 35 x 90 cm approx.

and silencing of those who question these illegal activities. Add to that the increasing powers of corporations to arrange the world to suit themselves better and you get a fuller picture. Concurrent with and indicative of this change in social relations is a growing intolerance for the indeterminacy and polyvalence of representation and language; its inherent feature, you could say. Rejecting polyvalence and indeterminacy, language is increasingly used in a blunt way, as a rigid tool that restricts, that fixes references, and ties words to things.' Elizabeth Newman, "The distance between representation and domination or...why we don't want 'a government that says what it means, and means what it says,'" *Das Superpaper* 31 (June 2014): 27, accessed November 10 2017, http://liangluscombe.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/DAS_7398_1WEB.pdf.

introduces the idea of the speaking horse who comes with the recently purchased house of the newlywed couple, Carol and Wilbur Post.⁷⁵ As they enter their house for the first time, Carol asks Wilbur, ‘aren’t you going to carry me over the threshold?’ Wilbur groans and struggles to lift his wife then realises he can’t find the keys to his new house. He hands his wife to the next-door neighbour who has joined them on the front lawn. Wilbur returns, keys in-hand to carry Carol ‘over the threshold’ or through the front door. It is a stereotypically gendered scene where the ‘threshold’, or difference between outside and inside the house is navigated (and also botched) by the patriarchal figurehead. Moving inside the house is moving more fully into the capitalist nuclear family and the act describes a settling of gendered positions and of the Law. Throughout the pilot episode, Carol and Wilbur constantly kiss, interrupted on four occasions by their nosey neighbour. In a sense, there are many thresholds, not just the front door; there is also the site of the human mouths’ kissing and the entrance to the horse stable with Mr Ed’s speaking mouth another kind of threshold. I think each threshold marks a place between public and private, between multiple bodies. The kiss, the stable entrance and the horse’s speaking mouth are very different kinds of thresholds. The audience knows the horse isn’t really speaking, yet in *Mr Ed*, ‘the threshold’ of the horse’s mouth at moments can produce a space of alterity and doubt. When Mr Ed starts talking to Wilbur, his first words are ‘how now brown cow.’ When Wilbur speaks about how he ‘just doesn’t understand it’ [the phenomena of the talking horse] Mr Ed responds, ‘don’t try to, it’s bigger than both of us.’ In navigating who can speak and on what terms, the speaking horse becomes ‘bigger’ than the bodies of those who speak, language becomes something that is not fixed to the speaker, or to understanding.

75 “The First Meeting”, *Mr Ed*.

The speaking horse plays language games between what is believed to be true and pleasure, testing various linguistic constructions. Narrm/Melbourne based artist, writer and psychoanalyst Elizabeth Newman writes about the dangers of meaning what you say and saying what you mean, referring to the limits in political speech, where language is used to fix and silence a position, tying words so neatly to things, rather than allowing for the indeterminacy of language.⁷⁶ She traces how emerging liberalism in the eighteenth century emphasised representation, ‘a concern with the possibility of perception and statements’ rather than *meaning* that has to be learned and believed.⁷⁷

The speaking horse becomes a cipher to bridge the communication divide between the couple, assisting them to navigate their relationship and the social forces shaping and surrounding the couple’s white, middle-class, post-war American experience. Much of the humour in *Mr Ed* involves speaking the unspeakable, an animal speaking and playing with language itself. Shortly after Wilbur carries his wife through the threshold, he meets Mr Ed and forms a rapport. Mr Ed is sarcastic and dry, with a deep authoritative voice. ‘How now brown cow,’ Mr Ed’s first words to Wilbur, are a complex, entirely meaningless statement. The common thread between the words is the opening of the mouth to announce the ‘ow’ sound, warming the mouth up to articulate something else. The horse is saying words that assist in announcing speech. They also reflect an animal speaking and naming another animal. In this way, the horse is scripted into language by using the sounds of language to subvert it. In *Mr Ed*, language, although often conventional, is usually indeterminate in meaning, the humour stems from how Mr Ed is able to use words that fool and that are not neat fact.

76 Newman, 27.

77 Ibid., 27-28. Newman describes Tony Abbott saying that a parliamentary candidate was ‘pretty sexy’ and not filtering or censoring comments: ‘It’s much better, I believe, to exist in this realm of language and representation - the realm of “*why did he say that? what does it mean?*” - the realm of the desiring and divided subject - than to live in a world where our speech is a site of surveillance, and value is compressed into a fact.’

...

The horse's head and flank appear out of the container. The horse flares her nostrils to speak, voice dubbed to match. She meddles in people's phone calls, rifles through calendars, tracks time like an alarm clock. The phone rings again.

...

Artist: Hello?

Photographer: Hello!

The horse hunts for the phone call with her mouth, tongue dripping over the earpiece of her receiver.

Artist: What's all that heavy breathing?

Photographer: What do you mean?

Artist: I can hear you.

Photographer: Hear what?

Artist: I guess it's nothing.

Plumed in ostrich, a pumpkin-shaped carriage sits waiting on the back of a semi-trailer for the horse. The day warming up. The shit shovelling up. The fog clearing over the river. She hauls her body up and down city streets past public garden beds tended by an international logistics company that manage traffics lights, public transport information and immigration detention centres.

...



Figure 23 Briony Galligan, *Call a horse a horse #1 #2 #3*, 2017, leather, polyester, velvet, cotton, rubber horse blinkers, acrylic, coat hangers. Photo credit: Christo Crocker.

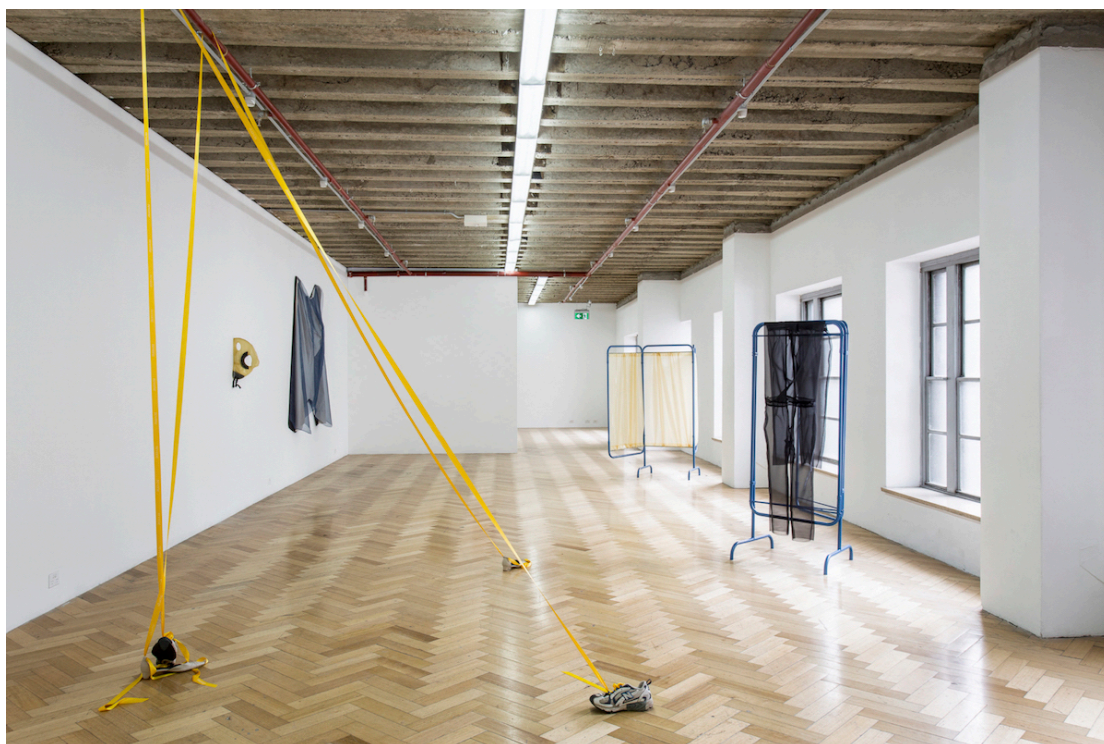


Figure 24 and 25 Briony Galligan *Haul Body*, 2017, installation view, West Space, Melbourne. Photo credit: Christo Crocker.

Heavy breathing/ desire and shame

I can't help but read the sexuality of the onscreen kissing in *Mr Ed*'s pilot alongside the speaking horse's mouth and the family home. These connections between the social mechanisms of control of sexuality through marriage and the law and the desire of the kissing butt up against each other, but also seem to echo within the horse's mouth. If the horse speaks, then what remains unspoken or unknowable? The horse's mouth is not necessarily an extension of the human body, Mr Ed has agency to make jokes and watch TV, yet the horse is spoken by a human ventriloquist. The horse's mouth cannot be entirely claimed as controlled, yet it wears human costumes, restraining measures such as the bit where the mouth experiences punishment for the horse to learn human behavioural patterns and desire. I think the restraint and control of the horse and how it behaves are also connected to other forms of control in the couple's relationship. There is also room here to play with or conflate these various controls and the ways they are dressed up.

The sexuality in all the episodes of *Mr Ed*, where tensions between the couple are the source of each plot-line, seem to relate to constructions of white, male Christianity; docility at home, yet violence in the world. In medieval relationships between knights and their steeds, bodily contact was harnessed as an extension of power and speed through both the man and the horse connected through the stirrup. The stirrup creates an 'augmented tactile system', or an appendage that connects the two bodies. J.J. Cohen, a researcher of Medieval history, argues that the horse is hardly passive material, and the knight hardly all-controlling human. The stirrup, 'supposedly inanimate', when in use becomes a thing that creates a passage between the two; the stirrup 'possesses body and soul indissolubly.'⁷⁸ The sexuality of the appendage like the stirrup can also be seen in

⁷⁸ Artist/collaborator Melissa Deerson wrote to me via email about medieval chivalry: 'how men and horses were bound together like lovers and like centaurs, horses crying for their knights and knights

‘the thresholds’ described in *Mr Ed*—the kissing couple, Wilbur carrying Carol through the front door with the key, the speaking horse’s mouth and the bit, through saliva, the air in the open door between inside and outside, the horse mouth movements that mime speaking. Each threshold connects bodies through appendages and creates new passages between bodies.

I make an exhibition of objects and costumes mostly for myself and an imaginary horse. These consist of a horse blanket of woollen jacket felt and transparent polyester chiffon, various horse racing masks made by me, as well as two interior privacy screen objects, one with the panels revealed, the other with latex panels. The horse costumes—scrims to keep flanks warm, or masks to assist in shooing the flies away—are a cross between underpants and blankets, human ideas of dignity, clothing and comfort made to horse dimensions, codifying anthropomorphic ideas of decency and care for the animal. The shop assistant at the Ascot Saddlery tells me I am seeing the costumes as decoration, when I need to understand their function. ‘Can you imagine getting the flies out of your face if you didn’t have hands?’ I think how much the horses’ masks look like bras, so I go to the change room and try one on. I find a fly mask made of stretch lycra and polyester chiffon and commission a fetish-wear latex designer called Rubber Kitty, to make horse masks from latex to my patterns. She is intrigued by the project. ‘Just out of interest,’ she asks, ‘where do you get the horse blinkers?’ She will make my racing mask, but won’t follow the fly mask pattern as there is no way for the horse to breathe. She is worried about the horse’s welfare. I explain it’s not for a horse, it’s for art. This doesn’t seem to register. She sends me a long list of instructions about the properties in latex that might

leaving their wives for their steeds, this way of having an army of dangerous violent men but keeping them tamed and restrained at the same time, channelling their power into love of both horses and rules.’ email from the artist, July 13, 2018. Melissa Deerson also plays the circling horse in the performance. These references are from J.J. Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines* (Minneapolis/St Paul: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 14.



Figure 26 Briony Galligan, *Drawing a circle of her own muck*, 2017, latex, rubber horse blinkers, plastic and aluminium fixings, coat hanger. Photo credit: Christo Crocker.



Figure 27 Briony Galligan *Haul Body*, 2017, wool coat felt, cotton, polyester. Photo credit: Cristo Crocker.

cause an allergic reaction in my horse, and what I should use to protect the horse's hair. For her, fetish-wear for a horse is feasible and interesting work, art sounds like a suffocating lie. The latex horse mask arrives the day before the exhibition opens and looks like a glistening wet fish. My reading of my own work as an object is limiting when Rubber Kitty is already considering the mask as an appendage—an 'augmented tactile system' or threshold between the human and the horse.

Mr Ed's eavesdropping makes me wonder if a horse can feel ashamed, or makes me wonder why I might consider that a horse could feel shame. The poet Anne Carson writes that 'psychoanalysts say that shame cuts through reverie, making cracks where it is difficult for thought to wander.'⁷⁹ I am reminded here of the episode "Mr Ed agrees to talk" (1961, directed by Arthur Lubin), where Ed intercepts a phone call between Carol and the neighbour.⁸⁰ Both women think that the other is breathing heavily, unaware Ed is listening in. I think about the confusion of who is breathing and the women also considering that perhaps it is Wilbur breathing.⁸¹ Mr Ed places the phone on the ledge in the barn, because he has no way to listen with his mouth. Mr Ed's heavy breath could be thought of as a space similar to linguistic edges, like paraphrasing or ellipsis, some more undefinable and undubbed expression of horse-ness in the middle of the conversation.⁸² The horse for that moment unnerves both women over the phone. Wilbur enters the barn as Mr Ed hangs up the phone, dropping the receiver with a quick cut-away shot of wet

79 Anne Carson, "Shame Stack," *Float* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart: 2016).

80 "Mr Ed Agrees to Talk," *Mr Ed*, Season 1, Episode 20, accessed November 1, 2017 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H2sVCCqfUFI>.

81 Fiona Macdonald suggests, 'I also think that Wilbur's shame was in his unfaithfulness to Carol though his relationship with Mr Ed. Their secret relationship that is bigger than both of them.' Email to me, Jan 8 2019.

82 In *Counterpath* Jacques Derrida and Catherine Malabou compare linguistic structure of the edge, the translation, the paraphrase, the margin or 'border' to a labyrinthine structure like the interior of the ear: 'a partition in a delicate, differentiated structure whose orifices may always remain unfindable, and whose entry and exit may be barely passable.' They consider the edges between imagined national boundaries and dividing lines in textual constructions where there are intangible lines which are confronted or 'pushed against either deliberately or indirectly'. See also Chapter 2 for discussion about Cixous and ellipsis. Jacques Derrida and Catherine Malabou, *Counterpath: Travelling with Jacques Derrida* (Redwood City, Stanford University Press: 2004), 166.

slobber dripping from the falling receiver. He asks Mr Ed if he has been eavesdropping again, to which Mr Ed replies, ‘Yes if you saw me and no if you didn’t.’ Wilbur tells the horse he should be ashamed of himself. Shame is constructed by Mr Ed as something that requires the eyes of the human other, Wilbur. Rather than a socialised process of internal self-control, Mr Ed avoids expressing shame, instead asking Wilbur to decide if he should feel it based on witnessing his actions. This feels like a moment where the standard procedures of control are called into question. In his breathing, and the words he speaks, resistant forms of subjectivity could be imagined in the horse’s mouth; Mr Ed listens and responds with his breath. Mr Ed makes it clear that shame is Wilbur’s human field. Yet, Mr Ed is also a well-trained horse, mouthing words that writers wrote for the voiceover actor to speak, the words about shame make the audience aware of their relationship to their own socially-sanctioned behaviours. For the audience, we don’t hear Mr Ed’s breathing; there is only silence, and what we hear is the women’s conversation about it.

...

The artist first met the photographer when they were taking photos of their artwork. The photographer didn’t make things look entirely spectacular, which they liked. The photographer came to the shoot fully briefed, wearing soft cottons and knee pads.⁸³ They were the best part of the performance, kneeling for all the good shots, moving into the light at the right time.

...

83 As described in Chapter 2, I commissioned a photographer, Christian Capurro to take photographs of a performance event at Heide Museum of Modern Art.



Figure 28 Briony Galligan, *eavesdropping*, 2016, pencil on paper, 29 x 21 cm.

Artist: Now I want you to have a speaking role.

Photographer: I don't feel comfortable with your words in my mouth.

Artist: I like you putting images into my words. Can you take an image of the bit that gets me inserted into the horse's mouth?

Photographer: Can you imagine what you'd see if you had eyes on the side of your head?

Artist: I want to be the bit inside her mouth that controls what she sees.

Photographer: Tender sinew giving way when you hit it hard.

Artist: Gums pulling her back from the periphery.

Photographer: To the mound below.

Artist: To the road just ahead.

Photographer: In under her feet.

The horse struggles to make plans to manage the future. Circling was a big part of her training, her body learning to move in loops and now she takes solace in that skill. Vision extends from her sideways and echoes back around her body. She is almost able to see herself.

Artist: What's all that heavy breathing?

Photographer: What do you mean?

The artist has started to wear the horse's racing mask as a bra in an attempt to keep up.

The horse is hard to follow. The artist tries to take notes.

Chewing and slobbering as circular motion and the ethics of embodying otherness

In thinking about the actions of Mr Ed, most of the focus is on the horse's mouth as a site of speech; in each action the animality and mouthy gestural constructions of eating, chewing or slobbering rarely appear. This absence of bodily process is distinct and deliberate. Mr Ed is so clean. The stables are shared between Mr Ed and Wilbur, where

he has his home office as an architect. Shit and muck are never seen and the horse is kept in controlled conditions much like the interior of the couple's Los Angeles home. I read the absent gestures of horse-ness as a way to enforce an order built on 'subjectivation,' defined within the working and psychological conditions of American capitalism, where power is cemented through bureaucracy, history and psychoanalysis.⁸⁴ In contrast to this, Rolnik refers to the subject produced in resistance to capitalism as 'the knowing-body.' In a way, the idea of Mr Ed as a speaking horse places him further within a capitalist subjectivity. Yet in the rare moments where his horse's mouth can be a horse's mouth, or where his horse-ness is inferred in the heavy breathing on the phone call, there are stranger possibilities that vibrate through the controlled order.

Rolnik writes of the poetic and political potential of chewing and digestion, and in particular anthropophagy, as a way to consider how 'the body' comes to know itself, antithetical to how Mr Ed is often structured; whilst he is able to speak *despite* his horse body, there are few moments when he can express himself from or in it. For Rolnik, this process where the body of the Other is eaten (absorbed and digested into the self only after becoming part of the community) is a way to understand and integrate difference at the level of the body. As outlined in Chapter 1, Rolnik expands this as a process that was developed by Brazilian modernist artists as a process of cultural creation.⁸⁵ She defines the 'anthropophagic' as a process of producing subjectivity constituted by the absence of stable values, 'giving rise to a plasticity of the contours of subjectivity (instead of identities).'⁸⁶ In this way, anthropophagy could be seen as the continuing and ongoing construction and digestion of resistant formations of subjectivity, shaped through desire. I really want Mr Ed's speaking mouth to be a place where this

84 Guattari and Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, 226.

85 Ibid., 3. Rolnik cites Modernist poet Oswald de Andrade's *Anthropophagic Manifesto* of 1928.

86 Ibid.

difference can be integrated. Yet, it's not really about how Mr Ed consumes otherness, it is more about how 'we' consume otherness by letting a horse mouth be a horse mouth and not speaking for it. This sense of digestion is described by Rolnik as a collective and ethical process:

a certain state of the body, in which its nerve fibres vibrate to the music of the universes connected by desire... a tolerance to the pressure that such unfamiliar affects exercise on subjectivity so it will incarnate them, re-inventing itself, becoming other.⁸⁷

There are small moments where this does happen, like the breathing interference/slobber on the phone that vibrate oddly through the show, destabilising the inescapable formula of prescribed gender roles and monogamy, the obsession with making domestic life, television, radio, and keeping up appearances with the neighbours. But for the most part, the horse's mouth is dubbed over, we can't hear it.

The bit in the horse's mouth

In my script, the horse's mouth can't be represented, the human doesn't have full control. Yet in wanting the horse's mouth to be in my work, I am also not letting it be a horse's mouth. The horse's mouth is a Möbius strip, a place of desire for me. Writing the horse's mouth is impossible, I can only write the bit that controls it into my script, a relationship to control of speech and vision. A horse sees in 360 degrees, the bit inside the horse's mouth pulls focus to what is immediately in front of or below them. The bit can scar the jaw and mouth of a misbehaving horse. The idea of looking into the horse's mouth connects an external image (the damage to the mouth) to the internal

⁸⁷ Rolnik, "Um e/entre Outro/s," 11. Slobber could also be thought of as potential resistance in *the horse's mouth* to speaking.

control that the horse must exercise.⁸⁸ Yet, rather than a neat loop, or symbol of *truth*, the horse's mouth resists being the subject of the work because of shifts within the scripted text. I imagine the horse's mouth positioned as a camera. Rolnik expands on the connections between change at the level of the body and creating texts that unsettle and unmoor meaning.

the text is never a coherent, conceptual construction closed in upon itself, constituting a representation on abstraction within which meaning resides, and in which each concept finds its place. The text is never that kind of burrow in which we could snuggle and have the impression that, whether dialectically or not, everything has always been under control, and is now and will be evermore.⁸⁹

Rolnik in this way closely mirrors Newman's desire for doing away with words tied directly to objects. The bit, and language, can also prohibit alterity and control subjectivities and experiences. However, the bit functions to control the horse's mouth and vision quite directly. I started to think of my script as the bit for the horse. But rather than thinking of the script as a controlling bit, could I think of it as an appendage?

My work as an appendage

I want the costumes and objects in my work to operate as appendages, connections between human and animal bodies where language and sensory experience operate in relation. At the same time, the script as a bit limits the focus of the horse to what immediately surrounds it, it simplifies how horses are depicted in a pantomime-like loop. The script and the written horse are so distant from the actual sound or movements of an animal, yet I don't ascribe any speaking to the horse. With the words and the characters, I

88 From a conversation with artist Kara Baldwin about riding horses as a teenager. Looking into or hearing from the horse's mouth itself is a linguistic sign for the truth of representation, and something necessary before the horse is bought or sold in determining the value of the horse.

89 Guattari and Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, 224.

want there to be a pull between the mouth as within the body, and the desire for a controlled, coherent narrative. Yet, through the appendage, like a stirrup, mask, or words themselves, an object that connects bodies can make a bodily shift as a point of exchange between subjects.

...

Recently, there has been talk of knocking the photographer and the horse off their plinths. Colonial sculptures are like dreams, easily spooked. The horse's body is in the carpark and at rallies with the police but her words aren't there.⁹⁰ All image, all front in training, she is introduced to flags, banners, drums, the human noise of resistance. Flight is in her bones. Giant beach balls accustom her to the force required to move bodies. She must learn to be a sculpture.

...

90 In Georgina Downey's essay, "Becoming-horse: Jenny Watson, Art Orienté Objet and Berlinde de Bruckjere," Downey charts the inherent impossibilities of becoming a horse. This is useful in relation to Rolnik's ideas to expand an idea for human-ness that recognises non-human subjects. Downey cites Freud's study of the agoraphobic five-year old known as Little Hans. 'Hans had become obsessed with horses after seeing one fall down in the streets of Vienna. Freud put his symptoms down to castration anxiety, caused by the boy's observation of the horse's 'très grandes fait-pipis'. [very large penis] Deleuze and Guattari counter this by arguing that Freud 'fitted the theory to the patient' rather than allowing for the possibility that Hans experienced a 'becoming', that is, his self-consciousness disappeared, borders dissolved and this identification led him to 'becoming horse.' This idea connects with Rolnik's theoretical position. Rather than castration anxiety, the boy has been confronted with the creatureness of the animal, and recognises his own creatureness and is changed through this. Georgina Downey, "Becoming-horse: Jenny Watson, Art Orienté Objet and Berlinde de Bruckjere," *Artlink* 38, no. 1 (March 2018): 48.



Figure 29 Briony Galligan, *screen*, 2017, enamel on aluminium, polyster, installation view, West Space, Melbourne, Photo credit: Christo Crocker.

Part-way through the *Haul Body* exhibition I present a performance using a costume hanging from an empty medical privacy screen. When I made the horse costume, I didn't think of it as a Möbius strip. I thought of it as two interconnected pairs of black chiffon pants. Without a body, the costume was a flat shadow, all seams and outline. There was no space for an imagined horse's head, its mouth only conjured through recorded description. During the performance, the performer's arms and legs become the headless horse's limbs. The performer's head sat inside the costume, somewhere between the belly and the crotch of the pants. I think about how the control exercised in the city outside the gallery leaks in. Tristen Harwood writes about the way gridded space (such as Melbourne's Hoddle grid) is aimed at 'controlling whatever it conceives.' The dominant European rendering of space epistemologically reduces and flattens complex ecological and human relationships, rather than recognising the lived processes, social, cultural and ceremonial practices that enliven space.⁹¹ I have set up a controlled series of movements for the performer, fellow artist and collaborator, Melissa Deerson. Walk in a circle, look at the camera. The photographer, Alex Cuffe, knows how to rollerblade and loops around the gallery. The horse walks in circles on all fours, posing for the camera. Like the exhibition, the performance is presentational, front-on like *Mr Ed*, a problem I don't know how to deal with yet.

91 Tristen Harwood, a descendant of Marra peoples, living and working in Wurundjeri Country, "Love and decolonization in actu," *un Magazine* 10, no. 2, (2016): 15-16. Harwood discusses the settler colonial technique of mapping space. Harwood frames his discussion with a description of Aboriginal boundaries as 'string-like, dividing, re-converging and weaving storied webs of connection.' This is part of a longer article and review of Léuli Eshragi's curatorial project and exhibition *Ua numi le fau* (6 May–25 June 2016) at Gertrude Contemporary, Melbourne



Figure 30 Briony Galligan, *Haul Body performance*, 2017, documentation taken by Alex Cuffe during the performance in her role as photographer, performer: Melissa Deerson, Photo: Alex Cuffe.

In a 1969 letter to Hélio Oiticica, Clark describes participatory experiences where, ‘the object isn’t to express a concept, but for the spectator to reach themselves.’ She describes a work:

after formulating these large plastic bags with my own lungs, when lying down on the floor in my flat I could touch, with a simple gesture, the ceiling. Which is no less than 6 metres high...It is as if I had created an egg of space that belongs to me and that embraces me.⁹²

I think of Rubber Kitty’s refusal to make the fly mask: she would like to do it next time she assured me, when there is more time to work out how the horse can breathe.

⁹² Lygia Clark letter in Claire Bishop ed., *Participation*, Documents of Contemporary Art Series, (London and Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2006), 114-115.



Figure 31 Briony Galligan, *Haul Body performance*, 2017, documentation taken by Swinburne University student film crew during the performance in their role as video documenters.

Conclusion

The Möbius strip has come to mark a process between the research and corporeal experience. Whilst the artwork I make isn't always sensory or tactile, I draw from Lygia Clark's work that renegotiates subjectivity as an inner sonorous space that changes possibilities for language within an external social order. When I develop work, it involves play, touch and conversation. In this body of work, text, and objects such as curtains, and the window frame, operate as 'the bit in the horses mouth,' that is, they control and direct the audience. At the same time, parts of the exhibition, such as the horse mask, or the horse costume, work more like an appendage. I see these objects as connected to the Möbius strip. They provide an exchange of energy between the animal/human, the performer/object and between the audience/artwork. Whilst I am critical of the idea that art can so neatly serve a macropolitical function, I am convinced that micropolitical change, at the level of the body, is necessary to undermine and shift broader psychological and linguistic structures of control. As this work and my practice unfold, I plan to continue to make objects, write and address some of these concerns through moving towards participatory and therapeutic modes. I love working with, making, touching and editing together objects and forms and I still want to give this sensory and object making desire time to unfold within my practice. Working more closely with other artists and viewers on who sets control and how seems like a next step in making work. With therapeutic modes of working, this will take time, maybe more than decades, but I am drawn to developing deep relationships and forms connected to transformation. I see the appendage objects as the very beginning of this.

January 3 2019

Möbius loops from paper, clay and ribbon weaving the empty foyer and its revolving door, with MOUTH's voice from 'Not I.' The viewer stands outside or inside the curtain, somehow sanitised and hospital-like, with opaque and transparent sections that reveal and conceal different parts of the exhibition space. A friend acting the part of a therapist opens the curtain. She places an eyedropper of honey on her lips and shines a torch inside her mouth. She is surrounded by a chorus of ceramic megaphones strapped in as appendages for invisible bodies, held tight on speaker stands. A muffled din is heard from the other room, words sounding more like a hum. A woman pretending to be a horse appears and poses for the viewer through a sheet of one-way surveillance mirror. A photographer captures the moment.



Figure 32 and 33 Briony Galligan, *Airlock installation images*, 2019, Masters of Fine Art presentation, Monash Art Design and Architecture, Dimensions variable. Photo credit: Christian Capurro



Figure 34 Briony Galligan, *Airlock installation images*, 2019. Features the work *Containment is an illusion*, aluminium curtain rail, calico, polyester netting, cotton, 2019. Photo credit: Christian Capurro

Figure 35 Briony Galligan, *Wall appendage*, 2019 window, one-way mirror film, 2019. Photo credit: Christian Capurro



Figure 36 Briony Galligan, *Airlock installation image*, ceramic works titled: *The buzzing*, aluminium speaker stands, glazed earthenware, steel, sand bags, boot polish steel attachment fabricated by Simone Tops, 2019. Photo credit: Christian Capurro

Figure 37 Briony Galligan, *Haul Body installation image*, 2019. Photo credit: Christian Capurro

List of related exhibitions and fieldwork

- 2016** “She imagines a city,” installation; dragonfruit, coffee, pomegranate, cochineal and commercially dyed cotton, polyester, synthetic polymer on pine, mirror-ball motor, photocopied publication and performance with Tace Kelly and Eva Popov in *The Kaleidoscopic Turn* curated by Sue Cramer, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Heidelberg

“Nothing Incarnadine,” installation; cotton, hand-dyed silk with plants from my mother’s garden, mirror ball motor, drawing, slide projected text, teak carved hands in *Jogja Calling* curated by Mikala Tai, 4A Centre for Asian Art, Sydney

“Wet wipe,” dirt on wet ones, cotton, dental floss, 3.2 metres x 2 metres in *The Lunchroom* curated by Jeremy Eaton, Kings ARI, Narrm/Melbourne

“Between the cemetery and the sky,” dirt on silk, pine, 18 metres x 55 centimetres in *Sanctuary for a flanellette*, Hawdon St Cemetery, Heidelberg

Dragon fruit belies image, horse dung on fabric, pencil on paper, watercolour on wet ones, digitally printed fabric. Comfort Station, Chicago with Tegan Brace

- 2017** *Haul Body*, live performance, 15 minutes with Melissa Deerson, Alex Cuffe and Swinburne University Students; installation including latex, aluminium frame, enamel, my mother’s shoes, ribbon, velvet, lamb leather, cotton, wool, horse dung dyed fabric, dental floss, acrylic, rubber horse blinkers, acrylic coat hangers, Westpace, Narrm/Melbourne

Boyd Studio show and work in progress, Southbank

Banff, November Independent Residency 2017, Canada

- 2018** Brazil, Research in Rio de Janeiro December 17 2017-Jan 3 2018

“Haul her Body,” woollen felt, calico, silk dyed with raspberries, velvet, cotton, acrylic, stones, i-pad showing adapted video documentation of the *Haul Body* performance, horse hoof with silver in acrylic box, in *We*, Bundoora Homestead, curated by Renee Cosgrave

Some scenes inlaid not in wood but in speech, collaborative work with Melissa Deerson, live performance, 30 minutes, Melbourne Art Theatre curated by John Nixon

- 2019** “shame making reverie making shame”, satin ribbon and mum’s shoes, exhibiting artists’ shoes, curators’ shoes, curators’ family’s shoes, my shoes, lover’s shoes, studio mate’s shoes, close friends’ shoes, in *Queer Economies* curated by Abbra Kotlarczyk and Madé Spencer-Castle, Bus Projects, Narrm/Melbourne

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