

GASWORKS 2017

Claudia Pagès

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1. Statement

In my work I make circulate conversations. Playing with technologies of the body as well as addressing the ways in which bodies, the economy and love are interconnected, I create performances, texts and objects to investigate how speech, song and spoken word emerge from bodies within communities and at sites of labor.

As my objects deal with distribution and circulation, the outcome of my texts also reshape each time becoming oral or written, printed matter or audios, ephemeral or eternal.

I see my research as an exploration of the uses and affects of language: the role it plays in defining class distinctions, as well as in power, gender and economic struggles. In particular I am interested in those moments where these struggles collapse amid overproduction anxiety and our tendency towards individualism. What kind of language is employed in those moments, and what are the objects that bear witness to them?

In my research I combine theoretical discourse, historical references - ancient mythology, epistemology or concrete historical events- and contemporary articles with the problems of contemporary everyday life. New problems emerge as a result of this combination, while old problems are re-complicated.

My practice can be separated into three different strands of work: objects, live performances, and publications. While in my textual practice, language is not only via but also material to investigate different uses of speaking, swallowing and registers, my objects maintain a socio-economic interest towards distribution systems, Pop-up engineering, time and growth and, at the same time they become spaces or structures to think, to speak.

2. GASWORKS

Over the past months I've been working in a series of works that emerge from an investigation about englishes, mother tongues and linguistic rhetorical forms like sayings, inside-jokes or insults.

The first of the series I made, consist in a book that works both as a flip-book - the right page becomes fast - and as a narration - on the left page the words have to be read slower. The book starts narrating a conflict that happens in a sublet house between flatmates. Written as a personal diary, the narration changes combining the description of the common context at home with the investigation of uses of language and injurious words in different contexts and etymologies of insults.

As a continuation of the book and second chapter, I worked on a radio-show that is life recorded in video so it can circulate both as a video and as an audio program. The radio-show combines music and talking about inside jokes, romance languages - comparing Latin and English -, and language as a contagious mechanism.

During the residency I would like to develop the third chapter of this series. Coming from a book - a compact text - then, combining words and music in the radio show, for the last piece, I would like to dilute as much as possible the future words to have music as the main structure. As the previous chapters have been written in Amsterdam and Madrid - two different context with different language struggles - I would like to create the texts for the last chapter in London, where English is the mother tongue of the majority, looking for uses of english that will work to define both labor and affects.

Meanwhile I've been writing and producing this series of chapters, I've been developing a series of objects and drawings that I understand as structures that only exist as structures to talk. A series of handmade glasses with engraved drawings, and "stairs" with pop-up engineering's made from the same materials as the floors they rest on. During the residency I would like to continue a more accurate investigation about the materials to use in those structures and create new ones.

3. CV

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Education

2014-16 MFA at Sandberg Instituut. Amsterdam. NL
2012-13 Exchange at Aalto University School of Art Design. Helsinki. FI
2008-13 Bachelor in Fine Arts, Universitat de Barcelona. ES
2009-11 Pattern design and Haute Couture. Escuela Superior de Diseño, Felicidad Duce. Barcelona. ES

Solo and duo exhibitions

2017 Post Verdad. With Rosell Meseguer. Curated by Violeta Janeiro. Salon. Madrid. ES
2016 You fall / with rage. Museu Abelló. Mollet del Vallés. ES
2016 Throat and Column. Festival of Choices. San Serriffe and Rongwrong. Amsterdam. NL
2015 Empathy & Burnout. With Ulijona Odišarija. Curator Gerda Paliušytė. P/////AKT. Amsterdam. NL
2014 So Much Flex & Why Patterns? With Laura Llaneli. Fundació Suñol. Barcelona. ES
2014 I ens vam preguntar: i ara, com cantem si no cantem plegades?. Museu Molí Paperer. Capellades. ES
2013 Tanssipaiikka. Media Lume Gallery. Helsinki. FI

Performances and readings

2016 Take Up Your Space. KAI 10 Arthena Foundation. Düsseldorf. DE
2016 De Salonnières. La Casa Encendida. Madrid. ES
2015 Empathy grow/stack/raise/hold/encapsulate at SWAB Art Fair. Barcelona. ES
2015 Empathy grow/stack/raise/hold/encapsulate. Opening Gallery Weekend. MACBA. Barcelona. ES
2015 Poetry will be made by all!. After Babel. Moderna Museet. Stockholm. SE
2015 Apuntes en sucio. Teatro Pradillo. Madrid. ES
2014 Caravana de tràilers. Organized by G.R.U.A inside the Grec Festival. Antic Teatre. Barcelona. ES
2014 You are never not supposed to be working. Curated by Angela Serino. Hangar. Barcelona. ES
2014 IN_PRESCINDIBLES. La Poderosa. Barcelona. ES
2014 Bulbasaur Selectors. Freedonia. Barcelona. ES
2014 Capacidad para deformarse. Curated by Caterina Almirall. El Passadís. Barcelona. ES
2013 "ES BIEN" EN SERIO. L'Estruch. Sabadell. ES
2013 What does it mean to have (this) space. Curated by Selina Väliheikki & Hanna Ohtonen. Node Gallery. Helsinki. FI
2012 Ciclo de performance. El Polvorín. Tenerife. ES

Selected group exhibitions

2015 Mercuri Splash. Fundació Joan Miró. Barcelona. ES
2015 Check point to the Stars. Hotel Paisano. Marfa, Texas. USA
2015 Gran Angular. Sant Andreu Contemporani. Barcelona. ES
2014 A(p)partament. Curated by Andrea Rodriguez Novoa and Veronica Valentini. Sant Andreu Contemporani. Barcelona. ES
2014 Present Indicatiu. Sant Andreu Contemporani. Barcelona. ES
2014 MolletArt'14. Museu Abelló. Mollet. Barcelona. ES
2013 ¿Qué hay de nuevo, viejo?. Can Felipa. Barcelona. ES
2013 Taking Time. Curated by Nora Sternfeld. Galleria Augusta. Helsinki. FI
2013 Pumping for art. Suomen Urheilumuseo. Helsinki. FI
2013 Erottaa+-. The Glue Factory. Glasgow. SCO
2012 Sesiones Polivalentes 05. Las Arenas. Hangar. Barcelona. ES
2012 Art<30. Sala Parés and Galeria Trama, Barcelona. Facultad de Bellas Artes UCM, Madrid; Universitat Politècnica de València (UPV) y Universidad de Sevilla. ES

2012 XVIII Biennial d'Art Contemporani Català. Galeria Canals. Sant Cugat del Vallès. ES
2012 Screen from Barcelona - Off Loop. Espacio de Proyectos Sant Pere. Barcelona. ES
2011 El camí per fer. Casa Elizalde. Barcelona. ES
2010 ACVIC. Thambos 9. Vic. ES
2010 Classes de memòria: d'un projecte creatiu a un projecte educatiu. Sala d'Art Jove.
Project in cooperation with the University of Fine Arts, Barcelona and Sala d'Art Jove. Barcelona. ES

Screenings

2017 Bromas internas, romance & contagious. Screening at Festival Acento. La Casa Encendida & CA2M. Madrid. 2017

Teaching

2017 Workshop "On Circulation" at Metáfora International Workshop. Barcelona. ES
2016- 2017 Main Tutor at Metáfora International Workshop. Barcelona. ES
2016 Workshop at La Casa Encendida. Madrid. ES
2016 Open Lab workshop at Metáfora International Workshop. Barcelona. ES

Residencies

2016 Residency at CA2M & La Casa Encendida. Madrid. ES
2015 Residency at La Caldera. Barcelona. ES
2015 Summer School Marfa TAAK. Marfa, Texas. USA
2015 Residency at Teatro Pradillo. Madrid. ES
2014 Residency in Hangar. Barcelona. ES
2013 Residency in Estruch. Sabadell. ES

Grants and scholarships

2016-2017 Mondriaan fonds. Werkbijdrage Jong Talent. NL
2016. Sala d'Art Jove. Grant for publication. Barcelona. ES
2015 Miquel Casablanças Prize at Fàbrica Fabra i Coats. Barcelona. ES (selected)
2014 Miquel Casablanças Prize at Fàbrica Fabra i Coats. Barcelona. ES (selected)
2014 MolletArt'14. Museu Abelló. Mollet del Vallès. ES (selected and prize)
2014 Sala d'Art Jove. Grants for projects. Barcelona. ES (selected)
2013 RMIT University of Melbourne. Scholarship for art projects. In collaboration with Erin Crouch and Rylie Thomas. Melbourne. AU
2013 Tokyo Association, scholarship to produce the project Tanssipaiikka. Helsinki. FI
2012-2013 Erasmus scholarship to study one year at Aalto University, School of Arts, Design and Architecture. Helsinki, FI
2012 Can Felipa. Grant for visual arts. Barcelona. ES (selected)
2012 Art<30, Sala Parés and Galeria Trama. Barcelona. (selected)
2012 Biennial d'Art Contemporani Català. Museu de Sant Cugat. Sant Cugat del Vallès (selected)
2010 Thambos 9. Biennial d'Art de Vic. (selected)

4. Portfolio

Broma interna, romance & contagion

2017

Single channel HD video, color and audio, 26'36"



Feminine rage, home & insults
2016



Structures to stumble. Steps, stairs, stumble.
2016, marble, spray painted methacrylate, screws. Variable sizes.



Feminine rage, home & insults
2016, publication 84 pages, 120 copies.



Structures to share, toast & talk. Fires and folds
2016, engraved plastic glasses, 15 units.

Throat & Column

2016

Throat and Column is an exhibition separated in two. A series of three objects that are displayed and they move, two pop-up table, two screws and two circular knitting collar, and a publication with a performance.



Counter,
2016, aluminium, red-shape (plastic, glass and wood), mdf, enamel



Screw
2016, coulored polystyrene



Collar, 2016
100% Polyester, circular knitting.



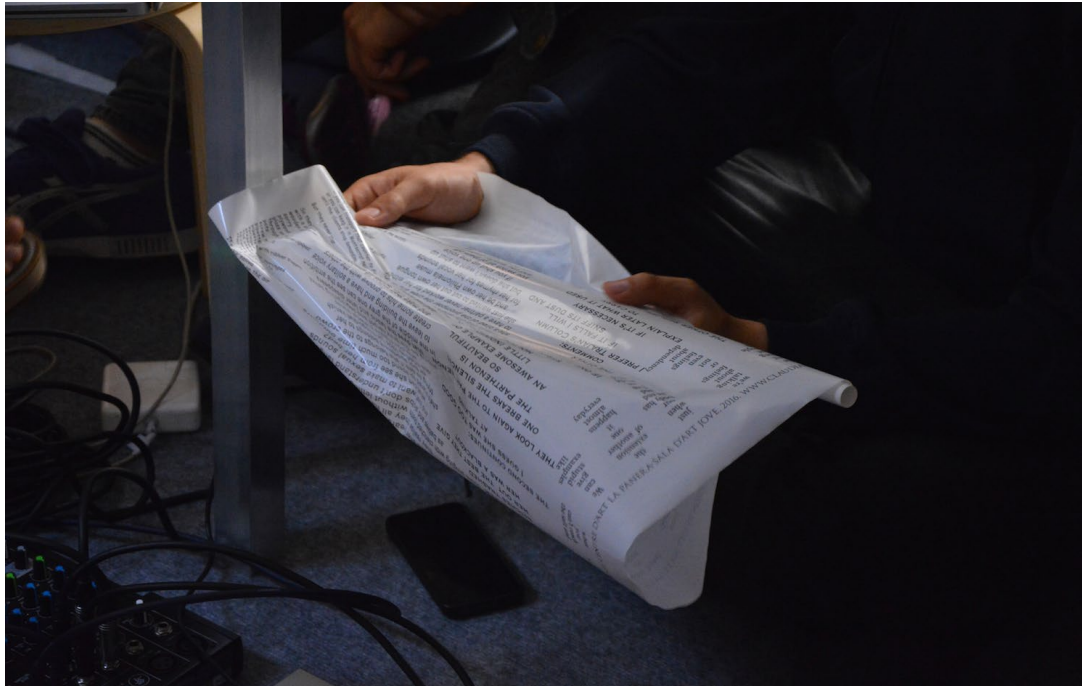
The second part of Throat & Column was presented in a book store.

It consists of an audio, played as a radio show - and live performed during the opening-, where swallowing and talking take the line through five different chapters/tracks.

The anglo-saxon or mediterranean pharmacies and their distribution system designs, their rooms to talk with the clients, music, the etymology of the word "addiction", a narrative that describes the intimacy of a small community that swallows for pleasure and have stopped talking, Baubo, the Greek mythological creature that has her mouth really close to the vagina and the comparison of the rooms in the pharmacies and the rooms of psychoanalysis' analysts and their payment procedure, appear during the talk.



Performance
documentation



Empathy grow/stack/raise/hold/encapsulate

2015

Installation, publication and performance.

“Empathy grow/stack/raise/hold/encapsulate” is a dismantled opera - or an attempted Gesamtkunstwerk with music, props, choreography, dialogue, characters, costumes and scenery - that has stopped functioning as a whole and has decided to stack, grow, hold, raise and encapsulate in a “every man for himself” situation.

“Encapsulated music or/and script for Empathy” is an audio piece and a performance that combines ambient music and a voice reciting. The voice contextualizes multiple characters reciting dialogues, stories and poems. It describes different anecdotes and situations resulting from a collision in an institution and how it affected the people who participated in it, at work, at home and in their bodies. The text, which follows the melody of the ambient music that accompanies it questions the necessity of empathy not only inside companies and institutions, but also in interpersonal relationships. It echoes the other parts of the opera that remain in the room, waiting to grow, stack, stand and raise: each one on its own, although always together.



Raise stage for Empathy

Plywood, enamel and aluminum. 4,90x6,2x0,44m



FIRST CHAPTER. NEWS & BONDING

(In the news)

The Government maintained that the murder of a prostitute at the hands of a customer is not considered domestic violence due to the absence of bonding between the perpetrator and the victim.

In this case, and in many others, the policies are dictated refusing any kind of affects that they might suppose. And the language has changed going back in time where rationality has imposed to all women, horizontal, sentimental bodies...

SECOND CHAPTER. EMPATHY AT WORK.

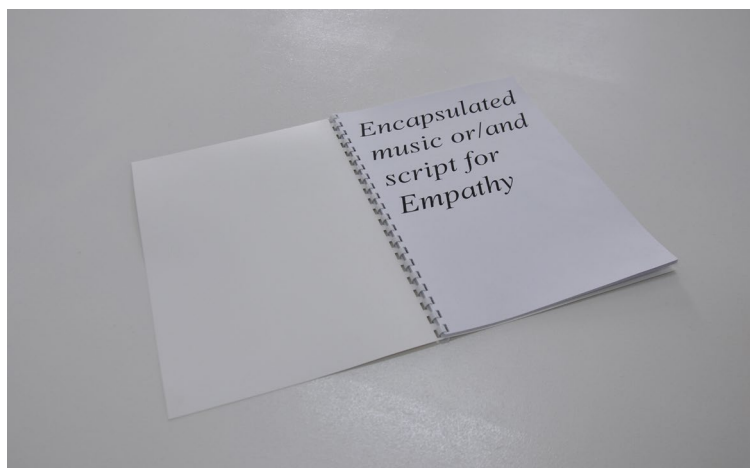
(A dialog)

But some crazy folks insist and say:

- Oh, no, this is not a place for empathy!
- They are so worried about messing up with human feelings.
- This is not a place for...
- I don't understand.
- In the past, we have faced a sick environment that didn't let us grow as much as we could make it.
- In the past, we have been carrying a disease that didn't let us continue and mutate into better individuals
- Actually, it is sick to say that.
- This is a place to find stability.
- I might need a consultant.
- The world is too big to have two people not matching.
- I've heard this before, by a white man with white clothes.
- You can go home now, enjoy the moment while you pick up your stuff and decide that maybe empathy is not that important here, and you can live so carelessly. The polarity of standing helplessly with your ideals...
- Nice words.
- Or simply keep going thinking about it tangentially. Feelings are strange things, you know? You only have to prevent them for eight hours a day. They should not have the same parity and intensity as the main affects that you follow in your life melody.
- Ebony thoughts.

And they continued muttering indoors:

- Listen, everybody can commit mistakes. Hey, listen, I don't know how many places you have worked in, but this is a completely normal situation. But listen, the important thing here is to know how to continue, how to progress and be able to point out who are the dangerous ones that don't let us do it!
- Now I's just too scary to say anything.
- Yes listen; the ones who are not productive are dangerous. Yes, listen, it's that simple. Sometimes it's good to not do anything and keep moving. Listen, it's gonna be better in this way for all of us. There're a lot of places where people clash or suffer too much, but it's unnecessary. You should keep working, and be focused on our concerns.
- I don't even want to contradict, it's like tape in my ears.
- Listen, we are not going to go to laws and things like that, let's just chat a little bit and if you do not agree, the world is too big, you can leave. Just take an ibuprofen and everything will disappear, take two, take three, just don't feel anything. Now, listen, now, now, now we can talk.
- I took the full package.
- I really like people who get things done. "Feel-good legislation" or "meaningful legislation", that's for the weak, for people who don't get things done.



Encapsulated music or/and script for Empathy
Publication DIN A4, 24 pages

THIRD CHAPTER. THE DOCTORS (EMPATHY STRATEGIES)

(The clients go to see the doctors)

Dr. Horowitz is a specialist who deals with harassment in the workplace. So many people have been appearing every day in his office lately, he is amazed at how much money is making, and sometimes he even feels bad about it, that's why he decided to not think about that and continue his research and his declaration to science, keeping his diploma hanging brightly on the wall of his office.

Dr. Horowitz says that

"for most of us, work provides structure to our day, the opportunity to socialize, a sense of accomplishment, and a source of happiness. In other words"

Dr. Horowitz says,

"work can reduce the likelihood of becoming depressed."

When he says the words he looks around the room, he kinda knows that that word "depressed" is too cheesy to talk about. But it's real, so it's problematic to avoid it too. That's what he thinks.

After a prolonged silence Dr. Horowitz continues saying: "despite this, there are circumstances in which work is less than beneficial to well-being. Although there is little evidence that poor working conditions causes depression, unreasonable work conditions combined with other problems, such as difficulties at home or unhappy events, can contribute to depressed mood."

Dr. Horowitz says that "in cases like that, good ideas get dismissed; opportunities are lost and productivity doesn't develop." Dr. Horowitz knows that his clients are paying a fortune for his prescription so he tries to be more accurate and extend his monologue saying: "If we look to different case studies we can realize the problems that emerge when pathologies are detected in one of the peers. Repeated means persistent or ongoing behaviour, not the specific type of behaviour, which may vary. 'Unreasonable behaviour' means behaviour that a reasonable person, having regard to the circumstances, would expect to victimise, humiliate, undermine or threaten.

'Risk to health and safety' means risk to the emotional, mental or physical health of the person(s) in the workplace. In any of these cases, productivity may be diminished, producing insecurity and fading self-confidence. The first impact might appear with less suitable attitude towards collaborative work and an incompetent abilities in comparison of the ones might had beforehand." (...)



Holding pallets for Empathy

Varnished wood, nine pieces of 37x57x- 10,6cm

FOURTH CHAPTER. HE THINKS.

(What he thinks)

Working against feelings. Working against feeling, he thinks.

To not arrive to the moment where the policies are imposed, he thinks.

To not get over controlled, and dismiss things, he thinks.

To use again the language that it is necessary to use, he thinks.

To operate in managing a way to create circumstances that are suitable to conditions to be productive, he thinks.

To mutate his body to each circumstance and be able to not be touched by anybody, he thinks.

To wear all black or pure white and be vanished off the map, but remarkable when it's necessary, he thinks.

To be at time, on time, he thinks.

Working against feelings, working against feeling, he thinks.

He has a strange way to think, he thinks.



Encapsulated music or/and script for Empathy
audio stereo / performance 31'31"

FIFTH CHAPTER. NOW I FEEL OKAY TO SAY
YA'LL WRONG.

(And now, her feelings)

Anything that is said with music, stays in music
Now I feel okay to say ya'll wrong

Sometimes I say "(it's) complicated"
Complicated what?
Everything stays in music wright?
Now I feel okay to say ya'll wrong

You put me in the line out
I'm tired to listen I should not care
I DO CARE, I care a lot
Sometimes I say, hey relax be open minded

I'm not moral, I swear it
Anything that is said with music, stays in music
Now I feel okay to say ya'll wrong

I'm ready to jump to your shoulders
And smash your armholes, perform the fattest daddy
And stretch provoking a smooth feeling of embarrassment
I LOVE TO CRY, and make wet the arrogants

Everything stays in music wright?
Now I feel okay to say ya'll wrong

I am A torch
I feel like I'm floating
Then is easy to say come down, calm down
I USED TO HAVE CONTROL OF MY BODY

Anything that is said with music, stays in music
Now I feel okay to say ya'll ABSOLUTELY wrong

You blame on my inexperience
I attack your overestimation
you prefer me more hidebound
But I won't die-hard
Leave me alone, leave me alone,
but don't go too far
I'm still the torch burning out

I'm not moral, I swear it
Anything that is said with music, stays in music
Now I feel okay to say ya'll wrong

SIXTH CHAPTER. NO LAPTOPS WHEN WE GO TOGETHER TO THE PARK.

(The situation at home)

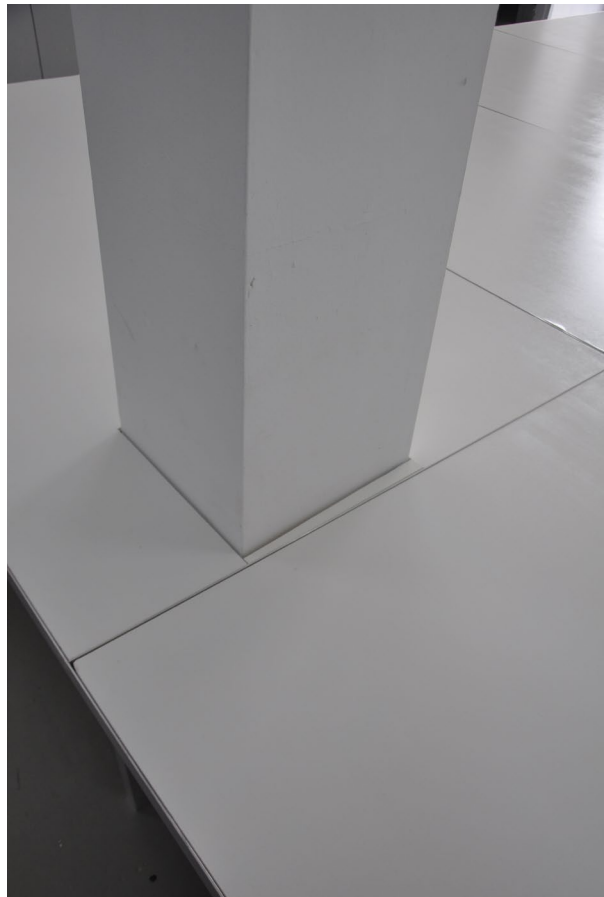
She says, "I say I'm going to jump from the window"
and then he's at home."

"Please the sweetest thing you said to me is
"if all our life is going to be like this
I don't want it,
you work way too much".

She says, "I feel so sad honey, I go to walk, I go to the park
I remember you said to me
"keep your laptop down in the park"
They lay on the grass.

She feels everything is a little bit tense, inside- out home.
It's difficult to know when is the turn to give more,
in responses, answers they become
She knows the institution teach them to don't give anything
back
But they don't want to give up
But they feel to give up
They listen a melody seated on a bass

She acts disoriented from one side to next,
corners are the best place to kneel
The hours got divided from silent opening the notebook,
to fade down enthusiasm
She waits until he says,
"I got a e-mail it's not so much but I will be busy I won't be
at home"
She opens the notebook again
He's back with enthusiasm.
Their pauses in between become gas.



SEVENTH CHAPTER. STACK/HOLD/GROW/RAISE/
ENCAPSULATE

(The medical report)

The thorax is stack.
The vertebra holds its weight too heavily
The platelets are growing burning out
The breath raises irregular
The pharynx is now encapsulated
The report is clear, avoid context to be speared

The bones are stack
The tongue holds too many words
The hair grows irregularly
The flicker raises blinding
The sighs are encapsulated
The report is clear, avoid context to be speared

The angriness will have to wait and stack
The little hope says hey hold on
The interest in changing grows inside them
The wind raises and moves the hair
The encapsulation is possible by gestures
The report is clear, avoid context to be speared

The future projects are stack
The tender words are holding up
The allergy to industrial dust grows
The empathy raise until it's culminate
The words are encapsulate in individual dose
The report is clear, avoid context to be speared

The muscles are stack
The hand holds air
The shoulders are growing against expectation
The inhalation raised the neck
The saliva doesn't flow because it's encapsulation
The report is clear, avoid context to be speared

The articulations are stack
The mouth pronounce "hold on"
The plants aren't growing this year
The stairs at home raise till night
The budgets encapsulates entire lives
The report is clear, avoid context to be speared

The fluids are stack
The time holds the door open
The nails are growing strong and resistant
The arms raised to find something up there
The tiny apartment makes them feel encapsulated
The report is clear, avoid context to be speared



Grow&Stack pots for Empathy

Ceramics. 60xØ27,5cm



Act(s) on the table / Actos sobre la mesa

2014 - 2016

A table: that was once a frustrated work, that wants to become a co-working table but ends up being a pretext for an (im)possible love story among two, three, four or more characters who are busy seeking/choosing the potential of the “we” either as a disinterested common or as an advantageous new business model.

The project ended in a theater piece for four characters ([the narrator], [the everything is movement], [the potential seeker], [the architect] and [the WE]).

Performing: Lieven Lahaye, Claudia Pagès, Eduard Pagès, Will Pollard and Nolwenn Salaün.
Photos by Nolwenn Saulün.



[narrator]

The coworking space is big and bright. It has around a hundred square metres of open space, and this is distributed between rooms separated by wooden shelves and construction-white columns.

The space has natural light. There are windows all around, and they let the light through to bounce off the white walls.

The space is furnished with modular, “easy to build” structures made of plywood and other cheap materials. They’re designed to be assembled on top of each other, to form new structures and create new shapes when needed: legs can be plugged in, or plugged out when not necessary; wooden boards can be folded; there are hinges for extending designs; and other little details of a kind of “temporary” engineering, used here for the building of sinuous curves, for welcoming bodies, to comfort those who have to sit for hours on end.

The space opened just two weeks ago after a half-Japanese, half-Dutch couple from the city contacted a Berlin-based co-working space chain, having decided to open one here. They searched for a location where they could start their new business, and found this spot on a pedestrian street with a big bike lane.

The space is determined by the constant movement of people: movement that creates shadows on the furniture, and spotlights new faces; movement created by the dynamism of those already working here.

Right now there are four people in the coworking space; they all arrived more or less at the same time. The first of them stayed because they saw new people arriving, those who arrived later decided to remain because they saw there were already people there. Together they created a connection of resistance, a silent agreement to hold on to each other.

They all work at their tables, looking at their screens, typing fast, concentrating. Every now and then, they pause and look each other.

Those present now are:

the everything-is-movement, the architect, the potential-seeker and the WE.



[the everything is moving]

everything is movement
but I'm trying
though
I don't understand

everything is movement
but I'm trying
though
as self-improvement
to each time
catch its flow
with great amusement

everything is movement
but I'm trying
though
when I write and then I read it
it already has moved
and I have to rewrite it
never stops moving

everything is movement
but I'm trying
though
as much I approach to it
it has changed to another place
so I have to remake it
to be again closer

everything is movement
but I'm trying
though
to write it and push it
until it seems immovable
but when it looks finished
it continues moving

everything is movement
but I'm trying
though
each time I move closer
there're no traces no drawings
it's never choreography
it just keeps moving

Everything is movement
but I'm trying
though
I don't understand

because

In moving I don't mean to continue to
pattern movements.
flattered patterns
all but scattered
In moving I don't mean established
choreographies.
governed choreographies.

A friend once told me:

Kill the choreography
but make all drown to only one center
like gravity does with things circulating

so

everything is movement
but I'm trying
though

everything is movement
but I'm trying
though

I don't understand
why
you don't start to move
but you are moving

Everything is movement
but I'm trying
though

in your
standing
still
still standing
that should be
static

AS A

static as a tactic

AS

tactics of sitting
tactics to don't fail
tactics in the praxis
the practice of still
still standing

but

still moving

you should start to move

Everything is movement
but I'm trying
though

continuing a rhythm
Investing in moving
not breaking it for nothing
so it will last longer

Everything is movement
but I'm trying
though
stretching the beat

maintaining the movement

Everything is movement
but I'm trying
though
stretching the beat
maintaining the movement

Everything is movement
but I'm trying
though

with

Flexible legs
Flexible times
Flexible incomes
preferible
equable
edible
credible
accessible
affectional
exceptional
sensual
incredible

(I repeat it)

but never censurable
never like a pedestal

but maybe plywood
(for example)
if it can be gazed
as a stage

Everything is movement
but I'm trying
though
a balance of minimums
attachments and coldness
in this constant movement

Everything is movement
but I'm trying
though
remembering names
of people who come here
forgetting them faster

Everything is movement
but I'm trying
though

I only come here
when I have to work with numbers
(never sitting so long, in my urge to
move)

but as the wages are changing
making new drawings between time and
numbers each time
and the numbers become flexible

This makes me remember
When I came here
the first time
and I saw the different options
and I chose the flexible tari-
ff
(I couldn't stop laughing when I heard the
name)

Flexible tariff.
So I can come when I want without paying
much more
being the new person, for the others, each
time I decide to come
not spending much time just to change
texts, numbers and words
that I will change again each time they will
change my income

Flexible tariff.
It sounded like a gym.

Flexible tariff.
It sounds like flexible tariff for flexible people
who neither are flexible nor able to move
their bodies in a flexible way, though they
might have really flexible incomes

Like making a wire transfer for 50 euros:
opening the bank website, introducing the
your password and accepting the procedure
to transfer 50 euros, or borrowing money to
a friend that will pay you back with several
dinners. And you loose the calculus.



[the architect]

It all started because I needed somebody to make my website. I had a friend of a friend who told me he could do it, but I know he's way too busy to have time for that, and he keeps postponing the dates, so, as besides the website I also needed a place to work, a studio - somewhere where I could do my stuff-, I thought I could kill two birds with one stone, and find a studio, a small table somewhere with more people, and maybe a graphic designer will also work there and I'll have my website done.

So I found one space full of graphic designers. A beer catalog designer, an "arty" designer but also one who makes websites. Bam! Perfect.

The space is great, with a small kitchen to cook my raviolis and different tables.

I bought a big office chair and I transported there because I didn't like the ones they had, they were too simple with the back of the chair too small - I like to feel like I'm in an office and play office when I'm there.

We're almost all the time in silence, I like to use headphones and listen loud music to concentrate. I also have my little things, my stuff to play when I want to stop, I have little boxes on the floor that look like stools where I put my papers and stuff so my table is empty and I can work with more space.

Talking about this, there was one thing I wanted to propose to improve the studio. When I got there, the space didn't have common things, shared furniture - besides the kitchen, of course. I felt I wanted something to move around so we could have our breaks together and create a nicer atmosphere to talk - and I could ask more freely about the status of my website.

So I went to the owners and I asked them if I could propose something for the space, to have more common spaces. I already knew what I wanted to do: I wanted to have some stools all around so we could move them, sit together, stand all together and think clearly, etc.

But I wanted to propose it in a professional but also dramatic way, so I thought about a story an architect friend of mine told me:

He just started to work as a freelancer architect and found a shared place to work. He told me that he couldn't stand how it was design, so he proposed to the owners to do some small changes. He asked them to start buying some stools - all of this must sound to you pretty familiar, but wait, now is when I get to the point of how he explained it: He told me he was in crisis with his career, he couldn't understand the decisions he had been making in his life. His father was an architect, he is retired right now, but he used to be a quite important architect, designing mostly public buildings. So he was feeling like shit, being alone, starting his career alone - because he refused to continue the architectural name of his father-, working in a private space alone and not having clients. So at least, he wanted to have some stools around to be able to talk with people in that private space.

He told me that the idea of the stools popped up in his mind because - in the middle of his existential crisis - he thought about the first time he was impressed by architecture. He was in Rovaniemi with his father, visiting the public library there, designed by Alvar Aalto. He remembered he was playing running up and down the stairs, exploring all the levels, and while playing, he got amazed by the big roof windows. He also started to remember how people was distributed: the users of the library who wanted to read were sitting in comfortable wooden chairs designed by Aine Marsio-Aalto, but the users who were just spending time and socializing, were gathered in the corridors, halls and others spaces sitting in stools. The stools were distributed anarchistically - I guess because people were moving them as they pleased. The stools were the mobile furniture in the library, ready to be caught and transported to a perfect place to sit with other people.

He thought that the idea of mobile furniture could improve the coworking space - and stop feeling so lonely by creating shared spaces - so he asked to the owners to buy some stools. But he actually asked to the owners to buy the Stool E60 model, by Alvar Aalto. He told me that, at the beginning, the owners were really excited because they declared themselves fans of the scandinavian design and found interesting to take care of the non-working spaces with "good" taste. But of course they just bought the Ikea version, the Frosta stool - I don't know what they were thinking trying to buy real Stool E60 -, and my friend ended up a bit disappointed waiting to see the real Stool E60.



[the potential seeker]

i promise one day i will stand on here
 like a jesus chirst of something
 and i will step on your laptop and shout:
 - Hi you! Can you listen to me now?
 and people won't react like i'm crazy or something
 they will understand and even apologize
 like if i was God or something
 and i will look at them deeply
 and they will feel scared as i would be able to see inside their bodies and minds
 so they will try to run away with they laptops and bikes
 and i will just stay on the top of the table looking and laughing
 like a maniac or something
 who just had an amazing feast
 and I will forbid to eat sandwiches with bad hummus
 and nobody will be allowed to even talk about cucumber
 because cockroaches eat everything: nails, hair, everything
 but don't eat cucumber
 and I will love to be working around lots of black cockroaches
 that will be scared of me when i turn on the light
 like i'm a furious Queen Nature or something



if nothing happens here during the next months
 i hope you all die soon and new ones will come
 soon

I go
 to
 the bathroom
 at least
 six times
 a
 day

just
 to wash
 my
 hands

slowly

looking
 through
 the mirror
 arranging
 my hair

looking
 the reflections
 again

and wait



I never look

behind the screen

as I know i will only find

your long fingers touching the touch pad

and i would just want to put them in my mouth

hook

clear glass

bind

friction clutch

pouch

under the table

my legs

my hit

my hate

my little nerve

moving legs

feeling the ground

parquet floor

you you

do what you do

because

have been always doing it

and so

have prepared for years

no shoes

painted nails

[the WE]

From "Is it Love?" by Brian Kuan Wood

Over the past few decades
it has often been said that

we no longer have an addressee
for our political demands

But that's not true
We have each other

(Guitar solo)

Over the past few decades
it has often been said that

we no longer have an addressee
for our political demands

What we can no longer get from the state,
the party
the union
the boss
we ask for from one another

And we provide! (bis)



So much Flex

2014

Two screen folders, silicone, metal.

HD single channel video 27', sound and color.

So much flex is a video in which an audition of three characters (a contortionist, a bodybuilder and a vogue dancer) explores and links the notion of administration, managing and performance. Surrounded by a tired and boring beige, the video shows the preproduction stage of an (uncertain) future work, where “so much flex” could be a precarious video of different characters with potential to explode perform, or may become the name of a place to work your muscles and give them shape, or a yoga slogan to promote being flexible and have organizational skills, or the name of a song written to give everything you’ve got to the dance floor and say: “you were so flex in the dancehall.”





5. Additional Documentation

5.1 Websites and some articles

<http://claudiapages.com/>

<https://soundcloud.com/claudiapages>

http://www.metropolism.com/nl/reviews/24164_sandberg_festival_of_choices

<http://www.aqnb.com/2015/10/06/claudia-pages-ulijona-odisarija-pakt-reviewed/>

<http://barcelones.com/cultura/claudia-pages-performance-cuerpo-y-algunos-conceptos/2014/03/>

<http://www.tea-tron.com/jorgemiron/blog/2016/06/08/de-salonnieres/>

<http://www.lacasaencendida.es/escenicas/empathy-growstackraiseholdencapsulate-claudia-pages-5626>

5.1 Other scripts and texts

Feminine rage, home & insults

(excerpt from the left side of the book)

The waitress announced the last round, so we ordered, but they didn't give us enough time to drink our drinks. They offered us a dessert that we wanted to eat but they wouldn't give us the time to do so – to eat it. As they were rudely cleaning the tables we rushed to empty our gin-tonics. I finished mine in one slurp, noisily banging the glass on the crystal table, and then I finished someone else's before they closed the door on our heels.

Twenty minutes later we were at home eating avocado on crackers. I don't remember how we made it home but I do remember that we opened all the cheeses and sliced them with one of those funny cheese knives that make the slices so thin. We had opened two kinds of crackers, one with sesame seeds and another that was a darker brown, and we were eating them with two avocados, cherry tomatoes, sliced cheese and olive oil. We were devouring them, our tipsy gazes disappearing slowly as our stomachs filled. I think she was complaining that nobody is critical in general, and specifically that nobody is critical about collaboration. She had just finished a one-week workshop about making and collaborating, and she was upset that nobody had raised any problems during the workshop - she was disappointed that nobody had been meta-critical about what a collaborative workshop about collaboration could mean. I think those sorts of questions just get in the way: they either take up all the room, leaving no space for anything else, or they're simply boring. But it's true that meta-comments are a good way to start bloody conversations about what is right or wrong in endless tautology.

The packages of crackers were almost empty and the criticality raised into opinion: "Everybody is stupid".

I thought everything was going too fast, so I gave my opinion very slowly: "Not everybody thinks the same; things are not wrong or right". And then I started to repeat the phrase that I always repeat to myself when I'm in situations like these: "Life is so fucking long". Life is too long to react quickly, to burn up situations and then disappear, because there's always the chance you might stumble on someone again someday, and then be even more annoying.

I couldn't articulate my opinion properly; I was too slow. I thought five crackers with avocado would have cured my tipsiness, but my brain, working so slowly, had me doubting their effects. I said as much – something about not being fast enough and letting judgments about being right or wrong disappear. But I was drunk and my hippy answer didn't have the result I expected. Her answer was faster than I thought: "I don't care about your opinion".

Brutal.

The house became a battlefield for individual words. She stood up from the wooden table that we were sitting at and moved behind her chair. She rested her body on the chair and from that position started to yell, claiming that I was ignorant of her career, ignorant of the field and ignorant about her statements. She claimed a few other little things of some sort of engagement. It was an awful collaboration – not a questioning meta-cooperation but a bad combination of disconnected onomatopoeias. Nobody would have been able to arrange the sounds to make a good sentence.

Everybody was stupid, and with no way back, I was finishing the night in the category of everyone. In the middle of her yelling I pointed out that I had just been trying to be critical about a lack of criticality and the excess of opinion, but this resulted more insulting. The yelling increased and she changed her position, moved from behind the chair to the middle of the kitchen. I had to move my own chair to see the scene and have good vision. She told me I was the one who was giving fast opinions by saying too quickly that she was giving fast opinions. I was holding a mug of “Good Night” tea, which was not working properly, and my face was crooked. She continued to stand in the kitchen with aggression in her eyes. I said the situation had become too crazy, but this caused yet another problem. She asked who the hell I was to call her “crazy”. I never called her “crazy”, but I was trapped now in the pleasure of the conflict. There are some people who love the excitement produced by conflicts and who become addicts. I called the situation “crazy” one more time and the door smashed behind me. There had been so many insults murmuring under my tongue and they stayed with me now that I was alone in the room. It was 6 a.m. and I couldn’t understand what the hell had just happened, or why my tea was not working properly now when I needed it to sleep.

The murmurs under my tongue were pronounced internally in English. I have to admit that it’s a relief that when we argue, we always do it in English. Not being our mother tongue, and speaking other languages, we were combining them depending of the topics and if they were carrying temperament topics, just facts or were personal. In the morning, with coffee, we will communicate in Spanish explaining the program of the day. English for work. English for love. Spanish for family.

I’ve been told that when you use a language as a non-native speaker you don’t get attached to the things you say or the names you get called. You cannot feel the words you pronounce when you have learned them only superficially, through mimicking – although that’s the same way kids learn a language. Some people want to defend their language, to oppose those who destroy grammar, pronounce with strange sonority and steal too much of their vocabulary from movies. But incorrectness doesn’t mean detachment. Sometimes, when the brain is busy with other thoughts, you might say a word other than the one you wanted to say, but still you will demand of the incorrect word the meaning of the intended word. Translation doesn’t mean losing meaning. Words and letters may move from one sound to another but still you will make them drown in a specific center each time. And insults aren’t softer in another language, since your gesticulations carry the same contempt, even though through their repetition different meanings may arise.

I called my mother to explain to her that I was looking for a job and to tell her my other future plans to stop my anxiety. I know I find peace through non-stop work, and she is the only one who can understand that. I also explained her that I was reading about insults. The first thing she asked me was if I was finally writing in my mother tongue. I can’t stop thinking about how funny it is that my mother asked me to write insults in my mother tongue. Then she asked me for whom I was writing if I was writing in English. “Old people won’t understand a word”, she said. “Maybe I’m not writing for old people”, I answered. She also told me that when we were kids, and we could only speak Catalan, she would yell at us in Spanish, in her mother tongue, when she was angry. My brothers and I probably didn’t understand a word, but I guess we understood the situation. We were learning a language by its injurious words, though we couldn’t understand the rest.

Rappers use language similarly by introducing words from other tongues into their lyrics – words that old non-English speakers won’t understand – and even invented ones. Boo, ganja, hay, and clicca constantly appear alongside bitch, whore, habibi, etc. But I want to separate here the invented words from the stolen ones by their uses. In the first category, words are used as keywords that only some people will be able to identify and that will make non-sense for the rest. These words are usually to do with sex, drugs and community, and work as synonyms for more familiar terms: for example, you might say clicca instead of saying “crew”, “gang” or “clan”; or ganja so as not to say “pot”, “marijuana” or “weed”. It is true that this category is really close to slang, but I want to think that it is even more exclusive, and that these words function more like passwords than more widely known slang terms can. In the second category, we encounter words that have been taken from other languages so to make them understandable, or more international.

These words are popular adjectives and grammatical links such as “so”, “nice”, “fucking”, “habibi”, “whore”, “nena”, etc. A good example is the word “bitch”, which people insist on singing in the chorus or backing vocals of songs that are nevertheless written in other languages.

Using insults as lyrics sounds like it should be a tough thing to do, but it is true that insults in this context are not always working as performative utterances. They are not actively hurting anyone, and a writer can say that they are not to be taken seriously or literally but only as material, as the words of a poet. A writer can say his or her words are not active, only pretending to be, when really all they desire is universality – at which point they don’t have to have any intention, they don’t have to mean what they say. I have a quite good sentence from Hippolytus that seems relevant right now. I translated it myself:

My tongue an oath did take, but not my heart. (AUSTIN, J.L. “How to do things with words”. The William James Lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955)

I have one cousin – a boy, and the youngest child of an extremely religious family that already had four daughters – who has suddenly started to like hip-hop. He's sixteen now, and says he doesn't want to study anymore but instead wants to dedicate himself to hip-hop. The family wonders about his future: What kind of work is he going to have? I wonder about something else: What happens if one day he starts to translate everything with Google Translate? But he's a sixteen-year-old kid with the Internet. I'm the naive one here, for he has surely already translated all the lyrics. I have a theory that his interest in hip-hop is his way of making a counter attack on his context. In my opinion, he has already translated all the lyrics of the songs that he listens to, and has found within them a perfect plan for liberating himself from all the sisters and all the religion: he will use all the words he always wanted to use in a language his parents don't understand in order to insult without being noticed by his censors. I fantasize about it, this harmless harmful mission. An ultra-Catholic kid using hip-hop to give injuring names with simple and repetitive music in the background. The family will stumble with the words and wonder where they went wrong. What is he trying to say? They took all the harmful words away from him, but now he has access to them again, and he wants to use them.

With hip-hop in the background, I thought it was better to leave the house. So, I tend not to do this, because my brain gets tired and annoyed around people whom I cannot understand, and yet at the same time I feel so happy not understanding what those people are saying, but I decide to take the tram, as this country knows only how to rain. I get on but the tram conductor asks me to move quickly. I always try to sneak aboard, but they are so watchful that it's impossible. She asks me again to quickly move inside and I get angrier and say, "borde". I don't have space to move. The tram is packed. I don't know if she has understood me, but she looks at me pretty angrily for a second before looking down again, shaking her head in disapproval and sighing – her sigh is her public declaration that she is giving up on the stupid situation. I'm always ready to fight with tram conductors. She continues to play with her phone. I move quickly but I stumble on someone else's legs that are in the way. I fall on the floor – pathetic – and I don't move. I have a great idea: now that I'm on the floor, in this most lame of situations, I'm going to wait here for a few seconds. I want to know if someone will help me to stand up or at least ask me if I'm "okay". If not, I'm sure I'll leave this country. I don't want to live in a place where nobody helps someone to get up who has fallen on the floor. I wait for more than five seconds – it felt like it was a lot more than five seconds, but I guess it was only five seconds – but nobody helps me or even asks me anything. I stand up again and clean my trousers. Fuck you all; I don't need you. I jump off the tram and make it to my temporary job at a Spanish tapas restaurant in the "poshest" neighborhood of the city.

It's a Spanish tapas bar, but I'm the only Spanish person there. The customers struggle, half blushed and half proud, to pronounce the traditional dishes, and I love to stop them. I point at the dishes while naming them properly out loud. As a waitress, I'm clumsy but I dissolve my rage by running around the bar; the feeling of being occupied and employed saves me from an impending mood of self-flagellation, guilt and frustrated leisure.

In the kitchen, a Chinese choreographer cleans the dishes and sits on a stool reading philosophy when it's quiet. The other waiter calls the dishwasher "basura" but it seems as if I'm the only one who understands what that means. He laughs as he says it so I imagine he isn't trashing her. At the beginning I thought it was pretty funny – I would be packing the forks and knives with napkins in a wicker basket and I would hear "Basura! Basura!" coming from the kitchen, and the waiter would come to the counter giggling, almost crying, and the Chinese girl would run behind him, giving him gentle punches. People would continue to eat, enjoying their tapas.

The other night, the waiter, Basura and I went dancing at a club. We arrived and a four-girl band was playing in silver costumes: the bassist wore a one-piece jumper; the guitarist a Chanel-cut dress with short sleeves; the singer had fishnet stockings on with underwear on top, and a bra and collar with stripes that camouflaged the bra; and the last one, the drummer, was wearing a really short sleeveless dress and her feet were bare. The last one, the drummer, hypnotized me. She was absorbed in the music, looking off to some sort of horizon that wasn't us. Staring nowhere. Open mouth. Head turned to one side, making her hair fall on half of her face. Epileptic legs. Shaking arms. She was incredible beautiful. I moved my position to be in front of the horizon that she was looking at. I couldn't make eye contact. Better, I could stare at her more. I was about to say to Basura how beautiful she was, but I changed my mind and I just commented on how well she was playing. She actually played very well. It must be annoying to be in a band and have people only comment on the clothes you are wearing and how good you look. They were mostly playing Iggy Pop covers and other songs we all knew and could sing along to. But this disappointed me. I would have much rather listened to exotic lyrics – even something in Dutch – so that I could have projected whatever I wanted onto those mouths. I could have imagined the horizon and been part of it. That would have been much better than just singing along with the crowd. I will never forget the lyrics I learned when I was a teenager.

When the club closed, we had two bikes but there were three of us so I jumped on the back of one bike and let Basura have the other bike to herself. When somebody is carrying me on a bike I prefer to stand behind them. I can have my legs straight, hold myself up by grabbing the rider's shoulders with my hands and even rest my chin on the driver's head. I think it's better for the one steering: it gives more stability, so there's less probability that we will fall over. And it's better for me too: from up there I can see the whole street and I feel like an Ancient Roman commander as I dictate the way we should go, the obstacles we should pass, all the while knowing that I'm the one being carried and moved by the other.

I'm on my way back home now, biking alone, and on the road I find Jakub and Rubert in front of me. They are biking in silence. I know where they are going because they are my neighbors. I pass them quickly and yell in Lithuanian: "Gaidys!" They don't turn their heads to see me. A few days later I see them again and I introduce the same word into a conversation and they react with shock. The word must not have carried the same meaning when I yelled it from the bike – probably because I was laughing at the same time. Maybe it had been unrecognizable then, had left only goose bumps on their brains, but now the word was introduced like a shot. As they heard it they breathed in, transporting air directly to the brain.

Home, home, home. Temporary home, sublet home. Place with stuff that is not mine. I don't know the contents of the boxes under the bed in which I sleep. I didn't buy the sheets I use every night. The cat I share the bed with doesn't know my name. Home, home, home. I get home.

I really need to pee so I run to the bathroom but it's occupied. They are having sex in the shower. Fuck them.

I know she thinks I have a problem. She thinks I am a lonely person who almost never has sex. I think her main problem is that she feels unemployed, without any freelance work to do, and her remedy for this has been – for the past three weeks at least – locking a kid in her room, day and night, in order to feel occupied instead of alone.

Feeling alone and not having a job. Call me a lonely, unemployed girl. To me those are the worst words to be called. Each time I get nervous about anything I wonder if I'm closer to neuroticism or hysterics. As soon as I have begun to wonder, I calm down very quickly, as if I have been given a sedative directly to the heart, into my blood system. I calm down because I don't want to be called names, but because of my sudden calm I'm called the same names again. I force my breathing to stay normal, thinking about both my throat and my nose, holding my breath from time to time. I start to fill up the boxes of my calendar with things I want to do in rhymes and prose. Today I don't feel like doing lists. After spending two weeks in my pajamas forgetting to eat but drinking Coca-Cola and smoking more than ever, I hear you singing to me again in the corridor: "Work, work, work, work, work", in the style of Drake as if it was funny or something. She has no fucking idea how to make good jokes because she wonders too much about their effects. They become a defensive mechanism. I wonder why she tries – singing that sarcastic rhythm – to be vile and to cause hurt when I'm already standing in the corridor looking stupid, thinking that our relationship has become annoyingly hostile.

I cannot stand people whose only concern is themselves: their diet, their body, their life, their life-style, the way their body looks and the five hours they spend cooking porridge. If you have to spend so much time in the kitchen or running under the rain, it is because you cannot stand your thoughts or you don't know what to do with them. Because all of this can be qualified as a disorder and it has a name: orthorexia nervosa. So the next time I see you cooking breakfast for three hours before going running, I will yell from my window: "You! You are an orthorexia nervosa!" as if it was an insult. I find people who invest in others clever. I'm afraid of those who don't think so, and my future around them. I don't mind everybody dying if nobody is going to care. But if nobody is going to die, I worry that we will have to deal with all of these people once they become adults. Being alone is not the same as being by yourself. "You only discover yourself by being alone and learning your own strengths and weaknesses." No, that's total bullshit. It's better to go to a Mass and learn who you are by how much you take care of what is around you. But then, if you love learning about yourself so much, why can't you handle sleeping alone? You'll have anyone in your bed as long as you don't have to be alone – at least until the sun is up and you can continue cooking porridge again.

Finally, I hear the door of the bathroom opening, so I run there to pee but she's still inside, in front of the mirror, arranging her hair with a twisted face and sweat on her forehead. She looks back at me with a stupid, proud look – a look betraying her approval of the state of her own mental health, now that it has been cured by her new, constant escort. In the face of this, I represent some supposed sickness – the ultimate loser, waiting alone in front of the door for the room to be vacant so I am able to pee. She finally gets out of the bathroom, walks out with an idiotic, aristocratic aura, but in cheap shorts and a cheap t-shirt, bought at the supermarket. It reminds me *The Idiots*; they were proud of their idiocy. I sit down in the bathroom and look for scenes from the film on my mobile phone.

Pride makes the fool an idiot, but selfishness more so. I'm not making it up. The term has its roots in Ancient Greece, where an idiot was someone who dedicated only to themselves. An idiot was a private person, a private citizen, a selfish individual who took no part in public life. Under Athenian democracy, public life was the democratic government of the polis, and an idiot was anyone who lacked the skills to be part of it, or was not interested in doing so. The term therefore stood in opposition to the public, as self-centeredness is opposed to the common (the community, the public good, politics). "Idiot" didn't have a pejorative meaning to begin with, at first it simply meant someone not participating in politics, however it started to become an insult as the importance of political and democratic engagement increased. The word idiot mutated as it was introduced into Latin, changing its meaning to signify more general ignorance. Now the idiot was someone defined by a lack, a person with insufficient skills for public life, a layman.

Idiots and imbeciles. Imbeciles and idiots. Though these insults are not the same, they both suggest the excess of individuality.

When I was in sixth grade I had a teacher who was a real performer. A crazy one. She used to teach us Latin in extremely creative ways. We would arrive at class and she would be waiting for us, lying on the floor, and she would stay in that position to give the lecture, would stay until the class was finished. She also had some other peculiarities. When somebody gave her a wrong answer, she would open the window, dangle half of her body out and start to yell: "Answer the question or I will jump out the window!" She used to smash chalk on our foreheads in circular movements – she preferred to do that to girls with pretentious haircuts – until we answered something properly. She also used to give us good marks if we wore cool skater shoes. She was a funny-looking woman, too. She used to dress like a skater, with big trousers, big t-shirts and Vans. She was in her sixties, and had short, shaved hair with a white stain at the front. She was always wearing different colored glasses. She used to love declaring to us that she was a lesbian, a Christian, a nun.

Her name was – I don't know if she's still alive – Triquell.

In my last year at that institution I asked to change classes so I would be in the same one as my best friends. I managed to do so, but on the first day in my new class Triquell was giving the lecture, and I remember that when I entered the classroom she said to me: "Oh, Judas, welcome to your new class". From that moment on, to her my name was Judas. She used to love pretending that she couldn't see me when I knew an answer to one of her questions and was waiting with an arm raised to be asked. I would be the only one with my arm up, demanding with my eyes, but she would never pick me. Later she would say: "Oh, Judas, I didn't see you". But I didn't mind any of those things because I didn't feel like a traitor, I had only changed to another class, and I knew that the reason she was upset with me was that if I had not changed classes she would have been my tutor – besides the insults, she had a real affection for me. Maybe she was calling me Judas, the traitor, because she felt like Jesus Christ or something, being outraged and sad, as her love was not corresponded.

She taught us Latin, and applied semantics in Latin. I remember on our first day she offered to analyze our names to find their roots and see how many of them came from Latin. She made a scary but excited face as she asked me: "Claudia! Do you know what your name means?" I had no idea, so she answered herself: "It means lame!" I was shocked; this fucking bitch had just ruined my name. I remember going back home that day and asking my mother if she had known about the meaning of my name before she gave it to me. After mine, Triquell explained the meaning of my other classmates' Latin names: Lucía, luminous; Pilar, strong and tall; Julia, with soft hair; Félix, happy; Lucrecia, lucky; Víctor, winner; and Valentín, strong and plucky. After all these, Claudia did sound pretty lame to me. But Triquell hadn't finished with names, and suddenly yelled at us: "And do you know what imbecile means?"

Imbecile has its origins in Latin. Im- works like in-, to negate. Becile comes from baculum, which means a stick or staff. So imbecile – imbecillus – means a person without a supporting stick. A person without a walking stick. In Ancient Roman times, old people were considered wise and intelligent, so the representation of a person carrying a walking stick represented that wisdom. At the same time, a person without a walking stick might well be someone without wisdom: still too young to be considered wise. Or, even worse, someone who needs a walking stick but doesn't have one, an actual imbecile, is someone unable to do anything by him or herself – someone who uses others as walking sticks. A constant need for others, the incapacity to be autonomous, defines the authentic imbecile.

6. Confirmation

This a confirmaiton I will be available from 3 April to 26 June 2017, if selected at the Gasworks Residency 2017.