

TRANS PERFORMATIVITY: In Between States of Becoming: Resistance, Transformation, Emanation

AURA

1. Genesis: An Introduction to the Auric Fields

Me [my body] | Physical Aura

Dedicated to all the trans people, all the gender non-conforming people, all the outsiders and the others that have had their life stopped, halted, ended, constrained due to violence.

You / We / I deserve more. (Alabanza)

This is my point of departure. I want to take you, the reader, as my companion in this autobiographical crossing. I want to be able to transpose my lived experience and knowledge into words. In them, to welcome and transfer you to a new cosmos.

It was a long pathway until 2021. The previous three years of academic life, and a whole life dedicated to learning, experiencing and, then, to transforming. Academia has indeed given me the Wittgensteinian toolbox and the timeframe from which I intend to build, tear down, and make my own; in other words, to construct, deconstruct, and reconstruct.

Interacting with the local, national, and international artistic scene has always enlightened me, and on this occasion even more. Becoming a Londoner has been a unique and fruitive experience, distinct, and pluri-dimensional.

Cementing foundations requires the expansion of the field of who we are. It is no longer about the Self, but about inhabiting the Environment. Imagine building a home not from bricks but from books, the windows would be paintings to the outer world, the furniture sculptures, the television an experimental video channel, the people its performers, and the guests its

spectators. It is not about owning a property, but creating a safe space, with inspirational neighbours and referential surroundings.

Transitioning is to enable re-imagination to happen. First, you set your vision towards where you want to go, and then, with all your strength and resilience, you go. Learning how to navigate in post-pandemic times is a challenge, however it becomes necessary to reassess the status quo, in order to embark on an inner odyssey of self-discovery.

After a cycle, the process of metamorphosis takes place. The celestial field is a totality. Thinking and generating a show for more than a year, enhances the change of an artistic practice hitherto predetermined. Following the phrase 'To be or not to be Normal' (Smith 154), I choose both. Transgression deserves to be normalised, and the normal transgressed. From queer to trans. One does not delete the other. Two bodies bounce and merge into a single bodyscape. An ecosystem is rendered from the four elements — earth, water, air, and fire. In it, the audience-performer inhabits, feels, and transforms.

Completing the cycle implies blossoming and transcending. In this last instance, a chapter closes, and wings are given to begin another. The one of ripening and committing to my work. Finally, I fulfilled myself.

2. Rooting: Nurturing through Academia

Me, myself | Etheric Aura

A thesis without punctuation

A thesis without quotation

A thesis without bibliography

Or

A thesis with self-referencing

Of multiple pseudonymous

A thesis as a manifestation

A performative thesis

I wrote these premises in October 2018, when I joined the master's degree in Performance Making at Goldsmiths, University of London, as a queer, migrant, working-class student yet to find the trans* community. Three years later, I write and see it differently. I question why not both? Why not allow ambiguity in including both experimentations and resolutions, poetry and prose, others and me? Why the obligation to replace the other, and not the permission for coexistence?

It was very important to me to find the 'I': I feel this, this panned to me, I did this. (Jarman 30-31)



Fig. 1 | Aura (2018) BOX SOLO. © By the artist

My university life resembles the iconic slogan that Fernando Pessoa wrote for Coca-Cola 'First it's strange, then it's ingrained'. Before, I estranged myself, the environment, the educational system, and its interrelationships. Now, I feel integrated and connected, as someone who belongs to the prior

three-generational communities of talented performance makers.

The deep relationships with colleagues from all over the world, together with several workshops and classes taught by in-house or guest professors, allowed me to fully experience the best academia has to offer nowadays. My first project consisted of staging me inside a box as a delivery to the George Wood Theatre by the fake company BHL.

. When the audience opened the box with duct tape repeating the word FRAGILE, I came out naked. It was the planting of a seed that has grown and bears fruits over the course of time, which now flourishes.

My bond with Butoh dance increased with the imaginative and expressionist-inspired methodologies by the choreographer Marie-Gabrielle Rotie and the artist Nick Parkin. In the first workshop, I wrote:

Dehumanising by placing clay on the skin to create another layer, to 'transform' the body. (Not just in white).

Butoh, as a 'cosmological way of expression which explored the darkest side of human nature' (Nanako 12) was founded in the 1960's by people including Hijikata Tatsumi and Ono Kazuo. Though the etymology of the word evolved with time, by the 1960's, 'The word "butoh," now the accepted name of the genre, originated as ankoku buyō (...) "Ankoku" means 'utter darkness.' "Buyō," a generic term for dance' (Nanako 12), yet this type of dance departed from existing dances, by allowing a questioning and reflection on the beauty of life, embracing the beauty of the ugly, clearly influenced by the post-war reality:

For Hijikata the body is a metaphor for words and words are a metaphor for the body [...] He was very aware of how such changes influence the relationship between the world and the body: "The body is constantly violated by things like the development of technology" (1969:19). Today these changes are accelerating. The rapid development of computer technolo-

gy, virtual-reality technology, and the internet have extended human possibilities for the future but seem simultaneously to be eroding or changing our sense of what is real. From this current context one can more clearly read that Hijikata's struggle was to present the real in a time when the body is constantly simulated. (Nanako 16-25)

Butoh allowed me to explore my own reality and the unlighted or hidden side which would result in a deeply surrounding, personal and emotional performance. I remove the audience from the harsh reality to join me in an ethereal journey to the self, allowing us to be real and free, even if for a moment.

The body is configured, and the imagery of the Self is created. In my scenography project, 'Lar Dom Home', languages and memories are introduced and deconstructed, symbolising the trajectory between three (dis)placements: Porto, Gdańsk, and London.

As nora chipaumire uttered, not in these exact words, during a workshop I participated in Warsaw. 'Remember: the size between your legs represents the space you occupy on Earth.'



Fig. 2 | Aura (2019) Lar Dom Home. © By the artist

The mapping of geographies became elementary in my work. I have grown a special interest for the topography of the Subject by drawing words and archotyping thoughts, emotions, ideas, concepts, memories, experiences. In a nutshell, knowledge.

The transmission of knowledge was implicit during this time through circle-shaped conversations around Radical Performance focused on sharing philosophical notions, reflecting on previous and current systems, contextualising pre-definitions and historical values, reaffirming the potential of performance art and its empowering effect.

Additionally, I started building upon a lexicon, which not only contained words but also stored memory: attention, beginning, composition, doorkeeper, exercise, frustration, grammar, half, image, justice, Kafka, law, meaning, newspapers, orange, progress, queer, response, space, time, uninvited, veto, war, xaman, yves, zig-zag.



Fig. 3 | Inter-non-disciplinary group (2019) OUTRAGEOUS UNIFICATION, COURAGEOUS INTERFERENCE; PRODUCT, MECHANISED, LAYERED. © By the artists

The terms's different possibilities of use and the significations each individual attributes to them were motivated during the collective interdisciplinary exercise with Music and Dramaturgy collaborators. Unapologetically,⁵

we assumed, staged, and disrupted objects such as mirrors (referencing the film 'Mirror', 1975, by Andrei Tarkovsky), speakers, video projectors, matches, a red flag (referencing the film "Battleship Potemkin", 1925, by Serguei Eisenstein), a computer, a ladder, a dripping system, and a maquette of the performative place, the George Wood Theatre, a former church.

Manifoldness inhabits the city and we have pluralised it. My friend, Graham Taylor, and I produced a site-specific performance at World's End in London's Chelsea district. Our investigation focused on the history of counterculture, in questioning 'how can we make anti-capitalist art?' with the enlightenment of 'Living in a World That Can't Be Fixed' (White n.pag). The never-performed action, due to the emergence of the first SARS-CoV-2 cases, consisted of a walk along King's Road while we unveiled ten different looks that we tailored into a single outfit. We were the Anti-Chameleon. Outsiders and hybrids:

[t]he very countries of the body are sites that vacillate between the psychic and the material. (Butler 36)

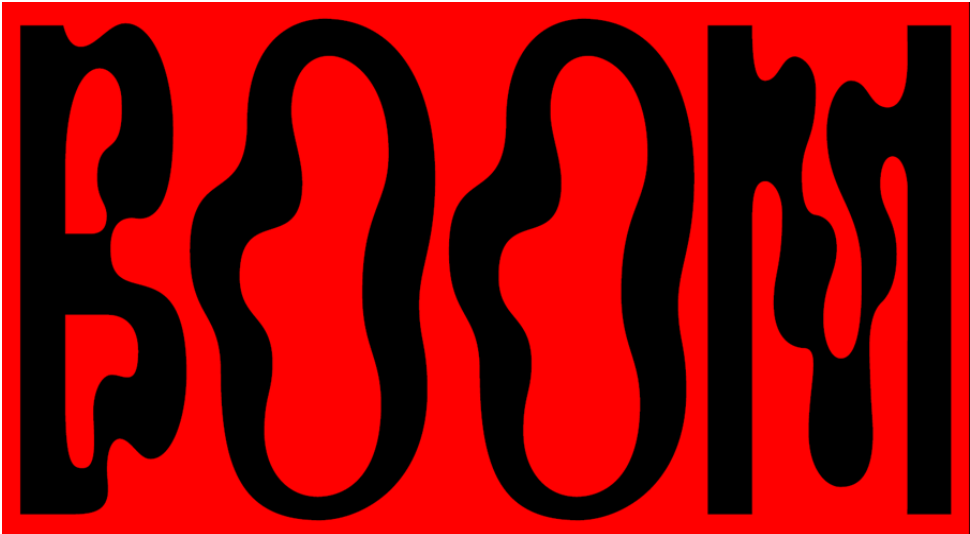


Fig. 4 | Anti-Chameleon (2020) Wal-king. © By the artist

3. Intersections: Spectatorship Findings across London, Porto, and Worldwide

Me and the other | Emotional Aura

Transformative energy is at the heart of affirmative ethics, which highlights the inexhaustible potential of all living organisms — human and non-human — to generate multiple and yet unexplored interconnections. This is the immanence of a life that can only be co-constructed and jointly articulated in a common world. (Braidotti 90)

Being a spectator is inherent to our lives. It is in the act of witnessing that we expand our vision and understanding; until, eventually, something intriguing and influential happens, in which we connect and immerse ourselves in.

Being a *flâneur* in the city and digital networks allows us to discover new contexts and to estimate existing internalised realities. The act of walking, permeability, and presence in space is included. Between streets, corners, roundabouts, museums, galleries, and theatres are more similarities than differences. After all, the world in the universe is small and our lives too short to fully contemplate it.

Nevertheless, I have glimpsed a variety of shows — live or online — from art, design, and architecture exhibitions, interventions, manifestations, protests, concerts, virtual or augmented reality visualisations, to theatre, dance, and performance pieces.

In March 2019, Anne Imhof built an atmospheric environment within the brutalist space, The Tanks, at Tate Modern. The work combined choreographed gestures, music, sculpture, and painting. The first time I came across her work was in 'Faust', although I was not present at the German Pavilion during the 2017 Venice Biennale, I immediately felt connected. Two

years later, 'Sex' was produced, and the libidinal aggression took hold of me:

It is certainly not a coincidence that performance art is Imhof's medium. The performance has come to play a key role today to the extent that its dynamic of permanent self-transgression has emerged as the paradigm of immaterial labor. (Rebentisch 28)

Although I identify with Imhof's work, there are mixed feelings regarding the new kitsch representation of peculiar pale bodies that wear couture alternative clothes and inhabit exclusively white spaces. There is something queer both in the piece and in the austerity that it represents, imposed by previous fascist regimes, that leads to an existentialist and situationist questioning. Perhaps, this is the violent and precarious scenario experienced by a young aimless generation:

It's the world of nocturnal violence with the lights turned on. Performers move languidly but with precision. Hands are on throats, tenderness contorts into aggression; simple gestures of walking are slowed down, glances become gazes. The dynamics of control pervade these actions. The micro-movements demonstrate how organic beings buckle under abstract powers and systems, evoking the current political tensions as right-wing ideologies start to take hold. (Manhattan)

Indeed: today's era is purely romantic. That which is strong in it is unflinching mysticism, assuming ever newer and newer forms. It is at once a mysticism of the decline of the world, of western culture; [...]; a mysticism of social belief in a rich wellspring of cultural strengths in the depths of the proletarian class; a pansexual mysticism [...], which rages directly, epidemically, in the young generations [...]; and this fashionable realism also has in its foundation mystical roots, just as it also

has not a little fashionable Weltschmerz. (Götz 67-68)

In November 2020, at São João National Theatre, in Porto, Mónica Calle unified four solos in 'This is My Body' ('Este é o Meu Corpo'). In this gesture, the actress questions and updates a series of works carried out over the last 28 years, probing her becoming. A physical, personal, and artistic body, but also a collective body, always built-in relation to others, working the word, the word in flesh.

Her work brought me into direct relationship with the Self. How do we build our identity intentionally or unintentionally over time? How is the body perceived? By the audience, either placed in an intimate and close space to the performance action, as in 'The Crazy Virgin' ('A Virgem Doida'), or in attentive observation from a seat that allows a full visualisation of the scene, as in 'My Feelings' ('Os Meus Sentimentos'). Respectively, by the complicity and interaction of two people or by the momentary collective dance.

In the first piece, the sexualised body is the centre of the action. With text by Rimbaud, the told stories merge between the real and the fictional. The spectator relates their own experience to what is said. It is a joint story-telling, in which one tells and the other listens, but both dive in.

In the second durational play, Calle reads and inhabits the words of the writer Dulce Maria Cardoso like a second skin. In a dense soil-fleuve, the spectator is once again taken to two different realities. One in which the theatre opened early between 6am and 12pm due to pandemic restrictions, while hosting a bar and dancefloor on stage between breaks. The other was the story that took us from the theatre inside of an overturned car, where a woman is laid down, with her seatbelt blocked, revisiting past moments in her lifetime:

[T]he position I encounter myself in, upside down, suspend-

ed by the seat belt, doesn't bother me, my body, strangely, doesn't weigh me down, the clash must have been violent, I don't recall, I opened my eyes and it was like this, upside down, arms hitting the roof, legs loose, a rag doll's misshapen, eyes staring idly at a drop of water standing on a piece of vertical glass, I can't identify the noises that I hear, I start again, I shouldn't have left the house, I shouldn't have left the house. (Cardoso 9)

I watched my third case study in April 2021, on the Portuguese TV channel RTP2. First in the company of my soul mate, who immediately wanted to see it again with our family. We were all blown away by the magnificent experience created by the musician Rone and the collective La(Horde) with the National Ballet of Marseille.

The show's title, 'Room with a View', resonates with the new post-pandemic way of living, in which from our rooms we became spectators of life and art. In the life that art dwells and in the art that life initiates, we are free to see and imagine:

In a marble quarry, several machines are in action, cutting and polishing the rock. In this out-of-this-world place, Rone sculpts sweeping electronic and emotional landscapes. As sculptors work with marble to 'free the human form from the block', dancers move to escape the stones white stillness, rising to examine the infinitely human contours of imminent disaster and glimpsing the very possibility of its beauty. (RTP)

Once again, forms of protest and rebellion, codified and incorporated, are references to my artistic practice. I find the proposition of (La)Horde to work on a blank page interesting, and, on it, to draw and sculpt sounds, bodies, and landscapes, that face urgent challenges about where humanity currently finds itself in mutation:

We live in the midst of permanent processes of transition, hybridisation and nomadisation and these in-between states defy the established modes of theoretical representation. (Braidotti 22)

4. Foundations: Building upon a Transarchive

Me and the environment | Viral Aura

The archive [...] is the general system for the statements formation and transformation of statements. (Foucault 10)

Building an archive involves, a priori, an encounter with research and/or practices — written, performative, visual, auditory, sensory, scientific, among others. And, afterwards, a place where memories, history, herstory, images, texts, videos, sounds, data, are saved.

In this case, it is a site-under-construction dedicated mainly to the transgender transdisciplinarity of artistic, cultural, social, philosophical, politicised fields... a transarchive:

[T]he process of signification is always material; signs work by appearing (visibly, aurally), and appearing through material means, although what appears only signifies by virtues of those non-phenomenal relations, i.e., relations or differentiation, that tacitly structure of and propel signification itself. Relations, even the notion of *différance*, institute and require relata, terms, phenomenal signifiers. And yet what allows for a signifier to signify will never be its materiality alone; that materiality will be at once an instrumentality and deployment of a set of larger linguistic relations. (Butler 38)

An archive is not just a place where *œuvres* are deposited, but a place in

constant change and expansion. A rhizomatic experiment where the peripheries become centralised, and the centres fade away. In botany, a rhizome is a modified type of stem that grows horizontally and, generally, underground, which are important organs that asexually reproduce roots through their nodes.

It could be said that it (de)colonises the mind and (de)territorialises the layer in which we incessantly navigate in search of articulating and re-establishing our foundations. It's about looking in the other and the surroundings, who we are.

The stories we've been told shouldn't be the stories we tell.

(Al-Maria 121)

Though it may appear to be historic, and it is, the archive inhabits all-time. It is in the present and will be in the future. Its criticism and evolution are essential according to the times and wills that change. Giving way to processes of diversification, decolonisation, and queerisation in the field of History. It is necessary to give space to other stories—old, new, or imaginary—and to other stakeholders, hitherto ignored and marginalised:

By the early 1990s, primarily through the influence of Leslie Feinberg's 1992 pamphlet *Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time Has Come*, transgender was beginning to refer to something else—an imagined political alliance of all possible forms of gender antinormativity. It was in this latter sense that transgender became articulated with queer. (Stryker 145)

The unfolding of new materialities previously immaterial implies the plurality of voices that become references. It is an umbrella capable of sheltering everyone. Trans men, trans women, non-binary people, androgynous, demiboy, demigirl, two-spirit, genderqueer, genderfluid, agender, intersex,

gender non-conforming, drag kings, drag queens, crossdressers, transvestites, and everyone who is fluid, disruptive, unsubmitive, deviant, and dissident. Although it seems impossible to install total justice and assign the deserved place and legacy to everyone, it is possible to fight for it:

From this moment on, all of you are dead. Amelia, Hervé, Michel, Karen, Jackie, Teo and You. Do I belong more to your world than I do to the world of the living? Isn't my politics yours; my house, my body, yours? Reincarnate yourselves in me, take over my body like extraterrestrials took over Americans and changed them into living sheaths. Reincarnate yourself in me; possess my tongue, arms, sex organs, dildos, blood, molecules; possess my girlfriend, dog; inhabit me, live in me. Come. Ven. Please don't leave. Vuelve a la vida. Come back to life. Hold on my sex. Low, down, dirty. Stay with me.
(Preciado 16)

Following Preciado's words, I add other living voices, which are or are not among us:

Marsha P. Johnson, Sylvia Rivera, Arca, SOPHIE, Lyra Pramuk, Anohni, Dorian Electra, Ezra Furman, Colin Self, Lauren Arder, Honey Dijon, Kim Petras, Laura Jane Grace, Hunter Schafer, Laverne Cox, Jamie Clayton, Trace Lysette, Indya Moore, Elliot Page, La Veneno, Lili Elbe, Gottmik, CHRISTEENE, Andreja Pejić, Paul B. Preciado, EJ Gonzalez-Polledo, Patrick Staff, Genesis P-Orridge, Juliet Jacques, Cassils, Yishay Garbasz, Wu Tsang, Candy Darling, Renata Carvalho, Linn da Quebrada, Liniker, Dinis Machado, Aurora, Odete, Ves Liberta, Hilda de Paulo, Joseph Morgan Schofield, Pê Feijó, Gilbert Sierotzki, Housnara Nara Ali, Ariel Albuquerque, and all of you that represent the world I live in.

[T]he archive is the time that unites and the time that separates. (Neves 49)

Let's think together: Who are the trans people from the present or past that you know? And the ones you don't because history has often decided to delete or murder them. So, how can we create a safer world for future generations? How can we learn from our ancestry of gender dissenting people? Perhaps let's start by reading transfeminist texts, by sharing our stories first-hand, by creating together, by dialoguing and even debating.

Also let's make something clear: there could be no transition for me as a person or as an artist if I wasn't able to meet other trans people at some point in life. The first one, that I was aware of when meeting her in 2017 during Queer Porto, is a dear friend called Aurora. I can't truly recall what my feelings were at that time, but I do believe it had a huge impact and was a turning point in my life, leading me to include the word trans in my vocabulary, until then nonexistent or unconscious of. From then, a voyage began.

5. Transition: Self-Navigating in a Post-Pandemic World

Me and the space-time | Astral Aura

In times when 'The Earth is transitioning. Power is transitioning.' (Preciado), and 'the subject doesn't die, but shifts'.
(Védrine 184)

'The need to externalise personal discourses, mediating them through the own body, will establish it as a place of production of meaning and dissidence.' (Neves 34) These are the inquietudes that I intend to carry out while I am displaced, living in a world I never recognised myself in, and never seem to recognise:

Disidentifications is meant to be descriptive of the survival strategies the minority subject practices in order to negotiate a phobic majoritarian public sphere that continuously elides or punishes the existence of subjects who do not conform to

the phantasm of normative citizenship. (Muñoz 4)

Moving towards Muñoz, it is by disidentifying myself that I decided to create my own world on the scale of who I was in which I learned how to walk.

The pandemic borne by the Covid-19 virus remains. Faced with the escapist instance of protecting ourselves from a common enemy — invisible to the eye, visible in the devastation — several, including myself, turned their vision on themselves. The time of Narcissus is installed, who sees their own reflection on water, even if tepid. It is the soul, and it is necessary to dive into it. Beyond vanity, submerging. Going to the depths of the individual who becomes aware of themselves, of their *raison d'être*:

It's knowing I was not born in the wrong body, rather born in the wrong world, but still grasping at my chest, longing for something to change, for me to change, for me to do better.
(Alabanza 45)

As Travis Alabanza redefines their body in this world, it is needed to turn the page, to ungroup from the status quo dominated by techno-patriarchal biopolitical forces and transphobic passersby who insist on the vertiginous operating theatre. In epidemic times of economic, social, environmental, and public health collapse to which we are exposed, immunity is what we have left to resist the norms that intend to govern and dictate our identity bodies. 'Turning my experience of violence into the ability to express it as sensitively and forcefully as possible: that is my ideal'. (Zevallos 140)

Quarantine allowed me to run a careful dissection of my own organism. Particularly, of my needs. At the level of physical and mental wellbeing. 'Materiality never disappeared. The emergence of Covid-19 plunged us all into the dense materiality of our mortal bodies.' (Braidotti 96). It was a time of death, but also of healing. And, in my case, the second one happened.

Coming home is always a challenging but liberating journey. The disconnection from the stress of work, college, and, especially, the toxicity of moving around the city, catapulted me to the possibility of finally inhabiting myself. In *Me, myself, and I* (referencing the song by Billie Holiday).

While watching a world-already-in-collapse, collapse, another must be raised. Mine. Two hemispheres merge into one. Countless mountains and valleys, caves and constellations, fountains and oceans, form in the vastness of a bodyscape, a fusion of the body with the landscape:

Our most intimate fantasies, desires, projections, internal dialogues and ever-shifting identities are bisected, influenced and ruled by public discourse, legislations and the law.

(Gonzalez-Torres 87)

In this instance, I took the reins and the control of this phenomenological process. In times of emergency, the ability to change the order of things is born in us. It is empowerment. An ancestral and contemporary practice of self-validation in which we are granted access to topographic archives where our contours, our languages, our conduct, our DNA are recorded. We hijack and hack ourselves. We obtain a cartography of the becoming. Our body-in-motion is now the ruling map that pierces borders, breaks barriers, centres, and decentralises, teleporting itself.

I arrived and arranged my bags, they weighed more than they should. Unpacking all the anxieties I carried. Who am I? How do others perceive me? Where did the child with the desire to change the world who can barely take care of themselves end up? Who can barely see, hear, and identify themselves with? There is an inherent and continuous nausea. A discomfort. An urge that doesn't seem to disappear. At first, one does not know where it comes from, but soon it is discovered. I always knew, and they did as well. That I was the difference. The nothing and the everything. The pansy, faggot,

weird, queer, deviant. Now, I transcend.

6. Metamorphosis: Transformation as an Experience towards an Artistic Practice

Me and the [w]hole | Celestial Aura

I can reach any empty space and make it a bare stage. One person walks through this empty space while another person watches — and nothing else is needed for a theatrical action to occur. (Brook 7)

Through the words of Peter Brook, on a black three-dimensional screen, a black box, I created my final project, *7 ≈ 8*, a solo performance-environment created from transdisciplinary media, such as movement, set, sound, light, and costume design; as a culmination of progress and change in my artistic path; focused, a priori, on my rebirth, and, a posteriori, on my emanation as Aura.



Fig. 5 | Aura (2021) 7 ≈ 8. © Liron Zisser

The methodology is based on previous explorations of performative

gestures that seek, in the tremor of the body, wounds, imprints, and traces that are intrinsic to memory. Not only does our brain acquire, store, and retrieve information biologically and psychologically conceived. As our spirit-body also entails, incites, and physiologically and ontologically connects the habits and sensory memories.

How to transpose my experience as a transgender woman into my artistic research-practice? How to compile and translate the ephemerality of memories into movement? How to externalise the experience through us? How to create bridges that pass through us between the present and the past? How to provide the spectator with the opportunity to freely internalise it? As in History, reality is always fictionalised:

We are the pieces of a game that the sky plays [...]. *In girum imus nocte et consumemur igni.* We move in the dead-end night and we are devoured by fire [...]. A generation passes, and another succeeds, but the earth remains. The sun rises, and then sets, and so it returns from where it came [...]. All rivers enter the sea and the sea never overflows. Rivers always return to the place they came from, to flow again [...]. Everything has its time, and everything under heaven passes there, after the prescribed period [...]. There is a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to cut down and a time to build... There is a time to tear and a time to unite again, a time to be silent and a time to say. (Debord 43-45)

Necropolitics questions whether or not the state has the power to kill. Here, the author kills and buries themselves. In the depths, the fire burns and restores them, the earth perishes and heals them, the water swallows and purifies them, the air suffocates and scars them. Everyone oppresses Them and She aurically frees Herself. Rising upon Herself. Like a cleave, title given to my MA's festival, that simultaneously tears apart and unifies the hybrid territory of the body that knows when to be silent, when to speak,

and when to silently speak.

Textless, the performance structure consists in a series of actions that contains tenderness in gestures, and perseverance in presence. From the tenuous horizontality to the transcendental verticality, the ritual passes through acts such as the umbilical water that descends, gestation, giving birth to oneself, levitating, the body as a foetus, ascending, revealing, drying, transiting, being dressed, the opening, the joining, and the expansion of a continuous movement, eternalised in memory:

James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis describe the Gaia hypothesis as a view of the Earth as a living organism where the clouds are the Earth's lungs, the rivers and oceans are the blood, the land is the skeletal structure and the living organisms are the Earth's senses. (Staff 18)

The body that rotates on its own axis is the translation that generates light and shadow. The bodysphere constituted by the seven almost eight auric layers, provides the ideal environment to be inhabited by the artist and the audience.

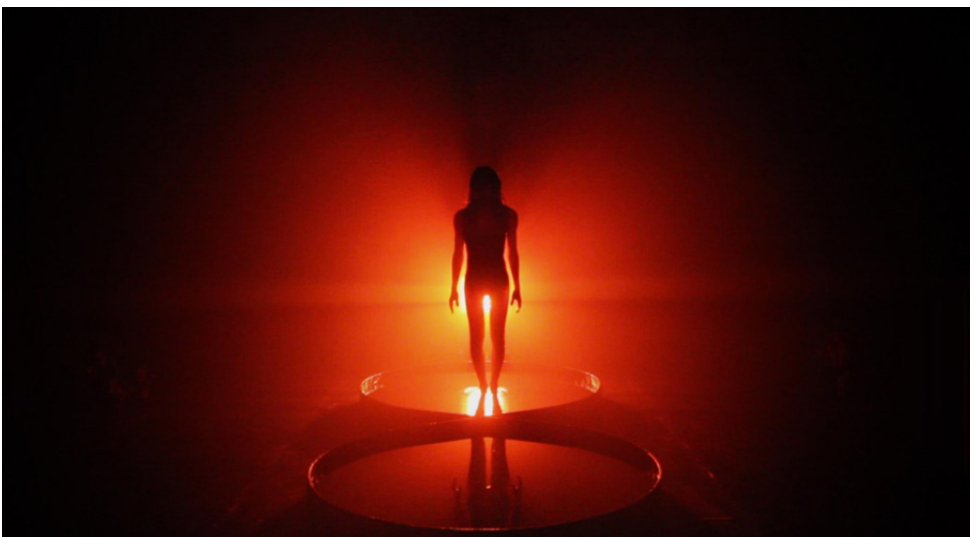


Fig. 6 | Aura (2021) 7 ≈ 8. © Konstantina Tsagianni

I — Aura — am the muse:

[D]efined as the body of the Earth, if the Earth is understood as a singularity that is also plural. The muse is Earth's life-energy, a holographic perception of self-interpenetrating spheres of space-time. In this holographic perception, the Earth becomes a portal to a hyperspatial exterior. (Allado-McDowell 50-51)

In a composition of atoms in transition, the hormonal process of oestrogen is the link that covers and exalts. It is in this etheric transformation that the artificial is diluted into the natural, and, in artificiality, a natural order of things is found. After all, biology is also a social construction.

In a process of transgression and transformation, oestrogen is simultaneously the constituent of the mental-corporeal being as well as of its surroundings. At its essence, plants have hormonal properties. My costume, a printed fabric garment, tailored from a double-coloured organza containing a microscopic view of oestradiol. The piece's soundtrack, composed by me and Sarah-Holly Sayeed, made out a binary technological code. The scenographic space divided in two hemispheres.

In Nature, I find myself. Its essence is vital in the construction of a transqueer practice through the research of counter-narratives. Where reading botanical texts queerly is bio-art. It's about understanding 'What is ancient about herbalism and what is modern about gender transition? What is modern about herbalism and what is ancient about transitioning?' (Linn and Staff 15)

For (Carl) Jung, a person needs to maintain a strong inner balance between the spirit of the times and the spirit of the depths; too much either creates neuroses. And as for the individual, so for society. Culturally, we have allowed the scales to shift dramatically; we are cut off from our deeper

natures, we have turned our back on the spirit of the depths and live entirely in the spirit of the times. In order to regain balance, we need to remaster the ability to go deep, to “turn away from outer things”. To face what is in ourselves. This starts with connection and creativity. (Tempest 40)

This shifting has enabled me and my performativity to leave a previously negative point-of-view over the living, surrounded by denial and confrontation towards the world status quo; and now to perceive things positively, with acceptance and healing.

To the resemblance of identity — unite and manifold — my artistic practice research is built through different assimilations at a personal and intellectual, academic and social, geographical and epistemological level. If one intends to define it, it works the negative positively, finds calm in calamity, balancing itself between the liminal space, and becoming aware of the causal action. Finally, in the individual it finds the plurality of other voices. A transgenesis.



Fig. 7 | Aura (2021) 7 ~ 8. © Sheila Burnet

7. Blooming: A Fulfilled Cycle

Me + myself + I ≡≡ 3nity | Causal Aura

From seed to flower, we infer the growth of form. (Neves 132)

Thinking of Humanity in relation to Nature. Another form of anthropocentric conception. Or, on the verge of the Anthropocene, a search for an answer by circumscribing ourselves in Her. Species — such as identities, ethnicities, sexes, genders, religions — carry ancestry. Each flower is unique, as is each body. Aura's blossom, and, in them, communities emanate.

The transcourse of this epistemic astral travel is the end of an academic chapter and the beginning of a new personal and professional trajectory. Three years. A trilogy that implodes against brutal power relations, including the power over us. Amidst pandemoniums, conflicts, and injustices, change took hold. 'Transformations, metamorphosis, mutations and processes of change have in fact become familiar in the lives of most contemporary subjects'. (Braidotti 21)

I recognise 'I am not nothing. I will never be nothing. I cannot ever want to be nothing. Apart from that, I have in me all the dreams of the world.' (Campos 649)

Ultimately, in the midst of these strange times, a deep feeling of hope dwells in me. After winter, spring arises. In hibernation, preparation happens. And, in liberation, achievement.

Fulfil yourself. Until the end. (Neves 136)

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