

*And you ghosts rise blue: A Methodology for Composing Art and Community Using Scores,
Contemporary Performance Practices, and Voices from the Past*

by

Indigo Cook

Dance Program
Duke University

Defense Date: March 28, 2025

Approved:

Michael Kliën, Advisor

Jingqiu Guan

John Supko

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Fine Arts in the Dance Program in The Graduate School of
Duke University
2025

ABSTRACT

*And you ghosts rise blue: A Methodology for Composing Art and Community Using Scores,
Contemporary Performance Practices, and Voices from the Past*

by

Indigo Cook

Dance Program
Duke University

Defense Date: March 28, 2025

Approved:

Michael Kliën, Advisor

Jingqiu Guan

John Supko

An abstract of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts in the Dance Program in The Graduate School of
Duke University
2025

Copyright by
Indigo Cook
2025

Abstract

This thesis proposes a compositional methodology that draws on scores, contemporary performance practices, and poetics from Western experimental art history as source material for new artistic work. The source material is organized within a matrix of relationality that becomes a site for the scores and poetic voices to interact and transform. This matrix is then activated as a creative scaffold for interdisciplinary, collaborative composition. Research for this thesis was approached via the theoretical development of the proposed methodology and its embodied application towards the composition of an experimental opera, *And you ghosts rise blue*, which explored summoning voices from the matrix as im/material ghosts able to communicate across life and death, the unreal and the real, and past, present, and alternate time-spaces. The composition of *And you ghosts rise blue* was accompanied by the creation of the *Reader* – an archive of the specific scores, theories, and poetics from the matrix that shaped the opera. This thesis ultimately suggests that a compositional methodology centered around multiplicity, communication, embodiment, and agency has the potential to ethically wield creative tools for navigating and composing language, community, systems of power, and time and space.

Contents

Abstract.....	iv
List of Figures.....	ix
Acknowledgements.....	x
1. Introduction: Prelude – the <i>Reader</i>	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Background and Key Terms.....	3
1.2.1 Background.....	3
1.2.2 Key Terms.....	3
1.3 General Overview	6
1.3.1 Compositional Methodology.....	6
1.3.2 Research and Creative Process	7
1.4 Politics and Poetics	7
1.5 Adam Pendleton and Black Dada	9
2. Act One – the Key	10
2.1 Introduction.....	10
2.2 The Matrix and the Reader.....	11
2.2.1 The Matrix.....	11
2.2.2 The Reader	11
2.3 Theoretical Frameworks.....	14
2.3.1 Chaos Theory	14
2.3.2 The New Discipline and Embodiment.....	16
2.3.3 Cybernetics.....	16

2.3.4 Affect Theory	18
2.3.5 Ritual	19
2.3.6 Queerness and Heterotopia	20
2.4 Artistic Frameworks	22
2.4.1 General Organizing Principles	22
2.4.2 The Reader's Strange Attractors	23
2.4.3 Contemporary Performance Practices	25
2.5 Ghosts and Poetic Evocations	27
2.6 Conclusion	29
2.7 Pauline Oliveros and the ♀ Ensemble	30
3. Act Two – the Medium	31
3.1 Introduction	31
3.2 Theoretical and Art History Research	32
3.3 The Reader	32
3.3.1 <i>Reader</i> as Archive	32
3.3.2 <i>Reader</i> as Manifesto	33
3.3.3 <i>Reader</i> as Art-Object	34
3.4 Embodied Research	35
3.4.1 Listening Sessions	36
3.4.2 Community Laboratories	36
3.4.3 Hauntings	37
3.4.4 <i>And you ghosts rise blue</i>	38
3.5 Hilma af Klint and De Fem	39
4. Act Three – the Tragedy	40

4.1 Introduction.....	40
4.2 The Collaborators.....	41
4.3 Rehearsal Process.....	42
4.3.1 Structure.....	42
4.3.2 Ritual.....	43
4.4 Designing the Rift.....	44
4.4.1 General Structure.....	44
4.4.2 Plastic Veils.....	45
4.5 Operatic Structure.....	47
4.5.1 Pasticcio Opera.....	47
4.5.2 The Three Acts.....	48
4.6 The Score.....	48
4.6.1 General Compositional Principles.....	48
4.6.2 Specific Examples.....	50
4.6.3 Sound, Movement, Light, Libretto.....	51
4.7 The Reading Room.....	52
4.7.1 Installation.....	52
4.7.2 Journey into the Rift.....	53
4.8 Conclusion.....	54
4.9 SOPHIE.....	54
5. Conclusion: Coda – the Rift.....	55
5.1 Creative Reflections.....	55
5.2 Future Engagements.....	56
5.3 The Rift.....	56

Appendix A.....	57
Appendix B.....	59
Appendix C.....	61
Appendix D.....	63
Appendix E.....	65
Appendix F.....	67
Appendix G.....	69
Bibliography.....	70

List of Figures

Figure B.1: Reader Zine Examples.....	59
Figure B.2: Diaz pages 1-2.....	59
Figure B.3: Diaz pages 3-4.....	59
Figure B.4: Diaz pages 5-6.....	60
Figure B.5: Diaz back cover.....	60
Figure G.1: The Rift	64

Acknowledgements

I am deeply grateful towards my advisory committee, professors Michael Kliën, Jingqiu Guan, and John Supko. Thank you for your counsel and support on this project, and thank you for acting as treasured mentors throughout my time here at Duke.

To the collective of collaborators with whom I realized *And you ghosts rise blue* – piercing the veils of time-space with you has been a gift.

1. Introduction: Prelude – the *Reader*

-Adam Pendleton and *Black Dada*- Our first introduction to the matrix, and the foundational inspiration for this thesis, is American visual artist Adam Pendleton and his *Black Dada Reader*.¹ Through the use of photocopied papers and huge canvases, abstracted images and grayscale color spectrums, disembodied sound, dripping text, and flashes of video, Pendleton calls on and im/materializes the voices of his artistic lineage and socio-political positionality as the voices of Black Dada. Black Dada then becomes the conceptual foundation and living chorus among whom Pendleton situates himself in order to create work. I in turn call on Pendleton's voice as a catalyzing force in the chorus of my own research: "we come from elsewhere / In part we grew by looking back at you / BLACK DADA."²

1.1 Introduction

This thesis proposes a compositional methodology that assembles contemporary performance practices, scores, theoretical concepts, and poetics from Western experimental art history and other sources, puts them in conversation with each other inside a matrix of relationality, and uses their voices³ as a scaffold from which to build new interdisciplinary, collaborative creative work. The compositional matrix was designed to allow the voices within to sing across and through realms of medium, time, and space in order to weave together alternate, im/possible materialities and creative and social time-spaces.

On one dimension, my interest with this research lay in the potential of my compositional methodology as a embodied creative tool that might allow for richer, deeper, polyvocal artistic work. On another dimension, I was drawn to how the many voices and time-spaces of my work

¹ Adam Pendleton, *Black Dada Reader*, ed. Stephen Squibb, (London: Koenig Books, 2017).

² Pendleton, "Black Dada Manifesto" in *Black Dada Reader*, 341.

³ A poetic catch-all term I use in my research that encompasses individuals, collectives, pieces of art, practices or concepts, body, identity, the actual human voice, etc.

might generate other social realms of multiplicity –language, community, epistemology, ontology. My research considered what might be possible and what might be at stake when we pierce the veil into those other multiple realms and practice composing time-spaces of the past, present, future, alternate, and im/possible alongside other voices.

Adam Pendleton and his *Black Dada Reader*, alongside an assemblage of other conceptual and poetic frameworks, shaped the theoretical research for my thesis and the development of my compositional methodology and organizational matrix. Embodied research for my thesis engaged the matrix in an interdisciplinary, collaborative artistic process for the creation of an experimental opera, *And you ghosts rise blue*, which premiered at Duke University in February 2025. The scores, practices, and voices that were drawn into the matrix for this work formed my own version of a *Reader*: an opera-specific matrix which also functioned as an archive of the research, a manifesto of the creative process, and a material art-object consisting of hand-made zines.

The opera furthered my research on the voices of the matrix by casting them as ghosts: spirits of my artistic lineage, poetic evocations of past, future, and alternate or un/real time-spaces; and summonings of power. While non-narrative, *And you ghosts rise blue* took ghosts as the conceptual, poetic, and aesthetic heart of the piece.

Composing *And you ghosts rise blue* according to my proposed methodology required summoning the ghosts of the *Reader* to interact and transform within the matrix and then evolve and reverberate into the material of the opera. The activation of the *Reader's* matrix for this project was done alongside a collaborative collective of interdisciplinary artists who were involved in each stage of composition and performance, with a significant focus on community activation and capacity building over a long-term creative process.

This written thesis will examine the conceptual development of my compositional methodology and will analyze its experimentation through *And you ghosts rise blue*. The chapters

of the thesis, like the acts of the opera, each speak through one of the primary ghosts from the *Reader*, who serve as strange attractors guiding the research. Adam Pendleton's Prelude will (1) provide background on my research positionality and define key relevant terms, (2) conduct a general overview of my compositional methodology and research process, and (3) explore the poetics and politics that shape my research questions.

1.2 Background and Key Terms

1.2.1 Background

I am approaching this research from a background as a classically-trained percussionist specializing in Western experimental and avant-garde music of the 20th and 21st centuries. My embodied interdisciplinary practice now weaves music together with elements of dance, contemporary performance practice, and poetics while orienting towards long-term collaborative processes and experiments in community activation. As a queer artist who works primarily with interdisciplinary/multimedia presentations of sound, movement, text, and light – often with an affinity towards intensity of dynamic and duration – I like to think of what I do as creating momentary suspensions, distortions, and re-fabrications of the normative time-space within which performers, audience, and community members gather. I am composing a moment of unreality that might ripple out and someday expand the possibilities of our current reality.

1.2.2 Key Terms

My research was influenced by my background in Western experimental art, and several key terms for this thesis were grounded within that specific context.

Contemporary performance practices: The contemporary performance practices I cited in my work come from Western experimental art in the 20th and 21st centuries. They can take the form of scores, manifestos, ritual, embodied approaches to performance, compositional techniques, and methodologies/ideologies of collective facilitation. My research focused on practices that could be translated and realized among an interdisciplinary collective, with a

particular orientation towards practices created and wielded by queer and gender-marginalized artists and arts collectives.⁴

I was drawn to the avant-garde of Western art due in part to its frequent invocations of an anti-establishment or revolutionary ethos, and its history of marginalized experimental artists using their position on the periphery to experiment with imagining radical new possibilities for their work and their community. Additionally, I engaged the specific scores and practices within the *Reader's* matrix because of a belief in their unique potential for destabilizing composer/performer relationships, technique, disciplinary boundaries, conceptual conventions, etc. The practices I chose to focus on rely instead on the interpretative agency of the performer and the creative power of the experimental.

Interdisciplinarity: The disciplines my research drew on were situated primarily within the context of the arts, while also engaging with an array of resonant conceptual frameworks in other fields of study.⁵ Western experimental art has a rich tradition of negotiating and transforming disciplinary boundaries – between movement and music, poetry and philosophy, the realms of art, non-art, and anti-art, etc.⁶ I viewed my research as a continuation of that tradition in its specific experimentation with translation and transformation of multiple disciplinary practices, knowledge bases, and vocabulary sets into a shared collaborative language.

Collaboration: While the incorporation of multidisciplinary elements into a solo practice is an approach to interdisciplinary art for many practitioners I deeply admire,⁷ my research interest lay less in the singular authorial creation of a *gesamtkunstwerk* incorporating all the

⁴ An orientation that will be discussed in detail throughout subsequent chapters.

⁵ These artistic and theoretical frameworks will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

⁶ Luis Camnitzer, *Conceptualism in Latin American Art: Didactics of Liberation*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 2.

⁷ Consider Eiko Otake's video and projection work or Carolyn Chen's compositions as examples.

disciplines, and more in the collective exchange that happens when people from many disciplines come together.⁸

My approach to collaboration was rooted in non-hierarchical and anti-capitalist sensibilities,⁹ but aimed to be an expansive and flexible framework of facilitation. While prioritizing long-term processes is a common element in my arts practice, collaboration does not have to follow the same compositional patterns or social structures every time. For this thesis I designed the facilitation, process, and outcome of my collaborative approach to be responsive and adapt to the needs, desires, and interests of the members of the *And you ghosts rise blue* collective. And it is important to note here that, as my understanding of collaboration does not adhere to a narrow definition of material membership nor to a singular time-space, I considered the ghosts of the *Reader* to be collaborators in this research project as much as the embodied members of the collective.

Embodiment: My thesis, with its focus on other voices, frequently invoked embodiment, disembodiment, materiality, and immateriality as both technical and poetic concepts. Embodiment in the context of dance and my creative practice could be understood through the frame of Alain Badiou's "thoughtbody" – the entanglement of movement and cognition that gives rise to meaning and experience.¹⁰ For Badiou: "the task of dance is to play time within space"¹¹ – this has been a foundational challenge and invitation for my artwork.

Dis/embodiment and im/materiality in the context of my compositional methodology and the ghosts of the *Reader* related to the potential of my focus on multiplicity and real/unreal time-spaces. As my thesis evolved within a matrix of past voices, present collaborators, and future

⁸ Shannon Jackson, "Performance, Aesthetics, and Support," in *Social Works: Performing Art, Supporting Publics*, (Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 2011), 14.

⁹ See Jackson, 21-25.

¹⁰ Alain Badiou, *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, trans. by Alberto Toscano, (California: Stanford University Press, 2005), 70.

¹¹ Badiou, 61.

imaginings, my work explored the ways in which all those bodies could be present in some manner and their voices heard. This research considered the extent to which our bodies are able to dance, move, and mean in this time-space while also developing the agential capacity¹² to transverse and compose other time-spaces, creatively and socially.

1.3 General Overview

1.3.1 Compositional Methodology

My proposed compositional methodology involves gathering contemporary performance practices, scores, theoretical concepts, and poetics within a matrix of sources, which can then be translated and transformed for the creation of new artistic work. As a basic example drawn from *And you ghosts rise blue*: one of the ghosts of the *Reader* was composer Pauline Oliveros. My collaborators for the opera and I frequently studied and practiced interpretations of Oliveros' vocal scores over the course of the rehearsal process. In addition to approaching the scores vocally, we experimented with translating them as movement scores, visual art prompts, etc. or with layering and performing them alongside scores from other sources in the *Reader*'s matrix. We then took our interpretations of two of Oliveros' scores and stitched them into new video, musical, and choreographic material to form the opening of the opera.

Orienting this compositional methodology specifically around interdisciplinary collaborative processes is a vital component to my research. The disembodied voices of the matrix must speak among and through embodied translators, who are themselves situated across their own spectrum of medium and discipline, expression, and lived experience. Each voice brings with them a unique language through which they experience and compose their reality.¹³ Gathering within the dynamic container of the matrix becomes a compositional process of

¹² A term originally coined by Karen Barad that will be discussed in the following chapter.

¹³ I am inspired here by Samuel Delany's *Babel-17* and the Sapir Whorf hypothesis, which argues that the language you speak inherently shapes how you relate to the world around you. Learning new languages can expand the possibilities of that world or grammatically reconstruct reality itself.

translation, negotiation, and communication as the dis/embodied chorus must learn to sound and move together across multiple time-spaces and realities.

My research considered how the collaborative practices necessitated and generated by my compositional methodology might affect and transform the practitioners in both creative and social ways, particularly as the collaborations play out over extended periods of time. I propose that if acts of translation and communication are practiced collectively over the course of a creative process, they may expand the collaborators' capacity to engage with other voices and compose time-space among them. My compositional methodology might therefore function not only as a tool for the creation of an artwork, but also as a heuristic for community language-building and activation.

1.3.2 Research and Creative Process

My thesis focused on (1) the theoretical research and development of my compositional methodology and (2) the embodied realization of that methodology. Modes of inquiry for the theoretical research included the assembly of a series of conceptual, artistic, and poetic frameworks that structured my approach towards composition and the organization of the matrix. A significant emphasis on art history research further informed specific sourcing of the contemporary performance practices, scores, and poetics that would become the voices of the *Reader's* matrix. These will be discussed in the following chapter. The composition of *And you ghosts rise blue* and its accompanying *Reader* represented the embodied modes of inquiry for my research, with the emphasis here on community activation and long-term collaborative process. Chapter 4 will address the creative process in more detail.

1.4 Politics and Poetics

The general overview, background, and keys terms presented in this chapter introduced the theoretical frameworks and practical approaches to my research and creative process. This

final section of the Prelude turns towards the poetic intentions and political implications of my research.

Each element of the development and realization of my compositional methodology related and resonated in some way to considerations of (1) communication, (2) multiplicity, (3) embodiment, and (4) agency. My approach to composition takes place within a matrix of voices and relationalities. These voices must communicate across boundaries of discipline, medium, and time-space, and the practice of translating between language sets – artistic, epistemic, or ontological – and transforming them into a new, collaborative language is what makes composition possible. In addition to the creative potential of that compositional process for opening realms of knowledge and expression that singular artists could not reach on their own, my thesis also proposes that those same translation and collaborative language-building practices – especially when engaged with consistently as a community over long periods of time – can ultimately function as a heuristic for my collaborators to increase their capacity for language-building on a social scale.

Multiplicity, meanwhile, was another central concept in my thesis that owes its poetic origin to Jorge Luis Borges' short story "The Garden of Forking Paths."¹⁴ In it, the author imagines a multiverse of temporalities, all branching off from each other in an infinite number of possible paths you might take in the garden. I was interested in how we might navigate that socio-temporal garden in the same way we navigate the compositional matrix and its many voices. What possible worlds, structures of reality, and systems of power lie outside of our own? How can we practice collectively exploring the garden paths of those heterotopic alternatives without assuming utopic universality in what their needs and values might be?

¹⁴ Jorge Luis Borges, "Garden of Forking Paths," in *Collected Fictions*, trans. by Andrew Hurley, (New York: Viking, 1998), 120-129.

And the question then becomes, once these time-spaces are rendered poetically imaginable, how might our bodies actually get there? My thesis ultimately wagers on how an experimental art practice like the one I developed could also function as practice in our agential capacity to act, change, and relate to each other and the im/material world around us.

1.5 Adam Pendleton and Black Dada

“I want an art of fatal optimism and divergent poetics. I want broken and imperfect genius for all people, from all people, I want the aftermath of all people. All people are my aftermath anyway.”¹⁵

¹⁵ Pendleton, *Past, Futures, Aftermaths: Revisiting the Black Dada Reader*, (New York: DABA, 2021), 10.

2. Act One – the Key

-Pauline Oliveros and the ♀ Ensemble- My first encounter with Oliveros’ music and the ensemble of women with whom she worked was on a hillside overlooking an old Shaker village in New Hampshire in 2017. A group of fellow musicians attending a summer intensive went for a walk after our final masterclass of the day, and Stella suggested we try something called a Sonic Meditation (text scores first developed by Oliveros and the ensemble in the 1960s). Stella talked us through the score for “Teach Yourself to Fly” – arranging ourselves in a circle on the hill, using a phone to illuminate the space with dim, blue light, and following our breath cycle to slowly start singing as a group. We settled onto the grass, suspended briefly for a moment, and dove into the light together. That dive, a collective movement through time and towards embodied sound, represents the key to my research as it is situated within a matrix of resonances, lineage, and poetic evocations. Pauline Oliveros and the ♀ Ensemble are therefore the key and the guides for this chapter with whom we might dive into the matrix and begin to speak with the other voices inside.

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the theoretical, artistic, and poetic frameworks of my research. It will first discuss the matrix as the primary organizational structure for my work and the influence of Adam Pendleton and Black Dada on the shaping of that matrix into the *Reader*. Next, the chapter will outline the following theoretical frameworks that feed into the matrix: (1) chaos theory, (2) the New Discipline and embodiment, (3) cybernetics, (4) affect theory, (5) ritual theory, and (6) queerness and composing heterotopia. The chapter will then discuss the artistic frameworks for my research, including the strange attractors of the *Reader* and the specific contemporary performance practices that informed my approach to composition, before concluding with the poetic and ghostly evocations of the work.

2.2 The Matrix and the Reader

2.2.1 The Matrix

As my work drew on a large, diverse range of theoretical concepts, artists, contemporary performance practices, and poetics, I needed an organizational structure within which to gather these sources and put them into conversation with each other. Research into Gordon Lawrence's practice of Social Dreaming first introduced me to the concept of the matrix as a flexible container capable of holding a multiplicity of meanings and a multi-dimensional site within which "many tongues may be spoken."¹⁶

Social Dreaming was developed by Lawrence beginning in the 1980s as a practice for sharing dreams and analyzing a group's collective unconscious, work which took place within a "social dreaming matrix."¹⁷ Participants gather and speak their dreams into the matrix, slowly populating the structure with a complex collection of dreams and associations that have the ability to recursively transform in both material and meaning through relation with the other entries in the matrix. The sources for my own research spanned a similarly oneiric range of ontologies and epistemologies, and placing them within my own matrix became a crucial opportunity to explore their relationality and generate new meanings along non-linear pathways of connection.¹⁸

2.2.2 The Reader

The other foundational organizational structure for my research comes from the work of Adam Pendleton and his *Black Dada Reader*. According to Pendleton's Black Dada Manifesto, Black Dada is "a way to talk about the future while talking about the past."¹⁹ Rooted in Hugo

¹⁶ Peter Tatham and Helen Morgan, "The Social Dreaming Matrix" in *Social Dreaming @ Work* (Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 1998), 71.

¹⁷ Gordon Lawrence, *Introduction to Social Dreaming: Transforming Thinking* (Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 2005), 14.

¹⁸ Non-linearity will be discussed in more detail below in 2.3.1.

¹⁹ Pendleton, "Black Dada Manifesto" in *Black Dada Reader*, 333.

Ball's 1916 Dada Manifesto²⁰ and Amiri Baraka's poem "Black Dada Nihilismus,"²¹ Black Dada is an art movement invented by Pendleton that bridges 20th-century European Modernism with American 20th and 21st century Black power movements. Pendleton composed Black Dada in order to propose a radical, fabulist vision of art history that relies on collectivity, polyvocalism, and an orientation towards the periphery – a sounding of voices that Western art traditionally marginalizes and silences.

This conversation is simultaneously proposed in the Black Dada Manifesto and performed through Pendleton's composition of the *Black Dada Reader* itself. The *Reader* is a spiral-bound collection of printer paper made up of photocopied pages from other books that are layered over with other photocopied images and painted text, appended by the Black Dada Manifesto. The pages and images are excerpts pasted from the artists and writers erased from the traditional art canon who Pendleton casts as the principal historical figures of Black Dada. Their assembly within the *Black Dada Reader* becomes a fabulative archive of Black Dada's history, a socio-aesthetic manifesto for the Black Dada movement, and the embodiment of Black Dada's compositional methodology.

The *Reader's* use of the photocopier to take snippets of text and image from outside sources and re-compose them side by side with other copies serves to abstract the voices from their original context and appropriate their meaning into the meaning of Black Dada.²² This abstraction and appropriation is not a neutral act. It is an active interpretive force of other voices that carries with it a danger of reducing those voices down in order to speak as Pendleton in the singular, authoritative tense. But Pendleton chooses to address that danger by framing Black Dada's practice as a conversation between the marginalized figures of Black Dada, himself, and

²⁰ Hugo Ball, "Dada Manifesto" in *Flight Out of Time: A Dada Diary*, ed. John Elderfield, trans. by Ann Raimis, (New York: Viking Press, 1974), 219-221.

²¹ Amiri Baraka, "Black Dada Nihilismus" in *Transbluesency*, (New York: Marsilio Publishers, 1995), 97-100.

²² This is a practice Pendleton began with the *Reader* and has since continued with a series of other Black Dada visual art works and paintings.

the institutions of art history – a generative conversation in which each party is “offering back what we know” to each other, the good and bad, and negotiating new meaning and relationships among themselves.²³

Curator and scholar Adrienne Edwards proposes that Black Dada’s compositional process represents “an assemblage²⁴ of incommensurable minds... now fragments of some distanced whole, separated from their origins yet not void of their own particular genealogies, references, and discourses.”²⁵ Appropriating these many minds and then abstracting them into a conversational creative space allows us to reimagine their relationality and potentiality without erasing their selfhood. The *Black Dada Reader*’s practices of abstraction and appropriation can therefore be seen to assemble a matrix-like space within which we might engage with my own stated research interests in multiplicity, conversation, and the re/composition of systems of knowledge and power.

As a book, the *Black Dada Reader* examines the history of the Black Dada archive and structures the theoretical framework of the manifesto. As an art-object, the *Black Dada Reader* embodies its own methodology by modeling its practices of abstraction and appropriation as assemblage. The *Reader* is also, crucially, an invitation to future action. Pendleton activates Black Dada in his own art-making practice in order to position himself within a fabulative, liberatory vision of art history that makes his existence as a Black, queer artist possible. For those who may seek to attempt a similar ontological activation, Black Dada offers itself as a possible

²³ Quoted in Jenny Schlenzka, “what can black dada do for my institution for my institution black dada, some thoughts,” *Black Dada Reader*, 15-20.

²⁴ Edwards draws here on the Deleuzian concept of assemblage as the organization and composition of objects/bodies, while the interactions between those bodies function to construct meaning. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 336.

²⁵ Adrienne Edwards, “The Struggle for Happiness, or What Is American about Black Dada” in *Black Dada Reader*, 30.

approach. It urges us right on the front cover to consider: “What can black dada do for me do for me black dada, a reader.”²⁶ This question was the catalyst for my own research..

Research into Gordon Lawrence’s *Social Dreaming* suggested the matrix as a site in my thesis for inputting and organizing a multitude of sources while allowing for multiplicity and relational non-linearity. What Pendleton and *Black Dada* as a theoretical framework then offered me was a way to think about what was at stake and what might be possible upon entering the matrix. The *Reader* as methodology and manifesto led me to consider which voices I was pulling into the experimental space of the matrix, how I was asking them to speak to each other, and the potential consequences of those conversations. The *Reader* as art-object suggested an approach to shaping those assembled conversations within the matrix and im/materializing them as a creative work, which eventually developed into *And you ghosts rise blue* and the composing of my own *Reader*.

2.3 Theoretical Frameworks

Having established the basic conceptual approach to my research via the matrix and the *Black Dada Reader*, my thesis was then further informed through a number of theoretical frameworks that fed into the matrix and shaped its development in concert with the ghosts of the *Reader*. Each of the following subsections explores these resonant theories as they related to my compositional methodology and its focus on multiplicity, communication, embodiment, and the agential capacity to act and be in relation to our community.

2.3.1 Chaos Theory

A key component of my engagement with the matrix was its ability to organize and encourage relationality in non-linear ways. Chaos theory, as the study of complex and turbulent systems whose behavior is constantly shifting and evolving in unpredictable ways, provided a

²⁶ Pendleton, *Black Dada Reader*, front cover.

further framework from which to explore approaches to non-linearity as both organizing principle and generative process in composition.

As organizing principle, chaos theory's concept of strange attractors offered a way to shape the primary guiding forces within the matrix of the *Reader*.²⁷ Attractors in systems theory and stochastics are any point within the orbit of a system that attracts other forces to it, influencing changes in energy or direction that can be tracked and plotted into regular shapes via linear causal relationships.²⁸ Chaos theory's strange attractors, meanwhile, account for attractive forces whose effects on the system transform the orbit in unpredictable ways – taking on non-linear shapes such as spirals or butterfly wings.²⁹ Designating Adam Pendleton, Pauline Oliveros and the ♀ Ensemble, Hilma af Klint and De Fem, and SOPHIE as strange attractors within the matrix offered a way to organize the range of sources within the *Reader* while maintaining and enriching the complexity of their relationality.

Chaos theory also became a framing for my own alchemical compositional methodology and an articulation of its long-term social intentions. Chaos – in its play between order, disorder, and transformation – can be seen as an inherently creative process,³⁰ as large forces and small shifts collide and transform whole systems in dynamic, unpredictable ways. It suggested in my research how the sourcing of a multiplicity of voices and practices could evolve from a matter of simple ordering, reproduction, and quotation into a speculative practice of possibilities that encouraged deeper, more complex artistic work. But beyond the short-term resonance of a single composition, I was also interested in how the collaborative, community-oriented elements of my work might function as chaotic forces, bifurcation points that could swirl and spiral out into larger community systems and alternate/future time-spaces.

²⁷ Pendleton and Oliveros have both previously been introduced in this and the preceding chapter.

²⁸ Gordon Slethaug, "Preface" in *Beautiful Chaos: Chaos Theory and Metachaotics in Recent American Fiction*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), xi.

²⁹ James Gleick, *Chaos: Making a New Science*, (New York: Viking Penguin, 1987), 140.

³⁰ Gleick, 43.

2.3.2 The New Discipline and Embodiment

My research orients around interdisciplinarity and a range of artistic practices and mediums. Across that spectrum, embodiment is a vital aspect of each component of my research in both theory and practice. I draw here particularly on the work of composer Jennifer Walshe and her theory of the New Discipline. In intermedial approaches to experimental music, the New Discipline insists on a fundamental acknowledgement of, and deeper engagement with, the embodied nature of these forms.³¹ Walshe encourages composers to consider the bodies of their performers and collaborators, to center those bodies within their research and their creative practice, and to open space for those bodies to have agency and resonate alongside the other mediums in the shaping of the work as a whole.³² This is the lens I adopted for my own body as a composer and researcher for this thesis. More significantly, however, the New Discipline also offered a way for me to acknowledge and honor the bodies of my material and immaterial collaborators and to give those bodies agency to act as we practiced being in community with each other.

2.3.3 Cybernetics

As my thesis focused on interdisciplinary, collaborative, polyvocal approaches to composition, the interactions between those many voices and their artistic and social applications were central considerations. My research was informed here by cybernetics: the study of behavior and the interactions between objects or systems – whether human, material, or immaterial.³³ In addition to a shared, basic belief in the potentialities of composing,³⁴ of particular interest was

³¹ Jennifer Walsh, “The New Discipline,” (self-published, Milker Corporation, 2016).

³² Walshe, “The New Discipline.”

³³ Ross W. Ashby, *An Introduction to Cybernetics*. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1956. Reprint, Connecticut: Martino Fine Books, 2015), 1, 60.

³⁴ “Composing arises in part as a folding together of lived experience, introspection, interaction with others, intellectual framing, and our participation in a large and diverse language community that we experience in many forms,” Bill Seaman, “Composing Systems for Advancing Advancing,” (*Enacting Cybernetics* 2, no. 1, 2024), 5-6.

Ranulph Glanville’s theories of conversation – the forms it could take among and within subjects, its constructivist possibilities, and its ethical implications. Glanville identified conversation as a key component to the creative process, and a practice for bridging divides between individuals’ perception, cognition, and “living-in-the-stream-of-experience.”³⁵ I viewed my embodied compositional process with my collaborators and my disembodied compositional process with the sources in the matrix as cybernetic conversations, and I consequently designed my methodology using cybernetic principles to activate conversational capabilities in the artistic work and the community engagement.

My cybernetics-related research also looked towards the concept of “boundary objects.” These are objects that are placed at the site of some kind of disciplinary boundary in conversation, and that have the ability to both support the unique properties of the individual systems at play and also adapt and transform to the collective facilitation needs of that site in an ethical manner.³⁶ Boundary objects become powerful devices for interdisciplinary translation and negotiation, and they can be conceptualized in my own research context as the ghosts in the *Reader*. The specific experimental scores and contemporary performance practices sourced for the matrix contain elements of abstraction and specificity that require both good-faith interpretation and agentival decision-making on behalf of the realizers, and this is particularly true when the scores are being realized in interdisciplinary settings outside of their original, medium-specific context. Designing the ghosts of the *Reader* as boundary objects, with a balance between the structure of individual agency and the flexibility of collective action, could activate the matrix as a site for conversation and expand its potential for generative, ethical collaboration.

³⁵ Seaman, *The Architecture of Ideas*, 256.

³⁶ Seaman, “Composing Systems for Advancing Advancing,” 3.

2.3.4 Affect Theory

My research focus on the ethics and potential consequences of conversation extended from cybernetics into readings on affect theory and ritual frameworks. I drew in part on the foundational work of Deleuze and Guattari on affect and its role in how the body, and bodies in interaction with each other, can gain or lose the ability to act, to affect and be affected.³⁷ But more specifically, my research focused on the work of later scholars of affect and phenomenology such as Sara Ahmed and Karen Barad on the application of an affectual lens to queer and feminist studies. Ahmed examines how affect plays a key role in shaping power, identity, and space by connecting or isolating us from the world and our orientation towards others.³⁸ Affect, she then argues, has an explicit responsibility towards assembling social good and happiness.³⁹ Barad, meanwhile, considers the potential for affect and agential capacity to expand into imaginative realms and queer futures of “infinite alterity,”⁴⁰ particularly in an embodied context. My research was further informed by the work of Karen Bray, who studies the potential of affect when the bodies involved are not (merely) human but instead immaterial, otherworldly, or divine.⁴¹

These theories formed an important conceptual and political frame for my own research. In the short-term application of my compositional methodology, understanding how the matrix’s assemblage of (dis)embodied voices affect and are affected by each other had the potential to expand the possibilities of those interactions for the sake of enriching the creative work. In the long-term, however, my compositional methodology also sought to enrich the agential capacity of those voices in the social as well as creative realms. For material collaborators, the

³⁷ Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth, “An Inventory of Shimmers,” in *Affect Theory Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 1-2.

³⁸ Morrison, “The Politics of Feeling: The Phenomenology of Affect in Sara Ahmed and Judith Butler,” (*Symposium* 24, no. 2, 2020), 147.

³⁹ Ahmed, “Happy Objects,” in *Affect Theory Reader*, 29.

⁴⁰ Karen Barad, “Transmaterialities: Trans*/matter/realities and queer political imaginings,” (*GLQ: A journal of lesbian and gay studies* 21, no. 2-3, 2015), 399.

⁴¹ Karen Bray and Stephen D Moore, “Introduction: Mappings and Crossings” in *Religion, Emotion, Sensation: Affect Theories and Theologies*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2020), 1-18.

interdisciplinary conversation practices we experimented with during the creative process might serve as a heuristic for community activation and Ahmed's assembly of social good. For the immaterial ghosts of the *Reader*, the alternative, im/possible time-spaces of the matrix could become spaces for silenced and erased voices to have their say, to take up a stake in how we compose the future and navigate the past in Barad's "thick now of the present."⁴²

2.3.5 Ritual

Ritual theory as a theoretical framework for my research considered how the kind of long-term, collective creative experimentation and community activation my thesis engaged might be understood as ritual, and how introducing embodied ritual practices into my methodology might serve the theoretical and practical application of my research. I was particularly interested in Catherine Bell's study of ritual as an act of power negotiation and creation, primarily in the context of groups of women and marginalized members of society.⁴³ According to Bell, ritual can serve to reinforce social control and normalize order and/or potentially reimagine and restructure those orders.

Bell's work relates to another key ritual concept for my research: Emile Durkheim's definition of ritual as "collective effervescence." For Durkheim, movement, rhythm, and harmony were collaborative actions that allowed communities to reach into expressive spaces and experience collective effervescence.⁴⁴ Robert Bellah argues that collective effervescence is a tool for the expression and negotiation of collective emotion, and it can also serve to open up pathways for reimagining and creating new social structures. However this is only possible, Bellah argues, when a participant commits to future action with their fellow participants –

⁴² Barad, 388.

⁴³ Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 170.

⁴⁴ Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Karen E. Fields (1912; New York: Free Press, 1995), 218.

theorizing ritual as a unifying force that both necessitates and generates collaborative action, while also requiring commitment towards the materialization of imagined time-spaces.⁴⁵

In my own research, the concept of collective effervescence led me to consider how the collective action proposed in my compositional methodology might facilitate the expression of emotion, the negotiation of experience, and the reimagining of social structures. If I assumed that collective effervescence was a desirable state for myself and my collaborators, then structuring the realization of scores and practices from the *Reader* during the creative process for *And you ghosts rise blue* around a ritual framework could constitute the collaborative actions and collective commitments that would move us into those effervescent time-spaces.

Collective effervescence and the composition of social structures, however, cannot be assumed to be a universally desired experience, just as alternate social structures will not automatically function ethically thanks only to their alternativity. Asking a group of people to participate in collective action or shift systems of power and social relation is never without consequence, just as Black Dada's use of abstraction and appropriation is not an innocent, neutral practice. My thesis proposes that my compositional methodology has the potential to wield tools for navigating and composing systems of power, time, and space. It can and must wield those tools ethically by centering its approach around multiplicity, communication, embodiment, and agency as forking garden pathways that might guide us towards the final theory in this section: heterotopias.

2.3.6 Queerness and Heterotopia

The preceding theories – matrix, Black Dada, chaos, embodiment, affect, and ritual – all oriented in some manner towards the creative and social potentials of the un/real, the im/material, and the im/possible. My final theoretical framework suggested that these were all queer

⁴⁵ Bellah, 162.

orientations, particularly in their focus on alternativity. José Esteban Muñoz suggests that queerness itself is “possibility.” His research focuses on queer relationships to the immaterial, or what he calls ephemera. These “traces, glimmers, residues, and specks of things” are what remain of the silenced voices of history: they are the echoes of movements half-begun, thoughts not yet completed, invisible ripples that spread outward from a body in action towards an unseeable destination in the future. Ephemera is the possibility of everything that exists or may exist outside of the official archive or system of power, and ephemera is traditionally dismissed or erased just as queerness can be rendered invisible.⁴⁶ Esteban Muñoz argues for the queering of ephemera instead, stitching the glimmers together into new archives, as a position of alternative power from which to refashion materiality itself.⁴⁷

My research is situated within a chaotic garden of forking paths, a dynamic matrix of relationality and multiplicity that aims to bring the many voices within and across communities into conversation with each other. Queerness as alternativity and possibility suggests that there are multiple approaches towards that assembly, and our goal should not be a singularity but instead an ephemeral blossoming of heterotopias. Originally proposed by Michel Foucault as “alternate spaces of ordering,” heterotopias are able to be separate from all other spaces while still remaining connected to them.⁴⁸ They can bridge divides between realities and possibilities without becoming a total, utopic time-space that collapses all others.⁴⁹

The concept of heterotopias might then offer a solution to the problem posed in the previous subsection when it comes to ethically assembling new social structures and ways to be in community: expanding our focus from the pursuit of a single approach that is the normative

⁴⁶ José Esteban Muñoz, “Ephemera as Evidence: Introductory Notes to Queer Acts,” (*Women & Performance* 8, no. 2, 1996), 6.

⁴⁷ Esteban Muñoz, 10.

⁴⁸ Robert J. Topinka, “Foucault, Borges, Heterotopia: Producing Knowledge in Other Spaces,” (*Foucault Studies*, No. 9, September 2010), 55.

⁴⁹ Kevin Hetherington, *The Badlands of Modernity: Heterotopia and Social Ordering*, (Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 1997), 8.

good for all, and instead experimenting with the many possibilities that can serve and transform the many members of a community. Heterotopia as a theoretical framework for my research and an ideology for my creative work could also respond to Black Dada's concerns regarding the consequences of calling on a multitude of unique voices and asking them to engage in collective action, either creatively or socially. Orienting their conversations and my own research around ephemera and multiplicity increases our ability to experiment with all the possible time-spaces that might best lead towards an assembly of social good and its materialization.

2.4 Artistic Frameworks

The previous sections of this chapter examined a range of theoretical frameworks informing my research and the development of my compositional methodology. The following section will address the artistic frameworks and inspirational scaffolds that directed the sourcing of the matrix and the assembly of my *Reader*, beginning with (1) general organizing principles for sourcing the matrix, (2) the four strange attractors of the *Reader*, and (3) the contemporary performance practices that inform and seed the matrix.

2.4.1 General Organizing Principles

The scores, artists, and contemporary performance practices I sourced for my compositional matrix were, as discussed in the Introduction, considered largely within the context of Western experimental and avant-garde art traditions of the 20th and 21st centuries. And in keeping with the theoretical and ethical frameworks of my thesis, the sources all oriented in some way towards multiplicity, communication, embodiment, and agential capacity. Adhering to this orientation, sourcing practices for my research focused on work related to interdisciplinarity, collaborative processes, generative approaches to composition, and the use of scores (whether traditionally notated music scores, graphic scores, or text scores).

In order to function in the matrix, I needed performance practices with concrete structures for realization that could be directly experimented with in embodied application— in the way you

can listen to a piece of music and the score allows to you to read and then realize that same music in good faith. But in keeping with the cybernetic concept of boundary objects, the material of the work needed to be flexible and abstract enough that the realization from score to sound was not a restrictive one-to-one output; it instead left room for choice-making, interpretation, and agency. Furthermore, the intersection of formal structure and flexible material had to allow for the translation of the score to interdisciplinary settings – in the way that a dancer or visual artist would be able to engage with a music score that utilizes graphic notation but would perhaps struggle to translate and realize music with traditional Western notation. The scores and practices best related to this research that ultimately found their way to the matrix provided clarity in shaping the decisions or containers of the work, while containing expansive, chaotic possibilities for interpretation, imagination, and translation in interdisciplinary collaborative settings.

2.4.2 The Reader's Strange Attractors

As discussed in the chaos theory subsection, the *Reader* has four strange attractors who function as non-linear organizing forces within the matrix and theoretical frameworks for my research at large. Each attractor represents a different artistic and conceptual entry point into the *Reader*, and they are will-o'-the-wisps around which the other ghosts congregate. Called into the space, they are: Adam Pendleton, Pauline Oliveros and the ♀ Ensemble, Hilma af Klint and De Fem, and SOPHIE.

The first, Pendleton, was discussed in detail at the beginning of this chapter, and represents the Prelude to this work – the foundational inspiration for the *Reader*. Oliveros and the ♀ Ensemble, are the Key and the strange attractor for those ghosts from my artistic lineage and voices related to the theoretical framework for this thesis. Oliveros was an American experimental composer of the late 20th century. Her work began in pioneering methods of tape music and electronic composition before shifting towards a practice she termed “Deep Listening.” During this period of her career, Oliveros worked in California with a group of women who

called themselves the ♀ Ensemble. The group met every week over the course of two years, often in entirely non-verbal settings, to make music and experiment with embodied sound as “a path for constant rediscovery of each person’s potentials in herself and in her instrument.”⁵⁰ These experiments eventually involved into a series of text-based compositions published by Oliveros called “Sonic Meditations.”⁵¹

The second strange attractor, Hilma af Klint and De Fem, is the Medium and represents the ghosts of the matrix as poetic inspirations and evocations of power and unreality. Af Klint was a Swedish painter, a pioneer within the field of abstract art, and an avid student of spiritualism, theosophy, and other esoteric practices that were swiftly gaining popularity within certain circles of the educated elite in Sweden at the turn of the century.⁵² A significant portion of her artwork was created alongside De Fem (“The Five” in Swedish), a collective of other Spiritualist women. With these artists, af Klint engaged with the “continuous imagining of unseen worlds”⁵³ by holding séances, conveying spiritual messages through painting, and practicing collaborative compositional techniques like automatic drawing and psychography.

Finally, SOPHIE is the Tragedy –the strange attractor for those voices within the many im/possible time-spaces of the matrix who might have been silenced in some way before their death in this time-space, particularly in the context of queerness and gender marginalization.⁵⁴ SOPHIE was an British producer and electronic musician – a major figure for transgender

⁵⁰ The Women's Ensemble - Diary excerpts, notes, programs and photographs. 1971-1972. Pauline Oliveros Papers. MSS 102, (Special Collections & Archives, UC San Diego), 36.

⁵¹ Pauline Oliveros, *Sonic Meditations* (Vermont: Smith Publications, 1974).

⁵² Kurt Almqvist, “The Significance of Anna Cassel to the Art of Hilma af Klint” in *Anna Cassel: The Saga of the Rose*, ed. Daniel Birnbaum (Sweden: Bokförlaget Stolpe, 2023), 163

⁵³ Daniel Birnbaum, “Lucid Dreaming,” (*Artforum* 60, no. 1, 2021), 236.

⁵⁴ Oliveros and many of the women in her ensemble were queer. While openly identifying as lesbian was not a socially-acceptable option for af Klint and De Fem during their lives, and no explicit historical mention can be found, it is generally accepted within the academic community that many of those women were in romantic relationships together (see Hedvig Martin, “Who Created *The Paintings for the Temple?*” in *Anna Cassel: The Saga of the Rose*, 157).

visibility in pop music who was a major force in the experimental development of hyperpop and PC Music before dying at a young age.⁵⁵

Each of these figures played a vital organizational and conceptual role in the development of my compositional methodology and the creation of *And you ghosts rise blue*. They also each represented a major artistic influence in my own practice and were the voices who, when embarking on this work, I most needed to speak to and create alongside.

2.4.3 Contemporary Performance Practices

While the following chapter engages with individual ghosts of the *Reader* in more detail, and the full index is available in Appendix A, this subsection makes a brief introduction to the major contemporary performance practices relevant to my research. These practices not only entered the matrix as sources for my compositional methodology, but they also inspired the theoretical foundation and development of that methodology thanks to their unique engagements with (1) interdisciplinarity, (2) collectivity, and (3) experimental approaches to composition.

Contemporary performance practices that formed the artistic framework for my approach to interdisciplinarity included Intermedia: an artistic field first developed by composers Dick Higgins and Phill Niblock, whose work incorporated sound, text, video, and a variety of other media.⁵⁶ Fluxus: an international art movement which consists in large part of the composition and realization of text event scores for bodies, musical instruments, mail art, salads, and everything in between.⁵⁷ Critical Art Ensemble: a tactical media collective of theorists and practitioners which organizes their practices within cellular “coalitions” spanning a range of

⁵⁵ Shaad D’Souza, “The life and legacy of producer pioneer Sophie,” *The Guardian*, September 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2024/sep/20/sophie-posthumous-album-interview>.

⁵⁶ See Dick Higgins, *Intermedia, Fluxus and the Something Else Press: Selected Writings by Dick Higgins*, ed. Steve Clay and Ken Friedman (New York: Siglio Press, 2018).

⁵⁷ See Natilee Harren *Fluxus Forms: Scores, Multiples, and the Eternal Network*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020).

performative actions and social engagements.⁵⁸ Senga Nengudi: a sculptor, dancer, and interdisciplinary artist known for her collaborative work with Studio Z Collective, a group of visual artists, musicians, dancers and the Just Above Midtown (JAM) gallery in the 1970s.⁵⁹

Contemporary performance practices related to collectivity and collaboration included Infrarealism: a countercultural poetry movement from Mexico City whose manifesto reads in part: “Our bridges toward the ignored stations. The poem interrelating reality and unreality.”⁶⁰ The Order of the Third Bird: a semi-secret society aimed towards building collective capacity to engage with and witness art.⁶¹ La Pocha Nostra: a collective of performance artists with a codified pedagogical approach to community collaboration that empowers them in considering borders, gender and sexuality, and institutional violence within their work.⁶² AACM (Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians): an influential collective of experimental jazz musicians and composers originally founded in the 1960s.⁶³ *Women’s Work*: a collection of scores published in collaboration between a range of composers, choreographers, and other experimental artists.⁶⁴

My artistic framework for experimental approaches to composition included practices and movements such as OuLiPo (Ouvroir de Littérature Potentielle): a group of French writers and mathematicians who use generative compositional methods and formal restraints in their writing process and claim, and OuXPo: the corresponding collectives for generative

⁵⁸ See Critical Art Ensemble, *Digital Resistance Explorations in Tactical Media*, (New York: Autonomedia, 2001).

⁵⁹ See Ewa Martyna Majewska, Martyna Ewa, “Beyond *Side by Side*: Intermediality in Senga Nengudi’s Collaborations,” (*Archives of American Art Journal* 62, no. 1, 2023), 20-41.

⁶⁰ Robert Bolaño, “First Infrarealist Manifesto,” trans. David Shook, *Sin Zona* (blog), December 2013, <https://www.tumblr.com/sinzona2/71375454178/roberto-bolaños-infrarealist-manifesto>.

⁶¹ See *In Search of the Third Bird*, edited by D. Graham Burnett, Catherine L. Hansen, and Justin E.H. Smith, (London: Strange Attractor Press, 2021).

⁶² Guillermo Gómez-Peña, *Ethno-techno: Writings on performance, activism, and pedagogy*, ed. Elaine Peña, (New York: Routledge, 2005), 95-133.

⁶³ See George E. Lewis, *A Power Stronger Than Itself: The AACM and American Experimental Music*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

⁶⁴ See Irene Revell, “Speculating on the ‘Feminist Performance Score’”: Pauline Oliveros, Womens Work and Karen Barad,” (*Contemporary Music Review* 41, nos. 2-3, 2022), 281-294.

compositional methods in other disciplines.⁶⁵ Surrealism: a writing movement that began in France and spread internationally and into other artistic mediums, taking dreams as its source material.⁶⁶ John Cage: an American pioneer of experimental music and aleatoric processes.⁶⁷ Simone Forti: a postmodern choreographer experimenting with the generation of movement patterns through interactions with built environments like her “Constructions.”⁶⁸ Michael Kliën: the developer of Social Choreography whose movement research practice includes text-based scores known as “Field Studies.” Éliane Radigue: an electronic music composer whose music is characterized by extremely long, slow crossfades between discrete samples of sound in order to distort listeners’ perception of time.⁶⁹

2.5 Ghosts and Poetic Evocations

In addition to the theoretical concepts and artistic frameworks discussed in the sections above, poetics were an equally important component in the development of my thesis. I chose specifically to engage with a poetics of ghosts, which served as a gateway into my field of research and as the conceptual, aesthetic, and emotional orientation for *And you ghosts rise blue*.

As a gateway for my research, the poetic voices and ephemeral collaborators I called into space with me were what allowed me to pull the theory, art history, and practical applications of my research together, expanding and spiraling out from there into creative and otherworldly realms. It was within a ghostly context that my thesis was able to consider collaborative practices and affectual relationality not only between the physical bodies working in space with me, but

⁶⁵ See Jacques Roubaud, “The OuLiPo and Combinatorial Art,” in *Oulipo Compendium*, compiled by Alastair Brotchie and Harry Matthews, (London: Atlas Press and Los Angeles: Make Now Press, 2005).

⁶⁶ See André Breton, *First Manifesto of Surrealism*, in *Art and Theory 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, eds. Charles Harrison and Paul Woods, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), 87-88. Particularly the work of Martinique writers Aimé Césaire and Suzanne Césaire

⁶⁷ See John Cage, *Empty Words; Writings*, 73-78. (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1979).

⁶⁸ See Simone Forti, *Handbook in Motion*, (Halifax and New York: The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and New York University Press, 1974).

⁶⁹ See Éliane Radigue, “The Mysterious Power of the Infinitesimal,” (*Leonardo Music Journal* 19, 2009), 47-49.

between the artists and practices from the past I was researching. The summoning of ghosts suggested a way to be in an active, emergent creative process with voices that were outside of this bounded space-time. Ghosts were, additionally, a permissioning for me to take the theoretical and formalist elements of my research and untether them in some way, allow myself to approach unreality, fiction, and fabulation.

In the practical shaping of my thesis action, ghosts are an especially evocative scaffold from which to explore several aesthetic desires and creative curiosities. A ghostly focus encouraged *And you ghosts rise blue* to play with dynamics of light and darkness, bringing the aesthetics of other worlds onto the stage with us. I wanted the opera to be sticky and spooky, shiny and resonant. I wanted it to flicker between the heaviness of death and the unreal shimmer of other dimensions, to sound with the resonance of the ephemeral and the infinite.

Ghosts as poetic scaffold and thematic center for my thesis project owe their genesis in large part to the writer Hilary Mantel. With her work in memoir and historical fiction, Mantel firmly believed that not only were the dead among us as living, active forces, but we could speak to them through creative practice. For Mantel, any look into the past was in fact a summoning to the present and a casting into the future.⁷⁰ My research interests in Spiritualism also formed an important thematic connection to ghosts, as in the work of Hilma af Klint and De Fem and recent scholarship on Spiritualist practitioners during the turn of the century – many of whom were women – who utilized their intimacy with the uncanny to navigate and redefine social hierarchy, bodily autonomy, and ephemeral identity.⁷¹ I was also drawn to these women’s understandings of ghosts and their relationship to collaborative artistic creation as a direct consequence of speaking with the dead and the divine.

⁷⁰ Hilary Mantel, “The Day Is for the Living, Reith Lectures,” June 13, 2017, BBC Radio 4, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08tebrp>.

⁷¹ Anne L. Delgado, “Bawdy Technologies and the Birth of Ectoplasm,” (Colorado: University of Colorado Boulder, 2011).

Epistemological and ontological engagements, distortions, and re-imaginings of time-space were a significant element of my compositional methodology, as it relied not only on long-term community processes, but also on communication between voices of the matrix that complicated and transcended temporal and conceptual boundaries of reality and unreality, life and death. Framing those engagements of time-space and compositional voices as a summoning of ghosts allowed me to unmoor my work from this particular time-space and take Borges' Garden of Forking Paths into time-spaces past, present, future, alternate, and im/possible. The matrix of the *Reader* could then become activated as a space in which ghosts could be seen, heard, and embodied, while my collaborators' and my capacity to be seen, heard, and embodied might also increase reciprocally.

Finally, ghosts as poetics offered the opportunity for me to clarify and complicate ideas related to my research focus on multiplicity, communication, embodiment, and agency. There are voices outside of my own – voices that can speak and affect, imagine and assemble in unpredictable, uncanny ways. There are alternate realities available to my community, an infinite multiplicity of time-space that allows for the individual agency and collective capacity to craft and negotiate systems of power and knowledge within those alternatives. Ghosts became a framework that allowed my research to plant one foot firmly beyond the veil, to align as Barad suggests with “the raging nothingness, the silent howling of the void, as it trans*figures fleshy possibilities.”⁷²

2.6 Conclusion

Each of the theoretical, artistic, and poetic frameworks presented in this chapter orbited among the realms of multiplicity, communication, embodiment, and agential capacity that formed the core focus of my thesis. The following chapters will analyze my research methodology as I

⁷² Barad, 416.

developed the matrix and composed the *Reader* and *And you ghosts rise blue*, in addition to discussing my research's wider social impacts and potential future transformations.

2.7 Pauline Oliveros and the ♀ Ensemble

“The process of dying also sound
sound of becoming another kind of being living dying
pulsing dying
listening to death
returning to home in the earth where the earth worm also sings”⁷³

⁷³ Oliveros, *Anthology of Text Scores*, ed. Sam Golter, (Kingston: Deep Listening Publications, 2013), 3-4.

3. Act Two – the Medium

-Hilma af Klint and De Fem- For this act, our entrance into the matrix is Hilma af Klint and De Fem: a group of artists concerned with how exactly they might become mediums calling on voices outside of themselves, and how those disembodied conversations might translate into embodied works of art. De Fem conducted seances, said prayers, directed each other's hands as they held the paintbrush, and washed each other's feet.⁷⁴ They believed in the power of the voices they were calling on and they believed in the power of their collective to guide their relationships to each other, their art, and the world around them. In designing the methodology for my thesis, I aimed to carry that same belief with me as I read, danced, listened, and created alongside my community.

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses my research methodology as I developed the theoretical framework for my compositional approach alongside my practical, embodied experimentation with composing. I proceeded along three primary modes of inquiry: (1) research related to the theoretical concepts and contemporary performance practices that informed and shaped my work, (2) development of the compositional matrix of the *Reader* through the sourcing of scores, art practices, and poetics, and (3) the embodied realization of the *Reader* in the collaborative creation and performance of my thesis action, *And you ghosts rise blue*. Each of these three modes, rather than playing out in linear succession, evolved recursively over the course of my research, with a consistent orientation towards multiplicity, communication, embodiment, and agency.

⁷⁴ Kurt Almqvist, *Anna Cassel: The Saga of the Rose*, 171.

3.2 Theoretical and Art History Research

As previously discussed in Act One of the previous chapter, the primary theoretical concepts I engaged with through this research included the organizational structure of the matrix and Adam Pendleton's *Black Dada Reader*, chaos theory, Jennifer Walshe's New Discipline, cybernetics, affect theory, ritual, and queerness and heterotopia.

The art history component for this research focused on the study of other contemporary performance practices and approaches to composition that would form the scaffold for my own compositional methodology. These, too, are discussed in detail in Act One and focus specifically on practices that incorporate some element of interdisciplinarity, collectivity, and experimental approaches to composition such as generative or aleatoric processes. Practices and artists of primary influence include the strange attractors of the thesis, in addition to Fluxus, La Pocha Nostra, the Order of the Third Bird, etc.

3.3 The Reader

My second methodological mode of inquiry took as inspiration Adam Pendleton's *Black Dada Reader*, which became a foundational catalyst for both the theoretical and embodied research for this thesis. I chose to embody the matrix of voices and ghosts within which my work lives as a *Reader* of its own – a *Reader* as art-history archive, manifesto, and art-object.

3.3.1 Reader as Archive

Developing my *Reader* as an archive involved assembling and documenting the specific scores, practices, and poetics I sourced into a compositional matrix for the creation of *And you ghosts rise blue*. The *Reader*'s matrix needed to be able to put those voices into conversation with each other while still allowing for evolving, non-linear relationships between each ghost. The archive therefore utilized the strange attractors as the energy centers around which all the other ghosts could coalesce – Adam Pendleton, Pauline Oliveros and the ♀ Ensemble as the Key, Hilma af Klint and De Fem, as the Medium and SOPHIE as the Tragedy. The process of building

my *Reader* as an archive of voices and sourcing the compositional matrix for *And you ghosts rise blue* began with choosing ghosts from my research who might be drawn towards these attractors.

I eventually gathered 82 entries for the matrix of the *Reader* and sorted them into the Key (34 entries), the Medium (26), or the Tragedy (22).⁷⁵ Ghosts in the *Reader* included both historical figures such as Senga Nengudi and the Studio Z Collective or Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, and specific artworks, scores, manifestos, poetry, etc. such as Simone Forti's *Constructions* or Han Kang's *Human Acts*. Once assembled, the ghosts of the *Reader* represented an embodied realization of my matrix and a dynamic archive of my research.

While my *Reader*'s matrix was designed and applied toward the composition of *And you ghosts rise blue* – with a conceptual and aesthetic orientation towards ghosts– the sourcing of scores and poetics into a compositional matrix could be applied to any specific range of interests and result in a matrix specific to the person assembling it. The compositional methodology proposed in this thesis could be applied by myself or others towards creating any number of new and alternative matrices for unique compositions.

3.3.2 *Reader* as Manifesto

In shaping the *Reader* as a manifesto of my art-making and my compositional methodology, I considered the sourcing practices that led me to each of these ghosts and the creative and ethical implications of that particular chorus of voices speaking to each other.⁷⁶ I placed a particular focus on the work of collectives – Oliveros with the ♀ Ensemble, af Klint with De Fem, even SOPHIE as a highly collaborative producer, in addition to others like Studio Z, La Pocha Nostra, etc. My research oriented around the potentials of collectivity – it was important to acknowledge my predecessors in that work.

⁷⁵ See Appendix A for the full index of *Reader* entries.

⁷⁶ These ethical implications were discussed in Act One, while the specific creative consequences of this unique assemblage of voices will be explored in Act Three's analysis of my creative process.

The ghosts of the *Reader* were majority queer and gender-marginalized, which carried significance on a personal level as I look (in much the same way Pendleton does) for the elders and art canon that can open space for me to create and be in community. This sourcing focus was also significant a social level as my work aims to honor voices that have traditionally been marginalized or silenced. Composing alongside the ghosts of these voices was an attempt to subvert and undermine the strictures and power imbalances of this time-space and instead creatively imagine im/possible conversations and heterotopias.

Finally, it should be noted that my research is located firmly in the context of Western experimental art history, in which whiteness is privileged and the contributions of artists of color are overlooked or actively erased. Sourcing for the *Reader* aimed to decenter that privilege by calling in a multiplicity of diverse voices to a non-linear, matrix-like creative space that wasn't shaped according to traditional center-periphery relationships in artistic and social systems of power.

3.3.3 *Reader* as Art-Object

Pendleton's *Black Dada Reader* is a single book divided into three categories – Foundations, Languages, and Artist Positions – which function similarly in many ways to my own matrix attractors. Each chapter within these categories focuses on a specific artist or scholar and includes excerpts from their work, archival documents, interviews, etc. As discussed in Act One, the entire *Black Dada Reader* is built using photocopies of these excerpts and other images – an important tool for abstraction and re/appropriation in Pendleton's own work.⁷⁷ I chose to build my *Reader* as a collection of handmade zines using images cut from magazines and snippets of poetic text. The decision to make zines spoke to my interest in their history within American counterculture, particularly as methods of communication and social activation for

⁷⁷ Edwards, 33.

queer artists and marginalized communities.⁷⁸ Creating each zine uniquely from scratch, as opposed to a photocopier approach, also offered an opportunity to experiment with my research focus on multiplicity, with every zine becoming a different branch in Borge's Garden of Forking Paths.

Each zine functioned as a single entry point into the matrix, or a chapter of the *Reader*. The pages of the zine included the ghost's name, poetic text, images, and basic biographical data.⁷⁹ The poetic text could come from the ghost themselves, but more often from another voice – forming a polyvocal assemblage even while each zine ostensibly focused on singular subjects. Using only images cut from collected magazines encouraged me to experiment with generative practices that rely on fixed artifacts as compositional constraint, while taking the time to pair each ghost with resonant text and images allowed me to explore their unique interactions within the matrix and their non-linear relationship to the other ghosts.

The zines for the *Reader* were assembled over the course of the past year with the collaboration of my thesis collective. The act of materializing the *Reader* as an art-object, in addition to its iterations as archive and manifesto, formed the second mode of inquiry for this thesis research.

3.4 Embodied Research

The final mode of inquiry featured the embodied application of my research via a series of long-term, process-based experimentations with my collaborators that led to the ultimate composition of my thesis action, *And you ghosts rise blue*. This methodological component offered the opportunity to enter the matrix of the *Reader* as a site from which to draw on

⁷⁸ Hua Hsu, "American Counterculture, Glimpsed Through Zines," *The New Yorker*, February 14, 2024, <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/american-counterculture-glimpsed-through-zines>.

⁷⁹ See Appendix B for photos of examples.

disembodied voices and scores that were then translated and transformed into embodied work via interdisciplinary collaborative artistic practices.

3.4.1 Listening Sessions

A significant component of the process-oriented aspect of this research included embodied exploration and engagement with specific performance practices and artworks from the *Reader*. In the fall of 2023, I started the *Listening Sessions* –gatherings open to the public for communal, embodied experiences listening and responding to music. These Sessions were hosted on a weekly basis at the Ark and typically featured about two hours of programmed material, during which time folks were welcome to come and go as needed. Listeners were encouraged to shape their experience in a variety of ways ranging from dancing to stillness, crafting to napping. The majority of regular attendees came from the Duke dance and music composition programs, with a mix of undergraduates, graduates, and faculty members alongside some outside community members. I programmed most of these Sessions myself, supplemented by requests and recommendations from community members, and many of the works we listened to then became entries in my *Reader*.⁸⁰ These sessions served as opportunities to embody time-spaces alongside voices of the *Reader* as I listened to their work, and they also functioned as a consistent site for community building.

3.4.2 Community Laboratories

In addition to the *Listening Sessions*, in fall of 2023 I also began facilitations of Community Laboratories that continued weekly or bi-weekly through the entire creative process for my thesis action. The Laboratories were open to the public and designed as a container for interdisciplinary experimentation, conversation, and non-product-oriented collective creative practice. I served as the general facilitator of these Laboratories, filling the container with scores

⁸⁰ A full list of programming is included in Appendix F.

or practices sourced from my thesis research, while also employing collective facilitation practices learned from my research in order to leave as much room open as possible for collaborators to contribute sources, ask questions, make requests, or propose experiments, etc. As such, a week's Community Laboratory could include my facilitation of a Deep Listening session and time spent experimenting as a group with the realization of a Fluxus event score I'd brought in. During other Labs, one of the attendees would lead us through a practice of their own or we would have an artist salon-style gathering where we contributed ideas and questions for group conversation, etc.⁸¹ These Laboratories served as a crucial site for embodied investigation into the theoretical concepts and contemporary performance practices related to my research, and as another opportunity for ethically developing communicative capacity among the collaborators for my thesis action.

3.4.3 Hauntings

The Hauntings formed the final component of my process-oriented approach to embodied research, designed as a series of ghostly activations for the collective of *And you ghosts rise blue*. These Hauntings, of which there were four total, were embodied field research opportunities for myself and my collaborators that took place in the two weeks leading up to the final performance. Structured similarly to pop-up performance art events, the Hauntings involved a performative realization of an entry to the *Reader* – embodying some score, contemporary performance practice, ritual, etc. that we had been engaging with together over the course of the artistic process.⁸² Each Haunting took place in a different location around Durham – in a cemetery, by the Eno river, in a downtown night club, and on campus. Various members of the collective gathered for each Haunting according to their availability, and we decided on the time, site, and programming for each one collaboratively.

⁸¹ A log of Community Laboratory activities is included in Appendix E.

⁸² See Appendix E.

The Hauntings served as continued experimentation with collaborative approaches that might develop our capacity to be in community with each through creative practices. They were also intended to provide an opportunity for further play and experimentation with the practices from the Community Laboratories and the scores of *And you ghosts rise blue*, but in alternative time-spaces from the rehearsal or performance context. The Hauntings were designed to blur the boundaries between each of these time-spaces and creative/social structures in ways that could deepen our existing relationships with the *Reader* and inform our future, final performance (while challenging the notion of “final” itself). The Hauntings also worked in the weeks leading up to the evening performance as a tool to introduce the audience into the work, seeding the field of experience and encouraging a porous relationship to the piece that extended beyond the blackbox theater. In this way, the Hauntings aimed to destabilize the traditional time-space container of performance and syncopate the performative experience,⁸³ build a bridge between the performance and public, and rub thin the veils between worlds.

3.4.4 *And you ghosts rise blue*

The Listening Sessions, Community Laboratories, and Hauntings together formed the process-based approaches towards embodied research for this thesis. Each of these practices was situated within community work over long periods of time, and they focused on exploring the parameters and possibilities of my proposed compositional methodology through recursive experimentation and a maintained focus on multiplicity, communication, embodiment, and agency.

The final component of my embodied research synthesized the theoretical development and process-based experimentations with my compositional approach and applied it towards a formal composition: the evening-length performance of *And you ghosts rise blue*. Structured as an

⁸³ See Gertrude Stein’s concept of “syncopated time,” from “Plays” in *Writings and Lectures 1911-1945*, ed. Patricia Meyerowitz (London: Peter Owen, 1967), 81.

experimental pasticcio opera in three acts, *And you ghosts rise blue* was a poetic evocation of the ghosts and voices within my compositional matrix. It featured an interdisciplinary cast of dancers, musicians, poets, actors, and visual artists, the same collaborators who had been working with me through the entire research process for this thesis. The performance took place on February 12, 2025 at the von der Heyden Studio Theater on Duke’s campus and included both the staged opera and an opening installation, called the Reading Room, where audience members could interact with the zines from the *Reader*. The following chapter, Act Three, will provide a detailed analysis of the creative process for *And you ghosts rise blue*.

3.5 Hilma af Klint and De Fem

“The creative impulse, [af Klint] would insist, did not emanate from the depth of her soul but from a realm inhabited by a plurality of spirits.”⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Kurt Almqvist and Daniel Birnbaum, “Foreword” in *Anna Cassel: The Saga of the Rose*, 7

4. Act Three – the Tragedy

-The Rift- The previous Act covered theoretical frameworks and methodology for the development of my compositional matrix. This chapter turns towards the embodiment of that matrix through the creative process for *And you ghosts rise blue*. Electronic musician, producer, and trans icon SOPHIE is the voice guiding us into this dimension of the matrix. She died four years ago at the age of 34, falling from a great height while trying to look at the moon. Her music was a glittering, thrumming alchemy of hard, shiny surfaces and impish, insistent hunger. She had more to say when she passed from this world, and one of the many forking paths that led to the creation of *And you ghosts rise blue* was walked because I wanted to imagine what those words might have been. When her music asks us to imagine a “Whole New World / Pretend World”⁸⁵ – this piece is my response to that challenge.

4.1 Introduction

My thesis action for this research took the form of an experimental pasticcio opera called *And you ghosts rise blue*. The opera was a conceptual and poetic evocation of ghosts as voices from the past, visions from the future, and echoes from alternative and im/possible nows.⁸⁶ Dance, music, poetry, projected video, and light came together to summon these ghosts and navigate through the time-spaces in which their voices might be heard.

The composition of *And you ghosts rise blue* relied on summoning the scores, artistic practices, and poetic inspirations of the *Reader*’s matrix as ghosts for the opera. Working with a collaborative collective of artists over the course of the past two years, we navigated the chronologies and ontologies, languages and legacies of each of these other voices. The embodied

⁸⁵ Final track on her album *Oil of Every Pearl’s Un-Insides*

⁸⁶ As discussed in detail in Act One.

translation and realization of their work into a collective, interdisciplinary creative time-space became the processual and formal scaffold from which *And you ghosts rise blue* was built.

As a thesis action, *And you ghosts rise blue* was created to experiment with the practical application of the compositional methodology I was developing. The opera was also an opportunity conceptually to consider the possibilities and consequences of calling on voices outside of myself in this research and in my artistic practice at large. The following analysis of the work will consider (1) my collaborators, (2) our collective rehearsal process, (3) the Rift, (4) the formal structure of *And you ghosts rise blue* as a pasticcio opera, (5) the scoring of the opera through the *Reader*, and (6) the Reading Room.

4.2 The Collaborators

The collective for *And you ghosts rise blue* included dancers, musicians, poets, actors, and visual artists. Collaborators came primarily from the undergraduate and graduate communities of Duke, in addition to several artists from the interdisciplinary arts company I direct in Salt Lake City. Michela Arietti, Sara Caldiero, Natalia Cervantes, Sasha Faison, Julia Piper, Kalei Porter, Severin Sargent-Catterton, Amare Swierc, and Nathaniel Woolley were dancers in the collective. Erich Barganier, Josué Collado, and Mozhgan Chahian collaborated as musicians and composers. Sara Caldiero also contributed as a poet, in addition to Lauren Neefe as poet and audio documentarian. Jordan Reynosa and Nathaniel Woolley were both voice actors alongside Amare Swierc. Finally, Dani Mendez was a visual artist and Uinta Cook served as this project's dramaturg.

Participation within the collective was structured around open membership and individual agency alongside community capacity and responsive collaboration. Many of these artists were peers who I recruited directly or who were recruited by other members for the project, while others became involved after attending one of my weekly community activations. The Salt Lake-

based artists have been collaborators for several years and ultimately appeared onstage alongside the rest of the collective as disembodied performers via recorded video and audio.

Early stages of the research process focused on the process-based experimentation component discussed previously – with Listening Sessions and Community Laboratories, etc. – as a way to lay the groundwork for the creative process. While community activations continued throughout the entire process, the emphasis eventually shifted more towards the formal rehearsal process for *And you ghosts rise blue*. At this point, in order to support my work’s intentions towards agency and ethical collaboration, I met with each collaborator individually to determine the role they wanted to play in the composition: what discipline(s) they wanted to embody, to what extent they wanted to collaborate as a performer or a co-creator of material, what ghosts in the *Reader* they were most drawn towards evoking or what ghosts of their own they would like to enter into the matrix, etc. Each of them was a unique voice not only in the making of *And you ghosts rise blue*, but throughout the entire research process, and I remain grateful for their fellowship.

As for my own role as a collaborator, I worked primarily as the director/facilitator of the collective. I contributed to the choreography, music composition, libretto, projected video, and lighting design, in addition to creating the set and the costumes. Sole authorship was and is not a credit I am interested in pursuing, and even in the cases where I was the only embodied creator for certain components of the opera, I considered myself at every stage to be in close collaboration with the ghosts from the *Reader*.

4.3 Rehearsal Process

4.3.1 Structure

The rehearsal process for *And you ghosts rise blue* aimed to find a balance between the process-oriented community experimentation already established and the formal structuring of the performance. To accomplish this, I designed the rehearsal process as a series of flexible

containers for both process and product. The Community Laboratories and other process-based activations were set on a weekly alternating schedule with the formal rehearsals. This allowed us to focus on experimentation equally alongside the generation and rehearsal of material for *And you ghosts rise blue*. Attendance at both the Community Laboratories and the rehearsals was encouraged but not mandatory for members of the thesis collective. Collaborators were welcome to participate according to flexible levels of engagement that allowed the individuals to make empowered commitments to the process while the collective was able to continually practice ethically navigating relationships and developing our communicative capacity with each other.

The Salt Lake-based collaborators were engaged with a similar alternating structure of composition and community. We met virtually every new moon to work on *And you ghosts rise blue*, while each full moon was dedicated to a cross-country dance party that played out simultaneously in our individual locations through synchronized music. We also gathered for two intensives over summer and winter break prior to the performance. During that time we filmed video and recorded audio for *And you ghosts rise blue*, ultimately utilizing projections and sound during the opera to evoke the Salt Lake artists as disembodied performers.

While the thesis collective included artists from a wide range of disciplines – including dance, music, poetry, etc. – the rehearsal process was designed to be interdisciplinary at its foundation. We were all together in the room for each stage of building *And you ghosts rise blue*, rather than composing and rehearsing the disciplinary components separately and stitching them together for the final performance. This allowed us to engage repeatedly and meaningfully with the acts of translation and collective language-building that form the basis for my research on collaborative, interdisciplinary creative processes.

4.3.2 Ritual

In addition to the periodic structure of community experimentation vs. rehearsal process, an important consideration for *And you ghosts rise blue* was the intentional shaping of the

individual rehearsals themselves. My research into ritual theory, as discussed in Act One, invited me to consider the potential of collective effervescence in ritual as an expression and negotiation of community emotion and experience, in addition to the role ritual can play in navigating and composing social power. I designed our rehearsals, therefore, to include some elements of ritual. Every rehearsal began with one of Pauline Oliveros' Sonic Meditations and a shaking practice, and every rehearsal closed with a Dance Party in the Dark. I brought homemade baked goods to each Community Laboratory, and celebrating the changing of the moon with my Salt Lake collaborators took on a ritual-like form as well. The Hauntings, as discussed in Act Two, also represented rituals as we prepared for the performance of *And you ghosts rise blue*.

4.4 Designing the Rift

4.4.1 General Structure

Moving into the world(s) of *And you ghosts rise blue* was accomplished through the design and construction of a custom set, which we named the Rift.⁸⁷ The Rift consisted of a collection of wooden poles arranged in rows on the stage. String was threaded through the tops of the poles to form a suspension net from which I hung a series of plastic sheets, which I called veils. Once assembled, it appeared as a rectangular structure with walls on three sides, the upstage wall of the theater as the fourth side of the rectangle, and veils hanging at intervals inside the rectangle. The entire performance took place within this structure, with the exception of a moment in Act Two when the dancers went spinning out into the surrounding blackbox. All three of the outer walls of the Rift were used as projection surfaces for video. Much of the video work in the opera featured the Salt Lake-based dancers who, when projected onto the plastic, appeared as ghostly bodies moving alongside and in conversation with the embodied performers.

⁸⁷ See Appendix G for a photo.

The Rift was placed at an angle from the backstage wall and reached out from there so that each side of the rectangle was slanted slightly differently in relation to the surrounding space. This was done in part as a way to emphasize multiplicity of perspective and positionality for the Rift, the performers inside it, and the audience members peering towards it. The tilt was also a reference to Sara Ahmed's work on spatial and sexual orientations and the queering of verticality.⁸⁸ I designed the Rift to slant and glow in the otherwise dark space of the blackbox as a visual reference to rifts in space-time, portals between worlds, and queer orientations to normalized spaces.

The veils on the inside of the Rift could be pulled forwards, backwards, and to the sides along the suspended strings, allowing the internal structure to shift and small rooms or hallways to appear and disappear. Manipulation of the Rift's veils was designed to embody the ever-evolving matrix of the *Reader*, with new spaces constantly opening and closing and unexpected connections forming – an echo of chaos theorist James Gleick's depiction of non-linear relationships as “walking through a maze whose walls rearrange themselves with each step you take.”⁸⁹ As *And you ghosts rise blue* progressed, the performers repeatedly built rooms within the veils and performed a score or some other poetic evocation in that newly composed time-space. The spatial and programmatic shifts were an attempt to charge the room with the unique energy of a ghost from the *Reader* before the space transformed again and opened a portal into a different dimension where other voices could speak.

4.4.2 Plastic Veils

I chose plastic as the material for the Rift because I was interested in the play between opacity and transparency as a tool for exploring my research questions on multiplicity and the

⁸⁸ Sara Ahmed, “Sexual Orientation” in *Queer Phenomenology: Orientation, Objects, Others*, (Duke University Press, 2006), 65-107.

⁸⁹ Gleick, 24.

Garden of Forking Paths. The arrangement of plastic veils in relation to an audience member's own vantage point determined how clearly they could see the bodies, light, and video of *And you ghosts rise blue*. What the piece offered was not a definitive, linear production of choreography and meaning but instead a series of potential portals into experience that opened in different ways according to your own positionality and its unique intersection with the theater's time-space.

Visually, the plastic was an engaging material to work with given its responsivity to light, its flexibility and movement, and the somewhat uncanny sense of immateriality as it hung and shone suspended in the air. Shooting projections on all three transparent outer walls also allowed light and image to refract and bleed through the veils, highlighting the distortions of time-space the opera engaged. And in addition to their role as a visual element, the veils of the Rift were an important aural component of the performance, as they became an instrument the performers could activate when manipulating the plastic and moving through spaces.

The veils themselves were made by taping together garbage bags whose seams had been removed to form flat panels. Stitching the panels together was a reflection of the act of assembling the *Reader* and drawing lines between points of the matrix – when the veils were hung in layers, the black stitch marks on each intersected to form complex, matrix-esque patterns. I was also interested in how the black tape might serve as small pockets of occlusion in the transparent material. These miniature black holes became moments of erasure or obscurity that defied cognitive capture and viewership. And the use of the tape further emphasized the im/materiality of the Rift as both built environment and a breathing membrane that moved and sounded alongside the other range of bodies and spirits in the space.

While I sourced the plastic from spare garbage bags found around Duke's campus in a small attempt at sustainability, choosing to use plastic as the primary material for the Rift was an ecologically suspicious decision. I was drawn in some ways towards to the contradictions of building the ephemeral, creative world of my opera using materials that are dangerously

permanent in their composition and how that spoke to the contradictions, consequences, and dangers of collective action as discussed in Act One. I was also drawn to the visual association of wrapping dead bodies in plastic as they decompose and transform.

4.5 Operatic Structure

4.5.1 Pasticcio Opera

And you ghosts rise was composed as an experimental pasticcio opera –a type of composition that pulls on previously composed pieces of music from a variety of other sources and weaves them together into a new piece.⁹⁰ Pasticcio is a classification frequently deployed by musicologists and historians to denote a specific genre of opera beginning in the eighteenth century, but recent scholarship argues for a reconsideration of pasticcio as a compositional process with deep roots and varied manifestations across periods of music history (in addition to other art forms).⁹¹ This reading of the term became a useful framing for how I understood my own experimentation with assemblage and the sourcing of other voices, in addition to opening a new channel of lineage between myself and others experimenting with similar contemporary pasticcio work.

The compositional work I engaged with for this thesis lived within a dynamic matrix of disciplines and non-linear forms, and opera could be seen as an overly determined structure within which to consider this matrix. However, I found that having opera, specifically pasticcio opera, as one of the framing devices explored along *And you ghosts rise blue*'s Garden of Forking Paths gave me permission to elevate the interdisciplinary nature of the work. This was a particular priority given my own positionality within a dance-specific degree program. The term “opera” allowed me to reemphasize the musical, visual, and textual elements of *And you ghosts rise blue*

⁹⁰ Barnes, Peter Morgan. "Introduction" in *Pasticcio opera in Britain: History and context*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2024), 1-3.

⁹¹ Barnes, 1-3.

among an audience that might otherwise hierarchize the piece as primarily dance with the other disciplines as accompaniment.

4.5.2 The Three Acts

And you ghosts rise blue was composed in three acts, each of which corresponded to one of the attractors from the *Reader*. Act One – the Key was grounded by Pauline Oliveros and the ♀ Ensemble. Act Two – the Medium called on Hilma af Klint and De Fem, and the final act – the Tragedy – brought SOPHIE into the space with us. The entire opera had a runtime of approximately one hour, with each act lasting for 15-20 minutes. There was, additionally, a Prelude to the opera which claimed Adam Pendleton and the *Black Dada Reader* as its attractor. The Prelude consisted of an opening installation called the Reading Room, from which the audience journeyed into the Rift for the beginning of the performance – this element of the opera will be discussed in more detail below.

Each act was further divided into a series of chapters. The chapters were designated for organizational purposes only, and did not dictate periodicity in the score. Every chapter took place in a new configuration of the Rift, and because the internal structure could shift to accommodate up to six partitioned spaces, chapters were frequently overlapping each other. Poetry could be recited in in one space while dance materialized in another room and projected video played on the outskirts, etc. There were moments of pause and transition, but frequently chapters flowed into each other and overlapped in non-linear ways, with the Rift constantly in motion alongside the performers.

4.6 The Score

4.6.1 General Compositional Principles

While *And you ghosts rise blue* is non-narrative, the piece represented a fractal, assemblage-like exploration of ghosts, other voices, and the potentialities of

multiple/alternate/impossible time-spaces. Over the course of the three acts, the opera followed a compositional, dynamic, and poetic arc across these themes.

For the design of the compositional arc, scoring for each act drew on the source material from the *Reader*'s matrix that was grouped with that act's respective attractor – Oliveros, af Klint, and SOPHIE. Those scores, practices, and poetic inspirations were then translated and stitched together alongside new material. While the programmatic sourcing of scores from each specific attractor category of the *Reader* was adhered to strictly at the beginning of Act One, as the piece progressed and time-space began to distort and multiply from its formalist beginnings, these strictures loosened accordingly and voices began to bleed through in all directions, with ghosts from the *Reader* materializing in new relationships to their attractors. As discussed in the previous chapter: Act One – the Key included ghosts with a relation to theoretical concepts, artistic lineage, and formal practice. The first act, therefore, was composed with the most formalist approach, and the scores for that act were more strictly interpreted in their realization. Act Two – the Medium summoned ghosts as poetic evocations, and this part of the opera opened itself up to more poetic interpretation in relationship to the scores from the matrix. The ghosts of Act Three – the Tragedy spoke to the possibilities of silenced voices being heard, and this act reached the opera's climax in sound and silence.

The poetic and aesthetic intentions of each act were also composed according to the guiding force of the attractors. The thematic progression of the opera from Key to Medium to Tragedy considered how the emotional and energetic tenor of the conversations between the ghosts might be woven together with the voice of the collective to shape the dynamic arc of the opera. When we began in Act One, the veils were the thickest and most opaque, the voices we were calling to the most fragmented and isolated. Act Two began to warp and weave - ectoplasm leaked from the edges and lights flickered in and out. The Tragedy of the third act was the ultimate piercing of the veil, moving through all possible time-spaces to arrive here and now, at

the flesh and bone of the ghosts we had been calling. In Act Three, the Rift underwent one final manipulation and was fully unfurled, with the outer walls raised until they were suspended horizontally above the ground. The Rift then closed itself off from the audience entirely by having a large, final piece of plastic laid over the top of the entire Rift and transforming it into a sealed, glowing cube. With this unfurling, the audience was offered one brief glimpse into the full potential of an embodied world within the Rift. We stepped for one moment wholly into a heterotopia before the Rift slipped into another stream of time-space and left the audience behind to continue on in our current reality.

4.6.2 Specific Examples

The process of composing each act began by engaging with the scores, quotations, poetics, and ghostly evocations from the corresponding attractor group in the *Reader*. Not all 82 entries in the matrix could be programmed wholesale into the show, and the ghosts' im/materialization was instead approached as an alchemical process weaving together direct realizations alongside quotations, resonances, and transformations. The weaving became more complex and non-linear as the opera progressed, in keeping with the compositional and dynamic arc described in the previous subsection.

For example, Act One began with a performance of two of Pauline Oliveros' Sonic Meditations, "Teach Yourself to Fly" and "Sonic Rorschach." These were layered with live electronics from collective member Josué Collado and an adaptation of a movement score, "Wall Fall," from a former mentor of mine, Carly Schaub. Later in the Act, a dancer in one section of the Rift was performing a Field Study by Michael Kliën while four dancers in another space were moving in response to a text excerpt from Roberto Bolaño's "First Infrarealist Manifesto" and a movement score from La Pocha Nostra. In a different space of the Rift, an actor was simultaneously performing a disembodied vocal quartet with the pre-recorded Salt Lake

collaborators, mixed with sound samples from Michael Pisaro, SOPHIE, and a composition of my own (which itself was written in response to a poem from Jos Charles).

As the acts progressed, the scoring reached further into poetics and evocations of ghosts, death, and dying. Act Two began with a projected excerpt of a solo I choreographed after my grandfather's death in 2023. The disembodied dancer was accompanied by the embodied dancers performing a realization of the Foretelling ceremony from Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness* and the use of diegetic lighting to quote George Brecht's Fluxus event score "Three Lamp Events." The act concluded with a multimedia projection of photos of the *Reader's* ghosts and Hilma af Klint's *Paintings for the Temple*, which flashed alongside a mix of SOPHIE and Mozart's *Requiem*.⁹² The dancers went spinning out of the Rift and into the theater space using lengths of green ribbon – a reference to both the ectoplasmic excretions materialized by (primarily women) mediums in turn-of-the-century Spiritualist seances⁹³ and to an excerpt from William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*.

Act Three began and ended with SOPHIE, and when the Rift unfurled and opened up during that act, the score was responding to Clarice Lispector's *Near to the Wild Heart*. As these examples demonstrate, the score for the opera moved through the matrix in complex systems of engagement that utilized translation, transformation, relationality and layering with the many voices of the *Reader* as they sounded alongside the embodied collective.

4.6.3 Sound, Movement, Light, Libretto

Sound and choreography for the opera relied primarily on the direct realization, quotation, or transformation of scores from the matrix of the *Reader* as outlined in the previous subsections. The visual components of the opera included the Rift, video projections of the

⁹² Itself a programming homage to an Excavation Site conducted by Michael Kliën at Duke in the fall of 2023 following the death of one of the graduate students in the MFAEIP program.

⁹³ Delgado, "Bawdy Technologies and the Birth of Ectoplasm."

disembodied dancers, and a series of graphic scores composed for the piece by collaborator Dani Mendez that were projected onto the Rift as the audience entered. The majority of the text for the opera's sung and spoken libretto came from very small excerpts of poems that I stitched together into new works, much like the use of refrains in a Deleuzian assemblage.⁹⁴ These same poetic excerpts formed the text used in the making of the *Reader* zines, as discussed in the previous chapter. In this way, the libretto for the opera was sounded into the live time-space of the performance while also embodied and archived on the pages of the *Reader*.

The one exception to this stitching approach, when a much longer excerpt of a text was written into the libretto as its own refrain, was collective member Mozhgan Chahian's performance of Farrouh Farrokhzad's "Let Us Believe in the Beginning of the Cold Season." This took place in Act Three – The Tragedy, the moment in the arc of the piece when we arrived most completely to a time-space where ghosts who have been silenced could speak clearly again. It was also the first time the libretto, a Persian-to-English translation, was projected onto the Rift itself, representing a moment when spirit, light, sound, and body came together to sing..

4.7 The Reading Room

4.7.1 Installation

And you ghosts rise blue opened with an installation in an adjoining lounge to the studio theater – an area which we called the Reading Room. The zines of the *Reader* were spread through the space, nestled within extra plastic veils from earlier prototypes of the Rift. Thesis collective member and audio documentarian Lauren Neefe used recorded audio from the Community Labs and collective rehearsals to compose a sound score for the space, and two music videos of SOPHIE's were projected on a far wall in alternating slow-motion and real-time

⁹⁴ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, "11: Of the Refrain," from *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Brian Massumi. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

playback speeds. The plastic, sound, and video were all elements designed to establish the many flowing time streams of the piece: reaching already into the past with the recorded audio, the future with the veils of the Rift, and alternativity with the time slippage of the videos and SOPHIE's disembodied presence. As the audience arrived for the performance, they were directed straight into the Reading Room for the first quarter of an hour and given time to move through the installation and engage materially with the *Reader's* zines.

The Reading Room was designed to offer the audience an entrance into the matrix of the work and prepare them to start listening to the voices of our ghosts before the performance began. This structure also attempted to destabilize the audience's experience of performance "beginnings" and to blur the boundaries of theatrical space-time. Rather than sitting uniformly in a theater with printed program in hand before the lights went out, I wanted the audience's first encounter with *And you ghosts rise blue* to situate them in an alternative/unreal performance space. The specific zines they interacted with in the Reading Room represented their unique entrance into the matrix, framing how they experienced the rest of the work around the ghosts they first encountered.

4.7.2 Journey into the Rift

After the reading prelude had ended, three guides came into the Reading Room to transition the audience into the studio theater space. As a reflection of the opera's poetic journey into a rift of space and time and through a series of dimensions and worlds, the journey from the Reading Room into the theater moved the audience through unfamiliar, deterritorialized spaces before arriving at the Rift. Instead of using the main doors for the theater, the guides took people in groups from the Reading Room through the backstage area before entering a backdoor that led to the upstage right side of the performance space. Lights and scraps of plastic veils were scattered along the way. This journey was both an opportunity to ground the audience's own

embodiment as they moved into the performance space, and also an experiment for community building and collectivity as they had to work together to navigate the passage to the Rift.

Once inside the theater, the audience walked downstage past the Rift and up the stairs to be seated on the mezzanine. To heighten the multiplicity of perspective and experience, and to optimize the dynamic range of opaque-transparent veils within the Rift, the audience was seated on all four sides of the mezzanine level of the theater. This allowed each person to peer down into the Rift from a slightly different angle, thereby determining what action would or not be perceivable according to their own positionality, the performers', and the intervening veils.

4.8 Conclusion

And you ghosts rise blue represented an opportunity to experiment with creating work using the compositional methodology on which my research focused. Every stage of the creative process – from forming a collective, rehearsing and Haunting, designing a set, framing the compositional structure, scoring the opera, and composing the audience's theater experience – took place within the complex systems and evolving relationality of the matrix. Each step I took was in conversation with ghosts – both the disembodied and embodied collaborators with whom I had the honor to work. In that way, *And you ghosts rise blue* also represented an opportunity for me to engage creatively with multiplicity, communication, embodiment, and agency. The opera also offered a poetic opportunity for me to explore life and death, considering each not as a boundary, but instead a language that might be translated and sung into space.

4.9 SOPHIE

“immaterial boys

immaterial girls”⁹⁵

⁹⁵ “Immaterial,” track 8 on SOPHIE, *Oil of Every Pearl's Un-Insides*, MSMSMSM, Future Classic, and Transgressive, 2018, Spotify.

5. Conclusion: Coda – the Rift

-The Rift- Our final Haunting as a collective took place inside the Rift right before the performance of *And you ghosts rise blue*. The audience was in the Reading Room going through the zines of the *Reader*. We were next door in the darkened theater, thirteen of us arranged within the plastic, sitting side-by-side or stretched out with our heads in another person's lap. The space was illuminated by a dim blue light, and we began breathing together as we started Pauline Oliveros' "Teach Yourself to Fly." This was the first Sonic Meditation I practiced with a group, years ago on a hill in New Hampshire, and I chose to call it into the Rift for this Haunting as a way to bend our space-time towards that past moment and into whatever future was next. After two years of practicing as a group and experimenting with scores, this realization felt powerful – easeful yet vast in our collective capacity. We suspended, we dove into the light.

5.1 Creative Reflections

My research for this thesis developed a compositional methodology that brought voices of the past into conversation with embodied presents and imagined futures. This chorus was assembled together in a matrix of relationality that allowed multiplicities of language, time-space, community, epistemology, and ontology to interact and transform each other.

On a fundamental level, I came to this research out of a desire to explore what voices lay outside of myself. I was seeking relationships to the past, to the future, and to the real and unreal that might offer possibilities for alternate, more ethical ways to be in community with the world(s) around me. I wanted to engage in that work as an artistic practice with other people because I believed it had the potential as a creative tool to make my art more beautiful. But I also wanted to explore how I might be able to craft social tools for myself and others to create a more beautiful reality.

5.2 Future Engagements

As I move forward in my own research, I hope to continue to experiment with this collaborative practice across longer time-scales and new creative contexts. I want to see what other kinds of work this compositional methodology is capable of, and I want to commit myself to pursuing the potential for social change that this thesis proposes.

In the words of Allison Knowles and Annea Lockwood in the introduction to *Women's Work*: "these are scores ready for you to do."⁹⁶ My compositional methodology for this thesis is not merely *mine*, it lives across many lives, practices, and realm of time-space. It is open and available for anyone who may be reading this to take up and bring into their own community.

5.3 The Rift

And you ghosts rise blue from alchemy from a forest of hunted beasts of twisted machines of a jujube tree of rotten flesh of a basket of oysters of eyes of a network of straps in the beautiful sisal of human skin I would have words vast enough to contain you and you earth taut earth drunk⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Alison Knowles and Annea Lockwood, eds., *Womens Work*, Issue One, (New York, NY: Self-Published, 1975), 1.

⁹⁷ Aimé Césaire, *Notebook on a Return to the Native Land*, trans. by Clayton Eshleman and Annette Smith, (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 2001), 2.

Appendix A

the *Reader* Index:

Act One – The Key

- Pauline Oliveros and the ♀ Ensemble
- “Teach Yourself to Fly”
- Adam Pendleton and Black Dada
- OuLiPo
- AACM
- Karlheinz Stockhausen (*Licht* with *The Crying of Lot 49*)
- Cornelius Cardew (*The Great Learning and Treatise*)
- Senga Nengudi and Studio Z Collective
- John Cage (*Imaginary Landscape and Silence*)
- La Pocha Nostra (“The Walk in the Darkness” and “Forming Communities in the Darkness”)
- Jennifer Walshe’s the New Discipline
- “The Garden of Forking Paths” (Jorge Luis Borges)
- Adrienne Rich (“Diving Into the Wreck” and “Phantasia for Elvira Shatayev”)
- *If on a Winter’s Night a Traveler* (Italo Calvino)
- FLUXUS
- Roberto Bolaño
- The Infrarealists
- Critical Art Ensemble
- Dada
- Pina Bausch
- *Field Studies* (Michael Kliën)
- Lucia Berlin
- *Vexations* (Erik Satie)
- Devin Maxwell
- New York School (Morton Feldman, Christian Wolff, Earle Brown, Frank O’Hara, Judson Dance Church)
- Wandelweiser
- Herbert Brün
- Robert Wilson

- Simone Forti (*Huddle*)
- Joan Retallack
- Phill Niblock
- Ultima Vez (*Blush* and *What the Body Does Not Remember*)
- *The Mathematics of Resonant Bodies* (John Luther Adams)
- “Everything Lies in All Directions” (Hua Xi)

Act Two – The Medium

- Hilma af Klint and De Fem
- The Order of the Third Bird
- Hilary Mantel
- Dreamachine
- *Trilogie de la Mort* (Éliane Radigue)
- Carolyn Chen
- *What is Not Yours is Not Yours* (Helen Oyeyemi)
- José Esteban Muñoz
- Samuel Delany (*Babel-17*)
- Aimé Césaire (*Notebook on a Return to the Native Land*)
- Kaveh Akbar
- *Invisible Cities* (Italo Calvino)
- *The Thomas Salto* (Timmy Straw)
- Is LaMonte Young here?
- Gertrude Stein
- *Exquisite Corpse (Mysterious Object at Noon)*
- *Lincoln in the Bardo* (George Saunders)
- *Pedro Páramo* (Juan Rulfo)
- Ursula K Le Guin
- Foretelling (*Left Hand of Darkness*)
- Robert Ashley (*Perfect Lives*)
- Hildegard Westerkamp
- Stith-Thompson and ATU
- *Oblique Strategies* (Brian Eno and Peter Schmidt)
- *The Dinner Party* (Judy Chicago)
- “Halfway” (Paula Mendoza)

Act Three – The Tragedy

- SOPHIE
- immaterial boys / immaterial girls

- Federico García Lorca
- Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz
- Bruno Schulz
- Forough Farrokhzad
- Molly Brodak
- Pauli Murray
- Julius Eastman
- Ada Limón
- *frank : sonnets* (Diane Seuss)
- *Human Acts* (Han Kang)
- Natalie Diaz
- *My Brilliant Friend* (Elena Ferrante)
- Danez Smith
- *Querido Diego* (Elena Poniatowska)
- *Women's Work* (ed. Annea Lockwood and Alison Knowles)
- *Near to the Wild Heart* (Clarice Lispector)
- CAConrad
- *A note on Form* (Jos Charles)
- Annea Lockwood
- The Poets (Nicole Arocho Hernández, Sara Caldiero, Ulises Carrión, Julio Cortázar, William Faulkner, Camonghne Felix, Seamus Heaney, Valzyhna Mort, Tawanda Mulalu, Frank O'Hara, Mary Oliver, Octavio Paz, Thomas Pynchon, Alberto Ríos, Mai Der Vang, Vanesa Angélica Villarreal, Ocean Vuong, Rebecca Wee)

Appendix B



Figure B.1: Reader Zine Examples



Figure B.2: Diaz pages 1-2

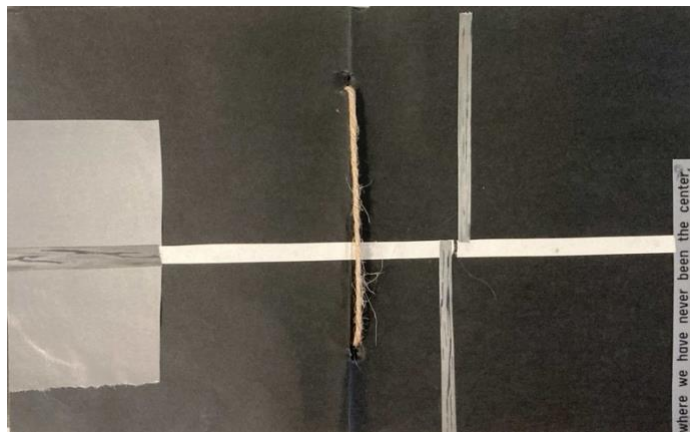


Figure B.3: Diaz pages 3-4

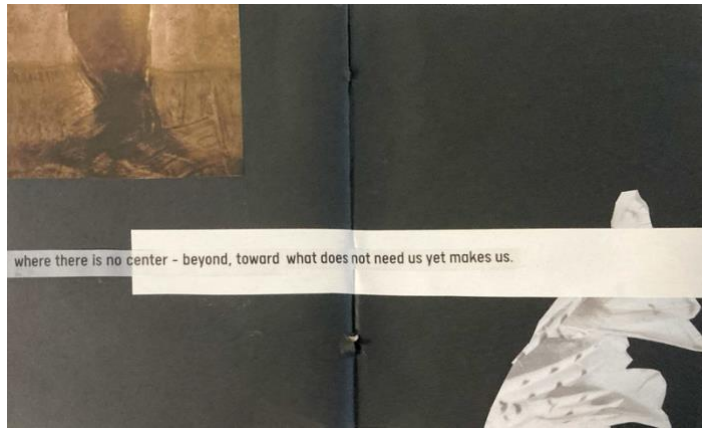


Figure B.4: Diaz pages 5-6

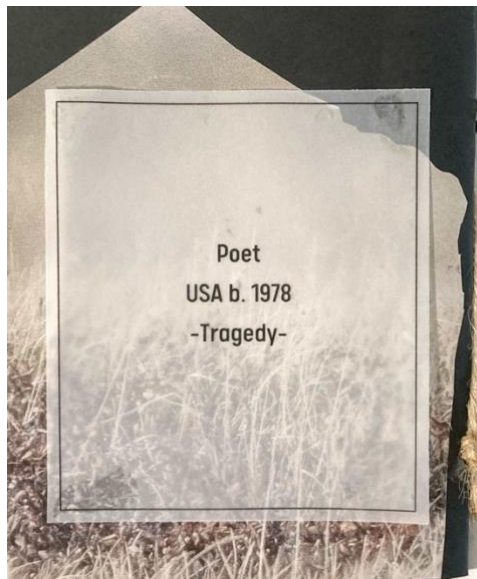


Figure B.5: Diaz back cover

Appendix C

And you ghosts rise blue Score:

Act One – The Key

Prelude

- Outskirts: Mendez
 - Rift graphic scores

Chapter One

- Side Room: Collado
 - electronic music (live)
- Rooms x: Oliveros / Schaub
 - *Teach Yourself to Fly* and *Sonic Rorschach*
 - *Tumbling Song*

Chapter Two

- Outskirts: Borges
 - Garden of Forking Paths video
- Rooms x: Cage
 - *Imaginary Landscape* tone rows

Chapter Three

- Room One: Kliën
 - *Field Study*
 - Impossible Body, Distribute Thyself, Lending II, I am Legion, 3 Skins, Sense Switching, Historical Dust
 - Room Two: Infrarealists and and La Pocha Nostra
 - “Walking Backwards” and “Forming Communities in the Darkness”
 - Room Three: the Poets, Pisaro, SOPHIE, and Cook
 - Voices Quartet

Chapter Four

- Outskirts: Bolaño and IAC
 - *Unidentified Subject* video
- Rooms x: Brecht and FLUXUS
 - *Three Lamp Events*

Act Two – The Medium

Chapter One

- Outskirts: Chaimbeul
 - Weaver video
- Rooms x: *Left Hand of Darkness*
 - Foretelling

Chapter Two

- Side Room: Barganier
 - Guitar (live)
- Room One: Exquisite Corpse
 - *Mysterious Object at Noon*
- Room Two: Arne-Thompson-Uther
 - Ferryman’s Boat

Chapter Three

- Outskirts: Cook and Lockwood

- Slippage and *Piano Burning*
- Side Room: Barganier
 - Guitar (live)

Chapter Four

- Room One: af Klint, ghosts, Saunders, SOPHIE, and Mozart
 - *WET GHOSTS (matterlightblooming phenomenon)*

Chapter Five

- Outskirts: Maxwell, the Poets, and Neefe
 - *Queens Row*

Act Three – The Tragedy

Chapter One

- Rooms x: Chahian and Farrokhzad
 - “Let Us Believe in the Beginning of the Cold Season” vocals (live)

Chapter Two

- Inside/Outside Rift: Cook and SOPHIE
 - Piercing the Veil

Chapter Three

- Outskirts: SOPHIE
 - Ponyboy video
- The Rift: Lispector
 - *Near to the Wild Heart*

Chapter Four

- Rooms x: SOPHIE
 - immaterial boys immaterial girls

Appendix D

And you ghosts rise blue Libretto:

Act One: Voices Quartet (Chapter 3, Room 3)

Voices: If in this sleep I speak, it is with a voice no longer personal

All: (I want to say with voices)¹

Amare: Some things / return, but never really do. / Like the sifting ground²

Voices: In this light / You are not where you were but you have not moved...³ We're going headfirst into all human difficulties in such a way that things begin to move inside a single person, a hallucinating vision of mankind.⁴

Amare: i see it in them. they know time is not a river. not quite like a lover. but a thing that leaves you until it's gone.⁵

Voices: & when time starts over, the future will be behind us but / love, like god, will still be here⁶

Amare: An act of stripping what life-worn / fabrics perforate the borders between lyric / and magic. I want to step out of my language / and light up, but the body is a container.

Voices: I want to step out of my language / and light up, but the body is a container.⁷

Amare: Aren't we indeed the keepers of our dead?⁸

Voices: (unintelligible)

Amare: Say a rooster is my mother.

Voices: Say there is a coffin in its body

Amare: Say the oven is a bone room.

Voices: Say the rock bleeds out / It's boiling eye. I don't know / Where I'm from, but say my feet endure because I must have come from somewhere.

Amare: Say I find a lighthouse burning / In a cave.

Amare: Say the oryx is a creature / Made of windows.

Voices: I'm trembling in the storm⁹

Amare: Dare me to say your name and see the lightning burning softly.¹⁰

Act Two: *Queens Row* (Chapter 5)

Some things / return, but never really do. / Like the sifting ground, / the scattered baleen, / and this your body ancient / turned upside down.¹¹

We are, I am, you are / by cowardice or courage / the one who find our way / back to this scene / carrying a knife, a camera / a book of myths / in which / our names do not appear.¹²

when the burning / begins the most / thoughtful among us dreams / of hurrying down / into the black petals, / into the fire, / into the night where time lies shattered, / into the body of another. ¹³

¹ Adrienne Rich, "Phantasia for Elvira Shatayev"

² Mai Der Vang, "Gray Vestige"

³ Alberto Ríos, "A Physics of Sudden Light"

⁴ Roberto Bolaño, "First Infrarealist Manifesto"

⁵ Danez Smith, "on faggotness"

⁶ Vanesa Angélica Villarreal, "To the Friend Who Is Crying on the Phone"

⁷ Camonghne Felix, "On Decomposition"

⁸ Valzhyna Mort, "Genesis"

⁹ Mai Der Vang, "Toward Home"

¹⁰ Tawanda Mulalu, "Elegy"

¹¹ Mai Der Vang, "Gray Vestige"

¹² Rich, "Diving Into the Wreck"

¹³ Mary Oliver, "Blossom"

By the bend in the clean zipper of stream, by the gate / of my life, a metal animal's insides steam up and I understand – / so many dolorous selves in each of us dissolving into fog.¹⁴
To uncoil the wild little everything / inside this *now*, which I am crouching to fit into... / I asked what is going to happen and he said *it's happening*¹⁵
With regard for the others. / Somewhere. Regardless of knowing. They wander / about. We follow. More trail. We spire. There. So to / dance. Witness of the furrowed field without. O blue.¹⁶

Act Three: “Let Us Believe in the Beginning of the Cold Season” (Chapter 1)

And here I am
a woman alone
at the threshold of a cold season
and the sky's simple and sad despair
among the mirrors gathered in mourning
how can one tell that person passing by—
patient,
heavy,
bewildered—
to stop?
How can one tell that man he is not alive?
Hello, o innocent life!
Why didn't I look?
It seemed my mother had wept that night
The night Esfahan was full of the tinkling of glazed blue tiles
Where do I come from? That I reek of the smell of night?
They are praying on the platform of my voice
Hello, o strange loneliness
And here I am
a woman alone
at the threshold of a cold season
Let us believe
Let us believe in the beginning of the cold season¹⁷

¹⁴ Ada Límon, “Long Ago & the Cow Comes Back

¹⁵ Molly Brodak, “Mild Peril”

¹⁶ Neefe, “Riftward”

¹⁷ Farrough Farrokhzad, “Let Use Believe in the Beginning of the Cold Season” arr. Mozghan Chahian

Appendix E

Community Laboratories and Rehearsal Scores:

- Pauline Oliveros' *Sonic Meditations*
 - Body Tune Up
 - Sonic Rorschach
 - Scanning-Hearing
 - Pacific Tell
 - Tumbling Song
 - Lullaby for Daisy Pauline
 - Teach Yourself to Fly
 - Rhythms
 - Give Sound, Receive Sound
 - Old Sound, New Sound, Borrowed Sound, Blue
- Michael Kliën's *Field Studies*
 - Distribute Thyself
 - Bow Until You Mean It
 - Necessary Changes
 - Animal Spirits
 - Truth and Reconciliation
 - Die Wunde
 - Morphing Body According to Awareness
 - Project Yourself Forward
- Other Scores
 - La Pocha Nostra's "The Walk in the Darkness" and "Forming Communities"
 - Carly Schaub's "Wall Fall"
 - George Brecht's "Three Lamp Events"
 - La Monte Young's Composition 1960 #10
 - John Cage's *Aria*
- Practices
 - Hildegard Westerkamp's Soundwalk
 - Zine making
 - Exquisite Corpse
 - Desert Shores workshop
 - The Order of the Third Bird
 - Tone rows
 - Ai Fugi and Aaron Nelson's StARTwine
 - Dreamachine
 - Social Dreaming
 - Dance Party in the Dark
 - Spring Cleaning

Hauntings:

- Haunting No. 1
 - February 6, 2025
 - Present: Mozhgan and her mom, Lauren, Kalei, Indigo, Iain, Natalia, Sasha
 - Location: Lakewood Cemetery
 - Activity: "Threshold Mediation (III)" by Pauline Oliveros
- Haunting No. 2
 - February 7, 2025

- Present: Indigo and Iain
 - Location: Motorco
 - Activity: Dance Party in the Dark
- Haunting No. 3
 - February 8, 2025
 - Present: Indigo, Natalia, Iain, Lauren
 - Location: Pump Station at Eno River State Park
 - Activity: The Order of the Third Bird meeting
- Haunting No. 4
 - February 12, 2025
 - Present: Amare, Erich, James, Josué, Julia, Kalei, Lauren, Michela, Mozhgan, Natalia, Sasha, Uinta
 - Location: the Rift
 - Activity: “Teach Yourself to Fly” by Pauline Oliveros

Appendix F

Listening Session Index:

Session XXXIX: April 10, 2025

- Kurt Weill and Lotte Lenya, *The World of Kurt Weill*
- Cecil Taylor, *Jazz Advance*

Session XXXVIII: March 26, 2025

- Doechii, *Alligator Bites Never Heal*
- Tyler, the Creator, *CALL ME IF YOU GET LOST*

Session XXXVII: March 6, 2025

- Burna Boy, *Outside* and Fela Kuti, *Zombie*

Session XXXVI: February 20, 2025

- Aphex Twin, *Drukqs*

Session XXXV: February 13, 2025

- Max Richter, *From Sleep*

Session XXXIV: January 29, 2025 - Dance Party Edition!

- Kaytranada, 2011 Montreal Boiler Room

Session XXXIII: January 22, 2025

- Brian Harnetty, *Shawnee, Ohio* and Julia Wolfe, *Anthracite Fields*

Session XXXII: January 15, 2025

- Ms. Lauryn Hill, *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill* and FKA twigs, *MAGDALENE*

Session XXXI: December 2, 2024

- Sinéad O'Connor, *I Do Not Want What I Haven't Got* and Prince, *Purple Rain*

Session XXIX: November 18, 2024

- Keeley Forsyth, *The Hollow* and Bon Iver, *For Emma, Forever Ago*

Session XXVIII: November 11, 2024

- Kate Soper, *Ipsa Dixit*

Session XXVII: October 28, 2024

- Burial, *Untrue* and Franz Schubert, *Death and the Maiden*

Session XXVI: October 21, 2024

- Dua Saleh, *I SHOULD CALL THEM* and Nilüfer Yanya, *My Method Actor*

Session XXV: October 7, 2024

- Camarón de la Isla, *La leyenda del tiempo* and C. Tangana, *El Madrileño*

Session XXIV: September 30, 2024

- Sun Ra, *The Futuristic Sounds of Sun Ra* and Henry Thomas, *Texas Worried Blues*

Session XXIII: September 23, 2024

- Charmaine Lee, *KNVF* and Sonic Youth, *Daydream Nation*

Session XXII: September 16, 2024

- Janelle Monáe, *Dirty Computer* (film) and Tierra Whack, *Whack World* (visual album)

Session XXI: September 9, 2024

- Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, *Wild God* and Cocteau Twins, *Heaven or Las Vegas*

Session XX: September 2, 2024

- John Coltrane, *One Down, One Up: Live at the Half Note* (disc 1), T.M. Krishna, Sheik Mahaboob Subhani, and Kaleeshabi Mahaboob, *Jagadodharana - Ragam Kapi*, and Bernard Woma, *Live at the Pito Bar*

Session XIX: April 21, 2024

- Claude Debussy, *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*, Pink Floyd, *The Wall*, and Run-DMC, *Raising Hell*

Session XVIII: March 25, 2024

- Billie Holiday, *Lady Sings the Blues* and Portishead, *Roseland NYC Live*

Session XVI: March 4, 2024

- Tobias Picker and Konzert und Theater St. Gallen, *Lili Elbe*

Session XV: February 26, 2024

- Bauhaus, *In the Flat Field*, Courtney Bryan, *Requiem*, and Brighde Chaimbeul, *Carry Them With Us*

Session XIV: February 19, 2024

- Phill Niblock, *Young Person's Guide to Phill Niblock*

Session XIII: February 5, 2024

- Silvana Estrada, *Marchita* and Sade, *Lovers Rock*

Session XII: January 29, 2024

- Federico García Lorca, selected poetry readings, Townes Van Zandt, *Townes Van Zandt*, and Chavela Vargas, *La Luna Grande: Homenaje a Federico García Lorca*

Session XI: January 17, 2024

- Robert Ashley, *Perfect Lives*

Session X: January 10, 2024

- Bad Bunny, *YHLQMDLG* and Beyoncé, *Renaissance*

Session IX: December 7, 2023

- Kate Bush, *The Ninth Wave* and Gustav Mahler, *Symphony No. 9*

Session VIII: November 29, 2023

- Lankum, *False Lankum* and Lisa O'Neill, *All Of This Is Chance*

Session VII: November 14, 2023

- Arooj Aftab, Vijay Iyer, and Shahzad Ismaily, *Love in Exile* and Caroline Polachek, *Desire, I Want to Turn Into You*

Session VI: November 9, 2023

- Saul Williams, *Neptune Frost* (film)

Session V: November 2, 2023

- Raven Chacon, *Live from Alcatraz* and *Voiceless Mass*, and Parchman Prison Prayer, *Some Mississippi Sunday Morning*

Session IV: October 26, 2023

- Cornelius Cardew and The Scratch Orchestra, *The Great Learning* (Paragraphs 2 and 7) and Brian Eno, *Another Green World*

Session III: October 19, 2023

- Diamanda Galás, *The Litanies of Satan* and Béla Bartók, *Bluebeard's Castle*

Session II: October 12, 2023

- SOPHIE, *Oil of Every Pearl's Un-Insides* and Julius Eastman, *Feminine*

Session I: September 10, 2023

- Éliane Radigue, *Trilogie de la Mort*

Appendix G

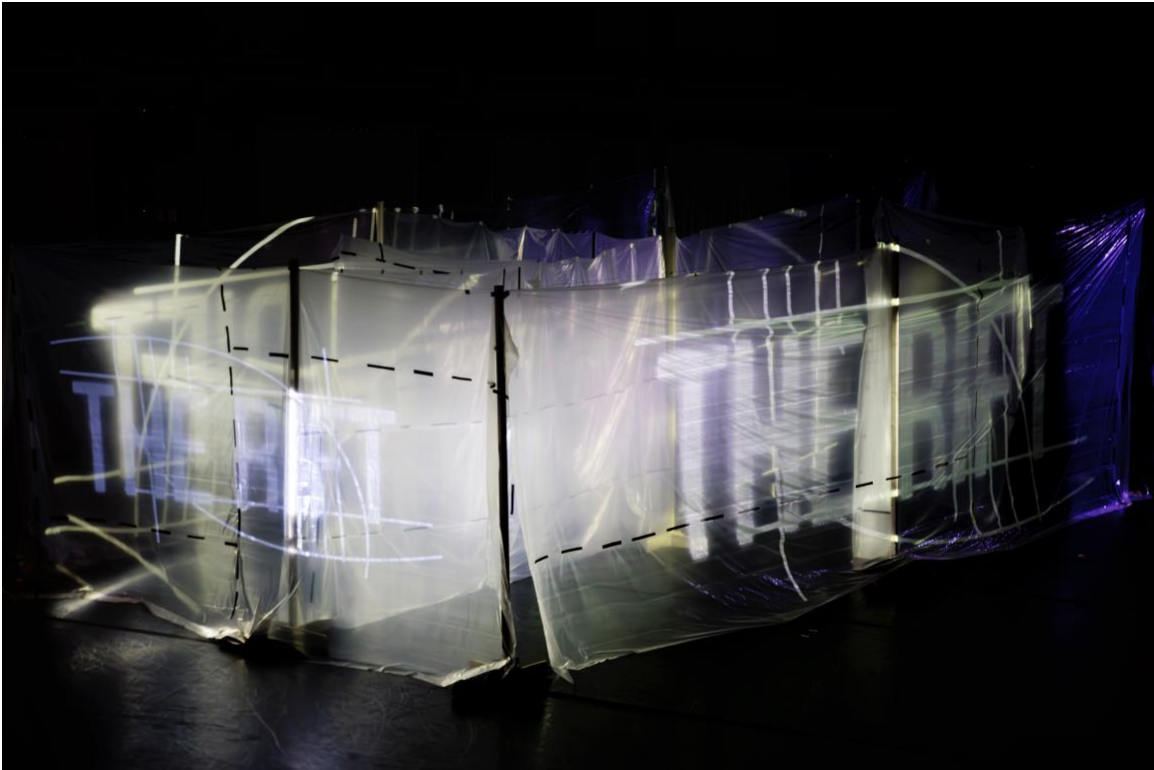


Figure G.1: The Rift

Bibliography

- Ahmed Sara. "Happy Objects." In *Affect Theory Reader*, edited by Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth, 29-51. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.
- Ahmed, Sara. "Sexual Orientation." In *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, and Others*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006, 65-107.
- Almqvist, Kurt and Hedvig Martin. *Anna Cassel: The Saga of the Rose*. Edited by Daniel Birnbaum. Sweden: Bokförlaget Stolpe, 2023.
- Ashby, W. Ross. *An Introduction to Cybernetics*. London: Chapman and Hall, 1956. Reprint, Connecticut: Martino Fine Books, 2015.
- Badiou, Alain. *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, translated by Alberto Toscano. California: Stanford University Press, 2005.
- Ball, Hugo. "Dada Manifesto." In *Flight Out of Time: A Dada Diary*, edited by John Elderfield, translated by Ann Raimés, 219-221. New York: Viking Press, 1974.
- Barad, Karen. "Transmaterialities: Trans*/matter/realities and queer political imaginings." *GLQ: A journal of lesbian and gay studies* 21, no. 2-3 (2015): 387-422.
- Baraka, Amiri. "Black Dada Nihilismus." In *Transbluesency: The Selected Poems of Amiri Baraka/LeRoi Jones 1961-1995*, edited by Paul Vangelisti, 97-100. New York: Marsilio Publishers, 1995.
- Barnes, Peter Morgan. *Pasticcio opera in Britain: History and context*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2024.
- Bell, Catherine. *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Bellah, Robert. *The Robert Bellah Reader*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.
- Birnbaum, Daniel. "Lucid Dreaming." *Artforum* 60, no 1 (2021): 234-241.
- Bolaño, Roberto. "First Infrarealist Manifesto." Translated by David Shook. *Sin Zona* (blog), December 27, 2013. <https://www.tumblr.com/sinzona2/71375454178/roberto-bolaños-infrarealist-manifesto>.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. "Garden of Forking Paths." In *Collected Fictions*, translated by Andrew Hurley, 120-129. New York: Viking, 1998.
- Bray, Karen, and Moore, Stephen D. "Introduction: Mappings and Crossings." In *Religion, Emotion, Sensation: Affect Theories and Theologies*, edited by Karen Bray and Stephen Moore, 1-18. New York: Fordham University Press, 2019,
- Breton, André. Excerpt from *First Manifesto of Surrealism*. In *Art and Theory 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, edited by Charles Harrison and Paul Woods, 87-88. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992.

- Burnett, D. Graham, Catherine L. Hansen, and Justin E.H. Smith, eds. *In Search of the Third Bird*. London: Strange Attractor Press, 2021.
- Cage, John. *Empty Words; Writings, 73-78*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1979
- Camnitzer, Luis. *Conceptualism in Latin American Art: Didactics of Liberation*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007.
- Césaire, Aimé. *Notebook on a Return to the Native Land*. Translated by Clayton Eshleman and Annette Smith. Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 2001.
- Critical Art Ensemble. "Observations on Collective Cultural Action." In *Digital Resistance Explorations in Tactical Media*, 59-73. New York: Autonomedia, 2001.
- D'Souza, Shaad. "The life and legacy of producer pioneer Sophie." *The Guardian*, September 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2024/sep/20/sophie-posthumous-album-interview>.
- Delgado, L. Anne. "Bawdy Technologies and the Birth of Ectoplasm." Colorado: University of Colorado Boulder, 2011. <https://www.colorado.edu/gendersarchive1998-2013/2011/09/01/bawdy-technologies-and-birth-ectoplasm>.
- Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated by Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.
- Durkheim, Emile. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Translated by Karen E. Fields. 1912; New York: Free Press, 1995.
- Edwards, Adrienne. "The Struggle for Happiness, or What Is American about Black Dada." In *Black Dada Reader*, 29-37. Edited by Stephen Squibb. London: Koenig Books, 2017.
- Esteban Muñoz, José. "Ephemera as Evidence: Introductory Notes to Queer Acts." *Women & Performance* 8, no. 2 (1996): 5-16.
- Forti, Simone. *Handbook in Motion*. Halifax and New York: The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and New York University Press, 1974.
- Gleick, James. *Chaos: Making a New Science*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1987
- Gómez-Peña, Guillermo. *Ethno-techno: Writings on performance, activism, and pedagogy*. Edited by Elaine Peña. New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Gregg, Melissa and Gregory J. Seigworth. "An Inventory of Shimmers." In *Affect Theory Reader*, edited by Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth, 1-25. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.
- Harren, Natilee. *Fluxus Forms: Scores, Multiples, and the Eternal Network*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020.

- Hetherington, Kevin. *The Badlands of Modernity: Heterotopia and Social Ordering*. Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 1997.
- Higgins, Dick. *Intermedia, Fluxus and the Something Else Press: Selected Writings by Dick Higgins*. Edited by Steve Clay and Ken Friedman. New York: Siglio Press, 2018.
- Hsu, Hua. "American Counterculture, Glimpsed Through Zines," *The New Yorker*. February 14, 2024, <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/american-counterculture-glimpsed-through-zines>.
- Jackson, Shannon. "Performance, Aesthetics, and Support." In *Social Works: Performing Art, Supporting Publics*, 11-42. Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 2011.
- Knowles, Alison and Annea Lockwood, editors. *Womens Work* (Issue One). New York, NY: Self-published, 1975.
- Lawrence, W. Gordon. *Introduction to Social Dreaming: Transforming Thinking*. Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 2005.
- Lewis, George E. *A Power Stronger Than Itself: The AACM and American Experimental Music*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.
- Majewska, Martyna Ewa. "Beyond *Side by Side*: Intermediality in Senga Nengudi's Collaborations." *Archives of American Art Journal* 62, no. 1 (2023): 20-41.
- Mantel, Hilary. "The Day Is for the Living, Reith Lectures," BBC Radio 4. June 13, 2017. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08tcbrp>.
- Morgan, Helen and Peter Tatham. "The Social Dreaming Matrix." In *Social Dreaming @ Work*, edited by Gordan Lawrence, 69-73. Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 1998.
- Morrison, Alexandra. "The Politics of Feeling: The Phenomenology of Affect in Sara Ahmed and Judith Butler." *Symposium* 24, no. 2 (2020):144-167.
- Oliveros, Pauline. *Anthology of Text Scores*. Edited by Sam Golter. Kingston: Deep Listening Publications, 2013.
- Oliveros, Pauline. *Sonic Meditations*. Vermont: Smith Publications, 1974.
- Pendleton, Adam. *Black Dada Reader*. Edited by Stephen Squibb. London: Koenig Books, 2017.
- Pendleton, Adam. *Pasts, Futures, and Aftermaths: Revisiting the Black Dada Reader*. New York: DABA, 2021.
- Revell, Irene. "Speculating on the 'Feminist Performance Score': Pauline Oliveros, Womens Work and Karen Barad." *Contemporary Music Review* 41, nos. 2-3 (2022); 281-294.
- Roubaud, Jacques. "The OuLiPo and Combinatorial Art." In *Oulipo Compendium*. Compiled by Alastair Brotchie and Harry Matthews. London: Atlas Press and Los Angeles: Make Now Press, 2005, 37-44.

Schlenzka, Jenny. "What can black dada do for my institution do for my institution black dada, some thoughts." In *Black Dada Reader*, 15-20. Edited by Stephen Squibb. London: Koenig Books, 2017.

Seaman, Bill. *The Architecture of Ideas: The Life and Work of Randolph Granville, Cybernetician*. Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2002.

Seaman, Bill. "Composing Systems for Advancing Advancing," *Enacting Cybernetics* 2, no. 1 (2024): 3. <https://doi.org/10.58695/ec.7>.

Slethaug, Gordon E. *Beautiful Chaos: Chaos Theory and Metachaotics in Recent American Fiction*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000.

SOPHIE. *Oil of Every Pearl's Un-Insides*. MSMSMSM, Future Classic, and Transgressive. 2018.

Stein, Gertrude. "Plays," in *Writings and Lectures 1911-1945*. Edited by Patricia Meyerowitz. London: Peter Owen, 1967 (58-81).

Topinka, Robert J. "Foucault, Borges, Heterotopia: Producing Knowledge in Other Spaces." *Foucault Studies*, no. 9, September 2010: 54-70.

Walshe, Jennifer. "The New Discipline." Self-published, Milker Corporation, 2016. <https://milker.org/the-new-discipline>.