

DOMINIQUE SAVITRI BONARJEE

PORTFOLIO

Listen to the waters and you will know the secret of time...

Swuś: a Ritual of Love

Body, pigment, natural dyes, bells, bones, clay, flowers, plaster, ink, paper, charcoal, electronic sensors, hair, yarn, wood, cotton, turmeric, 4k video & sound .

Last Ship Residency, Khajuraho, India (2025)



swuś | (*swoosh*)

To move with or make a rushing sound. To flow or swirl copiously. To cause to move with or make a rushing or swirling sound.

This is the first stage of an emerging body of work that combines rituals, graphic scores, and votive objects. Developed through research at the famed Shaivite Tantric temples of Khajuraho, India, this ritual and installation draw inspiration from the themes of love and sensuality depicted in the temple sculptures. Swuś unravels a speculative fiction that seeks to rediscover and reanimate an ancient knowledge of love and life's flow—hidden in the watery temple friezes and the sacred bodies of water surrounding these sites.

I performed a ritual of tonsure at the sacred site of Brahaspati Crater, offering my hair to the water. In this act, I embody the androgynous deity Ardhanarishvara, to rekindle the ancient knowledge of Swuś through this action.

The installation includes drawings, a clay cast of my head, robes dyed with sacred flowers from the palas tree, a rosary (mala) made of my hair, a civet cat skull—a totem animal linked to darkness and transformation, sculptures of water receptacles and conduits, activated in a studio water pooja, ritual copper objects and a sensor that sonifies the electrical energy created by the objects. Wet-on-wet scores, created using colours from the Holi festival of renewal, will become part of *Scores of Unknowing*.



How to Dream a Rasa Machine

Body, voice, wearable technology, sound & bio-art sculptures, electronic sensors, yarn, copper, glass, circuitry.

KOBA, Berlin (2019); Iklectik Art Lab (2022); Colet House, London (2023) Iklectik x CTSC (Centre for Technology, Sound and Culture); at SIML, Goldsmiths University (2024)



Tintype photo: Emma Brown

An immersive live installation and techno-ritual, that creates a sensuous sonic and kinesthetic experience. The space is activated through electronic, acoustic and embodied composition, using a music and dance vocabulary inspired by the microtonal scales of Indian raga. The core element is a handcrafted copper crochet sound-suit, a fragile instrument capturing movement data from the wearer's body, and from environmental entities like gravity, air, and humidity. Wearing the sound-suit as a MIDI controller, the dancer's dynamics respond to the delicate, unpredictable, noisy nature of the suit which can pick up the slightest tremor. Any shaking is capable of generating dizzying harmonics and deep subaural drone frequencies, the wearer must adapt her breath and rhythm to the suit's affordances into a 'choreography of care' that dissolves the hubris of control and foregrounds the suit as a relational interface.

In Indian aesthetics, 'rasa' refers to the spiritual pleasure of deep immersion in experience. Here, the audience encounters rasa through the sensuous materiality of the installation and the dark, spectral soundscape, that seduces them into a collective dreamspace.

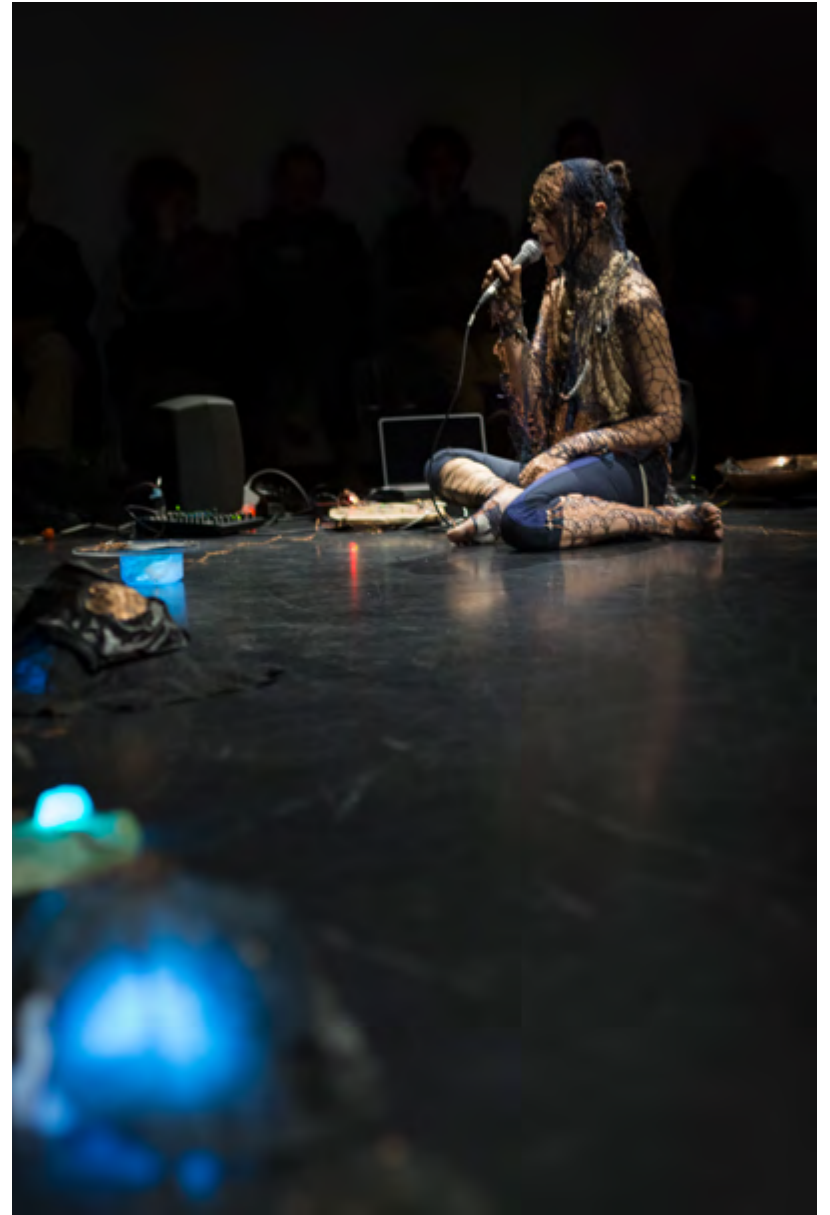
Supported by Arts Council England.

Video link: <https://vimeo.com/946139959>

Collaborators: Kobakant (Mika Satomi & Hannah Perner-Wilson), Mariam Arid, Pietro Bardini.



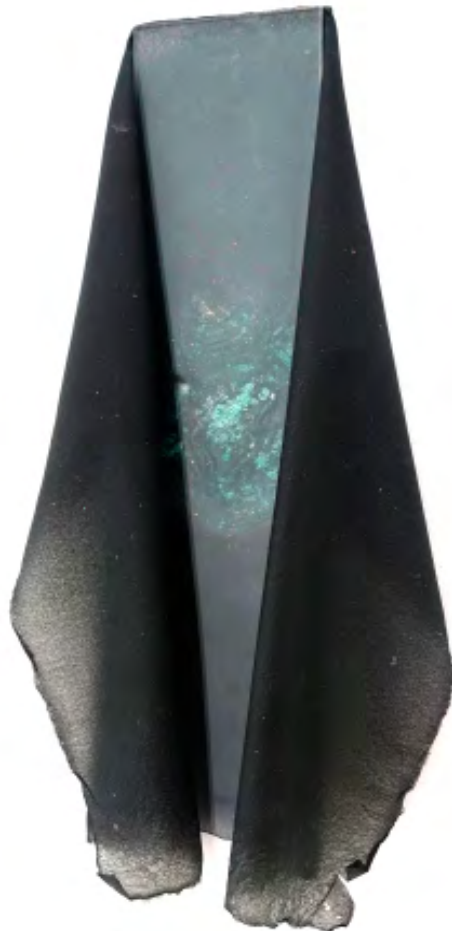
photos: Emma Brown



$E=H_2O$ /O vive~

Bodies, water, bio-membranes, verdigris, reclaimed copper, agar, magnets, museum-grade acrylic, clamps, ceramic and glass vessels, microphone, mixer, microprocessor, petri dish, transducers, amplifier, wood, paper, mirrors...

The Church, Goldsmiths University of London (2022), Caretakers Lodge, Colet House, London (2023)

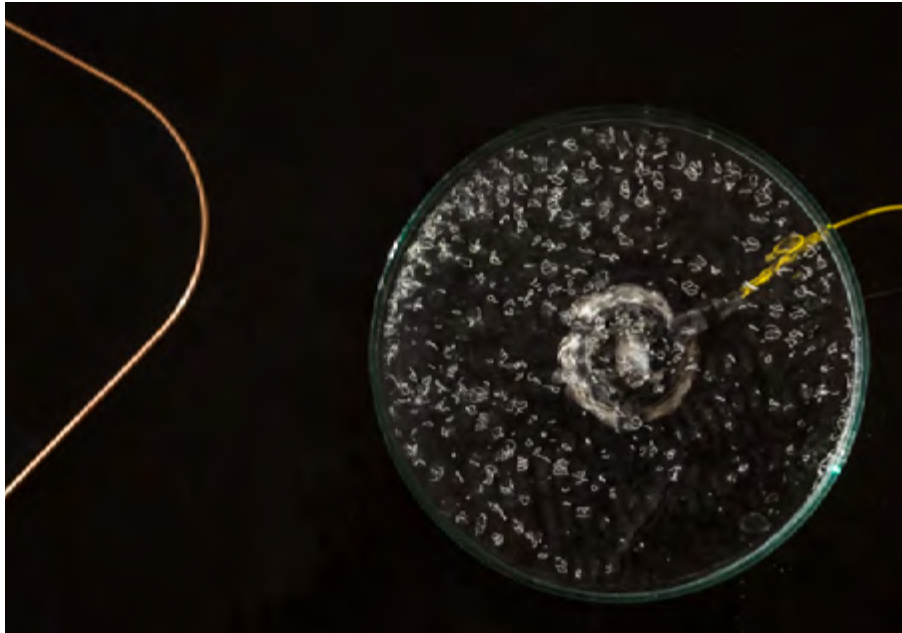
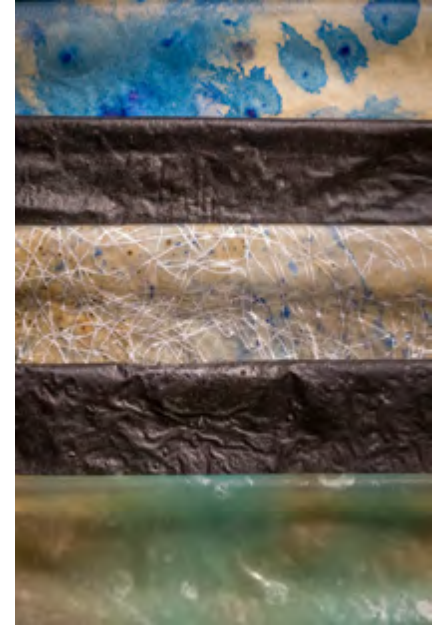


The installation functions as an expanded instrument, combining sound, sculpture, and dance to create an immersive sensory experience. At its core, the work features conductive sculptures: copper vessels, water, and handcrafted cables, which form a circuit connected to electronic sensors. These sensors translate shifts in latent electricity, moisture levels, and the charge of human bodies into sound. The resulting soundscape is played through bespoke seating and latex cushions, offering an intimate and tactile listening experience.

Drawing inspiration from water scientist Gerald Pollack's equation $E=H_2O$ —a watery alternative to $E=MC^2$ — *O Vive~* explores the foundational role of water to life on Earth and its paradoxical relationship with preservation. While water is essential for life, humidity poses significant threats to the conservation of knowledge in historical artefacts. *O Vive~* delves into fluid, material ways of knowing, embedded in the organic forms and energies of the natural world.

The soft, conductive interfaces — skin-like membranes — are crafted from organic matter from three domains of animate life: vegetal, aquatic, and animal. The membranes are connected as an instrument, inviting interaction from visitors. The interplay of haptic and electrical data generates a hypnotic composition, revealing the invisible entities of the environment.

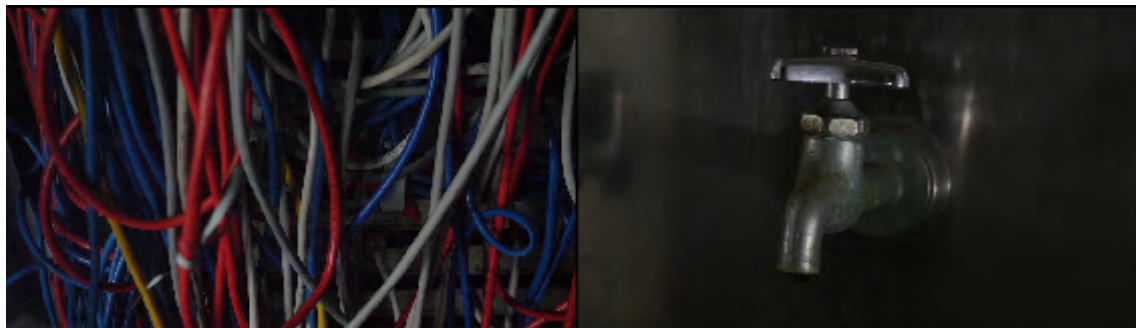
photos: Emma Brown



I pulsate therefore I am (*spanda ergo sum*)

two-channel moving image installation, HD & 4K video, original sound, exciter speakers, electronic sculptures, bespoke seating & floor

Colet House, London 2023, La Maison du Butô Blanc, Normandy 2023, BuOY Art Space, Tokyo 2023

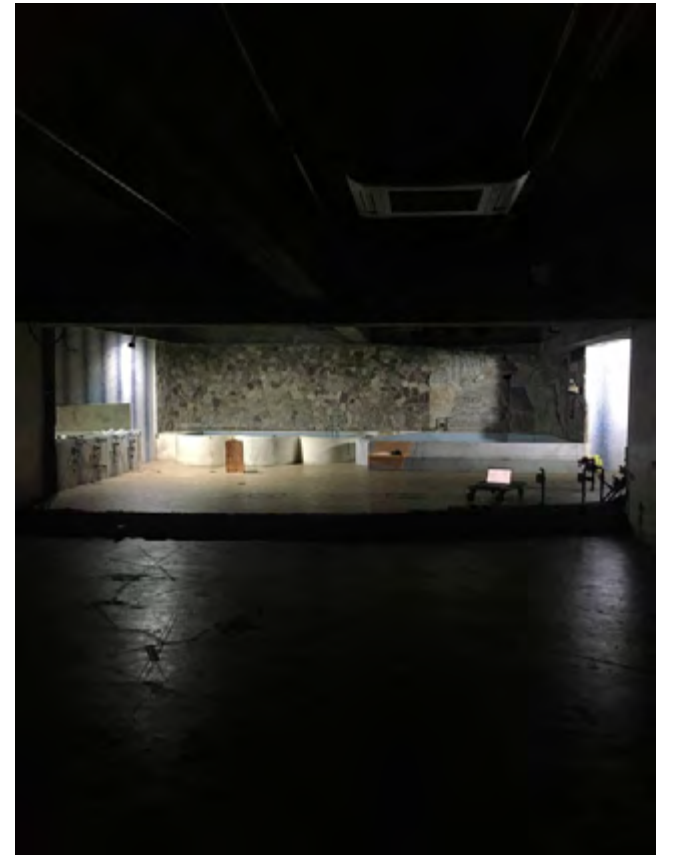


A two-channel moving-image installation (25:36), with a binaural sound composition, conductive sculptures, electronics, and latex beanbags to amplify the sounds inside the audience's bodies. The work reinterprets René Descartes' 'cogito ergo sum' ('I think therefore I am') into the self as part of a vast field of vibration : 'I pulsate, therefore I am.' In the Śaiva Tantric tradition of India, *spanda* is a principle of creative cosmic pulsation. It resembles a waveform, with alternating states of emergence submergence.

This oceanic rhythm shapes the installation, which offers a meditative space to contemplate the oscillation of life and death. The imagery of vacant spaces, devoid of human presence, are full of imperceptible activity of nonhuman occupants. The juxtaposition of the two screens creates a rhythmic choreography of images pulsing with energy.

The soundscape weaves together ghostly voices sourced from recordings of materials and film locations. This spectral polyphony is layered with the live sounds of ambient electrical activity within the installation space, which is amplified by copper antenna devices. Together, these elements create an immersive experience, where sound and image makes the subtle energies surrounding us resonate with presence and power.

Video link: <https://vimeo.com/819448763>



COLLAPSE

Body, space, time

COLLAPSE, Shimbashi (2015); COLLAPSE, Berlin (2016); COLLAPSE, Manchester (2016); COLLAPSE, Delphi (2016); COLLAPSE, Brexit (2019); COLLAPSE, Quintet (2019); COLLAPSE, Die Angewandte - Vienna (2024); COLLAPSE London (2024)



COLLAPSE, London (2024)



COLLAPSE, Manchester (2016)

COLLAPSE is a series of embodied artworks staged in diverse locations since 2015.

COLLAPSE is a dance activation that unfolds across public spaces, studios, and galleries, carving a poetic protest against the ceaseless momentum of contemporary life. It began in 2015 in Shimbashi, Tokyo's financial district, and has since been activated in London, Manchester, Vienna and Berlin. The body becomes a framework for a visceral dialogue between verticality and the pace of productivity, and the state of surrender and rest, and the taboo of 'public horizontality'. On 31 May 2024, the largest COLLAPSE to date happened in the City of London with 34 participants, transforming the urban environment into a stage for collective introspection.

Through a duet with gravity, COLLAPSE explores the exhaustion etched into our bodies by the relentless pressures of modern existence. Each fall is a testament to the weight we carry, an unravelling that reclaims time from its abstract linearity. As bodies surrender to Earth's pull, their material impermanence confronts the towering architectures of capitalism, offering a profound critique of the systems that shape our tempos, movements, and lives.

By disrupting the flow of the everyday, COLLAPSE makes the body's exhaustion tangible. It reframes the human body's relationship with time and space, through a ritual of resistance, an embodied reckoning with the forces of endless growth that are driving planetary ecosystems to the brink.

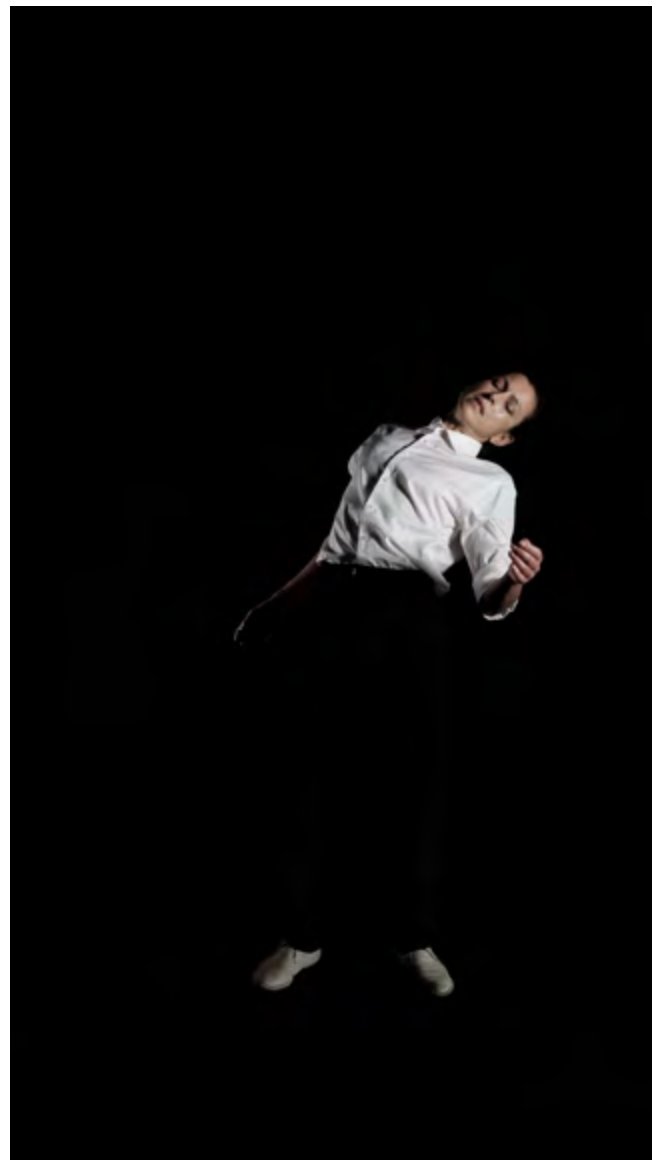
Video link: <https://vimeo.com/771954723>



COLLAPSE Die Angewandte, Vienna (2024)



COLLAPSE: Quintet (2019)



COLLAPSE, moving image with sound, 11:07 (2019)

The Three Seductions of Consciousness

Video meditation triptych: HD video & sound (2021)

What do you want? (6:13), Fragility as Constraint (7:55), The Utopia Frequency (18:07)



What do You Want? still from HD video

Each part of this triptych explores the relationship between information technology and consciousness through seductive visuals and guided meditations. The images and texts are based on research into soft robotics, the Blue Brain Project, and the use of wireframes in 3d software to construct the inner (unknown) spaces of objects. The images range from Busby Berkeley-inspired choreographies, to ancient fossils, gelatinous blobs, a spinning (Sequoia) pinecone and MRI brain scans to contemplate desire for knowledge. Computational technology has become a machine for human wish-fulfillment through its capacity for perfect geometry, repetition, regularity and the instant gratification of voyeuristic scopophilia. The soundtrack, created with Joel Cahen (Wet Sounds) is composed of frequencies that hover between pleasure and discomfort.

The accompanying text entitled *Hypertime* imagines a form of time contamination emanating from 'high-tech' gadgetry:

“Is time becoming thin or is it becoming thick? Could it make us move without us moving? ... I am talking about time.

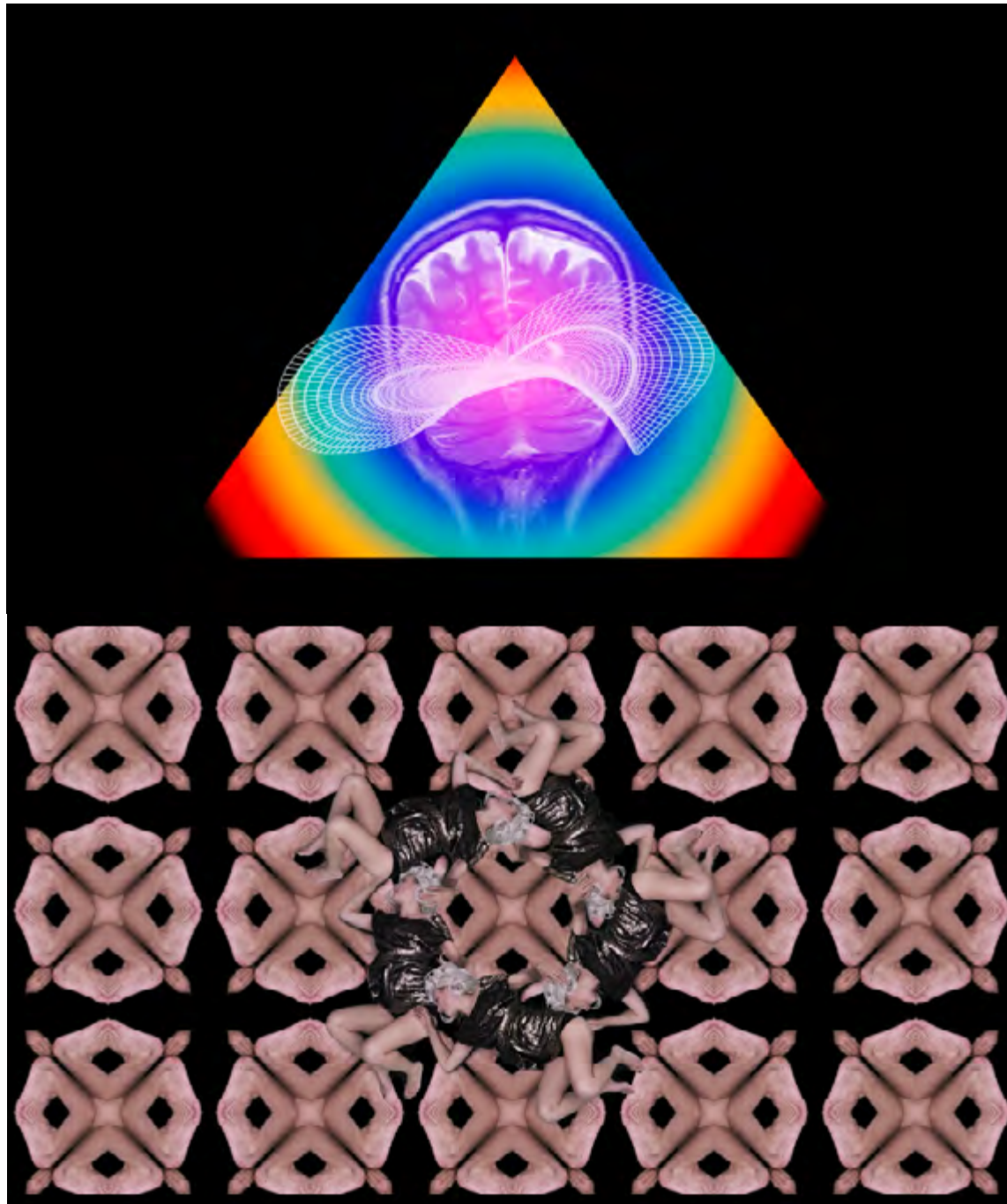
Thick time. Thin time. Time that congeals in things or whips, whisks, through at lightning speeds. In this state it has become malleable, sensate, incarnate, and so it appears to shape-shift between textures, qualities, and dynamics. The state of time as hyper-time.” Available at: <https://dominiquebb.com/hypertime>

Video links:

<https://vimeo.com/767657398>

<https://vimeo.com/767758064>

<https://vimeo.com/767758853>



The Utopia Frequency, stills from HD video

Sui Generis

Body, nylon ripstop waterproof fabric, spandex, steel hooks, chalk

photo: Galya Yotova



Sui generis is a latin term meaning unique and unclassifiable. The installation is made of soft sculptural objects. Each piece is a 3 metre diameter circle of fabric with a long tube of spandex at the centre. They hang from butcher's hooks attached to long metal chains and are intended to be animated by living bodies. The circle is reminiscent of the geometry of Vitruvius man but the fluidity of the fabric prevents clear logic, as it intermittently reveals and conceals the life within it, thus evading the taxonomy of species, gender, and name. The dance activation of the sculptures turns the space into a metamorphic landscape of transformation between abstraction and figuration and the birth of unknown forms.

Realisation Festival, 2023

Goldsmiths University, London 2018

P-Bodies Festival of Contemporary Performance, Leipzig 2017

Emergency MCR 2016,

Water Tower Art Festival, Bulgaria 2016;

Funkhaus, Berlin 2016

Tatwerk, Berlin 2014

Commission for the Noguchi Room, by the Hijikata Archive, Keio University, Japan 2013

Video link: <https://vimeo.com/829463925>



Black Walks

Body, black linen flag, stick, HD video & sound documentation films



I was inspired by Gandhi's Salt March and the landscape mandalas of the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage as ways to question a current reality; politically and spiritually. I made a large black flag, and go on long walks with it through cities. I've walked Berlin, Paris, London and Tokyo.

Between 2015 - 2021 *Black Walks* joined *Field Trip Project Asia*, a travelling exhibition that visited Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand. A linen flag and a walking score are presented with a backpack for people to activate the walk.

When I lived in Tokyo, I was called 'gaijin' – alien.

Like Kazimir Malevich's *Black Square*, a black flag became my 'philosophical object' for thinking of national identity, and how it creates a particular reality. Each walk reveals the politics of a space as people respond to the action; in Tokyo it was subversive, London was either too jaded or too cool to notice, in Paris it was all about revolution, in Berlin, its associations triggered hope and fear.

Black Walk films screened at People's History Museum, Manchester (2016); *Where to? The future of walking arts*, Falmouth University, UK (2015); Beyond Contamination, PSi Conference | Aomori Museum of Contemporary Art, Japan (2015); Hagiso Gallery, Tokyo (2013); Onca Gallery, Brighton UK (2013).

Black Walk, Berlin (2013): <https://vimeo.com/764498347>

photo: Pablo Cousinou



photo: Saverio Tonoli

