





Marcos Lutyens
Memoirs of a Hypnotist:
100 Days

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One morning in the summer of 2006, I knocked on the door of Algirdas Laurinaitis, a renowned psychiatrist in Vilnius, Lithuania, and asked him to hypnotize me. “I want to become a radio that is able to receive and transmit signals,” I said. “Even more important, I want to be able to receive signals both from the past and future. Radio waves roam across time, don’t they?”

My inquiry stemmed from a commission to produce a radio program by Anna Colin. Prior, I had had other fantasies of getting hypnotized and performing (or rather un-performing) specific activities. For example, I dreamed of suspending my ability to read in order to experience the urban environment without its visual linguistics, the way one experiences traveling in a far-away country and not being able to read billboards or street names. For Anna’s series I thought I could become a radio under hypnosis and pick up signals that otherwise stay undetected. I would receive but I would also transmit the signals into different temporal dimensions—I didn’t know in what form exactly, but imagined I might find the adequate words or sounds in my reach.

Laurinaitis welcomed me into his office. I explained my project and as our conversation progressed, we spoke largely on the subjects of memory (collective and individual), power, and ethics. According to Laurinaitis, a Kremlin-approved psychic named Anatoly Kashpirovsky was hypnotizing the whole Soviet Union on television every night in the early 1980s in a desperate attempt to save the collapsing empire. International protocols prohibit use of hypnosis through mass media. When I asked Laurinaitis, “If I am a radio receiver and I tune into the future, is it just me traveling in my own mind?” he replied: “Not only in your own. You can be roaming your family’s history or

collective unconscious.” Separately, he remembered as a child listening to Soviet troops invading Budapest in 1956 on Voice of America. The terror of hearing the transmitted sounds of a street battle stayed with him.

I learned that hypnosis is less of an act of magic that performs miracles, but a methodic collaboration between two or more people, a shared mutual practice in other words. “Anyone can hypnotize anyone. Hypnosis is a simple technique,” Laurinaitis explained. But he warned, “Being able to feel radio waves would seriously disturb everyday life.” I nodded in agreement and headed off to the sound recording studio. There a group of us produced a radio program with nearly two-dozen contributions, each softly framed by the recorded interview I did with Laurinaitis. The effect was as if the contributions were emanating from someone’s brain under hypnosis.

Around the same time, I was having coffee with Francesco Manacorda, a rigorous and imaginative curator who has organized exhibitions for audiences ranging from Martians to international collectors, and who one time proposed an exhibition, “curated by two parrots, six chocolate cakes, a bowl of seawater, two cans of warm Guinness, a potted geranium, and Maria Lind.” We were speculating on what it would be like if one of us claimed a certain portion of each other’s brain as a venue for an exhibition, or perhaps, as an exhibition itself. “Imagine, I would rent this cubic millimeter of your brain and organize a show there,” I can hear one of us saying. A territorial-colonial claim definitely played a role in our provocations—we made no mentioning of “soul,” “mind,” or “consciousness.” We were fantasizing about the frontiers of perception, cognition, and subjectivity. Exhibition as a form of organization also drove our thoughts. I often used to think of the exhibition as a public

vehicle that was making more of art than the art itself and thus organizing social forms of being together predicated on thinking, sensing, experiencing. How great it sounds, no? Why shouldn't it then be possible to curate an exhibition that:

1. Occurs in the mind of the audience without being a representation of anything identical to it;
2. Fully abolishes the physical parameters and properties of "objecthood";
3. Emerges as a non-referential cerebral dream;
4. Performs a sensorial and intellectual transference act like what is happening in *The Man Who Taught Blake Painting in His Dreams*, the drawing by William Blake (Was Blake painting in his dreams, or was he being taught how to paint in someone else's dreams?);
5. Pushes dematerialization to the limit that sci-fi, faith, and neuroscience can only imagine;
6. Stays miniature, telepathic, autonomous, and easily transferrable;
7. Reformulates all the above statements in its making.

How one might make this happen without resorting to some sort of medical intervention was a question. My attempt to become a radio over the course of one afternoon of 2006 failed. Still, I believed that hypnosis, or a hypnosis-based event, could serve as the main interface in the show. It meant isolating the so-called hypnotic power of an artwork, accelerating it, and running it, on its own terms, as a channel for other types of artworks (read: perceptions) to emerge. Whether the ultimate site of this exhibition remains as a brain or mind was another question. To me "brain" and "mind" are relatively interchangeable, sometimes I can have a good conversation about the exhibition as a sensorial phenomena of the neuro-chemical flow

of the brain, other times, about the exhibition as a way of organizing the thinking and imagining in the mind. Neither of the modes was superior to each other, the suspension of causalist hierarchy played an important part in the exhibition.

In 2008, Jessica Silverman extended a carte blanche invitation to me to curate a show at her gallery in San Francisco. I proposed "an exhibition in the mind of the audience that happens only through hypnosis." None of the concrete parameters of the show were sensible yet, they were not even looming on a distant horizon, but Silverman enthusiastically embraced the idea. San Francisco, with its mix of psychedelia heritage and Silicon Valley entrepreneurship, seemed to be a perfect place for such conversation to happen, and Silverman's program, which swung across queer poetics, jewelry and fashion, fancy North Californian witchcrafts, and intellectual rites of local art students, seemed the perfect context. By accepting my invitation, Silverman put a light at the end of something that hadn't yet turned into a tunnel. Still, three things were clear to us at that stage: the public, not the artist, would be hypnotized, so that the site of creative force is transferred from artist to the public as a fundamental condition of the project; we would need scripts of artworks to be invoked; and we would need someone who could actually hypnotize people. "Can you hypnotize people?" Jessica wondered. "I can try, but it is not exactly what we are trying to do here," I shrugged.

In my initial attempts to procure what would become hypnotist's scripts, I wrote, "Can you suggest an artwork that can function within the protocol of hypnosis?" The scripts would be the vehicles for the experience, and commissioning them was almost like commissioning a piece of software that generates chains of action. The letter elaborated:

The basic idea of the show is to radicalize the “hypnotic power” of an artwork into pure hypnosis (i.e. to see the brain space as an ultimate medium for art and to transmit/instruct an artwork through a medium of hypnosis). For example, imagine an empty room: ten people and a hypnotist. The hypnotist hypnotizes the ten people to experience an exhibition there, or to experience something that was proposed by artists. So the work of art exists only in the brain of an audience. How does it sound for you? Would you have anything in this show?

Some of the recipients quickly responded with further questions. For example, Gintaras Didziapetris asked, “Is it possible to make the visitor to the Hypnotic Show think (after hypnosis is finished) that s/he has one idea for the show him/herself ...?” Some sent full-fledged written scenarios, ranging from highly fantastic ones to medium-savvy constructions of screens for mental projections like Joachim Koester's Department of Abandoned Futures, where one enters the room packed with all kinds of abandoned things: “blueprints for social interactions that never happened because they could not be imagined at the time, plans for cities that were never built due to the prevailing economic interests [...]” etc. Some, like Fabien Giraud and Raphael Siboni, proposed social-psychological experiments, suggesting that the hypnotist leave the room in a middle of the session. In a few weeks, the first toolbox of scripts was ready.

Most of the scripts began with a word “you”: You are going down the path, you wake up with the warm sunlight in your eyes, you're nuts if you think you're making any of this up, etc. “You” is both a way to address the one who reads or listens directly and a code that indicates an attempt of such a direct address.

Perhaps that is the reason why people chose this mode of address as there was no indication to use the second person in my request. One of the shortest and best examples of the “you” mode could be found in Torreya Cummings' proposal:

You are driving a vehicle that you do not own. The road is paved, with an occasional pothole. The road stretches out as straight as a line on a map. The horizon is uneven and very far away. You are listening to your favorite radio station... You love this song. Turn up the volume. There is a large cactus on your right. As you pass it, something happens to your radio. Your favorite song is interrupted by static. Something else comes on the radio. Music you've never heard before. You don't like it. It is strange, the beat is erratic, it is music from the future. You recognize the voice singing. It's yours! As suddenly as it invaded your radio, it dissolves into static, and back into your favorite station. Your favorite song is still playing, but it's not the same, somehow. You can never hear it the same way again.

As you can imagine, ten people listening to this would have very different songs playing in their heads. This was exactly what the Hypnotic Show aimed at: interpersonal, but singular experience. For me, I was driving in Los Angeles in a car with the artist and event organizer Ronni Kimm, seeing Korean seafood pancakes and Blue Martinis by Mario Garcia Torres. We were flapping towards an equally strange mix of LA literati and art people at The Prince restaurant on Wilshire Boulevard. Nicholas Matranga was singing while the author of the newly released autobiography of Clifford Irving was reading it aloud.

In actuality, I did go to Los Angeles and to The Prince to prepare for The Clifford Irving Show, another project, which was coming there in a couple of months. The Prince is a Victorian-pub-turned-Korean-restaurant

that Ronni brought me to and it seemed like the perfect venue—a truly unparalleled knot of incompatible aesthetics and regimes of truth. As we were sitting there I asked, “Ronni, do you also possibly know somebody in LA, ideally an artist, who can hypnotize people?,” thinking about the upcoming show in San Francisco. Her sense and knowledge didn’t fail. “Maybe this guy,” she said after a short pause, and passed me her phone with a number. I sent him a text message.

Hello, I am curating an exhibition where the audience is hypnotized and experiences the exhibition under hypnosis. Let me know if you would be interested to discuss a possible collaboration to make this exhibition happen.

The guy, it turns out, was Marcos Lutyens, who is deeply immersed in neuroscience, cognitive bio-machinery, artificial and animal intelligence, eco-dreams, self-educational complexes, bacterial visualization techniques, and all kinds of indigenous knowledges of the world at large. He speaks several languages, cracks jokes that make people of different countries laugh at the same time and, among other things, practices post-Ericksonian hypnosis as a way to access what he calls an unconscious mind. He believes that people have been repressed by various systems economy, belief, the morals and tastes of their social class and as a result have become highly automated, desensitized, violence-prone individuals driven by greed, function, and reason. To access the unconscious mind means activating other ways of sensing and being, and this is where he inserts himself: at the interstices of the possible. Before working with me on the Hypnotic Show, Marcos worked with artist Matt Mullican, neuroscientist Vilayanur S. Ramachandran, and Def Leppard drummer Rick Allen on a variety of pursuits that involved hypnosis. An invitation to

address a group of people at an art gallery must have come as a business-as-usual proposal to him.

We couldn’t get together that time in LA. He arrived in San Francisco the same day that the Hypnotic Show premiered at Jessica Silverman Gallery: the sixteenth of March, 2008. We met over lunch in the Mission District and I remember being slightly anxious on my way over to see him knowing that I was making the acquaintance of a man with whom, in a few hours, I would ask people to give up control and immerse into a group exhibition in trance. I realized quickly that my new accomplice was more than a nice guy and I felt confident that at the very least we would be able to make people laugh or talk about some unobtrusive techno-gnostic matter. His presence remains a warranty that makes people feel comfortable; they develop an instant trust in what’s going on. And yet Marcos has remained opaque to the social standards of the contemporary art-world; he is an alien with a soothing and reassuring voice. It changes when you listen to it carefully, and this is what he asks you to do: Listen carefully to the tone of his voice, surf its rhythm. Even as you sense your reluctance to surrender to the vocal authority, you don’t want to stop listening to it. Multiple cascades of perception follow, projections overlap, narratives diffuse.

That afternoon, we prepared a sequence of scripts with which to induce the public. We went through each of them and Marcos made a drawing that would later serve as a score for the guided daydreaming session, as he calls them.

Walking towards Jessica Silverman Gallery on that rainy evening, we didn’t know what the night would be like. There had been no rehearsal or hypno-check. The passing cars on the wet asphalt were splashing more sound than usual—perhaps we were already affected by what we were about to do in an hour: amplify sensorial awareness.

When the sessions were over, Marcos and his wife Yi-Ping drove back to Los Angeles; I stayed in San Francisco and read emails from my friends who were apologizing for not being able to “attend your opening.” There were many things we still didn’t know. For instance, neither Marcos nor Yi-Ping knew that the project would continue on, that both of them, along with their son Jasper, would be spending the entire summer of 2012 at dOCUMENTA(13) in Kassel, Germany, where Marcos would perform 340 sessions of the Hypnotic Show in his dualist Reflection house in Karlsaue Park, a place where illusion and the real sank into each other. I didn’t know that some of my friends would keep sending the same apologetic note over the next couple of years whenever the Hypnotic Show was presented; it took a while for people to accept the fact that there is no opening reception and no show in the gallery. We didn’t know yet that by gathering people through the expectation of hypnosis, we would end up producing a social situation of conscious and engaged conversation. “If hypnosis can liberate the unconscious from the tyranny of the conscious, the Hypnotic Show can liberate the conscious from the tyranny of the unconscious,” the thinker Valentina Desideri remarked one day. We also didn’t know that some other day four writers would be writing scripts based on historic exhibitions for a series of hypnotic sessions at Artissima in Turin, under Francesco Manacorda’s direction, or that we would one day have to sign a document in Stockholm pledging “not to read the mind of the people,” or that the use of smell created by artist Sissel Tolaas for one of the Hypnotic Shows would provoke an outrage in a lecture in London.

For years, I tried to prevent images of the sessions from leaking out to the public—though they did—because I was convinced that the show takes place

only in the participants’ minds, not in the way they look while under hypnosis. What I didn’t know was that what I’d imagined as the most dematerialized project was in fact the most embodied one, transmitted by body and through bodies. And that people would keep wondering whether or not they’d been hypnotized. This is what actually happened the first night too in San Francisco: During the conversation that followed the session (we always do a conversation after the session it is part of the format) some of the visitors said they hadn’t experienced anything, while others could not really speak.

“Imagine,” Marcos said after asking people to relax and close their eyes, “there is a magnet in your hands. You don’t have to understand what I am saying, just follow my voice.”

Raimundas Malašauskas

*Memoirs of a Hypnotist:
100 Days*

Chapter 1 Expectancy Violation

Back in Los Angeles, as I write this record of my time at DOCUMENTA(13), I feel like Henry Hill, the mobster upon whose life Scorsese's film *Goodfellas* was based: he ended up in a US Marshals' Witness Protection Program, living at an undisclosed location and with a changed name. Raimundas, or Rai for short, thinks it's hilarious and tells me all his friends in Amsterdam are cracking up about it. Coincidentally, Hill passed away on June 12, three days after the opening of DOCUMENTA(13) [or d(13)], so who's to say that he didn't decarnate into the Reflection Room, waiting to latch onto me as I finally left Kassel 100 days later?

A warm welcome

I should have known that there was something odd lurking behind the "inspirational" phrase that d(13) curator Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev (whom I will henceforth call CCB), sent to invited artists: "The dance was very frenetic, lively, rattling, clanging, rolling, contorted, and lasted for a long time."

It had a darker undertone, a kind of lure, reminding me of the infamous phrase "*arbeit macht frei*" ("work sets you free") lifted off the pages of a nineteenth-century novel by German philologist Lorenz Diefenbach (and used abundantly by Nazis at concentration camps in Germany, Belgium, and Poland). As I reached Kassel train station for the first time in my jetlagged state on the ICE high-speed, at the end of a seventeen-hour journey, I was daydreaming about a nice hefeweizen by an old fireplace, in a worn seat perhaps used by the celebrated German artist Joseph Beuys between his *I Love America* performances. Maybe I would even find some lingering coyote hairs.

I stepped off the train, and it all seemed very reassuring at first. Melanie, with whom I had emailed so many times that I had practically made an Identi-kit version of her in my head, greeted me with a warm hug at the top of the platform ramp. Speaking Spanish with her as we got into the car warmed up the overcast Teutonic afternoon.

As we chatted, it seemed odd to me that we were not getting any closer to Kassel *stadtzentrum*. My German has always been lousy and so the road signs were mostly unintelligible, but I could tell from the number of cows now lining the roads that we were not heading towards anywhere likely to host documenta. The clouds were gathering, the road was turning a dark pewter, and the half-timber farm houses were throwing me into some kind of regression. It was a classic dolly-zoom moment, were this part of a film.

Sure enough, we turned left into a driveway with the most ominous collection of buildings I had ever seen, one of which was a twelfth-century Benedictine monastery that had been downgraded from house of spirituality to the incarceration place of miserable souls. Welcome to Breitenau concentration camp.

Walking into the main courtyard, I could almost feel the ghosts of the Poles frog-marched off to their doom in the last days of WWII. We were greeted by Dr. Gunnar Richter, who has dedicated his entire professional life to the preservation of this monument to human evil. As if to bring light into this repository of pain, Dr. Richter exhibits a permanent and beaming smile across his face—though his eyebrows are often interwoven into a saddened expression, perhaps unable to be coerced into the happiness the smile below is trying to recruit. Behind him was Rai, my project partner for the Hypnotic Show, with smiling eyes and a frozen grin, as if silently saying, *just you wait...*

With the mirage of the hefeweizen long gone but still in a daze, Rai and I were given a Gulliver's view of the history and layout of the site with meticulously modeled maps and maquettes. But it was only when we were gathered around the front entrance to the grisly main building that the cold reality of the place started to kick in. A strange mixture of gothic medieval stonework and a penitentiary overlay of impenetrable bars stood before us, as though daring us to approach.

We entered and came upon a stone Escher-esque stairway that seemed to jerk infinitely upward. During WWII, the first landing of this staircase was used to hose down newly arrived captives with freezing water. The white tiled stalls on the landing were reminiscent of a slaughterhouse, with the coppery smell of blood seemingly hanging in the air.

Further up the stairwell was no better: confinement cells with words and marks that had been scratched into the walls with bare fingernails. These efforts to communicate beyond the dire present were stealthily hidden behind where the straw mattress bunks would once have been. The dim cells had a single barred window high up in the corner, at the end of a long shaft of geometry formed by the thick, damp walls.

At the top of the stairs we were surprised to learn from our escort that, when the Nazis were finally flushed out, the place was turned into a women's correctional facility. It is claimed that when journalist Ulrike Meinhof visited the center, the brutality she witnessed here was a contributing factor to her taking up arms.¹

Towards the end of a hallway we found the so-called "Reflecting Room"—a thinly veiled euphemism for a solitary confinement chamber with frosted windows that denied any relief afforded by a view of the outside. The space contained nothing more than a bed made of

bare wood with a tilted plank for a pillow. Stripped of everything, the purpose of the room was to force prisoners to reflect inwardly. It reminded me of the deprivation in Camus' novel *L'Étranger*: "The future is the only kind of property that the masters willingly concede to the slaves."

The Reflecting Room would become the foundation for the Reflection Room we created to house our Hypnotic Show at d(13).

Reflecting... onwards

Later that day, Rai and I were taken on a tour of potential locations for the Hypnotic Show. Melanie, who had greeted me earlier at Kassel's central train station, conducted us through some cavernous spaces in the city's old Hauptbahnhof train station, but I had a feeling that these rooms would compel me to put most of my effort into dispelling people's fear of these foreboding quarters, rather than allow me to focus on the general mission of the Hypnotic Show—which was to guide people through unconscious scenarios.

It was jarring to visit the raw warehouse spaces that run alongside the train tracks and platforms. On this cold April afternoon, the impression I had was of a derelict and abandoned collection of spaces on the forgotten fringes of a run-down city. These buildings of course would later be transformed through the d(13) participants' projects, and to someone who had visited past documentas the rooms would probably have still resonated with the memories of art. But to me they seemed dead, cold, and empty. They also, as I later found out, had that same lingering type of Breitenau historical shadow running through them.

Melanie took us into Karlsau Park, down the steps, and past the Giuseppe Penone sculpture of a huge rock precariously perched in a stumpily branched tree that

reminded me of WWI trees seen through a Tolkien filter. At the time, I had no idea that the very steps we were walking down were fashioned from the rubble wrought by its sequel WWII.

We also explored the botanical garden, with lavish cascades of flowers rolling down towards the Auepark, which seemed other-worldly and *What Dreams May Come*-like. I liked it, but for some reason the botanical garden was never again mentioned by anyone. I suppose the director of the garden didn't want its prettiness sullied by artists' interventions. This is somewhat ironic as the first documenta in 1955 rode on the coattails of the Bundesgartenschau, the Federal Horticultural Show that was doing its best to build a sense of hope on the heaps left by the Royal Air Force bombings. Kassel was one of the "top ten" bombing targets of the allies in WWII, due to it being a major weapons production center. The debris was used to help landscape the west side of the Auepark, just under the Brothers Grimm Museum, including the steps I had just gone down.

Later on this same long day, at Dock 4, dOCUMENTA (13)'s labyrinthine office, Melanie showed me a pile of catalogues of garden sheds adorned with quaint Tyrolean details and flower pots, and said that the curatorial team had been considering an option whereby each artist would choose a shed in which to exhibit their work. The thinking was as much a curatorial exploration as a question of cost: renting out buildings in Kassel over a period of months would itself cost a substantial amount that could otherwise be spent on setting up prefabricated sheds.

I was not concerned about using these sheds as opposed to a more standard art venue, or by my ability to perform multiple sessions in one over the entire summer; we had been thinking about keeping the

sessions as intimate experiences with just one or two people at a time. So perhaps someone could sit where the wheelbarrow would usually go and I could stand behind the door?

Rai and I chatted about the possibilities over retsina and taramasalata at the Greek restaurant that he found. Rai always seems to find the antidote to everything—in this case Mediterranean warmth amid the Germanic chill. You will often find him juxtaposing the most unheard of ideas with unexpected tastes on your tongue. I think it makes people agree with him, as a kind of Pied Piper effect.

The trip back to Los Angeles was populated with a private landscape of impressions—sites, places, and gardening sheds, and how they could work as a platform for inner hypnotic journeys.

In CCB's introductory writings to the dOCUMENTA (13) project, I read about "kairological" time, a fluid concept of time that exists beyond clocks and is generated from an individual's feelings and reactions. Maybe this same idea of subjective time could be transposed to space as well.

Breitenau kept haunting me; particularly the memory of the Reflecting Room drove my thoughts. For little more cost, couldn't we afford two of those prefabbed garden sheds and put one on top of the other to produce a strange, mirrored effect? And, perhaps, then, could I take people down one at a time into the lower part for individual sessions?

Over the next few months, the Reflection Room started to coalesce through the development of models, both digital and real, as well as endless amounts of time spent laying down tape on my patio back in Los Angeles in order to get the proportions of the space just right. I had to ensure that there was enough room to get down into the lower space without the stairs

being too steep, for there to be enough space below for the apparent reflection to be seen but not fallen into, for the stairs to be hidden from first sight, for the light in the lower space to appear equal to that in the upper space, and many other factors.

Chapter 2 The Cabin Sinks Into and Rises From the Mud

Every house is an architecturally structured “path”: the specific possibilities of movement and the drives toward movement as one proceeds from the entrance through the sequence of spatial entities have been pre-determined by the architectural structuring of that space and one experiences the space accordingly. But at the same time, in its relation to the surrounding space, it is a “goal,” and we either advance toward this goal or depart from it. — Dagobert Frey

Sentimeter

Apart from purely practical needs, my intention was that the space would help people into a receptive state in which their unconscious minds would begin to take over before I had even spoken a word.

As the artist Corazon del Sol later noted, the “piece felt like swimming to the bottom of the ocean,” and much of this effect was to be cued by the space itself. This kind of psychologically driven world takes constructed space away from the realm of architecture and towards a narrative-driven environment—the kind usually present in bastard-architecture, which can, for instance, be found in set design for film. One way to calculate the distance from the bed to the door of the bedroom is to “measure” the length of a phrase that a certain actor may speak as she walks towards that door. This is a moment-specific conception of space, rather than a form-based terrain. It is also an emotionally conceived unit of space—perhaps a move away from the spatial centimeter and toward the sense-driven “Sentimeter,” a realm in which subjective emotions take precedence over objective function.

The idea of the Sentimeter as an emotional unit of measurement came to me after reading about the work of Dr. Manfred Clynes, who in the 1970s focused on how to chart emotions with what he called “Sentics” (Clynes, 1978). This was his attempt to measure emotions on an objective scale based on physical reaction times to given tests. In other words, how long it took respondents to pull their thumbs away from a button in response to a stimulus. Clynes’ work was interconnected with the idea of “qualia,” which involves pinning down subjective mental states and this in turn dates even further back to Clarence Irving Lewis’² work in the 1920s. Of course, giving definite scales and proportions to the mutability of emotional states has always been highly elusive. It reminds me of the early-twentieth-century spiritual savant George Gurdjieff trying to triangulate precise mathematical equations about the various facets of the soul, which René Daumal then adapted to steer his ship the *Impossible* in his unfinished novel, *Mount Analogue* (1952). In any case, as we shall see, the metrics of our particular project moved increasingly from the definite to the indefinite to the unknowable. I’m not sure, though, if I was aware of this transition at any point in the 100 days.

Whether or not the cabin would be “measurable,” the overarching plan was to create an “inductive” space—one that placed people into a trance-like state before a word is even spoken. It’s important at this stage to clarify that our intent was not to manipulate the visitor, as is often feared when the idea of hypnosis or an induction is mentioned, but rather to allow participants to enter into a state in which their minds are receptive to ways of thinking that may have been closed to them through developmental pruning in their early years.

And so, with an empty drawing board in front of me, the main characteristics that I wanted to weave into the space were:

1. The mirror

The mirrored space, i.e. placing the top cabin directly above the bottom cabin so they apparently reflect one another other, is, in a sense, a large-scale version of Professor Vilayanur Ramachandran’s well-known “mirror box” that he developed for people with “phantom limb syndrome.” The mirror box is a therapeutic tool that allows people with amputated limbs to reconnect with their phantom limb. By seeing the existing limb reflected in a mirror, it’s as if their missing limb has come back and the associated physical pain is diminished. In this way, maybe the cabin could become a device for people with “phantom *self* syndrome” to hopefully reconnect with that itchy, aching missing self?

So, the idea was to confound the mind by presenting it with what is known in neuroscience as an “expectancy violation,” a moment in which reflexive or automatic assumptions are reversed.

In this case, what appears to be a mirrored space turns out not to be at all. As Jacob, one of the visitors, noted:

First, I saw it simply as a cabin. Then, noticing the groove where the reflective surface should be, my mind switched gears. I looked for and found visual clues: the obvious mirroring of the construction, the subtle coloring of the wood, which showed that the groove must support an immaculately maintained mirror. I immediately wondered what was in the space blocked off beneath it; images of a darkened grotto, a secret compartment. But the mirror was so perfect I could see little of the reflective surface.

I leaned out over the railing to inspect it closer, and noticed I had no reflection.

My brain oscillated. Even when I put my hand through what should have been the mirror, it refused to release the impression that nothing below the groove was real. Even when people filed down the stairs and appeared below. Rather, they acquired the quality—strange and a bit unsettling—that they were both real and unreal. My brain offered suggestions of video feeds, mixed reality, screens within screens. But the truth of the situation was much simpler, much more analog, and body-driven. [...]Upon entering the Reflection Room, one has already fallen under a certain hypnosis.

Once the conscious mind is unbalanced by an inversion of the laws it imposes on the world around it, the mind opens to new ideas and possibilities. From this point onwards, the visitor is held in a constant state of distraction so as not to revert back to old patterns of thought. Preconceptions are the enemy of new ideas and experiences.

2. Moving left

The fact that people have to come through the door of the cabin and move left to the stairs is key to the layout. Most people (85%) are right handed, so the act of stepping left engages the right side of the brain, which is generally considered to be the spatially aware half of the mind. It is also the side that does *not* house the language centers.

Whole sub-created worlds, such as Disneyland, are based on a similar understanding of handedness, which may also have something to do with the Western process of reading a book from left to right. In Disneyland, designers worked out that people have a tendency to drift left attention-wise and with their bodies, so

they placed food stores (together with the pumped smells of cakes and cookies coming through the grilles) on the left of the main street as you go into the park. As you exit, retail stores are on your left-hand side.

3. Steps

The steps down into the Reflection Room would certainly support the hypnotic induction process, which uses the imagery of steps to deepen the induction, as the verbally cued scenarios are reinforced by just-experienced reality. Even though it is a goal of mine to create a space that has no hypnotic words or narrative, but casts the visitor into a trance-like state merely by means of spatial cues such as barely perceptible ramps, for this project certain architectural cues would be used to establish and reinforce the words of the hypnotic induction narrative itself. The steps would prime the hypnosis induction sequence: *In a few moments I would like you to imagine yourself at the top of a set of stairs, and I'm going to count down slowly from ten to one...*

Then, there were two basic design problems that needed to be sorted out: first, what would happen when people tried walking on the upside-down sloped ceiling? Second, how to make the stairs invisible to the visitors as they first looked into the space? Toni-Maria Anschuetz, an architect friend, gave a fresh perspective: she helped develop a partition wall that could hide the steps, as well as a stepped floor-ceiling which gave the impression of a sloping ceiling and yet provided the ideal stepping, sitting, and lying surface for visitors.

Sub-creating

The construction started on April 23 and photos were sent to me in Los Angeles of the work in progress. Efforts were made to keep the carpentry joints and

every last detail as symmetrical as possible. I sensed that the building team was beginning to fall under a spell of symmetry: whatever they were doing in the space above they would need to do in the space below, even down to the upside-down alarm detector. Echoes of this symmetrical bind later came back in many of the inductions, as the idea of symmetry and acting in two parallel spaces was designed to promote new channels of intercommunication between the sides of the brain.

This symmetry ties into a very basic state of being that lies between biology and aesthetics, and that is claimed to be at the very core of art. At a meeting with Ramachandran, the conversation drifted to his much contested ten “universal” laws of art, which includes symmetry. He pointed out how 600 million years ago butterflies and humans shared the same evolutionary branch as an example of how the incorporation of symmetry is profoundly embedded in our psyche. Then again, perhaps the top/bottom symmetry is closer to a model of Aldous Huxley’s “Heaven and Hell,” as an axis between transcendence and the everyday.

When my family—my wife, Yi-Ping and our three-year-old son Jasper Tian-Huu (sky tiger)—and I arrived on May 26, two weeks before the opening, we were greeted with a monsoon-like deluge that lasted for the whole of the next two weeks. I found my way on a bike with a loose chain, through the sideways rain and the six lanes of cars and trams to the hut in the depths of the Auepark. I practiced slowing my breath as the traffic sped by, disengaging myself from one world and preparing for the imaginal one.

Marcel, the one remaining carpenter, was working away on the interior of the cabin. He and I were left alone to finish things up, bound in this symmetrical

matrix. We had yet to make the symmetrical fireplace, the symmetrical coffee table, and all the other symmetrical details. Marcel and I repeatedly found ourselves in the bowels of huge home improvement centers in search of symmetrically patterned lumber for the mirrored skirting board. Our minds were beginning to find palindrome-like configurations in all our surroundings—in music, signage, the reflections in puddles—so it seemed to make perfect sense to spend hours digging around for paired pieces of lumber. If you look carefully enough, you can find lumber “twins” that have been cut from the same larger piece of wood and whose surface knots therefore match one another.

Back at the Auepark maintenance yard, I spent a whole day sifting through piles of river rocks to find ones that were symmetrical down one axis, so that they could be rotated 180 degrees for casting the top and bottom of the fireplace out of plaster. It’s amazing to discover just how varied rocks are. Each has its own kind of lopsided personality or trait; so few are actually symmetrical, like those human faces that have one smiling and one frowning side. Each one seemed to be growing its own personality. The weeds remained neutral.

We wanted the inside of the cabin to edge along a kind of pre-fab rustic look: minimalist details, somewhat timeless. The fireplace lent the cabin a homey character. It felt a welcoming destination at which you finally arrived after a long hike through the forest. It could have been a lingering homage to Magritte’s *Time Transfixed* painting, in which a Black Five locomotive ploughs through the back of the fireplace. We ended up putting an aluminum Moka Pot espresso maker on top of the fireplace and another one on the mantle of the upside-down fireplace. Even

though there was no vapor in the cabin, it was as if the steam from Magritte's train had been sublimated into the potential steam from the coffee maker.

We nailed the skirting board with its mirrored knots into the cabin floor surround, separating the top cabin from the upturned lower cabin. There was a long discussion about the distance between the top and bottom board and hence the width of the gap between the two spaces. If it were too narrow the gap became indiscernible; if it were too wide, the in-between space would no longer be a mysterious place where the eye lingers to see whether the mirror is attached or not.

I was well inside the symmetrical matrix, no longer seeing the work within, or related to, art. In my eyes, it was reduced to pure geometry. But Rai deemed the symmetrical coffee table, with its eight-millimeter gap to match the skirting board, to be too sculpture-like. So we placed a couple of coffee cups on the top as well as under the reflected upside-down surface of the coffee tables, to allow the coffee tables to become furniture, and not apparent art objects.

These cups would become a central part of the induction, as I had to warn visitors to be careful of hitting their heads on them as they sat or stood. Only people who were confident of paying attention sat under the coffee cups, while more absent-minded people avoided that spot. I thus knew to focus on those who chose to sit under the cups, as they were invariably more consciously engaged and therefore harder to hypnotize.

It was a day before the press opening and we were still in symmetry hell, as each effort to perfect the symmetry of the top and bottom of the cabin took longer and longer. The quest for symmetry began to take on obsessive-compulsive proportions, with areas that

had previously been deemed good enough needing to be re-adjusted to match their counter-parts even more precisely. This was especially worrying to me: I had renounced perfectionism at the age of five, as I felt that it was an illness that could take over my core self. I remember clearly being in front of the glass and bamboo coffee table in the always-in-shadow "sun room" of the family home in London and refusing (to myself) to straighten out a book that was "off axis." My mother suffered years of my untidiness afterwards, but unbeknownst to her it was a pact that I made with myself not to be enslaved by the inner-voice of order at the cost of the ability to be. And so I realized that the cabin had become *too* symmetrical. Ironically, as the space became identical above and below, it lost its sense of being mirrored, and just seemed one continuous volume.

In order to break the perfectionist, symmetrical matrix, I mixed some glaze with a pale forest green tint and proceeded to varnish the lower part of the cabin. I also placed a pale grey-green lighting gel filter on the lower window to differentiate it from the upper one. Both the upper and lower windows were fake, constructed of luminescent panels behind frosted glass. Any other solution—a tubular skylight or a system to electronically match the exterior light conditions in the top window—were found to be impractical. The falseness of these two windows produced another layer of conscious second-guessing; the more curious visitors would circle around the outside of the cabin and realize that there were no real windows at all.

The final touch was placing copies of Rai's book *Paper Exhibition* (Malašauskas, 2012) on and under the fireplace. I felt somewhat heretical drilling into the book. I could screw the bottom one into the underside of the fireplace, but realized that only a transversal handling of this

material would do it justice within the context of the Hypnotic Show. Usually we read a book from left to right and top to bottom and page after page (at least in Western cultures) but it occurred to me that if one could read the book by following the words that the screw touched as it pierced its way through the book, maybe there would be an entirely new and unintended meaning. Perhaps this would be the book writing Rai as opposed to the other way around? The agency would lie in the book itself and it would wrest control from its author. This had to be a key to the approach the Hypnotic Show would take: a centrifuge in which our creative decisions were received through an indirect system rather than imposed by Rai and me.

In the Hypnotic Show, the words in Rai's book were published directly in the visitors' minds through hypnosis. To a conscious mind, this type of transversal narrative, reading *through* the pages of the book as opposed to reading from page to page, would seem strangely discontinuous, but the narrow focus of the unconscious mind in trance allows one to move more completely from one scenario to the next without the need for a coherent context or flow. We encounter something similar when we "edit" our dreams as the electrical storms unfold somewhat randomly across our cortex: somehow the unconscious mind is always willing to sew together discordant scenarios to build a sense of narrative and spatial coherence. It is not so much about scanning the content of our dreams for coherence, as about running the scripts of experience through the mind to overlay the patterns of meaning that make up consciousness.

Chapter 3 The Hypnotic Induction

in-ducere: from in- "into" + ducere "to lead"

In hypnosis we often use the term "induction" to describe the process in which one is lead into a state of trance.

The hypnotic induction I applied was an amalgamation of stage hypnosis and a type of therapeutic hypnosis, otherwise known as hypnotherapy. Although my work as an artist using hypnosis is not intended to have therapeutic effects, and is rather directed towards experimental investigations, understanding the therapeutic basis for hypnosis is essential to knowing how best to work with the mind, and what to avoid at all costs—such as treating pain without a doctor's consent, which may mask an underlying ailment.

I learned these processes at the American Institute of Hypnotherapy (AIH), a now-defunct academy in Irvine, California. The Institute was founded by Dr. A. M. Krasner, who implemented Milton Erickson's approach to hypnosis. During his career, Erickson was a controversial figure in the world of medical hypnosis and family therapy, having generated inductive processes that often involved shocks and ordeals that drove people deeper into their phobias or neuroses in an effort to find a way out of them. Erickson developed most of his own methods, formulated during a childhood of paralysis caused by polio during which he was left to observe the contradictory behavior of his many siblings and study their body language. This keen sense of observation about the habits and rituals we follow throughout our day allowed him to discern how we are naturally predisposed to go in and out of trance.³

My first encounter with hypnosis, however, was not in the context of therapy. It was at a rehearsal for a

performance art project in the late 1990s for which I was asked to design the set.

The artist who had invited me to collaborate, was the “bad-boy” of performance art of the ’90s: Ron Athey. Known for his cutting and extreme body-piercing performances at a time of HIV paranoia, his work was “credited” with spurring the National Endowment for the Arts de-funding, along with the “scandalous” homo-erotic photography of Robert Mapplethorpe and Andres Serrano’s *Piss Christ* of 1987, which consisted of a crucifix immersed in the artist’s urine.

After a few meetings with Ron, I developed a design for his performance that centered around a space above and a space below: a half-mirrored screen elevated the reflected image of Ron who was lying on a gurney, so that his reflection was superimposed onto performance artist Vaginal Davis, who seemed to be floating above the stage in a Buddha-like meditation.

As the two entities appeared to morph into one being, Ron transitioned from male to intersex hermaphrodite by having his genitalia stapled with dexterity and devotional detachment by a gender-ambiguous helper called PigPen.

There was no doubt that extreme feats of painful interventions were being administered by and between Ron’s performers, not just the stapling of genitals, but also the Sioux Sun-Dance-like piercing of the pectoral muscles followed by suspension from hooks, and yet it was surprising and perhaps contradictory on the face of it that the goal was not to ride the razor’s edge of masochistic pleasure-pain. Rather, the focus was on a kind of a sublimation of pain through ritualistic processes to progress beyond the boundaries of gender and mortal constraints.

The fact that pain was not the focus of Ron’s performance was made clear to me by his engagement

of hypnotist and University of California Irvine philosophy professor David McLemont, or David Maxwell as he later called himself—a play on “Maximum Wellness.” David worked with the cast to allow them to bypass their pain response and not feel the needles or cuts in the slightest. The hypnosis had the added effect of reducing blood circulation through the suggestion of numbness, which reduced bleeding.

David’s approach and voice left an instant impression on me and I realized through him that I was what he called “a deep trance subject.” In other words, I could go in and out of a very deep trance at the drop of a hat. I seized the opportunity to learn about hypnosis, not as a hypnotist but as a subject. This allowed me to know how far I could go in a trance state.

I pushed David to work with me through as many hypnotic phenomena as possible. He was especially gifted in the field as he had experience both as a stage hypnotist as well as a hypnotherapist, and with his philosophy background he was articulate enough to frame each approach within its given context and historical perspective.

I asked him to demonstrate pain control on me with needles and by pinching my skin as hard as he could; he performed catalepsy to make my body go extremely rigid and had people sit and stand on my body strung between chairs. I pushed for the extreme sensation of heat to the point of burning, to provoke the feeling of being frozen until completely numb, the ability to recall banal moments from weeks ago, such as where I had left my keys ten days ago at 11 a.m., the ability to recall memories years back in time and build up scenes from fragments of memories, the ability to transfer my sight to my fingertips so I could sense through solid objects, the implanting of the idea of a home in my wandering psyche, and many other experiments.

We checked off the fifty or so levels of hypnotic suggestibility, down to the ones considered to be the most difficult to achieve, which involve positive and negative hallucinations. There were artifacts that got stuck to me, such as the compulsive need to laugh every time David touched his index finger to his left ear. I learned about the boundaries between manipulation and exploration, between being a guide and a controller, between enabling the unconscious and trapping it, between harm and benefit, the humor of it, and yet the sobering depths to which it could go.

On the other hand, hypnotherapy, which I learned subsequently, encourages an approach to working with the unconscious mind that is intended to be beneficial to the patient. A clear distinction is made between positive associations and negative ones, and the therapist makes special effort to divert the unconscious mind from fixating on negative ideas and compulsions. Thus, the apparently positive command “stop smoking” is actually a negative command that impels the patient to focus on smoking, rather than on breathing clean air.

In my own projects, and especially during the Hypnotic Show collaboration with Rai, I try wherever possible to avoid negative suggestions. Working with the unconscious mind is an extremely delicate process. When an induction involves the experience of death or killing, such a script created by the artist Dora Garcia and performed in Italy, which I will describe later on, I have done my best to frame death within a positive context as much as possible, to come out the other side with a positive frame of mind.

I once broke this rule and ended up with a negative outcome with the artist Matt Mullican as we worked on various performances at LACE in Los Angeles, at Anton Kern Gallery in New York, and at Martin

Klosterfelde Gallery in Berlin. Matt would continually request that I cast psychotic spells on him, which threw him into a state of tantrum-like hysteria. These outbursts made interesting viewing for an audience that was safely protected behind a barrier, but began to create a bizarre tension between us, which we were ultimately unable to control. In Berlin, Matt had to be walked around the block several times cursing repeatedly under his breath “Jesus: angels and demons.”

When working with the visitors to the Reflection Room, I kept in mind Erickson’s belief that the unconscious mind is always “listening,” regardless of the state in which one finds oneself. This resonates with other investigators of consciousness, such as the psychologist Charles Tart, who proposed that all states of consciousness are trances, and that what is called “normal” waking consciousness is merely a “consensus trance.” For this reason, it was important to work with visitors from the very moment they came into the space, and all the preliminary actions and words were designed to exert some degree of hypnotic influence.

The pre-induction talk, which appeared to be just a friendly introduction to most, was part of the main induction. Sometimes I even explained to visitors that the induction started just as they were coming into the space: as the conscious mind was confounded by the mirror-like space that contained no mirrors, and as they headed left down the balcony, engaging the right brain, and as they descended the ten steps.

The pre-induction always varied but usually included asking people where they were from. Apart from testing their English comprehension skills, it was a way in which I could gauge people’s level of inhibition. I could do that by paying attention to the tone of their voices and the inflection of their words. This gave me a sense of who I would need to engage to a greater or lesser

extent. I swiftly lulled the visitors into a state of ease. I did this, in part, by quickly repeating types of words that may have correlated with their recent experiences. For instance, I illustrated to them how easy it was to go into a trance-like state as you are walking or cycling through the park, or even sitting on the upturned roof of a cabin listening to the sound of my voice, at which point I drew people back into an awareness of the present. By the looks on their faces, I could begin to see who would go into a deep trance and who may have difficulties releasing the controlling faculties of their minds.

I made sure everyone was comfortable, as the biggest enemy of a trance state is an aching back or a cramped leg. I had a small supply of blankets and cushions that I spread around the cabin, being careful to soften the sharp edges of the upturned stepped-ceiling. I would suggest that they could give their noses a rest by taking off their glasses, that they take off heavy jewelry that might jangle and interrupt the quiet. Usually people would do this but if they did not, I knew that this, too, might cause a challenge.

I asked visitors if they had been in trance before, keying them into the expectation of the experience, and yet also showing them how, through the simplest of gestures, even a handshake, we can fall into a deep state of trance. As Erickson once said, "We hypothesize that in everyday life, consciousness is in a continual state of flux between the general reality orientation and the momentary microdynamics of trance..." (Rossi, 1976). I drew visitors' attention to how often we go in and out of states of trance. I also began to blur the line between being aware of listening to my voice while at the same time realizing that they were in a strangely mirrored space, where things may not be as they seem on both the outside and the inside.

As I carried on talking, laying a kind of resonant hum in the space, and keeping minds from meandering too far, I engaged people's attention with a direct look in their eyes, to remind them of the fact that this was not a playback of some worn-out performance, but was instead a live event that would rely mostly on the mental activity of the visitor.

I explained that we go in and out of trances all the time, perhaps as you can imagine yourself sitting on a train looking out of the window at the passing landscape. As you feel yourself lulled by the movement of the train and the texture of the seats, your mind begins to wander into a trance-like state, just as you, the reader, may be aware of your body as it is resting there, reading while your mind wanders from time to time.

I briefly outlined some findings in the scientific literature on hypnosis. For example that:

High hypnotizable persons have a greater disposition for more sustained attention and deeper involvement. In addition, they appear to have greater cognitive flexibility, the ability to shift from one strategy to another and from one alternative state of consciousness to another (Crawford, 2001).

This was meant to alleviate the common fear that suggestible people are gullible or weak-willed in a power struggle with a controlling hypnotist.

I also reminded visitors that rather than trance being akin to a zoned out state, the mind is in fact in a heightened state, focused like a laser:

Contrary to common conceptions in the clinical and experimental literature, recent EEG and cerebral metabolism research supports the view that hypnosis may take cognitive effort that demands further allocations of attention and disattention (Crawford, 2001).

This is supported by findings that “...increased blood flow and metabolism may be associated with increased mental effort” (Crawford, 2001).

The data suggests that hypnosis may involve enhanced cognitive effort. So I would carry on explaining that the main difference between the experience of art in a hypnotic state and its experience in a normal state is the difference of intensity.

Apart from sharing some of this technical background, the process involved “seeding ideas.” I wove in accounts based on how people had arrived at Kassel, whether on foot, train, or by bicycle, always adapting my examples to their own recent experiences. This process was intuitive and sometimes I would weave in certain ideas about how perhaps the mind oscillates between conscious and unconscious states thousands of times a second, and that all we were doing was prolonging the unconscious state. Like Erickson, I was careful with my choice of words. The question “Have you ever been in a trance before?” seeds the idea that a trance is imminent—the presupposition inherent in the word *before* is “not now, but soon.” Also, by gradually dropping into the trance state myself along with the visitors, I became more sensitive to the inflections of their breathing, posture, and their slightest movements.

Along with improvisation based on the visitors’ mention of where they had come from, how they got to the cabin, and other such details that I gathered from them, I sometimes focused on their clothing or appearances to find, say, a word or phrase on a T-shirt or tattoo that I then cycled into my narrative. This would then become a keyword that would form a mirrored resonance with their own experiences. For example, in session 184, someone’s T-shirt read “no borderline,” and I wove the phrase into the induction

repeatedly, which had the effect of creating a deeper state of mirrored empathy with the visitors and especially with the person wearing the slogan, as well as encouraging the mind not to be conditioned by its own boundaries.

This mirroring is vital for generating empathy. Once, at the remote temple of Venus at Erice, Sicily (transformed into an unlikely center for new investigations in technology), I used a mirror to dissolve a volunteer called Antonio’s sense of self before casting him into a digitally immersive universe generated with Marcos Novak and curated by Maria Luisa Palumbo. The mirror was actually a testing device to check whether the subject had indeed disassociated temporarily from himself. When I asked him, as he was standing there in front of the mirror in a trance state, with a large audience of 300 people expectant to hear, whether he knew who the person in the mirror was, he clearly said “no.” Philosophers as well as theologians would agree that true empathy involves the dissolution of the ego. When he awoke, I asked him why he said “no” and he told me it was because his mind rationalized that he could not be in two places at once and therefore he was not that other reflected person.

Later, I used my smartphone’s inverted camera as an improvised mirror at a version of the Hypnotic Show in New York for The Canal Series. I gradually drew the smartphone screen away from the eyes of the trance subject as his or her sense of ego-self began to withdraw. The use of the mirror in this way is linked to neuroscientists Rizzolatti, Di Pellegrino, Gallese, Fadiga, and Fogassi’s (Di Pellegrino, 1992) discovery of mirror neurons, which are parts of the brain that automatically act out gestures and movements by others. The whole field of mirror neurons in neuroscience has since opened up to

investigations into empathy and rapport, which are still much-researched subjects.

In the cabin, the mirroring of the visitor—sometimes through mentioning a similar item of clothing, sometimes through body posture, sometimes by hardening my look or by softening it—had the aim of dissolving the boundaries between myself and the visitor, so that the induction would not generate a master/slave dynamic as in the nineteenth-century days of Charcot's *grand hypnotisme*, in which hypnotism was related to control and hysteria. I wanted to act instead as a reciprocal companion. As a guide to mental caverns, I was not going to lead people to the door of consciousness and shove them in, but rather go inside with them, every step or stroke of the way.

I sometimes latched onto passing sounds. If it was noisy outside with visitors waiting for the next session, I used the disturbance and turned it back into a tool for us to gauge just how far “inside” we were traveling, suggesting that the sounds were drifting off more and more.

Every twenty minutes or so, the WWII bombers would come over and drop their bombs around the cabin—or so it seemed. This was not the work of William Burroughs, but rather the spatialized sound installation *FOREST (for a thousand years)* by Canadian artists Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller just on the other side of the lake. I had to direct attention away from the bombs by speaking louder and making the visitors laugh, as it's more difficult to listen to your surroundings when you are laughing. The lightness dissolves unconscious dread. The other overwhelming sounds that came into the cabin were in session 114, when a huge thunderstorm descended on the Auepark. It was a strange Byronic moment: lost in the woods, huddled against the drumming sound of torrential

rain and deafening bursts of thunder shaking the cabin to its core. Yet I managed to lull the nine visitors into a deep trance by keying them into the imagined crackle of the fire in the fireplace, into which the thunder transformed itself.

Rewiring: the usefulness of mistakes

The experience with you in Kassel has had an important and unexpected effect on my writing:

When we had the session in Kassel, I was “pulled out of” the hypnotic suggestion twice because of what you called “mistakes.” These mistakes contained adjective descriptions. I found this hugely interesting, so in my writing of the second novel I am removing certain descriptions that could remove the reader from a kind of a flow. It is working quite well and gives the novel quite a special feeling. — Per

On the first session of the day, I was prone to what I call “verbal typos,” such as making mistakes with adjectival descriptions as mentioned by Per. They were not really mistakes in the true sense of the word, but if I used an adjective too narrowly or descriptively, it was likely not to coincide with the trance subject's own visualization. For instance, if I said, “the stairway is red and carpeted,” the person may have a completely different stairway in mind.

In the first session of the day, my unconscious mind was not yet fully unleashed and my conscious mind was doing its best to keep track of and control a dynamic that was already racing ahead through unconscious processes. But as the session went on, the automatic centers of my mind kicked in and I began to disengage my conscious mind from the whole operation. Sometimes I yawned thirty or forty times between the phrases, as my voice became

slower and slower and slower... It was quite common for people to ask me after the session whether I was in fact the same person speaking in the trance session, or if someone else had taken over. The quality and tone of my voice changes substantially, as does the delivery and the way the content is assembled and delivered. I actually tend to think it is someone else, or perhaps the reverse side of the mimetic being that I call my waking self. It reminded me of Carl Jung's two alternating personalities that he dubbed "No. 1" and "No. 2," the former being scientific, rational, and contemporary, and the latter being archaic and archetypal.

Perhaps this realization of the two selves is due to uncovering the "User Illusion,"⁴ the mistaken belief that the conscious mind is directing one's thoughts and actions. This was often echoed in the visitor's mind when they woke up and said they were convinced that they knew what I was about to say before I say it. Most likely, in a trance state, different centers of the mind are relaying my words in a reversed order, so the unconscious mind receives the suggestion, and only later does the conscious mind and its speech processing centers become aware of it, as if the idea had already been there before I mentioned it.

As my voice meandered as though on autopilot, my thoughts wandered. In session 67, I was just beginning to understand some of Rai's words, upon which the content of the hypnotic inductions was based: "In the aquarium, turtles were touching the surface of the water from the other side." Or were these passages taking on a meaning of their own in this strange cabin in the woods? Was I transmitting the meaning that Rai intended or was Rai a victim of his own User Illusion while writing the book, his pen being driven by invisible forces over which he had no control, just as I had no control over what I was

saying in the session, let alone the meaning of what was being said?

During session 68, I began thinking about how my great aunt Mary Lutyens described the mystic philosopher Krishnamurti's flights of unconscious journeying, leaving behind the persona of a child of nine years of age to guard his body, while his other self embarked on a parallel journey of spiritual encounters (Lutyens, 1975). But on my end, I was a little concerned that this splitting of my own self could be an early indication of some kind of dissociative identity disorder. Going back to Carl Jung's No.1 and No.2, even he became worried: "*Wondering if I was on the way to 'doing schizophrenia,' as we said in the language of those days*" (R.F.C.Hull, 1977). And so it dawned on me that this Hypnotic Show was just as much a public performance as it was a kind of laboratory experiment inside my own brain, with my sanity at stake.

Chapter 4 Perhaps...

The recursive layers.

*A very old souvenir came to my mind like a dream.
I was a child snorkeling near Antibes, and between waters
appeared a cuttlefish, the chameleon of the sea, playing
with light and current. This old image is almost like an
old email coming back to memory. — Sébastien*

Aware of my lips twitching and pins and needles beginning to run up the side of my face, my right side dizzy, eyes rolled up and then flashbacks to Amurrio⁵ and waiting by the bumper cars, a song revolving in my mind with the lyrics “I woke up one morning,” a feeling of abandonment in the fun of the fair, tears in my own eyes messing up the mascara of the visitor in sympathy and not wanting to wake up, ever, and have to be “myself” again.

Meanwhile, as some part of my mind was drifting to memories of one of my many childhood summers in the Basque Country, my mind was on auto-pilot, solidly counting down the stairs for the visitors for the second time around. Deepening the trance:

More focus,

Deeper in your own time,

Number six going further and further down—five allowing time to go slower and slower—four as you listen to the sound of my voice.

Mo wrote to me later:⁶

*The stairs I saw were stairs I don't recognize from a home
or a house I know or lived in. But they were old and*

*beautiful. Wood. Warm? I wanted to stay there. It felt like
home. I'm sure they exist somehow.*

My autopilot voice continued:

...and going further and further down...

...and almost all the way down now...

And Simon commented from the same session:

*I found that I was immersed in the narrative you were
unfolding (or allowing to unfold perhaps) but that a bit of
me was quite objectively and appreciatively observing the
way you constructed it; observing the meta-narrative, the
invisible form behind the work.*

The formal hypnotic induction I used varied depending on whether there were three people or fewer in the cabin, in which case we would do the session with the visitors lying down; if there were more than three we would do it with them sitting up. It was always a little more effort for me to work with larger groups, as people have different expectations and differing speeds of descending into a trance state. The more participants, the more I would have to be like a mother duck on the banks of the canal, craning my neck to make sure everyone was keeping up. The evening sessions of 8 p.m. always had the largest crowds, with up to eighteen or so people huddled in the space.

With small groups or individual inductions I started off with a body relaxation, moving downward from the top of the head all the way to the feet, inviting the visitor to become more and more relaxed. With the larger groups I started with an exercise involving fixating on two imaginary magnets in each person's hands. The magnets would draw their bearer's hands

together. The more the bearer tried to keep his or her hands apart, the more he or she would find them drifting closer and closer.

This exercise enabled participants to move out of the cerebral mode and shift their attention to one point outside of their bodies. This would quiet the chattering mind and allow visitors to feel the power of the unconscious mind syncing up with the suggestions. Sometimes, though, the hands would refuse to come together, not because of a lack of attention or suggestibility, but on the contrary, too much “magnetic” force circulated around their hands.

Anton Zeilinger, the celebrated quantum physicist also taking part in dOCUMENTA(13), was amused by the pop idea that magnetic forces would come together like that, and showed me how in actual fact hands with magnets in them would be more likely to shear sideways. Anyhow, I wasn’t concerned about the precise physics of the idea, as long as the visitors went along with it. I also wanted to avoid any new-agey associations of aura, but rather to draw people’s attention to scientifically established facts, such as the electromagnetic fields around our bodies.

Sometimes the magnets had a lingering effect:

During the session I was unable to put my palms together but my fingers were locked. My entire body was locked. A couple of days ago, I was dozing off while checking my email in my hotel and I entered a state like that again, of being conscious but having my body feel locked. When my body is locked I am aware, more completely, of my whole body, and how immobile it is. — Noah

Eventually the magnets joined the hands, and occasionally, such as in the case of Hans, a sufferer of diabetes and Parkinson’s from Bonn, glued them so tightly that they became pale with the pressure. I would then begin

to work on a relaxation suggestion, coming down through the top of the head, the eyes, the backs of the eyes and every muscle, nerve and fiber, going all the way through the body until it was perfectly relaxed. Unlike most meditation techniques that require a precise body posture that takes years of practice to feel comfortable with, hypnosis works by relaxing the body completely and allowing the mind to follow into a deep state of trance.

Then I started to suggest stairs going down from ten to one, a classic deepening induction, which I touched on just now. The key is to allow visitors to feel safe as they go down the stairs. Some people tend to be afraid of stairs, or the stairs that come to mind are ones leading to dark places, perhaps a scary basement or a terrible memory. I gave them time and leeway to select a set of stairs that suited them, but often the set of stairs would flip from one to another, or the visitors would find themselves going up instead of down. Or perhaps they were sure of going into a basement but the spaces they were imagining at the top of the stairs changed over time and they were not sure at which moment they were going down. This was all part of adjusting to a mental mode in which the focused unconscious takes over and displaces the conscious mind’s menu of possibilities and dithering indecisions.

The next task was to quiet the babbling stream of conscious thought for the duration of the session. I found that the most effective way to do this was to make the dominant hand extremely heavy, as if made of stone, or concrete, or some heavy material, heavier and heavier, as if it was sinking deeper into your lap and extending that heaviness down into your fingers and up into your forearm, your elbows and all the way up to your shoulder. In effect, I was numbing the dominant hand and then that whole side of the body. This is in

turn linked to the opposite side of the brain, which is usually the side that houses the speech centers.

I allowed for the other hand, the hand you don't usually write with, to be very light and airy and free, loosening up the intuitive centers. This had the effect of leading visitors away from habitual, naturally overbearing ways of engaging with reality, and towards an approach attuned to movements and intuitive thought processes.

Sometimes there was an ambidextrous person present who was flipping mentally between hands. But most people who can write with both hands are educated away from using their left hand, including my mum who went to a nun's school in Barcelona and had her "sinister"⁷ left-handedness exorcised out of her. If I had a suspicion that someone was ambidextrous, I added the words "the hand you first started writing with as a child," as the speech center in the brain would invariably develop on the opposite side from that naturally dominant hand.

This passage explains why I placed so much attention on the sides of the body:

Hypnosis is much more dynamic [than waking consciousness], activating differentially regions in either the left or right hemispheres, or both hemispheres dependent upon the attentional, perceptual and cognitive processes involved (Crawford, 2001).

Once the process of quieting the speech centers was finished, it was time for one more trip down the stairs. This time it was much easier for people to stick with one set of stairs rather than morphing from stone to carpet to wood across various decades, but now the steps would render each visitor "twice as deep, twice as focused and twice as relaxed." To the conscious mind it

perhaps seems contradictory to be relaxed *and* focused at the same time, but this is the strange oxymoronic state in which you experience trance. It reminds us that the waking state is generally accompanied by a feeling of being hyper and distracted. This may be why it's often so hard for us to make decisions when we're wide awake.

By the end of the second flight of steps I could usually be quite sure that most visitors would be in a deep state of trance, ready for hypnotic suggestions. I found myself in the same, fully suggestible state, often feeling completely removed from my body, from gravity, from time, my eyelids extremely heavy, and my voice seeming to come from somewhere near my solar plexus, vibrating up through the back of my neck and up around my scalp and the back of my ears.

Chapter 5

Situation: The First of Three Segments of the Induction

The hypnotic induction begins to take form.

I glanced at the “menu” of scores and saw the ideograms I had made for myself, as Rai’s written words appeared transform into ants crawling across the page. Text is extremely hard to focus on in a trance-like state, except as a visual pattern, because reading requires the use of too many centers of the brain at once. In a trance state, all attention is best directed to one sense or cognitive modality at a time.

With each session I grew more familiar with each ideogram passage, the narrative it represented, its apparent meaning, and the anti-sense behind the meaning, so that it became easier to lead the way downwards in a mentally rarefied state.

Freeing the unconscious

Although a human being is free to imagine, to dream and even to be creative without any limitations, her/his actions can be accomplished only in a pre-constituted orbit, within a continuous and constantly supervised network. It seems that nowadays we can glorify all our possible liberties and witness how the old-school boundaries have been extinguished. However, all these magic words—globalization, Internet, market economy, advertising, independent media, new technologies—tend to conceal a very dangerous ambivalence. They provide us with an illusion of freedom.—Kristupas Sabolius

Let me expand upon the starting point of the content for the inductions:

A couple of months before the opening of d(13), Rai sent me a copy of his book *Paper Exhibition*. Back in January, we had been walking on the crisp, cold banks of Lake Geneva awash with Sunday joggers, and Rai was telling me how he was trying to fine-tune the book. It was based on ten years of interviews, essays, and thoughts, but he said that as a non-native speaker he was having some challenges with English. As I drifted into the book, in which every other page is blank to encourage the reader to redact his writing, I was amazed by how the expressions and turns of phrase provoked strange ways of thinking about time, place, and identity. Perhaps a resulting non-native shift in the rules of grammar, or the ordering of words, triggered a different way of thinking for the reader, or perhaps this peculiar hyper-real way of parsing experience is merely Lithuanian. Just as in English there is no equivalent to the Spanish word *simpatico*, perhaps this inverted way of seeing the world deserves a new set of grammatical rules. Certainly it deserves new words, though I’m sure this is more Raimundian than Lithuanian.

As soon as I finished the book, I took out my scissors and began cutting out passages and phrases that I thought would make good junction points for mental explorations. Soon enough I had three piles in front of me. The first part of the induction would be a situation, the second part a sensory immersion, and the last part a mental construct.

The main goal within this process was to generate a chain of experiences that pierced through the illusion of freedom. As Kristupas Sabolius, a Lithuanian philosopher and frequent collaborator of mine says, “*Creating could occur only as un-creating: the escape, the rupture, and the negation of our perceptual categories*” (Sabolius, 2012).

Situation

These snippets of Rai's books served in the same way as an opening reveal in a movie does. They described places that were easy to imagine, yet somehow removed from people's actual experiences. This first step of the induction would allow people to disengage from the cabin and feel themselves immersed in a narrative space, almost as if watching a film and forgetting that they were in the cinema, or so deeply engrossed in a book that it felt real. And yet the level of immersion would gradually grow as additional cues relating to the body, like weight and internal movement and balance, were to be added.

In Mark J.P. Wolf's book *Building Imaginary Worlds: The Theory and History of Subcreation* (Wolf, 2012), he divides the stages of involvement in an imaginary world as immersion, absorption, and saturation. Immersion is the lightest state of involvement and includes physical immersion such as being at a theme park where your body is surrounded by a created world, sensual immersion where your eyes and ears (although missing smell, taste, touch, and balance, to name a few) are linked to a virtual world, and conceptual immersion where your imagination is engaged in the world.

Absorption is the two-way process where the person, player, user, or reader not only engages with the created world by following a narrative or course of events, but the user begins to incorporate the world and access it much as we access memories of our own life experiences.

Saturation is when the imagined world is so dense and all-encompassing that it completely displaces our awareness of being in the present "primary" world, which is essentially what happens in a hypnotic state.

The trance state is one in which various brain centers that, in a waking state, would be divided into

unconscious and conscious processes, in hypnosis allow one to be aware of several brain functions at once and thus the experience enters a framework of complete saturation.

This contrasts with the conscious mind's limitations in attaining a sense of immersion. As psychologist and critic Norman N. Holland wrote:

We humans have a finite amount of attention or "psychic energy." Attention is a way of focusing that limited energy on what matters. If we concentrate on one thing, an important thing, we pay less attention to other things. Those other things become unconscious (or more accurately, "preconscious" in Freud's term). If we use more energy and excitation in one prefrontal function, following the play or story, we have less energy available for other prefrontal functions, like paying attention to our bodies or the world around that play or story (Holland, 2009).

My own experience in production design in film helped bring these worlds alive. I knew that the world-building skills involved in lighting, sounds, textures, and the way materials are aged or not adds to the feeling of actually being there, wherever "there" happens to be. Both the words from Rai's book and my verbal reworking of them provided the minimum narrative architecture, vague enough for the visitor to build his or her own world. This was so that the project would hand over control of what to imagine as much as possible to the visitor.

Examples of these opening scenarios included:

The Grand Duke Palace

The original scenarios Rai wrote in *Paper Exhibition* underwent a huge loss of fidelity as the visitor experienced the final immersion, but they also made

enormous gains in resolution. I transformed the descriptive sentences in Rai's book into nebulous interpretations with as few fixed cues as possible. It was quite likely that the "Grand Duke Palace," which in Rai's version was a somewhat crusty but respectable Nordic hotel, became a rambling old palace in which people's delusions of grandeur ran rampant due to the title of the place. At the same time, perhaps the place would be imagined by the visitor to be in such a complete state of disrepair and abandon that it felt as if it were taken back by the forces of nature. Dust, old chandeliers, frayed carpets, and armchairs with wheels on the bottom become old wheel chairs for decrepit people to slowly roll from one area to another. Some kind of *Dr. Zhivago* scene gone off the deep end perhaps, broken windows with creepers coming through, the dusty afternoon sunlight splintering through the old *persiennes*.

Unlike a physical exhibition in a gallery or museum, one has to imagine each person in the room diverging into very different versions of this experience, branching out further and further, not so much in their own passive interpretations but rather in active imaginary recreations of the scene.

Once they had explored the main room of the Grand Duke Palace, I encouraged people to drift on their chair of wheels towards a library, a bedroom, a kitchen. The purpose of introducing the idea of being pulled to an additional space was to encourage an exploration of other schema, such as knowledge represented by the library, the deepening unconscious explorations or sexual desires symbolized by the bedroom, and physical, mental, or spiritual nourishment in the kitchen. In fact the very idea of being drawn or pulled was repeated at various points. One such time was during the first part, or "situation"

part, of the induction, in which I described a wind that pushed the visitor back and ended up pulling him along. Being pulled is more inviting than being pushed, though technically this particular snippet of text was based on research by one of Buckminster Fuller's engineers, who posited that the low pressure in front of objects meant that the wind pulls objects, such as sailing boats, rather than pushes them.

An elevator in a hotel in New York in 1962

I sink away... It's like a path of words... Heavy, but light. An elevator with an orange floor of soft stuff, two men in it. I can only see their legs, no further than their belts. SEX? — Mo

I liked this passage, as it also worked as a deepening procedure. Whenever possible, any dynamic that deepens a trance state helps. Most people have a kind of buoyancy when going into trance, meaning that it takes more effort to keep them in trance and deepen it than for them to come out of the trance. The slightest verbal inconsistency or noise from outside is enough to bring a person right back out. However, once in a deep state of trance, the person may have a natural tendency to go even deeper, just as a human body becomes less buoyant the deeper underwater it goes.

In this passage we started on the twentieth floor of the hotel: "You can imagine yourself, if you like, in this elevator cabin, feeling and sensing the flickering glow of the light above you, the shiny textures of the walls. It's New York, 1962..."

As the visitor began to fixate on the buttons on the side of the cabin wall, the elevator started to go down one floor at a time. Each time the elevator went down a floor, the corresponding button lit up and cast its light

on the visitor's face and surroundings. And with each floor the induction deepened the trance. I pointed out that on one of the floors all the hotel guests were asleep, again a deepening suggestion. Someone pointed out that she thought it was odd that the hotel guests were so passive, though one purpose of that suggestion was to quiet the mind's curiosity about other matters and to allow focus on the experience of going down in the elevator, with all its minute sensory cues, such as the changing air pressure in your ears.

The whole point of this passage in Rai's text was to explore different types of absence: absence through lack of attention, absence through social taboo, etc. I omitted any reference to the thirteenth floor as the elevator went down. In order to distract from this omission, I suggested many aspects of how the journey felt and how it linked to past memories of other elevator rides. Towards the bottom of the ride, I would suggest that two people also inside the elevator wondered if the fourteenth and fifteenth floors actually existed, partly because they had been in such an involved discussion while those floors had gone by, they had no awareness of them. In a way, this process of watching the floor buttons is akin to praying with a rosary—the conscious part of the mind is engaged in a repetitive process while the unconscious part explores something much more substantial: different aspects of absence amidst reality.

One older lady awoke at the end of the session and said that she had a rough time going down the elevator, as she had had an unsettling encounter in a high-rise hotel in real life back in New York in 1962. The bellboy had accompanied her up to the room, searched in the bathroom and under the bed, and told her there had been two murders there just the previous week. So she had a lingering sense of foreboding when it came to

the trance induction. People bring their own impressions to art shows (Hypnotic Show included) just as much, or even more so, than shows impress their content upon people.

The hypnotist begins to lose his bearings

Another time, someone came in for a session very reluctantly. Chiara Ianeselli, who was in charge of bookings and without whom the Hypnotic Show would have devolved into complete chaos, and who extended her stay for the whole 100 days specifically to make sure everything ran smoothly, warned me that there was a very nervous man waiting on the porch. As I started my friendly banter with the visitors, to develop a sense of trust and rapport, I noticed this person meant trouble; perhaps not on purpose but I could see from his body language that he would be hard to “soften up” for the right frame of mind. His arms were crossed, his brows knitted into a deep furrow, and his knees were drawn up protectively to his chest.

I talked about the types of trance-like processes that the visitors may have already experienced, such as staring out the window on a train or driving a car and thinking about other things, and he looked more and more perplexed. I asked him if he was okay, not wanting to slow down the rhythm of my introductory talk and yet wanting to see if there was something wrong. A flood of anguish came out of his mouth, saying that he had once been anesthetized and almost died in the process and here he was once again in a similar situation, and would he die if he went under hypnosis?

The induction process was extremely physical. I used my whole body to engage with the visitors, changing my position to gain better views of certain people, suddenly becoming closer and more intimate and at

times finding a distant height from which to create a sense of objectivity. As I moved around and looked into this distraught visitor's eyes, attempting to bring them to a place of neutrality, *crack!*—I stubbed the middle toe of my left foot. But it was actually beyond a crack: it sent a searing pain all the way up my spine and into all the corners of my mind. I carried on, focusing on keeping the flow of the pre-induction going and, above all, trying to set this resistant person's mind at ease. At the end of the hour-long session, which combined searing pain with slow, steady talking, I took a quick peak at my toe and was horrified by the dark red blood blister and bruising up the middle of my foot; I had obviously broken it.

The next session was starting, with some fifteen visitors filing down the stairs, and I was beginning to limp more and more.

I started my pre-induction talk. With my toe throbbing, I went around the room asking what types of trance people had experienced—music, perhaps, or watching the dawn rise over a rave in the desert, or meditation. “Ecstasy!” one French guy said laughingly, and then put his hand over his mouth saying that he was sitting next to his mother.

This guy's verbal stumble stuck in my mind. I felt it could be contagious towards my own handling of words, a kind of *faux pas* centrifugal force in the room to be avoided at all costs. (I had previously stepped in some of these dog-shit-like vortexes on past days, getting ensnared by a “ladies first” comment that felt awkward in a room full of men and one woman. “Whatever that means,” she retorted, turning out to be Joan Jonas, the performance artist.)

When that session—the last of the day—was finally over, and it had become dark outside, everyone left except for the French guy—tall, good-looking, with

groomed stubble on his cheeks and chin. I was folding up the blankets behind the Breitenau-like bars that formed the upside-down railing in the lower half of the cabin and he was looking at me through the bars. Something felt deranged, perhaps him or perhaps me or perhaps the space in-between. I felt like I was starting to slide into an episode of hallucinatory realism in the style of the Chinese author Mo May, where folk tales and reported facts begin to share equal weight.

He started talking about *emprise psychologique* (psychological rapture) and telling me about a few months before, when he had been walking down the street and had had an encounter with someone who started up a conversation with him and who, it increasingly appeared, had stolen his ID online and read *all* of his emails and knew *everything* about his life—his innermost thoughts, his recent holiday intimacies, and had all of his bank account details and other crucial ID data: in effect, he was being held hostage in a perfectly choreographed identity heist. Identity theft is not really complete until someone has all your personal details and knowledge of your past experiences available to them in real time; the only domain left to you is that of your dreams, which thankfully erase themselves shortly after awakening.

As he clutched the railings, his knuckles white, he explained that his life had been taken hold of by this “*emprise*” and he had not been able to escape from its clutches. I was sidestepping up the stairs with my now-pronounced limp, feeling that my sense of reality was slipping, when he mentioned the name “Bateson,” which began to ring my alarm bells even louder. It was as if I were trapped in some strange matrix where my brain was working so hard that it was finding patterns everywhere: patterns that arrange reality into subjec-

tively convincing clusters that perhaps objectively made no sense at all.⁸

Bateson is the British anthropologist and cyberneticist known for his “double bind” explanation of schizophrenia. Schizophrenia! And no sign of the supposed mother who should have been waiting outside for this French guy, no embarrassed mother wondering why her beloved son would admit to the use of entactogenic⁹ drugs in front of strangers.

I was still standing there behind the railings of the cabin, and my mind switched to thinking about how a few decades ago Marilyn Monroe was able to hide an affair with the President; but, in our new Twitterverse, it is practically impossible to do anything without twenty versions of whatever you do appearing as posts, texts, messages, and videos. Ultimately this electronic bind leaves us with disparate versions of reality that need reconciling, and the only place for this to happen is in our own minds.

According to Bateson, if a person is exposed repeatedly to double binds on a daily basis the mental situation becomes perilous. As our brains swim through replayed experiences trying to decide which angle is the right one, we are second-guessed by third parties who see different sides of us, and we begin flip-flopping until we are in the clutches of an electronically induced schizophrenia.

I was collapsing the issues inside and outside the cabin, going deeper into this dark tunnel of blurred reality, perhaps into my own double bind. I was also thinking about how I had begun to mistake my own sweater for someone else’s that had been left behind in the hut. That episode crept up on me from behind; I was doing so many hypnosis sessions in a row that I was undergoing a shift in my understanding of reality.

Pascal Rousseau, one of the leading theorists of hypnosis in the context of contemporary art, came to a

session. The next day, over coffee, he was surprised to find out that I was susceptible to my own suggestions and inductions, as hypnotists traditionally pride themselves on being unaffected by their processes.

There had in fact been some unquestionably beneficial side effects from my hypnotic susceptibility: my optical migraines,¹⁰ consisting of the “spreading depression of Lečo,” a cortical storm that moves through the visual cortex at two to five millimeters per minute, burning up everything in its path, disappeared almost entirely. This migraine phenomena had been crippling me for years; I attribute it to a fall I had at the age of seven in Spain. Why the migraines left I am not sure, but it is possibly due to the vibrations created by my deep hypnosis voice, which transferred themselves upwards into my lower cranium.

Perhaps not so beneficially, I became more sensitive to things around me, the patterns between things and events. This hyper-sensibility while seemingly a gift for an artist, actually became a slippery slope as the weeks progressed.

The sweater incident started when the German writer Ingo Niermann, for whom I had previously contributed an induction for his and his co-writer Erik Niedling’s book *The Future of Art: A Manual* (2011), approached me to discuss writing a novel within a novel. We met for a glass of hefeweizen and he presented me with Philip K. Dick’s *The Man in the High Castle* (1962), a re-write of WWII history in which Germany and Japan win the war. Within the book are fragments of another novel, called *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy*, written by one of the characters. In this novel within a novel, the US and the UK win the war and eventually declare war on each other. The novel is filled with shifting layers of reality: there are secret agents with assumed names, a character who sells counterfeit antiques, an *I Ching* reading towards

the end of the book that tells the characters that they are living in a false world. This meta-fiction serves perhaps as a reminder to the reader that WWII could have ended very differently, indeed.

Ingo and I decided to use hypnosis and an oracular reading of the *I Ching* to help him join the dots of *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy*. My wife Yi-Ping has studied the *I Ching* (Wilhelm, 1967) and other divinatory systems for years, and so we set a time to film that wouldn't conflict with the hypnosis sessions. But somehow the novels' layers of falseness crept into my own psyche without my noticing, and I became certain that the cardigan that I had bought specially for the filming of this session had been replaced by someone who had taken it by mistake when leaving the Reflection Room. I was convinced because of the quality difference, a loose thread near the zipper and a seam that looked inside out. My wife came back from a trip to the UK with our son Jasper to find me fretting over the cardigan, which was probably funny to her as I don't think she had ever seen me give the slightest bit of attention to any item of clothing.

Later on, she went down to the store where we bought it, looking for the "original" one while I was busy in the Reflection Room. She established without a doubt that it was the same sweater. I trusted her truthfulness so I had to doubt my own grasp of reality. But on this evening of the "*emprise psychologique*" and the broken toe, I was still suspicious of the sweater's authenticity. It was like a temporary onset of Capgras Syndrome, in which people mistake their loved ones for inanimate objects, or think objects around their home have been replaced by alien versions of them—which famously lead to the title of the neurologist Oliver Sacks' book, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* (Sacks, 1998).

The bomb dropped

Yi-Ping was constantly gauging my mental and physical state through this long-term hypnosis endurance and she started to say that I should take some time off. I was so incensed by this that we got into a heated argument, as I felt that she was undermining my effort to stay on track with the scheduled performances. Honestly, I didn't think that things were that awry, at least from my own burrow-like perspective, but I was beginning to over-systemize my surroundings, much like what happens with autistic behavior. My pattern-seeking awareness of things had already factored in that just when the argument started, we happened to be walking by a building that had been constructed by the Workers' Union before WWII, and had later been turned into an SS torture center for enemies of the Third Reich, especially (in keeping with the SS's sadistic logic) for enemy union workers. We were also literally walking on bombs and perhaps this was an intuitive feeling as a week later the whole Auepark was evacuated—workers building the new Auedamm swimming pool next door to the ex-SS torture chambers unearthed an 800-kilo bomb that happened to be 100 yards from the Reflection Room.

In the end, I took a day off the schedule: Yi-Ping and my curatorial assistant Chiara ganged up on me and convinced me to stand down. I was forced to quietly ponder the previous days. I had to let the feeling of the intense linkage between everything in the known universe and the hyper sensibility to every single sensory input fade, to replace it with the "normal" experience of discrete events and objects driven by cause and effect. This latter world is a kind of cozy

Newtonian one in which boundaries are like familiar and polite picket fences dividing all the things around us into manageable and stable entities with predictable inter-relationships. The only concern we have in this world is shuffling around the known entities that are divided into neat binary opposites, so that we can play with proportions, like adding more form and a bit less function.

Stepping away from it all reminded me of the crushingly humiliating experience I had at my school, of being sent to the sanatorium for a few days against my will. My housemaster thought that I was losing it, and judged it would be “better for me.” It didn’t help that I had begun to scrawl “IAMALOONY” on the message boards in the school entryway.

By having time to think, I realized how Yi-Ping was protecting me from going over the mental precipice. She would spend hours meditating in the apartment so as to send a kind of remote calmness my way, as she often has done since in collaborations of ours. I owe her my ability to keep working through the 100 days across this difficult psychological terrain.

Moments too with Jasper, playing with his ever changing wooden train set or bicycling him up to his kindergarten every morning were a welcome way to unburden the cyclical heaviness that seemed to accumulate over time.

CCB every now and again sent me “special case” visitors, for whom I would usually find an extra slot, even though the sessions were always fully booked. I’m not sure if it was more to challenge the invited guest or me. She lined up Anton Zeilinger, the previously-mentioned quantum physicist, who was showing work in the main hub of d(13), at the Fredericianum. Ironically, in my mole-like existence in the lower upturned floor of the Reflection Room,

I was almost blind to the rest of what was being shown at d(13).

Every now and again I would wander almost by chance into another artist’s cabin on my way to the Reflection Room. Certainly the content of the other cabins was quite alien, and it was comforting to feel that the worlds the visitors went to in their unconscious states were supported by equally strange experiences to be witnessed in a conscious state. There were videos of Somali pirates shot on a phone camera by CAMP (Shaina Anand & Ashok Sukumaran); a flutist playing a prolonged and uninterrupted ascending note with circular breathing by Manon de Boer; and a cabin by Shinro Ohtake surrounded by boats and canoes suspended high above in the trees as if a tsunami had come down the Fulda.

But Anton Zeilinger, now that was something! I could only imagine the rational, logical intellect needed to parse through the contorted realities of quantum mechanics.

As soon as I met him on the porch of the Reflection Room, with his broad grin and hair just a bit wilder than Einstein’s, I knew that the session would not be held back by an analytical policeman of the frontal cortex, guarding the portals to the unconscious mind. I was comforted by the feeling that both the artists and the most advanced scientists of our time have to turn their backs on the tenets that hold our respective worlds together, to let go of the hand railings and dive, like Felix Baumgartner,¹¹ into the abyss of the unknown in order to find new perspectives and language to explain new models.

Once Anton was comfortably lying down I began the induction, relaxing the body progressively. He later told me that his arms and legs started detaching from his body. Dark reddish lumps of alien matter drifted

away from him. The middle story he had chosen revolved around chopping an onion in a kitchen, which seems like a relatively familiar activity to most. In general, the onion cutting was a useful device to trigger the feeling of smell and more especially the release of tears, which can sometimes be used as a conduit connecting emotions such as joy or sadness as the “layers” are peeled back, one after another.

The quantum onion

The onion and the kitchen in general are useful to tie motivation to nourishment, as food and sex are our two basic drives in life. In Anton’s case, as always, my unconscious took over and started to suggest the possibility of cutting the onion down into smaller and smaller pieces, over and over again, until we had reached the sub-atomic level. The middle part of the story had morphed from a sensory exploration into a mental construct, that is to say, it became an idea that the conscious mind cannot really understand, but at an unconscious level may make some sense.

When Anton woke up from the session he seemed bemused by the experience, as if he had indeed parsed the atoms at the core of an onion with a simple kitchen knife. He was also drawn to the symmetry of the cabin, in particular that of the rocks in the fireplace. He explained, approximating the shape of a sand timer with his hands, that quantum physics observes many random behaviors, but one constant is the symmetry of time. For instance, time is now in perfect symmetry as it will be in ten minutes or equally in an infinite amount of time later, which would need a lot more quantum explanation than we have time for in this book. I gave him one of my prized symmetrical stones that I had used to cast the fireplace, and I imagine it is sitting in his lab in Austria,

hopefully used as a paperweight for papers with radical quantum postulations.

As if to rub it all in, Rai later sent me an article by Sean Carroll, a theoretical physicist at the California Institute of Technology. He writes, “*One of the most astonishing insights of modern physics, and one of the hardest to grasp, is that sufficiently powerful symmetries give rise to forces of nature*” (Carroll, 2013).

The last night of d(13), we rode in Marcel’s VW camper and we happened to pass by a hitchhiking quantum physicist on his way to the same dinner. Marcel stopped, and Anton jumped in the back. We tumbled around as the van went over potholes and old railway tracks. We joked about “objective ignorance” and how “subjective ignorance” is just stupidity. This followed from a lecture he had given in the closing days of d(13), in which he described how the fundamentals of quantum mechanics are based on completely randomized behavior that can not be predicted, unlike the Newtonian model in which cause and effect can be used to describe all interactions. This lack of prediction of randomized behavior, he told us, is called “objective ignorance.”

After the lecture, a small group of us, including Yi-Ping, Rai, and Rene Gabri, went to have coffee with him. He talked about his discussions with the fourteenth Dalai Lama in which he asked His Holiness involved questions about whether Tibetan Buddhist theology could prove certain matters, such as reincarnation. The Dalai Lama was forced to admit “that is just the way things are,” betraying either a weakness in Buddhist cosmological theology or a handy mysterious rhetorical device to avoid discussing the factual basis for reincarnation. But as our own conversation with Anton explored the boundaries of quantum knowledge, Anton was also forced to admit, “that is just the way

things are.” Quantum physics is still largely undetermined, just as the existence of reincarnation is; a reminder that the scope of “what we don’t know” is vastly larger than the little we do know collectively.

On my own micro-level, I was thinking about myself as the blind mole in the cabin, about how through these repeated performances I was trying to feel my way around consciousness. I was comforted to note that the boundaries of our knowledge, whether metaphysical or scientific, constantly come to the edges of their own limitations. Perhaps through the explorations of the unconscious mind in the Reflection Room, intuitive thought could be harnessed as a tool for going beyond these limitations.

I can’t help think that in order to understand consciousness, quantum theories, and what happened before the big bang, there isn’t a need for more “intelligent” thinking; we must begin to imagine a different way of thinking altogether. Perhaps Edwin Abbott’s book *Flatland* (1884), written over a century ago, is the best metaphor for our inability to understand these things. In the short novel, two-dimensional figures have difficulty understanding the significance of the appearance of a line that grows and disappears in front of them. This turns out to be a three-dimensional sphere passing through their 2D plane of reality. Perhaps we are not yet equipped with the right tools to understand a more complex reality that involves multiple dimensions, elastic notions of space and time, and other possibilities that are counter-intuitive to our Newtonian mind-set.

An empty airport at night

Another scenario used in the sessions involved being in an airport at night and finding a clock inside a bag inside a locker inside a locker room. I liked the solitary

feeling of suggesting the echoes of footsteps on the hard floor of the empty airport. The transition into night helped deepen the induction by creating a feeling of isolated focus, and also evoked the sensation of sleep by fast-forwarding to nighttime. I alternated between saying that the clock had an alarm and it didn’t because I was worried that people might be anxious that the alarm would go off at any moment in their minds. But I was keen on using the clock as a device to slow down time. In a hypnotic state, time invariably seems to go faster: in almost every session, visitors would underestimate the time that they had been in trance by thirty or forty percent. Time in trance is way more elastic, and it was interesting to gradually slow down the metabolic system, the breathing, the heartbeat, and the perception of time itself.

This exercise was particularly appropriate in Kassel, the birthplace of the first clocks designed with second hands, built in the 1580s. In 1580, Kassel astronomer Christoph Rothmann wrote that Swiss clockmaker Jobst Bürgi, a resident of Kassel, had been constructing clocks with second hands; these more precise clocks were needed to calculate the exact position of the stars. Some of these timepieces had second hands as we know them today, but others marked the seconds off with the tick-tock of sound rather than with a hand. Of course the sound-generating clocks were more useful than others since astronomers could count the seconds while looking through the telescope. Rothmann likened the sound of the clocks to the rhythm of a rather slow melody, but it is amusing to us now to think that a second would need to be described in such a way.

Time and its elastic boundaries were also explored by Anri Sala, who had made a strange clock called *Clocked Perspective* for d(13) with a forced perspective at the end of the canal next to the cabin, itself based on

a kitsch painting at the Orangerie of a castle with a real clock embedded in it. The clock-sculpture was reminiscent of Salvador Dalí's *The Persistence of Memory*, with its iconic melted clock. There were several ancient telescopes at the Orangerie trained on Sala's warped clock, as if to drive home that time at d(13) was decidedly liquid.

d(13) was like a kind of sand-box for us artists and curators, and Rai deepened this exploration of time-keeping and strange mechanisms with another ongoing project he organized in Kassel. This project, called *Black Box*, was set up at the Orangerie and held a gathering every Thursday at 5 p.m. A system of mirrored cubes designed by Mariana Castillo Deball and Gabriel Lester at once hid and revealed a series of objects that had lost their use and, more importantly, had lost all of their user context. Speakers, including myself, were invited to speculate on what these objects were or how they may have been used.

For some reason, I was accompanied in talking by a magician called Friedhelm Fisher, who was also a part-time urban design professor (or was it the other way around?). It seems that I had begun to be placed in the category of artist-slash-entertainer rather than artist-slash-therapist. Or perhaps the box in which I was being pigeonholed was adaptable, moving away from a serious métier to something closer to a seventeenth-century French actor: in other words I would end up buried on the side of the road as unworthy of legitimate social inclusion. Anyway, I speculated that a bottle filled with gold letters was an early experiment in letter-taste synesthesia, and I introduced the famed Vilnius Sling to the audience. This was a drink I had helped Rai invent by putting him in touch with the letter-color synesthete Cassidy Curtis, and the color-taste synesthete Jody Monteith, translating the name "Vilnius Sling" into its taste equivalent. Meanwhile,

Friedhelm was showing how, through sleight of hand, things (like pen knives) and their meanings could vanish into thin air. This project seemed like a mental ricochet of what was going on in the Reflection Room.

Journeying into the gap

I might mention here a few short works in which I have recently examined, under the name of material imagination, the astonishing need for "penetration." Going beyond the seductive imagination of forms, it thinks matter, dreams matter, lives in matter, or what amounts to the same thing—it materializes the imaginary.
—Gaston Bachelard

My girlfriend was scared about my booking a place in your Hypnotic Show. She thought I would come out of the Reflection Room and I wouldn't recognize her, or I would run naked across the Karlsaue in Kassel. —Torsten

Another of the "situation" inductions was based on a mantra derived from one of Rai's passages about "a blank interval, a pause, a lapse, a portable hole, a warp, an in-between space, a fold, and a void." To make this work, I wove the physical features of the cabin into the induction: for instance, the door the visitors had just come through into the cabin, the floor of the wooden balcony that they were obliged to look at as they took off their shoes, and then the underlit spruce stairs (ten, nine, eight) deepening the induction as we went down... I reminded them of some things that *perhaps* (the word "perhaps" was helpful in sowing doubt about what was obviously there) they could remember: the metal railings that were actually there, but the clock that did not exist. This created a sort of mixed reality fog, extending the real into the possible and then into the incredible.

Throughout this gradual narrative reversal of reality, in which the imagined became more real than the existing objects in the cabin, I drew people's attention to the gap between the space "above" and the space "below," though their eyes were closed the whole time. It was the same gap that Marcel and I had made several attempts to get just right in terms of the separation between the top base-board and the upside-down lower base-board. I suggested to the visitors that their noses were within a centimeter or two of this gap, the sense of smell making the experience more primary. With that, I counted down from three to one to raise the expectation and sharpen the focus; then the visitors would suddenly find themselves diving through the gap, as it expanded to accept their bodies.

The essential part of the induction, to my mind, was not so much publishing Rai's words into people's subconscious, but allowing the process to develop: each visitor would generate their own interpretation or version of that initial cue from Rai's text. This was a process similar to what I had developed in my *Bestiary* project with different communities and migrants on the Mexico/US border; the third gender Muxhe in Oaxaca; and the Raëlians, a group that believes that the world was colonized by aliens. My interest in hypnosis has always been far less about implanting or suggesting ideas into visitors' minds, but rather listening for that emergent voice of the unconscious as it traces the world and pushes against the boundaries of the collective psyche. I have sensed there to be various nested levels of the collective: universal collective schemas and then ones that are specific to certain social and cultural mind-sets. For instance the sense of three-dimensionality seems a very strong schema to work beyond, in terms of giving an embodied sense of experience of fourth or fifth dimensions.¹² However, when I was working with

the Muxhe, imaginary clusters of three, such as three hills, three flowers, three churches, seemed to come up in a disproportionate amount in the trance experiences, which responded to a geographically and culturally localized collective schema.

Although I have never received negative feedback related to control and manipulation when I conduct live performances, perhaps because the intent of the hypnotist can be better gauged when one is present, after d(13) had ended, Rai played some of the past Hypnotic Show inductions to audiences and was met with extreme uproar. Here is one:

I have a funny story from Zurich last week. I was giving a presentation about different things to Swiss students, then Hypnotic Show's turn came. I introduced the basics, then put the Skype test recording of Artissima to play and went to the toilet. When I came back (well, I assume I was gone for no more than seven minutes), there was a mutiny on the boat! The professor who invited me (a good old friend) seemed to be offended by a voice that told him "now you feel this and that." He took it as an extreme manipulation and he wanted me to stop playing it, but I decided to keep playing it till the end. We had a good conversation after.

Perhaps the offended party had missed the point that although suggestions were being made, in actual fact these were the bare minimum cues; what we were mostly interested in was for the visitors to build on this minimal mental scaffolding and *make* their own worlds.

In a similar vein:

On Mon, Oct 8, 2012 at 8:41 AM, Rai wrote:
How are you doing amigo? I've come back from some touring in Stockholm and London. At my lecture about projects for PhD students at Slade School of Fine Art I

talked about HS quite a lot. The biggest controversy was caused by the fact of smell being introduced to people under hypnosis. "Abuse of trust" and "unethical" were some of the terms applied. It was very interesting. I pledged to be more responsible in future dealings with unconsciousness! Now off to Amsterdam, will see if we can bring Hypnotic Show to students again.

But the best way to sense whether there was a feeling of being controlled or not, was to listen to the visitors:

I took part in three sessions, two group sessions and the final open-air session. When I talked to friends before I went to the Hypnotic Show some of them were scared; they thought that if you undergo hypnosis you lose your free will. I was not afraid in the beginning, and also I did not have the feeling that I could not decide to stand up and go away at any time. There were some very intensive impressions during the session. When you made us stand at the top of a staircase, right away the staircase of my Grandma's house came up to me—a house in which I always felt very safe. After both sessions, I felt very relaxed and was free of back pain (which I have very often) for some hours. For some time after the sessions I still had your voice in my ear. It made me very calm. Coming to the final session, I never thought that I would be able to relax and follow your voice when I saw all the people. It took a little longer but it worked!!! — Ute

The session was a very impressive experience for me, as I had always wanted to do a hypnotic session. Further to find you merely through coincidence: I was looking for another art-piece of which I had the wrong location number, and ending up at your space makes it even more special for me. After the session I was extremely relaxed and balanced. Being normally extremely vivid, physically

and mentally, I was curious if it would be possible to find calm through someone I don't know. Well, it did happen, and I responded to your "orders." I felt a very deep relaxation and concentration, although I wasn't sure if it was actually my unconsciousness lifting up my arm or if it was my will to move my arm as you wanted me to do. Then again, the movement of my arm felt like a toothed wheel being powered by someone and it moves tooth by tooth. During a natural movement I would not have this feeling so it must have come from being hypnotized. — Ulla

I replied:

Thank you for your kind words... The description of the arm levitation is particularly interesting to me and your description of the toothed wheel feeling: the question is whether it was powered by my words or a kind of "user illusion" in which the conscious mind is puppeteered by the unconscious self, and only becomes aware of things well after the unconscious mind has issued its instructions. Also, when you say my "orders," I usually call them "hypnotic suggestions" as the idea is never to use overbearing force but rather a sense of guidance.

The gap

There are so many details I remember. But after fighting the progressive relaxation into hypnosis—having a revelation as to why I was fighting it and then letting go—I remember little more. The malleable rhythm of the voice. We were taken into the space between the room and its reflection above, and that brought a feeling of slim horizontality. My head was very heavy. After being squished into a plane three inches thick, we were sent out towards a star. That feeling was of blackness and stellar dust and movement without any effort. At one point I suspected we must be smelling something—but my head was too heavy to be willed

to smell actively. And then we were progressively brought back to the room. We had never quite left it, but I might have forgotten were it not for the weight of my head reminding me that I had a body.

In the end I thought it was quite comical that I, who had so diligently arrived to be immersed in Sissel's odors, Raimundas' texts, and Marcos' theater, so completely gave in to the hypnosis that little was left for me to reflect upon as an aesthetic experience. Like trying to say something about the architecture of a façade when it is under construction. So instead, scrutinizing the scaffolding. — Caitlin

The “in-between space” that represented the gap was akin to the moment between breathing in and breathing out, between being asleep and being awake, between living and death. I am not sure if this was Rai's intent, but there seemed to be substantial parallels between what he had written and the schema of the “bardo”—a Tibetan Buddhist concept of the ultimate liminal space in which the mind has the opportunity to gravitate to its own essence. Appropriately, one visitor found a dead man inside the gap, but another one found a laughing girl, and yet another found the intimacy of faces kissing within this blank space.

I killed a man

In as far as death and hypnosis goes, Dora Garcia, an artist participating in d(13), came to one of the sessions. She had previously written a script for the Hypnotic Show, which we performed at the Artissima art fair in Torino. It involved the uncomfortable idea that one had “killed a man.” To say the least, it was one of the most difficult inductions I have performed. It was easy to let a group of some thirty people drift into this

dark suggestion, in all the hypersensory fullness of a hypnotic state, since we are all predisposed to morbid fantasies of some sort. But to lead them back into a place where they would not have a lasting negative imprint involved paddling like mad to seed positive suggestions amidst the negative events of finding oneself in the situation of having killed someone.

The journey through the gap lead to a great variety of outcomes: someone awoke floating on the ceiling, another had a positive version of Breitenau play through their senses.

To different visitors the gap became:

A tunnel—red-orange-white

Floating

The cabin became overgrown with sinews of creepers forcing their way into the cracks between the walls

Moving cubes

Tilted dolphins

And after staring at the scene for a long time it all becomes a mirrored surface.

The visitors' visions were often accompanied by internal feelings:

My head was like a planet. The room felt wider and higher after the induction, fresher.

Repeatedly for many people the air is “cleared,” just like the desktops that I was supposedly clearing for people, as I will explain in a little bit.

And yet the space was much paler in relation to colors displayed in the mind, losing the “measure” of the body: the scale of oneself in the world around us.¹³

Being NOT HERE, but rather seeming to be a galaxy in the woods.

Reaching deeper into this framework of the gap, the seed of an experiment emerged through Morten Norbye Halvorsen's suggestion. Morten appeared in a memorable performance under a willow tree near Joan Jonas' cabin in the first week of d(13). It was something between a 1920s Oskar Schlemmer remix and a vision from a weird sci-fi movie. He crouched, twiddling the knobs of his synthesizers, wearing a prominently prehensile tail, perhaps just monkeying around or maybe giving a nod to the only way forward: going backward, devolving, unlearning, but certainly not deconstructing or anything nearly as convoluted as that. After he left Kassel, Rai sent him an email:

I was thinking that for the abstract space of Hypnotic Show it could be great to record a dry signal in the room in which Marcos and myself, also Marcos' kid and wife perhaps, are present so that we are part of the way his voice sounds, like the invisible watermark.

When all else is subtracted—the visitors, the induction narratives, the cabin, the noises from outside, the *hypnoteur*, the unconscious minds in collusion—we are left with a kind of resonant imprint.¹⁴

After dOCUMENTA(13) Rai began talking about the resonant frequency inside my sinus and conspiring with Morten to orchestrate a nasally-derived symphony of sorts.

In August, while in the thick of the Hypnotic Show, I had recorded an induction “to slip into a passing sound,” which Morten wove into his *Rockmore Recital* at Neringa for the Baltic Triennial in Vilnius, creating imaginary (or “listenary”) experiences. The induction was designed to induce listeners to enter into the space of sound rather than listen to it in a distant subject/object way.

The experiment reached its height at oO—the Lithuanian and Cyprus Pavilion exhibition at the 55th

International Art Exhibition of la Biennale di Venezia—in which the dry signal inside my sinus resonated throughout the gymnasium space, carried on Morten's specially modulated sound waves and curated by Rai. The Pavilion was awarded a Special Mention for National Participation and I was left wondering if my sinus had any subliminal effect on the jury?

Reverberations

Bachelard offers two concepts that bring about an altered temporality of material imagination: resonance and reverberation. Resonance is a dynamical condition through which the world discloses its imaginary opportunities: it oscillates with larger amplitude at some frequencies than at others. Under this intense state, the attunement of two rhythms—the rhythm of consciousness and the world-rhythm—can occur. Reverberation technically means a further step, i.e. the change of configuration of our rhythmical settings through the intrusion of alien vibration.—Kristupas Sabolius

While on the subject of sounds and reverberations, feedback loops, and recursive music, I first saw this very elegantly dressed man at the worker's mess a few days before the opening of d(13). Most of us were down in the trenches, struggling in the Somme-like mud and sawdust, coming up to the mess hall briefly to eat free asparagus and potatoes. I was amazed by how clean this guy was, secretly jealous of his panache and poise, and struck by the Tim Burton-like extension of his spidery fingers, hands, and arms.

Tarek Atoui would become a fixture in the landscape of d(13), playing his strange musical *extruments*,¹⁵ deviations from ordinary musical instruments that extended extraordinary feedback fugues across many different venues in Kassel. He even for a moment

displaced the Barry Manilow cover player at the Orangerie café, sending his contorted riffs ricocheting across the Song Dong mountain sculpture and beyond.

His self-built machines seemed to be hypersensitive extensions of his telescopic fingers, and his face would twitch and grimace to the jarring squeal of each high note, the deep rumbles of the bass and the clanging Hendrix-like resonances. Rai orchestrated a secret nighttime experiment in Tarek's cabin, and that night we spiraled into a deep hypno-sonic abyss:

I've been looking at our video and did not edit it.

I left it as one piece, the way it is, and I'm keeping it as a sacred object. It really looks like a new form of duo, especially with you in the back, whispering and sustaining the flow you have created.

Your presence this way makes the performance a complex process. You're a direct energy and sound source, and for me the interaction was happening with you and with sound itself.—Tarek

We rode into the night astride the vast amps inside this hollow, resonant chamber, experimenting with the impact of hypnosis and generating music straight from the unconscious.

An oscillation

The first time, I traveled back to my childhood. I was thinking about a small flowerbed in my childhood garden where I was standing in a floral dress with a watering can in my hands. Then I had pictures in my head of situations where I was disappointed or hurt by somebody. It was a journey through my whole past.—Miriam

This journey into death, a kind of “Meur-sault,” a jumping into death reminiscent of the protagonist of Camus’ *L’Etranger* (1942), came back in another one of the

inductions. This induction began with a very primary focus on balance or “proprioception”: a sense so primary that we feel it in the womb before the other senses.

Visitors found themselves on swings in a playground:

I see the house where I lived with my parents, I'm on the swing. For about nine years, every night I had the very same dream: that I flew away with a little red balloon. Always starting from the very same place, sand, and not knowing where I went. Now I saw this image again. It felt good.—Mo

I used the seconds it would take to swing back as a cue to go back and forth through time, my body and voice swaying back and forth, back and forth: forwards into the future and back into the past, gradually, further and further, until the visitor was being born on the one hand, gasping for his or her first breath, and on the other hand brushing the moment of death, smelling the aroma of those last seconds, as I myself had smelt the dying breath of my grandmother on her last night, being drawn into the sensory emotion of death.

This exploration of death was often quite liberating, as we have a conscious and social tendency to be so scared of it. Many visitors found that their fear had diminished or disappeared. One person mentioned that she felt comforted by the idea that the present, at whatever time in her life, is always at the bottom of the swing cycle and always in balance.

This symmetry of swinging through mirrored time and space meshed nicely with the architecture of the Reflection Room, and I would extend these mirror-like processes into the induction itself—often running the hypnosis journey backwards on the way out, in part to remind visitors of the journey they had undertaken, and in part to emerge at the end of the process as if, in a way, nothing had happened.

This picture of swinging forward and back to the past, and back to now, and then into the future, to the moment of birth and to the moment of death was very helpful. Somehow spiritual or symbolic. I took the freedom to choose how far and fast the swing would go. It helped to not think or feel too much about the Future or the Past or about the Present moment, because the swing wouldn't stop. The motion helped avoid getting lost in sadness. — Alex

The historian, filmmaker, and curator Red Vaughan Tremmel chose this same story fragment. He seemed very affected by the session, and I later found out that he and the artist/writer Ruth Robbins had been putting together a display in a hut nearby which included the ashes of a burlesque dancer. When I visited the display I felt the resonance of the life-death swing induction among the nipple tassels, the g-strings, the other burlesque paraphernalia, in contrast to the ashes of the dancer's remains quietly resting there.

Woman ironing and dreaming of a perfect life

Reality is that which, when you stop believing in it, doesn't go away. — Philip K. Dick

Another one of the “situations”—one of the sixteen first segments of the induction—was about a woman ironing her laundry. At the beginning of d(13), I was not especially familiar with Rai's texts and so when each new text was chosen, I had to figure out on the fly the mechanics of a fluid hypnosis. One thing that is particularly effective in a hypnotic state is to *embody* the situation; rather than *look* at a woman ironing clothes it is more involved to *become* the lady ironing the clothes. There were five guys and one woman sitting in the

room ready for the induction. Because of her gender, I surmised that the woman would be the easiest to work with and the others would be more of a challenge.

I presented the woman with the color menu that I always presented to visitors at the start of the session. She chose her color field from the menu of forty-eight possible stories based on an exercise she deployed, related, according to her, to chroma-therapy and the ancient thinker Avicenna.¹⁶

After the visitors chose their induction combinations and I had settled them into a trance state, I deepened the induction and came to the critical moment of not just observing the mother ironing the clothes, but *three, two, one! Becoming the mother!* The woman must have woken up with a jolt. Her eyes were fixed wide open on me, which I only noticed after a minute or two. She signaled that she needed to leave immediately and we tiptoed up the stairs while the five men were teetering on the mental precipice of becoming the opposite sex. The door at the top of the stairs was difficult to open. It was jammed shut. I used the sudden, unexpected jolting noise of the door opening to shock the guys into “becoming” women.

Later the woman told me:

Imagining this woman through your voice is hard, because I am her and I imagined this out of love for the character. To be simple, it is about love. And it is a complicated matter because it is all encompassing. To imagine myself is like a warp that hurts my intestines, I could not handle my body contorting.

It turns out that she had contributed the “woman ironing” passage to Rai's book, upon which this Hypnotic Show was based. She was overwhelmed by the coincidence that out of the forty-eight passages that I had chosen almost at random from the whole book,

she had chosen the story that she had written. The book seemed to have a power unto itself, revealing its own inner triggers and labyrinthine connections.

The woman's wording in her email to me after the session implied that my voice prevented her from connecting with the love she felt for her character, as if my voice was rough and invasive. To be intimate enough to connect with people emotionally, and yet not so close that people would feel in some way violated, was a constant struggle for me. It was already a bit strange for people to sign a waiver before entering the cabin, agreeing to being filmed during the session. In actual fact they were being surveilled lest, during a one-on-one session, someone later claimed that they were violated during their trance. Perhaps I have lived in California too long, but at certain moments where realities shifted, I was glad to have that objective eye in the space for backup. As it happens, I never had to review the footage and it was not kept afterwards.

The woman who walked out came back right at the end of DOCUMENTA(13) bearing a small twig, perhaps the size of the one that Hansel and Gretel used to trick the witch into thinking they were still thin. The worn twig had been with her since the day she came to the induction in the Reflection Room. She said it had been a kind of talisman that kept her from going insane. It turned out that she had been moved from one institution to the next in her native land, a country also in the clutches of its own collective breakdown (or perhaps awakening) as the Arab Spring had taken hold. She handed the twig back to me.

Microtones in my voice

The cabin was a place where trust needed to be nurtured together and yet this trust could be disturbed by my slightest misstep. One visitor said:

I have a short remark about fear and how it may also disrupt the hypnosis. It is impossible to accommodate for everyone's fears, but at one point Marcos abruptly moved our open hands down into our laps. Perhaps a lighter touch (or touch, pause, and then a slower descent) would have startled me less. [Another woman also] remarked upon it. The movement did not inspire trust.

Here again there is an example of how my movement in the space impacted a visitor:

I was always aware of the space my body was situated in, but listening to Marcos' sonorous voice, I lost my sense of time. When his voice suddenly grew louder and closer, I had the physical sensation of breathlessness.

I would move around the space and change the speed, tone, and inflection of my voice depending on the depth of the visitors' trances. Sometimes I would approach someone and speak loudly to them if I felt that they were on the verge of dozing off. At other times, I would come up close to someone and lower my voice to a whisper and perhaps reinforce the softness with a touch on the shoulder or between the brows to loosen the tension in a hunched shoulder or a frown.

At times my voice seemed to lull people into a deep sense of connection, as the defenses of the conscious mind gradually demobilized:

During one hour of dreaming and drifting, his beautiful voice brought me back to my childhood, then my adolescence and my first perfume, romance... I still remember the scent! — Selina

Even long after the sessions, my voice seemed to follow her:

For some time after the sessions I still had your voice in my ear.

And from someone else:

The other day I realized I have quite a vivid sound memory of Marcos' voice. By listening to him in my mind, I was able to descend the staircase again. This time it led to some kind of lake of thick, viscous, and opaque golden liquid, in which I stepped and immersed myself. I stayed there for a bit until I found the stairs back up, somewhat further along, and climbed them again.

Yi-Ping says that my hypnosis voice is curved like a hook that draws people in. In actual fact I don't pay special attention to what I do, or how it works, but I do notice that it changes radically from my everyday voice, especially as it progressively slows and lowers in tone. It also seems to take charge of its words, its narrative, and follows its own insights. This is where I have a sense that the intuitive aspects of Rai's book meshed with the unconscious "logic" that to my conscious mind came across as improvisational and sometimes bizarre and surprising.

If you pay close enough attention to conscious speech, you will frequently notice a subvocalized rehearsal loop of what you actually say as you calculate what it is that you mean to communicate. During the induction process, there only seemed to be one voice-stream moving outward, with no second-guessing by the conscious mind. This certainly required a special kind of attention on my part: a need to keep the conscious mind neutralized, and at the same time to facilitate the stream of words by breathing deeply enough to sustain the flow of words—the way a singer prolongs certain vocalizations and needs to adapt to changing rhythms and beats, breathing only at convenient moments from the depths of the belly.

Invariably at the end of the inductions my whole face would be tingling. I think this was from a lack of oxygen, but I also noticed a tunnel-vision effect, where

I would end the session quietly staring at one particular detail, like the knot in one of the spruce planks a couple of meters away from me, as if trapped in its spiral vortex. Aldous Huxley mentioned in "Heaven and Hell" the "value" of oxygen deprivation for its contribution to visionary experiences:

Prolonged and continuous shouting or singing may produce similar, but less strongly marked, results. Unless they are highly trained, singers tend to breathe out more than they breathe in. Consequently the concentration of carbon dioxide in the alveolar air and the blood is increased and, the efficiency of the cerebral reducing valve being lowered, visionary experience becomes possible. Hence the interminable "vain repetitions" of magic and religion. The chanting of the curandero, the medicine-man, the shaman; the endless psalm-singing and sutra-intoning of Christian and Buddhist monks; the shouting and howling, hour after hour, of revivalists—under all the diversities of theological belief and aesthetic convention, the psychochemico-physiological intention remains constant. To increase the concentration of CO₂ in the lungs and blood and so to lower the efficiency of the cerebral reducing valve, until it will admit biologically useless material from Mind-at-Large—this, though the shouters, singers, and mutterers did not know it, has been at all times the real purpose and point of magic spells, of mantras, litanies, psalms, and sutras. "The heart," said Pascal, "has its reasons." Still more cogent and much harder to unravel are the reasons of the lungs, the blood, and the enzymes, of neurons and synapses. The way to the super-conscious is through the subconscious, and the way, or at least one of the ways, to the subconscious is through the chemistry of individual cells (Huxley, 1956).

While on the subject of Huxley and his experiments with consciousness, including LSD, I received

this letter from Miriam, one of the visitors to the Reflection Room:

The strongest picture I still have in my mind was when I came there with my group as a Worldly Companion¹⁷ on the night tour. I didn't think that it would become a deep hypnotic state because I cared for the group and I was unsure if they would enjoy it. But they did. So I closed my eyes and imagined this personal cabin in the woods you were talking about. I saw a wooden cabin in my mind. Inside there was a bed for one person with white bed linen. On the pillow there was a black bowl lying there made of heavy, black marble. It was bright and gleamy with no real negative appearance. I drew this picture at home in my sketchbook and sometimes I still think about it.

The last time I joined your session I told you about my first experience with LSD, which I had had the day before. I experienced some analogy between the hypnotic state and the trip on hallucinogenic drugs: to experience your deepest unconscious, to feel, to touch, to taste, and to smell in a different, more direct way. I knew you must have had similar experiences with this drug before. This day at the session I was still really impressed by this new experience. The day before in the evening I went to Bergpark Wilhelmshöhe with a friend of mine. It was our first trip on LSD and I have never had such an expansion of the unconscious before. It was like becoming a child again, to discover the world, nature, your body, sexuality, and your whole environment for the first time in a very curious way—with all your passion but also all your fear. Why am I here? What am I doing? Time went by in a really different tempo. People from “the other world” were passing by. A wedding took place beside the park and we observed the bustle. You had no relationship to time and space anymore. The grass was soft and gentle, almost sexual. The lights were flashy, the castle seemed to be built out of gold, the flowers were like colorful toys, the music

was so intense. I could not imagine how to come back into the “real world” again. I was frightened by this strange reality and impressed by this wonderland. How long have I been in this state of mind? Every sensation was so overwhelming. It felt like being Alice. On our way back to the city, everything seemed crowded. Cars, trams, noise, flash-lights. It was a long sensual journey that I will never forget and that I would like to experience again. I went through this trip again when I was sitting in your cabin the next day. I was really smiling inside. Thank you for your journey. Sometimes I still have this warm and familiar smell of the reflection room in my nose like a short flashback and it makes me smile again.

And my reply:

Thank you so much for this detailed and emotive feedback... In actual fact I have been influenced by the teaching and guiding hand of peyote in the past and can completely relate to what you describe: the engulfing sensuality and linkage to all around you, the glimpse of a universe so much more sensitive and profound and yet encroached upon later by the busy and noisy machinery of our daily lives. I take it as a compliment that the hypnosis could mirror the profound visions that you experienced the day before...

Perhaps this feeling was a type of “coronal bliss.” By that I refer to a term I coined when the French novelist Marie Darrieusecq came for a session at CCB's recommendation. She awoke at the end of the induction with an intense feeling around the back of her head, behind and above her ears, in what she termed as an over-tight swimming cap sliding up off the top of her head. She said she felt it often and, as a matter of fact, so did I. I always supposed that everyone feels that kind of physical tingling feeling around the top of the head

that is matched by an uncanny sense of harmonious bliss. It's hard to describe, as the sensation goes beyond the meager tools that words provide us to describe our psychosomatic states. I first felt it when I was four, as I sat quietly on a space hopper in the very early sun under a porch in the Pyrenees, when no one else was up yet. I also felt it occasionally as a preteen at Stephen August, a louche barbershop in London, as the hairdresser snipped just above my right ear.

This strange discovery with Marie of our mutual "coronal bliss" opened up the conversation to other aspects of subjective reality that may or may not be shared with others. It appeared that she was also a congenital synesthete. A celebrated synesthetic artist is Wassily Kandinsky, who experienced an involuntary crossover in the mind between the sensing of sound and color, and transposed this onto canvas. Georgia O'Keefe and Piet Mondrian sometimes used the analogy of music in the titles to their work: O'Keefe called one of her works *Music-Pink and Blue*, but this may a poetic or metaphorical association rather than a description of true synesthesia.

Chapter 6 Synning

Gloucester: I see it feelingly

King Lear, Act 4, Scene VI, Shakespeare

I have long been interested in synesthesia, though I am not a congenital synesthete. The way synesthetes sense their environment in a waking state is very much like the heightened experience within a trance-like state. I have worked on several projects involving synesthesia; one was called *McSyn*, in which I asked a group of synesthetes in San Francisco to visit a McDonald's and help build up a synesthetic profile of the restaurant. My proposition was that even with a company like Micky D's and its First-World-wide slogan ("I'm loving it") backing the world into a more homogenous and uniformly dull place, personal experience always protects us from the flattening corporate force.

One of the *synners* (as synesthetes sometimes call themselves) said that the letters of McDonald's should not be yellow, but are like this: McDonald's [Red M, field green c, black D, white o, brown n, pale green a, olive green l, field green, d and plum colored s]. Another experienced ambient sound in her body. As I wrote at the time:

Perhaps the most curious of the syns is Colleen,¹⁸ who has a data-to-extended-proprioceptive syn. In other words, she projects data around her body, in a matrix of lines, shapes, and vectors, including such information as TV channels, spatial dimensions, days of the week, months of the year, etc. She is known as a "higher" synesthete, as her syn is driven by numerical correlation and not just sensory appearance alone.

As I explored further, I became interested in finding out more about whether synesthesia took place across brain centers or was a more localized phenomenon. The opportunity to investigate this arose through an experiment with Professor Vilayanur Ramachandran, who I mentioned earlier. Together with Daniela Frogheri, a collaborator of mine and a *synner*, I went down to the Center for Brain and Cognition at the University of San Diego. We ventured up to Ramachandran's study, filled with strange artifacts from his various experiments with phantom limbs.

We began to explore what color words like “psychology” (which begin with a “p” but have a sibilant first syllable) appear to a synesthetic mind. We used hypnosis to elicit a more focused and unconscious response:

DF To start with, Ramachandran asked me lots of questions in quick succession to see if I was a true synesthete. They were questions about colors and letters, about numbers and words. He asked these questions rapidly, each time in a different order and I repeated the same answers many times.

Then he asked me about the space around me: whether I locate or find numbers in a specific place around me. He asked me these questions many times too.

He asked me to identify Pantone colors of various tones so that he was sure I was able to describe the color of letters or numbers precisely.

For example, I would describe seven as a pale green tending to yellow, or six is a pale green tending towards blue.

I also did a series of computer tests with one of his assistants which included a quiz with quick questions and answers. I repeated this five or six times over.

Then he asked me questions such as whether two, as a volume, is larger than twenty or 200, and if they are the same color.

Then he put water in my ears and I got extremely dizzy for a few seconds.

ML So in other words, Ramachandran verified that you are a natural synesthete, that you see letters and numbers in color? Do you have other types of synesthesia?

DF Yes, I see the color and form of sounds as well as of those of some tastes. For instance when I lived in Barcelona a really silly thing used to happen to me. The metro lines have colors. But for me Line 2 is blue and not dark red. So I would try to get on R1, which is blue.

When Ramachandran asked me if I place numbers around me, I realized that some are positioned behind me, while others are located in front of me.

ML Do you feel sounds in your body, haptically?

DF No. The sounds in my body only happened with the hypnosis sessions. In my knees and hips.

ML Do you think you became more synesthetic under hypnosis?

DF Under hypnosis, I could feel the sounds and the colors running through my body. I could sense the colors of sounds and I felt them as textures in my fingers. Your voice always sounded red to me, by the way.

ML You sensed colors of sounds as textures in your fingers rather like the idea of René Daumal's “paroptic vision.”¹⁹ Do you remember the hypnosis tests with Ramachandran?

DF Yes, but I don't think they worked much... I can't really remember what happened?

ML You don't remember what we investigated?

You don't remember that we wrote on pieces of paper: words with silent letters at the beginning? Words like knock, wrist, psychology? When you were already deeply in trance and after having done the appropriate checks, such as lifting your arm to verify a natural heaviness response, Ramachandran began to hold up these words with silent first letters in front of your face with your eyes open while remaining in a hypnotic state. The idea was to try to see if we could determine which part of your brain was applying the synesthetic encoding: the auditory cortex or the language centers.²⁰ To see whether the synesthesia was stemming from a more primary, auditory center, or a "higher" brain center such as that involved with language processing.

So for instance, you said that the word "psychology" was an almost transparent greenish-silver.

DF Ah... "p" for me is brown whereas "s" is green so it would seem from the experiment that the word becomes synesthetic through sound predominantly.

ML The repeated words began to show a pattern in which there was a strong link between color and sound rather than color and spelling.

DF Ah yes... I notice that that happens to me with languages that I don't understand, or only hear spoken to begin with, or before seeing the words written down. As the written word is consolidated the letters do begin to have an influence. For instance, the first time I heard the word "Oaxaca" I saw it as brown and dark blue. I thought it was spelled "Guajaca." When I saw how it was spelled, it turned blacker with the beginning "O." It's almost the same color but

it's not brown anymore, but black with a dark blue tinge.

ML I think that is why Ramachandran was interested in this experiment because the written word has a contaminating influence on the experience of synesthesia, but it's difficult to tell where the boundaries lie unless the conscious mind is set aside, as in the case of hypnosis. The exercise was useful as it helped to shed light on which part of the mind first processes a word, whether it is the area that decodes sound as a word as it is sub-vocalized, or the area that deciphers spelling and the shapes of letters.

This division of brain functions was something that I was always hovering between in my inductions in the cabin, as I would ask people to listen to the *sound* of my voice, de-emphasizing the more conscious mode of listening for meaning. It seems from conducting all these hypnosis sessions at DOCUMENTA(13), that synesthesia, which is something that all children experience to some degree or other before the neural pathways between the senses become fully compartmentalized (Maurer, Gibson, & Spector, 2013), can be re-established through the practice of hypnosis.

For the cabin we developed a set of synesthetic menus. Back in the Artissima art fair in Turin the previous November we had already introduced a kind of synesthetic menu. The idea was to give visitors a choice of induction narrative through color, without showing them the first phrase so as not to give away the content, and particularly for the conscious mind not to begin formulating fixed ideas on the subject matter.

Our participation at Artissima was key in developing this menu, although from a conversation I had in the cabin with CCB, it appeared that Rai and I were almost

not invited to d(13) because we had taken part in this art fair, which to her was a commercial circus where art dealing overpowered the artwork.

In actual fact there is a yawning gap between the commercial gallery interests of the art world and the other ideas-oriented, less commerce-based faction, incubated by CCB among other curators. This is why, even though there was some involvement of the regrettably named “blue chip” galleries, d(13) was populated by artists who often seemed to have only tangential connections to the machinery of art commerce.

Linn was a visitor who was in despair at the state of art and culture:

Lately art has become more and more just a regular, often material, sector in the general neo-capitalistic system with hardly any vision or independence. I'm from Sweden and we see it everywhere here, from how difficult it is to get financing and what kind of art gets money, what kind of artists are accepted into our art schools, to what I think is even more frightening: how indifferent regular people and politicians are to art/culture in a broader sense. There is a general feeling that there is no interest in exploring anything outside the material and commercial world, like there wouldn't even be a need for that.

Best of luck and also, thanks for trying to have a conversation about art today, it's refreshing!

As Zian said:

I like the distribution of spectators, as some may access the new imaginary realm, but some may never. It is also one of the reasons I like this edition of documenta, as it contains the power of expanding our sense of experiencing aesthetic events or artifacts, whether they are art or not.

ML to Zian:

Most artworks have an outer form that prescribes a standard and objective viewing, whereas we were just providing the minimum framework for art to be experienced as generated from each person's imagination. I also like the “journey within a journey” aspect of the Hypnotic Show, as it deepened the wandering process that was already happening for visitors at d(13).

Luckily for us, at Artissima we were sent down to the “catacombs” of the fair to conduct our Hypnotic Show. We had the help of an Italian hypnotist called AnaLisa, who limped with a broken leg. We nicknamed her The Analyser. Our cold and damp cell in the basement of Artissima, where normally only maintenance people would venture, contrasted with the frenetic art fair environment above. And so, as we were cast down into the universe below, CCB let Rai and me off the hook.

At d(13), our synesthetic menus developed into a field of concentric colored squares, each one representing a different narrative passage, with a total combination of 4,096 possible narrative combinations. The squares were reminiscent of Josef Albers' paintings, and were placed on specially folded paper that could be opened and closed very easily.²¹ The colors corresponded to a synesthetic translation of the first phrase of each section chosen from Rai's book. In order to help form this synesthetic correspondence, I used my synner friend Cassidy Curtis' online translation tool to determine the colors of the menu. One phrase—“It's interesting”—translated into a concentric field of very pale colors. The many I's in “It's interesting” came up as white, according Cassidy's synesthetic mind. Other phrases came through as incredibly bright and colorful. Since that time, I have developed my own synesthetic color alphabet through unconscious processes.

In the beginning, I handed over the menus to the visitors and allowed them to make slow, conscious choices. But later on I developed a completely different approach to favor the unconscious mind of the visitor. The architectural space of the cabin had already been designed to work on the unconscious mind and push aside the bullying, obsessive-compulsive conscious mind. However, a certain doctor called Michael Petermeyer, an expert in back pain, changed the course of the menu selection process at the Hypnotic Show.

While still in the lower part of the cabin after the session, Michael talked about consciousness, memory, and chronic back pain, and how it is possible that these things relate to behaviors that have been preserved through ancestral memory. He told me that many of his patients arrive at the clinic with aching backs, but in reality there is nothing physically wrong with them: there is no trace of damage in their MRI scans. It seems that there is no logical explanation for ongoing chronic pain, no apparent reason for it to exist. However, a theory that suggests that when people leave their tribal or social groups, chronic pain begins to impact them until they eventually return to the protection of their group. This is a survival instinct. The doctor also mentioned that people sometimes hunch their shoulders when they are stressed, a reflex designed to protect their vulnerable necks from the attack of wild animals. Of course in our present day, these risks are highly unlikely, and yet our preprogrammed unconscious fears and instincts make us behave as we might have 20,000 years ago.

I was especially intrigued when Michael said that I should visit his friend who runs a brain surgery clinic in Essen. Before I knew it, I sneaked off on a three-hour train ride to Essen and met Dr. Ulrich Sure. There could not have been a better surname for such a

vigorous character with a firm handshake and long strides. Not a moment in the day to spare.

We went down from his office to the three simultaneously functioning operating theaters that he runs. I asked all the dumb sci-fi questions I could think of: Would it be possible to download consciousness onto a quantum hard drive with enough RAM? No. Would it be possible to transplant someone's head or brain onto another body? No, there are billions of connections. Would it be possible to have consciousness without any sensory stimulation? Probably not, but *perhaps* one could have a sense of consciousness by milking one's memories.

I was having trouble keeping up with his pace. We entered one door and stripped down to our undies; I was fumbling with my phone, trying to put my scrubs on the right way around, slip the rubber Calzuros onto my feet, tie on the surgical mask, to go into the surgery room. He had done this a million times. He smiled down at me, as I must have seemed like Woody Allen in *Sleeper*. We went through another door, and he started washing his hands, fingernails, and forearms thoroughly up to the elbows. He apologized, for he was about to do an "exciting" craniotomy on a two-year-old and I would get to see the grey matter in all its glory.

Alas, the child had caught a cold and the surgery had been delayed. We went through another door and there was a man in his sixties, overweight, lying on his back unconscious. *Stand here, no, here, you can look from here and at these screens there and there. This drill is an old one from the '60s, a pneumatic one...* The doctor talked quickly and was beginning to interface with his team, who had already prepped the patient with a stereotactic frame around his shaved cranium.

Uli, as everyone called him, cut a slice through the patient's scalp, a slice that seemed quite a lot thicker than what I would have imagined, and separated the

skin to reveal a nice piece of gleaming skull. He revved the trepanning drill and started pushing hard into the head. The patient was anesthetized but his head was wobbling around under the pressure. Uli pierced through, and it was then time to insert the biopsy needle into the grey matter.

It was a stark contrast to working with the mind in my cabin: seeing the oozing physicality of the brain, blood dripping out of the end of the needle. It was not a good sign, by the looks of the eyes gesturing to each other above their masks.

I was amazed first by the casual feeling in the room; and then by the sudden and intense focus and precision for a moment; and then by the return to a jocular, stress-relieving, laid-back atmosphere—almost like a jellyfish as it pulses through the water. The biopsy needle was pulled out with a sample and the diagnostician stood by with his microscope, smearing and staining and then down into the optical barrels. In a second, he swiveled on his seat and declared it to be a malignant tumor and hence a death sentence.

Life is short, the brain is delicate, and the mind is largely an unknown within neuroscience: sometimes seen in the operating theater as a bunch of grey protein and at other times a living system observed in very low resolution with relatively clumsy instruments known as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). I came away feeling that hypnosis should not be discounted as a powerful tool for reaching into the mind.

The encounter that actually changed the way I presented the menus in the Reflection Room, however, was a visit to one of the doctors who ran the tests to see what impact an operation had on people's cognition before and after surgery. A young woman with a tumor in her brain came into the room and began a

series of computer tests. I was surprised by how fast the tests were run, and the doctor explained that the unconscious mind makes extremely fast decisions, supposedly processing 20,000,000 bits of info per second, whereas the conscious mind can only process forty bits per second.

The very next day in the cabin, I tried out a new process of flashing the menu up in front of the visitors for a very brief instant. I was amazed by how instantaneously people made up their minds about which color-square they were drawn to. It was also a moment of extreme intimacy, as I would engage at close range one of a visitor's eyes (usually their left one),²² before raising the menu in front of their face. For a moment, I looked into the iris and beyond into the depths of their pupil.

The menu was just the starting point of the synesthetic immersion for the visitors. Many of the scripts encouraged a transfer of sensing or feeling from dialog and text toward smell, touch, and taste. In that act of transfer, a synesthetic connection was stimulated in the mind, at an unconscious level rather than at an intellectual one: the link was felt rather than understood rationally.

In the context of Neuro-Linguistic-Programming (NLP),²³ the shift was from a digital- or word-based interaction with the physical world to a much more sensory approach, in which sight, touch, and hearing could become dominant. In fact, we took it beyond NLP and emphasized the senses that NLP largely disregards, such as smell, taste, kinesthetic awareness (body movement) and proprioception (balance). Sometimes the primary sense, such as sight, would dissolve, melt away, or even explode, as in the case of one induction that involved being in the back of a taxicab looking at a book about hunting in Soviet Lithuania. The visitors

traveled “inside” one of the photos in the book, deep into the Lithuanian forests where they encountered a mountain animal by a stream and felt very thirsty, which transferred attention to an inner sense. When one particular visitor had been immersed in this sense of thirst for a while, I then suggested that the cab driver was looking at her in his rearview mirror, and that time was reflected or going back to front. She woke up and reported that her eyes “blew up” at that moment and she could not go on with the session.

The types of synesthetic associations visitors experienced were diverse, but for the most part intensely felt. A woman reported a strong feeling of the Brazilian dance Samba in her fingers. Someone else experienced her friends as “Bouba-Kiki-like” shapes; she was referring to an experiment involving angular and rounded forms that Wolfgang Kohler, a German psychologist, had developed.²⁴ So one could only imagine how this visitor to the session had begun to envision her friends—some with uncomfortable angular geometric extrusions, others with disproportionately soft and rounded features. The room in which this person was imagining herself had turned into an assault course of body parts, engulfing like outgrown pseudopodia or sharp and cutting. I think we can all collapse our friends into these geometric equivalences depending on their personalities, moods, and body traits, and yet in trance, this is something that even Kafka would have a hard time putting words to.

The Avocado Lady

An extreme example of a synesthetic experience involved The Avocado Lady. An elderly woman came in for an individual session. She came down the steps and I made her comfortable under a blanket, propping her shoulder and arm up with pillows. We began

the session and I took my time to get her into a deep state of trance. Her reactions confirmed her descent into a trance: her breathing slowed, she stopped conscious movements, such as scratching an itch, her hands became extremely limp and heavy, her jaw muscles relaxed, and there was now a gap between her lips as her mouth parted slightly. During these solo sessions I would be crouched in the corner under the railings, just behind the person’s head so that I could whisper and modulate my voice very subtly. When I brought her back into a state of wakefulness again, the joints on her hand cracked as she stretched, a sure sign that the session had been a very still and focused one.

The first thing she said was that she was sure that she had not been in trance and that the session had not worked at all. I was taken aback, as the indications had signalled the opposite. However, she didn’t move from her lying position, still staring up at the inverted geometry of the room, the mirrored coffee tables with Rai’s small, stacked coffee cups perched upside down, looking at her.

She paused, then sighed, then started talking about the fleeting, slippery texture of the inside of the skin, the rough external surface, the eternally hard roundness of the pit, the softness of the flesh, where your finger could just slip in deeper and deeper, displacing the vulnerable mushiness off to the sides. On and on, for minutes. She was not just talking about touching an imaginary avocado—a subject matter that had not come up whatsoever in this or any other induction—she was personifying the fruit, or perhaps she had become it. During the two-way ambiguities that I sometimes injected into the inductions (such as the notion that you may be standing on the ground, or equally, the ground may be supporting your weight,

you may be breathing the air or the air may just be moving through you), visitors had similar experiences of disembodiment or re-embodiment into something else, but this avocado case was entirely unprovoked.

When eventually The Avocado Lady struggled to her feet and up the stairs and out of the door; she turned to me and said with a deep sigh, “Now the avocado will get on her bicycle and ride away.”

The Avocado Lady was part of a large constituency of local Kassel visitors. They were engineers, accountants, weapons makers, cashiers, etc. Yes, weapon makers, too: I had seen the tanks being moved stealthily around town on huge transport vehicles at the dead of night from my dormer window.²⁵ One of the main reasons that Kassel was bombed to ashes during the Allied Strategic Campaign (between February 1942 and March 1945) was the Henschel & Son tank works. The tank manufacturing industry is alive and kicking today, though perhaps not so talked about due to the stigma of past experiences and the reduction of Kassel to rubble.

Therapy?

The Kassel locals generally had little interest in art, but came to me in droves when an article in the local paper pronounced that I “cleared people’s desktops.” I can only imagine how some of them, perhaps with messy homes and jumbled thoughts, came hoping that somehow a session that invited them to wander through mental notions on the peripheries of “normal” thought and beyond would instantly allow them to return to a structured and tidy life where all would be resolved.

But no, the Hypnotic Show was not designed as therapy. The word “Show” in the title cleverly inoculated the sessions against being interpreted as therapeutic.

“Show” would perhaps imply entertainment, or mere revealing, but not healing. A few hundred yards from the hut, the artist Pedro Reyes had set up his “sanatorium” with its supersized signage on display above the clinic-like structure. People wandered over there hoping to be cured of this and that in a simulated form of behavioral, mock therapy rendered by students who generally had no interest in becoming counselors.

One of the locals who came for a session at the Hypnotic Show was going through a divorce and was homeless and seemed very distraught. But just because we were not taking on the responsibility of therapy did not mean we would turn him away. Although I never practiced hypnotherapy I did work with a series of “at risk youth” through the HeArt Project,²⁶ a program that brings art to minority kids in Los Angeles. I remember once reframing the traumatic event of an ex-gang youth’s brother being shot by the police in front of him. Reframing involves laying a positive memory over the traumatic one by taking the person back to the exact turn of events and then giving the person the tools to help release a moment stuck so helplessly and hopelessly in their minds.

Chiara warned me that a solo session with this local could be challenging, but he seemed to be okay as he settled in. He understood English perfectly. No sooner was I halfway through my first count-down from ten to one than the guy sat bolt upright, completely surprised and started asking me questions in German. I spoke back to him in English, but he stared back at me unable to understand anything I was saying. Eventually I went upstairs and asked Chiara if she could come down and help. I carried out the rest of the session by saying each phrase of the induction and having Chiara whisper it into the guy’s ear. When he finally awoke from the session it seemed that he had recovered his

ability to speak English. He may have temporarily lost the English-language speech center or translation center in his brain due to the deep relaxation of certain parts of his body.

He left the session, but then came back for another four or five more, completely obsessed with the sessions as well as with Chiara, who had become the subject of a strange stalking behavior, so much so that we pulled her off coordinating the night sessions as the walk back through the dark park was a worry.

Sensory transfiguration

As one reads in his book Touching the Rock: An Experience of Blindness (Hull, 1992), Hull could, for instance, conceive the surroundings only by listening to the sound of rain, so delineating the contours and throwing a colored blanket over previously invisible things.

—Kristupas Sabolius

Going back to the synesthetic experiences generated through the Hypnotic Show sessions, someone reported fur growing inwards into her body. She described a feeling of internal softness, somewhat reminiscent of Meret Oppenheim's fur teacup, but instead of activating mirror neurons that made her feel like spitting out the virtual hairs, the feeling of ingrowing hair was a kind of entactogenic bliss, minus the chemicals. Someone else felt that his surroundings had begun to be embedded in or mapped onto his skin.

The music of sound

Somewhat in keeping with Goethe's observation—"I call architecture frozen music"—an older lady began to experience Bach's "St. Matthew's Passion" as a mountain range, with the word God at the highest summit, linking sound and narrative to physical terrain. When

I discussed this subject with her, it seemed that the most sacred words in Baroque compositions were often timed to coincide with the moment of crescendo.

Sound became a crucial medium inside the cabin. I would encourage the practice of being able to hear a pinecone dropping 100 yards away, a conversation clearly heard a mile away, the sound of a cloud passing from the state of Hessen into Baden-Württemberg. We allowed the ear drum and the fluid-filled cochlea to become ever more sensitive as the sound waves transferred into fluid vibration, opening up to all frequencies, including subsonic and supersonic hearing.

Sometimes the sounds heard and felt were abstract, rather like the beat-box noises that you might encounter at Tino Sehgal's nearby installation, where twenty-five people, in shifts of five hours, would surround visitors in a pitch black environment, and lure, subject, seduce the visitor into a human frog swamp concerto of moving voice sounds. It was a place where you were sensitive not just to the sound and pitch of the voices but to the air moving between their voices and around you. Perhaps these abstract resonances had been left behind in the Reflection Room by Tino's dancers, who cycled through the hypnosis sessions all summer to clear their minds of their own zero-gravity beats.

A note to Ela, one of the dancers:

The hyper-awareness must be a good complement to dancing... I like that feeling of the filters being lifted off so we have a glimpse of the world as we really sense it before the brain filters damp down what we receive as our normal version of reality.

And later from her:

Thank you for the session today. Once again, I was lost in the depths of myself—profound rest.

I didn't hear most of the story, just words, when you were closer to me.

What came up for me this time, as well as lifting the filter for a bit, was the truth of my tiredness. But I saw myself as I am, in my family house in the mountains, super at home and disheveled :) in a nice way.

But at other times the sounds became music inside visitors' heads translated from one genre into another: Middle Eastern music would morph into Gloria Estefan, the Grateful Dead into a Baroque sonata, Fats Domino's "Walking to New Orleans" segued into an old love-sick German ballad, Donna Summer's "I Feel Love" into the King of the Bongo into the Nine Inch Nails into Janis Joplin's "Cry Baby" and Deep Purple's "One Man's Meat." And sometimes no songs or sounds or music would arise, even when coaxing it from the known inner heartbeat or when visualizing a nurse using a drumstick to coax the beat out of the body... Eventually following the lead of Rai's script, the sounds would fragment into heavily broken beats, a mass of scratches and just noise... Sound becomes music, noise runs parallel to the mind's working, and thought can lead to ideas or just terminate in fragmented distraction.

As a visitor called Dr. Thomas Bündgen claimed:

I was in the head of the philosopher Habermas... I flew over a wide landscape of middle range mountains.

When I came nearer I saw that the mountains were furniture, commodes and wardrobes, full of papers, notes, imagery, and photographs. The furniture was partly covered with drifted sand.

It was interesting but also somewhat oppressive to be there and I was glad to get out of the head of the famous man.

I thought it was a sign of the times that Dr. Bündgen attached a YouTube link of an "ultimate outback heli

flight" to help describe his inner experience with more precision, as if one could use popular media to collage together the fleeting interior worlds our minds generate and are so hard to communicate.

However, other visitors could put words to their inner experience with absolute precision without the need for cut-and-pasting existing media. For instance one visitor explained how she could smell a perfume that was like "sun on an autumn day that I would like to touch all the time."

There were also synesthetic experiences based on color: one person felt green when descending the steps of the induction; one experienced twelve other people with purple personalities; another saw pink structures extruding out of her eyes like mosaics generating a feeling of unprecedented "sharp-mindedness." Sometimes her eyes would begin to take on their own properties above and beyond, or perhaps behind, vision. In session 200 I used a trick from one of the filmmaker Alejandro Jodorowsky's psychomagic²⁷ exercises, of suggesting a pocket full of doll's eyes in order to transfer sensing through the nose, ears, and mouth.

Chapter 7

Sensory Immersion: The Second of Three Segments of the Induction

I don't mean to confuse your work with a magician doing magic tricks. I realize it's a different thing. On the other hand, I don't think about magic as being only entertainment, although most magicians might. And I wish... that the art audience could participate in art in the same way they would do in a magic show, knowing that they are being tricked but still hoping to be tricked perfectly. —Jens

These scenarios—the middle part of the induction—led visitors into a deeper part of the trance, where they focused entirely on one sense modality or another. This part is a way of heightening the sense of intuition, or rather heightening the awareness of sensory faculties.

Melons

In my twenties, I was once in the desert near the Sierra Madre Oriental in Mexico and I could distinctly smell the aroma of melon. At about the same time I could see a speck on the horizon: what appeared to be someone approaching me very slowly. Twenty minutes later this speck had become a man on his bicycle, and sure enough he was carrying melons in his basket. Of course being in the desert there is less sensory “noise” than there is in our busy contemporary surroundings, but I did become aware that if you are in the right state of mind, you can tune into the sensory cues that our brains receive and yet our conscious minds usually filter out. Our conscious minds protect us from reality in part through boredom, narrowing down all the sensory cues that we receive from around us.

By narrowing in on one sensory modality, and asking the mind to lift off the filters that it usually deploys to simplify the sensorial feed, one becomes aware of such things as the smell of our own skin. This sensation is a “baseline feed,” as our minds habitually tune out the normal, everyday smell of our own skin. Yet we are perfectly able to differentiate, even be drawn to, the smell of another's skin. It is so much of a baseline feed that Sissel Tolaas, a smell artist/expert and our collaborator, brushes the skin of her wrist past her nostrils when she needs to “reset” her nose for the purpose of testing different smells.

Taste synesthesia

Then there was taste: One of the inductions involved wading deeper into chocolate cake in response to an exhibition that Francesco Manacorda²⁸ dreamed up to be curated by “two parrots, six chocolate cakes, a bowl of seawater, two cans of warm Guinness, a pot of geraniums and [the curator] Maria Lind.” Instead of considering this strange juxtaposed speculation intellectually, the visitor was cast through the process of hypnosis in the Reflection Room into the mind-set of chocolate by *becoming* chocolate (lush, gooey, sugary); the mind-set of seawater by *becoming* seawater (sharp, bitter, crystalline); the mind-set of a parrot (a visual echo in a mirror or the sound of echoing). And of course taste is ultimately linked back into smell, as 70-75% of what we taste is derived through smell cells. Our mouths are limited to perceiving bitter, salty, sweet, and sour flavors as well as the more recently acknowledged umami flavor—and yet it's our noses that can discriminate between 4,000 and 10,000 different molecules, and this is what really informs the nuances of our sense of smell *and* taste.

Opening the nasal fields

He made me open several doors and encounter friends and strangers. One was a woman I had just met. We were dressed in the same way. Our communication took the shape of a ray of light. A few times I had to adjust my imagination. Behind the first door I was surrounded by luscious nature, an entry into the rain forest. He said I should enter the next door. There was no door in my rain forest, so I built one. I built a wall, which was painted turquoise and looked shabby. When I entered the next space—a patio in the rain forest—and approached one of the basket-woven chairs lying around, there was an alluring smell of Pastis in the air. - Nina

In the middle part of the induction, one of the scenarios involved the visitor finding herself in a room with people (usually loved ones or friends so as not to create repulsion or rejection). The suggestion was to transfer attention away from conversation; the volume of the talking would appear to go down even though the people in the space would still be moving their mouths. The room would suddenly internalize—a switch I had first discovered through collaborating with a sound designer friend, Javier Bennassar, who was working on David Lynch's film *Lost Highway* in Los Angeles. The suggestion was to sense the room, each person, the objects through smell: intensely, profoundly, as if stripping the encounter down to its pure essence.

The array of olfactory hallucinations that visitors experienced was astonishing, especially since they triumphed over the strong spruce aroma of the cabin, and the lingering smells that Sissel had concocted for the Hypnotic Show, which I will elaborate on a little later. The visitors described:

- Sulfur in the air oozing out between the spruce boards
- Wayfinding through the smells of raw materials
- Gasoline, firelight, perfume
- Coffee and chocolate
- Baby skin
- Wind, soil
- Vanilla ice cream, leather
- Soap
- Smoke from a flower
- Inner temple salvia, burnt sage
- Potato salad from boyhood
- Sun on an autumn day with sweet lemons
- Dead animals and old people near death
- Smelling herself as his aftershave
- Frangipani
- Exotic spices
- The smell of his father who had passed away six years ago

Someone asked if people smell in dreams, and someone else replied that people don't smell when asleep and that is why they die of inhalation of fumes in a fire. But certainly people smell in a state of hypnotic trance, and friends I have asked say that they experience smell in their dreams even though they may not be matched by real, external smells.

Puberty

One of the more challenging passages was the suggestion that visitors should form their respective identities around the smell of their own skin. At the start of d(13), I was regressing people back to babyhood, thinking that this would be the first moment that they became aware of their own aroma. But I ran into difficulties, as people had trouble identifying their own smell at that early age. When Sissel came back to Kassel for a second

visit, we talked about it and she said that the best time to become aware of your own smell is at puberty, when your body acquires the smell you carry with you as an adult.

Of course! So I reengineered the induction to take visitors back to that moment—the moment of puberty, or perhaps simply the time between being a child and an adult. I found the word “puberty” to be risky in an induction as it is a word usually employed by adults, not teenagers actually going through that time, and is therefore an alienating word for the purposes of embodied imagination. Even the word “imagination” is a poor label for describing a simulated experience, as it implies *visualized* simulation rather than felt, heard, tasted, or touched inner experience. It is a wonder that we can get by with the words we so carelessly apply in everyday speech.

Despite these word traps, I ventured deeper through the rest of the induction, which involved an attraction to the perfumes we buy and put on ourselves. I weaved in a kind of misdirect, suggesting that people in the street might be helplessly attracted to our perfume or aftershave as we passed by, but actually perfume is a mechanism for attracting us to ourselves, anchoring our own identities. In my downtime, I began to notice that I would inhale as people passed me while wandering around Konigstrasse and other parts of central Kassel. Inhaling didn’t indicate some suppressed desire; it was more like a survival reflex: smelling the pheromones released by fear, happiness, and other feelings in passers-by. I discovered a kind of feral under-layer inside my own regular everyday behaviors, brought on by the focused concentration of so many hypnosis sessions.

Chapter 8 Mental Constructs: The Third of Three Segments of the Hypnotic Induction

The bee rarely comes, and the pollen clumps upon itself, waiting to explode on contact, to hijack your body and intoxicate your mind with indiscriminable simulations. — Allen Barkkume

One of the most captivating passages from Rai’s book is one about a “verso-game”: an imaginary game in which a duplicate of oneself is playing a copy of the game at exactly the same time. This idea of a doppelganger echoing one’s actions is an age-old schema²⁹ that is discredited by our conscious, logical thinking, but seems to be echoed in scientific theories of our times such as the entanglement of photons at infinite distances, or the existence of parallel universes. Perhaps this exercise helps us bridge the two sides of the brain, as our thought processes can focus on both halves at the same time, rather than flitting back and forth as they normally do through the commissural tracts of the corpus callosum.

Here is a description of the verso-game from Jacob, a visitor from California:

I went into a fairly empty room... beige walls, a bit dusty. Neutral light. There was an old door that had paint chipping off it.

When Marcos suggested there was a game there, I saw a black cube, about a foot and a half on each side. It was sitting on a non-descript plinth at chest-height. It had gold inlaid lines on it in really complicated patterns, like particle traces in a cloud chamber. I recognized it from a dream I’d had as a young child. Briefly, in this dream the black cube (which was about four inches on each side) was a source of infinite energy

for the world. I was an archeologist that had uncovered it. I had four other cubes arranged in a circle. This one was the last. I pushed it into the circle, and when it completed the circle everything exploded into fire, and I could feel my face burning. When I woke up the right side of my body, which was closest to the blast, was completely numb.

Other interpretations of the verso-game included a formal abstract shape, rather like the geometric squares of the synesthetic menus, composed of yellow, grey, and black nested shapes that could not be penetrated. Someone else imagined a game comprised of a giant Lego airplane that needed to be disassembled and reassembled deep inside a cave. There was a white castle made of plasticine for someone else, a kind of malleable defensive construct.

On similar lines, someone envisioned a double Trojan horse, and the game was to find the entrances to the imagined space faster.

After the session I felt quite confused, physically relaxed but maybe uncomfortable in mind. I came out of the hut almost crying. Everything real seemed a little bit too sharp. I couldn't get out of it.

We imagined some kind of game. First I had a table with cards that went lower and lower until it was one with the ground. The cards were still there but no one was really playing with them. The game turned into something like a dance. I felt that there were other people present, I could actually only see arms and legs moving. Maybe one of them was my little sister but I am not sure as I did not see any faces. And at that point something started to follow me back to consciousness. It felt like something that had been missing for a long time, so that it was no longer welcome. This is why it turns out to be something uncomfortable. It's hard to describe more precisely than that.

I would like to come back to do one more session to find out more about it. — Nena

Along with imagining the simultaneity of space, I also encouraged visitors to “lean over the balcony of language” and into a frame of mind beyond the limit-experiences of language. This was of course tautological, as I was using language to suggest a place beyond it, and the hypnosis induction required my voice to accompany the visitor, as otherwise the visitor may float to the surface of consciousness and wake up or sink to the bottom and fall asleep. When the visitor reached the balcony and journeyed beyond, I receded my voice into a hollow whisper, just above the rhythm of my breathing, enough to allow the visitor the sense that I had not abandoned her, but at the same time with the intent that no words should foul up the privileged space of understanding beyond the constraints of language.

This whole issue of language or the absence of it was a recurring struggle in the inductions, as can be observed in this exchange:

REBECCA You may remember we discussed the origins of hypnosis within art, and the work of Ron Athey, and how I have previously performed in *Gifts of the Spirit*. My companion and I very much enjoyed the work and felt immersed within it. We both found it fascinating to have been witnesses to a piece of work that no-one else could have seen, because it was in our own heads and completely unique. I am fascinated by the ability of hypnosis to bring forward thoughts and ideas that have never before occurred to the participant, for example your suggestion of picking up a book and my finding the title to be *The Happiness of Mr. Payne*.

My companion and I both felt that the slightest alteration in language used to induce and guide the meditation would alter the feel of the experience, the suggestion of descending down comfortable stairs causing conflict in a mind that is unwilling for some reason to imagine stairs being comfortable for one reason or another. The suggestion of a clock that had been in the room that was not actually in the room—these conflicts I suggest have the interesting affect of stirring the conscious mind to attention and possibly hindering the indulgence of the subconscious. The extent of this, I imagine, would depend on the temperament and even mood of the participant at the time, as well as their own preconceptions about whether or not for example stairs are allowed to be comfortable. And would you say that the use of language is a concern in your work? If so do you believe that the study of language itself has the ability to unlock subconscious associations and thoughts?

I am currently writing my dissertation about the impact of the first Surrealist manifesto upon contemporary performance art. I wonder, may I ask how, if at all, Breton's explorations into automatism and the unconscious mind have influenced this piece? Also do you share any of Breton's aims in terms of freedom of the subconscious mind?

ME I remember the strange, humorous logic of *The Happiness of Mr. Payne*. It would be interesting to write a novel stemming from that word-play/oxy-moron. I also like the link to Athey, as collaborating with him was seminal to my investigations into hypnosis... all tied up in a kind of circularity with Mr. Payne, and the sublimation of pain, masochism, and suicidal fantasies into *happiness*.

Yes, language choice is the toughest part of the induction, as the words need to be like empty molds in which the visitors' ideas and impressions can hatch. The idea of comfort with the stairs is to help give people a sense of confidence as they slip away into this hypnotic state. One of the biggest hurdles to connecting the reflective mind to the reflexive brain is fear.

The missing clock was usually noticed when people woke up, so by then the reflexive mind had already immersed itself in the notion that there was a time-keeper in the room, untroubled by its existence in reality or as an imagined experience. I would honestly prefer to do inductions without language as I find language often limits our ability to think beyond the boundaries of our understanding. Even the word "think" is difficult to imagine, as you read these words, without the use of words. Our brains are so tied to language that it's almost impossible to avoid it, and certainly "fascination," which was a common hypnosis method that usually involved a swinging watch, takes a very long time and is not an easy tool for focusing the mind.

I am interested in language on the boundaries of the senses, like the "Kiki-Bouba" effect. I think this kind of word use, which elicits feelings, is more powerful than a rational discourse. This has been explored through NLP, which you may or may not be familiar with.

I think there is a similarity to the Surrealists in that the d(13) Hypnotic Show originates in the hwritten word of Raimundas' book *Paper Exhibition*. Breton had a great influence through his writings on the visual (and other) artists of the Surrealist movement. Words being a key, a starting point

for the mind to take flight and explore feelings, sensations, emotions. However, the way I see it, appropriately perhaps because of the Reflection Room, is from a kind of inverted viewpoint. I am actually more interested in liberating the conscious mind than the unconscious mind. Breton's ideas at the time were influenced by Freudian theories of the unconscious mind harboring repressed notions, whereas I tend to see the unconscious (reflexive) mind as a source of dynamism and balance, and the conscious (reflective) mind as entrapped by inhibitions, peer pressure, and entrenched ideas that are often based on incorrect information and overconfidence in rationality.

Although both the unconscious as well as the conscious parts of the brain could currently be said to be under siege, particularly from the perspective of cognitive-cultural capitalism, which may lead to "specialized symptomologies manifesting themselves as lethargy, stress, depression, tunnel vision, and burn out" (Neidich, 2013), my own sense is that these mental constructs are tools that can aid the brain to create sufficient mental plasticity to overcome the challenges of the current complexities of contemporary living. They are antidote.

Utopia

One of the most refreshing prompts from the book was a passage suggesting, "There is no art in Utopia, as there is no ownership, authorship, or power in Utopia. Art will dissolve into the ether of the everyday."

Visitors, and I myself, felt relieved to find a place in which the territorial pissing contest of artistic ego was absent. The Hypnotic Show had a heavily blurred line of authorship, as the worlds were being generated in the minds of the visitor, mostly by the visitor. Was I the

hypnoteur, the artistic transducer, "a psychic engineer," as Kristupas Sabolius suggested? Was Rai the curator (a term he has squirmed away from repeatedly) or the concepteur? Was it in the writings he had gathered from his own mind and the agency of others, or was the authorship strung somewhere outside of all of us, deeply pre-embedded in a Jungian collective unconscious? The world of art craves new things, but what could be more annoying to the business machinery of this art world than a dispersed authorship, than this open-source shareware for the mind? And there was no wrong or right in this game, no orthodoxy, just learning together, experimenting, listening, and evolving.

These mental construct suggestions in the third segment of the induction would be accompanied by one of Sissel Tolaas' four specially designed smells. At the beginning of DOCUMENTA(13), Sissel, Rai, and I sat at the Orangerie café, and went through the menu passages of the third section, ascribing one of the smells to each of the sixteen possible stories. "Ozone" was assigned to a feeling of being accelerated and light: this was my favorite smell as it was the most difficult to pinpoint and gave me goose bumps. Most people did not know what it was, but my friend Toby came by and was sure that it smelled of smog in Milwaukee at 3 p.m.

I had an interesting follow-up experience with the happening. Since the exposure, I have smelled the Ozone scent made by my sister, Sissel! It appeared very strongly on the following days and it has appeared regularly since that moment, mostly outdoors, but also inside houses. Very strange! It's like an electric rinsing smell! —Helen

The three other smells generated by Sissel were:

- A dark damp forest smell, deep and grounding, and somewhat musty. A symphony of notes delivered, according to Sissel, in a single molecule. I still don't

understand how a single molecule can simulate such a complex set of smells, as if a symphony orchestra could be played by a single instrument and still sound that rich.

- The smell of fur, but not so much a fur coat that may have picked up the scent of a woman's perfume. (I used to cry hopelessly when my mother dropped me off at the cold and stark boarding school. The feeling of fur and rich perfume and gasoline fumes made me feel nauseous and desperate.) Rather, this was the living, breathing smell of an animal that had stopped for a moment on its way, scurrying about the park, just like the raccoons that came to visit Chiara on the porch during my sessions.
- The smell of skin, a Sissel specialty. She put an entire book together on the different smells of men's skin, a book with scratch-and-sniff pages for each man instead of photographs.³⁰

Since smell is the most instinctual of the senses, the four scents helped to anchor the strange mental gymnastics of this last part of the hypnosis. Smell is tied into the limbic or what is sometimes referred to as reptilian part of the brain, and is anchored in the core living strategy modules that determine our behavior in early life and when under stress. Smells are almost impossible to retrieve consciously and partly for that reason they are incredibly long-lasting when linked to memory and past events. Our experience of smells does not suffer from the "generational degradation" or memory loss that visual and auditory memories undergo—hence the usefulness of the sense of smell within the context of hypnosis.

Sissel's scents were dropped into four blue booklets with gilt edging that Rai brought back from Egypt, and we kept them contained in Tupperware boxes in

the hopes of isolating the strong aromas. So as not to raise suspicions to the conscious mind and all its preconceptions relating to smell in the session, I would make an excuse to the visitors that Rai had brought books with extra information back from Egypt as I pulled out a booklet for the session, just before starting the induction. Egypt was, after all, one of the decentralized locales of d(13), I would say, making the statement about the mysterious booklets seem slightly less implausible.

I also found myself a long twig and a clothes peg (borrowed from the neighbor's clothesline at Kettengasse), and tied the peg to the end of the stick. This allowed me to hold the scent book at arm's length so as not to be too close to the visitors, and to prevent them from feeling that I was "laying down" a smell. I would very carefully waggle the stick in front of them, so that the aroma would lift off the fanned pages and into their noses, very careful not to touch their noses, chins, or hair with the booklet. I was also careful not to cast a shadow over their eyes, careful not to creek the floor boards or misstep into the bottom rung of the upside-down ceiling, careful for the booklet not to slip out of the peg, and careful to disengage the booklet without snapping the clothes peg. I moved around like a cat.

Each nose in the room, with its 450 olfactory receptors, essentially exposed neurons outside of the membrane of the brain, was unconsciously detecting the smell molecules as they drifted through the air, and then sending signals deep inside to the olfactory cortex. The olfactory cortex works in an inverted way from the other senses, as sensory signals are not pre-processed by the thalamus but rather are received more directly through the limbic system and hence become a convergence point for emotions and somatosensation.

After the session, some people would comment suspiciously about the stick that seemed to have moved place. Others would comment on the smell, others would say that they didn't smell anything at all, while still others said they experienced an imaginary smell that may have been included as a suggestion in the middle part of the induction. It was a kind of mystery that blurred the line between invisible experience that was real and sensed experience that may have been imagined. The power of smell to awaken memories is quite legendary, as Proust reminded us in his seven-volume novel *À la recherche du temps perdu* (1913), and in Patrick Süskind's *Perfume* (1985), where smells became the guiding principle of existence to its protagonist.

Feral experiments

Even though I was increasingly immersed in the Hypnotic Show, locked into a tight schedule, I also had time to wander around meeting all sorts of people, especially students, who found themselves in longer-term arrangements in Kassel. I wanted to begin researching possibilities of mental explorations as an offshoot to the Hypnotic Show, perhaps because I could hardly bear to be in a normal waking state, wanting to spend as much time as possible in a trance-like immersion with fellow explorers.

The onramp to other investigations was through a journey I had previously embarked on, into animal-human consciousness. CCB promised to make d(13) different from past documenta editions, and one of her primary approaches was to move away from the heavily anthropocentric feeling of the previous documenta. In d(13) there were many exhibits to do with animals and our relationship to them: Joan Jonas' *Reanimation*; a cabin with videos of primordial animal expressions; and Pierre Huyghe's psychotropic *Untilled*, which was situated in the park's unruly composting heaps and

was guarded by a pink-pawed dog called Human and a hive-mind of bees situated atop the headless neck of a nude statue.

As I had been working with reptiles and insects, I was invited to submit work to a cabin curated by the artist Tue Greenfort. The cabin was called The Worldly House and was described as "An Archive Inspired by Donna Haraway's Writings on Multispecies Co-Evolution." My own work involved linking my unconscious responses to animals, including a bearded dragon, a boa constrictor, black widows, and brown recluses—with the last two creatures borrowed from my own garden. Over a few weeks on my studio-deck in Los Angeles, a robot traced lines as large-scale drawings in response to my heart rate as I entangled with these creatures.

Animal magnetism

While the pragmatic space of animals is a function of inborn instincts, man has to learn what orientation he needs in order to act.

—Christian Norberg-Schulz

The Worldly House in d(13) was situated in a small cabin accessible by a narrow bridge that floated mirror-like above a pond. The cabin was once the home of black swans back in the 1950s, and was later inhabited by a family of raccoons, who were evicted from the cabin in the name of art (and multispecies co-evolution) just before d(13). The first thing I did was send an Easter egg from Los Angeles as an offering from the swans to the raccoons, so they would forgive us for putting art above their basic interests.

Then I submitted a video of my animal entanglements in Los Angeles, which joined the digital archive and research library inside the cabin.

But it really started to get interesting when I managed to begin psychological experiments with Tue's students from the Malmö Academy. The line between human and animal became more and more blurred, almost as if we were embarking on our own version of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899), going ever deeper into the unconscious mind and unknown territories. Just as *Heart of Darkness* is a frame narrative³¹ mirroring *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy*, we were generating a story within the boundaries of The Worldly House, thereby rewriting the framework of the project in our own internal and collective way.

The theme of animals migrated out of the Hypnotic Show itself, as one of the forty-eight encounters was an immersion into a crypto-zoo described in *Paper Exhibition*: "After all, the crypto-zoologist searches for and studies marginal creatures—such as the Loch Ness Monster, Bigfoot, Unicorns, and Jackalopes—whose existence or survival remains unsubstantiated or disputed."

In keeping with the emergent and generative approach of the inductions, I avoided suggesting these easily pre-consumed tropes and encouraged visitors to come up with their own marginal creatures. Visitors came into close proximity to these living, breathing entities: some of the self-generated beings included an ancient beast with a large horn and wrinkles, a weird bird with white feathers who may have appeared friendly or perhaps had an evil intent behind the warmth, a mollusk embedded in a visitor's belly. Someone else heard himself roar as if he had *become* the creature. A man saw a huge, aggressive tiger and the person next to him in the cabin had visualized her own animal change into a different creature every time she looked at it.

A local lady from Kassel was having difficulties finding her animal, but she suddenly had a strange apparition of a bear to her left and a man to her right.

At the end of session, the intensity of her description gave me goose bumps, especially since someone had just talked of seeing a bear in the previous session, which by coincidence had included a visit to the crypto-zoo. It seemed to me that traces of these visualizations were accumulating and lurking in the space.

Later she wrote this to me:

After the session I lost my words a little bit. :)

So I say it now—thank you for this session.

I love the picture with my bear and my man.

This picture and the feeling of love are very big gifts for me.

LaminaRanimal

Going back to Tue's students, we had decided to explore the theme of the crypto-animal through the lens of a hypnotic trance. This was the perfect opportunity to put one of Rai's literary imaginings to the test in a more intensely physical way than the Reflection Room allowed. The project was called *LaminaRanimal*, reflecting the palindrome-like mirrored abyss in which we were operating. We set a date for the evening of August 20 and gathered at the black swans' hut as the light was fading and the mosquitoes and raccoons were coming out of hiding. We had prepared some malleable clay tablets in which the volunteers would imprint their emotional expressions as they ventured deeper into this hybrid animal state of hypnotic consciousness. Each participant responded uniquely:

1. *The way I breathed in and out made it easier for me to "become" this animal, as breathing connects humans and animals. Thoughts passed by but I did not register them. I had this very relaxed feeling without much control of the situation. All happened spontaneously and impulsively.*

I was in an animal form while at the same time conscious of my human body. It was a clash between conscious and unconscious. The animal that I imagined was a hybrid of different animals, and I turned more and more into a sort of creature. All of this took place in a very central spot in the Karlsaue Park. I had been in this area with high grass and huge trees once before but as there is no art to be seen, visitors to the park rarely go there. During the trance the space expanded into more levels under the earth. This animal, named something like Hysticus, with feathers on some parts of the body and fish scales on other parts, was crawling around in an enlarged, subterranean space. It seemed curious and quick, the size of a bear, but with enormous ears and legs more similar to human beings than animals. The smell was strong. - Mariana

2. Red. Red. Red.

An insect is biting my forearm, I am not sure if it is my arm, as it is really far away from me, it is just one of many arms.

I can perceive the sting penetrating the first level of my black and shiny skin, I feel as if it is happening in slow motion but I cannot speed it up to avoid the pain. The needle could be made of iron as it is incredibly harsh, sharp and cold; a black diamond is drilling into me, but there is just blood, no oil.

Every millimeter it goes deeper it hurts, I can almost feel the epidermis cells breaking and the blood flowing out, an artery being destroyed by a sudden and massive air raid.

I know I can't do anything, the effect of the anesthetic the insect injected into me is fading. I do not want to feel this anymore, it is the most painful bite I have ever experienced, I want to hide myself, I am sure I would die if I got another one. I begin to dig a cave in the soft material close to me that will be the shelter for my

survival, the refuge for my black, shattered body. Kafka was right. — Chiara

3. *I am a being adapted to the environment in which I thrive. A kind of cat. Cat-like features, cat-like fur, but not a cat in the sense of a domesticated creature. I feel wild. I live and move between the middle branches of trees in a damp forest, and the soft moist, leaf-covered bottom. The scent is rich, earthy. I dig through sediment. I dig for something alive, something underneath the leaves, roots and dirt. Ferocious and careful at the same time. - Joakim*
4. *I am surrounded by wood. The ground is covered by pine needles. Four feet makes it easy to run fast, in sync, really fast. I am almost flying. On the inside of me it's white. I have thick, soft brownish orange fur. I run slower. I stop. This is my forest. It is still and quiet. I stretch my toes and grab the grease under my left foot, making a ball out of the wet soil. — Ingrid*
5. *Feeling my hands, the magnets on the inside of my hands. Focusing more and more on the space between my hands. Walking down some carpeted stairs. A deep northern forest, with tall, tall trees. Running fast, then walking slowly. Feeling moist moss under my feet. High up in the mountains. There are bodies of water and hills and valleys. Blue skies, clouds. Staggering up and down. Feeling a bleating voice in my throat. No sound escapes. Clumsy jerking movements, executed in a leisurely manner. Electrified blue eyes. Robotic movements. The only sounds are of the wind and my own body. Feeling the clay. Wanting to eat the clay. Realizing that I am no longer a cybernetic sheep. — Mina*

Another creature experiment was orchestrated in an interpretation of Maria Castillo Deball's recurring

event called *Never Odd or Even*, in which artists and theorists were invited to interpret the contents of a book from among a collection of fake dust jackets that she had printed. One of the dust jackets had birds on its cover, tweeting or twittering about some kind of bird-like coding in undecipherable bird language. With the help of assistant curator Malte Roloff, I gathered a team of singers, and we made a “reading” of bird-humans singing phrases at the junction between the sound of the bird song and the catch-phrases that ornithologists give these different songs as mnemonic aids:

Are you awake? Me too. (Great Horned Owl)

But-I-DO-love-you. (Eastern Meadowlark)

Cheerily, cheer-up, cheerily. (American Robin)

Drop it, drop it, pick it up, pick it up. (Brown Thrasher)

Fire, fire, where, where, here, here. (Indigo Bunting)

Spit and see if I care, spit! (White-Eyed Vireo)

Teacher, teacher. (Great Tit)

Who cooks for you. (White-Winged Dove)

Common nighthawk calls sound like a person loudly whispering the word “beard.”

The bird-humans were dotted around the room just as one would expect when walking through the park: a decentralized, overlapping vocalization and a kind of cross-species synesthesia.

I had no idea if the project was a success, as I was too busy saying “beard” in a stage whisper through my cardboard megaphone, which appropriately looked somewhat like an inverted beak.

It seemed borderline absurd, and yet also jived with CCB’s call to action for d(13), which by now seemed to make complete sense to me: “The dance was very frenetic, roaring, clashing, ringing, twisting...”

Once the singing was over, someone in the audience unexpectedly challenged me to make someone hoot

like an owl. I am not one for gimmicks, and especially not of the stage hypnosis kind, but I thought it would be interesting to see about the possibilities of a *nabual*-like transformation in someone’s psyche, with no preparation. A volunteer came forward and I used a very quick trance technique which focuses on an extreme shift of various affects at once: voice, sound, muscle-poise, balance, and visual disorientation to create a sensory overload and which casts the person instantly into a deep state of trance. She collapsed in a heap and as she was slowly rising up from the floor, she hooted, transformed.

I also set up some trance experiments with food. In the cabin inductions, I was shifting down from our usual sense modalities of sight and hearing to touch, taste, smell, and balance or acceleration. We generally think of ourselves as having five senses and a sixth “intuitive” sense, or more lyrically having the sense of beauty, wonder, rhythm, and humor. But from a medical standpoint, we actually have over twenty-five senses; among those, we have interoceptive senses like thermoception, the sense of heat, which is different from touch as it can be sensed without actual physical contact. There is also nociception, the sense of pain, and other types of sensing such as chronoception, responsible for our being able to feel circadian rhythms. There is also shorter time sensing, and traces of magnetoception in the form of the magnetosensitive protein, cryptochrome-2 found in the eye, which may help us with the sense of direction.

At any rate, I found these senses to be more easily connected through the suggestions of mouth-feel, of exploring the inner cavities of the nose and mouth and sinuses. Undoubtedly when one takes food into the mouth, one is feeling something from the inside, captured inside the envelope of the body.

To set this exploration in motion Chiara and I went down to the supermarket on our bicycles and carried out an exhaustive review of vegetables, both organic and conventionally grown. It took quite a while to find matching organic/non-organic fruit and veggies, because non-organically grown food is usually supersized and with some kind of color-boosting properties.

The next day we gathered some students close to the “AND, AND, AND” hut in the Auepark, a project spawned by Ayreen Anastas & Rene Gabri with the purpose of interweaving “philosophical, poetical, political, practical, pedagogical, psychical, and physical zones of inquiry in one space/time.”

We appropriated a couple of their benches and laid out the fruits and vegetables in paired groups marked either with a + sign and an x sign³² so that those doing the test would not be aware of which was organic and which not. We carried out a few iterations of the tasting in a trance state, sometimes with passers-by and at other times with the students, and began to see a correlation forming in which the taste of the organic food was invariably more vibrant and alive. The ambient noise was substantial, but the testers managed to get into a deep state of trance as I had suggested that the sounds from outside would allow them to focus more and more on their senses of taste, touch, and smell inside their inner cavities.

Chiara reported that one tomato was like a regular soldier and another one (the organic one) was like Napoleon, such was the difference in the impact of flavor. Sometimes, however, the tasting went off the deep end with one of the students convinced that what she was eating was a tomato but in fact it turned out to be a grape and she could not figure out why the skin was so tough. It was interesting though that she was so focused on the mouth feel and the different mechanical

impressions inside her mouth that the flavor detection was relegated to the back burner. Extreme focus and attention on certain factors that block out the more obvious ones are both known traits of hypnosis. Summer Guthery, a curator now based in Los Angeles, diverged even further, becoming convinced that the carrot and its bushy stem and the “AND, AND, AND” hut were in fact a hand, someone else’s hand that for some reason was detached from the body it had come from, like a kind of vegetal phantom limb.

Chapter 9

Pascal Rousseau's Book Reading

Each day a different book commissioned by d(13) was read on the steps of the Kunsthalle Fredericianum, the main temple-mausoleum of every documenta. We conspired to do something different for the reading of Pascal Rousseau's book *Under the Influence, Hypnosis as a New Medium* (2012), which was a summary of how hypnosis had found its way into art through the ages. Our own Hypnotic Show was included in the book, so there was a certain amount of reality/literary reverberation going on in the first place.

Rai made one of his articulate and disarming intros as people milled around. True to form, nobody was paying much attention to the reading. That is, until I started the "reading" with a loud yell to trigger the sudden induction of a curator called Nefeli Skarmea, and began to work her into a heightened state of catalepsy. We had not rehearsed this in any way, so she was initially very nervous. I myself was quite worked up about doing this in such an exposed setting, with a very dispersed outdoor, noisy, crowded feeling, but we both fell into a state of extreme focus and I could begin to feel her muscles transforming, becoming more and more rigid as if they were becoming steel, like a type of I-beam.³³ Catalepsy is a very strange state of being, reflecting the hypnotic state but in a more extreme way:

In this physically relaxed state, they report their experiences as being more involuntary and effortless yet, somewhat paradoxically, at the same time more intense and involving than in a non-hypnotic condition (Crawford, 2001).

I had first experienced catalepsy as the guinea pig pulled out of my dinner party seat at Ron Athey's house

in Silver Lake by David Maxwell, a man I hardly knew. Before I knew it I seemed to be floating up into a table-like position, completely stiff and yet so incredibly relaxed, as if I could just rest there, strung between the two chairs indefinitely. I felt as though someone could've used me as a park bench.

Once Nefeli was turned into a table—the object of the reading was for it to feel as though in a very comfortable library—I placed the book on Nefeli-the-table's top and proceeded to transform Chiara into someone reading a book in the library. This was strange as it seemed so near to what she was actually doing as herself, apparently reading a book. Even though on-lookers saw her reading a book, they may not have been aware that to herself, she was in a library and not on a portico of a public square surrounded by strangers. In hypnosis, context is interiorized. Then I turned my attention to assistant curator Malte Roloff, who was assigned to do the reading. Nefeli had meanwhile transformed from a table into a reading lamp to cast additional "light" onto the book as the last rays of the sun pierced through the columns of the portico. Malte fell into a state of trance and I primed him to re-read the same passage, as if by re-reading it he could drill through and beyond its meaning in a kind of paroptic state.

Malte read and re-read:

Under hypnosis, the subject is able to recover the feeling of "existing in dependence on things," of being immersed in a force field that is no longer connected to a tutelary authority by an umbilical cord but rather grounded in a relationship with the world that is experienced as self-invention.

The pages were becoming transparent, the black markings started to dance on the surface of each page

and bore through the stacked-up meanings across the whole thickness of the book, and on and on...

We awoke out of this intense exercise and emerged as if out of a deep mental tunnel to find ourselves being watched by a quiet, still, and bewildered audience.

Just as the Hypnotic Show extended itself into other events in d(13), so too, during the cabin inductions, I would sometimes send people on mental explorations to nearby places and artworks in Kassel. One such place was Gabriel Lester's *Transition 2012*, which was a large-scale horseshoe-shaped tunnel and could be experienced as a transformative conduit. I also sent visitors off into past Hypnotic Show scripts such as to Vito Acconci's 1969 *Following Piece*, which we had first shared at Artissima in Torino.

This script resonated particularly well, and Agatha wrote of the induction:

I can't help but think what a perfect platform the Hypnotic Show is to re-construct some of those works that are so resistant to photo documentation—like the Vito Acconci following piece and how nice that the script is from the person who is experiencing the weird guy with the bad hair following him, and that this experience is just a small portion of his larger internal dialogue—not the whole. He has a life and is pre-occupied with other things. These mimicked internal dialogues are SO the way we look at artworks!

Other off-road explorations included exploits at the Hauptbahnhof train station, where some volunteers meandered though the station in a deep trance state with their bodies heavy and weighted down like statues on wheels. One student reported that the sound from the seconds clicking on the clock sent chills through her, and when a lady with a rolling cart went over some

bumps it felt like she had been “in a calm ocean... with massive ripples.”

Calming the strike

About seventy days into the 100 days of d(13), a mutiny began to develop at Pedro Reyes' *Sanatorium*. Pedro was “offshoring” *Sanatorium* from Korea and had left the project on a self-running basis. The students were starting to feel somewhat rudderless, and the strain was beginning to manifest, as if the documenta community was a microcosm of a whole society. Things came to a head when the students went on strike to demand more engagement from the lead artist Pedro Reyes, which sent waves of unease through d(13). Sure enough, *Sanatorium* was closed and strike signs were posted. Chus Martinez, Head of Department and member of the Core Agent Group at d(13), stepped in and gave Reyes' student-volunteers a pep talk, and we organized a hypnosis session with them so that they could become more connected to the symbols they had been juggling with every day for the last couple of months, but to which they had established little actual rapport.

In a somnambulistic state of trance, I lead them back into one of the rooms that had a labyrinthine structure on a table, and asked each person to take a small object from a shelf with which they identified. They then discussed why they had chosen each object, sometimes referring to rediscovered childhood memories of a similar object, such as a small, Mayan-looking glass effigy, tapping into traditions and the watery, liquid aspect of the object. The process of choosing the piece was very intuitive and made with no hesitation. Curiously, the objects chosen were ones that the students ignored when they were in a conscious state. The strike was soon over.

Small miracles

When we held a Hypnotic Show at the December 2012 Canal Series in New York, Rai sent a recording to be played to the visitors. In it he said, “People are expecting you to do miracles as usual. Of course you will do miracles as usual.” I had almost forgotten this therapeutic aspect of the project that seemed to be a by-product of the sessions.

Someone at The Canal Series said that her back didn’t ache anymore after the session, but at d(13) there were far more surprising cases of transformation:

Three of us arrived at documenta very late, we were about the last people to show up in the evening. My intuition had told me to go to the hypno-show.

It had been a hot day, and I felt flattened. I have Parkinson’s and diabetes, I see them as diseases, but not myself as being ill.

I had no expectations and was glad to have a break and sit down. Since I am not able to speak and understand English (a friend of mine is translating this text and sending it from her email address), it had even been a coincidence that I could participate at all!

Then my personal miracle happened within a very short time: I was so attracted by your voice, Marcos, that I could let go completely. I became utterly peaceful and had incredible light experiences.

They surpassed everything in length and intensity that I had had so far, how happy I was! It became a turning point in my life! From then on I undertook actions I had not done before. I wanted to go to Kassel again.

In the second session, my Parkinson’s rigor dissolved almost entirely, how wonderful! This time there was no light experience, I could choose which space to follow, I chose the voice. But when I got up after the session, the rigidity came right back. It was painful but also a

good experience: the option of switching back and forth from free flowing to rigidity. I felt very close to the process, which gave me a new orientation.

Thanks to the very kind Chiara, I was allowed to participate a third time. I could even bring my friends along. I was aiming for the number twelve, why I cannot say. Yet we were only ten people

But coincidence helped again: At the last moment, Chiara introduced two wonderful ladies from Brazil and Turkey respectively, so we ended up as twelve!

This session had been your 327th during the documenta. Added up, the figure makes twelve again. Also a nice detail, that 3/27 is my wife’s birthday although she did not participate in person this time.

Again it became an incredible experience.

Thank you, thank you, Marcos. — Hans

You can see in these comments how the unconscious begins to generate pattern-forms out of what the conscious mind would interpret as random occurrences.

Likewise, a man came by the cabin for a solo session. I didn’t notice, but he had a limp. When he awoke he was beaming from ear to ear and said that he had felt his polio-afflicted leg for the first time ever. He left the cabin and marched down the gravel pathway with a confident limp-free stride. I wonder if a kind of mental version of Ramachandran’s mirror box therapy for phantom limbs had taken place, in which the visitor’s unconscious motor control centers in the brain had rehearsed a living sensation in the forgotten limb.

This aspect of limbs and hypnosis had been an issue when Rai and I had been invited to perform the Hypnotic Show at Bonniers Konsthall in Stockholm by Daniela Castro and Sara Arrhenius in 2011. It took months for us to get the green light and this was only after the Swedish State Department of Health

made us sign documents that we would not “read minds” or “detach limbs.”

At the time it seemed an honor to have the assumption bestowed upon us by such a respected medical body that we could actually read minds, but the idea of detaching limbs was something that hadn't even crossed our minds. Detaching limbs did, however, come up spontaneously in the little cabin such as with Anton Zeilinger's arms and legs uncoupling from his body in a trance state, though the results didn't seem to cause any discomfort for him or others during or after the sessions.

Another visitor initially said that the hypnosis had absolutely no effect on him, but when he stepped outside the cabin, he said that it was as if he was seeing the world for the first time. Perhaps he felt similar to a Chibcha tribal priest, also known as a Kogi Mama when he leaves the darkness of the ceremonial cave for the first time ever on his ninth birthday.

In session 123, I felt as if I was helping a blind person come into contact with her own journey. After a lot of questions at the end of the session, she opened up and began to tell me of the visualizations that she had of snowy mountain peaks, open fields, and a huge dark sculpture poised at an exact point in the future. It was as if inside her own visual penumbra there was a bright life of imagined visual realities stretching into the past and future.

Session 103 the visitors were fidgety and giggling at the beginning, and so I decided to use a standing induction to bring the visitors into the seriousness of the exercise.³⁴

As part of this type of shift in experience, many visitors reported sensing a telepathic sense, a closing of the mental spaces between people. This telepathy sometimes manifested when two or more people visualized exactly the same thing; sometimes visitors knew

what I was going to say well ahead of my saying it. These coincidences included:

SESSION 175: Three people in a locker room were asked to imagine a combination code number. When they awoke, the answers appeared very similar and almost sequential: 67, 68, 1609.

SESSION 152: Two people went to the same island in the “world beyond language.” It was an island like Sicily. Both people registered the sound of the wind and the sea, and they both saw three people standing on the island.

SESSION 156: Strangely, passage sixteen of the sensory part of the induction had not been chosen in all of the previous 155 sessions. The person who finally chose it said out loud, “This wouldn't be the first time you are doing this one?”

SESSIONS 173-176: The fifteenth fragment from the “mental constructs” menu was chosen four times in a row, a probability of one in 65,536.

SESSION 176: Luisa saw a purple scene and was shocked to wake up to see that she had drawn a purple picture with a purple pen I had given her during trance. Her eyes had been firmly closed the whole time of the trance.

Throughout my investigations with hypnosis, I have noticed strange correlations and coincidences in mental thinking processes, but in order to establish the legitimacy of these connections, one would really need to carry out controlled scientific trials rather than artistic and speculative exercises.

Recently I investigated this idea of connection across a distance with the *K-tanglement* project, which sought to link people across four different cities simultaneously through hypnosis and unconscious pathways. The four Kunstverein branches put a call

out to their friends and a simultaneous Zeilinger-inspired “entanglement” happened across Times Square, New York; Dundas Square, Toronto; Rembrandt Square, Amsterdam; and the Duomo, Milan.

Collective confluence

Not only our memories, but the things we have forgotten are “housed.” Our soul is an abode. And by remembering “houses” and “rooms,” we learn to “abide” within ourselves. Now everything becomes clear, the house images move in both directions: they are in us as much as we are in them.
—Bachelard, 1994

In session 316, towards the very end, I suggested that an object was hanging in a room. The objects visualized included:

A shiny sculpture of Jeanne d’Arc

Red ducks

A grand piano with gold details

A red lamp

A nineteenth-century Victorian lamp

A metal spiral hitting the surface of the water

A quadruple set of barrels

A black plastic table

A “minimalist” round wooden table with too many legs

I daydream of a sculpture that somehow embodies all these elements, as if they are melded together in one great multi-faceted hanging expression of these inner visions.

Later in the same session, I asked the visitors to find themselves on a street corner, and they respectively found themselves on:

98th & Madison

Rue Descartes

Bethnel Green (a fire station with a doorbell and the smell of old painted wood)

A corner of a summerhouse near Ignalina

A Victorian city made of paper with two-dimensional figurines saying, “Hello, how are you doing?”

Again, I dream of a tour that will allow others to visit these spaces of mind—so specific and personal and yet also universal in their own way—as a study of objects or places in anticipated memory. But perhaps the real beauty of this hypnotic process is that the work remains immaterial and the experiences branch out subjectively to form a myriad of possibilities and potentials. The artist is the facilitator of experiences rather than the person who corrals the viewer into a pre-determined work.

CCB came for seventeen individual sessions and this, for me, was the ultimate loop: the curator, the “brains” behind the entire d(13) exhibition, would herself travel deeper and deeper through the world she had orchestrated, as if pushing at a wormhole in her own exhibition to see what more there was on display. It was touching to find her unconscious drawn towards an Arshile Gorky painting, with its indeterminate fields of intermediaries and mediators, and to a Venus figurine with flowing curves and archetypal associations of fertility and abundance. It seemed that CCB was seeing the world and d(13) from the inside out, as a visitor who happened to chance upon her own daydream manifested in different layers of consciousness and experience, as well as the internal ramifications of the huge exhibition she had built.

As social media interactions make our experience more fragmented, and scientific discoveries shake the foundations of our perceived reality, we need to instigate a migration of consciousness that can keep up with these changes, so that we not only understand these models intellectually, but really sense the true

meaning of their implications. For example, climate change has been discussed for years and although a lot of people may have known the theory behind it, it is only now that we really understand it because we're finally beginning to feel its effects. We are, in essence, locked into old schemata that hamper the uptake of new ideas. The Hypnotic Show is like a generator that dissolves old mind-frames and offers up new schemata. It doesn't create new thoughts, it creates new ways of thinking, embodied thinking. As the theoretical physicist David Bohm wrote: *"What I mean by 'thought' is the whole thing thought, 'felt,' the body, the whole society sharing thoughts it's all one process"* (Bohm, 1994).

Visitors morphed into another gender, became abstract forms moving in space, merged into a series of characters or family members and collapsed back into themselves, inhabited Habermas' mind, moved fluidly between fact and fiction. These metamorphoses were an exercise in changing viewpoint, changing the understanding of reality, and ultimately helped the visitors to adapt to new frames of reference.

The bubbles

The last performance was held just outside the cabin on the very last evening of DOCUMENTA(13). There were about 250 people lying on the grass, sitting in chairs or against the trees, some hugging each other, others by themselves looking up at the passing clouds. Rai and I had been playing ping-pong with our various ideas about how this last session should go, and in the end I incorporated a visualization that CCB reported having in one of her sessions. It was of a billiard ball ricocheting around her home in Rome, bouncing off places that had once existed, like as a covered-up fireplace. We morphed the ball metaphor into the idea of bubbles floating across the park.³⁵ The curved and flat surfaces

within these bubble clusters began to reflect everything around them, integrating the world into their transient, ephemeral structure: all the art works, the visitors, the thoughts, the walks through the park, the leaves blowing in the trees, the echoes of conversations, the smell of damp mud off the canal, the self and all its chambers, until eventually the bubbles just slowly drifted off... dreaming and drifting... So ended the 100 days of hypnotic experiments and adventures.

Later on, people asked me: "Why is he doing this? What kind of art is this?"

I told them my personal reading and understanding of the Hypnotic Show; I explained to them that it has nothing to do with art therapy, or spectacle, or any sort of "messianic attitude."

Mark Rothko once said, "art is an adventure into an unknown world," and I believe your unknown world is the unconscious with all its correlative meanings: the immaterial, the atemporal, the invisible.

I think your work has to do with art because it contains the classic elements of the art making: a visual field, a space, a matter of perception, both physical and mental. In terms of art practice your hypnotic sessions follow the tradition of performance art, with the methodical repetition of an action in form of ritual, where strength and concentration become the measure of the experience totally based on the systematic interaction with people's consciousness, dreams, and fears.

The hypnosis in itself is not the unique focus of the project. After the 100 days of documenta, after such a massive psychic confrontation with your visitors, The Reflection Room becomes a monumental installation made of an invisible energy, a place where the experience of art correspond to an act of contemplating our own unconscious. —Gianni

Chapter 10 The Combination Lock

The whole project finally clicks into place.

A year or more has passed and I feel that I have transitioned from being *inside* the kaleidoscope to looking down into it. The fundamental leap in perspective happened when CCB came to give a lecture in Los Angeles, hosted by La><Art. The theme of the lecture was “Notes on the Brain,” which refers to the central installation in the rotunda of Fredericianum. Ironically, of the few times I had managed to emerge from my underground cave to visit the Brain, I could not actually get in because the line was so long. I just had to peer through the glass and try to guess if this was CCB’s brain or the brain of DOCUMENTA(13), or perhaps a post-human brain?

Even though I had been in touch with CCB quite regularly and was invited to conduct performances in Amsterdam and Venice by her this past year, it was like a mirage seeing her again in the same physical space and feeling that vitality of d(13) was still vibrant in her eyes. As she began to introduce the theme of the Brain, it was almost as if I could hear the clicks of the combination lock finally unlocking the broader reasons of how the Hypnotic Show fit into all of this. It reminded me of the expanding and contracting hidden spatial relationships in the labyrinthine novel, *House of Leaves* (Danielewski, 2000). The dial was turned one way and then another, rotated and click, rotated and click.

The Brain

The first thing that struck me about the Brain was that the glass wall, the membrane separating the outside exhibition from the inner sanctum had the words: *THE MIDDLE OF THE MIDDLE OF THE*

MIDDLE OF written on the lower part of the window, *backwards*. Being back to front implied that only once you were *within* the Brain could you really understand what the rest of the exhibition, or perhaps even the world beyond d(13) was really about. This inner space was the core of d(13), encapsulated in the rest of the Fredericianum exhibit, which in turn was sheathed in the outer layer of the myriad exhibits in the park and the multiple buildings and spaces scattered around Kassel. Transposed back to the Hypnotic Show, of course it clicked: the key to understanding the project was to situate yourself inside it, looking outwards. Consciousness can only be experienced from the inside out: neuroscience 0, hypnosis 1.

And this was immediately followed by the Zen-like slap to the mind of Anton Zeilinger’s proposition that the *middle of the middle* can be anywhere. Certainly from a quantum perspective and from ideas related to *entanglement*, there could be two or any number of middles. Then CCB delivered a mental left hook bringing up the Klein Bottle, which is a “non-orientable surface,” in which notions of left and right do not hold true, as the inside-outside form contradicts our normal understanding of standard geometries within reality. In the case of the bottle, the three ideas of containing, contained and uncontainable live together in a harmonious tautology. Again, this resonates with the whole process of the hypnotic inductions, which would bring the exterior inwards and the interior outwards in a revolving cycle until neither inside nor outside could be separately defined. At the Ottoneum, one of the larger exhibit halls near the Fredericianum, I had stared blankly at some mid-century sculptures which only now seemed to knead their way into the larger perspective. A Norwegian sculptor called Texmon Rygh had explored the boundaries of the Möbius strip in all its

permutations, or to be more precise, the single boundary with its one surface. So in one fell swoop, we have moved from the middle of the middle to considerations of limitless and undefined constructs.

And to rub it in even more, how flimsy the duality of this glass that separated the inside of the Brain from the outside, CCB brought up the (now familiar to me) Paul Ryan project which was based on Gregory Bateson's threeing observations: first-ness, second-ness, third-ness, and how the project aimed to "mobilize positions" by freeing up the self from preconceived roles, especially roles of conflict relating to duality. Within the Hypnotic Show there were many threeing aspects:

The hypnotist, the visitor, and the induction.

Rai, Sissel, and myself.

Rai's book, my menu, and the books of smells.

The exterior of the cabin, the interior, and the mental space.

The more the project progressed, the more it seemed that the roles and perspectives switched. Throughout d(13), I had been "mobilizing my positions," increasingly becoming the other and hence sometimes getting close to a crisis of persona, of self, of existence. But the upside was that by becoming the other, by immersing myself fully I had found enough detachment from my own ego to *be* and *sense* anything and everyone.

And through this activity of intra-action we would "world" something, whether a new idea, a new perspective, or perhaps an increase in sentience to the environment and the animate and inanimate entities around us.

CCB's lecture progressed into the topic of how the history of Kassel had been rewritten as a kind of palimpsest. But the old writing could be read through

the new text, whether it was the Nazi occupation and the torture house by the Fulda, or whether it was the overlapping layers of conscious experience and unconscious slippages. The view penetrated through layers, through the glass and *into* the Brain itself. The activity would be that of a skeptic, which has somehow lost its original Greek meaning of *skepsis*: inquiry or search. By entering the Brain we would be searching for truth and finding the whole in the part, or the part for the whole, as a walk-in synecdoche.

One of the first elements to be encountered once inside in the Brain, are the Bactrian Princesses. These are small composite figurines that are over 4,000 years old and are from an ancient civilization of western Central Asia. They sit there looking back at you, as if peering through an immense time tunnel, and yet they inhabit a space rubbing shoulder to shoulder with supposedly the most "contemporary" of what twenty-first -century art has to offer. Immediately we know that we are not in a race for newness, for the flavor of the month, but rather if there was a quest for originality it would be something found at the *origin*. Suddenly, the Hypnotic Show fits comfortably within the context of the Egyptian sleep temples, which were dedicated to Imhotep, from around the same time. According to the hieroglyphs on the temple walls, visitors would gather for healing sleep sessions, ingest herbs, and go into a darkened chamber to enter into a dream-like state.

Stacked up since the sleep temples, a layering of trance techniques over the aeons gives the true perspective of the Hypnotic Show. This is no new idea, in fact there is little innovative about it when one considers the centuries of trance methods developed by the ancient Greeks with their temples to Aesculapius, shamanic rituals both in Mongolia and the Himalayan

plateaus as well as in the Americas, the traces of which I have experienced directly with the Wixáritari, and then up through Mesmerism, Animal Magnetism in the eighteenth century, the Nancy School, Charcot's Salpêtrière school that Sigmund Freud visited, and later on, the Surrealists, up until present day investigations by artists, therapists, and stage performers. The beauty of the practice is that it is like a Klein bottle that moves fluidly across time and space. It is never new and never old.

It was so rhizomatic, you can't really speak of a trajectory. — Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev

As we dive deeper into the Brain, led by our worldly guide, CCB, the associations start to resonate and ricochet: a rock lies on the floor, an exact twin lies next to it. Giuseppe Penone had sculpted it to be a replica of the natural version. I was not then the only artist caught in a bind of rock symmetry with the search for the symmetrical pebbles for the fireplace in the cabin. The Brain opened up to a kaleidoscope of copies and simulacra: Sam Durant's soft looking sack made of solid sculpted Carrara marble, Carrara being a cradle of anarchism: self rule and perhaps in this case self reality. A series of Giorgio Morandi's paintings of bottles that were shown next to the original bottles of which the surfaces Morandi had painted, as if extruding the canvas outwards into the object and collapsing the space between representation and what is represented. Next to these bottles there were other, smaller ones, the creepy artifacts that had once belonged to Hitler's companion, Eva Braun. Again, the recurring echo of Breitenau, the evacuation of the park due to the discovery of the WWII bomb, and the deep rumble of the war planes in the cabin drifting over from Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller's

FOREST (for a thousand years) installation, even my discovery of Horst Hoheisel's upside-down fountain.³⁶

Destruction seemed to be at the core of it all, but as with ceramics, which is nothing more than cooked earth, there is a cycle, CCB was telling us, whereby the whole is inevitably broken, fragmented, and then is reabsorbed into the ground in a cycle of coalescing and dispersing. The words, the stories, the experiences of the Hypnotic Show were crafted, woven together, built into a resonant whole only to disperse again into the air, into memories of memories. Perhaps the most encompassing work that filtered into the Brain and away again from it, shadowing the path of the visitors themselves, was Ryan Gander's *I Need Some Meaning I Can Memorize (The Invisible Pull)* in which air was sucked through the empty hallways of the lower floor surrounding the Brain.

Walking away from this whole experience of d(13), of the Hypnotic Show, of the Brain, one is left with an immense feeling of space

and
awe,
uncluttered
and
alive.

Afterword
Reflection Room/Hypnotic Show

I write on Marcos Lutyens' *Reflection Room/Hypnotic Show* installation for dOCUMENTA(13) with some trepidation, because I neither saw the space nor submitted to the hypnotic process—I cannot even with confidence claim that I fully understand the architecture of the self-mirroring building in which the show was housed. However, there is perhaps still room for my own reflection upon it, if not on its experiential materiality, then on my particular experience of its fragments.

Reflection Room/Hypnotic Show is itself made up of fragments so scattered as to never assemble into a closed whole. The piece, based in part on Raimundas Malašauskas's book, *Paper Exhibition*, is partly the cabin in which it was housed, where reflection is both invoked and literalized, both as looking back on oneself and the past in concentrated consideration, as well as in the interior that mirrors itself along a horizontal axis. Both forms of reflection function to unmoor one from the particular place and time of the present, and in fact are tied to a different site buried in the subconscious of the piece—that of the women's correctional facility at the Breitenau concentration camp. In addition to these spaces, the work is installed through the *Hypnotic Show* in the minds of the participants, who chose from a menu of possible situations, sensations and operational constructs and then are guided through a private or small group hypnotic session by Lutyens. Each individual has a unique interior experience of the hypnosis, and thus *Hypnotic Show* is never accessible to an individual audience member in its entirety. Lutyens created an archive of the descriptions given by the hypnotized of their memories of the

hypnotized state, but an archive is not equivalent to the object it documents. Furthermore, the archive is the resting place for the document that has ceased to circulate—it exists, but is not necessarily easily available. Additionally, I can only imagine a factor of the work I will never experience—Sissel Tolaas's scent created for the space, to which I have access only through a frustrated conceptual synesthesia when reading its description: "a non-referential scent drawn from an experience of time, rather than one of aroma or taste. It is an olfactory gesture towards a future, inevitable moment. It is as if, seeing your parents after a break of forty years, your future flashes in front of you in a life-size, petrified second."

In spite of the fractured nature of the work, however, Lutyens has allowed himself alone a position of near total access. He is the witness, the administrator, the perpetrator of each hypnotic session, and then the confessor of each subject. From his perspective alone may the worlds within the many visitors to the installation be glimpsed. This witnessing is not a passive one, but is more akin to Bracha Ettinger's concept of with-nessing, in which being in front of an event can never be a detached experience, but must always affect all parties. As a form of witnessing, hypnosis is, as Karen Barad might put it, intra-active. Therefore Lutyens himself is also a key site in which the work takes place.

Hypnosis is also therapeutic, and in this way the work touches on possibilities of healing. The particular therapy offered herein is two-fold: first, there is an imposition by the artist of a particular experience of reality onto the minds of his audience members, and second, there is a unique reflection of that reality that they in turn impress upon him. Something is offered and comes back changed, almost unrecognizably new,

and in this way a kind of research, or experimentation is undertaken with each exchange of hypnosis and response. But there is also a relationship of these intra-actions of offering and receiving to care, which is a part of healing (and not only to be cared for, but to experience care oneself.) As Donna Haraway describes it, “Caring means becoming subject to the unsettling obligation of curiosity, which requires knowing more at the end of the day than at the beginning.”³⁷ It may have been a goatskin in the wilderness, but is more often in contemporary society the confidentiality of the therapist.

However, the confessor, unlike the goatskin, may not remain a dumb vessel, and thus, as Foucault describes in *The History of Sexuality Volume 1*, a power is asserted by the confessor over he or she who confesses. And crucially, although components of therapeutic practices are in evidence in this work, the artist is not a therapist, and the archive is a leaky vessel in which to house one’s secrets. Although there may be elements of healing to Lutyens’ work, he is also mining the protected inner lives of his subjects in ways that, mishandled, could be understood as deeply invasive. After all, what he is drawing out of all of these hypnotized states may reveal more of the subjects than they may have intended. The possibility of damage is latent in every touch.

Caroline Carlsmith
to Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev
Worlding
Monday, December 2, 2013

1. Before Ulrike Meinhof co-founded the militant Red Army Faction, she was a journalist who, after a visit to Breitenau put together a radio broadcast in the late 1960s about the abuse taking place at this women's correctional facility.

2. Clarence Irving Lewis (1883-1964) was an acclaimed logician and the founder of conceptual pragmatism.

3. See Rosen, 1991.

4. This idea was first explored by Tor Nørretranders in his book, *The User Illusion: Cutting Consciousness Down to Size* (Nørretranders, 1999).

5. Amurrio is the small town in the Basque Country that my brother and I visited for many childhood years with our mum, Beatriz. She was first sent there to live with an aunt to escape the siege of Madrid in the Spanish Civil War.

6. All of the feedback quotes in this book were from subsequent emails, rather than shared in the sessions themselves.

7. Sinister means left in Latin.

8. Just across my cabin was the Paul Ryan pavilion; the only hut visible from mine, it was a social petri dish in which the act of "threeing" had taken place to combat the social binds that often lead to schizophrenia.

9. These types of drugs create a sense of oneness and emotional openness.

10. Migraines with aura create jangly, Art-Deco-like abstract moving patterns across the visual field.

11. What could be better than a name that means "happy tree gardener" for the person who holds the world altitude parachuting record?

12. Time here is not considered to be a dimension. The introduction of 4D Minkowski spacetime has created a century-long misunderstanding of time as the fourth dimension of space that lacks any experimental support (Zyga, 2012).

13. This is potentially terrifying, as I once discovered when I felt that my body was a mile away and that my hands were tiny butterflies... and yet it is an incredible feat of the mind that consciousness seems to keep our sense of scale relatively stable.

14. In Venn diagram terms, it would be something like:
The Universe minus the union of A and B ($x = U - A \cup B$)

...except in this case A and B are a multitude of factors including time, words, feelings, sensations, etc., and therefore needs to be represented by a higher number of sets, perhaps in multiple dimensions. At any rate, in a Venn diagram this would be represented by the space beyond any of the interlocking bubbles.

15. These were hip-high black boxes on legs with sensors, buttons, sliders and electronics hidden within the chassis. I say extruments as they are musical tools that resonate outwards, electronically rather than in their interior cavities as musical instruments were traditionally designed to do.

16. Avicenna was a tenth-century Persian polymath in the Islamic Golden Age, whose writings covered subject matter in diverse fields such as astronomy, poetry, alchemy, physics, psychology, geography, and mathematics.

17. The dTOURS of dOCUMENTA(13) were led by trained persons called "Worldly Companions," mainly from Kassel and from different backgrounds, generations, and knowledges.

18. Colleen was studied extensively in Richard E. Cytowic and David M. Eagleman's book, *Wednesday is Indigo Blue: Discovering the Brain of Synesthesia*.

19. This is also sometimes called "eyeless sight," and refers to the possibility of transferring the visual faculties of eyesight to other parts of

the body such as the fingertips, in which case this sensing becomes “dermo-optical” perception. See also *Pataphysics: The Poetics of an Imaginary Science* (Bök, 2001).

20. Technically known as Wernicke and Broca’s areas.

21. This method of folding was originally invented by astrophysicist Koryo Miura for deploying solar panel arrays by satellites.

22. If you want to give the feeling of engaging with someone by looking at them, the best way is to choose just one of their eyes and look at it, rather than going back and forth between the eyes. In most people the left eye is non-dominant more “receptive.”

23. This communication and personal development approach was developed by John Grinder and Richard Bandler in the 1970s. Since then there has been a great deal of discussion as to its efficacy as a communication device, but nonetheless, the importance of the specific use of language and choice of words in communication can not be underestimated.

24. Around 1920, Wolfgang Kohler became a subject of Wertheimer’s phi-phenomenon experiments, which studied the apparent movement generated by a sequence of static images and other visual affects in the brain, similar to the images generated much later in Op Art. Later he developed the Bouba-Kiki experiment of cross-modal perception in which a sharp-angled shape and a gently rounded one were shown to people. The subjects were asked to say which one corresponded more to the word “kiki” and which one to “bouba.” Between 95% and 98% of respondents said that the sharp one was “kiki” and the rounded one was “bouba.”

25. At a guess I would say this was a locally built Rheinmetall Defense Leopard 2: In their own

words: “the Leopard 2 is the world’s finest main battle tank. Its overwhelming combat performance, resulting from an optimum combination of firepower, protection, mobility and operational readiness, places the Leopard 2 in a class of its own. Crucially, it is armed with Rheinmetall’s superb 120mm smoothbore gun. Rheinmetall also makes a comprehensive range of state-of-the-art ammunition for the Leopard 2 as well as supplying the tank’s fire control technology and C4I systems.”

26. Now known as ArtworxLA, run by Cynthia Campoy-Brophy.

27. This is a therapeutic practice developed by Jodorowsky in which symbolic acts are played out in real life to overcome mental phobias and blocks.

28. The current director of the Tate Liverpool.

29. The idea of a spirit double goes as far back as Ancient Egyptian mythology, in the form of Ka which was an entity that replicated the original self.

30. She famously developed a project in which she synthesized a molecule from the soccer-player David Beckham’s cleats.

31. A story within a story.

32. Coinciding with the two symbols used in the Essen neurosurgery department cognitive tests.

33. My own word for hypnotic catalepsy, where the “I” in self becomes as strong as a structural steel I-beam used in construction.

34. It reminded me of that time a Wixáritari elder once slapped me in the face after an all-night ritual on Monte Quemado in the Eastern Sierra Madre of Mexico. We were at the top of Monte Quemado, it was December 31, 1999. There were eight shamans chanting all night around a large fire made from the stumps of yucca trees. The fire was a manifestation of Grandfather Fire: Tatahuari. Two baby goats that had

been bleating on the long walk up the mountain, were sacrificed, crying like infant babies and cooked into a stew. The frozen desert wind was howling and drawing the embers across my field of vision and down into the plains below, where the lights of Estaciones Wadley and Berendo could be made out far below, as if echoing the vault of lights in the night sky. The shamans, known as Mara’akame chanted in a crescendo of wave upon wave of growing intensity. The communion of Hikuri (peyote) was given on the tongue to those of us who were gathered around and the internal visions followed as we watched Tatahuari’s glowing embers transform into endless delicate geometries and the hissing of the fire turn into voices of teaching, of the dissolution of ego, of connectedness, of all things that can not easily be explained to a mind so often entrapped in the logical/rational plane. Just as the Millennial sun was rising and to finish off this transitional process, the head Mara’akame slowly walked over towards me. He suddenly grabbed me by the shirt collar, pulled me up in one stroke and slapped me hard across the face, yelling: “¡Levántate, charro, esto no es un juego!”

35. The Colombian indigenous Kogi Mamas’s bubble divination is a curious mirror of this schema. This can be seen in the documentary *Aluna* (Ercira, 2012).

36. This extraordinary sculpture in front of Kassel’s town hall consists of a huge ten-meter-long fountain and spire structure that is buried upside down into the ground to memorialize the original fountain that was demolished by the Nazis in 1939.

37. Donna Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 36.

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Hypnotic Show Timeline (approximate)

2008
Jessica Silverman Gallery,
San Francisco

2009
Kunstverein, Amsterdam
Kadist Foundation, Paris
Artists Space, New York

2010
Artissima, Turin
Repetition Island, Centre Pompidou,
Paris

2011
Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm
Artissima, Turin

2012
dOCUMENTA(13), Kassel
Forde Art Space, Geneva

2013
Taipei Fine Art Museum

2014
Kunstverein Toronto

Colophon

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by Marcos Lutyens

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Marcos Lutyens is an artist living
in Los Angeles, intervening
and entangling internationally.

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