

LOOK AROUND

SENSE AROUND HEAR AROUND TOUCH AROUND

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Tools for Experiencing the Space / Feeling Around

During the artistic research preceding the creation of the pavilion, each member of the collective proposed one exercise to be performed in the former slaughterhouse where the Prague Quadrennial 2023 is taking place.


Those exercises were meant as methods of exploring the relations between bodies, space and imagination. They enabled us to be more attentive toward the place where we were working—a site vibrating with multispecies entanglements; their difficult pasts and possible futures. Performing those exercises made us feel that neither is the skin a boundary of our body, nor do the eyes let us see all the bodies that constantly change us, shape us, make us become more than human. We are one with the environment that we inhabit, inevitably involved in its intricate affairs. Now, we would like to share with you this collection of tools and methods of looking, touching, feeling and smelling around, as an invitation to explore some aspects of our work process.

We had to decide on an order for the exercises to put them on paper, but you can challenge it by following our suggestions that precede each exercise.


**If you feel like
finding your
bones deep
down beneath
your feet**

go to exercise 


**If you feel like
greeting things
that are too
small to
experience**

go to exercise 


**If you feel like
morphing**

go to exercise 

**If you feel
like having
a multisensory
experience**

go to exercise 

**If you feel
overwhelmed
by the chaos
in your
environment**

go to exercise 

**If you feel like
following
the footsteps
of a stranger**

go to exercise 

Exercise in Looking Around: Proximity Check-up

Duration
at least
5 minutes

You will need
a body firmly
situated in
the space;
keen senses:
sight, touch,
smell and
hearing

Choose a comfortable spot in the space. If you are using earphones, take one of them out of your ear so you can hear the soundscape of the environment around you.

Look around.

Touch around.

Smell around.

Listen around.

To name things that are near in space, time or a relationship, we use the word “proximity.”

Name one thing that you can see in close proximity in the space you’re in.

Now recall one thing that you’ve touched in close proximity in that space.

Now name one thing that you can smell in close proximity in that space.

Now recall one sound that you’ve listened to in close proximity in time.

How do you use sight to learn about proximity?

How far can you see? How is your sight determined by the fact that as a human animal you have eyes in the front of your head? What do you do to sharpen your sight?

And how do you use touch to learn about proximity?

Do you reach out your hands? Can a tactile stimulus give you the impression that something is close or far away? Does closeness have temperature? Does distance have texture?

And how do you use smell to learn about proximity?

Can you navigate toward a destination based on smells? What kind of smell makes you want to step back? What kind of smell attracts you?

And how do you use listening to learn about proximity?

Can you differentiate between background sounds and main sounds? How does your perception of sound change when you shake your head?

If closing your eyes helps you to focus, you can do it now. You can also put both your earphones in your ears.

Have you ever experienced the feeling that something is close to you even though you couldn’t use your senses to make sure of this?

Think about a situation when something from far away has influenced your body.

Maybe it was information about an event taking place on another continent? Maybe it was radiation sent out by a star called the Sun that is distanced from Earth by one hundred and fifty million kilometers? Maybe it was a particle of plastic produced in China that got

into your digestive system from the plastic bottle that you bought at the railway station right before boarding the train?

Could you feel it when it happened? How did your body respond to that event? Did your palms sweat? Did your forehead go a darker color? Were you nauseous?

Open your eyes. Check if the web of relationships that you are part of has changed in your perception.

Look around.

Feel around.

Smell around.

Hear around.

**If you feel
a need to
be more
organized**

go to exercise ▾

**If you feel
an appetite
for a story**

go to exercise ◇

**If you feel
like drawing
what is
hidden deep
under**

go to exercise △

**If you feel
that choreo-
graphy is not
something
that belongs
to humans**

go to exercise ∑

**If you feel
detached
from
your body**

go to exercise □

The Movement Map

Duration
**at least
15 minutes**

You will need
**a sheet of
paper or
a notebook;
a pencil
or pen;
an open area
that you can
observe**

This is a game that is best carried out outdoors. During a walk, for example.

Stand for a moment and observe your surroundings in search of animals. You can focus on the far horizon to search for bigger creatures or look under your feet for small organisms. Observe the way they move. Is the movement linear or perhaps circular? Does it happen smoothly or in leaps?

Imagine that each of them leaves a trail—like an airplane in the sky. Try drawing this movement on paper or with a stick on the ground.

Now choose one animal or one type of animal. Observe its movements and draw its trail without looking at the paper or the ground. Don't mark the shapes of animals or the landscape. Let yourself be carried away by the movement of the observed animal. Follow its choreography. When you decide that it is enough—look at the drawing.

Now listen to the sounds made by the animal you are observing. Try to connect what you see with what you hear. Can the sounds be drawn? Try to improvise with creating a notation that seems suitable for the situation.

Look at what has been created on paper or on the ground. Which parts are responsible for the movement of each animal, and which parts are responsible for the sound?

If this drawing is a map, would it be possible to add a legend to it? Try to do it, including all the elements and factors that should be marked on the map.

If you feel
a need
to position
yourself
in the space

go to exercise ○

If you feel
like touching
what hides
from your
touch

go to exercise △

If you feel
like counting
all the colors
that are
around you

go to exercise ▽

If you feel
like creating
a breathing
sculpture

go to exercise □

If you feel
like wording
the world

go to exercise ◇

The Inventory

Duration

5-30 minutes

You will need

**what you
already have**

**You can touch,
write on pa-
per or on
your phone,
take a pic-
ture, record
a sound, save
a sequence
of movements
in your mem-
ory**

During this exercise you will create an inventory of what surrounds you.

The simplest compilation of what is around you.

You can perform it inside or outside.

Choose a fragment of the space. It may be near or far away from you.

Direct your eyesight, hearing, touch, smell and taste at the chosen fragment of the space.

Try to focus on it.

Shapes,
Colors,
Textures,
Smells,
Temperatures,
Sounds,
Human elements,
Non-human elements.

Are you able to say how many of ... there are?

Are they separate or do they exist in relationships with each other?

How do you think they would behave in other relationships?

If you feel that lines are connected with movement

go to exercise Σ

If you feel like discovering the skins of the Earth

go to exercise Δ

If you feel like broadening your perception of proximity

go to exercise \circ

If you are hungry

go to exercise \diamond

If you feel like exploring the relation between the interior and exterior of your body

go to exercise \square

Pieces of Memories from the Other Side of the Page

Duration
at least
15 minutes

You will need
a sheet of pa-
per of any size
(the size will
determine
the scale of
your explora-
tion)

a pencil
or charcoal or
other soft
drawing tool

a sense that
you feel like
taking off your
shoes

Start by walking with your eyes directed toward the ground. Carefully and slowly look at the maps that are drawn under your feet. Each imprinted step becomes a bulge on the other side. Every dug hole creates a hill.

The structure of the ground, the floor, the soil, the sidewalk, the spaces in between.

The temperature of the stone, the temperature of the concrete, the temperature of the ground, the temperature of the meat-textured floor coverings. Stand still. Look under your feet. Take off your shoes and try to find the connection between your feet and the floor. What kind of connection is it? Write down an emotion, a word, try to verbalize your experience.

Now look deeper, under the floor, under the grass, under the earth, deep inside you. Under the skin of the earth, under your skin. Look under the stone, direct your gaze to the bones. Is the spine of the earth arranged horizontally? Or is it layered, with all the bones inwrought in it? Think of a column of bones holding up your body and try to connect them in your thoughts with the bones of the earth. Immerse your thoughts in the soft earth and look for connections to the tissues of your body. What kind of connections are they? What sort of structures do they create?

Try to draw them with lines on the surface of a piece of paper. Take another piece of paper and use it as a tool to trace the structure of the surface you are standing on. Place the piece of paper on the ground. Using a pencil, piece by piece draw the outline on the sheet of paper so that what is underneath can come out on its surface. What image do you have in front of your eyes? Whose traces are imprinted on the sheet of paper?

If you feel like looking for an alternative future

go to exercise ◇

If you feel like taking a moment for yourself

go to exercise □

If you feel like drawing a map

go to exercise ∑

If you feel an urge to get to know deeply an object that you passed by recently

go to exercise ▽

If you feel like challenging your senses

go to exercise ○

Who do You Share Your Breath With?

Duration
at least
10 minutes

You will need
your body

I
Place your hands on your diaphragm—it is located at the lower part of your ribs, attached to the bottom five of them. Breathe freely, but stay focused on your breath. How are you breathing today? With ease or with some effort? What is the air you are breathing like? Humid or dry? What is its temperature? Is it stationary or moving? Can you smell anything? Try to sense it. Or maybe you can't? Does the absence of a smell always smell the same?

Look around you. Remember to keep breathing. Keep your hands on your diaphragm.

You are floating among substances of different densities. They surround you, touching one another and mixing with each other. Try to notice their flow all around you. Remember the ubiquity of air. Try to see it.

Feel it with the whole surface of your body—the pressure, the resistance it exerts on you. What is the density of your body?

How do you occupy a space that is not a void? Do you push through the air while walking? Are you dispersing it, stirring it, creating movement?

With every breath, you inhale less than half a liter of new air into your respiratory system. Almost three liters are already inside. The particles of the newly inhaled air mix with the ones inhaled earlier.

What you exhale is a mixture of air that entered your body in different times and spaces.

How long does it take to replace all the air in your respiratory system? Over what distances do you transport the air you inhale? You're a courier, a distributor—carrying air from place to place.

II
Breathe freely.

What do you take inside your body with each inhalation? What of yourself do you give back with each exhalation?

Think of things that are too small to feel.

Plant germs—pollen and spores.
Think of all the species that might have entered your body. Some of them might have caused you allergies, others went unnoticed.

Think of other things that are too small to feel.

Bacteria, protozoa, fungi moving through the air.
Recall the experience of breathing in a humid or cramped room.
Recall breathing in a dusty place.
When you enter a room, the room enters you.

Think of yet other things that are too small to feel.

Viruses.
Neither animate nor inanimate.
Pushing the boundaries of your body and already inhibiting its interior.
Multiplying in your cells.
Causing global pandemics.

Think of even more things that are too small to feel.

Dust and heavy metals.

Pollutants produced by burning coal and garbage.

Pollutants raised into the air by the wheels of cars.

When you breathe in an economy based on fossil fuels, its wastes settle inside your body.

How far can they make it into your body?

Some get stopped in your nostrils, some make it to your larynx. Finally, some go all the way to the alveoli and from there to your bloodstream.

Think of things that are simultaneously too small and too big for you to feel.

Think of the ecosystems both you and all the organisms infiltrating your body participate in.

Think of the global market that seeps into you through polluted air.

III

Inhale.

Can you feel the air flowing through your nostrils? What does it feel like when the mucous membrane in your nose warms and moistens the air? Can you feel it drying out? Exhale.

Do you feel the air escaping through your nose, giving back to the mucous membrane the moisture taken away from it? Can you feel it moistening again?

Inhale.

Can you feel what is happening to the larynx?

Exhale.

Place your hands on the front of your neck and take a breath.

Hold it.

Explore the curves of your neck with your hands.

Exhale.

Take a deep breath and hold the air.

What is the sensation when you can't take in any more of it?

What is the feeling when you try, regardless?

Exhale.

Inhale.

Hold it.

Your diaphragm has the shape of a convex dome—when you take a breath it tightens toward the bottom. With the help of the intercostal muscles, you expand your chest.

This allows air to get sucked in—the lungs can't do this without the help of those muscles.

Exhale.

Inhale.

Hold it.

Can you feel your chest expanding? How does the arrangement of your ribs change?

Exhale.

Inhale.

Hold it.

Place your hands on your ribs and inhale. Feel how they move.

Exhale.

Place your hands lower, on your stomach, and inhale. Feel how it expands.

Exhale.

Inhale.

Hold it.

Place your hands on your back, on the lumbar region—the back of your diaphragm is located there—and breathe out. Can you feel your back moving?

Inhale.

The alveoli transfer oxygen to the blood, which transports it to the cells. In them, cellular respiration takes place. It produces energy.

Can you feel how your cells breathe?

Exhale.

Inhale.

Hold it.

Connect your breath with your emotions. Can you identify them? Is it fascination, anxiety, boredom, something else?

Exhale.

IV

Breathe freely.

Who do you share your breath with?

Think of all the other beings breathing the same air as you.

Is it possible to breathe air that hasn't been breathed by someone before? How do you determine that?

Think about the breathing of other people.

What would it be like to breathe with asthma?

With pneumoconiosis?

With panic attacks?

With pneumonia?

With lung cancer?

With only one lung?

Think what it would be like to breathe being an animal.

All mammals breathe similarly.

Dogs, goats, elephants, rats, cats, chimpanzees, coyotes, pandas, hedgehogs.

You breathe the same way they do.

What would it be like to breathe being an

amphibian

reptile

bird

insect

fish

plant

a fungus?

Having baggy lungs; spongy and multi-chambered lungs or tubular ones supported by air sacs?

Not having lungs at all; breathing through the skin, mouth, gills, stomatal apparatus?

**If you feel like
interconnecting
with your
surroundings**

go to exercise ○

**If you feel like
giving some
attention to
animals around
you**

go to exercise ∑

**If you feel like
scanning the
Earth with your
feet and your
hands**

go to exercise △

**If you feel
a need to
open up your
imagination**

go to exercise ◇

**If you feel
like collecting
things**

go to exercise ▽

One Story from Many Different Times

Duration
at least
15 minutes

You will need
your
imagination

Find a comfortable place in the space and sit down.

I will ask you several questions. Try to answer them quickly with the first response that comes to mind. You don't have to write your answers down.

What was the last thing that you ate?

Where did it come from?

What bodies—human and non-human—were engaged in the process of producing your meal?

Between which spaces did it move before it appeared on your plate?

How did it impact those spaces?

How did it impact your body?

How did it impact the Earth's atmosphere?

Stand up and look around. You are in a former slaughterhouse.

Take a slow stroll around the space. During the stroll, explore the space. Look at it closely and try to answer the following questions. Take your time to answer. You don't have to write the answers down.

Look around.

What human bodies are there?

What non-human bodies are there?

Which of all those bodies need nutrition?

What do they need to obtain nutrition?

Do they need each other to stay nourished?

Who do they need to stay nourished?

Do they provide others with nutrition?

Who do they provide with nutrition?

When you finish, find a comfortable spot and sit down. I am going to share with you a story that I came across recently. Take your time to read it.

At first everything was human. Humans were the world itself. Some of those first people came to be what we now call humankind, but they were very different from us. They had incredibly plastic bodies, which enabled them to alter their own anatomy, transforming all their shapes and bodily structures. Over the years some of them evolved, gradually becoming more distinct from one another. That is how all the entities that compose the present world emerged. Some of the first people came to be animals, plants, rocks, oceans, valleys, celestial bodies, etc. However, underneath those new anatomies they remained humans. As such, they have created countless kinds of societies, with their own ways of inhabiting the world.

We, Europeans, have forgotten about that story of our origins. But there are people who still remember—Amerindians. They know that there are many more humans in the world than are dreamt of in Western philosophy. Amerindians, just like us, cannot see a human in an animal or a plant. However, the Amerindians know what we have forgotten—that both an animal and a plant are “humans for themselves.”¹ Therefore, when an Amerindian encounters an animal or a plant, that person deals with an entity which is “human in its own domain.”² Thus, for Amerindians every encounter with representatives of other species is a diplomatic negotiation which should be taken with consciousness and respect.

Amerindians believe that negotiation is a practice crucial for those who need nutrition to survive. If we have to destroy other beings to get food, destroy other humans, we should bear responsibility for that act. We can do it by practicing negotiations as an art of noticing and paying attention to the needs of other human beings, the rules of the society that they come from, and the ways our societies intertwine.

1 D. Danowski, E. Viveiros de Castro, *Ends of the World*, Polity Press 2016, p. 71.

2 Ibidem, p. 71.

I came across this story in the beautiful book *Ends of the World* by Déborah Danowski and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro.

But I am not sure where the story really comes from.

It might be a story from the future. It might be a story from the past.

It might be a story about the future. It might be a story about the past.

You are the one to decide where it comes from.

You can make a past out of it.

You can make a present out of it.

You can make a future out of it.

Now stand up, look around and continue your stroll while asking yourself the following questions:

How can we negotiate with those *other human societies* the terms of our coexistence?

How can we negotiate with them the ways we feed ourselves?

How can we negotiate who gets to eat and who gets to be eaten?

If you feel like giving some attention to animals around you
go to exercise Σ

If you feel like jumping in between scales
go to exercise \circ

If you feel like slowing down
go to exercise \square

If you feel like you don't have any influence on anything
go to exercise ∇

If you feel like you want to reach deep into the earth through invisible roots growing out of your feet
go to exercise \triangle

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