



*Locate Mindfulness* (2014), mixed media on paper

# Mindfulness, Mindlessness, *Mindfulness*:

## What did I do again?

**Colie Leung**

2014

Exegesis in support of practice-based Thesis

Master of Art and Design (Visual Arts)

Auckland University of Technology (AUT)

# Content

ii	— <i>Figures</i>
iv	— <i>Attestation of Authorship</i>
v	— <i>Acknowledgements</i>
vi	— <i>Abstract</i>
vii	— <i>Preface: Mindfulness And Mindlessness, Or Mindfulnessness</i>

Art Gestures **1**

Giving Instructions **4**

Magnifying Time, Modifying Time,

Repeating Time, And Passing Time **9**

Haha, HA. That's Absurd. Where's The Humour? **12**

Video Documentation **17**

Archival Documentation **21**

26	— <i>No Beginning, No Ending</i>
30	— <i>References</i>
35	— <i>Appendix I</i>
72	— <i>Appendix II (Thesis Examination Documentation)</i>



# Figures

Figure 1. Diagram showing the reflection of ten mirrors and a lamp

Figure 2. Diagram showing the consciousness, gesture, and unknown region

Figure 3. *Gripping Hand #1*, Colie Leung (2014), photographic documentation

Figure 4. *Lips*, Colie Leung (2014), photographic documentation

Figure 5. *Swing A Perfect Square With Your Arm*, Colie Leung (2014), photographic documentation

Figure 6.1. *Mirror No. 1*, Colie Leung (2013), instruction from research

Figure 6.2. *Mirror No. 1*, Colie Leung (2013), digital still

Figure 6.3. *Mirror No. 1*, Colie Leung (2013), photographic documentation

Figure 7. *Untitled Installation #1, Hopping, Skipping, Walking, And Not Being There On The Same Spot, Wall and Concrete Playing Tug-O-War*, mirror and concrete, Colie Leung (2014), digital still from installation

Figure 8. *Rolling On The Wall #2*, Colie Leung (2014), photographic documentation

Figure 9. *Laughing Into The Camera Lens*, Colie Leung (2014), photographic documentation

Figure 10. *Walk A Perfect Trapezium* (left) and *Walk A Perfect Triangle* (right), Colie Leung (2014), image-capture for photographic documentation

Figure 11. *Rolling Thumb Backward*, Colie Leung (2014), photographic documentation

Figure 12. *Breathing In And Out For Six Seconds*, Colie Leung (2014), photographic documentation

Figure 13. *Hopping, Skipping, Walking, Standing, And Not Being There On The Same Spot*, Colie Leung (2014), photographic documentation

Figure 14. *Walk A Perfect Square #2*, Colie Leung (2014), photographic documentation

Figure 15. *Looking Into My Own Nostrils*, Colie Leung (2014), photographic documentation

Figure 16. *Weight of Ideas*, Colie Leung (2014), digital still from installation

Figure 17. *Thoughts Above Your Head, Below The Clouds*, 1480x297mm, Colie Leung (2013), digital still from installation

Figure 18. *Out*, Colie Leung (2014), photographic documentation

Figure 19. *Walking In Different Manners #2 (Walking slow and walking fast on the same spot)*, Colie Leung (2014), photographic documentation

Figure 20. Diagram showing the role of documentation, absurd and humour, time, and implicit instructions with Art gestures of 'Jijimugi' (事事無礙)

Figure 21. *Walking Around A Camera*, Colie Leung (2014), image-capture for photographic documentation

Figure 22. Thesis examination documentation, 2014 digital still

Figure 23. Thesis examination documentation: *Swing A Perfect Shape* series (Circle, Oval, Triangle, Square, Rectangle), Colie Leung (2014), digital still

Figure 24. Thesis examination documentation: *mindfulness: 100 ways of non-thinking*, Colie Leung (2014), digital still

Figure 25. Thesis examination documentation: *Walk A Perfect Trapezium*, Colie Leung (2014), digital still

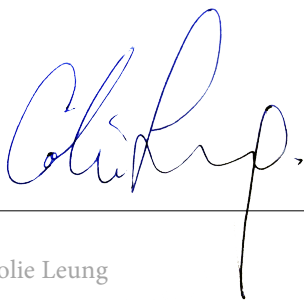
Figure 26. Thesis examination documentation: *Walking In Different Manners #1 (Walking)*, #3 (*Full steps*), #5 (*Small steps wide legs*), #6 (*One foot steps*), Colie Leung (2014), digital still

Figure 27. Thesis examination documentation: *Hopping, Skipping, Walking, Standing, And Not Being There On The Same Spot*, Colie Leung (2014), digital still

## *Attestation of Authorship*

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of another degree or diploma or a university or institution of higher learning.

Signed

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Colie Leung', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Colie Leung

8 October 2014

## *Acknowledgments*

It's amazing to sit and think, and be mindful of the many people over the past few years that have contributed to, or supported my own motivation to complete this MA&D and giving me the confidence to stand up to my own ideas. It's even more difficult to attempt to acknowledge all those who have contributed to this process in other ways over that time, or before it even started. However, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude and acknowledge the help and contributions of the supervisory staff of this thesis: Paul Cullen and Andy Thomson. They have generously provided inspiration, advice, guidance, and feedback that have helped immensely. Thank you for the conversations and laughter we had along during this project. I would also like to acknowledge Christopher Braddock whose inspiring advice assisted me in my postgraduate years, especially your understanding of my ideas. I express my deep gratitude to the academics that have shaped my curious conceptual ideas so far. Thank you.

I would like to dedicate this thesis to the memory of my father, who has always been my hero. I believe he would have been proud. And finally to my mother, I am forever grateful to your endless patience and love. I am blessed to be able to share this with such a magnificent and strong woman.

## *Abstract*

Moments that are usually imperceptible are highlighted and magnified; they are made absurd, taking serious matters in a playful manner the imagination at play can be amplified with a touch of light-heartedness. We have our own flow of actions every day, but what do they mean? Or, what could they mean? Does washing the plate merely mean washing the plate? By virtue of subtle shifts in bodily gestures and the mind's awareness, thoughts radically change signifying the transitions of perceptions. This idea can be explored in relation to different experiences through simple gestures or moments within the everyday tasks. Instructions for simple and straightforward gestures draw attention to imperceptible moments that could otherwise have gone unnoticed whether we are mindful or mindless. In this way, experiences and events are given new possible meanings and interpretations.

# *Preface: Mindfulness And Mindlessness, Or Mindfulnessness*

This practice based research project questions the balance of mindfulness and mindlessness in order to explore and progress to a state of *mindfulnessness*. Through installation works using video and photography and by focusing on commonplace bodily actions and gestures the project aims to create a state of *mindfulnessness* between mindfulness and mindlessness. *Mindfulnessness* is situated between the states of mindfulness and mindlessness manifested as mundane gestural activities that occur in everyday<sup>1</sup> life. *Mindfulnessness* is a word coined to signify tranquillity, between the state of mindfulness and mindlessness. Both mindfulness and mindlessness derive from the Latin word '*mind*' meaning thought ("Mindfulness", 2014).

Mindfulness is defined as "mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensation" (2014). In the context of the research, the mindful and mindless state is explored through the gestural self-performance. The performance is to be made aware of, acknowledging a particular gesture and gradually shifting to an unthinking state. Mindlessness signifies "acting without justification with no concern for the consequences" and "simple or repetitive as to be performed automatically" ("Mindlessness", 2014). The distinction of the two terms proposes two completely different states of mind, where one is with full awareness and the other

---

<sup>1</sup> In *The Practice of Everyday* (1980), Michel de Certeau describes the 'everyday' as the 'arts of doing' such as walking, talking, reading, dwelling, and cooking as repressive aspects of modern society yet exists an element of creative resistance to these strictures enacted by ordinary people.

relies on body's mechanism. Even so, when our body and mind attempt to locate ourselves in these two states, the distinction between the two decreases because the state of thought fluctuates faster than we imagine; so much so that the present moment is in a constant state of flux<sup>2</sup>.

Mindfulness keeps us situated in the present, therefore enabling us to know what is happening at present. Practicing the piano, bathing the baby, and even breathing, is to repeat what appears to be the same action over and over again, however, if these actions are engaged attentively and mindfully, an almost imperceptible process of change can be noticed. Ellen Langer states, by mindfully drawing novel differences in a process we may reveal issues that we may have gone unnoticed:

*It does not matter whether what is noticed is important or trivial, as long as it is new to the viewer.*

*Actively drawing these distinctions keeps us situated in the present. It also makes us more aware of the context and perspective of our actions than if we rely upon distinctions and categories drawn in the past (Langer & Moldoveanu 2000: 1-2).*

In contrast, the characteristics of mindlessness are trapped by categories. It is an activity of mindfulness to create new categories and distinctions (Langer 1989: 11). When we rely too much on categories and distinctions (masculine/feminine, young/old, success/failure) that were created in the past or in different contexts, we become mindless as we live within these classifications, "once distinctions are created, they take on a life of their own" (1989: 11). My purpose in carrying out this research has been to see if these created distinctions could take on a life of their own. Perhaps if we can address these distinctions, then we will be able to take control of our own lives, free from life bound within these categories and distinctions? I am interested in the possibility that we could be living our lives more through prescribed and set rules rather than actually living our own authentic lives. This question has led my interest in distinguishing actions that are projected outwards, I am trying to attune myself to listen to the internal noises and clutter within myself. I would then

---

<sup>2</sup> In *The Philosophy of Heidegger* (2014), Michael Watts discusses Hölderlin's notion of the 'Between' representing the transition point between past and future, the midpoint between Being and non-Being, and "the region that discloses the movement of coming-into-being as the counter-movement to non-existence and the fleeting nature of human existence ... allowing us a *sense of presence* amid ceaseless change" (134). Hölderlin exemplified this present moment by the river Ister, which is a becoming-in-the-midst-of-flux, an eternal 'now' that preserves its identity in spite of its perpetual flowing and constant state of flux (134). In terms of my research project, this notion exemplifies *mindfulness* in the midst of mindful and mindless states while passing time.

further look into and consider how to de-clutter and distance myself from arising emotions, a layered dialectical process.

In terms of exploring the mindful and mindless state to obtain *mindfulness*, simple everyday gestures and actions are examined by reappropriating customary thinking. Instead of perceiving every action as a tool, for example the idea of walking from point A to point B, the action is extracted from purpose and scrutinized as an action in itself. There are many actions that can be separated from obvious purpose, for example, we walk *because* we want to get to somewhere else; we lift our hand to wipe the strands of hair away *because* the hair itches our face; we flex our fingers to hold the cup of water *because* we are thirsty. In the every day conventions of form in our general *living* we perform every action because we have an obvious reason or intention behind it. This is where the *mindfulness* becomes apparent. The *mindfulness* becomes a hidden, subconscious cognition and by being aware of this state of mind, we may become conscious of new possible experiences.

In Japanese Zen Buddhism, there is a saying referred to as 'Jijimugi' (事事無礙). 'Ji' (事) means 'thing event', 'mu' (無) means 'nothing' or 'without', and 'gi' (礙) means 'block', consequently, 'mugi' means 'without blockage'. So the saying precisely means 'between thing event and thing event, there is no block'. "Every thing in the world, every event, contains a reflection of all other events" (Watts, para. 13). By means of inserting this notion into my practice within everyday events and moments or gestures, it aims to find new experiences within an experience through their interconnectedness.

Imagine ten mirrors that are set up at the eight points of a compass as well as the zenith and nadir with a lamp placed at the centre. Accordingly, ten of the mirrors will accordingly reflect the light. If we were to pick one of the ten mirrors, we will see that the mirror we picked will also reflect all the other mirrors reflecting the light, together with its' own reflection. Consequently, each one of the other nine mirrors is in the mirror we picked and that mirror is also in each of the nine. The diagram below is my interpretation of the idea of 'Jijimugi' (事事無礙) (Fig. 1) illustrating the concept of interconnectedness of experiences and events:



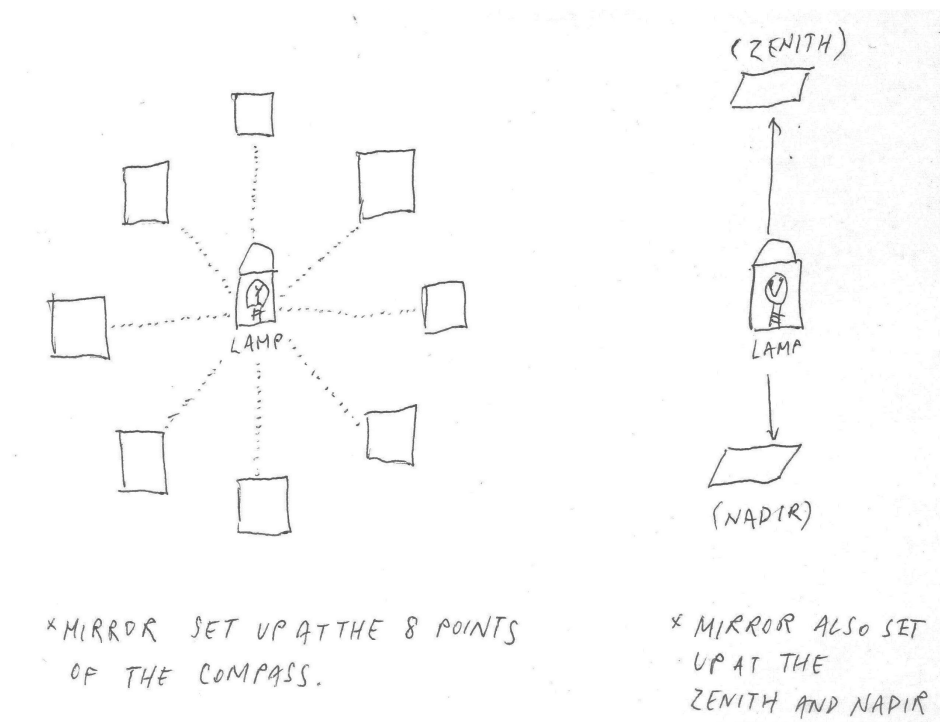


Figure 1. Diagram showing the reflection of ten mirrors and a lamp

This analogy of ten mirrors and a lamp illustrates the purpose of the project to explore the *unknown* regions that are also alternative experiences that are present yet may be difficult to perceive (Fig. 2).

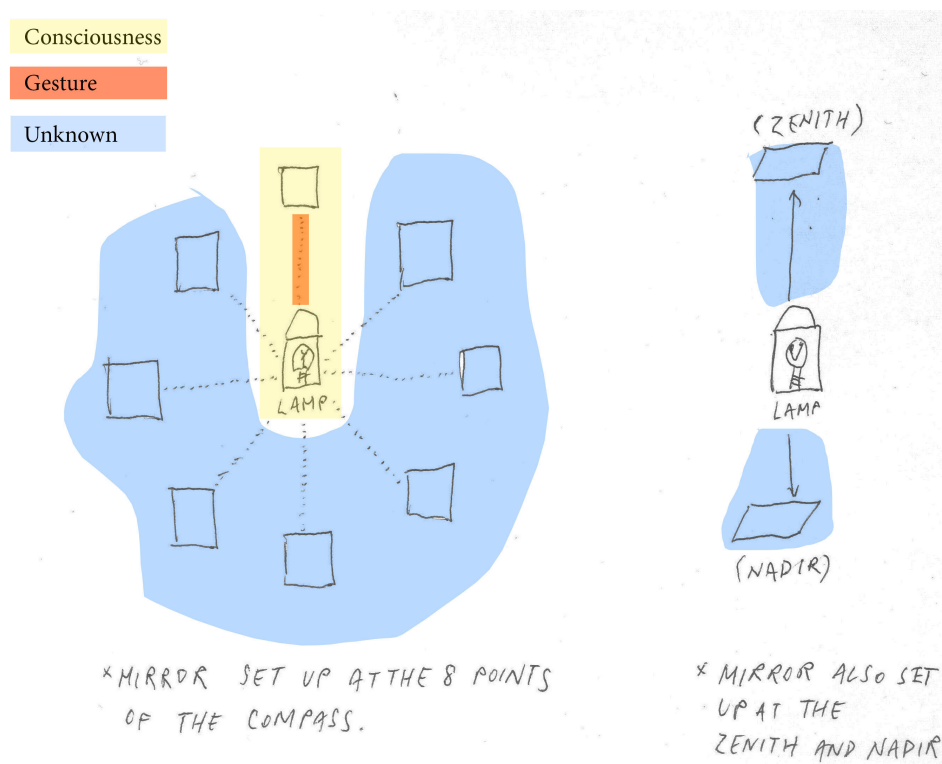


Figure 2. Diagram showing the consciousness, gesture, and *unknown* region

As illustrated by the diagram, the lamp is the mind and the area highlighted in yellow indicates the conscious awareness of our body performing a gesture or an action. The mirror is a symbol of the gesture that is performed and the dotted line in red is the process of the gesture, the *doing*. With respect to the notion of ‘*Jijimugi*’ (事事無礙) that every ‘*thing event*’ is in reflection to other mirrors, it is possible that there are alternative experiences that could occur. The yellow region (consciousness) relates to the other nine mirrors (blue region), resulting the possible interpretations within one event.

The blue region establishes the location of my research: the area of the *unknown* experiences known as the state of *mindfulness*. The blue region also indicates the unaware and unconscious experience. There are an enormous number of things are going on inside us which we are not conscious of. We often make arbitrary distinction between actions and gestures that are voluntary and involuntary (Watts, para. 19). The state of *mindfulness* can be examined in the blue region following the concept of what it means within a gesture, regardless of the already known.

The process of noticing alternative interpretations can be extracted from Premack and Woodruff’s theory of mind<sup>3</sup>. The theory of mind is the capacity to see the world from someone’s point of view or an alternative point of view (Freeman, 2014). Proposing two issues for research: (1) we can see ourselves separate from other people since human beings embody the theory of mind, then are we able to see our own gestures as separate from our mind? (2) Are we able to see the differences within ourselves just as the way we see ourselves as separate from others? The questions reflect and examine the process of tuning into oneself. By means of tuning into oneself, this project employs mirroring gestures using a camera as a mirroring device. In this way, bodily gestures could be focused on and become aware of shifts and movements during the process.

Bruce Nauman states, “by virtue of the formal shifts in the speech patterns and bodily gestures – from dragging on a cigarette, to cocking the head gently to one side, to signing – the phrases’ meanings radically

---

<sup>3</sup> Premack and Woodruff propose a theory of mind as having the ability to indicate mental states such as empathy, desire, intent, beliefs, and so forth to oneself and others and understanding that others mental states are different from their own. In other words, it is being aware of our own consciousness and knowing others think differently. If our own consciousness is not the only experience we could be aware of, that means there are other experiences that we are not conscious of.

change, signifying either a threatening affront or a bid for peace and reconciliation” (Kraynak 2005: 6).

Nauman suggests that every little gesture has its own underlying meaning and a shift in perception. From the temporal gesture of dragging on a cigarette, to cocking the head gently, these moments are magnified and prolonged to focus on the mindful and mindless movements so that the mind could find balance for the state of *mindfulness*. Through the process of “taking an activity and changing its meaning, abstracting it by stretching out the time and allowing you to see things that you couldn’t see otherwise, making you watch the formal parts of it” (Art21, 2013); this is explored by means of related video practice documenting simple gestures along with implicit instructions to challenge the separation from gestures we perform and the mind. In terms of my practice, instructions and gestures aim to be simple and straightforward, drawing attention to imperceptible moments that could otherwise have gone unnoticed. In this way, experiences and events are given new possible meanings and interpretations.

The notion of the ‘*non-graspingness*’ of mind is utilized to be aware of new interpretations of everyday actions. For example, peripheral vision works most effectively when we are in the dark, the corners of the eye sense what is around us and do not look at things directly. The ‘*non-graspingness*’ of mind is when we need to see details in a distance; we relax our eyes and vision focuses more clearly without using any effort. We are letting the body perform in its own way without premeditating these subtle actions. From this perspective, in the west we have put excessive dependency upon a sharp vision for the eyes, it becomes difficult to regain the powers of our peripheral vision. Watts pointed out “the mental or psychological equivalent is not simply calmness of mind, but ‘*non-graspingness*’ of mind” (1989: 36). Understanding the notion of ‘*non-graspingness*’, the mind is able to balance in between the mindful and mindless behaviour possibly achieving the state of *mindfulness*. To attain *mindfulness*, the ‘*non-graspingness*’ of mind is similar to being conscious of the task at hand while at the same time being in a relaxed state. This approach could further develop to the stage where we could find balance between mindfulness (conscious of the task) and mindlessness (relaxing the mind during the task).

Gestural performances are scrutinized in terms of the body’s movements raising questions about whether it is possible to find new realizations regarding the state of *mindfulness* by distinguishing the mindful and mindless shifts of the body. In terms of these actions as Art gestures, the idea is to abandon existing preconceptions about an action and to accept new interpretations from a different perspective. The mindful

and mindless shifts in simple gestures can be seen related to Bruce Nauman's and Richard Serra's video work examining their self-performances. The documented Art gestures are combined with instructions as work title acting in the role of an imaginative signifier. We follow implicit day-to-day instructions without noticing it: knowing dotted lines are an indication of where to cut, or crossing the road when the green light flashes; what alternative experiences could there be if we start recognizing their automatic affect on our mind and imagine what it would be like to disobey them? Instructions are made to be implicit, used as subtle clues for Art gestures to be realized. In a way, the instruction is a simple descriptive title representing the gesture to support recorded documentations, which help to attain *mindfulness* through information.

The state of *mindfulness* is challenged by means of using the absurd and humour as a tool adopting or embracing an unconventional thinking and its ability to widen our sense of interpretation. By exploring different sets of thinking relating to Nagel's theory on seeing an event as absurd from both a subjective and objective viewpoint, the *unknown* experiences may become conscious. For the reason that if we realize that we think the way we do, we would not have been unconscious of such *unknown* experiences, using absurdity and humour in gestures allows the mind to experience the Art gesture in a different light. Humour offers a sense of light-heartedness to events so that with a non-serious attitude, the mind is more amenable to new experiences entering the state of *mindfulness*. Simon Critchley's theory on humour describing laughter, as a moment of pause and "interruption of breath" with Francis Alÿs' video work is further explored for the quotidian actions to provoke the absurd in the everyday (2002: 8). Chaplin's silent movies are examined to consider the relationship between bodily actions, humour and irrationality, assisting and guiding my practical research.

Video art has the ability to explore components that could re-craft qualities of experiencing an Art gesture. Accordingly, time in this research project is reformatted and re-experienced through repetition for its continuing ability to emphasise instructive Art gestures. In terms of reshaping time through video editing, time is used to magnify Art gestures experienced with '*non-graspingness*', giving more time for the mind to find balance to arrive to the state of *mindfulness*. Bodily actions points to the experience of time, and time within the documentation highlights the role of perceiver's state of mind in relation to the installation set-up. The body is seen as an object and tool, aiming to test the mind in situations to pay attention to our own bodily awareness, helping to focus *mindfulness*. The strategy to convey everyday gestures as Art gesture

reflects Nauman's practice of creating artwork in his studio. Marina Abramović's re-enactment of Nauman's *Body Pressure* (1974) in her *Seven Easy Pieces* performance (2005) casts light on issues of performance art documentation by means of mimetic devices. The instants captured in still images from video documentation address time in the manner of projecting the momentum of the process through static images. By means of the absurd, humour, instructive Art gestures, photographic, and video documentation, this project aims to challenge states of mindfulness and mindlessness in order to draw attention to new interpretations of ordinary gestures and actions.

# *Art Gestures*

This section discusses the way in which everyday gestures and ordinary moments in the studio are able to manifest as 'Art gesture'. The key focus for this research is to examine the process of these unaccounted gestures and actions we are often unaware of and which may contain experiences to trigger our mind to think from different perspectives. The role of using everyday gestures and turning it into Art gestures is to help situate the mindful and mindless elements within the process. Adopting the notion of '*non-graspingness*' to perform these Art gestures, for instance, taking the simple act of yawning and dividing it into three main parts: the mouth opens – makes a weird and loud noise – the mouth closes. Significantly examining and being mindful of each movement letting the body perform in its own way, the process and sensation of yawning could expand the experience beyond the habitual perspective.

Learning scientist Wolff-Michael Roth noticed students in scientific studies using metaphoric gestures to illustrate concepts and processes, causing a temporal lag compared to verbal modality (2002: 289). Roth explores the way body gestures constitute as a fundamental aspect towards learning and knowing and that knowledge arises from simple manipulative movements. The temporal lag compared to verbal modality embodies abstract concepts such as a conceptual entity that does not exist in object form (imaginative) and the body becomes a signifier for the concept that is expressed (289). This allows gestures to provide an interruption of abstraction and imagination between the concatenated processes due to its metaphoric capacity (Roth 1999: 1684). In my research, this temporal lag is explored through prolonged video documentations and operated as an interruption to the mindlessness when these movements are often performed automatically and mindlessly.

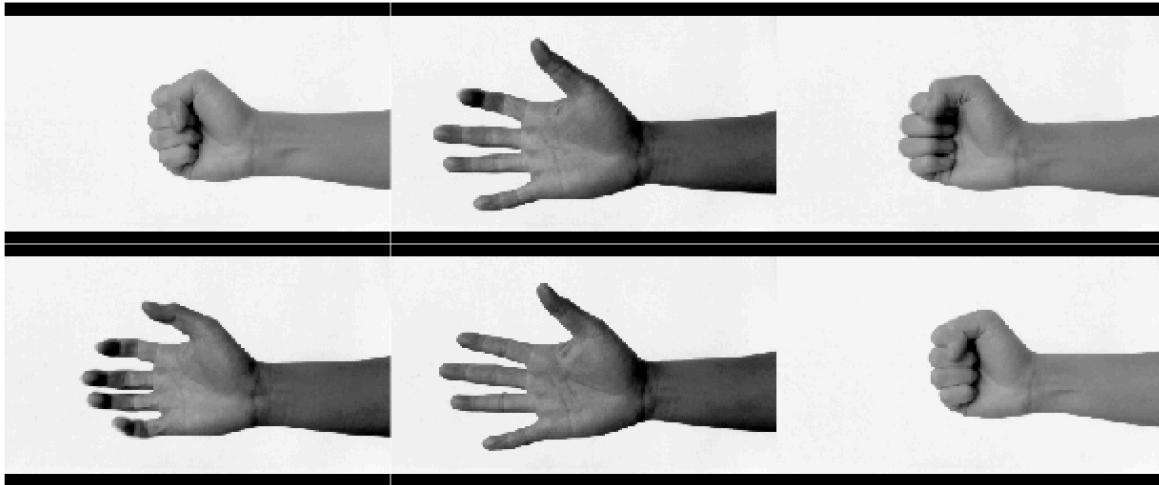


Figure 3. *Gripping Hand #1*, 2014 photographic documentation

*Gripping Hand #1* (Fig. 3) addresses the act of gripping a fist and releasing back to open palm. The gesture is repeated, however, every time it is repeated the movement and strength of the fist is different, iterating the movements. Being mindful of the way that every grip is gripped differently while the act of gripping is the same, new interpretations are able to flow through by thoughts such as, how much faster was the index finger than the thumb? Or, why do I grip harder every three grips? The mindful act of gripping and the mindless repetitive continuity of gripping as it entices the mind to go through the motion involved in the single action, almost as if one has been hypnotized. With regard to the framing of the hand, there is a resemblance to Richard Serra's *Hand Catching Lead* (1968). It is a soundless, three-minute, and 16mm black-and-white film documenting Serra's hand grabbing and releasing lead falling vertically through the image frame. When he successfully grabs onto the lead, he immediately loosens his grip. The hand also misses more lead than it manages to catch, reflecting on having no sense of purpose or urgency towards the gesture, merely focusing on the mechanism of the hand's movement.

The process of examining simple gestures explores larger questions than the gesture itself. Jacques Derrida discusses the hand in *Heidegger's Hand* (1989) as a separate bodily organ with its own speech and thought, suggesting body parts are able to communicate thoughts and meaning that the mind may not know of (172) and a human's hand compared to prehensile organs such as claws or paws functions as a tool of thought (174). Derrida's notion of the hand corresponds with Serra's sculptural methodology of the continuous hands-on procedure allowing him to perceive structures he could not imagine (Serra 1994: 72). Rosalind Krauss views Serra's work as "no terminus, no proper destination", focusing on the process of simple acts

continuously (2000: 16). This concept also reflects my focus on the idea of having no beginning or no end to the documented self-performances acting as a continuum that provokes the viewer's interpretation. As Nietzsche describes the process of depersonalization, it is during times viewers think utilizing perception improvised by their own understanding of the world from their current situation and past experiences (2004: 96). The process of depersonalization encourages viewers to think and draw connections from already known concepts. Similar to Derrida's notion of the *différance*<sup>4</sup>, the iteration of the Art gesture explores the mechanism of bodily actions. In this way, by means of adapting everyday events into Art gestures, this project aims to discover, identify, or search for different interpretations to experiences that we encounter every day.

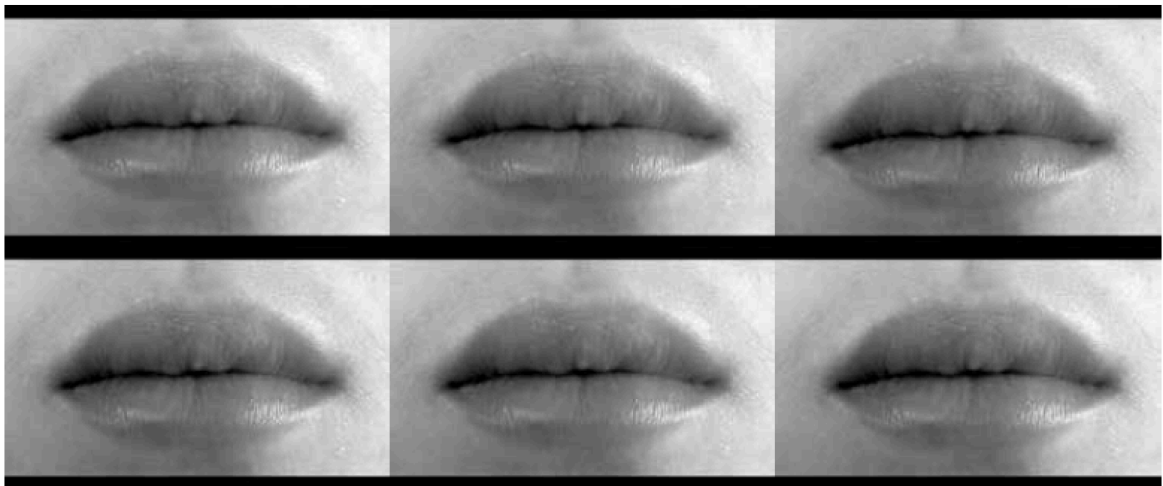


Figure 4. *Lips*, 2014 photographic documentation

---

<sup>4</sup> Derrida describes *différance* in *Positions* (1987) as the methodical analysis of differences, traces of differences, recognized by means related elements.



## *Giving Instructions*

As concepts are primary in art making, the linguistic expression of the concept also becomes primary, resulting in artworks embodied by statements, collection of statements, and so on (LeWitt 1967: para. 10). In my practice, instruction and performance are correlative. Instructions provide a conceptual understanding in conjunction with the recorded video performances. If an increased awareness is given to particular instructions, perhaps practical deviations and responsible disobedience can be increased within the daily structure of life. Everyday materials are employed in order to reinforce the everydayness of the Art gestures. Instructions focus and situate one's awareness on what it is that is happening, the *doing*, operating as a reminder to be mindful of the dotted line in red illustrating the process of the gesture in the 'Jijimugi' (事事無礙) diagram (Fig. 2).

In Hans Ulrich Obrist's *Do It* (2012) compendium, instructional art from various artists aims to create outcomes that are open to any number of possible interpretations, choices, and realizations within the instruction's constraint (Altshuler 2012: 37). Of interest to my practice are these open interpretations to the range of realizations. Imagination that is restricted within and without constraint is similar to being or behaving mindlessly in relation to all of the possible consequences and acting without any real concern. The state of *mindfulness* is explored in terms of using instructions for the Art gestures, which proposes two research questions: what exactly is the artwork - is it the concept of the instruction, the words, or the instruction diagram, or the whole set? An instruction can be interpreted in many different ways, which invites the second question: How precisely must one follow the instructions?

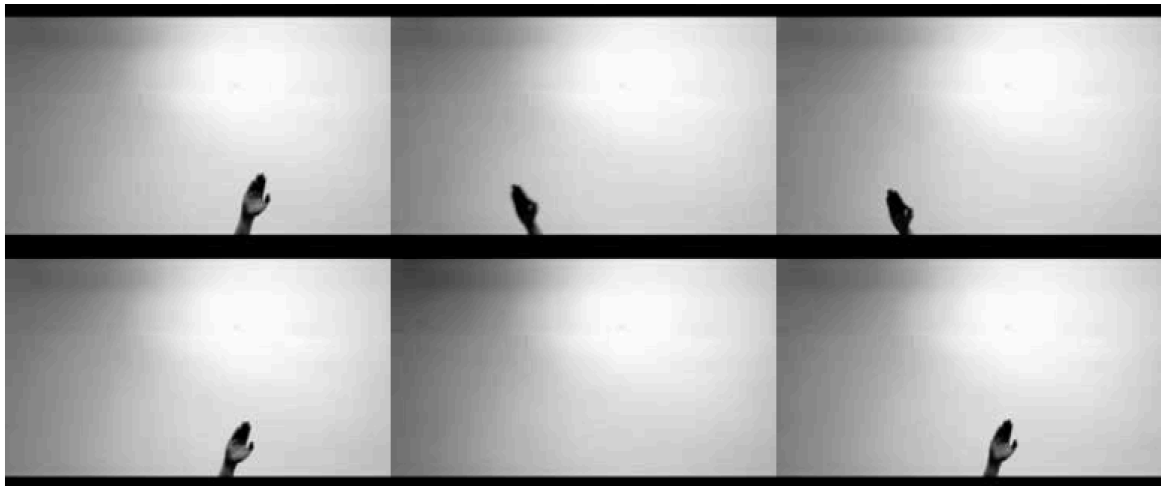


Figure 5. *Swing A Perfect Square With Your Arm*, 2014 photographic documentation

Through video and photography, the openness of interpretation can be framed with the use of the lens' surface area. In *Swing A Perfect Square With Your Arm* (Fig. 5), the task included swinging a perfect square with my arm and only a portion of the square can be seen swinging. How is it possible to know whether the performer is actually swinging a square when a square is not evident? In the documentation, we can only experience a segment of the square and the rest becomes an imaginative square. In response to the first research question, this work in particular focuses on the whole set including the instruction as work title and the recorded performance both combining together to generate the imaginative feature that attempts to challenge the openness of the interpretation. In this way, the strategy of giving viewers more or less information correlates with the state of *mindfulness*, challenging the concept of what it is they know and what it is they do not know. It also challenges the realization within the instruction's constraint allowing the work to have a less literal impact towards written instructions compared to my previous instructional works.

The instructions were presented as a written text utilizing a consecutive numbering method alongside video works in my 2013 works and the same instructions were carried out as performances for the camera. This became an issue, as doubling up the information with respect to the performance and the written instructive text, tended to reduce the intrigue that was produced via the conceptual instructions and the viewer's imaginative engagement with the work. As I performed and responded to Mirror No. 1 (Fig. 6) myself it became rather representational, limiting the imaginative aspect of the particular instruction. In order to ensure the instructions are less illustrative and representational, instructions to Art gestures are made implicitly simple and direct while I subtly respond to the instructions.

*Mirror No. 1*

1. Smash a mirror with a hammer.
2. Glue the plate back together.

*Instructions*

August 2013

Conceptual instructions of research project

Figure 6.1. *Mirror No. 1*, 2013 instruction from research

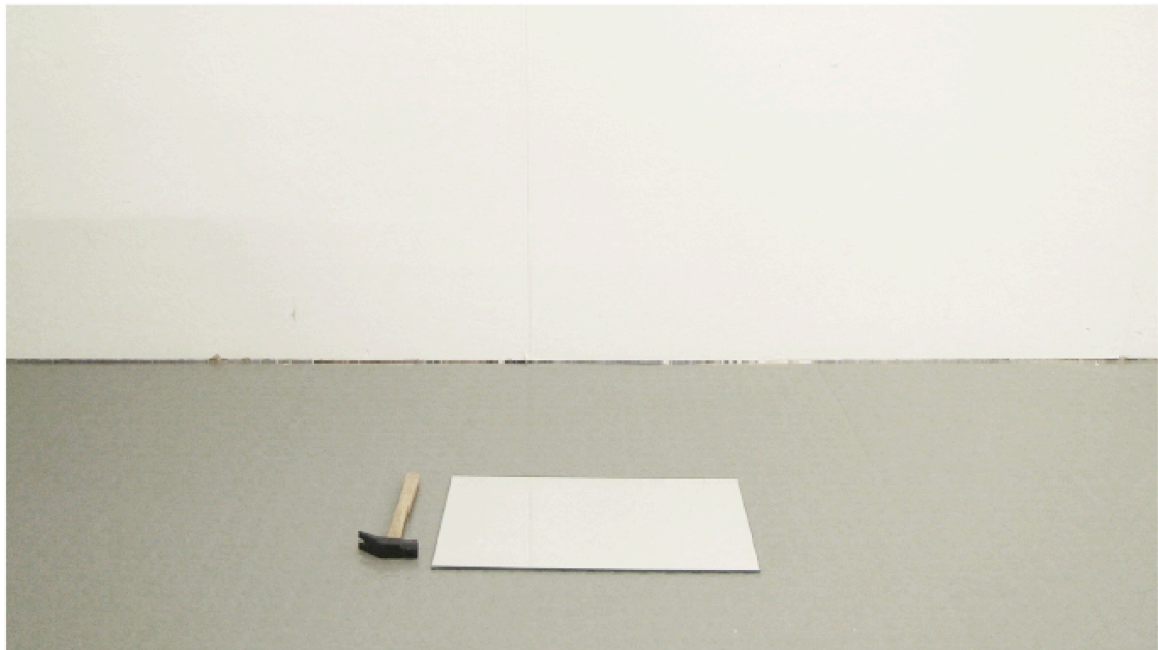


Figure 6.2. *Mirror No. 1*, 2013 digital still

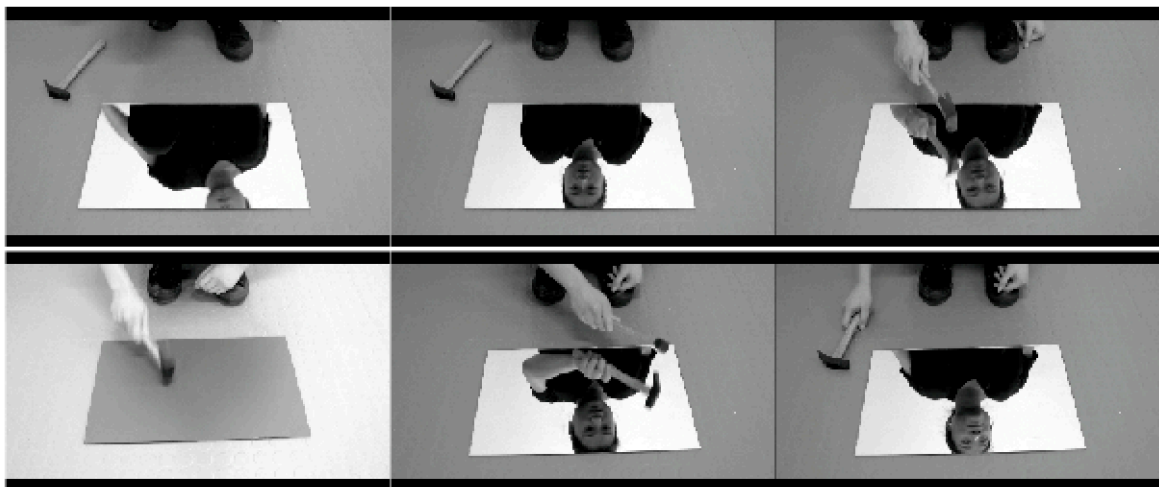


Figure 6.3. *Mirror No. 1*, 2013 photographic documentation

The shift from myself as the responder to instructions subtly directing audiences to respond is reflected through *Untitled Installation #1* (Fig. 7). This installation subtly directs viewers to follow unwritten instructions and to see their own reflection performing the same gestures as the performer in the documentation. The working title as instruction provides an implicit interpretation allowing instructions to be followed and noticed in a subtle way. Participants notice the video documentation in relation to the floor and the feet gestures, which redirects the viewers' awareness back to themselves through the mirror. When they notice their own feet reflected by the mirror, there is a cognitive process of self-awareness seeing their reflection performing similar actions from the video. The use of the mirror encourages self-awareness reflecting on actions that are often performed mindlessly, suggesting a temporal shift to *mindfulness*. The unbalanced concrete with the rigid wall projects a distorted sense of balancing. In contrast to the moving elements of the participants' feet in the video documentation, it aims to enhance the conflicting experiences in terms of their mindful and mindless body awareness in relation to their bodily movements. This installation aims to trigger the state of *mindfulness* by means of using the sense of balance to create confusion in terms of the floor and the floor that holds the body.



Figure 7. *Untitled Installation #1, Hopping, Skipping, Walking, Standing, And Not Being There On The Same Spot* (video), *Wall and concrete playing Tug-O-War* (mirror and concrete), 2014 digital still from installation

The mirror directs a certain physical and philosophical self-awareness. Viewers recognize themselves, increasing the level of self-awareness as Jacques Lacan described the structural value of the Mirror Stage as that of a dual relationship of the ego and the body (Harasym 1998: 10). The primary identification is what forms the ego, thereby constructing into a sense of self-awareness. In the mirror stage the subject becomes detached from the reflection returning to the imaginary value, much alike to the theory of mind in terms of seeing our own gestures separate from our mind when viewers notice their own *self-performing* in the mirror. In relation to the imaginary value, the state of *mindfulness* is challenged, as it is also the state of abstractness while self-awareness is present. We recognise our reflection in the mirror and yet the reflection is also a form of imaginative vision. The symbolic figure (documentation) represents what it is that is seen from the mirror (viewers foot) and ratifies both images to be relatively similar. The use of the mirror allows us to see the world from an alternative point of view and by reflecting the self-awareness, challenges one to see from a different perspective.

# *Magnifying Time, Modifying Time, Repeating Time, And Passing Time*

*To create the experiences of walking the same path again and again with the possibility of discovering new meaning that would otherwise be invisible (Bateson 1994: 115).*

In this section, the concept of time is explored by measuring time with body gestures and using the video camera to modify time, prolong time, shorten time, and repeat time, creating a rhythmical engagement with time embracing actions we may have been unconscious of. The concept of time along with the use of videography allows a gesture to be re-experienced as it is played again. Each gesture is documented for a short time, usually thirty-seconds and performed in a repeated fashion. The utilization of video editing to modify time is a strategy to bring specific moments into focus, having the effect of changing the relationship and perception of gestures and thus we become mindful of otherwise unremarkable actions or gestures. The immense focus of repeating a gesture aims to locate the state of *mindfulness* by being mindful regarding subtle differences in a gesture. Through repetition, actions may become mindless and these subtle differences that were once the mindless experiences may become conscious. Even so, in specific performances, repeating a particular gesture for thirty-seconds and re-experiencing the documentation greatly effects the perception of time. Although they are only thirty-seconds, in length each experience seems to be longer, allowing the work to become more mundane. Monotony reinforces the states of mindfulness and mindlessness through ritualistic repetition.

According to Bertrand Russell, “in a world in which there was no experience, there would be no past, present, or future, but there might well be earlier and later”, he suggests that our experiences measure time (1915:

212). It is when we realize how our emotional awareness effects the duration of time – how difficult or effortless it is to simply pass time. The experience in duration depends on how much the self magnifies a particular emotion. In this case, the self and concept of time becomes relative and subjective. In terms of exploring the concept of time, recorded Art gestures are focused on forms of repetition. In this way, moments or gestures can be re-experienced, magnified, and examined the same way our mind magnifies an emotion affecting the experience of time. Alan Watts explained the level of magnification in terms of scaling the time between rapid drumbeats:

*From the standpoint of the self, time is completely relative. You can have, if you scale it down, as much time between those very rapid drum beats as you can in eons and eons and eons. It's all a question of a point of view, or, to use a scientific expression, level of magnification (Watts, n.d.).*

From Watts' perspective on scaling the concept of time, this approach is utilized to magnify moments during which or while a gesture is conducted so that each movement can be examined closely. In video art, time can be expanded, edited, twisted, and distorted. Time becomes an event, a gesture, and a movement in and of itself, not a measurement of hours, minutes, or seconds. The level of magnification is subjected to our mind and once a gesture is magnified, it gives us more time to find balance and time to become aware of the interconnectedness. What we see outwards in the physical world are merely representations of the objects. Whereas if we take the representation and tune it in into our mind manifesting its quality imaginatively and creatively, it may create new possible understandings that we do not know or are not yet aware of. By magnifying an Art gesture, the process challenges our perspective and interpretations in relation to what it is that we perceive and feel.

Tehching Hsieh aims to cast the idea of merely passing time in *Time Clock Piece* (1980-1981), which is a one-year performance of punching the time clock every hour every day and night (Groom 2013: 26). From April 11, 1980 to April 11, 1981, he photographed the 8760 times of clocking-in for the whole year. For Hsieh there is no need to produce anything, punching the time clock itself is the work (Das Platform, 2014). Focusing on the gesture of repeated punches, "every punch on the time clock, every hour on the hour, it's repetition but every time the hour is changing ... we know time does not stop ... every minute, every hour is different, you cannot go back, and every time is different but also the same thing. We do the same thing but every hour is

different. That's the way we understand life, like the nonstop beat of heart" (2014). Hsieh approaches the idea of time from a philosophical perspective, utilizing the time clock towards the time of our everyday (24 hours a day) instead of the nine to five working day; he also believes that Sisyphus<sup>5</sup> eternally pushes the boulder 24 hours a day instead of nine to five (2014). Hence, the idea of time is not structured to certain time periods; it simply passes in the process of living life. Hsieh's time, marked and occupied by his actions, serves to delineate and determine time, using his body to measure and experience time. Similar to the process of an Art gesture, time is experienced with '*non-graspingness*' allowing the body movement to flow through and perform itself in repetition while the mind is present, being and becoming aware of new interpretations by passing time.

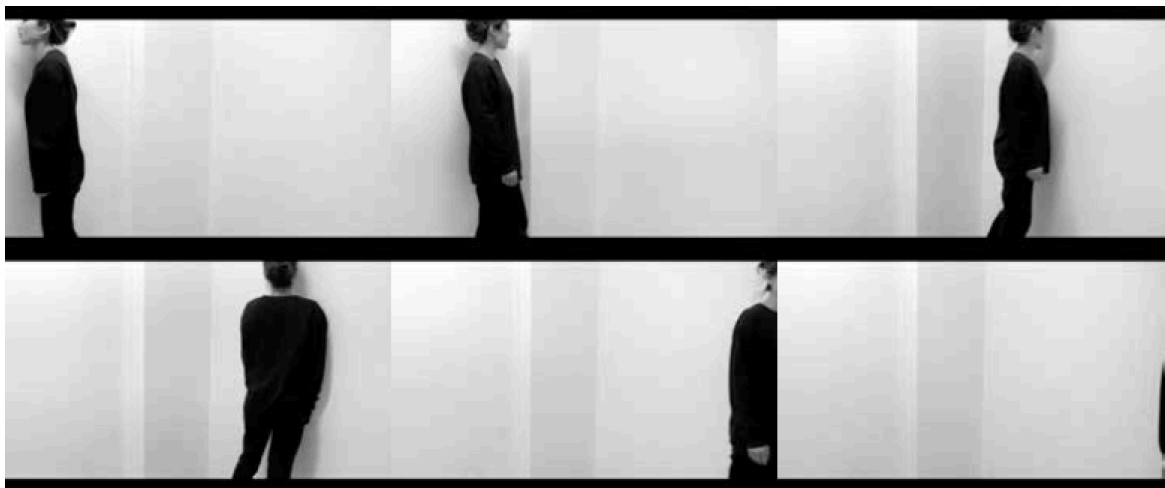


Figure 8. *Rolling On The Wall #2*, 2014 photographic documentation

---

<sup>5</sup> The Myth of Sisyphus is from the Greek mythology that was condemned by the gods to push a boulder uphill only to watch it rolling back down, repeating the same action eternally.



## *Haha, HA. That's Absurd. Where's The Humour?*

*There is no better trigger for thinking than laughter (Benjamin 1978: 235).*

*It is the subtle discrepancy we discern in what appears to be moral behaviour. In other words, through humour, we see in what seems rational, the irrational and in what seems important, the unimportant. It also heightens our sense of survival and preserves our sanity. Because of humour we are less overwhelmed by the vicissitudes of life. It activates our sense of proportion and reveals to us that in an overstatement of seriousness lurks the absurd (Chaplin 1964: 211).*

We live in the mindless classifications created in the past and leading to a paradoxical understanding of the world and what we do with our body and mind. The paradoxical situation is reinforced and investigated using the absurd and humour to point up the unusual nature of isolated gestures and actions. Humour enables the mind to reappropriate perceptions by what we interpret as strange and unusual, allowing us to see the reflections of alternative interpretations with a different set of thinking, challenging the state of *mindfulness*. Nevertheless absurdity and humour are perspectival and contextual, whether a situation is absurd or funny depends on the values and context. For that reason, if Sisyphus will ever think he will get the rock up there whereupon the gods would release him, he would never consider his efforts as futile, even if they were to us. Nagel describes this subjectiveness as having the 'objective view' clashing with the 'subjective view'; the absurd results from seeing in both standpoints (1971: 724). Consequently, "absurd intermingles humour with disillusionment and cynicism" depending on the standpoint the perceiver is seeing from (Rishel 2002: 177). The role of the absurd and humour is to trigger the alternative experiences operating as a pathway to the area of the *unknown* experiences.

Charlie Chaplin believed that humour enables us to widen our sense of perspective and be able to see into the seriousness of life with a new light (1964: 211). He described humour as behaviour of letting the mind recognize the paradoxical situation of what seems rational and irrational, important and unimportant (211). Chaplin used pathos in many of his narratives to create a bond between the audience and his character's hardship. I look for humorous moments that could be activated within a simple gesture, for instance, *Untitled Installation #1* (Fig. 7) where viewers were prompted to respond to a video of an Art gesture. As audiences notice their reflections are mimicking the movements of the Art gesture, their response is initially light-hearted, like Chaplin's trademark backward kick when he is about to do something. I am interested in using simple gestures to approach humour so that everyday situations can be experienced from a different perspective simply by viewing mundane actions as important tasks. Utilizing the combination of a light-hearted attitude along with the unusual perspective of the absurd, it is possible to manifest new interpretations of one event, which is the state of *mindfulness*.

Silent movies reinforced Chaplin's bodily actions and gestures. Bergson believes that "attitude, gestures and movements of the human body are laughable in exact proportion as that body reminds us of a mere machine," and "we laugh every time a person gives us the impression of being a thing" thereby generating humour in mimicking (1999: 32, 56). Adorno suggests that mimic reveals the absurd, offering the mind the possibility to think differently and to perceive the contradictions that arise, which is possible to approach new interpretations (1997: 318). Humour helps to return the attention of the mind to the Art gestures along with the absurd to think differently about the movements. When Chaplin performed as a chicken in *The Gold Rush* (1925), he adopted chicken behaviour and head movements all the time retaining his own identity in a sequence that is both absurd and humorous (Gunning 2005: 9). In the process of visualizing and noticing our affinities for certain animals, we absurdly refashion and reconstruct our body from a different perspective. It is this absurd reverse relationship between subject and object, which projects a sense of separation with Chaplin's antics as the source of humour (Coulson 2007: 160). From this perspective, approaching a problem with humour in an absurd manner by reversing the relationship may result in different outcomes, in which these different outcomes are isolated from the usual everyday life happenings, hence offering alternative experiences.

In the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944), Theodor Adorno discusses how Odysseus used humour and his wit to escape the unreasonableness of the gods in (2002: 40). Adorno refers to Odysseus's placation of Poseidon when he comically used an oar as a winnowing fan to get rid of the god's anger with laughter. Odysseus used a simple act of mimicking and in return set free the god's unpleasant perspective. Laughter often accompanies the moment when fear is ended and indicates a release, similar to Stephen Feeke's idea of laughter being a symptom of incomprehension, a moment of pause that causes the mind to think otherwise (Adorno & Horkheimer 2002: 112; Feeke 2005: 2). Sometimes, humour may convey attitudes about which we are so serious that they can be safely conveyed in no other way (Conolly & Haydar 2005: 127). Approaching this idea towards Art gestures, the state of *mindfulness* is explored from Odysseus's wit that was mindless of the consequences, which triggered his mind to think differently in the moment of pause.

Francis Alÿs uses absurdity to create situations or events that will challenge a perceivers' state of mind. *Paradox of Praxis 1 (Sometimes Doing Something Leads to Nothing)* (1997) documents him pushing a block of ice along the streets of Mexico City until the ice melts to nothing. The absurd task lasted nine hours and was edited to a five-minute video documentation. The ephemeral ritualized performance performed in a disciplined way portrays a sense of seriousness that portends the Sisyphean dynamics – he is aware of the block of ice melting yet continues on his labour until nothing is left. The absurdity that Alÿs endures becomes an answer to the absurdly humorous parody, inverting the disproportion between effort and outcome that is achieved within the economic situation of South America. Central to the idea of reversing a situation of rational to irrational respectively, absurd humour could provide a moment of pause in order to seize “more intensive engagement with the situation at hand” (Bergson, as cited by Crocker 2010). In terms of my practical research, in order to intensively engage with a situation, the use of video documentation and re-experiencing is employed. Alternatively, according to Jeffrey Sobosan, the approach involved in reversing of a situation creates contradictions that “compose the absurd, all these paradoxical passions, these endless conflicts between knowledge and ignorance ... emotion and reason, being and nothingness” (1976: 182). From this perspective, Sobosan suggests that we are mindlessly accepting contradictions and conflicts in the paradoxical world in which we live. By designing Art gestures of the absurd we hope to find balance in the paradoxical world we live in by addressing the often-unnoticed contradictions and allow humour to reveal them from the perspective of a light-hearted approach, and thereby reach *mindfulness*.



Figure 9. *Laughing Into The Camera Lens*, 2014 photographic documentation

Simon Critchley describes laughter as an “interruption of breath” in his book *On Humour* (2002) and that it “invites comparison with similar convulsive phenomena like orgasm and weeping” (8). In the moment of laughter, it contains a sense of loss of self-control that distances the mind from the body. This idea is further examined by means of manipulating the editing process of video: extending, repeating, pausing, and cropping moments in the video clip and the experience developed in terms of the audiences. Critchley considers this moment as an interruption where the mind could reflect and notice differences in the way things are (2002). Consequently, timing is important in humour, leading to laughter operating as the body’s timing device. *Laughing Into The Camera Lens* (Fig. 9) focuses on the act of laughing and increased speed through editing to provoke an absurd and surreal visual interpretation of the movements during laughter. By increasing speed, the loss of self-control is also magnified, causing laughter to become a gesture that seems unusual and different, respectively referring to the visually absurd and gradually becoming humorous.

Hayley Newman photographically documents non-existent performances regarding everyday domestic and work activities. *Connotations: Performance Images 1994-1998* (1998), is a succession of actions in images and humour is subtly manifested through the paradox of what is real and what is not. Images of Newman’s documentations are crisp with informative captions of dates and locations, description of the performances, and the name of collaborators, providing a sense of seriousness to the archives. The fictitious archival material becomes humorous when we notice they are fabricated and that the performances never happened, making the work absurd. In my practice, the paradox is explored in order to challenge the state of

*mindfulness* by causing the work to become abstract and ambivalent. Within the moment of trying to figure something out in confusion, the state of *mindfulness* may be achieved.



Figure 10. *Walk A Perfect Trapezium* (left) and *Walk A Perfect Triangle* (right), 2014 image-capture for photographic documentation

The sequential images documented in *Walk A Perfect Trapezium* look almost identical to *Walk A Perfect Triangle* (Fig. 10). Both works show the performer's walking gesture and it is difficult to identify which shape the performer is walking, six image-captures are employed as photographic documentation so that the Art gesture's movement can be recognized and distinctive differences can be noticed subtly. It could even be a lie that they are the same performances and no one will ever know. Correlating with the state of *mindfulness*, a sense of ambivalence aims to cloud the decision-making regarding what it is that is happening. Even so it is up to the viewers to be mindful or mindless of the task. Nevertheless humour is subjective in as much as the subjectivity in relation to the absurdity means that whether a work is humorous or not depends on the perceiver. One may find a work absurd yet non-humorous, whereas to find a work humorous, the work usually contains a certain quality associated with absurdity. For that reason the use of the absurd aims to insert humour into the Art gestures.

## Video Documentation

The role of documentation reflects the process of illustrating the Art gestures as the red dotted lines in the ‘Jijimugi’ (事事無礙) diagram (Fig. 2). The documentation acts to help locate the state of *mindfulness* as a reflection of the Art gestures. Video art is seen as a practice that “produces both temporal and extendedness and instantaneousness” (Ross 2006: 85). The video documentation of gestures focuses on the instant and repetitive nature of the short series pointing up the shifts in movements. This is in order to explore the nature of the duration between activities. In video, space is constrained within the camera frame and there is only time; this detachment from space allows time to become “its own existence as interval, duration, and retardation” so that by manipulating time, the search for *mindfulness* can be expanded and seen clearly with repetition (2006: 83). In order to convey specific gestural performances with no beginning or end, documentation begins and ends with the similar framework. For example, in *Rolling Thumb Backward* (Fig. 11), the gesture starts with the thumb rolling backwards and ends with the thumb rolling backwards. Consequently, when it is looped the Art gesture seems endless thereby giving focus to a single activity.

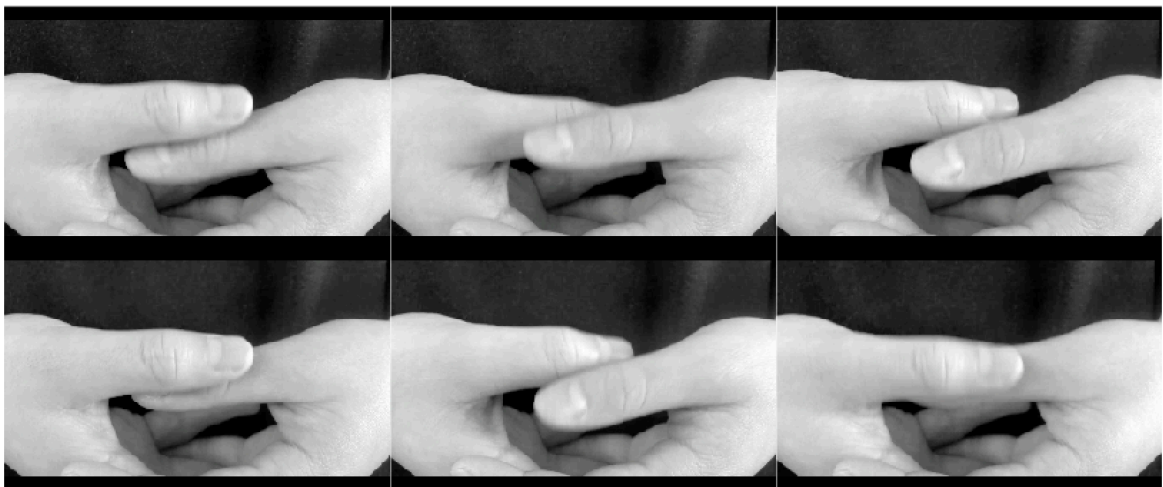


Figure 11. *Rolling Thumb Backward*, 2014 photographic documentation

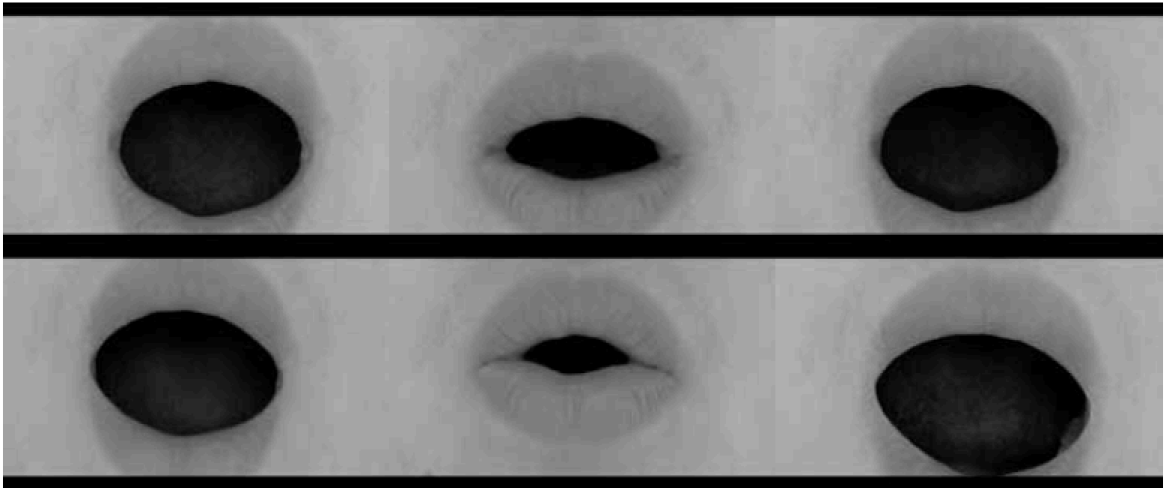


Figure 12. *Breathing In And Out For Six Seconds*, 2014 photographic documentation

Both video and photographic documentation is used instead of live performances for the reason that the camera within my practice functions as a mirroring device reflecting my body and the bodies of the audience. The documentation aims to trigger viewers to be aware of their own bodily presence by reflecting the gestural activity the video shows. By means of using the camera to document performances, there is the ability to reinforce concepts with the Art gesture, which live performances could not provide. For instance, the absurd and strangeness experienced in *Laughing Into The Camera Lens* (Fig. 9) and *Breathing In And Out For Six Seconds* (Fig. 12), the cropping of the mouth and the manipulation with time through video editing allows the Art gesture to be reinvented and examined utilizing angles we do not usually have access to. Another example is *Hopping, Skipping, Walking, Standing, And Not Being There On The Same Spot* (Fig. 13), viewers experience from a viewpoint on the floor watching the movements of the feet.

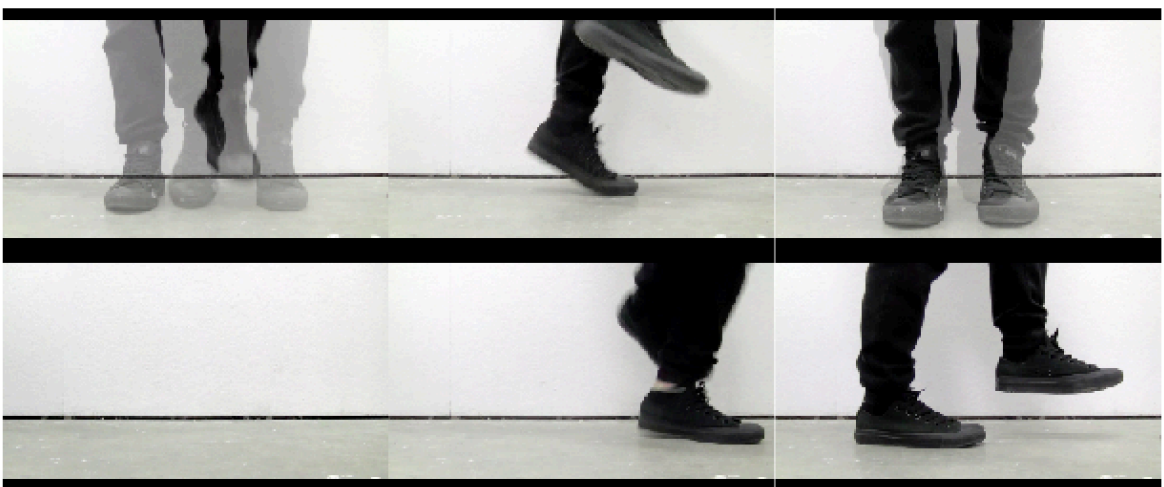


Figure 13. *Hopping, Skipping, Walking, Standing, And Not Being There On The Same Spot*, 2014 photographic documentation

As such, the use of the camera creates situations that become the focus of attention. This is because an alternative way to attain this perspective would require the audience to lean their head on the floor. This is the reason performances are performed in front of the lens and utilized as video documentations as the camera can be focused on the Art gestures. The use of black-and-white in the video documentation allows the repeated gestures to be the focused. The use of colour has the tendency to convey an alternative proposition as it relates to the original premise of the project. My interest is to explore the subtle changes within the repetition of a singular gesture and the possibilities that the gesture could investigate.



Figure 14. *Walk A Perfect Square #2*, 2014 photographic documentation

*Walk A Perfect Square #2* (Fig. 14) is a response to Nauman's *Walking Around The Studio In An Exaggerated Manner Around The Perimeter Of A Square* (1967 – 1968). Nauman exaggeratedly shifts as “his body calling attention to its presence by tracing the square’s outlines during the performance, thus mapping and executing the performance at the same moment” (Kraynak 2005: 16). Nauman names his performance work simply by describing the context of the work. I am interested in using the title as an implicit instruction to conceptually question the meaning of an Art gesture. For instance, with regard to walking a perfect square, the real issue is not whether it is a perfect square; it is that the camera analyses and directs the viewer to focus on the attempt in the performance. The title aims to challenge the conceptual aspects toward the established judgements we already have in order to open up alternative interpretations and once new meaning has developed, the state of *mindfulness* would have been reached.



Nauman investigates the impact on viewers' experiences through active participation touching on similar relationships of my project in terms of presenting the work to audiences. Even though concepts or movements in the performance may be interconnected, using our own bodies we are testing ourselves in situations that accentuate our own body awareness. From this perspective, subtle instructions are only a provocation, my body or the bodies of the audience become a tool or serve as the artistic object to invoke self-awareness during the process in gestures and movements. The performance itself is thus based on the performer's body limit encompassing thoughts and re-inventing anew. Pippilotti Rist's *Be Nice To Me* (Flatten 04) is similar to Paul McCarthy's video work as both consists of the artist placing their own face into a glass window. Each artist explores a different idea through a comparable methodology. Rist explores the stereotypical image of a woman by applying a large amount of makeup and smearing it onto a piece of glass in front of a camera. She documents herself rubbing and distorting her face into the glass pane and by smearing and rubbing her face into the glass window, messing up her make up while most women strives to ensure their makeup is perfect. Through her performance, Rist questions the idea of beauty in and of itself as the glass window becomes an invisible barricade reflecting on society's idea on beauty. Of particular interest to me is Rist's video documenting her performance, the camera has the ability to facilitate her actions by framing and making them absurd. In contrast, live performance may not have the ability to capture the distortion and smearing of her face against the glass window the way a camera could when placed right in front of her face. Metaphorically speaking, Rist explains that the remaking and re-enactment of existing performance work is similar to cooking a different meal while using the same ingredients (Kennedy 2009: para. 16).

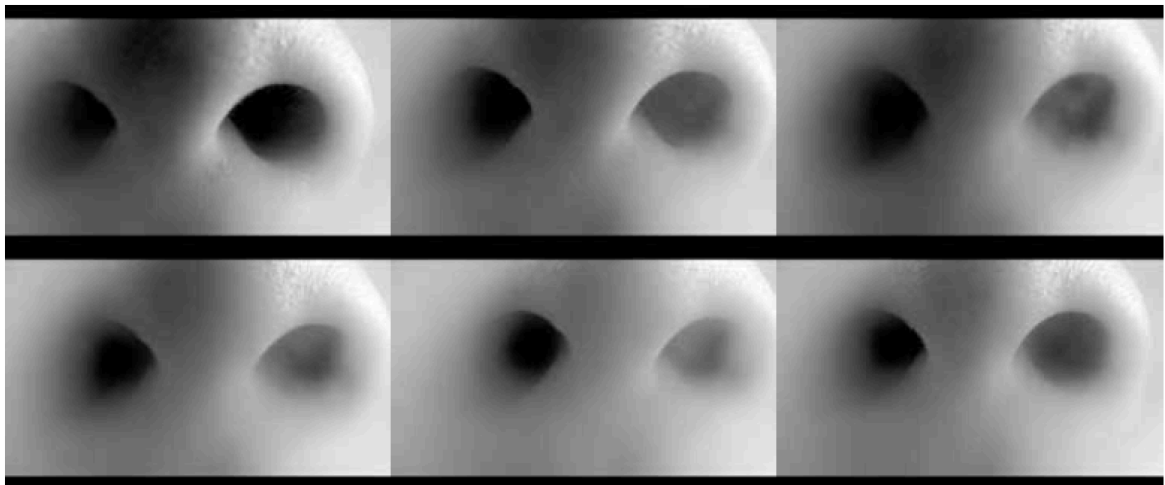


Figure 15. *Looking Into My Own Nostrils*, 2014 photographic documentation

## *Archival Documentation*

*That's such a delicate thing, how far you can go in the compromise without changing the meaning of the work, and how much living artists have to be aware of that and give as close instructions for preservation of that kind of work as possible. What is our responsibility once we are not there?*

(Abramović, as cited by Thompson & Weslien 2006)

In order to locate a state of *mindfulness*, photographic documentation, like video, produces a different form of representation of Art gesture. The artist has the ability to manipulate time through video editing and photography has the ability to capture an instant moment that holds information contained in one frame. From this perspective, photography allows me to select particular moments to show viewers. In this way, the strategy with respect to presenting often mindful or mindless details during the process of an Art gesture can be revealed and given special attention. To widen the imaginative interpretations of the Art gesture, it is important to choose particular moments to show, that they are, random representational parts of the process. With regard to the archival documentation of photography, the issue is to decide which photos to keep and which to discard, and even archivists would often question which material has the most potential value to the viewer (Shoaf 2000: 649). With regard to the archivist's intent, misperception towards archives is also an issue in that viewers may interpret the information differently (2000, 648). With respect to photography as a tool for my project, my aim is that the images will always be ambiguous. This method of documentation allows interpretation to be unclear and abstract, perhaps broadening the idea of gestures to be an interlaced and ephemeral form. Viewers' experience of a past performance will be based upon the translation of the two-dimensional form of photography or videography. This translation allows viewers to imagine their own interpretation of the performance.

Photographic and video documentation offer different approaches; Phelan suggests that documentation belongs to the medium that is used and not the documentation from the medium (1993: 147). In this research project, photographic documentation is employed to explore the conceptual abstractness and openness of thoughts in the context of an Art gesture, whereas the video documentation explores a physical bodily experience. Six frames from the video documentation are extracted for photographic documentation along with instructive titles. Through the photographic representation, extracting and placing together six mimetic moments from the thirty-second performance aims to create a sense of abstractness. In this way the viewers will be able to see the instructive Art gesture and imagine the process that took place during the performance.

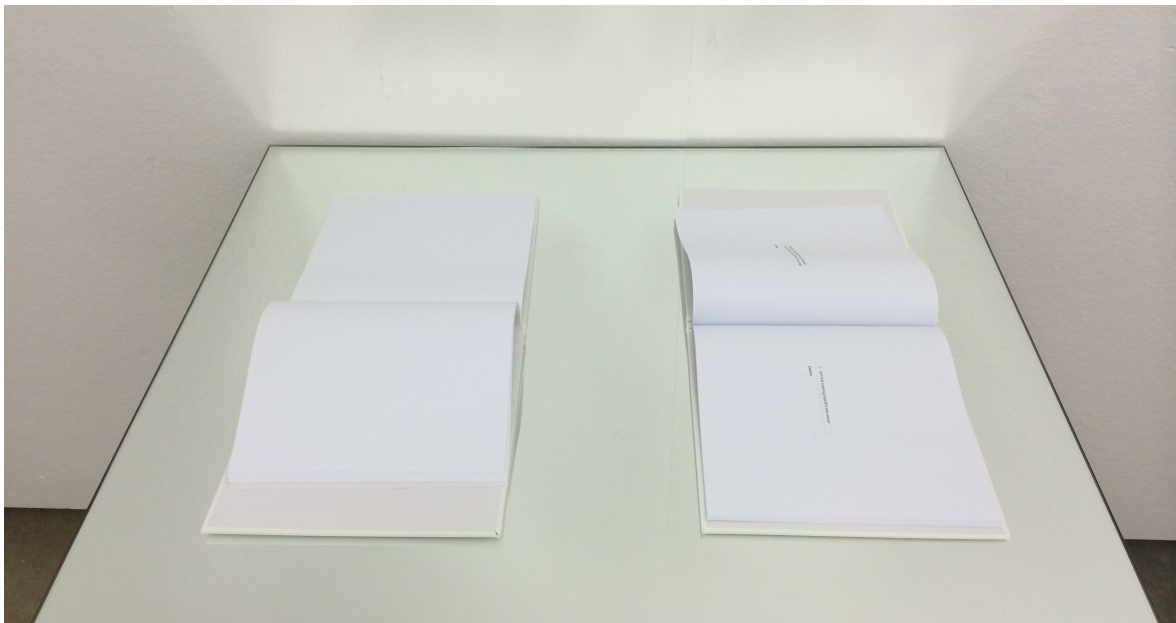


Figure 16. *Weight of Ideas*, 2014 digital still from installation

*Weight of Ideas* (Fig. 16) is an earlier developmental work investigating the design of archival documentation with the use of linguistic expression rather than visual documentation. It consists of a series of instructions composed during the initial developmental stage in relation to the instructions of the research project. Instructions were bound with a hard cover using perfect binding and also displayed as a scroll (Fig. 17), in order to be able to examine the different designs of documentation. The developmental process initiated the stage whereby visual components of gestural movements are crucial alongside instructive titles so that the conceptual ideas are conveyed through both methods visually and literally exploring different perspectives.

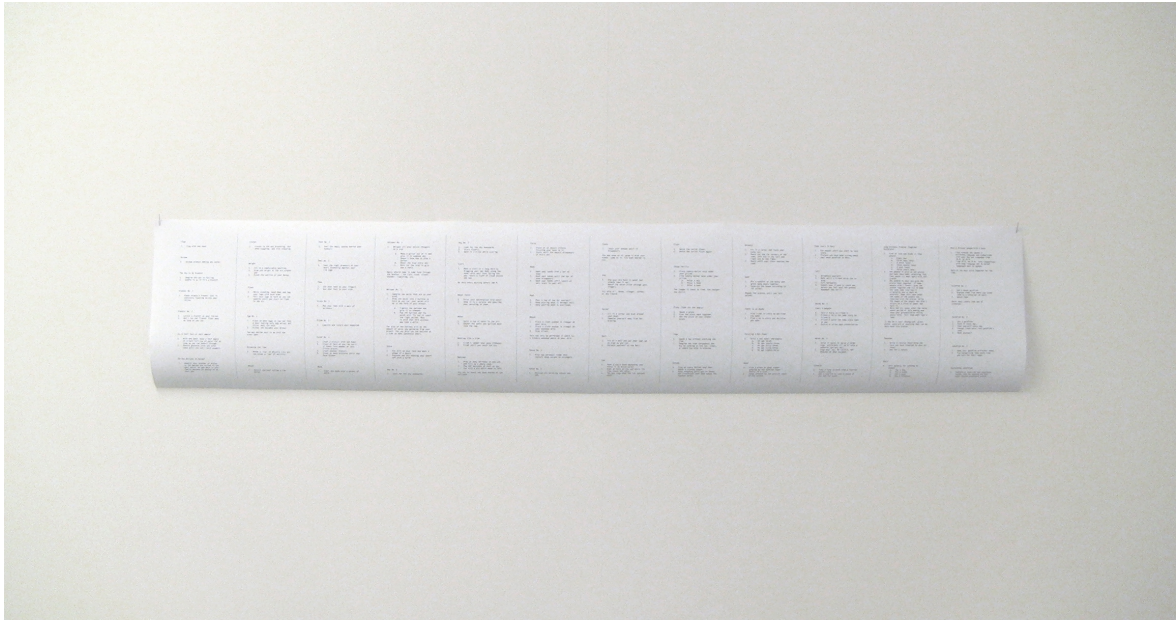


Figure 17. *Thoughts Above Your Head, Below The Clouds*, 1480 x 297mm, 2013 digital still from installation

With regard to the purpose of the use of film or video as archival documentation, it is to be able to efficiently convey the action involved in the performance. With respect to the static medium of photography, Santone suggests it is insufficient to record time-based artwork such as performance as it is considered to work against the essence of the performance (2008: 151). However, regardless of photography or videography, documentation itself is “thought to create distance from the original” (151). The distance between the original performance and the documentation could potentially open up the space to enable a wider interpretation of the intent of the performance. In terms of my practice, the title of the work serves to ground the position of the performance, in a way of being mindful of the gesture, forming a counter-experience between the concept of the work and the documentation. This counter-experience is similar to Schneider’s view on the re-experiencing of a historical performance as a kind of counter-memory (151). During a performance we attend, while we experience all that is going on in the performance, there may be moments in which we are inattentive, therefore we may not notice everything and there may be times during the performance where our mind wanders and times during which we may be more or less mindless so we cannot recall everything that occurred. When a past performance is re-enacted or re-experienced, fragments from the original documentation reappear, allowing viewers to experience a particular moment they may have missed previously. By means of time-based documentation, the slippage of performance into loss provides the possibility and the chance to see it as a new experience as the particular documented performance is replayed (151).

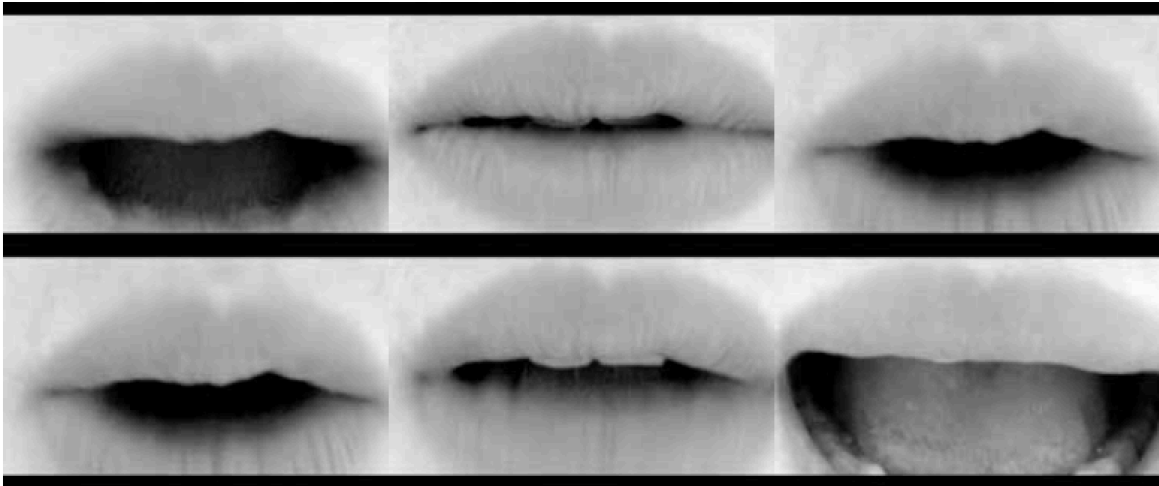


Figure 18. *Out*, 2014 photographic documentation

Performances performed in front of camera are used over live performances mainly for the full focus on Art gestures in order to be aware of mindful and mindless details. As Amelia Jones states, “while the viewer of a live performance may seem to have certain advantages in understanding such a context, on a certain level she may find it more difficult to comprehend the histories, narratives, processes she is experiencing until later, when she too can look back and evaluate them with hindsight” (1997: 12). Live performance may reveal additional information with respect to the concept of the work, which strays away from reaching the state of *mindfulness* or not being aware of the shifts in experiences when there is too much information to digest. Jones also suggests that it is difficult to identify patterns of events during a live performance while one is embedded within or actively participating even for an audience (12).



Figure 19. *Walking In Different Manners #2 (Walking slow and walking fast on the same spot)*, 2014 photographic documentation

Performance as a temporal and ephemeral event presents documentation as an essential medium, as it is a continuously changing and process-based art form (Clausen & Clausen 2010: 39). Documentation and performances are to be understood as equal elements as the performance needs the photograph to confirm that it has happened and the photograph needs the performance as an “ontological anchor of its indexicality” (Jones 1997: 16). The importance and significance of both photographic and video documentation is the ability to notice often imperceptible moments through re-experiencing and the ability to focus on particular moments of an Art gesture forming alternative relationships in contrast to the usual perception. In order to highlight the documentation’s significance as to how the Art gesture may meet the viewer, presentation forms such as episodes, series, and narratives have been explored to find the most effective collection of instructive gestures to be placed together that the audience may relate to.

## *No Beginning, No Ending*

With respect to this project, an ongoing challenge has been to test different spatial dynamics and televisual presentations that best support the idea of the instructive gesture in relation to a selected space. Photography and video documentation have the ability to give full attention to Art gestures in ways that are not always possible with live performances. Documentation allows the performance to be repeated and re-experienced while retaining the initial conceptual intent of the Art gesture. With respect to re-experiencing a documented Art gesture in repetition, the performer as well as the audience is able to notice the mindful and mindless change of details during the process of the Art gesture and this awareness could possibly help to promote and popularize the concept and theory of *mindfulness*. In terms of the spatial dynamic, mirror is used as a component that focuses the viewers' attentions in combination with video and directing participants to a state of *mindfulness*. Since the balance of mindfulness and mindlessness is between one's full awareness (mindfulness) and is reliant on the body's mechanism (mindlessness), the state of *mindfulness* is located during an experience of the Art gesture while being fully aware of every shift in movement, hence using the mirror's reflection will direct participants to their self-awareness.

Roland Barthes argues that the documentary is a "message without a code" which authenticates the performances' existence (1977: 17). Whereas, Jones states that documentation is an additional component that is reliant on the performance (Jones, as cited by Auslander, 2006). This project is interested in the use of photographic and video documentation to test whether it affects the encounter audiences have with the work and whether the installation of the video documentations along with accompanying objects offers a shift in the mindful and mindless state of their self-awareness. Diane Arbus (Arbus, as cited by Brizuela, 2007) believes "a photograph is a secret about a secret ... the more it tells you the less you know", by contrast, the less information I give viewers the more the work may trigger their imaginative encounter. The camera lens placement enables the artist to selectively choose which part of the Art gesture is to be the focus that is recorded, and in the process of selecting the amount of information to be visually revealed and reflected, this

approach reflects the Zen notion of 'Jijimugi' (事事無礙) of finding new interconnected experiences by means of reflection. The role of documentation, absurdity and humour, time, and implicit instructions with Art gestures locate a state of *mindfulness* as described in the diagram below (Fig. 20).

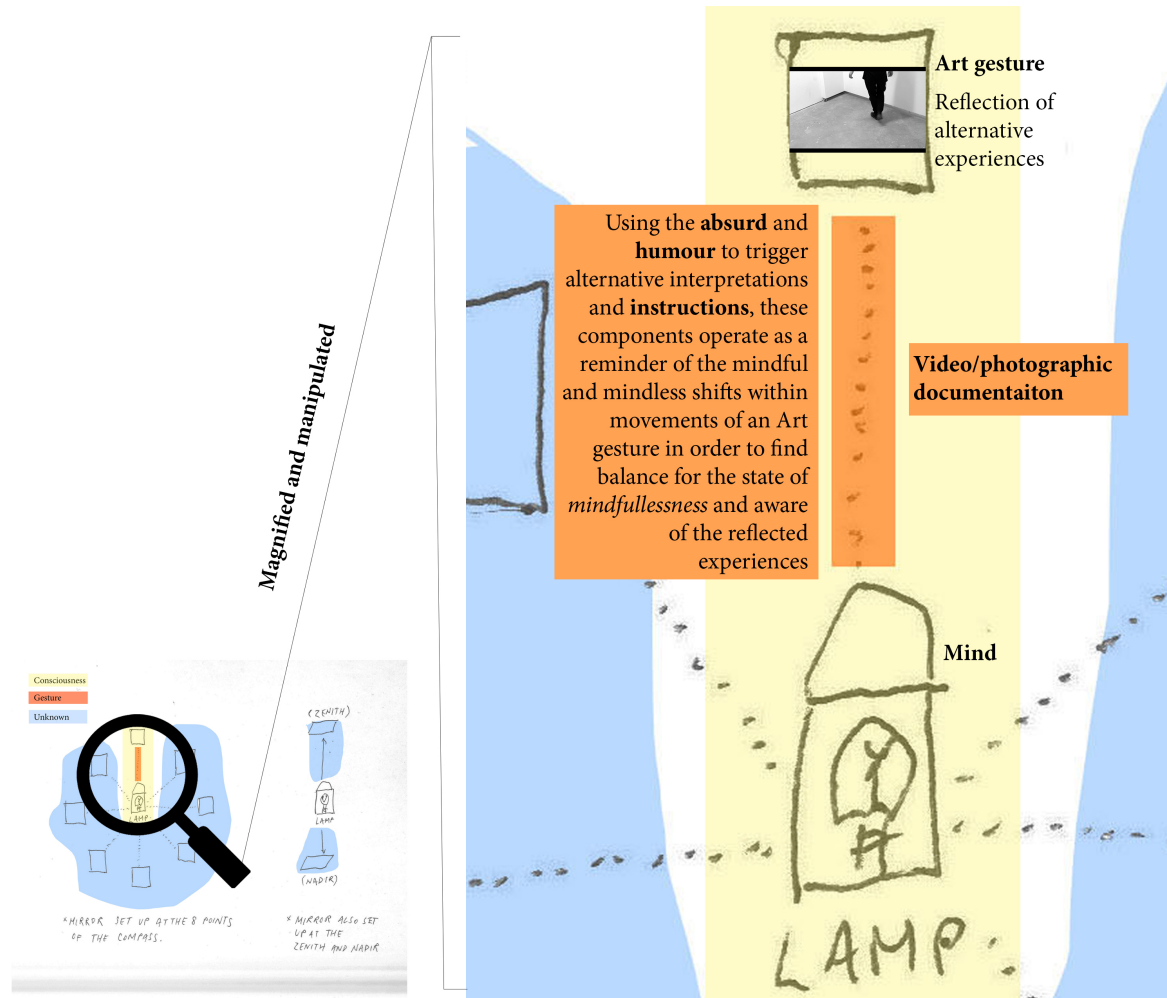


Figure 20. Diagram showing the role of documentation, absurd and humour, time, and implicit instructions with Art gestures of 'Jijimugi' (事事無礙)

Video and photographic documentation operate as a pathway to re-experience and to notice possible shifts in interpretations while the Art gesture operates as mirroring device of alternative experiences. Watt's notion of magnifying time expands on the Art gesture by means of video editing allowing the mind more space to find balance and be aware of interconnectedness within an experience. The absurd and humour in Art gestures combined with instructive work titles promote the unusual perspective suggested by Nagel. By this means the mind can separate objective and subjective thinking and widen the sense of perspective with humour as seen in the works of both Chaplin and Aljys. These components integrate into the practical research as a whole to



prompt and remind the mindful and mindless shifts in order to find balance to create a state of *mindfulness* and create conscious awareness regarding otherwise previously *unknown* experience.

Video as a medium capable of reproducibility allows the audience to further modify the presented final images even after the editing process. The edited video and the modifications by viewers thus present a paradox, and for that reason, video documentation does not identify as the creative expression, rather it is the audience's awareness of their own body in relation to the installation as a whole. Abramović reinventing Nauman's performance created different experiences for spectators of live performance and re-enactments wherein the conceptual concern and documentation are the central components to understanding the work. I am interested in using video for its capability to record and reproduce the process within movements of the Art gestures, signifying the concern of the present moment and suggesting time as a dynamic invention. As presented in televisual mediums, the documentations broadcast to viewers in deliberate loops suggests a reciprocal disappearance of time and thoughts in connection with the mind, directing to the state of *mindfulness*.

Video operates as a vehicle to transmit ideas from conceptual instruction. The implicit instructive gestures and video become tools for viewers to reach a state of *mindfulness*, whether they succeed or fail depends on the process of becoming aware of themselves and the gestures in videos aim to invoke the mindful and mindless shifts in movements. With regard to the project, the question this raises is whether viewers will find new realizations during their encounter, and while instructions could operate as LeWitt's claim of ideas as machines to make art, as being intuitive, involving all types of mental process (1967, para. 2). In this project, the absurd locates the instructive gestures as logical in conception and illogical perceptually, in some way responding to LeWitt's belief in lulling "the viewer into the belief that he understands the work, or infer a paradoxical situation" (para. 3). Or perhaps the absurd and humour in gestural performances, involving the reverse role in situations could possibly allow viewers to realize the instructive titles as an imaginative signifier. From this perspective, the practical research as a whole operates as an experimental formula in order to attain the state of *mindfulness* where new experiences can become conscious.

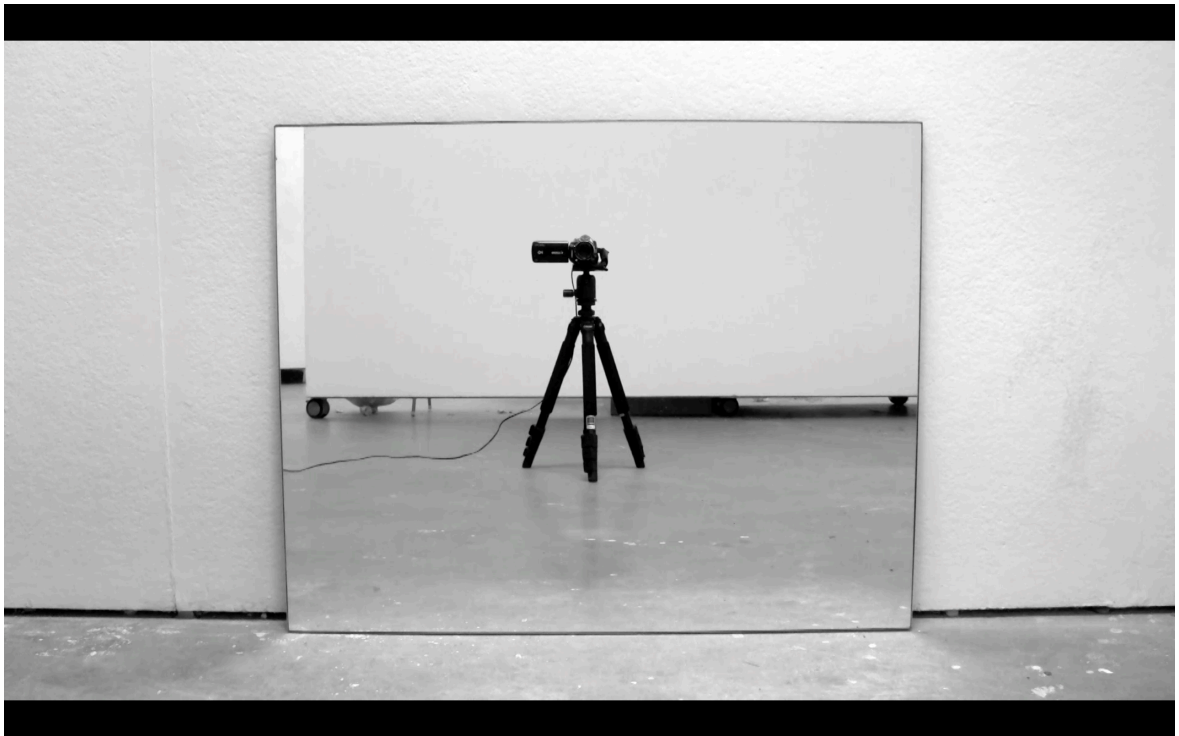


Figure 21. *Walking Around A Camera*, 2014 image-capture for photographic documentation

# References

Adorno, T. W. (1997). *Aesthetic theory* (R. Hullot-Kentor, Trans.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Adorno, T. W. & Horkheimer. (2002). *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical fragments* (E. F. N. Jephcott, Trans.). Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Altshuler, B. (2012). Art by instruction and the pre-history of do it. In H. Obrist (Eds.), *Do It: The compendium* (pp. 29-43). New York: Independent Curators International.

Art21. (2013, December 27). Bruce Nauman: Poke in the eye/nose/ear [Video file]. Retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kaR\\_gffVu1g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kaR_gffVu1g)

Auslander, P. (2006). The performativity of performance documentation. *PAJ: A journal of performance and art*, 84, 1-10. Retrieved September 2, 2014, from <http://lmc.gatech.edu/~auslander/publications/28.3auslander.pdf>

Barthes, R. (1977). *Image, music, text* (S. Heath, Trans.). London: Fontana Press.

Bateson, M. C. (1994). *Peripheral visions*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.

Benjamin, W. (1978). The author as producer. In P. Demetz (Ed.), *Reflections: Essays, aphorisms, autobiographical writings* (p. 235). New York: Schocken Books.

Bergson, H. (1999). *Laughter: An essay on the meaning of the comic* (C. Brereton & F. Rothwell, Trans.). Los Angeles: Green Integer)

Brizuela, N. (2007). Mirror, a hollow in the wall. Your portrait, a hollow in the wall. Ana Cristina Cesar: Poetry and photography. *Journal of latin america cultural studies*, 16(1), 27-44. doi: 10.1080/13569320601156746

Certeau, M. (1980). *The practice of everyday life* (T. J. Tomasik, Trans.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Chaplin, C. (1964). *My autobiography*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Clausen, B., & Clausen, M. (2010). Performing Histories: Why the point is not to make a point. *Afterall: A journal of art, context, and enquiry*, 23, pp. 36-43. Retrieved July 15, 2014, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20711778>

Conolly, O. & Haydar, B. (2005). The good, the bad and the funny. *The monist*, Vol. 88(1), p. 121-134. Retrieved July 1, 2014, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27903919>

Coulson, S. (2007). Funnier than Unhappiness: Adorno and the art of laughter. *New German Critique*, 100, p. 141-163. Retrieved July 1, 2014, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27669190>

Critchley, S. (2002). *On humour*. London: Routledge.

Crocker, S. (2010). Man Falls Down: Art life and finitude in bergson's essay on laughter. In M. R. Kelly (Ed.), *Bergson and phenomenology*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Das Platforms. (2014, April 30). *Tehching Hsieh: One year performance 1980-1981* [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tvebnkjwTeU>

Derrida, J. (1989). Geschlecht II: Heidegger's hand (J. Leavey, Trans.). In J. Sallis (Ed.), *Deconstruction and Philosophy: The texts of jacques derrida*, pp. 159-197. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Derrida, J. (1987). *Positions* (A. Bass, Trans.). London: Athlone P.

- Feeke, S. (2005). Francis Alÿs: Walking distance from the studio. *Papers of surrealism*, 3, pp. 1-5. Retrieved [http://www.surrealismcentre.ac.uk/papersofsurrealism/journal3/acrobat\\_files/Francis.pdf](http://www.surrealismcentre.ac.uk/papersofsurrealism/journal3/acrobat_files/Francis.pdf)
- Freeman, M., & McCreary, L. (Producers). (2014). Is god an alien concept? [Television series episode]. In *Through the wormhole*. Maryland: Discovery Communications, Inc.
- Gunning, T. (2005). Chaplin and the body of modernity. In *The bfi charlie chaplin conference*. Retrieved July 29, 2014, from <http://chaplin.bfi.org.uk/programme/conference/pdf/tom-gunning.pdf>
- Groom, A. (2013, April 25). Indifference and repetition: An interview with tehching hsieh. *Das Platforms*, 26, 26-29. Retrieved from <http://www.dasplatforms.com>
- Harasym, S. (1998). *Levinas and Lacan: The missed encounter*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Jones, A. (1997). "Presence" In Absentia: Experiencing performance as documentation. *Art journal*, 56(4), pp. 11-18. Retrieved July 15, 2014, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/777715>
- Kennedy, R. (2009, November 11). The world's most colourful video artist. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/>
- Kraynak, J. (Eds.). (2005). *Please Pay Attention Please: Bruce Nauman's Words: Writings and interviews / bruce nauman*. London: MIT Press.
- Krauss, R. (2000). Richard Serra: Sculpture. In H, Foster (Ed.), *Richard serra*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Langer, E. J. (1989). *Mindfulness*. Cambridge, Mass: Perseus Books.
- Langer, E. J., & Moldoveanu, M. (2000). The construct of mindfulness. *Journal of Social Science*, 56(1), 1-9. Retrieved June 28, 2014, from <http://www.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/interculturalskills/mindfulness.pdf>

- LeWitt, S. (1967). *Paragraphs on conceptual art*. Retrieved August 15, 2014, from [http://www.tufts.edu/programs/mma/fah188/sol\\_lewitt/paragraphs%20on%20conceptual%20art](http://www.tufts.edu/programs/mma/fah188/sol_lewitt/paragraphs%20on%20conceptual%20art)
- Mindfulness. (2014). In *Oxford dictionaries*. Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com>
- Mindlessness. (2014). In *Oxford dictionaries*. Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com>
- Nagel, T. (1971). The Absurd. *The journal of philosophy*, 68(20), pp. 716-727. Retrieved August 19, 2012, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2024942>
- Nietzsche, F. (2004) *Ecce Homo: How one becomes what one is* (T. Wayne, Trans.). New York: Algora Publishing.
- Phelan, P. (1993). *Unmarked: The politics of performance*. London: Routledge.
- Rishel, M. A. (2002). *Writing Humor: Creativity and the comic mind*. Michigan: Wayne State University Press.
- Ross, C. (2006). The temporalities of video: extended revisited. *Art Journal*, 65(3), pp. 82-99. Retrieved August 22, 2010, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20068483>
- Roth, W. M. (1999). From gesture to scientific language. *Journal of pragmatics*, 32(2000), pp. 1683-1714. Retrieved August 15, 2014, from <http://tecaetu.unige.ch/staf/staf-i/sangin/CLEAP/Article/deictic/roth-2000.pdf>
- Roth, W. M., & Lawless, D. (2002). Scientific investigations, metaphorical gestures, and the emergence of abstract scientific concepts. *Learning and instruction*, 12, pp. 285-304. Retrieved August 15, 2014, from <http://www.elsevier.com/locate/learninstruc>

Russell, B. (1915). On the Experience of Time. *The Monist*, 25(2), pp. 212-233. Retrieved September 4, 2014, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27900529>

Santone, J. (2008). Marina Abramović's "Seven Easy Pieces": Critical documentation strategies for preserving art's history. *Leonardo*, 41(2), pp. 147-152. Retrieved July 15, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20206555>

Serra, R. (1994). *Richard Serra: Writings, interviews, etc.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Shoaf, R. W. (2000). Archives. *Notes, second series*, 56(3), pp. 648-654. Retrieved July 15, 2014, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/899650>

Thompson, C. & Weslien, K. (2006). Pure Raw: Performance, pedagogy, and (re)presentation. *PAJ: A journal of performance and art*, 28(1), pp. 29-50. Retrieved August 25, 2014, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4139995>

Watts, A. (1989). *The way of zen*. United Kingston: Vintage.

Watts, A. (n.d.) *How could this happen to me*. [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dDCGL9tRDEc>

Watts, A. (n.d.). *Self and the other* [Lecture Text]. Retrieved from [http://www.deoxy.org/w\\_self.htm](http://www.deoxy.org/w_self.htm)

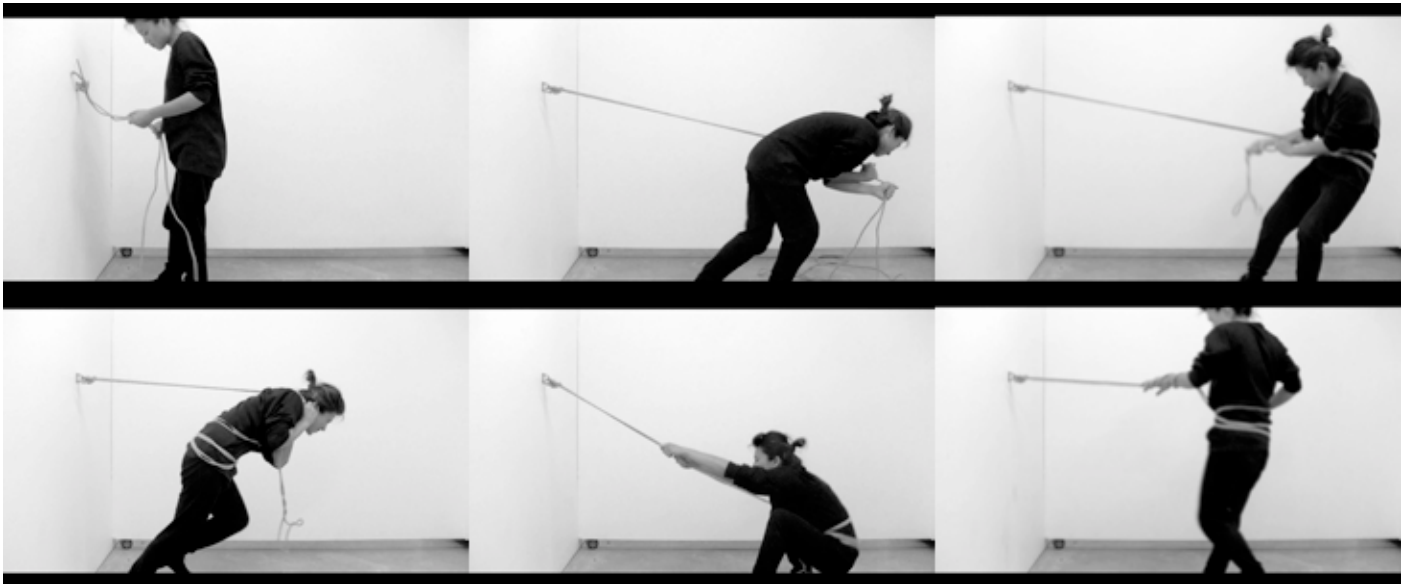
Watts, M. (2014). *The philosophy of heidegger*. United Kingdom: Routledge.

# Appendix I

---

Appendix I





*Tug-O-War With The Wall*



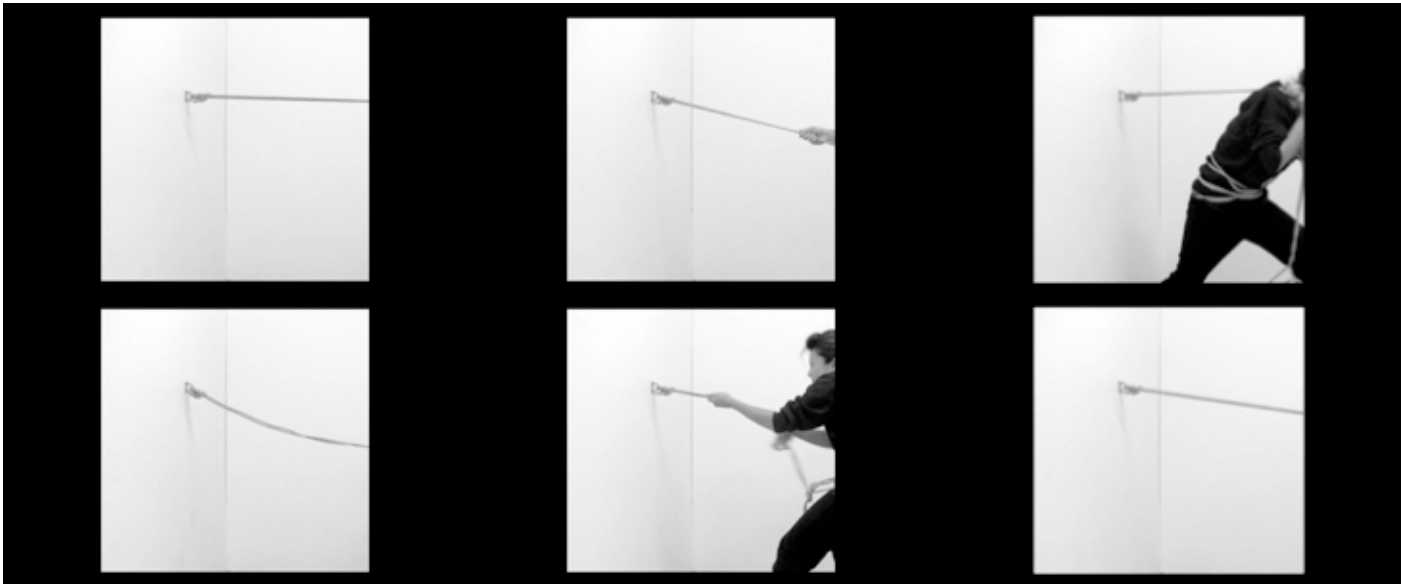
*Vacuuming Stones To Move Mountains*



*Rolling In And Out Of A Rope*



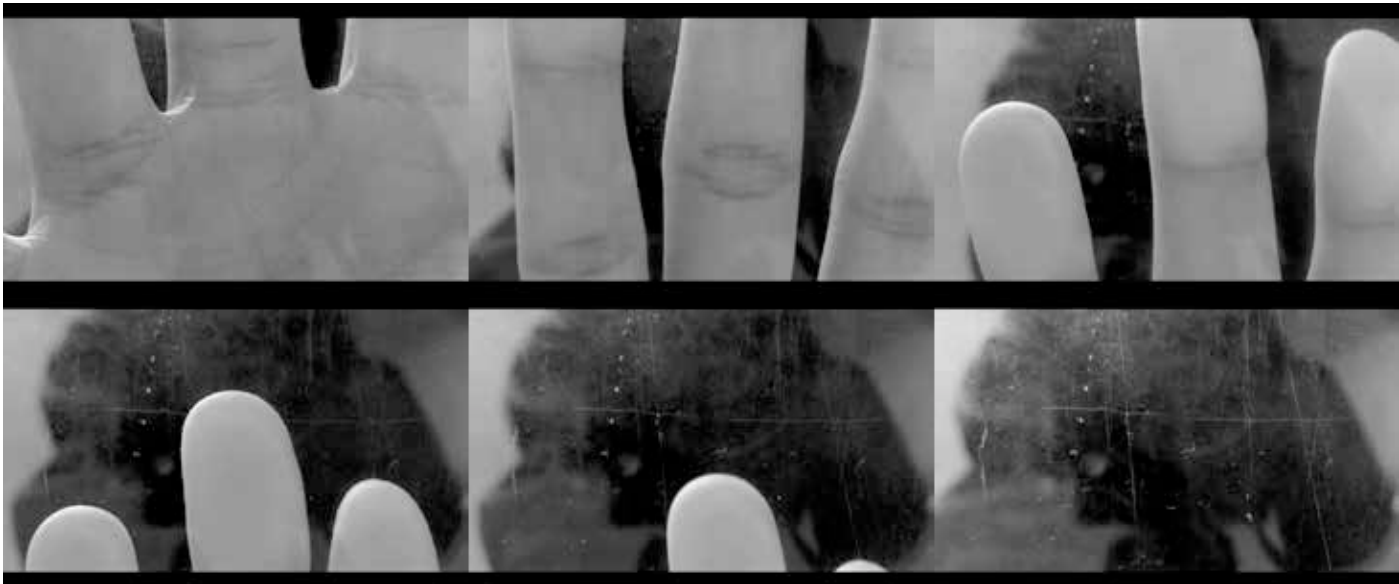
*Cleaning Broken Glass From The Floor*



*Tug-O-War With The Wall (Edited)*



*Hopping, Skipping, Walking, Standing, And Not Being There On The Same Spot*



*Hand Sliding*



*Face Forcing Into Something*





*Wiping Something*



*Walking In Different Manners #2 (Walking slow and walking fast on the same spot)*



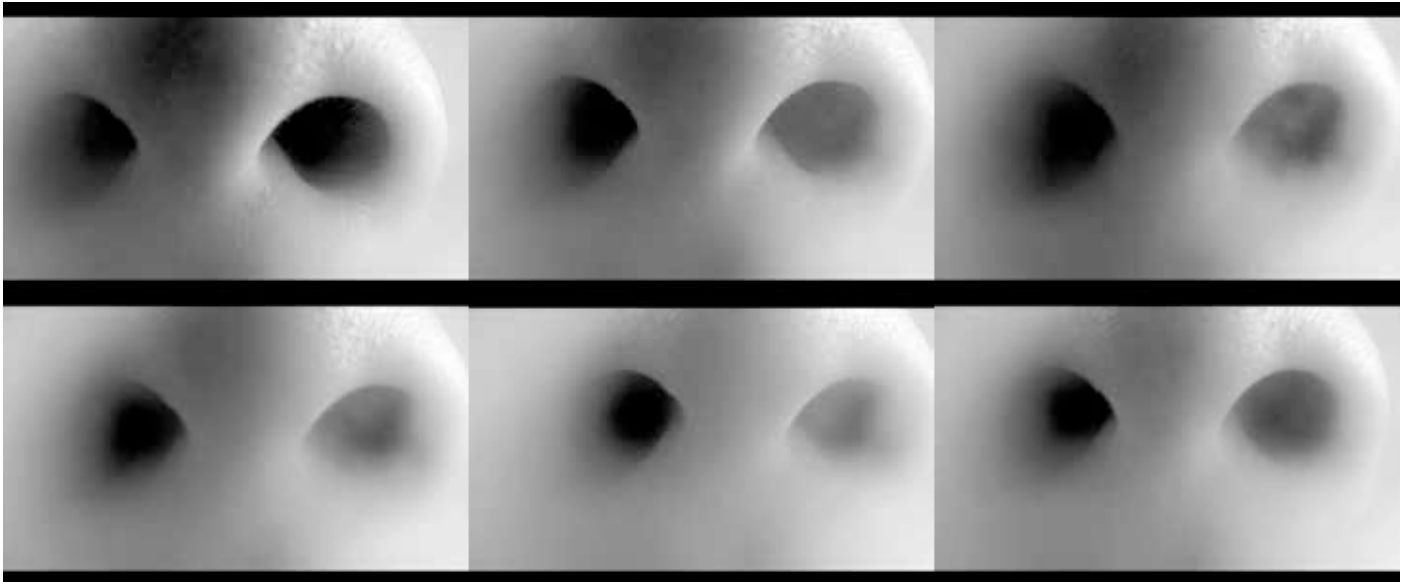
*Walking In Different Manners #3 (Full steps)*



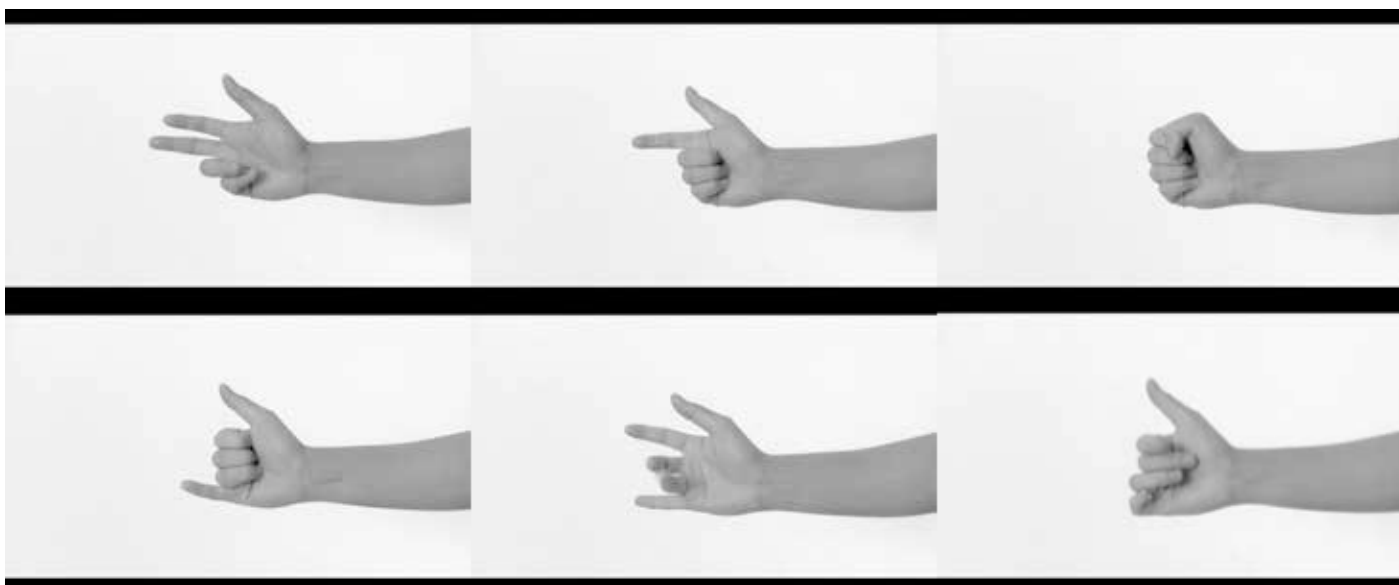
*Walking In Different Manners #9 (Walk and shoe falls off)*



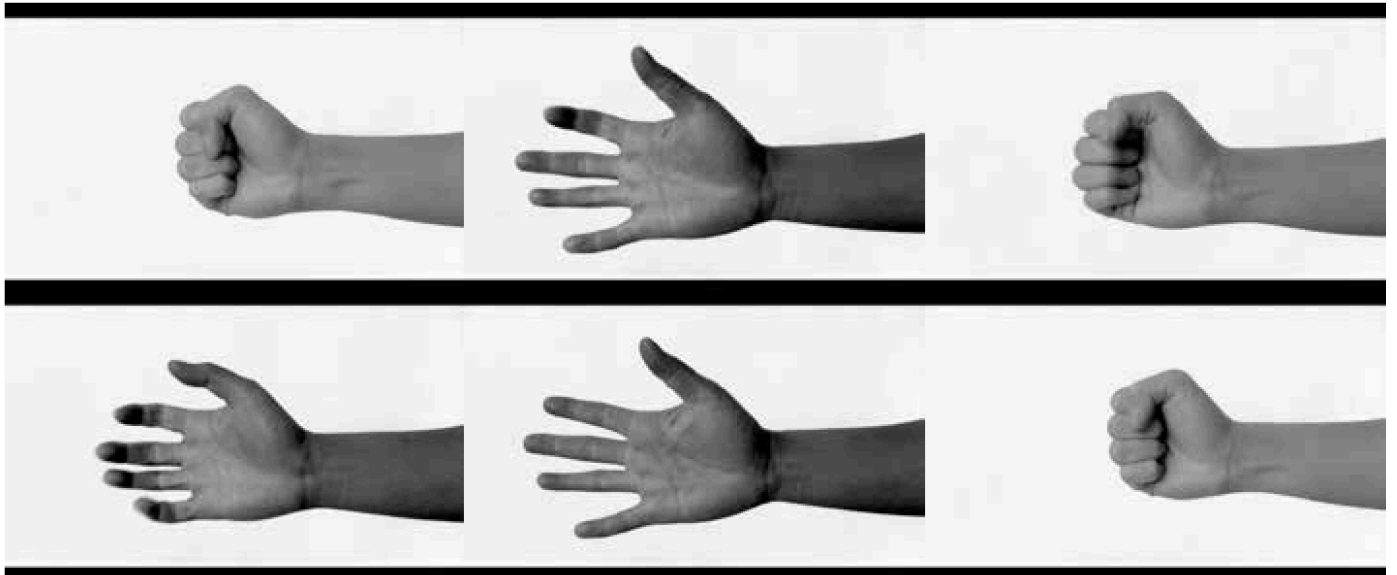
*Clapping With One Hand #2*



*Looking Into My Own Nostrils*

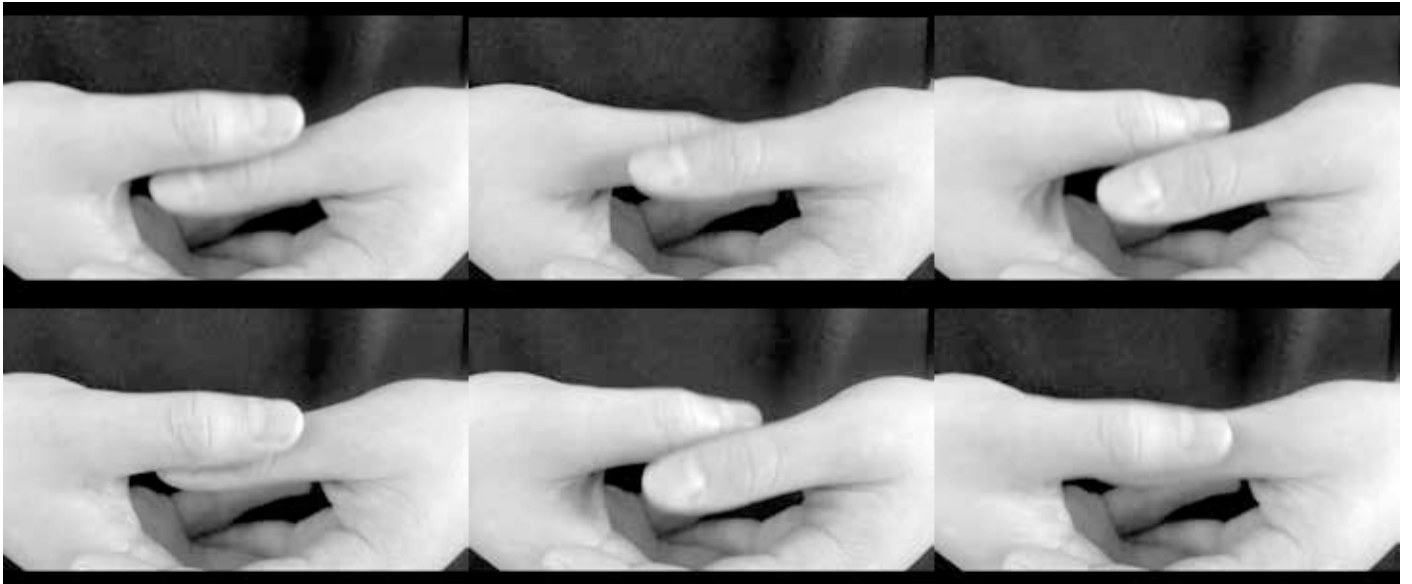


*Fingers Moving In Random Order*



*Gripping Hand #1*





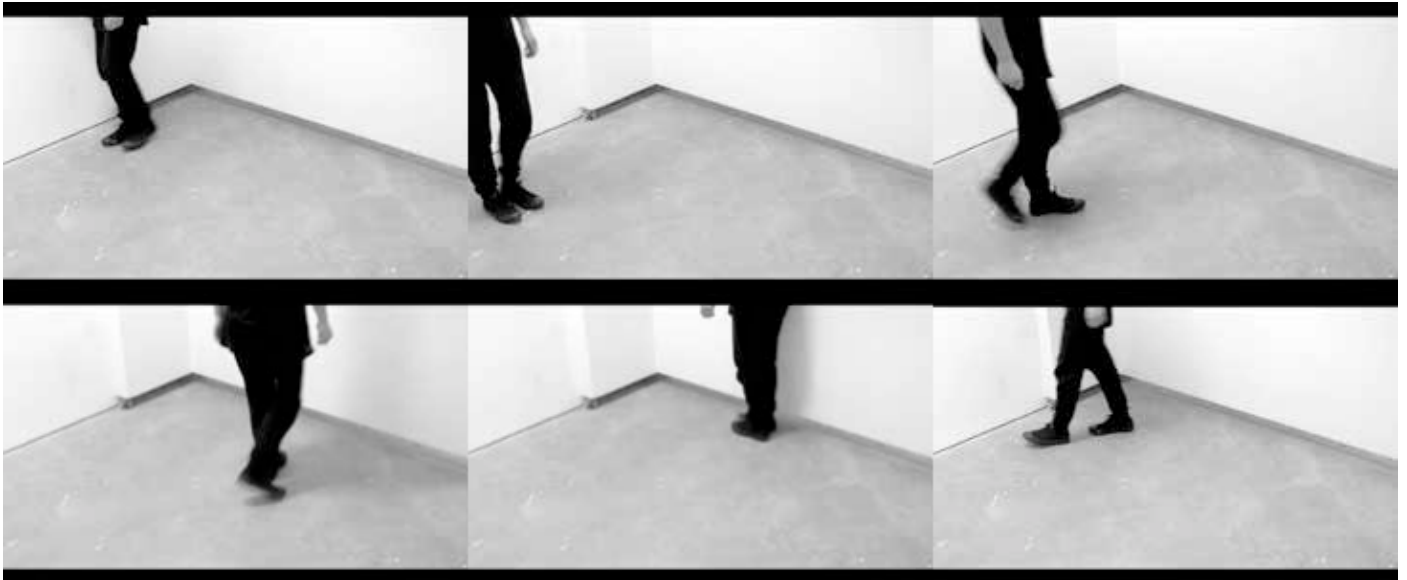
*Rolling Thumb Backward*



*Hiding Lower Lip*



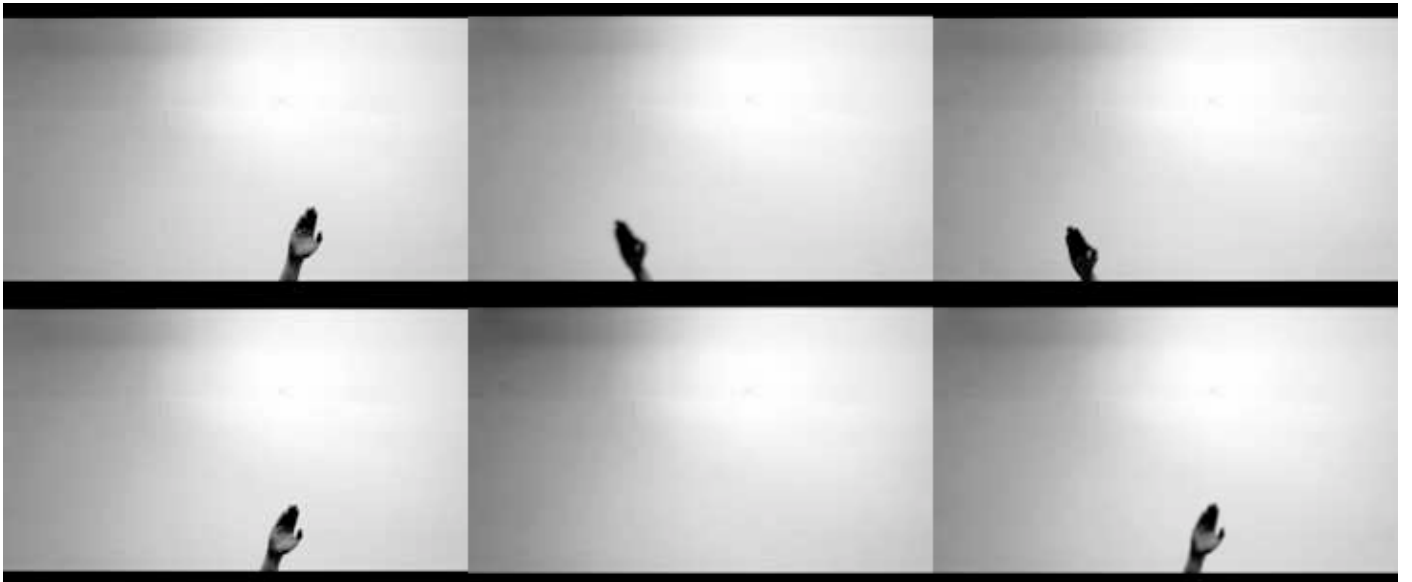
*Lips*



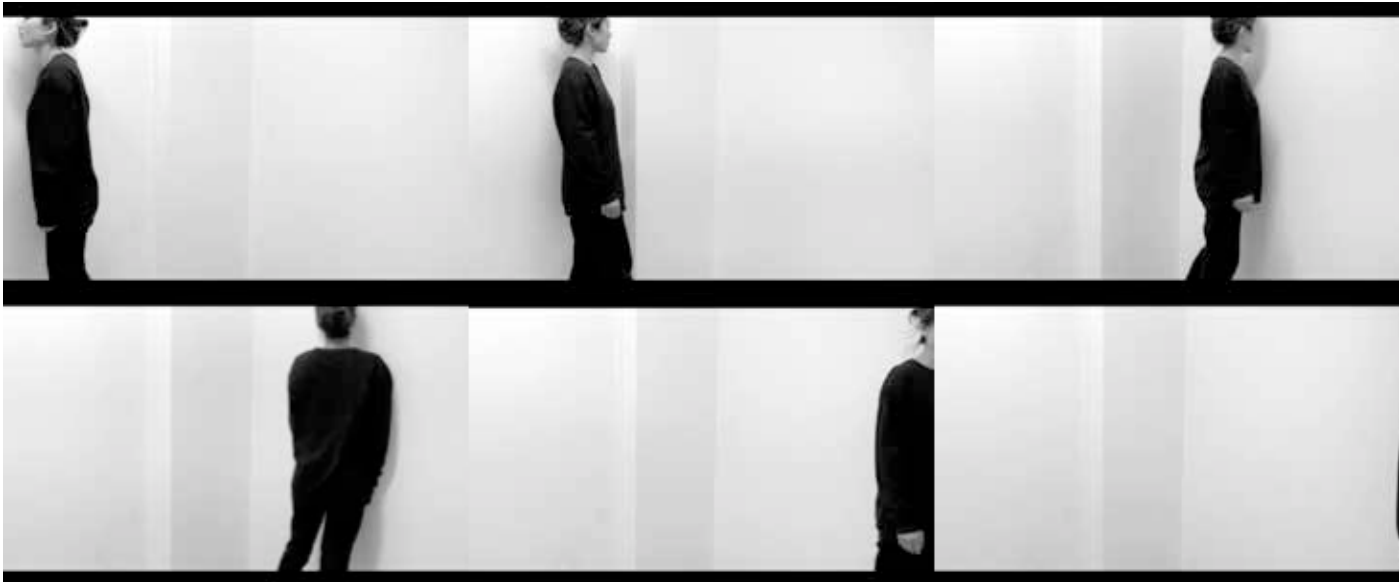
*Walk A Perfect Trapezium*



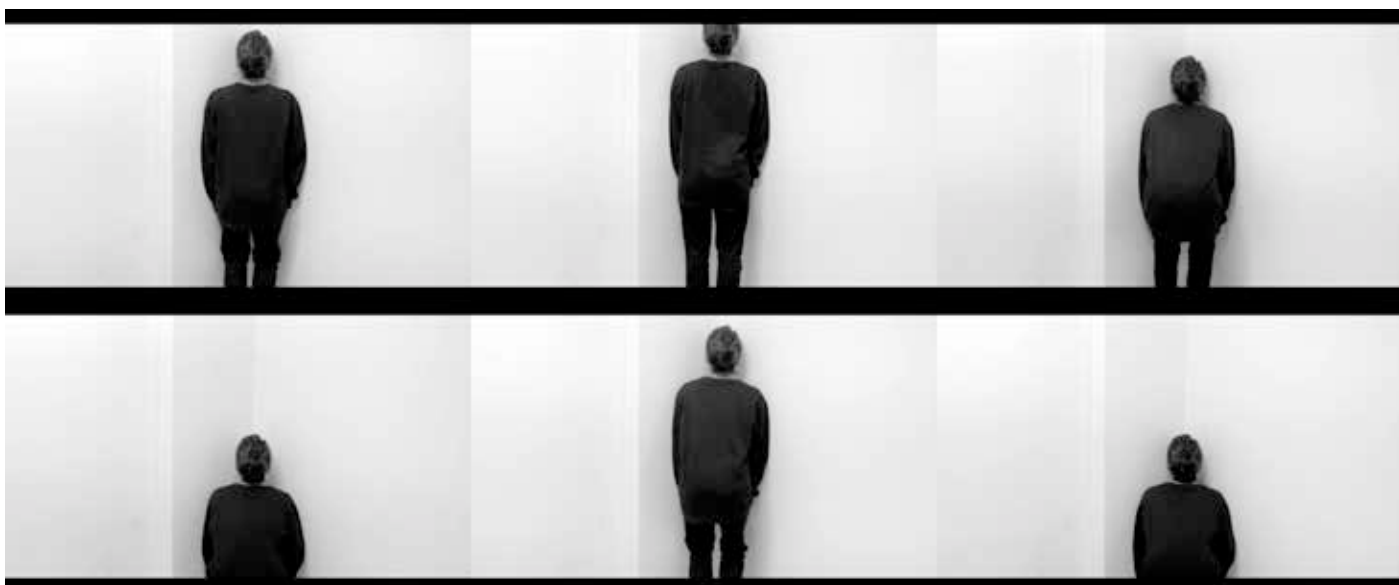
*Walk A Perfect Pentagon*



*Swing A Perfect Square With Your Arm*

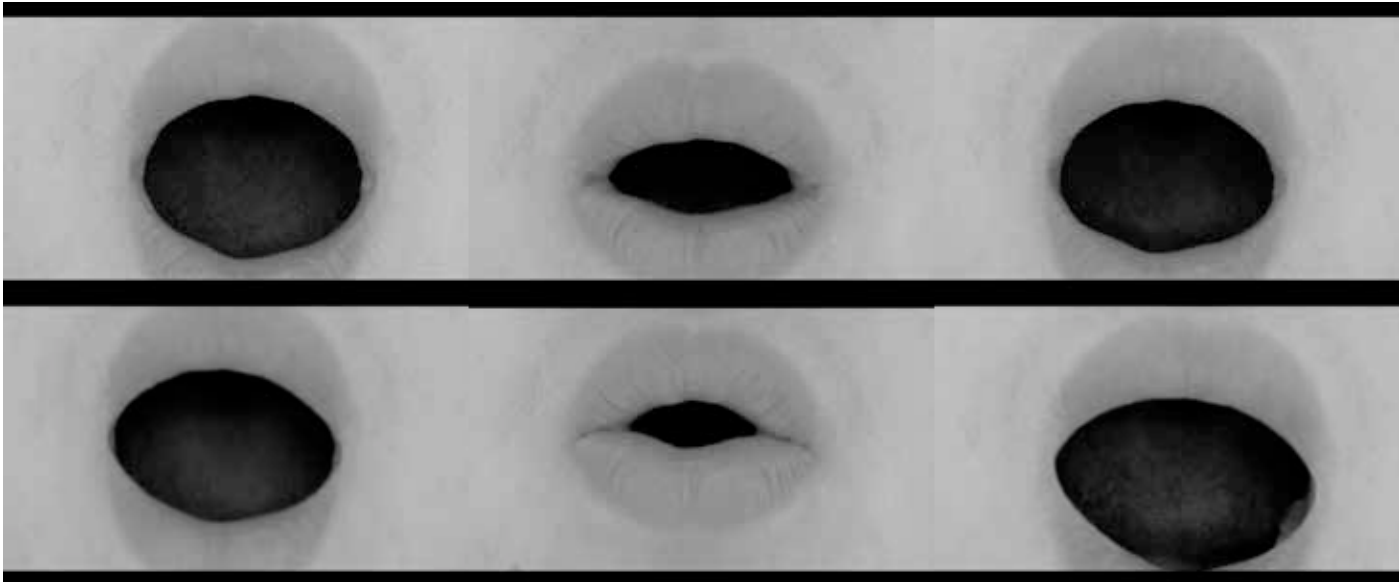


*Rolling On The Wall #2*

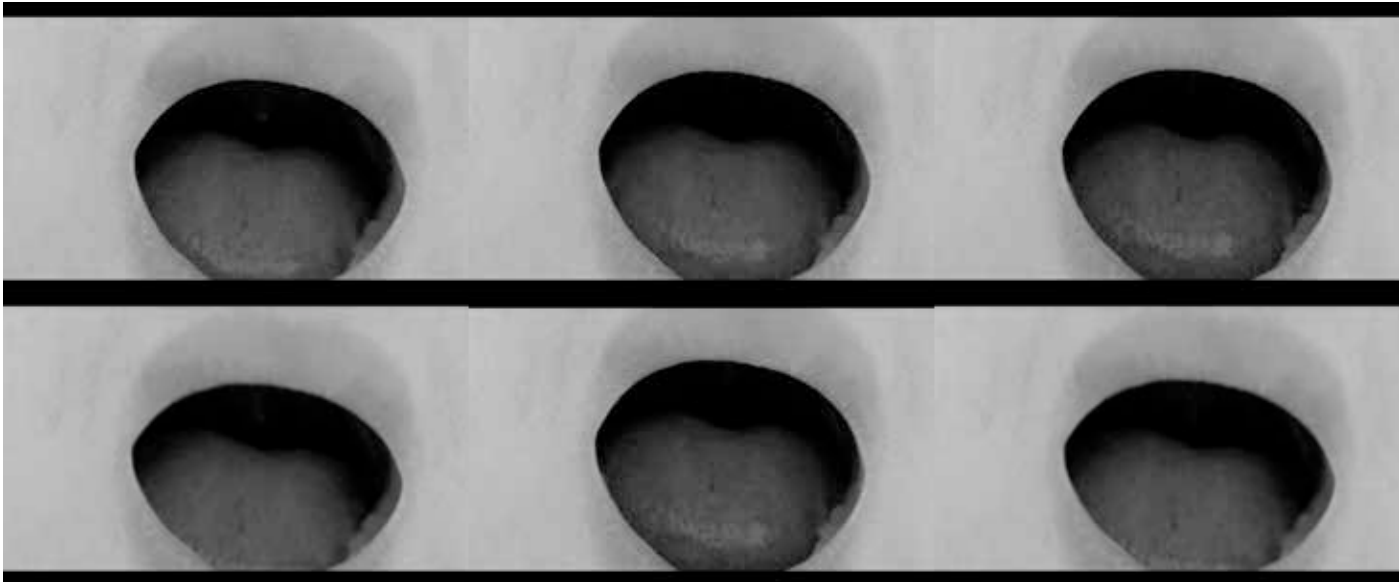


*Standing Into Corner and Move Up And Down*

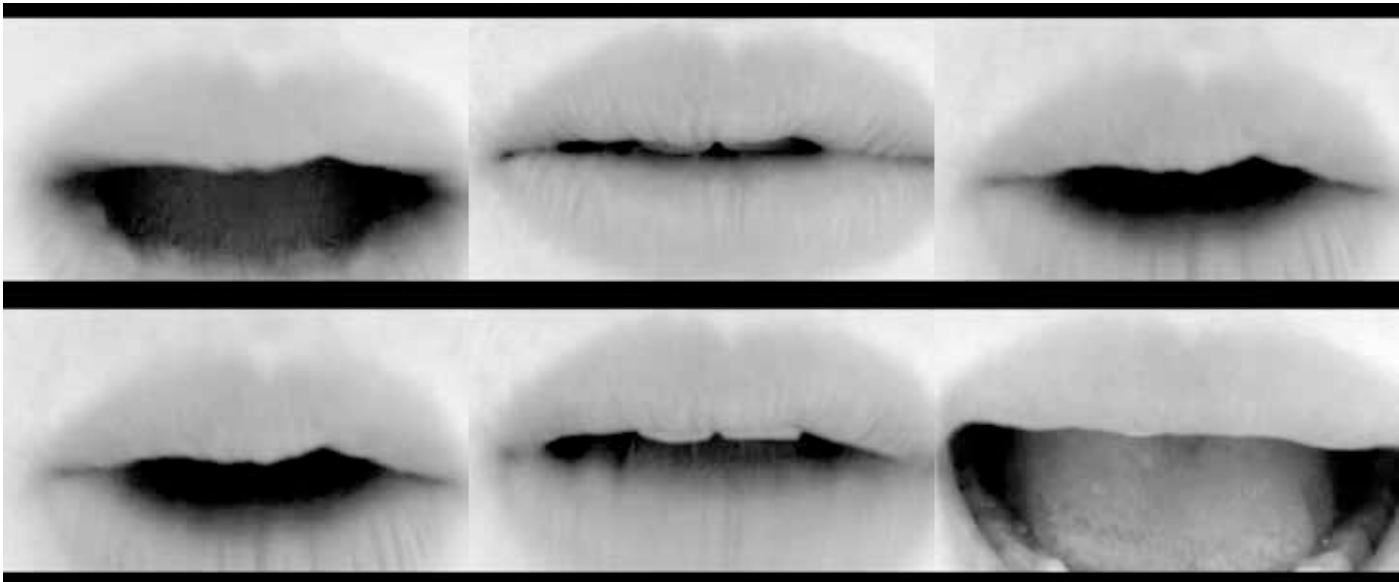




*Breathing In and Out For Six Seconds*



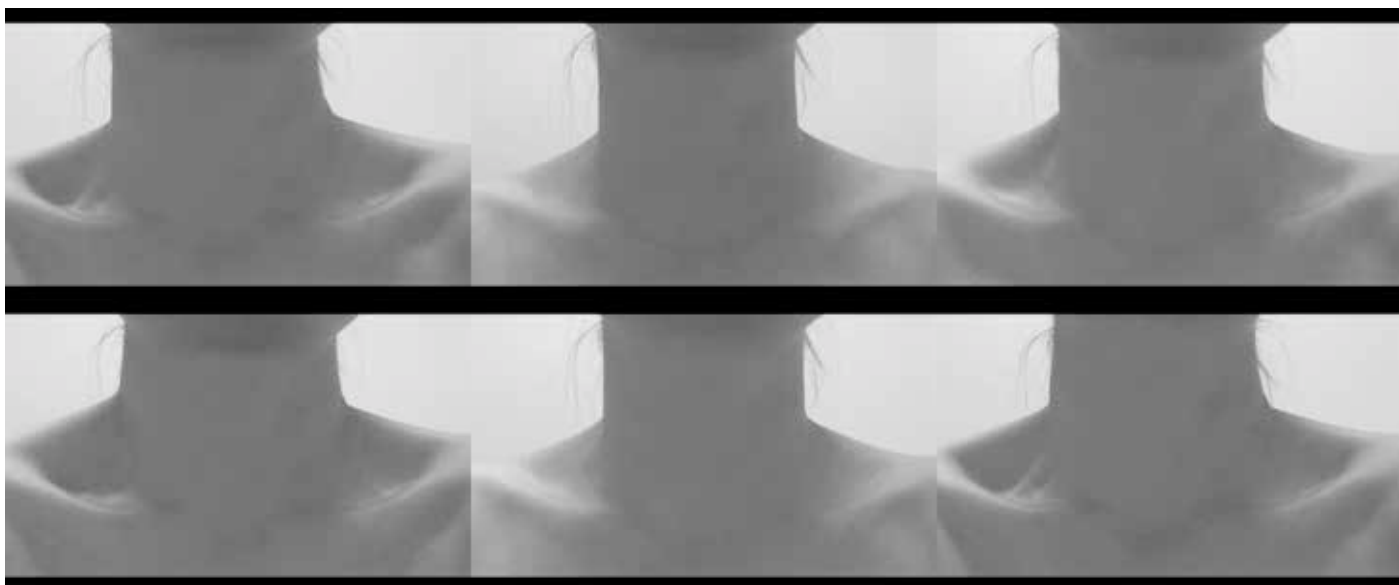
*Keep Your Mouth Open*



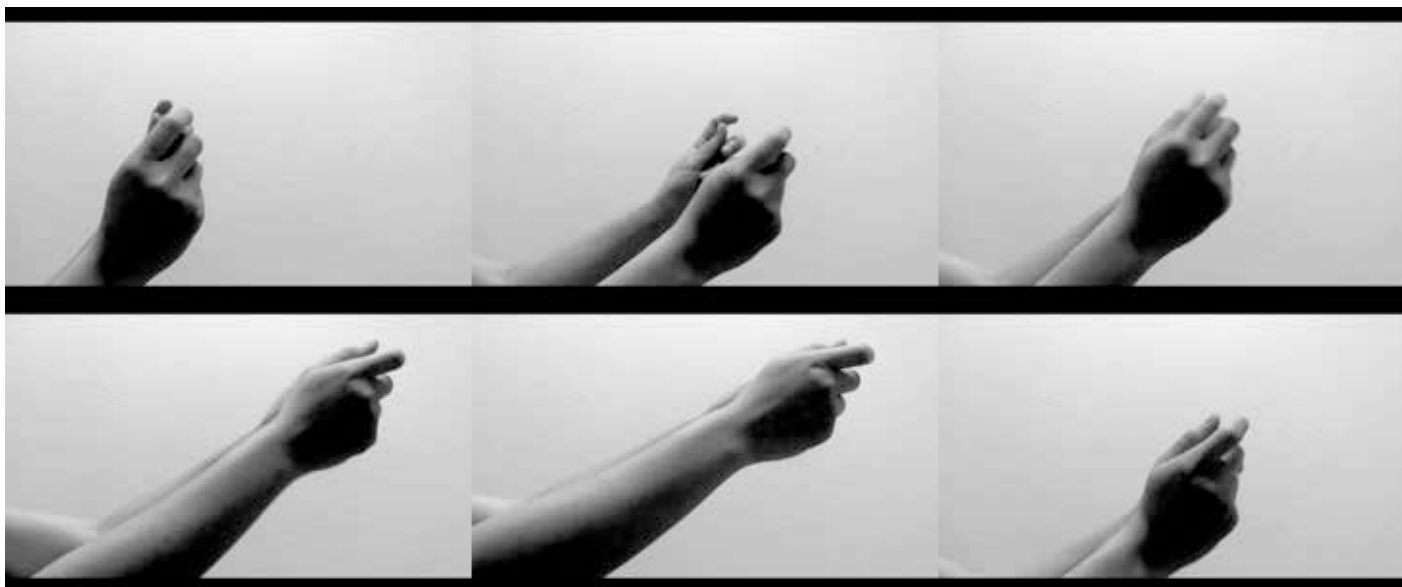
*Out*



*Blink*



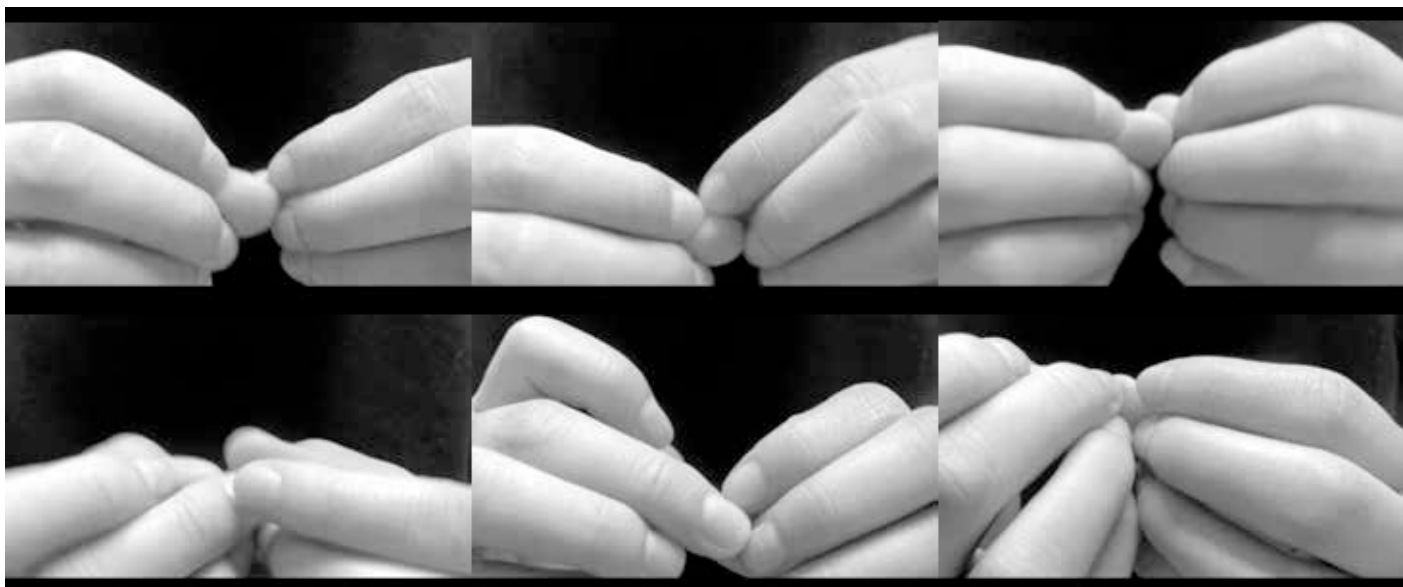
*Clenching Shoulders*



*Pretend To Fly A Kite*

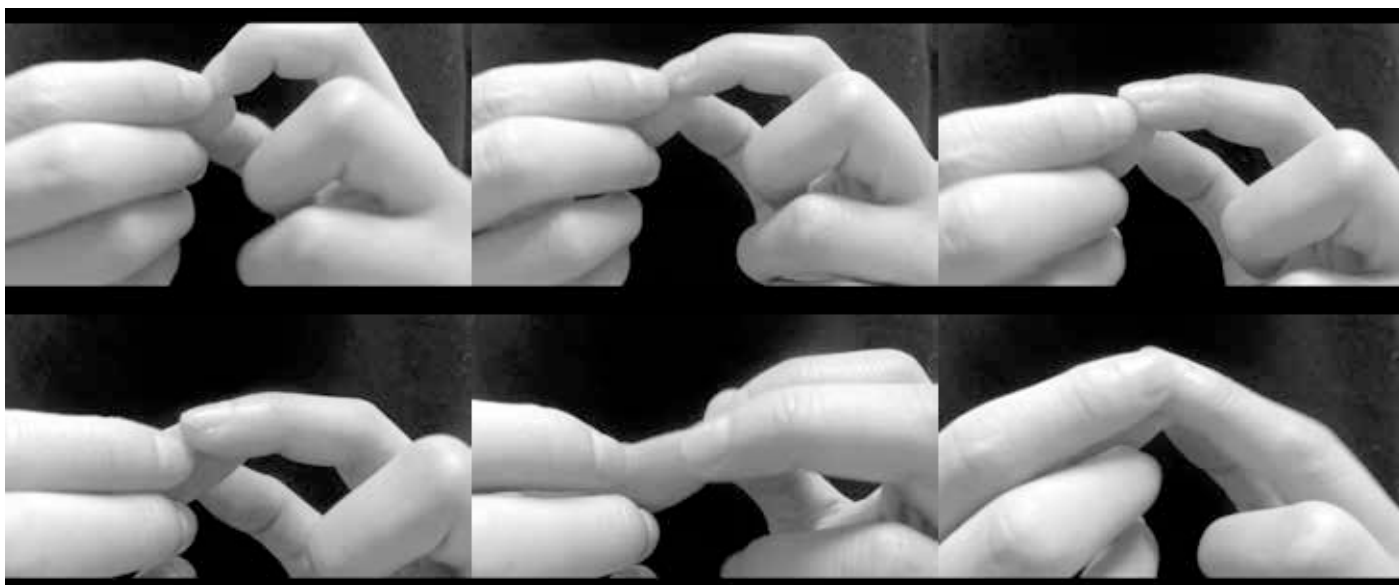


*Bounce On The Wall #2*



*Fiddling With Your Fingers*

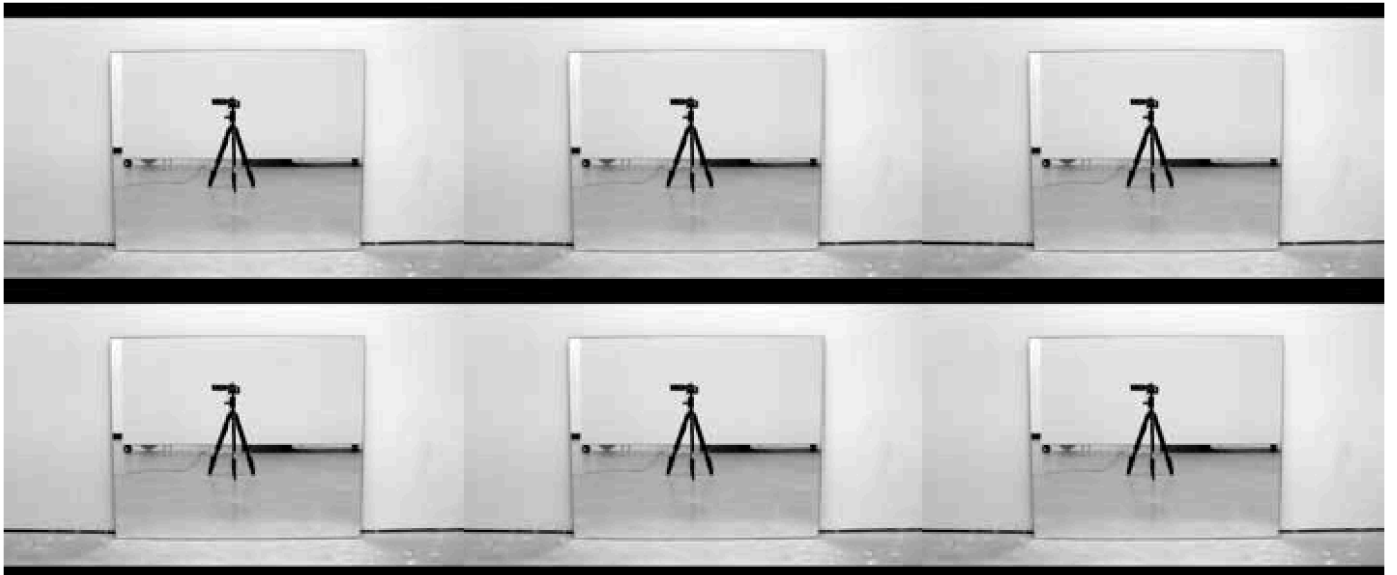




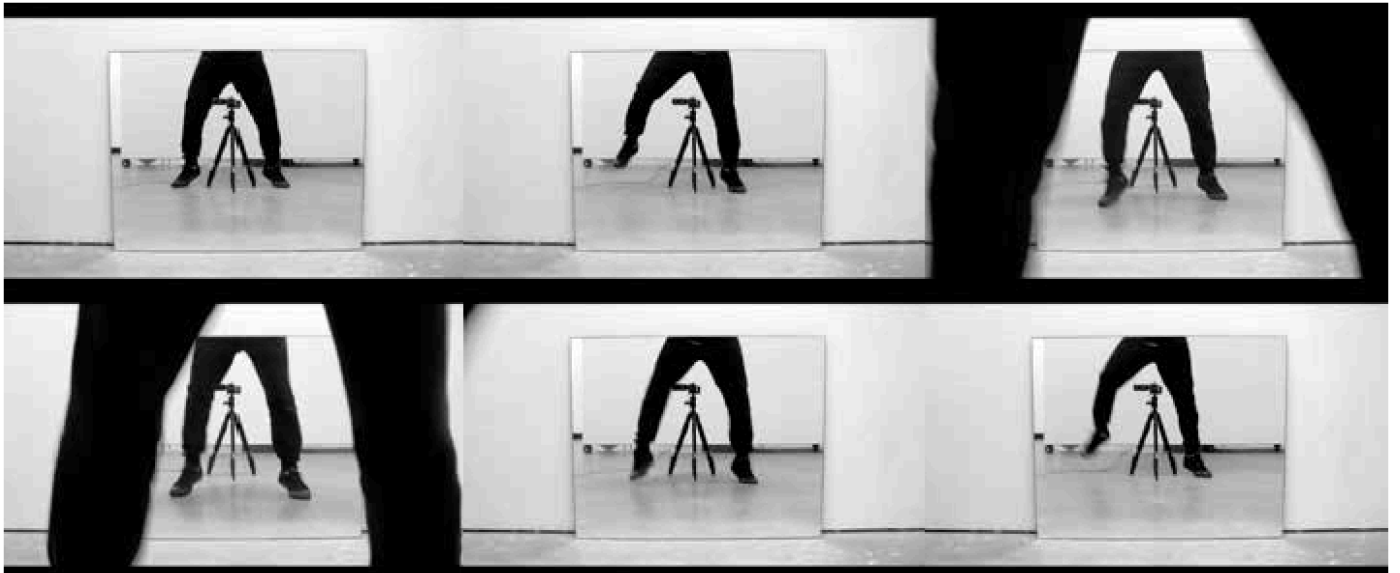
*Peeling Skin From Your Nail*



*Swinging Arms In Rhythm*



*Walk Around A Camera #2*



*Walk Around A Camera #4*

# Appendix II

---

## Appendix II

## *Thesis Examination Documentation*



Figure 22. Thesis examination documentation, 2014 digital still





Figure 23. Thesis examination documentation: *Swing A Perfect Shape* series (Circle, Oval, Triangle, Square, Rectangle), 2014 digital still

Installation of the documentation for examination includes further exploration towards the spatial, material, and archival aspects. Installed in Gallery II of St Paul ST Gallery,

the space I had was a white wall and perpendicular to the wall was a long glass window almost the length of the gallery. Using the white wall, an LCD screen was placed at the height of my arm span upwards, where the intention was to have the gesture in the video work to be the same height as my arm span while I swing my arm at the spot (Fig. 23). This set up allowed the audience to be aware of the body in the present, in relation to the site and scale of the installation space and the space represented by video itself.

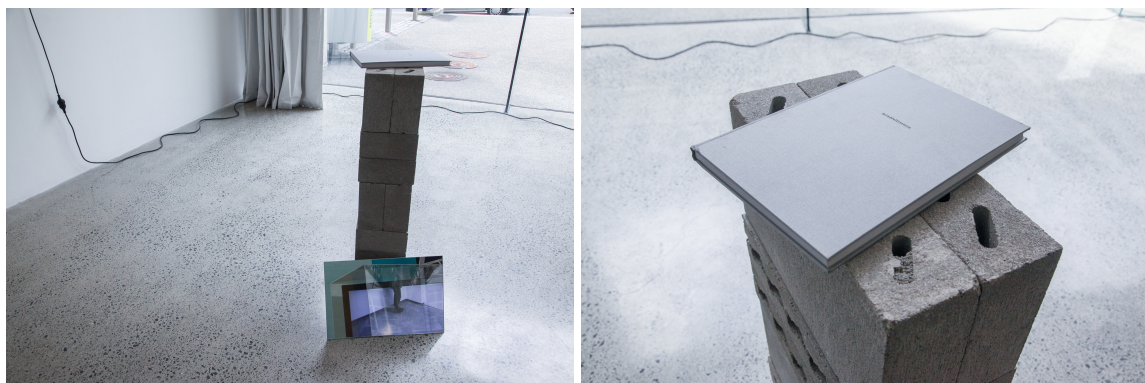


Figure 24. Thesis examination documentation: *mindfulness: 100 ways of non-thinking*, 2014 digital still

For examination I presented five works selected for the specific space exploring different forms of reflections. The project's interest in using photographic and video documentation was explored by a perfect bound archival booklet of gestures archiving relevant details of Art gestures (Fig. 24). This functioned as a catalogue of Art gestures but also a catalyst for thinking about the entire work and its temporal and spatial dimensions. While other shown works were moving images, this booklet served the purpose to offer shifts in the mindful and mindless awareness towards the Art gestures in the form of a different presentation, challenging the possibility of finding new interconnected experiences. In relation to the other video works

as a whole, a mirror was placed on the floor tilted and leaning on the concrete stand reflecting into another video work that was placed in a Perspex box (Fig. 25). The use of mirror explored the spatial dynamic of the selected space with other presented works using different forms of reflections.



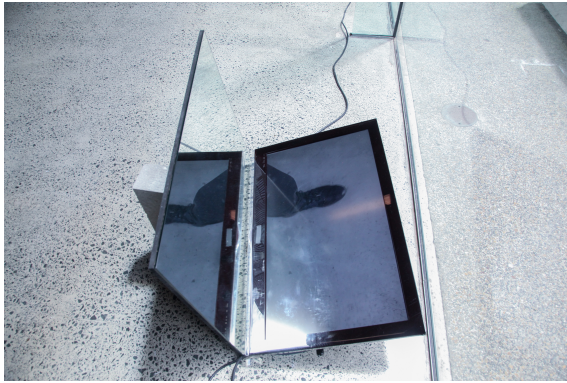
Figure 25. Thesis examination documentation: *Walk A Perfect Trapezium*, 2014 digital still

The light projecting from the LCD screen that was placed inside the Perspex box is reflected onto the plastic in which was also reflected through the mirror leaning on the concrete stand and floor, exploring the idea of seeing different reflections from different perspectives. The reflection of a mirror and also the reflection of the long glass window of the gallery accompany another Art gesture of walking in different manners (Fig. 26). The video of the walking Art gesture is reflected onto a large mirror supported by a concrete block and also reflected into the glass window as they were placed very near each other. This set-up allowed viewers to notice their own foot walking towards the installation work reflected by the mirror and when they walk closer to the installation they notice the walking Art gesture from the video. This work intended to explore the audience's awareness of their own body and its locomotion in relation to the installation as a whole. Both video and photographic documentation was utilized for its capability to record and reproduce the process within movements of the Art gestures in real time and further implicated the viewer's own bodily awareness in relation to the installation works.





Figure 26. Thesis examination documentation: *Walking In Different Manners* #1 (*Walking*), #3 (*Full steps*), #5 (*Small steps wide legs*), #6 (*One foot steps*), 2014 digital still



The projection that is placed on top of a concrete block projects into the concrete wall consists of a series of repeated leg movements in one spot (Fig. 27). This work intends to signify the balance and stability of the concrete's materiality and also the body movements documented in the video. With the use of concrete and mirror as material supporting documented Art gestures, the deliberate loops of movements attempt to capture the reciprocal disappearance of time and thoughts in connection with the mind. The nature of the materiality emphasises self-reflection and awareness as well as the balance of mind, finding its way to *mindfulness*.



Figure 27. Thesis examination documentation: *Hopping, Skipping, Walking, Standing, And Not Being There On The Same Spot*, 2014 digital still