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Moving, Shaking and Tracking: Micro-Making in Video, Performance and Poetry

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Abstract: Ethnographic video requires the makers to grapple with the idea of ‘constituting a compositional present’ (Stewart 2007), rather than a static notion of truth or representation. This audio/video performance project sits at the intersection of affect theory, feminist and performance studies, and extends these discourses into new materialist considerations of the posthuman and more-than-human. The piece takes up Bennett’s (2010) challenge to any distinction between dull and vibrant lifeforms through the project’s attention to the ways in which both ‘nature’ and person-made objects play an agentic role in the everyday of living and travelling. Video and audio-informed research can be, in our view, themselves enactments of new materialist mappings of research spaces and practices, suggesting new paths for methodological and conceptual becoming. In this ‘micro-making’ (that is, a making practice built up out of brief video clips, flash performances and the brevity of poetry), the three co-authors enact notions of entanglement (Barad 2007; Ingold 2010) as a ‘meshwork of interwoven lines of growth and movement’ (Ingold 2010: 3) by bodily engagement with machines and machine-bodies that propel us forward and intervene in everyday practices and performances.

Concrete River¹

*The sidewalk dips
and turns,
a concrete river
out of alignment
with sand
and air and ocean.*

*A Los Angeles
invention: tame
the wild
and unpredictable
into an
artificial course.*

*Tonight that river
remembers
its Santa Monica
meeting with
the Pacific,
a long-ago kiss.*

*As two girls,
heads together,
walk along
its path,*

*moving in
and out of sight.*

Introduction: Non-Representational Method

We take as our starting point that ethnographic video requires the makers to grapple with the idea of ‘constituting an emergent present’ (Stewart 2007: 4), rather than a static notion of truth or representation, and that contemporary ethnography itself is only able to interpret presents—and *presence*—not historical or cultural pasts or futures, though we realise present, past and future are but ghosts (Barad 2014: 183). We believe in the necessity of looking reflexively or, better, diffractively² (Haraway 1997; Barad 2007) at culture, but not for analytic reasons; rather, we engage through creative practice in affectively interrupting socio-cultural flows, mapping their interference (Barad 2003), including those contemporary awakenings that incorporate new materialist and more-than-human collaborators.

Representation, which assumes depth and hierarchy (St. Pierre 2013), has been called into question in many quarters over recent decades, including within new materialist discourse. Drawing upon Nigel Thrift and Karen Barad, Selmin Kara (2013) argues that much of our received modern understandings of thought are seen through the frame of *representational thinking*, where there is an ontological distinction drawn, following Kant and Hume, between the human and the material (Kara 2013). Art historians Nora Sternfeld and Luisa Ziaja remind us that ‘Both the critique of representation and the critique of the institution were essential parts of the avant-garde in the course of the 20th century’ (Sternfeld & Ziaja 2012: 22). They attend to the ‘transition from curating to the curatorial’ (2012: 22), moving curation from facilitating exhibitions/sites for ‘setting up valuable objects and representing objective values’ toward curatorial enactments in which ‘unusual encounters and discourses become possible’ (2012: 22). That is, living life as a curatorial event, or, in Deleuzian terms, becoming-curatorial. Sternfeld and Ziaja attend to three important aspects of the

contestation of representation in a range of artforms and practices since at least the 1960s: the status of the art object, the relation to the viewer, and the relation to the institution. All three of these are central to our discussion of the micro-making project that we have created, curated and performed.

In this project, we take seriously Karen Barad's and many others' rejection of the Cartesian subject-object divide in a consideration of multiple forms of bodies, creatively collaborating around the theme of movement. As Kara writes, again drawing upon Barad, 'the assumption that the world is divided into representing subjects and passive matter awaiting representation' is problematic, and has assisted in setting our mindset by leading to 'the emergence of the dichotomy between representations and the represented (as well as of the related problem of realism in philosophy)' (Kara 2013: 585). We therefore ask our readers/audience to engage creatively, but also philosophically, with this project's 'method' (or, as we'd prefer, its *concept-in-motion* – see Jackson 2017 for a robust challenge to the notion of 'method'), as it works at rejecting the simplistic, 'hard' truth claims that persistently cling to video-based methods in academic work. Such claims for video are often placed in contrast with the positioning of poetry and performance as 'soft' and (merely) relational. Bringing video, text and performance together in this project highlights how both the processes we used and what we produced were profoundly relational.

The Thingness of Bodies #1 (3 seconds of wooded landscape glimpsed out the window of a fast-moving NY train)

My hybrid body is moving too fast.

The Thingness of Bodies #2 (17 seconds of Australian beachfront shot through the window of a moving car)

My machinebody frames a shot

My POV is framed by time, not space.

I am my soundtrack not my movie

My landscape not my story:

I am my own audience.

We have used the terms ‘creative’ and ‘relational’, seeing them not in their commonplace usage, with creativity as (only) meaning practices of art-making, say, or ‘relational’ concerning being attentive to human relationships. We see them both as processual. We see creativity as a continual process of ‘opening-up-to-what-may-be’ (Wyatt 2019: 45), as following Deleuze and Guattari, a *becoming* (Harris 2014) and, within this new materialist framework, relational not static, not an interaction—noun—between separate, stable, human subjects but a process, a verb, a doing, an enacting of boundaries (Barad 2003). Relating is the performative³ process of Karen Barad’s ‘agential realism’, whereby relating produces *relata* and not the other way around; not an anthropocentric but a quantum, queer relationality (de Freitas 2017):

[A]gential realism’s posthumanist account of discursive practices does not fix the boundary between ‘human’ and ‘nonhuman’ before the analysis ever gets off the ground but rather enables (indeed demands) a genealogical analysis of the discursive emergence of the ‘human.’ ‘Human bodies’ and ‘human subjects’ do not preexist as such; nor are they mere end

products. 'Humans' are neither pure cause nor pure effect but part of the world in its open-ended becoming (Barad 2003: 821).

In this project, therefore, in this 'creative-relational inquiry' (Wyatt 2019), 'we' were not *a priori*, not ontologically separate from the machines, tools, and activities, nor from our milieus (time of day, weather, those others, human and non-human) in which we were entangled in those material-discursive moments. 'We' were being produced in those moments of relational entanglement.⁴

Between Dull and Vibrant Lifeforms

Jane Bennett has argued that we should reconsider matter as 'passive stuff, as raw, brute, or inert' (2010: vii). This habit of parsing the world into dull matter (it, things) and vibrant life (us, beings) is a 'partition of the sensible,' to use Jacques Ranciere's (2001: 8) phrase, and Bennett proposes instead we embrace the 'vitality of matter and the lively powers of material formations' (2010: vii). In this chapter, we take the digital bodies of video, the machine-bodies with and in which – or as which, perhaps – we spend our days, as well as human bodies, as three equally-vibrant forms and generators of life.

The project we discuss here is comprised of a series of video-based micro-makings (small video projects) in a multi-sited (USA, UK, France, Australia) cine-autoethnography (Rouch & Feld 2003) that intersects movement and stasis, temporality and spatiality. We take as our impetus a creative consideration of our 'not-quite bodies' (Bennett 2010: xii) in conversation with non-human bodies (movement machines such as trains, trams, ferries, cars) and macro-bodies such as geographical regions, topographies and landscapes. We note the act of 'cutting together/apart' (Barad 2014: 176) we make here: we could name other bodies implicated— affective bodies, 'discursive bodies, bodies of thought, bodies of water' (Stewart 2007: 127), and more. The bodily traces in the videos (and their co-constituted poems) are a visual experiment in which the human body is decentred by the

agency of the other machines, moved by machines; in these encounters, both human and more-than-human bodies are affected and *moved*.

This 'continuum of material' generated in/by our creative making highlights Roland Barthes' (1984) and Karen Barad's (2010) notion of *traces*, in which the photograph/video is not only an emanation of a referent but also the process of devising in which no single point of departure or arrival is assumed (Williams 1977). The project employs both performed and digital compositions to emphasize the interdependence of perception, motion and stillness and foregrounds the hybridity of contemporary bodies/subjects and the creative vectors that intersect our everyday lives/lines of mobility. The visual arts now include a diversity of digital forms as well as text, sound, video, installation, happening, environment, performance, and encounter. Video is often framed as extending the 'dematerialising' turn, showing ways in which video can become the process, the happening, the doing, the interaction with audience. The intersection of live performance and video embodies an affective encounter between the digital 'body' (projection), and the bodies of the performer and audience; in this 'intra-action' (Barad 2007) of the ontological within, we can understand the video as a becoming-with that which is spatial and temporal, public and intimate.⁵

The Dawn Watcher

This tram passes, you see

well, no, stops, leaves,

slow, then faster,

few people, this early

platform empty, no one alights

no one boards

it stops, stays, leaves

one man, I can see

holding his phone

like this not like that

like he's filming

filming nothing

from a dawn tram that stops, stays, leaves

Moving as the Making

The project grew around a series of provocations where we invited each other first to make a series of short (3 to 6-second), medium (7 to 10-second) and long (30-second) video clips from machines in/through which the body is set in motion (i.e., trains, planes, buses, cars, bicycles, and ferries) and, second, to write with/to the video clips we had made. We placed these artefacts into a shared electronic folder as we created them. When the time came, Anne then edited the video clips together and brought them into conversation with artificial sound from sound banks in Garage Band and Final Cut editing software, as well as with ambient sound from the clips. In turn, in the live performance the combined video (approximately ten minutes in length) was projected against the bodies of the three actor-writers who performed live spoken word, creating a hybrid performance that problematised notions of liveness and virtuality as we played in and with the footage.

The Thingness of Bodies #3 (30 seconds, shipping containers)

My life in a box, boxes become human-nonhuman landscapes

Crowds of boxes become cities

Cities become worldings:

My life is a

Shipping container.

If we must travel, why must we cart so much shit along with us?

Aren't they two different impulses?

Always want it both ways, homo sapiens.

Always queer in one way or another.

Just one more box of sweaters, one more end table,

You never know when we might need that tall boy again.

The arm picks up, lifts, pivots, sets down another box of stuff

Doing its shipping work as graceful as Astaire,

powerful as Baryshnikov.

Shipping what to where?

Another frame goes by.

Bodily Traces #1 (7 seconds, Australian oceanfront)

Machine-bodies in motion are the only lingua franca.

In this multimodal creative practice collaboration, the series of 'micro-clips' were recorded at a range of places within each of our own milieus at moments where we sensed the mediation of what

we might call our 'experience' and our 'agency' through machines; and we understand these moments of confluence as operating in/between natureculture (Haraway 2003; Barad 2015).⁶

The video-filming⁷ called us into a sense not of being active travellers across a passive landscape backdrop or even of being in a process of 'place-making' (Pink 2007), where human-centred 'meaning' and 'understanding' are created in the travelling, but rather into a sense of our ourselves of, in and as *assemblages* (Deleuze & Guattari 2004). We found our filming paid particular attention to windows, platforms, passageways – to thresholds – and to other objects/people/bodies in motion. The visual caught us (the blades of a wind turbine turning, a clump of trees receding into the distance), and so too the aural (the dull hum of a jet engine, a radio playing in a car), the haptic (the smoothness of a dashboard, the discomfort of cramped seats), and the olfactory (the sweetness of seaside candy stalls, the scent of summer-hot late afternoon). Our attention was not that of ethnographic video-makers being emphatic observers gathering the embodied experiences (Pink 2007) of what we were 'witnessing'. The video-making was instead suggestive, and generative, of the sensing of *bodily traces*, calling attention to the lines, angles, vectors, and relating among and between the assemblages of machinic, material, climatic, temporal, cultural and affective bodies.

The written poetic texts emerged from and alongside the video-filming.

Stop. An aside: it is impossible, we find here, to use (English) language in a way that does justice to the agentic and machinic force of writing, to becoming-writing. We could have said here, 'we wrote the texts', but this leaves agency lying with us, with the human. 'The written texts emerged', is better but implies passivity. And both phrases risk neglecting how our texts were caught up in, were part of, were entangled with, the video-making and its 'mangle' of voice(s), machines, bodies, technologies, movement and more. We have named the video-filming and the writing above, in introducing the project, as discrete processes, yet they did not seem so. They were not so. We were

writing (in notebooks, on laptops, on our hands) as we moved. We moved as we wrote. We were moved by writing. We moved as we watched the videos and wrote. We moved again as we performed what we wrote up against the videos. We were always filming-watching-writing-performing-moving.

And we have introduced these two paragraphs here as an 'aside', as if they were tangential, yet this discussion is pivotal in this chapter's concern with other-than-human agency, and how such a take on agency permeates and affects the research process. Texts, bodies, laptops, cameras, phones, notebooks, and much more, intra-act in the process of research, in what Childers (2013: 602) calls 'the all-encompassing 'doing' of inquiry.'

So, that said, we repeat: The written poetic texts emerged from and alongside the video-filming. The video-making component of the project centred around the crafting of an edited final cut film. The video was made with the intention of its dissemination being in-performance, a mash-up of live and digital artefacts enacted together. The video script running order offers a textual sense of the place-based texture of the work, the interconnections between place, motion, and bodies:

Santa Monica long footage (0:00-0:50)

1. Jonathan 30 second turbine (*What do We See of What Makes a Motion?*) (0:50-1:21)
2. Anne AUS beach from car (*The Thingness of Bodies #2*) (1:21-1:37)

Animated NY train footage (1:37-1:52)

3. Stacy Santa Monica (*Concrete River*) (1:52-2:25)

Muscle beach (2:25-2:31)

4. Jonathan 10 second wind turbine (*Solitude*) (2:31-2:41)

5. Anne (*The Thingness of Bodies #3*) (2:41-3:24)
6. Anne AUS beach (*Bodily Traces #1*) AUS beach (3:25-3:32)
7. Jonathan 10 second tram (*Dawn Watcher*) (3:32-3:51)

Red Man on Rocks (3:51-3:55)

8. Anne fast motion NY train (*The thingness of Bodies #1*) (3:56-4:05)
9. Stacy San Diego Amtrak 1 minute (*Shore*) (4:05-5:05)

Scottish trees (5:05-5:12)

10. Stacy LA Cars (*Rising*) (5:12-5:26)

Industrial mill footage NY (5:27-5:41)

11. Jonathan 30 second plane (*Still*) (5:42-6:09)
12. Anne 10 seconds NY train (*Bodily Traces #2*) (6:09-6:19)
13. Stacy 30 second Venice (*Tim Miller's Scarf*) (6:19-6:33)

San Diego/Wind turbine (6:34-7:00)

14. Jonathan 30 second tram (*Tree*) (7:00-7:30)

Australia beach/rocks (7:30-7:37)

15. Stacy LA traffic (*Drive*) (7:37-8:54)

Composite: Santa Monica/Beach (8:55-9:05)

16. Anne NY train (*Bodily Traces #3*) (9:05-10:56)

Shore

On the train from Los Angeles to San Diego, you watch your daughter sleep, her head thrown back, sunlight glinting off of her braces. You imagine her expression when she hears the news that you want to move her—to move yourself—to Australia to live and work with your lover, thousands of miles from California, thousands of miles from here.

You remember teaching her how to swim; how she would cling to you, her fingers digging into your flesh. How she only learned to trust herself in the water once you let her go, once she was floating on her back unaware that you weren't holding her anymore. And how, when she realized what was happening, she panicked and began to sink. Though that floating, of being carried away and held, was somehow enough. Enough for her to remember the next time she got into the water.

We see the multiple and dynamic processes of the project as serving to extend 'natureculture' from its pursuit of de-centring the human from all onto-epistemological and ethico-political narratives about life and liveness primarily within ecological concerns, to a consideration of our ecologies as inclusive of machines (all machines, including writing machines) and urban landscapes. Indeed, the much-debated articulation of 'natureculture' represents a flattening of the entire ecological hierarchy through human eyes – a *human* mindset shift – characteristic of the Anthropocene. Or as Serenella Iovino has said in **Rosi Braidotti & Maria Hlavajova's *Posthuman Glossary*** (2018):

This idea of the 'world as a text' is not to be interpreted in the radical deconstructionist sense, implied by Derrida's often-misunderstood assertion there is no '*hors-texte*'. Rather, it suggests that the world's complexity can be seen as a story emerging from the process of becoming-together of nature and culture – and that it is only thinkable as their inextricable co-

emergence: *natureculture* (Iovino 2018: 113).

It is such a 'co-emergence' of natureculture that the varying practices of this project, filming-moving-writing gave rise to. We chose locations of intersection—or locations of intersection chose us—or they chose us choosing them—where nature, human sociality, urban landscapes and machines all seemed to be agentic, if not equally so. The locations, as the running order notes, included Santa Monica Pier and beach in Los Angeles California, along New York's Hudson River, the single Edinburgh tram in Scotland, which runs between the city and the airport, wind turbines in Aveyron in the countryside of southern France, the Los Angeles-San Diego Amtrak train in California, driving along the Australian shorefront, Los Angeles traffic at rush hour, and more, each in their unique, singular, moments of *haecceity* (Deleuze & Guattari 2004) affecting and being affected by (Spinoza 1993) the 'bodies' of video footage and written text.

Rising

Sometimes

when the light is fading

you look skyward

and imagine

your car hovering

just above the heat rising up

from this desert mirage.

Still

Earlier, eyes closed, head in balance, back straight

Still, legs bent, knees pressed against yellow plastic

Still, hands at rest, knuckles on palm,

Still, pulse fast breath short

Still

Still, at so-many-thousand-feet

Still, at so-many-miles-an-hour

Still, surfing pockets of worried air

Still, gushing unseen untold toxic traces

Still

Now, from the oval plastic window the air is still

Held in place by camouflaged pins against a motionless landscape

Parched lifeless by a stationary sun

A still life of the jet-propelled

Arranged just so, a tableau of the imaginary

Still

You look again through the oval window

You notice hesitant, jerky motion of hand, arm –

A line of body, your own,

Still no more

Still never was, is,

Still

This micro-making project was a way of becoming-with differently. In parlance that privileges the human and the visual we could describe how it required us to, and led us to, ‘see with new eyes’ the ways in which we are constitutively co-changing with/in our environments through and with machines that allow us to move. Yet, if our claim is that, at heart, the moving in our project *is* the making – as the title of this section proposes – then why the poems, the video footage, the editing, the curating, performing, photographing, cutting, suturing, for the artefact and its creation? What work do these processes accomplish or make possible? In other words, what work do they do—in Deleuze and Guittari’s sense of making a work *work*—creating something that ‘stands up on its own’, where standing up is ‘the act by which the compound of created sensations is preserved in itself—a monument, but one that may be contained in a few marks or a few lines’ or a series of brief clips, strung together in a series of becomings (1994: pp. 164-165)?

Machines that Move (Us)

Tim Ingold and Jo Vergunst argue that ‘the movement of walking is itself a way of knowing’ (2008: 5; see also Springgay and Truman 2018). In this project we walked, but we also moved by other means, and found the movement of moving to be part of the encounter with nonhuman and more-than-human others. We found traces of the movements of previous/other beings to be present in the machine, in other bodies and naturecultures. In the movements themselves, we traced, as we moved (not always walking), others’ histories and memories, others’ futures. People, trees, coastlines. Climates. We found our movements themselves a kind of ‘archaeology of affect’ (Gibbs 2007), in which the archaeology or layers do not need to be material ones. Our movements itself/themselves were a kind of archaeology, or repetition, in which our bodies remembered those who may have moved before us in these places, or ways, or rhythms, or with similar intent. As Ingold has put it in terrestrial terms, ‘The land, we could say, is continually growing over, which is why archaeologists have to dig to recover the traces of past lives. And what hold it all together are the

tangled and tangible lifelines of its inhabitants' (2011: 120). And we see the movements as 'growing over' too – and we, ethnographers who 'dig' with aesthetic tools to find the nonmaterial lifelines of previous/other inhabitants.

Tim Miller's Scarf

You push your bike

I walk beside you

an evening stroll along

the edge of a continent we

will not share for long,

speaking of movement,

swapping notes on Oz

on a chilly May

evening in Venice.

Tree

You see the tree, left, on the first frame – yes, see, look, there –

proud, it asks for your attention,

its three gathered heads

aloof

You hold it, hold it with your eyes – yes, hold it –

Hold, hold, hold –

You think you will lose it soon – yes, you must, you will –

*but it stays, it stays beyond
the coarse grass, the wooden fence, the grey metal signs
the white lost house, the brick blocks – all
that enters, pushing the tree back*

*You know it is becoming distant
you know it will go, that tree,
become faint
but at the final frozen frame
you tell yourself 'it's there, I know it
I know it'*

'And so, too, the perfect ethnography hides the traces of its inscription, presenting a picture of the lifeworld as if it were arrayed, fully formed, upon a surface' (Ingold 2011: 222). For us, these traces of (micro-) making in the doing, the encounter, rather than in the material. Perhaps this had something to do with how movement machines became our primary tool for seeing/understanding/problematising these aspects of contemporary life. Our movement machines included locative (locomotive?) machines—trains, cars, and other machine-propelled apparatuses. Though we carried other moving machines onto the 'traditional' forms of transport—our smart devices, in the intimacy of our pockets or clasped in the palms of our hands, allowed our minds to move, our perceptions to move; they even allowed 'us', 'bodily', via artificial intelligence, augmented reality and virtual reality technologies, to feel moved, to perceive ourselves to be moved, moving, and moveable in new ways.

Language moves. Linguaging moves. Writing moves. Linguaging/writing is a machine that moves us.

Ingold suggests:

On paper, written words are separated by spaces, as are footprints on the ground. Yet although the traces are discontinuous, the movement they register is a continuous one. Even with a cursive script, handwriters have to lift the pen from time to time from the paper surface, between words and sometimes between letters. So too, walkers have to lift their feet between steps. But the writer does not cease to write on lifting the pen, nor does the walker cease to walk on lifting each foot, alternately, from the ground. Nor, for that matter, does the singer or storyteller cease his recitation every time he pauses for breath. 'Stories walk', writes John Berger, 'like animals and men. And their steps are not only between narrated events but between each sentence, sometimes each word. Every step is a stride over something not said' (Berger 1982, pp. 284-285, in Ingold 2008: 8-9).

For us there was, for instance, the hesitation as we saw, or recalled, or watched film of, the shape of a distant building through the train window, or the face of a child in a passing car; and then wrote. One word, or two, or a flurry of words.

The body of the word is most obvious on the page, but in this project we also explore ways in which *voice* and word are material, as they are in/relation to our bodies. In one version of this project, the following voice-over was created by Anne for a showing of the hybrid film/performance:

How is using video changing the way I see myself and others? The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines 'seeing' as 'to come to a knowledge of something...to come to an awareness...'. Through video, I am coming to see research differently. Through using video as a method and methodology, I am coming to see others differently, to see **for** others

through framing a shot, coming to 'see' in new ways or see differently, or make the familiar strange. This is exactly the pedagogical project, or what Maxine Greene (1978) called 'wide-awakeness', that unique gift of all practice-led research and education.

When I frame a shot (cue video) – I see myself in a place, as a moving through space, rather than an identity/being – as a POV rather than a subject, in time. I am the soundtrack to my own movie (insert me humming), the landscape to my own narrative – I am my own audience – I 'follow' myself, I am my own best re-port.

Video makes my life seem better than it is (like social media), makes it consumable, enter-able in a way that drama doesn't and photographs cannot. Video/film is not as they taught me in college a medium of realism, while theatre is the medium of symbols (and language).

Video keeps promises that never occurred to theatre, that photography broke long ago.

Video is the ocean when theatre is the river.

Video is the marriage when photography is the date.

(I'm not sure about going comparative, here).

Still. If performance is the bedroom (private), video is the sky or horizon, the marketplace (public).

Video is a language, a relationship (not a place), a practice (not a product). Video (think Occupy) is a political public social act when performance and speech cannot be. It speaks back, interrupts and confronts when mere vocal chords fail. It is residual/resilient when

voices fade, bodies disappear. Video has a life of its own when organic life ends, yet brings back voice and gesture and laughter and flesh in the absence of these dear materialities.

Video is the lover of performance, the partner of language – a visual medium that needs the visceral to thrive. The ketchup to performance’s mustard; the fish to somatic chips.

Video is the teenager to performance’s old man. It fights back, resists, thinks it invented everything. Video’s got a smart mouth and sex appeal, but thinks it’s the first sexy methodological innovation to come along. But for all its arrogant presumptions, video is still the one I want to go out with on Saturday night, do shots of tequila with at 3am, and laugh about it with over a greasy breakfast at Sunday noon. I’ve got video under my skin in an unhealthy, unholy kind of way, and if this illicit affair, this desire-as-method is short-lived, so be it. I will have lots of great data/footage to remember it by.

I see myself in the old scholar’s rest home, boring my colleague / inmate / companions with old ‘home movies’ of when I was a new young scholar and video and I were still in love: the golden sun shining through video’s hair, my tight ass in a blue bikini on the dock at crystal lake, us laughing in the waves at Ogunquit (Kennebunkport), still fresh in my mind and crystal clear thanks to video’s impeccable memory / archiving fetish. No chance of restorying these irresponsible years, of the selective memory that absolves us when regret is too much to bear, of revisionist histories that help us collectively push ahead when the truth is too much to bear/ (...is nothing but a gravel road when we need perfect bitumen)...my fellow oldies will hate me for such home movies, if not ‘home truths’, because there is increasingly no time for (and what’s the use?) for the past and what’s the use of truth anyway?

Drive

When I moved to Los Angeles, I was afraid—to leave my home, to leave my job and my friends, to begin, again.

When I moved to Los Angeles the thing I was most afraid to do was drive. I was afraid of the speed, the wind and twist of the canyon roads, the cars packed tight on the freeway.

I was afraid the thunderclap of metal and glass that spun me around so hard and so fast I could not see the world shifting would happen, again.

But when you move to Los Angeles, you must drive. Must move, on. No matter that you take the train to San Diego or the Metro downtown, no matter that you carpool, catch rides, beg your partner to drop you off or pick you up. You must drive to the station. To school drop off and pick up. To the therapy sessions which focus on your fear of driving.

When my partner was packing to leave, her movements another kind of thunderclap, she stopped folding t-shirts and disappointments long enough to say, 'You're going to have to drive now, you know?'

When you move to Los Angeles, you do the things you're most afraid to do. You drive. You move on. You begin, again.

To the 10 Second Wind Turbine

I never understood

how solitude

could stand so tall

and carve time so steady

it could reach and hold the sky still

We find in the words of Anne's voice-over a kind of linguistic gesture, or movement, unique to its form. For Ingold, gestures are lines. The moment one gestures, a line is made, formed, traced. 'For whenever we walk or talk we gesture with our bodies, and insofar as these gestures leave traces or trails, on the ground or some other surface, lines have been, or are being, drawn' (Ingold 2011: 176). Yet we three, as non-representational artists, also see the over-attention in the emergent area of some 'walking research' as attentive to the visual, as a symptom of a burgeoning visual culture that pay tribute to the need for visual traces in online media, driven by the insatiable need for speed. Our experiment with movement, traces, and visibility in the micro-making project is not attentive to the visibility per se, but rather the ways in which the movement itself causes us to see, hear, smell, touch and taste the world differently. The affective charge of bodies in motion. How we might begin to understand the changes in us from being moved so quickly, so often, and now so unnoticeably.

What do We See of What Makes a Motion?

This project has implicitly explored Erin Manning and Brian Massumi's question 'What do we see of what makes a motion? What is predominantly seen is indeed a line of movement: the arm describes a curve' (2014: 40). They are talking here about the movement of dance and in this project we too have been investigating bodies in motion, but in different milieus and in a different sense in that we have been thinking, making and writing our way into an exploration of bodies (of all kinds) that are inevitably in motion in ways both seen and unseen. In the performances of this project, we try to say to our audiences that we too see a line of movement, but rather one that moves continuously

between the individual and collective, in more-than-human bodies and virtual ones. In our micro-making we have tried to en flesh 'this visible form of the movement', which is

only a certain salience of the field of motion. It is but the striking, to the eye, of a dominant vector. Form is a simplification of the field occurring between registers, flashing up from their difference to each other. The visible form of a gesture is a distancing of movement from itself.

(Manning & Massumi 2014: 40)

For us too, movement and motion become the event, an emergence in/with/between bodies, both human and more-than-human, experienced and performed creatively, collaboratively, and publicly.

Bodily Traces #2 (10 second car)

Video keeps promises that other visual methods break.

Video is a vector, not a dot.

I can no longer feel my still body. I am only alive when I'm moving.

Bodily Traces #3 (30 seconds)

The body of the train with blue coming to stop.

*What happens to your body set in motion through machines,
intersecting with my machine-body?*

We breathe, mediated.

Slow down

listen for the heartbeat, or other unmachine rhythms.

*Moving images surround me invade me carry me beyond the need for organic endings. How
moderne.*

Video means never having to say goodbye.

Resilient when voices fade, bodies disappear.

Video is my wife when performance leaves me for someone else,

the ketchup to performance's mustard;

the fish to somatic chips.

Video I think I love you.

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¹ Each italicised body of text in the series that runs through, or ‘intra-rupts’ (after Barad 2007) this text was written as part of the project we are bringing onto and out of the page. We outline and discuss the tangle of video-making and text-writing that characterised the project; how this poem, for example, ‘accompanies’ a video of a walk in Los Angeles. We resist any neat connecting of written text and film; any slip towards ‘interpretation’ or ‘representation’, as we will argue. We do not credit these texts to any one of us in order to destabilise attachments we habitually make between texts and authors.

² ‘Diffraction’ (Haraway, 1997; Barad, 2007) calls us away from the optics of ‘reflection’ and ‘reflexivity’, and those terms’ tendency towards *sameness* (the reflection in the mirror), and instead orients us to *difference*: ‘A diffractive methodology seeks to work constructively and deconstructively (not destructively) in making new patterns of understanding-becoming’ (Barad, 2014: 187n).

³ Barad’s ideas about performativity lead us away from the becomings of individual entities and toward collectivities; creative relational inquiry might be understood in terms of Barad’s entangled ‘material-discursive intra-actions’ across *spacetime mattering*, a proposition that presumes no prior existence of the phenomena intra-acting in their inseparable encounters/entanglements, thus challenging conventional notions of an ontology of determinacy. Her assertion that all bodies and things (and not just human ones) matter asks us to see, queerly, performativity in all its iterative, perverse and indeterminate intra-activity (2012, p. 32).

⁴ The notion of ‘entanglement’ for Barad (originally a theoretical physicist), concerns ontological *inseparability*, how (drawing upon mid-20th century physicist Niels Bohr) the object of scientific observation, the observational apparatus, and the observers are all entangled (Barad, 2007), i.e. how, contrary to traditional scientific understandings, it is impossible to separate the scientific researcher from the object of their research and the apparatus (e.g. a microscope) they are employing to study it. Taking this beyond the laboratory, she writes: ‘Entanglements are relations of

obligation—being bound to the other—enfolded traces of othering. Othering, the constitution of an ‘Other,’ entails an indebtedness to the ‘Other,’ who is irreducibly and materially bound to, threaded through, the ‘self’—a diffraction/dispersion of identity’ (Barad, 2010: 265).

⁵ Say, for example, we are meeting a friend in a café to discuss this chapter. The familiar term, ‘interaction’, implies ontologically separate, *a priori*, entities engaging with each other. ‘Intra-action’, by contrast, conveys the sense that ‘we’ and ‘our friend’ *become* in, are in a sense created within and by, the encounter with each other and the café, its tables and chairs, cups and saucers, the sun we have to turn away from, the hackneyed track playing on the sound system, the sound system itself, and so on; more accurately, perhaps, intra-action suggests that ‘each other’ is a process that *happens* in the encounter. Barad writes: ‘It is through specific agential intra-actions that the boundaries and properties of the ‘components’ of phenomena become determinate and that particular embodied concepts become meaningful.’ (2003: 85) In other words, intra-action is about *immanence*.

⁶ We ask how material agency—that is, the agency of machines and other objects—offers openings for escaping such binaries completely, including agentic/non-agentic ones. As Latour (2005) has theorized *actants*, in this text we explore the possibility that an agentic resonance, including Barad’s agential realism, moves us beyond nature/culture or material/discursive debates, or indeed any notion of a ‘pure’ idea of agency.

⁷ We might have used the term ‘video-shooting’ in this paragraph, but its connotations of violence trouble us. We are aware that ‘video-filming’ is a technical contradiction in terms.