

Our Bodies are Supernal in their Bionic Dynamism

Research in Performance, Drawing, Painting, Photography and Music

Through Processes Involving
Automatic Corporeal Gesture in a Flash

ACG 

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ABSTRACT

My research explores recurring automatic processes used throughout time that develops conceptual and physical aptitude in the performer. During my research I define automatism as a process formulated as ACG ⇌ **Automatic Corporeal Gesture in a Flash** where I work to make art from an inspirational sensation in my body. The main way that I have been doing this is through automatic mark making and then working to define images as they appear on the substrate that emerge from this activity. ACG ⇌ is a kind of automatism that I use in various ways through process to make Art without fear. It is a performance process that uses perception and action intrepidly while in an apparatus to maintain corporeal balance, integrity, and momentum during the event. Practicing ACG ⇌ changes the way qualities in material are affected over time which changes the way meaning is made from it. The change in qualities that happens during performances between people and the material involved are always particular to each event.

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NOTES ON RESEARCH AND PROCESS

I began my Interdisciplinary Master's in Art, Media, and Design (IAMD) studies in 2020 by exploring a wide range of automatic processes in artmaking and research, from drawing vortexes in full-bodied gestures to the precise and no less ecstatic activity of automatically transcribing music notes on paper. Throughout this research into mark making, I realized that I am dealing with two sides of the same interest concerning automatic physical processes.

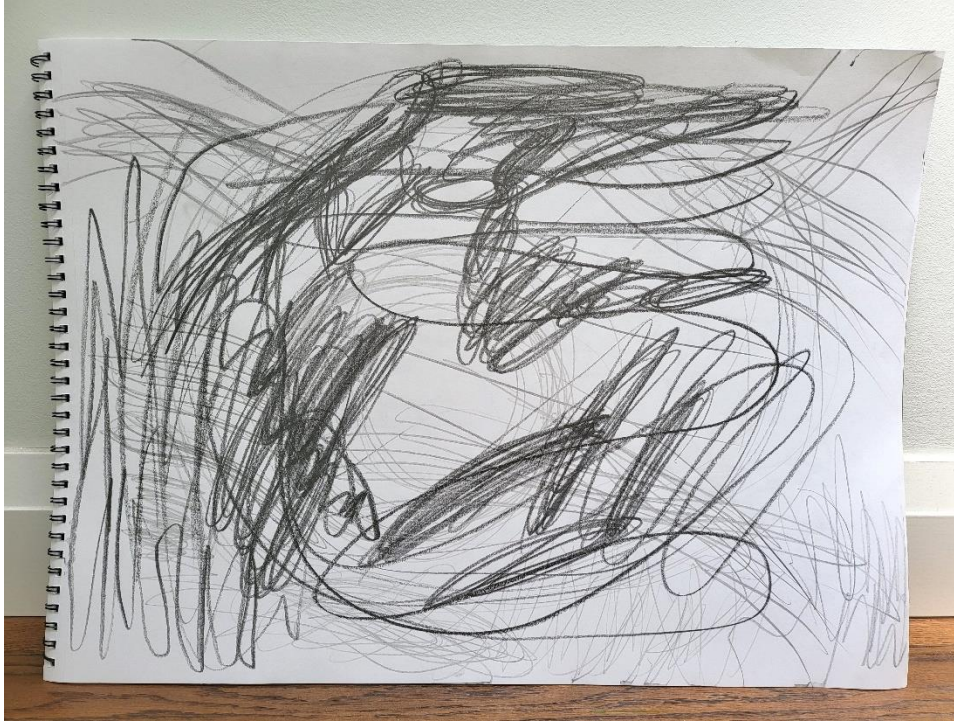


Figure 1: Full Bodied Gesture Drawings, September to November 2020.

In considering the history of my twenty-year practice, automatism seems to have been always happening with some degree during my art making. Automatism means to love and trust life enough to sing and dance. The basic automatic process that I have noticed to work most often involves spontaneous, automatic physical/corporeal gestures. I use physical and corporeal as synonyms to refer to bodies. All bodies exercise the agency of presence. I work in series of performance-practice sessions with material through extended improvisation within parameters.

The main way I have been practicing automatism is through drawing and painting where I move my body spontaneously to make marks on paper or canvas, and then start to respond to what I see happening there to define it into being something. The other automatic process that I have begun using in art making is to draw or paint an image that is mostly only in accordance with what I conceive of in my imagination. My imagination is usually a mental kind of thing, with pictures, but I am also practicing feeling through as much of my corporeal sensing as possible to connect with the source-vibration that I am working from in this way; a source vibration that I

can behold invisibly yet is there in my imagination. This is a paradox, though I do consider that I am using my corporeal senses to perceive my imagination's inspiration as I would use my senses to perceive the material world around me. My imagination contains qualitative, empirical data, which is the crux of the discourse's symbolic definition, and hence integrity. It must be defined somehow. Everything is imbued with meaning.

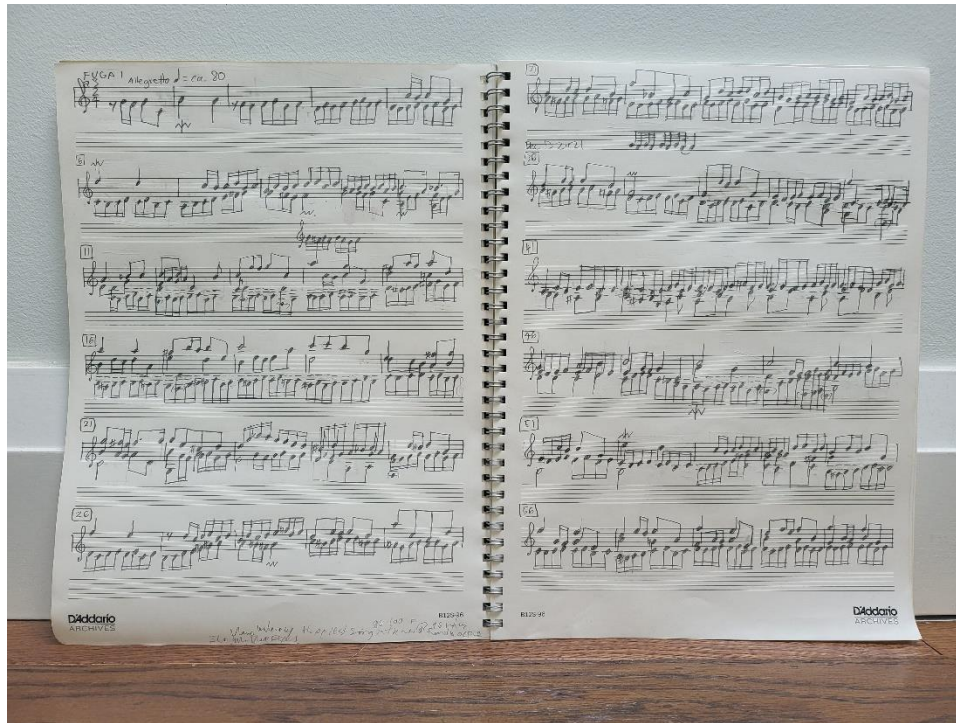


Figure 2: Fuga 1 (C Major) The Well-Tempered Clavier Book 2, December 2021.

This is a transcription from standard keyboard notation with bass and treble clef into standard guitar notation, which only uses a treble clef. The notes remain the same, only drafted around a treble clef (sometimes the low E string is drop-tuned to D to accommodate lower notes as they are in Bach's original, or I will just write them in their higher octave).

Bars 31 – 35 of Fugue 1 from The Well-Tempered Clavier Book 2 express a unique magic in how the independent melody lines here become extremely compressed together. With slight variation, this segment is a model of how independent voices can exhibit high amounts of correlative locational relationality between one another. This passage is laden with subtle nuance.

Learning musical skills through transcribing is extremely rewarding. Every note involves the action of clearly considering it with one's mind and body, internalizing it, and then expressing it back out again, depositing it to a substrate through writing. Transcription is a thorough way to learn discourse of material on its terms, and to be accountable to every one of its aspects. Bach wanted his students to have a transcription/analysis practice along with their reading/performance practice.

The motivation for me to make art is both conceptual and experiential. I feel the vibrations from the application of the discursive into material form. This is like a radio head that lifts the marks in ridges and groves up from the record and registers them as sound. The signal moves into the air of the room. My artistic practice moves vibration through the substrate and my performing body.

Our bodies are locations where we store a balance of energy, which we mete-out according to circumstance in situ. I want to be able to use as much of my body as needed in performance situations. As an artist, I can build up potential energy within my body, and then activate it. This is like how I warm up before performing or how I psych myself into making art. Listening to

music is great to get me singing and dancing and warmed up in a very sincere way. I can build up and nurture energy to garner performative momentum through engaged enthusiasm, fortified through daily practice. When I can get out of my own way, I can allow for occurrences in my life.

I agree with Alberto Giacometti when he said “Basically, I no longer work for anything but the sensation I have while working” (Giacometti, 2022). This sensation that Giacometti is talking about is healing for me in practice. It is the groove of the performative/meditative gesture, a trance dance. Trance is maintaining the entrainment of one’s body to a frequency which focuses perceptive consciousness.

Throughout all of this, I have been concerned with mark making, with perception, with process, with performance and performativity, with diffraction for qualitative data and relationality. I conclude that everything is relational discourse in corporeality. Our physical bodies are to us the most materially real things that we encounter. Our bodies create material with meaning which we use in every aspect of our lives, and we live to make more of it.

The basic tenet of ACG ⇄ is relationality with inspiration. I am making art with what I sense from without and from within my body. The relational aspect is what makes this about empathy and channeling. Everybody has naturally inherent bias through physicality.

In this MFA thesis, and new body of research, I am tracking my use of automatism and its development into a process-based approach to intrepid creativity.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

These are the questions I posed for my thesis:

How does ACG ⇄ relate to trance/channeling-mediumship, energy healing and remote viewing?

How does ACG ⇄ specifically inform how perception happens, not only through the ocular faculties of the eyes, but also through what may be described as inner-vision/dream-time vision, second-sight, inspiration, imagination?

How does ACG ⇄ , as an applied performative theory of process, influence my practice and creation in drawing, photography, and music; and how do each of the characteristics specific to these disciplines relate to and influence each other? How are they diffracted through each other for the purposes of perceiving new qualitative data? For example, how does ACG ⇄ function through tempo, phrasing and dynamics in my drawing, photography and as how it works in my music?

How does perception occur in my animated human body and what are its qualities (Ross; Saraswati, Swami Niranjanananda; Samkhya Darshan: Yogic Perception of Theories of Realism)?

What is the nature of consciousness and reality as understood through ACG ⇌ (Saraswati, Swami Niranjanananda; Samkhya Darshan: Yogic Perception of Theories of Realism)?

I explored trance through ACG ⇌ in my work with the aim of tuning into different perception states to make different marks. The array of discursive qualities in my marks comes mostly through varying the pace and rate of my mark making. My goal was to use as much of my whole body as needed to sense and respond during performance. Making actions this way in situ involves me being conscious of my node of sensorium and using it as openly as needed.

The main ways that I made art between 1980 and 2020 was through drawing, painting, piano, drums, guitar and stage acting. In 2020 I wanted to check how my body, being my main instrument, was processing information, as well as how I was activating my perception. I placed my node of sensorium in as much of my body as I could, through as much of its sensing capabilities as possible. I feel the need to be most accountable when realizing and relaying discourse on its own terms and not only from the bias that I bring to my relations, which is inevitable, as my body has material definition. Corporeality precludes neutral presence; physical existence is biased.

I was excited to see ACG ⇌ qualities in J.S.Bach's creative process. The main thing about interdisciplinarity is that it all takes the same inclination. Making a series of pictures is the same as making music for an album. Growing a painting practice is the same as growing a yoga practice. Differences are the techniques and materials used in each discipline, which are usually fun to learn. I proved that teaching myself to read music was not as big of a deal as I had been making it out to be for decades. My best guess as to why it happened in this IAMD course is because, in a Research Creation kind of way, I was able to approach learning to read music obliquely while being concerned with other aspects of my interdisciplinary practice. This kept my approach to reading music open, loose, and unattached. Keeping it simple this way was much better than being physically tight, constricted, and anxious about learning to read music, which would hinder my progress.

Interdisciplinarity has helped me avoid sabotaging myself. ACG ⇌ is mostly about getting out of my own way through minimizing how I make what I am trying to do more difficult than it needs to be. My erroneous actions often have the hallmark of being done out of fear, reacting to a current situation as I have in the past. ACG ⇌ is a way for me to respond to what is really happening instead of responding how I think I should act to avoid disaster. ACG ⇌ requires a mind and body which is open to relational experience. What I feel about the impressions that I absorb is up to me to define. What I project into experience is my responsibility as well.

Athletics is what I think about most when I consider the performative body. I like to make my art practice more like my Ashtanga (eight-limbed) yoga practice. I like performance that uses full body presence and activation: performance that works conceptually, viscerally, and from the heart.

TRUSTING MYSELF: THE CENTRALITY OF CORPOREALITY

Since 2020 I have practiced the kind of drawing where I move automatically to start a piece, making marks freely this way, and then I respond to what happens on the page to develop the image according to what I see the forms suggest themselves to be. I am deciphering the meaning from my improvised physical actions while in the process of performing. I am performing and composing at the same time. In other words, the marks I make in ACG ↗ this way start to look like definite things which I then begin to shape with intention. Here I am not really imagining something and then drawing it. This may happen in part, but I find that I mostly go back and forth between improvised action and action with concerted intentions that relate to what I perceive to be developing on the substrate. The concept and its materialization are happening at the same time. This is how I mostly made paintings from 2000 – 2010.

When I draw or paint, or work on music I show up to perform non-stop. I started to ask myself the questions, *Do I stop? Why do I stop? Is it because I struggle with trusting myself?*

Approaching action through how I perform in my practices works well in helping me regain and build my capacity and aptitude for energetic flow. In the drawing action I adjust the trajectory of the performative action; it is about the relation between balance and intent of movement. I allow myself to lean into actions from the fulcrum of my inner sense of energetic balance.

Conversely, practicing through grasping, being attached to outcomes, and forcing results to happen can make things too heavy. Being attached to results easily leads to second guessing myself which pauses the performative action, cutting the flow. From a balanced physical state qualities like rigidity and laboriousness are choices, not necessarily default responses. As the stakes of performance get higher, it becomes more challenging to remain balanced in physicality enough to negotiate successful actions. An example of this is the Giant Slalom Skier at the Olympics who can either win big or die trying. Resistance to straining through turning to flow is required for actions requisite to successful performance in every apparatus.

I would describe straining during performance as stepping on the gas and the brakes at the same time. Stopping for measurements while in performance is anathema to the event's dynamic flow. Our hearts always beat and pause. We live within this rhythm. Momentum of successive action is important to keep the activity going. This momentous energetic foundation is requisite to sustain performances. Rhythm and energetic dynamic flow are linked in the process of physical movement.

Body-centered awareness continues to be how I approach and develop my art making practice as well as how I conduct research. Since 2020 I concentrated in turning this awareness from my environment inwards. My work and research keep showing me that the more I perceive of my body through self-reflection, the more I can dive into it and all things for meaning.

PRACTICING ACG ⇨

I have been framing performance qualities like spontaneity, improvised action, and automatism through ACG ⇨. This acronym emerged from salient, recurring qualities in my research and art making, as well as from being inspired by the adages that Elvis Presley lived by in the middle to later stages of his career. Elvis took the saying *Taking Care of Business* and added to it *in a Flash*, and this became a kind of mantra, a quality that he promulgated and projected into his business and lifestyle. Elvis put his energy through TCB ⇨. It was a script that he lived by sincerely; him and his bodyguards and close friends especially. He also used the common saying *Tender Loving Care* in like manner. Elvis lived by TLC ⇨ and TCB ⇨.

ACG ⇨ is also informed by a practice-through-theory process, which is how Bach scholar Christoph Wolff frames J.S. Bach's creative practice, one where it was possible to perform and create music instantly, without any preparation other than learning how to read and perform music in the first place. Bach's approach to music makes extensive skill possible to be learned very effectively. Practice-through-theory however was opposite to the theory-through-practice approach of philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz, who lived a little before Bach's time, and was a very influential philosopher. Leibnitz was concerned with exercising and expanding abstract theories through practice. Bach, on the other hand, took a little theory that he thought was exceptional and put a lot of practice through it. He used counterpoint in much the same way throughout his life, doing a lot with a little, and his music is like this too, where mostly only one note is being sounded per beat, sometimes two, and about 30% of the time three and four or more. I found this to be the case after pointing randomly twenty times as I flipped the pages of Bach's catalogued works BWV 995 - 1006. 80% of the time only one note per beat occurs.

Bach was interested to see how much he could do with the material vibrations of music through theories of counterpoint. As a performer-composer Bach was interested in generating pragmatic results by putting his performance practice, through the rules of counterpoint theory, which were already at least hundreds of years old by the time he was born. Bach added a little to the rules of counterpoint as he used them in his work during his life. His additions solved problems that musicians had been encountering for a long time. Most of all Bach wanted to know and realize music in material, to expand the discursive awareness of relational, polyphonic music. Bach was not interested in speculating about non-material theories.

And like Bach I run my practice through ACG ⇨. I always want to be fresh with life. The Flash part of Elvis' formula is the best part. It is the Vajra, the lightning bolt of Indra, Lord of the Gods, the Devas in Vedic scripture. It is Zeus's lightening bolt. It is Thor's Hammer. The Vajra is a part of the energy of the manifestation of the Goddess within the tradition of the ten great wisdom

Goddesses in Vedic cosmology. The flash is the instantaneous precipitation of qualitative alteration in the material world. This is the Vajra, the flash aspect that has been a part of the kind of spontaneous automatism that I practice through ACG ✨ . <https://amitray.com/vajra-nadi-the-divine-path-of-manifestation/>

AUTOMATISM AS A PROCEDURAL DRIVER

Practicing ACG ✨ creates the apparatus in which to expand human physical performativity and relationality. Both are essential future survival skills. Every move and every succession of moves matters more than ever. We are living in high-stakes times. This means that to maximize physical performative flow in relation with the Universe, to all things and in every environment, it is incumbent upon us to find ways to develop practices that support this connection. Automatism practices like ACG ✨ promotes a condition of knowledge and trust in Universal corporeal performativity through relational dynamics.

ACG ✨ is a form of performative stream-of-consciousness. It is a way to go “swish” as my grandpa Austin Philips says, who played sports all his life, and he’s referring here to making perfect shots in a manner where there is flow, harmony, and relationality of performative action in the apparatus of a sports event. Maggie Nelson, through autoethnographic style in her book *The Argonauts*, describes her concept of the process of creativity as “flicker, flow” (Nelson, 4).

During my graduate research I have found that there are artists who have embraced Automatism in various ways. Highlights range from my Serbian family’s folk-art in cushion and clothes embroidery of rhombus and plus sign inscriptions, to Buddha, to Bach, Jack Kerouac, Susan Rothenberg, Agnes Martin, Jimi Hendrix, Jeff Beck, and Jimmy Page: flow, trance-dance automatism is a part of all their practices. I continue to gravitate towards artists that practice their craft with the dynamic of allowance in their work, which is about relationality. It is about working in artmaking where energy is perceived as having its own agency and consciousness and is related with co-agentially to make art through my body. ACG ✨ is a way that I make art in balanced partnership with energy where we both unite. I have been particularly interested in watching the practices of artists who position their practices as performance artists who make material things, like the work of my advisors Peter Morin and Doug Jarvis, and artists Jonathan Meese and Paul McCarthy.

I have realized that ACG ✨ is also a healing methodology that I use to transmute and sublimate the effects of my corporeal impressions and expressions into meaningful discourse. Automatic art practices are a way for me to deal with the energy in daily life. My research is concerned with tracing and studying recurring automatic processes used by creators throughout time that develops and evolves conceptual and performative aptitude in the practitioner.

SKILL ACQUISITION PROCESS IN ACG ⚡

The process of skill acquisition comes through practice over time in trying to meet the form of a standard, while simultaneously practicing non-attachment to forms, which means not straining or grasping for results. Skill acquisition involves practicing, at times, at one's gradient edge of ability. I improve my musical skill by starting to play all the notes as I encounter them in the *Sarabande* and the *Sarabande Double* from *Bach's Partita No.1*. Doing this repeatedly leads naturally to playing phrases with groups of notes together that start to define meaningful chunks to me. The notes set down then start turning from being a confusing mess of visual overwhelm, or at best, from a marvelous pattern into sound that has meaning that I am unlocking through the act of reading-performing. The sound is the written code of notes set down and the vibrations moving around me. I am activating Nature's discursive coding in note patterns. It becomes meaning that is moving, the sound being at once surprising and familiar.

I participate in Bach's musical discourse with agency when I play his music. Listening is also an act of agency in discourse. Attentive participation makes resonant the discursive message. Reception is an agential act. Relationality is co-agential.

Automatism appears to always involve the action of reading. I am either reading through perceiving my location, or I am using my imagination to read vibrations from another location, or I am doing both at the same time in some capacity. Automatism is about existing at the gradient edge of self-evolution where we fully operate in non-attachment to outcomes. If I need to play a guitar in an improvised rock performance, I am going to be reading in my mind the chords of the song, to consider what note options I can place with them, and then to automatically improvise original responses to the song for each performance of it, all the while leaving notes in the wake of this action for people to listen to, without being attached to them.

I keep reading and performing and letting go of whatever happens from this action. It is like surfing a wave where the aim is being in the fulcrum of momentum in the action. Letting my actions be as they are without altering them further allows them to become measurable from my fresh, uncensored response. I want to be transparent about the energy through my body that makes the marks in my work. The automatic act of reading-performing is how I remain unattached to my art creation practice results. I keep balancing myself into the lean of the action. When my practice is functioning well its fruits are abundant, sweet, and good.

PROMINENT QUALITIES IN ACG ⚡ PROCESS

CCSS – Considered Cognitive Space in Succession. It is assessment, measurement. It can become analysis paralysis when unbalanced. **CCSS and ACG** ⚡ **dynamically revolve** around and through each other, causing movement and manifested emergence to happen. CCSS is the void and ACG ⚡ fills that void automatically, instantly, in a flash.

Trying to not Repeat Myself – Trying to not Repeat Myself

Resting State – being open to respond, to relate to what’s happening with you through relating, what’s the exchange dynamic in your relationality.

Ideathesia – Danko Nikolic, he asks on his web page “What is really happening so unique in our minds during creation and consumption of art that is not happening during any other mental activity?” (Nikolic, 2022). Ideathesia - where concept, and corporeal sensing merge, where ACG ⇌ and CCSS become cause and effect for each other, and what is on the liminal edge of consciousness starts to merge into manifested existence through trance dancing performativity.

Perception - using ACG ⇌ for examining how illusion functions, to find what qualities happen in materiality, to test one’s own projection, using your illusion / suspending disbelief, taking someone’s word for something to your own benefit or detriment. Taking your own perceptions for something, believing everything you think: total **nightmare**of suspended disbelief (!). The 9 of Swords card in the Tarot is all about mental anguish. Balance thoughts through balanced breathing, balance breathing with balanced thoughts.

Making for Healing - dealing with OCD, ADHD, PTSD, and trauma, making art to deal with trauma. Repetitive physical movements inducing trance states in the body release the mind from **cyclical thinking**. It may be possible that when J.S. Bach became orphaned at the age of 10 that he turned to music with great fervor to sublimate his trauma. Repetitive physical actions make for less ability to think much at all. The mental coordination for repetitive tasks, however menial, keeps filling the mind instead of focusing negatively on the past. Therefore Master Huineng in *The Platform Sutra* stresses the primacy of taking corporeal action over thinking alone to succeed in life (Pine, 90 – 94).

Obsession is a major component in my practice, where I experience healing in life, through **rhythm**. It is in my beating heart and my breathing. It is waving to a friend. It is about being fully interested in something.

Proliferation - being prolific involves more performance skill becoming automatic, and this leads to greater leverage for each creative gesture.

Making art from the not “I” position – The poet Charles Olson formulated this phrase circa 1950. He was teaching Cy Twombly at Black Mountain College when he replaced Joseph Albers there as director, and Albers began to direct Yale’s art program where he would teach Eva Hesse. Whenever one runs out of ideas fresh perceptions can be sparked through relating to sources beyond ourselves. Diffractive relationality processes become involved in the art making to garner qualitative data, which can be done in collaboration through using regulations to produce qualitative material effects from the relational energy of the event. Relating causes collaboration, more compromise, more possibility for surprising relational occurrences to happen, more diffraction, which cause qualities to manifest in materiality. **The apparatus for events is the measuring device of material qualities.**

Relationality - the Buddha and his friend the venerable Subhuti say to each other in the Diamond Sutra that **there is no self**. Bodhisattvas who live in the Dharma ending age, which is today, live with no walls in the mind, and are therefore free. The idea of self is to have walls in the mind. (Pine, 31 – 40, 58). Everything is always a part of the Oneness (Rasha). Since our

bodies are in relation with their locations, as well as places and times that are extra-local contemporary locations, extra-local locations, as well as memories or prognostications - which are parts of the Oneness of everything. We are always in Oneness, and we are always connected to parts of the One. We are always in relation, even if it is with objects around our bodies, even with the air. Being in relation with things precludes the self as something that exists outside of relationality.

Automatism - where skill, performance experience and knowledge are operational **instantly**, where ideas and responses come from beyond the self alone, through energetic connectivity between everything, where unpremeditated responses occur which yields novelty, variation, the natural, the subliminal, the subconscious, channeled action, reflex; and reading, which is observation-projection, action-measurement.

Intuition - means using the body to sense, feel with **the heart, gut, and brain**. We use these areas and our entire bodies to perceive and know things. The chakras relate to the endocrine system. Feeling with the whole body, the spine, and **not just the fingers, the eyes**, and “the mind”. Using more of the body opens a lot of flow in the creative process, and likewise, limiting and hemming-in the body makes for a constricted energetic flow during the creative process. With the body freezing, the quality of the art’s materiality, imbued with performative energy, ends up suffering as a result.

Craft - Craftsmanship – corporeal proficiency comes from selflessness, from love and devotion to the entirety of the craft, **learning something on its own terms**, of its own traditions, being of beginner’s mind in relation with it, no thinking, just doing, allowing results to happen.

This connection may come from love of the use of the tools, it may come from the performance of the action of the craft, as well as a love for what the craft is all about, its philosophies and origins, the knowledge to effect **specific material results**. To get good at guitar, yoga, anything, you must make it a part of your life. Skill and craftsmanship well developed are inevitable results of devotion. Bhakti is the yoga of devotion. Getting results you want from actions depends on the level of craftsmanship that you need to do the task, from the music of Bach to Eric Satie, to Frank Zappa.

Approaching the practice of art making as a motivational device de facto builds skill and proficiency in the act with the tools; where instruction in how to practice comes, in part, through practicing, and not only in theories about the craft. Genuine **enthusiasm** needs to be involved for devotion to be effective in actions. To expect great results from artmaking, from playing guitar, from yoga, you must fully love it, and possibly be obsessed with it, but not necessarily. One lives and is what they love. This means practicing something daily. Everyone practices an array of things daily. What do you practice?

Craftsmanship - implies historicity as processes of craft develop over **multiple generations**. The consciousness of craft is transgenerational.

Interdisciplinarity - is a hallmark of Renaissance times as being a part of scholarship at its gradient-edge of growth. In times of interconnectivity, where information is shared,

interdisciplinary activity deepens and widens. At the same time, so does the expertise in individual fields. The evolution of interdisciplinarity invariably evolves specialization.

Invention and variation of form is discursive. **Discourse** is absolutely everything, it is the **Logos, the Word**. Anything is always discourse. Existentialism is about points of view on the matter. Everything is meaningful. **We exist to relate through ourselves, though discourse.**

High-art and Low-art – Bach and Dowland were both inspired by and used folk music in their work along with counterpoint. They often mixed them together, taking older tunes and putting them through counterpoint. Some consider jazz as high art, rock as low, country music as high discourse and metal as low, and electronic dance music to be the absolute, best, and only kind of music that matters.

Feeling your body - The artist Alberto Giacometti says that he basically **works more and more for the sensation that he has while working**. The painter Lucien Freud, grandson of Sigmund Freud, says that painting is **habit-forming**. ACG ⇨ is about making the research and the creative act like this.

A mindset that leans predominantly towards **the actualization of one's desired results that come from one's own force and intended design** may feel insecure in Automatism because they may feel too much out of control in allowing things to happen not on their terms alone. But then, in the flow, it is not about control like you think; it is about union with your body and the energy, like a horse and rider working together.

The actions in ACG ⇨ can be **plumbed** in the **after-event**. This is the time for contemplation about what happened. This is the time to be impressed by what you did, to project into what you did, to really know it; full awareness of one's performative actions. Next time you strive to act better.

ACG ⇨ thwarts **boredom** through the enactment of excitement in creating meaningful material. Boredom is thwarted by action. Actions **evolve** the gradient edge of a practitioner's physical ability, expanding performative aptitude and experiential capacity.

ACG ⇨ results in **an inevitable aptitude** in craftsmanship. It is devotionality towards the gestures associated with performance practice. Through playing Bach's music on my guitar, my arms and hands and fingers become ever more proficient in articulating musical sounds.

Studying Bach's works are a turn in my practice to a more crafted kind of music, one that stems from traditions that are practiced in polyphony and counterpoint, using techniques developed and practiced by multiple generations of practitioners. This is a more relationally **subtle kind of crafting** of music.

In transcribing from standard keyboard notation to standard guitar notation, you must project and see the notes from the bass clef into the treble clef. **Suspension of disbelief** is used here to see notes on the staff differently. Ambiguity tolerance is a part of advancing through the successive levels of the crystalline development of the art.

From the Diamond Sutra, the Buddha says “The idea of a dharma, Subhuti, the ‘**idea of a dharma**’ is said by the Tathagata to be **no idea**. Thus, does he speak of the ‘idea of a dharma’” (Pine,59). Learning the rules of the craft, becoming proficient at asana, doesn’t automatically mean that all problems are solved. Life is not a mechanistic game where the right prescription wins the prize. Life is about relating, now. ACG ⇌ is a way to practice being in the moment and making the right moves in relationality.

Through **performance repetition using ACG** ⇌ I learn the dharma, going from darkness to light, and back to going from light to darkness. To make appropriate performative gestures, authentic gestures, I can’t prescribe them beforehand as much as I have to custom-make them as they are encountered afresh in the experience of the moment with attention to how they fit into the flow of the apparatus. Practice what you love. Memorizing chord formulas is tedious, but it supports and expands my ability to engage with music. It helps me wail. “I wanna wail.” People used to ask guitarists in the 80’s and the 90’s, can you wail?, like Van Halen???

We always produce discursive material automatically. The question is about how safe we feel when we invent and vary to use more of our bodies in doing so, with more senses involved more often in the process. **Automatism is used in writing a script**. Any source material that is brought in before beginning writing involves spontaneity during the materializing process. Automatism is always how emergence of form occurs. We may keep saying that we put plans in place, but our enactment of them is always done automatically.

Recording a spontaneous idea constitutes an automatic act. ACG ⇌ is about getting into the rhythm of the performance. It is entraining to the energy level you need to do the performance. To achieve this involves entering a kind of trance state. I think of the **Giant Slalom Skier**, up at the top of the hill, before the starting gate, and she is building up her psyche to comprehend that what she is about to do is an extremely precarious performance, because her life is on the line. She must keep being automatic while she is flying down the hill. If she starts pondering what she’s doing, she’s toast. She can only think about what she must do to keep performing, which may sound/feel/seem to her as thoughts that say “go, react, adjust, keep, find, go, whoosh, soar, down, push, level, keep, go, lean, lean, resist, stronger, go, soar, land, relax, swish, yes, yes, yes, done.” This is not thinking about anything but being physically responsive during performance; it is thinking and acting at almost the same time, to the point that it feels automatic, but is about being well prepared. It is existing in a supernal bionic state, where you unleash your latent performative corporeal potential. It is bionic dynamism. The **Automatic Corporeal Gesture in a Flash** is a performance process that uses perception and action appropriately while in an apparatus, to maintain physical balance, integrity, and momentum during the event.

Automatism can follow scripts during its performative trance-dance. Going with the flow can easily become method acting if you become skilled at **using your illusion**, suspending your own disbelief. Method acting is just practicing a lot and doing it in public.

What do you allow to happen **in your perception**? How do you allow your perception to function?

Sometimes entraining oneself into seeing the world through the eyes of the performance sticks around after the performance. When interviewing hockey players at halftime, they exhibit a middle state that is transitioning between appropriate energy levels for the performance at hand and the performance that they were just in. The shift involves an alteration of their rate of physical vibratory oscillation. These players are speaking to the reporter while they are still in the physical state that they had to be in to play the game. Their breathing must change from skating on the ice to standing and talking. In these half-time interviews they are always slowing down their bodies from their previous state. It appears that they are so often saying the same thing in the same way. This is noticing their **pronounced performative qualities** in situ. We watch them cool down as their bodies adjust from being appropriate for a faster-paced apparatus to adjusting to the parameters of a slower one, with their heart rates coming down after skating on the ice. They catch their breath as they speak. If we are watching this from a screen, we are mostly likely in a very calm state, and we feel their heightened energy markedly.

Automatism is trance work. It behooves the practitioner **to be able to transition well between consciousness states**, between different maintained sustentions of oscillatory levels of being. Being is perceiving, and oscillation of vibration affects the resolution of perception.

Automatism like ACG ⇄ is like how the Blues are often created, where you **sing and invent your song spontaneously**. The inventing and the performance are influencing each other as they happen at the same time. Here the performer is a juggler. Actions must be done on the fly to get very fresh gestures, to get out of your head, to stop thinking, stop overthinking, and to just respond. ACG ⇄ helps me perform and create with economic simplicity. I end up saying what I mean as if I was talking to a friend. There's always a script. It is inside, it is outside, it is everywhere. And when you follow instruction like a script, you still must **breathe life into it**. Life happens to you, and you must happen back to life. You and life must happen together. Meeting the mark alone rarely ever cuts it: you must **exceed the mark**. You can't just read the script and expect magic to happen. You must bring your imagination and consideration to the words. It is not about magic-button words, but about the physicality and action that succeeds in performing in its apparatus. Automatism comes in here and helps you realize the magic that will make your art **sparkle**. It comes from your heart and your whole body.

Fearlessness - ACG ⇄ is totally about performative fearlessness. It can be about operating from a concept-first position, which can even be through a simple concept, as in using a script with lots of room for improvisation. Every apparatus always has definitive parameters. Apparatus and parameters, and even tools, end up being the same thing. Every action involves concept and intuition.

This is what I bring to my yoga and guitar practice: I do what I can every day. And to grow my practice, to expand the gradient edge of my capabilities, I must be honest and accountable with **measuring** out the amount of force I must apply towards the action, to realize how much will-power is needed to complete the gesture of daily practice. Daily practice grows and changes over time according to the practitioner's developing corporeal capabilities, according to adaptation in changing life circumstances.

Many Bodies in One – Corporeal and physical as a definition in ACG ⇨ includes any of **the vibrational bodies** that intersect my material body: my mental body, my spiritual body, and my emotional body, and others, however they express themselves through my body, through nadis and meridians, through the peptide/receptor network.

Anamnesis – the anamnestic in healing is considered a part of the function in bringing the fragmented pieces of yourself back to you after experiences.

Automatism is **not chaos**; it is not being out of control. Control is never relinquished in being spontaneous. Automatism, through trance, connects you to whatever vibratory discourse for which you have and develop an aptitude, which can be more complex or simpler than languages that are currently used. Chaos does not only exist in the way that it seems to be ubiquitously understood, as synonymous with terrible, wrong, wreck, mess, disaster, deconstruction. We cannot conflate in anything our inability to comprehend it with the certainty that it has no meaning. Everything has always only ever been meaningful.

Preparation for action may be threefold. At its primary and most available level it involves what you already have going on in you when you decide to act. Next you can perform from recent preparation for your action. Then there is preparing for a longer time before you act which ends up placing you in the first position of acting spontaneously when you decide to do so. To **act or not to act**. That is the only question. To keep an action going once you start it, especially if you are not used to acting in an apparatus, you must do a lot of improvising in the moment for what is next most appropriate. A functioning apparatus is more realistic than expecting perfection.

We act from what we have learned, from what is already automatic in us. ACG ⇨ is a way to practice variations of what we already know as well as what happens anew in every performance situation.

ART LIFE BETWEEN 2000 – 2020

I studied at the Dell'Arte School International School of Physical Theatre from 2001 - 2002. Carlo Mazzone-Clemente and Jane Hill started the school in 1974 in Blue Lake, California. Carlo was the first person to bring the Commedia Dell'Arte masks from Europe to North America. Before residing in California, Mazzone taught in Stratford Ontario when he first emigrated from Italy in the 1960's. The professional actor training that I received at Dell'Arte continues to have effects in my body, and influences how I approach performance, trance, physicality, gesture, and how I gather qualitative/empirical data.

It was at Dell'Arte that I first encountered the term *physical theatre* and learned of actor-created theatre from traditions where this dynamic functioned, as in the Commedia Dell'Arte theater tradition with its roots in ancient Europe, going back to the Etruscans and before. When a group of actors that create material together is tight, they can perform with supernal

flexibility, strength, and aptitude. They needed to be able to improvise to maintain and shape their connection with their audiences. They needed to have ready storehouses of theatrical material that they could activate together instantly. This is how the Commedia Dell'Arte theater tradition evolved to be able to function, by being actor-creators, where they were always able to commune with audiences in a custom-made and deeply meaningful way. Between 2003 – 2013 I worked for a month each year at *Talk Is Free Theater* in Barrie, Ontario, directed by Arkady Spivak. The 13 shows that I acted in were all built from actor-generated material, mostly with director Aleksandar Lukac and some recurring fellow actors. We improvised to create material and used extant texts, customizing and adapting them with our inventions. Generating the material that we acted allowed us to commit fully to its performance. Working this way provided a wonderful glue to the connection we all shared, and it made our work very strong.


I retired from theatre in 2013 to deepen my practice and study of painting and guitar. I need to keep going with the gesture to establish the dreams that my heart wants to realize in performance this way. I could never fully let these interests go, though I have tried. Stagnating in their activity gnaws away at me. I decide what I really want to develop. I must clear the limiting programming that I have accepted over time. I had not noticed that I accepted limiting beliefs. I clear them out now and give myself a tune-up after a long run, as it were, only to continue the marathon.

Going into acting gave my family the impression that I was not serious about my art school training, that I was being a dilettante, though after every show my whole family was happy with the work, as well as the many people that attended. That buzz evaporated soon after the show run ended, in about a week. People showed their appreciation. I was not attached to it, and I neither liked it nor disliked it. Nevertheless, I felt that I needed time to integrate the skills and theories that I had been exposed to in my undergraduate studies at Mount Allison University in New Brunswick from 1995-1999. My father's passing in 1999 probably made me retract in ways that contributed to me taking care of my personal needs the way that I did, going at the pace I did in my process, which was slower than rat pace.

Slowness is a discursive quality that is pronounced in Doom metal, Vaporwave and Hypnagogic Pop. I have been keenly aware of music's language from my earliest years alive. It has been a way for me to contemplate principles in Art. Between 2015 - 2017 I deepened my guitar studies through Berklee Online in their Master of Guitar Certificate program. I currently continue working to be able to implement what I learned during my training at Berklee. The learning curve is especially steep with guitar, and music in general, but the process becomes more fluid and automatic with practice in time.

From 2000 – 2010 I was painting mostly spontaneously in figuration. I would set up a medium-large hand-stretched canvas, just like I would do in my BFA, and prime it with acrylic gesso. I also began working more on linen as well as canvas. I bought a sturdy studio easel. During these years I would mostly just paint from what I saw developing on the canvas from automatic marks that I would make first, with the intention to work figuratively, and I would develop the image as I saw it to be evolving before me from my automatic marks. In hindsight, my body and its

performability is always a theme throughout my work, and I study it through art, theatre, yoga, and music.

In *Quantum Lisa 2012* (See fig. 3) I had a mounted, PVA sized, primed and Masonite board that I placed on the lawn behind my house. I poured some paint onto this substrate. I wanted to work quickly but had to negotiate with roofers who were putting new shingles on my house at the time. My wife and I were newly married. This painting emerged spontaneously, with no conscious preconception or plan, and in part through performing painting as a practice, concerning its craft and process. This is an early instance where I was deeply inside of and working in ACG . I poured the paint on the substrate and pushed it into place there on the flat Masonite. I used a thinner medium for this first layer of paint. I used a palette to mix the narrow range of colours I used here, but only a little as I ended up mixing the paint somewhat directly on the substrate, pushing and pulling the painting into formation with a paint brush. Working at a brusque pace helped me remain unattached to what I was doing. It helped me refrain from judging myself while in the painting action.

The painting *Quantum Lisa* emphasises the qualities of my performing body, its dynamic physicality, during the performance of its creation. This physical state of the creator is a source of qualitative/empirical data that is of no less value to that which is gleaned from observation of my local environment, as is exhibited in my en plein air paintings like *Hummingbird Circle* (See fig. 5). My painting practice is enriched by accommodating both modes of recording perception. Both modes also include each other in themselves, seemingly invariably to a greater or lesser extent.

In 2006 I also made paintings from laser prints of internet images. This was one way that I was experimenting with making paintings. I was looking at the work of Dana Schutz, and Daniel Richter who were also doing this at the time. My interest was concurrently deepening in the artists Raymond Pettibon, Jonathan Meese, Tal R, Luc Tuymans, Francesco Clemente, Lucien Freud, and Peter Doig. Richter and Doig were painting from inkjet images made with spent cartridges which created lots of fades and “failed” deposits of intended colours. Painting images from inkjet prints of low-resolution/higher distortion is a way to insert more chance affect into my process. I am drawn towards the interpolating and extrapolating effects that distort the vibration signatures of forms, like an overdriven tube amp signal of an electric guitar.

It was between 2007 and 2010 that I started to wonder if my marks were too generalized to sustain the extended meditation that I was doing on my paintings. I started to feel that I could be more accountable and responsible with the way that I was making pictures, putting paint on surfaces, and presenting images that were resonant in ways that was discursively worthwhile. People seemed to like the show I had in Kensington Market in 2008, though afterwards I felt that I was filling in the canvas too quickly in those pictures, which resulted in generalized mark making, and that this reflected the energy I was bringing to my practice. I connected generalized mark making to generalized perception, which I thought was something to check. I was concerned with the optimal functioning of my perception through my senses, considering

especially how my perception affects my relationality. It is incumbent upon me to perceive to the best of my abilities for the sake of all my relations.



Figure 3: Quantum Lisa, oil on Masonite, 2012.

IN NATURE, THEN BACK TO THE CITY



Figure 4: *Brad's Tree*, acrylic on canvas, 38 cm x 26 cm 2011


Great invention and variation is in Nature. I painted this picture in 2011 after having lived in the Boreal Forest for a year with my wife (See fig.4). In paintings like *Brad's Tree* I am making marks like the discursive patterns of the tree, carefully painting it as it is, on its terms, noticing its details and its subtle nuances and registering them to the canvas as they were and not as I imposed any alteration of my own projected on it. I am perceiving something real. My own bias inevitably precipitates into the form of the piece. I sat on the forest floor with a bug net over my face. All of this made for a picture that I found that I could meditate well upon.

After painting this tree I worked for the next ten years predominantly painting from my local environment in semi-local colours. Using non-local colours in my pictures is a way for me to relay discourse in my art symbolically and poetically. Non-local colour choices may or may not correlate to actual locations extra to myself and its surroundings. *Hummingbird Circle* was made over a period of one month. For this image, I sat down in the garden everyday with my dog Buddy beside me, as he has been for all my work since 2010.

I remember ikons growing up. Ikons in the Serbian Orthodox Christian tradition are windows to the other dimension where entities like angels exist. I have ikons from my grandfather and my

great grandfather, which he painted himself, who was a Milos in my family before me. My father used to chuckle about how my great grandfather painted this picture of Archangel Michael wearing traditional Serbian shoes, opanak, with the turned-up leather horn at the toe indicating, by variation, what region people were from in Serbia. Serbian Orthodox Ikons are engaged with in a meditative way, and they are seen to be windows to the spirit world that were meant to be meditated upon.

Ikons are painted showing the opposite, related dimension to which our world is connected. Therefore, the light is coming from Michael's shimmering clothes and body instead of it falling on his body as it does in our reality from an external source. Here Michael emits light through his body and his clothes.

When I paint I am mostly thinking about performing the activities concerned with painting. The conceptual considerations in my practice are sometimes worked through while I am making art. Performing my practices helps me to kick the habit of cyclical thinking, like worrying. ACG  has helped me reflect and articulate my insights about these embodied practices in my past, and future work.


I find it noteworthy that the painters Lucien Freud, Alberto Giacometti, David Park, and Philip Guston returned to painting from life and figuration after engaging in automatic, surrealist and abstract kinds of artmaking. Richard Diebenkorn and Henri Matisse kept going deeper into abstraction but with strong figurative sensibilities, Pierre Bonnard was painting from memories and dreams; his late works display extrapolated forms that exist between figuration and abstraction, as if they were exploding with light from within. Susan Rothenberg was painting like this in the 1980's. I attempted painting with marks like this, informed by ACG , in my series *Peripheral* from September 2020. Chaim Soutine's painting inspires me. He painted the world around him in a very energy-filled way. The energy in Soutine's painting explodes the forms that he is witnessing.



Figure 5: Hummingbird Circle, oil on canvas, 122 cm x 92.5 cm 2014

The Hummingbirds drank from the Bee Balms. I painted them instantly when they appeared, posing in the air, they leave fast, then I painted them from memory. Their circle is also in the Hydrangeas. The scene kept changing, and I had to renegotiate placements and forms on a regular basis, especially on the right side of the painting in the

Hollyhocks. The quality of image distortion here is caused by time passing. Dealing with this kind of discrepancy that I must somehow make up for in my process is related to my interest in obfuscating turns in discourse. Here I am dealing with this sort of painting process which includes discrepancies and ambiguities of a shifting scene.

This picture shows how ubiquitous and varied the shapes are in nature of the rhombus and the plus sign; it is the amplituhedron expressed holographically in a living environment. It is visual counterpoint. This geometry is woven through existence in fractals of intersecting materiality. It took me years to see that there is a big rhombus in the middle of the picture from top to bottom, consisting of the Hawley Hocks, the Hydrangeas to the Motherwort. The plus signs are throughout the scene, in the intersection of foliage, as in the bottom left in the negative space between the grasses and the flowers and shadows, where four dots relate in a way to define a plus sign between them. The rhombus is made up of two chevrons, and chevrons are plus-sign halves.

MEDITATIONS ON PRACTICE

One kind of plateauing in practice makes me wonder about how to breakthrough to new momentum for fresh results. Another kind accompanies the loss of physical ability from sustaining injury. Too much energy run through my body, blocked, expressed suddenly in movement can result in physical damage. A warmed-up body prevents things like invasion from the cold, which stiffens the tissues and increases the possibility of tearing to occur.

To stop practicing is not necessarily a safe thing to do. Practicing without pain is smart, and healing takes time. You need to practice what you can do to retain physical tone, which prevents further injury, and to continue healing. Keep living, keep loving, keep practicing. Strength, flexibility, and aptitude is a daily practice. All our practices eventually become seamless activities in our automatic living.

A person can be in a co-agential relationship with something like yoga. It is the same with music, painting, and performance, where the practice negotiates its own conscious agency within the bodies of the practitioners, both currently and through generations of people. Yoga is alive through its constituent members. Everybody and everything's intrinsic relationality and its effects are more ubiquitous and deeper than is defined by consensus reality. Relationality needs requisite tension and ease between its discursive members for energetic flow to occur within the apparatus of performative events. Tension and congruence occur between corporeal biases negotiating with the energy deployed in each performative apparatus.

Letting go of disappointment is eschewing cyclical thinking; worries, fear about the future, replaying the past. It is incumbent upon me to know how to heal. Corporeal functioning must happen. As Bach says, everything must be possible. I take this to mean that our thoughts, everything about us is connected to reality, and that what we are is in relational context within Oneness (Rasha). We realize dreams. My cycle returns to where I pick myself up again to find a way to continue growing in life. This growth is what ACG ⇌ helps me achieve. However circuitous my path in life may become, I always go towards a sense of home, though sometimes taking the scenic route instead of the direct path.

RESEARCH PROJECTS USING ACG WITH RESULTS

In 2020 I returned to drawing vortexes, big body gestures to loosen up, and I can see what kind of discourse I can run through my body. I painted strangely, obliquely, weirdly, emotionally, experimenting with convention and invention.

Mark making is the incarnate transmission of vibration. The intimacy in this action is the connection between an impulse to act and the consideration of one's body in relation to self-imposed parameters. The mark is the record of the performance, it is a symbol for discourse. It speaks to the quality of the performing body making the mark. This is empirical data, qualitative data; how the body moves. It is a cause for discursivity. This quality in marks can be used to develop discourse in the same way that qualities perceived through corporeal senses and made into marks are used from environments extra to a performing body as qualitative data. The qualities of movement of the human body and its marks speak to us about our human condition, about corporeality and about its perception of qualities through/of itself and through/of its local and extra-local environments.

In every performance the energy brought to the event is run through something material. Bodies that run energy through themselves start to become altered qualitatively through their relationship with the energy. If I played the game *Jai Alai*, the high-speed court game where players use a prosthetic whicker scoop on their arm to catch and relaunch a hard rubber ball back to the wall, my body and senses would develop to support the regular and concerted use needed to make the requisite performance happen in the court during matches. The relation between the material body and the energy for the event appears to be co-agential in that they can affect each other qualitatively. The energy embedded within the performative action causes effects in materiality. It may also be the case that the energy I bring to my performance is qualitatively affected and impressed upon by my body's physical state.

The energy goes through the body, through concepts and actions, through tools and substrates.

In performance, a costume, corporeal attitude, or persona as artist Paul McCarthy uses for his work in this way, is what the performative energy is also put through. Staying in the demeanor appropriate for the duration of a performance is like staying within the rules of counterpoint where the performer is allowed to move within the parameters of the diffractive tool being used in the apparatus of the creative event. The apparatus, the parameters and the diffractive tools for the performance have a strong connection with each other in that they end up defining through effecting materially what happens in events in similar ways. Picking five colours to paint a picture sets parameters on the vibrational range of expression that I can achieve.

During the past two years of my MFA research I have been reading-performing Bach's music as my primary text. This is influencing my other practices by proxy.

ON PAINTING AS A PRACTICE INFORMED BY ACG ⇌ : LIMINAL, CORPOREAL, PERIPHERAL, BILATERAL

<https://milosh-rodic.format.com/>

In the series of pictures on my Format webpage, *Corporeal*, *Liminal*, *Peripheral*, and *Bilateral*, I am using four ways of perceiving in my painting and using ACG ⇌ as I understand it to function in my practice.

The names for the series are inspired by the artist Eva Hesse, and how she named some of her works, like *Metronomic Irregularity I*, *Addendum*, *Accession II*, *Ingeminate*. Titles like these often came from her reading practice. I resonate with this language, and using it in ways that insert obscurity, obfuscation into the discursive of my work. It reflects how I feel about how it is difficult to understand reality in 2022. Reality has become harsher during COVID lockdown times. Speaking about it directly exacerbates the pain of the circumstance. The world is in turmoil. Inflation is happening. Major ministers resigning. A sense of pending doom has permeated everywhere.

I also like Hesse's more prosaic and colloquial titles for her pieces like *Hang Up*, *Right After*, *Expanded Expansion*. They reflect how people talk, almost euphemistically, with specific meanings for words and treatments of phrases that must be learned as they are not readily decipherable. Slang is a kind of discursive code that must be learned before it can be comprehended because its meanings are specific and decided upon by its living users.

ON CORPOREAL

In this series I am perceiving the magic and poetry of my location. I feel that all the pictures in this series have a pervasive vacuousness throughout them. I think of the Surrealist painter Renee Magritte's painting of a room filled with a giant apple, or with a massive rock. I feel that kind of gravity in the objects that I paint in this series. In their inertia they are simultaneously dematerializing, blending in ephemerally, falling-in with and dissolving into their environments. Looking too closely, the image dissolves because of the plasmic factor in the way I deposit paint. It's paint blobs, it's thinned out, it's smeared, it's wet on wet.

Using distorted signals has appealed to me since I first was exposed to rock music, which was in 1980 when I got the 7" single of Blondie's *Call Me*. The guitar sound on that piece of music was one of the first songs with distorted guitar signal that I could listen to repeatedly on a small record player that I had. The dynamic sound was very compelling to me. It sounded tough and bionic; bionic in the sense of a human body with leverage, not replaced with machine parts.

Orange amps have my favorite kind of tube amp distortion for electric guitar. It has harmonies and overtones in its signal that results in what company founder Chris Cooper calls an orange sound, synesthetically speaking. To me it sounds like it has texture that is mellow and tactile.

Musician Stevie Wonder was one of the first major enthusiasts of Orange amps. Orange amps have since also become one of the most preferred Doom metal amps. Guitarist Matt Pike of

Sleep prefers Orange's Dual Dark amp, featured on the trio's 2018 release *Leagues Beneath* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=06sw1MnOgZ0> Orange's overdrive distortion is like sonic wafers. It has texture to it, which correlates to the reasons why I like paint and painting. Music and painting are the same kind of art for me. They move me and inspire me in the same way.

I call this series *Corporeal* because I feel that these objects function like bodies, with agency, autonomy, and consciousness. This belies my proclivity for Animism and pre-Christian Serbian culture.

ON LIMINAL

In this series I am using images from my 2021 drawing practice, which was performed daily on an 18" x 24" Canson 1557 pad with Zebra ballpoint pens. The pads were big enough for me to make marks that involved a lot of my body, not only movements at the tips of my appendages.


Emptiness and sparse materiality are also themes in these drawings. Liminal refers to the place on the edge of perception that is between the material world that I see and other worlds that may permeate into this one. Glimpses occur. In my drawing practice, in an ACG way, I feel that my presence and my perception is at a liminal edge, between worlds. My body rhythm while drawing, the way I am breathing, helps make this happen, altering the vibration of my body's material, altering my perceptive state, tuning in through corporeal vibrational frequency to another vibrational dimension. Perhaps it is here, in this liminal space, that emergence into form and dissolution into formlessness occurs.

The drawings in *Liminal* were made within a few months of the *Corporeal* paintings. The forms that are described are fragmentary. These silver and goldpoint images are traced projections of my ballpoint pen drawings. The paper was prepared first with Poly Vinyl Acetate sizing because I wanted to fortify it to prevent ripping. I put coats of Golden Silverpoint ground on top of the PVA on the paper substrate. I used 3M Velcro wall hangers to mount the paper on the wall where I drew on the paper. I traced the projected images using a 0-gauge sterling silver wire for the first, third and fourth images and a 0.5 -gauge gold wire for the second image.

This series shows my influence from working in a photo lab. I am using a digital projector to enlarge drawings, treating them like film negatives. I am using silver to realize the enlarged version of the first drawing like how I used to print on silver paper from black and white film negatives at Mt. Allison University in Thaddeus Holownia's photo lab; through which I saw so much of the world in the mid to late nineties.

The first two drawings are the largest, and they were both initially done with my body channeling the energy differently. In the second drawing I kept my drawing arm in an unbending pose, and I drew with my body concertedly held like that. I put a curb on my gesture. I diffracted my energy through a semi-rigid body. I held my upper body still and moved at the waist to make the marks.

Using a pen is how Paul McCarthy and Susan Rothenberg often practice drawing. Using a tool that makes a small mark, like a pen, like metalpoint, makes me move my body more to make substantial forms. I must put a lot of energy to get a little result with ball point pens in drawing. The same is the case with yoga and classical music. It is the equivalent to working with Fender guitars and their single coil pick-ups, which have a thinner electrical signal and require more performative effort from the player to make good sounds.

The face in the first silverpoint drawing looks like a Plague Doctor's mask from Commedia Dell'Arte. It is reminiscent of the film that I made on October 9th, 2020, called *Doc Doc* where my partner and I both in character deal with the themes of the emergencies and restrictions surrounding the beginning of COVID lockdowns. This performance demonstrates the ACG  process. We did not rehearse this piece. We showed up ready to put our specific intentions through the props, masks, costumes and personas that we designed for the performance. Megan made the masks and we decided to build a piece around them. Like in a Commedia Dell'Arte show, we knew where we wanted to go with the piece, and we showed up to activate it, to make the event happen. We were not concerned about whether we would succeed. Doing the piece accomplished our goal. It came out just right. We each brought our own plans to the table to perform in the piece. We worked together while performing through our masks, our personas, like two independent melody lines in a Bach Invention, responding to each other's actions with spontaneous responses as they occurred in the piece. We were emulating the way Paul McCarthy works in collaboration to create expressionistic theatre, and in diffracting automatic, performative improvisation through persona, props and set. This is a more exploratory kind of approach to theatre. <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/470679050>

ON PERIPHERAL

It is difficult to tell what the images are in this series. It is understanding reality by taking experiences poetically at face-value. I am intentionally extrapolating or interpolating the forms of the image, distorting them.

Every successive colour I use describes an energetic-material field that permeates and builds the scene. These fields are inter-woven with each other, forming a reality. I observe and then set these fields down, in paint on paper substrate. Successive colours that go into the picture relate to the previously set down fields. This is like Bach's counterpoint of polyphonic music, where each voice has its own agency and relates from its position as vibrational-texture body in space to other vibrational-texture bodies. Distortions end up influencing perceiving the form where successive marks build around previous marks and perpetuate a mutation. I am thinking of artist Jay DeFeo's *The Rose* 1958 – 1966 which was painted/sculpted in this built-up way. (<https://whitney.org/collection/works/10075>) <https://seeallthis.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Jay-DeFeo-NY-Mag.jpg>

I am facing the scene I am describing here, feeling it through my peripheral vision, feeling it obliquely, through that perceptual circuit. In *Liminal* in the second drawing, I put a curb on my physical gestures I held my body in a semi-rigid fashion and drew like that. Here in *Peripheral*, I

put a curb on my visual apparatus by allowing myself only furtive, cursive, oblique, sudden, short-lived glances at the scene I was painting. This, at least, was the attitude I brought to my activity.

My first approach was with watercolour, using a wedge-shaped brush which holds plenty of water and has a point for details. The watercolour helped me connect to the scene in a playful, low stakes, and easy-going way. I then went to gouache, and I carried the fresh physical energy from the watercolour approach's initial pass. I brought that energy in to the next phase where I built up the image while now looking at the scene as well as looking at the kind of distortion that the marks I made on the paper perpetuated in the scene. I ended up using the gouache liberally perhaps because the watercolour usage set a precedent working style.

I wanted to with an imposed filter between me and the scene, a blocker, an interference pattern. I was experimenting with ways to see my immediate location with not only my eyes. In limiting my vision, I would exercise my other senses in reading the material and vibratory nature of my location through my body. I made this happen by moving and connecting my brush with the substrate faster than in *Corporeal*. With faster comes a requisite momentum that is generated from the way I dance a performative song through my body.

The overlay of the fields in this series has a loose, distorted quality to it. Every successive field perpetuates the mark placements of the previous fields. My successive passes at the painting respond to previous passes, and the image is built-up in layers this way.

When I gaze at my work, I find myself scrying into it. Divination is happening here, which is about relational discourse with the Universe.

Automatism may be frightening to go with as a process. You merge with the apparatus system, like a horse and rider. This is the groove of the automatic flow in trance dance. Automatism involves extrapolating one's corporeal energy into its local and non-local environments and interpolating the environment within one's corporeality. Relationality appears to occur in this way between bodies, spaces, and places. The merging acts as sprocket and chain, tongue and groove, cogs of wheels synching-up and moving together, and we deepen our connection to the Oneness, becoming more intimate with it. We merge ourselves with information, inspiration, and we ground it into our materiality.

ON BILATERAL

The images in the *Bilateral* series emerged after I showed my pen drawings to my advisors that I was making from July onwards. These were later works in the same series of the drawings that I used for *Liminal* which began from a daily drawing practice that I began as a performance/research/practice endeavor in December 2020.

It was in the *Bilateral* series where I realized that making paintings from drawings is a good practice for me. I can communicate my pictorial discursive more affectively going through this refinement process. There is a consolidation of discursive intent when I work from my drawings to make paintings. The process involves a crystallization of the message in the pieces when I

make decisions to refine my automatic output. It is another layer on the crystal of my corporeal discursive, formed in gestural succession. Working this way, I feel surer of what I need to do, I can relax into the process. This stage is much less stressful, or at least differently stressful, than the initial stages of creating an image.

I paint from direct, relationary gesture to the next direct relationary gesture, the sequence becoming linked and knitted through energetic momentum. I want direct relationality between my gesture and the rhythmic connection of the performance happening through the tool and the substrate. This translates into allowing the way that my marks occur to remain unchanged from extra alteration. In *Corporeal* the oil paint was thicker, like in the crystal ball picture where I ended up using more impasto. Here in *Bilateral* with acryl-gouache, I used Turner matte medium to cut the paint, sometimes in proportions with more medium and less paint to make it thinner.

I find value in painting like Lucien Freud, through extended sessions, returning to the same piece and working on it continuously over days, months and more. I also like painting in one session, like Luc Tuymans who feels that his images must be completed within the day they are started, or they will never work out. It is important to consider how the state of the body affects the unity of accumulated marks on a substrate. This speaks to how the marks have a fresh discursive feel throughout the piece.

The images in *Bilateral* were derived from listening to my body for information, cues, direction, impressions. These images came to me primarily as imaginative, mental images. The experience may have also been informed through combinations of my physical senses and my extra-physical senses of my imagination, inner-vision, second sight to using clairsentience and clairaudience. At those times, my senses may be engaging with this world or something else. I drew these images first with a pencil on index cards in 40 minutes (See Appendix A).

The colour choices for these images came also through intuition, asking the Inspiration what colours these images are to be. I kept these thoughts in mind to refer to and I also made choices during the painting of the images. The first image that came to me was the fourth one as shown on my Format webpage; the pink one. The colours and the atmosphere of light in this picture are close to the image that was in my mind. There is lemonier/orange to the sky in my original conception that I will, like Agnes Martin, keep trying to realize in accordance with the inspiration. This image reminds me of some of my favorite Renee Magritte paintings, from his series *The Empire of Light*. Magritte experiments with concept through atmospheric effect in this series by making the sky as daylight and the street scene below to appear as being in the nighttime.

There is a bold simplicity in these images. Nudie Cohn's embroidered design on his suits have this same quality. Leonardo, the Renaissance artist, would call these cartoons. I think that the bold, essentialization of an image helps to project it more clearly.

The painter Agnes Martin waits for an idea and then creates a painting from an initial drawing of her inspiration. She makes a painting from the drawing of her perception of the piece's first inspiration. She resists any new ideas coming in to alter piece. In her 1997 interview she

stresses the importance of being true to the inspiration after receiving it (Smith, 1997). I used the same process for this piece. I had to resist altering the images after I received the inspiration.

I diffracted my drawing through the stipulation that these images must be bilateral to relate to the bodies of the viewers of this work. I tried to draw them as I perceived them, in my mind, through my body, however it made me feel, however I could register the impression of the information from wherever its source may be. I simply asked the Universe with my heart for ideas to make some paintings. When I drew them I tried to only respond to the inspiration.

There is a consolidation of discursive intent when I work from my drawings to make paintings. I find that I can communicate my pictorial discursive with more clarity in a refinement process like this. There is a crystallization of intent when I make decisions to refine the work made during my first performances for a piece. Self-editing is a part of this refinement procedure. Becoming better at this aspect is a part of my current process.

The images for *Bilateral* as they are on the website are arranged in 3 groups of 4. The first four seem to have a balanced energy to them, the middle four have a more vivacious energy about them, and the last four have a cooler energy. In Vedic thought, this is the equivalent of the energetic states of sattva - balance, rajas - action and tamas - entropy. The images may also function as representations of the twelve zodiac signs, with the top left image being Aries, the image to its right being Taurus on to Aquarius and Pisces as the last two pictures.

ACG PERFORMANCE WORK

Physical performance is a major aspect in all my work. In 2020 I decidedly framed all my practices through performance. I studied with Peter Morin in my second semester in an independent performance study. He considered where my practice was in 2021 and suggested that I explore the work of artists Agnes Martin and Bruce Nauman. This created common ground between us and led into meetings with Doug Jarvis. The subsequent discussions between the three of us have prompted me into further study of Paul McCarthy's performance as well as deepening my exploration of the work of artist Nam June Paik. Peter and Doug are helping me become more aware of contemporary performance art as well as how to use performance through different mediums. They encouraged me to continue developing and defining the kind of automatism that I have been using, and in doing so, I have become more effective in growing my current practice with more leverage than before. Self-awareness is a major component of the leverage power.

In my piece (*I am*) *the Son of Dad* 2021 I explored the meaning of father, son, and masculinity. I did this through vocal repetitions and variations of the title, exploring a kind of trance state through repetition.

In my piece *Political Hand* 2021 I looked at the hand gesture language of politicians in contemporary political theater. I watched their debates on YouTube, viewing the hand language

of Americans and Canadians, like Chris Wray, the head of the FBI, and Ted Cruz, Republican representative, and others. I presented them to Peter during one of our sessions silently. I read often from Zeami's performance notes (Hare) and began studying La Pocha Nostra (Gomez-Pena) during this time as well which led me into studying contemporary politics more deeply.

I have begun using my performances as foundations for subsequent pieces. In my film *Doc Doc 2020* I emulated for the first time Paul McCarthy's performance method where he performs through a persona, in collaboration, drawing or making art of some kind during the performance, as well as making art afterwards allowing the initial performance to influence subsequent work. I remembered my own performance in *Doc Doc* as well as how my partner performed and made drawings afterwards inspired from these memories of our performance, copying the energy through my body making drawings afterwards.

ORANGE, CARAMEL AND CHERRY RED HAIR

I grew my beard during the majority the time of my graduate studies. I made a performance about cutting it in early 2022, calling it *Beard Cut Piece* after Yoko Ono's *Cut Piece*. Taking corporeal qualities away with scissors accentuates physical vulnerability. This became work that led to understanding more about my corporeality and its identity. The pheomelanin in my skin and hair makes me a redhead. Both my paternal and maternal grandmothers expressed pheomelanin. My moustache grows in a russet orange, my chin hair is cherry red. My head hair is more caramel, bronzy brown. The brown is the melanin, which I have. Northern climate redheads have evolved to produce less melanin.

I learned through art historian and researcher Jacky Collins Harvey, in her book *Red A History of the Redhead*, that there are over four hundred different expressions of pheomelanin in humans. Mosaicism is the sort of redheadedness that I express in my body, a southern climate kind, expressing a range of pheomelanin concentration with melanin to tan for sun protection (Harvey, 23).

ON TUNING

In this solo performance I engaged in hardcore cyclical thinking and became attached to outcomes. It seemed like the right thing to do at the time even if I knew that it sounded like a bad idea. I started obsessively compulsively checking material qualities during the creation process. I am measuring while I am performing. I realize now that I was going through healing that had its own trajectory. I opened what felt like an energetic wound that I had to heal.

I have a high metabolism body, and it changes frequently from day to day. I have never looked this closely at myself before. The more I looked, the more I saw variations, and I was becoming increasingly aware of how often a body can wave, as it were, through different expressions of

materiality, even from day to day. I had never really noticed these kinds of precipitative material shifts occur so frequently in my body.

I stopped this work because I started to feel like Paul McCarthy's piece of two eye holes cut out of cardboard, suspended from the ceiling by a string that you can look through, showing that we are our senses, and that our materiality is not constant; where I am not really my body at all, but the conscious agency that senses through it.

This piece activated deep healing in me. I found that through this project I had developed a prolonged difficulty in distinguishing between my own projections and the actual qualitative state of material reality, which in this case was my body, which changes frequently and drastically, especially when wondering how I am the same as I used to be.

ACG ⇌ SONG MAKING

Using ACG ⇌ imbues my song creation, its structure, energy, and words with naturally occurring irregularities in the pattern throughout the material of the piece. I am using automatism in the first stages of song creation.

I created fourteen songs in about three weeks in February of this year 2022, acting without strain. My challenge is to keep staying loose enough to receive an idea and to keep responding appropriately and automatically with my body to what is happening. All my Bach practice is improving my improvising skills. Becoming a better music reader happened incrementally since July 2021. By October I could see that I was making marked improvements as it took less time to play through more of the *Two-Part Inventions*. This happened through being committed to showing up every day to practice, doing what I can, as my yoga teachers used to say. It made the practice path very enjoyable. I was always in the moment in each session. The practice became less thought oriented and more automatic over time.

ACG ⇌ song making is a way I can find fresh corporeal gestures. I am singing and playing and creating everything on-the-fly. This puts natural action through the musical discourse that I know to refer to, that is already a part of what I know how to say in music, as well as whatever may be new to me. The guitarist of Motley Crue Mick Mars has said in recent years that he is not trying to reinvent the wheel when he creates music, but that he might come up with a slightly new combination that is compelling and inspires him to create 3:25 – 3:35 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZNk3eQWK-w>. Mars offers insight from minute 6 till the end of the video on how he plans to write new material and compare it to public tastes, especially when it comes to negotiating his own growth as an artist as well as pleasing his fans.

In this series, am getting into arpeggiation and playing flurries of note clusters in ACG ⇌ fashion.

7 Crystal Connection <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/679855275>

I am eager to make this into a song by taking it to the next level, just as I did with *Bilateral*, where I took the first drawing and make a crystalized next, refined version of it. I am going to do that with these songs. They are initial blueprints that I will use as templates and references for next stage works involving ensemble instrumentation and multitrack recording.

8 Compulsion <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/679858373>

This session demonstrates how using the Fender Telecaster guitar affects the way I perform. The sound that I get, the feel of the instrument in getting the sound, it all affects what kind of song comes out. The second part of this session extends the motif that I was working with in session 3 <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/679371229>

9 Tarot Online <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/680694464>

This is the sound of Rockabilly that Jimmy Page brought to Led Zeppelin. It is what I love about Elvis Presley.

Through ACG ⇨ I am making up music on the spot. It is spontaneous. It is instantaneous. I get better at it through regular practice. It is natural, it is fresh. It is Rock and Roll, it is vajra lightening, ACG ⇨ .

12 <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/681662917>

This piece has a lot more complex discursive formulations here, and excellently performed at times. It is a longer composition and features many major and minor 7th chords.

6 for Westlake and McGoeys <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/679609769>

This is an extension of the lyrical developments from session 5 which was from earlier that day. I am talking about two of my friends who left their Earthly bodies 20 years ago. I have recurring dreams about them. ACG ⇨ helped me automatically deal with my feelings about my friends. I healed through making this piece about them.

Eye contact with the audience through the camera is important in these pieces. Working more in video has come through discussions with my advisors. Recording these in video has helped me in evaluating the sound of my work, as well as in helping me be more aware of myself as I appear when I flow in ACG ⇨ .

ACG ⇨ made fourteen song sketches in about a half a month, that all have noticeable discursive relation in motives, themes, and variation throughout them.

ACG ⇨ is a method for physical leverage. If I can make an album of original material in 14 days, at least the basic template for it, then if I had to make a thousand songs for a piece I would simply start using ACG ⇨ like I have for these songs, and increase my lean into the practice in time, starting to do more sessions each day every month. It is like adding weights to your repetitions in building strength and endurance. In some months I would be able to

produce even more than 14 pieces in this amount of time, because I'm in tune with the process at a greater level. I am interested in peak performance artmaking.

My grandfather liked the pre-Christian bard tradition in Serbia. He enjoyed telling me about it, and we listened to it together sometimes on cassette tape. The Guslar, the bard, would recount epic legends in drone singing style using an instrument called a gusla. It is a one-stringed violin-banjo-type of instrument that the bard plays while recounting epic stories. Singing songs and playing a guitar is one way that I am connecting to my pre-Christian Serbian roots in the Bard tradition, and although I have lost touch with the symbols and the surface discourse of those traditions, my genetics carry the experience and the memory from the places and times where my family has been. It is good for me to be aware of the past. I am here now, and I must deal with the discursive modes and patterns that are used today. I keep returning to rock and electric instruments as well as acoustic instruments. I love rock and roll. My grandparents often speak in parables, and they used to say "Ko peva, zlo ne misli": those who sing think no evil.



Figure 6: Serbian Opanak are Serbian traditional shoes that are mostly worn by folk dancing groups today. People were wearing it in the 1970's in villages as regular, every clothes. I remember these as shoes from the 1970's, and I associate them with happiness, and singing, and accordion music. The ancient three colours of red, black, and white are represented in the socks of the circle dancer above. The motivic shapes of the rhombus and the plus sign are in the knitted design. The plus signs here may be depicting a body with the half rhombus shapes representing the energetic pulse and flow around and throughout the plus sign corporeal forms, linking them in the circle dance.

My ACG ⇌ songs also exhibit exactly what I was going for through this process, which is unique motifs and variations that relate to the discursive modes that I am operating in, and ones that come from what I have already remembered in my body, and from wherever else they may derive. ACG ⇌ song making shows what I will create when I must do it instantaneously as a daily practice. The product may not seem as crafted and polished as a piece recorded in a studio, yet it contains compelling content, or there may be subtle nuances of new syntheses in the material that can be used very well to make a new work. This ACG ⇌ process forces me to make whatever I can generate work as music.

Learning counterpoint is going to give me new creative techniques that I will mix in with ACG ⇌ song making practice. I have acquired two recently published texts that teach counterpoint through Bach's *Two-Part Inventions* by Martin Lohse.

THE REALTIONSHIP BETWEEN PERFORMANCE AND DRAWING

Whatever we put our performative energy through affects that energy. This is the case from concept, choice of colour, parameters for working, to the choice of materials. It diffracts the performative gesture. Paul McCarthy diffracts his performative gestures through a persona. The process is further diffracted through collaboration with another person who is also putting their performative energy through a persona, interacting freely with McCarthy like that, sometimes for up to 15 days in a row or more with everything improvised. McCarthy has worked increasingly in these extended performance runs, spanning days like this as his career has progressed. Zeami's Noh performance structures also embrace extended performance timeframes. This deconstructs keeping information in smaller, more bite-sized cultural artifact nuggets so common in today's MSM, Mainstream Media.

Simple scripts may be devised beforehand through prose, poetry, whatever; loose is the energy, free flow. Especially with McCarthy, since 1974 from his piece *Stand-Up*, when he was using more and more+ mayonnaise and ketchup in his performances, that he says everything changed for him. Flow. "Flicker – Flow" is how Maggie Nelson describes a performative energetic sequence, from *The Argonauts*, and she thinks Paul McCarthy is a good artist (Nelson, 4). There is a spontaneity to action-response in relation to what ignites it, which can come from inside your body, from your body's location, or from the extra-local.

The empty void is what McCarthy puts upfront during his performative state. The void was in his sculpture Dead H, and H is for human, which is a sculpture from early in his career. It is a square tube metal H on the floor, empty on the inside, larger than human size. McCarthy comments that you can never get to the center of the H, that there is a void in the middle.

ACG ➤ RESULTS IN BACH AND PERFORMANCE ART

Playing Bach slowly and precisely builds my ability to play fast when I improvise. I do want to keep the two approaches alive in my practice, of learning music technique in a contemporary way, like through scale pattern memorizations, as musicians practice in rock, country, and jazz. My music practice will be focusing on continuing my Bach studies. The two paths build skills. Both are needed to be most effective for building my practice going forward.

The energy spirit of the whole intention and performance of the action is important to notice as that energy is related to qualifying the material involved. The meaning in the material and the performance must be in the ineffable devotive love of their practice, and there are no words for that, only about technique and process, but the love of it is in the fruit of the actions of the daily performative practice. Dynamic propulsion through time is the important connection between successive actions in generating and building momentum during the performative gesture.

In playing Bach I am finding that the notes must be linked together with effulgent energetic expression, which has momentum to it. This is connective propulsion in the notes produced, played together with dynamism and the right crescendo and diminuendo as becomes any current of embodied discourse.

The most intense Bach music that I have encountered is from *The Art of the Fugue*. Christoph Wolff writes that “the initial focus of the project was centered around contrapuntal theory in general rather than the technique of fugue in the narrower sense. Bach in fact pursued in the collection the core idea of using the vehicles of fugal design and fugal technique to exemplify contrapuntal processes. This procedure is confirmed by his later designation of the individual movements as “Contrapunctus” rather than “Fuga.” “(Wolf 291)

ACG ➤ AS A PROCESS FOR READING BACH AND DOWLAND ON GUITAR AND LUTE

(Sept/Oct of 2021) I just sat down and automatically and instantly read and played the Allemande Double from Partita No.1 BWV 1002. The first pass at this music took me about 7 or 10 minutes, or less, and I only played the first half of it, to bar 12. I then played through it once. I tried it again, and I was surprised to see the music making more sense to my ear and surprised further that I was playing it like I would like it to sound, my precision, energy and momentum were even better this second time around. I had the sense that I was activating it well. It sounded good at parts when I was playing it. The third time, more of it sounded like “it should” to me, I was unlocking the message in the discursive on its terms.

I was not thinking that I was going to play it better this time. I just tried to play as best as I could in that moment. Bringing the notes set down into living discourse is compelling. There is unattachment as to how it should sound because to hear it at all is for me miraculous and full of novelty. To unlock the discourse from static potential into activated vibrational existence, I

must focus on the notes and identify them by name and move my fingers to where the notes are on the fretboard; and there are different areas where the same notes are on the fretboard, unlike piano where each note is only found once on the keyboard, which is another step of negotiating corporeal locality for guitar players who can pick between about 3 locations of the same note frequency on their instrument. Therefore, I think this may be in part why Zeami called song and dance as foundations for the performative arts, and even all arts. Like in the Tarot, the Fool card, 0 in the Major Arcana, a song and a dance are the first tools that we have for living and for embarking on our journeys. I used to say dance the instrument when I was a child and my grandfather Danilo would laugh that I said it that way, when I should have said play the instrument. I said “igra” igrati – to dance when I should have said “svira” svirati- to play (an instrument).

It is peculiar that people do not mostly perform aloud what we read. We mostly practice reading silently. And with music it is far less common for instrumentalists to spend most of their time reading music silently instead of mostly playing it. Bach knew that it was not going to be a ubiquitous reality in his time that most instrumentalists also become composers. He discouraged people from going into composition if they did not show a proclivity for invention.

It seems less common for musicians nowadays to just pass written music to each other when sharing ideas than to share live recordings of their performances of their material. I would like to see a culture where musicians share their musical ideas in written form as much as they do through recordings. Peter suggested that I revisit Joni Mitchell and Herbie Hancock’s music in July of 2021. In his Masterclass video, he recommends developing the skill of being able to write music without an instrument. He also urges musicians to explore the work of Maurice Ravel, the Impressionist composer from the 1800’s. I first hear Ravel’s F sharp string quartet in high school and loved it. I think that my lyrics in my ACG ↗ songs have Joni inflections, like in song 6 Policies where my lyrics are like Joni’s conversational and political discourse. Bruce Cockburn is like this too and I have listened to and loved many of his albums. I remember hearing Bruce and Joni’s and Herbie’s (*Rockit*) music on the radio in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s. Herbie’s song *I Thought It Was You* from his 1978 album *Sunlight* makes me sing and dance. They are voices from that time that people heard back then. The art we make ends up being what is left from the times when we were alive. Art marks and defines our culture. It is the most precious thing. It shows that we exist.

It was in part after hearing Herbie Hancock suggest Ravel’s music, as well as getting to the point of writing music without an instrument, that I decided to make a daily practice of Bach’s *Two-Part Inventions*. The causation sequence was Peter to Herbie and Joni and Ravel to Bach.

John Dowland was the English composer, lutenist and singer, who lived from January 2 1563 to February 20 1626 (<https://www.bornglorious.com/person/?pi=207355>). He played the seven-course renaissance lute which involves an excessive amount of insanely wide hand stretching. I am practicing his piece *Lachrimae*. The fretboard hand, my left, stretches took me about ten passes at the music to start to make some discursive sense of it, even just to be able to make the notes sound, to stick the hand postures; because of the high string tension on the lute, more hand strength is required playing the lute than the guitar, especially in barring many notes. When I start practicing the lute, I must build my hand strength for it up again. I have

never even conceived that a fretboard hand could be asked to do such things as in the 7 course Renaissance Lute. But like Bach told his instrumentalist Kirkenberger, who grieved to Bach that some music Bach had written was impossible to perform, Bach responded “All things must be possible”. He believed that people can develop their physical performative abilities to do what they needed to do through their instruments.

No Mind means no preconceptions which means no limitations from any held views. The Buddha says that bodhisattvas live free because they have no walls in the mind. I use this approach in finding out how to play my lute.

In ACG ⇨ applied to playing Dowland, how do you, using the researcher Karen Barad’s suggestion of diffractively reading texts through each other, how do you play Dowland through ACG in a flash? I keep showing up every day to try. There are a thousand reasons why it is not a good idea, but I keep moving towards it within my physical limits. Forgoing injury, I recover, and I practice the next day. The skill becomes more incorporated through practice.

This practice involves me making my left hand to become larger over time. I am actively distorting my own body so that I can perform an action through an instrument. I do it to connect with the lute, the music, and the person John Dowland. I learn the lute to connect through musical performativity in materiality with the late 1500’s and early 1600’s while in 2022. This is time travel.

ACG ⇨ AND WHY I LOVE BACH NOW

It takes a lot of whole-bodied energy to play Bach on the guitar. I have been playing with my playing hand, my right, in a different way, without nails, and by pressing down on the strings with my playing/string-sounding hand with the pads of my fingers. This is one of a variety of ways to make the strings sound with fingers without using nails. I am pressing the strings like they are buttons, dancing freely and loosely with my hand while doing this. It seems like it would not be possible to do this if you just thought about it without trying. Consensus reality amongst most classical guitar players is that you must sound the strings with nails. However, it is possible to play with nail-less fingertips. There is a plethora of ways to use nail-less fingertips to sound nylon guitar strings. The lute approach to playing works very well, flicking the strings using the sides of the fingertips beside the nails, through rotating the wrist with lifting and flicking.

This nail-less technique has increased the range of dynamic and tonal sonic results that I can get on a guitar. Nails have a limited range of sonic expression. My personal approach to “classical” guitar is playing a flamenco blanca guitar. Its thinner body accentuates the mid-tone sonic range of the strings. Mid-tone frequency is range that electric guitar players often prefer and isolate in their sound. One way to do this is to use an Ibanez Tube Screamer foot-switch pedal, which was on a preponderance of recordings from the 1980’s.

If everything is discourse, then everything is the body. The Buddha says there are no separate selves as we are all in relation. Hence there is no self, other than the Oneness. Huineng in the Platform sutra urges people to use their bodies, as through our bodies we find everything. It can build on other bodies’ discourse in the way that as I am a body who emerged later than Bach I can nevertheless learn and promulgate his music. Bach wants people to activate his discourse today. Bach designed the publications of his music to simultaneously function as pedagogical texts. They are training manuals for performance and knowledge in music. He designed them to also be marvelous works of art, of science, of research, of sonic exploration, of mysterious sounds.

I played the first four movements of the *Partita No.1 B minor BMV 1002* today so far. I have again never seen this music before, yet I can play through it. This activates great joy inside me. It is abstract sound, but I feel like it is a story, or a message with meaning that I have become exposed to through reading and performing it. It is like watching a movie, reading a book, and having the story stick with you afterwards, through your body. Art takes you to other realities while you are also in the reality you were in before you encountered the art. Heaven on Earth is making or thinking about art.

By just playing the *Two-Part Inventions* for half a year, everyday, with magnetic obsession that came from my heart, very much musical development has occurred in me. This activity automatically continues to improve my sightreading skills. I did not try to become a better sight reader per se. My aptitude for automatic performance of the material is more of a process of gleaning through exposure, by proxy. I find that practicing reading music is fun to do, and takes no thought once it become automatic reading.

When reading Bach, performing it, activating it, I am blank, and I do not remember much afterwards. I can start playing instantly upon seeing the music and having my guitar in my hands. Dharana, which is a yogic term for inward turning focus is happening here when I focus on reading the notes to the point of excluding anything else. This process forces me to be in each present moment of every sounded note.

I feel great freedom in Bach’s music. I am turning to it with such fervor because it is totally about the music, not about being signed to a record label, looking cool and playing huge shows. It is about activating and sharing musical discourse in a live performance setting, like domestic ones, and public settings that are not designated as such but work well nonetheless for concert activity.

INSIGHTS IN WORKING WITH ACG ⚡

ACG ⚡ is a healing process where I can transmute and sublimate my feelings into discourse that can be shared. The materialization of discourse feels like a crystallization process. Making meaning through Art and Research is a way to make life into something for which I have an exponentially expanding joy every time I practice.

Making art is a major part of how I realize contentment in life. The same concern for flow is what I was talking about in my thesis research proposal that began this work. What I was in large part focusing on developing in my drawing practice particularly was the right application of my corporeal energy during the performative process so that I may get the kind of fresh, natural, vivacious, living quality to my performative gesture set down in marks. In Samkhya philosophy from ancient Vedic times, the cause is the effect, they are one and the same thing, and so the body's state is part of what causes the marks to happen the way they do. Cultivating my body's ability to perform Bach, and Dowland, is one of the most challenging and most rewarding, not to mention most bewilderingly captivating paths I have ever walked. I become more into performing music through reading it every time I practice. This fills my life with great meaning. It is the same for me with yoga, painting, writing because I have trained myself over years of repetition that I do indeed live and grow through these practices.

Presenting enigma, paradox, insinuation, and suggestion in my work makes it more challenging to know how to read its message beyond these qualities, if any such qualities are there at all. Nonetheless these are ubiquitous themes of COVID times. It is strange to present discourse that functions in crypticism. It resonates with audiences in the same way as do mystery stories. My work endures suspension of comprehension which has been the prominent quality of our world climate state since 2015.

Being attached to the completion of a piece during its creation can cause too much stress and halt the creative flow. There are many ways here to sabotage the process. You start to fulfill your own lack-destiny. The more you look and do not see what you want, the more impatient you may grow to not see the empty space anymore, and the more you drift away from letting the result you may be happy with occur and instead go towards making marks be what you think you want them to be, in accordance with how you think that the Big Picture wants you to make them. You are doing what you think you should be doing instead of doing what your heart, gut and mind really say. You're operating from a root position of erroneous fear, which instantly sucks life out of the performance.

Areas of a picture worked on in this way may then become rushed; you're not connecting with your activity but instead what you think you should be doing, of just accomplishing your goal. Self-tyrannizing of one's own performance is happening here. Energetic and material stifling is occurring through worrying about what must happen. Confidence needs to be brought to the table. Choosing to drop out of character at this point is perhaps believing that the apparatus is measured differently than it was when you were in the courageous energy of engaging in performativity within the apparatus. It becomes easier to do nothing at this point, to retract and play it safe. Then nobody will single you out for doing a big mistake. That would be the worst, because it is linked with social ostracization, which results in being an outcast from

society. Better to do nothing. It is safer, easier to make nothing. Then nobody will blame you, and that is better than trying and failing, which is inevitable. Such may be the thinking when falling into fear.

Excessive generalization seems to occur when acting locally and thinking about the Big Picture, instead of acting locally, being concerned with the local, and seeing how the Big Picture happens through it: how the local connects to the Big Picture. Bringing power-worship deference into the creative dynamic kills its flow, because it makes it all about fear.

Even though I, like everybody else, have inherent bias, which is in the definitions of my corporeality, I am nonetheless compelled to relate. Relation does not preclude imperfection in discourse, in its meaning or in its delivery, as it also never ensures that communication is pain-free. Bias is needed to measure the proportions of each relationary context. It gives definition to the discourse shared, just like how dark areas do a lot in defining pictures with much light in them.

It is incumbent upon us to bring our specific corporeal definitions to our relationality, bringing ourselves as we are to the work and experience at hand. Painting and drawing for me are about exercising my empathy in relating to internal, local, and extra-local environments.

Sometimes I will just mix the first colour that I am going to use and go paint. Then I'll mix what I want to paint next in the picture and paint that. At other times I will begin by first making several colour mixes, and then just paint. I must remind myself that I can make songs just like I make pictures.

The objects in these painting are things and tools that my body uses. They are everyday items I treat poetically. Painting from observation helps me to make art from not the "I" position alone because of the relationary scrutinizing that happens between my environment and myself when painting. From an animist perspective this is an act of communion.

I treat painting as a performative practice. First mark is best, then it is on to the next until the piece is done, with revision and checking at the end. I approach music creation this way. I continue using fresh marks even in successive stages of refinement of ideas into fuller works.

The shapes of reading glasses recur as a motif in my work, as is shown in my series *Liminal*. The glasses are the spectacles of the Plague Doctor's mask from the Commedia Dell'Arte characters. This motif also becomes lemniscate forms in my pictures, infinity symbols, which is also a propellor, a twisted ouroboros, a DNA and RNA ladder. The propellor is in my paranormal film called *Corkscrew Angel* 2020 on my Vimeo channel. I do not know what this propellor entity is in the video. It looks organic to me but not from our world. It looks like a phantom. (<https://vimeo.com/484990140>).

Our heart beats cause a toroidal field to occur around our bodies, whose center is a void. Our heartbeat is a mark that is made by our heart, which is a tool of physical body existence, and the heartbeat is the middle of the lemniscate, the point of contact where our bodies as tools contact the material substrate of vibrational existence. It is through our heartbeats, as points of

contact with the existential substrate in materiality, who's other side in its point of contact is the place from where we manifest discourse.

NUANCE

Subtlety of nuance is the most effective element in discourse. It has to do with the Goddess Kali. The seed syllable of her mantras is Krim, which is the first electric occurrence in the Universe. Pulsing electric subtlety is the foundation and the propellant of the Universe. It is wise to utter this seed syllable mantra with great care, and to do requisite research before any performative attempt. Its effects are profoundly altering. Beware.

PRACTICE

Daily practice is the bhakti devotion of being in the Supreme Vehicle, as Master Huineng calls our practices, which is what our Bodies of Merit are built through: daily practice. This is where we see past our mind fluctuations, and into the depths of who we really are.

REFLECTIONS

It is noteworthy that when I started practicing yoga in 2007, I found correlations to how I understood drawing and art making to function. The way you get better at yoga is the same way to become better at making art.

The unrecognizable turn in discourse does not always signify a thread to follow somewhere. New and novel does not automatically mean good and favorable, like old and familiar is not automatically synonymous with being contemptable or to be unquestionable and taken as law. Bach developed further the hundreds' year-old counterpoint tradition. Jimi Hendrix took the old blues forms further. Both were criticized for using what was considered in their day antiquated discursive styles. The enduring qualities of their work and its merit have perpetuated their continued importance in today's discourse.

The Universe is inherently discursive. In life we explore for exposure to new and various discursive patterns. We relate what we find to what we currently use and know. Our bodies are the main vehicle for the registration of discourse through vibrations from within and from around our bodies. Considering vibrations carefully is important in being able to appropriately measure how to use them in performative experiences. Adequately comprehending our bodies

plays a key role in measuring levels of aptitude for engagement with discourse commensurate to it being transmitted well enough for the message to be received.

Automatism is where life always moves towards. Our technology evolves towards greater automatism. Our practices become our automatic skills over time.

When I questioned mark making in September 2020, and how I was painting to make marks, I considered that performativity was the place from where I was making all my art and research. This led me to focus on drawing in lieu of painting for a period. I wanted to put more performativity into making images that were able to clarify my discursivity. I went deeper into performance art projects. This experience has led me to a greater awareness of how my body relates and what it feels.

ACG ⇄ as a methodology is easy to use. In activating your wishes, you get what you want. It is a snap of the fingers, the Automatic Corporeal Gesture in a Flash. I have been finding that the process comes with deep change which can be very painful. The confusing thing for me has been in thinking that what comes up after I go deep in ACG ⇄ work is from other sources when, in retrospect, it was the deep diving into wherever ACG ⇄ took me that was really causing post performance pain. I used ACG ⇄ to investigate my body which led to looking into my past experiences and healing them.

It is important to ask yourself before using ACG ⇄ whether you want the effects of an experience. How far can you let yourself go into experiences, how far can you take any relational encounter at face value, and yet find a way to not forgo being able to pull yourself together again? We answer that question best ourselves. We are all responsible for our actions.

ACG ⇄ is a way to run energy through your body. The experience has healing effects.
ACG ⇄ is a way to get excited and motivated. I use ACG ⇄ to acquire knowledge about the qualities that experience has in my body, and to learn what that means. This practice increases my ability to be more responsible and accountable as a receiver and transmitter of discourse, which is the function of my relationality.

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