

# Ascending/Descending *Sonic Shadows:* Prologue and Tactile Reading Notes Fayen d'Evie & Lizzie Boon

## Prologue

*I want to point out that if we literally took about two steps... you'd be running into the old Botta staircase, which no longer exists... it was literally right behind us.<sup>1</sup>*

*I remember those stairs, I didn't quite register that they were all gone.<sup>2</sup>*

This coauthored text is both script and transcript, a circulatory writing process oriented through blindness and crafted through an embrace of syncopated time. Through the scripting and transcription of this text, writing and publishing is filtered through disability justice and vibrational poetics, blundering toward the development of an ethics of sensorial translation. Too often, disability is approached by the art world as an inconvenience to be evaded, or a legal protocol tangential to creative practice. Inverting this logic, renowned disability theorist Tobin Siebers refers to disability as “not a physical or mental defect, but a cultural and minority identity [...] capable of effecting social change.”<sup>3</sup> This text is offered as a provocation, arguing that embracing and critically rethinking access can expand the perceptual space of publication.

Artist and writer Fayen d'Evie advocates for the radical potential of blindness to expand the critical and perceptual horizons of artistic and curatorial thinking. Invitations to write for print publications present a political and ethical dilemma for her project, risking reinforcing the exclusion of blind audiences and readers from the ocularcentric art world. By positioning this text as both script and transcript of a parallel

audio work, the coauthors offer an experimental response to d'Evie's conundrum. By taking accountability for the creation of an audio version of the text, the coauthors resist and protest the persistent marginalization of blind audiences. Simultaneously, we exploit the print invitation to embed an invitation to Deaf readers to engage with a sensorial transcription of the sound works. This text is thus a proposition and a clarion call for radical publishing access.

The drafting of this text will script an audio track, one element in a sequence of ekphrastic reverberations that relocate the echoes of an encounter with *Sonic Shadows* (2010), a site-specific installation by Bill Fontana.

*Right now, we're at a quiet moment, but I've been surprised at how much the very directional sound will... reflect off the surfaces down here.*<sup>4</sup>

*We're standing underneath Sonic Shadows... On the same bridge is a large Calder hanging sculpture that is looming above us... From my vantage point, it looks like dinosaur bones.*<sup>5</sup>

*Sonic Shadows* debuted at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) in November, 2010. Live signals were fed from remote accelerometers to eight loudspeakers and four ultrasonic emitters mounted on mechanical arms on SFMOMA's fifth-floor oculus bridge, so that directional sound bounced around the atrium void. Most of the accelerometers had been fixed to pipes in the museum boiler room, to relay real-time fluctuations in flows of water in pipes of varying size and shape. A few accelerometers had been installed on the steel truss oculus bridge, to react dynamically to the resonant vibrations of visitors' footsteps. *Sonic Shadows* thus sampled and layered the active movements of visitors, as well as processes that are normally concealed from public view but which undergird the working museum.

*Yeah, there's the constant of this air conditioning... but then a softer sound... from Sonic Shadows... It sounds like something skating across a surface. Like, sliding across a surface, and it's very directional. It goes from here to here, here to here. And then I heard a car horn outside.*<sup>6</sup>

*The softest sound I could hear, sort of a murmuring that I assumed was human voices, but far enough away that it didn't seem that they were in any kind of proximity.<sup>7</sup>*

*Yeah, I also heard that humming... then there were peaks from the street. Somebody honking, the traffic. I heard some doors opening and closing, and then I also heard the sound sculpture as the next layer... and I could not go below that.<sup>8</sup>*

Among those who visited the inaugural installation of *Sonic Shadows* was blind architect Chris Downey, who shared his impressions in an essay published on the museum website: "Stepping into the SFMOMA atrium, we were greeted by strange sounds of dripping water, metallic pings, and intermittent clicks. Just as we thought we might recognize a sound, it vanished. Sometimes it seemed to travel right past, while others seemed to swerve somewhere near [...] Most interesting to those of us without sight was the way the ultrasonic beams bouncing off the walls demonstrated the shape of the architecture we could not see."<sup>9</sup>

*I thought about the Fontana piece and these skating sounds, and how they almost sound like... if you could imagine what the sound of like a flying insect would be... because they do have this sense of movement to them, and so to me... takes on like something living...<sup>10</sup>*

*I think I've heard... three registers of sound... air moving, the kind of rotation of sound moving from above, and then... the sounds behind what seemed like a wall, almost sounded like a TV... I was struck by the sound in relation to the space, sounds being inside the room and outside the room.<sup>11</sup>*

In July 2017, *Sonic Shadows* was reinstalled at SFMOMA for the museum's first large-scale group exhibition exploring sound in contemporary art. Co-curated by Rudolf Frieling and Tanya Zimbaro, the exhibition, *Soundtracks*, promised perceptual opportunities for discovering the museum's recently expanded architecture. The new extension was not a subtle intervention. It dwarfed the original building, nearly tripling gallery space and transforming SFMOMA into the largest museum of modern art in the United States.

Four days after the opening of *Soundtracks*, on July 19, 2017 — a Wednesday, the day in the week that the museum is closed to the public — Fayen d’Evie led a small, invited group of SFMOMA staff and guests in an ascending encounter with *Sonic Shadows*. The group included: then-Director of Collections, Jill Sterrett; then-Director of the Artist Initiative, Robin Clark; Assistant Director of Education and Public Practice, Megan Brian; Associate Media Conservator, Martina Haidvogel; Assistant Curator of Media Arts, Tanya Zimbardo; and photographer Don Ross. Among the guests were Chris Downey, local curator Devon Bella, and Georgina Kleege, a literary and disability studies professor from University of California, Berkeley. Kleege had been a close co-conspirator with d’Evie on a succession of artist-curatorial projects oriented through blindness.<sup>12</sup>

*Elevator: Going up.*<sup>13</sup>

*Let’s gather... along this glass wall... we’ll do exactly the same listening exercise... a couple of minutes of tuning into the sounds and their different shape and intensity from the loudest to softest...*<sup>14</sup>

D’Evie’s ascending score for the encounter with *Sonic Shadows* drew on echolocation exercises to train attention toward the quietest sounds. She gathered the group in the museum atrium and invited each person to listen for the loudest sound, to tune into its shape and intensity, and then put that sound aside, and listen for the next loudest, and tune into its shape and intensity, and then put it aside, and so on, and so on, until they were finally listening for the quietest sound of all. After each listening meditation, d’Evie passed around an audio recorder and invited each person to describe the sounds that they had heard. This process was repeated over five levels, rising from the atrium to the fifth-floor oculus bridge, so that the audio recordings would cumulate as a collective description of the ascending encounter.

Excerpts from the polyphonic description have been collaged into a series of audio tracks that have been published on *Re-Locating Echoes*, a hybrid virtual archive, exhibition space, and publication platform under development by d’Evie and sound artist Bryan Phillips.

*Well, the obvious sound for me is the sound coming from the bridge, Sonic Shadows. The very mechanical sound. Then tried to put that aside and then I heard a knock on the door, put that aside, and then heard someone whistling.<sup>15</sup>*

*I think that there's a quality of the sound that feels more fleshed out from up here... There's this kind of rowing and fading almost ringing, or sort of bell-like resonance.<sup>16</sup>*

The audio-descriptive sound work revealed that the expansion of SFMOMA's architecture, and the mechanics supporting the functioning of the new building, had vastly changed a listener's experience of Fontana's *Sonic Shadows* in 2017, as compared with its inaugural installation in 2010. In the wake of the perceptual displacements exposed by the ascending score, the curatorial team asked Fontana if a new title or year ought to have been attributed to the 2017 reinstallation. Fontana insisted on staying with the original, leading Zimbardo to conclude that *Sonic Shadows* "was much more open of a score than we had imagined."<sup>17</sup>

Speaking at a conference in 2007, Jill Sterrett proposed that "shepherding contemporary installations into the future — the complex negotiation between [...] a work's initial appearance and its extended life — distils down to mediating its variability."<sup>18</sup> Building on Sterrett's comments on incompleteness and intermittence as characterizing reinstallation, Tina Fiske has proposed literary translation as a method for conservators to consider the play between prolonged periods of absence and sporadic, iterative presence: "how might looking at translation ethics direct the conservator to recognise and avoid effacing difference, not least where it is generated by the periods of absence that arguably underwrite installations and certainly punctuate their iterations?"<sup>19</sup>

*Up here the swoosh-skating insect-like sound becomes more a part of like a forest sound, because there's many more sounds contributing to it, so it's much more dense and complex...<sup>20</sup>*

*There was that more consistent clicking sound that would go by, somewhat of a tinny, metallic clicking sound, which is pretty prevalent, then the occasional drip sound behind it...<sup>21</sup>*

If we consider Fontana's *Sonic Shadows* as the point of origin for a series of ekphrastic echoes, then d'Evie's ascending score offers a secondary reverberation. The audio-descriptive work *Ascending Sonic Shadows* can be approached as a tertiary reverberation to Fontana's *Sonic Shadows*, engendering new meaning while pointing to the displacements (difference) involved in any translation (reinstallation).<sup>22</sup> The audio track scripted within this text attends to a further reverberation: an artist book by d'Evie and printmaker Trent Walter, which experiments with translating the kinesthetics of the processual encounter and the sensorial process of the listening meditations into a tactile publication.

*That humming sound, or that ongoing kind of unbreakable sound that's recurring became more prominent... almost distracting from the other sounds. The kind of skating, moving sounds were there, but this humming became more impenetrable.*<sup>23</sup>

*When we first arrived on this level and all sort of lined up on a row in the overlook, I felt that the sound piece had become... immersive in a way that was welcome. It had a weird kind of ritual tribunal feeling to me as we were all kind of perched and leaning forward...*<sup>24</sup>

The materiality of the book took shape incrementally at Walter's print studio Negative Press, where Lizzie Boon works as an archivist and curatorial assistant. A few years earlier, during undergraduate studies in art history and curatorial practice, Boon had initiated a series of writing and publishing experiments, with d'Evie as mentor. This progressively branched into a collaborative professional relationship founded on complementary inquiries into the performative and expanded potentials of published space. Simultaneously, at Negative Press, Boon was immersed in a deepening exploration of print practices and archival handling. The incidental collision of Boon, d'Evie, and Walter, working in one space, unfolded a congruous opportunity for conversation, feedback, and experimentation.

From the mezzanine office above the print workshop, Boon would overhear bursts of chatter as d'Evie and Walter debated how printed imagery feels, or how visual instability could open new modes of reading, even for ocularnormative audiences.

As d'Evie and Walter calibrated and recalibrated their thinking and their material approach, Boon took note of the slow accumulation of print spreads and structural form. Over time, her arms-length spectatorship of the project dissolved. The artists sought Boon out for close readings of experimental page spreads, and progressively implicated her in conversations around tactility, erasure, and kinesthetic reading.

A certain intimacy is ushered in while archiving an artist's body of work. The archivist, absorbed in close visual analysis, oral history, documentation, categorization, sequencing, and indexing, carefully and slowly configures material and immaterial structures that may preserve and articulate the memory of the work. It is pertinent to propose the act of archivist as the haptic "be-holder." In her work, d'Evie has reclaimed the etymological root of "beholding" as "to guard, to preserve, to maintain, to take care," which in practice implies "close attention, by thoroughly regarding, handling [and] holding."<sup>25</sup> It might be understood that the archivist's intimate knowledge of the nuances of an artist's work are acquired through thorough be-holding.

*[Layered audio of the interior space of the print studio.]*

### **Tactile reading notes**

*[Layered audio of the interior space of the print studio.]*

*I'm noticing how beautiful it is right here in the sun. The sun is falling on my arms, I'm also noticing that what goes on below is not occupying my attention anymore... that we are so much more in the physical sphere of peace.<sup>26</sup>*

*[Layered audio of handling materials within the print studio.]*

Negative Press is a printmaking studio in a light industrial zone in Brunswick, Victoria, Wurundjeri Country. It occupies a space in the middle of a strip of warehouses, with disparate neighbors: a bitcoin mining business, a brewery, a mechanic, a burrito maker. Behind a roller door, Trent Walter has been building a dynamic and collaborative environment for the printing and publishing of prints and artist books of contemporary artists, mostly Australian. Recent projects include *Screenprints, Woodblocks & Unique Relief Prints* (2019) by John Nixon, and a ten-color

screenprinted pamphlet *Female Orgasm: A Codex of Sorts, After Ursula K. Le Guin* (2018–19) by Emily Floyd in collaboration with graphic design collective Experimental Jetset.

Over the past two years, d'Evie and Walter have worked together to develop an edition of thirty artist books, titled *Ascending/Descending Sonic Shadows* (2019). The book builds on an earlier collaboration between the pair, exploring tactility and hallucination as ways of thinking and reading prints, and mnemonic devices for recalling and sharing stories of private encounters with artworks. *Ascending/Descending Sonic Shadows* continues this intangible archival impulse, recalling and sharing the story of a specific encounter in July 2017 with Fontana's installation *Sonic Shadows* at SFMOMA.

*There's a kind of anticipation as we ascend each level.  
The sounds from the work seem more prominent or I guess  
more relatable in some way than they did earlier.<sup>27</sup>*

*I'm struck by the rise and fall of this humming sound that also  
has a kind of small ringing sound in the middle of it. I miss the  
skating-rattley sound. That's gone away now.<sup>28</sup>*

Each book is section-sewn, forty-four pages, with a four-page braille colophon. The page spreads alternate between debossed and printed spreads. The debossed spreads were made by translating photographic documentation into a succession of screen-print films, which were used to expose photopolymer plates that were then relief printed, creating tactile indentations. The technical term for this process is blind embossing. The source photographic images ascend in vantage point, beginning at the ground floor of the atrium and moving progressively closer to the ultra-directional speakers fixed on the oculus bridge. The printed pages are monotone, in a color called Concentrated Blue. While the debossed pages ascend, the interspersed printed pages reverse the sequence, descending from the oculus bridge to the atrium floor. The succession of debossed and printed pages meets in the middle, crosses over, and each set then continues its path of ascent or descent. The book can be read from front to back, or back to front, or can be embraced as a continuous circulatory reader, perpetually climbing, whereby each time the destination is reached, the pathway opens to climb higher.

*Certain things are turning on, turning off, adjusting...*<sup>29</sup>

*I felt that up here the sounds were a little bit flatter, which I thought was interesting because we're actually much closer... on the third floor, because of the architecture of the building, we're sort of below an entire bell that would collect the sound and feed it to us... Here we're much closer, so we only hear bits and pieces of it, we don't get the full collection of it at once.*<sup>30</sup>

*The bell-sounding sound was... sort of seductive and it made me not want to continue down to put it aside and listen to other sounds, because it was really mesmerizing and inviting and it felt meditative and so I really felt like wanting to hold onto it...*<sup>31</sup>

The first debossed image that a reader encounters at the front of the book is also the last image the reader encounters in its print rendering at the rear of the book. In this first/last image, the mechanical form of the bridge strikes across the photographic frame, its mass interrupted by Alexander Calder's skeletal hanging sculpture, which cascades into the rounded expanse of the atrium.

*We're going to go up the stairs. Is that right? Then you go up and across the bridge... It can sustain our weight, right?*<sup>32</sup>

*From here it sounds much more watery to me. It's splashing, and splishing, and floating, and less metallic than I remembered, and more immersive...*<sup>33</sup>

When reading the debossed image via touch, searching fingertips sense shifting forms and textures. The atrium ceiling is configured by a sharp round ridge, while the Calder sculpture is a cluster of lines and dips fitting the soft pads of the reader's palm. A smooth intermission is felt as the reader's fingertips pass across the negative space until they again find rhythm, tracing along the linear patterning of the oculus bridge. The subsequent pages continue to narrate architectural interiors, whether situating the reader more directly in the light-filtered ceiling space of the atrium, or in more intimate proximity with Fontana's mechanical pan-tilt arms as from the perspective of the oculus bridge. With each image, fingertips trace, stroke, trail, and creep, as the reader's hands tighten or expand across the surface of the indented paper.

*It's really lush when you're up here... It's really immersive. The skating, trickling sounds, almost sound like vigorously played violins. Then I also noticed you can hear the sounds of the mechanical arms that are moving the speakers around, they have their own hum and so they're not only transmitting sounds through cords, but their own sound.<sup>34</sup>*

*I was occupied... revising my prior descriptions of the sounds... the one that I was thinking of as a rattly noise now is more of a whooshy, liquid noise...<sup>35</sup>*

The screenprinting films that mediated the translation from photograph to print form were created with dot sizes ranging from thirty-five to ten lines per inch. By contrast, the standard for commercial books is 150 lines per inch. The comparatively large dot sizes of the films used in *Ascending/Descending Sonic Shadows* introduce pixelation of the source imagery. Visually, the affect is disruption at close range and, with certain combinations of dot size and image, hallucinatory shimmering. Following Roland Barthes's notion of the photograph as a shared hallucination, an epistemology of hallucination displaces the evidentiary status of photographic documentation. An image can instead be engaged with as a conversational frame for the sharing of descriptive memories, counter-memories, imaginative fictions, and speculations.

*[Layered audio from print studio of pages flipping, fingertips reading pages.]*

Still, whether debossed or printed, each printed image registers marks that resolve into a representation of *Sonic Shadows* as installed in 2017, and distinct from its debut in 2010, before the expansive renovation of SFMOMA so radically changed the architectural space. *Ascending/Descending Sonic Shadows* can thus be approached as an archival proposition to conserve a kinesthetic memory of a specific experience of Fontana's work. Conservation here is not the elusive quest to maintain an object in its original form, but a more nebulous quest to carry forwards memories of ephemeral moments through corollaries, translations, redescrptions.

*At first I thought someone was humming in the distance, and then it was like, "No, this is too consistent." But... the tone would*

*change, and it was really interesting because it was subtle... and I was feeling it in the rail, but I was also feeling it in my cane...*<sup>36</sup>

*Up here I feel like I'm in the centre of the sounds and they're circling around me.*<sup>37</sup>

The screenprinting process modestly impresses texture and form, inviting tactile interaction. The larger dot sizes emboss sweeping and fuller form, with broader smooth respite in the negative space. As the dot sizes get smaller, so too do the intricacies within the texture, calling for closer attention to the tiny shifts in shape across each spread. As the pages yield to one another, a tactile meta-rhythm is established. The debossed forms articulate more clearly. The printed pages invite a tactile encounter too, but through very subtle material shifts in ink across a page, and through the imprint of the leading and following pages.

*The sound from up here occupied a more imaginary space. Almost as if they took on some kind of animal nature. I don't know if it's the same sound in every speaker, but this one where I've been meditating for a while has these kind of wobbly animal or human gentle creature-like sounds.*<sup>38</sup>

What tactile reading allows for is ambiguity. It not only enables a slowing down, but also invites liberation from the authority of immediate visual feedback. Through a process of repetitive touch, the reader deciphers sensory language: rough and woolly grain, rounded linear ridge, softer refined groove. The reader finds patterns, alters intensity and pace, and, in time, accesses deeper tactile details in the pages.

*It's so hot from the sun coming through... my heartbeat is really heavy, and so this is the first level where my internal sounds are mixing in with the Sonic Shadows... in a slightly fight-or-flight way.*<sup>39</sup>

*Aside from the heat, I... noticed more of the droplet water-type sounds.*<sup>40</sup>

*The wateriness that somebody mentioned was something that I remembered historically in the work, and I wasn't hearing it so clearly until we got right to the bridge. Then it came back.*<sup>41</sup>

The translation of the embodied encounter with *Sonic Shadows* is not only through the sequence of printed imagery, but also through the action of tactile reading. The ascending score at SFMOMA trained listening toward the quietest sounds. As Jill Sterrett noted during a handling of test spreads for the publication, the subtle nature of the blind embossing requires fingers to search attentively for the quietest mark, a correlative sensory translation of the listening score. Through tactile engagement with the printed artist book, a reader may train their sensorial inquiry toward quieter and quieter moments of discovery in the tactile field.

*The exercise of listening to the piece on multiple levels and isolating experiences in each space... became kind of a cumulative or anticipatory experience...*<sup>42</sup>

As a performative possibility, the book invites erasure. Tactile engagement with the pages of the book demands a spatialized, repetitive, motion-based investigation, triggering a slow erasure of the textures and gesture of forms. Academic Erica Fretwell wrote: “in the world of touch, to read is to erase.”<sup>43</sup> The threat of degradation here is not vexed, it is ancillary to the performative embodiment of touch. Erasure implies duration. In the Bergsonian sense, duration is a coexistence of past and present, a constant continuation. Through a kind of durational reflexivity, *Ascending/Descending Sonic Shadows* offers a portal for conservation of embodied memory through kinesthetic transference. Erasure through touch becomes a material vocabulary that carries a choreographic translation of the ascending encounter, mirroring the ephemeral perceptual experience. Touch is a double-sensation that Fretwell succinctly classifies as agent and recipient. She asserts: “touch [as] a sense and a story — specifically, a story of a self that is radically coextensive with and other than itself.”<sup>44</sup> In a conservational framework, erasure is flipped on its head, made generative rather than degenerative.

*The thing was the boiler room got remodelled and they could not find the original sounds anymore..., there's new pipes now and the water flows differently in them. That's why the work is so much more dynamic now... For me coming from conservation it's so interesting how it's not just the pipes themselves that we*

*would have needed to conserve, but it's even the water inside them, and how the water inside the pipe moves...*<sup>45</sup>

As a series of reverberations, Fontana's *Sonic Shadows*, d'Evie's kinesthetic score, the polyphonic audio-description, the edition of artist books, the reader's performative tactile encounter with the pages of a book, and this scripted text, enact back and forth, back and forth, back and forth. Rebecca Schneider's writing on the archival remains of performance points to "citational performance" as a call to action that can be "resonant in the varied and reverberant cross-temporal spaces where an echo might encounter response."<sup>46</sup> She asks: "can we account not only for the way differing media cite and incite each other but for the ways that the meaning of one form takes place in the response of another?"<sup>47</sup> Troubling citational linearity, Schneider dwells on conversations that take place inter-temporally, invoking future-past lags, time drags, deferrals, repetition, reoccurrence. She asks: "when we habitually read documents as evidence and evidence as indication of a past supposedly gone by, do we overlook the liveness of temporal deferral, the real time of our complicities?"<sup>48</sup>

Here, we directly address you who are listening to this audio text or reading the printed transcript.

How are you complicit?

Will the echoes of *Sonic Shadows* attenuate here, or, in some manner, reverberate on?

*[Fade in recordings from the interior of the print workshop, and the action of tactile reading.]*

*I was mostly reflecting on the direction that sound can happen, whether you emit it towards an artwork, or the artwork emits it towards you.*<sup>49</sup>

*[Fade out recordings from the interior of the print workshop, and the action of tactile reading.]*

## Appendix

Lizzie Boon, "Ascending/Descending *Sonic Shadows*: Tactile Reading Notes," November 4, 2019

Explicit invitation of **the cover**: Tight, then broad.  
Automatic left-to-right movement before settling into the curves.

The hand is inquisitive of what is behind, beneath, within the cut circles. Visual observation: ability to read is disjointed.

The reading of the **braille colophon**: Return to a left-to-right motion. Even with limited ability to understand braille there is an embodied comprehension by the hand to touch closer, more intricately, and to be led by sensation.

**Blank page**: Closer touch. There is a small string of vertical dots impressed near the center of the page. Visual observation: small patches of residue are concentrated on the right hand of the page from the preceding braille. I presume this will alter and expand over time.

**First debossed spread**: Almost smooth at first touch. The fingertips find the reverse of the vertical dots on the left-hand spread. Both hands engage — a flat stroke with the palm and then a more intricate inquiry with both index fingers. Searching for moments of difference among the broad soft texture across the majority of the spread.

**First printed spread**: Both hands edge up the gutter and on finding the top they splay outwards in both directions. Meeting the outside edges, they weave in toward the center again. Gradually moving slower, subtle finger palm-size smoothness is discovered in incremental patches. Visual observation: referential to the cover.

**Debossed spread two**: Both hands placed on the page at random. Beginning to feel more comfortable releasing the structure of left-to-right reading and becoming less bound by the structure of the paper. Subtle in texture, I become more attuned to the shifts from the soft coarseness to the smoother sectioning. It is as though my fingers search for this smoothness not as respite, but rather as exploration for image-making in my head through the sensations. Prominently debossed. A series of vertical lines on the left-hand page, intercepted by some diagonal fractures across each.

**Printed spread two**: Both hands begin on the left-hand side of the spread. There is a spot in the top corner that my right hand lingers on for some time. I cannot figure the form. Moving to the right-hand side, moments of difference are more apparent. Circling the fingertips of both hands in the top right-hand corner, there is a strong indent that my fingers find. It sweeps on the slightest curve and off the page's edge.

**Debossed spread three**: Overall texture more definite, too strong to describe as rough, but rougher than the previous

debossing. Moving from the top middle of the spread, splaying wider as the texture underneath indicates a string of lines on a curvature. I draw an amateur drawing of the sun in my head, likening that drawing to the pattern underneath my fingers, the rays of that sun drawing. The form dissipates as I move down the page. Intermittent smooth patches reveal themselves; my right index finger finds stillness in what feels like a groove made for my finger to perfectly fit into at the bottom of the right spread.

**Printed spread three:** Following a blanket search of the page, my hands are immediately summoned to the right-hand spread, notably configuring a form likened to an upside-down “L” in one spot and then with a wider expanse underneath. I assume it is a depiction of the mechanical tilt arm. The overall texture is looser, with more space in between.

**Debossed spread four:** The left-hand page is explored first; the dot size of the texture is noticeably bigger. It causes the form to feel increasingly pronounced. I am getting feedback of difference that is more immediate with a broad swiping action of the spread. My fingers draw squiggly lines down the pages, finding a wide sweeping form with smoother curves across the bottom third of the page. Visual observation: small patches of dots that accumulate to make a bunch of curved vertical lines creating an abundance of movement across the spread.

**Printed spread four:** Tactilely clearer. Movement is not patterned in a particular way. Visual observation: strong structures with diagonal rectangles taking up the majority of the spread.

**Debossed spread five:** Moving from top left to top right, distinct diagonal lines are found. Engaging with each individually, I trail down to their end points, where most take me to the edge of the page. Toward the bottom half of the page, I find wider sections that are smooth. Experimenting with each finger individually, I identify the individual dot size more easily. Perhaps a close attention has developed along with a slightly larger dot size. Particular focus is on my pinkie fingers. Brushing back and forward near the bottom of the spread like playing a xylophone, the structure of the dots acts like different keys.

**Printed spread five:** Some heavy texture top left (left-hand page) and bottom right (right-hand page). My hands creep slower with the printed pages, the points of difference feel deeply embedded.

**Debossed spread six:** Between both hands, three textures can be identified — smooth, tight, and sharp (bottom left in particular). Wider dots that are simpler to find patterns within (moving in diagonals). No longer constructing images with touch, but rather through sensation, uncovers patterning and deeper intricate shifts in the paper. Syncopated rhythms. I fixate on two small smooth dots oriented vertically. Visual observation: the tilt arm shift is clear.

**Printed spread six:** I take a break. I have been receiving substantial tactile feedback and am curious what will happen if my fingers settle while I rest, and then I return. Will I enter with the same state of tactile depth?

**Debossed spread seven:** My hands take a few minutes to reacquaint with the page, but I find myself attuned to the feeling under fingertip. Experimenting with my full hands across the page. This uncovers more obvious tactile feedback, especially with the smaller dot size. Through a slow full-hand encounter with the page I receive greater embodied tactile vibrations, whereas the fingertip touching is required for investigating micro areas of the page. Body more implicit in the reading. Visual observation: the print page before has bled through, overlaying image into the debossing.

**Printed page seven:** Strong tactile qualities on the right-hand page. A curving form from top to bottom where it dissipates by the bottom edge of the page. Visual observation: this spread is distinctly different on each page, and the broader sections of smoothness are obvious in the printing.

**Debossed spread eight:** The most explicit tactile experience, only taking a few moments to detect the points of difference in the page. Spending thirty seconds, I am able to establish a pattern in the page for my hands to follow. Finding the mirroring patterning of the debossing, the form of the atrium wall. Going over again, my hands enact a swaying movement in unison. Visual observation: striking, complementing the tactile encounter with this spread.

1 Voiced by Jill Sterrett in the collective audio-descriptive work "Ascending *Sonic Shadows*: Re-calling an Encounter with *Sonic Shadows* (2010) by Bill Fontana," July 19, 2017, <https://relocatingechoes.space/sonic-shadows>.

2 Voiced by Georgina Kleege, *ibid.*

3 Tobin Siebers, *Disability Theory* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 4.

4 Voiced by Tanya Zimbardo, "Ascending *Sonic Shadows*?"

5 Voiced by Martina Haidvogel, *ibid.*

6 Voiced by Georgina Kleege, *ibid.*

- 7 Voiced by Tanya Zimbardo, *ibid.*
- 8 Voiced by Martina Haidvogel, *ibid.*
- 9 Chris Downey, "On Bill Fontana's *Sonic Shadows*," *Open Space*, July 11, 2011, <https://www.sfmoma.org/publication/soundtracks/bill-fontana/#chris-downey-on-sonic-shadows>.
- 10 Voiced by Megan Brian, "Ascending *Sonic Shadows*."
- 11 Voiced by Devon Bella, *ibid.*
- 12 The *Sonic Shadows* encounter was the first experiment in what would evolve into an incremental research project for d'Evie and Kleege, collaborating with SFMOMA staff to explore ways that blindness could introduce new approaches to sensing, documenting, archiving, and recalling ephemeral encounters with artworks. For more context on this research project, see: Fayen d'Evie, "Re-describing the Periphery," 2019, <https://www.sfmoma.org/read/redescribing-the-periphery/>.
- 13 Voiced by coded electronic announcement in SFMOMA elevator, July 19, 2017.
- 14 Voiced by Fayen d'Evie, "Ascending *Sonic Shadows*."
- 15 Voiced by Don Ross, *ibid.*
- 16 Voiced by Tanya Zimbardo, *ibid.*
- 17 Tanya Zimbardo in conversation with Fayen d'Evie at SFMOMA, February 11, 2019.
- 18 Jill Sterrett, "Artists' Installations and the Museum," in video recording of conference *Shifting Practices, Shifting Roles*, Tate, March 22, 2007, <https://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/video/shifting-practice-shifting-roles>.
- 19 Tina Fiske, "White Walls: Installations, Absence, Iteration and Difference," in *Conservation: Principles, Dilemmas and Uncomfortable Truths*, ed. Alison Bracker and Alison Richmond (Oxford: Elsevier Ltd. in association with the Victoria and Albert Museum, London), 237.
- 20 Voiced by Megan Brian, "Ascending *Sonic Shadows*."
- 21 Voiced by Chris Downey, *ibid.*
- 22 Tanya Zimbardo in conversation with Fayen d'Evie, February 12, 2018.
- 23 Voiced by Devon Bella, "Ascending *Sonic Shadows*."
- 24 Voiced by Robin Clark, *ibid.*
- 25 Fayen d'Evie, "Orienting through Blindness: Blundering, Be-holding and Wayfinding as Artistic and Curatorial Methods," *Performance Paradigm* 13, (2017): 43.
- 26 Voiced by Robin Clark, "Ascending *Sonic Shadows*."
- 27 *Ibid.*
- 28 Voiced by Georgina Kleege, "Ascending *Sonic Shadows*."
- 29 Voiced by Chris Downey, *ibid.*
- 30 Voiced by Martina Haidvogel, *ibid.*
- 31 Voiced by Megan Brian, *ibid.*
- 32 Voiced by Fayen d'Evie, *ibid.*
- 33 Voiced by Robin Clark, *ibid.*
- 34 Voiced by Megan Brian, *ibid.*
- 35 Voiced by Georgina Kleege, *ibid.*
- 36 Voiced by Chris Downey, *ibid.*
- 37 Voiced by Martina Haidvogel, *ibid.*
- 38 Voiced by Devon Bella, *ibid.*
- 39 Voiced by Fayen d'Evie, *ibid.*
- 40 Voiced by Don Ross, *ibid.*
- 41 Voiced by Jill Sterrett, *ibid.*
- 42 Voiced by Robin Clark, *ibid.*
- 43 Erica Fretwell, "Stillness is a Move: Helen Keller and the Kinaesthetics of Autobiography," *American Literary History* 25, no. 3 (2013): 569.
- 44 *Ibid.*
- 45 Voiced by Martina Haidvogel, "Ascending *Sonic Shadows*."
- 46 Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains* (Oxon: Routledge, 2011), 194.
- 47 *Ibid.*, 168.
- 48 *Ibid.*, 142.
- 49 Voiced by Robin Clark, "Ascending *Sonic Shadows*."