

Emma's Archive

I. NO CRY
BASIC
ERROR

II. HOLD
LIFT

III. PUSH
PULL

A FOLD
WITHIN
A FOLD
WITHIN
A FOLD
WITHIN
A FOLD
WITHIN
A FOLD

PINCH
FLOP
FOLD

IV. CROSSING
SOUNDS

V. BLISTER
MAGNIFY

VI. FILTER
CARRY

VII. CHAIN
TETHERED

VIII. SWALLOW
REFRACT

IX. SEVEN

X. RESTRAIN
SWING

VII a. STONE COLD SOUP
VIII a. BREATH SWING DOOR

I CARVE
II WEIGHT
III LIFT
IV REPEAT
V SCORCH
VI MARCH
VII see. STONE COLD SOUP
VIII see. BREATH SWING DOOR
IX STONE
X SHIVER

ZOOM PAN STOP

BRANCH

RAMIFY



Jao's Archive

Light as an element

Una metáfora ambivalente de la realidad

Reflection

Reaction

Be

Time

Contemplation

Loneliness

Structure

Observation

Filters

Erotic

Practice

Expectations

Labor

Privacies and work

Precarious

Imagination as a method for survival strategies

Tu Miranda dislocada

By chance

Definition

Extraction

Patrons change formats

Vitrines

Types of folding

Collecting reactions

Packing / folding

Habit

Daily life

Crossing sounds

Resistance

Retorcer

Twisted

Tools

Units

Windows

Shadow

Archive maps

Extraction extracts

Dynamic

Hands

Modified

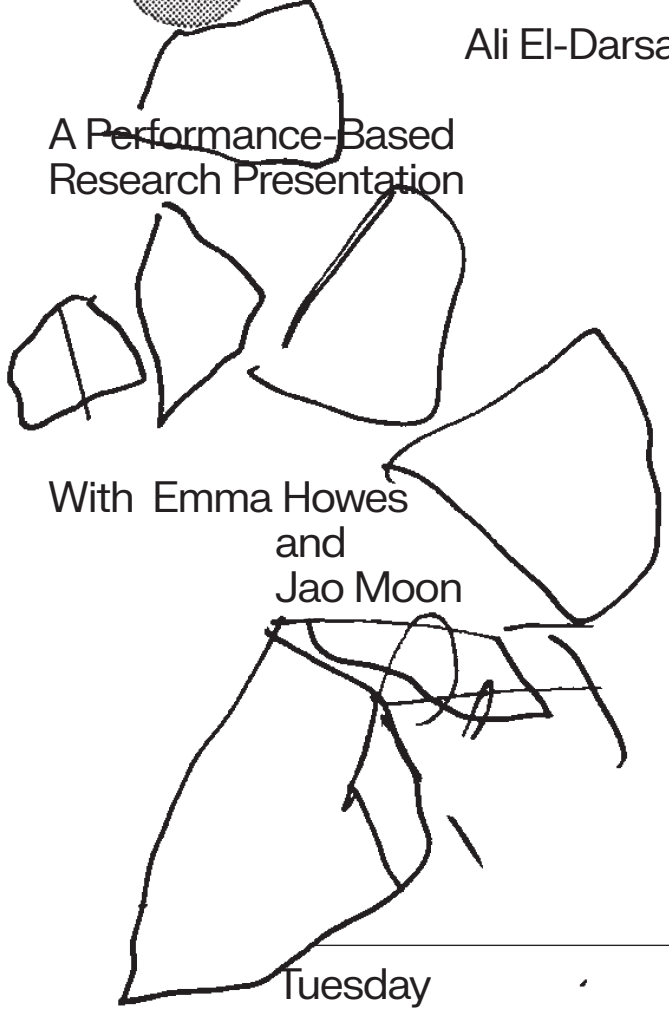
Rehearsal

Repetition

Playground

Ali El-Darsa

A Performance-Based Research Presentation



With Emma Howes and Jao Moon

Tuesday
13.08.2024 6 PM

Workshops
7-13.08.2024

The research will be on view through 10.09.2024

Diaphanes Berlin
Dresdener Str. 118

Artistic Director: Ali El-Darsa / Researcher-Performers: Emma Howes and Jao Moon / Gallery Director: Marie Glassl, Diaphanes Berlin / Sound Design: Richy Carey, eist sound
Graphic Design: arc / Sound Technician: Nobutaka Shomura / Videographer: Karam Ghoussein / Photographer: Andreea Dican.

Playground is an ongoing collaborative performance-based research project that takes form in workshops consisting of individual and group performances, readings, screenings and discussions. Iterations of Playground have been developed and presented in Beirut at Ashkal Alwan (2018) and in Dubai at Alserkal Residency under the title *Zwischenspiel* (2017), engaging local performers and artists. The project evolves continuously over several years, responding to local settings and experiences while forging spaces for experimentation with local performers and non-performers.

Employing open-ended, collaborative rehearsal strategies, Playground examines movement as written and oral language; as visual and sonic translations. In this iteration of the project, Emma Howes and Jao Moon are asked to examine their bodies as vehicles devoid of affect, capable of performing movement shaped by the conceptual framework and methodology I have set in place—defining form and aesthetics.

Playground opens onto the fields of text, word, sign and languages, both vernacular and through their relationship with the linguistic legacy in Europe. It involves questioning the ways in which language influences thought systems and, by extension, the discourses and interpretations of a work of art, both in its material and metaphorical sense. The research approaches the notion of communication through its means, methods and media, whether oral, written or coded; through the transmission of customary, historical or contemporary stories; and through dialogue, with consideration for the diversity of discursive spaces and how location informs, expands or limits the room for expression.

I am interested in how formal representations manifest and interact with the conceptual framework I have set for the researcher-performers, and how the perception of the audience becomes a crucial agent in this interaction. Playground positions settings and modes of *embodied research through rehearsal* as a self-contained work of art. For me, these modes, along with the aesthetics they foster, are self-sufficient and independent of conventional modes of exhibition. The methodological process, along with the workshops and presentation space as containers of thought-in-the-making, aims to liberate the research from traditional economies of production.

Ali El-Darsa

Methodology

Before attending workshops over the course of a week, Howes and Moon are asked to document their immediate realities on video while conceptually reflecting on the following questions and positions:

We are experiencing a suppression of our voices, fundamentally transforming how we navigate our public and private spheres—how we move, act, belong and care for ourselves as communities.

Pro-Palestine demonstrations over the last few months in Berlin reveal masses of bodies that are alert, fearful, defiant, angry, cheerful, burnt-out and equally hopeful, all in search of collective strength, agency, transformation and relief. How do our bodies inform our mediated and public spaces, and vice versa? Can we study the transformation of our collective movement over a set period of time as a means to overcome oppression, affect change, and find alternative forms of expression through translation, abstraction and the coded? Where do we start and how do we wrap up, if we can at all?

Howes and Moon reflect on these questions by capturing what is significant and striking to them. Excerpts from their research videos are then indexed to create an archive, from which they collaboratively develop sets of translations using text, image, sound and drawing. They present several iterations from their research, constructing a collective body-based language in real time. Their diverse backgrounds play crucial roles in shaping this research.

Ali El-Darsa

Ali El-Darsa works in moving image, performance, sound and installation. His work examines structures of belonging in transnational contexts, emphasizing the specificity of time-based media's significance to creating networked, mediated memories and narratives. His interdisciplinary research in performance explores fields of text, word, sign, and languages, questioning collaboratively the ways in which language influences thought systems and, by extension, the discourses and interpretations of a work of art. El-Darsa holds a Master of Visual Studies from John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design at the University of Toronto. He is a fellow at Akademie Schloss Solitude in 2025 and was a fellow at Villa Aurora Residency in Los Angeles in 2022. El-Darsa is a board member of Dazibao, an art center dedicated to the dissemination of contemporary image practices in Montréal, Canada. aliel-darsa.com

Emma Howes

Howes oscillates between movement and form to create time-based performance installations that incorporate soft-sculpture, sound, and improvisation with fallible objects. Her trans-disciplinary works manifest as multiple reconfigurations of the body and space, informed by a background in dance (ballet, baroque opera, modern, and baguazhang—an internal Chinese martial art), performance theory, and the visual arts within the framework of a conceptual art practice. Her labor is guided by observations of gestures, focusing on speculative scores—compositions that represent a stage in the development from concept and intention to depiction and effect. Buttressed by these graphic systems, Howes creates space for concentrated encounters, or serious play—a process that embraces embodied experience toward the creation of *hyper-glitch* operas as *Cadavre Exquis*—chimeras that celebrate comprehensive failure and foster alternative perspectives. Recent solo presentations and upcoming projects include: *Critical Shifts*, Istanbul, Turkey (2024); Art Museum of Joliette, Quebec, (2024); Kunstverein am Rosa Luxemburg Platz (2023); ImPulsTanz, Vienna (2023) and the 11th Berlin Biennale, Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin (2020). Howes holds a joint MFA from Concordia University, Montreal, and the Bauhaus-Universität, Weimar. emmawaltraudhowes.com

Jao Moon

Growing up in the marginalized periphery of Cartagena de Indias, Colombia turned Jao Moon into a political body. His experience in an environment of constant resistance led him to question predominant social orders, a theme that defines his work. Jao Moon's projects include *Memory of Dislocation – Exactly the same in the opposite direction* at Ballhaus Naunynstraße, *The Lifetime of Fire – Manifestos for a Queer Futures* at HAU and as part of the closing event for the exhibition, *Ceremony (Burial of a undead world)* at Haus der Kulturen der Welt. His work *Everybody can be / Everybody can not be My* was presented at Ballhaus Naunynstraße in 2019. Jao Moon's collaborations and works have been presented at Volksbühne, Kampnagel, Sophiensaele, Deutsche Oper Berlin and at the Pompidou Center in Paris. He is currently working at MDT Stockholm on a new production by Ofelia Jarl Ortega. instagram.com/itsjaomoon

Former Participating Researcher-Performers

Beirut, 2018
Bassam Abou Diab, Ghida Hachicho, Stephanie Kayal, Christel Salem and Corinne Skaff.

Dubai, 2017
Hened Choueiry, Sandra Egido Ibañez, Vrushali Kulkarni and Isaac Sullivan.