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# Live Art

## Blood, the land and the role of the artist's body

CARALI McCALL

Geographer Ellen Semple suggests that [hu]men are a product of the Earth's surface – dust of her dust (Churchill Semple 1911b). Astrophysicist Jocelyn Bell Burnell famously quotes that we are intimately and ultimately [children] of the stars.<sup>1</sup> Made from Earth's dust and the stuff of stars, and pre-solar grains such as graphite, diamond and titanium, it is the substance of blood that is most commonly used to materialize the concept of human life. Containing water, cells and plasma, blood, in its most natural form, is a liquid that takes the shape of the container it is in. It has a colour of intensely saturated red with blue undertones and can have the consistency of a screen printer's ink with a smell of a metallic alloy. Blood can be linked to the many artists working today and can serve as a symbolic metaphor or functioning element in various forms of practice.

Writing from Iceland, this article introduces how the role of the body and its bodily fluid has had an impact on my art practice. It aims to link how the vulnerable landscapes that we inhabit can be described and shaped in a way that connects to lived experience. The emphasis is on a perspective as a practitioner, referencing a series of ongoing artworks and past works of others to explore some conceptual possibilities and descriptive representations of the body in a broader fine art context.

The relationship between body, blood and land can be interpreted through the many historical and literary accounts in considering geographical lines and boundaries and wars between people. To focus not on the collective memory of recent or historical bloodshed narratives but addressing an individual relationship to the body as a drawing instrument, this article is an ongoing investigation into how movement and environmental references, like Earth's riverbeds and mountainous structures, can offer an understanding of the body. It is an artist's

presentation of artworks and writing practice that engages with the field of contemporary art.

In considering artworks, such as *Circle Drawing* (2004–23) and *Performing Rock* (2021–3), the writing begins by providing a context and operative means to explore definitions of landscape, movement and expenditure of energy. It suggests ways to look at measurements of time and the nature of colour to make some initial connections. In my own artist practice, such as the drawing series *Circle Drawing*, blood is expended during the process of its making. The artwork does not present blood as a subject in and of itself, but as an outcome of the performance-based drawing process. In the work *Circle Drawing* it is during the performance and process of making that blood becomes the material and fabric of the work. In *Performing Rock*, a more recently conceived series is then described; this artwork is presented as a group of performative acts and a live performance whereby the artists' relationship to the land/landscape and the weight of contemporary art and perhaps more socio-political issues are developed.

The article brings together texts by the feminist writer Donna Haraway and artwork and writings by artists Roni Horn and Barry Le Va. My references and written descriptions lean on the canon and margins of art history and the work of others to help shape and uncover this emerging interest and direction in thinking. Prompted by the troubling matters confronted when making work today, such as the complexities of climate change and polarization of social and economic upheaval, the article ultimately aims not to shy from the large issues of importance but to adopt and cater to an approach to finding solutions and encourage Indigenous philosophies and land acknowledgements – to support a kinder, sustainable attitude to art making and address things both subjectively and objectively. Its

<sup>1</sup> References first introduced in conversation with artist Maryclare Foá. See Bell Burnell (2013) and see also Foá (2020).

conclusion suggests that the artist's body can be performatively in (and of) the land and landscape and closes by questioning: if I miss the land, does the land miss me?

## PART 1

More than 35,000 years ago humans were drawing on caves with bodily substances and found materials. It can be recognized today that the painted scenes and imagery from the Palaeolithic Period depict connections between Earth and its inhabitants. As the scholarly writer Chris Pallant (2015) writes in the introduction to a collection of essays on *Animated Landscapes*, 'beyond the speculative myth-making is that the landscape becomes a selective record, a site of inscribed information that might serve to guide ... across generations' (2).<sup>2</sup> He suggests that while these ideas of a landscape may or may not have originated with the conditions to denote one's own body in a particular space and time, or even suggest 'movement' within some of the figures drawn within ancient civilizations, it does, however, support the idea that through the constructed concept of recent years we inhabit a meaning of the image to connect to the once-lived environment. The human condition to trace, record, collect ideas and describe some sort of 'knowing' through the body about the landscape – and to this end, blood as a drawing material – pervades today's culture and art/academic-based worlds.

This writing starts from the idea that some artworks point to cultural responses and can aim to soften and hold space for adopting new sensibilities. The notion of the landscape has long provided a subject for artists – and in a time when we have consciously reached an unprecedented moment in history regarding a relationship with Earth's environmental state – looking to the tools that shape new experiences, curiously and keenly this article aims to describe how artists, today more than ever, may construct ways of reflecting on these issues. In acknowledging climate change and (geo) political instability the writing aims to express the lived experience and moments of a current thinking that unravels with the past. Perhaps, for today, it is not just about being in the world,

but essentially being 'engaged' and 'with' and 'of' the world/environment and nature and with intentions of shaping evidence of that in hope of a better world.

The definition of 'landscape' in art history comes from a certain representation of a place observed with a particular distanced view of Earth's horizontal ground; landscape is said to have originated from the Dutch word *landschap*, eventually acquiring the meaning of a picture depicting scenery on land.<sup>3</sup> Historically, images presenting landscapes have been dominated by the mediums of painting and photography – an image illustrating a far-reaching viewpoint with the long horizon line that underpins and inspires. In many ways, sculptural shapes sit on the edges of foreground and background, and the planes help to structure and visualize an experience of the world. Images help to conceptually measure distance and observe one place from another. In this trajectory, what is landscape can be understood as an evolving and ever-changing subject matter. The discourse of visual representations of what is essentially around us provides many points of context to expand and discuss; it opens a broader academic platform that can be cultivated by crossing with (new) Indigenous and diverse perspectives.

In much past and present cultural and philosophical thinking, the concept of the body as a primary means of understanding a relationship to the world has long resonance and historical standing – in particular, the 'flesh' (Merleau-Ponty) and how the body dissolves the boundary between subject and object, inside and outside, life and death, and can act as a porous interface for both ancient belief systems and contemporary science-based research fields. The flesh / and the body is a subject between philosophy and science and that of ethics and the wider social context with means to define life and what it means to be human (or animal). Perhaps flesh and blood cause some of the most controversial and challenging ideas and findings. And here takes issue with the body *in* (and *of*) the land as a way to find meaning; to be experimental and explorative about these notions; and ultimately suggests that the body's blood is of material, colour and means of collaborative interaction of mind/body and

<sup>2</sup> This collection of essays includes further discussion of how landscapes are steeped in meaning and significance and addresses scale, mobility and the long history of landscapes and technology.

<sup>3</sup> The term 'landscape' derives from the Dutch word *landschap*, meaning 'region, tract of land' and acquired the artistic connotation of 'a picture depicting scenery on land' in the early 1500s (*American Heritage Dictionary* 2000). See The J. Paul Getty Museum (2022).

the physical elements of Earth's geological formations.

#### CIRCLE DRAWING

■ Left: Figure 1. Carali McCall, *Work no. 1 (Circle Drawing) 2hour47minutes*, 2007, detail of a documentary photograph, from performance drawing, graphite on paper, 150 x 220 cm, 'Phase Space' exhibition at Brunswick Centre, Camden, London. Photo courtesy of the artist.



■ Right: Figure 2. Carali McCall, *Work no. 1 (Circle Drawing) 2hr10 minutes*, 2016, performance drawing, graphite on paper, 150 x 220 cm, 'Gallery 46' London. Photo by Ben Watson, courtesy of the artist.

During the performance, while standing, holding and drawing, I draw with a stick of graphite marking my full arm's length, although this measurement of a full arm's length references the various and different



To provide context, I am Canadian (my ancestors are white settlers) and grew up in Huron County, which can also be identified as the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and home of the Neutral peoples. Although most of my work is performed on the farm and agricultural fields I grew up on, I now live and work in London, UK. And it was while undergoing an undergraduate art and art history programme that, in 2004, I performed for the first time *Performing Circles*, re-titled *Work no. 1 (Circle Drawing)* in Toronto/Tkaronto, Canada (fig. 1 and fig. 2). As an ongoing series of large-scale works on paper using compressed graphite, the artwork subsequently initiated research investigations into the body and its role in the physical making process (see McCall 2014). Made in front of a live audience, each artwork is titled by its duration and constructed by drawing circles for as long as possible or to the point of exhaustion.

efforts and lengths of reach that alter during the performance, in relation to fatigue and the durational element. I start drawing with my arm outreached as far as possible, only for the work to change in time with smaller circles. Some performances have lasted up to four hours, with each overlapping circle building to create dark and reflective areas on the paper. And depending on situational factors, such as the surface of the wall and subtle shifts made by the body, while drawing parts of the paper become buckled and stretched and usually rip. In some areas, using one hand to draw and the other as a support, I lean into the work and leave further unpredictable prints and traces of the body on the paper.

In the beginning, my ambition was to explore the simple yet purposeful act; it was a matter of pursuing a laborious action or task to produce an artwork as a performance. It has since developed my ongoing concerns about how



time is experienced and conditioned behaviours test the limits of the body. And, on reflection, further untethers a commitment to the process of drawing and foundational artist materials.

It is the friction caused by the process of drawing that tears the skin on my drawing hand. Blood seeps onto the paper and becomes a mark-making material. It mixes with the layers of metallic graphite and is also absorbed into the paper. In this way, the bodily liquid alongside the performing body and the graphite become not only direct tools but physical qualities and fabrics integral to the work.

There is excitement and vulnerability about performing in front of a live audience – a feeling of difference – a new version of ‘self’ and/or ‘other’. During the drawing process that takes shape, it is about finding a rhythm and some sort of cadence while exploring time and effort – being mindful of ‘being’ and ‘becoming’ (Grosz).

Over time, parts of the body begin to fade from the forefront of my mind (sometimes you forget you have a body) but then in other moments, they race forward with pain. At first, the hand, shoulders and lower back muscles ache, and in more time, the whole body starts to fatigue. At punctuated moments, when it seems the mind is unable to battle the physical body any further and when drawing seems to lag with every second, I question, ‘How long do I draw for?’ – the visual presence of blood appears, and the question reverberates and repeats louder and louder. In time (as experienced in past performances), my knuckles covered with layers of graphite stop bleeding and the sound of mark-making quiets; eventually, my hand cramps and the chunk of graphite releases from my grasp.

During these performances, there are experiences of entangled layers and levels of self-awareness and the ‘other’ (the audience). In the beginning, a heavy sense of judgement from onlookers weighs heavy. A physical presence is apparent. Then slowly, fading after time, there becomes a familiar feeling and any sense of ‘another’ wanes or rather melts away – it is like our bodies become part of the same landscape.

## PART 2

In moving through the angst and experiences of uncomfortable and awkward moments, it is the shift in apparent colours and movement that also denote the passing of time. As markers of the process and recording duration, the accumulative drawn lines of graphite churn a darker colour. In the beginning, the shape of the circle is an outline and then grows and becomes solidified with smooth, pressed and reflective sphere-like burnished areas. Blood, then in smaller parts, also builds, changing colour during the very act of drawing. During the process of drawing the releasing of blood is witnessed, at first with thin linear strokes almost a luminous bright red in colour; then as the result of blood oxidizing it changes to a rusty, burnt, viscous brown, later to reside in final shades of earthly umber tones. As the substance of blood binds with the graphite and the paper, it quickly dries and ages.

While in Iceland, works by Birgir Andrésson at the Reykjavík Art Museum have helped direct me to certain ideas about the perception of colour, and importantly the language of colour inside and outside of nature. Curated by art historian Robert Hobbs, the survey of his works called *As Far as the Eye Can See* (January–May 2022) has come as a point of re-introduction to the works by Roni Horn and Barry Le Va. As an Icelandic artist, Andrésson critiques the systems of colour to address communicative practices of observation. Born to parents who were both blind, his works are by design challenging the naming and categorization of colours appropriated in nature, and poignantly introduce disparities of both experience and associations with cultural identity.<sup>4</sup> As language-based and conceptual work, a body of his works on paper are giclée prints that contain a block of a single bold colour and a text, boldly in italics, reading, ‘*dark ashen grey*’, then below in text capitals, ‘COLOURS: ICELANDIC PANTONE 419, ICELANDIC PANTONE 614’. It is important to note that the Pantone brand’s formula was created as a colour system – and supposedly, the formulas could be based on colours found in the natural environment.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, Andrésson’s approach plays on the very fact that labelling

<sup>4</sup> The artist Birgir Andrésson was born to blind parents and his childhood was based in Iceland’s Reykjavík Blind People’s Home. See Hobbs (2022) and Andrésson (2022).

<sup>5</sup> Pantone is a company and producer of commercially standard colours. See Pantone (2023) and Santos (2014).

and finding differences in colour can be both abstracted and personal, an objectification and subjection of perception. It uses text and language placed in a definitive geometrical shape to present a means of association that adds a complexity of value to a (un)definitive colour.

RONI HORN (*BECOMING A LANDSCAPE*)  
1999–2001

In Iceland, the artist Roni Horn has made an extensive contribution to the perception of how the landscape has both agency and urgency. In the artwork *Becoming a Landscape* (1999–2001) (fig. 3) Horn's paired photograph images are of a small geological thermal hole. Because of Iceland's position, Earth's surface succumbs to ruptures and openings of hot water and lava; from beneath, natural geothermal energy is released in states of liquid and steam. And like the crevasses of the body, the land can become a way of pooling and gathering and of

of place as a way to categorize and capture imperfect nature and question what we are looking at. As a document, they draw the viewer in closer to see change and the subtle differences in time. The stillness can be a comment on the matter of instantaneous performativity and the colours and qualities of the landscape – both light and dark, solid and liquid that can be linked to a reflection and perception of self. Horn has captured and presented some of Iceland's enduring and ever-changing terrain and characteristics – the green moss, volcanic rock, and the deep, dark, cold and hot stoic waters. The churning layers of the land's geography have underpinned a practice that seems to be based on the examples of being in and shaped by the landscape; Horn writes, 'Iceland ... big enough to get lost on. Small enough to find myself. That's how I use this island. I come here to place myself in the world. Iceland is a verb and its action is to center' (cited in Foster and Godfrey 2009: 75). As a part of the changing environment, Horn's

■ Figure 3. Roni Horn, *Becoming Landscape* (1999–2001). Reproduced from *Roni Horn* (Phaidon Contemporary Artists Series, London and New York: Phaidon Press)



transformational change between inside and out. In Horn's *Becoming Landscape*, two images are taken only seconds apart and presented like a series for a nature's symmetry document. In clarity and photographic quality, the earthly volcanic minerals and sediments are rich in colour and texture. And the vaporizing, reflective and glassy characteristics of the water are captured.

The seemingly doubling of the image may question confusion, but taken from a portrait-like distance, the holes register Horn's sense

writing and artworks point to the performative act of finding oneself among the water and the environment that is its culture.

Following the writings by Donna Haraway and the practice of 'situated knowledge', the nature–culture divide is unthinkable within the conceptual universe (2016: 13). This text aims to respond to Haraway's writing and similarly asks questions of what tools and environmental concerns we find ourselves immersed 'in' and shaped 'by'. Contemporary artists have heavily been exploring new technologies, beginning

with cameras and representing an empathetic relationship between body and land/landscape. Roni Horn's many returns to Iceland have aimed in some way to unveil and present a vision and some understanding of humanness and the body in the Icelandic landscape; artworks, like bloodlines, are developed through time and somehow can maybe point to a rediscovery of representation and curiosity. An artist visiting the landscape today is rooted in Horn's observed view but with/from a different sense of place.

In Haraway's further writing in *Staying with the Trouble*, she writes of the world of 'terrapolis', in which 'companion species' engage in relentless processes of 'becoming with' – a world in which 'natures, cultures, subjects and objects do not pre-exist their intertwined worldings' (cited in Hunter and Palmer 2018). Haraway's writing reiterates how important is thinking through entities on their own terms and considering positionality and objectivity a possibility that can make new experiences. Haraway writes:

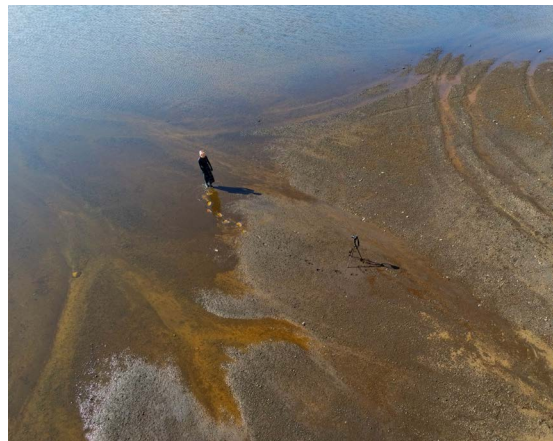
It matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what descriptions describe descriptions, what ties. (2016: 12).

Poetic and confounding, what Haraway importantly alludes to, for me, is emphasizing the importance of articulating and acknowledging the many sources and various voices artists can acquire in making material-based choices and making meaning of what they do. Haraway's notion of Terrapolis calls into question the nature of matter itself, what we perceive and consider as human and non-human matter, what counts and *what matters* and, through doing so enables the fostering of a new ontological disposition. Haraway recognizes, as the viewer, or maker, in the act of observing the tools we use are reflecting back and marking us; when we use tools, tools also use us (ibid.)

#### PERFORMING ROCK

In my recent work, *Performing Rock* (2021–3), in Iceland's landscape videos and photographs of Earth's bodily elements, as sort of 'self-portraits' and placing my body as something 'other' in the

landscape, I am documenting ways of performing in reference to Horn's portraits. In documenting the process from overhead, the images also make reference to how, like blood, the water seeps and pools to make textures and tones on Earth's surface (fig. 4 and fig. 5). In *Performing Rock* (2021–3) a series of performances engaging with the landscape are made, which eventually are parts of and the material for a live performance in front of an audience. In the recordings, the tidal shifts and ebbs and flows of the water form the material. Like the body's ruptures and emergences in the *Circle Drawing* artworks, Earth's surficial markings help to shape the work.



■ Figure 4. Carali McCall, *Performing Rock, Iceland 2022*, coloured documentary photograph of performance to camera. Photo by piot laurent dit LOrenzo, courtesy of the artist



■ Figure 5. Carali McCall, *Performing Rock, Iceland 2022*, black and white documentary photograph of performance to camera. Photo by piot laurent dit LOrenzo, courtesy of the artist

*Performing Rock* (2021–3) has been performed in different locations. In Iceland's version of the work, with sound and video, the artist performs by standing and holding a medium-sized volcanic rock 'borrowed' from the Icelandic landscape. The ten-minute performance is choreographed with pre-recordings of the



fieldscape with birds and waterways, and a light projector plays scenes of the body emerging in the landscape and swimming in the cold waters. In holding a bit of landscape, the performance aims to address the weight of things and illustrate the relationship between actions and objects, acts between movement and stillness (fig. 6 and fig. 7). It begins with turning on the spotlight and picking up the rock and ends when the artist sets the rock down and the lights, sound and projector turn off.

While performing and being conscious to keep focused and mindful of the act of 'being', like any endurance-based event, when fatigue escalates

and decision-making process.

In the process of working and collaborating with other artists, the research has been engaged with the possibility and thinking of 'drawing as movement'. Yet now, also considers in contrast, performing and drawing with stillness. In *Performing Rock*, the holding of the rock and attempting stillness in duration aims to point to the quietness and directness of another physicality. Like in the duration of a day or a year or a lifetime, certain processes are punctuated with events and holding this bit of landscape, a material is sourced to accumulate and evidence time.

■ Left: Figure 6. Carali McCall, *Performing Rock (Going, going gone)*, Iceland 2022, documentary photograph of live performance. Photo by Candace Couse, courtesy of the artist



■ Right: Figure 7. Carali McCall, *Performing Rock (Going, going gone)*, Iceland 2022, film still/material. Photo courtesy of the artist



and deep exhaustion settles there is a shift in emphasis and focus of the act of being present – there becomes a contingent mind/body problem. Similar to the *Circle Drawing* process, although it feels like I have not necessarily altered a level of attentiveness or commitment to the act of drawing, there can seem to be a collective presence and altered sense of time. Over time the duration and the lengthy time element can seem to bring a sense of an uncomplicated vacuum or communal pocket of time.

In some form of dialogue while researching and studying other duration-based processes I have made works based on historical artworks and other key artists – by carving and running through the landscape and considering the invisible traces and the concept of a line as a drawing. As part of the practice, cultivated by reading and writing, thinking of things in this way has been an important part of the making

BARRY LE VA'S VELOCITY PIECE: *IMPACT RUN, ENERGY DRAIN (WITH BLOOD)*

Questions concerning how drawing can explore duration and physicality have roots in the definitions of performance art and 'happening(s)'. Influenced by the immediate sensation of a live event and the anticipation of the unknown, running, like drawing, is a process. And drawing in full scale can allow access to pre-reflective, pre-conscious concepts of the body.

In Barry Le Va's *Velocity Piece: Impact run, energy drain* (1969–70) (fig. 8) the artwork consists of two speakers at opposite ends playing a recording of Le Va running in a direct line back and forth in the gallery (Le Va and Ingrid Schaffner 2005: 84). When entering the gallery space the only other visible objects and markings are the bloodstains on the wall – where the artist was physically committed to the action



of running in the space so much that the body was injured. The physical qualities of the work are related to the expenditure of energy, such as velocity, speed, acceleration and rhythm, as well as bodily flesh and fluids to produce sound. The work also prompts a further exploration into how visual elements can be evoked through sound.

The recorded sound from the live artwork reveals the rhythm of natural everyday movement and echoes biological and geographical systems. It can contribute to a physical understanding of the body and/or landscape. Through its duration and temporal movement, the visceral image of the body produced by sound has provided an understanding and mode of thinking that the body is not only an organization of mechanical operations but also a subjective being through forms of materiality.

In Le Va's description of the event, he writes:

the sounds were of my footsteps and the impact of my body against the walls. While I was running, the microphones were set up at either end of the rectangular space so that there wouldn't be any dead spots; then, for the exhibition, the speakers were placed in approximately the same position. People would have an auditory experience of the footsteps going in a straight line from one end to the other, my body hitting the wall, bam, stop, and back again. What the sounds did was articulate the changing location of the footsteps as they travelled across the floor ... My activity had a specific purpose: to continue running until I had utterly exhausted myself. There were physical barriers – the walls; there was a finite duration – I ran for one hour and 43 minutes and there was a single configuration – a straight line. (Le Va and Ingrid Schaffner 2005: 84)

His work emphasizes the simple task of running until exhaustion, and the specific conditions, that is, those of the gallery space, influence the production of the work. Like liquid, the



■ Figure 8. Barry Le Va, *Velocity Piece: Impact run, energy drain*, 1969–70. Detail image of documentation – *Impact Run, #2*, 190. Reproduced from *Accumulated Vision: Barry Le Va*, Pennsylvania: Institute of Contemporary Art, 2005

sound is shaped by its container. The action was running. The time was allocated by the body's energy source. The body's material was both the tool and the markings on the wall (via blood). Although Le Va has evidenced this work through a series of still images from the film, he insists that the material of the work is only ever a sound recording made within the gallery and the live action of making work. He perhaps thought of himself as an object and a dematerialized art object, as equally, it was about the space – its architecture – distances – what was between the walls and floors, and the liquidity of fluids and movements.

The sound of running back and forth – like the sound of drawing – is perhaps the repetitive movement and rhythms that evoke a specific physical property of the body. Particular indexes and traces of the body help to question a sequential or temporal presence. What becomes the framing device for the viewer's potential understanding of the work as live?

It is these tactile-like qualities that reveal the importance of sound, even beyond the visible markings, is evident in palpable, malleable and spatial possibilities. It evidences the connection between drawing and movement and the expanded field of the body. In 1971, Le Va stated that his work was not about materials or about a specific process; rather it was about time, place and physical activity (Bear 1971: 66). At this time expanding forms of practice placed new emphasis on the viewer's experience. The viewer was able to enter the gallery and experience a single work, rather than view a space filled with objects. Works such as Le Va's *Velocity Piece: Impact run, energy drain* opened up new explorations of spatial relationships and how the body moves and shapes and merges in that new fine art landscape.

While considering the body as a drawing tool the sound of blood and the movement of it flowing through the body like a river can suggest how the body becomes an ever changing, sounding scape, a source for feeling and re-imagining. This visualization I think drives artists to consider these relationships with the environment and ultimately the body as not merely a tool but a landscape that pulses and folds and envelops itself and that has the

possibility to contain movement and move through different states.

And while enduring a long performance-based drawing practice such as running and/or drawing, it is the subtle movement and the sound of drawing that conceptually anchors the work – to explore further experiences that culturally engage. Orchestrated by the swooshing and gushing of blood and the heartbeat of the human body, the act of drawing envisions blood moving around the body in the same way as rivers and lakes and volcanic systems flow and travel through Earth's tectonic shifts, and thus grounds the work in embodiment.

#### CONCLUSION

Typically expressed as beats per minute (or bpm) the sound of the heartbeat while drawing, as well as the breath, become aids and ways to experience, absorb and measure time. Mechanically, the heart adapts as the body's need to absorb oxygen and excrete carbon dioxide changes. For me, it has been the 'live art' element that brings something of offering and importance to the many works and therefore perhaps the live heartbeat and subtle wave-like rhythms of blood pulsing together in proximity that make the most mind-/body-altering and experience impactful.

In Haraway's writing, the underlined mode in 'staying with the trouble' has been interpreted as: if/when it feels like you can't go on, go on. And in questioning the decision-making process during many of the performances, *Circle Drawing* and *Performing Rock*, there is always a question of how long to draw for, or how long to hold this rock. Since the last performance, it has struck me how sometimes it is easier to keep going than it is to stop. Despite the soreness, discomfort and drawing of blood – it can be particularly uneasy considering stopping. While setting out to complete a repetitive task without a pre-determined time, the question and decision to what end or element of completion is never clear. There are no obvious conclusions but rather experiences in the shifts and changes in perception.

This has been a platform to discuss the issues

of 'becoming' and 'being' and to draw some connection with the land and landscapes we occupy – to problematize and question the body, land and blood as material. It has been a means for reflecting on art practices. An act of reflection and practice of thinking.

To image Earth's human-like body, or alternatively, the body's earthly elements and to run and swim and move through the landscape – it is this nature of thinking and uncovering bodily references that can open up new approaches and relationships with the body, the land and the sea. Through the sounds of heartbeats pounding and gasps for air, or the crunching of snow and ice and water and lava spattering, perhaps it is that a species is linked and a future further shaped.

There are the romantic visions of the artist adrift and lost in creativity in the studio, or the lone runner in the wild landscape making unknown trails, governed only by the will and want of the individual, and however coiled and misleading some reactions to this may be, there are many emerging works and writings of postcolonial, diasporic and radicalized landscapes that best challenge past notions and broaden and enrich the field. Crucially, with mounting wars, immigration crises and climate emergencies on the minds of scholars and artists working today, perhaps sourcing solutions has never felt more conflicted. This article, I hope, points to an optimistic approach by considering how artworks present the value of landscape and its ongoing and changing understanding. For postcolonial migrants living abroad, for Indigenous artists making work to keep a culture alive, there are things to be re-examined and to conjure a sense of knowing and unknowing of both the land and body.

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