

Thank you so much for inviting me to participate today. I was so happy to hear from Lucas that we have, in a way, already 'met', that we have already been thinking together, that the work I am doing here in my studio in London is already in concert with yours in Rio - across the contexts, categories, fields that we are all navigating. It really is the best kind of news when you hear that your work is already joined with others. But then, I know it already, as we all do.. that we are all already implicated, knotted together, folded together, in complex, material entanglements.

Somehow, to actually *meet* - even through technology... through something as awkward as Zoom, seems to help create this mysterious sense of *relationship* .. to make you *feel* in a creaturely way, the connections that sometimes can feel abstract or remote. It's companionable to meet... to become friends and allies... known to each other..

## 1

I'm going to take a bit of a convoluted path here. It's at the heart of my drawing that straight lines trouble me.. and I trouble them in return.

The word 'convolute' means to 'make difficult or complex to follow' to complicate.. The word complicate means to fold with...

folding.. pli.. to be enfolded.. in the midst.. not at the start.. already, always, in the middle.

I'm going to meander, with the help of images, through my work, some thoughts, my drawing, and take a detour through the locality where I spend most of my time, here in London - Woolwich Dockyard, where my studio is based.

Drawing, for me, is neither abstract nor representational, it helps me to think entanglement.

## 2

The ways we are enfolded, implicated, entangled - speak to our *complicity* in structures and histories of power. But these ways also speak to the *potential for finding ways through*. The attending to tangled stories and materialities help us to see.. to find ways.. to grow in understanding.. to see things differently .. to understand how we belong to each other..to see how we harm.. are harmed.. to see how our stories of suffering and our hopes of freedom are bound . Attending to tangled stories teaches us.. to write *together* stories of what solidarity might look like, nourished by what we've learned through entangled tales of oppressions and survivals, shared stories, different stories, interconnecting stories.. learning how to

give ground, to forgo mastery, authority, leadership, command, control, to learn how to gather, to coalesce, to strengthen in our complex dynamic collectivity.

We are mutually constituted .

There is no clear space of purity or innocence and knowing that, accepting that, frees us to get properly to work.

### 3

I listened to the sociologist Saskia Sassen (who writes on globalism and migration), in an interview a few years back, she spoke about The City, the Metropolis, as a place where the powerless can learn to become complex. That our strength comes, has come, will come, from our capacity to *become complex* in these heaving, magical cauldrons of experiments in living. Experiments in living together, in Cities, in proximity, in all our multiplicity and difference. Becoming complex through staying with the trouble as Donna Haraway says, with the call, the demand, the friction, the rub, .. the violence and conflict, yes, ... but also and always with the hope, joy, beauty, the warmth, risk, the vulnerability, the music and poetry, the food and dance, the hope and promise and flavour that can be .. *is being*.. cooked up in the real world politics of community, of locality, of neighbourhood, of mutual aid and care.

These are complex stories of living... entangled across places, spaces, times .. non linear, roped, twisted, looped, knotted, fugued. Cleaving, splitting, spinning, weaving, together and apart. London is an infinite complexity for sure..and Rio, and their complexities are entangled with each others and *all* others everywhere, everywhen.

### 4

The strong separations of 'categories' are, and always have been, illusory.. We have to trouble them, disrupt them, undo them, make them leak, merge, tear, undo. We have to kick up the dust of them, make them join, gather, meet, become permeable, multiple, polyrhythmic, choral, many voiced, musical, dancing.. a beautiful riot of generative confusion and contagion, full of colour and noise and fragrance and flavour and warmth.

The word confusion means 'to mix together' and the word 'contagion' comes from 'contact' which means to touch with.

Which is all to say, to find ways ***to be in solidarity***, working together to create the conditions for better and more just futures.

## 5

More just futures will not be determined by leaders and top down control but, it seems clear, can *only* be written together. More just futures will emerge (are already emerging have already emerged in mutating forms across times and places,) through the *creating of the conditions* for thriving, the developing of the *capacity* for meaningfully *meeting*, for congregating, for gathering, for joining together, in sustainable and shared practices ... in what Fred Moten and Stefano Harney call the Undercommons.. in what they call Study. This is together-work.

With all the will in the world, people are carrying too much inherited pain, distrust, trauma and daily pain to stay together without shared language and culture - practices that can sustain and support the gathering, sustain and support the commitment to each other, sustain and support and nourish the practice of solidarity, our shared project. Sharing and spreading the pleasure and joy of being social is our fuel and sustenance.

***‘There’s a movement of the earth against the world. It’s not the movement. It’s not even a movement. It’s more like what Tonika calls a procession, a holy river come down procession, a procession in black, draped in white. The earth’s procession sways with us. It moves by way of a chant. It steps in the way of the base, in the way of the dancing tao. It bows to the sisters of the good foot, carrying flowers from Caliban’s tenderless gardens. The earth is on the move. You can’t join from the outside. You come up from under, and you fall back into its surf. This is the base without foundation, its dusty, watery disorchestration on the march, bent, on the run. Down where it’s greeny, where it’s salty, the earth moves against the world under the undercover of blackness***

The Centre holds the power of the structure in place, in status quo. The centre *requires* that the other is kept outside the city gates. The centre is structurally sustained, maintained, made meaningful by what is kept outside the city gates.

The power of the centre’s hold is always ***haunted*** by what it keeps outside the city gates, the centre is always threatened by who and what it refuses, by who and what it subjugates.

Supremacy, in all its forms, legitimises extraction, exploitation and subjugation. Supremacy is the brutal fiction.. the *rationale* and justification for degradation and control.

Extraction and exploitation demands the maintenance of dominator logic, the language of hierarchy, the belief in alleged natural superiority.

That which is kept outside the city gates, outside the self, outside the conception of The Subject, The Individual, is exactly what maintains the cohesion of these constructions. Is exactly what shores up their power, dominance, strength - conceptually and materially.

We have to undo the centre, disrupt the binaries, dismantle the hierarchies with relentless collective commitment and persistence. Through solidarity.

Our conception of 'solidarity' will continue to grow more broad, more extensive in its reach as we break down the borders, as we actively undo the binaries and hierarchies dominator logic imposes and depends on. Solidarity is a verb and its scope and work grows with our every effort to extend our notion of kinship, of who belongs to the category 'us' 'we' These binaries and hierarchies that we actively undo together with commitment and persistence - binaries and hierarchies that riddle language and maintain power structures everywhere everywhen.

## 6

It is in the ongoing interest of power that we **do not** gather, that we **do not** become complex. Every effort to organise collective action has always been systematically attacked with the eternally effective tools of fear and division. Global movements like Occupy or Black Lives Matter have routinely been infiltrated with disruptive agents charged with causing division and disarray. Historically, when slave populations grew in cities to meet the demands of production, legislation was brought in to prevent gatherings of 3 or more. To prevent the threat of what any sort of gathering, any sort of congregating could enable. To prevent anything like hope. This prevention of gathering is everywhere maintained by the powers that be to shut down and control the threat of challenge, refusal, resistance, rebellion. Which is why we must learn how to write solidarity in ways that can withstand these threats, thrive and find ways.

Even in these hard times, it seems that decentralised networks of organised protest and political organising is growing in capacity for complexity. The climate group Extinction Rebellion is clearly trying to learn from complexity and systems thinking despite many mistakes along the way.

Black Lives Matter is rooted in generations of organising and queer Black feminist resistance, community and political thinking.

It's no wonder the government in this country has been trying so hard to force through a Policing Bill to regain and assert control and to crush protest. To sustain collective action we need to develop resilience and a dynamism that evades the grasp of power. Leaders are easy to target. Non hierarchic network structures are more difficult to dismantle. While power maintains us in varying states of precarity along lines of class, race, gender, religion, sexuality, ableism, its all too easy to stoke division, anger, fear.

This government is trying hard to keep people apart and to crush hope. To protect the powerful and the rich.

## 7

The more we can knot together and develop understanding of how our struggles are entangled, the more we can learn and understand how the lines that separate us are drawn and strategically maintained.

The more we learn of the lived *histories* of those stories of separations - gender, race, class, religion, nationality - and how the stories that determined those histories were written and propagated in the service of power and profit, the more effective we will grow in gathering and creating, together, healing and transformative choral, many voiced, many storied, spaces and places.

## 8

The Centre holds the power of the structure in place, in status quo. The centre *requires* that the other is kept outside the city gates. The centre is structurally sustained, maintained, made meaningful by what is *kept outside the city gates*. The centre's hold is *always haunted* by what it keeps outside the city gates, the centre is *always* threatened by who and what it refuses, by who and what it subjugates.

Supremacy, in all its forms, legitimises extraction, exploitation and subjugation. Supremacy is the brutal fiction.. the *rationale* and justification for degradation and control.

Extraction and exploitation demands the maintenance of dominator logic, the language of hierarchy, the belief and faith in the fiction of natural superiority.

Bad faith.

9

But that which is kept outside the city gates *always returns*... like the water that inexorably rises as dominator logic drives the climate emergency, through the performance of its myriad tentacular oppressions, extractions, brutalities, violences. The return of the repressed.

And we know very well too, that it's too late, that it was always too late, that those who are kept outside are always *already inside* finding ways, like water finds ways, to try to live, to refuse, to resist, to gather, to thrive.. though underground passages, and fissures, and secret places.

***'The earth is on the move. You can't join from the outside. You come up from under, and you fall back into its surf. This is the base without foundation, its dusty, watery disorchestration on the march, bent, on the run. Down where it's greeny, where it's salty, the earth moves against the world under the undercover of blackness'***

***This is what Moten and Harney call Base Faith, the kind of faith that can undo the bad and dangerous kind of faith.***

10

It's no coincidence that the word 'contagion' is used so often in Far Right propaganda in *this* country which is currently so under the sway of nationalist supremacist narratives, to describe how our borders are infiltrated by refugees and migrants. All of these words used to show threat to the purity and cohesion of identity, whiteness, nationhood selfhood, manhood, words associated with disease, threat, deluge, disaster, filth, dirt, disorder, criminality, impurity, savagery, the abject, the mad, the corrupt, the alien, the immoral, the disposable, the rejected, the degraded, the useless, the weak, the sick, the lost.

Words that have always been heavily recruited in to codify racial difference, gender, class, sexuality, the other in all the ways it threatens the subject construed in essence as the White Enlightened Englishman.

These words shore up the concept of the Subject, the Self, the Rational, the Whole, the One the Autonomous, the Good, the Powerful, the Strong, the Dominant, the Right.

11

We who wish to gather reject the masters tools, *we choose these words as our guides,*

*we choose to be* the dirt, the noise, the rhythm, the music, the sound the song, the common wind. *We choose* to contaminate and be contaminated in a contagion of sociality.. to touch with.. to make contact.. to be together. .. to find the ways, in and with and through and across. To 'bring the noise.' We celebrate the potential of dirt, noise, poetry and energies of dis-order.

As Glissant says, via Fred Moten, we 'consent not to be a single being,' but to be part of a joyful, generative refusal, a resistance, a gathering, an active hope for better, more just, more equal futures. The music is the making of the music. When we meet, we begin, together, to make the music. When we are separated we are silenced and we cannot dance.

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

12

***I have been drawing now, for 20 years or so.*** Many years ago I studied Literature and Philosophy and went on to postgraduate study in Political Philosophy.

So many of the philosophers I was drawn to wrote inspiringly *across* categories of painting, music, literature, science, politics -. Merleau-Ponty wrote on the artist Cezanne, Deleuze on Francis Bacon.. Blanchot on cave painting..Derrida crossing spaces everywhere..

They productively scrambled categories, creating the conditions for new ways of thinking, interrogating the way philosophy had gone about things for so long...

troubling the categories philosophy was built on: Truth, Enlightenment, Foundations, Rationality, Beauty, Justice, God, Matter, the Subject, the Object, The Real

I came to drawing in the spirit of what Derrida calls soliciting, shaking, methodically threatening structure.

And in the spirit of what Glissant calls *trembling*:

**'We understand the world better if we tremble with it'**

***To draw seemed like a way to learn how tremble.. to tremble with the world... to develop the capacity for trembling.***

13

All of my interest when I was studying philosophy was in troubling binaries, hierarchies, centres, the unitary, the One, the Individual, the subject, power.. dominator logic. I was drawn to Merleau Ponty because he tried, systematically, to undo the separation of the 'subjective' and the 'objective'.

To trouble binaries

*difference and sameness*

*The object / the subject*

*mind / body*

*male / female*

*The animate / the inanimate*

*good / bad*

*right / wrong*

*the social / the natural*

*nature / culture*

*performativity / representationalism*

*entangled// separate*

*Presence / absence*

*Health / sickness*

*Rationality / madness*

*focus/ blur*

*Black / white*

I wanted to open lever open the grey area and find, as Fred Moten says, fellowship in the blur.



I was drawn to ways of thinking that I have come to think of as choreo thinking .. dance thinking.. I wanted to approach drawing as choreographic thinking.. dance-writing..performative.. which (as the choreographer, William Forsythe describes)

***‘..strives to testify to the plasticity and wealth of our ability to re-conceive and detach ourselves from positions of certainty. ‘***

I wanted to try to develop the capacity to think **rhythmically**. To develop the capacity to be **indeterminate to detach from positions of certainty**.

**14**

To quote the thinker Portanova (who writes across dance, technology, rhythm, and the body):

***‘Rhythm as a force of disruption and of re organisation... rhythmic interchange exchange ..rhythmic transforming ...rhythm as an attribute of matter itself: rhythm as a galvanising current flowing in and between all human, animal and technological, animate and inanimate, organic and inorganic bodies, simultaneously dissolving their solid organisations and remodelling their fluid exchanges...making/unmaking. construction deconstruction, weaving/unweaving ‘***

**15**

I have named an ongoing series of large scale drawings *Choral Fields*.

The first 6 of the Choral Field series were made in a small studio on a jetty by the River Thames. The rhythms of the tides and flow of the river, the boats, planes, birds, the daily migrations of office workers into the banking sector of Canary Wharf - part of London’s central business district -, the movement of transport and people all found their way into the drawings.

The word ‘Chora’ carries many echoes and resonances.. chorus, choral coral chiral choro choreo chora... the many voiced, polyphonous, polyrhythmic, place, dance.

The chora, which I think you're familiar with... is the place that exist outside the polis, outside the city, the periphery..., in Plato, it names a third space where forms materialise. The chora crops up in a constellation of contexts - including Derrida where it names a radical otherness, that "gives place" for being , for Heidegger as the clearing in which being happens or takes place and, in Kristeva's *Revolution in Poetic Language*, it is associated with the semiotic: 'a realm associated with the musical, the poetic, the rhythmic.'

I think of it like Karen Barads fluctuating quantum field of 'nothingness' no-thing-ness. A place where the categories that set up 'things' 'entities' 'objects' is undone. A place of indeterminacy. A place that creates the conditions for something else.. For other ways of thinking then modes that are built on things, and objects, and separate entities, and units and individuals.

I am trying to bring the disruptive energies of the musical, the poetic, the rhythmic into the 'city', by which I mean, the regulated, the controlled, the ordered, the constrained, the bordered - like the water of the river finds its way through the geometries of city space.. Like poetry undoes the rule and constraint of prose..The way generative noise disrupts the prevailing and dominant signals capturing the airwaves.

Scramble disrupt trouble blur

I think of water and its cyclings, and carbon with its cyclings through spaces and times, everywhere every when entangling.. made and unmade.. knotting .. cleaving.. .weaving... fugueing..spinning.. weaving...

16

The word 'field' is used across all categories : maths, physics, geography, geology, battle fields.. Visual field.. Depth of field.. Electrical field, magnetic field, electromagnetic field, gravitational field.. Fields of study.. Fields where forces are at work.. Quantum field theory..

I think of them as fluctuation fields, vibrational fields, oscillatory fields, field of perturbation, waves, sound - polyrhythmic, choral, many-voiced, across categories, melting categories, scrambling them, troubling the - Turning them over into a weather of complexity: indeterminate, fluid, dynamic, roiling, turbulent, relational, dancing: like water

## 17

My drawing is a rhythmic sounding of complexity, entanglement and turbulence across scales, times and spaces. I'm attempting to develop capacity and resilience around this "choreo-thinking, choral-thinking, eco-thinking, thinking with": to radically disrupt the concept of the Individual, the Subject.

I try to drum up polyphonous, polyrhythmic fields of activity in carbon: the figure/ground relation is actively blurred through a process of drawing under erasure; multitudes of disparate marks, evoking myriad spaces, whirl concurrently. Noise and signal are continually scrambled to produce generative sites. Making and unmaking, mark and erasure hold equal, interchangeable status and conditions are created for new possibilities to emerge. I undo the hierarchy of mark and substrate, graphite and paper, by rhythmically sanding and rubbing with one hand the rhythmic graphite marks I make with the other. The two hands work concurrently: the graphite and paper are materially broken down and combined, mulched, melded, blurred, smudged, scuffed together, disrupting the conditions of focus.

The word 'important' means to carry in (from *portare*).

Drawing troubles and questions what is important, what comes into the frame, where it is positioned, and how the space is divided, spaced, orientated. Verticality, centralising forces, geometries, separations, divisions all carry freight... and are troubled, disrupted, rhythmically opened.

## 18

I listen to sound from across sources - music of all categories, field recordings - constantly while I work. The distinction between the visual and the sonic is actively undone through drawing. Sound helps me to trouble space, to trouble organising principles, to make the matter of graphite on paper, with paper, turbulent and on the move

Dynamic weather systems of graphite conjure matter migrating, cycling across states: water - torrential, turbulent, roiling, falling, rippling - sea, ice, rain, cloud, mist; carbon as smoke, coal, fall out; desert storms and rainforest fires; the weaving and unweaving of DNA. The choreography of spinning, spiralling.

Place as chorus, as dance, as rhythm.

19

The polyvalency of charts, soundings, screens, data visualisations, notations are employed: radar, sonar, telescopes, electron microscopes, surveillance, satellite imaging... 'Readings' index gatherings and dispersals of matter across scales, spaces, velocities - particle collision chambers, constellations, deep sea mapping, global CO2 imaging, internet networks, telecommunications, city-flows intermingle into complex knots, fugues, skeins, weaves, textile. Binaries, hierarchies, borderings, categories are all actively undone and scrambled.

20

I think of drawing as something active, performative, constantly unfolding. My drawings are middle spaces, sites or fields of activity where I am attempting to find passage, to feel my way, to probe, touch, excavate, navigate, plumb. I'm trying to traverse all sorts of spaces and times, all sorts of states of matter and across scales. They are fields of relation, of emergence.

I'm trying to open up a clearing where as many different ways of thinking about space, time, matter, can be brought into rhythmic relations, to generate emergent, complex organisations through the making..where forces can be at play making and unmaking, gathering, dispersing, disrupting, building, destroying, asserting, obliterating, erasing... a weather system of graphite.

I want the spaces to be polyphonous, multiple, complex, dynamic. I want these spaces to be as much constructed from stuttering, stammering, hesitations, uncertainties, probings, flailings and confusions as robust, bold assertions and discharges of energy: for forces of doubt and certainty, absence and presence, to be in constant dynamic fluid relation.

21

The drawings are fugitive, heterogenous spaces: grey areas. I'm trying to constantly disrupt the figure/ground relation to make blurred spaces where the conditions of focusing are undone.

The drawings are the turbulence between noise and signal. They are a space of difference and deferral, a space of encounter. They are zones of indeterminacy where definitions and boundaries are broken down.

Although information in the drawings are suggestive of scientific readings, so many different sorts of 'reading' are brought into the text of the the drawing that they are scrambled. Il am trying to do something akin to broadband spaces where signals at

multiple frequencies are being transmitted and received - including those not usually within 'range': sonar, ultraviolet.. the very fast and the very slow. I mine all sorts of ways of thinking visually about space, scales and times.

I like Deleuze's phrase 'atoms, insects, mountains, stars' that traverses scale matter rhythm.

Spacetimematterings, as Karen Barad calls it.

Here's a passage from Barad, who I feel deep kinship with:

***'Meaning is not an ideality; meaning is material. And matter isn't what exists separately from meaning. Mattering is a matter of what comes to matter and what doesn't. Difference isn't given. It isn't fixed. Subject and object, wave and particle, position and momentum do not exist outside of specific intra-actions that enact cuts that make separations – not absolute separations, but only contingent separations – within phenomena.'***

22

I really love the beautiful images generated by the sciences that suggest so many different spaces and times - the spiral paths of the particles in bubble chambers, infinitely fast and small; the images of cellular mitochondria; the Hubble Deep Field images that probe deep time.. where all time is held in the surface of the image but can't be reached.

23

I look at images from across categories.. images that show quantum scale events so fleeting and also images of aerial views of cities at night, all the emergent formations at a macro scale that look like deep sea organisms in the dark water.. the aerial view images of the Nasca Lines, airports in use and obsolete that are reminiscent of the Nasca Lines, images of aerial view of ancient civilisations that have been covered over because the water source that was the seed of their emergence dried up and became extinct.

24

I constantly listen to sound when I draw - from the white noise of rainfall, field recordings from all environments, I love the sound artist Francisco Lopez - the humming and buzzing of his 'buildings of New York' for example, I love the transmissions from the hydrophones under the Antarctic Ice, live streamed on the

internet, as well as all sorts of music. I try to attend as closely as possible to the sound and to transcribe it's rhythms into the drawing, to make a sort of seismograph. I love all of these sorts of 'readings': seismographs, spectrographs, visual representations of musical notation, data, code, morse, glyphs and inscriptions.

## 25

I try to bring very different ways of thinking rhythmically about space into relation within the drawing and sound/music helps me to do this. Marks that are suggestive of the airborne or the sub-oceanic, for example, can come into relation with marks, lines, traces and paths suggestive of circuitry, telecommunications, morse, molecules, stars, shoals, electronic pulses, particles, networks. I want the drawings to be intertextual, textile.. polyrhythmic weavings being made and unmade.

I want there to be as much 'time' enfolded into the drawing as possible, from the shortest, fastest to the long and slow. I want to time time and space space - incantatory.. to rhythmically conjugate and to drum up. I am making dark regions of lost time, passed time, histories, the repressed, buried, hidden, obscured, forgotten: active rememberings and forgettings.. When I build up dense areas of information in graphite it accumulates and becomes compressed, compacted, obscure.. dark, potent, encrypted like coal, peat or black oil.

This density acts as a dark engine in the drawing, emitting dark signals. There are questions of loss, of memory, of aftermath, of the material heat and draw and potency they exert. There are questions of desire, longing, separation, reaching... also 'clearings', emptinesses, vacancies, voids, 'black outs' that create the conditions for arrivals, new time, future possibilities for emergence.

## 26 graphite

Graphite is a medium that lends itself perfectly to this sort of rhythmic making and unmaking. It is a material for palimpsest, constructed from physical layers that shed easily. It is very susceptible to touch from the most quiet, nuanced, whispering of marks, the freely and energetically gestural, cool 'scientific' diagrammatic depersonalised marks, notation, glyphs, lines through to the violence of pencils that scratch, gouge, probe, bore, excavate, pencils loaded into electric drill and jigsaws

that churn and dig: marks that cut and marks that stitch, marks that damage and destroy and marks that construct, heal, generate.

Graphite powder can be dropped onto primed paper and the impact frozen like a bomb crater. An unmediated 'moment', a graphite event instant in time that carries a

very different sort of heat and energy than the sort gathered in dark layerings and obscure markings that have been rubbed and sanded and compacted down and are no longer available to deciphering that are no longer available to be looked at at all.. All of these states of matter of graphite, these emergent organisations, are in a state of 'exchange' like a city or a psyche or the carbon and water cycles where nothing disappears and everything returns or persists and insists in one form or another.

I like to think of carbon in different states: coal, diamond, smoke, black oil, - a material that is both an insulator and a conductor.. and water in all its states: ice, snow, mist, rain, vapour, torrential, oceanic, still, deep fleeting. One of my favourite films is Tarkovsky's *Stalker*.. the way water, time, desire, loss, longing, memory play out in the film-time-space.

Graphite maps, unfolds, describes and returns to dust in the drawings in systems of exchange. I want them to be humming graphite sound-fields: vibratory, oscillatory, many-voiced, assertions and hesitations but also full of silences, voids, ghosts. residues and remainders. Intimate - about touch - and also distant. A weather of all these things. A space of contagion, contamination that tunes, detunes, retunes, receives, transmits, scrambles, orders, disorders, makes and unmakes.

## 27 paper

And paper is never just a passive plane, a surface. Under electron microscope you can see its complexity; a web and entanglement of fibres, threads that then, through the practice of drawing, of making and making, materially combines with the graphite. The separation between graphite and paper is broken down through the practice of drawing, through its performativity.. Through the rub, scuff, smear, noise, heat and rhythmic trouble and dance of drawing. Paper and graphite are both forms of carbon. When you burn paper it returns to black carbon dust.

## 28

This passage from Faulkner has always meant alot to me

***“Maybe nothing ever happens once and is finished. Maybe happen is never once but like ripples maybe on water after the pebble sinks, the ripples moving on, spreading, the pool attached by a narrow umbilical water-cord to the next pool which the first pool feeds, has fed, did feed, let this second pool contain a different temperature of water, a different molecularity of having seen, felt, remembered, reflect in a different tone the infinite unchanging sky.”***

Of late I have become increasingly preoccupied by spin and the spiral.. the way matter spins across scales .. the quantum, the chiral twist of DNA, the the swirl and eddies of oceans, the winds, the movement of CO2 through the planet's atmosphere, the formations of galaxies.. all of these swirling, eddying, spinning, whirling, turbulent flows of matter winding in and with and through and together.. knotting together and apart..cleaving.. fluid dynamics.. and, at quantum levels, how matter is in a continuous flow that undoes separations of absence and presence, here and there, somewhere and nowhere.

One of my favourite artists is Leonardo and his deluge drawings .. the knottings of chiaroscuro.. light and dark in serpentine swirls, speaks to me of matter moving and the turbulent scrambling of separations.

## 29 images of river drawing surface

I'll read 3 passages now, the first - Derrida, the second - Fred Moten, the third - Karen Barad

**“..a woman's infinite mourning is something that haunts everyone... each time there is a kind of “braid” of voices making it plurivocal - this word has several meanings, in fact - a plurivocal quality that works, laboriously or not, on each voice. For instance, here, we were talking about several individuals, several women, and Lorca, and all those ghosts that come to haunt the same place, and that in a way we take onto ourselves at the moment of mourning, at the moment of contemplation, which we mentioned earlier, it must be that these ghosts - which are both masculine and feminine voices - several qualities of voice, several registers of feminine voices, compose together get tangled up or braid together. In a certain way, whenever we speak, whenever I speak, whenever an “I” speaks, this “I” itself is constituted, made possible in its identity of “I”, by this tangling of voices. One voice inhabiting another, in a way, haunting the other. And I think that repression, all repression ... begins at the place where one tries to stifle a voice or to reduce this tangle, this braid, to one voice only: a kind of monologic.**

**The multiplicity of voices right from the word go, spells open house for ghosts, revenants, the return of that which is repressed, excluded, debarred. So I would try to group together the multiplicity of voices, the haunting, the spectrality, and also everything we've been talking about for a while... For this democratic space to open, it would take everyone, each citizen, that in everyone this multiplicity of voices be liberated as far as possible. It would take every last citizen to handle within these problems of voice, of sexual differences, of ghosts, etc. in order to be able to handle them as they should outside. If I am tyrannical within myself I would tend to be the same outside.**



**That's why politics also involves a kind of self-analysis, a kind of self experience. If you don't deal with your unconscious well, if you are not constantly analysing yourself, the exercise of political responsibility will suffer."**

**- Derrida**

**fellowship in the blur .. a palimpsest of stateless states... marks that get marked on or marked up, steam and water writing on ice... so that the sheets of sound were glacial and, as such, phonotopographical. .. We make the path, we draw the map, by walking, like pilgrims of the obvious: John Coltrane, Paulo Friere, Myles Horton, Ivan Illich. The path of the common wind. Weather map. Weather Bird.**

**We make the path, we draw the map..**

**And superposition/entanglement/nonlocality - is that palimpsestic walking? ...like pictures of all our singing walking through the world'**

**- Fred Moten**

**'Complementarity. Contingency. Indeterminacy. Inseparability. Any attempt to say something, anything, even about nothing, and we find ourselves always already immersed in the play of quantum in/determinacy.**

**Questions of the nature of measurement-or, more broadly, intra-actions-are at the core of quantum physics. Intra-actions are practices of making a difference, of cutting together-apart, entangling-differentiating (one move) in the making of phenomena. Phenomena –entanglements of matter/ing across spacetimes-are not in the world, but of the world. Importantly, intra-actions are not limited to human-based measurement practices. Indeed, the issues at stake in exploring the vacuum are not merely questions of human exploratory practices in the quest for knowledge, but are thought to be ontologically poignant matters that go to the very nature of matter itself.'**

**- KarenBarad**

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*

## **Woolwich Dockyard**

**30**

**I wanted to tell you something about where I work, here in London** - my locality, my neighbourhood.

My studio is located in a place called Woolwich Dockyard

Woolwich is on the south side of the River Thames - A peripheral region to the east of the city.

There are over 90 languages spoken in this part of London including English, Nepalese, Somali, Chinese, Panjabi, Lithuanian, Gujarati, French, Yoruba, Vietnamese, Polish..

**31**

This is the building where I have my studio. It was built over 100 years ago and is part of Woolwich Dockyard Industrial Estate.

Because it was a factory building, I have a double height ceiling and a massive window. Through the window, I can see the night lights of the city, the light pulsing at the top of Canary Wharf tower, all the lit windows in the steel and glass towers in the distance.

Canary Wharf is where the headquarter buildings of the major banks are gathered, part of London's Central Business District as I mentioned earlier ( the place where my previous studio on the jetty was located.) It is now far off on the horizon. Nestled in the skyline of many clustered, tall towers. Woolwich is far enough away from there to allow a tract of dark sky in between.. because it is on the periphery and the buildings are still low lying, for now. But that is changing.

A major new train line has been built - the Queen Elizabeth Line - that will carry commuters into the heart of the city in 20 minutes. This will change everything for Woolwich.

## 32

In the day, the window is full of sky in perpetual motion.. clouds gathering and ungathering.. the seagulls circle and the aeroplanes from nearby London City airport draw large curves.. coming and going.. chem trails appearing, criss crossing, disappearing again. A constant weave, made and unmade. The sky: matter drawing in time..

## 33

Here's a map of where Woolwich Dockyard is situated in London

## 34 thames barrier

It lies just beyond the Thames Barrier

The Thames Barrier was designed and built to prevent the floodplain of most of Greater London from being flooded by exceptionally high tides and storm surges moving up from the North Sea. It has been in operation since 1982. When needed, it is closed during high tide; at low tide, it can be opened to restore the river's flow towards the sea.

## 35 (Woolwich Dockyard thru time images)

Woolwich Dockyard was originally founded by King Henry VIII in 1512 to build his flagship known as the Great Harry - the largest ship of its day.

By 1540, the royal shipbuilders had begun operating on higher ground further west along the river at what was to become the permanent site of the Dockyard.

Woolwich Dockyard became an English naval dockyard where many large ships were built from the early 16th century until the late 19th century.

The historian and topographer, William Camden called it 'the Mother Dock of all England'.

**Because of the size and quantity of vessels built there, Woolwich Dockyard is described as having been 'among the most important shipyards of seventeenth-century Europe'.**

During the Age of Sail, the yard continued to be used for shipbuilding and repair work more or less consistently; in the 1830s a specialist factory within the dockyard oversaw the introduction of steam power for ships of the Royal Navy. At its largest it filled a 56-acre site. In the 19th-century naval vessels were fast outgrowing the yard and it eventually closed in 1869.

***Woolwich, Rotherhithe Deptford Greenwich* are heavily freighted names. The names of the docklands and yards that built and launched the ships that were the pride and glory of the British Empire.**

**The ships built and launched from here forged and sustained the so called golden age of British Maritime. The age when Britannia sailed out to 'rule the waves:' to 'discover' and conquer, to dominate, plunder and rule lands and people, with unquantifiable violence and brutality. In the 1710s and 1720s, nearly 200,000 enslaved Africans were transported across the Atlantic in British ships. London remained the largest slaving port in Britain with perhaps more than 50 ships a year leaving for West Africa.**

### **36 last night of the proms photo**

**These are the lyrics of the song Rule Britannia! from the poem by James Thomson in 1740. An orchestral version song traditionally closes the annual BBC's season of music on what is known as the Night of the Proms.**

When Britain first, at heaven's command,  
Arose from out the azure main,  
This was the charter of the land,  
And guardian angels sang this strain:

Rule Britannia!

Britannia rule the waves  
 Britons never, never, never shall be slaves.  
 Rule Britannia!  
 Britannia rule the waves.  
 Britons never, never, never shall be slaves.

The nations, not so blest as thee,  
 Must in in their turn, to tyrants fall,  
 Must in their turn, to tyrants fall,  
 While thou shalt flourish, shalt flourish great and free,  
 The dread and envy of them all.  
 Rule Britannia!  
 Britannia rule the waves.  
 Britons never, never, never shall be slaves.

### 37 tate and lye factory

On the opposite side of the river from where I am based in Woolwich Dockyard is the site of a large sugar factory : the Tate and Lyle sugar refinery.

Sugar.. Which lies at the heart of material global entanglements of extraction, profit, domination, subjugation, violence, brutality. Sugar, which is entangled everywhere across spaces scales times with the rise of London's power and wealth, entangled everywhere with the fabric of this city and the dominion of empire.

Sugar, known as White Gold, everywhere everywhen in complex non-linear material entanglement globally. A substance that has everywhere determined in real material ways how our cities have developed through the centuries - spatially, economically, politically.. their populations enmeshed in the brutal history and legacy of sugar slavery. Sugar which demanded the brutal fiction of racism to legitimise its violent extraction, production and distribution.

This is a passage from a recent article in The Guardian newspaper on Eric Williams who wrote the book *Capitalism and Slavery* on the slave economy (It was written in 1938, suppressed since then and only now being published)

**'In great detail, he lays out the scale of the wealth and industry that was created in Britain, not just from the slave plantations and in the sugar refineries and cotton mills, but by building and insuring slave ships, manufacturing goods transported to the colonies – including guns, manacles, chains and padlocks – and then banking and reinvesting the profits.**

**It was all this wealth created by slavery in the 17th and 18th centuries that powered the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century. ‘**

Sugar, transported through the waterways..

I walk every day along a tract of the River Thames where, once, ships were heading out and returning, endlessly carrying freight of slaves, convicts, ill gained goods and profit.

This quote is from the New York Times:

***‘It was the introduction of sugar slavery in the New World that changed everything. “The true Age of Sugar had begun — and it was doing more to reshape the world than any ruler, empire or war had ever done,” Marc Aronson and Marina Budhos write in their 2010 book, “Sugar Changed the World.” Over the four centuries that followed Columbus’s arrival, on the mainlands of Central and South America in Mexico, Guyana and Brazil as well as on the sugar islands of the West Indies — Cuba, Barbados and Jamaica, among others — countless indigenous lives were destroyed and nearly 11 million Africans were enslaved, just counting those who survived the Middle Passage.’***

The Tate Modern gallery further along the river towards the centre, was founded by Henry Tate from the Tate and Lyle partnership . Tate Modern is one of the largest museums of modern and contemporary art in the world and one of the crown jewels of London - attracting huge numbers of visitors, nationally and internationally over its history... alongside its constellation of galleries around the country bearing the name, Tate Britain, Tate St Ives, Tate Liverpool around the country.

The Tate Gallery put a statement on their website in August 2019 (produced by Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slave-ownership, University College London in response to the Tate’s request). Here’s an extract.

**For two centuries Britain was deeply involved in chattel slavery in its colonies in the Caribbean and mainland Americas, where enslaved people produced sugar, coffee, cocoa, cotton, mahogany, indigo and other tropical goods. The enslaved people were either themselves captive Africans forcibly transported across the Atlantic, or the descendants of such people and born in captivity in the British colonies of the Caribbean and mainland Americas. In this period wealth from slavery permeated Britain’s economy and society, and the legacies of British colonial slavery continued beyond the abolition of Britain’s**

slave-trade in 1807 and of slavery itself in 1833/34. After the end of Britain's own slave-empire, its cotton industry continued to depend on slave-grown cotton from the southern states of the US until 1865.

..

Neither Henry Tate nor Abram Lyle was born when the British slave-trade was abolished in 1807. Henry Tate was 14 years old when the Act for the abolition of slavery was passed in 1833; Abram Lyle was 12. By definition, neither was a slave-owner; nor have we found any evidence of their families or partners owning enslaved people.

*However*, we believe the firms founded by the two men, which later combined as Tate & Lyle, do connect to slavery in less direct but fundamental ways. First, the sugar industry on which both the Tate and the Lyle firms (the two merged in 1921) were built in the 19th century was itself absolutely constructed on the foundation of slavery in the 17th and 18th centuries, both in supply and in demand. Without slavery, the British sugar industry and the wider Atlantic sugar industry would not have existed in the form and on the scale they did. Henry Tate's career began as an apprentice to a dry goods merchant; Abram Lyle's father was a cooper in Glasgow whose firm Abram Lyle joined. Both these precursor businesses were closely connected to slave-grown sugar, which formed the basis for developing the consumer market served by dry goods merchants and for fostering supporting industries such as cooperage that furnished the casks for transportation of sugar and rum. Throughout the period of slavery, sugar grown in the British colonies had been brought into Britain at lower tariffs than sugar from foreign producers, thus protecting British slave-owners from foreign competition in the domestic market.

.. after the end of Britain's own slave-economy, Britain's sugar, including sugar for the Tate and Lyle companies, continued to come mainly from the Caribbean and South America. We do not know whether either sourced raw sugar from the slave-states of Cuba and Brazil which, after the equalisation of sugar-duties beginning in 1846, had become competitive suppliers to the British market and which remained slave-economies. Raw sugar imported from the British Caribbean by the Tate or Lyle companies in the post-slavery era would have been from estates established under slavery but worked at that point by wage-labourers and, in the case of British Guiana and Trinidad, by indentured labour, a system which lasted into the early 20th century. The monoculture of sugar, and the land-ownership and labour practices implemented by British firms that dominated the industry in the British colonies in the second half of the 19th century and most of the 20th century,

contributed to the progressive under-development and impoverishment of the Caribbean.

**.. While it is important to emphasise that Henry Tate was not a slave-owner or slave-trader, it is ..not possible to separate the Tate galleries from the history of colonial slavery from which in part they derive their existence.**

Art is a very messy business, entangled, complicit, in the midst of the mess. In the 90's, when pride in British Art was in ascendancy the phrase 'Cool Britannia' was coined.. Riffing and rhyming with the Rule Britannia of the patriotic song.

To feel the truth of arts complicity drives us to find ways to dismantle Art from within, to dismantle The Artist as Individual - to become choral, many-voiced from inside the midst of the mess.

Because there is not an *outside* to this mess.

#### **40 picture of a ship from 1700s**

Here, is an account of the journeys of just one of those ships that headed out along the Thames across the globe, .. a knot of a story that draws in London, the countries of my parents - Ireland and Australia as well as Rio da Janeiro and so many others .. along routes transporting slaves and convicts, sugar, cotton, silk, indigo, salt, spices, tea, and opium. A material entanglement.

The ships name is the *Sugar Cane*

Sugar Cane launched in 1786 upon the Thames River.

In 1789 the trade route of the ship was between London and St Vincent.

Sugar Cane sailed from Portsmouth for Ireland, on 9 March 1793.



Having embarked with 110 male and 50 female convicts, the ship left Cork, Ireland, on 12 April 1793.

Sugar Cane arrived at Rio de Janeiro in late June and left on 13 July arriving at Port Jackson, New South Wales on 17 September 1793 to deliver the freight of impoverished and dispossessed Irish convicts

Sugar Cane left Port Jackson for Bengal in late 1793.

Sugar Cane left Calcutta on 15 May 1794. The ship reached Madras on 29 June, the Cape on 4 October, St Helena on 25 October, Crookhaven on 25 December, and Kinsale, Ireland on 31 January arriving at the Downs, Ireland on 27 February.

On 18 July 1795, Sugar Cane was authorised to engage in offensive action against French shipping should the opportunity arise.

In 1795 the trade route changed to between London and Africa.

Sugar Cane sailed from London on 29 July 1795, bound for the Gold Coast, arriving there on 21 September.

The ship gathered the cargo of slaves and arrived 5 January 1796 at Montevideo, in the Rio de la Plata with 228 slaves to deliver.

Sugar Cane arrived back at London on 10 June and in July 1796 sailed to the Gold Coast again to gather slaves arriving at there on 30 September.

The French captured Sugar Cane on the voyage from Africa to Barbadoes.

By 1797 Sugar Cane had been recaptured by the British and in service again. The trade route was between Liverpool and Africa

\*\*\*\*\*

## 41

My mother was from the county of Wexford in Southern Ireland, a largely rural area. Her family lived in relative poverty and it was not possible for her to be educated. She and the other children she played with could barely read and write - or not at all. Later, after my father died when she was 38 years old, she did everything in her power to educate herself - with inspiring and extraordinary result. She was amazing. (she died last August and I am deeply grieving her loss.)

Convicts on the Sugar Cane came from Wexford as well as other counties in the vicinity of County Cork. Many of the convicts, homeless and impoverished due to the British rule in Ireland. They were given 7 year sentences for stealing a shirt or 'linen' and deported. The history of Ireland is and continues to be deeply entangled with British dominance. And my life and work is entangled with this history in non linear ways.

My Father's family in Australia came from Irish convicts. My mother and father met in London - she had left Ireland with a travelling theatre company and then made her way as a singer. He was working on ships and was passing through London. They married and stayed in the UK.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Thames now is changing. It is no longer the watercourse way of empire in the way it was. It is not a working river in the way it used to be. Although freight is still moved slowly along for construction work.

The river is increasingly becoming a site for privilege, luxury housing, entertainment. The new Riverside development in Woolwich - tall apartments buildings full of accommodation with 'spectacular views' over the Thames and the city skyline which will not be affordable for anyone living here now. Gentrification in action.

.....

**42**

All of these stories.. all of these material entanglements.. complex, knotted, woven, looping, twisting.

I have, over the last couple of years, been in correspondence with Fred Moten our entangled histories and commitment to justice helping us to find ways, to think solidarity.. to extend kinship.. friendship..

Both our mothers churned butter when they were young. My mother remembers the meal 'corn stirabout' her grandmother would cook over the fire for them... the food of the poor.. A sort of corn porridge.

I wonder what meals have traditionally been prepared from corn in Brazil. Fred's partner, Laura Harris, cooked his grandmother hot water corn bread just how she liked it when they were caring for her after Fred's mother died.

Corn is a story of entanglement.. those stories help us reach each other.. help us to find each other, help us to meet, to gather.

To talk with Fred about corn sets up, I think, what Karen Barad calls a refraction pattern.. A rippling refraction pattern

Drawing helps me think, helps me to be radically open, helps to be indeterminate, helps me to tremble with the world.. To set up refraction patterns with all and everyone 'I' am thinking with....

### 43 corn bread

The following is from an interview in Lit Hub with Fred Moten. He's talking about where the title for his poetry collection 'The Little Edges' came from.. He's talking about corn:

'well, after my mom passed away, my partner Laura and I brought my grandmother, who my mom had been taking care of, to live with us in New York, and once we moved from New York to Los Angeles she came with us to live in Los Angeles but our house wasn't set up to be able to, we were working and we didn't have enough time or enough resources for her to stay with us all the time, also because of the level of care she needed, so she stayed in a nursing facility that was close enough so that we went there, one of us was there with her, every day; and we cooked most of her food, and one of the foods which she really loved, a kind of staple for her, was what she called "hot water corn bread." And it's just cornmeal mush that is fried, okay? And I would make it – she didn't like, she kinda, she was very ... there's an art to making it, you know? I've seen like these great Japanese master chefs make tempura, and I said they do it with the same care and with the same skill that my grandmother and other folks like her that I knew growing up made hot water corn bread. There's a real art to deep-frying, you know? That they knew. And the way that it would play itself out in this really specific way is that – so what you want to do is that you want to cook the piece of – you have to be very careful and specific about how you spoon the mush into the oil when you cook it. What my grandmother wanted was that there would be uncooked soft mush in the center, because that mush was good for sopping or soaking up pot liquor. So she wanted that soft center. But what she also loved was that the thickness in the middle would sorta fan out into these little hard edges that would be crispy, right? And if you cook it right it would be almost a kind of lace-work. A kind of lattice, kind of lacy texture at the end of it, and those are the little edges – those little hard edges like that – it's almost like you can trace the history of the flow of that fanned out mush as it disappears almost, you could say, into the oil. And I couldn't do it right, but Laura could do it right. So it got to

the point where she wouldn't eat my cornbread, but she would eat Laura's cornbread. She would eat the cornbread of the Jewish girl who grew up on Fairfax and Olympic in Los Angeles, who comes from – the Hungarian immigrant's great-granddaughter. She wouldn't eat my whack but bonafide black Arkansas bread. And it was – yeah, that's the little edges.'

Entanglements of corn. Corn stories are looped and knotted into the stories of cities.. part of the vocabulary of the metropolis.. And a way to help build friendship and solidarity.

*To have been shipped is to have been moved by others, with others. It is to feel at home with the homeless, at ease with the fugitive, at peace with the pursued, at rest with the ones who consent not to be one - Fred Moten & Stefano Harney, "The Undercommons"*

\*\*\*\*\*

## 45 Boomy

I'll finish up with this. A very short video. I have a dear whose name is Nick Garcia. His father is Mexican, his mother born in England with Irish heritage. He loves music.

Nick has built a small portable sound system on wheels. Small and nimble enough to bring on public transport from Slough, a town that lies on the periphery of the city of London. Nick wheels the sound system, that we call Boomy, up and down escalator, on and off the underground trains, through the streets to various parts of the city.

When he finds a good spot, he sets up Boomy and plays records. These are records of music from all over the world that he has been collecting for years - often buying or being gifted from people with a history of migration.. Recorded music that is only here because it was physically brought here.

People continually stop when they hear the music.. Often recognising is as music from where they come.. Recognising the languages being sung as their own. They stop and listen and smile and talk. Its one of the most joyful parts of my life to go out with Nick and to play records together. It is hopeful, subversive and reclaims public space in real and intimate ways. It cheers people, brings people together and gives us the heart to keep going.. In the city... together.

The man in the video stopped to listen and then, when Nick asked, spoke a poem he had written. Gather.. Gather.. gather..

