







Honestly I am arriving at this work, I made my way here through sloping silicon, stitching thoughts, and folding conversations, to get to a point where I could do what I do, facilitate and arrange.

I spin around this sensorial terrain of touch, sentimentality, and object relations so often and I'd like to have more company here. I'm going to bring you on a mini tour. You don't even have to get out of your seats. We will visit each section and navigate the title of the work, following it as it exists as loose interpretive courier for the work. I'll plot through "Close," then "to," then "you." Charting this space that is complete yet imbued with ambiguity – a good enough installation. Taking this from D.W. Winnecott's idea of good enough mother which is a holding space, a place where there is just enough security of a structure for a child to become separate yet build a sense of healthy attachment to the mothering environment.

I am beginning to see this installation is an epistolary configuration – a collection of communications. And, this communication through arrangement wants to prompt interpersonal and intersensorial communication via non-verbal modes. My task here, now, is not to give the install a voice, but rather inhabit and share, with you all, a nearness to the work. I'm inviting us to participate in being eavesdropper to the engagements of tactility and closeness that is oblique and oh so real.





MOVE

Close

WHY DON'T ANY BIRDS SLOWLY DISAPPEAR
WHY DON'T ANY STARS RISE UP FROM THE SKY

I am often a sentimental copycat. That's how I make work. I could tell you more about this but my miming modality urges me to mouth the words,

"Oblique life? I am well aware that there is a slight detachment between things, they almost collide, there is a detachment among the beings that lose one other amongst words that almost don't say anything more. But we almost understand one other in this light discord, in this almost, that is the only way to stand full life..." (That was a bit of Clarice Lispector from *Água Viva*, pg. 63)

She often helps me exercise rootedness, not just with finding a position with my work (in relation to literature, philosophy, even discussions within sculpture), but more acutely brings me to twist my eye/tongue and ask; where am I and where are you in *Close to You*? What is our address, in location and longing?

MOVE

EVERYTIME YOU ARE NOT NOT NEAR.
EVERYTIME YOU DON'T DON'T WALK BY.
I WON'T NOT FOLLOW YOU LESS FEW PARTICULAR PLACES
I WON'T NOT FOLLOW YOU LESS FEW PARTICULAR PLACES

My sister loves to sing. She sings her favorite pop songs with atonal gusto. She sings Katy Perry, Lady Gaga, The Smiths – all out of her range. Her singing is practice for speech and is a part of her echolalia where she inserts lines from pop culture into conversation as if they were her own words. The repetition is a way she grasps a world that is not incorporated into her autistic schema. Conversely, Sara is not bound to a social reality because that reality is not designed to include her. I can see some benefits in having distance from the social and political world. If you can separate, PERHAPS operate from a double negative perspective, you can inhabit the fold of being positioned as or positioning an other - seeing and feeling the inextricability of one's self from one's environment and community/civic body/family in whatever way you formulate it.

This bind between separation and inclusion, could also be called solitude in the way philosopher Emanuel Levinas describes it as able to allow one to form a self in relation to the world, building responsibility and empathy to an other.

MOVE

NOT UNLIKE ME, THEY DO NOT NOT DESIRE TO NEVER NOT BE
NOT UNLIKE ME,
THEY DO NOT NOT DESIRE TO NEVER NOT BE

I, or we, are moving through interstices and a space “for another by virtue of another” a phrase I hold close from Maggie Nelson’s book *The Argonauts*. The epistolary form (this installation) is the shape of being by virtue of, between the positions of another.

The Epistolary Object – a letter, a seat cushion, a weighted blanket. These are all objects that are for a body that is not present. These objects are invitational, addressing an unspecified addressee through communicating through a multi modal vernacular language be that through the bodily scale of work, pop music intonation, word choice in lyrics, or recognizable domestic items.

Listen in as if you were signal noise or static caught between the fabrics contact communication. Tuck into the folds, allowing the blanket’s bulges to pull you down into a settled and awkward depressive position (shout out to Melanie Kline).

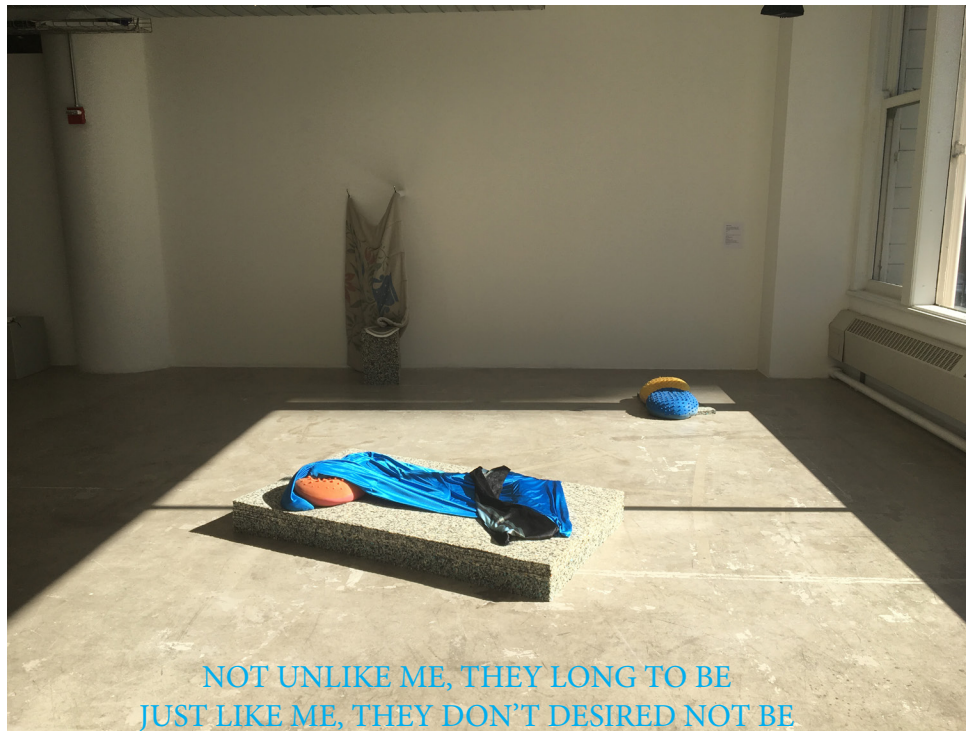
There is no need for full possession, let the objects rest outside of your reach, because right here, now, it is more about listening to a tactile caress across your interoceptive schema. Within stillness can you extend out to the tops of your fingers? Wiggle the left pinky finger and proprioceptively calculate the distance between your hand and the underside of the soft stomach of the muted orange seat cushion. Finding yourself curving to the to the arch of the sheen on the blanket that wraps whirling sounds into spooning.

Carried in the transmission is an arrangement of closeness connected to proximity. This touch is a listening to a transmission carried by the epistolary arrangement which shoots a three sided (and quite tender) signal. The epistolary form here is a three sided transmission made of:

- The author, artist, and reader, viewer
- the material, which includes a dynamic of signal and noise (coherence and incoherence) both in the objects and music.
- a pathway of production, where it comes from and who its potentially for. Which leads to the last point.
- The transmission relative to site and sight (place, space, and sculpture. The site is it as an actual address and a call to a person not in view, in both regards the site encapsulates longing and distance. In other, more technical and minimalist terms, the letter form is a site and non-site, sculpture in the expanded field. Haha, but expanding not just on a phenomenological level, as with say with minimalisms poster child Donald Judd, but into an intimate field of squishy reading and listening. Perhaps in that field we can practice a restorative re-formation of self with regards to that which is outside our grasp – what is right next to the site/sight (emotions).

*there is so much ore to be mined from looking at other writers who use the epistolary form, especially unpacking an feminist perspective in the epistolary (Emily Dickinson, Chris Krauss, Sophie Calle) but that is another discussion. I’m trying to think about what the epistolary can be in sculpture and installation, in a sensuous object.

MOVE

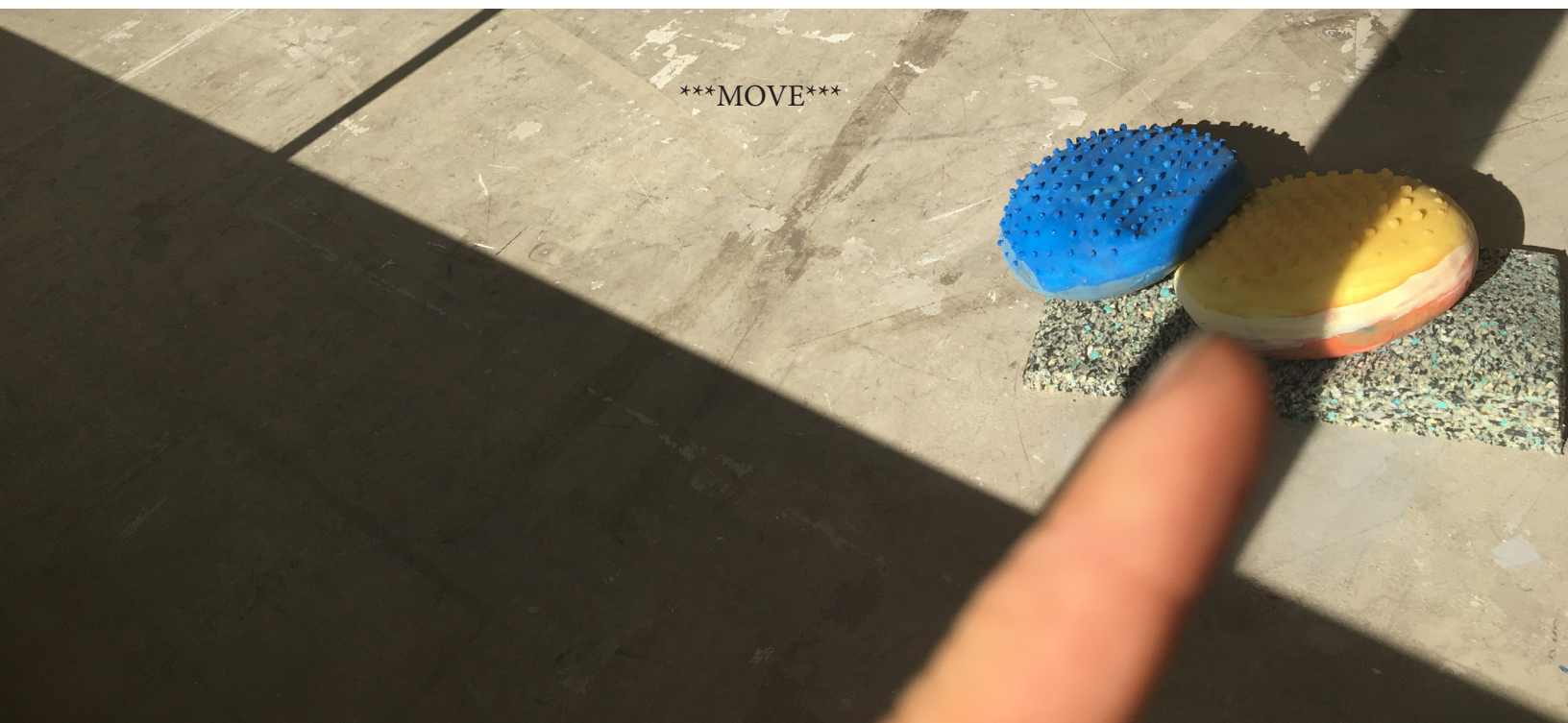


But what else are these objects?.

They come from Sensory Integration Therapy which seeks to help those with sensory overstimulation disorder or people on the Autism spectrum. The therapeutic method uses particular kinds of objects is to help organize the senses and categorize the imputes such that synesthesia does amass to be a wall from which people on the spectrum try to communicate through.

Examples of these object:

- weighted blanket (dep pressure inspired by temple Grandin's squeeze machine)
- disc-o-sit for wiggling and focusing, a rear fidget
- wedge – here it is made into a hybrid but for SIT is a positioner for focus



When Sara becomes over-stimulated by way of social stimulation and social affective forces (say a very operatic sentimental song she enjoys but also does not understand (really who does). She stems out (such as when my sister flaps her hands and hums a song). This creates a space that makes sense by way of social stimulation through piling of senses and social affective forces (say a very operatic sentimental song designed to reduce the need for stems and also induces to organize (really who does). She senses to rid the overcompensating behavior (flapping, flapping, hands and hums a spinning and humming). This corrective behavior that makes sense through aims to give autistic individuals skills for independent living (daily survival), and reduce the need for stems and also induces to organize the senses to rid use occupational therapy, physical therapy, and behavior therapy, physical therapy, and behavior therapy. These objects are less defined than they define a user's function or non-functional. They position a reading of physical and mental ability. Yet left alone these objects are undecided.



When Sara becomes overstimulated by way of social stimulation and social affective forces (say a very operatic sentimental song she enjoys but also does not understand (really who does). She stems out (such as when my sister flaps her hands and hums a song). This creates a soothing space that makes sense through piling of senses. Sensory integration objects are designed to reduce the need for stemming out, to organize the senses to rid the over compensating behavior (flapping, hitting, spinning and humming). This corrective behavioral therapy aims to give autistic individuals skills for independent living (daily survival), and crop up as devices in for more popular use occupational therapy, physical therapy, and ergonomics. These objects are less defined themselves than they define a user's function or non-functional. They position a reading of physical and mental ability. Yet left alone these objects are undecided.

Move

We play off each other while making meaning in the space of disorientation. Playing on undecidability, or play in general, is non-productive. It's a way of abstaining from becoming functional and by extension depleted. For example, the way that the ergonomic use of the wedge is used to facilitate working longer hours, ergonomics in a sense are a conduit to further give away labor power. But here you assist to distill in me a sense that one does not have to function in a structure that does not serve us.

Objects become membranes for interpreting how and who is legible or visible in capitalist and patriarchal society...ooooofffff I look at the bigness of that last sentence, and I am exhausted. I encounter and have to inspect so many objects in my studio and daily life. I'm going to rest on your slant and read to you a section of Karen Weiser's book *Or, The Ambiguities*. In it, she conjures a plane of glass on which metallic material adheres to make a mirror that makes the world lucid. When the film peels away, we still have a membrane of meaning. It is a bit like when I close my eyes and feel you pushing against me – a reciprocal relationship with mediating structures. If you don't mind, I'll read,

NEAR TO YOU
NEAR TO YOU

“to”

IF THIS IS AN INSTALLATION OF LETTERS, IM WRITING BACK

Dear wedge,

I have never in my life been able to make decisions, and I think that is why I like you. You are undecidedly functional and dysfunctional. You are a useful tool used in occupational therapy, something that encourages people to have better posture and focus on tasks. Simultaneously your simple geometry, coming into form from a pile of composite foam scraps that don't do very much, silly useless art object playing the role of a support structure. Oh how you oscillate between what you signal and what you signify, nothing quite sticks to you. Jacques Rancière gave me this language to place onto you, and I delight in his meaningful nonsense,

...one may play at once on the radical separation between the world of art and that of cauliflowers and on the permeability of the border that separates them... The only remaining subversion is, then, to play on this undecidability (“Problems and Transformations in Critical Art”).

for the mirror's a story but its silver's been scrapped, so that
each hue begins and we see it so, reading us through,
reading us,

A y,

Ay, Ay all is up;

(Or, The Ambiguities)

Sitting on you is a pursuit of interpretation, a scrapping of the silver. I find myself waiting for moments to feel where I am. You are not dissimilar to the mirror story, which is about how to see what is you, what is like you, and what is separate from you. Forgive me for talking in this linguistic register rather than speaking on your terms, but I hear you.

Mostly you present yourself as a transitional object – through foam. Again I call up Winnicott who described, “The term transitional object...gives room for the process of becoming able to accept difference and similarity” (Playing and Reality). This process of weighing difference and similarity equates to a person's ability to toggle between reality and illusion. A transitional object is commonly thought of as a cherished “blankly” or teddy bear, however they can take on many forms and I feel are apt in adult life (Molly ZH). But whatever the material or object, transitional objects invite interpersonal communication and reconfiguration what is expressible within the confines of “the systems that hang us through.”

Thank you for letting me rest in indecision and transition. Your smooth standard grade of 1:12 allows innocuous movement between form, function, and possible perspectival positions. Can you hear me from up here talking through my rear? Well, I can hear you. You sound in a rhythm of rise over run and make a rounded pitch. Think of the sound of a skiball game, where the ball never makes it into a hole. It naturally falls back into my hand to be thrown again. My arm begins to swing, and the rocking soothes me.

But I also need help from you, which is why I'm writing to you. How can I move in and out of coherence with objects and others? I am grasping for sensory integration and play with the slipperiness of how we read anything. Give me a slick slide between my eyes, so I can start to comprehend the impossible separation of reading and breathing.

I should tell you where you get your slop, it is in your genealogy that traces back to the mythic slant step, which William T Wiley bough for less than a dollar at a thrift store in the Bay Area for his then student Bruce Nauman. The strange, undecided, object resisted any logical interpretation, which is why the two artist (who both toyed with language) were captivated by the object enough to exhibit it (Slant Step Show in 1966 at Berkeley Gallery) and use it as an uncomfortable footrest in Nauman's studio.

Don't worry, I won't challenge you by introducing a readymade object, I'll keep building a sensuous world around you. I study sensory integration objects in order to make inside out versions of them (molds), or even auratic versions. Each object becomes in service of another, placing a viewing body to the side but maintained is a key sculptural question is how bodies and form are interpreted and situated. You take the slant step a few feet forward to dance in the field of sculpture, because what you tell me is that your therapeutic use is a way to address a particular "a-typical" person and in so become a place where more than one need is actually met. Thus the body situated by you is not one, but many, not general but particularly human in their different uses and reads of you.

Yours,
Maggie





NEAR TO YOU
NEAR TO YOU

NEAR TO YOU
NEAR TO YOU

NEAR TO YOU

You -A swing to the sentimental,

I am so so very sentimental, that is my methodology – feeling thought

Writer Mary Ruefle in her lecture “On Sentimentality” defines sentiment as “emotional-thought,” linking the Latin root of “sentire,” to feel, with the “mental” part of the word. A methodology of sentimentality allows emotional-thought to be an approach to work, and a means for that work to open channels of communication and collectivity.

The pronoun “you” creates a vague and amorphous relationship between us – song writer/performers, artist/audience. There are many “you’s” possible in the sentimental song and installation, and I thank you all for being here.

I truly love this song, all the many many versions. It was written by song writers (Burt Bacharach and Hal David in 1963, but made famous in 1970 by the Carpenters. Since its creation the song has been recorded and performed countless times. The sentimental schlocky lyrics and intonations have been absorbed and adapted by performers across genres. Carpenters, Isaac Hayes, Diana Ross, Richard Chamberlain there is even a punk version by the Circle Jerks which did not make it into this piece. The coverability of the song in a sense makes it a poor, low brow node of culture that is highly sharable and fluid, which is at the heart of why its so beautiful.

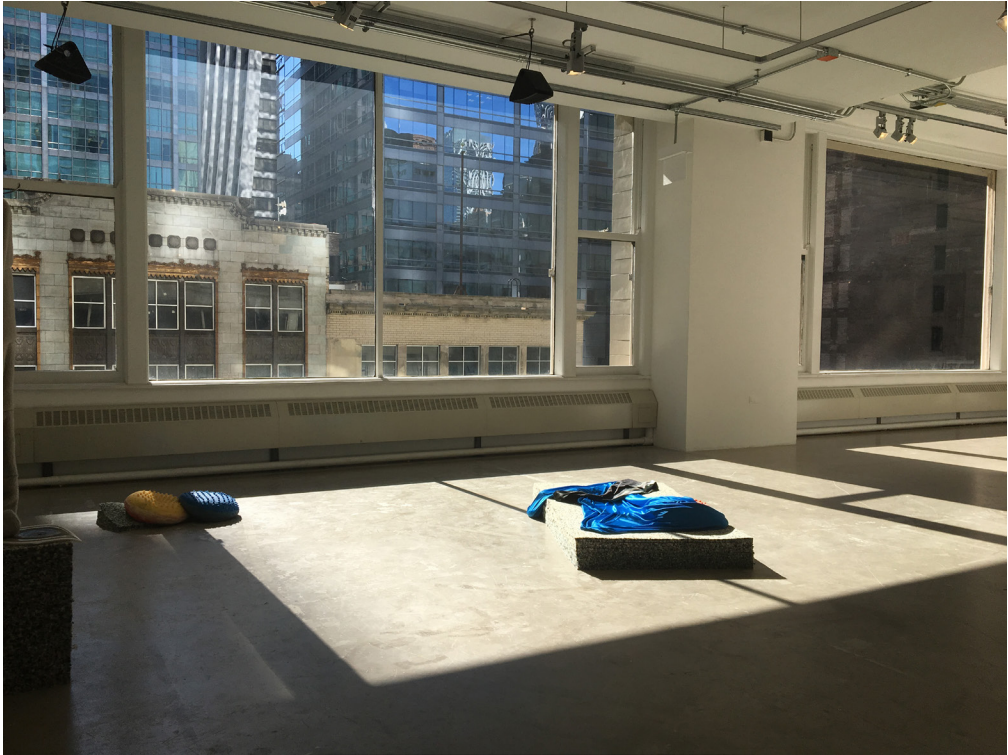
I desire to physically apprehend the already physical information engraved into the used records I collect. The scratches, pops, bits of noise are exacerbated by my very low fi rendering made from silicon pours. What I am looking for is not the meaning of the song in the its lyrics or musical pop structure, what I am wanting to grasp is the way the song moooooooves, the way it has been held and I hold it close in the face of its ever blabbering nature that emerges from its reproduction (a kind of cultural and affective echolalia). Further the singers performed authentic feelings rubbing up against the affective nature of the song, in the wake of the songs lacking specificity I feeeeeeeel. If that isn’t sentimental I don’t know what is. Sentimentality is loving at a distance, feeling close to something, to another, through mediation.

It is important to be aware if its mediation for its has been disseminated to create gendered stereotypes and push products. Robert Solomon's In Defense of Sentimentality he argues that cultural values reflexively influence an individual's emotional response and so we must carefully inspect how sentimentality is wielded in society. He proposes that emotional instigation can build empathy and weaves an individual into a social fabric.

The sentimental is thus nested into the function of sensory integration objects. A kind of physical touch without touching, that is oh so touching. Being alone together.

But what the objects do here is they attempt to settle a overwhelming feeling that comes out of the song becoming disjointed and uncoherent. Quite possibly these objects are really a way to piece the emotional world together. Melanie Kline talks about partial objects (fragments of mother – body parts) becoming permanent object (whole mother) which is the way to obtaining a depressive position (which is a good thing). This I find to be a continual developmental process, so child psychology for any age. The accumulation of sentimental shows a tangible common desire to be in and of the world. This is the transitional phenomenon as well. So let's swoon in an inside out twist and shout of what it might mean to be close.

*** MOVE***



CENTER
IN THE HOLE

These objects are a proposal in a larger letter I am writing in this space. I'm asking for interpersonal and social connection to be comprised of both attachment and distance through sensory integration. What can come of keeping the ability of our senses to be merged? What can that show us about the complexity of an experience? What if interpretation happened with in and through aware emergent inclusive functioning? Could this be another fold onto not just how we see ourselves but how cognition happens within gaps, within a continual engagement with sensuous, transitional, and undecided objects, rather than a real objet (tools that become apparatus and make us functionaries or dis functionaries). The kind of sensorial experience I am looking for the kind of art as experience from which John Dewey built his pedagogy. You don't have to write back, just keep making art.

Sincerely,
Maggie









