

Access as Desire: Epistemicide and Emergence

Transcription of Radio Web MACBA's
podcast *High Latencies* #3

Conversation with Ren Loren Britton



INTRODUCTION

Stretching time until it trembles, staying with the slipperiness of lived experience, embracing non-linear temporalities, and insisting that joy and fun are necessary technologies of survival are part of Ren Loren Britton’s critical and radical pedagogy. Against the logics of efficiency and assimilation, Ren calls for modes of being-together that value other temporalities and ways of feeling—where needs are not burdens but signals of interdependence, where data can be tender, and where the archive might become a site of relational vulnerability.

Ren Loren Britton’s artistic research moves through the molten intersections of trans*feminisms, technoscience, disability justice, and radical pedagogy. Working within collaborative constellations such as MELT (with Iz Paehr) and FansBenderPresents (with Rosen Eveleigh), among others, their work invites us to engage in processes of unlearning, reimagining, and reconfiguring access—not as compliance or checklist, but as a rehearsal of desire and relation, building infrastructures of care. In their words, this practice draws inspiration from Indigenous epistemologies and thinks with trans* and Disabled experiences, working against epistemicide, i.e. the willful killing of ways of knowing.

↑ Cover photo by Boudewijn Bollmann, at MU Hybrid Arthouse for the exhibition, *Poetics of Prompting*, 2024. Ren is in a room holding microphone wearing a shirt with embroidered flowers, it looks like they are in the middle of saying something. Behind them is a screen where the letters ‘Poetics’ are projected. They appear as a white, trans*masculine person wearing many rings on their fingers with yellow nail polish and short brown curly hair and glasses.

Ren walks us through trans* and Disabled lineages, their erasure and resurgence, tracing how cultural memory holds both the burden of remembering and the care of unforgetting. The conversation wanders through crip technoscience, access riders and servers, and braver spaces that acknowledge that safety is never universal, alongside the affective infrastructures that sustain care across difference. In the middle of too much data—and not enough—crip technologies of knowing, and of feeling knowledge into being, offer other ways of sensing the world.

This is a transcription of Radio Web MACBA's *High Latencies* #3, a conversation with Ren Loren Britton recorded in 2024, which has been lightly edited for clarity and readability. While minor adjustments have been made to streamline the flow of conversation, care has been taken to preserve Ren's unique way of speaking, which is a defining and idiosyncratic aspect of their communication style.

Between fragments of the dialogue, there are excerpts from *Collective Conditions*, a collaborative protocol developed with Constant, inviting us to imagine protocols not as rules but as gestures—tools for making space otherwise.

This podcast was part of *High Latencies*, a transdisciplinary artistic research project led by Nicolas Malevé and Jara Rocha within the framework of *[contra]panorama* (2024-2025). It explored the socio-technical infrastructures and dependencies of MACBA. For this purpose, the pair established their own temporary department in the museum: the Department of Presence Studies. In this space, and in constant conversation with different teams at MACBA, they proposed different areas of inquiry for thinking with and from digital logistical operations.



Photo by Franz Warmhof, at MESH Festival, Basel 2024. Shown is an installation of the video *Coalition Bouquet: 504 Sit-In*, the video is on a monitor hung on a metal pole, there are metal grids all around it with fresh cut flowers woven between the grid, suspended in air. On the screen the captions read 'they bring a mood.'



TIMELINE

00:00	Slowness is a possibility. Politics of time, crisis and exhaustion	49:38	Archives and vulnerability. An open relationship with data, crip technologies of feelings and knowing the world
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14:23	Ren Loren Britton’s and Constant’s <i>Collective Conditions</i> excerpt #1	56:05	Cultural memory. Burdened by the act of remembering
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29:45	Ren Loren Britton’s and Constant’s <i>Collective Conditions</i> excerpt #4	74:59	The reality of the werkstätten in Germany: workshops for intellectually Disabled and physically Disabled people. Low wage jobs, removed from society.
29:56	Against assimilation. Going beyond the checkbox logic		
35:24	Sound intermission	83:09	Ren Loren Britton’s and Constant’s <i>Collective Conditions</i> excerpt #9
37:40	Ren Loren Britton’s and Constant’s <i>Collective Conditions</i> excerpt #5	83:40	Safe spaces should be re-enacted and are not self-maintained
38:05	Slowing down and attending to modes of difference	92:27	Ren Loren Britton’s and Constant’s <i>Collective Conditions</i> excerpt #10
39:03	Trans*feminist technosciences	92:41	Fun and joy are necessary
41:21	Unforgetting is caring: cultural genocide through hearing aid technologies	97:36	Ren Loren Britton’s and Constant’s <i>Collective Conditions</i> excerpt #11
48:45	Ren Loren Britton’s and Constant’s <i>Collective Conditions</i> excerpt #6		



Photo is from the show *Gaps, Leaps, Fractures: Queer Temporalities*, Queer Museum Vienna, 2025. Shown is another installation instance of the video *Coalition Bouquet: 504 Sit-In*, the video is installed on a wall, there are metal grids all around it with fresh cut flowers woven between the grid, suspended in air, wilting over time. On the screen the captions read 'A Bouquet is hopeful.'



Photo is from the show *Gaps, Leaps, Fractures: Queer Temporalities*, Queer Museum Vienna, 2025. Shown is another installation instance of the video *Coalition Bouquet: 504 Sit-In*, the video is installed on a wall, there are metal grids all around it with fresh cut flowers woven between the grid, suspended in air, wilting over time. On the screen the captions read ‘Section 504 mandates that all federally funded programs be accessible. It funds: speech therapy, mental health services, joy training programs for disabled people. It prevents segregation and institutionalization on the basis of disability. And it requires support services are actually accessible for those who need them.’



Photo by Franz Warmhof, at MESH Festival, Basel 2024. Shown is an installation of the video *Coalition Bouquet: 504 Sit-In*, someone is wearing headphones and watching the video. It is installed on a monitor hung on a metal pole, there are metal grids all around it with fresh cut flowers woven between the grid, suspended in air. On the screen the captions read ‘to us all.’



**00:00 SLOWNESS IS A POSSIBILITY.
POLITICS OF TIME, CRISIS AND EXHAUSTION**

My grandma Dixon used to always say ‘I have one speed: slow’. And slowness as a way of moving in time is something that can happen in a lot of disability justice or spaces that are refusing ableism. Slowness as a practice of time. It can also create the possibility for things to come up that wouldn’t be otherwise perceptible. I also have a good friend that says that speediness is how they work. So that they are someone that rushes through things, and if it’s too slow, they do not have the possibility to actually connect to something.

So I don’t think that time and slowness, even though it may be something that I like or engage with—slowness as a kind of practice—I don’t think it works for everyone. Time and temporal politics are actually really multiple. That’s why time and thinking about how time works is something that I’m very attentive to. In my artistic practice and research, I’ve thought about time quite a lot, how a normative tempo often runs itself through people and exhausts people in this relationship to time. And exhaustion being something that I feel like in our current political climate, and not enough time to be able to attend to everything, the feeling of it being too late to organise towards some things. This relationship of climate change and overlapping crises that we’re experiencing, whether that be to war or climate, this relationship towards apathy and time. It’s already done. Nothing can be changed. This kind of non-feeling as though there is agency within relationship to time is something I’m frustrated by and skeptical of. But also the ways that certain normative ideas of time literally just run through bodies.

In a recent work of mine that’s called *Mining Meisspelling*, I look at the fact that I’m dyslexic, and I kind of go into that, and I reflect about my experience of learning how to read, but also learning how to type. And this is a moment in which technology

in my practice kind of comes in as a techno-solutionist force that I would not wish for. I was taught to correct my spelling vis-à-vis spell check as a child, I’m someone that has grown up with digital technologies, and this was always rendered as a way to fix my bad spelling. And this relationship of fixing through technology is something that, in my case of neurodivergence, was immediately applied, and I have literally never not used spell check, except in the six months in which I was producing this work, in which I stopped using spell check and did a kind of self study, and slowed down my experience of typing, but also sped up my relationship to studying my own languaging practices. So as a kind of relationship to time in that work, I tried to reconsider what my life, or what my languaging practices would have been like if I had been allowed to learn how to spell the way that I spell, and the relationship towards professionalism and marking intelligence, vis-à-vis good spelling, was something that was not so produced within our super capitalist society that we live in.

This relationship to this work in time is something that I tried to unmake and through looking at like the histories of the standardization of the English language, for example, but also the ways in which spell check was is kind of built on this algorithm called the Levenshtein-Damerau algorithm, which is a string algorithm, and it corrects for things that are basically two to three letters wrong. There’s also a way in which you could play with the tolerance of this, and it would never detect a misspelled word. This was also something that I started to think about. That relationship of technology, time and fixing of bodies is something that I’ve become incredibly suspicious of. So whenever there’s a kind of techno-fix that relates to a body and time, I’m like: ‘What is this?’ Working around or against that also means understanding the histories of standardisation that relate to what kinds of time or what kinds of technology is being produced as the only option. This is something that I’m tooling around a lot these days.

If I talk about that work, it has been through the correcting of myself into a standardised relationship to language that has provided me access into spaces. If I had been writing all of my emails to MACBA with many, many, many spelling mistakes, at some point you would have been like, ‘What? Who is this person writing to you?’. On the other hand, if we think about the time that it takes for me to unlearn that embodied way of spelling that I have, it’s also a real, normative, standardised violence that I’ve enacted upon myself. So I think that my embodied experiences are often in tension with a kind of timeliness that needs to be in action for contemporary society to function as it is. And when thinking about time and access, there’s this tension always between, what do we need, what is the politics of time that we can enact in the world that we’re currently in, and how much can we stretch it? How much space is there to stretch it? That liminal space of how much stretching is possible, that’s like the kind of edge of access that I’m really interested in. This is the kind of opening space that I attempt to enter into, in my practice, through multiple registers. How much of the maintenance of what is recognisable do we need to continue and how much room is there?

And maybe that kind of relationship to trans time is something that I’ve thought a little bit about. In my trans community, we have this really sweet way of talking with each other that has to do with when people come out. So I have some people that are much younger than me, like trans babies, but that’s because they just came out more recently, whereas in linear time age, they might be much older than me. And I refer to some people as my bristers, my friend Hank is my brister, and that’s a kind of way of bringing brother and sister together in a language, of course, but also they’re both much older than me in trans time and in linear time, but because they’re my brister, there’s a leveling of age in a way that it doesn’t matter so much. I think that there’s something about a slipperiness of lived experience

and time as it relates towards coming into one’s fullness in trans community that is very much a part of my experience. Trans time is something that I’m taking joyful luxury. It is a language game that allows for multiple points of access through time experiences that are inventive, right? Like our genders, or experiences of moving through the world are inventive.

08:21 VOICE OVER INTRO

11:15 DISABLED LINEAGES AND THEIR ERASURE FROM HISTORIES

I would like to introduce my lineage. The relationship that I have to the work that I have, is also through thinking through my Disabled lineage. I was raised by my great grandmother, my grandma Dixon. I’m actually wearing today a string of beads that I restrung from something that she used to wear a lot when I was growing up. It’s a kind of costume jewelry with different kinds of articulated pieces of plastic and a lot of fake gold that’s wearing off at different points. Then I strung it together with a piece of orange and green string. I wear it like a sash, and it’s something that grounds me in that relationship with her.

I actually don’t remember when she was born, but she had two strokes throughout her life, and so when I was raised by her, she always walked around with a limp and with one of her arms in a sling. And she had this thing that she said, ‘I only have one speed, and it’s slow’. And as a formative thing in my upbringing that really shaped me. Also, being raised by her was something that really has informed a lot of disability politics that I work with and carry through in my professional practice from then until now. Another way in which thinking with disability has been the shape-shifting reality in my life is that my brother is Deaf. And so from a young age, when he was born, I was six, I

started night school, and I started learning American Sign Language. And so when I was growing up, I was bilingual, meaning that I would sign everything I would speak at the same time. And this kind of multilingual experience of always speaking two languages at the same time, one through the body, one through the voice, I think relates a lot to my experiences of embodiment or thinking with the body as a primary way of knowing things and moving through the world.

So understanding my Disabled lineage has also shaped my experience as an artist in the world through thinking about my own experiences of neurodivergence, which is something that I came to later in life, but also understand to be embodied and related to the kinds of sensory experiences that I make in the world. So when I think about my practice, it was always there from the beginning. It was always there from a very young age, and I guess it’s more of a practice of finding and coming back to things that I already knew when I was growing up, if that makes sense. And the work that I do now, in broad strokes, relates to questions around trans*feminism and Disability Justice. These are big key terms for the work that I do. And I also like to think about Disabled lineages or trans lineages as something that’s really informative and meaning-making in my life, because these are histories that are often erased.

14:23 REN LOREN BRITTON’S AND CONSTANT’S COLLECTIVE CONDITIONS EXCERPT #1

One diva one mic. Don’t interrupt.
Respect other’s voices.

14:35 I’M SKEPTICAL OF RIGHTS. ORGANISING ON TRANSFORMING SYSTEMS

I should start by saying that I am skeptical of rights. There’s

this black feminist scholar that I’m a huge fan of. Her name is Lola Olufemi, and she wrote this book called *Experiments in Imagining Otherwise*. And one of the lines that has stuck with me throughout that text is that the political horizon that we are organising forward towards will not be met by the kinds of rights-based discourses that we are currently within. And although I believe that there should be rights held and solidified for Disabled people, for queer people, we have seen also in the rising of fascism across the globe, that rights can be won and they can indeed also be lost. And the reality of rights-based discourse as the primary way of transforming society is something that I am skeptical of.

So in the differences between anti-assimilationist Crip movements in Germany and also in the US as I understand them, and a kind of mainstream disability rights organisation in Germany, this question around what ‘rights’ means and for whom, is something that is to be thrown into radical question. If we believe that the way that we get protected and safe is only through legal measures, I don’t believe this is enough. The tension that exists between mainstream disability organising in Germany and Crip organising, which is anti-assimilationist, is precisely this. So in which ways do forces transform through securing more protection in the law. And I think that my politics are radical and I’m not organising or focusing on rights as the primary thing—I’m organising and focusing on transforming systems which I feel is more in line with Crip anti-colonial modes of rethinking and reworlding.

16:49 REN LOREN BRITTON’S AND CONSTANT’S COLLECTIVE CONDITIONS EXCERPT #2

Caretaking is a responsibility shared by everyone.

17:04 ACCESS AS A LABOUR OF LOVE

I understand myself to be as connected to a long, long, long, delightfully long group of people in past and in present and in future, of folks working on relationships to access, I would name Sins Invalid here as a huge inspiration and grounding point for the way that I think about radical access. They have this very simple document online that's called *Suggestions to make your event more accessible for Disabled audiences*. It's a list of things that you can do, and it's also a list of things that, if you do, will radically transform everything that you do. So it's very smart in this way. They talk about access as being a labor of love and also of being something that benefits from long term planning and from the capacity to hold different temporal needs. And what I mean by that is it does take time to organise, to rebuild a building, to make it wheelchair accessible. It also does require time to make sure that there can be a sign language interpreter or someone who speaks sign language and an interpreter into English or another language, for example. It does require time and community and capacity building, and also trust to be built between Disabled communities and institutions. Because of the reality of how much cultural programming has not catered its attention towards Disabled audiences, the first time that a cultural context makes itself accessible, I would not expect Disabled people to be running to arrive. How can it be that you would be trusted, that from here on out, you would be continuing to provide the kind of access that you did for that one event? When thinking about radical access, I'm thinking about undoing long term ignorance and long term ignoring that has shaped what neurodivergent and Disabled people understand to be our space that we can take up.

Radical access works at many levels. It works in this long term way right where if, let's say, MACBA decided that they wanted to start working on developing their relationship to D/deaf audiences, that would mean that you would need to understand all of

the sign language interpreters that are in Barcelona and maybe also in Spain. Because sometimes maybe you would have it online, so you could have an online interpreter, and you would have a list of those people, and then you would have relationships with those people, and maybe you would see if there's a union, and there would be a kind of active, willful relationship to the interpreting community, but then it would also enable a relationship to the D/deaf community here as well. And then, that would mean that every time there's an event, there's either a D/deaf speaker behind the lectern talking about their work and practice—or it would mean that there's interpretation. This is what would happen, and it would happen every single time. Over time, I imagine the D/deaf community here would start to attend these events, if they're not already. So radical access means a kind of politics around making things accessible that expects, demands, requires, and persists in making things accessible in a long-term sense. It also attends to things that may be less perceptible.

There's this really amazing document that Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha refers to that's called *Fragrance free femme of colour genius*, that talks about everything that you would need to do in a cultural institution to make it accessible for people with multiple chemical sensitivities. So people that are impacted by cleaning products, for example, or perfume or anything that's used to kind of wipe down surfaces. These chemical sensitivities can be really toxic for many people, and it requires institutions to stop using cleaning products that are of a certain nature, up to as much as a month before they would have an event where people with multiple chemical sensitivities would come. And this is a kind of amazing document that entails everything that would need to be done in order for that to happen, up to and including when people come that day, they can wear nothing scented. And that needs to be communicated way ahead of time. These are radical accessibility practices that with time, care, planning and attention, can be

put in place, but require a kind of attentiveness, a building of perception towards what kinds of spaces we're setting up for, who and why and what that what that means. It is a very different kind of world that I'm proposing here, in which the kind of care that would be required or normalised is far beyond what is commonly thought of as the normal relationship to building an event now. So radical access is these requests that would make a different worlding possible, and that shape-shift the norms that we work within.

22:03 REN LOREN BRITTON'S AND CONSTANT'S COLLECTIVE CONDITIONS EXCERPT #3

Movement is good, taking care of your own needs is good. Leaving space for silence is good. Leaving the room and coming back is good.

23:14 NEEDS ARE COOL! ACCESS RIDERS, ACCESS SERVER, AND ACCESS AS DESIRE

Everyone has needs. Needs are cool. Access riders as a practice comes from many Disabled creatives who have been working on how to get our needs met across cultural institutions for a long time. I really love the one from Johanna Hedva. There's also *Access Docs for Artists*, which is a website that I often refer people to. I first learned of access riders from this person named Spiders, who I met when I was living in Kassel for some time. As I started working within cultural institutions, in the cultural world, I realised that there are so many questions and so many assumptions that are taken as though they're normal and naturalised within this space, and the only way to build a sustainable practice for myself was to let people know ahead of time what it is that I would need to be able to perform well and

to show up well as myself, because if I can't be myself in this extremely precarious field, then why would I be working here?

I've taught many workshops on access riders, and also have written about them, and I see them as a kind of way of rehearsing a shape-shifting of space, so that also the kind of tokenisation that I experience within spaces can also be lessened. In my access rider I link to a few references at the bottom, in which it's built from, and in Johanna Hedva's access rider, they write that: 'hey, it would be really cool for me and everyone else too, if you made your institution with these practices always, not just when I'm here'. And I think that that kind of practice of education that goes in the different direction from the person being hired to the cultural institution is also a kind of world-building practice. So we, me and everyone else that's using an access rider, we're trying to encourage cultural institutions to build the world that they're producing a bit differently, which would be a world where many different needs could be met without it being a burden.

A project of mine that speaks to this directly is the work called *Access Server*. It's a project that I worked on with Iz Paehr, and it's an email server that pays Disabled people 20 euros per email to write to cultural institutions asking for access and simultaneously educates cultural institutions on what access practices they might need to learn about in order to provide. It's still in the prototyping stage, so we can't use it yet, but it's a project that actively tries to take the fact that cultural institutions are now working on access as a good thing. It does not interrupt people for trying to learn about something. It rather supports people in unlearning ableism as normal, and considers what kinds of tools might you need to have at hand. I'm sure every cultural institution learned where to buy the right color paint, right but have they all learned where to hire an interpreter for sign language, for example?

These are things that, if you have at hand, are not big barriers. But if you don't have them at hand, they can seem too big to even start. And that paradigm of not knowing where to start is something that I think having an access rider practice for myself also empowers, hopefully, cultural institutions to then start tooling up what they might need in order to shift what they have on hand. So that's the kind of world that I see them building towards.

I've thought about access before as almost like a mood. I like to define access as anything that someone might need to be in this space. So that's what we can take access to mean. And also, if you think of access as a mood like I like to think about it, it's that the possibility for you to be in this space in any way is something that is welcome and desired, right? So how can we create an environment in cultural spaces in which any way that someone might need or want to show up in the space is welcome and desired? It feels very far from where we are now, but that is a key point for me in terms of thinking around smaller institutions when it comes to questions of access. Because in bigger institutions because of bureaucracy or because of 'the way that things have been, and therefore this is the way that things always will be', it can also be harder to show up with your full self. Because in a bigger institution, when I send an access rider, I can assume that it's sent between anyone from five to 25 people. And in a way, I'm then outed between five to 25 people, if I am in a para-institution, or if I'm in a collective, and I say to my friend, 'hey, it would really be nice for me if I had captions for this talk'. Or, 'hey, is there a place where I can take a rest?' That friend is going to be like, 'oh, yeah, no problem'. And because it's a mood, right?

29:45 REN LOREN BRITTON'S AND CONSTANT'S COLLECTIVE CONDITIONS EXCERPT #4

Privacy. Personal stories stay within the room.

29:56 AGAINST ASSIMILATION. GOING BEYOND THE CHECKBOX LOGIC

Access riders in bigger institutions run the risk of furthering tokenisation in some ways, because then I become the representative of these things. I still believe I'm politically doing it, and that's why I am doing it. It's also not an option for me to not have it. So it doesn't matter, in a way, because I need to have a sustainable career for myself. But I also think that in smaller cases, access practices can be more informal, less produced, and still just as accessible, because there's a more of a willingness to extend one's own resources. Within limits, of course, but also the mood is often there in a smaller space.

Assimilation, as I understand it, is a force that wishes for people to be able to participate within the same things that are already there. And this is an operation that happens on multiple levels. 'The same things that are already there' means that, if a talk is given in an auditorium, that everyone can come to the talk between 6 to 8pm that everyone can listen to the talk that is spoken to them in spoken language, that everyone can literally access the space that the talk is in, in terms of the building that it's in. This means that there is often a high level of spoken academic English that is shared, that is accessible to everyone, and it means quite a few things around education level, around access to English as a dominant language, around access to spaces, places, ideas, concepts... I would like to contrast it to anti-assimilation, which would mean a very separate setup of operations. So what would an anti-assimilationist lecture look

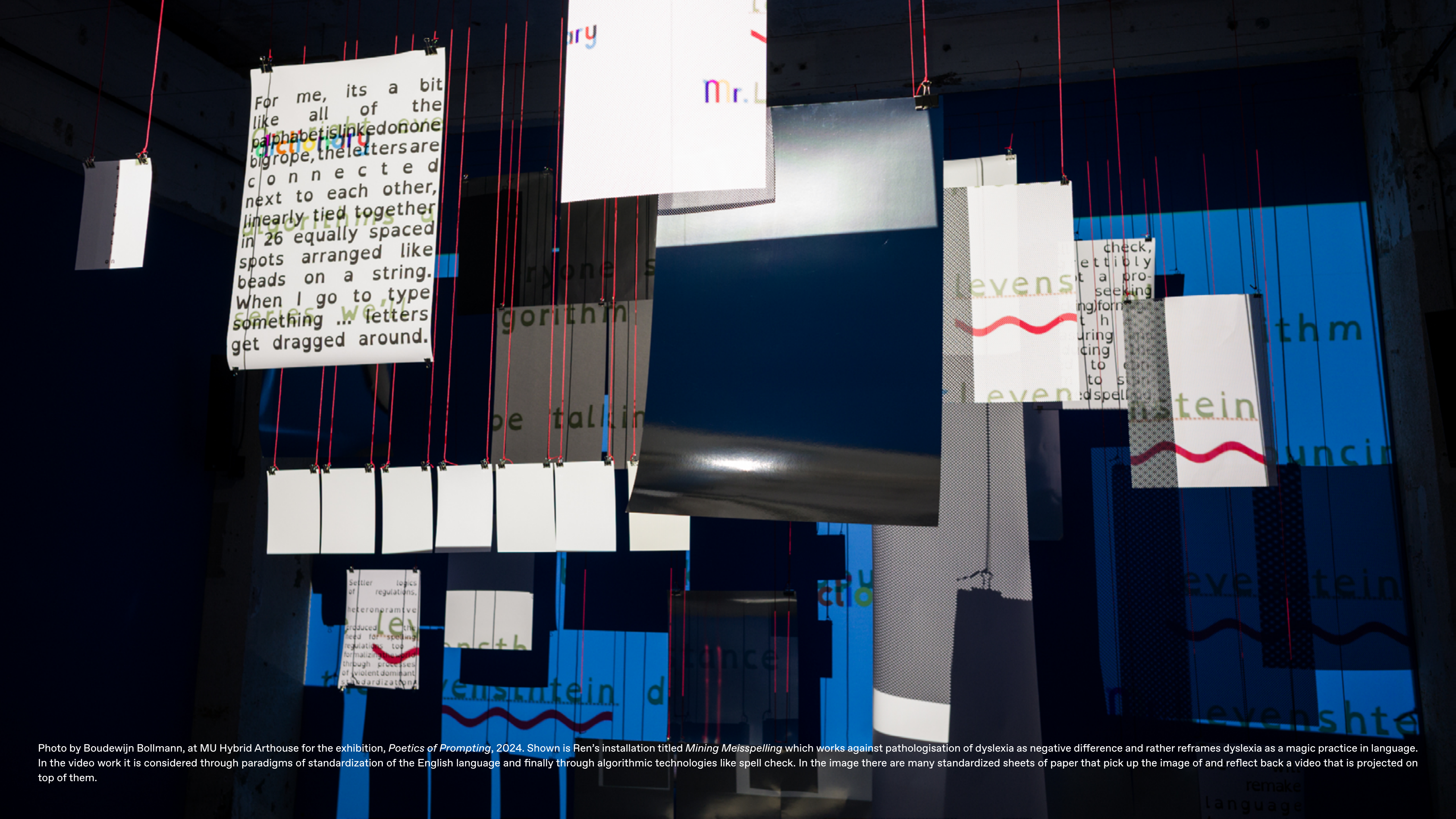


Photo by Boudewijn Bollmann, at MU Hybrid Arthouse for the exhibition, *Poetics of Prompting*, 2024. Shown is Ren's installation titled *Mining Meisspelling* which works against pathologisation of dyslexia as negative difference and rather reframes dyslexia as a magic practice in language. In the video work it is considered through paradigms of standardization of the English language and finally through algorithmic technologies like spell check. In the image there are many standardized sheets of paper that pick up the image of and reflect back a video that is projected on top of them.

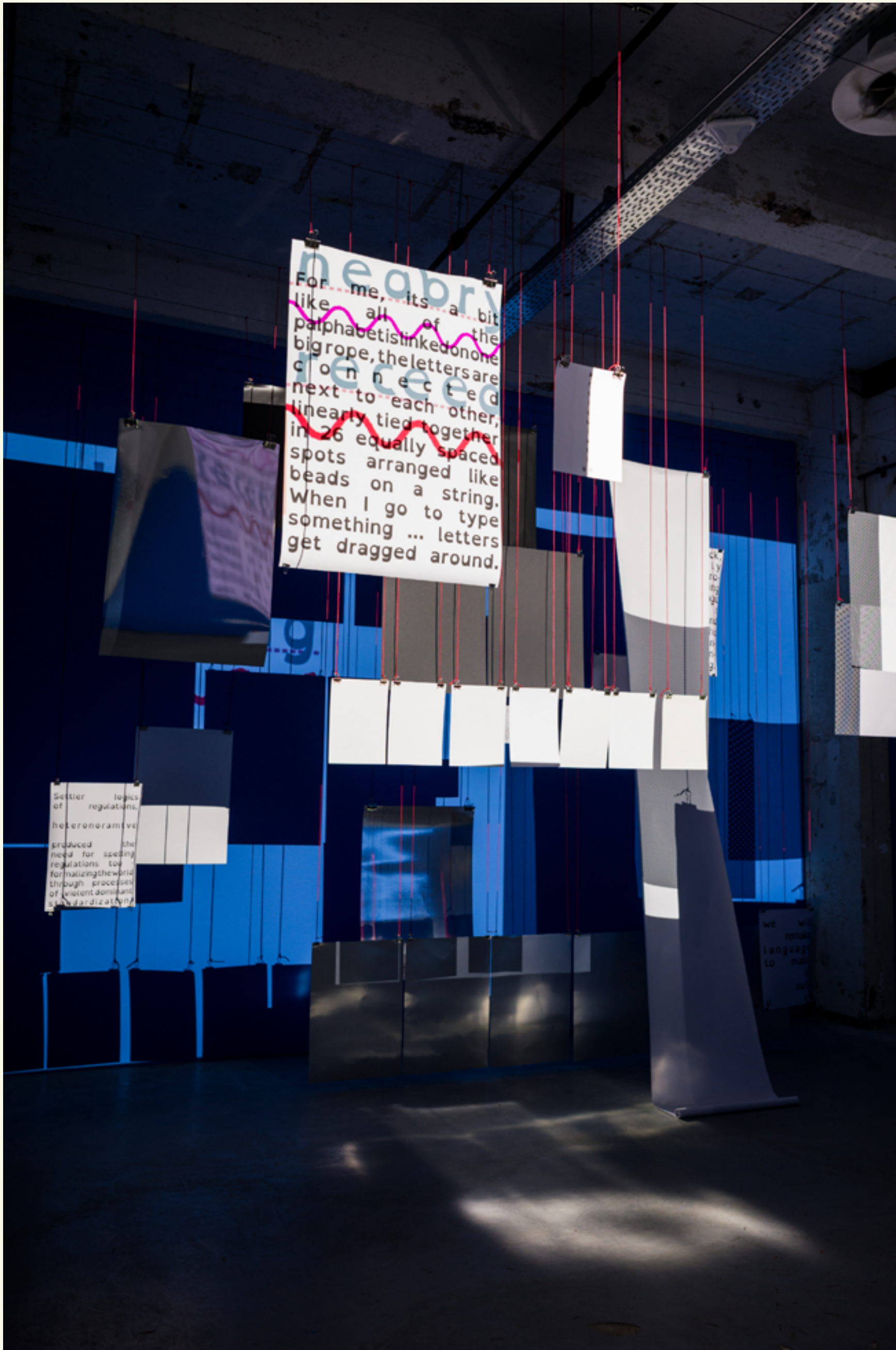


Photo by Boudewijn Bollmann, at MU Hybrid Arthouse for the exhibition, *Poetics of Prompting*, 2024. Another view of the same installation is shown, reflections from the various sheets of reflective paper are shining down on the ground.



Photo by Boudewijn Bollmann, at MU Hybrid Arthouse for the exhibition, *Poetics of Prompting*, 2024. Another view of the same installation is shown, reflections from the various sheets of reflective paper are shining down on the ground. Someone is seated in the right side of the image, reading the access copy.

like? What would be the parts of it? First of all, it probably would be online at the same time, so that it would be accessible both in presence and also simultaneously online. And then if you couldn't be there at that moment, it would be recorded and posted later. The ways it would be delivered would probably be through at least three or four language operations, meaning that it could still be spoken, but it would also be captioned. It would also be translated into a local sign language. And then if there's another local dominant language, it might be translated again into a different language. It would also be printed with an access copy, so people could read it along the way. And if the lecture was given in an academic framework, there would also be an easy language translation, meaning that there would be a way of saying the lecture that would be done in a way that would privilege access for folks that are intellectually Disabled.

This anti-assimilationist framework would also extend into the way that the space itself literally looks. So that would mean that in the space you're not expected to sit there for the entire thing, upright with full attention, nodding that you understand. You would be welcome to lay around, take a nap, fall asleep, go away, have a snack, bring your baby, have your dog, bring a friend, bring something to play with, stim, colour. Come and go as you please, bring an access worker with you, any sort of way that would allow you to be in the space, if you are physically there, would be something that is not only allowed but welcome. Most of the ways in which Disabled and neurodivergent people move through the world right now, are perceived to be as an interruption to the status quo, and this is only when assimilation is privileged and prioritised as a way of working in spaces.

Right now, in most cultural institutions, there's a notion of assimilation in terms of access, which means that there's a checkbox logic that is overlaid. So the idea of a checkbox logic is that I need, let's say, captions, closed captions, to participate in a talk. Because I need that. I say ahead of time, 'hey, will you

put closed captions on this talk?' And they say, 'Yes'. Check. Done. What does that do to the rest of the institution? That's my question. And what that does to the institution, often is nothing. They do something for me where for two hours they set up these captions for the talk, and then there is no durable legacy, so to speak, of what that has done to transform the institution in terms of thinking about why their language practices are produced the way that they are. And what I think an anti-assimilationist perspective on this would be, would be that you don't just assume that this one person needs this one thing, and so then you do it for that one time, and then it's over. You really think about what it is to remake the kinds of access that are possible in this space as a continual project of the institution.

And I'm trying to root it in the institution because that's the context in which we're speaking, but anti-assimilationist politics relates to a kind of Crip-queer-worldbuilding project that is really not about making Disabled people, neurodivergent people, trans people, fit into the world within its current logics. It's about breaking the world down and apart so that the kind of world that we can make is a world that many worlds fit, right? This is a kind of pluriversal logic that I think comes from a lot of decolonial thinking, and this is something where I understand anti-assimilationist frameworks and decolonial thinking to align and come together extremely succinctly, because this is about allowing multiplicity to coexist without needing one to conform into the other for it to be welcomed, desired and respected.

35:24 SOUND INTERMISSION

This notion of access intimacy is a term from Mia Mingus, who is a disability justice writer and activist who I'm a huge fan of. To paraphrase what she understands access intimacy to mean, it is this kind of strange and eerie feeling when someone just gets

your access needs. And so I also think that in terms of talking about access, it's not that people need to have a huge training on ableism and disability in order to be able to get someone's access needs. It can also be a kind of careful attentiveness to an experience that then allows for someone to share a need and for that need to be met and for that exchange to be welcome and good. This is a kind of production of access intimacy that I find is really important when thinking about access. And for me, something that I've been tooling around a lot around access is also this relationship to problematics. So talking about access and needs often produces problems within ableist spaces. When I think about this language of 'becoming a problem', I draw a kind of intellectual lineage with W. E. B. Du Bois, for example, who has a very famous statement in which he says, 'How does it feel to be a problem'. Which is also something that comes back again in Sara Ahmed's text *Complaint!*, where she says: 'when you name the problem, you become the problem'. And so when thinking about these relationships of access and needs in relationship to problemmaking in situations, it's also about naming the problem of inaccessible spaces and then being able to create a container in which people can address the problem, while it's also speaking about disability and neurodivergence and differences in a way that is safe enough that we can meet each other's needs. Which is a remarkably difficult set of operations, but all of which challenge the kind of white Western colonial, disembodied reality that most cultural institutions participate in and produce as 'normal'.

37:40 REN LOREN BRITTON'S AND CONSTANT'S COLLECTIVE CONDITIONS EXCERPT #5

Be mindful of speaking times. Please make an effort to communicate. Communicate in all forms, not only orally.

38:05 SLOWING DOWN AND ATTENDING TO MODES OF DIFFERENCE

One other thing I wanted to say about slowness and time is that I think it also makes people very uncomfortable to slow down and to make space for attending to modes of difference that are often erased within places and spaces. So my relationship to speed and holding space is often to pay attention to what's uncomfortable and understand that the uncomfortability of slowing down within something is often because we're expected to perform very fast, and this relationship to fastness as the *modus operandi* is something I'm really skeptical of. For me that relates to trans*feminism, or trans*feminist technosciences.

With our shared colleague, Helen Pritchard – and also Jara: you and I have also been thinking about trans*feminist technosciences as kind of a shape-shifting field, as you talk about it, and also maybe something that slowly, attentively and carefully continues to persist and change in its *attentivenesses* over time.

With another colleague, I work on a project that's called *Fans Bender Presents*, which talks about presence as both presence as in being here with you right now, presence as in gift giving as like a present, and presence as in presenting, so presenting this person. And I think that this kind of series of operations around presencing, trans*feminist, technoscience and speed over time, there's something in that triangle that I've been attending to, recently.

I guess I would attempt a definition of trans*feminist technoscience, I would say that trans as in what crosses, trans as in transgender, trans as in connecting between, and trans as in transient, are all frameworks that bear upon feminisms – with a plural, feminisms, and how that relates to the politics of who's funding, who's producing and who's included in technologies as they are produced and engaged. I find that trans*feminist

technoscience in my practice emerges through excavating histories, often. Finding minor histories around, like the thick intersectional positions around when technology has been used and how it's been used, and holding attentiveness to the trouble of the production of technologies. And also the possibility of access that they produce.

A work that I made last year was called *Unforgetting Is Caring*. It's a video work that I made with Iz Paehr. And in that work, we looked at a series of technologies that carry with them troubling politics and sometimes hopeful politics as they relate to disability technology or anti ableist technology. We're looking at, for example, the Zenith hearing aid, which is a hearing aid that has a lot of technological development within it in terms of vacuum tube technologies. So vacuum tube technologies that were used to produce TVs, for example, were also used within early hearing aids. However, the politics around what has been called the cultural genocide from D/deaf people.

Big D 'Deaf community' is those people in deaf community that understand themselves to be a cultural community. Little D, 'deaf community' is those in the deaf community that understand their deafness to be a disability. This is a split within D/deaf community, whether deafness is understood as a disability or not. And for those that understand deafness as a cultural context and a language, not as a disability, hearing aid or cochlear implant technologies are seen as a kind of cultural genocide. Because this is as though to shift someone out of a language practice is inherently violent. And for me, when I think about trans*feminist technoscience, put next to this example of the Zenith hearing aid, we get immediately into the thick intersectional positions around Deaf culture, disability culture, the fact that vacuum tube technologies have their own long history in terms of technological development, the relationship of what it is for me as a hearing person with a Deaf brother who speaks sign language, to be researching something, my own personal

narrative with it, which is entirely not neutral and totally specific... And how all of those things produce this technology, through my reading of it or through my studying of it, but also through the fact that most people don't know anything about hearing aid technologies. And this is a kind of cultural moment that we're in, in which hearing aid technologies, for example, are just something that we're not taught about, as though they are not important. But they also are furthered through technological biomedical research that keeps developing technologies that some D/deaf people simply don't want.

So this is a thick web of relations that I understand myself to be responsible to. For me, that's a kind of trans*feminist technoscience perspective. It is the interweaving and the dealing with and the attending to both the important kinds of access which that technology has made, and also the troubling frameworks upon which it assumes a kind of technoableist worldview, to paraphrase Ashley Shew. This kind of technoableist worldview in which technologies are produced to eradicate disability or experiences of disability, as though that's what technology should be doing. This is deeply problematic. And also technologies like hearing aids make access for some people, and some D/deaf people want that, or hard of hearing people want that. And so these are entirely non neutral contexts in which trans*feminist technoscience is, in my reading, in full operation.

And those kinds of thick contradictions around the experience of technologies is something that I see all around me. When considering accessibility and technology, perhaps we shouldn't normalise the reality of compromises that often have to be made, right? One should not need to always compromise based on one's politics and within an experience of transness or disability, compromise and finding ways of working together that are about compromise are often at the heart of our realities.

Being real about the necessity to compromise within overlapping violences is not to say that the violences are not there. But my politics is that I want most people there, that can be there, that want to be there, because I think that it's often the case that even if some Disabled people want to be there, they literally cannot get there, and if we literally cannot get there, we cannot fight for conditions to be otherwise. So yes, I would currently use GAFAM-supported infrastructures, Google, Facebook, Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, whatever, that big conglomerate of technologies, which I also hold to be extremely exploitative, extremely extractive. And if it means that we can get into a space where more of my Disabled community can be there because it provides a kind of access for us to be there together, then I would still use those technologies, while tooling up our capacities, our interests and our relationships towards building a world in which we don't have to make these choices. And it's also important to note that there are ways to organise beyond these contradictions as well. We can think around accessibility practices that would actually allow more people to be there if temporality was also stretched.

In our culture, temporality is understood as 'the moment of the thing'. So in the moment of the thing, if you're not there, you miss it. And I'm really interested in thinking around a politics of atemporal access. I'm giving this podcast at the moment, but something that's so great about this podcast is that it will be online, right? This is a kind of atemporal access that modes like these perform and allow that we can think of ways of being together that are not tied to the moment, but are, in fact, stretched over time, that would allow for us to have a different kind of reliance on tools that we don't want to have. So I think that perhaps it's a stretching of the imagination that needs to happen in terms of what it means to have presence, and for presence to be sensitised across time, as being something that is also just as valuable as if you're there in the moment. And maybe then these questions of our reliance on technologies that

we don't wish for become less tight because it doesn't require this exact moment. And then, of course, we will always have cases where there will be contradictions. And then I think it is about holding space for those contradictions, and naming them as such, and still holding a politics in which the most amount of people that want to be there can be there.

**48:45 REN LOREN BRITTON'S AND CONSTANT'S
COLLECTIVE CONDITIONS EXCERPT #6**

No-isms. This is a space that welcomes all genders, is decidedly anti-racist and anti-ableist, there is no room for -isms such as: classism, misogyny, ageism, religious discrimination or any other form of discrimination and oppression.

**49:38 ARCHIVES AND VULNERABILITY.
AN OPEN RELATIONSHIP WITH DATA,
CRIP TECHNOLOGIES OF FEELINGS
AND KNOWING THE WORLD**

The quote I wanted to find was from this disability studies scholar called Rosemarie Garland-Thomson. She speaks about how there's no archive or template for understanding disability as a category of analysis of knowledge, as a historical trope or a cultural community. And in relation to thinking about archives or vulnerability, or, what it means to collect and archive stories, there's two things I think about that. One is that I think that because, as she speaks about, there's no format, this opens us up quite a lot, right? And this is maybe also where the pleasure and possibility of archiving, when it comes to queer ways of knowing the world, is possible. This is something that I take great pleasure in, like understanding the histories that I relate to in my practice, but also the communities that I'm part of.

A work that I'll mention is this work called *Counting Feelings* by myself and Iz Paehr. In that work, we addressed how, regarding disability, autism, and trans experiences, there's often overrepresentation of our experiences in terms of the kinds of data collected about us that we don't want. This often means that allistic or non autistic or cisgender people are the ones authoring projects that are producing kinds of data around our lives that are not what we would ask for. So it's a kind of willful, intense production that follows similar lines of eugenic thinking or erasure that do not allow for people to live. And also, notably, this is not data projects that we are ourselves authoring. These are projects that are decided about us with none of our input. This is one paradigm that the project responds to, and the other is that the kinds of data that would actually make our lives more livable are often not there. As a trans person, when I go to the doctor, the kinds of data that would be helpful for me to have available are simply not collected. So there's this one paradigm where there's too much information that we don't want... and not enough at the same time. We have been thinking about both data as something that we have an open relationship to, because there isn't this paradigm of what it must look like or what it must feel like or what it must sense like. And with that, we've been thinking about Crip technologies, of ways of knowing and feeling the world. For example, we made a work that's called *Data Set of Weight*, which is literally a weighted blanket that you can put on top of yourself. And it is a way of sensing material, or materiality that creates the possibility of entering a data set through laying underneath it and seeing what that feels like.

We also made another work that's called *Pop-up Disabled Data Center*. We had funding from North Rhine Westphalia in Germany, to invite people into a few workshops with us, where we thought about data collecting on our own terms from our own communities as a kind of counter practice, and from there, we

authored a series of data sets that include information about things that we would want. In the beginning of these workshops with our community, we asked them ‘hey, what would you want?’. And we had some money to pay people to do that. In this case, when thinking about the relationship to the archive, there is also such a paradigm of extraction so that things are archived about us that do not actually serve or relate to our experiences. And so because this is the case, I find it important to mention that, when we were setting up the workshops, we always said to people: ‘at any point we can close this down’. So the idea would be that at any point someone could say, in this safe space of eight, ten, or however many people it was, ‘I felt like this was an important thing to talk about, and I learned something from this community. But then when I wanted to think about taking this data set and sharing it with who knows who it is, then it wouldn’t be available anymore. These paradigms of consent when thinking around archival access and non-extractive practices when it comes to collecting community needs or community practices of data is something that I’ve been meditating a lot on and thinking about the realities of extraction. That perhaps there is no non-violent way for us to relate to these things. We cannot guarantee that every person that views this data set will be using it for good means, so to speak, and also many of the data sets, had I had access to them before we had them in the workshop, at least, would have made my life better. It’s something that becomes a community resource.

In my work there’s a lot of practices around authoring community resources and making them accessible, as well as holding space for naming our experiences. And also with that, there’s a bit of upholding the kinds of practices that we have as trans and Disabled folks as already meaningful, right? I would never go to a doctor without having it vetted by a friend. And that is also a data practice, and I think that to name it as such also gives a different kind of linguistic weight to something that

otherwise is just seen as something that is community practice and perhaps then easy to be thrown away.

**55:30 REN LOREN BRITTON’S AND CONSTANT’S
COLLECTIVE CONDITIONS EXCERPT #7**

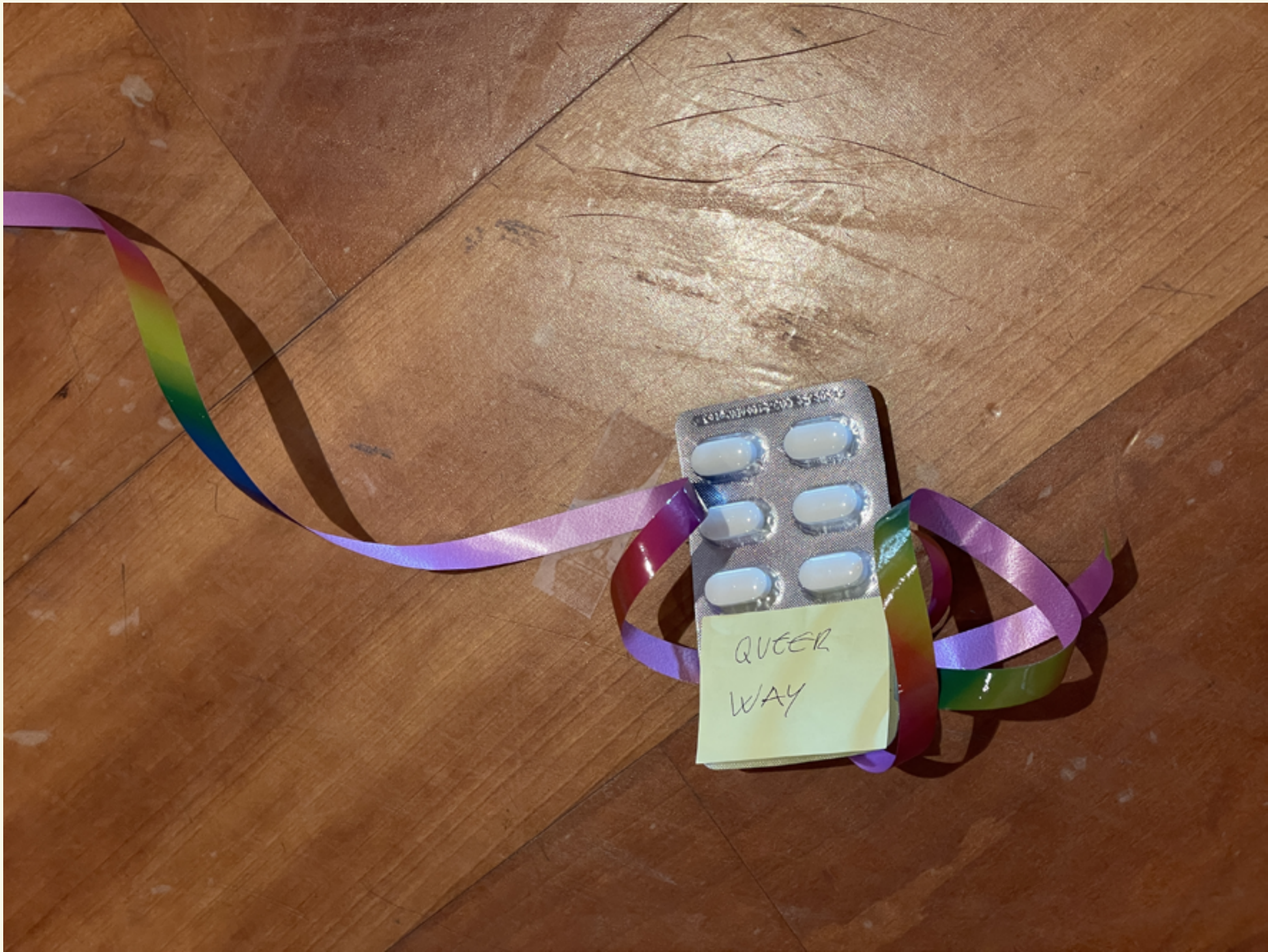
Privacy. Personal stories stay within the room.

**56:05 CULTURAL MEMORY.
BURDENED BY THE ACT OF REMEMBERING**

I was in a conversation recently with a colleague that I haven’t seen in quite some time, and he spoke a lot about the kind of cultural memory that we have for remembering in history, what it is that has happened, right? So he brought up, for example, how Donald Trump had, at some point, said that people should drink bleach as a way to kill COVID-19, and that being something that he remembered, and feeling kind of burdened by the act of remembering. And I too, share that feeling of feeling burdened by the act of remembering. And when it comes to the experience of tokenisation, I have two or three or many strategies to think about this, but one is to understand that in places of cultural production, those of us that are working at the margins are often burdened by the act of remembering because we’re close to the experiences of dispossession that have profoundly touched our lives. So that means that we carry with us in our bodies, in our traumas, in our relationships to world-building practices, both the burden but also the responsibility that comes from having a specific experience in the world and minding that and attending to that as meaningful, meaning-making, a site in which is routinely forgotten for many people, and also extremely important to transmit.

So this reality of transmission as it meets a question of tokenisation, is often that I am the person coming into a space talking

about trans experience and disability. This is my experience of tokenisation within cultural institutions. I also bring in questions around critical technical practice, and I bring in questions around community practice, and I bring in questions around archival research. However, I can be put into a box because of these topics that I task myself with remembering and holding and attending to. I cannot do that work all the time. I understand that the work that I wish to do is specifically done in a context in which I feel like people can meet me right, and I feel like I want to maintain my energetic resources so that I can be generous in spaces. If I don’t feel as though I can be generous in a space, I will not do the work. That is how I agree to do things, and I agree to not do things in my practice. And that comes from experience. It comes from experience of saying yes to places that were not ready to do work with me that I had proposed that we do, and it means that then that work has gone poorly, because there is a logic at play in which I come to represent something and then the next person comes to represent something else, and the next person comes to represent something a third, and none of us have any impact on the ways in which something is transforming within a space. If that’s the case, I also personally maintain a community of people that I’m connected to where the questions that I’m bringing up here in this conversation are no questions. The way that we research, live or operate together is coming from a place of radical accessibility and radical care that is informed by lived experience and is not putting intention or kind of performing a difference in the ways that cultural production asks us to perform differences. So personally, in terms of my energetic resources, I have had to find ways to continue to invest within my own community, through projects or care organisation, or, I don’t know, just cooking dinner for each other, like these kinds of ways in which... I don’t feel the differences of the world. And I think that my differences are my world. And I’m really privileged to live within a community of people that think and uphold similar values that I do.



↑

Photo by Isaac Sanjuan, at MACBA, within the workshop *Study of Presence with Ren Loren Britton. Non-Foreclosed Access Points: Pluralizing Virtuality* (2024). For the group dynamics, attendees were asked to bring a personal object, which they would then place in constellation with several concepts developed collaboratively during the workshop. In the image, we see a pill blister on a wooden floor beside a yellow post-it note with 'queer way' handwritten on it. A rainbow cellophane string connects it to other objects that are out of the frame.

→

Photo by Gemma Planell, in the streets of Barcelona. A white sheet with hand-written blue text, part of the documentation of shared concepts from the workshop *Study of Presence with Ren Loren Britton. Non-Foreclosed Access Points: Pluralizing Virtuality* (2024), noted by Jara Rocha. In the image, a person holds the human-sized white sheet outdoors, standing between two doors, with lively graffiti tags also visible in the scene.



what are the forces of ableism

Kinds of knowing-making

chosen
limits / co

Matterport
3D-exhibition-visiting tool

just
as
important

loose not

refuse pandemic is
not yet i

a synchronous

audiences
from home

digitally - together

pre-determined sites

remote

checks & balances in place

relevant

not at all

from place-to-place-to-place

Photo by Gemma Planell, at MACBA. Detail of a white sheet with hand-written blue text, part of the documentation of shared concepts from the workshop *Study of Presence with Ren Loren Britton. Non-Foreclosed Access Points: Pluralizing Virtuality* (2024), noted by Jara Rocha. The notes include terms and phrases such as 'what are the forces of ableism', 'kinds of knowing making', 'just as important', 'Matterport', '3D exhibition tool', 'asynchronous', 'remote', 'audiences from home', 'digitally-together', 'pre-determined sites', 'loose', and 'from place to place', along with other partially visible notions.

in perspective

you where seeing it

between

And so then the burden that I carry of remembering in spaces is lessened because I remember that I'm connected to and grounded within a community of people that are performing active resistance. And I think that I can hold this, and some people cannot. And it's a question to what level people are asked to hold what so I would think that my methods or strategies for this are really related to maintaining a multiplicity of connection points. So one is maintaining a multiplicity of connection to anti-ableist work and practice as central to what it is that I understand my work to be, while simultaneously maintaining a connection to my community that is interested in these topics and caring for these topics, but with which I do not have to be in the position of teaching, or I do not have to be in the position of holding the discomfort of people not knowing something.

61:38 SOUND INTERMISSION

**62:08 WORKING AGAINST EPISTEMICIDE
(THE WILLFUL KILLING OF WAYS OF KNOWING):
THINKING WITH TRANS AND DISABLED
EXPERIENCES**

A key term that I've been thinking a lot about recently is epistemicide, the willful killing of ways of knowing. Indigenous thinkers and scholars write a lot about this, but it's also something that comes up in thinking with trans and Disabled experiences. So what are the ways in which our pasts are actively kept from us, as well as erased willfully, and those are due to forces of ableism, white supremacy, racism... we know this. And I think it shows up in my work through multiple avenues, actually. It comes up in terms of the kinds of stories that were told within Western frameworks in art school, for example, in terms of what kinds of representations become powerful in meaning-making. I think it comes up specifically within my own experience of thinking

about neurodiversity and disability over time as something that is also linked to queerness. The kind of histories that I relate to were not ones that were taught to me. And all of this is something that I've had to go back and understand is also willfully kept and intentionally needing to be found. Within the disability and trans community, there's a lot of excavation of these pasts being done, but it's still like a kind of minor history, I think that is being found again. For me, I work with this really directly through multiple ways. One example is through this work that I'm screening around right now, that's called *Coalition Bouquet: 504 Sit-In*. It connects to a larger research trajectory that I have that's thinking around like political coalitions from the past that are perhaps less understood or less recognised and with a specific interest placed onto what kinds of recognitions between political differences must there be that allow for each group to work together to get their needs met. And in this case, it's also using the bouquet as a metaphor, as something that is temporary and perhaps doesn't have to last forever in order for it to be salient or important or meaningful. So kind of thinking through these temporary forms that, through their coming together, make possibility, but don't have to last forever in order for it to be important.

In that film, I tell a story about the 504 sit-in, which happened in the United States across 20 or 25 different cities for 25 days. It basically asked for this regulation to be signed so that the access that the regulation had promised could be granted for Disabled folks. The ACCD, which is the American Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities, the Black Panthers, and also Mission Rebels were the three activist groups that actioned this sit-in together. And what literally happened was that they all sat in for different amounts of time, but the one in San Francisco was the most successful. They literally sat in a federal building for 25 days and did not leave. And during that time, the Black Panthers were notably there supporting and doing food support for the protesters sitting inside of this building. Something I've been paying attention to is the kinds of improvisational

technologies that protesters invented and kind of hacked to be able to make that possible. For example, they used an air conditioning unit and taped a paper box onto it to make a medicine fridge for everyone that was inside. Or at some point, they cut the phone lines from this building so that no one could call out or call in anymore, so D/deaf people inside the building would sign to their friends on the street through sign language. So this was a way of also communicating what was inside and outside and needing to be shared. It's a really interesting history, because there's a lot of through lines that continue from that. In the Black Panther newsletter, they started publishing about the 504 sit-in and Alondra Nelson talks about it as a kind of durable legacy of the kind of Disabled movement in relation to the Black Panthers, because they continued to follow up with some of the big figures from that movement over years. In her book she talks about the kind of impact of continuing to have something reported on over years. It was because they had this one intervention, the Black Panthers started transforming their infrastructures to make things more accessible in a real way. They made sure that all their meeting points had wheelchair accessible entrances and grab bars, things like this. Just to name some of the people that were part of that, Brad Lomax was the key interlocutor, and also Chuck Jackson.

67:10 SOUND INTERMISSION

67:12 MY SITUATED CONTEXT IN EU: GERMANY

This also connects to this relationship of working against epistemicide. Finding out, maintaining and excavating a history that made my life possible, made my grandmother's life possible, made my brother's life possible. It still makes a lot of lives possible today.

I live in Berlin, and I've been doing quite some work thinking about the disability politics and context within the place that I live. For me, situated contexts are really important. So it's for me, it's because I come from the US that I speak about, that context is meaningful for me. But I also live in a place, and there's also meaningful resonances there that I want to connect to and participate in. So in Germany, there's a large and violent history of Eugenics, as we know, in terms of the kinds of relationships that are established or set up for what it means for Disabled people to live or thrive, and if that is possible. There's also extremely ableist and racist policies when it comes to things around migration, for example. So if you are a Disabled person, it is extremely hard to migrate into Germany. This is something that is actively kept in terms of border policy maintenance, which is maintaining a kind of extreme violence as we know. In a lot of the work that I'm doing, I'm looking at these minor histories in Germany, where there has been active resistances to that. There's a mainstream disability movement in Germany, which is other than a Crip movement. And this kind of split is also reflected in many different political contexts, where there's a more mainstream rights organised movement, and then there's also a movement that's more anti assimilationist in every way. And this often has a kind of queer politics to it, which is the kind of movement work that I feel connected to. And in that I've been learning about the *Krüppel Zeitung*, which was called the Crip Magazine. It was published, I believe, from 1976 to 1984. And in their magazine, they had a kind of amazing politics where they would just publish anything that they wanted right next to each other. So it was really like mail slot in the door. And if you had an article, you put it through the mail slot. If you had a drawing, you put it in the mail slot, and then they would compose a zine or a publication based on this. And in that document there is a lot of resistant organizing and just experiences of living life and everyday ableisms that then become chronicled and named as such. I've been researching this magazine with my colleagues simo_tier, SchwarzRund and

Iz Paehr. I've been thinking a lot about some of the major figures in that magazine, and also talking about people that are still active in Crip resistance movements now, not people that have passed. To name someone who's still alive and working, their name is Udo Sierck. He lives and works in Bremen. He has been long involved in the Crip movement in Germany, and he did this talk with my colleague SchwarzRund, who I greatly admire. In that talk, they speak about this Neuengamme Kirchentag. Neuengamme was a concentration camp during the Nazi times in Germany, and during this evangelist church day, they had a meeting about reparations. And in that, he spoke about how Disabled, Sinti, Roma and gay folks that had been murdered by the Nazis were not eligible for reparations. And that was actually something that he and this group of people, because of that day, came together and started organising to shift hardship laws so that reparations could be paid. So this was something that happened around 1987 or something like this. He also remarks how at different moments in his life he had tried to reach out to, for example, the queer community during the AIDS crisis. And this was something that absolutely did not work out. But in that case, working on reparations together, it did actually work out so they were able to shift policy and get reparations for family members of the deceased from these groups.

There's a monument called *Aktion T4* in the center of Berlin that commemorates T4, which is the name of the action that exterminated Disabled people. It's a large glass blue monument with names inscribed of people that were murdered. And there was actually quite some discussion over years of family members of the deceased not wanting their names to be listed, because then it would link the fact that they had had a Disabled family member. This kind of long term ableism that is then inscribed within these monuments is not something of remembering as a site of possibility, or remembering as a site of connection and grief, but remembering is also something that's quite tenuous

and reflecting of the ableism that is also held by the family members.

These topics and this reality is quite undercared for. Talking about disability today in Germany is still under attended to. But for me, these past experiences reflect into the present in persistent and frightening ways, and the ways in which Disabled people are still routinely ignored within multiple contexts, but also the kinds of realities of ableism are not incorporated into a political education or some sort of emotional capacity to deal with difference within one's own family for example, in the case of this monument that I bring up.

74:30 REN LOREN BRITTON'S AND CONSTANT'S COLLECTIVE CONDITIONS EXCERPT #8

There is as many teachers in this room as there are people in this space.

74:59 THE REALITY OF THE WERKSCHADEN IN GERMANY: WORKSHOPS FOR INTELLECTUALLY DISABLED AND PHYSICALLY DISABLED PEOPLE. LOW WAGE JOBS, REMOVED FROM SOCIETY.

I would also like to say that I'm a migrant in this context. And because I'm a migrant living in Germany, I have a less embedded relationship to these realities. But I also find that this is something that people do not know about, and I find it's politically important to name the active disappearances that are still persisting in Germany. So in Germany, there's a system of Werkstätten, which in English translates to workshops, in which intellectually Disabled and physically Disabled people are often working. And large companies actually pay penalties

to Werkstätten to not have to hire intellectually or physically Disabled people. These are full campuses of people working, often repetitive, low wage jobs, where people are literally removed from society. So this mainstream disability organising focuses on Werkstätten as a primary site where people are disappeared from society. Do I believe that this is correct and right? Absolutely not. Do I believe that the project of integration, where Disabled people are integrated into non-Disabled society and tasked to prove as though they should be able to perform through the logics of ableism, or through the logics of ability that produce everyone as though they should be able to do the same things? Absolutely not. Not everyone can or should do the same things, and that's a good thing. And the kind of Crip politics that I bring to this is that we have many differences, and our differences are beautiful and honorable. This is a context that I live in, in which people are actively disappeared from society, and that is maintained through a penalty that people don't speak about. This kind of carceral logic is something that I am actively against.

The kind of Crip world-building that I am close to is a kind of politics that seeks to remake the world. What would it really be like should Disabled people and non-Disabled people live together, that people were welcome to take breaks, that people were reimagining work to make it accessible for intellectually Disabled and physically Disabled people. What kind of world would it be like that not everyone has to work, and that's also welcome and a good thing? What kinds of rejections of the status quo would allow for all sorts of Disabled folks to live a good life that does not mean disappearing from the context that non Disabled people move and live in? These are the kinds of questions that I think that sit with the Crip movement.

Udo Sierck, who I mentioned before, speaks about the kinds of organising which the Werkstätten and the Krüppel group have tried to enact in the past, and he is critical of this. He says that

the bridges that he tried to make have ultimately failed, and that is a point of contention between mainstream disability and Crip organising – that there is not much overlap. This has to do with gaps in education, gaps in agency. So this is still something that is rife with failure and non possibility that is still in action.

In my own research practice, I've been very burdened by the fact that in my political communities in Germany right now, there is a lot of single issue organising that is pervasive, meaning that people are focusing on rights-based discourse as the primary way of securing safety, which I struggle with. And also because there is an attitude of non extending of generosity to someone else, I have experienced that there isn't a lot of space for difference. Even within groups that are organising for political change. So my explicit focus on coalition has also risen in the past few years, because I find that the stories that we can tell around when it went well for different groups from different perspectives, aren't... Which ones come to mind? What do we have available in the back of our minds that we can say, 'Oh, yeah. When my Disabled friends and when my trans friends worked on this project, it went well', or you know, 'when the migrants rights organisation partnered with, I don't know those working on class based issues. It went well'. These are things that are inherently interwoven with each other, and yet, I find that the kinds of stories that we can pull up and offer as examples or blueprints or models for how we might imagine a political outcome otherwise, are very rare and just available in the back pocket. So, and this is something that I'm concerned about and actively working against, in my practice. I'm thinking about finding those stories which are also, again, not so easy to come by, increasingly more right? It's a kind of excavation work that I'm doing. And then furthermore thinking about what kinds of metaphors or models can hold them.

In my research recently, I've been thinking about the bouquet as a form. My friend Kerry Downey suggested to me that it's a kind of like, bouquets are like the ultimate expression of against

nihilism, in a way, because they're so sincere and they're so temporary, and they're so silly in some way, but they're also extremely meaningful across multiple contexts. But I've also been thinking about the constellation. So thinking about how different it would be if we looked up in the sky, and rather than seeing Orion's Belt, we saw the reparations constellation. What kinds of sensing of our communities, of ourselves, would we do differently if that was the kind of imaginary of what we looked up and saw in the sky. This kind of practice of a trans* feminist renaming of constellations against a white Western Imperial gaze is something that I'm really thinking about. And also thinking about how to tie these political struggles to the planet in a way, right? So what kinds of metaphors, both with the bouquets and celestial bodies and our imaginaries around them. What kinds of orientations or reorientations does it perform to rename constellations and draw their borders differently, or maybe draw their lines differently, is how I would say it.

**83:09 REN LOREN BRITTON'S AND CONSTANT'S
COLLECTIVE CONDITIONS EXCERPT #9**

Not all disabilities are apparent, please don't assume what is normal for other people.

**83:40 SAFE SPACES SHOULD BE RE-ENACTED
AND ARE NOT SELF-MAINTAINED**

I recently gave a workshop, and a good friend of mine attended it. Her name is Gaby Collins-Fernandez, and she said to me that it's kind of hilarious the militancy of how I hold safer spaces because they're so produced. So I guess I would agree with Ona Bros and what you're saying about how this is not something that you have, but something you perform. But also, I

would say that safer spaces are not something that maintain. It's something that you have to actively enact every single time that you go into a space. And I mean that because of the reality of crushing forces around us when it comes to the amount of violences that we navigate every day. If we take to be true the fact that we live in a white supremacist, ableist, classist, violent world, then every time we leave or enter into any sort of digital, physical space, we are encountering and engaging with the realities of colonial operations that are at our every fingertip and at our every movement. And that shows up in all sorts of ways, right? It shows up in the ways in which there's no access to public buildings for wheelchair users. It shows up in the ways in which the data that we shortly look at on our phone is mined immediately as soon as we open any sort of application. It shows up in the ways that different bodies moving through space are not appreciated or not supported through the assumptions put on bodies when they walk into any cafe, any educational space, any bureaucratic office, any subway. I perceive the reality of the world that we live in as remarkably violent on different levels, with different amounts of perception that we have towards those things. Sometimes we don't perceive things as a way to be able to persist. This is also valid. However, when setting up an educational or a community space, where someone holds a relationship to power and contention, then there is the need to denounce, name and produce the space otherwise.

When it comes to holding a space in a workshop, I've been really inspired by the work of *Collective Conditions*, which was this work session that Constant held in 2019. In that work session, I made a series of sculptural objects that played with questions around recomposition and kind of continual recomposition as a space of access-making, or what it might mean to be in collectivity. That was a sculptural intervention I made into that space, but I have also been using and continue to iterate on the collective conditions as a form. These are a series of statements that are put into the space every time I hold a workshop.

The ones that I use, I also carry them literally through every single context that I move through. Everyone is always invited to read them aloud—the entire group reads one aloud. And at the end, I ask everyone: 'do you agree?' And it's often the case that people are like bowled over by the fact that they have to agree on the spot to something like this. And then after I wait for a few minutes, someone says: 'Well, no. I don't know what misogyny is'. Or someone says: 'No, I don't know what classism means'. Or someone says: 'What do you mean that you can't see all disabilities? There's no wheelchair users here'. So there's assumptions that are then levied to be able to open up what it means to hold a space, and then it also allows it to be a kind of tool, to tool the space specifically. So some of the ones that come to mind are like, 'Not all disabilities are apparent. Please don't assume what's normal for other people'. Or 'This is a multilingual space. Please ask for clarification or translation'. There's this 'One diva, one mic. Please don't interrupt'. That's a nice one.

Recently, at a workshop I gave, someone wanted to add the one which is now in there. 'Care is fun and fun is also care'. It's also something to bring a sense of lightness and possibility towards what it is to care for each other in space. And that this is also a fun operation. It's not always *care work* as in *work*, it's like care is *fun*, as in, we can do this in a joyful or light way. These are a series of statements that I enact and then hold within space. And it does require of me, as a facilitator, the capacity to be able to hold that space with intention, which also means that I have to set up situations where I can actually meet that capacity. So I'm consistently trying to put myself in a position to be able to have the capacity to hold the space against these violent forces that I perceive to be around us all the time. So it's both a process of sensitising myself and everyone else to these realities, and also then holding the space intention to that where another thing can be possible. I also think this relationship to 'safe space' or 'unsafe space',

or I've also heard words like 'braver space'... I'm not sure that there's lots of critiques around this language. Regarding the notion of safe space, some people say that no space is fully safe for everyone. And I would agree with that. From my own positionality, I'm sure that there are things that I also miss, right? I can do my best to attend to countering the violent realities of racism and ableism and overlapping dispossessions that are in every space. But I can make mistakes. The wish of a safe space or a braver space, is to move against the non acknowledgement of power that operates within most spaces. However, I too, want to be humble about this. I don't believe that I know how to do all of this, and I always also need attention and tension in this as well, and, you know, also appreciate the ways in which I fail in doing this. This is a constant rehearsal or a constant performance of a different way of being in space together that I'm always trying to tool up for, to differing degrees of success.

92:27 REN LOREN BRITTON'S AND CONSTANT'S *COLLECTIVE CONDITIONS* EXCERPT #10

Care is fun, but fun is also care.

92:41 FUN AND JOY ARE NECESSARY

Fun and joy are necessary. My relationship towards playfulness and care and fun and 'fun is care' is that it's so rare actually, to allow yourself to be a goof in places of professionalism. How often do we hear people sing a lecture or dance a word or stim in front of an audience or perform the joyful perversity of their neurotypes openly? In places of whiteness, ableism, classism, which is to say most cultural institutions, the permission to show up as a goof and have a personality is not centered. It's just not. And for me it's really important to create a space

where we can laugh with each other, and that we can be playful together, and we can have fun together, because there is a lot of intelligence that is through fun, joy, play and care that is not recognised within dominant systems of intelligence as intelligence. There is a lot of intelligence that comes from playing together. There's a lot of intelligence that comes from dancing around and having fun and allowing spaces to open and have a sense of life and possibility in them. For me, it's life giving to center fun and joy as methods of my practice, because I talk about structural oppression. The things that I'm talking about are ways in which me and my colleagues, those that I care for and those in my lineage have been dispossessed of opportunities to have a life. I mean that as a Disabled person, I mean that as a trans person. Also related to class: I don't come from an upper class perspective. For me, if you have the emotional space opened to have enough fun, you can also talk about things like ableism and racism and experiences of otherness, and you have the emotional capacity to transform that. The worst thing that can happen if you go into a workshop around ableism is that you leave feeling like: 'Oh my God, I am a terrible person. I have not been thinking about this. I've never learned anything about disability. How terrible am I that I have never thought about this before?' Rather, we are in a deeply ableist world. We are in a world that teaches us willfully to ignore racism, to ignore ableism, to ignore queerness, as though that's normal. So how do we deal with this?

I think we need to have a bit of space to, I don't know, transform it. And where does transformation come from? In my case, it comes from feeling connected. It comes from feeling open. And it comes from feeling a bit, you know, jostled open by something, right? So if you can be a bit jostled open by something, and if you can have a bit of fun, if you can have a bit of joy and what it is that you're doing, then maybe there's the political ability to open it up. To play with it, to understand its contours, to not be weighted in the same kind of white supremacist logics that

wishes us to be performed as individuals. For me, having a bit of fun, having a bit of play and talking about really intense structural oppression, while also relating to it in such a way that we actually are agents of possibility in our own small ways. We're just all slowly, step by step, movement by movement, shifting this thing through our collective education through undoing of colonial patterns. This is the work. And how do we do that work? We don't do that work by crying about it alone. We do that work by crying about it together, and also by shifting that emotion into feeling like we can do something about it.

**96:37 REN LOREN BRITTON'S AND CONSTANT'S
COLLECTIVE CONDITIONS EXCERPT #11**

Care is fun, but fun is also care. Fun is another form of intelligence, bring all your forms of intelligence into the space.

LINKS AND REFERENCES

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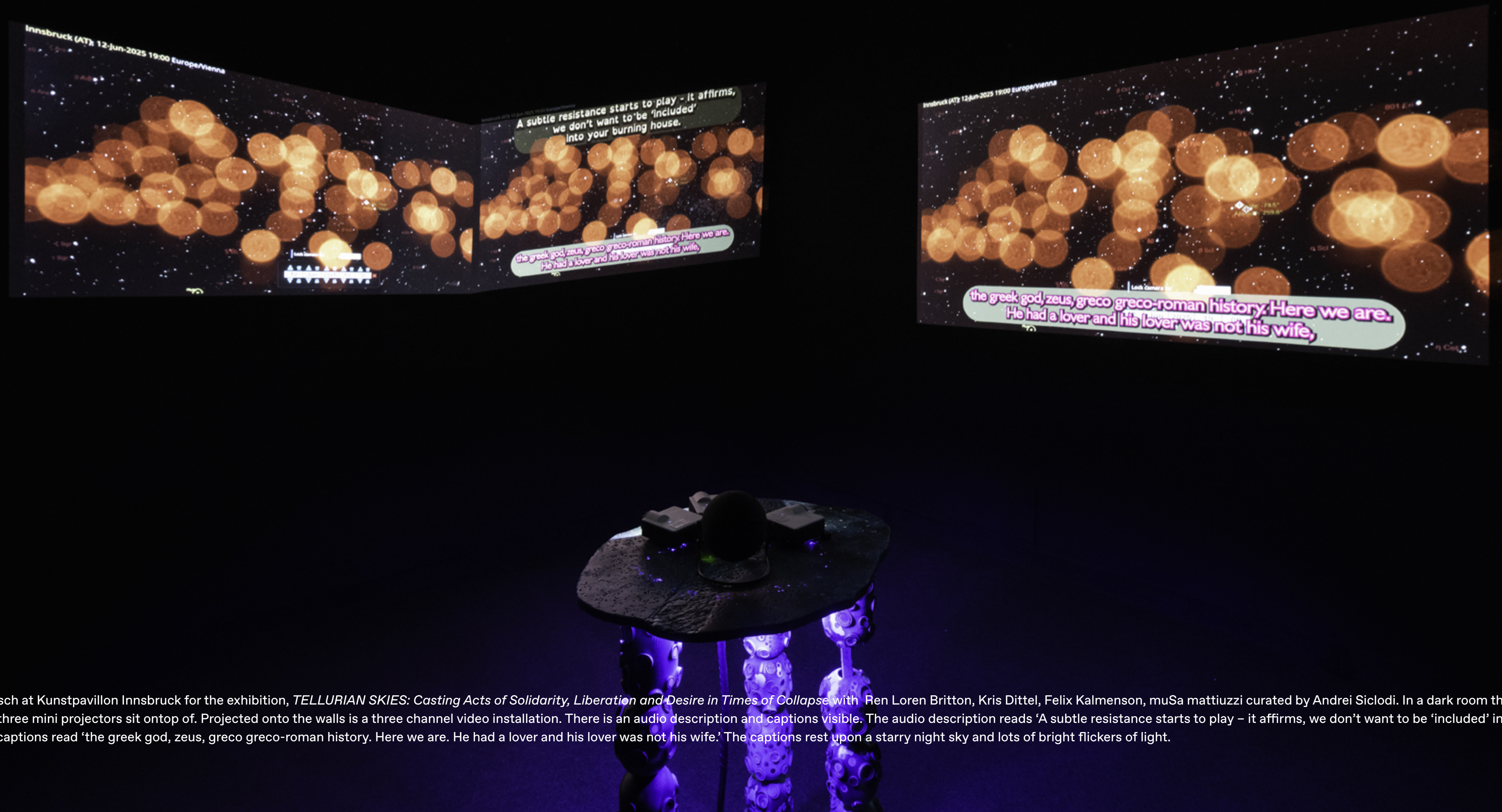


Photo by Daniel Jarosch at Kunstpavillon Innsbruck for the exhibition, *TELLURIAN SKIES: Casting Acts of Solidarity, Liberation and Desire in Times of Collapse* with Ren Loren Britton, Kris Dittel, Felix Kalmenson, muSa mattiuzzi curated by Andrei Siclodi. In a dark room there is a dreaming table that three mini projectors sit on top of. Projected onto the walls is a three channel video installation. There is an audio description and captions visible. The audio description reads 'A subtle resistance starts to play – it affirms, we don't want to be 'included' into your burning house.' The captions read 'the greek god, zeus, greco greco-roman history. Here we are. He had a lover and his lover was not his wife.' The captions rest upon a starry night sky and lots of bright flickers of light.

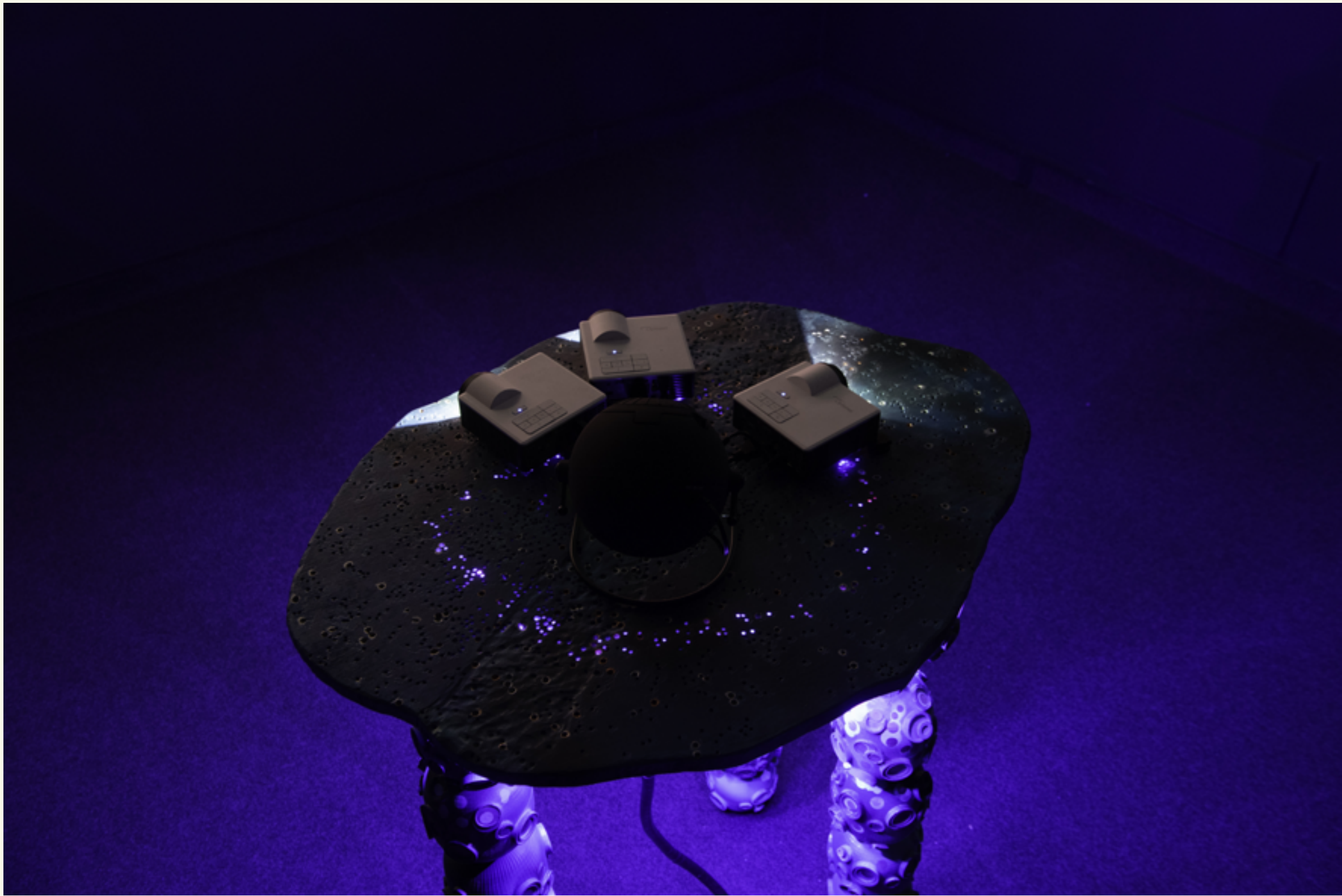
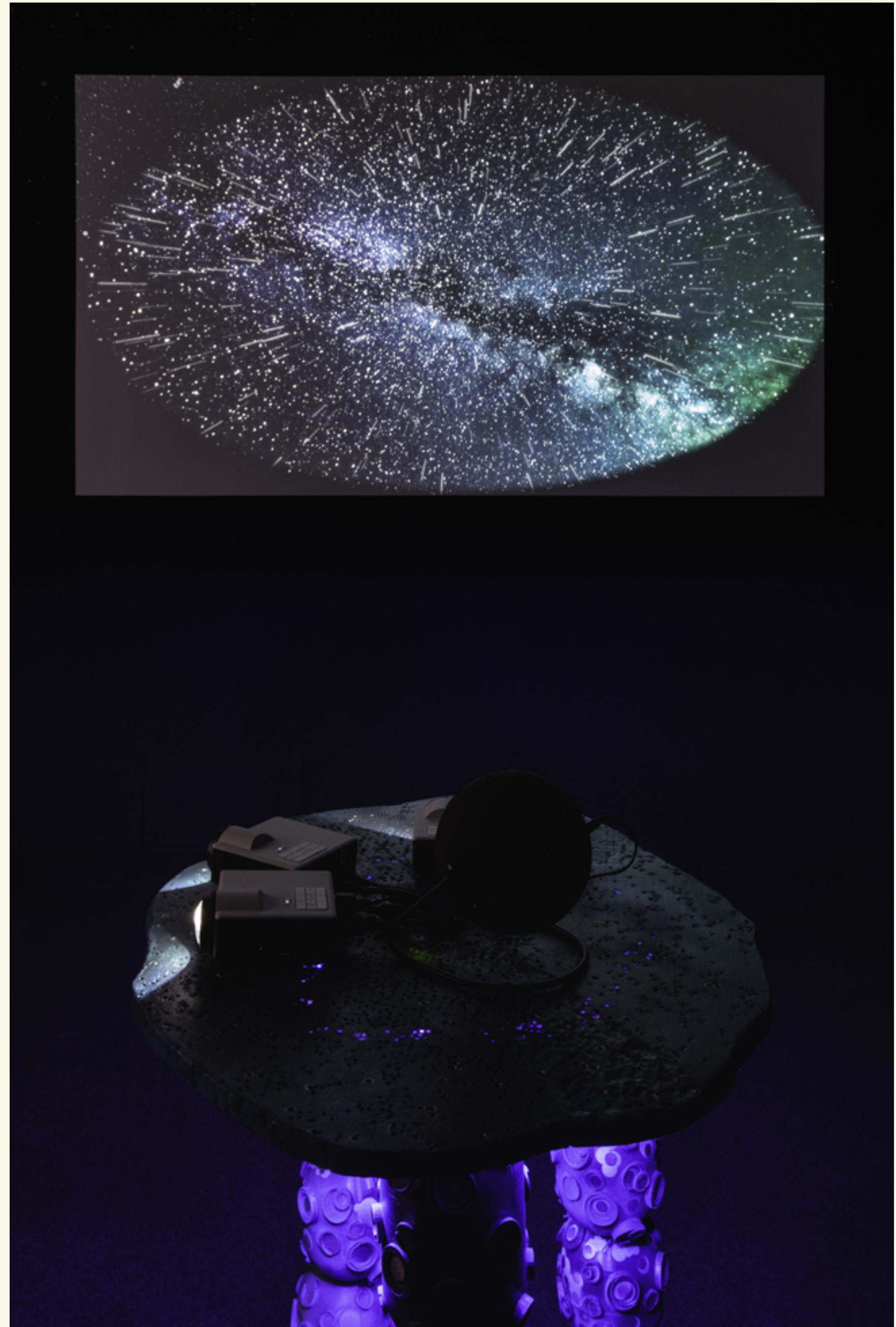


Photo by Daniel Jarosch at Kunstpavillon Innsbruck for the exhibition, *TELLURIAN SKIES: Casting Acts of Solidarity, Liberation and Desire in Times of Collapse* with Ren Loren Britton, Kris Dittel, Felix Kalmenson, muSa mattiuzzi curated by Andrei Siclodi. The dreaming table is shown, illuminated with holes in a wooden table top of various stars that were in the sky when the starting point for this work was shown. The table legs look like mini-planetarium machines.



Photo by Daniel Jarosch at Kunstpavillon Innsbruck for the exhibition, *TELLURIAN SKIES: Casting Acts of Solidarity, Liberation and Desire in Times of Collapse* with Ren Loren Britton, Kris Dittel, Felix Kalmenson, muSa mattiuzzi curated by Andrei Siclodi. The dreaming table is shown in another view with various lights resting above and below the table.



CONTEXT

This text is one of the pilot studies of *Re-Imagine Europe: New Perspectives for Action*. In these contributions we explore and reflect on artistic practices and experimental approaches in the cultural field that can engage and activate audiences and communities to address ecological, social, and political challenges. The pilot studies provide an overview of practices of cultural organisations that can serve as models, recipes, or tools for transformation for current and future generations of cultural workers and artists.

Re-Imagine Europe: New Perspectives for Action (2023–2027) is a four-year transnational co-creation and circulation project of fourteen interdisciplinary art organisations across Europe. The project aims to equip and empower young Europeans through artistic practices to better withstand societal challenges triggered by rapid climate change.

The Re-Imagine Europe partnership is a collaboration of: Paradiso^(NL), Sonic Acts^(NL), Elevate Festival^(AT), INA grm^(FR), A4^(SK), Borealis^(NO), KONTEJNER^(HR), BEK^(NO), RUPERT^(LT), Disruption Network Lab^(DE), Semibreve^(PT), Parco Arte Vivente^(IT), Kontrapunkt^(MK) and Radio Web MACBA^(ES).

BIOGRAPHY

Ren Loren Britton is a trans*disciplinary artist-designer who reverberates with trans*feminism, technosciences, radical pedagogy and disability justice. Trans*feminist technoscience in their work follows the long wiggle of cyber-feminism; focusing on trans*, as in, transgender and trans*, as in, crossing contexts with feminist concerns. They are interested in the ways that socio-technical systems and media make lives accessible and pleasurable. Departing from the understanding that we live in a deeply ableist white supremacist world, and therefore to be able to follow a justice oriented direction, their work begins from the assumption that we must rethink the terms of who fits into institutions of all scales, with what friction (or not) and why. This set of considerations brings them to their interest in disability justice which upholds and values all non-normative bodies and minds. In this way their artistic research is often collaborative, focuses on reaching their named community (trans*gender and Disabled people) and focuses on the critical technologies, narratives and media practices that have connected us in our shared non-linear futures, pasts and presents. This conceptual framework enables their practice often engaging hir-her-historical storytelling looking into under-attended to narratives that tell other stories about technologies, counter-pathologies and community connection.

Working in collaboration, Britton actions MELT with Iz Paehr and Fans Bender Presents with Rosen Eveleigh and other projects with beloved crossers. lorenbritton.com + meltionary.com.

Radio Web MACBA (RWM) rwm.macba.cat is an online radio project based at MACBA Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona. A radio-beyondradio that dwells in the folds and intersections of critical thinking, contemporary art, artistic research, activism, knowledge transfer, sound... and everything in between. RWM produces podcasts which can be listened to on demand, downloaded, and/or subscribed to. RWM also publishes essays, texts, and related documentation and it strives to slow down processes and thicken the conversations within the small community of thinkers, makers, artists, and mediators who make it possible: the Radio Web MACBA Working Group.

Conversation	Jara Rocha and Anna Ramos
Script & sound production	pantea
Sounds	pantea and RWM Sound Library
Voice over	pantea and AI voices
Photos	Boudewijn Bollmann, Daniel Jarosch, Gemma Planell, Isaac Sanjuan, Franz Warmhof
Transcript	Roc Jiménez de Cisneros
Graphic Design	Henri Kutsar
Publication coordination	Annette Wolfsberger

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The podcast was produced by Radio Web MACBA as part of New Perspectives for Action, a project by Re-Imagine Europe.

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

