



selected writings & images from

visitations

a research project by Nicola van Straaten and Coila-Leah Enderstein
may-july 2021

realizing that when we go there,
we are meeting the parts of ourselves,
our world,
that we understand the least,
that have the least meaning

we try to understand.
we try so hard to understand,
because perhaps having understanding,
or a sense of it -
a sense of some kind of meaning behind it,
helps us integrate?

very big headache in the evening.
dehydrated?
today, stuffy, fatigued.

12/05/2021.

first visit to the site.

we stepped in like we usually
do for Transvaalstrafte but
it didn't quite feel right.

walked around, feeling
hot and reading placards,
so much history
so little information.

keep feeling absence of Africa,
absence of planetary
continuation / corruption.

- (concrete
- heat (27°)
- fatigue
- sugar cravings
- resting in
Tiergarten (twice)
- doppelgangers
- Otto von Wolt?
- Jewish memorial
- depression
(as in downwards)

exhausting funny lifeless massive place to
spend time.

"how ~~many~~ many enemies can
we internalize and still expect
to remain whole?"

CONVERSATION WITH LOUISE.

“we have to go through the doors of oppression as intimately and as vulnerably as we can, otherwise we’re not being honest.”

“we have to know where it hurts, and why it makes us sick.”

“when we’re not conscious, we’re opaque, we can’t see or hear.”

parts of your personality that you don't
want to see

become more permeable to myself

and everything is meeting in me..

Having boundaries - knowing exactly what
I'm doing here

where do our instincts come from

“we have to acknowledge how we’ve been politicized”

“there’s nothing we can do energetically to combat these things.”

we are the site.

we are where it’s happening.

we are the site

we are also allowed
to keep our innocence
and allowed to
enjoy learning.

clarity - seeing my whole self
seeing the site
being seen by the site
being seen by Nic
seeing Nic
↓
what about "listening"
"perceiving"

e.g. why do i use particular words to describe it?

Reverse Justice Card

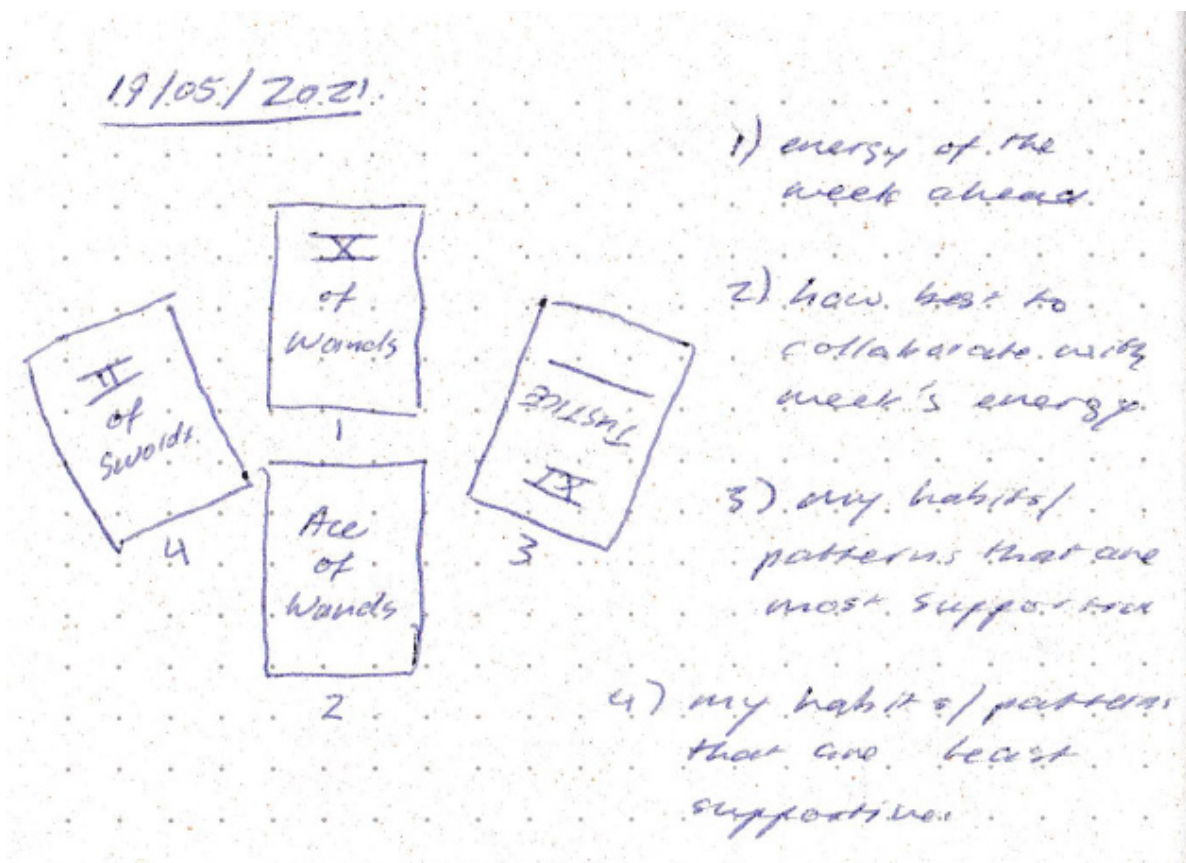
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V

about complicity

making steps to alleviate
benefiting from other's loss.

what do we omit from our present narratives to protect our comfort?

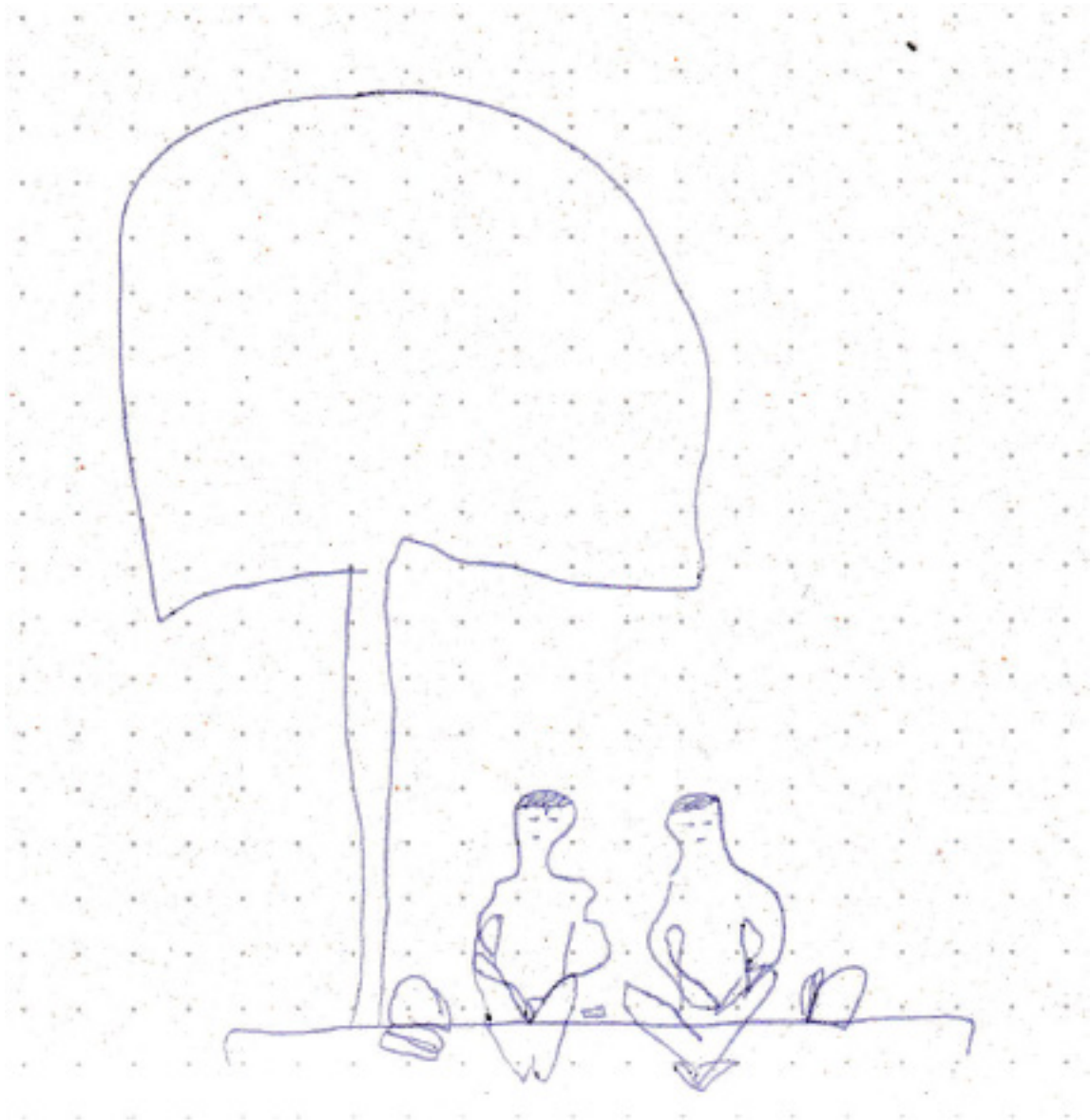


you can hold all of the feelings.

listening.

how visible you become when you close your eyes in public.





listening session minsterium garten

sense of diving into a pool

immersion - so much sound

the road is so smooth

very compositional/musical at times

(nic: is this the kind of imagination of spirituality?)

braving relation

pleasure of sensing different sounds

birds on cobbles behind us close sounds
leaves, rain drops slowly picking up, wind on
left ear, rain prickling face

whistling
whirring continuation. blends into the wind
air gusts blend with motors, accelerating.
always birds - upper levels

feet/shoes pat pat
quite comfortable

being seeing doing something different

feel

safe but also very monitored/surveilled
area

determining by ear how wet it is getting

flags
bouncing
clink
metal

1 June 2021

Germany acknowledges Nama Herero genocide (last week)

pledges £1,1 billion in "Financial aid"

Namibian ~~was~~ Council of Chiefs rejects the amount as "insulting"

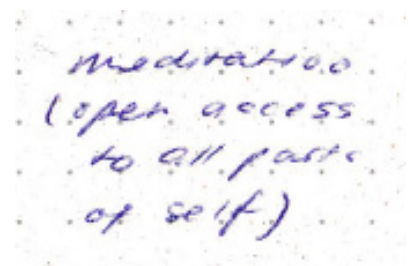
- not directly linked to reparations

more than 1 year of negotiations to call it a genocide?

first official apology

29.05.2021

coila asked me to write about the scream i heard during my meditation
on wednesday, 19 may.
i tried to do a listening exercise,
opening myself and my ears.
heard the birds, wind in the chestnut, human voices,
sbhan in the distance...
then i listened even more,
softened into a type of imaginary state with my listening
and "heard" a bomb, or several bombs,
exploding.
i put heard in inverted commas because
it wasn't concrete sound,
half-imagined (or wholly imagined) -
i heard it in my mind's ear.
loud explosions and then people screaming,
which continued briefly, no more than several seconds
before my mind's ear decided to close itself off,
it was quite upsetting and
throughout the day, would sometimes return.
by the end of the day, i wanted to scream myself.
i can only think that it had to do,
or was interconnected with violence in
israel and palestine i've been reading about.
(i think actually i experienced this on tuesday)
it feels a bit silly to write about this.



meditation
(open access
to all parts
of self)



wanna talk about the “performing tourism” exercise. it happened quite spontaneously, or rather - organically. Coila mentioned this thing of feeling like a tourist right at the beginning of the session, when we met. I think especially because of the caps, backpacks, moonbags, sunscreen in the heat, but also because we are looking for something.

so,
we sort of slipped into the tourist-game as we would an improvisation, with an attitude of playfulness. we walked to Potsdamerplatz, where there are plaques and photographs on pieces of the Berlin Wall. We watched as a guy took a picture of a woman standing in front of the wall, snap - and then they quickly left. I went to the same spot she went to, Coila took a picture in the same position as the guy, and with mimicry, the game began.

talking about : performing tourism
 imperial tourism
 consuming
 commodified history
 commodified history
 history for sale
 layers of history
 invisibility & access
 never arriving at
 colonial history



performing tourism.

fun, but risky.

is this politically correct? is it good? or bad?"

"interesting to perform something you've done before (without performing)"

something to understand about white supremacy. the gaze.
 i'm just here to consume, and then i'll go home.

Nic very familiar with tourist mode.

--> am I? or just not aware of how I am?

then moved on to the
 'Boulevard des Stars'
 a sad, run-down &
 scrappy red pathway
 with names of famous
~~German~~ ~~actors~~ names
 in German
 cinema. Weird 3D
 kind of Binoculars
 with Hologram-type
 images ~~that~~ of
 famous person.
 Took more pics,
 posing & performing
 tourism quite well
 & at this point.
 Actually having
 some fun, too
 and feeling almost
 taboo about. Every-
 thing just so
 absurd.



choreography of tourism.

listening to the mall.



Nic: what do we do with these sites of trauma? we turn them into sites of consumption and then consume them over and over again.

Mall of Berlin
“biggest food court in Berlin”

comfort food.

commodification of trauma

palace

escapism - indoors
non-placeness of mall

lure

Spirits +
ghosts +
feeling
the
absence
of
people
in places
made to
contain
many
people.

listening exercise on Mall bridge.

Nic "a certain type of hearing that's
not simply aural"

violence - sounds of humanity
sounds of machines

hidden / voyeuristic position
fantasy of falling over the banister
as if part of our exercises

emptiness - covid

- what it's designed to do -

ghost town
but so much reverb, like a container

every sound dramatic

----- utterances, fragments get
swallowed into the soupy mess

"like when going to an empty water
park you feel the "presence"/absence
of ppl."

birds straight ahead and above, ----
ominous? outside, calling

people below us, unaware of us
(Nic felt opposite)
can we hide ourselves and listen?



heard someone walking behind
me, then stop and stay. Coila
thought I was moving.

(first checked the route on the phone to site)
(sitting in Kleistpark waiting for my friend)

in my mind:

walked to bus station
got on bus, thinking of many things on bus,
felt natural to be distracted and thinking about a lot of different things in the visualization because
that's how it would be in “real life” too.

different to a meditation, less focus or pressure because you're doing something,
going somewhere.

was hot on bus because it was hot day.

arrived at site, got off bus. was at the corner of Wilhelmstraße and Voßstraße, walked down Voßstraße,
towards the mall, arrived at the corner of Gertrud-Kolmar-Straße.

Didn't know whether to go straight or turn into Gertrud-Kolmar-Str. Decided to turn right.
Walked slowly on the sidewalk down Gertrud-Kolmar.

Realized my body wasn't present or limiting me, so started walking down the middle of the street.

Car went through me, enjoyed newfound liberation, lay down in the middle of the road, thought of
Crossing the Pale River and Lüderitzstrasse, but this time unable to actually stop traffic.

Got up. Continued walking until I got to parking lot. Went and sat on little piece of grass with small
tree that I had noticed earlier, on a physical site visit.

Sat on the ground.

Considered flying up, getting a bird's eye of the site. But instead went into the ground.

Stayed there for a while, encased, quieter
just under the surface
and it was very, very thirsty

The ground was patient but in agony,
the agony of thirst

I listened for a while until I realized
I could turn myself into water for the ground.
So I did, slowly melting into water, fusing with thirsty, sandy, water
we became mud and muddy.

in this way,
I became the earth
and we started trickling downwards.

noise voice

Sitting on a bench near the
ducks & reeds in Windsor.
Construction workers, making
a road.

We talk through the whole
project, our conversations,
tasks/experiments.

architecture deliberately for
this muddy, messy environment -
churches, pantheons.

becoming really conscious in CPR
about the tourist gaze - who is
that public space for?
And nervous about approaching
the de-colonial organisation

body inflected with stress.
I hope today's embodied research
can open me up, let some things out

feeling very angry.

The garden will be quite dry,
by now.

Thinking about objects "listening"
- what is agency?

sentence ≠ consciousness

relationality - how is everything linked,
co-constituting?

sound being received by concrete. The
train under ground, going through the
earth and into my brain flesh and bones

listening to the site, what the buildings are saying / the noise of the location - the simplicity of this &
choosing not listening to voices of historians or activists

noise becoming voice when meaning is being perceived

the noise of a place
can be
the voice
of the collective consciousness
that built it / inhabits it

- immediately an absence - in every site visit, feeling an absence,
the feeling itself of absence is also quite absent -

