

REPORT

LANDING SITES

- a further-field pursuit of new tools for choreography

Amanda Steggell, December 2014



This document reports on the artistic research project 'Landing sites' led by Amanda Steggell, professor within the field of choreography, Academy of Dance, Oslo National Academy of the Arts, in co-operation with students in the first year of the Masters' course in choreography, Katherine Fallmyr, Heidi Jessen and Solveig Styve Holte, and Tormod Carlsen, a second year Master student in stage design, Academy of Theatre.

Landing sites took place from 20-28 October 2012 at Reversible Destiny Lofts MITAKA, a suburb of Tokyo. It was made possible through an artistic research grant from Oslo National Academy of the Arts, and in cooperation with Momoyo Homa, Director of the Architectural Body Research Foundation and curator of Reversible Destiny Lofts MITAKA. Other invaluable contributors are Fujii Noakota MD., Ph.D., leader of Adaptive Intelligence Laboratory, RIKEN Brain Science Institute, artist Miuki Kawamura and linguist Ryoko Uno, Associate professor, Tokyo University.

The project is also indebted to artist/complex systems scientist Professor Takashi Ikegami. He introduced me to the work of Shusaku Arakawa and Madeline Gins while I was a researching artist at his Artificial life laboratory, Tokyo University.

The title of the project 'Landing sites' is on loan from *Architectural Body* (2002), a written work by Arakawa and Gins. Reversible Destiny Lofts is an iteration of this book in the form of a very unusual apartment building, constructed through prescribed techniques called 'Procedural architecture'. We traveled to these lofts in pursuit of new tools for choreography.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Research should no longer be done off to one side, in a school, a library or laboratory. Where one lives needs to become a laboratory for researching, for mapping directly, the living body itself, oneself as a world-forming inhabitant. (Arakawa and Gins)



Summary

From 20th - 28th October 2012 I traveled with three Master students studying choreography at Oslo National Academy of the Arts on a field trip to a unique apartment building, namely Reversible Destiny Lofts in Mitaka, a suburb of Tokyo. A student following the Masters' course in stage design, already in Tokyo, joined us when we arrived. The residency was envisaged as the first of a two-part workshop for exploring the body's capacity to co-create event-spaces with any given environment. From an educational perspective, my aim was to address 'the ongoing construction of the teaching space (is) as the curriculum'. - Jondi Keane 2010

The lofts are the creation of artist/architect duo, Arakawa and Gins and are a physical iteration of their book *Architectural Body* (2002). They enable the book's complex discourses and schemas to be probed directly through embodied experiences of an unlikely architecture. The purpose of the visit was to study the shared experience of cohabiting and working in this built environment. The unique architecture of each apartment, the building and its rooftop and ground level gardens poses a means to grapple with the nature of embodiment, cognition and personal action, and to reorient the body and its capacity to apprehend and shape the world. A perceptual approach to 'attention', 'decision' and 'action' is a key element of this study.

Central questions

- Can the complex relationships between a body and its co-construction of the environment be analyzed and measured?
- How can decisions and actions in choreographic procedures be accounted for?
- What kinds of tools for choreography can be developed from addressing the above questions?

Potential outcomes

- Enhanced/extended pedagogical prompts and analysis for choreography students.
- Presentations of the experience and reflections on its potential and limits for colleagues and students within the Academy of Dance, across Oslo National Academy of the Arts, to targeted institutions (such as AHO, NMI, etc) as well as a general public.

- A web-based presentation/documentation to reach a wider public.
- A report that can form the basis for a future article.

Roots

The project is bound up in my research in choreography as a procedure that departs from-, yet extends beyond the subjective body (of a dancer) and the often pre-empted outcome of choreographic work as a dance. It also constitutes a case study in research-based teaching involving students actively and directly as co-researchers. In both cases an intention was to propagate new sets of perceptual, cognitive and kinaesthetic tools for individual choreographic projects and interdisciplinary collaborations, dance-wise, stage-wise and other-wise.

My background: Since 1995 I have explored how networked technologies have transformed the way people work, socialize, create and share information, and organize the flow of people, ideas, and things around the globe. I have investigated how a body copes with flows of information passing between the digital, natural and lived world, grappling with how these flows reshape perceptions of time, space and place. As a consequence my artistic practice, once concerned with the staging of dance, has escaped into many artistic fields and scraped up against scientific ones.

The works I have created have taken on many forms, from live art happenings to site-specific and relocatable installations and machine-works, as interventions in public space and combinations of the above. They are experimental and participatory, often occurring in spaces beyond those normally reserved for the arts - or to put it another way - where life happens.

From an international perspective this work, previously positioned between performance, electronic and media art, now finds a landing site in a current mostly European discourse about 'expanded choreography', a term coined by the Swedish choreographer, Mårten Spångberg. The tendency is to look beyond choreography as a 'craft' with prescribed sets of procedures for producing dance, and explore the shifting contexts of choreography in contemporary society. Developing new strategies, protocols and open tool sets for choreography that produces subjects and reality (rather than 'mere' ideologies) are a part of this discourse. I am interested in the aspect of 'tools' as I find an ambiguity as to what these tools are. Is it possible to be more specific? I became interested in Arakawa and Gins' work because, through a set of prescribed tools (procedures), they attempt to reveal how shifting relationships between bodies, things and environments can become measurable and accountable – 'tentatively'.

I was introduced to the work of Arakawa and Gins by complex systems scientist/artist Prof. Takashi Ikegami who leads a laboratory on Artificial life at Tokyo University. I visited Reversible Destiny Lofts MITAKA while on a research residency at Ikegami's laboratory in July 2013, where I worked on the discursive project *Beautiful and Irrational – conversations between science, art and choreography*. 'Landing sites' grows out of this project, encompassing co-operations with people I met during my residency; Momoyo Homa, curator of Reversible Destiny Lofts MITAKA, Miyuki Kawamura, visual artist and Fujii Naotaka MD, Ph.D, leader of Adaptive Intelligence, Riken Brain Science Institute.

About Arakawa and Gins

Shusaku Arakawa (b. Nagoya, Japan 1936 - 2010) and Madeline Gins (b. Long Island, New York 1941-2014) have collaborated on a wide range of artistic, architectural, poetic and theoretical projects that are profound in their insight and influences. Arakawa had a background in science and medicine, and Gins in creative writing, literature, philosophy and painting. After meeting in New York

in 1963 they soon achieved global recognition for their initial conceptual artwork *The Mechanism of Meaning* (1963-71). Arakawa and Gins drew inspiration from the life achievements of Helen Keller, the American author and political activist who lost her sight and hearing as a child. By learning how to communicate she seemed to prove that reversing one's destiny is possible. Together they developed an esoteric philosophy of life and art, and a theory called 'reversible destiny'. Their mission - to combat totalitarianism and outlaw aging - is voiced via numerous concurrent treatises, paintings, films, written works/books and built projects.

Architectural Body and the Reversible Destiny Lofts

Architectural Body (2002) demonstrates the *inter-connectedness of architectural design, the poetic process, and philosophical inquiry*. It draws from a perceptual approach to 'attention', 'decision' and 'action' to set out the stakes for sustainability and improved living. Coordinating every 'scale of action' - from the mere 'noticing of things' to the 'co-construction of the body and environment' - form the stakes.

Architectural Body represents an important dimension within contemporary research practices. It addresses convergence and complexity across the arts and sciences on the 'scales of action' relevant to human experience. *The refusal to reduce the terms of one discourse or experience to that of another, while always working 'on-site where living happens' causes the architectural body as a practice to resonate with all kinds of practitioners*. Once grasped, topics such as 'organism that 'persons', 'landing sites' and 'coordinology' can be used by anybody, from the very old to the very young, and the physically and intellectually challenged. Rather than being recipes for making things, they are procedures to enable new connections and relationships. *Reversible Destiny Lofts MITAKA* both embody the discourses of *Architectural Body* and are a physical schema and a 'shell-space' for its practice. The complex texts that precede the built work are just as interesting as the crafted built work itself, yet they are made accessible through the carefully crafted building and directions for inhabiting it.

The peculiar three-dimensionality of the lofts seeks to expose how relationships between things and events occurring inside of it are 'measurable' and 'accountable'. Designed for communal living, they are never the less a challenge to live in. And this is exactly the point! The lofts stimulate the senses, and force inhabitants to use physical strength and imagination. They are made up of many coloured rooms of diverse materials, and in the form of cylinders, cubes and spheres. The rooms are distributed around a central area with a sunken kitchen and a floor that resembles miniature sand dunes. Floors and ceilings slant awkwardly. Strangely placed windows, tiny balconies, level changes and other surrealist tricks convey an off-balanced feeling of being in several places at once; of a breakdown of interior and exterior, mind, body and environment. The absence of doors challenges residents to find ways of being private. There is no furniture except for the kitchen and bathroom facilities. Yet there are oddly placed power switches, and hooks and rods for suspending and reorganizing ropes, nets, swings and things - and more.

2. TENTATIVE APPROACHES

When I first read *Architectural Body* it is with an uncanny feeling of déjà vu. What is expressed is akin to the difficult-to-pin-down-and-put-words-on underpinning choreographic organising in my own work. By introducing a novel approach for doing, thinking, talking about and questioning one's own choreography in an environment far removed from Oslo, new tools for choreographic projects may emerge from being a short-term loft resident-choreographing dance artist-researcher. The research trip could also serve as a tentative 'tool' for addressing, from a further-afield stance, existing discourses of 'expanded choreography' in circulation in Europe.

The question of whether the findings of such a research can be accessed/ transferred *independently of the architectural context* they propose became central to the research. For this reason 'Landing sites' extended into three more workshops. The second was pre-empted and directly preceded the first, after which two more workshops took place. For the remainder of this report I will focus only on the field trip to the Reversible Destiny Lofts, MITAKA, citing the proceeding workshops as outcomes.

Field trip

Imagine that you are a student-researcher on an eight-day field trip to Tokyo. You may not have visited Tokyo before, yet for the majority of the time you are required to work in a building in the suburbs. It demands a high level of commitment.

The approach to the field trip was to enable participants to dig deep into the art, theory, philosophy and ideology of Arakawa and Gins to the point of immersion, not through hours of studious reading, but by cohabitating two loft apartments, namely Room 202/ Critical Resemblance Room and Room 303/ Kehai-Coordinating Room. When entering the lofts as a resident (or as part of a guided tour), one is presented with a pack of twenty-two instruction cards; Directions of use for Reversible Destiny Lofts – In Memory of Helen Keller. "As you step into this unit fully believe you are walking into your own immune system" is just one example. Another. "At least once a day, amble through the apartment in total darkness". These cards formed the launch pad for physically probing the lofts, creating choreographic situations and expressions, and introducing the concept of 'Landing sites' as proposed by Arakawa and Gins in *Architectural Body*.

The schedule was negotiated organically on a day-to-day basis, structured around practicalities and everyday life-rhythms. While there were some given tasks/activities, each participant defined her own focus point(s) for the field trip, negotiating co-operations to facilitate explorations. There was no intended pressure to 'perform'.

Activities were drawn from individual and communal experiences of living and working in the apartments, presentations by Momoyo Homa and invited guests, and several 'fixed' and self-chosen excursions. A visit to RIKEN Brain Research Institute to experience 'substitutional reality' posed an opportunity to compare the lofts with another built environment for challenging the senses and for questioning what reality 'is'. Other resources available to residents include a library, screening room, office and rooftop and ground level gardens. Participants were expected to keep multi-sensory and multimodal diaries of their experiences for web-based presentation. Daily meetings mainly occurred during meal times, with discussions about organization, experiences, reflections and further activities. A small budget was provided for purchasing materials and to cover costs of excursions.

Borrowing a term from Arakawa and Gins, I became 'coordinologer' (a manager of space and time, and logic). At intervals I proposed tasks, and joined in tasks proposed by participants. I also prompted them to take new looks at the issues presented in the project proposal. The diaries are a

significant part of the project, flowing out of and assisting the production of social relations and decision making in terms of developing individual practices within the frame of the research.

Reporting

The main approach to this report draws on the participants' diaries, organized chronologically with the daily schedule indicating what else went on during the day. There has been no attempt to analyze or change these diaries. The posts are unedited, save the absence of the many images and videos of some of them. URL references are provided for these absences. Some posts are composed in collaboration. The authors' names are not connected to the individual diary postings, though they do appear on a blog, and therefore accessible to a general public who have internet access.

This format has been chosen to convey a process where (through the generosity of the participants, hosts and drop-in guests) bodies, objects, architecture, ideas and memories rub up against and affect one another. A reader may be able to identify different concerns, styles of writing and uses of other media that she may attach to an author-personality. She may also find convergences/similarities in postings such that a singular 'identity' is difficult to pin down. In the mingling of experiences, memories and thoughts the report becomes a multi-voiced approach/ontology that explores what choreography can be and produce. It is hoped that the diary posts can reveal information that is otherwise absent in this document.

- Grappling and scratching

As stated by one of the diary authors "(this) text is already reducing the capacity of the body" in a situation where the becoming body is central to the research. Likewise, while I have been composing this document, it is with a feeling of self-doubt regarding my ability to convey the project, and in terms of terminology and authenticity there-in. Without doubt there are many borrowed /appropriated words and phrases from many sources that lack direct reference. And there are big gaps of information that are not reported on. Additionally, as the native language of the participants is Norwegian it is a struggle to find words between languages.

- - Acknowledging the unforeseen (an open ending)

It is difficult to prepare for the forces of nature that people who live in Japan have to deal with. On 25 October the effect of a powerful earthquake 200 miles off the Fukushima coast were felt in Tokyo. Tsunami warnings were issued, but cancelled the next day. At the same time Typhon Francisco and tropical storm Lekima were approaching Japan, with heavy storms hitting Tokyo towards the end of our stay. They followed a similar course to the devastating Typhoon Whipa that struck just days before our arrival. Each posed a threat to the Fukushima-Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant complex. We experienced the unsettling effects of these natural forces, and fears of recurrences of the 2011 earthquakes and tsunami that caused so much devastation. Fortunately the typhoons did not converge on Japan.

We traveled in calm weather to Tokyo Narita Airport, unaware of the storms that were about to hit Europe, and which greeted us when we landed at Schiphol Airport, Amsterdam. We were the last passengers to leave a plane before the storms grounded planes with their passengers inside them, and all incoming flights were directed to safe havens. Even though we were stuck at the airport for many hours, it seemed a poignant way to conclude the research trip, suggesting that the journey we began in Oslo was bound to continue further afield.

- - - Acknowledging authorship

The diary posts, including photos and videos, are accredited to the participants; Anne Katherine Fallmyr, Heidi Jessen, Solveig Styve Holteand and Tormod Carlsen.

3. DIARY - SCHEDULE AND UTTERANCES

Sunday 20th October: departure from Oslo

Journey: Reading about the work of Arakawa and Gins.

Monday 21st: Arrival at [Reversible Destiny Lofts MITAKA](#)

Getting settled.

20.00: Dinner – local sushi restaurant.



Utterance #1, Unsettled

Monday the 21st of October I arrived at Reversible Destiny Lofts, MITAKA. With three hours alone in this structure I wandered around in the space. Not really sure where to be or what to do. Should I sit down? Should I explore the space? Should I rest? Should I work? After wandering around for some time I was drawn into the yellow cocoon shaped room. I attached a hammock in the ceiling and took up my camera. I laid the camera on my stomach, imaging the camera to be the eyes of my stomach investigating this round room. After some time I fell to sleep...

Video: <https://vimeo.com/77478750>

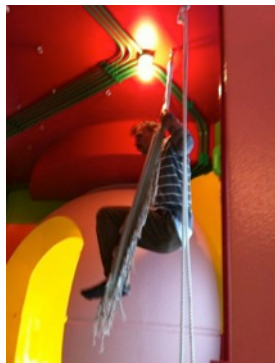
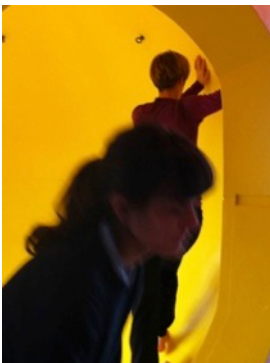
Tuesday 22nd October

10.00-13.00: Breakfast meeting in Room 303/ Kehai Coordinating Unit

13.00-17.00: Collective work – exploring the Kehai Coordinating Unit via the instructions provided on how to be a loft inhabitant.

17.00-19.00: Screening of CHILDREN WHO WON'T DIE—A Documentary Film on Shusaku Arakawa. Directed by Nobu Yamaoka Music: Keiichiro Shibuya. Narration: Tadanobu Asano.

19.00: Welcome Party with Momoyo Homma, curator of the Reversible Destiny Lofts MITAKA, Matsuda Takeyoshi and other long-term residents.



Wednesday 23rd:

10.00 -11.00 Breakfast meeting in Room 202/ Critical Resemblance Room

13.00 – 17.00 Visit to Substitutional Reality Laboratory, [Riken Brain Science Research Institute](#).

17.00 Free time/ have fun in the city



Utterance #2: Glossary

We have been digging into the world of Arakawa and Gins. This is a glossary (in progress) of some of the basic vocabulary of them:

Landing sites -

Landing sites are used (by Gins and Arakawa) to describe the way attention operates and to simultaneously map the way these attentions come to know themselves and situate the body, albeit tentatively, within an environment. It is not “it” and it is not “you” but the energy or relationship between “you” and “it”. It is what catches your attention, what makes you aware and able to act, be, feel...

Were nothing being apportioned out, no world could form. What is being apportioned out, no one is able to say. That which is being apportioned out is in the process of landing.

- Arakawa and Madeline Gins

You may say it is where you “land” – what draws your interest and shapes your understanding in a space. The cluster that makes it “meaningful”, “interesting”, “graspable”, etc. It is more than a perspective. They make you present and able to grasp the world.

You look at a forest and you see a forest. Then a tree chooses you, or you chose the tree. And you are drawn towards this.

Landing sites operate on three levels or scales that are singular to themselves yet also overlap simultaneously, slipping seamlessly into and out of each another. These are “perceptual,” “imaging” and “dimensionalising” landing sites.

Perceptual landing sites -

Perceptual landing sites are what grab attention in the immediate; the object in front of you, the text on a page, the nearness of anything that is so proximate as to be right there in the here and now. It is what just appear to you! It is the perception of the world in shapes and color, where shape and colors are experienced as just this. It is purely perceptual.

It is immediate and in direct response to probable existence.

Imaging landing sites -

Imaging landing sites can be thought of as the next stage away from the perceptual, what’s happening later in the day, what’s going on just around the corner, what you can feel but can’t see, the not quite

here and now but getting there as the pre-cursor to the perceptual.

It is an imagining relationship.

An example could be how the shower suddenly appears as teleport, the tree appears as monster, and so on...

An imaging landing site is that what gives you an idea about that site.

An intuition. What being in/with the site evokes.

Dimensionalising landing sites -

A dimensionalising landing site is quite different from the imaging and perceptual landing sites, as it loosens and widens its cast of attention to draw in the bigger picture so to speak, even if the elements thereof are imperceptible in form and substance.

Dimensionalising landing sites = mapping.

A dimensionalising landing site combines the qualities of the perceptual landing site and imaging landing site, and in so doing, simultaneously ranges narrowly/tightly and widely/diffusely.

Something that engineers depth and dimension.

A dimensionalising landing site registers location and position relative to the body. Building, assessing, and reading volume and dimension.

Architectural body -

A body that manages to produce

– the body proper.

Coordinology -

Organising of space and time. Coordinating logic.

Thursday 24th:

10.00-11.00 Breakfast meeting in Room 303 Kehai Coordinating Unit

11.00-18.00: Open schedule/own projects

15.00-15.30: Visiting the roof top

18.00-22.00: Artist Miyuki Kawamura and linguist Ryoko Uno visit us and present their work with a lecture about “Dancing Self Theory”. Dinner and discussions.



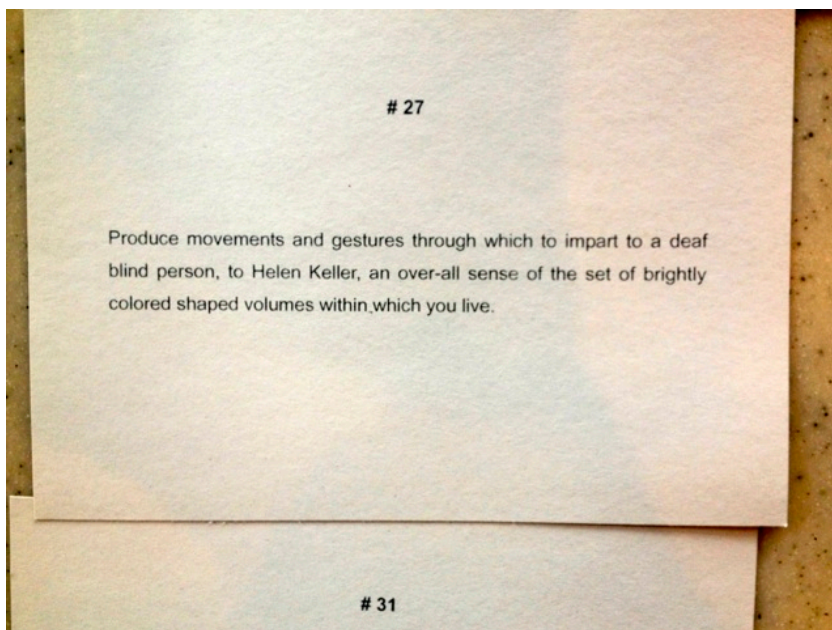
Utterance #3, Following the guidelines of Reversible Destiny Lofts MITAKA

How are you choreographed?

How can I approach sensing the space without putting it in a certain time or shape.

The body is easily reduced.

Outside, trying to listen three-dimensionally I remember that I understand the sounds as a composition. Inside the roughness of the floor under my feet is an opener to a world of sensing and creating sense. The meaning arises from the experience. I cannot move without reflecting on how I am choreographed, how the space guides me and how memory, at the same time awakens a certain choreography. I am longing to set myself loose from judging movement and phases. I am very sensitive to my self-judgement and I keep coming back to how stupid society can make the body, the image of the body and how easy it is to be ironic instead of being. The aesthetics of being is complicated to enter without identifying it and feeling the fear. I try to move beyond fear and from addressing and identifying movement to experiencing the movement in itself.



I forgot that I could have been 100 or 4, but subconsciously I sometimes enter being four and sometimes I have the same compassion for myself inside my sensing body as I can have for an old person; a body that is full of experience. I notice when my body directly can approach its surroundings and move through space as a known landscape.

I can differ from when I identify the space as I remember to have seen it and when I remember it first – when I am there.

The architecture serves my body. The curve serves differently than the right-angled wall, underneath my feet there are rough stones, bamboo mats, concrete.

I remember that when I met a pole there was something familiar, and then our previous talking of Miley Cyrus sexual pole dancing and licking made my approach of the pole suddenly unfamiliar and bizarre. When the instructions some time later reminded me of poles as trees I could again approach and let myself be touched by the pole without being culturally embarrassed by my behaviour.

The movement from the body differs from when 'I' do; when I feel they are performed and when they are playfully alive and awake responds to "each passing moment", responding to the situation the

environment serves me. When my body recognises a choreographic situation I am caught by the contemporary discourse of reducing and being ironic to the sensing body. The protest against the aesthetics of release and improvisational work in the body sometimes force on the body that which it shouldn't sense.

Is there a time for taking the body back again, and not needing to be responsible for the aesthetics it is producing? The image doesn't give an imaginary experience. This text is already reducing the capacity of the body. There is still a struggle for language, but I will use every language I have available to understand and to be understood.

To allow rest.

To see with the eyes closed, how the light changes.

To see with my eyes open the meaning of using colours and contrast.

To be silent to Helen Keller.

To use silence without being afraid of making a statement through sounds.

To name something 'Susan' and then later The Museum of Unconditional Surrender; to remember that it is a subtitle of one of my favorite books which I never finish. And which I read in different cities, always starting from the beginning. To recognize that I am no longer writing to myself but to someone else. To you. To feel a bit embarrassed of the unwilling poetic, and therefore maybe cliché in the past sentence. To resist making fool of the body

To feel that an on-going lifelong theme/ work/ project is arising. The choreographed body as not different from the architectural body and not different from the life choreographed. How does/did life choreograph you? How to investigate this with a deep compassion, an ease and not being afraid of sensing my whole body as once? Not being afraid of making form and appear foolish. Not being afraid of aesthetics that don't feel cool. Not being afraid of identifying a movement or a response as authentic within its frame, situation and circumstance.

Saying farewell to non-sensing, saying farewell to irony, saying farewell to coolness, welcoming unconditional surrender.

Utterance #4: Into the woods

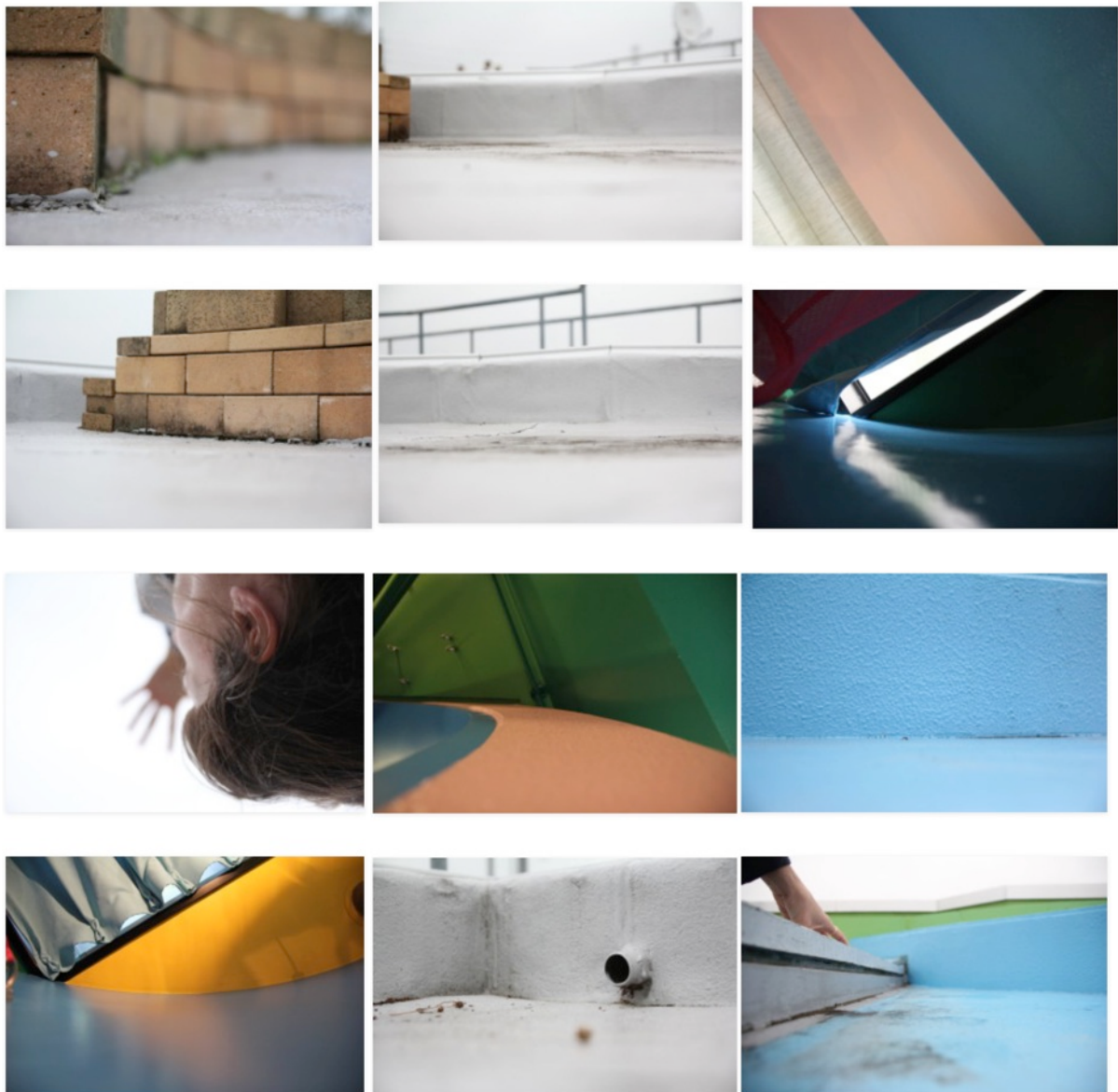
I am outside the door. The floor is cold. There are sounds everywhere. Both near and distant. Birds integrate with the humming traffic, both of which are playing with the speed of sound. Slowing down and stopping, starting and moving again. A crow is surprisingly cutting through space as if its looking for action. It draws my attention and make me smile. Then I go towards the door, and stand in front of it. I "knock-knock-knock" in the most stereotypical way. I open the door, close my eyes and enter the space.

"WOW! Hello space. You have changed since the last time I saw you".

I have completely lost my orientation! The bumpy floor has now become a steep hill. I struggle to keep my balance and get a bizarre sensation of climbing downhill from a mountain. Yet I know I am inside a room! The structure of sand on the floor contains millions of details. And only a very few I am able to grasp. As I slowly carry on my "hike", I meet all sorts of textiles, sharp edges, wires, poles, cold and warm surfaces (which in fact turned out to be my computer- haha), fake fur, patterns. All objects of which I in this space, with my eyes closed, somehow see as the "nature of things". I am in the woods.

Utterance #5: The camera as landing site – searching for shapes

Today I have been exploring using the camera as a Landing Site. What I found was these shapes.



Utterance #6, First impressions of Reversible Destiny Lofts MITAKA

In the beginning the Reversible Destiny Lofts MITAKA provoked me. Of all the colors, shapes and structures in the apartment – which one would get me to be more creative? Be younger? Be Better? My first impression of Reversible Destiny Lofts MITAKA was a different feeling than the feeling I have now. At first, the strong color-contrasts and peculiar shapes of the rooms were provocative to me. Why I do not know. Maybe I will have an answer in a few days. I felt dizzy, was this the effect of jetlag or the really strong colors? I hunted for comfort. Three days have gone by and I'm not dizzy anymore. At first it was uncomfortable; the structure, shapes etc. It's strange what color can do to you and your focus. Now I have accepted and become more familiar with the place the unfamiliar colors, I have made the space "mine" using little things like hanging up clothes and my visible toothbrush at the sink. I lay tracks after me. Or was it for me? I have learned to see where in the room I want to see and I'm starting to think that I am becoming a super hero that has the power of choosing where I want to hold my focus...I am now

taking in what I want to include. I take this tool with me when I trudge around in Tokyo, tools I can take with me back to Oslo.... something that I can keep working on, getting even better at it. Comfort is found. It has given me a taste for more and now.... I will hunt for more tools.



- traces of me, clothes, my dresses my, my toothbrush...

Friday 25th:

10.00-11.00 Breakfast meeting Room 202/ Critical Resemblance Room

12.00: Open schedule/own work/optional screening of “For Example. A Critique of Never”, Arakawa and Gins, 1971



Utterance #7, A performance that made me believe in performance!

- reflections on my visit to [Riken Brain Science Research Institute](#).

I expected that the experience of having my senses hijacked and experiencing virtual reality would create a sense of unease and fear in me. But the experience I had at Riken Brain Science Institute made me feel quite the opposite. I felt excited and inspired, a sensation that reminded me about one of my first theatre experiences as a child. I was fascinated and completely into a fictional world, but at the same reminded of how this world was created. In the play between my until now known world and the world that was

opened by the hijacking of my senses, possibilities of multiple realities arose. And with that the recognition of how reality is a belief and a perspective.



For someone who has not experienced the about 10 min. performance of Ph. D Naotaka Fujii and his staff at the Riken Brain Science Institute it can be hard to understand what the experience could be like. I will not reveal all the secrets, in case you might be lucky to try this yourself. But, basically they use a technique where you see the world through video glasses and earphones. What is shown and heard is a mix between the real surroundings and pre-recorded material. The illusion dimension is highlighted by that the “actors” were wearing the same cloths/costumes in both realities. The scenario that unfolded was a scenario where they revealed the secrets of the technology. At the same time, I was unable to tell if this was a recorded reality or happening in real time. A “lie” or “truth”.

This play between recorded reality and real time was experienced through the same mediums; the glasses and the earphones. This made touch, smell and taste the only senses I could use to separate the “real” realities from each other. This inability to “understand” dragged me into, or you may even say left me in the hands of, the performance of Ph.D. Fujii and his staff. The here and now performance of the team made me want to go into a possible other reality. It was a strong reminder on how performance it self could be used as a tool to drag you into other worlds and possibilities.

<https://vimeo.com/77853329>

Utterance #8, Being, changing, living

Yesterday I spent two and a half hour on my own in the space. I now try to create language for the experience and link it up to the on-going process of using Arakawa and Gins vocabulary. The space we live in, Kehai Coordinating Unit were my landing site, and inside new landing sites developed. (Landing site: where my attention is drawn.)

Arakawa and Gins speak about three different layers in understanding the landing sites: immediately perceived sites, imaginary sites and dimensional sites. Can I use this vocabulary to analyze my experience yesterday in retrospective? Is it possible to say that the immediate site is linked to the question what did you do, that the imaginary site is linked to how did you think/ project/ perceive what you did and can the 'why did you do that' be linked to 'dimensionalising site'?

What did I do? I worked intuitively in the space for two and a half hours, not putting restrictions to where, how long and what to do/ produce. I wanted to investigate being; investigating the immediate interests in the space and at the same time knowing that to find and make new tools for choreography is the headliner for our stay here. In memory of Helen Keller I wanted to work spontaneously.

What became my landing sites? I started in the open room with the bamboo mat, stretching, moving, seeing, I had an idea that I wanted to move. I climbed up and sat and laid in the hammock under the ceiling, finding new places for it and I found some grapes that were hanging from one of the eyes. I spent time inside the yellow cocoon, receiving support at different parts of my body, finding the hooks at the end of rods and making new connections, I moved this outside in the big space. I read and organised the 32 instruction cards from Arakawa and Gins for inhabiting the lofts and then I understood that I had too little time.

Why? Tuesday evening we saw the documentary "Children who won't die", a documentary of the work of Arakawa and Gins made by a filmmaker who lived in the Reversible Ddestiny Lofts for four years with his family. To live and work in these spaces has been very inspiring in many different ways. The space doesn't need me to exist. I am not sure if I am the one choosing landing sites or if it is the way the space is constructed that gives my attention direction.

In august I saw the performance "You" of Lisa Østberg and Kim Hiortøy at Black Box Theatre in Oslo. To be here reminds me of the performance and I can try to sum it up in the sentence: To play is existential. When I am in the spaces I often try to excuse my being and amusement with: now I'm not using or producing anything. To not produce more than being can be ambivalent to me. But as long as I am not using anything either, it feels more okay. The space serves me possibilities for changing them and creating new possibilities of existing. This is not easy to write but I feel alive and at the same time "landed" here.



How? There is a tendency of thinking that easy makes you happy, to not make an effort makes you

happy. To be here brings me into being- an active state of recognising that I am alive. The house serves a sense that thinking, building, changing, perceiving through my body is important. I can transform. I can be four years old. I can climb. I can receive support different parts under my feet, back, neck, hands at the same time. The spaces receive me differently than the flat floor, right angle walls and chairs I am used to. To move makes you alive- I think. This place forces the body and the mind into moving. Things aren't as they seem to be, or as you're used to.

This place forces intelligence, whole hearted, body and mind. I need less sleep here. I feel vital. I am 30 min outside the city center of Tokyo (!), We spend a lot of time here but I still want to stay. There is so much to attend to. The small doors – imagining that I am Alice in Wonderland. The hooks and ropes that I can move around in the “eyes” of the ceiling. I can be the mountain climber, the monk, the monkey, the philosopher, researcher, architect, stage designer, composer, blind and deaf, the human.

What is a tool?

Now I want to divorce with formats for performance and performativity. The expanding choreography; about how we live and interact is feeling much more important and relevant than to make another show. I want to build instruments that you can't play without moving through-, and infecting the space around you and I want to change, and be changed in places like this.

Utterance #9: What is reality. Really?

As the terms concerning reality and fiction has been fascinating me for a while, I was intrigued to be a “victim” of getting my senses hijacked in the Riken Brain Science Institute in Tokyo. New layers of reality revealed itself and made me question: What is reality?

Really?

Prof. Naotaka Fujii is the team leader of the Adaptive Intelligence Faculty at the Riken Brain Science Institute in Tokyo. Prof. Fujii and his companions are currently working on developing technology that can discriminate between real and fake reality. Through manipulation, or hijacking of my visual and auditive senses, and by including the “real” sense of touch, they are able to make me doubt and question my conventional concept of reality. “Reality is what you believe” says Prof. Fujii.

And I believed it all. Pretty much. Prof. Fuji team of researchers are shifting between recorded and live material. Though a helmet that contain both a video screen and headphones, they have completely control over my visual and auditive senses. What I see and hear are different scenes, of which, I don't know are real or not. It is when the sense of touch are included as a layer, I start to believe the fiction. Or more correct, start to doubt whether it is fiction or reality. In general I am VERY confused, VERY scared and VERY entertained – all at the same time.

What are the possibilities of the further development of this technology and why am I interested in combining this with art? Probably because I don't know exactly how this can be done at this point. My sensation is only that this combination of technology, art and science can be useful in various fields such as for instance treatment within psychology, research within sociology, and in education and entertainment. Are Prof. Fuji and his team now developing what will be the future way of not only viewing but experiencing film/theatre/dance? How could this make us perceive art differently? And also, how will this specific research of the brain influence future generations perceptions of reality?

re·al·i·ty (rē-ăl'ī-tē)

n. pl. re·al·i·ties

1. The quality or state of being actual or true.
2. One, such as a person, an entity, or an event that is actual: "the weight of history and political realities" (Benno C. Schmidt, Jr.)
3. The totality of all things possessing actuality, existence, or essence.
4. That which exists objectively and in fact: Your observations do not seem to be about reality.

adj.

Relating to or being a genre of television or film in which a storyline is created by editing footage of people interacting or competing with one another in unscripted, unrehearsed situations.

Idiom:

In reality

In fact; actually.

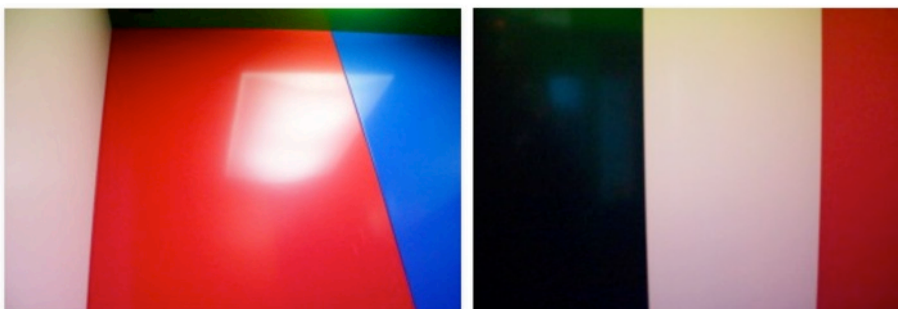
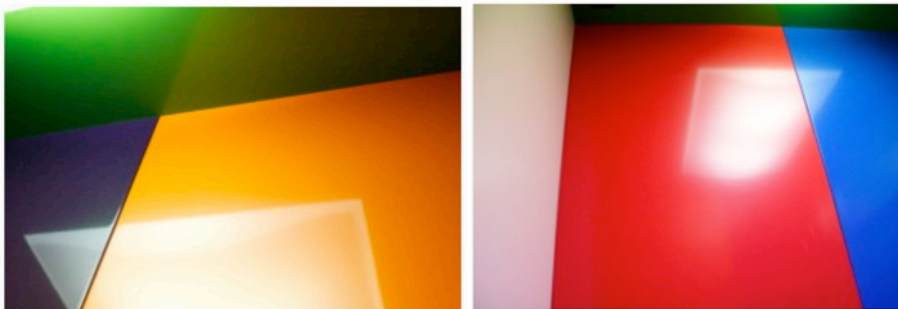
Sources:

<http://www.brain.riken.jp/en/faculty/details/6>

<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/reality>

Utterance #9: Colors colors colors and colors of Reversible Destiny Lofts, Mitaka

A set of 14 specially concocted colors are used throughout the Lofts, calculated to offer a view of six colors at any given angle. Here is my documentation of the colors I see.



All 14 photos: <http://choreography.khio.no/?p=250>

Saturday 26th:

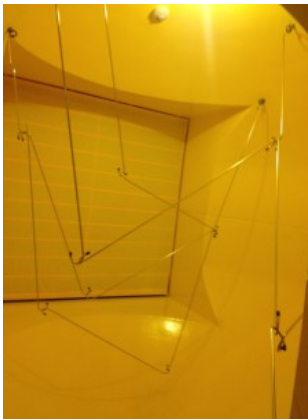
11.00: breakfast meeting Room 303 Kehai Coordinating Unit
Open schedule/own work/logging

Utterance #10: Make something

I wanted to do something specific in the space. I wanted to create something, document something and finding tools. I worked inside the yellow cocoon again, because it is not everyday you can be in a yellow space of concrete where even the curtains are yellow and round as well. I played with the eyes in the ceiling and the rods with hooks on each end.

The rods in steel are 60 cm long and the rods in plastic are half the size. The plastic ones are in green, pink and black. First I tried to put all of them, 14 in steel and 14 in plastic, inside the yellow room in some kind of construction, hanging them up in the six eyes in the ceiling. Then after some consultation I hung only the steel ones inside the cocoon. This gave some more space and acoustic. I could see more clearly how they infected each other and the space. I tried to be outside the cocoon while I build and changed the rods and the space.

The choreography was simply to test the possibilities in making connections, breaking and making new connections. Paying attention to the sound the rods made when they hit each other, or when they fell apart and hit the floor. Paying attention to what shape they made; clusters, triangle, square. To see and change them from different angles and see if only changing one rod could infect all the others, set them in motion, or make them swing. I love when they can swing like a hammock construction, and to see how this work gave me something to attend to, paying less attention to everything else quite disturbing in being a body.



Then I made one long connections with the plastic rods stretching from the cocoon to the other rooms. It was funny to test these possibilities and to feel I had to take some risks where the thread of rods could easily fall apart. The last time I ended up with too few rods, but luckily I found some coat hangers to fasten the thread of rods into the bathroom.

Amanda gave me this great sentence: Awareness – attention- action.

I take with me these tools from this day: analysing my own awareness through the glossary of Arakawa and Gins. Naming my attention, understanding more of what I do/ want to do through naming or recognising it as an immediate or imaginary landing site. Understanding how to work with the dimensional site where my attention comes into action.

Utterance #11, Hello earth. Today we have been looking at floors.

Strange? Perhaps, but in the Lofts there are different cards with tasks written by Arakawa and Gins. One of these is "Use the floor to chart the intricate set of actions by which you succeed time and again in regaining your balance". Difficult task, indeed- and here are some thoughts.

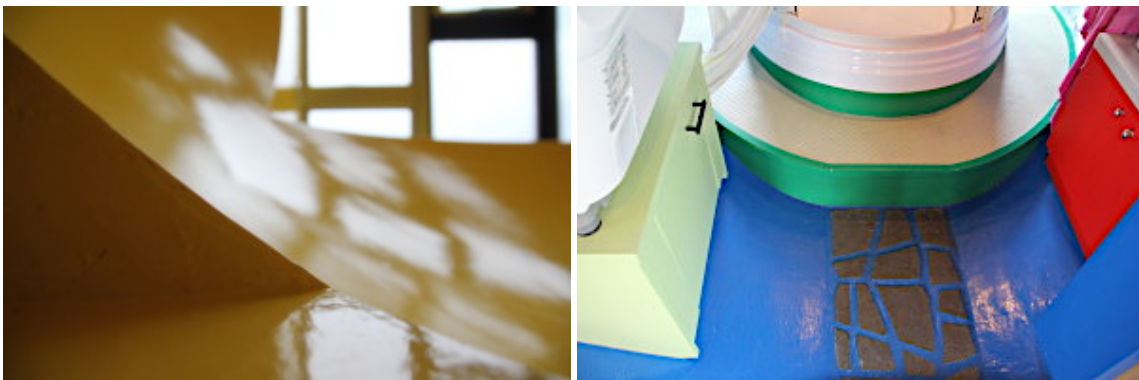


SAND/BUMPS/FLOOR

The floor is made of sand, tiny stones and concrete. Almost like a sand dune with tiny bumps and small uneven hills. Walking on this surface stimulates both the imaginary and immediate perceptions and is in this sense, combining both the body and the mind. Because this room is taken out of its original context, and placed inside a flat it plays with what is authentic or not, and therefore allows for another experience. A somewhat subjective experience. And one question could be; do different culture backgrounds have an impact on how one perceive the diverse surfaces in the Loft? How would for example an "urban Tokyo hipster "experience it differently to a "Norwegian hiking enthusiast"?"

WOOD/STONES/CARPET/FLOOR

This space is unique, because it has got three totally different surfaces. The sizes of the different surfaces vary, so does the temperature. The stones are cold. It is easy to switch for one to another and therefore it can rapidly change how one is moving. Jumping up and down is not the same on a wooden floor as on the rocks. The wooden surface especially provoke an "known" feeling of being home in the living room. Nice and cozy Christmas-celebrations, dancing with woolen (and slippery) socks. The rocks project a beach. By projecting through the feet, it creates an imaginary world of fresh air, seagulls, the ocean and bad weather clouds in the horizon. However the sounds you actually hear are traffic from the street. Interesting combination!



YELLOW/ENTERING A BALL/FLOOR?

Basically, this room does not contain any floor, walls or ceiling. Or another way to put it; all is united in a circular shape. And this creates perhaps a dimension of eternity. There is no difference in material and

you are generally tempted to climb the walls, WITHOUT having to deal with gravity. Moving here is a challenge. The movement is distinguished by having control and being out of control; everything from laying down in fetal position- or running around like hamster in a wheel.

NARROW/LEVELS/BATHROOM/FLOOR

This room is (not) made for walking... Having to research the floor in this site was rather intimidating. Hmm.. Yes.



ACCIDENTAL/COMFORT/FLOOR

This floor was accidentally covered with pillows, mattresses, carpets, when we cleaned the flat. Instead of ignoring the “messy room” we decided to include this in our research. Surprisingly this floor is the only space that really invites the whole body. Immediately one wants to lay down in its fun, soft, airy surface. There is also a sense of resistance, when moving about amongst all the pillows. Actually quite a work out! Otherwise it is a relaxing and comfortable space.

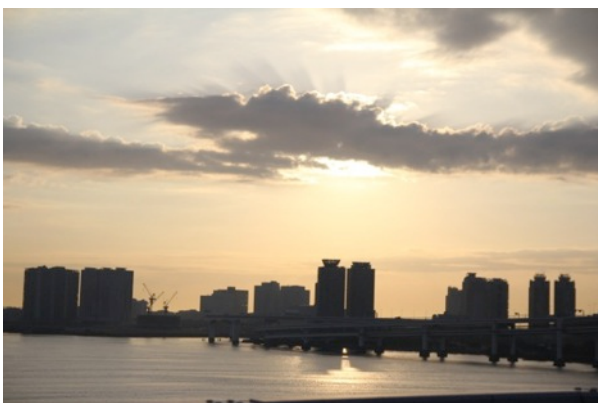
Sunday 27th:

10.00 - 12.00: Breakfast meeting in Room 202/ Critical Resemblance Room. Summing up, group discussion

12.00 - 19.30: Packing, clearing up, prepare space for evening talk

16.30 - 20.00: Ken Mogi talk Critical Resemblance Room Room 303, RDL

Monday 28th October: Departure



Wednesday 30th October: Landing sites part 2 begins at Oslo Academy of the Arts.

CHOREOGRAPHIC ACCOUNTING

Expectancies

- Enhanced/extended pedagogical prompts and analysis for choreography students
- Presentations of experience and reflections on its potential and limits for colleagues and students within the Academy of Dance, across Oslo National Academy of the Arts, to targeted institutions, as well as a general public
- A web-based presentation/documentation.
- A report that can form the basis for a future article

Outcomes

- **Web-based documentation:** <http://www.choreography.khio.no>
Other forms of web-based dissemination distributed via various social media platforms.
- **November - December 2012: Landing sites, part 2**
Workshop in collaboration with Academy of Art, Oslo National Academy of the Arts and guest teacher, HC Gilje
- **31 October – 1 November 2013: Landing sites**
Working group presentation, Amanda Steggell
“Re;placing the cinematic” conference. ANX Oslo. The conference was organized as part of the artistic research project “Re:place,” funded by the Norwegian National Artistic Research program, in collaboration with Atelier Nord, Academy of Fine Art, Oslo National Academy of the Arts, and IFIKK Dept. of Philosophy, Classics, History of Art and Ideas, University of Oslo.
Images: <http://replace-project.blogspot.no/p/replacing-cinematic-oslo-31-october-1.html>
- **4-5 December 2013: “Landing sites”**
Anne Katherine Fallmyr, Heidi Jessen and Solveig Styve Holte.
Four staged presentations distributed between two black box spaces to an invited audience, colleagues and students of Oslo National Academy of the Arts and a general public. Students and staff of the Academy and dance artists from the independent dance scene in Oslo were involved as guides. The public experience two different renditions of explorations of Arakawa and Gins work.
Invitation: <http://choreography.khio.no/?m=201311>
Video documentation <https://vimeo.com/90520672>
- **April 2014: “Not-dance, but-dance”**
Solveig Styve Holte, Ann-Christin Berg Kongsness, and Marte Reithaug Sterud
Workshop and presentation based on the "Directions for use" of the Reversible Destiny Lofts MITAKA by Arakawa Arakawa + Gins, Reversible Destiny Lofts MITAKA, Tokyo.
- **April/May 2014: Landing Sites Specific part 1**
Workshop/ field trip to Art Villa Garikula, Shida Kartli region of Georgia. In cooperation with Art Villa Garikula, National Academy of Fine Art, Tbilisi, and the people of the village of Akhalkalaki
- **May/June 2014. Landing Sites Specific part 2**
Workshop/ field trip on Hovedøya, Oslo - a small island five minutes by ferry from the mainland, in cooperation with Akerselvan Boat Society.

- **May 28 and 1 June 2014. "Landing Sites Specific"**
Three works distributed between Høvedøya and Oslo National Academy of the Arts.
 - "Den einaste utsida som finnest er di eiga hud" (The only outside to be found is your own skin), Solveig Styve Holte, black box space, Oslo National Academy of the Arts.
 - "En alternativ guide til Hovedøya" (An alternative guide to Hovedøya), Anne Katherine Fallmyr, Hovedøya
 - "Fall", video installation on the beach, Heidi Jessen. Hovedøya
- **June 2014: Short film**
Short Film by Solveig Styve Holte, Marte Reithaug Sterud and Ann-Christin Berg Kongsness. Made at Reversible Destiny Lofts in Tokyo, Japan. Premiered as part of the commissioned performance "Endevendinga" at Dei Nynorske Festspela (New Norwegian Festival)
Video: <https://vimeo.com/115674005>
- **December 2014: Report.**

REFERENCES

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Books/Journals

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Films

- "For Example. A Critique of Never", Arakawa and Gins, 1971
- "Children who will not Die", Directed by Nobu Yamaoka Music: Keiichiro Shibuya. Narration: Tadanobu Asano, 2010.

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