

Katrine Skovsgaard

Contemporary Art Practice - Public Sphere
Royal College of Art, MA 2021

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Sharing Care Vulnerability Haptics Body Movement Collectivity Touch

Hi, I'm Kat!

Who are you?

I am an artist, co-creator, workshop facilitator and collaborator. I'm interested in the spaces between us, how we share or, more often, do not. My art practice investigates ways to reveal subjective sensory experience, especially those personal experiences we do not talk about and those we do not notice. My research is located at the crossroads of shame, chronic pain, sharing and mutual radical care.

*For years, I hesitated sharing my story.
What do you share with others and how?
What would you hesitate to share?*

The initial reluctance I felt about sharing, when faced head-on, became a catalyser for not only my own, but for many other people's sharing stories of vulnerability. This enquiry started with a willingness to ask questions I didn't know the answers to. The work instigated conversations I'd never had before. Through my art, I now intend to spark more of these conversations, intimate moments, sharing, and most importantly, the feeling of being safe to do so.

*When and where do you feel safe?
What do you imagine the tactile surface of safety feels like in your hands?
Memory reveals what touch already knows.*

I currently explore notions of intimacy through touch-based art and radical sharing narratives in text and sound. For example in my piece, *Touch*, a tapestry installed as a semi-circle creates a room-within-a-room; a calm environment to listen to an audio piece with a choir of stories sharing about emotional or tough experiences with hands. Maybe these stories bring up experiences of your own?

*Would you share these stories with a stranger? Or a friend?
It can be hard to collectivise and confront the loneliness that some experiences give us.
How do you ask for help in your life? Who are your allies?*

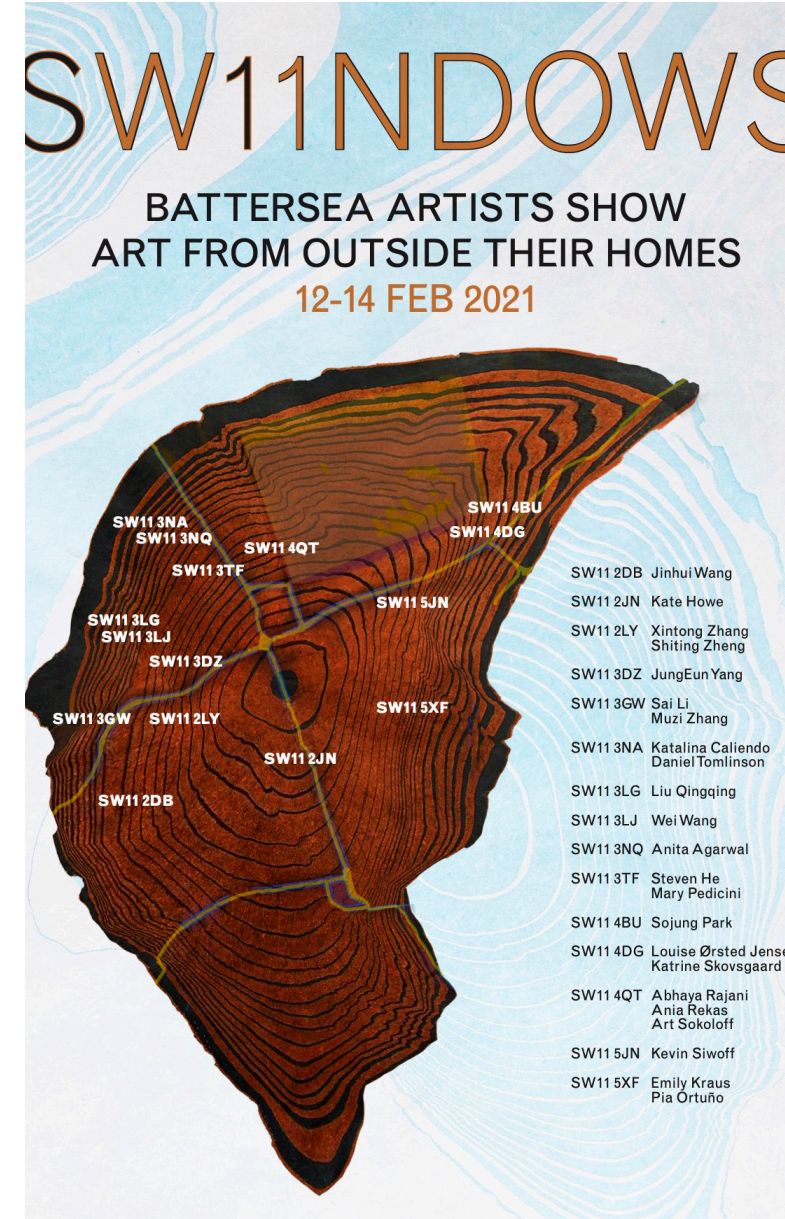
I examine how we can provide embodied safety for each other, and how that might 'materialise', emotionally as well as physically. Dealing collectively with the tough aspects of being human is an important and revolutionary practice that current, interpersonal and social systems and structures do not support. I want to bring about the world that emerges when we come together around the inherently tough and awkward experiences of being human.

How can WE start to think about doing this?



Touch Technique from work process, Danish Art Workshops, January 2021

These images show a fragment of a larger tapestry in progress of collages of hands. The fragment is a long piled shag carpet of 1.5 x 3 m, to be accompanied by stories of radical sharing about experiences with hands. The carpet is thick, approximately 4 cm.



SW11NDOWS Battersea, February 2021

Lockdown exhibition with 23 artists all living in London postcode SW11, exhibited in or accessible from public space; works installed on balconies, windows and doorways, in gardens, on fences and in door phones. Open call curated by Anita Agarwal, Louise Ørsted Jensen and Katrine Skovsgaard.

I exhibited a carpet alongside sound narration - listen here:

<https://www.katrineskovsgaard.net/da/Projects/2021/SW11-NDOWS-2021>

Mercurial Mist

← previous

Welcome to the pile. To navigate through the pages, click on the floating numbers. Drag the works around and select what to read by clicking on text titles or images. Some artists have their work spread over search bar to

Pray, Katrine Skovsgaard

I'm crouched on a wooden pallet in the gutter, tears streaming down my face as a large, warm hand touches my shoulder. "How are you?" a towering body over me asks. I'm reluctant to respond and surprised by the presence: where I come from, the tearful stranger is best avoided. You don't approach someone crying in the street – much less touch them. I'm flustered by this approach.

"I can't really fool you with 'I'm fine', can I?" I shrug as she sits down beside me in a sideways hug, her strong arm wrapped around my shoulder. I tell her about my worries, and about my employee's incompetence – spit flying; how my health is declining, how I will have to fire him – tears flooding my face; I am in critical need of care myself, and I need to find and hire his stand-in within hours – the tissue in my hand is soaked.

I disappear into her embrace, limbs protruding either side of her large body as it envelops mine and her hands softly but insistently hold me to her chest. My sobs intensify, then gently subside into sniffles, in turn becoming slow, deep breaths to the drum of her heart. Seconds become minutes in the warm embrace of this stranger.

"I want to pray for you before we go inside. If that's something you would like," she whispers. I think to decline her offer, but I am inspired to meet her way of being in the world like she now meets me in my sadness and irritation, so I say yes. Her warm face lights up as she places the palms of her hands to the uneven ground and pushes herself to stand. She takes an extended, calm breath in, and a deep voice intonates expertly from the depths of her stomach. Her hands flutter upwards, full of passion. Hips sway as her voice vividly evokes my troubles in a scintillating use of intonation. She expresses her love and sings for the lord to be my guide: to send me health and strength in this life. I find power as my words reverberate from her vocal cords and into her wildly frustrated dancing hands; my heart passes through her being.

Her song lingers with me as I walk inside, and she joins me; she is my new employee. Today is her first day. I'm embarrassed that I haven't even asked her about her worries – reciprocated her caring presence.

See more of Katrine's work at: <https://www.everythingforever.net/katrine-skovsgaard>

Soft Everything Forever, Mercurial Mist, Montez Press Radio; exhibition, radioshow and publication, 2021

Since producing the first carpets, I have made small performances to 'translate' them onto the screen. I have worked on creating 'haptic visuality' to tap into the sensory potential of screens and workshop on (online) graduation strategies. (*Haptic visuality* is a term used by Laura U. Marks in *The Skin of the Film*: a visuality that functions as a sense of touch by triggering physical memories of smell, touch and taste).

The artwork exhibited here has three outputs: only text, only narration, and moving image with narration <https://chartreuse-harp-n3pl.squarespace.com/katrine-skovsgaard>



THE FEELIES

SENSORY

SCREENS

ONLINE LAUNCH EVENT

6pm 14.05.2021

The Feelies Workshop and online exhibition, February-May 2021

Through *The Feelies*, an across-RCA group, I experimented with this translation and the idea of sensory screen experience beyond the visual. I translated the sensation of touch to screen through a set of criteria introduced by Marks. I found that, e.g. a narrow field of vision, hyper-close-up and using the camera as if it were a hand can produce some of the haptic effects I was looking for. Using very limited visibility to make space for the auditory elements of the work was another strategy I used for this project.

I co-hosted the opening event with Barbara Mueller - see works at <http://ordinaries.online/thefeelies>



Work in progress Royal College of Art, May 2021

Carpet tapestry of 1.5 x 10 m to be accompanied by sound piece. This image shows the tapestry hung on a wall. The carpet will be accompanied by a sound piece, as well as a circular construction that will allow me to hang this tapestry and create a room-within-a-room that can become a soft workshop environment, and a calm environment in which to listen to the audio piece.



Release - Grid #1-15 Photographic grids 100x70 cm - KP20, Kunsthall Aarhus, April 2021

A series of paintings, photographic grids, performances and videos. I translate exercises into material, that speaks openly about the body and its functions. The work becomes a visualisation that is inseparably bound up with the real without resembling it; abstractions of lived life.



Release - Performance Performance of painting a release painting at Copenhagen Art Week

Release has been shown in different constellations; at The Language Hospital at Sorø Art Museum, Copenhagen Art Week, Kuldiga Art Hall in Latvia, BKF in Copenhagen and in the publications The Pluralist, UK and Der Grief Guest-Room curated by Dominic Bell, Germany.

Here shown as a performance at Copenhagen Art Week.



Bridge

A collaborative performance with Anita Agarwal and Katrine Skovsgaard. Participants were invited on a physical journey that intertwined internal private space and external public space. We walked through the streets of London hand in hand, and through a set of instructional scores and meditations, were encouraged to connect and reflect on relationships to those around us, and the space we inhabit.

<https://vimeo.com/372209281>

THE SPECULATIVE CLINIC CARE KIT WORKBOOK

Exercises to accompany you in the healthcare system
through aural, logical, physical, verbal and visual learning

ABOLISH EVERYTHING BUT CARE, MUTUAL AID AND COMMUNITY

Organise all aspects of your life into one of the categories above. Which of these categories could work, education, cooking or commuting benefit from? What would your life look like if you reframed it as care, mutual aid or community?

For the verbal or logical learner

CARE AND CARING

Who drinks your tears, who has your wings, who hears your story?
- Naomi Shihab Nye

We are constantly (not only sometimes) in need of care and support. This page lets you think about the structures around you that can help you get the care and support that you need.

Write down a list of those you care for and those who care for you:

For the verbal or logical learner

EACH TIME YOU WALK TOWARDS FEAR, YOU SLOWLY ERASE IT

What can you do today to meet your fears?

Being brave is not a feeling. You can recognise bravery in others, but possibly not in yourself. When you are being brave, what you might feel is fear. By confronting your fear in everyday actions, you are growing the boundaries of what feels safe. You might find that your fear does not have the power over you that you imagined.

Where do you feel fear in your body? Where do you feel bravery?

What's something that fear keeps you from doing?

Is there something you can do today to confront that fear safely?

How might you recognise bravery in your own body in the future?

For the verbal or physical learner

BODY SCULPTURE

How does your body move now? How would it move if you felt better or your situation improved? Make two 'sculptures', or body postures that embody:

- 1) How you feel now
- 2) How you would like to feel.

What do they look like?

Try to overdo or caricaturise them and see how that feels.

Now 'do' one sculpture followed by the other, and invent a transition from one posture to the other.

For the physical learner

Use this transition as a reminder when you forget where you want to go, where you came from or how far you've come on your journey. You can transition in both directions at will. For example a transition from position one to position two is a reminder of where you want your journey to lead you. Transitioning from position two to position one can be a way to allow yourself to have a bad day.

LETTER FROM YOUR BODY

If your body could speak, what would it say? Write yourself a letter from your body when you have gained insight about it, for example after a visit at the clinic or following another exercise in this booklet. Alternatively you can write a dialogue where you ask your body questions and write out your body's response to those questions. Try to let the answer or letter come from your body, don't force it.

If you prefer listening or speaking, you can do this exercise by speaking out your questions to your body, listen in and see how it reacts, or shift seats and respond as if your body were another person.

For the verbal or aural learner

BODY MAP

Draw how your body feels right now - what you feel and where you feel it. Think about: placement, size, shape, colour, temperature and intensity. Or even: sound, smell, taste, touch

The register we see something in changes our response to it.

For the visual, aural or physical learner

The Speculative Clinic Workbook State of the Art Symposium, March 2021

A workbook to accompany and prepare you for your visit to a health care clinic of the near future. Concept conceived in collaboration with Rieko Whitfield and Elena Lo Presti.

The book is a framework for the language we use and how we meet in the health care system; a system, where hierarchies and borders are upended. The patient is the teacher, and all aspects of health are considered at your visit to the clinic. Here are some of the exercises you can meet in the workbook.

The Speculative Clinic

ena Lo Presti



David Burrows

The Speculative Clinic

eko Whitfield



Pil Kollektiv

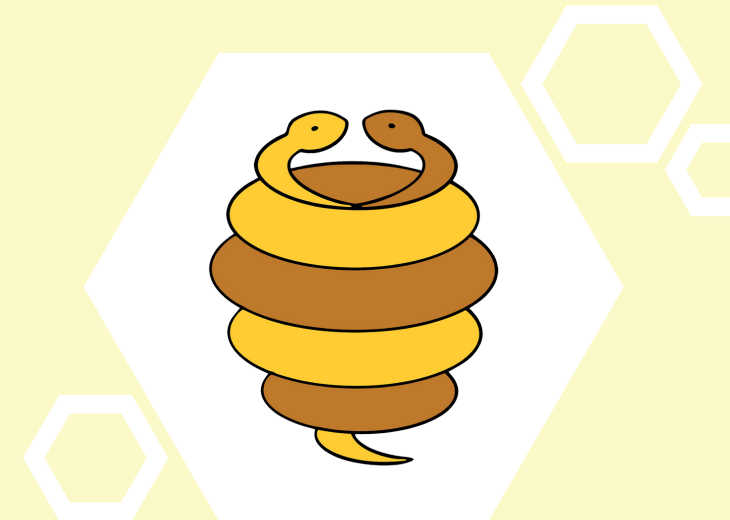


on O'Sullivan



Katrine Skovsgaard

The Speculative Clinic



**Exercises to accompany you
in the healthcare system**

State of the Art Symposium, March 2021

The Speculative Clinic Workbook was presented at the *State of the Art* symposium, where we performed a fictional takeover of state functions. As the Department of Health and Social Care, we put forward new policies, strategic goals, languages and new aesthetics to replace the existing official ones. Can health and social care be rethought using artistic speculation? Might art help us think beyond the narrow horizon of the neoliberal zero-sum game? Respondents: Pil Kollektiv, David Burrows & Simon O'Sullivan.

Invitation Letter Sample

Dear _____, _____ and _____:

I am writing to ask you to join in a peer to peer support project called The Hologram. For now, I want to invite you to a two hour meeting online. Are you available on this day and time, this or this?

If you say yes you will be contributing to an experiment in peer to peer healthcare - with its roots in an integrative care model developed within the Social Solidarity Clinic movement in Greece, in response to the financial and migrant crisis. All our crises are connected, as we know more every day. This is a practice developed by an artist as a way to help distribute the labor of care in a way that can produce more stability and health for more people as we survive the end of capitalism and find new ways to thrive collectively. You can read about the project [here](#).

If you agree, you will also be helping me. As you know, this has been an extremely confusing time. Like most people, I have a lot of changes to contend with. I would be very moved if you would be a part of this experiment with me.

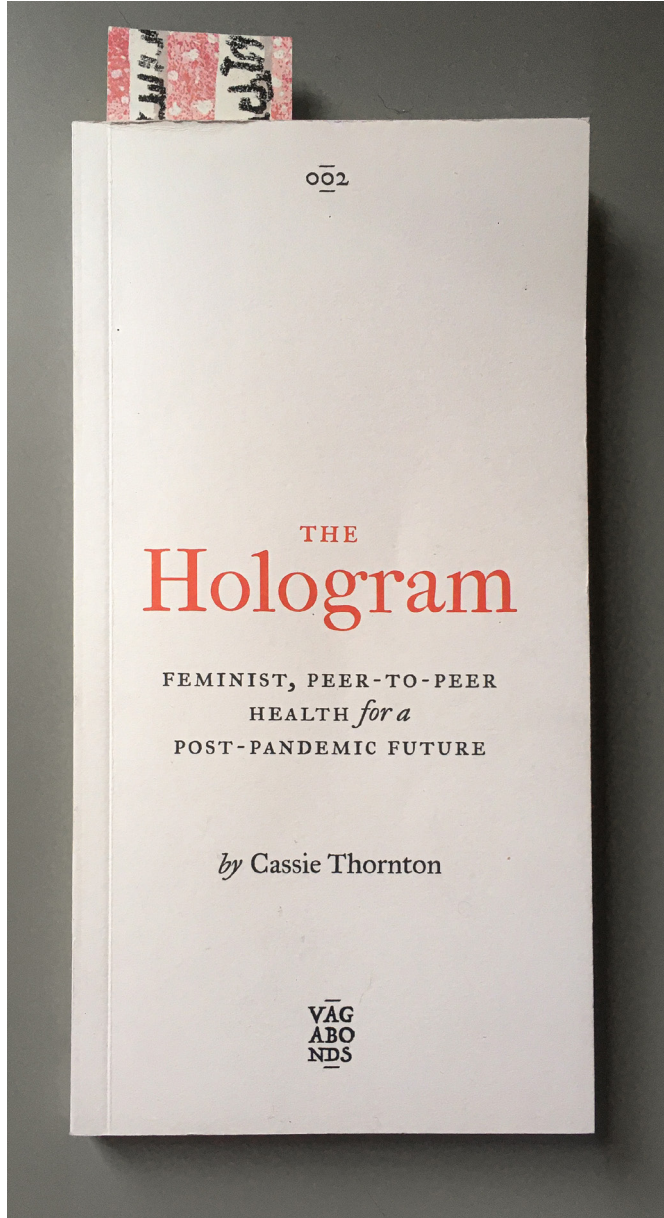
In the meeting I am planning, three people will act as my triangle. As a member of my triangle, you would focus on helping me to see myself in all my dimensions. To do that you would ask me questions with a focus on my social, physical, or mental/emotional well being. I would also be playing a role, called a hologram. At the beginning I will share a little bit with you about what I would like to talk about during our session. I think your presence would make it possible for me to understand and learn from my present situation.

The Hologram is meant to be a long term practice, but if you agree, let's just start with one trial meeting. If it feels good to the four of us, it is a practice we could do in an ongoing way. The goal is that after you act as a member of my triangle for a while, I would help you form a triangle of support for you too.

Thank you so much for receiving this message. As you might guess, it was quite scary to write and ask for this kind of support. I hope this leads to a good conversation with you, no matter what your decision is:)

The Hologram Facilitation online and on couches all over the world, through 2020 and 2021

The Hologram is an artwork by Cassie Thornton: a mythoreal viral distribution system for non-expert healthcare. Its protocol formalises our informal caregiving relationship and ensures that all caretakers are cared for, and regards supporting someone else's wellbeing as therapeutic in itself. I am in the team who delivers this method of social care and collective liberation. I facilitate inductions; what we call Minimum Viable Holograms; an intimate two-hour facilitated session. Participants sign up in groups of four, with one person asking three trusted others to join a guided conversation about their physical, social, and emotional health. Sign up and more info here: <https://thehologram.xyz>





The Hologram Film in production, 2021

The result is the construction of a robust multidimensional health network, and collectively oriented social practice negotiated with peers, rather than through systems that are often exclusionary, inaccessible, and tied to capitalist frameworks. We collaborate with Furtherfield Gallery in London and A Blade of Grass in NY. In order to spread this network, we currently work with artist Melanie Gilligan on making a film about The Hologram through an online live action role play. This screenshot is from the LARP, where we enact a future version of ourselves in a future where healthcare is privatised, but who for at least 30 years, has gotten the care they need through practicing The Hologram.



PhD Project proposal, February 2021

I have applied to and been offered a place at the PhD programme at RCA. I will pursue a PhD degree in order to develop my art practice by linking it more firmly to research and by expanding it in context and scale. Studying for the PhD degree at RCA would allow me to do so, and to bring in new collaborators and specialised contexts in London. I am currently fundraising for the tuition, salary and production costs that such a project requires. In the following pages, I outline some of the key research questions, methods and methodologies of the proposed project. Image above from the co-creational and participatory project (I). <https://www.katrinekovsgaard.net/en/Projects/The-Body/I-2016>

- **How** might one find a feeling of safety, intimacy and inter-subjectivity within contemporary participatory and/or haptic art practices?
- **Is** participatory or haptic art an apt method of creating feelings of safety and platforms for sharing? And if so, what factors within these methods contribute to a sense of safety?
- **What** are the knowledges produced in haptic art and in workshops through which co-creational artwork is created?

PhD research questions February 2021

Methods for this project involve:

- 1) Participatory trans-disciplinary workshops
- 2) An exploration of touch-based art (audience-based)
- 3) The outcomes could inform each other and feed into a new art process



PhD methodology PhD interview, March 2021

Participatory -> input for qualitative analysis (e.g. coding framework)

Transdisciplinary -> new forms of knowledge through e.g. movement practices and haptics
 -> sensitive process of responsiveness/reciprocity -> artwork and body of writing

Image above from the co-creational and participatory project *Headscapes*.
<https://www.katrineskovsgaard.net/en/Projects/The-Body/Headscapes-2018>