

Slowness as a Bridge

Art, Identity and social practice; with artist-curators **Rochelle White** and **Georgina Johnson**. White and Johnson present ‘**Slowness As a Bridge**’ an open conversation. Exploring *s l o w n e s s* and *transformation* through precarity and uncertainty. Dealing with the experiences we once knew and contemplating upon the future to recognise our needs and capacities as socially engaged artists.

***In the name of open source love we share the references which are keeping us inspired/challenged during this time.*

This Document and Resource has been created collaboratively by Georgina Johnson and Rochelle White

“Slowness as a Bridge for us to recognise other capacities”

Tina Campt



Slowness: A conversation between Tina Campt, Saidiya Hartman, Simone Leigh and Okwui Okpokwasili

Available at: <https://vimeo.com/410656841>

S l o w n e s s is "not only a question of kinetics, but also of intensities, of generating an intensive field of microperceptions."

- Tina Campt quoting André Lepecki's book, Exhausting Dance

Microperception is not smaller perception, it's a perception of a qualitatively different kind. **It's something that is felt without registering consciously.** It registers only in its effects. According

to this notion of shock, there is always a commotion under way, a 'something doing'... There is always a something-doing cutting in, interrupting whatever continuities are in progress. For things to continue, they have to re-continue.

'Of Microperception and Micropolitics' By Brian Massumi

Politics of Affect By Brian Massumi [available here](#)



'BELLY FULL' The Laundry arts x V&A July 2019

Image by Ryan Adrian Prince

COMMUNITY AS A KEY

Community makers are the ones that carve out the spaces that aren't readily offered to us. They are the ones that demand more on the behalf of the many. The ones constantly asking - What do you Carry?
What load can we share? Where are you right now and where do you want to be?

"Community makers are way makers and future mappers.
They activate static space through a vibrating constellation of mobilisers. The onus isn't on the individual, it's on the collective." - *Georgina Johnson*

Can we unpack Insecurity? As it pertains to socially engaged practise as a Black person or POC?

S P R E A D yourself out

There's ROOM for you

collaboration,

community and the **inclusion** of others.

Emphasis on process, participation and relationship building



From, Abstraction, opacity, and transparency: The Black artist and what it means to be understood
- reading group at Tate Britain, 2019 -

Opacity:

opacity
/ə(ʊ)'pasɪti/

noun

the quality of lacking transparency or translucence.
the quality of being obscure in meaning.

Today the choice between ‘opacity’ and ‘transparency’ has become the subject of increasing critical engagement in the realms of both contemporary art and politics. Should art works reveal their cultural origins and references or should they hide them? Do political claims still depend upon making identities visible?

“Opacities are those hard-to-explain parts of yourself. The subtleties, the intricacies, the “irreducible singularities,” the prime numbers and contradictions of yourself... The right to opacity is freedom from the expectation of complete coherence and comprehensibility in every aspect of your personhood.” - Malakai Greiner

We share a common interest, survival, and it cannot be pursued in isolation from others simply because their differences make us uncomfortable. We know what it is to be lied to. The 1960s should teach us how important it is not to lie to ourselves. Not to believe that revolution is a one-time event, or something that happens around us. Not to believe that freedom can belong to any one group of us without the others being free. How important it is not to allow even our leaders to define us to ourselves, or to define our sources of power to us.

There is no Black person who can afford to wait to be led into positive action for survival. Each one of us must look clearly and closely at the genuine particulars (conditions) of his or her life and decide where action and energy is needed and where it can be effective. Change is the immediate responsibility of each of us, wherever and however we are standing, in whatever arena we choose.

Audre Lorde - Learning from the 1960s

Can we talk about *Insecurity*?

In order to do so we must meet the **Truth of Capitalism** and the chasm between

Health of the People

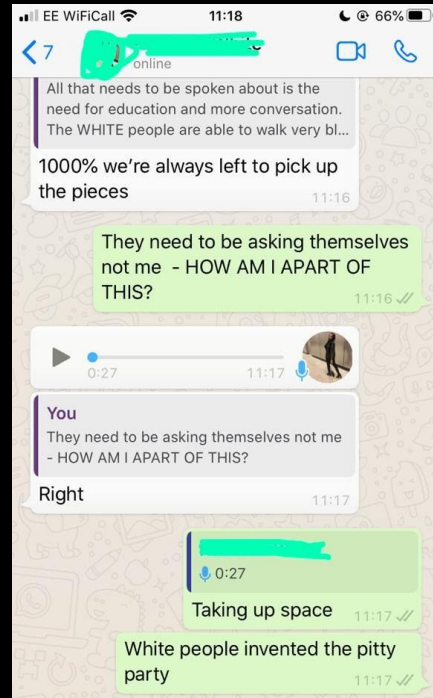
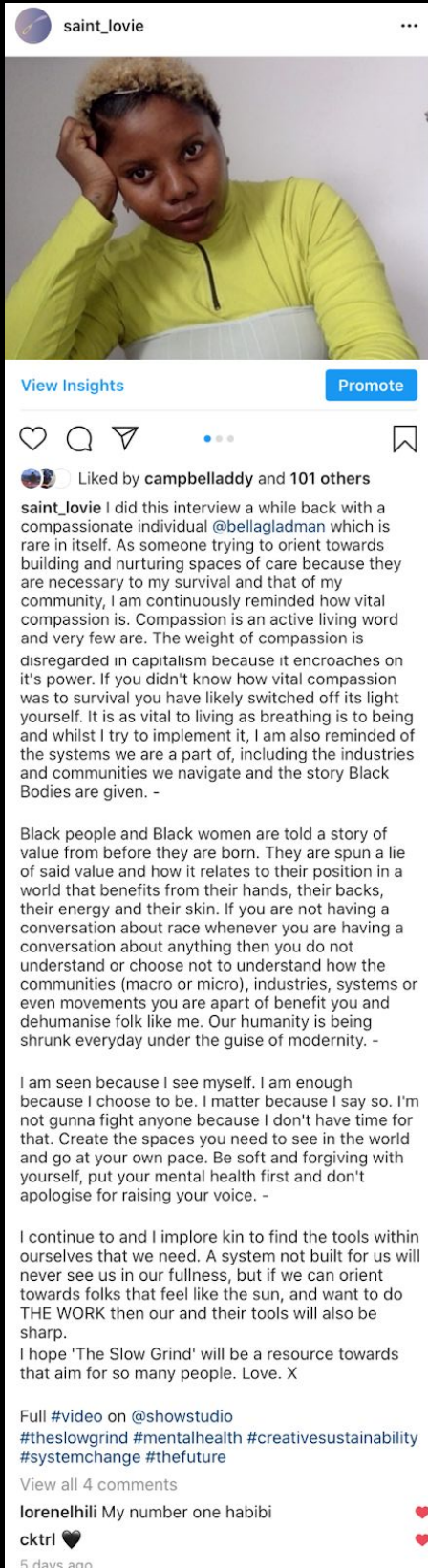
Health of Capital

Can a Socially engaged Practise be sustained in our future Industries ?



Roadworks, 2019. 8.40mins. Performance documentation by Rochelle White
4 my g's dem.

The crisis is shining a light on the disparities in our society.



Many of us are privy to them , most of us experience them, most of us carry them.



Socially /^lsəʊʃ(ə)l/
engaged /ɪn^lgeɪdʒd,ɛn^lgeɪdʒd/
art /ɑ:t/

aims to create social and/or political change
through collaboration with individuals,
communities, and institutions in the creation of
participatory art. The discipline values the process
of a work over any finished product or object.

"There's no such thing as neutral education. Education
either functions as an instrument to bring about
conformity or freedom."

— Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

"But many of us seek community solely to escape the fear of being alone. Knowing how to be solitary is central to the art of loving. When we can be alone, we can be with others without using them as a means of escape."
— Bell Hooks, *All About Love: New Visions*

What is being revealed in this moment of crisis, is the inevitability of more insecurity.
A scepticism towards touch, a factor of life that we need so vitally, and a movement
towards absolute distrust. Here we find ourselves asking what will our social spaces
look like, what shape will our mobilisations that have long been ignited by physical
gathering take?

Capitalism runs on the consumption of *bodies*. We should see the *body* as the 'whole'
In Christianity the *body* is the personification of both Jesus and the body of Christ - *the people*.
In ecological terms it is of *water*
Capitalistism runs on the consumption and absorption of sources of *life*.

Questions to ask yourself:

Do I feel ok being still?

How do I centre myself and my practise?
question of perception?

Is Slowness a question of kinetics or a

Can we mobilise slowness? Is Slowness an act of care?

Both to myself, my community/locality or the natural world?

What do I need to change in order to be still?

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dedication to imagining other ways to perform and other ways to enjoy consumption means claiming the imagination and the aesthetic experience as a field of collective agency where workable forms of resistance can be devised.

I Can't

But what would it mean to put up resistance against a social order in which high performance has become a growing demand, if not a norm? What would it mean to resist the need to perform? Is "resistance" even a useful concept to evoke in this context? Are the forms of agency that we commonly associate with resistance not modes of high performance themselves? Grand gestures of revolt tend to be overpoweringly assertive. They thrive on the rush of the moment when things *really start happening* (the crowd surges forwards, the water cannons start shooting). In this sense they actually *exemplify* the core momentum of high performance itself: they make something happen and deliver an event. Should we then not rather look for other, more subtle ways of performing dissent? What silent but effective forms of non-alignment, non-compliance, uncooperativeness, reluctance, reticence, weariness or unwillingness do we find in everyday life? There are, for instance, those covert survival tactics of the workplace accumulated by generations of employees devising ever-new schemes to avoid performing the task they're asked to perform in the way (or at the time and speed at which) they are required to do so. Can we embrace such forms of anti-performance in art and thinking as forms of art and thinking?

Or do we inevitably find ourselves in the same position as the high performers who are enraged by slow people standing in their way? Uncooperativeness may well be the revenge that uncreative people take on creative society by wilfully stopping it in its tracks. Have you ever found yourself screaming or wanting to scream at an uncooperative clerk behind a counter: "I haven't got time for this!" only to

realise that, yes, *he does* have time for this—an entire lifetime dedicated to the project of stopping people like you from having their way? This slow man may turn out to be a guardian of the social equilibrium, protecting peace and sanity by preventing insanely restless performers like you from changing things for the worse. Or he may merely represent an older system of control and alienation—the bureaucratic apparatus—that is increasingly coming into conflict with its successor, the regime of high performance. In any case the question remains: Can we learn something from the traditional know-how of casual uncooperativeness when we seek to put up defenses against a culture of compulsive high performance?

Why does it take other people to stop us from performing in the first place? Why do we not dismiss the need to perform of our own accord? What can make us utter the magic words *I Can't*? Does it take a breakdown to stop us? Does the utterance of the words *I Can't* already constitute or confirm a breakdown, a failure to perform, justifiable only if our body authenticates our incapacity by refusing to function? How could we restore dignity to the *I Can't*? How could we avoid becoming backed into a corner where the *I Can't* would merely be perceived as a passive-aggressive stance of denial? In other words: How can we embrace the *I Can't* without depriving ourselves of our potential to act? Could we unlock the *I Can't* as a form of agency?

Reportedly, Gerhard Richter used to have a poster next to his phone with one single word printed on it in big letters: *NO*. As compelling as this may seem, the categorical no in this case only functions as (because it is) a response to an existing demand—and therefore a move within a stable economy that supports or even rewards it (rarified supply enhances the demand and raises the price). So the question is rather how performing the *I Can't* could effectively *interrupt* the self-contained economic cycle of supply and demand and truly break the spell of the pressure to produce for the sake of production.

What have I tolerated from...

Systems

Work practise

Language

My Environment

Working Relationships

Love

Friendships

Myself

That I no longer have S P A C E for.....

What have I tolerated as:

Care

Intimacy

Devotion

Warmth

‘Add your own’

That I no longer have S P A C E for.....



rachel.cargle  · Following



Rachel Elizabeth Cargle

Just now · 

Activism is not synonymous with
overworked and underpaid.



17,326 likes



Let's talk about
Care

I want to live so densely. lush. and s l o w in the
next few years, that a year becomes ten years,
and my past becomes only a page in the book of
my life.

Nayyirah Waheed

There are *no* rules

for how to care for yourself. Just tek it *e a s y*



Yam and Other Hard Food

A love note . . . to self.

a visual series, collection of poems,
stories by the cast and text by Saint.
Yam and Other Hard food (zine) brings
together individual wranglings with the
contemporary Black British experience
as well as unpicking thoughts around
Blackness as a commodity,
Blackwomanhood and Mental Health.

A collaboration between
Georgina Johnson (Saint Lo'vie) &&
Adama Jalloh 2018

THE HYPERDIGI

In this moment of Digital Hyperuse and the mediation of connection we welcome the *LowFi*. We go backwards to feel. We go backwards to go forwards and interrupt systems and *assert* ourselves.

Moesha Theme Song Compilation



Ebun Sodipo

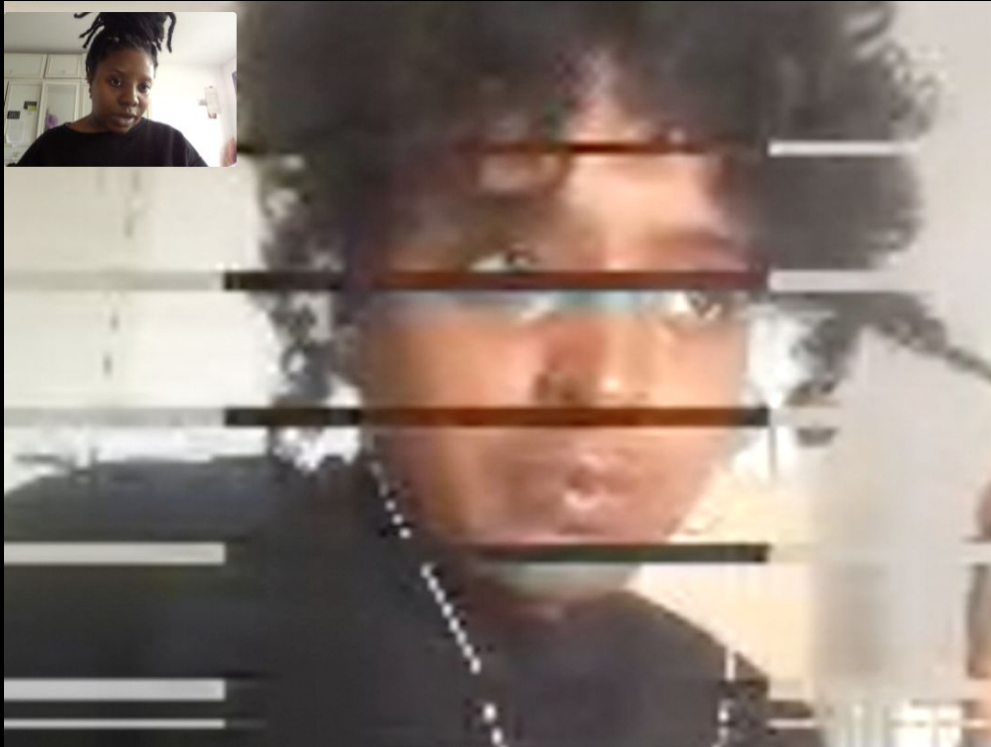


Ebun A. Sodipo, although it may seem absurd, the earth also moves, Performance 2019

I think a lot about how the layering of history, of epistemes, is produced by ideologies, particular ways of seeing. I want to highlight the frame. So I show image upon image upon image, sound on sound on sound, positioning each clip so the viewer is hyper-aware of its boundaries and those of the image it lies on top of or behind. I play with these layers of images. Cutting away the superficial to reveal inner workings informs how I arrange the clips and what effects I use to produce this cutting away.

I'm critical of the desire and need for art to have a finished look, a sleekness that lends itself to the commodification and financialization of the art object, a finish that acts like a polished surface. As an artist I feel a pressure to produce *iArt*. While hypermodern sleekness has its place, and artists have different reasons to produce it, my work attempts to highlight a messy, contingent, experimental process of self-making with undefinable edges. I like my work to be visually appealing and considered while also messy. This is also why I prefer to work with poor images as opposed to lush HD footage.

Extract from Challenging Epistemologies with Fragmented Prose, in Contemporary&, By Mearg Negusse 2020



Various expressions of a common resistance.
wip, 2020



Honing Silent Language, Gesture and Meaning... Through the Algorithm

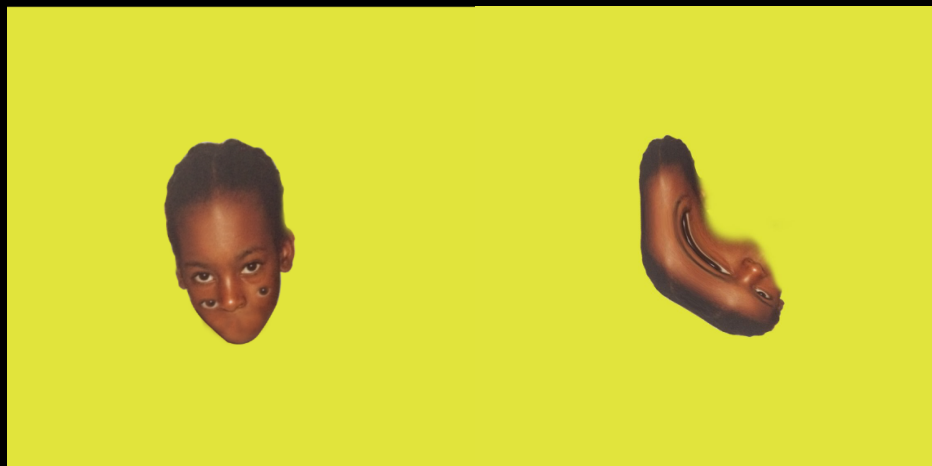
Experimenting with digital collages and pairing manipulated images with short text. Johnson takes old family photos collected from her Nan's house along with her own personal photos as the starting point for her collages.

"My mum said that when I was young there was a time when I was obsessed with people's facial expressions, trying to figure out what they meant. I didn't have a wide enough vocabulary at the time to try and explain it, as I was pretty young, but I was clearly intrigued by meaning and gestures and silent languages. I am obsessed by quirkiness and especially with the meaning put on to Black women's facial expressions and how beauty is packaged through a white lens mainly. To me, when a Black woman isn't smiling, it's not offensive, or aggressive – why should they make themselves palatable for you? While my images are funny and ironic and a bit silly, they're commenting on things that I have experienced and that the people in the images who have now grown up have experienced before. I am always thinking about conversations that I am having here and there – piecing these images, facial expressions and bodily gestures together to form a picture that makes sense to me and the broader we."



****Artworks courtesy of Georgina Johnson 2019/20**

Full article available : <https://www.splashandgrab.co.uk/features/georgina-johnson>

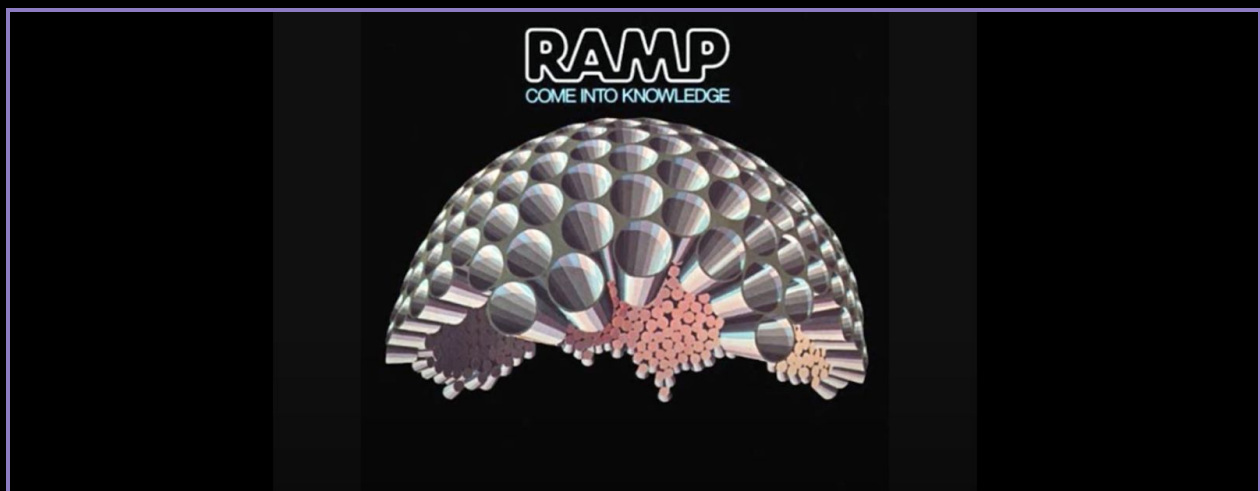


Why we shouldn't forget about Dubplate Drama - Courtney Wynter for GRM Daily



Dubplate Drama, which was made up of three seasons lasting from 2005 to 2009, follows the story of a promising MC named Dionne (played by the First Lady of Grime, Shystie) and her dream of getting a record deal to provide for her grandmother. The series aired on MTV Base and Channel 4 – two national broadcasting channels in the UK – and the series was monumental for many reasons.

For example, the show is described as “the world’s first interactive drama series” because it enabled audiences to dictate the outcome of cliff-hangers. At the end of each episode, legendary UK rapper Rodney P would urge fans to vote for what they’d like to see happen in the next episode by texting in or visiting the website. The most-voted option aired on TV the following week. The first series attracted 3.3 million viewers, which suggested the **interactive feature** was popular with fans of the show. Just like the genre it represented, the series relied on heavy audience engagement and was filled with innovative ideas.



music is more than sound (click + play this loud, if possible)

Georgina Johnson is a polymath, an earthworker and a futurist, driven by curiosity, self-making and care centred ideologies that she embeds in her engagement with disciplines that reach far beyond the fashion industry in which she began. Since graduating with a 1st class honours from LCF in Womenswear and Pattern Cutting (2016), Johnson has simultaneously maintained an adamant set of values (n.b community focused, challenging status quo's, the creation of space for peripheral experiences) whilst finding an assertive voice in the languages of art and design, curation, art direction, filmmaking and production. Johnson has completed artist commissions for The Photographers' Gallery and Now Gallery (2017-2018) and exhibited with The National Museums Scotland (2019); underscoring why The British Council and The Design Museum voted her as one of *10x10 2018* - a nomination of the most exciting emerging creatives operating within the creative industries. In 2017 Johnson founded London based arts and curation platform *The Laundry* as a vehicle from which to support voices in her immediate community and beyond. The platform in its current stage is expanding internationally; with the socio-political at its core, holding the intention of facilitating, nurturing and connecting the dots between a growing network of like minded local and global artists, creative practitioners and thinkers. The vast constellation of innovative individuals that Georgina has collaborated with are testament to the impact of her authentic voice for our hyphenated and global experience.

Georgina is the Editor of the upcoming creative anthology - *The Slow Grind: Finding our Way Back to Creative Balance*. Published Independently by The Laundry arts this year - soon come

For Updates **follow** @saint_lovie + @thelaundryarts on Instagram #theslowgrind

Rochelle White: Rochelle White is a London-based artist and educator whose interdisciplinary work blends social practice, photographic mediums, moving image and installation. White's practice investigates the fabric of cultural and racial identity, referencing both contemporary and traditional symbolism specific to and rooted in unspoken diasporic understandings. Drawing from the personal, White's work studies the nuances of the Black-Caribbean experience in Britain. Graduating from Camberwell College of The Arts in 2016, White continues to create whilst cultivating inclusive educational arts spaces and pedagogy. In 2017 White partnered with Bold Tendencies' Sasha Morgan to launch *Eating At the Same Table (EAST)* an artist-led network which programmes for emerging artists of colour, nurturing, supporting and facilitating creatives as they navigate their careers.

Website: rochelle-white.com

For updates, **follow** @rochelle.rw and @eatingatthesametable on Instagram.