

DRAWING BY WILLIAM THOMAS

### THE DEGREES OF AFFIRMATION

# *World as diagram, work as dance*

Curated by Tosia Leniarska

Lawrence Abu Hamdan

Emily Barker

Simon Denny

Ana Viktoria Dzinic

Win McCarthy

Gretchen Lawrence

Carolyn Lazard

Coumba Samba

Diamond Stingily


















03 February – 04 March 2023

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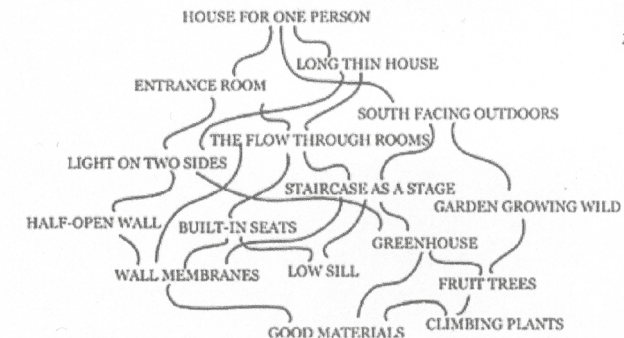
	SEARCH		INSPECT
	FIND		PRE-POSITION
	SELECT		RELEASE LOAD
	GRASP		TRANSPORT EMPTY
	TRANSPORT LOADED		REST FOR OVER COMING FATIGUE
	POSITION		UNAVOIDABLE DELAY
	ASSEMBLE		AVOIDABLE DELAY
	USE		PLAN
	DISASSEMBLE		



Their works consider how spatial and material conditions produce affects and the ways the organising of the body in turn translates to the organisation of the mind. The exhibition stems from thinking about choreography as notation of a body in movement – restricted by space, responding to limitations, self-perceiving. This echoing – these turns of translations between space and body, mind and other – speak of reflexivity between us and the environment: a dance.

The exhibition opens with *Cité Internationale des Arts Studio 1732*, a triptych of photographs by Emily Barker. It depicts the damage caused by the artist's wheelchair scraping corners of walls, enacting an almost gentle exchange of violence between person and space. The photographs were taken with a phone camera by a friend, Arnaud Wohlhauser, illustrating an expanded notion of authorship unbound by restricted access, illuminating the shifts between and within agency and reliance. Like an obstacle to movement, the connection between translation, explanation and physical presence is denied – and the image's refusal of a bodily presence is turned into a mark of violence on an infrastructural wall.

Emalin is pleased to present *World as diagram, work as dance*, a group exhibition with Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Emily Barker, Simon Denny, Ana Viktoria Dzinic, Win McCarthy, Gretchen Lawrence, Carolyn Lazard, Coumba Samba and Diamond Stingily, curated by Tosia Leniarska. Taking choreography as a method for mapping the body in space, the artists in the exhibition address structures of measurement, normativity and affect. They trace how social directions are arranged through objects across generations and places, how aesthetics are used in the restriction or shaping of bodies and how these are implicated in constructed space.



Following from this absence of the body as a mark of retribution, Diamond Stingily's sculpture *diamond's old body* is a bronze cast of the artist's hands and feet, disembodied, only suggestive of a pose. The sculpture draws on *dead Daughter*, a body of work that invoked funerary rites, transience and loss in the context of family and belonging. *diamond's old body* positions itself as a form of embodied knowledge where movement trained in intimacy and childhood is reconstructed and frozen. Her hands and feet emerge as if to find touch but refuse all else. "To not live in violence is a privilege", the artist said in reference to her past work; and in *dead Daughter*, a book that accompanies the sculpture, Stingily describes an audience of violence around the refused body, as taunting voices surrounding her, threatening, demanding. Casting the body silently speaks to an attempt at casting away repressive

constraint and isolation: the assumed position of leaving is a push of movement into abandon.

Exploring how the described body can be fragmentary, and yet whole, is Carolyn Lazard's *Leans Reverses – Channel 2*. Published in this booklet, it is a transcript of the subtitles from their film of the same title, and functions both as a reflection of the work, existing as a fragmentary experience, and a refusal to participate in inaccessible exhibition spaces. Lazard uses accessibility as a lens through which to pull apart the roles of instruction, translation and description. The video is of a performer following a choreography under which closed captions describe the sounds produced by the body – laboured breathing, sweeping, thudding. The written form repositions viewership itself, shifting values of description in the non-normative sensorial experience of an artwork.

Lawrence Abu Hamdan's *Earwitness Inventory Metal Door Instrument*, from his *Earwitness Inventory* project, continues the reconfiguration of what sound can be translated into and what type of transcription can be understood. The project is made up of objects described by the artist as instruments or mnemonic devices that replicate sounds described in testimonies. They are based on interviews – with victims of political imprisonment, with witnesses in trials, for whom sound could provide a form of evidence. Abu Hamdan's *Earwitness Inventory Metal Door Instrument* was designed to make the sounds of a variety of potential doors, searching for the specific sound which would respond to the mnemonic imagination of the witnesses. He explores the translation of visceral memory and its mediation through cultural tropes – the metallic door resembling devices used by foley artists, which are not precise but

reflect a collective idea of the sound of a door being locked or banged closed. This connection between personal experience and machinic imagination, built on codes from media, creates objects that are simultaneously mechanism, memory, imagination and medium.

Speaking devices multiply in *Cityscape* by Gretchen Lawrence and Coumba Samba, where the found objects function as a medium for the translation of migratory identity. Sharing a collaborative practice, their duo installation furnishes a city as both a modernist grid and a skyline, turning cartography to choreography. Growing up in the periphery, respectively post-Soviet Estonia and Senegal, they looked towards the hegemonic, metropolitan centres that they eventually migrated to, New York and London. Both used the visual signifiers of 2000s hipsters to rehearse engagement with culture in anticipation of the

difference; their aesthetic vocabulary trained and learned online and through objects that travel across borders. They explore how these subcultural objects and symbols provide structures of support and comfort – streamlining difference into code.

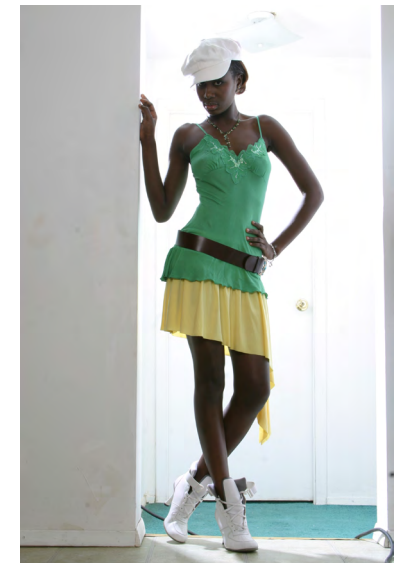
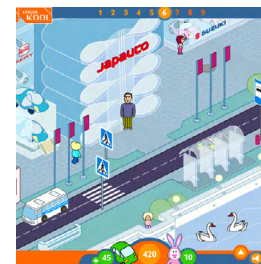
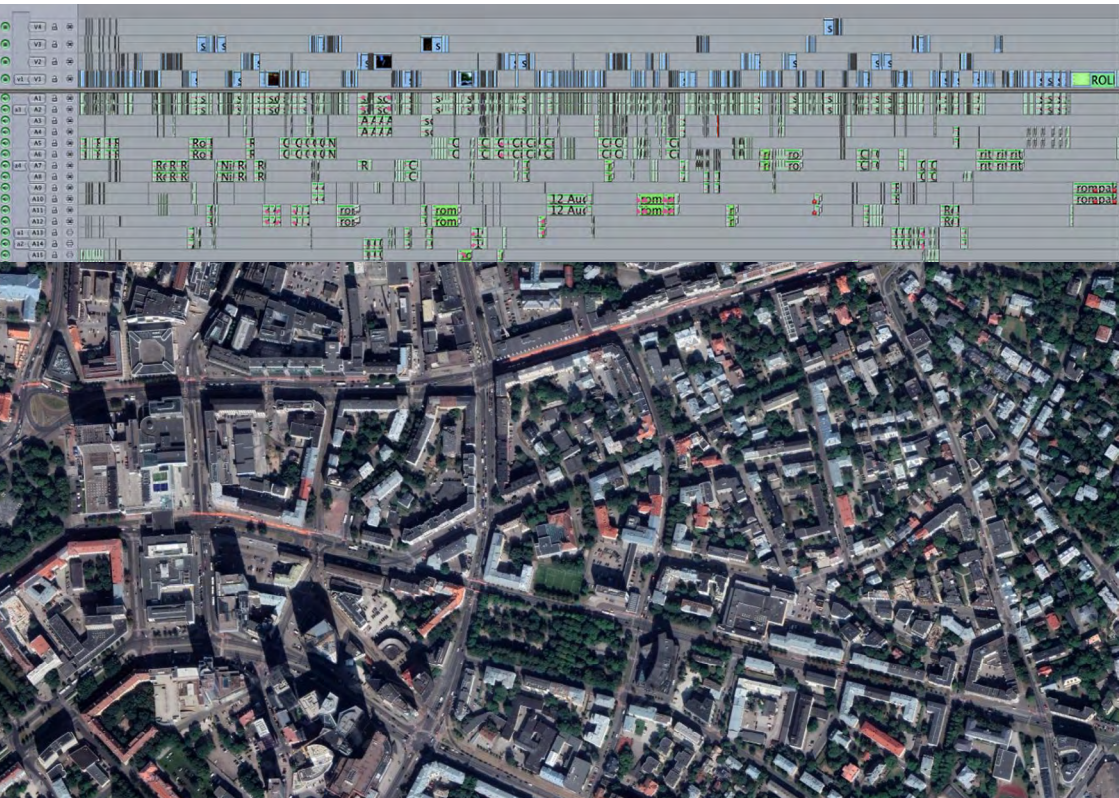
*Stripe blinds* is a broken window blind painted in colours that echo a picture of Coumba Samba's sister taken during a modelling

stint in her first years in New York, before she turned to religion and family life. Samba picks up domestic objects from the city streets, painting and redomesticating them, expanding the notion of home from the indoors to include rogue material, colour and cultural reference. She explores the different strategies of assimilation and conservatism undertaken by her siblings as they moved between Dakar and New York. The accumulation of

these stories in their photos, memories, behaviours, souvenirs and letters is calqued onto objects of the city by Samba's soft moulding, each transformed by different parts of this social choreography.

If Samba's painted, domestic work is like a souvenir of her sister and surrogate of home, Gretchen Lawrence's *First encounters* – a composition in faux leather belts and aluminium studs – is like a souvenir of subcultural signification, detritus from a found generation. The strips of leather mimic Minimalist

paintings, except in their used, worn down and protruding form. The constellation of studs mirrors Lawrence's first encounter with pixels and circuit boards, a life-forming event, generative. Subculture itself becomes found material. Here, choreography is a reproducible sequence of movements that allows you to be in alignment with others. Lawrence and Samba's works trace this method of identity as defence, a strategy in itself – consciously wielded, manifested, instrumentalised.



At a young age, Ana Viktoria Dzinic had to learn that there is a zone of extraction where identity and image economy meet – and yet that there are ways of subverting this for one’s benefit. Her two-part series is made up of sculptures, *Liberal Trauma Trophies*, and printed canvases, *Conservative Distress Displays*: ghostly reproductions of an artwork series recovered from her childhood. Systematically documenting herself as a child was instrumental in navigating the bureaucratic structure of gender reassignment procedures, causing her to develop a habit of collecting evidence. Having spent her childhood training as a male ballet dancer, she began self-mythologising her past through a canon of symbols of femininity and transformation, taking series of pictures of romanticised ballet shoes as a constructed catalogue of her past in objects. The shoes, not really hers; the stories, mistold; the memories, reconstructed. It is an exercise in the flattening of reality and determinism, storytelling moving beyond truth or validity.

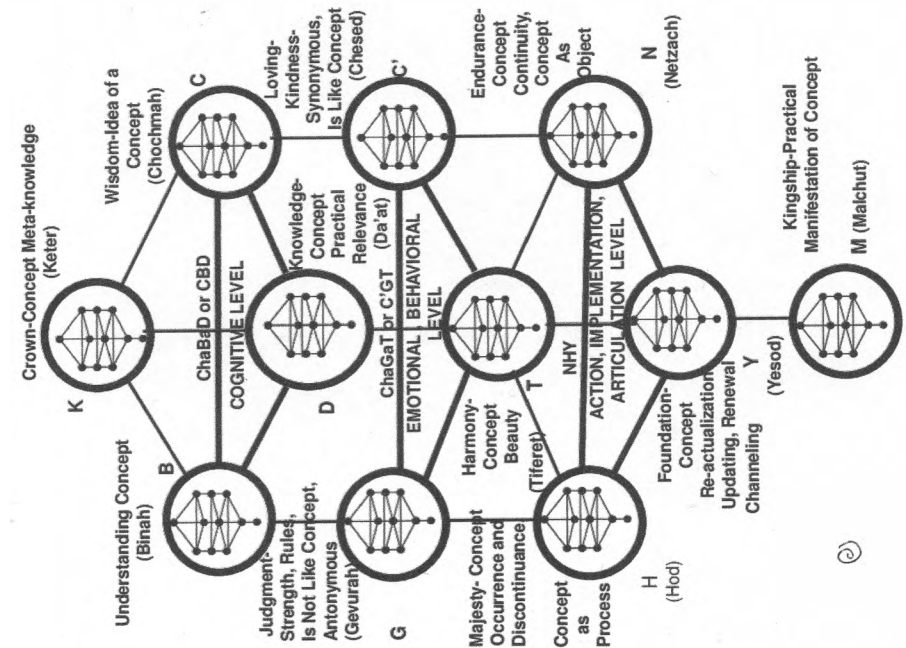
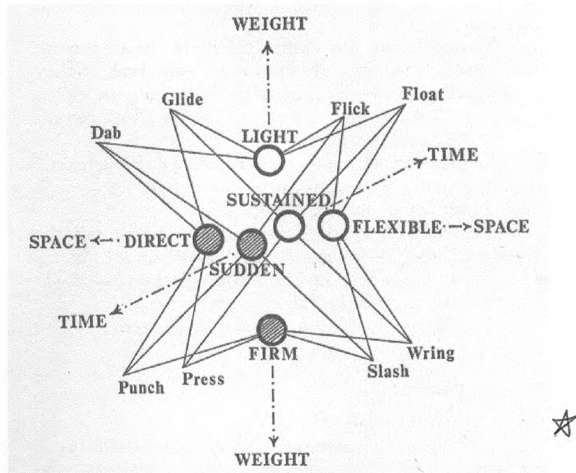
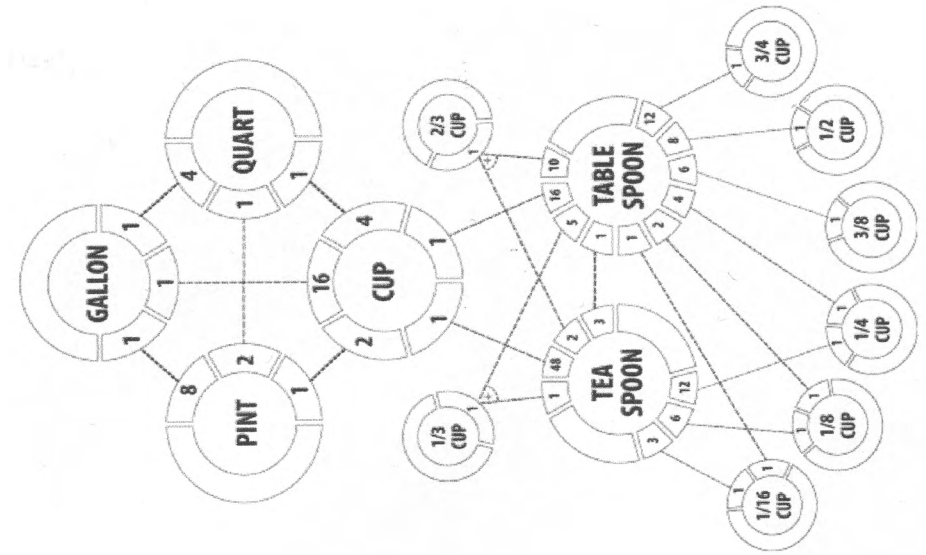
Researching the vernacular ways in which images proliferate, Dzinic is interested in the medium of user-generated technologies such as home-order prints and self-made monuments. Bronze-cast ballet shoes that parents make as keepsakes for their children are layered with her manipulations: the bronze and mahogany are replicas, the drawings imitations, the aging an artifice. Dzinic creates ‘merch’ objects infested with ghosts – of the past, and manifestations – of the future. The naive symbols, faux framed drawings that illustrate private desires such as money, success or belonging, are taken from Seth Price’s text on the motivations that bring people into the artworld. Manifestations are ideologically ambiguous. In contemporary terms, this seductive occultism aligns with the ways media proliferate online. To take an existing economy and frame it as a neutral force that can be bridled for one’s personal success – here, in a depriving system, spirituality turns into user-generated technology.



Simon Denny plays with the overlaps between ideology and technological development, or how they implicate our self-perception and social participation. His *Document Reliefs* are sculpted using stacks of A4 archival paper printed with documents showcasing structures of knowledge and ideology. In this case, the U.S. technological patent for the Amazon Worker Cage, the intellectual property safeguard for a human cage which enables workers to enter human exclusion zones in their fulfilment centres. The relief form sits at the edge between threat and ridicule. The patented cage is both a mechanical and bureaucratic structure which builds around the body of the worker like reductive architecture; but it is also comically shaped, like a toy made of office paper. Power is detached from its own self-perception, yet the cyclicity of evil’s archetypes does not impact bodies restricted and reproduced by policy.

Win McCarthy's *Untitled (Orange Difference)* is part of a series of sculptures using metal rulers, stacked and welded in parallel lines, mounted on the wall. Researching the extent of reduction that a person will subject themselves to, McCarthy's rulers rehearse this need to self-measure, to quantify. Another thrashed material echo of Minimalism, the imposing height and colour of the welded metal threatens with the presence of some vaguely hostile system. The notion of measure introduces a literal normativity in space, a frame of reference against which to compare, stack evidence. The invasive clarity of measurement connects habits of obsessive quantification and accumulation of data with the structuring of identity. The force of legibility is a loss of opacity.

Where movement and information systems meet, a reduction happens. Something alive and reflexive has to be extracted in order to mediate into a comprehensive form. Choreography as a system of language is coded to translate something endlessly irreducible into notation – a synecdoche for the same reductive impulse of systemic thinking that turns the world into a diagram.



Carolyn Lazard  
*Leans, Reverses - Channel 2*  
2022

[exhalation][breathing][breath][foot peel][soft clicks]  
[breathing][breath][rumbling, sweep][floor creak]  
[sweep, breath][sweep, breath][breath][breath,  
scrape-sweep][thud][shuffle][sweep-breath]  
[sweep-land][breath][scuffle][breath][scuffling]  
[breath][swish][thud][panting][slap][scuffle, wind,  
sharp inhale][crinkling][zig-zag, zip][breath][in-  
hale][deep exhalation][panting][scuffle][inhale]  
[stomp-stomp][swoosh-swoosh][swish, step, swish]  
[swoosh, swoosh][sweep][gasp][sharp inhale]  
[wobble, clatter][exhalation][swish, swoosh][Ahhh]  
[breath][sharp inhale, slapping][scrape, scratch]  
[thud][heavy breathing][heavy breathing][scratch]  
[slap][zip][scrape][breath][motion stops][labored

breathing][breath][breath][breath][breath][breath]  
[breath][fizz][scratch, scratch][fizz][scratch][breath,  
sweep, breath][breath][floor creak][heavy breathing]  
[floor creak, foot peel][foot peel][swoosh][tap-tap]  
[breath][sweeps to thud][scratchy pitter-patter]  
[heavy breathing][slap][swish-swoosh][exhale re-  
lease][scuffle][fast scuffle][thud][breath][sweep]  
[breath][whip snap][grunt][shuffle][sweep-sweep]  
[floor creak][scrape-scrape][scuffle][zip, step][zip,  
step][scrapping, zipping][scrapping, zipping][scrap-  
ping, zipping][scrapping, zipping][thump-sweep]  
[scrapping, zipping][swish-swoop-swoop][thump-  
swoosh-thump][thud][scuffle][thud][thump-swoosh-  
thump][scuffle][thump-swoosh-thump][thud][scuf-  
fle][thump-swoosh-thump][scuffle slows][sweep,  
thump, slap][thud][sweep-sweep, thud][thud][floor  
creak][breathing][sweep, slap][thud][slap][breath]  
[exhaling][exhaling][slap][peeling][thump][thump]  
[step-step-step-step][zip-slap][thud][swish][sweep]  
[slap][scuffle][slow sweeping][slow sweeping][slow  
sweeping][slow sweeping][slow sweeping][slow  
sweeping][slow sweeping continues][breathing][siz-  
zle, sweep][exhalation][breathing][breathing contin-  
ues][swoosh to a step][zip, dull clatter][click-clack]  
[deep breath][thud-swoop][step-floor creak][swish]  
[slow sweeping][slow sweeping][thud-fizz-creak]  
[breath, breath, sweep][breath, sweep][faint breath-  
ing][faint breathing continues][faint breathing con-



tinues][faint fizz][faint pop, peel][sweep-step][static  
sweeping][click][swoosh-step-step][sweep-sweep]  
[shuffling][big sweep][big sweep][step-step][big  
sweep][sweep, step-step][clatter][sweep][sweep]  
[sweep][staggered breathing][swoosh][swish][shh-  
hhhhhh][shhhhhhhhhhh][breath][swish, creak][shuf-  
fling][short swish][thunderous boom][Shhhhhhh]  
[step-stomp][thud-thud-thud-thud][swoosh][boom-  
boom-boom][boom-boom-boom][boom-boom-  
boom-clack][boom-boom-boom-clack][boom-  
boom-boom-clack][boom-boom-boom-clack]  
[boom-boom-boom-clack][boom-boom-boom-  
clack][rhythmic thuds][sweep][scuffle, fizz][swoosh-  
slap][breath][scuffle][dampened rhythmic clacks]  
[clatter to a stop][heavy breathing][heavy breathing  
continues][step][slap]  
[breath][breath][swish-step][faint breath][swish]  
[breath][swoop][floor creak][swoop-step][breathing]  
[breathing continues][flip-step][step][hushed steps]  
[scuffle][step, creak, step][long sweep][sweeping]  
[heavy steps][sweeping][thud]  
[sweep, breath][swish-swish][breath][breath][swish]  
[breathing][swoosh][breathing][swoosh][breathing]  
[long swoop][floor creak][swish, swoosh, swish]  
[floor creak][sweep][brush-brush][swish][scuffling]  
[scuffling][sweep-sweep][breath][scuffling][scuffle,  
breath][breath][scuffle continues][scrape][shuffle]  
[loud breath][swoop-swoop][breath][clunk][sweep]

[clunk-clunk][breath][breath][breath]  
[step-step][breath][scrape][zip-zip-zip][exhale]  
[sweep][inhale][long exhalation][swish][swoosh]  
[swish, swoosh, step][floor creak, step][floor creak]  
[breath]  
[creak, step-step][slow shuffle][click-clack][shhhh-  
hhhh][zip-zap][sweep][floor creak][scrape][sweep,  
breath, sweep][breath][hoo-hoo][breath][breath,  
shuffle][sudden step][swoosh][floor creak][scuffling]  
[floor creak][floor creak][squeaking]  
[squeak, breath][squeaking continues][floor creak]  
[scratch][shuffle][step-step][shuffling][dense steps]  
[swish-swoosh-thud][shuffle][thud][scrape, swoosh]  
[swish][shuffle][thud][breath][thud][sweep-sweep]  
[thud][sweep][breath][sweep][large step][sweeping]  
[inhale][thud-thud-thud][grunt][thud-thud-thud]  
[thunderous boom][labored breathing][sharp inhale]  
[swish][sweep][breathing]  
[light shuffling][heavy breathing][exhalation][exha-  
lation][heavy breathing][heavy breathing][sweep]  
[scuffling][breathing][thud][heavy breath][sharp in-  
hale, slap][breathing][sweep][breath][sweep-sweep]  
[strained breathing][creak][sweep][breath][swish]  
[haaaa][scratch-swish][scrape][sweep, sigh][labored  
breathing]  
[labored breathing][labored breathing][labored  
breathing][labored breathing][labored breathing]  
[labored breathing]

~~being chosen by should pass every being in case that they  
have existed~~ There is perhaps no clearer testimony to the  
loss of the public realm in the modern age than the almost complete  
loss of authentic concern with immortality, a loss somewhat over-  
shadowed by the simultaneous loss of the metaphysical concern  
with eternity. ~~The latter, being the concern of the philosophers~~

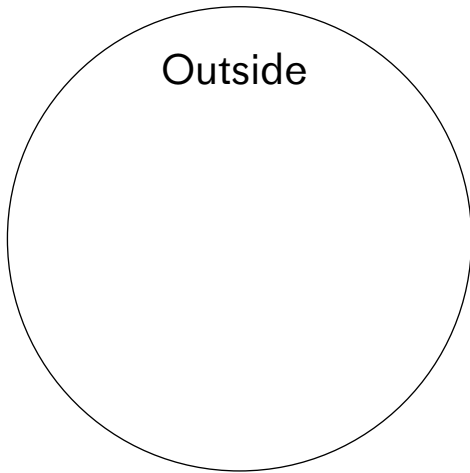
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- ✧ Chart of therbligs, a pictogrammatic code first introduced by Franklin Gilbreth in: *Motion Study for the Crippled Soldier*, Journal of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, December 1915
- ✧ Pattern language from Christopher Alexander's *The Timeless Way of Building*, 1979
- ⊙ Burstein & Negoita, *A Kabbalah System Theory Modeling Framework for Knowledge Based Behavioral Economics and Finance*, in: *Computational Models of Complex Systems*, 2014
- ✧ The Eight Efforts of Rudolf von Laban
- ✧ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 1958

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Outside



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