

*nausea in my hands*

Dallas, TX.

The exhibition takes its title and framework from a scene in Jean-Paul Sartre's 1938 novel *Nausea*. He writes:

*Now I see: I recall better what I felt the other day at the seashore when I held the pebble. It was a sort of sweetish sickness. How unpleasant it was! It came from the stone. I'm sure of it, it passed from the stone to my hand. Yes, that's it, that's just it—a sort of nausea in the hands. (11)*

Throughout the novel, the protagonist, a French historian living in a small village, wrestles with a sickness that is hard to define by its very nature, as its behavior resists formation. Much like the world around his body and self. The tree; the hands; the friend—object and subject begin losing their shaded contours, and the self becomes subsumed in a mercurial headache that humbles language in its attempt at defining it.

*"The Nausea isn't inside me: I can feel it over there on the wall, on the braces, everywhere around me. It is one with the café, it is I who am inside it." (35)*

This moment of the pebble at the seashore, where the self is at the mercy of a transference between object and subject, is a dysphoria known by many names. Frantz Fanon in his phenomenological account of being seen as Black foregrounds this interpellative slippage between body and self in his seminal *Black Skin, White Masks*. He writes:

*"I came into the world imbued with the will to find a meaning in things, my spirit filled with the desire to attain to the source of the world, and then I found that I was an object in the midst of other objects." (109)*

The pebble and the hand. Racialization and Fanon. Right at the moment of being handed one's body, one comes into contact with a preceded, conditioned failure. Then, the ligature holding world and language (and thus the body) together snaps:

*"A man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language." (127)*

This disorientation is found everywhere as it is an existential foundation.

It is in Sarah Ahmed's classic *Queer Phenomenology*:

*"The body emerges from [a] history of doing, which is also a history of not doing, of paths not taken, which also involves the loss, impossible to know or to even register, of what might have followed from such paths. As such, the body is directed as a condition of its arrival, as a direction that gives the body its line. And yet we can still ask, what happens if the orientation of the body is not restored? What happens when disorientation cannot simply be overcome by the "force" of the vertical? What do we do, if disorientation itself becomes worldly or becomes what is given?" (159)*

It is in Hartman's *Scenes of Subjection* when she discusses the profusive nonlinearity of time, memory, and history in action as induced by the Middle Passage:

*"...[M]emory is not in the service of continuity, but incessantly reiterates and enacts the contradictions and antagonisms of enslavement, the ruptures of history, and the severed and dispersed networks of kinship and affiliation. It is by way of this memory of difference that everyday practices are redolent with the history of captivity and enslavement." (125)*

It is in Eva Hayward's discussion of the chemical influences induced by hormonal sex changes in her *Spiderwoman*:

*"Premarin® is a standard hormonal treatment for transwomen, consisting primarily of conjugated estrogen isolated from mare's urine... The effects... of this non-bioidentical hormone are to immerse the body's organs in a chemical bath such that one's proprioceptive senses are as radically changed as one's external presentation: vision is distorted, one is disoriented by racking focus; haptic senses are reworked, making handled things feel like never before... The expressive potential of the body, its capacity to respond to the world, is substantively disfigured, transforming the sensuous exchange of self and environment." (260)*

