



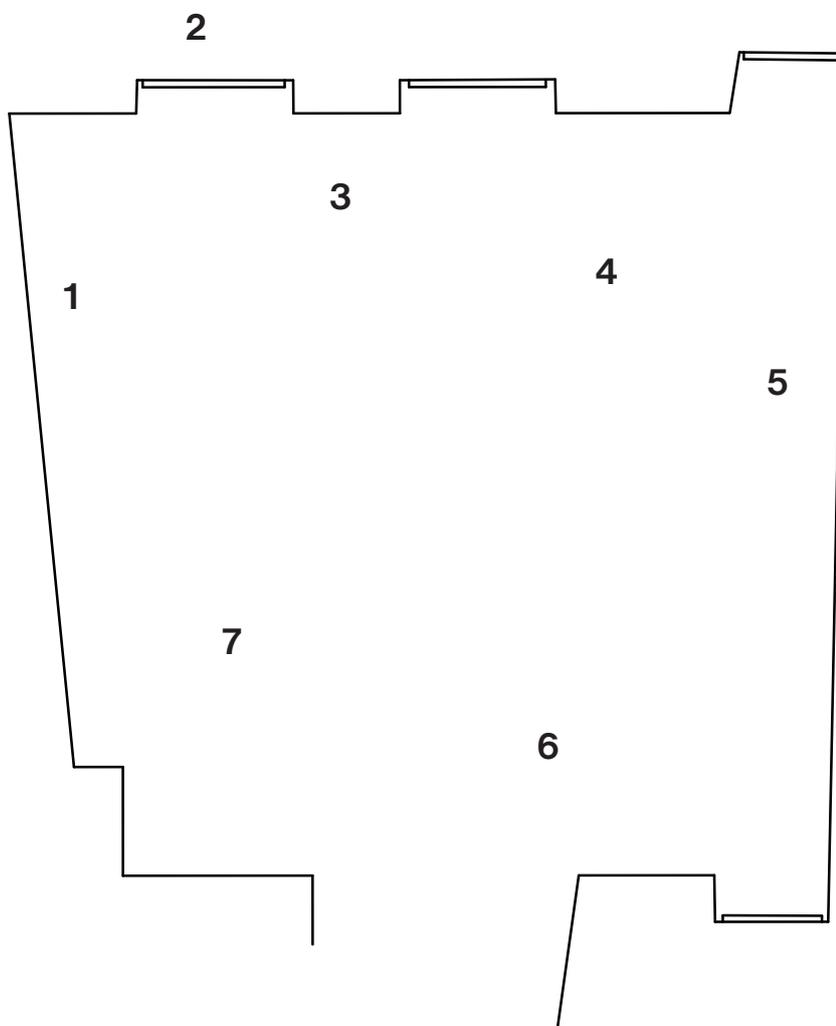
**Au Studio :**  
*it won't be silence (part. II)*

**Camille Dumond &  
Tina Omayemi Reden**

**invited curator : Julie Marmet**  
*12.05 – 06.06.21*

The exhibition is an invitation to enter an environment with a deferred temporality, enabling the attentive listening of counter-hegemonic narratives. In the space, the suggested choirs and bodies are suspended, allegorical protagonists of a parallel reality made of artificially generated stories and speculative epistolary exchanges. A fictional archival room, containing fragmented texts and voices of ancestors whose history has not always been perpetuated.

*it won't be silence* is a two-part exhibition with Maya Hottarek, Camille Kaiser, Camille Dumond and Tina Omayemi Reden, conceptualized by Julie Marmet. The project articulates self-mythological narratives and strategies of fictionalization, in order to put into space situated, political and polyphonic histories.



### **1 – I sing for all the hers who have paved your ways**

Tina Omayemi Reden

*étagère, cahiers, textes manuscrits, fils. 2021.*

### **2 – decay convo**

Camille Dumond

*grès, cuisson sigillée, peinture, éléments métalliques, miroir. 2021*

### **3 – hyperscarcity**

Camille Dumond

*faïence émaillée suspendue, éléments divers. 2021*

### **4 – \*a headless group that incites change**

Tina Omayemi Reden

*bande sonore d'un coeur, platine vinyle, transducteur. 2020*

### **5 – Algorithm (x6)**

Camille Dumond

*papier, vernis, éléments divers, stabilo. 2021 – Textes sélectionnés par Tina Reden et Camille Dumond.*

### **6 – Echoïne I**

Camille Dumond

*faïence émaillée suspendue, éléments divers. 2021*

### **7 – Echoïne II**

Camille Dumond

*faïence émaillée suspendue, éléments divers. 2021*

## Camille Dumond

*translated from french*



Could you tell me about the different elements that constitute the installation in the space?

To begin, there is this series of six half-spheres that are made of varnished paper. The idea is really that they blend into the space, that the text on the white page is more or less one with the wall. The texts on the half-spheres can only be read in a fragmented way. On three of the semi-spheres, are texts that Tina has collected and altered. Sometimes you can't read well, some words stand out, others don't. By gluing them together and taking on the shape of the half-sphere, they are re-conditioned, transformed. There is a process of plastic digestion of the text. On the three other half-spheres are texts from my own archive. Several relate to feminism in different ways - excerpts from a text by bell hooks on the notion of "white feminism"; an interview with the Spice Girls conducted by Kathy Acker - others that relate to figures or forms : Hito Steyerl and the figure of the mercenary, Peter Sloterdijk and the form of the sphere. Others have no source. They are conversations, remarks, collages of different emotions and opinions. In the end, what interests me is to create a new body of text from the act of reading of these half-spheres. It's linked to an act of editing, like the reflection of Laura Mulvey, who is a film theorist and the originator of the Male Gaze concept. Her book *Fetishism and Curiosity* has just been translated into French, even though it came out 25 years ago in the United States, which immediately triggered a reflection on the politics of translation, on the links between the access to an author's work and the availability of a cultural product. In an interview I heard that she wanted to re-make / re-mount an old existing film by focusing only on certain female characters for example. I find this practice of reworking stories interesting. This idea of a process of reparation by the means of the problem.

Afterwards, there is a ceramic sphere hanging. It is a contained object, a full object, coming from readings on the spherical form. In his books *Spheres I, II and III*, Peter Sloterdijk speaks of the form of the bubble, the circular form and what it supposes in our human and social world. Starting from this formal research, what interests me is the question of the community and the group that this form implies, the idea of the circle, of the community. It is for this reason that I started this series of suspended spheres. I consider them to be relatively charged objects, almost of the emotional, sentimental order. It's really a full form, kind of like an organ. The first one I did was called *The Managed Heart*, in reference to the book by Arlie Russell Hochschild, who wrote about emotional labor. This one, I link it more to the question of the archive, of the passing of time. It is more armed than the previous one too.

Then there are two ceramic half-spheres. They are suspended objects that refer to a resonance. It is the idea of a floating and empty space, under a bell, a bit like a dome. I think they are quite autonomous objects that function in pairs like eyes, in symmetry.

Finally, there are these ceramic puppets that are objects that have a bit of a special history. During the confinement, I was working with a potter's wheel to practice. The sphere is the first shape you make when you learn the wheel because it's quite technical and at the same time it's small so you have an easy grip. So I made a lot of little spheres and when I put them together I realized that they almost formed a body, a form resembling a puppet. In fact, there is one shape that is very natural on the wheel, it's the phallic shape, which is one of the first three shapes you make when you learn how to handle clay. So



I started to make this shape and it made me laugh because I thought it looked like a plug, like the object of the god. In the context of confinement it echoed a lot to questions of self-sufficiency, especially sexual self-sufficiency... So I fired and then assembled these figures and finally for a year they remained in my studio. I found them again before the exhibition at the CAN Studio and I thought they were interesting in the sense that they conveyed something that is both this idea of sexual self-sufficiency and this articulated/disarticulated side of the puppet. Then I started to paint them patterns (of Harlequin, of cow) to disguise them, to give them costumes. I liked the idea that these characters would represent a sort of fusion, and would leave the spectator be little free in their interpretation.

For me, the ceramic puppets are kind of mediators. It is really the idea of transmission of narratives, or representation of narratives. What ties things together is the fact that they are covered with a motif and a uniform, which are elements that come up a lot in my film practice. The uniform as a sign of rallying or standardization. Also, some of the spheres that constitute the ceramic puppets are present on the chains of the suspension of the semi-spheres, to accentuate their disarticulation.

Finally as for the half-spheres, there is also something of a random mixture, resulting from an algorithmic form. Always following the idea that things are re-digested, without there being any authoritarian intention. The question is rather to know how each source can appear.

In my eyes, the clay-dolls completely transform the scale of the spheres. When we are in front of a sphere, we are going to project an imaginary on its function, its nature, its history or what it would carry. But as soon as another body inhabits the space, the scales of both the puppet and the spheres are altered. They become almost monumental, less precious, less accessory.

Yes, and it could almost create a form of micro-scenario. Afterwards, I think that the idea of the filter on the windows was also to consider these objects with a distance, so that they are not offered directly to the viewer. Things as a little blurred, so as not to be considered in a too important way within the narrative of the space.

In fact, it also depends a lot on how I set them up and how they are placed. Because I can place them as dolls, staged, but depending on where you are looking at them, you might not see they are anthropomorphic. From outside, there is this variation of color, with a natural blue or gray sky, it's almost like a backstage. They are a kind of phantasmagorical archive of medieval-archaic-fusion figures, which I wanted to put at a slight distance from the rest of the exhibition environment.

And so, this question of the archive appears in these serial elements, in this aesthetic of conservation, of storage, of collection almost. Is this the way you thought of the yellow filters?

In reality, it is more the practice of editing from these archival documents than the enterprise of archiving or preserving that interests me. For me, the filters mark an intention to modify the space. One immediately enters an environment with Tina's pieces and with the half-spheres, although they are not directly offered for reading either. But it allows the viewer to enter a space of communication, sound, visual, ambient. I like the idea of influencing the color of the whole room : you are suddenly plunged into a slightly parallel dimension.



For me there is this effect of deferred temporality. The yellow filter completely neutralizes the passage of time. We no longer have access to the markers of light intensity that specify the passing of time. We are in another temporality, which creates both a physical space and a temporal space.

Yes, and also, the filtered and tinted aspect is related to the idea of conservation, of protecting materials and objects that are inside the space. So it's both the idea of preventing alteration and breaking the diffraction of daylight. And then you have the impression of entering a special space.

Concerning the spheres, you say that they appeal to the idea of community, group, circle or organ. For me, all these elements can be characterized as part of a system. Is there also a systemic or even algorithmic aspect that is generated, in the production and seriality?

Yes, there is something of the order of the generic, of a generic form that can be multiplied tenfold under different aspects. It's the idea that everything comes from the same mold and then unfolds. It is this form of deployment that interests me to develop, through formal links between the pieces. Concerning the autonomy of the pieces, it's a bit ambiguous in the sense that they are autonomous pieces, but from a series.

For the sphere presented at the CAN Studio, I incorporated fabric, which again appeals to me to the notion of uniform, and the chain which implies an idea of preservation or protection of what it contains and suggests the possibility of an opening.

There are also holes that are left visible to show connections and underline the idea that I am not interested in hiding. For me, a smooth, solid surface is silent. So if it has roughness, voids or holes, it is necessarily something that will communicate, show cracks, alter this silent surface.

And could you tell me about the suspension?

I think that these objects have a strength precisely because they are suspended. They have a kind of levitating force. They weigh quite a lot because they are made of ceramic. On the other hand, paper is something that can blend in with the wall, but is not necessarily interesting to hang. The mass, heavy and full side of the object, I find that it makes a lot of sense, because of this weight and the strength of the presence that comes from it.

In this piece, there is also a very visual element, linked to the architecture of the space that resonates with the sphere. In the end, everything is a form of decor or visual environment, everything participates and influences the other, sustaining this idea of a system.

Yes, and I would say that the wall of glazed paper half-spheres is the most connected to the architecture of the place. The ceramic spheres can hardly take into account the place because it's too long a process to make. On the other hand, the paper half-spheres are a piece that can really open up. That's what interests me, this variation.

Finally, there is also something quite new in your work which is the presence of these ceramic characters and the presence of the text in the space. Often, in your work, the bodies and voices are present in the films and the objects act as anti-accessories. This time, the texts and the bodies are contained in the objects.



In fact the characters were generated by the sculptures, and not by a scenario, unlike my films. As for the text, I'm very interested in language, so I liked trying to insert text into sculptural objects and in a collaborative form for the exhibition. There is a gesture that comes from this question of translation, of semantics. These are questions that are completely part of the films but are not usually visually present in my sculptures. I experiment with this form of half-sphere that comes out of the wall and carries text. It is not necessarily an evolution but it is this variation that interests me a lot. It also represents the practice of montage that I use in my sculptures and in my films - but in an immobile way. And the desire to show the pieces of the puzzle rather than to deliver the final form.

## Tina Omayemi Reden



Could you first maybe speak about the two elements that are in the space, the sound record and the books in the bookshelf?

So the two elements in this space are the audio file and then the collection of stories or poems that are on the wall.

The audio file *\*a headless group that incites change* is the echo of a perpetual choir that dreams of the otherwise and calls for change. It's the sound of a headless group that has multiple voices and comes with a multiplicity of histories - or herstories. I think of the chorus as a tool for transformation and a polyphonic reverberation of collective action. It's the place where multiple voices coexist and relate to one another. This piece, that I created together with Tapiwa Svosve, is very much inspired by Saidiya Hartman's notion of the chorus, where she refers to it as *a vehicle for another kind of story, not of the great man, but of a headless group that incites change\**. It's a quote that comes from her book *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Riotous Black Girls, Troublesome Women, and Queer Radicals*. Hartman refers to the chorus as an articulation of a tumultuous and rebellious act of collaboration and improvisation. I see these moments of collaboration and improvisation inherent in polyphonic assemblages as crucial in the collective dreaming of an otherwise.

For me, the bookshelf and the booklets as well are the articulation of a polyphonic assemblage. Also trying to create a counter narrative of the story of the great man, it is a collection of diasporic voices, herstories and poems, headless, yet connected. It's a collection of - or even an ode to - fierce women and riotous (m)others, caring friends and gentle lovers, unruly daughters and passionate radicals. It's herstories about intimate, loving, queer and chaotic relationships, poems about collective responsibility and kinship. Some books are seemingly empty and create space for the stories that have yet to be written. When I wrote them all down I realized that this could be one story, the fictional story of one shapeshifting time traveler or so. Or it can be read as a collection of individual little poems that in the end are all interconnected. When I wrote the texts I used the pronouns interchangeably. So there is a kind of interconnection or a blurring of the line between the *me*, the *you* and the *her*. The *me* is *her* and the *her* is *you* and the *you* is *me*. This changes constantly. So that it is always unclear who is speaking and who is listening. Am I talking about somebody, or is somebody talking about me, or are we in this together? It was quite important for me to push this idea that I am multiple and that many voices resonate within me. So when I'm talking about *me*, I'm maybe also talking a little bit about *her* and about *you*.

Could you speak about the decision to place the transducer on the window? And to place sound and text in an on Camille's pieces?

So here the idea is that while putting on the record, the voices and the chorus are sent outside. They leave this very particular space and transcend the alleged boundary between the *in* and the *out*. I kind of like the idea that you can go outside and that the voices are still hearable, that they transcend time and space.

And for me, Camille's spheres reveal kind of imaginary worlds - an otherwise! I love the idea that it is this reverberating space that functions as an amplifier of the chorus. So these resonating spheres are kind of this fictional world



where these multiple perpetual voices that call for change can coexist. And on the semi-spheres on the wall, she used some of the texts that inspired my practice and that influenced the process of the library. Such as for instance a part of *Jambalaya* from Luisah Teish. She's a storyteller and a Yoruba priestess who constantly reminds me of the fact that „we are the ancestors of the future“. I even have a shirt of her that says so. I love to remember myself of that because it again kind of deconstructs the dichotomy between the now and the past, between the past and the future. I also gave Camille parts of Rasheedah Philips *Recurrence Plot (and other Time Travel Tales)* in which the characters stories aswell challenge the notion that time flows in only one direction. I like the idea that the half spheres become sort of a collection space of our research material or a materialization of our process.

Maybe we could also speak about the room and the feeling that is established in it, mainly because of the alteration of the light? To me it has a strong impact of fragmenting the linearity of time. This neutralization of time also resonates with this chosen genealogies that you were referring to.

Totally. When we are standing in this space with the changing of the light, it totally changes the perspective somehow. It feels like entering yet another sphere, you know. With the different lights it feels like this imaginary space where time just ends. It's hard not to think of Sun Ra's intro of *Space is the Place*, a - or maybe *the Afrofuturist science fiction movie*. He talks about this place, a colony for Black people, where everything is different, the vibrations are different, the music is different and the first thing that would have to be done is „to consider time as officially ended“. I feel a bit like this when entering the space. It's a mixture of a kind of void space, but then also super dense because of the light.

And about the books and those threads that are hanging from them? To me this is very connected to ecofeminist thinking, to knitting nets and webs of community and collective thinking.

Exactly. That was totally the idea to also have this moment of the weaving together of these different temporalities, voices and perspectives. So it was quite important that they all have their own thread, every book has its own thread, but they all come together and build exactly these networks. Even if they do maybe stand separately initially, in the end they are all connected in the bottom. They all intermingle in the end.

Also, the threads of the books are actually coming down, grounding like roots. So those grounding voices actually create a balance with the spheres of Camille that are hanging, almost floating in the room.

Yes that's super nice, so interesting that you call them roots, because you know Edouard Glissant, in an interview he gave in *one world in relation*, he says „Tu sais, si on me demande de dessiner un arbre, je ne dessine jamais un arbre. Je dessine une forêt.“ [You know, when I'm asked to draw a tree, I never draw a tree. I draw a forest.]. I and he talk about it in relation to DNA and genealogy. He talks specifically about the coming together of all these roots underground in the forest and how they're interconnected. He also talks about the Creole Gardens, which were little clandestine gardens of enslaved people, where they would plant all kinds of seeds that they collected and plant them all together. Again, the plants would completely mix and interconnect. This of course is similar to how he talks about the creolization of the area after the transatlantic slave trade, where the people lost their genealogy and had to build new ways of being and different ways of connecting and rooting. So I like this reference of interconnectedness through rizomatic roots and the refusal of this one tree that has its own roots. Which kind of brings us back to the story of the headless group and not the one of the great man.



Also, about the room itself, I think there is a strong effect that the space induces on our bodies, first through the light as we spoke earlier, but also with the fact that we are invited to interact. With Camille's work, it's linked to the way our bodies move around them as we have to go down and up and just circulate, and in your work, we're invited to take the books and put on the music. Could you speak of this invitation to engage with our body and to interact with the piece?

Yes. So as I mostly work with sound, the notion of listening is very crucial in my whole practice. So it is always about *how do I listen and what are the political possibilities within the active position of listening*. Listening as bringing consciousness towards something specifically. I very often work with a very sound specific interpretation of this idea of conscious listening. And so here at CAN, the idea of listening goes beyond the normativity to hear. There is a different kind of listening that I want to invite in, through consciously choosing to engage with these multiple stories, poems and voices. I also maybe wanted to invite people to write. But it would have needed a space to come together and think about this action of writing down something. I am thinking of what will happen next with these books. If they will be filled with stories or if they will remain with just one story per book. Maybe each book could become the vessel of a multiplicity of voices. This is something that is still open I think.

And about the stones? We've talked about Neuchâtel and its super strong history in the colonial times, but you chose to put the rocks right next to the voices which seems important.

Yeah. I think this was more a bit of a gut decision to put them there. But it's also a bit this action of creating a reminder of where we are. To put the pieces into the context of this city. I see these stones as kind of a symbol for the majesty of many of these old buildings in the city. A little reminder of the colonial history of the wealth and money of the city. It is a reference to the violence that can be done by imposing a certain narrative, by not dealing with the past as if it is constituent of the now and by silencing the voices that do not align with his story.

And with that said, maybe here, also to end I would like to quote karakashian tunchez „I sing praises and thank the sisters and m/others and mamaz who have paved our way, because they are so often overlooked, silenced and written out of our institutionalized histories.“