

# EVA ZORNIO





After a degree in biology and a master's in neuroscience, Eva Zornio turned to the arts. Moving between institutions and independent structures, she performs at the Swiss Institute in Rome (2019) ; she exhibited at the Fondation d'Entreprise Ricard (2019), Kunsthaus Langenthal (2019), Forde (2018); in 2020 she took part in the Bourses de la Ville de Genève exhibition at the Centre d'Art Contemporain; she was nominated for the Swiss Art Awards 2021; in 2022 she exhibited at Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen; she published Who are you performing today? for the 2023 edition of Pro Helvetia's Cahiers d'Artistes.

## EXHIBITIONS - PERFORMANCES - SCREENINGS (SELECTION)

Redevenir poisson (solo), Espace 3353, Genève, Suisse	2023
Entangled Events, Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen, Saint-Gall, Suisse	2022
Pleure-moi une rivière (solo), Soul2Soul/RU, Genève, Suisse	
Study on Empathy #6, Backslash Festival, Zürich	
Life lives in gaps (solo), EAC - les Halles, Porrentruy, Suisse	2021
Swiss Art Awards 2021, Bâle, Suisse	
Instabil II, Ausstellungsraum Klingental, Bâle, Suisse	
Joyfully waiting IV, joyfully-waiting.ch	
33 drawings of empathy (solo), Grand Palais, Berne, Suisse	2020
Bourses de la Ville, Centre d'Art Contemporain, Genève, Suisse	
Unexpected Delivery (duo), Espace Libre, Bienne, Suisse	
Nona Decima Morta, Sissi Club, Marseille, France	
Études sur l'Empathie, Fondation Ricard, Paris, France	2019
Sauve qui peut, LiveInYourHead, Genève, Suisse	
Nothing is always something, LiveInYourHead, Genève, Suisse	
Cantonale Berne-Jura, Kunsthaus Langenthal, Suisse	
Vedo Non Vedo, Istituto Svizzero, Rome, Italie	2018
Image:Reading, Forde, Genève, Suisse	
L'élément Contingent, LiveInYourHead, Genève, Suisse	

Technologies of violence, Casa Encendida, Madrid, Espagne	2017
Taiwan International Documentary Festival, Taipei, Taiwan	
Kasseler Dokumentarfilm- und Videofest, Kassel, Allemagne	
51. Solothurner Filmtage, Soleure, Suisse	

## EDUCATION

Master of Arts, work.master, HEAD, Genève, Suisse	2019
Bachelor of Arts, cinéma, HEAD, Genève, Suisse	2015
Master of Science, neurosciences, Université de Genève, Suisse	2011
Bachelor of Science, biologie, Université de Fribourg, Suisse	2008

## AWARDS S & RESIDENCIES

Centre Européen de Recherche et Formations en Arts Verriers, France	2023
Swiss Center for Affective Science, Genève	22/23
Bourse d'aide à la recherche, reprise et résidence, Ville de Genève	2022
Nominée aux Swiss Art Awards	2021
Bourse de recherche artistique du commun, Ville de Genève	2021
Nominées aux Bourses de la Ville de Genève, Suisse	2020
Ateliers de la Ville de Genève, FMAC, Genève, Suisse	19-22
Résidence à la Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris, France	20/22
Summer Academy ISR x HEAD à l'Institut Suisse, Rome	18/19

## PUBLICATIONS

Who are you performing today?, Cahiers d'Artistes 2023, Zürich	2023
Artist Network Theory, éd. Axelle Stiefel, Genève, Suisse	2020
Études sur l'Empathie, éd. HEAD – Genève, Suisse	2019
L'élément contingent, éd.HEAD – Genève, Suisse	2018

## PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Collection jurassienne des beaux-arts

My practice develops from an endless curiosity about the forms of life and the relational weaves that constitute us. My work is then not linear, it rather takes the form of a dynamic system whose elements interact with each other. There are also ellipses.

I propose situations, I play with composing and decomposing interactions, I try to infiltrate and unfold structures. My work is informed and formed by notions of embodiment, affect, fiction and network. It operates on the ground of contemporary realities, multiplying the points of view, beyond dualism.

Ma pratique se développe à partir d'une curiosité sans fin pour les formes de vie et les trames relationnelles qui nous constituent. Mon travail n'est donc pas linéaire, il prend plutôt la forme d'un système dynamique dont les éléments interagissent entre eux. Il y a aussi des ellipses.

Je propose des situations, je joue à composer et décomposer des interactions, je tente d'infiltrer et de déplier des structures. Mon travail est informé et formé par les notions d'*embodiment*, d'affect, de fiction et de réseau. Il opère sur le terrain du réel contemporain, en multipliant les points de vue, en dehors des dualismes.

# REDEVENIR POISSON

Solo show at [Espace 3353](#)  
Genève, 2023

Installation, variable dimensions  
Sandblasted and bush-hammered glass, sound piece



## REDEVENIR POISSON

exhibition view, Espace 3353, Genève 2023  
© Anastasia Mityukova

The affective turn refers to the moment when scientific research reconsidered emotions in the understanding of social and cultural phenomenon. This recognition of the affects passes in particular by their objectivation and by the establishment of protocols of measurement, which allow scientists and researchers to take into account their role in the human and social activities.

Initially trained in neurosciences, Eva Zornio operated these last months a real turn of the making. This turn is illustrated by the incorporation of glass in her practice, through the context of a residency at the CERFAV–Centre Européen de Recherches et Formation aux Arts Verriers, where she experiments with the physical properties, the limits and the reflections, both aesthetic and metaphorical, of the material.

At 3353, Eva Zornio proposes a manifestation of this double turn, through the symbolic reconstitution of the glass building of the Biotech Campus in Geneva. In the exhibition space, we find ourselves facing a labyrinth that we cannot define, whether it is a laboratory for modeling affects, an abandoned open-space because it is unsuitable for any activity, a storage place for a gang of emotion dealers, or an aquarium where we would be the permanent residents.

Thus, carried away by the wave, we walk around, and we listen.

Julie Marmet





10.8H

OMITEEM  
MOOJA





## Pool of Clouds [Piscine de nuages]

Clara Schulmann

English translation, Fig Doche

Text produced in the framework of Eva Zornio's exhibition *Redevenir poisson* from 29.04.23 to 11.06.23 at Espace 3353

In the train to London I listen to the voice of Claire Richard talking about her book *Des Mains heureuses : une archéologie du toucher* [Happy Hands : an Archaeology of Touch]. The work centers on the importance of touch in a moment when preventative gestures still keep us at a distance and motherhood as a new grammar of gestures. The most basic relation to the other plays out in touch : new responsibilities that create in return new loyalties, explains Claire Richard. I wonder what these new loyalties produce in the field of art, as they designate a zone from now on affected by and affectively charged with our common experiences – where we would speak less by and with our eyes, summoning more our other senses.

In the meantime, Eva sends me. Eva sends me images of her works at the moment when she finishes them in the workshop. I do not know her work, so I need her to tell me what she's doing. Our exchanges pass through the images and through her voice that describes them to me. I ask her questions. She responds. I hear that she's looking for the right words. She herself is starting a new practice. She completed a training last January to learn how to sandblast glass. She wanted to learn something new, something technical. So she works on glass tiles on whose surface she draws forms. The technique of sandblasting consists in digging into a surface by blasting it with sand, very hard, which is done in a booth. She sends me pictures and a video in which we see her hand brush one of her freshly-finished pieces. She holds, undoubtedly, her phone in one hand, while the other follows the contours of the drawing on the surface of the glass. The framing is very tight, and we can distinguish the finesse of the swirls while also understanding what is at stake with sandblasting : creating a very slight relief, matte, that "muffles" the contourless transparency of the glass. In her sandblasting work, Eva says it's a caress. She caresses the glass, but the more she caresses, the more she digs in, creates volume.

I tell her how, on my end, I recently had the desire to pass my fingers over a sculpture in an exhibition I saw in London, despite it being well-protected. The prohibition was serious as I was visiting a Donatello exhibition. An

impressive number of works were gathered, and that day, I sent Eva the photo that I had taken of *Madone aux Nuages* (circa 1380-1466) conserved in Boston. It's a small marble relief that represents Madonna holding the Child in her arms, close to her, and they float together in the clouds, surrounded by angels. The format makes you think that the object was dedicated to a domestic use and that the technique – which consists in sculpting the material by brushing it, letting the forms appear, that emerge from the surface by only a few millimeters – renders nearly fantastical the precision and the softness of the gestures required to obtain them. In the case of this *Madone aux nuages*, because it is basically about a mother holding her child, caught in the milky expanse of the marble, from which emerge the faces and wings of a few angels, as well as the dress, its drapery, and the veil of the Virgin, the question of softness seems central, almost as if it were the very subject of the piece. The relief is set in a marble frame that belongs to the whole and serves as a pretext, if one may say so, for the infinitesimal depth of the object - however, the artist skillfully plays with this limit : the top of the relief is slightly deeper, so the faces of Madonna with Child are more hollowed out, but the bottom is clearly less so, which gives the impression that the right foot of the Virgin, the folds of her dress and two angels' faces are literally resting on a wave of clouds that comes from our world, from a space of which we can still be a part, while the top of the relief seems clearly to belong to another dimension. In any case, the relief's format, the preciousness of the marble, and its milky, soft aspect all evoke the sensation of holding a loved one in the hollow of one's arms. (...)

Water enters the discussion. There's a lake somewhere, but also rivers, bubbles that form in the glass – it's all very aquatic, anyway, says Eva. And then the sandblasting, also : "often at the end of the day my hair is like I went to the beach," so the sea is not far either. And as I am still in my marble cloud tide, I continue swimming. When I send Eva my image of *Dontatello*, she replies that she loves drapery and then I tell her that it's a very small format, destined to be hung in a bedroom, and she says that this makes her think of an amulet. It's a lot bigger than that – an amulet needs to fit in a hand – but when I go to look for more information on these reliefs I stumble across a great text<sup>[1]</sup> dedicated to representations of Madonna with Child, to their tight framing, that suggest that, arranged in the Renaissance rooms, they also had the function of a talisman, watching over future mothers

and unborn children – and were thus not only devotional images, but also accompanied important stages in the lives of women.

I wonder if the word talisman would work for Eva's glass tiles, sandblasted with forms she chose and destined to be suspended : in their turn they will float around the exhibition space. Amongst the drawings she has chosen to reproduce, there are the treelike shapes, a bit organic, of whisps; there are those that work with more geometric lines, that evoke architecture, and then those that imitate lettering or sigils, and these latter forms call up the links between glass the spaces in which we are supposed to find our way around, cohabit, work – produce. These are three ways of narrating her own apprehension of a precise space, dedicated to scientific research, in which she recently spent time in residency : the Campus Biotech and the Centre Interfacultaire de Science Affectives, in Geneva. Once again, the question of loyalty arises, this time, toward a space – that in which Eva's forms originate, offspring that are not always conciliatory. Her glass tiles wear the mark of contradictory intentions that preside over stumbling immersions : the results of Eva's residency are "hindered" transparencies. Her sandblasting narrates, above all, how difficult it is to stick entirely to a project with resolutely neoliberal coordinates : of the Biotech Campus, she says that it resembles an impassive aquarium where mouse-fish debate.

Eva and I have never met, but with each image she sends I watch for her reflection, I appreciate her shoes; we meet each other thus through her pieces and their transparencies. But she remains in the reflection, in the blur, a bit distant. She floats in her pieces. As I live on the sixth floor, I see the sky a lot. When it's gray out, my daughter says it's a bit like a swimming pool of clouds. Whether sculpture has to do with the forbidden pleasure of sliding one's finger over marble, or in the indentations of the glass, or even diving into the clouds, offers perhaps the conditions for Claire Richard's new loyalties, meaning a new way to be engaged with what we see, in what we produce, and with what we feel. In short, reduce the distance.

[1] Geraldine A. Johnson, « Art or Artefact ? Madonna and Child relief in Early Renaissance », in *The Sculpted Object 1400-1700*, éd. S. Currie and P. Motture, Ashgate Press, 1997, pp. 1-24.





REDEVENIR POISSON  
details of the installation, Espace 3353, Genève 2023  
© Anastasia Mityukova



## REDEVENIR POISSON

details of the installation, Espace 3353, Genève 2023

© Anastasia Mityukova



# PLEURE-MOI UNE RIVIÈRE

Solo show at [Soul2Soul/RU](#) Genève, 2022

Installation, variable dimensions

Glass, mirror screen, video projection, print, sound piece, site-specific intervention

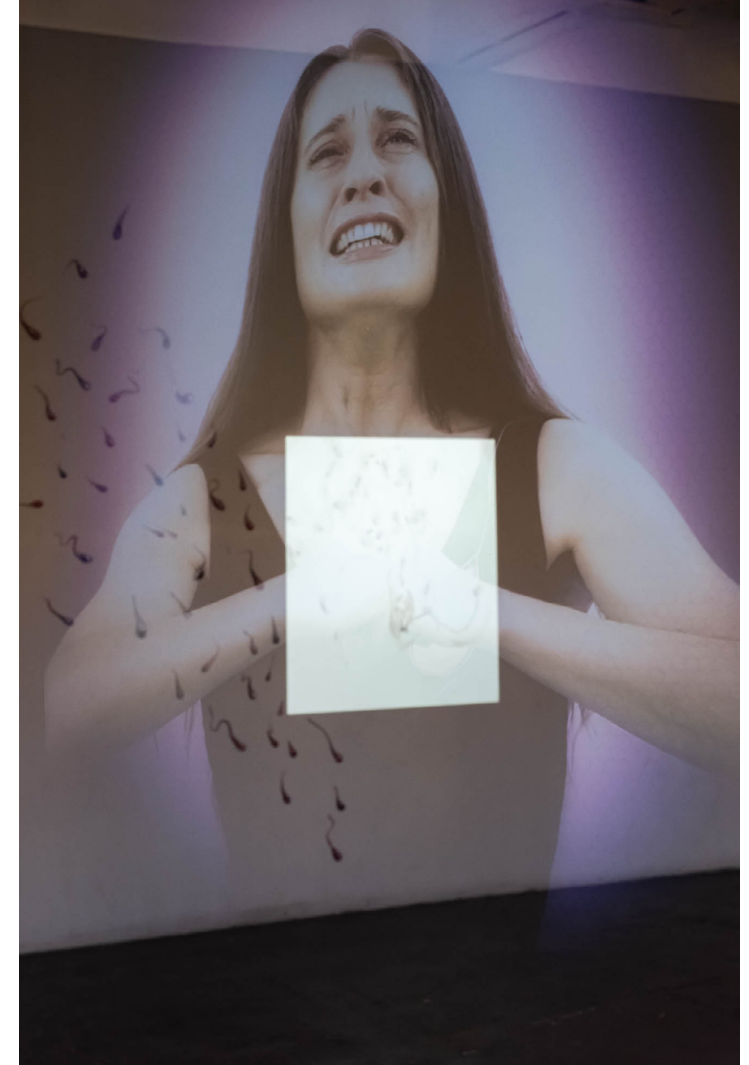
PLEURE-MOI UNE RIVIÈRE  
exhibition view, Soul2Soul/RU, Genève 2022  
© Danny Leal







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<https://vimeo.com/794793584/5eb85ba8e7?share=copy>

PLEURE-MOI UNE RIVIÈRE  
 details of the installation, Soul2Soul/RU, Genève 2022  
 © Danny Leal



## Being of the empathetic community

Andréanne Béguin (2022)

English translation, Yasemin Imre

Text produced in the framework of Eva Zornio's exhibition  
Pleure-moi une rivière in november 2022

There are many dystopias in cinema or literature where emotions have disappeared or are strictly forbidden. In an aseptic universe, the two heroes of the film *Equals* try to live a love story, even though love and emotionality are considered dangerous pathologies for the social body. These fictions paint a portrait of apathetic and placid societies, in which the refusal of emotions amounts to denying all that is humane. The withdrawal and the difficulties to relate, which permeates the current - and very real - society, are certainly the seeds of these dystopias, which all seem to carry a serious and sinister warning about our way of making society. Rare is it that these films or novels portray a cheerful or optimistic perspective. The future is not often rosy.

Eva Zornio's exhibition *Cry me a river* is a step aside in this greyness. Like a space-time capsule, it transports us into a futuristic universe, halfway between technology and mythology, resolutely soothing and meditative.

It is the bewitching song of a mermaid that guides us on the threshold of this portal, not to trap us but to welcome our body and its energies. The journey begins. The room is bathed in a soft pink light, in which the time of day or night no longer matters. Chronic stress evaporates almost instantly in this pastel hue, whose artificiality does not erase a possible reminiscence of fetal limbo. The visual repertoire of technology infuses here and there - from a mirrored screen, through one-way mirrors, to microscopic views - and hybridises with more magical forms - filamentous glass tears, magnetic sound waves.

Exploring the exhibition goes beyond the simple visit, to arrive, by the sensitive experience, to a form of real and new presence. A reconnection with the here and now, as well as a renewed presence to others and to ourselves. Indeed, with the works she brings together for this exhibition, Eva Zornio touches our emotions right in the heart, in what they allow us to «affect and be affected», to quote Spinoza. This «office of the future» that the exhibition creates is intended to arouse and receive our emotions, metamorphosing our regime of emotivity and de facto our ways of being in the world in mind and body. In the words of Michelle Rosaldo, the

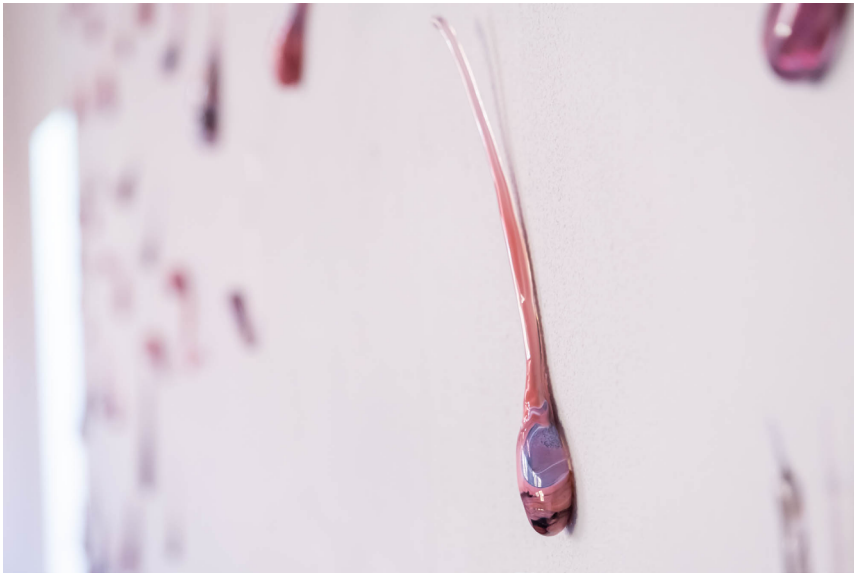
artist treats emotions as embodied thoughts, that is, as psychosomatic manifestations. The body thus delivers the emotional signs that run through us in various movements: laughter, tears, anger, but also contractions, oscillations, relaxations, beats.

The video *To poke gently* portrays the succession of these different emotional states: the whole of the performer's upper body is mobilized by the emotional wave. This wave blurs the features of the face, makes the arms rise and the head lean backwards and forwards, jerks the breathing, agitates the hair. Our reference system of emotions then becomes deficient in face of the imposed indistinction: laughter and tears form a single whole, a cycle without beginning nor end. It is no longer sadness or joy, but a holistic emotional state. The difficulty and fragility of the ties we weave and unweave between individuals dissolves in this re-consideration of the values of emotions, finding there a resolution, almost primal. Not only does dancer Eve Chariatte succeed in holding this state of full emotional awareness, but she also manages to share it with us. Embedded in a mirror screen, her body mixes visually with ours, then our own mirror neurons perform the emotional translation: her laughter, even blurred, remains communicative. From this spontaneous sharing of emotions and the invisible links thus created, an emotional community emerges, to borrow Barbara Rosenwein's historiographic concept. Human groups find themselves thus united in the power of circulation and adhesion of the emotions. Animated by the affects of circumstance, they compose another social landscape, more organic, made of crossings and interpenetrations. This emotional and relational renewal also extends into reinterpreted forms of dialogue. On the wall, sheets of paper are hanging and at disposal, the text fluctuates between poetry, conversation, monologue, address, examination, confession. So many language games that are offered to us, that we can take away, to feed our emotional communities. The visitors of this exhibition, in a conscious or unconscious way, will then share a community, for which it is the capacity of empathy that weaves the link.

Paramecium's death proves that the adaptive movements, which according to Antonio Damasio are the root of emotions, can also be experienced by unicellular organisms. Placed under the microscope, these paramecia form a constellation that seems to frantically become more compact as they approach the danger that ultimately dooms them.

This empathy connects us to others, but Eva Zornio also offers the possibility of taking an empathetic look at oneself, of considering one's own emotions with sincerity and benevolence. Mirrors in the space allow us to look ourselves in the face, to accept that part of ourselves that is sometimes as foreign to us as others and that it is easier to ignore or even reject. In *Friday or the Wild Life*, Robinson Crusoe finds a mirror, but can no longer smile, his isolation having erased his expressive abilities. What about us?

Will we be able to smile in front of the mirror? Perhaps we will shed a tear that will turn into a pearl as in Japanese mythology? Maybe the glass tears scattered in the exhibition space are those of the previous travellers...



PLEURE-MOI UNE RIVIÈRE  
details of the installation, Soul2Soul/RU, Genève 2022  
© Danny Leal





## TO POKE GENTLY IN THE RIBS

Installation, variable dimensions

Glass, mirrored screen, print, sound piece, site-specific intervention



## TO POKE GENTLY IN THE RIBS

exhibition view, Entangled Events, [Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen](https://www.kunst-halle-sankt-gallen.ch/), Sankt Gallen 2022

© Sebastian Schaub

<https://vimeo.com/792204802/fdc9e40605?share=copy>





TO POKE GENTLY IN THE RIBS

details of the installation, Entangled Events, [Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen](https://www.kunst-halle-sankt-gallen.ch/), Sankt Gallen 2022

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# LIFE LIVES IN GAPS

Solo show at [EAC - Les Halles](#), Porrentruy 2021

Installation, variable dimensions

Video, sound piece, print on plexiglas, prints, site-specific interventions, ready-mades



LIFE LIVES IN GAPS

exhibition view, EAC - Les Halles, Porrentruy 2021

© Sébastien Verdon



At EAC les Halles in Porrentruy, datas take the form of abstract graphics, released from part of their legend. Printed on large transparent boards, their materialization seems to hesitate between big data and minimal painting.

In this environment of pale pink light, a few clues to past experiences are assembled. A portrait of the artist in CEO, a motionless rocking chair, a half-open door: the exhibition presents a snapshot of an agentivity constituted by a network of signs which, like the rest of the living world, are subject to change, to the movements induced by their successive activations. What if the graphics were to start humming too, swaying between «most of the time» and «almost never», oscillating between temperature and temperament barometers?

A soundtrack emerges from a pedestal, a polysemous dialogue of rubbing, humming humming, yawning, apnea and sobbing. This could be the soundtrack to the video dyptic presented further on, on wheels: an operator - Eve Chariatte - unrolls her fascias, frowns, explores the paralinguistic resources of her face. She wears the same uniform as the photographed artist and the operator busy cleaning surfaces with viscous, glittery water, singing:

Life lives in gaps  
In little slits lives the life  
Life breath in breaks, small passages, big cracks  
Oh life lives in gaps

Anaïs Wenger



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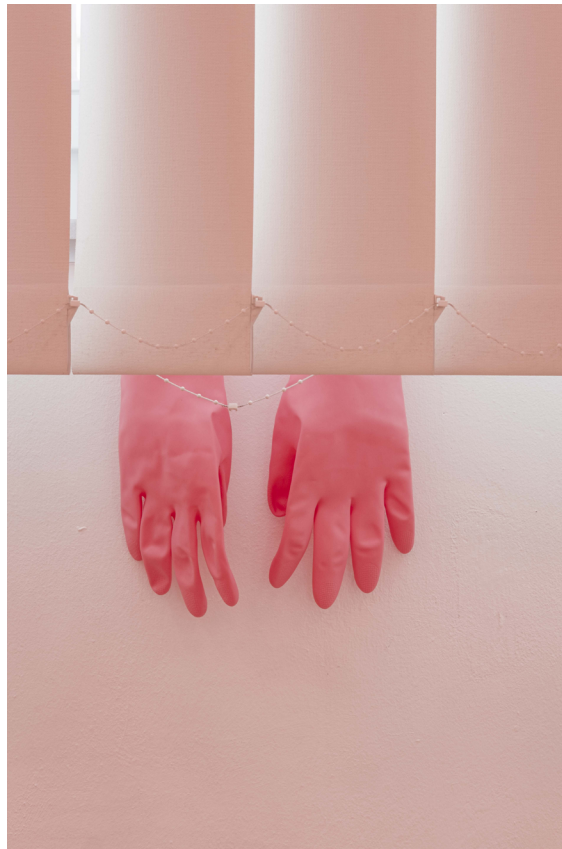


## LIFE LIVES IN GAPS

details of the installation, EAC - Les Halles, Porrentruy 2021

performance during the opening, operator : Axelle Stiefel

© Sebastien Verdon



## LIFE LIVES IN GAPS

details of the installation, EAC - Les Halles, Porrentruy 2021

© Sebastien Verdon





LIFE LIVES IN GAPS  
details of the installation, EAC - Les Halles, Porrentruy 2021  
© Sebastien Verdon

## Affective Evaluation

Eva Zornio

Excerpt from an interview with Lucie Kolb held in the context of the publication of the book *Who are you performing today?* part of the 2023 Edition of Pro Helvetia's Cahiers d'Artistes

I found myself wondering in what ways I myself relate to, feel, affect and am affected, am a body and have a body. This desire to understand has led me, among other things, to reconnect with my career in neuroscience. My attention was quickly drawn in particular to the "affective turn", to the associated methods of producing scientific facts, and to the dissemination of those scientific facts as truths within many areas of today's society. I was also interested in the interactions that exist between psychology and the cognitive and affective sciences, and also with neo liberal practices for managing the emotions of individuals. My artistic practice has thus focused on the creation of this entity called Affective Evaluation, which is at once a research group, a corporation, an institute, and an organization – in short, an institution with shifting, indeed even tentacular forms that provide a space for a fiction and which frame some of the performative situations I propose. The institution is intentionally opaque and evokes various institutions typical of our present day, such as the research laboratory, the wellness institute, the scientific-technical start-up, or even the cultural education unit.

This work dates back to 2018, when I conducted an epistemological reflection on the scientific fields associated with our contemporaneity, which form an interactive web: psychology, cognitive science, and the affective sciences. When I was invited to give a performance that would take place during a party at an alternative art space, I proposed conducting a study on empathy, and so I made my first questionnaire: an A4-size version that was practically identical in form to scientific questionnaires. I had assembled and listed various assertions for the participants to respond to, in order to cover different aspects associated with the activation of the idea of empathy. I was particularly attracted to affirmations that revealed ambivalent areas, for example: "Seeing people cry doesn't particularly upset me." Over the years, I've taken more and more liberties with the conception of the questionnaires, playing with the format, typography, and layout. I added the Affective Evaluation logo, I rewrote the affirmations, I incorporated the exhibitions, I invented protocols. The questionnaires also bear traces of each and every individual. I like to watch people put down their crosses or circles or even write comments on the assertions. Based on the results of the questionnaires, I then experimented with statistical analysis of the data; I produced absurd graphs, tried to prove hypotheses, proposed "future perspectives". The performance, in the course of which I collect the questionnaires, forms the basis for a subsequent three-dimensional proposal and so on. In this way, Affective Evaluation spins a web that interlaces spaces and different temporalities.

This fiction functions like a mirror of the institution, which it infiltrates and incorporates into its mode of operation. The point is to highlight areas of experience such as sentiment, emotion, intensities, perceptions, and atmospheres, and to speak of affective bodies, that is, bodies that can affect and be affected. My work thus revolves around embodiment. The performance invites visitors to play an active role, to re-enact certain patterns of behavior that are prescribed in specific ways by the institutions and in the process to thwart, seek out, reject, and subvert them. I encourage sharing, playfulness, ingenuity, discussion, and digression. The questionnaire thus takes on the form of a relational object, a mediating form that creates presence and gradually infiltrates the spheres of our affects.



### LIFE LIVES IN GAPS

details of the installation, EAC - Les Halles, Porrentruy 2021

© Sebastien Verdon



# THIS IS PLAY

Installation and online performance at Swiss Art Awards 2021

mirror screen, vinyl stickers, carpet, digital work

THIS IS PLAY

installation view, Swiss Art Awards 2021

©BAK / Guadalupe Ruiz







THIS IS PLAY  
details of the installation, Swiss Art Awards 2021  
©BAK / Guadalupe Ruiz



# STUDY ON EMPATHY #6

performance at [BackSlash Festival](#), Zürich 2022  
©Lea Huser







## STUDY ON EMPATHY #6

view of the performance at Backslash Festival, Zürich 2022  
©Tim Wettstein

### Studies on empathy

Eva Zornio

Excerpt from an interview with Lucie Kolb held in the context of the publication of the book *Who are you performing today?* part of the 2023 Edition of Pro Helvetia's Cahiers d'Artistes

The idea of empathy relates to a multitude of individual and collective experiences: projection, transference, association, expression, resonance, contagion, communion, fusion, identification, compassion, agreement, altruism, solidarity, sympathy, harmony ... All of these are everyday phenomena that defy conscious action and rational control. Engaging with the concept of empathy allows me to rethink the boundaries between self and other, material and immaterial, affect and cognition, body and society – in short, to work outside of classical dualisms. This is also a term that has been aspired to communication strategies, so that it has become something of a has-been for certain artistic circles.

From my personal point of view, I have discovered in the course of the performances called Study on Empathy that the use of this object has both a certain attraction, so that people willingly come and participate, and also a dissemination effect, because what happens in the performance has an impact on the wider environment. The framework is simple: there is a table with chairs, a questionnaire, someone who invites and welcomes people, a pleasant atmosphere, and rewards.

The situation created is one of presence and shared attention. And in my view, talking and acting about affect implies that we are more intensely present. To "study" empathy in the context of art is perhaps a way of spreading life. What interests me about this idea is that dealing with areas that have to do with affect, with embodiment and interaction, amounts to developing a care network. As a woman operating a patriarchal context, my way of denouncing and thwarting the varied experiences of microaggression triggered by normative practices, power, hierarchy, partition, rigidity, denial, neglect, iniquity, and rationalism used as an answer to everything is to infiltrate them through practices of attention, listening, play, irony, autonomy, sensitivity, and sensation.



# STUDY ON EMPATHY #5

Installation and ongoing performance

maple table, pink neon, cardboard stools, museum display case, rocking chair, sound piece, prints, ready mades



STUDY ON EMPATHY #5  
exhibition view, Instabil II Das Experiment / Der Beweis at [Ausstellungsraum Klingenthal](#), Basel 2021  
©Eliane Rutishauser





## STUDY ON EMPATHY #5

exhibition view, Instabil II Das Experiment / Der Beweis at [Ausstellungraum Klingenthal](#), Basel 2021

©Eliane Rutishauser



## STUDY ON EMPATHY #5

detail of the installation

museum display case showing original questionnaires completed and collected during previous studies

©Eliane Rutishauser



## STUDY ON EMPATHY #5

performance *Results and Perspectives*, operator : Eve Chariatte

Instabil II Das Experiment / Der Beweis at [Ausstellungraum Klingenthal](#), Basel 2021

©Eliane Rutishauser





# THE AESTHETIC EMOTIONS SCALE

installation and ongoing performance

rectangular cut-out in wall, print on Plexiglas, carpet, print, sound piece, stand with built-in loudspeaker and pencil pot



## THE AESTHETIC EMOTIONS SCALE

detail of the installation, *Bourses de la Ville de Genève* at [Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève](#) 2020  
performance during the opening, operator : Christina Antonarakis

©Raphaëlle Mueller



# RECEPTION SPACE

installation and ongoing performance

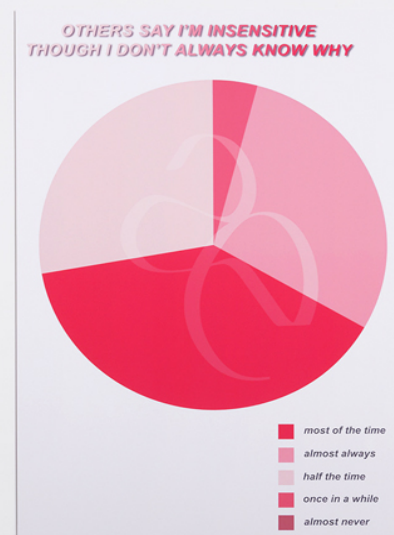
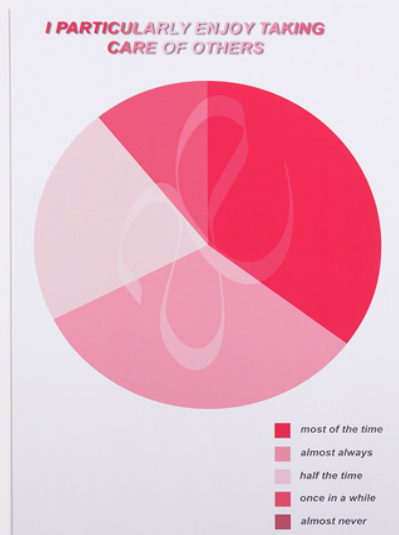
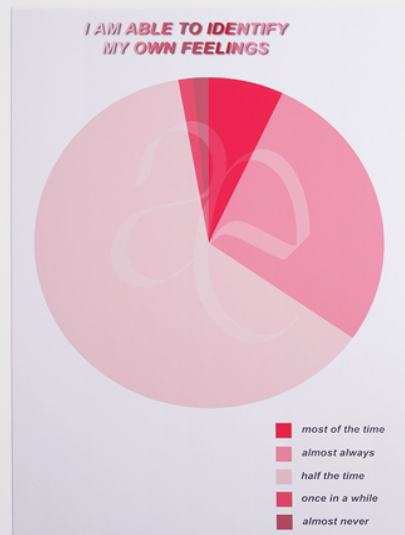
prints on paper mounted on aluminium plate, vinyl stickers,  
video, prints, silver badge, ready mades



RECEPTION SPACE

exhibition view, Etudes sur l'Empathie at [Fondation d'Entreprise Ricard \(Paris\)](#) 2019

@Aurélien Mole



## RECEPTION SPACE

exhibition view, Etudes sur l'Empathie at [Fondation d'Entreprise Ricard \(Paris\)](#) 2019

@Aurélien Mole



## Agencements de cobayes

Sylvain Ménétrey (2020)

publié sur ISSUE, Journal of art & design HEAD – Genève

C'est en fine tacticienne qu'Eva Zornio s'est saisie du concept d'empathie pour concevoir, sous le label Affective Evaluation, une série d'œuvres et d'actions qui se situent, là aussi tactiquement, aux marges des expositions auxquelles elle prend part. Depuis l'identification des neurones miroirs, découvertes chez le macaque en 1990, la question de l'empathie est devenue un champ très investi et débattu dans les neurosciences et la psychologie cognitive. Dans le grand public aussi cette notion incertaine que chacun peut investir d'un ressenti personnel suscite d'interminables discussions. En ce sens, l'empathie serait un concept performatif, dont la simple énonciation génère de l'introspection et du relationnel.

Zornio se sert de cette composante pour créer des situations où elle récolte des données, des définitions ou des dessins du public sur ce sujet. Lors de l'exposition Études sur l'empathie curatée par Charlotte Laubard à la Fondation Ricard à Paris, l'artiste a choisi d'investir la zone d'accueil de l'espace d'art. Le public était invité à répondre à des questionnaires sous le vague intitulé d'« étude sur l'empathie », où il s'agissait d'évaluer ses réponses émotionnelles dans différents contextes. Si l'artiste s'est inspirée de questionnaires employés par les chercheurs en sciences affectives, la scientificité du protocole d'enquête était mise à mal par l'absence d'explications quant à la méthodologie de traitement des données ou l'objectif final de l'étude, qui sont d'usage dans le monde scientifique. On pouvait remarquer aussi certaines irrégularités dans le questionnaire comme la répétition d'une question. La présence de panneaux accrochés au-dessus du desk d'entrée avec des graphiques en camemberts de statistiques tirées de précédentes collectes venaient en revanche signifier que ces données sont bel et bien traitées par l'organisation Affective Evaluation, dont la nature exacte n'est pas précisée par l'artiste. La présence envahissante du logo AE, le choix de diverses teintes rosées froides pour les graphiques, un diffuseur d'essences blanc épuré sur le desk et le mobilier blanc ou transparent de l'espace d'accueil – dont on pouvait se demander s'il était d'origine ou spécialement choisi par l'artiste – englobaient l'étude dans une esthétique ambiguë, à mi-chemin entre la start-up qui exploite des données à des fins commerciales, l'institut de recherche, le centre de bien-être et le bureau de médiation culturelle.

Ce flou entretenu autour de la structure sous laquelle elle opère, du but de la récolte de données, de la notion qu'elle investigate, et même à bien y regarder de la lecture de ses graphiques – peu lisibles – permet à l'artiste de tester bien d'autres paramètres que celui de l'empathie. Et en premier lieu celui du statut de son travail. Car si le public a participé de bonne grâce à son étude, c'est qu'il l'identifiait à une œuvre. Néanmoins, la position en marge de l'installation, à l'accueil, et le fait que l'artiste avait mandaté les médiatrices culturelles dotées d'un badge Affective Evaluation pour la distribution des questionnaires, lui donnaient un statut à part et envahissant. L'œuvre, telle une préparation mentale, venait prescrire, résumer, expliquer ou commenter l'exposition à venir. En 2018, lors d'une autre exposition collective à Forde à Genève, Eva Zornio avait mené diverses expériences hors des heures d'ouverture lors de rendez-vous individuels avec un public inscrit. Elle laissait les participants déambuler librement dans l'exposition munis d'un capteur qui enregistrerait leur pouls. Elle notait le temps passé devant chaque œuvre, les évolutions du rythme cardiaque

et récoltait des réponses plus qualitatives sur l'état affectif des participants face aux images. En privilégiant l'axe émotionnel et la réponse affective, l'artiste dictait une manière spécifique d'appréhender l'exposition.

Le travail d'Eva Zornio comporte donc une forme de manipulation de l'expérience du public. Il peut s'inscrire dans la critique institutionnelle, en ce qu'il vient perturber, ou renforcer selon les cas, les métadiscours que les curateur·trice·s ou les médiateur·trice·s établissent avec un message en vogue dans les cercles de théoriciens de l'art sur l'agentivité des images. L'expérience particulière qu'elle propose au public, qui peut prendre une pause et faire son introspection en répondant au questionnaire, performe cette relation affective qui se noue entre l'œuvre et celui ou celle qui l'expérimente, mais par des moyens en apparence scientifique plutôt qu'expressif. L'esthétique corporate des installations suggère cependant un glissement vers l'exploitation commerciale et l'économie de l'expérience, ce qui dans un contexte de fondation privée comme Ricard, n'est peut-être pas anodin. Plus largement, le travail de l'artiste questionne les pratiques contemporaines de quantification de soi. Le flou qui entoure l'usage des questionnaires qu'on lui confie est à la mesure du mystère qui plane sur la destination et l'exploitation de données personnelles récoltés par les grandes sociétés du web. Sous les apparences innocentes de l'esthétique relationnelle, le travail d'Eva Zornio révèle donc certaines structures de pouvoir contemporaines en plaçant le public dans une position de cobaye. D'autres interventions d'Affective Evaluation, par exemple à l'espace Cyberrance, à Romainville en 2019, manifestait clairement ce mode d'interaction. L'artiste récompensait le public qui acceptait de produire un dessin sur l'empathie avec des petits cadeaux : bougies d'artistes, cassettes de label ou kits de microscope.

En parallèle, Eva Zornio adopte et performe une position de chercheuse sensiblement différente dans ses carnets de recherches qu'elle a entamé pour son essai master à la HEAD et qu'elle poursuit aujourd'hui. Tel un journal de bord, les trois cahiers baptisés, « Empathie », « Embodiment » et « Emotions » font le récit au jour le jour, à la manière d'un blog, des discussions, échanges d'e-mails avec des spécialistes ou des amis et des réflexions personnelles de l'artiste-chercheuse. Des citations de philosophes comme Spinoza et Deleuze, de psychologues comme Paul Ekman ou de psychobiologistes comme Vittorio Gallese, alternent avec des récits d'expériences personnelles. L'artiste raconte ses séances de qigong, de shiatsu ou de fasciathérapie pour soigner une épaule douloureuse. Cette texture fragmentaire fait écho aux divers agencements sociaux et du corps et de l'esprit qui sont analysés. Elle nous plonge aussi dans l'intimité et le bricolage de la recherche selon un mode d'écriture à la première personne proche de l'autofiction contemporaine à la Maggie Nelson. Le cobaye n'est ici plus le public, mais l'artiste elle-même.



## 33 DRAWINGS OF EMPATHY

installation at [Grand Palais](#), Berne 2020

video loop (20')

### 33 DRAWINGS OF EMPATHY

installation view, Nine to Five, Grand Palais,  
Berne 2020

©Nico Müller

<https://vimeo.com/379025873/ed34421686>



Who are you?  
Something in between here and there.  
A permeable space moving with a very persistent presence.  
Where does empathy end?  
Good question.  
Who are you performing today?  
I'm the artist.  
What is empathy?  
A  
way  
to  
be  
alive.

# WHO ARE YOU PERFORMING TODAY?

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Lucie Kolb - Nous nous sommes rencontrées à Paris, pendant que j'effectuais une résidence à la Cité internationale des arts. Tu es venue de ton open studio pour réaliser une autre *Study on Empathy* (sur l'empathie). Le studio ressemblait à un cabinet d'enquête, avec d'une zone d'attente, il y avait des bonbons et des boissons, et nous étail demandé de remplir le questionnaire fourni par Affective Evaluation. Ce document contenait une série de questions plutôt intimes sur des aspects relatifs au bien-être et sur notre capacité d'empathie. Le formulaire, ou le questionnaire, est un instrument essentiel dans ta pratique. Dans l'histoire de l'art, il sert d'outil pour inter les processus démocratiques dans le cadre de la critique institutionnelle, j'ai par exemple à l'œuvre de Hans Haacke, intitulée *Gallery Visitor Profile* (1972), dans laquelle on distribuait aux visiteurs et accroché la galerie un questionnaire qui leur demandait d'indiquer leurs caractéristiques démographiques et qu'il s'agissait de certaines questions socio-politiques. Les formulaires remplis étaient déposés dans une boîte en bois, et les résultats étaient ensuite affichés sur mur dans l'espace de l'exposition. Un autre exemple est Stephen Willats qui, dans plusieurs livres, s'est servi du questionnaire pour dialoguer avec les communautés et entamer des processus participatifs. Il me semble que ton questionnaire est plus spéculatif. Quel rôle est-ce que le questionnaire joue dans ta pratique et dans ton travail avec Affective Evaluation et comment est-ce que tu l'utilises ?

Eva Zornio - Could you specify what you mean by "speculative"?

LK - Lorsque tu utilises le questionnaire, tu ne t'intéresses pas en premier lieu aux réponses et aux comparaisons que tu peux en tirer. Tu as par exemple utilisé les réponses pour créer un poème, comme dans *Pleure-moi une rivière* (2022). J'ai l'impression qu'il s'agit davantage de créer une situation particulière à l'aide du questionnaire que de réponses en elles-mêmes et de ce que tu peux en apprendre. Ou est-ce que je me trompe ?

Lucie Kolb - We met in Paris, during your residency at the Cité internationale des arts. You used your open studio to perform another *Study on Empathy*. The studio appeared as a room of inquiry with a waiting area. There were sweets and drinks, and we were asked to fill out a form issued by Affective Evaluation. The form listed a series of rather intimate questions addressing issues of well-being and our ability to show empathy. The form or questionnaire is a pivotal tool in your practice. In art history it has been used in the context of institutional critique as a tool to mimic democratic processes; I'm thinking for example of Hans Haacke's *Gallery Visitors Profile* (1972), where he provided a questionnaire for gallery visitors inquiring about their demographic background and opinions on sociopolitical issues. The completed forms were dropped into a wooden box and the results later posted on the wall in the exhibition space. Another example is Stephen Willats, who has used the questionnaire in various works as a tool to engage with communities and initiate participatory processes. It seems to me that you're using the questionnaire in a more speculative way. What role does the questionnaire play in your practice and work with Affective Evaluation and how do you use it?

Eva Zornio - Est-ce que tu pourrais préciser ce que tu entends par « spéculatif » ?

LK - You use the questionnaire not in a way that is first and foremost interested in the answers and drawing knowledge from them. For example, you have used the answers to create a poem, as in *Pleure-moi une rivière* (2022). I feel it's more about creating a particular situation with the questionnaire than about the actual answers and learning something from them. Or am I wrong?

EZ - Tu as tout à fait raison.

LK - It's not a sociological approach as in the case of Hans Haacke; you don't just transfer and apply scientific

Empathy is a marketing product.  
Can be.