



Suspended

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Suspend (sus-pond) *vb*: 1. To hang from above so as to permit free movement 2. to cause to remain floating or hanging 3. to render inoperative or cause to cease, esp temporarily 4. to hold in abeyance; postpone action on 5. to debar temporarily from privilege, office, etc, as a punishment 6. to cause (particles) to be held in suspension in a fluid 7. *music* to continue (a note) until the next chord is sounded, with which it usually forms a dissonance.

(Collins English Dictionary)

To be suspended is to feel oneself hanging, to be stretched between structured forms and towards the impossible. It is to occupy spaces, times, and/or bodies in between and in transition. It is to materialize the social in its tremulating forms, not knowing exactly what lies beneath one's feet, where and how, when and if one will touch down. States of suspension involve a reaching or an impulse towards a different social, without knowing what that difference will or will not do: what or who it will upset, connect, confirm. In making the call for this issue, we wanted to gather texts and

artworks animated, motivated, electrified by this sense of tenuous balancing, blurring boundaries, uncertainty, and tension.

[2] From Deleuze's theory of becoming and performance studies (Mackenzie; Sedgwick; Taylor), to the endless deferral in Derrida's difference, various contemporary approaches have emphasized the importance of attending to social knowledges as always emergent, information, and thus partially unpredictable (Marcus and Saka: 101). There has been a great deal of enthusiasm for the hope, utopian visions, and anti-hegemonic social movements that can form in spaces which evade the colonization of the linear and definable (Agamben; Grosz; Hardt & Negri). Elizabeth Grosz stresses the need to pay more attention to the critical affirmations enabled by the "joyous open-endedness of the future" (21-22). There is a need, she insists, on a politics that is open to a future beyond the imaginable, that allows itself to be charged by the potentiality within everyday life rather than the possible — that which is constrained within what already is. But what is it to live suspended, hanging or floating between certainties? What are the different ways in which the openness of the present and future become known within given cultural and social spaces? How and for whom might states of suspension produce pleasure, fear, a sense of urgency or other responses? Are all moments and states equal as events charged with potential? What are the relationships between

sensings of the future as mystery and alignments of power in particular contexts? What are the relationships between becoming suspended and histories or structural conditions of violence, gender, and imagined/anticipated futures within particular contexts? How do engagements with an undefined territory of possibilities recast agency and 'the political?'

[3] This issue of *InTensions* focuses on the fields of force generated through lives lived in ambiguity. The contributors here demonstrate that alongside or pulsating beneath national narratives, expected life-spans, military rules, tourism discourses, program designs, and identity categories, formed are other pushes and pulls, stories, details, desires, situations, opportunities, weights. These cannot be contained within the firmness of terms, History, borders, duties, monuments or diagnoses. And yet, sensed, these are presences with which one can or must reckon. There is the vague but nerve-wracking sense that things are off in a beach town in Belize (Little), and the at once apocalyptic and soothingly kitsch traces of an American dream on the sides of a Highway (Murphy). There is the impulse to find a way to belong even as one's physical safety is threatened by one's own as a female soldier in Iraq (Kremmer), and existence marked by "the paradox of visibility" that does not equal liberation (Medaglia). Readers are invited to enter configurations between illusion and reality in Harris Smith's

discussion of avatar involvement design, and shown such spaces in the art of Chutiwongpeti and Kaufman.

[4] Bodily knowledges elude abstraction here, while insisting on their importance. The textures and energy of Patterson's performance challenge the reduction of the body to a stable terrain while registering in texture and movement intimate contact with cancer and witnessing of (dis)ability. Sheila Simonson contests the painful inadequacy of medical discourse to the "physiological complications and indignities" of disease through carnivalized writing. There is the holding of house keys by Palestinian refugees for homes never seen evoked in Freda Guttman's artwork. There are the voices of the dead in a Cyprian town called *Aphania*, Disappearance. These haunt contributor Anna Agathangelou and re-member slavery, murder, silencing, dreams, upsetting systems of erasure and narratives of ethnic-national conflict.

[5] Kathleen Stewart has written that, "[p]ower is a thing of the senses. It lives as a capacity, or a yearning, or a festering resentment." (Stewart 2007: 84). To be suspended is to materialize that power and yearning, that stretching towards...something, as of yet undefined. While underlining the cultural, historical and biographical specificities of this sensed power, issue 3

of *InTensions* is a collective pondering and enquiry into the generative energies immanent to the suspended.

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Alberto & Elysée

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