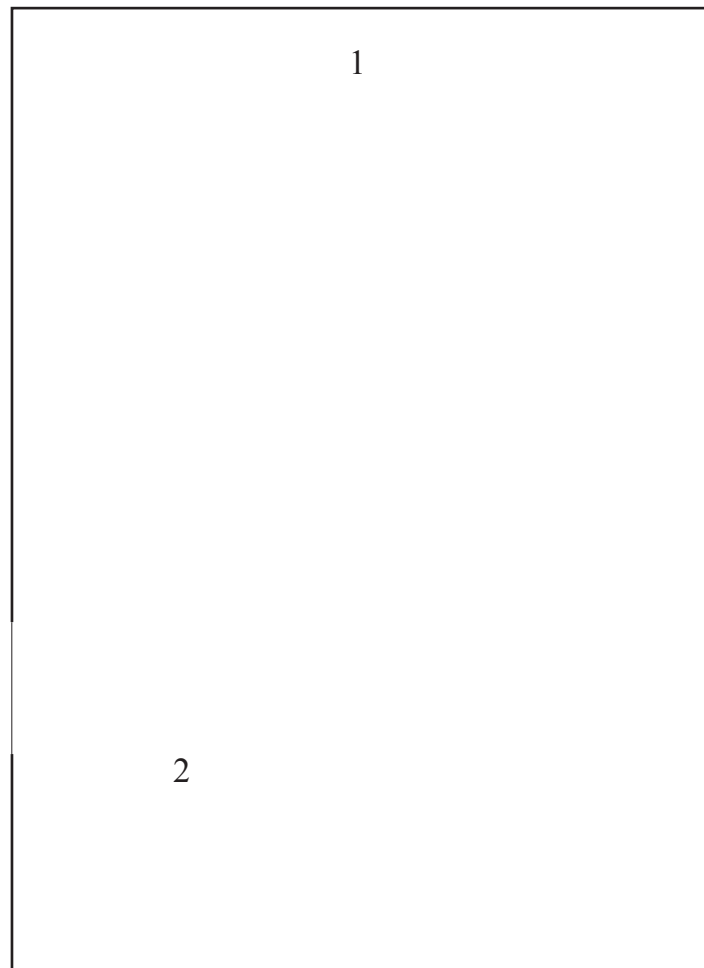


Aviva Silverman
Before the Law
3.6. - 23.7.2023



1
Door of Breath, 2023
Felt, LED's, miniature train tracks
38 x 150 cm

2
The Escort (homage to Dog with a Human Face 200 AD), 2023
3D FDM print Technopolymer HD, acrylics, bluetooth speaker
60 x 33 x 50 cm

Before the Law

We, however, want to give thanks to the movable, garish little altars that an acolyte of curiosity, absentmindedness and sensation chases past the train screamingly — when for a few hours, snuggled into the passing countryside, as though into a streaming scarf, we feel the shudders of suspense and the rhythms of the wheels running up our spine.

-Walter Benjamin

A human body was unravelled in 1888, five months of dissection revealing the cerebrospinal nervous system in its isolated entirety for the first time. Each filament glazed in protective lead paint and affixed to an educator's slate with thousands of pins, a delicate arrangement making tangible the complex system by which innumerable signals are transmitted between every part of the body. Identity lost to the public record, her mythologisation conceals a place in a lineage of bodies exploited for the advancement of medical knowledge. That same year, an internal combustion engine for railway use was first prototyped; we are made of signals and we have built a world in our image.

Prior to the national adoption of railway time in 1840, train stations often kept a practice of displaying two clocks— one set to local time, the other, to London time, conveying the temporal disjunction between two sites. The demands of railway time, driving production and industry, asked of us a new punctuality. Time speeds up, becomes systematised and regulated by bodies and commodities in motion, shuttled from origin to destination on an arterial of tracks veining the landscape. The mechanisms which allow and enable us to adopt omniscience are altering the very substance of the world. Emissions and infrastructure quicken global heating, environmental collapse and mass displacement and unrest. Having set this tempo, we submit to its escalating cadence. World-building, world-destroying power is accompanied by the god's eye view, the drone view, aerial and gliding forward seamlessly (yet meanwhile, the private delight of spotting a donkey in a field of buttercups from the passenger window). The ceaseless churn and metallic aspiration of the moving train extends into a continuous single whine, a merging of rushing susurrations, humming judder and rattle.

Describing the nature of his work, La Monte Young said “Sound is God. The universe began with a vibration.” Godlike, sound has the ability to harm or heal, cause disturbance to the systems of the body or swathe them in peaceful rapture. Brownian motion is a 19th century botanist's description of the movement of pollen suspended in water, innumerable minute bodies whirling through their medium. Applied to sound, the phenomena of signal noise drifting away indefinitely from its origin is said to sooth restive minds to sleep or meditative focus.

We're motion sick as the undulant crumple and fold of time-softened geology is pulled and stretched taut into tapestry thread, accelerating over a terrain cut by field boundaries and eminent domain. The train is more than half an hour behind schedule, passengers will be informed that they can collect a fee of £19.50 for the inconvenience if a claim is filed— We are sorry that you experienced a delay to your journey. Tomorrow, the tracks will be mostly, but not entirely, at rest: new UK legislation demands minimum levels of service even in the midst of planned industrial action. £19.50 for 30 minutes lost, a rate of compensation more than double national minimum wage. Your claim has been checked using a set process and the details of any delay verified using industry systems holding historic train running information. Industrial estate and garden allotment, sheep, hay bales, ploughed raw earth furrowed for planting monocultures, a field of broad beans in bloom, so much in flower right now, red clover, blossoming hawthorn trees, the landscape moves too fast to name them all (there's elderflower, cow parsley, ragged robin); it is the end of May and the air is so full of pollen.

Translating as “release,” Shmita is a time of fallowing in a seven-year agricultural cycle according to the Hebrew calendar; a dialectic relationship between cultivation and rest. Debts are forgiven in a law of return. When agricultural turf is left fallow, febrile networks of fungal mycorrhizae are allowed to weave together pathways around millions of enriching soil symbionts. Released from the depleting drain of constant productivity, land is allowed to repair itself, to be host to an infinitude of lifeforms which are free to range, feed, and thrive in a state of sovereignty. To step outside the temporal framework of progress and productivity is a supplication of the creator in the act of uncreating.

Dislocated from scale, space, time, and speciesism, can we pause in the current of unabating forward movement, and at rest, behold our fragile, vulnerable selves? Can we bear witness to what sets us alight with pain, with pleasure; what sickens us and what might bring about our collective healing?

Ein Haus ist kein Heim ohne einen Pudel

-Anonym

by Mollie Goldstrom

