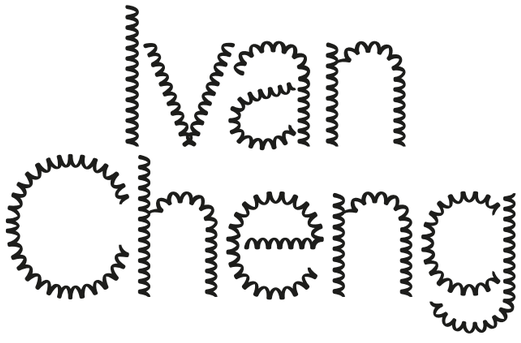
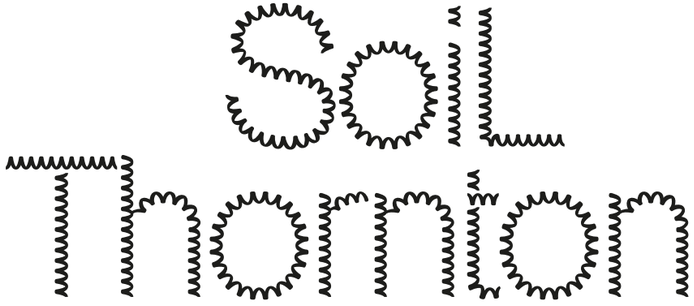
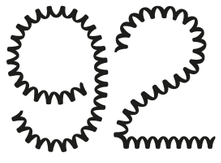
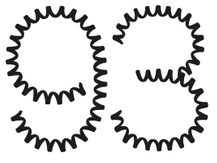

mensaje


solmnion







Ivan Cheng, *16*, 2026, *AIR* 2026: *Figures in a Landscape*, Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, 2026 (performance views) Garments: Good & Bad Camera: Arvo Leo, Will Sardinsky Photo: Maria Baranova Courtesy: the artist and Aspen Art Museum (pp. 94-99)















Ivan Cheng, *Cookie Tower (NY)*, 2022, Edouard Montassut, Paris, 2022 (installation view and detail)
Design: Thorben Gröbel Production: Maxime Prananto, Thomas Rübsamen Photo: Gina Folly
Courtesy: the artist and Edouard Montassut, Paris

SoiL Thornton, *The Rest*, Galerie Neu, Berlin, 2025 (installation view)
Courtesy: the artist, Maxwell Graham, New York, and Galerie Neu, Berlin





SoiL Thornton, *Spot your rectum versus mine, untitled Political aliens (top fifty US babies 2023 gender mashed to make my new) (with four typos from embroidery name tag producer)*, 2023 [Plush toys, embroidered name tags and dental floss, dimensions variable] Courtesy: the artist and Maxwell Graham, New York







Ivan Cheng, *Burnout (Esaurimento) 2: Consensus Dynamo*, 2026, *VULCANA – Sublimation*, Stromboli, 2026
Video stills: Gianfranco Piazza (top), Arvo Leo (bottom) Garments: Good & Bad Camera: Arvo Leo Courtesy: the artist, Vulcana, and Edouard Montassut, Paris



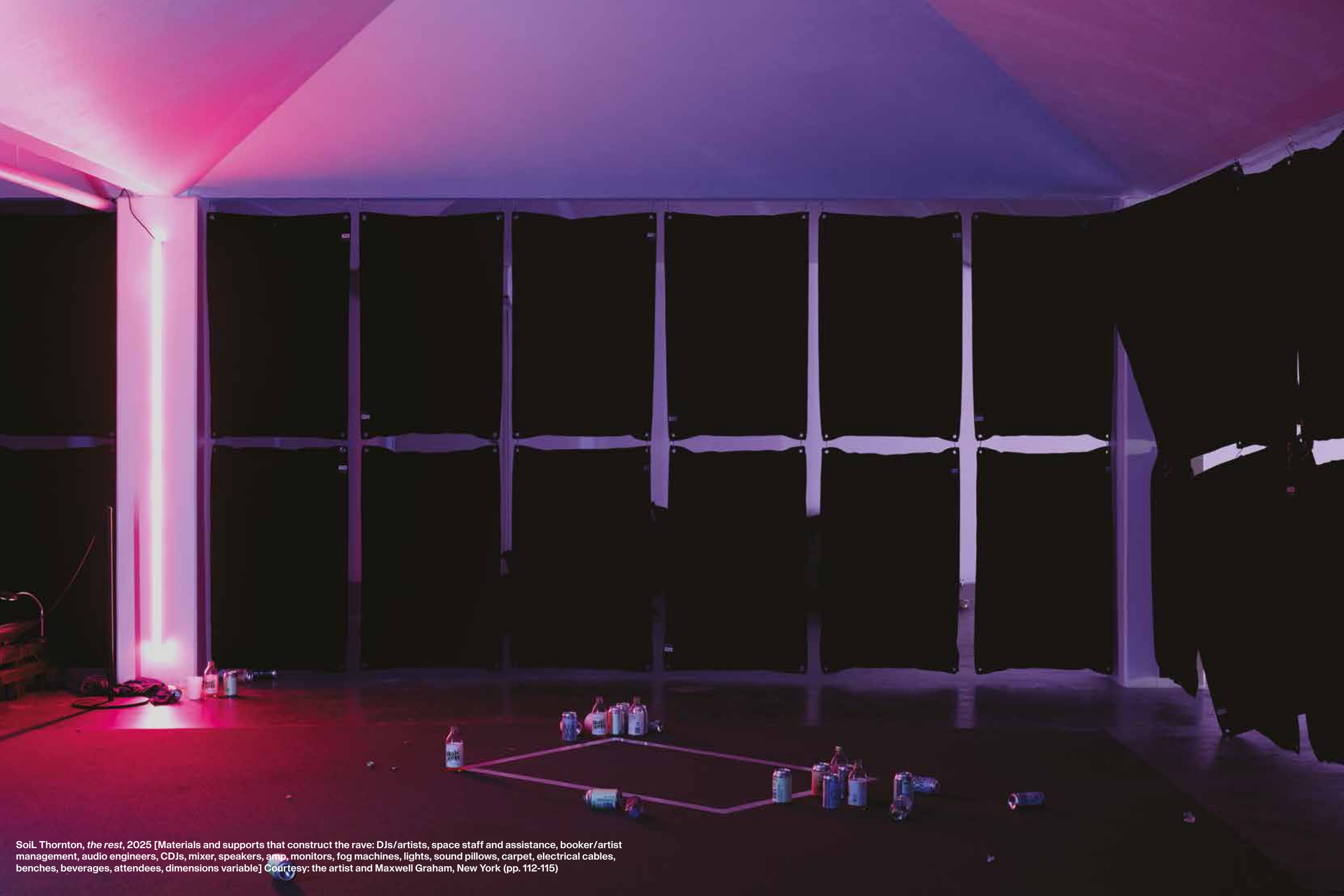
Ivan Cheng, *Burnout (Esaurimento) 1: Museum Highlights (intoccabile)*, 2026, *VULCANA – Sublimation*, Stromboli, 2026
Garments: Good & Bad Camera: Arvo Leo Photo: Marco Dapino, Antonello Trio Courtesy: the artist, Vulcana, and Edouard Montassut, Paris



Ivan Cheng, *Nowadays*, 2026, *Julidans*, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, 2026 (performance view) Garments: Good & Bad
Set design: Leander Camera: Arvo Leo Photo: Maarten Nauw Courtesy: the artist and Edouard Montassut, Paris



Ivan Cheng, *Mood Ring (temor teflon)*, 2026, *Inmaterial*, Casa del Lago UNAM, Mexico City, 2026 (performance view)
Garments: Good & Bad Photo: Mara Arteaga Courtesy: the artist and Edouard Montassut, Paris



SoiL Thornton, *the rest*, 2025 [Materials and supports that construct the rave: DJs/artists, space staff and assistance, booker/artist management, audio engineers, CDJs, mixer, speakers, amp, monitors, fog machines, lights, sound pillows, carpet, electrical cables, benches, beverages, attendees, dimensions variable] Courtesy: the artist and Maxwell Graham, New York (pp. 112-115)





SoiL Thornton, *Assisted Cleansing/tactile gap glue (934 of 1,000,000)*, 2020–ongoing [Vehicularly flattened aluminum cans inside storage vessels, dimensions variable] Courtesy: the artist and Maxwell Graham, New York





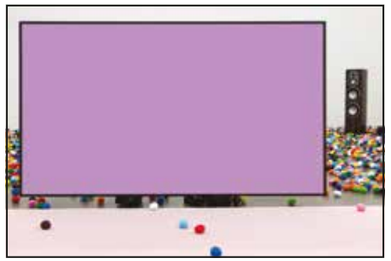
SoiL Thornton, *some rest of rests*, 2026 [My bed frame disassembled and separated from my daily mattress and its bedding materials, each grouping placed in their own environment (bed frame, mattress, bedding, eye cover, Protection Indoor Inflatable Capsule Car Bubble Cover), two parts, each: 130 × 74 4/5 × 59 in, 330.2 × 190 × 149.8 cm] Courtesy: the artist and Maxwell Graham, New York

IC: For a while, I've been interested in cookies, browser cookies and their edible analogues, and make cookie boxes with different rules. One of the early ones was for a show that you organized in 2021. In 2023, I put a cookie tower in a museum, and, cautious about food safety, it was filled with industrially produced cookies selected by the technicians. The technical director and his team had actually worked on the opening of the institution decades ago, and were returning to work on a grand reopening. The incoming director expressed her surprise that the selections of her team were all children's cookies. A brutally nostalgic selection.

At my workplace, it's summer hours, so we're offering ice cream (usually there's soup). So, I'm seeing how people behave differently around ice cream, how they get excited, or move into acts of self-pleasure or self-indulgence. To colleagues, to the ice cream guy, I keep telling an anecdote about a friend who trained as a pastry chef, and hates making pastry in restaurants because "it is extraneous." It's literally unnecessary, she says, and it's poison. Irrespective of this, her business approached (relative) virality during COVID. She also took pride in controlling the aesthetic sides of things; she "trained as an artist."

Watching your Instagram stories blurs my awareness/relationship with you and your work and makes me feel familiar. I think of you as working with language in a particular tonality, vernacular, and phrase. Screenshot dumps, text overlays, voice memo screen recordings, paragraphs of text in color similar to background color. Face masked or obscured. My ice cream typing is a sensory cue for how ice cream recurs in your stories. What are your favorites at the moment? Where do you get them?

ST: I am enjoying how you are starting this off so much Ivan. This is all reminding me of how stressful that show was to produce but also how fun and complicated our phone calls were, speaking years before we'd even met in person. The shared vulnerability in those moments reminds me of what we are setting out to do here with this conversation. So, ice cream—sooo much to say but I'll try to be concise. Ice cream is actually my favorite thing to consume of all the things in the world. I am constantly interested in trying new flavors and have



SoiL Thornton, *A years worth of calm soothing and restful at 15 seconds a day (According to color psychology, blue is the most calming color for the mind; pink is the most physically soothing and will leave you feeling swaddled. Green, the color of nature, is the least demanding of all the colors and is very restful on the eye)*, 2025 [Color video, rug, borrowed pillows and resting supports from various friends, piers and *supporters, dimensions variable, edition of 3] Courtesy: the artist and Maxwell Graham, New York



Ivan Cheng, *Parataxis – sidling under eaves, spread the copycat not the origin, preen for chokehold; the bloodsucker's coming, so-so global morass, three-pack of microwaveable lava cakes, the obscene and overt as markers of repression, in-store celebrity hands you a scrunchie, actually horrific ways of describing the body, little mice and blossoming (bouillon cubes in the supermarket aisle, the deluded exuding of sexual energy for the purpose of making out with...)*, 2021 Cookie Rail designed by Thorben Gröbel, Confidences / Baseline with cover image Özgür Kar, cover photo Nikola Lamburov, design Sabo Day, OoO, Vienna Photo: Julius Pristauz Courtesy: the artist and Edouard Montassut, Paris

tried the very high and the very low, but I do less now that I'm trying to be even smarter with what my sugary vice intake is like in regards to health. My favorite brand/flavor that's more readily available at the moment is one that I'm actually about to scoop into this very moment. It's the mint chip flavor made by the company McConnells "since 1949" (wonders who owned the company back then and if they'd even let me taste their ice cream during that time...). The mint chip is addictive and I worry about how good it tastes to me and why that is. I usually am not even a mint chip person but this has made me more open to them. Another really insane creamery and flavor is the Kulfi-Pistachio Cardamom by the French creamery named Adirondack. They also make a flavor named Syrian Date & Walnut which is unbelievably good, maybe on the same level as the Kulfi-Pistachio Cardamom. Also, with the Syrian Date & Walnut, a portion of profits from each pint sold is said to go to support organizations providing aid to refugees. I purchase these all around my neighborhood at different places depending on who has them. One of the things that I think about which keeps me so excited to live in New York, amongst the many, is that I can walk and get very nice ice cream at any time of day or night, easily. I think the accessibility to various types of food, outside of the home, 24 hours a day, is indicative of places I enjoy to spend time in the most, even if I'm not always participating in said availabilities.

Food consumption is fuel for thought for me and thought produces my work, and more importantly the fun outside of work. That being said, food can also be a burden. What's your relation to food? Do you usually enjoy it or is it just fuel? Do you cook a lot? Do you like eating alone? I love to eat alone (but with others too) and particularly in nice restaurants when possible. What 'nice' constitutes exactly would warrant many more words, so I won't go there...

Are there activities outside of "traditional" studio working that fuel your practice and how do you arrive at producing work? I think we both work without a studio but I can't remember if you are still moving that way?

IC: My response mechanism seized and froze for a few weeks while I was in Stromboli, Aspen, sorry. Too many things to pick up, this format is more like letter writing than an email, or, God forbid, voice messages. Re: nice, tonight we had dinner together at

Odeon, which probably sits in that spectrum. You told me that everything on the menu was good. Thank you for letting me take your order—a frisée salad with medium salmon on the side. Thank you for not asking me how it was. I presume that you were confident in its quality. I knew that I'd find it over seasoned, and that the blue cheese and lardon were almost too salty. Where else could we hang out? Lately, due to my responsibilities at my job, I proactively dine out and scope culinarily in Amsterdam. I try to do so with friends, because I probably worry that I won't order adequately while solo, or wish to have a mouthful of other things as well.

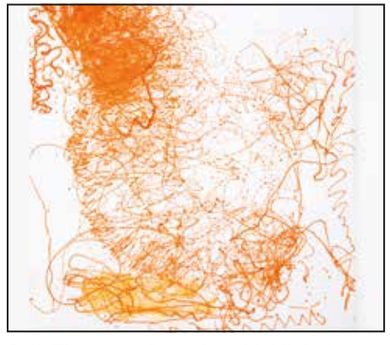
I was thinking about early Puppies Puppies works today; I know Jade is a friend of yours. I think it was the show at Vilma Gold, where she had written this press text about getting the diagnosis that she had beat an illness, and suddenly having the sense of a future, implying that her life now offers access beyond the limitations of food deserts. Also, the Puppies declaration of green being blue and yellow come together, maybe it was linked to Félix González-Torres as well. There was a show with all these green household things that I thought was so impressive. I don't know her, but I admire her, or depend on slivers of biography to access the work, which has been important to me to see, and think about. Do you have any thoughts on parasociality and referential apparition?

Prelude to mint chip; I was walking under blazing sun in Gowanus and past a major construction site, with these walls painted the mandated hunter green. You own this color for me. I love these fragments of green that you retrieve from the temporary girders that hide the work being done on the city, the so-called swag of street cred that you pull, almost sanctimonious, and chill into the gallery space. It's cool—genius-sleight-style—that there are so many interprets of hunter green, and here you make the laborer the painter. I'm shy to ask why and when you started implementing rules for painting. Were you more technical at one point? Who drove you where and to whom? You told me about your studies; I want to learn about the good teachers and the relatively shrug ones. I want to ask more about whether you believe furiously in the dragging of the street inside, or to blow up, amplify, and mount the markers of petty ownership (pun, in the dog tag name works; the credit card chips). Do these mechanisms work as triggers on those who can afford to collect them, or only on the working class to whom the elevation of this quotidian into high art seems like a miracle? Back to Puppies, to see these characters from *Minions*, *Harry Potter*, *Frozen*, transfigured into pertinent symbols was just like reading New Narrative writers; finally confident that someone else had carved out a style where you could digest the bits and pleasures that you already had, but it could also be hypercharged by its re-display.

Now mint chip (i.e. hunter chip, pine chip). Stop thinking about it. It is *good* that you like mint chip. Our Odeon mint chip was great, very earthy and distinct, like sucking the bushel in a mint-tea pot. Drenched in fudge, nuts, and chocolate, the Harry's sundae, without really sparing a thought for who Harry is. On a hot day in Amsterdam a few weeks ago, I had a mint chip scoop for myself, and it was so intense that I bowed down and accepted it, narrativized it as pleasurable, even though it probably was a trick of green food dye and peppermint extract with bits of compound chocolate spread through unevenly. I probably dream more of the Bulli Blue Ribbon version, where the choc chip is much finer, almost like having a stracciatella scoop. But that consistency is *uh oh*, another nostalgic choice, not something more refined that I've learned since. I used to eat 2L at a time, take a tub from the family fridge and carve away at it with a teaspoon. I think I have very poor impulse control, and at times can even approach patterns of binge eating. This leads to generally unhealthy patterns. I also valorize hard work and, as a consequence of this, often find myself pushing limits of how many things I can do at the same time. Thus, I don't always make time to be considerate about my intake; perhaps I even find some glee in how unhealthy I can be. But as I have more meetings in the day where I need to have something resembling sane and controlled exchanges with colleagues, then I realize that eating a piece of toast or some fruit in the morning makes sense. Gone are the days when house guests of mine just get offered coffee and nothing else. Recently I had high protein Greek yoghurt to offer. Wow…

What shared vulnerabilities were between us? Hehe. What if we were totally invulnerable, as it sometimes seems we are through our work. Disagree? I don't think that answering questions directly should really be our vibe. What is the status of exchange through non-sequiturs?

And then, with your question about a studio, tricky for me to answer, this will not be so concise. Maybe it's that I'm not striving to have a traditional studio practice, and also trying not to work directly in the methodology of others who have come before. Obviously, I'm not reinventing the wheel with format, but it's not an urgency of my practice; I care more about the challenge of how audiences 'read.' If I wanted to aggressively phrase what I do as writing-based, then I'd say, flip, that my studio is in Google Docs, flipping between inputting ideas and references into each of them. Then I print and rewrite vast tracts by hand, then re-input, so I'm writing, and then deciphering my writing. For nine months last year I had a huge studio, associated with a prize that brought me to live next to the cottage where Mondrian wrote his neo-plasticist manifesto, but I was mostly trying to figure out what contemporary forms of abstraction are and what function they have—an ungenerous thesis that abstraction is often a form of simplification. There I



SoiL Thornton, *A cautious highlight (eyes closed arm yoga for duration of Mohammed Wardi's track, Al Mursal ~The Messenger~on top of a mistake before session started)*, 2022 [Gesso and caution spray paint on wood panel, 64 × 58 in, 162.6 × 147.3 cm] Courtesy: the artist and Morán Morán, Los Angeles



SoiL Thornton, *realization suppression / Rihanna_work.mp3*, 2026 [Color video, sound, 2 min 22 sec, dimensions variable] Courtesy: the artist and Maxwell Graham, New York

rehearsed, wrote music, made paintings for a show. If I have the time and space version of a studio, I'm not yet inventive with it.

Tell me about your studio life. And tell me about those around you that might have a more 'traditional' studio life. Do you have assistants, or wish for assistants? You seemed disturbed by how much I relish a position of pushing and having ongoing deadlines. I get a feeling that you imagine and invent projects related to exhibitions for yourself and work to complete those? I think I do the same but since I'm often using language, then things slip out in repetition between proximate shows, or get to be orated better despite not having an intentional place in the work.

ST: You are a complexly funny one and I appreciate your candidness.

I think sharing food and places to eat is a very vulnerable one which is why some people are afraid to eat with and in front of others. Odeon is solid, as I said, but if you remember I said specifically do not order the steak; I think it's overrated and there's much better steaks around.

I'm very into the clock on the wall, it haunts me even when I'm not there. My relationship to eating outside of my home, or what brings me to places is mostly related to two things. How is the room (sound, shape, lighting, design, comfort) like and then what food is made there and is it enough things that I'm not going to make for myself at home. I've not been in the financial state to eat out much at all over the last year so in that way I feel I can't even answer your question about where else we could have gone. There's lots of answers but maybe they aren't interesting for the moment either way. I like perverted rooms though with good light and enough privacy, that way the conversations can go however they need and I don't have to look around too much. We covered a lot of personal vulnerable ground that night eating and talking which is exactly what I would have wished for, so that's fun.

Jaaade! Jade and I have been friends for years now and shared so many sentiments and curiosities both in life and in art. Her world has shifted in many ways since the world you are referring to but I love and respect that she's driven the practice where it needs to go versus staying in one zone, although there's lots of overlaps between her new work and the work that was made when she was anonymous and solely Puppies Puppies. I've been thinking over the past few years about artists who circle around similar subjects yet have extremely different approaches to the subject but also, I'm more fascinated when there's some close mirrored dialogue or material exploration and signifiers used, particularly when said artists didn't discuss such interests. A big memory of mine that I revisit is that Jade was very helpful in answering lots of questions and concerns that I had when I was realizing I was non binary trans. I was even frustrated at times with conversations around gender and coming out as x y or z but I think that the more I looked into and listened to myself, lots of things made more and more sense as to why my life and navigation felt so uphill at times regarding my gender. Life imitates life is that one song by quannnic. Know them? As for Jade I think her work slowly moved more explicitly into using and surrounding her transness as an expression to question and highlight the systemic burden on trans people and providing aid or forum to other trans people. I move in and out of using myself to speak about the gender non-conforming space versus whoever else, and a critique of GNC constantly perpetuated by systemic trickle down into social "normality" (power man says: stay normal, be good, don't think, work hard for us not you, oil our machine) but I also prefer a more sideways approach to analyzing these institutions (let's say even what is marriage really for example) at times. What do you mean by parasociality and referential apparition?

Now I can't help but think about the performance of gender and wondering what your thoughts are on that in relation to performance first in life, personally, selfishly? As we all deal in this performance to some degree at some point in time, versus the performance practice, as you as artist?

Did we speak on psychoanalysis? What do you feel about it?

The hunter green—wow, to own something is very rare in art so I appreciate that sentiment coming from you, although I can't really own anything and especially this city oppression mandate. I like that you say that I make the laborer the painter. That's partly what I think as well, and especially saying as I have a hard time making paintings these days and don't get that turned on by the action, so it's more exciting to think about how I can observe paint and its literal meaning or use value, in this case, but one that hides the strange purpose of the cities/peoples reality.

As for painting I was very technical at one time and even now I'm secretly technical even if the paintings seem less so. I guess it depends on what technical means to you. I'm anti rendering for the most part but do it sometimes using a specific referent to work as a foot note. But I kind of hate talking about painting. I like talking about ideas, LOL.



SoiL Thornton, *Splinter from bouquet of each year of me as you under them (painting)*, 2023 [Epoxy and mirror tiles on acquired pre-painted hunter green (as mandated by The City of New York's Local Law No. 47 of 2013) wood scaffold/fence piece originally from 174 Mott Street, Manhattan, 6 3/4 × 3 1/2 × 5 in, 17.1 × 8.9 × 12.7 cm] Courtesy: the artist and Morán Morán, Los Angeles

Teachers are amazing but I'm not interested in this sort of teacher/student marriage that Europe seems to really ride on. "Oh yeah their work isn't interesting but they studied under Timbuktu so they must be of value," and all that silliness. I like to look at the work in front of me and decide on what it's doing. Context is always important but I don't think a professor should have that much influence on what work someone makes in this sort of repetitive trickle down slightly different version of way. Ideeaasss, ethereal and in thought. Material and form later. But that's a larger conversation about what art school does and does not do, is it relevant today, and why…

Punning can be fun, you use them in your writing and performance dialogues and I use them in my titles and in the physical works too. Language is extremely prevalent and divisive for both of us in that way. I can't answer that question regarding what certain materiality does and doesn't do for the working class versus the rich. I do think though that most materials and signifiers I use relate to all classes and can be jerking and tickling to anyone who wants to look at them. Every class uses a credit card and the chip is universally binding, exploitative, fun and damaging all in one. This somehow reminds me of people who cover their babies' faces up on Instagram which I don't get the point of because they already got your babies face in a file anyways? Maybe it's to combat pervy people?

As for vulnerable versus closed, I feel I'm very vulnerable and generous with my work in both that my titles and the info in the work helps one get somewhere else but attempts not to over hand-hold or assume the viewer as less intelligent than they are. (There has to be more space to self-affirm the viewer without spoon-feeding, and sincerity helps this.)

You also seem to be interested in confusion or displacing thoughts and then bringing them back into the viewers head. I haven't seen your performances in person but I imagine there's lots of peripheral observation happening (even the human camera operator moving in and out of sight lines, therefore oscillating between being the main character or the technical assistant antagonist at other times) on top of the direct eye contact with you and your actions but the peripheral maybe the words being stated and the actions being made at the same time or in opposition to each other but seconds later those roles are reversed. I do feel that in some world I'm seeking this kind of movement with sign and signifier or subject object, literal or metaphorical…

Non-sequiturs are sooo special highly desired islands as long as they aren't attempting to aid avoidance, I think. I love transparency and direct communication and I'm not really a romantic in this nonverbal kind of way unless I know and trust someone very well and even then I find words so appealing, when I do.

I think that non-sequiturs is maybe the term that is most relevant to how I imagine your performance works to construct and deconstruct themselves actually.

Okaaay I seeeee. You gave some deep insight into aspects of how you work and I can follow that for sure. Fascinating overlays and speed bumps you make for yourself. I make those too in varying ways. I guess another word would be systems to cause disidentification, also maybe? I very much relate to you saying you are trying not to work directly in the methodology of others who have come before you. I think there's lots of small ways to do this which people overlook. I also don't think in regard to the need for a continuously fresh approach to all things that I do within my practice, but I feel that there's lots that hasn't been done just simply because every year is different from the next and comes with new tools and ways of thinking and accessing material, both in a physical sense and ethereally. Plus, I made the thing so it's new no matter what.

I won't speak about others much, I try not to do that because I'm me and I should be accountable for that. Other people's studios and ways of working is not for me to worry about too much or partially on this context between you and I. I'd otherwise have to write so much and would then feel like a theorist or anthropologist, critic? Although these subjects often inform my work deeply.

That's an enjoyable way how you are writing there from "you seemed disturbed ———place in the work."

For the last four years or so I've tried to slow down my life and therefore slow down my practice. I do this in order not to feel enslaved by the art world, its disorder and hyper-productive mechanic nature at the expense of the artist. My studio practice I guess is living, reading, watching, but not that of working day in and out in an allocated room per se. I have my apartment, and two storage units. I work everywhere but mainly sitting and thinking in my living room or the park. I want more and more to live my life and feel healthy, I want that more than most things and I am no longer interested in sacrificing my health for the sake of others who don't care for me, if they did they'd want my health to be intact so… you mentioned the unhealthy as appealing to you so I guess we super differ there. I previously (on and off continuously) participated in or was forced to be unhealthy for varying reasons, mainly due to scarcity of financial stability, and I'm deeply anti. I'm also the person who would like to know what being 85 is like so…

Speaking of that, I don't drink or do drugs and haven't ever participated basically outside of someone saying try this crazy picante spiced drink. Then I will sip and give notes, but I can't remember the last time I've even done that. This all comes from a straight edge background in high-school to years and years later a more apathetic experimental one. I can't remember if I told you but I've thought about it more and more, this plan that when I get like 65 I'll start doing drugs of sorts, maybe shrooms or ecstasy, I don't know. Flip the table around. But for now, I like doing food dancing and sex. What are your thoughts on substances and their many layers? Some people can't do caffeine…

(I'm writing from Paris on my cellphone which is sooo different, but we are on the same time zone again but in different locations from one another again.)

IC: Hey cellphone, I'm laptopping, and fundamentally grateful for your thinking and words. I know it's not easy. Tonight, I'm going to see *The Odyssey*. Last night I saw *Spider-Man*. I love being inside these huge images and losing myself in the desire and bone shaking bass of the image. I paid a surcharge for tonight's 70mm print. Given these two movies, it's a Tom Holland (and Jon Bernthal and Zendaya) pair of days I guess. Let's focus as I expect the films will, on Tom Holland, this British nerd whose world prominence remains entangled with Spider-Man and bleeds into his virtuous earnestness. Guessing, hoping, that you do not gaf about him? Conversely, I feel like I 'know' him, from his interviews, and know the fallacy of that. That is what I mean, partially, by parasocial. Figure striated through media, not unlike how I do, like maybe you do too. Tom's so ready to slip with movie spoilers he can't be trusted with scripts, and Tom will insist on things, belligerent. A good balance of being proud of his Britishness, loving his brothers, just got married to Z, and, well, is he sexy? I don't mind watching him, maybe I love watching him, somehow sweet, or maybe I like that he's short, or that his actor persona is over enthusiastic and too chatty, cartoonish, leading to the happy peril of: on what level can I read his attractiveness; haha should I imagine dating him or fantasizing about him (prob no), or is this a symptom roll of whatever dominant media tells me = good. Then other actors. Boring Elordi, Cringe Chalamet, QuirkcoR Pattinson, great actors, etc. 'Method' and low-key authenticity vs camp choices they all make. What means embodiment beside the machine of celebrity? What am I trying to say to you about my relation to a constructed witness and sex and masculinity? Of course, I enjoy movies in general, me unwilling to relinquish the easy pleasures of dominant western media, moments of being a young girl, my steadfast consumption, and don't want to divorce myself from. When I was a teen, I used to say that the *Lizzie McGuire* Movie was my example of a perfect film, beside Fellini *Satyricon*, Godard *Pierrot le fou*, and a shifting Teshigahara. That traditional high-low taste mix. I don't hate this answer now; I could still say this answer to a stranger and deal with the repercussions. But I crave legacy and continuity in my 'self,' just like having high-school friends alongside your art-world friends. Here am I, playing normal. This is my Margiela shirt type banality. This is chill, but also limits me from a higher, emancipated mind, but I also suspect this is my way of 'staying with the trouble,' and not trying to transcend a class station towards as shredded, shed self. Adult spider. How does pretentiousness and an over-aware sense of taste clash with a construction of sexuality and desire, when so much of what I consume is dependent on valorizing an image that does not resemble my own? I think I told you that lately, my fears of lacking capacity to desire for myself, and a growing passivity to be desired and told where to be and how. Is this a condition that the malleability of my work has produced? Or a symptom of the type of people who express their attraction to me, whether as my work, or as a socialized body, constellated to it. Not really so preoccupied with acting as a craft, but I find it useful as a mechanism that many people have a relationship to, to pretending behavior, or being someone else. I just got back from being in the Swiss mountains with my band, 33, all boys, who are, to my eyes, and I think to those of others, sitting comfy in the category of sexy and hot, but I'm never sure where I sit in those categories. Sometimes I wonder if I'm holding them back from being even more successful by not being attractive enough. There was a running joke about being a Berlin 10 and a New York 6, and I thought to myself, oh I'm probably a Berlin 6, so I'd be like, a 2 in New York, but I could work on that, and maybe this is answering your question about the depth to which I will claim to consider psychoanalysis and one's ambition to work on the self through a narration towards separation, resolution, and realization. I never wanted that, to understand flimsy persona as a contract. When I see your credit card works, I feel like they're designed to make me look at myself and others in a way I never really do, which is obviously important—the trick of imagining one as an accumulation of debt anonymized to a classy frame and matte board. The variety show of it all—naming value games. The trick of imagining oneself mounted on the wall like a diploma or a calculation—partial and thus whole enough. I don't mind expressing a fundamentally low sense of self-esteem combined with relative confidence in my technical ability to use a space for a performance based on my bodies or others; I get disgusted with myself, sure, but is that a reason to work on myself in a manner of resolution? I don't see my harm to others yet, which is why I would. Well-constructed texts may be informed by psychoanalytic basis. I met someone who was doing TM therapy and was repelled by how easily he articulated his goals but also impressed by how he had reconfigured his life into things he wanted and clearing the obstacles that were obstructing him. Sometimes I wonder if I'm a situation of ambition without clear goal. I just saw a Juliette Lewis style rock chick walk up to a window I am sitting near, she was checking herself out as she strutted across the road. In positive boons, seeing myself tagged in stories, I currently like how my hair is moving in the wind. *Spider-Man* last night was with my camera operator, Arvo, who has been called



Ivan Cheng, *Casemates*, 2026, Mudam Luxembourg – Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean (installation view) Photo: Ivan Cheng Courtesy: the artist and Edouard Montassut, Paris

"the Brad Pitt of the Amsterdam art world." He's Canadian and pretty handsome, a bit like an elf maybe, and we were both entranced by Tom Holland's star power, the way his big face held the image alongside all these special effects and sounds. He's such a good friend, I just trust him, but we also talk about what role he plays in framing me, and he also trusts me to put him in a place of objectification, that he is a first stand in for where the audience, ideal audience, should be. Someone who loves me enough to stay with me (?!). He told me that he's also happy to play with this, wearing skimpy running clothes that contour his tight, fit, but aging body. It can be a lot to have your own image directly intertwined with 'your work,' and to constantly work to interpret yourself as other while naturalizing materials through yourself as channel. But it's also mostly fun. It's not the point, but it has felt important to surrender to the cameras and edits of others, eschew vanity—I think I told you that even with Good & Bad, the designers I work with, I try not to give input on what I want to wear for shows and let them make the choices, but now also realizing that ultimately, I trust that they want me to look good in their stuff. I guess it's purposefully avoiding accountability of my own identification, and hoping it leads to the viewer feeling, sensing and enjoying the gap of interpretation? In Aspen, I think I pressured myself a lot to do something provisional, coherent, and then ended up writing some teenage romance that I was entangled with, and people really seemed moved by 'knowing me.' I didn't like this much, but at least I felt I remained in their hearts and minds, which I was pleased with. Working in the US I felt very urgently that I had to recalibrate a lot of the performance tricks and tools I had to make sure I wasn't inherently 'theatre-kid,' whereas that's probably the most alienating thing you can lean into for a European audience. Maybe one day I will have the strength, resources, and temporality to propose another world in my work, rather than a refracted, reflected one.

Referential apparition—in this context it's the use of references/images to invoke association. But doing it when you don't really have any ownership over it, like the Puppies Puppies citation. Names to make a quick shape out of something; shape, color, responsibility.

I took acid when I was a teenager, with people I really liked, and had great trips. I cut socially smoking weed after a really stressful morning playing piano accompaniment for a young teen and trying to sight read Schumann in 3 parts while high off a bong from the night before. I felt my body get hot and excused myself, drove home, feel the failure now still. I'd never tell my parents this. Wow I really like to please when employed. Many people around me are dependent on substances. I find the place I live, Amsterdam, relatively innocuous when it comes to this; not many people in my sphere with overdose tendency, so it never confronts me hardcore. I also smoke, I also drink, I am pretty socially malleable; I want to be having generally parts of fun that others have, and make it my own? This is a privilege of where and how I am living. Don't like any type of addiction, try to avoid it.

I don't want to be a guy who only talks about his job, but I also go to a magazine stand and buy magazines for my workplace, so I'm always looking at covers and alternate covers for magazines, then arranging them in a display of faces and striking poses. New over old. I'm realizing maybe my job workplace is my actual studio, where, as I started, I wondered if it was a long form artwork where I could produce answers on what a museum or institution now could be, and more importantly what constitutes a temporary and long-term audience. Then I got saturated in solutions for operations, and generating energy to keep asking what hospitality should mean, and pressuring myself to do things with minimal ego, think constantly about service, audience, obligation, and occasions to flout this. So, my work got strained, separated from this. Even my 'loose' tone now is a performed, imaginary binary split from the clarity and poise demanded by the job (colleagues, call me out). I've stopped making work about operations as I used to, cringe at the use of 'infrastructure' related to practice (as though the word holds meaning specific enough). I'm repeatedly interested in partial analysis and citation of 'transgression'—whistleblowers, notional lawbreakers, ethical violators. Through this, perhaps a transformation of the primordial idea of sacrifice, as I pull audience in and out of alienations. Maybe this relates a bit with what you do with *Choosing Suitor Intervention*, but there you're thinking through image, identity, streetstyle, friendship, naming, and maybe that's through editorial scalpel? Maybe that's all about alienation? To drag a word from its past use, is CSI part of a 'healthy' practice, I wonder, to be looking at 'others' as subjects.

Listening to quannnic now. Will have to revisit. It slips past my ear actually… doesn't stick yet. Maybe I sneak in another question if you think about the act of releasing music, and circulation? Like nostalgic forms meshing with digital streaming services, convenience vs obstacle, and thresholds of work to get the dopamine?

I had a steak today, flatiron with bearnaise, in your honor. In Odeon's absence. *The Odyssey* was kind of garbage. Overtly symbolic use of the 'gods,' too cautious to deal with the essential belief systems that drive action. Uncomplicated invitation through 'image immersion' into the video. Also had mango ice cream, and some white tahini ice cream.

ST: It's interesting to maybe highlight the differences I've noticed in how we approach this conversation here. Maybe this conversation is seen as material that could highlight differences in our practices? I'm very much interested in being direct in my speaking and as concise as possible surrounding my practice and working. I find that maybe you are interested in more of a stroll to arrive at certain things here while bringing in outside anecdotes. This may bring up questions for the reader in regards to what is valuable to the work, for either of us.

Do you feel your relationship to the performative or theatric, blurring of structure versus the meta layering informs even how you approach this conversation with me?

Are you still not taking photos on your phone much?

The Odyssey was entertaining, I saw it while in Paris at the Rex. Tom Holland is so forgettable to me in all the ways although I know very little about him and never heard him speak outside of the movie. You and I are very different in this way. I mostly don't enjoy new blockbuster movies anymore nor do I see many of them. I'm gonna watch *Bird Box* tonight though, and was told it's very scary psychologically.

Speaking of desire and acting, I remember this one friend or a few of them said never be in a relationship with an actor, you never know who they really are! I've always thought about this statement I wonder what you'd say to this? I also am now thinking about the performance of gender and where the edges of that are? Being non-binary myself, I'm often arguing against societally learned gender guides and then this other thing which still uses those guides to push against so I'm left with_____. The outside can't go outside. Hopefully there's room for you to answer some of my above new questions. I had some of the best ice cream of my life in Paris the other day, titled INDIAN WEDDING: Milk, Pistachio, Cardamom, Rose.

IC: That ice cream sounds tasty. Its name produces a bit of cringe. Maybe the combination exceeds the list of ingredients. Hope *Bird Box* doesn't haunt you. Entertaining?

Wondering if your friends, presumably now in relationships with non-actors, find behavior easier to parse or more authentic. Predictable? My work involves directing others. I feel vindicated regularly when my intuitions prove true. I'm good at seeing who someone is, I tell myself with some degree of delusion. Not all actors are built the same, just like not all ____ are the same. Perhaps it's ultimately about caution with anything that which too readily takes on a name?

Writing 'conversational tone' is a regular mode for me, especially inputting as we are into Google Docs. I do it constantly in the fast writing I do for shows. It's very familiar to drag in inanities from the day to suggest temporal relevance. Oops. It feels easy to allude to bigger ideas through it, suggest subtext, leave space to wonder. Yeah, it's performative, but am I not doing it as an alternative to something else? Erasing divisions between self and work is increasingly interesting, maybe labels get more useless. Maybe it's too private to ask if identifying as non-binary is 'useful' for you, and whether the aegis/tyranny of labels is part of the primary codex with which you'd like someone to interpret your work.

Still not many photos on my phone, no, mostly when I go to see exhibitions I'll do it, a form of notetaking. I took a lot at Mumok in Vienna last week. I'm listening to a Pink Industry *What I Wouldn't Give*. If we had more space, I'd try to cap off by my recent thoughts on watching musicians perform in video lives, music videos, in movies, in auteur films, and how the trace of the sung remains an impression. Thinking more and more about the comfort of soundtracks, ornamental listens, anachronistic listening, genre-smashing.

If we had done this in another typing channel, on another timeline, I'/we'd surely have travelled differently. Noting that we texted interstitially about how to evade edits. This typing happened without images, but this text will probably get illustrated with images. Do you also feel relief and disappointment at relinquishing our agency? Today new matcha ice cream, flat but nice dirt flavor, fior di latte, lychee sorbet. Disturbed combo.

ST: "Perhaps it's ultimately about caution with anything that which too readily takes on a name?"

Very good, I really like that.

Also that Pink Industry song is one of my faves of theirs, it makes me tear up sometimes when I play on repeat for long durations.

We need many more pages, maybe they'd let us use no images, I think not. I feel we both are very interested in varying degrees of relinquishing our agency to an explicit degree (not like art dealers springing deadlines last minute that we must submit to no matter what our health or life circumstance is and the time needed for said work to be produced etc.)? Relinquishing agency may possibly be one the truest materials at times?

I wish I could say more as you brought up some veeery interesting last ideas, but I think our space is up.

Thanks to everyone who made it this far reading us, and thank you Ivan for inviting me to play/not play, and thanks CURA. for housing our many letters, touching and not.