

Lexie Owen
let's go to the mall...
(working title)

Proposal for *Welcome to the Jungle*
Nitja senter for samtidskunst

November 27, 2020

Bio

Lexie Owen (b. 1982, Canada) is an interdisciplinary artist whose practice explores support structures and networks of care. She uses artistic, curatorial and textual methods to investigate the material conditions of collectivity and uncover the potentialities of occupying institutional forms, with the aim of developing alternative modes of togetherness. Her projects often create space for intimacies in unexpected ways, ultimately allowing for a greater understanding of the conditions for and products of collectively. Past projects have explored fermentation processes as a map for artistic practice, maintenance labour as a catalyst for community engagement, neighbourhood-developed economic infrastructures and embodied archives of knowledge. Owen holds a BFA from Emily Carr University (2014) and is currently studying towards a MFA in Art and Public Space at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts.

"I am fascinated with the ingenious ways people occupy the forms and structures that surround them, and am convinced that these occupations show potential for otherways of being in a world that is not always made with our best interests at heart. This fascination is directly influenced by my lived experience as a queer person, as someone who must live with and in structures that do not necessarily "fit" me. I see these occupations as subtle forms of resistance, the expression of human needs and desires on the physical and social architectures that surround us. Often in my work I find expressions of unexpected collectivity and care within the everyday structures we interact with. I see these expressions as a sign of human agency, and look for the subtle ways we can take advantage of unexpected plasticity to mold the world around us into something else"

Project Overview

I have a love/hate relationship with the shopping mall. The town I grew up in had the most space dedicated to retail shopping in North America. It was a town of malls. The shopping mall was the first space I was allowed to exert my independence, I was always allowed to roam more freely in the mall than any other “public” space. I rarely bought anything. I walked in circles, an endless loop, revelling in relative autonomy. I used the form of the mall, and the freedom it provided, eliding its intended function of consumption.

What happens when we occupy a form differently than intended?

For *Welcome to the Jungle* I am proposing a 4-month self-directed research residency at two local shopping centres, Lillestrøm Torv and Strømmen Storsenter. Over the course of the residency I will investigate how the physical and social architectures of the shopping mall choreograph movement through the respective spaces, ultimately creating a series of choreographies to be performed at the mall. This project approaches the shopping mall as an institutional form, asking multiple questions about this everyday structure, including: What are the consequences of occupying a form differently than intended? What possibilities does this difference create? How do human needs and desires express themselves in shared spaces? What is a public space in times of rampant privatization?

Project Components

Research/Production Residency

From December 2020 – March 2021 I will perform embedded research at Lillestrøm Torv and Strømmen Storsenter. Through a series of research intensives, I will spend time documenting and observing the sites, paying particular attention to the movement of visitors through the malls, with the aim of discovering idiosyncratic usages of these spaces – those distinctive, individual ways in which the mall is used. I am interested especially in uncovering the ways in which the mall is used for purposes other than consumption – how is this space occupied in perhaps unintended ways? Tracing movement and usage through the mall I will document how the physicality and sociality of these sites affect movement, while taking care to protect the anonymity of those I observe.

Publication/Performance Scores

The results of this research will be materialized into a series of scores (instructions) for choreographies to be performed on site at the respective malls. Performance scores can take a variety of forms, including text instructions, drawings and other forms of notation. I anticipate the scores developed for this project will be varied depending on content, with considerable thought put into understandability and readability for a broad public. Published as a multiple in the form of a newspaper and disseminated at Nitja, attendees of the exhibition will be encouraged to take a copy and use the scores to mount their own performances in their local shopping centres. The publication will include a clear, approachable text describing the project and how the scores could be used, as well as excerpts of a text I am writing outlining my own personal relationship with the shopping mall.

Performative Tours

Over the course of *Welcome to the Jungle* I will offer two participatory performances, one at each mall, taking the form of a 'tour.' For the duration of these performances I will act as tour guide, leading participants in an informative walk through the respective malls, highlighting the outcomes of my research into each space, and incorporating some of the choreographies scored during the research residency. This tour will create a link between the exhibition at Nitja, and the mall sites – in my mind extending the exhibition from the gallery out into 'the jungle.' The organized tours will also offer members of the Nitja audience who are interested, but perhaps hesitant to take the initiative to follow the performance scores on their own, an opportunity actively engage in *let's go to the mall...* within a more directed framework.

Video Index

Additionally, the project will be indexed at Nitja through a video work installed in the exhibition space. Ideally played on a series of CRT monitors, the looping video will depict me performing a selection of the choreographies developed for the mall sites. While I am intrigued at the possibilities of considering the mall and its shoppers as the primary site and audience for this work, this index connects the more ephemeral aspects of this project directly to the exhibition, and firmly roots the work as part of *Welcome to the Jungle*.

Project Timeline

	Fall '20	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May
initial research							
onsite research							
performance tests							
materialization of scores							
document layout							
submission for printing					end of		
filming of performances							
video editing							

Visual Considerations



Top: example of printed matter, in form of a broadsheet newspaper

Left: costume for documentation of performances and research

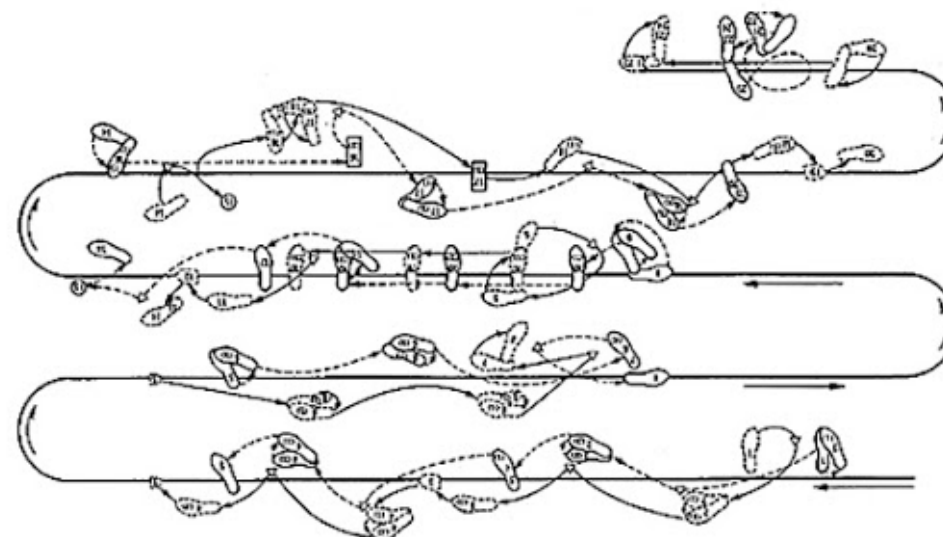
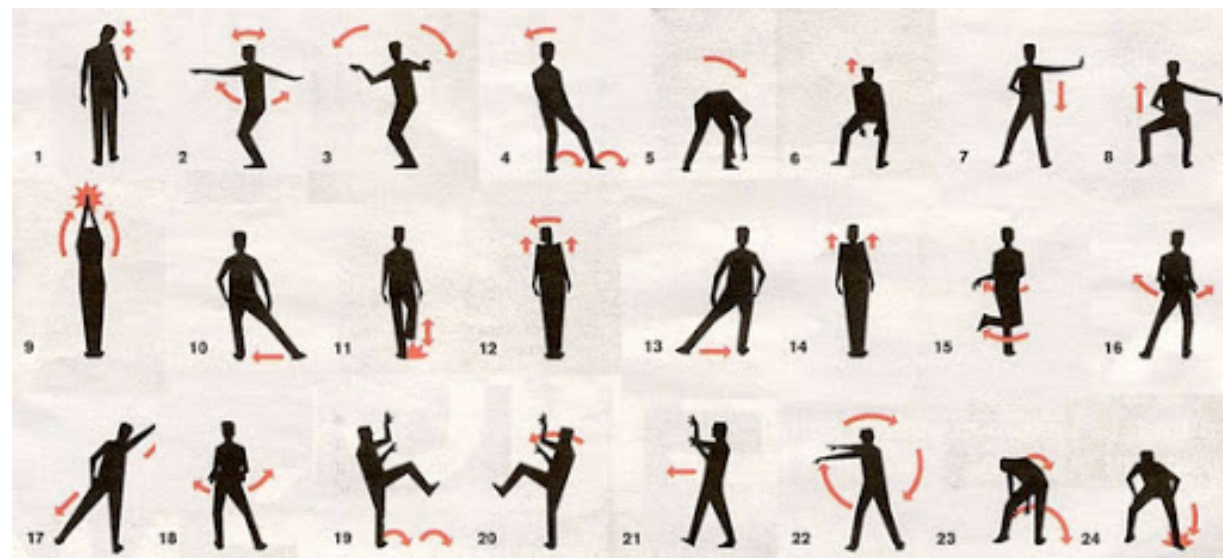
Right: CRT monitor for video installation

Examples: Performance Scores

PIECE FOR A SMALL PUDDLE

This piece is performed by several performers.
Each performer takes position around the puddle.
Each stands or squats according to ones own
chosen rhythm looking at the surface of the puddle.

C. Shiomi June 1964



Top: Fluxus performance
score in text form

Mid: Notations for Michael
Jackson's *Thriller*

Bottom: Notations for T'ai
Chi foot movements

while none of these exactly
represent what the scores
will contain, they show
examples of how movement
can be notated, and various
strategies that can be used in
combination to create an
easily understandable score

Video Installation Option 1

Technical Requirements

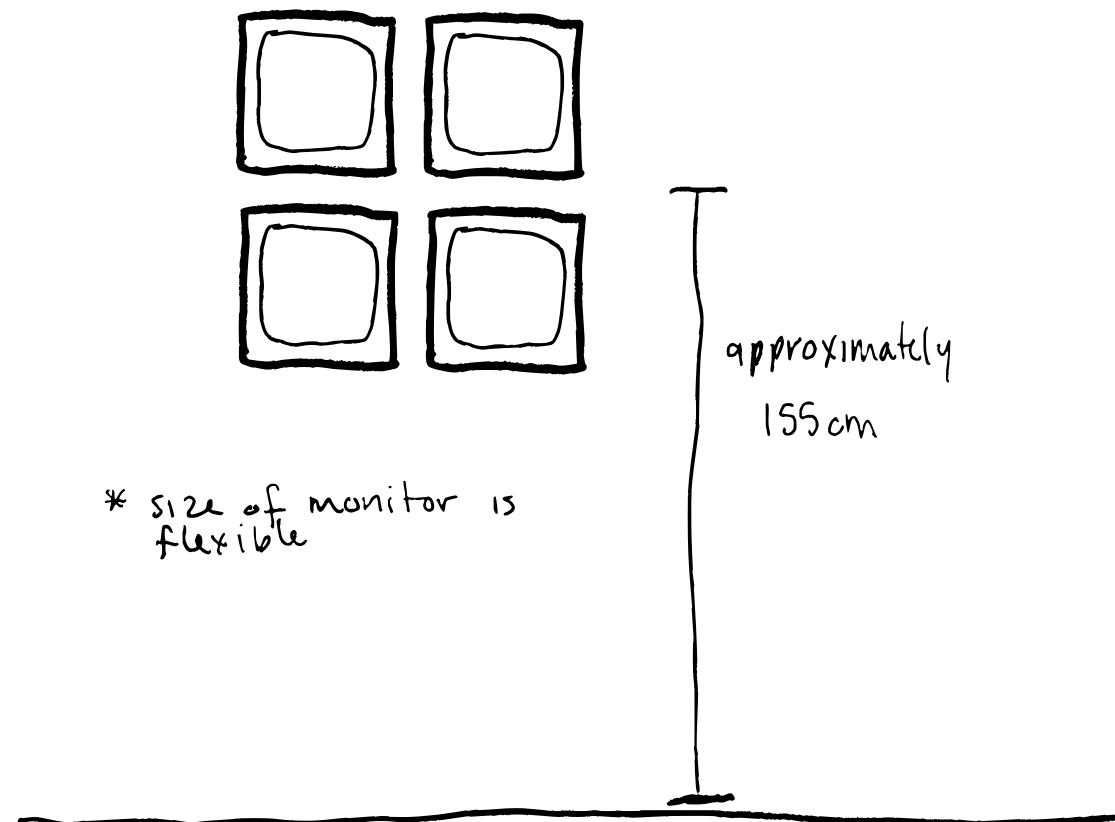
4 CRT Monitors, 4 media players

Installation Placement

Recessed into a false wall (see image). Location in gallery is flexible

Publication Placement

on plywood shelf adjacent to video installation



Video Installation Option 2

Technical Requirements

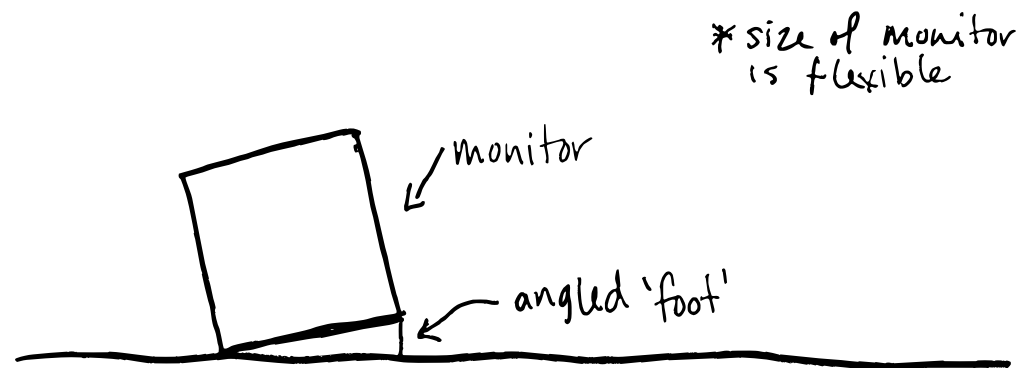
1 CRT Monitors, 1 media players

Installation Placement

Placed on gallery floor, with angled foot (see image). Location in gallery is flexible

Publication Placement

on floor in a stack adjacent to video installation



Budget

Production Expenses

Travel				NOK	3,460.00
Item	Cost per unit	Quantity	Subtotal	Description	
Intensive Research Period	1,364.00	2	2,728.00	2 x monthly transit passes for research	
Video Production	61.00	6	366.00	3 x round trip for filming for myself	
Assistant Transit	61.00	6	366.00	3 x round trip for filming for assistant	

Performance Props				NOK	349.00
Item	Cost per unit	Quantity	Subtotal	Description	
Performance Costume	349.00	1	349.00	Jumpsuit from H&M	

Publication Expenses				NOK	3,796.80
Item	Cost per unit	Quantity	Subtotal	Description	
Printing Costs - broadsheet	37.97	100	3,796.80	8 page, full colour - see extra notes	
Printing Costs - tabloid	29.90	100	2,989.50	8 page, full colour - see extra notes	
Printing Costs - broadsheet	22.12	100	2,212.10	4 page, full colour - see extra notes	

PROJECT TOTAL NOK 7,605.80

Extra notes on publication expenses

I have included quotes for two alternative formats for the printed matter that would be acceptable, but only include the preferred option for publishing in the budget. The two other quotes are for different sizes of publication (less pages, or smaller total print area).